

Grand Vizieral Networks and Political Economy: Some Documentary Evidence Concerning the Practice of Admission Payment

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It is well known that, especially after the second half of the 16th century, admission payment for a particular post by the candidates to the privy purse of the Sultan and the Grand Vizier became prevalent. This practice has been described and discussed based on chronicles, political treatises, travelogues, and official documents. However, thanks to the nature of these primary sources that provide only circumstantial evidence, the actual process of admission payment has remained mostly out of focus.

The necessity of networks and communication in daily politics is obvious. With the phrase of the actual process, I intend to stress these daily necessities of politics. Still, minor details that have the potential to expose daily politics could only present themselves generously in some of the primary sources. In this paper, by utilizing some unofficial bidding letters by candidates to kethüdas of Grand Viziers about their intended posts and court records, I will discuss the multiple minor aspects of the practice of admission payment and its relation to the function of networks in communication and decision-making in the Ottoman political system.