SPACE AND TIME IN OTTOMAN DYNASTIC CELEBRATION OF 1675

1675 Osmanlı Hanedanlık Kutlamalarında Zaman Ve Mekân

M. Fatih Torun

İstanbul Bilgi University, Turkey
e-mail: torunfatihh@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8947-1455

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SPACE AND TIME IN OTTOMAN DYNASTIC CELEBRATION OF 1675*

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M. Fatih Torun

Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey
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Abstract

This article offers a spatial and timewise examination of the 1675 imperial festival which took place in Edirne (Adrianople) during the reign of Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687). The article links the recent works of various scholars, and contribute to Ottoman festival studies through providing original data on the determination of the festival square with the help of the recent archaeological excavations in the imperial palace in Edirne, and the analysis of the places of the sports games held during the festival. In the light of witness accounts, it analysed the architectural setting in the festival events. According to both Ottoman and non-Ottoman sources, time management of the Ottoman court is explored by the daily program of the celebrations and timing of the Ottoman high court members.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, early modern Ottoman court, Edirne (Adrianople), Sultan Mehmed IV (The Hunter), imperial festival of 1675, festival space (sırık meydanı)

Öz

Bu makale 1675 yılında Edirne’de (Adrianople) Sultan IV. Mehmed’in (r. 1648-1687) döneminde düzenlenen imparatorluk festivalinin zaman ve mekânsal incelemesini yapmaktadır. Makale son zamanlarda imparatorluk festivallerini inceleyen çeşitli araştırmacıların çalışmalarına katkı niteliğinde olup yakın zamanda Edirne Sarayı’nda yapılan arkeoloji çalışmalarının yardımıyla şenlik meydanının tespiti ve şenlikte yer alan spor oyunlarının yeri üzerine orijinal veriler sunar. Görgü tanıklarının ifadeleri ışığında şenlik meydanının mimari düzeni analiz edilmektedir. Hem yerli hem de yabancı kaynakların anlatılarıyla kutlamaların günlük programı ve saray erkânının zamanlaması üzerinden Osmanlıların zaman yönetimi keşfedilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, erken modern Osmanlı sarayı, Edirne (Adrianople), Sultan IV. Mehmed (Avcı), 1675 imparatorluk şenliği, şenlik alanı (sırık meydanı)

The Turkish word *meydan* describes an open space where people assemble for a variety of purposes. During the Ottoman Empire, one such important usage was for state-sponsored festivals, in which the meydan was transformed into festival space. More crucially, meydan became a demonstration hall, where the sultan portrayed the hierarchy between himself, his court and his subjects. In 1675, the Ottoman court organized a series of festivals in honour of the circumcision of Mehmed IV’s (r. 1648-1687) two sons and the wedding of a daughter. The

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celebrations were held in Edirne (Adrianople), the sultan and his family were located there at that time. The Ottoman officials adjusted an open field into a festival site, right next to the imperial palace; Thus, the Ottomans were called the festival site *sırık meydanı* [pole square], *saray meydanı* [palace square], or *saray ovası* [palace plains]. The festival square functioned as a stage for the entertainments where the imperial hierarchies and power relations were demonstrated. In this article, the exact location of the festival square will be determined with the help of the latest excavations in the field. The answers to the following questions will be chased: how did the Ottomans design and construct the festival square? What was their main purpose in designing the festival square? How did they manage time and schedule daily events? Why did they transcend the borders of the festival square in public games?

Three different Ottoman intellectuals wrote about the celebrations in 1675. Nabi, one of the famous poets at that time, wrote a festival book in verses by the commission of the sultan himself.¹ Yusuf Ağa, the chief harem eunuch, assigned his scribe, Abdi, to write another festival book.² In his book, Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi reserved a specific section for the festival.³ Two of the state chroniclers, namely Raşid Mehmed and Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, also added festival narrative in their official registers.⁴ To cross-check the Ottoman sources, the present author will apply to the witness diaries of the English and French travellers presented at the festival. John Covel, Thomas Coke, and Dudley North were presented at the festival as the members of the English Levant Company's committee, and they all wrote down their Ottoman experiences, at the festival in particular.⁵ The French ambassador, Marquis de Nointel, and his secretary, François Pétis de la Croix, also published their observations, even though the ambassador's records were based on his secretary's personal experiences.⁶ In all of these primary sources, state chroniclers paid the most attention in their registers to time and scheduling. Their main aim was to archive Mehmed IV's reign; thus, they produced the most accurate calendar. They made no mistake on the dates of the celebrations in the annals. On the other hand, festival book authors and travellers shared different perceptions of time. Nabi's poetic writing probably caused him to pay attention to the harmony of the arrangements, rather than to dating and recording every event in the festival. As a consequence, his festival calendar became utterly disorganized. He concerned neither spatial description nor time perception, although his verses seem the most lyrical of all the other written sources. Abdi's time perception was mainly based on the position of the sun, such as 'gifts came after evening'⁷ and 'after midday, viziers went to

¹ Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hutân-ı Şehzadegân-ı Hazreti-i Sultan Muhammed-i Gaazi Li Nabi Efendi*, ed. Ağâh Sırrı Levend (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1944).

² Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, ed. Mehmet Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri 4-5: Lebib Sûrnâmesi, Hâfiz Mehmed Efendi (Hazin) Sûrnâmesi, Abdi Sûrnâmesi, Telhîsü'l-Beyân'ın Sûrnâme Kısım* (Istanbul: Sarayburnu Kitaplığı, 2011).

³ Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân fî kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân* (Istanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998).

⁴ Raşid Mehmed, *Târih-i Râşid* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2013); In Appendix A: Aslı Göksel, "The 'Surname' of Abdi as a Sample of Old Turkish Prose," (Unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1983).

⁵ *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant: I.- The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600. II.- Extracts from the Diaries of Dr John Covel, 1670-1679. With Some Account of the Levant Company of Turkey Merchants*, ed. James Theodore Bent (Farnham: Ashgate, 1892); Thomas Coke, *A true narrative of the great solemnity of the circumcision of Mustapha Prince of Turkie eldest son of Sultan Mahomet present emperor of the Turks. Together with and account of the marriage of his daughter to his great favourite Mussaib at Adrianople, as it was sent in a Letter to Person of Honor* (London: Printed by James Cottrell for William Crook, at the Green Dragon without Temple-bar, 1676); Roger North, *The life of the Honourable Sir Dudley North, knt. ... : and of the Honourable and Reverend Dr John North ...* (London: Printed for the editor and sold by John Whiston, 1744).

⁶ François Pétis de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur, Cy-Devant Secrétaire de l'Ambassade de Constantinople* (Paris: Seconde Partie, 1684); Albert Vandal, *L'odyssée d'un Ambassadeur: les Voyages du Marquis de Nointel, 1670-1680* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie, 1900).

⁷ 'Yine ba'de'l-'asr etrâflardan gelen hediyeler 'arz olunup ...' (Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 506).

their places to sit.⁸ He disarranged the days and even mistook the day of the wedding celebration.⁹ François Pétis de la Croix, in other respects, stated exact time giving the hour of the day, ‘the grand vizier went to his amphitheatre to observe games usually after 4 o’clock.’¹⁰

In 1675, Mehmed IV followed earlier imperial symbols of his ancestors, specifically the seating plan rooted back to the Eastern Roman Empire.¹¹ In the Roman Empire, the emperor appeared standing in the imperial lodge when festivals and games were held in Hippodrome in Constantinople. His seat was higher than that of the attending citizenry, and his superiority became visibly obvious. In this way, the emperor established the hierarchy between himself and his subjects. Imperial lodges consistently highlighted the power of the ruler as depicted on the Obelisk of Theodosius in Hippodrome.¹² As Sezer Tansuğ remarked, the sultan appeared in his balcony in the celebrations of 1582 in a way corresponding to the depiction of the Eastern Roman Emperor on the foot of the obelisk; the sultan in his balcony also stood in a place higher than his subjects, just as previous emperors had done. Mehmed IV and his court followed the same pattern in 1675, seating in an elevated place, a kiosk, located next to the imperial palace in Edirne.¹³ After evening prayers, the sultan and higher officials came to the lodge almost every day of the circumcision festival.¹⁴ They watched gift-giving ceremonies and firework displays after finishing banquets in the sultan’s pavilion.¹⁵ Mehmed IV, thus, was not a ruler who was easily visible to his subjects. His might and power were apparent from his higher position in the kiosk; although nobody could see or reach him, he was able to observe everyone in the field. The festival square should have been entirely visible in one glance from the seat of the sultan. The Ottoman court, ultimately, made use of an ancient practice, in that they did not allow people to see the sultan directly, but he was in a position to monitor the entire festival square.

Locating the Festival Site

Except from the first academic research of the 1675 princely festival by Özdemir Nutku in 1972, the spatial environment of the festival did not take scholarly attention.¹⁶ For a long time, Rıfat Osman’s detailed studies and his oil paintings were the only illustrations documenting the imperial palace complex in Edirne.¹⁷ Lydia M. Soo recently published a detailed work on the architectural settings of the festival, determining the festival square the most accurately.¹⁸ She mined visual and written data in John Covel’s diary and limited her analysis to traveller observations. She did not refer to the recent excavations from the field and to the Ottoman sources either. However, archaeological excavations in the imperial palace in Edirne begun in 2009 were completed in 2014.¹⁹ The excavations brought to light the existence of two fountains next to the

⁸ ‘Vakt-i zuhrdan sonra vüzerâ nişimenlerine varup . . .’ (Abdi, ibid. p. 502).

⁹ Göksel, ‘The ‘Surname’ of Abdi as a Sample of Old Turkish Prose’, p. 12.

¹⁰ Pétis de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur*, p. 122.

¹¹ Sezer Tansuğ, *Şenlikname Düzeni: Türk Minyatüründe Gerçekçi Duyuş ve Gelişme* (İstanbul: De Yayınevi, 1961), 26-33.

¹² Sezer Tansuğ stressed that the Ottomans used the same pattern in the 1582 festival (Tansuğ, ibid. p. 30).

¹³ Coke, *A true narrative of...*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hitân-ı...*, p. 46; Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 494, 497, 499 and 500; Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân...*, p. 225 and 229.

¹⁵ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 499.

¹⁶ Özdemir Nutku, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği (1675)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1972).

¹⁷ Rıfat Osman, *Edirne Sarayı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989).

¹⁸ Lydia M. Soo, ‘The Architectural Setting of ‘Empire’: The English Experience of Ottoman Spectacle in the Late Seventeenth Century and Its Consequences,’ in *The Dialectics of Orientalism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marcus Keller, Javier Irigoyen-García (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 217-245.

¹⁹ Mustafa Özer, Mesut Dündar, Hasan Uçlar, Gökben Ayhan & Yavuz Güner, ‘Edirne Sarayı (Sarayı Cedit-i Âmire) Kazısı 2014 Yılı Çalışmaları,’ in *37. Uluslararası Kazı, Araştırma ve Arkeometri Sempozyumu. III* (Erzurum: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, 2015, 11-15 May), p. 595.

festival square and the walls of the imperial palace.²⁰ The archaeological research would confirm the estimations of the scholars, such as Özdemir Nutku and Lydia M. Soo, as well as drawings of Rıfat Osman.²¹

Illustration 1: A combined map of the latest excavations and the Ottoman sources (satellite image).

According to the illustration, the black area with thick borders refers to the imperial palace. The palace was located on the shore of Tunca river. The more transparent and smooth black area right next to the palace was the exact position of the festival square. The location of the festival site clearly shows why the Ottomans were called this space an open field or palace square. On the north side of the map, two of the star pins point out the fountains indicated in the excavations. The last pin, on the bottom side of the map, refers to *Sarraçhane Köprüsü*, the bridge which connected the palace with the city. The line that appears between the bridge and the festival square, shows the walking route that people and royal processions came from this direction. While the small geometrical shapes on the top corner of the festival site refer to royal marquees and tents, the rest of the settings such as decorations and illuminations were left to the city side of the square. The court officials in charge of festival space settings made the square face toward the city, therefore, the illuminations became the first sight when viewed from afar. When Dudley North noted his impressions concerning the festival construction, he stressed the prevalence of the marquees and the illuminations that caught the eye at first sight.²²

²⁰ One of these fountains had the same name as the festival square (Ibid., p. 614).

²¹ Mustafa Özer, *Edirne Sarayı (Saray-ı Cedid-i Âmire): Kısa Bir Değerlendirme* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014), p. 73.

²² North, *The life of the Honourable Sir Dudley North*, p. 210.

Designing the Festival Square

When the invitees and audience came to the festival square, they first saw the decorations and illuminations, then the inner circle within the square, and beyond that circle, the royal marquees.

Illustration 2: A design of the festival square (*sırk meydanı*) for the festivals of 1675 in Edirne (satellite image).

Starting from the last tent, the organizers left the other side of the festival square for the illuminations and ornamented poles (*donanma*). In the second illustration, a flag pin in a large quadrangle field is pointed to this entire area of illuminations. The workers erected a high number of poles in this area using ship masts.²³ Abdi stated that the line of poles reached from the circumcision tent to the gate of the palace.²⁴ He described the Egyptian firework makers that they had set up fifty ornamented poles.²⁵ Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi claimed that twenty-two poles were erected in this area, and between these poles, the firework makers hung ‘a thousand’ lamps on the ropes.²⁶ The numbers were varied, as they all focused on describing the high number of decorations. The firework makers, including a team from Egypt, specifically worked on garnishing these poles and making the illuminations. They crafted fancy wooden artefacts in the shape of ships and buildings, illuminated with candles, and suspended them on the ropes between the poles.²⁷ Thomas Coke indicated that the firework makers have changed the figures every

²³ ‘...meydânın bir tarafına yirmi iki gemi sireni dikilüp ve envâ’-ı snâ’ât ile her birine bin maddâr kandiller dizilüp, Sûr’un ibtidâsından âhirine varınca her gece cırâğân olsun deyü fermân olundu’ (Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân*..., p. 208).

²⁴ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 492.

²⁵ Abdi, *ibid.* p. 489. For more information on these illuminations: Metin And, *Osmanlı Şenliklerinde Türk Sanatları* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1982), p. 101-121. And see: Suraiya Faroqi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (Munich: Tauris, 2005), p. 178.

²⁶ Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân*..., p. 208.

²⁷ Coke, *A true narrative of*..., p. 2.

night.²⁸ He was reminded of his travels to Egypt, as he noted the Egyptians practised a similar donanma when they cut the dike of the river Nile.²⁹ As Thomas Coke recalled, Evliya Çelebi took in the illuminations and the decorations of the vessels naturally, as he had witnessed those of the royal ceremonies in the imperial capital.

According to the second illustration, however, a circle is drawn inside the square, pinned by a flag. This circle was reserved only for acrobats and firework makers, probably to prevent accidents. François Pétis de la Croix stated that the crowds did not allow him to watch the displays comfortably: there was ‘a wall of heads.’³⁰ He attended in the name of Marquis de Nointel, with the ambassador of Ragusa, Lord Pietro Marino Caboga. They were sitting in a tent, on carpets and cushions given by the grand vizier.³¹ Organizers may have been concerned about insecure pyrotechnical devices; perhaps the reason for the inner circle was to avoid injuries. Thus, spectators were not allowed to cross the line. *Tulumcus*, a group of employees commissioned to protect the line. According to Abdi, fifty-five *tulumcus* were employed around the circle.³² They ruled as reminders of the rules, carrying an oily sack in hand. If one crossed the line, they were struck with these sacks.³³

The imperial band, called *çalıcı mehterler*, was placed on the other side towards the palace walls. Starting from the sultan’s kiosk, the band’s tents were set up to the main gate of the palace (in the illustration, the entrances of the palace are pinned with gate icons, and the imperial band was pinned with a musical icon).³⁴ The imperial band were employed to play for several occasions. They mostly played to announce the starting of entertainments as well as ceremonial tasks, such as when the sultan came to the kiosk, or to announce the accomplishment of the prince’s circumcision.³⁵ The sultan’s kiosk, as Thomas Coke described, allow imperial women to have ‘had the convenient feeling’ while watching spectacles.³⁶ Abdi mentioned the kiosk as *Alay Kasrı* (kiosk of parade), probably thinking of its practical use, for the kiosk stood on the route of parades and processions, where spectacles and offerings were presented to the sultan.³⁷ The general plan of the festival square construction would comprise a majestic scene. The image of the royal court provided a visual banquet across the river. The Ottomans determined to show the court’s image in all its glory and brilliance to the townspeople with this architectural setting. This settlement plan put royal marquees and the sultan’s kiosk at the head of the festival square, also illustrating the social hierarchy between the sultan and his subjects.

By the side of the kiosk, the Ottomans installed seven marquees using them as frontiers of the festival square. The sultan and the grand vizier took the beginning part of the royal marquees standing right next to the palace walls. Their tents were made in large and prepared for the royal banquets given to the Ottoman officers. In the illustrated map, their tents were pinned with coffee symbols representing treats in the royal banquets. Their tents were followed by the head treasurer, the representative of the grand vizier, and the commander of the Janissaries. These figures,

²⁸ Ibid. p. 2.

²⁹ The reminder of donanma in Egypt also could be seen in the travels of Evliya Çelebi. Similarly, Evliya mentioned the celebrations, and narrated the parades and garnished vessels in the Nile: Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi* (10. Kitap), ed. Robert Dankoff, Seyit Ali Kahraman, & Yücel Dağlı (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p. 176-178.

³⁰ Pétis de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur*, p. 103.

³¹ ‘Les plus considérables trouvoient place le long des murailles des têtes assis sur le cul. J’y assistay avec le Seigneur Pietro Marino Caboga Ambassadeur de Raguse, le grand Visir nous avoit fait donner un tapis & des coussins, sous la tente du Kehaia Beig’ (Ibid. p. 103).

³² Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 492.

³³ Sinem Erdoğan-İşkorkutan, “Kimmiş Bu Tulumcular?” paper published in *Toplumsal Tarih*, no.297, 2018.

³⁴ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 492; Pétis de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur*, p. 93-94.

³⁵ Pétis de la Croix, *ibid.* p. 97.

³⁶ Coke, *A true narrative of...*, p. 2.

³⁷ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 489.

apparently, demonstrated the royal court during the festival. The marquees had a wooden stand in front due to practical reasons, as it allowed the dignitaries to see the entertainments on display. This arrangement gave them a chance to demonstrate their power in the imperial hierarchy by positioning themselves in elevated places with grandeur appearance. Marquis the Nointel stressed that the formation of the marquees stood in majestic immobility.³⁸ And his secretary defined the square: ‘the camp had the shape of a semicircle,’ describing the tents in the same order.³⁹ The royal marquees were followed by the circumcision tents and a tent for invitees’ banquets (these tents were pinned with a clipper and tableware).

Illustration 3: A living example of a ceremonial Ottoman marquee in the Dresden court, bought by Augustus II (the Strong). It has three large poles identical to the ones in the festivals of 1675 (The authors own photo).

In addition, the Ottoman court placed the military forces at the festival space. The regiments were too big to put a side of the square. Thus, they placed behind the royal marquees, installing their tents. Abdi highlighted that two thousand janissary troops were employed inside the palace as well, on the backside of the sultan’s kiosk, for as far as the imperial harem.⁴⁰ A canopy hung over them, which made forces relatively hidden, perhaps looking like a janissary corridor. The

³⁸ ‘Tous ces grands porte-turbans, entoures de leurs gardes, se tiennent dans une immobilité majestueuse’ (Vandal, *L’odyssée d’un Ambassadeur*, p. 197-198).

³⁹ ‘La disposition du Camp estoit en demi-cercle; la première pointe du côté du Sérail estoit occupée par les pavillons du xeislar Aga & des Eunuques noirs destinez pour la garde de ces belles prisonnières, qui regnoient depuis la Porte du Palais jusques au coin de la muraille, où se terminoient les tentes Impériales, au devant desquelles il y a voit deux petits cabinets élevez de six pieds pour le grand Seigneur, & le Prince Moustafa’ (Pétis de la Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur*, p. 94-95).

⁴⁰ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 492.

presence of the janissary troops has two meanings; they were employed for the security of the court members and the sultan, and, it has semiotic meanings. They were indeed subjects of the sultan, and thus, would be represented in such gargantuan scale festival. They ate the sultan's food and demonstrated their adherence to the sultan and the prince. Therefore, they illustrated the sultan's military power before the people.

Scheduling Festive Events

A French scholar once wrote that 'the calendar and the creation of festivals cannot be separated'.⁴¹ The Ottoman court in 1675 indeed took time and scheduling seriously. They planned on which day the circumcision of the two princes would happen, and on which day the nocturnal entertainments performed and royal food would be served in the wedding ceremony. In this sense, they considered the calendar as a kind of talisman.⁴² Abdi emphasized a miraculous coincidence of timing for the circumcision day, due to the event taking place on important dates by chance.⁴³ Miracles on the circumcision of the princes was a highlight for the continuity of the sultanate, Mehmed IV's family in particular. The court chose dates and programmed daily events strictly; they used religious holidays and collective commemorative places around the city. Imperial officers and people were invited at a certain day of the week, and the high members of the Ottoman court, such as the grand vizier and the queen mother, appeared at the same time each day. The grand vizier came to the sultan's marquee at midday, to welcome invitees and receive their praise. The sultan came into the kiosk after the grand vizier's welcoming ceremony, taking evening prayers for himself.

Table 1: Daily program of the circumcision festival of 1675.

After 12 o'clock. (Afternoon prayer)	1. Invitees arrive. 2. Royal food giving. 3. Treats serving, coffee and sherbet.
Around mid-afternoon (After afternoon prayer)	1. The sultan and the grand vizier arriving at the kiosk. 2. Circumcision children parade. 3. Gift-giving processions, <i>pişkeş</i> . 4. Artisan's pageantry and their offerings. 5. Acrobat shows (around 4 o'clock).
Around sunset (After evening prayer)	1. Firework display and illuminations start. 2. Presentation of mock battles and pyrotechnic devices continues until midnight.
Arriving at midnight (Extended on the religious holidays)	1. The sultan and court members remove. 2. The festival square becomes empty.

The Ottomans believed that they would demonstrate the empire's power and influence over its subjects by maintaining festival time defined. The control of time drew the attention of the

⁴¹ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 161. Originally, festivals followed the natural cycle or repeated events. In this sense, festivals and carnivals were bound closely to a yearly calendar. See the introduction: Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

⁴² In one of the queen mother's mosque constructions, the ceremony started with a blessed time determined by the head astrologer, Mehmed Efendi: Betül İpşirli Arıt, *Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah Sultan, 1640-1715* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2014), p. 143.

⁴³ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 510.

travellers as well; John Covell was surprised by the order in the festival by timing.⁴⁴ In the mornings, presumably, festival book authors could not find anything worth mentioning. The imperial kitchen should be prepared royal banquets in the morning, utilizing dinner tables on the marquees. City households and invitees took care of their own needs until the public celebrations started around mid-afternoon. The chef started to serve the royal food after invitees had shown gratitude toward the grand vizier. Invitees blessed and prayed for both the sultan and the grand vizier at the end of the banquets. Coffee and sherbet were offered to guests during this ceremony. At the wedding feast, the groom made the same practice, by offering coffee and sherbet to invitees after the banquet.⁴⁵

According to the daily program of the festival, the firework makers and acrobats performed every evening; indeed, they started after sunset to make the display more apparent in the dark. Entertainments continued until the sultan returned to the palace in the nights. People took advantage of the more relaxed and liberated atmosphere of late afternoons and evenings in the festival.⁴⁶ After sunset, the festival site was lit by lamps and illuminations, making the crowd's behaviours more relaxed and uncontrolled by officers. In other words, the court let people continue feasting, liberating people from formal boundaries. The firework makers had said 'let's turn night into day!'⁴⁷ The celebrations did not span the entire night; generally speaking, they finished when the sultan said 'everybody is dismissed. The festival will continue tomorrow.'⁴⁸

The court put the wedding night on a Thursday.⁴⁹ Leyla Saz, one of the witnesses of a royal wedding ceremony in the late Ottoman period, stated that 'all weddings were settled on Thursday, which is before the religious holiday, Friday.'⁵⁰ She was quite aware of wedding customs including the date. It would not be a coincidence to see the same tradition a hundred years earlier. Naturally, the organizers deliberately assigned the date of special occasions in the wedding festival of 1675. The circumcision of princes was another scheduled event during the festival. The officers combined circumcision day with two religiously significant occasions.⁵¹ One was *mevlid*, the birthday of the prophet, the other was holy Friday. Indeed, holy days put divine meaning into the circumcision practice, and created a spiritual atmosphere, especially considering the 'temporal culture' intertwining this divine order, and daily practices into an exclusive occasion. Abdi stressed the miraculous feat of this circumcision day, seeing a miracle of the numbers in the situation; the prince was twelve years old, it was the twelfth day of the year, it was *mevlid* day and holy Friday at the same time.⁵² For him, it was an oracle, only to be explained by the spiritual values of the sultan's character.

⁴⁴ Metin And, *Osmanlı Şenliklerinde Türk Sanatları*, p. 38.

⁴⁵ Today, the same tradition can be seen in daily life in Turkey. Traditionally, a household offers Turkish coffee to guests after dinner. This practice may have given an official or proper feasting code of the Ottomans' daily life throughout the centuries, even to the present day.

⁴⁶ Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800* (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 183.

⁴⁷ 'Bir safâ eyleyelim kim şebimiz rûz idelim' (Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 495).

⁴⁸ 'Dağın bi-çârelere çün kaldı divân irteye' (Ibid.).

⁴⁹ Râşid Mehmed, *Târîh-i Râşid*, p. 190.

⁵⁰ Şair Leyla (Saz) Hanım, *Anılar: 19. Yüzyılda Saray Haremi* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2000), p. 172.

⁵¹ Avner Wishnitzer had discussed widely that the practices and the perceptions of time were relative and not standardised in the early modern Ottomans, and the 'temporal culture' requiring the divine order was embedded in daily practices and became inseparable parts: Avner Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks, Alla Turca: Time and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

⁵² 'Mustafâ hazretlerinin sinn-i şerifleri on ikisinde ve mâh-ı rebî'u'l-evvelinin on ikinci gününe müsâdîf olduğundan kat't nazar, yevm-i mevlûd-ı Hazret-i Risâlet-penâhî olup ve şeb-i âzîne vâki' olmuşdur' (Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 510).

Moreover, *mevlid* was supposed to be celebrated in the mosque. The ceremony usually takes place in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in Istanbul. Because the sultan had moved to Edirne, the court needed to adapt this ritual from Istanbul to Edirne. The sultan and officers went to the Sultan Selim Mosque, the only landmark place of worship in the city that could be compared with the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.⁵³ Since that time, an imperial order claimed that the Sultan Selim Mosque would replace Sultan Ahmed's objective ambition. Therefore, Edirne became the new centre of both imperial and religious ceremonies. In this spirit, people were invited from all around the city. Coffee and sherbet were distributed to worshippers in the mosque, candies and treats were spread around the mosque just as was done in Istanbul.⁵⁴ The court, thus, linked with the most significant collective memory space in Edirne. Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi found it notable that the sultan left the door of his lodge open for a while before he went into the 'cage' and saluted the officers.⁵⁵ He claimed that a messenger from the holy lands, specifically from the Kaaba, came into the mosque during the sermon. The sultan's generosity to the messenger was exhibited in front of everybody present; after that, the sermon continued. A message from the holy lands at that point must have greatly increased the sanctity of the space. It appeared that the adaptation of *mevlid* ceremony was used as a trump card when the 1703 rebellion broke out in the capital city, and the sultan sent the nominees for high religious offices to Edirne in order to commemorate the *mevlid*.⁵⁶ Thus, the adaptation of official ceremonies elevated the position of the city of Edirne.

Beyond the Festival Site

The first fifteen days of the festival were organized for the princes' circumcision celebrations; four days later, a horse-riding tournament was scheduled. In this tournament, the court announced a contest in which those who had proper horses should participate, while others were invited to watch.⁵⁷ The tournament was organized in the nearest open space, namely *Hıdırlık*.⁵⁸ *Hıdırlık* was a plain terrain, crossing *Timurtaş* field on the border.⁵⁹ Today, however, one would see a dervish grave, called *Hıdırbaba Mezarı* [grave of father Hıdır], next to the sultan's palace. There is an emplacement next to the grave, *Hıdırlık Tabyaları* [Hıdırlık flanks], and both of these sites look toward a road by the same name, *Hıdırlık Bağlık Yolu* [road of Hıdırlık yard]. John Covell drew most of these places in his diary, including the outlook of the city and the terrain.⁶⁰ Still today, the hills have a view of the entire city. In fact, it is the only hill near the city and the palace.

⁵³ The city of Edirne developed around the 'Old Palace.' The Old Palace was demolished and Sultan Selim Mosque built in the same area. Only the Old Palace's bathhouse survived (Özer, *Edirne Sarayı (Sarayı Cedid-i Âmire)*, p. 6).

⁵⁴ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 507; Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân*..., p. 234; Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hıtân-ı*..., p. 62-63.

⁵⁵ 'Şevketlü pâdişah hazretleri, sa'âdetle kafese çıkup oturmadan, kafesin câmi'-i şerîfe nâzır olan kapuların küşâde etdirüp, vüzerâ-yı izâmı ve ulemâ-yı kibârı selâmladı. Ba'dehu yine kafesin kapuların kapadılar. Ve her biri yerinde karâr edüp, Eski-sarây ve Yeni-sarây baltacıları şerbet ve buhûr verüp ikrâm olundu' (Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân*..., p. 233-234).

⁵⁶ Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and The Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1984), p. 74.

⁵⁷ Abdurrahman Abdi, *Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa Vekâyi'-nâmesi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1648-1682)* (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2008), p. 443; Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 511-512; Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân*..., p. 237; Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hıtân-ı*..., p. 69-71.

⁵⁸ Hezarfen Hüseyin did not give the name of the tournament.

⁵⁹ Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hıtân-ı*..., p. 69-71.

⁶⁰ Check the image 6 in Özdemir Nutku's study.

Illustration 4: Approximate estimation of the sultan's encampment at the Hıdırlık site (Black stars point to the grave and the flanks. The black line shows the road of yard).

During the tournament, the imperial band settled on top of the hills to announce horses coming from surrounding locations. The sultan's tent was installed down part of the hill, with the grand vizier's and other court members' tents settled below. The same hierarchy practised in the festival square, positioning the sultan high, appeared in this geographical terrain. There must have been a bridge over the nearby river, so people looked toward the bridge's road to see horses coming.⁶¹ Unfortunately, no bridge survives today, but according to John Covel's drawings, there were bridges toward the hills. His map luckily showed the bridges in front of the hills.⁶² he described that these bridges were maiden by wood, which explain why they did not survive.⁶³ Tents and all other site placements were positioned along the bridge road to see coming horses.⁶⁴ Three destinations were appointed for the tournament. The first one was Mustafa Pasha Bridge [*Cisri Mustafa Paşa*], which takes six hours to travel to round trip. Today, this bridge is in the city of Svilengrad in Bulgaria, thirty-three kilometres away from the estimated field. Horses approximately run sixty-six kilometres round trip. Horses headed for Mustafa Pasha Bridge directly but returned on the other side of the river by crossing the bridge. The second destination was Mustafa Pasha's grave. Due to lack of information, currently, it would not be possible to

⁶¹ Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hutân-ı...*, p. 69-71.

⁶² Soo published the map and identified the nearest village, the imperial palace and the city centre (M. Soo, "The Architectural Setting of 'Empire'", p. 228). See the second map of Edirne terrain in John Covel's diary: Dr John Covel, *Voyages en Turquie 1675-1677*, ed. J.-P. Grélois (Paris: Réalités Byzantines, 1998), p. 78.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 96.

⁶⁴ Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 511-512; Hezarfen Hüseyin, *Telhîsü'l-beyân...*, p. 237; Nabi, *Vakaayi-i Hutân-ı...*, p. 69.

determine its location. According to Abdi, this destination took four hours. The final destination was a ‘well-known’ dervish lodge.⁶⁵ It is also not possible to locate.

Illustration 5: The first destination of the tournament, from Hıdırlık to Svilengrad (Cisri Mustafa Paşa), thirty-three kilometres.

The wedding festival of the princess began after this tournament. After preparations, the wedding festival took another fifteen days. Two days after the wedding festival, another riding tournament took place, this was the endgame on behalf of the festivals of 1675.⁶⁶ On the one hand, neither Abdi nor Nabi mentioned the tournament, but both authors finished their festival books at the end of the wedding festival. On the other hand, state chronicler's annals mentioned this tournament, referring to competitions for both on foot and by horse.⁶⁷ People went to a completely different place for this tournament, called *Timurtaş Sâhrası* [Timurtaş field]. There is a mosque today that survives, named *Timurtaş*, in an open field next to the city.⁶⁸ The field is flat as far as one eye can see, which makes it hard to determine the exact spot of the tournament.

⁶⁵ ‘Menzil-i Sâlis: Tekye nâm mahal, üç sâ’ardir’ (Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 511).

⁶⁶ Abdurrahman Abdi Pasha and Abdi confirms that they both mentioned the second tournament after the wedding festival in the nearest plain in *Timurtaş Sâhrası*.

⁶⁷ Sarı Mehmed Paşa, *Zübde-i Vekayiât, Tahlil ve Metin (1066-1116-1656-1704)*, ed. A. Özcan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), p. 68; Abdurrahman Abdi, *Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa Vekâyi'-nâmesi*, p. 446.

⁶⁸ The name *Timurtaş* turned to *Demirtaş* in time. According to the informative plate hanging on the outer wall, the mosque was constructed in the first quarter of fifteen-century by the military officer Timurtaş Pasha (*Subaşı Timurtaş Paşa*).

Illustration 6: Sight of Timurtaş field from the Hıdırlık Hills (The authors own photo).

One of the state chroniclers, Sarı Mehmed Pasha, mentioned the same name for both the first and the second tournaments. It is not surprising to see that since either place stands next to each other, there is no defined border at that time. Perhaps they are located in between, on the coast of Meriç River in particular.

Illustration 7: Superimposed maps of Timurtaş field, Hıdırlık hills and John Covel's bridges.

Conclusion

The festivals of 1675 were an auspicious time to integrate the continuity of royal ceremonies in the new city. The sultan and his household adopted ceremonial spaces from Istanbul into Edirne; sırık meydanı replaced at meydanı (Hippodrome), sultan's palace (*Saray-ı Cedid-i Âmiri*) replaced Topkapı Palace, *Tunca* and *Meriç* rivers replaced the Golden Horn and Bosphorus. For this purpose, the Old Palace in Edirne was repaired for use in wedding procession to demonstrate the connection to the same previous practices at the Old Palace in Istanbul. The Ottoman court, therefore, influenced the people's minds in an unmediated way, persuading them directly through the use of space and time. The Mehmed IV's court spread throughout the hills and fields of Edirne, influencing a mirrored domination for a newly emerging capital. Why did festival organizers spread events over all these spaces? They could merely have managed horse riding within the festival site, like their ancestors used to, in the *at meydanı* (Hippodrome) during the 1582 imperial festival in Istanbul. Why did organizers adopt formal ceremonies in natural spaces? Edirne's hills (*Hıdırlık*), fields (*Timurtaş*), rivers (*Meriç*) and streams (*Tunca*), bridges (Mustafa Pasha Bridge, Cisri Mustafa Paşa/Svilengrad) and collective memory places (Mustafa

Pasha's grave, dervish lodges, *Hıdırbaba Mezarı*) served the princely festival altogether. The festival square exceeded its limits, while the sovereignty of Mehmed IV possessed Edirne's collective memory spaces. Organizers selected natural spaces such as Hıdırlık's hills and Timurtaş field, due to these places were familiar to Edirne's residents. People might feel liberated from the overbuilt festival square next to the imperial palace. The festivals of 1675 demonstrated an amplified natural connection with the ancient roots of folk culture, instead of being boxed into a formal square. According to Mona Ozouf, the open-air indicated 'the dome of heaven', and it 'was clearly a theocentric space, ordered by the radiating gaze of an architect God.'⁶⁹ Would the Ottomans at the celebrations in 1675 also intend to demonstrate their celestial power to the sultan's subjects? The answer may be hidden behind the divine; symbolically speaking, if open-air settings amplify unlimited heavenly power, then people located in a space without collective memory could experience a ceremony as an 'entry into a new world.'⁷⁰ Like the circumcised princes, the process of 'becoming a man' would be fulfilled through the organization of the sports games in the tournament.⁷¹ Festival books stressed that Mehmed IV and his oldest son, Prince Mustafa, attended the first tournament together, right after he recovered from his circumcision operation.⁷² Only two years old, the second prince, does not appear in any written sources; in his case, circumcision did not yet mean that he had moved into a new stage of his life.

In the end, the continuity of the sultanate was underlined in the festive events. The court intended to stress the endurance of Mehmed IV's reign through the use of collective memory spaces in the festival. In other words, the sultan and the sovereignty of the state were imposed on the people through circumcision and wedding celebrations. Only two days after the wedding ceremony, another tournament occurred. The princess had also entered into a new world: a world in which women could hold power in an oligarchical administration, just as had been demonstrated by the sports games. The age of puberty was deemed similar for both male and female children in this festival. As a consequence, the festival tournaments marked the end of childhood and the beginning of future rulers and ascendants.

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⁶⁹ Moan Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 129.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, p. 176.

⁷² Abdi, *Sûr-i pür sürûr-i Hümayûn*, p. 511-512; Nabi, *Vakaayi'-i Hutân-ı...*, p. 69-71.

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