

İbrahim Paşa, Nevşehirli Damad

Nevşehirli Damad İbrahim (Dāmād İbrāhīm) **Paşa** (c.1073–1143/ c.1662–1730) was an Ottoman grand vizier for twelve years, nine months, and ten days (1130–43/1718–30) during the reign of Sultan Ahmed (Ahmed) III (r. 1114–42/1703–30). He was born in the village of Muşkara, which was located in the *kaza* (*qaḏā*, judicial district) of Ürgüp, in the *sancak* (*sancaq*, administrative unit) of Niğde, in the *eyalet* (*eyālet*, province) of Karaman. İbrahim Paşa later invested heavily in the village of his birth, which contributed to its transformation into the city of Nevşehir, as it was called from 1138–9/1726 onwards. To emphasise his link to the city, he was nicknamed Nevşehirli (“from Nevşehir”). His investment in Muşkara/Nevşehir, as well as Ürgüp, Kayseri, and Arki-Karaman, through *vakıf* (*waqf*, pious foundation) is well documented (VGMA, register nos. 27, 38, 42, 734).

İbrahim Paşa’s father was Ali Ağa (‘Alī Āghā, d. 1085/1674), the *vojvoda* (governor) of İzdin (Lamia, in present-day Greece), and his mother was Fatma (Fāṭ(i)ma) Hanım (d. 1112/1700). He came to Istanbul in 1100/1689, and a close relative helped him enter the imperial service at the Saray-ı Atik (Sarāy-ı ‘Atīq, or Eski Saray, “the Old Palace,” the first Ottoman palace in Istanbul, built by Mehmed (Mehmed) II, r. 848–50/1444–6 and 855–86/1451–81). He started as a *helvacı* (*helvāci*, sweet-maker) but later joined the *teberdarân* (*teberdārān*)-ı *saray-ı atik* (corps of halberdiers of the *saray-ı atik*), which was under the authority of the chief eunuch of the harem (*ağa-yı darü’s-sa‘ade*). İbrahim Paşa’s highest post at the Saray-ı Atik was

evkaf katibi (*awqāf kâtibī*, clerk of pious foundations). The turning point in his career that eventually led to the grand vizierate was his appointment as a *yazıcı halifesi* (*yāzıcı khalifesi*, junior clerk) at the palace in Edirne, on 8 Zilkade (Dhū l-Qa‘da) 1106 (20 June 1695). He made the acquaintance of Şehzade (Şehzāde, Prince) Ahmed (the future Sultan Ahmed III) in Edirne and later became his favourite. When the prince ascended the throne in 1114/1703, İbrahim was appointed to the post of *yazıcı* (clerk) for the harem’s chief eunuch, where he served for six years.

İbrahim was involved in conflict both during the grand vizierate of Baltacı Mehmed (Bāltaçī Meḥmed) Paşa (d. 1124/1712) and of Çorlulu Ali (‘Alī) Paşa (d. 1123/1711). The latter succeeded in lessening İbrahim’s influence as *haremeyn-i muhteremeyn muhasebecisi* (*haremeyn-i muhteremeyn muḥāsebecī*, accountant for Mecca and Medina, a post which he held since 1121/1709) and in distancing him from the sultan. In 1121/1709, İbrahim was exiled to Edirne; however, he regained favour during the grand vizierate of Şehid (Şehīd) Ali Paşa (d. 1128/1716) and took part in the Morea campaign as *mevkufatçı* (*mevkūfatçı*, controller of the office of suspended payments). When the military operation succeeded, he was given responsibility for the *tahrir* (*tahrīr*, cadastral survey) of the Morean peninsula. Subsequently, he was appointed *defterdar* (*defterdār*, treasurer) of Niş (Niš in modern-day Serbia) and took part in the Peterwardein campaign (1128/1716). Upon his return to Ottoman lands, and largely to reward his good service during the campaign, he was promoted quickly, first to the post of *ruznamçe-i evvel* (*rūznāmçe-i evvel*, senior accountant) and then to the position of *mīrahur*