

SEEKING REDRESS AT THE SIGNORIA:
OTTOMAN MERCHANTS IN DISPUTE WITH
THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA

TOMMASO STEFINI

BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY

2013

SEEKING REDRESS AT THE SIGNORIA:
OTTOMAN MERCHANTS IN DISPUTE WITH
THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA

Thesis submitted to the
Institute of Social Sciences
in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

by
Tommaso Stefani

Boğaziçi University

2013

Seeking Redress at the Signoria:

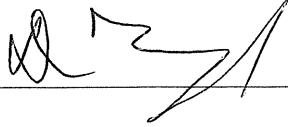
Ottoman Merchants in Dispute with the Republic of Venice in the Early Modern Era

The thesis of Tommaso Stefani

has been approved by

Assist. Prof. Derin Terziođlu

(Thesis Advisor)

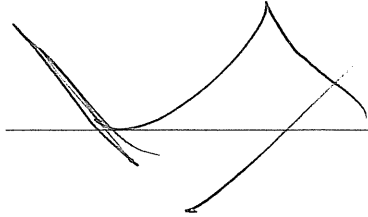


Prof. Dr. Suraiya Faroqi


(External Committee member)

Suraiya Faroqi

Prof. Dr. Edhem Eldem



Assist. Prof. Evangelos Kechriotis



Assoc. Prof. Meltem Toksöz

Meltem Toksöz

September 2013

Thesis Abstract

Tommaso Stefini “Seeking Redress at the Signoria: Ottoman Merchants in dispute with the Republic of Venice in the Early Modern Era”

In the early modern era the Republic of Venice hosted a vast cosmopolitan community of merchants from the Ottoman Empire. It was probably the most important place of Ottoman commercial deployment in Western Europe. While the presence of Ottoman merchants has recently been the subject of several studies, the latter have dealt mainly with the commercial dealings, the identity of the merchants, and the problem of housing. What is still little known are the legal framework that regulated the Ottoman trade with Venice and the perspective of the Ottoman authorities on it. This thesis analyzes three important legal disputes between some Ottoman merchants and Venetian subjects and authorities that took place between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. It investigates the legal ways pursued by the aggrieved merchants in seeking redress against Venice, the attitude of the Ottoman authorities towards their cases, and the debate between the Ottomans and the Venetians over the contents of the *ahidnames*, the capitulations, during the unfolding of the disputes. Overall this study aims to question the assumption of most of the historiography on the Mediterranean trade during the early modern era that the Ottoman authorities were unconcerned with the international commercial ventures of their subjects and to shed some light on the legal framework that regulated that trade.

Tez Özeti

Tommaso Stefani “*Signoria*’da Hakkını Aramak: Erken Modern Dönem’de Osmanlı Tüccarlarının Venedik Cumhuriyeti’yle Hukukî Davaları.

Erken Modern Dönem’de Venedik Cumhuriyeti Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndan gelen kalabalık ve kozmopolit bir tüccar grubuna ev sahipliği yapmaktaydı. Büyük ihtimalle Venedik o dönemde Batı Avrupa’da Osmanlı ticaretinin en büyük merkeziydi. Bu Osmanlı tüccarlarının varlığı, yakın zamanda yapılan birçok araştırmada söz konusu edilmişse de genelde bu araştırmalar ticari işlemler, Venedik’e götürülen mallar, tüccarların kimliği ve tüccarların konaklama meselesi üzerinde durmuşlardır. Venedik’le Osmanlı ticaretini düzenleyen hukukî sistem ve Osmanlı idarecilerinin bu ticarete yönelik tavrı hâlâ az araştırılmış ve az bilinen bir konudur. Bu tez on altıncı yüzyıl sonu ve on yedinci yüzyıl başında Venedik tebaaları ve idarecileriyle bazı Osmanlı tüccarları arasındaki üç hukukî davaya odaklanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, zarar görmüş tüccarların haklarını ararken Venedik’e karşı izledikleri hukukî yolları, Osmanlı idarecilerinin bu davalara yönelik tutumunu ve Osmanlılarla Venedikliler arasında davaların müzakere sürecinde *ahidnamelerin* (kapitülasyon) taraflarca nasıl yorumlandığını incelemektedir. Bu araştırma, Erken Modern Dönem’de Akdeniz’deki ticaret üzerine olan tarihyazımının Osmanlı idarecilerinin, kendi tebaalarının uluslararası ticari girişimleriyle ilgisi olmadığı iddiasını sorgulamakta ve o ticareti düzenleyen hukukî çerçeve üzerine ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are some many people I owe my gratitude for their support and contribution to the writing of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to my supervisor Derin Terziođlu for her constant guidance, support, and encouragement during the writing of this thesis. Her comments on my drafts provided me with invaluable insights and her patient editing greatly helped me in shaping the final draft of the thesis. I would also like to thank Edhem Eldem, Suraiya Faroqi, and Meltem Toksöz for sharing with me their thoughts about my thesis project during the period of research and writing, and for making precious comments for its betterment. I am also deeply grateful to Vangelis Kechriotis for his encouragement and interest in my research topic and for his constant support throughout my years in the History Department of Bođaziçi. The course about non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire that he gave together with Molly Greene during the academic year 2011/2012 proved pivotal in choosing the topic of this dissertation.

At the History Department, I had the honor to make friendship with several wonderful people: Orçun Can Okan, Tanya Lawrence, Polina Ivanova, Cengiz Yolcu, Esra Ansel, Nora Mildanođlu, Sada Payır, Meriç Öztürk, Kerim Kartal, Yeliz Çavuş, Ozan Gürlek, Ramiz Üzümçeker, and others. All they contributed to my maturation as an academician and, above all, they immensely enriched my sojourn in Istanbul and my life in general with their precious friendship. At the History Department I also thank the secretary Buket Sargan for her friendship and support throughout my Master years.

In Venice I am grateful to the staff of the Venetian State Archives and to the young academicians whom I met there for their help during my research during spring 2012. In particular, I would like to thank Serap Mumcu for helping me in tracing the Ottoman and Venetian documentation for this thesis. In Venice I am grateful also to my supervisor during my bachelor studies there, Vera Costantini, for sharing with me her ideas about my thesis project and for giving important suggestions. I thank also Maddalena Comincini, my dear housemate during my bachelor years, for the nice time we have spent together during my sojourn in Venice.

In Istanbul, I would like to thank the staff of Bođaziçi University Library for their help throughout my studies in Bođaziçi. In particular I am grateful to Celal and Engin Gündođan, Özge Kaya, and Çađdaş Aydođan, for their companionship during my daily studies at the library. I also thank the staff of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, and above all to Fuat Bey, for assisting me during my research there. In Istanbul, I am also extremely grateful to my friends Hasan Şiringül and Batuhan Eper, for their exquisite friendship and their unwavering support in the good and in the bad times of my long sojourn in this city.

Finally but most importantl, I owe my deepest gratitude to my father Leone Stefini and to my mother Carlotta Dognini. They have continually supported me since I decided to pursue an academic career in Middle Eastern studies several years ago. Without their love and unvarying faith in me, I would not have been able to pursue my studies in Venice and Istanbul. It is to them to whom I dedicate this thesis.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Topic and the Objectives.....	1-17
The Sources and their Authors.....	17-30
CHAPTER II: JOHN AND MARINO SCARUOLI, TWO GREEK <i>MÛLTEZIMS</i> IN DISPUTE WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE AT THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.....	31
Introduction.....	31/32
Greek Tax-Farmers and Merchants in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean.....	32-34
The Unfolding of the Affair.....	35-67
CHAPTER III: BOSNIAN MERCHANTS VICTIMS OF THE USKOKS AT END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.....	68
Introduction.....	68-69
The Adriatic Trade and the Uskok Threat in the Second Half of Sixteenth Century.....	69-72
The Unfolding of the Affair.....	73-103
CHAPTER IV: A SPANISH ATTACK ON THE OTTOMAN-VENETIAN TRADE IN THE ADRIATIC: BOSNIAN MERCHANTS IN DISPUTE WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE IN THE SECOND DECADE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.....	105
Introduction.....	105-106
The Unfolding of the Case.....	106-160
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	161-191
Seeking Justice “from the Bottom up”.....	162-176
The Attitude of the Ottoman Authorities.....	178-192
APPENDIX: Examples of the Sources Employed	193-200
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	201-210

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Topic and the Objectives

In the 1970s Fernand Braudel defined Venice and the Ottoman Empire as “complementary enemies”: everything separated them, but vital interests forced them to coexist.¹ They were “condemned” to live together. Indeed, of the numerous European polities that maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire in the early modern era, none did so extensively as the Republic of Venice, The Most Serene Republic, *La Serenissima*.² The two Mediterranean powers shared a lengthy common border in the eastern Mediterranean for almost five hundred years during which their economic and political fortunes were closely intertwined. Despite the rivalry in the Mediterranean politics, several conflicts, and a permanent ideological hostility, the relationship between the two states was characterized by mostly peaceful coexistence.

One of the most important aspects of the peculiar relationship between the Venice and the Porte was the intensive bilateral trade between the two states. In the early modern era, trade between the Western European polities and the Ottoman Empire was a bilateral business. Even though almost surely the mercantilist European states

¹ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century, Vol 3, The Perspective of the world* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992 printing), p. 137.

² Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006), p. 3.

conducted most of that trade by setting up chartered companies, monopolies, and by deploying diplomacy, consuls, and a naval protection which was lacking in the Ottoman case, the participation of Ottoman merchants in this trade must not be overlooked. Since the pioneering studies of Traian Stoianovich for the Balkans, Peter Earle for Ancona, Giorgio Vercellin, Şerafettin Turan, and Cemal Kafadar for Venice, and Gilles Veinstein for Poland and Russia, historians of the Levant trade have become acquainted with the commercial activities of Ottoman subjects in Western Europe.³ These Ottoman merchants included Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Until recently, the Ottoman Muslims' commercial ventures in Western Europe were denied or overlooked. Scholar even claimed that Ottoman Muslims, for religious and cultural reasons, abhorred doing business abroad with Europeans.⁴ This has proven to be wrong. Ottoman merchants circulated both in Western and in Eastern Europe and exported their commodities to Western markets. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their foremost area of activity was the Italian Peninsula, where they intensively frequented the ports of Ancona, Venice, and later Livorno.

The Republic of Venice probably constituted the principal centre of Ottoman commercial deployment in Western Europe in the early modern era. The Ottoman merchants engaging in this commerce were mostly Levantine Jews from Istanbul and the Balkan cities, Orthodox Greeks from Northwest Greece, and Muslims from Bosnia and Anatolia. They brought to Rialto a vast array of commodities, among them wool,

³ Traian Stoianovich, "The *Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant*", *The Journal of Economic History*, 1960, vol. 20, issue 02, p. 234-313; Peter Earle "The Commercial Development of Ancona, 1479-1551" *The Economic History Review*, ser. 2, 22 (1969), p. 28-44; Giorgio Vercellin "Mercanti Turchi e Sensali a Venezia", in *Studi Veneziani* (Edizione Electa Venezia, 1980, n.s. IV), p. 45-78; Şerafettin Turan "Venedikte Türk Ticaret Merkezi, Fondaco dei Turchi", *Türk Tarih Kurumu, Belleten. C. XXXII*, S. 126, s. 247-283, 1968, Ankara; Cemal Kafadar "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986), p. 191-218; Gilles Veinstein "Marchands ottomans en Pologne-Lituanie et en Moscovie sous le règne de Soliman le Magnifique" *Cahiers du monde russe* 35, 4 (October-December 1994), p. 713-738.

⁴ Kafadar, "A Death in Venice", p. 209-212.

cotton, camlets, alums, leather and foodstuffs. Levantine Jews, subjects of the Ottoman sultans, played an important role in the commerce between the Italian Peninsula and the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century. They were serious competitors with Venetian merchants in that commerce. However, given the important role of Levantine Jews in the trade with the Ottoman Empire, which Venice, in first half of the sixteenth century, was in serious danger of losing to the benefit of the rival city of Ancona, the Venetian authorities, from 1541 onwards, enacted laws to encourage them to settle in the city. They settled in the Old Ghetto (Vecchio Ghetto). Their commercial ventures were particularly important in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁵ Orthodox Greeks from the Ottoman Empire had benefited from the end of Italian hegemony over the Levantine trade following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and from the protection of their new Ottoman overlords. Together with their fellow Venetian subjects from Venetian possessions in the eastern Mediterranean (above all the Ionian Islands and Crete) in the sixteenth century they settled in great numbers in Venice where they set up commercial networks with their original communities in the empire. The center of their community was the Greek Fraternity next to the Church of St. George.⁶ Finally, the presence of Muslim merchants is remarkable since Venice was one of the very few European cities where they did business as a matter of routine. Not only tax-paying Muslims (*reaya*) but also members of the military ruling class of the Ottoman Empire (*askeri*) took part in commercial undertakings with the Serenissima. The presence of Muslim traders increased in the second half of the sixteenth century, especially after the establishment of the port of Split in Dalmatia in the 1590s, and reached its peak in the first decades of the seventeenth century. In 1621, the Venetian

⁵ Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations. Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 5-12.

⁶ Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 23-38.

authorities designated a building to host the numerous Muslim traders from the empire, the famous *Fondaco dei Turchi*.⁷

The Ottoman commerce with the Serenissima functioned under the legal framework of the *ahidnames*, the capitulations.⁸ They were political and legal documents that the Ottoman sultans granted to a non-Muslim polity in order to regularize peaceful relations with it. Even though the scholarly literature on the capitulations has emphasized their commercial nature, they were not commercial in essence since trade-related matters were quite limited in comparison with the rest of the covered issues, and they were treated in very general terms of freedom and protection. Furthermore, the capitulations were granted to all the subjects of a foreign state regardless of their occupation. Probably, as Suraiya Faroqhi supposed, the Ottoman administration regarded commercial relations as problems of a more local nature, to be decided *ad hoc* as need arose.⁹ However, despite the marginality of commercial matters in the *ahidnames*, traders had always held a prominent position among the beneficiaries. The *ahidnames* were valid only for the reign of the issuing sultan, and had to be confirmed by his successor. They bestowed fiscal and juridical privileges on the subjects of a state

⁷ Vercellin, "Mercanti Turchi e Sensali"; Eric Dursteler, Commerce and Coexistence: *Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Modern Era*, *Turcica* 34 (2002), p. 128-131; Kafadar, "A Death in Venice"; Turan, *Venedik'te Turk Ticaret Merkezi*; Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, "Between Diplomacy and Trade: Ottoman Merchants in Venice" in Suraiya faroqhi - Gilles Veinstein, *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire* (Paris-Louvain-Dudley: Ma, Peeters, 2008), p. 3-21.

⁸ The recent academic literature on the *ahidnames* is quite extensive, but it deals almost with the 18th century and with France, Great Britain, and the Dutch Republic: Edhem Eldem "Capitulations and Western Trade" in Faroqhi (ed), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, 1603-1839* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 284-335; Alexander de Groot "The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries" in *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context*, edited by Maurits H. Van Den Boogert and Kate Fleet (Oriente Moderno, Anno XII, LXXXIII, 3 ,2003), p. 575-604; Maurits H. Van den Boogert, *The capitulations and the Ottoman legal system: qadis, consuls, and beraths in the 18th century* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005); Halil Inalcik, "İmtiyâzât" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed; Daniel Goffman, "Negotiating with the Renaissance State" in *The early modern Ottomans: remapping the Empire*, edited by Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 61-74.

⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire", *The Journal of European Economic History* 15 (Rome, 1986), p. 345-384, p. 365.

friendly with the Ottoman Empire. They can be viewed as a special case of *aman*, an Islamic legal notion which referred to a safe-conduct granted to subjects of a non-Muslim state who wanted to temporarily reside in an Islamic country. These subjects were called *müste'min* and theoretically they had to leave the host Islamic country after a lunar year; or accept the status of *zimmi* (non-Muslim living under Islamic rule). Through the legal secular device of the *ahidnames*, literally pledge, their status became more permanent. The subjects of states which obtained the *ahidnames* could sojourn in the Ottoman Empire for an indeterminate period and enjoyed some fiscal and juridical privileges such as exemption from the *cizye* (the poll-tax paid by non-Muslims subjects of an Islamic state), and absolution from the responsibility for debts contracted by their countrymen. Their status contained elements of extraterritoriality and quasi-immunity which were unavailable to Ottoman subjects.¹⁰ In return for these privileges, the Ottoman sultans explicitly expected friendship and peace from the receiver state. They granted *ahidnames* to friendly powers as a reward for a past service or as an incentive for forging future alliances, as in the case of the powers hostile to the Habsburgs in the sixteenth century like France and Great Britain.¹¹ If the Ottomans regarded the pledge of friendship violated by the receiver state they could abrogate those privileges. The temporary abrogation of the *ahidnames* periodically occurred. For instance, in 1638, the Venetian admiral Marino Cappello pursued pirates from Tunis and Algiers in the Adriatic Sea who took shelter in the Ottoman port of Avlonya (Vlorë, Valona). He bombarded the port, entered it, and carried off the pirates' galleys. This act outraged sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-1640) who suspended the *ahidnames* and ordered the imprisonment of the Venetian diplomatic representative in Istanbul, the *bailo*. After a

¹⁰ Eldem, "Capitulations", p. 295.

¹¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Attitudes towards Merchants from Latin Christendom before 1600", *Turcica* 35 (2002), 69-104, p. 78-80.

long negotiation and the payment of a huge indemnity, the Venetians managed to restore good relations with the Ottomans.¹²

A controversial issue of the *ahidnames* is their alleged unilateralism. In this issue, we must distinguish the Venetian *ahidnames* from those granted to other states, since the former underwent substantial changes over time which did not take place with the capitulations granted to other Western European polities. During the fifteenth century, starting with the document of 1419, the Venetian *ahidnames* were bilateral treaties that emphasized commercial reciprocity and demanded the confirmation of both sides. They included equal rights for Ottoman merchants in the Venetian-ruled areas and for Venetians in the Ottoman Empire.¹³ However, after the beginning of the 16th century the Venetian *ahidnames* increasingly lost their explicitly bilateral articles and came to resemble unilateral grants of privilege (*nişan*), which were used for affairs internal of the Ottoman Empire. They did not need the signature of the Venetian Doge anymore. Also the *ahidnames* issued to other Western European rulers from the second half of the sixteenth century can be characterized as unilateral grants of privileges.¹⁴ The steady decrease of the bilateral character of the Venetian *ahidnames* could be related in part to the changing balance of power between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice to the clear advantage of the former. On the other hand, such a development might also have been brought about by a change in the way the Ottomans perceived treaties with non-Muslim states since all the other *ahidnames* granted to other Western

¹² Rhoads Murphey, "Merchants, nations and free-agency: an attempt at a qualitative characterization of trade in the eastern Mediterranean, 1620-1640" in Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot & Maurits H. van den Boogert (edited by) *Friends and rivals in the East: studies in Anglo-Dutch relations in the Levant from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 25-58, p. 35. On the issue of the revocation of the *ahidnames* see also Maurits H. Van den Boogert, *The capitulations and the Ottoman legal system*, p. 26-30.

¹³ Hans Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: the Ahd-names. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents* (EJOS, I, 1998), p. 224-234.

¹⁴ Eldem, "Capitulations", p. 294; Faroqhi, "Ottoman Attitudes", p. 124/125.

European polities shared the same unilateralism. That this change took place mainly during the reign of Süleyman I (1520-1566), when the Ottoman Empire reached its zenith of political and military power, does not come as a surprise.¹⁵

Yet the unilateralism that the Venetian *ahidnames* acquired from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards did not influence the commercial and the political, relations between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire, which were carried out under a regime of reciprocity. This reciprocity is evident in the complementary treatment of the subjects of the two states.¹⁶ An example is the fate shared by Ottoman and Venetian merchants after the onset of the war of Cyprus in spring 1570: on the one hand, sultan Selim II (r. 1566-1574) ordered to detain the Venetian merchants in Aleppo and Istanbul and their goods; on the other, the Venetian Senate ordered similar measures against Ottoman merchants in Venice. The legal disputes studied in this dissertation will further show the reciprocity in commercial matters. Even though the *ahidnames* give us the impression that the Ottomans unilaterally granted juridical and fiscal privileges to Venetian subjects, it is my contention that they tacitly presumed reciprocal rights for Ottoman subjects going to Venice or to its possessions in the eastern Mediterranean. The wording of these documents hides this inherent bilateralism. Alexander de Groot insightfully pointed out that Ottoman statesmen, in order to conceal the reality of lasting peaceful commercial and political relations with foreign “unbelievers”, which were in fact conducted on a basis of reciprocity and bilateralism, tried to make these relations appear in the *ahidnames* as administrative ordinances of the home government such as *nişans* and *fermans* (sultanic commands) by employing a subtle juristic formulation. The Ottoman officials created a legal fiction in the texts of the *ahidnames* according

¹⁵ Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats*, p. 240.

¹⁶ Vera Costantini, “Quando i nostri sono da loro e viceversa” in Bellingeri G.; Ucer N.; Romanelli G., *Venezia e Istanbul in epoca ottomana/Osmanlı Döneminde Venedik ve İstanbul* (Milano, Mondadori/Istanbul, Electa, 2009), p. 46-50, p. 47.

which all non-Muslim foreigners were to be seen as obedient Ottoman subjects (*zimmis*) on whom the benevolent ruler bestowed various privileges in order to promote the welfare of the Islamic community.¹⁷ As a consequence of this, in my opinion, they purposefully limited the explicitly bilateral articles of those documents since the latter did not fit into that legal scheme. That the Venetian *ahidnames* of the sixteenth century were explicitly bilateral might have been related to a political and ideological context different from that of the sixteenth century.

Evidence of the bilateral commercial relations between Venice and the Porte are the frequent diplomatic missions of Ottoman envoys to Venice. In the sixteenth century, more than eighty Ottoman envoys (*çavuş*) reached Venice.¹⁸ Many of these missions came to discuss purely diplomatic or military issues, but some of them took up also commercial matters. Predictably, mostly of the individuals involved in these cases were preeminent people of their time or people associated with them, like the Jewish Joseph Nasi and Solomon Askhenazi, respectively the banker of the sultan and the physician of the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha; and the *beylerbeyi* (governor general) of Cyprus Cafer Pasha.¹⁹ Given the importance of their position in Ottoman politics and economy, the Venetian and the Ottoman authorities attached much importance to their cases. Ottoman envoys were also sent to defend the trade-related disputes of ordinary individuals. In 1546, for instance, Cafer Çavuş was sent to Venice, with a letter of the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, to resolve the complaints brought to the Ottoman authorities by some Muslim merchants trading in that city. Among them there was a certain Aga Beg from Bursa who had been subjected to an unfair treatment by Venetian custom

¹⁷ De Groot, "The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime", p. 576. On this issue see also Goffman, "Negotiating with the Renaissance state", p. 66.

¹⁸ Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia*, Venice (Deputazione editrice, 1994), p. 205-208.

¹⁹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p.78; Dursteler, "Commerce and Coexistence", p. 118-120; Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore*, p. 153-158.

official and who had not been paid for the sale of spices and several bales of velvet.²⁰ More important was the mission of Çavuş Kubad in 1567 who was sent to deal with the complicated dispute about the bankruptcy of the Jew Hayyim Saruq, which had started the previous year. He was the agent of Aron Segura, a leading Jewish entrepreneur in Istanbul who was well connected to the Ottoman court. The alums belonging to the Segura brought to Venice by Saruq were confiscated by the Venetian authorities following his bankruptcy. As a consequence, the former demanded compensation from the Venetian authorities for his confiscated merchandise. This case developed into a serious diplomatic crisis between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice.²¹ After the Peace of 1573, while the diplomatic missions diminished, the commercial ones increased. Apart from strictly commerce-related disputes, many Ottoman envoys came to Venice to complain about attacks of pirates and privateers in the Adriatic Sea, and to demand the retrieval of the robbed goods. Above all the pirates infesting those waters, the Uskoks were particularly detrimental to the Ottoman trade in that sea. From their base in Senj in the northern Adriatic in Habsburg territory, they attacked ships carrying Ottoman merchants to and from Venice. The robbed merchants complained to the Ottoman authorities that Venice failed to patrol the Adriatic and, much worse, that Venetian captains and subjects collaborated with those pirates.²² An instance is the dispute of Seyyid Abdi, a wealthy merchant from Anatolia who traded mohair with Venice during the 1580s. In 1586, a huge load of mohair belonging to him was robbed by the Uskoks in southern Dalmatia. Following that, he vociferously complained in Istanbul and sent numerous envoys to Venice to ask for redress for his losses. His

²⁰ Kafadar, "A Death in Venice", p. 199.

²¹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 95-144.

²² Catherine Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: piracy, banditry, and holy war in the sixteenth-century Adriatic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

dispute dragged on at least until 1594.²³ The attacks of the Uskoks were a continuous source of tension between Venice and the Porte in the second half of the sixteenth and in the first two decades of the seventeenth centuries.

The numerous missions of the Ottoman envoys to Venice for commercial matters show the involvement of the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul and in the provinces on behalf of merchants from the empire. Ottoman subjects whose commercial ventures to Venice suffered losses due to the frauds of Venetian custom officials, brokers and business partners, attacks of pirates, and other reasons were able to mobilize the sultan's officials. The latter, in turn, wrote to the Venetian government or appealed to the bailo in Istanbul to complain about the merchants' losses and ask for redress and the protection of the merchants. Depending on the gravity of the case, the number of the people involved, and their social status, the Ottoman officials could also exert considerable pressure on the Venetians and jeopardize the relations between the two states. The aforementioned dispute of Hayyim Saruq shows this well. Also the fact that the *çavuşes* were often sent out as ambassadors of sort attests that the Ottoman government did not regard the problem of its subjects trading abroad as minor.²⁴ This noticeable protection granted by the Ottoman authorities to their merchants contradicts the old assumption about the Ottoman government's lack of interest in the foreign trade of its subjects.

Our knowledge of the status of merchants within the Ottoman polity in the early modern era is still quite limited. Legally, merchants (*tüccar* or *bazirgan*) were *reaya*, tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman Empire, like peasants and the craftsmen. However,

²³ Suraiya Faroqhi "Ottoman Views on Corsairs and Piracy in the Adriatic" in *The Kapudan Pasha. His Office and his Domain*, edited by Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: University of Crete Press, 2002), p. 357-371, p. 362/363; Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore*, p. 179-186.

²⁴ Faroqhi "Ottoman Views", p. 369; Pedani Fabris *In nome del Gran Signore*, p. 36-40.

both their ability to accumulate capitals and their relations with the central state set them apart from the last two groups. According to Halil Inalcik, merchants were not subjected to any code of regulations, unlike craftsmen who were subjected to the regulations of the *hisba*, and, hence, they were able to freely accumulate capital.²⁵ However, the Ottoman state controlled and regulated the trade of at least some goods. These goods were essential commodities like foodstuffs and raw materials, which were needed to provision the court, army and the population of Istanbul. Furthermore, at times, also the outflow of bullion and the importation of some luxury goods were subjected to state control. State regulation was mostly applied to internal trade and international trade was often exempt. This regulation was legitimized by practical reasons, like provisioning the army and Istanbul population, and preventing foreign enemies from benefitting from these goods, as well as by moral considerations. Given the dominance of morality over the “economy” in Islamic state theory, merchants’ activities that were thought to harm the existing social order were checked and the importation of certain goods was sometimes controlled or restricted on moral grounds.²⁶

Overall the state accorded some privileges to the merchants because they provided consumer goods, produced customs revenues, made loans to central treasury, acted as intermediary between the state and the mass of the population in matters of taxation, and, lastly, provided work to numerous Ottoman subjects, like commercial agents, guides, owners of boats, etc. However, the merchants’ ceaseless search for profit and their ability to accumulate wealth made them suspicious in the eyes of at least some doctors of laws (*ulema*) and most of the population in great cities. Their critics regarded

²⁵ Inalcik, “Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire” *Journal of Economic History* 24/1 (1969), 97-140, p. 98.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 106-108; Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around it* (I.B. Tauris, London, 2006), p. 155-160.

them as inveterate smugglers and profiteers and their activities as potentially dangerous. Among the social groups, the craftsmen in the bazaars were particular concerned with the activities of the merchants, since the latter sometimes disrupted the functioning of the guild system.²⁷

Despite their importance for the functioning of the state apparatus, overall the merchants did not enjoy special protection from the Ottoman government. This is particularly true for the international undertakings of Ottoman merchants, which, as mentioned above, did not enjoy promotion and support by the state comparable to those granted by the Venetian, French, Dutch and British governments to their merchants. The Ottoman government was not concerned like the European states of the time for the development and the promotion of international trade conducted by its own subjects. The European states set up boards of trade and deployed charters, monopolies, diplomacy, consular services, and also naval protection to foster the commercial ventures of their subjects abroad. By contrast, the Ottoman government did not set up any particular infrastructure, like the Venetian board of trade Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia or the English chartered Levant Company, to promote and support its merchants abroad. According to Edhem Eldem, this government attitude was “non mercantilist” but not “anti-mercantilist”, and it stemmed from the marginality and reduced incidence of Western trade for the Ottoman economy compared to Eastern trade with Persia and India and, above all, to the thriving domestic trade²⁸. In comparison with the latter, Western trade was more risky and had little to offer to the Ottoman commercial entrepreneurs.

²⁷ Inalcik, “Capital Formation”, p. 103-108.

²⁸ Edhem Eldem, “Capitulations and Western trade” in *The Cambridge history of Turkey*, edited by Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 304-308. See also Suraiya Faroqhi, “Crisis and Change 1590-1699” in Inalcik Halil and Donald Quataert (ed.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*. Vol 2 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, c1994), p. 411-636, p. 474-530.

However, the aforementioned recent studies of Cemal Kafadar, Maria Pia Pedani, and Benjamin Arbel on the commercial undertakings of Ottoman subjects with Venice and the disputes in which they became embroiled question the idea that the Ottoman authorities lacked concern for the protection of their merchants.

The legal ways pursued by the Ottoman merchants in dispute with Venetian subjects and authorities, and the support that they managed to enlist from the Ottoman officials are the two major topics of this study. In order to research these, I will present in detail three important disputes taking place between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. My objectives are threefold. Firstly, I shall describe the causes of the disputes, the ways the merchants submitted their grievances to the Ottoman authorities, the legal bodies to which they applied, and the claims and arguments they brought in their defense. Secondly, I will outline the entire negotiation process between the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities taking place in Istanbul and in Venice in order to show the attitude of the Ottoman officials toward these merchants and how and to what extent they supported them. Finally, I will relate these cases to the current academic debate about the nature of the Ottoman *ahidnames* since they reveal us how the capitulations were applied in precise contexts and how they were understood by both the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities. Overall, I hope with this study to provide some insights into the attitude of the Ottoman government towards commercial ventures abroad of its subjects in the early modern era and the legal framework which regulated the Mediterranean commerce. I do not pretend to draw broad conclusions on these two topics from this modest study. This would need further study of legal cases involving merchants from the empire and of other aspects of the Ottoman commercial presence in Venice and in other Western European states.

There are only a few studies on this topic. This stems mostly from the fact that, in the early modern era, probably no Western European state witnessed an intensive, long, and well documented presence of merchants from the sultan's realm comparable to the Republic of Venice, especially in the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century. This is without doubt true for Ottoman Muslims, whose commercial ventures beyond the western borders of the empire were limited to Venice and few other cities. The Adriatic city of Ancona, the Ligurian port of Livorno, Lwów in Poland, Amsterdam, Marseilles, and other few cities, which at times hosted conspicuous communities of Ottoman merchants, did not show a long-lasting, manifold, and, above all, state-backed, commercial activities comparable to those in the Serenissima. Most of the studies on Ottoman merchants in Venice, like those of Kafadar, Pedani, Dursteler, and Vercellin, deal with the commercial dealings, the problem of housing, the brokers, and shortly with the dangers which the merchants faced. They do not dwell on the numerous legal disputes between these merchants and Venetian subjects and authorities, and over the attitude of the Ottoman government towards these cases. The only notable exception is Benjamin Arbel who worked on the commercial activities of Ottoman Jews in Venice in the sixteenth century. His detailed studies of the above-mentioned bankruptcy of Hayyim Saruq and the case of the ship Girarda, which took place between 1575 and 1581, have been a source of inspiration for this study.²⁹ This study could be considered a continuation of Arbel's studies on maritime trade and legality. However, in contrast to him, I will focus my study on the Ottoman side, on the activities of the plaintiff merchants and the support given them by Ottoman government. Apart from studies on Venetian history, the studies of Molly Greene, and Maurits de Boogert on Ottoman subjects who became victims of Christian piracy in the Mediterranean

²⁹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*; and "Maritime Trade and International Relations in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean: The Case of the Ship Ghirarda (1575-1581)", in Vera Costantini and Marcus Koller (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Leiden, 2008), p. 391-408.

during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century have also been important for this study³⁰. Although they focused on rather different political and economical contexts, their studies are nevertheless relevant for this thesis since they show the initiatives of Ottoman subjects in seeking redress and the backing of their Ottoman overlords.

The three disputes studied in this thesis were important affairs for the relation between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice in the early modern era, and their protagonists were either preeminent Ottoman subjects or numerous enough to manage to obtain considerable backing from the Ottoman authorities. These features are unavoidable since only important disputes with powerful protagonists produced enough archival documents that allow us to reconstruct them. For less weighty matters we have only a patchy and incomplete documentation.

The first case is a debt-related dispute. Its protagonists are two prominent Greek tax-farmers (*mültezim*) from the Peloponnese, John and Marino Scaruoli, respectively father and sons. In the 1580s, they farmed out the production of Valonia oaks in the whole Peloponnese. Furthermore, they also engaged in international trade with Venice in the 1570s and 1580s. In 1581, John Scaruoli sent a load of Valonias to Venice but it was confiscated by some Venetian creditors of his. He, and his son Marino, complained to the Ottoman authorities about the confiscated merchandise and demanded compensation from the bailo. The matter was complicated by the fact that John Scaruoli was severely indebted to the Ottoman treasury, and, throughout the case, the financial authorities of the empire (*defterdar*) insistently demanded the payment of his debt. The case dragged on until 1588, went through complicated phases, and involved several high-ranking Ottomans.

³⁰ Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants*; Maurits H. van de Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman victims of European privateering: A case against the Dutch in the Divan-i Hümayun (1708-1715)" in *Turcica* 33 (2001), p. 91-117.

The second dispute concerns an attack of the Uskok pirates against a ship carrying a group of Bosnian Muslim merchants, who were escorted by an armed Venetian galley, from Venice back to the empire. It took place in southern Dalmatia in October 1587. It was one of the numerous disputes between the Ottoman and Venetian governments resulting from attacks of the Uskoks against Ottoman subjects and territories in the Dalmatian region. The matter was complicated by the fact that the merchants had borrowed the money for their commercial venture from Muslim charitable foundations (*evkaf*) in Bosnia, which, consequently, demanded the money back. The robbed merchants brought their grievances to Istanbul and accused the Venetians in the escort galley of collaborating with the Uskoks. Their charges against Venice were backed by the sultan himself and some Ottoman grandees who demanded that Venice compensate them and punish those Venetians who had allegedly collaborated with the assailants. After numerous threats against Venice and a complicated mission to Venice of an Ottoman envoy, the affair was finally settled in spring 1590.

The third dispute, the most complicated and the most threatening for the relations between the two states, again involved merchants from Bosnia. In summer 1617, during the Habsburg-Venetian War of 1615-1618 (the Uskok War), a Spanish fleet entered the Adriatic Sea to help the Habsburg forces against the Venetians. In July, this fleet attacked and robbed two merchant galleys, which, escorted by some Venetian armed ships, were carrying numerous Bosnian merchants from Venice back to Split, the major Venetian port along the Dalmatian coast. The losses were huge and part of the robbed merchandise belonged to high-ranking Ottomans in Istanbul. The merchants demanded compensation from Venice since they claimed that the escort ships did not defend them, and, more important, that Venice had guaranteed the security of the route between Venice and Split against pirates and other threats. Both claims were repeatedly rebutted

by the Venetian government and the bailo. The case went through numerous phases. In January 1619, it was settled to the advantage of Venice, but, in December of the same year, the new grand vizier Güzelce Ali Pasha, who harbored a grudge against Venice for past grievances, restarted the dispute. Under him the affair took a dramatic turn and grew into an international scandal as the ambassadors of other western European states also became involved. After enervating negotiations, threats of breaking the peace, and huge sums of money paid to the Ottomans by the bailo, the dispute was finally settled in spring 1621.

The Sources and their Authors

Almost all the primary sources employed in this study are located in the Venice State Archives (Archivio di Stato di Venezia). The majority of them are Venetian documents (in Italian, Veneziano) written by the baili in Istanbul and by echelons of the Venetian government. However, a conspicuous portion of them are original Ottoman documents sent to Venice by the sultan's officials in Istanbul and in the provinces. Here I will review the main series of the archival sources and discuss their advantages and shortcomings.

The letters sent by the baili in Istanbul to the Venetian government, the *dispacci* (dispatches), are the archival source most employed in this study.³¹ The baili wrote to the Venetian government dispatches at frequent intervals, even daily in periods of tension, to inform it about recent developments taking place in Istanbul and in the rest of the Ottoman Empire. They usually presented also a concise analysis of these developments. If secrecy was needed, key passages were put in cipher. For our study the

³¹ They are collected in the series *Dispacci, Senato Costantinopoli*. They started by the mid-16th century. The vast majority of them have not been published. For a guide of this source see *Dispacci degli ambasciatori al Senato: Indice* (Roma: Ministero dell'Interno, 1959).

dispacci are the only source for the negotiations between the baili and the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul about the three trade-related disputes. In this regard, they form the backbone of this study. From them we learn the activities of the plaintiff merchants in Istanbul, the conversations between the baili and various Ottoman authorities, political, economical, and factional factors that influenced the resolution of the disputes, the particulars of each phase of negotiations, and the final settlements.

The other reports of the baili are the famous *relazioni*, the final report of their ambassadorship in Istanbul that they read aloud to the Senate after returning to Venice.³² In them, they reported at length about the state structure, factional politics, financial and military resources of the Ottoman Empire, and the state of the provinces. The reliability of these reports has been debated among historians in the last fifty years, as they were not written at first hand in Istanbul but they were prepared with care and forethought for their exposure in the Senate.³³ In this study I used them occasionally, in particular for their accounts of the factional divisions among high-ranking Ottomans and the latter's attitudes toward Venice.

In the Ottoman archives, we do not have sources corresponding to the *dispacci* and the *relazioni*. Apparently, the Ottoman chancery, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, did not produce descriptive documents about legal disputes involving Ottoman and foreign subjects, and about diplomatic dealings between Ottoman authorities and the ambassadors of foreign states. This is also true for the Ottoman envoys to European capitals, who, until the mid-seventeenth century, did not leave any written reports of

³² On this source see Lucette Valensi, *The birth of the despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte* (translated by Arthur Denner, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

³³ For an overview of the academic debate over the reliability of the *relazioni* see Eric Dursteler, "Describing or Distorting the "Turk"? The Relazioni of the Venetian Ambassadors in Constantinople as Historical Source," *Acta Histriae* 18 (2011), p. 231-248.

their mission comparable to the Venetian *relazioni*.³⁴ In the case of the missions to Venice, Venetian sources report that the Ottoman envoys wrote letters to the Ottoman government during their mission, but, to my knowledge, these have not been found in the Istanbul archives so far. The lack of Ottoman sources comparable to the *dispacci* and the *relazioni* is regrettable since we have to rely exclusively on Venetian sources for almost all the phases of the three disputes. The letters sent by the sultan and his officials to the Venetian government tell us only the causes of the disputes and the final settlement, with only salutary, if any, references to the negotiations between the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities.

The *dispacci*, and to a lesser degree the *relazioni*, are a source of paramount importance not only for this study and the history of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice, but also for Ottoman history in general. The advantages of the *dispacci*, as well as of the reports of ambassadors of other western European countries, has been stressed by Benjamin Arbel in his studies about commercial disputes with Venice of Ottoman Jews, and by Emrah Safa Gürkan in his pioneering study about Ottoman espionage in the sixteenth century.³⁵ First of all, the *dispacci* and the *relazioni* provide invaluable information about Ottoman politics since they show factional divisions within the Ottoman government, rivalries between different political actors, and the ways by which political decisions were made in Istanbul. Secondly, the *dispacci* and *relazioni* show us how the Ottoman authorities conducted diplomacy with the Republic of Venice by displaying the main actors, the issues that were negotiated, the procedures and the unfolding of the negotiations, the

³⁴ Nuri A. Yurdusev, *Ottoman diplomacy: conventional or unconventional?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 175.

³⁵ Arbel, "Maritime Trade and International Relations", p. 408; Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret diplomacy, Mediterranean go-betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg rivalry* (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Georgetown University, 2012), p. 28-34.

places of meeting, etc. Thirdly, as Gürkan pointed out, they “allow us to render agency to the often neglected individual” in Ottoman politics.³⁶ This is particularly true for less preeminent figures, such as informants, spies, courtiers, power brokers, members of pasha households who in Ottoman sources remained almost invisible. These figures played an important role in our disputes and the *dispacci* are the only sources on their existence.

Although they are an invaluable and unique historical source for the history of the Venetian-Ottoman relations and Ottoman history in general, the *dispacci* and the *relazioni* present some risks which stem mostly from the people who produced them, the baili. A short account of the the baili’s educational background and their office is required in order to pinpoint the inherent risks of using the *dispacci*, and, above all, the *relazioni* for Ottoman history.

All the baili were drawn from the ranks of the Venetian patriciate, an oligarchy of noblemen which dominated the political life of the Republic of Venice. They were the sons of the most highly educated elite and were steeped in classical, humanistic culture. Many of them went to study to the University of Padua, which during the Renaissance was one of the major centers in the revival of classical studies.³⁷ After university, most of the future baili acquired firsthand experience by travelling with diplomats to the courts of Europe and the Ottoman Empire or by joining a relative in the Venetian embassies. After this practical education, they started their political career by entering the *Maggior Consiglio*, the great assembly of the Venetian noblemen, which usually occurred at age of twenty five. Then, they were elected to a variety of positions of increasing importance in the Venetian bureaucracy.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 34.

³⁷ Valensi, *The birth of the despot*, p. 10-12.

The baili were sent to Istanbul had a vast range of duties³⁸. First, they were the representatives of the political interest of the Republic of Venice in the Ottoman capital. There, they devoted most of their time and energy to treat the myriad issues that arose daily between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. They carried this out through a form of “personal” diplomacy wherein they maintained extensive networks of friendship and patronage with Ottoman grandees who might favor the interests of Venice. These networks were created and maintained through liberal use of gifts, bribes, and hospitality.³⁹ The extension of these networks is striking: the baili reached out almost any influential Ottoman in Istanbul regardless rank, religion, and gender. Remarkable in this aspect are the relations between the baili and the mother (*valide*) of sultan Mehmed III Safiye Sultan, and with the head of the white eunuch of the royal palace (*kapı ağası*) Gazanfer Agha at the end of the sixteenth century.⁴⁰ In the early modern era there was no other Western state with such a developed system of communication with the Ottoman world as the Republic of Venice. Since almost all the baili did not know Ottoman Turkish, for each dealing with the Ottoman authorities they had to rely on *dragomans* (in Turkish *tercüman*), the interpreters. Their role in the relations between the two states is of paramount importance since they carried out all the diplomacy between the baili and the Ottoman officials.⁴¹ Related political duties, the baili

³⁸For the office of the bailo see Eric Dursteler, “The bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice’s Early Modern Diplomatic corps” in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 16(2), p. 1- 30; Carla Coco and Flora Manzonetto, *Baili veneziani alla sublime porta: Storia e caratteristiche dell’ambasciata veneta a Costantinopoli* (Venice, 1985). For a general story of this office from Byzantine era to the end of the Republic of Venice in 1797 see Bertelè Tommaso, *Il Palazzo degli Ambasciatori di Venezia a Costantinopoli* (Bologna, 1932).

³⁹ Dursteler, “The bailo in Constantinople”, p. 3; and ‘A Continual Tavern in My House’: Food and Diplomacy in Early Modern Constantinople. In *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors*, edited by Machtelt Israëls and Louis A. Waldman (2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 1 Vol, p. 166-171.

⁴⁰ Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, “Safiye’s Household and Venetian Diplomacy”, *Turcica* 32 (2000), p. 9–32.

⁴¹ On the important office of the dragomans see Natalie A. Rothman, “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 4 (October 2009), 771-800.

endeavored to collect and communicate to Venice information on the Ottoman Empire. They and the members of their mission obtained information from a wide variety of sources: renegades, merchants, spies, individuals within the Ottoman bureaucracy and the royal palaces, banished men and women, and other foreign ambassadors. Apart from being the chief Venetian diplomat in Istanbul, the baili were the chief consular representatives of Venice in the Ottoman Empire. Among their consular duties, they promoted and protected Venetian trade in the empire and Ottoman commerce with Venetian possessions. This was done mainly by ensuring the observation by the Ottomans of the *ahidnames*. Furthermore, the baili had the juridical authority to arbitrate legal and commercial matters within the Venetian community in Istanbul; and they had also a notary function as their chancellery notarized a wide variety of commercial and legal documents, requested by both Ottoman and Venetian subjects. Further duties of the baili included: redemption of captives, protection of the goods of Venetian subjects who died in the Ottoman Empire, and involvement in the religious life of the Latin-rite communities of the Ottoman Empire.

The risks of using the *dispacci* and the *relazioni* are related to three issues: the baili's cultural biases against the Ottoman, the trustworthiness of the information that they collected in Istanbul, and their relation with the addressee of their reports, the Venetian government.

The undeniable cultural biases of the baili against the Ottomans derive in part from the baili's humanistic education and in part from the anti-Ottoman official ideology of the Venetian government. Even though in Venice during in the early modern era there was a notable interest in the Ottoman Empire, manifest in numerous historic, literary, and philological publications, the official ideology of the Venetian government and

Venetian culture in general was staunchly anti-Ottoman and anti-Muslim.⁴² The countless stereotypes against the Turks, like the falsehood of the Islamic religion (*falsa credenza*) and the lust and despotism of the sultans, were deeply rooted in society. Taking into account this cultural and ideological milieu, the preeminent historians of the Republic of Venice Paolo Preto and Gino Benzoni maintained that the baili's views of the Ottomans were deformed by their cultural biases and that this inevitably undermined the accuracy of the reports.⁴³ They baili were sent to Istanbul with the conviction that civilization cannot be anything but European and Christian. Consequently, they did not learn Turkish, apart from the notable exception of the bailo Gianbattista Donà at the end of the seventeenth century, and they disregarded the study of Islamic religion and history. These cultural biases and lack of knowledge about the Ottoman world are particularly evident in the lengthy *relazioni*, but also the short *dispacci* are not spared. In our disputes, this issue is evident in the baili's accounts of the functioning of Ottoman justice (*ragione turchesca*).

The second problem is the reliability of the information conveyed in the *dispacci* and in the *relazioni*. As we have seen above, the baili collected information from a variety of sources. Their ability to collect information has been downplayed by some historians, among them Charles Carter. He argued that, since Venice lost prestige and power in Mediterranean politics during the sixteenth century and since its diplomats were regularly rotated and, therefore, sojourned in a foreign country only for short periods, Venetian ambassadors were unable to collect valuable information firsthand and,

⁴² Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, c1975).

⁴³ Ibid, p. 100; Gino Benzoni, "A proposito dei baili veneziani a Costantinopoli: qualche spunto, qualche osservazione" *Studi Veneziani* 30, p. 72–76

consequently, were dependent on rumors, and tips from other diplomats.⁴⁴ In absence of Ottoman complementary sources it is impossible to assess the accuracy of the bailo's reports. A comparison with contemporaneous reports from other ambassadors may shed light on this matter.

The last issue, that is, the relation between the baili and the Venetian government must be taken into account in assessing the contents of the *dispacci* and the *relazioni*. The office of the bailo brought much attention and prestige for its holder and represented a rather significant step in his ongoing political career. Therefore, the good outcome of the mission was of utmost importance for the baili. A failure could compromise or end a promising career. This happened to the bailo Girolamo Lippomanno (bailate 1590-1591), who was accused of passing sensitive information to the Spanish in Istanbul. In 1591, he was recalled but, as he approached Venice on a ship, he killed himself (or was killed according to some sources).⁴⁵ The third dispute of this study too will show the risks for the baili's career. The utmost importance of the success of his diplomatic mission for the bailo's career and prestige, this is my contention, might have in part influenced the information relayed in the *dispacci*, and above all the *relazioni*. The baili wanted to appear before the Venetian government as successful negotiators with the Ottomans and as dutiful executors of the government. Therefore, they might not have reported all the details about their negotiations with the Ottoman authorities, especially if the latter harmed their public reputation. Actions such as informal agreements with influential Ottomans and partial disregard of the orders of the Venetian government, which the baili might have carried out for the sake of a good

⁴⁴ Charles H. Carter, "The ambassadors of early modern Europe" in *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation: essays in honor of Garrett Mattingly*, edited by Charles H. Carter (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 269-295, p. 279/7280.

⁴⁵ Dursteler, "The Bailo in Constantinople", p. 15.

outcome in negotiations with influential Ottomans but that might have jeopardized their reputation vis-à-vis the Venetian authorities, might have been omitted in the *dispacci*.

The aforementioned risks of the *dispacci* and the *relazioni* do not undermine the overall validity and importance of these sources, but they do warn us against relying uncritically on them. In other words, we must keep in mind their author, his educational background and his position in Venetian politics. In defense of their validity we must take into account the difficult political context of the sixteenth century for the Republic of Venice. In that century Venice grew weaker diplomatically and militarily in the Mediterranean. The Ottoman Empire increasingly conquered its seaborne empire in the Levant. At the same time, the backbone of the Venetian economy, the lucrative trade with the Levant, was threatened by the Portuguese naval presence in the Indian Ocean which threatened to cut Venice off from the spice trade, and by the concurrence of the Levantine Jews who were subjects of the Ottoman sultan.⁴⁶ Conscious of its weakness, the Republic pursued a precarious policy of non-alignment and neutrality vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire in order to avoid any source of dispute that would endanger the delicate peace. Two pillars of this policy were the selection of able baili and the strengthening of their mission in Istanbul. One of the baili's most important duties was the collection of accurate information about the Ottoman Empire, which would facilitate the adoption of effective policies by the Venetian government towards the former.⁴⁷ Correct information about the Ottomans was essential to the survival of the Republic as a political and economic power in the difficult historical context of the sixteenth-century Mediterranean. For this reason, the baili endeavored to gather reliable

⁴⁶ Frederic C. Lane, *Venice, a maritime republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 276-307; Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and early modern Europe* (U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 179-183; Brian Pullan, *Crisis and change in the Venetian economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, (London: Methuen, 1968).

⁴⁷ Dursteler "Describing or Distorting the Turks?" p. 240.

information in Istanbul. In our disputes, these efforts will be evident from the baili's extensive network of informants within the political circles of the Ottoman capital.

Apart from the *dispacci* and the *relazioni*, I have used other Venetian sources. Among them, the *deliberazioni Costantinopoli*, the decisions taken about the Ottoman affairs by the Venetian Senate, a council presided by the Doge and the highest magistrates of the state, which was the center of the political life of the Republic of Venice. The Senate, informed by the baili about important issues taking place in the Ottoman Empire, ruled for the acts to be carried out in their regard. This series contain letters with orders for the baili in Istanbul, letters to the sultan and other Ottoman authorities, and the description of the missions of Ottoman envoys in Venice. The *deliberazioni* are noteworthy since they show us the reaction of the Venetian government to the disputes of this study and the course of action it chose in order to settle them. The descriptions of missions of the Ottoman envoys are particularly important since they allow us a glimpse, although fairly limited, into the negotiations taking place in Venice between the envoys and the Venetian authorities. Another source for these missions is the series *Collegio Esposizioni Principi*, in which we have quite extensive accounts of the sojourn and the dealings with the Venetian authorities of the envoys sent to Venice for the matters of our disputes. The risks of biased accounts by the Venetian authorities that I have pointed out for the *dispacci* and the *relazioni* are valid also for both of these series.

Apart from the extensive Venetian documentation, I also employed numerous original Ottoman documents kept in the series *Documenti Turchi*, *Lettere e Scritture Turchesche*, and *Bailo a Costantinopoli*.⁴⁸ These important series contain innumerable

⁴⁸ For the inventory of these series Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *I documenti turchi dell' Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1994), and *Inventory of the 'lettere e scritture Turchesche' of the Venetian State Archives* (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2010). See also Mahmut Tayyib

documents written by the Ottoman sultans, grand viziers, provincial authorities, legal bodies (*kadı* courts) of Istanbul and provincial cities, and also Ottoman subjects, about the countless diplomatic, commercial, legal, and military issues between the two states. These documents depict a lively picture of the contacts that took place between Venice and the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century till the dissolution of the Republic in 1797. The documents from these sources employed in this study can be divided into four groups: Imperial documents (*nişan-ı hümayun*), the letters of the sultan and the grand vizier (*name*), petitions of Ottoman subjects, and legal documents issued by the Ottoman courts. The *nişans* were usually issued for the final settlement of the disputes. They have a short explanation of the cause but almost no mention of the negotiations between the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities which led to the settlement. The numerous sultanic letters are important since, as Suraiya Faroqhi pointed out, it is rare to find in other archives such an extensive set of correspondence between the Ottoman Empire and foreign powers in the early modern era.⁴⁹ In the Istanbul archives these documents became numerous only from the end of the seventeenth century. Although these texts are highly formulaic, they nevertheless show the state of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Venice.

More striking are the letters written to the Venetian government by the grand viziers, which usually accompanied the sultanic letters, and those written by provincial governors. Similar documents have not been found in the Ottoman archives so far.⁵⁰

Their contents are often quite informal: grand viziers and provincial governors might

Gökbilgin, “ Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Türkçe Belgeler Koleksiyonu ve Bizimle ilgili Diğer Belgeler”, in *Belgeler Türk Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi V–VIII* (1968–1971), p. 1–153. For Bailo a Costantinopoli see G. Migliardi O' Riordan, “Présentation des archives du baile à Constantinople”, in *Turcica*, 33 (2001), p. 339-367 and, for the Ottoman documents contained in that series, Desaiye Dilek, “Les documents en Ottoman des fonds des Archives du Baile à Constantinople”, in the same publication, p. 369-367.

⁴⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Views", p. 106/107.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 107.

point out the actions that would be in the best interests of the Republic and make less than respectful remarks about third parties. Furthermore, the letters written by provincial governors reveal negotiations over our cases that took place in the provinces without the intervention, and probably also the notice, of the central government. Overall, the letters of the sultan and, above all, the grand viziers and provincial authorities are of paramount importance for this study since they allow us a glimpse, from an Ottoman perspective, into the negotiation between the Ottomans and the Venetians about the three disputes. They are the only source for understanding the attitude of the sultan and his officials towards these cases. Although the information about the negotiations that these letters convey is rather meager in comparison with the extensive accounts of the *dispacci*, they are nonetheless important since they shed light on the diplomatic efforts of the Ottoman authorities from an Ottoman perspective.

Other important Ottoman sources for this study are the original petitions written by the aggrieved merchants to the Doge to submit their grievances and ask for redress. They were written in a rather simple Ottoman Turkish and sometimes they contain grammatical errors. These petitions are relevant for this study since they show us the manner in which the merchants presented and defended their cases before the Venetian authorities. From them we learn the charges they brought against Venetian subjects and the arguments they employed to back their case. Unfortunately, we do not have the original petitions submitted by the merchants to the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul. Apparently, at least for the sixteenth and the first half of seventeenth century, the Ottoman scribes rarely kept the original petitions submitted by the sultan's subjects or by foreigners and preserved only the responses made by the authorities to those petitions. Consequently, the historian has to reconstruct what the petitioners may have

said on the basis of the brief summaries of the issue that form part of the imperial edicts in question.⁵¹

Further Ottoman sources in the aforementioned series are legal documents (*hüccets*) issued, on request of the merchants of our disputes, *kadıns* (Islamic judges and local administrators) of Istanbul and provincial cities and few of them even by the two *kadıaskers* (the chief judges in the European and Asiatic parts of the Ottoman Empire). Often we have only their Italian translations, but in some case also the original text. These *hüccets* have different contents: some of them register the grievances of the merchants, others the sentences against the Venetian bailo and his representatives issued by the *kadıaskers*, and others are the receipts of the payment of the merchants. Except one, all these documents are preserved only in the Venetian archives and not in the place where they were issued.

A few more words must be said about the Ottoman documents about our disputes located in the Prime Minister's Archive in Istanbul (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi). Regrettably I have been able to identify only two documents, both of which are related to the third dispute, which took place between 1617 and 1621. They are included in the series *Maliyeden Müdevver* and *Başmuhasebe Kalemi*. They consist of one *nişan*, whose copy is kept in the Venice archives too, and a *hüccet*. Usually, for the sixteenth century the *mühimme defterleri* (registers of important affairs) are an important source for the relation between the Ottoman Empire and Venice and other European states.⁵²

However, we do not find any reference to our disputes there. The other notable sources for the issues involving the authorities and the subjects of a foreign state are the *ecnebi*

⁵¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanatic Legitimation (1570-1650)" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXXIV (1992), p. 1-39, p. 4-7.

⁵² *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* (T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, İstanbul, 2000), p. 63-73.

defterleri (registers of matters connected with foreigners).⁵³ They cover both the affairs of individual foreigners and inter-state relations. In particular they show numerous disputes and complaints involving foreign merchants and Ottoman authorities. These registers survive from the early seventeenth century onwards. They too did not contain any reference to our disputes. It is of course possible that further research in series that I had been not able to research or I was unaware of may produce more documents on the disputes of this study.⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid, p. 33/34.

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, due to the move of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi to its new location in Kağıthane neighborhood during spring 2013, I could work there only for a little time and I did not have access to the whole documentation.

CHAPTER TWO

JOHN AND MARINO SCARUOLI, TWO GREEK *MÜLTEZIMS* IN DISPUTE WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE AT THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

The protagonists of this first case, which took place during the 1580s, are two prominent Greek *mültezims*, John and Marino Scaruoli (respectively father and son) from Nafplio in the Peloponnese, who during the 1570s traded goods from that peninsula with Venice.⁵⁵ Their case started as a debt-related dispute between them and some Venetian merchants but, as often happened in matters related to international maritime trade, it rapidly developed into a protracted diplomatic crisis between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire. Many political personalities took part in the negotiation process and in the final settlement including the Venetian Senate, attorneys, and diplomats in Istanbul (the *baili*) on the one hand, the sultan, Ottoman political and fiscal authorities, and palace officials, on the other. Given its length and complexity, and the numerous and prominent personalities involved, this case illustrates the legal ways that could be pursued by two notable *zimmi* merchants in the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire to settle their dispute against Venetian merchants and authorities, and the degree of support that they managed to obtain from the Ottoman state.

⁵⁵ Their surname is spelled as “Scaruoli” or “Ascaruoli” the Venetian sources, and as “Iskarūl” in the Ottoman ones. The name of the father is spelled in the Venetian sources as “Zuan” or “Gioan” (John in English) in the Venetian sources, and as “Iānūl” in the Ottoman documents

In this chapter, I will reconstruct the case mainly on the basis of Venice's diplomatic correspondence, in particular the baili's reports from Istanbul, the *dispacci*. Some extant Ottoman documents will be also employed. Missing or badly preserved documents for some years are a major drawback for an accurate reconstruction of all the phases of the disputes. However, the extant sources still allow me to portray its main features. Before this, I will provide an historical overview of the activities of Greek tax-farmers and merchants in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean in order to locate our dispute within a larger political and economical context.

Greek Tax-Farmers and Merchants in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean

The two protagonists of our dispute were among the many prominent Ottoman Greeks active in tax-farming in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Since the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and especially during the reign of sultan Mehmet II (r. 1451-1481), many Greeks, most of whom were members of the old Byzantine aristocracy, became active in the Ottoman finances as *mültezims*. In competition with Muslim and Jewish tax-farmers, Greek *mültezims* farmed out customs duties of Istanbul and numerous Aegean ports, state monopolies of salt productions throughout the empire, and rich mines in the Balkans. The richest ones who contracted big tax-farms played a major role not only in the empire's finances but also in its politics. Inalcik suggested that ethnic, personal and factional connections played a role in obtaining and managing big-tax farms. According to him, Greeks or converts with influence at the sultan's court might have favored Greek bidders.⁵⁶ The best known example of a prominent Greek

⁵⁶ Halil Inalcik "Greeks in Ottoman Economy and Finances, 1453-1500" in *Essays in Ottoman History*, (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), p. 375-389; "International trade: general conditions" in *An Economic and Social*

mültezim in the early modern Ottoman Empire is Michael Kantakouzenos (d. 1578). He had the monopoly of all salt works of the empire, and farmed innumerable custom duties and provincial revenues. Furthermore, like many other tax-farmers, and like the two protagonists of this chapter, he was also engaged in international trade. Given his wealth and his extensive connections with the Ottoman palace, he played a major political role within the Ottoman administration controlling the elections and dismissals of Orthodox patriarchs in Istanbul, and of *voyvodas* of the Rumanian vassal principalities. In the end, he fell into a huge debt to the Ottoman treasury and was executed by order of sultan Murad III (reign 1574-1595).⁵⁷

Apart from tax-farming, Ottoman Greeks were also deeply involved in international commerce and shipping. The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, which signaled the end of Italian domination (Venetian and Genoese) over the trade between the eastern and the western Mediterranean, paved the way for the emergence of a strong Greek commercial class in the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸ For our topic, particularly relevant were the commercial activities of Ottoman Greeks in the Italian cities during the sixteenth century. They were among the numerous merchants from the empire, both Muslims and *zimmi*s, who in that century traded with Ancona and especially Venice. While for centuries the Serene Republic had reserved the trade with the eastern Mediterranean to its patrician citizens, the new political context in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, where the political and military of the Republic steadily declined, forced it to relax its policy against non-patrician and non-Venetian merchants in order to maintain its commercial ties to the Levant. Gradually Venetian citizens and subjects from the

History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914, ed. İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge, 1994), vol. 1, p. 211.

⁵⁷ İnalcık “International trade”, p. 212/213; and Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (London: Collins; Fontana), 1972-1973, vol 2, p. 694/695.

⁵⁸ This development was firstly described by Traian Stoianovich in a still authoritative article, “The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchants”, *Journal of Economic History* 20, no. 2 (1960).

Venetian colonies in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as Ottoman subjects (mostly Jews, Greeks, and Balkan Muslims) played a major role in the Ottoman-Venetian trade.⁵⁹ Throughout the sixteenth century the Greek colony in Venice kept swelling its ranks as more and more Greek merchants from Ottoman lands, mostly from northwestern Greece, together with Greeks from the Venetian-held Ionian Islands and Crete, reached the city. Being Ottoman subjects enabled them to enjoy the protection of the sultans according to the Venetian *ahidnames* (capitulations), which provided a legal framework for the functioning of the trade.⁶⁰ Throughout the sixteenth century, Ottoman sultans and grand viziers promoted the smooth conduct of the trade between the two states and supported Ottoman subjects who traded with Venice, especially when the latter become involved in some kind of dispute with the Venetian authorities and merchants. Some of the diplomatic missions of the Ottoman envoys to Venice took up commercial matters.⁶¹ Our dispute represents an example of a trade-related dispute between some Venetian merchants and two eminent Ottoman subjects who managed to enlist the support of numerous Ottoman authorities.

⁵⁹ Frederic C. Lane *Venice, a Maritime Republic*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 300-304; Molly Greene, *Catholic pirates and Greek merchants: a maritime history of the Mediterranean* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c2010), p. 15-51. On the Ottoman Jews' activities in Venice see Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Brill's series in Jewish studies, 14, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995). On the Muslim Ottoman merchants in Venice see: Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima", in *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986), pp. 191-217; and Eric Dursteler, "Commerce and Coexistence: Venetian and Ottoman Merchants in the Early Modern Era," *Turcica*, 34 (2002): 105-133.

⁶⁰ For a detailed study of Venetian *ahidnames* see Hans Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The Ahidnames. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial*, "EJOS", 1998, at <http://www.let.uu.nl/oosters/EJOS/EJOS1.html>.

⁶¹ Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia*, (Venice, Deputazione editrice, 1994), p. 172-176, and Greene, *Catholic Pirates*, p. 38-41.

The Unfolding of the Affair

Istanbul: 1581/1582.

The first mention of our two protagonists is in a *dispaccio* from the bailo Paolo Contarini⁶² on 29 June 1581. He reported to the Venetian Senate that the grand vizier Sinan Pasha⁶³ had sent to his residence in Pera an envoy (*çavuş*) together with a Greek from Nafplio (in Italian Napoli di Romania and in Ottoman Anabolu), John Scaruoli. The latter is described as the tax-farmer of the production of Valonia oaks (*valonie* in Italian, and *palamut* in Ottoman Turkish) in the whole Peloponnese (Morea in Italian and Mora in Ottoman Turkish) and as a trader of that merchandise with Venice.⁶⁴ We learn more about Scaruoli's background and economical activities from a letter that he had sent to his Venetian creditors three years before, which was used later during his dispute against Venice. In that letter, he reported that he had recently been made tax-farmer, for three years, of salt and Valonias production in the whole peninsula, together with tax collection in Patras, in return to a payment of 212.000 akçes to the Ottoman treasury.⁶⁵ Being a contractor of state monopolies, especially that important and remunerative of salt production, he must have played an important role in the Ottoman finances in those years. We obtain further information about his wealth from a

⁶² Bailo between 1580 and 1583.

⁶³ Koca Sinan Pasha (d. 1596). He had been grand vizier four times: 1581/1582, 1589-1591, 1593-1595, and 1595. Dàvid Geza, "Sinan Pasha Khodja" *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

⁶⁴ Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Senato, Dispacci, Costantinopoli (henceforth SDC) filza 15, No. 20. "*Zuan Scaruoli greco, che ha l'appalto della Valonia di tutta la Morea..*". Since all the archival sources employed in this chapter are located in the Venetian State Archive, henceforth I will only write the name of the series they are found in. The Valonia oaks were widely employed in the Venetian textile industry as dyestuffs.

⁶⁵ That original letter was written in Greek but we have only its Italian translation. It dates 15 December 1579, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli Filze (henceforth SDeICF), busta 5 (unnumbered), "*..hoggi sono stato fatto datiaro per queste cose per duecentododici mille in anni tre purchè li salda senza altro, cioè in salle de tutta la morea, le saline, et valonie, et patrasso..*".

dispaccio, dated 10 June 1587, in which we read that John Scaruoli also owned extensive properties throughout the Peloponnese, which became a source of contention with the Ottoman authorities towards the end of the dispute.⁶⁶ Furthermore, according to the bailo, Scaruoli had a relative in the royal palace, a member of the royal gate-keepers (*kapıcı*) named Ömer, who later played an important role in the dispute.⁶⁷

Returning the first mentioned *dispaccio*, the *çavuş* related to the bailo that John Scaruoli had gone to the Imperial Council (*divan-ı hümayun*) to complain that a ship of his loaded with Valonias, which he had sent to Venice in order to pay his debt with the Ottoman treasury (*hazine-i amire*, in Italian *Casna*), had been confiscated by the merchant Giacomo Ragazzoni, together with other Venetian merchants, who had claimed that the former was indebted to them. Ragazzoni (d. 1609) was a prominent non-patrician Venetian citizen who was well known in Istanbul and who traded extensively with the eastern Mediterranean and played an important diplomatic role during the War of Cyprus.⁶⁸ Scaruoli claimed that the confiscated Valonias actually belonged to the sultan, and said that he had asked the grand vizier to help him to retrieve that merchandise. He also stated that he would go to Venice to support his claims vis-à-vis Venetian justice. The bailo responded to the *çavuş* that, in Venice as well as in Istanbul, it was normal for the creditors to confiscate their debtors' goods whenever they find them, and added that the Venetian legal bodies would undoubtedly handle the case. However, he rebutted Scaruoli's claim that the Valonias belonged to the sultan since, he maintained, "it was well known that tax-farmers could not risk

⁶⁶ SDC, filza 25, No 37.

⁶⁷ SDC, filza 16, No. 43, in date 29 November 1581.

⁶⁸ In 1571, he was in Istanbul to negotiate the release of the Venetian merchants who had been taken captive after the outbreak of the Cyprus War in 1570. Previously, he also played an important role in the complicated commercial dispute involving the Ottoman Jew Hayyim Saruq, who had threatened the peace between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice between 1566 and 1568. Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 72-74, 135, 137.

sultan's capitals in commercial undertakings".⁶⁹ He stated also that that claim was merely an excuse (*vanità*) in order to postpone the payment of his debt to the imperial treasury, since, at that time, he did not have enough money to pay.

From the following *dispacci*, we learn more about Scaruoli's activities in Istanbul. He turned to the Divan several times to ask the grand vizier and the heads of the finance administration of the empire (*defterdars*) to force the bailo to pay him 15.000 ducats for his confiscated ship and Valonias. The financial authorities played an important role during the dispute as they were directly responsible for Scaruoli's payment to the treasury.⁷⁰ About his actual debt, our sources do not provide any detail. However, the numerous and prominent Ottoman officials in charge of his payment, and the severe pressure that they put on the bailo to compel them to compensate Scaruoli, suggest us that his debt was have very substantial. He also had a commercial partner, another Ottoman Greek called Giacomo Perdicca in the Venetian sources. They owned half of the ship loaded with Valonias and half of that merchandise each. Perdicca brought those Valonias to Venice⁷¹. In September, another *çavuş* was sent to the bailo's residence to deal with the affair. The bailo told the *çavuş* that he was not informed about the case since he was in Istanbul to represent the Republic and not to deal with the affairs of individual merchants, and he maintained that the case should be treated either by the Venetian or Ottoman tribunals. He also stressed again that Scaruoli's merchandise had been lawfully confiscated in Venice as the latter was seriously indebted to some Venetian merchants. After, the *çavuş* stated that John Scaruoli vast interested neither in the Valonias nor in the ship because they actually belonged to his son, Marino, and he

⁶⁹ ASV, SDC, filza 15, No 20, "*li datiari non havevano autorità di arisegare li capitali di sua Maestà...quelle inventioni del greco erano tutte vanità*".

⁷⁰ The chief *defterdars*, like the grand viziers, sent several *çavuşes* to the bailo to ask him to compensate Scaruoli for his confiscated goods. For an example, see, SDC, filza 15, No 35, in date 14 October 1581.

⁷¹ Scaruoli was also indebted to Perdicca for 5.000 ducats. SDC, filza 15, No 29, in date 02 September 1581.

maintained that they could not be confiscated due the former's debts. The bailo responded that that claim was a mere cover (*una coperta*) to hide John Scaruoli's debts, and he again suggested that the latter should turn to Venetian justice. Later, the bailo sent his chief dragoman (*tercüman*), Marco de' Scassi, to meet with the grand vizier Sinan Pasha. The latter too claimed that the Valonias belonged to the sultan and that Marino Scaruoli, and not his father had sent them to Venice, and he ordered the dragoman to ask the Venetian government for their immediate retrieval. The dragoman, like the bailo before, rebutted the claims that the sultan owned those Valonias.⁷²

Two claims of this round of negotiation deserve to be discussed separately. First, the bailo's remark that he does not deal with the disputes of individuals is of paramount importance since in this dispute, as well as in many others involving claims of individual merchants, the baili always maintained that, according to the Venetian *ahidnames*, they could not be held responsible for the debts of other people.⁷³

Throughout this dispute, at each round of negotiation with the Ottoman authorities, the baili reiterated that the case was a dispute between individuals and, as such, it had to be treated in either Ottoman or Venetian tribunals.⁷⁴ For this reason they always refused to

⁷² SDC, filza 15, No 31, in date 16 September 1581. The dragomans in Venice's service played a critical role in this dispute since they conducted most of the negotiations with Ottoman authorities. About their office, see Natalie E. Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 4 (October 2009), p. 771-800.

⁷³ Arbel discussed the same issue in the above-mentioned case of Hayyim Saruq and in the case of the ship Girarda during the 1570s. Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 118/119, 123; "Maritime Trade and International Relations in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean: The Case of the Ship Ghirarda (1575-1581)", in Vera Costantini and Marcus Koller (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Brill, Leiden, 2008), p. 394, 402/403. Also see and Halil Inalcik "İmtiyāzat", in *EI*, 2nd ed.; Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire", *The Journal of European Economic*, 15 (Rome, 1986), p. 367/368, and "Ottoman Attitudes towards Merchants from Latin Christendom before 1600" *Turcica*, 35 (2002), p. 69-104, p. 77. For an example of the article of the *ahidnames* exempting the baili from been prosecuted for the debts of single individuals see, in Theunissen "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: the 'Ahd-names", the *ahidname* of 1575, p. 515, ".baylos olanı āharin borcu için kimesne bunda dutmayup ödetmeye.."; and its Italian translation, p. 538, "Che per debito altrui non possa esser ritenuto, ne fatto pagare il Bailo".

⁷⁴ According to the *ahidnames*, the commercial disputes between Ottoman subjects and Venetian merchants should be decided by the *kadıs*. At court, the presence of a Venetian dragoman was compulsory. Ibid, p. 513, "Venedik bazırgaları ile bir kimesnenin nizā-i vāki' olup kādiya varalar

negotiate directly with John Scaruoli and his son. Understandably, the Venetian government feared the consequences of allowing its diplomatic representatives to deal with cases of individual merchants, as more and more individuals might have harassed the baili to ask for support or redress for their losses. The frequency of the baili's reiterations of their legal immunity to the Ottoman authorities in disputes involving individual merchants, suggests that this important article of the Venetian *ahidnames* was, indeed, frequently violated. Regarding the violations of the *ahidnames* by Ottoman authorities, Benjamin Arbel, a major expert on Ottoman-Venetian trade, stated "formal agreements could not prevent frauds by individuals, and when such frauds were considered a threat to vested interests of at least one of the parties concerned, the peace agreement was not respected to the letter".⁷⁵ In our case, the importance of Scaruoli's payment of his debt to the imperial treasury might have contributed to the violation of the judicial immunity of the baili. Second, the issue of the actual owner of the Valonias is also noteworthy as it remained a major source of contention during most of the phases of this dispute. Time and again John and Marino Scaruoli, as well as many Ottoman officials, claimed that that merchandise actually belonged to the sultan. The baili always denied that by maintaining that the sultans were not involved in any commercial activities and forbade their tax-farmers to trade in goods belonging to the sultan. Indeed, in our sources, there is no indication whatsoever that the Valonias belonged to the sultan. We know from some studies that the Ottoman sultans sometimes sent their representatives, mainly *çavuşes*, to Venice to bring some goods from the empire and to

Venediklî kendü tercümânları hâzır olmayınca kâdî olan dav'aların istimâ' etmeye.."; p. 538, "Che se alcuno haverà differentia con li mercanti Venetiani, & anderanno al Cadi. Il Cadi non debba ascoltare le loro litte se non vi sarà presente l'interprete de Venetiani".

⁷⁵ Arbel, "Maritime Trade and International Relations", p. 401.

purchase others in their name.⁷⁶ In our case, however, it does not seem to have been the case. In Hayyim Saruq's bankruptcy described by Arbel, the latter's creditor, the powerful Segura family, also claimed that the confiscated merchandise belonged to the sultan, even though this was categorically denied by the Venetian authorities.⁷⁷ Judging by Arbel's case and our dispute, it is tempting to surmise that the Ottoman plaintiffs used the argument that the contested goods belonged to the sultan to enhance the importance of their case vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities. Further studies over commercial disputes between those two states may confirm, or disprove, this supposition.

Continuing with our case, upon instructions by the Venetian government, the bailo personally met with the grand vizier Sinan Pasha. The Pasha, in presence of John Scaruoli, severely reproached the bailo over the seizure of the Valonias, underlining that such an act was against the peace agreements between the two states, and he insisted on compensation. The bailo repeated the same arguments employed in the previous rounds of negotiations, and stressed the legality of the seizure of the Valonias in Venice in accordance with Venetian laws.⁷⁸ This last argument deserves particular attention. Throughout this dispute, we will see that, at each round of negotiation with the grand viziers, *defterdars* and *çavuşes*, the baili stressed the legality, in view of the Venetian laws as well as of the *ahidnames*, of the actions undertaken by the various Venetian magistracies. This legal argument was, firstly, observed by Arbel who wrote that the Venetian government and diplomats, in their negotiations with the Ottomans, were "always eager to emphasize Venice's image as an orderly state, whose different

⁷⁶ Dursteler, "Commerce and Coexistence" p. 117, and Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore*, p. 172-174.

⁷⁷ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 118-121.

⁷⁸ SDC, filza 15, No 37, in date 28 October 1581.

magistracies performed their particular functions according to established, unbreakable, laws and customs”.⁷⁹ By this argument, the Venetian authorities tried to show to their Ottoman counterparts how they handled each affair according to well-established and respected laws. Probably, the weak military and political position of the Serenissima vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire and the desire to avoid any source of tension that might endanger the commercial relations between the two states, led the Venetian authorities to adopt this prudent legalistic attitude. Taking this into account, we can understand the bailo’s insistence on the legality of the seizure in Venice of the Valonias, and on their legal immunity in cases involving single individuals, as well as their numerous appeals to John Scaruoli to personally present his case to the Venetian tribunals. This legalistic standpoint remained the official line of the Venetian government throughout this dispute.⁸⁰

This emphasis on legality is also evident in the letter sent by the Senate, in November 1581, to the bailo containing a deal of information about Scaruoli’s debts in Venice.⁸¹ The Venetian government waited several months before directly intervening in the dispute as probably it had hoped that the latter would be settled in public tribunals, or between the interested parts. This is why the bailo repeatedly relayed to the Ottoman officials that he had received neither information nor instructions on that case by the Venetian government. However, the prospect of another private dispute menacing the relations between the two states, given that several Ottoman officials upheld Scaruoli’s claims, must have worried the Venetian government and urged it to

⁷⁹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 138.

⁸⁰ The Venetianist scholar Vera Costantini also pointed out the legalist attitude of the Venetian government towards the Ottoman authorities in regard of Venetian merchants in Ottoman Cyprus. See “Venetian Trade and the Boundaries of Legality in Early Modern Ottoman Cyprus” in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), p. 35-46.

⁸¹ ASV, Senato Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, registro7, foli 54/55 (henceforth, SDeIC), in date 16 November 1581.

play an active role in its resolution.⁸² The Senate reported to the bailo that John Scaruoli during the 1570s had traded intensively with Venice, where he had contracted conspicuous debts with several Venetian merchants; who, consequently, had legally confiscated his Valonia.⁸³ It also defined as a complete falsehood (*ingiustissima avania*) the claim that the merchandise belonged to the sultans.

Apart from defending the Venetian stance vis-à-vis the *çavuşes*, the *defterdars*, and the grand vizier, the bailo, together with his dragomans, endeavored to enlist the support of influential Ottomans to settle the dispute. The relationships between the bailo and the Ottoman authorities were strictly reciprocal: in return to the baili's gifts, collaboration, and support to prominent Ottomans in their affairs, the latter were expected to protect Venetian interests in the empire.⁸⁴ Among the Ottomans whose support the bailo managed to obtain, there was Siyavuş Pasha (d. 1602, Sciaus Bassà in the Venetian sources), who, by 1581, had the rank of vizier and acted as deputy grand vizier (*kaymakam*) when Sinan Pasha was conducting military operations against the Safavids.⁸⁵ In the final report of his ambassadorship in Istanbul (*relazione*), Contarini stressed the continuous good affection of Siyavuş towards himself and the Republic, as well as the latter's numerous favors that the latter had done for it in all the disputes with Ottoman subjects in which he had been involved.⁸⁶ Throughout Scaruoli's case he remained one of the main supporters of Venice. In a session of the Divan in December

⁸² The difficult commercial case of the ship Girarda was settled only in 1581. Arbel, "Maritime Trade and International Relations".

⁸³ "*havendo li suoi creditori proceduto in ciò con scritti quei termini di ragione, et di giustizia, che si convenivano*".

⁸⁴ On the baili's diplomacy with influential Ottomans see Pedani Fabris, "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy", *Turcica* 32 (2000), 9–32.

⁸⁵ Jan Schmidt, "Siyāvūsh Pasha" *EI*, 2nd ed.

⁸⁶ "Relazione di Paolo Contarini" in Eugenio Alberi, *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, (18 vols. Florence: Società Editrice, Fiorentina, 1839–1863), vol. IX, p. 239/240.

1581, the bailo reported that Siyavuş Pasha had reprimanded Scaruoli and insisted on the falsity of his claims against Venice. In the end, he expelled him from the Divan.⁸⁷ After that episode, the handling of the case of John Scaruoli was assigned to Cerrah Mehmet Pasha, at the time governor-general (*beylerbeyi*) of Rumeli who, according to the *dispacci*, was in charge of collecting the tax arrears in the European provinces of the empire. Like the grand vizier and the *defterdars*, he too sent numerous *çavuşes* to the bailo to ask him for redress for the confiscated Valonias. The *çavuşes* basically repeated the same accusations, and, in particular, the claim that Marino Scaruoli, not his father John, had sent that merchandise to Venice in the sultan's name.⁸⁸ That claim remained the cornerstone of the two Scaruoli's arguments against Venice for all the duration of the dispute. In February 1582, after receiving from Venice a detailed account of John Scaruoli's affairs in Venice, the bailo sent his chief secretary, Valerio Anselmi, to meet with Mehmet Pasha. The secretary reported in detail the commercial activities of John Scarioli in Venice and especially the circumstances of the seizure of the Valonias. According to his account, Scaruoli, in 1580, after having been appointed tax-farmer of the production of Valonia oaks in the whole Peloponnese, proposed to his creditors, to whom he owed 6.945 ducats, to pay his debt with that merchandise but the deal was refused by the latter. As he was severely indebted to the Ottoman treasury, he sent to Venice a load of Valonias, 1811 kantars, in a ship belonging to himself and to the aforementioned Giacomo Perdicca. According to the secretary's account, he had tried, by sending the merchandise under his son's name, to deceive his creditors. Then, in Venice the load was sold and the money derived brought to the city board of trade (*Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*). After a thorough investigation, the latter ruled that half of

⁸⁷ SDC, filza 15, No 49, in date 9 December 1581.

⁸⁸ SDC, filza, No 52 and 55, in date, respectively, 20 January and 2 February 1582. On Cerrah Mehmet Pasha (d. 1589) see Günhan Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites at Courts of Ahmed I (r.1603-1617) and His Immediate Predecessors*, (unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2010), p. 93/94.

the Valonias and half of the ship belonged to John Scaruoli and, consequently, they were given to his creditors. In this account of the legal procedures of Venetian tribunals, the secretary's stress on the orderly functioning of the Venetian justice is very clear. In the end, the secretary asked for Scaruoli's punishment, because he claimed that the latter had deceived both Venetian subjects and Ottomans authorities. Thereafter, the Pasha called in John Scaruoli, who, basically, reinstated his previous claims against Venice. Yet, that time he also presented to the highest juridical authority (*kadiasker*) of Rumeli some written evidence (probably a *hüccet*) according which the Valonias and ship, worth 15.000 ducats, belonged to his son Marino, who also was, like him, a *mültezim*. John Scaruoli also brought to the audience the captain of the ship and his commercial partner, Perdicca, who confirmed his words, and added that both the Valonias and the ship had been forcefully seized by the Venetians. Upon hearing this, the Pasha, after expressing resentment for the Venetians' actions, went so far as to threaten the seizure of goods belonging to the Venetian merchants in the empire, if the bailo did not pay compensation. The contents of the debate were afterwards told to the grand vizier who, like the other ministers of the Divan, agreed that the bailo had to pay up to 20.000 ducats to the Ottoman treasury. Then, a *çavuş*, together with John Scaruoli, went to the bailo to inform him about the decision. Besides rebutting Scaruoli's claims once more, the bailo, in order to counter the pressure of the Ottoman viziers and to gain some time, stated that he had to wait for a decision by the Venetian government before taking any action over the issue.⁸⁹

In response to the last threatening developments, the Senate wrote to the bailo on 23 April 1582. After expressing concern for the continuous support given to Scaruoli's claims by some Ottoman authorities, the Senate ordered the bailo, during his negotiation

⁸⁹ SDC, filza 15, No 57, in date 17 February 1582.

with the Ottomans, to first and foremost uphold the principle that the baili should not be held responsible for the debts or misdeeds of single individuals, which, as we saw above, was stated in the Venetian *ahidnames*.⁹⁰ The Senate expressed optimism that the Ottoman ministers would, in the end, reject Scaruoli's claims, as the possible disruption of Venetian trade in the Levant would seriously harm the Ottoman treasury as revenues from custom duties would plummet. After, it suggested that the bailo should propose to Scaruoli to come to Venice in order to have his case handled again by the Venetian tribunals. Finally, together with that letter, the Senate sent to the bailo copies of some documents produced in the Venetian tribunals over Scaruoli's case. Among them, there were the declarations of Scaruoli's creditors over his actual debts and the quotes of his confiscated merchandise which they had appropriated; together with the already mentioned translation of letter he had sent to his creditors to offer them to honor his debt with Valonias.⁹¹

After some months of relative calm, in June, the bailo went again to meet with the grand vizier in the presence of John and Marino Scaruoli. The grand vizier supported the two Scaruolis' claims and stated that the bailo, as the representative of the Republic, had to pay compensation for the Valonias confiscated in Venice. This claim was promptly rejected by the bailo who, by mentioning the *ahidnames*, maintained that he was there exclusively to represent the Venetians state, and not the interests of single individuals. The grand vizier, like Mehmet Pasha before, threatened to confiscate the goods belonging to the Venetian merchants throughout the empire. To this threat, the bailo responded by reminding him of the peace between the two powers and, above all, of the foreseeable harmful consequences for the Ottoman finances if that threat

⁹¹ SDeIC, reg.6, fo. 68, in date 23 April 1582. The declarations of Scaruoli's creditors date 24 July 1581.

materialized.⁹² The Pasha's menacing words were not followed by any actions against Venetian merchants, as it normally happened during commercial disputes between the Porte and Venice. The prospect of serious economical losses for both the polities arising from a disruption of the trade, especially for the Ottomans who at that time were involved in a difficult and budget-draining war against the Safavids, must have deterred the Ottomans from taking any serious action against Venetian merchants in the empire. From another *dispaccio*, we learn the grand vizier assigned Scaruoli's case to Mesih Pasha⁹³, who, in 1582, was third vizier, and who, according to the bailo's account, was in charge of the collection of tax arrears in Rumeli. The bailo sent his chief dragoman to meet with Mesih Pasha, where John Scaruoli was also present. After the dragoman's account of the case, Scaruoli again repeated that the Valonias belonged to the sultan. The Pasha then asked him to provide the sultan's letters to prove his claims, otherwise, he had to find another way to pay the treasury. Hard-pressed by the Pasha, Scaruoli once more turned to the grand vizier, who called the dragoman to audience. That time the grand vizier proposed to John Scaruoli to go to Venice in order to seek justice in the city's tribunals. He answered that he would risk his life in Venice, but the grand vizier reassured him by promising him to ask the bailo to write a letter to the Venetian authorities for his personal security. The bailo accepted the proposal and assured that he would write that letter.⁹⁴

The following months were devoted to the organization of the expedition. John Scaruoli decided to send his son Marino to Venice in his stead, fearing for his personal safety, and managed to obtain for him an imperial letter (*name-i hümayun*) over the dispute to

⁹² SDC, filza 6, reg. 28, in date 21 July 1582.

⁹³ Hadım Mesih Pasha (d. 1592). Halil Inalcik, "Hadım Mesih Mehmed Pasha", *EI*, 2nd ed.

⁹⁴ SDC, filza 16, No 34, in date 18 August 1582.

be submitted to the Venetian authorities. He also managed to obtain from the *kadiasker* of Rumeli a *hüccet*, a legal certificate (*cozetto* in the Venetian sources), which declared that his son Marino was the actual owner of half of the Valonias and half of the ship which had carried that merchandise to Venice.⁹⁵ Two men were chosen to go with him to Venice, the already mentioned *kapıcı* Ömer, and the *sipahioğlanı* Ibrahim. They acted, respectively, as the special commissioner conveying the sultan's letter (*mübaşir*), and as the collector of the money deriving from the confiscated merchandise (*kabz-ı mal*). According to the bailo, Ömer was a relative of John Scaruoli and was chosen to go to Venice in order to enhance the importance of the dispute vis-à-vis the Venetian legal authorities.⁹⁶ Furthermore, from a letter of the Senate dated 11 March 1583, we learn that the expedition had been arranged by Gazanfer Agha (d. 1603), the Venetian renegade who served as chief white eunuch (*babüssaade ağası* or *kapı ağası*, Capi Agà in the Venetian sources) at the sultan's palace, although we do not know any detail of his actual engagement in the dispute. Gazanfer's involvement suggests that Scaruoli's case assumed importance also for the palace officials close to the sultan.⁹⁷

Venice: Spring 1583, the Revision of the Lawsuit.

The three men reached Venice at the end of February 1583. In a letter dated 1 March 1583, the Senate reported to the bailo their reception at Palazzo Ducale by the Collegio, a council composed of the Doge and the highest authorities of the Venetian government. After receiving the sultan's letter, the Venetian authorities, as a gesture of good will

⁹⁵ SDC, filza 16, No 37, in date 1 September 1582.

⁹⁶ SDC, filza 16, No 43, and Documenti Turchi, busta 7, numero 909. A *kapıcı* was a member of a palace corps who had different security responsibilities, such as guarding the palace main doors and the sessions of the Imperial Divan. See İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı devletinin saray teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 1984), p. 396-404.

⁹⁷ SDeIC, reg. 6, fo. 105/106. On Gazanfer's Venetian connections see Pedani Fabris, "Safiye's Household".

towards the sultan, chose one of their members, the senator Balbi, as a state attorney (*avogador de comun*) to defend Marino Scaruoli during the following revision of his father's trial in the Venetian tribunals⁹⁸. All the expenses of the trial were covered by the Venetian government. The sultan's letter deserves attention.⁹⁹ It is basically a narration of the case made by John Scaruoli during his past audiences with the bailo and Ottoman authorities. According to the imperial letter, Marino, *zimmi* tax-farmer of the production of the Valonia oaks belonging to the sultan in the Peloponnese (*miri palamut mültezimi*) had sent 5.000 kantars of that merchandise to Venice in a ship he had bought for 100.000 akçes. There, the ship and the Valonias, whose overall value amounted to 20.000 ducats, had been confiscated by Ragazzoni and by some Venetian merchants who claimed that Marino's father, Yanul (John), was indebted to them.¹⁰⁰ The sultan asked the Venetian authorities, in accordance with the "well established sincerity, uprightness, and devotion" of the Venetians to the Ottoman sultans, to release the Valonias and the ship to Marino, whose personal safety in Venice should be ensured. Otherwise, the sultan stated, Venice would violate the peace and the agreements (*'ahd u aman*).¹⁰¹ It is important to point out that in this letter as well as in all the Ottoman documents over the case only Marino was recorded as the tax-farmer of the Valonia from Morea. Throughout the dispute, the actual relationship between John and Marino Scaruoli remains unclear, since both were recorded as tax-farmers in the Venetian and

⁹⁸ SDeIC, reg 6, fo. 105/106. On the reception of Ottoman envoys in Venice, see Pedani Fabris, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, p. 49-98.

⁹⁹ Documenti Turchi (DT), b. 7, No. 909, it dates the third decade of şaban 990, that is, 10-18 October 1582.

¹⁰⁰ "Yanol Iskaruoli nām zimmiden bizim alacak hakkımız var deyü".

¹⁰¹ "mün akid olan sadākat ve ihlās ve şerā'it-i istikāmet ve ihtisāsınız mucibince", "palamūdun ve sefinenin pahāsı verilmeyüp kendüye nev'-i zarar kurbet sizden 'ahd u amāna muhālif vaz' sudur etmiş olur". The letter also reported another dispute of Marino Scaruoli with a Venetian merchant, named Francesco, from the Venetian-held island of Zakynthos (Zante in Italian, Zāklise in Ottoman). However, the documents produced by the baili in Istanbul and by the Venetian Senate over John and Marino Scaruoli did not deal with this dispute.

the Ottoman sources. In the bailo's *dispacci*, they are both called interchangeably tax-farmer (*appaltador*) and collector of the custom duties on the Valonias (*daziere*).¹⁰²

The whole trial was recorded in the Venetian sources and both its proceedings and the final verdict were sent to the bailo. It was handled by the court of the *Dieci Savi del Corpo del Senato*, a body of ten senators (later twenty) which had been instituted in 1529 to deal with appeals in fiscal matters, but also with special cases delegated to it by the Senate. Normally, disputes involving Ottoman merchants were handled by the board of trade *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, created in 1506, but the importance of Marino's case must have led the Senate to transfer it to that special court.¹⁰³ Sixteen senators took part in the trial. The foremost claim that Marino Scaruoli defended in the court was that the Valonias and the ship belonged to himself and not to his father, and, consequently, they could not be confiscated for the latter's debts. He brought as evidence of his claims a *sicil* (a legal record, *sigilletto* in the Venetian sources), issued in 1578, together with a witness, to prove that he was really the tax-farmer of production of Valonias in the whole Peloponnese; and he submitted letters of Giacomo Perdicca, the captain of the ship, to show that he owned half of the ship and half that merchandise. The creditors of his father countered Marino's claims by providing several written documents and witnesses. They pointed out the aforementioned letter of John Scaruoli, dated 15 November 1579, in which the latter declared that he was indebted to some Venetian merchants and that he was the tax-farmer of the Valonias in the Peloponnese. They also stressed that both John and Marino acted together in farming out that merchandise as well as in all their commercial undertakings. Furthermore, they brought to the court

¹⁰² Only a research in the Istanbul archives into the registers of the *mukata'a* holdings (*mukata'a defteri*) in the province of Peloponnese during 1580s may shed light on the actual relation between John and Marino Scaruoli. Unfortunately, due to the moving of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in spring 2013, I could work there only for a short time and I did not have the access to the entire documentation.

¹⁰³ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Collegio dei X poi XX savi del corpo del senato*, ed. Tamba Giorgio, (Rome 1977), p. 9-15, 20. Also the important case of Hayyam Saruq's bankruptcy was handled by this court, Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 114.

several witnesses who testified that half of the ship had been purchased by John Scaruoli and not by his son. In the end, the court ruled against Marino's claims by a large majority (fourteen out of sixteen senators). The Valonia oaks and the ship were declared to belong to his father and their confiscation by the latter's creditors was found to be legitimate according to the Venetian law. The Senate, on March 13, reported to the bailo the outcome of the trial and sent him several documents produced in the court. The Senate also informed the bailo of an informal agreement with the two Ottoman envoys, according to which they, once in Istanbul, would defend the Venetian stance vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities, in return for support in advancing their political career. It also asked the bailo to favor them in their affairs in Istanbul and to give them, as soon as they arrive there, 100 ducats each.¹⁰⁴ The Senate also sent a letter to the sultan himself to present him the details of the dispute and of Scaruoli's revised process in Venice. In that letter, the Senate stressed the good will of the Venetian government toward the sultan by accepting Scaruoli's request of reviewing his case, and the correctness of the legal procedures in the city's courts.¹⁰⁵

Istanbul: 1582-1585, a Temporary Interruption.

After their return to the Ottoman capital in May, the *kapıcı* and the *sipahioğlanı* met with the bailo, who at that time was Gianfrancesco Morosini¹⁰⁶, before reporting their expedition to the Ottoman authorities. John and Marino Scaruoli were not in the city at that time. After expressing satisfaction about the treatment they had enjoyed in Venice

¹⁰⁴ SDeIC, filza 5. Much of the documents produced during the trial were sent to the bailo and are located among the Senate's rulings, in the filze and not the registri. SDeIC, filza 5. For the Senate letters to the bailo see SDeIC, reg. 6, fo. 105/106. During the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, several Ottoman envoys in Venice asked to the Venetian authorities for help in obtaining a promotion in the Ottoman administration. Pedani Fabris, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, p. 86/87. Upon their departure, the two Ottoman envoys were also given two satin robes and all their voyage expenditures were paid by the Venetian government. It was a normal diplomatic praxis for the Venetian authorities to give money or other goods to the Ottoman envoys before their departure for Istanbul. Ibid, p. 90-94.

¹⁰⁵ SDeIC, reg. 6, fo. 107.

¹⁰⁶ Bailo between 1582 and 1585.

and for the outcome of the expedition, the two envoys discussed with the bailo about their impending relation to the grand vizier, who, at that time, was Siyavuş Pasha. Since previously the Venetian government had agreed to help them in advancing their career in return for their support in the dispute, the *sipahi* asked the bailo to write a petition to the sultan to ask him to make himself *çesnigir* (taster, *cesnier* in the Venetian sources) in the sultan's palace. The bailo promised him to write that petition and to ask that appointment directly to the grand vizier after the two envoys had reported to the latter the expedition.¹⁰⁷ The Pasha, after hearing their account and receiving the Senate's letters for the sultan and himself, called the bailo to audience. There, the bailo described all the proceedings and the final verdict of the trial, and the grand vizier told him that as soon as John Scaruoli returned, he would handle his case.¹⁰⁸ In July, the *sipahi* informed the bailo that Scaruoli, then in Istanbul, had written a long petition to the Sultan (*ruk'a, rocà* in Venetian sources) in which he blamed both the *sipahi* and the *kapıcı* for the "unfortunate" outcome of the mission. The grand vizier too received a petition from him, but, that time, he ordered him to collect enough money to honor his debt to the treasury.¹⁰⁹ Undeterred, John Scaruoli continued to write petitions to various Ottoman authorities and the sultan himself about his case during all the summer. In September, the bailo, hoping to end the dispute, decided to meet with the grand vizier. There, he again recounted in detail to the Pasha Scaruoli's trial in Venice, stressing the correctness of the legal procedures and the validity of the verdict; and asked for Scaruoli's punishment because, he maintained, the latter had lied both to his creditors in Venice and to the Ottoman ministers about his debts. The bailo also presented the Pasha a copy

¹⁰⁷ SDC, filza 17, No 26, in date 17 May 1583. From this *dispaccio* we learn also that the two envoys, as soon as they arrived to Istanbul, reported the details of their expedition to Venice to the *odabaşı* (*odabassi* in the Venetian sources), an officer in the royal palace, and to afore-mentioned *kapı ağası* Gazanfer Agha.

¹⁰⁸ SDC, filza 17, No 26, in date 17 May 1583.

¹⁰⁹ SDC, filza 17, No 46, in date 12 July 1583.

of the above-mentioned *hüccet* on Scaruoli's behalf, which recognized Marino's ownership of the Valonias and the ship, as a proof of John's lies to the Ottoman authorities. The grand vizier then promised the bailo to punish John Scaruoli.¹¹⁰

After the last *dispaccio*, for less than two years the bailo Morosini did not report on John and Marino Scaruoli, and from our sources, we do not know their whereabouts in that period. However, since we learn from the last *dispaccio* that the Grand Vizier had promised to punish John Scaruoli, we can speculate that he might have been imprisoned during that time. The next *dispaccio* on his dispute dates 29 January 1585. The bailo reported his audience with Cafer Pasha¹¹¹, recently elected vizier, who had been charged with dealing with our dispute by Mesih Pasha. After discussing several political issues, Cafer Pasha told the bailo that John Scaruoli had come to his residence and shown him some documents over his confiscated Valonia and ship in Venice. The bailo, after expressing astonishment at Scaruoli's new accusations against Venice, once more rebutted entirely his claims.¹¹² Thereafter, John Scaruoli also turned to the Public Divan and, again asked the grand vizier to force the bailo to compensate him. On that occasion, the captain of the ship, Giacomo Perdicca, was present. Perdicca, after rejecting as falsehood (*inventioni*) Scaruoli's charges against Venice, claimed that the latter was indebted to him, and had him arrested in order to force him to honor his debt.

¹¹⁰ SDC, filza 18, No 1, in date 3 September 1583.

¹¹¹ Hadım Cafer Pasha (d. 1600), one of the most influential commanders during the long Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578-1590. See Baki Tezcan *The second Ottoman Empire: political and social transformation in the early modern world* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 142/143; and "Relazione of Gianfrancesco Morosini" and "Relazione of Giovanni Moro" in Alberi *Le relazioni*, Vo. IX, respectively, p. 291 and p. 374/375.

¹¹² SDC, filza 20, No 51, in date 29 January 1585.

After being freed, Scaruoli fled from Istanbul, since, according the bailo's account, he feared to be once more arrested as he was seriously indebted to the treasury.¹¹³

Istanbul: 1586-1588, an Escalation and the Conclusion

Again, for more than a year the baili in Istanbul did not report any development in our dispute. We learn from a *dispaccio* of the new bailo Lorenzo Bernardo¹¹⁴, dated 3 March 1586, that John Scaruoli had been put again in prison for his debts to Perdicca. From prison, he sent numerous petition to the recently elected *başdefterdar*, Üveys Pasha (Veis Bassà in the Venetian sources)¹¹⁵, to help him obtain enough money to honor his debt to the treasury. Worriedly the bailo reported that the *defterdar* had decided to release him from prison in order to let him recover the money.¹¹⁶ Thereafter, Üveys Pasha became one of strongest supporters of Scaruoli's claims against Venice in the Imperial Council. He sent to the *bailo* several *çavuşes* to force him to comply with Scaruoli's demand for compensation. At the beginning of June, the *defterdar* sent a *çavuş* to ask the bailo to send one of his representatives to the Divan to stand trial over Scaruoli's dispute. The bailo responded that, according the *ahidnames*, the baili, together with their representatives, could not be prosecuted by the Ottoman law (*legge turchesca* in the Venetian sources) for that dispute, as they dealt only with the state affairs between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁷ However, the *defterdar* insisted on prosecuting a representative of Venice. This development is

¹¹³ SDC, filza 20, No 53, in date 12 February 1585.

¹¹⁴ Bailo between 1585 and 1587.

¹¹⁵ Kara Üveys Pasha (d. 1591). He was *başdefterdar* three times: 1575-1578, 1581/1582, and 1586/1587. Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, N.J, Princeton University Press, c1986), p. 194, 204; Bökrekçi, *Factions and Favorites*, p. 166-170.

¹¹⁶ SDC, filza 23, No 1, on date 3 March 1586.

¹¹⁷ "I ministri dei Principi non hanno a che fare con questa giustizia, ne con altri che con questo Signore, o con chi rappresenta la sua persona". SDC, Filza 23, No 37, in date 9 June 1586.

noteworthy. For the first time in this dispute an Ottoman authority asked the bailo to send someone representing in his stead to stand trial. The bailo at every round of negotiation with the Ottoman officials maintained that according to the *ahidnames*, he could not be prosecuted by the Ottoman legal authorities. This alleged legal immunity was a source of contention between the bailo and the Ottoman officials in all the major political and commercial disputes between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice in the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century.¹¹⁸ In the *ahidnames* we do not have clear rules about the legal status of the bailo in the Ottoman Empire. The bailo sent his chief dragoman, Cristoforo Brutti, to the Divan to protest and to ask for Scaruoli's punishment. The dragoman showed the *ahidnames* in defense of the bailo's legal immunity, and stressed that John Scaruoli had been found guilty in the Venetian courts and his claims dismissed by the previous grand viziers. The *kapıcı* who had been sent to Venice with Scaruoli's son, almost three years before, was thereafter summoned to report on his expedition to the Ottoman authorities. Then, the grand vizier, who, at that time, was again Siyavuş Pasha, expelled Scaruoli from the Divan.¹¹⁹

However, the latter continued to turn to the Imperial Divan. According to the bailo, John Scaruoli, urged by the chief *defterdar* to pay the treasury, hoped to gain enough money by forcing the Venetian diplomat to compensate him for his losses in Venice.¹²⁰ Üveys Pasha's continuous support of Scaruoli deserves attention. Probably, the economical problems affecting the Ottoman Empire in the 1580s were not unrelated. During those years, the Ottoman Empire was involved in a long and costly war with Safavid Iran (1578-1590), which put state finances under a severe strain. To relieve the

¹¹⁸ See again the disputes described by Benjamin Arbel, and the following two disputes of this study.

¹¹⁹ SDC, filza 23, No 37, in date 9 June 1586.

¹²⁰ SDC, filza 23, No 41, in date 22 June 1586.

fiscal strain, the government opted in 1585/1586 to undertake a major debasement of the Ottoman currency which was followed by a period of monetary instability. Üveys Pasha was appointed *başdefterdar* in 1586 in order to cope with those pressing financial difficulties.¹²¹ Since according to baili's account Scaruoli's debt was substantial, his payment might have been an important issue for the chief financial authority of the empire in those difficult years. In July, John Scaruoli found an apt opportunity to further his claims when a ship belonging to Giacomo Ragazzoni, the abovementioned leader of his Venetian creditors, arrived to Istanbul. He asked the Ottoman authorities to confiscate both ship and its load as compensation for his goods seized in Venice. He also claimed that, when his son was in Venice, Ragazzoni had promised to pay him in order to conclude the dispute. The bailo, alarmed, immediately sent his chief dragoman to the Divan to categorically dismiss that claim.

At that time, the bailo had an important informant in Moshe Benveniste, the Jewish doctor of the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha. He was a relative of the famous Joseph Nasi, and during the 1580s, he was a key informer for the Republic and a supporter of Venetian interests in the Ottoman capital.¹²² He played an important role in our dispute as he reported to the bailo Scaruoli's activities in Istanbul and other developments in his case, and he advocated the Venetian stance before the grand vizier. For instance, through Benveniste, the bailo learnt that Scaruoli had sent numerous petitions to the

¹²¹ Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 131-148; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 104.

¹²² "Relazione of Gianfrancesco Morosini" in Alberi, *Le Relazioni*, Vol. IX, p. 294, and Pedani Fabris, "Relazione of Lorenzo Bernardo" *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, vol. XIV: Costantinopoli relazioni inedite (1512-1789)* (1996, Padua: Ausilio), p. 341. See also Francesca Lucchetta, "Il Medico del Bailaggio di Costantinopoli fra terapie e Politica, Secc.XV-XVI" in *Veneziani in Levante: Musulmani a Venezia* (supplemento di *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, n°15, Roma: Herder 1997), p. 17-19. On the network of Joseph Nasi and Benveniste see also Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret diplomacy, Mediterranean go-betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg rivalry* (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Georgetown University, 2012), p. 377-383.

Sultan and to other Ottoman viziers asking for the confiscation of the Venetian ship.¹²³

Another eminent Ottoman whose support the bailo endeavored to win was the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli, Mehmet Pasha, who, at that time, had a strong influence in Ottoman politics due to his closeness to the sultan.¹²⁴ In exchange for their continuous support, the bailo donated them huge sums of money and various Venetian luxury goods which they requested.

Informed of the ship issue, on 2 August 1586, the Venetian Senate wrote to the bailo to use all means possible to avoid its seizure. In particular, the latter was requested to remind Siyavuş Pasha of the risks of a disruption of the Venetian trade to the Ottoman Empire, in case that Venetian ship was to be confiscated. The Senate's emphasis on avoiding the seizure of that ship, with any means available, underlines the detrimental consequences of such action for the smooth functioning of the Ottoman-Venetian trade, since many other Ottoman merchants in dispute with Venice might have been encouraged to ask the authorities for similar actions.¹²⁵ The menace of confiscating the ship was supported by the two *başdefterdars*, who in a session of the Divan, argued before the dragoman that the action would be a legitimate compensation for Scaruoli's losses in Venice. Then, the bailo, fearing such a possibility, urged the captain of the ship to leave the city as soon as possible, but Scaruoli, fearing such a move, obtained an order by the grand vizier forbidding its departure. Thereafter, the bailo sent his chief dragoman to the Divan to complain against that order.¹²⁶ After several inconclusive rounds of negotiations, the bailo, in accordance with the Senate's request, went to meet with the grand vizier at his residence. In that meeting, Üveys Pasha and both John and

¹²³ SDC, filza 23, No 46, in date 22 June 1586.

¹²⁴ Doğançlı Mehmet Pasha (d. 1589). He was a favorite (*musahib*) of sultan Murad III. See Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites*, p. 175-194.

¹²⁵ SDeIC, reg. 7, fo. 47.

¹²⁶ SDC, filza 23, No 60, in date 19 August 1586.

Marino Scaruoli were also present. Before starting the discussion, the bailo stressed to the grand vizier that he would not speak at all with father and son Scaruoli, since he was there only to negotiate only with the representatives of the Sultan. Afterwards, John Scaruoli began to relate his case to the Pasha, focusing especially on the confiscation of the Valonias in Venice by the merchant Ragazzoni. His claims were supported by the *başdefterdar*. His account and accusations against the Venetian authorities were severely rebutted by the bailo, who underlined that his claims had been dismissed by the previous grand viziers. Thereafter, the *kapıcı* was called in to report his expedition to Venice, and he confirmed the bailo's version of the dispute. Consequently, the bailo asked for the immediate liberation of the ship, and stressed to the grand vizier of the detrimental consequences arising from that incident for the Ottoman-Venetian trade. At that point, the *kadıasker* of Rumeli was summoned into the room to decide about the dispute after evaluating the available documentation. Then, the bailo decided to end the discussion since he refused to be prosecuted for that dispute.¹²⁷ Back at his residence, the bailo found, among the documents produced by the Venetian courts, a document concerning John Scaruoli's actual debts to numerous Venetian merchants. He decided to have it immediately translated into Turkish and to send it, by his chief dragoman, to the grand vizier. The Pasha brought that document to the next Divan, and showed it to the other viziers; and, after a short debate with the latter, he decided to release the ship much to the bailo's relief.¹²⁸

However, John Scaruoli was not discouraged and continued to appeal to the Divan, where he found a new supporter in the fourth vizier Ibrahim Pasha.¹²⁹ At the end of

¹²⁷ SDC, filza 23, No 61, in date 21 August 1586.

¹²⁸ SDC, filza 23, No 63, in date 22 August 1586.

¹²⁹ Damat Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1602). Jack Parry, "Ibrahim Pasha Dāmād", in *EI*, 2nd ed., and Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites*, p. 178/179.

August, in one session of the Divan, the latter, to the surprise of the other viziers, claimed that the Venetian ship had to be sold to cover Scaruoli's debt. According to the bailo, Ibrahim's support for Scaruoli's claims was due either to an acrimonious rivalry with the Grand Vizier Siyavuş Pasha, or to a secret agreement with Scaruoli. The bailo sought to enlist the support of other Ottoman authorities in a position to counter Ibrahim's influence within the Imperial Council, like the aforementioned *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli, Mehmet Pasha, and the powerful mother (*valide*) of sultan Murad III Safiye Sultan. Safiye was also mother in law of Ibrahim. During the 1580s and 1590s, she was one the main supporters of the Republic of Venice in Istanbul. The bailo communicated with her through the mediation of Esther Handali (d. 1588), the latter's *kira* (*chierazza* in the Venetian sources), or woman-servant. This *kira* forwarded to Safiye the bailo's requests of support against Ibrahim Pasha. Being in minority in the Divan, the latter's defense of Scaruoli's claims did not reverse the grand vizier's decision of releasing the ship.¹³⁰

However, Ibrahim Pasha, together with the *başdefterdar* Üveys Pasha, remained the foremost supporter of John and Marino within the Imperial Council in the following months. From another *dispaccio*, we learn that Ibrahim was charged with the collection of the tax-arrears in the European part of the Empire.¹³¹ Consequently, the retrieval of Scaruoli's debt to the treasury must have been one of his main priorities. Unfortunately for our study, the series of *dispacci* No 23, which covers seven months from September 1586 to the beginning of March 1587, has been poorly preserved and cannot be consulted. This gap is all the more regrettable because in those months our dispute took

¹³⁰ SDC, filza 23, No 64 and No 65, both in date 30 August 1586. On Esther Handali and the other *kiras*, as well as on the relationship between the baili and Safiye Sultan, see Pedani Fabris "Safiye's Household", 12/13 and 17-19; and "Relazione di Lorenzo Bernardo" in Pedani Fabris *Le Relazioni*, p. 346.

¹³¹ SDC, filza 25, No 8.

a turn for the worse as the bailo's chief dragoman, Cristoforo Brutti, was arrested. However, we can reconstruct that alarming development through a long letter sent by the Venetian Senate, on 13 January 1587, to the bailo in response to that event. According to it, the arrest of the dragoman, which took place at the end of November 1586, was ordered by Üveys Pasha, after the *kadiasker* of Rumeli had issued a *hüccet* ordering the bailo to pay up to 20.000 ducats.¹³² In a *dispaccio* dated 10 May 1587, the bailo also reported that Ibrahim Pasha was the main person who was responsible for the arrest, and he asked Venice to pay him 15.000 ducats for the dragoman's release.¹³³ Sometime later, the dragoman was released after an intense diplomacy (about which we unfortunately do not know any detail), between the bailo, the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli Mehmet Pasha, the Jewish doctor of Siyavuş Pasha Benveniste, Safiye Sultan, through the mediation of her *kira* Handali, and Ibrahim Pasha. The Venetian Senate expressed deep concern about that threatening event, which had "seriously harmed the public dignity of the Republic of Venice, a close friend of the sultan, and the peace between the two states".¹³⁴ It then lauded the bailo's diplomatic efforts with the Ottoman authorities which resulted in the dragoman's release, and instructed him to reward all those who had favored that accomplishment. However, for the Senate, the dragoman's liberation was not enough. It asked the bailo to seek, by all means possible, the public punishment of John Scaruoli in order to restore the reputation of the Republic in the Ottoman capital. Together with this letter for the bailo, the Senate also sent a letter to

¹³² We have an Italian translation of the *hüccet* in a *dispaccio* dated 6 February 1588. SDC, filza 26, No 58.

¹³³ SDC, filza 25, No 26.

¹³⁴ "Grave offesa, che contra ogni ragione, vedemmo essere fatta alla dignità della Repubblica Nostra, tanto amica di quel Serenissimo Signore, et contra quello che conviene alla bona amicitia, che havemo con Sua Meastà".

the grand vizier himself to directly ask him for the punishment.¹³⁵ The arrest of the dragoman was a dangerous development for the Venetian authorities, as it meant that a representative of the Republic had been put in jail for a debt of a single individual, a violation of the rule of *ahidnames* which stated that the bailo cannot be held responsible for the debt of single individual. This was exactly what the baili and the Venetian government had tried to avoid so far.

Thereafter, the pursuit of Scaruoli's punishment became one of the bailo's foremost occupations in Istanbul for months. After several rounds of negotiations with Ottoman ministers and after writing an *arz* to the sultan himself, at the beginning of March 1587, the bailo succeeded in having both John and Marino Scaruoli arrested during a session of the Imperial Divan. According the bailo's account, Ibrahim Pasha, who was at the time acting as deputy grand vizier in the absence of Siyavuş Pasha from Istanbul, in accordance with an order from the sultan, ordered their arrest and warned them against harassing the bailo once again. However, while Marino was put in prison, John Scaruoli was left free under an obligation of selling some goods he had brought from the Peloponnese in order to pay at least part of his debt. He was also ordered to sell all his properties there to fully honor his debt. According to the bailo, Ibrahim Pasha was convinced into complying with the sultan's order for the punishment of the two Scaruolis by the difficult prospect of the latter's payment to the treasury and, above all, by the bailo's gifts (in this case, the promise of donating him twenty five Venetian silk broad cloths). The bailo expressed satisfaction, but he was not completely appeased. In accordance with the Senate's instructions, he also asked the Ottoman ministers for a public punishment of John Scaruoli and an imperial order to end the case definitely. Clearly, the Venetian authorities thought that only a public punishment could

¹³⁵ SDeIC, reg. 7, fo. 76-78. It contains a list of the sums of money and the goods that the Senate instructed the bailo to give to all the supporters of Venice among the Ottoman authorities.

compensate for the humiliation that international prestige of the Republic of Venice had suffered due to the arrest of its chief dragoman. Furthermore, the bailo probably feared that without an imperial order both Scaruolis might continue to pursue their claims against Venice.¹³⁶ Securing a public punishment proved a difficult task for the bailo. The bailo repeatedly sent his chief dragoman to the Ottoman authorities or went personally to meet with them, mainly with Ibrahim Pasha, Doğancı Mehmet Pasha, and the grand vizier through the mediation of the latter's doctor Benveniste. Much of the negotiation proved fruitless and also costly, since in each meeting with an Ottoman official the bailo, or his dragoman, had to donate sums of money or expensive goods. On many occasions, in his *dispacci* he angrily maintained that the grand vizier purposely postponed the issuance of an imperial order to publicly punish the two Scaruolis since he was eager to continue receiving money and gifts from Venice.¹³⁷ The main opponent to the bailo's request remained Ibrahim Pasha, since, by that time, the *başdefterdar* Üveys Pasha had been dismissed from his office. Ibrahim, once again, tried to confiscate the ship belonging to Giacomo Ragazzoni which was still in Istanbul.¹³⁸ At the beginning of May 1587, he ordered, for the second time, the arrest of the dragoman Brutti, who was put in prison for several days. The grand vizier was not present in the Divan when that decision was taken, and we know from the following *dispacci* that he severely reproached Ibrahim Pasha for it. The latter insisted on the confiscation of the ship as a compensation for Scaruoli's merchandise seized in Venice. The bailo, alarmed, went to audience, first, with the grand vizier, and, after, with the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli Mehmet Pasha to ask them for the immediate release of the

¹³⁶ SDC, filza 25, No 5, on date 10 March 1587; and SDeIC, reg 7, No. 61/62 in date 14 April 1587.

¹³⁷ “*per avidità del mangiare*”. For example, see SDC, filza 25, No. 1 in date 1 March 1587; and SDC, filza 25, No 13, in date 13 April 1587.

¹³⁸ SDC, filza 25, No 6, on date 10 March 1587; SDC, filza 25, No 25, in date 7 May 1587; and SDC, filza 25, 26 in date 10 May 1587.

dragoman.¹³⁹ The grand vizier, on the bailo's request, also wrote a petition directly to the sultan. The sultan ruled for the liberation of the dragoman, who was then released.¹⁴⁰ The sultan also issued an imperial order (*nişan-ı hümayün*) according to which, from then on, no Ottoman authority should hear John Scaruoli's claims against Venice since he had fraudulently sued Venice for his Valonias.¹⁴¹ The order plainly stated that, according to the *ahidnames*, the bailo, his dragomans, and the Venetian merchants in the Empire cannot be detained for the debts of other people.¹⁴² Furthermore, the latter was admonished against harassing again the bailo, his dragomans, or any Venetian merchants, otherwise he would be punished.¹⁴³ Thereafter, the bailo, once again, endeavored to obtain a public castigation of John Scaruoli. On that occasion, the bailo approached Ibrahim Pasha directly, and after several rounds of negotiation, and various gifts, at the beginning of June he finally managed to convince him to have both John and Marino Scaruoli imprisoned. In the following session of the Divan, the bailo's chief dragoman presented an *arz* to the viziers asking for their punishment, and after a brief debate, the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha ruled in favor of it. Thereafter, a *çavuş* took the two Scaruolis from prison, and forced them to walk, chained by their neck and tied together, throughout the city as far as the bailo's residence in Pera.¹⁴⁴ The ambassadors

¹³⁹ SDC, filza 25, No 26, in date 10 May 1587.

¹⁴⁰ SDC, filza 25, No 27, in date 13 May 1587. We have the Italian translation of the grand vizier's petition to the sultan on the bailo's request. According to another *dispaccio*, dated 22 May 1587, Safiye Sultan severely reproached Ibrahim Pasha for the arrest of the dragoman. SDC, filza 25, No 28.

¹⁴¹ “*gerekir ki minba'd husûs-u mezbûre takayyüd olunmaya*”, “*mukaddem venedik'e palamüd ırsâl itmiştim deyü tezevvur ve telbîs da'va itti*”.

¹⁴² “*venedik beylerine virilen 'ahidnâme-i hümayünümde âhar kimesne borcu için baylos olanlar ve tercümanları ve venedik bâzırğânları tutulup habs olunmayalar*”.

¹⁴³ “*mezbûr zimmi ol husûs için tekrâr girdiği dav'a ve husûmet edecekse hakkından gelmek mukarrerdir*”. Lettere e Scritture Turchesche (henceforth LST), filza V, n° 492. It dates evail-i cemaziyülahır 995, that is 9-18 May 1587.

¹⁴⁴ The bailo also obtained an imperial document (a *tezkere*) which ordered the imprisonment of John and Marino Scaruoli. LST, filza. V, n°491, in date 23 cemaziyülahır 995, that is, May 31th 1587.

of France and England were also present at their punishment. According to the bailo's account, this public punishment was meant to show to all the representatives of foreign powers in Istanbul the justice of the sultan against those who laid false claims against them. The two Scaruolis were later put in prison. The bailo, satisfied by this punishment, sent his chief dragoman to all the Ottoman authorities who had played a role in that accomplishment in order to give his thanks and reward them.¹⁴⁵

However, the imprisonment of the two Scaruolis lasted only a few days. Some relatives of their appealed to the Divan and to Ibrahim Pasha for their liberation on the grounds that their health was quickly deteriorating in prison. Ibrahim Pasha and the grand vizier discussed that matter with the bailo's chief dragoman in a session of the Divan. The former suggested that John should be set free, as he was an old and ill man, while Marino should be sent, as a prisoner, to the Peloponnese where he would sell his family's numerous properties in order to pay the treasury for his father's debt. The bailo feared that, once freed, John Scaruoli would continue to pursue his claims against Venice. At the end of the debate, the proposal of Ibrahim Pasha was accepted. The bailo was assured by both the grand vizier and by Ibrahim Pasha that both Scaruolis would not turn to the Divan any more; otherwise they would be severely punished. That time the bailo accepted the decision without complaining, as he had been instructed by the Senate to end that dispute once and for all.¹⁴⁶

Thereafter, for several months the *dispacci* do not report anything about John and Marino Scaruoli. In the meantime, at the end of the summer, a new bailo took office in

¹⁴⁵ SDC, filza 25, No 34, on date 3 June 1587. The bailo Bernardo reported the public punishment also in his *relazione*. "Relazione di Lorenzo Bernardo" in Pedani Fabris, *Le Relazioni*, p. 385/386. According to the bailo, also the ambassador of France, Jacques Savary de Lancosme, was pleased by Scaruoli's punishment, as recently his chief dragoman had been severely beaten by a *çavuş*, and he hoped to obtain similar treatment for the latter. SDV, filza 25, No 37, in date 10 June 1587.

¹⁴⁶ SDC, filza 25, No 37 and 39, on date, respectively, 10 and 17 June 1587. SDeIC, reg. 7, fo.87/88, in date 4 June 1587.

Istanbul, Giovanni Moro.¹⁴⁷ To the surprise of the new bailo, in December 1587, John Scaruoli, again began to turn to the Divan. In an audience with the grand vizier, the bailo was reported that John Scaruoli had managed to obtain a *hatt-i hümayun* (*Catimagine* in the Venetian sources) from the sultan, according to which his son Marino, together with a *çavuş*, should go to Venice in order to have his process again revised. The bailo responded that that royal order was completely opposite to the previous one, which plainly stated the falsity of Scaruoli's claims and strictly forbade him and his son to harass Venice's representatives in Istanbul. He also decided to write a petition to the sultan to protest against Scaruoli's new activities.¹⁴⁸ The Venetian Senate, alarmed by Scaruoli's resumed claims, instructed the bailo to use any means to stop that expedition.¹⁴⁹ Thereafter, the latter endeavored to prevent the expedition to Venice and to do away with that royal letter. In all the ensuing negotiations with Ottoman ministers, the bailo always maintained that the dispute had been concluded under his predecessor's office by a sultan's order, which, he reiterated several times, was irreversible. Consequently, he refused to debate again John Scaruoli's claims against Venice.¹⁵⁰ At another audience, at the beginning of February 1588, the bailo, the grand vizier, and the chief chancellor (*nişancı*) discussed the contents of the imperial order. The grand vizier insisted on revising Scaruoli's process in Venice. He also asked the bailo to write letters of recommendation to the Venetian government for the *çavuş* and Marino Scaruoli. The bailo refused that request because, he claimed, the Venetian government had absolutely forbidden him from taking part in that dispute, which the

¹⁴⁷ Bailo between 1587 and 1590.

¹⁴⁸ SDC, filza 26, No 45, in date 22 December 1587. A translation in Italian of the sultan's letter is contained in SDC, filza 26, No 53.

¹⁴⁹ SDC, filza 26, No 54, in date 22 January 1588, and SDeIC, reg. 7, fo. 87/88, in date 2 February 1588.

¹⁵⁰ "*Le leggi di questo Serenissimo Signore non comportavano, che sopra una causa già terminata, si tentasse nuovo giudizio*". SDC, filza 26, No 58.

Venetians perceived to have ended. However, he promised the Pasha to wait orders from Venice before taking any decision over the matter.¹⁵¹

From February to September 1588, again we do not have legible *dispacci*. However, apart from the Senate's letters, this time we have also the rubrics of the missing *dispacci*, which allow us to learn, at least, the main events taking place in Istanbul. The Senate wrote to the bailo on March 17. It instructed the bailo to continue employing, as major arguments in defense of the Venetian stance, the previous Sultan's order against Scaruoli, and to remind the Ottoman authorities of the latter's public punishment. It also asked the bailo to continue stressing to the Ottoman ministers the futility of a new revision of Scaruoli's process, since the Venetian justice, in 1583, had unmistakably proven the fallacy of the latter's claims. The Senate sent a letter also to Siyavuş Pasha in which it expressed displeasure over Scaruoli's new activities, and asked him to prevent Scaruoli from pursuing his claims. Two weeks later, the Senate also wrote to the Sultan. It reminded him of the previous imperial order on Venice's behalf which had been violated by John Scaruoli who continued with his false accusations to harass Venice's representatives. It then asked him to end the dispute once and for all.¹⁵² In the meantime, in Istanbul the bailo endeavored to gain the support of influential Ottomans in the dispute. Apart from the above-mentioned supporters of Venice in Istanbul, this time the bailo also contacted a prominent Ottoman Jew, David Passi¹⁵³, who, at that time, had a prominent position at the Ottoman court. Through the latter, the bailo met with Mehmet Agha¹⁵⁴, the powerful chief black eunuch of Sultan's harem (*darüssaade*

¹⁵¹ SDC, filza 26, No 58, in date 6 February 1588.

¹⁵² SDeIC, reg. 7, fol. 90/91, in date 27 March 1588 and fol. 93/94 on date 7 April 1588.

¹⁵³ See Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p.164-167. See also Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean*, p. 385/386.

¹⁵⁴ Habeşi Mehmed Pasha (d. 1590), see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 102/103.

ağası). The bailo learnt that the Agha had been previously a supporter of Scaruoli, and had delivered to the sultan the latter's petitions against Venice. That time the bailo managed to enlist his support in Scaruoli's affair.¹⁵⁵ At the end of May, after receiving the abovementioned Senate's letters over the dispute, the bailo delivered them to the grand vizier and presented him the decision of the Venetian government over the dispute. The grand vizier assured the bailo that he would submit them, together with the latter's new *arz*, directly to the sultan. Afterwards, at the beginning of June, the bailo reported that the sultan had responded favorably to the Venetian letters. Unfortunately, the rubrics of the *dispacci* which cover these events give us little information on this last important phase of the dispute. In August, to the bailo's gratification, the sultan finally issued a new *nişan-ı hümayun*, against both Scaruolis. It, basically, reinstated the arguments of the previous *nişan*, which had ordered to John and Marino Scaruoli not to continue their claims against Venice.¹⁵⁶

After the last imperial order, the dispute lost much of his importance for both the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities, although it did not end immediately. Both John and Marino Scaruoli continued to be mentioned in the baili's *dispacci* and in the Senate's letters for some years, albeit less frequently. In few occasions, they again appealed to Imperial Divan to ask for compensation from the baili for the confiscated Valonias, especially when a new grand vizier and a new bailo took office. However, they did not manage to obtain any support from Ottoman ministers. A clear proof the declining relevance of their case is the lack of further royal orders over the dispute.

Illegible *dispacci* for several years from 1590 to 1595 also complicate a further

¹⁵⁵ Senato Dispacci, Costantinopoli, Copie Moderne, registro 7, p. 18, on date 23 March 1588. In many *dispacci* the baili lamented that John Scaruoli managed to send directly to the sultan his *ruk'as* through the help of "some palace aghas" supporter of his. Mehmet Agha might have been among those aghas indeed.

¹⁵⁶ LST, filza IV, No 452, it dates *evail-i ramazan* 996, that is, 14/23 August 1588.

reconstruction of their activities in those years. However, if their grievances for the confiscated Valonias dropped, they were embroiled in other disputes with Venetian subjects. In December 1588, the bailo reported that they had again been appointed tax-farmers of the customs duties on Valonias and the collection of some taxes in the Peloponnese. We do not know how they managed to obtain that office. In this new position, they harassed some Venetian merchants purchasing Valonias and other goods in that peninsula, and the bailo complained to the Ottoman authorities about their actions. This new dispute, together with others involving our two protagonists and the Venetian merchants and authorities, dragged on for some years, at least until the death of John Scaruoli in Patras in October 1595.¹⁵⁷ These cases await further research.

We should keep in mind that the case that we have discussed here was just one among many other commercial and political disputes which strained the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice during the 1580s. A cursory glance at even just one series of *dispacci* allows the historian to have an idea of the myriad of issues between those two states in those years. Undoubtedly, our dispute had been a serious affair, especially in 1586 and 1587 when it took a dangerous turn with the arrest of the Venetian dragoman, but, nevertheless, it was not unique. During that decade, far more threatening issues threatened the peace agreements between the two polities, such as the activity of pirates and corsairs in the Adriatic and the Aegean, as the next dispute will show.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ SDC, filza 28. It contains several *dispacci* on this new dispute between the two Scaruolis and some Venetian merchants. For John Scaruoli's death see Senato Dispacci Costantinopoli, Rubriche, filza 6 (unnumbered), in date 12 October 1595.

¹⁵⁸ For an overview of these issues see Faroqhi, *The Venetian Presence*, p. 354-368, Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats*, p. 177/178.

CHAPTER THREE

BOSNIAN MERCHANTS VICTIMS OF THE USKOKS AT END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

The protagonists of this second dispute are a group of Muslim Bosnians who traded with Venice in the last decades of the sixteenth century. They were among the numerous Ottoman subjects who were engaged in international trade with the Republic of Venice after the end of the War of Cyprus (1570-1573). In October 1587, while they were sailing from Venice to the empire on a ship escorted by a Venetian armed galley, they were attacked, robbed and taken captive by Uskok pirates in southern Dalmatia. After being released, they brought their case to Istanbul where they complained with the Ottoman authorities that the Venetians escorting them had collaborated with the pirates in the attack, and they demanded compensation for their losses from the Venetian diplomatic representative in Istanbul, the *bailo*. Their charges were rebutted by the bailo and their case turned into a serious diplomatic crisis between the Ottoman and Venetian governments which involved numerous political personalities. Their case was one of the numerous disputes that arose between the two states because of the attacks of the Uskok

pirates at Ottoman merchants in the Adriatic in the second half of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁹

As in the previous chapter, I will reconstruct the case mainly on the basis of the diplomatic correspondence (*dispacci* and *Senato deliberazioni*) between the Venetian government and its bailo in Istanbul. Several extant Ottoman documents will also be employed. While there are several other disputes involving attacks of Uskoks on Ottoman subjects, this case is one of the best documented, especially in the Ottoman documents. Before describing the dispute, I will provide a brief overview of the Ottoman trade in the Adriatic Sea and the Uskok threat in the last decades of the sixteenth century in order to locate our dispute into a broader historical context.

The Adriatic Trade and the Uskok Threat in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century

In the aftermath of the Peace of 1573, two important developments in the Adriatic Sea affected both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice: the growth of the Ottoman trade with the Republic of Venice and the intensification of the Uskok piracy.

After 1573 and until the onset of the War of Crete in 1645, the Ottoman trade with Venice boomed. The merchants were mostly Ottoman subjects (*reaya*) from Bosnia and Anatolia, although we find also numerous Ottoman officials (*askeri*), like *çavuşes*, provincial governors, and even grand viziers.¹⁶⁰ The most important commercial

¹⁵⁹ Between 1580 and 1618, one third of the thirty Ottoman envoys who went to Venice were sent specifically to complain about the aggressions of the Uskoks and to recover robbed goods. Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia*, (Venice, Deputazione editrice, 1994), p. 208/209.

¹⁶⁰ Eric Dusteler, "Commerce and Coexistence: Venetian and Ottoman Merchants in the Early Modern Era," *Turcica*, 34 (2002): 105-133, Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima", in *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986), p. 191-217. Pedani

development was the opening of the port of Split at the end of the sixteenth century thanks to the initiative of the powerful Jewish merchant Daniele Rodrigo. The growth of the new port was jointly promoted by both the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities. The Venetians protected the merchants from pirate attacks by deploying armed ships in protection of the merchant galleys departing from and arriving to Split; while the Ottomans protected the land routes and encouraged their merchants to go to Split instead of other ports along the Dalmatian coast. Soon after its establishment, the port of Split, in severe competition with Dubrovnik, became the main hub for the goods coming from the Ottoman Balkans and directed to the Italian peninsula. It reached its apogee in the first decades of the seventeenth century.¹⁶¹

The Uskok pirates seriously threatened Ottoman trade with Venice in the Adriatic. They were mostly refugees from the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans in the sixteenth century, and they had their operative base in Senj (Segna in Italian and Seng in Ottoman Turkish) in the northern Adriatic, within the borders of the Habsburg Empire. In principle they were supervised by the Habsburg archdukes of Styria and were counted as militiamen serving on the imperial military frontier against Ottoman attacks. However, Habsburg control over their activities was often nominal. Their foremost sources of livelihood were booty and ransom of the captives taken during their raids. From Senj they attacked Ottoman territories in the Dalmatian region as far as the borders of the Republic of Dubrovnik. Ottoman subjects of whatever religion were the main targets of their raids. In particular, they attacked the cargoes of the numerous

Fabris, "Between Diplomacy and Trade: Ottoman Merchants in Venice", in Faroqhi Suraiya/ Veinstein Gilles (eds), *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, Paris-Louvain-Dudley (Peeters) 2008, pp. 3-21 (Collection Turcica, XV).

¹⁶¹ Paci Renzo, *La "scala" di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra cinque e seicento* (Venezia: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1971), p. 45-46. See also Vera Costantini, "Commerci ed economie nell'Adriatico d'età moderna" in Gherardo Ortalli and Oliver Jens Schmitt (eds) *Balcani occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo / Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaum und Venedig (13. - 18. Jahrhundert)* (Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2008), p. 363-372.

merchants sailing to and from the Ottoman port of Gabela located in the *sancak* of Hersek (Herzegovina) in the estuary of the river Naretva. However, they also threatened the subjects of the Christian states in the Adriatic, above all Dubrovnik and Venice. For them, the latter's policy of appeasement towards the Ottomans and the intense trade between the two states was a justification for attacks.

The attacks of the Uskoks against Ottoman territory and merchants in the Adriatic Sea were a serious source of contention between Venice and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶² After the Peace of 1573, Venice endeavored to patrol the Adriatic in order to provide security to the merchants against the attacks of the numerous corsairs and pirates infesting these waters. As we shall see in this chapter, the nature of this commitment was continuously debated by the Ottoman and Venetian authorities. In return for such commitment, Venice obtained that the Ottoman fleet would not penetrate into the Adriatic.¹⁶³ In many cases, the Uskoks, in their attacks against Ottoman subjects, passed through Venetian territories and were helped by Venetian subjects. In other cases, Venetian captains whose job was to protect Ottoman and other merchants against the Uskoks and other pirates engaged in piracy themselves.¹⁶⁴ From the 1580s onwards, the Uskoks' aggressions increased notably. Many Ottoman merchants who had been robbed by them submitted their grievances to the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul and Bosnia, and asked for compensation for their losses, since, according to them, the Venetians had

¹⁶² Bracewell Catherine Wendy, *The Uskoks of Senj: piracy, banditry, and holy war in the sixteenth-century Adriatic*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 175-236. This is the most complete study on the Uskoks so far. For a history of the Uskoks based on Ottoman sources see Idris Bostan, *Adriyatik'te korsanlık: Osmanlılar, Uskoklar, Venedikliler, 1575-1620* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Timaş, 2009).

¹⁶³ Tenenti Alberto, *Piracy and the decline of Venice: 1580-1615* (translated from the Italian, with an introduction and glossary, by Janet and Brian Pullan, London: Longmans, 1967), p. 4; Paci, *La "scala" di Spalato*, p. 65.

¹⁶⁴ The most known case is the attack, in 1584, of two Venetian commanders to a galley belonging to the Bey of Djerba. Antonio Fabris, "Un caso di pirateria veneziana: la cattura della galea del bey di Gerba (21 ottobre 1584)", *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 8 (1990), p. 91-112.

failed to protect them or, worse, had collaborated with the Uskoks.¹⁶⁵ The Ottoman government on many occasions reminded Venice of its obligation to provide safety on the sea and threatened to retaliate or to send a naval detachment to the Adriatic if the attacks did not stop.¹⁶⁶ This was something that Venice wanted to avoid at all cost since it would have undermined the city's age-old claim to dominion over the Adriatic Sea. Furthermore, an Ottoman fleet in that sea would have endangered the Republic's possessions in Dalmatia. Trying to avoid such military deployment became one of main occupations of the baili in Istanbul during the 1580s and 1590s. In order to avoid any serious complication with the Ottomans which could threaten the delicate peace, the Venetian authorities strove to fight the Uskoks by deploying war ships in the Adriatic, to retrieve robbed goods, and to free captives. In 1592, an admiral was appointed specifically to fight them: the *Provveditore generale in Golfo*. For Venice fighting the Uskoks was all the more complicated since they were officially Habsburg militiamen and Venice could not directly attack their base, Senj, in order not to complicate the already fragile relations with the archdukes of Austria. Repeatedly Venice asked the latter to halt the Uskoks' attacks. The Habsburgs usually did not intervene decisively against the Uskoks since the latter harmed both the Ottoman and the Venetians, who were their rivals in the Balkan and Adriatic. In the end, suppressing the Uskoks became one of the main reasons that led the Republic of Venice to wage war against the Archdukes of Austria in 1615 (Uskok War, 1615-1617).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Views on Corsairs and Piracy in the Adriatic," in *The Kapudan Pasha. His Office and his Domain*, edited by Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: University of Crete Press, 2002), p. 357-371.

¹⁶⁶ Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, p. 257. For instances in archival sources see Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Documenti Turchi (DT), busta 8, No 949, and Senato Dispacci Costantinopoli (SDC) filza 30, No 1/6/11.

¹⁶⁷ Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, p. 281-303.

The Unfolding of the Case

Venice: January and February 1588

In January 1588, Halil Agha, the steward (*kahya, chiecaia* in the Venetian sources) of the governor-general (*beylerbeyi*) of Bosnia Ferhad Pasha¹⁶⁸, arrived to Venice with a merchant from Sarajevo called Mürüvvet. The envoy delivered to the Venetian government a letter from Ferhad Pasha, together with a *hüccet* written by *kadı* of the port of Gabela, Hayrettin bin Veli, about an attack of the Uskoks on a ship carrying twenty five Bosnian merchants from Venice back to the empire.¹⁶⁹ Both the documents were issued under the request of the relatives and business partners (*şeriks*) of the aggrieved merchants. The attack took place in October 1587 at the east cape of the Venetian-held island of Hvar, in southern Dalmatia (today in Croatia, Lesina in Italian and Fâr in Ottoman Turkish). According to the letter and the *hüccet*, the merchants, during their journey from Venice back to the empire on a ship captained by the Venetian Marco Scura, stopped in Hvar. There, they asked the admiral of the Venetian fleet in the Adriatic Sea (*Capitano del Golfo, Körfez Kapudanı* in the Ottoman documents), who was in the proximity of that island, to provide them with an armed galley to escort their ship to the mouth of the river Naretva, in Ottoman territory. Under payment, they were granted an armed galley led by the Venetian Captain Giovanni

¹⁶⁸ Ferhad Pasha Sokolović (d. 1590). He was *sancakbeyi* of Klis in Dalmatia between 1570 and 1574, then *sancakbeyi* of Bosnia 1574-1583, and finally *beylerbeyi* of the newly established *eyâlet* of Bosnia intermittently until his death. He was cousin of the famous grand vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (d. 1579). Fleischer H. Cornell, *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1986), p. 60/61 and 66/67.

¹⁶⁹ DT, busta 8, No 953 and 956. The letter of Ferhad Pasha is undated while the *hüccet* dates evail-i zilhicce 995, that is, between November 2 and 11 1587. Much more information about the episode is also present among the documents of the following investigation over the attack carried out by the Provveditor d'Armata Nicolò Surian. See Quarantia Criminal, busta 99, No 47. From this source we learn that the ship also carried five Jewish merchants who managed to flee from the Uskoks. We learn also that the merchant Mürüvvet lost 200 ducats in the attack.

Battista Calbo. During the voyage, they reached a locality called Skurye¹⁷⁰, in Venetian territory, where they stopped for the night. At night, about one hundred Uskoks, in agreement with the Venetian captain of the armed galley, attacked them with four boats.¹⁷¹ Three merchants were killed and the others were taken captive. Among the latter there was the above-mentioned Mürüvvet who later managed to flee from his captors. Most of the money and the goods carried by the merchants were robbed (4.000 florins, scarlet broad cloths, fabrics, and pearls valued 60.000 akçes), while the remainder of the load was delivered to the governor of Hvar by the captain of the armed galley. Two Ottoman *zimmis*, Nicola and Domenico, who were sailing close to the place of the attack when it took place, confirmed that version of the event before the *kadı* of Gabela. Ferhad Pasha wrote to the Venetian government that, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice was responsible for the security of the merchants on the sea.¹⁷² He stated that most of the capitals lost by the merchants belonged to Muslim pious foundations (*evkaf*) in Bosnia, from which the latter had borrowed the money for their commercial venture.¹⁷³ Then he added that the people who had lost capitals in the attack were on the whole about five hundred, and they had turned to him to seek justice. In the end he urged the Venetian government to retrieve the stolen goods and free the captives; otherwise, all those people would go to Istanbul and submit their grievances to the

¹⁷⁰ The place is the today small town of Sućuraj (San Giorgio in Italian), located on the east cape of the island of Hvar. In the Ottoman documents the place is mentioned as either *Skūriye limanı* or the *Skūriye nām kilise*, the latter probably derives by the still-extant Franciscan monastery in locus.

¹⁷¹ “*kadırga kapudamı uskoklarıyla yek-dil ve yek-cihet oldu*”.

¹⁷² “*Venedik beyleri sa ‘âdetlü padişâh hazretleri ile ‘ahd u amân üzerinedir deryâ yüzünde olan mesâfede cümle tüccârın hayâtlarına ve mâ-meleklerine hıfz eylemeye ta ‘ahhüd olunup ‘ahdnâme-i hümayün dahi böyle meşhûrdur*”.

¹⁷³ “*meblağ-i mezbûrun ekseri mu ‘âmele ile alınmış māl vakûr fukarâ hakkıdır*”.

sultan.¹⁷⁴ In Venice, this version of the event was also narrated before the Venetian authorities by above-mentioned Mürüvvet, the merchant who had escaped his captors.

The captain of the merchants' galley, Marco Scura, was not taken captive and he brought the merchant galley back to Hvar where the Venetian authorities made an inventory of the goods that had not been robbed by the Uskoks.¹⁷⁵ In January 1588, Marcantonio Pisani, the Venetian admiral charged with fighting the Uskoks (*Capitano alla guardia contra Uscocchi*) managed to free seven captive merchants from Senj, the base of the Uskoks in Habsburg territory, and recovered some of the robbed goods. He delivered them to some officials of the *sancak* of Klis.¹⁷⁶

On February 2, the Venetian Senate replied to Ferhad Pasha. Firstly, it denied that the Venice was obliged to guarantee the security of the sea but stated that regardless of that Venice strove to persecute the Uskoks and to protect the merchants coming from the empire through any means possible.¹⁷⁷ Secondly, it denied that the captain of the galley escorting the merchants had made common cause with the Uskoks, and stated that he and his men had tried to repel the assailants but they had been eventually overcome. This version of the attack was later confirmed, before the Ottoman *emin* (collector of the custom duties) of Zadar, by Mürüvvet and those merchants who were taken captive and freed later by the afore-mentioned Venetian admiral Pisani. The *emin* issued a written declaration in the name of the merchants over their release by the Venetians. Furthermore, the Senate stressed to Ferhad Pasha that the Uskoks were

¹⁷⁴ “eğer mezbûrların emvâlleri görülmezse sa’âdetlü padişâh hazretlerinin asitâne-i sa’âdet aşiyanlarına varup şekvâ etmeleri mükarrer”.

¹⁷⁵ DT, busta 8, No 978, in date 21 November 1587.

¹⁷⁶ DT, busta 8, No 955. His letter from Zadar to the Venetian government dates January 22 1588. For the details of the release of the merchants from the Uskoks see the aforementioned Quarantia Criminal, busta 99, No 47.

¹⁷⁷ “potemo affirmarle non essere vero, che noi habbiamo alcun obliigo di assicurare il mar”.

subjects of another state and, despite the Venetian authorities in the Adriatic resolutely repressed them, they could not be eradicated. Upon dismissing the Ottoman envoy, the Venetian government, as a sign of good faith, gave him several gifts and money for himself and Ferhad Pasha. The Senate also wrote to bailo in Istanbul Giovanni Moro¹⁷⁸ to report him the event in detail.¹⁷⁹

The issue of Venice's alleged guarantee of safety for the merchants in the Adriatic Sea deserves analysis. Throughout this dispute, as well as in all the numerous cases of pirates' attacks on Ottoman merchants in that sea, it was one of the main sources of contention between the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities. The Bosnian merchants and several high-ranking Ottoman officials maintained that, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice had to guarantee the safety of all the merchants sailing in the Adriatic Sea and to pay compensation for losses arising from pirates' attacks. This was denied by the Venetian government and the bailo in Istanbul. The *ahidnames* granted to Venice by the Ottoman Sultans contained only general reciprocal obligations about suppressing pirates and denying them shelter in their own ports and territories. Two articles of the *ahidname* of 1575 deal with piracy:

“(Venedikler) eğer ittifak düşüp harāmī levend gemisine buluşup o harāmī gemisi bunlara kasd idüp ceng ile harāmī gemisi bunlar gālip olalar”.

¹⁷⁸ Bailo between 1587 and 1590.

¹⁷⁹ Senato Deliberazioni Costantinopoli (SDelC), Registro 7, foli 86-89. The *kahya* Halil asked to the Venetian government help in advancing his position in the Ottoman administration in the *eyalet* of Bosnia. The latter complied with that probably wishing to encourage him to report to Ferhad Pasha about his expedition on behalf of Venice. Several Ottoman envoys to Venice asked for help in advancing their career in the Ottoman administration. Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore*. p. 86/87. Other archival series, like the series of the dispatches sent by the Venetian governors (*rettori*) of the Dalmatian cities and of the naval authorities in the Adriatic (*provveditori*) may produce further details over the attack and its aftermath. Unfortunately, when I sojourned in Venice in March 2013, those series were under restoration due to rainwater damages.

“gayri vilāyetin dahi harāmī barçalarına ve kadirga ve gayri gemilerine duş geldikleri vaktin venedik kendü adaların ve limanlarına ve hisārlarına sığındırmayıp durgurmaya tutmak mümkün olursa mecāl virmeyüp tutup hakklarından geeler”.

Another article could be applied to the attacks of pirates, and it was indeed used against Venice later in this dispute. It is rather ambiguous. It states that the captains of Venetian ships travelling to the Ottoman Empire must appoint guarantors. If they commit any hostile acts against Ottoman subjects and territories, their guarantors (*kefīl*) must pay compensation.

“Venedik cānibinden dahi deryā yüzüne gemiler çıka venedik kapudanı bile olmaya re ‘isler muhkem kefīl virdikten sonra memālik-i mahrūseme zarar ve ziyān irişdilerse olan zarar ve ziyān kefilleri vireler eğer kefilsiz giderlerse mücrim ve günāhkār olalar muhkem hakklarından gelir”¹⁸⁰

However, none of the Venetian *ahidnames* contains Venice’s obligation to guarantee the safety of merchants on the sea or to compensate the victims of pirate attacks. In our case this issue, despite being hotly debated, remained unresolved and it continued to be a source of controversy in all the following disputes over attacks of the Uskoks and other pirates, as the next dispute will also show.

Istanbul: 1588/1589.

The release of the captive merchants and the recovery of part of their goods did not satisfy the merchants and their business partners who, sometime in summer 1588, came

¹⁸⁰ Hans Theunissen *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The Ahidnames. The Historical Background and the development of a Category of Political-Commercial* (“Eidos”, 1998, at <http://www.let.uu.nl/oosters/EJOS1.html.p.506/507>), p.506-507, and 512.

to Istanbul to submit their grievances directly to the Ottoman authorities there.¹⁸¹ Their affair was just one of the numerous disputes arising from the attacks of the Uskoks on Ottomans subjects with which the bailo was at that time dealing. On many occasions, he had to counters proposals for an Ottoman naval deployment in the Adriatic and the building of new fortresses along the Venetian-Ottoman borders in Dalmatia.¹⁸²

Although, it is not clear from our extant sources, the merchants must have met with the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha¹⁸³ to whom they submitted a petition. Ferhad Pasha too sent a letter on their behalf to the grand vizier. The Pasha started an investigation over the attack of the Uskoks. More important, they also submitted a petition to the sultan through their supporters in the imperial council (*divan-i hümayun*). The bailo, fearing their actions, at middle September, wrote a petition directly to the sultan to describe the event. He attached to the petition copies of the relations on behalf of Venice of the *kahya* Halil and the other Ottoman officials in Bosnia about the release of the captive merchants and the retrieval of part of their goods accomplished by the Venetian captains. All these documents were forwarded to the sultan by the Esther Handali, the *kira* (*chierazza* in the Venetian sources), or woman-servant, of the Queen Mother (*valide sultan*) Safiye.¹⁸⁴ Safiye Sultan (d. 1605), during the 1580s and 1590s, was one the main supporters of the Republic of Venice in Istanbul; and she played an important

¹⁸¹ Unfortunately the series of *dispacci* numbered 27 has not been preserved. Therefore, we do not know the activities of the Bosnian immediately after their arrival to Istanbul during the summer 1588.

¹⁸² For instance see SDC, filza 28, No 4, 10, and 14.

¹⁸³ Kanijeli Siyavuş Pasha (d. 1602). He had been Grand Vizier three times: 1582-1584, 1586-1589, and 1592/1593. Jan Schmidt "Siyāvūsh Pasha" *EI*, 2nd ed.

¹⁸⁴ SDC, filza 28, No 8, in date 23 September 1588. On Esther Handali and the and other *kiras*, as well as on the relationship between the baili and Safiye Sultan, see Pedani Fabris, "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy", *Turcica* 32, (2000), p. 12/13 and 17-19; and "Relazione di Lorenzo Bernardo" in Pedani Fabris *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, vol. XIV: Costantinopoli relazioni inedite (1512-1789)* (1996, Padua: Ausilio), p. 346. On the diplomacy of Safiye Sultan with foreign rulers see also Leslie Pierce *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 218-228.

role in this dispute since the bailo, through her *kiras*, sent her petitions to seek her support and mediation with the sultan on behalf of Venice.

At the beginning of November, Siyavuş Pasha called the bailo to his residence to discuss the dispute in presence also of the Bosnian merchants. One of them reported to the Pasha the circumstances of the attack of the Uskoks for which he blamed the Venetian galley escorting them. He claimed that the value of their lost goods amounted to 50.000 ducats. The bailo decried him and the other merchants as “bold (*impudentissimi*) enough to tell such falsehoods” even after the Venetians had rescued them from captivity and retrieved part of their goods. He then presented the written declarations (*fedi*) of the merchants about their release. The Pasha dismissed the merchants and continued to discuss with the bailo. He told the latter that, even though he believed to the documentation provided by the bailo, the merchants needed to be compensated for their losses otherwise they would continue to turn to the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul. He also upheld the merchants’ claim that the Venetian escort galley had been responsible for the event and urged the bailo to do justice.¹⁸⁵

On October 8, the bailo reported that the Bosnians went to the Divan to ask for compensation from the bailo for their losses. They claimed that their goods were kept by the Venetian captain who had betrayed them. The following days the grand vizier communicated to the bailo’s chief dragoman that the sultan had responded to the merchants’ and the bailo’s petition by ruling for a compensation to the merchants. Two days later the merchants went to the bailo’s residence in Pera with a *çavuş* to demand their payment. The bailo countered them by stating he would discuss the affair with the grand vizier and assured them that if Venice did recover their goods, it would deliver them. At audience with Siyavuş Pasha, the bailo was submitted the royal ruling for

¹⁸⁵ SDC, filza 28, No 14, in date 7 October 1588.

compensation, a letter of Ferhad Pasha over the affair, and a *hüccet* obtained by the merchants from the *kadı* of Herceg Novi, a port in the *eyalet* of Bosnia (today in Montenegro). The Pasha urged the bailo to recover the robbed goods and also to punish the captain of the Venetian escort galley. The bailo again rebutted the accusations brought against Venice by the merchants as falsehoods (*inventioni*) and told the grand vizier that he would await orders from the Venetian government. Before being dismissed, the bailo submitted a petition to the Pasha in which he described the event arguing against any allegation against the Venetian captains and stressing the efforts of the Republic in fighting the Uskoks. After being dismissed, the bailo met also with the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia, Mehmet Pasha¹⁸⁶, one of the main supporters of Venice in Istanbul at that time and, according to the bailo's account, a rival of the grand vizier. Mehmet Pasha told the bailo that the grand vizier wanted to end the dispute as soon as possible since the merchants continued to turn to him at the Public Divan and at his residence. He assured the bailo of his support in the dispute and that he would make offices with the grand vizier in order to convince him to dismiss the merchants. He also warned the bailo that the merchants had found a powerful supporter in the Divan, Ibrahim Pasha¹⁸⁷, who at that time was the third-ranking vizier. This Pasha had been highly critical of Venice in the issue of the Uskoks and was one of the foremost

¹⁸⁶ Doğancı Mehmet Pasha (d. 1589). He was a favorite (*musahib*) of sultan Murad III. Günhan Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites at Courts of Ahmed I (r.1603-1617) and His Immediate Predecessors* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2010), p. 175-194.

¹⁸⁷ Damat Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1602). Jack Parry, "Ibrahim Pasha Dāmād", in *EI*, 2nd ed. His brother, Ali Bey, was the *sancakbeyi* of Herzegovina, a territory frequently raided by the Uskoks. Through Ibrahim, Ali, on several occasions, complained with the Venetian authorities in Dalmatia and the bailo about those aggressions, and threatened to retaliate against Venetian territories and build fortresses there.

promoters of an Ottoman naval presence in the Adriatic Sea.¹⁸⁸ Iso in the previous dispute he had been a key supporter of the merchants in dispute with Venice.

To complicate the negotiation of the affair, in mid November, Ferhad Pasha, recently dismissed from the *beylerbeyilik* of Bosnia, arrived to Istanbul with his *kahya* Halil and a large retinue. Ferhad Pasha had had hitherto difficult relations with the Venetian government and its officials in Dalmatia due to border disputes and, above all, the numerous attacks of the Uskoks against Ottoman territories and subjects. Once in Istanbul, he encouraged the merchants to seek justice for their losses and spoke on their behalf with the grand vizier. During a session of the Divan, they asked Siyavuş Pasha to try the bailo and force him to pay them. The Pasha then called the *kadiasker* of Rumelia (*Cadileschiero* in the Venetian sources) to ask him whether it was legal to try the bailo in accordance with the *ahidnames*. The latter's answer was negative since the bailo was there only to report (*scrivere et riferire*) to his government and to the Ottoman sultan and grand vizier.¹⁸⁹

On December 2, the *kahya* of Ferhad Pasha Halil went to the bailo's residence to discuss the affair. Halil reported to the bailo his expedition to Venice and he expressed regret for the accusations brought against Venice by the Bosnian merchants. He stated that the Venetian government could not be held accountable for the latter's losses. However, he blamed both the captain of the ship and the admiral against the Uskoks, Pisani, for the attack. He then claimed that the documents issued by the *emin* of Zadar and the merchants about the efforts of the Venetian captains against Uskoks were compiled under threats from the Venetian officials. He also claimed that some goods of

¹⁸⁸ SDC, filza 28, No 20, 21, and 23, the first two in date 22 October and the last in date 3 November. We have the Italian translation of the letter of Ferhad Pasha and the *hüccet* of the *kadi* of Hercegnovi in the *dispaccio* No 21.

¹⁸⁹ SDC, filza 28, No 27, in date 17 November 1588.

the merchants were in Hvar and that, when he was going from Venice back to the empire, he was brought by the Venetian captains to Zadar and not to the previous locality. Therefore, he could not recover the goods kept there and blamed those captains for that. He then asked the bailo to retrieve those goods. The bailo contested his charges against the Venetian admirals but assured him that if they were true, Venice would recover the lost merchandise as soon as possible. Halil then proposed to the bailo to pay a certain sum of money to the merchants (500 ducats each), before recovering their goods kept in Hvar, in order to end the dispute immediately; otherwise, he warned that the latter would continue to seek justice in Istanbul. The bailo refused that proposal maintaining that he needed precise orders from Venice in favor of that payment¹⁹⁰. The following day the bailo, together with Halil, met with the grand vizier. Halil reported the episode to the Pasha in detail who expressed satisfaction that the Venetian government was not directly responsible for the attack. He then urged the bailo to write immediately to Venice to ask for a quick retrieval of the merchandise in Hvar. Outside of the meeting room, the merchants were expecting the outcome of the debate, and, as soon as Halil came out, they complained to him about his relation on behalf of Venice to the grand vizier and threatened to continue to demand for compensation.¹⁹¹

On December 6, Ferhad Pasha, to the relief of the bailo, left Istanbul for Hungary. Despite the offices of the *kahya* for Ferhad Pasha and his relation to the grand vizier on behalf of Venice, the Bosnians continued to seek compensation from the bailo. They went to the Divan, to the grand vizier's residence, and they also wrote another petition (*ruk'a*, *rocà* in the Venetian sources) to the sultan. The bailo, ordered by the Venetian

¹⁹⁰ SDC, filza 28, No 34, in date 3 December 1588.

¹⁹¹ SDC, filza 28, No 36, in date 5 December 1588. The account of Halil to the bailo is also partly verified by a letter sent by the Venetian government to the governor of Hvar in January 1589. SDeIC, reg. 7, f. 147.

government, endeavored to obtain an imperial order from the Pasha to conclude the dispute and to dismiss the charges of the merchants. In mid December, the bailo met with his informant Benveniste. He was the Jewish physician of Siyavuş Pasha, and he was a key informer of the Republic of Venice and a supporter of Venetian interests in the Ottoman capital.¹⁹² He played an important role in the dispute since the bailo repeatedly asked him to mediate with the Pasha on Venice's behalf, and obtained from him information about the dispute. Benveniste told the bailo that the merchants had supporters within the royal palace who forwarded their petitions directly to the Sultan. He then told him that the grand vizier supported Venice and wanted to end the dispute immediately, since he was continuously harassed by the merchants. He also wished to punish them for the falsehoods that they had told him. However, he was prevented from that since the merchants continued to enjoy the support of the sultan, who, as we have seen, had before ruled for compensation for their losses. The dissatisfaction of the merchants harmed Siyavuş's reputation vis-à-vis the Sultan, and he feared to appear to have taken money from the bailo to favor Venice in the dispute.¹⁹³ He proposed to the bailo to send a *çavuş* to Venice with a royal letter on the case. This was something the bailo and the Venetian government wanted to avoid. Similarly, the merchants did not want that expedition since they preferred to obtain fast redress from the bailo. In the end, Benveniste also told the bailo that the Pasha wanted him to pay something to the merchants in order to stop them from harassing him. Also the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia,

¹⁹² “Relazione di Gianfrancesco Morosini” in Eugenio Alberi ed., *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato* (18 vols. Florence: Società Editrice, Fiorentina, 1839–1863), Vol. IX, p. 294, and Pedani Fabris, “Relazione di Lorenzo Bernardo” *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, vol. XIV: Costantinopoli relazioni inedite (1512–1789)* (1996, Padua: Ausilio), p. 341. See also Francesca Lucchetta, “Il Medico del Bailaggio di Costantinopoli fra terapie e Politica, Secc.XV-XVI” in *Veneziani in Levante: Musulmani a Venezia* (supplemento di *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, n°15, Roma: Herder 1997), p. 17-19; and Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret diplomacy, Mediterranean go-betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg rivalry* (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Georgetown University, 2012), p. 305.

¹⁹³ “perchè non si dica di haver mangiato dalla Serenità Vostra qualche centinaio di cechini”.

Mehmed Pasha, whom the bailo met soon after the meeting with Benveniste, suggested that he pay something to the merchants. In the following weeks, the Siyavuş Pasha and Mehmed Pasha repeatedly asked the bailo to satisfy the merchants, at least partly.¹⁹⁴

At the beginning of January 1589, Benveniste informed the bailo that the sultan, in response to the new petition of the merchants had again ruled, through a *hatt-i hümayun* (*Catimagine* in the Venetian sources) for their compensation. According to the sultan's order, if the bailo did not pay the merchants, he would be imprisoned and the goods belonging to Venetian merchants in Istanbul would be confiscated. Siyavuş Pasha did not carry out that order and this angered the merchants. To thank the Pasha and ask him to dismiss the merchants, the bailo sent him two thousand ducats. He also gave the Pasha a new petition for the Sultan. In it, the bailo wrote to the Sultan that the Venetian government was not responsible for the Uskoks' attack and stressed the efforts of the Venetian admirals for the release of the merchants. He maintained that, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice could not be held accountable for the harms caused by individuals.¹⁹⁵ He then proposed that, if the merchants blamed the Venetian captains for their losses, they should go to Venice to seek justice. Here the bailo clearly showed the legalistic attitude of the Venetian government toward the case that we have also seen in the previous chapter. The bailo and the Venetian government vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities always stressed the contents of the *ahidnames* and the proper functioning of the Venetian justice in order to defend their stance.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ SDC, filza 28, No 39 and 40, in date 18 December 1588. SDelC, reg. 7, f. 147, in date 4 February 1589.

¹⁹⁵ “*La Serenissima Signoria in essecutione delli Eccelsi Capitoli non può essere astretta per danno fatto da alcun particolare*”.

¹⁹⁶ SDC, filza 28, No 53, in date 10 January 1589. The bailo's petition for the Sultan is attached to the *dispaccio*.

The bailo's new petition did not have an effect and the merchants continued to seek compensation for their losses. In mid January, the grand vizier called the bailo's chief dragoman to the public Divan where the merchants and the two *kadiaskers* were present. The bailo feared that the latter would rule for compensation but, nonetheless, he sent his dragoman since he did not want to anger the grand vizier. Once there, the *kadiasker* of Rumeli, urged by the merchants, wanted to try the dragoman instead of the bailo. The dragoman responded that he, like the bailo, according to the *ahidnames* could not be prosecuted by the Ottoman law, and stated that he was not the proxy (*commesso*) of the bailo. He said that the bailo was only a representative of the Republic of Venice and not its public prosecutor (*procurator*), and, consequently, he had to wait for orders before taking any decision in the dispute. Then the *kadiasker* wanted to call the bailo to stand trial, but that was rebutted by the chancellor, the *nişancı*, who stated that was contrary to the *kanun* (*canon* in the Venetian sources) and the *ahidnames*. In the end, despite the insistence of the *kadiasker* on punishing the bailo, the grand vizier and the other Ottoman officials agreed to send to Venice a *çavuş* together with one of the aggrieved merchants with an imperial letter.¹⁹⁷

After this meeting, the bailo sent his dragoman to the *kadiasker* of Rumeli. They discussed the imperial letter written for the Venetian government. The *kadiasker* told the dragoman that, according to that letter, Venice had to compensate the merchants since it was responsible for all the losses suffered in the Adriatic Sea by the Ottoman merchants. He warned that, if Venice refused the payment, the Ottomans would send a fleet to that sea to fight the Uskoks and break the peace between the two states. He then urged the bailo to comply with the contents of that letter. The dragoman replied that, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice could not be forced into paying the merchants. The

¹⁹⁷ SDC, filza 28, No 53, in date 14 January 1589. The *nişancı* (*Cancelliere* or *Nissanci Bassà* in the Venetian sources) was another acquaintance and informant of the bailo.

bailo, in reporting to the Venetian government the threats of the *kadiasker*, wrote that he did not believe those threats since the Ottoman armies were engaged on other fronts, for instance, against the Safavids and in border skirmishes on the Habsburg frontier in Hungary.¹⁹⁸

Worried by the war threats, the bailo, at the end of January, met with Siyavuş Pasha. The bailo complained about the threats of war since he maintained that Venice in that dispute had showed loyalty and good faith and had behaved in accordance of the *ahidnames*. He asked for the modification of the imperial letter (*qualche alteratione*) for the Venetian government in order to eliminate those threats. The Pasha answered that the sultan had ordered three times to compensate the merchants, and that he refused to modify the wording of the imperial letter. Then he stated that the only solution to end the dispute was a mission to send to Venice a *çavuş* with some of the merchants. The bailo wanted to avoid that and asked to send the imperial letter personally instead of sending an Ottoman envoy, but this was refused by Siyavuş Pasha. After that meeting the bailo met with the Pasha's doctor Benveniste. The latter suggested that the bailo should comply with the sending of an Ottoman envoy to Venice; otherwise, he would be forced to pay the merchants. After that meeting, the bailo met with the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia Mehmet Pasha. The latter told him that Venice could not avoid compensation to the merchants since the sultan had ruled for it. He stated that their reimbursement was all the more important and unavoidable since the capitals lost by the merchants belonged to Muslim pious foundations (*beni di Moschee*). He also informed the bailo

¹⁹⁸ SDC, filza 28, No 54, in date 15 January 1589. The Italian translation of the imperial letter is attached to the *dispaccio*.

that the merchants had submitted the inventory of the capitals borrowed from the pious foundations.¹⁹⁹

The emphasis put by the merchants and the Ottoman authorities on the fact that the lost capitals belonged to pious foundations deserves analysis. The need of returning the money borrowed from foundations supporting mosques and providing livelihood to orphans was stressed in all the letters sent to Venice by the Ottoman authorities and during most of the negotiations between the latter and the bailo. Furthermore, we find this emphasis in many other disputes arising from pirate attacks on the Ottoman merchants in the Adriatic, as the following dispute will show. Two observations can be made. First of all, as Suraiya Faroqhi pointed out, debtors to *evkaf*, like our merchants, were required to repay the entire sum borrowed even if their commercial undertaking ended in disaster through no fault of their own. This is different from the commercial partnership (*mudarebe*), in which an investor provided capital to a travelling merchant and expected a large share of profit. According to this contract, a loss for which the travelling agent did not bear any responsibility was not reimbursed to the investor.²⁰⁰ Second, the legitimacy of the sultan might have been at stake in our case. Being the sovereign of a powerful Muslim empire the sultan was expected to be concerned with the welfare of the Muslim community. The decay of mosques and other pious foundations due to economical problems could hurt his image as the pious leader of the Muslim community. Therefore, religious legitimacy might have brought Murad III to rule in favor of the merchants on several occasions.

¹⁹⁹ SDC, filza 28, No 57, in date 26 January 1588. During their meeting, the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli thanked the bailo for the goods he had previously requested from Venice, and for the support of the Venetian government to some Jewish business partners of his in Venice.

²⁰⁰ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Bosnian merchants in the Adriatic" in *Ottoman Bosnia, A History in Peril*, edited by Markus Koller and Kemal Karpat (Madison: Center of Turkish Studies, 2004), p. 225-239, p. 244/245.

On January 26, the bailo met personally with the *kadıasker* of Rumelia.²⁰¹ He showed him all the documentation over the dispute produced in Venice. In particular, he showed him the declaration (*fedi*) of the merchants over their release and the recovery of part of their goods by the Venetian admiral Pisani. He stressed the success of the Venetian admiral and denounced the ingratitude of the merchants who blamed the Venetians for their losses. The *kadıasker* was convinced by those documents and told the bailo to submit those documents personally in the public Divan and ask for the punishment of the merchants. The bailo responded that he did not have the authority to go to the Divan, and asked the *kadıasker* to keep those documents and showed them in the public Divan to dismiss the merchants. The latter responded that he could not carry those documents to the Divan since he would seem too biased towards Venice; and suggested that the bailo should send him those documents when the merchants would appear in the Divan. The bailo thanked him for his stance and started to talk with him about the imperial letter written for the Venetian government. He lamented that it included a threat of war if the merchants were not compensated. That threat, he continued, resembled the one brought to Venice by Kubad Çavuş in 1570, which had led to the War of Cyprus. He asked the *kadıasker* to remove that threat from the letter since it was contrary to the peace between the two states and against the *ahidnames*. The latter assured the bailo that he would discuss the matter with the grand vizier. On the same day, the bailo asked also to the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia and to *nişancı* for an amendment of the imperial letter.²⁰² Some days later, the *kadıasker* informed the bailo that the Bosnians continued to appeal to the Divan and to the grand vizier's house, and that they proposed to send to Venice someone more authoritative than a *çavuş*, a

²⁰¹ He was Bostanzade Mehmet Efendi (d. 1598). He was *kadıasker* of Rumelia twice, 1580-1583 and 1587-1589, and then *şeyhülislam* twice, 1589-1592 and 1593-1598. *İslâm ansiklopedisi* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988-), Cilt 6, p. 311.

²⁰² SDC, filza 28, No 58, in date 27 January 1588.

Bosnian *çeşnigir* (taster in the Sultan's court) called Ibrahim who was close to them. This choice was approved by the grand vizier. The bailo communicated to the *kadiasker* that he opposed that choice since he deemed that person too close to the merchants and biased (*interessato*), and, therefore, potentially dangerous for the outcome of the mission. However, the sultan approved that choice.²⁰³

The threats of a new conflict were taken seriously by the bailo. Concurrently to his diplomatic efforts at settling the dispute, he endeavored to collect information over war projects against the Republic arising from this dispute as well as other attacks of the Uskoks. Above all, he strove to learn the Sultan's projects through the offices of Safiye Sultan and her *kiras*, to whom he repeatedly wrote petitions.²⁰⁴ In February, Safiye wrote to Venice to assure that the war rumors were baseless but urged it to pursue the alliance with the Ottoman Empire. Another palace authority, whose mediation with the sultan the bailo endeavored to obtain, was Gazanfer Agha, the Venetian-born chief of the white eunuchs of the royal palace (*kapı ağası* or *babiüsaade ağası*, Capi Agà in the Venetian sources).²⁰⁵ Although we do not have clear information about the actual role of Gazanfer in our dispute, his mediation with the sultan over a possible conflict with the Republic was sought by the bailo on several occasions.

In the weeks following the meeting with the *kadiasker*, the bailo endeavored to avoid the mission of Ibrahim to Venice. At the beginning of March, on several occasions the grand vizier sent *çavuşes* to the bailo to ask him to write letters of presentation for the Ottoman envoy. The bailo refused to those requests and asked to send the imperial letter

²⁰³ SDC, filza 28, No 62, and 68, in date, respectively, 11 and 25 February 1589.

²⁰⁴ SDC, filza 28, No 67 in date, respectively, in 23 February 1589. The previous *kiras*, Esther Handali, had died on 18 or 19 December 1588. Pedani Fabris, *Safiye's household*, p. 19.

²⁰⁵ For Safiye's letter see DT, busta 8, No 985. It is undated but it was received by the Venetian government in March 1589. On Gazanfer's relations with the bailo and the Venetian government see Pedani Fabris, *Safiye's household*, p. 14-27. SDC, filza 29, No 11, in date 1 April 1589.

personally. He then sent his chief dragoman to the Public Divan to criticize the choice of Ibrahim. After a long debate among the Ottoman officials, the grand vizier conceded to the possibility of appointing another envoy. More important, he agreed on writing a new imperial letter for the Venetian government.²⁰⁶

While the mission to Venice was debated, in March the Bosnians continued to come to the Divan to complain about the delay of the mission. They also submitted a new petition, the fourth, to the sultan when he went to the imperial mosque (Aya Sofya?) for the Friday prayer. Again, the sultan ruled for compensation. They presented the written order to the following session of the Divan, and they cried out that it was an utter outrage (*indignità*) that the royal order was not carried out. A tense discussion among the Ottoman authorities took place. At the end, the grand vizier dismissed them by saying that the bailo could not compensate them since he was only a representative of Venice.²⁰⁷ Toward the end of March, the bailo met with the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia. Besides confirming his support for Venice in that dispute, Mehmed Pasha told the bailo that the payment of the merchants was unavoidable because their lost capitals belonged to Muslim pious foundations and they had the backing of the sultan; hence the bailo should reach a compromise with them in order to end the dispute. He suggested that he should pay them 10.000 ducats apart from the 12.000 ducats they would receive in Venice for their goods retrieved by the Venetians. He then told him that the other viziers in the Divan had also agreed on that. The bailo then met with Ibrahim Pasha, who, as we have already seen, was a supporter of the merchants. He told the Pasha that he could not pay anything to the merchants. The former threatened him with sending a fleet into

²⁰⁶ SDC, filza 29, No 3, in date 10 March 1589.

²⁰⁷ SDC, filza 29, No 5, in date 24 March 1589.

the Adriatic Sea to attack the Venetian dominion there in retaliation, but then softened his words and urged the bailo to find a compromise with the merchants.²⁰⁸

At the beginning of April a major political event took place in Istanbul which also influenced our dispute. On April 1, the Janissaries and the *sipahis* received their three-month overdue salaries, but some of the *sipahis* were paid in debased akçes for which they blamed Mehmed Pasha, the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia. The following day, enraged, they staged a rebellion and marched to the Topkapı Palace where they forced the Sultan to execute Mehmet Pasha. Hence the name by which this event came to be known, the *beylerbeyi vak'ası*. Following that episode, Siyavuş Pasha was removed from his office of grand vizier and replaced by Sinan Pasha.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the *şeyülislam* (Müyyedzade Abdülkadir Efendi) was removed, and, much to the bailo's relief, he was replaced by the *kadıasker* of Rumelia, Mehmed Efendi, who, as we have seen, had proved sympathetic toward Venice in the dispute. Immediately after his appointment as grand vizier, the merchants came to Sinan Pasha's residence to report him their affair. They blamed the Venetians for their losses and asked also for a new imperial letter for the Venetian government.²¹⁰

Sinan Pasha proved more resolute in upholding the claims of the merchants than his predecessor. On April 12, a *çavuş* sent by the new grand vizier to the bailo's residence together with the Bosnian merchants urged the bailo to either compensate the merchants or send a representative of his to stand trial. The bailo refused to debate with the Bosnians and responded that he or his representatives could not be prosecuted by the Ottoman law.²¹¹ He then decided to meet with the grand vizier. Sinan Pasha told the bailo that, according to the

²⁰⁸ SDC, filza 29, No 9, in date 1 April 1589.

²⁰⁹ Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites*, p. 190-194. The third vizier Ibrahim Pasha and Cerrah Pasha were also removed from their offices. Koca Sinan Paşa (d. 1596). He had been Grand Vizier four times: 1581/1582, 1589-1591, 1593-1595, and once again in 1595. Dávid Geza, "Sinan Pasha Khodja", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

²¹⁰ SDC, filza 29, No 13 and 15, in date, respectively, 5 and 12 April 1589.

²¹¹ "che à me non s'apparteneva ne andare ne mandare alla giustizia".

ahidnames Venice was compelled to prosecute those who robbed Ottoman subjects and to return their goods. He asked the bailo to send to Venice one of his representatives together with the merchants, and to bring to Istanbul those Venetian captains whom the merchants had blamed for their losses in order to make them stand trial. The bailo did not reply to those requests but assured the Pasha that the Venetian government would handle the dispute according to the *ahidnames* and punish those of its subjects who had violated them.²¹² The Pasha then warned the bailo that if the Bosnians in Venice were badly treated and denied justice to them, they would be compensated with the goods belonging to Venetian merchants in the Ottoman Empire. He also threatened the bailo to break the peace and conquer Crete, the last important Venetian possession in the eastern Mediterranean. After some days, Sinan Pasha, in a move clearly aimed at pressuring the bailo, ordered the arrest of the bailo's physician (*medico di casa*) when the latter, together with the chief dragoman, went to his residence to discuss the affair. Thereafter, the release of his physician became one of the bailo's main occupations in Istanbul. In the following weeks as the merchants continued to turn to the Divan Sinan Pasha renewed his threats against the Republic. After those threats, the bailo began to carefully monitor the construction of new armed ships in the Istanbul arsenal (*tersane-i amire*) in order to gauge any evidence of an impending naval campaign.²¹³

At the beginning of May, the merchants brought to the Divan the *kadı* of Sarajevo, Hasan, recently arrived to Istanbul and charged by some *evkaf* from that city to supervise the return to those foundations of the capitals lost in the attack of the Uskoks. Before the Ottoman authorities, he testified that, since the removal from the mouth of the river Naretva of Ottoman ships after the Peace of 1573, Venice had guaranteed to compensate the Ottoman merchants who were attacked by the pirates. He also stated that there were written

²¹² “*la Serentia Vostra vederà la causa sua per giustitia, et faria castigar severamente chi si trovasse haver contrafatto alli Eccelsi Capitoli*”.

²¹³ SDC, filza 29, No 16 and 17, in date 13 and 27 April 1589.

declarations of that pledge in the Ottoman ports in those regions. The grand vizier then called the bailo's dragoman to hear the deposition of the *kadı* in the Divan. The latter also recounted the dispute of the galley of Ramazan Pasha, robbed by two Venetian captains in 1584, for which Venice had been forced to pay compensation to the victims and execute those captains, evidently in order to stress the obligation of the bailo to compensate the Bosnian merchants.²¹⁴ The merchants then wrote another petition to the Sultan in which they mentioned the deposition of that *kadı*. Sinan Pasha assured them that he would carry out the order of the Sultan. Upon the last menacing development, the bailo decided to meet with the Pasha the following day. He asked for the release of his physician but the Pasha stated he had to wait for the proper time. The Pasha then told the bailo that the merchants had written in their new petition to the sultan that he had received money and goods from the bailo to release the physician. He admitted his disdain (*sdegno*) for them.²¹⁵

The rest of May was spent in organizing the expedition to Venice. The aforementioned *kadı* Hasan, up on the request of the Bosnian *evkaf* that had lent money to the merchants, drew a register (*defter*) of their losses, which amounted to 32.000 akçes. He also communicated to the bailo that, upon the request of the merchants, he wanted to issue a *hüccet* (*cozetto* in the Venetian sources) which would oblige the bailo to respond for any damage suffered by the merchants during their expedition to Venice. The bailo refused that proposal. Sinan Pasha wanted the bailo to pay that sum but, he had to comply with a new order from the Sultan in favor of an expedition to Venice.²¹⁶

At the beginning of June, the bailo sent a petition to Safiye Sultan to ask for her help in releasing his physician. In that petition he reported the attack of the Uskoks and its

²¹⁴ Fabris, "Un caso di pirateria veneziana".

²¹⁵ SDC, filza 29, No 22, in date 6 May 1589.

²¹⁶ SDC, filza 29, No 29, in date 25 May 1589. The *defter* with the money borrowed by the merchant from the Bosnian *evkaf* was then carried to Venice by the merchants. Its original text is still located in the Venetian State Archives. DT, busta 8, No 953. Its text has been thoroughly studied by Faroqhi in "Bosnian merchants in the Adriatic".

aftermath in detail. The Valide forwarded the petition to the Sultan and later to the grand vizier. After some time, she sent the bailo the new imperial letter for the mission to Venice of the Bosnian merchants. The Sultan appointed a *sipahi*, called Bali, to deliver that letter to Venice together with the merchants. The Sultan also asked the bailo to free other four merchants who were still in captivity. Then, on June 6, the bailo met with the grand vizier. The merchants were also present. The bailo told the Pasha that those merchants were in Senj, in the Habsburg Empire, and stated that Venice could not intervene in that city. He, again, tried to avoid the expedition to Venice by maintaining that he had chosen an officer of his to carry that letter. After a long debate, Sinan Pasha refused the proposal of the bailo. He then asked him to pay the merchants 10.000 akçes for the expenditures of their journey and to accept a *hüccet* for the security of the merchants' lives in the Venetian territories. Both proposals were rejected by the bailo who stated that if he agreed to them he would be punished by the Venetian government. The bailo was afterward dismissed. In his *dispaccio*, the bailo reported that the grand vizier had soothed his stance toward Venice thanks to the pressure made on him by the Valide Sultan. Some days later, Sinan Pasha sent to the bailo his letter for the Venetian government and urged him to select someone to accompany to Venice the Ottoman envoy and the merchants.²¹⁷

After several weeks of debate, on June 24, the Ottoman envoy Bali, together with five Bosnian merchants left Istanbul for Venice. Before his departure, Bali was made *silahdar* (*silictar* in the Venetian sources), the sword-bearer in the royal palace.²¹⁸ The bailo, ordered by the Venetian government, had tried till the end to annul the expedition but the insistence of the grand vizier and, above all, the orders of the sultan forced him to comply with it. The bailo appointed his dragoman Mattea Salvago to accompany the Ottomans to Venice. Sinan

²¹⁷ SDC, filza 29, No 33 and 37, in date, respectively, 8 and 22 June 1586. The Italian translation of the new imperial letter is attached to the *dispaccio* No 33, while the letter of Sinan Pasha to No 37. The bailo promised to Safiye Sultan a crystal box to thank her for the support in this and in another disputes.

²¹⁸ For this office see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı devletinin saray teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1984), p. 342-348.

Pasha paid for the expedition (10.000 akçes) and demanded that sum from the bailo who, in the end, paid him only 1.000 as a sign of good faith.²¹⁹

Venice: Fall and Winter 1589/1590.

The group reached Venice at the end of August. During their long sojourn in Venice, Bali, his assistants, and the five Bosnians, sojourned in a mansion allocated to them by the Venetian government on the island of Giudecca. Among the five merchants, only one, the already mentioned Mürüvvet, had been present on the ship robbed by the Uskoks, while the others were business associates of the robbed merchants. On 29 August, Bali was welcomed in Palazzo Ducale by the Collegio to whom he submitted the imperial letters.²²⁰

The two letters, one by the Sultan and one by Sinan Pasha, basically reinstated the charges against Venice brought by Ferhad Pasha the previous year and then by the merchants during their negotiations with the Ottoman and Venetian authorities in Istanbul.²²¹ Both stated that, when the Ottomans had agreed not to deploy war ships in the Adriatic, the Venetians had guaranteed (*zamin*) for any losses on the sea suffered by Ottoman merchants and that pledge was included in the *ahidnames*. The Ottoman authorities blamed the captain of the Venetian escorting ship, Giovanni Battista Calbo, and the captain charged with suppressing the Uskoks, Marcantonio Pisani, for the attack. A different amount was given for the losses in each of the letters, 33.000 akçes in the sultan's and 60.000 in Sinan Pasha's. The sultan and the grand vizier demanded that the Venetian government to punish those responsible for the attack and return the

²¹⁹ SDC, filza 29, No 43 and 44, in date, respectively, 24 June and 7 July.

²²⁰ Collegio, Deposizioni Principi (CDP), registro 8, foli 153/154.

²²¹ Lettere e Scritture Turchesche (LST), busta IV, No 433 and 438. Unfortunately, due to the restoration of the series when I sojourned in Venice, I could not read the original text of the two letters. Consequently, I had to rely on their Italian translation.

robbed goods, or else the Venetians would violate the peace and the agreements between the two states (*'ahd u aman*). They also threatened to deploy a fleet in the Adriatic Sea. Finally, they also asked for the release of four merchants still prisoners of the Uskoks.

The negotiations between the Venetian authorities and Bali and the Bosnian merchants proved difficult and dragged on for several months until March 1590. Each phase was recorded in the Venetian sources in detail²²². The Venetian government appointed Vincenzo d' Alessandri, a low-ranking employee of the ducal chancellery (*nodaro ordinario della cancelleria ducal*), as its chief mediator. He was assisted by the Public Dragoman Michele Membrè²²³ and the aforementioned Mateca Salvago, one of the bailo's dragomans. Due to the length and the complexity of the negotiation, here we will report only its most important phases.

On September 6, Bali was called to the Collegio. He reported the whole dispute to the Venetian authorities and maintained that he was there not to debate over the affair but to learn the response of the Venetian government to the imperial letters. He asked for compensation for the merchants and for the punishment of the Venetian captains, both the captain of the escort galley and the admiral fighting the Uskoks. The Venetian authorities asked him to provide proofs against those captains, but assured him that they would investigate the issue and punish those found responsible for the Uskoks' attack.²²⁴ They then read aloud the declaration of the Venetian captain Pisani, over the release of the merchants from captivity in January 1588, the retrieval of part of their

²²² In CDP, reg. 8 and 9 we have an extensive account of all the phases of the negotiation.

²²³ On the important historical personality of Michele Membrè see Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 172-174.

²²⁴ "*La sua Serenità era pronta a fare buona, et presta giustizia*".

merchandise, and their return to Ottoman territories. The Venetian authorities stated that according to both that declaration and the imperial letters, that captain had released the merchants and returned part of the robbed goods. About the four merchants who were still held prisoner, they said that they needed more information. A few days after that meeting, the Venetian government informed Bali that it had called to Venice the two aforementioned captains in order to take them to trial to ascertain their responsibilities. They were then processed by the magistracy of the *Avogaria de Comun*.²²⁵

After that meeting, the negotiation took place mostly at the residence of Bali and the merchants. At least twice a week, until the end of the dispute in March 1590, the mediator d'Alessandri went there with the dragomans. The three foremost points of contention throughout the rounds of negotiation were the responsibility of two Venetian captains, above all the captain of the escort galley, the extent of the reparation demanded by the merchants, and the release of the four merchants still held captive in Senj.

About the first issue, Bali demanded a punishment for the two Venetian captains since their guilt had been declared in the official document produced by the Ottoman legal authorities. The Venetian mediator defended the captains and asked him for proofs (*giustificazioni*) against them. Furthermore he criticized the allegations against them in the Ottoman legal documents, since he stated that those documents were issued by people who favored the merchants.²²⁶ A related issue extensively discussed was Venice's accountability in pirate attacks. The Ottoman envoy maintained that, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice had to patrol the sea against pirates and that it had to pay compensation for the merchants' losses. On one occasion, Bali and d'Alessandri

²²⁵ CDP, reg. 8, f. 157-160; SDelC, reg. 7, fo. 167/168, in date 13 September 1589.

²²⁶ “*procurano li interessati con efficace maniera di essere favoriti dalli scrivani, perchè restino favorite le cause loro*”.

debated on the text of the *ahidnames* and the former dwelt on the aforementioned article which states that the guarantors (*kefils*) of the Venetian captains who had committed hostile acts against Ottoman dominions and subjects have to pay compensation. The Venetian authorities denied the obligation of redress. They maintained that, despite not being obliged by the treaties between the two states, Venice endeavored to fight the Uskoks but it was impossible to patrol the sea entirely. About the request of reparation, d'Alessandri proposed to deliver to the merchants the recovered goods, whose value amounted to 5.000 ducats, in addition to the other goods kept in Hvar. The merchants submitted the aforementioned *defter* over their losses to the Venetian authorities and declared they would accept only the sum written in that register. The sum that they demanded amounted to about 100.000 akçe. The last issue, that is, the release of merchants who were still remained captive, was the least debated. D'Alessandri repeatedly maintained that the Venetians, again according to the *ahidnames*, were not obliged to free them, especially since the Uskoks' base, Senj, was in Habsburg territory. This issue remained unresolved²²⁷.

The *silahdar* Bali, throughout the negotiations, employed different arguments and threats in order to make the Venetians comply with the merchants' demands. He warned the Venetian mediator that, if the merchants were not satisfied, they would continue to ask for redress in Istanbul, and the Ottoman authorities would force the bailo to pay them. He maintained that the grand vizier Sinan Pasha favored them and had threatened dire consequences against Venice, such a war or the confiscation of the goods belonging to Venetian merchants as compensation for the merchants' losses. He also argued with the mediator d'Alessandri that Venice should not threaten the peace with the Ottomans since he maintained that, at that time, there was a coalition of hostile powers, headed by

²²⁷ CDP, reg. 8 and 9, f., respectively, 170-175, and 1-10.

Spain and the Papacy, threatening to attack the Republic. He maintained that Venice needed the support of the Ottoman sultan to face that menace.²²⁸ To those threats, the Venetian mediator stressed the falsehood of the merchants' charges (*avanie*) against Venice, and the good faith showed by the Republic to the Sultan throughout the case, manifest in the release of the merchants and the ongoing investigation over the responsibility of Venetian captains in the attack. He also tried to win over the Ottoman envoy and influence the negotiation with gifts (Venetian fabrics) and sums of money.

On November 22, Bali was informed by the Collegio that the captain of the escort galley, Calbi, had been acquitted by the *Avogaria de Comun*. The other captain was also acquitted. The Venetian Senate informed the sultan and the grand vizier Sinan Pasha over the result of the two processes.²²⁹

Thereafter, the amount of the compensation remained the only hurdle to the settlement. After exhausting negotiations, on December 1, a first attempt to settle the affair took place: Bali told d'Alessandri that he had accepted to lower the demanded sum to 10.000 ducats, plus the goods kept in Hvar, and he promised to write letters to the Ottoman authorities over the settlement. The Venetian mediator refused that proposal on the grounds that the sum was far higher than the value of the retrieved goods, 5000 ducats, to which he decided to add another 3.000 ducats.²³⁰ In the following meetings, Bali continued to insist on the payment of a higher sum or on the delivery of Venetian luxury goods instead of money.

The length of the negotiation angered the merchants who pressured Bali to conclude the issue and obtain their compensation as soon as possible. In contrast of Bali, they had

²²⁸ CDP, reg. 9, f. 11-14.

²²⁹ CDP, reg. 9, f. 31/32, and SDeIC, reg. 7, fo. 179/180.

²³⁰ CDP, reg. 9, f. 38/39.

to pay for their sojourn and they were short of money. On several occasions, they clashed with him over his handling of the dispute and accused him of having conducted a secret agreement with the Venetians and of taking bribes from the latter in order to settle the affair on the latter's behalf. They threatened to report to Sinan Pasha against him. They also wanted to negotiate personally with the Venetian authorities since they did not trust Bali and wanted to be part of the agreement.²³¹

In the end, the final agreement was reached on January 1590. Venice paid the merchants 8.000 ducats for their retrieved merchandise, in addition to another 2.000 ducats as an "act of mercy" (*pietà*) and the goods kept in Hvar. In return, the *silahdar* Bali wrote two declarations (*temessük*), signed by all the five merchants, over the settlement and the payment for the Venetian and the Ottoman government. Furthermore, all the documents produced by the Ottoman authorities (petitions to Venice, *hüccets* from the Bosnian *kadis*) were delivered by Bali to the Venetian authorities in order to prevent that the Bosnian merchants and other Ottomans in dispute with Venice from employing them in future.²³²

According to the written declaration, the Venetian officials had inquired the role of the Venetian captain of the galley escorting the merchants' galley and had found him innocent. He had fought valiantly against the Uskoks when they attacked the galley, and the charges that he had collaborated with the latter were baseless.²³³ Furthermore, the Venetian galleys successfully pursued the Uskoks, punished them and recovered part of

²³¹ CDP, reg. 9, f. 51/52.

²³² CDP, reg. 9, f. 59-62; SDeIC, reg. 7, f. 184/185 and 190/191.

²³³ "*kadırğa re'isi cenk idüp makdûrun sarf eylediğinden gayri aslen ve cidden mezbûr harâmîlerle zıkr olunan kadırğa re'isi zerre kadar müşâveresi ve ma'rifeti olmayup ve bu hususta dahi dil uzadup hilâf-i hak söylenmiş ise tamam hilâf söylediler gayri vâki'dir*".

the robbed goods.²³⁴ Bali and the merchants then declared to have received the recovered goods from Venice.²³⁵ Then they stated that, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice is not compelled to compensate the merchant victims of the Uskoks and to rescue the prisoners since the pirates were subjects of another state²³⁶. Finally, they declared that they did not demand anything more from the Venetian government and its baili in Istanbul.²³⁷

At the beginning of March, Bali went to the Collegio where he received the letters of the Venetian governments for the sultan and the grand Vizier about the settlement and he was dismissed. Then, on March 17, the mediator d'Alessandri went to Bali's residence. He gave him some gifts (Venetian fabrics) in the name of the Venetian government, a usual practice for Ottoman envoys in Venice. Bali showed his gratitude for the treatment offered by the Venetian authorities and promised to report to the grand vizier on behalf of Venice. He also suggested to d'Alessandri that, in order to avoid the recurrence of a similiar dispute, given the frequency of the attacks of the Uskoks, the bailo in İstanbul should obtain an imperial order which would unmistakably declare that the, according to the *ahidnames*, Venice could not be held accountable for the aggressions of the Uskoks.²³⁸

²³⁴ “*Venedik beylerinin olan kadırgaları hemişe deryâ yüzüne yürüyüp ehl-i fesâd ve harâmîleri kovmakdan hâli olmayup ve ele getürdüklerini hakkından gelinüp ve mezbûrların buldukları esbâbın kurtardılar*”.

²³⁵ “*rızkları alup kabz eylediğimizin ikrâr-i sarîh ederiz*”

²³⁶ “*pâdişâh-i âlem-penâh hazretleriyle Venedik beylerinin mâbeynlerinde olan ahidnâme-i şeriflerinde bir şart yok ki harâmîler aldıkları nesneyi ödeyeler ve âhar beylerin vilâyetinde mahbûs olunan esîrleri kurtaralar*”

²³⁷ “*biz 'uhdemize alıruz ki ne beyler hazretlerinden ve ne bayloslarından aslen ve cidden nesne istenmeyüp rencîde etmeyeler*” DT, busta 8, No. 996. It dates evasıt-ı rebülahir 998, that is between 17 and 26 February 1590. The name of the five merchants are Mürüvvet bin Timur, Kasım bin Mahmud, İbrahim bin Mehmed, Hacı Şehman, and Ali bin Süleyman. We have two more versions of their declaration; see DT, busta 8, No 998 and 1000, the latter in the version of a petition to the Sultan. Bali wrote also a relation over his mission to the grand vizier Sinan Pasha. DT, busta 8, No 1000.

²³⁸ CDP, reg.9, f. 75/76, SDeIC, reg.7, fo. 190/191.

After that meeting, d'Alessandri together with Bali, his assistants, and the Bosnian merchants, embarked on a Venetian galley that brought them to Hvar. There, at beginning of April, the local Venetian authorities, through d'Alessandri's mediation, delivered to the merchants their recovered goods kept in locus. On April 13, Bali and the five merchants wrote a declaration (*temessük*) about the recovered goods. Then, they moved to Dubrovnik from where they continued their journey by land to Istanbul.²³⁹

Istanbul: Summer 1590, the Conclusion.

At the beginning of April, the bailo in Istanbul received the news about the agreement between the Bosnian merchants and the Venetian authorities. He soon submitted the declaration and the petition written by Bali, which the Venetian government had sent him, to the grand vizier, who in the previous months had insistently asked for news about the expedition to Venice. He asked the Pasha to forward the petition also to the sultan but the latter replied that he had to wait for the Ottoman envoy's return to Istanbul. However, the bailo managed to send those documents to the sultan through Safiye Sultan and her *kiras*. In the meantime, in mid June, the new bailo Girolamo Lippomano arrived to Istanbul.²⁴⁰

The *silahdar* Bali and the merchants reached Istanbul at the beginning of August. He promptly met with the new bailo to report the outcome of the expedition and to discuss about his impending relation to the grand vizier. He promised to write a new petition to the latter over the settlement under the promise of a sum of 200 thalers. The bailo was

²³⁹ DT, busta 8, No. 1007. It includes the inventory of the goods recovered in Hvar. In Dubrovnik Bali and the merchants declared before the Ottoman *emin* of that city, Ahmed, that the Venetians had fought against the Uskoks and they had recovered the robbed goods. That declaration, which survived in its Italian translation, dates June 18. DT, busta 8, No 994.

²⁴⁰ SDC, filza 31, No 11 and 21, in date, respectively, 14 April and 12 May 1590. Girolamo Lippomano was bailo in 1590/1591. SDC, fila 31, No 33, in date 26 June 1590. His predecessor, Giovanni Moro, left Istanbul at the beginning of July.

satisfied by the following report of Bali to Sinan Pasha.²⁴¹ Around the middle of September, the bailo reported that the merchants and their business associates had clashed before the grand vizier over the division of the goods and money that had been obtained from Venice. The latter was angered by the frauds introduced by each one of them in order to obtain higher shares, and threatened them to give those goods and money to the mosques of Istanbul. More important, the bailo reported that they were eager to continue pursuing their claims against Venice.

In order to avoid that possibility, he managed to obtain from the sultan a *name-yi hümayun* for the Doge about the final settlement of the affair. It was issued in response to the bailo's previous petition to sultan.²⁴² According to the *name*, the circumstances of the attack of the Uskoks had been satisfactorily investigated by the Venetian government, and the robbed goods had been delivered to the merchants. The Ottoman authorities had mistakenly accused the Venetians of wrongdoings since they were unaware of the circumstances of the attack and, from this point onwards, they were dropping all the accusations and complaints against Venice.²⁴³ The Sultan then stated that the aggrieved merchants had settled the dispute with Venice and, according to the document issued over the agreement (*temessük*), they did not demand anything more.²⁴⁴ If they did, the legal authorities would dismiss them.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ SDC, filza 31, No 47, in date 4 August 1590 and filza 32, No 1, in date 1 September 1590.

²⁴² SDC, fiza 31, No 8, in date 15 September 1590.

²⁴³ “*hilâf-ı vâki' her ne söyledik ise bilmediğimizden söylemiş idik min ba'd bu husûsa müte'allik Venedik beylerinden ve bayloslardan ve dragomanlardan ve gayrı Venediklülerden bir ferd ile aslâ ve kat'a da'vâ ve nizâ'ımız yokdur*”

²⁴⁴ “*bi't-tamâm haklaşup..aslâ ve kat'a da bir nesne talep ve iddi'â eylemezler*”

²⁴⁵ “*inde ül-hükkâm istimâ' olunmaz ahvâlleri ber-taraf olmuştur*”. Bailo A Costantinopoli (BAC), busta 250/330, in date evail-i zilka'de 998, that is, between 1-10 September 1590.

The imperial order ended the dispute. We do not find further reference to those merchants in the bailo's *dispacci*. However, the current bailo and his successors continued to be embroiled in numerous cases of attacks of the Uskoks against Ottoman territories and subjects.²⁴⁶ Again they had to counter the threats of an Ottoman naval deployment in the Adriatic and of breaking the peace. The settlement of our case did not solve the main point of contention of the dispute, that is, Venice's alleged guarantee of the safety of the merchants in the Adriatic Sea. The last imperial order did not clarify this issue and it continued to be a source of controversy between the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities in all the later disputes over the attacks of the Uskoks, as the following dispute will show.

²⁴⁶ For instance, see DT, busta 9, No 1050 and 1053.

CHAPTER FOUR

A SPANISH ATTACK ON THE OTTOMAN-VENETIAN TRADE IN THE ADRIATIC: BOSNIAN MERCHANTS IN DISPUTE WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE IN THE SECOND DECADE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

This dispute took place at the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century, during the sultanates of Ahmet I, Mustafa I, and Osman II. It began in 1617 in the Adriatic Sea with the attack of a Spanish fleet to two Venetian merchant galleys which were carrying numerous Ottoman merchants from Venice back to the empire. The aggrieved merchants then brought their case to Istanbul. They accused the Venetian government of having failed to defend them from the enemy and demanded reparations for their losses. The affair developed into a serious diplomatic crisis between the Venetian and the Ottoman governments. It became in fact one of most serious diplomatic crises between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of the Venice between the Peace of 1573, following the War of Cyprus, and the onset of the War of Crete in 1645. Many political personalities in the Ottoman Empire and all around Europe played a role in its unfolding and settlement: Spanish authorities in the Italian Peninsula, the Venetian government and its representatives in the Adriatic Sea and in Istanbul; Western Europe governments and their ambassadors in Istanbul; sultans, numerous grand viziers and other high ranking Ottomans; and also numerous merchants from the empire.

In this chapter, I will reconstruct the case relying mainly on Venetian and Ottoman sources. Of particular importance will be the correspondence between the Venetian government and its baili in Istanbul (*dispacci* and *deliberazioni del Senato*), and Ottoman diplomatic and legal documents (Sultan's *names*, *nişan-i hümayuns*, and *hüccets* from Istanbul tribunals). Because of the numerous high-ranking personalities involved, the role played by other Western European powers, the long and delicate phases of negotiation, and the gravity of affair for Ottoman-Venetian relations, this dispute produced an enormous amount of documents. Probably, further research in European archives, among them those in Netherland and Naples, would produce more material on this dispute and shed light on its broader international dimension. In this chapter, I will focus mainly on the negotiation process taking place in Istanbul between the baili and their Ottoman supporters, on the one hand, and the robbed merchants backed by numerous high-ranking Ottomans, on the other hand.

The Unfolding of the Affair

Dalmatia: Summer 1617

The dispute began in the summer of 1617 in the Adriatic Sea, during the Venetian/Habsburg war of 1615-1618 (called the Uskok War or War of Gradisca).²⁴⁷ In 1615 border disputes and the continuing activities of the Uskok pirates in the Adriatic had led the Venetian government to wage war against the Archduke of Austria. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Uskok piracy was highly detrimental to the

²⁴⁷ On this conflict see *Frederic C. Lane, Venice, a maritime republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 398-400, and Alberto Bin *La Repubblica di Venezia e la Questione Adriatica, 1600-1620* (Il Velcro Editrice, Roma, 1992), p. 101-105.

Venetian Republic since it harmed the navigation and trade in the Adriatic, and, above all, it threatened the delicate peace with the Ottoman Empire, since the Uskoks attacked the Ottoman territories in Dalmatia and the numerous merchants from the empire trading with Venice. Several times the Ottoman authorities demanded that the Republic either prevent Uskok attacks or allow the Ottoman fleet into the Adriatic.²⁴⁸ The latter possibility was repeatedly rejected by the Venetian government which claimed that the Adriatic Sea was under its political and military jurisdiction. During the war of 1615-1618, the Habsburg authorities enjoyed the support of the Spanish viceroy of the Kingdom of Naples, the Duke of Ossuna²⁴⁹, who contested the Venetian lordship of the Adriatic Sea.

In 1617 Ossuna, without an official endorsement by the Spanish government, mobilized a large fleet which during spring entered the Adriatic to attack the Venetian domains and shipping there in order to divert the Venetian forces from Istria and Friuli where the Venetians were fighting against the Habsburg forces. The Venetian fleet confronted it several times inconclusively. On July 15, the Spanish fleet achieved an important success against Venice by capturing two Venetian merchant galleys, which operated between Split (Spalato) and Venice. The trade route between Split and Venice had risen to preeminence at the end of the sixteenth century through the establishment and promotion of the port of Split by both the Venetian and Ottoman authorities.²⁵⁰ The galleys robbed by the Spanish fleet were travelling close to the shore between Zadar (Zara) and Sebenik (Sebenico) and were carrying numerous Ottoman merchants, mostly

²⁴⁸ Catherine Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: piracy, banditry, and holy war in the sixteenth-century Adriatic*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 289.

²⁴⁹ Pedro Téllez-Girón, third Duke of Ossuna (d. 1624). He was Viceroy of Naples between 1616 and 1620.

²⁵⁰ Renzo Paci, *La scala di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra cinque e seicento* (Venezia: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1971).

Bosnian Muslims, back to Split after they had traded in Venice. Although we cannot know precisely from our sources, probably many of the merchants on board were only commercial agents. The merchant galleys were guided by the Venetian captain Ottavio Dell'Oglio, who, since the 1590s, contracted the merchant galleys operating from Split.²⁵¹ Furthermore, like all the galleys operating between Split and Venice, they were guarded by Venetian armed ships, in this case eight light galleys which were commanded by the *Provveditore all'Armata* Antonio Civran, in order to avoid enemy aggressions. In the attack, the majority of the merchants managed to survive by reaching the coast. One of the six guarding galleys was lost (the galley Contarina).²⁵² The two galleys were later brought to Naples and their return to Venice became in the following years a major source of contention between the Viceroy of that city and the Venetian government.

The attack was a severe blow to the international prestige of the Republic of Venice since it seriously undermined the age-old city's claim to dominion over the Adriatic.²⁵³ As soon as the Venetian Senate received news of the tragic event, on July 20, it wrote to the Venetian governors (*Rettori*) of Zadar and Split, and to the two chief Venetian military authorities in the Adriatic (the *Provveditore all'Armata* and the *Provveditore General de Mar*) asking them to assist the survivors, retrieve the lost merchandise in order to return it to the merchants, and keep the trade from and to the port of Split

²⁵¹ Ibid, p. 60.

²⁵² The circumstances of the attack, above all the responsibility of the Venetian guarding galleys, are still unclear and controversial. Currently they are being studied by the Venetianist scholar Guglielmo Zanelli. I am grateful to him for his details over the episode. Antonio Civran, the commander of the Venetian armed galleys, was later tried in Venice for having failed to defend the galley from the Spanish fleet. However, he was acquitted. Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV) Quarantia Criminal, filza 128.

²⁵³ On this claim see Filippo De Vivo "Historical Justifications of Venetian Power in the Adriatic", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v.64 (2003), p. 159-76.

functioning.²⁵⁴ The Venetian government's main fear arising from the attack was a possible disruption, to the benefit of the rival city of Dubrovnik, of the thriving trade from and to the port of Split, whose creation was one of few successful commercial undertakings of the Republic in the years following the War of Cyprus (1571-1573). The Senate also reported the event to the bailo in Istanbul, Almorò Nani.²⁵⁵ It asked him to carefully report the event to the grand vizier and to other Ottoman authorities and to assure them that Venice would try by all means to retrieve the robbed merchandise. Particularly, the Senate asked the bailo to stress to the Ottoman authorities the responsibilities of the Dubrovnik authorities in that attack. The Venetian charges against the rival Dubrovnik, which was repeatedly accused of supporting Spanish and Habsburg anti-Venetian policies, were constant in the negotiations between the Venetian and the Ottoman authorities during the dispute arising from the attack.²⁵⁶

On July 19, the Venetian governor of Split, Marino Garzoni, reported to the Senate that numerous merchants who had survived the attack had arrived to Split and had asked him for redress for their losses.²⁵⁷ Among them, there was a *çavuş* and *müteferrika* (member of a royal palace elite corps) from Istanbul named Mümin, who played an important role during the entire dispute. He wrote a petition to the Venetian government in the name of fifty one merchants, present in Split.²⁵⁸ This document, written in simple

²⁵⁴ Senato Secreta Deliberazioni Costantinopoli (henceforth SDeIC) Registro 12, foli 16-18.

²⁵⁵ Bailo between 1616 and 1620. SDeIC, Reg. 12, f. 18-20.

²⁵⁶ The Dubrovnikian authorities' relationship with the Spanish monarchy, and in particular with the Viceroy of Naples Ossuna, was a major source of contention between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Dubrovnik during the war between the Venetian Republic and the Habsburg Empire of 1615-1617. Zdenko Zlatar *Between the Double Eagle and the Crescent: the Republic of Dubrovnik and the origins of the Eastern Question* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1992), p. 100/101

²⁵⁷ Senato Dispacci Rettori (SDR), Dalmazia, busta 16 (unnumbered). Other survivors went to Zadar and Sebenik.

²⁵⁸ Documenti Turchi (henceforth DT), busta 11, No 1210. It does not have a date but it was part of part of the letters, dated 21/07/1617, sent to the Venetian government by the *Provveditore Generale da Mar*

Turkish, deserves attention. Mümin stated that during the attack of the Spanish fleet, the Venetian captain of the two merchant galleys Ottavio dell'Oglio had fled and the captains of the armed escort galleys had not fought the enemy. Consequently, he claimed that the Venetian captains had “betrayed” them.²⁵⁹ Second, he maintained that the Ottoman merchants frequented the port of Split since the Venetian authorities had promised to compensate them had they suffered losses from pirates or foreign enemies.²⁶⁰ Therefore, he asked for compensation. Third, he repeated the argument of the insurance allegedly granted by the Venetians by stating that when they were in Split, on the way to Venice, they had heard that the Spanish fleet was in the Adriatic and they had wanted to interrupt their journey. However the Venetian authorities in Split had convinced them to go to Venice by promising that they would be compensated if they suffered damages from the enemy fleet.²⁶¹ Finally, the Çavuş wrote that he and the other merchants would wait at the harbor of Split five months for their reparations. The claims that the Venetian captains had not defended the merchants during the attack and that the Venetian authorities in Split had promised to compensate them in case of losses on the sea will be the main arguments that would be employed by the Bosnian merchants throughout their following long dispute with Venice.

Then, the *sancakbey* of Klis, located in the proximity of Split, wrote to the Venetian government on behalf of Mümin Çavuş and the other merchants. He stated that all the merchants together had lost up to 360.000 thalers in the attack, while Mümin alone had

Giacomo Zane, the officer in charge of the Venetian fleet in the Adriatic. The petition was signed by fifty one merchants.

²⁵⁹ “*kapudanımız olan otaviu bir barkiya girüp kaçardı ve sa'ir kapudanlar gerüde kaldılar ve bir yerde ele virdiler ispanya gemilerine karşı bir top ve tüfenk atılmadı... pes belli ki bizi kasden ele virdiler*”.

²⁶⁰ “*.biz sizin iskelenizi emin bilup geliriz sizden dahi her zarara gerek denizden gerek düşmandan bir zarar gelirse zâmininiz..*”.

²⁶¹ “*.kneziniz emîrleriyle gelip adamlara cevap virdi ki bazirgânlar aslâ ve kat'an havf çekmeyin zira bu iskeleye mal cümlesi bizim beylerimiz sigoriya etmişlerdir ve kadırgalar dahi sigoryadır eğer bir akçeniz zâyi' olursa yerine beş akçe virilir ve 'ahdimiz bu minvâl üzeredir..*”.

lost 30.000. He too maintained that the Venetian captains had not defended the merchants from the Spanish fleet's attack and that Venice, upon the establishment of the harbor of Split and according to the *ahidnames*, had promised to compensate any Ottoman merchant victims of hostile actions in the Adriatic.²⁶² The Venetian authorities did not respond to the merchants' request of redress. When they lost hope of speedy redress, the majority of the merchants decided to take their grievance to the Ottoman authorities in Bosnia and then to Istanbul. From our sources we cannot follow precisely their movements; however, it seems that they had been divided in several groups. On August 7, the above-mentioned Venetian governor of Split, Marino Garzoni, wrote to the Venetian government reporting that some of the Bosnian merchants had turned to the Venetian consul in Sarajevo, Marcantonio Vellutello, to ask for reparation for their losses. Furthermore, the *kadı* and *müfti* of Sarajevo, Nurullah, wrote to the Doge to demand compensation and stated that he would wait for the response of the Venetian authorities, otherwise he threatened that he would write a petition (*arz*) to the Sultan. The Venetian government and its officials in Split and Sarajevo counteracted the Ottoman allegations by accusing Dubrovnik authorities for the attack against the merchant galleys.²⁶³ On September 12, Garzoni reported that numerous merchants, encouraged by the aforementioned *kadı* of Sarajevo, were on their way to Istanbul to submit their grievances directly to the Ottoman authorities.²⁶⁴ Although we cannot know from our sources, probably some of the people who set off for Istanbul were not

²⁶² DT, busta 20, No 1990. We have only a badly preserved Italian translation of the original letter. It is undated, but it must have been written during the sojourn in Split of Mümin Çavuş and the other numerous Bosnian merchants.

²⁶³ SDR, Dal. busta 17, and DT, busta 11, No. 1989. On the contrary of the previous dispute, the merchants of this case did not turn to the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia, Iskender Pasha since the latter, during the summer of 1617, was engaged against Polish troops along Moldavian/Polish borders.

²⁶⁴ SDR, Dal. busta 17. In the same series, in several letters dated August and September 1617, the Venetian consul in Sarajevo reported to Venetian government that several merchants had approached him to ask for redress and obtained legal documents (*sicils*) certifying their losses from the *kadı* of Sarajevo Nurullah.

the aggrieved merchants themselves but their agents. This is likely true for the wealthiest merchants.

Istanbul: 1617-1618.

On August 9, the Senate wrote to the bailo to inform him about the impending arrival to Istanbul of numerous Bosnian merchants. It ordered him to approach the most prominent Ottoman authorities in the city and defend vis-à-vis them the good faith of Venice in establishing the harbor of Split and providing to all the merchants from the empire shelter and protection on the sea against pirates. It also asked him to stress that Venice had promised, neither in the *ahidnāmes* nor in the agreements for the establishment of the port of Split, to compensate Ottoman merchants for any losses suffered during the journey to Venice. It also urged him to report that the Venetian galleys had been overwhelmed by a large Spanish fleet, which had been assisted by Dubrovnik authorities eager to harm the functioning of the port of Split.²⁶⁵ Clearly, the risk of a disruption of the Ottoman-Venetian trade in the Adriatic and the risk of a diplomatic crisis between the two states arising from the Spanish attack compelled the Venetian government to immediately take an active role in the affair.

On August 12 and 26, the bailo alarmingly wrote to the Senate about the activities of groups of Bosnian merchants newly arrived to Istanbul. He reported that some of them had approached him to ask for compensation for their losses since they claimed that the Venetian authorities had promised to defend the commercial activities of Ottoman merchants in the Adriatic and to compensate those who suffered damages from pirate activities. They also presented him a *hüccet* (*cozetto* in the Venetian sources) of the *kadi*

²⁶⁵ SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 20-22.

of Klis, Ali bin Şeyh, dated 1610, in which the aforementioned captain and contractor of the merchant galleys Ottavio dell'Oglio, together with four other Venetians from Split, declared that the Venetian government would indemnify those Ottoman merchants who would suffer losses from pirates.²⁶⁶ The bailo contested the validity of that document and maintained that the promise of compensation was not part of the *ahidnames*. He later sent his chief dragoman, Marcantonio Borissi (d. 1620) to the main Ottoman authorities in the capital to seek their help in the dispute. He learnt that many of them had also suffered economic losses in the attack (mainly silk and woolen fabrics). Among them, there were the *şeyhülislam* Es'ad Efendi, the *kızlar ağası* (or *dariüssaade ağası*) Mustafa Agha, the black eunuch of the Sultan's harem, who had lost respectively 800 and 12.000 ducats; and the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia Iskender Pasha. Therefore, many influent Ottomans, much to the bailo's regret, became personally involved in the dispute. Their involvement was risky for the Republic as they could exert much more pressure on the Venetian authorities to compensate the merchants than the latter alone could hope.²⁶⁷

The grand mufti Es'ad Efendi played an important role throughout the dispute. His involvement deserves some analysis. From the bailo's *dispacci*, we learn that he had a Jewish agent, called Isaac, who in Venice purchased for him silk fabrics or exchanged the latter with Iranian carpets. Furthermore, his son's tutor, Molla Şerif, too suffered losses in the attack, and, through Es'ad, repeatedly asked for compensation from the

²⁶⁶ Senato Dispacci Ambasciatori Costantinopoli (henceforth SDC), filza 83, No 24. We have only the Italian translation of the *hüccet*. It was signed by twenty five Muslim witnesses (*şuhud*).

²⁶⁷ SDV, filza 83, No 26. Hocasaadettinzade Mehmet Es'ad Efendi (d. 1625) was two times, between 1615 and 1622 and later between 1623 and 1625. See Baki Tezcan, "The Ottoman mevâlî as 'lords of the law,'" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20 (2009): 383-407. Mustafa Agha was *kızlar ağası* under Ahmed I, Mustafa I and Osman II until his retirement in 1620. Baki Tezcan, *The second Ottoman Empire: political and social transformation in the early modern world* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 110-114. Iskender Pasha was the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia twice between 1613-1615 and 1616-1619. On his losses see SDC, filza 84, No 30, in date 25 January 1618.

bailo.²⁶⁸ Apart from these personal issues, the direct involvement of the head of the religious establishment of the Ottoman Empire in a dispute between Ottoman merchants and a foreign power also shows the political power his office had acquired by the early seventeenth century. As Baki Tezcan has shown, from the reign of Murad III onwards, high-ranking *ulema*, in general and Es'ad and his brother Mehmed in particular, had come to constitute a powerful political faction in Istanbul able to check the power of the Ottoman sultans.²⁶⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that, from the beginning of the dispute, the Bosnian merchants and the bailo turned to Es'ad Efendi, beside the grand vizier, to enlist his support in the dispute. Given his stature, the bailo and the Venetian government throughout the affair were keen to appease him by facilitating his commercial activities and compensating him for the losses that he and his associates suffered in the Spanish attack.

On September 1, the bailo reported that numerous merchants had turned to the Imperial Council (*divan-i hümayun*), which at that time was headed by Sofu Mehmet Pasha, the deputy grand vizier (*kaymakam*).²⁷⁰ There, they blamed the Venetian authorities for their losses and insisted on the obligation of the Republic to compensate them. The Pasha decided to leave the issue to the two *kadıaskers*, the chief judges of the Ottoman Empire. This was something the bailo wanted to avoid at all cost since he feared that the latter would rule against Venice. Therefore, he communicated to Mehmet Pasha that he would discuss the dispute with none but him. The bailo then decided to

²⁶⁸ For some references to the commercial undertakings of the mufti see Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli, Busta 13 (henceforth APC), Vigesimo IV^o, foli 241-255, and APC, busta 14/ XXXVI^o and XXXVII^o, respectively fo. 291-300, and 325-325.

²⁶⁹ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 64-72.

²⁷⁰ Hazergradlı Sofu Mehmet Pasha (d. 1626). Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani: yahud, Tezkire-i meşâhir-i Osmâniyye*, yayına hazırlayanlar: Mustafa Keskin, Ayhan Öztürk, Ramazan Tosun (Sebil Yayinevi, İstanbul, 1995), IV cilt, p. 178. The Grand Vizier Halil Pasha in 1617/1618 waged war against the Safavids. Ibid, p. 132. For Halil Pasha see Alexander de Groot, "Khalil Pasha", *EI*, 2nd ed.

meet with the mufti. The bailo maintained vis-à-vis the latter that the Venetian authorities were not obliged to compensate the merchants for their losses and accused the government of Dubrovnik of having promoted the attack. The mufti showed him a petition written by the merchants and supported their claim that the Venetian captain had not defended the ships from the Spanish fleet and, above all, that Venice had promised to indemnify those who had suffered losses due to hostile actions. He then urged the bailo to compensate them if he did not want them to directly petition the Sultan. Furthermore, upon the suggestion of a group of Jewish merchants who were affected by the attack and who were close to him, he also proposed to the bailo that the Venetian authorities might collect the money for compensation by raising the custom duties on the goods carried by Ottoman merchants to and from Split. The bailo disregarded that proposal.²⁷¹

The claim that Venice and its authorities in Split had promised to compensate the merchants who fell victim to hostile attacks deserves further analysis. As we have seen hitherto, it was the foremost accusation brought by the merchants against Venice. At each round of negotiation, they and many Ottoman authorities maintained that such guarantee was part of the *ahidnames*. However, we do not find any reference to such compensation in any of *ahidnames* granted to Venice by the Ottoman sultans. As we have seen in the previous chapter, according to those documents the Venetians had to persecute privateers and pirates (*harami* or *levend*) on the sea and were forbidden to give shelter to them in their ports and cities. However, their accountability in case of an attack from those irregulars is not stated²⁷². This claim was extensively employed by all

²⁷¹ APC, busta 13/Vigesimo V°, fo. 241-255.

²⁷² For instance see the *ahidnames* of 1604. Hans Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The Ahidnames. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial*, "EJOS", 1998, at <http://www.let.uu.nl/oosters/EJOS/EJOS1.html>, p. 582/583.

the merchants who fell victim to piracy in the Adriatic Sea in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.²⁷³ Furthermore, the Bosnian merchants in their first petition mentioned also specifically that Split's governor, Marino Garzoni, had insured them against enemy actions. This was always negated by the bailo and the Venetian government. I did not find any mention of such guarantee in all the studies done on Split's port. After its establishment, the Venetian authorities provided armed galleys to escort the merchant galleys during their trip between Venice and Split, but, to the best of my knowledge, they did not insure the merchants from hostile attacks. The issue of the guarantee deserves further studies.

After a period of calm, during which groups of merchants continued to arrive to Istanbul, the dispute restarted in November. At the beginning of that month, the bailo reported that more than forty Bosnian merchants had gone to the mufti. The bailo's dragoman Borissi was later called there. The merchants, backed by the mufti, angrily (*come tanti cani arrabbiati*) insisted on compensation and presented some legal documents on their behalf, the aforementioned *hüccet* and the petition previously sent to Venice by Mümin Çavuş. They threatened the dragoman to write a petition directly to the sultan, if the bailo and the Venetian government did not address their grievances. The following day, numerous Bosnians went to the bailo's residence in Pera. The bailo showed them regret for their losses and blamed the Dubrovnikans for the incident, but he maintained that Venice could not be held accountable. The merchants then submitted him their legal documents. The bailo had those documents translated and he analyzed them carefully. Then, he went again to meet with the mufti Es'ad at the latter's residence. There, he complained about the activities of the Bosnians in Istanbul and maintained that the written documents brought by them were a mere fabrication (*piene*

²⁷³ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Views on Corsairs and Piracy in the Adriatic," in *The Kapudan Pasha. His Office and his Domain*, edited by Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: University of Crete Press, 2002), p. 357-371.

di falsità). The mufti, according to the bailo's account, seemed to be convinced by his arguments. However he asked the bailo to write to the Venetian government about the dispute and demanded from the bailo the 800 golden ducats which he had lost in the attack.²⁷⁴ The bailo satisfied him.

In the middle of November, Mehmed Pasha called the bailo to his residence to settle the affair in presence of the Bosnian merchants and the two *kadiaskers*. The bailo feared that the latter would issue a verdict against Venice but nevertheless decided to go. However, as a precaution, he sent the Pasha 1.000 ducats in advance. At the Pasha's residence, the bailo found more than 80 Bosnians waiting for him. During the ensuing tense discussion, they again claimed that the Venetian authorities in Dalmatia had promised to protect and compensate them for any damage suffered during their journey to Venice, and maintained that the Venetian guarding ships, in agreement with the Spanish fleet, had not defended them. They also claimed that the Venetians had retrieved their ships. The bailo rebutted those allegations as complete falsehoods (*falsissime*). He stated that there was no written evidence proving the pledge of compensation and that the Venetian fleet had been pursuing the Spanish fleet but could not reach it before it attacked the merchant galleys. The Ottoman authorities were divided over the dispute. The *kadiasker* of Rumelia and Mehmet Pasha upheld the merchants' claims, while the *kadiasker* of Anatolia did not. In the following round of negotiations, the bailo reported that the latter continuously supported the Venetian stance in the dispute, and that thanks to him the dispute had not taken a turn for the worse.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ APC, busta 13/Vigesimo VII°, fo. 322-329.

²⁷⁵ SDC, filza 84, No 16, in date 20 November 1617. Upon the end of the debate, the bailo sent to the *kadiasker* of Anatolia 400 golden ducats in order to win him over. In another *dispaccio*, the bailo described his as a "good man and a dear friend" of the Republic (*uomo di grande bontà et molto amico di questa casa*). SDC, fo. 84, No 18, in date 29 November 1617.

The debate continued the following day. This time the Ottoman authorities raised a new issue in defense of the merchants, that is, that the capitals lost during the attack belonged to Muslim pious foundations (*evkaf*) which provided funds for the upkeep of mosques and the livelihood of orphans. Consequently, they warned the bailo that the recovery of the money was all the more important and that the sultan would undoubtedly rule for compensation.²⁷⁶ Again the bailo rebutted all the claims of the merchants and repeated that neither the *ahidnames* nor the Islam law obliged Venice to indemnify the merchants. Mehmet Pasha, angered by the bailo's steadfast defense, threatened to allow the Bosnian merchants to confiscate the merchandise of Venetian merchants in the Ottoman Empire as compensation. He then said that he would send a *çavuş* to Venice to report the affair directly to the Venetian government and ask redress from it.

At their next meeting, the Pasha presented the bailo a *fetva*, issued by the mufti on request of the merchants, against the governor of Split, Marino Garzoni. According to it, Garzoni had to pay the merchants immediately since he had promised to redress them in case of hostile actions. The *fetva* was sent later as an imperial order to the *sancakbey* and the *kadı* of Klis who were ordered to carry it out.²⁷⁷ However, to the Pasha's disappointment the bailo managed to counter the *fetva* by submitting the Pasha another *fetva* over a similar dispute, which had taken place few years before, in which the Venetian authorities were cleared from any obligation to compensate merchants who

²⁷⁶As we have seen in the previous case, the claim that robbed goods belonged to Muslim pious foundations was employed in several disputes by Ottoman merchants whose good had been robbed by the Uskoks or other pirates in the Adriatic. Suraiya Faroqhi, "Bosnian merchants in the Adriatic," in *Ottoman Bosnia, A History in Peril*, edited by Markus Koller and Kemal Karpat (Madison/Wisc.: Center of Turkish Studies, 2004), p. 225-239.

²⁷⁷We have the Italian translation of the imperial order containing the *fetva*. DT, busta 11, No 1235. The aforementioned Mümin Çavuş is cited in the document among the merchants who asked the mufti to issue a *fetva* on their behalf.

had fallen victim to piracy. The content of the *fetva* and the imperial order against the governor of Split were not carried out.²⁷⁸

In the meantime, on November 22, Sultan Ahmed I died and he was succeeded by his younger brother Mustafa I.²⁷⁹ To communicate to the Venetian government the enthronement of the new sultan and to deal with the dispute of the Bosnian merchants, the Ottoman authorities chose a *çavuş* named Mustafa. The bailo did not like that choice since he thought the *Çavuş* too close to the deputy grand vizier and hostile (*tristo*) toward the Republic. The Sultan and Sofu Mehmed Pasha wrote a letter about the dispute to the Venetian government.

In December, while the expedition was being prepared, news arrived to Istanbul that the Republic of Venice and the Habsburg Monarchy had signed a peace treaty (the Treaty of Madrid signed on 26 September 1617). The bailo reported lengthy to Mehmed Pasha about the treaty. In particular he reported him the final settlement over the issue of the Uskoks, and the obligation of the Viceroy of Naples to return the two robbed galleys to Venice. The merchants were relieved by that news. Many of them went to the bailo's notary court to register proxies who would go to Split or Venice to retrieve the robbed goods. However, the bailo doubted that the return of the robbed goods would be smooth and that the merchants would stop looking for redress from the Republic.²⁸⁰

Venice: March and April 1618.

The Ottoman envoy Mustafa *Çavuş* reached Venice at the end of February. He was accompanied by his steward (*kahya*), the Venetian dragoman Antonachi Grillo, and

²⁷⁸ APC, busta 14/Vigesimo VII°, fo. 352-359, in date 21 November 1617.

²⁷⁹ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p.73; APC, busta 14/Vigesimo VII°, fo. 259.

²⁸⁰ SDC, filza 84, No 20 and No 21, in date, respectively, 10 and 26 December 1617. In Bailo A Costantinopoli (henceforth BAC), busta 279, f. 120- 126 we have the registration of proxies for several merchants.

more than twenty Bosnian merchants involved in the dispute. At his arrival, he was welcomed at the Palazzo Ducale, the seat of the Venetian government, by the Collegio. After presenting the letters about the enthronement of sultan Mustafa, the envoy submitted the two letters, one by the sultan and one by Sofu Mehmet Pasha, over the dispute of the robbed galleys. Both basically reinstated and expanded the claims defended by the Bosnian merchants in their previous petition to Venice and during the negotiations with the bailo and the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul. Several points of both deserve analysis. Here, I will present the sultan's letter.²⁸¹

Mustafa I wrote that the merchants, while they were in Sarajevo, had learnt that the Spanish fleet had entered to the Adriatic Sea (*venedik körfezi*), and they were hesitant on undertaking the journey to Venice. The Venetian consul in Sarajevo (Marcantonio Vellutello) convinced them to continue their journey by promising, before the *kadı* of the city Nurullah, that they should not fear the enemy since the Venetians would compensate them had they suffered any losses during the voyage on the sea.²⁸² The aforementioned *kadı* registered the consul's guarantee on a *sicil* and issued a *hüccet*. Therefore, the merchants decided to go to Venice. At the harbor of Split they learnt that the Spanish fleet was close to that city, and again they were hesitant to go to Venice. The Venetian authorities of Split persuaded them to go, firstly, by stating that the Spanish fleet would not attack the Venetian galleys since they were not the target of their attack and, secondly, by assuring them that they would compensate the merchants had they been robbed.²⁸³ That guarantee was registered by the *kadı* of Klis, Kemal

²⁸¹ DT, busta 11, No 1214, in evahir-i zilka'de 1026, that is, 20-29 November 1617. The letter of Sofu Mehmed Pasha, written on the same date, is located in DT, busta 11, No 1217.

²⁸² “*ispanya donanmasından emn üzere olun deryā yüzünde nüfūs ve emvālinize her ne zarara kurbet olursa garāmeti 'ahidimizde olsun*”.

²⁸³ “*ispanya donanması yakın yere geldiği takdirce murādları gayri venedik gemilerine ta'arruz eylemeler*”, “*deryāda her ne zarar 'āid olursa biz ta'ahhud ederiz*”.

Ismail, who then issued a *hüccet*. Upon receiving that guarantee, they went to Venice and traded in that city. While returning back to Split, they again learnt that the Spanish fleet was near to their galleys and begged the Venetian captains to let them go ashore.²⁸⁴ However, the captains continued the journey to Split and eventually the galleys were attacked and robbed. The eight guarding ships did not fight the enemy. The sultan blamed the guarding ships, the Venetian consul in Sarajevo, and the authorities of Split for the unfortunate event.²⁸⁵ After he told that when the Ottoman port of Gabela²⁸⁶, located at the estuary of the river Naretva in Herzegovina, had been abandoned in favor of Split, the Venetian authorities had promised to indemnify the Ottoman merchants who would suffer losses both on sea and in Split.²⁸⁷ Furthermore the Sultan maintained the most of the capitals and goods of wretched merchants belonged to Muslim charitable institutions, from which the merchants had borrowed for their commercial venture.²⁸⁸ It is important to point out that this claim is absent from the first petition written by the merchants in Split at the end of July 1617, and it was introduced by Ottoman authorities later during their negotiations with the bailo in Istanbul. Another new charge is that Venice, when it had signed a peace truce with Spain, gained back Venetians goods robbed by the Spanish fleet, while those belonging to the Bosnian

²⁸⁴“*bizi karaya çıkarın başımız ve mālımız ile emin ve salim halās olalım deyü ibrām ve ilhāh eylemişler*”.

²⁸⁵ *hıfz ve hirāset için koşulan sekiz pāre kadirganız aslā cenk ve müdafa'a'ya mübāşeret itmedi.gemilerinizin tanımayup kaçması ve sarāy'da olan konsolosunuzun ve isplit beyinin ve iskele zabitālarının kefalet ve ta'ahhüd eylemeleri sebab-i özür ve taksīr*”.

²⁸⁶ Gabela was a major Ottoman port frequented by both Ottoman and Dubrovnikan merchants in the sixteenth century. It lost importance due to the Uskok pirates' attacks and to the promotion of the harbor of Split by both the Venetian and Ottoman authorities during the 1590s. See Paci, *La Scala di Spalato*, p. 45-69, and Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, p. 178/179.

²⁸⁷“*isplit iskelesin işlediğinizden dahi deryāda isplit içeriüsünde tüccāra ve gayre her ne zarar u ziyān olursa zamāne ta'ahhüdünüz meşhūr ve mut'eriftir*”.

²⁸⁸ “*mağdūr ve mazlūm fukarānın alınan māl ve metā'larının aslı kendü māyalar ve mällar olmayup ekseri murābaha ile alınmış evkāf ve it'ām emvālidir*”.

merchants remained unfairly in enemy hands.²⁸⁹ In conclusion, the sultan asked the Venetian government to retrieve those goods, otherwise, Ottoman merchants would stop to go to Venice to the detriment of the city custom duties.²⁹⁰

On March 16, the Venetian Senate replied to both Mustafa I and Sofu Mehmed Pasha rebutting all the above-mentioned allegations.²⁹¹ First, it stated that the Venetian authorities in Dalmatia and Bosnia had not been authorized by the Venetian government to promise any compensation to the Bosnian merchants for any loss that they might have suffered during their journey on the sea, and added that the alleged pledge had also not been registered by any Ottoman judges (*Sapientissimi Giudici della Nation Mussulmana*). Therefore, it described the merchants' claim that Venice was obliged to compensate them a complete falsehood.²⁹² The Venetian government, the Senate continued, during the establishment of the harbor of Split, had allowed the Ottoman merchants coming to Split on their way to Venice to load their goods onto the Venetian merchant galleys; and, above all, it had assured them protection from the pirates' attacks by deploying Venetian armed galleys. It then stated that the Spanish fleet was enormous (*così grossa*) and the Venetian armed galleys could not repulse it and they too had suffered losses. After the Senate claimed that the Dubrovnikians, "close friends" of the Spanish (*confidenti amici*), had encouraged the latter into attacking the Venetian merchant galleys. Therefore, it proposed to the Bosnian merchants to ask the Dubrovnik authorities for redress. Finally, the Senate assured that the Venetian authorities were

²⁸⁹ "ispanya kıralı ile aranız barışıklık olup sizin alınan mällarınız cümle redd olunup ancak müsülmänların emvâli düşman elinde mürüvvet ve insâfa lâyük değildir".

²⁹⁰ "evkâf ve it'âm emvâlin kayırıp hüsn-ü tebrîr ve tedârik ile teselli olunmaları 'ahdinize lâzım olduğundan kat'-ı nazar tüccâr fukarâsından dahi gözleri korkmakla min ba'd kimesne venedik cânibine ticâret eylesiz gitmeğe cüret ettirmeyüp tüccâr nefret etmekle iskeleniz battal olup tarafınız gümrüklerine zarar-i fâhiş hâsıl olmadığı mülâhaza gerekmez".

²⁹¹ SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 53-56; DT, busta 11, No 1224.

²⁹² "non ha fondamento alcun, ne' di ragione, ne' di fondamento".

striving to retrieve the robbed merchandise in Naples, which the Spanish authorities had promised to return with the Treaty of Madrid.

In April, while the Ottoman envoy was in Venice, news arrived from Istanbul that, on February 25, Sultan Mustafa I had been pacifically removed from the throne and replaced by his uncle Osman II (r. 1618-1622).²⁹³ About a month later, on March 16, the doge of Venice, Giovanni Bembo (office 1615-1618) died, and during most of March the Collegio did not meet. Due to these circumstances, the mission of Mustafa Cavuş was prolonged until the end of April.

During his sojourn in Venice, the Venetian authorities constantly tried to win over the Ottoman envoy and to influence his final report to the Ottoman authorities. Pressed by the Bosnians with him, he insisted on learning the final decision of the Venetian government over the dispute before going back to Istanbul. On many occasions, frustrated by the continuous delay of the decision of Venetian government over the dispute, he wrote to the deputy grand vizier to complain about the extension of his mission for which he blamed the Venetian authorities. The latter managed to intercept those letters, and instead persuaded him to write a letter on behalf of Venice in which he lauded the city government's efforts in retrieving the robbed goods. Finally, on April 24, he called the Ottoman envoy to the Collegio and communicated to him their final decision about the dispute, that is, the rebuttal of the claims of the Bosnian merchants. It ensued a polemical debate in which also some merchants took part. The envoy insisted on obtaining a compensation for the merchants but this was categorically denied by the Venetian authorities. In the end, Mustafa was given the letters of the Venetian government for the new sultan Osman II and for Sofu Mehmet Pasha, and was dismissed by the Collegio. As a long-standing diplomatic praxis for the Ottoman envoys

²⁹³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 108-114.

to Venice, upon his departure he was also given several gifts, for the sultan, high-ranking Ottomans, and himself.²⁹⁴ He was carried by a Venetian galley to Split, from where he went to Istanbul passing through Bosnia.

After his departure, the Senate wrote to the bailo to report him the outcome of the missions of the Ottoman envoy to Venice. Particularly, it informed the bailo that it had struck a deal with Mustafa, whereby the latter promised to report his mission to them on the behalf of Venice. In return, he obtained money and gifts from both the Venetian government and the bailo. The Senate asked the bailo to welcome and favor him upon his arrival to Istanbul.²⁹⁵

Istanbul 1618/1619: a Difficult Negotiation and a Temporary Conclusion

On July 19, Mustafa Çavuş arrived to Istanbul. In the same month, much to bailo's gratification, Sofu Mehmed Pasha was dismissed from his office of *kaymakam* and succeeded by Kara Mehmed Pasha²⁹⁶. Despite his promise to speak on behalf of Venice with the Ottoman authorities once in Istanbul, the Ottoman envoy harshly criticized the attitude of the Venetian government when he reported his mission to Mehmet Pasha and the mufti Es'ad.²⁹⁷

At the beginning of August, the new deputy grand vizier called the bailo to his residence. Also the *kadıasker* of Anatolia was present. The Pasha warned the bailo that

²⁹⁴ SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 69-74. On this practice see Maria Pia Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia* (Venice, Deputazione editrice, 1994), p. 90-94.

²⁹⁵ SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 62.

²⁹⁶ Öküz Kara Mehmed Pasha (d. 1622). He was Grand Vizier two times, between 1614 and 1616 and in 1619. He was brother in law of Sultan Osman II. Alexander de Groot, "Kara Mehmed Pasha", *EI*, 2nd ed.

²⁹⁷ Also the Venetian Senate reported that Mustafa had broken his promise not to send the letters to the Ottoman authorities in which he harshly blamed the Venetian government for the lengthening of his mission. SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 75, in date 1 May 1618.

the Bosnians continued to turn to the Divan and to his residence, and told him that the Sultan wanted to conclude the dispute as soon as possible. He agreed with the bailo that it was unfair to demand compensation from Venice, but he stressed that the merchants' losses were huge and that they needed to be satisfied in some way. He then proposed to the bailo that Venice might exempt from custom duties the goods brought to Venice by those merchants.²⁹⁸ The bailo, after pointing out that the Venetians had also suffered losses due to the attack of the Spanish fleet (he probably was referring to the light galley Contarina), refused that proposal since, according to him, it would be equal to paying the merchants and they would abuse that exemption privilege. The Pasha then called three prominent Bosnian merchants, among them the aforementioned Mümin Çavuş and a certain Resul Agha (both are called in the bailo's *dispacci* the heads of the Bosnian merchants, *capi de bossinesi*), to discuss the issue. Mustafa Çavuş was also present to report his expedition to Venice. This time he spoke on behalf of Venice and lauded the treatment that he had received and the efforts of the Republic to retrieve the robbed merchandise. Then, the bailo defended the Venetian stance in the dispute and rebutted the entire claims advanced by the merchants. In the end, Mehmet Pasha told the merchants that they could not demand any compensation from Venice and dismissed them. He also told the bailo that he had talked with the mufti and the *kadiaskers* who had agreed with him on dismissing altogether the merchants' claims.²⁹⁹

The above mentioned Resul Agha was a rich merchant who traded intensively between Istanbul and Venice between about 1600 and 1620. He had lost huge capitals in the attack. He played an important role throughout the dispute: together with the above mentioned Mümin Çavuş, he several times represented all the merchants in the

²⁹⁸ “*le facesse alcuna agevolezza nel datio*”.

²⁹⁹ APC, busta 14/XXXIII^o, fo. 120-130, in date 8 August 1618. Later, Mustafa Çavuş wanted from the bailo 2.000 ducats for his relation and other offices on the behalf of Venice, but that was refused by the bailo.

negotiations with the Ottoman authorities and the bailo. He personally met with the bailo to discuss the affair at the latter's residence at the beginning of August. Resul told the bailo that Venice should pay compensation to the merchants since their losses were very substantial and since that dispute threatened the peace between the two states. The bailo responded him that Venice and its authorities in Dalmatia could not be held accountable for their losses, and pointed out that also Venetians had also suffered losses from the attack of the Spanish fleet. Resul told the bailo that he was in Split with the other Ottoman merchants when the Venetian authorities allegedly promised to compensate them for any loss suffered during the journey on the sea. The bailo answered that, in that case, he must have misunderstood the Venetian authorities.³⁰⁰ Then Resul warned the bailo that without compensation the Ottoman merchants would leave the harbor of Split for other ports. To that threat, the bailo responded that, in that case, he and the other merchants would also suffer from the interruption of the lucrative trade with Venice. In the end, the merchant angrily threatened the bailo that the Ottoman authorities would force the bailo to pay compensation unless the Venetian would retrieve the stolen goods from the Spanish.³⁰¹

After the meeting with Mehmet Pasha, the bailo reported that during August more than half of the Bosnian merchants had left Istanbul; some of them for had returned to Bosnia, others had gone on pilgrimage to Mecca. However, those who remained in Istanbul continued to pursue their claims against Venice despite having been previously dismissed by the deputy grand vizier. They went to the Divan, to both the Mufti and Mehmet Pasha and they also submitted a petition directly to the sultan when he left the mosque (Aya Sofya?) after the Friday prayer. On 19 August, the bailo met again the

³⁰⁰ *“che non havesse inteso all’ora il fatto”*.

³⁰¹ APC, busta 14/XXXIII^o, fo. 109-114. On Resul Ağa's trade with Venice see Eric Dursteler, “Commerce and Coexistence: Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Early Mordern Era”, *Turcica*, Vol. 34, (2002), p. 114.

Pasha. The latter told the bailo that he was continuously harassed by the Bosnians and he had letters on their behalf to send to the Venetian government. The bailo answered that those letters would be useless since the Venetian government had previously refused to pay any compensation. The Pasha also reported to the bailo that the Bosnians had threatened to abandon the port of Split for other ports causing a serious economic loss to the Republic. The bailo answered that the Bosnians would also suffer from such action since they would be forced to go to ports that were more distant, undertake longer and unsafe journeys on the sea, and pay higher customs duties. The Pasha then told the bailo that the Bosnians did not demand compensation from Venice but from the count of Split, Marino Garzoni, who, according to them, had promised to compensate them for any losses suffered on the sea. Then the Pasha suggested the bailo to go to the mufti to discuss the issue.³⁰²

The mufti told the bailo that the merchants had submitted a long petition directly to the sultan, who had then urged the deputy grand vizier to conclude the dispute as soon as possible. More important, the mufti reported to the bailo that the Sultan did not want to force Venice into paying the merchants, but, rather, to encourage it to mitigate their losses.³⁰³ The mufti, as Mehmet Pasha has done before, suggested that the Venetian government should lift the custom duties to the merchants, but this solution was criticized by the bailo as he had done before. Then the mufti proposed that the governor of Split, Marino Garzoni, whom the merchants blamed for their losses, should compensate the merchants instead of the Venetian government. The bailo defended the latter by stating he could have not guaranteed indemnification to the merchants without precise orders from the Venetian government. However, the mufti insisted on

³⁰² APC, busta 14, XXXIII° fo 130-138, on date 27 August 1618.

³⁰³ “*che la Signoria non può essere astretta a pagamento... nondimeno si potrebbe trovar qualche temperamento*”.

demanding from the bailo a solution to try to alleviate the Bosnians, otherwise they would continue to harass the bailo and the Ottoman authorities.³⁰⁴

On August 27, the bailo reported that the two *kadiaskers*, pressed by the merchants into taking a decision over the dispute, had decided to discuss the issue directly with the deputy grand vizier at the latter's residence. As it had happened before, the two *kadiaskers* clashed over the dispute: on the one hand, the *kadiasker* of Rumelia, like the mufti, upheld the claims of the Bosnians and wanted to obtain for the latter at least a partial relief from the Venetian government; on the contrary, the *kadiasker* of Anatolia refused their claims and wanted to end the dispute as soon as possible. The final decision lay in the deputy grand vizier. Then the bailo endeavored to convince the latter to dismiss merchants and to obtain an imperial order concluding the dispute. The bailo offered him 3000 golden ducats for this. Mehmet Pasha neither accepted nor refused the offer since he told that he could not assure the bailo about the definitive conclusion of the dispute. The need of obtaining an imperial letter (*scrittura* in the Venetian sources) which would officially dismiss the claims of the merchants was stressed also by the Venetian Senate in a letter dated 26 September.³⁰⁵

In the meantime, on August 25, the Bosnians turned to the Divan and asked for the interruption of the trade to the port of Split in order to force Venice to comply with their wishes.³⁰⁶ The threat to divert the merchants from Split to other ports along the Adriatic coast was continuously repeated by the merchants throughout the dispute. However, it never materialized. The foreseeable economic losses for many Ottoman subjects must have deterred the Ottoman authorities from taking any actions against the Venetian port.

³⁰⁴ APC, busta 14, XXXIII° fo. 138-145, on date 27 August 1618.

³⁰⁵ SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 98.

³⁰⁶ APC, busta14/XXXIII°, fo. 145-149.

At the beginning of September, the Bosnians turned again to the Divan. This time they presented to the Ottoman authorities a new proof to promote their cause.³⁰⁷ They stated that in 1587, a ship of Ottoman merchants going to Venice from the port of Gabela had been robbed by the Uskok pirates. After negotiations and the issuance of a *hüccet* from the *kadiaskers* with the approval of the mufti, reportedly Venice had compensated them by paying 75.000 ducats. According to them, this was proof that Venice had promised to compensate the Ottoman merchants who had suffered losses on the sea.³⁰⁸ They also asked the Ottoman authorities to send again an envoy with letters from the sultan to Venice to demand redress directly to the Venetian government. Their new claim and proposal were backed by the *kadiasker* of Rumelia. The idea of sending a new *çavuş* was also backed by the deputy grand vizier who then wrote a letter on the dispute to the Venetian government and obtained another from the sultan. According to the bailo, the latter approved that mission in the hope of freeing himself from the continuous complaints of the merchants.

The bailo's foremost effort in all the subsequent meetings with Mehmet Pasha during September and October was to avoid the expedition of the Ottoman envoy to Venice. The Venetian government had instructed him to prevent such expedition at any cost. In a meeting in the middle of September, the Pasha proposed to him to once again send Mustafa Çavuş to Venice but the bailo strongly opposed this idea claiming that the latter was untrustworthy (*tristo*) and that he had not achieved anything during his previous mission. He then proposed to the deputy grand vizier to send personally the imperial letters for the Venetian government instead of sending an Ottoman envoy. Furthermore,

³⁰⁷ APC, busta 14/XXXIV°, fo. 152-164, in date 8 September 1618.

³⁰⁸ Here, the merchants probably related the dispute of the previous chapter. The year of the attack was 1587, the merchants were robbed by the Uskoks in a place closed to the port of Gabela, and in the end of the dispute Venice paid the merchants for their goods it had managed to recover from the Uskoks. However, the *kadiaskers* did not issued any *hüccet* against Venice forcing it to pay the merchants, and the sum paid to the latter was by far lower than that mentioned by the merchants of this case.

the bailo also tried to at least delay the mission by spreading rumors among the merchants that the Venice government and the Duke of Ossuna were close to a deal for the return of the robbed galleys and goods.³⁰⁹ As we have seen, according to the Treaty of Madrid, the latter was obliged to return the two galleys, however, due to his hostility towards Venice he endeavored to sabotage it. Those rumors divided the merchants: some of them were willing to wait in Istanbul for news from Venice about the dealing while other insisted on sending a *çavuş* charged with the supervision of the return of the galleys. At the end, the majority of them decided to wait for the return of grand vizier Halil Pasha from the Safavid front to Istanbul before taking a decision. Then, most the merchants returned to Bosnia, and only few of them remained in Istanbul. However, Mehmed Pasha decided to select a *çavuş*, named Ali for the new expedition. According to the bailo, this move was meant to show to the merchants his efforts in the dispute and the person selected was close to the Venetian interests. The mission was not carried out but the two letters for the Venetian government, one by the Sultan and one by Mehmet Pasha, were nevertheless sent.³¹⁰

After the sending of the imperial letters, the dispute stalled for several months since the bailo waited for the response of the Venetian government and the few merchants stayed in Istanbul ceased to pursue their claims against Venice.

At the beginning of December, the ambassador Francesco Contarini³¹¹, charged by the Venetian government with congratulating the new sultan Osman II for his enthronement and with obtaining the renewal of the *ahidnames*, arrived to Istanbul. As

³⁰⁹ The Venetian government on several occasions reported to the bailo the difficult negotiations with the Duke of Ossuna over the return of the merchant galleys. For instance, see SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 112/113, in date 3 November 1618.

³¹⁰ SDeIC, reg. 12, fo. 169-173, in date 26 September 1618. For the two imperial letters see DT, busta 11, No 1231 and 1232.

³¹¹ Previously he had been bailo in Istanbul between 1602 and 1604.

soon as he arrived, the ambassador was welcomed by the bailo and brought to audience with Mehmet Pasha to discuss the main political issues. Later, in January 1619, they also went to Divan, and meet with the grand mufti and the sultan.³¹² The ambassador during his numerous meetings with the Ottoman authorities did not deal with the issue of the Bosnian merchants, suggesting that, by that time, it might have lost much of its importance for the Ottoman authorities. During Contarini's sojourn in Istanbul, on January 18, the grand vizier Halil Pasha was removed from his office due to his defeat by the Safavids the previous year, and was replaced by the *kaymakam* Mehmed Pasha.³¹³

Despite the calm in the dispute and other important political issues demanding his attention, the bailo continued to endeavor to obtain an imperial order against the claims of the Bosnian merchants in order to permanently settle the affair. In the end, in February, the bailo obtained, through the intervention of the new grand vizier, two letters from Osman II, one to the Venetian government and one to the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia, Mustafa Pasha, which dismissed the claims of the Bosnian merchants against Venice. The bailo thanked the Pasha for the letters and for all the support he had given to the bailo throughout the dispute by giving him 3.000 ducats.³¹⁴ According to the Sultan's letter, the claims of the Bosnian merchants who had complained against the bailo for the losses they had suffered from the attack of the Spanish fleet, had been rebutted according to the *şeri'at* and the *ahidnames*.³¹⁵ However, the sultan asked the

³¹² APC, busta 14/XXXVI°, fo. 287-291.

³¹³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 132; APC, busta 14/XXXVI°, fo. 300-304, in date 17 January 1619.

³¹⁴ APC, busta 14/XXXVII°, fo. 328-337.

³¹⁵ “*vilāyet-i Bosna'da olan ba'zı ehl-i İslam tâcirleri asitâne-i sa'âdetimizde mukim olan baylosunuz ile da'vâ ve husumet eylediklerinde şer'-i şerif ve 'ahidnâme-i hümayûnumuz muktezasınca cevâbları verilip men' olundu*”.

Venetian government to try to recover at least part of the robbed goods from the Spanish³¹⁶.

Istanbul: 1619-1621, a Turn for the Worse and the Final Conclusion of the Affair under the Grand Vizierate of Güzelce Ali Pasha.

After several months of calm, the dispute suddenly started again with the election of Güzelce Ali Pasha as new grand vizier on December 24 1619.³¹⁷ He decisively upheld the rights of the Bosnian merchants vis-à-vis the Venetian government and applied a great deal of pressure on the balio to force him to compensate them. Under Ali Pasha, the dispute took a dangerous turn for the worse and grew into an international controversy as the ambassadors of several Western European kingdoms played a role in its resolution.

The restart of the dispute and the dramatic turn that it took in 1620 were due mainly to the strained relationship between Ali Pasha and the Venetian government. It dated back from about 1608 when the former was *beylerbeyi* of Tunis (about 1607/1608). Near Crete, a galley belonging to Ali and several other high-ranking Ottomans was attacked by some armed Venetian ships which mistakenly had thought it a corsair ship. He then sued Venice and demanded compensation for his losses from the bailo Simone Contarini (bailo between 1608 and 1612). However, the bailo, after difficult rounds of negotiation with the Ottoman authorities carried out by his chief dragoman Borissi, had

³¹⁶ “*a’danın ellerinden hulāsa mümkün olan esbabların eğer cüzü ve eğer küllü her neyse istihlasa bedel-i makdur ve sa’y na-mahsur eylemeniz aksa-ı murād-i hümayūnumuzdur*”. DT, busta 1243, No 1243. It dates evahir-i şehri-i sefer 1028, that is, between February 7 and 15 1619. The second imperial letter, for the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia and the *kadı* of Klis, has been preserved only in its Italian translation. APC, busta 14/XXXVII°, fo. 343-346.

³¹⁷ İstanköylü Çelebi (Güzelce) Ali Pasha (d. 1621). Robert Mantran, “Guzeldje Ali Pasha”, *EI*, 2nd ed.; Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 110/111 and 132-136.

managed to counter his claims.³¹⁸ However, Ali continued to hold a grudge against Venice for his ship in the ensuing years. In the winter of 1616/1617 he became *kapudan pasha*, the great admiral of the Ottoman fleet, and in the following years, during his yearly naval campaigns against corsairs and privateers in the Eastern Mediterranean, he attacked some Venetian ships in the Ionian Sea seizing their goods and capturing their crews. The bailo Nani on several occasions complained to the *kaymakam* and later grand vizier Kara Mehmet Pasha and the mufti Es'ad Efendi about his activities. Ali Pasha insisted on obtaining compensation from Venice for the losses that he had suffered during the incident involving his galley many years before.³¹⁹ In 1619, his attacks against Venetian shipping increased and he attacked also French and Dutch ships. Despite the bailo's complaints, Ali Pasha was not punished since, according to the bailo, he had powerful supporters in Istanbul, above all the *kızlarağası* Mustafa Agha and the sultan's preceptor (*hoca, coza* in the Venetian sources) Ömer Efendi. The grand vizier Mehmet Pasha could not oppose their influence over the Ottoman politics.³²⁰

At the beginning of December 1619, Ali Pasha returned to Istanbul after his successful campaign against the pirates in the Aegean, the spoils of which he donated to the Sultan. Among the spoils there were also goods and slaves from Venetian ships. The bailo asked him in vain to return the robbed goods, and the Pasha demanded up to

³¹⁸ "Relazione di Simone Contarini" in Nicolo Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet, *Le relazioni degli stati europei lette al senato dagli ambasciatori veneziani nel secolo decimo settimo: Turchia* (2 vols, Venice, 1871/1872), p. 138 and 253.

³¹⁹ For instance, see APC, busta 14/XXXVI°, fo. 259-254, and 271-278, in date, respectively, 16 and 21 December 1618. Also the Ottoman historian İbrahim Peçevi reported the attacks of Ali Pasha against Venetian ships in 1619 and the ensuing complaints of the bailo, backed by the grand vizier Mehmet Pasha. İbrahim Peçevi Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi* (2 books edited by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, Ankara, Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992,) p. 346/347.

³²⁰ APC, busta 14/XXXVII°, fo. 404-412. On Ömer Efendi see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 118-128; on the relationship between Ali Pasha and the chief black eunuch Mustafa Agha see Ibid p.110/111.

10.000 ducats for his galley. The bailo rejected his demands. In all his following dealings with Ali Pasha the bailo was helped by Mahmut Agha, described by the former as a “confidant of the Republic”. His identity is unclear in our sources, but he must have held a prominent position in Ottoman politics since he regularly met with Ali Pasha and other high-ranking Ottomans.³²¹ He carried out most of the negotiations between the bailo and the Pasha.

On December 24, much to the bailo’s anxiety the grand vizier Kara Mehmed Pasha was deposed and succeeded by Ali Pasha himself. According to the bailo, the two main reasons for his election were his successful naval campaign, during which he had managed to collect huge sums of money to present to the sultan, and his previous role in the deposition of Sultan Mustafa and the enthronement of Osman II in 1618.³²² In the days following his election, through Mahmud Agha, the bailo learnt that the Pasha demanded up to 50.000 ducats from him for his galley and that he wanted to help the Bosnian merchants obtain redress from Venice. The bailo also learnt that Mümin Çavuş had met with Ali Pasha who had assured him that he would force Venice to compensate him and the other merchants. Mümin, encouraged by the Pasha’s promise, then wrote to the other merchants in Bosnia to call them to Istanbul. Also the sultan’s preceptor, Ömer Efendi, an ally of the new grand vizier, backed the merchants’ demands.³²³

At the beginning of January 1620, the new grand vizier called the Venetian dragoman Borissi to audience at his residence, where several Bosnian merchants and the head of the chancellery, (*nisancı*) were also present. There, Ali Pasha angrily claimed

³²¹ APC, busta 15/XXXXIV°, fo. 167-175, in date 20 December 1619.

³²² APC, busta 15/XXXXIV°, fo. 186-188, in date 24 December 1619. Also Tezcan maintained that Ali Pasha’s ability of collecting huge sums of money during his naval campaign in 1619 was pivotal to his promotion to the Grand Vizierate. *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 133.

³²³ APC, busta 15/XXXXIV°, fo. 194-199, in date 31 December 1619; and APC, Busta 15/XXXXXV°, fo. 209.

that the Venetian authorities had let the Spanish fleet attack the merchant galleys after an agreement with the Spanish viceroy of Naples, and he demanded up to 300.000 ducats for the losses of all the Ottoman merchants and for his galley. He even stated that the Ottomans did not need “the friendship of the Venetian Republic” and that the presence of the bailo in Istanbul was “unnecessary”.³²⁴ Later the dragoman reported to the bailo those demands and also that, according to some informants, the grand vizier had proposed to other Ottoman authorities to wage war against Venice and to conquer Crete, the last important Venetian possession in the Eastern Mediterranean. Alarmed by the enmity of the grand vizier (“innate hatred”, *odio intestino*, according to the bailo), and, above all, by his threat of a war against the Republic, the bailo asked Mahmut Agha to try to soothe the Pasha. The Agha suggested to the bailo that he should pay up to 7.000 ducats to Ali Pasha in order to placate him. The bailo agreed to pay that sum under the condition that the Pasha would dismiss the Bosnian merchants and return the goods and the crews of the Venetian ships captured. The bailo later met with the Sultan’s preceptor Ömer Efendi to discuss the issue of the Bosnian merchants. The latter refused to negotiate with the bailo and rejected his gifts, and warned him that a rupture of the relations and a war between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice were imminent.³²⁵

Mahmut Agha later met with Ali Pasha as he had decided previously with the bailo. He told the latter that the claims of the Bosnian merchants had been rebutted by the previous grand vizier and that the bailo was seeking his friendship. He also gave him the 7.000 ducats promised by the bailo but the Pasha refused them. The following day Ali Pasha sent his steward (*kahya*) to the dragoman Borissi to present him a *buyrultu* (a

³²⁴ “*Che bisogno abbiamo delle vostra amicitia! Per me non me ne curo, nè vi è anco bisogno che qui vi stia Bailo*”, APC, busta15/ XXXXIV°, fo. 217-219.

³²⁵ APC, busta15/XXXXIV°, fo. 219-227, in date 21 January 1620.

rescript, *buiurdi* in the Venetian sources) which urged the bailo to meet with the Pasha at his residence to deal with the dispute of the merchants in the presence of both the *kadiaskers*. The *kahya* also told the dragoman that the Pasha wanted 10.000 ducats to conclude the dispute and to establish a pacific relationship with the bailo. The bailo complied by paying that sum to the Pasha.³²⁶

However, the payment proved vain. On January 30, the bailo went to the Ali Pasha's residence to deal with the issue of the merchants. Before going, he had unsuccessfully tried to avoid, through the mediation of Mahmut Agha with Ali Pasha, the presence of the two *kadiaskers*, since he feared they would rule against Venice, forcing him to compensate the merchants. Once there the bailo stated that he would not discuss the dispute of the Bosnian merchants since, it had been previously settled by both the Ottoman and Venetian authorities and concluded with the issuance of a sultanic order. However, the Pasha disregarded the bailo's defense and started to debate harshly with the dragoman Borissi accusing him of several misdeeds.³²⁷ Suddenly, after having consulted one of the two *kadiaskers*, the Pasha had the dragoman arrested by a *subaşı* and he dismissed the bailo. The bailo thought that they would put the dragoman in prison and therefore endeavored to free him. He met with Halil Pasha, the new grand admiral and a longtime supporter of Venice, to ask him to help him free the dragoman, but later he learnt that the dragoman had been hanged in a public square. According to him, the decision for the execution had been taken exclusively by Ali Pasha, while the two *kadiaskers* had proposed a lesser punishment. Furthermore, after the execution the two *kadiaskers* ruled that Venice had to pay compensation to all Bosnian merchants for their losses and issued a *hüccet*.

³²⁶ APC, busta 15/XXXXIV°, fo. 227-236, in date 22 January 1620.

³²⁷ “*Si sa bene quanti misfatti hai commesso!*”.

In his *dispaccio*, the bailo lamented the execution of Borissi and the great blow that it had dealt to the international prestige of the Republic of. He also alarmingly reported that the Pasha, full of sound and fury, had even threatened to execute him and to wage war against Venice if the bailo did not comply with the verdict of the *kadiaskers*³²⁸. In the following *dispaccio*, the bailo stated that the execution of the dragoman must have been decided by Ali Pasha several days before, and that the sultan himself must have approved it, since the grand vizier did not have the authority to take such a draconian decision by himself. The bailo suggested as the reason for the execution, the Pasha's longtime hatred and the desire of revenge against Borissi who, during the dispute for his galley in 1608, had successfully defended the Venetian stance vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities. Furthermore, the Pasha and the Bosnian merchants had blamed the dragoman of disrespecting them and the two *kadiaskers* by not reporting correctly and completely their arguments to the bailo during the negotiations.³²⁹

After that tragic event, the bailo strove to find supporters who might counter the threats of Ali Pasha. At the beginning of February, he sent his secretary and the dragoman Brutti to the grand mufti. The latter told them that he had always favored the peace between the two states and protected Venetian interests in the empire, especially by opposing those Ottoman grandees who promoted a war against Venice. He also stated that he had opposed the verdict of the two *kadiaskers* and had refused to sign it as they had requested. According to the mufti, Ali Pasha had obtained that verdict with the backing of the powerful sultan's preceptor, Hoca Ömer Efendi. However, the mufti said that he had supported the execution of the dragoman, since the latter had harmed the

³²⁸ “*azione che mi ha trafitta l'anima, vedendo calpestata la dignità pubblica..A me anco ha minacciato, fuori d'ogni proposito, che mi leverà la testa, et che quando non voglia star alla giustizia che ve intenda rotta la pace*”. APC, busta15/XXXXV°, fo. 238-240, in date 30 January 1620, and fo. 244-251, in date 4 February 1620. During the night of 30 January, the bailo managed to recover the body of the dragoman from the grand vizier through the mediation of the Dutch Ambassador Cornelis Haga.

³²⁹ “*non riferiva quello ch'io dicevo*”.

negotiations between the bailo and the Ottoman authorities by not reporting correctly to both the parties. About the dispute of the Bosnian merchants, he suggested, as he had done before, that Venice should at least provide a partial remedy for their losses, for instance by modifying the custom duties. Finally, the mufti encouraged the bailo to compensate Ali Pasha for his galley in order to placate him. The bailo also sent his dragoman Brutti to meet with the grand admiral Halil Pasha and Gürcü Mehmed Pasha³³⁰, both longtime supporters of Venice. The latter expressed their condolences for the execution of Borissi and promised to defend Venetian interests against the Pasha.³³¹

On February 8, Ali Pasha called the bailo to his residence. The bailo found there also the two *kadiaskers* and many Bosnian merchants. The merchants submitted to the *kadiaskers* several documents, including the registers of custom duties and freight bills, to prove them the extent of their losses and, one by one they told the latter how much reimbursement they wanted. Then, after the merchants swore on the truth of their declarations, the *kadiaskers* told the bailo that the expected indemnification was 100.000 ducats (but that sum would rise as other merchants involved continued to arrive to Istanbul). The bailo responded that, before deciding on paying the merchants, he had to write to the Venetian government and receive precise orders on that. Ali Pasha criticized the bailo's answer because he maintained that, by buying time, the bailo had deceived the merchants during the last three years. He then urged him to pay that sum as soon as possible and claimed that the sultan too had ruled for that. He also threatened the bailo to deviate the Ottoman trade from the port of Split should the latter not comply, and told him that Venice might recover the disbursed money by obtaining the

³³⁰ Hadım Gürcü Mehmed Pasha (d. 1626). In 1620 he was second vizier in the Divan. Alexander de Groot, "Gurdju Mehmed Pasha", *EI*, 2nd ed..

³³¹ APC, busta 15/ XXXXXV°, fo. 251-256, in date 4 February 1620. The mufti reinstated and further explained his opposition to the sentence issued by the two *kazaskers* in a *dispaccio* dated 7 May 1620. APC, busta 16/ XXXXXVII°, fo. 340-348.

robbed ships from the Spanish. Finally, the Pasha charged a *çavuşbaşı* (*chiaus bassi* in the Venetian sources) with the collection of the money from the bailo. After being dismissed, the bailo wrote to the Venetian government to ask for instruction about the most recent threatening developments.

After this meeting, the bailo's foremost objective was to gain enough time to write to the Venetian government and receive precise orders. After asking his mediator Mahmut Agha to try to convince the Pasha to grant him at least four months, the bailo met with the ambassadors of France, England, and the Dutch Republic. He asked them to mediate with the grand vizier on his behalf in order to obtain from the latter enough time to receive orders from the Venetian government, and to receive an assurance he would not be arrested and forced into payment. Thereafter they played an important role in the dispute as mediators between the bailo and Ali Pasha.³³²

On February 11, Mahmut Agha met with Ali Pasha to try to convince him into giving four months to the bailo to write to Venice and receive orders. The Pasha denied such request by saying he had discuss the matter with the Sultan himself who had then ruled for the immediate payment. He also demanded 50.000 ducats as a compensation for his galley. Mahmut Agha answered that the bailo could not compensate him without precise orders from the Venetian government, otherwise he would be punished. The Pasha disregarded his arguments and again threatened to break the peace with the Republic of Venice and to have the bailo arrested by the *çavuşbaşı*, if he did not pay the the merchants. The following day, as they had agreed with the bailo, the ambassadors of France, England, and Netherland together met with Ali Pasha to persuade him to give enough time to the bailo to write to Venice and receive orders before he would be forced into paying the merchants as the *kadıaskers* had sentenced. After a long debate,

³³² APC, busta 15/XXXXXXV°, fo. 258-263, in date 11 February 1620.

the Pasha agreed to give the bailo seventy days under the condition that, in the case of further delay, the latter would be forced to immediately pay the merchants.³³³

The merchants were not satisfied by the delay of the payment and continuously harassed the bailo to demand an immediate compensation. On the other hand, the bailo wanted to gain more days since he deemed the seventy days granted by the Grand Vizier insufficient.

On February 17, Ali Pasha again called the bailo to audience at his residence where several preeminent merchants involved in the dispute were also present. There, they discussed at length the possibility of giving the bailo more time. In the end, the Pasha decided to give him three months to receive orders from the Venetian government under the condition (*piezaria*) that he would then pay the merchants. Otherwise the Pasha threatened to confiscate the merchandise of the Venetian merchants in the empire and warned of other dangerous consequences for the bailo and the Republic. After being dismissed, the bailo disconsolately wrote to the Venetian government that he could not achieve anything positive through negotiation since the dispute had already been decided with a verdict against Venice, which could not be reversed according to Ottoman law. He admitted that the Venetian government could either comply with the verdict, that is, to pay the merchants, or suffer from a rupture in the relations.³³⁴ In a later *dispaccio*, the bailo, writing again about the *hüccet* issued on behalf of the merchants, told the Venetian government that it cannot be annulled since, he

³³³ APC, busta 15/XXXXXXVI°, fo. 263-267, in date 12 February 1620.

³³⁴“*Questo negotio, Serenissimo Principe, non è come gli altri, ne' quali con la negotiatione vi si può dar alcun ripiego; ma in questo trattadandosi di dar essecutione ad una sentenza fatta, che non ha appellatione secondo la loro legge..bisogna risolversi in uno de' duoi partiti, cioè di pagare o di rompere*”. APC, busta 15/XXXXXXVI°, fo. 275-279, in date 21 February 1620.

maintained, according to Ottoman law even the sultan could not do away with the verdict passed by the *kadiaskers*.³³⁵

After the Pasha conceded three months to the bailo, the dispute stalled for some months. During those months many more merchants involved in the dispute arrived to Istanbul after hearing that the Pasha had promised to compensate each of them for their losses.

In March the Venetian government received the news of the execution of Borissi and the dangerous developments in the affair of the Bosnian merchants. On the 14th and 24th, the Senate wrote to the bailo to lament the tragic event and to ask him to try by any means possible to counter the grand vizier's harmful actions, such as the verdict in favor of the Bosnian merchants, and dangerous threats, above all the rumored war, against the Republic. About the *kadiaskers*' sentence, it asked the bailo to avoid its execution at any cost since it would be highly detrimental to Venetian interests and to do away with the related *hüccet*.³³⁶ It ordered the bailo not to negotiate personally with the merchants and the Grand Vizier but to employ mediators. In an evident attempt to divide the merchants, it also ordered the bailo to deal only with the most prominent merchants, like Mümin Çavuş, and to try to appease them. As the foremost argument in defense of Venice, the Senate asked the bailo to stress to the grand vizier that according to neither the *ahidnames* nor other agreements between the two states the Republic was obliged to compensate the merchants; and that the latter's claims had been already dismissed by the imperial order issued in the previous year. In all this effort, it asked the bailo, to obtain the support of the most influent Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, above all the

³³⁵ “*nel stato, in che si atrovano le cose stimano questi della legge, che il medesimo Re non possa tagliar una sentenza decretata dalli Cadileschieri, che chiamano le colonne di questo Imperio..*”. APC, busta 16/XXXXXVII^o, fo. 318-326, in date 23 April 1620.

³³⁶ “*conoscemo non potersi far cosa con maggior dano et pregiuditio*”.

grand mufti Es'ad, and to look for the mediation of the ambassadors of France, England, and Netherland in Istanbul with the Pasha. In particular, the bailo was asked to gain the support of the Dutch Ambassador, Cornelis Haga³³⁷. Furthermore, the Senate informed the bailo that it had agreed to compensate Ali Pasha for his galley in order to appease him. The newly elected bailo Giorgio Giustiniani, whose departure for Istanbul was close, was charged with bringing the sum of money for the Pasha. The threat of a rupture of the delicate peace and a new war was taken very seriously by the Venetian government which sent orders to its authorities in Crete and in the Adriatic to arm galleys and strengthen the defense against possible Ottoman attacks. However, conscious of the impossibility of resisting to a possible Ottoman attack, the Venetian government, first of all, increased its diplomatic efforts with the Western European countries in order to obtain their mediation with the grand vizier.³³⁸

On April 9, the Venetian government wrote again to the bailo to give him further instructions over the affair. It asked him to try to buy further time, especially by negotiating with the grand mufti and the *hoca* of the sultan, in order to allow the new bailo Giustiniani to arrive to Istanbul. The new bailo was charged with handling the affair of the Bosnian merchants and bringing the compensation for the Pasha. Together with the instructions for the bailo, the Senate also sent letters for sultan Osman II, Ali Pasha, the great admiral Halil Pasha, the mufti Esad Efendi, the sultan's preceptor Ömer Efendi, and the chief black eunuch of the royal palace Mustafa Agha. To Osman II and Ali Pasha, the Senate wrote that according to the *ahidnames* Venice could not be held accountable for any the losses that Ottoman merchants might suffer on the sea from the

³³⁷ He was the first diplomatic representative of the Dutch Republic in Istanbul. He stayed there between 1612 and 1639.

³³⁸ SDeIC, reg.13, fo. 1-19.

attacks of an enemy state.³³⁹ It then stressed that the affair had been already settled with the imperial order issued in January 1619. Finally, it asked the sultan to dismiss the merchants since their demand plainly violated both the *ahidname* and the Sultan's order, and to stop them from harassing the bailo.³⁴⁰

At the end of April the Bailo received those letters of the Venetian government for the Sultan and Ali Pasha. At the beginning of May, the bailo decided to send his chief secretary, Girolamo Alberti, together with the mediator Mahmut Agha to meet with Ali Pasha and deliver those of the Venetian government. The secretary told the Pasha that Venice had agreed to compensate him for his robbed galley and the upcoming new bailo would provide it. The Pasha was satisfied by that news but, again, insisted on compensating also the merchants since, he stressed, this had been decided by a verdict of the two *kadiaskers*. The promise of compensation did not soften his defense of the Bosnian merchants.³⁴¹

In mid May, the three months granted to the bailo expired. The Bosnian merchants began to harass the bailo by sending numerous *çavuşes* to his residence to demand immediate compensation. The *çavuşbaşı*, who was in charge of the collection of the money from the bailo, urged him to pay the merchants and warned him that he would arrest him if he refused that. The bailo defended himself by stating that he could not negotiate any more about that affair since the upcoming bailo Giustiniani had been charged with its settlement by the Venetian government. He also sent his dragomans to the mufti and other high-ranking Ottomans sympathetic towards Venice, such as the grand admiral Halil Pasha, in order to obtain their help in avoiding being arrested.

³³⁹ “*conforme alla nobile giustizia, et alli Ecc. Capitoli, non sia la Republica nostra tenuta ad alcun refacimento delle robbe depredate in Mare da Nemici dell'Ecc. Porta nelle galere di mercantia..*”

³⁴⁰ “*essendo quella pretensione del tutto vana, ordinò che per giustizia fossero li Avani licenziati*”. SDeIC, reg. 13, fo. 35-43.

³⁴¹ APC, Busta 16, XXXXXVII^o, fo. 340-348, in date 7 May 1620.

However, the grand vizier and his ally Hoca Ömer Efendi disregarded the bailo's defense and urged him to immediately pay the merchants; otherwise, they threatened to imprison or even execute him. The bailo sent to Ömer Efendi the ambassadors of Netherland, France, and England. They tried order to convince him not to force the bailo into payment, since, they maintained that the bailo, just like them, was just a representative of his government and could not take important decisions without precise orders. They also told the Hoca that the upcoming bailo had been specifically instructed about the settlement of the affairs by the Venetian governments. The *hoca* was convinced and told the ambassadors that he would wait for the new bailo, but he warned them that, if the latter did not provide to the merchants their compensation, he would be punished according to Ottoman justice.

After this meeting, the ambassador of Netherland, Cornelis Haga, went to meet with the grand vizier to mediate over the issue of the Bosnian merchants as he had agreed with the bailo. The choice of Haga for that delicate mediation was due to the high esteem he enjoyed in the eyes of the Pasha. Thereafter he became the main negotiator between the bailo and Ali Pasha throughout the affair. At his residence, Ali Pasha told him that, as a preventive measure in case the bailo refused to pay the merchants, he had sent orders to the main commercial hubs of the empire to forbid the Venetian merchants from loading their ships and carrying the purchased goods to Venice. He also again threatened to divert the Ottoman merchants from going to Split. He then told the ambassador that he would imprison the bailo, execute him, and wage a war against Venice if the merchants were not satisfied. However, he agreed with the ambassador to

wait for the arrival of the new bailo before taking any actions against Venice and the Venetian merchants in the empire.³⁴²

Soon after, on May 19, the three aforementioned ambassadors met at the residence of the French ambassador with the three most prominent merchants involved in the dispute, that is Resul Agha, Mümin Çavuş and an unspecified third. They aimed at convincing the merchants to stop harassing the present bailo. They maintained vis-à-vis the three merchants that the bailo was not in charge of their dispute any longer and asked them to wait for the new bailo to resume the negotiation. The merchants responded that, since they had a verdict of the *kadıaskers* on their behalf and since they were backed by the grand vizier and the sultan, they expected immediate redress. They also assured the ambassadors that, if they were assured about their payment, they would cease harassing the bailo. The ambassadors then warned them that if bailo were to be forced to pay or to suffer any mistreatment, like imprisonment or even execution, they together would complain directly to the sultan.³⁴³

On May 20, Ali Pasha, through a *buyruktu*, called the bailo to his residence with the money for the merchants. There the two *kadıaskers* and numerous merchants were also present. The bailo managed to bring there the Dutch and French ambassadors, but they were not allowed to take part in the ensuing negotiation. In this meeting, Ali Pasha had the contents of the *hüccet* on behalf of the merchants read out loud. Then he proposed to the merchants to confiscate the goods belonging to Venetian merchants in Istanbul until

³⁴² APC, busta 16/XXXXXVII^o, fo. 348-357, in date 18 May 1620. Haga's role in the affair is reported also by Alexander H. De Groot in *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: a history of the earliest diplomatic relations, 1610-1630* (Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut Leiden/Istanbul, 1978), p. 163/164.

³⁴³ “*essi Ambasciatori in fine sarebbono comparsi davanti unitamente inanzi al Re a dolersi, et querelarsi di qualsiasi ingiuria, et violenza, che fosse fatta al Bailo, non essendo il dover, che debito de altri fosse soggetto a ingiurie tali il Bailo, né li Ambasciatori*”. APC, busta 16/XXXXXVII^o, fo. 357-360, in date 19 May 1620.

the arrival of the new bailo. He also decided to give the bailo thirty more days after which, if the latter still did not pay, these goods would be sold, and the bailo would be imprisoned or even executed. He also threatened not to allow the upcoming bailo to enter to Istanbul if the latter did not give assurance that he would pay both the merchants and the Pasha for his galley. Finally, he sent orders to the Ottoman authorities in the cities and ports frequented by Venetian merchants to urge them to prepare to confiscate the latter's goods. After these threats, the Pasha let the two ambassadors of France and Netherland to take part in the debate. After thanking him for having given to the bailo thirty more days, they told him that they objected not to the payment of the merchants, but rather to the physical punishment of the bailo. Ali Pasha replied to them that if bailo did not pay the merchants, he would wage war against the Republic.³⁴⁴

In the beginning of June, the situation in Istanbul was very tense. The risk of a rupture of the peace between the two states increased as the days given to the bailo to pay the merchants were rapidly expiring and the coming of his successor was not close. However, many in Istanbul opposed that dramatic eventuality. The most preeminent merchants involved in the affair, as well as many other Ottoman merchants trading with Venice, feared that they would lose an important source of profits from a possible interruption of the trade between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. According to the bailo's account, some of Bosnian merchants even regretted having pushed the grand vizier against Venice so far as to threaten a war. On the other hand, the Venetian merchants in the empire feared a confiscation of their goods. The foreseeable economic consequences were evident to both the parties and this encouraged them to look for a compromise. An Ottoman Greek ship captain from Trikala (in Thessaly), who is called in the Venetian sources Dimitri Todorini, whose

³⁴⁴ APC, busta 16/ XXXXXVIII^o, fo. 370-374, in date 22 May 1620.

brother was the head of a network of Greek merchants based in Venice, offered his mediation to all the parties concerned in order to avoid the interruption of the trade between the two states. After intense debates with the bailo, the two most preeminent Bosnian merchants Resul Agha and Mümin Çavuş, and the Dutch ambassador, he managed to broker a deal: those merchants who had received the previous *hüccet* on their behalf, would be fully compensated by the bailo, but Venice would recover that money by raising the custom duties on all the goods carried by Ottoman merchants to Venice from Split, and on the other way round and on the other way round by 2% for at least five years. Ali Pasha agreed to this plan. Upon the bailo's request, all documents issued on that agreement by the Ottoman legal bodies were delivered to Cornelis Haga and signed in the latter's name, since the bailo wanted to avoid any mention of himself and Venice in the agreement in order to hide the fact that Venice had indeed paid the merchants. Resul Agha and Mümin Çavuş wrote then a plea (*supplica*) in the behalf of all the merchants to the Venetian government to ask for the raise of the custom duties. After the bailo arranged the delivery of silk and woolen fabrics valued 96.969 *guruşes* (the Spanish piece of eight, or piastra) belonging to some Venetian merchants based in Istanbul, plus 7.000 ducats from himself, to Cornelis Haga who later delivered them to the twenty two merchants beneficiary of the *hüccet*. Finally, on June 19, the *kadı* of Galata Mustafa Ibn Şeyh issued a general *hüccet* that registered that the merchants had received their compensation from the Dutch ambassador and had ended their lawsuit against Venice. Each merchant then received a single *hüccet* with the receipt of their compensation. It is important to point out that the general *hüccet* had been issued by a *kadı* and not by the *kadıaskers*, as it was the case with the previous sentence and as indeed the merchants had hoped. This choice was the result of the bailo's diplomacy with the most prominent merchants, and it was motivated by his fear that the *kadıaskers* would have issued a verdict much more detrimental to the Venetian interests. The Pasha

was satisfied by the agreement. However, soon after the agreement, he communicated to the bailo that he was still waiting for the compensation for his galley from the upcoming bailo.³⁴⁵

The Venetian government criticized the agreement. On July 16, the Senate wrote to the bailo that all the parts of the agreement were contrary to its orders and detrimental to the Venetian interests.³⁴⁶ First, it criticized the compensation given to the merchants, since it had specifically ordered him to avoid it at any cost and to allow the new bailo to settle the affair. Second, it refused the raise of the custom duties, since its imposition would equal mean the execution of the *kadiaskers'* verdict on behalf of the merchants. Third, the Senate warned that that agreement would encourage other Ottoman subjects in dispute with the Venetian authorities to demand a similar treatment.³⁴⁷ In *dispaccio* dated 22 August, the bailo defended the agreement by maintaining that saved the peace between the two states and ultimately his life. He pointed out that, in accordance with the orders of Venetian government, the deal had been reached exclusively through mediators and that the Dutch ambassador, and not he himself, had provided the compensation to the merchants.³⁴⁸

The payment of the merchants did not end the dispute. After about a month of calm, at the end of July the bailo wrote to the Venetian government that numerous Bosnian merchants, not included in the compensation, had turned to the grand vizier to ask him

³⁴⁵ APC, busta 16/ XXXXXVIII^o, fo. 381-401, and 418-417, in date respectively, 14 and 24 June 1620. The original *hüccet* issued by the *kadı* of Galata is kept in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA, Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives) in *Başmuhasebe Kalemi*: 8/62. It dates 18 Receb 1029. Baki Tezcan mentioned it in *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 136. For its Italian translation see DT, busta 12, No 1263. Both the ambassador Haga and the captain Toderini received from the bailo precious Venetian fabrics for their mediation efforts.

³⁴⁶ “*queste sono tutte attioni contrie affatto al nostro desiderio, alli nostril ordini, et al servitio delle cose nostre*”.

³⁴⁷ SDelC, reg. 13, fo. 98/99.

³⁴⁸ APC, busta 15/XXXXX^o, fo. 486-491.

for redress from Venice. These merchants, far more numerous than the first group, are described in the bailo's *dispaccio* as the poorest of all the victims of the Spanish attack. The Pasha assured them that the upcoming bailo would compensate them, or else he would wage war against Venice and interrupt the trade between the two states. After dismissing them, through the Dutch Ambassador, he communicated to the bailo that he demanded at least part of the money for his galley since he was short of money to pay the troops on occasion of the approaching Ramadan. The bailo assured him that his successor would give him all his money as it had been promised by the Venetian government. The Pasha reacted positively and freed several Venetian captives as a gesture of good faith to the bailo. However, in the following weeks he continuously sent *çavuşes* to ask for his money.³⁴⁹

On August 6, Ali Pasha called the bailo to audience at his residence to discuss commercial matters in Siria. To the bailo's surprise and alarm, there he found the second groups of Bosnian merchants. The bailo feared that the *kadiaskers* would rule against Venice and force him to also compensate those merchants. The Pasha insisted on obtaining immediately at least part of his compensation for his galley. Despite his defense that the compensation would arrive with the upcoming bailo, and after numerous threats from the Pasha, the bailo decided to give him 10.000 ducats as part of the compensation. The Pasha did not discuss the merchants' issue at all. Three days later, the merchants, numbering seventy three, went again to the grand vizier with the hope of obtaining hopeful from the *kadiaskers* a sentence on their behalf. To their disappointment, the Pasha told them to wait for the arrival of the new bailo and ordered them to stop asking to him for their compensation.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ APC, busta 15/XXXXIX°, fo. 450-460 and 460-473, in date, respectively, 28 July and 9 August 1620.

³⁵⁰ APC, busta 15/XXXXIX°, fo. 473-483, in date 9 August 1620.

On August 15, the new bailo Giorgio Giustiniani³⁵¹, arrived to Istanbul. On the same day, Hoca Ömer Efendi, who was a close ally of the Ali Pasha and one of the main adversaries of Venice in the dispute of the Bosnian merchants was removed from his office. The Venetian government had commissioned the new bailo to pay the grand vizier for his galley as soon as he arrived to Istanbul. About the dispute of the Bosnian merchants, it ordered him to annul the agreement struck by his predecessor Nani and to try to do away with the *kadiaskers'* verdict and the last *hiiccet* issued by the *kadi* of Galata deemed highly detrimental to the Venetian interests.³⁵² It also instructed him to defend the Venetian stance vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities by showing the previous imperial letter, which he brought with him to Istanbul, against the merchants; and to stress that the bailo, according to the *ahidnames*, could not be prosecuted by the *kadiaskers*.³⁵³ Furthermore, the Senate asked the bailo to obtain a written declaration that Venice could not be held accountable for the losses suffered on the sea by Ottoman merchants in order to avoid the repetition of a similar case. Finally, the Senate ordered the new bailo to urge his successor Nani to return immediately to Venice in order to stand trial (at the tribunal of the *Avogaria di Comun*), since he had violated government orders by allowing the payment of the merchants.

Upon hearing his arrive, the Bosnian merchants went to the grand vizier to ask him to demand their compensation from the new bailo. The Pasha sent his agents to ask him to pay him immediately for his galley since he had to pay the troops on occasion of the Ramadan. However, the new bailo was seriously ill and could not make the customary official entrance in Pera and meet with the grand vizier. He lay in bed for several weeks

³⁵¹ He was bailo between 1620 and 1627.

³⁵² “*ripieno di pregiudicii così notabili et danosi al publico servitio*”.

³⁵³ SDelC, reg. 13, fo. 99-102 and 112-114, in date, respectively, 16 July and 1 August 1620. The bailo Nani left Istanbul for Venice on May 1621.

in September and October during which Ali Pasha repeatedly sent him *çavuşes* to ask for the money of his galley. From our sources we do not know if this illness was a pretext for postponing the payment to the grand vizier and avoiding debating the affair of the Bosnian merchants. At the end, the bailo, as the Venetian government had instructed him, compensated Ali Pasha (18.500 ducats)³⁵⁴.

During his difficult recovery, the new bailo through the mediation of the Dutch Ambassador endeavored to do away with the *hüccets* in favor of the Bosnian merchants and to obtain a written assurance that, thereafter, Venice and the baili should not be held accountable for losses suffered by Ottoman merchants on sea. Contrary to the expectations of the Venetian government, the compensation did not soften Ali Pasha's firm defense of the remaining Bosnian merchants, who amounted to about eighty. They were irritated by the bailo's long recovery and continuously turned to the Pasha and to the Public Divan to ask for their compensation. According to the bailo's account, at audience with high ranking Ottomans, the merchants appeared barefoot and half-naked in order to impress them. Furthermore, they threatened to write a petition to the sultan himself. This was something that the Pasha wanted to avoid, since he might be held responsible by the sultan for the dissatisfaction of the merchants. Ali Pasha sent numerous *çavuşes* to the bailo to ask him to compensate the merchants immediately. The bailo always responded that he would discuss the affair with him as soon as he recovers. The bailo took advantage of his illness to drag out the affair since he hoped for Ali Pasha's removal from his office due to the political turmoil following the imminent war against Poland. In particular, the bailo waited for the arrival to Istanbul of Halil Pasha, the grand admiral and a longtime supporter of Venice, who, according to rumors in the political circles of the Ottoman capital, might be reappointed grand vizier.

³⁵⁴ APC, busta 15/XXXXXX°, fo. 486-502 in date 22 August 1620; and APC, busta 18, No 1, f. 1-8, in date 10 October 1620. Ali Pasha wrote a letter to the Venetian government to thank it for his compensation. BAC, busta 251/334.

Ali Pasha's unyielding defense support to the merchants, even after he obtained the compensation for his galley deserves further analysis. As we have seen, his hostility toward Venice and his vigorous support to the Bosnian merchants was due mostly to the incident of his galley and his desire to obtain redress for it. However, as the unfolding of the affair shows, other considerations might have moved him to support the merchants with such great vigor. His support for the grievances of the merchants was unprecedented in the Ottoman history and might be related to the political and economic context of his grand vizierate. As Baki Tezcan has shown, since his appointment he followed a very aggressive fiscal policy aimed at generating funds to finance the treasury and to keep him in office. The payment of the army, especially the *sipahis*, during summer and fall 1620 was also another important factor which led Ali Pasha to adopt such fiscal policy. As the bailo frequently reported, he confiscated the properties of rich statesmen and, in different ways, forced numerous individuals, including foreigners, to pay him or the treasury.³⁵⁵ Dragging on the dispute and continuously demanding sums of money from the bailo in order to settle it might have been another way to generate funds. On more than one occasion, the bailo bitterly wrote to the Venetian government that Ali Pasha's unyielding defense of the merchants was uniquely due to his willingness to earn great sums of money.³⁵⁶

In early November, the Grand Vizier through a *buyrultu* asked the bailo to come to his residence. Despite being still ill, the bailo decided to comply with the Pasha's order. He was carried by a stretcher (*lettica*) to the latter's residence. The captain Todorini and

³⁵⁵ For instance see APC, busta 15/XXXXVI°, fo. 290-296; busta 16/XXXXXVII°, fo. 340-348; busta 18, No 1, fo. 1-8. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p.133. Joseph von Hammer also mentioned Ali Pasha's aggressive fiscal policy and the frequent seizure of the estates of Ottoman officials. *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours/par J. de Hammer; ouvrage puisé aux sources les plus authentiques et rédigé sur des documents et des manuscrits la plupart inconnus en Europe; traduit de l'allemand, sur les notes et sous la direction de l'auteur, par J.-J. Hellert* (Istanbul, Isis, 1992-2000, Livre XLII, p. 1357136.

³⁵⁶ "si conosce che il fine del Bassà non è altro, che cavar da questo negotio grossa soma di denari". APC, busta 18, No 1, fo. 11-16, and 18-22, and 22-27, in date, respectively, 8, 11, and 22 October 1620.

the Dutch ambassador Haga were also present. Through their mediation, the bailo managed to avoid the presence of the two *kadiaskers* and the merchants at the negotiation. The bailo presented the Pasha the Senate's letters for him and stressed that he would deal with the dispute of the Bosnian merchants with none except for him. He then maintained that the compensation given to the first groups of merchants by his predecessor had violated the orders of the Venetian government, and told the Pasha that he had been instructed not to pay anything to the merchants. The latter became angry at the bailo's stance and threatened to end the debate. The Dutch ambassador then stepped in. He asked the bailo to soften his stance, otherwise he and Venice would suffer serious consequences, and proposed that he pays not the merchants but the grand vizier, who would then pay the merchants and keep part of the money for himself. The bailo agreed on that solution and told the Pasha that he would pay him for both the merchants and himself after debating over the sum. Yet, he asked that in the final agreement neither he nor the Republic should be mentioned. Ali Pasha too agreed. The ensuing debate on the sum proved difficult. The merchant Resul Agha stated that the merchants' compensation was 200.000 *guruşes*. The bailo promptly refused that sum and, in front of the Grand Vizier, accused the merchants of fraud (*la fraude di costoro*) since they continuously had raised the sum from 40.000 to 50.000, then to 176.000 and finally to 200.000 *guruşes*. He maintained that the original sum written by the merchants was 50.000 *guruşes*. Ali Pasha agreed with the sum of 200.000 *guruşes* and assured the bailo that he would provide witnesses to prove the correctness of the sum. He then dismissed the bailo.³⁵⁷

The difficult negotiation over the sum of money for the Pasha and the merchants dragged on for all the month of November. After some days from the last meeting, the Pasha told the bailo through the captain Todorini that he had chosen as compensation

³⁵⁷ APC, busta 18, No 1, fo. 27-41, in date 6 November 1620.

for himself 35.000 *guruşes* and for the merchants, at least, 180.000 *guruşes*. He also threatened the bailo that if did not accept that sum, the *kadiaskers* would issue a *hüccet* demanding its payment. The bailo responded him, through the captain, that the original sum demanded by the merchants was at maximum 60.000 *guruşes*. He then added that he could not offer more money; otherwise, he would violate the orders of the Venetian government and would be punished for that. Finally, he asked the Pasha to order the destruction of all the *hüccets* and other legal documents against Venice produced throughout the affair, and to issue a written assurance that thereafter Venice should not be prosecuted in similar disputes.

After several rounds of negotiations carried out by the Dutch ambassador, Ali Pasha accepted the bailo's demands and promised to do away with all those legal documents in favor of the Bosnians and assured him that in the future similar dispute would not take place. About this assurance, he proposed either the issuance of a *hatt-i hümayun* (*Catumaiun* in the Venetian sources) by the sultan or the addition of a new article to the *ahidnames*, which would clearly decree that Venice was not accountable for losses suffered by Ottoman merchants on sea. Upon instruction by the Venetian government, the bailo wanted this *hatt-i hümayun* and article to specify that the baili were exclusively representatives and ambassadors sent to Istanbul to deal with political issues between the Ottoman and the Venetian government and not its proxies in disputes involving individuals³⁵⁸. Furthermore, he wanted to include the assurance that, in any future dispute, either public or private, the baili would deal only with the grand vizier, and not with the *kadiaskers* and the *kadis*.

³⁵⁸ “I Suoi baili non sono altrimenti Commessi, et Procuratori della Repubblica ma suoi Rappresentanti et Ambasciatori per trattar i negotii come si usa tra Principe et Principe”.

The last hindrance to the final deal was an agreement over the extent of compensation for the merchants. The bailo tried to lower it and insisted that most merchants did not have documents proving their credit. On the other hand, the latter endeavored to submit to the Ottoman authorities as many the documents about their goods as they could find. After several round of negotiations, toward the November 20, the bailo managed to convince Ali Pasha to accept a payment of 93.000 *guruşes* instead of the about 185.000 which the merchants had demanded. However, the latter demanded further 25.000 *guruşes* besides the 35.000, which he had asked before, as a reward for his lowering the amount of the payment of the merchants.³⁵⁹

During the weeks following the agreement, the grand vizier, irritated by the long wait for the payment, complained to the bailo and reiterated his threats against Venice. In the meantime, the merchants continued to turn to the Divan and to the bailo's residence to urge him to pay them. On other hand, the bailo claimed a serious shortage of money and goods which hindered the payment, since the sum required was very high and since many merchants, both Ottoman and Venetian, as well as local moneylenders had refused to lend him money or providing him bills of exchange. He feared that such a postponement would endanger the fragile accord. He then gave the Pasha 35.000 *guruşes* for the merchants as a first round of payment. He however had difficulties to find the 25.000 ducats for the Pasha. The bailo also sought audience with the grand mufti Es'ad, who promised to support the agreement with the grand vizier. The latter also informed the bailo over a potentially dangerous agreement between Ali Pasha and the Spanish authorities according which the latter were willing to pay him up to 100.000

³⁵⁹ APC, busta 18, No 2, f. 1-13, in date 21 November 1620. SDeIC, reg. 13, fo. 132-135, in date 2 January 1621.

ducats in order to break the agreement with the bailo. He thus urged the bailo to settle the affair as soon as possible.³⁶⁰

Finally, after further mediations on the actual compensation for the merchants, a new agreement was reached in the middle of December. According to it, the bailo would pay 70.000 *guruşes* to the merchants instead of the 93.000 that the bailo had agreed previously. The 23.000 saved *guruşes* would be given to the grand vizier. The payment and the following documents would be made in the name of the grand vizier and the Dutch ambassador, avoiding any mention to Venice and the bailo, as the latter had insisted. In return, the bailo obtained a *nişan-i hümayun* (*segno imperiale* in the Venetian sources) from the sultan with the articles in favor of Venice that he had agreed on with the Pasha. The text is of paramount importance since it shows the official Ottoman perception of the entire dispute and, in particular, of the main points of contention. Firstly, the sultan described the Spanish attack and reported that the robbed merchants had claimed that the Venetian authorities had guaranteed to reimburse them if they suffered any losses on the sea and had maintained that the bailo was their proxy (*vekil*).³⁶¹ These two claims were the main points of contention. The bailo rebutted both by stating that the Venetian authorities had not guaranteed any redress and that he was not their proxy in the Ottoman Empire.³⁶² Secondly, the Sultan reported the settlement. In order to conclude the dispute and to avoid the repetition of a similar case, he ordered to do away with all the *hüccets* and other legal documents issued throughout the affair. In particular, the previous compromise between the Ottoman authorities and the bailo (here the Sultan refers to the agreement struck by the bailo Nani in June 1620), which

³⁶⁰ APC, busta 18, No 2, fo. 16-22, in date 10 December 1620.

³⁶¹ “*Venedik beyleri deryāda bizim olan zararlarımız sigorya eylemişler idi ya’ni kefil ve zāmin olmuşlar idi...baylos beyler vekilidir*”.

³⁶² “*dahi beylerimiz kefil değildir ve ben dahi anların vekili olmak üzere bu cānibe gönderilmişdim*”.

was against the orders of the Venetian government, should be eliminated and in future it should not be used to sue Venice.³⁶³ After, the Sultan ordered the following provisions: thereafter, Ottoman merchants who had suffered losses on the sea should not demand a compensation since Venice was not accountable for them, the merchants in dispute with Venice over the robbed galleys should stop asking for redress from the bailo in Istanbul since he is not the proxy of his government, the bailo should not be prosecuted by legal authorities of the empire in that affair, in case of a violation of the *ahidnames* the bailo should deal only with the Grand Vizier and report to the Venetian authorities.³⁶⁴

Apart from the *nişan*, Ali ordered that the previous verdicts of the *kadıaskers* and the *kadı* of Galata in favor of the merchants should to be delivered to the bailo who would later destroy them. The Pasha proved satisfied by the deal and assured the bailo that thereafter he would favor the Venetian interests in the empire. The bailo then went to the Dutch ambassador and the captain Toderini to thank them for their indispensable mediation throughout the dispute.³⁶⁵

The last hurdle to conclude the affair was the issuance of a final *hüccet* in which the merchants would acknowledge having received their payment (*Cozetto di quietanza* in the Venetian sources). The bailo feared that without this document, the merchants,

³⁶³ “*Venedik beyleri anın gibi ihtilâle bâ'is olacak da'vâların şimdiden sonra ref' u izâlesi maslahat için bu bâbda sudûr bulan hüccetler ve hükümler her kimin elinde bulunursa alınup mukaddemâ beylerin rızâlarına mugâyir tüccâr ile vâki' olan sulhun aslâ nâm ve isri kalmayup vechen minülvücûh mûmâileyhim beylere zarar olmak ihtimâli olmaya*”.

³⁶⁴ “*..buyurdum ki ba'delyevm Venedik beyleri vech-i meşrûh üzere deryâda rençber kadırgalarıyla ve sâyir gemeleriyle gezen tüccâr ve gayrilere vâki' olan zarar u ziyânları için sigorye etmiştir ya'ni kefil ve zâmin olmuşlardır demeyüp ve tüccâr- ı merkûmenin da'vâsın ve sâir ana müte'allik ahvâl için bir vaz' u hareket olunmayup beylerin bayloslar vekîlidir demekle kimesne mütesaddi olunmayup ve hükkâm huzûruna getürdülüp anlardan bir nesne suâl olunmayup da'vâları istimâ' olunmaya ve 'ahidnâme-i hümâyûnumuza muhâlif bir vaz' zâhir ve nümâyân olursan baylos beylerin vekîli olmamağın heman vezîr-i 'azâmım ile söyleşilüp beylere inhâ eyleye*” . BAC, Busta 251/334. It dates evahir-i şehr-i muharrem 1030, that is between 14 and 24 December 1620. Another copy is located in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) in the series Maliyeden Müdevver Defterleri, nr. 6004, s. 11/3. The Italian translation is located in DT, busta 12, No 1268.

³⁶⁵ APC, busta 18, No 2, fo. 22-31, in date 26 December 1620.

backed by Pasha, might ask for more money. In obtaining the *hüccet*, the foremost concern of the bailo was to avoid any mention of the Republic of Venice and himself in that document in order to prevent anyone in dispute with Venice from exploiting that document to demand compensation in similar cases. Thus the wording of the *hüccet* held much importance in the negotiation between the bailo and the *kadı* of Galata, Abdullah, who was charged with writing down the document. At the beginning of January 1621, that *kadı* handed in to the bailo the *hüccet* issued the previous June on the behalf of the first group of merchants, and he issued the final document. Interestingly, as we have seen, a copy of the former is still preserved in the Istanbul archives.

According to it, the Muslim merchants whose merchandise, valued 186.000 *guruşes*, had been robbed by the Spanish fleet, had agreed with three Frankish (*frenc*) merchants (Francesco Negroni, Antonio Ferri and Pietro Rigoni) to receive from them 70.000 *guruşes* as a compensation for their losses (*bedel-i sulh*). It listed all the merchants, a total of seventy two, with their losses and compensation.³⁶⁶ The entire sum was actually paid by the Venetian government, and the three merchants were Venetians and acted as figureheads. In this way any mention of Venice and its subjects was purposefully avoided. Through that artifice, the bailo managed to show that the Republic of Venice had not paid the merchants for the losses that they had suffered at the hand of the Spanish fleet.

The Bosnian merchants were paid separately in cotton and silk fabrics throughout the spring of 1621. The bailo could not pay them at once since he was short of money and goods and he had to borrow them from the Venetian merchants in Istanbul. The length of the payment irritated the Bosnians who several times turned to the Divan to

³⁶⁶ DT, busta 12, No 1271. Its Italian translation is located in DT, Busta 12, No 1272, in date evail-i sefer 1030. The *hüccet* dates between 26 December 1620 and 4 January 1621. It was signed by nine witnesses (*şuhud*). Another copy of it is located in BAC, busta 251/334.

complain. Bound to payment was also the annulment of the *hüccet* issued by the *kadiaskers* against the bailo Nani in January 1620 since the grand vizier wanted all the merchants to be satisfied with it.

On March 9, to the relief of the bailo and the Venetian government, Ali Pasha died and in his stead was appointed Hüseyin Pasha.³⁶⁷ Soon after, the Bosnian merchants turned to the Imperial Divan to ask the new grand vizier to annul the agreement struck by Ali Pasha since they demanded a higher compensation from the bailo. They wanted a new verdict of the *kadiaskers* and offered to the Grand Vizier part of the desired new compensation. However, Hüseyin Pasha dismissed them and thereafter they were not heard in the public Divan anymore. Soon after, in April he left Istanbul to take part in the Sultan's campaign against Poland. This conflict monopolized the attention of the main Ottoman authorities throughout 1621.³⁶⁸

After their dismissal by the new grand vizier the dispute basically ended. In the *dispacci* we do have further references to some Bosnian merchants still looking for a higher compensation from Venice.³⁶⁹ However, their attempts failed since they did not manage to enlist the support of any Ottoman authority. On the other hand, in June the bailo finally obtained the destruction of the *hüccet* issued by the *kadiaskers* against his predecessor.³⁷⁰ This ended the affair definitely. From his final report of his ambassadorship in Istanbul (*relazione*), in 1627, we learn that Venice, in 1623, recovered from Naples the two merchant galleys together with part of the goods of the

³⁶⁷ Ohrili Hüseyin Paşa (d. 1622). Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 137. APC, busta 18, No 2, fo. 37-43.

³⁶⁸ APC, busta 18, No 2, f. 43-55, in date March 22 1621. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 137.

³⁶⁹ At the beginning of April they even submitted a petition directly to the sultan when he left an imperial mosque after the Friday prayer. APC, busta 18, No 3, f. 1-5.

³⁷⁰ APC, busta 18, No 5, in date June 16.

Bosnian merchants. This was a compensation for all the money that the bailo had spent to compensate all the merchants for their losses.³⁷¹

³⁷¹ “Relazione di Giorgio Giustiniani” in Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, vol. XIV: Costantinopoli relazioni inedite (1512–1789)*, (Padua: Ausilio, 1996), p. 570.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Having looked at our three disputes in detail, in this final chapter we will analyze the legal avenues pursued by the Ottoman merchant protagonists of the three disputes in order to seek justice against Venetian subjects and authorities, and the actual support they managed to enlist from the Ottoman authorities. Before treating these issues we must point out that in our sources we know the activities of the Ottoman authorities far better than those of the merchant plaintiffs. The bailo's *dispacci* report mostly the activities of the Ottoman officials on behalf of the merchants, like the former's negotiations with the bailo, their charges and threats against Venice, and their undertakings to end the disputes. These issues are generally covered in detail in the bailo's reports. On the other hand, the *dispacci* do not give us similarly detailed information about the activities of the merchants in Istanbul and in the provinces. They inform us about the charges that the merchants brought against Venice, the courts to which they turned, the Ottoman officials whose support they managed to enlist, the evidence in favor of their claims that they were able to produce, and so on. However, all these activities are described in quite general terms. In particular, we know little about how the merchants presented their case to both the Ottoman and the Venetian authorities. This is in part related to the fact that the bailo negotiated exclusively with the Ottoman officials and usually refused to discuss the disputes directly with the interested merchants. In the Ottoman sources we learn even less about the activities of the merchants. Except for one petition, all the Ottoman documents related to our

disputes were written by the sultan and the grand vizier, who reported the reasons of the disputes, the negotiations, and the final settlement only in general terms. Given these limitations of our sources, our analysis will focus more on the Ottoman authorities, their attitudes toward our cases and their efforts at solving them.

Seeking Justice “from the Bottom up”³⁷²

In the early modern era, when we compare the legal avenues available to Ottoman and Western European merchants in dispute with foreign merchants or a foreign government we find a crucial difference: the lack of a permanent Ottoman diplomatic representative outside the empire to whom victimized merchants could turn for asking justice. In the Ottoman Empire merchants from the Republic of Venice, France, Great Britain, and the Dutch Republic were able to turn to ambassadors in Istanbul or to the numerous consuls of their nation located in the main commercial centers of the empire in order to submit their grievances against local merchants and authorities. Ambassadors and consuls would later convey their complaints to the Ottoman authorities. Furthermore, the *ahidnames* granted to those states laid out some procedures for these cases: the disputes between foreign merchants and Ottoman subjects and authorities were supposed to be decided either by the *kadı* or by the Divan held by the grand viziers depending on the nature of the issue.³⁷³

³⁷² I freely borrowed this expression from Suraiya Faroqhi, "Political Initiatives 'from the Bottom up' in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire" in *Osmanische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vanco Boskov*, edited by Hans Georg Majer (Wiesbaden, 1986), p. 23-34, p. 23.

³⁷³ Maurits H. van Den Boogert, "Consular jurisdiction in the Ottoman legal system in the eighteenth century", *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context*, edited by Maurits H. van den Boogert and Kate Fleet (Oriente Moderno, Anno XII, LXXXIII, 3, 2003), p. 614-617.

Since they could not turn to the representatives of their government abroad, Ottoman merchants whose commercial venture abroad suffered losses due to disputes with subjects/authorities of a foreign country or pirate attacks had to start from “scratch” when mobilizing support both in the empire and in a foreign country.

The Ottoman political system rested on the premise that anyone, man or woman, poor or rich, Muslim or *zimmi*, might turn to the ruler or to his deputies to ask for a redress of his or her grievances.³⁷⁴ However, the process of submitting petitions and, above all, getting them implemented was complex and required notable efforts and economic resources.³⁷⁵ The merchants, like all the other *reaya*, could appeal to the courts of the *kadis*, of the grand vizier and other high-ranking officials in Istanbul and in the main provincial centers. In this regard, the legal ways available to them were identical to those available to all the other Ottoman subjects. In contrast to their European counterparts, Ottoman merchants did not any have special courts to submit their grievances to, nor did they have special legal bodies which would deal with their cases. In the Venetian case, for instance, the board of trade *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* ruled over most of the disputes involving Venetian and foreign merchants. The merchants of our three disputes were either well-to-do or numerous enough to share the expenses for bringing their cases to the Ottoman authorities in the Balkans and in Istanbul. They hailed from the provinces, the Peloponnese and Bosnia, and they spent considerable efforts and economic resources to come personally, or to send agents, to Istanbul to submit their grievances. The legal ways they pursued to seek justice were

³⁷⁴ Uriel Heyd, *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, edited by V. L. Ménage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 226.

³⁷⁵ Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXXIV (1992), p. 1-39, p. 25; Halil İnalçık, "Şikâyet Hakkı: Arz-i Hâl ve Arz-i Mahzarlar", in *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adalet*, (İstanbul: Eren yayıncılık 2000), p. 49-71.

manifold and often outside the Ottoman courts of justice, and they probably eluded the majority of the Ottoman merchants with lesser financial means.

Initiatives in Locus

First of all, as is clear from the second and the third disputes, the aggrieved merchants or their business partners tried to seek justice, in the first place, from the Ottoman legal and administrative authorities close to the place where their dispute began or in their native land. They probably hoped to obtain speedy redress in locus without undertaking a complicated and expensive mission to Istanbul or Venice. Unfortunately, our sources provide us only scanty information about their activities in locus.

In the second case, the relatives and business partners of the merchants robbed and taken into captivity by the Uskoks in 1587 reported the aggression to the *kadı* of the Ottoman port of Gabela in the presence of several witnesses who confirmed the event. The *kadı* then issued a *hüccet*, a legal certificate about the attack. After that, they turned to the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia, Ferhad Pasha, to submit their grievances, probably during his Divans although this is not clear from our sources, and presented him that *hüccet* as proof of their charges against some Venetian subjects. High-ranking provincial governors, in the same ways as the grand viziers, were entitled to receive petitions (*arzuhal*) as the sultan's deputies in the provincial districts under their command. Their provincial Divans, in legal procedures and competencies, resembled the Divans held by the grand viziers in Istanbul, whose legal functions we will review below. They were the highest courts of justice in the Ottoman provinces.³⁷⁶ After hearing the case, Ferhad

³⁷⁶ Micheal Ursinus, *Grievance administration (şikayet) in an Ottoman province: the Kaymakam of Rumelia's 'Record book of complaints' of 1781-1783* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 4-8; Mumcu Ahmet, *Hukuksal ve siyasal karar organı olarak Divan-ı Hümayun* (Ankara: Birey Toplum, 1986), p. 151-155.

Pasha sent his steward to Venice to complain about the attack and ask for redress from the Venetian government.

In the third case, the Bosnian merchants assailed by the Spanish fleet during the summer of 1617 turned directly to the Venetian authorities in the port of Split to ask for redress for their losses and wrote a petition to the Doge. As their demands had been unanswered, they turned to the Ottoman authorities in the *eyalet* of Bosnia. First, they appealed to the *sancakbey* of Klis, in the proximity of Split, who then wrote to Venice; and after went to the *kadı* and mufti of Sarajevo Nurullah who ruled over the case and also wrote a letter to the Venetian government on their behalf. In Sarajevo, they also appealed for redress to the Venetian consul with the documents issued by the aforementioned *kadı*. Unfortunately, our sources tell us little that is precise about their activities in Bosnia. To sum up, the merchants of our disputes turned to the most important “secular authorities” (*ehl-i örf*), like *beylerbeyis* and *sancakbeyis*, close to their homeland and the site where their cases began. Before this, they needed to obtain some written documents in support of their claims which they usually obtained from local *kadıs*. They also submitted their grievances directly to the Venetian authorities, both in the Dalmatian region and in Venice.

Coming to Istanbul

Overall their attempts at solving their cases locally failed. Therefore, the merchants of all the three disputes, or the procurators appointed by them, came to Istanbul to file a formal complaint with the Ottoman government. Only the direct intervention of the highest authorities of the empire could compel the Venetian government to address the grievances of the merchant plaintiffs. First of all, they needed to bring their cases to the attention of the most preeminent authorities in the city by filing a petition to them. Probably, they went to a professional petition writer (*arz-ı halcı*) who would have

produced petitions in accordance with the appropriate legal terminology. The wording of the petitions seems to have been important for the successful resolution of the disputes of Ottoman subjects.³⁷⁷ Unfortunately, as far as I could tell, none of the original petitions written by our merchants has been preserved in the archives of Istanbul. However, the Venetian sources tell us that they wrote several petitions to numerous high-ranking Ottomans and even to the sultan. Once the plaintiffs were equipped with their petitions and with the evidence they had managed to collect so far, they were ready to submit their case to the Ottoman authorities.

In the Ottoman Courts: the Grand Vizier's Divans and the *Kadi* Courts

The *divan-i hümayun* was the highest court of law of the Ottoman Empire.³⁷⁸ It functioned both as the Ottoman cabinet, dealing with political, military, financial, and administrative affairs; and as the supreme court of the empire. It was the centralized institution for dealing with petitions from subjects from all parts of the empire. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, it was presided by the grand vizier, the representative plenipotentiary of the sultan (*vekil-i mutlak*).³⁷⁹ Other permanent members of the Imperial council were: the two *kadiaskers* (chief judges of the Ottoman Empire), and the two *beylerbeyis* (governors-generals) of Rumeli and Anatolia, the *defterdars* (heads of the financial department), the *nişancıbaşı* (head of the chancery), and at times, other officials. Until the second half of the seventeenth century, it was used to meet four times a week (on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays) in the second court of the

³⁷⁷ Richard Wittmann, *Before Qadi and Grand Vizier: intra-communal dispute resolution and legal transactions among Christians and Jews in the plural society of seventeenth-century Istanbul* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2008), p. 147-150.

³⁷⁸ On the institution of the Imperial Divan see Uriel Heyd, *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, edited by V. L. Ménage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 223-227; Wittmann, *Before Qadi and Grand Vizier*, p. 131- 155; Pál Fodor, "Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral *Telhis*" in *In quest of the golden apple: imperial ideology, politics, and military administration in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), p. 207-226; Mumcu, *Hukuksal ve siyasal karar organı olarak Divan-ı Hümayun*.

³⁷⁹ Heyd, *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, p. 224.

royal palace. Only one day a week was set aside for its functions of supreme court of law. In these meetings, the grand vizier gave sentences on lawsuits and trials in accordance with the Islamic law (*şeri 'at*) and state law (*kanun*), after consulting with the two *kadiaskers* and the other members of the council. On occasion, especially when the workload was too great, the grand viziers delegated his authority of ruling to the *kadiaskers*.

According to the *ahidnames*, the Imperial Council was the only competent court in cases brought by Ottoman subjects against the Venetian bailo.³⁸⁰ In our disputes, the bailo was represented in that court by his chief dragoman and on a few occasions by other agents of his (like his secretary). Apart from the Imperial Divan, the merchants of our dispute submitted their petitions and defended their cases in the Divans held by the grand vizier at his residence. They took place several times during the week. There, the grand vizier dealt, among other matters, with lawsuits and trials in a similar way to the Imperial Council. He was joined by the two *kadiaskers*, and sometimes by other state officials too. In the grand vizier's absence from Istanbul, his judicial functions were taken over by his deputy (*kaymakam*).³⁸¹ Interestingly, contrary to what Uriel Heyd said, in our disputes the *kadiaskers* did not accompany the grand vizier outside Istanbul and they took part in the Divans held by his deputies.³⁸² In all the three disputes the Divan held at the grand vizier's residence was the main arena of the negotiations between the bailo and the plaintiff merchants. In contrast to the Imperial Council, the

³⁸⁰ For instance see the *ahidname* of 1575, in Hans Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: the Ahidnames. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents*, EJOS, I (1998), p. 514, “..bir kimesnenin baylos ile nizā'ı olsa südde-i sa'ādetimde mahrüse-i İstanbul'da ola vak'ı olan kādısı dīvān-ı 'alişānımda istimā' oluna..”.

³⁸¹ Heyd, *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, p. 225.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

bailo occasionally took part in these meetings; although in most of the cases he sent there his chief dragoman.

The grand vizier's Divans were theoretically accessible to all Ottoman subjects, whether rich or poor, Muslim or non-Muslim, and of all social classes.³⁸³ However, in practice, getting a case heard by the Divan must have required a substantial financial investment. The plaintiffs had to provide documentary evidence in support of their case, which were mainly certified deeds issued by the *kadı* courts, the Ottoman lower courts. For obtaining these documents, they had to pay conspicuous fees.³⁸⁴ They also had to pay for the writing of a petition by a professional petition writer. Furthermore, the travel to Istanbul of the plaintiffs, or their prosecutors, from their place of residence must have been rather expensive. Finally, undoubtedly funds were also needed to expedite the process of obtaining redress for the grievances. These factors altogether must have limited the accessibility of the Divan for the majority of the Ottoman subjects. These procedures were probably only available for large claims, like those of the merchants of our three disputes.³⁸⁵

In our disputes, the *dispacci* of the bailo provided us some insights into the legal functioning of the Divan. Although their accounts of the legal procedures of the Divan are rather sketchy and limited, they are important since European and Ottoman sources are usually silent on the legal aspects of the Divan.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ Ibid, p. 226.

³⁸⁴ Boğaç Ergene, *Local court, provincial society, and justice in the Ottoman Empire: legal practice and dispute resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden; Boston, Mass. : Brill, 2003), p. 98/99.

³⁸⁵ Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers" p. 40; Maurits H. Van Den Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman victims of European privateering: A case against the Dutch in the Divan-i Hümayun (1708-1715)", *Turcica* 33 (2001), p. 91-117, p. 96.

³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 95; Faroqhi "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers", p. 475.

At this court, the merchants of our disputes first of all presented any written documents about their case they possessed. These documents were mainly *sicils* and *hüccets* issued by *kadis* to whom the aggrieved merchants or their agents had brought their complaints. These documents reported the episode of contention, affirmed the ownership of the disputed goods, and registered the extent of the losses of the merchants. In the third dispute, the Bosnian merchants brought to the Divan also a *fetva*, a legal opinion, of the *şeyhülislam* Es'ad Efendi.³⁸⁷ These documents were the base of the claims of the merchants against the Venetian subjects and authorities. Also the baili and their representatives brought to the Divan any document available in defense of the Venetian side. For instance, in the second case their dragoman submitted to the grand vizier in the Divan the written declarations in Turkish of the merchants robbed by the Uskoks about the attack and their release by the Venetian naval authorities. Overall the importance of written documents in our cases is important if we take into account that, according to the doctors of Hanefi *şeri'at* law, the testimony of witnesses was more valuable than written evidence.³⁸⁸ In the first dispute the bailo also brought to the court several documents produced in the Venetian courts during the process against the plaintiff John Scaruoli. These documents held importance in the unfolding of the latter's dispute against Venice. Their employment in the Divans is noteworthy since it is rather rare to find non-Muslim documents (in our case they were also produced by foreign

³⁸⁷ They must have obtained the document from the office of the legal opinions (*fetvahane*). For the procedure of obtaining a *fetva* see Walsh J. R., "*Fatwa-Ottoman Empire*", EI, 2nd ed.

³⁸⁸ Joseph Schacht, *An introduction to Islamic law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 192/193. Also baili were conscious of the greater importance of verbal evidence over written one in the Ottoman legal system. See Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Brill's series in Jewish studies, 14, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), p. 122. However, recent studies of the Ottoman legal system have reevaluated the importance of written evidence in the legal procedures of the Ottoman courts. See Haim Gerber, *State, society, and law in Islam: Ottoman law in comparative perspective* (New York: State University, 1994), p. 48; and Boğaç Ergene, "Evidence in Ottoman Courts: Oral and Written Documentation in Early-Modern Courts of Islamic Law", *Turcica* 37 (2006), p. 83-111.

tribunals) employed in proceedings of an Ottoman court.³⁸⁹ In the third dispute, the Bosnians brought to the Divan a *hüccet* about a previous similar case, in order to draw a parallel between their case and the latter, and thus to legitimate their demands.

According to Suraiya Faroqhi, referring to precedence was a powerful means for legitimating any kind of practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman society.³⁹⁰ This reference to a previous case or to a previous ruling of an Ottoman court was employed by the plaintiff merchants on several occasions in our disputes.

Apart from submitting their petitions, the merchants presented orally their cases to the Ottoman authorities in the Divan. At this court, usually a *tezkereci* read out the petition of the plaintiffs, but in the baili's reports we do not find references to this official. However, it is highly probable that the latter actually was present, especially in the first hearing of the cases in the Divan.³⁹¹ The baili reported that the merchants swore on the validity of their claims, either individually or collectively, although they did not give further information on how the oath was administered.

In the first case, John Scaruoli, often together with his son Marino, personally presented his allegations against Venice and defended his case throughout the dispute. He must have had considerable self-confidence, knowledge of the Ottoman legal system, and material resources to present his case personally. Once he also brought a witness, his business partner who together with him had suffered losses in the confiscation of the ship loaded with Valonia oaks, in order to validate his claims against his Venetian creditors. In the other two disputes, the complainants were numerous and

³⁸⁹ For an important example of the use of non-Muslim document in the Ottoman courts see Alexander Fotić, "Non-Ottoman Documents in the Kādīs' Courts (Mōloviya, Medieval Charters): Examples from the Archive of the Hilandar Monastery (15th–18th C.)", in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, Volume II, eds. C. Imber, K. Kiyotaki and Rh. Murphey (London-New York: I.B. Tauris 2005), p. 63-73.

³⁹⁰ Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers", p. 5.

³⁹¹ Heyd, *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, p. 226.

in our sources it not clear who among them reported the case to the Ottoman officials in the Divans. In the last case, however, we know that two of the plaintiff merchants, the most well-to-do, represented all the aggrieved merchants before the Ottoman officials throughout most of the rounds of negotiations.

In the second case, the bailo reported that during one of the first sessions of the Divan one of the Bosnian merchants described to the Ottoman authorities the attack of the Uskoks. In the same case, the merchants brought to the Divan as a witness the *kadı* of Sarajevo, who validated their claims against Venice. The choice of a *kadı* as a witness must have been related to the social standing of the latter, which, in Islamic law, was crucial in the legal process of weighing evidence in the courts.³⁹² Furthermore, this *kadı* reported to the Ottoman authorities a similar case, which had taken place a few years before, in order to support the claims of the merchants. Here again, the importance of recalling a past event to legitimize the present claims is evident.

Apart from the grand vizier's Divan, also the *kadı* courts in the Balkans and in Istanbul played a role in our disputes. Since according to the *ahidnames* the charges against the bailo and Venice should be heard only in the Divan, the *kadı* courts were not the arena of the litigation between the baili and the complainant merchants. However, these courts played an important role since they produced most of the written evidence that the merchants submitted to the Ottoman authorities in the Divans. As we have already seen, the merchants or their representatives turned to these courts to present their case and to obtain certified documents about it. In our sources we have little information about how they presented their case at these courts and we have to rely mostly on the documents issued there. At court their claims were confirmed by several witnesses (*şuhud*). After hearing the case the *kadı* issued a *hüccet*. Apart from

³⁹² Greber, *State, society, and law in Islam*, p. 46/47.

registering their grievances, the merchants also appealed to the *kadı*s to ask for documents ascertaining the ownership and the extent of the contested goods, like the register of customs duties and payments. In this function they acted as notary courts.³⁹³

In the third case, *kadı*s played a more important role. First, in the beginning of the dispute, the merchants turned to the *kadı* and mufti of Sarajevo, Nurullah, to present their case. Besides issuing a *hüccet* over the case, he also wrote to the Venetian government to urge it to answer to the grievances of the merchants. He, therefore, played a diplomatic role with a foreign power. This example of international dealings of a provincial member of the religious class (*ilmiye*) of the Ottoman Empire is striking, since, to my knowledge, we have few instances of it.³⁹⁴ Second, toward the end of the case, the *kadı* of Galata, after an intensive negotiation with the bailo, issued the final documents over the conclusion of the dispute. These documents, together with those issued by the sultan, registered the payment of the merchants and the end of the litigation.

After hearing the case in the Divans and review the submitted evidence, the Ottoman authorities usually sent an envoy (*çavuş*) to the residence of the bailo in Pera to acquaint him with the case and urge him to deal with it. Then they bailo sent his chief dragomans to the Divans and took part only in those held in the house of the grand vizier. Once at the courts, he or his dragomans were shown the petition and questioned about the disputes. The legal procedures in the Divan followed the Ottoman practice of the

³⁹³ Najwa al-Qattam, "Inside the Ottoman courthouse: territorial law at the intersection of state and religion" in D. Goffman and V. Askan (ed.), *The Early Modern Ottomans* (Cambridge University, 2007), p. 201-212, p. 206-211.

³⁹⁴ This diplomatic role probably is related to the authority of that *kadı* inside the boundaries of the eyalet of Bosnia, an Ottoman province neighboring Venetian territories in Dalmatia that had strong commercial relations with the Republic of Venice. Furthermore, we should also take into account that a *kadı*, apart from dispensing justice, had also an important administrative function within the district under his jurisdiction. Gerber, *State, society, and law in Islam*, p. 16.

composition (*sulh* or *musalaha*), which was based on negotiations between the interested parties in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement.³⁹⁵ The negotiations between the bailo and the plaintiff merchants were extremely complicated, underwent several phases, and dragged on for months and years. During the unfolding of the cases, both the aggrieved merchants and the bailo strove to submit more evidence and witnesses on their behalf and, more important, to enlist the support of as many influential Ottoman as they could. Both parties had to strive to activate networks of patronage in order to generate pressure on the Ottoman authorities to favor their side. While we have extensive documentation of the bailo's network of supporters in the Ottoman politics, we have only little information about the dealings of the merchants with Ottoman officials. Overall the procedures of seeking redress pursued by our merchants had a political, more than a juridical character.

The final settlement of our disputes did not take place within the grand vizier's Divan. At this court, the grand viziers, together with the *kadiaskers*, heard the grievances of the merchants and led much of the negotiation between them and the bailo, but ultimately they did not rule over them in most of the cases. In the first case, the grand viziers and the other viziers members of the Imperial Divan who played a role in the dispute of John and Marino Scaruoli always had a rather limited executive power and had to comply with the sultan's decisions. In 1586 and 1587, Ibrahim Pasha who acted as deputy grand vizier, in accordance with the *kadiasker* of Rumeli ruled in favor of the two merchants, but both these rulings were annulled by the sultan's rescripts (*hatt-i hümayun*) issued in response to the petitions of the bailo. In May 1587, the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha, upon request of the bailo, wrote a petition to the sultan to ask for the release of the former's dragoman and the punishment of the two merchants. The sultan ruled in favor of the petition and thereafter an imperial order (*nişan-i hümayun*)

³⁹⁵Heyd, *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, p. 247-250.

was issued against the latter.³⁹⁶ In summer 1588, again in response to a petition forwarded by the same Pasha, the sultan ruled for the definitive conclusion of the affair. This correspondence between the sultan and the grand vizier was part of the *telhis* system by which grand vizier did not report to the sultan on important issues at private audience but through a petition after which the latter then ruled.³⁹⁷

In the second dispute Siyavuş Pasha and his successor Sinan Pasha did not pass judgment in the Divan but waited for orders from the sultan. Ultimately, the affair was settled with a sultan's rescript issued in response to the bailo's numerous petitions. In these two disputes the grand viziers showed limited executive power in the Divan. This might have been related to the importance of these cases, which involved large claims and preeminent plaintiffs in dispute with a foreign power. After all, they were matters of foreign policy. Probably, the grand viziers were hesitant to rule on such important disputes and preferred to wait for the sultan's decision. Furthermore, the curtailment of the power of the grand vizier during the reign of sultan Murad III (r. 1574-1595) might have also contributed to their hesitation in taking a decision the disputes. Starting from the latter's reign the Ottoman sultans began to curtail the executive power of the grand viziers by empowering court officials and sultan favorites and by the employing the above mentioned *telhis* system which reduced the importance of the decrees (*ahkam*) issued by the Imperial Divan.³⁹⁸ In the third dispute we have a diametrically different situation. The strong-minded grand vizier Ali Pasha vigorously supported the claims of

³⁹⁶ In the bailo's dispaccio we have the Italian translation of the petition written by Siyavuş Pasha to the sultan. On the back of the petition we have also the short reply of the latter. SDC, filza 25, No 27, in date 13 May 1587.

³⁹⁷ Pál Fodor, "The Grand Vizierial *Telhis*: A Study in the Ottoman Central Administration, 1566-1656," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 15 (1997), pp. 137-188.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 137/138; Baki Tezcan, *The second Ottoman Empire: political and social transformation in the early modern world*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 93-118; Günhan Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites at Courts of Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) and His Immediate Predecessors* (unpublished PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 2010), p. 149-154.

the merchant complainants and promoted the verdict against Venice passed by the two *kadıaskers* in the Divan in January 1620. This verdict did not end the dispute which dragged on until the issuance of a final *hüccet* by the *kadı* of Galata in December of that year and of a *nişan-ı hümayun* by the sultan. The legal procedures of this case, with a first verdict in the Divan and the final settlement through a sultanic rescript, must have been related to the ascendancy of Ali Pasha in the Ottoman politics and his hostility towards Venice.

Outside the Ottoman Courts

Apart from turning to the grand vizier's Divans, the merchants of our disputes appealed personally to the most important Ottoman officials in Istanbul outside the Divans or forwarded them petitions through their acquaintances and supporters in the Ottoman capital. These ventures pointed to the existence of legal ways outside the official courts of the Ottoman Empire about which we have little information. In this regard, the *dispacci* of the bailo are of paramount importance since they are probably the only source on this "unofficial" way of seeking justice. The high-ranking Ottomans whom the merchants strove to meet and forward their petition were mostly the grand vizier or his deputies (*kaymakam*) when he was out of Istanbul. The merchants also turned to other viziers in the Imperial Divan and even members of the religious establishment. In the first dispute, John Scaruoli was continuously in touch with the *defterdars* and several viziers who supported his claims against Venice. Among those viziers there was Ibrahim Pasha who firmly backed Scaruoli against the bailo. The same Pasha in the second dispute was one of the main supporters of the plaintiff Bosnian merchants in the Imperial Divan. In the third dispute, the Bosnian merchants once in Istanbul turned to the *şeyhüislam* Es'ad Efendi who, at that time, was one of the most prominent authorities in the Ottoman capital. Overall, it seems that the merchants forwarded their

petitions and sought the support of any influential Ottoman who, they hoped, would support their cases. In order to accomplish this, they probably had to activate networks of patronage about which our sources give us little information.

More important is the role of the sultan. In all the disputes the aggrieved merchants sought and managed to submit their grievances directly to the sultan by forwarding him their petitions. They accomplished this basically in two manners. Firstly, they forwarded him their petitions through the help of their acquaintances and supporters in the royal palace or within the Imperial Divan. In the first case the bailo lamented on more occasions that some “*aghas*” in the royal palace supported John Scaruoli and submitted his petition to the sultan. In particular, he reported that, at least on one occasion, the chief black eunuch of the palace Habeşi Mehmed Pasha (*darüssaadde ağası*) accomplished that. Similarly, in the second case some viziers who supported the Bosnian merchants sent the latter’s petitions to the sultan on several occasions. The closeness of these officials to the sultan seems to have played a role in these procedures. The bailo employed the same procedures with his acquaintances within the royal palace: in the first and in the second dispute, he delivered his petitions for the sultan to the latter’s mother Valide Safiye, through her female servants (*kiras*), who, in turn, presented them to the sultan. Secondly, merchants tried to get as close as possible to the sultan to personally forward their petitions during his public appearances in Istanbul. In the second and third disputes the Bosnian merchants sometimes submitted their petition to the sultan during the latter’s excursions to an imperial mosque for the Friday prayer. The sultan after reading the grievances of the merchants ruled over the disputes by issuing *hatt-i hümayuns* for the grand vizier who then had to carry them out. Probably his close assistants in the royal palace helped him in this task. In the first case, after being submitted several petitions from John Scaruoli, and despite having previously

ruled against him, toward the end of the dispute the sultan issued an *hatt-i hümayun* on behalf of the former restarting the case. In the second case, the sultan, at least four times, issued rescripts in favor of the merchants. In the third case his rescript ended the affair. The role of the sultan was pivotal in the final settlement of all the three cases.

Apart from seeking justice within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, some of the merchants of our disputes went to Venice to ask for redress directly to the Venetian government. They went to the Serenissima not individually but as part of an official Ottoman mission headed by a sultan's envoy (usually a *çavuş*) charged with dealing with their disputes. In order to urge the Venetian government to address the complaints of the aggrieved merchants and also to ward off the pressure exerted by the latter on the Imperial Divan, in all the three disputes the grand viziers or their deputies arranged an expedition to Venice. Often the merchants opposed this expedition since they preferred to obtain redress from the bailo in Istanbul without undertaking an expensive and complicated mission to Venice.³⁹⁹ Unfortunately, our Venetian sources report mainly the diplomatic mission of the Ottoman envoy and give us little information about the activities of the plaintiff merchants who accompanied him⁴⁰⁰. In Venice the merchants were subordinate to the authority of the sultan's envoy, who submitted the letters of the sultan and the grand vizier to the Venetian government about the disputes and negotiated over them. The merchants usually did not take part in the negotiations between the envoy and the Venetian authorities since the latter refused to deal directly with them and wanted to negotiate the cases exclusively with the envoys of the sultan. However, as the second case shows, the merchants influenced the negotiations. In that

³⁹⁹ Similarly the bailo in Istanbul always tried to prevent these missions for their cost, since all the expenditures of the sojourn in Venice of the Ottoman envoy and his retinue were paid by the Venetian government. Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia*, Venice (Deputazione editrice, 1994), p. 49-56.

⁴⁰⁰ Further research in the Venetian archives in series that I could not consult or I was unaware of may produce more information on their activities in Venice.

case, in winter 1589/1590 the *silahtar* Bali carried out all the negotiations with the Venetian chief negotiator d'Alessandri about the losses suffered by a group of Bosnian merchants at the hands of the Uskok pirates. Those merchants who accompanied this envoy to Venice continuously put pressure on him in order to urge him to obtain from the Venetian government the desired compensation. Often, they harshly argued with him over his handling of the negotiations, and tried to negotiate personally with the Venetian negotiator and dragomans, although these attempts were always refused by the latter. In the first case, we have a rather different situation. Marino Scaruoli was sent to Venice with two Ottoman envoys to represent his father John in the revision of the lawsuit against the latter by the Venetian tribunals. Unfortunately, our sources tell us little about how Marino defended his father's case in these courts. We know only that he brought there a witness and some written evidence to support his case. Given the importance of his case for the relations between the Porte and Venice, the Venetian authorities chose a special tribunal for handling the lawsuit and assigned to Marino a preeminent Venetian state attorney. Therefore, the legal ways available to him to support his case in Venice were decisively exceptional, and probably eluded the vast majority of the Ottoman merchants who in Venice sought justice from the city authorities for any kind of grievance⁴⁰¹.

The Attitude of the Ottoman Authorities

Throughout the three disputes, the Ottoman authorities strongly supported the merchants against Venetian subjects and authorities. Just a quick glance at each round

⁴⁰¹ Also the important case of Hayyam Saruq's bankruptcy was handled by this court, Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 114.

of negotiations shows that the sultans, grand viziers, *kadiaskers*, and other influential Ottomans were committed to upholding the claims of the plaintiff merchants. They put a great deal of pressure on the bailo and the Venetian government in order to urge them to address the grievances of the merchants. On several occasions their actions even threatened the peace between the two Mediterranean powers. This firm support to the grievances of the merchants is noteworthy if we keep in mind that until recently most of the historiography of the Mediterranean trade greatly downplayed the concern of the Ottoman authorities toward traders and trade in general.

The Ottoman Authorities between Threats and Moderation

During the rounds of negotiations with the baili, the Ottoman authorities resorted to several confrontational acts such as threats and arrests of the bailo's employees. These acts are so numerous in our disputes, as well as in others involving Ottoman merchants, that we can surely say that they were a common feature of the disputes between the Ottoman Empire and Western European states arising from commercial matters.⁴⁰²

In our cases, the threats made by Ottoman authorities to Venice were potentially dangerous for the peace between the two states. The most frequently employed ones were fiscal and economic in essence. The most common threat was the seizure of the goods belonging Venetian merchants in the Ottoman Empire as a compensation for the losses suffered by the plaintiff Ottoman merchants at the hands of Venetian authorities in Venice and to pirates in the Adriatic Sea. The Ottoman officials also threatened to stop Ottoman merchants from going to Venice, ruining in this way the city's custom revenues. In particular, in the third case, the grand vizier Ali Pasha threatened to divert

⁴⁰² For instance see Van Den Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman victims of European privateering"; Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations*; and "Maritime Trade and International Relations in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean: The Case of the Ship Ghirarda (1575-1581)", in Costantini Vera and Koller Marcus (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Brill, Leiden, 2008), p. 391-408.

the numerous Ottoman merchants from Bosnia from going to the jointly-administered Venetian port of Split, along the Dalmatian coast, to the benefit of Venice's commercial rival Dubrovnik. These fiscal and economic threats were present in almost all the letters sent by the sultans and grand viziers to the Venetian government in response to the grievances of the merchants. They targeted the Venetian-Ottoman trade, which, as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, still held a prominent importance in the economy of the Republic of Venice. To these threats the baili responded with remarks that, in the case of a halt of the trade, the Ottoman side too would suffer economic losses. After all, at least in peacetime, the Ottomans too were concerned with the protection of the trade in order to benefit from the custom revenues.

More serious than a disruption of the trade were the threats of breaking the peace between the two states. Sinan Pasha in the second dispute and, above all, Ali Pasha in the third case, on several occasions went so far as to threaten to wage war against Venice and to attack the island of Crete, the last important Venetian possession in the eastern Mediterranean. Such threats were taken very seriously by the Venetian government, which, in response to them, strove to increase its diplomatic efforts with the Ottoman officials in order to prevent a rupture of the delicate peace.⁴⁰³ Other threats to Venice comprised forcing the bailo to stand trial in the Ottoman courts and arresting him. As we will see below, such actions were considered a violation of the *ahidnames* by the Venetian government and also several Ottoman authorities. Apart from threats, the Ottoman authorities sometimes retorted to intimidating actions against the baili and their employees. In the first case, Ibrahim Pasha, the supporter of the claims of John and Marino Scaruoli against Venice, had the bailo's dragoman arrested twice. Similarly, in

⁴⁰³ In both the War of Cyprus (1570-1573) and the War of Crete (1645-1669) the attacks of Christian privateers and pirates, who had allegedly taken shelter in these islands, were the main pretexts used by the Ottomans to wage war against Venice. They did not differ noticeably from the attacks that started the second and the third dispute.

the second case Sinan Pasha had the physician of the bailo arrested and detained at his residence until a settlement was reached.

None of the above mentioned threats materialized. In our disputes the Ottoman authorities were not willing to jeopardize the relations between the two states through drastic acts, such as the seizure of goods belonging to Venetian merchants, or ending the peace. The only notable exception is Ali Pasha in the third case. He had the bailo's chief dragoman executed and forced him to compensate the merchants. However, his recurrent threats of war and imprisonment of the bailo did not materialize. From the end of the War of Cyprus in 1573 and the onset of War of Crete in 1645, the Ottoman authorities were concerned about maintaining friendly or at least reasonably good relations with the Republic of Venice. Political and economical considerations prevented the Ottoman authorities from compromising the peace between the two Mediterranean polities. With the exception of Ali Pasha, during the negotiations, the Ottoman officials usually sought to attain a compromise, which would appease both parties, rather than to force a solution on Venice. A reasonable settlement was their utmost objective. We have a clear example of this in the third dispute: on several occasions, the grand mufti Es'ad and some grand viziers suggested the bailo, as a compromise to end the dispute, that Venice should compensate the merchants and recover the disbursed money by raising the custom duties on the goods brought to Venice by Ottoman merchants. Overall the threats were a part of the negotiation process; they were a means to urge the Venetian officials to address the grievances of the aggrieved merchants and to appease them. This is clear in the imperial letters brought to Venice by the numerous Ottoman envoys sent there to deal with our disputes. These letters contained several threats against the trade and the peace between the two

states that, evidently, aimed at encouraging the Venetian government to deal with these cases.

Despite the threats and some actions against the bailo, the Ottoman authorities usually conducted the negotiations reasonably and with moderation.⁴⁰⁴ They usually allowed considerable time for an investigation about the disputes and granted the bailo enough time to collect evidence on Venetian defense and receive instructions from the Venetian government before taking any decision over the cases. They put great pressure on the bailo to find a compromise with the merchant plaintiffs but carefully avoided to compromise the relations between the two states. The second case shows this well. Both of the grand viziers Siyavuş Pasha and Sinan Pasha received at least four orders from the sultan to force the bailo to compensate the Bosnian merchants with the goods of Venetian merchants in Istanbul. However, they did not carry out these orders, probably in order to find a solution that would not have been too detrimental to the Venetian side and to the relations between the two states in general. The same grand viziers repeatedly asked the bailo to find a compromise with the plaintiff merchants. Similarly, in the third dispute, the staunchly anti-Venetian Ali Pasha did not immediately enforce the verdict of the *kadıaskers* against Venice, much to the resentment of the merchants who wanted immediate redress, and waited some months for the bailo to receive instructions and reach an agreement with the latter.

Lastly, the Ottoman authorities did not uphold the claims of the merchants against Venice unconditionally but took time to evaluate them. Not infrequently, when they found these claims baseless they dismissed them and expelled the merchants from the Ottomans courts. In the first case, the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha and other members of the Imperial Divan on many occasions dismissed John and Marino Scaruoli from the

⁴⁰⁴ On the moderation of the Ottoman authorities in the negotiations with foreign authorities over trade-related disputes see also van den Boogert, "Redress of Ottoman victims of European privateering", p. 117.

Imperial Divan on the ground that they needed to bring evidence in support of their charges against Venice or that their claims has been proved false by previous enquires. In the second and in the third dispute, the Bosnian merchants were not satisfied by the final agreement and demanded higher compensation from the bailo for their losses. However, despite their repeated vociferous appeals the grand vizier rebutted their demands and forbade them from continuing to sue Venice for their disputes.

The Debate on the *Ahidnames*

The articles of the *ahidnames*, the legal framework that regulated the political and commercial relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice, were a source of debate in almost each round of negotiation between the baili, the plaintiff merchants, and the Ottoman authorities. Privileges listed in the *ahidnames* appear to have had little relevance on the ground, while the legal procedures of dispute resolution taking place in our disputes were not even mentioned in these texts. Throughout the unfolding of the three cases both parties repeatedly blamed the other side of violating their contents. For the Venetians such alleged violations of the capitulations were *avantias*, a term widely used by Western Europeans in the early modern era to denote the arbitrary acts of the Ottoman authorities, while for the Ottomans they were acts contrary to the agreements between the two states (*'ahd u amana muhalif*).⁴⁰⁵ This controversy over the contents of the *ahidnames* stemmed from the fact that the latter provided only general rules for political and commercial relations, and they were not designed to offer resolutions for every imaginable problem involving Ottoman and foreign subjects.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ On the issue of the definition of *avantias* see Maurits H. Van den Boogert, *The capitulations and the Ottoman legal system: qadis, consuls, and berats in the 18th century* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), p. 117-157; and Merjlin Olon, "Towards classifying *avantias*: A study of two cases involving the English and Dutch nations of seventeenth-century Izmir" in Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot & Maurits H. van den Boogert (eds.), *Friends and rivals in the East: Anglo-Dutch relations in the Levant from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century* (Leiden, Brill, 2000), p. 159-186.

⁴⁰⁶ Van den Boogert, *The capitulations and the Ottoman legal system*, p. 304.

This allowed various interpretations of their application to specific situations. This uncertainty could be both an advantage and a disadvantage for the Venetian and the Ottoman side, according to the circumstances. Three cases taken by our disputes clearly show the uncertainty inherent to the capitulatory regime.

In the first dispute, the bailo maintained that the case of John and Marino Scaruoli against Venice was a dispute between individuals, that is, between the latter and their Venetian creditors, and that, according to the *ahidnames*, he could not be held accountable for transgression perpetrated by singular individuals. However, for the Ottoman officials the case was a public matter and they claimed that the Venetian government had violated the agreements between the two states by allowing the confiscation in Venice of the load of Valonia oaks belonging to John Scaruoli by the latter's creditors. In the text of the *ahidnames* there is only a general article that states that the bailo cannot be held responsible for the debts of other people. The Ottoman authorities disregarded this and demanded that the bailo pay John Scaruoli for the losses he had suffered in Venice. However, the *nişan* issued by the sultan's at the end of the dispute to settle the affair explicitly stated that the bailo could not be prosecuted for that dispute according to the *ahidnames*.

In the second and the third cases, one of the main issues of contention was the commitment of the Venetian government to patrol the Adriatic Sea against the activities of the numerous pirates and privateers infesting those waters. The plaintiff merchants and numerous Ottoman officials maintained that the *ahidnames* stated that Venice had guaranteed the security of that sea and had promised to compensate those merchants who had suffered losses at the hands of pirates and privateers. The bailo and the Venetian government always denied the existence of such guarantee but stated that Venice nevertheless endeavored to fight those pirates, release the captives, and retrieve

the robbed goods. As I showed in the second case, the *ahidnames* contained only general and reciprocal articles about the fighting of the pirates, their punishment, the retrieval of the robbed goods, and the latter return to their legitimate owners. Such general articles could not offer solutions to complicated cases arising from pirates attacks, like the attack of the Uskoks to a group of Bosnian merchants in the second case. These pirates were Habsburg subjects but they enjoyed support from many Venetian subjects in the Dalmatian region. In the third dispute, the assailants of the merchant galleys were soldiers of the Spanish viceroy of Naples, who was engaged in an unofficial war against the Republic of Venice. At the end of the case, the *nişan* that settled the affair plainly stated that Venice could not be held accountable for the losses suffered by Ottoman merchants on the sea.

A last emblematic point of controversy was the legal status of the bailo in the Ottoman Empire. In all the three disputes, numerous Ottoman authorities claimed that the bailo, according to the *ahidnames*, was the guarantor (*kefil*) and legal representative (*vekil*) of the Venetian government. Consequently, they demanded that he stand trial in the Ottoman courts for the charges brought against Venetian subjects and authorities by the aggrieved Ottoman merchants. The bailo always denied that he had been sent to Istanbul to act as a guarantor and legal representative of the Venetian government, and vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities he always maintained that he dealt exclusively with the political issues between the two states. Consequently, he refused to be tried in the Ottoman courts according to the Ottoman law (*ragione turchesca*). In the *ahidnames* we do not have detailed information over the legal status of the bailo: two rules state that any case lodged against him could be heard in the Imperial Divan and that, as we have already seen above, he could not be held responsible for the debt of individuals. In our three disputes, the Ottoman authorities wavered from considering him a legal

representative of Venice, as the plaintiff merchant did, to deem him as exclusively a diplomatic representative. In third dispute, initially the first position took preeminence when the grand vizier Ali Pasha managed to obtain from the two *kadiaskers* a sentence against the bailo who was then forced to compensate the merchants. However, the final *nişan* confirmed his status as diplomatic representative: he was neither the guarantor nor the legal representative of the Venetian government, he could not be prosecuted by the *kadiaskers*, and he could deal exclusively with the grand vizier about diplomatic matters.

These three instances from our disputes show an important feature of the *ahidnames*: their general and often vague rules did not suffice to regulate the complex commercial and political relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice, and, consequently, their adaptations to specific cases on the ground involved considerable discussion and negotiation between the Ottoman and the Venetian representatives. The *ahidnames* were only a theoretical framework, a set of general rules, within which the Ottoman authorities, the plaintiff merchants, and the bailo had to “fend for” their interests by negotiating with each other⁴⁰⁷. During these negotiations both sides spent considerable efforts to have their “interpretation” of the rules of the *ahidnames* accepted by the other side and applied on the ground. This process of consensus-building over the way of applying the *ahidnames* was exclusively political as it involved many political actors and confrontational acts, as our disputes clearly show. Often, during the unfolding of a single case, different interpretations prevailed at different times. Usually, the final document over the dispute issued by the sultan clarified the points of

⁴⁰⁷ Olnon, “Towards Classifying Avaniyas”, p. 185/186; Rhoads Murphey “Merchants, nations and free-agency: an attempt at a qualitative characterization of trade in the eastern Mediterranean, 1620-1640” in Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot & Maurits H. van den Boogert (edited by) *Friends and rivals in the East: studies in Anglo-Dutch relations in the Levant from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century*, p. 25-58, p. 38.

contention in the *ahidnames*. However, this did not prevent the same issue from being a source of dispute in another occasion. For instance, the issue of the legal status of the bailo remained practically unresolved in the disputes between Ottoman and Venetian authorities taking place between the 1560s and the 1620s.⁴⁰⁸ This seemingly inherent uncertainty of the *ahidnames* is well demonstrated by the frequent issuance, upon the request of the bailo and the Venetian consuls, of ad hoc Ottoman decrees that clarified their rules or amended them. The Venetian baili disregarded or denied this inherent uncertainty of the capitulatory regime. They interpreted the *ahidnames* in their own favor and rejected the different interpretations of the Ottoman authorities and, above all, of the plaintiff merchants as *avantias*, that is, violation of the *ahidnames*. Highly probably, some claims of the merchants were blatant lies and ploys as were some of their demands from Venice. However, in some cases their claims might have reflected the ways they and some Ottoman officials too, perceived the rules of the *ahidnames*. Therefore, the claim of the Bosnian merchants that Venice had guaranteed against the attacks of pirates in the Adriatic Sea might be the result of their free interpretation of the rulings of the *ahidnames* about the repression of pirates.

Reasons behind the State Support

As we have hitherto seen, the aggrieved merchants of our disputes managed to mobilize Ottoman officials in order to obtain redress for the losses they suffered during commercial ventures with Venice. Taking into account our cases as well as others studied by other scholars we should now dwell on the reasons for this state support.

First, the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans vis-à-vis their subjects was a major factor in promoting the support of the Ottoman officials for the merchants of our cases. The sultans ascribe to the “circle of justice”, a specific concept of state and justice that

⁴⁰⁸ For instances see the cases studied by Arbel.

considered the upkeep of justice one the key virtues in a ruler. The promptness of retribution and redress and equitability for all the subjects, regardless their religion, social status, and gender has been stipulated as a primary duty of the sultans for the welfare of the state⁴⁰⁹. Therefore, state support to the cases of our merchants against Venice was important for the public image of the Ottoman sultans. After all, one of the most frequently used titles of the sultans was that of “world protector” (*padişah-ı alempenah*). If they claimed to protect mankind as whole, then evidently their own subjects had the most obvious claim to that protection. In this regard the merchants of our disputes were like all the other Ottoman subjects appealing to Imperial Divan and the *kadı* courts to submit their grievance for any kind of reasons. Furthermore, the second and the third case might have held a particular importance for the public image of the Ottoman sultan since they involved attack of pirates. In Islamic law and sultanic *kanun* piracy and high-robbery were viewed as acts of defiance against the state, and they warranted the harshest punishment whose execution was incumbent on the ruler, or his representative, the grand vizier⁴¹⁰. A crime that demanded a strong response when it took place in Ottoman territory must have been equally reprehensible when it occurred abroad.

Second, more important was the issue of prestige of the sultans vis-à-vis the Republic of Venice. Venice and the Porte were two rival Mediterranean powers in the 16th-century Mediterranean. Despite the long periods of peace and mutually beneficial commercial relations which generally characterized the relations between these two polities, they competed for economic and political influence in the Mediterranean basin.

⁴⁰⁹ Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1986), p. 262.

⁴¹⁰ Ahmet Mumcu, *Osmanlı devletinde siyaseten katl* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1963), p. 137-140; Schacht, *An introduction to Islamic law*, p. 9.

Given this rivalry the Ottoman sultans were keen to uphold their prestige as sovereigns of a powerful empire. The protection of Ottoman subjects against frauds committed by their foreign partners and attacks of pirates was an important part of the sultans' image vis-à-vis Venice. When such transgressions took place, they were seen as an affront to the sultans themselves. Consequently, the Ottoman authorities strove to support the aggrieved merchants and demanded redress from the Venetian government for their losses in response to these perceived affronts to the honor and prestige of the sultan. This is all the more true in our cases, which involved substantial losses of capital and numerous and often prominent merchants.

Third, apart from matters of prestige and internal legitimacy, the support given by the Ottoman authorities to the merchants of our disputes must have been motivated also by merchant-driven reasons. Even though our disputes and those studied by other scholars do not allow us to draw far-flung conclusions on this issue, they nevertheless suggest us that Ottoman authorities were concerned with the commercial ventures of their subjects abroad. The Ottoman authorities in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean promoted the smooth functioning of the trade between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. This promotion involved the protection of subjects involved in this trade against threats on the land and on the sea as well as. The frequent missions of Ottoman *çavuşes* to Venice to complain about the mistreatment of merchants throughout the 16th century, the support given by some Ottoman authorities to Jewish subjects trading with Venice in the second half of the sixteenth century and the promotion, by both Ottoman and Venetian authorities, of the port of Split at the end of that century are the most known examples of the concern of the authorities in Istanbul for the commercial ventures of their subjects toward Venice. As I stressed on several occasions, this Ottoman concern for international trade lagged behind the continuous and extensive support provided by

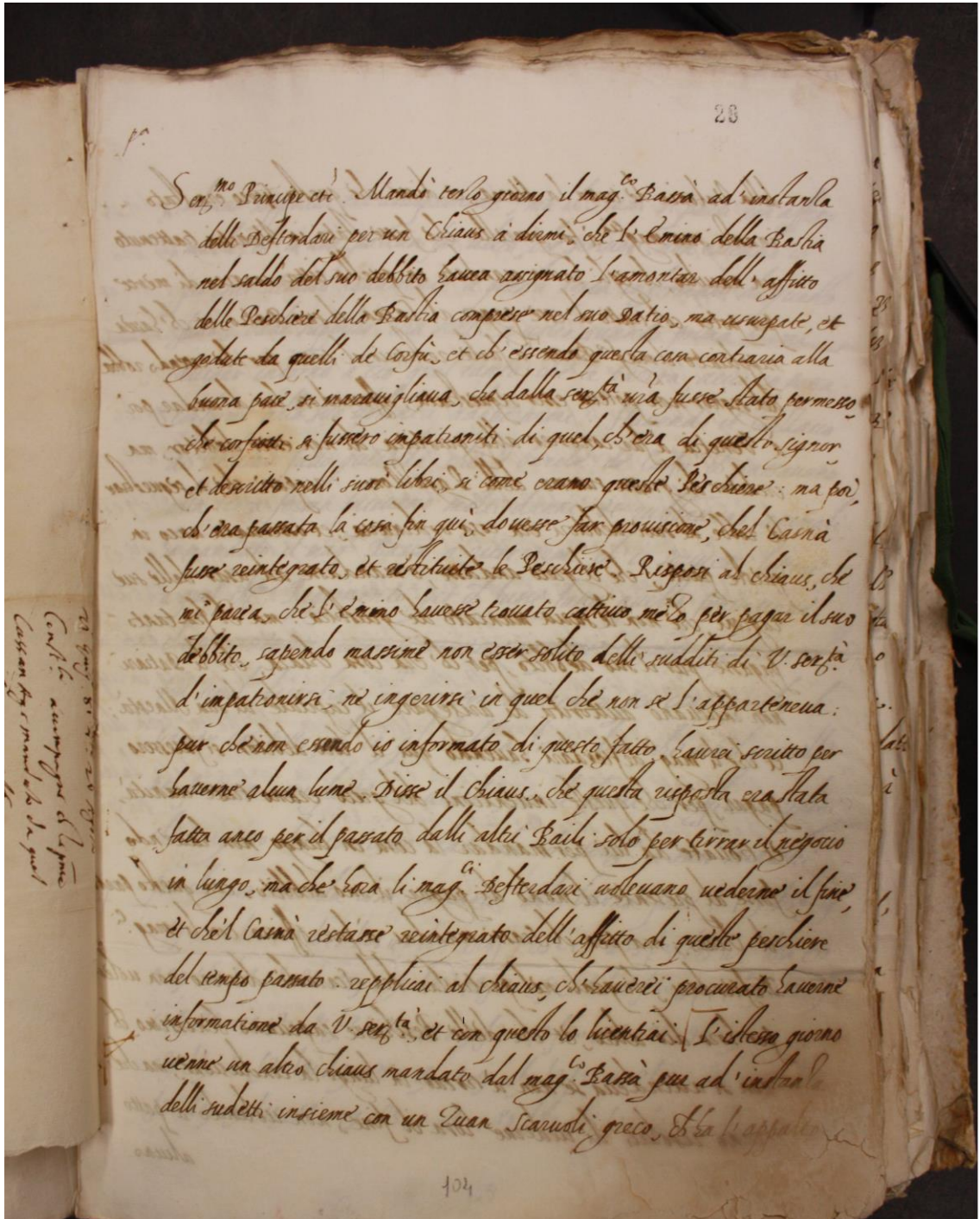
Western European powers to their merchants. Nevertheless it must not be downplayed, as the disputes of this study show. The historiography of the Ottoman Empire and the early modern Mediterranean still lacks comprehensive studies on the commercial ventures of Ottoman subjects in Western Europe, above all in the Italian Peninsula, during the early modern era. Only such studies may satisfactorily show the actual attitude of the Ottoman authorities toward international trade carried out by their subjects.

Finally, apart from matters of prestige and promotion of trade, other factors, bound to local circumstances, must be taken into account in order to better understand the strong support given the merchants of our disputes. Among these there were personal interests of the Ottoman authorities, economic and political circumstances of the time when the disputes took place, factional strife among the Ottoman grandees, and the individual attitudes of Ottoman officials towards Venice. The *dispacci* of the bailo are the only sources of information about these factors. We will briefly mention some of these circumstances. In the first dispute, the bailo reported that Ibahim Pasha strongly supported John and Marino Scaruoli due to a bitter rivalry with the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha, who was a backer of the Venetian interests in the empire at that time. In the same case, the other chief supporter of the latter, the *defterdar* Üveys Pasha, in 1586, was engaged in the difficult task of collecting tax arrears in the European provinces of the empire, in order to cope with the pressing financial difficulties of the state in those years. Consequently, the recovery of the substantial debt of John Scaruoli from the bailo might have been an important matter for him. Ali Pasha's defense of the Bosnian merchants in the third case is the clearest instance of these local factors. He held a grudge against Venice for past grievances and, throughout the dispute, he strove to obtain compensation from the bailo and firmly supported all those Ottoman subjects in

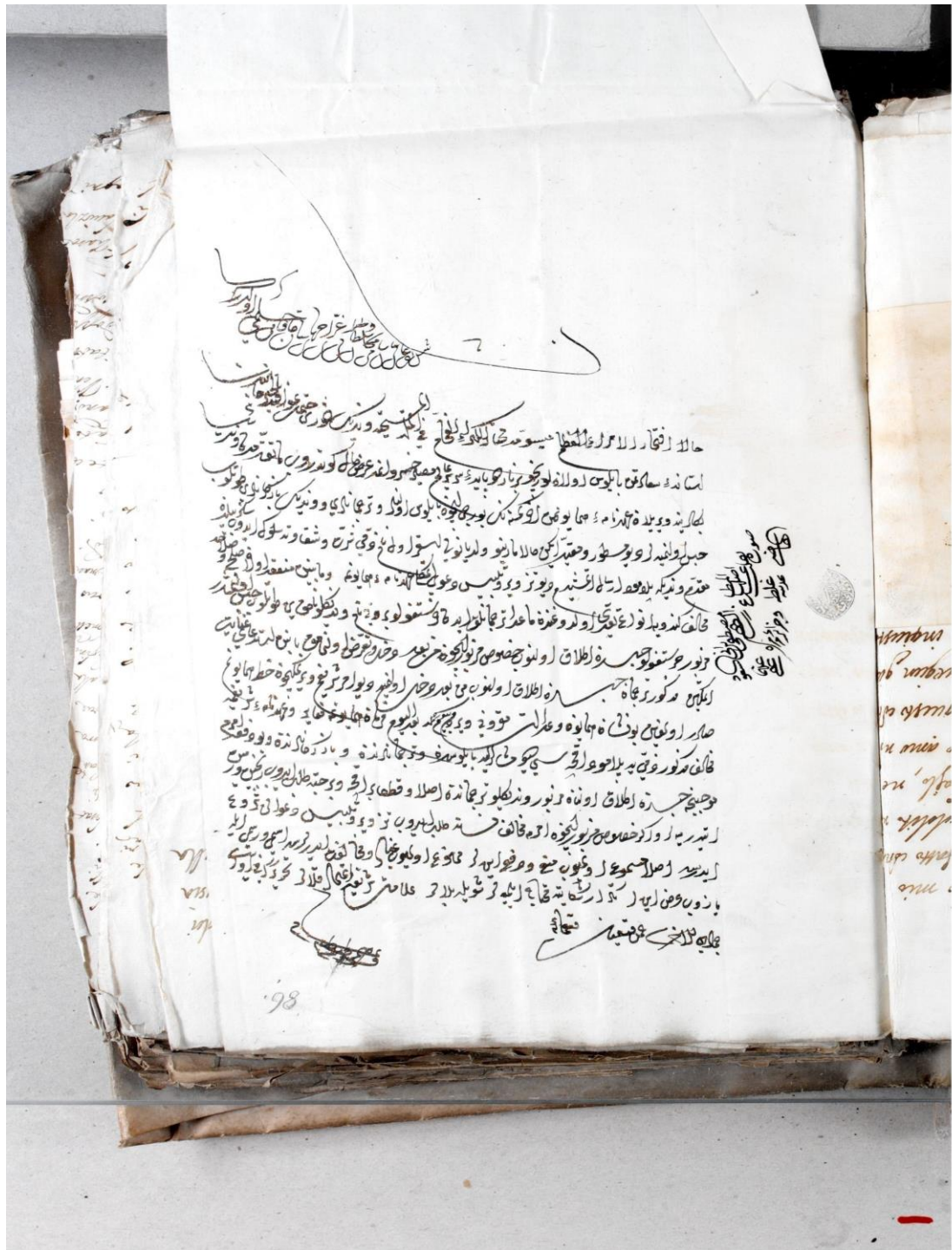
dispute with Venetian subjects and authorities. Furthermore, throughout his grand vizierate, he continuously looked for ways of extracting money from numerous Ottoman officials and foreign ambassadors in order to supply the sultan's treasury, pay the unruly troops, and organize the military campaign against Poland. Overall, these factors bound to local circumstance played a role in our disputes. Although they did not determine the attitude of the Ottoman authorities toward our merchants, they nevertheless must be taken in account in order to understand more satisfactorily the reasons that led the former to strongly support the merchants of our disputes.

APPENDIX

Examples of the Sources Employed



1) *Dispaccio* of the bailo Paolo Contarini. It dates 24/06/1581. ASV, Sento Dispacci, Costantinopoli, filza 15, No 20. It the first mention of John Scaruoli (at the bottom of the page)



2) *Nişan-ı hümayun* of Sultan Murad III against Marino Scaruoli. It dates evail-i cemaziyülahır 995, that is, 9-18 May 1587. ASV, Lettere e Scrittura Turchesche, filza V, No 492.

spettare il debito per il negozio del vascello malgrado dalla carezza di castel nouo
come fosse anijato con le arre de' d'oro di bonazzo passato, douendo poi egli partire
in Spadania per dar qualche picciolo con un suo fratello li baneimo concesso
del resto restargli la fino ad altro ordine suo, et nel proposito il detto vascello
malgrado di castel nouo non ci occorre di nuotarlo poiche baneimodij po' il
fatto sopra la nostra volontà, et mandateci tutte le informazioni, faremo
operando d'intender quello, se baneire capro.

— 157 — + — 5
adi detto

All' M^o Scianus Babà Primo Vizièr

Scianus del Cons.
Scianus di P. F.
Scianus alli ordini

aviso, se ci ha dato il Bailo vostro residente à quell' eccl^a
Corta, che quel comercario Scario del scaruoli sia così spacia-
mente tornato à farsi sentire, ci ha appreso tutto maggior
dispiacere, quanto se per ragione non appettavamo la sentir
cosa talè; non sapendo noi veder, come egli possa esser esol-
tato senza nostra pregiudicio. Nella parola di quel Sermo
Imperator, il qual essendo benissimo informato, che da molti
suoi M^o Primi Vizièri, et da tutta quella sublime Corta
era per così lungo spazio stata crucciata et conosciuta per
falsissima la precessione di costui: et se arca in questa città,
per instancie fatteci li anni passati da Sua Maestà con li
onorati noi spaci, et lapipi mandati à posta; essendo
stata riveduta questa istessa causa, era stato per giust^a
terminato con uniuersal consenso li molti nostri Senatⁱ.
Se deuenessimo per rivederla, s'egli non si baneisse alcuna
ragione, uolse finalmente Sua Maestà secondo il solito della
sua esemplar giustizia, non solo far impreggiar, et castigare
esso Scaruoli, come fu fatto: ma dechiarar arca, se la preven-
sione delle Valorie fusse una offresa uania, et falsità;
comandando con suo Imperial commandamento, che non si
potesse mai più per la detta precessione mandar per un
affero alli Baili nostri, nè alli loro Dragoxani, nè arca
à niua mercante Venetiano, come è particolarmente offes-
so in esso commandamento. Orde seben non si potemo in alcun
modo persuader, se si uogha Sora intromper per una così

3) Letter of the Venetian Senate to the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha over Scaruoli's affair.

It dates 17/03/1588. ASV, Senato Deliberazioni, Costantinopolo, registro No 7.

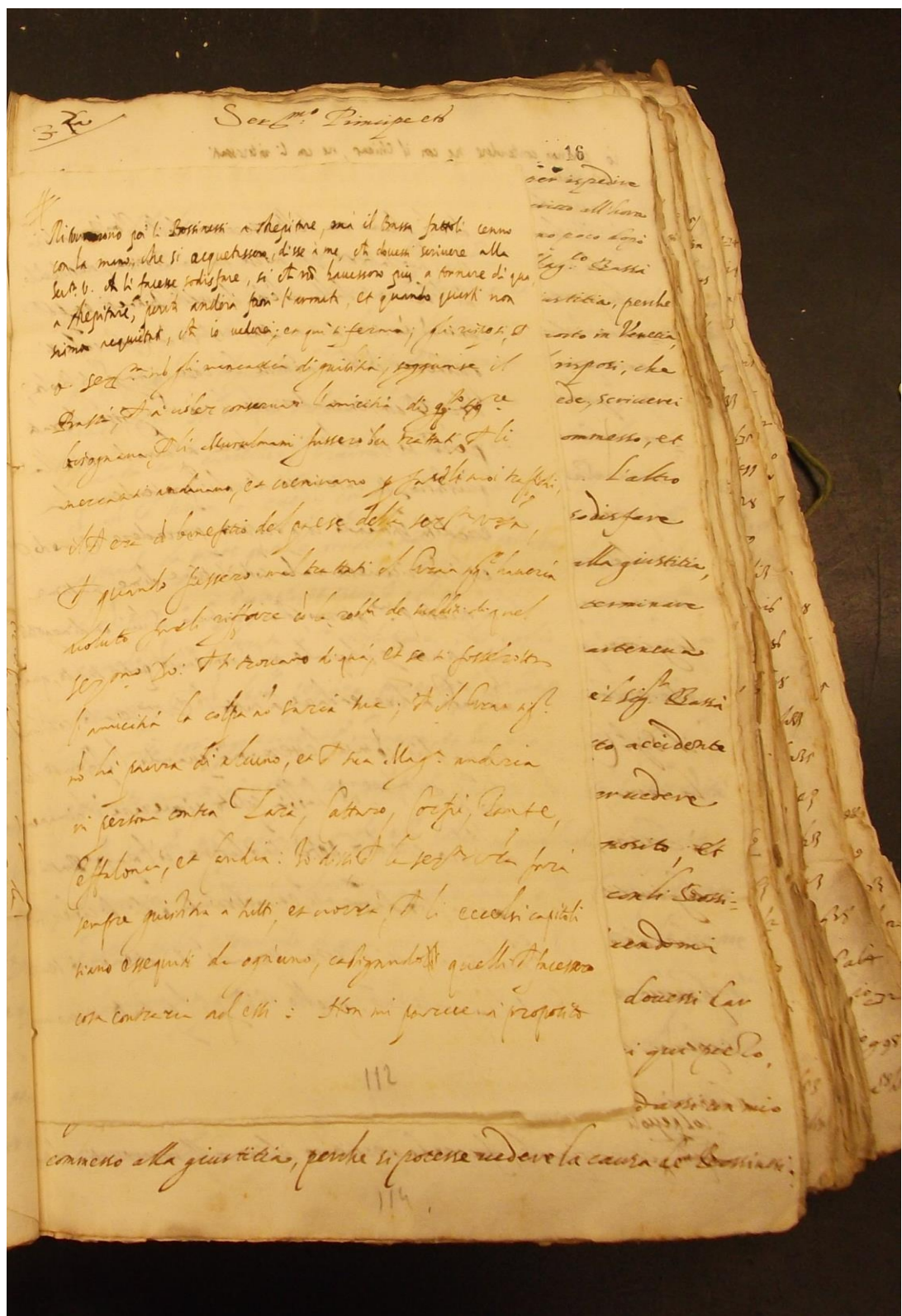


وحدانیه است و در این مورد ...
صحت این حکم را ...

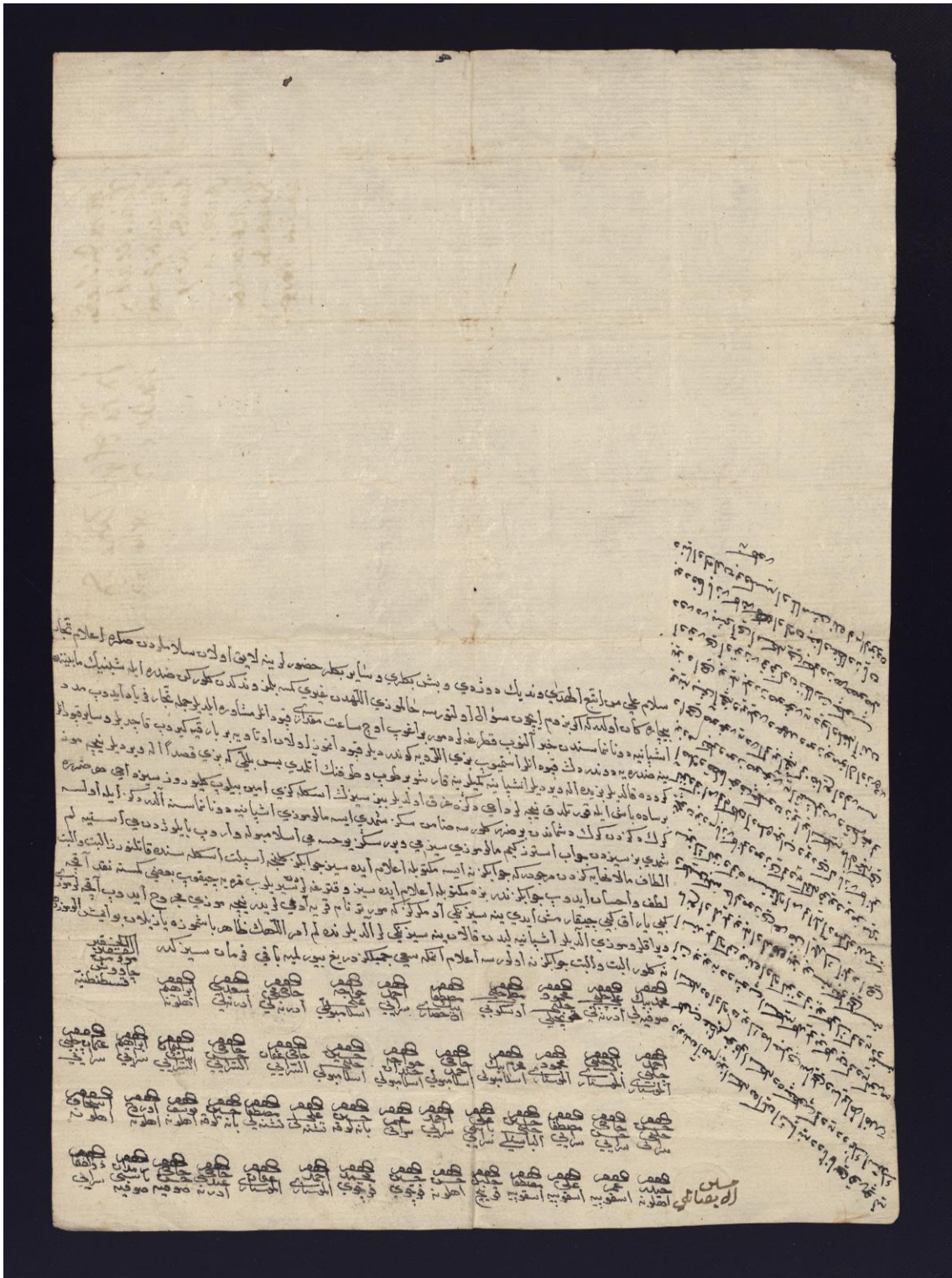
وجوه خبری و وف اولدر که هر دو سه سالی ...
بنام و میرین اسکندر و حاجی شرفان ...
و صالح ظلیف و حاجی پیری و صوفی اور و ...
و لا شند و ندریکم شمس و بعضی کز ...
اشقور مار قونام رابک کلکتی و ب کلویب ...
او با پاره قدری و الی موجود بیونوب ...
الوب چقار مقام مذکور قیودان دخی ...
عبارت الوب و اجرت دخی بقصور الی ...
ملاعین دورت پاره کی الیم اوز لربنه ...
ایم لرب الوب کند و کلرینه و کیم ایچن ...
بوخارنیه کلن انکی پاره کین کین ...
شتر بادت ایوب و دیدیکه ذکر اولان ...
قدرت الوب کلدی و بقره اولوب جلفه ...
یوک اتم مقدار ای اسبایلرین الوب ...
دریا حلسوق ملاعین الدوقلر و ...
ضامن اولدقلری ایلدرن سکلی اولن ...
اولنوب بربطاله وضع و رفیع اولن ...

و الاظنا ومصطفی و بشرفلیف و حاجی ...
و صین بو یوسف و سلیمان و غیره ...

4) *Hüccet* issued by the *kadı* of Gabela about the attack of the Uskoks against several Bosnian merchants in southern Dalmatia. It dates evail-i zilhicce 995, that is, between November 2 and 11 1587. ASV, Documenti Turchi, busta 8, No 953.



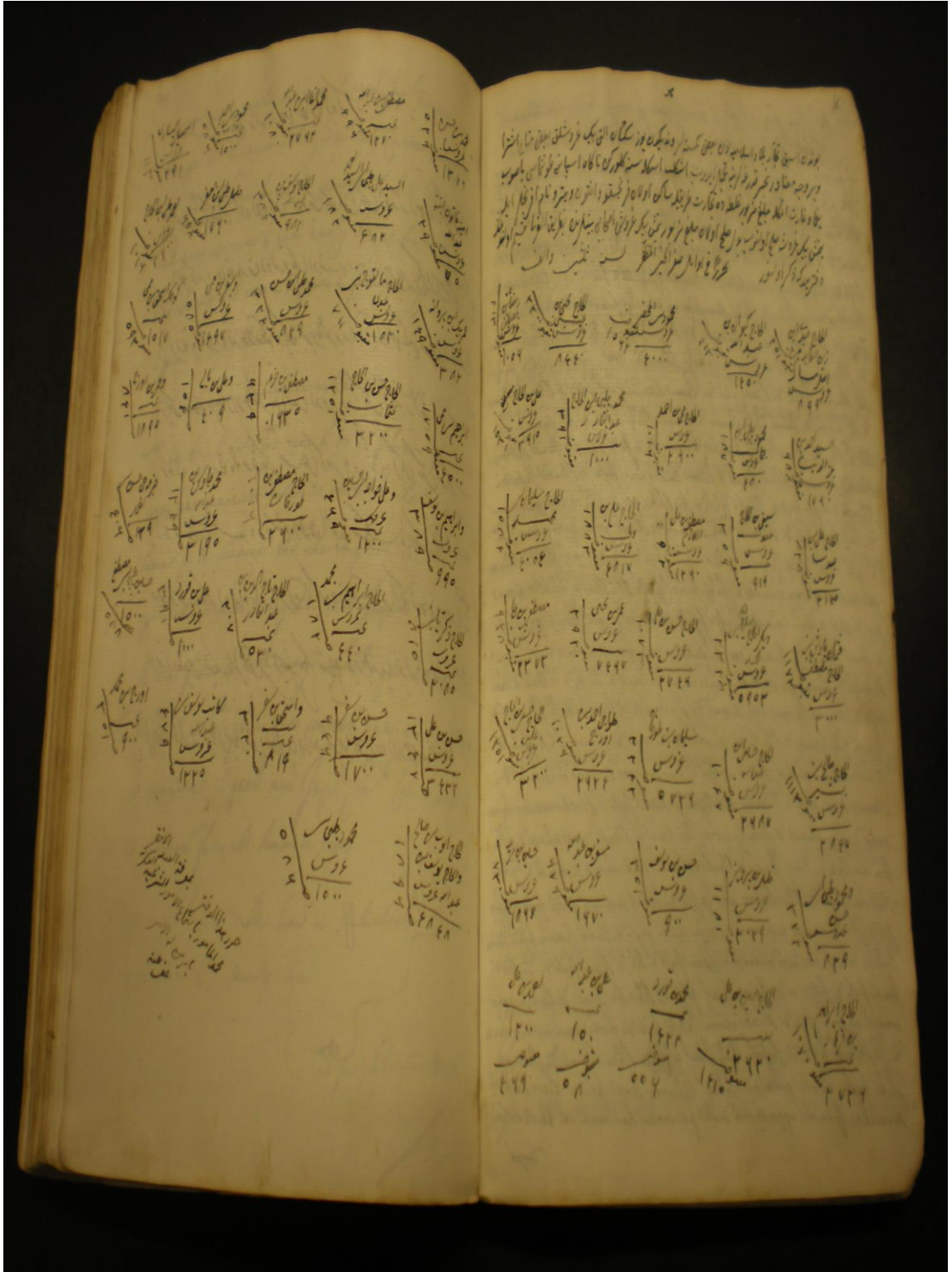
5) *Dispaccio* of the bailo Giovanni Moro about his difficult negotiation with the grand vizier Sinan Pasha over the issue of the Bosnian merchants robbed by the Uskoks. It dates 13/04/1589. ASV, SDC, busta 29, No 16.



7) Petition to the Venetian government of Mümin Çavuş and other fifty one merchants who survived from the attack of the Spanish fleet against two merchant galleys along the Dalmatina coast on July 15 1617. DT,busta 11, No 1210

S^{no} Dispaccio
 Sono comparsi già li Meranti fuggiti dalle falce di
 Meriara nella perdita di esse e con spettacolo ammirabile
 adoperati con la sua barbaie furibonda non parodia-
 ta recato in tanta miseria l'anno citato all'eu. ^{no. viii.} 1617.
 Il D^{no} Zappè d'esser demerito del poco d'anno, rivolgen-
 do pure le pedine intanto tirava di più. Ho presta-
 to la sua eu.^a con l'ordinario della sua Supplicazione
 una d'adularli et confortarli quanto sia più possi-
 bile come per lo più fanno appresentando già emi un
 verso d'una persona principale della città per comben-
 to, et d'ordinar l'altrezza dei conetti che perde. Il
 precepe fatto è però di qualche reggimento. ^{no. viii.}
 tutto dalla mia casa senza alcuna minima spesa del
 publico. Hauera l'eu. ^{no. viii.} però io dal medesimo eu. ^{no. viii.}
 Grou. Ho la ridanda parte di essi di scrittura
 circa la quale sendo non si dubita per la bocca in
 cielo, arditi per darle supplicando l'eu. ^{no. viii.} l'eu. condonare
 mi Carone con l'ardore della mia deuotione et con
 la passione del mio animo, che mi fa per auentura
 delirante nel suo seruitio, che io timerei utile, et pro-
 prio remedio all'imminente pericolo, che souato a que-
 sta sala della total sua diluazione. ^{no. viii.}

8) Dispaccio to the Venetian Senate of Marino Garzoni, Venetian governor (rettore) of the Split, about the arrival to that city of numerous merchants survived to the attack of the Spanish fleet. It dates 19/07/1617. ASV, Senato Dispacci Rettori, Dalmazia, busta 17.



9) The *hüccet* of the kadı of Galata Abdullah about the payment of the second group of Bosnian merchants by three Venetian merchants. It dates evail-i sefer 1030, that is, between 26 December 1620 and 4 January 1621. ASV, Bailo a Costantinopoli, busta 251/334.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Catalogues and Reference Works

Archivio di Stato di Venezia. *Collegio dei X poi XX savi del corpo del senato*, ed. Tamba Giorgio, Rome 1977.

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, İstanbul, 2000.

Da Mosto, Andrea. *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Indice generale storico, descrittivo ed analitico*, Roma, Biblioteca d'Arte Editrice, 1940.

Dispacci degli ambasciatori al Senato: Indice. Roma: Ministero dell'Interno, 1959.

Encyclopedia of Islam, second edition 1960-.

İslam Ansikolpedisi, İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988-.

Pedani Fabris, Maria Pia.

_____ *I documenti turchi dell' Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1994.

_____ *Inventory of the 'lettere e scritture Turchesche' of the Venetian State Archives*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010.

Storia di Venezia, 14 volumi, Treccani, (1992-2002).

Süreyya, Mehmed. *Sicill-i Osmani: yahud, Tezkire-i meşâhir-i Osmâniyye*. yayına hazırlayanlar: Mustafa Keskin, Ayhan Öztürk, Ramazan Tosun, 4 cilt, Sebil Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1995.

Archival Sources

Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV)

Archivio Propri degli Ambasciatori, Costantinopoli, buste: 8, 13-15, 17/18.

Bailo a Costantinopoli, buste: 250, 251, 266, 279, 387.

Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, lettere di Ambasciatori, busta 7.

Collegio, Esposizioni Principi, registri: 8, 9.

Documenti Turchi, buste: 7-12, 19.

Lettere e Scritture Turchesche, buste: 1, 4.

Quarantia Criminal, filze: 99, 128.

Senato Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, filze: 5-10, 13-15.

Senato Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, registri: 6-9, 12-14.

Senato Dispacci, Costantinopoli, filze: 15-23, 25- 32, 37-40, 83-85, 87.

Senato Dispacci, Costantinopoli, decifrazioni: 7-9, 14-16.

Senato Dispacci, Costantinopoli, rubriche: 6.

Senato Dispacci, Rettori, Dalmazia, filze: 16, 17.

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA)

Maliyeden Müdevver, 6004, s. 11/3.

Başmuhasebe Kalemi, 8/62.

Edited Primary Sources

Alberi, Eugenio ed. *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*. 18 vols, Florence: Società Editrice, Fiorentina, 1839–1863.

Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, relating to English Affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of northern Italy. 38 vols. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1864-1940.

Firpo, Luigi, ed. *Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al senato, tratte dalle migliori edizioni disponibili e ordinate cronologicamente*. Vol. 13: *Costantinopoli (1590-1793)*, Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1984.

Peçevi, Ibrahim. *Peçevi Tarihi*. 2 books edited by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, Ankara, Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992.

Pedani Fabris, Maria Pia. *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, vol. XIV: Costantinopoli relazioni inedite (1512–1789)*, Padua: Ausilio, 1996.

Secondary Sources

Arbel, Benjamin.

_____ *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean*, Brill's series in Jewish studies, 14, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.

_____ "Maritime Trade and International Relations in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean: The Case of the Ship Ghirarda (1575-1581)", in Costantini

Vera and Koller Marcus (ed.), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Foroqhi*, Brill, Leiden, 2008, p. 391-408.

Benzoni, Gino.

_____ “A proposito dei bails veneziani a Costantinopoli: qualche spunto, qualche osservazione”. *Studi Veneziani* 30, 1995, p. 72–76.

_____ “A proposito della fonte prediletta di Ranke, ossia le relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneziani”. *Studi Veneziani* 16, 1988, p. 245-257.

Bertelè, Tommaso. *Il Palazzo degli Ambasciatori di Venezia a Costantinopoli*, Bologna, 1932.

Bin, Alberto. *La Repubblica di Venezia e la questione adriatica: 1600-1620*, Roma: Il Veltro, 1992.

Boogert, Maurits H. van den.

_____ *The capitulations and the Ottoman legal system: qadis, consuls, and beraths in the 18th century* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005).

_____ “Redress for Ottoman victims of European privateering: A case against the Dutch in the Divan-I Hümayun (1708-1715)”, *Turcica* 33, 2001, p. 91-117.

_____ “Consular jurisdiction in the Ottoman legal system in the eighteenth century”, in Maurits H. Van Den Boogert and Kate Fleet (ed.), *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context*, Oriente Moderno, Anno XII, LXXXIII, 3, 2003, p. 614-617.

Bostan, Idris. *Adriyatik'te korsanlık: Osmanlılar, Uskoklar, Venedikliler, 1575-1620*, Çağaloğlu, İstanbul: Timaş, 2009.

Börekçi, Günhan. *Factions and Favorites at Courts of Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) and His Immediate Predecessors*, unpublished PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 2010.

Bracewell, Catherine Wendy. *The Uskoks of Senj: piracy, banditry, and holy war in the sixteenth-century Adriatic*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Braudel, Fernand.

_____ *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II*, London: Collins; Fontana, 1972-1973.

_____ *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century, Vol 3, The Perspective of the world*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Carter, H. Charles. “The ambassadors of early modern Europe” in *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation: essays in honor of Garrett Mattingly*, edited by Charles H. Carter, New York: Random House, 1965, p. 269-295.

Çızakça, Murat. *A comparative evolution of business partnerships: the Islamic world and Europe, with specific reference to the Ottoman Archives*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1996.

Coco Carla and Manzonetto Flora, *Baili veneziani alla sublime porta: Storia e caratteristiche dell'ambasciata veneta a Costantinopoli*, Venice, 1985.

Costantini, Vera.

_____ “Quando i nostri sono da loro e viceversa” in Bellingeri G.; Ucer N.; Romanelli G., *Venezia e Istanbul in epoca ottomana/Osmanlı Döneminde Venedik ve İstanbul*, Milano, Mondadori/ Istanbul, Electa, 2009, p. 46-50.

_____ “Commerci ed economie nell’Adriatico d’età moderna” in Gherardo Ortalli and Oliver Jens Schmitt (eds) *Balceni occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo / Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaraum und Venedig (13. - 18. Jahrhundert*, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2008, p. 363-372.

_____ “Venetian Trade and the Boundaries of Legality in Early Modern Ottoman Cyprus” in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein, Leuven: Peeters, 2008, p. 35-46.

Desaive, Dilek. “Les documents en Ottoman des fonds des Archives du Baile à Constantinople”, *Turcica* 33, 2011, p. 369-367.

Dursteler, Eric.

_____ *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Baltimore, 2006.

_____ “The bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice’s Early Modern Diplomatic corps”, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, 2001, 1- 30.

_____ “Commerce and Coexistence: Venetian and Ottoman Merchants in the Early Modern Era”, *Turcica* 34, 2002, p. 105-133.

_____ “Describing or Distorting the “Turk”? The Relazioni of the Venetian Ambassadors in Constantinople as Historical Source,” *Acta Histriae* 19, 2011, p. 231-24.

_____ ‘A Continual Tavern in My House’: Food and Diplomacy in Early Modern Constantinople. In *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors*, edited by Machtelt Israëls and Louis A. Waldman, 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press:, 2013, 1 Vol, p. 166-171.

Edhem, Eldem. “Capitulations and Western Trade,” in Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, 1603-1839*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 284-335.

Ergene, Boğaç.

_____ *Local court, provincial society, and justice in the Ottoman Empire: legal practice and dispute resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)*, Leiden, Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2003.

_____ “Evidence in Ottoman Courts: Oral and Written Documentation in Early-Modern Courts of Islamic Law”, *Turcica* 37, 2006, p. 83-111

Faroqhi, Suraiya.

_____ “Bosnian merchants in the Adriatic,” in *Ottoman Bosnia, A History in Peril* -- has also appeared as *The International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10, 1-2, edited by Markus Koller and Kemal Karpat, Madison/Wisc.: Center of Turkish Studies, 2004, p. 225-239.

_____ “Ottoman Attitudes towards Merchants from Latin Christendom before 1600,” *Turcica* 35, 2002, p. 69-104.

_____ "Ottoman Views on Corsairs and Piracy in the Adriatic," in *The Kapudan Pasha. His Office and his Domain*, edited by Elizabeth Zachariadou, Rethymnon: University of Crete Press, 2002, p. 357-371.

_____ “The Ottoman and the Trade Routes of the Adriatic” in Faroqhi Suraiya, *Another mirror for princes: the public image of the Ottoman sultans and its reception*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008, p. 249-265.

_____ “Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXXIV, 1992, p. 1-39.

_____ "Political Initiatives 'from the Bottom up' in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire" in *Osmanische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vanco Boskov*, edited by Hans Georg Majer, Wiesbaden, 1986, p. 24-33.

_____ "The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire", *The Journal of European Economic History* 15, Rome, 1986, p. 345-384 and reprinted in *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, edited by Huri İslamoğlu İnan, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 311-344.

_____ “Crisis and Change 1590-1699” in Inalcik Halil and Donald Quataert (edited by), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*. Vol. 2, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, c1994, p. 411-636.

_____ *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around it*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2006.

Fleischer, H. Cornell. *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Fotić, Alexander. “Non-Ottoman Documents in the Kādīs’ Courts (Mōloviya, Medieval Charters): Examples from the Archive of the Hilandar Monastery (15th–18th C.)”, in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, Volume II, eds. C. Imber, K. Kiyotaki and Rh. Murphey, London-New York: I.B. Tauris 2005, p. 63-73

- Gerber, Haim. *State, society, and law in Islam: Ottoman law in comparative perspective*, New York: State University, 1994.
- Geza, Dàvid. “Sinan Pasha Khodja”, *EI*, 2nd ed.
- Fabris, Antonio. “*Un caso di pirateria veneziana: la cattura della galea del bey di Gerba (21 ottobre 1584)*”, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 8, 1990, p. 91–112.
- Fodor, Pál.
- _____ “The Grand Vizieral *Telhis*: A Study in the Ottoman Central Administration, 1566-1656,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 15, 1997, p. 137-188.
- _____ “Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral *Telhis*” in *In quest of the golden apple: imperial ideology, politics, and military administration in the Ottoman Empire*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000, p. 207-226.
- Goffman, Daniel.
- _____ “Negotiating with the Renaissance state” in *The early modern Ottomans: remapping the Empire*, edited by Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 61-74.
- _____ *The Ottoman Empire and early modern Europe*, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Gökbilgin, Mahmut Tayyib. “Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Türkçe Belgeler Koleksiyonu ve Bizimle ilgili Diğer Belgeler”, in: *Belgeler Türk Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi V–VIII*, 1968–1971, p. 1–153.
- Greene, Molly. *Catholic pirates and Greek merchants: a maritime history of the Mediterranean*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- De Groot, Alexander H.
- _____ “The historical development of the capitulatory regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries” in *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context*, edited by Maurits van den Boogert and Kate Fleetex, Istituto per L’Oriente, Rome, 2003, p. 575-604.
- _____ *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: a history of the earliest diplomatic relations, 1610-1630*, Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut Leiden/Istanbul, 1978.
- _____ “Gurdju Mehmed Pasha”, *EI*, 2nd ed.
- _____ “Kara Mehmed Pasha”, *EI*, 2nd ed.
- _____ “Khalil Pasha”, *EI*, 2nd ed.
- Gürkan, Emrah Safa. *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret diplomacy, Mediterranean go-betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg rivalry*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation Georgetown University, 2012.

Heyd, Uriel. *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*. edited by V. L. Ménage, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Imber, Colin. *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structures of Power*, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002.

Inalcık, Halil

_____ *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*. edited with Donal Quataert, Cambridge, 1994.

_____ “Şikâyet Hakkı: Arz-i Hâl ve Arz-i Mahzarlar” in *Osmanlı'da devlet, hukuk, adalet*, İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık ve Kitapçılık, 2000, p. 33-54.

_____ “Greeks in Ottoman Economy and Finances, 1453-1500” in *Essays in Ottoman History*, ed. Halil İnalcık, İstanbul: Eren, 1998, p. 375-389.-

_____ “Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire”, *Journal of Economic History* 24/1, 1969, p. 97-140.

_____ “İmtiyazat”, *EI* (Leiden, 1971).

_____ ”Mesih Pasha”, *EI*, 2nd ed.

Kafadar, Cemal. “*A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima*”, in *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10, 1986, p. 191-217.

Lane Frederic C., *Venice, a maritime republic*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Migliardi O' Riordan, Giustiniana. “Présentation des archives du baile à Constantinople”, *Turcica* 33, 2001, p. 339-367.

Francesca Lucchetta, “Il Medico del Bailaggio di Costantinopoli fra terapie e Politica, Secc.XV-XVI)” in *Veneziani in Levante: Musulmani a Venezia*. supplemento di *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* n°15, Roma: Herder 1997, p. 5-55.

Mantran, Robert. “Guzeldje Ali Pasha”, *EI*, 2nd ed..

Mumcu, Ahmet.

_____ *Hukuksal ve siyasal karar organı olarak Divan-ı Hümayun* , Ankara: Birey Toplum, 1986.

_____ *Osmanlı devletinde siyaseten katl*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1963.

Murphey, Rhoads. “Merchants, nations and free-agency: an attempt at a qualitative characterization of trade in the eastern Mediterranean, 1620-1640” in Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot & Maurits H. van den Boogert (ed.) *Friends and rivals in the East: studies in Anglo-Dutch relations in the Levant from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000, p. 25-58.

al-Qattam, Najwa. "Inside the Ottoman courthouse: territorial law at the intersection of state and religion" in D. Goffman and V. Askan (ed.), *The Early Modern Ottomans*, Cambridge University, 2007, p. 201-212

Olnon, Merjlin. "Towards classifying *avantias*: A study of two cases involving the English and Dutch nations of seventeenth-century Izmir" in Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot & Maurits H. van den Boogert (eds.) *Friends and rivals in the East: Anglo-Dutch relations in the Levant from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000, p. 159-186.

Rothman, Natalie.

_____ *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011

_____ "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 4, October 2009, p. 771-800.

Pamuk, Şevket. *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Paci, Renzo. *La "scala" di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra cinque e seicento*, Venezia, Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1971.

Parry, Jack. "Ibrahim Pasha Dāmād", in *EI*, 2nd ed.

Pedani Fabris, Maria Pia.

_____ "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy", *Turcica* 32, 2000, p. 9–32

_____ *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla guerra di Candia*, Venezia, Deputazione Editrice, 1994. It has been translated in Turkish, *Osmanlı padişahının adına İstanbul'un fethinden Girit Savaşı'na Venedik'e gönderilen Osmanlılar*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2011.

_____ "Elenco degli inviati diplomatici veneziani presso i sovrani ottomani", *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 5/4, 2002, p. 1-54.

_____ "Between Diplomacy and Trade: Ottoman Merchants in Venice" in Suraiya faroqhi - Gilles Veinstein, *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, Paris-Louvain-Dudley ma, Peeters, p. 3-21.

Pierce, Leslie. *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, 1993.

Preto, Paolo. *Venezia e i Turchi*, Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1975.

Pullan, Brian. *Crisis and change in the Venetian economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, London: Methuen, 1968.

Schacht, Joseph. *An introduction to Islamic law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

Schmidt, Jan. "Siyāwush Pasha", *EI*, 2nd ed.

- Stoianovich, Traian. "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchants" in *Journal of Economic History* 20, no.2, 1960.
- Tenenti, Alberto. *Piracy and the decline of Venice: 1580-1615*, translated (from the Italian), with an introduction and glossary, by Janet and Brian Pullan, London: Longmans, 1967.
- Tezcan, Baki.
 _____ *The second Ottoman Empire: political and social transformation in the early modern world*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
 _____ The Ottoman Mevali as 'Lords of the Law' *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, 2009: 383-407.
- Tucci, Ugo. "Tra Venezia e mondo turco: i mercanti", in *Venezia e i turchi: Scontri e confronti di due civiltà*, Electa, Milano, 1985.
- Theunissen, Hans. *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: the Ahd-names. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents*, EJOS I, 1998.
- Turan, Şeraffettin. "Venedikte Türk Ticaret Merkezi, Fondaco dei Turchi", *Türk Tarih Kurumu, Belleten. C. XXXII*, S. 126, s. 247-283, 1968, Ankara.
- Ursinus, Micheal. *Grievance administration (şikayet) in an Ottoman province: the Kaymakam of Rumelia's 'Record book of complaints' of 1781-1783*, London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005.
- Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı. *Osmanlı devletinin saray teşkilatı*, Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 1984.
- Valensi, Lucette. *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte*, Ithaca 1993.
- Vercellin, Giorgio. "Mercanti Turchi e Sensali a Venezia", in *Studi Veneziani*, Edizione Electa Venezia, 1980, n.s. IV, p. 45-78.
- de Vivo, Filippo. "Historical Justifications of Venetian Power in the Adriatic", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v. 64, 2003, p. 159-76
- Walsh, J. R. "Fatwa-Ottoman Empire". *EI*, 2nd edition.
- Wittmann Richard, *Before Qadi and Grand Vizier: Intra-Communal Dispute Resolution among Christians and Jews in the Plural Society of 17th Century Istanbul*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Harvard University, 2008.
- Yurdusev, Nuri A. *Ottoman diplomacy: conventional or unconventional?*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Veinstein, Gilles. "Marchands ottomans en Pologne-Lituanie et en Moscovie sous le règne de Soliman le Magnifique" *Cahiers du monde russe* 35, 4, October-December 1994, p. 713-738.

Zdenko, Zlatar. *Between the Double Eagle and the Crescent: the Republic of Dubrovnik and the origins of the Eastern Question*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992.