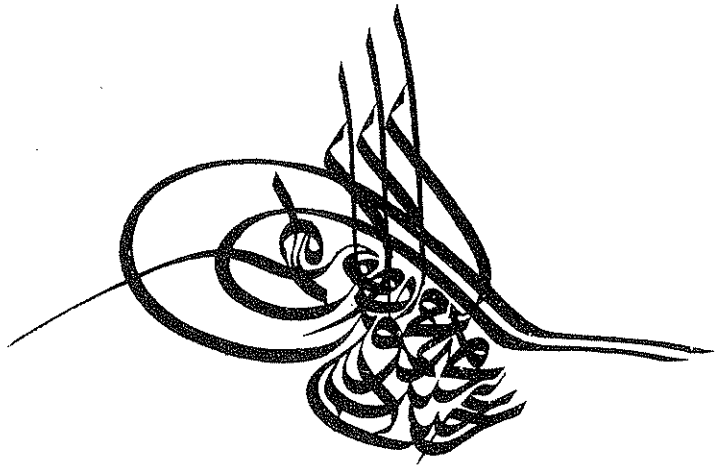


*Bureaucratic Reform
in the Ottoman Empire*



*BUREAUCRATIC REFORM
IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE*

THE SUBLIME PORTE, 1789-1922

Carter V. Findley

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For My Parents

Elizabeth S. Findley
and
John C. Findley

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Princeton Studies on the Near East

. . . lâkin bir devletin böyle külliyen tebdil ve tecdid-i nizamatı müceddeden bir devletin teşkilinden güç olduğuna binaen . . .

. . . since it is more difficult thus entirely to change and renovate the laws of a state than to found a state anew . . .

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih*, vı, 6

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FRONTISPIECE. *Tuğra* or "Cipher" of Sultan Abd ül-Mecid (1839-1861)

SOURCE: An original *ferman*, dated EI RA 1263/1847, in the possession of the author

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Sublime Porte—there must be few terms more redolent, even today, of the fascination that the Islamic Middle East has long exercised over Western imaginations. Yet there must also be few Western minds that now know what this term refers to, or why it has any claim to attention. One present-day Middle East expert admits to having long interpreted the expression as a reference to Istanbul's splendid natural harbor. This individual is probably not unique and could perhaps claim to be relatively well informed. When the Sublime Porte still existed, Westerners who spent time in Istanbul knew the term as a designation for the Ottoman government, but few knew why the name was used, or what aspect of the Ottoman government it properly designated. What was the real Sublime Porte? Was it an organization? A building? No more, literally, than a door or gateway? What about it was important enough to cause the name to be remembered?

In one sense, the purpose of this book is to answer these questions. Of course, it will also do much more and will, in the process, move quickly onto a plane quite different from that of the exoticism just evoked. For to study the bureaucratic complex properly known as the Sublime Porte, and to analyze its evolution and that of the body of men who staffed it, is to explore a problem of tremendous significance for the development of the administrative institutions of the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic lands in general, and in some senses the entire non-Western world.

The chapters that follow will amplify and substantiate this statement. Before going further, however, it is appropriate to comment more fully than will be possible, once substantive discussion begins, on certain features of the sources and on two principles, formulated in response to these features, that have guided the organization of this study.

Research in Ottoman history is a venture into an ill-charted terrain. Original source materials exist, often in unmanageable bulk, but they are difficult of comprehension and sometimes of access. The state of scholarship in the field, despite the efforts of generations of scholars in many lands, is such that a high pro-

portion of the questions that call for attention in any study cannot be treated adequately by any means other than investigation of the primary sources. Where a given question is only ancillary to the main subject of a study or, however important, is centered elsewhere, a full-scale investigation of the type needed is sometimes not practicable. Nor does such an investigation always answer the researcher's questions. In this as in other societies, it sometimes turns out that important problems either did not attract the attention, or else eluded the comprehension, of contemporaries. Accounts by contemporary observers of different cultural background, when such persons were present, may or may not be of much help. Exploration of certain issues may thus require the painful culling and interpretation of widely scattered fragments of information. At times, the extent to which it is possible to proceed even by this means may be limited.

These are well-known characteristics of the field, and their effects will be apparent at times in the following pages. As we shall note more fully in Chapter Five, for example, Ottoman reformers of the nineteenth century were quicker to proclaim reforms than to regulate exactly how the reforms should be implemented; they were also quicker to regulate than to investigate and record how the regulations were applied. European observers, with a few valuable exceptions, lacked the depth of interest or information that would have enabled them to compensate for this deficiency. In the field of finance, the problems of the sources are even more severe. Their tradition and situation left Ottoman statesmen notoriously ill-equipped to cope with questions of this kind, while Europeans, though more knowing, reacted and commented primarily in terms of their own interests. This situation is particularly unfortunate, as nineteenth-century Ottoman government finance is a topic potentially capable of yielding a study of considerable importance. But little critical scholarship has yet been devoted to the subject, the relevant Ottoman documentation is especially voluminous and difficult to interpret, and the records of the Ministry of Finance for the late nineteenth century were not open to scholars when most of the research for this study was done and presumably still are not. A detailed analysis of one financial issue of particular importance for bureaucrats, the official compensation system, has developed out of the research undertaken for this study. Presentation of the statistical part of this analysis could not be

included within this book without expanding it beyond reasonable limits, however, and thus must wait, but for some comments, for a later work.

How should a scholar react to the difficulties of the Ottoman field in designing a program of research? One long-familiar response is to narrow the scope of inquiry, seek a problem as free of impinging uncertainties as possible, and attempt to arrive at a sound interpretation through exhaustive study of the sources and conscientious investigation of the details and technicalities that they present. For thoroughness and attention to specifics, this kind of approach is indispensable in any historical work that is to carry conviction. The research that culminated in the writing of this book made clear, however, that such a method has its potential costs where selection of topic is concerned. There are few subjects, however delimited, in Ottoman history where the scholar does not confront uncertainties that cannot be totally resolved within the framework of a single study. There must also be few topics of significance for which it is humanly possible to locate and use all relevant source materials. This being the case, narrowing the scope of research can hinder more than help the researcher, who must also try to acquire a broad frame of reference in which to interpret his findings and demonstrate their significance. The limited development of the literature on related subjects heightens this danger, creating the risk that the fruit of conscientious scholarship will be idiosyncratic pedantry.

Given this situation, the first principle that has guided the organization of this study is that its scope should be defined as broadly as possible. The study should also be as thorough as possible in the investigation of the sources and the cultural milieu. The situation of a bureaucracy cannot be assessed fully without reference to its relations with its broader political and social setting, however, and it is thus indispensable that the scope of the analysis be large enough to permit appreciation of these relationships, especially as they evolved over time.

For anyone approaching Ottoman bureaucratic institutions of the nineteenth century with these concerns in mind, the ideal subject would be the entire civil bureaucracy, long the most influential and dynamic branch of Ottoman officialdom, and all the institutions it staffed. But this is too much to attempt in any depth in a work of reasonable scale. This study accordingly concentrates on the Sublime Porte, the civil-bureaucratic headquar-

ters of the time, and on the men who staffed it. The following chapters will examine the development of this complex over the whole era of reform, paying particular attention to the evolution of the organizational and procedural apparatus of administration, to the elaboration of the relevant body of laws and regulations, and to change in the corporate state of the branch of the bureaucracy that staffed the agencies under study. A fuller treatment of the social, economic, and cultural implications of reform will be the subject of a later work, which will include the analysis of the compensation system mentioned earlier.

The wish to achieve a broad frame of reference was decisive not only in determining the scope of this study, but also in prompting formulation of the second of the principles that has guided its preparation. This is that the study should be written in a way that can be enlightening not only to specialists but also to a broader audience, including readers who are not historians of the Middle East but are interested in bureaucracy or the modernization of traditional societies. It is true that this book is the work of a historian and deals with the evolution of a bureaucratic system as seen in its own immediate cultural context. Yet works on bureaucracy and modernization, written by scholars in a variety of other fields and disciplines, have provided invaluable guidance for structuring the present analysis and for evaluating the phenomena it investigates. This is above all true of the work of theoretically oriented writers, and especially of Weber and Eisenstadt. Through the medium of discourse that it creates, this broader literature has also suggested a way of expressing the conclusions of the present study in terms whose currency transcends the limits of a particular field of historical specialization. To pursue the comparisons among different bureaucratic systems or the criticism and refinement of theory, which are the preoccupations of scholars in some of these other fields, falls beyond the scope of the present work. One of its goals, however, is to analyze its subject in a way that both throws light on the specific cultural setting of that subject and can prove meaningful to scholars interested in the subject but not in the cultural setting as such. If this book proves useful to scholars outside, as well as inside, the field of Middle Eastern history, it will have achieved one of its most important objectives.

Acknowledgments

To attempt to recall all those who have contributed to this study is to retrace a path that has wound across much of the world during a period of over ten years. Some scholars have contributed through sustained guidance provided throughout a lengthy period of association. Some have contributed through incisive comments made during brief meetings. Some institutions and individuals have contributed other types of support, material and sometimes moral, as well.

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1. *Rendering of Ottoman Turkish in Latin Letters.* In transcribing Ottoman terms, names, and expressions from the Arabic script into Latin letters, this study follows the practice, now general among historians of the late Ottoman period, of adhering to the orthographical conventions of modern Turkish. In the transcribed items, as in the citation of modern Turkish names and titles, the reader unacquainted with Turkish will encounter some letters and diacritical marks that are standard parts of the Latin alphabet as used since 1928 in Turkey but that may otherwise be unfamiliar:

c pronounced like "j" in English

ç pronounced like "ch" in "chip"

ğ the "soft g." Depending on the adjacent letters, this is either dropped, pronounced like "y" in English, or treated as lengthening the preceding vowel.

ı Similar sounds exist in English but have no consistent orthographical representation. G. L. Lewis describes this as "a back, close, unrounded vowel. It is not unlike the sound of a in *serial*, but a closer approximation can be achieved by spreading the lips as if to say *easy* but saying *cushion* instead; the result will be the Turkish *kışın*, 'in winter.' . . . Americans will recognize in it the sound of the first vowel of *Missouri* as pronounced by a native of that state." The upper-case form of "ı" is "I." Note, in contrast, that the upper-case form of the front vowel "i" is "İ," pronounced more or less as in English "pit."

ö pronounced like "eu" in French "peur"

ş pronounced like "sh" in "ship"

ü a front vowel sounding much like "ü" in German or "u" in French.

^ The circumflex is used chiefly to indicate palatalizing of a preceding g, k, or l. It may also be used to mark long vowels in borrowings from Arabic, especially in otherwise ambiguous cases. For example, the name Âli corresponds to what most Arabists would transliterate as 'Âlî and is to be distinguished from Ali, for which the corresponding transliteration is 'Alî.

' The apostrophe is used in modern Turkish for several purposes. Examples of two of these will appear in this study. The

first is to separate proper nouns from grammatical endings attached to them. The second is to represent the Arabic letters "ayn" and "hamza," where these are shown at all. In the former case, the apostrophe is purely an orthographical convention and represents no sound at all. In the latter case, educated speakers of Turkish will at most make a slight pause or break between syllables.

For more exact discussion of the sounds of the Turkish language, see G. L. Lewis, *Turkish Grammar* (Oxford, 1967), chapter 1; or Robert Underhill, *Turkish Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), chapter 1.

Purists may object that this assimilation of Ottoman to modern Turkish orthography forfeits the unequivocal convertibility between scripts that is the goal of rigorous transliteration systems. For the purely Turkish, as opposed to the Arabic and Persian, elements in Ottoman Turkish, unequivocal convertibility is, however, an elusive goal. The modern Turkish orthography is far less cumbersome to use. And the chief scholarly objection to its use, certainly for late Ottoman texts, has largely fallen by the wayside since the appearance of the *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, edited by Bahadır Alkım, Andreas Tietze, et al. (Istanbul, 1968). This shows each term in Arabic script following the main entry in Latin letters and thus makes it possible to verify Arabic-script orthography with convenience. This dictionary has accordingly been adopted as the orthographical standard for this study, except in a few points that should be noted.

Modern Turkish orthography is not so standardized as to exclude a small range of variation, and the entries in the *New Redhouse Dictionary* reflect this fact. Some of the variations amount to inconsistencies in the handling of certain facets of transcription from Arabic into Latin script. In this study, to maintain ease of reference to the dictionary adopted as standard, these inconsistencies have been eliminated only where they would be particularly conspicuous. For example, we have rendered the Arabic plural of the word more or less invariably written in modern Turkish as *memur* ("official," "bureaucrat") as *memurin*, rather than *me'murin* as shown in the dictionary. The latter form is in fact a more accurate transliteration, but it is pointless to use it unless the singular conforms to it.

Some of the historical terms and proper names that appear in the following pages do not appear in the dictionary. This point is of slight consequence, inasmuch as most such terms are derived forms of, or constructs including, terms that do appear there. The Arabic orthography of proper names can also normally be verified from sources such as the English- or Turkish-language editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

For ease of recognition by nonexperts, a number of Arabic constructs normally written as one word in modern Turkish have been broken down into their component elements. This applies to both terms and proper names. Thus we shall speak of *reis ül-küttab* and *seyh ül-İslâm*, rather than *reisülküttab* or *seyhülislâm*, and discuss the reign of Abd ül-Hamid rather than Abd-ülhamid.

Arabic phrases, when quoted totally in Arabic and not incorporated into a syntactically Turkish construction, will be transliterated precisely in a style that normally retains the Arabic-Latin consonantal equivalences of modern Turkish—for example, "c" for "jîm"—but renders the vowels according to an Arabic rather than a Turkish pronunciation. For exact differentiation of the Arabic consonants, added diacritical marks will also be used as needed. For example, when quoting phrases entirely in Arabic, we shall distinguish the "ayn" (ء) and "hamza" (ْ). These principles will not apply to what are essentially Ottoman historical terms, again such as *reis ül-küttab* or *seyh ül-İslâm*, but happen to be entirely Arabic from the linguistic point of view. Proper names of Ottomans will also be treated as Turkish irrespective of linguistic provenance.

Final "b" and "d," although converted in Turkish into "p" and "t" except when followed by suffixes beginning with a vowel, will normally be retained as is. Thus we shall prefer Ragîb and Mehmed to Ragîp and Mehmet.

Terms and place names that have acquired wide currency in English will also be rendered as English; for example, Istanbul rather than İstanbul. On the other hand, terms that represent concepts of central importance to this study, such as *vezir*, will be rendered in Turkish fashion instead.

Names of persons alive since the official adoption of the Latin alphabet in Turkey in 1928 will be cited as found in the sources. Citations of books and articles published in modern Turkish will follow the title page.

2. *Translation of Ottoman Terms into English.* The main guideline followed here has been that of intelligibility to the nonexpert reader. A sustained effort has been made to handle Ottoman terminology throughout the text without assuming that the reader understands its meanings or grammatical properties. With few exceptions, Ottoman terms are therefore used in conjunction with their English translations with a frequency which would otherwise be unnecessary and may seem tautological to experts: e.g., “*intisab* connections,” or “Tanzimat reforms.” For the same reason, given the variety of ways in which plurals were formed in Ottoman, Ottoman terms appearing in conjunction with their English translations will almost invariably be in the singular, even when the context demands that the English be in the plural. The chief exceptions will occur in cases where the sources normally cite only the plural—*hulefa*, *hacegân*—without ever using the corresponding singular in the same meaning. As a further aid in maximizing the intelligibility of the Ottoman terminology, the figures included in most chapters to illustrate bureaucratic organizational patterns will include the Ottoman as well as the English names of all offices shown. Items included in the index will appear under both their English and their Ottoman names, where appropriate, with cross references from Ottoman to English.

The choice of translations for Ottoman terms has been guided not only by the principle of intelligibility, but also by that of avoiding false analogies. In general, the simplest, most literal translation is preferred, and a careful effort has been made not to make Ottoman offices sound like those of other governments. There were many similarities, of course. But the tradition of Western scholarship on some of these institutions is already centuries old, and full—as the work of Joseph von Hammer demonstrates—of confusing analogies between Ottoman institutions and those of other states, which in some cases no longer even exist.

3. *Conversion of Dates.* The Ottoman sources used in preparation of this study cite dates most often in the *hicrî* (Islamic lunar) calendar, sometimes in the *malî* or *rumî* (solar) calendar used for purposes of financial administration, sometimes in both. Wherever possible, care has been taken to keep the mechanics of date conversion from intruding on the attention of the reader. In

principle, only Gregorian dates will appear in the text. Where necessary to identify a source or indicate its precise location (as in unpaginated archival registers), the *hicrî* or *malî* dates will then appear in the notes with their Gregorian equivalents—unless already indicated in the text—following them after a slash. In converting *hicrî* dates in which no month is mentioned, a single Gregorian year will normally be cited as long as a quick glance at a conversion table makes clear which solar year overlapped most of the *hicrî* year in question. Since the *malî* or *rumî* year was a solar one, there is never any ambiguity in converting in such cases, although it should be borne in mind that the *malî* year began in March and that its last quarter extended into the Gregorian year following the one which we shall cite. Wherever the original text offers both *hicrî* and *malî* dates, we shall cite only the *hicrî*.

List of Special Abbreviations

Abbreviations referring to names of archives are followed by an asterisk.

- AA* *Auswärtiges Amt*, papers of the Imperial German Foreign Office; consulted by means of the microfilm collection in the U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C., whence the inclusion of microfilm roll numbers in the form of citation used in this study.
- AAE* *Archives des Affaires Étrangères*, Paris
- A. AMD Papers of the Office of the *Amedî*, BBA
- Ayn. *Ayniyat Defterleri*, BBA
- B *Receb*, seventh month of the *hicrî* calendar
- BBA* *Başbakanlık* (formerly *Başvekhâlet*) Archives, Istanbul
- Bd. *Band* (volume), in citations from AA
- Bell. *Bellekten*, Journal of the Turkish Historical Society, Ankara
- BEO *Bab-ı Âli Evrak Odası*, papers of the Records Office of the Sublime Porte, in BBA
- Buy. *Buyuruldu defterleri*, registers of grand-vezirial orders, BBA
- C *Cemazi ül-ahir*, sixth month of the *hicrî* calendar
- CA *Cemazi ül-evvel*, fifth month of the *hicrî* calendar
- CD George Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*
- Cev. Har. *Cevdet Tasnifi*, a classification in BBA, subsection on foreign affairs
- Conf. Pr. Confidential Print; designates confidential documents found in FO in printed form
- deft. *defter*, register
- DSA *Dahiliye Sicill-i Ahval Tasnifi*, registers containing official biographies, classified in BBA as pertaining to the Ministry of the Interior
- Dstr.¹ *Düstur*, collection of legal texts officially published by Ottoman Government, first series, containing texts dating from 1839-1908; cf. bibliography for additional details on the various volumes and appendices.
- Dstr.² Continuation of the preceding for the years 1908-1922

EI ¹	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , first edition
EI ²	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , second edition
El	<i>Evail</i> , the first ten days of a month
Er	<i>Evahir</i> , the last ten days of a month
Et	<i>Evasit</i> , the middle ten days of a month
FO*	Foreign Office Papers, Public Record Office, London
Har.*	<i>Hariciye</i> (Foreign Ministry) Archives, Istanbul
Har. Saln.	<i>Salname-i Nezaret-i Hariciye</i> , "yearbooks" of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry
HH	<i>Hatt-ı Hümayun</i> , collection of imperial decrees, BBA
HHS*	<i>Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv</i> , Vienna
IA	<i>İslâm Ansiklopedisi</i> , Turkish edition of the <i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , with expanded treatment of Turkish subjects
IFM	<i>İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası</i> , Journal of the Economics Faculty of Istanbul University
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
Kal. Niz.	<i>Kalem Nizamnamesi</i> , register of regulatory documents for certain offices of the Sublime Porte, BBA
Kanz.	Josef Matuz, <i>Das Kanzleiwesen Sultan Süleymân's des Prächtigen</i>
L	<i>Şevval</i> , tenth month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
LO	Grégoire Aristarchi, <i>Législation ottomane, ou recueil des lois, règlements, ordonnances, traités, capitulations et autres documents officiels de l'Empire ottoman</i>
M	<i>Muharrem</i> , first month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
Mal. Müd.	<i>Maliyeden Müdevver</i> , a classification of financial registers in BBA
MENA	J. C. Hurewitz, ed., <i>The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record</i> , 1
mf.	Microfilm
Müh.	<i>Mühimme defterleri</i> , registers of important affairs, BBA
Müt.	<i>Mütenevvi Tasnifi</i> , miscellaneous files, Har.
N	<i>Ramazan</i> , ninth month of <i>hicrî</i> calendar
Niz. Kav.	<i>Nizamat ve Kavanin</i> , a collection of laws and regulations, Har.
OT	Enver Ziya Karal, <i>Osmanlı Tarihi</i> , v-viii

OTD	Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, <i>Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü</i>
PA	<i>Politisches Archiv</i> , a classification in HHS
R	<i>Rebi ül-ahir</i> , fourth month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
RA	<i>Rebi ül-evvel</i> , third month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
S	<i>Safer</i> , second month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
Ş	<i>Şaban</i> , eighth month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
SA	<i>Sicill-i Ahval</i> , personnel records, Har.
Sadr.	Mahmud Kemal İnal, <i>Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadriazamlar</i>
Şair.	Id., <i>Son Asır Türk Şairleri</i>
Saln.	<i>Salname</i> , yearbooks of the Ottoman government
Şehb.	<i>Şehbender defteri</i> , register of consular appointments, BBA
Staats.	Joseph von Hammer, <i>Des osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung</i>
Tar. Der.	<i>İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi</i> , Historical Journal of the Istanbul University Faculty of Letters
Tar. Ves.	<i>Tarih Vesikaları</i> , "Historical Documents," a journal published by the Turkish Ministry of Education
TDvM	<i>Teşkilât-ı Devair ve Mecalis</i> , papers on organization of various bureaucratic and conciliar agencies, BBA
TKE	<i>Tercüme Kalemi Evrakı</i> , papers of the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte, Har.
TPK*	Topkapı Palace Archives
Z	<i>Zi'l-hicce</i> , twelfth month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar
ZA	<i>Zi'l-kade</i> , eleventh month of the <i>hicrî</i> calendar

*Bureaucratic Reform
in the Ottoman Empire*

INTRODUCTION: THE SUBLIME PORTE AND
THE SCRIBAL SERVICE AS ELEMENTS
OF STATE AND SOCIETY

Mülk durmaz eğer olmazsa rical
Lâzım amma ki rical emval

The state cannot stand without statesmen
But the statesmen must have wealth

Nabi, *Hayriye*¹



In the administrative tradition of the Islamic world, the imperial institutions of the Ottoman Empire hold a place of special importance. The overall continuity of that tradition means that the Ottoman imperial system was the product of a development that had been in progress ever since the rise of Islamic civilization and that drew in notable respects on pre-Islamic roots, as well. The tradition had perhaps passed its classic phase before the Ottoman state emerged, and the Ottomans at their height were not the only contemporary power to preserve it. But preserve it they did, making contributions of sometimes unexcelled importance to its further elaboration. In later centuries, when the two other great empires of the late traditional Islamic world, those of the Safavids in Iran and the Mughals in India, were collapsing, the Ottoman Empire survived to become the longest-lived of the three. Despite the increasingly manifest obsolescence of the imperial form of political organization, the Ottoman Empire also became the only one of those states to continue the evolution of the administrative tradition without break into the era of modernization. The radical reforms through which the Ottomans of the nineteenth century attempted to come to grips with the consequences of their decline and with the altered circumstances of the world they lived in thus form a bridge, unique in its kind,

over which the millennial development of the Islamic administrative tradition continued into the twentieth century.

The final collapse of the state, by sweeping away what was left of the antiquated superstructure of multinational empire, has not so much denied as reaffirmed and brought more clearly into view the significance of the efforts of nineteenth-century statesmen to reform and revitalize their tradition. This point is clearest in the history of the Turkish Republic, for decades the most dynamic and viable of the modernizing Islamic polities of the Middle East. Despite the traumas attendant on imperial collapse, however, benefits of the late Ottoman reforms also scattered over what are now the other successor states, both Middle Eastern and Balkan. Examples range from early nationalist leaders trained in the higher schools of Istanbul² to laws and law codes that were first promulgated by Ottoman reformers and have in some cases remained in force in the other successor states after being superseded in the Turkish Republic.³ Even in Iran, the one major Middle Eastern state never integrated into the Ottoman imperium, efforts at reform, both under the Qajars and under Reza Shah, displayed the marked influence of Ottoman and later republican Turkish example.

The Ottoman reforms of the nineteenth century are thus of pivotal importance not only for the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, but also for the entire history of the administrative tradition of the Islamic world. These reforms are also significant in a larger sense, as well. If we except Russia, whose traditional culture had much in common with that of the West, the Ottomans come to the fore as the first modernizing society of the non-Western world and one of the few such societies to retain any degree of independence during the nineteenth-century age of imperialism. In view of the Ottomans' geographic position and the level of their interaction in all periods of their history with Europeans, theirs, too, is an exceptional situation. But their experiences during a century and a third of administrative reform must have implications for the study of the efforts of other peoples, the world over, who have launched comparable efforts only more recently—at times under even less promising circumstances, and often without any resource equal to the indigenous tradition that the Ottomans had behind them.

Full appreciation of the Ottoman administrative reforms thus depends on examining them in a deep chronological perspective

and comparing them with the experiences of other societies. Yet the scale of the Ottoman administrative system and the limited amount of scholarly research thus far devoted to it stand in the way of full realization of any such goal in a single work. The study that follows will therefore take as its goal the explanation and analysis of one quintessentially important phase of these reforms: the development of the most important of the bureaucratic organizations of the later empire and of the branch of the ruling class that staffed it.

The organization in question is that known to generations of Westerners by the exotic title of "Sublime Porte." A gratuitous but long-familiar piece of obfuscation, this term is basically a French translation of an Ottoman Turkish expression, *Bab-ı Âli*, literally meaning "high" or "exalted gateway." The apparent whimsicality of the term diminishes once we recognize that it, like the word "court" as associated with European monarchies, is a way of using a spatial attribute of the center of power as a general designation for the government. Among the Ottomans, indeed, there were terms similar to "Sublime Porte" that did, like "court" in Europe, refer to the Sultan's palace. With the progressive differentiation of governmental institutions, however, the term Sublime Porte came to be used in a loose sense, especially by Europeans, as a designation for the Ottoman government in general. In a more precise way, Sublime Porte referred not to any gateway, but to a specific building, or succession of buildings over time, that housed the principal administrative agencies.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Sublime Porte in this stricter sense was a distinct complex, which was adjacent to the imperial palace and contained the household and office of the grand vezir, the offices of several officials immediately subordinate to him, and the meeting place of the grand vezir's *divan* or council. By 1922, the vezirial household had moved elsewhere, and the internal organization of the Porte had come to consist of the grand vezir and his immediate staff, the Council of Ministers, a body known as the Council of State, and the Ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs. While this organization seems substantially different from the earlier one, each of the elements in the later pattern is linked in origin to those noted for earlier dates.⁴

The men who staffed these agencies belonged in the vast

majority of cases to a branch of the ruling class that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, can best be called the scribal service. Progressively, as a result of changes in the corporate state of this body, its size, and the roles its members filled, it assumed the quite different form of what we shall call the civil bureaucracy.

Our subject, then, is the organizational complex of the Sublime Porte and, viewed in relation to it, the scribal service or, later, the civil bureaucracy. To study the development of these institutions, we must first define their place both in the totality of the governmental system and in the general organizational patterns of Ottoman society. The remainder of this chapter will pursue this goal by presenting a repertory of organizational concepts. In subsequent chapters, we shall use these concepts, first, to reconstruct the developmental patterns of all the branches of the ruling class and then, in greater detail, to follow the development of the Sublime Porte and the scribal service from the late prereform period through the final collapse of the empire. We shall thus explore the paradoxical and far-reaching ways in which the politico-bureaucratic tradition continued to evolve, even as the empire approached its inevitable dissolution.

THE SUBLIME PORTE AND THE SCRIBAL SERVICE AS ELEMENTS OF THE IMPERIAL "CENTER"

In keeping with the length and richness of the political tradition that lay behind it, the core of institutions, men, and ideas that composed the ruling system of the Ottoman Empire—what Edward Shils would term the "center"⁵—was a complex entity displaying great variation over time. Radically different in form from the governmental system of a modern state, this was in Weberian terms a patrimonial system of a type characterized both by an extensive development of "patrimonial officialdom" and by a strong and effective opposition of the state to the emergence of anything like the social classes or estates associated with the variant manifestations of the patrimonial tradition known at the same time in parts of Europe.⁶ In fact, the Ottomans did distinguish a ruling class and a subject class, but it will become clear that these terms, established by convention, designate social classes only in a rather exceptional sense. A general

description of the major organizational elements, first of the imperial "center," then of the larger society, will clarify the meaning of these statements.

The Office of Sultan

The patrimonial character of the system is largely comprehensible from typical, traditional conceptions of the office of the sultan. The sultan's role tended to be conceptualized on the model of that of a patriarch presiding over his household. He was the head of the household, the dynasty was the family proper, the ruling class comprised the slaves who served in the household, the subject classes were the "flocks" (*reaya*) entrusted by God to the care of the family head, and the territory of the state—with theoretically limited exceptions—was the dynastic patrimony. In the sultan, the state found the embodiment of its unity and its one source of legislative authority apart from Islamic law and established custom, while hereditary succession within the dynasty provided the means by which this unity and authority were perpetuated over time.

The powers of the sultan were immense; the governance of the empire was largely dependent on his personal discretion. And yet his powers were far from being without limit. Some of the restrictions were of a practical kind, related to factors such as the capabilities of the administrative and military apparatus under the sultan's command, or the need for him to possess personal strength and acumen if he were to be more than a "cog in a machine."⁷ Other limits were ones of principle, derived from the conception of the society as the fulfillment of a divinely appointed and thus invariable plan, and the consequent necessity for the sultan to maintain the legitimacy of his rule through performance of religiously valued functions. In addition to promotion of certain social-welfare policies⁸ and respect in practice for the religious-legal tradition, this quest for legitimacy expressed itself in the lives of the sultans most clearly in a progressive accretion of roles and titles—Warrior for the Faith (*Gazi*), Custodian of Sacred Relics, Protector of the Pilgrimage, Servitor of the Two Holy Cities, and finally, if not quite properly, Caliph—through which the sultans sought to establish an unassailable claim to preeminence in the Islamic world.⁹ In the era of reform, one of the chief obstacles in the way of efforts to restruc-

ture and broaden the polity would arise from the fact that the legislative power, the continuity, and the legitimacy of the state were so thoroughly invested in this one figure.

The Imperial Cultural Tradition

Consideration of the religiously sanctioned roles of the sultans brings us to the ideals and values associated with the imperial "center," and thus to the fundamental problem that gave the roles of the sultan their significance. The Ottoman Empire, like other sultanates, existed in a permanent state of tension in relation to the Islamic heritage. Shaped by an Iranian tradition of absolute kingship and a Turkic ideal of quasi-divine monarchy, both rooted deep in the pre-Islamic past, the very concept of *sultan* was at odds with the Islamic ideal of rule by a caliph in whom religious leaders acknowledged the legitimate successor (*khalifa*) of the Prophet in his capacity as head of the Muslim community. Exercising a power based on little but military force, no sultan could gain the acceptance of the pious except as he, in the absence or weakness of a legitimate caliph, devoted himself to the achievement of religiously valued goals.¹⁰

The determination with which Ottoman Sultans pursued this struggle for legitimation is one of the most consistent and intriguing themes of Ottoman history. The longevity of the empire, and the measure of seriousness ultimately attributed to their claims to the caliphate, are a measure of their success. In fact, however, the struggle to legitimate the imperial system and assert its claim to a unique position in the Islamic world had other aspects, which went beyond the office of the sultan and also helped to shape the imperial cultural tradition.

The stubbornness of the struggle for legitimation is equally clear, for example, in the field of law. Like other Islamic rulers from earliest times, the Ottomans had to cope not only with the need to enforce Islamic law, but also with the fact that the law was incompletely developed in many respects and thus required additional enactments based either on the authority of the sovereign or in custom. The Ottoman approach to striking the necessary balance was a complex one, including ostentatious deference in principle to Islamic law and to religious-legal scholars; unprecedented development of the legislative role of the state through the promulgation of *kanunnames*, or "codes" of a sort, and through vigorous use of the sultan's power to issue

decrees; integration of the religious-legal experts into the imperial ruling class; and assignment to the local religious courts of adjudication in both kinds of law, as well as of a major role in local administration.¹¹ It is also significant in this connection that the school of religious-legal scholarship that the Ottomans espoused was the Hanefi, the most flexible in its methods of the orthodox four.

The process of creating an imperial tradition and forging multiple links between it and the religious value system proceeded in other ways, as well. We see this, for example, in the attempt to identify the state and its ruling class not only with the religious-legal tradition, but also with the Islamic mystical orders.¹² The same phenomenon appears in the idealized view, propagated by political thinkers, of state and religion as a single, undifferentiated whole (*dim-ü-devlet*).

The effort to identify the state with established values also reached beyond the limits of religious tradition as narrowly defined. For example, the Ottomans clearly aspired to create a composite literary culture that would fittingly express the character of their empire as the preeminent Islamic state. This literary culture was, ideally, to envelop and carry forward not only the Islamic religious studies (*ulûm*), but also the more worldly belletristic tradition known in Arabic as *adab*, a term embracing what Turks ultimately came to refer to as both *edeb*, "good breeding," and *edebiyat*, "literature." For this worldly literary culture, and for the official uses of the state, to the service of which the *adab* tradition was always closely linked, a special language evolved: Ottoman Turkish. In this, distinction of style came to mean a heavy encrustation of Arabic and Persian and a reduction of purely Turkish elements to little more than a few syntactical devices useful for combining these diverse linguistic elements into sumptuously cadenced and lengthy sentences. The very texture of the official language clearly tells how the Ottomans saw themselves in relation to the cultural heritage of the entire Islamic Middle East.

By such means as the accumulation of religiously sanctioned roles by the sultans, the development of the complex legal system, the identification of the imperial system with as many as possible of the expressions of orthodox Islam as it then existed, and the elaboration of a composite literary culture, the Ottomans set about building an imperial cultural synthesis of vast in-

* tegrative power. Inevitably, this effort encountered a number of obstacles, some of which are of considerable importance for this study. One arose from the very artificiality of the synthesis. This was and could only be the culture of the palace and ruling class. It could never have a mass basis—not that the Ottomans ever aspired, before the era of modernization, to give it one. Of perhaps greater moment was the uneasiness with which certain elements—sultanate and Islam, religious-legal and mystical traditions, religious studies and worldly *adab*—coexisted within this would-be synthesis. In fact, the imperial cultural tradition was polymorphous, a juxtaposition more than a coherent blending of elements from the traditions out of which it had been forged.

This fact helped to provoke a long series of attacks on the imperial “center” from forces on the “periphery” of Ottoman society or beyond its frontiers, even before the advent of the explosive force of modern nationalism. Predictably, in the context of a traditional society, these challenges tended to express themselves in terms of Islamic religious orientations that the imperial synthesis could not readily accommodate. Such challenges found expression in ways ranging from the rigoristic and antimystical point of view associated with the Hanbali school of legal thought to movements with mystical or heretical orientations too extreme for toleration by the Ottoman “center.” The best-known example of the former type is the Wahhabi movement of eighteenth-century Arabia; of the latter type, that which assumed statehood as the Safavid Empire of Iran.

Quite significantly, contrasting responses to the polymorphism of the cultural tradition also appeared, if within a narrower range, among the different services that together composed the ruling class. Among the religious scholars, naturally, the strictest orientation toward the values conveyed through the Islamic religious studies emerged, but with a tendency to polarization between sympathizers and opponents of the mystical orders.¹³ Among the military appeared an equally understandable emphasis on holy war for the expansion of Islam, and also, in connections such as that of the Janissaries with the Bektaşî dervish order, inclinations toward mysticism and even heterodoxy. Persons serving in the palace tended to place strongest emphasis on loyalty to the sultan. Those trained in the palace school, in particular, received an education specially aimed at inculcating that loyalty, along with military and vocational skills, polish as cour-

tiers, and a literary culture encompassing a range of “humanistic” studies broader than that encouraged in the colleges of the religious scholars.¹⁴ The palace school, in fact, served specifically for the propagation of the *adab* tradition, the “secular” and “state-oriented” character of which often excited the animosity of the religious.¹⁵

This *adab* tradition was also strongly associated with the scribal officials of the traditional Islamic states. In the Ottoman Empire, too, it was among members of the scribal service that the purely literary and intellectual dimensions of this tradition appeared most strongly. With the decline of the palace school, the scribal service became, practically speaking, the center for the propagation of this tradition within the ruling class. With the styles of script and composition, mechanical techniques of document production, and procedural conventions of the official routine as its lowest common denominator, this scribal *adab* in its most evolved form was encyclopedic in scope, as required for the performance of some of the most demanding scribal duties. In this form, the scribal learning embraced extensive knowledge of subjects such as Arabic and Persian, the laws promulgated by the state, geography, and history. However the purists among the religious scholars felt about it, this was a rich tradition, as the works of generations of scribal intellectuals attest,¹⁶ and one indispensable to the ongoing life of the state.

Thus, while state and religion were ideally undifferentiated, the imperial cultural tradition could not, in fact, produce a perfect union of the two. Similarly, while the tradition, though elaborated over time, was assumed to imply an invariable pattern whose maintenance would assure the legitimation of the state, this tradition could not blend the elements that it encompassed so as to evoke uniform responses from different social groups, even within the ruling class. One consequence of this fact, critically important in the history of the scribal service, is that the different cultural orientations of the various branches of the ruling class played a major role in determining the relative political prominence of each branch as the situation and needs of the state changed over time. Another consequence, closely linked to the first, is that the scribal, or by then more aptly civil-bureaucratic, elite that assumed political preeminence in the era of reform took a leading role in altering or even abandoning various elements of the traditional synthesis, and thus in prepar-

ing the way for the cultural revolution that followed on the final collapse of the imperial order.

*Formal Organizational and Procedural
Apparatus of Government*

Together with the sultan and the imperial cultural tradition, the Ottoman "center" also included an elaborate mechanism of organizations and procedures through which the business of the government was discharged. Reflecting earlier Islamic and non-Islamic patterns, but often used in new ways or refined to new levels of organization, the various elements of this apparatus are too complex and numerous for easy description. Any comprehensive account has to reckon with the palace, the palace school, and the child levy; the *divans* or councils that deliberated on affairs of state, heard complaints, and received ambassadors;¹⁷ the *kadı* courts; the imperial hierarchy of religious colleges; the Janissary infantry corps; the *tımar* system of landholding, with its important functions in local administration, revenue collection, and the support of the cavalry corps; the system of land survey and registration required for maintenance of the *tımar* system; the administrative complex of the Sublime Porte; and more, besides.

The usual subject matter of the "institutional historiography" which has long been a favored pursuit of specialists in Ottoman studies, these institutions are beginning to be well known in some respects. But there is still much to learn. For example, greater attention needs to be paid to chronological precision in treating the relations among institutions; for not all of them flourished at the same time, and the rise of one and decline of another often reflected reorientations of far-reaching importance. Most importantly, the study of these institutions needs to be informed by an awareness of the patterns by which patrimonial political systems characteristically develop out of the household of the ruler.

Weber has given a memorable picture of these patterns in his discussions of patrimonial officialdom, and the development of the governmental mechanisms of the Ottoman Empire seems in general to have progressed along the lines he indicates. In Ottoman history, we find, for example, the initial assimilation of tasks falling outside the specifically domestic service of the ruler to corresponding tasks within; the initial concentration of ad-

ministrative responsibilities in a rudimentary organization headed by a single political official, here the grand vezir; heavy reliance for administrative and judicial purposes on collegial bodies; and early limitation of professional officialdom to little more than a few central bureaus performing secretarial and accounting functions. Here, too, are the complex and variable developmental relationships between the collegial bodies and the bureaus staffed by full-time, professional administrators, as well as the gradual multiplication of bureaus through differentiation of functions.¹⁸

While there has been much progress in the study of Ottoman governmental institutions,¹⁹ the general reassessment needed to achieve a clearer picture of their developmental patterns will still require the effort of many scholars. A central goal of this study is to contribute to this effort and, as concerns the Sublime Porte and the men who served there, to show how the developmental patterns that Weber outlined continued to operate into the era of modernization.

The Ruling Class

Consideration of the formal organizational and procedural apparatus of the Ottoman government brings us next to the ruling class. Although it was in a sense an aspect of the formal organizational apparatus of government, it requires separate consideration as a social body.

What modern scholars characteristically refer to as the ruling class consisted of men for whom the most characteristic and general Ottoman designations were *Osmanlı* (pertaining to the House of Osman, Ottoman) or *askeri* (military). The members of this group enjoyed a number of distinctions. For example, they were exempt in principle from taxation. With the chief exception of some Christians incorporated directly into the military forces during the first two centuries, members of the ruling class were also set apart by their assimilation of some form of the composite imperial culture. Most importantly, they wielded power. Within the limits traced by factors such as rank, favor, seniority, custom, and law, they enjoyed a discretionary power, derived implicitly or explicitly from that of the sultan, and comparable to his on a reduced scale. One of the clearest signs of their elite status, and one of the clearest differences between them and the officials of most modern states, was the idea that

they served the sultan, from whom their power derived, and only secondarily served his subjects.

The elitism of the ruling class was, however, not without serious qualifications related to the patrimonial character of the state. Servants of the sultan indeed, members of the ruling class traditionally stood in the legal status of slaves. When the empire was at its height, many of them were recruited by means that presupposed literal enslavement. This was most notably the case of the Janissary Corps in the era of the child levy (*devşirme*). A technique of slave recruitment drawing on the Christian populations of the empire, this, however foreign to modern ideas, was one of the most significant examples of the evolution of traditional Islamic techniques of government to new levels of elaboration under the Ottomans.²⁰ But even individuals recruited by means that did not presuppose literal enslavement effectively became slaves of the sultan when they entered his service. The irony of this became more apparent in the later centuries, with the decline of the child levy. The religious scholars alone seem to have formed a sort of exception, thanks to their position as custodians of the religious value system that provided the state with its major source of law and legitimation; but even their relative independence was compromised as the sultans succeeded in bringing them into positions of dependence on the state.²¹

The ruling class was, then, a servile elite. Traditional Islamic ideas of slavery differed enough from those normally assumed by Western observers that this designation is less self-contradictory than it might seem. Yet the juridical fact of absolute subjection to the sultan and absolute subservience to his will remained incontestable. Down to the reforms of the 1830s, and sometimes thereafter, the sultan could punish, execute, or confiscate the estates of his official slaves at will. In principle, he was their heir.²² For the sultan, the legal principle of servility made it possible to maintain a kind of control that modern bureaucracies, at least as seen by Weber, achieve through the rule of law.²³

The state-imposed character of this servile elitism had several other important consequences. It meant that the ruling class was in principle deprived of corporate autonomy, and thus was in a position radically different from that of the estates or privileged corporate bodies of medieval or early modern Europe. While assimilation of the imperial culture and access to the material per-

quisites of high station created in the upper echelons of the ruling class a sort of "grandee mentality" and a style of life to go with it,²⁴ no member of the ruling class could be sure how long he or his family would enjoy the means to support such a style. Furthermore, while in other societies wealth or status might become the basis for claims to political power, the kind of patrimonial domination seen in the Ottoman Empire made any such claims practically impossible. Wealth and status might to a degree exist in isolation from power, as among the commercial and religious notables of the subject classes; or else they might be secondary attributes of power, distributed along with it by the sultan to the more exalted of his slave officials.²⁵ With but rare and imperfect exceptions, political power, wealth, and high status could coincide only in the upper echelons of the ruling class, and only on the sufferance of the sultan. The concepts of "ruling class" and "elite" therefore need to be distinguished, as we shall attempt to do from this point on. The former will refer to the servile officials in terms of their state-imposed collective identity; the latter to a relative kind of distinction of which the basis needs to be indicated whenever the term is used.

In addition to these general characteristics of the traditional "Ottomans" or *askeris*, the ruling class also displayed a division into discrete branches. For reasons partially implicit in the application of the term *askeri* (military) to the whole ruling class, this differentiation is the subject of a controversy that we shall have to reexamine in the next chapter. In any case, we shall ultimately distinguish four branches of the ruling class. These are the military-administrative establishment or "men of the sword" (*seyfiye*); the Islamic religious establishment or "men of religion" (*ilmiye*, or *ulema*); the palace service, the existence of a single Ottoman designation for which is, significantly, problematical; and the scribal service or "men of the pen" (*kalemiye*). For the nineteenth century, it will be more appropriate to refer to the first of these as the military establishment only, its administrative dimension largely having been lost by then, and to the last as the civil bureaucracy (*mülkiye*). Since these branches emerged by processes of differentiation within the ruling class, we shall speak of all of them as "bureaucratic" to the extent that they became distinct from the properly domestic, in the sense of menial, service of the patrimonial sovereign.²⁶ This should not be taken to imply that they had acquired all the attributes of modern "bureau-

cracy," as opposed to "patrimonial officialdom," in the Weberian sense. That never happened in the Ottoman period, although the processes that distinguished the various branches within the ruling class and the reforms of the era of modernization were major steps in that direction.

In the nineteenth century, the pattern of ruling and subject classes began to undergo alteration. One of the forces behind these changes was a desire within the ruling class to acquire safeguards against the dangers inherent in its traditional slave status, and, in the process, to take on the privileges typical of a European official aristocracy. The pursuit of this desire in a period of cultural change gave the elitist aspirations of the ruling class a new and, in terms of the underlying legal principles, stronger expression, linked to the emergence of the civil bureaucracy (*mülkiye*). The other main force in transforming the traditional pattern of officially recognized classes was the formal proclamation of something never perfectly realized in practice: the legal equality of all the peoples of the empire. With this went the attempt to create an imperial supranationalism to serve as an antidote to the separatist nationalisms then emerging among various of the subject nationalities.

Since these changes, beginning in the 1830s, contravened basic principles of the traditional order without sweeping away all vestiges of the old patterns, we must treat the old class designations as either obsolete or fundamentally changed in meaning after 1839. The latter is particularly true of the term *Osmanlı*, which subsequently referred not to the official servants of the sultan, but to all his subjects. In some other respects, after 1839 there are no clearcut terms to use in describing social relations. To refer beyond that date to what had previously been the ruling and subject classes, we shall accordingly speak of "officialdom" or of a "bureaucracy" divided into certain branches, or of "subjects of the empire," or the like.

The Political Balance

Having now categorized the component elements of the Ottoman imperial "center," we must note one additional feature of critical relevance to all that follows: this "center" was not simply a matter of disjointed elements; it was a totality uniting all of them. In this totality, depending on the extent to which the imperial "center" had evolved as of any given time from charac-

teristically traditional to modern forms, and on the extent to which the "center" was able to maintain its integrity against hostile peripheral interests, there appeared one of the most important features of the political life of the empire. This is what F. W. Riggs refers to as the political "balance" or "imbalance."

This concept is formally akin to the more familiar and more complex one of "balance of powers" as associated with a political system like that of the United States. As it relates to the bureaucracy of a traditional or modernizing state, the balance or imbalance is basically to be understood in terms of power and legitimacy. We shall use the term in speaking of the relationship between the bureaucracy and that element of the polity in which sovereignty, and thus legitimate control of the power that the bureaucracy wields, is vested, whether directly or by delegation. Even if there is no explicitly articulated system of checks and balances, study of any bureaucratic system requires reference to this larger relationship. For it alone tells whether the bureaucracy operates within the limits of an effective system of control or accountability, and that fact in turn is critical in determining the character of the mixture of functions through which the bureaucracy interacts with all other elements of center and periphery alike.

In the case of a traditional empire beginning to undergo modernization, discussion of the political balance becomes more complicated. Here the polity is in a state of transition from an authoritarian form of organization, in which legitimacy belongs to a more or less autocratic sovereign, to a more broadly based form in which the only definition of the locus of sovereignty that can command ultimate acceptance—certainly in the nineteenth or twentieth century—is the sovereignty, in fact or fiction, of the people. In the traditionalistic pattern, barring the emergence within the state of rival powers that repudiate the control of the center, the polity and the center are practically coterminous, and politics is very much an activity of the bureaucracy. In the modern pattern, the polity is more nearly coterminous with the entire society, and politics and bureaucracy become increasingly differentiated. In the transition between these two patterns, as a number of scholars have pointed out, political systems tend to display a marked loss of balance and a burgeoning of the bureaucracy in both size and power before the controls implied by a balance of the modern kind can develop. Indeed, demand for

the new controls emerges largely in reaction against the bureaucratic preponderance of the transitional period.²⁷

In the Ottoman "center"—composed of the sultan and his family, the imperial cultural tradition, the formal organizational and procedural apparatus of administration, and the ruling class—the political balance was constantly threatened by tensions or incompatibilities built into the component elements of the "center," and by shifts over time in their importance in relation to one another, even before the beginning of the reform era. During that era, the Ottoman system developed a classic case of the kind of imbalance characteristic of transitional societies. This was only worsened as doubt about who the "people" really were, in this as in other multinational empires, compounded the problems of redefining the locus of sovereignty.

In subsequent chapters, we shall draw on the categorization of the component elements of the "center" presented here in order to analyze the problems surrounding this imbalance, its significance for the history of the Sublime Porte and its officials, and the attempts made in the era of reform to achieve a new equilibrium. To prepare for this discussion, however, we must now also consider the setting of the ruling class in relation to the broader society.

THE RULING CLASS AS AN ELEMENT OF THE BROADER SOCIETY: PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Even before modernization began to create pressures for broadening the polity, the ruling and subject classes of course interacted in many ways. Ottoman thinkers evoked one mode of this interaction through the resonant metaphors that they loved to use in speaking of the role of the ruling class in the "binding and loosing" (*akd ve hall*) or, better still, the "rending and mending" (*fath-u-rath*), of affairs of state. This was part of what political philosophers conceived as a symbiotic relationship, visualized in terms of a "circle of justice" (*adalet dairesi*), in which the rulers provided the justice and protection that the subjects had to have in order to flourish, while the subjects produced the resources indispensable for the continued functioning of the state.²⁸ The couplet quoted as the epigraph of this chapter alludes to one element of this schematization.

There were other links between rulers and subjects, as well.

One of these consisted of the mechanisms through which people entered the ruling class. More important for present purposes, there was another, subtle kind of interplay between the two "classes" recognized in the official picture of Ottoman society. This appears in certain models of social organization that originated outside the imperial "center," but found replication in ruling and subject classes alike. To complete our survey of the organizational patterns associated with the officials of the Sublime Porte, we must examine these models and, first of all, attempt to throw some light on the circumstances of their replication within the ruling class.

In describing the official pattern of ruling and subject classes, we have already commented on the extent to which it was imposed and maintained by a state determined to defend its own control over the distribution of political power and the right of access to such power. We have also noted the radical contrast between the Ottoman kind of patrimonialism, which Weber at one point calls "patriarchal," and that found in some other societies characterized by the marked development of privileged classes or estates, or of other types of corporative organizational forms independent in some measure of state control.²⁹ The Ottomans opposed the development of autonomous organizations intermediary between the individual subject and the state. In this they resembled other Middle Eastern states³⁰ and found support in the Islamic religious-legal tradition.³¹ Where the emergence of such bodies could not be prevented, the state attempted to dominate them and use them to maintain or extend its own power. The emergence of some such organizational forms was inevitable, in fact, given certain fundamental characteristics and aspirations of the populations under Ottoman rule. These features of Ottoman society shaped the organizational models of which we must speak here. The replication of these models within the ruling class shows how basic the forces that shaped them were, and how much those forces did, in spite of all, to determine the character of the state itself.

An exhaustive account of Ottoman social and political history might well turn up a larger number of models of this kind;³² but a study of the scribal service and later civil bureaucracy brings into view three, on which we shall concentrate for the remainder of this chapter. One of these reflects the ways in which the Ottoman Empire, like all other traditional Islamic polities, had to

respond to the religious diversity characteristic of Middle Eastern society. This can be referred to as the model of the autonomous confessional community. There were also certain persistent forms of voluntary association, which we shall relate to the model of the guilds, although the importance of this model only becomes clear in a larger setting that includes organizations of other types, as well. Finally, there is what we may call the model of the patrimonial household. We have already mentioned how this appeared on its grandest scale in the metaphorical integration of the entire state into a single household establishment. In this concept, a variety of relations extending beyond the range of kinship proper but still characteristic of the archetypal patriarchal household—the status of the ruling class as slaves and of the subjects as “flocks”—provided the means by which to link all the inhabitants of the empire to the sultan. On its smallest scale, this model, or the social reality underlying it, appeared in the smaller kinship groups that were the basic building blocks of imperial society. In an ironic way, then, the official view of the state as an enormously extended household was both a formal parallel of the kinds of kinship organization that made up Ottoman society, and a means of defense against the divisive tendencies operative within and among those organizations.³³ Although the models of the autonomous confessional community and the guilds were also influential, we shall find the model of the patrimonial household to be of particular significance at all levels of Ottoman social and political life.

The Model of the Autonomous Confessional Community

The development of the system for accommodating religious diversity under Islamic rule was dominated by the conception of Judaism and Christianity as coming out of the same prophetic tradition that culminated in the advent of Islam. There is no need here to comment on the eventual application of this system to non-Muslim peoples other than Jews and Christians, the exact legal terms of the subordinate, protected status (*dhimma*) under which the “peoples of the Book” were allowed to live within the Muslim state, or the resulting contrast in official attitudes toward such peoples living within the “domain of Islam” on one hand and their coreligionists living in the “domain of war” on the other.³⁴

What does require comment is, first, the traits that distin-

guished the autonomous confessional communities in practice and, then, the evidence for the replication of the organizational pattern which these traits defined. On the first point, the latest scholarship shows the beginnings of a radical reinterpretation of these communities, or *millet*s (“peoples”), as they have long been known. The old interpretation appears to have overestimated the elaboration of communal structures, the scope of communal privilege, and the formalization of the relations that existed between non-Muslim religious leaders and Ottoman officials. The sources of the error lie in self-serving accounts emanating from some of the non-Muslim religious leaders, and in the projection into earlier periods of conditions resulting from reforms of the mid-nineteenth century. As an added irony, the very application of the term *millet* to non-Muslim, as opposed to Muslim, communities of the prereform periods appears mistaken.

The point is not that distinct communities possessing a certain autonomy in their internal affairs did not exist. Rather, they existed at much lower levels of institutionalization, and with much greater interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims, than has commonly been assumed. Each community, of course, had its own religious leaders, who might or might not form a centralized hierarchy. The investiture of these leaders, at least of the more important ones, required the confirmation of the state; but this did not necessarily entail the granting of the extensive powers and privileges assumed in the conventional accounts. The religious leaders of a given community exercised authority in its religious affairs, and in the legal and judicial matters that fell under the scope of its religious law. Indeed, although non-Muslims often appeared, even by choice, in the courts of the Muslim *kadis*, the Islamic religious-legal tradition was so central to the life of the state that it was necessary for the non-Muslim communities to have courts of their own. In addition, each community had lay leaders who discharged the administrative responsibilities of the community in fields such as taxation. At least in some communities, there might be a series of regular offices held by such figures. From the point of view of the state, this kind of communal organization was not just a way of accommodating non-Muslims within the empire, but also an example of the use of organizational forms external to the administrative system proper in order to extend its capabilities.

With the decline of the imperial system and the resulting

processes of decentralization, both the judicial and the administrative responsibilities of the communal leaders seem to have increased, judging from eighteenth-century documentation that İnalçık mentions. In any case, the distinctiveness of the communities was perpetuated in all periods, not just by legal and administrative needs, but also by the condescending attitude of Muslims toward non-Muslims and the determination of the various communities to perpetuate their identities. Its forms depended in some measure on the community, the locale, and the date; but the autonomous confessional community was a characteristic reality of Ottoman society, and one that the state managed in some respects to adapt to its own ends.³⁵

The replication of this pattern of autonomous confessional communities is apparent in a number of respects. Most obviously, there were several communities—Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Jewish—whose affairs and whose relations with official authorities at different levels were organized in terms of this pattern. In the nineteenth century, the same kind of status was officially granted to other religious communities, as well.³⁶ Replication of the model also appears in the “capitulations” or grants of privileges issued to specify the terms under which non-Muslim merchants of different nationalities might trade within the empire. In the various port cities, the merchants of each capitulatory state were allowed, under the terms of the grants, to organize collectivities to which Ottomans referred as *millet* or *taife*, terms that Europeans translated as “nations.” Endowed with internal legal autonomy under the headship of their consuls, these bodies displayed important analogies to the autonomous confessional communities, as well, in other respects, as to the Ottoman guilds.³⁷ In a more diffuse way, the attitudes that shaped the system of autonomous confessional communities must have left their traces in countless other settings, although, as reports of guilds with religiously mixed membership imply,³⁸ separation along religious lines did not prevail in every instance.

Within the traditional ruling class, the scope for the replication of the model of the autonomous confessional community was narrow. Once the child levy and the palace school had become fully developed, the role in the Ottoman ruling class—as contrasted with those of some earlier Muslim states—of non-Muslims who had not gone through recruitment processes entailing conversion and cultural assimilation was quite limited. In

different periods, there were nonetheless non-Muslims, few in number but sometimes influential, in or on the fringes of the ruling class in a variety of roles, including those of interpreter and physician. Sometimes the roles were no more than quasi-official; often, too, the non-Muslim presence seems to have been strongest in the local administration of certain provinces or tributary regions, such as the vassal principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.³⁹ Wherever found, however, these individuals appear to have developed career patterns exclusive to themselves, and to have been, not fully integrated into the ruling class, but rather enclaved into it without loss of status as *dhimmis*.

In the nineteenth century, the formal proclamation of equality among members of the different religions profoundly changed the legal setting of the old system of autonomous confessional communities. Through their efforts to promote concepts of common Ottoman citizenship and patriotism, Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals attempted to actualize the new principle and find in it a new source of strength for the state. As in so many other cases, however, the reforms could not entirely sweep away the preexisting patterns. For a variety of reasons, the system of autonomous confessional communities was not abolished, but rather retained and reformed.⁴⁰ This was, in fact, when the term *millet* began to be applied officially to the non-Muslim communities.

Thus began a period in which the pattern of autonomous confessional communities coexisted with the official policy of egalitarian Ottomanism, and both were challenged in turn by the separatist nationalisms that threatened the integrity, not just of the empire, but also, in some cases, of the religiously defined communities. Such circumstances assured that the egalitarian reforms could not produce real social integration. Indeed, the similarities between the social patterns implied in the system of autonomous confessional communities and those found still in some of the most egalitarian and secular sociopolitical systems suggest that complete fusion could hardly have been expected under the best of circumstances. The model of the autonomous confessional community thus never totally disappeared.

Still, the egalitarian reforms made a substantial difference, beginning with the Reform Decree of 1856, which triggered a marked growth in the number of non-Muslims in official service. Indeed, as surely had to be the case if the reforms were to be-

come meaningful anywhere, it was precisely within governmental institutions that the ideals of equality and Ottomanism produced the most appreciable changes. For the later nineteenth century, this fact forms the background against which the continuing influence of the tradition of communal separatism must be assessed in this study.

The Model of the Guilds

The model that we shall identify simply with the guild tradition was even more widely influential among the ruling class. Full appreciation of the significance of this model requires that we recognize its derivation from a rather different institution, characteristic of Anatolia in the early period of Turkish settlement, at a time when guilds as such had yet to appear in the sources.⁴¹ This institution is best known under the Arabic name *futuwwa* (Turkish form, *fütüvvet*), an abstract noun corresponding to Arabic *fatâ*, "young man." The simplest way to think of the *futuwwa* is to adapt Marshall Hodgson's translation and refer to the *futuwwa* organizations as "young men's clubs."⁴² These, in their turn, were under the influence of the Islamic mystical brotherhoods or dervish orders. The organization of the guilds, we shall argue, was based on a model common in general terms to the guilds, the "young men's clubs" while they existed, and also the dervish brotherhoods. The widespread replication of this model must be due in large part to this linkage.

The origins of the "young men's clubs" are obscure. Perhaps corresponding to a pre-Islamic prototype,⁴³ they were known in pre-Ottoman times over a geographical area extending well beyond Anatolia, and went by a variety of names, including *'ayyârûn* ("rogues," "vagabonds"), *runûd* ("debauchees"), *shuttâr* ("tricksters"), as well as *fityân* ("young men," plural of *fatâ*). In societies typically dominated by what were, or were perceived to be, establishments of "elders" (*shaykh*), the fact that the members of these "clubs" often identified the spirit that united them with young manhood is probably, as Goitein indicates, chiefly emblematic of their anti-establishment orientation.⁴⁴ Their other names convey a similar emphasis.

At any rate, the "clubs" tended to draw their members from the less favored elements of society. Such men banded together for the sake of comradeship and for the added conviviality made possible by the sharing of their resources. In addition, they

characteristically opposed government authority when it was strong, but took the maintenance of local order on themselves when government was weak. This last fact, as much as the natural human inclination to affiliate with groups possessing some such animating spirit (what Ibn Khaldûn calls *'aşabîya*), goes far to explain the wide diffusion of this organizational pattern and its persistence over a period of centuries when the authority of states was often evanescent.⁴⁵

By the thirteenth century, another important force had begun to influence the development of these associations. This was the tradition of Islamic mysticism. Its history extending back to early Islamic times, the mystical tradition underwent an important development about the twelfth century with the emergence of the organized dervish orders. This event seems to have stimulated various forms of interaction between the "young men's clubs" and the mystics. One celebrated phase of this interaction was an attempt of the Abbasid Caliph al-Nâsir (1180-1225), in collaboration with a great mystic leader, 'Umar Suhrawardî, to organize the "young men's clubs" under his own auspices and inject into them a "courtly" *futuwwa* ideal linked to and supportive of the caliphate.⁴⁶

One place where this effort had a significant impact was Anatolia, to which Suhrawardî journeyed on the Caliph's behalf. The results appeared not only among the local Turkic dynasts, the Seljuks, but also in more popular settings. These included both the bands of *gazis*, or warriors for the expansion of Islam, active in the frontier zones, and the urban groups then forming about a kind of religious leaders known as *ahis*. Lightly Islamized successors of the *shamans* of the pre-Islamic Turks of Central Asia, the *ahis* began to be conspicuous in Anatolia in the thirteenth century with the influx of the second wave of Turkish immigration, set in motion by the Mongol invasions. In the disorder left by the Mongols' conquest of the Seljuks, the groups formed by the *ahis* in the towns and the bands of *gazis* on the frontiers came to the fore as the most important foci of popular religious life and the most important social organizations in Asia Minor at the time.⁴⁷

While the contribution of the *gazis* to the formation of the Ottoman imperial system is well known, the *ahi* groups also displayed a combination of traits highly significant for the future development of Turkish society. These groups were the specifi-

cally Anatolian version of the "young men's clubs." As such, they played the role of vigilante, characteristic of the clubs in periods of weak governmental authority. They also displayed a mystical fervor that melded the ideals of the Caliph al-Nâsir with an ardent if still superficial Islam.⁴⁸ Finally, recruiting their adherents only among craftsmen or merchants, the *ahi* groups appear to have combined mystical and paragovernmental or paramilitary characteristics with a progressive evolution toward a guild-like character. The account of Ibn Battuta, who benefited repeatedly from the hospitality of the *ahis* while traveling through Anatolia in the 1330s, indicates no clear articulation of specialized guilds as of that time. And yet he implies that a consciousness of organization in terms of trade was then emerging in connection with the *ahi* groups in at least some places.⁴⁹

Subsequently, the *ahis* as such progressively disappeared from the sources. This very likely reflects a new attempt by established authority, in this case the Ottoman Sultan Murad I (1362-1389), to assure control of a popular movement.⁵⁰ In addition to recalling the earlier initiative of the Abbasid al-Nâsir, such an effort would parallel the contemporary displacement of the *gazi* warrior bands by the highly disciplined slave-military establishment,⁵¹ the fate of *gazis* and *ahis* thus providing two clear illustrations of the determination of the emerging state to assert its primacy in the regulation of the social order.

As the *ahis* disappeared, however, the organizational elements that their groups had combined seem to have gone through a process of differentiation that left common patterns in the successor organizations. On one hand, popular religious life had to be channeled more into the dervish orders, which had all along remained distinct from the *ahi* groups to some degree. On the other hand, specialized guilds began to emerge and proliferate.

That these changes were, in fact, linked to the effort of the state to assert its dominance over the surviving organizations seems clear, particularly in the case of the guilds. With the dervishes, there seems to have been a subtler kind of interplay, recalling the policy of the sultans toward the religious establishment and again emphasizing the creation of multiple linkages between the state and the bodies it sought to control. There were, to be sure, incidents such as the attempt of Selim I (1512-1520) to wipe out Safavid sympathizers in Anatolia, or the abolition by Mahmud II (1808-1839) of the Bektaşî order, as well as

of the Janissary infantry corps so closely linked to it. Seemingly more typical, however, were the efforts of the early sultans to use the Bektaşîs, then still orthodox, as a force with which to counter the spread of heterodoxy, or the official encouragement of the foundation in the countryside of dervish establishments, which then served as foci for the concentration of Muslim settlers. Paralleling the historical association of the Janissary corps with the Bektaşî order, there was also a link of the palace cavalry regiments with the Melamis, and of many members of the ruling class with the Mevlevis. The sultans, too, had their traditions of affiliation with the dervish orders, often with the Bektaşîs through the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512), but more typically with the Mevlevis in the late period.⁵²

In the case of the guilds, state control was more pronounced and direct. Gabriel Baer is certainly right that the picture sometimes painted of a society totally regimented into guilds is exaggerated, and the capabilities of the state for the exertion of that kind of control were, in any case, limited by modern standards. Yet the state was clearly concerned to exert control over commerce and the handicrafts. In an intermittent way, it may even have used guild-like forms to establish certain types of controls over other occupational groups, ranging from the so-called "immoral guilds" of thieves and the like to the religious scholars. To varying extents, the state thus sought to work through the organizational structures of the guilds for purposes such as collecting taxes, controlling prices, policing the market place, outfitting and supplying the army, and eventually limiting the number of shops in a given craft through a kind of licensing system referred to by the term *gedik*.⁵³

As economic decline narrowed popular conceptions of trade and commerce more and more to the kind of small-scale operations typically associated with craft guilds, and at the same time confirmed the orientation of popular religious life toward mysticism as a kind of escape, the ideal of young manliness around which the "young men's clubs" grew up metamorphosed, as Ülgener has shown, into an ideal of the wise old man, the *seyh* or *pir*, whose living embodiments were legion in the bazaars and dervish meeting halls of the later empire. Guildsmen and dervishes were not beyond taking a role in the popular disorders of the later centuries.⁵⁴ The original activism of the "young men's clubs" had mostly drained away, however, by the time their tra-

dition assumed its final form under the aegis of the declining sultanic patrimonialism.

As this transformation progressed, guilds and dervish orders preserved many common traits. Here we can do little more than indicate basic points of similarity between two types of organization that could surely support extended comparison. There are, however, two important sorts of similarity relevant to the study of conditions in the Ottoman ruling class. These we may group under the headings of ethics and ceremonial—which are significant for what they imply about behavioral and procedural patterns—and organizational hierarchy.

In the ceremonial life of these organizations, one of the clearest signs of links between the guild and dervish traditions appears in the existence of a special literary genre, found above all in Turkish, and known as *fütüvvetname*, or “*futuwwa* books.” These include the rules of behavior (which the Turks call *edeb*) appropriate for adherents, as well as the prescriptions for rituals, such as the girding ceremony of initiation. Given the existence of similar concepts and rituals in guilds and dervish orders, as well as the influence of mystics in shaping the “courtly” ideal of the “young men’s clubs,” it is particularly significant that the social bodies that preserved this *futuwwa* literature in the Ottoman period as their ethical and ceremonial guidebooks were not the dervish orders, which had a rich literature of their own, but some of the guilds.⁵⁵

In these guidebooks, the rules for behavior are numerous and minutely detailed. Among them, however, certain concepts stand out as reflecting significant assumptions fundamental to both guild and dervish order. One is the novice’s or apprentice’s duty of service, in the most varied of senses, to his master. Another is the concept of the distinctive learning of the group as esoteric, to be acquired through service and through prolonged association with the master, rather than as a rationally ordered body of knowledge that could or should be propagated through a pedagogical process expressly designed for that purpose.⁵⁶ One of the most serious consequences of the replication of the model of the guilds and dervish orders would be the diffusion of this assumption to other fields of endeavor. The significance of this fact would become particularly clear in the era of economic decline, under the influence of that altered version of the old *futuwwa* ethic that Ülgener so penetratingly evokes.

In organizational terms, meanwhile, there developed various hierarchies characterized by a progressive proliferation of levels and by parallels in nomenclature, and to a degree in purpose, among the grades of the various schemes. Probably the simplest version of the hierarchical scheme is that of disciple (*murîd*) and master (*mürşid*, *seyh*, *pir*, *baba*), found among the dervishes. Among the *ahi* groups in Anatolia, these grades corresponded to *yiğit* (“youth,” “young man,” a Turkish translation of Arabic *fatâ*) and *ahi*. Among them, too, this hierarchy acquired a third level, referred to as *seyh*, perhaps designating a dervish to whom the group acknowledged some attachment.⁵⁷ This three-grade scheme may be compared to that which then developed in the guilds, differentiating apprentice, journeyman, and master. The characteristic terms were *çırak* (apprentice) or *şagird* (student) for the first grade, *kalfa* (from Arabic *khalîfa*, but meaning “assistant” in this case) for the second, and *usta* (master) for the last. The hierarchical orderings were variable from guild to guild, and probably also among the dervish orders, and might include fewer grades or more, up to as many as nine. Basically, the designations of the grades indicate differing degrees of initiation, although some of the grades in the extended lists also designate distinction in terms of seniority or officeholding within the group. In any case, the terms appearing in the extended lists give added evidence of borrowing among organizations of the different types. The more extended lists for the guilds include such designations as *ahi* in some cases, or *yiğit başı* (“chief of the young men”), recalling the *ahi* groups, and *seyh*, recalling the dervish orders.⁵⁸ In a dervish order such as the Mevlevis, we find *halifes* (derived, like *kalfa* as used in the guilds, from the Arabic *khalîfa*), as well as *seyhs*.⁵⁹ One of the distinctive signs of the replication of the model of the guilds and the dervish orders would be the borrowing of such designations and the replication of the relationships that they assumed.

Gabriel Baer has challenged the idea of a “close connection” between the guilds and the dervish orders as unsubstantiated. On the basis of his research on conditions in Egypt, he argues that organizations of the two types “co-existed on different levels,” with “many points of contact but no system of connections.” Among the Turks, too, there may have been no *system* of direct connections, at least after the disappearance of the old *ahi* groups. The manifestation of traits recalling the *ahi* groups may

also have varied in different guilds, depending on their particular history or degree of organizational elaboration.⁶⁰ But the guilds and dervish orders of the Ottoman Empire do display noteworthy similarities, which reflect the links between their traditions in the period of the *ahis*, as well, no doubt, as the fact that many individuals over the centuries were simultaneously members of organizations of both types.

Responding to deep-seated human needs and adaptable to those of the state, the model of the guilds and the dervish orders also found an extremely wide range of replication, going beyond anything that the multiplication of organizations of those two types could alone explain. The extension of elements associated with this model even into the life of the sultan is apparent not only from the direct affiliation of some sultans with the orders, but also from the way in which the ceremony of "girding on the sword" (*taklid-i seyf*), the Ottoman counterpart of coronation, recalls the initiation ceremony common to the guilds and dervish orders.⁶¹ Among the Janissaries, the influence of the model appears not only in the close historical link to the Bektashi order, but also, Gibb and Bowen assert, in the modeling of the organization of the corps after that of the *ahis*.⁶² Guild-like patterns of hierarchical organization found replication among social groups as diverse as the women of the imperial harem and school children.⁶³ Most importantly for our purposes, guild-like patterns of organization and procedure were strongly entrenched within the scribal service, especially in its lower echelons, and continued to exert their influence well into the era of reform, if indeed they ever ceased to.

The Model of the Patrimonial Household

The last of the models that we must consider is not easy to explain in terms of a historical development. As we have seen, however, it was operative from the lowest level of Ottoman social organization, where it reappeared in varying forms in villages and nomad camps across the empire, to the highest, where it expressed itself in the prevailing conception of the organization of the state. Correspondingly, this model affected the individual member of the ruling class in more than one way at once. Generally speaking, some form of it would have characterized the background out of which he came. Within the ruling class, it affected him inasmuch as he had become a slave in the sultanic

household. As an extension of that fact, the model affected him in another sense; for the sultan's delegation to his official slaves of power and its benefits gave them the means to set up households of their own. Naturally, this was most conspicuously the case in the highest echelons, among what we may term the slave grandees of the ruling class.

It has often been observed that such people tended to pattern their households after that of the sultan. Closer inspection shows that more was involved than mere emulation of sultanic example and that the households represented a particular kind of response to the fact that the grandees were still, in legal terms, no more than slaves. To illustrate these points, we must look at how the grandees organized their establishments and at how these functioned in the political life of the traditional ruling class. We shall do this with particular reference to conditions in the scribal service on the eve of the nineteenth-century reform era. Conditions in other branches of the ruling class and in other periods naturally varied in some respects. Some of the variations are well enough known that it is possible to allude to them; others are still coming to light, particularly through the work of Metin Kunt on the military-administrative elite of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶⁴

Imitation of the sultan's palace appears at many points, beginning with the kinds of relationships used by the grandees to put their households together. Until the decline of the child levy, many of these establishments must have had little or no basis in kinship. In the household of any grandee of the old military-administrative establishment who had been recruited through the child levy, there hardly could have been kinsmen, unless there were siblings or cousins also in the slave establishment, or, of course, children. These might be either by wives⁶⁵ or by concubines, children of the latter being legitimate when acknowledged by the father.

In other branches of the ruling class, or in periods when the reliance on recruitment systems that involved literal enslavement was less pronounced, the core of any such establishment would have been an extended family. A household of this type would tend to display a dynastic motif, expressed in terms of pride of descent and signaled most conspicuously by the affectation of a familial forename ending in *-zade* or *-oglu*, meaning "son of." Such were the realities of sultanic dominance and offi-

cial servility, however, that few such families managed in the long run to hold on to more than their name. The chief exceptions would appear in the period of decline among provincial magnates, whose houses, referred to as *hanedan* or *sülâle*, often in fact figured as the self-perpetuating and more or less autonomous dynasties that those terms evoke.

Whether the household was formed about a single individual of slave origin, or whether the head of an extended family was a slave only by virtue of being a member of the ruling class, this individual would use his resources to extend the size of his establishment to the maximum possible extent. To this end, he would make use of a variety of relationships.

Among these, marriage is obviously most important as a means of extending the bonds of kinship. It would be helpful at this point to be able to speak concretely, using the kinds of terminology current among anthropologists, about the characteristic marriage preferences of the Ottoman ruling class. In fact, however, even the relatively rich biographical sources of the later period seldom provide much information on this subject, and there is reason for caution in extrapolating from the growing body of anthropological literature, most of which deals with provincial conditions of the present day. To some degree, members of the ruling class, especially in the later centuries, must have used marriage as a way to interlink families of comparable standing, or perhaps to reinforce already existing kinship bonds. To judge from the seemingly endless kinship ties among present-day descendants of the old elite, we should expect this behavior to have been widespread for a long time, although it would be hazardous at this stage to attempt a more precise definition of customs associated with such marriages in the past.⁶⁶

One reason for this caution is that there are signs indicating that inequality of status, rather than equality, was also sometimes sought between the partners to marriage. One source, referring to the nineteenth century, says that wealthy men selected "their wives from the relatively uneducated or the socially isolated," a custom there interpreted as a way to assure acquiescence of the wife in practices such as polygamy and concubinage.⁶⁷ The reasoning was not new: the poet Nabi (1630-1712) advised his son not to marry at all, but only acquire concubines.⁶⁸

As it relates to the daughters of prominent families, who ap-

pear often to have been demanding and unruly wives, this pattern of marriage between persons of unequal standing is usually presented in a way that emphasizes the prospective husbands viewed as sons-in-law (*damad*). These were frequently men who had promise, but little else in the way of social assets. In many cases, they were already attached to the household of the prospective bride's father by a kind of clientage, which we shall follow Ottoman usage in terming "connection" (*intisab*), before being chosen for closer integration through marriage. In a society where the emphasis in marriage was, if we may judge from present-day practice in a provincial setting, rather on the integration of the bride into her husband's family, with more or less radical severing of her bonds to her own blood-kin, one trait of the "grandee mentality" thus might be a contrary tendency that emphasized the role of the son-in-law in relation to his father-in-law.⁶⁹

This kind of marriage custom, emphasizing inequality of status among the partners, is in fact simply one more way in which the ruling class imitated sultanic practice. For, ceasing entirely to contract legal marriages after the early sixteenth century themselves, the sultans maintained the custom of marrying their daughters to highly placed members of the ruling class, who thus gained the added dignity, often onerous and dangerous, of being sons-in-law to the sultan at the same time as being his slaves.⁷⁰

Of greater quantitative importance as means of extending the household were other forms of relationship that went beyond the limits of kinship by either blood or marriage. Relationships that might occasionally function in this way included adoption (*evlâtlık*)⁷¹ or "milk-brotherhood" (*süt kardeşliği*), the lifelong bond remaining among persons who had shared a wet nurse in infancy.⁷² Another such relationship, much more widely encountered, was slavery. Grand Vezir Husrev Paşa (c. 1756-1855) was reportedly the last major exponent of a long tradition under which members of the ruling class would accumulate large retinues of slaves of their own and train them for government service.⁷³ Recent research has begun to throw light on the fascinating position in the ruling class of such "slaves of the slaves" of the sultan. In provincial settings, where the households also had a military function, many of the slaves would have had a military

role. The household might also include paid mercenaries or, in some settings, consist more or less entirely of military slaves.⁷⁴ Both in the accumulation and training of slaves, and in this military dimension, the grandees' emulation of the sultans is again manifest.

In addition, and probably most important in numerical terms, at least among scribal officials of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, there were men who entered the households of patrimonial grandees through the kind of patron-client relationship vaguely referred to as "connection" (*intisab*). If a young man of talent could find a way to bring himself to the attention of a grandee, the formation of such a "connection" might result, and that would mean a place in the grandee's household and—indistinguishable from the household—his official suite. If highly favored, the protégé might be placed at his protector's side in some such role as bearer of the latter's seal (*mühürdar*) or pen-case (*divitdar*). From there, it was a well-traveled, if not always easy, path to becoming a son-in-law, then perhaps head of yet another great household. The value of such "connections" is reflected in countless official biographies of the period, and in the difficulties that some of the most outstanding bureaucratic figures endured in order to form the indispensable links.⁷⁵

Behind these formal categories of relationship, certain other principles were also apt to be at work. One might be the attraction of shared geographical, sometimes also ethnic, origin. Metin Kunt has called attention to the importance of bonds of ethnic-regional solidarity among persons entering the old military-administrative establishment as slaves, and has pointed out indications of a kind of rivalry between "Westerners," typically Albanians and Bosnians, and "Easterners," typically Abkhazians, Circassians, and Georgians.⁷⁶ The importance of this kind of bond was clearly not limited to slaves or to any specific period. Especially in slave recruitment, another factor that might be decisive was physical appearance, the principle—physiognomy (*kiyafet*) being regarded as a science—on which the child levy operated. Probably, however, what mattered most often for the young man who aspired to form a useful "connection" was to attract attention to himself by a show of talent. In scribal circles, this usually meant a display of proficiency in the Ottoman literary language. An ode submitted voluntarily, perhaps no more than a chronogrammatic couplet or a literary conversation, was

enough to launch the career of more than one youthful aspirant who had both skill and luck.⁷⁷

Whatever the basis of the relationship, the patrimonial grandees of the ruling class, like the sultan, viewed relations of personal dependence as the way to assure loyalty and maintain the patron's control over his kinsmen, slaves, and clients.

Contemporary sources, increasingly rich and varied in the late period, convey a vivid picture of life in the great households. The sizes that these establishments could assume are astounding to the modern reader: as high as the low thousands at the height of the empire, in the period of decline they might still include hundreds of people.⁷⁸ The sources show the constant comings and goings occasioned in such settings by high rates of birth and death, by polygamy and ease of divorce, by purchase and sale or manumission of slaves, and by the formation and rupture of *intisab* links. Such sources evoke visions of the great wooden mansions in the central quarters of Istanbul and the summer houses along the Bosphorus, with their separate reception rooms for men (*selâmlık*) and private rooms for family life (*haremlık*).⁷⁹ In the midst of the city, we see the Sublime Porte, at the start of the nineteenth century still a grandee household as much as a complex of offices,⁸⁰ and the even vaster imperial palace.⁸¹

Particularly fascinating in these settings are the ambiguities and contradictions associated with the "grandee mentality," which coexisted so strangely both with the otherworldliness and fatalism of the popular mentality in its later form, and with the legal principle of official servility. On one hand, there appear among the grandees of the ruling class tendencies toward ostentation and social exclusiveness, as in accounts of the lavish decors and costumes,⁸² the studied cultivation of luxury and idleness, the grand scale of hospitality and acts of charity,⁸³ and sometimes, too, the snobbish insistence (*hadşinashlık*) that others "know their place."⁸⁴ On the other hand, there was much behavior of a far less exclusive kind. Various accounts tell of grandees sitting down to dinner with their servants,⁸⁵ and of the marriages that such grandees arranged between their clients and their trusted female servants, or even their daughters.⁸⁶ In a more casual way, the literary coteries and dervish assemblies that accounted for a great part of the social life of the ruling class created settings for interaction among individuals who differed widely in status. The state-imposed character of the ruler-subject distinction meant

that in all periods, if in differing ways, many members of the ruling class had close familial and other bonds with members of the subject classes.⁸⁷

Finally, and most importantly for purposes of this study, sources on the households of the ruling class convey valuable insights into the way they functioned in bureaucratic politics, and thus into what made replication of the model of the patrimonial household worthwhile. To assess these factors as they relate to the scribal service, we may overlook the military function which might be so important in certain settings, particularly in the provinces. Obviously, too, we may overlook those elements of the households—the cooks, stable grooms, and household stewards—whose functions were purely domestic. We shall speak only of the part of the household that assumed a role in the politico-bureaucratic process. Here there are two main points to emphasize: what we may call the “patrimonial style in recruitment,” and the character of the household as political faction.

One notable consequence of the servile status of the ruling class and of the state's attempt to dominate the articulation of social organization was an extreme degree and rapidity of social mobility.⁸⁸ In the heyday of the imperial system, a European observer like Busbecq, his expectations conditioned by the standards of the European aristocracies, was awestruck to find the sultan surrounded by men who had nothing to recommend them but their abilities and who possessed no claim to power aside from their status as his slaves.⁸⁹ The decline of the child levy and of the palace school, and the implications of institutional decay and territorial loss for the possibilities of appointment and promotion, obviously introduced changes into this picture. Still, the decline of such highly institutionalized recruitment systems as the child levy and the acquisition by certain elements of the ruling class of some of the attributes of a self-perpetuating elite kept alive an altered form of the “patrimonial style in recruitment.” This emphasized discretionary or even capricious use of patronage and heavy reliance on the kind of relationships through which the grandee households were put together. A few examples from the early nineteenth century will illustrate how this kind of recruitment worked.

While there were often severe problems of overcrowding in official ranks, it was still striking how abruptly an encounter be-

tween the sultan or a highly placed official and a young man or even a child could lead to the start of the latter's career, or to his enrollment in a school designed to train him for official service. The charmingly naive memoirist Aşçıdede Halil İbrahim, for example, almost began a career when his soldier-father used him, then a small child with long blond hair that had never been cut, to present a petition to the minister of war. The latter reacted by granting the father's request and ordering the boy's enrollment in military school, an idea that the child's mother managed to thwart.⁹⁰ The minister of war in question, one Rıza Paşa, had once been an apprentice in the Egyptian Bazaar. Riding through one day, Mahmud II (1808-1839) saw him and, taking a liking to him, asked his name. On being answered with “Rıza,” Mahmud responded, “Well, then, follow me Rıza Bey,” thus with a word launching the rise of the latter toward the notoriety he acquired as a palace favorite.⁹¹ A not dissimilar incident occurred in the life of Tayyarzade Ata Bey, remembered today as a historian of the palace. Together with his brother and father, who was a palace official, he once encountered the same sultan in the street. The upshot of the meeting was an order for the enrollment of the two boys in the palace service.⁹²

Endlessly replicable, these few examples form part of a larger set of promotion patterns that Şerif Mardin has expressively dubbed “Aladdin's lamp mobility.”⁹³ In tribute to the fact that what went up also came down, we shall call it “wheel-of-fortune” mobility.

As the official wheel of fortune carried a young man upward, he would rise not only in formal bureaucratic position, but also in terms of the relationships that characterized the patrimonial household. In order to survive politically, he would have to make the best of opportunities of both these kinds, for bureaucratic life became increasingly politicized and uncertain in proportion as one rose to high station. In a society characterized by the commitment of the state to the maintenance of an ideally changeless cultural pattern and by the supposedly complete subordination of the ruling class to the will of the sovereign, political controversy remained within relatively narrow limits in the articulation of alternative policies or issues.⁹⁴ One concomitant of this, however, was a shift of political emphasis to questions of personality and of unconditional personal loyalty, on which the model of the patrimonial household was founded.

Very intense, the political activity that thus surrounded the patrimonial households of the ruling class appears to have taken two main forms.

One form, used not only by *grandees* but also by minor officials who might otherwise have had no influence over the great, was an aspect of the literary life of the traditional ruling class. Anyone who reads İnal's biographical compendium on the poets of the late period will be struck by the fact that most were, like İnal, primarily bureaucrats. The continued association of the kind of literary skills required for official service with the kind required for writing verse, while reflecting the still limited intrusion of alien ideas and of new media of communication and new forms of entertainment, signifies the enduring vitality of the age-old *adab* tradition and the interlinkage to the last of its belletristic and bureaucratic expressions. At the same time, literary activity had practical political uses. Eulogy and satire were highly developed genres that also served as means for persons with sufficient facility in versification to take revenge for a slight or to establish a claim to the largess of a potential benefactor.⁹⁵ Other genres less explicitly tailored to such ends also served at times for their achievement.⁹⁶ Some of the most amusing incidents in the social history of the ruling class reflect the patience with which *grandees* and even sultans had to endure and reward literary activity of such kinds. Numerous examples attest the continuation of this pattern well into the era of reform.⁹⁷

In addition, it was possible, particularly for those in high office, to pursue political goals not only in verse but also through intrigue and through appeals to the favor of the sultan. This could be a very dangerous and competitive activity; for the more official advancement brought an official into proximity to his imperial master, the more that official had to contend—whatever the rewards of office—with the dangers implicit in the sultan-slave relationship. Cevdet Paşa's epic history of the half century leading up to the destruction of the Janissaries conveys vivid impressions of what bureaucratic life was like under these conditions. In his account, the factions, scarcely distinguishable except in terms of their leaders, pass into and out of the annals of the empire. Occasionally, particular officials achieve such prominence that two of them seem to duel for a while for preeminence,⁹⁸ or a single one comes close, as did Halet Efendi in the years before the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, to a

monopoly on influence.⁹⁹ The factions appear short-lived and unstable, however, not only because of the few significant issues by which to distinguish them, but also because factional rivalry compounded the vulnerability of their leaders to the penalties that the sultan could arbitrarily impose on his slave officials.

The model of the patrimonial household thus had greater significance than the mere desire to emulate the sultan's style. Rather, given its structural characteristics and the principles governing the relations of the ruling class to the sultan, the model possessed great political utility. For a prominent official to have the largest possible number of personal dependents trained and placed in strategic positions was as close as he could come to ensuring himself against the intrigue of rivals or the anger of his imperial master. This, presumably, was true in all periods. In the period of decline, however, incentives for the development of household factions were heightened. For one thing, changes in the conditions of access to high office intensified official insecurity and augmented the value of the households as defenses for their heads. Simultaneously, the decline of other systems of recruitment and training made the formation of such households desirable even from the viewpoint of the sultan. These special problems of the period of decline are ones to which we shall return in a later chapter.

In any case, the vulnerability of the slave *grandees* points again to the principle of state dominance over the differentiation and validation of distinctions of social status, and so to the restriction of possibilities for the emergence of classes, estates, or even smaller types of corporative organizations independent of government control. Within the general framework of a state-imposed dichotomy of ruling and subject classes, a certain differentiation of smaller-scale organizational patterns nonetheless existed. Rooted in ancient tradition and in basic characteristics and needs of the societies under Ottoman rule, these patterns were characteristic not only of the subject classes; they also influenced the formal evolution of the state, as the sultans sought to establish means by which to accommodate and control them, and finally they found replication in varying ways as structuring principles of social life even within the ruling class. Some of the most critical issues of the era of reform would arise over the extent to which these models would continue to exert their influence as the state began to undergo modernization.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have presented a vocabulary of organizational concepts in terms of which to define the setting of the Sublime Porte and of the men who served in it, first as elements of the imperial "center," then as part of the totality of Ottoman society. In the former context, the Sublime Porte was a critical element in the formal organizational and procedural apparatus of the administration, and its officials corresponded in whole or part to a branch of the ruling class that it is appropriate to designate before the nineteenth century as the scribal service, and subsequently as the civil bureaucracy. In addition to the ruling class and the formal organizational and procedural apparatus, the "center" included the office of the sultan and the cultural component of the imperial tradition, all these elements combining to form the vitally important relationship of political balance or imbalance.

In the broader perspective of Ottoman society, the basic distinction, imposed by fiat of the state, was between ruling and subject classes. Within these categories appear the various branches of the ruling class and, among the subject classes, the officially recognized confessional communities. In addition, there were certain organizational forms, smaller in scale, that found replication among rulers and subjects alike. Three such forms, identifiable in terms of the models of autonomous confessional community, guild, and patrimonial household, played a major role in shaping the life of the officials whom we shall study.

In the next chapter, this vocabulary of organizational concepts will provide the means by which to analyze the evolution over time of the entire ruling class and to chart the emergence within it of the scribal service. The same vocabulary will then serve in the remainder of the study for a more detailed examination of the Sublime Porte and the scribal service as they were at the end of the eighteenth century and in each of the successive periods of the era of reform.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE RULING CLASS AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE SCRIBAL SERVICE

Müstağni[-i] tarif olduğu üzere Devlet-i Aliye'de dört tarik olup.

As there is no need to relate, there are four [official] careers in the Sublime State.

Mustafa Nuri Paşa¹

... fenn-i kitabet taife-i sanayi ve bedayiın eşref ve akdemi olup.

... the scribal profession is the noblest and oldest of arts.

A grand-vezirial decree of 1824²



Even a sketch of the component elements of the Ottoman imperial "center," such as that presented in the last chapter, is enough to suggest the variability of this system over time. The governmental system in fact followed a complex life cycle that included phases, not necessarily well demarcated from one another, of emergence, florescence, decline, and attempted modernization. The component parts of the "center" at the same time followed individual cycles of their own, cycles interrelated in origin but differing in length and often out of phase with one another or with that of the system as a whole. In this chapter, we shall describe the evolution of the various branches of the ruling class with reference to these cycles, resolving an important historiographical controversy in the process. In keeping with the ultimate purpose of this study, we shall give particular attention to the emergence of the scribal bureaucracy and to introducing the changes attendant on its metamorphosis into the very different civil bureaucracy of the era of reform.

To discuss the evolutionary cycles of the ruling class in a way that will lead on naturally to the detailed discussion of nineteenth-century developments in subsequent chapters, we shall divide this chapter into separate sections for the prereform and reform eras. We shall define the phases distinguished above as parts of the life cycle of the state so that the phase of emergence corresponds roughly to the years 1300-1350, that of florescence to the years 1350-1600, and that of decline to the years from 1600 to the accession of Selim III in 1789, these three phases together composing the era of traditionalism. The era of reform we shall date more precisely to the interval from 1789 to the fall of the empire in 1922.

While there is an element of arbitrariness in taking 1789 as the watershed between traditionalism and reform, there is no doubt that two major events of the following decade marked new departures in the history of the Middle East. One of these was the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. Opening an age in which Asiatic and African, as well as European, territories of the empire would fall subject to the direct encroachment of the major European powers, this effectively made it impossible ever to restore the preexisting order in one of the most important of the Arab provinces of the empire.

Disproportionately more important for purposes of this study, the other critical event of the 1790s was Selim III's inauguration of the wide-ranging reform program that became known as the "New Order" (*Nizam-ı Cedid*). This, too, signaled the opening of a new era. The point is not that there had never been attempts at reform before or that everything that could be called traditional vanished at this time. But earlier efforts at reform had, with limited exceptions, had as their goal the restoration of an idealized vision of the traditional order of the state.³ Those efforts had also been intermittent and had never led to anything like a comprehensive overhaul of the administrative system. Selim's "New Order" was innovative both in some of the specific reforms that it included and, perhaps more importantly, in its comprehensiveness and what this implied about the changing role of the central government.

The history of reform did not become continuous before the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Still, it is logical to regard Selim III's reforms as the symbolic beginning at the Otto-

man "center" of transition from a world view oriented toward maintenance of inherited cultural patterns to an outlook that, accepting and even aspiring to change, would increasingly have to turn to reason to regulate and legitimate what tradition could not. In terms of Weber's distinction of traditional, rational, and charismatic authority, here lay the beginning of a movement away from traditionalism and toward a modern system that would be governed by rational plan and specially enacted legislation—in sum, a rational-legal order. Since only the broad approval of the populace, or its politically active segments, could assure ultimate acceptance of policies lacking the transcendental sanction conveyed through perpetuation of traditional norms, here also lay the beginnings of need for that enlargement of the polity that we have already noted as characteristic of modernization.⁴

The accession of Selim III in 1789 serves better than any other single event to mark the beginning of transition in the Ottoman Empire from traditionalism to modernization. Here we shall simply use this date as the dividing line between the two sections of our discussion of the evolutionary patterns of the branches of the ruling class. The significance of this turning point will become clearer in later chapters, as, in some respects, it quickly became to the Ottoman statesmen of the day.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE RULING CLASS IN THE TRADITIONAL STATE: A PROBLEM IN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

In characterizing the elements of the imperial "center," we introduced the idea that the ruling class was divided into a number of branches: the military-administrative, or later simply the military, establishment (*seyfiye*); the religious establishment (*ilmiye*); the palace service (the existence of a distinct Ottoman name for which is in doubt); and the scribal service (*kalemiye*) or, later, civil bureaucracy (*mülkiye*). A comprehensive discussion of the Ottoman ruling class, at least as it ultimately came to be, must make use of all these categories. In fact, however, if we confront the literature on the ruling class as it has thus far developed, the four categories appear to be pieces of some vexatious kind of puzzle, in which not only the mutual fit of the pieces, but in some cases also the existence of particular pieces or the propriety of

regarding them as parts of the puzzle, are in question. How is it possible to put such a puzzle together?

Conflicting Interpretations and Indifferent Experts

This puzzle has given rise to a controversy among scholars writing about the Ottoman ruling class, at least among those writing in English. Simply stated, the argument is between those who argue that the ruling class was divided into only two branches, a "ruling institution" and a "religious institution," and those who contend that there were at least three branches, or four if the palace service is posited as a distinct entity, the four being named more or less as in the description above.

In the former view, which Albert H. Lybyer introduced in his study on the period of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the "religious institution" consisted of born Muslims trained in the religious colleges; the "ruling institution," of slaves recruited from the non-Muslim subject population of the empire through the child levy, the best of these being educated in the palace school.⁵ Lybyer's "religious institution" corresponds to our religious establishment, while his "ruling institution" more or less includes all the other branches of the ruling class as we have described it. Writing of the eighteenth century, Gibb and Bowen took Lybyer's classification as their starting point, although they acknowledged that the system by then existed only on paper. They attempted to describe the changes that had occurred, but did not produce an alternative conceptual framework to set in place of Lybyer's dichotomy.⁶

The view that opposes the Lybyer-Gibb-Bowen tradition is the work of Lewis Thomas and Norman Itzkowitz and is a product of further study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conditions. This view acknowledges the systems of recruitment and training mentioned above, but correctly cites evidence of movement between those two branches of the ruling class, both in the sixteenth century and at later dates. More importantly, this interpretation argues for a larger number of branches. Itzkowitz, in particular, has attacked the Lybyer-Gibb-Bowen interpretation as incorrect.⁷

The controversy over these two views has generated a certain amount of heat as well as light, but an added peculiarity of the conflict is that some scholars working closely on the ruling class and the imperial administrative system have managed to remain

indifferent to such questions. This appears more or less generally true of the Turkish historians; the same applies to various other scholars who have dealt with aspects of the ruling class narrowly delimited in topical or chronological terms.⁸

What to make of this controversy and the curious pattern of responses to it thus emerges as the central question about our historiographical puzzle. Fortunately, if we recall the Weberian conception of the progressive evolution of governmental institutions out of the ruler's household, and bear in mind the links of the opposing interpretations to different centuries, the answer to this question is not far to seek. It will help to distinguish two questions: the character and exclusivity of systems of recruitment and training, on the one hand, and the number of branches of the ruling class, on the other—the latter question being the more important for our purposes. The answer to our central question now presents itself in the form of a schematization that subjects both interpretations to critical scrutiny and assigns each to its chronologically defined place in a larger evolutionary perspective.

The Origins of the Ottoman Ruling Class

As the logical starting point for the development of this schematization, we may take the fact that the entire ruling class was often referred to as *Osmanlı* (Ottoman) or *askeri* (military). The former term obviously identifies the members of this class with the House of Osman; the latter, with the holy war (*gaza*) for the expansion of Islam, the pursuit in which the sultans found their first, and in concept ever primary, means for the legitimation of their rule. Since the holy war was in a sense the foundation of the imperial system, the identification as "military" of the entire ruling class, including judges, professors of the religious colleges, scribes, and eunuchs, as well as soldiers, must not have seemed incongruous to the Ottomans. As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, indeed, this identification found a tangible expression in the tradition that required much of the central administration, including the scribal officials, to take part in military campaigns, leaving replacements in the capital for the duration, but carrying on the administration chiefly from the field headquarters. By the nineteenth century, this system had become an unworkable anachronism.⁹ But in the earliest stage of Ottoman history, when the state was no more than a tiny *gazi*

principality, to carry the administration on campaign was no problem. Then there was no bureaucracy distinct from the household of the ruler, still less was there any sense of a ruling class divided into branches, and the administrative needs of the state were of a rudimentary sort that could be handled, so to speak, from the saddle.

The rapid expansion of the state nonetheless quickly began to make a difference, at least in the organization of the ruling class. By the second half of the fourteenth century, cleavages were appearing among the *askeris*, and some of the organizational and procedural elements of the classic imperial system were beginning to take form. On one hand, this period witnessed the phenomenon of the so-called "Turkish aristocracy," representing a phase in the incorporation of the dominant families of the other, once-independent Anatolian *gazi* states into the Ottoman ruling class. On the other hand, in the same period there were two other phenomena of enduring importance. One consisted of the early stages in the institutional elaboration—particularly with the development of the Janissary Corps, the child levy, the palace school, and the *timar* system of landholding—of the military-administrative establishment. Simultaneously, developments such as the founding of the first Ottoman religious colleges and the organization of a central administrative system, at first staffed largely by men of religious education and administrative experience acquired under other governments, marked the first stages in the emergence of the religious establishment. Leading to the further evolution of the palace organization, the elaboration of a hierarchical order of religious colleges, and the creation of a vast religious bureaucracy headed by the *seyh ül-İslâm*, the conquest of Constantinople (1453) provided added stimulus to both these lines of development.

The Dichotomous Interpretation Rehabilitated?

These facts suggest that for the period of florescence (c. 1350-1600), there are practical grounds for visualizing the Ottoman ruling class as made up of a "ruling institution" recruited through the child levy and a "religious institution" trained in the religious colleges. This dichotomous classification must be corrected, however, with respect to the identification sometimes made between the "religious institution" (*ilmiye*) and the "men of the pen" (*halemiye*); indeed, there is a fundamental ambiguity in

the way Gibb and Bowen, and their sources, use this latter term. Thomas and Itzkowitz are also right in criticizing the idea, which Gibb and Bowen knew to be inapplicable by the eighteenth century, and which was an exaggeration for any period, that the two "institutions" were hermetically sealed off from each other, one containing only slaves of non-Muslim origin, and the other only free-born Muslims.¹⁰ The discretionary character of the "patrimonial style in recruitment" could hardly have produced such a degree of rigor in any period. In addition, there were elements within the ruling class that did not conform to the typical patterns of either of the two major corps. Still, as a picture of the ruling class at the height of the empire, a modified dichotomous concept cannot be dismissed out of hand or imputed to ignorance of the Ottoman sources.¹¹

What, then, happened to the "ruling" and "religious institutions" during the period of decline, and where were the branches of the ruling class not yet accounted for? The answer is that the services prominent in the sixteenth century declined with the empire. Meanwhile, partly as an aspect of the decline of those services, and partly through the continuing processes of differentiation that had given them distinct form in the first place, the pieces of the puzzle not yet accounted for gained increasingly in organizational articulation and importance. This process is particularly linked to the decline of the "ruling institution," or, more specifically, of what we have termed the military-administrative establishment. The religious establishment, too, declined in moral and intellectual standards, but its religious, legal, and educational functions, as also the role of the *kadırs* in local administration, remained essentially in its hands. In some respects, the influence of this branch of the ruling class even increased.¹² In contrast, the military-administrative establishment, which included the Janissary Corps, palace cavalry regiments, and "feudal" cavalry in the provinces, and whose "elite" traditionally rose through the palace school to fill such high positions as provincial governorships and the grand vezirate, declined more drastically. The child levy faded to the point of disappearance by the beginning of the eighteenth century; the various types of military forces declined to the point of more or less complete loss of discipline and effectiveness. As the governmental system continued, even in the face of decline, to differentiate itself more and more from the sultan's household,

elements of the ruling class that had been only marginally distinguishable or minuscule in size, now emerged with distinct form and unprecedented power.

The Problem of the Palace Service

Searching for the pieces that the dichotomous interpretation excludes from the puzzle of the ruling class, we come back to the question cited earlier: when and whether certain branches of the ruling class can properly be regarded as pieces of the puzzle at all. If we look for a palace service in the period when the military-administrative and religious establishments were at their height, we find that while an elaborately institutionalized imperial household certainly existed,¹³ those who served in it could hardly be regarded as forming a distinct and coherent branch of the ruling class. Most of them were actually from the military-administrative establishment. Subsequently, the elements of the ruling class associated with the palace began to change, while a tendency toward bureaucratization—in the sense of the acquisition of administrative responsibilities as well as, or in place of, obligations of personal service—appeared not only among functions that moved out of the household, but even among those that remained within it and were most associated with personal attendance on the sultan and his family. Palace functions traditionally held by members of the military-administrative establishment ultimately gained most from these developments. Since they did so at a time when the child levy was falling into disuse, this phenomenon signified not only bureaucratization in the palace service, but also a fundamental change in its social character.

There was a basic distinction in the palace between the Outside Service (*Birun*), the Inside Service (*Enderun*), and the harem. The first of these was, in the heyday of the empire, the real center of government and was responsible for all functions having to do with the sultan's relations with the outside world. It was the center also of the military-administrative establishment, members of which tended, from the conquest of Istanbul at least through the sixteenth century, to dominate the grand vezirate, then part of this Outside Service. Subsequently, with the further differentiation of services within the ruling class, many of the administrative functions that had been concentrated in the

palace, including the grand vezirate, moved out to separate institutional centers and ceased to figure as elements of the palace establishment. In some cases they also passed out of military-administrative and into scribal hands in the process.¹⁴

What then remained as the quintessential palace service had its center in the imperial harem and the Inside Service. Located in the private quarters of the sultan, the latter included the palace school, the students of which were traditionally recruited through the child levy and waited on the sultan as "pages" before going on to hold military or administrative positions. For a long time, however, the main power in the inner parts of the palace was in the hands of eunuchs, or de facto, of the more favored women of the harem. Originally, the most important of the eunuchs was the chief white eunuch (*bab ül-saade ağası, kapı ağası*), in charge of the palace school, the personal service of the sultan, and the administration of the harem. At the end of the sixteenth century, he lost an important part of his responsibilities thanks to the emergence of a distinct staff of black eunuchs, the chief of which (*dar ül-saade ağası, kızlar ağası*) acquired the role of supervisor of the harem, as well as other duties, including the exclusive right to transmit communications between the sultan and other officials.¹⁵

Posts originally held by military-administrative personnel became preponderant in the Inside Service only in the eighteenth century with the evolution of the most important part of the old palace school, the Privy Chamber (*Has Oda*), into an organization increasingly devoted to attendance not to the personal needs of the sultan, but rather to his relations with other parts of the administration. With this development, the chief of the pages in the Privy Chamber, known as the *silahdar ağa* or "sword-bearer," emerged as titular head, in place of the chief white eunuch, of the Inside Service. This change entailed the conversion of some of the sword-bearer's subordinates from pages to the sultan into assistants to the sword-bearer and the gradual emergence out of the Privy Chamber of a palace secretariat.

With this, the part of the Inside Service known as the *Mabeyn* (literally, "what is between," in this case between the imperial harem and the remainder of the Inside Service) began to acquire a significant new dimension. In addition to including, as

before, those individuals in immediate personal attendance on the sultan, the *Mabeyn* also came to include the new palace secretariat. Much later, at the end of the nineteenth century, the secretariat was in fact known as the "big *Mabeyn*" and the personal servants of the sultan as the "little *Mabeyn*."¹⁶

Discharging a function for which there had once been no need,¹⁷ the palace secretariat thus surely emerged in response to the evolution of what had formerly been the most important parts of the Outside Service into distinct agencies, mostly headquartered outside the palace precinct. The development of the secretariat clearly challenged one of the prerogatives of the chief black eunuch, and the eighteenth century seems accordingly to have witnessed a struggle between him and the sword-bearer over the control of communications between the sultan and the bureaucracy outside the palace. The sword-bearer apparently gained the upper hand for a while during the reign of Ahmed III (1703-1730), but was not able to consolidate his victory. It is not entirely clear when the sword-bearer's ascendancy became definitive, although he had certainly won control of the flow of communications by the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839). Since the sword-bearer and his subordinates were by then no longer child-levy recruits, but more likely members of Muslim families long prominent in Ottoman bureaucratic circles, this change represented not only a shift of balance within the palace service, but also the emergence of a new kind of leadership within it.¹⁸

Ultimately, the palace service would never lose the motley aspect that resulted from its inclusion of personnel categories and career lines as disparate as those of the palace secretaries and the eunuchs. The fact that by the end of the eighteenth century the number of secretaries did not exceed a few tens, that of the eunuchs a few hundreds, or that of the entire palace establishment a few thousands,¹⁹ also kept the palace service from standing out in relation to others, such as the military and religious establishments, far vaster in scale. Still, the simultaneous processes of bureaucratization and partial change in recruitment patterns—changes reflecting the decline of the child levy and the growing differentiation of governmental institutions—had begun to give the palace service a new character and a new place in the balance of power within the ruling class. Evident by the end of the eighteenth century, this trend climaxed at a date so late—at a time when the modernization of the political system

was so far launched—that it bore the aspect of an atavistic throwback, ultimately short-lived but redoubtable in effect.

Emergence and Internal Differentiation of the Scribal Service

Easier in some ways to trace, but again obscured from view by the bulk of the military-administrative and religious establishments, was the early scribal service ("men of the pen," *kalemiye*). Its origins are shrouded by the undifferentiated state of the household of the earliest Ottoman rulers and by the relatively scarce documentation on their reigns. The evidence seems to confirm that the Ottoman principality, for its first half century or so, had no formally organized scribal offices or distinct group of professional scribal officials. Yet the documents surviving from this period, whatever the means for their production, already attest the existence of conventions for their composition, the use of the *tuğra* (a sort of "cipher" of the sultan) as the sign of validation, and thus perhaps the existence of some functionary charged with drawing this complex motif.²⁰ Within a relatively short time, the growth of the state and the increasing need for written records necessitated a clearer organization and articulation of scribal functions. By the sixteenth century, there had emerged a scribal staff performing a variety of important tasks, but still organized on small scale and still working in large part within the palace and under the grand vezir.

Of these scribal officials, the most prestigious was the *nisancı* or, roughly, the affixer of the cipher, so called because he drew the imperial cipher (*tuğra, nışan*) at the head of the documents that required it. More substantial bases of his importance lay in the fact that he was a member of the imperial Divan and had overall responsibility for the assignment of benefices in land (*tımar, zeamet, has*) and the conduct of land surveys (*tahrir*). He was also the supreme jurisconsult in matters pertaining to the laws promulgated by the state (*kanun*) and enjoyed the right, at least through the seventeenth century, to emend legal enactments and other documents to conform to that law before applying the cipher.²¹

At the high point of the empire, the affixer of the cipher had other officials working under him. These included a figure known as the *tezkereci*, or "memorandum officer," whose role centered, at least at later dates, on the oral presentation in Divan

meetings of the matters that required decision there. There was also a figure whose character as some kind of assistant is to be inferred from his title, bearer of the pen-case (*divitdar*).²² In addition, there were under the affixer of the cipher two other officials, both of whom had staffs of their own. One of these was the *defter emini* or keeper of the registers. His job, perhaps originally one of records conservation in a more general sense, eventually came to center on maintenance of records on land tenure. We shall accordingly call his office the Land Registry Office (*Defterhane, Defter Emaneti, Defter-i Hakani*).²³

Finally, there was the *reis ül-küttab* or chief scribe, an office evidently created early in the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent as a result of growth in the volume of business on the hands of the affixer of the cipher. The *reis* was chief of the scribes who performed the written business of the imperial Divan. This included making appointments and assigning landholdings, responding to petitions and complaints, and attending to the paperwork related to the "important affairs" (*umur-ı mühimme*) of the state, such as correspondence with foreign governments and registration of all laws (*kanun*) that the state issued concerning nonfinancial matters. Under the headship of the chief scribe, these men would gradually take shape as a bureau organizationally distinct from the Divan itself, an early instance of the evolution of a bureau, staffed by professional specialists and operating on a full-time basis, out of a collegial body.²⁴

In addition, there was one other major scribal organization that did not come under the affixer of the cipher. It included the personnel who kept financial records and accounts, was the largest of the scribal departments, and was headed by the chief treasurer (*baş defterdar*), who was a member of the imperial Divan in his own right.²⁵

In the period of florescence, then, the subordinates of the affixer of the cipher and the chief treasurer were, in effect, the scribal service proper, for it was chiefly they who conducted the correspondence, kept the accounts on landholding and finance, and conserved the records necessary for the conduct of administration. An exhaustive account of the scribal service in that period would have only to add to them such miscellaneous elements as the translator of the imperial Divan and his assistants, then mostly foreign-born converts to Islam;²⁶ the master of ceremonies (*teşrifati*);²⁷ and a few other scribes working in vari-

ous posts in the capital, such as the headquarters of the military organizations or the commissionership of the mint, or perhaps in provincial administrative centers.²⁸

Despite the manifest importance of its functions, both the size of this scribal bureaucracy and the relatively low level of its institutional development explain how it has been lost to the view of some of the scholars who have attempted to describe the organization of the ruling class in this period. A document of roughly the 1530s, listing scribes serving under the affixer of the cipher and the chief treasurer, includes eighteen secretaries of the imperial Divan (seven of them serving under the treasurer in preparation of correspondence relating to financial affairs), twenty-three other clerks regularly assigned to the Treasury, and twenty-three apprentice clerks, also assigned to the Treasury, followed by nine miscellaneous clerks. This makes a total of fifty clerks and twenty-three apprentices.²⁹ By comparison, the religious and military-administrative establishments were already organizations of imperial scale, the latter then having some 25,000 members, without counting the provincial cavalry.³⁰

Aside from this difference in numbers, the scribal service, while it had come to consist of full-time "professionals,"³¹ was still far from having the aspect of a distinct branch of the ruling class. The biographical information that Matuz presents for scribal officials of the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent suggests that most of them were freeborn Turkish Muslims, but with no distinct sense of collective professional identity³² and no clear-cut or unitary system through which to bring new men into their ranks. The scribal service of the empire's great age tended to draw its personnel, to perhaps varying degrees, from both the other branches of the ruling class which were more highly developed in organization. Already in this period, however, some candidates appear to have been recruited straight into the offices and educated through apprenticeship there, without prior study in either palace or religious college.³³ In the period of decline, reliance on such relatively ad hoc means of recruitment and training became more pronounced, with the result that the scribal service never developed a highly elaborated system like those that served the same purposes for the military-administrative and religious establishments when these were at their height. This is in ironic contrast to the richness of the scribal cultural tradition, its indispensability to the conduct of ad-

ministration, and the eventual growth of the scribal service in size, organizational distinctness, and political power.³⁴

For the sixteenth century, meanwhile, an equally low level of organization and differentiation was apparent in the internal structure of the scribal service. Matuz' findings indicate that in the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, differentiation of scribal specializations had still not fully hardened. This is apparent in the assignment of scribes subordinate to the affixer of the cipher to serve under the chief treasurer, and in the monopolization by that official—at least if we may generalize from the evidence on which Matuz relies—of the training of apprentice scribes. The scribes of the affixer of the cipher were not yet regarded as forming distinct bureaus; still less was there any evidence of the separate sections that ultimately appeared within the staffs of the keeper of the registers and the chief scribe. While the various types of document that the scribes of the Divan produced were formally distinct, specialization by individual scribes in preparation of documents of one type or another was only beginning to develop at this time.³⁵

As in the case of the palace service, there is some reason, then, why scholars surveying the state of the Ottoman ruling class at the height of the empire have tended to overlook the scribal service and concentrate rather on the military-administrative and religious establishments. For the subsequent period of decline, the situation was quite different. Even as the palace service underwent the important changes of role and social character summarized above, the decline in the military fortunes of the empire appears to have affected the position of the scribal service even more significantly, by creating new roles and new possibilities of promotion for its members, as well as by giving a new importance to the "statist-secularist" cultural orientation of which they were increasingly the chief exponents.

The stages of the transformation of the scribal service in the period of decline are not yet fully known. Several recent writers have cited signs of an increase, linked to complex changes in the economy and fiscal system, in the status and power of the chief treasurers as of the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth.³⁶ In the present limited state of knowledge about this period, the most visible sign of change in the scribal service remains the movement of several of the scribal departments to new locations outside the palace and, in particular, the

development in the second half of the seventeenth century of the new grand-vezirial headquarters which history remembers as the Sublime Porte (*Bab-i Âli*). There, what had been the afternoon *divan* of the grand vezir (*ikinci divan*), and had previously served for little more than minor business left over from the morning meetings at the palace, began to become the real center of governmental affairs, while the role of the imperial Divan at the palace gradually declined to little more than ceremonial functions.³⁷

As the new administrative headquarters emerged, the *nisancı* or affixer of the cipher remained behind in the palace, retaining vestiges of his old honor but losing effective power. The chief treasurer (*baş defterdar*) and keeper of the registers (*defter emini*) acquired new headquarters of their own, separate from but near the Sublime Porte. Although the chief treasurer continued to sit in the *divan* of the grand vezir at the Porte, it is difficult to conceive that spatial isolation from the new executive center, not to mention the general decline of the Ottoman economy, had not already begun to undermine his effective power, which had clearly declined by the eighteenth century.³⁸ The elements of the scribal service that gained most from the emergence of the Sublime Porte were the scribes of the imperial Divan. Passing out from under the old imperial Divan at the palace, they moved with their head, the *reis ül-küttab* or chief scribe, to the Porte. Perhaps it was at about the same time that they assumed corporate form as the Office of the Imperial Divan, a name anachronistic by then, but reflecting the essential continuity in their functions.

Since a detailed discussion of the Sublime Porte as it existed at the end of the eighteenth century will be the theme of the next chapter, here we need only demonstrate the extent to which the scribal service, specifically as seen at the Porte, and there as quintessentially represented in the staff of the chief scribe, continued to grow in importance up to that time. As will be recalled, the Porte then included a number of organizational elements: the grand vezir's household, his *divan*, and numerous officials. Some of the officials, such as the official historiographer (*vakanüvis*),³⁹ may have functioned as individuals. For the most part, however, they served under three dignitaries directly subordinate to the grand vezir. Two of these, their origins lying elsewhere, were still in the process of becoming parts of the scribal service in any

meaningful sense. These were the *çavuş başı* or chief bailiff, whose duties at the Porte had mainly to do with judicial affairs, and the *kâhya bey* or steward, a former major-domo become a kind of executive assistant to the grand vezir.

In contrast to these two, the central importance of the chief scribe becomes clear. For under his direction, the Office of the Imperial Divan, at first the only properly scribal agency at the Porte, served as the indispensable chancery for the grand vezir. One measure of the chief scribe's consequent growth in importance appears in the development within the Office of the Imperial Divan of three different sections, a change related in turn to the volume of patronage under the grand vezir's control. By the end of the eighteenth century, three other offices had also passed, or developed, under the chief scribe's supervision. As will become clearer in the next chapter, this fact relates to an important qualitative change in the chief scribe's functions. For as head of the office traditionally responsible for correspondence with foreign sovereigns and for the registration of treaties and concessions to foreign powers, he became increasingly occupied with matters of that kind as the diplomatic business of the declining empire grew in volume and seriousness. Evident from the time of the Carlowitz peace negotiations (1698-1699),⁴⁰ this fact did not fail to leave its mark on the development of the grand-vezirial chancery.

The chief scribe thus began to take on the character of a foreign minister and, in the process, to grow in prominence within the scribal service. With these changes, the number of men under his supervision rose to some 130 to 200. The total number of scribal officials serving at the end of the eighteenth century, most of them still in the Treasury offices, was 1,000 to 1,500⁴¹—a contrast indeed to the few score noted in the early sixteenth century.

At the same time, the growth in importance of the scribal service, and especially of that part of it subordinate to the chief scribe, was reflected in the development of new promotion patterns. Thomas and Itzkowitz have argued that in the eighteenth century it became increasingly common for men of scribal background, particularly those rising through the offices under the chief scribe, to go on to high positions such as provincial governorships and even the grand vezirate, positions once filled mainly by members of the military-administrative establishment

who had risen through the palace school. Combining titles of address appropriate to the scribal officials on the one hand, and to these high positions on the other, Itzkowitz has designated this phenomenon the "efendi-turned-paşa" pattern.⁴²

In the next chapter we shall have to reexamine this pattern in terms of both its novelty and its relative importance. For the moment, the image of the "efendi-turned-paşa" can stand, as that assessment will generally confirm, as a symbol of the extent to which the scribal service had begun to grow in size and prominence as the military-administrative establishment decayed and the needs of the imperial system began to shift.

*Resolution of the Historiographical Controversy
in an Evolutionary Perspective*

Like the contemporary developments in the palace service, though more clearly delineated, this change in the scribal service was a development whose significance would become fully apparent only in the nineteenth century. Before going on to discuss that period, however, we need to note how the changes observable through the eighteenth century affect the historiographical puzzle that has been our preoccupation thus far. In a sense, this is not one puzzle but several. For the earliest period, a ruling class, indeed a political "center" in any sense, existed only in an inchoate and undifferentiated way. By its sixteenth-century heyday, the ruling class and the "center" in general had evolved from the undifferentiated patrimonial household of the early fourteenth century into an elaborately organized example of what Weber would call patrimonial officialdom. At that point, there were two major pieces to the puzzle of the ruling class, the military-administrative and religious establishments. By the eighteenth century, partly as a result of decline in one or both of these, there were at least three—the question of the distinctness and coherence of the palace service being a persistent problem—with the scribal service now appearing as the most important, thanks to its growth in size and range of responsibilities.

In this sense, both interpretations of the now familiar controversy are valid, with suitable emendation of the older view where questions of recruitment and training are concerned and with due care for chronological precision. The indifference of certain experts to the controversy also becomes explicable in the sense that there is no controversy when the different interpreta-

tions, as emended, are placed in a larger perspective. Superimposed in chronological sequence, the puzzle-like patterns of all major periods suggest a kaleidoscopic pattern of change over time, beginning with an undifferentiated ruling class, and ending with one divided into four branches.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE RULING CLASS IN THE ERA OF REFORM:
WOULD THE SCRIBAL SERVICE REMAIN PREEMINENT?

As the Ottomans began, around the end of the eighteenth century, to undertake reforms that went increasingly beyond the limits of traditional patterns, a central unstated question was whether the trends observable in the development of the ruling class during the preceding period would continue, or whether new pressures would emerge to shift the course of change. Since much of this study will be devoted to analysis of the development of the scribal service through the successive political periods of the nineteenth century, there is no need for detailed comment on it here. But it is worthwhile to take up the question of continuity or change in evolutionary patterns in a more general way, comparing the developmental dynamics of all four branches of service. To do so not only carries our general account of the evolutionary patterns to the fall of the empire, but also provides a basis for differentiating the political periods of the nineteenth century, and thus for elucidating the critical shifts in the political balance during the era of reform.

Why Not Military Politics?

Looking first at what remained of the military-administrative establishment, we encounter a question of a comparative nature, perhaps greater in interest than has commonly been realized by historians working in late Ottoman history. If the Ottoman Empire was the first of the traditional states of the non-Western world to attempt to modernize in the face of the constant threat of Western expansionism, should we not expect the efforts at modernization to have first of all a military thrust? If so, what was there to preclude the emergence of an Ottoman equivalent of the kind of "military politics" so familiar in the Middle East more recently, particularly since the military had once been a dominant force in the administration?⁴³

This question is no airy speculation; for in the eighteenth century, when such important developments were occurring at the Sublime Porte, the sultans were simultaneously trying to remake their military institutions. Such attempts began, in fact, in the first half of the century. With the disastrous Russian wars in the last part of the century, Ottoman statesmen renewed and expanded the scope of these efforts.⁴⁴ Selim III continued this trend in his "New Order," introduced in the 1790s. While this program went beyond the purely military, its best-known measures lay in that field.⁴⁵ After the fall of Selim (1807), a military measure, the abolition of the Janissaries (1826), again opened the way for continued, wide-ranging change by removing the most dangerous single source of opposition.⁴⁶ By the death of Mahmud (1839) or soon after, however, the military focus had been lost. The main thrust of reformist energies had begun to go elsewhere, and the real leadership for reform had begun to come from a different quarter.

Why did these changes occur? The answer seems clear, at least in part. Relevant points include the radical change in Ottoman military institutions with the abolition of the Janissaries, and the fact that the old institutions had been in deep decline for so long before then. The old military-administrative establishment having already largely lost its administrative dimension, the new military organizations never fully regained it, although later sultans drew on military men occasionally for governorships, ambassadorships, or other such positions. The discontinuity in the military tradition also extended to the system of military education. Between the decline of the old palace school and the emergence of reasonably effective new military schools in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman military hardly had better educational facilities than did the scribal service. The effort to create new schools for the military did begin earlier,⁴⁷ but the task was probably more difficult. For what the military needed was men possessing not just a generalist's grasp of modern European culture, and particularly of the French language, but rather a significant command of more technical subjects, such as medicine, military engineering, or naval architecture, and their applications. How slow the military would be to acquire such men is apparent from the fact that in the 1820s and 1830s the "intellectual-technical elites" of the military and the scribal serv-

ice still consisted of the same handful of people.⁴⁸ The effort to produce a modern school-trained officer corps does not appear to have yielded results on any significant scale before the reign of Abd ül-Hamid II (1876-1909). Even then, while the military schools performed an important function of social mobilization, there was a continuing conflict in the officer corps between the "school men" (*mektepli*) and the "old troopers" (*alaylı*), while both faced the determined efforts of the paranoiac sultan to prevent either from acquiring any real power. The "school men" first emerged as a military elite in little but an educational sense; only through the medium of the Young Turk movement would they produce a power elite as well. By then, the anticipatory tremors of the wars that would destroy the empire were already being felt.⁴⁹

This brings us to another point significant in helping to explain the failure of the military to resume a paramount role in the Ottoman ruling class of the nineteenth century. This was the growing awareness in both the Ottoman Empire and Europe that the survival of the empire depended not solely on its military capabilities, but also, and in the long run primarily, on its ability to pursue its ends effectively in diplomatic relations with the major powers of Europe. Uriel Heyd dates the realization of this fact by Ottoman statesmen as early as 1829, and interprets it as one of the implications of the Peace of Adrianople.⁵⁰ In the 1830s, the two disastrous showdowns with Muhammad Ali of Egypt provided clearer proof, especially in 1839, when it was really the collective intervention of the European powers that saved the empire.

As long as the empire remained dependent in this way on the joint support of the European powers and had any hope of getting such support, what the state needed more than military leaders was men skilled in dealing with Europeans and in conceiving and implementing reforms that would—if the two goals could be reached at once—both strengthen the empire and cement relations with those powers. At a time when the military elite could not provide such manpower, developments in the scribal service, and especially in that part of it associated with the chief scribe, meant that it could more quickly supply the need.⁵¹

Events of 1908 and later would show that the military could not be ruled out once and for all as a major contender for power within the Ottoman and later republican systems. But the vicis-

situdes of its history, the fact that another branch of the ruling class could adapt more readily to the changing needs of the state, and the peculiar aspect of the international politics of the period combined to keep the military from playing any significant role during most of the nineteenth century.

Eclipse of the Religious Establishment

The eclipse of a once preponderant branch of the ruling class was even more complete in the religious establishment. This fact resulted not just from the bureaucratization of the *ulema* or from the decline of the traditional religious scholarship. It also reflected the inability of men with a traditional religious education to comprehend and comment effectively on the new kinds of problems facing the empire.

Writing from the peculiar vantage point of a nineteenth-century religious scholar turned civil official, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa provides vivid insights into the meaning of these statements. Some of his most mordant passages deal with the corruption, nepotism, and faltering intellectual standards of the religious establishment as of the late eighteenth century.⁵² He uses particularly acerbic terms to describe the increasing inability of the religious leaders to advise, as their predecessors had been expected to, on current affairs. He links this inability, in turn, to the changing character and increasing hopelessness of the problems—crushing military defeat, diplomatic helplessness, bankruptcy—then crowding in on the state. In the space of some fifteen years around the time of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) and the Russian annexation of the Crimea (1783), the religious elite seemed to go through a decline, Cevdet says, as if of one or two centuries.⁵³ This became particularly clear in the consultative assemblies then convoked with increasing frequency to deliberate on each new catastrophe. Never did the incapacity of the religious scholars emerge more dramatically than when a *kadı* of Istanbul turned to the grand vezir in an assembly held in 1784 and said:

We are obedient and subservient outwardly and inwardly to the wishes and commands of our Sovereign (*Padişah*), who is the Commander of the Faithful. It is impossible to obtain from us an explanation of why things have turned out as they have. . . . You are the absolute delegate of our Sovereign.

Deign [to tell us] what is the view of the Sovereign in this matter, and we shall say "we hear and we obey" (*sama'nâ wa ata'nâ*).⁵⁴

Comparison of Cevdet's account with the less highly colored picture that Uriel Heyd paints suggests that Cevdet may have exaggerated the rate and extent of the religious leaders' loss of influence. Yet a crisis was indeed approaching for the religious establishment. In the early nineteenth century, as Heyd shows, religious leaders had still not entirely lost their voice in the making of major decisions. Some of them, in fact, played important roles in support of the reforms of that period. Even as they did so, however, they were working themselves into an impasse from which there would be no escape. For while they may have thought that the reforms would strengthen the empire in its character as an Islamic state, the ultimate impact of those measures was secularization. The beginning of overt legal reform with the Gülhane Decree of 1839 made this fact unmistakable.

Unable any longer to cling to the rationalization that the eternal validity and immutability of Islamic law were being maintained, even if compromises and violations occurred in matters of transitory detail, even the progressive *ulema* then began to abandon their alliance with the reformers.⁵⁵ On top of the problems already noted by Cevdet, this alienation and the negative reaction of reformist statesmen to it intensified the decline of the religious establishment and provoked a long series of attacks against it. These included efforts to divert the revenues from pious foundations on which the religious scholars depended,⁵⁶ and to deprive religious leaders of their traditional roles in local administration.⁵⁷ The attack on the pious foundations accelerated the decline of the religious colleges, while the simultaneous development of new secular educational institutions helped to provoke a "brain drain," as the better minds tended less and less to enter the higher religious schools at all.⁵⁸ Not until the reign of Abd ül-Hamid II would any political priority again be given to the promotion of an explicitly religious policy, and then in ways carefully tailored to emphasize the figure of the sultan-caliph, and not the religious establishment as such. The predictable result was further decline and the adhesion of elements of the *ulema* to the Young Turk Movement.⁵⁹ By then, the secularization of Ottoman society had progressed to

the point of seriously undermining the specifically Islamic elements of the imperial tradition, thereby portending its collapse and reformulation.

Vicissitudes of the Palace Service

While the decline of the religious establishment was thus a kind of opposite to the rise of the scribal service, the palace service followed a course of development competitive with that of the scribal officials, though at odds with the broader political implications of the process of modernization. Indications of what was to come appeared as early as Selim III's "New Order," which was perceived at the time as entailing a reassertion of the power of the palace in relation to the Sublime Porte.⁶⁰ While that was a transitory phenomenon, the history of both the palace and the scribal service did pass a critical turning point with a series of reforms that Mahmud II undertook in the 1830s. The goal of these was not just to make the bureaucracy more effective, but specifically to abolish the grand vezirate, subdivide its powers, and centralize the administration to the highest possible degree in the hands of the sultan.

In a later chapter, we shall discuss the details of these changes as they relate to the scribal service, but they cannot be fully appreciated in that connection alone. For they also led to the consummation of the process already apparent in the eighteenth century whereby the old Privy Chamber of the palace school evolved into a sort of palace secretariat, and its head, the sword-bearer, into the director of the entire Inside Service. In the 1830s, this trend culminated in a series of reorganizations and changes of title, out of which the sword-bearer emerged as a marshal of the palace, or more exactly, marshal of the *Mabeyn* (*Mabeyn müşiri*), while one of his subordinates, the former confidential secretary (*şur kâtibi*) of the sultan, emerged as the first secretary of the palace secretariat (*Mabeyn baş kâtibi*). Mahmud intended this new organization to become the means through which he would not just communicate with, but would actively dominate, the rest of a government restructured to facilitate that end.⁶¹

Mahmud's death in 1839 and the fact that he was succeeded by three weaker sultans has kept later scholars from properly appreciating his intentions. Even during the three succeeding reigns, however, the secretariat continued to exist at the palace,

along with a congeries of chamberlains, aides-de-camp, and eunuchs. The civil-bureaucratic dignitaries who dominated the affairs of state during that period never ceased to have reason to fear the opposition of those palace minions or the wrath of the sultan, when he gave vent to it. With the accession in 1876 of Abd ül-Hamid, determined and able to reassert the power of the sultanate, the palace secretariat served as an instrument ready at hand. In its new home at Yıldız Palace, the secretariat grew enormously in size and importance, becoming the hub of a political machine that Abd ül-Hamid built up as a means by which to neutralize and dominate the other branches of government.

Even then, the palace service still did not acquire full organizational coherence or distinctness. It never acquired its own hierarchy of ranks, such as characterized the other branches of the ruling class; nor did it have a single, distinctive name in Ottoman Turkish. But it, and above all the secretariat of the *Ma-beyn*, acquired an unequivocally important place in the power equation of the empire. So much was this the case that the first objectives of the Young Turk leadership, when it came to power in 1908, included the dismantling of the mechanisms that Abd ül-Hamid had created for the exertion of control from the palace and the transformation of the palace secretariat into an instrument through which to control the sultan himself.⁶²

From Scribal Service to Civil Bureaucracy

The Hamidian system reminds us that the scribal service, to which we now turn, did not dominate Ottoman political life uninterruptedly throughout the nineteenth century. As before, however, this was still the branch of government service that grew most dramatically and was most linked to constructive developments in imperial policy and administration. This fact relates generally to the previous pattern of growth in this branch of service, and particularly to the way in which the relatively "secularistic" and "state-oriented" character of the traditional scribal culture predisposed its exponents to take a leading role in reform and to acquire that knowledge of the world which members of the other services so lacked. The scribal officials of the late eighteenth century may have "lacked complete competence and full knowledge" of political and diplomatic affairs, again to quote Cevdet Paşa, but they "were still superior in these matters

as compared with the other classes [that is, other branches of the ruling class]."⁶³

As a result, the scribal service grew tremendously during the nineteenth century in size, complexity, and, at times, in power. We shall see this very clearly in the development of the Sublime Porte, but in fact, that is only one part of the process. Whatever modification may ultimately be required in the image of the efendi-turned-paşa for the eighteenth century, by the nineteenth century any such qualifications had largely vanished. Particularly during the period of weak sultans, statesmen of this type dominated the entire government and left an indelible imprint in the reforms (Tanzimat) after which this period is still commonly named. In the process, as the consolidation of the efendi-turned-paşa pattern implies, the domain of this branch of service enlarged considerably. By 1908, it also included nine or ten other ministries located outside the Porte.⁶⁴ The civil bureaucracy had expanded overseas through the growth of the consular and diplomatic services, and had institutionalized its role in the provinces by acquiring prime responsibility for the new provincial administration that the nineteenth-century reformers attempted to create. Thanks to this expansion in responsibilities, this branch of official service, which had consisted of a few score men in the early sixteenth century and some 1,000 to 1,500 at the end of the eighteenth, grew to the point that 50,000 to 100,000 were at least nominally affiliated with it during the reign of Abd ül-Hamid II (1876-1909).⁶⁵ The range of roles in which these men served had also proliferated beyond the once primary ones of secretary and bookkeeper, to include local-administrative, executive, legislative, judicial, and diplomatic functions.

As if in formal recognition of these changes, the scribal service also underwent fundamental transformations in corporate organization and status. It is about the time of the first series of these changes, concentrated in the 1830s, that it ceases to be appropriate to speak of the scribal service in the sense of the old "men of the pen" or *kalemîye*, a term that could also be translated "men of the offices" and hints at the once more or less exclusive association of these men with the central bureaus in Istanbul. From the 1830s on, we shall speak instead of the civil bureaucracy or *mülkiye*. No such change of nomenclature was ever for-

mally decreed, it seems, nor did it ever become entirely systematic. The emergence of the term *mülkiye*, conveying associations with both landownership and sovereignty, was probably related to the acquisition by the scribal service of responsibility for local administration. Despite continuing inexactitude of usage, however, this became the new name for this branch of the bureaucracy in general and is only erroneously or imprecisely interpreted in any more restrictive sense.⁶⁶ In later chapters, we shall investigate in more detail the extent to which nineteenth-century changes justify the identification, which our translation of *mülkiye* conveys, with the civil bureaucracies or civil services of modern Western states.⁶⁷

Pausing first to survey nineteenth-century developments in all branches of government service, we see that trends already in evidence before the beginning of the nineteenth century continued, in interaction with forces bearing on the empire from outside, to exert a decisive influence on the later course of change. This appears in the difficulty with which the military regained either effectiveness in its own field or an important place in the political balance of the empire, as well as in the way in which deliberate cultural change accelerated the decline of the religious establishment. A similar continuity also appears in the development of the palace service and in the continued growth of the scribal service and later civil bureaucracy. Thus, as the state moved from the era of traditionalism into that of culturally innovative reform, the momentum accumulated over the centuries in the development of the imperial "center" continued to be an important determinant in the further development of bureaucratic institutions.

CONCLUSION: THE DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLES OF THE
RULING CLASS AND THE POLITICAL PERIODS
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

To study the evolution of the various branches of the Ottoman ruling class is to gain a new sense of the magnitude of the imperial governmental system, the intricacy of the developmental cycles that characterized it and its component elements, and the importance of long-term continuities, despite the profound changes associated with the beginnings of modernization.

To speak in terms of the comparison, evoked in the introduction of this chapter, between the life cycles of the state as a whole and of the individual branches of the ruling class, we note first that the imperial system displayed little or no internal differentiation during its period of emergence (c. 1300-1350). During the subsequent period of florescence, ending around 1600, the ruling class was dominated by the military-administrative and religious establishments, with distinct palace and scribal services only beginning to emerge. The prominence of the military-administrative and religious establishments in this period is explicable in terms of the strong orientation of imperial policy toward conquest, on the one hand, and toward the institutionalization and legitimation of the state and its administrative system, on the other.

The period of decline (c. 1600-1789) witnessed the decay of the religious and still more of the military-administrative establishments and the concomitant emergence of the palace and scribal services. The emergence of the palace service appears to have been linked to the movement of much of the apparatus of government to loci outside the palace and the consequent need for a secretariat to provide a link between the sultan and the new agencies. The rise of the scribal service, and within it particularly the chief scribe and his staff, seems to reflect a greater variety of factors. One, certainly, is the emergence of the new executive headquarters of the Sublime Porte, the most important product of the increasing differentiation of governmental institutions. Another factor, as the *efendi*-turned-*paşa* pattern makes clear, is the new opportunities for promotion created by the decline of the military-administrative establishment. Finally, and perhaps most important, there was the demand for new applications of the scribal culture in an age when the empire found itself less and less able to deal with outside powers from positions of strength and when the religious tradition was beginning to appear insufficient as a guide to a changing world.

Substantially the same developmental trends continued into the nineteenth-century era of reform, varying only slightly with the efforts at reform of the military. In a sense, however, the different services pursued their developmental trends at uneven rates. This is most noticeable in the case of the palace service and civil bureaucracy, the former making gains under strong sultans

and the latter under weak, at least down to the time when demands for the broadening of political participation began to produce a restructuring of the traditional polity.

The competitive character of these trends produced a series of shifts in the political balance, allowing us to define distinct political periods within the era of reform: an initial period of strong sultans, spanning the reigns of Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839); a period of civil-bureaucratic hegemony and political imbalance, the Tanzimat (1839-1871); a period of efforts to restore political balance either through the creation of a constitutional system or, more effectively in the short run, through the reassertion of the sultanate (1871-1908); and finally a short-lived and not entirely successful return to constitutionalism (1908-1922).

To follow the development of the Sublime Porte and the transformation from scribal service to civil bureaucracy in the era of reform, we shall now look more closely at the state of those institutions on the eve of reform and then, in subsequent chapters, trace them through the successive political periods that we have just defined.

THE IMPACT OF IMPERIAL DECLINE ON THE
EMERGENT SCRIBAL SERVICE:
THE SUBLIME PORTE AND ITS OFFICIALS
ON THE EVE OF REFORM

Mansıb ve caha heveskâr olma
Taleb-i izzet için har olma
Ehl-i mansıbda bulunmaz rahat
Hal-i bi-azildedir emniyet
Zillet-i azline değmez nasbı
Sarfına ser-be-ser olmaz gasbı

Yearn not for office or for high estate,
Demean thee not by seeking to be great.
Those in high places know not of repose;
Peace bides not where sultan may depose.
Appointment is not worth dismissal's pain;
Oppression pays not back the price again.

Nabi, *Hayriye*¹



In what has been said thus far about the development of the scribal service of the traditional empire, there are two facts of particular significance. The first is the importance, with reference not just to preexisting tradition, but also to later efforts at reform, of the formulation of the imperial cultural tradition associated with this branch of the ruling class. The other is the extensive growth of the scribal service in both size and importance, even during a period of overall imperial decline. What implications did this decline of the imperial system have for the emergence of the scribal service? And how did decline affect the cultural vitality of the scribes or their readiness to lead, or serve in, movements of reform?

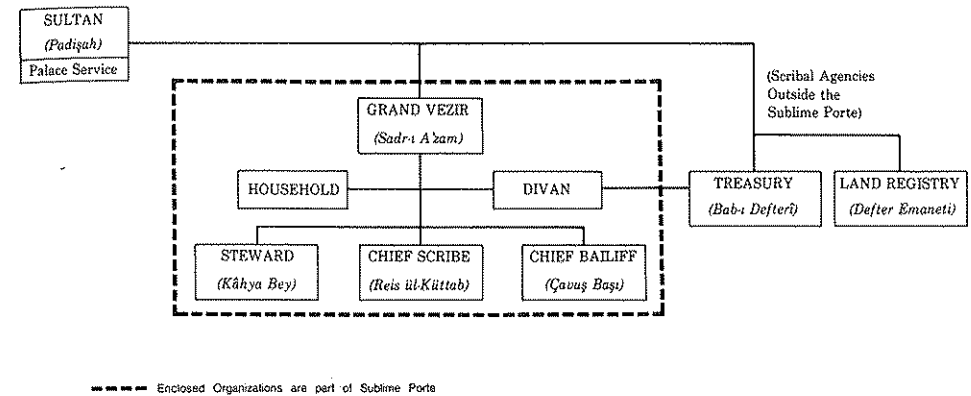
These are the questions that this chapter addresses. The best way to answer them is to present an overview, which will also serve as the basis for discussion in subsequent chapters of the changes which followed later, of the Sublime Porte on the eve of the nineteenth-century reform era. We may begin by discussing the patterns of organization and procedure found at the Porte at that time, and then the social state of the scribal personnel who served there. Throughout, we shall emphasize the offices under the *reis ül-küttab* or chief scribe as those which had attained the most advanced state of organization and most fully represented the scribal tradition. Examination of these organizational, procedural, and social patterns will throw additional light on the developmental processes that shaped the scribal service and on the replication within it of the models of social organization presented in Chapter One. In conclusion, to answer the fundamental questions posed above, we shall reexamine the efendi-turned-paşa pattern against the backdrop offered by the general state of the administrative system as of the end of the eighteenth century.

PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE AT THE SUBLIME PORTE ON THE EVE OF REFORM

Figure III-1 presents the elements that composed the Sublime Porte at the end of the eighteenth century: the grand vezir, his household, his *divan*, and the departments headed by the *çavuş başı* or chief bailiff, the *kâhya bey* or steward, and the *reis ül-küttab* or chief scribe. The one omission is the official historiographer (*vakanüvis*), who was not always of scribal background, and who had no known staff. For reference, the figure also includes the two major scribal agencies located elsewhere in Istanbul, the Treasury (*Bab-ı Defteri*) and the Land Registry Office (*Defter Emaneti*). For purposes of discussion, we shall leave aside those two agencies, as well as the grand-vezirial household, to the extent that it can be distinguished from the other components of the Porte. We shall concentrate first on surveying the general organizational aspect of the other elements of the Porte, as shown in the figure. Then we shall go on to examine more closely the organizational patterns found inside the offices of the chief scribe and, finally, to analyze patterns of procedure characteristic both of those offices and of the Divans of the grand vezir.

Since it is impossible, given the patrimonial discretionism of the system, to reduce all aspects of its organization or functioning to a consistent system, the picture which we present will in some parts be idealized. It will nonetheless serve to bring out many distinctive traits of the scribal tradition, and thus of the legacy of the traditional scribal service to the reforming statesmen of the later civil bureaucracy.

FIGURE III-1. ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBLIME PORTE, c. 1789



The Organizational Components of the Sublime Porte

At the head of the organization shown in Figure III-1, but with powers extending far beyond the Porte, was the grand vezir. Traditionally styled the "absolute delegate" (*vekil-i mutlak*) of the sultan,² the grand vezir could be described in one sense as exercising as much of the sultan's power as the latter would grant to him. In the period considered here, the grand vezir was the head of both the scribal service and the military establishment.³ In wartime, he often assumed the role of commander-in-chief (*serdar-ı ekrem*). After the decline of the imperial Divan at the palace and the growth in importance of his own *divan* at the Porte, the grand vezir also served increasingly as the chief functionary in the dispensation of justice, with senior judges from the religious establishment sitting in his council to assist him in this purpose. He had ultimate responsibility for the administration of the capital city and, to the extent that the provinces in fact remained under central control, for provincial administra-

tion. In making or approving appointments, finally, his powers extended into all branches of the ruling class.⁴

In terms of the business they discharged, the *divans* of the Porte were in some ways the most important adjuncts of the grand vezirs. While there had historically been several types of these, meeting at different times for various purposes and with different membership, by the late eighteenth century, the grand-vezirial *divans* had come to be of two main types. First, and most directly in continuity with the original afternoon *divan* (*akindi divanı*), there was a sort of routine *divan* that met on a regular basis, chiefly to serve as a high court of justice. In addition, as the eighteenth century wore on, there began to be more and more extraordinary consultative assemblies (*müşavere, mes-veret*) convoked to deal with the continuing crises with which the state found itself threatened. These were variable in both membership and place of meeting, including senior officials of all types even if out of office, but they appear normally to have been presided over by the grand vezir. In meetings of this latter type lie the immediate ancestors of the conciliar bodies that proliferated so remarkably during the Tanzimat.⁵

Turning to the three departments subordinate to the grand vezir, we recall that these differed among themselves in that two of them, those of the chief bailiff and the steward, were not yet fully integrated into the scribal service. The internal organization of these two departments was as yet not very clear, either. These agencies provide insights into the developmental processes that shaped the Sublime Porte, however, and may profitably be considered more closely before we go on to the offices of the chief scribe.

The chief bailiff and his men had originally been functionaries of the palace, where they served as heralds and messengers in a variety of circumstances, as bailiffs in meetings of the imperial Divan that served for the disposition of judicial cases, and as agents for the execution of the sentences rendered there. With the transfer of such judicial responsibilities from the old imperial Divan at the palace to the *divan* of the grand vezir at the Porte, the *çavuşes* did not just move from the palace to the Porte. They also began to undergo a change of role, through which they increasingly took on the complexion of the scribal service. At the end of the eighteenth century, this transformation was still incomplete, but the chief bailiff had begun to take over part

of the written business related to selection and preparation of cases to be decided in the grand-vezirial *divan*. In this connection, two definitely scribal officials long associated with the imperial Divan, the *tezherecis* or memorandum officers, whose duty it was to read the petitions submitted to the Divan, appear to have become parts of the chief bailiff's entourage at the Porte.⁶ In the nineteenth century, the metamorphosis of the chief bailiff and his staff seems to have culminated in the emergence of a Ministry of Justice separate from the Porte, although in fact the processes that shaped that ministry were complex and are still little known.

The position of the *kâhya bey* or steward was also the product of an unusual evolution, though in a different sense. He had begun as a purely domestic functionary, managing the grand vezir's household and lacking any official character. At the Sublime Porte, he became an official of high status, serving the grand vezir as a kind of deputy, though he was not to be confused with the *kaymakam* or lieutenant appointed during the grand vezir's absences from the capital in wartime. The responsibilities of the steward are usually described as having to do with internal and military affairs. Beyond this, sources on the eighteenth century disagree as to the details of his role or the roster of officials who came under him. Gibb and Bowen list as his subordinates only the *mektubî* or corresponding secretary of the grand vezir, whom we shall follow other writers in placing under the chief scribe; the *kâhya kâtibi* or secretary to the steward; the master of ceremonies (*tesrifâtî*); and one or two others. Joseph von Hammer at the turn of the nineteenth century gave a much longer and rather different list, including numbers of functionaries that Gibb and Bowen list only as parts of the grand vezir's domestic staff, as well as the representatives at the Porte of various groups in other parts of the ruling class, especially in the palace service and the military. The disparity clearly evokes an evolutionary process still short of completion. In the nineteenth century, the steward emerged as a minister of the interior. At the end of the eighteenth century, the most important scribal element in the retinue of the steward would have been the Office of the Secretary to the Steward, who had charge of some thirty scribes.⁷

Thanks to the long history of his post and its long-term rise in importance, the situation of the chief scribe is in many ways

clearer. In addition to his traditional role as chief of the Office of the Imperial Divan, he figured at the Porte as first secretary to the grand vezir, with responsibility for preparation of the reports and proposals that the latter submitted daily to the palace. While the chief scribe was also acquiring responsibility for the diplomatic business of the empire, and thus for the most sensitive of the ministerial portfolios that would be created in the 1830s, it is important to note that he was not becoming solely or merely a specialist in diplomatic affairs. This is apparent from his prominence in terms of what Itzkowitz has referred to as the efendi-turned-paşa pattern of mobility, as well as from the broad-ranging functions that still fell under the chief scribe's purview.⁸

The best way to appreciate the variety of these functions is to look at the offices under the chief scribe's supervision. Figure III-2 is a graphic portrayal of these, and also includes, for purposes of subsequent discussion, an attempt at reconstruction of the personnel categories found within each.

First in order of emergence among the agencies under the chief scribe was the Office of the Imperial Divan (*Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemi*), under the direction of an official known as the *beylikçi*. By the eighteenth century, this office had been divided into three sections, also confusingly designated as *kalem*. Of these, the first, known as the *Beylik* Section, or sometimes—to make things more confusing—as the Divan Office, had in fact inherited many of the most important functions of the sixteenth-century scribes of the imperial Divan. These included the registration of laws, of provisions pertaining to the legal status of the non-Muslim communities within the empire, and of treaties made with and capitulatory privileges granted to foreign governments, as well as the verification of subsequent measures to see that they conformed to the terms of these commitments.⁹

The other two sections of the Office of the Imperial Divan, the *Tahvil* and *Rûus* Sections, both also under the control of the *beylikçi* but each possessing a supervisory official of its own with the title of purse-bearer (*kisedar*), had to do with the processing of records on appointments of different sorts and took their names from aspects of the procedures used for that purpose. The essential difference in their functions was that the *Tahvil*, also known as *Nışan* or *Kise*, Section issued the brevets of assignment (*tahvil tezheresi*) required to assign incomes from ben-

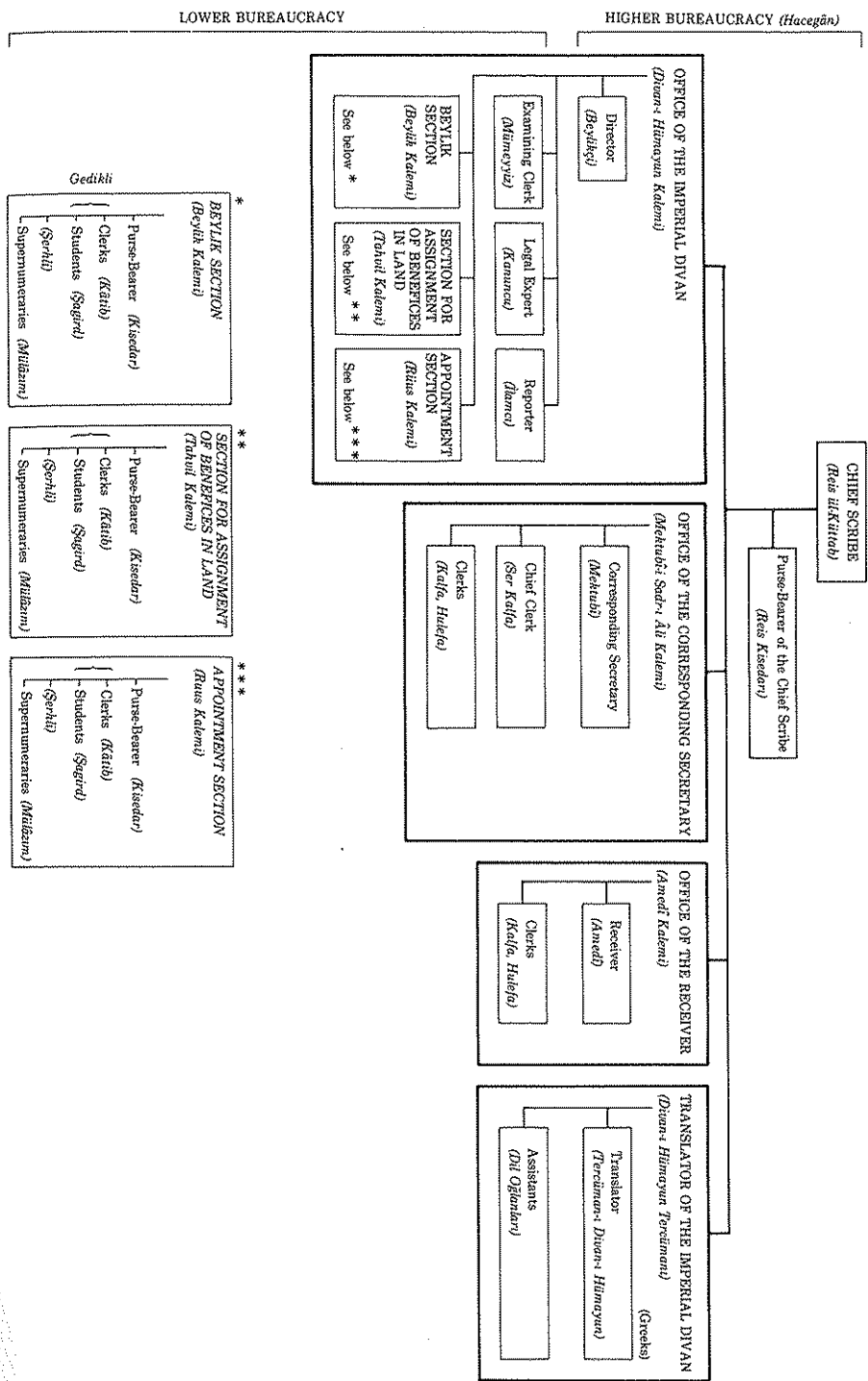


FIGURE III-2. THE CHIEF SCRIBE AND HIS STAFF, c. 1789

efices in land (*tımar*, *zeamet*, *has*) to all members of the ruling class whose positions entitled them to compensation in that form. Hammer, in fact, refers to this as the section for "feudal affairs" (*Lehenssachen*).¹⁰ To avoid any risk of false analogy with European feudalism, we shall translate the Ottoman name as the Section for Assignment of Benefices in Land, or the Assignment Section.¹¹

The *Rüüs* Section, in contrast, had chiefly to do with issuing brevets of a different type, called *rüüs*, used for making appointments that carried compensation in other forms. We shall accordingly call it simply the Appointment Section. Brevets of the same kind were also used to assign pensions to needy individuals, either out of the revenues of certain pious foundations, or from the farms of certain customs duties.¹² Although the *Rüüs* Section was a scribal agency, its functions are perhaps best known in connection with the religious scholars. Students who had completed their religious studies would, upon successful passage of a special *rüüs* examination, receive brevets from this office for appointment to positions in the religious establishment.¹³ This fact is a good indicator of the volume of patronage under the control of the grand vezir.

The distinction between these two sections on the basis of the compensation systems associated with the types of appointments they processed was perhaps not thoroughly systematic,¹⁴ and not enough is yet known about the history of the two to reveal how they emerged. To the extent that it was controlled from the center, the assignment of benefices in land was originally a responsibility of the *nişancı* or affixer of the cipher. This responsibility must have entailed duties for both his major subordinates, the chief scribe and the keeper of the registers (*defter emini*), a title referring specifically to cadastral registers and thus to the basic records of the system of benefices in land.¹⁵ Here, as in so many other details, the later spatial and organizational separation of these three officials appears to have redounded to the benefit of the chief scribe. This fact presumably reflects both the importance of this kind of patronage to the grand vezir and a tightening of central control in the period of decline over the assignment of the benefices.¹⁶

That the emergence of the *Rüüs* and *Tahvil* Offices is linked to a growth in the volume or importance of the business they performed is also apparent from changes over time in the applica-

tions of those two terms. At the height of the empire, they referred simply to certain types of records produced by the Office of the Imperial Divan, the term *rüüs* designating a daybook in which appointments, without differentiation as to type of compensation, were only the most frequent of a variety of types of entries.¹⁷ With time, the applications of the terms *rüüs* and *tahvil* seem to have become more specific and more clearly differentiated, and specialized bureaus appear to have emerged to perform the functions that those terms designated. Ultimately, the decline of the system of benefices in land seems to have limited the range of application of the term *tahvil*; but as the bureaucracy grew in size, the associations of the word *rüüs* continued to proliferate, with the result that the term almost survived into the vocabulary of modern Turkish.

By the end of the eighteenth century, then, there were three distinct sections in the Office of the Imperial Divan, and they contained somewhere between 90 and 150 men. Of these, to judge from the one itemized account, two-thirds served in the *Beylik* Section, and the remainder were divided evenly between Benefice Assignments and Appointments.¹⁸

Outside the Office of the Imperial Divan, probably the first position to become linked with the chief scribe was that of the translator of the imperial Divan (*Divan-ı hümayun tercümanı*). Originally, these translators, too, presumably served under the Divan at the palace, though not as subordinates of the chief scribe.¹⁹ With the rise of the Sublime Porte and the eclipse of the palace Divan by that of the grand vezir, the translators, like the other officers discussed here, moved to the new executive center. There, as the chief scribe became increasingly the man in charge of foreign affairs, the translators began to be regarded as part of his suite. Also at the Porte, this translatorship, previously held by foreign-born converts to Islam, became a virtual monopoly of a coterie of Istanbul Greek families who retained their hold from the mid-seventeenth century until 1821.²⁰

At the end of the eighteenth century, the translator of the imperial Divan was responsible for translating all documents submitted to the Porte in foreign languages if not accompanied by translations. In formal audiences, he translated the addresses of European ministers to the sultan or grand vezir. In working sessions, he translated the statements of the chief scribe, the foreign diplomats answering through their embassy translators.

The translator of the Divan also prepared written accounts of these meetings. He was the only Ottoman official to pay formal calls on European diplomats. In sum, he was the most important official after the chief scribe in the conduct of foreign affairs. Given his social marginality to the bulk of the ruling class, this could be a fact of some inconvenience both to the state and to him and his assistants, of which there were eight as of 1764.²¹

Next in order of emergence was the bureau of the *mektubî* or *mektupçu*, the corresponding secretary of the grand vezir, whose full Ottoman title was accordingly *Mektubî-i Sadr-ı Âli*. While various authorities disagree as to whether his formal hierarchical attachment was to the chief scribe or the steward, in practical terms he worked for the grand vezir as a sort of personal secretary, handling incoming and outgoing correspondence. Since the Office of the Corresponding Secretary was strongly linked in terms of promotion patterns to the other offices under the chief scribe and to the position of chief scribe itself, it seems logical to interpret the hierarchical subordination of the office as reflecting those links. We may also hypothesize that this office evolved out of the Office of the Imperial Divan at some point in the late seventeenth or eighteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth, it included about thirty scribes.²²

Newest of the bureaus of the chief scribe, though again its functions had probably been performed previously within the Office of the Imperial Divan, was the office of the *amedî*, or *amedci*, a curious title that we may render as "receiver." The receiver, the emergence of whose bureau İnalçık dates to about 1777, was a personal secretary to the chief scribe, and his office appears in some accounts as a fourth section of the Office of the Imperial Divan. Noting receipt of fees due the chief scribe from newly invested holders of benefices in land—the duty from which he acquired his name—was but a part of his role. More importantly, he assisted the chief scribe in his written business, including preparation of the documents that the grand vezir submitted to the palace and the correspondence of the grand vezir with foreign governments. The receiver also attended the chief scribe in meetings with foreign diplomats and was responsible for the correspondence of the chief scribe with the foreign diplomatic and consular officials within the empire. At the time of his presumed emergence, then, the receiver's functions also appear particularly linked to foreign affairs. His was a small but

important office, with only five to ten scribes at the time here under survey.²³

On the eve of the nineteenth-century reform period, the organizational pattern presented by the offices of the Sublime Porte thus reflected both the processes of their development and the variety and magnitude of the powers concentrated in the hands of the grand vezir. In the metamorphosis of the chief bailiff from an official of the palace to one of the scribal service, the emergence of the steward from a domestic function under the grand vezir to one of the most powerful offices of state, the apparent differentiation of a series of offices out of that of the imperial Divan, or the accretion of meanings around terms such as *rîis* and *tahvil*, we witness distinct phases of the process, described in the last chapter, that brought the traditional scribal service to the fore within the ruling class. This process displays tendencies at once toward differentiation and specialization, as in the incipient evolution of the bureau chiefships into ministerial portfolios, and toward the continued accumulation of miscellaneous functions, as in the heterogeneous attributions of those same figures or in the generalism implicit in the efendi-turned-paşa pattern. This contrast points to the continuing preponderance of the patrimonial tradition, and to the opposition between its conception of public function as discretionary within traditional limits and the more characteristically modern demand for rational definition of jurisdictional lines. The emergence of the various clerical and accounting offices shows that tendencies toward specialization, differentiation, and systematization were operative even within the traditional state.²⁴ Patrimonialism meant that such tendencies could not be predominant.

Organizational Patterns within the Offices of the Chief Scribe

A survey of organizational traits within the offices of the chief scribe makes this point even clearer. Here, too, the lack of concern for rational systematization means that any attempt to reduce the recorded patterns to a clearcut order has to contend with heterogeneous categorizations, overlapping and conflicting schematizations, and gaps in the data. Significantly, this is nowhere more true than in the oldest part of the system, the Office of the Imperial Divan.

The problems of explaining the organizational patterns are greatest among the scribes and apprentice scribes of that office, thus among those who fell below the level of supervisory officials and bureau chiefs and appear in Figure III-2 as the lowest four categories. The confusion is apparent from the start in the fact that the "scribes" (*kâtib*) and "student scribes" (*sagird*) now appear not as the lowest personnel categories, but as the third and fourth up from the bottom. In the sixteenth century, these two would presumably have been the only categories required for general description of the lower scribal personnel. In terms of the practicalities of entry into the scribal service, they still should have been so. But somehow, with the evolution of the office, the terms seem to have acquired new applications no longer corresponding to their obvious meanings.

This inference gains in probability from the inclusion of both "scribes" and "student scribes" in the category of *gediklis*, which, the sources make fairly clear, must be understood somehow in opposition to the next lower category of the *serhli*s. Despite the efforts of several recent scholars to produce an explanation,²⁵ the nature of this distinction remains unclear. The best inference seems to be that the application of these terms reflects two successive attempts made in the period of decline to organize the personnel of this office, and that the organization had to do with regulating the number of officials in each of the two categories, with providing specific forms of compensation for members of each category, and perhaps with maintaining certain differentiations in their obligations.

An eighteenth-century source indicates that the category of *gediklis* (holder of *gediks*) came into being first, dating back at least to the reign of Mustafa II (1695-1703), and that the category of *serhli*s (holders of *serhs*) was added later "at the time of the campaigns" (*seferler vukuunda*). In one sense, what the creation of the *gediks* meant may be inferred from the basic meaning of the word: "notch" or "breach," whence "place" in an organization or even "privilege." That the scribal *gediks* also reflected an attempt to regulate the number of scribes is clear from the references to them in the sources as being of specific numbers,²⁶ a fact recalling the way in which the concept of *gedik* was coming into use in the guilds about the same time.²⁷

In the case of the scribal officials of departments in which the *gedik* system was applied, the "privilege" meant, first, the ac-

knowledgment of a right to a "place" as one of a fixed number of clerks and apprentices of the office. The "place," in turn, seems to have been at least partly defined in terms of compensation systems. For with the decline of the ability of the Treasury to pay the salaries that scribes of the central offices had once enjoyed,²⁸ and with the consequent increase in reliance on prebendal forms of compensation, many incomes from benefices in land, which were then coming increasingly under central control and being diverted to new kinds of beneficiaries because of these very pressures, were assigned to the offices for which the *gedik* system is mentioned. Not by chance, the Offices of the Imperial Divan and Land Registry (*Defter Emaneti*), both of which traditionally had important roles in the assignment of these benefices, appear to have been the only scribal agencies successful in defending their economic interests through the acquisition of such incomes.²⁹

In contrast to the *gediklis*, the *serhli*s (holders of *serhs*) represented a later addition to the "organization table," apparently made by assigning additional benefice incomes to the same offices. The term *serh*, usually meaning something like "explanation," "commentary," or "gloss," by itself conveys little more than an allusion to some feature of the records kept on these men.³⁰ Yet there are hints that their status may have differed from that of the *gedik* holders in ways such as their obligations to go on campaign,³¹ or even in terms of whether they really served in the offices to which they were attached, or elsewhere, the link to the office in which they were *serhli* perhaps pertaining solely to administration of the benefice income.³² In the present state of the documentation, it is useless to speculate further about two terms that will require little attention beyond this point. It is enough to conclude that while the *gedik* system seems to have represented one attempt to fix the "organization table" of the office and provide for the compensation of its personnel, the system of *serhs* represented a subsequent increment, analogous in character, but entailing some differences in the roles or statuses of the men in the two categories.

The *mülâzıms*, finally, are probably best understood as a kind of residual personnel category, holding neither *gedik* nor *serh*, and thus forming the bottom of the scribal heap. In the nineteenth century, the term *mülâzım* normally meant "supernumerary" or "apprentice" and tended in that sense to supplant

the terms *şagird* and *çırak* as previously applied to student clerks. For the eighteenth century, the situation is not so clear. Hammer and d'Ohsson do not acknowledge the term *mülâzım* at all, and documentary sources that do apply it to the Office of the Imperial Divan do so in a hopelessly confused way that makes it impossible to distinguish this term clearly from the others we have already discussed. In view of the contrast with the much clearer and more specific sense of *mülâzım* in the following century, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that the term was just coming into use as a designation for a category of scribal personnel, and that it referred to persons who were not provided for through the systems of *gedik* and *şerh*. The *mülâzıms* would thus have been aspirants both in professional terms, as student clerks, and in economic terms, as nonrecipients of benefice incomes. Eighteenth-century documentary references support this hypothesis by referring to the eligibility of the *mülâzıms* to be assigned benefice incomes when scribal officials who had previously received the incomes died without heirs.³³ The presence in the offices of a group of aspirants of this kind is surely one indication of the pressures that the decline of the productive sectors of the economy brought to bear on any attempts, such as the systems of *gedik* and *şerh*, to fix the size of bureaucratic cadres.

By the eve of reform, then, the lowest levels in the Office of the Imperial Divan displayed a heterogeneous set of organizational categories, reflecting successive but uncoordinated and incomplete attempts at the organization of the clerical staff. The terms "student" and "scribe" appear to have become fossilized at the historical core of the office in ways to which the obvious meanings of these terms may have been only marginally relevant. The distinction of *gedik* and *şerh* implies deliberate efforts at organization, but in a sense chiefly apparent in terms of compensation systems. The term *mülâzım* suggests, finally, a continued growth of the office, only incompletely and reluctantly registered as yet in formal organizational terms. Elements of a hierarchical order are implicit in the opposition of "student" and "secretary," and perhaps in that of *şerhli* and *gedikli*, but there is no overall hierarchical articulation, at least none apparent in these categories. Similarly, the real duties of the scribes are, if anything, masked by the terms applied to them. At the lower levels in this oldest of the offices under the chief scribe, fragmentary attempts at systematization, processes of accretion over

time, and, in the linkage of the *gediks* and *şerhs* to the system of benefices in land, the effects of imperial decline appear as the paramount influences on the evolution of organizational patterns.

At the level of supervisory officials of this office, meanwhile, organizational terms begin to reflect the actual duties of the officials more clearly, but within the limits of a significant pattern. At the head of each of the three sections of the Office of the Imperial Divan, and again as a sort of assistant to the chief scribe, came officials known as *kisedar* (purse-bearer), whose duties included filing documents in sacks (*torba*, also *kise*) and collecting the fees charged for the issue of official documents. Some writers attribute the title "purse-bearer" to one of these functions; some, to the other. In addition, the staff of the *beylikçi* also included three other supervisory officials. One of these was the *mümeyyiz* or examining clerk, who scrutinized the documents drafted in the office for correctness of official style and conformity to what Hammer called the "spirit of the constitution." In addition, there was the *kanuncu* or expert on the laws promulgated by the state, who checked each measure for its conformity to those laws, and an *ilamcı* or reporter, who prepared reports on difficult or doubtful subjects as needed.³⁴ None of these officials appears to have existed in the sixteenth century, and there would hardly have been any need for the *kanuncu* or legal expert before the scribes moved from the palace to the Porte and were separated from their quondam chief, the affixer of the cipher (*nişancı*), in his day the supreme authority in that very field.

In contrast to the confusing organizational patterns apparent among officials at the lower levels in the Office of the Imperial Divan, the duties of the supervisors exhibit a tendency to define official functions in terms of aspects of the processes by which documents were produced. Looking on to the clerks of the other offices under the chief scribe, and then to the bureau chiefs, we encounter the same pattern.

Being smaller and much newer than the Office of the Imperial Divan, the offices of the corresponding secretary (*mektubî*) of the grand vezir and the receiver (*amedî*) should be easier to account for. In fact, however, it is difficult to find information that can be assumed with certainty to depict the state of these offices before the beginnings of reform. The Office of the Corresponding Secretary included a "chief assistant" (*ser kalfa*, *baş kalfa*), a number

of clerks usually known in this as in most other offices as *hulefa* (from the plural of the Arabic *khalifa*, the singular being pronounced "kalfa" in Turkish in this case, as also in the application of the same term in the guilds and in other occupational settings). Significantly, a document of 1797 on the reform of the office identifies the functions of these men only in terms of long-acknowledged aspects of the document-producing process: the making of rough drafts (*tesvid*), of summaries or abstracts (*hulâsa*), and of fair copies (*tebeyyuz*). A document of the same date on the reform of the Office of the Receiver refers to the business treated there only in terms of its confidentiality. Both these offices were, however, small and select in the sense that only persons trained elsewhere—as well, predictably, as well-qualified sons of *vezirs* and scribal officials—were to be appointed to them. This suggests that there was already in this period something more or less approaching a hierarchical ordering of scribal bureaus, with those of the corresponding secretary and the receiver serving the ambitious, as they certainly did later, as way stations on the path to high office.³⁵ The last of the subordinates of the chief scribe, the translator of the imperial Divan and his assistants, stood outside this pattern, being distinct from the bulk of the ruling class in ethnocultural terms, and had their own *cursus honorum*.

Moving on from the lower scribal personnel and their supervisors to the higher realm of the bureau chiefs, designated by the rank-title of *hacegân*, we again encounter a tendency to define official positions in terms of processes of document production. The term *mektubî*, for example, comes from *mektub*, normally used to refer to "letters" in the sense of written correspondence, whence our translation as corresponding secretary. The term *amedî*, from the Persian verb "to come," reportedly derives from the fact that the receiver wrote the term *amed* ("arrived") in the appropriate registers opposite the names of newly invested holders of benefices in land to indicate receipt of the fees they owed the chief scribe.³⁶ The term *beylikçi* alone is more obscure—in fact, untranslatable. Some authorities derive it from the word *bey*, and thus see it as having to do with affairs of state as exercises of sovereignty (*beylik*).³⁷ Probably the more widely accepted explanation traces the title of this official to the word *bitik*, which, though archaic in Ottoman Turkish by this time, meant a written document or inscription, and from which a derived form *bitikçi* ("scribe") is known.³⁸ Only the title of the *reis*

ül-küttab lacks such reference to the phases of document production. He is designated rather in hierarchical terms: the "chief of the scribes."

In sum, then, the patterns of formal organization found in the traditional offices under the chief scribe reflect a variety of developmental processes. Even within the patrimonial system, episodic attempts at systematization obviously could occur. Where they did, they often reflected the way in which the growth in the volume or importance of a given kind of business would lead to the creation of a separate, specialized bureau for precisely that purpose. Alternatively, attempts to cope with personnel problems could give rise to such efforts, as seems to have been the case in the creation of the systems of *gediklis* and *serhlis*. In addition, processes of differentiation and specialization could create needs for the replication in new settings of official functions—purse-bearers, legal experts—previously performed by perhaps a single individual. Obviously, though, the desire for system could not govern overall in an organizational complex so attuned to reliance on custom and discretionism in the use of power.

Where efforts at differentiation and systematization did occur, they were typically restricted by a tendency to conceive of official functions only in terms of the internal document-producing processes of the bureaucracy. Indeed, conceptualizations of this kind characterized not only bureaus, such as those for appointments (*rûus*) and benefice assignment (*tahvil*), whose duties were relatively specialized, but also other offices or positions that handled a wide diversity of matters. At times, as in the case of the *beylikçi* or the receiver, the resulting designations necessarily identified the bureau or position only obscurely or incompletely, with the result that direct translation either is impossible, or gives little idea of the responsibilities that went with the title. In the craftsman-like emphasis on document-producing processes, and also in personnel designations such as *sagird* (student), the essentially synonymous *mülâzım* (supernumerary), *kalfa* and its plural *hulefa* (here, clerk), or—we shall argue—even *hacegân* (bureau chiefs), we also begin to notice signs of guild-like traits.

Patterns of Procedure

The procedural patterns of the offices throw light on the way these organizational traits related to the day-to-day operations of the Porte, and begin to show, too, how they were linked to the

social realities of scribal life in the late prereform period. We may demonstrate this point by focusing on procedural patterns first in the scribal offices and then in the *divans* of the grand vezir.

Descriptions of the way the offices operated obviously differ in detail, depending on the specific office in question or the task referred to; yet they do imply an overall pattern. Such descriptions usually deal almost exclusively with the complicated procedures by which documents, before they could be issued, were supposed to pass up through the official hierarchy, being approved at numerous echelons. In the Office of the Imperial Divan, for example, a rough draft would first be prepared by an official of competence and status appropriate for the matter in question. This might mean one of the clerks of the office; or it might mean the *beylikçi* or the chief scribe himself. At whatever level the document originated, it would then pass to higher echelons for approval.

A document drafted by one of the clerks would pass, as necessary, to the reporter (*ilamcı*) and legal expert (*kanuncu*), in any case to the examining clerk (*mümeyyiz*), who would edit it for style, content, and conformity to other measures in force, before passing it on to the *beylikçi* and the chief scribe. The purse-bearer (*kisedar*) perhaps, and certainly the examining clerk, *beylikçi*, and chief scribe would each review the document and signify his approval by writing a conventional term of approbation on the draft. Then, depending on the importance of its subject, the document would either receive approval in the form of an order for execution (*buyuruldu*) from the grand vezir, or it would be referred to the palace in a "summary" version (*telhis*) to receive the commands of the sultan. Once the matter received approval, a fair copy would be prepared and sent to the *nişancı*, whose role of affixing the cipher had by this period become a perfunctory but still requisite formality. Preservation of any drafts or register entries that the office retained, perhaps also the issue of the final fair copy, and certainly the collection of any fees due for its issue were then the responsibility of the purse-bearer (*kisedar*).

Variations of detail would enter into this picture for different types of documents or different offices. Still, conception of official procedure in such terms was typical not only at the Porte, but also in other scribal departments. One contemporary description of how business was done in financial offices, for

example, gives only an account of how documents were prepared and issued; this runs to twenty-two stages.³⁹

The conception of scribal procedures in terms such as these reinforces the implications, already noted in formal organizational patterns, that the Ottomans conceived of their scribal service above all as a mechanism for the production of documents according to prescribed types. Such a view follows naturally from the original role of the scribes as secretaries to the imperial Divan and is practically a premise of the study of the diplomatics of any traditional state.⁴⁰ Document production was the job of the scribes, and they were good at it, so good as to form a startling contrast with the overall condition of the imperial administrative system at the time. As Sir James Porter, an eighteenth-century British ambassador, put the matter after long experience:

There is no Christian power which can vie with the Porte for care and exactitude in the several offices; business is done with the greatest accuracy, in any important document, words are weighed, and that signification constantly selected, which may most conduce to their own advantage. Papers of the remotest date, if the year of the transaction is but known, may be found at the Porte; every command granted at the time, and every regulation then made, can be immediately produced. . . .

When they feel an inclination to expedite business at the Porte, or it is agreeable to them, no people do it with greater celerity; when the contrary is the case, they will as artfully protract or delay.⁴¹

Scattered comments of Joseph von Hammer, a better-qualified and hardly over-sanguine observer, confirm this picture, at least in part. The physical aspect of the more formal documents, he said, was of a "splendor . . . which leaves all the elegance of the European Chanceries of State far behind." The role of the examining clerk (*mümeyyiz*) in maintaining correctness and uniformity of style was also one respect in which European governments might well, in his opinion, have followed Ottoman example.⁴²

Such proficiency was not without its costs, however. The emphasis on approval of each action at several levels of the hierarchy suggests, for example, a significant limitation of the initiative

left to individual officials. The accounts that we have summarized imply a fixation, craftsman-like in fact, on the documents as ends in themselves. This suggests that many scribal officials must have been oblivious to the external impact of actions taken within the offices, and that the scribal culture must have existed, in all but the most vigorous minds, only within narrow limits. The lack of any differentiation between clerical and professional personnel in the offices, while hardly exceptional for the period, throws this preoccupation with the official *paperasseries* into yet higher relief. The limited scope of initiative and the strong orientation to the formalistic details of document production may have served well enough for the old scribes of the imperial Divan. But how good a preparation would it be for the efendi-turned-paşa or for the reforming statesmen of a later age?

Accounts of the meetings of the *divans* of the grand vezirs deal with one of the settings in which the efendis-turned-paşa were active, and thus help us to answer this question, at least as it relates to the period under consideration. The best contemporary general discussion of procedure in these *divans* is that of d'Ohsson.⁴³ Speaking in particular of the extraordinary consultative assemblies (*müşavere*, *meşveret*) that the grand vezirs of this period convoked to deal with urgent problems, d'Ohsson says that the grand vezir would first present the matters for decision and then call on the head of the Muslim religious hierarchy, the *seyh ül-İslâm*, to comment first. The latter would normally do so only vaguely, so as not to inhibit further discussion. Other members of the assembly would then have a turn, but they too would avoid speaking out for fear of opposing the wishes of the grand vezir. Were he to press them for opinions, they would answer evasively that he was wisest, that it was he who had the confidence of the sultan, that it was for him to command and them to obey. Further urgings to speak would be answered only with the *temenna*, the old-fashioned oriental salute made by bringing the fingers of the right hand first to the lips and then to the forehead. Even in the most serious matters, the only point likely to lead to argument would be the legitimacy of a given project in terms of Islamic law. Any who disagreed with the grand vezir on this were likely to find themselves in exile very shortly.

The real purpose of these consultations, d'Ohsson continues, was not so much policy formulation or even a serious consulta-

tion of opinions, but rather the legitimation of controversial governmental action in the eyes of the populace and the insulation of the sultan and grand vezir from censure. When it became necessary to take decisions that might prove unpopular or harmful to the empire, the clever grand vezir would then, in the most flattering manner possible, refer the difficult decision back to the sultan. At such times, not even the most adroit maneuvering could ensure the grand vezir against loss of his master's favor or a disastrous outburst of public resentment.

D'Ohsson's account should probably not be taken as descriptive of the way business was done in *divan* meetings of more routine kind. It also understates the development of debate in the extraordinary assemblies.⁴⁴ Scattered through the "History" of Cevdet Paşa, however, are detailed accounts, presumably drawn from minutes kept by the chief scribe or his assistants, of many such meetings. Already quoted in the last chapter for what they tell about the different branches of the ruling class, these reports generally confirm and amplify what d'Ohsson has to say.

From these accounts, it is a clear inference that the convocation of such assemblies reflected the need not only to spread responsibility for inescapable actions, but also to tap every possible source of solutions for problems that the sultan at times would frankly admit his inability to resolve.⁴⁵ The gravity of the issues, together with the servile status of those in attendance, was enough to account for the behavior that d'Ohsson describes, although the sultans and grand vezirs were not sparing in their demands that the officials speak their minds,⁴⁶ that the assemblies—however large—maintain absolute secrecy,⁴⁷ and that they reach their decision in "unanimity of opinion" (*ittifak-i âra*).⁴⁸ This was a phrase that would reverberate through accounts of such meetings for decades to come, its unrealistic character hardly gaining recognition before the late 1830s.⁴⁹ Sultans and grand vezirs reacted to the frustrations they experienced with these assemblies by redoubling their demands for secrecy and unanimity and by voicing bitter disillusionment at the quality of the official manpower at their disposal.⁵⁰ As we have already noted, Cevdet Paşa associated this kind of deficiency particularly with members of the religious establishment and regarded the scribal officials, whose paper pushing at least gave them some familiarity with the issues in question, in a better light.

In terms of their implications for future developments in the ruling class, these consultative assemblies were of immense significance. But for the late prereform period, their significance lies in what they show about the limited scope of initiative and the tendency toward a kind of bureaucratic formalism, implied both in what d'Ohsson says about the real purpose of the meetings and in the unrealistic demand for unanimity of decision. Formalism and restriction of initiative thus appear at the top-most levels of the ruling class, just as among the clerks of the scribal bureaus. The correspondence of these traits among officials at both upper and lower levels is one of the most significant facts of bureaucratic life in this period and is important for the appreciation of the scribal eminence implied in the efendi-turned-paşa pattern.

The procedural patterns observable in both the scribal bureaus and the assemblies also suggest several additional points of interest. For example, the routines of the offices not only confirm that scribal functions tended to be conceived solely in terms of document-producing processes, but also hint at the pervasive influence throughout Ottoman society of the guild tradition, an influence perceptible in the craftsmanlike approach of the scribes to their work as well as in formal patterns of personnel organization within the offices. The implications of what is often termed bureaucratic formalism are equally far from fortuitous. For the drafting and production of official documents, as well as the subjects with which the documents dealt, were indeed caught up in, and to a degree governed by, patterns of official ritual that served continually to dramatize and reaffirm the character and purpose of a state seen as the expression of a divinely appointed order.⁵¹

The repression of initiative observable in both the offices and the assemblies, in addition to bespeaking the influence of the guild tradition in the former setting, adds a significant note to what we have seen about the workings of Ottoman patrimonialism. The discretionary use of power by those in highest positions had as a necessary concomitant the servility, in practical as well as formal juridical senses, of those who worked in their shadow. The decline of the empire surely compounded both this problem and the bureaucratic formalism. For the progressive loss of control by the central administration over the provinces created a discontinuity between the document-producing proc-

esses of the central offices and the world outside, while the growing hopelessness of many of the issues confronting the state not only created the need for the special consultative assemblies, but also conditioned many of the frustrations encountered in them.

What was it like to serve in such a bureaucracy? What could the eminence of the scribal efendi-turned-paşa have amounted to in such an age?

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF THE LATE TRADITIONAL SCRIBAL SERVICE

To answer these questions, even within the limits of the offices that fell under the chief scribe, we must begin by acknowledging the existence there of three distinguishable social groups. The first, differentiated in ethno-religious terms and thus really marginal to the Muslim Ottoman ruling class, consists of non-Muslims in scribal positions. At the Sublime Porte of the eighteenth century, this meant the translator of the imperial Divan and his assistants. The other two groups may be defined as lower and upper parts of the scribal service proper, the boundary between them being most readily identifiable in terms of the *hacelik*, or rank of the *hacegân* (approximately, bureau chiefs).

The conditions of service in these groups again illustrate the organizational and procedural patterns we have just discussed. More importantly, they illuminate the social context underlying the operation of those patterns. To be specific, each of the three groups we have just distinguished displays the influence in particularly marked form of one of the patterns of social organization presented in Chapter One, although the influences are never unmixed and thus cannot be appreciated simply on a one-for-one basis.

The Translators of the Imperial Divan

The monopoly of this post by non-Muslims reflects the fact that while there were many Muslim Ottomans of great learning in the "three languages" (*elsine-i selâse*) basic to their cultural tradition, few even of the relatively "secular-minded" scribal officials were capable of the "infidel business" of translating to and from the languages of the Christian West, while those who were able were not always willing to accept such duty. The passage of the translatorship into the hands of Greeks, in place of the foreign-born renegades who had once filled the post, was a product of

this cultural exclusivism of the Muslims and of the emergence of a sort of Greek "merchant aristocracy." Centered in the Phenar (or Fener) quarter of Istanbul, where the patriarch had his seat, these "aristocrats" used their wealth for the aggrandizement of their families, the acquisition of learning and promotion of Greek culture, and the pursuit of power both in the Orthodox community and—within the limits of the possible—in the Ottoman imperial system.

In Runciman's vivid account of the rise of the great Phenariot families,⁵² the tensions implicit between their ambitions, symbolized in their vainglorious claims to Byzantine imperial ancestry, and the practical limitations of the system of confessional autonomy become dramatically clear. The linkage of the Phenariots' story to the history of the Sublime Porte is a by-product of their custom of sending their sons to Italy to study. Acquiring a good Western education, many of the latter took up medicine and returned to become physicians to highly placed Ottoman dignitaries. The first two Greeks to hold the Divan translatorship first served the Grand Vezir Köprülüzade Ahmed Paşa (1635-1676) in this capacity, and their promotion to translator bespeaks his recognition of the political value of the less technical branches of their learning. The career of the second of them, Alexander Mavrocordato, who played a key role in the Carlowitz peace negotiations, is the most brilliant in all the history of the Greek translators and also coincides with a critical moment in the evolution of the office of chief scribe.

Acquisition of a foothold in the governmental system gave the Phenariots added opportunities to increase their wealth, while the value and rarity of their learning placed them in a strategic position to capture other political positions, as well. By the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Phenariots had developed what amounted to an official *cursus honorum*, consisting of positions in the Ottoman administrative system, distinct from the offices held by laymen within the Orthodox community. According to Cevdet, the lowest positions in this *cursus honorum* were those of the two agents (*kapı kâhyası*) that the tributary princes of Moldavia and Wallachia maintained, as did ordinary provincial governors, to represent them at the Sublime Porte.⁵³ Above these, in ascending order, came the translatorship of the imperial fleet, then that of the imperial Divan, and finally the two princely thrones of Moldavia and Wallachia. These last were

posts that the Phenariot elite coveted as the only Christian vassaldoms then remaining within the Ottoman state and as steps toward reviving the "Great Idea" of Byzantine imperialism.

Western visitors to the courts of these princes were impressed by their learning and sumptuous style of life, but also by the paradox of a Greek prince ruling as the slave of the sultan. At the Porte, the situation of the *divan* translators was equally paradoxical. These members of what has been called a Phenariot *noblesse de robe*⁵⁴ enjoyed privileges of a sumptuary, ceremonial, and fiscal character comparable to those of the ruling class. In a sense, they enjoyed a cultural eminence even in relation to the Ottoman elite. But the ethnoreligious difference separating the Phenariots from the ruling class proper, combined in the case of the translators with the doubts and anxieties awakened by their central role in some of the most sensitive and secret affairs of state, made their position a particularly dangerous one. In relation to their coreligionists, the Phenariots who had won places in this *cursus honorum* were patrimonial dignitaries of awesome scale and even grander aspirations. In relation to the sultans, they were no more than slaves confined in a sort of bureaucratic miniature of the Orthodox community, all the more vulnerable for their powers and their hopes.⁵⁵

The Lower Scribal Service

Muslim scribal officials who fell below the level of the *hacegân* also displayed the workings of more than one of the organizational patterns described in Chapter One. In this case, however, the dominant motif seems to have reflected the limited extent to which mere membership in the ruling class could be equated with "elitism" in any meaningful sense. While the lower scribal service displayed traits of the patrimonial motif, its most pronounced characteristic was that of a craft guild. To trace an imaginary scribe of this period through the career cycle will demonstrate this fact, leading naturally to the discussion of the differences found at and above the rank of the *hacegân* or "bureau chiefs."

Whatever the extent to which the early scribal service had drawn its personnel from the religious colleges or the palace school, the normal pattern of the eighteenth century was rather that the aspiring scribal official would enter an office as a young boy just out of the elementary mosque school. This might well

mean beginning his official career before the age of ten. Even in the nineteenth century, there were many who began by the early teens and some who thus accumulated service records running into six and seven decades.

The means by which the boys entered the offices reflected the combined operation of prescribed official procedures and of the more *ad hoc* patterns characteristic of patrimonial households. On one hand, to enter central scribal offices, it appears to have been necessary to obtain some sort of brevet of appointment. In the Office of the Imperial Divan, the only one of those under the chief scribe to which a complete novice was supposed to be appointed, this would ostensibly have taken the form of the *şagirdlik rüusu*, or brevet of studentship,⁵⁶ although the way in which the term *şagird* (student) actually figured among the personnel designations then used in the office raises questions as to whether this was in fact invariably the procedure.

In any case, boys of proper age would have needed someone to complete the formalities, pay the fees, and provide any other monetary inducements necessary to get such a document. Most typically, these patrons would have been their fathers, already in government service. In the case of individuals whose entry depended on the formation of *intisab* connections, and who, to produce the displays of talent necessary for that purpose, must have been somewhat older and more experienced, the protector would have been the head of the patrimonial household to which the young man had become attached.

In principle, as the system of brevets of appointment implies, appointment was a matter of centralized official procedures. In practice, appointment making depended to an important degree on the influence of a patron and meant appointment to a position in whatever part of the bureaucracy fell under the patron's control or influence. In offices of low status, and probably in general outside Istanbul, the role of the patron must have been relatively even greater. There were surely situations in which appointment was purely discretionary, entailing no official formalities whatever.

Scribal recruitment in the late prereform period thus still displayed only a low degree of formal systematization. In contrast to the formidable systems characteristic of the military-administrative and religious establishments at their high point, we note here little more than a reliance on the "patrimonial style in re-

cruitment" and a tendency, which we may think of as guild-like, to follow in one's father's footsteps. Statements have appeared, in fact, to the effect that scribal recruitment in this period was totally hereditary. There was, no doubt, an element of this in recruitment, as in the transmission of the incomes from benefices in land. Yet any conception of scribal recruitment as solely hereditary does not make allowance for the full range of relationships encountered within the patrimonial household, or for the extent to which a concern for the discovery of talent prevailed even there.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the range of recruitment was relatively narrow; and that narrowness, coupled with the distinctive cultural orientation of the scribes and the fact that this culture was hardly propagated anywhere at this time except in the offices themselves, gave the scribal service the inbred, "small-townish" air then characteristic of its members.

Once in the offices, the boys were trained in essential scribal skills through apprenticeship, a function no longer confined, as Matuz believes it was in the time of Süleyman the Magnificent, to the Treasury offices. One eighteenth-century account explains the wisdom (*hikmet*) of training by apprenticeship: "The child who is to become a clerk begins his attendance in the office by being seated facing his 'teacher' (*hace*). Perceiving, thanks to this proximity, everything that his 'teacher' writes or crosses out or says, he observes in which register the affairs of Baghdad are recorded and in which notebook are those of Bosnia, and it remains in his memory as if engraved in stone (*ka'l-nakş fi'l-hacar*)." Gradually, the "teacher" would begin to entrust tasks of increasing complexity to the boy, until the latter became a master himself of the conventional skills of the scribal profession,⁵⁸ that "noblest and oldest of arts."

Implicit in the very concept of apprenticeship, the evocation of the guild tradition is reinforced in the original text by the terms used for the apprentice and his teacher. The passages preceding the one just quoted make clear that the term *hace*, or colloquially *hoca* (singular of *hacegân*), does not here refer to the director of the office, although the latter no doubt had ultimate responsibility for the training of apprentices, as for the other functions performed there.⁵⁹ Rather, the term is applied here to one of the clerks of the office (*hâtib*), of the type also referred to as *kalfa* or, in the Turkish version of the Arabic plural, as *hulefa*. As far as we can determine from the text of the document, the

term *hace* or *hoca* applies to this official only loosely, in terms of his relation to the boy. In other cases, however, use of this term is a distinctive feature of the application of the basic, three-grade guild hierarchy in the scribal offices. For it is also, and indeed more typically, used both for teachers (*hoca*), such as those maintained even in the offices for subjects like Arabic and Persian,⁶⁰ and for the rank commonly borne by the bureau chiefs, the *hacegân*, who stood among the scribal officials in a position comparable to that of the master (*usta*) in the guilds. Neither the terminological substitution nor the history of the term *hace* is easy to explain. But the word *hace*, or the Persian *khvâja* from which it comes, had traditionally applied in certain cases, in other Middle Eastern societies as well as among the Ottomans, to merchants, who might also be organized into guilds or even have something like official status. It is thus another term associated with the marketplace, if not with the handicrafts.⁶¹ For the "apprentice" in the account quoted above, the term is *sagird* ("student"), a common synonym for *çırak* ("apprentice") even in the craft guilds, and thus not necessarily to be understood in the peculiar sense that the term seems to have acquired in the formal organizational patterns of the Office of the Imperial Divan.

The influence of the guild tradition thus appears prominently both in the emphasis on training by apprenticeship and in the personnel designations associated with the training process. This helps to explain the scribes' typical predilection for the use of the literary tradition distinctive of their "craft" as if it were not so much a means of simple and straightforward communication as a craft or art, even an esoteric medium, in which what mattered was to demonstrate one's mastery in ways that an outsider would have to marvel at more than comprehend.

Apprentice scribes could, however, also extend their education by means other than apprenticeship. It was not uncommon for them to spend part of the day attending lectures in the religious colleges. Persian poetry could be studied in some of the dervish convents, or in the homes of certain *lîteratî*. Numbers of the latter, who were more or less invariably members of the ruling class, would give instruction to any who came seeking it and, in fact, maintained something like literary salons. Persons of means might retain private tutors (*konak hocaları*). Heads of great households obviously found it in their interest to give considerable attention to the education of their slaves and protégés

by such means. Then, too, there were many libraries scattered through Istanbul, numbers of them endowed by celebrated paragons of the scribal culture.⁶² The resources available to the scribal official for mastery of his cultural tradition were thus considerable, but hardly well organized for efficient use. They did not compare to the palace school, to the religious educational system at its height, or to the Italian universities frequented by the Phenariot grandees. This fact must have thrown the guild-like traits of the tribal officials into higher relief and helped to limit the numbers of those who developed into really great exponents of the traditional scribal culture.

In any case, when his superiors considered the apprentice scribe to have sufficient mastery in the scribal arts, he would go through a sort of initiation, in which he would be assigned a new name (*mahlas*), usually alluding to some distinction or superior quality, and a seat of his own among the cushions on which the clerks of the office sat (*mindere çıkmak*).⁶³ No longer an apprentice but now a full-fledged scribe, he would, in accordance with his abilities and connections, begin to progress upward.

Exactly how he did so is not always clear. In some senses, he rose through the social relations assumed in the model of the patrimonial household as much as through the organizational patterns characteristic of the offices. To the extent that the latter were his chief concern, and to the extent that he pursued his career exclusively in the offices of the chief scribe, the young scribe would have begun by moving up through the hierarchically ordered categories within the Office of the Imperial Divan. It would then have been advantageous for him to obtain a transfer into one of the smaller and more select offices, those of the corresponding secretary of the grand vezir or the receiver. To some degree, then, an ambitious scribal official would have to think in terms of rising both through the hierarchical orders within the bureaus and through a hierarchical order of bureaus.

This pattern is too complicated, however, to have prevailed very strictly in a bureaucratic system of this kind. In the biographies of scribal officials who rose to prominence in this period, elements of such a hierarchical pattern do recur.⁶⁴ Yet such individuals neither passed through every level of the hierarchical schematization nor spent their entire careers in the offices subordinate to the chief scribe.

Surely what mattered more than the hierarchical pattern per

se was the ability of the individual to establish claims to advancement in ways that his superiors would recognize. In the Ottoman scribal service, this meant giving proof of ability. To make ability count, however, the individual needed connections. Ability without connections would mean frustration; connections without ability might lead to high position, but offered no protection against mockery and reproof.⁶⁵ Reasonably combined, however, aptitude and connections would enable the aspiring official to "cut through the stages" (*kat'ı merahl*—a widely echoed phrase) of the supposed hierarchical ordering and rise quickly to high station.

Meanwhile, where working conditions are concerned, the available information suggests that their status as slaves of the sultan sat but lightly on the lower-level scribal officials of this period. Not only were the facts of their social origin out of consonance with the legal principle of servility, but the conditions in which they served imply that discipline was anything but rigorous. For example, in addition to the apprentices, scribes, supervisors, and bureau chiefs, the offices appear to have been thronged most of the time with other people of the most varied types, including even beggars and peddlars. Many of those standing about were menials—doormen waiting to show the visitor to his destination in return for a tip (*bahşis*), messengers, guards, and the makers of the innumerable cups of coffee and glasses of tea that provided stimulus for the continual "rending and mending of affairs of state." Others were outsiders who streamed in and out to request favors or appointments, to pay social visits, or to consult scribes who conducted a sort of petty "legal practice" on the side by writing petitions and such as a way to pick up extra income.⁶⁶ Some of these visitors posed security risks, of which the beleaguered government was becoming increasingly conscious.

Despite the obvious disadvantages of conducting the most sensitive business amid such a hubbub, many scribes probably found it all congenial and satisfying. Indications are that most scribal officials did not work very hard and never had.⁶⁷ While there is evidence to show that there was always a hard core of the serious-minded and ambitious, others no doubt found relief from the boredom of their paperwork, much of it extremely repetitive,⁶⁸ in avocations ranging from cutting out and lettering the fancy labels that still grace many of the old registers, to the

development of political acquaintance, discussion of literary or mystical interests, or the pursuit of private economic advantage. Not too surprisingly, some abused the prescribed hours, and some simply did not come to work. In 1823, for example, up to a quarter of the clerks of the Offices of the Imperial Divan and the Receiver did not attend at all, and some, while retaining incomes from landholdings assigned to the offices, had taken up other occupations.⁶⁹ The guild-like traits of the lower bureaucracy, like the repression of initiative that we noted earlier, were thus associated with underemployment and indiscipline, and so with what sociologists term a "subversion of service goals," an abuse of office for service of personal ends rather than those of the state.⁷⁰

In part, no doubt, this is to be explained in terms of the material rewards for service in the lower scribal offices. Apprentices received no compensation whatever. Even the regular clerks (*hulefa*) no longer received salaries paid from the central Treasury, as had their predecessors of the sixteenth century. Instead, they received their compensation only through a ramshackle series of prebendal systems. The incomes from benefices in land, which we have already discussed in connection with the systems of *gedik* and *şerh*, were only one of these; and since the benefice incomes assigned to the offices of the chief scribe were by now described as "worthless and without yield" (*çürük ve bihasıl*),⁷¹ they were perhaps no longer the most important. Other types of prebendal income included fees (*harc*, *rüsum*, *aidat*) collected in the offices for the performance of official functions and divided among the officials in shares, and gifts (*atiye-i seniye*) distributed by the sultan on ceremonial occasions. After retirement, scribes might receive modest pensions assigned through the Rüks Section from the proceeds of the farming of certain customs duties.

It was in these conditions, then, that scribal officials below the rank of the *hacegân* pursued their careers from apprenticeship through clerkship, and on as far as the supervisory positions such as purse-bearer (*kisedar*), examining clerk (*mümeyyiz*), or chief clerk (*ser kalfa*, *baş kalfa*). The low state of official discipline, the ad hoc character of facilities for scribal recruitment and education, and the regression over time from compensation by salary into prebendalism⁷² are all witness to the inhibitive effect of imperial decline on the development of the service. Partly for

this reason, the "patrimonial style" was operative in recruitment and promotion to an extent that it probably could not have been, say, in the military-administrative establishment at its height. Even more in evidence, however, is the influence of the guild tradition. The scribal officials in Istanbul, perhaps unlike those in some provincial centers,⁷³ do not appear to have been formally organized into a guild. Yet guild-like traits appear in the system of training by apprenticeship; in the emphasis, if never exclusive, on following in one's father's footsteps; in procedural patterns; in the application to the scribal offices as well as to the guilds of the *gedik* system; and finally in some of the most important of the terms used to designate the various categories of scribal personnel. In sum, lower scribal life was guild-like in countless details and in its very ethos.

The Upper Scribal Service

The lack of anything like separate career lines for clerical and professional personnel implied that many elements of these guild-like patterns would carry over into the upper scribal echelons. The expectations of high officials about how the business of the offices should be conducted and about how their subordinates would behave, for example, surely came largely from that source. Yet, above the threshold marked by the rank of the *hacegân*, the relative importance of the influences observable in the lower scribal service shifted markedly. Officials who attained the rank of *hace* or the higher one of *vezir*, which carried the title *paşa*—these being the only ranks commonly given to scribal officials in this period⁷⁴—were the patrimonial elite of the scribal service, and life for those who joined this elite became quite different from what it had been before. In part, the differences involved advantages for the scribal grandees; to a perhaps larger degree, particularly with the decline of the empire, the differences brought disadvantages.

To begin with some of the more attractive traits, high status entailed a number of conspicuous distinctions, such as rank, occupancy of designated places in the tables of ceremonial precedence (*tesrifat*), receipt of robes of honor (*hil'at*) upon investiture, steeply increased entitlements to compensation, and, increasingly as the official rose in status, the capacity to maintain a large household patterned after that of the sultan. Attainment of the *hacelik* also signified considerable enlargement of the scope of

lateral mobility, a distinctive element of the efendi-turned-*paşa* pattern.⁷⁵ The biographies of scribal officials of this type are full of shifts among the higher positions linked to the chief scribe, such other high offices of the Porte as those of chief bailiff and steward, or other scribal positions in the capital, such as the superintendencies (*nezaret*, *emanet*) of the granaries (*zahire*), cannon foundry (*Tophane*), and naval arsenal (*Tersane*). Even more significant is the inclusion in such biographies of posts traditionally beyond the scribal pale, such as provincial governorships and the grand vezirate.⁷⁶

As we know already, however, status, resources, and an increased range of employment opportunities were not all there was to life in the upper scribal echelons. Rather, those traits were accompanied by a marked politicization of bureaucratic life. Basically, this was a function of proximity to the sultan. The legal principle of slave status may have weighed lightly on the lower officials, who formed the political connections indispensable for the advancement of their careers with persons who were their equals in terms of this principle. But for those who rose to higher status, close contact actualized the dangers of the sultan-slave dichotomy in a way made all the more perilous by the intense competition for favor and office. In the dangers inherent in this situation lay the dark sequel to the "patrimonial style in recruitment," the two together engendering the peculiar pattern of rapid movement, both upward and downward, that we have described as "wheel of fortune mobility."

While the insecurity of high-level officials in relation to the sultan was presumably characteristic in all periods of Ottoman history, at least after the earliest decades, in the period of decline there was an additional problem that compounded these dangers. In one sense, this was actually the mechanism that turned the scribal efendis into *paşas*, for the mobility of the high-level officials of this period was partly a function of brevity of tenure. This had become institutionalized through a system of annual appointment (*tevcihat*) for all high officials, meaning, in the case of the scribal service, all those who had attained the rank of the *hacegân*. Such officials often obtained reappointment to the positions they already held,⁷⁷ but only for a year at a time.

Numerous signs indicate that this practice of annual reappointment, not characteristic of the empire at its height, was a product of imperial decline. References to the holding of office

on a rotational basis (*münavebet*) and to the conferment of ranks alone on those for whom there were no appropriate places⁷⁸ made clear, for example, that the system operated amid a surplus of aspirants in relation to the number of posts. The economic interests built up around the system are significant in a similar sense. For there were fees to pay, either for appointment or for reconfirmation in place. The fees went into the pockets of the officials who had power to appoint and formed part of the prebendal income of their offices. The grand vezirs of the late eighteenth century received up to 400,000 *kurus* per year from appointment fees, a sum corresponding at rates of 1797 to about 30,000 English pounds, while various of the grand vezirs' subordinates received proportionate sums.⁷⁹ Those who had to pay the fees naturally sought to recoup the outlay during their time in office through demands on their official subordinates or on members of the subject classes who fell under their authority. Referred to by a variety of names such as *caize*,⁸⁰ these appointment fees amounted in practical terms to a breach of the supposed tax exemption of the ruling class and appear, if we except the rather different phenomenon of tax farming, to be the sole reality behind talk of sale of office in the Ottoman Empire, at least in the central administration. The history of the *tevcihat* system is unclear in many respects, but its character makes clear how far the fees were from representing a purchase of property rights in office in any lasting sense.⁸¹

Still, the systems of annual appointment and fee collection were significant in at least two respects. First, in a state that had long allowed collection of fees for performance of certain types of official functions,⁸² the annual appointments and the transfers of funds to which they gave rise provided a major stimulus to that proliferation of various forms of extortion and unauthorized taxation which so characterized the decline of the administrative system.⁸³ In addition, given the personnel needs resulting from the decline of the military-administrative establishment, the system of annual appointments seems to have served as the engine that catapulted the scribal specialists of the central offices into the position of top-level generalists of imperial administration.

The institutionalized uncertainties of the annual appointments may thus have created the efendi-turned-paşa pattern; but the same factor compounded the dangers already inherent

in the sultan-slave dichotomy—arbitrary deposition, exile, expropriation, summary execution—to confront the tribal grandees with uncertainties of which they could never be unmindful. A series of *causes célèbres* dramatized this fact right up to the 1830s, when conditions of service began to undergo reform. For example, scribal dignitaries of 1785 were shaken by the overthrow of their colleague, the Grand Vezir Halil Hamid Paşa, the subsequent expropriation of his estate, and his execution.⁸⁴ In 1799, it was the execution in exile of Ebu Bekir Ratib Efendi, not a paşa but a former chief scribe and once a man of great and constructive influence.⁸⁵ Others of his kind were destroyed by the troubles attendant on the overthrow of Selim III.⁸⁶ In 1823, a major crisis occurred with the exile, execution, and confiscation of the estate of Halet Efendi, a scribal official and long the most influential figure at the court of Mahmud II. His fall precipitated the expropriation and the banishment or imprisonment of many of his dependents, including both officials and household retainers, as well as the release of those whom Halet had sent into exile.⁸⁷ Halet had been much feared and hated, but the best repute was no guarantee against a similar fate. In 1828-1829, Galib Paşa, a former diplomat and chief scribe become provincial governor, was disgraced unjustly and sent into exile, where he shortly died.⁸⁸ In 1837, a particularly vicious scribal-bureaucratic rivalry culminated in the overthrow, exile, and murder of Pertev Paşa. As with Halet, Pertev's fall precipitated that of many of his associates. Pertev's fall did not go unavenged.⁸⁹ But by then times were changing, and the fruits of vengeance included not just the liquidation of Pertev's enemies, but the first fundamental reforms in conditions of service.

An account of these reforms must appear in the next chapter. Until they occurred, there was little a high-level official could do to escape the fate of Pertev or the others who had gone before him. A man of such standing could protect parts of his property through the abuse of the system of pious foundations (*evkaf*) known as "family *evkaf*." Property so deeded would in principle pass beyond the reach of the state, while most or all of the income would remain for the benefit of the family members as "trustees." In addition, some branches of the ruling class were considered safer from the insecurities of bureaucratic life than others. The scribal service was, in fact, regarded as relatively safe, but the religious establishment was even safer.⁹⁰ This im-

plies that a grandee in a particular branch of the ruling class might profit by placing at least some dependents in other branches. Ultimately, though, the inescapable strategy for such a figure was to accumulate the largest possible network of personal dependents, and to acquire for himself the kind of position that would give him sufficient patronage to put his kinsmen and protégés, suitably trained, to political use on the largest possible scale. There are indications, in fact, that government policy had begun as early as the seventeenth century to encourage this kind of behavior, at least in the provincial administration, by favoring heads of "complete" or extensively developed households (*mükemmel kapı*) for promotion.⁹¹

In any case, the very extremity of the sultan's demands for subservience and the uncertainty of tenure in office meant that the pursuit of household interests would appear to the patrimonial grandees of the period of decline as the most vital issue of political life. In this fact, indeed, lay the upper-bureaucratic counterpart of that "subversion of service goals" observable in the more petty kinds of indiscipline characteristic of the lower officials.

The types and amounts of compensation that the grandees of the ruling class might draw while in favor provide further insights into the stakes of the political struggle and the means available for the maintenance of the households, as well as into the character of the imperial system and the processes of its decline. Upper scribal officials most likely did not receive incomes from benefices in land except in the very highest positions, to some of which incomes from the most valuable category of landholdings, known as *has*, were traditionally assigned. Scribal officials who had held incomes from smaller landholdings before rising to high position were supposed to give up those incomes on leaving the bureaus through which they had been assigned—a rule often honored in the breach.⁹² Such officials would then receive compensation in a variety of other prebendal forms.

One of these, evocative of a time when the ruling class was little more than a military retinue undifferentiated from the household of the ruler, took the form of rations (*tayinat*). Even in the early nineteenth century, senior officials were still entitled to startling quantities of such commodities as meat, bread, olive oil, and charcoal, which they presumably used to feed, heat, and light their entourages.⁹³ Officials also received gifts in customary

ways. Some of the most important scribal officials, such as the corresponding secretary of the grand vezir, were said to be dependent for their entire income on gifts (*atiye*) that the sultan distributed once annually.⁹⁴ Since most high officials were under obligation to give gifts in certain situations as well as to receive, the economic significance of the gifts as forms of compensation was probably doubtful in most cases. What they do reflect is the preponderance of political criteria in the distribution of economic resources and the emphasis in the traditional economic mentality on patterns of reciprocity and redistribution.⁹⁵ Other types of income included the share of the revenues that some high officials received for serving ex officio as supervisors of the large pious foundations created by the sultans.⁹⁶ Finally and most importantly, high officials were allowed to collect fees, not only for appointments over which they had control, but also for the services that they or their bureaus performed, lower officials also deriving income from shares of some such receipts.⁹⁷ Many of these sources of revenue were surely very lucrative, at least for some individuals. Yet it is difficult to imagine that the mechanics of collecting and disbursing income in such ways did not do as much as the uncertainties of official tenure to concentrate the attention of high officials on personal and household interests.

During the period of decline, then, upper-echelon scribal life increasingly exemplified the model of the patrimonial household, both in the sense that the officials were inescapably slaves in the household of the sultan, and in the sense that they were simultaneously heads of analogous establishments of their own. Their inability to find real security in their own households from the dangers built into that of the sultan points to the continued operation, as in earlier periods, of traditional patrimonial principles. Yet, the decline of the empire had heightened the importance of the grandee households, both because government policy came to assume their existence and because of intensification of the uncertainties of upper-bureaucratic life. The restriction of official tenure through the system of annual appointment, the spread of the fee system, and the effective breaching of the tax exemption supposedly distinctive of the ruling class were key examples of these added uncertainties. Scribal officials of a later generation would tend to view the rudimentary development of a system of ranks for their service, unlike others, as another sign

of the weakness of their position. The status of the scribal officials of the Ottoman Empire was in many respects less different from that of their counterparts in other states of the time than comparison with modern-day conditions would imply.⁹⁸ Still, the insecurities built into the situation of Ottoman scribal officials in this period implied a number of important goals that collective self-interest would lead them to pursue in the era of reform, even as they adhered in other ways to the patterns of political activity associated with the patrimonial tradition.⁹⁹

Looking beyond the elite to survey the social state of the late traditional scribal service overall, we may conclude that the operations of the patrimonial model appeared to varying degrees in all distinguishable groups, if in conjunction with other patterns. In the case of the Greek translators, the influence of the patrimonial model, strongly characteristic of the Phenariot elite, was subordinate to that of the model of the autonomous confessional community. That the official *cursus honorum* of the Phenariots suggested a non-Muslim enclave in the ruling class is particularly indicative of this fact. Among the lower scribal echelons, patrimonial traits were ancillary to a strong guild-like pattern. Among the scribal elite, the politicization of bureaucratic life and the material rewards of power submerged the guild-like traits in those of the patrimonial household. The decadence of an imperial system once noted for the vigor and stringent discipline of its ruling class, by thwarting the development of any consistent policy for the social ordering of the scribal service, seemed to heighten the manifestations of all these patterns.

The state of the scribal service at the end of the eighteenth century obviously had critical implications not only for the overall reform of the imperial system, but also for the determination of the capacity of scribal officials to play a leading role in the reforms. Even before the opening of the era of reform, then, the condition of the scribal service implied a fundamental question: how meaningful in fact was the eminence of the scribal efendis and paşas of the late eighteenth century?

CONCLUSION: THE EFENDI-TURNED-PAŞA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The eminence of the efendi-turned-paşa had, to return to the point with which this chapter opened, two essential elements: a political component expressed in the emergence of the upper

scribal officials as an elite of administrative generalists, and a cultural component identified with the traditional scribal culture. Acquired in a period of decline, this eminence may have been modest by the standards of the Ottoman system at its height, or by those of contemporary Western states, but it was nonetheless there. An attempt at more precise evaluation of the relative significance of its two component elements will make its importance clearer.

To begin with the political component of the scribal eminence, this is most readily appreciable in terms of promotion patterns, on which we have already presented some of the relevant evidence. We have commented, for example, on the decline of the military-administrative and religious establishments and the simultaneous development of the palace and the scribal service. Within the last, we have also noted a shift of balance among its component elements, with the chief scribe and his men emerging to the most prominent position. Considering that the Treasury had reportedly once been the scene for the training of all scribal officials¹⁰⁰ and possibly even the major power center of the scribal service, it was a fact of ironic significance for the future development of reformist policy that by the end of the eighteenth century, Treasury business and the "affairs of the Divan" had come to be regarded as two separate specializations, with the former considered inadequate as preparation for the latter.¹⁰¹ In any case, the effects of all these long-term shifts in the ruling class were among the influences that converged to shape the pattern of the efendi-turned-paşa.

To have a precise appreciation of the expression of this pattern in terms of lines of promotion, however, it is not enough to say only this. Rather, we must take a closer look at the efendis who turned into paşas by achieving such offices as provincial governorships or the grand vezirate. To assess the relative importance of the kind of mobility that they represent, we must then also go beyond Itzkowitz' discussion of these men to consider them, not in isolation, but in relation to all the other officials who held the same offices they did.

For example, Itzkowitz names eight former chief scribes who served on one or more occasions during the years 1683-1774 as provincial governors.¹⁰² Considering that this kind of promotion was known as early as the time of Süleyman the Magnificent,¹⁰³ that the total number of men who served as chief scribe

in the same period was thirty-three,¹⁰⁴ and that the total number of provincial governors must for the same time span have run into the hundreds, this does not seem enough by itself to prove the existence of a strong scribal hold on provincial administrative office.

The same kind of problem appears in the promotion of scribal officials to the grand vezirate, again a phenomenon with antecedents at much earlier dates.¹⁰⁵ Changing his period of reference somewhat, Itzkowitz cites six officials of scribal origin who rose to the grand vezirate during the years 1703-1774. Five of these had served as chief scribe; one had not, although he had been ambassador to several Western states.¹⁰⁶ Counting one other grand vezir who had held the rank of *hace* but had never served in positions associated with the chief scribe would bring the total of scribal grand vezirs to seven.¹⁰⁷ Yet, the total number of men who served as grand vezir between 1703 and the conclusion of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 was forty. The number of chief scribes for the same years was twenty-five.

Extending the counts from 1774 all the way to the death of Mahmud II in 1839 produces two more grand vezirs who had previously been chief scribe, another who had risen to be corresponding secretary to the grand vezir but then moved over into the Treasury, plus two *hacegân* who rose to the grand vezirate outside the offices of the chief scribe, one of them serving en route as steward (*kâhya bey*), and the other as chief bailiff (*çavuş başı*).¹⁰⁸ This adds five more scribal grand vezirs, making twelve for the period 1703-1839, although only seven of the twelve had served as chief scribe. The total number who held the office of grand vezir during the same period was seventy-three; and the total of those who served as chief scribe between 1703 and the transformation of that office into the Foreign Ministry in 1836 was fifty-three.¹⁰⁹

In purely quantitative terms, the pattern of promotion from chief scribe to grand vezir again does not appear strong enough for its importance to pass without question. To give these figures the weight they deserve, we have to take account of two other considerations. Presumably, these apply to the provincial governors as much as the grand vezirs; but it is in relation to the latter, thanks to their smaller numbers and the greater availability of biographical information, that these points become most visible.

The first fact, clearly, is the difference in size of the branches

of service from which the grand vezirs came. Figures for comparison are not readily at hand, but what was left of the military-administrative establishment certainly was hundreds of times larger than the group of some 130 to 200 who served under the chief scribe at the end of the eighteenth century. The systems of recruitment and training then characteristic of the scribal service also make clear that it was not uniformly an elite corps, and that the number of its members who were serious candidates for the highest offices must at any given moment have been quite small. Closer consideration of who the other grand vezirs of the period were does, however, bring out a factor which makes these few men stand out in a way out of proportion to their numbers.

In fact, it is difficult to detect clear patterns of promotion among the other grand vezirs of the same years. In view of the development of the palace service during the period, one fact that stands out is that eight former sword-bearers (*silahdar ağa*), representing another small group within the ruling class, became grand vezir between 1703 and 1839,¹¹⁰ as opposed to only seven former chief scribes. Beyond this, there were many grand vezirs with backgrounds in military and provincial positions, although the decline of the military-administrative establishment makes it hard at times to know how to type these men. The best overall description of the backgrounds of the grand vezirs of the late prereform period is perhaps still the "variety" (*tenevvü*) cited long ago by Mustafa Nuri Paşa.¹¹¹

When they are viewed against this variegated backdrop, the factor that gives the scribal officials special prominence, and which also increased their hold on the grand vezirate dramatically after 1839, is their qualifications. These were what made the scribes look good in comparison with officials of other types in the consultative assemblies described by Cevdet Paşa. Similarly, the biographies of the non-scribal grand vezirs of this period make clear how few well-qualified candidates for that office there were. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, for example, there was one grand vezir who was illiterate.¹¹² He was not the last. Another figure illustrates our point all the more strikingly in that he was one of the most influential individuals of the day.

A Georgian ultimately known as Koca Yusuf Paşa, he began his career as a slave of the Istanbul harbor master (*liman reisi*).

After manumission and the death of his former master, Yusuf worked as a coffeemaker in the Istanbul harbor district in winter and sailed with the fleet or engaged in trade during the summer. Through his trading partnerships with prominent individuals, including the Grand Vezir Gazi Hasan Paşa, Yusuf formed politically valuable connections, which enabled him to acquire administrative positions. He became known as an opponent of reform, although at times he supported it in the military. In any case, personal links, rather than any concept of policy or ties to any specific branch of service, propelled Yusuf's rise. Selim III disliked him vigorously, however, and Yusuf's appointment as grand vezir in 1791 was proof of the lack of choices. In selecting Yusuf's predecessor, the young Selim had actually been reduced to going into the hall at the palace where the Mantle of the Prophet was kept and choosing by lot among the names of his paşas.¹¹³ As for Koca Yusuf, he ended his career in provincial administrative posts in the Hijaz (c. 1793-1800). These, too, were unwise assignments, if we are to believe Cevdet Paşa; for Yusuf's drinking, lechery, and corruption were hardly the way for the Istanbul government to maintain its influence in the face of the rising Wahhabi movement.¹¹⁴

These details are admittedly among the most pronounced indications of disorder and incapacity from this period. Along with the organizational, procedural, and social patterns discussed earlier, however, they provide the context in which the eminence of the scribal officials can be appreciated. There may have been disadvantages implicit in the craftsmanlike approach of the scribal officials to training and the conduct of affairs, in their tendency to harness the interests of the state to personal and familial interests, in their lack of experience in finance, and in their small numbers. Yet the best of the scribal officials were the men who kept alive the ideas of administration of which a Koca Yusuf Paşa was so thoroughly devoid, and they were the ones best prepared, if not in every sense well prepared, to cope with a changing world.

That this scribal elite and its successors in the era of reform would ultimately fail to save the obsolescent, multinational empire, whose decay so trammled their careers as individuals and their collective development as a branch of the ruling class, can scarcely be cause for wonder. That fact must not, however, be allowed to obscure the revolutionary changes that men of scribal

background, more than any others, brought about in the nineteenth century, or the remarkable difference between the legacy that fell to the scribal officials of the late prereform period and that which passed to their republican successors in the twentieth century.

REASSERTION OF THE SULTANATE AND FOUNDATION OF THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY

... zaman-i Selim-i Hanide her şey taht-ı nizama idhal olunmakta olduğu gibi. . . .

In the time of Selim Han, [it was] as if everything was being brought under order. . . .

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa¹

... kâffe-i memurin haklarında erzan buyurulmuş olan işbu mevâhib-i ulya-yı şahanenin kadr-u kıymetini ve hidemat-ı Devlet-i Aliye'de usul-ı memuriyet ve mücib-i mükâfat ve mücazatını alâ vechi 'l-küllî bilmek üzere bi-lütfihî 'l-müstean vaz-u-tesis kılınan kanunname-i ceza-i madelet-ihtivadır ki ber vech-i ati zıkr-ü-beyan kılınır.

... the penal code, just in its provisions, which has been established by the grace of Him from whom we seek aid in order that all might know the quality and worth of the high imperial benefactions granted all officials and the fundamentals of duty and entitlements to reward and punishment in the service of the Sublime State, is proclaimed as follows.

Penal Code for Officials, 1838²

... bundan böyle Devlet-i Aliye ve memalik-i mahrumemizin hüsn-i idaresi zımında bazı kavanin-i cedide vaz-u-tesisi lâzım ve mühim görünerek. . . .

... whereas it appears necessary . . . henceforth to establish certain new laws for the good administration of our Sublime State and our well-protected provinces. . . .

Gülhane Decree, 1839³



In 1789, in the midst of war and defeat, Selim III succeeded to the Ottoman sultanate. Almost immediately, he began a series of efforts at reform that, once peace had been concluded, blossomed into what became known as the "New Order" (*Nizam-ı Cedid*). Aimed particularly at the creation of a new and more effective military machine and the establishment of the indispensable support services for it, this ultimately affected countless other phases of Ottoman life. A major reassertion of the initiative of the central government, and especially of the sultan, the "New Order" was in effect the first attempt ever made at a general reform of the governmental system. The extent to which certain of Selim's reforms were culturally innovative is sometimes debated.⁴ Different ones were to different degrees. But the generality of the drive toward "order," "regulation," or "system," all of which can be used as translations for *nizam*, was an innovation worthy to be taken as marking the symbolic opening of a new age. The very name of Selim's reform program was thus a first explicit evocation of that shift of orientation, away from traditionalism and toward the creation of a rational-legal order, that we have noted as fundamentally distinctive of the era of reform.

After the overthrow of Selim III in 1807 and the abolition of the "New Order," it was not clear during the brief reign of Mustafa IV (1807-1808) or in the early years of Mahmud II (1808-1839) whether either sultanic dominance or the reformist impulse would survive. The early years of Mahmud's reign were, however, ones of preparation, during which he built up his practical political strength.⁵ When he felt strong enough to reassert the reformist initiative in unmistakable fashion, as he began to do with the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826, he generally continued along the paths that Selim had earlier begun to explore. This was true of the content and relative importance of the various measures and particularly of the reassertion of the regulatory activity of the central government; it was true, too, of the sultan's dominance over the course of change. In this sense, the reigns of Selim and Mahmud fall together in the history of Ottoman reform as a single period of sultanic leadership.

To appreciate the critically important changes that occurred at the Sublime Porte and in the corporate state of the scribal service under these two sultans, we shall begin by looking at the general way in which Ottomans appear to have perceived their

needs for reform as of the opening of this period. We shall then go on to look at the beginnings of reform within the traditional offices of the chief scribe (*reis ül-küttab*, *reis efendi*) at the Sublime Porte, next at the creation of a series of new organizations and systems related to the transformation of the chief scribe into a foreign minister. This will bring us to the attempt that Mahmud made at the end of his reign to restructure the central administration in general, bringing it more tightly under his own control, but in the process transforming the collective aspect of the scribal service and the traditional conditions of service within it. Throughout the discussion, we shall note the frustrations and failures as well as the successes of the reformers, emphasizing also the progressive contribution of their efforts to the sociocultural transformation of the scribal service. This will help make it possible in the conclusion to evaluate the changes of this fifty-year period and to bring out the distinctive features of a particular approach to modernization, one that became evident in these years and remained so until the end of the empire.

CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR REFORM

The contrast between the capabilities of the governmental system at the end of the eighteenth century and the problems then facing the empire, obvious to the modern scholar, in many ways was even more cruelly immediate to Ottoman statesmen of the time. To view this contrast as portrayed in Ottoman sources is to appreciate the frame of mind in which Ottoman sultans and statesmen entered the era of reform. Always relating back to the state and its needs, the perceptions of these men provide the natural background for the reforms to be discussed in this chapter.

For contemporary Ottomans, the basic fact in their conception of the need for reform was the continued military defeats they endured. The military was one field in which innovative reform had already begun—in which, indeed, it had always been considered allowable. As Cevdet Paşa points out, however, Ottoman officials had little substantive knowledge of what it would mean to create a modern kind of military system, other than what some of them had gained by fighting armies better than their own.⁶ On that account Ottoman efforts at military reform were to remain derivative in inspiration and dependent on obtaining

technical assistance from European powers. Military problems nonetheless remained central to the thinking of Ottoman reformers, certainly through the reign of Mahmud, and would do more than anything else to fill any comprehensive account of the reforms of this period.

Any thought of improving military effectiveness raised the equally desperate question of finance. Ottoman statesmen of the 1790s could not escape the fact that the state was practically bankrupt. Selim's predecessor, Abd ül-Hamid I (1774-1789), had been reduced in his last years to lamenting: "This money business is giving me sleepless nights; God help the Sublime State. . . ."⁷ The sultan's advisers, too, could think of no solutions more promising than soliciting contributions, further debasement of the coinage, or trying to borrow from foreign states such as Holland or the Sultanate of Morocco.⁸

Of course, none of these efforts worked. In the case of the loans, to judge from later experience, it was just as well. In the case of efforts to raise money internally, the problem was not only the inefficiency of Ottoman fiscal administration, but also the already far-advanced disruption of the Ottoman economy. Unfortunately, Ottoman officials were poorly equipped to address such issues. Their grasp of economic questions was weak by any standard. In the case of the scribal officials, ironically, the relative decline of the Treasury as a path to high office had diminished their preparation to deal with financial problems in the very period when the scribal service was gaining in political importance. So complex were the economic troubles of the period that even modern scholars do not understand them fully.⁹ Contemporaries could not have seen them more clearly; yet they could not escape awareness of some of the economic problems of the state. Their inability to raise needed revenue would eventually lead them to think in terms of centralizing the financial administration. They were aware of the evolution of the capitulatory regime toward terms more and more disadvantageous to Ottoman commercial interests.¹⁰ And they could not have failed to sense the linkage between economic disruption and the continuing pressure for expansion of bureaucratic ranks.

In hindsight, military defeat and economic disruption show that the Ottoman Empire was being drawn more and more into a world-embracing system of European hegemony. Ottoman thinkers understood this phenomenon only in part, but their

awareness stimulated their thinking about a broad range of administrative issues.

They saw, for example, that government business was growing in volume and seriousness every day. This was especially true of diplomatic affairs,¹¹ the more so in that many problems that had once been purely domestic now had diplomatic repercussions. This is apparent in the claims of foreign powers to protect specific religious communities within the empire, in the abuses of the capitulatory rights of consular protection,¹² and in a whole galaxy of problems consequent upon loss of territory.

Anxiety about the future and the sense of the growth in volume and gravity of official business led in turn to a new concern about the state of the governmental apparatus and the ruling class, as well as to a rise in demands for efficient performance from them. The influence of this demand on the evolution of the various branches of the ruling class and on the characteristic patterns of promotion to high office is already apparent. In the consultative assemblies that the sultans and grand vezirs of the eighteenth century convened to deal with problems of particular gravity, the same demand made itself felt with particular force, incidentally launching what would prove an unstoppable process of enlarging the basis of consultation. In the demands of the sultans for solutions, and in the threats they made to officials who did not meet their expectations, lie the origins of a new kind of "activism," which became increasingly evident as the nineteenth century progressed. Understanding it in terms that Ottomans of an earlier generation could have appreciated, Cevdet Paşa described this spirit with the Arabic aphorism "blessing is in activity" (*al-baraka fi 'l-haraka*).¹³

A kind of dynamic reaction to the trauma of helplessness in the face of defeat, so widely apparent in the Middle East a half century later, was thus already in evidence at the topmost echelons of the Ottoman "center." More than that, it had begun to radiate downward and outward, provoking or preparing the way for changes in many phases of the administration and in many phases of its interactions with the subject classes. The concern for military reform and for generating increased levels of resources are parts of this process. So was the related problem of reasserting the control of the central government over Janissary contingents and other disorderly elements in the towns¹⁴ and, in the countryside, over "notables" (*ayan*) and "lords of the valley"

(*derebey*), who not only enjoyed quasi autonomy locally but also, in the revolt of Bayrakdar Mustafa Paşa (1808), exerted a decisive if temporary influence over events in Istanbul.¹⁵ In the power of the magnates, and in such forces as the Wahhabi movement, the empire building of Muhammad Ali Paşa in Egypt, or the nationalism of Serbs and Greeks, the reformers of the "center" encountered forms of resistance with which they could not effectively cope. In a sense, however, such frustrations only increased the incentives for reform.

As is implicit in the very concept of Selim's "New Order" (*nizam*), another lesson that the reformers quickly began to perceive was that reassertion of the "center" and reform in general would require a new emphasis on law and law enforcement. The fact that the legislative function of the traditional state, limited in any case by modern standards, had fallen to some degree into disuse in the period of decline¹⁶ clearly heightens the significance of this new emphasis. So does the fact that the legislative activity of the reformers quickly became their most important instrument for introducing innovative policies. The culmination of the Bayrakdar Mustafa revolt in the signing of the "Deed of Agreement" (1808) provided a first sign of how readily this legislative reassertion might extend into changes in the fundamental constitutive principles of the state.¹⁷ With the late reforms of Mahmud II, the use of the new legislative function for making such changes became a permanent feature of Ottoman political life.

The success of this legislative reassertion depended, in turn, on enforcement, not only over the subject classes, but also within the administration itself. Recognizing the extent to which the credibility of all their efforts at reform depended on the regularization of the governmental system itself, Selim and Mahmud directed a great part of their regulatory activity toward this objective. Even before the accession of Selim, however, Ottoman statesmen had begun to recognize the need for such improvements. This is clear from vezirial orders to prohibit abuses of official discipline,¹⁸ from high-level complaints about irregularities in preparation of official documents at lower echelons,¹⁹ and from anxiety about the character and purposes of many of the persons then thronging government offices.²⁰ Problems such as these were to remain objects of concern throughout the period of reform.

Alongside the sense of threat from without that underlay this growing recognition of a need for reform at the imperial "center," a more positive kind of consciousness of the outside world was also emerging. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, while the sense of European menace mounted sharply,²¹ a subtler attraction did, too, opening new and larger breaches in the cultural exclusivism and insularity characteristic of traditional Islamic society. The causes of this change are too far-reaching for easy explanation. But it is certainly associated with the decline in the ability of the empire to deal with Europeans from a position of superiority, and thus also with the factors that underlay the growth of the scribal service in relative prominence within the ruling class. In particular, the development of a new outlook is linked to the temporary diplomatic missions that the sultans began to send out with increasing frequency in the eighteenth century, usually under the leadership of scribal ambassadors.²²

A new degree of positive response to European cultural stimuli had appeared as early as the reign of Ahmed III (1703-1730), in what Berkes has termed the "silhouette of a renaissance."²³ At a later date, it reappeared in the extraordinary efforts of Selim III, even prior to his accession to the throne, to make contact with Louis XVI and gain French assistance for his projects of reform.²⁴ On the eve of Selim's inauguration of his "New Order," this new interest showed itself in ways especially significant for the development of the ruling class in the reports of the envoys Ebu Bekir Ratib Efendi, in Vienna in 1791-1792, and Ahmed Azmi Efendi, ambassador to Prussia in 1790-1792.

The most important ambassadorial reports of the last decades prior to Selim's institution of permanent embassies in 1793, the accounts prepared by these two men bear testimony to the considerable pains they took at their master's behest to learn about the states to which they were accredited. The unpublished but voluminous reports of Ratib Efendi, to judge from available accounts of them, describe in minute detail the Austrian armed forces, speaking as well of the principal ministries and other features of Austrian government and society.²⁵ The much briefer published report of Ahmed Azmi Efendi's embassy to Prussia lacks the military emphasis. Yet, it appends to the conventional narrative of the ambassador's journey a topical description of various significant aspects of the administrative system and the

economic and social life of that most orderly of kingdoms. From the standpoint of any study of the ruling class, particular importance attaches to Azmi Efendi's laborious but clear description of the ministerial system and the division of portfolios, the concept of bureaucratic professionalism, the system of official salaries and ranks, and the startling facts that officials did not exact fees or bribes and that they were allowed to retain their positions as long as they rendered good service.²⁶ The implications of these discoveries for the spirit in which the bureaucrats, as opposed to the sultans, of the Ottoman Empire would approach the reform of the ruling class are of the utmost moment; and, while it has been known for some time that Ottoman diplomats were drawing these lessons from the Vienna of the 1830s,²⁷ this report makes clear that they had already drawn them elsewhere at the very beginning of the era of reform. To the eighteenth-century Ottoman grandee willing to look at contemporary Europe with something other than the traditional contempt, the spectacle could be eye-opening indeed.

As the era of reform opened, then, Ottoman statesmen had an increasing consciousness of Europe as a source both of threats and of ideas that might profitably be applied to improve their own situation. While the sense of threat made them particularly conscious of military issues and thus of fiscal ones, as well, there was also a general sense that administrative problems of all types were making new demands. From this followed a sense of the need to reestablish the control of the central government throughout the empire, to reassert the legislative initiative of the state, and to achieve the improved levels of administrative regularity indispensable for these ends. For reform to succeed, it would, according to this view, have to begin at the "center" and work outward from it.

Obviously unable to verbalize their problems in terms of such modern concepts as integration into a Europe-centered world system, activism, or movement away from a traditionalistic order toward a system of rational-legalism, contemporary Ottomans were nonetheless beginning to formulate essential elements of what modern observers understand by such concepts. Through media such as the memoranda that Selim solicited from leading officials prior to the inauguration of the "New Order,"²⁸ the ambassadorial reports just mentioned, and the others submitted in increasing volume with the subsequent adoption of a system of

permanent, reciprocal diplomatic representation,²⁹ ideas such as these, and the increasing awareness of the Western world that lay behind them, provided the basic guidance for the reforms to follow. Among these were fundamental changes at the Sublime Porte and in the general corporate state of the scribal service.

REFORM IN THE TRADITIONAL SCRIBAL OFFICES OF THE SUBLIME PORTE

Less conspicuous and narrower in immediate impact than other parts of the "New Order," the reforms that Selim III carried out in the scribal offices have attracted little notice. Nonetheless, it is clear that in addition to creating a special new treasury (known as the "New Income" or *Irâd-ı Cedid*) to provide financial services to his new troops, undertaking certain reforms in the preexisting Treasury Offices, and trying to improve the official historiography program,³⁰ Selim also introduced a series of reforms relating to the core of scribal offices headed by the chief scribe (*reis ül-küttâb* or *reis efendi*) at the Sublime Porte. These changes, occurring in the Offices of the Imperial Divan (*Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemî*), the Corresponding Secretary (*Mektubî-i Sadr-ı Âli*), and the Receiver (*Amedi*) can be followed best, although not exclusively, in an archival register, the entries in which begin with several sets of regulations (*nizamname*) dating from the year 1797.³¹

The documents in this register show how Ottoman reformers first applied their perceptions of the general need for reform to specific problems of the scribal offices. For example, signs of mounting pressures for admission into official ranks find confirmation in a variety of prescriptions concerning overcrowding and other related problems. The documents make clear that all three of the offices were overstuffed, and the regulation on the Office of the Corresponding Secretary indicates clearly that the growth in the number of its clerks over the previous three to four decades had outstripped even the needs implied by the growth in the volume of affairs.³² The fact that many of these unneeded clerks were either untrained or unreliable merely compounded the problems created by their presence. Thenceforth, the backgrounds of candidates for appointment in each of these offices were to be carefully checked. Persons lacking requi-

site qualifications were not to be admitted, nor were any past "middle age" (*vasat-ı sinni tecavüz edenler*) to be accepted into the Office of the Imperial Divan.³³ No appointments were to be made on the basis of requests or out of deference to men of influence. As the growing pressures on the empire from without and the desire of the sultan to reassert his power against the provincial magnates (*derebey, ayan*) heightened official awareness of the need to maintain the secrecy of government business, this stipulation bore special reference to persons who were in the employ of the magnates or their Istanbul agents and might thus be used to "infiltrate" the central offices.³⁴ This was one of the chief reasons for the anxiety about the thronging of the offices described in the last chapter.

In the case of the Offices of the Corresponding Secretary and Receiver (*Amedi*), an added concern appears in attempts to keep the main channel of scribal mobility from becoming clogged. The regulations for both these offices, which performed particularly important secretarial services for the grand vezir and the chief scribe, insist that persons employed in them be trained elsewhere, that the qualifications of all candidates for appointment be carefully verified, and that each appointment receive written approval from the sultan. No new clerks were to be taken into the Office of the Corresponding Secretary until the number already there fell within the prescribed limit of thirty, while in the Office of the Receiver, only large enough to accommodate five or six, unqualified persons were to be expelled and worthy ones brought in from other offices.³⁵

Some of the same concerns that underlay these rulings on personnel procedures reappear in a regulation of the same year on the drafting and registration of official documents. Acknowledging that certain individuals had succeeded in having documents drawn up specially to facilitate their achievement of corrupt ends, this regulation ordered that due care be taken in reviewing and correcting drafts of orders as they were prepared for issue and forbade the mention in such documents, even by way of example, of anything contrary to law. Similarly, documents were not to be issued by offices other than those properly responsible for their issue, nor were certain matters requiring formal registration in the offices to be so registered without unequivocal order from the sultan.³⁶ The thought of extreme cen-

tralization of the administration seems to have been intoxicating, especially since the headaches that overcentralization could induce were still unknown.

The regulations issued in 1797 for the Office of the Imperial Divan also include a measure of particular significance for Selim's attempts to improve the effectiveness and confidentiality of administration. These regulations begin by describing the variety of matters handled in the office and the way in which the most secret of them had traditionally been drawn up by the *beylikçi*, the director of the office, or by the most trusted and experienced clerks, sometimes taken for the purpose into a separate room. On the supposition that the volume of business in the office would not be great—so the document puts it—those handling such important matters (*umur-ı mühimme*) had not originally been given a separate place, but left for the most part in the same room with the other clerks. This was no longer permissible. A separate room would have to be contrived for the clerks to whom the most confidential business was entrusted, so that they could be separated from the outsiders constantly entering and leaving the office, including not only Ottoman subjects but also the dragomans of the European embassies.³⁷

Provision was thus made for the creation of a special Section for Important Affairs (*Divan-ı Hümayun Mühimme Odası*). It was to be staffed initially by fifteen experienced clerks, to whom might be added others of proven ability, to a total of thirty. Whenever incomes from any of the benefices in land assigned to the Office of the Imperial Divan became available, those incomes were to be assigned to the clerks of the new section on a preferential basis.³⁸ From the start a prestigious place to serve, the Section for Important Affairs was initially under the supervision of the "purse-bearer" (*kisedar*) who also supervised the *Beylik* Section, largest of the three preexisting sections of the Office of the Imperial Divan. The new section grew rapidly in size and acquired a director (*müdür*) of its own in 1837.³⁹

The emergence of this new section is noteworthy for several reasons. As may be recalled, the term *mühimme* ("important affairs") was essentially a technical term, referring to matters closely linked to the interests of the state. The creation of a new section to specialize in such business thus appears to be another significant example of the kind of development that had earlier resulted in the emergence within the Office of the Imperial

Divan of the Sections for the Assignment of Benefices in Land (*Tahvil*) and Appointments (*Rüüs*). Precisely as the terms *tahvil* and *rüüs* had been in use before the appearance of those sections to designate certain types of documents, so the term *mühimme* had a long history. At least since the 1540s, there had existed a distinct series of registers for the recording of such matters of state, and by the end of the eighteenth century, various sub-series, such as "secret important affairs" (*mektum mühimme*), had also developed.⁴⁰ The creation of the Section for Important Affairs thus represents another step in the processes of differentiation and specialization already long at work in the scribal offices. At the same time, it reflects a newer process, one of groping toward a system of stratifying official business in terms of different degrees of confidentiality and restricting the diffusion of the most sensitive types. The creation of the new section was only a single step toward such a system, but it did provide a new model, which would be followed in later years as a whole series of departments acquired their "Sections for Important Affairs."

In addition to recording the regulations of 1797 for the offices subordinate to the chief scribe, the same register also includes later entries indicating the extent to which these measures took effect. From these entries and other supplementary documentation, it is clear that while the Section for Important Affairs continued to exist, the problems that led to its creation did, too, the more so as a result of the discontinuity in the reformist initiative in the years following Selim's fall.

The regulations issued for the Office of the Imperial Divan in 1797 attempted, among other things, to remedy the overcrowding in its older sections by ordering a two-year moratorium on new appointments and imposing a quota on the numbers of new clerks, other than sons of men already serving in the office, who could be taken in thereafter. This quota allowed for only twelve appointments a year, six in the *Beylik* Section and three each in the Sections for Appointments (*Rüüs*) and Benefice-Assignment (*Tahvil*).⁴¹ In 1801, an increase in business on account of an approaching campaign became the pretext for admitting all aspirants from whom petitions for appointment were then on hand and then doubling the quotas.⁴² Since there is nothing to indicate that the quotas were subsequently reduced, it is natural to wonder if things were not again getting out of control. In the new Section for Important Affairs, this certainly happened.

While the number employed there was initially to be limited to thirty, appointed strictly on the basis of ability, the workings of favoritism and the natural aspiration of the officials to serve in a prestigious office soon shattered this limit. Forty years after its foundation, the staff of this section exceeded one hundred, even though thirty clerks were still, as of 1832, officially considered enough.⁴³

As for the attempt to ensure the prior training of persons appointed to the Offices of the Corresponding Secretary (*Mektubi*) and Receiver (*Amedi*), a document dating from some ten years after the original regulations presents it as more or less an oversight that there was no provision for appointment directly into the Office of the Corresponding Secretary of the sons of its employees. Thenceforth, persons whose fathers were already serving there were to be eligible for appointment as supernumeraries (*mülâzım*) without written permission from the sultan, and might become full-fledged clerks as the regular staff fell within its prescribed limit. Supposedly, such candidates would be examined by the supervisory officials of the office, but these examinations were apt to be perfunctory. Rather clearly, the "patrimonial style in recruitment" had prevailed again.⁴⁴

The fact that this concession dates from a few months after Selim's downfall is surely not fortuitous. Indeed, except in the case of the Greek translators, whose situation became untenable with the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, the state of the scribal offices did not arouse any particular concern again before the early 1830s. Then, presumably under the impact of the first, disastrous "round" of the conflict with Muhammad Ali Paşa of Egypt, Mahmud II began to move toward a general reassessment of governmental institutions. As it relates to the Porte, this new approach is clearest in reforms undertaken outside the traditional offices of the chief scribe. Relating to those offices among others, however, a decree of 1832 provides one of the first signs of what was to come.

This document makes clear, though without mention of specific numbers, that overcrowding and the presence in official position of persons of unknown qualifications and intentions were still serious problems. The document promises an investigation of the clerks of both the Sublime Porte and the Treasury Offices to find out "what sort of men [they are] and whose sons, relatives, and dependents"; the presentation of a register containing

the findings of the inquiry; the expulsion of the unworthy; and the transfer of qualified but unneeded men to offices short of personnel or to the engineering school (*mühendishane*) or printing house (*tabhane*).⁴⁵

It is not clear how much fruit this promise bore; but the archival register that has been the basic source for this discussion shows this period closing with a measure of tremendous significance both for the traditional scribal offices and for the new institutions that had by then begun to grow up beyond them. This is the founding in 1839 of the *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye*, the first of the new schools set up specifically to train young men for civil-bureaucratic careers, and thus the first element of what would become the imperial network of secular, civil schools.⁴⁶

This document begins with the observation that while attempts to improve the quality of military and naval training had been in progress for a number of years, nothing had yet been done to remedy the ignorance of students emerging from the elementary mosque schools to enter government offices. Before being apprenticed in the offices at age eight or ten, they would at most have learned the Kur'an by rote and traced out a few exercises in a basic script (*sülüs karalayub*), would not have learned any Arabic or Persian (or had any formal instruction in Turkish, for that matter), and perhaps never even have heard the names of such essential subjects as arithmetic or geography. To train them properly in the offices was at last acknowledged as impossible: proper clerks emerging from such material were "rare to the point of nonexistence" (*al-nâdir ka'l-mâ'dûm*). The growing demands on the scribal officials required that the educational and clerical functions, traditionally combined in the offices, be separated. Thus occurred one more step toward subdivision of functions, the first clear concession that the guild-like system of training by apprenticeship was no longer functioning adequately for the needs of the scribal service, and the starting point of one of the most important processes through which reform in the central offices would transform the society outside.

Thus, in the traditional scribal offices of the Porte or in direct connection with them, the first of the political periods of the era of reform included a number of important changes. To a degree, these reflected processes of specialization and differentiation already operative in earlier times. In other respects, as in the developing concern for distinguishing different levels of

confidentiality, or in the move to separate the training of officials from their service in the offices, the changes were innovative and would, particularly in the case of the school, produce effects extending far beyond the Sublime Porte. Change did not come easily, to be sure. As the difficulties of controlling the numbers and quality of personnel imply, the self-interest and indiscipline of the scribal officials and of those who aspired to join their ranks would survive into the era of reform, and infect the new organizations then created. Similarly, the new school was at best a single breach in the guild-like pattern traditionally characteristic of the lower scribal officials. Nonetheless, the measures here discussed marked first steps in the old central offices toward the administrative regularization that was beginning to assume such a central place in the reformist consciousness.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE FORMATION OF A MODERNIST SCRIBAL ELITE

Fully to appreciate the changes that Selim and Mahmud made in the part of the scribal service associated with the Porte, we must now examine a sequence of events that occurred chiefly outside the old central offices. These events began in 1793 with what was, in terms of its cultural significance, one of the most innovative of all the reforms of Selim's "New Order": the setting up of a system of permanent embassies in European capitals, and thus the acceptance of the Western concept of permanent, reciprocal diplomacy.⁴⁷ Starting with this measure, efforts at reform within old offices and without eventually converged in Mahmud's formal inauguration of a Foreign Ministry. The same sequence of events was also of critical importance in consummating the political emergence of the scribal service. For these events precipitated the formation of a new scribal elite, which not only assumed responsibility for the foreign relations of the empire, but also, thanks to its Westernist cultural orientation acquired through adaptation to the diplomatic role, emerged as the vanguard of modernization in the internal affairs of the empire.

Since the Ottoman Empire had never before sent out embassies on any but a temporary basis and had also applied restrictions that were unconventional by international standards to the permanent embassies of European states in Istanbul, the shift to diplomatic practices of the European type was more complicated

than might be expected. In the eighteenth century, for example, European ambassadors in Istanbul were still treated as guests. The Ottoman government paid their expenses while they were within its frontiers and assigned escort officers (*mihmandar*) to them in their travels. In return, the ambassadors had to remain under something like house arrest in their residences, to conform on ceremonial occasions to a demeaning etiquette, and to expect, in time of trouble between the Ottomans and their own governments, to be imprisoned and treated as hostages. After discovering that European governments could not be counted on to pay the expenses of ambassadors accredited to them, the Ottomans began to adapt to international conventions, resisting the process where the old ways favored their interests and encountering European resistance where the advantages fell to the other side.⁴⁸

In fact, the difficulties of adjusting to Western-style diplomatic conventions became a theme of the early history of the Ottoman diplomatic system. Before Selim sent out the first of his permanent embassies, Ottoman officials held detailed discussions with the British ambassador in Istanbul on questions such as which Ottoman officials should, given the disparities of governmental organization, correspond with which European officials, which diplomatic ranks would be best for the new envoys, whether they should travel by land or sea, and other such questions.⁴⁹ These were only the first of countless lessons that Ottoman officials would have to learn; the formalism and snobbery common in European diplomatic circles would make many of the lessons unpleasant in the extreme.

Selim's initial plan for sending out his new embassies was that they should go to London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin for terms of three years each. Each ambassador was to have on his staff young men whose duties would include learning languages and other subjects useful in the service of the state. The first step in implementation of this plan was the sending of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi to London in 1793. Within a few years there were missions in all four capitals.⁵⁰

In addition to these attempts to organize a diplomatic corps, Selim appointed consuls to attend to the commercial interests of his subjects abroad. Or rather, it may be more accurate to say that he gave official form to a preexisting consular "system" which had never before had more than a partially official charac-

ter. As early as 1725, the Grand Vezir Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa had appointed one Ömer Ağa consul in Vienna.⁵¹ Seemingly an isolated event without sequel, this was perhaps just one more of the velleities of change so characteristic of that time. With or without official appointment, however, "consuls" clearly existed in a variety of places between 1725 and 1802, when their "appointments" began to be recorded officially in a special register. Traian Stoianovich has pointed out that it was traditional by then for Orthodox Balkan merchants trading outside the empire to be "organized into companies or merchant guilds, with a 'consul' or 'Richter' [judge] at their head to smooth out discords and promote the business of the entire 'company'."⁵² When, apparently in the reign of Selim III, the Ottomans attempted to organize two groups of merchants made up of subjects of the empire, Muslim in one case (*hayriye tüccarı*) and non-Muslim in the other (*Avrupa tüccarı*), who in order to compete more effectively with Europeans would be given privileges analogous to those that the latter enjoyed under the capitulations, the same kind of office appeared among them under the name of *şehbender*.⁵³ Having originally referred to something like the "mayor" or "provost" of a port town, or by extension to a customs collector, this term was to become in late Ottoman usage the normal one for "consul."⁵⁴

The evolution in meaning of the term *şehbender*, and the terms that Stoianovich uses, provide another significant reflection of the intermingling in Ottoman ideas on the organization of international trade of elements from the organizational traditions of the guilds and the autonomous confessional communities. The issue of brevets of appointment to these "consuls" gave them official status, and the recording of those brevets in a special register makes it possible to trace the gradual development of an official network of consular posts. Beginning in the Mediterranean trade centers in which the disturbances created by the French Revolution had given merchants from Ottoman lands a greatly augmented role, this network extended within a few years to major Western centers such as London and Amsterdam, where such merchants had by this time also long been active.⁵⁵

In the short run, Selim's attempts to establish systems of permanent diplomatic and consular representation were hardly more successful than most other parts of his "New Order." The

changeable diplomatic climate of the Napoleonic era and Selim's eventual fall were enough to ensure this. Both systems continued to operate for over a decade after 1807, but even before that time their results had been uneven.

The problems of the early embassies provide insights into the difficulties Ottoman reformers would have to overcome before they could succeed in establishing a new basis of interaction with Western powers. These problems included the transition to the international diplomatic conventions of the times. But a more serious, indeed fundamental, problem was the lack of any well-developed organizational basis for the operation of a system of permanent reciprocal diplomacy. Although the chief scribe had begun to take on some of the attributes of a foreign minister, the agencies under him at the Porte still included none specializing in the coordination and supervision of the foreign relations of the empire. The role of the one partial exception, the translator of the imperial Divan, was essentially limited to relations with the European diplomats in Istanbul. With this lack of organization went the absence of any system for selecting diplomatic personnel and an almost total dearth of officials with real qualifications for diplomatic service, however distinguished some of the early diplomats may have been as exponents of the traditional scribal culture.⁵⁶

The lack of any definable system for making foreign policy was a natural extension of these facts. Indeed, it does not appear that the empire really had a very clear or highly articulated foreign policy at all. The accounts of the embassies abroad show ambassadors striving for alliances or military assistance,⁵⁷ or for the impossible goal of getting commercial privileges for Ottoman merchants like those that Europeans enjoyed in the empire under the capitulations.⁵⁸ Various ambassadors attempted to influence the European press, or at least reported on it to the Porte.⁵⁹ At least one of them attempted to negotiate a foreign loan.⁶⁰ On balance, what stands out about their missions is not that they had specific, let alone attainable, policy objectives to pursue, but rather that they and their secretaries were expected, as had been Ebu Bekir Ratib and Ahmed Azmi Efendis, to learn in a general way about the countries to which they had been sent.⁶¹ Understandable in terms of the low level of policy articulation in traditional political systems, as well as in terms of the novelty of permanent diplomatic representation, this fact also

bespeaks the position of cultural dependency that the empire assumed in relation to the Western world as the era of westernizing reform began.

It is only natural, then, that the achievements of the early Ottoman ambassadors were limited. Faced with problems such as the necessity of relying on interpreters of questionable qualifications and reliability,⁶² poor communications with Istanbul, severe financial hardship,⁶³ and the nonchalance with which European statesmen could ignore Ottoman interests, some of the envoys seem to have found the strain more than they could bear.⁶⁴ At least one, Halet Efendi, became a vociferous and, for a time, extremely influential opponent of westernization.⁶⁵ In Istanbul, Selim knew that his diplomatic system was not working well. All too often, however, he could do no more about this than scribble irate comments on the reports he received.⁶⁶

In beginning to add to the traditional scribal culture a new dimension of knowledge about the outside world, Selim's diplomats did, however, make gains that would have long-term significance. To document such gains is difficult, but some evidence has survived. For example, "İngiliz" Mahmud Raif Efendi, who went to London as first secretary to Yusuf Ağâh Efendi and learned French there, later became chief scribe and wrote several works in French. Two of these were published in Istanbul, one in French in 1798, one in Ottoman translation in 1804-1805.⁶⁷

A more prestigious member of the first generation of diplomats, the future Grand Vezir Mehmed Said Galib Paşa, made his contributions through his official roles, including an important part in the abolition of the Janissaries, and through personal links as the patron of Pertev Paşa, who in turn was patron of Sadık Rif'at and Mustafa Reşid Paşas.⁶⁸ Both of these emerged as leading diplomat-reformers in the mid-1830s, Mustafa Reşid becoming the dominant figure of the reform movement for two decades thereafter.

Another significant figure among the early diplomats was İsmail Ferruh Efendi, Yusuf Ağâh's successor in London. Following his return to İstanbul, İsmail Ferruh is known to have been associated with a "scientific society" (*cemiyet-i ilmiye*), which included some of the most broadly learned intellectuals of the day and devoted itself to scientific, literary, and philosophical discussions, as well as to the teaching of individuals interested in such

subjects.⁶⁹ The educational activities of the society, and the acquisition of İsmail Ferruh's library for the first of the new civil schools at its foundation in 1839, are good indications of the lasting influence that he and his friends exerted.⁷⁰

In the career of İsmail Ferruh there also appears another noteworthy motif, that of official reliance on what were, in terms of the customary social and cultural norms of the scribal service, "marginal men." This motif would reappear with some frequency over the next several decades, until a pool of manpower more adequately prepared for diplomatic roles, and thus endowed with some of the characteristics that had made the "marginal men" useful, had come into existence within the scribal service. A colorful example of these "marginal" types, İsmail Ferruh differed from the typical scribal efendi of the old school in coming from the lands of the former Crimean khanate—the fall of which could hardly have failed to stimulate in him a consciousness of international political problems—and in having made his livelihood more in commerce than in official service. The British ambassador's account of İsmail Ferruh's departure from Istanbul in 1797 records these facts, incidentally providing a memorable indication of how far the Ottomans still were from having adapted to European diplomatic conventions:

Ismael Effendi himself is the son of a reputable merchant at Ozon (Oczakov), where he was born; and has been chiefly bred to trade which gradually led him to the directorship of the public corn magazines in Constantinople; an office of much responsibility, but more emolument than splendor. He can hardly be fifty years of age; and I have already ventured to mention him to your Lordship as a person whose general reputation, and personal expressions, authorised me to consider him as less tinctured with fanatical prejudices, so incompatible with his new career, than many of his countrymen; and perhaps more disposed to identify himself properly with the *Corps diplomatique* than his predecessor. He is so far familiarised with Franks, as to be the only Ottoman of the higher rank, who resides in the village of Boyukdereh, on the Bosphorus, the usual summer resort of the foreign ministers. He is in affluent condition, as your Lordship may judge from the circumstance of his having upon hand at the settlement of his public accompts, when removed from the inspection of the

granaries, a stock valued at near 2, millions of Piastres. He has hitherto lived in an opulent stile . . . ; but yet some of the arrangements of his present expedition have rather shewn him liable to be actuated by . . . avarice . . . , perhaps fixed in him by previous mercantile habits. In making his bargain with Captain Castle, which was for 12,000 Piastres (about £900 sterling), he stipulated for the privilege of 800 Quintals stowage, with a view to make a trading voyage by shipping some of his superfluous wheat for sale in Italy: and, having once yielded to this speculation he could not resist the farther temptation of turning nearly his whole privilege to account in this way so as not only to curtail his sea stores, particularly such an article as water, which the known excess of Mussulman consumption renders most essential, in spite of the best advice; but even to cramp his own comfort, and destroy every advantage to be derived from the hire of a private yacht, by crowding his party into a single indifferent apartment.⁷¹

Foreign Office officials in London must have been amused at these details. From the Ottoman point of view, it is perhaps unfortunate that there were not more men available with similar qualities.

During the interruption that all aspects of reform underwent after the fall of Selim, efforts to widen the horizons of the scribal service ground more or less to a halt, and the diplomatic and consular systems fell into a state of atrophy. After 1811, none of the diplomatic posts was manned by anything more than a *chargé d'affaires*, the best known being J. Mavroyeni, a Greek who held that post in Vienna.⁷² The *chargés* and consuls of the time being Greek, by and large, the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821 led to the abolition of the diplomatic service for the time being.⁷³ In the case of the consular service, the break may have been less decisive, perhaps only a reversion to the nonofficial status of the eighteenth century.⁷⁴ Still, there would be no more diplomatic appointments until the early 1830s; no more consular ones until the middle of that decade.

In Istanbul, meanwhile, the same suspicions about Greeks in official service gave rise at the outbreak of the revolution to a general attack on the Phanariot elite. One phase of this was the overthrow of the last of the Greek translators of the imperial Divan and the creation in his place of a new Translation Office

of the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âli Tercüme Odası*). The purpose of the new office was to relieve the state once and for all of the need to rely on Greeks as translators. Since the responsibilities of this office included a typical mixture of educational and bureaucratic roles, it gradually began to yield the desired result, becoming in the process the principal center for the formation of a new type of Muslim scribal official and at the same time the most prestigious place of service at the Sublime Porte. Partly because of the initial lack of qualified Muslims, however, the new office had first to pass through a period of obscurity during which the continued reliance on "marginal men" was one of its most prominent features.

The Translation Office emerged in stages, beginning in the spring of 1821, when Constantine Mourouzi was dismissed from the translatorship of the imperial Divan and executed on grounds of complicity in revolutionary intrigues. To replace him, a teacher from the military engineering school (*mühendishane*), a Bulgarian convert to Islam, known as Bulgarzade Yahya Efendi, and his son, Ruh ul-Din Efendi, were summoned to the Porte to translate Greek and French documents and to train one or two assistants. When it became apparent that this would not yield satisfactory results fast enough, Stavraki Aristarchi, thought to be reliable though still suspect as a Greek, was given the post of translator on an interim basis, with Yahya Efendi to check his work. By April 1822, the supposedly neutral Aristarchi had compromised himself sufficiently that he, too, was dismissed and sent into exile. Never again would a Greek serve as translator of the imperial Divan.⁷⁵

Eventually, Yahya Efendi formally received that title, although he hardly brought to the post all that was desired. The British ambassador said of him that he was "thought to be profoundly versed in the abstract Sciences. But he is not well acquainted with any [*sic*] of the European languages, and even his knowledge of Turkish is said to be limited."⁷⁶ Ottomans had doubts about Yahya's occupancy of such a sensitive position on account of his character as a "marginal man." The noted scholar, Şanizade, who was probably better qualified for the post but for whom, as a prestigious member of the religious establishment, it was not thought appropriate, bluntly said that Yahya was left in the job "because a Muslim could not be found."⁷⁷

By the time of Aristarchi's dismissal, Yahya had as his assistant

another "marginal" type, an Armenian named Zenob Manasseh, reported to be of European education and a good linguist.⁷⁸ The two of them also had a few apprentices to train. A contemporary account shows Yahya Efendi and his associates hard at work:

M. Chabert [one of the dragomans of the British embassy] called upon him a few mornings ago, and found him surrounded by a number of the young Turks whom the Porte has lately formed into a sort of Collegiate Establishment for the purpose of instruction in the European languages. They had a prodigious pile of the Frankfort Gazettes before them, and were busily engaged in translating indiscriminately, by the sultan's positive order, every Article in which the name or the Affairs of Turkey were to be found. His Highness will, assuredly, be not a little astounded on reading some of the paragraphs dated from Odessa—Augsburgh—and Nuremberg.⁷⁹

Thus began the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte. For the period down to 1833, the office remained very small, and contemporaries, if aware of it at all, seemed to doubt its worth.⁸⁰ Most of those associated with the office were still "marginal men," and while several had or acquired importance in one respect or another, none of them ever achieved front-ranking political position in the reformist elite.

Of most immediately perceptible importance was Yahya Efendi's successor as head of the office, İshak Efendi. Resembling Yahya in being of non-Muslim origin, at least according to some accounts, and in having served previously in the military engineering schools, İshak Efendi was in fact a pioneer in the modernization of Ottoman education, especially in technical fields.⁸¹ Of the men who served under him, one, Mehmed Namik Paşa (c. 1804-1892), would discharge several significant diplomatic missions and, shifting to a military career, play a major role in the founding of the new Ottoman Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*, 1834) before parting company with the reformist movement.⁸² Another is chiefly of interest in this setting as an extreme example of the sociocultural "marginality" of the figures on whom the early reformers had to rely. An English orphan who had apparently been sent to sea and had jumped ship in Istanbul, James Redhouse (1811-1892) was des-

tinued to serve the Ottoman government in a variety of sensitive capacities down to the outbreak of the Crimean War and ultimately to distinguish himself as a Turkish lexicographer of unexcelled importance.⁸³

The real growth of the Translation Office in size and prestige began only in the 1830s. In the tense interlude between the defeat of the Ottoman armies by the Egyptians at Konya (December 1832) and the conclusion of the Russo-Ottoman Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi (July 1833), the Translation Office, like the traditional offices discussed in the last section, came under renewed scrutiny. The employees of the office received sizable increases in salary and were joined by three young men from the Important Affairs Section of the Office of the Imperial Divan.⁸⁴ These included Âli and Safvet Efendis, each of whom would serve in time as both foreign minister and grand vezir. Within a few years, two more future grand vezirs had joined them: Keçecizade Fuad and Ahmed Vefik Efendis.

Son of Ruh ul-Din and grandson of Bulgarzade Yahya, Ahmed Vefik is a convenient symbol of the way in which service in the Translation Office ceased about this time to be a "marginal" activity and began to appear instead as something highly desirable for the young scribal efendi on the way up. The presence in the office of Âli (1815-1871) and Fuad (1815-1869), who with Mustafa Reşid (1800-1858) would be the leading statesmen of the next political period, is added proof of this change, as is the growth of the office, which acquired a staff of thirty by 1841.⁸⁵ With the diplomatic repercussions of the Ottoman-Egyptian crisis, knowledge of French thus clearly began, in Bernard Lewis's phrase, to serve as the "talismán" of preferment, and the main source from which a scribal official could acquire this knowledge was the Translation Office of the Porte.⁸⁶

With this growth in the size and importance of the Translation Office went another response to the same set of underlying pressures: Mahmud's decision to revive the system of permanent diplomatic representation. Since 1832, when on an Austrian proposal Mahmud had reappointed J. Mavroyeni as *chargé d'affaires* in Vienna, the empire had had one, but only one, diplomatic agent permanently resident in the West.⁸⁷ Mahmud had also sent out several temporary embassies, including one under Mehmed Namik Paşa, whose mission took him to both London and Saint Petersburg.⁸⁸ In 1834, however, Mahmud began to

reestablish permanent embassies, starting with the assignment of the then receiver (*amedî*), Mustafa Reşid Bey (Paşa after January 1838) to Paris. With him and the other ambassadors who shortly began to follow him went suites of officials, drawn for the most part from the Offices of the Imperial Divan, the Corresponding Secretary, and the *Amedî*. As translators, Mustafa Reşid took Ruh ul-Din Efendi; the other ambassadors of this period still took Ottoman Greeks, whom Âli and Fuad would only begin to replace a few years later. Soon, too, the appointment of consuls resumed, and with it the extensive growth that characterized the consular service in the following period.

Contemporary documentation suggests that the resumption of diplomatic representation after such a lengthy interval brought with it many of the same problems as in Selim's day. In addition, there is at least one traditional type of problem that surely impinged on Selim's efforts, as well, but is in fact much more readily documented for this period. This is the way in which the patrimonial tradition of politico-bureaucratic life interfered with the rational working of the diplomatic system. The role of personal relationships in determining diplomatic appointments that were otherwise quite foolish is one example of this interference.⁸⁹ Another is the impingement on the diplomatic system of factional rivalries. The clearest case of this is the violent wrench given the official wheel of fortune by the fall and death in 1837 of Pertev Paşa, who had been patron to such leading modernists as Mustafa Reşid and Sadık Rif'at, and whose overthrow led to an extensive turnover of personnel in the embassies and in the central offices from which diplomatic appointments were usually made.⁹⁰ In the behavior of the sultan, the importance of the patrimonial tradition expressed itself not only in the critical role of the sovereign in determining the outcome of factional clashes, but also in the way in which the long-familiar desire for magnificence and display combined with a newer aspiration to modernity to create a peculiar attitude toward the diplomatic system. An Austrian diplomat characterized this attitude succinctly when he referred to the "sort of *gloriole*" that Mahmud attached to having ambassadors in Europe.⁹¹

But for certain other circumstances, Mahmud's efforts at diplomacy might thus have produced no greater result than Selim's. The situation of the 1830s differed from that of the 1790s, however, in at least two critical respects. One was the

availability within the ruling class of men much better prepared to function in a diplomatic setting. The growth of the Translation Office is symbolic of this development, although in fact the uncertainty of its early history means that some of the new diplomats had to acquire their French elsewhere on a catch-as-catch-can basis.⁹² The other major change is that the international situation was vastly different, Middle Eastern affairs being now of much greater interest in Europe than they had been forty years earlier. In particular, the collective European intervention in settling the Ottoman-Egyptian conflict of 1839 showed that there was now a basis, given the danger of what might happen if Muhammad Ali destroyed the empire, for common action by the European powers in support of vital interests of the Porte.⁹³ Of course, this support had its limits and its costs. The empire had to make concessions in other spheres, such as commercial policy, and it had to demonstrate its capacity for reform in ways that Europeans recognized and appreciated.

Under the circumstances, the position of Mahmud's diplomats proved to be important, if in a paradoxical way. Representatives of a state dependent for its very survival on outside aid, the Ottoman diplomats of the 1830s were again doomed to a role of relative effacement on the international political scene. With goals such as settling the Egyptian and Algerian questions, renegotiating tariffs, influencing the European press, and training additional diplomats,⁹⁴ they really could not succeed anywhere, aside from the training function, except where they had European help. Even there, as the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Treaty of 1838 showed, they succeeded only on European terms.

Where Mahmud's diplomats really produced their impact was not so much as representatives of the Ottoman Empire to the states of Europe as in their unprecedented ability to absorb and respond to their experiences abroad, and in their role in mediating the demands of the major powers to their own people. Thus, in representing the West to the Ottomans, more than the other way round, they quickly acquired an influence that extended in Ottoman official circles far beyond the field of foreign affairs as narrowly defined.

In fact, the competence of the new diplomats to assume this role of expertise in westernization was still in an early stage of development. One sign of this is the contrast between the im-

pression of diplomatic ineptitude that Sadık Rif'at made as ambassador in Vienna on the noted orientalist, Joseph von Hammer, and the reputation that Sadık Rif'at continues to enjoy in Turkey as one of the pioneers of modernization.⁹⁵ The limits of the diplomats' comprehension no doubt also help to explain the parochial or short-sighted reasoning that seems at times to lie behind their espousal of certain concepts. This would appear to be true in their advocacy of the principles of guaranteed individual rights and legal equality. As Şerif Mardin has plausibly argued, these ideas must have appealed to scribal diplomats of this generation primarily as a means by which to strengthen the position of the servile official class in relation to the sultan and thus prevent more such catastrophes as the death of Pertev.⁹⁶ Ottomans of the 1830s could not have foreseen the effects that official adoption of these principles would produce on the traditional social and legal systems of the empire.

And yet, the best of the new diplomats were extremely intelligent men, in direct contact with the most influential European statesmen of the day, including Metternich and Palmerston. While the first steps of a Sadık Rif'at or a Mustafa Reşid as diplomats reflected the difficulties of adjusting to a new world, their writings,⁹⁷ and still more their influence on subsequent reforms, reflect the eagerness with which they responded to the political lessons to be drawn from the Europe of the 1830s. The vital importance to the empire of the function that they were uniquely able to perform also provided the diplomats with the political leverage to translate their ideas quickly into actions of the most far-reaching significance, a fact that the reforms of the later 1830s began to make clear.

Coming from what was still a relatively small branch of the ruling class, the new diplomatic elite was at this stage only a tiny band of relatively young men. Those among them who would play major creative roles in the reform of the empire included hardly more than Mustafa Reşid, Sadık Rif'at, and the younger Âli and Fuad. With all their factional hangers-on, irrespective of merit, they were probably not over one or two score. Nonetheless, they would grow rapidly in numbers, as well as in expertise and influence. With them, a new elite emerged and a kind of cultural orientation formerly marginal to the norms of the scribal service assumed a central place within it. Indeed, the scribal tradition began to take on a whole new dimension, if at the cost of

the sociocultural homogeneity once characteristic of Muslim scribal officials. Thus, the processes that over a century and more had brought the scribal service to a position of political preeminence within the ruling class approached their culmination in the era of reform.

As if to provide an organizational basis for this new elite, Mahmud, having strengthened the Translation Office and revived the diplomatic and consular services, went on in March 1836 to transform the chief scribe into a foreign minister (*hariciye nazırı*).⁹⁸ While in a sense this was no more than a change of title, Mahmud also began to create other components of what could serve as a Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In November 1836, he instituted the office of *müsteşar* or undersecretary.⁹⁹ Slightly over a year later, among a number of important reforms, the traditional Offices of the Corresponding Secretary and the Receiver (*Amedî*) were subdivided into separate sections for internal and foreign affairs, and these in turn were placed under authority of the appropriate ministers.¹⁰⁰ With the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte, the Office of the Imperial Divan, which now included the Section for Important Affairs (*Mühimme Odası*) along with the three traditional sections shown in Figure III-2, and the recently reactivated consular and diplomatic services, this would have been the entire organizational complement of the Foreign Ministry as of 1839.

With the measures which shaped this Foreign Ministry and its diplomats, the Sublime Porte and the scribal service underwent some of the most important changes of the nineteenth century. Not only was a new ministry of critical importance beginning to take shape, but in the process a new elite was forming. In many respects the changes were still far from consolidated. The entanglement of reform in the vicious factional politics of the old style is one witness to this fact. Another is the haste with which new ideas, their implications for Ottoman society still untested, began to be taken up for application. In addition, there was the question, scarcely broached as yet, of the effect that further growth of this new elite would exert on social and political relations within the ruling class.

For his part, Sultan Mahmud gave no heed to doubts such as these. For him, the formation of the diplomatic service and the creation of the Foreign Ministry were part of a larger set of measures governed by a goal distinctly his own. Occurring to-

gether in the 1830s, these measures rapidly transformed the organization of the central administration, the corporate state of the scribal service, and thus the context in which the problems implied by the emergence of the new diplomatic elite would continue to develop.

THE LATER REFORMS OF MAHMUD II: AN AUTOCRATIC SULTAN OR A "PATRICIATE OF THE PEN"?

Writing in 1835, Joseph von Hammer said that if his book of twenty years earlier on the Ottoman administrative system were to be brought up to date, it would have to be completely revised. If change continued at the same rate, he added, such a revision would also soon be outdated.¹⁰¹ In the four remaining years of his life, Mahmud proved this prediction to be well founded. Attempting to push centralization and the reassertion of sultanic dominance as far as possible, he launched a frontal assault on the Sublime Porte, dismantled the grand vezirate, and reorganized the scribal service—and the palace service also—to serve as instruments of his personal control. Given his objectives, the changes he made in the scribal service were to be of paradoxically decisive import; for they amounted to giving it, largely at the inspiration of the new diplomatic elite, the much-enhanced organizational forms of what would subsequently become known as the civil bureaucracy (*mülkiye*).

The attack on the Porte is, in fact, the context in which the shift of title from chief scribe to foreign minister occurred. Along with that change, Mahmud also transformed the former steward (*kâhya bey*) of the grand vezir into first the minister of civil affairs (*mülkiye nazırı*) and then in 1837 the minister of the interior (*dahiliye nazırı*), simultaneously giving to the two new ministers and to two treasurers the highest of ranks and enormously inflated stipends.¹⁰² So began the reorganization of the administration along the lines of a European system of ministries. Soon, the chief bailiff (*çavuş başı*) also turned into what is sometimes likened, not too accurately, to a minister of justice (*divan-ı deavi nazırı*);¹⁰³ the chief treasurer, into a minister of finance (*maliye nazırı*);¹⁰⁴ and so on.

The central object of these changes became apparent in the spring of 1838, when Mahmud not only abolished the title of grand vezir, but also entrusted the successor post of prime

minister (*baş vekil*) as an additional duty to the man then serving as minister of the interior.¹⁰⁵ Attempting thus to wipe out the traditional role of the grand vezir as "absolute delegate" of the sultan, Mahmud went on to parcel out the deliberative functions of the grand vezir's Divan. For example, he reassigned responsibility for the religio-legal cases formerly heard there to the headquarters of the religious establishment (*Bab-ı Meşihat*). Just as the most senior religious judges had formerly attended the *divans* at the Porte to participate in the decisions on such cases, now the minister of justice had to go to the *Bab-ı Meşihat* for the appropriate sessions.¹⁰⁶ In addition, Mahmud created two new councils, patterned after one that he had already set up to take charge of the legislative process as it related to military affairs.¹⁰⁷ One of the new councils was known as the Consultative Assembly of the Sublime Porte (*Dar-ı Şura-yı Bab-ı Âli*), the other as the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*). The latter was to meet under Mahmud's own direction at the palace.¹⁰⁸

Ottomans with some knowledge of Western institutions excitedly compared these new councils to the two houses of a European *parlamento*.¹⁰⁹ The real affinities of these institutions lay, however, with the ad hoc consultative assemblies that we have already seen in the eighteenth century. For the future, what the new councils signified was a step toward the more general diffusion of the conciliar form of administration, the emergence of the legislative councils that would assume an important role in the next period, and the shaping of a council of ministers, to which each of the new councils was also sometimes likened.¹¹⁰ Significantly, however, the history of the Consultative Assembly of the Sublime Porte proved shadowy and brief.¹¹¹ That the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances survived is another sign that Mahmud was trying to bring the center of deliberation back to its classic locus in the palace, an implication that gains in significance from the contemporaneous reorganization of the palace secretariat, discussed in Chapter Two.

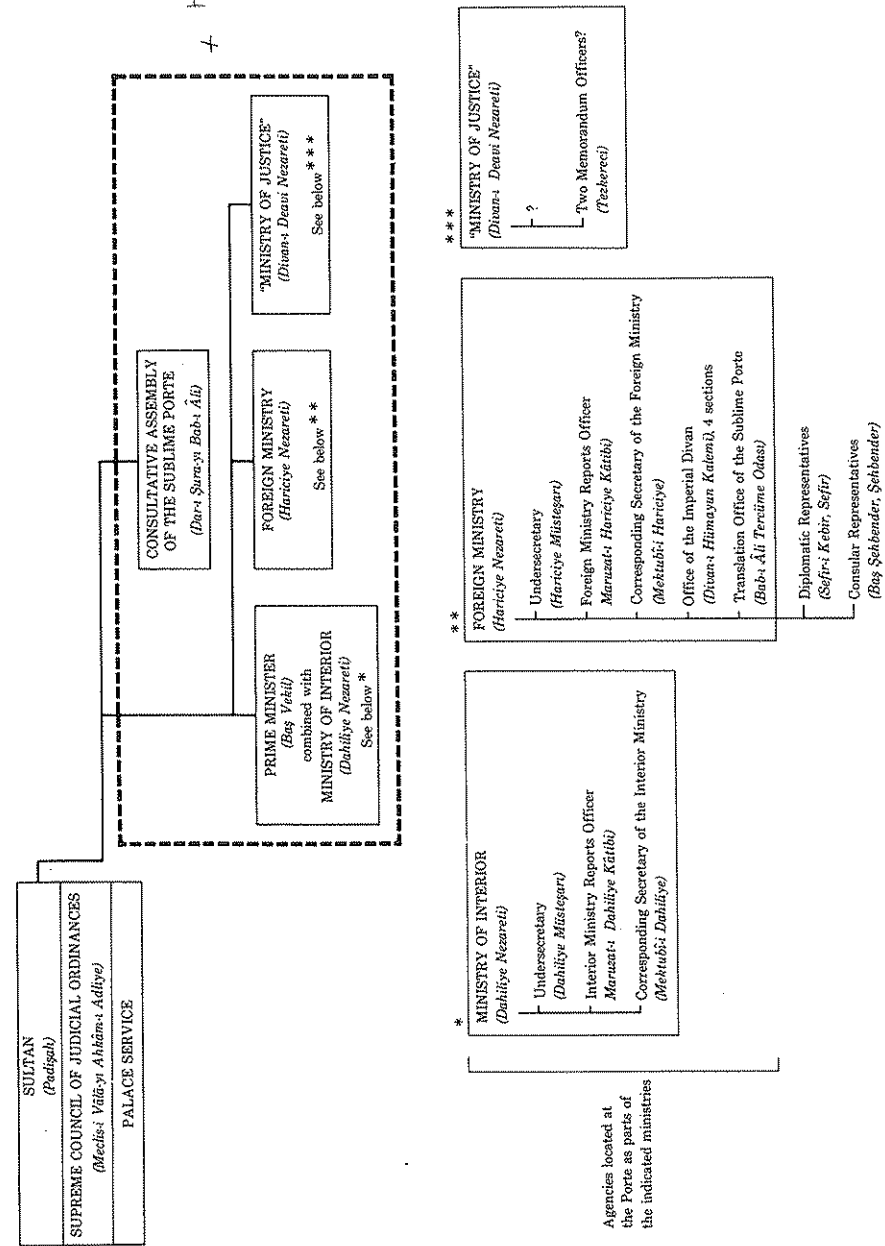
Thus began the general reorganization of the Sublime Porte. While the pattern that Mahmud created was modified soon after his death and was thus ephemeral, it is nonetheless worthwhile for purposes of comparison with the organization charts presented in other chapters to include at this point a graphic representation of this arrangement as he left it. In this and subse-

quent figures, we shall no longer attempt, as we did in Figure III-2, to show all the personnel categories within each office. Since we have already commented on the internal structure of the Foreign Ministry, and since there is little concrete information for this date on the staffs of the supposed minister of justice or minister of the interior, it will nonetheless be useful to try in the figure to identify the component agencies of these three ministries. Among these components, the two corresponding secretaries and the pair of what we shall, for want of a better translation for *maruzat*, call reports officers are the products of the subdivision of the older Offices of the Corresponding Secretary of the Grand Vezir and the Receiver, a change already noted in commenting on the Foreign Ministry. We shall assume that the grand vezir's, or for the time being the prime minister's, household had also by this time acquired a location outside the premises of the Sublime Porte, although the dating of that event seems to be undocumented. Figure IV-1 thus not only depicts a short-lived arrangement but also, of necessity, is more speculative than our other charts.

Mahmud's apparent success in instituting this rather bizarre rearrangement was, in fact, deceptive. Not only were most of his changes undone after his death in 1839, but even the strongest will to autocratic centralization could not free him from the need for able subordinates, particularly in an age of such urgent needs for reform along lines that others with firsthand experience of the outside world understood better than he. It may be, too, that just as he attached a special importance to having ambassadors in Western capitals, he also wished to see himself surrounded by a bureaucratic elite more like those of contemporary Western states than like the slave-officials of his own tradition. In any case, one aspect of Mahmud's attempt to streamline the administration was a collective reorganization and upgrading of the scribal service, a process directed at least in part by the ideas and elitist aspirations of the new diplomats, not to speak of their desire for self-preservation. Even as he tried to neutralize the Sublime Porte, Mahmud thus also laid a new foundation for the "Patriciate of the Pen" that would become so powerful after his death.¹¹²

Mahmud's first steps in this direction actually date back to the creation in 1832-1833 of a new hierarchy of civil ranks. These were designated by numbers¹¹³ and inserted between the

FIGURE IV-1. ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBLIME PORTE, c. 1838-39



--- Enclosed organizations are part of Sublime Porte

preexisting rank of *vezir*, which thus became superior to the new "first rank" (*rütbe-i ulâ*), and the *hacelik* (the rank of the bureau chiefs or *hacegân*). Over the next several years, additional ranks were inserted into the hierarchy, until by 1846 it included nine grades, not counting the *hacelik*. As lowest element in the list, the *hacelik* began to undergo a devaluation that would presently lead to the loss of its former character as a rather clear line of division between upper and lower levels of the scribal service and, indeed, to its obsolescence.¹¹⁴ Initially, there were attempts to specify which positions should be held by holders of which rank; but this degree of systematization soon proved impossible to maintain. Nonetheless, the continuing issue of tables of equivalence or precedence for the ranks of the civil, religious, and military hierarchies,¹¹⁵ and the adoption of such related paraphernalia as official uniforms¹¹⁶ or official styles of address (*elkâb*) graded according to rank,¹¹⁷ gave the scribal service a more "modern" image and a more sharply delineated collective identity than it had ever before enjoyed. Ultimately, what was most significant about the table of civil ranks was the way in which it reflected the growth of this branch of service in relative prominence within the ruling class. Indeed, the civil ranks provided for the first time a fully elaborated and standardized measure of equivalence in status between the members of this service and those of the religious and military establishments.¹¹⁸

Meanwhile, in 1834, Mahmud began to alter the old system of annual reappointment (*tevcihat*) for all officials at or above the level of bureau chief or equivalent rank in other services. Initially, all he did was shift the month in which the appointments occurred, without altering the annual limit of tenure or the old system of appointment fees. The point of this change was simply to settle all questions about appointments each year before the beginning of *Ramazan*, the month of fasting, rather than after, as had previously been the case. In 1838, however, Mahmud abandoned the system of annual appointment altogether. Thenceforth, appointments and dismissals were supposed to occur only as needed.¹¹⁹

This change gained in significance from another reform of the same year. As part of a larger set of measures aimed at centralizing collection and disbursement of revenue,¹²⁰ Mahmud decreed the assignment of salaries to all officials and forbade the old practices of fee collection and bribe taking, which now be-

came indistinguishable from each other. A needed sequel to other measures such as the abandonment of the annual appointments, which each year had set in motion the exchange of huge sums as appointment fees, or the creation of such new organizations as the embassies, for which the old types of prebendal compensation were unworkable, the salary system in fact functioned poorly from the start. Such contemporary evidence as is now available suggests that the system was inaugurated almost simultaneously with the beginning of the effort at fiscal centralization, with minimal planning as to what requirements the salaries would create or what revenues could be used to cover them.¹²¹ The salaries that Mahmud assigned his top officials were far in excess of those of their European counterparts,¹²² and the minister of finance almost immediately declared that he would not be able to produce such sums.¹²³ Skeptical observers foresaw that Ottoman officials would simply regard their supposed new entitlements as additions to their traditional sources of income.¹²⁴ Decades after the institution of the change, the official historiographer, Lûtfî Efendi, a member of the religious establishment, still wrote of it with unwonted vehemence as destructive of the incentives that the old fee system had created for efficient performance of duty, as creating all manner of new needs for record keeping and regulation, and as having a disastrously inflationary impact.¹²⁵ In the way the salary system was adopted, Mahmud and his advisers thus revealed their lack of sophistication in economic and fiscal policy. In principle, nonetheless, the shift from prebendalism to payment of regular salaries, and the process of fiscal centralization that the salaries presupposed, were among the most important of the reforms which had to be undertaken if administrative modernization was to become a meaningful reality.

Ultimately most important of the reforms of 1838 was Mahmud's formal reassertion of the tradition of sultanic legislation (*hamun*) with the promulgation of special penal codes (*ceza kanunnamesi*) both for officials (*memurîn*) and for the judges (*kadis*) of the religious establishment. The code for officials, including the scribal service, proclaimed the abolition of "underserved expropriation" (*müsadere-i gayr-i icabiye*) and nonjudicial, administrative punishment (*siyaset-i örfiye*). Having thus abolished or at least restricted two of the most dreaded sources of the insecurity traditionally characteristic of upper-level bureau-

cratic life, the code added that all offenses by officials, unless subject to penalties specified by Islamic law or to retaliation (*kisas*), were to be punished under its provisions without deference to the rank of the offender. With this demand for an end to the customary association of rank and arbitrariness, the code went on to proscribe violation of the secrecy of government business, abuses in purchasing and supply, making appointments on a basis of favoritism rather than proven ability, and finally bribery, penalties being specified for each type of abuse.¹²⁶ While the actual uses to which this and subsequent codes were put were sometimes another story, the significance of the code in principle, both for the improvement of the status of the officials and for the regularization of administration, is self-evident.

The climax of this series of measures came a few months after Mahmud's death, with the promulgation of the Gülhane Decree of 1839. The work of Mustafa Reşid Paşa, this contained legal innovations of epoch-making importance. Through its guarantee of "perfect security for life, honor, and property," the decree obliquely implied the complete elimination of the practice of expropriation, which the code of 1838 for officials had merely and ambiguously restricted. More explicitly, through a clause guaranteeing that no accused person should be executed without public trial, the Gülhane Decree reconfirmed the provision of 1838 concerning nonjudicial punishment. However much the motives that lay behind the drafting of these clauses may have involved bureaucratic class interest, the decree no longer bore the character, as had the code of 1838, of a document addressed to the ruling class alone. Ignoring the dichotomy of ruling and subject classes and extending the application of these and all its other provisions to all the peoples of the empire, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, the document implied something that it never quite clearly stated and that few of the sultan's subjects were ready to comprehend or live with, anyway: the effacement of the centuries-old dichotomy of rulers and subjects and the opening of a new age of equality among the various ethnoreligious communities of the empire.¹²⁷

The Gülhane Decree thus opened a vast set of problems pertaining to the general restructuring of Ottoman society. In a narrower sense, the decree at the same time brought to fulfillment a series of measures which, in less than a decade, caused a

more profound alteration in the collective state of the scribal service than would occur again in any period of comparable brevity. It was not yet clear what the long-term implications of these changes would be. On the one hand, Mahmud had attempted to neutralize the Porte as a power center and reduce it to a mere mechanism for the exercise of a resurgent sultanic domination. At the same time, to make the scribal service into a more effective instrument for the achievement of his purpose, he had drastically altered traditional conditions of service within it. Neither he nor the Gülhane Decree had explicitly renounced the traditional concept of official servility, but he had provided his officials with legal safeguards of a sort that they had never before known.

Whatever its unclear points, this abrupt transformation effectively marked the disappearance of the old scribal service (*halemiye*) into the new collective forms of what would gradually become known as the civil bureaucracy (*mülkiye*). Only time would tell how much the officials could rely on the newly proclaimed safeguards, or how well the civil bureaucracy and its diplomatic elite would, in fact, serve for the maintenance of the sultanic dominance to which Mahmud aspired.

THE RECORD OF A HALF-CENTURY OF BUREAUCRATIC REFORM: CHARACTERISTICS AND LIMITATIONS OF MODERNIZATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In the history of the scribal service and the Sublime Porte, the half-century that elapsed between the accession of Selim III and the death of Mahmud II was a time of major changes. To view these in terms of the general perceptions of the need for reform discussed in the first section of this chapter, we note recurrent attempts, as in the reforms that Selim instituted in the old offices of the chief scribe or in Mahmud's later corporate reorganization of the scribal service, to achieve new degrees and new kinds of regularization in the working of bureaucratic systems. The implicit movement away from traditionalism and toward rational-legalism finds confirmation in the reactivation of the legislative role of the state and in the changes of fundamental legal principle conveyed in the Gülhane Decree. Efforts at a reassertion of the central government, indeed at extreme autocratic centralization, mounted to a climax in Mahmud's attack on

1839

X

the grand vezirate. Meanwhile, responding both to the need for new types and levels of official performance and to the combination of menace and attraction apparent in contemporary Ottoman attitudes toward the outside world, the scribal service formed a new elite possessing capabilities and cultural characteristics once hardly found in scribal circles but now supremely relevant to the needs of the state. The emergence of the Foreign Ministry provided the indispensable official mechanism for a new degree of interaction between the empire and the outside world, while the corporate reorganization of the scribal service in the 1830s signified a kind of formal recognition of processes of growth and change already long at work in the ruling class in practical ways.

At the same time, the achievements of this period displayed obvious limitations and left many questions unanswered. Selim's experiments with reform in the traditional offices of the Porte demonstrated the tenacity with which old forms of bureaucratic indiscipline could survive and spread in the face of efforts at reform. The workings of the new diplomatic service, and in a different sense those of the fledgling salary system, offered jarring insights into the ways in which aspects of the patrimonial tradition might interfere with attempts at modernization. The fact that the early diplomat-reformers were themselves only beginning to digest the new Western ideas, and the added fact that those who possessed a Westernist cultural orientation were still a minority even within the ruling class, implied a number of questions about the impact which the new elite would ultimately produce.

There were problems too, about certain implications of the reforms of the 1830s. The old principles of official servility and of the dichotomy of ruling and subject classes were nowhere explicitly abolished, but only overlaid with new measures that ignored or contravened those principles in certain respects; and the extent to which the new measures would, in fact, prevail against tradition remained to be seen. Equally uncertain was the resolution of the conflict, implicit in these same reforms, between reasserted sultanic authority and reformed bureaucracy. Indeed, until the scope of the political process, or at least of the demand for participation in it, began to broaden decisively, this conflict was to govern the shifts in the political balance that distinguished the successive political periods of the era of reform.

Finally, in the association of reform with autocratic centralization, there had emerged a pattern that was to remain characteristic of Ottoman reform throughout the nineteenth century. In an apt if inelegant phrase, S. N. Eisenstadt has designated this pattern "split-up modernization." Certainly where the Ottoman Empire is concerned, this can be regarded as a subcase of what Eisenstadt and others have referred to more recently as *neopatrimonialism*.¹²⁸ As this designation implies, the pattern of "split-up modernization" is a phenomenon of central importance for evaluation of the efforts at reform that are the subject of this study.

In the typology of modernizing societies in which the concept of "split-up modernization" originally appeared, Eisenstadt described it as the principal type observed before the present century in the autocratic states of eastern Europe and beyond. The term "split-up" applies in several senses. On one level, certain elements of such a society push for modernization, while others oppose it. In addition, advocates of change who are in positions of power, their roles still defined and legitimated in basically traditional terms, tend to advocate change in spheres where they think they can control it and use it to buttress the order of which they are a part. Simultaneously, they try to restrict change in the fundamental, constitutive principles of the polity and to keep modernization from becoming a generalized process. As new ideas begin to spread through the society, however, this degree of control proves impossible to maintain. Sooner or later there emerge rival reformist groups that oppose the established leadership and expound alternative concepts of change. While efforts at modernization in such societies display a "split-up" aspect in all these ways, the emergence of such a rival reformist intelligentsia—thus, the "splitting up" of the reformist leadership—is a phenomenon of particular significance. For in the opposition intelligentsia appear most clearly the pressures that force the enlargement in scope of the political process, as the range and intensity of political controversy begin to go beyond the limits of the old factionalism of the ruling class, as a modern kind of issue-oriented political ideology emerges, and as politics and bureaucracy begin to become differentiated from each other.

Faced with mounting pressures for the restructuring of the political balance, the rulers of such societies characteristically use

whatever resources are at their disposal to maintain their position. If the resources are great enough, it is not impossible in principle that some new kind of viable order may emerge from this effort. More characteristically, certainly among nineteenth-century cases of "split-up modernization," the sense of contradiction between the demands for change emerging within the society and the traditionalistic foundations of the established order eventually becomes too great. The fact that the reformers presiding over the process of "split-up modernization" are still apt to display a style of political behavior deriving from the patrimonial tradition only heightens the sense of contradiction, helping to bring on eventual political upheaval, which may extend into revolutionary forms of social and cultural change, as well. The new order that then emerges may owe great debts to the reforms of the fallen autocrats and may perpetuate something of their patrimonial style, but will represent fundamentally different principles.

As the nineteenth century wore on, the Ottoman Empire inched its way toward just the kind of multiple transmutation that this pattern envisages. As of 1839, the lines for this conflict were only beginning to be drawn, and it was still not possible, for example, to determine exactly what role the new civil-bureaucratic elite would play in it. Nonetheless, in the use of innovative reform for purposes of sultanic reassertion, Selim and Mahmud had set the fundamental pattern of "split-up modernization." This would provide the context in which the issues aroused by attempts at bureaucratic reform and the struggles over the maintenance and form of the political balance would work themselves out for the remainder of the imperial period.

The transition from a traditionalistic to a rational-legal order had begun. It would gradually become apparent, however, that the patrimonial tradition was far from dead.

THE CIVIL-BUREAUCRATIC HEGEMONY OF THE TANZIMAT

... Saltanat-ı Seniye'mizin tezyid-i kuvvet ve miknetini ve revabıt-ı kalbiye-i vatandaş ile birbirine merbut olan ve nazar-ı madelet-eser-i müşfiknemde müsavi bulunan kâffe-i sunuf-ı tebaa-ı şahanemin her yüzden husul-ı tamamı-i saadet-i hal ve memalik-i şahanemizin ma'muriyetini müstelzim olacak esbab ve vesailin anbean ilerilemesi murad-ı merhamet-itiyad-ı mülûkanem iktizasından bulunduğu binaen hususat-ı atiyet ül-zikrin icrasına irade-i madelet-ifade-i padişahanem şerefsadır olmuştur.

... it being the requirement of our benevolent, sovereign intention ever and by all means to promote the increase in power and might of our exalted Sultanate, the prosperity of our imperial lands, and the attainment of full happiness for all classes of our imperial subjects, who are bound to one another by the heartfelt bonds of a common patriotism and are all equal in our equitable and compassionate view, our just and imperial decree for the implementation of the following particulars is hereby issued.

Reform Decree of 1856¹

Hariciye sadr-ı devlettir masalih andadır.

Foreign affairs are the heart of the state; all business lies there.

Fuad Paşa, from a poem sent to Âli Paşa²

Paris'e git hey efendi akl-ü-fikrin var ise
Âleme gelmiş sayılmaz gitmiyenler Paris'e.

Go to Paris, young sir, if you have any wits;
If you haven't been to Paris, you haven't come into the world.

Hoca Tahsin Efendi³



With the death of Mahmud II in 1839, the convergence of three major factors determined the resolution of the power conflict between the sultan and his officials, implicit in the reforms of the 1830s, and thus opened a new political period that lasted until 1871. Most basic of these factors was the character of Mahmud's successors: Abd ül-Mecid (1839-1861), who came to the throne in a time of unprecedented danger as an ill-prepared sixteen-year-old;⁴ Abd ül-Aziz (1861-1876), who possessed a will to dominate but lacked the comprehension and ultimately the mental stability to do so effectively;⁵ and Murad V (1876), whose instability led to his deposition after only three months.⁶ The House of Osman was not to produce a real successor to Mahmud before Abd ül-Hamid II (1876-1909).

The second factor in opening this new political period consisted of the changes that the reforms of the 1830s made in the security of tenure in high office. Lowering the rate of bureaucratic mobility, these changes combined with the relative effacement of the sultanate to produce a very clear shift in the locus of power. The chief beneficiary of this shift was the civil bureaucracy. More specifically, thanks to the influence of the third major factor—the political leverage accruing in the circumstances of the times to the officials in the vanguard of westernizing reform—the chief beneficiaries were the new diplomatic elite. Under a triad of great leaders, the last of whom died in 1871, the civil bureaucracy consolidated its hold as the most influential branch of officialdom, both in Istanbul and in the provinces, and the Porte became more than ever the real center of government.

These three factors combined to open a period destined to be remembered as a time of extreme political imbalance—of practically unfettered dominance by the civil-bureaucratic patricians of the Porte over all phases of the life of the state—and, in a sense, as the period of reform par excellence. The very name by which this period is still commonly remembered, *Tanzimat*,⁷ a causative form derived from the same Arabic root as the already familiar *nizam* (“order,” “regulation,” “system”) and meaning, simply, “reforms” or “reorganizations,” is a subtle witness to the continuation and intensification of reform under the new elite.

In fact, however, this new elite was not able to consolidate its hold immediately. Amounting initially to little more than one faction within the civil bureaucracy, it had to contend both with

rival forces within its own branch of service and with a faction-ridden military leadership, among whom those most identified with reform took a different and narrower view of what reforms were desirable. Here the most important opponent of the civil-bureaucratic reformers was the redoubtable Husrev Paşa (c. 1756-1855), who served as minister of war (*serasker*) throughout the years 1827-1837 and assumed for himself the post of grand vezir—no longer “prime minister”—immediately following the death of Mahmud in 1839. Husrev compared to the new civil-bureaucratic diplomats much as Koca Yusuf Paşa had compared to the efendis-turned-paşas of the 1790s. Thanks to the large numbers of slaves that he had trained and placed in sensitive positions, Husrev Paşa was also an extremely difficult man to circumvent.⁸

Mustafa Reşid and his friends were able to do so, largely thanks to the influence that they derived from European intervention in the Ottoman-Egyptian crisis. But other problems awaited them. Their first effort to extend the program of fiscal centralization into local administration produced almost instant failure. Muhammad Ali Paşa used the wealth of Egypt to launch intrigues against them in Istanbul, in opposition to the terms of settlement between the Istanbul and Cairo governments. And the Lebanese crisis of 1840 created continuing difficulties on the diplomatic scene. The fall of Mustafa Reşid in 1841 from the Foreign Ministry, a post that he had held for four years, consequently initiated a short period of reaction.⁹ Mustafa Reşid did not again become foreign minister until 1845, following which he received his first appointment as grand vezir the succeeding year. Even after that time, men with backgrounds outside the civil bureaucracy continued to gain the grand vezirate on occasion, down to the Crimean War. Among them were Damad Mehmed Ali Paşa, husband of the sister of Abd ül-Mecid and a palace minion, and Mustafa Naili Paşa, a perplexing figure who had made almost his entire career in Egyptian service and was reportedly illiterate.¹⁰

As in the past, however, such men could not fill the shoes of the best civil bureaucrats. It is thus not surprising that during and after the Crimean War, the new civil-bureaucratic elite established something of a monopoly on the most important positions at the Porte. After holding the grand vezirate almost continuously from 1846 to 1852, at which time he returned to the

Foreign Ministry, Mustafa Reşid became grand vezir three more times between 1854 and his death in 1858,¹¹ although his influence gradually faded before that of his younger associates, now become rivals, Âli and Fuad. Âli had become foreign minister as early as 1846 and grand vezir for the first time in 1852, Fuad following him several years later in each post. Following the death of Mustafa Reşid, these two men and a small core of civil-bureaucratic associates—Kıbrıslı Mehmed Emin, Mütercim Mehmed Rüşdi, and Yusuf Kâmil Paşas¹²—monopolized the grand vezirate down to the death of Âli in 1871. Meanwhile, Âli and Fuad, having shared the foreign ministry since 1846 with only a few other diplomatic colleagues, such as Sadık Rif'at Paşa, monopolized that post between the two of them from 1857 until the death of Fuad in 1869, following which Âli combined it with the grand vezirate until his own demise in 1871.¹³ Since the post of minister of the interior did not exist for most of this period, its responsibilities being absorbed into those of the grand vezir, this oligarchical control of the two most important posts of the Porte provided the means for the domination of almost the entire administrative system.

The linkage of grand vezir and foreign minister thus became the central element in a political system that the leaders of the new elite gradually built up to fill the political vacuum created by the weakness of the sultans. In fully elaborated form, this system included a number of other components, as well. There was a gradually lengthening roster of ministries and councils in Istanbul, located both at the Porte and outside it, which assisted the reformers in planning and implementing their reforms. Outside the capital, there was a similarly lengthening list of agencies manned by civil-bureaucratic personnel, a list that ultimately included a variety of local administrative organs created during this period, as well as the consular and diplomatic establishments. To govern these agencies, there was also a rapid accumulation of laws and regulations, which record in detail how the dominant statesmen of the time set about erecting and calibrating the new bureaucratic system over which they presided. Finally, to fill the organizational structures and apply the laws and regulations, there was the social body of the new civil bureaucracy, differing from the old scribal service in a variety of ways, including size, organizational complexity, sociocultural orienta-

tions, career patterns, and—in part—characteristic modes of political activity.

In this chapter we shall analyze the elements of this system, at least as found at the Porte, and the implications of its workings for the further development of the civil bureaucracy and the “center” in general. Before going on to take up the questions of organizational development, regulation, and social change within the civil bureaucracy, it will, however, be useful to discuss certain critical weaknesses of the civil-bureaucratic hegemony, which seemed so overwhelming to Ottomans at the time.

STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES OF THE CIVIL-BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM OF THE TANZIMAT

Despite their virtually monopolistic control of the levers of power, the position of the Tanzimat statesmen was far from invulnerable. Before the period ended, they encountered opposition of one sort or another from a number of quarters, and the very character and scope of political controversy began to undergo a profound transformation. Underlying this transformation were a number of general issues that stand out as structural weaknesses in the political position of the Tanzimat statesmen and thus as critical factors in shaping and limiting their achievements in bureaucratic reform. These issues we may identify as the mimetic quality of the reforms, the problems of human and economic resources, the inconsonance of reformist principle and political behavior, and the problems that the westernizing reformers experienced in the legitimation of their power and their policies.

The Mimetic Quality of the Reforms

As the events of the 1830s demonstrated, the new civil-bureaucratic elite emerged with relative abruptness and acquired a broad-ranging influence over the course of reform at a time when the development of its knowledge of Western ideas and institutions was still only beginning. Perhaps this, like the earlier reliance on “marginal men,” was simply a phase through which the reform movement had to pass. Ultimately, Mustafa Reşid, and certainly Âli and Fuad, gained acknowledgment from their European counterparts as diplomats of considerable

skill.¹⁴ While it was not invariably the case, and while imitation implied pitfalls of its own, some of the reforms also clearly reflected thorough knowledge of Western prototypes. To varying degrees this was true of the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) created in 1868,¹⁵ the system of municipal government created for Istanbul,¹⁶ and certain of the legal codes adopted during the period.¹⁷ But certain basic problems inherent in the very concept of borrowing from one culture to another, as well as certain peculiarities of this specific historical situation, combined to give even the most carefully planned reforms an air of imitative shallowness and incongruity with the Ottoman setting, and thus to generate controversy around them.

In part this was a reflection of the situation in which the Tanzimat statesmen found themselves in relation to European statesmen and diplomats, on one hand, and to their varied Ottoman compatriots, on the other. Where the former were concerned, the problem of the Tanzimat statesmen was essentially an aggravated version of that mixture of attraction and threat already apparent in the way Ottoman dignitaries of a half century earlier had viewed the outside world.

As the Middle East became more enmeshed in the evolving, Europe-centered world system, the association of Ottoman statesmen seeking to derive benefits from the West with Western statesmen acting in pursuit of the interests of their governments tainted the Ottomans in a way that the behavior of the Europeans seldom did anything to allay. Never did this become clearer than in the career of Stratford Canning, the noted British diplomat. Throughout his experience in Istanbul, spanning the half century from the fall of Selim III to the aftermath of the Crimean War, he exerted an influence on Ottoman reform that was surely material, if less nearly exclusive than some of his biographers have implied. But it also did much to make some of the innovations, such as the Reform Decree of 1856, unpalatable to Ottomans, and it tarred some of the Tanzimat statesmen, Mustafa Reşid Paşa most notably, with the brush of subservience to foreign interests.¹⁸ Mustafa Reşid's successors were vulnerable to the same charge, if on other accounts. For example, an opponent once attacked Âli Paşa for being, not the foreign minister of the Ottoman Empire, but rather the ambassador of whichever European power had most influence in Istanbul.¹⁹ Reporting Âli's death to London, the British ambassador, Sir H.

Elliot, said of him: "I have never had to complain of his having stopped short of what I had understood him to promise, while I have repeatedly had to thank him for having given way to my wishes further than he had engaged to do."²⁰ In a way that reflects their cultural formation as much as the international disequilibrium of the times, the Tanzimat statesmen never broke the pattern of dependence on outside powers already apparent in the reforms of the 1830s.

It does not follow that they were unaware of the need to engage the interests of broader segments of Ottoman society in their programs, although in this, too, they faced obstacles that it was impossible to overcome in the short run. It has been argued, in fact, that one of the goals of the local administrative assemblies which the Tanzimat reformers created at the beginning of the period, and which were to include indirectly elected representatives of the local populace, was to link the material interests of broader segments of the population to reform in just this way. No doubt the same could be said of other experiments in representation, cautious though they were, that followed during the remainder of this period.²¹ The egalitarian reforms introduced in the Gülhane Decree and the attempt to redefine Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*) as a supranationalism that would appeal to all the peoples of the empire are clearly significant in the same sense. Such efforts always encountered obstacles, however, either in preexisting vested interests, or in the opposition of principle emerging from the growing sense of cultural cleavage that Berkes evokes²² or from the self-contradictory character of the imperial supranationalism.

The practically impossible task that the reformers faced in trying to steer a smooth course between European self-interest and interference, on one hand, and the varied sorts of domestic opposition, on the other, complicated a task that would have been awesome even if it could have been pursued in isolation from all such distractions. In purely logical terms, the introduction of new measures and programs seemed to entail a sequence of basic stages, each more demanding than the last. First the concept had to be adopted. Then came two intermediate stages, of which the order varied in Ottoman practice. One was the elaboration of the concept in detail, this being the point in the process where promulgation of new laws and regulations typically occurred. The other was the practical implementation of the

concept, whether or not it had yet been worked out fully in regulatory guidelines. Not only did this and the preceding phase occur in variable order, but material restraints often forced the Ottomans to implement new programs on a gradual or piecemeal basis, a method that created additional subphases in the cycle. In any case, the concluding phase of the cycle would be the placing in operation of systems through which to monitor or control the implementation of the concept as elaborated in the laws and regulations.

The reforming statesmen of the Tanzimat were not slow to launch into the first stage of the cycle. Varying the order of the next two, they were usually quicker to create new organizations and programs than to work out how these should operate. As for control and monitoring, in a way that recalls and parallels the lack of effective political controls over the civil bureaucracy itself, the Tanzimat statesmen often seemed not to understand the need for this at all.

On top of the problems of coping with contending interests operating both from Europe and from within the Empire, the inherent difficulty of carrying the reforms through from initial conceptualization to controlled implementation thus did much to give the innovative policies of the Tanzimat an imitative and insubstantial quality. To make matters worse, there were at the same time other obstacles that made it even harder for the reformers to give substance to their programs.

The Problem of Human Resources

The difficulties that the reforming statesmen encountered immediately following the promulgation of the Gülhane Decree of 1839 in their attempts to implement changes in local administration demonstrated how lacking they were in subordinates prepared to understand and support their efforts. Since the social state of the civil bureaucracy at the end of the period will require more detailed consideration later in this chapter, no more need be said about this problem here than to note its seriousness and, in particular, to remark the emphasis which it forced all reformers to lay on reform in the field of education.

In the last chapter we noted the very small size of the modernist segment of the civil bureaucracy at the end of the 1830s and the fact that the Translation Office of the Porte was still, practi-

cally speaking, the only place entrusted with the task of inculcating the "talismanic" knowledge of French in civil officials. The school known as the *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye* (1839), and another similar institution, the *Mekteb-i Ulûm-i Edebiye* (School of Literary Studies, founded about the same time), were supposed to provide a modern kind of education, but appear never to have developed the means to do so.²³ In fact, the development of effective secular civil schools proved disappointingly slow.

The one type of new school most frequently mentioned in official biographies of this period and later, the *rişdiye*, surely owes its frequency of mention to the fact that it was little better than an elementary school in modern terms, and that a whole system of schools of this type gradually came into existence.²⁴ The political expediency which the reformers saw in keeping their hands off the monopoly of the religious establishment over the traditional, Kur'anic elementary schools (*şbyan mektepleri*) and the religious colleges (*medrese*) otherwise hindered the development of a comprehensive system of secular schools, thus limiting efforts to train civil bureaucrats to the development of a series of special institutions. Such, to varying degrees, were the "House of Instruction" (*Dar ül-Maarif*, 1849), the Ottoman School in Paris (c. 1857-1874), and the School of Civil Administration (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*, 1859, ancestor of the present Faculty of Political Science of Ankara University). Such, also, was something called the "Vestibule of the Offices" (*Mahrec-i Aklâm*, 1862), created in place of the two schools founded in 1839, and the Language School (1864, early history uncertain). Finally, there was the prestigious Galatasaray Lycée (1868).²⁵

The existing works on educational history, mostly emphasizing questions of organization and curriculum, provide considerable evidence of the weaknesses of the new schools. From the standpoint of bureaucratic training, there were other problems of at least equal gravity. The fact that the first of these schools were founded expressly for bureaucratic training stamped them with a kind of "trade-school" mentality. This quality comes through with distressing clarity in the name of the "Vestibule of the Offices" and calls attention to the lack of any Ottoman civil school providing the equivalent of a lycée-level education before the foundation of the Galatasaray Lycée in 1868. With this mentality went the projection into the new schools of kinds of indis-

cipline traditionally associated with lower-level scribal life, and particularly with behavior in matters pertaining to appointment and advancement.

The best indication of this appears in yet another reflection of the extremely close link between school and office: the use of the same kind of brevet, the *rüüs*, traditionally required for official appointments, to signify both the admission of students into the earliest of the civil schools and the appointment of the "graduates" from school to office. Records of the bureau responsible for the issue of these brevets, the section for Appointments (*Rüüs Kalemi*) in the Office of the Imperial Divan, indicate that during the 1840s, over five hundred persons obtained brevets for admission to the *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye*, the first of the new civil schools, but perhaps fewer than seventy completed the course of study and then obtained brevets once again for appointment to the offices. In some offices, notably that of the imperial Divan, officials continued to be appointed as if the new school did not exist at all. Aspiring bureaucrats who entered the new schools thus resisted the idea that they should complete the course of study, others found ways to get into the offices without going to the schools at all, and the authorities connived in these practices. One document, in fact, says baldly that one purpose of the schools was to make the way into the bureaucracy longer for persons who were not sons of officials.²⁶

While the term *rüüs* gradually acquired the meaning of "diploma," at least in connection with the new civil schools, in addition to its preexisting significations, changes in records-keeping systems make it impossible to trace the problems here described in a continuous way through the remainder of the period. Nonetheless, it is clear from other sources that in the new schools, as in the offices, disciplinary problems of the type just noted remained as much an issue as did the development of curriculum, texts, and instructional staff. The significance of these problems is apparent in a variety of ways in the sociocultural aspect presented by the Civil Bureaucracy as of the end of the period. The one compensating factor is that the new schools, for all their defects, provided a means for an unprecedented extension of literacy and for the diffusion of new types of cultural stimuli. Like the one-room schoolhouses of nineteenth-century America, these institutions at times exerted an influence to which their modest aspect gives little clue.

The Problem of Economic Resources

Perhaps more significant than anything else in inhibiting the ability of the Tanzimat statesmen to cope with such problems were the difficulties created by the economic situation of the empire. Effectively bankrupt by the end of the eighteenth century, the state stood now under the domination of a new elite that had inherited little if anything from the once impressive Ottoman tradition of financial management and would never succeed in fully comprehending the economic developments then transforming the West. As a result, the economic policies that the Tanzimat statesmen developed tended to be either stillborn or self-defeating, at least in purely economic terms, and the accomplishments of the reformers became a measure of what could and could not be done in the face of a chronic shortage of the material resources indispensable for effective administration.

The crippling effect that financial problems would have on the Tanzimat is clear from two events which occurred prior to the promulgation of the Gülhane Decree. One was the attempt of 1838 to replace tax farming with direct collection and centralized control of revenues and simultaneously to institute a system of salaries, thus providing an alternative form of emolument for the men who had been tax farmers and were now to be integrated into administrative cadres as salaried officials.

The simultaneity of these two measures, and the apparent lack of adequate calculation about how to meet the burdens that the salaries would create, seems to have created a vicious cycle. The salaries could not be covered, in part because revenue collection was not already centralized; and the tax farmers resisted centralization because they suspected that the proposed change would harm them economically. The upshot was that fiscal centralization never became a reality. Both tax farming and a largely nonfunctional salary system continued to exist, while governmental structures continued to expand, partly because of the attempt at bureaucratization of the provincial administration.

These financial difficulties helped to bring on the period of reaction of the early 1840s. In addition, the failure of fiscal centralization led directly, with the help of other problems, to the issuance of paper money (*kaime*), beginning in 1840. Its depre-

ciation helped to necessitate the contracting of the first foreign loan in 1854, while mounting indebtedness in turn led to the official acknowledgment of bankruptcy and the institution of foreign financial controls shortly after the end of this period. Efforts to reform the tax system and raise revenues had by then borne some fruit, but not enough to halt this course of events.²⁷

Among the forces propelling this downhill slide was the inauguration, also in 1838, of a fundamental change in the provisions governing international trade. This was the adoption of the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention of Balta Liman. The economic price of British support in the Egyptian crisis, this marked the point at which the traditional system of capitulations, the repeated revisions of which had for a long time been becoming less and less favorable to Ottoman interests, gave way to bilaterally negotiated commercial treaties. The convention of 1838 had the effect of confirming all preexisting capitulatory privileges, setting export and import duties at low rates, abolishing monopolies, and assuring British merchants the same rights as the most favored of local traders. This convention, and the similar ones subsequently concluded with other powers, thus opened Ottoman markets to industrial Europe at a critical moment, effectively giving the coup de grâce to what was left of Ottoman manufactures.²⁸

In their ill-planned attempt at fiscal centralization and in this opening of their domestic markets, the Tanzimat statesmen, perhaps irresistibly, became the agents of two critical failures, whose consequences were never fully remedied before the collapse of the imperial system. The effects of these failures on subsequent efforts at bureaucratic reform were to appear at every turn. Indeed, but for two facts, these events might have left little to speak of in the remainder of this study. In a way that the patrimonial tradition of political control over the distribution of economic resources makes more readily understandable, however, the concentration of political power still made bureaucratic growth possible, even without adequate resources to support it. Ultimately more significant is the fact that some of the developments most essential for the modernization of the administrative system—the propagation of new ideas, the modernization of communications, the formation of new concepts of organization and procedure and new attitudes concerning law and legislation—did not always entail substantial economic costs. The ma-

terial constraints within which Ottoman statesmen operated were very narrow, but not to the point of precluding a drastic transformation of the administrative tradition.

Reformist Principle versus Political Behavior

Interacting with the problems of resources and with the mimetic character of the reforms, another weakness in the political system of the Tanzimat statesmen resulted from the imperfect extent to which they accommodated their political behavior to certain implications of their own reforms.

On an intellectual level and in terms of their own, the reformers seem by the end of the 1830s to have had a rather clear grasp of the extent to which innovative reform implied movement toward a rational-legal order. Their role in the reassertion of the legislative function of the state and the character of the legislation of that decade indicate such an awareness. So does Mustafa Resid's contemporary perception of European support of the empire against Muhammad Ali as a matter of the entry of the Ottoman state "dans le droit Européen."²⁹

Much as George Yaney has found to be the case in nineteenth-century Russia,³⁰ rational-legalism was coming to exist in the minds of Ottoman statesmen as a myth and an ideal, even if it did not yet exist in the day-to-day workings of the administrative system. From at least as early as 1829, when Chief Scribe Pertev Paşa reportedly angered Mahmud II by insisting that the latter's subjects were "equally possessed of all human rights,"³¹ we could cite a long series of often dramatic incidents in which Ottoman statesmen and their republican successors have risked their careers and sometimes their lives for the sake of this ideal.³² In the nineteenth century, they were sometimes denounced for their pains as excessively Europeanized (*frenkmezreb*);³³ and one of the things that made them politically vulnerable, as Abd ül-Hamid's persecution of the constitutionalists showed after 1878, was that there was little popular appreciation for the values that lay behind their behavior.³⁴ Nonetheless, their actions contributed on more than one occasion to the consolidation in fact of the rational-legal ideal.

Among the men of the Tanzimat, however, this was clearly only one variety of political behavior. Much more typically, their political behavior continued to reflect the tradition of patrimonial factionalism. In the period between the fall of Pertev Paşa

and the triumph of the new diplomatic elite over Husrev Paşa, with whom the diplomats differed not only because of his policies but also because of his place among Perhev's enemies, this factional activity displayed the intensity of a mortal struggle in which some of the reform measures were used as if they were little more than weapons. For example, Mustafa Reşid and his friends did not stop with securing Husrev's dismissal from the grand vezirate in 1840; they also brought him to trial under the new penal code of the same year and secured his conviction on charges of bribe-taking.³⁵ Their subsequent efforts at the reform of provincial administration gave rise to many more actions of the same kind.³⁶

What makes this use of the new laws more interesting is that the reformers were themselves persistently accused of similar abuses. On and off for the remainder of their careers, reports of venality circulated about the major Tanzimat statesmen and many of their dependents.³⁷ They were also noted for nepotism and favoritism. The many conciliar bodies founded during the period were often denounced as no more than a form of relief for officials who were out of office,³⁸ and the evidence on other aspects of favoritism in appointments, though scattered, is quite voluminous.³⁹

In terms of the actual political behavior of the leading statesmen, it sometimes seemed to contemporary Ottomans that the era of reform had made no changes in older patterns at all. The two official historians of the day, Lûtfi Efendi and Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, both said as much.⁴⁰ Once threatened with being "crushed" if he hesitated to choose between the opposing factions that had grouped around Mustafa Reşid on one hand and Âli and Fuad on the other, Cevdet was speaking from experience.⁴¹ Equally by experience, he knew that whatever the formal structures created for the deliberation of policy, the major questions were still decided by the most influential statesmen in consultation with a few confidants.⁴²

Such political behavior had been taken for granted before the beginning of reform, but that could no longer be. The more steps were taken toward erection of a rational-legal order, the more absurd and reprehensible behavior incompatible with such an order inevitably seemed. Since the reforms of the 1830s, eliminating the conditions that had shaped the old pattern of "wheel-of-fortune" mobility, had made it possible for the same

few men to hold on to the highest positions in a seemingly unending way, this absurdity was never more apparent than when the offenders were the very leaders of reform, while those slighted by the abuses were subordinates who sensed their chances for advancement to have been diminished by the emergence of this new elite.

The Tanzimat statesmen were not totally unaware of this, and some of the most trenchant descriptions of the discontinuity between practice and principle came, in fact, from statements they made about themselves. For example, Mütercim Mehmed Rüşdi Paşa, one of the grand vezirs of the period, likened the state to a ship in distress. He compared his own position to that of a man who spied this situation from another ship and approached to offer assistance. All those aboard the endangered vessel were drinking and carousing in so frenetic a fashion that Rüşdi Paşa, unable to find anyone to whom to explain why he had come, soon joined in the revelry himself.⁴³

An image of imperial decay, this is also an image of the tension between the reformers' promise of a new, rational-legal order and their persistence in patterns of political behavior governed by the patrimonial tradition. Others perceived the Tanzimat statesmen in much the same light. Presently, some of them began to think up other, more effective ways of responding to the situation that Rüşdi Paşa so vividly evoked.

Westernization, Political Imbalance, and Legitimation

This brings us to another weakness of the Tanzimat system, greater in importance than all those discussed thus far: the effect of the Westernist cultural orientation of the reformers on the legitimation of their policies.

As deviations from patterns sanctioned by tradition, the innovations of the era of reform were inherently controversial. With them, the articulation of alternative policies and programs began to assume the prominence and centrality to political activity that is familiar in modern political systems. Each innovative measure was, in effect, a focal point for controversy of a sort differing in both character and intensity from that associated with the personality-centered factionalism of the patrimonial tradition. But the emergence of a more modern type of political activity was not instantaneous. The discontinuity between principle and practice meant that the old and new patterns coexisted dur-

ing this period, with the Tanzimat statesmen behaving like an enlarged version of a patrimonial household faction, or a set of factions, even as their reforms created a lengthening list of issues for controversy of the new kind.

This increasing articulation of policies, their obviously innovative character, and the new levels and kinds of political conflict that resulted made it more than ever necessary for the reformers to have effective means by which to legitimate the policies they espoused; but the political imbalance of the period turned this into an insoluble problem. In the traditional Islamic state, there had been three sources of legal authority: the Islamic religious-legal tradition, custom, and the will of the sovereign, the last two in theory only ancillary to the first. As long as the initiative for reform remained chiefly with the sultan and it had not become obvious that the reforms would violate fundamental principles of the traditional order, the legitimation of reform was not a major issue. After 1839, those conditions were no longer fulfilled.

For the Tanzimat statesmen, the essential problem was that the orientation of their policies away from the first two of the traditional sources of legitimation inevitably heightened their dependence on the third. However much they manipulated the sultan in practice, however much they sought through the reforms of the 1830s to alter their servile status in relation to him, they still had to respect his office and to cling, sometimes in a purely formalistic way and sometimes in deadly earnest, to conventional concepts of their relation to him if they were to have recognized authority behind their measures. They thus retained the old rhetoric of official slavery at the very time that they tried to suppress the more painful aspects of its reality. They also held fast to the traditional concepts of the delegation of the sultan's power and the "absolute delegacy" of the grand vezir. The only practical alternative to this would have been to effect revolutionary changes in principle, including the redefinition of the bases of sovereignty.

The Gülhane Decree and the promotion of the new, egalitarian concept of Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*) showed that the reformers were willing to make changes of fundamental principle in certain respects. Yet, to the extent that they understood the implications of the relevant issues,⁴⁴ they feared to go further and were, in any case, in no position to attempt a thoroughgoing

restructuring of the polity as traditionally conceived. Their power was purely de facto; and, as a number of unpleasant incidents between the sultans and the leading figures of the period made clear,⁴⁵ even the supposed safeguards instituted in the 1830s against the arbitrariness of the sultan could not yet be taken for granted.

Even without a revolutionary restructuring of the polity, all it would take to destroy the political system of the Tanzimat would be for its leadership to lose its unity or continuity, or for a sultan strong enough to assert his sovereignty to come to the throne. The death of Âli Paşa in 1871 fulfilled the first of these conditions. Abd ül-Aziz attempted in the five remaining years of his life to fulfill the second; Abd ül-Hamid did so unequivocally.

Thus, the political imbalance of the Tanzimat ended, and another political period opened. Comparable in this respect to the scribal bureaucrats of earlier periods, the Tanzimat elite enjoyed a political eminence that was only relative and that was marked, partly because of the very decrepitude of the imperial system of which they were a part, by critical limitations. The impact of these men on the continuing development of the Ottoman politico-bureaucratic tradition was nonetheless great. Among the measures of this fact are both the growth and reorganization of the bureaucracy under their direction and the pressures for further change that this growth provoked.

THE GROWTH OF A BUREAUCRACY FREED OF OUTSIDE CONTROL

The transformation of the civil bureaucracy during the Tanzimat was both the culmination of growth patterns apparent in the history of the scribal service from the seventeenth century on and, more immediately, the product of the changes that followed on the shift in the locus of power and the restoration of the grand vezirate in 1839. Partly because the development of new institutions progressed more rapidly than their regulation, not every facet of this growth can be measured with precision. Yet, available information, particularly the government yearbooks published regularly from 1847 until the Young Turk period, provides unmistakable indications of the scale and complexity that governmental institutions acquired in this period, suggesting that the Tanzimat must have accounted for a great part of the numerical growth from the 1,000 to 1,500 who

served in the scribal service at the end of the eighteenth century to the 50,000 to 100,000 on its rolls under Abd ül-Hamid.⁴⁶ Particularly given the shortage of resources with which the Tanzimat statesmen had to contend, this growth provides impressive evidence of the potential for empire building in a bureaucracy effectively freed of control by other elements of the political system.

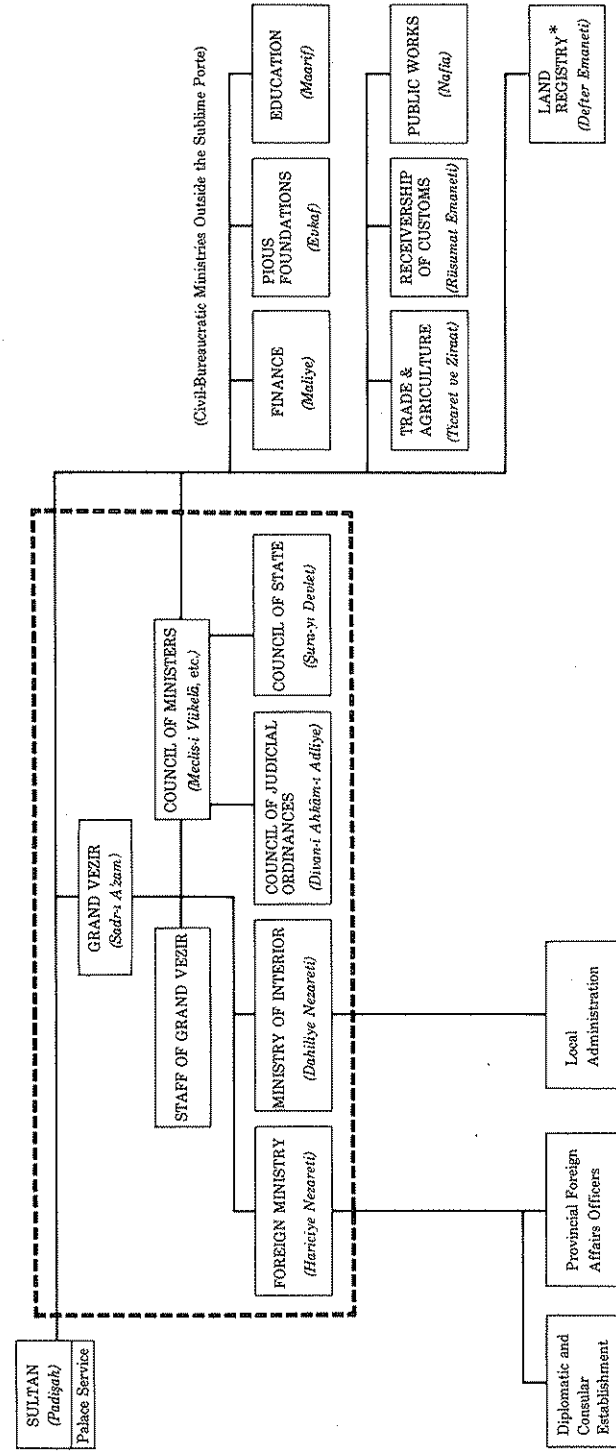
As a point of reference for the discussion to follow, Figure V-1 presents a graphic summary of the organizational state of the Sublime Porte as of the death of Ali Paşa in 1871. For the record, the figure also includes other civil-bureaucratic agencies outside the Porte. The organizational developments of the period were such, however, that some bodies that do not show in the figure also require discussion. In addition, it is no longer practicable under conditions of 1871 to include in a single figure details on the internal structure of each agency of the Porte. To give a graphic portrayal of some such structures, which will be discussed in the text, a separate detailed figure for the Foreign Ministry will appear at an appropriate point in this and succeeding chapters. For most, if not all, of the era of reform, the Foreign Ministry continued to be the most highly evolved of the major civil-bureaucratic agencies.

The Grand Vezir and His Staff

Husrev Paşa's preemptory assumption of the grand vezirate following the death of Mahmud not only terminated the latter's experiment with a "prime minister," but also restored full blown the traditional concept of the "absolute delegacy" (*vekâlet-i mutlakâ*) of the grand vezir. The decree that the hapless Abd ül-Mecid found himself issuing to Husrev stated this unequivocally, the misrepresentation of the initiative behind the appointment underscoring the fact: "I have of my own good inspiration selected and appointed you with full freedom of action to the exalted station of comprehensive supervisor of all affairs domestic, foreign, financial, or military, to the grand vezirate, and to the great and absolute delegacy."⁴⁷

To the men of the Tanzimat, the high-handed methods by which Husrev assumed office were a shock and a scandal; his conception of the office, not so. For reasons that are by now understandable, they saw to it that formal decrees on at least some subsequent occasions described the office in terms even more

FIGURE V-1. ORGANIZATION OF THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY AND ITS RELATION TO THE PALACE, 1871



Enclosed organizations are part of Sublime Porte.
* Not included in the Council of Ministers.

bombastic than those addressed to Husrev. The prologue to the Reform Decree of 1856, if we may judge from a French translation, addressed Âli Paşa as "you who distribute the honors of our Caliphal Court" and as the "alter ego" of the sultan.⁴⁸ On a day-to-day basis, the men of the Tanzimat exerted continuing vigilance to maintain the grand vezirate on just this footing. Âli Paşa, for example, was noted for insisting that the sultan consult him not only for ministerial appointments, but also for those of secretaries and certain other attendants at the palace. Âli was equally insistent that his ministers have contact with the palace only through him.⁴⁹ At his death, Âli was said to have "exercised an authority over every department of the State to a degree that reduced the other ministers to insignificance, and no doubt impeded the independence of action indispensable to their offices being conducted with due vigour."⁵⁰ Only after Âli's death did this pattern begin to change.

As differentiation among the organs of the Porte continued, however, the grand vezirate did begin to change in the sense of accumulating a variety of offices directly subordinate to it and not otherwise attached to any ministry. Most important of these was the post of undersecretary (*müsteşar*) to the grand vezir. The history of this post began with the appointment of an "assistant" (*muavin*) to the "prime minister" (*baş vekil*) in 1838, the title being changed to "undersecretary" (*müsteşar*) with the reconversion from prime minister to grand vezir in 1839. From then until 1869, the office of undersecretary, which existed for most but not all of this period, appears to have been a sort of alternate form for that of minister of the interior, a post that existed only when the undersecretaryship did not. More exactly, when the grand vezir assumed responsibility for internal affairs, as was usually the case, the minister of the interior would disappear and an undersecretary to the grand vezir would be appointed.⁵¹

At the same time, the evolution of the chief scribe (*reis ül-küttab*), traditional head of the grand vezir's chancery, into a foreign minister of relatively specialized functions initiated a process by which most of the offices in the chancery gradually severed their links with the Foreign Ministry and began to assume a new form as a secretarial staff attached directly to the grand vezirate. Since to some degree these offices retained their old, heterogeneous functions, this change is clearer in terms of organizational affiliations than of actual duties. By the end of the

period here surveyed, it had progressed to the point that the Offices of the Corresponding Secretary of the Grand Vezir (*Mektubî-i Sadr-ı Âli*) and of the Receiver (*Amedî*), restored to their old forms in 1839 after their subdivision of a year earlier into separate sections for internal and foreign affairs, had begun to be regarded as part of the grand vezir's personal staff.

The logic of this development was obvious in the case of the corresponding secretary. With growth in business and size of staff, this office gradually began to go through a process of internal differentiation, acquiring its own Section for Important Affairs (*Mühimme Odası*) with fifteen members in 1861-1862. Later references also mention other sections for matters such as legal affairs (*hukuk, deavi*) and the preparation of reports and minutes of meetings (*mazbata*).⁵²

In the case of the receiver (*amedî*), the organizational link to the grand vezir presumably followed from the traditional role of the office in preparing documents for submission from the Porte to the palace. In the nineteenth century, the receiver retained this responsibility, acquiring in addition the related duties of recording the proceedings of the Council of Ministers and registering the imperial commands (*irade*) that came back from the palace in response to the documents submitted from the Porte. In consequence, as many traditional offices began to go into eclipse, this one retained considerable importance. Its staff, no more than five or ten a half-century earlier, included twenty or more clerks (*hulefa*) through most of this period.⁵³

Also attached to the grand vezir were several other offices that were smaller in size and importance, or less clearly established in organizational terms. One traditional function that falls into this category is that of the master of ceremonies or *chef de protocole* (*teşrifâtî-i Divan-ı Hümayun*) and his assistants. Perhaps under him was a Decoration Office (*Nişan-ı Hümayun Kalemi*), presumably in charge of issuing the various types of decorations created during this period.⁵⁴ Several agencies dealt with various aspects of official communications and what is now referred to as records management. Needs in that field led to the creation of new archives (*hazine-i evrak*) for the Porte and the construction in 1846 of a special building to house the records.⁵⁵ By 1861, there was a special Records Office of the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âli Evrak Odası*), its mission being to supervise the flow of documentation between the Porte and the other offices in Istanbul and to keep

records that would make it possible to recover documents when needed.⁵⁶ The extension into the empire of telegraph lines also led to the creation of a special Telegraph Office of the Sublime Porte.⁵⁷

Thus, while the prevailing conception of the grand vezirate remained practically unchanged, the process of reform precipitated changes in the grand vezir's entourage. Ultimately, of course, the most important adjuncts of the grand vezirate lay not in these offices providing technical and secretarial services, but in the various conciliar bodies and ministries. The differing degrees to which these assumed organizational substance and distinctness are highly indicative of the thrust, and the limitations, of the reformers' efforts during this period.

Conciliar Bodies—The Council of Ministers

As heirs to the *divans* and ad hoc consultative assemblies of the late prereform period, the conciliar bodies have a logical claim to consideration immediately following the grand vezirate. This is true not only on account of the close working relationship between the highest councils and the incumbent of that office, but also on account of the important contributions which the growth of collegial bodies has tended historically to make to the development of more characteristically bureaucratic institutions.⁵⁸ Since Mahmud's creation in 1838 of the Consultative Assembly of the Sublime Porte (*Dar-ı Şura-yı Bab-ı Âli*) and the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*) had been an integral part of his efforts to dismantle the grand vezirate and shift the locus of power, the restoration of the grand vezirate in 1839 required immediate changes in those bodies. The sequence of reforms that followed had the effect of replicating the conciliar form of organization much more widely than in the past and regularizing what had been the ad hoc character of earlier consultative assemblies in certain respects. The same reforms also stimulated the organizational growth of many agencies of the civil bureaucracy and furthered the development in certain councils of legislative and representative as well as consultative roles.

While Mahmud had intended his system of dual councils to replace the old *divan* of the grand vezir, it is not surprising that a sort of successor body to the vezirial *divan* reappeared—largely shorn, it seems, of its quondam judicial role—following the res-

toration of the grand vezirate. Nor is it surprising that this became the most important of all the conciliar bodies. Known by names such as Council of Ministers (*Meclis-i Vühelâ*) or Privy Council (*Meclis-i Has*), this is often compared to the ministerial councils and cabinets of other governments, although it still functioned only in the limited capacity that its transitional state of development and the absolutism of the empire implied.

For example, ministers were chosen in theory by the sultan—a choice usually made during this period at the behest of the grand vezir—and there was no principle of collective ministerial responsibility. Membership in the council was neither entirely fixed nor entirely civil-bureaucratic. Yet, a check through the listings in the government yearbooks shows that there was a more or less permanent core. This consisted of the grand vezir, his undersecretary, the head of the religious establishment (*seyh ül-İslâm*), the chairmen of the two major councils that Mahmud II had created or their successor organizations, and the ministers of foreign affairs, finance, education, pious foundations, and trade (a portfolio that sometimes also encompassed agriculture and public works). The council also included the officers in charge of the military departments (army, artillery, navy) and police (*zabtiye*), as well, in most years, as the steward of the powerful sultan mothers and various ministers-without-portfolio.⁵⁹ Ranging in numbers as high as fifteen or sixteen, the ministers without portfolio began to be listed toward the end of the period as "appointed to the high councils" (*mecalis-i âliye'ye memur*), and indeed their names usually reappear, along with some of those of the ministers with portfolio, among the members of the other conciliar bodies.

The heterogeneous membership of the Council of Ministers in this period suggests that it, like the old ad hoc assemblies, served to a degree as a forum for the creation of consensus, or the appearance of consensus, and thus lends added credence to Cevdet Paşa's indication that the real decisions about matters of policy were arrived at informally by the leading statesmen in discussion with their closest associates. Such a reliance on ad hoc or confidential means of policy making would help to explain the lack of explicit specification of the duties of the Council of Ministers, or of the differences between its attributions and those of the conciliar bodies immediately below it. The same fact would also perhaps explain the shortage of comment in the biographi-

cal and historical literature on the inner workings of what should have been one of the most important governmental agencies of the period. Yet the Council of Ministers was not simply a façade. However much it may have differed from the cabinet of a Western European state, the leading statesmen of the period clearly relied on it, at least at times, to respond with comprehension and dispatch to a broad range of policy questions. Indeed, the research of Roderic Davison is beginning to demonstrate that the speed and ingenuity with which the Council of Ministers supported the diplomatic efforts of the leading statesmen was at times remarkable, especially in view of the circumstances in which the empire then found itself.⁶⁰

*Major Conciliar Bodies with Legislative,
Judicial, and Representative Functions*

While the other conciliar bodies of the period were eventually quite numerous, the most important were those that derived directly from the two major councils that Mahmud created in 1838. Following Mahmud's death, one of these, the Consultative Assembly of the Sublime Porte (*Dar-ı Şura-yı Bab-ı Âli*), was abolished or combined with the other, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*).⁶¹ In a move clearly symbolic of the opening of a new political period, the meeting place of this body, expressly charged under the Gülhane Decree with framing the new laws needed to implement its promises, was transferred from the palace to the Porte. There this council evolved into a permanent institution with a subordinate secretarial bureau (*Meclis-i Vâlâ Tahrirat Odası*) and became the chief center for preparation of the legislation used to institute the reforms of the period. In addition, the council assumed judicial functions in administrative cases and in appeals against decisions rendered under the new secular laws and codes that it gradually began to propound.⁶²

Relations between this council and the Council of Ministers were nowhere explicitly regulated, but gradually settled into a pattern governed by the political realities of the time. Particularly as the volume of needed legislation increased, the draft laws prepared in the Council of Judicial Ordinances tended to gain approval without change in the Council of Ministers, and again at the palace. The problems that might have arisen between councils because of the indeterminate allocation of legisla-

tive initiative were taken care of in a practical sense by the fact that appointment to and compensation within the Council of Judicial Ordinances depended on the will of the grand vezir and his intimates. Thus, this council became a specialized, second-echelon element in a political machine that included the Council of Ministers, as well.

Over time, the continuing growth in the volume of its business, as well as the complexity of its functions and other political considerations, led to a series of changes in the legislative council. Quite early, it became customary for the council to perform much of its work in small, specialized committees. Between 1854 and 1861, there also existed another council, known as the High Council of Reforms (*Meclis-i Âli-i Tanzimat*). The distinction between its role and that of the older body was to some extent a matter of politics rather than logic. Both councils ultimately discharged a mixture of legislative and judicial functions, but the new one had a greater degree of legislative initiative and gradually became preoccupied in its legislative role with matters of administrative law and regulation. Cevdet Paşa, who was a member of the High Council of Reforms, adds to this that the new council was also to serve as a court for the trial of ministers and to exercise a watchdog role over the implementation of the legislation it prepared. In 1861, however, problems of coping with continued growth in the workload of the two councils led to their recombination into a supposedly improved form, still known as the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances. This was divided into separate sections for legislation, administration and finance, and adjudication. According to Cevdet, the watchdog role of the High Council of Reforms was then dropped.⁶³

Finally, in 1868, there was another reorganization, resulting in two councils, shown in Figure V-1. The legislative function passed to a Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*), consisting of fifty members divided into five specialized departments and having its own secretarial staff. In the limited sense in which the representative principle had already come into use in local administration, the Council of State also had a representative character, both through its inclusion of members chosen from various non-Muslim communities and through the requirement that it meet annually with delegates from the elected general assemblies of the provinces.⁶⁴ While this Council of State in fact retained judicial functions as well, those in principle passed to a

new Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Divan-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*).⁶⁵ Of these two bodies, the Council of State continued to exist at the Sublime Porte, if with many ups and downs, until the end of the empire. The Council of Judicial Ordinances, in contrast, appears to have been integrated within a few years into a reorganized Ministry of Justice separate from the Porte, thus providing a particularly notable case of the bureaucratization of collegial institutions.

Smaller Conciliar Bodies

While the details of the subject lie beyond the limits of this discussion, it is relevant to note in general that the development of conciliar bodies of smaller size and more specialized character was also a prominent feature of the bureaucratic growth of the Tanzimat. Where information is available on the early history of these, they often appear to have been little more than special committees that were formed to administer new programs and gradually grew in some cases into regular bureaucratic departments or even ministries.

For example, the Council on Trade and Agriculture was in a curious way an outgrowth of the Foreign Ministry, as well as the first step in the creation of a Ministry of Trade and Agriculture, which emerged later in this period. Reflecting the economic concerns surrounding the negotiation of the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention of 1838, the council was founded under the auspices of Mustafa Reşid Paşa, then foreign minister, with his undersecretary as its first chairman.⁶⁶ The Quarantine Board, in turn, evidently came into existence to administer a quarantine system that had already existed for several years. On a practical level, the diplomatic complications arising from the need to gain the compliance of foreign nationals with its measures linked the operations of this board, too, with those of the Foreign Ministry. At the same time, the role of the board, the first governmental agency of consequence in the field of public health, in drafting quarantine regulations provided a good illustration of how these smaller councils could pick up a share of the legislative responsibilities discharged by their larger prototypes.⁶⁷ In 1847, the earliest of the government yearbooks listed eight of these smaller, specialized councils. By 1871, their number had surely increased, although their internal subdivi-

sions made the listings so complex that it is difficult to determine an exact count.⁶⁸

In the next period, the smaller conciliar bodies seem by and large to have faded in relative importance, in many cases because they became absorbed into regular bureaucratic agencies. Of course, that was not the only evolutionary route such a body could follow. Just as the Council of Ministers survived, ostensibly as a high-level coordinating and policy-making body, at least one of the small councils was to develop, under the guiding hand of Abd ül-Hamid, into a mechanism for the exertion of his control over bureaucratic appointments. This was a Commission for the Selection of Civil Officials (*İntihab-ı Memurin-i Mülkiye Komisyonu*), first noted in the yearbooks in 1871.⁶⁹ Later developments suggest that its mission at the time had to do with staffing the administrative structures called for under the recently enacted laws on provincial administration.

"Ministry of Justice"

As bodies of conciliar form increased in number and developed new functions, the ministries, with the one notable exception of Foreign Affairs, appear to have developed only more gradually, reliance on conciliar bodies remaining most pronounced where the development of bureaucratic organizations was weakest. Nowhere at the Porte was this weakness more pronounced than in what contemporary observers called the Ministry of Justice. In fact, it can be so termed only with reservations and had disappeared by 1871. Consequently, it has no place in Figure V-1, although it requires comment because of the links between its history and that of several others of the institutions we have discussed.

The head of this "ministry" was the successor to the chief bailiff (*çavuş başı*) of the traditional system and was known as the *divan-ı deavi nazırı*. Since for most of this period, the holder of this post was not a member of the Council of Ministers, it is surely better to think of him not as a minister, but as something closer in rank to the various supervisors and intendants known as *nazır* before, and sometimes after, the adoption of that term to designate European-style "ministers." When the title of *divan-ı deavi nazırı* first came into use in 1836, the Austrian ambassador translated the title as "Président de la Cour de Jus-

tice."⁷⁰ In fact, there was no distinct court of justice of which this figure was president, although he was initially assigned to attend two days a week at appeals courts, then held in the offices of the *şeyh ül-İslâm*, at which cases were heard under the new laws created by the reformers (*nizamî davalar*).⁷¹ Perhaps it will do just as well, then, to translate *divan-ı deavi nazarı* as "supervisor of judicial affairs," specifically of those pertaining to the new laws. Aside from this "supervisor," the yearbooks also mention several lower-ranking officials recognizable as his subordinates. These include two assistants (*muavim*), recalling the two scribes known as *tezkerecis* who worked for the chief bailiff under the old system, and a few others. The numbers of these subordinates grew slowly until the late 1860s, but never to the point of indicating the existence of an organization of any size.⁷²

This insubstantiality of the supposed Ministry of Justice appears to provide a particularly strong indication of the difficulties of carrying reform from concept to controlled implementation in the kind of environment in which the Tanzimat reformers had to operate. It was not that the empire had no judicial system. On the contrary, it had more than one, including the traditional *kadı* courts of the Muslim religious authorities, the analogous tribunals of the non-Muslim communities, and the mixed courts trying commercial cases between Ottoman subjects and foreigners. The councils (*memleket meclisleri*) created in the course of local administrative reform and the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances at the Porte also performed judicial functions. The problem was rather to create a coherent hierarchy of civil and criminal courts over which a minister of justice could assume responsibility. This really only began in the 1860s with the introduction in the provinces, as part of the general elaboration of a new system for local administration, of what became known as the *nizamiye* courts.⁷³

Paralleling the problems of creating a modern court system were those of developing a coherent body of secular law for these courts to enforce. The process was equally gradual. Beginning with the codes of 1838 for officials and *kadıs*, it continued with the successive penal codes of 1840 and later—no longer drafted, after the egalitarian promises of the Gülhane Decree, for officials or any other single segment of the population. Then came the land code of 1858, the great *mecelle* of

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, and a series of codes borrowed more or less from foreign models.⁷⁴

The real beginning of the Ottoman Ministry of Justice lies in the differentiation in 1868 of the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) from the Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Divan-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*). Simultaneously, the "supervisor of judicial affairs" and his subordinates disappeared from the government yearbooks, an accretion of courts and offices began to build up around the new Judicial Council, and it, in turn, metamorphosed a few years later into a Ministry of Justice, which then ceased to figure as an element of the Sublime Porte. The exact course or timing of these events is not totally clear.⁷⁵ In an effort to reflect conditions of 1871, Figure V-1 shows only the Council of Judicial Ordinances and neither the "supervisor of judicial affairs" nor the later Ministry of Justice.

Prior to his disappearance, the "supervisor of judicial affairs" (*divan-ı deavi nazarı*) remained so obscure that it is difficult to do more than speculate on his role. It probably involved the presentation of cases and appeals to the higher courts or councils in Istanbul, particularly to the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances when functioning in its judicial role, or the enforcement of the decisions there rendered. These functions corresponded to the traditional ones of the chief bailiff and were taken over at the founding of the Council of Judicial Ordinances in 1868 by agencies created within it.⁷⁶ Probably the best-known figures to hold this supervisorship were Ahmed Vefik Paşa (1823-1891) and Ziya Paşa (1825-1880), the former in 1857 and the latter in 1863. Since both were politically in Âli Paşa's disfavor, their consignment to the post is presumably an index of its insignificance.⁷⁷

Ministry of the Interior

Discussion of the power position of the Tanzimat statesmen and of the undersecretaryship of the grand vezir has already given an idea of the discontinuities in the history of the Ministry of the Interior, at least as represented by the minister, during this period. Indeed, from 1839 through 1868, there was no titular minister of the interior. Not until the death of Fuad Paşa in 1869 and Âli Paşa's assumption of the office of foreign minister as well as that of grand vezir was a separate Ministry of the Interior

reinstated and provided with regulations. Even so, to judge from the yearbooks, the central organizational structure of the ministry developed only slowly. By the end of the period, this included an undersecretary (*müsteşar*), an assistant to him, and at least two bureaus. One was headed by a corresponding secretary for internal affairs (*mektubî-i dahiliye*) and contained several subsections; the other was known somewhat cryptically as the Internal Affairs Office (*Dahiliye Kalemi*).⁷⁸ Once again, this hardly looks like the organization of a ministry with administrative responsibilities over a large empire.

The apparent underdevelopment of the central organs of the Ministry of the Interior surely reflects not only the determination of the leading men of the Porte to concentrate power as much as possible in a few hands, but also the concrete problems of projecting new administrative policies over an empire in which the power of the central government had been in decline for so long. The failure of the reformers' first effort at fiscal centralization, an effort that in large part had to take the form of a change in the methods of revenue collection at the local level, clearly illustrated the magnitude of these problems.

What survived from that effort, at least through the Crimean War, was a system of local administration based on several elements. One was the provincial governor general (*vali*), appointed from Istanbul, or other chief administrative official at the three lower jurisdictional echelons. The provincial governors general exercised rather limited powers, which were increased by a decree of 1852. Nominally in support of the chief administrative officer, there was a small staff of appointive officials. Part of these were recruited by the chief administrative officer himself through the mechanisms implied in the model of the patrimonial household. At least at the provincial level, however, some of the most important—the treasurer (*defterdar*) and local military commander (*serasker*)—were appointed from Istanbul and represented checks on the governor general's power. In certain times and places, military commanders were, in fact, appointed to head the local administration, even at the provincial level. Finally, there was a system of local assemblies. These included both the appointed officials and other members elected by an oblique system as representatives of the various ethno-religious communities of the locality.⁷⁹ Relations between the local authorities and those in Istanbul were assured through

such means as the sending out of provincial inspection missions, the referral of certain types of matters from the local assemblies to the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances, and the maintenance by the appointed governors general (*vali*), as in the past, of "agents of the gate" (*kapı kâhyası*) to represent them at the Porte.⁸⁰

The limited extent to which this system differed from that which existed before 1839 may be inferred from the continuing role of the "agents of the gate." Similarly, while the local assemblies were new in form, their elected members were apt to be the same religious dignitaries and other notables who had long dominated local affairs, and these men often managed through the councils to maintain their accustomed influence.⁸¹ While it is true that the assemblies represented a step toward the development of representative institutions, the variety of their powers in fiscal, judicial, and other types of business makes it equally logical to view them as an example of reliance on collegial institutions to supplement the otherwise thinly developed administrative cadres. Considering how rudimentary the central organization of the Ministry of the Interior was, the existence among the various committees of the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances, at least after the Crimean War, of a committee specializing in civil-administrative (*mülkiye*) or internal (*dahiliye*) affairs suggests that a similar dependence prevailed even in Istanbul.⁸² Underdevelopment of the administrative infrastructure meant that the outreach of the central government into the countryside was still limited; and in fact, the first requirement for implementing reforms in the provinces was often outright pacification.⁸³

For most of the period, efforts to improve local administration proceeded on a fragmentary or localized basis. There were occasional redefinitions of the responsibilities of the governors general or other officials. A distinct municipal organization was developed for Istanbul, and special regimes were created for localities which—like Lebanon—were placed in a special status for one reason or another. There was also the major experiment in administrative reform that Midhat Paşa undertook in the province of Nish.⁸⁴ But there was no further attempt at general reform of the provincial administrative system until the promulgation of the laws of 1864 and 1871.

These were patterned on the French model of a centralized

system. Again, there were to be four echelons of territorial subdivisions, and there were to be centrally appointed administrative chiefs at all but the lowest. In one sense, the new laws pointed in the direction of decentralization rather than its opposite; for the power of the provincial governor general (*vali*) was increased in 1864 and again in 1871. Given the difficulties experienced earlier in the period with limited gubernatorial powers, and given the fact that the *valis*,—in contrast to their predecessors of a generation earlier—were now likely to be Istanbul-based members of the central bureaucratic elites, this change must have seemed both indicated on practical grounds and tolerable in a larger context of centralizing policy. In any case, to support the chief administrative officers, there was also to be an expanded cadre of appointive subordinate officials, as well as a representative collegial body, or now a set of them. These were the administrative council (*meclis-i idare*) found at each of the top three administrative echelons; the general assembly set up in each province; the local courts, on which the inclusion of representatives of the non-Muslim communities was envisioned chiefly as a way to thwart European complaints about Ottoman justice; and a series of commissions with responsibilities in fields such as public works, education, agriculture, and trade. The law of 1864 was first implemented in the single, specially created Danube province, with Midhat Paşa as governor. In 1867, the law was amended in some points and extended in its application to a number of provinces. Promulgation of a revised law then followed in 1871, and application of this law to virtually all the provinces of the empire occurred over the next several years.⁸⁵

The law of 1871 remained in force until 1913. It stands out as a milestone in the development of a modern type of local administrative apparatus, in the expansion of the role of the civil bureaucracy in administrative positions outside the capital, and in the broadening of the scope of participation by elements of the populace in political and bureaucratic processes. At the same time, the fact that such laws were not even drafted until the very end of the period is an eloquent witness to the difficulties which the men of the Tanzimat encountered in pursuit of the long-espoused goal of reasserting central control over the provinces. At the Sublime Porte, the rudimentary development of the central organs of the Ministry of the Interior, like the strange his-

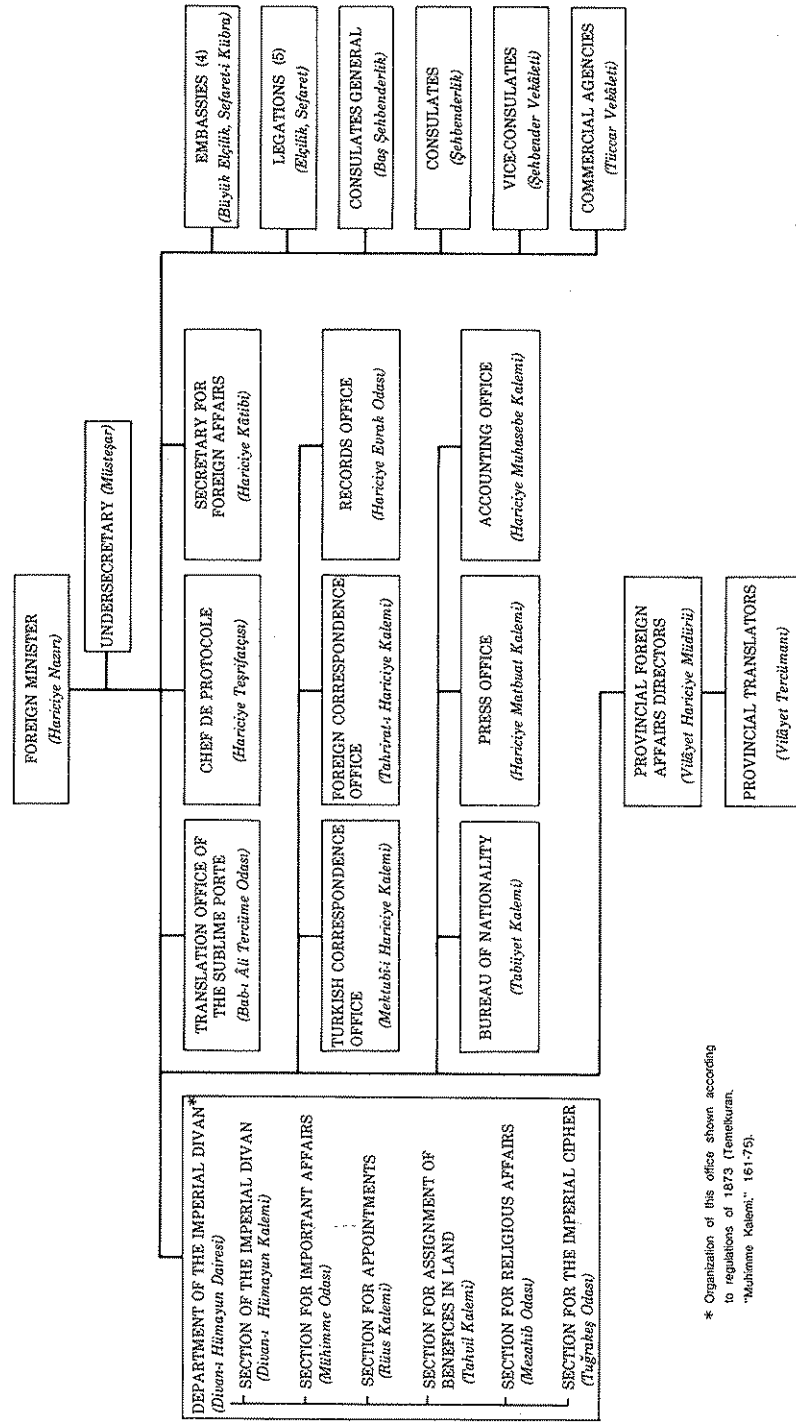
tory of the supposed "Ministry of Justice," bore witness to the same fact.

The Foreign Ministry

The state of this ministry as of 1871 forms a marked contrast to those of the two just discussed. Here, the necessity to develop an empire-wide infrastructure was absent, as was the reliance on the collegial bodies that supplemented the gradually developing bureaucratic agencies in other fields. The Foreign Ministry did, of course, require a different kind of network of agencies and representatives outside the capital. But this network was relatively small; and its development, like that of the central organs of the ministry, had already begun in the preceding period in response to some of the most keenly felt necessities of the state. By 1871, the Foreign Ministry thus became the most highly evolved organizational component of the Porte and in some respects the most modern in its structure. These developments gave rise, however, to other organizational problems different from those of the ministries just discussed. For the proliferation of agencies and departments began to imply questions about the relations among them and about the most effective means for coordinating and controlling their efforts. Seemingly of no concern to the men of the Tanzimat, these problems would elicit no response until they became a great deal worse and the political climate underwent a fundamental shift.

At the head of the organization shown in Figure V-2, the foreign minister discharged responsibilities ostensibly much more specialized than those of his predecessor, the chief scribe. At least one of the offices under him, that of the imperial Divan, still retained enough of a traditional assortment of functions, however, to give him powers reaching beyond those implied by his title, particularly where patronage was concerned.⁸⁶ In addition, in an age of westernization and foreign encroachment, the head of the agency officially responsible for relations with the states of the Western world naturally retained considerable influence, already apparent in the 1830s, over government policy in many areas. The unusual linkages between the Foreign Ministry and the Board, later Ministry, of Trade and the Quarantine Board are indicative of this fact. The circumstances of the times thus made foreign affairs into a particularly far-reaching category and the foreign minister into the second man at the Porte

FIGURE V-2. ORGANIZATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, 1871



* Organization of this office shown according to regulations of 1873 (tenetkuran, "Mühimme Kalemî," 161-75).

after the grand vezir, a point subtly underscored by the play on the word *sadr* in the verse of Fuad Paşa quoted at the head of this chapter. To assist him, the foreign minister had an undersecretary (*müstesar*), although the history of this post does not appear to have become continuous before the Crimean War.⁸⁷

Below the minister and his undersecretary, and despite the tendencies toward a progressive shift of the traditional offices of the chief scribe to positions under the grand vezir, the Office of the Imperial Divan continued to occupy a central place in the Foreign Ministry. Still under the supervision of the *beylikçi*, this office included, by the end of the period, several new sections as well as its traditional ones, the responsibilities of the latter also having undergone some changes. Slightly to transgress the terminal date of this chapter, a set of regulations adopted in 1873 for what was then termed the Department of the Imperial Divan (*Divan-ı Hümayun Dairesi*) described it as being made up of six sections. These were the Section of the Imperial Divan (*Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemî*, corresponding to the *Beylik* Section of the traditional system), the Section for Important Affairs (*Mühimme Odası*) created in 1797, the traditional Sections for Appointments (*Rüüs*) and Assignment of Benefices in Land (*Tahvil*), one new Section for Religious Affairs (*Mezahib Odası*), and another for the Drawing of the Imperial Cipher on appropriate documents (*Tuğrakeş Odası*).

Of these sections, the first four still retained functions much like those they had discharged before the founding of the Foreign Ministry. In addition to the official registration of laws and treaties, the duties of the Section of the Imperial Divan included receiving and responding to communications from the foreign ambassadors in Istanbul and comparing the questions that those communications raised with the relevant provisions of the international agreements and concessions then in force. The duties of the Section for Important Affairs, as they appear in the regulations of 1873, are similar and difficult to distinguish. The roles of the Sections for Appointments and Benefice Assignments still had to do with patronage, although the latter section appears to have been declining in importance, thanks to the episodic efforts to phase out the system of benefices in land. The Section for Religious Affairs appears to have inherited the function, traditionally discharged in the *Beylik* Section, of keeping records on the status of the non-Muslim communities inside the

empire. Later in the 1870s, this responsibility would shift to the Ministry of Justice. The Section for the Drawing of the Imperial Cipher, its functions recalling those of the "affixer of the cipher" (*nişancı*) who had once been the chief scribe's superior, was a modest commentary on the magnitude of the changes that over the centuries had shaped the Sublime Porte and the position of the foreign minister within it.⁸⁸

The Office of the Imperial Divan was the only one under the foreign minister to display such heterogeneity of responsibilities and the only one to have significant functions unrelated to foreign affairs. Perhaps for that very reason, it, too, would in another decade or so be classed as part of the staff of the grand vezir.⁸⁹ Lacking such a lengthy history, the other bureaus of the Foreign Ministry were more specialized and usually more fixed in their organizational affiliation with the ministry. Like the offices of earlier centuries, however, their emergence seems usually to reflect the subdivision of functions once performed in a single office, or in some cases the replication in already distinct departments of functions for which there might once have been but a single bureau or official.

The first of the new offices to emerge was the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âli Tercüme Odası*, 1821), founded to replace the old system of translators of the imperial Divan (*Tercüman-ı Divan-ı Hümayun*), a title that was nonetheless retained for the head of the new office. This nomenclature, referring to the Sublime Porte and the imperial Divan, is suggestive of the fact that there was at first no Foreign Ministry to which to relate the new office. With the nominal conversion of the chief scribe into a foreign minister, this Translation Office became in a sense the basic component of the emergent ministry, at least for the business that it conducted in languages other than Turkish. It is not surprising, then, that several of the other major offices of the ministry later emerged out of the Translation Office either directly or indirectly, or that its papers are probably the most comprehensive classification in the archives of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry.

Omitting several ephemeral organizational changes made in the traditional offices of the chief scribe in 1838-1839, perhaps the next component of the Foreign Ministry to appear was the *chef de protocole* (*hariciye teşrifatçısı*),⁹⁰ created in 1847, obviously on the model of the centuries-old office then serving with comparable title and functions under the grand vezir.

Another official mentioned in the yearbooks every year from the beginning is a "secretary for foreign affairs" (*hariciye kâtibî*). Perhaps a counterpart to the secretary for internal affairs (*dahiliye kâtibî*) mentioned earlier, he acquired two assistants in 1870 and a third some five years later. A document of the early 1870s indicates that the functions of this "secretary for foreign affairs" had to do with legal cases arising between Ottoman subjects and foreigners;⁹¹ and in the yearbook for 1877, the title of the head of this office was in fact enlarged to secretary for foreign legal affairs (*deavi-i hariciye kâtibî*), the titles of his assistants being changed accordingly.⁹² Assuming that the functions of this secretary and of the secretary for internal affairs lay entirely in this field would imply another comment on the rudimentary development of the "Ministry of Justice" during this period.

Also in existence by 1847-1848 was another official known from the early 1850s on as the corresponding secretary for foreign affairs (*mektubî-i hariciye*),⁹³ a title obviously copied from that of the corresponding secretary of the grand vezir. From a variety of sources, including the language skills of the clerks of this office as noted in the personnel records of the ministry, it is clear that the functions of this office were to conduct whatever correspondence the ministry had in Turkish.⁹⁴ Accordingly, to contrast this office with the next one to be discussed, we shall henceforth identify it, as we have in Figure V-2, as the Turkish Correspondence Office of the ministry.

Roughly at the end of the Crimean War, a parallel to the Turkish Correspondence Office appeared in what was termed the Foreign Correspondence Office (*Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiye Odası*), the Ottoman version of this title being replaced a few years later with the synonymous and thereafter more familiar *Tahrirat-ı Hariciye Odası*. Parallel in functions to the Turkish Correspondence Office, this new bureau was by origin an outgrowth of the Translation Office, founded to cope with the increasingly voluminous correspondence in French with foreign ambassadors in Istanbul and Ottoman representatives abroad.⁹⁵ From the end of the Crimean War, the role of the Translation Office thus appears to have been limited to the translation of documents coming into the ministry in languages other than Turkish,⁹⁶ while the Foreign Correspondence Office assumed responsibility for the correspondence of the ministry in French, as the Turkish Correspondence Office did for that in Turkish.

Up to the Crimean War, then, the Foreign Ministry developed in large part by a kind of modernization of the old document-oriented organizational patterns, now transposed into various forms of linguistic specialization: translation into Turkish, correspondence in Turkish, correspondence in French. The organization that had emerged by 1856 appears to have remained stable until about the time of Fuad Paşa's death (1869). Several more elements were then added, and with them the first signs of a different kind of organizational concept emerged.

First to appear in the government yearbooks was the Foreign Ministry records director (*Hariciye evrak müdürü*), mentioned in 1868-1869.⁹⁷ Since there were already special supervisory-level officials in the Turkish and Foreign Correspondence Offices to handle records problems there, the creation of this new office is another sign of the mounting demands that the control of official paperwork was beginning to make on Ottoman officials.

A set of regulations issued in 1869 called, in addition, for the creation in the Foreign Ministry of a Bureau of Nationality (*Tabiiyet Kalemi*). This had as its mission to determine the real nationality of individuals who claimed to be subjects or protégés of foreign powers. The bureau was thus clearly intended to play a key role in controlling an abuse at which the new law on nationality, promulgated earlier in the same year, was particularly aimed.⁹⁸ The fact that the new office does not appear in the government yearbooks before the end of the period implies, however, that the implementation of these regulations may only have occurred after some delay. With this reservation, the office nonetheless appears in Figure V-2.

Also noted for the first time in 1869 was what developed into the Foreign Ministry Press Office (*Hariciye Matbuat Kalemi*). Its role included supplying local and foreign newspapers with what would now be called press releases, as well as monitoring the rather considerable foreign-language press of the empire.⁹⁹

Finally, in 1871, there appeared a special Accounting Office for the Foreign Ministry (*Hariciye Muhasebe Odası*).¹⁰⁰

With this, the central organization of the Foreign Ministry assumed its final form for the period. As it did so, it began, especially in the Nationality and Press Offices, to display signs of a reorientation toward organizational concepts defined in terms of goals external to the *paperasseries* of the bureaucracy itself and directed sometimes at the provision of services to, sometimes at

the exercise of controls over, the larger society. Growing organizational complexity was beginning to imply, however, that the ministry would have to develop improved mechanisms for coordinating the work of the new agencies if they were to perform their missions effectively.

The reorientation of organizational concepts was also evident in the offices and agencies outside Istanbul. Had the development of the provincial agencies of the Ministries of Justice and the Interior progressed further in this period, this would no doubt already be clear from those cases. As it was, two of the best illustrations appeared in the development of the Foreign Ministry.

One of these took the form of the provincial foreign affairs directors and their interpreters, appointed to cope with the increasing problems created in the provinces by foreign consular representatives, local residents with claims to foreign nationality, and the diplomatic crises always brewing over some part of the empire. The assignment of provincial foreign affairs directors became a matter of system with the laws of 1864 and 1871 on provincial administration, under which such officials, nominated by the Foreign Ministry but under orders of the local governor, were to be a regular part of the administrative staff of each province.¹⁰¹ Documentation of the next period suggests that the directors in fact only appeared where the foreign presence was particularly consequential, and that the translators served sometimes under the directors and sometimes alone in provinces where no director was stationed.

The same kind of organizational reorientation was also implicit in the consular and diplomatic services. From the modest scale on which Mahmud II revived these in the 1830s, they grew by 1871 to the point of including embassies in Paris, London, Vienna, and Saint Petersburg, and legations in Berlin, Washington, Florence (still so listed in the yearbook, although Rome was already capital), Athens, and Tehran. There was also a host of consular officials, ranked as consuls general, consuls, vice-consuls, and—in places over which the empire still technically retained sovereignty—"commercial agents." The consular officials might be either careerists in the Foreign Ministry or individuals, often not Ottoman subjects, who held their titles on a purely honorary basis. On this account, there is no reliable way to determine the numbers of employees of the ministry serving

in 1871 in consular posts. In one sense or another, however, the Ottoman consular network was beginning to extend around the world, to include North and South America and Africa as well as Europe and Asia.¹⁰²

Thus the Foreign Ministry developed during the Tanzimat. On the basis of the personnel records of the ministry, it is possible to estimate that it had about two hundred salaried officials as of the end of this period.

To compare the Sublime Porte of 1871 with that of 1789 or of 1839 is thus to realize the magnitude of the changes resulting from the political imbalance and the reforms of the Tanzimat. Problems of resources and the inherent difficulties of projecting new concepts over the vast territories and heterogeneous populations of the empire impeded the changes in critical respects. Yet, in the development of the conciliar bodies, the formation of a new "chancery" under the grand vezir, the organizational development of the Foreign Ministry, or the emergence of new organizational conceptions, the reforms of this period made a profound difference. Of course, there were costs and unexpected problems associated with this kind of growth. The problems of coordination implied in the development of the Foreign Ministry are one example. Another, more vivid if less serious, appeared in the experiences of the official historiographer, Lûtfi Efendi. He learned the costs of growth the hard way as he found his access to the sources to which he was supposed to have a right denied in one office after another. He explained this in terms of civil-bureaucratic disrespect for his religious rank, which was equivalent to that of a vezir, and of what we would now call "getting the run-around."¹⁰³

For better or for worse, the old and more intimately scaled bureaucratic structures were giving way to more modern but also bigger and more impersonal ones. To look now at the efforts made to systematize and regulate the new institutions is to gain a deeper insight into this transformation.

REFORM AND REGULATION OF THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY

In discussing organizational and procedural patterns typical of the scribal service before the beginning of reform, we noted the craftsman-like emphasis on processes of document production, the guild-like organizational patterns, the limited scope of individual initiative, and the tendencies at all levels to indiscipline

and self-service. We also noted the concept of official position as discretionary within the limits of tradition and hierarchical subordination, rather than as a matter of legally defined rights and duties, and the consequently limited scope of rational processes of differentiation and specialization in the development of organizational and procedural patterns. Although a fundamental reorientation toward the creation of a rational-legal order was inherent in the very concept of reform, the limited progress of reform in the central offices before 1839 meant that these traditional patterns still formed a kind of matrix within which the transformation of the bureaucracy proceeded during the Tanzimat.

Thanks to the inherent incompatibilities between the new elements and the old, and to the conflicts that processes of change generated among the men who worked in this context, it becomes more difficult in this period to present idealized or stereotyped views of organizational and procedural patterns, as we did for the prereform period. It is certainly possible, however, to survey changes in organizational and procedural patterns in a topical way, noting survivals of traditional features and areas where rationalization and regularization did not occur as well as ones where they did. From this we may draw an understanding of how, and where, the reformers applied their regulatory powers in order to restructure the bureaucratic system over which they presided.

Since the regulatory documentation becomes so voluminous in this period as to require a selective approach, it will suffice here to look at documents of three types. These have to do, first, with routine questions of official discipline, then with broader aspects of personnel policy, and finally with regulations of an organic character, issued to govern the overall organizational and procedural patterns of new or existing agencies. Documents of the first two types, in particular, tend to apply to a broad range of central administrative agencies and not just to those of the Porte. The discussion in this section thus helps to illuminate the general corporate state of the civil bureaucracy, and not just the conditions found in specific agencies that it staffed.

Official Discipline

This documentation, usually taking the form of orders issued by the grand vezir, is extensive and quite repetitive. Its significance

comes partly from that very fact, although we must also acknowledge that the repetition was to a degree simply indicative of instabilities built into official routine.

It was customary, for example, to change office hours seasonally (*hasbe 'l-mevsim*) on account of the varying length of the days.¹⁰⁴ The fast during the lunar month of Ramazan also upset routine every year, although in ways that differed depending on the season in which Ramazan fell and the urgency of the business in hand.¹⁰⁵ Changes of these types were enough to necessitate the repeated issue of documents on certain aspects of official routine. The texts of the orders make clear, however, that the reasons for their repetition went well beyond mere changes of this kind.

The disciplinary problems that emerge from these orders assume even more significance in that the demands made of the civil bureaucrats of the Tanzimat were by present-day standards still relatively slight. The increase in the volume of official business had not yet reached the point where most officials were expected to devote more than seven or seven and a half hours a day to their work. At times, not counting Ramazan, the number of prescribed working hours was as low as four and a half.¹⁰⁶ Officials living on the Asian side of the Bosphorus or on the islands of the sea of Marmara were sometimes authorized to arrive late and leave early,¹⁰⁷ and everybody had one, or in certain times and agencies more than one, day off per week.

Still, securing the compliance of the officials with whatever regime was in force was a chronic problem. In 1842, the weekly off day was changed from Thursday to Friday, partly as a sign of respect for the Friday congregational prayer, but mainly because many people had been taking both days off. In another fifteen years many had begun to take Sunday off—an expression, no doubt, of the egalitarian spirit of the new era—and a special order had to be issued to forbid that.¹⁰⁸ Probably the most common complaints in the orders are against coming to work late and leaving early, absence without valid excuse (*özr-i şer'i, mani-i hakikî*), and lack of promptitude in the dispatch of business. Various orders indicate that the supervisory personnel of the bureaus were not the least offenders and threaten penalties. Eventually, the orders on hours of work began to include the stipulation that only clerks having nothing left to do might leave at the time appointed for closing, while supervisors would be re-

quired to remain, on a rotational basis, until the departure of the ministers, to take care of any urgent business that might come up.¹⁰⁹

Some of the disciplinary orders also give more specific ideas of what the officials were doing instead of attending to their duty. One problem still not under control was the crowd of visitors who distracted officials from their work.¹¹⁰ The clerks of the Porte had to be told that they were to remain in their offices attending to their appointed tasks and not wander about outside mixing with people who came in on business (*erbab-ı masalih*), and that they were not to take into their hands any papers except ones having to do with the affairs of the offices. They were no longer to deal on the side in the old type of petty "legal practice" (*kâğıd haffaflığı*), they were to collect the fees that continued to be collected on a modified basis for many transactions, and any negligence in such matters was to be punished.¹¹¹ References such as these reinforce European reports of the limited extent to which things inside the offices of the Porte had changed with the beginning of reform,¹¹² while other types of sources make abundantly clear that the real interests of many officials still, as in the past, lay in avocations such as literature and mysticism.

In addition, of course, there were more serious abuses of discipline, which had to be taken up in the different setting of the new laws and codes promulgated following the Gülhane Decree of 1839 and superseding the penal code of 1838 for officials. For example, the codes of 1840 and 1858 included articles prohibiting offenses such as bribery, theft of government property, abuse of office, negligence, and mistreatment of the populace by officials. At times, other more specialized acts addressed questions such as bribery and the kinds of petty gifts that were harmless enough to be allowable.¹¹³

Overall, then, the documentation on official discipline establishes several basic facts. One is that kinds of indiscipline long familiar in scribal circles continued into the era of reform. The vezirial orders, repeatedly prohibiting the same forms of abuse and aimed mainly at the lower and middle echelons, are particularly reflective of the persistence of such behavior at those levels.

Another fact that the disciplinary orders demonstrate is the gradual propagation, through repetition, of the concept that the behavior of officials should, for specific reasons, be governed by

rules. The reasons appear in the motives for compliance that the disciplinary orders invoke. Aside from various threats of punishment, the earlier orders reminded the officials that they were paid "ample salaries" (*müstevfa maaşlar*) for the proper performance of their duty. As if in acknowledgment of the failure of the fiscal policies of the period, later orders tended to fall back on less material considerations, such as the importance of the matters the clerks handled or the honor of their calling (*haysiyet, namus-i kitabet*). At the same time, the orders began to reiterate the idea of improvement in the efficiency and regularity of administration as indispensable for the proper functioning of the state. Speaking of delays in the conduct of business, for example, the orders denounced them as injurious to the interests of private individuals, especially of those who had to come to Istanbul on official business from the provinces, as harmful to the Treasury, and as inadmissible even at the lowest echelons of the local administrative hierarchy.¹¹⁴

Reflecting the spirit of the Gülhane Decree, then, the disciplinary rulings asserted the demand for a new regularity in administration and even, in an inchoate way, for respect of the public interest.

General Personnel Policy

From previous discussion of the political behavior of the reformers, it will already be clear that their ability to impose such concepts on their subordinates was restricted by their failure always to practice what they preached. Looking beyond the relatively narrow issue of official discipline to the broader question of general personnel policy, we find this point confirmed and amplified by the very limited extent to which the reformers applied their regulatory powers in this field at all. However startling it may seem in contrast to their influence on the reforms that shaped the civil bureaucracy in the 1830s, the fact is that the Tanzimat reformers really produced no coherent or comprehensive personnel policy going beyond those earlier measures.

A search through the record of the Tanzimat reforms for anything like a comprehensive system to govern appointments, promotions, and official compensation brings to light only a few fragmentary changes. There were occasional, rather weak measures, patterned after earlier ones, to reduce overcrowding

in the offices.¹¹⁵ As already discussed, there were efforts, ultimately of considerable significance despite immediate problems of discipline and institutional quality, to improve bureaucratic education. The development of the civil rank table continued into this period, as did that of rules to govern such ceremonial facets of official life as titulature, precedence, and the awarding of decorations.¹¹⁶

Where basic questions of appointment and promotion were concerned, a measure of 1863 transformed the appointment of the "agents of the gate" (*kapı kâhyası*) from a matter left to the discretion of the provincial governors general, and other local administrative officials who maintained such agents, into a prerogative of the central government.¹¹⁷ In similar fashion, the Provincial Administration Law of 1864 considerably increased the extent to which the officials on the staff of the governor general were to be appointed from the center by imperial decree, thus asserting central control over appointments in one of the settings where the tradition of the patrimonial household had thus far prevailed in clearest form. One of the respects in which the subsequent law of 1871 increased the powers of the governor general was, however, in restoring much of the appointment power to him.¹¹⁸ The rights of department heads in selection of their staffs also continued to be acknowledged.¹¹⁹ By asserting the existence of regular patterns where there were at best elements of de facto system, an account that Âli Paşa penned in 1861 to explain the organization of the Ottoman diplomatic corps is misleading overall and mendacious at points, especially in affirming that "the only basis for promotion is capacity."¹²⁰ In bureaucratic recruitment and promotion and in the distribution of the rewards of office, the tradition of patrimonial discretionism was still, as Âli Paşa knew, much more strongly entrenched than that.

The one really fundamental alteration in personnel policy in this period occurred with the promulgation of the Reform Decree of 1856. Going beyond the general concessions in the earlier Gülhane Decree to enumerate specifics, this document affirmed the eligibility of non-Muslims to hold government office in conformity with "rules to be generally applied."¹²¹ In the wake of this decree, the numbers of non-Muslims in government service, at least in the civil bureaucracy, did increase significantly. Yet, the traditional pattern of their affiliation with

official cadres did not change as much as the decree indicated, largely because the period ended without the promulgation—let alone general application—of the promised rules.

Why did the Tanzimat statesmen take such a piecemeal approach to the elaboration of a personnel policy for the civil-bureaucratic machine that they had created, especially when they were so active in efforts to maintain discipline among their subordinates? Perhaps the most basic reason lies in the problems that the Tanzimat statesmen faced in getting their policies enacted into law and in the related fact of their inability to legitimate their control of political power. Since their hold on power was solely *de facto*, any comprehensive regulation of conditions of bureaucratic service was not to be expected from them. In addition, the comprehensive regulation of career patterns, emphasizing proof of achievement as the criterion for appointment and advancement, that we associate with the concept of civil service today was an idea that was still just emerging, even in the most advanced Western states of the time. The wording of the Reform Decree of 1856 was enough to show that the Tanzimat statesmen had some awareness of this idea. Yet, the fact that they were so typically of diplomatic background, and that the diplomatic services of the major powers were so strongly elitist and aristocratic in character, suggests that the Tanzimat reformers really aspired not to regulate conditions of service overall so much as to acquire for themselves the privileges of an official nobility. Such an aspiration corresponded not only to the character of the European diplomatic elites, but also to the self-image implied in the grandee mentality noted in the upper echelons of the traditional ruling class. And it was an aspiration already perceptible in the reaction of the diplomatic elite to the bureaucratic reforms of the 1830s.

As a natural consequence of their political position, their tradition, and the weak development of alternative example in Western nations, the changes that the Tanzimat reformers made in personnel policy, at least after 1839, were thus limited. The proclamation of egalitarianism was their one really fundamental reform in this field, a measure which produced considerable practical effect even though the reformers failed to follow through with a general regularization of personnel policy, as promised. Where the reformers did attempt to define personnel policy in detail, as in their efforts to tighten discipline over sub-

ordinate echelons or to order ancillary points such as ranks and decorations, their use of the techniques of rational-legal reform was at best a secondary feature of an overall policy pattern that remained mostly unregulated and must by default have continued to follow the social patterns characteristic of the traditional ruling class. The employment of modern techniques of rationalization and regulation as if they were no more than tools or weapons to use in defense of a power position that remained exempt from their application was typical throughout the era of reform. Naturally, the Tanzimat statesmen also took the same approach to other types of organizational and procedural matters.

Regulations of Formal Organizational and Procedural Patterns

Measures of these types are particularly numerous and heterogeneous. In a sense, it is arbitrary to exclude questions of personnel policy from this category, even though the social implications of the personnel measures and a practical differentiation that appears in the original documentation make it worthwhile to do so. Even with this exclusion, however, it is easy to distinguish whole fields among the measures that remain.

In the field of finance, for example, despite the fact that the reformers never redeemed the failure of their initial effort at fiscal centralization, the process of rigging up the series of expedients by which the state attempted to keep going required the enactment of one systematizing measure after another. This is apparent in a variety of measures on taxation, such as the systems of stamped papers and revenue stamps in which the old practice of fee collection, not quite abolished after all, assumed a more modern guise.¹²² In a symbolic sense, at least, a similar significance also attaches to the new kinds of budgets that began to be prepared in this period. In fact, the limited extent to which the Tanzimat statesmen had any grasp of financial affairs, their rapid slide into indebtedness, and the consequent erosion of the economic autonomy of the empire obviously divested the concepts of budgetary allocation and control of the meanings now normally associated with them. The process of budget preparation does seem to have included the gathering of information about the experience of previous years, however; and the budgets thus possess at least a retrospective documentary value.

A tabular summary of the budgetary data on the agencies of the Sublime Porte consequently appears in the Appendix, covering the years 1858-1918.¹²³ Yet it seems unwise, particularly in the present state of research, to place much reliance on the data contained in these documents.

Where the material obstacles to regularization were less massive, the achievements of the reformers could be much more substantial. Developments in official communications illustrate this point, even though that field presented some significant challenges of its own. Indeed, the reformers faced an unmistakable need to revolutionize both media and content if they were to project their policies intelligibly over the whole empire and keep track of the mounting volume and complexity of official business. The resulting efforts at such things as stylistic simplification,¹²⁴ development of conventions for drafting legal texts,¹²⁵ creation of controls over the circulation and security of official documents,¹²⁶ reduction of repetitive paperwork through the adoption of blank forms,¹²⁷ and publication of government actions through such media as the official newspaper (1831), year-books (1847), volumes of legal texts (1862), and diplomatic "color books" (1868)¹²⁸ form one class of reforms to which the success of all others was linked in a particularly intimate way.

Where the efforts of the reformers to give order and form to the evolving governmental apparatus begin to produce a pattern reflecting their motives and goals is in yet another class of measures. These are the regulatory acts of organic character, issued precisely for the purpose of defining the organizational structures and missions of specific agencies. A survey of documentation of this type yields results that are startling and yet confirm implications already drawn from the sources on personnel policy. This pattern emerges partly from the substantive content of the documents, partly from the limited range of agencies for which they exist.

Where organic regulations were drawn up, the extent to which they simply perpetuated traditional patterns is perhaps their most salient characteristic. This is not invariably the case, to be sure. One good example is the set of regulations that Mustafa Reşid Paşa prepared for the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances in 1839. Paralleling measures already adopted for the Military Council (*Şura-yı Askeriye*) created in 1832, these regulations attacked such obvious procedural problems of the old con-

sultative assemblies as the deference in debate of lower-ranking members to their seniors, or the demand for unanimity in the making of decisions. The regulations provided that documents relating to matters to be discussed in the meetings should be distributed to the members in advance. Members wishing to speak on a given matter should sign up before the meeting and speak in the order of their signing. There was to be a fixed procedure for the right of rebuttal, the debates were to be recorded, decisions should be by majority vote, and so on.¹²⁹

Not every comparable measure displayed this much good sense. The regulations of 1873 for the Office of the Imperial Divan still had not sorted out its traditional functions and bristle with old-fashioned job designations such as copy checkers (*muhabeleci*), summarizers (*hulâsa memuru*), register keepers (*defterci*), writers of formal letters (*namenüvis*), examining clerks (*mümeyyiz*), preparers of first drafts (literally, "blackeners," *müsevvid*), copyists ("whiteners," *mübeyyiz*, presumably so called after the fine white paper on which they wrote), as well as the ordinary clerks (*hulefa*) and supernumeraries (*mülâzım*).¹³⁰ The persistence in these terms of guild-like organizational concepts and of the craftsman-like fixation on the processes of document production is obvious.

Newer offices usually displayed from the start a greater specificity of functions and often had jurisdictional limits that were more or less clear. A set of regulations drawn up in 1869 for the Foreign Correspondence Office (*Tahrirat-ı Hariciye Kalemî*), however, describes its personnel only in such terms as chief clerk (*ser kalfa*), examining clerk (*mümeyyiz*), producers of rough drafts (*müsevvid*), copyists (*mübeyyiz*), and registrars (*muhayyid*). While it is true that even the most modern of bureaucracies cannot dispense with their typists and file clerks, counterparts of the Ottoman types just named, these regulations do not delimit the responsibilities of the office at all, except as so many modes of paper-pushing. In the want of other sources, it would be impossible to tell how this office differed from either the Translation Office or what we have called the Turkish Correspondence Office, the Ottoman title of which literally identifies it only as the Office of the Corresponding Secretary (*Mektubi*) for Foreign Affairs. This kind of specification makes it easy to sense why Cevdet Paşa thought many of the laws and regulations of the period were poorly drafted.¹³¹ Similarly, if tradi-

tional categories so dominated the thinking of the officials who disposed of the regulatory power, it is only too clear how strongly such ideas must have directed the behavior of lower-echelon officials, with their guild-like heritage, as they confronted the rising demands of a new era.

What gives these traditional traits even greater significance is the very fragmentary extent to which the reformers produced any kind of organic regulations for the agencies over which they presided. There were no organic regulatory documents to govern the Sublime Porte in entirety; nor does there appear to have been any for the grand vezirate or any of its subordinate offices except the humble Records Office (*Bab-ı Âli Evrak Odası*).¹³² Regulations were issued for the Council of State and for the Council of Judicial Ordinances at their foundation in 1868.¹³³ But for the Ministries of Justice and the Interior, the reformers' efforts had to go first to the erection of the systems of courts and laws, on one hand, and the local administrative infrastructure, on the other. We find nothing at all to govern the central organs of the Ministry of Justice, and nothing on those of the Ministry of the Interior prior to 1869, when the post of minister was again separated from the grand vezirate and the ministry thus in a sense "recreated."¹³⁴

Even in the Foreign Ministry, the regulatory activity of the reformers had not gone nearly as far as the ostensible organizational development of the ministry would imply. Indeed, for the period running through 1871, the only regulations of organic character thus far found for this ministry are the already cited ones of 1869 for the Foreign Correspondence Office and the Nationality Bureau (*Tabiiyet Kalemi*), the provisions on the provincial foreign affairs directors in the Provincial Administration Laws of 1864 and 1871, and—stretching the point—regulations on such aspects of the consular system as consular leaves and the fees to be collected in consular chanceries.¹³⁵ The regulations that we have used as the basis for our discussion of the Department of the Imperial Divan date, in fact, from 1873.¹³⁶ So far as can now be shown, just as there was no visible concern for the problems of coordination implied in the organizational growth of the ministry, there was no attempt to regulate it in entirety or in its other parts.

Thus, while the Tanzimat statesmen did make efforts to impose order on the evolving administrative system, traditional

conceptions of bureaucratic roles and procedures continued to leave a strong imprint on such measures, and the extent to which the promulgation of laws and regulations kept up with the organizational growth of the period was, in fact, limited. This limitation provides a vivid indication of the difficulties that the reformers experienced in progressing from initial conceptualization of each new measure through full elaboration and practical implementation to supervision. But more was involved than that. Just as the reformers appear to have sought to use regulation as a means for the disciplinary control of the middle and lower echelons and for the ordering of peripheral details of personnel policy, in other types of organizational and procedural matters they again limited their efforts chiefly to workaday matters of routine and to the circumscription of subordinate elements of a bureaucracy in which the most important powers and relationships remained undefined. If we "map" the organic regulatory acts issued for the Sublime Porte against its overall structure, noting the agencies for which such acts were promulgated and those, including the most important, for which there were none, we have a picture of what Eisenstadt's pattern of "split-up modernization" meant for the development of the bureaucracy in this period.

To bring this picture into sharper focus, we need to look at changes in patterns of social organization among the officials then in service and at the gradual development of their reactions to this peculiar state of affairs.

THE SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACT OF THE TANZIMAT ON THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY

Coming on top of the modifications already introduced under Selim III and Mahmud II, the reforms of the Tanzimat drastically transformed the sociocultural fabric of the civil bureaucracy and enlarged it greatly in size. Cumulatively, these changes introduced into the bureaucracy two new forces which, partly cutting along traditional lines and partly cutting across them, altered the differentiation and relative balance of the various groups previously discernible among scribal personnel. One of these forces was the cultural cleavage created in the civil bureaucracy, as throughout Ottoman society, by the rise of the new Westernist elite and the commitment of the state to policies of

overtly innovative character. The second force was that of Ottomanism and egalitarianism. Within the civil bureaucracy, these forces shaped new sociocultural configurations that were to persist until the collapse of the empire.

To conclude our survey of bureaucratic reform during the Tanzimat, it is indispensable to discuss the new cleavages that developed with the bureaucratic growth of the period, the links between the new bureaucratic subgroups and the old, and the significance of the tensions resulting from these changes for the further transformation of the bureaucratic-political process. Given the greater complexity of the new social patterns and the fact that the available sources, vastly increased in volume for this period and much different in character, permit quantitative verification of many points about which it is possible for earlier periods to speak only in impressionistic terms, a thorough pursuit of these ends would require a discussion of larger scope than can find a place in this chapter. Here we shall therefore present only a summary, in primarily qualitative terms, of an analysis that we hope to present in detail in a later work.¹³⁷

Traditionalistic Muslim Officials

In a period of such complex changes, it could hardly be expected that the new differentiating factors would neatly isolate all traditionalistic survivals in a single segment of the civil bureaucracy. Although knowledge of other languages, such as German or Russian, or of other types of technical skills, ranging from stenography to law, could give an official a modern aspect, the high degree to which mastery of French continued to be both symbol and substance of modernity in the eyes of Ottomans nonetheless marked off officials lacking this talismanic quality as the segment of the civil bureaucracy most likely to preserve traditional traits. Furthermore, since there had previously been no possibility for a non-Muslim to assimilate the culture of the ruling class fully without becoming Muslim, and since practically all the non-Muslims who entered official service in this period and later did claim proficiency in French, the traditionalistic officials of the later nineteenth century were all Muslim. Since lack of proficiency in French had an adverse effect on promotion prospects, finally, these men presented the aspect in many ways of a continuation of the old, lower scribal service.

How large a part of the civil bureaucracy fell into this group,

and where were they to be found? At the Sublime Porte, they accounted at the end of this period for about thirty percent of those serving in the Foreign Ministry, or some threescore cases, the percentage declining slightly in the next period. In agencies where literacy in French made less difference, whether at the Porte or elsewhere, the percentage was probably higher. Naturally, men of this type continued to fill most of the offices surviving from the traditional scribal chancery. But in a bureaucracy that still operated for the vast majority of its purposes in Ottoman Turkish and that retained many elements of old patterns of procedure even as it created new and different patterns, traditional kinds of scribal skills were of use in many of the new institutions as well as the old. The continuing lack of any stratification of clerical and professional personnel probably helped to reinforce this point.

Even in the Foreign Ministry, the one ministry in which, under nineteenth-century conditions, command of French was surely most important, men lacking that qualification could serve in a variety of positions. The personnel records of the ministry show, for example, that the Turkish Correspondence Office (*Mektubî-i Hariciye Kalemi*), the one large office of the ministry in which duty required literacy only in Ottoman Turkish, was full of men whose traditionalistic character showed itself in their language skills and in many other ways as well. Even in the consular and diplomatic services, there was a marked difference between posts in major Western states and others located in the Aegean and Black Sea regions or in Iran and British India, where Ottoman interests were substantial. In Iran and India, indeed, Ottoman interests had an Islamic dimension which it required someone of strongly, if not exclusively, traditional cultural formation to serve.¹³⁸

The traditionalism of the more conservative Muslim officials also appeared in a number of other characteristics that followed naturally from their confinement within the linguistic limits of the old culture, as well as from the fact that some of these men served in agencies predating the beginnings of reform. The fact that the education of these men was traditional tended to mean, for example, that they had less schooling prior to their entry into the offices and that their careers consequently began at slightly earlier ages—although the usual age at first appointment, even for this group, rose to between seventeen and eighteen by the

last quarter of the century. Once in the offices, these men were the most apt to continue their training through traditional means, such as apprenticeship, study of Oriental languages or calligraphy with teachers retained in the offices,¹³⁹ or part-time attendance in the religious colleges. While literary interests ran high in some of the new offices as well as the old—the Translation Office of the Porte, in particular, is remembered as something of a literary club—among officials of this type such interests continued to find expression in the most traditional modes, particularly in old-fashioned types of versification. Furthermore, while only a minority of officials engaged in literary activity to the point of leaving verifiable evidence of their work, authorship and publication seem to have been most of all infrequent in this sector of the civil bureaucracy.

The conservatism of officials of this type also shows in their continuing association with the dervish orders. It would be going too far to assert that only officials lacking first-hand access to Western ideas took an interest in mysticism. But in an age when modernists such as Fuad and Âli were more apt to become Freemasons¹⁴⁰ than dervishes, dervish links were clearly becoming emblematic of cultural traditionalism. Among the literary sources on civil bureaucrats of this period, the memoirs of Aşçıdede Halil İbrahim provide unforgettable insights into the life of a man who was at once a lifelong bureaucrat and a passionate adherent of the Mevlevi and, at times, other dervish orders. Educated in part in the "School of Literary Studies" (*Mekteb-i Ulûm-ı Edebiye*), one of the very first of the new civil schools and thus, in fact, only marginally different from the traditional institutions, he spent all the time he could get away from his office and family in the meeting places of the mystics. In traveling between posts, he might shock more progressive colleagues by donning the garb of an itinerant dervish in preference to the frock coat and fez prescribed for officials. Faced with difficult decisions, he would take the advice of a dervish shaykh, or turn to divination with his rosary or a sacred text. Nonetheless a useful and, by the standards of the times, conscientious official, he served the Ministry of War for sixty years and eventually achieved the first rank second class of the civil hierarchy, the fourth grade from the top in a ladder of nine ranks.¹⁴¹

Aşçıdede Halil İbrahim's rank points to another distinguishing characteristic of men of his kind. Before the beginning of

reform, there was nothing to stop such individuals, if they possessed ability and could form the right kind of connections, from rising to the highest offices. During the Tanzimat, however, the premium placed on a modernist cultural orientation created a new dissociation between proficiency in the traditional scribal literary culture and the kind of advancement to which it had once been a major entitlement. At the Porte during this period, there continued to be officials who were not too different from Aşçıdede Halil İbrahim in cultural terms and who did achieve such relatively high offices as *beylikçi* or director of the Department of the Imperial Divan, receiver (*amedî*), corresponding secretary (*mektubî*), or even undersecretary (*müsteşar*) of the grand vezir. The same individuals were at times also members of the major conciliar bodies. Outside the Sublime Porte, such persons might become provincial governors or perhaps even ministers in some of the smaller ministries. But in the era of reform, the most important civil-bureaucratic positions lay increasingly beyond their grasp.¹⁴²

Comparing the situation of the traditionalist Muslims with that of the non-Muslims in official service, we begin to see something of the political tensions resulting from the sociocultural impact of bureaucratic reform.

Non-Muslims in the Civil Bureaucracy

While the traditional association of non-Muslims with the Ottoman ruling class did not come to a complete end with the abolition of the Greek Translatorship of the Imperial Divan in 1821, the number of non-Muslims in official positions over the next several decades appears to have been very small. When the non-Muslim presence began to grow again following the Reform Decree of 1856, it did so in ways reflective partly of traditional patterns, partly of the egalitarian provisions of the decree, and partly of the relative precocity with which non-Muslims had espoused the cultural westernism valued by the reformers.

Such a precocity had already been evident among the Greeks, long before the state itself became committed to reform. Stimulated by a variety of factors such as religious affinity, commercial ties, and movements of national revival, similar cultural orientations gradually spread to others of the non-Muslim peoples, as well.¹⁴³ While the Greek Revolution nearly destroyed the old position of the Phenariots in relation to the ruling class, as other

crises would affect the positions of other groups at later dates, the increasing scope and tempo of innovative reform and the initially trifling numbers of Muslims with the technical qualifications required for new programs created a continuing need to draw on the skills of the non-Muslim peoples. This need was simply one more way in which the initial difficulties of creating a modernist bureaucratic elite led to a resort to "marginal men." Throughout the period between 1821 and the Reform Decree of 1856, small numbers of non-Muslims therefore continued to hold official or quasi-official positions as translators, engineers in the Imperial Powder Works, architects, physicians, or financiers (*sarrafs*). While some of these were Greek, Armenians were also prominent.

From 1856 on, the development of this non-Muslim presence accelerated considerably. The Armenians soon outstripped the Greeks to form the most numerous contingent,¹⁴⁴ while other groups, such as Ottoman Jews, Syro-Lebanese Christian Arabs, and even a few men of western European origin joined them in smaller numbers. In the Foreign Ministry, these non-Muslims, the ethnoreligious subgroups of which display numerous differences, came by the end of this period to account for just under forty percent of the personnel in service, or about seventy cases. In the succeeding period, however, the non-Muslim presence in that ministry fell to little over twenty percent, or not quite forty individuals. The decline was particularly sharp among the Armenians. Representation of some other non-Muslim communities grew, but not enough to compensate for a sharp increase in the proportional strength of the modernist Muslims. These changes presumably reflect both cultural developments among the Muslims and the effects of the political tensions of the 1890s on the position of the Armenians.

Even when the non-Muslim presence in the bureaucracy was at its height, the fact that claims to mastery of French were practically universal among the non-Muslims, while the Muslims were divided among those who could advance such claims and those who could not, indicates that a Westernist cultural orientation was still the factor of supreme importance in making the non-Muslims useful in official service. This was so true that numbers of them were unable to fill out their official personnel forms in correct Turkish, and a few did not even try to.¹⁴⁵ In any case, a variety of indicators, such as the total number of languages of

which they claimed some knowledge and the relative frequency of study at European universities, suggest that the non-Muslims, in addition to being invariably Westernist in cultural orientation, were perhaps the best-educated officials of all. As usual, there are differences in this regard among the various non-Muslim communities; and for non-Muslims in general, as for their Muslim colleagues, to speak of having a good Western education in this period was seldom to claim more than a modest distinction.

Given their ethnoreligious identification and their educational qualifications, the non-Muslims of the civil bureaucracy appear mainly to have occupied official positions of two types. One type included positions for which a non-Muslim incumbent was particularly appropriate. Such, for example, were administrative posts in various regions of the empire that had important non-Muslim populations and had, for one reason or another, been placed in special administrative status. The best known of these regions was Lebanon, which under the special regulation of 1861 had to have a governor who was an Ottoman Christian but not a Lebanese.¹⁴⁶ Otherwise, the most salient characteristic of the positions that non-Muslims filled seems simply to have been that they were of the new types created by the reforms. Jobs that the traditionalistic Muslim segment of the civil bureaucracy often could not hold, these positions differed little from those associated with the rise of the Tanzimat statesmen themselves. In the Foreign Ministry, for example, non-Muslims appeared frequently as translators, consuls, and diplomats, and several of them enjoyed lengthy tenure as representatives of the Porte to Western states.¹⁴⁷

In addition to being more numerous than their precursors in the traditional scribal service, the non-Muslim officials of the new civil bureaucracy thus appear to have been more fully integrated into its prevailing patterns of service and promotion. But this integration had its limits. The data contained in official personnel records indicate, for example, that the salary entitlements of the non-Muslim officials and their access to other forms of reward remained limited compared to those of the Western-oriented Muslims with whom this group compares in qualifications and types of service.¹⁴⁸ The Tanzimat statesmen also had some reluctance about the promotion of non-Muslim officials to high office. This is clear from Fuad Paşa's statement, made to the British ambassador at the time of the first appointment of a

non-Muslim minister, that some positions, including the ministries of war and foreign affairs and the grand vezirate, would have to remain in Muslim hands.¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, there were to be a number of non-Muslim ministers, including four in foreign affairs,¹⁵⁰ but no retreat in principle from Fuad Paşa's statement.

This kind of reluctance, which the circumstances of the times help to make understandable, was no doubt an added factor in keeping the Tanzimat statesmen from developing the fully regulated personnel policy that they had promised in 1856. In the want of such a thorough systematization, preexisting patterns continued to characterize the position of non-Muslim officials as much as that of Muslims. The evidence on the imperfect integration of non-Muslims into the bureaucracy thus includes traits of the organizational models of both the autonomous confessional community and the patrimonial household. For example, Cevdet Paşa blamed Âli Paşa for making the Foreign Correspondence Office of the Foreign Ministry into an Armenian enclave. The personnel records of the ministry substantiate this observation, which surely reflects the consequences of the appointment of Sahak Abro Efendi, an able Armenian much in favor with the leading Tanzimat statesmen, as chief of the office.¹⁵¹ The discernible patron-client networks and bureaucratic "dynasties" of the period also include cases attesting the replication of these patterns among non-Muslims. This is especially true of the Greeks, above all of a few elite families that presented the aspect of, and to a degree literally were, survivors of the old Phenariot elite.¹⁵²

Despite their growth in numbers and relative prominence, then, the non-Muslims in the civil bureaucracy continued to occupy a second-class position in relation to the modernist Muslim elite and to display significant elements of the old patterns of enclavement and patrimonialism. If we assume that in this, as in other respects, the implementation of the reforms within the governmental systems was prerequisite to their taking root in the larger society, then we must judge the attempts to implement the principles of equality and Ottomanism within the civil bureaucracy a failure.

Yet it would misrepresent the commitment of Ottoman statesmen to their principles to say no more than this. In fact, the non-Muslim officials must be compared not only to the new

Muslim elite, but also to the more traditionalistic sector of Muslim officialdom. While non-Muslim officials may have been less well rewarded than the Muslim elite for performing similar functions, the non-Muslims on balance appear to have fared better than the traditionalistic Muslim officials in terms of both compensation and promotion.¹⁵³ Compared to their own precursors, who had been marginal to the norms of the old ruling class in terms of both ethnocultural characteristics and service patterns, the non-Muslim officials of the Tanzimat shared the cultural orientation valued by the Muslim elite and had clearly moved into a kind of intermediary position between upper and lower elements of the Muslims, now themselves differentiated in cultural terms. This kind of change could not fail to awaken doubts and resentments, which must be numbered among the obstacles to fuller realization of the egalitarian ideal. Indeed, given the impact that separatist nationalisms were producing in the empire, it is impossible to believe that the non-Muslim officials were not themselves of divided mind about their situation.¹⁵⁴

In the acceptance of non-Muslim officials, as in other respects, the reforms of the Tanzimat were thus incompletely successful, but not without impact. Like the evidence on conditions in the First Ottoman Parliament (1876-1878),¹⁵⁵ information on conditions within official cadres indicates that the changes in intercommunal relations during the decades following the Reform Decree of 1856 were extensive, enough so to sustain comparison with changes over comparable periods in other societies where the bases of social cohesion and the effective force of the underlying principles are better established than they were in this moribund, multinational empire. The difference here was that the forces shaping the future would ultimately keep the ideal of a supranational Ottoman synthesis from becoming viable.

Modernist Muslim Officials

The emergence of this third major group, definable more precisely as Muslims claiming proficiency in French, was a continuation of the process that, starting with Selim III's experiments with permanent reciprocal diplomatic representation, had shaped the reformist elite. The growth of this group in numbers was a natural consequence of the influence that its members acquired. In the Foreign Ministry, the extent of growth was such

that westernist Muslims accounted by the end of the period for almost exactly a third of the personnel of the ministry, or about sixty men. In the next period, the proportion rose to almost half, or about ninety men. In other agencies, the percentage of Western-oriented Muslims may, for obvious reasons of specialization, have been lower. Yet there is no question that this sector of civil officialdom increased sharply in relative size during the Tanzimat and continued to increase in subsequent periods.

As among the non-Muslim officials, the growth of this segment of the bureaucracy led to the appearance within it of internal subdivisions. In this case, the subdivisions resulted from differing responses to the new cultural dimension of the civil-bureaucratic elite, and thus implicitly from the difficulties of propagating new ideas. At least by the end of this period, there were essentially three subgroups distinguishable among the westernist Muslims of the civil bureaucracy. First came the serious modernizers in positions of power, that is, the leading statesmen of the period and their collaborators. Subsequently, there appeared another, and typically younger, group of serious modernizers. Differing from the leading reformers of the period in having a greater mastery of and more critical response to western ideas, the younger men experienced frustration in their official careers and consequently developed into the first Middle Eastern instance of the opposition intelligentsia that Eisenstadt describes in his concept of "split-up modernization."

Finally, there was among the westernist Muslims a residual category of men who were little more than casualties of cultural change. Addressed in the insouciant couplet of Hoca Tahsin Efendi—who was not one of their number—at the head of this chapter, these were men for whom modernity meant little more than glibness in French and the aping of Parisian manners and fashions. To all the serious-minded, whether modernist or traditionalist in orientation, such figures were *alafranga celebiler*, a term literally meaning "Frankish-style gentlemen" but corresponding more in tone to something like "Frenchified playboys." In the literature of the period, as Şerif Mardin has shown, these playboys live on in ignominy, while more earnest modernists, noble in purpose and dashing in frock coat and crimson fez, stand before a society woefully short of heroes as little less than the beau ideal.¹⁵⁶

The official careers of the modernist types obviously absorbed their interests to varying degrees. Indeed, the second and third of the three subgroups represent the beginnings of a process by which the traditionally almost complete identification of the educated Muslim segment of the population with government service would gradually break down—a process that would not, however, go beyond its incipient stages before the collapse of the empire.¹⁵⁷

In office, it was only natural that modernist Muslims of all sorts be found in the new posts created by the reforms. On into the closing years of the century, the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte retained its reputation as the best place to start one's career. It was probably desirable, however, for those seriously interested in foreign affairs to move on after a few years to one of the western European consulates or embassies. Others could move on to positions in one of the more important of the other ministries, to one of the major conciliar bodies, or, if they had connections with provincial governors, to staff positions in provincial administration.¹⁵⁸ The lack of any comprehensive regulation of personnel procedures, the extent to which the patrimonial tradition still governed matters of appointment and promotion, and the disorderly growth of the administrative organization make it impossible to speak in more precise terms of a clearly marked *cursus honorum*.

Possessing in both ascriptive and prescriptive terms the characteristics most distinctive of the leading statesmen and most valued by them, westernist Muslim officials had, however, the best chances of promotion of any of the three major groups and enjoyed the highest levels of compensation. Since the distinctive qualifications of this group were not too difficult to attain, and since the leading statesmen continued in the traditional way to be on the lookout for talented young men, this was true even of the intellectuals of the opposition, to the extent that they were willing to sacrifice their principles, and of the playboy types, if sufficiently well connected. In this sense, the westernist Muslims displayed closest affinities both with the reformist oligarchy of the Tanzimat, who were after all the first of their kind, and with the upper echelons of the old scribal service.

And yet, so much had changed that it is misleading to make simplistic comparisons with a single element of the traditional scribal service. The westernist Muslims were no longer simply

the upper echelon of a larger group, distinguishable in having risen above a relatively clearly marked rank frontier. With the proliferation of civil-bureaucratic ranks, there had ceased to exist any such neat frontier. The new force of cultural differentiation had created an entirely different kind of disjunction, which individuals crossed not as officials, but normally as students. At the same time, the force of egalitarian Ottomanism, however imperfectly realized in practice, had made it possible for non-Muslims in unprecedented numbers to assume a place intermediate in responsibilities and compensation between the Muslim elite and the other Muslims of the bureaucracy. Whatever their affinities with the groups distinguishable in the old scribal service, the major segments of the new civil bureaucracy were significantly different in the modes of their differentiation and in their positions in relation to one another.

Fully to appreciate the sociocultural changes that reform created in the civil bureaucracy, it is thus necessary to look at these major groups not just singly, but also in terms of the relations among them. In this respect, the most important changes of the Tanzimat had to do with the characteristic modes of upward mobility and political behavior.

*Changing Patterns of Bureaucratic Mobility and
Political Behavior*

Eliminating the insecurities that had conditioned the "wheel-of-fortune mobility" characteristic of the traditional scribal service, Mahmud II's reforms of the 1830s substituted for the old pattern a new one of more typically pyramidal aspect,¹⁵⁹ yet one to which any static image of a pyramid was only partially appropriate. The pyramid of the new civil bureaucracy was still under construction, and it seems to have increased in size all the time, even despite the critical shortage of resources. It probably also changed in shape as it grew. The proliferation of ranks, the limited ability of the state to provide sufficient compensation to its servants, and the way in which the leading statesmen were now able to hold on to their positions suggest that this pyramid may have become attenuated toward the top and harder to scale, even as it broadened at its base.

To make things more complicated, the elements of which the pyramid was built were heterogeneous, and the engineering principles applied at different levels in its construction inconsis-

tent. More explicitly, this was a pyramid not of stones, but of formal organizational structures filled with men, most of whom aspired to move higher with time. Yet, the qualitative differences among various categories of these men affected both their initial placement in the structure and their ability to move upward. These differences naturally created tensions; and the application by the engineer-statesmen, presiding over the erection of this structure from their vantage point at its apex, of different rules to the elaboration of different parts of the structure heightened these tensions even more.

As the study of the regularizing and systematizing activities of these "engineers" reveals, in the upper parts of the structure, peopled more or less exclusively by men of modernist orientation, the reformers paradoxically still operated according to the tradition of patrimonial factionalism and discretionarism. In the lower or peripheral parts of the structure, most apt to be filled by men whose traditionalistic cultural orientations denied them access to the highest positions, the reformers tended to be most vigorous in application of the new tools of rationalization and regulation. There is little wonder, then, that the reformers themselves sometimes confessed dismay at the results of their efforts.

This pyramidal pattern, and the categories of men who worked within it, persisted in general terms until the end of the empire. During the Tanzimat, however, it was clear that the growth of this structure, in power if not necessarily in size, could go on only so long before being brought to a halt by the stresses built up within it, by the outcry that its burgeoning evoked from other parts of government and society, or by a combination of the two.

Where bureaucratic mobility was concerned, the critical fault in the structure lay in the effective limits of traditional techniques of patrimonial faction building when applied on such a vastly enlarged scale among men lacking the sociocultural homogeneity or the low consciousness of political issues characteristic of the traditional ruling class. Here, to a major extent, lies the answer to a question often posed by contemporaries—why Ali and Fuad failed to train successors to carry on their system after them.

Even under the conditions of the traditional system, their preference for friends and kinsmen would have brought many

incompetents into their entourage and produced embarrassments for them. Under the altered conditions of the Tanzimat, the insidious way in which members of the opposition intelligentsia or "Frenchified playboys" emerged from even the best households compounded these problems.

The practical necessity for the leading statesmen to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of equality and Ottomanism, given the imperfect extent to which those principles gained acceptance, exerted a similar influence. The Tanzimat statesmen accepted these principles to the extent of relying heavily on non-Muslims, sometimes including foreigners, in many capacities. Contemporaries, including European diplomats, were amazed at the extent of the reformers' trust even in non-Muslims whose loyalties to the empire were known to be suspect.¹⁶⁰ The criticisms raised by Ottoman Muslims were apt to be more general, and it was not only traditionalists unable to adapt to the new era who voiced such complaints. This is apparent from the way Cevdet linked Âli Paşa's failure to train successors to the latter's excessive reliance on Armenians,¹⁶¹ or from the comments on the promotion of non-Muslims that Ziya Paşa, a leader of the opposition intelligentsia, inserted in his celebrated "Victory Eulogy" (*Zafername*), a satire directed, like Cevdet's remark, at Âli Paşa.¹⁶²

The kinds of patrimonial faction-building techniques that had worked under the conditions of the old scribal service could not, under the altered conditions of the Tanzimat, integrate the diverse human elements of the much-enlarged civil bureaucracy in any satisfactory way. Nor would it ultimately work to use the techniques of rational systematization only as a supplement to the old methods. Anyone with sufficient power or resources could make such a combination work in the short run. But elimination of the internal absurdities of the bureaucratic pyramid presupposed two things. One was resolution of the doubts and ambiguities that hindered full acceptance of the non-Muslim members of the bureaucracy. The other was the removal, or at least minimization, of the opposition between practice and principle and the creation of a more fully rationalized system, especially in the field of personnel policy. Attainment of the first of these desiderata would ultimately prove impossible; progress toward the second did, in subsequent periods, gradually occur.

Meanwhile, for all those discontented with the way the civil-bureaucratic pyramid was developing, the increasing articulation of political issues provided new means for the expression of grievances, even as the persistence of traditional assumptions among the men at the top of the system made it difficult for them to know how to cope with such behavior. This change is clearest in the literary life of the officials, particularly in the sequence of events that brought forth the new opposition intelligentsia.

There are abundant examples to indicate that the old type of bureaucratic poetasting and the long-familiar use of satire and eulogy for the resolution of official grievances continued on into the last years of the empire. Some of the examples of this activity are both amusing and enlightening. One of the most celebrated satirists of the Tanzimat period was one Kâzım Paşa (1821-1889), who had somehow become a general officer (*ferik*) in the army. He once lampooned Mustafa Reşid Paşa's westernizing policies in a quatrain that compared Reşid to a doctor who set out to advance his own reputation by curing the state, which was healthy, of—the French pox (*frenği illeti*). Mustafa Reşid responded to this affront in the traditional way of a patrimonial grandee. He received his satirist in a personal interview and presented him with a gold watch.¹⁶³ It was certainly possible for satirists to overdo it and hurt themselves in the process,¹⁶⁴ but Mustafa Reşid's placation of Kâzım Paşa was thoroughly conventional.¹⁶⁵

What Mustafa Reşid and his like were not prepared for was certain new types of activity that began to evolve out of this traditional pattern. For far-reaching changes in communications, especially the rise of journalism, created new outlets for the eulogists and satirists, giving them a new sense of their own importance and making them harder to tame by the conventional means. If we may accept an opinion attributed to Cevdet Paşa, a petty bureaucratic *littérateur* known as Hafız Müşfik Efendi (1825-?) played a central, but not unique, role in this development. At some time, probably in the late 1840s or early 1850s, he was employed in the Office of the Corresponding Secretary of the Grand Vezir and thus, under the assumptions of the day, was a candidate for promotion into the Office of the Receiver (*Amedi*). In Müşfik's place, Âli Paşa secured the appointment of his own son-in-law to the coveted position. It was the kind of

thing that had happened many times before and had driven other men to drink, to mysticism, or to the composition of poetical attacks against their malefactors. Müşfik tried all those routes, and a new one as well. Leaving official service entirely, he went to work as a writer for the *Ceride-i Havadis*, the first non-official Ottoman newspaper, founded in 1840.¹⁶⁶ There he became the center of a coterie of like-minded poet-bureaucrats, which in turn began to attract persons of a somewhat different type, destined to develop, as Cevdet said, into what "is called in French the *opposition*."¹⁶⁷

The roles of bureaucrat and *littérateur* were beginning to differentiate; and new types of literary expression, new media of communication, and new forms of political behavior were beginning to emerge. The opposition of which Cevdet Paşa spoke consisted of a small group of men whose motivation has upon occasion been explained in terms of frustrated bureaucratic aspirations analogous to those of Hafız Müşfik.¹⁶⁸ In fact, almost all of this group were of very high social status and were very well connected.¹⁶⁹ Those whose family connections were less gilt-edged had or could have had literary *intisab* connections with some of the leading statesmen of the period. The grandfatherly Yusuf Kâmil Paşa, one of the six major civil-bureaucratic grand vezirs of the Tanzimat, was particularly prominent as a protector of these and other literary talents.¹⁷⁰ But there was a factor that disinclined these young men to capitalize on their connections in traditional fashion. Instead, they opposed and criticized the leading statesmen and stood fast, at least to a degree, when the statesmen tried to buy them off. The Young Ottomans, as the new opposition came collectively to be known, were even ready to take the unprecedented step of going into voluntary exile in Europe in order to escape that kind of pressure.¹⁷¹

What made such a difference in the political behavior of the Young Ottomans was their response to the new western ideas. Almost all trained in the prestigious Translation Office of the Sublime Porte, they enjoyed what amounted practically to the best modern education then available for Young Ottoman gentlemen. Their intellectual formation was certainly not entirely westernist. But they possessed a better knowledge of the West than that with which the Tanzimat statesmen began their careers, and it was this knowledge that led the Young Ottomans

to elaborate what amounted to the first identifiable political ideology of the modern Middle East.

While there were significant variations in their views, it is possible to summarize fundamental elements of the Young Ottomans' program in coherent fashion. Heavily under the imprint of European liberal thought, their principles included Ottoman patriotism, Namık Kemal (1840-1888) being particularly ardent in its advocacy, and demand for a constitutional, parliamentary system of government. The latter they intended as a restraint not so much on the sultan, whose office some of them—notably Ziya Paşa—rather idealized, as on the civil-bureaucratic elite of the Porte. The Young Ottomans opposed this elite not only as autocratic, but also as uncritically westernist in its policies. In contrast, the Young Ottomans insisted on a criterion that would become common among reformist intellectuals of the nineteenth-century Middle East. This was the implementation of only those reforms that could be justified in the light of the traditional value system.¹⁷²

While the Young Ottomans reinterpreted this tradition somewhat loosely to fit their purposes, it provided them with a weapon by which to attack the Tanzimat statesmen at their weakest point—that of the legitimation of their policies and of their control of power. This use of tradition also gave the Young Ottoman program a moderate-conservative cast that had wide appeal. The leading literary lights of the movement capitalized on this appeal by developing the simple, direct style in which they found men like Hafız Müşfik already beginning to work. They also exploited new genres and media, such as popular journalism and Western-style theater, in which the poet Şinasi had already blazed a trail for them. Thus the Young Ottomans not only launched an appeal for the restoration of political balance and for a more reflective approach to reform, but also, despite their elite origin, did so in ways capable of producing tremendous resonance in the less favored segments of the bureaucracy and, to a degree, throughout Ottoman society.

With these developments, the patterns of social organization and political activity characteristic of the civil bureaucracy assumed forms much different from those traditionally known in the scribal service. As the image of the bureaucratic pyramid implies, the civil bureaucracy had entered a transitional state in which, as in the formal organizational and procedural apparatus

of the Porte, elements of the patrimonial tradition continued to exist in discordant juxtaposition with new features representing the progress thus far made toward creation of a rational-legal order. The new subdivision of the civil bureaucracy into subgroups defined in terms of ethnoreligious identification, on one hand, and of cultural orientation and thus indirectly of educational achievement, on the other, is witness to this intermediate state of development. The way in which the traditional patterns clashed with the new in the minds of men who lived with the system is at the same time apparent in the tensions surrounding questions of bureaucratic mobility and in the emergence of ideological controversy.

In creating the conditions out of which the Young Ottoman movement emerged, in particular, the Tanzimat reformers wrought better than they knew. For from the nascent constitutional movement came the ideas that carried the empire forward from the attempt to develop a modern bureaucracy to the larger task of creating a modern polity, including not only the bureaucracy but also a new and effective set of controls over it.

CONCLUSION

This progression would not, however, occur in an easy or untroubled way. On the one hand, the traditional powers of the sultan had yet to be limited in principle. On the other, the possibilities of harnessing the new force of nationalism to the defense of the state, and thus the prospects for the redefinition of the locus of sovereignty—prerequisite for a modernistic restructuring of the polity—remained very much in doubt. These two facts alone were enough to assure that the remainder of the history of the empire would be a time of wrangling over how the political system should evolve and over whether it could survive at all.

During the Tanzimat, the central theme of Ottoman political life was the creation and operation of the bureaucratic-political system described in this chapter. In succeeding periods, the further development of this mechanism would gradually become a subsidiary issue in a political process of continually changing character and enlarging scope. Before going on to examine the Sublime Porte in its last phases, it is thus important to determine how, other than in calling forth their "antithesis" in the Young

Ottoman movement, the Tanzimat reformers contributed to the continuing development of the bureaucratic tradition.

The manifold problems and tensions growing out of the extreme political disequilibrium, and the somewhat improvised character of the new bureaucratic structures, obviously mean that this assessment cannot be unmixed. Nonetheless, there were many gains. This is especially true of the development of bureaucratic organization. The massive difficulties of creating needed kinds of infrastructure, empire-wide, in fields such as justice and internal administration mark obvious limitations of the reformers' achievements. The prominence of conciliar bodies in this period is, in its way, another sign of the difficulties of developing bureaucratic institutions of all the needed types, even though the conciliar bodies displayed a major development in terms of numbers, kinds, and roles within the limits of their own tradition. Nonetheless, the bureaucratic institutions associated with the Porte underwent significant changes. This is apparent in the formation of a new official suite—including some of the traditional chancery offices—under the grand vezir, in the organizational elaboration of the Foreign Ministry, and in the tentative appearance of new concepts of organization. To identify what were ultimately the most important organizational developments of this period, it is perhaps enough to point out that the history of the consular and diplomatic services of the Ottoman and later republican Foreign Ministry is essentially continuous from the 1830s to the present; that of the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) and its republican successor body (*Danıştay*), from 1868 on.

In the attempts of the reformers to regulate and systematize patterns of organization and procedure, the picture of partial but sometimes significant progress is similar. On the negative side of the balance sheet, it is necessary to note the dismal record of the period in finance, the persistence in some of the regulatory acts of traditional patterns, and the fact that the rate at which bureaucratic institutions grew far outstripped the rate at which they were brought under any kind of regulation at all. On the positive side, we note such advances as more effective techniques for the conduct of meetings in the councils and assemblies, or numerous innovations in the field of official communications. The leading officials of the period, and their younger critics even more, were also acquiring a capital of ideas