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DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORY  
AND  
CIVILIZATION

# ‘In the Shadow of Rivalry and Intrigues: Diplomatic Relations of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman Empire during the Sixteenth-Century’

F. Özden Mercan

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to  
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization  
of the European University Institute

Florence, 30 May 2017



European University Institute  
**Department of History and Civilization**

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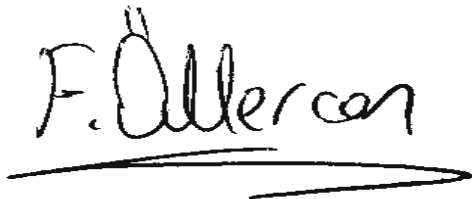
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30/5/2017



**In the Shadow of Rivalry and Intrigues:  
Diplomatic Relations of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman Empire  
During the Sixteenth-Century**

**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation focuses on the relations of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, with a specific emphasis on key moments in their diplomatic contacts. Triggered by political and economic factors, both states attempted to restore their relations with the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the sixteenth century. Building largely on Italian archival material and complementing it with Ottoman and European sources, this study reconstructs each diplomatic negotiation process that took place and highlights the complex environment in which they occurred. Although the Genoese and the Florentine diplomatic enterprises took place at different times (the Genoese during the late 1550s and the Florentines in the 1570s and 1590s) and under different circumstances, they followed similar patterns, shared common experiences and were confronted with the same obstacles. Thus one of the main contributions of this study is to examine Genoese and Florentine diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire together, and to present a comprehensive picture of the intricacies of cross-cultural diplomacy in the early modern period, placing specific emphasis on actors, stratagems and exchanges. In so doing, it also sheds light on the dynamics of political configurations and alliances as well as inter-state rivalries, which were shaped by commercial and political interests in the early modern Mediterranean.





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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ARCHIVAL TERMS

ASFi Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Florence  
ASG Archivio di Stato di Genova, Genoa  
ASLSP Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria  
ASV Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice  
AÜDTCF Ankara Üniversitesi Dil Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi  
BOA Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul  
BSOAS Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies  
CSP Calendar of State Papers  
DİA Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi  
EI<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia of Islam, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
İA İslam Ansiklopedisi MEB  
İÜEF İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi  
TDV Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi  
TSMA Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, İstanbul  
TTK Türk Tarih Kurumu

## A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

When giving quotations from archival documents in European languages, I have translated the text into English and provided the original text in the footnotes when necessary. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

For Ottoman terms, names and titles I have used modern Turkish spelling, but in the case of common English usage, I have used English version such as pasha, agha etc. Terms and titles with English equivalents have been translated; others have been kept in the original form. Direct quotes from the Ottoman sources are transliterated according to the system established by the *Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*.

Both Islamic lunar calendar dates and Common Era dates are shown together. For example: 27 Şevval 951/ 11 Ocak 1545.

For currency units and measurements, I have preferred to keep the original spelling.



## INTRODUCTION

If any man take exception against our new trade with Turks and misbelievers, he shall show himself a man of small experience in old and new histories [...]. For who knoweth not that King Solomon of old entered into league with Hiram the King of Tyrus, a Gentile? Or who is ignorant that the French, Florentines, Venetians and Polonians are at this day in league with the Grand Signor, and have been these many years, and use trade and traffic in his dominions? And who doth not acknowledge, that have travelled the remote parts of the world, or read the Histories of this later age, that the Spaniards and Portuguese in Barbary and the Indies have confederacy with the Moors and many kinds of Pagans [...]. Why then should it be blamed in us, which is usual and common to the most part of other Christian nations?<sup>1</sup>

In 1580 Sir Francis Walsingham, an English statesman and principal secretary to Queen Elizabeth I, wrote a report on the advantages of direct English commerce with the Ottoman Empire, with the aim of defending the recent diplomatic mission of William Harborne to the Sublime Porte.<sup>2</sup> According to Walsingham, there was no reason for England to hesitate over negotiating with the Ottoman sultan, as other Christian states like France, Florence, and Venice had already conducted trade in the Ottoman lands for many years and were taking their share of the Levant trade. At first glance, Walsingham's remarks could simply be taken as a justification for England's ambition to expand into the Eastern Mediterranean markets. Yet, reading between the lines, one can recognize the existence of invisible boundaries with the "Other" while at the same time gaining an insight into the early modern mentality that prioritized commercial interests over religious and ideological concerns.

A closer look at the Eastern Mediterranean during this period, in fact, demonstrates that almost all early modern European states in the region strove for access

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<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth 1547–1580*, p. 691, CXLIV, 70 (London, 1856): "A Consideration of the advantages to be gained by opening a direct trade with Turkey by Sir Francis Walsingham." Cited from Richard Wilson, "Another Country: Marlowe and the Go-Between," in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âli*) indeed refers to the office of grand vizier and center of Ottoman government between the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. See Selçuk Akşin Somel, *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire* (Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2003) pp. 275-276. Throughout this dissertation, however, Sublime Porte is used as the translation of the expression "*eccelsa e felice Porta*" used for the Ottoman Empire in the Genoese and Florentine documents. It alternates with the Ottoman court and Ottoman administration.

to trade routes and markets, competing for commercial dominance. In this respect, their relations with the Sublime Porte were largely shaped by economic motives rather than religious considerations, despite the periodical eruption of crusading rhetoric and the formation of holy leagues against the Ottoman menace. During the sixteenth century, Ottoman imperial ambition reached its peak, and as such, from the mid-sixteenth century onward, there was an increasing demand from European states for capitulations and diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire. This demand indicated a growing interest in the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant trade as well as the commercial and diplomatic benefits of close relations with the Sublime Porte.

This dissertation focuses on the practice of diplomacy and trade in the Eastern Mediterranean just before the “Northern Invasion” (1550s–1600), when Venice and the other Italian states were still the primary rivals in the region, competing to market their textiles and act as intermediaries between the East and the West. The second half of the sixteenth century could be considered the last episode of Italian dominance over Mediterranean trade, after which the English and Dutch arrived on the scene and began changing local trading patterns and power relations. The dissertation specifically examines the relations of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman Empire during the latter part of the sixteenth century, bringing to the fore certain key moments in their diplomatic contacts. While the Genoese negotiated with the Ottoman court during the late 1550s, the Florentines made two such attempts, one during the rule of Grand Duke Francesco I de’ Medici in the 1570s and the other in the time of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de’ Medici in the 1590s.

The choice of these two Italian states as the focus for this study is not a random selection but an intentional one, as both states had ambitions of expanding into the Eastern Mediterranean markets and had similar diplomatic experiences with the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the sixteenth century. The Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry in the Mediterranean certainly shaped the diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and these Italian states, whose close contacts with Spain seem to have overshadowed their diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman administration. However, these diplomatic endeavors often had far more complex stories behind them and included a wide array of actors; thus, the dissertation will focus on the negotiation processes that took place, rather than on their results. By analyzing each diplomatic negotiation through its actors, intricacies, and maneuverings, the dissertation seeks to highlight the peculiar and complex ways cross-cultural diplomacy was conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean during this

period. It will explore the interplay of different dynamics and assess the role of key figures and mediators in diplomatic relations, among them ambassadors, envoys, merchants, spies, dragomans, and renegades at the Ottoman court, all of whom significantly shaped the course of the negotiations.

In the existing literature, no one has examined in detail the dynamics of these negotiations, the factors that triggered them, or the reasons for and impacts of their failure. Moreover, little attention has been paid to the positions that different social, economic, and administrative actors took regarding the Genoese and Florentine enterprises, or to the importance of those actors who adamantly opposed the Genoese and Florentine negotiations in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, by focusing on these aspects, the dissertation aims to present a comprehensive picture of diplomatic practices, the role of intermediaries, and various formal and informal networks that connected the Ottomans to their Italian counterparts. Examining the interactions between the Ottoman Empire and these small states (yet important economic players) during the sixteenth century will also reveal certain paradigms and power relations that were an intrinsic part of the wider political and economic agenda of the Mediterranean. All in all, the study of Genoese and Florentine diplomacy with the Sublime Porte addresses several aspects of early modern Mediterranean history, focusing heavily on power politics, commercial competition, and cross-cultural diplomacy.

### **The Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean: Power Politics and the Formation of Alliances**

The Mediterranean Sea, having hosted various cultures and peoples along its shores throughout history, has been perceived and interpreted by twentieth-century historians in contrasting terms. Some have regarded it as a dividing borderline and others as a connecting link between the East and the West. In fact, studies on the medieval and early modern Mediterranean have been largely dominated by these two opposing paradigms: in Dursteler's terms, these are "the bifurcated Mediterranean of the battlefield" and "the linked Mediterranean suggested by the region's many bazaars and other places of encounter and exchange."<sup>3</sup> The former focuses on the image of a sea

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Dursteler, "On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts," *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011): 413–434. James G. Harper has offered the alternative terms "Iron Curtain model" and "Global Village model" to define these two paradigms: see J. G. Harper, "Introduction," in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism*

divided between different empires and religious blocs in constant conflict. The earliest contemporary supporter of this view was the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, who argued that it was the Islamic invasions, not the fall of Rome, that shattered the unity of the Mediterranean and put an end to the Roman world, which accordingly led to a collapse of international trade.<sup>4</sup> Pirenne's divided Mediterranean initially dominated the historiography, creating a clear-cut view of cultural and political boundaries between the Islamic East and the Christian West. The arrival of the Ottomans on the shores of the Mediterranean after almost a millennium of Islamic invasions only served to naturalize this view. Focusing on the differences between the Islamic and Christian worlds, with specific emphasis on Christian-Muslim or East-West polarizations, this approach has portrayed the two sides as two hostile camps engaged in constant political, cultural, and religious conflict with temporary periods of peace, but it has also obscured the frequent exchanges and shared patterns between them. Pirenne's legacy has been maintained by scholars such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington, whose works also emphasize differences and draw a boundary or "an iron curtain" between the Christian and Muslim civilizations, which were separated by religion, culture, and language.<sup>5</sup>

This paradigm, firmly grounded in East-West conflict and enmity, was countered by the French historian Fernand Braudel's groundbreaking work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*.<sup>6</sup> Although Braudel also pointed to a divide in the Mediterranean between the Habsburg and Ottoman zones of influence during the sixteenth century, he was one of the few European historians who marked the Ottoman Empire as an equal actor in the historiography of the Mediterranean. In this regard, his remarks in the preface of the English edition of his book are particularly important: "I retain the firm conviction that the Turkish Mediterranean lived and breathed with the same rhythms as the Christian, that the whole sea shared a common destiny, a heavy one indeed, with identical problems and general trends if not identical

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(Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1–18. For a comprehensive evaluation of historiographical trends in the field of Mediterranean studies see also Monique O'Connell, "The Italian Renaissance in the Mediterranean, or Between East and West. A Review Article," *California Italian Studies Journal* 1 (2010): 1–30.

<sup>4</sup> Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, tr. Bernard Miall (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1939)

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lewis used the term "iron curtain" in his article "Muslim Discovery of Europe," *BSOAS* 20, 1/3 (1957): 411. Later he published an extended version as a book with the same title, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982). His other works in the same vein are *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) and *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002). Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, tr. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (London: Collins, 1972–73)

consequences.”<sup>7</sup> Braudel’s *opus* has inspired many scholars, who in recent years have revisited his work and examined its lesser explored topics, thus presenting a more nuanced and multifaceted image of the Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup>

One ambitious study in this vein is *The Corrupting Sea*, by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell. Their comprehensive study focuses specifically on the environmental factors and regional diversities of the Mediterranean, and through their approach they have demonstrated that “Mediterranean interdependence” and “connectivity” promoted commercial exchanges and mobility.<sup>9</sup> In the same vein, Maria Fusaro has also pointed out the constant movement of objects and people among the different shores and cities of the Mediterranean, emphasizing how “competing states and empires constantly interacted commercially and culturally on land and on sea, even when they were at war with one another.”<sup>10</sup> This emphasis on mobility and exchange posits a Mediterranean with flexible boundaries, one that is contrary to the binary oppositions presented in the traditional historiography. Although the crusading/*gaza* rhetoric remains in the background and has been used to justify periods of military conflict and tension,<sup>11</sup> it falls short of explaining the involute and complex commercial and diplomatic relations between the Europeans (especially the Italian states) and the Ottoman Empire during this period.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, this

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<sup>7</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> John A. Marino (ed.), *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences. Testing the Limits of Braudel’s Mediterranean* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002); David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011); Gabriel Piterberg, Teofilo F. Ruiz and Geoffrey Symcox (eds.), *Braudel Revisited: the Mediterranean world, 1600–1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood and Mohamed-Salah Omri, *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the early modern Mediterranean: Braudel’s Maritime Legacy* (London: Tauris, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) pp. 121–172. In a similar vein, see Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550–1870: A Geohistorical Approach* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2008). Tabak emphasizes certain long-term shifts in Mediterranean patterns of economic activity and ecological changes from the mid-seventeenth century to the nineteenth, which marked the waning of the Mediterranean. For a critical approach and evaluation regarding Horden and Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea*, see the articles in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. by W. H. Harris (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Maria Fusaro, “After Braudel: A reassessment of Mediterranean History between the Northern Invasion and the Caravane Maritime,” in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>11</sup> *Gaza* (Holy War) was one of the important features of Ottoman ideology since its foundation in the fourteenth century. According to Paul Wittek, *gaza*, the expansion of Islam by force, was the main impetus for the emergence and rise of the Ottoman state. Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1938). For a critical discussion and revision of this view, see Halil İnalçık, “The Question of Emergence of the Ottoman State,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (1980): 71–79 and Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> There is a substantial scholarship concerning Ottoman-Italian trade relations including Cemal Kafadar, “A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima,” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 10 (1986): 191–218; Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations. Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Kate Fleet,

dissertation aims to address this gap, and through an examination of the Genoese and Florentine experiences, it will argue that commercial and political interests often outweighed ideological concerns and allowed for various forms of collaboration and exchange.

Recent studies on the Ottoman side, written from within this frame of mind, have also effectively demonstrated the active participation of the Ottoman Empire in the global politics of the early modern period, focusing on its contacts with Europe, the Mediterranean, India, and the New World.<sup>13</sup> By expanding their empire into Eurasian space, the Ottomans became incorporated into and connected with the commercial, political, and cultural spheres of other states and empires in Europe, Africa, and East Asia. Ottoman expansion to the east and west from the early sixteenth century onward gradually shifted the balance of power in the Levant and reshaped diplomatic and commercial relations, making the Ottomans an important economic actor in Eastern Mediterranean trade. Through effective diplomacy and favorable alliances, they soon established their hegemony in the region and took control of trade routes stretching from Venice to the Indian Ocean. As Brummett has emphasized, they became “conscious participants in the Levantine trading networks among which their empire emerged.”<sup>14</sup>

Triggered by their imperial ambitions, the Ottomans also allied with North African rulers, thereby gaining access to the central and western Mediterranean and posing a

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*European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (eds.), *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008); Stephen Ortega, “Across Religious and Ethnic Boundaries: Ottoman Networks and Spaces in Early Modern Venice,” *Mediterranean Studies* 18 (2009): 66–89; Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean. The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015); and Mikail Acıpinar, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Floransa. Akdeniz’de Diplomasi, Ticaret ve Korsanlık* (Ankara: TTK, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002); Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (eds.), *Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007); Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2000); Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004); Giancarlo Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford UP, 2010); Thomas Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World: A Study of Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi and Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Americana* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990); Gülru Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (İstanbul: The ISIS Press, 1993) pp. 163–94; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011); John-Paul A. Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013); Pascal W. Firges, Tobias P. Graf, Christian Roth and Gülay Tulaşoğlu (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery*, p. 176.



direct challenge to Emperor Charles V's claims of supremacy.<sup>15</sup> As already mentioned, Braudel's Mediterranean was characterized by "the shared common destiny" of as well as the struggle between two religious imperial blocs: the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. These two rival powers tried to extend their control over the Mediterranean by forming alliances with strategically important states, most especially the Italian states. During the sixteenth century, Italy was far from a "unified" entity, being divided into various city-states, duchies, republics, and kingdoms.<sup>16</sup> Each political entity cemented an alliance with an imperial power depending on its own interests and agenda. In this respect, the relationship between the empires and the smaller states was far more complex than simple subjugation. Rather, it was mutually shaped, and required constant negotiations and maneuverings.<sup>17</sup>

In the political constellations of the sixteenth century, Venice allied itself with the Ottoman Empire, Genoa operated on the side of the Habsburgs, and Florence shifted its alliances between the Habsburgs, France, and the Ottoman Empire depending on the particular benefits of such relations at any given time. Therefore, to describe the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the European states as one in constant conflict would be overly simplistic, considering that there were frequent rivalries and clashes among the Christian states themselves, who most often actually allied with the Ottomans against each other. During this period, alliances were fluid and fluctuating, being largely shaped by short-term interests and circumstances. In other words, so-called "unholy alliances" were formed as a result of commercial motives and political benefits that brought together adherents of different religions, in order to pursue joint military action against mutual enemies/rivals.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); idem., "The Moriscos: An Ottoman Fifth Column in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *The American Historical Review* 74/1 (1968): 1-25.

<sup>16</sup> Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-century Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> In recent years there has been an increasing number of studies focusing on the relationship between empires and states and the limits of imperial ideologies, bringing forth the importance of formal and informal diplomacy as well as of human agency; see Gábor Ágoston, "Information, ideology, and limits of imperial ideology: Ottoman grand strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry," in *The Early Modern Ottomans, Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) pp. 75–103; Tonio Andrade and William Reger (eds.), *Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History. Essays in Honor of Geoffrey Parker* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); and Giuseppe Marcocci, "Too Much to Rule: States and Empires across the Early Modern World," *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 511–525.

<sup>18</sup> The term "unholy alliance" is taken from David Abulafia's *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*, p. 411.

In the case of the Venetians, despite periods of conflict and repeated wars with the Ottomans, they maintained their dominant position in the Levant trade through their diplomatic skills, informal relations, well-developed networks of information, and naval power.<sup>19</sup> Braudel depicts Venice's relationship with the Ottoman Empire as follows: "Venice lived in fact off the great Turkish empire, as the ivy draws its nourishment from the tree to which it clings."<sup>20</sup> The strong economic and commercial ties that bound the Venetians to the Ottomans significantly shaped the Serenissima's attitude towards Spain, hindering any political collaboration with the Habsburgs.<sup>21</sup>

In order to understand the processes and developments that shaped Genoa's and Florence's alliance with Spain in the early modern period, it is necessary to first look at the significant transformations these two states went through in the early sixteenth century. Unlike Venice, Genoa and Florence experienced serious internal conflicts and strife as well as foreign invasions in their territories, all of which had serious effects on their economies. They finally overcame this chaotic period through the support of Charles V: through his intercession, both states were able to re-establish internal stability, re-build territorial integrity, and consolidate their power while guarding against a possible French invasion. Economically the biggest impact was on the textile industry, which only managed to recover, to some extent, after this consolidation. All these strengthened the bonds between these states and Spain. From the Spanish perspective, however, it was not an unreciprocated support. By making alliances with Florence and Genoa, Spain intended

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<sup>19</sup> Halil İnalçık, "An Outline of Ottoman-Venetian Relations," in *Venezia: Centro di Mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (Secoli XV-XVI) Aspetti e Problemi*, vol. 1, ed. by Hans-Georg Beck, Manoussos Manoussacas and Agostino Pertusi (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1977), pp. 83–90; Peter Sebastian, "Ottoman Government Officials and Their Relations with the Republic of Venice in the Early Sixteenth Century," in *Studies in Ottoman History in honor of Professor V.L. Ménage* (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 1994) pp. 319–337; Maria Pia Pedani-Fabris, "Veneziani a Costantinopoli alla fine del XVI Secolo," in *Veneziani in Levante, Musulmani a Venezia, Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 15 (Venezia: Herder Editrice, 1997), pp. 67–84; idem., "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy," *Turcica* 32 (2000): 9–31; Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2006); idem., "Commerce and Coexistence: Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Early Modern Era," *Turcica* 34 (2002): 105–133; idem., "The Bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice's Early modern Diplomatic Corps," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 16:2 (2001) 1–30; Eric Dursteler, "Power and Information: The Venetian Postal System in the Mediterranean, 1573–1645," in *From Florence to the Mediterranean: Studies in Honor of Anthony Molho* (Florence: Olschki, 2009) pp. 601–623.

<sup>20</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, p. 342.

<sup>21</sup> The Battle of Preveze in 1538 and the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 could be considered an exception to this. Yet even in these cases, the Venetian-Habsburg alliance was short-lived, as Venice individually signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans soon after the war. See Andrew C. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and its place in Mediterranean History," *Past and Present* 57 (1972): 53–73; Halil İnalçık, "Mühimmelere Göre İnebahtı Deniz Savaşı: Osmanlı Belgelerinde İnebahtı (Lepanto)," in *Türk Denizcilik Tarihi*, ed. Bülent Arı (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Denizcilik Müsteşarlığı, 2002) pp. 145–149; Hugh Bicheno, *Crescent and Cross: The Battle of Lepanto 1571* (London: Cassell, 2003); and Niccolò Capponi, *Lepanto 1571: La lega santa contro l'impero ottoman* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2010).

to increase its control over Italy, aiming to establish a *pax hispanica* there.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the Spanish monarchy was heavily motivated to keep the Italian states on its side and to consolidate their power in the peninsula through diplomacy, marriage alliances, commercial benefits, and personal relations.<sup>23</sup>

Genoa in particular became a significant ally of the Habsburgs in Italy, “both because of its economic ties with various Habsburg dominions, and because it permitted access from Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain to Lombardy, Germany and the Netherlands.”<sup>24</sup> It has been argued that shared political, commercial, and strategic factors tied the Genoese patricians firmly to Spain, and more generally Genoa and Spain have been depicted as “complementary imperialists” interested in the maintenance of the Spanish empire.<sup>25</sup> In the case of Florence, the Medici were restored to power thanks to Spain; because of this, in order to protect their political stability and trade networks in the Habsburg-controlled markets, the Medici rulers supported them. Moreover, through royal marriage their relations became increasingly inter-connected and secure. According to Charles V, these alliances made the Florentine dukes “solicitous for him and his affairs.”<sup>26</sup>

Although there is a tendency to view Genoa and Florence as satellites of the Habsburg Empire, which held influence over a greater part of Italy (except for territories under Venetian rule), recent scholarship has argued that these states did not consider themselves subordinate to Spain and that their alliance was by no means permanent or steadfast. According to this revisionist approach, the concept of *pax hispanica* is open to debate, as the Spanish control or hegemony in Italy was not uncontested: it had limits.<sup>27</sup> As Michael Levin noted, Spain was “uncomfortably aware that any Italian power could at any time jeopardize what control they had in Italy, simply by allying with one of Spain’s

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<sup>22</sup> Fernand Braudel argued that 1559 marked the beginning of the *pax hispanica* in Italy; i.e. of Spanish domination of Italy; see Fernand Braudel, *Out of Italy: 1450–1650*, tr. Siân Reynolds (Paris: Flammarion, 1991) p. 97. In a similar vein, see Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain* (London: Yale UP, 1997) pp. 72–73. Regarding the notion of Spanish Italy, see Aurelio Musi (ed.), *Nel sistema imperiale: l’Italia Spagnola* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), pp. 77–84.

<sup>24</sup> Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 82; Céline Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Genoese Merchants and the Spanish Crown* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2015): Dauverd describes it as symbiotic relationship between Genoa and Spain during the sixteenth century.

<sup>26</sup> Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, p. 81.

<sup>27</sup> Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy*; idem., “Italy and the Limits of the Spanish Empire,” in the *Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History. Essays in Honor of Geoffrey Parker*, pp. 121–136. In fact, there are also earlier studies criticizing the overemphasis on Spanish influence in Italy; see Franco Angiolini, “Diplomazia e Politica dell’Italia non Spagnola nell’Età di Filippo II. Osservazioni Preliminari,” *Rivista Storica Italiana*, XCII (1980): 432–469; and Elena Fasano Guarini, “Italia non Spagnola e Spagna nel Tempo di Filippo II,” in *Filippo II e il Mediterraneo*, ed. Luigi Lotti and Rosario Villari (Roma: GLF editori Laterza, 2003).

enemies.”<sup>28</sup> This point is crucial for the arguments of this dissertation, as it demonstrates that, despite the tendency to assume these states remained firmly within Habsburg’s imperial orbit, in truth there was always room for Genoa and Florence to maneuver so as to reconfigure their alliances in the Mediterranean.

Unlike Sicily, Naples, and Milan, which were ruled by Spain, Genoa and Florence were independent states that were closely allied with the Spanish Habsburgs. However, the relations between these states and the Spanish crown were not without tensions and conflict.<sup>29</sup> In the mid-sixteenth century, the combination of various factors set the stage for Genoese-Ottoman diplomatic negotiations. Having fallen victim to the Habsburg and Valois conflict and being torn between the two, Genoa was forced to resort to an alternative imperial power to protect its integrity and independence, as well as to engage in the Levant trade. In the second half of the sixteenth century Florence had similar motivations: the Medicis’ desire to be recognized as an independent “grand duchy” and the alluring economic opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean markets encouraged the Florentines to reopen diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, Genoese and Florentine diplomacy with the Porte could be considered a diversion of the foreign policy that had previously been focused on the western Mediterranean and was tied to Habsburg imperial ambitions. Although both states conducted trade under the aegis of the Spanish crown, tensions and strained relations with the Spanish kings and the desire to expand into new markets compelled them to negotiate with the Ottoman court in the second half of the sixteenth century. This maneuver also amounted to an assertion of independence and neutrality for both states, who desired to be considered in the same category as Venice and thereby establish friendly relations with all powers in the Mediterranean.

One of the aims of this dissertation, therefore, is to focus on moments of crisis in Genoa and Florence and analyze how they led these states to consider shifting their alliance from the Habsburgs to the Ottomans, who were the former’s most compelling rival in the Mediterranean. Although both the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic

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<sup>28</sup> Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 5

<sup>29</sup> In the case of Genoa, there are a number of studies that have offered a more rounded understanding of Habsburg-Genoese relations in the sixteenth century; see Arturo Pacini, “Genoa and Charles V,” in *The World of Emperor Charles V*, ed. by Wim Blockmans and Nicolette Mout (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2004) pp. 161–199; idem., “Pignatte di Vetro”: Being a Republic in Philip II’s Empire,” in *Spain in Italy, Politics, Society and Religion 1500–1700*, ed. by Thomas James Dandeleit and John A. Marino (Leiden: Brill, 2007) pp. 197–225; and Thomas Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea. Policy and Power in an Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559–1684* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2005).

endeavors ultimately ended in failure, the idea of a potential alliance with the Ottomans and the efforts these states invested in their diplomatic negotiations demonstrates that political constellations were not static or bound by geography, but rather dynamic and driven by economic and strategic considerations in the early modern Mediterranean.

### **Interstate Rivalry and Competition over the Ottoman Market**

Rivalry, referring to competition for the same objective or for superiority in the same field, is a term mostly employed in international relations to understand certain dynamics that shape interstate relations.<sup>30</sup> It involves a number of potential actors and forms of competition: the desire to “occupy the same territory, control the same markets, or monopolize overlapping positions of influence.”<sup>31</sup> Conflicting interests in these areas lead to enduring rivalries between states and significantly impact the evolution of world politics. Thus, for William Thompson, it is necessary “to develop a better understanding of rivalries in order to understand better all the other things that happen in international relations.”<sup>32</sup>

Considered in the context of the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, it would not be wrong to use the term “interstate rivalry” when referring to the competition among the European states—namely, Genoa, Florence, Venice, and France—to secure access to the trade routes and markets in the Levant, which were controlled by the Ottoman Empire. It is necessary to unravel and analyze these rivalries at the interstate level in order to understand the various dynamics that shaped the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic endeavors in the Sublime Porte.

Despite alternative ways and markets to access Levantine goods, the trade routes that passed through the Eastern Mediterranean were one of the most important during the pre-modern period. Getting access to these routes required contact and cooperation with the Ottomans. Merchants from European states could come and conduct trade in the Ottoman lands only if they were able to obtain from the Ottoman sultan an *ahidname* or grant of protection and privileges in the Ottoman domains, known in European languages

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<sup>30</sup>For the definition, see *English Oxford Dictionaries*.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rivalry>

<sup>31</sup> William R. Thompson (ed.), “Why Rivalries Matter and What Great Power Rivalries Can Tell Us about World Politics,” in the *Great Power Rivalries* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

as capitulations, derived from the *capitula*/articles in the agreement. This was not a one-sided deal. The Ottomans had always recognized the benefits of foreign trade, and granting such privileges to European states not only promoted the development of East-West trade through the Ottoman lands instead of along new alternative routes, but also guaranteed the flow of necessary commodities and luxury goods to the Ottoman market. Moreover, through the customs duties enacted on imported goods, a steady flow of cash entered the imperial treasury. There were political benefits as well: the Ottomans used the *ahidnames* as leverage to secure political alliances with states. In this respect, the capitulatory system was both politically and economically beneficial to the Ottoman state.<sup>33</sup>

From the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, with the rise of multifaceted relations with various European states, the Ottoman capital of Istanbul became an important center of international trade and diplomacy. During this period, relations between the Porte and European states involved complex alliances that can hardly be reduced to simple patterns. The initial rapprochement of the Ottoman Empire with the “Habsburg allies” Genoa and Florence was, for instance, the result of ongoing political conditions as well as of the personal interests of certain influential Ottoman dignitaries in regard to trade and diplomacy with these states. The Ottoman military-administrative class, the *askeri*, was actively engaged in commercial investments and trade. Thus, the intersection of the commercial and political interests of Ottoman high officials with those of foreign states significantly shaped diplomatic relations on both sides.

In the case of Genoa, the demand for Ottoman grain in the mid-sixteenth century was a significant motive for requesting commercial privileges from the Sublime Porte. Genoa’s close contact with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, who was himself actively involved in the grain trade, seems to have facilitated the initial diplomatic rapprochement between the two states. Moreover, the *nobili nuovi* (“new nobles”) in Genoa, who invested predominantly in commerce and textile manufacturing, had ambitions to expand into the Ottoman market with Genoese textiles, especially silk cloth, and they therefore urged the Genoese government to reinvigorate the Levant trade. In the case of Florence,

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<sup>33</sup> Halil İnalçık, “İmtiyazat,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, vol. III (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 1179–1189; Edhem Eldem, “Capitulations and Western Trade,” *Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume III: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), p. 283; Mehmet Bulut, “The Ottoman Approach to the Western Europeans in the Levant during the Early Modern Period,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:2 (2008): 259–274.

too, the strongest supporters of the negotiations in the 1570s were the textile manufacturers and merchants, more specifically Florentine woolen cloth producers and cloth merchants who brought forth the possibility of rejuvenating their trade in the Ottoman lands due to a crisis in Florence's woolen cloth industry. In the first set of negotiations, in 1578, Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's initially favorable approach to the Florentine request encouraged official contacts between the two states. In the subsequent diplomatic negotiations of 1598, Grand Admiral Halil Pasha actively participated in the negotiation process and strongly supported the Florentine endeavor. Thus, the initial contact between the two states and the Porte were sparked, on the one hand, by the favorable approach of certain Ottoman dignitaries, and, on the other hand, by the urgent necessity for certain commodities, the opportunity to profit, and the desire to extend trading opportunities in order to revive the economy.

A significant challenge faced by Genoa and Florence, however, was rivalry and the cutthroat competition from the other states conducting trade in the Ottoman lands; i.e., France and especially Venice. Although there could be a certain degree of collaboration between European merchants in the Ottoman Empire when profit was at stake, most of the time states that claimed the right to protect their merchants were jealous of any interlopers in the Ottoman ports. As a result, both Venice and France became strong opponents of Genoese and Florentine diplomacy at the Porte, considering them a serious threat to their dominant position in the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant markets. For Genoa, they used Genoese citizens who were in the service of the Spanish king and their naval activities against the Ottomans as a trump card to disparage them to the sultan. For Florence, the activities of the galleys of St. Stephen became a recurrent issue frustrating Florentine diplomatic efforts.

If we rewind back to the late fifteenth century, however, we see that the situation was just the opposite: the Genoese and the Florentines were active participants in the Levant trade and provided goods for the Ottoman market; Venice was struggling with the Ottomans to preserve its trading interests and bases in the region; and France did not yet have a presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. In fact, after the conquest of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed II's strategy to play these trading partners off against each other was crucial in bolstering the commercial activities of the Florentines and the Genoese at the expense of the Venetians. Both Genoa and Florence offered their locally produced woolen and silk cloth to the Ottoman market in return for Levantine raw materials. In particular, Florentine wools dominated the Ottoman market, bringing huge

profits into the city's coffers. The Florentines had a virtual monopoly over the export of luxury textiles into the Ottoman market.

Towards the early sixteenth century, the internal crises and foreign domination these two states experienced significantly affected their economies and their mercantile presence in Ottoman territory. Consequently, they forfeited their prominence to the Venetians, who penetrated the Ottoman market by producing counterfeits of Florentine woolen textiles. Their efforts in this regard were quite successful, and within a matter of years they came to dominate the market. The reversal of fortune in favor of the Venetians was related not only to their ability to imitate Florentine wools, but also to political factors, which played an important role in the advancement of Venetian trade in the Ottoman lands. Adept diplomacy and shared interests significantly shaped Ottoman–Venetian relations during this period, and Venice became “a primary mediator between the Porte and the royal powers of Europe.”<sup>34</sup>

Besides Venice, the Ottoman Empire also favored another trading partner: France. Initially started as a political and military collaboration in 1536, the Franco-Ottoman alliance gained a commercial character during the second half of the sixteenth century. The war between Venice and the Ottoman Empire in the 1570s was a turning point in this regard, as it was during this period that French trade developed in the Ottoman lands, breaking the Venetian monopoly. Moreover, the capitulations of 1581 granted the French the right to act as the protector of all European merchants, which meant that, except for Venice and England, all other European states were required to conduct their trading activities in Ottoman territory under the banner of the French flag. Thus, from 1581 onwards, the French were motivated to prevent any diplomatic encroachment by European states, not just to protect their commercial interests but also to maintain their status within the Ottoman lands.

Yet it should be noted that, just as in the case of Genoese/Florentine relations with Spain, the alliances of Venice and France with the Ottoman Empire did not always move at the same pace. The privileges granted to these states would be either renewed or suspended depending on the political conjuncture and individual relations between the ambassadors and Ottoman high officials. Moments of crisis between these two states and the Porte paved the way for new competitors as possible trading partners for the Ottoman

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<sup>34</sup> Palmira Brummett, “Ottoman Expansion in Europe, ca. 1453–1606,” in the *Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. II: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603*, edited by Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013) p. 60.



Empire. This gave rise to fierce competition among the European states, with each trying to carve itself a niche in the Ottoman market. During this period, it was textiles and other luxury items in high demand by the ruling elite and the imperial palace that especially characterized European trade in the Ottoman Empire. Thus the competition among foreign states became reflected on export commodities to the Ottoman market, mainly silk and woolen textiles.

As already mentioned in the first section above, once Genoa and Florence had recovered from their internal crises and consolidated their authority, they experienced a boom in textile production. Florence in particular became one of the most important centers of manufacturing in Europe. Moreover, with the end of the Italian Wars and the restoration of peace on the peninsula in 1559, there was a significant and widespread recovery of the textile industries within the Italian states.<sup>35</sup> This industrial growth within Italy enhanced the competition among the Italian states to find new sources for raw materials and new markets for their finished products. Apart from Genoa and Florence, Lucca, Ferrara, and Urbino also sent emissaries to the sultan to obtain trading privileges in the Ottoman lands. Thus, besides political motives, Genoese and Florentine diplomatic initiatives should also be understood in the context of this competitive commercial war in Italy, as the different Italian states were fighting to gain access to new markets. Focusing on this aspect, this dissertation also offers insights into this competition among the Italian states, particularly the competition between Venice and Florence, in generating new production techniques and adapting to changing fashions and demands so as to attain a place in the Ottoman market.

Textile manufacturing became a highly specialized field in the Ottoman Empire as well. There was, particularly by the second half of the sixteenth century, significant and notable growth in the Ottoman economy's capacity to manufacture woolen cloth and silk textiles. Examining the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic attempts from a wider perspective also reveals important aspects concerning local textile manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman state policy regarding the export of goods and local production. In this respect, the competition centering on textiles did not exist only among European states themselves, but there was also rivalry between Ottoman and Italian manufacturers. This rivalry fostered imitations of different types of textiles, pointing to a

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<sup>35</sup> Domenico Sella, "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry," in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Brian Pullan (London: Methuen, 1968) pp. 113–115.

diffusion of technology and an acculturation of techniques between the Italian states and the Ottoman Empire.

As a result, this dissertation will put specific emphasis on interstate rivalry, which was among the most important elements shaping the course of Genoese and Florentine diplomatic negotiations in the Ottoman capital. This rivalry functioned in various ways and took various forms, and finally became an effective tool in undermining Genoese/Florentine diplomatic efforts. Thus, the dissertation will examine the dynamics of rivalry among the European states, exploring how it became manifested during diplomatic negotiations and how, in general, it shaped the diplomatic and commercial exchanges of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman Empire during this period. This will present not only a fuller and more balanced understanding of the relations between Genoa/Florence and the Ottoman Empire, but will also provide important insights into the ensuing political and economic orientations of the Mediterranean.

### **Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean**

Diplomacy was one of the areas where disparate states and cultures entered into communication. It not only promoted political relations but also fostered trading networks and the spread of goods, technologies, and ideas between different polities. When diplomacy in the early modern period is to be considered, Garrett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy* serves as one of the touchstones. Tracing the development of diplomacy as an institution of the modern international system back to the early modern period, Mattingly considered the emergence of resident embassies first in Italian city-states and then in other European states as a distinguishing feature of Renaissance diplomacy. According to him, internal conflicts on the Italian peninsula compelled the city-states to solve their problems diplomatically. In so doing, they established a kind of balance of power among themselves through resident embassies, and after the French invasion of 1494 this practice spread more widely throughout Europe. From Mattingly's point of view, this "new style of diplomacy generated by the spirit of Renaissance" was a uniquely European phenomenon that marked the beginning of modern diplomacy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York: Dover, 1988) p. 47.

Similar to Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*,<sup>37</sup> Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy* argued for an internally shaped, solely European phenomenon "centered on a restricted European geography," as Watkins puts it.<sup>38</sup> Recent scholarship has to a great extent revised Mattingly's approach, re-evaluating diplomacy in the early modern period from a broader perspective. Some studies have taken a fresh look at Mattingly's arguments, proposing more sophisticated ways of understanding diplomacy and the circumstances that occasioned diplomatic negotiations. Yet, in terms of scope, these studies have still had a strictly European focus.<sup>39</sup>

On the Ottoman side, studies on pre-modern diplomatic relations were overshadowed for a period by the axis of certain assumptions shaped by the dichotomy of Christian West/Muslim East.<sup>40</sup> According to Bernard Lewis:

The Turks had long since become accustomed to co-existence with European powers, and even to a relationship for which they commonly used such words as "friendly" and "friendship." Europeans occasionally saw such relationships as alliances; the Turks never did, and the idea of an alliance with Christian powers, even against other Christian powers, was strange and, to some, abhorrent.<sup>41</sup>

This approach highlighted the differences and irreconcilability of the two civilizations and regarded Ottoman-European diplomatic relations as being shaped by antipathy and antagonism. A closer analysis, however, demonstrates that Ottoman-European relations were too complex and multilayered to be defined in certain categories

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<sup>37</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, tr. S. G. C. Middlemore (Charleston, SC.: Bibliobazaar, 2008)

<sup>38</sup> John Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38:1 (Winter 2008): 3.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800*, tr. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox, *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); the special issue edited by Catherine Fletcher and Jennifer Mara DeSilva on Italian Ambassadorial Networks in Early Modern Europe in the *Journal of Early Modern History* 14, 6 (2010); Isabella Lazzarini, "Renaissance Diplomacy," in *the Italian Renaissance State*, eds. Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012) pp. 425–443; Isabella Lazzarini, *Communication and conflict: Italian diplomacy in the early Renaissance, 1350-1520* (Corby: Oxford UP, 2015).

<sup>40</sup> This was partly rooted in the works of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians, who wrote the history of Ottoman-European political and diplomatic relations by using exclusively European sources. Adopting a Eurocentric and "clash of civilizations" approach, they emphasized conflict and the essential difference of the two civilizations; see Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa*, 7 vols. (Hamburg: F. Perthes, 1840–63); Nicolae Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, 5 vols. (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1908–1913); Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350–1700* (New York: AMS, 1976); and Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976–84). One exceptional work in this regard was Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's voluminous history of the Ottoman Empire: making use of both Ottoman and European sources, Hammer provided a more balanced view of the history of Ottoman-European relations; see Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, 10 vols. (Pest: C. A. Hartleben, 1827–35).

<sup>41</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, p. 45.

or by generalized terms. During the early modern period, there was intense diplomatic traffic between the Europeans, particularly the Italian states, and the Ottoman Empire, which ultimately resulted in a negotiating system through the reciprocal sending of representatives. European states were allowed, via *ahidnames*, to maintain resident embassies in Istanbul. The Ottomans, however, did not have resident ambassadors in Europe until the eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Yet, the lack of Ottoman resident embassies did not prevent the Porte from conducting diplomacy with the European states in earlier periods. Envoys (*ulak*, *çavuş*, *müteferrika*, court dragoman, and so on) were frequently sent by the Ottoman administration to Italy and to other courts in Europe. These officials were in charge of delivering news and letters from the sultan, and they sometimes conducted diplomatic negotiations concerning political and economic issues on his behalf.<sup>43</sup>

More importantly, the Ottomans conducted their diplomacy mainly through the European ambassadors residing in the Ottoman capital. The Ottoman ruling elite also collected information about developments in Europe through various channels of information, including renegades at the court, Jewish courtiers and merchants, spies, envoys, the dragomans of foreign representatives, and the Venetian *bailos* and ambassadors.<sup>44</sup> Thus, from the beginning, the Ottoman Empire was fully integrated into European diplomacy. The earliest diplomatic relations in this sense were with the Italian states. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Florence and Venice were the dominant powers, with whom the Ottoman Empire maintained close diplomatic and commercial contacts. Through intensive diplomacy and informal alliances, the Ottomans became a part of Italian politics, and at times they were able to manipulate the rivalry among the Italian states to their own advantage. In this respect, evaluating early modern

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<sup>42</sup> Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, ed. by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara: TTK, 1987). According to Jacob Hurewitz, the lack of Ottoman resident embassies during this period was due to the fact that the Sublime Porte considered itself superior to European states and so did not need to send resident ambassadors abroad. Some Ottoman historians have also evaluated this lack in a similar manner and compared the case of the Ottomans to that of China, which also lacked the practice of resident embassy; see J. C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European States System," *Middle East Journal* 15, 2 (1961): 145–146 and Kemal Beydilli, "Sefaret ve Sefaretname Hakkında Yeni bir Değerlendirme," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları XXX* (2007): 22–23.

<sup>43</sup> Antonio Fabris, "From Adrianople to Constantinople: Venetian–Ottoman Diplomatic Missions, 1360–1453," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 7, 2 (1992): 154–200; Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore: Inviati Ottomani a Venezia dalla Caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia* (Venezia: Deputazione Editrice, 1994); idem., "Ottoman Diplomats in the West: The Sultan's Ambassadors to the Republic of Venice," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 11 (1996): 187–223.

<sup>44</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "Information, ideology, and limits of imperial ideology: Ottoman grand strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry," pp. 75–103; Eric Dursteler, "Power and Information: The Venetian Postal System in the Early modern Eastern Mediterranean," p. 622; Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Espionage in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-Betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Georgetown University, 2012, pp. 345–423.

diplomacy in the context of resident embassies and their formation as a uniquely European phenomenon leads us to ignore the complex and intensive forms of diplomacy that were conducted between the Italian states and the Ottoman Empire during this period, which undeniably contributed to the practice of diplomacy. According to Daniel Goffman, while resident embassies, extraterritoriality, reciprocity, and so on are the fundamentals of modern diplomacy, these fundamentals were largely shaped by diplomatic interactions between the Italian states and the Ottoman Empire, as well as by the experiences of the Venetian, Florentine, and Genoese representatives in the Ottoman capital.<sup>45</sup> In opposition to Mattingly's argument of modern diplomacy as an invention of the Italian Renaissance and its being mainly rooted in the political climate of Italy, Goffman has proposed a more nuanced perspective of early modern diplomacy, emphasizing how it emerged from the context of shared experiences, and was shaped by the Ottoman-Italian interactions that had begun as early as the 1450s.

A recent collection of articles on Ottoman diplomacy has also re-evaluated the issue of resident embassies and the assumption of Ottoman disinterest towards the West, putting greater emphasis on the "existence of extensive and intensive diplomatic activities between the European states and the Ottoman Empire."<sup>46</sup> Yet, except for the articles by Halil İnalcık and Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Hajj, which are based on case studies, the collection's other articles have a primarily theoretical focus and so provide only a general overview of Ottoman diplomatic practices in the early modern period within the framework of Muslim-Christian divisions (*dârü'l-islâm /dârü'l-harb*).<sup>47</sup> In this respect, these articles have hardly provided any really new perspectives on the mutually shaped diplomatic interactions of and practices conducted between Ottoman and European polities.

There are also a number of studies exploring pre-modern diplomatic contacts through analysis of the *ahidname-i hümayun* (imperial capitulations) granted by the Ottoman administration to foreign states. Analyzing these treaties in terms of content and

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<sup>45</sup> Daniel Goffman, "Negotiating with the Renaissance State: The Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007) 61–74.

<sup>46</sup> A. Nuri Yurdusev (ed.), "The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy," in *Ottoman Diplomacy. Conventional or Unconventional?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 30.

<sup>47</sup> Halil İnalcık, "A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan," pp. 66–80 and Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Hajj, "Ottoman Diplomacy at Karlowitz," pp. 89–113. Both articles have already been published elsewhere. For the other articles, see A. Nuri Yurdusev, "The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy," pp. 5–35; and Bülent Arı, "Early Ottoman Diplomacy: Ad Hoc Period," pp. 36–65.

context has provided important insights into Ottoman-European relations during this period.<sup>48</sup> In the case of Genoa and Florence, although they did not receive official capitulations from the sultan, by analyzing a draft copy of the privileges, we can project the economic and political benefits that both states strove to acquire from the Porte. Moreover, to establish the politico-economic motives lying behind the Genoese and Florentine negotiations, the *ahidnames* are a useful source, but insofar as they provide little information on the actual negotiation process or its actors, they cannot be relied on exclusively for studies on diplomatic negotiations.

In recent years, with the attempt to re-consider “relationships between and among polities” in the early modern period, novel approaches to cross-cultural or cross-confessional diplomacy have been proposed within the framework of the new diplomatic history.<sup>49</sup> One such direction has been to focus on the importance of mediation and of less visible intermediaries—such as Christian slaves, renegades, spies, Jewish doctors, merchants, and dragomans (translators)—in cross-cultural diplomacy.<sup>50</sup> Through their linguistic abilities and cultural flexibility, such people were able to actively participate in the diplomatic negotiation process between Muslim and Christian polities, and indeed they helped to significantly shape them. With this approach, the focus shifts from ambassadors and official diplomats to such informal actors or “trans-imperial subjects,” to use Natalie Rothman’s term.<sup>51</sup> Recently, a number of studies have also concentrated on

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<sup>48</sup> Hans Peter Theunissen, “Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The *Ahdnames*. Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents,” *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 1:2 (1998), pp. 1–698; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations, 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries: An Annotated Edition of Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); A. H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations, 1610–1630* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1978); Michael Talbot, “British Diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire during the long 18<sup>th</sup> century,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, SOAS University of London, 2013; idem., “A Treaty of Narratives: Friendship, Gifts, and Diplomatic History in the British Capitulations of 1641,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/ The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, XLVIII (2016): 357–398.

<sup>49</sup> John Watkins, “Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” pp. 1–14.

<sup>50</sup> Recently a special issue of the *Journal of Early Modern History* focused specifically on the importance of non-ambassadorial diplomatic intermediaries in mediating between disparate polities; some of the articles relevant to this study are: Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, “Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 93–105; Emrah Safa Gürkan, “Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560–1600,” pp. 107–128; Tijana Krstić, “The Elusive Intermediaries: Moriscos in Ottoman and Western European Diplomatic Sources from Constantinople, 1560s–1630s,” pp. 129–151; and E. Natalie Rothman, “Afterword: Intermediaries, Mediation, and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” pp. 245–259.

<sup>51</sup> Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire, Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012); idem., “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51 (2009): 771–800; Francesca Lucchetta (ed.), *Veneziani in Levante, Musulmani a Venezia, Quaderni di Studi Arabi supplement al n. 15* (Venezia: Herder Editrice, 1997).

the role of dragomans, merchants, converts, and captives in mediating between different geographic, cultural, and religious spaces.<sup>52</sup> This approach presents us with a more transitive early modern world, one where the Mediterranean has blurry boundaries as well as entwined religious and cultural identities, and where adaptation and symbiosis developed into common practice.

In addition to the role played by mediators in diplomatic relations, another field of enquiry in the new diplomatic history has been the material exchanges made by means of diplomatic gifts.<sup>53</sup> Gift-giving constituted an important part of early modern diplomacy and diplomatic gifts, besides their symbolic meaning, also functioned to promote material and commercial exchanges between disparate polities. In this context, the studies by Rosamand Mack and Deborah Howard are particularly revealing.<sup>54</sup> Both studies place emphasis on exchanges of luxury objects and architecture through different channels, including trans-Mediterranean diplomacy. An increasing number of studies devoted to artistic and material exchange as well as to the transfer of knowledge between European states and the Ottoman Empire have provided new perspectives concerning the role of external factors and influences in the formation of the European Renaissance.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Bartholomé Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah: L'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVIe-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 1989); Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 35–63; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009); Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels, *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2012); Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: knights, corsairs, Jesuits and spies in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean world* (New York: Oxford UP, 2015).

<sup>53</sup> One of the latest issues of the *Journal of Early Modern History* is devoted to this topic; see Nancy Um and Leah R. Clark, "Introduction: The Art of Embassy: Situating Objects and Images in the Early Modern Diplomatic Encounter," *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 3–18.

<sup>54</sup> Rosamand Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Deborah Howard, *Venice & the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000). See also Deborah Howard, "Diplomacy and Culture," in *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World. Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer*, ed. by Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli and Gerhard Wolf (Venezia: Marsilio, 2010), pp. 161–171. For a critical overview of these works in the context of cross-cultural exchanges between Renaissance Italy and the Muslim world, see Francesca Trivellato, "Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work," *The Journal of Modern History* 82 (2010): 127–155. Trivellato emphasizes the necessity of exploring "two-way process of recognition that engaged the inhabitants of peninsula and its eastern neighbors."

<sup>55</sup> Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000); Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002); Gerald MacLean, *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Jack Goody, *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010); Ayşe Orbay (ed.), *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000); Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà, "The Global Renaissance: Cross-Cultural Objects in the Early

Drawing on the recent approaches in the field of the new diplomatic history, this dissertation will evaluate the diplomatic attempts and negotiation processes of the Genoese and the Florentines with the Sublime Porte, placing particular emphasis on the mediation performed by various kinds of informal agents. In addition to ambassadors, it is necessary to explore the role of intermediaries in order to trace the networks and the circulation of information between the Porte and these Italian states. From the second half of the sixteenth century onward, the growing desire of European states to obtain privileges from the Ottoman court and gain direct access to the trade routes and commercial networks of the Levant made Istanbul a hub for diplomats and diplomacy. Besides Venice and France, Genoa, Florence, and England began to look for ways to negotiate with the Ottoman administration in order to secure an *ahidname* for their merchants. This created an atmosphere of rivalry among the European states to establish favorable diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, these states began cultivating agents who had links with influential figures at the Ottoman court and were familiar with Ottoman diplomatic practices, protocols, and etiquette.

Another important characteristic of this period is the transformations that occurred in the Ottoman administrative structure in relation to the empire-building process. The increasing seclusion of the sultans from state affairs initially gave the grand viziers unprecedented authority to govern the empire; however, during the later sixteenth century the emergence of court favorites as power brokers at the court downgraded the power of the grand vizier. These court favorites, acting as intermediaries between the sultan and the outside world, gained prominence in the eyes of the European diplomats, who needed to obtain the sultan's direct approval for the capitulations. As a result of this transformation, the division of power between the grand viziers and the sultan's favorites resulted in factional politics, which significantly impacted foreign affairs and how diplomacy was conducted at the time. In such an atmosphere, the mediators not only enabled communication between the Italian representatives and the Ottoman court officials through their linguistic abilities, but they also advised foreign diplomats on the politics and influential factions at the Porte. Thus, the dissertation will explore the important role played by various individuals during the negotiation process, including dragomans, merchants, envoys, Jewish mediators, and Christian renegades, all of whom played a role

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Modern Period,” in *Global Design History*, ed. Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello and Sarah Teasley (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 11–21. Gülru Necipoğlu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 1–81; Anna Contadini (ed.), *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).



mediating between Genoa/Florence and the Sublime Porte. These intermediaries not only bridged boundaries but also allowed for various sorts of exchange, including the circulation of news, the transmission of information, and the exchange of luxury products as both diplomatic and personal gifts.

One of the contributions of this dissertation will be to provide a more nuanced understanding of the diplomatic relations between Genoa/Florence and the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century by bringing together documents in the archives of Genoa and Florence and cross-checking them with the evidence found in Venetian, European, and Ottoman sources. In the literature, there are quite a number of studies on the Ottoman-Venetian diplomatic exchanges, and in fact it can be said that Venice has largely dominated the study of Ottoman-Italian interactions during the Renaissance period. This is partly related to the availability of the extensive Venetian sources dealing with early modern Ottoman history: no other European state had access to as much detailed information about the Ottomans as Venice. As a result of the rich corpus in the Venetian archives, it is possible to construct the nature of relations between the two states, including diplomacy, mediation, and exchanges.<sup>56</sup>

This dissertation is an attempt to look further afield than Venice and evaluate Ottoman-Italian relations within the framework of Genoa, Florence, and Venice in the second half of the sixteenth century. The fact that both Genoa and Florence failed in their diplomatic endeavors with the Porte should by no means overshadow the importance of the cultural interactions and material exchanges conducted between the polities during their negotiations. Although the relevant sources are not as abundant as those in the Venetian archives, they do shed light on various aspects of early modern diplomacy in terms of its negotiators, mediators, and gift exchanges. This indicates that Venice was not an exceptional case, since both Genoa and Florence followed largely similar patterns in negotiating with the Sublime Porte. Yet the fact that Venice had the advantage of maintaining a permanent representative in Istanbul and was able to develop relatively

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<sup>56</sup> Tayyip Gökbilgin, “Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Vesikalar Külliyyatında Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devri Belgeleri,” *Belgeler* 1:2 (1964): 119–220; idem., “Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Belgeler Koleksiyonu ve Bizimle ilgili Diğer Belgeler,” *Belgeler*, V-VIII/9–12 (1971): 1–151; Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, *I “Documenti Turchi” dell’Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1994); idem. (ed.), *Inventory of the Lettere e Scritture Turchesche in the Venetian State Archives: Based on the Materials Compiled by Alessio Bombaci* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); idem., *In nome del Gran Signore: Inviati ottoman a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla guerra di Candia*; idem., *Venezia porta d’Oriente* (Bologna: Società editrice il mulino, 2010); Deborah Howard, “Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries,” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe: Forging European Identities, 1400–1700*, vol. IV, ed. Herman Roodenburg (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006–2007), pp. 138–177.

favorable contacts with influential figures at the Ottoman court strengthened its hand against potential rivals, preventing them from taking share of the Ottoman market. Thus it can be said that both the Genoese and the Florentine diplomatic negotiations took place against a backdrop of intense rivalry and the intrigues of the opponents involved, which led to a number of interesting stories full of adventure. Each negotiation contains a story in itself—one that is quite complex and involved a host of actors and rivals as well as intrigues and plots—and can tell us much about diplomatic practices in the Mediterranean during this period. Overall, this study aims to engage newer fields of enquiry in the new diplomatic history and to establish a fuller and more rounded understanding of the complex meeting of cultures. In doing so, it will present a connected history of the early modern Mediterranean within a broader political, economic, and diplomatic context.

### **Sources and Methodology**

As this dissertation focuses on the diplomatic relations of the Florentines and the Genoese with the Ottoman Empire, a large part of the research has been conducted in the *Archivio di Stato di Genova (ASG)* in Genoa and the *Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASFi)* in Florence. Within the collections of these archives there is sufficient surviving documentation to examine these negotiations in depth. All the documentation relating to Genoese–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations is held in the *Archivio Segreto Materie Politiche* 2169. This fund includes correspondence, both official and secret, that was exchanged between Genoa and the *Porte* between 1556 and 1565. On the Florentine side, the main corpus of sources is preserved in the *Mediceo del Principato* collection, which includes letters from the Medici dukes; letters and reports from the Florentine envoys and ambassadors; accounts of expenses; reports on negotiations; imperial orders; and translations of letters from Ottoman sultans, high officials, and Ottoman envoys. In addition to these, there are also letters from Florentine and Ottoman merchants, agents, and spies regarding negotiation processes. Apart from the *ASFi* collections, there are also some documents in private family archives, such as that of the *Capponi* family in Florence, which provided invaluable evidence for this dissertation.

As Venice and France played an active role during the diplomatic negotiations of Genoa/Florence with the Sublime Porte, the Genoese and Florentine archival findings have been complemented by the rich materials held in the *Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV)* in Venice. The *dispacci*, which were sent regularly from the Venetian *bailo* in

Istanbul to the Senate, provided systematic information about contemporary political, diplomatic, and economic issues in the Ottoman Empire. As such, one can use such material to obtain different perspectives and details about the trade relations and diplomacy of the Sublime Porte with other states, including Genoa and Florence. Although these sources were generally products of a mind quite biased towards the Ottomans, they still provide valuable details on the diplomatic contacts between Genoa/Florence and the Ottoman Empire from the Venetian perspective. Moreover, the letters and reports in the *deliberazioni* (directives of the Senate to Venetian officials) and the *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* (Heads of the Council of Ten) can allow us to gain insights into the position of the Venetian government towards the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic attempts. Examining these documents is helpful in enabling us to see the active (yet invisible) role of the Venetians in these negotiations, as well as their machinations against the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic endeavors. Another Venetian source is the *relazioni*, which were reports presented by the *bailos* to the Senate upon their return to Venice after the completion of their diplomatic mission. These reports provide an up-to-date overview of political, social, and economic matters of involving the Ottoman Empire, with specific emphasis on the character and motives of important figures as well as on factions at the Ottoman court, summarizing recent developments.

Besides the Venetian sources, French sources are also important for understanding the Venetians' attitude and actions in the face of the Genoese and Florentine initiatives. Almost all the diplomatic letters exchanged between the French kings and French ambassadors in Istanbul and other important cities of the Mediterranean have been compiled and published by Ernest Charrière. Thus, for the French perspective on the negotiations, Charrière's multi-volume work has been consulted.

On the Ottoman side, the sources are much more limited. In fact, it must be noted that there is a sharp difference between the Italian and Ottoman sources. While Italian archival documents provide a remarkable number of letters and reports concerning diplomatic relations and negotiation processes, and in impressive detail, it is hard to find the same sort of information in the Ottoman sources. There is, for instance, no mention of either the Genoese or Florentine diplomatic contacts at the Ottoman court during the second half of the sixteenth century. Likewise, there are considerable challenges in reconstructing the activity of the Ottoman envoys sent to European states, since their presence and activities were mentioned only in Italian diplomatic correspondence. Given these limitations, the Ottoman archival sources are rather limited and do not shed light on

the intricacies and subtleties of diplomatic negotiations between these states and the Sublime Porte.

The absence of private letters and reports on the Ottoman side regarding these diplomatic exchanges underscores the importance of the Italian archival material for sixteenth-century Ottoman history. Still, when dealing with Italian sources, one must approach them critically, as they have their own limitations. In some cases, for example, there are misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the Ottoman political and diplomatic context—not to mention the sources' own biases. There are thus obvious, yet difficult to solve, risks in taking the Italian sources at face value. To what extent can we use them to reconstruct the motives and intentions, let alone the emotions, of an Ottoman envoy, mediator, agent, or pasha? Ottoman agents' motives and intentions are usually only dimly visible through fragmented and often unrevealing sources. Nonetheless, their active role in the negotiations can be constructed only through the evidence provided by the Italian sources, as they are mostly invisible in the Ottoman sources.

This dissertation focuses on diplomatic practices and transformations in the Ottoman state administration through the example of diplomatic negotiations; therefore, Ottoman chronicles of the period can prove useful inasmuch as they provide interesting details concerning Ottoman officials and the increasing factionalism at the Ottoman court during the second half of the sixteenth century. In this respect, the chronicles of Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, İbrahim Peçevî, and Selânîkî are especially revealing, providing important insights into the factions and their power struggles at the court.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the information given in such Ottoman narratives will be analyzed together with the Italian archival sources. When necessary, Ottoman histories of Lütî Paşa, Kemal Paşazâde, Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi, and Kâtib Çelebi, are also used to present Ottoman perspective on particular issues. Moreover, the *mühimme defterleri* (registers of important matters), which consists of the decisions taken by the *Divan* on the diplomatic, political, economic and social events of the period, can also be valuable for some particular cases, such as the formal exchange of letters, confirmations of peace, and trade privileges. It is therefore possible to find some limited Ottoman material to complement that provided by the Italian sources.

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<sup>57</sup> *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî ve Künhü'l-ahbâr'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri*, 3 vols., ed. Faris Çerçi (Kayseri: Erzincan Üniversitesi, 2000); Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, ed. B. Sıtkı Baykal, 2 vols. (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1982); Selânîkî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selâniki 2 vols. (1003–1008/1595–1600)*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: TTK, 1999).

The originality of this dissertation lies mainly in its use of sources from the state archives of Genoa, Florence, and Venice in tandem with Ottoman and other European sources. Each body of sources comprises different types of documents and different degrees of detail. The dissertation will examine the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic negotiations through a series of case studies, presenting each as an episode and discussing the specific diplomatic negotiations involved. By performing a close reading of the sources, one can reconstruct the negotiation process and recapture the interactions that occurred among the Italian representatives, Ottoman court officials, and important mediators, while also exploring these actors' different agendas and personal interests. Employing such a micro-historical approach allows the dissertation to highlight the various individuals, personal relationships, and conditions of action and agency by examining the specific actors involved in the process.<sup>58</sup> Through its use of micro-history as a historical method, this dissertation will focus particularly on those invisible, or less visible, individuals who shaped or changed the course of events, as well as on those individuals who were "crushed to insignificance under the weight of vast impersonal structures and forces."<sup>59</sup>

Traditional historiography treats the Mediterranean as a divided sea and draws religious frontiers wherever cultural conflicts occurred. In contrast, micro-histories have presented a different view of the Mediterranean, highlighting instead "sites of cultural contact, hybrid zones, middle grounds, places of much greater complexity than simple confrontation."<sup>60</sup> In this respect, as Maria Fusaro noted, micro-history is a useful tool for analyzing phenomena that carry "characteristics of fluidity and ambiguity" which would otherwise be excluded from the traditional black-and-white variety of categorization, thus providing us with a vivid picture of the early modern world in all the complexity of its networks, relations, and figures.<sup>61</sup>

In contrast to the traditional historiography's anachronistic and conservative approach towards Ottoman-European diplomatic relations in the sixteenth century, the

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<sup>58</sup> Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. by Peter Burke (State College, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 93–113; Carlo Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," tr. John and Anne C. Tedeschi, *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1993): 10–35.

<sup>59</sup> Edward Muir, "Introduction: Observing Trifles," in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, eds. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. x.

<sup>60</sup> Eric Dursteler, *Renegade Women: gender, identity and boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2011), p. 108.

<sup>61</sup> Fusaro, "After Braudel: A Reassessment of Mediterranean history between Northern Invasion and the Caravan Maritime," in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in early modern Mediterranean*, 10.

study of individual experiences has the potential to significantly shape our current and future understanding of the period. Thus, through the use of micro-analysis, the aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the wider world of networks and interactions in the early modern Mediterranean through a series of in-depth case studies.<sup>62</sup>

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

Following a chronological order, the dissertation is divided into four parts. Chapter I will offer a more historically grounded introduction to the study. It will outline the background of Genoese and Florentine relations with the Ottoman Empire, their settlement in the Ottoman capital, and their diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottomans in the context of the changes and transformations that occurred during the late medieval period. Chapters II and III will focus on Genoa. Chapter II will explore the reasons and motives behind Genoa's decision to reinitiate diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte during the mid-sixteenth century. Chapter III, on the other hand, will analyze the negotiation process, reconstructing the Ottoman-Genoese negotiations and including all its actors and complexities, highlighting especially how inter-state rivalry shaped the course of Genoese diplomacy at the Porte. The focus of the following three chapters will be on Florence. Chapter IV will provide background information regarding the economic and political issues that were influential in shaping the Medicis' Levant policy from 1537 to 1600. In this way, it will explore the complex backdrop to the diplomatic negotiations which took place in the 1570s (1574/1578) and 1590s (1592/1598), respectively. Chapters V and VI will focus on each of these negotiation processes in turn. Reconstructed from a variety of sources, these negotiations bring to light several less visible actors, such as ambassadors, translators, merchants, agents, courtiers, and court officials, all of whom played a part in mediating between the Medici dukes and the Porte. Thus, these chapters will attempt to exhaustively map individual relationships and to explore the connections that relate to the formal and informal ties between these actors. Furthermore, they will look at the various factors and individuals that led to the ultimate failure of these negotiations. Finally, the conclusion will provide

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<sup>62</sup> Jacques Revel, "Microanalysis and the Construction of the Social," in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past; Postwar French Thought*, ed. by Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: The New Press, 1996) 492–502; Francesca Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?" *California Italian Studies* 2 (2011): 1–26.

an overview of Genoese and Florentine diplomatic negotiations with the Porte, placing specific emphasis on the complex ways through which diplomacy was conducted with the Ottoman court during this period.

## CHAPTER I

### From the Byzantine to the Ottoman Period:

#### The Genoese and the Florentines in the Eastern Mediterranean

An Italian presence in the Eastern Mediterranean dates back to the late eleventh century, when by means of the crusades the Genoese, Pisans, and Venetians were able to establish themselves in some Levantine ports such as Acre and Tyre, and thereby achieved direct access to Eastern goods and raw materials.<sup>63</sup> In tandem with their expansion into Levantine markets, these maritime states also extended their commercial activities into the Byzantine Empire, particularly the imperial capital Constantinople, obtaining trading concessions from Byzantine emperors.<sup>64</sup> Through their trade bases in the East and their advanced technology in navigation, shipbuilding, and armaments, Genoa and Venice in particular became active forces in Mediterranean trade, connecting the economy of Europe with that of the Levant. From that period until the mid-fifteenth century, the struggle and competition for supremacy in the Mediterranean was between those two states. Indeed, each became the other's toughest opponent, and the strong rivalry between them made it difficult to take concerted action in their relations with the Byzantine and Islamic Empires. In Abu-Lughod's words, "[T]hey [the Genoese and the Venetians] spent as much energy fighting one another as they did conquering the East."<sup>65</sup>

It was this rivalry that significantly shaped and determined the relations of these states with another emerging power in the Eastern Mediterranean, i.e., the Ottomans. In the traditional historiography, the dominant view is that with the rise of the Ottomans, the Italians' trade in the Eastern Mediterranean was interrupted.<sup>66</sup> A close analysis of the

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<sup>63</sup> David Abulafia, "Trade and Crusade, 1050-1250," in the *Mediterranean Encounters, Economic, Religious, Political, 1100-1550* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) pp. 1-20.

<sup>64</sup> Michel Balard, "L'Organisation des colonies étrangères dans l'Empire Byzantine (XIIe-XVe siècle)," in *Hommes et Richesses dans l'Empire Byzantine vol. II VIIIe-XVe Siècle*, eds. V. Kravari, J. Lefort and C. Morrisson (Paris: Pierre Zech Éditeur, 1991) pp. 261-276.

<sup>65</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European hegemony: the world system A.D. 1250-1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 103.

<sup>66</sup> Wilhem Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen-Âge*, vol. II (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1886) pp. 257-313. In fact he discusses the issue in the last section under the heading of "décadence."



period, however, presents a far more complex and nuanced picture of interstate relations with a constant shifting of alliances shaped by commercial and political interests.<sup>67</sup> Both the Genoese and Venetians established diplomatic contacts with the Anatolian principalities, the Byzantines, and the Ottomans so as to maintain their trade interests and territorial possessions in the region. These relations continued after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when Sultan Mehmed II not only renewed the privileges formerly given to the Genoese and Venetian merchant communities by the Byzantine emperors, but invited Florentine merchants to ply their trade in the Ottoman territories and granted concessions and guarantees of protection to them as well. Thus, the competition among the Genoese, Venetians, and Florentines to control key trade networks as well as to acquire access to raw materials and products of the East gave rise to closer diplomatic, political and commercial contacts with the Ottomans in the late fifteenth century.

This chapter deals with two main issues: in the first part, it examines the relations between Italian states and the Byzantine Empire, placing emphasis on the settlement, status, and activities of Italian merchants under Byzantine rule in order to determine whether there was continuity or, rather, a break with the arrival of the Ottomans in Constantinople. In relation to this, it also discusses the early diplomatic contacts of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman state before 1453. In the second part, the focus is on the relations of these Italian states and their merchant communities in Constantinople with the new conquerors of the city. This look at the post-conquest period traces the main motives and new conditions that shaped the diplomatic and economic relations of these city-states with the Ottoman state. In thus depicting the various dynamics and political and economic interests that connected the Genoese and Florentines with the Ottomans in the second half of the fifteenth century, this chapter will provide a basis for tracing the changes and continuities in the nature of relations for the following period.

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<sup>67</sup> Some of the studies written in this vein: Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydın (1300-1415)* (Venice: Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, 1983); Şerafettin Turan, *Türkiye-İtalya İlişkileri I, Selçuklulardan Bizans'ın Sona Erişine* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1990); Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium Between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009)

## Italians in the Byzantine Capital

As Polybius observed, “Nobody sails the seas just to get across them”<sup>68</sup>; trade was one of the primary reasons for the Italians to come and settle in the Byzantine capital Constantinople. Among the Italian states, Venice was the first to obtain trade privileges in the Byzantine Empire, doing so in 1082.<sup>69</sup> In return for Venetian support against Norman and Turkish attacks, Emperor Alexios I (r. 1081-1118) granted extensive privileges and tax exemptions to the Venetian merchants. They were also given a quarter in Constantinople on the shore of the Golden Horn, in which they had a church of their own.<sup>70</sup> These privileges helped the Venetians increase their profits and strengthen their position in the imperial capital. In order to counterbalance their increasing influence, the succeeding emperors also granted privileges to Pisa and Genoa, Venice’s rivals, in the second half of the twelfth century. Emperor Manuel Comnenus (r. 1143-1180) conferred upon the merchants of these states privileges similar to the ones enjoyed by the Venetians.<sup>71</sup> These concessions were called *chrysobulls* or Golden Bulls, which were essentially *praecepta* rather than *pacta*. In other words, they were a grant of favors by the Byzantine emperors to the Italian states rather than a bilateral contract.<sup>72</sup> This was the prevailing practice, especially when the Byzantine Empire was at the peak of its power. However, the weaker the empire became over time, the less authority and control it had over the foreign merchant communities and their trading outposts within its domains. This could be seen most notably in the case of the Genoese, who eventually established semi-autonomous rule in Pera/Constantinople and autonomous rule in Chios.

In contrast what was to the case in Islamic cities, there was no *fondaco* or *pandocheion* in Byzantium; rather, the European merchant communities were given a “small territorial enclave (*embolo*)” to accommodate both temporary visitors and

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<sup>68</sup> Polybius, *History*, 3.4.10, cited from Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: a study of Mediterranean history* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) p. 342.

<sup>69</sup> Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1973) p. 29.

<sup>70</sup> Horatio Brown, “The Venetians and Venetian Quarter in Constantinople to the close of the Twelfth-Century,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 40 Part I (1920): 71; David Jacoby, “The Venetian Quarter of Constantinople from 1082 to 1261,” in *Commercial Exchange Across the Mediterranean. Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) pp. 154-170. For a more recent study on this: A. Ağır, *İstanbul’un Eski Venedik Yerleşimi ve Dönüşümü* (İstanbul: İstanbul Araştırma Enstitüsü, 2009).

<sup>71</sup> Akylas Millas, *Pera, The Crossroads of Constantinople*, (Athens: Militos Editions, 2006) p. 17; Gerald Day, “Byzantino-Genoese Diplomacy and the Collapse of Emperor Manuel’s Western Policy 1168-1171,” *Byzantium*, Tome XLVII (1978): 398-405; R. S. Lopez, “Foreigners in Byzantium,” in *Byzantium and the World Around it: Economic and Institutional Relations* (London: Variorum, 1978) p. 351.

<sup>72</sup> Horatio Brown, “The Venetians and Venetian Quarter in Constantinople,” p. 69.

permanent settlers.<sup>73</sup> These *embolos* consisted of houses, warehouses, churches of the Latin rite, baths and other amenities necessary for foreign merchant communities.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, there was relative freedom of movement. The Italians were not confined to their own quarters in the city; they were able to reside in other neighborhoods as well.<sup>75</sup> These privileges had a direct influence on the Italian presence in Constantinople. More and more Italians came to the city either permanently, as settlers, or temporarily for trade purposes.<sup>76</sup>

In the Byzantine Empire there were three different groups of Italian merchants. The first group was the *mercatores*, visiting merchants who left the Byzantine ports as soon as they finished their business. The second group was composed of “traders and merchants who stay in the empire temporarily, though this may amount to anything up to a decade” (like Ottoman *müstemins*), and the third group consisted of the *habitatores burgenses*, who were permanent settlers in the Byzantine cities and ports.<sup>77</sup> Because of the privileges and concessions granted by the emperor, the presence of Italian merchant communities aroused frustration and a sense of rivalry in the local merchants of Constantinople. Throughout the twelfth century, there was constant conflict and competition not only among the Italians themselves but also between the Italians and the Greeks.<sup>78</sup> This situation continued until the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, when the Venetians replaced both their Greek and Italian rivals.

Upon the Latin conquest, the balance of power among the Italians changed significantly, and the Venetians established dominance over the trade routes by excluding their rivals. However, this dominance did not last long. With the recapture of the imperial city by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261, the situation changed in favor of the Genoese.

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<sup>73</sup> Olivia Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean world: lodging, trade and travel in late antiquity and Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) p. 150.

<sup>74</sup> Donatella Calabi and Derek Keene, “Exchanges and cultural transfer in European cities in 1500-1700” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe: Cities and Cultural Exchange*, vol. II, eds. Calabi and Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) p. 320; Louise Robbert, “Rialto Businessman and Constantinople, 1204-1261,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 49, *Symposium on Byzantium and the Italians, 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (1995): 47.

<sup>75</sup> Constable, *Housing the Stranger*, p. 153.

<sup>76</sup> David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001) p. 294.

<sup>77</sup> C.A. Maltezou, “Venetian habitatores, burgenses, and merchants in Constantinople and its hinterland (twelfth-thirteenth centuries),” in *Constantinople and its Hinterlands*, ed. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995) pp. 233-241; M. Balard, A. Laiou and C. Otten-Froux, *Les Italiens a Byzance, edition et presentation de documents* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987); David Jacoby, “Les Gênois dans L’Empire Byzantin: Citoyens, Sujets et Protégés (1261-1453),” *La Storia dei Genovesi IX* (1988): 245-284.

<sup>78</sup> R. S. Lopez, “Foreigners in Byzantium,” pp. 349-51.

In return for the support they gave to the Byzantine emperor against the Latin forces, the Genoese were granted extensive concessions, including access to the Black Sea, in the Treaty of Nymphaeon.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, they were given a district in Constantinople, Pera, located on the northern shore of the Golden Horn opposite the main city. The Genoese settlement in Pera was mainly in the New and Old Loggias, where they had their churches; the *Magnifica Communita di Pera*, a council composed of twenty-four members, was responsible for the organization of and order in the colony.<sup>80</sup> In 1304, the colony's status as "*imperium in imperio*" was confirmed.<sup>81</sup> From this time onward, the Genoese community established semi-autonomous rule in Pera, which was fortified with walls. The *podestá*, a leading official and governor, was responsible for ensuring that the statutes of Genoa were applied and observed in Pera.<sup>82</sup>

The Venetians, on the other hand, though negatively affected by the outcome of the events in 1261, did not withdraw from trading in the Byzantine domains. Byzantine emperors soon granted privileges to them as well in order to prevent the Genoese from acting arbitrarily. For instance, the position of *bailo* was first established in Constantinople around 1265, soon after the city was retaken by the Byzantine emperor.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, in 1277 the Venetians got back their trade base on the southern shore of Golden Horn. It is not clear whether they were able to maintain the pre-1261 boundaries of the *locus Venetorum*, but they resided in the same area.<sup>84</sup> Thus, while the Genoese settled in Pera on the northern shore of Golden Horn, the Venetians resided on the

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<sup>79</sup> Michel Balard, *La Romanie Génoise (XIIe-Debut du XVe Siècle)*, 2 Vols (Rome: École française de Rome, 1978). Balard's voluminous work is valuable in terms of providing a careful examination of Genoese trade bases in the Eastern Mediterranean —Pera, Chios, and Caffa— during the Byzantine period. The two volumes explore the establishment of the colonies, and their administration and institutions, ethnic composition, and social and economic activities.

<sup>80</sup> Millas, *Pera*, p. 20; Louis Mitler, "The Genoese in Galata: 1453-1682," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979): 73.

<sup>81</sup> Mitler, "The Genoese in Galata", p. 73. According to Geo Pistarino, it was in 1352, during the reign of John VI Kantakouzenos, that Pera became "un vero e proprio Stato entro lo Stato." *Genovesi D'Oriente* (Genova: Civico Istituto Colombiano, 1990) p. 131.

<sup>82</sup> These were legal regulations concerning the civil, commercial, and administrative organization of the community. Lodovico Sauli, *Della Colonia dei Genovesi a Galata*, vol. II (Torino: G. Bocca, 1831) pp. 83-85; Vincenzo Promis (ed.), "Statuti della colonia genovese di Pera," *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana* XI (1852): 513-780; T. Belgrano, "Prima Serie di Documenti riguardanti la colonia Genovese di Pera," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 17 (1877-84): 105-109.

<sup>83</sup> Maria Pia Pedani, "Bailo," in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Gabor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts On File, 2009) pp. 72-73; Carla Coco and Flora Manzonetto, *Baili Veneziani alla Sublime Porta, Storia e caratteristiche dell'ambasciata veneta a Costantinopoli* (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1985) p. 14; Ennio Concina, *Fondaci: Architettura, arte e mercatura tra Levante, Venezia e Alemagna* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1997) p. 73.

<sup>84</sup> A. Ağır, *İstanbul'un Eski Venedik Yerleşimi ve Dönüşümü*. She makes a detailed examination of this issue with the help of contemporary Venetian and Byzantine sources as well as later Ottoman documents.

opposite, southern shore; this settlement pattern remained the same until the early sixteenth century.<sup>85</sup>

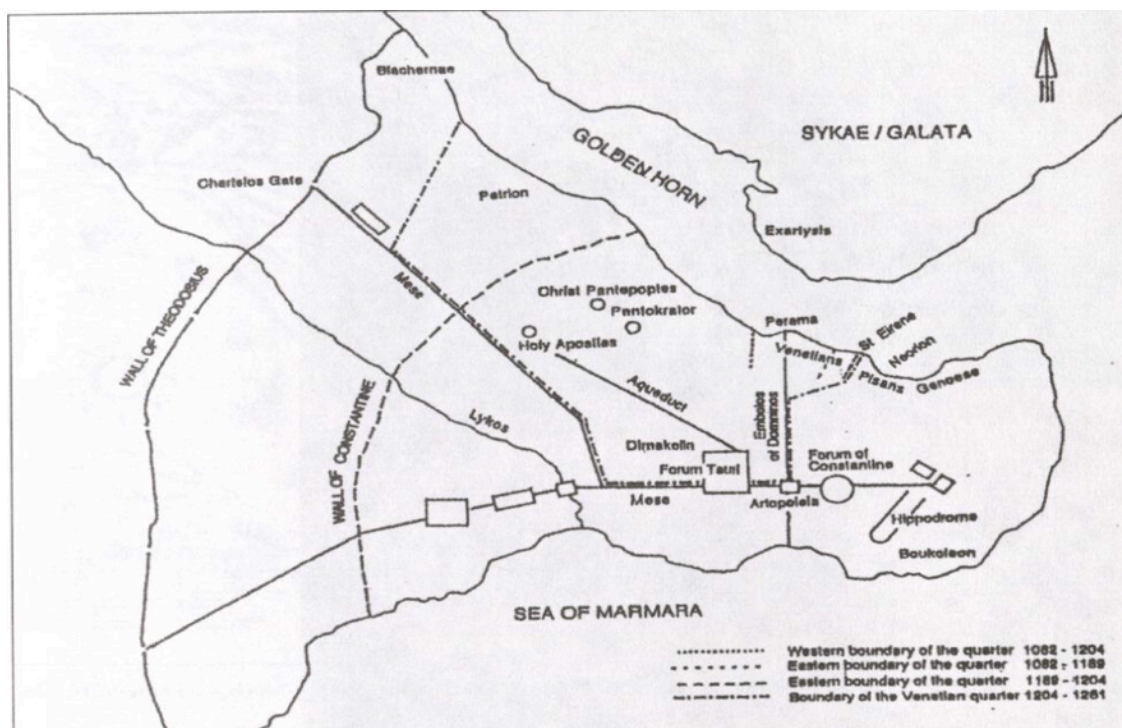


Figure 1: Venetian, Pisan and Genoese quarters in Constantinople between 1082 and 1261 (Taken from David Jacoby, “The Venetian Quarter of Constantinople from 1082 to 1261,” p. 154)

By the second half of the fourteenth century, the Byzantines had almost lost control of the Black and Aegean Seas, where the merchant fleets of the Genoese and Venetians emerged as the dominant rival powers. The Genoese established many trade bases on the Black Sea: Samastro (Amasra), Finogonya (Kefken), Sinope (Sinop), Amisos (Samsun), Vatiza (Fatsa), Trebizond (Trabzon), Caffa (Kefe), Cembalo (Balaklava), and Soldaia (Suğdak).<sup>86</sup> In Caffa, the Genoese established a self-governing colony, which served as the Black Sea headquarters of the Genoese merchants from 1270 on.<sup>87</sup> During

<sup>85</sup> From the early twelfth century onward, Pisans were also actively operating in Constantinople and other Levantine ports. However, after 1261 they became less dominant in comparison to the Venetians and Genoese. For the privileges and activities of Pisan merchants in Constantinople and the Levant, see Giuseppe Müller, *Documenti sulle Relazioni delle Città Toscane coll’Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi fino all’anno MDXXXI* (Firenze: Cellini, 1879)

<sup>86</sup> Şerafettin Turan, *Türkiye-İtalya İlişkileri I, Selçuklulardan Bizans’ın Sona Erişine*, pp. 46-54.

<sup>87</sup> Notarial documents provide valuable details concerning the organization of this Genoese colony and its settlers. Most of these documents have been edited by various historians. G.I. Bratianu, *Actes de notaires génois de Pera et de Caffa de la fin du treizième siècle (1281-1290)* (Bucarest: Cultura Nationala, 1927); Idem, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1929); G. Balbi-S. Raiteri, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Caffa e a Licostomo (sec. XIV)* (Genova: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 1973); Gabriella Airaldi, “Note sulla cancelleria di Caffa nel secolo XIV,” in

this period, Caffa and the Venetian colony Tana became important centers of international trade as a result of their position “connecting the Black Sea with China via Astrakhan, Saray and Urgenj in Central Asia as well as with India through Persia.”<sup>88</sup> Genoese merchants dealt mainly in the trades of slaves, as well as the trade of leather, wax, and precious commodities originating from distant countries, such as raw silk and silk cloth from Persia and China and spices from India.<sup>89</sup> The Genoese became the main providers of Levantine raw silk for the silk industry in Lucca, which was “the first new center of silk manufacturing to emerge in the West,” producing high-quality fabrics.<sup>90</sup> In return, they were exporting high quality woolen cloth, soap, and olive oil. In the fourteenth century, the transport of Chinese silk via the Black Sea was interrupted by the Mongol invasions. However, Caffa maintained its importance as a center for the trade of slaves, furs, and forest products. In addition, both Constantinople and Italian cities were fed by grain supplied by Genoese ships from Caffa and other Genoese trade bases on the Black Sea; the Genoese of Pera was very active in this trade.<sup>91</sup>

Another important Genoese trade base was the island of Chios in the Aegean Sea. In 1261, when Emperor Michael VIII granted concessions to the Genoese merchants in Pera, he also allowed them to maintain a consul in Chios. In 1304, the Genoese brothers Benedetto and Manuele Zaccaria seized the island. They had already been controlling the alum mines in Phocaea in return for an annual tribute to the Byzantine Emperor since 1267. Alum was used as an “essential mordant” in the textile dyeing process and was thus indispensable to the textile industry in Europe.<sup>92</sup> It was also widely used in the leather industry.<sup>93</sup> Thus, it became an important source of wealth for the Genoese during the medieval period. In order to protect the alum trade route through Chios from the attacks of the Turkish pirates, and also benefiting from the weakness of the Byzantine Emperor,

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*Studi e Documenti su Genova e L'Oltremare* (Genova: Istituto di paleografia e storia medievale, 1974) pp. 11-110.

<sup>88</sup> Gilles Veinstein, “From the Italians to the Ottomans: The Case of the northern Black Sea Coast in the Sixteenth Century,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 1:2 (1986): 227-228.

<sup>89</sup> Eliyahu Ashtor, “Il Commercio Italiano col Levante e il Suo Impatto sull'Economia Tardomedioevale,” in *Aspetti della Vita Economica Medievale. Atti del Convegno di Studi nel X Anniversario della morte di Federigo Melis Firenze-Pisa-Prato, 10-14 Marzo 1984* (Firenze: Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1985), pp. 17-23.

<sup>90</sup> David Jacoby, “Genoa, Silk Trade and Silk Manufacture in the Mediterranean Region (ca. 1100-1300),” in *Commercial Exchange Across the Mediterranean* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> Michel Balard, “Le Commerce du Ble en Mer Noire (XIIIe-XVe Siècles),” in *Aspetti della Vita Economica Medievale*, pp. 64-80; Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the early Ottoman State*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>92</sup> Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, p. 361.

<sup>93</sup> It was an important material used for the tanning of the leather. Giuseppe Nenci, “L'allume di Focea,” *La Parola del Passato* Fascicolo CCIV-CCVII (1982): 184-185.

the Zaccaria brothers took control of the island. They thereby obtained a monopoly of the mastic trade in Chios, in addition to alum mines in Phocaea. Benedetto Zaccaria held the island in return for tribute to the Byzantine emperor. In the following years, however, the succeeding members of the family declared their own sovereignty over the island, disregarding the imperial authority. Upon this, Byzantine Emperor Andronicus III sent his troops to Chios and with the support of the local Greek population and Venetian ships brought the island under his control in 1329. Yet, Chios was both strategically and commercially far too important for the Genoese to give up. Taking advantage of the struggles over the throne that were going on in the Byzantine court, the Genoese again seized the island in 1346.<sup>94</sup> It remained in their hands until it passed to Ottoman control in 1566.

Both Genoa and Venice derived their wealth from the exchange of goods between Europe and the East. These maritime states aimed to establish commercial hegemony through their long-distance trade and colonies all over the Mediterranean. By the fourteenth century, Genoa had established a “seaborne commercial empire” with colonies around the Black Sea, on the Aegean, in Cyprus, and in the Iberian Peninsula as well as in England and Flanders.<sup>95</sup> There was, however, an ongoing competitive war with the Venetians for control of the same markets. The increasing overlap of Genoese trading interests with those of the Venetians and the struggle to monopolize the transport of commodities between Eastern and Western markets led to rivalry and constant clashes among the merchants of these two states. By the 1350s there was already conflict between the two maritime states in the Aegean over their interests there; eventually the Venetians designated the Dalmatian coast and the Ionian islands as their trade zone, while the Genoese dominated the eastern part of the Aegean, giving them easy access to Constantinople and the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>96</sup>

Moreover, after the War of Chioggia (1378-1381), which was considered to be the “climax of the struggle,” both maritime states defined their trading areas in the East more explicitly in order to avoid any more conflict. While the Venetians focused primarily on

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<sup>94</sup> William Miller, “The Zaccharia of Phocaea and Chios (1275-1329),” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 31 (1911): 42-55; Philip Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese and their administration of the island, 1346-1566*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1958) pp. 54-105; Michel Balard, “The Genoese in the Aegean (1204-1566),” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4:1 (1989): 161; Pistarino, *Genovesi D’Oriente*, pp. 128-131; Roberto S. Lopez, *Storia delle Colonie Genovesi nel Mediterraneo* (Genova: Marietti, 1996) pp. 222-223;

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea. Policy and Power in an Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559-1684* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2005) p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> Michel Balard, “The Genoese in the Aegean (1204-1566),” pp. 160-161.

the spice routes and their trading activities in Alexandria and Beirut, the Genoese concentrated on their interests in Constantinople and Asia Minor.<sup>97</sup> However, unlike Venice, which established its dominance over the Levantine trade,<sup>98</sup> Genoa could not recover its strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean after this financially draining war. The instability in Genoa resulting from factional conflicts and foreign domination over the city had a significant impact on its colonies in the *Oltremare*. According to the dominant view in the historiography, from the fourteenth century onward the mother city became loosely connected with its colonies in the East. The Genoese of Pera and other Genoese possessions took the initiative in relations with other powers and pursued their own interests, sometimes even at the expense of Genoa itself.<sup>99</sup>

In this respect, Genoa's experience was quite different from that of its rival Venice. In contrast to Venice's state-backed expansion, in which the colonies were governed firmly from the center, Genoa did not have tight control over its trade outposts.<sup>100</sup> Instead, Genoese merchants in the colonies established a self-governing rule. Chios provides a good example in this sense. From 1346 to 1566, the island was controlled by a group of families under the name of Giustiniani, which was a political and social union of people coming from different families but united under a single name.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, the Genoese Gattilusio family ruled over Lesbos and some other islands in the northern Aegean through their close contacts with the Byzantine ruling family.<sup>102</sup>

According to Fernandez-Armesto, an important characteristic of the Genoese was their "hermit crab character," which enabled them to easily "adapt to every economic environment and political climate."<sup>103</sup> It would seem that for the Genoese in the Eastern

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<sup>97</sup> Frederic Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1973) pp. 189-201; Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, p. 378.

<sup>98</sup> Eliyahu Ashtor, "The Venetian Supremacy in Levantine Trade: Monopoly or Pre-Colonialism?" *Journal of European Economic History* 3/1 (1974): 5-53; Christine Shaw, "Genoa," in *The Italian Renaissance State*, eds. Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini (New York: Cambridge UP, 2012) p. 222; Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean. The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450-1700*, p. 28.

<sup>99</sup> David S. Kelly, "Genoa and Venice: An Early Commercial Rivalry," in *Great Power Rivalries*, ed. William R. Thompson (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999) p. 148; Steven Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese 958-1528* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996) pp. 254-270; Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus. Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987) pp. 99-105; Roberto S. Lopez, *Storia delle Colonie Genovesi*, p. 251; Thomas Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire*, p. 64.

<sup>101</sup> Geo Pistarino, *Chio dei genovesi nel tempo di Cristoforo Colombo* (Roma: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato Libreria dello Stato, 1995).

<sup>102</sup> Anthony T. Luttrell, "The Latins and life on the smaller Aegean Islands, 1204-1453," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4/1 (1989): 154.

<sup>103</sup> Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus*, p 96; p. 106.

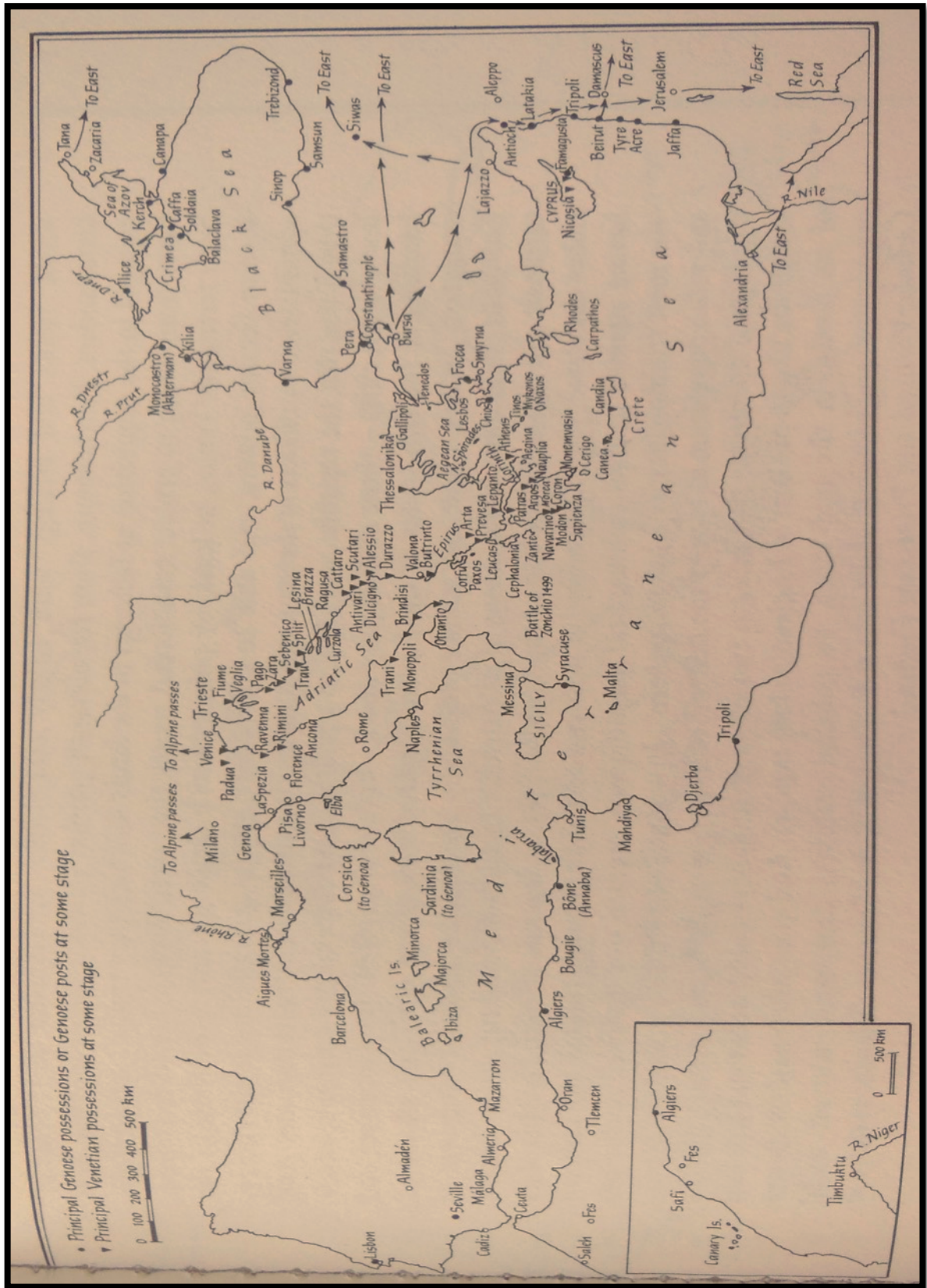


Mediterranean, this was not just a matter of character but also a strategy for survival. For instance, in the case of the Genoese of Pera, it can be argued that the flexibility and versatility of the members of the Genoese community in the face of changing conditions, and their prioritization of individual interests over all else, caused them to adopt a pragmatic approach in their relations with the Byzantines, Latin powers, and the Ottomans.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> This can best be seen through the individual stories of the leading Genoese families in Pera and other colonies. For instance, I have in another study examined the Draperio and Spinola families in Pera, focusing on their relations and networks with the Byzantine and Ottoman authorities during the fifteenth century and exploring the continuities and changes they experienced after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. “The Genoese of Pera in the Fifteenth Century: The Case of the Draperio and Spinola Families,” in *Living in the Ottoman Realm. Empire and Identity, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, eds. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016) pp. 42-54.

Figure 2: Venice and Genoa in the Mediterranean and the Levant (circa 14<sup>th</sup> c.) (Taken from G.V. Scammel, *The World Emcompassed: The First European Maritime Empires c. 800-1650* (London: Methuen, 1981) p. 87.



## Early Diplomatic Contacts with the Ottomans

From the fourteenth century onward, the westward advance of the Ottoman rulers marked the beginning of a significant political change in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Ottomans entered the Balkans for the first time in 1354. Although the defeat of Sultan Bayezid I by Timur, founder of the Timurid Empire, at the Battle of Ankara in 1402 slowed down the process of expansion, this interregnum period (1402-1413) did not last long; the Ottomans soon regained their strength and continued their advances in Anatolia, the Balkans, and Greece.<sup>105</sup> During this period, they became according to the circumstances at various times an ally or a foe of the Genoese or the Venetians, who struggled to maintain their trade bases both against each other and in the face of Ottoman advances.

Diplomatic contacts between the Genoese and the Ottomans dated back to the mid-fourteenth century. The earliest treaty was presumably made in 1351-52 between Sultan Orhan (r. 1324-1362) and the Genoese authorities. Filippo Demerode was sent to the Ottoman sultan as one of the Genoese ambassadors for these negotiations. The choice of Demerode as an ambassador was not a random one; indeed, he was a close friend and servant of the sultan, and was conducting trade in Pera on his behalf.<sup>106</sup> For instance, in 1356, upon the request of the sultan, the Genoese government ordered the *podestà* of Pera to grant tax exemptions to the servants of the Ottoman sultan, including Filippo Demerode.<sup>107</sup> The Demerode were not a noble family rooted in Genoa; rather, they were defined as a “colonial family,” which had established itself as politically and economically influential in Pera without having solid ties in the mother city.<sup>108</sup> In this respect, they were similar to Draperio family, whose members participated in diplomatic negotiations with the Ottomans either as ambassadors or witnesses from the time of Sultan Murad I. To give an example, Giovanni Draperio was among the witnesses to the treaty of 1387, while his brother Iane Draperio, a merchant active in the grain trade, was

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<sup>105</sup> Molly Greene, “Resurgent Islam: 1500-1700,” in *the Mediterranean in History*, ed. David Abulafia (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003) p. 211.

<sup>106</sup> In the letter sent to Sultan Orhan from Genoa, Filippo Demerode and Bonifacio de Sauli were defined as “servioi e amixi vostri.” L.T. Belgrano, “Prima Serie di Documenti riguardanti La Colonia di Pera,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* XIII (1877-79): 125-126, doc. XVII (21 March 1356).

<sup>107</sup> Belgrano, “Prima Serie di Documenti,” pp. 126-127, doc. XVIII (21 March 1356); Kate Fleet, “The Treaty of 1387 between Murad I and the Genoese,” *BSOAS (Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies)* 56 (1993): 23.

<sup>108</sup> M. Balard, “La Société Pérote aux XIVe-XVe siècles: Autour des Demerode et des Draperio,” in *Byzantine Constantinople. Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2001) pp. 304-311.

sent as an ambassador of the Genoese colony to Sultan Bayezid I in 1389.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the close contacts of members of the Demerode and Draperio families with the Ottoman rulers made them instrumental in the diplomatic relations of the colony with the Ottoman state.

To go back to the treaty of 1351-52, unfortunately a copy of this agreement is not available to us<sup>110</sup>; however, the capitulations it granted were renewed in the treaty of 1387 signed between Sultan Murad I (r. 1362-1389) and the Genoese.<sup>111</sup> Giovanni Demerode, Filippo's brother, was also present at the signing of this convention. Just like his brother, he had personal relations with Sultan Murad I and traded in Pera on his behalf.<sup>112</sup> Kate Fleet, who has examined the relations between the Ottoman state and the Genoese merchants in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, argues that commercial interests were the main motive for the close Ottoman-Genoese relations during this period.<sup>113</sup> This is indeed evident in the articles of 1387 treaty, which stipulated that Genoese merchants would come and trade freely in the Ottoman lands, and would benefit from special arrangements when trading in the Ottoman territories. In return, there would be favorable treatment concerning taxation for Ottoman merchants conducting trade in the Genoese colony, and they would be exempt from taxation on goods bought and sold in Pera.

In fact, the favorable relations between the Genoese of Pera and the Ottoman state were not confined to the economic sphere; the two parties also provided each other political and military support against their enemies. In the case of the 1351 treaty, the Ottomans supported the Genoese with troops in their defense of Pera against allied Venetian-Byzantine attacks. In return, the Genoese provided safe passage to the Ottomans in the straits to bring people and troops from Anatolia to the Balkans.<sup>114</sup> This kind of alliance between the two continued in the following years as well. However, there was a constant shifting of alliances depending on the political and economic interests in play at any given time. In 1384 Sultan Murad I sent an envoy to Venice to propose an

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<sup>109</sup> M. Balard "Péra au XIVe Siècle Documents Notariés de Gênes," in *Les Italiens a Byzance, Édition et Présentation de Documents*, doc. 66; Belgrano, "Prima Serie di Documenti," doc. XXX.

<sup>110</sup> The peace agreement between the Genoese and the Byzantine emperor John VI in the same year confirms this treaty. L.T. Belgrano, "Prima Serie di Documenti riguardanti La Colonia di Pera," p. 124, doc. XVI (6 May 1352).

<sup>111</sup> For a detailed examination of this treaty, see Kate Fleet, "The Treaty of 1387 between Murad I and the Genoese," pp. 13-33.

<sup>112</sup> Kate Fleet, "The Treaty of 1387," pp. 23-24; Belgrano, "Prima Serie di Documenti," pp. 146-149, doc. XXX (8 June 1387).

<sup>113</sup> Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 4-12.

<sup>114</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. I (Ankara: TTK, 1995) p. 233; Halil İnalçık, "The Ottoman Turks and the Crusades, 1329-1451," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, vol. 6, p. 231.

alliance against the Genoese, and a four-year trade contract was signed.<sup>115</sup> As already discussed, in 1387 a trade agreement was also made between the Ottoman administration and the Genoese. In 1388, the Genoese of Pera joined a “holy league,” coming to an agreement with the king of Cyprus, Francesco Gattilusio of Lesbos, the rulers of Mytilene, the Knights of Rhodes, and the *Maona* of Chios to fight against the Ottomans.<sup>116</sup> However, a year later, in 1389 after the battle of Kosovo, a peace treaty was made between the new sultan, Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402), and the Genoese, which confirmed all former agreements made with the previous sultans.<sup>117</sup> As can be seen from these examples, there were constant interactions between the Ottomans and the Italian states, characterized not only by military conflicts and confrontations in the name of a *gaza*/crusade ethos but also by frequent diplomatic and commercial exchanges.

Especially when the Ottoman state began to dominate key trading networks and became one of the competitors for commercial hegemony, Ottoman sultans did not hesitate to benefit from the strategic advantages of this situation. To give an example, by the end of the fourteenth century the Ottomans had taken control of a large part of western Anatolia after conquering the emirates of Menteşe and Aydın. This area was important in terms of grain production, and grain was in great demand by Italian merchants to feed their cities and colonies. Already in the time of the Turkish emirates, various commercial treaties had been made with the Venetians and the Genoese concerning the grain trade. When the region passed to Ottoman control, Ottoman rulers used the export of grain “for their own political and financial gains.”<sup>118</sup> They benefited from it financially by determining the price of grain and the rate of tax upon it. Moreover, control of grain exports enabled the Ottoman rulers to secure the necessary support from the Genoese or the Venetians against their opponents.

Another example in this respect would be the control of alum mines in Anatolia. The extraction and export of alum had been under the control of Genoese families since the thirteenth century. When the Ottomans became dominant in the region, they farmed out alum mining and trade to the Genoese in return for an annual tribute. From the time of Mehmed I (r. 1413-1421), members of Genoese families in Phocaea were appointed as tax

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<sup>115</sup> Antonio Fabris, “From Adrianople to Constantinople: Venetian-Ottoman Diplomatic Missions, 1360-1453,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 7/2 (1992): 159.

<sup>116</sup> Belgrano, “Seconda Serie di Documenti riguardanti La Colonia di Pera,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* XIII (1888): 359-371, doc. VIII (November-December, 1388)

<sup>117</sup> For a transcription of this treaty, see Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, doc. 2, p. 157-158.

<sup>118</sup> Kate Fleet, “Ottoman Grain Exports from Western Anatolia at the End of the Fourteenth Century,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40/3 (1997): 290.

farmers for the alum mines. The assignment of the tax farming of these mines to the Genoese not only ensured “a fixed and guaranteed income”<sup>119</sup> for the Ottoman rulers, but also secured the former’s collaboration and support on certain political occasions. In the early fifteenth century, the Genoese *podestà* of New Phocaea, Giovanni Adorno, son of Giorgio Adorno (the ex-doge of Genoa), was appointed as tax–farmer of the alum mines by Mehmed I, for which he paid the sultan 20,000 gold coins annually. Due to financial difficulties stemming from the Genoese–Catalan war, Adorno was not able to pay the tribute to the new sultan Murad II (r. 1421-1444; 1446-1451) on a regular basis. He therefore found an alternate way of paying his debts. According to the Byzantine historian Doukas, who for a time worked as Adorno’s secretary, the Genoese tax farmer decided to solve the problem through diplomatic means. Referring to “the deep friendship and intimacy he had enjoyed with his father Mehmed,” Adorno offered his ships to Murad II to be used for the latter’s campaign against his uncle Düzme Mustafa, a pretender to the Ottoman throne:

As your faithful servant, I am eager to offer you my assistance by transporting you from East to West in my triremes and warships. I can provide you with better service than any other person. Only command me and your instructions will speedily be carried out.<sup>120</sup>

The sultan was quite pleased with this offer and asked Adorno to send one of his trusted servants to talk about the details of his plan. Collaborative relations continued after Adorno’s death in 1421. He was replaced by another Genoese, Percivalle Pallavicino, a friend of Murad II, as tax farmer of the alum mines in Phocaea. Pallavicino also provided ships for the service of Sultan Murad II in his struggle against the governors of Smyrna and Ipsili.<sup>121</sup> Similar cooperation occurred during the Crusade of Varna in 1444. Despite the impediments the Venetians created to prevent Murad II, who was at the time in Manisa, from passing through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to Rumelia, the Genoese helped the sultan cross to Edirne (Adrianople) so that he could fight against the crusaders in Varna.<sup>122</sup> Francesco Draperio seems to have played an important role in this,

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<sup>119</sup> Kate Fleet, “Power and Economy: Early Ottoman Economic Practice,” *Eurasian Studies* III/I (2004): 121.

<sup>120</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottomans*, tr. Harry Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1975), pp. 150-151; Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, p. 91.

<sup>121</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottomans*, p. 168.

<sup>122</sup> Antonio Fabris, “From Adrianople to Constantinople,” p. 181; Hans Peter Theunissen, “Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The Ahdnames,” pp. 121-122. Also see Halil İnalcık, *Fatih Devri üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar I* (Ankara: TTK, 1987) pp. 1-67.

as he visited Murad II at his court more than once during the time of the conflict.<sup>123</sup> It was presumably in return for this support that Draperio was able to gain the sultan's favor and hence the privilege of tax farming the alum mines in Phocaea.

In short, the Genoese collaborated with the Ottomans from the outset on many occasions with the intention of maintaining their commercial outposts and interests. Meanwhile, the Ottomans supported the Genoese presence in the Eastern Mediterranean at the expense of the Venetians and others, and secured the cooperation of the Genoese in return for "economic profits and naval assistance" until the takeover of Pera in 1453.<sup>124</sup> One particular aspect of these relations was that personal relationships between the leading Genoese families and the Ottoman sultans played an important role in promoting the political alliances and economic cooperation between the Ottoman state and the Genoese colonies. The Genoese acted as merchants, tax farmers, informants, and diplomats, with sometimes conflicting allegiances to their mother city and the Ottomans.

In the case of the Florentines, this sort of collaboration and cooperation was common in the second half of the fifteenth century, during the rule of Mehmed II (r. 1444-1446; 1451-1481). In the earlier period, Florence's commercial links with the Eastern Mediterranean had been rather limited in comparison to those of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa.<sup>125</sup> Merchants of the latter states operated across the Mediterranean by establishing trade relations with the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic empires. They developed large commercial networks linking Far Eastern and Middle Eastern markets to European ones and set up trading colonies in the preeminent cities of the Levant. As Florence was not a port city, its merchants could trade in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levantine ports only under the flag and protection of Pisa, Genoa, or Venice.<sup>126</sup> Florentine merchants had been active in Constantinople as early as the thirteenth century. They supplied woolen cloth to Eastern markets and in return brought raw silk, cotton, and spices to Italian and European markets. The Florentine Acciaiuoli family established close contacts with the Byzantine imperial family and obtained large possessions in the Greek

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<sup>123</sup> Cyriac of Ancona, *Later Travels*, tr. E. Bodnar and C. Foss (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), Letter 8; Letter 37.

<sup>124</sup> Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume I: 1300-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) pp. 193-194.

<sup>125</sup> Though there were Florentines in the Holy Land, in Jerusalem, Syrian ports and Cyprus in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries for trade and travel purposes, see Franco Cardini, "La Toscana Medievale e L'Oriente Musulmano," *Oriente Moderno, Nuova Serie, Studi in Memoria di Pier Giovanni Donini* 24 (85), 2/3 (2005): 363-375.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Mallett, *The Florentine Galleys in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) pp. 4-20.

Morea during the late fourteenth century. The Acciaiuoli ruled over the duchy of Athens until Sultan Mehmed II took it over in 1460; their presence in the region made it possible for the Florentine merchants to have easy access to Greek ports.<sup>127</sup>

It was only after annexing Pisa (1406) and Livorno (1421) that Florence gained direct access to the sea and, with their own galley system, became rivals to the other maritime powers in the Mediterranean. The first diplomatic contact with the Byzantine Empire took place in 1416, when Emperor Manuel Palaiologos granted to the Florentine merchants the same privileges as the Pisan community had enjoyed in Constantinople and other parts of the Byzantine lands.<sup>128</sup> In 1422 the Florentine state sent official representatives to Constantinople to obtain trade concessions in Byzantine ports such as Patras and Chiarentza, which were important centers for the production of raw silk and silk fabrics.<sup>129</sup> In the same year a diplomatic legate was also sent to the Mamluk court to ask for commercial privileges and a *fondouq* in Alexandria and Damascus.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, after the Council of Florence in 1439, the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos granted Florentine merchants a quarter in Constantinople (which had formerly been used by the Pisans) together with commercial privileges similar to those enjoyed by Venetian and Genoese merchants.<sup>131</sup> In terms of customs duties, the Florentines were to pay 2 percent of the value of merchandise, instead of 4 percent that they used to pay. During this period, the Genoese and Venetians were not paying any customs duties. Their Byzantine counterparts, on the other hand, used to pay the full rate of 10 percent until the mid-fourteenth century; however, in the late fourteenth century this was reduced to 2 percent.<sup>132</sup> From the travel account of Bertrandon de la Broquière, it becomes clear that as early as 1432 Florentine merchants were also conducting trade in Ottoman Bursa.<sup>133</sup> However, the turning point for Florentine trade in the Eastern Mediterranean came after the conquest of Constantinople. Sultan Mehmed II granted extensive trading privileges to

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<sup>127</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2009) pp. 175-177.

<sup>128</sup> Giuseppe Müller, *Documenti sulle Relazioni delle Città Toscane coll'Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno MDXXXI* (Firenze: Cellini, 1879), p. 149, 281.

<sup>129</sup> Mallett, *The Florentine Galleys in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 115; Jacoby, "Genoa, Silk Trade and Silk Manufacture in the Mediterranean Region," pp. 22-23.

<sup>130</sup> Cardini, "La Toscana Medievale e L'Oriente Musulmano," p. 371-72; John Wansbrough, "Venice and Florence in the Mamluk Commercial Privileges," *BSOAS* 28/3 (1965): 483-523; Eliyahu Ashtor, "The Venetian Supremacy in Levantine Trade: Monopoly or Pre-Colonialism?" pp. 15-16.

<sup>131</sup> Scipione Ammirato, *Istorie Fiorentine di Scipione Ammirato*, Parte II, Libro XXI (Firenze, 1641), p. 19; Robert Mantran, *17. yy'ın ikinci yarısında İstanbul*, vol. II (Ankara: TTK, 1990), p. 118.

<sup>132</sup> Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, p. 192; 192ff.

<sup>133</sup> Bertrandon de La Broquière, *The Voyage d'Outremer*, tr. and ed. Galen Kline (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 85; Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of Ottoman Empire*, p. 230.



the Florentine merchants and permanent representation in Pera/Constantinople, which enabled them to exert considerable influence in the Ottoman market at the expense of the Genoese and the Venetians.

### **Post-Conquest Period: Italians in the Ottoman Capital**

The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 marked a watershed in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean. While it brought an empire to an end, it also laid the cornerstone of a new empire, which would soon extend its borders in all directions and become a significant power in the Mediterranean. The news of the fall of the Byzantine capital was received in Europe with anger, fear, sadness, and anxiety, which reactions were effectively put into words through the mighty pens of the Renaissance humanists and intellectuals.<sup>134</sup> European states were almost of one mind in expressing this event as a tragic loss. However, with regard to taking a concerted action against the growing threat nearby, there were contradictory attitudes even among the Italian states themselves. While the papacy urged the necessity of organizing a large-scale crusade,<sup>135</sup> some Italian states such as Venice and Florence sought out negotiation and accommodation with the Ottoman sultan for the sake of their trade interests. Pope Pius II complained bitterly about the Venetians who pledged to support a crusade against the Turks, yet acted to the contrary. Soon after the conquest of Constantinople, they made peace with the Ottomans, promising not to enter into any alliance against them. In his *Commentaries*, Pius expressed his reaction to the *Serenissima*'s doings in these words:

[Venetians] are not people who embrace splendid projects. They are mostly merchants whose nature, intent on gain, usually shrinks from noble aims which cannot be achieved without expense. The Venetians thought that if war were

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<sup>134</sup>There is a huge literature on the perception of 1453 in Europe; some of these studies are Agostino Pertusi (ed.), *La Caduta di Costantinopoli. Testi*, 2 vols. (Milan: Mondadori-Fondazione Valla, 1990); Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967); James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111-207; Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>135</sup>Pope Pius II was an outstanding figure of this period. His constant efforts to organize a crusade against the Ottomans and the attitude of the Christian rulers and princes toward these efforts were discussed in detail in his autobiographical work: *Commentaries of Pius II*, tr. A. Gragg and ed. L. C. Gabel, 5 Vols. (Northampton: Smith College Studies in History, 1931-57). Also on his famous letter to Sultan Mehmed II, see F. Özden Mercan, "Constructing a Self-Image in the Image of the Other: Political and Religious Interpretations of Pope Pius II's Letter to Mehmed II (1461)," Unpublished MA Thesis, Central European University, 2008.

declared against the Turks, all their trade with the East, on which their livelihood depended would cease and that after Greece was freed the western princes would not allow the Venetian republic to have sovereignty in Dalmatia and the East.<sup>136</sup>

In fact, the situation was no different in the case of Genoa and Florence. The merchants of the former made peace with the sultan in the hope of maintaining their trading posts, while the latter did not want to give up the opportunities that had recently emerged for them in the Ottoman market. Thus for all three states, trade interests prevailed over crusading fervor. On the other side of the question, Mehmed II's aim was not to cleanse the Ottoman market of foreigners; on the contrary, following a "free trade policy," he encouraged the Italian merchant communities to continue their trading activities in Ottoman lands.<sup>137</sup> This also paralleled his imperial vision, as he wanted to create "a world empire governed from Constantinople."<sup>138</sup> He constructed a cosmopolitan capital city by repopulating and rebuilding it with communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.<sup>139</sup> Besides transferring Greek, Jewish, Muslim, and Armenian craftsmen and merchants from other cities to the imperial capital, he also called back the Genoese of Pera, who had left their houses in panic during the conquest, and returned to them their properties. In addition, he invited the Florentines to stay and trade in his capital.

When evaluating the conquest of Constantinople, some present-day historians, writing in the same vein as the Renaissance humanists, focus on the destruction of Byzantium and the loss of Byzantine traditions. For instance, Bernard Lewis argues:

[T]he Byzantine organization was destroyed and eliminated, and replaced by a classical Islamic governmental system, modeled on, and largely staffed from the sultanates in the East. It was from the Sultan of Rum, rather than any early or late

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<sup>136</sup> *The Commentaries of Pius II*, Bk. III, p. 257;

<sup>137</sup> Cemal Kafadar, "The Ottomans and Europe," in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600 Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation, Volume I: Structures and Assertions*, eds. Thomas Brady, Heiko Oberman and James Tracy (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 599.

<sup>138</sup> Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul. Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> Contemporary sources of the period provide information on the repopulation and rebuilding of the new capital: Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, tr. Charles T. Riggs (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1954) p. 93; Aşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğullarının Tarihi*, eds. Kemal Yavuz and M. A. Yekta Saraç (İstanbul: Koç Kültür Sanat Tanıtım, 2003) pp. 219-220; Neşri, *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ*, Vol. II, ed. Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen (Ankara: TTK, 1957) pp. 708-711. Also see Halil İnalçık, "The Re-building of Istanbul by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror," *Cultura Turcica* IV 1-2 (1967): 5-15; Gülru Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye: Creation of a Cosmopolitan Capital and Visual Culture under Sultan Mehmed II," in *From Byzantium to Istanbul 8000 Years of a Capital* (Istanbul: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2010) pp. 262-277.

emperor of Rome, that the Ottomans derived their theory and practice of government.<sup>140</sup>

The Byzantine Empire was replaced by the Ottoman Empire and Constantinople, now Kostantiniyye/Istanbul, became the capital of this new empire.<sup>141</sup> However, this hardly means that Byzantine traditions and practices were completely ignored or abandoned. The conquest of Constantinople opened a new phase in the existence of the Ottoman state, transforming it from a frontier principality into an empire and invigorating imperial claims and aspirations for universal sovereignty. Mehmed II considered himself as heir to the Roman and Byzantine empires. At the same time, it is certainly true that the Ottomans, whose roots went back to Central Asia, established their empire upon Turco-Mongol and Perso-Islamic as well as Roman-Byzantine traditions. Thus, it is difficult to fit the Ottoman polity exclusively into any particular category: it was a combination of Roman and Byzantine, Balkan, Turkish, Persian, and Islamic institutions and practices. Located at a geographic point in-between the Western and Eastern worlds, the Ottomans selectively appropriated different traditions and polities to consolidate their power and endeavored to create a balance between coherence and diversity.<sup>142</sup> In explaining the Ottomans' success vis-à-vis all other Anatolian principalities, Kafadar places emphasis on the Ottomans' ability to creatively blend various different traditions in constructing the Ottoman polity. He describes this as a "bricolage of different traditions," where all were mingled in forming a new civilization.<sup>143</sup>

In regulating his relations with the Italians in Istanbul, Mehmed II followed practices more or less similar to those of the Byzantines, combining these with Islamic traditions. Italian merchant communities were allowed to conduct their trade activities within the framework of *ahidnames*, which were unilateral grants of privileges and protection to foreign merchants. In this respect, they could be considered as having a close affinity to the Byzantine *chrysobulls*. Both were granted to a friendly or subordinate party. Moreover, the classification of foreign merchants as temporary merchants or

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<sup>140</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 44.

<sup>141</sup> Constantinople continued to be referred to as Kustantiniyye in the Ottoman period. This name was used in particular on the Ottoman coins and in official correspondence. It is also argued that in some Ottoman sources the city was called Stinbol, Stanbol or Islâmbol. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was called among people as Stambol or Stimboli, which is thought to have been originated from Greek word Istin Bolin. See Halil İnalçık, "Istanbul," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 23 (2001): 220.

<sup>142</sup> Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: the Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2008) p. 8.

<sup>143</sup> Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*, pp. 118-150.

permanent settlers, referred to in the context of Islamic law as *müstemin* and *zimmi*, had similarities to the Byzantine practice, which differentiated temporary merchants, who could stay up to ten years, from *habitores burgenses*, who were permanent settlers.

In Islamic law, there were two types of non-Muslims: *zimmi* (who were tributary subjects) and *müstemin* (who were temporary inhabitants residing in Islamic territories for commercial and diplomatic purposes). Within the *dârü'l-islâm* (the land of Islam), the *ahl al-kitab* (People of the Book) were permitted to make a compact with the Muslim ruler and acquire the status of *zimmi* in return for the payment of *cizye* (poll-tax) and *haraç* (land tax).<sup>144</sup> This was what had been done in the case of the Genoese of Pera. Non-Muslims coming from the *dârü'l-harb* (the land of war, referring to non-Muslim states) and asking for protection obtained the status of *müstemin*; they were allowed to stay for a limited period of time without paying *cizye* or *haraç*. They could have a representative called a *bailo*, consul, or *emino*, who would advocate for the interests of the merchants and deal with the Ottoman authorities.<sup>145</sup> Thus, the *ahidname* and the *sulhname* (peace treaty) became the formal procedures that were used to establish commercial and peaceful political relations with the Ottoman Empire.

*Ahidname* was, however, quite an ambiguous term and thus difficult to provide an exact definition for, as it was used for types of all occasions when regulating relations with non-Muslims. There existed various types of *ahidnames* with respect to the authority and privileges they conferred. Soon after the conquest of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed II granted an *ahidname* to the Genoese of Pera in order to define their status and privileges. He likewise granted *ahidnames* to the Venetian and Florentine merchant communities in order to regulate relations with them.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, the Ragusans and the

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<sup>144</sup> Halil İnalçık, "İmtiyazat," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, vol. III (Leiden: Brill, 1986) pp. 1179-1180; Nicola Melis, "Introduction," *Oriente Moderno* 93 (2013): 354-58.

<sup>145</sup> İnalçık, "İmtiyazat," p. 1180.

<sup>146</sup> There exist a number of studies examining the diplomatic and commercial relations between Venice and the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period through analysis of the *ahidnames*. The most comprehensive work in this sense: Hans Peter Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomacy: The Ahdnames," pp. 1-698; As case studies: Diana Wright and Pierre A. Mackay, "When the *Serenissima* and the *Gran Turco* made love: The Peace Treaty of 1478," *Studi Veneziani* LIII (2007): 261-277; Yutaka Horii, "Some Characteristics of the Ottoman Capitulations in the Sixteenth Century: The Cases of Dubrovnik and Venice," *Mediterranean World* 20 (2010): 199-207. As for the Florentines, due to the problem of availability of original documents, this kind of examination is unfortunately limited to a few case studies: M. Grignaschi, "Una Raccolta inedita di 'Münşeat': il Ms. Veliyüddin Ef. 1970 della Biblioteca Beyazit Umumi di Istanbul e gli 'Ahdname' concessi dalla Sublime Porta a Chio (muharrem 927 h), a Firenze (muharrem 934) e ad Antivari (ramadan 983)" in *Studi Preottomani e Ottomani*, ed. Aldo Gallotta (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1976); Sergio Camerani, "Contributo alla storia dei trattati commerciali fra la Toscana e i Turchi," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 47 (1939): 83-101; Halil İnalçık, "Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553," in *the Essays in Ottoman History* (İstanbul: Eren 1998), pp. 317-323.

Genoese rulers of Chios were also granted *ahidnames*, but their status was different from either the *zimmi* or the *müstemin*. They were considered *haraç-güzar reaya*, i.e., they were paying tribute to maintain their independence and autonomy.<sup>147</sup>

The main preconditions for an *ahidname* were “friendship and sincerity.” As long as these were assured, the European merchant communities were able to obtain privileges from the Sublime Porte, which was the first step to staying and trading in the Ottoman lands.<sup>148</sup> The *ahidname* was at the same time a legal document that determined the status, rights, and obligations of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire. While how it actually worked in practice is a matter open to question,<sup>149</sup> this official document provided the legal framework for not only the commercial activities but also the social life of foreign merchants in the Ottoman domains.<sup>150</sup> For this reason, the formal character of the capitulations and legal validity of the documents were always of major concern for European ambassadors and diplomats as well as the Ottoman authorities. During the sixteenth century, the main objective for the European ambassadors was to ensure that the capitulations were written in Ottoman Turkish and signed with the sultan’s signature (*tuğra*) so that they would be valid. However, the translation of the document into other languages and the discrepancies among different translations often became a source of conflict between the Ottoman administration and the European representatives.

For instance, prior to the Genoese–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations in 1558, the governors of Genoa strongly exhorted Ambassador Giovanni de Franchi not to accept any changes to the draft of the capitulations without the Senate’s permission. Similarly, in the second half of the sixteenth century the Florentine representatives presented to the Ottoman authorities a copy of the capitulations (granted to the Florentine community by the former sultans), but with an additional article on the galleys of St. Stephen. During the

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<sup>147</sup> Alexander H. De Groot, “The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,” *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context Oriente Moderno*, Nuovo Serie, 22 (83), n.3 (2003): 575-604; Daniel Goffman, “Negotiating with the Renaissance state: the Ottoman Empire and the new diplomacy,” pp. 64-65; Nicolaas H. Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship. According to the Firmāns of Murad III (1575-1595) Extant in the State Archives of Dubrovnik* (Paris: Mouton, 1967); Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A City Between East and West* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972) pp. 50-62.

<sup>148</sup> İnalçık, “İmtiyazat,” p. 1180.

<sup>149</sup> There were cases where Ottoman officials attempted to extract *harac* from foreign residents (*müstemins*) as if they were *zimmis*. An interesting incident from the seventeenth century is discussed by Tijana Krstić, “Contesting Subjecthood and Sovereignty in Ottoman Galata in the Age of Confessionalization: The Carazo Affair, 1613-1617,” *Oriente Moderno* 93 (2013): 422-453.

<sup>150</sup> From the late sixteenth century onward, the relations between the foreign representatives and local authorities played a more important role than did the capitulations in determining the position and privileges of the European merchant communities; see Niels Steengaard, “Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15/1-2 (1967): 13-55.

diplomatic negotiations, Ottoman administrators refused to accept this additional article and asked for some alterations; however, the grand duchy would not agree to make any changes. In the end, the Florentine ambassador could not obtain the official *ahidname*, as the Ottoman administration did not approve the version of the capitulations proposed by the grand duchy. To sum up, the draft of the capitulations was finalized only when it was agreed to by both sides and confirmed by the Ottoman administration by being issued and sealed in Ottoman Turkish. In this respect, relations were based on bilateral negotiations but formally concluded with a unilateral grant of the privileges by the Ottoman administration. However, as de Groot points out, the contents of these privileges similarly had a more bilateral nature, although in a formal sense they were unilateral.<sup>151</sup>

The main rationale behind the Ottoman concessions to the Italian states in the late fifteenth century was a desire to revive the economy while preventing the dominance of any one state in the market. To forward this objective, Sultan Mehmed II encouraged merchants of these states to come and settle in Istanbul, the new capital. Being aware, however, of the Byzantine experience in the late medieval period, the sultan did not allow Venetian or Genoese territorial dominion within the Ottoman borders.<sup>152</sup> In order to reinstate the imperial unity of the Eastern Roman Empire, Mehmed II was determined to take control of major trade routes and outposts. The conquest of Constantinople was an important strategic step in this sense, as it enabled the Ottomans to reunify their territories in the Balkans and Anatolia under the authority of the new capital and to dominate the trade routes between Europe and Asia, and between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.<sup>153</sup> Taking advantage of the rivalry among the Italian states and alternately favoring one state over another, the sultan soon expanded his territories, gaining control of key Genoese and Venetian possessions on the Aegean and Black Seas, and in Greece and the Balkans. It can be argued that instead of coming to a halt, Italian trade activities took a different shape during this period. Italians were no longer predominant in the region, losing most of their territorial holdings to the Ottomans; however, through *ahidnames* they continued their trading activities in the Ottoman domains.

Besides economic interests, political considerations also played an important part in moving Ottoman rulers to grant *ahidnames* to European states. As during the early

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<sup>151</sup> Alexander H. De Groot, "The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime," p. 595.

<sup>152</sup> Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>153</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality to Empire," in *The Practice of Strategy: From Alexander the Great to the Present*, eds. John Andreas Olsen and Colin S. Gray (New York: Oxford UP, 2011) p. 119

stages of the Ottoman state, during this period as well commercial treaties were used as “political instruments,” either as “a reward for past services or an incentive for future cooperation.”<sup>154</sup> Ottomans followed this strategy in the late fifteenth century by favoring the Florentines at the expense of the Venetians. During the sixteenth century, the main political motivation to grant *ahidnames* was to secure allies against the Habsburgs.<sup>155</sup> In fact, the diplomatic negotiations with the Republic of Genoa and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the second half of the sixteenth century should be evaluated in this context. The initially welcoming attitude of the Ottoman administration to these states’ requests for trading privileges reflects the desire of the Porte to get them on its side or at least neutralize them by inducing them to end their support of the Habsburg Empire. This intention was also conveyed in the sultan’s letters to the rulers of these states, using the conventional expression “becoming a friend of the friends and an enemy of the enemies of the sultan.”<sup>156</sup>

The “pragmatism” and “inclusivism” of the early Ottoman state<sup>157</sup> were maintained during the post-conquest period, most notably in the incorporation of the former Byzantine inhabitants and Italian merchants into the social and political fabric of the new imperial capital through covenants providing them autonomy in the practice of their faith and in organizing their internal affairs in return for their loyalty to the state and payment of the poll tax. As a part of the formation of the imperial polity and vision, another important step was the creation of a new administrative apparatus by appointing *kuls* (Christian slave servants who had converted to Islam) to the highest positions of the state, thereby constructing “a polyglot ruling elite.”<sup>158</sup> In this way, Mehmed II was able to establish alliances across religious and ethnic boundaries. His high-ranking officials, who were not “entirely foreign to his non-Muslim subjects and the European visitors to his

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<sup>154</sup> Edhem Eldem, “Capitulations and Western Trade,” *Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume III: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), p. 296; Halil İnalcık, “The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspects of the Ottoman Economy,” in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, ed. Michael Cook (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) pp. 214-215.

<sup>155</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, “Before 1600: Ottoman Attitudes towards Merchants from Latin Christendom,” *Turcica* 34 (2002): 78-80.

<sup>156</sup> “Âsitânemizin dostlarına dost ve düşmanlarına düşman olmak târikiyle” which was translated into Italian as “esser amico degli amici, nemico degli nemici del Sultano.” For instance see Ottoman Turkish copy of Sultan Murad III’s decree to the grand duke in BOA, MD 23:603 (10 February 1574) Also Uzunçarşılı provided its transcription in *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. III/2, p. 146 fn. 2. For the Italian version of this letter, see ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 2, (8 February 1574) The letter was translated into Italian by Ottoman court dragoman Hasan Bey.

<sup>157</sup> Gábor Ágoston, “The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality to Empire,” pp. 116-117.

<sup>158</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, “From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye,” p. 262.

court,”<sup>159</sup> mediated between the sultan and his non-Muslim communities. For instance, Grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha (1456-1468; 1472-1474) was from a Byzantine–Serbian aristocratic family;<sup>160</sup> Mesih Pasha and his brother Has Murad Pasha were of Greek origin, in fact nephews of Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos, and held important posts as admiral, governor, and grand vizier in the Ottoman administration.<sup>161</sup> Jacopo Gaeta (Yakub Pasha), Sultan Murad II’s Italian–Jewish physician, had quite a close relationship with Mehmed II, serving as his personal physician as well. Besides being a doctor, he acted as a financial adviser, interpreter (being fluent in both Turkish and Italian), and consultant to the sultan, and accompanied him on his military campaigns. He maintained close contacts with the Italian representatives in Istanbul.<sup>162</sup> There were also renegades appointed as provincial governors. For instance Iskender Beg, who was appointed governor of Bosnia, came from an Italian–Greek family, his father being a Genoese resident of Pera and his mother a Greek from Trebizond. His brother was a Christian merchant residing in Pera and dressed in the Italian style; Iskender Beg also married his daughter to a Genoese merchant from Pera.<sup>163</sup> Thus, individuals who had close familial contacts with the non-Muslim communities and at the same time total allegiance to the sultan became the connecting link between the sultan and his non-Muslim subjects residing in the Ottoman domains.

Along with such figures holding important posts in the Ottoman administration, there were also individuals of Genoese, Venetian, and Florentine origin in Mehmed II’s court. For instance, the Genoese merchants Francesco Draperio (tax-farmer of the alum mines in Phocaea since the time of Sultan Murad II) and Jacopo de Promontorio (who had been at the Ottoman court for twenty-five years) were important intermediaries as well as sources of information for Mehmed II in his contacts with the Italian states.<sup>164</sup> The sultan

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Viziers: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vizir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)* (Brill: Leiden, 2001). In this fascinating monograph, Stavrides provides a biography of Mahmud Pasha, constructed from a variety of sources.

<sup>161</sup> Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003) p. 116; Gülru Necipoğlu, “From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye,” p. 262.

<sup>162</sup> Minna Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul, The Formative Years, 1453-1566* (Brill: Leiden, 2002) pp. 201-202.

<sup>163</sup> Giovan Maria Angiolello of Vicenza [Donado da Lezze], *Historia Turchesca (1300-1514)*, ed. Ion Ursu (Bucharest: 1909) p. 97; Necipoğlu, “From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye,” p. 262. Angiolello was taken captive during the siege of Negroponte in 1470 and remained in the service of Prince Mustafa until 1474. He was later in the service of Sultan Mehmed II until his death in 1481.

<sup>164</sup> Both had been merchants at the Ottoman court since the time of Murad II. Jacopo de Promontorio de Campis (1410-1487), a Genoese noble, went back to Genoa c. 1475; he wrote a brief work on Sultan Mehmed II and the administrative organization of the Ottoman court. It was published by Franz Babinger,



also acquired information about Italy and Europe through Italian states' representatives in Istanbul. Florentine merchant and agent Benedetto Dei noted in his diary that Mehmed II had a number of key Italian informants, among whom were Venetian merchant Girolamo Michiel (tax farmer of the alum mines in Phocaea from 1455 onward), the sultan's physician Jacopo Gaeta, Jewish merchant Salomone Cifutti (a formerly inhabitant of Cremona and Milan), Florentine consul Marino Ubaldini and two other leading figures in the Florentine merchant community in Istanbul.<sup>165</sup>

The personal networks linking the sultan with some of the Italian merchants in Istanbul and the cordial relations the two sides enjoyed also promoted shared political and commercial interests at the state level. Through the agency of such individuals, Mehmed II established contacts with the Italian courts, closely followed the developments in European states, and even patronized Renaissance art.<sup>166</sup> They not only played an important role as intermediaries in diplomatic relations with the West but also made possible various sorts of exchanges in ideas, information, know-how, and goods, promoting cross-cultural interaction and the formation of political alliances between the Ottoman Empire and Renaissance Italy.

Among the Italian communities residing in the Ottoman capital, the case of the Genoese was the most peculiar. Unlike the Venetian and Florentine merchants who remained citizens of their respective states and stayed in the Ottoman lands on temporary basis (as *müstemin*), the Genoese of Pera became subjects of the sultan and constituted the core of the Latin-rite inhabitants of the empire, known as the "Perots." The following section will focus on the status and experiences of the Genoese of Pera after 1453.

### **The Genoese of Pera and the Ottoman Sultan**

With the conquest of Constantinople on May 29, 1453, the Genoese colony of Pera came under Ottoman control. However, Pera did not suffer the same fate as the rest of Constantinople, since Mehmed II did not besiege or conquer it; rather, the Genoese nobles

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*Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Iacopo de Promotorio-de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475* (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1957) pp. 29-95.

<sup>165</sup> Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica dall'anno 1400 all'anno 1500*, ed. Roberto Barducci (Firenze: Francesco Papafava editore, 1984) p. 128.

<sup>166</sup> For the cultural exchange between Italian states and the Ottoman Empire, one of the pioneering studies is Julian Raby's *El Gran Turco: Mehmed the Conqueror as a patron of the Arts of Christendom* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 1980). For a more recent study, see Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," pp. 1-81.

surrendered it in return for certain privileges. According to Doukas, a month before the conquest of Constantinople, the Genoese of Pera sent ambassadors to Sultan Mehmed II in Edirne, “declaring their genuine friendship with him and renewing past treaties.”<sup>167</sup> While the sultan confirmed his feelings of friendship toward the Genoese, he also warned them not to give support to the Byzantines in their defense of the city. The ambassadors gave him their promise; yet, during the siege, the Genoese of Pera allied with both sides. On the one hand, the ex-podestà of Pera, Angelo Giovanni Lomellino, wrote in a mournful letter to his brother that they had tried to help defend the city using mercenaries from Chios and Genoa, and that he himself had done whatever was possible, as the loss of Constantinople would be the loss of Pera.<sup>168</sup> Moreover, Giovanni Giustiniani-Longo, from a noble Genoese family, was appointed as the general commander of the Byzantine army and stood next to Emperor Constantine in the defense of the city. On the other hand, some Genoese provided support to the Ottoman troops. Doukas in his chronicle gives a vivid account of the situation, stating that the Genoese were fighting in both camps throughout the conquest.<sup>169</sup> Niccolò Barbaro, a Venetian eyewitness, also noted that the Genoese acted as spies for the Ottomans to gain the favor of the sultan: “Enemies of the Christian faith, the Genoese, committed this betrayal of the Christians to show themselves friendly to the Turkish sultan.”<sup>170</sup>

In any case, witnessing the conquest of the imperial city, many Genoese began to flee Pera in panic despite the agreement they had made with the sultan. Seeing this, Zaganos Pasha, Mehmed II’s vizier, quickly went to Pera and assured the Genoese that they would receive treaties with terms better than those in their previous treaties with the (Byzantine) emperors and Ottoman sultans. Upon this promise, those residents remaining in Pera, together with the *podestà*, surrendered the keys of their city to the sultan and obtained an *ahidname*, which guaranteed protection for themselves and their property as well as commercial privileges for both themselves and the merchants of Genoa.<sup>171</sup> This pledge or agreement was in a way a renewal of the privileges that the Genoese community had possessed during the Byzantine period. Under the terms of this agreement, the

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<sup>167</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium*, p. 212.

<sup>168</sup> *The Siege of Constantinople 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts*, ed. J. R. Melville-Jones (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972) p. 132 (Letter from Angelo Giovanni Lomellino, ex-podestà of Pera, to his brother, 23 June 1453).

<sup>169</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium*, p. 217.

<sup>170</sup> Niccolò Barbaro, *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople 1453*, tr. R. J. Jones (New York: Exposition Press, 1969) pp. 41-42.

<sup>171</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium*, p. 230.

Genoese were allowed to live under Ottoman rule; they were given protection and the right to follow their own laws and religious practices. In this sense, it granted the Genoese community a right of autonomy with respect to internal matters, even if Pera passed under the administration of an Ottoman judge (*kadı*). Although they could apply their own laws when dealing with internal affairs, in matters concerning the Ottomans or other non-Muslims they were subject to Islamic law. The *Magnifica Comunità di Pera* continued to take care of the needs of the Genoese community, and the churches and religious organizations of Pera came under its control; however, the *podestà* was now deprived of his title. Genoese merchants who were citizens of Genoa and resided in the city on a temporary basis for trade purposes had to pay only customs duties, and the sultan also promised to provide security for them.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> The original *ahidname*, which was in Greek, is preserved in the British Museum. For the Italian translation of the *ahidname*, *Archivio Stato di Genoa* (hereafter ASG), Archivio Segreto (hereafter AS) 2774 D “Capitolatione fatta dall’Impero Sultan Mehmet con li Perotti (857)”; the Ottoman Turkish version of the text is in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, *MS fonds turcs ancien* 130. This *ahidname* was subsequently renewed in 1613, 1617, 1624, and 1652. An original copy of the Turkish *ahidname* granted by Sultan Ahmed I in 1613 is preserved in the Genoa State Archive, AS 2737 D fol. 41. Concerning the various versions of this *ahidname* and commentary on it: E. Dalleggio D’Alessio, “Traité entre les Génois de Galata et Mehmet II (1 June 1453),” *Échos d’Orient* XXXIX, N. 197-198 (1940):161-175; “Trattato tra i Genovesi di Galata e Maometto II,” *Il Veltro* 2-4 Anno XXIII (1979):103-118; Mahmut Şakiroğlu, “Fatih Sultan Mehmed’in Galatalılara verdiği fermanın Türkçe Metinleri,” *AÜDTCF Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, XIV (1983): 211-232; Halil İnalcık, “Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553,” in *the Essays in Ottoman History* (İstanbul: Eren 1998) pp. 275-376. A recent study indicates that there is also an original Turkish version of the *ahidname* in the Galata court records: Galata Şer’iye Sicilleri, n. 17. S. 190/1. K. İlker Bulunur, “II. Mehmed tarafından Galatalılara verilen 1453 Ahidnâmesi ve buna yapılan eklemeler hakkında yeni bilgiler,” *İÜEF Tarih Dergisi* 50 (2009/2): 59-85.



Figure 3: The *Ahidname* of 1613 by Sultan Ahmed I [It confirmed the renewal of the privileges granted by Sultan Mehmed II to the Genoese of Pera in 1453. Archivio di Stato di Genova, AS 2737 D fol. 41.

It is hard to make an exact claim concerning the number of Genoese who remained in Pera immediately after the conquest. The Ottoman survey of Galata (Pera)<sup>173</sup> from 1455, which was prepared for taxation purposes (more specifically, to identify the non-Muslim *zimmi* population subject to the poll-tax and look at the houses in Galata to determine their rent), provides a list of residents and dwellings in Galata. As the document is incomplete, only the survey results for the central and eastern parts of Galata are available to us.<sup>174</sup> Looking at these results, İnalçık concluded that in 1455 there were still a remarkable number of Italians residing in Pera (60% of the pre-conquest population) and that obviously some of those who had fled to Chios and other places during the conquest had returned to Pera when they heard that Mehmed II would restore their houses and property to them.<sup>175</sup> After almost two centuries of existence, Pera was the birthplace and home of most of the Genoese who lived there. Moreover, Genoa was at the time rife with internal quarrels, and for many residents of Pera returning to the mother city did not appear a better option. They therefore remained, agreeing to become subjects of the sultan. The notarial documents from 1453 to 1490 give the impression that the Genoese community seems to have adapted itself to the changes and continued to play a part in the life of Ottoman Galata without much disruption.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Pera (meaning “the opposite side” in Greek) was the name generally used by the Genoese; the Ottomans called it Galata. There are different ideas concerning the origin of the word Galata. Some argue that it comes from the Greek word *gala* (milk), as the place was once a pasture, while others suggest that it derives from *calata* (a Genoese term for “staircase”) in reference to the famous stepped streets of the district. For details: Louis Mitler, “The Genoese in Galata: 1453-1682”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 10 (1979), 71. Although over time Pera and Galata came to refer to two different districts— Galata became the area from the shore to the tower and Pera was the upper part of the hill— during the Byzantine era and the early period of the Ottoman Empire, no such differentiation was made: both words referred to the same place.

<sup>174</sup> Halil İnalçık, “Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553,” pp. 289-297. The same author also recently published the original document along with a translation: *The Survey of Istanbul 1455* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012).

<sup>175</sup> Halil İnalçık, “Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553,” pp. 292-297; Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, p. 126.

<sup>176</sup> Geo Pistarino, “The Genoese in Pera-Turkish Galata” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 1/1 (1986): 63-85. For the edition of the notarial documents of Pera in the fifteenth century, see Ausilia Roccatagliata, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare. Atti Rogati a Pera (1408-1490)* (Genova: Università di Genova, 1982). Also, idem., “Notai Genovesi in Oltremare. Atti Rogati a Pera (1453),” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 39.1 (1999): 101-160. Besides Pera, she also edited a selection of notarial documents from Mitilene (1454-1460) and Chios. Roccatagliata, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare. Atti Rogati a Mitilene (1454-1460)*, vol. II (Genova: Università di Genova, 1982); idem., *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare. Atti Rogati a Chio (1453-1454, 1470-1471)* (Genova: Collana Storica di Fonti e Studi, 1982).

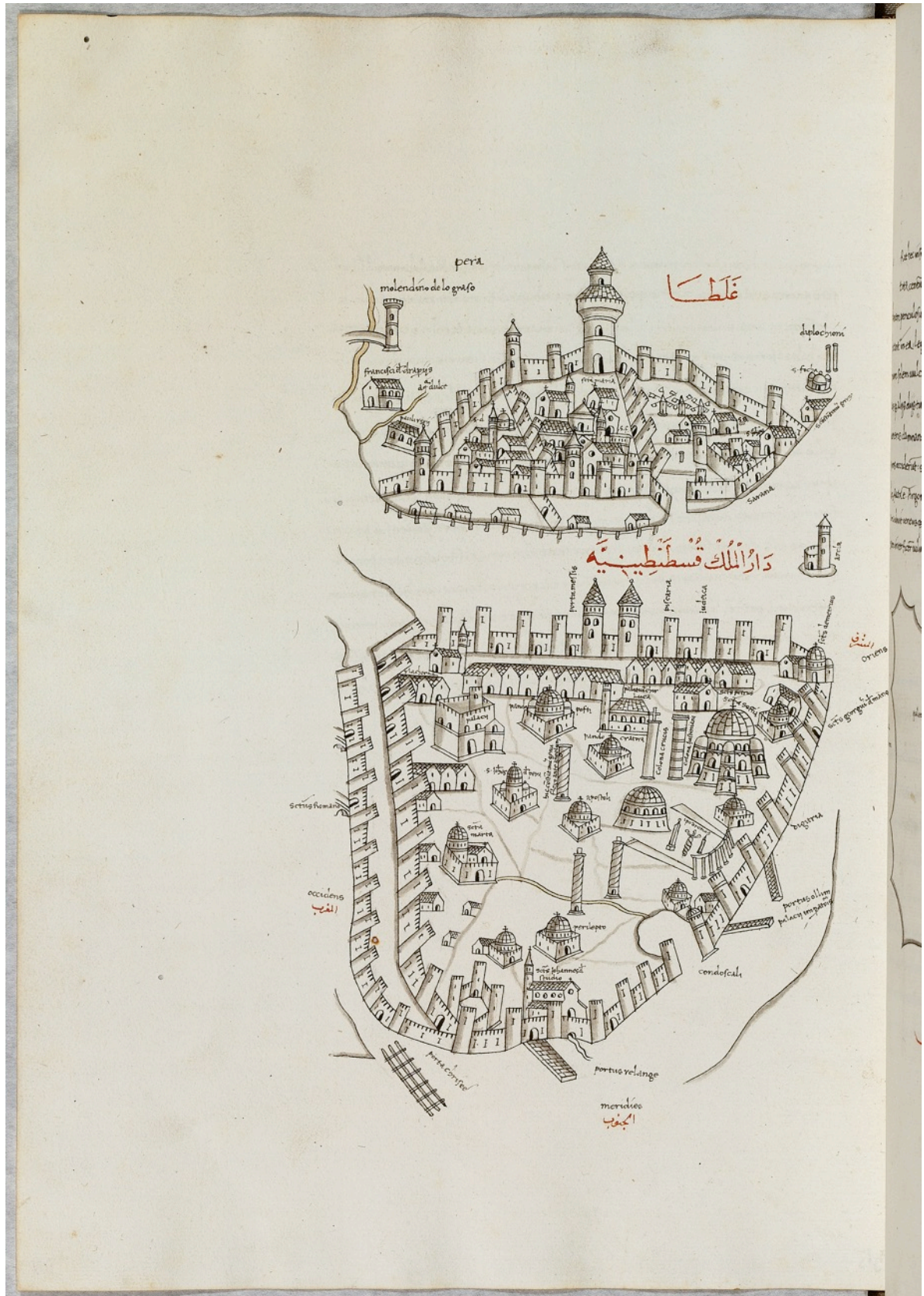


Figure 4: Map of Constantinople/Pera c. 1457/1458. Cristoforo Buondelmonti, *Liber Insularum Archipelogi*, Paris, Bibl. Nat. Nouv. Aqu. Lat 2383, fol. 34v, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

It was mutual economic interests that determined the character of Ottoman–Genoese relations during the post-conquest period.<sup>177</sup> Mehmed II wanted to repopulate his new capital and revive its economy; with this intention in view, he renewed the privileges granted to the Genoese. The Genoese community followed a similarly pragmatic approach in its relations with the Ottoman court. It is important to emphasize the fact that the entire negotiation process was conducted by the Genoese of Pera rather than representatives sent from Genoa. The *ahidname* granted by Mehmed II regulated the status and rights of the Genoese in connection with their becoming subjects of the sultan and trading in Ottoman lands; it included no reference to the government of Genoa. (The Genoese of Chios and Mytilene likewise sent ambassadors to negotiate agreements.) Therefore, it can be said that the Genoese presence in the Ottoman capital was an individual initiative of the Genoese inhabitants of Pera rather than a state-backed endeavor.

In 1455 there was in fact a diplomatic effort made by the doge of Genoa, Pietro di Campofregoso, who sent representatives to negotiate with the sultan. He seems to have been urged on the advice of ex-podestà Angelo Giovanni Lomellino, who suggested that a proper diplomatic legate be immediately sent to Istanbul “to discuss everything that applies to our places of business.”<sup>178</sup> Luciano Spinola and Baldassarre Maruffo were thus sent as ambassadors of Genoa to the Ottoman court. We do not have much information about the negotiation process; however, the detailed instructions given to the representatives indicate that their main aim was to persuade the sultan to hand Pera over to Genoese control. To this end, the ambassadors were to make contact with Francesco Draperio, who enjoyed the favor of the sultan and was familiar with the rules of conduct at the Ottoman court. They were to rely on his mediation and also take care to highlight the friendship and support the Genoese had historically given the Ottoman sultans. The ambassadors should then draw particular attention to the present situation in Pera, where the walls had been demolished, and request the sultan to make good the losses the Genoese community had suffered, ensure that the walls were repaired, and turn over the administration of Pera to the Genoese so that their merchants could safely import commodities and engage in trade.<sup>179</sup> However, this was a futile effort. The sultan did not

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<sup>177</sup> Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, p. 126.

<sup>178</sup> *The Siege of Constantinople 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts*, Letter of Angelo Giovanni Lomellino, ex-Podestà of Pera to his brother, 23 June 1453, p. 134.

<sup>179</sup> Belgrano, “Prima Serie di Documenti riguardanti la colonia Genovese di Pera,” doc. CLIV (11 March 1454), pp. 261-270: “Istruzioni della Signoria di Genova a Luciano Spinola e Baldassarre Maruffo, che si

agree to rebuild the walls and return control of the district to the Genoese, as this would mean confirmation of Genoese territorial sovereignty there.<sup>180</sup> However, in order to facilitate trade activities and economic development, bazaars, inns, and *bedestans* (covered markets) were constructed both in Istanbul and in Galata. The *bedestan* of Galata, constructed during the reign of Mehmed II, functioned as a commercial link “between the domestic sector and the warehouses of Galata.”<sup>181</sup> It was built in Perşembepazarı, in the heart of the Genoese quarter.

Apart from the failed attempt of 1455, Genoa undertook no other diplomatic initiatives concerning its colonies; in fact it had little say in developments going on in the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1453 Caffa and other trade bases on the Black Sea were given over to the control of Bank of St. George.<sup>182</sup> Different from Venice, where the government was consolidated under the control of great merchant families promoting a state-supported trade, Genoa was “a city of feuds and factions” where the nobility consisted of urban merchants and rural nobility “whose interests were split between commerce and traditional feudal estates.”<sup>183</sup> These divisions most frequently resulted in conflicts of interests and civil war among the rival noble families. Already in 1430s the Spanish traveler Pero Tafur regarded Genoa as a nation very powerful at sea; but at the same time noted this crucial internal weakness, observing that “had it not been for the great dissensions which the people have had amongst themselves, their dominion would have extended throughout the world.”<sup>184</sup>

During the fifteenth century Genoa engaged in constant domestic political crises, rapid changes in the *signoria*, and external interventions, which consequently left Genoese merchants in the Eastern Mediterranean to their own fate. Braudel pointed out

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spediscono ambasciatori a Maometto.” Some of the walls that had been built around the district during the Byzantine period were apparently demolished by the Ottoman authorities soon after the conquest for security reasons. İnalçık, “Ottoman Galata,” pp. 281-282.

<sup>180</sup> Halil İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History*, p. 273; Millas, *Pera*, p. 26; Semavi Eyice, “Testimonianze Genovesi in Turchia,” *Il Veltro* 2-4 Anno XXIII (1979): 63-64.

<sup>181</sup> Ekrem Işın, “Everyday Life in Pre-modern Istanbul,” in *Encomium to Istanbul*, ed. Enis Batur (Istanbul: YKY, 1996) p. 69.

<sup>182</sup> Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978) p. 119. In Babinger’s view, the Bank of St George was an institution whose importance was akin to that of the East India Company. In return for loans to the state, the bank was assigned the right to collect duties and *gabelle*. In addition, it also took over control of the Republic’s colonies and territorial possessions as guarantees for further loans. When the Genoese administration had difficulty in paying its debts, it had to sell its possessions to the Bank of St. George, which was described by Machiavelli as a state within a state with its own administrative organization, ships and financial powers.

<sup>183</sup> David S. Kelly, “Genoa and Venice: An Early Commercial Rivalry,” p. 135-141.

<sup>184</sup> Pero Tafur, *Travel and Adventures 1435-1439*, tr. Malcolm Letts (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926) p. 28.



that within the forty years from 1413 to 1453, Genoa underwent fourteen revolutions and following that, suffered two invasions; the first of these at the hands of the French in 1458, five years after the conquest of Constantinople, and the second by the Sforza of Milan in 1464.<sup>185</sup> For this reason, unlike in the case of Venice, there was no state to establish diplomatic representation in the Ottoman capital and protect the interests of Genoese merchants. As for the colonies on the Black Sea, they gradually dwindled in number and all were finally lost. It was only in 1528 that Genoa restored itself under the leadership of Andrea Doria, and with the support of the Spanish Empire. By this time, however, it had lost all its colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean except Chios. And Chios was under the control of the *Maona*, who maintained almost autonomous rule over the island, independent of the mother city.<sup>186</sup>

The chaotic situation in Genoa paved the way for the Ottomans to take over the Genoese colonies of Pera (1453), Phocaea (1455), and Caffa (1475) without much resistance. After the Ottoman conquest, the structure of trade, which involved the exchange of finished products for raw materials, remained the same. However, these commodities and raw materials were mainly used for provisioning the imperial city, whose population increased significantly during this period.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, the Italian monopoly over the Black Sea was broken by the increasing presence of Greek, Muslim, Jewish, and Armenian merchants.<sup>188</sup> Along with the Genoese colonies, Sultan Mehmed II also took over Venetian trade bases between the years 1459 and 1475, thus bringing the entire Black Sea region under Ottoman control. However, the Italians were not completely shut out of trade in this area. Although loss of the trade bases on the Black Sea did indeed negatively affect Genoese trade interests, there exist sources—for instance, the Ottoman customs registers for the years 1486-89—indicating that Italian merchants, including the Genoese, still continued to trade on the Black Sea as both merchants and

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<sup>185</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. I, p. 339.

<sup>186</sup> The *Maona* refers to an association of merchants who collected revenues from the island on behalf of Genoa and in return paid an annual tribute to Genoa. Enrico Basso, “La Maona di Chio, Genova e l’Impero Ottomano: relazioni commerciali e intrecci diplomatici fra Tardo Medioevo e prima Età moderna,” in *Relazioni Economiche tra Europa e Mondo Islamico secc. XIII-XVIII, Atti della Trentottesima Settimana di Studi, 1-5 Maggio*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi, vol. I (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2007) pp. 315-324.

<sup>187</sup> İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 181.

<sup>188</sup> Gilles Veinstein, “From the Italians to the Ottomans,” pp. 223-226.

ship owners, and that, contrary to what most historians had until recently assumed to be the case, the Black Sea was open to them until the end of sixteenth century.<sup>189</sup>

As the evidence related to the trading activities of the Genoese merchants during the post-conquest period is scattered among many sources, it is difficult to determine their position in the Ottoman market. However, it can be argued that those Genoese who remained in the Ottoman realm and became Ottoman subjects not only continued their commercial activities, but did so in a more advantageous way. As subjects of the sultan, the Genoese of Pera received protection and also benefited from lower customs duties. In the early 1480s the customs duty for non-Muslims (*müstemins*) and non-tributaries was 4 per cent, while tributaries, including the Genoese, paid only 2 per cent.<sup>190</sup> In return, by virtue of their wealth, expertise, and commercial networks, the Genoese merchants could meet the immediate needs of the expanding Ottoman state. At least until the arrival of the (Sephardic) Jewish merchants in 1492, the Genoese subjects of the sultan seem to have acted as intermediaries between the Italian and Ottoman markets through their knowledge of the languages and practices of both sides in this commercial relationship. For instance, according to the report of the Ottoman secret agent Barak Reis, who was sent on a mission to Genoa and France,<sup>191</sup> quite a number of Genoese merchants who were subjects

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<sup>189</sup> İnalçık, "The Ottoman Customs System and the Black Sea Trade," in *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea, vol. I: The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487-1490* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996) pp. 109-10; Gilles Veinstein, "From the Italians to the Ottomans," p. 229.

<sup>190</sup> İnalçık, "Ottoman Galata," p. 288; Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, 131.

<sup>191</sup> His mission had to do with tracing and, if possible, capturing or even assassinating Prince Cem, a pretender to the Ottoman throne, who was taken hostage by the Knights of Rhodes and sent to France. The story actually goes back to 1481, when Sultan Mehmed II died suddenly and his sons Bayezid and Cem clashed over the throne. With the support of the Janissaries and a number of statesmen, Bayezid rushed to Istanbul and was proclaimed sultan. Meanwhile Cem, who also had quite a large number of supporters, gathered his troops and marched toward Bursa, which city recognized him as sultan. Taking encouragement from this, Cem proposed to his brother that they settle the conflict peacefully by the dividing the empire into two: the European portion would go to Bayezid, while Cem would rule the Anatolian lands. However, this offer was rejected by Bayezid, who sent his armies against his brother and defeated him. Upon this, Cem and his supporters fled first to Konya and from there to Egypt, to seek refuge in the Mamluk Empire. With the help of the Mamluks, he attempted to besiege Konya but was not successful. Eventually he had to flee to Rhodes, where he was taken hostage by the Knights of Rhodes. From this time onward, he would become a pawn used by the European powers in their diplomatic relations with Sultan Bayezid. In order to eliminate the possibility of Cem attacking the Ottoman Empire with the support of the Knights of Rhodes, Bayezid sent an ambassador to Pierre d'Aubusson, the grand master of the Order, offering him 45,000 ducats per year, in return for which the grand master would guarantee that Cem would not pose a threat to Bayezid. In the meantime, for safety reasons the Knights sent the Ottoman prince to France, where he was kept as a prisoner under the watch of the Duke of Savoy. Cem remained there for six years. In 1488 he was handed over to the pope, becoming his captive. When Charles VIII of France invaded Rome, he took Cem with him to Naples, and soon after that, in 1495, the Ottoman prince died there in the custody of Charles VIII's army. During Prince Cem's captivity in Europe, the Ottoman administration sent various ambassadors, secret agents, and spies to learn the prince's whereabouts and, if possible, capture him. Barak Reis was one of those agents. For more details, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. II, pp. 163-170; İsmail Hikmet Ertaylan, *Sultan Cem* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1951) pp. 183-204; Halil İnalçık, "A Case

of the sultan were residing in Genoa and conducting trade in textiles between Genoa and Istanbul. Barak Reis came across ten or fifteen such individuals in a tavern in Genoa, and these merchants, who had known him since his childhood, told him that they had come to buy “Janissary felt and other cloth” to sell in Istanbul. Among them was a man known as Frenk Iskender, who provided Barak Reis with clothing and money for his expenses and also hosted him in his home, where the Ottoman agent stayed for a month.<sup>192</sup> It can be thus seen that along with the Florentines, who were exporting a substantial amount of woolen cloth for the Ottoman army, the Genoese subjects of the sultan also dealt in this trade.

In fact, from the 1450s onward a significant transformation took place in Genoa’s woolen cloth industry and trade. Previously, the Genoese had exported woolen cloth of English, Lombard, or Tuscan origin to the Levant market. However, during the second half of the fifteenth century, they began to export their own woolens not only to nearby regions but also to the Ottoman market. The Genoese woolens were of mediocre quality, and therefore their prices were far lower than those of Lombard or English woolens.<sup>193</sup> Besides producing mid-range quality woolens, the Genoese also manufactured high-quality cloth, imitating the English and Florentine fabrics. As early as 1458 a remarkable portion of Genoese woolens were sent to Chios and Bursa as “counterfeits” of Florentine woolens. With these high-quality imitations, the Genoese appear to have been in competition with the Florentines in the Ottoman textile market. Referring to an account book of Genoese notary Antonio Gallo, Heers shows that from 1491 to 1494 Gallo sent a significant quantity of Genoese woolens produced in the Florentine style (*more florentianum*) to Chios. Moreover, muslins, i.e., light fabrics made of wool, cotton, linen, or hemp, were very much favored in the Ottoman market and valued at a price twice that of other Genoese textiles.<sup>194</sup> Looking at this evidence, one can argue that the opportunities in the Ottoman market seem to have encouraged the Genoese to develop their woolen

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Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: the Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan,” in *Ottoman Diplomacy. Conventional or Unconventional?* ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) pp. 66-88; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel. The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 82-113.

<sup>192</sup> This fascinating four-page report by the Ottoman secret agent is preserved in Topkapı Palace Archive D. 10589. It has been transcribed and published by Şerafettin Turan in his article “Barak Reis’ in Şehzade Cem meselesiyle ilgili olarak Savoie’ya gönderilmesi,” *Belleten* XXVI/103 (1962): 539-55; for an English translation of and commentary on this report, see V. L. Ménage, “The Mission of an Ottoman Agent in France in 1486,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 3/4 (1965): 112-132.

<sup>193</sup> Jacques Heers, *Gênes au XVe Siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971) pp. 180-182; Idem., “La mode et les marches des draps de laine: Gênes et la Montagne à la fin du Moyen Âge,” *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 26/5 (1971): 1114.

<sup>194</sup> Heers, “La mode et les marches des draps de laine,” pp. 1116-1117.

cloth industry by diversifying the quality of their products, from low to high. In order to penetrate that market and increase the volume of their exports, they imitated Florentine woolens in particular. Thus, during the post-conquest period, the Genoese, just like their Florentine counterparts, were quite active in the Ottoman textile market, exporting their woolens in return for raw materials.

In addition to woolen cloth, silk fabrics were another important commodities exported by the Genoese to the Ottoman market. In comparison with the state of Genoa's woolen cloth industry in the mid-fifteenth century, its silk cloth industry initially established in Genoa by Florentine and Lucchese specialists in the late fourteenth century was developed to a far higher level by Genoese craftsmen, who soon became masters in this field. In particular, Genoese velvets (with triple pile) were in great demand at the Ottoman court, where velvets were regarded as among the most prestigious silks in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>195</sup> Genoese merchants developed contacts at the Ottoman court to sell luxurious Genoese velvets and also to achieve easy access to Persian raw silk. The latter was important, because Genoa acquired the raw silk for its silk industry mainly from the Levant. According to Heers, even after the fall of Pera and Phocaea a significant amount of raw silk came to Genoa from Chios; there were even various types of raw silk known as silk of Chios, silk of Rhodes, and *stravai* (raw silk from Astarabad).<sup>196</sup> Levantine raw silk thus continued to constitute a significant portion of Genoese imports from the Ottoman market during this period.

Genoese merchants likewise continued to be quite active, especially in Bursa, a center for the silk trade. Both European and Ottoman sources frequently mention Genoese merchants and their business affairs in this Ottoman city. Florentine agent Giovanni di Francesco Maringhi, who acted as resident agent in Pera for a number of Florentine firms selling woolen cloth from 1497 to 1507, in his letters to Florence made reference to Italian and Jewish merchants residing in Bursa at the beginning of the sixteenth century, who numbered around thirty-two. Along with their names, Maringhi also provided details about their occupations: cloth merchant, commissioner, banker, jeweler, silk weaver, and so on. Among them were quite a number of Genoese drapers and brokers (for example,

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<sup>195</sup> Nurhan Atasoy et al., *İPEK: The Crescent and the Rose, Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets* (London and Istanbul: Azimuth Publications and TEB Publishing, 2001) p. 16.

<sup>196</sup> Heers, *Gênes au XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 184-185.

members of the Spinola family) bartering finished cloth for raw silk in Bursa.<sup>197</sup> Not surprisingly, we come across Genoese names in Bursa's Ottoman-era court registers, which provide valuable information concerning their daily lives and business affairs.<sup>198</sup>

At this time, in addition to serving as an important transit port for raw materials from Asia Minor to Genoa and Europe, Chios was a textile-manufacturing center, and the main customer for its silk fabrics was the Ottoman palace.<sup>199</sup> Although information on the history of silk cloth production in Chios is quite limited, it is assumed that in the late fifteenth century the island was producing its own raw silk, which was used by local looms.<sup>200</sup> In 1480, there were quite a number of silk weavers on the island, and from evidence found for 1483, we understand that most of them had migrated from Genoa—concerning which the *Arte della Seta* in Genoa made a complaint to the authorities in Chios, asking them to return these craftsmen. Another such complaint, which offers perhaps the most striking example of the interplay between Chios and Genoa, has to do with the Genoese Gaspare Borra moving to Chios in 1498 and setting up a silk weaving business “with a secret manufacturing process and special machines.” Upon this, the Genoese administration requested that the authorities in Chios destroy all the machinery and send Borra back to Genoa.<sup>201</sup> This indicates that the *Arte della Seta* in Genoa regarded silk cloth production in Chios as a potential threat to the marketing of their own silk fabrics. In any case, Chios maintained its importance as a supplier of silk cloth to the Ottoman palace. In a treaty between Sultan Selim I and the Genoese Chiots dating from 1512, it was affirmed that if the sultan ordered textiles, the cost would be deducted from the annual tribute the Genoese were obliged to pay him.<sup>202</sup>

In addition to raw silk, Genoese merchants also imported a significant amount of cotton. According to Mazzaoui, “in the fifteenth century the largest exporters of Turkish

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<sup>197</sup> G.R.B Richards edited and translated these letters in her book *Florentine merchants in the Age of the Medici* (Cambridge, 1932) pp. 283-293; Heath W. Lowry, *Ottoman Bursa in Travel Accounts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies Publications, 2003) pp. 24-25.

<sup>198</sup> A selection of these court cases for the years 1478-80 and 1484-86, in original Ottoman Turkish along with their summaries was published by Halil İnalçık, “Bursa: XV. Asır Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihine Dair Vesikalar,” *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten* 24 (1960): 45-102; “Osmanlı İdare, Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihiyle İlgili Belgeler: Bursa Kadı Sicillerinden Seçmeler,” *Belgeler* 13 (1980/81): 1-41. In these court registers, the Genoese of Pera were referred to as Galatalı zimmi, Galatalı Efrenci or Cenevizli. As their names were written quite differently in the Ottoman documents and the father's name (rather than the surname) was used as an identifier—for instance, Civanbatist oğlu Lorenzo (Lorenzo, son of Giovan Battista) or Cenevizli Damyan oğlu Piero (the Genoese Piero, son of Damian)—it is a bit difficult to trace them in parallel with the European sources.

<sup>199</sup> Nurhan Atasoy et al., *İPEK*, p. 173.

<sup>200</sup> Philip P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios*, vol. I, pp. 510-511.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 493.

<sup>202</sup> Nurhan Atasoy et al., *İPEK*, p. 173.

cotton were the Genoese,<sup>203</sup> who bought the cotton of Asia Minor in the markets of Bursa and Phocaea and transported it through Chios to Genoa. There was also cotton from the Balkans transported to the European markets via Chios. With these substantial cotton imports, the Genoese supplied the rural industries in Lombardy, Liguria, and Piedmont, where it was used for the manufacture of inexpensive cloth. They also re-exported a large quantity of cotton to Flanders and England. During the years between 1507 and 1537, cotton from Asia Minor represented “the highest volume of textile fibres imported into Genoa.”<sup>204</sup> Thus, despite the loss of the Black Sea colonies, Genoese merchants continued to supply raw materials necessary for the textile industry, such as raw silk, cotton, wool, camlet, and mohair, along with alum and dyes, to Genoa and other European ports through Chios, which became an important base for Genoese trading activities. At the same time, the Genoese merchants of Pera and Chios competed with other Italians and local merchants in the Ottoman market to sell their finished cloth of varying types and quality. This competition not only promoted the development of the textile industries in Genoa and Chios, but additionally offered Genoese merchants new prospects for profit.

The Genoese of Chios also used their resources and skill at shipbuilding in the service of the Ottomans. During this period, as a result of the Ottoman naval policy to acquire control over the trade routes and protect trade entrepôts in the Eastern Mediterranean, there were repeated naval conflicts with the Venetians. With intensive activity underway to prepare a fleet for the Ottoman navy, the Genoese Chiots were able to provide skilled craftsmen and resources to the Ottoman arsenal. In 1468 Ottoman Grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha sent an order to *Maona* of Chios asking for sixty caulkers to be sent to Gallipoli to assist in preparing a fleet to be used in Ottoman attacks against Venetian possessions.<sup>205</sup> A similar order was made in 1488; in consequence, Genoese craftsmen Nicola Corsanego and Benedetto Brusacastella were sent to the arsenal in Istanbul to help with building ships.<sup>206</sup> In addition to caulkers and carpenters, building materials such as pitch were also obtained from Chios. In the first half of the sixteenth century the *Maona* continued to provide skilled shipbuilders to be at the disposal of the

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<sup>203</sup> Maureen F. Mazzaoui, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the Later Middle Ages, 1100-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) pp. 44-45. For instance, in 1458, 430 tons of cotton worth 74,000 gold ducats were imported from Chios to Genoa.

<sup>204</sup> Heers, *Gênes au XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 278; Mazzaoui, *The Italian Cotton Industry*, p. 47.

<sup>205</sup> Philip P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios*, p. 219.

<sup>206</sup> Gian G. Musso, “I Genovesi e il Levante tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna. Ricerche d’archivio,” in *Genova, La Liguria e L’Oltremare tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna. Studi e Ricerche d’Archivio*, II (Genova: Fratelli Bozzi, 1976) p. 113.

sultan. In 1545 Grand Admiral Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha sent an urgent message to Chios asking for the immediate dispatch of some craftsmen to the Ottoman capital to work at shipbuilding, noting that compliance would be regarded as a manifestation of their loyalty to the Sublime Porte.<sup>207</sup>



Figure 5: Island of Chios, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Museo Navale, Genoa

In sum, the conquest of Constantinople certainly affected the Genoese in Pera and other colonies on the Black Sea and the Aegean; yet, the assumption that it struck a serious blow to Genoese trading activities in the Eastern Mediterranean is misleading. By prioritizing their personal and commercial interests, the members of some Genoese merchant families adapted themselves to the new conditions and even tried to shape them according to what best served their interests. Due to the scarcity of sources, it is hard to pinpoint these families precisely; but in the light of evidence from the Ottoman survey of 1455 and from Genoese notarial documents, it appears that the Draperio, Langasco, Garra, Grillo, Spinola, Salvago, Gentile, Pallavicino, and de Franchi families were among

<sup>207</sup> Halil Sahillioglu (ed.), *Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi H. 951-952 tarihli ve E-12321 numaralı Mühimme Defteri* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002), doc. no. 283 (c. 951/1545).

the wealthy Genoese who became subjects of the sultan. Some of these families continued to hold the same important positions they had held before the conquest. The best-known example in this sense is Francesco Draperio. As a close friend of the sultan, he was able to keep the tax-farming concession of the alum mines in Phocaea after the conquest. At the same time he was one of the partners who controlled the production and export of alum, which indicates the extent of the Genoese monopoly over this profitable commodity. As previously mentioned, in the process of building their state, the Ottoman rulers looked to increase state revenue by establishing fixed income streams rather than controlling and exploiting resources themselves.<sup>208</sup> This economic policy allowed the Genoese to hold onto their trade interests in the Ottoman realm for a time, though in Draperio's case, his position as tax farmer of the alum mines did not last long due to a conflict with the Genoese Chiots. This took place when, in 1455, Draperio asked for the payment of 40,000 gold coins owed to him for alum by the Genoese in Chios. The *Maona*, however, rejected this demand, claiming that the debt had already been paid. Upon this, Draperio resorted to asking for help from the sultan, who sent a fleet to Chios to collect the debt. In the end, faced with the threat of losing their colony, the Chiots agreed to pay increased tribute to the sultan.<sup>209</sup> After this event, we do not come across any references to Francesco Draperio in the sources; he seems to have been replaced as tax farmer of the alum mines in Phocaea by a Venetian merchant, Girolamo Michiel.

It is difficult to trace the Genoese community of Pera through the sixteenth century, as its members became reduced in number for various reasons and gradually acculturated and assimilated into Ottoman society as Perots, who represented “the last vestiges of the Genoese community that had thrived in the area for centuries, joined by refugees from Caffa forced to move to the Ottoman capital after its takeover in 1475.”<sup>210</sup> Those who found better opportunities for their interests made their way to new markets and routes in the West. It has been declared that although the Genoese lost easy access to the alum mines in Phocaea, the discovery of alum mines at Tolfa near Rome in 1464 served as compensation for this, which event was described by Pope Pius II as “our

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<sup>208</sup> Kate Fleet, “Power and Economy: Early Ottoman Economic Practice,” p. 127.

<sup>209</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium*, pp. 246-255.

<sup>210</sup> Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, p. 142. According to Mauri della Fratta, a patriarchal vicar in Istanbul between 1629 and 1631, there were 41 Italian houses and 50 families in Pera. Among them, the Genoese Draperio, Grillo, and Salvago families had remained since pre-Ottoman times. *Relazione dello stato della christianità di Pera e Constantinopoli obediante al Sommo Pontefice Romano. Manoscritto della prima metà del XVII secolo*, ed., Eugenio Dalleggio D'Alessio (Istanbul, 1925)



greatest victory against the Turk.”<sup>211</sup> However, Musso notes that alum was still sent from Phocaea even after the discovery of Tolfa.<sup>212</sup> Moreover, after the loss of Samastro (Amasra) in 1460 and Caffa in 1475 to the Ottomans, the Genoese turned their sights to Sicily and Morocco for grain and to Calabria, Sicily, and Granada for raw silk. The sugar previously supplied by Syria and Cyprus was now obtained from Spanish colonies such as Madeira and the Canaries. Nonetheless, some Genoese families also maintained their presence and trading activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Through an extensive mercantile network from the Levant to the Atlantic, they were able to transmit information and know-how quite easily among different markets. For instance, in the late fifteenth century the Doria family was active in London, Spain, Madeira, Chios, and Flanders; the Spinola family operated in London, Spain, Portugal, Madeira, Chios, and Gallipoli.<sup>213</sup>

The death of Sultan Mehmed II in 1481 and the conflict between his sons Cem and Bayezid over the throne aroused hopes in Genoa of recovering its possessions from Ottoman control. To this end, the Genoese administration agreed to send galleys to Otranto (which had been already invaded by the Ottomans in 1480) and in tandem with the government in Genoa, the Genoese of Pera offered their help to King Ferrante of Naples.<sup>214</sup> The real intention of the Genoese was to benefit from the chaotic situation in the Ottoman Empire after the death of the sultan and if possible take over control of Caffa and the trade posts on the Aegean. However, as a result of the ambitions of Alfonso II, duke of Calabria, and the distrust between the papacy, King Ferrante, and the Genoese, such plans did not reach any conclusion.<sup>215</sup> According to Dauverd, the year 1480 was a decisive moment for the Genoese of Pera, who upon the death of Mehmed II would shift their alliance to King Ferrante in order to concentrate their trade in the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. She argues that the trade privileges and concessions granted by King Ferrante attracted the Genoese to southern Italy and marked a new alliance.<sup>216</sup> Although there is no trace in the Genoese archival sources of such a mass migration of the Genoese

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<sup>211</sup> Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, pp. 392-93.

<sup>212</sup> Musso, “I Genovesi e il Levante tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna. Ricerche d’archivio,” p. 110.

<sup>213</sup> Giorgio Doria, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informativo: il know-how dei mercanti-finanzieri genovesi nei secoli XVI e XVII,” in *Nobiltà e investimenti a Genova in Età Moderna* (Genova: Istituto di Storia Economica, 1995) p. 112.

<sup>214</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto 2774 A Oriente e Costantinopoli: “1480 Proposta fatta in consiglio di governo a Genova per aiutare il Re Ferdinando contro l’armata turca a Otranto.”

<sup>215</sup> Giacomo Grasso, *Documenti Riguardanti la Costituzione di Una lega Contro il Turco nel 1481* (Genova: Istituto Sordo-Muti, 1880) pp. 1-21.

<sup>216</sup> Céline Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Genoese Merchants and the Spanish Crown*, pp. 30-31.

from the Ottoman lands to Naples, it is true that over time the Genoese merchants shifted the bulk of their trading activities to southern Italy, Iberia, and western Europe.<sup>217</sup> After 1528, when Andrea Doria transferred his allegiance from France to Spain, Genoese mercantile interests became more and more concentrated on the Spanish colonies extending from southern Italy to the Atlantic and the newly discovered Americas, which together provided a market with ample scope for the activities of the Genoese merchants.

By the mid-sixteenth century, Chios was the only link connecting Genoa to the Eastern markets. There remained almost no ties with the Genoese of Pera. This could be seen in the Genoese diplomatic efforts at the Sublime Porte in the 1550s, for which the Republic chose a Genoese citizen and Ottoman subject, Francesco de Franchi from Chios, instead of a Genoese Perot to establish contacts with the Ottoman court and facilitate the negotiations at the Ottoman capital. Meanwhile Genoese ambassadors were also strongly exhorted not to accept any requests for protection from the Perots, which gives an idea of the level of attachment existing between the *patria* and the Genoese of Pera.

### **Friends of the Sultan: The Florentines and Mehmed II**

Like other Italian states, Florence had an ambivalent stance regarding the westward expansion of the Ottomans and their conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Some Florentines supported calls for a crusade, while others were reluctant to commit their financial resources to this cause or to jeopardize their trade interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Already in 1455 Florentine galleys were commuting to and from the Ottoman capital; thus, joining a holy league against the Ottomans was not an attractive plan to many. The dilemma of the Florentines became especially evident during the Congress of Mantua, convoked by Pope Pius II in 1459. At the time of the Congress, Florentine merchant ships had already set out for Istanbul. However, Cosimo de' Medici (r. 1434-1464) also sent representatives to Mantua to express the desire of the Florentine state to serve the pope. The Florentine ambassadors stated that the idea of organizing a crusade against the infidel was a very righteous one; however, the *Signoria* did not have enough resources to give help to such an undertaking at the moment.<sup>218</sup> In truth, the Florentines did not want to support something that would be to the advantage of their

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<sup>217</sup> David Kelly, "Genoa and Venice: An Early Commercial Rivalry," p. 132; Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, pp. 392-93.

<sup>218</sup> Robert Black, *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985) pp. 230-251.

political and commercial rivals, the Venetians. Consequently, Cosimo instructed his ambassadors to leave Mantua as soon as possible in order to “avoid any public exposure at the Congress of Mantua with the galleys at Constantinople.”<sup>219</sup> Nothing came out of Pope Pius’s initiative, and in the following period, during the rule of Lorenzo de’ Medici (r. 1469-1492), relations with the Porte became much closer. Along with political and commercial interests, rivalry with Venice significantly shaped Florence’s diplomatic relations with the Ottoman sultans.

One of the most significant sources to shed light on the early phases of Florentine–Ottoman relations is the diary of a contemporary Florentine, Benedetto Dei (1418-1492), who resided in the Ottoman capital from 1461 to 1467. His *Cronica* offers valuable details concerning the politics of the time as well as the Florentine presence and trading activities in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>220</sup> Another notable work in this respect is Müller’s *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll’Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi*,<sup>221</sup> which provides the transcription of a large number of archival sources related to the diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman court and the organization and conditions of the Florentine community in the Ottoman capital from 1453 to 1531. Relying largely on Dei’s chronicle and the documentation provided by Müller, Franz Babinger wrote a comprehensive study of Florentine–Ottoman relations in the late fifteenth century, focusing on the key figures and events that fostered the relations between the two states.<sup>222</sup>

One of those key figures was undoubtedly Benedetto Dei himself, a peculiar character known as a merchant, agent, spy, traveller, and adventurer. He visited many places, from Tunisia and Timbuktu to the Ottoman Empire, presumably establishing an extensive network of commercial contacts and intelligence.<sup>223</sup> In his diary he narrated in detail his experiences in Istanbul, especially insofar as they concerned the Florentine

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<sup>219</sup> Black, *Benedetto Accolti*, p. 252.

<sup>220</sup> Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica dall’anno 1400 all’anno 1500*, ed. Roberto Barducci (Firenze: Francesco Papafava editore, 1984).

<sup>221</sup> Giuseppe Müller, *Documenti sulle Relazioni delle Città Toscane coll’Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi fino all’anno MDXXXI* (Firenze: Cellini, 1879) p. 149, 281.

<sup>222</sup> Franz Babinger, “Lorenzo de’ Medici e la Corte Ottomana,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* III (1963): 305-361. Other relevant works on this topic: Franz Babinger, “Maometto II, Il Conquistatore, e L’Italia,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* LXIII (1951): 469-505; Halil İnalçık, “Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553,” pp. 275-376; Reena Devi, *Glass Bridges: Cross-Cultural Exchange between Florence and the Ottoman Empire*, Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009; Lorenzo Tanzini, “Il Magnifico e il Turco. Elementi politici, economici e culturali nelle relazioni tra Firenze e Impero Ottomano al tempo di Lorenzo de’ Medici,” *Rivista dell’Istituto di Storia dell’Europa Mediterranea* 4 (Giugno 2010): 271-289; Kate Fleet, “Florence and the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century,” in *Ötekilerin Peşinde: Ahmet Yaşar Ocak’a Armağan*, eds. Mehmet Öz and Fatih Yeşil (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2015) pp. 781-794.

<sup>223</sup> Roberto Barducci, “Benedetto Dei,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 36 (1988) [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/benedetto-dei\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/benedetto-dei_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

state's relations with Sultan Mehmed II and tensions with the Venetians, whom he considered the greatest enemies of the *Signoria*. Ironically enough, when he first came to Istanbul, Dei worked as treasurer for Girolamo Michiel, an influential Venetian tax farmer and lessee of the alum mines in Phocaea. The crisis between Venice and the Ottoman Empire negatively affected Michiel's business, and Dei also suffered the consequences, being arrested in Edirne due to his patron's debts. He was soon freed, however, and returned to Istanbul.<sup>224</sup> It is not clear whether Dei's enmity against the Venetians was related to this unfortunate business experience with his Venetian patron, or whether this was simply used as a pretext for the Florentines' collaboration with the sultan to further their interests in the Ottoman lands. Even so, in his *Cronica* he expressed his antipathy towards the Venetians at every opportunity. In this respect, the objectivity of Dei's account is open to debate, especially when also taking into consideration the fact that Leonardo da Vinci regarded him as "a fabulist" after having met him at the court of the Sforzas.<sup>225</sup> However, his work is important in terms of describing the conditions that paved the way for the settlement of Florentines in Ottoman cities, including the imperial capital, during the rule of Mehmed II.

According to Dei, in 1460 Sultan Mehmed II [Ottomanno Ughuli] heard that the Venetians and the Genoese had sent ambassadors to Rome in order to complain to the pope that the Duke of Milan and the *Signoria* of Florence were supporting the Ottomans. The sultan also learned that it had been decided to hold a council in Mantua for all of the Christian rulers; but to him the most alarming news was that when the pope had come to Florence, the Florentines all agreed upon the need for military operation in the East. However, soon after this, Florentine galleys under the captaincy of Francesco Vettori, Agostino di Nerone, and Bernardo Chorbinegli arrived Istanbul with cargos of silk cloth, brocades, woolen cloth, oil, and soap. Sultan Mehmed was so pleased that he himself went aboard one of the ships. Dei also noted that the sultan discussed with these Florentines the affairs in Italy; they assured him that both Florence and the Duchy of Milan were enemies of Venice, and that without their participation, Italy could not move against the Ottomans. Moreover, they outlined to the sultan "the way and means that would make him the ruler of the Morea which was currently controlled by the Venetians."<sup>226</sup> Accordingly, Mehmed II granted privileges allowing all Florentines to

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<sup>224</sup> Franz Babinger, "Lorenzo de' Medici e la Corte Ottomana," pp. 310-311.

<sup>225</sup> Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His time*, p. 182.

<sup>226</sup> Dei, *La Cronica*, p. 159-160.

come and trade in the Ottoman domains without paying customs duties; they could have their own dwellings and a church in which to freely exercise their religion.

From Dei's account, it can be deduced that the first formal *ahidname* was granted to the Florentine community in 1460-1461. Considering as well the fact that the first permanent representative of the Florentine community in Istanbul, Mainardo degli Ubaldini, was appointed in 1461, it seems reasonable to assume that in return for their support against the Venetians in the Peloponnesian campaign, Mehmed II granted privileges allowing the Florentine merchants to trade in the Ottoman lands.<sup>227</sup> In this way, the sultan also secured the alliance of the Florentines as "his greatest and best friends" in case of a possible holy league directed against the Ottomans under papal-Venetian leadership.<sup>228</sup>

Unfortunately the official document containing the capitulations granted by Mehmed II is not available to us. There are various views concerning its original version. According to Müller, in 1455 the Florentines requested trading privileges in the Ottoman ports and thereupon received capitulations, which were renewed many times in the following years.<sup>229</sup> The version of the capitulations Müller and, later, Vedovato provided was derived from the work of Pagnini, who found an undated document in the chancellery of the *Arte della Lana*.<sup>230</sup> Both Müller and Vedovato contended that this document was the earliest copy of the capitulations, possibly dating from 1455-60. However, Camerani argued against this contention, by presenting another copy of the privileges, dated 1500.<sup>231</sup> It was granted in Edirne by Sultan Bayezid II as a renewal of the privileges previously granted to the Florentine community by his father. According to Camerani, this is the earliest copy of the capitulations available to us; the version published by Pagnini was probably that granted by Sultan Selim I in 1513.<sup>232</sup> The most noticeable difference between the two versions of the capitulations is that in the older one (i.e., the one from 1500) the term *emino*—rather than *bailo*—was used to designate the

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<sup>227</sup> Franz Babinger, "Lorenzo de' Medici e la Corte Ottomana," p. 312.

<sup>228</sup> Dei, *La Cronica*, p. 159: "magiori e più ottimi amici ch'egli avessi."

<sup>229</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CXXXII (3 December 1455) p. 182; p. 496.

<sup>230</sup> Giuseppe Vedovato, "Note sui privilegi capitolari fiorentini del secolo XV," *Archivio Storico Italiano* XCVII (1939): 182-184; Giovanni Francesco Pagnini, *Della Decima e delle altre gravanze della moneta e della mercatura de' Fiorentini, Parte III, Della mercatura* Tomo II (Lisbon: Lucca, 1765) pp. 281-282.

<sup>231</sup> Sergio Camerani, "Contributo alla storia dei trattati commerciali fra la Toscana e i Turchi," p. 87. The document is preserved in the Florentine State Archive, Miscellanea Medicea (hereafter MM) 173/10, cc. 1r-2v.

<sup>232</sup> In fact, the version of Pagnini also corresponds to the Ottoman Turkish copy granted in 1527/28 [Fi evahir-i muharrem sene 934] by Sultan Süleyman and recorded in Feridun Bey's *Mecmûa-i Münşeatü's-Selâtin*, vol. II (Istanbul, 1265), p. 395.

representative of the Florentine nation; however, this modification seems to have been a nominal one, as it did not bring about any changes in the eminence or responsibilities of this office.<sup>233</sup>

Apart from this difference, all of the other privileges were more or less the same in both documents. In general terms, these include guarantees of freedom of trade and travel in the Ottoman domains, including the Black Sea; security for the persons and properties of Florentine merchants; and customs duty rates similar to those paid by the Venetians. Florentine merchants buying silk in Bursa would not be double taxed. The Ottoman administration would guarantee the security of the Florentine merchants' property at sea and on overland trade routes against depredations by the Venetians, Genoese, and others.<sup>234</sup> As for civil and criminal matters arising among the Florentines, the *bailo* or *emino* would be responsible for the jurisdiction, and the Florentines free to choose their own witnesses in legal cases; however, in the case of conflicts with other non-Muslims or Ottoman subjects, an Ottoman *kadı* (judge) would be the main authority.

The close collaboration and alliance between the Florentine community and Sultan Mehmed II continued full steam ahead during the Ottoman–Venetian war from 1463 to 1479. Consul Mainardo Ubaldini and Florentine merchants Jacopo Tedaldi, Niccolò Ardinghegli, and Carlo Martegli actively supported Mehmed II's decision to declare war on Venice, sharing with him secret letters of the Venetians concerning a possible attack against the Ottomans. Moreover, in 1466 Dei obtained in Chios a letter belonging to the Venetians, which he immediately sent to the Florentine consul in Pera, who presented it to the sultan. In the letter, the writer spoke of the alliance of the Venetians with the other Italian rulers and the pope against the Ottoman sultan, bragging that Venetian priests would soon be celebrating mass in Santa Sophia.<sup>235</sup> This news was enough to inflame the sultan's anger against the Venetians.

Besides providing intelligence on the Venetians' moves, the Florentines advised the sultan concerning the construction of fortifications and artillery installations along the Dardanelles to defend against Venetian attacks. They also accompanied the Ottoman

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<sup>233</sup> Gino Masi, *Statuti delle Colonie Fiorentine all'Estero (sec. XV-XVI)* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1941) pp. 97-102.

<sup>234</sup> According to this article, "if the Florentine merchants arrive in Avlona and take a boat to cross to Italy, and the Venetians, Genoese, or other infidels intercept the boat and seize their goods, the Ottoman authorities shall demand the captured goods from them when the infidel attackers are found in the Ottoman territories." It is clear from this article that Pagnini's version dates from a time after the 1480s, when the Ancona-Avlona-Istanbul route became the main trade route for the Florentine merchants. For more details, see Chapter IV.

<sup>235</sup> Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica*, p. 164.

army in its campaigns. For instance, Dei himself participated in Mehmed II's campaign against the Venetians in Argos and Mistras in the Peloponnese and in Albania.<sup>236</sup> The Florentines even organized public feasts in Pera to celebrate the sultan's victories.<sup>237</sup> Moreover, in 1470 when the Ottomans occupied Negroponte, a significant commercial and military Venetian outpost in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Florentines chose not to respond to the sultan's actions, despite the fact that Florentine merchants and ships also incurred great damage during the fighting. Neither Pope Paul II's exhortations to the Florentines for a united expedition against the Ottomans nor the Venetians' appeal to their "brothers and dearest friends"<sup>238</sup> to act together against the common enemy had any effect on the Florentines.<sup>239</sup> Their neutral stance even led to rumors that they provided financial and logistical support to the Ottoman fleet during the conquest of Negroponte, to the detriment of their commercial rival Venice.<sup>240</sup>

It could be argued that the sultan's conflict with the Venetians played into the hands of the Florentines in the Ottoman Empire in a significant way. As a consequence of the Ottoman–Venetian war, many Venetians residing in the Ottoman lands were imprisoned; their commodities and houses were seized. The resultant commercial lacuna was quickly filled by the Florentines, who soon expanded their interests in the Ottoman market. There was great demand for woolen cloth in the Ottoman Empire, especially for the growing army. Florentines met this demand with their domestically produced Garbo cloth and in fact almost monopolized the trade of woolen cloth in the Ottoman market. This topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV; however, just to give an idea of how profitable this business could be, by the end of Sultan Mehmed II's rule in 1481, the number of the janissaries had increased twofold, to 10,000 men.<sup>241</sup> Providing the Ottoman army with woolen cloth thus brought a remarkable upsurge to the woolen cloth industry in Florence. In return, the main commodity Florentines bought in the Ottoman market was Persian raw silk, which was in demand for the developing silk industry. Despite certain periods of stagnation and crisis in Florentine trade in the Ottoman market due to the

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-125

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., pp. 162-165. Sultan Mehmed II participated in one of these celebrations in Pera in 1465; he visited and dined in the house of Florentine merchant-banker Carlo Martelli and Vermiglio Capponi.

<sup>238</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CLXVII (22 August 1470) p. 213: "populi Florentini, fratribus et amicis nostris carissimis."

<sup>239</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CLXVI (3 August 1470) p. 211 [Pope Paul II's letter].

<sup>240</sup> Margaret Meserve, "News from Negroponte: Politics, Popular Opinion, and Information Exchange in the First Decade of the Italian Press," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59/2 (2006): 451-52.

<sup>241</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "Janissaries," in the *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts On File, 2009) pp. 296-97.

plague, the prospects of profitable trade continued to attract Florentine merchants to that market.

The lucrative trade relations between the Florentines and the Ottomans were also strengthened by certain political collaborations during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II. The Pazzi conspiracy in 1478, followed by a dizzying sequence of events culminating in the Ottoman invasion of Otranto in July 1480, was one such political episode marking a turning point in diplomatic relations. This conspiracy against the Medici was organized and funded by one of their rivals in Florence, the Pazzi family. However, the actual masterminds of the plot were King Ferrante of Naples and Pope Sixtus IV. During this period, Ferrante's aggressive ambitions to expand toward Tuscany coincided with the antagonism of Pope Sixtus IV toward Lorenzo de' Medici.<sup>242</sup> Collaborating with members of the Pazzi family, Ferrante and Sixtus IV planned an attack against Lorenzo. It resulted in the assassination of Giuliano de' Medici, his brother, by Bernardo Bandini dei Baroncelli, who escaped and found shelter in the Ottoman capital. However, upon the sultan's order, he was soon captured and handed over to the Florentine ambassador, Antonio de' Medici.<sup>243</sup> It was soon after this incident that the Florentines started intensive diplomatic trafficking with the Ottoman and Neapolitan courts. As the Neapolitan army was heading toward Florence, already besieging Siena, Lorenzo decided to go to Naples to negotiate with King Ferrante; a peace agreement was arrived at in March 1480. At around the same time, an Ottoman ambassador came to Florence accompanied by Benedetto d'Antonio di Leonardo, who worked at the Martelli bank in Pera. He presented gifts to Lorenzo de' Medici and on behalf of the sultan asked for craftsmen skilled in woodcarving and intarsia, as well as masters of bronze sculpture.<sup>244</sup> In fact, Mehmed II had made a similar request to the Venetians in the winter of 1480, asking for a master builder, a bronze sculptor, and a painter, but nothing came of it.<sup>245</sup> Therefore, in March 1480 the sultan requested skilled craftsmen from Florence. According to Dei, these craftsmen were selected and sent to Istanbul by the *Signoria*.<sup>246</sup> For what purpose they

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<sup>242</sup> Paul M. Dover, "Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante D'Aragona (1458-1494) and His Ambassadors," *Mediterranean Studies* 14 (2005): 71.

<sup>243</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CLXXXIX (18 June–11 July 1479) p. 225; Lauro Martines, *April blood: Florence and the plot against the Medici* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003)

<sup>244</sup> Benedetto Dei, *Le Cronica*, p. 176: "E chiese e adimandò la signoria de' Fiorentini di maestri d'intaglio e di legname e di tarsia, e adimandò e Fiorentini di maestri di scholture di bronzo. I quali s'ordinarono e missonsi e a punto e a ordine per le mani di Benedetto d'Antonio di Lionardo, giovane del bancho de' Martegli, lo quale chondusse e detti ambasciadori a Firenze del mese di marzo 1479, fornendogli di tutto."

<sup>245</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation," p. 30.

<sup>246</sup> Benedetto Dei, *Le Cronica*, p. 176.



were sent remained a mystery; however, the predominating view holds that the sultan invited them to work on architectural decoration. This was the time Gentile Bellini, a Venetian painter, was at the Topkapı Palace, embellishing some of its spaces with his work and also doing portraits of the sultan and others.<sup>247</sup> The bronze sculptors, on the other hand, were most probably requested in order to cast bronze cannons for the Ottoman campaigns of 1480 against Rhodes, Otranto, and Hungary.<sup>248</sup>

In May 1480 (on the eve of the Ottoman siege of Otranto) Lorenzo de' Medici sent another envoy to Istanbul with a letter expressing his gratitude for the extradition of Bandini. It is assumed that the famous portrait medal of Mehmed II designed by the sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni was also presented during this visit as Lorenzo's gift to the sultan in return for the favor. However, more than the medal itself, it is the meaning it conveys that has attracted scholars' attention and led to various discussions concerning the intended message. One side of the medal shows the sultan riding in a triumphal chariot and holding in his right hand the personifications of three kingdoms: Asia, Greece, and Trebizond. On the other side, the legend "Mehmed, Emperor of Asia and Trebizond and Great Greece" appears.<sup>249</sup> The reference to Great Greece has been interpreted by some scholars as a statement of Mehmed II's claim on the former Byzantine colonies of southern Italy, signaling Ottoman preparations to attack Otranto. Emil Jacobs and Julian Raby suggest that this implies Lorenzo was already informed about the Ottoman attack and even winked at it, as he was not on good terms with King Ferrante of Naples because of the ambition shown by the latter in extending his territories in the direction of Florence.<sup>250</sup> Thus, by means of this politically symbolic medal, Lorenzo was in a way indicating his approval of such a campaign by the Ottomans in Neapolitan lands.

According to Babinger, however, the inscription *Magna Graecia* (Great Greece) did not refer to southern Italy but rather to the whole of Byzantium. Moreover, in his view, it was unlikely that the sultan would have informed Lorenzo de' Medici about his expedition to Otranto in advance. Thus, the medal was simply sent as a gift to express Lorenzo's gratitude to the sultan with regard to the Bandini issue.<sup>251</sup> Recently, Spinale has argued that taking into consideration the tense political climate before and after the

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<sup>247</sup> Julian Raby *El Gran Turco: Mehmed the Conqueror as a patron of the Arts of Christendom*, pp. 49-51; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation," p. 30.

<sup>248</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation," p. 71, fn. 130.

<sup>249</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye," p. 273.

<sup>250</sup> Emile von Jacobs, "Die Mehemed-Medaille des Bertoldo," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstmuseen* 48 (1927): 1-17; Julian Raby *El Gran Turco*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>251</sup> Franz Babinger, "Lorenzo de' Medici e la Corte Ottomana," pp. 319-21.

invasion of Otranto, the interpretation of the medal as a “prognostication” is far too ambitious. Already in March 1480, Lorenzo had made peace with King Ferrante; moreover, he provided him with military and financial support for the defense of the southern regions of Italy a month after the Ottoman attack.<sup>252</sup> Thus in Spinale’s view, rather than serving as an invitation to Mehmed to attack Italy, Bertoldo’s undated medal was most probably sent after the Ottoman conquest and had the “congratulatory function” of conveying praise to the sultan for his achievement.<sup>253</sup>



Figure 6: Bertoldo di Giovanni, Mehmed II, 1480-1481 [Victoria and Albert Museum, London]

In any case, it is quite possible that Lorenzo de’ Medici followed a dual policy, supporting King Ferrante with troops while also secretly favoring the sultan’s expedition to southern Italy. Although this is not revealed openly in the sources, the diplomatic traffic between Florence and the Ottoman court during this period suggests some exchange of information between Lorenzo and Mehmed. Considering the overall benefits of the siege of Otranto to Lorenzo, this is not a distant possibility. Because of Ferrante’s territorial ambitions vis-à-vis Tuscany, Lorenzo was already on a knife-edge. At the time of the Ottoman invasion of Otranto, Ferrante’s son Alfonso, the duke of Calabria, was besieging Siena. When Ottoman troops under the commandship of Gedik Ahmed Pasha

<sup>252</sup> Susan Elizabeth Spinale, *The Portrait Medals of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-81)*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Harvard University, 2003) pp. 184-185; Paul M. Dover, “Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy,” p. 76.

<sup>253</sup> Spinale, *The Portrait Medals of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II*, pp. 188-189.

attacked Otranto in August 1480 and settled in, Ferrante had to put aside his ambition to rule over all of Italy and concentrate on bolstering the security of his kingdom against Ottoman attacks.

Another Italian state that benefited from Ferrante's difficult situation was Venice. Although there is no clear evidence concerning Venetian support of the Ottoman invasion of Italy, at the time the close relations of the Venetians with the Ottoman administration resulted in the speculation of a possible indirect assistance for the Ottoman assault. According to Babinger, Venetian ships transported supplies for the Ottomans from Albania to Italy.<sup>254</sup> After the long and exhausting war of 1463-1479, the Venetians presumably did not want to come into conflict with the Ottomans again; they instead sought to strengthen their friendship with the sultan. In addition, the *Signoria* was already full of enmity toward King Ferrante and his son Alfonso for their support of the Ottoman sultan in his conquest of Albania in 1478; besides which, the expansionist moves of Neapolitan and papal forces toward the north were threatening Venice as well as Florence. Thus, both of these states seem to have played a role in the Ottoman conquest of Otranto as allies of the sultan. Due to Mehmed II's sudden death in May 1481, the Ottoman presence in the southern Italy did not last long; Ottoman troops had to leave the city within a year of their arrival. However, the echoes of the siege of Otranto continued to reverberate in the West for some time.

Florentines' relations with the Ottomans under their new sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) did not continue with the same closeness as in the time of his father Mehmed, of whom Florentines had regarded themselves as "most faithful and obedient sons," since he had granted numerous favors and benevolences to the Republic and the Florentine nation.<sup>255</sup> Unlike the Republic of Venice, Lorenzo de' Medici did not send an ambassador to congratulate Bayezid II upon his accession to throne and request the renewal of the privileges granted by his father. It was only in 1488 that Florentine ambassador Andrea de' Medici was sent to congratulate the sultan and to renew the capitulations; this mission was, however, unsuccessful.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, pp. 395-96. Also see, A. Bombaci, "Venezia e l'impresa Turca di Otranto," *Rivista Storica Italiana* LXVI (1954): 159-203.

<sup>255</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CLXXXIX (18 June 1479–11 July 1479), p. 225: "[...] per innumeri beneficij facti dalla sua gloriosissima Maestà in verso la Republica et natione nostra, habiamo seco grandissimo obliho et siamo addictissimi et observantissimi figliuoli di Sua Maestà..."

<sup>256</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CCIV (2 June 1488), p. 238.

This striking change in the Ottoman–Florentine diplomatic relations was connected to a set of events, the most important of which was the Cem Sultan affair.<sup>257</sup> The Florentine attitude regarding Cem Sultan seem to have resulted in the delay in requesting the renewal of capitulations during the reign of Bayezid II; according to Babinger, the delay in recognizing Bayezid II as the new sultan indicates that the Florentines were expecting Cem Sultan to be named the rightful heir to the throne.<sup>258</sup> Considering the fact that after his father’s death Cem occupied Bursa, had coins struck in his name (an act regarded as symbol of sovereignty), and proclaimed himself an Ottoman sultan<sup>259</sup> in this city where Florentine merchants were active in trade, such an expectation on the part of the Florentines would not seem preposterous. As Fleet rightly puts, conditions in the Ottoman Empire was not the same as they had been during the time of Mehmed II; Florence, having already firmly established itself in the Ottoman market, did not have as pressing a need to ingratiate itself with the Ottoman sultan as before.<sup>260</sup> Therefore, Lorenzo de’ Medici followed a cautious line of diplomacy, preferring to wait and find out what would happen before pledging friendship to the new sultan.

The first diplomatic move to maintain trade relations between the two states in fact came from Bayezid II, who sent an ambassador, Ismail, in company with Paolo da Colle to Florence in 1483.<sup>261</sup> According to a contemporary Modenese chronicle, the Ottoman envoy discussed with Lorenzo de’ Medici the renewal of trading privileges for Florentine merchants, offering to purchase 5,000 bolts of woolen cloth annually and granting Florentine merchants a tax exemption.<sup>262</sup> For Babinger, however, this mission was motivated more by political aims than by economic purposes. Bayezid II was seeking Lorenzo’s support in finding and capturing his brother Cem.<sup>263</sup> After negotiating with Lorenzo, Ismail went to Savoy together with Paolo da Colle to meet Cem Sultan; however, this venture was not successful, as the Ottoman envoy was captured by the Knights of Rhodes and imprisoned for four years. Meanwhile, da Colle sent a long report

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<sup>257</sup> Concerning the Cem Sultan affair, see fn. 129 above.

<sup>258</sup> Franz Babinger, “Lorenzo de’ Medici e la Corte Ottomana,” pp. 357-58.

<sup>259</sup> İnalçık, “A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: the Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan,” p. 68.

<sup>260</sup> Kate Fleet, “Florence and the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century,” p. 791.

<sup>261</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CXCIX (7 Aprile 1483), p. 235. Just like Benedetto Dei, Paolo da Colle was a merchant-cum-spy of Lorenzo de’ Medici acting as mediator with the Ottoman court..

<sup>262</sup> H. Hoshino, “Il Commercio Fiorentino nell’Impero Ottomano: Costi e Profitti Negli Anni 1484-1488,” in *Aspetti della Vita Economica Medievale: Atti del Convegno di Studi nel X Anniversario della morte di Federigo Melis, Firenze-Pisa-Prato, 10-14 Marzo 1984* (Firenze: Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1985) p. 81; Kate Fleet, “Florence and the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century,” p. 791-792.

<sup>263</sup> Franz Babinger, “Lorenzo de’ Medici e la Corte Ottomana,” p. 329.

to the sultan concerning the mission.<sup>264</sup> Strangely enough, in 1484, a year after this unsuccessful attempt, Paolo da Colle went to Savoy again and during this visit presented Francesco Berlinghieri's *Geographia* to Cem Sultan as a gift. Another copy of this work had been presented to Bayezid in 1482. It had in fact originally been dedicated to Mehmed II; however, after his sudden death in 1481, the dedicatee was changed to Bayezid II.<sup>265</sup>



Figure 7: Sultan Bayezid II, Veronese School, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

Figure 8: Cem Sultan (Zizimus) by Cristofano dell'Altissimo, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Presenting the copies of the same manuscript as gift to the rival sultans may have been a tactic on the part of Lorenzo de' Medici for gaining the favor of both. But it might also be interpreted as the sign of a change of attitude on the part of Florence with regard to the Cem Sultan affair. This became more evident over time, especially after the Ottoman–Mamluk war in 1485, which ended with the decisive defeat of Sultan Bayezid

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p. 338-343. Babinger published the report of Paolo da Colle.

<sup>265</sup> Gifts of manuscripts were frequently given by the Florentines to the sultan during this period as a sign of friendship. Florentines knew that Mehmed II had a great interest in history and geography; thus, Berlinghieri's work was clearly chosen as diplomatic gift that would please Mehmed II. Previously, a similar gift had been presented to him by Florentine merchant Niccolò Ardinghelli, who gave the sultan a copy of Leonardo (Aretino) Bruni's commentary on the first book of Polybius's *History of the Punic Wars*. Sultan Mehmed had it translated; a Greek manuscript of the work is preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library. Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica*, p. 128; Julian Raby, *El Gran Turco*, vol. I, p. 172.

II. Mamluk Sultan Kayitbay (r. 1468-96) wanted to obtain Cem to use him as an instrument in his struggle against the Ottomans; Lorenzo de' Medici acted as mediator in this attempt, which would in return provide the Florentines with an opportunity to obtain trading privileges in the Mamluk Empire.<sup>266</sup> In 1486 Lorenzo sent Paolo da Colle as his ambassador to Kayitbay in order to initiate commercial relations between the two states.<sup>267</sup> Although da Colle died during the mission, the following year (1487) an Egyptian ambassador arrived in Florence with lavish gifts. Meanwhile Lorenzo de Medici's agent in France, Lorenzo Spinelli, negotiated with the French king on behalf of Sultan Kayitbay, requesting the transfer of Cem to Egypt in exchange for one hundred thousand gold ducats. However, the pope had already put in a request of his own and received permission to take Cem to Rome.<sup>268</sup> Thus, the attempt of the Mamluk sultan to obtain Cem ended in failure; but the Florentines were still able to conclude a trade agreement with the Mamluks in 1489.<sup>269</sup>

This political collaboration between Lorenzo de' Medici and the Mamluk sultan significantly embittered diplomatic relations between Florence and the Ottoman Empire. When in 1488 Andrea de' Medici was sent to the Ottoman court to congratulate Bayezid II on his accession to throne (after seven years), to beg pardon for the belated embassy, and to ask for the renewal of privileges, he returned empty-handed. However, despite all these negative developments, commercial relations between the two states continued without any disruption (as will be seen in Chapter IV). After the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492, Florence entered a period of civil strife and as far as the Ottomans were concerned lost its importance as an ally and counterbalance to the Venetians. Bayezid II instead developed diplomatic relations with Francesco II Gonzago, the ruler of Mantua.<sup>270</sup> In 1499 Florence sent a new ambassador, Geri Risaliti, to Istanbul to request renewal of the capitulations, and in 1500 this was granted.<sup>271</sup> When a new sultan, Selim I, came to throne in 1512, he in his turn renewed the capitulations granted to the Florentines by his

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<sup>266</sup> İnalçık, "A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: the Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan," p. 70.

<sup>267</sup> Franz Babinger, "Lorenzo de' Medici e la Corte Ottomana," pp. 335-336.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 353-54.

<sup>269</sup> John Wansbrough, "A Mamluk Commercial Treaty concluded with the Republic of Florence 894/1489," in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. S. M. Stern (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965) pp. 39-80.

<sup>270</sup> Concerning the intensive diplomatic traffic and exchanges between the two courts, see H. J. Kissling, "Francesco II Gonzago ed il Sultano Bayezid II," *Archivio Storico Italiano* CXXV (1967): 34-68.

<sup>271</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CCIX (10-18 February 1499), p. 242; doc. CCXII (23-27 May 1500), pp. 245-46.

father Sultan Bayezid II.<sup>272</sup> These commercial privileges were then renewed again by Sultan Süleyman I in 1527.<sup>273</sup> But the Florentines were never again able to attain the privileged position they had enjoyed during the rule of Sultan Mehmed II, when Florence was both politically and commercially a significant ally for the Ottoman Empire against other Italian states. In the subsequent period, the political interests of the two states rarely converged; however, the Florentines continued to dominate the Ottoman market with their textile imports until the 1530s. Especially during times of armed conflict between the Venetians and the Ottomans, the winning party was undoubtedly the Florentines, whose position in the Ottoman Empire strengthened in proportion to the setbacks experienced by the Venetians.

### Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the historical background regarding the presence of the Genoese and Florentines in the Eastern Mediterranean, their settlements in Constantinople/Istanbul, and their diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottomans in the context of the changes and transformations that occurred during the late medieval period. The examination has demonstrated that since the early times of the Ottoman state, the Ottomans and Italians had possessed a shared sea, trade networks, and individual human contacts connecting them to each other. Although religious tension, accompanied crusading/gaza rhetoric, was a recurring theme, against this backdrop there existed continuing alliances and collaborations largely shaped by the economic and political considerations of the time, as well as by complex networks of individuals. During the early Ottoman period, the Genoese became a significant ally of the Ottomans in the latter's struggle against their opponents. Mutual economic and political interests strengthened friendship and cooperation between the two powers.

After the conquest of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed II, driven by pragmatic and strategic motives, followed a policy of incorporation and accommodation with regard to Italian trading activities in the Ottoman lands. The freedom and monopoly Italian merchants had enjoyed during the Byzantine times was no longer the case; however, with the framework of the capitulations, they benefited from the new opportunities in the growing Ottoman market. The Genoese community of Pera took the lead in negotiating

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<sup>272</sup> Müller, *Documenti*, doc. CCXXXIX (25 October 1513), p. 267.

<sup>273</sup> İnalçık, "Ottoman Galata," pp. 317-323.

with the sultan soon after the conquest and agreed to become his subjects in return for protection and trade privileges, as they wished to take advantage of the consequent tax benefits and control of various natural resources.

Unlike the Genoese, the Venetians were able to establish state-level diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. A year after the conquest, in 1454, Bartolomeo Marcello arrived as Venetian *bailo* to renew the privileges granted by the sultan in the previous treaty of 1451. Thus, Venice became the first European state to establish diplomatic negotiations with Sultan Mehmed II and was allowed to maintain a permanent representative in the newly conquered Ottoman capital.<sup>274</sup> However, the tenor of the relations between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was quite inconsistent. The Venetians' determination to preserve their possessions and trade interests in the face of Ottoman expansion in the Greek archipelago, Crete, Albania, and Dalmatia led to incessant wars. During the wars of 1463–1479, 1499–1503 and, later the Battle of Preveza in 1537–40, commercial relations between the two states were negatively affected. All these wars ended to the detriment of the Venetians and resulted in the loss of many of their strategic and commercial bases in the Aegean and the Adriatic.<sup>275</sup>

During these periods of conflict with the Venetians, the Florentines proved to be a significant ally of the Ottomans. Taking advantage of the rivalry between these two Italian states, Sultan Mehmed II invited Florentine merchants to come and trade in the Ottoman lands, granting them privileges and permanent representation in Istanbul after the conquest of Constantinople. Political expediency and shared economic interests cemented the alliance between the two during this period. While the Florentines contrived to encourage the expansionist ambitions of Mehmed II, they benefited from trading opportunities in the Ottoman domains, which gave a new impetus to the textile industry and economy of Florence in the late fifteenth century. In the absence of the Venetians, both the Florentines and the Genoese (of Chios and, as Ottoman subjects, of Pera) were active in the Ottoman market, offering their domestically produced textiles—woolen and silk cloth—in return for raw materials. The Ottoman Empire, with its increasing population and, more importantly, its growing court and army, became an important market for Florentine woolen cloth and their Genoese imitations.

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<sup>274</sup> Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, p. 119.

<sup>275</sup> Palmira Brummett, "The Ottoman Empire, Venice and the Question of Enduring Rivalries," in *Great Power Rivalries*, ed. William R. Thompson (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999) pp. 234-237.



Towards the mid-Cinquecento, important changes in the state system and in patterns of international trade downgraded the political and commercial importance of the Genoese and the Florentines in the Eastern Mediterranean. The political crises and foreign domination the two states experienced during the French–Spanish struggle over Italy significantly weakened them, negatively affecting their economies and trade. In the end, with the support of Charles V, both Genoa (under the leadership of Andrea Doria) and Florence (under the Medici family) restored their authority and independence in 1528 and 1530 respectively while also becoming closely tied to the Habsburgs, a significant rival of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean during this period. As a result of these new circumstances, both states became political allies and trade partners of the Habsburg Empire, shifting the bulk of their trade to the new markets and more favorable opportunities in the Spanish Habsburg domains.

Meanwhile Venice pursued a wary stance in its relations with the Ottoman Empire. From 1540 until the War of Cyprus (1570-73), relations between the two states were peaceful. By means of their diplomatic skills and well-developed information network, the Venetians were able to maintain their trade interests and bases adjacent to the Ottoman lands and also serve as a politically important ally for the Ottomans during this period. Moreover, by producing imitations of the various types of Florentine wools, the Venetians penetrated the Ottoman market and provided a substitute for the Florentines, whose position was already weakening in the Eastern Mediterranean. France was another actor that emerged as a political ally and trade partner of the Ottomans during this period. Thus in the sixteenth century the position of the Genoese and the Florentines vis-à-vis the Ottomans underwent a reverse to the benefit of the Venetians and the French. However, these alliances and configurations, largely determined by shared economic and political interests, were similarly subject to change in the face of the reversal of circumstances. The need to revive their Levant trade and to penetrate the Ottoman market, and the desire to maintain politically friendly relations with the Porte, all triggered by various commercial and political concerns, propelled the Genoese (in the 1550s) and the Florentines (in the 1570s and 1590s) to reopen diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman Empire — a process that will be examined in detail in the following chapters of the thesis.

**CHAPTER II**  
**A Struggle for Survival:**  
**Genoese Diplomacy with the Sublime Porte**  
**In the Face of Spanish and French Opposition**

On December 1, 1556, Agostino Pinello Ardimenti, the doge of Genoa, wrote a letter to Sultan Süleyman, expressing the desire of the Republic to gain his favor and to have his consent for Genoese merchants to safely come and trade in the Ottoman lands securely.<sup>276</sup> In another letter written to Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha (1544–1553; 1555–1561), the doge repeated the same request, asking for his support concerning negotiations.<sup>277</sup> Francesco de Franchi (also known as Tortorino), a Genoese resident of Chios familiar with the Porte, would be sent to the Ottoman capital as Genoa's representative. Preparations for this diplomatic mission were conducted with great care. Various types of woolen and silk fabrics, a velvet robe, a small box of different sorts of confectionaries, six barrels of anchovies, Piacenza cheese, and sugar from the Canary Islands would be sent on a separate ship to Pera to be delivered to de Franchi.<sup>278</sup> With these gifts and money he was to persuade the Ottoman high officials, especially Rüstem Pasha, to grant the Republic's desire for peace and friendship with the Empire.

What was the motive for Genoa to reopen diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte after almost a century? The answer to this can be found in the letters of instructions given to de Franchi by the Senate concerning his mission in Istanbul. There were two such letters, one public and one secret. In the public instructions, de Franchi was ordered to make diligent efforts to persuade the Ottoman administration to accede to the Republic's desire for trading privileges in the Ottoman lands. He would do this with the help and favor of Rüstem Pasha, who had precedence over all other ministers at the Porte. Most importantly, his priority should be to gain permission for Genoese ships to obtain grain from Ottoman ports. He was instructed to win the favor of the court officials not only with well-founded arguments but also with small gifts. If Rüstem Pasha vigorously

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<sup>276</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 1 December 1556: "Al Altissimo Potentissimo et Invittissimo e tre mondo S.re Soltan Solyman Gran Imperator di Morsomany."

<sup>277</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 1 December 1556: "Al Illustrissimo e Eccellissimo S.re, Il S.re Rostem Bassa e Gran Consigliere del Gran Imperator di Morsomany."

<sup>278</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 20 December 1556.

supported the confirmation and, subsequently, the continuance of the privileges, the Genoese representative was to promise him a life annuity, which would be around 1,000-1,500 *scudi* per year.<sup>279</sup>

In the secret instructions, de Franchi was commanded to obtain an imperial order from the sultan decreeing that Ottoman galleys should not attack Genoese citizens, ships, or coasts. Moreover, he was provided with the arguments he should use in case of any objections that might be raised by the Ottoman court concerning the Genoese citizens serving Charles V and his son Philip II. De Franchi should make a clear distinction between the Genoese government and those Genoese citizens who were in the service of Spain, explaining that the Republic could not prevent individuals from serving as ministers for the Spanish court or taking up arms against the Ottomans upon the order of the Spanish king. Neither could it prohibit the presence of Spanish ships along the Ligurian coasts, as Spain was far more powerful than Genoa. Thus making it clear that the Genoese government had no responsibility for the anti-Ottoman acts of Spain's Genoese ministers, de Franchi should also promise the Ottoman administration that the Genoese Republic and nation would not harm the ports and subjects of the sultan.<sup>280</sup>

De Franchi's negotiation with the Ottoman authorities passed off quite successfully; he was able to obtain an imperial order that confirmed the right of Genoese merchants to come to the Empire with their goods and ships. It also granted safe conduct for the Genoese diplomatic legate and three ships that would come directly to Istanbul and unload their commodities there.<sup>281</sup> However, misfortune struck de Franchi on his way back to Genoa. He was captured and imprisoned by the Spanish ministers governing Calabria, and all the official documents he carried, including the sultan's letter, were confiscated.<sup>282</sup> He was able to come back to Genoa only in November 1557, almost a year after his departure. Nonetheless, the prospect of the resumption of commercial relations with the Sublime Porte and the suspension of hostility between the two states was

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<sup>279</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 1 December 1556: "Istruzioni della Signoria a Francesco de Franchi detto Tortolino nella sua prima legazione segreta a Costantinopoli."

<sup>280</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 1 December 1556: "Istruzioni segrete al Tortolino nella stessa legazione."

<sup>281</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 2v-3r (21 May 1557): "Traductio litterarum quas scribit Invictissima, Potentissima Imperialis Magnitude Sua Imperator Turcarum ad Ill.mum D. Ducem Nationem de Genua Amicis suis." "[...] vobis autem Imperiali gratia et verbo omnia ista concedimus ut omnes mercatores natione vestra cum mercibus eorum in Imperio nostro trafficare et navigare possunt, postquam hanc amicitiam de qua nobis notificavistis per oratorem vel oratores vestro eam confirmabitis et adventu suo nunc per marem tribus navibus saluum conductum concessimus et dedimus..." [Written by Court Dragoman İbrahim]

<sup>282</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the Doge and Governors to Francesco Costa (20 June 1558).

welcomed in Genoa, and preparations to send an official ambassadorial retinue to Istanbul got underway.

Unlike its ex-rival Venice, Genoa had not ventured to establish diplomatic representation in Istanbul prior to this attempt in the mid-sixteenth century. In this respect, de Franchi's mission can be considered a surprising diplomatic move on the part of the Republic. But what made Genoa approach the Ottoman court? Why was such an attempt made in 1556? In this chapter the motives and reasons for the Genoese efforts to revive diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire will be discussed in the light of the political and economic developments within Genoa and in the Mediterranean. Considering the fact that Genoa was closely linked to the Spanish Habsburgs after 1528 and followed a course of diplomacy tied to that of Spain, this maneuver in the direction of the Ottoman Empire comes as a surprise, opening the possibility of shifting alliances and new configurations in the Mediterranean, and spurring Spain and France to become actively involved in Genoese diplomacy with the Sublime Porte. In order to understand the politico-economic motives for the Genoese diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire, it is essential to look at the internal dynamics of Genoese politics at the time, as well as the Republic's relations with Spain and France. In the same way, Ottoman attitudes regarding the Genoese initiative require assessment in the context of the political and economic conditions in the Ottoman Empire. Such an examination not only sheds light on the factors underlying the Genoese–Ottoman rapprochement but also provides insight into the strategies and machinations that a small state used to survive at a time when imperial rivalry over the Mediterranean was escalating.

### **1528: A Significant Turning Point for Genoa**

In discussing the response of the Italian city-states to the extended political crisis of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Braudel has argued that each state adopted different strategies regarding these political upheavals in order to maintain their survival:

They might like Genoa in turn surrender, betray, negotiate, lose their identity only to recover it, give or sell themselves to another power; or they might struggle as Florence did, with more passion than lucidity; or as Venice with a superhuman effort managed to do, they might struggle and what was more stand firm. But they all had to adapt; it was the price of survival.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, p. 341.

As Braudel notes, the price of survival was not the same for all three states. Moreover, in addition to the human factor, geographical realities played a significant role in determining the political fortunes of these states. For instance, the major threat to Venice was not from other European states, as geographically it enjoyed an isolated position in the Adriatic Sea; rather, it was under threat of the Ottomans expanding towards Venetian zones in the Balkans, the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>284</sup> Therefore, the situation of Venice was not unlike that of Florence, which though not a Habsburg satellite was still dependent on the Habsburgs in internal politics and foreign policies; Venice was obliged to maintain a similar kind of balance in its relations with the Ottoman administration. Unlike these two states, Genoa faced a struggle for survival that was more pressing, as due to its location between two rival states, France and Spain, it was more exposed to external threats. In addition, possessed of a seaside geography that offered easy access to the Italian mainland, Genoa served as a gateway to Italy (*Janua, janua Italiae*) and thus became a zone of struggle for dominion in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>285</sup>

Besides its geographical position, constant internal conflicts and the predominance of individual over state interests made Genoa vulnerable to foreign domination. Instability and upheavals became a characteristic of political life in the city as a result of the incessant rivalry between the nobles (*nobili*) and the commoners (*popolari*), the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and the Adorno and the Fregoso (two families competing for the office of doge).<sup>286</sup> The competition between the nobles and commoners over public offices and power was only one aspect of the prevailing factionalism. There were also divisions within each group. For instance, among the nobles there was a division between the feudal aristocracy, composed mainly of four major houses (the Doria, the Spinola, the Fieschi, and the Grimaldi), and the faction of ship owners and merchants who had acquired the status of nobility more recently. There was a similar sort of division within the commoners, which were composed of two groups: merchants and artisans. These

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<sup>284</sup> Regarding the Ottoman policy in the Mediterranean during this period, see İdris Bostan, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed ve Osmanlı Denizciliği," pp. 85-95; idem., "II. Bayezid Döneminde Osmanlı Denizciliği," pp. 111-119; idem., "Preveze Deniz Zaferi ve Sonrasında Akdeniz Dünyası," pp. 173-183, in *Türk Denizcilik Tarihi*, eds. İdris Bostan and Salih Özbaran, vol. I (İstanbul: Deniz Basımevi Müdürlüğü, 2009).

<sup>285</sup> Antonia Borlandi, "'Janua, janua Italiae': uno sguardo al Quattrocento Genovese," *Archivio Storico Italiano* CXLIII/1 (1985): 15-35.

<sup>286</sup> Arturo Pacini, "Genoa and Charles V," in *The World of Emperor Charles V*, eds. Wim Blockmans and Nicolette Mout (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2004) p. 169; Thomas Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea. Policy and Power in an Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559-1684* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005) pp. 18-19.

social and political divisions (both horizontal and vertical) prevented any sort of internal unity and coherence in medieval Genoa.<sup>287</sup> And the factional parties did not hesitate to invite foreign powers to intervene in their internal conflicts. Thus, any power that wanted to gain control over the city made an alliance with either the Fregoso or the Adorno. As early as the 1390s, Antoniotto Adorno, the doge of Genoa at the time, entered into collaboration with Charles IV of France to protect the city against internal threats. In the fifteenth century, the city was largely under the control of the dukes of Milan, the Sforza. However, when it was invaded by French forces in 1499, the commune again declared its subjection to the French king. In the early years of the sixteenth century French administration resulted in tensions and discontent, which culminated in a popular uprising in 1506-1507. However, in general, by suppressing the factions and achieving political stability, French rule promoted the development of commerce and manufacturing. For example, Lyon became an important market for Genoese velvets. When the rule of Louis XII ended in 1512, another period of instability began, lasting until 1528.

Factionalism and dissension began to pose a significant threat to the survival of the state, particularly during the period when the struggle between France and Spain to dominate the Italian peninsula reached its peak. With the help of the papacy and Spain, the Fregoso family took over the office of doge in 1512, but this situation did not last long. Following the collapse of a short-lived alliance with Spain, as of 1515 Genoa was again under the control of France and its new king Francis I. However, in 1522 imperial and papal forces occupied the city, bringing it under Spanish domination once more. In 1527 the French made an initially successful attempt to retake control, besieging Genoa with the help of the Genoese nobleman Andrea Doria; however, French domination quickly ended when Doria switched his allegiance from Francis I to Charles V in 1528.<sup>288</sup> It can be said that this particular shift of alliance also brought an end to the vicious circle of political instability. With his fleet of twelve galleys, Doria played a strategic role, taking over the city with a *coup de main*. By means of his naval fleet and assistance from the imperial forces, he drove the French out of Genoa and became captain-general of the imperial fleet. Moreover, he declined to be elected as doge; instead, he supported the establishment of a twelve-member commission that would introduce constitutional reforms. A significant step in this regard was the change in the length of tenure of the

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<sup>287</sup> Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, p. 23.

<sup>288</sup> For a list of the Genoese revolts and changes in government between 1257 and 1528, see Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958-1528* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996) pp. 325-27.

office of doge from life to two years. Doria did not participate in the government; however, he did take a seat among the “supreme controllers” who supervised the actions of the doge and the eight governors who made up the *Signoria*. In order to eliminate dissension among different factions, the reforms introduced a new regulation bringing both nobles and commoners together in a single ruling class, giving them all the title of noble and assembling them under twenty-eight *alberghi*.<sup>289</sup> These changes brought political stability to the city, albeit temporarily.<sup>290</sup>



Figure 9: Andrea Doria, Genoese admiral and statesman (1466-1560). Painting by Sebastiano del Piombo (1485-1547).

<sup>289</sup> The *albergo* was an association comprising members of various branches of the same family having the same surname, who made a compact among themselves to act as a single entity. The term refers to a “fusion of the families.” The names of the *alberghi* established by the 1528 reforms were: Calvi, Cattaneo, Centurione, Cibo, Cigala, De Franchi, De Marini, Di Negro, Doria, Fieschi, Fornari, Gentile, Giustiniani, Grillo, Grimaldi, Imperiale, Interiano, Lercaro, Lomellini, Negrone, Pallavicino, Pinelli, Promontorio, Salvago, Sauli, Spinola, Usodimare, and Vivaldi. Among them, the De Franchi, Fornari, Giustiniani, Promontorio and Sauli *alberghi* were from the *popolari*. Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>290</sup> Pacini, “La Repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI,” in *Storia di Genova. Mediterraneo, Europa, Atlantico*, ed. Dino Puncuh (Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2003) pp. 326-327.

This stability was also desired by the city, which had long wanted to be liberated from French domination. Relations with the French monarchy had been based on pacts of submission, which granted a certain degree of independence to Genoa in internal affairs. However, attempts by the French kings to restrict the city's autonomy created growing discontent with the French monarchy among the Genoese. Not only were they forced to recognize the king of France as the lord of Genoa; in addition, a governor appointed by the king replaced the doge. The last straw came when the French king sought to turn Savona into an alternative economic and political center in order to control western Liguria. This effort was considered a direct threat to the territorial integrity of the Republic, casting a shadow on Genoa's economic importance.<sup>291</sup>

In this situation, Genoa had a choice of being subject to France or dependent on the Habsburg Empire while still preserving its republican government. After oscillating between French domination and Spanish protection, Genoa chose the latter as a way to preserve its independence and freedom.<sup>292</sup> The Genoese thus came to regard the emperor as "the protector of all Christianity and particularly of all the cities that want to avoid being subject to others."<sup>293</sup> Consequently, the intertwinement of internal and international factors and various political forces impelled the Republic to enter the Spanish–Habsburg imperial system.

### **A New Period in the Imperial Orbit**

The agreement with Charles V was based on a guarantee of the liberty of Genoa, restoration of its territorial dominion and protection from its enemies. In return, Genoa pledged loyalty to the emperor and Andrea Doria was committed to protecting the imperial possessions from any attacks. By liberating the city from French domination and bringing political stability, Doria had already earned the title of *pater patria* in Genoa. His close relationship with the emperor further enhanced his reputation; he became a vital link, promoting the bonds between the Republic and the Habsburg Empire. As Pacini noted, it was in every instance stated by the Habsburgs that "any concession granted generally to the Republic or to particular citizens was because of Andrea Doria's

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<sup>291</sup> Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," pp. 341-344; *Idem.*, "Genoa and Charles V," p. 165; 172. For a recent study on the relations between France and Genoa at the time, see Fabien Levy, *La monarchie et la commune. Les relations entre Gênes et la France, 1396-1512* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2014).

<sup>292</sup> Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 272.

<sup>293</sup> Pacini, "Genoa and Charles V," p. 167.



intercession and in respect for his services”.<sup>294</sup> The relationship between Charles V and Doria was based on reciprocal reliance and mutual interest: to Charles, Doria was indispensable for both the naval/military and financial support he could marshal in service of the Habsburgs; while for Doria the benefits and favors he would receive from the emperor were essential to consolidating his power within the city and making him a significant force in Genoese politics.<sup>295</sup> It was through his agency that other galley owners were contracted with for the Spanish naval force; Doria also had the power to choose which Genoese bankers would serve the emperor’s needs. As a result, his command of the imperial fleet and control over financial activities at the Spanish court enhanced his prestige in Genoa, enabling him to establish a clientele network among the Genoese elite.<sup>296</sup> Along with the Doria, the De Mari, Lomellini, Cigala, Imperiale and Negrone operated as galley contractors in the naval battles of the Spanish Habsburgs.<sup>297</sup>

When corsairing activity in the Mediterranean escalated significantly after 1528, an agreement concerning the provision of galleys was made between the Genoese galley owners and the Habsburg monarchy. Spanish attacks and conquests in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean then impelled Sultan Süleyman to improve his navy. The most notable instance of this dynamic occurred when Andrea Doria, as commander of the imperial fleet, attacked Ottoman possessions in Greece in 1532. The sultan thereupon turned to a famous Barbary corsair, Barbaros Hayreddin, appointing him grand admiral (*kapudan-ı derya*) of the Ottoman fleet in 1534.<sup>298</sup> The choice of a corsair for this office was not a random one; North Africa-based corsairs such as Barbaros were a key resource for the Ottoman administration, providing not only the necessary naval technology for the

<sup>294</sup> Pacini, “Pignatte di Vetro”: Being a Republic in Philip II’s Empire,” in *Spain in Italy, Politics, Society and Religion 1500-1700*, eds. Thomas James Dandele and John A. Marino (Leiden: Brill, 2007) pp. 202-203

<sup>295</sup> Pacini, “Genoa and Charles V,” p. 194; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>296</sup> Kirk, “Giovanni Andrea Doria: Citizen of Genoa, Prince of Melfi, Agent of King Philip II of Spain,” in *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Vera Noldus (Leiden: Brill, 2011) pp. 60-61.

<sup>297</sup> Pacini, “Genoa and Charles V,” p. 185; Giorgio Doria, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informativo: il know-how dei mercati-finanzieri genovesi nei secoli XVI e XVII,” p. 100.

<sup>298</sup> Concerning the appointment of Hayreddin Barbarossa as commander of the Ottoman navy, see Seyyid Muradî, *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa* (MS 2639 Istanbul University), edited by Mustafa Yıldız (Aachen: Shaker, 1993) 313a (p. 203): “Pâdişâh-ı ‘âlem dahî hazz eyledi, andan Hayreddin Paşaya kürk kaftan geydirüb kapudân-ı deryâ eyledi, ve her umür üzerinde destür-ı mükerrem müşîr-i mufahham nizâmu-l-‘âlem eyledi. Başladı gayri Tersâne-yi ‘Âmireye nizâm virüb donanma düzüb gemiler münşâ itmeklige şurû‘ eyledi.” *Gazavat* is an account of life and exploits of Barbarossa and his sea battles as Ottoman admiral for the period 1520–1539. Also for modern Turkish translation see Seyyid Muradî, *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa: Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa’nın Hatıraları*, 2vols., tr. and ed. by Ertuğrul Düzdağ (İstanbul: Tercüman Gazetesi, 1980)

fleet but also expertise, intelligence, and naval bases in the western Mediterranean.<sup>299</sup> Within a short period, Barbaros had built up a new Ottoman fleet, being composed of seventy-eighty galleys and begun conducting naval expeditions, targeting Habsburg domains in southern Italy and the Ligurian coasts.<sup>300</sup> Defending against them were the Genoese galleys commanded by Doria. Thus, both Andrea Doria and Barbaros Hayreddin were able to further their own interests and gain power and wealth in return for meeting the naval needs of their imperial sovereigns. As naval warfare became a significant part of the imperial rivalry in the Mediterranean between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans during this period, the service of these grand admirals was indispensable.<sup>301</sup>

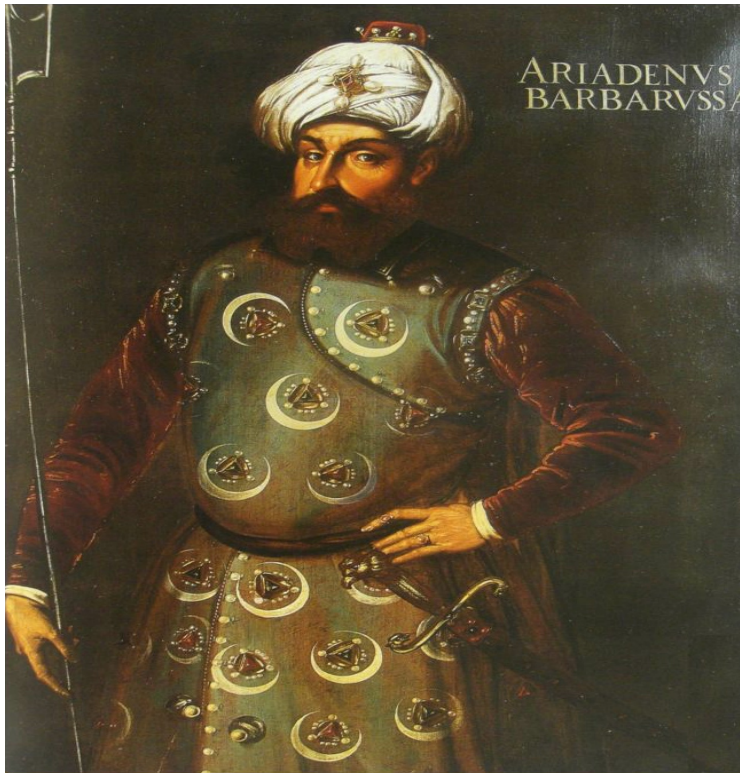


Figure 10: Portrait of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, İstanbul Naval Museum

<sup>299</sup> Emrah Safa Gürkan, "The centre and the frontier: Ottoman corporation with the North African corsairs in the sixteenth century," *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010): 133-135. Because of their knowledge and experience, corsairs were considered ideal for the position of grand admiral by the Ottoman intellectuals of the time. For instance, according to Kâtib Çelebi, a seventeenth-century Ottoman scholar, only a corsair should be a grand admiral; even if he did not have a corsairing background, he should consult and take advice from the corsairs in naval affairs. Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr Fî Esfâri'l-Bihâr*, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1973) pp. 235-236.

<sup>300</sup> "Andan sonra başladı yabca yabca evvel-i bahâra kadar donanmayı düzdi koşdı. Vaktâki elli altmış kıt'a kadirge çekdiri dahî ba'zı sefâyin hâzır ü müheyyâ eyledi, kendinün dahî Cezâyirden getürdüğü yigirmi kıt'a çekdiri ile hâsil cümlesi yetmiş seksen pâre tekne olmak üzere bir mübârek sâ'atda Beşiktaş öninden kalkub Sarayburnından taşra yola revân olub gitdiler." Seyyid Muradî, *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, 313a-313b (pp. 203-204).

<sup>301</sup> Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel*, pp. 72-76.

Despite Genoa's professed neutrality and independence, the realities of the situation with Genoese galleys serving the Spanish kings and Andrea Doria commanding the Spanish fleet made the Republic an enemy of the Ottomans. The Genoese became the "chief informal actors" in the Ottoman–Habsburg wars.<sup>302</sup> And so, Genoese ships, ports, and coasts became potential targets for the Ottomans in their battle with the Spanish Habsburgs. Chios, the last Genoese colony in the Eastern Mediterranean, also came under constant threat of Ottoman invasion. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the island was governed by the *Maonesi*, who had become tributaries of the sultan. At the same time it was administratively controlled by Genoa through the *podestà* (local administrator) appointed from the mother city. As a result of the escalating tension between Genoa and Istanbul, in 1534 Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha warned the *Maonesi* that the island must remain completely autonomous and independent from Genoa, and that any official sent from Genoa to the island should be dismissed, as the sultan could not allow a territory so close to his domain to be controlled by his enemies.<sup>303</sup> Similar warnings were repeated by the Ottoman authorities in the following years as well.<sup>304</sup> Consequently, the commercial losses suffered by the islanders due to the frequent Ottoman raids, along with the increasing sums of tribute to be paid and the constant pressures upon the *Maonesi* in connection with the island's subjection to Genoa, led to a loosening of the ties between the Republic and its colony, and eventually to the total loss of Chios to the Ottomans in 1566.

From this perspective, Genoa's alliance with the Habsburgs was not without consequences; yet, the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. Contracting galleys to the service of the king proved to be a lucrative business for the Genoese nobles. For instance, Andrea Doria put his twelve galleys at the disposal of Charles V in return for 72,000 ducats per year, a supplementary payment for munitions (around 1,200 ducats per year), and certain benefits in Naples, which brought in at least 8,000 ducats a year.<sup>305</sup> In 1530 the number of the galleys rented from Doria rose to fifteen in return for a fee of 90,000 ducats. In 1533, Genoese galleys in the service of the emperor numbered twenty-seven; in 1535, twenty-five Genoese galleys (seventeen belonging to Doria and eight to other

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<sup>302</sup> Céline Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, p. 250.

<sup>303</sup> Philip Argenti (ed.), *Chios Vincita or The Occupation of Chios by the Turks (1566) and Their Administration of the Island (1566-1912) described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports and Official Dispatches* (London: Cambridge UP, 1941) doc. 7, p. 18 (5 December 1533; 3 February and 8 March 1534).

<sup>304</sup> Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese*, vol. I, pp. 343-369.

<sup>305</sup> Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," p. 352.

Genoese) participated in the Habsburgs' Tunis expedition. Twenty-eight galleys (all belonging to the Doria family) took part in the Battle of Preveza in 1538, and for the expedition against Algiers in 1541, thirty-two Genoese galleys (thirty of them from the Doria family and the other two from the Cigala) were present. After the Habsburg defeat, Charles V gave Andrea Doria thirteen galleys in order to compensate the galley owners for their losses. Moreover, the annual rent of the galleys was constantly increased by the Genoese nobles; this resulted in a constant flow of money to Genoa, reaching 120,000-240,000 ducats per year from the 1530s to the end of the century.<sup>306</sup>

In addition to receiving payments in cash, the Genoese were recompensed for their services by means of certain benefits, including extensive trading privileges and tax exemptions in the Habsburg domains. Dauverd notes that in the sixteenth century, renting a Genoese galley cost approximately 7,000 ducats annually; this expense was met by the Spanish partly by waiving “the import–export tax on all their goods and ports for the [Genoese] ship captains.”<sup>307</sup> Similarly, Genoese merchant bankers who provided credits for the emperor to run his realm and finance his wars were reimbursed through certain concessions, such as the right to collect taxes and “issu[e] annuities on various entries of the royal income.”<sup>308</sup> For instance, when Charles V decided to organize an expedition to North Africa in 1536, Tommaso and Nicola Spinola, Francesco Grimaldi, and Agostino Doria financed this military venture.<sup>309</sup> In return, they were repaid from the crown's income; some Genoese served as customs officers, tax collectors, and treasury officers in the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily. Genoese merchant bankers lent nearly 11.5 million ducats to Charles V, making a profit of about 5 million between the years 1520 and 1556.<sup>310</sup>

Looking at the totality of these interactions, Dauverd concluded that there was a symbiotic relationship between Spain and Genoa during the sixteenth century: “the dynastic imperialism of Spain and the mercantile imperialism of Genoa expanded simultaneously.”<sup>311</sup> However, it was not the government of Genoa but rather private citizens such as the Doria who provided galleys and credit to the emperor and in return exploited the opportunities offered by the Spanish monarchy, thereby furthering their individual and family interests. Not all Genoese were able to become a part of this

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<sup>306</sup> Doria, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informative,” pp. 99-101.

<sup>307</sup> Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, p. 34.

<sup>308</sup> Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, p. 30.

<sup>309</sup> Pacini, *La Genova di Andrea Doria nell'Impero di Carlo V* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1999) pp. 356-357.

<sup>310</sup> Doria, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informative,” p. 68; Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, p. 31.

<sup>311</sup> Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, p. 2.

symbiotic relationship and benefit from these advantages. It was the old nobility, such as the Doria, Spinola, Grimaldi, Pallavicino, and Lomellini families, who monopolized the business of *asentistas* of galleys and loan contracts. The alliance with Charles V presented political and economic opportunities to these families, who represented the pro-Spanish group in Genoa. Thus the new nobles, made up mainly of merchants and artisans, emerged as a rival group to the old nobles. In effect, the long-standing factionalism of medieval Genoa was resurrected in a different form during the early modern period. Despite the formation of a single ruling class under the *alberghi* by means of the reforms of 1528, there emerged division within their ranks between the *vecchi* (old nobles) and the *nuovi* (new nobles). The economic interests of these two groups began to diverge, leading to jealousy and enmity as a result of the political and economic developments after 1528.

While the old nobility were active in banking and maritime ventures, the new nobility invested primarily in commerce and textile manufacturing. As their interests were tied more to France, the pact with Spain proved damaging to them in particular. The economic relations between this group and France were based on the trade in Genoese silk cloth; in reaction to the Habsburg alliance, the French king banned the import of Genoese velvets to the French market in the 1530s. This triggered smuggling of these textiles into the Lyon market by the Florentines and the Lucchese. In Genoa there was a strong desire to restore relations with France in order to maintain the silk industry, as it was an important source of income for the city and thus a sector in which not only silk merchants and manufacturers but also weavers and many other citizens had an interest.<sup>312</sup> As a result of the efforts of this majority, commercial relations with France were restored in 1537 and Genoese velvets were again imported openly into the Lyon market, albeit subject to high customs duties. This brought about a kind of balance between the interests of the manufacturers and those of the bankers within the governing class of the city.<sup>313</sup> However, it did not eliminate the rivalry between these two groups.

During the mid-sixteenth century, the conflict of interests between the *vecchi* and the *nuovi* gained a new vigor, which would culminate in the civil war of 1575. Instances of this conflict were manifested on various occasions; the most notable was the Fieschi conspiracy against Andrea Doria in 1547. With the help of the pope and the French king, and the support of common people in Genoa, Gian Luigi Fieschi, a member of the old nobility, planned to take control of Doria's galleys, killing him, his heir Giannettino

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<sup>312</sup> Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," p. 357.

<sup>313</sup> Pacini, "Genoa and Charles V," pp. 195-196.

Doria, and their supporters. Fieschi and his fellow conspirators hoped by these means to provoke a revolt and overturn the Habsburg-allied government. It should be noted that in addition to the conflict between the old and new nobles, age-old rivalries continued to exist within the old nobility. Fieschi's actions against Andrea Doria can be evaluated in this context; a personal enmity towards Doria combined with a desire to rise to power and control the city constituted the main motivation for Fieschi. In the end, the plot failed; Andrea was able to escape, although Giannettino was killed.<sup>314</sup> The threat posed by these rivals was thus eliminated for a time, but the crisis had served to exacerbate other conflicts within the city. After this incident, Charles V wanted to build a fortress in Genoa, which would be under direct control of the empire; however, this was rejected by the Republic as it would be a threat to Genoa's liberty.<sup>315</sup> The crack that opened with the Fieschi conspiracy deepened during the war of Corsica (1553-1559), leading to a significant crisis between Genoa and Charles V.

Rivalry over the control of the Mediterranean was, as Abulafia has argued, more about controlling important coastlines, islands, and ports than battling over the sea itself.<sup>316</sup> The island of Corsica had strategic value in the western Mediterranean; it did not have a particularly land or rich resources, but in terms of location was of inestimable significance for France as a base that served to interrupt communications between the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish possessions in Italy. After Doria's transfer of allegiance from France to Spain, Genoa was regarded by the French as "an integral part of the Spanish system"<sup>317</sup>, despite the Republic's emphasis on neutrality. French plans regarding Genoa had been frustrated by Doria's alliance with Spain; therefore, in retaliation, King Francis I made an alliance with the Ottoman sultan and, together with the Ottoman fleets, French ships began to organize periodic expeditions along the southern Italian and Ligurian coasts. The enmity reached a climax with the attack of the allied Ottoman-French forces on Corsica. With the support of some locals led by a Corsican rebel, Sampiero Corso, the island had been occupied and a large part of it taken under the French control as of the end of 1553. This was a great shock for Genoa, as it posed a strategically significant threat to the city and its environs. The Genoese undertook a long and costly struggle to re-take the island; they were only able to recover it in 1559, with

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<sup>314</sup> Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," p. 359; Kirk, "Giovanni Andrea Doria: Citizen of Genoa, Prince of Melfi, Agent of King Philip II of Spain," pp. 62-63.

<sup>315</sup> Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," pp. 361-62.

<sup>316</sup> David Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, pp. xxx-xxxii.

<sup>317</sup> Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, p. 54.

the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. Meanwhile, the Corsica experience had incited new tensions among the ruling elite.

In such a time of crisis, the *nuovi* had found an opportunity to reassert their influence and policies. For them, the dependence on the Spanish imperial authority for the defense of the Republic's coasts and vital bases was the main source of the problem. As Genoa lacked state-owned galleys, it depended on galleys belonging to private ship-owners, many of which were in the service of Charles V. The fact that the monarchy remained indifferent to the gravity of the situation and was quite slow to take action during the conquest of Corsica elicited a negative reaction from the new nobles. Andrea Doria also came in for a share of the criticisms; he was accused of prioritizing his personal interests over the public good. Thus the war of Corsica was used as a pretext by the *nuovi* to mount a political attack on the *vecchi*. In the view of the former, hiring mercenaries (in this case private galley owners) for the defense of the state was very costly; moreover their effectiveness was always open to question, as it was possible they might either hold back so as not to risk their galleys in battle or else intentionally prolong the conflict in order to get paid more. These considerations brought to the fore certain issues related to the political order and defense policies of the Republic, such as a proposal for the establishment of a state-owned galley system, which was not only a matter of prestige but would also be a guarantee of freedom of movement and trade for the Republic. In this context, the reliance on Spanish protection was also questioned by the *nuovi*, who considered Spain an obstacle to the prestige and ambitions of the Republic.<sup>318</sup>

It was during this period that Genoese–Ottoman relations experienced a new beginning. When the stabilizing effect of the Spanish alliance began to diminish and the attacks of the allied French–Ottoman forces in Liguria grew more pressing, the possibility of negotiating with the Sublime Porte entered the equation. The faction of the new nobility was certainly influential in initiating diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire in 1556; however, the impetus for such contacts cannot be attributed to factional dynamics alone. A succession of severe famines and difficulty in getting access to grain roused great despair and anger among the populace. To this was added Charles V's delay in paying the galley contractors and ship-owners, and finally his bankruptcy in 1557.

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<sup>318</sup> Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, pp. 54-55; Arturo Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," p. 364; Michel Balard, "Genoese Naval forces in the Mediterranean during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. John B. Hattendorf and Richard W. Unger (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003) pp. 137-149.

These financial issues created discontent among some bankers and led to episodes of serious distrust and uncertainty regarding the emperor even on the part of the pro-Spanish faction in Genoa. Thus, all of the above factors—with the urgent need to obtain grain for Genoa coming first and foremost—seem to have influenced the Republic to change course vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte.

### **Grain Crisis: A City on the Verge of Famine**

As a coastal city located between the sea and the mountains, Genoa's topographical setting was not suitable for agricultural activities. The lack of arable lands made the city dependent on external resources for its food supply, and for grain in particular. During the medieval period, a significant part of the grain needed was provided by the Genoese colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean; in the sixteenth century, however, it was largely procured from the lands controlled by the Spanish crown. Following the Spanish alliance in 1528, the agreement concluded with Andrea Doria guaranteed privileges that included the provision of Sicilian grain for his navy. In addition, it affirmed that grain would be provided to Genoa from Spanish Habsburg domains such as the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, but with the stipulation that this should not be to the detriment of the local population.<sup>319</sup> Thus, in return for the services provided by Doria, the Republic was granted the privilege to import grain from southern Italy, which became one of the main sources of grain for Genoa during the sixteenth century.<sup>320</sup>

Being heavily dependent on foreign harvests, however, the Republic was compelled to maintain links with additional grain markets. In addition to that obtained from Sicily and Naples, the Genoese imported grain from France and the Ottoman Empire; but Genoese politics and foreign relations significantly affected the supply from those alternative sources. For instance, after 1528, Genoa was deprived of Provençal grain as a result of the French prohibition on trade. In 1541 a short-term peace with King Francis I came about, and the Genoese were able to meet some of their need for grain from French sources, until the war of Corsica broke out in 1553. Another source of grain was the Levant. During years of poor harvests in Sicily, the Genoese turned to the

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<sup>319</sup> Edoardo Grendi, "Genova alla metà del Cinquecento: una politica del grano?" in *La repubblica aristocratica dei genovesi: Politica, carità e commercio fra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1987) p. 174.

<sup>320</sup> It was only in the 1590s that the Genoese began to supply their city with Baltic grain transported by German, Dutch, and English ships. Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs: The 'Flemish' Community in Livorno and Genoa (1615-1635)* (Verloren: Hilversum, 1997) p. 74.



Ottoman market. For instance, in 1550-51, 186,600 *mine*<sup>321</sup> of grain were imported from the Orient; in 1551-52, the amount was 175,000 *mine*; in 1557-58, 95,000 *mine*; and in 1558-59 60,000 *mine*. But in 1558-59 and 1559-60, Sicily was once again the main source of grain supply for Genoa.<sup>322</sup> It can thus be said that during the decade of 1550-60, the Genoese interchangeably consumed grain from the Ottoman Empire and southern Italy. However, the Republic did not negotiate treaties with the Ottomans regarding the trade of grain; rather, they obtained it either through Chios, which became the main center of Genoese trading operations in the Levant, or through the mediation of Ragusan merchants, who were quite active in trade between the eastern and western Mediterranean during this period.<sup>323</sup> Compared to their Venetian and Genoese counterparts, the merchants of Dubrovnik were more easily able to obtain special licenses from Ottoman officials in order to export and transport grain from the Balkans and the Black Sea to various parts of Europe.<sup>324</sup> Particularly in times of conflict between the Italian states and the Ottoman Empire, Ragusa (Dubrovnik) benefited from the situation by using skillful diplomacy and maintaining its neutrality, which proved quite helpful for its commercial relations with both the Europeans and the Ottomans.<sup>325</sup>

As a result of various political and diplomatic crises, during the years 1553 to 1558 Genoa intermittently experienced serious shortages of grain, bringing the city face to face with famine. This was due in large part to frequent grain shortages in Sicily as a result of bad harvests, leading to significant restrictions on its export. But, the critical point came in November 1555, when the viceroy of Sicily seized Genoese ships loaded with grain in order to supply the Spanish army in Tuscany.<sup>326</sup> The situation regarding Naples was no different. During the period 1556-1558, poor harvests and grain shortages

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<sup>321</sup> The *mine* was a unit of measure for grain. In 1550, a *mine Genovese* corresponded to approximately 87 kg. Grendi, "Genova alla metà del Cinquecento," p. 218, fn. 8.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>323</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, p. 343.

<sup>324</sup> James D. Tracy, "Il commercio italiano in territorio ottomano," in *Il Rinascimento Italiano e L'Europa*, vol. IV: *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, ed. F. Franceschi, R. Goldthwaite and R. Mueller (Treviso: Fondazione Cassamarca, 2007) p. 433.

<sup>325</sup> The Ragusans paid annual tribute to the *Porte* but at the same time remained in close contact with the papacy, rented ships and equipment to Spain, kept Venice happy by passing on information about the Ottomans, maintained friendly relations with Ancona and other Italian states such as Urbino and Ferrara, had consuls in Spanish-leaning Italian states and kept on good terms with France. Anselmi, pointed to this as a significant diplomatic achievement in the early modern Mediterranean. Sergio Anselmi, "Motivazioni economiche della neutralità di Ragusa nel Cinquecento," in *Il Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metà del '500 alla Luce di Lepanto*, ed. Gino Benzoni (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1974) pp. 35-36. James D. Tracy, "The grand vezir and the small republic: Dubrovnik and Rüstem Paşa, 1544-1561," *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010): 196-201. Also see Bariša Krekić, "The Role of the Jews in Dubrovnik (Thirteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)" *Viator* 4 (1973): 257-271.

<sup>326</sup> Grendi, "Genova alla metà del Cinquecento," p. 211.

in Naples caused the viceroy to contravene the privileges of the Genoese to export grain to Genoa. From the perspective of the viceroys, who were appointed by the Spanish monarch to administer the region, it was necessary to prioritize the needs of the local population over other interests. In a letter to Philip II, the viceroy thus justified his actions: “thinking about exporting one grain of wheat from this kingdom to Genoa would be impossible, because the penury is so great that men drop dead.”<sup>327</sup> The Genoese, however, were angered by this argument and responded to the embargo by threatening to apply similar measures against Spanish transactions in Genoa. Philip II sought to conciliate the two sides and in fact acknowledged the Genoese claims in order to guarantee their financial support for his military ventures, as per the agreement discussed above in this chapter. Be that as it may, this crisis became a breaking point in the relations between Genoa and the Spanish Habsburgs, at the same time unearthing long-hidden tensions between the Genoese and the viceroys of Sicily and Naples. In fact, Genoa made many complaints to the crown concerning the infringement of their privileges by the Spanish viceroys, and these complaints appeared frequently in the correspondence of the Spanish ambassadors in Genoa and in the letters and instructions of the Genoese ambassadors to Spain.<sup>328</sup>

The grain crisis with southern Italy became a matter of life and death for the Genoese when they could not obtain grain from their alternative suppliers either. France had already renewed hostilities in 1553 with the war of Corsica, and so Provençal grain was no longer available. Although there was ample grain in Andalusia, access via the Tyrrhenian Sea was interrupted significantly due to the Franco-Ottoman takeover in Corsica.<sup>329</sup> More importantly, the possibility of being supplied by the Ragusans was also hindered by French intervention. In August 1555, the Genoese government wrote that if deprived of grain from Sicily and the Levant, the city would be surrendered: “as far as we are informed, the French have ensured that some ships, and mostly those of the Ragusans transporting goods from the Levant, are not able to carry grain from the east for the Genoese.”<sup>330</sup> It should be noted that this prohibition applied not only to the Genoese but to all European states. The fact is that in 1555 there was a grain shortage in the Ottoman

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<sup>327</sup> Céline Dauverd, “The Genoese in the kingdom of Naples: Between Viceroys’ Buon governo and Habsburg expansion,” in *Genova y la Monarquía Hispánica (1528-1713)*, vol. I, eds. M. H. Sanchez, Y. R. Garfía, C. Bitossi and D. Puncuh (Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2011) p. 286.

<sup>328</sup> Dauverd, “The Genoese in the kingdom of Naples,” p. 287; Grendi, “Genova alla metà del Cinquecento,” pp. 209-210.

<sup>329</sup> Grendi, “Genova alla metà del Cinquecento,” p. 174.

<sup>330</sup> ASG, AS 2519, Letter of 2 August 1555; Grendi, “Genova alla metà del Cinquecento,” p. 210.

Empire, and as a precaution, the Porte banned the sale of grain to European merchants.<sup>331</sup> While there were strict regulations concerning the export of grain from the Ottoman ports, the last straw was the fate of two Genoese ships loaded with 11,000 *mine* of Ottoman grain in the autumn of 1555, which Bernardino Mendoza (captain general of Spanish galleys) seized and sent to Livorno and Porto Ercole.<sup>332</sup> The prolonged famine turned into a crisis, impelling the Genoese government to find new solutions for the problem.

The peace of Vaucelles (in February 1556) between Philip II and Henry II of France temporarily relieved the grain crisis in Genoa, as grain from Provence and Languedoc became available again. However, regularly frustrated in its requests to the courts of Charles V and Philip II, disgruntled by the conflicts with the Spanish viceroys in southern Italy and pressured by the French–Ottoman attacks along the Ligurian coast, Genoa decided to apply to the Sublime Porte for access to grain and in 1556 sent Francesco de Franchi to Istanbul to negotiate peace and trade privileges with Rüstem Pasha. Moreover, the Genoese governors instructed the official diplomatic legate to Istanbul to attempt to obtain the sultan’s permission for the Republic to send 25 to 30 ships to the Levant every year to buy grain.<sup>333</sup> In this way, the Republic hoped to secure Ottoman grain for Genoa on an official and permanent basis. At first glance, such an effort might be interpreted as a definitive turning away from the Habsburg alliance on the part of the Republic. However, after the eventual failure of the diplomatic negotiations with the Porte, the Republic attempted to justify this attempt to the Spanish king by reminding him what had happened a few years ago, i.e., the seizure in Sicily of the Genoese ships loaded with grain from the Levant, and stressing the critical nature of the grain shortage in Genoa and in the western Mediterranean in general. The Genoese declared that opening trade with the Levant was of particular benefit in that it would ensure the provision of grain: “When said traffic and commerce was stabilized, it would be of service and common benefit to the kingdoms of both his Majesty and ours.”<sup>334</sup> Whether this was the real motivation or an excuse presented to the Spanish crown is not clear, but the desperate need for grain was undoubtedly at least one important reason for the Republic’s attempt to launch diplomatic contacts with the Porte.

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<sup>331</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, p. 592; Maurice Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé pendant la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N, 1966) p. 134.

<sup>332</sup> Grendi, “Genova alla metà del Cinquecento,” p. 211.

<sup>333</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, “Istruzione per Costantinopoli,” 8v (25 April 1558).

<sup>334</sup> ASG, AS 2707 D, Letter of 14 February 1559: Istruzioni al Pronotario Marcantonio Sauli, Ambasciatore mandato a Re di Spagna: “[Q]uando il sudetto traffico e commercio si fossi stabilito, sarebbe stato questo un servizio e beneficio commune dei Regni di S. Maestà e nostro.” cc. 72-73.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the difficulty of finding a reliable grain supply for the city significantly shaped Genoese politics and diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century. The stability and peace brought about by Spanish protection certainly marked a watershed in Genoese political and economic life, but this was a precarious stability, subject to the vicissitudes of foreign harvests and to unpredictable developments in diplomatic relations among the imperial powers.<sup>335</sup> Alongside the palpable necessity for grain, the idea of reviving trade activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and expanding into the Ottoman market seems to have encouraged the Genoese, particularly the *nuovi* faction, to negotiate with the Sublime Porte.

### Seeking a Place in the Ottoman Market

As discussed in the preceding chapter, through their commercial outposts and dominance over trade routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, Genoese merchants had connected eastern markets to those in the west during the medieval period, accumulating significant wealth from this profitable trade. But in the sixteenth century, the earlier hegemony of Genoa in the Mediterranean took on a different aspect in the face of the Ottoman–Habsburg political and naval struggle. In the historiography the dominant view is that from the early sixteenth century onward, there was a shift of focus from trade to finance, with Genoa tying its “political and economic destiny to that of Spain and its empire.”<sup>336</sup> The important role of the Genoese in the redistribution of silver from the Spanish colonies in the Americas to Europe is regarded as an instance of proto-globalization; and Braudel describes the period between 1557 and 1627 as the “age of the Genoese.”<sup>337</sup> Although there was indeed a significant shift from the Republic’s status as a commercial empire to that of a financial giant tied to the Spanish crown, production and trade continued to be important activities in Genoa.

The alliance with Spain brought significant commercial advantages to the Ligurian merchants and ship owners who installed themselves in various Spanish-controlled ports—Seville, Lisbon, Antwerp, and Americas.<sup>338</sup> In particular, the discovery of the Americas

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<sup>335</sup> Grendi, “Genova alla metà del Cinquecento,” p. 175.

<sup>336</sup> Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, p. 91.

<sup>337</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, pp. 500-501.

<sup>338</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, p. 343; Giovanna Petti Balbi, “Le nazioni italiane all’estero,” in *Il Rinascimento Italiano e L’Europa*, vol. IV: *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, ed. F. Franceschi, R. Goldthwaite and R. Mueller (Treviso: Fondazione Cassamarca, 2007) 417-18.

and the establishment of Spanish colonies there became an important source of wealth for Genoese merchants, who conducted trans-atlantic trading operations with royal permission. These colonies not only emerged as potential markets for export items but also provided natural resources and raw materials to be imported into Europe. And the Genoese played a dominant role in connecting the Atlantic markets to the Mediterranean.

Another important aspect of Genoese trade during this period was the monopoly established over raw materials, especially alum. In the medieval period the Genoese had controlled alum mines in Phocaea until the city was taken over by Sultan Mehmed II and the Genoese tax-farmer of the mines, Francesco Draperio, was replaced by the Venetian merchant Girolamo Michiel. From this time onward, the monopoly of Phocaea's alum mines was in the hands of first the Venetians and then the Jewish subjects of the sultan. The Genoese, however, were able to compensate for their loss in Phocaea with the alum mines discovered in Tolfa in 1464.<sup>339</sup> In addition, in the 1530s the Genoese acquired monopoly of the mines in Mazarrón (in Spain), thereby becoming the sole owners and sellers of this raw material in Europe during the period between 1531 and 1578 (when they were replaced by the Florentines in Tolfa). For instance, the Sauli and Di Negro families were selling 1,600 tons of alum to Antwerp annually—enough to meet the alum demands of the entire northern European market.<sup>340</sup> In addition to their interests in alum, the Genoese also had a leading role in the sugar trade, at least until the 1570s. Previously Egypt and Cyprus had been important sources of sugar for the Genoese; however, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries they used the profitable trading links between Spain and the New World to expand into the Atlantic. In 1455 they introduced the cultivation of sugarcane to Madeira; between 1480 and 1496 the Catholic kings entrusted some of the colonization of the Canary Islands to Genoese families, so that as of 1526 a large number of the sugarcane plantations belonged to them, and during the first part of the sixteenth century they controlled half of the commerce of the islands. Besides its use in the field of medicine, sugar began to be consumed as food and thus its production increased enormously. In other Spanish colonies, such as those in Caribbean and Brazil, the Genoese also possessed an extensive number of sugarcane plantations.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Giovanni Petti Balbi, "Tra dogato e principato: il Tre e il Quattrocento," in *Storia di Genova. Mediterraneo, Europa, Atlantico*, ed. Dino Punuh (Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2003) p. 307.

<sup>340</sup> Doria, "Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informative," pp. 94-95.

<sup>341</sup> Doria, "Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informative," p. 97; Balbi, "Tra dogato e principato: il Tre e il Quattrocento," p. 311; Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1879*, pp. 65-66.

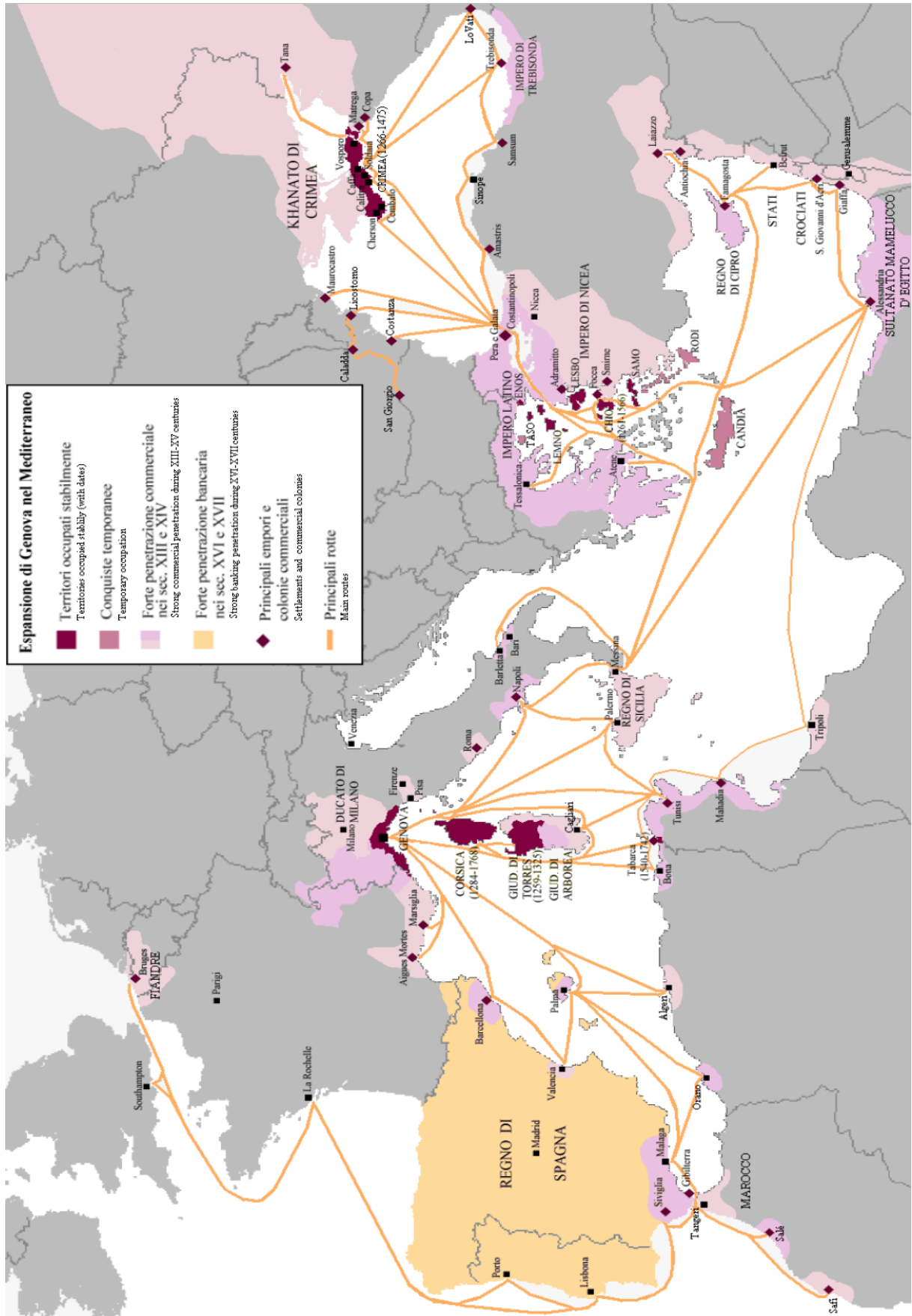


Figure 11: Expansion of Genoa in the Mediterranean (13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)

Similarly, in the trade of wool and raw silk, the Genoese actively exploited sources in Spanish-controlled territories. In Spain they competed with Spanish merchants to obtain Castilian wool. In addition to Spanish wool, they also supplied raw wool from Barbary and Abruzzo to the Italian market, for the Tuscan, Venetian, and Lombard industries.<sup>342</sup> As for raw silk, a significant part of it was obtained from Sicily and Calabria, which replaced the Levant as the primary source of raw silk for the Genoese and Florentine silk industries.<sup>343</sup> As it was a precious commodity, it was transported from the southern Italian ports to Genoa by means of a special convoy called the “*flotta della seta*,” and utmost attention was given to protecting the galleys used and the route they travelled.<sup>344</sup>

The commercial activity that was such an important part of economic life in the Republic of the sixteenth century also triggered industrial development, particularly in the area of textile manufacturing.<sup>345</sup> Through extended mercantile networks, Genoese families in Spain exported around 5,000 to 15,000 sacks of wool from Spain to Genoa annually, a large part of which was used for the Genoese woolen cloth industry.<sup>346</sup> For its part, the silk industry experienced significant growth from the first decades of the sixteenth century; Genoese velvets came to be in great demand in many markets in Europe and the Mediterranean. In 1510 Genoese silk cloth was exported to France, Germany, Flanders, England, Spain, Portugal, Chios, Algiers, the Canaries, and Italy.<sup>347</sup> In the Lyon fairs in France, different varieties of Genoese silk cloth, such as *velluti cremisi*, *rossi*, *rossi-cremisi*, *violetti* and *violetti-cremisi*, had a ready market. As previously mentioned, during the period of French–Habsburg conflict, Genoese silk fabrics became contraband goods as a result of the frequent bans of the Genoese from the Lyon market. It has been estimated that during the 1530s France was annually importing from Genoa silk fabrics and velvets

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<sup>342</sup> Doria, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informative,” pp. 96-97.

<sup>343</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000) p. 72.

<sup>344</sup> Gabriella Sivori, “Il Tramonto dell’Industria Serica Genovese,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* 84/4 (1972): 910.

<sup>345</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, pp. 319-320; Giovanni Petti Balbi, “Tra dogato e principato: il Tre e il Quattrocento,” p. 307; Paola Massa Piergiiovanni, “Tipologia industriale e modelli organizzativi: la Liguria in Età Moderna,” in *Lineamenti di Organizzazione economica in uno stato preindustriale la Repubblica di Genova* (Genova: ECIG, 1995) pp. 43-69.

<sup>346</sup> The plague epidemic of 1579-80 brought about a significant decline in the industry for a time, and Genoese merchants began to re-export the Spanish wool to other Italian cities, specifically to Venice, which experienced a boom in the woolen cloth industry toward the latter part of the sixteenth century. Andrea Caracausi, “The Wool Trade, Venice and the Mediterranean Cities at the End of the Sixteenth Century,” in *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400-1800*, eds. A. Caracausi and C. Jeggle (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. 201-203.

<sup>347</sup> Doria, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informative,” p. 94.

worth one million ducats. Despite the enormous taxes levied on these textiles by the king, between 1551 and 1556 the value of Genoese silk cloth imported into France rose to 1,275 million ducats per year.<sup>348</sup> This export trade, in return, fueled production by the guilds; the number of textile manufacturers in Genoa tripled between 1531 and 1565.<sup>349</sup>

This boost in the silk and woolen industries occurred not only in Genoa; other cities of northern Italy also experienced a spurt in textile production and became rivals in obtaining raw materials and finding markets for their finished products.<sup>350</sup> In the export of raw silk from southern Italy and raw wool from the Iberian Peninsula, Genoa's biggest rival was Florence.<sup>351</sup> Similar to the Genoese experience, the Florentines had seen political stability and peace restored by the Medici, with the support of Charles V, in 1537; moreover, the marriage of Cosimo I de' Medici and Eleanor of Toledo, the daughter of Don Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, the viceroy of Naples, had strengthened the links with the Spanish crown. But the high tide in Florentine–Spanish relations came in 1556 when Philip II granted to the Florentines the privilege to freely import their *rascie fiorentine* (high-quality woolen cloth made of Castilian wool) into the dominions of the Spanish monarchy. This made it possible for Florentine luxury textiles to penetrate even the American markets.<sup>352</sup> There was also fierce competition between the Genoese and the Florentines to control the supply of raw silk in Sicily and Calabria; both needed it for the production of high-quality silk fabrics. In return, southern Italy became an important market for Genoese velvets and Florentine silk fabrics. Thus, the Genoese contended with Florentine rivalry in the Spanish markets.

In view of this situation, it could be argued that the Republic looked to extending its trading operations to new markets in order to increase its gains. As indicated in the instructions given to Francesco de Franchi, the Genoese wanted their ships to trade and navigate freely in Ottoman waters. In other words, they wanted to revive their trading activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and carve out a niche for themselves in the Levant trade. In doing so, they would once more assume the role that they had occupied during

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<sup>348</sup> Concerning the trade volume of Genoese silk cloth in the French market in the early sixteenth century, see Paola Massa, *L'Arte Genovese della Seta nella Normativa del XV e del XVI Secolo* (Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1970) pp. 197-198; Sivori, "Il Tramonto dell'Industria Serica Genovese," pp. 931-33.

<sup>349</sup> Arturo Pacini, "La repubblica di Genova nel secolo XVI," p. 357.

<sup>350</sup> Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 4-19.

<sup>351</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 141-142; Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, pp. 127-131.

<sup>352</sup> Giorgio Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell' Europa del '500 vol. I: Strumenti e veicoli della cultura Relazioni politiche ed economiche* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983) p. 197; also see Chapter IV.



the medieval period as intermediary between East and West. But this time, they aimed to connect not only northern European but also Atlantic markets to the Levant. In fact, among the gifts presented to the sultan by the Genoese, we see sugar from the Canary Islands as well as various sorts of woolen and silk fabrics. The hoped-for peace treaty with the Ottomans would not only provide security for Genoese merchant ships in the Mediterranean but also enable them to enter the Ottoman market with Genoese textiles. During the audience given to the Genoese envoys at the Ottoman court, Rüstem Pasha asked in detail what kind of goods the Genoese would bring to the Ottoman Empire; to which de Franchi responded that unlike the Venetians, who brought glass, the Genoese merchants would bring woolen and silk fabrics as well as gold coins to buy merchandise from the Ottoman domains. He added that if the sultan granted privileges to Genoa, the Genoese would give priority to manufacturing textiles (specifically woolen cloth) for the Ottoman market, as had been the case in the past.<sup>353</sup> It should be noted that in the view of the Ottoman administration, European merchants posed a threat when they tried to obtain and export from Ottoman lands commodities that were vital or militarily important for the empire. As long as these merchants brought goods into the Ottoman market that could facilitate the provisioning of the court and army, they were welcomed. Gold and silver in particular were favored as important sustenance of war.<sup>354</sup> The grand vizier thus regarded with favor the commodities that the Genoese representatives proposed to bring to the Ottoman Empire.

Genoa was not, however, the only state attempting to establish diplomatic contacts with the Porte. At around the same time, other Italian states, including Florence, Urbino, Lucca, and Ferrara were trying to obtain commercial privileges from the Ottoman administration.<sup>355</sup> As the scarcity of grain in Italy affected these states as well, its acquisition in the Ottoman market was one of their motives. In addition, the growth of textile industries within Italy was increasing competition among the Italian states to find new sources for raw materials and new markets for finished products. Although the expansion of the silk and woolen industries promoted the diffusion of sericulture within Italy and both silk and cotton cultivation in Spanish-controlled regions such as Granada, Sicily (silk) and North Africa (cotton), these new sources of supply did not effectively

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<sup>353</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 17v-18r.

<sup>354</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Before 1600: Ottoman Attitudes towards Merchants from Latin Christendom," p. 99.

<sup>355</sup> Bruno Simon, "Contribution à l'étude du commerce vénitien dans l'Empire Ottoman au milieu du XVIIe siècle (1558-1560)," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen Age, Temps Modernes* 96/2 (1984): 995.

challenge the dominance of Persian silk and Levantine cotton.<sup>356</sup> One after another, more and more Italian states sent emissaries to negotiate capitulations with the Porte in order to expand into the Ottoman market. The Lucchese seem to have been successful in their initiative, as they received an imperial order from Sultan Süleyman in 1558 that granted safe conduct for Lucchese merchants who wished to come and trade in Ottoman lands.<sup>357</sup> Unfortunately, our knowledge about their trading activities in the Ottoman Empire is quite limited. The Florentine *bailo* in Istanbul also conducted negotiations with the Porte for the renewal of the privileges during the years 1557-1558, but to no avail.<sup>358</sup>

In the case of Genoa, initial diplomatic success was owed to Francesco de Franchi, who had successfully negotiated with the Ottoman court during his previous mission and reopened official diplomatic contact between the two states in 1556. As already mentioned, no document revealing the details of his negotiations with the Ottoman court exists. However, post-dated documents provide a draft of the capitulations negotiated by de Franchi in Istanbul.<sup>359</sup> These included the right for Genoese merchants and their ships to trade and travel freely and safely in the Ottoman domains, just as did the Venetians. The Genoese also requested the right to send an ambassador and keep a permanent *bailo* in Istanbul. For its part, the Genoese Republic would promise never to take up arms against the sultan or take the side of any other ruler against him. Genoese governors would also publicly decree that their citizens were not to take up arms against the sultan and his subjects. However, this peace and friendship agreement would apply to neither the Genoese galley captains nor the ministers in the service of Spain; the Ottoman–Genoese friendship would not be affected by them or their activities. Moreover, the state of commerce and exchange between Genoa and the emperor would not affect the Republic's peace with the Porte. The Republic would be exempt from obligation to make peace with

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<sup>356</sup> Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1879*, p. 114; Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 56-64; 217-220.

<sup>357</sup> Both the Ottoman original and the Italian translation of the *ahidname* are available in the Archivio di Stato di Lucca (ASL), *Diplomatico, Tarpea*, 10 May 1558. Lucca was famous for its silk cloth; such an agreement would open the Ottoman market to Lucchese merchants. According to Lenci, the timing of this *ahidname* was not coincidental. At around the same time, Piyale Pasha was in Liguria to join with the French forces in attacking Corsica and Genoa. Thus the main motive for the Ottoman sultan to grant these privileges was to guarantee Lucca's support and use the state as a logistical base on the Tuscan–Ligurian front during the Ottoman naval expeditions along the Ligurian coasts. Marco Lenci, *Lucca, il Mare e i Corsari Barbareschi nel XVI Secolo* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1987) pp. 70-71.

<sup>358</sup> Concerning the Florentine diplomatic attempt, see Chapter IV.

<sup>359</sup> One of the copies of the capitulations was included in the letter presented to Grand Admiral Piyale Pasha during his expedition along the Ligurian coasts. Another copy was given to Genoese ambassador Giovanni de Franchi and *bailo* Niccolò Grillo for their mission in Istanbul. ASG, AS 2169, Copia del' Arze (Copia della apontamento preso per Francesco di Franchi Tortorino col Gran Signor Turco) (25 April 1558).

France or any other Christian state against its will. It was also noted that the Genoese were subject to neither France, Spain, nor any other Christian ruler, but, like the Venetians, were independent and under the protection of the sultan, preserving friendship with him and serving him loyally, promising any kind of help he would request. This clause is particularly important. On the one hand, it acknowledges the Republic as an independent state; on the other, it demonstrates that the Republic was willing to be under the protection of the Ottoman Empire rather than that of Spain, France or any other Christian state.

Furthermore, Ottoman galleys would be allowed to anchor in the ports of Liguria and would be provided with victuals and other necessary supplies; however, if the galleys were too large, they would not be allowed to enter the port of Genoa. Also, the Republic would not be responsible for any damage that imperial galleys might inflict on the Ottoman fleet in Genoese ports. Lastly, as in the case of the Venetians and Chiots, the Genoese would have the right to mint coins for the trade traffic in the Levant. All these privileges would be announced throughout the sultan's realm, and his subjects informed that anyone who harmed Genoese citizens would be severely punished.

This agreement could be interpreted as the Republic's assertion that it would follow its own independent political line. The desire to keep a permanent ambassador in Istanbul could be taken as an indicator of this. Moreover, by drawing a line between the Republic itself and the Genoese officials in the service of the Habsburg emperor, the Genoese governors were attempting to establish a distinct political entity, rejecting any sort of political alignment with the Habsburgs. This would enable Genoese citizens to conduct commercial activities in states that were enemies of Spain. The Genoese were intending to obtain access to the Ottoman market in the same way the Venetians had, through neutrality in foreign relations and friendship with the sultan. A peace with the Ottomans would protect Genoese merchant ships and trade routes from Barbary corsairs and Ottoman attacks. Ligurian cities and shores would no longer be under Ottoman threat; this also gave hope regarding Corsica to be recovered from the French control. The confirmation of all these privileges by the Ottoman administration would confer upon the Republic multiple benefits. Besides providing a source for grain and furthering the interests of the *nobili nuovi* in the area of trade and textile manufacturing, it would also remove the Ottoman menace threatening its territory, coasts, and merchant ships.

While this move hinted at a possible reversal of the alliance with Spain, Genoa would in fact follow a balanced strategy that involved walking a fine line between the

Spanish Habsburgs and the Ottomans without incurring the wrath of either side. Unwilling to challenge Spain openly for fear of losing freedom of trade and movement in Spanish-controlled territories, the Republic made the arrangements for de Franchi's mission in utmost confidentiality. However, Spain soon found out about the matter and responded by capturing de Franchi on his return trip to Genoa, torturing him and imprisoning him in Calabria for a year. In addition, Philip II suspended the payments he owed to Genoese bankers, further escalating tensions between the two states. Giacomo di Negro, the Genoese ambassador in Madrid, reported in November 1557 that the negotiations with the sultan had aroused great dissatisfaction at the Spanish court.<sup>360</sup> Due to the concerns about the Spanish reaction, it took almost a year for the Republic to send an official diplomatic legation to Istanbul. When in the late spring of 1558 Genoese representatives were finally sent to the Porte, the Senate attempted to withdraw the Genoese ambassador from the Spanish court. Ambassador di Negro responded by immediately positioning himself against such a move, declaring it would only create more suspicion.<sup>361</sup>

Indeed, the most striking aspect of the Genoese diplomatic mission was the fact that the Republic took this initiative without informing the Spanish king. As Braudel noted, the years 1556-1559 were a period of diminishing respect for the Spanish state—"a crisis of insubordination" on all fronts.<sup>362</sup> Genoa, encouraged by the conditions in Spain and the growing discontent among its citizens regarding the monarchy, sought to restore peace with the Ottoman administration in order to secure itself against any foreign threats.

Not only Spain, but also France actively opposed de Franchi's mission at the Porte. Should the Genoese obtain the sultan's friendship and privileges, it would not only threaten French commercial interests in the Levant but also terminate Ottoman support of French forces against the Genoese in the western Mediterranean. Consequently, when Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, the French ambassador in Istanbul, received the news of the arrival of the Genoese representative, he wrote to Henry II, reporting that he negotiated with the sultan charging the Genoese with all manner of crimes:

Thus, it seemed to me a significant service to you to put the blame on the Genoese, saying that they were the spies of thieves, who no longer had their galleys in the payroll of the emperor, nor could live by pillaging. The Sultan conversed with them and gave them Chios, where they hunted for the Ottomans and acquired all their necessities. Upon this, a dispatch was sent to Chios by a *çavus* with an immediate

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<sup>360</sup> Grendi, "Genova alla metà del Cinquecento," p. 213.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. II, p. 957.

order to retain all the Genoese vessels that were found there as well as any that would subsequently come to Chios. This I think will cause many Genoese noblemen serve you, as it will always be in your power to make it possible for them to trade not only in Chios but also in other lands and ports of the sultan; without the sultan and yourself they could not achieve it by themselves.<sup>363</sup>

With such accusations, de la Vigne intended to provoke the sultan against the Genoese Chiois, accusing them of spying for the enemies of the sultan and putting Chios at the target of the sultan on the eve of the diplomatic negotiations between the Porte and the Republic. This could be further interpreted as a demonstration of the close alliance between the French and the Ottomans and, more importantly, an assertion of French influence and credibility with the sultan, indicating the importance for the Republic of not incurring the French king's enmity if they wished to secure the sultan's friendship.

Thus mired between Spanish and French impediments, the Genoese mission at the Ottoman court had a thorny path from the very beginning. In such a delicate situation, the Republic was striving to protect its independence and further its own interests as best it could by seeking Ottoman protection. Up to this point, the main emphasis has been on the motives and justifications of Genoa in initiating this diplomatic endeavor. What, then, about the Ottoman side? Why did the Sublime Porte agree to negotiate capitulations with the Republic, a close ally of its fiercest rival?

### **Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha and Ottoman Relations with Genoa**

The mid-sixteenth century was a period of transformation for the Ottoman Empire in terms of administrative structure as well as political, economic, and cultural policies. Unlike the first part of Sultan Süleyman's reign, which was characterized by the rivalry with Charles V over universal rulership and territorial expansion, the second half of his reign focused more on internal consolidation and an expansion of the central

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<sup>363</sup> E. Charrière, *Négociations de La France dans le Levant ou Correspondances, Memoires et Actes Diplomatiques des Ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople et des Ambassadeurs, Envoyés ou Résidents à divers titres à Venise, Raguse, Rome, Malte et Jérusalem en Turquie, Perse, Géorgie, Crimée, Syrie, Égypte, etc. et dans les États de Tunis, D'Alger et de Maroc*, vol. II (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1850), pp. 391-392, Letter of M. de la Vigne to Henry II (15 May 1557): "Lors me sembla de vous pouvoir faire un service signalé de la charger sur les Genevois, disant qu'ils estoient une espelongue de larrons, lesquels n'ayant plus leurs gallères à la solde de l'empereur, ne pouvoient vivre que de rapine, à laquelle le G. S. les entretenoit, leur donnant port à Cio, où ils, estans chassés de vous, estoient pourvus et secourus en toutes leurs nécessités; à l'occasion de quoy fut incontinent dépesché un chaoux audit Cio avec exprès commandement de retenir tous vaisseaux genevois qui se trouveroient là, et ceulx qui y arriveroient pour l'advenir. Cela, ce me semble, ne pourra que beaucoup servir pour rendre messieurs les Genevois à vostre dévotion, car toujours sera à vostre puissance de leur faire avoir le traficq non seulement de Cio, mais de tous les pais et ports de S.H.; sans lesquels et les vostres je ne voy point qu'ils se peussent maintenir."

bureaucracy.<sup>364</sup> In relation to these efforts, an important change was the empowerment of the office of grand vizier. As Sultan Süleyman withdrew himself more and more from daily politics and active governing, the grand vizier took over these duties as the deputy of the sultan. As an influential and long-serving figure at the Ottoman court, Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha (1544-1553; 1555-1561) had a significant role in this transformation process. Born in Sarajevo, Rüstem was a *devşirme* recruit, having been trained in the sultan's palace.<sup>365</sup> During his career, he served in various positions. He started as chief stable master at the imperial palace, but soon rose to the rank of governor-general of Diyarbakır and Anatolia (1538). In 1539 he married Mihrimah Sultan, the daughter of Sultan Süleyman and Hürrem Sultan. This marriage enabled him to swiftly ascend yet further in his career; he became third vizier in 1541 and grand vizier in 1544. According to Venetian *bailo* Alvise Renier, Rüstem Pasha not only attained his position but also was able to remain in the office for so long thanks to Hürrem Sultan's support.<sup>366</sup> After the execution of Şehzade Mustafa,<sup>367</sup> who was a presumptive heir to the throne and enjoyed great favor among the courtiers and general populace alike, Rüstem Pasha was regarded as having the main responsibility for the death and faced a serious public reaction. The sultan was thus compelled to dismiss him from the grand vizierate in 1553, but with the assistance of his wife and mother-in-law, he was restored to this position in 1555 and remained there until his death in 1561.

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<sup>364</sup> Cornell Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman," in *Soliman Le Magnifique et Son Temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992) pp. 159-177; M. Zahit Atçıl, "State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire: The Grand Vizierates of Rüstem Pasha (1544-1561)," Unpublished PhD Thesis (The University of Chicago, 2015) p. 7.

<sup>365</sup> There are various claims concerning his origins: he was either of Bosnian, Croatian or Albanian origin. See Christine Woodhead, "Rüstem Pasha," *ET* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) pp. 640-41; Şinasi Altundağ and Şerafettin Turan, "Rüstem Paşa," *İA* (İstanbul: MEB, 1964) pp. 800-802; Erhan Afyoncu, "Rüstem Paşa," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 35 (2008): 288-290.

<sup>366</sup> Alvise Renier, "Relazione (1550)," in *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato: Costantinopoli, Relazioni Inedite (1512-1789)*, ed. Maria Pia Pedani-Fabris (Padova: Bottega D'Erasmus-Aldo Ausilio Editore, 1996) p. 75.

<sup>367</sup> He was Sultan Süleyman's son from his first *haseki* (favorite concubine), Mahidevran Sultan.



Figure 12:  
Hürrem Sultan (Roxelana)  
Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul

Figure 13:  
Mihrimah Sultan, 16<sup>th</sup> century.  
Painted by Cristofano dell'Altissimo.  
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.



Despite the strong aversion toward Rüstem in government circles for his fiscal policies, and among the public for his intrigues, the grand vizier was able to introduce significant reforms and changes in the economic sphere, increasing state revenues. In foreign relations, he promoted peace and the furtherance of trade.<sup>368</sup> Through his abilities and his marriage with the sultan's only daughter, Rüstem was able to maintain the favor of the sultan and enhance his authority in the administration of the empire. According to Ogier de Busbecq, who in 1555 was sent to Istanbul by the King of the Romans, Ferdinand I<sup>369</sup> as an ambassador to conduct peace negotiations with the Ottoman court, among all the pashas, Rüstem enjoyed the most influence with the sultan.<sup>370</sup> In diplomatic negotiations, he became the main negotiator and sole authority acting on behalf of the sultan. Venetian *bailo* Nicolò Michiel stated that when a foreign representative or ambassador arrived in Istanbul, he had to visit Rüstem Pasha before he was presented to the sultan. Thus a conflict or problem could only be solved through his means, and it depended on him to inform the sultan what had been negotiated or decided. Thus for Michiel, Rüstem was a second Süleyman.<sup>371</sup>

The Genoese governors were aware that Rüstem Pasha enjoyed significant diplomatic power at the court. The instructions given to the Genoese representatives clearly indicate this awareness of the importance of Rüstem's position. The Genoese not only held him in great respect and esteem but also offered to pay him a personal tribute annually if the desired capitulations, especially the privilege of obtaining grain from the Ottoman domains, were granted. During the mid-sixteenth century, grain was in fact one of the commodities that was most carefully supervised and regulated in the Ottoman Empire. Storage of grain was organized by the state and oversight of all food supplies came under the authority of the grand vizier. As maintaining a sufficient supply of grain was vital both for military campaigns and for feeding the populace, its export from Ottoman lands was permitted only through special licenses granted to foreign merchants

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<sup>368</sup> Halil İnalcık, "Sultan Süleyman: The Man and the Statesman," p. 94.

<sup>369</sup> After Charles V's abdication, he would become Holy Roman Emperor in 1558.

<sup>370</sup> Ogier de Busbecq, *Turkish Letters* (London: Sickle Moon Books, 2001) p. 20.

<sup>371</sup> Nicolò Michiel, "Viaggio e Relazione (1558)," in *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato: Costantinopoli, Relazioni Inedite (1512-1789)*, ed. Maria Pia Pedani-Fabris (Padova: Bottega D'Erasmus–Aldo Ausilio Editore, 1996) pp. 108-109.



for one-time use. In cases of scarcity or shortage, the government forbade its sale to European merchants entirely.<sup>372</sup>

Rüstem Pasha himself exercised strict control over grain exports to Europe. Although this may have been partly due to concern about adequately provisioning Istanbul, it was also a result of the grand vizier's disinclination to share the profits of this trade with other Ottoman officials. In European sources Rüstem was frequently described as avaricious and mean; it was stated "his first thoughts were always of his own interests and enrichment."<sup>373</sup> As an example of behavior that tended to confirm the accuracy of such observations, at the beginning of his grand vizierate, he sent an order to the judges of Yenişehir, Çatalca, and Levâdiye stating that the sale of grain to merchants from Dubrovnik, Chios, Ancona, Venice, and France was banned; yet he consented to the sale to foreign merchants of grain from lands belonging to the sultan and to himself.<sup>374</sup>

It is necessary to note that in the Ottoman state the *askeri* was a military and consuming class whose prosperity was tied directly to state service and the sultan's favor, while the producing class, the *reaya*, consisted of merchants, tradesmen, and peasants dependent upon the state.<sup>375</sup> However, many notables of the *askeri* class, possessing large fiefs and owning ships, were actively engaged in commercial ventures. The grain trade was one of these ventures, and provided a significant source of profit for Ottoman administrators. According to Brummett, Ottoman grandees engaged in this trade in various ways: they did it either through agents, by negotiating trade agreements with ambassadors and foreign representatives, or by overlooking piratic activities.<sup>376</sup>

Rüstem Pasha also actively dealt in trade agreements with European powers. Through his agents and ships he sold and delivered grain to the Ragusans and Venetians from his extensive estates in Greece and in the Balkans. For instance, in 1551 the Ragusans asked the grand vizier for permission to buy grain from his agent in Thessalonika. Similarly, in 1555 they obtained *fermans* from the grand vizier to buy grain

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<sup>372</sup> Lütü Güçer, "XVI. Yüzyıl Sonlarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu dahilinde hububat ticaretinin tâbi olduğu kayıtlar," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 13, 1-4 (1952): 79-98; Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery*, p. 124; Rhoads Murphey, "Provisioning Istanbul: The State and Subsistence in the Early Modern Middle East," in *Studies on Ottoman Society and Culture, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) pp. 217-263.

<sup>373</sup> Ogier de Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, p. 131.

<sup>374</sup> Sahillioğlu, *Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi H. 951-952 tarihli ve E-12321 numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, doc. no. 55 (27 Şevval 951/ 11 Ocak 1545); Atçıl, "State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire," p. 277.

<sup>375</sup> Brummett, "The Ottoman Empire, Venice and the Question of Enduring Rivalries," p. 240.

<sup>376</sup> Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy*, p. 139.

in western Greece.<sup>377</sup> In times of bad harvests or problems with the grain supply, the grand vizier's estates in Albania became the main source of grain for Dubrovnik. Venetians also collaborated with the grand vizier in order to purchase grain from his estates. For instance, in 1551 Rüstem made a deal with the Venetian *bailo* to provide 200,000 *staia* of wheat over a two-month period and sent his own ships, loaded with grain, to Venice.<sup>378</sup> These kinds of sales brought the grand vizier huge profits.

During the 1550s there were prohibitions on grain exports to Europe due to the increase in local demand. This increase was a result of population growth, the necessity to provision the Ottoman army and navy, which had increased in size, and from time to time bad harvests.<sup>379</sup> In 1555 there was an outbreak of famine in Egypt, leading to a shortage of bread in Istanbul that lasted for three days.<sup>380</sup> In 1560-61 Istanbul experienced another grain shortage, which caused the sultan to prohibit its export.<sup>381</sup> Due to such bans, grain became the main contraband good, and its smuggling was quite frequent.<sup>382</sup> It is possible to find many cases related to the illegal selling of grain to foreigners during the times of prohibitions. Ships belonging to Ali Pasha (second vizier) and the sultan's chief white eunuch (*kapı ağası*) carried grain to Venice and Candia.<sup>383</sup> In 1559 a captain of the chief eunuch's ship promised Venetian *bailo* Marino Cavalli that he would load 14,000 *staia* of grain and beans to be sent to Venice.<sup>384</sup> The only threat to this sort of contraband trade was the intervention of grand admirals and local governors, who were charged with stopping the increasing rate of smuggling. For instance, twenty-four vessels laden with grain were seized by Ali Portuk, the provincial governor of Rhodes. In the end, though, this move had little effect, as all the ships belonged to people influential at court; the captains managed to escape and took refuge in Candia.<sup>385</sup> In another case, Ali Portuk

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<sup>377</sup> Tracy, "The grand vezir and the small republic: Dubrovnik and Rüstem Paşa, 1544-1561," p. 207.

<sup>378</sup> Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy*, p. 139.

<sup>379</sup> Maurice Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé pendant la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N, 1966) pp. 135-140.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132; Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe. Taxation, trade and the struggle for land, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) p. 35.

<sup>381</sup> Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, p. 134.

<sup>382</sup> In the Ottoman registers detailing important affairs, there are many imperial edicts and orders that urged the governors and judges of various Aegean and Adriatic towns to prevent the sale of grain to foreign merchants. For the period 1558-1560, see BOA, *3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (966-968/1558-1560)*, docs. 20, 128, 162, 420, 426, 427, 437, 482, 517, 647, 916, 1479, 1590, 1607, 1648, 1652, 1653, 1654, 1655. This issue is also discussed by M. Z. Atçıl in his dissertation "State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire," p. 280 and he referred to the same documents in order to emphasize the concern of the Ottoman administration about provisioning Istanbul.

<sup>383</sup> Bruno Simon, "Contribution à l'étude du commerce vénitien dans l'Empire Ottoman au milieu du XVIe siècle (1558-1560)," p. 1003.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1013.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 1004.

captured two Venetian ships loaded with grain but the ship captains presented receipts issued by the stewards of Rüstem Pasha and Ali Pasha, so he had to release the vessels.

Even while he was himself actively involved in grain trading with the Europeans, Rüstem Pasha also oversaw the enforcement of the prohibition and took military and naval actions to prevent any attempts by smugglers and pirates to contravene it. In the Ottoman sources, it is possible to find many cases related to it. For instance, in 1548 the grand vizier made a complaint to the sultan about fourth vizier Haydar Pasha, to whom the sultan had granted the privilege of selling grain from his estates in the Black Sea region to European merchants. Rüstem asked the sultan to repeal this privilege, as it would prompt other viziers to request similar privileges, which he believed would jeopardize Istanbul's grain supply given the potential for grain shortages in the realm. He also complained that Ottoman officials like Haydar Pasha, by exerting their status and influence, were able to broker the sale of grain at high prices to foreigners while buying from local sellers at low prices.<sup>386</sup> The grand vizier also criticized the merchants of Galata for selling grain to Europeans and making huge profits from these sales.<sup>387</sup> He sent imperial orders commanding that those who were engaged in illegal sales to the Venetians and other Europeans be arrested and imprisoned.<sup>388</sup>

An important factor in promoting the practice of smuggling was the Ottoman policy of regulating grain prices and sales. The Ottoman administration imposed a fixed maximum price (also called the *narh*) for grain, which was usually below the market rate, in order to facilitate state purchases and provisioning of the populace<sup>389</sup>; the sellers were thus easily attracted by the possibility of selling their grain to foreign buyers to a price two or three times higher.<sup>390</sup> Although neither Genoa nor Florence was able to obtain an official permit to export grain from the Ottoman Empire, smuggling and illegal sales

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<sup>386</sup> TSMA, E. 4100, cited from Tayyip Gökbilgin who published the document in his article "Rüstem Paşa ve Hakkındaki İthamlar," *Tarih Dergisi* VIII 11-12 (1955): 32-33. Besides Haydar Pasha, Rüstem Pasha also complained about second vizier Ahmed Pasha, third vizier İbrahim Pasha and the Agha of Jannissaries.

<sup>387</sup> Gökbilgin, "Rüstem Paşa ve Hakkındaki İthamlar," pp. 12-15; 32-33.

<sup>388</sup> BOA, 3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (966-968/1558-1560), docs. 349, 526, 561, 750, 967, 1031, 1604, 1634. Also see M. Z. Atçıl, "State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire," p. 280.

<sup>389</sup> Regarding *narh* system in the Ottoman Empire, see Halil Sahillioğlu, "Osmanlılarda Narh Müessesesi ve 1525 yılı sonunda İstanbul'da fiyatlar," *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi* 1 (1967): 36-38; Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Narh Müessesesi ve 1640 Tarihli Narh Defteri* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983) pp. 4-18.

<sup>390</sup> For example, according to an imperial edict in 3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (966-968/1558-1560), Manol bin Yani, a *zimmi* merchant, bought grain above the *narh* rate in Ferecik (an Ottoman town in the Western Thrace) to bring it to Istanbul. When some Muslim merchants asked how he managed to buy it at such a high price he replied that he sold it to European merchants (*Frenge*) to a much higher price. Upon the complaint of Hacı Mustafa, Hacı Yusuf and Derviş, the sultan ordered the *kadı* of Ferecik to send Manol bin Yani to Istanbul. See BOA, 3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri, doc. 1442 (22 Zilkade 967/ 14 August 1560).

allowed both to obtain grain from the Levant indirectly. However, such a thing was only possible through close contacts with local merchants, officials, and intermediaries. In some cases Ottoman officials appeared to act as partners in the trade, being either shareholders in or owners of ships in which goods were transported, or owners of large agricultural estates and producers of grain, as in the case of Rüstem Pasha. It was for this reason that the Venetian *bailos* strove to establish close relations with influential pashas. In this way, both sides became part of the Levantine international trade network.

Confronted with the frequent threat of grain shortages, the Genoese decided to follow the same strategy and sought to gain Rüstem's support in order to secure Ottoman grain officially. And in fact the grand vizier also considered the Genoese request favorably. During an audience at the Ottoman court, Rüstem Pasha interrogated the Genoese ambassadors about their grain resources; the latter replied that they customarily obtained it from Sicily, Milan, and other such places, but when there was scarcity in those regions, they went wherever they could to find it. Upon this, the grand vizier gave the green light for the sale of Ottoman grain to the Genoese as long as the Ottoman capital had a sufficient supply for itself. In return the latter would bring textiles and gold coins to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>391</sup> The control of grain supplies gave Rüstem significant leverage in diplomatic relations with the Genoese. This was in line with the longstanding Ottoman policy of inviting rival groups to participate in the Ottoman market. The Genoese could now compete with the Venetians, the French, and even the Florentines in that market. Since the late fifteenth century, the Florentines had been the main importers of woolen cloth to the Ottoman Empire; the recent souring of relations between those two states, opened up a new opportunity for the Genoese to expand into the Ottoman market.<sup>392</sup>

Another opening for the Genoese was to be found in the decline of Venetian trade in the Ottoman Empire during this period. As early as 1553, Venetian *bailo* Bernardo Navagero had looked at the position of the Venetian merchants in the Ottoman market, noting that their number had decreased significantly because they were not making as much profit in the Ottoman capital as formerly. In Navagero's view, this situation was the result of the high price of provisions, the high cost of brokers, gifts, and a growing number of servants, the increasing rent for warehouses, and a decline in the sale of gold

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<sup>391</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 17r-v.

<sup>392</sup> At the time, Venetian woolens did not yet dominate the market, and the increasing number of janissaries and thus the growing demand for military clothing made the Ottoman Empire an attractive market for the sale of woolen cloth. Concerning woolen cloth production in the Ottoman Empire and the rivalry between local products and Italian imports, see Chapter IV.

jewelry. He stated that due to the strict fiscal policies, Venetian merchants had to conduct trade through the mediation of Ottoman merchants (specifically Jewish ones), as the latter had taken control of the market for raw materials.<sup>393</sup> A similar observation was recorded a few years later by another Venetian *bailo*, Marino Cavalli in his *relazione* of 1560, where he offered the following remarks:

Our merchants (in Constantinople) number between ten and twelve houses. With little effort, they do everything through the mediation of Jews. They [the Venetians] buy the raw wool from the Jews and to them they give the woolen cloth, while they later resell this cloth and make a profit. The Venetians also obtain alum, camlet, and other things through these Jewish merchants, earning half of what they would if they did it themselves.<sup>394</sup>

In the mid-sixteenth century both the internal and overland external markets came under the control of the sultan's subjects. Constrained by the risks and dangers of the Levantine trade, the Venetians ceded their places to Ottoman merchants and conducted their trade in the Ottoman Empire through the mediation of the latter.<sup>395</sup> Rüstem Pasha played a key role in this change, as he promoted an expansion in international commerce by carefully supervising the flow of merchandise to and from the empire and furthering the interests of Ottoman merchants to the detriment of the Venetians and other European merchants.<sup>396</sup>

Another significant blow to the Venetian trade was the decline in the import of luxury textiles and goods to the imperial palace. During the grand vizierate of Rüstem Pasha, a spurt in domestic production of luxury textiles in the Ottoman capital occurred,

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<sup>393</sup> "Relazione dell'Impero Ottomano del Clarissimo Bernardo Navagero, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli Fatta in Pregadi nel Mese di Febbraio del 1553," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Alèri, Serie III (Firenze: Tipografia all'Insegna di Clio, 1842) p. 101.

<sup>394</sup> "Relazione dell'Impero Ottomano di Marino Cavalli, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli nel 1560," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, p. 275: "Li nostri mercanti sono da dieci o dodici case, che con poca loro fatica fanno il tutto per mezzo degli Ebrei. Da loro comprano le lane che essi fanno lavorare e a loro danno li panni che poi rivendono e guadagnano; con loro contrattano d'allumi e ciambellotti e cosi del resto, guadagnando la metà manco di quello che fariano se facessero da per sè."

<sup>395</sup> Bernard Dov Cooperman, "Venetian Policy Towards Levantine Jews in Its Broader Italian Context," in *Gli Ebrei a Venezia secoli XIV-XVIII*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi (Milano: Edizioni Comunità, 1987) p. 67.

<sup>396</sup> In the Venetian archives there exist letters from Rüstem Pasha to the Doge regarding the complaints of Ottoman merchants about the damage and losses they were exposed to in Venice due to unfair treatment by the Venetian authorities and asking the Doge to provide them with protection and more favorable conditions during their travels and trade in Venice. The grand vizier also gave the Doge a stern reminder regarding his obligation to fulfill the condition of reciprocity laid out in the *ahidname* of 1540, warning that it would not be good for the relations between the two states were this obligation to be neglected. See Tayyip Gökbilgin, "Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Vesikalar Külliyyatında Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devri Belgeleri," *Belgeler* 1:2 (1964): 161, doc. 33. The same document is also mentioned by Şerafettin Turan, "Venedik'te Türk Ticaret Merkezi," *Belleten* 32, 126 (1968): 253; 276 and by Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 10 (1986): 199.

counterbalancing the Italian imports. The royal workshop that produced luxury textiles increased in size: while only 27 artisans were employed there in 1526, this number had risen to 105 in 1545 and 156 by 1557, making it the “largest court workshop in the capital.”<sup>397</sup> The production in this workshop provided the court with silk fabrics for *hil’at* (ceremonial robes of honor) and furnishings in which a “distinctive artistic identity” and an Ottomanization in models and designs was established.<sup>398</sup> Besides supporting the royal luxury textile workshop in the capital, the grand vizier also supported silk production in Bursa, owning silk looms there.<sup>399</sup> Navagero remarked that Rüstem did everything possible in order to promote the silk and gold textiles of Bursa, sometimes even wearing robes made of them.<sup>400</sup> In this way, he endeavoured to encourage the consumption of locally produced textiles, which would limit the import of Italian fabrics.

Yet, the Venetian *bailos* in their *relazione* did not assess the impact of domestic production on the sale of Venetian fabrics, instead attributing the decline to other factors. According to Navagero, it was due to the death of İbrahim Pasha, whose vizierate had marked a period of luxury and lavish expense that was now ended.<sup>401</sup> For Cavalli, the decline in sales had occurred because the sultan had grown older and begun to pursue a religious life, which led him to wear robes of camlet instead of silk and woolen fabrics. As Süleyman adopted a style of modesty and simplicity, the ruling class followed suit. Cavalli added that the imperial treasury was so full of precious fabrics during this period that the palace administration sold them to those who were required to present gifts to the sultan; in this way, both the money and the fabrics remained in the treasury. However, Cavalli regarded this situation as temporary; once the sultanate changed hands, everything would change.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, “A Kânûn for the State, A Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture,” in *Soliman Le Magnifique et Son Temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992) p. 198.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>399</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan. Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005) p. 315.

<sup>400</sup> “Relazione dell’Impero Ottomano del Clarissimo Bernardo Navagero, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli Fatta in Pregadi nel Mese di Febbraio del 1553,” p. 93.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>402</sup> “Relazione dell’Impero Ottomano di Marino Cavalli, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli nel 1560,” p. 275: Il poco consumare viene dal principe, che essendo vecchio e religioso non veste se non panni di lana e ciambellotti, siccome la sua legge comanda, e quel che fa il Gran-Signore fanno medesimamente tutti gli altri; dimodochè le cose sono ridotte a questi termini, che le vesti di seta dei donative sono moltiplicate tanto nel cazna del Gran-Signore, che han trovato modo, perchè non crescano più ed insieme non perdere il guadagno, che quando un suddito vuol far donativo al Gran Signore, quelli del cazna gli dimandano che cosa vuol dare, e gli vendono il tutto; dimodochè il danaro entra e le robe ritornano ancora....Ma se si muterà il Gran-Signore, le cose ancora si muteranno assai.”

While the piety adopted by the sultan in the last years of his reign may indeed have affected the flow of Venetian luxuries into the Ottoman palace, evidence from various other sources indicates that the court continued to consume a wide range of luxury goods, from clocks and glassware to high-quality textiles. There were many cases where Rüstem Pasha accepted Italian fabrics as gifts; he even gave special orders to Dubrovnik for particular types of luxury textiles produced in Venice and Florence. This is an indication of that city's important role in providing the Venetian silks and Florentine woollens requested by the grand vizier, especially in times of diplomatic conflict with Venice.<sup>403</sup>

Overall, Rüstem was not on friendly terms with the Venetians, a situation that was reflected in the reports of Venetian *bailos*. For instance, Erizzo referred to him as an austere man and the strongest enemy of the Christians.<sup>404</sup> Cavalli went further, describing him as the worst man in the empire, an individual without conscience; he was nothing but a tyrant and an impolite person.<sup>405</sup> The tense relations between the grand vizier and the Venetian representatives appear to have had a significant impact on Venetian trade with the Ottoman court. Thus Genoa's request to restore trade relations with the Porte came at an opportune time, increasing its chances to gain a place in the Levantine market as the new trading partner of the Ottomans. The fact that the Genoese representative was initially well received by the grand vizier also raised the possibility that Rüstem intended to support the Genoese at the expense of the Venetians. Prompted by the lure of Genoese gold and intersecting trade interests, the pasha favored the Republic's initiative. In consequence, the main blow to the Genoese did not come from the Ottoman side but rather from the French and the Venetians, who had a preeminent role in commercial exchanges between the West and the Levant. Especially in Levantine ports such as Aleppo and Alexandria, the Venetian and French trade volumes remained quite high; commodities including spices, raw silk and cotton were exchanged for Western products such as woolen cloth, silk fabrics, metals, glassware, silver, and gold. That being the case, they did not wish to share their interests in the Levantine market with yet another rival, and so devoted considerable effort to undermining the Genoese diplomatic mission.

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<sup>403</sup> Tracy, "The grand vezir and the small republic: Dubrovnik and Rüstem Paşa, 1544-1561," pp. 209-212.

<sup>404</sup> "Antonio Erizzo, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Sommario della Relazione (1557)," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, Serie III, vol. III (Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1855) p. 137.

<sup>405</sup> "Relazione dell'Impero Ottomano di Marino Cavalli, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli nel 1560," p. 295: "Rustan-pascia non ama alcuno se non il danaro, ed è il peggior uomo di Turchia, senza ragione, senza coscienza alcuna e quanto si possa dire tiranno e discortese."

## Ottoman Foreign Policy in the Mid-Sixteenth Century

The apparent Genoese–Ottoman convergence was prompted not only by economic interests, but by specific political considerations as well. At around the same time as the Genoese negotiations were taking place, the Sublime Porte was dealing with an internal crisis. Sultan Süleyman’s sons Bayezid and Selim were already at loggerheads with each other over the succession to the throne, a situation that after 1558 turned into a war. The sultan openly supported Selim as his successor. Bayezid, aware of the doom awaiting him, decided to flee and took shelter in Persia, leading to that state’s involvement in the conflict. Thus the crisis precipitated by a runaway Ottoman prince fueled the existing rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia for domination over the region and the trade routes connecting Europe with Asia. Shah Tahmasb tried to use the Bayezid issue to further his own interests, but in the end he agreed to return the prince, and in 1562 Bayezid was executed in Iran by an Ottoman agent working for Selim. The Bayezid affair, lasting from 1558 to 1562, significantly constrained the Ottoman government in its relations with other foreign powers.<sup>406</sup> During this period, peace negotiations took place with the Holy Roman Empire, Genoa, Florence, and Spain as well as with the Safavids. Ambassador Busbecq, who came to the Ottoman capital in 1555 as representative of the Holy Roman Emperor, initially experienced some difficulties; however, he was able to conclude a six-year truce with the Ottomans in 1562. Genoa and Florence sent diplomatic representatives to the Ottoman capital in 1556-1557 to obtain peace and trade treaties. Spain soon followed suit, initiating informal diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman government in 1558.

After the mid-sixteenth century, the imperial struggles between Charles V and Sultan Süleyman diminished somewhat as a result of the conflicts and problems the two rulers were experiencing within their own realms. Both Charles and Süleyman were suffering illnesses and becoming more and more “melancholic.”<sup>407</sup> In order to secure an easy succession for his son, the emperor stepped down in 1556 and left the Spanish crown to Philip II (1556-1598); in 1558 the former’s brother Ferdinand became the Holy Roman

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<sup>406</sup> Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman. Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013) p. 147.

<sup>407</sup> M. J. Rodriguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire: Charles V, Philip II and Habsburg Authority, 1551-1559* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) pp. 74-77; Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, p. 148.



Emperor. This division would have a major impact on what had been the sole Habsburg Empire, which was now led by two heads, ruling over different territories and regions. Meanwhile, a financial crisis in Spain had triggered increased Protestant activity in the Netherlands, putting Charles V in a difficult position. In consequence of all these events, a more conciliatory approach was adopted in foreign policy. Both France and the Ottoman Empire were in a similar position in that their rulers were preoccupied with their own problems at home. Moreover, the Ottomans' actions were influenced not only by the succession crisis between the sultan's sons, but by Rüstem Pasha's choice of policy. He favored peace in foreign relations and received positively the requests of other powers for friendship; this allowed for closer diplomatic contacts with former enemies, including Genoa and Spain, during this period. But in the end, the Genoese initiative was impeded by the French and ended in failure in November 1558.

Meanwhile Philip II began to conduct diplomatic negotiations on two fronts, with both France and the Ottoman Empire. The diplomacy between Philip and the Porte took place to a certain extent behind the scenes, as both sides were unwilling to take the first step, which would be "admission of failure" and would lead to "loss of authority, reputation and prestige."<sup>408</sup> Thus it was conducted by informal agents and actors, among whom Francesco de Franchi—the same who had previously represented the Genoese in their negotiations at the Porte—played a significant role. According to Salgado, de Franchi was, at the desire of the sultan, assigned with the task of arranging a truce with Philip II. De Franchi was well received at Philip's court, and was immediately sent back to Istanbul to negotiate with the sultan on behalf of the king. However, instead of sending an official embassy, which "would have put the negotiations on an official footing," the king refused to provide the necessary credentials for de Franchi.<sup>409</sup> This attitude displeased the Ottomans, who insisted that an official envoy be sent to the Porte to start diplomatic negotiations. Philip therefore sent Niccolò Secco, ex-captain of justice in Milan, as his envoy to Istanbul. Secco, who had already performed this task on behalf of Ferdinand, now went to represent Philip II, who was determined to continue peace negotiations with the Ottoman administration. In April 1559 the Spanish initiative ended without conclusion when the sultan rejected Philip's request that he be referred to as

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<sup>408</sup> M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire*, p. 298.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid. According to Braudel, however, de Franchi was entrusted with this task by Philip II when he was sent to Istanbul for a second time by the Republic of Genoa. This would mean that de Franchi negotiated both for Genoa and for Philip II during his second visit in Istanbul in 1558. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. II, p. 969.

“joint negotiator” with Ferdinand in these peace negotiations.<sup>410</sup> At around the same time, Philip signed the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis with France, which brought a final settlement to the Habsburg–Valois conflict, meaning that negotiating with the sultan was no longer vital for the Spanish crown.

To the Ottomans, this treaty came as a major shock, jeopardizing the Ottoman–French alliance. The close collaboration between the two states dated back to 1525, when the forces of Charles V defeated the French and captured Francis I at the Battle of Pavia. France sent an ambassador to Sultan Süleyman, asking for his assistance in saving the French king; the sultan received this request favorably, sowing the seeds of diplomatic relations between the two states.<sup>411</sup> For France, Sultan Süleyman was the only ally strong enough to stop Habsburg domination over Europe. For the Ottomans, having a Christian ally in Europe would likewise be a strategic advantage in their struggle against the Habsburg Empire. Thus, their shared enmity and opposition to the Habsburgs brought the two powers together to cooperate in alliance against Charles V. In 1536, a year after the Habsburg attack on Goletta and Tunisia, diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the French gained a new impetus. Lütfi Pasha, who served in various posts and finally became grandvizier between 1539 and 1541, wrote in his work *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* that Francis I sent an ambassador, Jean de la Forest, to Istanbul to encourage the sultan to take revenge for the Habsburg attack and proposed an agreement for military collaboration; Sultan Süleyman agreed with this proposal and sent his fleet to organize expeditions to the Italian coasts.<sup>412</sup> Regarding the official treaty between two states, it was discussed with the grand vizier of the time, İbrahim Pasha; however, according to İnalçık, it was never confirmed by the sultan, and soon after, İbrahim Pasha was executed.<sup>413</sup> Thus the prevailing view in the historiography is that this treaty or *ahidname* was not implemented but remained only a draft copy, with the official capitulations not being granted until

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<sup>410</sup> M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire*, pp. 299-303.

<sup>411</sup> Kemal Paşazâde, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman, X. Defter*, ed. Şefaettin Severcan (Ankara: TTK, 1996) pp. 220-221.

<sup>412</sup> Lütfi Pasha who was at the time third vizier also joined this expedition and thus provided a detailed account of it in his work. Lütfi Paşa, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, ed. Kayhan Atik (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001) pp. 277-278: “Ve bu yılda Françe vilâyetinin kralı olan Françaşko pâdişâha mektubiyle âdem gönderüb ve mektûbunda dimiş ki, “İslam Pâdişâhı Sultân Süleymân’dan temennâ budur ki bu muhibb bî-riyânızı İspanya dîn-i mel’un hayli bî-huzûr idüb incitdi. Şöyle kim denizden donanma-ı hümâyun pâdişâh-i İslâm sa’âdetle karadan Avlonya iskelesine gelüb dahi Polya vilâyetine ve denizden dahi kırk elli pare kadırgalarımız gelmek mukarrerdir” deyu bildirmiş. Öyle olsa pâdişâh dahi fi’l-hâl niyyetü’l-gaza deyu emr eyledi.”

<sup>413</sup> Halil İnalçık, “İmtiyazat,” p. 1183.

1569.<sup>414</sup> In any case, the Ottoman–French alliance in 1536 marked a turning point in the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

The agreement between the French and the Ottomans had commercial advantages as well. The French would be able to have trading privileges in the Ottoman lands similar to those enjoyed by the Venetians. Indeed, the French had been conducting trade in Egypt since Mamluk times. When Sultan Selim I conquered the region, he confirmed the privileges granted by the Mamluk sultan to the French; these were renewed during the reign of Sultan Süleyman. Through these privileges, French merchants were able to conduct trade in Alexandria and Cairo; France even kept a consul in Alexandria.<sup>415</sup> Now, the alliance between the two states would enable the French to expand their commercial activities to other parts of the Ottoman Empire, bringing profit to the French economy that would be especially welcome after their loss of Genoa's naval power to the Spanish Habsburgs, along with loss of the profits from the Far Eastern and New World trades. The Ottoman Empire would provide France a new market for its textiles, paper, and currency in return for spices, silk, leather, wool, carpets, ash, and drugs from the Levantine markets. Marseille gained importance as a French trading port during this period, as spices from Alexandria were shipped directly there.<sup>416</sup> Thus, political cooperation fostered trade relations.

For the Ottoman side as well, such an alliance had economic advantages. The French could be used as a balance against the Venetians. Moreover, French trading activities would revive the Eastern Mediterranean markets in the face of the threat posed by the Portuguese, who had discovered direct maritime routes to the East around the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>417</sup> Still, French commerce in the Levant remained limited until the 1570s, when war broke out between the Ottomans and Venetians. After this, the French were able to bring in their own products, in particular textiles produced in Normandy,

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<sup>414</sup> There are various arguments concerning the nature of the agreement of 1536 between France and the Porte. Joseph Matuz, "À Propos de la Validité des Capitulations de 1536 entre L'Empire Ottoman et La France," *Turcica* 24 (1992): 183-192; Gilles Veinstein, "Les capitulations Franco-Ottomanes de 1536 sont-elles encore controversables?" in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, eds. Vera Constantini and Markus Koller (Brill: Leiden, 2008) pp. 71-88.

<sup>415</sup> Alexander H. De Groot, "The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries," pp. 595-596.

<sup>416</sup> Paul Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1896) pp. xii-xiv.

<sup>417</sup> De Lamar Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16/4 (1985): 456.

Dauphine, Languedoc and Provence, and break the Venetian monopoly on textile trade.<sup>418</sup> Moreover, with the capitulations of 1569 the sultan granted even more extensive trading privileges to the French, including the capitulatory right over all European nations except the Venetians. Ships of the other European powers thus had to sail under the French flag, and those states' citizens would be under the protection of the French consulate; in return for these services, fees would be paid to the French. This situation meant that France, in the words of Vaughan, was "the most favored nation" at the Sublime Porte.<sup>419</sup> Still, it would be difficult to say that French merchants could fully benefit from this advantageous position at the outset, due to the turmoil caused by the religious wars in France.<sup>420</sup> Based on the available archival sources and data, it would appear that French trade with the Ottoman Empire became a large-scale affair only from the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>421</sup>

Although it was military and political necessity that prompted frequent diplomatic exchanges between France and the Sublime Porte during this period, military cooperation between the two powers was in fact rarely effective. The naval campaign of the allied forces in 1543–44 achieved nothing, despite extensive and costly preparations. During the reign of Henry II military operations continued, but still did not bring much success. In 1552 a joint French–Ottoman attack was mounted in the western Mediterranean; however, due to lack of coordination, it ended in failure. The following year the target for the joint French–Ottoman forces was Corsica and by extension its overlord Genoa. However, the Ottomans were already engaged in conflict on their eastern front and had no wish to enter into a war with the Spanish Habsburgs in the west. Therefore, the island could not be taken over in its entirety.<sup>422</sup> In view of these outcomes, the French–Ottoman expeditions can be considered largely ineffectual.

Besides the lack of military coordination, collaboration between the two powers was also at times hampered by a lack of cordiality in the relations between French officials and Ottoman notables. Reciprocal distrust and various conflicts in individual relationships tended to prevent effective joint action. For instance, enmity between the

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<sup>418</sup> Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Français*, p. xvi; Raymond Collier and Joseph Billioud, *Histoire du Commerce de Marseille*, vol. III (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1951) p. 462.

<sup>419</sup> Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: a pattern of alliances, 1350-1700*, p. 122.

<sup>420</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Introduction," in *Cambridge History of Turkey vol. II: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power 1453-1603*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013) p. 7.

<sup>421</sup> Edhem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>422</sup> Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel*, pp. 42-43; De Lamar Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," pp. 458-459.

French ambassador Jean de la Vigne and Rüstem Pasha had an impact on the allied expedition to the Ligurian coast in 1558, playing into the hands of the Genoese such that they were able to protect their shores from French–Ottoman attack through diplomatic means. Yet, as Jensen has observed, the importance of this alliance lay in “its potential threat rather than its actual operation.”<sup>423</sup> Contrary to Rüstem Pasha’s view, for Sultan Süleyman the French alliance had always had a strategic importance; therefore when during the Genoese diplomatic negotiations de la Vigne warned the sultan that concluding a peace and trade agreement with Genoa would be an infringement of his alliance with the French king, Süleyman, who of course had the last word, gave it in favor of the French.<sup>424</sup>

It was the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis between France and Spain, signed on April 3, 1559, that constituted a breaking point in French–Ottoman relations and upset the balance of power in the Mediterranean. After this peace, diplomatic relations between the two states were temporarily suspended, as the sultan considered this act of the French a betrayal of their alliance; he expressed his disappointment in a letter to Henry II, reminding him that “old friends do not easily become enemies, or old enemies friends.”<sup>425</sup> Meanwhile, de la Vigne left the Porte on September 1559 but died on the way to France. In his place, Vincenzo Giustiniani, a Genoese Chiot, arrived as a temporary representative.<sup>426</sup> The same year Henry died and was replaced on the throne by Francis II, whose reign did not last long either. In 1560 Charles IX took over the throne at the age of ten. The most urgent issues facing the new king had to do with the wars of religion in France; given this situation, diplomatic relations with the Porte were more limited.<sup>427</sup>

### **A Change in Genoese Policy and the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis**

When their negotiations with the Porte ended in failure, the Genoese maneuvered toward the Spanish crown again and looked for ways to renew their relations with the latter. The main concern of the Republic was the possibility of an Ottoman attack on the Ligurian coast. Consequently, Genoese ambassador Marcantonio Sauli was sent to Madrid to negotiate with Philip II and ask for financial and military support, which would

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<sup>423</sup> De Lamar Jensen, “The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy,” p. 459.

<sup>424</sup> The details of the negotiation process will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

<sup>425</sup> Ogier de Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, p. 145.

<sup>426</sup> Charriere, *Négociations du Levant*, vol. II, pp. 604-605; 735. Vincenzo was from the Giustianiani family, the *Maona* of Chios. It is notable that during this time, Vincenzo’s sons were residing in Henry’s court in France and being brought up with Henry’s son. In the following period as well, Vincenzo acted as temporary French ambassador on behalf of both Francis II and Charles IX.

<sup>427</sup> Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, pp. 148-149.

be needed for the security of not only Genoa but also the Spanish territories of Milan and Naples. The instructions given to Sauli clearly indicate a change of attitude on the part of the Republic. He was exhorted by the governors to make a good impression on both the king and the ministers by stressing the Republic's devotion and loyalty to the monarchy.<sup>428</sup> Regarding the diplomatic negotiations with the Sublime Porte, the Genoese governors put forward the argument that it was an attempt to engage in trade with the Levant, in particular to gain easy access to grain, which would have benefited both Genoa and Spain; however, due to the French machinations, the mission could not fulfill its goal of obtaining commercial privileges. They instructed Sauli to clearly explain this to the king, in order to justify Genoese actions in this regard.<sup>429</sup>

The Genoese ambassador was also instructed to emphasize to the Spanish court the importance of Corsica's re-integration into Genoa. Concerning this matter, he should resort to the advice, support, and favor of Antonio Doria, who was "the person most devoted to his country and, deservedly, highly regarded in that [Spanish] court."<sup>430</sup> It can thus be seen that the formerly critical attitude toward the Doria family had been replaced by an appreciation of the value of their agency between the Republic and the Spanish crown. The loss of Corsica as a defensive bulwark had been traumatic for Genoa; the governors asked Sauli to draw attention to the depressing vision haunting the city: the likelihood that the Ottomans would soon be plundering the Ligurian coasts again. For this reason, the governors proposed, with the help and support of the king, to produce more galleys and prepare a strong fleet so that they could overcome the French–Ottoman forces and impede their activities in the western Mediterranean. First of all, two or three strongholds should be built on the gulf of Spezia. Then, in order to retake Corsica, they planned to build fifty to eighty galleys; however, due to financial limitations only twelve galleys could be armed. Thus, Sauli was to ask the king to meet half of the expenses necessary to maintain such a large force of armed galleys. The galleys of the king and of Genoa would thereby be so many in number that they could easily confront those of the Ottomans: "To your twelve galleys more should be added, which may cause more

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<sup>428</sup> ASG, AS 2707 D, Letter of 14 February 1559: "Istruzioni al Protonotario Marcantonio Sauli, Ambasciatore mandato a Re di Spagna," cc. 63-64; c. 70.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 71-73.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 75: "Il signor Antonio Doria è affettionatissimo alla sua patria e meritamente ben visto in quella Corte."

jealousy and worry among the Turks, so that they will re-consider coming into our waters and disrupting the designs of His Majesty.”<sup>431</sup>

The failure of Genoese diplomatic negotiations with the Sublime Porte had thus compelled the Republic to restore a state of reciprocal trust and cooperation with Philip II. Sauli was instructed to highlight the important and powerful role of the Spanish king as seen by Genoa, and to describe how the two states could struggle together against their enemies. This was the final card the Genoese had to play, after seeing that there was no hope for them in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the machinations of the French and the Venetians; thus the Republic once more endeavored to take refuge under the imperial banner in order to maintain its independence, security, and survival. Nor did the Spanish king have any other choice. In order to maintain his position in the Mediterranean he needed Genoese naval support and financial resources. In short, mutual interests once again brought the two states together.

Soon after the Genoese negotiations with the Spanish court, the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was signed and the long struggle over Italy ended. Although both France and Spain were forced by financial constraints to make this peace, Spain still had the advantage. With this treaty, France gave up all claims over Italy, Savoy and Piedmont. Above all, it surrendered Corsica, which meant the loss of a strategic base in the Mediterranean.<sup>432</sup> Genoa thus recovered what it had looked to gain through peaceful means.

From the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis to the capture of Chios by the Ottomans in 1566, Genoese diplomacy with the Sublime Porte followed an uneven course. In 1560 the Genoese joined with the naval forces of Philip II, Florence, and the Hospitallers against the Ottomans in the battle of Djerba, which ended in defeat for the former. In 1562–1563, pressured by the possibility of another revolt by Sampiero Corso in Corsica and with the encouragement of the Genoese renegades at the Porte, Genoa attempted for a second time to negotiate with the Ottoman administration and ask for trading privileges in the Ottoman domains. It ended in failure, but the Republic was at least able to establish a sophisticated intelligence system in the Ottoman capital, which provided constant flow of information to the Republic as well as to Spain. Genoese renegades, spies, and merchants acting on behalf of the Republic in the court and the capital supplied military intelligence, including

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid., c. 78: “[E]t aggiongendosi poi al suo stuolo dodeci altre di più ben ad ordine e ben armate, forse che si darebbe maggior gelosia, e maggior pensiero alle Turchesche di tanto domesticarsi di qua nei nostri mari, che sturba sempre tanto i disegni di S. Maestà, quanto ogn’un vede.”

<sup>432</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. II, p. 946.

information on naval activities and the movements of the Ottoman fleet. Nonetheless, in 1565 that very fleet moved against Philip II and his allies at Malta, and a year later, in 1566, Genoese-controlled Chios was captured by the Ottomans, which would have a significant impact on Genoese trade in the Levant.

### Conclusion

This chapter has examined the reasons and motivation behind Genoa's decision to restart diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire in the mid-sixteenth century. These may be summarized as the escalating tension between the *nuovi* and the *vecchi* within Genoa due to the loss of Corsica, and the conflict with the Spanish governors in southern Italy as a result of the grain supply crisis and the threat of famine. These moments of tension resulted in the *nuovi* seriously calling into question the value of Spanish protection. Moreover, after witnessing the Spanish attitude during the war of Corsica, the Republic was compelled to ward off the threat of a French–Ottoman attack on the Ligurian coast through diplomatic means. In 1556 the Genoese Chiot Francesco de Franchi was sent to the Sublime Porte to negotiate for peace and trading privileges with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha. The pasha's positive attitude toward the Genoese request encouraged the Republic to send an official diplomatic legate to obtain the capitulations. The negotiation process and the actors who participated in it will be discussed in detail in the following chapter; however, one obvious issue that the Republic had to face during the negotiations with the Porte was how to handle Spain and France, two rival states fighting to control Genoa.

As a small state located in a geopolitically strategic position, it was difficult for Genoa to follow an independent policy. The Ligurian city was not strong enough to declare its political autonomy and so was constantly under the threat of invasion by France or Spain. Thus, from 1528 the Genoese aligned themselves politically and economically with Spain in order to preserve their independence and internal stability. Through the agency of Andrea Doria, the *vecchi* in particular benefited from the commercial opportunities and resources the Spanish territories offered; in return, they provided financial and military support to the crown. Until the invasion of Corsica by allied French–Ottoman forces in 1553, the Republic remained as strong ally of the Habsburgs. The loss of Corsica and other crises impelled the Republic to follow a different strategy for its survival, which led to the peace negotiations with the Ottoman



Empire. The diminishing influence of Spain also influenced the Republic's decision to look to the Ottomans for friendship and protection. At a time when the imperial rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs was at its peak, the relationship between the large and small states in the region was shaped mainly by the shifting balance of power and influence at the international level. The Genoese intended not only to revive their Levantine trade by expanding into the Ottoman market but also to end Ottoman support to French naval forces. In this way, through adept political and diplomatic maneuvers, the Republic endeavored to protect its interests.

In the Ottoman Empire as well, the conditions were ripe for such an attempt. Rüstem Pasha's policies favored peace and the promotion of trade; during his grand vizierate he tried to maintain peaceful relations with European states, in part due to the internal crisis resulting from the succession conflict between the sons of the sultan and the tensions on the eastern front. It seems that the grand vizier and the Genoese had also come to an agreement at the individual level regarding the grain trade. In view of all this, the Republic was initially quite hopeful about restoring peace and trade relations with the Porte as well as securing the protection of the latter. However, French intervention changed the course of the negotiation process. The fact that the Republic was closely attached to the Spanish crown in a relationship of mutual interdependence was used as a trump card by the French in denigrating the Genoese to the sultan, who in the end chose the French alliance over Genoese friendship. Despite Genoa's proclaimed neutrality and determination to maintain friendly relations with all powers of the Mediterranean, and its desire to attain a position in the Levant trade equal to that of Venice, the Republic was not able to gain the sultan's trust and favor.

After the failure of its negotiations with the Sublime Porte, Genoa quickly turned to Spain in order to restore its relations with Philip II. The treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis and the subsequent developments changed the balance of power, making conditions more favorable to Genoese interests. Although in the following years another crisis in Corsica and trading opportunities brought forward the possibility of re-opening negotiations with the Ottoman Empire, the Republic remained within the orbit of Spain. At the same time, it maintained unofficial contact with the Porte through a well-developed intelligence system that kept both the Republic and the Spanish crown informed regarding developments in the Ottoman capital and court. Through the first half of the seventeenth century, Genoa, as a small state, guaranteed its survival and independence thanks to the

Spanish alliance, which precluded the establishment of any sort of diplomatic contact or trading links with the Porte.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> In 1665, Genoa made another serious effort to restore peace and trading privileges with the Ottoman Empire, sending Gio Agostino Durazzo as ambassador to Istanbul. Unlike the diplomatic initiative in 1558, this later mission was successful, and in 1666 the Genoese obtained the privilege of keeping a resident ambassador in Istanbul and a consul in Smyrna.

## CHAPTER III

### Much Effort for Few Gains:

### Genoese–Ottoman Negotiations (1558/1563)

The grain crisis, the souring relations with the Spanish crown, and economic as well as strategic considerations led Genoa to relaunch diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte. After the success of informal negotiations conducted by Francesco de Franchi with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, the Republic started preparations to send an official diplomatic legation to Istanbul for the confirmation of the capitulations. Meanwhile, Tortorino was sent for a second time to the Ottoman capital to maintain close contacts and the continuance of favorable relations with the Ottoman court until the arrival of the Genoese embassy. In this chapter, the focus will be on Tortorino's second mission in 1557 and the succeeding diplomatic negotiations, which may be considered the first official diplomatic mission sent by the Republic to Istanbul since the time of Sultan Mehmed II.

In the historiography, there are only a very few studies that discuss the reasons behind this diplomatic effort and detail the course of the negotiation process. This could be partly due to a general assumption that Genoa was closely tied to the Spanish Habsburgs and thus any Genoese attempt to negotiate with the Sublime Porte was doomed to failure. From this perspective, the issue was already a cut-and-dried case, not worth in-depth examination. However, as discussed in the preceding chapter, confronted with a succession crisis and the economic weakness of Spain, Genoa began to reconsider the benefits of Spanish protection and look to restore its relations with the Sublime Porte. Thus, the circumstances that stimulated Ottoman–Genoese diplomatic relations were far more complicated than is generally assumed.

In an article that appeared in 1898, Camillo Manfroni discussed the negotiations in detail and published some of the relevant archival documents.<sup>434</sup> His article laid the groundwork for subsequent exploration of this topic. In recent studies on the history of

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<sup>434</sup> Camillo Manfroni, "Le Relazioni fra Genova, L'Impero Bizantino e i Turchi," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 28 (1898): 577-858.

early modern Genoa,<sup>435</sup> Ottoman–Genoese diplomatic relations have been mentioned in bits here and there, with reference to Manfroni’s work. But his article has one significant drawback: a lack of Ottoman perspective. Evaluating events from a Euro-centric viewpoint, Manfroni minimized the Ottomans’ role as active participants in and shapers of the negotiation process. Instead, he overemphasized French influence in Ottoman politics and considered the French input to have been the main determinant of the outcome of the Ottoman–Genoese negotiations. This stems in part from a lack of sources on the Ottoman side, with a large part of the documentation related to the mission coming from the Genoese and the French sides.

The documents in the State Archive of Genoa include diplomatic correspondence, reports as well as secret letters, preserved in the collection of the *Archivio Segreto*. For the topic being discussed here, the records in the box *Lettere Ministri Costantinopoli* 2169, covering the period 1556–1569, are particularly important. The main difficulty one faces in working with these documents is that they are not organized in chronological or thematic order. Thus, throughout this chapter, the date of the document will be the main identifier for reference. Besides the archival documents, some letters concerning the negotiations of 1558 and a detailed report on the mission are to be found compiled in a manuscript prepared upon the request of a Genoese nobleman, Tommaso Franzone, in the late seventeenth century.<sup>436</sup>

Although Genoese sources provide extensive details concerning the diplomatic mission, they are not always explicit enough to allow one to grasp the full picture. Thus, the evidence in the Genoese sources is complemented by that in the French and Venetian ones, in particular those of the French, who were the main opponents and disrupters of the Genoese diplomatic initiative. In the multi volume work *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, E. Charrière edited and published the letters, memoirs and other diplomatic writings of the French ambassadors in Istanbul and other places in the Levant.<sup>437</sup> In this

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<sup>435</sup> Onorato Pàstine, “Genova e L’Impero Ottomano nel secolo XVII,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* LXXIII (1952): 5-7; Carlo Bitossi, “Genova e I Turchi: Note sui rapporti tra Genovesi e Ottomani fra Medioevo ed Età Moderna,” in *Italien und Das Osmanische Reich* ed. Franziska Meier (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2010) pp. 87-117; James D. Tracy, “Il commercio italiano in territorio ottoman,” pp. 437-438. However, for instance in the very recent studies of the sixteenth-century Genoa by Thomas Kirk and Céline Dauverd, there is no mention of the Genoese–Ottoman diplomatic interactions that took place in the mid-sixteenth century.

<sup>436</sup> ASG, Biblioteca MS. 128, “*Istruzioni e Relationi de Ministri della Ser.ma Rep.ca di Genova, Stati in diversi tempi appresso al Gran Turco ad uso dell’ Ill.mo Sig.re Tomaso Fransone.*”

<sup>437</sup> E. Charrière, *Négociations de La France dans le Levant ou Correspondances, Memoires et Actes Diplomatiques des Ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople et des Ambassadeurs, Envoyés ou Résidents à divers titres à Venise, Raguse, Rome, Malte et Jérusalem en Turquie, Perse, Géorgie, Crimée, Syrie,*

comprehensive study, it is possible to find all of the writings and letters regarding the Genoese negotiations and the French position concerning them. It seems that Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul, Marino Cavalli, also closely followed the negotiations.<sup>438</sup> Unfortunately his dispatches to the Senate and the Heads of the Council of Ten do not appear to have survived; however, the instructions of the Senate and the letters of the Heads of the Council of Ten to Cavalli demonstrate that the *Serenissima* was indirectly involved in the negotiation process and strove to impede it.

As mentioned above, due to the lack of Ottoman sources it is difficult to reconstruct the negotiations from the Ottoman standpoint; yet, by bringing the Ottoman context into the picture, one may evaluate the entire process from a multifaceted perspective. Ottoman–Genoese diplomatic interactions were shaped by various agendas and key figures/parties who actively operated to advance or to retard them; to show this complexity, this chapter will focus on the negotiation process and all its actors, and reexamine it within a wider context.

### **Francesco de Franchi's Second Visit to the Ottoman Capital**

After the success of his first mission, Francesco de Franchi, or Tortorino, was again sent to Istanbul to give notice of the impending arrival of an official diplomatic legate and to maintain cordial relation with Ottoman officials. As a merchant active in the Eastern Mediterranean, he was an ideal negotiator for the Republic. Moreover, his father Tommaso de Franchi was a Genoese nobleman who had close links with the Giustiniani family in Chios. The de Franchi family had also moved to the island, joined the *Maona* and begun conducting mercantile activities in Chios. Tortorino was registered in the *Liber Civilitatis* (a register of Genoese nobility) in 1530, when he was already a resident in Chios.<sup>439</sup> But as noted in a letter from the doge of Genoa to the sultan, Tortorino was also a subject of the sultan (*suddito del detto Gran Signore*).<sup>440</sup> With roots in Genoa, residency in Chios, and allegiance to the sultan, the de Franchi family was able to serve as an intermediary connecting the mother city to the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition to his being an active merchant, his familiarity with the Ottoman world made Tortorino the best

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*Égypte, etc. et dans les États de Tunis, D'Alger et de Maroc*, 4 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1848-1860).

<sup>438</sup> Marino Cavalli was in office from 19 July 1558 to 15 September 1560.

<sup>439</sup> A. Lercari, "De Franchi-Tortorino Francesco," *Dizionario Biografico dei Liguri*, ed. William Piastra, vol. IV (Genova: Consulta Ligure, 1998), pp. 431-432.

<sup>440</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 2r, Letter of the doge to the sultan (1 December 1556).

possible representative for the Republic in its diplomatic relations with the Sublime Porte. In this respect, he was a good example of a trans-imperial subject who was able to transcend linguistic barriers and cultural differences, and foster communication between the two states. It should be noted that Tortorino did not act in such a capacity only for Genoa; he also offered his services to various other European states in their diplomatic negotiations with the Ottomans. In 1555 he was already in the Ottoman capital to conduct negotiations on behalf of the Duke of Ferrara.<sup>441</sup> In the following year, he was entrusted by Genoa with the task of negotiating a commercial treaty with the Ottoman court. Interestingly enough, Tortorino also secretly conducted peace negotiations between Philip II and the Ottoman administration in 1558-59. Although they did not bring about any results, Tortorino's dealings with the Ottoman court enabled him to cultivate with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha the cordial personal relations so important in conducting diplomacy with the Porte.

On 27 December 1557 the doge and governors of Genoa gave instructions to Tortorino concerning his mission in Istanbul and provided him with a letter of safe conduct addressed to all princes and rulers, stating that Francesco de Franchi was being sent to Venice on the Republic's business and requesting that during his journey no harm be done to him or his servants in the lands and states he would pass through. In return, the Republic promised to provide the same ease and security for anyone needing to travel to Genoa.<sup>442</sup> After Tortorino's unfortunate experience in Naples, Genoa this time followed a different strategy and sent its representative to the Ottoman capital through Venice. Moreover, in their letter of safe-conduct, the Genoese governors did not reveal his real mission in order to ensure his safety.

Tortorino was to submit to Rüstem Pasha a letter from the doge, in which the Genoese government expressed the gratitude and satisfaction it felt at being a friend and servant of the sultan. In this letter it was also noted that preparations had started for sending an official delegation, which would leave Genoa in a month or so once there was favorable weather for a sea voyage. The events that had previously befallen Tortorino in the Kingdom of Naples were given as the reason for the delay.<sup>443</sup>

In the instructions, the Genoese representative was ordered to prepare the ground for the confirmation of the proposed capitulations by fulfilling any requests made by

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<sup>441</sup> Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. II, p. 433.

<sup>442</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 27 December 1557.

<sup>443</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, 27 December 1557.

Rüstem Pasha, who had already shown courtesy and favor toward the Genoese, acting as a “good protector” (*buon’ protettore*) in the preliminary negotiations. Tortorino was to ensure that he would maintain the same attitude and continue to provide support during the official negotiations. More importantly, he was to obtain a guarantee from the grand vizier that the Ottoman fleet would not do any harm to Genoese citizens and ships, as the Genoese ambassadorial retinue would soon be coming to the Ottoman capital to negotiate peace and friendship with the Sublime Porte. He should also take this occasion to tell Rüstem Pasha in detail how he had been captured and tortured on his return trip by the Spanish ministers in southern Italy, presenting this as the reason for the belated nature of the Genoese embassy so that the grand vizier would understand the Republic’s good intentions with regard to the negotiations. Tortorino was also ordered to present gifts to Rüstem Pasha, but not more than three garments. He should also give small gifts to the doorkeepers and servants who might be useful in promoting the Republic’s cause. By these means, he would be able to gain sufficient favor to have the capitulations rewritten according to the draft prepared by the Genoese government. Thus, when the ambassador and *bailo* arrived in the Ottoman capital, they would find everything ready for them to accomplish their mission without difficulty. In addition to preparing the Ottoman court for the negotiations, Tortorino should also provide the Genoese embassy with the necessary information concerning how to proceed in their dealings with the Ottomans.<sup>444</sup>

Although no document exists giving details about Tortorino’s trip to Istanbul, on the basis of the expense list he presented to the Republic, he set out for Istanbul at the end of December and, taking a route through Venice, arrived in Pera on 16 April 1558.<sup>445</sup> After arriving, he wrote a detailed letter to the Genoese governors concerning the situation in the Sublime Porte, in which he also asked for information concerning the whereabouts of the ambassadorial retinue.<sup>446</sup> He had previously been informed that the official legate would leave by January; however, as of April there was still no news of it. The long delay in the embassy’s arrival had already somewhat dimmed the favorable atmosphere at the Ottoman court with regard to the Genoese cause. On 25 April, the Republic sent letters to the sultan and the grand vizier for a second time in order to give excuses for this delay. It was stated that an ambassador, Giovanni de Franchi—a resident of Genoa and a relative of Tortorino and a *bailo*, Niccolò Grillo, were being sent to the

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<sup>444</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of 27 December 1557, “Instruzione data à Francesco de Franchi mandato al Turco.”

<sup>445</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Expense list of Francesco de Franchi, 24 October 1558.

<sup>446</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Francesco de Franchi to the Genoese governors, 29 April 1558.

Porte for the negotiations; the long delay was explained as due to unfavorable weather conditions and the difficulties caused by the Corsican war.<sup>447</sup>

In fact, preparations for the official delegation had started soon after Francesco de Franchi left Genoa in December 1557. A comfortable ship would be provided for Giovanni de Franchi and his retinue, which was composed of ten people and a secretary; the salary of the ambassador and possible expenses of the legation during the mission in Istanbul were stated in detail by the government.<sup>448</sup> Also, in April 1558, as an expression of goodwill and sincerity, the doge published a declaration in Genoa, ordering all citizens of the Republic not to resort to arms against the subjects of the sultan on either sea or land, in accordance with the peace negotiations Francesco de Franchi had conducted with the Ottoman court. A similar order was sent to all captains, local governors, and jurists, forbidding Genoese captains or ships to harm Ottoman subjects or ships; should they disobey, their goods would be confiscated and they would be punished severely.<sup>449</sup>

Despite all such preparations being well under-way since December, the instructions to the Genoese ambassador were given only on 29 May 1558, and he and his retinue could not set out for Istanbul until June 11. It is quite doubtful that, after all the doge and the governors had written to Tortorino about the importance of negotiating with the Sublime Porte, they were simply dragging their feet when it came to sending the legation to Istanbul and spent six months on the preparations alone, which could have been completed in a shorter period. Rather than reluctance about the negotiations, this delay was almost certainly related to concerns about the Spanish reaction and French impediments. After what had happened to Tortorino in Naples, the Republic acted more cautiously in sending the official legation, which took the sea route and sailed to Istanbul without any stops along the way. The Genoese were also concerned about the French attitude. As early as 30 December 1557, Henry II had sent a letter to Sultan Süleyman asking his support for naval expeditions in the western Mediterranean. In addition to logistic support, the French king had also requested financial assistance.<sup>450</sup> The Ottoman administration did not respond to either of these requests for a time, being occupied with

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<sup>447</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge and governors to the sultan, 25 April 1558; Letter of the doge and governors to the grand vizier, 25 April 1558.

<sup>448</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 3v: "Stabilimento fatto col M. Giovanni di Franchi Ambasciatore per la Porta del Gran Signore col mezzo, et interposizione dell' Ill.mo S. Duce e Ill. S.ri Geronimo Vivaldo, Ottoviano Sauli, Leonardo Cattaneo e Paolo Battista Calvo."

<sup>449</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 4v-5r: "Copia della grida publicata in la presente Città di Genova" (21 April 1558). However, it was noted that this order did not include Muslim corsairs, whom the Genoese could attack and defend themselves against.

<sup>450</sup> Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. II, pp. 421-425.



conflict in Hungary and other internal problems. It seems that the Genoese were already aware of the French requests and waited to learn what the Ottoman response was before sending their diplomatic legation to Istanbul. But in the meantime, as related above, they sent Tortorino to Istanbul for a second time to lobby at the Ottoman court in favor of the Genoese. Although Tortorino secured Rüstem Pasha's support, it was not enough to dissuade the sultan from assisting the French, and he sent a large fleet to the western Mediterranean under the command of Piyale Pasha, which departed on 15 April 1558.<sup>451</sup> Upon this, the Republic took action and gave instructions to their legation at the end of May. Moreover, the orders sent to all Genoese citizens, local governors, and ship captains not to harm Ottoman subjects, and the instructions given to Tortorino to ask the grand vizier for safe conduct for Genoese ships and citizens are indicative of the Republic's efforts to secure the Porte's friendship and to guarantee protection for the Genoese diplomatic legation against the possibility of an Ottoman–French attack.

### **French Alliance vs. Genoese Subservience**

The Ottoman administration followed a dual diplomacy in dealing with the French and the Genoese actions during this period. This was largely due to differences between the sultan and the grand vizier with regard to Mediterranean policy. While Sultan Süleyman was in favor of maintaining the French alliance and continuing naval expeditions in the western Mediterranean alongside French forces, Rüstem Pasha advocated the promotion of peace and trade in the region. To this end, the latter avoided cooperating with corsairs, and had, at the beginning of the decade, been determined to appoint his brother Sinan Pasha grand admiral of the navy in order to have someone in the position whom he could command at will. Although Turgut Reis, a Barbary corsair and commander of Ottoman naval forces, was a better option for this post in terms of experience and knowledge in naval affairs and was favored by the sultan,<sup>452</sup> Rüstem was able to prevent his appointment and instead make his brother the grand admiral; he served in the office from 1550 until his death in 1553.<sup>453</sup> Moreover, although Turgut Reis was expected to succeed Sinan Pasha, Rüstem was able to hinder his appointment for a second time and instead chose Piyale Pasha, a *devşirme* of Croatian origin, as the grand admiral

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid., p. 464 fn.

<sup>452</sup> Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. I, pp. 245-46.

<sup>453</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr*, p. 100.

of the Ottoman navy; the latter held the post from 1553 to 1567.<sup>454</sup> Rüstem Pasha preferred men of *devşirme* origin to corsairs for service in this position because he wanted to work with individuals from the same background as himself. More importantly, having considerable investment in trade, Rüstem wished to preserve peace and commercial relations with European states and thus did not want to assign control of the navy to a corsair such as Turgut Reis, who could potentially imperil this peaceful atmosphere for his own interests.<sup>455</sup>

In addition to Rüstem Pasha's conciliatory approach to foreign relations, his dislike of the French ambassador Jean de la Vigne was also a significant factor causing him to favor rapprochement with the Genoese. The fact that the French ambassador was not able to deal with the grand vizier tactfully had a serious impact on diplomatic relations between the two states. De la Vigne was sent to the Porte as Henry II's representative in 1556 and served there until the latter's death in 1559. According to Jensen, among the French ambassadors of the time, de la Vigne was the least influential, as he could not establish effective communication with the Ottoman administration due to his strong dislike of the Turks.<sup>456</sup> Contemporary accounts also refer to his prejudiced and negative attitude toward Ottoman officials. According to Busbecq, during one audience de la Vigne, believing that he was not being received with due respect, responded furiously to the grand vizier, stating in a threatening tone:

Perhaps you imagine that Buda, Gran Stuhlweissenburg and the other Hungarian towns were captured by your valour. You are quite wrong; it is all owing to us that you possess them; for had there not been continual wars between our kings and those of Spain, so far from capturing them [the Hungarian towns] you would have hardly been safe from Charles V in Constantinople itself.<sup>457</sup>

Upon this, Rüstem Pasha shouted at him saying "If all your Christian princes joined arms together and made war on him [the sultan] at once, he would not care a jot, but could easily defeat them all."<sup>458</sup> He then ordered de la Vigne to leave immediately. In Busbecq's view, de la Vigne lost the grand vizier's favor due to his bluntness and arrogant manner. He had also tense relations with other Ottoman officials including court dragoman İbrahim Bey, who played a key role in diplomatic negotiations at the Ottoman

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<sup>454</sup> İdris Bostan, "Turgut Reis," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 41 (2012): 418.

<sup>455</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr*, pp. 101-102; M. Zahit Atçıl, "State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire," pp. 89-91.

<sup>456</sup> De Lamar Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," p. 457.

<sup>457</sup> Ogier de Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, p. 135.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

court.<sup>459</sup> The hostility toward de la Vigne affected the alliance with the French king as well. Henry II's request for financial support fell on deaf ears. The response of the grand vizier was particularly expressive: "One who has no money in his purse should have honey in his mouth."<sup>460</sup> The grand vizier also made his feelings known in discussing the matter with the Venetian *bailo* Antonio Barbarigo. In his *relazione* of 1558, Barbarigo stated that the credibility of the French at the Porte was declining; in evidence, he cited Rüstem Pasha's remarks to him concerning de la Vigne's request for financial help: "Look, they want to make war and they don't have money; at the same time they haven't paid what they were supposed to for the expenses of the fleet, and once again they ask for two million gold coins!"<sup>461</sup>

De la Vigne himself was also aware of the growing discontent at the Porte concerning the unfulfilled promises of the French. Apparently, the French had two years previously promised to pay 12,000 ducats to the Ottoman sultan in return for his naval support; yet, this debt was never paid. In one of his letters to France, de la Vigne acknowledged the matter:

It is impossible to talk to them [the Ottomans] without gifts, and you need to do this in order to get any service. They have been so much used to having them [the gifts] that they consider promises that were made before as an actual debt. For this reason I came at a bad moment, because in order to get the naval fleets [of the Ottomans] that set sail some years ago, we promised so much and we fulfilled so little, that considering how much we borrowed from them without satisfying them in return, they have turned from friends into enemies.<sup>462</sup>

In fact, the request for additional financial support while existing debts remained unpaid was not the only issue that drove a wedge between the two states. Another such occurrence was the capture of two Turkish girls on their way to Mecca in an Ottoman ship by the French Grand Prior François de Lorraine, who had been sent to Malta by Henry II

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>460</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, II, p. 397: "[Q]ui n'a argent à la bourse, doit avoir du miel à la bouche."

<sup>461</sup> *Relazione di Antonio Barbarigo (1558)*, in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, Serie III, vol. III (Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1855) pp. 158-159: "Sebbene li Francesi si vantano e si presumono di aver molta autorità con Turchi, affermo alle Signorie Vostre Illustrissimo che ne hanno assai meno di quello che si crede; ed io so che quando il re di Francia li mandò a dimandare ad prestito due million d'oro, il bascia mi disse: 'Guarda, questi vogliono far guerra, e non hanno danari, e mentre non hanno pagato quel che devono dare per la spesa dell'armata, anco ne dimandano due milioni d'oro.'"

<sup>462</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, II, p. 384, Letter of de la Vigne (1 April 1557): "[Q]u'il est, pour cette heure, impossible de pouvoir parler à eulx sans présens, tant s'en fault d'en tirer aucune commodité; et les a-on tellement accoustumés à ester présentés, qu'ils prennent les promesses que on leur fait pour certain debte. Voilà, pourquoy à mauvaise heure je y suis venu; car pour avoir des armées de mer qui sont sorties depuis quelques ans en ça, on leur a tant promis et si peu tenu que, avec ce que on a beaucoup emprunté d'eulx sans leur avoir jusques à présent satisfait, ils se sont rendus d'amis ennemis..."

to organize expeditions in the eastern Mediterranean and thereby gain naval experience. In 1557, during a skirmish with the Ottoman galleys, de Lorraine captured the Turkish girls. When, in the same year, he was called back to France to be appointed as grand admiral of the French fleet, he took the girls with him to present as a gift to Catherine de' Medici. The girls entered the French court and were converted to Christianity. This issue became known at the Ottoman court; the sultan interrogated de la Vigne about it after someone from the French court sent a letter, in Turkish, to the mother of the girls stating that her daughters had been converted to Christianity by force. Upon the mother's petitioning the sultan, the Ottoman administration demanded that France repatriate the girls.<sup>463</sup> Although "an event seemingly of little importance," it soon turned into a diplomatic crisis that led to almost three decades of conflict between France and the Ottoman Empire, negatively affecting the Ottoman–French relationship during this period.<sup>464</sup>

In view of these developments, it can be said that the credit of the French fell considerably at the Sublime Porte. However, despite what was considered French perfidy, this alliance was in Sultan Süleyman's view strategically important, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Thus, as part of the agreement, the sultan pledged to send galleys to assist the French forces in the western Mediterranean. Piyale Pasha was placed in command of the Ottoman fleet for this operation,<sup>465</sup> while Captain Dupérat, a French agent, was to accompany him, officially as interpreter and guide for the Ottoman fleet. In reality, he was to spy on Piyale Pasha and report the movements of the fleet.<sup>466</sup>

The target of the Ottoman–French allied forces was to be Corsica; however, contrary to French expectations, Piyale Pasha came back to the Porte without engaging in any conflict or confrontation against the Genoese. According to French sources, the pasha set out for the western Mediterranean with a large fleet. There were opportunities to plunder in the waters close to Sicily and the Neapolitan coast, as this area was a busy sea trade lane. Thus, the pasha, after sacking Sorrento, headed for Liguria; however, he did not find the French galleys at the prearranged meeting place. He nonetheless had to shelter in an inlet there due to the bad weather, and then decided to set sail towards the Balearic Islands, where he stayed for a few days to attack Minorca. Eventually he went to

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<sup>463</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, II, pp. 459-60 fn.

<sup>464</sup> Susan A. Skilliter, "Catherine de' Medici's Turkish Ladies-In-Waiting; A Dilemma in Franco-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations," *Turcica* 7 (1975): 188-204.

<sup>465</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibar*, p. 107.

<sup>466</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, II, p. 462.

the port of Toulon, where he at last met with the French fleet in mid-July.<sup>467</sup> This delay on the part of the grand admiral caused the French commanders to lose their patience; indeed, a strong suspicion was aroused on the French side concerning the matter, as they believed that an experienced sailor and commander like Piyale Pasha would have managed against all obstacles to unite with the French forces, had he really wished to do so. In their view, the pasha had deliberately gotten delayed because he was unwilling to undertake any enterprises against the Genoese.<sup>468</sup>

Moreover, during his stay in Toulon, Piyale Pasha conversed with Admiral Paulin de la Garde, Ambassador Boistailé (both of whom had long experiences in the Levant), and the commander of the French fleet de Lorraine (he who had captured the two Turkish girls), who urged him to join them in a naval venture. They proposed various plans: an assault on Villafranca, the port of Savoy on the Riviera di Ponente; an expedition against the Genoese stronghold of Bastia on Corsica; or one against the Porto Ercole, a Spanish enclave at Argentario. However, Piyale Pasha did not find any of the potential military targets acceptable, offering various reasons such as the risk of Habsburg imperial galleys arriving, or the general difficulty of the ventures.<sup>469</sup> The pasha's attitude increased the suspicion that he was an ally of the Spanish and the Genoese and may have been bribed by these enemies of the French. Shortly afterward, the French learned that from time to time small Genoese craft had approached the Ottoman vessels and unloaded boxes; the Genoese had even been so daring as to enter the port of Toulon under the banners of Genoa and Spain. Upon this, the duke of Lorraine remonstrated with Piyale Pasha for having allowed such an offence against the king of France and threatened to report his undignified conduct to the sultan.<sup>470</sup> According to the French sources, the grand admiral began to regret his actions and tried to justify himself by saying that he had been negotiating some private business with the Genoese. Yet the French knew that the latter had offered the Ottoman pasha generous gifts and pledged complete obedience; in return they asked for protection and security for the Ligurian coasts.<sup>471</sup> It seemed evident that Piyale Pasha did not attack them for this reason. Thus, as the French saw it, they had been unable to conduct an expedition against the enemy due to Piyale Pasha's faithless behavior.

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<sup>467</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, II, p. 476; 483; 487-88.

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 493; 508-509.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 508-518 fn.

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 519-20.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.* p. 528.

The version of events emerging from the Genoese sources is similar, but offers additional details concerning the Genoese perspective. Once the news of the arrival of the Ottoman fleet along the coast of southern Italy reached Genoa, the Republic became alarmed and started to search for ways to obviate this threat and suffer the least damage possible to its possessions. As the Genoese diplomatic legation had not yet reached the Ottoman capital, Piyale Pasha's expedition alarmed the Genoese. Nonetheless, they decided to use the overall situation to their benefit and solve the conflict through diplomatic means.

### **Diplomacy at Sea: Piyale Pasha and Francesco Costa's Legation**

Having heard that Piyale Pasha was sailing toward the Ligurian coast, the Republic decided to send Francesco Costa as an extraordinary ambassador to negotiate with the pasha. In fact this kind of secret negotiation was not new to the Genoese. Although there were constant naval conflicts and tensions between Andrea Doria and Ottoman admirals such as Barbaros Hayreddin and Turgut Reis, there were also instances when potential conflicts were prevented through the use of diplomacy. According to Giovanni Salvago,<sup>472</sup> positive relations between Genoa and the Ottoman Empire were established as early as 1543, when the Ottoman fleet went to Toulon and along with French forces attacked Nice, which was ruled by the duke of Savoy (an ally of Charles V). That winter the Ottoman fleet stayed in Toulon. Exposed to a possible French–Ottoman attack on their coast, the Genoese found a way to get rid of this menace: sending Genoese vessels to supply the Ottomans with victuals and textiles. In fact Ottoman sources also confirm this claim. According to *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, Barbarossa obtained food from Genoa, Corsica and Sardinia.<sup>473</sup> The Genoese thus provided the Ottoman fleet with whatever it needed but was not being provided by the French, who failed to properly supply Barbarossa's force. This act of the Genoese had a positive

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<sup>472</sup> Giovanni Salvago was from a noble family. A comrade-in-arms of Andrea Doria, he died in 1585 at the age of 94. His *Histories* are a valuable source of information regarding the political and diplomatic events of sixteenth-century Genoa. He also discussed Ottoman–Genoese negotiations of 1558.

<sup>473</sup> While Seyyid Muradî's *Gazavat* covers the period from 1520 to 1539, a manuscript of the *Gazavat* found in BNF (Ms. Turc 1186) included the story of Hayreddin Barbarossa from 1543 to his death in 1546. Concerning this manuscript see Aldo Gallotta, "Le Gazavât di Hayreddîn Barbarossa," *Studi Maghrebini* III (1970): 79-160. Also see Aldo Gallotta, "Il 'Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa' Pars Secunda e La Spedizione in Francia di Hayreddin Barbarossa (1543-44)," in *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 1994) pp. 86-87; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel. The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 130-138.

outcome, as day by day they gained the Ottomans' goodwill through their offerings. Already being frustrated by the unfulfilled promises of the French king, the Ottoman fleet, after having overwintered in Toulon, set out for home in May without harming the Genoese dominions.<sup>474</sup>

A similar strategy was followed in 1558 during Piyale Pasha's expedition to Liguria. Although we do not have any documents that report the actual negotiations between the pasha and Costa, the instructions given to the latter on 20 June reveal the main issues discussed. First of all, Costa's primary task was to persuade the grand admiral not to attack the Ligurian coast, informing him that the sultan had already pledged peace and friendship with the Republic of Genoa. As proof, Costa should present him a copy of the document Tortorino had received from the Porte a year before.<sup>475</sup> The ambassador should also do his best to show the French in a bad light. By emphasizing the fact that they constantly operated in opposition to the Republic and had used force, most notably in Corsica, he should try to persuade Piyale Pasha not to regard the requests of the French too favorably and not to give them assistance, in consideration of the peace and friendship existing between the Republic and the Sublime Porte. As for the diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman court, Costa should make clear to the grand admiral the reasons for the delay in the arrival of the Genoese embassy in Istanbul, including Tortorino's imprisonment in Calabria, the time to prepare an official embassy, and finally bad weather, so that the legation was at that time still at sea, on the way to the Ottoman capital. Finally, the Genoese representative should present to the grand admiral the translation of the sultan's letter confirming the naval armistice already negotiated by Francesco Tortorino.<sup>476</sup>

As a sign of their respect, the Genoese sent with Costa generous gifts including textiles, victuals, confectionary and money.<sup>477</sup> Manfroni in his article presented a detailed list he had found in a document in the registers of the *Masseria Communis* in the Genoa State Archive.<sup>478</sup> According to this list, the gifts to the pasha included Piacenza cheese, 56 palms (approximately 14 meters) of yellow and white velvet, more than 200 palms (50

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<sup>474</sup> Giovanni Salvago, *Histories di Genova*, MS. Biblioteca della Facoltà di Economia, fondo Doria di Montaldeo, scat. 417, n.912, reg. 1, c. 66r-v; Carlo Bitossi, "Genova e i turchi," p. 101.

<sup>475</sup> ASG, AS 2169, "Copia del' *Arze* dato a Francesco Costa, mandato all' armata turca."

<sup>476</sup> ASG, AS 2169, "Istruzioni data Magnifico viro Francisco Costae misso ad classem Turcharum pro rebus publicis," (20 June 1558).

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>478</sup> I searched for this document in the cited registers in the Archivio di Stato di Genova but was unable to find it due to the fact that the registers had been re-catalogued under a different name subsequent to the time of Manfroni's publication.

meters) of silk cloth, a gold plated clock with a bell (but no pendulum), four boxes of sugar, a substantial quantity of biscuits with almonds and pine nuts, perfumes, and cinnamon. In addition, there was also a remarkable amount of cash.<sup>479</sup> By sending such a mission, the doge and governors intended to demonstrate their devotion and loyalty to the grand admiral and gain his favor.<sup>480</sup>

Meanwhile, the governors dispatched a courier to inform the Genoese legation on the way to Istanbul about Piyale Pasha's arrival on the Ligurian coast and Costa's mission. The Republic's main concern was how the negotiations would go; Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo were exhorted to do their best in order to persuade the sultan to approve the peace and trade agreement. They should also strive to obtain an imperial order from the sultan stating that the grand admiral would not harm Genoese merchants or ships either at sea or on land.<sup>481</sup> Thus, by employing diplomacy through two separate channels, the Republic endeavored to rid itself of the threat posed by the Ottoman–French forces to its coasts and possessions.

Costa was successful in his initial negotiations with Piyale Pasha apparently promising him that he would not harm the Republic. Upon this, on 30 June, the doge and governors wrote another letter to the Ottoman admiral thanking him for preserving peace and friendship.<sup>482</sup> At that time, Piyale Pasha had not yet met the French fleet and was sheltering in a port near Corsica. Thus, Costa was instructed by the Genoese government to assist him and provide him with all kinds of comforts and services. He was to present refreshments, fruits, and textiles to the pasha as a gesture of gratitude; and he was also to present the declaration Genoa had promulgated throughout its towns and coasts enjoining every citizen to act peace and friendship toward the Ottomans. The fact that the Genoese legation had not yet returned to Genoa with the confirmation of the desired privileges impelled the Genoese governors to curry favor with the Ottoman admiral. At the same time, they ordered Costa to watch him closely and send regular reports to Genoa concerning his activities.<sup>483</sup> Meanwhile Piyale Pasha attacked the Spanish islands Minorca and Majorca and then sailed to Toulon in Provence in mid-July, where he finally met the

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<sup>479</sup> Manfroni, "Le Relazioni fra Genova, L'Impero Bizantino e i Turchi," pp. 771-772.

<sup>480</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge and governors to Piyale Pasha (20 June 1558).

<sup>481</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge and governors to Giovanni de Franchi e Nicolo Grillo (25 June 1558).

<sup>482</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Second letter of the doge and governors to Piyale Pasha (30 June 1558).

<sup>483</sup> ASG, AS 2169, "Istruzioni data a Francesco Costa nella sua seconda ambasceria all'armata turca," (30 June 1558).



French fleet. Costa found him on the island of Santa Margherita in Provence where he negotiated with him for a second time and provided him with victuals and gifts.<sup>484</sup>

Although in French sources the failure of the allied Ottoman–French expedition was attributed to Piyale Pasha’s secret negotiations with the Genoese, the Genoese sources noted that the grand admiral was disappointed not to find any French troops in Piedmont, without which no important ventures could be undertaken.<sup>485</sup> Angry with the French for not keeping their promise a second time, the pasha decided not to do anything that would harm the Genoese, who had been quite generous and eager to serve him. Costa spun out the negotiations until Piyale Pasha left the Ligurian Sea on 27 July. Escorted by Costa to Livorno, the pasha was received on his way along the Ligurian coast with honor and respect by the Genoese, who sent twenty large frigates full of victuals of all sorts to the Ottoman fleet.<sup>486</sup> They also fired the customary salvos hailing the Ottoman fleet, most notably from the fortress of Savona, which was a provocative act considering the fact that the fortress had been the primary source of conflict between the Genoese and the French since the time of King François I.

We do not want to omit telling you that while the pasha, as our friend, was passing along the coast, there was fired from the Fortress of Savona a salvo as honorable and glorious as one could say or imagine, with the shooting of more than 50 pieces of heavy artillery, along with more than a thousand arquebuses; the applause lasted an hour, and on the walls there were more than 600 pieces of equipment, which shone like the sun; all in the honor of pasha and the sultan.<sup>487</sup>

Firing a salute to the vessels of another state was a ceremonial event, which had a protocol. According to Kirk, who was to salute whom was regulated in the context of being a subordinate or sovereign state; ships of subject states had to salute those of the sovereign first, as an indicator of subordinate status and submission.<sup>488</sup> Thus by firing salvos to the Ottoman admiral, the Genoese confirmed their subordination and submission to the Ottomans. By means of all these gestures, the Genoese succeeded in gaining the favor of Piyale Pasha, who in conversation with Costa mockingly remarked that the French wanted him to besiege certain fortresses, adding that France’s power was not that

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<sup>484</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolo Grillo (30 July 1558).

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to Francesco Costa (27 July 1558).

<sup>487</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to de Franchi and Grillo (30 July 1558): “Non vogliamo gia mancar di dirvi che passando il bassa come amico a un tiro di smeriglio della rocca di Savona in mare...[D]ella rocca li fecero una salva, cosi honorata e gloriosa quanto dir e imaginar se potessi, con sparare piu di 50 pezzi grossi di artiglieria, con piu di mille archebusi, et durò l’applauso un’hora, con esser sur le mure piu di 600 alacresi (?), che risplendevano come il sole, tutto per il honor del bassà e l’Altezza del Gran Signore.”

<sup>488</sup> Kirk, “Giovanni Andrea Doria: Citizen of Genoa, Prince of Melfi, Agent of King Philip II of Spain,” p. 68.

compelling, as it was only with the help of the Ottomans that those fortresses could be conquered.<sup>489</sup> Thus to the grand admiral, it seemed more profitable to negotiate with the Genoese rather than undertake a risky venture with the French, who had limited military resources. Through their skillful diplomacy at sea, the Genoese were able to dispel a serious threat; but they were not equally successful during their negotiations in the Ottoman capital.

### **The Genoese Diplomatic Legation in Istanbul**

Costa's operation was in itself a success, as Piyale Pasha avoided any confrontation with the Genoese. Meanwhile, Genoese ambassador Giovanni de Franchi and *bailo* Niccolò Grillo had set out for the Ottoman capital only in June. According to Giovanni Salvago's chronicle, "the ambassador and the *bailo* chosen for the court of the Oriental emperor left [Genoa] with three ships, many gifts, and money to buy grain and merchandise."<sup>490</sup> Thus, it is apparent that the main aim was to obtain trading privileges from the Ottoman court in order to buy commodities, in particular grain. For the official negotiations in Istanbul, the Genoese legation was given detailed instructions. First, once they arrived in the Ottoman capital they should get in touch with Tortorino about the audience protocol and diplomatic decorum at the Ottoman court, especially with regard to the rules for presenting gifts to Ottoman administrators.<sup>491</sup>

Unlike the French, the Genoese held Rüstem Pasha in great respect and esteem, and recognized that he had significant power at court. The instructions they gave their representatives clearly indicate their awareness of the importance of his position. The legation was exhorted to meet the grand vizier first, before meeting any other official, as he was the only person who had access to the sultan; indeed, the legation could meet the sultan only after negotiating with and getting permission from the grand vizier. This was one reason for making him their primary contact. In addition, he was the main protector and supporter of the Genoese cause (*precipuo protettore e fautore delle cose nostre*).<sup>492</sup> (Indeed, aware of the great diplomatic power enjoyed by Rüstem Pasha, the Genoese even offered to pay him a personal tribute annually and tried to win him over with gifts.) Through his mediation, the legation should negotiate with the sultan on the various

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<sup>489</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to de Franchi and Grillo (30 July 1558).

<sup>490</sup> Salvago, *Histories di Genova*, cc. 99 r-v.

<sup>491</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 6v: "Instruzione per Costantinopoli."

<sup>492</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 6v.

specific issues of interest and obtain from him a decree of peace to be proclaimed in all lands and ports of the Empire—especially in Greece, Syria, Egypt and important trade cities such as Bursa, Damascus, Cairo, and Aleppo—for the purpose of guaranteeing security for all goods, ships, and citizens of Genoa. The Genoese representatives should also obtain from the sultan another order enjoining the grand admiral to cease his incursions against the Genoese coasts and possessions, including Corsica and Capraia.

Another important issue that should be brought to the attention of the sultan concerned the preliminary agreement the Ottomans had made with Tortorino. As the Spanish had seized the original document carried by Tortorino, the Republic instructed de Franchi and Grillo to have a copy of the document confirmed by the sultan without any alterations. One interesting detail in the instructions was that Niccolò Grillo, as the future *bailo*, was exhorted not to accept any request for protection from either the Perots or the *Maonesi* in Chios; he would be responsible only for the protection of Genoese citizens and their commercial interests in the Ottoman lands and on the Ottoman seas.<sup>493</sup> On the one hand, this could be indicative of the fact that the Republic already severed its ties with its former colonies. On the other, it could be interpreted as an instance of subtle diplomacy on the part of the Genoese. Perots were already Ottoman subjects, and Chiots were paying tribute to the sultan. Any attempt to claim protection over these groups might be rebuffed by the Ottoman administration and overshadow the actual aims of the Republic.

There were indeed other political and economic issues that needed to be resolved during the negotiations. At the political level, the Genoese representatives were instructed to be careful when discussing the relations of the Republic with France and Spain. They should emphasize the fact that the French, having occupied part of Corsica for many years, had inflicted much harm on Genoese subjects and goods; it was for this reason that the Genoese had been compelled to ask the king of Spain for help. De Franchi and Grillo should justify the Genoese stance by arguing that if Genoa had not been exposed to any threats from the French, it would have remained neutral in the wars between France and Spain. Another topic that needed to be discussed with the sultan was the issue of ransoming certain Genoese prisoners and slaves in Istanbul.<sup>494</sup> But, if de Franchi and

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<sup>493</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 8r.

<sup>494</sup> The Republic focused on specific individuals that they wished to see ransomed: a son of Pantaleo Doria, Geronimo de Fabiano di San Remo, a German ship captain, Bartolomeo Usodimare (a slave in Pera), and Pellegrino Botto (the son of Francesco Botto, the chancellor), who had been captured on a Genoese merchant ship. ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 10r.

Grillo met with resistance, they would do better not to insist on the matter, so as not to irritate Ottoman officials and jeopardize the negotiations.

The Republic of Genoa also prepared a meticulous list of gifts with the help of their envoy Tortorino to be presented at the Porte. According to this list, there were garments made of different types and colors of textiles. Among them, velvet garments of different colors constituted the majority. Besides, there were garments of satin in different colors, garments of damasks in different colors, garments made of purple woolen fabric (*panno pavonazzo*), garments of scarlet fabric of Valencia and garments made of golden brocade. As can be seen, the list includes a variety of textiles produced in various parts of Italy. While velvets were of Genoa, golden brocades and woolen fabrics were from Florence and scarlet fabrics were from southern Italy. All the garments were prepared according to the measures sent by Tortorino to Genoa. Besides garments, there were also sent woolen cloaks (*fodre di panno*) for some of scarlet fabrics. The number and type of the garments would be distributed in a hierarchical order. While sixty garments would be presented to the sultan, six garments (made up of two velvets, two satins and two damasks with woolen cloaks) would be presented to each of the four viziers. To Dragoman İbrahim Bey, one satin and one damask garments with woolen cloaks would be presented and other officials and servants would be given silk garments with less quality.<sup>495</sup>

After presenting the gifts, securing the capitulations, and coming to a satisfactory understanding on all these issues, the representatives should then persuade the sultan, through Rüstem Pasha's mediation and favor, to authorize the arrival of twenty-five to thirty ships annually in Ottoman ports for the purpose of loading grain. Conveniently, Rüstem Pasha was also active in the grain trade and was accustomed to blending politics and commerce by proposing side deals with European states.<sup>496</sup> The legation should take advantage of this and endeavor to negotiate with him regarding this matter. Lastly, the Genoese representatives should secure the sultan's protection against the attacks of Muslim corsairs in North Africa. On a side note, they were instructed to behave with the utmost respect and friendliness toward the ambassadors of the Holy Roman Emperor and the Spanish king, as long as this did not have a negative impact on the negotiations with the Porte.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 11v-12r.

<sup>496</sup> He made trade agreements with Venetians and Ragusans. See the section on Rüstem Pasha in Chapter II, pp. 127-128.

<sup>497</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 9r-10r.

The Genoese legation was able to arrive in Chios at the end of July, almost two months after their departure. There they received a letter from Tortorino, who informed them about the growing anxiety at the Porte regarding their delay.<sup>498</sup> Unfortunately, they had to remain in Chios throughout August and could not set out for the Ottoman capital until September, when there was suitable weather. But the Genoese ships were once again plagued by bad weather as well as contrary currents when attempting to enter the port in Istanbul, and it was only through the order of Rüstem Pasha that they were finally able to disembark onto a small boat and land in Pera on 22 September.<sup>499</sup> Considering that they undertook their voyage in summer, a time of year when the journey between Genoa and Istanbul normally required only a month, the Genoese legation's travels took far longer than expected.<sup>500</sup> They reached Istanbul after 140 days en route. According to the report of Secretary Marc Antonio Morinello, they were quite unfortunate in terms of unfavorable winds, which significantly delayed their arrival.<sup>501</sup>

When they did at last arrive in Pera/Istanbul, they were received with great pomp, and greeted by a huge crowd of people including Perots, representatives of European states, and quite a number of janissaries. Ragusan and other Christian ships fired salvos; in the following days, when the weather permitted, the three Genoese ships entered the inland sea and while passing in front of the sultan's palace themselves fired salvos.<sup>502</sup>

Murad Agha, a Genoese renegade from the palace who would serve as an important intermediary during the negotiations, presented as a welcome gift two horses "very well ornamented in the Turkish way with silver and jewels" to Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo.<sup>503</sup> Murad Agha was from Sturla, a maritime village located to the east of Genoa, and probably captured by Ottoman forces during one of their expeditions along the Ligurian coast. He came to Istanbul, entered the palace and soon made a career for himself, becoming Selim's chief eunuch (*kapı ağası*).<sup>504</sup> He actively promoted the Genoese cause during the negotiations; moreover, as will be seen later in this chapter, he

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<sup>498</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo to Genoa from Chios (30 July 1558).

<sup>499</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo to Genoa (5 October 1558).

<sup>500</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. I, p. 363-365. According to Braudel, the average time it took to get from Alexandria to Leghorn in the late sixteenth century was thirty-three days.

<sup>501</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 13r-14v.

<sup>502</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo to Genoa (5 October 1558).

<sup>503</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 15v.

<sup>504</sup> The *Kapı ağası* was the agha (chief) of the white eunuchs. He was the sultan's personal confidante and head of the palace school; he served as the sole intermediary between the sultan and the outside world. Regarding the increasing influence of the chief eunuchs from the second half of the sixteenth century see, George Junne, *The Black Eunuchs of the Ottoman Empire: Networks of Power in the Court of the Sultan* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2016).

played a key role in the second diplomatic attempt of the Genoese in 1562-63 and also served as an important informant in the Habsburg intelligence network at the Porte.

Following their reception in Pera, the Genoese representatives mounted the horses that Murad Agha had presented to them and rode to their residence, where a magnificent feast that lasted for three days took place. On 25 September the Genoese legation finally went to visit Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha in his palace. In his report, Morinello described the ceremony elaborately, emphasizing the solemn atmosphere at the court, and describing in detail the ostentatious uniforms of the servants, which differed according to their ranks. There were also references to the customary way of receiving ambassadors during an audience, such as giving them seats lower than those of the Ottoman officials.<sup>505</sup>

### **Audience with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha**

Rüstem Pasha received the Genoese legation in a manner that betokened sincerity and a desire for peace. As a skillful negotiator who was quite well informed about Genoese politics, he interrogated the representatives regarding various issues, foremost among them Genoa's relations with Spain. The main question posed by the grand vizier was how the Genoese government could make peace with the sultan at the same time it was friendly with his enemy, the king of Spain. In fact, the position of Genoa with regard to Spain was vague. De Franchi and Grillo guaranteed that the friendship with Spain would not be an obstacle to this peace, as Genoa would not provide military support to the king against the sultan. Upon this, the grand vizier asked about Andrea Doria, who continued to stay in Genoa and maintained the Spanish king's galleys in Ligurian ports. Genoese representatives gave a somewhat diplomatic response, noting that the Republic had its hands tied in this matter as many Genoese citizens had significant commercial interests in the Spanish domains and forbidding the Spanish fleet to enter Genoese ports would be detrimental to them:

It is not in the hands of the Republic to be able to prohibit Spain from doing this, because then the Republic would make itself an enemy of Spain, to which Genoa does not consent to do; if it consented, it would be very bad. Many of our citizens are connected to the king of Spain by a significant sum of gold; also, our nation is already spread throughout his domains, many in Spain, Italy and Flanders, with merchandise and trade traffic. If our city recognized the king of Spain as an enemy, all these Genoese would be ruined. Because of these issues, the Republic cannot

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<sup>505</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 16r.

block its ports and take up arms against his galleys, nor can it prevent his ministers from entering our city.<sup>506</sup>

The second issue of concern for the grand vizier was Genoa's relations with France. To this, the representatives responded in the way the Republic's government had instructed them. They declared that the Republic had no enmity with the French king; yet, French vessels constantly seized Genoese goods and ships at sea. Moreover, many times the French had made many attempts to take over Genoa with the hope of dominating Italy. It was for this reason that the Genoese governors had been forced to turn to Emperor Charles V and later Philip II for help in order to defend their independence and maintain their liberty. The representatives also pointed out that Genoa would be able to defend itself against France without external help if the sultan were to stop supporting the French fleet with his powerful forces. To the grand vizier this attitude was quite interesting, as the Genoese had formerly had favorable relations with France and even been subjects of the French king. Clearly, Rüstem Pasha was quite knowledgeable about Genoese history and closely followed developments at the other end of the Mediterranean. The representatives explained the matter by saying that previously, different factions in the city had invited either France or Spain into Genoa in order to boost these factions' own efforts to dominate the Republic, but neither outside power had enjoyed the support of the whole city. The grand vizier then asked about the position of Andrea Doria with regard to this factionalism. De Franchi's response was revealing: Doria was a Genoese citizen like any other, but in addition he was known as the father of the *patria* for having established its liberty. He was also captain general of the Spanish fleet and could come and stay in Genoa, but as a high-ranking Spanish officer, he could not govern the Republic.<sup>507</sup> In fact, Andrea Doria's pro-Spanish stance contrasted starkly with the Republic's profession of neutrality. However, the negative aspects of allying with Spain compelled the Republic to follow an individual and independent political line. With this answer, the representatives drew a clear line between the Republic's position and that of Doria, rejecting any responsibility for the latter's activities.

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<sup>506</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 16v-17r: "Gli risposero non essere in man della Republica di poterglielo vietare perche sarebbe di scoprirseli inimici, il che non gli conviene e gliene converebbe avere troppo male, essendo interessati con esso Re di Spagna molti nostri cittadini d'una rilevante somma d'oro, et ancora per esser diffusa la nazione nostra in tutti i stati suoi, tanto in Spagna, quanto in Italia, e Fiandra con mercanzie e traffichi. Li quali tutti se la città nostra se gli scoprisse nemica resterebbero perduti. Per il che stante quelli soggetti non se gli poteva vietare il porto, nè armare le galee sue, e de suoi ministri in la città nostra."

<sup>507</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 17r.

The third issue raised by the grand vizier concerned Genoa's naval power, with Rüstem Pasha asking the representatives whether Genoa had as many galleys as Venice. De Franchi confessed that the Republic did not have as much power as the Venetians because it no longer possessed the colonies it had previously had in the Levant, such as Caffa, Trebizond, Pera, and Phocaea. Still, it had the capacity to build up to fifty galleys, which would be the equivalent of the Venetians' seventy galleys. Unfortunately, the Corsican war had set Genoa back in building its own galleys.<sup>508</sup>

Finally, the grand vizier sounded out the representatives regarding Genoa's need for grain. Ambassador de Franchi expressed the Republic's desire to buy grain from the Ottoman market, as the Venetians did; he proposed that in return, Genoese ships would bring various sorts of textiles as well as cash to the Empire. Rüstem Pasha received this offer positively and agreed that as long as the Empire had sufficient grain for itself, it could provide Genoa with grain.<sup>509</sup>

In the end, the grand vizier agreed that they could negotiate with the sultan. For the Genoese legation, this was a positive development, as the sultan was the only person who could grant the capitulations, and Rüstem Pasha was the only person who had access to the sultan and determined who would meet with him. Thus de Franchi and Grillo left the grand vizier in an optimistic mood and paid a visit to the second vizier Ali Pasha, as was customary. They presented their gifts, expressed their thanks, and asked for his favor and support in the matter of the capitulations. In the meantime, the grand vizier sent to the Genoese legation a certain quantity of food, including hot pot, chicken, a barrel of wine, two baskets of bread, ten bags of sugar, and some fruit, both as a welcome gift and as the standard provisioning usually made for foreign ambassadors, in particular the Venetian ambassador.<sup>510</sup>

On the following day (26 September) the Genoese legation visited more pashas, who welcomed them in a friendly manner. Among them, Ferhad Pasha, who had recently been appointed fifth vizier and enjoyed Rüstem Pasha's strong support, gave the Genoese representatives an especially favorable reception. Thus, everything was going very smoothly for the Genoese—more so than expected.<sup>511</sup> Meanwhile French ambassador de la Vigne, who had heard about their audience with Rüstem Pasha, visited the latter to lodge an official protest on behalf of King Henry II with regard to the friendly attitude

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<sup>508</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 17r.

<sup>509</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 17r-v.

<sup>510</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 18r.

<sup>511</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolo Grillo to Genoa (5 October 1558).



being demonstrated toward the Genoese. The ambassador, placing emphasis on the agreement between the two states, argued that the Sublime Porte should be the friend of its friends and the enemy of its enemies; otherwise the sultan would be deceived by the Genoese, as they were known to favor Spanish interests and might even urge the sultan to make peace with King Philip II. Moreover, as Morinello related, in order to make a greater impression on the grand vizier, the French ambassador presented a letter from the king concerning this matter.<sup>512</sup>

Learning that de la Vigne had taken action to prevent the negotiations, on 27 September the Genoese representatives went to visit him at his residence to pay their respects. As the entire conversation with de la Vigne was recorded by Morinello, we are able to learn the details of this meeting from the Genoese perspective. De Franchi and Grillo explained that they had come to the Porte to negotiate a peace and trade agreement with the sultan. They stressed in particular the fact that because of wars and other unfavorable conditions, commercial traffic in the western Mediterranean had almost ceased to exist, and thus Genoa was compelled to secure trading privileges in the Ottoman dominions for its merchants.

Being a “melancholic and immodest man,” de la Vigne responded to the Genoese legation in a tone both sarcastic and threatening. He was already informed about the details of the Genoese representatives’ audience with Rüstem Pasha, he said; he accused them of not being honest to the Porte on two main issues, the first one concerning the Republic’s ability to compete with the French king. De la Vigne stated that he found it quite daring for the Genoese to challenge such a great empire as France. The second issue was the Genoese denial that they had ever been subject to the French king. For de la Vigne, it was incredible that the Genoese would make such a claim, as their whole history was full of examples to the contrary.

De Franchi and Grillo, however, strongly refuted these accusations, declaring that they were not so witless as to make such remarks, and suggesting that de la Vigne had most probably been inaccurately informed about their conversation with the pasha. In an effort to soothe their rival, the representatives gave explanations on both issues in such a way as to satisfy de la Vigne. As for the first issue, they explained that it was due to French oppression and the weakness of the Republic that Genoa had to ask for help from Spain in order to defend itself. Concerning Genoa’s subjection to France, they stated that

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<sup>512</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 18r.

they had never denied this, but rather had simply explained the matter in the context of the factionalism within Genoa and the mutual agreement between Genoa and France regarding French rule over the city. Both de Franchi and Grillo pretended to be astonished that everything had been related to de la Vigne in a distorted way. Thus, by manipulating and misrepresenting the conversation with the grand vizier, the Genoese representatives endeavored to soothe de la Vigne's ire; they also underlined the affection the Genoese people had for the French king. De la Vigne in turn softened his tone and promised them his help and favor with regard to the negotiations, a promise that de Franchi and Grillo found hard to believe.

The French ambassador also asked about the reaction of the Spanish king to the mission. To this, both de Franchi and Grillo gave a diplomatic answer, trying to balance the Republic's interests and the French claims. They stated that Genoa sought advice from all kings; however, being an independent state, it never asked permission from any prince.<sup>513</sup> Thus ended the visit to de la Vigne. The next stop for de Franchi and Grillo was the residence of Venetian *bailo*, who had lately been suffering from ill-health; they exchanged courtesies and gifts with him.

A few days later, they had their second meeting with Rüstem Pasha, and found that everything had been turned upside down. The grand vizier told de Franchi and Grillo that upon the order of the sultan, no peace agreement would be done with the Republic unless the Genoese became friends with the sultan's friends and enemies with his enemies. Perplexed by this response, de Franchi and Grillo reminded him that they had come to the Porte at the command of the sultan for confirmation of the privileges already granted to Tortorino. They confessed that it was hard for them to understand the sultan's change of attitude. They noted that the Venetians were not forced to submit to such conditions and repeated their previous futile arguments concerning Spain, saying that they could not be enemies with the Spanish king since they were bound to him in so many ways but promising to retreat gradually from his dominions once they had the support and assistance of the sultan. But the grand vizier remained firm, declaring that this was the decision of the sultan, and therefore he could not do much for the Genoese.<sup>514</sup>

According to Morinello's account, after this meeting the grand vizier summoned the Genoese dragoman and told him that the money offered by the Genoese was not enough; if they increased the amount, he could in fact do something about this problem.

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<sup>513</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 20r.

<sup>514</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 20v.

Thinking that the whole difficulty could be overcome with gifts, de Franchi and Grillo offered the grand vizier various types of luxury textiles. The grand vizier indeed openly said that he needed a great many garments, as he wanted to marry off his daughter in the near future. The Genoese representatives did not have much choice; Rüstem Pasha was an influential figure and they needed to keep him happy. Thus, they also gathered a significant amount of money, similar to that presented by the Venetians; however, when they offered it to the grand vizier, he rejected it. Upon this, they suspected that Rüstem Pasha resented the generous gift, the gold-plated clock, presented to Piyale Pasha by the Republic, as he had been heard complain that the ones offered to him were inadequate in comparison. Apparently, he requested one from the representatives, because when the Genoese legation sent their dragoman to Rüstem Pasha at the end of the month to learn about the sultan's response to the peace treaty, the grand vizier first asked about the clock he had demanded from de Franchi and Grillo. The dragoman said they would have it prepared for him and also indicated the amount of money the grand vizier would be receiving. However, the latter immediately said that he did not want anything, as the sultan would not accede to making peace with Genoa.<sup>515</sup>

Although the Genoese initially assumed that it was simply a matter of satisfying the grand vizier's greed and that gifts could overcome all difficulties, there were in actuality other factors at play affecting the negotiation process. The major one was undoubtedly the French ambassador.

### **French Intervention**

From the beginning, de la Vigne had looked for ways to undermine the Genoese negotiations. He tried hard to prevent the Genoese legation from obtaining an audience with Rüstem Pasha. He voiced his concern about the proposed agreement at every opportunity and started a defamation campaign against the Genoese at court, denigrating the latter to the grand vizier and using all means to discredit them. However, Rüstem Pasha, who had already given green light for the negotiations and did not like de la Vigne at all, frustrated the French ambassador's efforts. In a letter to Henry II, de la Vigne, implying that the Genoese already enjoyed the support of the Ottoman administration,

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<sup>515</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 20v.

related how the legation had upon its arrival traversed the city “with great fanfare and with strong confidence.”<sup>516</sup>

Seeing that the grand vizier was inclined to favor the peace agreement with Genoa, de la Vigne employed yet another strategy to create new irritations and take the bloom off the friendly feelings that the Genoese had cultivated: he sought to solve the conflict by communicating directly with the sultan. Just before the Genoese representatives were to have their audience with Sultan Süleyman, de la Vigne prepared two copies of an *arz* (petition) and went to the *Divan*. He gave one copy to the grand vizier in front of various other pashas, adding that if Rüstem Pasha did not want to convey the petition to the sultan, he had another copy to be presented. The grand vizier, annoyed with the ambassador’s attitude, responded that he could submit it to the sultan through whomever he liked. In the end, de la Vigne did find a way to convey his petition to Süleyman. The French ambassador’s move was effective, as it broke off the peace negotiations with the Genoese in a definitive manner. The sultan did not give the Genoese any latitude as things stood, refusing to grant them a peace and trade treaty on the grounds of the Republic’s close friendship with King Philip and Andrea Doria’s serving as his captain general. Instead, he stipulated two conditions that would need to be met for the agreement to be confirmed: first of all, Genoa must become a friend to the friends and an enemy to the enemies of the sultan. Secondly, Genoa must pay a certain sum in tribute to the sultan. As the Genoese legation was not commissioned to make such concessions, they requested additional time to confer with the government of the Republic.<sup>517</sup>

Meanwhile they prepared another *arz* with the assistance of their key intermediary Murad Agha and presented it to the sultan in order to set the negotiations in motion again.<sup>518</sup> In this document, the Genoese legation once more requested the sultan to take Genoa under his protection as he had done in the case of the French, the Venetians, and the Florentines, and promised to be most loyal friends to the sultan. Noting that they had come to the Porte in order to obtain official confirmation of the privileges already granted a year ago, they expressed their astonishment that the French request could so influence the sultan’s decision. They also once again explained the Republic’s strategic position in relation to Spain, stating that after securing the sultan’s support, Genoa would gradually withdraw its people and goods from Spanish domains in order not to be subject to

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<sup>516</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, II, p. 491.

<sup>517</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 21v-22r.

<sup>518</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 22v.

anyone.<sup>519</sup> Lastly, they guaranteed that the Republic would never give military support to or join with any other prince opposing the sultan.

However, this petition did not prove effective, as de la Vigne continued to undermine the Genoese cause. He first went to Rüstem Pasha, saying that surely the grand vizier could not think of negotiating with the Genoese, enemies of France, given the thirty-year alliance between the sultan and the French king. Of particular interest were his remarks concerning Spain, as he argued that the Porte could not make peace with the Genoese, who provided military support to Spain, while the French were fighting against the king of Spain for the sake of the sultan.<sup>520</sup>

The final blow to the Genoese negotiations came when there arrived a French envoy in the Ottoman capital on 8 October, just before Piyale Pasha's return from his naval campaign. With de la Vigne, he reported to the *Divan* the conduct of the grand admiral during the naval operations in the western Mediterranean, accusing Piyale Pasha of having accepted bribes from the Genoese and having failed to observe what had been agreed between the two states. This made the situation more complicated still. Up to this point, the Genoese had counted on Piyale Pasha intervening in their favor and informing the sultan of the good offices the Republic had performed for the Ottoman fleet; this prospect gave them some hope concerning the negotiations. But after the accusations against the Ottoman grand admiral came to light, all such hopes were lost.

By now, Rüstem Pasha also harbored resentment against the Genoese, as they had sent their second *arz* to the sultan through Murad Agha instead of bringing it to the grand vizier. As for Piyale Pasha, he was fully occupied in defending himself against the accusations made by the French ambassador and therefore could not do much for his Genoese friends. After hearing the French envoy's version of the story,<sup>521</sup> the sultan ordered the Genoese legation to leave the Sublime Porte immediately.

The French ambassador had thus succeeded in his aims; the sultan chose the French alliance over the Genoese. According to the French sources, Rüstem Pasha and Piyale Pasha had acted outside the sultan's knowledge. Although Süleyman was quite willing to maintain the alliance with the French king, the avarice of his ministers, who always put their own interests before their master's honor and grandeur, had encouraged

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<sup>519</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 22v: “[I]l desiderio nostro è di negoziare in l’imperio tuo, per tirare à poco à poco i nostri homini e beni dalli paesi suoi e d’altri prencipi per non haver soggetto a sig.re alcuno.”

<sup>520</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 22v.

<sup>521</sup> The report presented by the French was published by Charrière in his *Négociations*, vol. II, pp. 509ff-522ff.

the Genoese to make such an attempt at diplomacy.<sup>522</sup> De la Vigne thus endeavored to show the grand admiral to the sultan in a bad light, with his greed playing an important role in the failure of Ottoman–French expedition. Yet, despite the denunciations in the French sources, Piyale Pasha was honored with the title of governor general of *Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid* in 1558 for his unquestionable merit and proven capabilities after his successful naval expedition to Majorca.<sup>523</sup> In the following years, his performance at the battle of Cerbe (Djerba) again won for him the favor of the sultan who sent robes of honor (*hil'at*) and a sword to congratulate his success,<sup>524</sup> and in 1565 he was promoted to a vizierate. But even before that, his efforts had been rewarded with a royal marriage. In 1562 he wed Gevher Sultan, one of the daughters of Sultan Selim II.<sup>525</sup>

As early as the first week of October, Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo had written to Genoa, stating that as a result of the actions by some adversaries, the initially positive atmosphere surrounding the negotiations had dissipated and they “doubt[ed] to have any conclusion.”<sup>526</sup> The despondent mood of the Genoese ambassador became yet more evident in subsequent letters. On 17 October, he reported that the sultan did not want a peace agreement as he was more inclined to favor the enemies of Genoa, even though “on our part every diligence and all means and ways were employed.”<sup>527</sup> The Genoese ambassador and *bailo* had preferred not to provide details about the negotiation process in their letters, being quite worried that it would not be possible to have them conveyed safely and securely. But when the negotiations ended in failure, they decided to send a reliable man to Ragusa to dispatch to Genoa a report of the entire negotiation process starting from the beginning. It was unfortunate for the Genoese representatives that the negotiations turned out so badly, as there had been such great expectations in Genoa. However, Ambassador de Franchi tried to make the best of it, stating that he regarded the failure of the negotiations as a blessing:

Thanks to M. Domenedio a better thing was chosen; because we have recognized that this nation does not observe anything insofar as it puts the avidity for goods

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<sup>522</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, vol. II, p. 492.

<sup>523</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibar*, p. 107. The office of governor general of the province of *Cezayir-i Bahri Sefid*—comprising the Aegean islands in the Mediterranean—was established in 1534, soon after the appointment of Hayreddin Barbarossa as commander of the Ottoman navy. Through this appointment, Piyale Pasha was granted the control and government of the islands and seas in the Ottoman Mediterranean. İdris Bostan, “The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid,” in *The Kapudan Pasha: His Office and His Domain, Halcyon Days in Crete IV: A Symposium held in Rethymnon, 7-9 January 2000*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 2002) pp. 245-250.

<sup>524</sup> BOA, 3 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (966-968/1558-1560)*, doc. 1268 (29 Ramazan 967/ 23 June 1563).

<sup>525</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibar*, p. 115.

<sup>526</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolo Grillo to Genoa (5 October 1558).

<sup>527</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolo Grillo to Genoa (17 October 1558).

before all human concerns. With this sultan very much devoted to the French side, our great enemy, and with the conditions they demanded concerning the imperial galleys, it was a difficult thing, rather a very dangerous one, to attempt to preserve this peace without many scandals and considerable damage to our nation; moreover while being here always to have one of our enemy at the ear of these people, and favored by them.<sup>528</sup>

After seeing that the sultan favored the French, de Franchi realized that the Republic would be caught between a rock and a hard place should a peace agreement be concluded with the sultan. Another serious question for him was whether such an agreement would be worth the expense, by the time they had satisfied the Ottoman officials' desire for gifts. Even at this point in the negotiations, they had already presented most of the textiles they had brought with them to the sultan. The rest of the fabrics (*paonazzo et scarlato*) had been shared among the pashas, except for the brocades that had been presented to Rüstem Pasha. Moreover, the latter had kept an additional two pieces of brocade, claiming that he wanted to pay for them. However, since the legation was more concerned about obtaining their safe-conducts and embarking on a safe voyage, they did not ask for money.<sup>529</sup>

During their final visit to the grand vizier, de Franchi and Grillo received safe-conducts; they were also strictly ordered not to buy any commodities in Ottoman ports and not to do any damage to Ottoman vessels. On 30 October Grillo and de Franchi embarked on the ship *Fornara*.<sup>530</sup> During their return voyage, the Genoese legation encountered many difficulties; for instance, their ship ran the risk of being captured because the crew was accused of having loaded grain.<sup>531</sup> Adam de Franchi, a Genoese merchant from Chios who resided in Istanbul and acted as informant for the Republic, noted that rivals of the Genoese had told the grand vizier that the Genoese had loaded victuals and other commodities in Chios despite his interdiction. Upon hearing this, Rüstem Pasha furiously ordered the Ottoman captains in the Aegean islands and ports to capture the Genoese ships.<sup>532</sup> In the end, despite the huge expense of the mission and the

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<sup>528</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolo Grillo to Genoa (26 October 1558): “[È] da rigratiare M. Domenedio, et credere habbia eletto il meglio, perche havemo conosciuto queste natione, che non osserva, se non tanto quanto gli accomoda, ingordissima della robba, sopra ogni humano pensiero. Con questo signore divotissimo alla parte francese, nostra capitale inimica, et con li soggetti, si hanno costi alle gallere Imperiali, difficil cosa era, anzi molto pericolosa, poter conservare questa pace, senza molti scandoli, et rilevati danni della nation nostra con esser qui sempre all’orecchie de costoro un nostro inimico, da loro favorite.”

<sup>529</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolo Grillo to Genoa (26 October 1558)

<sup>530</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 25r.

<sup>531</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 26r-27r.

<sup>532</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Adam di Franchi, 10 January 1559.

gifts, the result of this diplomatic endeavor was a failure; the Genoese legation, having initially been received with pomp and ceremony, had to leave the Porte under humiliating circumstances. The only real success that the Genoese had achieved during this time was preventing a new attack on Corsica.

Although in all Genoese communications the failure of the negotiations was attributed solely to the French ambassador, Salvago's chronicle indicated that the Venetian *bailo* was also operating against the Genoese.<sup>533</sup> Genoa represented a real threat, not only for the French ambassador but also in terms of trade interests, for the Venetians. The Venetian sources make it clear that Venetian *bailo* Marino Cavalli followed the negotiations closely and reported on them to the Senate. Apparently Cavalli interceded with the grand vizier in an attempt to dissuade him from making this treaty with the Genoese. And if this did not work, the Senate instructed Cavalli, he should use all means to oppose the Genoese negotiations, meanwhile concealing from everyone his true thoughts.<sup>534</sup> But it seems de la Vigne's actions were so effective that Cavalli did not have to do anything else.

The disappointment felt by de Franchi and Grillo at leaving the Ottoman capital empty-handed was shared by others who had supported their efforts, including the Genoese renegade Murad Agha, who had worked hard to promote the Republic's interests at the Ottoman court. While, in a letter he wrote to the Genoese government at the end of October, he did not give any details about the negotiations, he expressed his unhappiness regarding the outcome: "I am deeply sorry that the Republic could not accomplish the desired peace with the Ottoman Empire; it was all because of the French."<sup>535</sup>

Meanwhile the Republic, still unaware of the developments at the Sublime Porte, was hoping for a good result. A letter from the doge dated 25 November indicates that the Genoese government had not yet received any information concerning the negotiations from its legation in Istanbul. He also informed the ambassador and *bailo* about peace

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<sup>533</sup> Giovanni Salvago, *Histories di Genova*, p. 103v: "et stando in questa aspetacione, arrivò di novo uno mandato dal Re di Francia, il quale con lo suo ambasciatore, residente in quella corte, opperorno tanto che il Signore non li volse vedere, [maldire?] et meno vollere genovesi per soi amici, habbiando il simile secondo fu detto, procurato dal Bailo de Venetiani, non piacendolli che genovesi li fosseno compagni in quella corte et in quelli trafichi, et assai presto fu commandato alli prefati ambasciatore et bailo, sotto gravi pene, che dovesseno fra pochi giorni partirse, et habbiando carigato merchantie o robe discharigarle. Egli è vero che li Base et ministri volseno li presenti sepeno che erano statti portati per loro, et al tempo statuto partirno, chosa la quale dette despiacere in Genova, parendose essere stati maltratati et deshonorevolmenti, con havere spezo denari senza havere fatto frutto."

<sup>534</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter ASV), Senato, Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli (1556-1559), c. 101 r/v, 23 November 1558.

<sup>535</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Murad Agha to the doge and governors of Genoa, 28 October 1558.



negotiations that were taking place between France and Spain, warning them not to say anything about this at the Porte until the outcome was known.<sup>536</sup> In fact, the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis that was concluded between France and Spain in 1559 turned the tide completely. Upon receiving news of this, Sultan Süleyman and the Ottoman grandees became so angry that the French ambassador had to leave the Ottoman capital immediately; the position of the French at the Ottoman court was thus significantly affected.

After the loss of their important ally France in the wake of Cateau-Cambrésis, the Ottomans looked favorably upon a renewed request from the Genoese to reopen diplomatic contacts. For the Genoese, relations with the Sublime Porte still mattered, especially after Ottoman forces' defeat of the Holy League at the Battle of Djerba in 1560. Subsequent to this, the re-eruption of the Corsica crisis and the favorable attitude of the sultan towards Sampiero Corso's request for support impelled the Republic to maintain contacts, either formal or informal with the Porte. With the help of a number of individuals, including Genoese renegades serving in the Ottoman administration and other Christian merchants and slaves in Istanbul, the Republic received a continual flow of information regarding the movements of the Ottoman fleet and other political and military developments in the Empire.

Among these individuals were Adam de Franchi, Giovanni Maria Renzo, Murad Agha, Mustafa Reis, and Ferhad Agha. They all operated actively in favor of Genoa and regularly provided information to the Republic. For instance, in letters sent by Adam de Franchi to the Republic, it can be seen that the Genoese followed developments at the Ottoman court closely, in particular the conflict between Sultan Süleyman's sons, Selim and Bayezid. These letters also provide significant details about the number of galleys in the Ottoman arsenal and the movements and commanders of the Ottoman fleet, as well as the Empire's diplomatic relations with Persia.<sup>537</sup> More importantly, this intelligence network, most notably the Genoese renegades at the Ottoman court, encouraged and initiated a second round of diplomatic negotiations between Genoa and the Porte that would take place in 1562-63.

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<sup>536</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to Giovanni de Franchi and Niccolò Grillo, 25 November 1558.

<sup>537</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letters of Adam de Franchi from Pera (30 May; 9 June; 29 June 1559)

## A New Diplomatic Attempt at the Urging of the Genoese Renegades at the Porte

After the 1558 negotiations failed, despite the considerable expenses that had been incurred, the Republic all but lost hope of reopening diplomatic contacts with the Porte. However, Murad Agha, who had been such an important mediator during the previous negotiations, sent a letter to encourage Genoa in this matter. The circumstance that occasioned such a request was in fact the arrival of another Genoese, Giovanni Maria Renzo, in the Ottoman capital. Believing that Renzo, although ostensibly in Istanbul upon business for the Spanish king, had been sent by the Genoese governors to initiate a new round of negotiations with the Ottoman administration, Murad Agha decided to write to Genoa to let them know that conditions in the Empire were quite favorable for again requesting a peace and trade treaty. Rüstem Pasha was no longer in power, having died in 1561. Appointed to his place was Semiz Ali Pasha (r. 1561-1565), a man praised by his European contemporaries for his benevolence and gentle character.<sup>538</sup> In Ottoman sources as well Semiz (Fat) Ali Pasha was defined as good-humored and witty.<sup>539</sup> According to Murad Agha, Ali Pasha was of a milder and more flexible disposition.<sup>540</sup> Moreover, both he and other officials would be favorable to the Genoese cause, as they were friends of the Republic. In view of this positive atmosphere, Murad Agha suggested that the Republic renew its efforts at diplomacy with the Porte, promising to do whatever he could for the Republic, such as talking to influential people at court. He suggested that the *Signoria* send an experienced person for the negotiations—but not Tortorino, as this would be detrimental to the entire enterprise. Lastly, he informed the Genoese government that his patron Selim would be succeeding his father Süleyman as the new sultan, implying that this would increase his (Murad Agha's) power at court and accordingly his usefulness for the Republic.<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> In the Venetian sources, Semiz Ali Pasha was described in glowing terms. For instance, in the *relazione* of Antonio Barbarigo, the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople, Ali Pasha was depicted as a prudent and just person, unlike Rüstem Pasha. In the *relazione* of Secretary Marcantonio Donini, he was described as someone “di natura assai piacevole, benigna e liberale” who was in favor of peace (ama la pace). “Sommario della Relazione di Antonio Barbarigo, bailo a Costantinopoli (1558),” p. 154; “Relazione dell’Impero Ottomano di Marcantonio Donini, Segretario del Bailo Girolamo Ferro (1562),” p. 185, in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, Serie III vol. 3 (Firenze: Tipografia all’Insegna di Clio, 1842).

<sup>539</sup> Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, p. 288.

<sup>540</sup> ASG, AS 2169, “Relazione di Gian Maria Renzo di San Remo,” 16 April 1563: “persona più trattabile e molto dolce.”

<sup>541</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Murad Agha, 11 November 1562.

Other supporters of renewed negotiations included Mustafa Çelebi, an Ottoman Turkish “merchant of great credit” (*mercante di molto traffico*) who had close contacts with the sultan, and all of the pashas and court officials. Along with a Jewish merchant, Chaim de Selimo Ebreo (Cain de Salin), he offered his help in the matter. According to Renzo, the Republic could easily establish contacts with the Porte through these two men. Moreover, he wrote, all the Genoese in the Empire believed that it would be of benefit to conduct talks using the good offices of such individuals, who were favorites and had important friends at the Ottoman court.<sup>542</sup>

Ferhad Agha, a Genoese convert in the household of Grand Vizier Semiz Ali Pasha, also promoted Genoese diplomatic efforts, serving as an intermediary between the Republic and the grand vizier, and persuading the latter to favor and support the Genoese request for friendship and trade privileges.<sup>543</sup> Thus with the encouragement and help of Murad Agha and Ferhad Agha, Genoese renegades within the Ottoman administration who also styled themselves faithful servants of the Republic, Genoa resumed diplomatic contacts with the Porte. Meanwhile, Murad Agha, formerly Prince (*Şehzade*) Selim’s chief eunuch, was appointed as *müteferrika* for Sultan Süleyman, becoming responsible for the court service and when necessary entrusted with political and diplomatic missions.<sup>544</sup>

Murad Agha sent instructions to Genoa regarding how to proceed with the negotiations. He suggested that the Republic secretly send a reliable person to Istanbul. This individual should thoroughly disguise himself and should not appear in Pera, instead he should go directly Murad Agha’s house in the Kumkapı district of Istanbul. Then with the help of the agha and his friends, he would first visit Prince Selim with an “honorable” gift, so that the latter would command the pashas and aghas to favor peace with Genoa. Murad Agha noted that he was sure they would all be willing to do that in order to please the future sultan. The Genoese governors should also prepare a letter for the current sultan, which would include a draft of the desired capitulations; similar letters should be presented to Grand Vizier Ali Pasha, second vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, third vizier Pertev Pasha, fourth vizier Ferhad Pasha, and fifth vizier Mustafa Pasha. In addition, the envoy should present letters to Hasan Agha, head of the Janissary corps; to Grand Admiral Piyale Pasha; to Sultan Süleyman’s chief eunuch; to Grand Mufti (head of

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<sup>542</sup> ASG, AS 2169, “Relazione di Gian Maria Renzo di San Remo,” 16 April 1563.

<sup>543</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Ferhad Agha to the doge, 1 May 1563.

<sup>544</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Murad Agha, 29 March 1563: “Io Morat Agga Genovese olim Capi Agga de Soltan Selim et hora Mutferacha del gran Signor.”

religious affairs) Ebussuud Efendi; to Mustafa Çelebi (“merchant of the sultan”); and finally, to Murad Agha himself. However, before presenting these letters, he should visit Prince Selim, as already noted, and obtain from him a letter of recommendation that the envoy could then present to the grand vizier and to all the other pashas and officials along with the above-mentioned letter from the *Signoria*. This should be done before Ali Pasha presented the Genoese request to the sultan, thus preparing the ground: Süleyman would consult his pashas before coming to a decision, and they would all persuade him to grant the capitulations to the Republic.<sup>545</sup>

Murad Agha also cautioned that everything must be conducted in the utmost confidentiality, and the Republic should be careful of the French, Venetians and Florentines, who would do anything to prevent the Genoese from obtaining this treaty. If the Republic followed the strategy Murad Agha proposed, there should not be any problems. Finally, the *Signoria* should send adequate provisions and money for gifts. According to the Genoese agha, this was an important matter; if the Republic wanted to obtain this agreement, they should not refrain from spending whatever was necessary. In this context, magnificent gifts should be presented to the sultan and all the pashas upon the arrival of the ambassador and *bailo*.<sup>546</sup>

Soon after receiving Murad Agha’s letter, the Republic sent an envoy named Luchiano to the Porte for the negotiations.<sup>547</sup> From Ferhad Agha’s letter of 1 May, we understand that he had arrived in the Ottoman capital by the end of April.<sup>548</sup> At this time, the Corsican rebel Sampiero Corso was also in Istanbul to negotiate with the sultan regarding Corsica. Both Murad Agha and other Genoese agents in Istanbul provided detailed information concerning Corso’s mission at the Porte. In fact, the Genoese diplomatic endeavor could also be seen as a move to prevent the sultan from supporting Corso, who was preparing to incite a new crisis in Corsica. The island had been taken under French control in 1553 by the allied forces of the Ottoman navy under Turgut Reis and the French fleet commanded by Paulin de la Garde. After several years of conflict and struggle, with the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559 Corsica passed into the control of the Genoese again. Yet the Corsicans were not content with Genoese rule and were unwilling to give up their claims on the island. Thus, in 1562 Corso left Marseilles, and

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<sup>545</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Murad Agha Genovese, 29 March 1563.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid.

<sup>547</sup> ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci (hereafter CapiX), Parti Secrete, f. 11, Lettera al Bailo a Costantinopoli, 19 January 1563 [1564].

<sup>548</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Ferhad Agha to the doge, 1 May 1563.

stopped by Algeria before continuing on to Istanbul to conduct negotiations with the sultan. Meanwhile, Genoese agents were closely following Corso's every step.

For instance, Agostino Pierano, also known as Ahmet Reis Genovese, sent a letter to Genoa on 15 January 1563, informing the Republic that Sampiero Corso had visited the sultan and asked for naval support in order to take over Corsica. The sultan did not give an immediate answer, but after discussing the issue with his pashas appeared to favor the idea of having people on that island who were loyal to him and could supply provisions and munitions for his fleet.<sup>549</sup> Adam de Franchi, Agostino Gilli, and Murad Agha had also notified the Republic of Corso's arrival in Istanbul a few months back to ask for naval support and present to the sultan a golden garment (*una veste d'oro*).<sup>550</sup> Thus, having received information through different channels, the doge instructed Genoese agents to sound out the attitudes of the Ottoman administration and the French ambassador toward Corso and also to learn the number of galleys that would sail to Corsica.<sup>551</sup>

Corso remained in the Ottoman capital until the end of April. During his stay, the Genoese agents not only provided the Republic with information concerning his actions but also tried to obstruct his mission, even going so far as to make attempts on his life.<sup>552</sup> Corso was backed by the king of France and his mother Catherine de' Medici; they gave him a recommendation letter to be presented to the sultan, indicating that they stood surety for him. The offer Corso made to the sultan was also appealing. He asked for the naval support; in return, if he was able to take over the island, he would pay for any expenses incurred or damage that was done to the Ottoman fleet. Moreover, he promised to pay a generous tribute to the sultan and his successors on an annual basis.<sup>553</sup> In the end, the sultan decided not to give Corso the support he requested; he only provided him an armed galley in which to return to Algeria.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Ahmet Reis Genovese to Genoa, 15 January 1563. In introducing himself, he noted that he had two brothers, Battisto and Nicola Pierano, who lived in Cornigliano in Liguria.

<sup>550</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Adam di Franchi, 6 February 1563; Letter of Giovanni Agostino Gilli and Murad Agha, 28 and 30 April 1563.

<sup>551</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge to Agostino Gilli and Pompeo Bero, 20 February 1563.

<sup>552</sup> The Republic offered a monetary reward for the murder of Corso; there were attempts to poison him. It was also planned to kill him with an arquebus when he was taking a walk in the garden of de la Vigne's residence where Corso stayed. ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Gregorio Bregante (18 January 1563); letter of the doge (3 Marzo 1563).

<sup>553</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Mustafa Reis Genovese through Giovanni Maria Renzo, 8 January 1563.

<sup>554</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni Agostino Gilli and Battista Ferrari, 30 April 1563. For a detailed discussion of Sampiero Corso's mission in Istanbul and the correspondence relevant to his activities, see Carlo Bornate, "La Missione di Sampiero Corso a Costantinopoli," *Archivio Storico di Corsica* 15/4 (1939): 472-502.

Meanwhile, the Ottoman administration had also rejected the Genoese request for peace and trading privileges, on the pretext that the Republic should have sent a proper diplomatic legation to Istanbul for the negotiations. But according to Ferhad Agha, it was due to the machinations and provocative remarks of the Venetians and the French that the sultan refused to accede to Genoa's wishes. And indeed, evidence found in the Venetian sources indicates that Venice did have a significant hand in this failure.

### Venetian Intervention

Considering Genoa a significant threat to its interests in the Levant trade, Venice kept a close eye on the Genoese activities in the Ottoman capital. Through their well-developed intelligence network, the Venetians had learned as early as January of 1563 that Genoa would be sending a representative to the Porte to conclude a peace treaty with the sultan. Consequently, the heads of the Council of Ten ordered Venetian *bailo* Daniele Barbarigo to do whatever he could to disrupt this initiative. First, he should discuss the issue with the grand vizier and sound out his attitude. Barbarigo had already close relations with Ali Pasha and was very much liked by the latter.<sup>555</sup> Taking advantage of this favorable situation, the *bailo* should persuade the grand vizier not to grant trade privileges to the Genoese. He should place particular emphasis on the fact that Genoa was still subject to the Spanish king and dependent on his authority; this was evidenced by its participation in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis on the side of the Spanish and Philip II's insistence on the return of Corsica to Genoese rule. Another argument that the *bailo* could use was the fact that many Genoese served as captains of Spanish galleys. Thus, all the important arguments that had been put forward by the French ambassador in 1558 should be reviewed for the benefit of the grand vizier, and it should also be pointed out that if the Genoese were granted the capitulations, they would actively engage in spying in the Ottoman capital for Habsburg interests. All in all, it would not be appropriate for such a great and powerful sultan to ally with the Genoese, subjects of the King of Spain.<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> "Relazione dell'Impero Ottomano del Clarissimo Daniele Barbarigo tornado bailo da Costantinopoli (1564)," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, Serie III vol. 3, p. 38; 56. In fact their friendship went back to the times when Semiz Ali Pasha was governor general of Egypt. At the time, Daniele Barbarigo was serving as Venetian consul in Cairo. So they already formed close friendship during this period.

<sup>556</sup> ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci (hereafter CapiX), Lettere degli ambasciatori a Costantinopoli, b. 3, cc. 4-5 (18 January 1563).

Barbarigo was told to discuss these points with Ali Pasha so eloquently that this intervention would seem to be a service to the pasha, instead of an action taken for Venetian interests.<sup>557</sup> In fact, the Venetians were deeply concerned that their interests at the Porte and elsewhere would be affected very negatively if Genoa obtained the desired privileges and established close relations with the Ottoman administration.<sup>558</sup> Above all, Venice was worried about losing control of the spice trade in the Levant, especially in view of the fact that at around the same time, negotiations were underway between the Porte and the king of Portugal with a view to granting freedom to travel and trade in the Ottoman lands and throughout the Indian Ocean for the merchants of both sides.<sup>559</sup> The Genoese were already quite active in the spice trade in the Indian Ocean; thus, if the Porte granted trading privileges to the Genoese, the Ottoman Empire would also be open to them; a situation that, Barbarigo should point out, would be detrimental not only to Venetian merchants but also to Ottoman merchants. They would no longer be able to make a profit from the spice trade, as the Genoese would monopolize it.<sup>560</sup>

If none of these arguments proved effective with Ali Pasha, Barbarigo should clinch the issue by offering him a considerable amount of money (up to 5,000 ducats). In the meantime, the heads of the Council of Ten had also written to the Venetian ambassador in Spain to find out whether the Genoese diplomatic attempt was being made with the knowledge and consent of the king. On another front, the Venetian ambassador in Savoy soon learned from the duke that the Genoese were secretly preparing to send a new ambassador to the Porte to establish lasting friendship with the sultan and that they would offer to pay annual tribute in order to attain this end. In addition, Genoa would soon free itself from all ties to the king of Spain and would allow the sultan's galleys to use its ports. More importantly, the Republic would not permit in its ports any other galleys (except their own), to protect the Genoese coast from corsairs. According to the duke, if such a peace were to be concluded between Genoa and the Porte, it would damage his interests greatly. Thus informed, Venice took action to let the king of Spain know about the proposed Genoese mission.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> ASV, CapiX, Parti Secrete, f. 11, Lettera al Bailo a Costantinopoli, 14 January 1562 [1563].

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1562 [1563].

<sup>559</sup> Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, pp. 114-116.

<sup>560</sup> ASV, CapiX, Parti Secrete, f. 11, Lettera al Bailo a Costantinopoli, 9 March 1564.

<sup>561</sup> ASV, CapiX, Parti Secrete, f. 11, Lettere all'ambasciatore in Spagna, 4 March 1563: "[E]ssi Genovesi haveano secretamente mandato ambasciatori a Costantinopoli, et che per ottenerla offrivano di pagarli un censo annuale, et che dariano riccapito sempre alle soe armade, et che di più si liberariano in tutto dalla colleganza che tengono col Re di Spagna, nè permetteriano che nelli lor porti stiano altre galere che quelle

In view of the above, it appears that Genoa was quite eager to conclude a treaty with the sultan—even at the cost of paying an annual tribute and cutting off all ties with Spain, which it had not dared to consider during the negotiations of 1558. This bold move triggered the *Serenissima* to take opposing action on all fronts. Having learned that Ferhad Agha and Murad Agha were in the service of Genoa, the Venetians kept close tabs on them. Apparently, Luchiano, the Genoese envoy, had negotiated with Murad Agha and Ali Pasha and left the Porte with a safe-conduct prepared for the coming Genoese legation with the help of Ferhad Agha, as well as a letter from Ali Pasha to the Genoese governors.<sup>562</sup> However, the Republic never sent an official embassy to the Ottoman court. Already in October 1564, Ferhad Agha was writing a letter to Genoa to ask about the legation, as the grand vizier was unhappy about the delay in its arrival.<sup>563</sup> In the end, the Republic did not send a legation to the Porte, the reason for the change of attitude on the part of the Genoese is not clear in the sources. Yet, Genoa was able to maintain a well-developed intelligence network consisting of a group of people that included Genoese renegades serving at the Ottoman court, Jewish and Muslim merchants having close contacts with Ottoman officials, and other Christian merchants and slaves in Istanbul. It appears that the ability to obtain news from Istanbul through personal agents and spies was something the Republic valued even more than establishing official contacts through diplomacy.

In a letter of thanks penned by the doge, all the agents in Istanbul were praised for their service to the Republic. Among them were the Jewish-Genoese merchant Ambrosio Giudice, Murad Agha, Mons. Vescovo de Millo, Ferhad Agha, Mustafa Reis Genovese (a galley captain in the Ottoman navy), Chaim de Selimo Ebreo, and Mustafa Çelebi, merchant at the Ottoman court. The doge noted that negotiations for a peace and trade treaty had been conducted with the sultan; yet for many reasons these negotiations had not been successful. Still, he wrote, the Republic would always be in need of their services, and they should remember that all they had done was for the good of the *patria*.<sup>564</sup>

This network had been established by Giovanni Maria Renzo, who persuaded people to gather intelligence in the service of Genoa and the Spanish king. All the information gathered was put down and transmitted by Giovanni Agostino Gilli, who

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che la Signoria di Genova haverà per difesa delli suoi loughi da corsari. Il Duca disse che quando ciò accadesse gli porterebbe molto disturbo e incomodo per molti suoi interessi.”

<sup>562</sup> The document (in Ottoman Turkish) of safe-conduct was granted in Rabiulevvel 971 (October/November 1563). It is available in ASG, AS 2737 D.

<sup>563</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Ferhad Agha, 29 October 1564.

<sup>564</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of the doge, 21 April 1563.



developed a technique to send ciphered messages. A large number of the documents sent by the network were written in the form of an ordinary letter, discussing commercial issues; however, the back of the page contained secret information written in lemon juice, which could be read only after being exposed to heat.<sup>565</sup> Agostino Gilli sent letters to an individual known as Aurelio Santa Croce the Venetian, who was head of the Habsburg intelligence network in Istanbul. The information provided by the agents concerning the members and affairs of the Ottoman court was thus sent to both Spain and Genoa. To what extent such information was true is hard to determine, but considering the fact that the network remained in the service of the Republic for a long period—at least from 1559 to the 1570s—its agents seem to have been loyal servants of Genoa.

But to secure such loyalty, a remarkable amount of money was necessary. The agents were provided with special gifts, bribes, and perquisites such as pensions in return for their services. For instance, Murad Agha and Mustafa Reis Genovese received garments made of damask and other fine textiles. The Republic also provided financial support for agents' family members in Genoa.<sup>566</sup> It can thus be said that these individuals agreed to engage in intelligence activities out of a mixture of self-interest and obligation, as most had families and relatives in Genoa, representing an additional bond with the *patria*. They provided the Republic with valuable information concerning the movements of the Ottoman fleet, the naval expeditions of the grand admirals, the activities at the arsenal, the number of galleys outfitted at the arsenal, and so on. Thus, although Genoa was not able to obtain a treaty from the sultan due to French and Venetian machinations, it seems in the end to have proved more profitable for the Republic to maintain informal links with the Sublime Porte by establishing an information-gathering network composed primarily of individuals of Genoese origin.

### Conclusion

The examination of Genoese–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations highlights various aspects of commercial competition, politics, and diplomacy in the Mediterranean during the sixteenth century. Caught in the middle of the Habsburg–Valois–Ottoman struggle over the Mediterranean, Genoa, as a small-scale state, strove to preserve its independence and promote its trade interests through the use of effective diplomacy. In the mid-

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<sup>565</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Giovanni Agostino Gilli to the doge, 9 November 1562; 8 January 1563.

<sup>566</sup> ASG, AS 2169, Letter of Adam di Franchi/Giovanni Agostino Gilli, 3 March 1563.

sixteenth century, various events from grain shortages to crises in Corsica, resulted in a cooling of relations with Spain, compelling Genoa to fend for itself. It was at this juncture that the Republic decided to turn to the East and attempted to revivify its Levant trade by opening diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte. The agreement with the Ottoman administration had a number of aims, above all obtaining easy access to Ottoman grain and protecting the Genoese coast from allied French–Ottoman forces. Despite its assertion of independence, its proclaimed neutrality, and its ambition of putting itself on the same level as Venice and establishing friendly relations with all the powers of the Mediterranean, Genoa could not prevent itself from remaining a Habsburg satellite, tied in many ways to the Spanish king. Unwilling to challenge Spain openly for fear of losing the privilege of free trade and travel in the Spanish domains, Genoa was torn between its desire for peace with the Porte and its fear of the Spanish king, and tried to maintain a balance by courting both sides. The Genoese ambassador's remarks to French ambassador de la Vigne clearly expressed the Republic's viewpoint: "[B]ecause [Genoa] was trading all over the world, it was necessary for it to remain on good terms with all."<sup>567</sup>

Although this is not clearly indicated in the sources, shared trade interests may have brought Genoa and Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha together. Being active in the grain trade himself, Rüstem Pasha regarded the Genoese request to buy grain from the Ottoman market on regular basis with favor. In addition, both Rüstem Pasha and Grand Admiral Piyale Pasha were not on good terms with the French ambassador and the Venetian *bailo*, which played into the hands of Genoa, allowing its representatives to gain their support with ease. But however favorably the Genoese were received at the Porte to begin with, they soon fell victim to intrigues outside their control and had to return to Genoa empty-handed.

The strongest negative reaction to the diplomatic effort by the Republic came from the French side. As the relations between France and the *Sublime* Porte were tenuous in the wake of various diplomatic crises, and personal enmity existed as well between the ambassador and the grand vizier, de la Vigne's appeals regarding the Genoese effort fell on deaf ears. Although both the French and Genoese sources depicted the situation as if the French had strong influence over the sultan and his foreign policy, such an image is deceptive. The decisive factor that terminated the Genoese negotiations was the sultan's preference of the French alliance to Genoese subservience. In Sultan Süleyman's view,

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<sup>567</sup> ASG, Biblioteca Ms. 128, 19v: "perchè negoziando per tutto il mondo, ne bisognava star ben con tutti."

this alliance was strategically important in that it enabled the Ottomans to assert their imperial claims over the Mediterranean.

In this respect, the Genoese negotiations revealed the division of opinion between Rüstem Pasha and the sultan, implying the increasing authority and power of the grand vizier vis-à-vis the sultan. Yet although the grand vizier's interests conflicted with the sultan's desire, the sultan had the last word. Still, through his support of the Genoese negotiations, the grand vizier not only furthered his own interests but also brought the French and the Venetians to heel by instigating rivalry and competition between these states. From this perspective, it could be seen as a successful tactic for the Porte, allowing it to play its trading partners off against each other while also opening the door to potential alternative partners for commerce. Moreover, politically, establishing new alliances and luring the allies of the Spanish Habsburgs to its side would always be in the interest of the Sublime Porte. For Rüstem Pasha, the alliance with Genoa would above all be a significant blow to the military power and defenses of the Spanish Empire, as Genoese galleys made up most of the latter's naval force. Thus, he tended to favor strengthening the Empire's own position in the Mediterranean through new alliances, such as that proposed with Genoa, and maintaining peace on all fronts. However, after encountering the Genoese evasiveness regarding the Republic's relationship with Spain, he withdrew his support.

Despite the fact that the Genoese diplomatic efforts ended in dismal failure, the Republic gained some benefits from this endeavor. First of all, the diplomacy at sea with Grand Admiral Piyale Pasha proved quite successful, and the Genoese were able, albeit temporarily, to keep Ottoman galleys away from Corsica and the Ligurian coast by preventing any possible alliance with the French navy. Moreover, the Genoese ships that had arrived in Istanbul for the negotiations took advantage of this opportune occasion to load grain from Ottoman ports.

The conditions that paved the way for Genoa's second diplomatic effort were rather unusual. The initiative was sparked mainly by the Genoese renegades serving in the Ottoman court, who, citing the favorable circumstances for diplomacy at the Porte, urged the Republic to make a move. Close analysis of this diplomatic endeavor has demonstrated how conflicting interests and tangled loyalties were able to shape diplomacy, decision-making, and foreign politics in the Mediterranean. Encouraged by their agents at the Porte, in 1563 the Republic for a second time sent an envoy to Istanbul to negotiate with the Ottoman administration. Yet, despite the support Genoa enjoyed

from certain groups and influential figures within the Ottoman Empire, this diplomatic effort also did not reach any conclusion, as the sultan asked that a proper diplomatic legation, rather than a mere envoy, to be sent to conduct the negotiations. In the view of the Genoese agents, French and Venetian machinations were ultimately to blame for the failure of Genoese diplomacy. Given the fact that the alliance between the Ottomans and the French had already been seriously damaged by the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, the main blow had come from the Venetians this time. With the help of their informants at the Ottoman court and the close relationship between Venetian *bailo* Daniele Barbarigo and Grand Vizier Ali Pasha, the Venetians were able to keep close tabs on Genoese activities. They had reasons for doing so; if the Genoese restored their trade relations with the Levant, it would be detrimental to Venetian interests. Especially in view of the recent discussions between the Ottoman Empire and Portugal, Genoa had the potential to become a dangerous rival, particularly in the spice trade. Venice and the Venetian *bailo* thus actively obstructed the Genoese initiative and prevented the negotiations from reaching a conclusion by pitting the Republic against both Spain and the Ottoman Empire.

In the following period, the likely expense of a new diplomatic mission and the overall circumstances at the time dissuaded the government from undertaking a new diplomatic effort. After losing all hope of gaining a share in the Levantine trade, Genoa decided to change its strategy and to maintain informal contacts with the Sublime Porte through a sophisticated information-gathering network, largely composed of Genoese renegades, merchants, and subjects in Istanbul. During the period from the late 1550s to the 1570s, secret contacts between Genoa and its informants in the Ottoman capital enabled the Genoese government to closely follow the internal and foreign affairs of the Ottoman state as well as the movements of the Ottoman fleet, strengthening the Republic's hand in any potential naval conflicts in the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER IV

### Medici–Ottoman Relations in the Sixteenth Century:

#### Economic and Political Perspectives

In 1588 Jacopo Mormorai, a Florentine commission agent in the woolen cloth trade, penned a lengthy proposal to the new grand duke Ferdinando I de' Medici (r. 1587-1609) on the importance of restoring commercial relations with the Sublime Porte for the grand duchy. In his report, the Florentine agent explained in detail the reasons for the decline of Florentine trade in the Ottoman Empire and suggested that the grand duke renew trading privileges with the sultan, which would be profitable for the already shrinking Florentine woolen cloth industry in particular.

Now that you have taken over the administration of your all-happy state, as your dearest man and servant, I decided to present to you how important were the agreement and friendship with the Grand Signor of Constantinople, [whose restoration] would be particularly useful and honorable to you, and of universal benefit and advantage to the whole city of Florence....I am relating this fact with pleasure after having been in Constantinople twice, and having known how beneficial the friendly relationship with the Sublime Porte used to be to this city of Florence.<sup>568</sup>

Mormorai's proposal is particularly important for its elaborate description of the historical friendship between Florence and the Ottoman Empire dating back to the late fifteenth century. According to him, a Florentine *bailo* had been sent to Constantinople to reside there permanently as early as 1479.<sup>569</sup> There existed reciprocal security and privileges for the merchants of both states; Ottoman merchants formerly traded in

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<sup>568</sup> Archivio di Stato di Firenze (hereafter ASFi), Mediceo del Principato (hereafter MdP) 800, fol. 435r (23 September 1588): "Quella non hebbe prima preso il governo di questi suoi felicissimi stati, che come suo aff.mo s.re et vasallo, mi venne in pensiero mostrarli quanto seria stato a lei in particolare utile, et honorevole et in universale benefeff.o et commodo a tutta la citta di Firenze la confederatione et l'amicitia col Gran Signore di Costantinopoli...[] vengo con lieto animo a dirli questa verita per esser stato in Costantinopoli due volte, et haver considerato quanto l'amicitia di quell'eccelsa porta, sia stata a questa citta di Firenze sempre giovevole."

<sup>569</sup> Mormorai is mistaken about this date. It was in 1460-61 that the Florentines first received capitulations from the Ottoman sultan and appointed a resident ambassador to Istanbul. In 1479, Florentine ambassador Antonio de' Medici was sent to Istanbul to thank the sultan for his help in the Bandini case. (see above Chapter I, p. 45)

Florence, just as Florentine merchants did in Constantinople. Mormorai stated that this situation had continued for sixty years, during which the Florentines were able to dominate the Ottoman market, taking advantage of the constant wars between the Venetians and the Ottomans.<sup>570</sup> The Florentine agent also discovered in some historical records that there had been twenty-two mercantile firms in Pera belonging to Florentine nobles at that time. The Florentines were in fact so satisfied with the conditions in the Ottoman Empire that more and more came to settle there; some, such as Gagliani, Verrazzani, and Doni, married local women and soon became Perots [*Di Fiorentini doventorno Perotti*].

Mormorai put specific emphasis on the substantial volume of trade the Florentine merchants conducted, noting that they had returned to Florence with thousands of ducats each year. Thus, Florence's present prosperity had its origins fifty years ago in the commerce with Constantinople.<sup>571</sup> According to Mormorai, this situation began to change after 1537,<sup>572</sup> when the Venetians made peace with the Ottomans and secured trade privileges in the Ottoman Empire. At a juncture when Florence was placing relatively little value on the export of woolen cloth to the Levant, favoring instead the export of higher quality *rasse* (*rascie*) to European markets, Venice developed its *Arte della Lana*.

The Venetians were behind the Florentines during the time of war, and then in the time of [Ottoman] peace with the Florentines and Venetians, all became stagnant, and the Venetians returned [to the Ottoman market] in such a way that Venice became rich; each year they sold 20,000-24,000 bolts of woolen cloth in the territory of the Turks, a significant part of which quantity had been previously provided by the Florentines.<sup>573</sup>

According to Mormorai, the final straw that led to the termination of Florentine trade in the Levant was the piracy committed by the armed galleys established by Cosimo I de' Medici. Due to his kind nature and in consideration of the historical friendship between the two states, Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha did not imprison the Florentine *bailo* Albertaccio degli Alberti and the Florentine merchants in

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<sup>570</sup> Here Mormorai refers to the series of wars between the Ottomans and the Venetians that took place successively in 1463-1479, 1499-1503 and 1537-1540.

<sup>571</sup> ASFi, MDP 800, fol. 435r: "Fú tale questo traffico, che tutte le ricchezze, che sono in Firenze, ch' hann' havut' origine da cinquant' anni indietro, sono uscite di Costantinopoli."

<sup>572</sup> Here Mormorai is referring to the Ottoman-Venetian War of 1537-1540. The siege of Corfu took place in 1537 and the Battle of Preveza in 1538. In 1540 a peace treaty was signed between the two states. The year should thus be 1540 instead of 1537.

<sup>573</sup> ASFi, MDP 800, 435v: "[Li Venetiani] tutto quello ch'era prima de Fiorentini in tempo di Guerra e in tempo di pace de Fiorentini e de Venetiani tutto s'arruggirono (?) per loro, e sono venuti a tale che con l'havere arricchita Venetia, smaltiscono l'anno venti e ventiquattro milla capi di panno nel territorio de Turchi, quantità che, prima buona parte sollevano mandarvisi di Firenze."

Constantinople.<sup>574</sup> Instead, he sent the *bailo* back to Florence to inform the grand duke that if he wanted friendship with the Porte, he should stop sending galleys to pillage Ottoman ships and merchants. It was only after the War of Cyprus (1570-1573), Mormorai noted, that the new grand duke, Francesco I de' Medici, recognized the advantages of trading in the Levant. In order to reopen negotiations, he sent Cavalier Bongiani Gianfigliuzzi as ambassador and Mormorai himself as *bailo* to Constantinople. For many and various reasons, this mission failed. According to Mormorai, if the grand duke had agreed that the galleys would stay away from Ottoman merchant ships, friendship with the Sublime Porte would have been restored and trade could have continued freely and securely. However, the grand duke did not agree to this condition, partly as a result of the bad counsel he was given.

Now advanced in years, Mormorai recognized the importance of the Levantine trade for the *Arte della Lana*, which was already in difficulty due to the failure to sell *rascie* in the same volume as before. In his view, the deterioration of the industry could only be halted by reviving the trade of woolen cloth in the Ottoman market: "Recognizing how beneficial it would be to the city of Florence, to all your vassals and especially to you, I consider it my duty to urge for the renewal of an agreement with the Ottoman court for the benefit of all those mentioned above."<sup>575</sup> Mormorai, laying out his knowledge and experience with regard to this issue, also offered his services to the grand duke for negotiations with the Porte. Although he was not entrusted with this task, his letter seems to have had an impact on Ferdinando I. A few years later, the latter would reopen diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman court, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter VI.

The main focus of this chapter is on the period from 1537 to 1600, during which the Florentine state was transformed into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany under the Medici family, and Ottoman-Florentine relations took on a new character. Mormorai's letter is a valuable source in this respect, as it presents to us the changing economic and political relations of the Florentines with the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century as seen through the eyes of a contemporary. As he pointed out, from the late fifteenth century until the 1530s relations between the two states had been positive. Especially in the

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<sup>574</sup> When there was a threat of war, it was a common practice for the Ottomans to imprison the *bailo*. There are many examples of this in case of the Venetian *bailos*: Paolo Barbarigo (1463), Nicolò Giustinian and Giacomo da Canal (1537) and Marcantonio Barbaro (1570).

<sup>575</sup> ASFi, MDP 800, fol. 436r: "Però conoscendo io quanto benefico saria alla Città di Firenze, a tutti i suoi vassalli, e a lei in particolare, mi è parso obligo mio infiammarla alla rinnovatione di questa confederatione per i benefitii di sopra detti."

woolen cloth trade, Florentine merchants made considerable profits in the Levantine market. In the following period, the situation began to change in a striking way, such that by the late sixteenth century, Florentine commerce had significantly declined in the Ottoman lands. Mormorai outlined the reasons for this decline: firstly, it was the direct result of growing relations between the Venetians and the Ottomans from the 1540s onward, as well as the industrial development Venice had seen in the production of woolen cloth. In fact, while trade still contributed significantly to the Venetian economy during the sixteenth century, industrial growth also played an important role. Venice became an industrial center producing and exporting “wool and silk fabrics, glass and crystal works, leather goods, the products of goldsmiths, books and prints.”<sup>576</sup> The predominance of Venetian textiles in the Ottoman market, as noted by Mormorai, closely correlated with the decline of Florentine commerce in the Ottoman Empire.

Secondly, the Florentines’ shift of focus to the western Mediterranean also played an important role, opening the way for Venetian and Jewish merchants, who soon came to be unrivalled in the Ottoman market. Although the Florentines made attempts to revive their Levant trade and, more importantly, attract Ottoman merchants to Livorno in the second half of the sixteenth century, they faced significant opposition from the Venetians and the French. Lastly, the activities of the Order of St. Stephen in the Eastern Mediterranean complicated matters further and brought diplomatic negotiations to an impasse.

The detailed analysis of these three aspects underlined by Mormorai provides us with a more profound understanding of Medici–Ottoman relations in the sixteenth century by bringing into light the various dynamics at play. Thus, this chapter focuses on the economic and political issues that were influential in shaping the Medici’s Levantine policy during the time of Cosimo I, Francesco I, and Ferdinando I. In relation to this, the factors that paved the way for Florentine–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations in the 1570s (1574/1578) and 1590s (1592/1598) are discussed in order to set the stage for the following two chapters.

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<sup>576</sup> Luciano Pezzolo, “The Venetian Economy,” in *A Companion to Venetian History 1400-1797*, ed. Eric Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013) p. 272. Also Ugo Tucci, “Venezia nel Cinquecento: Una città industrial?” in *Crisi e rinnovamenti nell’autunno del Rinascimento a Venezia*, ed. Vittore Branca and Carlo Ossola (Florence: Olschki, 1991), pp. 61-83.



## Florentine Woolen Cloth and the Ottoman Market

Since Byzantine times, woolen cloth had constituted the main commodity exported by the Florentines to Near Eastern markets. In the thirteenth century, Florentine merchants were engaged mainly in supplying the Levant with woolen cloth they had obtained from Northern European markets.<sup>577</sup> From the late fourteenth century onward, however, Florence underwent a remarkable industrial transformation in the manufacture of woolen cloth and began to produce high-quality woolen fabrics from English raw wool, imitating Flemish products.<sup>578</sup> With this significant shift, they soon established a dominant presence in the Mediterranean textile market. The dynamic of Florentine trade was based on the supply of raw materials and the export of finished products. In the fourteenth century, raw wool was imported mainly from the Low Countries and England; but in the following century, when English raw wool became costly, the Florentines turned to Spain and began to use Castilian wool for their cloth production.<sup>579</sup> Thus, unlike the Genoese and the Venetians, who acted primarily as intermediaries between Northern Europe and the Levant, exchanging English and Flemish woolen cloth for Levantine raw silk and spices, the Florentines imported raw wool from England and Spain and manufactured high- and midrange-quality woolen cloth to be exported to many markets, from Italy and Spain to Syria and Egypt, during the late medieval period.<sup>580</sup>

From the mid-fifteenth century until the early sixteenth century, another important market for Florentine woolen cloth was the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Mehmed II invited Florentine merchants to the Ottoman realm and granted them privileges to conduct their trade there. Moreover, as already noted in Chapter I, certain political collaborations between the two states during this period gave the Florentine merchant community an advantageous position in the Ottoman Empire, at the expense of the Venetians. Woolens from Florence soon dominated the Ottoman market, bringing considerable profit to the Florentines. In 1469 there were around fifty Florentine merchants residing permanently in Istanbul, Bursa (including the Guanti family), and Edirne, important Ottoman cities of the

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<sup>577</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 176.

<sup>578</sup> John Munro, "Medieval Woollens: Textiles, Textile Technology and Industrial Organization, c. 800-1500," in *Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, ed. David Jenkins, vol. I (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003) pp. 262-264.

<sup>579</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 39.

<sup>580</sup> In fact, Venetian merchants were quite active in importing large amounts of Florentine woolen cloth to Syria and Egypt during the fifteenth century. Ashtor, "The Venetian Supremacy in Levantine Trade," pp. 46-47; Ugo Tucci, "Venezia nel Cinquecento: Una città industrial?" p. 69.

time.<sup>581</sup> In his chronicle, Florentine agent Benedetto Dei elaborated on the Florentines' position in the Ottoman Empire, emphasizing their superiority over the Genoese and the Venetians:

We have two trades greater than any four of yours in Venice put together—the trades of wool and silk. Look at the Roman court and that of King of Naples, the Marches and Sicily, Constantinople, Rhodes, Chios, Pera, Bursa, Gallipoli, Salonika, Adrianople, and other places where, to your spite, scorn, and disgrace, Florentines send their cloth, and in all of those places there are Florentine banks, houses, merchants, consuls, and churches. We have produced and always continue to produce more silk cloth and gold brocade than the amount your city Venice, Genoa, and Lucca produce together.<sup>582</sup>

Dei's remarks concerning the Florentines' extensive mercantile activities in the Ottoman lands were hardly an overstatement. By the early sixteenth century, sixty or more Florentine firms had agents operating in Istanbul; their trade volume was valued at 600,000 ducats per year.<sup>583</sup> The letters of Giovanni di Francesco Maringhi present details concerning the mercantile structure and networks of the Florentines in the Ottoman realm.<sup>584</sup> In return for their woolen and silk cloth, Florentine merchants bought precious stones, spices, carpets, camlets, raw silk, cotton, leather, and some other materials necessary for the textile industry, such as dyes.<sup>585</sup> For instance, according to data given by Giovanni Salviati's firm in Istanbul for the period between 1491 and 1494, raw silk had the largest share (81.3%) among the import commodities, followed by pepper (8.41%) and leather goods (5.51%). Among the export goods, woolen cloth predominated (85.24%), with soap coming next (14.17%).<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> Benedetto Dei provides a list of these merchants. See G.F. Pagnini, *Della Decima e delle altre gravezze della moneta e della mercatura de' Fiorentini fino al Secolo XVI, Parte Terza: Della Mercatura de' Fiorentini*, Tomo II (1765) p. 303; Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 184.

<sup>582</sup> Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica*, pp. 133-134: "Abiano dua artti più magnie e più degnie che non à la vostra città di Vinegia, per ognun quarto; e questo si è la lana e i drappi, e si ène testimone la chorte romana e la chorte de rre di Napoli e la Marcha e la Cicilia e Ghostantinopoli e Rodi e Scio e Pera e Brusa e Ghalipoli, Sallonicchi e Andrinopoli e altri luoghi, là dove Fiorentini mandano e panni, e là dove sono banchi e chase e fondachi e merchant e chonsoli e chiese de' Fiorentini al vostro dispetto e vilipendio e onta. E drappi di seta e brochati d'oro e chanpi d'argiento e d'ogn'altra ragione noi ne faciano e abiano fatto e ffareno senpre più assai che lla città vostra, città di Vinegia, e Gienova e Luccha insieme."

<sup>583</sup> Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto (MCCCCXCVI–MDXXXIII) dall'autografo Marciano ital. cl. VII codd. CDXIX–CDLXXVII*, vol. 7 (1 Marzo MDVII–XXVIII Febbraio MDVIII), ed. by Rinaldo Fulin, Federico Stefani, Niccolò Barozzi, Guglielmo Berchet, Marco Allegri (Venice: F. Visentini, 1882), p. 19; Wilhem Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen-Âge*, vol. II, p. 344; İnalçık, "Ottoman Galata, 1453-1553," p. 319.

<sup>584</sup> Richards, *Florentine Merchants in the Age of the Medici*, p. 51.

<sup>585</sup> Benedetto Dei provides a detailed list of the commodities bought by Florentine merchants in the Ottoman lands in *La Cronica*, p. 141.

<sup>586</sup> Angela Orlandi, "Oro e Monete da Costantinopoli a Firenze in alcuni documenti toscani (secoli XV–XVI)" in *Relazioni Economiche tra Europa e Mondo Islamico secc. XIII–XVIII, Atti della Trentottesima Settimana di Studi, 1-5 Maggio*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi, vol. II (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2007) p. 983.

Two types of woolen cloth were produced by the *Arte della Lana*. The first was San Martino cloth, made of high-quality English wool<sup>587</sup>; the second was Garbo cloth, a medium-quality fabric made of wool supplied from North Africa, Spain, and southern Italy.<sup>588</sup> As most of the Garbo cloth was sold in the Levantine market, it was also known as *panni di Levante*.<sup>589</sup> According to Benedetto Dei, during the period 1470-1473, around 7,500-8,000 bolts of woolen cloth were exported to the Levant annually,<sup>590</sup> which was half the amount of Garbo cloth produced in Florence.<sup>591</sup> This cloth, referred to as *filordin çuhası* in Ottoman documents, was mainly used for the uniforms of the janissaries, professional infantrymen in the service of the sultan.<sup>592</sup> Although there were fluctuations in the amount of exports during the late fifteenth century, there was a steady demand for the Florentine cloth in the Ottoman market, so much so that when Lorenzo de' Medici did not send a representative to renew the capitulations with the new sultan, Bayezid II, in 1481, the latter sent a letter to express his concern over the delay of Florentine galleys that carried goods for the Ottoman market. In 1483, he sent his envoy Ismail to Florence for the purpose of renewing the privileges and also ensured the *Signoria* of the export of 5,000 bolts of woolen cloth per year to the Ottoman market<sup>593</sup>; this was “close to one-third of the industry’s estimated total production at the time.”<sup>594</sup> Thus, during this period woolen cloth constituted the core of Florentine trade in the Levant, such that in 1487 the heads of the *Arte della Lana* declared that the Ottoman Empire was “the stomach of the

<sup>587</sup> The name came from the convent of San Martino in the center of Florence.

<sup>588</sup> The name Garbo derived from a place name in northwest Africa. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 273. Paolo Malanima, “An Example of Industrial Reconversion: Tuscany in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries,” in the *Rise and Fall of Urban Industries in Italy and in the Low Countries*, ed. Herman Van der Wee (Leuven: Leuven UP, 1988) pp. 64-65.

<sup>589</sup> Patrick Chorley, “Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry during the sixteenth century,” *The Journal of European Economic History*, 32, N. 3 (2003): 489.

<sup>590</sup> Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica*, pp 94-96.

<sup>591</sup> Patrick Chorley, “Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry,” p. 489.

<sup>592</sup> In the accounts books from the time of Sultan Bayezid II, there are references to Florentine woolen cloth as çuka-i filordin bought for janissaries between the years 1509 and 1513. The account book of janissary cloth in 916-917/ 1510-1511 is registered in Ali Emîrî, Bayezid II, N. 26 and published by Halil Sahillioğlu in “Yeniçeri Çuhası ve II. Bayezid’in Son Yıllarında Yeniçeri Çuha Muhasebesi,” *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, nos. 2-3 (1974): 424-464. The other account books are in the Kamil Kepeci collection n. 6590. They are discussed in detail by Özgür Kolçak in his master’s thesis “Osmanlılarda bir Küçük Sanayi Örneği: Selanik Çuha Dokumacılığı (1500-1650), [A Case Study of an Ottoman Small-Scale Industry: The Woolen Cloth Manufacture in Salonica],” Unpublished M.A. thesis (Istanbul: Istanbul University, 2005).

<sup>593</sup> H. Hoshino, “Il Commercio Fiorentino nell’Impero Ottomano: Costi e Profitti Negli Anni 1484-1488,” p. 81; Lorenzo Tanzini, “Il Magnifico e il Turco,” p. 280; Franco Franceschi, “Medici Economic Policy,” in *The Medici: Citizens and Masters*, eds. Robert Black and John E. Law (Florence: Villa I Tatti, 2015) p. 139.

<sup>594</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 185.

Florentine Garbo cloth.”<sup>595</sup> In addition to Garbo cloth, high-quality San Martino cloth was also consumed, though to a lesser extent, in the Ottoman market, especially for winter garments for members of the Ottoman court.<sup>596</sup>

Florentine merchants bought raw silk in Bursa, which was quite profitable and in high demand by the developing Florentine silk industry. Hoshino and Mazzaoui, who have studied the account books of the Guanti firm, found that Iranian raw silk was the main commodity bought by the Guanti firm in the Ottoman Empire, as this type of silk was used for the production of Florentine velvets and brocades.<sup>597</sup> In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Bursa was an important international market where European and Asian commodities were exchanged. Many Iranian merchants came to this city to sell raw silk from their native land. According to İnalçık, the Bursa silk market made its highest profits from raw silk between 1487 and 1512 as a result of increasing demand and the high prices offered by Florentine, Genoese, and Jewish merchants.<sup>598</sup>

The city had also been an important center for the manufacture of silk cloth since the early fifteenth century.<sup>599</sup> By the late fifteenth century there were over a thousand silk looms in operation in the city,<sup>600</sup> concerning which the Florentine traveller Bonsignore Bonsignori (who visited Bursa in 1498) noted that the amount of silk cloth and *drappi d'oro* produced in this city was said to be higher than the total produced in all of Italy.<sup>601</sup> Various types of silk fabrics were manufactured in Bursa under various names, depending on their weave and design. The major ones were velvets (*kadife*), brocades (*kemha*), and satins (*atlas*, *tafta*). Yet the records of the Palace Treasury from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries reveal that the Ottoman court also consumed a large quantity of

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<sup>595</sup> ASFi, *Arte della Lana* 62, cc. 12-13 (1487): “il Levante era in buona parte lo stomaco de’ nostri panni garbi.”

<sup>596</sup> H. Hoshino, *L’Arte della Lana in Firenze nel Basso Medioevo. Il Commercio della Lana e Il Mercato dei Panni Fiorentini nei secoli XIII-XV* (Firenze: Olschki, 1980) p. 244.

<sup>597</sup> H. Hoshino and Maureen F. Mazzaoui, “Ottoman Markets for Florentine Woolen cloth in the late Fifteenth century,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 3:2 (Winter 1985-1986) pp. 20-21.

<sup>598</sup> Halil İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 225. Also see Halil İnalçık, “XV. Asır Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihine Dair Vesikalar,” pp. 45-102.

<sup>599</sup> Concerning silk cloth manufacturing in Bursa, see Fahri Dalsar, *Türk Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihinde Bursa’da İpekçilik* (İstanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1960) pp. 21-85; Halil İnalçık, *Studies in the History of Textiles in Turkey* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2010) pp. 206-227; Nurhan Atasoy et al., *İPEK*, p. 160. Also for the organization and condition of silk cloth manufacturing in Bursa during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> c., see Özer Ergenç, *XVI. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Bursa* (Ankara: TTK, 2006) pp. 205-238.

<sup>600</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Kânünnâme-i ihtisâb-i Bursa,” *Tarih Vesikaları* II/7 (1942): 30.

<sup>601</sup> Eva Borsook, “The Travels of Bernardo Michelozzi and Bonsignore Bonsignori in the Levant (1497-98),” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 36 (1973): 163. “Et dicono vi si lavora più seta et drappi d’oro che non si lavorano in tutta Italia...”

Italian textiles, especially velvets.<sup>602</sup> Some of these silk fabrics, described as *Firengi* (Frankish), were undoubtedly of Florentine origin. Similar to what occurred in Bursa, the Florentine silk industry, which started to develop from the fourteenth century onward, increased its production during the fifteenth century. The Florentines produced in particular luxurious silk fabrics—velvets and brocades—to be exported to various markets in Europe and the Mediterranean, from England, France, and Spain to the Papal States and the Ottoman Empire. Benedetto Dei noted that among the variety of silk fabrics sold in the Ottoman capital were gold and silver brocades, damasks, velvets, and satins.<sup>603</sup>

The favorable position of the Florentines in the Ottoman Empire continued until the early sixteenth century. The prevailing view in the historiography is that Florentine trade in the Ottoman market began to decline from 1530 onward.<sup>604</sup> This decline has been attributed to various factors. One of the major reasons was the interruption in the importation of Persian silk as a result of the Ottoman–Persian wars in 1512-1520.<sup>605</sup> According to Ottoman *şeyhülislam* (chief religious authority) and historian Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi, Sultan Selim I banned trade activities of Persian merchants in Ottoman Empire on the grounds that they carried munitions, silver and iron to Persia. Thus, in conjunction with his campaign against Shah Ismail, he placed an embargo on all silk imports from Iran between 1514 and 1518. In order to stop this flow, he even banned trade with other Arabic lands and confiscated the commodities of Ottoman merchants who carried silk thread to Iran.<sup>606</sup> This prohibition negatively affected not only Persian

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<sup>602</sup> TSMA, D. 4; TSMA, D. 10026 cited from Nurhan Atasoy et al., *İPEK*, p. 161. Also see the list of local and foreign silk textiles between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Ottoman Empire: Dalsar, *Türk Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihinde Bursa'da İpekçilik*, pp. 77-85. Based on the evidence in Bursa *Şer'iyye Sicilleri*, Mustafa Akdağ also argued that Italian textiles (*Frenk kumaşları*) were highly demanded by Ottoman high officials, who annually paid a significant amount of money to these textiles in the late fifteenth century. Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiye'nin İktisadî ve İçtimai Tarihi* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010) p. 662.

<sup>603</sup> Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica*, p. 82.

<sup>604</sup> Richards, *Florentine merchants in the age of the Medicis*, p. 51; S. Camerani, "Contributo alla storia dei trattati commerciali fra la Toscana e i Turchi," pp. 83-101; R. A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 191.

<sup>605</sup> Bruno Dini, "Aspetti del Commercio di Esportazione dei Panni di Lana e dei Drappi di Seta Fiorentini in Costantinopoli negli anni 1522-1531," in *Saggi su una economia-mondo Firenze e l'Italia fra Mediterraneo ed Europa (secc. XIII-XVI)* (Pisa: Pacini, 1995), pp. 264-65; Patrick Chorley, "Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry," p. 491.

<sup>606</sup> Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi (1536-1599) wrote *Tâcü't-Tevârih*, a history of the Ottoman Empire from its foundation to the rule of Sultan Süleyman. In this work, Sâdeddin provided a detailed narrative of Sultan Selim's expedition to Iran and mentioned the strict regulations and bans regarding trade with Iran. Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi, *Tâcü't-Tevârih*, vol. IV, ed. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1999), pp. 214-216. See also Kemal Paşazâde, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman, X. Defter*, pp. 40-44. Kemal Paşazâde also noted that when Süleyman replaced his father as sultan, he removed this ban and compensated the silk merchants for the loss of their commodities.

and Ottoman silk merchants, but also Italian merchants, specifically the Florentines, who were deprived of the raw silk necessary for their silk-weaving industry.<sup>607</sup>

As a result of these restrictions, Bursa was gradually replaced by Aleppo, which became the main entrepôt of the Persian silk trade in the sixteenth century. The silk caravans came to Aleppo from Iran through the Tabriz-Van-Bitlis-Diyarbakir-Birecik route. Both the control of these trade routes and the Aleppo market were taken over by the Ottomans after the Ottoman–Mamluk war in 1516-17.<sup>608</sup> In the long run, this shift in the trade axis proved profitable primarily for the Venetians, as they transferred their consul in Syria from Tripoli to Aleppo as early as 1548.<sup>609</sup> In addition to raw silk and cotton, they also had easy access to pepper and other spices coming from the East Indies through the Persian Gulf to Aleppo’s markets.<sup>610</sup> In return, Venetian merchants exported woolen fabrics, silk cloth, and other Western products.<sup>611</sup> As the Florentines’ trade in the Ottoman Empire remained limited to the cities of Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne, this change negatively affected their commercial interests.<sup>612</sup>

While the problem of accessibility to Persian raw silk was an important factor in the decline of Florentine trade in the Ottoman market in the early sixteenth century, the evidence from Florentine firms acting in the Ottoman Empire indicates that its impact was not, in fact, so immediate and destructive for Florentine merchants, who found a better way to make profits during this period. According to Angela Orlandi, between 1510 and 1550 a great part of the exchange trade began to be conducted in cash or bullion, which resulted in a substantial flow of gold to Florence. Florentine merchants performed their

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<sup>607</sup> This prohibition also significantly affected the revenue from tax-farm system (mukâta‘a), which dropped from 7.350.000 akçe in 1512 to 2.100.000 akçe in 1521. See Halil İnalcık, “Harir,” *EF<sup>2</sup> (New Edition)*, vol. 3, p. 213; Özer Ergenç, *XVI. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Bursa*, p. 226.

<sup>608</sup> İnalcık, “The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspects of the Ottoman Economy,” p. 211.

<sup>609</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>610</sup> Bruce Masters, “Aleppo: the Ottoman Empire’s Caravan City,” in *the Ottoman City between East and West, Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul*, eds. E. Eldem, D. Goffman and B. Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) p. 26.

<sup>611</sup> Luciano Pezzolo, “The Venetian Economy,” p. 265; Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 60-64; Bruce Masters, “Aleppo: the Ottoman Empire’s Caravan City,” p. 27: Especially from the second half of the sixteenth century, there was a growing demand for raw silk in Europe, which made Aleppo an attractive place for the European silk trade. Therefore, besides the Venetians, the French also established consular representation in the city in 1557, in which they were followed by the English in 1581 and the Dutch in 1613. Although the Medici grand dukes made a specific request to obtain ready access to the ports of Syria as well as Aleppo, the Florentines were unable to establish a presence in the area because diplomatic negotiations proved to be fruitless. As a consequence, in the early seventeenth century Grand Duke Ferdinando I de’ Medici decided to take the part of the local rulers (such as the Kurdish chieftain Ali Canboladoğlu) and supported their rebellion against Ottoman sovereignty with the intention of gaining a share in the silk and wool trade in the region. For more details, see below, pp. 247-248.

<sup>612</sup> Patrick Chorley, “Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry,” p. 491.

exchanges in gold coins—*seraffi*,<sup>613</sup> *verghe d'oro*, or *monili*—as these were the only items valuable enough to replace raw silk.<sup>614</sup> During this period, gold coins were used mostly by merchants to make large payments in the course of domestic or international trade. Moreover, they were used almost interchangeably with ducats.<sup>615</sup> Thus, as the equivalent of raw silk, such gold coins and bullion brought profit to the Florentines, as the balance was mostly in their favor. It has been stated that during the years 1498 to 1540, there were around thirty Florentine merchants trading between Florence and the Ottoman Empire, most of whom returned to Florence with cash and precious metals.<sup>616</sup> Although this favorable situation seems to have been interrupted in 1525 by a decree of Sultan Süleyman, which stated that anyone who exported any form of gold or silver from the empire would be punished severely,<sup>617</sup> the evidence from the account books of Florentine firms in the Ottoman Empire demonstrates that some Florentine merchants continued their trade in cash and gold coins even after this restriction.<sup>618</sup> Moreover, in 1527 Sultan Süleyman renewed the privileges granted to the Florentines by his predecessors Bayezid II and Selim I.<sup>619</sup> Thus, although it can be argued that the changing conditions and certain restrictions to which the Florentine merchants were subject in the Ottoman Empire

<sup>613</sup> Egyptian *ashrafi* or *esrefiye* were gold coins minted by the Mamluks in the early fifteenth century and widely used in Egypt. They were among the most important foreign gold coins in circulation in the Ottoman lands during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In addition, Ottoman *sultani* (also gold coins) were prominent in the early sixteenth century and commonly used in international trade. Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) pp. 60-65.

<sup>614</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 184; Angela Orlandi, “Oro e Monete da Costantinopoli a Firenze,” pp. 986-989.

<sup>615</sup> Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>616</sup> Angela Orlandi, “Oro e Monete da Costantinopoli a Firenze,” pp. 991-92.

<sup>617</sup> Bruno Dini, “Aspetti del Commercio di Esportazione dei Panni di Lana,” p. 266. For this decree of Süleyman, see Bursa Şeriyeye Sicilleri A. 35/35, Vr. 394b (3 Recep 931/26 April 1525): Bursa Kadısı Mevlânâ Davud’a ve Hüdavendigâr Sancağı kadılarına malûm ola ki: “Hâliyâ sūdde-i saadetime şöyle ilam olundu ki, hariç vilayetten gelüp ticaret eden frenk ve sair kâfir tacirleri meta getürüp, satup gerü vilâyetlerine avdet edüp gider olduklarında veya memâlik-i mahrusem tâcirlerinden birisi frenk vilâyetine veya âhar hariç vilâyete gitmek istediklerinde ol diyara lâzım ve münasip olan metayı almayup hemen nakit akçe ve altun ve gümüş avansın alup giderler imiş. İmdi bu babda emrim şöyle sâdır oldu ki, hükm-i şerifim vusul bulduğu gibi bir saat tehir eylemeyüp hemen zikrolan hususu nidâ-i âm ile çağırıp gereği gibi tenbih ve tekid eyliyesiz...Emrim üzere kazanızda olan mevazie gerü yasak ve tehdid olunduktan sonra memnu olunmayup elinde Diyarbekir akçesi bulunup anun ile satı-pazar eder ise elinde bulunan Diyarbekir akçesini alup hassa-i hümâyûnum için girift ettikten sonra evvel mecal vermeyüp salbedüp cezasını ve sezasını veresiz ki ta minbaad bir kimesne hilaf-ı emr Diyarbekir akçesiyle muamelet ihtimali olmuya...” Cited from Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiye'nin İktisadî ve İçtimai Tarihi*, pp. 637-638 fn. 10.

<sup>618</sup> Orlandi provides statistical information from Bernardo di Bindo dei Bardi, who served in Adrianople and Pera (1527-1529) and (1532-1533), and Filippo di Niccolò Capponi and Giovanni di Niccolò Biffoli (1530-1539) in “Oro e Monete da Costantinopoli a Firenze in alcuni documenti toscani,” pp. 1002-1004.

<sup>619</sup> As mentioned in Chapter I, the Turkish copy of this *ahidname* is recorded in Feridun Bey's *Mecmûa-i Münşeâtü's-Selâtîn*, vol. II (Istanbul, 1265), p. 395. Also see M. Grignaschi “Una Raccolta inedita di ‘Münşeât’: il Ms. Veliyüddin Ef. 1970 della Biblioteca Beyazit Umumi di Istanbul e gli ‘Ahdname’ concessi dalla Sublime Porta a Chio (Muharrem 927 h), a Firenze (Muharrem 934) e ad Antivari (Ramadan 983)” p. 107, which provides both the Ottoman and Italian versions of 1527 *ahidname*. An English translation of the document is provided in İnalçık, “Ottoman Galata,” pp. 320-22.

certainly affected their trade volume and activities in the Levant, there seem to have been other forceful factors as well that accelerated the decline of Florentine trade in the Eastern Mediterranean.

One of these was constituted by the internal crisis and political turmoil that the Florentine state was experiencing during this period. According to Richard Goldthwaite, “the struggle for survival of the Last Republic from 1527 to 1530” affected Florentine trade with the Ottoman Empire to such an extent that it could not recover its previous profitability. It was not only the specific effect of the circumstances surrounding the Siege of Florence (1529-1530), but also the significant changes in the political and economic conditions of the era that led to an irreversible decline.<sup>620</sup> The scarcity of raw materials, a decrease in the labor force as a result of the plague, and demands for higher wages led to a serious crisis in the Florentine textile industry.<sup>621</sup> In fact, this situation was not peculiar to Florence. The wars, internal conflicts, and foreign occupation that were experienced almost all over Italy brought textile production to a low ebb in the whole of Italy except Venice, which thus found the perfect opportunity to develop its own textile industry and fill the gap resulting from the decreased presence of other Italian cities in the Levantine trade during this period.<sup>622</sup> In the 1520s, the Florentine woolen industry produced approximately 20,000 bolts of cloth, of which 4,000-5,000 bolts were of the San Martino type. According to the evidence, Florentine production was unable to reach similar levels again until the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>623</sup> The volume of Florentine trade in the Ottoman Empire fell to such an extent that by the 1540s, the Florentine bailo was barely able to pay wages and meet consular expenses, so significantly had the special tax (*cottimo*) he received from the merchants diminished.<sup>624</sup>

In his report, Jacopo Mormorai noted that following the Venetian–Ottoman peace in 1540, the Venetians established good relations with the Sublime Porte and displaced the Florentines in the export of woolen cloth. However, evidence from the Venetian side demonstrates that Venice’s woolen cloth production reached a level of only 20,000 bolts

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<sup>620</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 191.

<sup>621</sup> Bruno Dini, “Aspetti del Commercio di Esportazione dei Panni di Lana,” pp. 269-270; Patrick Chorley, “The Volume of Cloth Production in Florence 1500-1650: An Assessment of the Evidence,” in *Wool: Products and Markets (13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c.)* ed. Giovanni Luigi Fontana and Gerard Gayot (Padova: CLEUP, 2004) p. 553.

<sup>622</sup> Domenico Sella, “The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry,” in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Brian Pullan (London: Methuen, 1968) pp. 113-115.

<sup>623</sup> Bruno Dini, “Aspetti del Commercio di Esportazione dei Panni di Lana,” pp. 231-32.

<sup>624</sup> Gino Masi, *Statuti delle Colonie Fiorentine all’Estero*, p. 150.



in the 1560s,<sup>625</sup> meaning that Venetian penetration of the Ottoman market was not that immediate. Benjamin Braude has also stated that until the middle of the sixteenth century, the presence of Italian woolen cloth remained limited and the Venetians only appeared later, in the 1560s.<sup>626</sup> Thus, until their arrival, the market was largely under the domination of Salonican manufacturers, who took over a large portion of the Florentines' market share in the Ottoman Empire beginning in the early part of the sixteenth century.

Salonica and its surroundings were one of the main centers for the manufacture of woolen cloth, especially the type known as *çuha* or *çuka* (i.e., broadcloth), made from Balkan raw wool. This type of cloth was used for both military and civilian garments. Although woolen cloth production had been a significant economic activity in Salonica since early Ottoman times,<sup>627</sup> it increased, especially upon the arrival of the Jews who had been expelled from Spain, Portugal, and Italy, at the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>628</sup> It is argued that this was one of the motives behind Sultan Bayezid II's decision to allow these Sephardic Jews to come and settle in Salonica.<sup>629</sup> Through the technology that they brought with them, they gave an impetus to woolen cloth production and formed the core of the expanded woolen cloth industry that developed in the city. Halil Sahillioğlu, who has studied Ottoman account books detailing the purchase of woolen cloth by the Ottoman administration, demonstrates that a significant portion of the woolen cloth bought between 1509 and 1513 came from Salonican manufacturers.<sup>630</sup> In fact, the Ottoman state annually distributed cloth for winter garments (*zemistâni*), sourced in large part from Salonica, to its military corps, janissaries, and some court officials,<sup>631</sup> thereby supporting local production due to concern over excessive quantities of imports.

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<sup>625</sup> Domenico Sella, "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry," pp. 109-110.

<sup>626</sup> Benjamin Braude, "International Competition and Domestic Cloth in the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1650: A Study in Undevelopment," *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center) vol. 2:3 (Winter, 1979) p. 438.

<sup>627</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları*, vol. I (Ankara: TTK, 1943) p. 273. According to Uzunçarşılı, uniforms for the janissary corps had been produced in Salonica since the first half of the fifteenth century.

<sup>628</sup> Benjamin Braude, "The Rise and Fall of Salonica Woollens, 1500-1650: Technology Transfer and Western Competition," *Mediterranean Historical Review: Special Issue on Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492*, vol. 6:2 (December 1991) p. 218-19.

<sup>629</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Labor Recruitment and Control in the Ottoman Empire (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> c.) in *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950*, ed. Donald Quartaert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) p. 30.

<sup>630</sup> Halil Sahillioğlu, "Yeniçeri Çuhası ve II. Bayezid'in Son Yıllarında Yeniçeri Çuha Muhasebesi," p. 431. According to the data in these account books from Sultan Bayezid II's reign, in the years 1509-10 the Ottoman state purchased 95,066 *zirâ* (an Ottoman unit of measure) of Salonican cloth; in contrast, it purchased only 1,476 *zirâ filordin çuhası* (Florentine woolen cloth). While the amount of Salonican woolen cloth purchased by the state gradually increased until 1513, the amount of Florentine woolen cloth purchased remained static.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

According to evidence in the Ottoman archival documents, the average price the Ottoman administration paid for Salonican woolen cloth between 1509 and 1519 was around 13.5-16.5 *akçe* per bolt, while the price for *Filordin çuha* (i.e., Florentine woolen cloth) was approximately 45-48 *akçe*.<sup>632</sup> It can thus be seen that purchasing Salonican woolen cloth proved quite cost effective for the Ottoman state. In return, local producers were provided with the privilege of buying Balkan raw wool at lower prices without having to compete with foreign buyers.<sup>633</sup> Salonican Jews produced around 40,000 bolts of woolen cloth per year in the early sixteenth century, making them one of the major woolen cloth producers in the Mediterranean.<sup>634</sup>

Besides *çuha*, a variety of other woolen fabrics were produced in Salonica. These included *velençe* cloth, the name of which was presumably derived from Valencia in Spain. It was a low-cost textile made of rough wool, used mainly for rugs, blankets, and raincoats.<sup>635</sup> Another type was kersey, a lighter-weight, high-quality fabric similar to English broadcloth, and basically an imitation of the cloth produced in the north and western parts of England.<sup>636</sup> Also produced in Salonica was *sobraman*, a fabric of higher quality than *çuha*, and more expensive. The name *sobraman* (or *sopramanni*) originally came from the *sobremanos* wool of Spain.<sup>637</sup> This fabric was a type of Garbo cloth made of Spanish wool; in the 1490s the Florentines had introduced a special type of *sopramanni* to the Ottoman market, which was made of wool from Abruzzo in Italy.<sup>638</sup> Salonican manufacturers appear to have imitated the Florentine type of *sopramanni*. Although Florentine *sopramanni* continued to be consumed by the Ottomans until the 1550s,<sup>639</sup> from the second half of the sixteenth century they were replaced by Salonican *sobraman*,

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<sup>632</sup> Özgür Kolçak, "Osmanlılarda bir Küçük Sanayi Örneği: Selanik Çuha Dokumacılığı (1500-1650), [A Case Study of an Ottoman Small-Scale Industry: The Woolen Cloth Manufacture in Salonica]," pp. 46-47.

<sup>633</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Labor Recruitment and Control in the Ottoman Empire (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> c.)," p. 30.

<sup>634</sup> Braude, "The Rise and Fall of Salonica Woollens, 1500-1650," p. 220.

<sup>635</sup> Eleni Gara, "Çuha for the Janissaries – Velençe for the Poor: Competition for Raw Material and Workforce between Salonica and Veria, 1600-1650," in *Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Randi Deguilhem (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005) pp. 122-123; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Artisans of Empire. Crafts and Craftspeople under the Ottomans* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009) pp. 49-50.

<sup>636</sup> Özgür Kolçak, "Selanik Yünlü Dokumacılığının Tarihsel Gelişimi (1500-1620): Yeni Bulgular Işığında Genel Bir Değerlendirme," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/ Journal of Ottoman Studies*, XXXI (2008) p. 107.

<sup>637</sup> Gilles Veinstein, "Sur la draperie juive de Salonique (XVIe-XVIIe s.)," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 66 (1992): 58-59.

<sup>638</sup> H. Hoshino, "Il Commercio Fiorentino nell'Impero Ottomano: Costi e Profitti Negli Anni 1484-1488," p. 83; James Tracy, "The grand vezir and the small republic: Dubrovnik and Rüstem Paşa, 1544-1561," *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010): 211.

<sup>639</sup> James Tracy has demonstrated that in order to obtain and maintain their commercial privileges, Ragusan merchants paid tribute to the Ottoman court, specifically to the grand vizier of the time, Rüstem Pasha, consisting of large quantities of Venetian silks, fine woollens, and Florentine *sopramanni*. "The grand vezir and the small republic," pp. 208-212.

which the Ottoman court began to purchase on a regular basis.<sup>640</sup> Thus, Salonican manufacturers produced not only woolen cloth for the army, but also both low- and high-quality woolens for the general market.

However, as the number of janissaries increased during the sixteenth century, the demand for military clothing similarly increased. Delivery of cloth to the Janissary corps became a “compulsory service” for the Jewish community of Salonica, which was responsible for providing the required quantity and quality of cloth at a stated time according to the needs of the janissaries.<sup>641</sup> This resulted in certain restrictions being imposed on the manufacturers by the Ottoman administration. An Ottoman document from 1574 shows that the Ottoman state gave the Salonican manufacturers strict orders not to produce *sobraman* cloth, kerseys, or *velençe* before the *çuha* for the military corps was ready, with production of the latter to be their priority.<sup>642</sup> These kinds of limitations imposed by the state usually put the Ottoman manufacturers at a disadvantage in competing with the European merchants in the free market.

During the 1530s Florentine manufacturers were still producing woolen cloth for the Levantine market; however, there was a striking decline in the direct export of these woolens to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>643</sup> Instead of conducting trade through agents in the Ottoman cities, the Florentine merchants were now selling their woolen cloth to Ragusan and Ottoman merchants in Ancona, which had already in the early sixteenth century become the main port for Florentine trade with the East. Formerly, Florentine merchants had transported their commodities to the Ottoman market by sea from Pisa or Leghorn to Chios and from there by caravan to Bursa and Istanbul. However, increasing piracy at sea and the inefficiency of the Florentine galley system forced the Florentines to look for much safer trade routes. From the 1480s, Ancona became an alternative transit trade center for the Florentines, who brought their commodities to the city overland.<sup>644</sup> It was conveniently located on the Adriatic coast opposite Dubrovnik (Ragusa), which put it in a

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<sup>640</sup> Özgür Kolçak, “Selanik Yünlü Dokumacılığının Tarihsel Gelişimi,” p. 109.

<sup>641</sup> Eleni Gara, “Çuha for the Janissaries – Velençe for the Poor,” pp. 124-125.

<sup>642</sup> Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Maliyeden Müdevver 20 111, Ahkâm-ı Maliyye s. 17, cited from Halil Sahillioğlu, “Yeniçeri Çuhası ve II. Bayezid’in Son Yıllarında Yeniçeri Çuha Muhasebesi,” pp. 422-23.

<sup>643</sup> Raymond de Roover, “A Florentine Firm of Cloth Manufacturers,” *Speculum* 16/1 (1941): 19. Examining the account books of the Medici firm from 1531, de Roover has argued that for reasons of security and efficiency, the Florentine merchants stopped engaging in the direct export trade to the Ottoman lands.

<sup>644</sup> Peter Earle, “The Commercial Development of Ancona, 1479-1551,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, vol. 22:1 (1969): 34-35; M. Mallett, *The Florentine Galleys in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 145-152; Cemal Kafadar, “A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima,” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 10 (1986): 195; İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 241-243.

more advantageous position than Venice for trade with the Balkans.<sup>645</sup> From Ancona, Florentine merchants made a short voyage across the Adriatic Sea to Dubrovnik or Vlorë (Avlona) and then took the land route through the Balkans to Istanbul.<sup>646</sup> The Ottoman administration made great efforts to keep the overland trade routes in the Balkan Peninsula secure; moreover, the *ahidname* granted in 1500 shows that it even gave the Florentines a guarantee of protection against Venetian and Genoese pirates on the Adriatic Sea.<sup>647</sup> In addition to the existence of relatively secure land routes, the settlement in the Balkans of Sephardic Jews escaping from Iberian Peninsula was another factor promoting the emergence of new commercial networks and economic revival in the region.<sup>648</sup>

In the early sixteenth century, the commercial hegemony of the Venetians, Genoese, and the Florentines in the Ottoman market was broken by “Greeks, Turks, renegade Christians, Armenians, Ragusans, and Jews,” with the support of the Ottoman state. According to Traian Stoianovich, the Ottoman administration did not want to leave “the provisioning of the capital and supplying of the army and navy to remain in the hands of foreign merchants with whose governments it might one day find itself at war.”<sup>649</sup> And Ottoman merchants not only replaced Italians in the domestic market; they also actively traded in Italy. Jewish merchants, in particular, dominated the woolen cloth trade as well as the supply of raw and finished materials necessary for the textile industry.<sup>650</sup> It can be said that the decline of Florentine merchants in the Ottoman Empire was directly proportionate to the rise of Ottoman merchants, who were granted certain privileges to conduct trade in certain Italian cities.

Ancona took the lead among these cities, granting customs duty reductions to Greek merchants from Ioannina, Larissa, and Arta in Ottoman Thessaly in 1514. Soon these privileges were extended to all Ottoman merchants who would in return direct their

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<sup>645</sup> Benjamin Ravid, “A Tale of Three Cities and their *Raison d’Etat*: Ancona, Venice, Livorno, and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century,” *Mediterranean Historical Review, Special Issue on Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492*, ed. Alisa Meyuhas Ginio, vol. 6 no. 2 (December, 1991): 140.

<sup>646</sup> İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History*, p. 242.

<sup>647</sup> ASFİ, MM 173/10, c. 1v: “Volendo li mercatanti loro andar dala Velona et entrando nella Fusta et passando dalla banda di là o Venitiani o Genovesi o qualunche altra natione gli offendessi, trovandosi al paese mio, quelle tal persone possino esser constrette a satisfare.”

<sup>648</sup> Cemal Kafadar, “A Death in Venice (1575),” p. 195.

<sup>649</sup> Traian Stoianovich, “The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 20, n. 2 (1960): 239-240.

<sup>650</sup> Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean*, pp. 18-19; İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 262-263; F. W. Carter, “The Commerce of the Dubrovnik Republic, 1500-1700,” *The Economic History Review* 24, No. 3 (1971): 370-394.

trade primarily to Ancona. In 1518, they were granted more comprehensive rights and privileges.<sup>651</sup> The main commodities brought by the Ottoman merchants to Ancona were camlet, raw silk, wool, leather, dyes, spices, and carpets; in return they bought Florentine woolen cloth as well as silk cloth, velvets, and jewelry. Besides Florentine cloth, English and Flemish woolen cloth was sold in the Anconitan market.<sup>652</sup> The privileges granted to the Ottoman merchants were also maintained after the city came under the control of the papacy. In 1534 Pope Paul III released a decree allowing all merchants from different nations and confessions to come with their families and commodities and trade in Ancona. He was followed by the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole II, who in 1538 similarly invited foreign merchants, including “all Spaniards and Portuguese, Levantines, Slavs, Dalmatians, Greeks, Turks and people of every other nation” to live and trade in his domains.<sup>653</sup>

In the 1540s competition among the Italian cities escalated even further, which resulted in “a full-blown customs war in which Venice was forced by its competitors to grant more and more concessions.”<sup>654</sup> After the Venetian–Ottoman war (1537-1540), the Venetians took steps to attract Levantine Jews to their city in order to revive its economy; for this purpose, in 1541 they provided privileges to Jewish subjects of the sultan enabling them to reside for a limited period of time in a segregated area in Venice and be exempt from customs duties for two years.<sup>655</sup> Following this, the Anconitans in 1544 released another decree granting exemption from customs duties and certain privileges regarding their dress and protection to the Ottoman Jews.<sup>656</sup> An invitation from the Florentine duke, Cosimo I, to Jews and other Ottoman merchants in 1551 should also be viewed in the context of this rivalry. In fact, the move was initiated by a private banker and advisor of

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<sup>651</sup> Bernard Dov Cooperman, “Venetian Policy Towards Levantine Jews in Its Broader Italian Context,” p. 71.

<sup>652</sup> Peter Earle, “The Commercial Development of Ancona, 1479-1551,” pp. 35-37.

<sup>653</sup> Benjamin Ravid, “A Tale of Three Cities and their *Raison d’Etat*,” pp. 142-144.

<sup>654</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 66.

<sup>655</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century, Ottoman merchants even had a community in Venice. Concerning the trade activities of the Ottoman merchants in Venice, see Şerafettin Turan, “Venedik’te Türk Ticaret Merkezi,” pp. 247-283; Giorgio Vercellin, “Mercanti Turchi e Sensali a Venezia,” *Studi Veneziani*, 4 (1980): 45-78; Cemal Kafadar, “A Death in Venice (1575),” pp. 191-218; Ennio Concina, *Fondaci, Architettura, arte e mercatura tra Levante, Venezia e Alemagna*, pp. 219-246; Eric Dursteler, “Commerce and Coexistence: Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Early Modern Era,” *Turcica*, 34 (2002): 105-133; Maria Pia Pedani, “Between Diplomacy and Trade: Ottoman Merchants in Venice,” in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Peeters, 2008) pp. 3-21; Stephen Ortega, “Across Religious and Ethnic Boundaries: Ottoman Networks and Spaces in Early Modern Venice,” *Mediterranean Studies* 18 (2009): 66-89; idem., *Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Ottoman-Venetian Encounters* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>656</sup> Bernard Dov Cooperman, “Venetian Policy Towards Levantine Jews,” p. 72.

Cosimo, Jacob Abrabanel, and a Damascene Jew, Servadio, who requested that the duke establish a trading center in Florence for the Levantines. This served Cosimo's interests as well, for he wanted to revive the economy and attract Ottoman merchants from Venice to Florence. Like the Anconitans, he also granted residence permits, special privileges, and full protection to all "Turks, Greeks, Jews, and people of other nations living in the Ottoman lands to come with their merchandise to trade in the city of Florence."<sup>657</sup> Thus, in competition with Ancona and Venice, the Florentine duke aimed to make Tuscany a center of international trade. Although Cosimo's efforts did not result in any solid success at the time, his policy of endeavoring to attract Ottoman merchants to the Tuscan port of Livorno was maintained by the succeeding Medici rulers, and by the seventeenth century this port would become an important trade entrepôt between Northern Europe and the Levant.

After a period of stagnation, from the mid-sixteenth century onward there was again an upward trajectory in Florentine industry and trade, with exports to Spain in particular increasing significantly. Florentine merchants could transport their *drappi d'oro*, silk cloth, and various types of woolen cloth freely throughout the Spanish Empire; in return, they acquired cochineal,<sup>658</sup> raw wool, silk, pearls, and other precious stones. Cosimo's personal interest in crystals and precious stones led him to promote the production of luxury craftworks; he supported the glass, porcelain, and coral-cutting industries as well as the art of inlaid stonework (*pietre dure*).<sup>659</sup> Various merchants and artisans from Antwerp and other places came to Pisa and Florence to conduct their trade and develop these industries.<sup>660</sup>

Moreover, Cosimo I undertook initiatives to further develop the textile industry and invited specialists from Flanders. In the mid-sixteenth century the Florentines were able to reverse the fortunes of their woolen cloth industry. Between 1558 and 1561, the

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<sup>657</sup> ASFi, MM I, 126/19, fol. 21r: "Che tutti li Turchi, Greci, Hebrei et alter natione habitanti nel paese del turco possino con lor persone, mercantile et robe di qualunche' sorte si voglia et etian(?) gioie' et cavalli sempre liberamente per tutto il territorio di sua Eccellenzia et nella citta di Firenze..."

<sup>658</sup> This was a type of insect native to Mexico. The dried form of this insect was used in the textile industry to obtain a red color for cloth dyeing.

<sup>659</sup> J. Hale, *Florence and the Medici: the pattern of control* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977) p. 145-146; Richard Goldthwaite, "Artisans and the Economy in Sixteenth-Century Florence," in *the Medici, Michelangelo and the Art of Late Renaissance Florence* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002) pp. 85-92; Also in the same book, see Annamaria Giusti, "The Origins and Splendors of the Grand-Ducal Pietre-Dure Workshops," pp. 103-111.

<sup>660</sup> R. J. Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il Governo della Casa Medici*, Tomo I (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi Stampatore Granducale, 1781), p. 381.

industry underwent such a “sharp boom” that production doubled.<sup>661</sup> A report written to the grand duke in 1572 noted that the wars in Flanders and France and the disasters of the Spanish monarchy had seriously affected textile production in those places and, consequently, paved the way for Florentine textiles, making them indispensable in their markets.

In Florence the wool industry grew beyond expectations because it supplied the needs of France, Spain, and the colonies of America; to that purpose, in 1566 King Philip had allowed the free introduction of *Rascie Fiorentine* into the territories of the monarchy...Therefore, it is no surprise that for these reasons, each day the products of this *Arte* increased more, so that in 1561 there were produced in Florence 33,000 *panni*, and it continued to produce in the same quantities in the following years as well.<sup>662</sup>

The revival of the Florentine textile industry was related not only to the crises in other European countries, but also to the development of a new kind of drapery, the *rascia fiorentina* made of Castilian wool, for which there was a great demand in European markets, as it was more refined and lighter than the traditional broadcloth. Thus the Florentines, albeit temporarily, compensated for their decline in the Levant by their success in the Northern European and Spanish markets.<sup>663</sup> The dominance of Florentine *rascie* in the European markets did not last long, however, as by the third quarter of the sixteenth century Florentine trade in *rascie* had come to an end in Lyon, Antwerp and Spain as a result of competition from local producers, who began to produce imitations of Florentine *rascie*.<sup>664</sup> Moreover, changing tastes and fierce competition in the northwestern European market prompted producers to expand the variety of their products, introduce new types of cloth, and look for new markets. These new fabrics, which were lighter and cheaper, began to dominate the international market.<sup>665</sup>

The 1570s were the turning point marking the decline in the production of *rascie*. The loss of important European markets and the high price of Castilian wool were instrumental in this decline. During this period, *rascie* was replaced by *panni corsivi*, the

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<sup>661</sup> Patrick Chorley, “Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry,” p. 495.

<sup>662</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo II, p. 220: “In Firenze il lanificio era cresciuto oltre l’aspettativa perche suppliva ai bisogni della Francia, della Spagna e delle Colonie d’America; a tal effetto nel 1566 il Re Filippo avea concesso la libera introduzione delle Rascie Fiorentine nei parti della Monarchia...Non è maraviglia pertanto se per tali cause ogni giorno più crescevano i prodotti di questa Arte, poichè se nel 1561 si erano fabbricati in Firenze trentamilla panni si proseguì negli anni successivi a fabbricare l’istessa quantità.”

<sup>663</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 190.

<sup>664</sup> Patrick Chorley, “Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry,” pp. 505-508.

<sup>665</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 279-280.

basic traditional product of the Garbo branch of the industry.<sup>666</sup> Already in the 1550s the annual output of *panni corsivi* was around 17,000 pieces, and this had risen to approximately 33,000 pieces as of 1571. In a letter written to the grand duke by the *Arte della Lana*, it was reported that:

Last year [1570] there were produced around 28,492 pieces of San Martino and Garbo cloth, and this year were produced 33,212, reduced to *panni corsivi*; in this way, 4,720 more pieces of cloth were produced; considering that each was thirty ducats, the total was worth around a million gold ducats: preparations are underway to produce more this year than in the previous years, so that the wool producers can sell their cloth in Alexandria and other lands of the Turk, safe and secure.<sup>667</sup>

It is clear that already in 1570 Florentines were selling their woolens in the Ottoman market and due to the demand were planning to increase output in the following year. Encouraged by the possibility of restoring their trade interests in the Ottoman Empire and looking to compensate for losses in the European markets by concentrating on the Levant, the grand duchy geared up to reopen diplomatic negotiations with the Sublime Porte. The conditions in the Levant were also quite favorable for such an attempt. The War of Cyprus between Venice and the Ottoman Empire (1570-73) negatively affected Venetian exports to the Ottoman market. According to the statistics, there was a steep fall in the annual output of woolen cloth, from 26,541 pieces in 1569 to 13,686 in 1573.<sup>668</sup>

In fact, in the 1560s Venice's woolen cloth production had seen a striking expansion in connection with the city's industrial growth. The annual output of woolen cloth rose from about 2,000 pieces in the early 1500s to an approximate average of 20,000 pieces annually in the 1560s.<sup>669</sup> The periodic crises experienced by the Salonican manufacturers from the 1560s onward seem to have facilitated Venetian penetration of the Levantine market. Moreover, Venice became the main trade entrepôt for Ottoman merchants during this period, especially when Ancona lost its favored position. According to Kafadar, the trading activities of the Ottoman merchants in Ancona declined significantly in the 1560s due to the growing tension between the Ottoman administration

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<sup>666</sup> Patrick Chorley, "Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry," p. 515-516.

<sup>667</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo II, p. 221: "L'anno passato si lavorono fra in San Martino e Garbo panni 28,492 e questo se ne sono lavorati 33,212 ridotti a panni corsivi; in modo che si è lavorato più del passato 4,720, che ragionando ducati trenta il panno vagliono al circa di un milione d'oro: preparasi di lavorar questo anno più delli altri per avere i Lanaioli spacciato tutte le loro pannine, per essere Alessandria & alter terre del Turco libere e immune dai pericoli." (17 January 1571)

<sup>668</sup> Domenico Sella, "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry," p. 109.

<sup>669</sup> Richard T. Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth Century Venice* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1976) p. 7; Domenico Sella, "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry," pp. 109-110. Concerning the production volume of Venetian woolen cloth, statistics indicate that there was a sharp rise in its output, from 3,639 pieces in 1520 to 17,569 pieces in 1560.



and the papacy. The conflict between the two states was so great that in 1564 a sultanic decree stipulated that Ottoman merchants could trade only in Venice and Dubrovnik; they were not permitted to go to Ancona or anywhere else.<sup>670</sup> In the following period as well, due to frequent papal interdicts, Ancona was no longer an attractive, welcoming city for Ottoman merchants. This was one of the reasons why Venetian woollens replaced the *panni fiorentini*, almost monopolizing the Ottoman market, since they were easily accessible to Ottoman consumers. From the mid-sixteenth century to the outbreak of the Ottoman–Venetian war in 1570, the Venetians were the dominant exporters of woolen cloth to the Levantine market and they also imported the majority of the raw wool from the Ottoman market.

Salonican manufacturers thus had to face fierce competition from the Venetian producers, who had broken into the Ottoman market and were steadily increasing the price of raw wool in the market as a result of their growing demand for Balkan wool. The increasing price of raw wool, competition with European imports, and extraordinary taxes imposed on local producers led to a temporary decline in Salonican wool manufacturing in the 1560s and 1570s.<sup>671</sup> Moreover, producers experienced serious losses as a result of the plague (1577-78), which significantly impacted the labor force and increased costs. Above all, “administrative malpractice” had a negative effect on the Salonican manufacturers, as indicated by the fact that in 1572-73 the weavers made many complaints about the local officials, mainly concerning the large bribes demanded by corrupt officials before they would allow them to obtain the money sent from the Treasury for their production expenses. Bribery had also become a common practice in the course of these officials’ inspection of the cloth for purposes of quality control.<sup>672</sup>

The problems that the Salonican manufacturers faced and the drastic decline in the Venetians’ trade volume as a result of the War of Cyprus paved the way for the Florentines to negotiate with the Ottoman administration in order to obtain privileges to trade in the Ottoman lands. Moreover, the latter had already received the necessary support from some Ottoman officials and merchants, who promised to further Florentine

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<sup>670</sup> Cemal Kafadar, “A Death in Venice (1575),” p. 198.

<sup>671</sup> Feridun Emecen, “From Selanik to Manisa: Some Information about the Immigration of the Jewish Weavers,” in *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule 1380-1699. Halycon Days in Crete II: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 9-11 January 1994*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymno: Crete UP, 1997) p. 99. pp. 99-100.

<sup>672</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, “Textile Production in Rumelia and the Arab Provinces: Geographical Distribution and Internal Trade (1560-1650),” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/ Journal of Ottoman Studies* 1 (1980): 68-69.

interests in the Ottoman court at the expense of the Venetians.<sup>673</sup> In 1574, Ludovico Canacci, a representative chosen by the *Arte della Lana*, was sent to the Ottoman capital to conduct the negotiations. However, the activities of the galleys of St. Stephen and the grand duke's attitude concerning the galleys resulted in conflict with the Ottoman administration, and the expectations of the *Arte della Lana* came to naught.

In the meantime, the Venetians, having signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans, tried to improve their trade relations with the Sublime Porte. In 1574 there was a steep rise in the production of woolen cloth (from 13,686 pieces to 21,296 pieces) in Venice, which would continue in 1575 (25,501 pieces).<sup>674</sup> According to a report by the Florentine merchant Filippo Sassetti, written in 1577, the woolen fabrics that found favor in the Levant came mainly from the West; some were Florentine while the majority were Venetian.<sup>675</sup> Besides their availability, the Venetian woolens seem to have appealed to the taste of Ottoman consumers. The statistics provided by Rapp demonstrate that from the mid-sixteenth century onward, in addition to the traditional heavy fabrics made of high-quality wool, the Venetians also produced a new type of woolen cloth—lighter, medium-quality fabrics that imitated Flemish textiles and soon were in great demand in the Levantine market.<sup>676</sup> Seeing that Venetian woolens were very much favored by the Ottoman court, the Florentines brought woolens imitating the Venetian style of fabric to the Ottoman–Florentine diplomatic negotiations in 1578. The Florentine ambassadorial retinue presented these Venetian-style woolen fabrics, along with Florentine silk fabrics to the Ottoman court, where they were very much appreciated by the sultan and the viziers.

The main goal for the Florentines was to gain a place in the Ottoman market at all costs and challenge the Venetian presence. Venetian *bailo* Nicolò Barbarigo initially

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<sup>673</sup> Among these Ottomans were the dragoman Mahmud Bey, the dragoman Hasan Bey, and the court merchant Hacı Mustafa. Their role in the negotiations is discussed in detail in Chapter V.

<sup>674</sup> Domenico Sella, "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry," p. 109.

<sup>675</sup> Filippo Sassetti, "Ragionamento sul commercio ordinate dal granduca fra i sudditi suoi e le nazioni Levante (1577)," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, App. IX (1853): 178: "Le pannine delle quali è fanno stima, sono la maggior parte di Ponente, qualcuna di Fiorenza e molte delle Veneziane."

<sup>676</sup> Richard T. Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, p. 158: While between 1550 and 1559, 3,048 bolts of high-quality cloth and 10,119 bolts of intermediate-quality cloth were produced, in the years 1579-1589, production was on the order of 1,099 bolts of high-quality cloth and 18,734 bolts of intermediate-quality cloth. On the introduction of medium quality fabrics, see: W. Panciera, "Qualità e costi di produzione nei lanafici veneti (secoli XVI-XVIII)," in *Wool: Products and Markets (13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c.)* ed. Giovanni Luigi Fontana and Gerard Gayot (Padova: CLEUP, 2004) p. 421; Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 87-88. Edoardo Demo, "Industry and Production in the Venetian Terraferma," in *A Companion to Venetian History 1400-1797*, ed. Eric Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013) p. 301.

underestimated the Florentine diplomatic effort. In his letter to the Senate, he evaluated it as hopeless:

The common opinion is that the Florentines cannot stay here for long as all trade is in the hands of the Jews, and they [Florentines] have seen all the others lament that they rarely recover the capital from the cloth they bring here.<sup>677</sup>

*Bailo* Barbarigo's negativity, however, soon gave way to anxiety. The favorable attitude of the Ottoman administration toward the Florentine ambassador Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi during his first audience and the appreciation of Florentine goods shown in the Ottoman capital aroused fear on the Venetian side. In his following letter, *Bailo* Barbarigo reported that Venetian woolens were already being compared with Florentine woolens, and that the Florentines had the best fabrics, with beautiful colors. He added, "[W]e may to a significant degree lose our reputation and the profits of these years here and, indeed, our merchants have already been discredited."<sup>678</sup>

The diplomatic negotiations between the Florentines and the Ottoman court were closely followed by the Venetian *bailo*, who reported everything to Venice in detail. Although there is no evidence concerning any direct interventions by the Venetians to disrupt the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations, they seem to have manipulated certain factions at the Ottoman court to the detriment of the Florentines. Moreover, the presence of the Order of St. Stephen in the Mediterranean and its activities there were direct threats to the Ottoman Empire. This contentious issue was thus also employed by the Venetians and other rivals in order to discredit the Florentines. In the end, as Mormorai noted in the report discussed above, the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations ended in failure for various reasons.

The important point about these negotiations is that they were strongly supported by the Florentine woolen cloth producers. From 1575 onward, the Florentine woolen industry began to decline, and thus for some Florentines it became vital to restart the Levant trade again. For this reason, even after the failure of the 1578 negotiations, Jacopo Mormorai, who had been part of the diplomatic legation as the future *bailo* of the Florentine community and who had been involved in the woolen cloth trade as an agent,

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<sup>677</sup> ASV, Senato, Dispacci, Costantinopoli (hereafter SDC) 12, fol. 135 v (4 July 1578): "Commun opinione è che non possano lungamente essi Fiorentini trattarsi qui essendo tutto il negotio in mano de Hebrei et vedendosi che tutti gl'altri si lamentano che delle robe, che conducono qui appena cavano il capitale."

<sup>678</sup> ASV, SDC 12, fol. 141r (6 July 1578): "[S]i habbia da perder grandemente in questo loco della riputazioni et dell'utile di questi anni; e veramente i nostril mercanti sono restati confuti." In his article, Sella also draws attention to these remarks; see "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry," p. 116.

strove hard to continue diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman court through his connections to the grand vizier and the latter's network. In his letter to the grand duke, Mormorai dwelled on this issue, emphasizing the importance of the Levantine market for the *Arte della Lana* and the advantages it would bring for the woolen cloth producers in Florence. His main argument was that the Venetians had lost ground in this market as a result of the War of Cyprus, so the Florentines should be able to benefit from this situation and turn the tide in their favor. According to Mormorai:

Yet the importance of this negotiation is as regards the woolen cloth, and Your Highness (V.A.S.) can be sure that if you had 300 pieces of woolen cloth of the highest quality made...the trade of Venice would be swept away and this would be transferred to Florence; 2,000 pieces or more could be sold annually. The most important thing is to get a good start...I assure You that one should address this as the most important negotiation of the current time and, with the occasion of war, it will remove almost the whole trade of Venice because, in fact, [Florentine] woolen cloth will be of a better type, more salable and at a better price.<sup>679</sup>

As can be seen from these remarks, Mormorai was quite sure that if the Florentines could obtain the desired trade privileges from the Ottoman administration, they would easily displace the Venetians in the Ottoman market, since they would introduce better quality woolen cloth at a lower price. Although Mormorai's comment on the Venetian position after the War of Cyprus takes a somewhat exaggerated view, his remarks concerning the favorable prospects for Florentine woolen cloth do not sound that unrealistic if we take into consideration the alarmed reaction of the Venetian *bailo* to the news that Florentine woolens were being well received in the Ottoman market, and that they significantly threatened the position of Venetian woolens in terms of quality and variety. However, Mormorai's effort did not bring about any results, as the commercial advantages it proffered did not overlap with the diplomatic and political concerns of the grand duchy. The grand duke declined to accept the condition stipulated by the grand vizier, whereby the Florentines would promise that the galleys of St. Stephen would not engage in corsairing activities targeting Ottoman ships and territories. At this time, the grand duke and the Florentine ambassador Bongianini Gianfigliuzzi were in fact conducting secret negotiations with a rival faction to the grand vizier at the Ottoman court, believing that

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<sup>679</sup> ASFi, Carte Stroziane (hereafter CS), Prima Serie, 32, fol. 187v (20 December 1578): "Ma l'importanza del negotio saria sulla pannina, et sia certa V.A.S. che s'ella facesse far fabricar pezze 300 di panni, che fussero optime...si leveria questo negotio di Venetia et si trasmutteria in Fiorenza col finirme l'anno pezze 2,000 e meglio, e tutto stà nel principio...Acertandola che s'invierà uno negotio importantissimo, di presente, et coll' occasione d'una guerra, si leveria quasi del tutto di Venetia, perch'in effetto li panni sariano di meglio sorta, meglio condotti et a miglior' pregi."

this approach would succeed in having the capitulations confirmed in the way that the grand duke desired. However, due to the intervention of the Venetians and the French, these negotiations also ended in failure, leaving the Florentines to turn back empty-handed.

In conclusion, tracing the story of the Florentine woolen cloth trade in the Ottoman Empire from the late fifteenth to the late sixteenth century has demonstrated that while in the beginning the Florentines had almost a monopoly over the Ottoman market, they lost their dominance as a result of internal and external factors and were in the sixteenth century replaced by the local Salonican woolen cloth manufacturers and the Venetians. In order to compensate for their losses in the Levant, the Florentines introduced a new type of woolen cloth and expanded into European markets. However, this venture did not last long, forcing the grand duchy, and specifically the *Arte della Lana*, to give up *rascie* for *panni corsivi* and consider reinvigorating the Levant trade. To this purpose, the Florentines entered diplomatic negotiations with the Sublime Porte; however, as a result of the clash of various individual and state interests, it did not produce any results.

At the end of the sixteenth century, during the rule of Ferdinando I de' Medici, the question of restoring diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire came to the fore again as a result of the serious decline in the Florentine woolen cloth industry. The motives that triggered the diplomatic negotiations of 1592 and 1598 will be discussed in the last part of this chapter. In the following section, the focus is on the political relations between the Medici dukes and the Sublime Porte. As has already been seen in the case of the 1578 negotiations, not only commercial concerns but political expediency as well determined and shaped the diplomatic relations between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire. An examination of the period's political events and the foreign policies of the Medici dukes from the time of Cosimo I to the end of the sixteenth century is particularly illuminating in terms of understanding the reasons for the grand duchy's changing relations with the Sublime Porte.

### **An Ambivalent Diplomacy between East and West**

After almost three decades of conflicts and internal crises in Florence, in 1537 Cosimo I de' Medici came to power with the support of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V and installed his family as hereditary rulers of Florence. He received the title of duke from

the emperor, as his vassal.<sup>680</sup> Moreover, upon the emperor's request, in 1539 he married Eleanor of Toledo, daughter of the viceroy of Naples. Not everyone was happy with these developments. Within the city, there was still a factional group of leading Florentine families who were disturbed by the ascendancy of the new duke and allied themselves with foreign powers such as France in order to resist Cosimo's authority. In such a tenuous environment, Cosimo had little choice but to rely on Charles V's backing. Thus, in its early stages, Cosimo's Florence was a Habsburg-oriented state, and the imperial hold over the city, as evidenced through the presence of Spanish troops in key fortresses, was very much felt.

It did not take long for the duke to turn the tide in his favor. By means of skillful diplomacy, Cosimo restored the independence of his territory as well as his authority over it in 1543. In return for his financial support of the emperor in the latter's war against France and his expeditions against the Ottomans in North Africa, the duke officially took over control of the Fortezza da Basso and the fortress of Livorno upon the withdrawal of the imperial garrisons. Cosimo I was now an independent prince and free from the tutelage of the Emperor. Yet, the Habsburg Empire still acted in the role of a "big brother" to Medici Florence; Charles V took Cosimo under his wing and guaranteed his survival within the European power dynamic by officially recognizing his rule and allowing him to extend his territories. Thus, throughout his rule, Cosimo always endeavored to maintain good relations with the emperor and the Spanish kings but also attempted to keep Florence from becoming their satellite, as Naples and Milan did.<sup>681</sup> His primary aim was to "gain protection without being forced into subservience"; this was an important factor in shaping his diplomacy and foreign relations.<sup>682</sup> The duke moved in all directions to consolidate his power in the international arena. When necessary, or if it served his interests, he did not hesitate to establish contacts with France, the Papacy, and the Ottoman Empire, sometimes even providing support to two opposing sides at the same time.

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<sup>680</sup> J. R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici: the pattern of control*, p. 129; E. Fasano Guarini, "La fondazione del principato: da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609)" in *Storia della città Toscana*, vol. III (2003) p. 11.

<sup>681</sup> Hale, *Florence and the Medici*, p. 129

<sup>682</sup> Alessandra Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century," in *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy, The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, ed. Daniela Frigo, tr. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) p. 59.

There are a number of studies focusing on Cosimo's diplomacy and his relations with other European states,<sup>683</sup> however, the Medici–Ottoman relations during this period are still uncharted territory waiting to be explored.<sup>684</sup> The general tendency is to assume that the political alignment with the Habsburgs affected Florentine–Ottoman relations negatively during the period in question. Yet a close examination of Cosimo's diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire demonstrates that the issue is far more nuanced than this.

There were two phases in Medici–Ottoman relations during Cosimo's rule. The first phase, which lasted from 1537 to 1560, can be characterized as a period of friendship, alliance, and favorable relations between the Medici state and the Ottoman Empire. The second phase, from 1560 to 1574, was in contrast a period of conflict and confrontation. It is impossible to analyze these two phases independently from the larger context of Mediterranean politics. During the sixteenth century, the Mediterranean was the target of imperial ambitions and became the scene of conflict between the Ottoman and Habsburg forces. Medici Florence inclined more to the Habsburg axis but Cosimo, especially during the first two decades of his rule, also made certain to maintain favorable relations with the Ottoman court.

His arrival as ruler of Florence in 1537 did not create a significant change in terms of diplomatic representation in Istanbul. Luigi Gherardi, who had been Florentine *bailo* since the rule of Alessandro de' Medici, continued in this role until 1543, when Guglielmo da Sommaia, an agent of the Florentine company Sommaia and Girolami in Pera, was appointed to the post.<sup>685</sup> Due to the scarcity of letters exchanged between the new duke and *bailo* Gherardi, it is hard to reach a conclusion concerning the nature of the relations between the two states during the early part of Cosimo's rule.<sup>686</sup> However, according to a contemporary Ottoman chronicle, Bostan Çelebi's *Süleymannname*, in 1538 Cosimo sent an ambassador to Sultan Süleyman to present a letter along with valuable

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<sup>683</sup> Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century," p. 49-94; idem., "Dinastia, patriziato e politica estera: ambasciatori e segretari medicei nel cinquecento," *Cheiron*, XV, n. 30 (1998): 57-131; Giorgio Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento," pp. 177-216; Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici* (Torino: UTET, 1987) pp. 183-190.

<sup>684</sup> It is necessary to mention two recent contributions to this topic: Mikail Acipinar, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Floransa. Akdeniz'de Diplomasi, Ticaret ve Korsanlık*, pp. 114–187; Veronica Prestini, "Economia e diplomazia nella politica ottomana di Cosimo I," in *The Grand Ducal Medici and the Levant*, eds. Maurizio Arfaioli and Marta Caroscio (Turnhout: Brepols/ Harvey Miller, 2016), pp. 9-17.

<sup>685</sup> Marcello del Piazzo, *Gli Ambasciatori Toscani del Principato (1537-1737)* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1953).

<sup>686</sup> There is available only one letter from Luigi Gherardi to Cosimo I, and it says little. MDP 343 fol. 49, [8 January 1539]

gifts.<sup>687</sup> This attempt may be considered an important step on Cosimo's part toward being formally recognized by the sultan. The Florentine ambassador was warmly received by the Ottoman administration. He was asked to extend his stay in Istanbul and was even provided with a generous allowance for his daily expenses, which was, according to Hammer, a completely new practice at the time and a sign that the sultan was pleased with the duke's attitude.<sup>688</sup> Bostan Çelebi did not provide any details concerning these negotiations, but it seems that in addition to obtaining official recognition and renewal of existing privileges from the sultan, Cosimo was also able to obtain permission for the Florentine merchants to carry grain, on the condition that it be destined only for Florentine ports.<sup>689</sup>

This was a time when Venice and the Ottoman Empire had just entered into a war, which would last until 1540. Thus, the new duke seems to have made use of this opportunity to further Florentine interests in the Ottoman lands. Cosimo's diplomatic initiative was also connected to the political developments that took place during the early phase of his rule. Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean and the constant conflicts between the Habsburgs and the allied Franco-Ottoman forces rarely posed a threat for Cosimo, who was trying to restore his authority within Florence; he therefore continued to cultivate relations with the Ottomans at the expense of the Venetians.<sup>690</sup>

In the following period as well, the increasing tension in the Mediterranean between the Franco-Ottoman forces and the Habsburgs conveniently prepared the way for the duke to consolidate his power and extend his territories. As already mentioned, in 1543 Cosimo provided financial and military support to Charles V for his expeditions against the French and the Ottomans, in return taking over control of two Florentine fortresses that had been garrisoned by Spanish troops. Meanwhile, in 1541, Cosimo again sent an ambassador to Sultan Süleyman in order to renew friendship and privileges with the Ottoman Empire. It was when the sultan was on his way to Hungary for a campaign

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<sup>687</sup> Bostan Çelebi, *Süleymannâme*, Cod. H.O 42a HAN, Vienna National Library, fol. 279, Muharrem 945 [May/June 1538]. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, tr. M. Dochez, Vol. II, Book XXIX (Paris: Imprimerie de Béthune et Plon, 1844) p. 39. Hammer attributed this source to Ferdi but later studies have demonstrated that it was actually written by Bostan Çelebi. See Hüseyin Yurdaydın, "Bostan'ın Süleymannâmesi (Ferdi'ye Atfedilen Eser)" *Belleten*, 74 (1995): 137-202.

<sup>688</sup> "Diyar-ı Firnetse beği ki, sūdde-i saâdetün kadîmi dostu ve hevâdarıdır, dergâh-ı cihan-penaha elçi gönderüp ol mahalle elçisi gelüb pişkeşi ve nâmesi mevkıf-ı arza yetişüb miktarınca iltifât ve riâyet bulub tecdid-i misâk olunub sūdde-i saâdete mülâzemet için memleketine gitmeyüb rûzı merre-i âli dirlik ta'yîn olundu."

<sup>689</sup> Angela Orlandi, "Oro e Monete da Costantinopoli a Firenze in alcuni documenti toscani," p. 994.

<sup>690</sup> Niccolò Capponi, *Lepanto 1571: La lega santa contro l'impero ottoman*, p. 89



that a Florentine ambassador visited him in Niš.<sup>691</sup> The ambassador did not himself meet with the sultan, but he was received honorably by the Ottoman viziers, through whom he presented a letter and gifts from the duke to the sultan. The response of the sultan to Cosimo's request was positive: he confirmed the renewal of privileges with the Medici duke. Through this confirmation, Cosimo also secured the friendship of the Ottomans against the possibility of an attack by Franco-Ottoman forces along the Tuscan coast.

One interesting detail provided by Bostan Çelebi concerning these negotiations has to do with the ceremonial assembly of the Imperial Divan and the *tour de force* performance of the janissaries on the field. Bostan Çelebi describes the scene in a poetic way: “[I]n their costumes, more richly ornamented than the viziers’, the janissaries, swaying like the waves of the sea, mounted their horses, lined up and regimented in majestic splendor,” just at the moment of the Florentine ambassador's arrival.<sup>692</sup> On the eve of the Hungarian campaign, such a performance in the presence of the Florentine ambassador was deployed as a show of force to challenge and intimidate the opponents of the Ottomans—the latter having no doubt that the ambassador would relate to Emperor Charles V the information he gathered during this visit concerning the Ottoman military preparations. Indeed, soon after, in 1543, the Ottomans took Budin and the fortress of Belgrade.

In the same year, Hayreddin Barbarossa sailed toward the western Mediterranean, attacking a number of Italian towns, including Messina, Reggio, and Ostia, en route to his final destination of Marseille.<sup>693</sup> Along the way, he passed by the Tuscan coast but left it unharmed and instead headed for Corsica. Still, the arrival of Barbarossa and the French–Ottoman attack against the Italian coast aroused fear and panic in Italy. Cosimo, who had just renewed his state's friendship and trading privileges through the abovementioned negotiations with the Ottoman court, elaborately reported in a letter to Charles V's military commander Francisco Alvarez de Toledo the movements of the Ottoman galleys along the Tuscan coast and how he had provided support, in the form of soldiers,

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<sup>691</sup> Bostan Çelebi, *Süleymannâme*, fol. 350: “Firnetse serdarı ki, sūdde-i saâdetün kadîmî hevâdarıdır, dergâh-ı cihan-penaha elçi göndermişti...Mezkûr olan elçi sūdde-i saâdete gelüb erkân-ı devlet vasıtasıyla pişkeşi ve nâmesi mevkıf-ı arza yetişüb şeref-i bisât bulup murâdâtında müsaade gösterilüb merî olduktan sonra gerü memleketine gönderildi.”

<sup>692</sup> Bostan Çelebi, *Süleymannâme*, fol. 350.

<sup>693</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr*, p. 86; Gallotta, “Il ‘Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa’ Pars Secunda e La Spedizione in Francia di Hayreddin Barbarossa (1543-44),” p.84.

equipment, and fortifications, to Piombino and other places against a possible attack by the *armata turchesca*.<sup>694</sup>

This was not the only time that Cosimo would pursue a dual policy in the politics of the Mediterranean. In the following period as well, the duke of Florence tried to strike a balance between siding with the Habsburgs or the Ottomans. He maintained his support for Charles V against the French–Ottoman alliance while at the same time, through his *bailo* in Istanbul, he looked for ways to maintain friendly relations with the Sublime Porte. According to Spini, until 1559 Cosimo’s political interests and foreign policy were hardly ever aligned with the interests of Florentine merchants, and most of the time the duke made his decisions without taking into account the commercial activities of Florentine citizens abroad.<sup>695</sup> The archival evidence, however, presents a different picture in the case of the Florentines who were in Istanbul during the 1540s and 1550s. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the Florentine merchants’ presence in the Ottoman lands was quite limited compared to what it had been in previous eras. Yet Cosimo strove hard to maintain trade relations with the Ottoman Empire and moreover personally engaged in commercial exchanges with the Ottoman court. Through his *bailos*, he sold jewels and precious stones to Sultan Süleyman, his wife Hürrem Sultan, and Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha.<sup>696</sup> In return, he requested his *bailo* in Istanbul to obtain for him antique medals, rare Greek books, horses, seeds, and plants.<sup>697</sup> Thus, the mercantile networks of the Florentines at the Porte continued to facilitate the exchange of goods between the Ottoman court and the Medici during this period.

In his letter to Alfonso Berardi in 1547, Cosimo instructed the Florentine *bailo* to fulfill whatever requests Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha made, in order to gain his favor, and exhorted Berardi to employ all possible means to do this.<sup>698</sup> For Cosimo, having Rüstem

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<sup>694</sup> ASFi, MdP 5, c. 194 r/v [4 July 1543]; Capponi, *Lepanto 1571*, p. 295ff.

<sup>695</sup> Spini, “Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento,” p. 197.

<sup>696</sup> ASFi, MdP 653 fol. 52 [4 March 1545]: Cosimo instructed *Bailo* Guglielmo da Sommaia to sell two jewels to Hürrem Sultan and even indicated the price the *bailo* should ask for: at least eight thousand *scudi*. Moreover, the *bailo* should send the receipts to the duke. Similar practices continued under the succeeding *bailos* as well. When Alfonso Berardi was appointed as the new *bailo* of the Florentine community at the Porte and departed for Istanbul, he was given drawings and descriptions of Duchess Eleanora’s jewels—which included information on the shapes and dimensions of the jewels and large pearls—to present to the sultan. Through the mediation of the court jeweler, Giannino Sciotto, Berardi was able to show the drawings to the *kapi agha* of the sultan, who then presented them to the sultan, who liked them very much and wanted to see the pearls themselves; but as he then left on a campaign to Persia, the issue remained inconclusive until 1550 when the *kapi agha* sent Sciotto to Berardi to ask for the drawings again and to order the pearls. ASFi, MdP 1172 fol. 40 [14 October 1546]; ASFi, MdP 397A, fol. 1029 [23 April 1550]

<sup>697</sup> ASFi, MdP 2633, fol. 6.

<sup>698</sup> Alfonso Berardi was appointed to this post on 15 September 1546, after the death of Guglielmo da Sommaia. Masi, *Statuti delle Colonie Fiorentine all’Estero*, p. 153.

Pasha's favor and support would be important in securing a five-year truce and renewing the Florentine merchants' trade privileges, an outcome potentially profitable for Florence. The duke also asked the *bailo* to find out whether there were any particular gifts that would please the grand vizier, as the treaty with the Porte should be confirmed at all costs.<sup>699</sup>

It is not known whether Berardi's request for the renewal of trade privileges was considered and granted by the Ottoman administration. However, the *bailo*'s letters reveal that contacts with the Ottoman court were maintained in the ensuing period. In one of his letters, Berardi informed the grand duke of Rüstem Pasha's request for a golden robe to be made in Florence.<sup>700</sup> The grand vizier in addition requested that it be embroidered with gold sent from Istanbul. As the use of foreign gold was not permitted in the workshops of Florence, the Florentine *bailo* asked for an exemption from the grand duke in this particular case. Although this correspondence does not tell us much about the position of the Florentine merchant community in the Ottoman Empire, it does give us hints concerning the ongoing existence of personal contacts with high-ranking Ottoman officials.

In the 1550s, the trading activities of Florentine merchants in the Ottoman lands significantly decreased. The activities of pirates in the Mediterranean,<sup>701</sup> the decreasing safety in the Levant for Florentine merchants, and the shift of commerce to the other parts of the Empire (i.e., Aleppo) resulted in the decline of Florentine trade in the Ottoman lands. In order to revive its former vigor, the Florentines tried to compete with others (i.e., the Venetians and French) and presented lavish gifts to the grand vizier, comprising thirty pieces of woolen cloth (half of which was Garbo and the other half San Martino) and

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<sup>699</sup> ASFi, MdP 186 (16 September 1547), fol. 46; Capponi, *Lepanto 1571*, p. 89. "[...] non si mancherà conforme alla richiesta et desiderio suo [Rustem Pascia] di satisfargli essendo come ben dite persona da trattenere per molti rispetti, et noi vogliamo che il facciate in tutti quei modi che vi verrà opportuno di poterlo fare. Saria bene poi che havete questa entrata concessa di procurare et far opera co'l mezzo del favore et autorità sua che venissero a queste nostre bande di merchanti a portar et levare merchantie come già solevano, che sapete quanto profitto davano alla città nostra et ci potranno hor venir tanto più sicuri quanto c'è la tregua de' cinque anni, benchè qui senza quella potevon venire. Parlatene adunque et fatene ogni opera, sendo cosa che importa al benefitio universale della città. Vedrete con destro modo d'intendere che cosa potessimo noi in particolare mandare a donare al prefato Rustan che li fusse grata da queste bande et avisata cene perchè vogliamo che in tutti quei modi che si può sia trattenuto."

<sup>700</sup> ASFi, MdP 397A, fol. 710 (30 May 1550)

<sup>701</sup> During this period, Muslim corsairs based in North Africa posed a threat for Christian merchants ships and vessels. Among these, there were Hayreddin Barbarossa and his brother, Turgut Reis and Uluç Ali Pasha who were quite famous corsairs in the Mediterranean before being appointed as Ottoman navy captains. See İdris Bostan, "Akdeniz'de Korsanlık: Osmanlı Deniz Gücü," in *Türk Denizcilik Tarihi*, eds. İdris Bostan and Salih Özbaran, vol. I, pp. 227-239.

thirty pieces of silk cloth.<sup>702</sup> However, this effort was useless; for most Florentine merchants, shifting their focus to European markets and exporting *rascie*-type cloth there was a more attractive prospect.

While in 1551 there were fifteen Florentine houses in Pera, this figure had declined to four houses as of 1554 and to single house by 1556.<sup>703</sup> Moreover, the French constantly spoke ill of the Florentines and attempted to turn the Sublime Porte against them. The Florentine *bailo* in Istanbul, Giovanbattista Buondelmonti, tried hard to persuade the Ottoman administrators that the actual war was in fact among the Florentines themselves (between the Medici and the anti-Mediceans<sup>704</sup>), not with the French, but this had no effect.<sup>705</sup> The whole conflict had to do with the control of Siena. During this period, Cosimo's main focus was on taking Siena and consolidating his authority over his territories. However, the inhabitants of this city, together with some anti-Medicean Florentines, allied with the French against the duke and the Habsburg Emperor. The possibility of a French-controlled state in the Italian peninsula already appeared to both Cosimo and Charles V as a significant threat. Moreover, the collaborative French–Ottoman attacks taking place in the Mediterranean close to Florentine and Genoese ports were also a source of concern for Cosimo. As early as 1553, Turgut Reis and Piyale Pasha besieged Piombino, Elba, and Pianosa and then headed for Corsica in order to support the French forces in their attempt to take the island from the Genoese.<sup>706</sup> Cosimo contributed to the defense of these ports by sending ships and soldiers. In response, the French king supported the anti-Mediceans against Cosimo in Siena. But with the help of the Habsburg emperor, the opposition was overcome and Siena was annexed to the Duchy in 1557.

In the meantime, given that only a few Florentine merchants remained in the Ottoman Empire, the magistrate of the *Conservatori del Commercio di Levante* found the presence of a permanent *bailo* at the Sublime Porte unnecessary and suggested to the duke that he make the Florentine nationals subject to the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul. Cosimo, however, rejected this proposal, as he wanted to restore the ancient splendor of the Levant trade. For this purpose, he invited to Florence the Ottoman envoy Hasan Çavuş, who was on a mission in Ferrara at the time. The Ottoman representative accepted the invitation and came to Florence, where he was received with the utmost courtesy and presented with

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<sup>702</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo I, pp. 155-156.

<sup>703</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo I, p. 155; p. 383.

<sup>704</sup> These anti-Mediceans were exiled Florentine aristocratic families. They allied with powers such as France and Venice against Medici rule.

<sup>705</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo I, p. 383.

<sup>706</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr*, pp. 103-106.

precious and exquisite goods by the duke. Cosimo asked for his support in the effort to have the capitulations that had previously been granted to the Florentine Republic reconfirmed by the Sublime Porte. Hasan Çavuş agreed with this proposition and promised to do whatever he could. He also assured Cosimo that he would employ his influence with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha to the end of ensuring that the Florentines would be favored by the Ottoman court and the imperial harem, which would acquire *drappi d'oro* and high-quality silk and woolen cloth from the Florentine merchants in return for raw silk, spices, leather, and grain.<sup>707</sup>

Cosimo also wrote a letter to Rüstem Pasha to offer an explanation for repulsing the Ottomans at Piombino in 1555, stating that this had been done only for the purpose of defense and that the Florentines had abstained from harming the Ottoman forces so as not to become an enemy to the empire. Along with Hasan Çavuş, a Florentine merchant conducting trade in Istanbul was sent to the Sublime Porte as a representative for the negotiations.<sup>708</sup> One of the key mediators involved in this diplomatic initiative was the Jewish banker and merchant Joseph Nasi (Don Josef or João Miches). Apparently, Nasi had offered his assistance in seeing that the privileges were confirmed, asking in return the duke's help in facilitating the departure of his brother Samuel Nasi from Ferrara.<sup>709</sup> In fact, in 1556 Rüstem Pasha had sent Hasan Çavuş to Ferrara with gifts to be presented to

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<sup>707</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo I, p. 383: “che avrebbe interposto il suo favore presso il Visir affinché le nazione Fiorentina fosse prescelta dalla Corte e dal Serraglio per provvedersi di drappi d'oro e di seta e di panni delle qualità che fossero domandate per ricambiare queste merci con seta cruda, spezerie, coiami, e frumenti.” According to Galluzzi's account, Hasan Çavuş came to Florence and negotiated with Cosimo I. Also, a letter written by Cassano Ciaus (Hasan Cavus) to the duke in May 1556 from Ragusa promised that the Ottoman envoy, together with Rüstem Pasha, would do all that was possible for the benefit of the Duchy of Tuscany. See ASFi, CS, Prima Serie, filza 10 fol. 262 r/v.

<sup>708</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo I, p. 383-384. For a detailed examination of this mission, also see Veronica Prestini, “Economia e diplomazia nella politica ottoman di Cosimo I,” in *The Grand Ducal Medici and the Levant*, pp. 9-17.

<sup>709</sup> The Nasi family was originally of Portuguese Jewish background. In 1497 they converted to Christianity, taking the name Mendes. As new Christians, they benefited from their status and prospered as bankers and spice importers. Their house also had a branch in Antwerp, where they dealt in spices coming from the Far East through Portugal to Northern Europe. After the Mendes brothers died, the widow of the younger brother, Doña Gracia took over the business and moved to Venice. However, due to a legal dispute with her sister regarding the inheritance, she had to leave Venice and moved to Ferrara, where there existed a relatively favorable attitude toward Jews. Here she embraced Judaism and in 1553 moved to Istanbul under her Jewish name, Gracia Nasi. A year later, her nephew (and son-in-law) Don Josef Nasi joined her in Istanbul. Employing his connections at European courts and the extensive mercantile network of the Nasi firm, Josef Nasi became an influential figure at the Ottoman court. With the accession of Selim II to throne, his career and influence reached their peak. Meanwhile, his brother Samuel Nasi and the latter's fiancée Gracia la Chica were expelled from Venice in early 1556, finding refuge in Ferrara. However when they decided to move to Istanbul to join the rest of the family, the duke of Ferrara, Ercole II, created difficulties. It was only in 1558 that he allowed them to leave for Istanbul; Venice issued a safe-conduct for the couple for their trip to the Ottoman capital. Minna Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul*, pp. 210-211; Marianna D. Birnbaum, *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003) pp. 103-104; Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, p. 157.

Duke Ercole II and a request that Samuel Nasi and his fiancée might leave Ferrara for Istanbul. However, the duke of Ferrara rejected this request. When Hasan Çavuş did not obtain any concrete results in Ferrara, he went to Florence to negotiate the issue with Cosimo and in return offered his services (presumably on behalf of Joseph Nasi) in the matter of the confirmation of the Florentine trade privileges by the Ottoman court. It is not clear whether Cosimo had any help in the Nasi affair; however, being aware of the political influence of Joseph Nasi at the Ottoman court, the duke did not hesitate to offer his own assistance in resolving this issue. This could be also seen in his letter of December 1558, in which Cosimo instructed the Florentine *bailo* to assure Joseph Nasi that the duchy was ready to do whatever was necessary for his brother.<sup>710</sup>

There were contacts and gift exchanges with other Ottoman dignitaries as well. An archival document from 1558 reveals that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who was third vizier in the *Divan* at the time, sent as a gift a box of *terra sigillata* to Cosimo.<sup>711</sup> *Terra sigillata*, a special type of soil that was reputed to provide protection against poison and plague, was one of the most prestigious and valuable imperial gifts that the Ottomans could present to foreign rulers.<sup>712</sup> The context for such a gift from the vizier is not provided in the document, but, considering that this gift-giving took place at around the same time that the Florentine duke sought confirmation of the privileges, it points to the duchy's friendly relations and collaborations with other members of the *Divan*, specifically Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.

Cosimo also urged his *bailo* in Istanbul, Giovanbattista Buondelmonti, to strive hard to obtain the privileges so that Florentine merchants could provide the Ottoman market with an abundance of silk cloth and all types of woolen cloth. If during the negotiations the issue of the activities of the Florentine galleys were to come up, Buondelmonti should explain to the Ottoman administration in detail that Florentine galleys were in fact on the payroll of the King of Spain; thus, if they went *in corso*, there was nothing the Florentine duke could do about them as they were under the king's command, although the duke could ensure that no harm would be done by the galleys

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<sup>710</sup> ASFi, MdP 49, fol. 503 (1 December 1558).

<sup>711</sup> ASFi, MdP 4279, fol. 1 (28 September 1558) Letter of Giovanbattista Buondelmonti to Cosimo I: "Per altra mia ho scritto a V. Ecc.a Ill.ma il presente sutomi fatto per V. Ill.ma S.ria da il S.or Mehemet Terzo Bascia della terra sigillata et per Piero di Francesco Guardi se ne manda una scatola bene amagliata con incerato et bollata in piombo col giglio."

<sup>712</sup> Julian Raby, "Terra Lemnia and the Potteries of the Golden Horn: An Antique Revival Under Ottoman Auspices," *Byzantine Forschungen*, ed. by Adolf M. Hakkert and Walter E. Kaegi (Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1995), pp. 305-342.

under his own control.<sup>713</sup> From this letter of Cosimo's to his *bailo*, it becomes clear that in 1558 Florentine merchants had not yet obtained trade privileges from the Ottoman court. Soon after, a new *bailo*, Albertaccio degli Alberti, was sent to Istanbul to replace Giovanbattista Buondelmonti. His primary task was to revive the trade contacts already negotiated through Hasan Çavuş's mediation. However, as Galuzzi noted, the jealousy of other nations and the ensuing affairs in Europe rendered this negotiation-in-progress totally useless.<sup>714</sup> In 1559 the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis was concluded, bringing to an end the conflict between the Habsburgs and the Valois and restoring peace in Italy.

From the beginning of the 1560s, Cosimo gravitated towards the papacy and sought to establish close relations with Rome. The duke's intention was to obtain sanction for his rule and legitimation for the title of grand duke. In this way, Tuscany could achieve a higher status than that enjoyed by any other Italian state except Venice.<sup>715</sup> As the Habsburg Emperor had refused to grant such recognition, the Medici duke looked to the papacy for support. The election of a Medici pope in 1565 was of great importance in this context. Cosimo's religious zeal in defending the papacy's Church reforms and his founding of the military order of St. Stephen in Pisa in 1562, with the aim of defending Christianity against the Muslims, presented the Medici duke as a strong supporter of the Catholic Church and faith. Despite the opposition of Emperor Maximilian, Pope Pius V granted Cosimo the title of grand duke of Tuscany in 1569.<sup>716</sup>

### **The Order of St. Stephen and a Period of Conflict and Clashes**

The period following 1560 can be characterized as one of conflict and confrontation in terms of Medici–Ottoman relations. Besides the alliance with the papacy, the grand duchy took part in various anti-Ottoman activities in the Mediterranean during this period. The first of these was the Battle of Djerba in 1560, initiated by the allied forces of the Habsburgs, the papacy, the Genoese, the Maltese and the Florentines under the command of Giovanni Andrea Doria and Don Alvaro de Sande. The battle ended in failure for the Christian league; the island was retaken by Piyale Pasha, while Don Alvaro

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<sup>713</sup> ASFi, MdP 49, fol. 503 (1 December 1558).

<sup>714</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo I, p. 384.

<sup>715</sup> Contini, "Medicean Diplomacy," p. 79.

<sup>716</sup> Guarini, "La fondazione del principato: da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609)" p. 25. This title would be recognized by the Habsburg Emperor for Francesco I de' Medici and his successors only in 1576, after Cosimo's death.

de Sande and Don Sancio de Leyva were taken captive by the Ottomans.<sup>717</sup> The interesting point here is that Florentine *bailo* Albertaccio Alberti and others helped Don Sancio de Leyva in an attempt to escape from the tower in which he was imprisoned in Istanbul. However, the escape was not successful, as Leyva was caught by the night guard and subsequently sent to a tower on the Black Sea. Meanwhile the Florentine ambassador and others were now imprisoned due to their complicity. Surprisingly, they were released only through the mediation of the French ambassador.<sup>718</sup> Moreover, according to one of the imperial orders in October 1564, Alberti stood surety for Don Sancio de Leyva (Donsanço) who was released by the Ottoman administration on the condition that he would bring one hundred fifty Muslim slaves and a certain amount of money to the Ottoman sultan. Don Sancio brought the slaves and as for the amount he was supposed to pay, he brought fifty thousand four hundred thirty three filori coins and some textiles.<sup>719</sup> This piece of evidence also demonstrates that throughout his mission, Alberti was more occupied with saving Florentines captured during naval conflicts and battles with the Ottomans and with providing intelligence to Florence on political and military developments in the Ottoman Empire than he was with commercial concerns.

As the Florentine galleys and the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen increased their activities against the Ottoman fleets in the Mediterranean, the position of the Florentine *bailo* became less and less tenable in the eyes of the Ottoman administration. In 1565, Alberti was finally sent back to Florence on the grounds that the Florentine state was infringing the *ahidname* (treaty) requirement of being a “friendly party.” In fact, it was the activities of the ducal galleys and the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen that jeopardized the Florentine presence in Istanbul, and their participation in the siege of

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<sup>717</sup> For the Ottoman account of the Battle of Cerbe (Djerba) and the captivity of Don Alvaro de Sande, see Zekeriyâzâde’s journal. Zekeriyâzâde was a scribe at the Ottoman naval shipyard. He participated in this naval conflict under the command of Grand Admiral Piyale Pasha and provided a detailed account of the battle as an eyewitness. Zekeriyâzâde Çelebi, *Ferâh – Cerbe Savaşı* (1560), ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Istanbul, 1980). Regarding the siege of Malta, also see Francesco Balbi di Correggio’s eye-witness account of the Siege; he was arquebusier during the siege and afterwards he wrote the book which was dedicated to Don John of Austria. *Diario dell’assedio all’isola di Malta*, tr. Henry Alexander Balbi (Copenhagen: B. Antikva, 1961).

<sup>718</sup> ASFi, MdP 4277, fol. 77r (21 May 1561): “È stato posto prigionero S. Amb.re Fiorentino et altri, ma dipoi detto Amb.re è stato relassato sopra la parola del Amb.re di Francia, et fu per esser stato incolpato d’haver tenuto mano di far fuggire Don Sancio di Leva, et era prigionero qua in una di queste Torri, et una notte con intelligentia di questi si calò giu da la Torre, e stando per montare sopra una fregata armata preparata à questo effetto per fuggirsene, fu scoperto da la guardia, che andava per pigliare alcune meretrice, e fu ripreso e l’hanno mandato ne la Torre del Mar Maggiore.”

<sup>719</sup> BOA, 6 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* (972/ 1564-1565), doc. 274 (18 Rebi’ul-evvel 972/ 24 October 1564).



Malta in 1565 officially ended Florentine representation at the Sublime Porte.<sup>720</sup> Thus, Albertaccio degli Alberti was the last Florentine *bailo* in Istanbul, where he remained until 1565.

The change in attitude toward the Ottoman Empire on the part of the Florentine duke was also related to the duchy's developing commercial ties with Spain. Since Cosimo had already secured close economic relations with Philip II, he calculated that the loss of the Levantine market would not be that damaging for the Florentine textile industry. After all, Florentine trade in the Ottoman lands was already in decline as a result of the competition from the Venetians. Thus, during this period Cosimo I positioned himself openly against the Sublime Porte. In this respect, the Order of St. Stephen and its activities in the Mediterranean caused this period to be a turning point for Ottoman–Medici diplomatic relations.

Stuck in the middle of the Ottoman–Habsburg conflict, Cosimo I adopted a different policy from the 1560s onward, and decided to benefit from this conflict by expanding his naval force with the establishment of the Order of St. Stephen. On March 15, 1562, with the sanction of Pope Pius IV, the Duke of Florence established the Knightly Order of St. Stephen and became the Grand Master of this Order. It was established as a naval force equipped with armed galleys and was composed of members of noble families from all over Europe.<sup>721</sup> Cosimo's initial plan was to create an order that would be self-sufficient and use its own revenues while fighting against the infidels. However, due to the reluctance of the knights to spend their own resources for this purpose, all the expenses of the fleet, from weapons and provisions to the salaries of the sailors, were met by the duchy, and this was soon to become a heavy burden for the Medici.<sup>722</sup>

The main intention in creating such a galley fleet was to protect merchant ships along dangerous sea routes and against increasing piracy in the Mediterranean. Especially given the enlargement of the duchy in the direction of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the escalating tension between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire in the

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<sup>720</sup> Francesco Balbi di Correggio, *Diario dell'assedio all'isola di Malta*, p. 167; 181; Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento," p. 197.

<sup>721</sup> Giuseppe G. Guarnieri, *Cavalieri di Santo Stefano: Contributo alla storia della Militare Italiana (1562-1859)* (Pisa: Succ. Nistri, 1928) pp. 25-36; E. Fasano Guarini, "La fondazione del principato: da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609)," pp. 17-18. In the beginning the Order had only two galleys, but by the 1570s it had four. This number soon increased, so that by the early seventeenth century there were more than eight galleys.

<sup>722</sup> Niccolò Capponi, *Lepanto 1571*, p. 86.

Mediterranean, there arose a real necessity for such a fleet. The galleys were to defend the Tuscan coast against Muslim warships; they were also given for use in the service of the Spanish king and the papacy whenever necessary.

In the creation and organization of the Order, the main ideal adopted was to protect the Christian faith against the infidels.<sup>723</sup> Cosimo intended thereby to win over the papacy and, in connection with this, to improve relations with other Christian states. Moreover, while providing the duchy with a professional naval force, such a chivalric order would also create a new vehicle for the nobles of Florence and other Christian states to “channel their energies to the goal of protecting Christendom against the Muslim onslaught.”<sup>724</sup> Thus the Order, based in Pisa, was established in the spirit of crusading, to fight against the Barbary corsairs and to protect the Christian coasts against the attacks of the infidels. Above all, this galley fleet was important for Cosimo in terms of achieving a visible presence in Mediterranean politics. With his extended territories and heightened authority, Cosimo now sought to gain international recognition by playing an active part in the diplomatic, political, and military affairs of the time. In this respect, the “creation of a military–knightly order styled on the Knights of St. John on Malta” was an important step.<sup>725</sup>

In 1563, Giulio de’ Medici, a distant relative of Cosimo, was appointed admiral of the navy and two galleys were given to the Order of St. Stephen. From the outset, the galleys of the Order represented an organic component of the Christian naval forces, starting their mission in the Mediterranean at the disposal of the Spanish Habsburgs. In fact, the king of Spain agreed to hire the galleys of the duchy as *asientas* for five years in return for a certain amount of money to be paid to Duke Cosimo, while the galleys would be under the command of Don Garcia de Toledo, general captain of the sea of the Spanish Empire. This procedure was repeated in 1569. Cosimo I de’ Medici thus put his galleys under the order of the Spanish king; during these excursions, some of the galleys were destroyed, constituting a loss for Cosimo. In the same year, the Medici duke received the title of grand duke of Tuscany from Pope Pius V. The favorable relations with the papacy enabled Cosimo to enter into an agreement with the pope to provide twelve galleys that were to be at his disposal for use during the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The grand duchy’s galleys fought under the banner of the papacy during the battle. In the following years as

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<sup>723</sup> Franco Angiolini, *I Cavalieri e il Principe* (Firenze: EDIFIR, 1996) p. 20.

<sup>724</sup> Niccolò Capponi, *Lepanto 1571*, p. 86.

<sup>725</sup> Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010) p. 90.

well, Cosimo I continued to enter into contracts with the papacy and the Spanish king and to put his galleys at their disposal.<sup>726</sup>

After Cosimo's death in 1574, his son Francesco I de' Medici became the grand master of the Order of St. Stephen. Francesco followed the practice of his father, and offered the galleys in *asiento* to the papacy and Spain. Moreover, in order to reduce the expense of maintaining the galleys, Francesco frequently sent them to the North African coasts and the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, the Knights of the Order soon went on the offensive rather than simply defending the coasts, sailing toward the Barbary coasts and the Levant to hunt for Muslim ships.<sup>727</sup> In other words, they engaged in piracy and preyed on Muslim ports and ships, which soon proved quite profitable for the knights.<sup>728</sup> They grew rich with the booty they took from these ships—slaves, money, commodities, and other items of value. However, this sowed the seeds of discord between Tuscany and the Sublime Porte, putting the grand duchy in the position of a potential enemy to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>729</sup> Thus what characterized Ottoman–Florentine relations during the time of Francesco I was an attempt to maintain both commercial interactions in the Eastern Mediterranean through diplomatic contacts and the anti-Ottoman activities of the galleys of the Order. This will be discussed at greater length in the following section.

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<sup>726</sup> Marco Gemignani, "The Navies of the Medici: The Florentine Navy and Navy of the Sacred Military Order of St Stephen, (1547-1648)," in *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. J. B. Hattendorf and R. W. Unger (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003) pp. 176-178.

<sup>727</sup> Alberto Tenenti, *Piracy and the Decline of Venice 1580-1615* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) p. 17.

<sup>728</sup> Marcello Berti, "La Marina da Guerra Mediceo-Stefaniana e L'Attività Commerciale nel Mediterraneo (Secoli XVI-XVII)," in *Nel Mediterraneo ed Oltre: Temi di storia e storiografia marittima toscana (Secoli XIII-XVIII)* (Pisa: ETS, 2000) pp. 62-63.

<sup>729</sup> On the activities of the Order during the second half of the sixteenth century, see Marco Gemignani, "Diplomazia e marina stefaniana nell'epoca di Francesco I de' Medici," in *L'Ordine di Santo Stefano e il Mare* (Pisa: ETS, 2001) pp. 85-110; Mikail Acipinar, "Anti-Ottoman Activities of the Order of St Stephen during the Second-half of the 16th Century," in *Seapower, Technology and Trade: Studies in Turkish Maritime History*, ed. Dejanirah Cotto, Feza Günergun, Maria Pia Pedani (Istanbul: Denizler Kitabevi, 2014) pp. 165-172.

Figure 14: Galleys of the Order of St. Stephen, Livorno, 17<sup>th</sup> c. Museo di Santo Stefano, Pisa.



## Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici and a Spain-Oriented Diplomacy

After the death of Cosimo I, his son Francesco I de' Medici (r. 1574-1587) became the grand duke of Florence. For some scholars, Francesco I's period was "less heroic, more conservative and strongly conditioned by the Spanish hegemony."<sup>730</sup> He subverted the delicate balance his father had established in his relations with other states and gravitated without reserve toward Philip II.<sup>731</sup> Indeed, there were various factors behind this pro-Spanish attitude. First of all, Francesco's marriage with the daughter of Emperor Ferdinand I, Joanna of Austria, was political, propelling the grand duchy toward the Habsburgs. In this way, Francesco was able to obtain sanction from the Habsburg emperor for the title of grand duke of Tuscany for himself and his successors. In addition, the decline of the Florentines in the French market (i.e., Lyon) impelled the grand duke to strengthen commercial contacts with Madrid and Lisbon during this period.<sup>732</sup> There was a growth in exports to Spain, which was also related to the increasing import of Castilian wool. Moreover, Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples, also under Spanish control at the time, became the main suppliers of raw silk to the Florentines, who, in return, exported Florentine *rascie* cloth.<sup>733</sup>

In short, the convergence of political and economic interests caused the grand duke to drift more toward the Spanish Habsburgs during this period. This political positioning had significant consequences for the diplomatic relations of the grand duchy with other powers in the Mediterranean, particularly the Ottoman Empire. Soon after the Battle of Lepanto, the grand duke sought friendship and trade privileges from the Ottoman administration, with the encouragement of the *Arte della Lana* and taking advantage of the decreasing influence of the Venetians in the Ottoman market. However, this attempt was not successful due to the grand duke's insistence on maintaining the activities of the galleys of St. Stephen while also asking for trade privileges for Florentine merchants in the Ottoman lands. In his explanation of this, the grand duke made a clear distinction between the interests of the Florentine merchants and state policy, underlining his belief that the conflicts between the two states should not affect the position of Florentine merchants in the Ottoman Empire. Such a request was hardly acceptable to the

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<sup>730</sup> E. F. Guarini, "La fondazione del principato: da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609)," p. 34.

<sup>731</sup> Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento," p. 202.

<sup>732</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>733</sup> Patrick Chorley, "Rascie and the Florentine Cloth Industry," p. 501.

Ottoman administration; therefore, despite all efforts by the *Arte della Lana*, the negotiations did not reach any conclusion.

The grand duke's uncompromising attitude concerning the galleys was most likely connected to the possibility of taking over the monopoly of the import of spices through Lisbon to Northern Europe via Livorno. In the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese had already established a direct sea route to East Africa and India with the discovery of Cape of Good Hope. From 1500 to the mid-sixteenth century the Portuguese dominated the spice trade, exporting Asian spices via Lisbon to Antwerp and the whole of Europe. In the meantime, due to conflicts in the Mamluk Empire and the Ottoman–Venetian war from 1499 to 1503, the export of Asian spices through Venice to Europe declined significantly.<sup>734</sup> However, in the second half of the century, the constant conflict between the Muslim sultanates in the East Indies and the Portuguese led to a disruption of the spice trade and revived the trade route through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea to the Mediterranean (i.e., Alexandria and Aleppo). This shift proved profitable mostly to the Venetians, who were able to monopolize the trade again and supply Europe's demand for spices by cooperating with the Ottomans against the Portuguese.<sup>735</sup> During this period, the grand duchy also looked for ways to gain a share of the spice trade and make Livorno a transit station for the spices exported through Lisbon and the Levant to Europe. When negotiations with the Ottoman court ended in failure in 1574, the grand duke turned his focus to Portugal and in 1576 sent Antonio Vecchietti (who would in 1592 be sent to Istanbul as Florentine representative) to Lisbon to negotiate with the king for the privilege of importing spices from Lisbon to Livorno and establishing a Tuscan company in Lisbon. But, this attempt also failed, as the king of Portugal had already granted this privilege to German merchants for a four-year period.<sup>736</sup>

When the grand duke could not get what he had expected from Portugal, he decided to reopen negotiations with the Ottoman court, and this time, the main emphasis was on attracting Ottoman merchants to Livorno through reciprocal trade privileges. The

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<sup>734</sup> Herman Van Der Wee, "Structural changes in European long-distance trade and particularly in the re-export trade from south to north, 1350-1750," in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750*, ed. James Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) pp. 27-33.

<sup>735</sup> John H. Munro, "South German Silver, European Textiles, and Venetian Trade with the Levant and Ottoman Empire, c. 1370 to c. 1720: A Non-mercantilist Approach to the Balance of Payments Problem," in *Relazioni Economiche tra Europa e Mondo Islamico secc. XIII-XVIII, Atti della Trentottesima Settimana di Studi, 1-5 Maggio*, ed. Siomonetta Cavaciocchi, vol. II (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2007) p. 936-37. Frederic C. Lane, "The Mediterranean Spice Trade Further Evidence of its Revival in the Sixteenth Century," *The American Historical Review*, 45/3 (1940): 581-90.

<sup>736</sup> Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici*, p. 258; Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs: The 'Flemish' Community in Livorno and Genoa*, p. 29.

report written in 1577 by Filippo Sassetti to Florentine ambassador Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi clearly reveals this intention. Although addressed to Gianfigliuzzi, the report seems to have been intended to provide a thorough exposition of the advantages and benefits of the Levant trade for the grand duchy as well as for the Florentine cloth manufacturers. Sassetti noted that the Levant trade was not as profitable as it had been in the past. Thus, it was more important to attract Ottoman merchants to Livorno by offering them better conditions for settlement (in terms of amenities such as housing and storage facilities) than they had in Ragusa, Ancona, or Venice.<sup>737</sup> Moreover, according to Sassetti, some easing of customs duties must be offered. In terms of distance, Venice was closer for Ottoman merchants; therefore, Livorno could be a better option only if the grand duchy reduced the duties. In such case, the merchants would overlook the distance and come to Livorno.

More importantly, in Sassetti's view, the Levantine merchants had to be assured of safe navigation between the Ottoman ports and Livorno. In this respect, Venice was also the better option for Ottoman merchants, as the only dangerous section at sea was that between Venice and Otranto, where their ships might be attacked by the galleys of St. John and St. Stephen. However, the remaining part of the voyage to Ottoman ports was relatively secure. In contrast, the sea route to Livorno was full of danger for Ottoman merchants. They could easily be captured or attacked by the galleys of Spanish, Genoese, Napolitan, Sicilian or other Christians on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Thus, it was necessary for the grand duchy to eliminate this threat, as the smallest impediment would dissuade the merchants from coming to the Tuscan port.<sup>738</sup>

A guarantee of security and the offer of facilities of all kinds to these merchants would encourage them to trade in Livorno. Moreover, Ottoman merchants could export Tuscan goods, especially woolen and silk cloth, to the Levant via this route, which would create a great opportunity for the growth of the Florentine textile industry, and would also be able to supply Livorno with goods such as spices, raw silk, camlet, and leather. Raw silk and camlet in particular could be exported to France and Flanders from Pisa or Livorno more easily than from anywhere else.<sup>739</sup> Sassetti also noted that Florentine satins and Lucchese silk cloth were in great demand in the Levant, with Ottoman merchants acquiring them mainly in Ancona. However, when they went to Venice, they had no real

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<sup>737</sup> Sassetti, "Ragionamento sul commercio ordinate fra I sudditi suoi e le nazioni del Levante (1577)," pp. 171-172.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

option but to purchase Venetian silk textiles. The same was true in the case of woolen fabrics.

Thus, the wisest step for the grand duchy, according to Sassetti, would be to shift the trade axis from Venice to Livorno, because at present Ottoman merchants obtained Florentine goods in Venice but only at higher prices; this made Florentine textiles less competitive and attractive than Venetian textiles, since the more intermediaries were involved, the higher the cost of the commodity became. Hence, he believed that the grand duchy should aim at bypassing these intermediaries by attracting the trade directly to Livorno. Commodities previously carried to Antwerp through Venice would now be carried via Livorno, making this port an important trade link between the Northern European markets and the Levantine market. Moreover, the Florentines should endeavor to replace the Venetians in the Ottoman market by imitating Venetian-style fabrics. Most importantly, Livorno should offer to Levantine merchants facilities and privileges similar to those offered to foreign merchants in Antwerp. All this would also make it easier for the Florentine merchants to go to the Levant for trade.

In the concluding part of his report, Sassetti noted that it would not be impossible for the Florentines to live without the goods coming from the Levant as spices could, after all, also be obtained through Portugal. He contended that in fact the greatest importance of this trade lay in its potential contribution to the textile industry. The export of goods produced in Tuscany to the Levant would bring wealth and help to develop new industries.<sup>740</sup> It can be suggested that Sassetti's detailed argumentation concerning the Levant trade carried weight with the grand duke. For the diplomatic negotiations of 1578, Francesco sent a proper ambassador with valuable gifts. Moreover, he adopted a different stance than in previous negotiations, focused more on attracting Ottoman merchants to Livorno by emphasizing the issues of reciprocal rights and trade privileges.

Concerning the galleys of St. Stephen, the grand duke declared that the Order had an autonomous composition and was free of the authority of the grand duchy. Thus, if the galleys acted under the command of the Spanish king or the papacy, the grand duke should not be held responsible for the damage they caused. For himself, however, Francesco promised not to send any galleys against the Ottoman ports and merchants. His declarations were initially received positively by the Ottoman administration; however,

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<sup>740</sup> Sassetti, "Ragionamento sul commercio ordinate fra I sudditi suoi e le nazioni del Levante (1577)," pp. 183-84.



subsequent developments irreversibly changed the course of the negotiations. It can be argued that Grand Duke Francesco I was torn between trade interests in the Levant and the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen. On the one hand, as the founding principle of the Order of St. Stephen was to give support to “Christian states”—more specifically, the Habsburgs and the papacy—against Muslim states, and this initiative was already a source of prestige and recognition for the grand duchy, it was impossible for Francesco to abolish the Order of St. Stephen. On the other hand, it was highly desirable that Livorno—whose development as a port was another important project of prestige for the grand duchy initiated by Cosimo I—become an international trade base and transit port that attracted merchants from everywhere, especially the Levant. Thus, Francesco I in his policies straddled both projects.

The galleys of the Order continued their periodic excursions to the North African coasts and the Eastern Mediterranean during this period. Moreover, as the Florentine ambassador set out for Istanbul, one of the grand duke’s other officials, Prospero Colonna, sent a letter to Philip II on behalf of Francesco I, informing the king about the negotiations with the Sublime Porte. In the letter, Colonna explained that while the grand duke was starting the negotiations in order to keep a *bailo* in the Ottoman capital and restore the trade privileges of Florentine merchants in the Ottoman lands, he also intended to keep the galleys that were to be employed by the Christian states and to go *in corso* when necessary. Colonna made a particular point of stating that such an agreement would be even more beneficial for the Spanish king than for the Florentine merchants, as the king would be able to obtain reliable information concerning the Ottoman Empire and could easily be informed of the plans of the Ottoman sultan.<sup>741</sup> The king’s men could be given safe conduct and would have a license from the grand duke or his *bailo* to enter the Ottoman lands with any commodities and people. In return, Colonna asked Philip to ensure that the grand duke’s ships be able to travel freely to the Levant without being molested or damaged by the galleys or other ships of the Spanish king, thus granting to the grand duchy the same privileges as the Venetians.<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>741</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 29v (May 1578): “essendo che questa capitulatione s’è da lui procurata non tanto per beneficio de suoi popoli, come per servitio et interesse di V.M.tà per poter ritrarre avvisi sicuri, cosi de disegni...”

<sup>742</sup> Ibid.: “[C]h’ i suoi huomini et vasselli che dal Gran Duca o suo Bailo hara’no licenza, possino venire et passare liberamente con qualsivoglia mercantile et huomini, etiam infedeli, senza che dall’ Armata, Galere o altri navili di V.M.ta si dia loro alcuna sorte di molestia o altro impedimento et conforme al privilegio che tengano con lei i Venetiani.”

This letter is intriguing in many ways. It is difficult to gauge whether the main reason for the grand duke reopening negotiations with the Ottoman court was in fact to facilitate intelligence gathering for the Spanish king, or whether this was just a way for the grand duke to excuse and justify this diplomatic effort. However, the letter could be taken as a declaration of loyalty to the Habsburgs. As Contini has pointed out, the Tuscan state depended on the Habsburgs of Spain and on the Empire, “since only this dependence could ensure the survival of Medici power in the European power system, by legitimating it and by permitting its territorial expansion.”<sup>743</sup> Francesco I, having recently received the title of grand duke from the Habsburg emperor and the Spanish king and being closely tied to them in terms of economic interests, had to be cautious in his relations with other foreign powers, in particular the Ottoman Empire, rival of the Habsburgs in the Mediterranean.

In this respect, the grand duchy pursued a diplomatic double game during the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations, so as to placate both sides. While one of the grand duke’s officials was describing to Philip II the benefits of these negotiations for his kingdom, his ambassador in Istanbul was assuring the Ottoman administrators that the activities of the galleys of St. Stephen were attributable not to the grand duchy but rather to the Spanish king and the papacy. But the negotiations, having started out in a favorable atmosphere, soon became the target of rival states (i.e., Venice and France) and factional groups at the Ottoman court. In particular, the ongoing activities of the galleys of St. Stephen during the negotiations best served the interests of the Venetians, who were not willing to share their interests in the Levant with their former rival, and used the galleys’ depredations as an opportune pretext to tip the scales in their own favor. The detailed examination of the long-running negotiation process between the two states to be given in the following chapter demonstrates that diplomatic relations between the grand duchy and the Sublime Porte during the time of Francesco did not concern only the conflict over the Order of St. Stephen, but were in fact far more complicated. For Grand Duke Francesco I, it was more a matter of oscillating between the interests of the members of the *Arti* (the *Arte della Lana* and the *Arte della Seta*) and the demands of his Habsburg-oriented foreign policy. As indicated in Sasseti’s report and in Mormorai’s letter of 1578, the Levant trade was important for the Florentine textile industry, especially for the *Arte della Lana*, which was in decline from 1575 onward. Although there were close economic

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<sup>743</sup> Alessandra Contini, “Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century,” p. 62.

relations between the grand duchy and the Spanish Habsburgs, the Florentines were not unrivalled in these markets, due to the strong presence of the Genoese in the western Habsburg domains, from Spain and the Low Countries to the Spanish colonies in America.<sup>744</sup> Therefore, besides maintaining their presence in the Spanish markets, it was also necessary for the Florentine textile manufacturers to again expand into the Levantine market. The failure of the negotiations with the Ottoman court indicates that the interests of the members of the *Arti* and those of the grand duke were not completely reconciled during this period, as Francesco I was unwilling to make concessions concerning the Order of St. Stephen, which had become the *sine qua non* condition for the Ottoman administration. With the loss of the Levantine market, the woolen cloth industry in Florence began to decline significantly in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The crisis in the industry and the possibility of revivifying the Levantine trade became major issues during the rule of Grand Duke Ferdinando I, who adopted a completely different approach in his foreign policy.

### **Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici and the Question of Reviving the Levant Trade**

After the death of Francesco I in 1587, his brother, Ferdinando, who at that time was a cardinal in Rome, became the new grand duke of Tuscany. The most notable aspect of Ferdinando I's period was no doubt the radical shift that took place in the grand duchy's foreign policy. Unlike his brother, Ferdinando followed a relatively independent stance in diplomatic affairs.<sup>745</sup> In this respect, his foreign policy was quite similar to that of his father Cosimo. An important change for the grand duchy during this period was the development of close relations with France, which had been divided as a result of the religious wars there. The first political move in this sense was the marriage of the grand duke with Christine of Lorraine, the niece of Catherine de' Medici, in 1589. He enhanced this collaboration by financially supporting the cause of Henry of Navarre (Henry IV of France) against the Catholic League. Besides playing an active role in Henry's conversion to Catholicism in order to restore the unity of France, Ferdinando also arranged the

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<sup>744</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 141-161.

<sup>745</sup> Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century," p. 186; E. Fasano Guarini, "Ferdinando I de' Medici, granduca di Toscana," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 46 (1996) [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ferdinando-i-de-medici-granduca-di-toscana\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ferdinando-i-de-medici-granduca-di-toscana_(Dizionario-Biografico))

marriage of his niece Marie de' Medici to him.<sup>746</sup> Thus, in the early years of his rule, he followed a policy that was totally the opposite of his brother's and established strong links between the grand duchy and the French crown.

In other ways as well, Ferdinando adopted a more open and flexible diplomacy in order to further Tuscany's interests in the international arena. While he officially gave assistance to Philip II in his struggle against England during 1588 and 1589, he also maintained close contacts with Queen Elizabeth in order to attract English merchants and ships to Livorno.<sup>747</sup> In fact, his relations with the English were so close that he secretly provided the queen with valuable information concerning Spain, which he gathered through his merchant and intelligence networks.<sup>748</sup> The grand duke developed diplomatic contacts with Poland as well and financially supported the Habsburg emperor in his war against the Ottomans in Hungary. At around the same time, he initiated diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte in order to secure trade privileges for Florentine merchants and attract Ottoman merchants to Tuscan ports, specifically Livorno. Grand Duke Ferdinando engaged in diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman court twice, in 1592 and 1598. Both attempts ended in failure, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter VI. The significant point is that in both cases, economic motives and concerns were the main determinants of the grand duke's decision to resume contacts with the Ottoman Empire. In contrast to his brother Francesco, Ferdinando did not seek the consent of the Spanish king or the Habsburgs. On the contrary, his close relations with France and England facilitated his negotiations with the Ottoman court. The grand duke also secured the support of Jews residing in the Ottoman Empire who wished to settle in Pisa and Livorno.

According to the Venetian diplomatic representative in Florence at the time, Grand Duke Ferdinando was a man "who had the economic interest of his subjects at heart and was determined to maintain the dignity of his court."<sup>749</sup> Thus, once he came to rule, he gave an ear to the concerns of the woolen industry and took into consideration the suggestions, recommendations and pleas from many quarters that the Levantine trade be

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<sup>746</sup> Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century," p. 88; Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento," p. 208; E. Fasano Guarini, "La fondazione del principato: da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609)," p. 36.

<sup>747</sup> L. Frattarelli Fischer, "Livorno città nuova: 1574-1609," *Società e Storia*, XI, n. 46 (1989): 876-77; 887; Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, pp. 96-100.

<sup>748</sup> Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century," p. 91; E. Fasano Guarini, "La fondazione del principato: da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609)," p. 37.

<sup>749</sup> Hale, *Florence and the Medici*, p. 150.

reinvigorated in order to revive the textile industry in Florence. He also endeavored to develop Livorno as a center of international trade and a transit port between the Levant and Northern Europe, while in addition encouraging the development of the silk industry in Pisa.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Florentine woolen cloth industry experienced a boom in the 1560s and 1570s (thanks to the success of *rascie*-type cloth in European markets), which was followed by a gradual decline from 1575 onward. In Spain and France, the Florentine merchants were challenged by local producers who began to imitate Florentine types of woolens. Within Italy, Venice was a strong rival for Florence in the market for woolen cloth.<sup>750</sup> In Northern Europe, the expanding economy encouraged innovation, competition and the discovery of new markets for woolen fabrics of differing qualities and prices. As early as the 1570s, English merchants were attempting to learn what the export markets demanded in terms of design, color, and texture. To do this, they sent agents to Persia and the Ottoman Empire to spy on techniques of dyeing wool.<sup>751</sup> Another way in which the English attempted to penetrate the Ottoman market was by producing counterfeits of Venetian woolens, to the detriment of the Venetian manufacturers.<sup>752</sup> But the most significant challenge posed by the English and the Dutch was their introduction of “new draperies”: lighter and cheaper woolen fabrics that “began flooding all the Mediterranean markets beginning about 1570.”<sup>753</sup> In the face of all these developments, the Florentines had difficulty keeping up with the competition. Although there were attempts to re-enter the Ottoman market with *panni corsivi* (a type of Garbo cloth) and imitations of Venetian textiles, after the failure of Ottoman–Florentine negotiations in 1578 no possibility remained for revivifying the Levantine trade, and the industry underwent a serious crisis. Between 1575 and 1580 the annual output of woolen cloth fell from 30,000 pieces to less than 15,000 pieces. This was

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<sup>750</sup> A recent study has illuminated the active role played by Genoese and Florentine merchants in supplying Spanish raw wool to the Venetian woolen industry in the late sixteenth century. Andrea Caracausi, “The Wool Trade, Venice and the Mediterranean Cities at the End of the Sixteenth Century,” pp. 201-222.

<sup>751</sup> Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors & Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 68.

<sup>752</sup> Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>753</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 280. Besides economic factors, political considerations played an important role in allowing the English to gain access to the Ottoman market. About the success of the English textiles in the Levant markets, see: Benjamin Braude, “International Competition and Domestic Cloth in the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1650: A Study in Undevelopment,” pp. 437-451; John H. Munro, “South German Silver, European Textiles, and Venetian Trade with the Levant and Ottoman Empire, c. 1370 to c. 1720,” pp. 941-950. Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, pp. 76-83.

followed by a final decline from the 1590s onward.<sup>754</sup> Once Ferdinando succeeded his brother Francesco, some of the Florentine woolen cloth producers raised their concerns regarding this issue through letters and reports addressed to the new grand duke. The letter by Jacopo Mormorai discussed at the beginning of this chapter, for example, underlined the importance of the Levantine trade for the revival of the woolen cloth industry.

Another letter, written by an anonymous merchant/agent to the grand duke in 1587, also dwells on the importance of restarting trade relations with the Ottoman Empire for the future of Florentine textile industry. Intended to be persuasive, the letter starts by referring to the key roles of the *Arte della Lana* and the *Arte della Seta*, likening them to “two beautiful eyes at the front of the head” and arguing that it was necessary for Florence to maintain these two institutions along with the export of woolen and silk cloth to foreign markets.<sup>755</sup> To underline the benefits of the Levantine trade, the anonymous writer gives the example of a Venetian gentleman, Maffeo Bernardi, who was “one of the wisest and richest merchants.” Interestingly, there are in the scholarship a couple of references to this individual. According to a Greek source, he was Matthios Bernardes, a rich Greek banker and ship owner in Venice.<sup>756</sup> Frederic Lane gives the name as Matteo Bernardo and describes him as “one of the four leading merchants of Alexandria.”<sup>757</sup>

In the letter under discussion here, Bernardi was described as a Venetian gentleman who owed all his wealth to the Eastern trade. The text runs as follows:

Thus, I would like to say that formerly, when there was export of woolen cloth to the Levant, the galleys used to come back three or four times a year with cash and gold coins [*sultanini* and *zecchini*]. It is necessary to restart this trade, because there will be export not only of woolen cloth but also of silk cloth, particularly satins. For two or three years, some Levantine merchants were coming here to buy many satins...Florentine satins surpassed all other silk fabrics.<sup>758</sup>

According to the letter’s author, it was necessary to revive the Levantine trade for the benefit of the textile industry. The only way to restart trade relations with the Sublime

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<sup>754</sup> Paolo Malanima, “An Example of Industrial Reconversion,” pp. 65-67.

<sup>755</sup> ASFi, MM 27/III, fol. 1090r (15 February 1587): “dua begli occhi stanno in fronte del capo.”

<sup>756</sup> Cited in Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean*, p. 43.

<sup>757</sup> Frederic Lane, “Venetian Bankers, 1496-1533,” in *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1966), p. 71; cited in Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants*, p. 43.

<sup>758</sup> ASFi, MM 27/III, fol. 1090r: “Voglio dunque dire che anticamente quando l’esito delle Pannine era in Levante, tre e quattro volte l’anno venivano le galere con li ritratti in sultanini e zecchini pero bisognerebbe di nuovo ranestar questa pratica e commercio perche non solo vi saria l’esito delle pannine, ma ancora delle drapperie e massimo de Rasi, havendomi detto due o tre anni sono certi mercanti Levantini che qua levorno molti rasi per tal luogo...e che li Rasi fiorentini trapassavano ogni altro drappo.”

Porte was to promise the Ottoman administration that Florence would not send the galleys of St. Stephen to commit piracy in the Levant—an action that carried the risk of the grand duchy’s losing out in many ways. Instead, the galleys should remain in the Tuscan Sea, where they could when necessary prey on the rich vessels and large ships there; meanwhile the grand duke could negotiate with the Porte through the mediation of the French ambassador.<sup>759</sup> Thus, for the anonymous writer, the best strategy for the grand duke was to withdraw the galleys of the Order from the Eastern Mediterranean and use them instead for the protection and defense of the Tuscan Sea, which would enable the grand duchy to reopen diplomatic and commercial contacts with the Ottoman court.

Concerns about the future of the *Arte della Lana* increased yet further in the last decade of the sixteenth century. After the decline of the Florentine merchants’ presence in the Ottoman market and their shift in focus to European markets in the middle of the century, the woolen cloth producers had restricted themselves to the production of one type of woolen cloth (*rascie*) in the international market, where there were many competitors and a great variety of products of differing quality. In another anonymous report, written presumably in the early 1590s, it is suggested that besides *rascie* and *perpignani*, new types of woolen cloth, which would be less durable (*pannine di poca durata*) but come at a lower price, should be introduced by the *Arte della Lana*. According to the author, people’s tastes changed like the seasons of the year; therefore, it was particularly risky for Florentine producers to limit themselves to one type of cloth.<sup>760</sup> Indeed, it was for this purpose that the Grand Duke of Tuscany invited artisans and weavers from a number of places to Pisa to introduce different types of mixed fabrics woven in silk and wool of various colors and qualities.<sup>761</sup>

Written in the same vein as Mormorai’s letter of 1588, this report covered similar topics, expounding on the formerly positive relations between Florence and the Ottoman Empire and the privileges the Florentine merchants had enjoyed in Istanbul (until 1535). It contrasted this favorable state of affairs with the current situation in the Levant, pointing out that Florentine trade and consumption of Florentine woolen cloth had decreased significantly in the Ottoman market. To solve this problem, the anonymous author, like his contemporaries, argued that it was necessary by all means to restore trade

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<sup>759</sup> ASFi, MM 27/III, fol. 1090v.

<sup>760</sup> Archivio Capponi alle Rovinate, Firenze (hereafter ACRF), Lettere e documenti di vari Capponi XXX (II), cc. 60r, “Relazione, non datata e non sottoscritta, sul decadimento dell’arte della lana in Firenze e sulla possibilità di riavviarla mediante il riattivare i traffici con Costantinopoli.” I am grateful to Niccolò Capponi for sharing these documents from the Capponi family archive with me.

<sup>761</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 179-181.

relations with the Sublime Porte, as this would be of great benefit to Florence, and also to the Tuscan ports of Livorno and Pisa. Ships carrying all sorts of commodities from the Levant could safely sail to Livorno. As the distance between Livorno and Florence was short, the goods, especially textiles, could then be easily transported between the two cities. Tuscan middlemen and manufacturers could sell silk and woolen cloth and, in return, would receive a considerable amount of gold and merchandise. The emphasis of this anonymous report was thus on two main issues: the necessity of reviving the woolen cloth industry, and the importance of the Levantine trade for that revival.

All these observations and suggestions seem to have carried weight with the grand duchy. A letter written by Florentine senator Niccolò di Giunta to another senator of the time, Giovambattista Capponi, indicates that the possibility of restarting diplomatic relations with the Ottoman court had also been addressed by members of the Senate. Giunta, in his letter, discussed the necessity for Florence of exporting commodities, i.e., woolen and silk cloth and other merchandise, and emphasized the importance of the Levantine market for Florentine exports.<sup>762</sup> Moreover, he also shared with Capponi his views concerning a possible diplomatic attempt by the grand duchy to negotiate with the Ottoman court:

I have heard that in the Levant they [the Ottomans] intend to expand and reorganize their trade, that they are granting comprehensive safe conduct to all nations who ask for it. I believe that the grand duchy at this time should send a Florentine to the Levant, as a private person, to obtain safe conduct on behalf of all Florentine merchants, with major and better conditions and more guarantees for protection of the persons and commodities of Florentines [in the Ottoman domains], so that they might go and trade their commodities and buy merchandise anywhere in the Levant.<sup>763</sup>

Giunta believed that the *Arte della Lana* should cover all the expenses of a Florentine merchant for this journey. Based on the report the merchant would give on his return to Florence, the grand duke could decide whether to send a permanent representative to Istanbul and make a greater effort to negotiate with the Ottoman court. Giunta also noted that there were currently various opinions in the Ottoman Empire

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<sup>762</sup> ACRF, Lettere e documenti di vari Capponi XXX (II), cc. 62r/v “Breve rapporto, non datato, mandato da Niccolò di Giunta a Giovambattista Capponi,” (without date).

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.: “E sentendo ch’in Levante desiderano di accrescere e riordinarvi li negozi, e pero concedono larghissimi salvicondotti a ogni nazioni che li domanda. Sarei d’oppenione che S.A. Ser.ma per hora consentissi che in Levante andassi un Fiorentino, come privata persona, e procurassi in nome di mercanti fiorentini un ampio salvocondotto con le maggiori, e miglior condizione, e con piu sicurtà che potessi haverlo per le persone, e beni de Fiorentini che qualsivoglia loco di Levante andassino mercantilmente con mercanzie o per comprare mercanzie.”



regarding the grand duchy; thus it would be expedient for the grand duke to authorize an initial investigation of the situation in a manner that would entail little expense and less risk. Following Giunta's advice, the grand duchy sent a Florentine merchant, Antonio Vecchietti, to the Ottoman capital to negotiate with the grand vizier regarding trade privileges for Florentine merchants. This effort, although received favorably by the Ottoman court, did not reach any conclusion as a result of interference by the French ambassador. However, in the years following, the grand duchy continued to seek ways in which to improve diplomatic relations and trade contacts with the Ottoman administration, culminating in the negotiations of 1598-99.

The members of the *Arte della Lana* also carried out initiatives to put an end to the continued decline of the woolen cloth industry. Besides meeting the expenses of Antonio Vecchietti's diplomatic mission to Istanbul, they sent Ludovico Canacci to Venice in the same year for industrial espionage. Canacci was supposed to penetrate the circles of artisans and entrepreneurs there and gather information about the organization of the woolen cloth industry and the types of woolen fabrics produced by the Venetians for the Levantine market. The longtime presence of the Venetians in the Ottoman market had enabled them to gain significant experience and insight regarding the expectations of consumers there, which put them in a highly advantageous position vis-à-vis their rivals. The Florentines were intending to adapt their products to suit the consumption patterns of the Levant by imitating the Venetian woolens that were produced for Ottoman consumers. Canacci was successful in his mission and sent a detailed report to Florence covering all the relevant issues. In addition, he also obtained approval to develop Florentine versions of some new manufacturing equipment he had seen in Venice, which would be of great value for the woolen cloth industry.<sup>764</sup>

An archival document from the same year (1592) also indicates how closely the grand duchy tracked the Venetian textile production for the Levantine market.<sup>765</sup> A detailed list was compiled of the quantities and types of Venetian textiles that were exported to Constantinople, Syria, Alexandria (Egypt), Hungary, Bosnia, Morea, Corfu and Candia. Among the exports to Constantinople were *scarlatti* (heavy silk cloth), *pavonazzo di grana* (silk cloth dyed using an inferior quality dye to produce a crimson color), and woolen fabrics of various qualities. It was noted that Ottoman merchants

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<sup>764</sup> Luca Molà, "Artigiani e brevetti nella Firenze del Cinquecento," in *Arti Fiorentine: La grande storia dell' Artigianato, vol. III: Il Cinquecento*, eds. Franco Franceschi and Gloria Fossi (Firenze: Giunti, 2000) p. 59.

<sup>765</sup> ASFi, MM 27/III, fol. 1070-1071.

reached Venice via Ragusa and brought camlet and raw silk with them; in return they purchased Venetian woolens and silk cloth. To Syria and Egypt as well, woolen fabrics of different qualities and a variety of silks in different colors, from crimson and dark green to purple and black, were exported; in return, Venetians bought raw silk from Armenian merchants and pepper and spices from Egyptian merchants. This list, clearly the product of meticulous enquiry, provided the grand duke with precise information not only about the amount of woolen cloth produced in Venice for the Levantine markets but also about the types and quality of fabrics preferred in different parts of the Ottoman Empire, and the commodities they were exchanged for.

Yet despite all these efforts, Antonio Vecchietti's attempt at negotiation did not succeed. And in the following period, the Florentines faced even fiercer competition in the international market. Although they made efforts to adapt their production techniques to changing fashions and demands, they had difficulty keeping up with their rivals in the woolen cloth export market. As a last resort, they again turned to the Levant and attempted to gain access to the Ottoman market. Beginning in 1597, contacts with Ottoman officials were reestablished, and in the early summer of 1598, a Florentine merchant named Neri Giraldi was sent to the Ottoman capital in order to negotiate trade privileges for Florentine merchants and to invite Ottoman merchants to trade in Livorno, with similar privileges.

The *Arte della Lana* and the *Arte della Seta* met the expenses for the entire negotiation process. In a letter to the director of the *Arte della Lana*, Grand Duke Ferdinando emphasized the particular importance of these negotiations for both guilds, and listed the expenses in detail, from the payment to be made to the Ottoman envoy Mustafa Agha and for his travel expenses back to Istanbul, to the gifts for the Ottoman court as well, to Florentine representative Neri Giraldi's expenses for his mission to the Ottoman capital.<sup>766</sup> There was a growing desire to expand into the Levantine market, on the part of not only the woolen cloth industry but the silk cloth industry as well. Already by the end of the sixteenth century, an upsurge in market demand for silk cloth had impelled manufacturers to turn their focus to silk fabrics.<sup>767</sup> In the following section, Florentine–Ottoman diplomatic relations will be discussed in the context of silk cloth production in Pisa and the emergence of Livorno as a trade entrepôt.

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<sup>766</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 59 r/v (2 July 1598).

<sup>767</sup> Paolo Malanima, "An Example of Industrial Reconversion," p. 69.

### **Pisa, Livorno, and the Ottoman Connection**

As already mentioned, as of the early sixteenth century most of the trade in the Eastern Mediterranean had come under the control of Ottoman merchants, who were able to gain supremacy vis-à-vis foreign merchants. European merchants were urged to conduct their trade activities in the Ottoman realm through “intermediaries with the language, business, diplomatic, and legal skills necessary to handle transactions for them.”<sup>768</sup> Sephardic Jews living in the Ottoman lands took on a particularly active role in international trade as a result of their familiarity with both European and Eastern languages and customs as well as their familial and business contacts, which helped them connect the local market to the international one.

From the second half of the sixteenth century, the struggle among the Italian and other European states was less about controlling the Ottoman trade bases than attracting to their port cities the Ottoman merchants who had taken control of the Levantine trade. The policy followed by Mehmed II after the conquest of Constantinople, which in order to revive the imperial economy aimed to attract foreign and local merchants and artisans to the city by means of offering privileges,<sup>769</sup> was this time adopted by the Italian rulers, who sought to make their cities centers of international trade and exchange. At first, the competition was between Ancona, which was the main market for the export of Florentine textiles, and Venice. After the mid-sixteenth century, Venice in fact came to the fore as the main center of international trade, attracting merchants from all over the Mediterranean. But it did not take long for the Florentines to rival the Venetians. Under Cosimo I, in order to develop Pisa and Livorno, privileges were offered to merchants and agents who would come and trade in the Tuscan ports and in Florence. Besides reviving the economy and producing prosperity, another important aim of these privileges was to import raw materials and transfer the expertise necessary to develop certain industries more easily. This can be seen in the case of the Duke of Ferrara, who in 1538 invited merchants and agents of all nations to develop certain industries in Ferrara, including the textile and soap-making industries.<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>768</sup> Jonathan Israel, “Diasporas Jewish and non-Jewish and the World Maritime Empires,” in *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History*, ed. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou (Oxford, 2005) p. 8.

<sup>769</sup> İnalçık, “The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspects of the Ottoman Economy,” pp. 207-208.

<sup>770</sup> Luca Molà, “Il mercante innovatore,” in *Il Rinascimento Italiano e L'Europa, vol. IV: Commercio e cultura mercantile*, ed. Franco Franceschi, Richard Goldthwaite and Reinhold Mueller (Treviso: Angelo Colla Editore, 2007) p. 629.

In the 1560s and 1570s a number of Jewish merchants of Levantine and Ponentine (western-Portuguese and Spanish) origin settled in Pisa, Livorno, and Florence thanks to the privileges offered by Cosimo I in 1551; however, due to restrictions on Jews in Tuscany or even their expulsion and attempts to ghettoize them in Florence, Cosimo's project did not have much success.<sup>771</sup> It was only under Ferdinando I de' Medici that solid steps were taken to encourage Ottoman merchants to come and settle in Livorno and Pisa. The so-called "Livornina," a charter declared by Ferdinando I de' Medici, provided the legal framework for privileges granted to merchants from all nations, especially the Jews, residing in the Ottoman lands. The charter, which is regarded as "a significant document of tolerance," assured the merchants that they could settle with their families in Pisa and Livorno for twenty-five years without any impediment or molestation; they would be exempt from taxation and would have freedom of trade and storage facilities, as well as a relative degree of freedom of religion.<sup>772</sup> One of Ferdinando's motives in issuing such a charter was to vie with the Venetians, who had in 1589 granted both the Levantine and Ponentine Jews privileges to settle permanently in Venice.

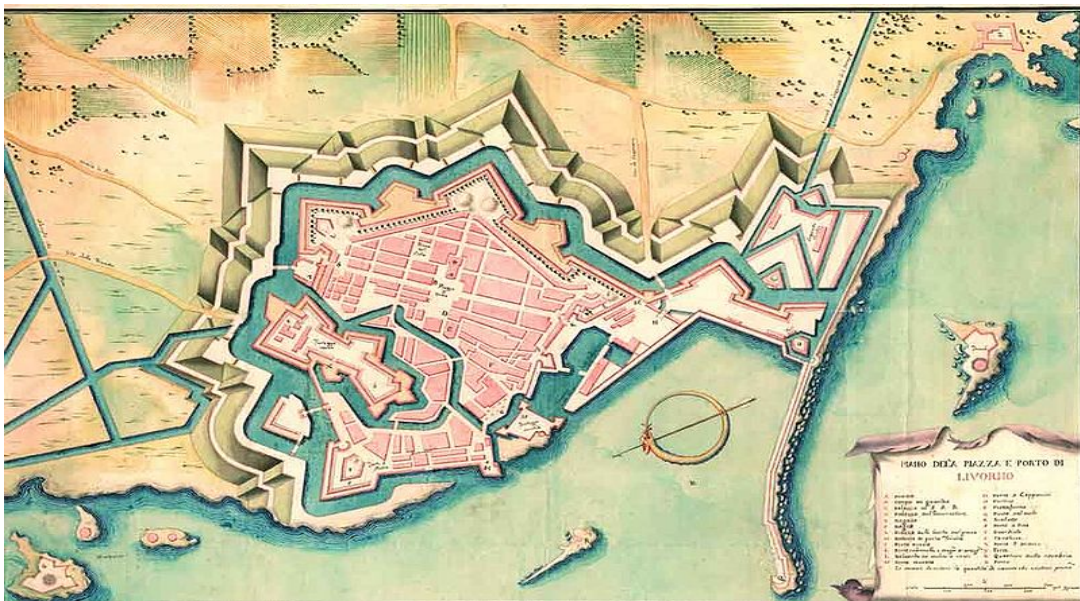


Figure 15: Map of Fortifications of Livorno, 17<sup>th</sup> c.

<sup>771</sup> Shlomo Simonsohn, "International Trade and Italian Jews at the Turn of the Middle Ages," *Proceedings of the Italia Judaica Jubilee Conference* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) p. 237; Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence: The Construction of an Early Modern Jewish Community* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006) pp. 104-118.

<sup>772</sup> L. Frattarelli Fischer, "Livorno città nuova: 1574-1609," p. 886; Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs*, p. 30.

In the diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman court (in 1592 and in 1598/1599), the grand duke's main emphasis was on inviting and encouraging Ottoman merchants to come to Tuscan ports by offering them the same privileges that Florentine merchants would have in the Ottoman lands. Ferdinando's invitation was especially welcomed by the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, who offered strong support to both of these rounds of negotiation. Although neither effort came to any conclusion, by the latter part of the sixteenth century Jewish communities were already residing in Pisa and Livorno. After the failure of the first diplomatic attempt, in one of his letters to his wife, Christine of Lorraine, dated 1593, Grand Duke Ferdinando wrote that quite a number of Jewish merchants had departed from Constantinople with their families and possessions to come and stay in Pisa.<sup>773</sup> Unfortunately there is no information concerning the response of the Ottoman administration to this development. But there seems to have been significant migration to Pisa, especially among those active in the textile sector, with the view of reviving the wool and silk industries of the grand duchy.<sup>774</sup>

Under Ferdinando I, Pisa became an important center of textile manufacturing and trade, particularly for the silk cloth industry.<sup>775</sup> In contrast to the decline of the woolen industry, there was a rise in the production and trade of silk cloth during this period. The Florentines compensated for the lack of Persian raw silk by turning to alternative suppliers in southern Italy. Sicily and Calabria in particular became the main suppliers for the Florentine silk industry. However, the Florentines were not without rivals in these markets. Genoese merchants were also obtaining a significant portion of the raw silk for the production of Genoese velvets from these cities.<sup>776</sup> Consequently, the grand duke encouraged the cultivation of mulberry trees (*gelsicoltura*) so that raw silk could be produced locally. The silk industry was promoted to such an extent that the annual output of silk cloth rose from 2,000 pieces (*drappi*) in the mid-fifteenth century to 10,000 pieces in the early seventeenth century.<sup>777</sup> In the late sixteenth century in particular, there was a boost in silk cloth production, and, unlike Florentine woolens, Florentine silks

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<sup>773</sup> ASFi, MdP 596, fol. 288 (22 May 1593); Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto: Ebrei a Pisa e Livorno, secoli XVI-XVIII* (Torino: Zamorani, 2008) p. 90.

<sup>774</sup> L. Frattarelli Fischer, "Livorno città nuova: 1574-1609," p. 890.

<sup>775</sup> Paolo Malanima, "An Example of Industrial Reconversion," p. 69.

<sup>776</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 72-88: In the second half of the sixteenth century, Venetians would also become interested in importing raw silk from these places.

<sup>777</sup> Paolo Malanima, "L'Industria Fiorentina in Declino fra Cinque e Seicento: Linee per Un' Analisi Comparata," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell' Europa del '500 vol. I: Strumenti e veicoli della cultura Relazioni politiche ed economiche* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983) p. 298.

successfully maintained a presence in foreign markets. In the words of Galluzzi, “even as trading posts for woolen cloth were lost, those for silk cloth expanded satisfactorily.”<sup>778</sup>

This was also related to the ability of Florentine silk cloth producers to adapt to changing consumption patterns. In the case of woolen cloth, the Florentines lost the market to the Venetians and, later, to the English and the Dutch, who successfully adapted to the shifts in consumer taste and began to produce “cheaper, simple and less durable new draperies” instead of heavy, expensive woolen fabrics.<sup>779</sup> The Florentines were not able to do this as quickly. As related above, they did devise a new type of woolen cloth, *rascie*, which brought some temporary success; however, in the long run, the industry failed to adapt to the changing demands of the international market and was unable to foresee “the marked trend of textiles towards ever-lighter cloths.”<sup>780</sup> This, however, was not the case for silk cloth production, as the Florentines here followed the changes in consumption habits and kept up with fashion, which was “a significant determinant of consumer markets.”<sup>781</sup> Part of the reason for this success were the incentives offered by the grand duke in inviting to Tuscany artisans and producers from various parts of Italy and the Mediterranean for the purpose of reviving the economy and invigorating the textile industry.<sup>782</sup> To Pisa came the Lucchese and the Genoese to offer expertise for the silk industry and the Venetians to produce glass and crystal. Levantine Jews also provided a spur to the textile industry, and to the leather industry as well.<sup>783</sup> These people, who wanted to expand their businesses or avoid the difficulties in their home markets, migrated to Pisa and brought with them know-how regarding textile manufacturing and information about consumption patterns in the Levant.

Florentine diplomatic efforts during the time of Ferdinando I sought not only to revive the woolen cloth trade but also to export Florentine silk fabrics to the Ottoman Empire. The privileges offered to Ottoman merchants, and especially to Jewish

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<sup>778</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo II, p. 468; “A misura che le manifatture di lana perdevano di smercio e di credito, quello di seta crescevano di stima.”

<sup>779</sup> Jordan Goodman, “Tuscan Commercial Relations with Europe 1550-1620: Florence and the European Textile Market,” in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell’ Europa del ‘500 vol. I: Strumenti e veicoli della cultura Relazioni politiche ed economiche* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983) p. 333.

<sup>780</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, “The Florentine Wool Industry in the Late Sixteenth Century: A Case Study,” *Journal of European Economic History*, 32/3 (2003): 549-550.

<sup>781</sup> Beverly Lemire, “Introduction: Fashion and the Practice of History A Political legacy,” in *Force of Fashion in Politics and Society: Global Perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp. 1-11.

<sup>782</sup> Franco Franceschi and Luca Molà, “Regional states and economic development,” in *The Italian Renaissance State*, eds. Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), pp. 458-466.

<sup>783</sup> Rita Mazzei, *Pisa Medicea: L’Economia Cittadina da Ferdinando I a Cosimo III* (Firenze: Olschki, 1991) p. 20; 35.

merchants, to settle and trade in Livorno and Pisa were targeted at re-establishing the trade links between Tuscany and the Ottoman market. Moreover, the grand duchy also hoped to benefit from these merchants and agents in terms of the information they could provide on consumption patterns, tastes, and demand in the Levant. Some Levantine Jews considered this an opportunity to further their own interests and proposed to the grand duke and his officials that they would introduce new technologies or the production of new types of silk cloth that would suit the tastes of the Ottoman market. For instance, the Levantine Jewish craftsman Mattedia Menachem proposed to the secretary of state, Lorenzo Usimbardi, that he would bring his technological expertise in textile production, and thus introduce new techniques with which to produce different types of silk cloth:

I have in mind to introduce to the industry some types of silk fabrics never used or produced in this city before, but I would like to obtain a privilege from your Highness in order not to expend my labor for the benefit of others, and most of all, because for these kinds of inventions it is necessary to make many trials before they are brought to perfection; for ten years no merchant could be allowed to produce them if not under my order or at my request for the benefit of my merchants in the Levant and other parts....[Moreover] there will be ways to attract every day new kinds of silk fabrics used in the Levant to be produced here, and this will bring about fruitful sales.<sup>784</sup>

Menachem was given a patent in 1595 for a new method of weaving silk fabrics that he introduced from the Levant.<sup>785</sup> Menachem's case is important in many ways. First of all, it indicates the intense rivalry between the Italian and Ottoman textile industries. It suggests that in order to compete with Ottoman domestic producers and also with the Venetians, the Florentines encouraged agents like Menachem to move to Tuscany so that they could introduce new techniques and produce imitations of the fabrics that were most consumed in the Levant market, and at a cheaper price in order to compete with their rivals.

Through their familiarity with changes in material culture and consumption patterns and their ability to provide advice and information about current fashions and varieties of cloth, Menachem and other agents acted as mediators in the exchange of technical knowledge and consumption habits. Thus, by means of the Livorno and Pisa

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<sup>784</sup> ASFi, MdP 865, fol. 175 (19 February 1594): “[H]avrei in mente introdurre nell’arte alcuni sorti di drapperia non piu usata in questa citta ne fatta mai, ma che vorre ottener gratia da S.A. per non impiegare la mia industria per altri, et massime in tali inventioni sendo necessario spender in farci molte prove prima che se ne venga in perfettione, che per anni X nessun mercante ne potesse fabbricare se non ad istanza mia in commodo delli miei mercanti di Levante et altre parti....[N]on mancherà modo far venir ogni giorno nuove sorti di drapperia che si usa in Levante, per poterle essercitare qua, il che causara l’espeditone della drapperia felicemente.”

<sup>785</sup> Luca Molà, “Artigiani e brevetti nella Firenze del Cinquecento,” p. 59.

projects, the grand duchy aimed not only to promote the flow of trade but also—with the aid of the Levantine merchants, whose transnational networks offered connections between the domestic and foreign markets—to encourage the diffusion of information and technical know-how between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire. Menachem was an important figure in Florence, acting as a representative in relations between the grand duke and the Sephardic Jews in Tuscany. Moreover, together with his contacts in Ancona, he acted as a mediator between the Ottoman court and the grand duchy. The letters of Mustafa Agha, the Ottoman envoy in the diplomatic negotiations of 1598, reveal that the exchange of information between the two courts was conducted through Menachem and his relatives in Ancona.<sup>786</sup>

Menachem's case was indeed not the only example of such exchanges taking place between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire. During this period, there was an increase in requests for patents on inventions and new techniques related to the weaving of new kinds of fabrics. In 1595, Abraham Israel, a Levantine Jew, and Jacob Cavaliere proposed to the grand duke their project for producing fustians and cotton cloth and asked for his support. Grand Duke Ferdinando not only backed their proposal but urged them to expand the initiative into a large enterprise within a short period of time.<sup>787</sup> To this end, they were granted privileges for ten years and exemption from customs duties.<sup>788</sup> Abraham Israel had close connections in the Ottoman Empire: he had agents in some Anatolian cities and had himself formerly resided in Istanbul with his brothers, where they served the Ottoman court.<sup>789</sup> Thus, through their extended networks, the Levantine Jews facilitated all sorts of exchanges, including that of various kinds of skills and techniques, between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire. Despite the failure of diplomatic negotiations, these informal merchant networks and alliances enabled interactions in the areas of production and design along with the circulation of technical know-how between the two states, especially with regard to luxury textiles. Moreover, even though the grand duchy was not able to obtain trade privileges from the Sublime Porte, there was actually a remarkable export of Florentine silk cloth to Levantine markets during this period, as Malanima has argued.<sup>790</sup> The failed diplomacy and deteriorating relations with the

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<sup>786</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 483-485 (15 Giugno 1599).

<sup>787</sup> Luca Molà, "States and crafts: relocating technical skills in Renaissance Italy," in *The Material Renaissance*, ed. Michelle O' Malley and Evelyn Welch (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007) pp. 140-141.

<sup>788</sup> Mazzei, *Pisa Medicea*, p. 39.

<sup>789</sup> Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto: Ebrei a Pisa e Livorno*, p. 101.

<sup>790</sup> Paolo Malanima, *La Decadenza di Un'Economia Cittadina: L'Industria di Firenze Nei Secoli XVI-XVIII* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982) p. 264.



Sublime Porte seem to have had relatively little impact on the export of silk cloth. Among the Florentine patrician families, the Riccardi family, which had abandoned woolen cloth production to invest in silk cloth, was active in this branch of trade during the 1590s. In order to maintain his commercial interests in the Levant, Riccardo Riccardi in fact paid a considerable amount of money to the Ottoman envoy Mustafa Agha for his services during the Tuscan–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations.<sup>791</sup>

However, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, the attitude of the grand duchy toward the Ottoman Empire grew overly confrontational, and the failure of the Tuscan–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations in 1599 can be considered a turning point in this context. When all diplomatic means had been exhausted upon the failure of Ferdinando I de' Medici's final attempt, which ended in a humiliating manner, the grand duke sought other means to realize his goals. The Levantine market remained attractive to the Florentines, especially in terms of the raw materials it offered for the textile industry. Persian raw silk was still in high demand in Italy; between 1590 and 1604, the Venetians procured a large amount of raw silk from Aleppo. It should be noted that the amount of raw silk imported by the Venetians during this period was five times higher than the amount imported in the late fifteenth century.<sup>792</sup> This great rise demonstrates the growing importance of Persian silk for the Venetian textile industry. Although under Ferdinando I the Florentines had started to grow mulberry trees in Tuscany, they too still needed to procure raw silk from foreign markets for their textile industry.<sup>793</sup>

After the failure of the diplomatic negotiations, the galleys of St. Stephen increased their piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean; the grand duchy was essentially compensating for its loss of trade in the Levant by pillaging Muslim ships and vessels. Thus, in this period Livorno adopted an antagonistic stance toward Ottoman merchants. In Cochrane's account, Ferdinando probably calculated that his interests were better served by selling in Livorno the goods captured from Ottoman ships by the galleys of St. Stephen than they would have been by putting an end to the piracy of his knights and gaining the favor of the Ottoman court through careful diplomacy.<sup>794</sup>

The grand duke also sought another route for gaining access to the Levant market so as to obtain raw materials and open up new outlets for Florentine textiles in Syria and

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<sup>791</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 276; Paolo Malanima, *I Riccardi di Firenze. Una Famiglia e un patrimonio nella Toscana dei Medici* (Firenze: Olschki, 1977) p. 89.

<sup>792</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>793</sup> Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>794</sup> Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973) p. 113; p. 173.

other Levantine ports; this consisted in supporting local rulers who rebelled against the Ottoman administration, such as Canboladoğlu Ali, the governor of Aleppo, and the Druze Emir Ma'noğlu Fahreddin (Fakhr al-Din).<sup>795</sup> As early as 1603, Canboladoğlu Ali established contact with Ferdinando, offering the grand duke trade privileges in return for military support in his revolt against the Ottomans. This presented a good opportunity for the Medici, as the Tuscans would benefit from the establishment of a self-governing state in the Levant, specifically in Aleppo. However, with the defeat of Canboladoğlu by the Ottomans, the expectations of the Florentines came to naught.

They then turned their focus to Fahreddin, an ally of Canboladoğlu. Fahreddin became an influential provincial ruler in the early seventeenth century.<sup>796</sup> In his early years, his cooperation with certain influential factions at the Ottoman court enabled him to advance his own power and extend his control over the key ports at the coast of Syria and Palestine.<sup>797</sup> These ports were especially important in terms of the easy access they offered to not only raw silk but grain as well.<sup>798</sup> Tuscany had already faced serious grain shortages in 1596-97.<sup>799</sup> For this reason, in 1608 the grand duchy offered an alliance to Fahreddin in return for joining a crusade. This led to the planning of a naval expedition with the participation of Florentine galleys. Fahreddin himself stayed in Florence for five years (1612-1618) under the protection of the grand duke. He presented Ferdinando with numerous gifts, with the intention of receiving his support for the establishment of his own kingdom within the Ottoman Empire. In 1615 Emir Fahreddin established control over his territory independent of the Ottomans, ruling there until 1633, during which time he granted privileges to the Medici for the export of grain, cotton, wool, and raw silk.<sup>800</sup> Fahreddin's rule, however, came to an end when he was executed by the Ottomans; this

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<sup>795</sup> Concerning the relations between the Ottoman administration and local rulers in the Arab provinces, see Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Changes in the Relationship between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Syrian Provinces from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, eds. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1977) pp. 53-73; Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "The Revolt of Ali Pasha Janbulad (1605-1607) in the Contemporary Arabic Sources and its Significance," *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi Bildiriler*, vol. III (Ankara: TTK, 1983) pp. 1515-1534; Mücteba İlgürel, "Canbolatoğulları," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 7 (1993): 144-145; Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats. The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) pp. 189-220; Bruce Masters, "Semi-autonomous forces in the Arab provinces," in *Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume III: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006) pp. 186-206.

<sup>796</sup> Feridun Emecen, "Fahreddin, Man'οğlu," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 12 (1995): 80-82; Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2008) pp. 70-71.

<sup>797</sup> Alessandro Olsaretti, "Political Dynamics in the Rise of Fakhr al-Din, 1590-1633: Crusade, Trade, and State Formation along the Levantine Coast," *The International History Review* 30/4 (2008): 718-719.

<sup>798</sup> Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs*, p. 33.

<sup>799</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>800</sup> Alessandro Olsaretti, "Political Dynamics in the Rise of Fakhr al-Din," pp. 737-38.

put the grand duchy in a difficult position. The Medici support of Fahreddin created further tension in the relations between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire during this period, and the cases of Canboladoğlu and Fahreddin were not the only ones where the grand duchy took a position opposing the Ottoman administration.

The grand duke also provided support to Sultan Yahya, a son of Sultan Mehmed III and brother of Sultan Ahmed I, who claimed to be the rightful heir to the Ottoman throne. In contrast with the fifteenth-century claimant Cem Sultan, however, Sultan Yahya did not have enough influence so as to create an international crisis to the detriment of the Ottomans, as European rulers had their doubts and did not credit his self-proclaimed identity and cause. The grand duchy, however, seriously considered the possible benefits it might have if Sultan Yahya ascended to the throne and gave full support to his cause, even hosting this “Ottoman sultan” in Florence.<sup>801</sup> All these developments demonstrate how relations between the two states came to be in a state of constant conflict and antagonism from the early seventeenth century onward.

### Conclusion

During the period 1537 to 1600, the Medici rulers did not follow a stable or consistent Levant policy, as a result of the changing political and economic dynamics in the Mediterranean. The preceding detailed examination of this period has demonstrated that until the end of the 1550s, the duchy was able through diplomacy to maintain both the Habsburg alliance and the economic advantages of the Levant trade. However, with the establishment of the Order of St. Stephen, the duchy’s anti-Ottoman activities, which had previously been conducted secretly, became more visible and concrete. The participation of these galleys in various expeditions against Ottoman forces led the Ottoman administration to end the official diplomatic representation of the Florentine state in the Ottoman realm, which also restricted the trading activities of the Florentine merchants. The Florentines’ place in the Ottoman market was quickly filled by local merchants as well as by the Venetians and the French, who strongly countered Florentine diplomatic efforts by using their own diplomatic influence at the Sublime Porte.

In order to understand Tuscan–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations in the second half of the sixteenth century, it is necessary to evaluate them in the context of the fierce

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<sup>801</sup> Angelo Tamborra, *Gli Stati Italiani, L’Europa e Il Problema Turco Dopo Lepanto* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1961), pp. 70-72.

commercial competition over the Mediterranean and Levant markets. By extending its borders and legitimating its authority with the title of grand duchy, Florence gained a prominent position in the Mediterranean during this period. Yet, the grand duchy's attempts to carve out a niche for itself in the Ottoman market failed, due not only to the interventions of other rival powers but also to problems in navigating the complex ways of conducting diplomacy with the Ottoman court. Nonetheless, as has been discussed, exchanges and continuing interactions between the two states were achieved through informal merchant networks and cross-cultural agents. The following two chapters will examine Florentine–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations in the 1570s and 1590s in depth, with a particular emphasis on the negotiation process itself and the role of the various mediators who took an active part in the diplomacy.

## CHAPTER V

### Medici-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations (1573-1580): What Went Wrong?<sup>802</sup>

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Florentine state were shaped largely by shared political and commercial interests, with the rivalry between Florence and Venice a constant theme. From the first quarter of the sixteenth century, changes in the political and economic situations diverted Florence's focus from the eastern to the western Mediterranean. The restoration of Medici rule with the support of Emperor Charles V realigned Florence with the Habsburgs politically; this also gave the Florentines greater commercial opportunities in Habsburg-controlled markets. During the 1560s they dominated European markets with their new *rascia fiorentina* cloth. But meanwhile, their trade in the Levant was waning significantly.

It was only after the War of Cyprus (1570-73) that the Florentines decided to open a new chapter in their diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. Facing growing competition and even a declining share in Western markets, the grand duke and, more importantly, the *Arte della Lana* found attractive the idea of restoring the once-profitable woolen cloth trade in Ottoman lands by renewing their former commercial privileges. The War of Cyprus inflicted a serious blow on the friendly relations between the Venetian Republic and the Sublime Porte, putting the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the position of a potential ally and trading partner that could take the *Serenissima's* place in the Ottoman market. Thus, various overlapping political and economic factors resulted in the resumption of Florentine-Ottoman diplomatic negotiations, after a hiatus of almost a decade since the departure of Florentine *bailo* Albertaccio degli Alberti from Istanbul in 1565.

Very few historians have discussed this negotiation process in detail. One such scholar, Sergio Camerani, has made use of archival and printed sources to examine the diplomatic missions of the Florentine representative Ludovico Canacci (1574) and the

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<sup>802</sup> A shortened version of this chapter has been published in *The Grand Ducal Medici and The Levant*, eds. Maurizio Arfaioli and Marta Caroscio (Turnhout: Brepols/ Harvey Miller, 2016), pp. 19-31.

Florentine ambassador Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi (1578), and has published transcriptions of the draft capitulations. As the activities of the Order of St. Stephen's galleys were the main source of conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany during that time, Camerani looked at the two missions in this context, viewing the grand duke's expressed desire to renew commercial privileges with the Ottoman Empire while at the same time refusing to take any responsibility concerning the anti-Ottoman activities of the galleys as a "cunning attitude."<sup>803</sup> Furio Diaz offered a similar interpretation, suggesting it was "simply hypocrisy" to attempt to negotiate a commercial agreement with the sultan while allowing the galleys to remain in the Mediterranean.<sup>804</sup> Neri and Niccolò Capponi called the galleys a "stumbling block" for the negotiations. Using as their source a report written by Gianfigliuzzi, the Capponis concluded that the negotiations reached "a dead end" due in part to the intrigues of the Venetian and French ambassadors, and also to the opposition of Ottoman Grand Admiral Kılıç Ali Pasha (Ucchiali or Occhiali in Italian), who was particularly adamant concerning the galleys.<sup>805</sup>

This present account approaches the issue from a different perspective. Focusing principally on the negotiation process itself, it analyses relations between the Florentine representatives and the Ottoman administrators at the individual level. As such, it looks beyond the sultan and the duke to consider the vital roles played by various individuals—including ambassadors, dragomans, agents, merchants, court officials, renegades, and Jewish mediators—in the negotiations. These intermediaries served as a bridge between the two polities and became the principal determiners of this long-running negotiation process. When viewed from this perspective, it becomes evident that Tuscan–Ottoman relations during this period were shaped not only by the conflict over the galleys of St. Stephen, but also quite significantly by these mediators and their individual interests and personal rivalries. This focus on the mediators not only offers insight into the mechanisms of early modern diplomacy but also provides a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons these negotiations failed.

Many and varied documents pertaining to the negotiations are held in the *Mediceo del Principato* collection in the State Archive of Florence. They include letters and reports of Florentine envoys and representatives, letters of the grand duke, and translations of

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<sup>803</sup> S. Camerani, "Contributo alla storia dei trattati commerciali fra la Toscana e i Turchi," pp. 83-101.

<sup>804</sup> Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana- I Medici*, p. 259.

<sup>805</sup> N. Capponi and N. Capponi, "The Order of St Stephen Pope and Martyr and the 1578 Tuscan-Ottoman Peace Talks," *Settecento* 18 (2006): 50-51. I am grateful to Niccolò Capponi for sharing this article with me.

letters of the Ottoman sultan, grand vizier, and other officials. Additional letters and reports related to the negotiations are in the *Carte Strozziane* and *Miscellanea Medicea* collections. Lastly, a long *relazione* penned by Gianfigliuzzi in 1579 concerning his mission in Istanbul provides a very rich source of information, shedding light on various aspects of the negotiations from the Florentine ambassador's perspective. Thus we have at our disposal sufficient documentary material from which to draw a comprehensive picture of the negotiation process, dating back as early as 1573 and continuing (with gaps) to 1580. These documents are not merely formal, impersonal diplomatic reports and missives. On the contrary, they offer interesting personal insights into varied aspects of the negotiation process. In addition to these Florentine sources, the Venetian *bailo*'s letters to the Senate and the *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* are of particular value. Though exhibiting their own flaws and biases, they often complement the Florentine sources, both closing lacunae and providing an alternative account of the negotiations. Finally, various Ottoman chronicles of the period, in particular Mustafa Âli's *Künhü'l-ahbâr* (*The Essence of History*) and İbrahim Peçevi's *Tarih-i Peçevi* (*Peçevi's History*), are enlightening in the sense that they reflect the views of different factions at the Ottoman court and indicate the existence of internal divisions in the Ottoman administration.<sup>806</sup>

### **Dragoman Mahmud Bey and the Preliminary Contacts**

The first step to reestablish Florentine–Ottoman diplomatic contacts was taken by an Ottoman official: Mahmud Bey, chief dragoman of the Sublime Porte. Dragomans or *tercümans* had a high-ranking position in the Ottoman administration; they not only acted as interpreters during audiences at the Ottoman court but also conducted diplomacy in foreign states. In that respect, they functioned as diplomats and ambassadors for the sultan. Most were Muslim converts of European origin; their knowledge of European languages and familiarity with European customs made them ideal for such missions.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>806</sup> The author of *Künhü'l-ahbâr*—a work intended to cover the history of the world from the creation to 1599—was historian and bureaucrat Mustafa Âli (1541-1600). Born in Gallipoli—Gelibolu in Turkish—he was thus also known as Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli. He based his account of Ottoman politics for the years 1566-1599 on his own observations. İbrahim Peçevi (1574-1649), of Bosnian origin, was born in Pécs (Hungary). His work *Tarih-i Peçevi* covers the period from 1520 to 1639. While Peçevi made use of the works of earlier authors for the years 1520-1566, for the years 1566-1639, he relied primarily on eyewitnesses and his own observations.

<sup>807</sup> Concerning the role of dragomans in diplomacy and intelligence gathering, see Gábor Ágoston, “Information, ideology, and limits of imperial ideology: Ottoman grand strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry,” pp. 75-103; Emrah Safa Gürkan, “Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560-1600,” pp. 107-128.

Born in Vienna as Sebold von Pibrach, Mahmud Bey was most likely taken captive by the Ottomans at the Battle of Mohács in 1526.<sup>808</sup> During his career as a diplomat–interpreter at the Ottoman court, which lasted from as early as 1541 until his death in 1575, Mahmud Bey played an active role in diplomatic matters concerning Hungary and Transylvania, and also conducted missions to Vienna, Poland, Venice, and France.<sup>809</sup> In addition, given his knowledge of both German and Latin, he was able to make significant contributions to cultural mediation through his translation activities, acting as a “Renaissance go-between.”<sup>810</sup>

In 1569 Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha sent Mahmud Bey to France to conduct negotiations with King Charles IX. He was accompanied by French representative Claude du Bourg, who had been sent to Istanbul to request the renewal of his country’s capitulations from the Ottoman government and improve the relations between the two states, which had undergone a temporary deterioration after the establishment of close ties between France and Spain in 1567-68. The French representative was able to obtain the capitulations;<sup>811</sup> however, he caused friction in the Ottoman capital by being at odds with Grantrie de Grandchamp, the French ambassador, as well as with banker Joseph Nasi, a close friend of Sultan Selim who was in addition the lender of a significant amount of money to Charles IX. Du Bourg instead looked to gain the favor of the grand vizier, a rival of Nasi’s.<sup>812</sup> According to Braudel, du Bourg was able to obtain the trade treaty and had it in hand on his way back to France with Mahmud

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<sup>808</sup> Pál Acs, “Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad, Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan’s Interpreters,” in *Europe und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. B. Guthmüller and W. Kühlmann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000) p. 309.

<sup>809</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>810</sup> His compilation *Tarih-i Ungurus* (History of Hungary), based on medieval Hungarian chronicles, constitutes an important example of this. He also had an interest in contemporary European works and obtained books providing current cartographical and other information on various countries. Tijana Krstić, “Of Translation and Empire: Sixteenth-century Ottoman imperial interpreters as Renaissance go-betweens,” in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (New York: Routledge, 2012): 130-142; Gábor Ágoston, “Information, ideology, and limits of imperial ideology: Ottoman grand strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry,” p. 87.

<sup>811</sup> Interestingly enough, Claude du Bourg also offered his services to the Genoese and the Florentines in their negotiations with the Ottoman court. For his letter to the grand duke of Tuscany, ASFi, MdP 570 fol. 186 (4 January 1572) and his letter to the Genoese, ASG, AS, Oriente Costantinopoli 2774 A (without date): “Memoriale di Claudio Dubourg, cavalier e consigliere del Re di Francia, andata a Costantinopoli per ragioni di traffico/concessione di privilegii commerciali ai genovesi.” In his letter to the Genoese, du Bourg promised to obtain for their merchants the same commercial privileges the French had received from the Ottoman sultan: “[ ] offerisse anchora ottenir e impetrare del gran turco suficiente comandamento e capitulation per la quale sara concesso a gli genovesi potere andare e tornare per tutti gli luoghi sottoposti al ditto turco tanto per conto di mercantia...godendo gli ditti genovesi delli medesimi privilegii e capitol accordati alli ditti francesi per il ditto grande turco e sui antecessori.”

<sup>812</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 1076; Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. IV (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1976-1984) pp. 944-950.



Bey.<sup>813</sup> However, the animosity he had aroused in Istanbul displeased the French king, who wrote a letter to the grand vizier stating that only de Grandchamp was authorized to oversee French interests in the Ottoman Empire. Calling du Bourg a troublemaker who had deliberately sown discord between de Grandchamp and the grand vizier, Charles requested that the latter arrest du Bourg and hand him over to the ambassador.<sup>814</sup> Apart from this, the arrival of an Ottoman envoy in France at this particular time constituted an issue of concern for the king. When du Bourg and Mahmud Bey arrived in Venice on January 16, 1570, the French agent received a sharply worded note from Charles, telling him not to bring Mahmud Bey and his retinue into France. There was already turmoil in the kingdom as a result of the war going on against the Huguenots. Charles IX was looking for the support of Spain and the papacy; the arrival of the Ottoman envoy at this critical moment would further complicate everything.<sup>815</sup> Consequently, du Bourg left for France alone while Mahmud Bey remained in Venice. When the War of Cyprus broke out at the beginning of March, he and the eight other Ottomans in his retinue found themselves imprisoned by the Venetians in response to the Ottomans' detention of Venetian *bailo* Marcantonio Barbaro and the Venetian consuls in Syria and Egypt. Mahmud Bey was at first confined to his house in Venice; later, he and two of his attendants were taken to the Castle of San Felice near Verona. Only after a three-year imprisonment did he gain his release as a result of the peace treaty signed between Venice and the Ottoman Empire on March 7, 1573.<sup>816</sup>

Following this Mahmud Bey forged contacts with Vincenzo Banchieri, a Florentine merchant commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici to purchase antiquities, curiosities, and other precious objects in Venice.<sup>817</sup> At the same time Banchieri was collecting medals, bronzes, and rare plants and animals on behalf of the grand duke, he also seems to have been acting as a political agent.<sup>818</sup> Venice, situated between the East and the West, served as a global hub of commercial exchange during this period; it was in addition at crossroads of local and international information networks.<sup>819</sup> Many agents

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<sup>813</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 1076.

<sup>814</sup> Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. III, pp. 96-97 footnote (9 February 1570).

<sup>815</sup> Charrière, *Négociations*, vol. III, p. 99; Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 1076.

<sup>816</sup> Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. IV, pp. 970-71; 1049. Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, pp. 163-164.

<sup>817</sup> ASFi, MdP 589, fol. 154 (20 June 1573), fol. 159 (27 June 1573); MdP 590, fol. 293 (12 July 1573); MdP 591, fol. 236 (8 August 1573); MdP 595, fol. 169 (23 December 1573).

<sup>818</sup> Even though Cosimo was still alive during this period, Francesco headed the government.

<sup>819</sup> Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice, Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007) pp. 5-6.

and merchants also acted as spies, gathering intelligence about Venice and other states on behalf of a range of foreign powers. Banchieri was one of these merchants-cum-spies, collecting information for the grand duke.

Through the mediation of a nobleman who was a close friend, Banchieri met Mahmud Bey. The Ottoman diplomat, assumedly feeling vengeful toward the Venetians, proposed that Banchieri write to the grand duke about reopening negotiations with the Ottoman court with the object of renewing the capitulations, so that a Florentine *bailo* could reside in Istanbul, as before, and Florentine merchants could trade freely and securely in Ottoman lands.<sup>820</sup> It appears that both Banchieri and this nobleman (whose name is not indicated in the correspondence) were parts of a wider network of collectors and dealers in Venice, which Mahmud Bey used in an attempt to establish diplomatic contacts with the grand duke. In the course of this attempt, he gave Banchieri a box of *terra sigillata*, which was among the most prestigious and valuable imperial gifts the Ottomans presented to foreign rulers.<sup>821</sup> Given the grand duke's great interest in rare objects and natural curiosities,<sup>822</sup> this would seem to have been an astute diplomatic move.

In his letter to the grand duke, Banchieri noted that Mahmud Bey was quite sincere and eager to assist in opening negotiations, and was being very careful to keep the matter secret from the Venetians, who would consider such an attempt detrimental to the position of their own merchants in the Levant.<sup>823</sup> The Ottoman envoy himself wrote two letters in Latin addressed to Francesco. In the first, he emphasized the great benefits that could result from negotiations with the Ottomans and also offered his services, promising to do whatever he could to ensure that the sultan confirmed the capitulations. In the second, he urged the grand duke to write a letter to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha concerning the renewal of privileges for the Florentines and even provided a draft in Latin indicating what the content of the letter should be.<sup>824</sup> As Banchieri saw it, Mahmud Bey's primary motivation in this matter was a desire for vengeance against the Venetians, who had held him in prison for three years.<sup>825</sup> Though this may have been true, Mahmud Bey most

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<sup>820</sup> ASFi, MdP 588, fol. 194r (9 May 1573).

<sup>821</sup> ASFi, MdP 588, fol. 142r (21 May 1573): "una scatola di terra sigillata contro al veleno."

<sup>822</sup> J. R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici*, pp. 145-147; Valentina Conticelli, "*Guardaroba di Cose Rare et Preziose*," *Lo Studiolo di Francesco I de' Medici: Arte, Storia e Significati* (Lugano: Agora Publishing, 2007).

<sup>823</sup> ASFi, MdP 588, fol. 143r/v (23 May 1573).

<sup>824</sup> ASFi, MdP 588, fol. 264r- 265r. (without date).

<sup>825</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 30: "per vendicarsi con li venetiani che lo havevano tenuto qua prigione."

probably made these overtures with the knowledge of the grand vizier. Thus, the Ottoman envoy became the initiator of the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations.

Along with Mahmud Bey, the unnamed nobleman mentioned above (who according to Banchieri had great affection for the grand duke) also encouraged the negotiations, noting that sending a *bailo* to Istanbul would make it easier for the grand duke to gain control of the market in Syria.<sup>826</sup> During this period, Tripoli in particular had become an important port for European merchants, who sold European textiles (woolens and silks) and in return bought spices, raw silk and cotton there. As long as the Venetians controlled Cyprus, they had easy access to the ports of Tripoli, Beirut, and Alexandria; the island also functioned as “a transit center for other European merchants who did not have privileges to trade in the Ottoman lands.”<sup>827</sup> As a result of the War of Cyprus, Venetians not only lost one of their most important trading bases in the eastern Mediterranean but also their advantageous position in Tripoli and other Syrian ports.<sup>828</sup> The prospect of replacing the Venetians in these ports was certainly an attractive one for the Florentines. The grand duke therefore received Mahmud Bey’s unofficial offer to assist in reopening negotiations with the Ottoman court positively, and sent letters to the sultan and the grand vizier along the lines he had suggested.

Both the sultan and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha welcomed the grand duke’s request for friendship, as their responses indicated. The sultan’s answer came in the form of *firman*, in which he decreed that the grand duke could send his merchants and ships to the Ottoman realm and appoint a *bailo* for the Florentine nation as long as he was a friend to the sultan’s friends and an enemy to his enemies.<sup>829</sup> The grand vizier sent a letter in which he, too, stated that the Sublime Porte was always open to those who asked for peace and

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<sup>826</sup> ASFi, MdP 591, fol. 179r (29 August 1573): “Quel gentilomo affezionato a Vostra Altezza, mi ha detto che se Vostra Altezza manderà il Bailo in Costantinopoli, che darà uno modo facile che Vostra Altezza si impatronirà di tutta le mercanzie de la Soria.”

<sup>827</sup> Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, p. 347.

<sup>828</sup> Crete was another important trading base of the Venetians in the Eastern Mediterranean. When they lost Cyprus, they conducted their Levantine trade through Crete.

<sup>829</sup> A copy of Sultan Murad III’s *firman* (decree) to the grand duke is in BOA, MD 23:603 (10 February 1574). See also, Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. III/2, p. 146 f. 2: “Hâlâ südde-i saâdet-mekân ve atebe-i aliyemize...âdemin gönderüp arz-ı dostluk ve ubûdiyyet ve izhâr-i muhâleset ve rûkiyyet idüp memâlik-i mahrûsemize ticâret için gemilerin göndermeğe ve irsâl olunacak bâzergânlarınız konsolosluk itmek için bir mu’temedün–‘aleyh âdemin göndermek hususunda icâzet-i hümayûnumuz rica idüp ve minbâd yüce Âsitânemizin dostlarına dost ve düşmanlarına düşman olmak târikiyle davâ-yı sadâkât ve muhâleset izhâr eylemissin. İmdi hâlâ muradunuz üzere âdemlerin südde-i saâdetime ve bâzergânlarınız memâlik-i mahrûsemize gelmekte icâzet-i âli-nihmetimiz mukârin olmuşdur. Buyurdum ki vüsul buldukta muradın üzere südde-i saâdetimde mektubun ile âdemin ve gemiler ile bâzîrgânların gönderip ve bazîrganlarınız konsolosluk edecek adamı tayin edip minbâd dahi tacirleriniz memalik-i mahrûsemize gelip gitmek hususunda ruhsat verip cade-i ubûdiyyet ve ihlasta sâbitkadem olasız.”

showed goodwill.<sup>830</sup> In other words, as long as the grand duke did not collaborate with the Habsburgs in the Mediterranean and the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen did not engage in further hostile activities against Ottoman ships or merchants, peace and friendship could be established between the two states, and the Florentine merchant community could conduct trade in Ottoman lands without disruption.

### **Hacı Mustafa, Ludovico Canacci, and an Inconclusive Negotiation**

The sultan's and grand vizier's responses were brought to Venice by court dragoman Hasan Bey and "a nobleman of the Great Master of the Turks" known as Hacı Mustafa. The two men had stopped in Venice to conduct negotiations with the doge, and in the meantime contacted Banchieri to ask for a safe-conduct so that they could continue on to Florence and deliver the documents to the grand duke by hand.<sup>831</sup> Hasan Bey, a convert of Italian origin (from Lucca), had translated the communications from the grand vizier and the sultan into Italian. Hacı Mustafa, an Ottoman merchant engaged in the trade of luxury products in Venice, was most likely merchant-cum-spy like Banchieri.<sup>832</sup> Banchieri's letters give some idea of the extent of Hacı Mustafa's network and the nature of his trade. For instance, in one letter, Banchieri mentions that in Venice Hacı Mustafa had purchased four cases of brass objects and two cases containing approximately one thousand scimitars. This had been possible since he had a special license to obtain these items abroad, free of import duties; in fact such military equipment normally could be obtained because the law forbade Ottoman citizens to trade in military goods.<sup>833</sup> This makes it appear likely that Hacı Mustafa was a court merchant (*hassa taciri*) who was in Venice to trade on behalf of high-level officials like Sokollu Mehmed Pasha or to make purchases for the imperial palace. In return, he had brought Turkish horses to sell. The term *hassa tacirleri* refers to merchants sent to foreign countries by the sultan or high-ranking court officials in order to purchase goods for the palace. These merchants had

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<sup>830</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 2. The grand vizier's letter was translated into Italian by dragoman Hasan Bey (8 February 1574).

<sup>831</sup> ASFi, MdP 598, fol. 111r/v (17 March 1573); fol. 112r (20 March 1573); MdP 598, fol. 299 (30 March 1574).

<sup>832</sup> Ottoman administrators made wide use of such individuals to gather intelligence in Christian states. Another example was Mahmud Abdullah Frenk or Gabriel Defrens; for this, see Susan Skilliter, "The Sultan's Messenger, Gabriel Defrens; An Ottoman Master-Spy of the Sixteenth-Century," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 68 (1976): 47-59.

<sup>833</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 110 r/v: "Lui melo ha confessato che ha comprato 4 casse di ottoni lavorati, et 2 casse di scimatarre che sono a numero mille, et ha hauto licenza di cavarlo fuori et senza gabella che tali armi non si possano cavar che cie pregiuditio de la Porta(?) et è gran male perche guiranno contro a cristiani."

special status, having protection and privileges in foreign states and the goods they brought were exempt of taxes and customs duties.<sup>834</sup>

Although he did receive a safe-conduct to visit Florence, Hacı Mustafa gave up on doing so since the grand duchy was in conflict with the dukedom of Ferrara at the time, and Hacı Mustafa would have to pass by the latter in order to reach the former. As the route would not be safe, the documents were sent through a courier instead.<sup>835</sup> As had Mahmud Bey, Hacı Mustafa offered his services to the grand duke for the negotiations in Istanbul; he also presented Francesco with some of the beautiful Turkish horses.<sup>836</sup> The documents arrived safely, and to express his satisfaction as well as to secure future cooperation and assistance from Hacı Mustafa, the grand duke sent him a gift of money and a scarlet robe.<sup>837</sup> In return, Hacı Mustafa promised to do his best to forward the negotiations at the Sublime Porte.<sup>838</sup> Banchieri's letter also informs us that Hacı Mustafa asked Banchieri to propose that the grand duke appoint him the Florentines' dragoman in Istanbul. In making this request, the Ottoman intermediary stressed the high favor in which he was held by Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.<sup>839</sup> By thus pointing to his network and of connections, Hacı Mustafa not only indicated how indispensable he could be for the grand duke in the negotiations but also used the situation to attempt to carve out a niche for himself.

Meanwhile in Florence, preparations for the diplomatic mission to the Ottoman capital were getting underway. On 30 April 1574, Francesco I sent another letter to the grand vizier concerning the renewal of capitulations with an additional clause.<sup>840</sup> In this clause, he noted that Florentine merchants had been trading in the Ottoman realm for

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<sup>834</sup> The *Mühimme* registers contain a lot of references to *hassa tacirleri*. For instance see *BOA, 5 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, docs. 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316 include valuable information regarding the court merchants sent to Moscow to buy fur and other commodities. Particularly in the decrees sent to the rulers of Moscow (doc. 1312) and Poland (doc. 1313), the sultan asked for protection, trading privileges and tax exemption for Ottoman court merchants travelling to these states as a sign of friendship and loyalty of these states to the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>835</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 95 (17 April 1574) Letter of Hacı Mustafa. Also MdP 599, fol. 110r.

<sup>836</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 94r (14 April 1574): "boni et bei cavalli turchi"

<sup>837</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 281, Letter of Hacı Mustafa: "200 scudi d'oro e una veste di scarlata foderata di damasco cremisino."

<sup>838</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 281 (28 April 1574).

<sup>839</sup> ASFi, MdP 599, fol. 298r, Letter of Vincenzo Banchieri (28 April 1574).

<sup>840</sup> G. F. Pagnini, *Della Decima e delle altre gravezze della moneta e della mercatura de' Fiorentini, Parte III. Della mercatura*, Tomo 2, p. 283 (30 April 1574): "La nostra natione per il passato ha negoziato lungo tempo nelle parte di Romania & il medesimo sarebbe per l'avvenire ogni volta che la potessi sicuramente & senza pericolo mandar in quel paese le sua robe & mercantie, quale non potessino esser arrestate ne molestate per qualsivoglia accidente di guerra del Serenissimo Gran duca di Toscana o d'altri Signori & Potentati o da danni che nascessino dall' Armata, Galere, & altri Vascelli del prefato Gran Duca o della sua Religione de Cavalieri di S. Stefano, per esser cose dependente da principi & non da mercanti & privati."

more than one hundred years. Given this long friendship, he requested that any conflict between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany or the Order of St. Stephen and the Ottoman Empire should not be allowed to affect Florentine trade in Ottoman lands or ports, his reasoning being that such conflicts or wars had nothing to do with the merchants or trade but rather with the rulers. Thus, contrary to the expectations of the Ottoman administration, the grand duke chose to make a distinction between state policy and commercial interests. In so doing, he indirectly declared that the grand duchy's galleys would maintain their presence in the eastern Mediterranean, and that Florence might collaborate with other powers against the Ottoman Empire; however, these state-level actions should not be attributed to the Florentine merchants conducting trade in the Levant.

The main supporters of this diplomatic effort were in fact the members of the *Arte della Lana*, who wanted to revive Florence's woolen cloth industry through reinvigoration of the Levant trade. Thus, it was they who took the lead in negotiating with the Ottoman court, with Ludovico Canacci, a Florentine merchant dealing in woolen cloth, being entrusted with the task of negotiating with the Ottoman court.<sup>841</sup> The *Arte della Lana* and the *Conservadori sopra le Cose di Levante* provided Canacci with detailed instructions as to how he should proceed. First, he should seek out Hacı Mustafa, who would be in Ancona or Ragusa, and would accompany him to the Ottoman capital via a quick and secure route. Throughout his journey, he was not to talk to anyone about his mission. He was also instructed to express his gratitude to Hacı Mustafa and make efforts to gain his favor. When Canacci arrived in Istanbul, he was to call upon the grand vizier and persuade him to confirm the capitulations, informing him that should such confirmation be granted, the *bailo* would offer the sultan 500 *fiorini* as a pledge of the good intentions of the Florentine nation.<sup>842</sup> In addition, Canacci was to go to Pera and find the convent of Zoccolanti friars, where the original copies of the previous Florentine capitulations were

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<sup>841</sup> As mentioned in Chapter IV (pp. 52-53), the *Arte della Lana* would also send Canacci to Venice in 1592 in order to spy on the production of woolen cloth, especially that destined for the Levant.

<sup>842</sup> M. Grignaschi suggests that the amount presented to the sultan by the Florentine *bailo* was at one time 100 *fiorini*, increasing to 200 *fiorini* as of 1507. "Una Raccolta inedita di 'Münşeat,'" p. 107

preserved.<sup>843</sup> There, he should obtain an undated document, insert the additional clause, and have it confirmed by the sultan as an authentic copy.<sup>844</sup>

Canacci set out for the Ottoman capital in early May; Hacı Mustafa accompanied him from Ragusa to Istanbul. The archive contains only one letter by Canacci from this period, which provides quite limited information concerning the negotiations.<sup>845</sup> Therefore, most of the details about his audience come from Hacı Mustafa, who arrived in Venice after the negotiations and sent a letter to the grand duke via Vincenzo Banchieri. In his letter, Hacı Mustafa stated that he did all he could to make sure Canacci's audience at the Ottoman court went well. The grand vizier, he wrote, was indeed very much pleased with the audience (*ha havuto grande contento et allegrezza*) and agreed with all the proposed clauses except the one added by the grand duke concerning the galleys of St. Stephen.<sup>846</sup> He objected to this newly added clause because its terms did not seem fair: the galleys could attack the Ottomans but the Ottomans could make no reprisal against the grand duchy.<sup>847</sup> It was less than helpful that at the very time Canacci was negotiating with the Ottoman court, the galleys had sailed toward the coast of North Africa and seized five Muslim vessels, taking captive 176 people. And on August 7, the admiral of the galleys, Tommaso de' Medici, set out again for North Africa and caught an Ottoman brigantine carrying victuals for the Ottoman fleet. In the following months, the galleys of the Order continued their hunt in the Mediterranean, seizing eleven Muslim ships and capturing around three hundred prisoners.<sup>848</sup> Thus, word that the grand duke's galleys had captured Ottoman ships and subjects reached the Ottoman court in the midst of the negotiations. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha responded to the news with these words:

If your Serenity would like to be on good terms and in friendship with the highest and most-happy emperor of the Muslims, and the Florentine nation wishes to conduct trade in the Ottoman domains, it is necessary for you to avoid giving any help either by land or by sea to the enemies of the Sublime Porte.<sup>849</sup>

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<sup>843</sup> From a letter sent to the Zoccolanti friars on 7 May 1574, we learn that the previous *bailo*, Albertaccio degli Alberti, had left these and other documents in the convent before departing from the Ottoman capital in 1565. Pagnini, *Della Decima e delle altre gravezze della moneta e della mercatura de' Fiorentini, Parte III. Della mercatura*, Tomo 2, p. 285.

<sup>844</sup> Pagnini, *Della Decima*, p. 284: "Istruzione a voi Lodovico Canacci di quanto haverete a trattare nel viaggio vostro in Levante" (7 May 1574).

<sup>845</sup> ASFi, MdP 665, fol. 351r (19 September 1574) Ludovico Canacci's letter to the grand duke.

<sup>846</sup> ASFi, MdP 666, fol. 212r/v Hacı Mustafa's letter (4 October 1574).

<sup>847</sup> ASFi, MdP 666, fol. 212r: "Ma solo di uno cap.lo non si contenta, quale non li pare honesto, de le Galere di V.A., le quale le arma, et vengano contro di esso, non volendo ancora esso che le sue venghino contro a V.A."

<sup>848</sup> Marco Gemignani, "Diplomazia e Marina Stefaniana nell'epoca di Francesco I de' Medici," pp. 86-87.

<sup>849</sup> ASFi, MdP 4279, fol. 12r/v (4 August 1574) Letter written by dragoman Hürrem Bey on behalf of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha: "Se la Serenita V[ost]ra desidera di essere in la buona protettione e amicitia dello altissimo e felicissimo imperatore dei musulmani e che la natione di quella abbia il comertio per tutto

So in the end, despite the efforts of the *Arte della Lana*, Canacci returned to Florence empty-handed, as the grand duke had held his ground on the issue of the galleys of St. Stephen.<sup>850</sup> During the years 1574 to 1576, the galleys increased their activities in the eastern Mediterranean, seizing around ninety Ottoman vessels and four Ottoman warships; they captured two hundred Muslims and liberated one hundred Christians.<sup>851</sup> But even while the struggle between the galleys of St. Stephen and Muslim naval forces was going on in the Mediterranean, the grand duchy continued to look for ways to restore diplomatic relations with the Ottoman court. Around the end of 1575 a certain Camillo came to Istanbul to talk to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha about resuming the negotiations.<sup>852</sup> Subsequently, there seems to have been a hiatus in such attempts until 1577, when another Florentine representative was sent to the Sublime Porte to present a letter from Francesco I de' Medici.<sup>853</sup> This time, the grand duke would adopt a more conciliatory approach, emphasizing the mutual benefits the agreement would bring to the two states and providing a new explanation concerning the galleys of St. Stephen.

### **A New Attempt, with a New Justification**

In the spring of 1577 Pietro Ammannati was sent to the Ottoman capital as Florentine envoy. He was quite familiar with Istanbul, as he, along with his patron Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi had been captured by the Ottomans at the Battle of Lepanto and spent part of his captivity in the Porte. He was known among the merchants in the city as "Moreto."<sup>854</sup> In the view of Venetian *bailo* Giovanni Correr, an illiterate common soldier like Ammannati was not an appropriate person to be entrusted with conducting diplomatic negotiations. However, it seems that this Florentine envoy was shrewd enough to overcome the difficulties inherent in traveling to Istanbul by introducing himself to the Ottoman governors as a French-man carrying a very important letter for the grand vizier. Upon this, he was provided with a *sipahi* (cavalryman) who would accompany him all the way to the city and take him directly to court dragoman Hürrem Bey. Thus, Ammannati

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il suo risguardato paese, essere di necessario guardarsi di non dare aiuto cosi per terra come per mare alli inemici di questa eccelsa porta."

<sup>850</sup> ASFi, MdP 666, fol. 212v.

<sup>851</sup> Giuseppe Gino Guarnieri, *Cavalieri di Santo Stefano*, pp. 115-116; Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. II, p. 877.

<sup>852</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 4-5 (11 December 1575).

<sup>853</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 2.

<sup>854</sup> ASV, SDC 11, fol. 148 r/v (17 June 1577).



arrived in the Ottoman capital safely and in secrecy; he presented the grand duke's letter to Hürrem Bey and through the latter's mediation negotiated with Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. During his stay in Istanbul, he was guest in Hürrem Bey's home.<sup>855</sup>

The letter presented by Ammannati to the grand vizier opened thus:

We have always longed for the friendship, commercial relations, and good contacts that previously existed between the Ottoman sultan and the Florentine Republic, and we would like to restore these in our name and that of our most-happy Tuscan state.<sup>856</sup>

In contrast to what occurred during 1574 mission, in this second attempt the Florentine envoy was able to persuade the grand vizier to reconsider the grand duchy's request to negotiate the proposed capitulations with the Ottoman administration.

The main emphasis of the letter was on the reciprocity of privileges. It was to be guaranteed that the subjects of the sultan could safely enter Tuscany, by land or by sea, without being exposed to any threats.<sup>857</sup> They could bring in their goods, and conduct commercial exchanges wherever they wanted.<sup>858</sup> In return, Tuscan merchants would have the same privileges in the Ottoman realm. One of the main motives behind the grand duchy's attempt to re-establish contacts with the Sublime Porte was a desire to attract Ottoman merchants to the growing Tuscan port of Livorno. The grand duke was seeking to increase his state's maritime trade and make Livorno a major hub of commerce between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe.<sup>859</sup> Privileges to trade in Tuscany had first been granted to Ottoman merchants in 1551, during the rule of Cosimo I de' Medici. These privileges allowed all merchants in the Ottoman Empire to trade in Florence. As related in the previous chapter, this move did not bring about any remarkable results; nonetheless, Medici rulers continued their efforts to attract Ottoman merchants, especially Levantine Jews, as part of their attempt to make Livorno a trading center that would rival to Ancona and Venice.<sup>860</sup> Francesco's emphasis on reciprocity should thus be considered in the context of these efforts.

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<sup>855</sup> ASV, SDC 11, fol. 148 r.; fol. 168r (2 July 1577)

<sup>856</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 3r (29 April 1577): "Habbiamo desiderato sempre che quella amicitia, commercio, et buona intelligenza, che è stata gia tra la M.ta del Gran Sig.re et la nostra Repubblica fiorentina, si rinnovasse in nome nostro et con tutto il nostro felicissimo stato di Toscana."

<sup>857</sup> ASF, MdP 4274, fol. 3r-4r.

<sup>858</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 3r: "[...] i sudditi et vassalli di S. M.ta possino sicuramente entrare nelli felicissimi stati nostri per terra ferma et per mare, senza ricevere alcuno impedimento et in quelli recare loro merci, venderle, barattarle, guardarle et trasportarle sicuramente dovunque a loro piacesse."

<sup>859</sup> Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, "Livorno Città Nuova: 1574-1609," pp. 873-880.

<sup>860</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 16-18.

Yet more importantly, the grand duke in his letter elaborated on the issue of the galleys of St. Stephen—the greatest source of tension between the Tuscan state and the Ottoman Empire. Adopting a defensive posture, Francesco stated that although certain people with malicious intentions might complain to the sultan that the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen were attacking Ottoman ships and ports, and although it was true that his father Cosimo I de' Medici had founded the Order of St. Stephen, its galleys in fact served to the pope and the Catholic king of Spain.<sup>861</sup> Therefore, argued Francesco, he could not on his own abandon or annul the Order. But, he pointed out, he never sent armed galleys against Ottoman subjects and ports himself; however, sometimes Florentine merchant ships were detained in Spanish ports and used for the king's military ventures.<sup>862</sup> In such cases, he could not prevent any attacks that might take place, as the ships were not under his control. In short, Francesco was making the claim that such merchant ships and, more importantly, the galleys of St. Stephen were acting completely outside his authority, and therefore he could not be held responsible for any harm they might inflict on Ottoman ships or merchants.

In this second diplomatic effort, it is clear that the grand duke changed his strategy concerning the galleys. Instead of making a distinction between the grand duchy's state policy (which supported the activities of the Order) and the Florentine merchants' commercial interests, he this time tried to evade any responsibility for the attacks on Ottoman merchants and ships, placing all the blame on the papacy and the king of Spain. The grand vizier seems to have found this argument persuasive, as he responded by suggesting that the grand duke send an ambassador to Istanbul so that the privileges could be renewed and confirmed.<sup>863</sup> The conflict regarding the galleys of St. Stephen was therefore not as insurmountable an obstacle to the opening of negotiations as it had first appeared.

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<sup>861</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 3v: "Religione di Cavalieri fondata dalla fe[lice] mem[oria] del Gran Duca Cosimo de Medici pr[incip]e nostro nel nome di San Stefano per sua devotione et per salute della anima sua, con espresso ordine ch'ella possa tenere sino in XII galere armate, che sieno preste ad ogni comandamento del sommo Pontefice et del Catt[oli]co Re di Spagna, la quale religione non potrebbe da noi essere annullata, o, dismessa senza incorrere nell'ira del nostro Sig[no]re Iddio, et con molta alterazione delli stati nostri."

<sup>862</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 3v: "Perciò quanto habbia a venire dalle nostre mani non usciranno mai legni armati contro alli sudditi et porti di S.M.ta. Vero é che le navi, che habbiamo mercantile sono state talvolta arrestate nelli porti del Re di Spagna et violentemente se ne è servito per sue imprese et disegni, il che per l'advenire potrebbe ancora occorrere, nè noi possiamo obviare a quella forza."

<sup>863</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 2r: "Dunque ricevuto che avete questa nostra amichevole e sincera lettera, siando desiderio vostro di fare amicitia con la felice porta, seghondo il loro eccelso comandamento manderete uno vostro inbasciatore alla loro giusta e eccelsa porta che seghondo che sperate il desiderio vostro sarà accettato e la capitulatione sia confermata." (Translated by dragoman Hürrem Bey)

The issue of the galleys had in fact become of secondary importance, at least to the grand duke, due to another matter that had arisen around this time. A letter written by Francesco and dated 30 May 1577 reveals that his immediate concern was Piero Capponi, a Florentine exile and Medici opponent.<sup>864</sup> The background to this story actually dates back to the time of Cosimo I and originally focused on the Pucci family, another noble family in Florence. Initially the Pucci family had close relations with the Medici. However, the development of a new political culture and new notions of the state—that is, the shift in Florence from a republican political culture to the absolute rule of a prince, as implemented more assertively under Cosimo I—created a group of opponents from among the old Florentine families. Among them was Pandolfo Pucci, who together with other members of the Florentine nobility conspired against Cosimo in 1560. Learning about the plot in time, Cosimo had Pucci captured and executed.<sup>865</sup> But the story did not end there. In 1575 Pandolfo's son Orazio Pucci, wishing to avenge his father's death, plotted to kill Francesco. Again the plot was foiled, this time by Francesco's brother Ferdinando, a cardinal in Rome, who found out about it and informed Francesco. Pucci was arrested and sentenced to death.<sup>866</sup> His accomplices—including Piero—escaped abroad. As it was believed he might take refuge in Istanbul, the grand duke wrote to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, explaining the situation:

Since there remains a certain Florentine Piero d'Alessandro Capponi, who is now hiding in England and most likely to go to Constantinople, as it seems to him much securer, I want to beseech Your Excellency for the return of this wicked man, who is one of the main plotters.<sup>867</sup>

The request was not unprecedented. As related in Chapter I of the present work, in 1478 members of the Pazzi family plotted to assassinate the Medici brothers and succeeded in murdering Lorenzo's brother Giuliano. The assassin, Bernardo Bandini Baroncelli, fled to the Ottoman capital; in answer to a plea from Lorenzo de' Medici, Sultan Mehmed II had Bandini captured and returned to Florence.<sup>868</sup> A century later, Francesco's similar request was made to the grand vizier through the mediation of dragoman Hürrem Bey. Having already taken an active role in the diplomatic exchanges

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<sup>864</sup> ASFi, CS I/97, fol. 218.

<sup>865</sup> Nicholas Scott Baker, "For Reasons of State: Political Executions, Republicanism, and the Medici in Florence, 1480-1560," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 62:2 (Summer 2009): 444-478.

<sup>866</sup> Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana- I Medici*, p. 232.

<sup>867</sup> ASFi, CS I/97, fol. 218: "Hora perche ci resta un certo Piero d'Alessandro Capponi fiorentino rifuggito in Inghilterra et risoluto di passar in Constantinopoli parendogli d'esser piu sicuro, ho deliberato di pregar' V. Ecc.za che attesa la scelleratezza di costui che è uno de principali macchinatori."

<sup>868</sup> See Chapter I, pp. 45-46.

between the two states, Hürrem Bey seems to have collaborated with the grand duke on this occasion as well; in a letter to the grand duke, he indicated that he had informed the grand vizier about the matter and promised that he himself would let the grand duke know should there be any reports of Capponi's presence in Ottoman lands.<sup>869</sup> In actual fact, Capponi was not in Istanbul; his travels took him to Poland, England, and finally France, where he was stabbed by a Medici assassin in 1582.<sup>870</sup> Nonetheless, it can be argued that the Capponi affair—taking place as it did just when diplomatic negotiations were about to get underway—seems to have assisted in bringing the two states closer together.

### **Florentine Ambassador Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi**

Having successfully fulfilled his mission in the Ottoman capital, Pietro Ammannati was able to return to Florence with a positive response. Soon, preparations began to send an official diplomatic legate to the Sublime Porte. Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi was chosen to serve as the principal negotiator for the Medici in their dealings with the Ottoman government. He came from an old Florentine patrician family, which had been active in Florentine politics and diplomacy since the fifteenth century.<sup>871</sup> As a member of the military Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Gianfigliuzzi had received both religious and military training, and participated in the Order's activities against Ottoman naval forces. He saw action with the Order's fleet in 1570 when he attacked the Ottoman galleys under the command of Uluç Ali Pasha en-route from Algeria. Although the attack ended in failure, it marked the beginning of Gianfigliuzzi's adventures. A year later, he fought at the Battle of Lepanto (1571), where he was taken captive by the Ottomans. After some years in Istanbul, he was ransomed by his family.<sup>872</sup>

In 1578 Gianfigliuzzi returned to the Ottoman capital as Florentine ambassador, with the mission of negotiating the renewal of friendly relations and commercial privileges. Besides a distinguished family background in diplomacy, Gianfigliuzzi's previous experience of the city and familiarity with Ottoman culture no doubt recommended him for the position. Indeed, in a letter to the secretary of state, Antonio Serguidi, Gianfigliuzzi displayed his knowledge of sartorial etiquette at the Ottoman court, bemoaning the fact that although he would prefer to wear a short tunic as was the

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<sup>869</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 4.

<sup>870</sup> Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana- I Medici*, p. 232.

<sup>871</sup> V. Arrighi, "Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 54 (2000).

<sup>872</sup> Idem.; Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, Vol. II, Book XXXVII, p. 213.

style in Italy, this would be regarded as inappropriate at the Ottoman court and would make him appear ridiculous to the court ministers and pashas as well as the other foreign representatives, all of whom wore long robes.<sup>873</sup> This suggests that Gianfigliuzzi had been able to observe the Ottoman court during his captivity. At the very least, he was aware of the manners and etiquette at the Porte and made his preparations accordingly.

His letters to the grand duke in 1577 (while he was still in Florence) reveal details about other aspects of the preparation for this diplomatic mission. Meeting with the five members of the Tribunal of Merchandise (*Tribunale della Mercanzia*)<sup>874</sup>—Agnolo Guicciardini, Jacopo Martelli, Giovanni Mannelli, Carlo del Nero, and Filippo Antinori—Gianfigliuzzi discussed and prepared a draft of capitulations.<sup>875</sup> As the tribunal had been established for the purpose of protecting merchants' interests in foreign markets, it “negotiated trade treaties with foreign governments”; thus, the 1578 Ottoman–Florentine negotiations came within its purview.<sup>876</sup> Although the members of the tribunal did not have direct contact with the Ottoman administration, they reviewed the previous capitulations in the context of present concerns of the merchants, with a view to revising them as necessary.

The members of the council were all merchants from patrician families. Agnolo Guicciardini had made investments in the cloth industry and accumulated considerable wealth through the production of woolen and silk fabrics.<sup>877</sup> The Martelli firm was among Florence's principal silk cloth producers in the sixteenth century. The Antinori family was similarly engaged in the production and sale of silk cloth in the first half of the sixteenth century, although their firm went bankrupt in 1588.<sup>878</sup> Thus, all three of these families were engaged in the textile industry and moreover had interests in the Levant market.

One issue discussed by the members of the tribunal concerned the use of the phrase “all Tuscans” (*tutti i Toscani*) in the capitulations. They concluded it should be changed to “all subjects of the grand duke,” as this would enable merchants from Perugia, Lucca, and other towns outside Florentine territories to trade in the Ottoman realm with

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<sup>873</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 8. Letter of Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi, 20 November 1577.

<sup>874</sup> Established in the fourteenth century, the Tribunal of Merchandise was an institution with its own statutes, existing primarily to settle disputes among merchants who were trading abroad, to oversee the security of land and sea trading routes, and to deal with arrangements relating to export and import duties. In sum, the Tribunal was set up to protect merchants' interests in foreign markets and provide legal regulation of their business transactions with each other. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 111-113.

<sup>875</sup> ASFi, MdP 708, fol. 128 r/v (1 March 1577).

<sup>876</sup> Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 113.

<sup>877</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

the same privileges as Tuscan merchants, under the protection of the grand duchy.<sup>879</sup> Gianfigliuzzi informed the grand duke about the alternation, noting that “if, instead of saying Tuscans, it says all subjects of the grand duke of Tuscany, the obstacle for others will in this way be removed.”<sup>880</sup> Other than this change, the tribunal approved the capitulations in their existing form and sent the final version to the grand duke.

Gianfigliuzzi’s preparations also involved finalizing the makeup of the ambassadorial retinue, which was initially to include Girolamo Inghirami, Giulio del Caccia (ambassador at the Spanish court from 1571 to 1576), and an individual referred to as “the Painter” (*il Pittore*). However, due to the increasing expenses of the venture, Gianfigliuzzi decided at last minute to go to Istanbul without the three, whereupon del Caccia wrote a letter to the grand duke objecting to Gianfigliuzzi’s decision, noting that he had already made his own arrangements for the mission.<sup>881</sup> As for the unnamed man, we do not know much about him, but his designation as simply “the” painter implies that he was a well-known artist working in Florence at the time. There seem to be two possible names: Jacopo Ligozzi or Cristoforo dell’ Altissimo, both of whom had some interest in the Ottoman world. During this period, it was a common practice to have painters and artists in ambassadorial retinue, so it would not have been exceptional for Gianfigliuzzi to have included one in his entourage. Moreover, there was a demand for a painter at the Ottoman court; Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had asked Venetian *bailo* Niccolò Barbarigo to find an artist who could paint Western-style portraits of the Ottoman sultans.<sup>882</sup> It may be that Gianfigliuzzi, having heard about this, planned to provide such an artist himself in order to please the grand vizier. But in the end, Gianfigliuzzi gave up on the idea of including a painter in his retinue, instead choosing to be accompanied by the “*cavalieri*” Girolamo Inghirami, Riccardo Riccardi, Domenico Naldini and their servants, as well as the recent visitor to the Ottoman court Pietro Ammannati. The party sent to the *Sublime Porte* had one final member: Jacopo Mormorai, a commission agent in the woolen cloth trade. Should Gianfigliuzzi’s mission prove successful, and the Ottoman administration confirmed the capitulations, Mormorai would serve as the Florentine *bailo* in Istanbul.

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<sup>879</sup> ASFi, MdP 708, fol. 128 r: “Tutti i Toscani potessino liberamente andare negli stati del Gran Sig.re facilmente si verrai a pregiudicare à i sudditi di V.A. venendo compresi i Perugini et Lucchesi e altri, i quali goderebbono i medesimi privilegi senza alcuna loro spesa.”

<sup>880</sup> ASFi, MdP 708, fol. 128 r: “in cambio di dire Toscani, si dica tutti i sudditi del Ser.mo Gran Duca di Toscana, in questo modo sarà levato via l’impedimento degli altri.”

<sup>881</sup> ASFi, MdP 708, fol. 225r (7 March 1577).

<sup>882</sup> ASV, SDC 12, fol. 167r. (3 August 1578). The reign of Sultan Murad III was an interest in Western-style painting; it was also the most fertile period for Ottoman–Turkish painting. Julian Raby, “Avrupa’dan İstanbul’a” in *Padişah’ın Portresi: Tesâvir-i Âl-i Osman* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2000).

## Gianfigliuzzi in the Ottoman Capital

Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi set out for Istanbul in March 1578. Various difficulties along the way delayed his arrival; however, once he entered the Ottoman territories, he was guided and protected by members of the grand vizier's network. For instance, in one letter Gianfigliuzzi reports his arrival in Ceinizza (Caynice), where he found Sinan Bey, *sancakbeyi* of Herzegovina and brother-in-law of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.<sup>883</sup> He was very well received by Sinan Bey, who put his three nephews and a sergeant at his disposal, to accompany him to the Ottoman capital. At last, on June 22, the Florentine ambassador arrived in Pera, where he was welcomed by representatives of other European states, including the Habsburg emperor's ambassador, Venetian *bailo* Niccolò Barbarigo, and the Duke of Naxos, Joseph Nasi,<sup>884</sup> along with a number of Ragusans, Lucchese merchants, and Perots.<sup>885</sup>

Preceding Gianfigliuzzi, a Lucchese ship had arrived on March 21, carrying sizeable trunks that contained presents sent by the grand duke to the sultan and various Ottoman officials. Among the items were crossbows, sheathed scissors, flowers made of gold, feathers and silk, and assorted confectionaries.<sup>886</sup> According to Venetian and French sources, the cargo also included high-quality woolen and silk fabrics, tables with tops of inlaid stone (*pietre dure*), and a beautiful chariot.<sup>887</sup> The grand duke's gifts were indeed spectacular, and Gianfigliuzzi entered the city with pomp; however, not everyone was pleased with his arrival. According to Jacopo Mormorai, the French were not happy with this visit and showed their discontent by neglecting to receive or visit the Florentine ambassador; the Venetians were similarly disgruntled but did a better job of hiding it, with the Venetian *bailo* visiting Gianfigliuzzi's residence and paying him many compliments.<sup>888</sup>

Soon after his arrival, Gianfigliuzzi went to the Ottoman palace accompanied a number of Ottoman janissaries and cavalrymen. Upon entering the *Divan*, he found all the

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<sup>883</sup> ASFi, MdP 711, fol. 10-11 (17 May 1578).

<sup>884</sup> As already noted, he was a Sephardic Jewish banker and merchant, and had also been close to Sultan Selim II. He played an important role in Ottoman-Florentine negotiations, which will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

<sup>885</sup> ASFi, MdP 712, fol. 22 (24 June 1578).

<sup>886</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 21 (21 July 1578) Letter of Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi to the Grand Duke.

<sup>887</sup> ASV, SDC 12, fol. 4v (7 March 1578); E. Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. III, p. 750 fn.

<sup>888</sup> ASFi, MdP 713, fol. 81 (3 July 1578).

viziers assembled there. In a letter to the grand duke, the Florentine ambassador vividly relayed what transpired during this audience:

They [the viziers] made me sit in front of them. After having talked over various issues, I stood up to present to them the capitulations the grand duke was requesting from the Grand Signor. Signor Mehmed Pasha read through them, and when it came to the clause concerning the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen, he said that the grand duke (*Vostra Altezza*) could command the galleys on the condition that they would not engage in piracy. To this, I replied that the Order had its own revenues, separate from those of the grand duke; as it thus maintained itself, it was free, having kept the form in which Grand Duke Cosimo had established it. In addition, it held privileges from the emperor, the king, and other Christian princes. The grand duke was unable to do anything about the Order, except to ensure that its galleys did not harm any vessels that carried goods from other places to unload in the ports of the Tuscan state, provided that they had a license from the grand duke's officials. The grand duke intends that with such licenses (permits), Turks, Jews, and Moors and their commodities will be safe and secure; they will thus be able to come and unload as well as load goods in the ports of the Tuscan state.<sup>889</sup>

As can be seen, Gianfigliuzzi's response echoed the grand duke's line of reasoning, emphasizing the Order's independence from the grand duchy while at the same time guaranteeing safety and security for Ottoman merchants and ships coming to trade in Tuscan ports. After hearing out this argument, the grand vizier said nothing more except to promise, in concert with the other viziers, to do whatever he could to serve the grand duke.

The meeting with the viziers was followed by an audience with Sultan Murad III. Gianfigliuzzi, along with Mormorai and the other Florentine nobles in his retinue, made their reverences to the sultan, kissing the hem of his robe; with Hürrem Bey acting as translator, the Florentine ambassador requested confirmation of the capitulations he had presented to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. Meanwhile, the gifts for the sultan were passed from hand to hand among the courtiers in attendance arousing everyone's admiration.

The sultan was satisfied with this opening to the negotiations and responded with friendly words. He also provided Gianfigliuzzi a daily allowance for his expenses. Thus,

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<sup>889</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 21v (21 July 1578): “[F]acendomi sedere rincontro à loro; et doppo l’haver ragionato di varie cose; levatomi in piedi, presentai le capitulazioni che V. Alt.za Ser.ma chiedeva al Gran Sig.re. Dove il S.or Maometto Bascia le lesse, et sendo arrivato al Capitolo delle galere della religione di Santo Stefano; cominciò a dire che V. Alt.za poteva comandare à dette Galere ch’elle non andassero in corso. Alle quali parole io risposi che la religione teneva le sue entrate e partite da quello di V. Alt.za et che così come del suo si manteneva, così ancora era libera, havendola lassata in questa forma il Ser.mo Gran Duca Cosimo B.M. che la creò. Aggiungendosi ancora à questo li privilegii che essa tiene da S.S.ta dall’ Imperatore et Re, et altri Principi Christiani. Et che V. Alt.za Ser.ma non haveva potuto ottener altro da detta Religione salvo che le Galere non nocerebbero alcun vassello che caricassi in qualsivoglia scala, per andare a scaricare nelli stati di V. Alt.za sempre che havessino patente de ministri di V. Alt.za residenti in qualsivoglia scala, volendo V. Alt.za con tal patenti sieno sicuri Turchi, Ebrei, Mori et lor robe, così per quelle che verranno a scaricare nelli stati di V.A. come per quelle che vi caricheranno.”



the Florentine ambassador's first audience with the sultan had gone quite well. The following day, Gianfigliuzzi paid a visit to Şemsi Pasha, an intimate of the sultan, presenting him with a gift to secure his support. All in all, the Florentine ambassador was quite happy with the proceedings to that point, and expressed his contentment in the first letter he wrote to the grand duke from Istanbul: "By the grace of God, I have been fully satisfied with the sultan, all the viziers, the governor of Greece, and the grand admiral of navy; in sum, with all those with whom I negotiated."<sup>890</sup> Gianfigliuzzi also declared that he was quite hopeful the capitulations would soon be confirmed.

Nevertheless, in a letter written on August 5, little more than two weeks later, the Florentine ambassador seemed to have lost his initial optimism. He reported that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had informed him about some rumors regarding the Florentine galleys; nonetheless, Gianfigliuzzi continued to rely on the grand vizier's support, saying that he hoped to overcome all difficulties with his help. In the following weeks this hope was also dispelled; the grand vizier, who had promoted this friendship between the two states and accepted the Florentines' explanation regarding their position vis-à-vis the galleys of the Order, withdrew his support from Gianfigliuzzi "seemingly" as a result of the rumors afloat that the galleys of the Order indeed belonged to the grand duke and dependent on him.<sup>891</sup> Consequently, Gianfigliuzzi turned to the Jewish doctor Solomon Ashkenazi (whom Sokollu trusted a great deal) and the dragoman Hürrem Bey for help in persuading the grand vizier of the truth of his statements regarding the galleys, and in regaining his support.<sup>892</sup>

### **Two Key Mediators in the Negotiations: Solomon Ashkenazi and Hürrem Bey**

Solomon Ashkenazi and Hürrem Bey played key roles in the Ottoman Empire's diplomatic relations with a number of European states during this period. Their mediation in the Florentine–Ottoman negotiations is particularly illustrative of various facets of diplomacy and diplomatic practice at the Ottoman court. Both of them served for Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, as "right hand men" who operated in his network. Solomon Ashkenazi (ca. 1520-1602) was a rabbi and physician. Born in Udine, he studied medicine at the

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<sup>890</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 22r/v (21 July 1578): "Hora per grazie d'Iddio col Gran Sig[no]re et con tutti li S[igno]ri Visiri, col Beglerbei di Grecia, col Cap[itano] del Mare et in somma con tutti gli altri con quali m'è occorso trattare, ho havuto a pieno sodisfazione."

<sup>891</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 23v/24r (14 September 1578).

<sup>892</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 23v/24r.

University of Padua. Due to the expulsion of Jews from Udine in 1556, he went to Poland to serve as physician at the court of King Sigismund II Augustus. After living in Cracow for a time, Ashkenazi moved to Istanbul in the 1560s and became physician to the Venetian *baili*; he subsequently found his way into the Ottoman court. Through Marcantonio Barbaro and Yunus Bey, respectively the Venetian *bailo* and the chief dragoman at the time, he met Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and was able to enter his service. Ashkenazi soon became one of the grand vizier's close confidants and advisors.<sup>893</sup> He also continued to serve as physician to the Venetian *baili* and ambassadors until his death in 1583.<sup>894</sup>

In Barbaro's view, Ashkenazi was a person of good will, who was working to forward the interests of the Venetian Republic.<sup>895</sup> He engaged in spying activities on behalf of Barbaro, who was imprisoned by the Ottoman administration at the outbreak of Ottoman-Venetian war in 1570. As the *bailo*'s doctor, he was able to visit him and thereby secretly transmit his letters to Venice. Although Ashkenazi was in fact caught in the act more than once, he was saved from death by Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who had adopted a friendly attitude toward the *Serenissima* in the face of opposition from the rival groups at the Ottoman court.<sup>896</sup> Ashkenazi's double agency provided him with the opening to play a key role in the peace negotiations between Venice and the Sublime Porte in 1573.<sup>897</sup> The grand vizier sent him as ambassador to Venice to conclude a peace treaty, which mission he successfully fulfilled.

While Ashkenazi's efforts to restore peace between the two states might be partly rooted in his "attachment to his native country,"<sup>898</sup> personal interests and financial gain also seem to have been significant motives as they were indeed for all mediators taking part in the diplomacy of this period. As a result of his good relations with the Venetian authorities, he was able to conduct commercial dealings of his own between Crete and Poland without difficulty. He in addition promoted the interests of his Jewish brethren in Venice, securing protection for Levantine Jews trading in the city and persuading the

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<sup>893</sup> "Seconda Relazione di Marc' Antonio Barbaro tornado da Costantinopoli nel 1573," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, Appendice*, ed. Eugenio Albèri (Firenze, 1863) p. 400; Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations*, pp. 78-80; Arbel, "Ashkenazi, Solomon," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman Stillman, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 2010) p. 273; Francesca Lucchetta, "Il Medico del Bailaggio di Costantinopoli: Fra Terapie e Politica (Secc. XV-XVI)," in *Veneziani in Levante, Musulmani a Venezia*, pp. 13-16.

<sup>894</sup> Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, p. 35.

<sup>895</sup> "Seconda Relazione di Marc' Antonio Barbaro," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti*, p. 399.

<sup>896</sup> Arbel, *Trading Nations*, p. 79.

<sup>897</sup> Carla Coco and Flora Manzonetto, *Baili Veneziani alla Sublime Porta*, p. 48.

<sup>898</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

authorities to compensate these merchants for losses they incurred during the Ottoman–Venetian war.<sup>899</sup>

Ashkenazi also played an important role in the election of Henry de Valois (Duke of Anjou) to the throne of Poland in 1574. The Ottoman administration supported Henry de Valois in order to secure a ruler friendly to the Ottomans in this neighboring state. Although François de Noailles, the French ambassador in Istanbul, took all the credit when Henry was chosen for the throne, Ashkenazi made no secret of the fact that he had made a significant contribution to this effort by putting to good use his previous experience in Poland at the court of Sigismund II and his connections with influential figures in the government circles there.<sup>900</sup> It thus seems evident that Ashkenazi's past successful involvement in Ottoman diplomacy, in addition to his close relations with the grand vizier, were the main reasons for the Florentine ambassador's decision to ask for his assistance at a point when the trajectory of the negotiation had taken a turn for the worse. Gianfigliuzzi evidently hoped Ashkenazi might be something of a savior for the Florentine cause, with the ability to persuade the grand vizier to change his mind once more concerning the galleys.

Gianfigliuzzi's letter makes it clear that the Jewish physician indeed made great efforts to get the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations restarted. Through his mediation, the Florentine ambassador was able to see the grand vizier again. During this audience, Gianfigliuzzi tried to persuade him that the grand duke had been telling the truth about the galleys in his communications with the Ottomans, and noted that the grand vizier had initially accepted his explanation. However, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha obdurately replied that everyone, including the Venetians, declared that the galleys were in fact commanded by the grand duke.<sup>901</sup> Upon this, the experienced diplomat Ashkenazi proposed that the article on the galleys of St. Stephen be removed from the capitulations in order to resolve the problem. Although the grand vizier did not approve this suggestion either, Gianfigliuzzi nonetheless expressed appreciation of Ashkenazi's efforts.<sup>902</sup>

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<sup>899</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-94; Arbel, "Venezia, gli ebrei e l'attività di Salomone Ashkenasi nella Guerra di Cipro," in *Gli Ebrei e Venezia secoli XIV-XVIII: Atti del convegno internazionale organizzato dall'Istituto di storia della società e dello Stato veneziano della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, 5-10 giugno 1983*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi (Milano: Edizioni Comunità, 1987) pp. 163-190.

<sup>900</sup> Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVIII, p. 107-109; Elli Kohen, *History of the Turkish Jews and Sephardim: Memories of A Past Golden Age* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2007) pp. 106-107.

<sup>901</sup> ASFi, MDP 4274, fol. 24v (5 September 1578); Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo IV, p. 70.

<sup>902</sup> ASFi, MDP 4274, fol. 24v (5 September 1578); fol. 23v-24r (14 September 1578)

Solomon Ashkenazi was not the only person who contributed to forwarding these negotiations. The chief dragoman of the Ottoman court, Hürrem Bey, also played an important role in Ottoman–Florentine diplomatic relations at this time. Like Hasan Bey, he was from Lucca. His Italian (and in fact Tuscan roots), his knowledge of Ottoman diplomatic practices, and his close relations with the grand vizier made him an ideal interlocutor. In addition, he had close contacts with the Florentines in Istanbul, one of them being Pierfilippo Assirelli, a Florentine merchant and secretary to the previous *bailo*, Albertaccio degli Alberti. In a letter, Assirelli noted that Hürrem Bey had great affection and friendship for the Florentine nation, which was reason that the Ottoman dragoman did all he could do to forward the Florentine diplomatic initiative.<sup>903</sup> His cooperative attitude in the Capponi affair (discussed above) and the guidance he provided to Gianfigliuzzi concerning manners at the Ottoman court had indeed demonstrated his favorable disposition toward the grand duchy.

Although Hürrem Bey, like Ashkenazi, was in the end un–able to help the Florentines obtain approval of the capitulations, he did succeed in another matter in which the grand duchy had an interest: assisting the Spanish representative Giovanni Margliani of Milan to obtain one-year truce from the Sublime Porte during the Ottoman–Spanish negotiations in 1578, which would be subsequently renewed until 1587.<sup>904</sup> In his position in the service of the grand vizier, Hürrem Bey promoted the interests of not only the Florentines but also the Spanish Habsburgs, giving Margliani guidance similar to that he provided Gianfigliuzzi, offering information concerning Ottoman diplomatic practices and the notions and expectations of Ottoman dignitaries.<sup>905</sup> Gianfigliuzzi and Jacopo Mormorai in fact kept close tabs on the Spanish representative’s activities. In their letters to the grand duke, they reported that King Philip II had sent him to Istanbul to negotiate a peace or truce with the Ottoman Empire, also observing that Ottoman officials appeared to despise Margliani, describing him as an agent rather than an ambassador, and asked the king to send a proper ambassador—with gifts—to conduct the negotiations between the

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<sup>903</sup> ASFi, MdP 718, fol. 436-37: “[...]Urembei s’e mostro di far tutto per amor et per l’anticha amicitia che sempre ha tenuto con la nostra natione...”

<sup>904</sup> Susan Skilliter, “The Hispano-Ottoman Armistice of 1581,” in *Iran and Islam: in memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, eds. Vladimir Minorsky and Clifford Edmund Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971) pp. 491-515; Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. II, p. 1154.

<sup>905</sup> At around the same time Philip II, being pressed by the conflicts in Netherlands, sought to make a peace with the Ottoman sultan. Concerning the role of Hürrem Bey in Spanish-Ottoman diplomatic relations, see E. S. Gürkan, “Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople,” pp. 112-113; M.J. Rodríguez Salgado, *Felipe II, El ‘Paladín del a Cristiandad’ y La Paz con El Turco* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2004).

two powers.<sup>906</sup> In spite of all the obstacles Margliani faced, the Spanish effort to gain an armistice with the Ottomans concluded in success—an achievement in which Hürrem Bey had an important share.<sup>907</sup>

Somewhat ironically in view of this success on the part of the Spanish representative, Gianfigliuzzi's request for peace and friendship was rejected by the Ottoman court on the grounds that the galleys of the grand duke were aiding the galleys of the enemy—i.e., the Spanish—and inflicting harm on the Ottomans. An incident that occurred around this time also had a considerable influence on the grand vizier's decision, thus changing the course of the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations. Twenty-five Muslim slaves ransomed in Ancona arrived in the Ottoman capital by boat and went to the *Divan*, relating how they had been seized and enslaved by the galleys of St. Stephen and swearing (falsely, in the view of the Florentines) that these galleys were operating under the command of the grand duke.<sup>908</sup> Although the Florentine ambassador refuted these claims, he could not convince the grand vizier of their untruth. The latter asked for an alteration in the clause concerning the galleys, ordering it to be rewritten in such a way as to indicate that the galleys of St. Stephen were indeed under the command of the grand duke, and to require the Florentine ambassador to promise that the grand duchy would not let them commit acts of piracy against the Ottomans. As far as Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was concerned, only if these requirements were fulfilled would the Ottoman court grant the desired privileges to the grand duchy.<sup>909</sup> To Gianfigliuzzi this was unacceptable, as the grand vizier was making these demands on the basis of what he, as Florentine ambassador, regarded as false information. In a letter to the grand duke, Gianfigliuzzi expressed his frustration:

I don't know what else to do, because the inconsistency and infidelity of these people is so enormous that it is not enough to have a reason and explain it. He [the grand vizier] commanded that I should salute Your Highness on his behalf and tell you that he is always ready to serve you. I replied that I would do that but it was necessary for the sultan and the grand vizier to first try the grand duchy; they would always find there loyalty and truth in word, and these were immutable. The grand vizier turned to me, saying that they were not inconsistent but they were indeed deceived. And so I left.<sup>910</sup>

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<sup>906</sup> ASFi, MdP 713, fol. 81. (Letter of Jacopo Mormorai, 3 July 1578)

<sup>907</sup> Susan Skilliter, "The Hispano-Ottoman Armistice of 1581," p. 498.

<sup>908</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 8-14v (26 December 1578).

<sup>909</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 27r/v (25 October 1578).

<sup>910</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 29r: "Io non saprei fare altro, perche l'instabilità et infedeltà di costoro è tanto grande, che non basta haver ragione et dirla. Commessemi che io salutassi V.A. in suo nome con dirla che sarà sempre pronto a servirla. Risposi che lo farei, ma bisognava che il Grand S.re et egli provassero prima

Consequently, Ottoman–Florentine negotiations reached an impasse, and Gianfigliuzzi had to leave the Porte in mid-December 1578 without having accomplished his mission. On his journey back to Florence, Gianfigliuzzi wrote a report (26 December 1578) providing the grand duke with the inside story of the negotiations in the Ottoman capital, including meticulously detailed accounts of how he was received at the Ottoman court, who he spoke with, and what really happened during the process.

### **From Gianfigliuzzi’s Perspective: What Happened behind the Scenes?**

A week after he left Istanbul, Gianfigliuzzi arrived in Ragusa; it was there that he decided to compose this report, in the form of a letter, concerning the negotiations at the Ottoman court, feeling it was not only more convenient but also more secure to write to the grand duke from a location outside the Ottoman Empire. This detailed letter indicates that the negotiation process was in fact disrupted by the opposition of certain parties at the Ottoman court who used the issue of the galleys of St. Stephen as a trump card in their campaign to discredit the Florentine ambassador in the eyes of the sultan and invalidate his request for privileges.<sup>911</sup> Gianfigliuzzi included the names of those who acted either in support of or in opposition to him during the negotiations. According to his account, during his first few days in Istanbul, everyone appeared to be satisfied with his presence and approached favourably to the Florentine initiative with the exception of Grand Admiral Kılıç Ali Pasha, who took a stand against Gianfigliuzzi’s efforts and maintained this antagonistic attitude until the very end.

Uluç Ali Reis (later Kılıç Ali Pasha) (ca. 1500-1587)—or, to give him his former name, Gian Dionigi Galeni—was a renegade of Calabrian origin. It is believed that he was captured and enslaved by the Algerian Ali Ahmed Reis on his way to Naples in 1520. He converted to Islam and entered the service of Turgut Reis.<sup>912</sup> Uluç Ali soon proved his worth in such important naval engagements as the Battle of Djerba (1560) and the Siege

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V.A., la quale troveranno sempre d’una fede et d’una parola, acciò essi non fussero così mutabili. Tornò a rispondermi che non erano mutabili ma che erano stati ingannati. Et così mi licenziai.”

<sup>911</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 6-12.

<sup>912</sup> As related in previous chapters, Turgut Reis was a privateer who later became commander of the Ottoman naval forces as a result of his successful expeditions in the Mediterranean. He was appointed governor of Tripoli during Sultan Süleyman’s reign.

of Malta (1565).<sup>913</sup> After the death of his master Turgut Reis, he became governor of Tripoli in North Africa and showed himself to be a fierce opponent of Christian forces in the Mediterranean. He was appointed grand admiral of the Ottoman navy (*kapudan pasha*) in 1571 after the Battle of Lepanto, in which he was able to save a number of ships from destruction. Because of his achievement, he was given the nickname Kılıç and became Kılıç Ali Pasha.<sup>914</sup> He soon restored the imperial naval forces and organized frequent expeditions along the Italian and Spanish coasts.<sup>915</sup> In charge of the Ottoman navy and responsible for the marine and land administration of not only the Aegean but also the North African shores of the Mediterranean, the *Kapudan Pasha* was more involved in Mediterranean affairs than any other official in the Ottoman administration.<sup>916</sup> Given the fact that Ottoman–Habsburg rivalry was escalating in the Mediterranean, and the Order of St. Stephen, the Knights of Malta, and other Christian forces were the grand admiral’s main opponents at sea, it is not surprising that Kılıç Ali Pasha reacted negatively to the grand duchy’s request for friendship.

At any rate, the main opposition to the negotiations came from the grand admiral. He declared to the sultan that the grand duke’s demand was unjust, since his galleys were conducting hostile activities against the Ottomans. In support of his stance, the grand admiral claimed that the grand duke himself had sent galleons with supplies, troops, and money to aid Sebastian I, the king of Portugal, in his attempted capture of Fez. In fact, this accusation was not without foundation; at around the time of the negotiations, Francesco de’ Medici was supporting Sebastian by sending him money and military engineers. In the end, the king’s venture was a failure.<sup>917</sup> Nonetheless, this news had a serious negative impact on the negotiations, which had apparently begun so well.

Kılıç Ali Pasha’s opposition was not the only factor that caused the negotiations to break down. Other rivals were also operating against the Florentines during the negotiation process. One of the most notable among them was Joseph Nasi who had

<sup>913</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü’l-Kibâr*, pp. 108-119.

<sup>914</sup> *Mustafa Âli ve Künhü’l-ahbâr’ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri*, vol. I, p. 169; Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, p. 351.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid., pp. 352-353; İdris Bostan, “Kılıç Ali Paşa,” in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 25 (2002): 411-412. <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/ayrmetin.php?idno=250411>; Gino Benzoni, “Galeni, Gian Dionigi (Uluch-Ali, Ulucciali) in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 51 (1981) [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-dionigi-galeni\\_\(Dizionario\\_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-dionigi-galeni_(Dizionario_Biografico)/) Last visited on 10 June 2015.

<sup>916</sup> Feridun Emecen, “Some Notes on Defters of the Kaptan Pasha Eyaleti,” in *The Kapudan Pasha His Office and His Domain: Halycan Days in Crete IV, A Symposium Held in Rethymnon 7-9 January 2000*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 2002) p. 253.

<sup>917</sup> Spini, “Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento,” p. 204.

initially acted in a friendly manner towards the Florentine ambassador but soon reversed course, seeing that his rival Sokollu Mehmed Pasha initially supported negotiation with the Florentines. As a Portuguese Marrano, Joseph Nasi offers a good example of hybrid/multicultural identity shifting between different confessions and cultures in the early modern Mediterranean. As related in the previous chapter, after traveling in various European states as a Christian, he came to Istanbul in 1553 with his aunt Gracia Mendes Nasi, a businesswoman of note.<sup>918</sup> On the basis of their substantial financial assets and Europe-wide networks of contacts, the Nasi family gained considerable influence at the Ottoman court. The establishment of a close friendship with Sultan Selim II marked a turning point in Joseph's career at the Sublime Porte, and he became involved in shaping Ottoman foreign policy.<sup>919</sup> Having received the title "Duke of Naxos" from the sultan, Nasi also aspired to become king of Cyprus, which was at the time under Venetian control. For this reason, he along with Lala Mustafa Pasha and Piyale Pasha supported going to war against Venice while Sokollu Mehmed Pasha strongly opposed this move.<sup>920</sup> The enmity between the two men, in fact, originated from this conflict. In the end, the Nasi faction triumphed and the Ottomans entered a war with the Venetians, which in the end did not greatly benefit either side. Although Cyprus came under Ottoman control, Lala Mustafa Pasha, and not Nasi, was appointed governor of Cyprus. Nonetheless, Nasi seems to have retained a powerful position at the Ottoman court throughout Selim's rule. Abroad, he was not universally well regarded. Not only did he arouse the enmity of the Venetians, suspected of being responsible for the great fire in Venice in 1569 (which seriously damaged the Arsenal there) as well as for the seizure of Cyprus; he was also disliked by the French, as he had caused the French ships to be confiscated in Alexandria in order to collect the debt owed to him by the French king.<sup>921</sup> In the case of the Florentines, it seems that Nasi wanted to carve out a niche for himself during the

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<sup>918</sup> There are quite a number of studies concerning Joseph Nasi. These include: Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: The Duke of Naxos* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948); Marianna D. Birnbaum, "Nasi, Joseph," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman Stillman, vol. III (Leiden: Brill, 2010); José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim, "Sephardic Intermediaries in the Ottoman Empire," *Oriente Moderno* 93 (2013): 454-476

<sup>919</sup> Concerning the relations between Selim II and Nasi, see "Relazione dell'Impero Ottomano di Andrea Badoaro, Stato Ambasciatore a Costantinopoli Per La Confermazione della Pace col Turco, L'Anno 1573," in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, Serie III, vol. I (Firenze: Tipografia all'Insegna di Clio, 1840) p. 361: "[E]gli ama sommamente Michel giudeo inventore di preziosi cibi, e di bevande delicatissime, il quale viene così ad avere grande autorità; ed è costui di grandissimo danno non solo alla serenità vostra, ma ancora a tutta la cristianità, perchè essendo lui capo di tutta la nazione sua, ed avendo intelligenza in ogni loco, e per tutte le parti del mondo, fa sapere a sua maestà molte imperfezioni dei principi, che causano poi grandissime rivoluzioni negli stati."

<sup>920</sup> Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations*, pp. 55-57.

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59; Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, p. 157.



negotiation process, and thus he initially offered his services to Gianfigliuzzi. However, when he realized that the grand vizier was promoting negotiation with the grand duchy, he switched sides and attempted to derail the process.

The Florentine mission, thus stalled by individual interests and rivalries playing out within the Ottoman court, also faced the opposition of various foreign groups who believed it would threaten their interests. Gianfigliuzzi noted that the grand vizier warned him against the French, Venetians, Ragusans, and Lucchese as none of them wanted the negotiations to proceed.<sup>922</sup> The French, in particular, objected to the prospect of a Florentine–Ottoman rapprochement, with the French agent repeatedly telling Gianfigliuzzi that such a move could not take place because according to an agreement between the sultan and the king of France, the sultan could not befriend any other Christian prince without the approval of the king of France. The French used this *ahidname* dated 1569 as a basis to oppose any attempts by other nations to obtain privileges from the Ottoman Empire. It also stipulated that “the commodities of the Genoese, Sicilians, Anconitans, and other merchants should come to Alexandria, Tripoli, Syria, and other Ottoman ports under the banner of the French king.”<sup>923</sup>

For a number of reasons, however, French opposition was not as effective as it might have been. First, the above-mentioned privilege had been granted during the rule of Sultan Selim II, and it was only in 1581 that the new sultan, Murad III, renewed the *ahidname* granted to the French to legalize their claims to function as the protector of all European merchants.<sup>924</sup> Thus, when the French representative complained about infringement of privileges during the Florentine negotiations, the Ottoman administrators disregarded his protests, as the French, had no official *ahidname* at the time.

France was also losing its influence at the Ottoman court. The sultan had been seriously displeased when Henry de Valois left the throne of Poland, to which he had ascended with Ottoman backing, to assume the French crown in 1575. Moreover, the French ambassador François de Noailles was unpopular at the Ottoman court and left

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<sup>922</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 6v.

<sup>923</sup> Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. III, p. 66; B. de Testa, *Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottoman avec les Puissances Étrangères*, Tome I (Paris, 1864) p. 91: “Lettres-Patentes en date du 18 octobre 1569: “les robes et marchandises des Genevois, Siciliens, Anconitains et autres qui cheminent sous le nom et bannière de l’Empereur de France en Alexandrie, Tripoli de Syrie et aultres eschelles.”

<sup>924</sup> Susan Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey 1578-1582: A documentary study of the first Anglo-Ottoman relations* (London: British Academy, 1977) p. 5: “Que des Venitiens en hors les Genevois & Anglois & Portugais & Espagnols & marchands Catellans & Siciliens & Anconitains & Ragusois and entierement tous ceux qui ont cheminez soubz le nom & Banniere de France d’ancienneté iusques à ce iourd’huy & en la condition qu’ils ont cheminez que d’icy en auant, ils ayent a y cheminer en la mesme maniere.”

Istanbul in the same year. An anecdote in the diary of Stephan Gerlach, the Habsburg ambassador's secretary, narrates how de Noailles came into conflict with Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1575. According to Gerlach, during one of his visits to the Ottoman court, the French ambassador behaved in such a reckless way that he was warned by the grand vizier that he should be aware of whom he was talking to. De Noailles responded that he was aware he was talking to a slave. This answer not surprisingly made Sokollu very angry, but de Noailles stuck to his point, maintaining that the grand vizier was in fact a slave of the sultan, while he, de Noailles, came from a noble family and was in the service of the French king of his own free will, not as something he was obliged to do.<sup>925</sup> Interestingly, de Noailles's response is reminiscent of Machiavelli's observations in *The Prince* (written in 1513 but not published until the 1530s), where a distinction is made between the types of government in the Ottoman and French realms: in the Ottoman Empire there was one master, with the others being servants under obligation to their lord, while the French king was surrounded by established nobles.<sup>926</sup>

The conflict between the grand vizier and the French ambassador clearly had an impact on Ottoman–French relations during this period.<sup>927</sup> Although François de Noailles was replaced by his brother Gilles, the latter was not able to affect a rapprochement with the Sublime Porte. As a result, in December 1577 he too left Istanbul; his secretary, Sebastian Juyé, remained as the French representative in the Ottoman capital until the arrival of Jacque de Germingy in 1579.<sup>928</sup> The chaotic state of the French diplomatic mission during this period thus makes it seem unlikely that French influence at the Ottoman court had much to do with the failure of the Florentine negotiations in 1578.

Undoubtedly, the grand admiral's objections based on the issue of the Order's galleys had much more impact on the sultan's attitude.<sup>929</sup> Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who originally had been a strong supporter of the negotiations with Florence, also withdrew his favor after the sultan's negative response.<sup>930</sup> The grand vizier had initially promoted

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<sup>925</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü 1573-1578*, (*Tage-Buch Der Von Zween Glorwürdigsten Römischen Kaysern Maximiliano und Rudolpho...An Die Ottomanische Pforte Zu Konstantinopel Abgefertigten...Gesandtschaft*), tr. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006) pp. 169-170.

<sup>926</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, tr. and ed. Thomas G. Bergin (New York: F.S. Crofts & Co., 1947) pp. 10-11.

<sup>927</sup> İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. III/2, p. 294; Joseph Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, Tomo II, Bk. XXXVII, p. 205.

<sup>928</sup> Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, III, pp. 716-717.

<sup>929</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 7v: "Il Cap.no del Mare scrisse al Gran Sig.re informando S.Mta che la domanda di V.A. era ingiusta e falsa e che le galere della Rel.ne di Santo Stefano non dependono se non da lei, come lui sapeva..."

<sup>930</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 6-7.

the negotiations for political reasons. According to Gianfigliuzzi, the news coming in from the Empire's eastern frontier at that time was not pleasant. With the outbreak of war against Persia in the east, the grand vizier wanted to ensure peace in the west insofar as was possible. In addition, he most likely intended the grand duchy's friendship to serve as a counterbalance to the souring relations with France and the forced peace with Venice after the war over Cyprus.

In fact, with the beginning of the Ottoman–Persian war in 1578, requests for friendship and privileges started coming in from one European state after another. Like the Spanish representative Margliani and the Florentine ambassador Gianfigliuzzi, the English representative William Harborne arrived in Istanbul with the object of obtaining trading privileges from the Ottoman court—which he succeeded in doing in 1580.<sup>931</sup> The Dutch, too, were in direct contact with the Ottoman Empire from the 1570s onwards. Despite fierce opposition from the French, English, and Venetian ambassadors, the Dutch ambassador was able to negotiate capitulations for his country in 1612.<sup>932</sup>

This period, therefore, might be described as one of “gradual internationalization of the Levant trade,” with new western European interests, increasing competition among these newcomers, and no clear dominating power in this trade.<sup>933</sup> In an atmosphere of such intense rivalry, states relied heavily on their representatives—not only on their diplomatic skills, but also their ability to develop and use personal connections with influential figures at the Ottoman court to secure treaties with the Empire, as the example of Margliani illustrates. For its part, the Ottoman administration welcomed such requests for peace and friendship and negotiations for commercial privileges as accruing to their benefit, in terms of both securing their western frontier and strengthening their economy while they battled with the Persians in a war that would continue until 1590.

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<sup>931</sup> Laura Coulter, “An Examination of the Status and Activities of the English Ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” *Revue Études Sud-Est Europe*, XXVIII, 1-4 (1990): 57-87; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. III, Part II, pp. 224-225. In fact as early as 1530s English merchant ships were coming to Chios and Crete to sell English cloth in return for silk, spices, carpet, and other goods. Moreover, in 1553 Sultan Süleyman granted trading privileges to an English merchant Anthony Jenkinson. Yet these privileges were granted only to Jenkinson and his representative instead of covering all other English merchants. There was not state-level diplomatic contact between England and the Ottoman Empire but it was an agreement done between the sultan and Jenkinson. Moreover, there is no evidence about the English presence in the Ottoman ports after 1553. According to Kurat, from 1553 to 1575 commercial relations between the Ottoman Empire and England was almost standstill. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi (1553-1610)* (Ankara: TTK, 1953), pp. 10-11. Also see Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisâdi Münasebetleri (1580-1838)*, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1974).

<sup>932</sup> Edhem Eldem, “Capitulations and Western Trade,” p. 292.

<sup>933</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

To return to the Florentine negotiations, it is clear that the news about the galleys of the grand duke impelled the grand vizier to withdraw his support for the negotiations, especially as the latter's position at court was growing more and more vulnerable as a result of the opposition he was facing from within the sultan's circle of advisors. As we have seen, Gianfigliuzzi tried through the mediation of Solomon Ashkenazi and Hürrem Bey to persuade the grand vizier to have the capitulations confirmed in the form that the grand duke wanted, or at least in the way Ashkenazi proposed, i.e., with the article concerning the galleys totally removed. However, the grand vizier rejected this out of hand, responding, according to Gianfigliuzzi, that if the galleys were not pulled back to land, the capitulations would not be granted.<sup>934</sup> Yet the Florentine ambassador continued his attempts to persuade the grand vizier to intercede with the sultan on behalf of the grand duchy. Seeing that the negotiations were stalled, Gianfigliuzzi and Mormorai decided to loosen the purse strings and offered the grand vizier money and valuable gifts: a jewelled mirror and a ruby.<sup>935</sup> However, he did not accept them. This was indeed a sign of the grand vizier's intent to withdraw completely from the negotiations and, wrote Gianfigliuzzi, he at that point began to believe in the rumors that were circulating, which claimed that both the grand vizier and the mediators (Hürrem Bey and Ashkenazi), and even Kılıç Ali Pasha had been bribed by the Venetian *bailo* to disrupt the negotiations.<sup>936</sup> But actually, the main reason Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had withdrawn from the negotiations was the fact that Gianfigliuzzi was also collaborating with Şemsi Pasha—another influential figure in the Ottoman administration who was close to the sultan, as previously mentioned—and also a fierce rival of the grand vizier at court.

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<sup>934</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 8.

<sup>935</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 9: “uno specchio gioiellato che valeva dumila ducati” and “un rubino di mille ducati”

<sup>936</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 9r: “[C]ominciai a credere (come si diceva) che fussi stato corrotto...il Bailo Venetiana dava mille zecchini al Medico e mille à Urem e cinque o sei milla al Bascia Grande, oltre à quell che spendeva col Capitano del mare e altri perche questo negotio non seguissi.”



Figure 16: Portrait of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, engraving in Jacob Schrenck von Notzing, *Augustissimorum imperatorum [...] verissimae* (Innsbruck: Ioannes Agricola, 1601), plate 84.

## Gianfigliuzzi at the Heart of Ottoman Politics

To understand just what political currents Gianfigliuzzi was negotiating, some additional background on the Ottoman court and political system is necessary. A *devşirme*<sup>937</sup> of Bosnian origin, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (ca. 1505-1579) was an exceptional figure in the Ottoman Empire, serving in the imperial administration as grand vizier from 1565 to 1579, a period that spanned the reigns of three sultans: Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, Selim II, and Murad III. He was married to Süleyman's granddaughter, Esmahan Sultan, the daughter of Selim II and Nur Banu Sultan; Sokollu was thus Selim's son-in-law and the brother-in-law of Murad III.<sup>938</sup> This marriage had helped Sokollu secure his status in the Ottoman dynasty. Moreover, during the struggle for throne between Selim and Bayezid, another of Süleyman's sons, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had sided with Selim and gained the future sultan's favor. What would become the centuries-long custom of secluding the sultan from the *Divan* had already been in practice during the rule of Sultan Süleyman; Selim II continued this tradition, to the extent that he "stayed aloof from the cut and thrust of decision-making."<sup>939</sup> This left all the authority in the hands of the grand vizier and allowed him to consolidate his position in the imperial administration.

The growing authority of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha could be seen in his actions during this period. According to the historian Peçevi, the grand vizier removed certain figures close to Selim from positions of power within the administration, by either exiling or demoting them.<sup>940</sup> He used his authority to create his own network, appointing his relatives to important positions. Moreover, through the sale of offices, which became a very common practice during this period, and the acquisition of valuable gifts from foreign diplomats during the diplomatic negotiations, he accumulated considerable wealth. Thus, by the time Sultan Murad III ascended the throne in 1574, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha already possessed an extended network and remarkable wealth.<sup>941</sup>

With Murad's accession, however, things changed. Disturbed by the extent of the grand vizier's authority and the strength of his network, the new sultan decided to build

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<sup>937</sup> *Devşirme* refers to the levy of Christian children for military service or to serve in the palace or in administrative positions. V.L. Menage, "Devshirme", *EF* (New Edition), vol. 2, pp. 210-213.

<sup>938</sup> M. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, vol. IV, ed. Nuri Akbayer (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996) p. 1073; Gilles Veinstein, "Sokollu Mehmed Pasha," *EF* (New Edition), vol. 9, pp. 706-711.

<sup>939</sup> Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: the History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2005) p. 154.

<sup>940</sup> Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, pp. 4-5.

<sup>941</sup> Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2010) pp. 94-96.

his own alliances to rival the faction loyal to the grand vizier. He brought his friends and intimates into the court and empowered new political actors against the Sokollu loyalists. Among them was Şemsi Pasha, who had been a friend of both Süleyman and Selim. Şemsi Pasha was of noble descent, the son of Mirza Mehmed Bey of the Kızıl Ahmedli İsfendiyaroğlu dynasty, which had ruled the Kastamonu region until it was taken over by Sultan Mehmed II.<sup>942</sup> He entered the court at a very young age during the reign of Sultan Selim I. He was appointed governor-general (*Beyleybeyi*) of Damascus in 1551, and of Anatolia and Rumelia in 1555. During the rule of Selim II, Şemsi Pasha was one of the sultan's close companions, and also one of his viziers.<sup>943</sup> His enmity to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha dated back to 1569, when the grand vizier had appointed him governor-general of Sivas a less important post than that of governor-general of Rumelia. Then, he was sent to govern Damascus again, and finally in the same year was ordered to retire. Considering these demotions and his enforced retirement humiliating, Şemsi Pasha grew hostile toward Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.<sup>944</sup>

Through the agency of Şemsi Pasha and other companions, Sultan Murad set out to break up Sokollu's control over the Ottoman court. First, Sokollu's cousin and the governor of Budin, Mustafa Pasha, was accused of misconduct and executed. Then Sokollu's close friend, Nişancı Feridun Bey, was exiled from Istanbul, while many relatives of the grand vizier were deprived of their *timars* and *zeamets*<sup>945</sup> for trifling reasons. Peçevi informs us that despite all these events, Sokollu never changed his attitude and continued to stand by the sultan.<sup>946</sup> In this way, he was able to remain as grand vizier until he was murdered in 1579.

Historian Mustafa Âlî, author of the chronicle *Künh-ül Ahbâr*, based his own view of the conflict between Sokollu and Şemsi, attributing it to the fact that the sultan was so close to the latter that he once said to him "I do not trust the grand vizier as much as I trust you," thereby sparking the enmity between the two men.<sup>947</sup> Stephan Gerlach also focused on the close relations between Şemsi and Murad, noting in his diary that as a

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<sup>942</sup> Mustafa Âlî ve Künhü'l-ahbâr'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri, vol. II, p. 249.

<sup>943</sup> M. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, vol. V, p. 1583; Günay Kut and Nimet Bayraktar (ed.), Şemsi Ahmed Paşa, *Şeh-nâme-i Sultan Murad*, ed. Günay Kut and Nimet Bayraktar (Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2003) 2-3.

<sup>944</sup> Günhan Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and His immediate Predecessors*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2010.

<sup>945</sup> A *timar* was land granted by the Ottoman sultan, with an annual tax revenue value of less than 20,000 akçes. A land grant with revenues from 20,000 to 100,000 was referred to as a *zeamet*.

<sup>946</sup> Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, pp. 4-6.

<sup>947</sup> *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî ve Künh-ül Ahbâr*, vol. II, p. 242.

close friend of the sultan, Şemsi Pasha had much easier access to him than the other pashas and grandees, and that Murad agreed with whatever he said.<sup>948</sup> But as Tezcan rightly argues, aside from the issue of jealousy, the situation could be also interpreted as a reaction of sultanic authority to the emergence of the grand vizier's household as an "alternative locus of political power."<sup>949</sup> Indeed, both Peçevi's and Mustafa Âlî's accounts implicitly confirmed the existence of this fierce struggle and reflected the development of factions within the court during this period.

Coming from the same family as Sokollu, Peçevi was more sympathetic toward the grand vizier.<sup>950</sup> While in his history he praised Sokollu Mehmed Pasha for his maturity and good judgement as an administrator, he adopted a critical tone regarding Şemsi Pasha, depicting him as an individual deficient in self-esteem and also in any sense of shame.<sup>951</sup> Mustafa Âlî was also quite critical of Şemsi Pasha, considering him a promoter of bribery at the Ottoman court. In *Künh-ül Ahbâr*, Âlî put Şemsi Pasha's provocations of the sultan against the grand vizier into these words:

The grand vizier served your [Sultan Murad's] father and your grandfather, but he does not let you become visible. He still treats you as if you were a child and hides everything related to state affairs from you; he seems to share your authority.<sup>952</sup>

Such accounts indicate the extent of the rift between the sultan's favourite courtier and the grand vizier, and describe how the Şemsi Pasha faction, empowered by the sultan, became a center of opposition to the grand vizier. This rivalry among the factions within the court left its mark on the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations as well. In fact, looking more closely at it takes us indirectly to the core of Ottoman politics and demonstrates how the transformations in the Ottoman polity were reflected in the Empire's diplomatic interactions with foreign representatives during this period.

One factor that led to a stalemate in the negotiations was Gianfigliuzzi's attempt to work with both factions in order to achieve his goal. Although Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was his principal contact, Kılıç Ali Pasha's increasing objections and the eventual obduracy of the grand vizier impelled the Florentine ambassador to seek help elsewhere, so that finally he decided to resort to Şemsi Pasha as one of the sultan's intimates.

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<sup>948</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü 1573-1578*, vol. I, p. 523.

<sup>949</sup> Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 80

<sup>950</sup> Peçevi's mother was from Sokoloviç family, she was the daughter of one of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's uncles.

<sup>951</sup> Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, pp. 8-9.

<sup>952</sup> *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî ve Künh-ül Ahbâr*, vol. II, p. 262: "Babana ve dedene hizmet eylemegin seni göze göstermez. Tıfl-ı şîr-hâre yerine koyub ekser umûrı sana bildirmez. Gûyâ ki mülk-i mevrûsında seninle şerîkdir, der idi (498a)."



Through his mediation, Gianfigliuzzi intended to reach Nur Banu Sultan (ca. 1525-1583), Murad's mother and, as the most powerful woman at the Ottoman court, an influential figure in Ottoman politics and diplomacy. Şemsi Pasha had easy access to the imperial harem, and more specifically had close contacts with Nur Banu Sultan.<sup>953</sup>

The increasing influence of the imperial harem in politics and diplomacy during this period can be interpreted as another attempt at the reassertion of royal authority over that of the grand vizier, and this development was encouraged by the sultan.<sup>954</sup> Women of the harem, especially the *valide sultan* (mother of the sultan), exerted considerable influence in state affairs and diplomacy during this period; they therefore gained a new importance in the eyes of the European ambassadors. Gianfigliuzzi thus decided to overcome the deadlock in the negotiations by attempting to obtain Nur Banu Sultan's assistance through Şemsi Pasha. The attempt was evidently successful, as the sultan sent a letter, which was read at the next *Divan* meeting, stating that the capitulations would be granted in the form desired by the grand duke, and that Şemsi Pasha would have them written out and presented to Gianfigliuzzi. However, the Florentine ambassador did not have long to enjoy his success. Two days later, the twenty-five ransomed Muslim slaves from Ancona came to the *Divan* with their accusations concerning the galleys of St. Stephen. Assuming this event to have been engineered by Kılıç Ali Pasha, Gianfigliuzzi contended that it was all part of a plot to undermine the negotiations; however, he could not find anyone to take his side. Once more, the Florentine diplomatic effort was at an impasse.

Inevitably, Gianfigliuzzi's alliance with Şemsi Pasha had caused Sokollu and his associates—Hürrem and Ashkenazi—to turn against the negotiations, putting the

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<sup>953</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 8v-9r. Nur Banu Sultan was Sultan Selim II's favorite. Various accounts exist concerning her origins. Studies by Skilliter and Arbel indicate that she was born in Paros as Cecilia Baffo, illegitimate daughter of the island's Venetian ruler Niccolo Venier. She was taken captive by Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha during the siege of Corfu in 1537 and presented to the sultan. As Selim's favorite, Nur Banu was able to wield remarkable power and authority in state affairs during this period and also, as queen mother, during the rule of her son Murad III. The fact that she enjoyed close relations with the Venetians in this context tends to confirm the suggestion that she was of Venetian origin. Through her Jewish *kira* (agent) Esther, she established contacts with the outside world. Along with Esther, Joseph Nasi, the Venetian renegade kapı ağası Gazanfer, and Şemsi Pasha, Nur Banu exercised considerable influence in diplomatic interactions with European states. A.H. de Groot, "Nur Banu Sultan," *EF*, vol. 8, p. 124; Skilliter, "The Letters of the Venetian 'Sultana' Nur Banu and Her Kira to Venice," in *Studia Turcologica Memoriae Alexii Bombaci Dicata*, ed. A. Gallotta and U. Marazzi (Naples, 1982) pp. 515-536; Benjamin Arbel, "Nur Banu (c. 1530-1583): A Venetian Sultana?" *Turcica* 24 (1992): 241-259; Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 92-97.

<sup>954</sup> Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 219-228; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 107.

Florentine initiative under serious threat. Seeing the sultan confirm the capitulations, which he had previously refused to do, only after Şemsi Pasha's mediation, the grand vizier not only distanced himself from involvement in the negotiations but beyond that did not hesitate to raise difficulties when possible. The additional intervention of Kılıç Ali Pasha and Joseph Nasi—who were able to reinforce the claim that the Order of St. Stephen was in fact under the command of the grand duke by pointing to the ransomed slaves' statements as evidence—struck another serious blow to the negotiations, the issue of the galleys again being the main point of disagreement.

In the letter the grand vizier wrote to the grand duke following this latest breakdown in the negotiations, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha definitively stated that if Francesco desired peace with the Ottoman Empire, his galleys should stop aiding the enemy, namely the pope and the Spanish king, against the Ottomans. The grand duke should remove his galleys from the sea and send an ambassador to the Sublime Porte in order to have the capitulations confirmed.<sup>955</sup> Thus it could be argued that the grand vizier hid his personal resentment with Gianfigliuzzi under a cloak of indignation regarding the activities of St. Stephen.

In his report, Gianfigliuzzi depicted himself as a resourceful individual, who had tried all means to get the capitulations confirmed for the grand duke but failed due to external factors. He placed the primary blame for the failure of the negotiations on the Venetians, claiming that they had bribed Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Hürrem Bey, Solomon Ashkenazi, Kılıç Ali Pasha, and others so that the negotiations would not proceed. Perhaps seeking to exonerate himself, he wrote that he had done everything possible to fulfil his mission successfully:

I cannot express to Your Excellency with a letter the intrinsic pain I feel at not having been able, after having spent so much time, effort, and money, to obtain [the capitulations] that Your Excellency had desired and been promised... You will see that I have done as much as I could, not having done anything by halves, and that I made contact with all who were favorable to me in order to bring about a good result."<sup>956</sup>

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<sup>955</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 14-15 (15 Ramadan 986/ 15 November 1578).

<sup>956</sup> ASFi, MM 28/26, fol. 10v (26 December 1578): "Non potrei con lettera esprimere a V.A.S.ma l'intrinseco dolor' mio, non havendo possuto ottenere quel che V.A. desiderava, e che gli era stato promesso, dopo haver perso il tempo tante fatiche che danari...[C]rederrà ch'io habbia fatto quanto ho possuto, non havendo lassato nessun mezzo ch'io habbia conosciuto posser essermi favorevole per condurre a buon fine."

## Venetian Perspective

The matter grows yet more complicated when we look to Venetian sources for the details of the negotiations. Venetian *bailo* Niccolò Barbarigo, reporting the developments concerning the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations to the Senate from the perspective of an outside observer, declared the activities of the galleys of St. Stephen to have been the main reason for the failure of this diplomatic initiative. Referring to Gianfigliuzzi as a person highly favored by the grand duke,<sup>957</sup> Barbarigo summarized the trajectory of the Florentine ambassador’s mission in these words:

They arrived with honorable pomp and with distinguished gifts for the sultan and other pashas and important figures at the Porte; and they left the empire without any demonstration of honor or courtesy.<sup>958</sup>

However, in the letter he wrote to the Heads of the Council of Ten on October 25, 1578, Barbarigo related the inside story of the failed negotiations.<sup>959</sup> The Council of Ten was one of the major governing bodies of the Venetian Republic; responsible for issues related to state security, it coordinated espionage activities and oversaw the diplomatic and intelligence services. The letters that the *bailo* addressed to this council are therefore more revealing in terms of details concerning the negotiations and the part that Barbarigo played in the matter. We see that from the beginning he was indeed keenly interested in the negotiations, with his main source of information being none other than Solomon Ashkenazi, physician to both the Venetian *baili* and the Ottoman court. Discussing the failure of the Florentine mission, Barbarigo complained that Gianfigliuzzi had openly and vociferously accused the Venetians and other parties of disrupting the negotiations. In fact, he said, he had done nothing to deserve such accusations and had treated the Florentine ambassador with all due courtesy:

I did not make even the smallest move in this case, nor did I give any opportunity or any occasion for these suspicions to be aroused; on the contrary, I diligently avoided any act or word that could cast a shadow on the negotiations.<sup>960</sup>

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<sup>957</sup> ASV, SDC 12, fol. 138v (4 July 1578): “una persona per quanto s’intende molto favorita appresso il Duca.”

<sup>958</sup> ASV, SDC 12, fols. 330-331 (17 November 1578): “Et venuti con honorevole pompa et con presenti honorati ad esso Sig[no]re et alli Bassa et altri grandi personaggi di questa porta, sono stati licenziati senza nessuna dimostrazione di honore et di cortesia.”

<sup>959</sup> ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci-Lettere di Ambasciatori (hereafter CapiXLett), Costantinopoli 5, fols. 55-56 (25 October 1578).

<sup>960</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fols. 55r-v: “[N]on ho fatto per minimo moto in questa occorenza, ne ho dato per minima materia, ne occasione di haver queste suspicione anzi che io studiosamente mi sono guardato da far cosa, ne da dir parola, che potesse dar alcuna ombra.”

In Barbarigo's view, the real cause of the failed negotiations was the Florentine ambassador's reluctance to accept the conditions demanded by the Ottomans concerning the galleys of the Order of St. Stephen. He in addition noted that while Kılıç Ali Pasha had done much to undermine Ottoman–Florentine friendship, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha came to view the negotiations with disfavor only after finding out that the ambassador had enlisted with Şemsi Pasha's assistance. As for Ashkenazi, he was, according to the *bailo*, initially on Gianfigliuzzi's side; however, he was largely excluded throughout the negotiation process and when, the ambassador finally did ask for his help during the last days of the discussion, the physician did the opposite and sought to disrupt the proceedings. Joseph Nasi had also played a part in preventing the negotiations from being concluded, wrote Barbarigo, as Gianfigliuzzi did not at first remunerate him sufficiently for his services as a mediator. Looking at this list of Florentine mistakes, it is clear that the *bailo* saw Gianfigliuzzi as being responsible for the failure of the negotiations. Even Florentine *bailo* Jacopo Mormorai considered Gianfigliuzzi to be solely culpable for the failure, declared Barbarigo, due to the latter's lack of knowledge and his arrogance in refusing to take advice from anyone else.<sup>961</sup>

Indeed, in a letter to the grand duke dated September 4, 1578, Mormorai complained that Gianfigliuzzi had gone to the Ottoman court to negotiate the capitulations without informing him.<sup>962</sup> It is clear that even the Florentine *bailo* was, at a certain point, was kept at a distance from the negotiations, as he states quite clearly that he learned about Gianfigliuzzi's failed diplomacy from other acquaintances. Pierfilippo Assirelli, the secretary of the previous Florentine *bailo*, also criticized Gianfigliuzzi in a letter to the grand duke, saying that the ambassador did not ask for advice from anyone, including him, a person who had good relations with Hürrem Bey and the grand vizier. Assirelli also noted the importance of neglecting to gain the favor of the dragoman and Ashkenazi, as the negotiations could only have been concluded through their mediation.<sup>963</sup>

The impression derived from these various documents is that Gianfigliuzzi's own diplomatic (in)ability played an important role in the breakdown of the Florentine diplomatic effort. Although in his letters he pointed to the Venetians and the French as the real culprits (and it is quite possible that they may have indirectly affected the process), the failure was in large part his own, in that he did not ask others for advice; he

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<sup>961</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 56.

<sup>962</sup> ASFi, MdP 715, fol. 22 (4 September 1578).

<sup>963</sup> ASFi, MdP 718, fol. 436-37 (20 September 1578).

established the wrong networks at critical times; and he was unable to gain the support of Ottoman officials due to his attitude. While the clause concerning the galleys of St. Stephen was the apparent reason for the failure of the negotiations between the Medici and the Ottoman Empire, the way in which Gianfigliuzzi conducted his mission contributed to making this issue insoluble.

### **A Last-Ditch Effort by Jacopo Mormorai**

The Sokollu faction's discontent with Gianfigliuzzi expressed in letters written to the grand duke by Hürrem and Ashkenazi soon after the ambassador left the city. Both men criticized Gianfigliuzzi's conduct as a diplomat, saying that he asked for their help and advice only after things had gone wrong and the negotiations had broken down. He had also rejected all of their suggestions and was suspicious of everyone, including Hürrem Bey and Ashkenazi, who were in fact eager to serve the grand duke. Along with criticizing the ambassador, they took the occasion to propose to the grand duke a new solution in order to bring the negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion.<sup>964</sup> Apparently this initiative came from Jacopo Mormorai, who in a long letter to the grand duke elaborated on the benefits of his plan.

As a commission agent in the wool trade, Mormorai looked at the negotiations from a merchant's perspective. In his view, the capitulations were vitally important for the Florentine woollen cloth trade, and the grand duchy should obtain them no matter what the cost. With this object in view, Mormorai decided to take steps toward reconciliation with the Sokollu faction soon after Gianfigliuzzi left the Ottoman capital. Mormorai, who already had good relations with Hürrem Bey and Ashkenazi, proceeded to discuss the issue with them and together, the three came up with a plan to conclude the negotiations to the grand duke's advantage. First, Francesco should give the grand vizier ten thousand gold ducats to win him over. Second, there should be no mention of the galleys of St. Stephen in the capitulations; however the new ambassador or the *bailo* would promise that the galleys would not go in *corso*—they would not pillage Ottoman ports, lands, or merchants and the Ottomans would make a promise the same regarding the conduct of

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<sup>964</sup> ASFi, CS I/32, fols. 190-191. (18 December 1578)

their ships toward the ports, etc., of the grand duchy. This, wrote Mormorai, would provide the most stable and secure basis for Florentine–Ottoman friendship.<sup>965</sup>

Mormorai continued his letter with an elaboration of the benefits the grand duke would gain from such an agreement. He claimed that within three years, the revenues to the grand duke would far exceed his expenditures in this matter. To support this point, Mormorai provided his calculations, noting that the customs duties for Florentine merchants in Ottoman lands would be half of what they paid at present, and this would prove quite profitable, especially in Alexandria and Tripoli where Florentine merchants currently paid 2 per-cent while Venetians paid 1.25 per-cent. In this context, he pointed to the declining influence of the Venetians in the Ottoman Empire: “After the recent peace, Venetians returned to the Ottoman market only in name but not in effect.”<sup>966</sup> Venetians, still being under the influence of the recent war, were worried that they would be expelled from the Ottoman lands. Mormorai contended that if the grand duke made good use of this opportunity, the Florentines could easily surpass the Venetians in the Ottoman market, specifically in the export of woollen cloth.<sup>967</sup> He also suggested that this friendship could offer the grand duchy considerable help in gathering intelligence.<sup>968</sup>

Being on good terms with Hürrem and Ashkenazi, Mormorai seems to have believed that the negotiations could be concluded only by allying with the Sokollu faction, and thus it was necessary to satisfy the grand vizier. So how did the grand duke respond to Mormorai’s offer? No document recording this has been found, but letters written by the grand duke in 1579 clearly indicate his attitude toward the negotiation process overall and his position regarding Gianfigliuzzi and Mormorai. These letters have been preserved among the reports Niccolò Barbarigo sent to the Heads of the Council of Ten. How they found their way to Venice points to a factional intrigue. Barbarigo stated Şemsi Pasha had secretly passed the letters on to him, and requested that he have them

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<sup>965</sup> ASFi, CS I/32, fol. 187r (20 December 1578): “[n]on faranno mentione delle Galere di Santo Stefano, come cosa allei non aspettante, ma che l’Imbasciator’ o Bailo che qua risederà prometta che dette galere non andranno in corso, né metteranno in terra à predar paesi, et vaselli sottoposti à questo imperio, dichiarando in detta promessa ch’andando in armata dette Galere, con qualsivoglia principe, o potentate Cristiano, detto Imbasciator’ o Bailo et la natione non sieno tenuti a cosa alcuna, et che V.A.S. non verrà né con altri manderà, né per mar, né per terra, sue forze contro à questo imperò, et e converso loro prometteranno il medesimo. Sia certa V.A.S. che in altra maniera questo acordo non era né sicuro, né stabile, dov’ hora in questa maniera ell’è sic[urissi]mo et stabilissimo.”

<sup>966</sup> ASFi, CS I/32, fol. 187v: “Li Viniziani di poi la pace seguita, ci sono tornati con il nome, ma non col effetto.”

<sup>967</sup> For more on Mormorai’s letter, see Chapter IV, pp. 24-25.

<sup>968</sup> ASFi, CS I/32, fol. 187v.

translated into Turkish.<sup>969</sup> Thus, the *bailo* was able to make copies to send to Venice. The letters were written in response to letters sent by Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Kılıç Ali Pasha, and Joseph Nasi.<sup>970</sup> Among these, only Nasi's letter is available to us. In it, Nasi was quite critical of Gianfigliuzzi's attitude toward him. He complained that although he had from the beginning favored the Florentine initiative and was willing to do whatever he could to forward its success, after a certain point and for an unknown reason, Gianfigliuzzi alienated himself from Nasi and moreover spoke ill of both Nasi and Kılıç Ali Pasha. In Nasi's view, Gianfigliuzzi had been unable to accomplish anything because he did not have the advice of true friends.<sup>971</sup>

In his response, the grand duke defended his ambassador's actions, declaring that Gianfigliuzzi had distanced himself from Nasi because of the grand vizier's attitude. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had become suspicious of their relationship and warned Gianfigliuzzi that negotiations with the sultan could not be conducted in the houses of Jews. The grand duke's response brings to the fore more clearly the friction between the grand vizier and Joseph Nasi. Torn between the two factions, Gianfigliuzzi could not in the end seek help and advice from Nasi. In short, the grand duke stood up for the ambassador, referring to him as an honorable person who had a just reason for all that he did. Thus in the grand duke's view, it was the ministers at the court and their unreasonable demands that had led to the impasse:

As the negotiations could not be conducted in a rightful manner, I do not want to think about the matter any more; it was enough for me to see how much credence could be given to the sultan's letter.<sup>972</sup>

In the letters to the other two men, the grand duke supported his ambassador and evinced an implicitly critical attitude toward the addressees, believing as he did that the negotiations failed because of their resentment. In his letter to Kılıç Ali Pasha, the grand duke explained that as the sultan already promised that the capitulations would be confirmed, his ambassador did not realize that he should have sought the grand admiral's assistance and support in the matter:

My ambassador Cavalier Gianfigliuzzi did not avail himself of your help and favor because he already had the promise of the confirmation of the privileges in the letter

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<sup>969</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 102. (12 October 1579)

<sup>970</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 103. (22 July 1579)

<sup>971</sup> ASFi, MdP 4279, fol. 15. (7 November 1578)

<sup>972</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 103: "Poiche per la via dritta non s'è potuto condur[e] questo trattato, io non ci voglio pensar piu; bastandomi haver conosciuto quanta fede si possa prestare alle lettere del Gran Sig[nor]e."

of the sultan himself; he did not think anyone else's favor would have been needed.<sup>973</sup>

Moreover, Francesco again attributed the failed effort more to greed and rivalry among the Ottoman officials who obstructed the negotiations than to Gianfigliuzzi's lack of skill in diplomacy: "In this country avarice and envy averted the favor of His Majesty."<sup>974</sup>

The grand duke's response to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was more diplomatic. He stated that he had received the grand vizier's letter through Jacopo Mormorai and was fully informed about the grand vizier's favorable attitude during the negotiations. However, in this letter too, the grand duke made the complaint that although the sultan had promised in his letter to confirm the capitulations, the negotiations did not reach a satisfactory conclusion because of the Ottoman officials' attitude: "It was due more to the greed and competition of the ministers than to the nature of the sultan that the negotiations were prevented."<sup>975</sup>

But who were these people the grand duke targeted as being responsible for the failure of the mission? Was the grand duke actually covertly criticizing the Sokollu faction, Joseph Nasi, and Kılıç Ali Pasha or he was referring to other individuals? The answer to this can be found in Gianfigliuzzi's *relazione*.

### **Gianfigliuzzi's *Relazione di Costantinopoli***

Upon returning to Florence at the end of his mission, Gianfigliuzzi presented to the grand duke another long report, written in the style of Venetian *relazioni*. This report in fact represents a unique example of a Florentine *relazione*.<sup>976</sup> Rich in information, it was intended as a sort of manual for future diplomatic missions. Considering the limited period of time he spent in Istanbul, Gianfigliuzzi was able to pen an impressive piece, providing details about many aspects of the Ottoman Empire with particular emphasis on the Ottoman administrative structure and the ranks and tasks of officials at the Ottoman court, as well as the background and character of some influential officials; he even

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<sup>973</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 103: "Il Cav.re Gianfigliuzzi mio Amb.re non fece recapito dell'aiuto et favour di V.S. perche havendo la promessa del negotio per lettere proprie del Gran Sig.re, non credeva haver bisogno del favour di nessuno."

<sup>974</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 103. (Letter to Grand Admiral Kılıç Ali Pasha): "[M]a gli ordinai solo che la visitasse per buona creanza; non sapendo che in cotesto paese l'avaritia et l'invidia impedisse il servitio di Sua Maesta."

<sup>975</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 5, fol. 103. (Letter to Grand Vizier Sokollu Pasha): "piu per l'avaritia et gare de Ministri, che per natura del Gran Sig.re che vien da loro aggirato."

<sup>976</sup> MS. Biblioteca Riccardiana, Cod. Ricc. 1826, *Relazione di Costantinopoli del Cav.re Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi*, fols. 273-287 (31 December 1578).



identified who was the best person for a diplomat to speak to, and who was best avoided. He also provided information on various military and political matters, with details on the movements of fleets and troops, accounts of the ottoman court's diplomatic relations with other states and information about the present state of affairs in the Empire.

According to Gianfigliuzzi, no one enjoyed such favor and authority with the House of Osman as did Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, and this could be credited to his prudence. The pasha, said the Florentine ambassador, was a great dissimulator (*gran dissimulatore*) who performed many duplicitous actions under the guise of carrying out the sultan's will, as was the case during the Florentine–Ottoman negotiations. The grand vizier was so greedy for money (*tanto avido della moneta*) that he often disregarded not only his own honor but also the sultan's honor for the sake of financial gain.<sup>977</sup>

Gianfigliuzzi's comments on Grand Admiral Kılıç Ali Pasha are also noteworthy. The ambassador argued that Kılıç Ali Pasha did not have a favorable attitude toward the negotiations because, most likely, he had been influenced by others who disliked the grand duchy. Here, "others" evidently refers to the Venetians and the French; in his letters from the Ottoman capital, Gianfigliuzzi had often claimed that both Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Kılıç Ali Pasha were being bribed by the Venetians in order to disrupt the negotiations. According to the ambassador, Kılıç Ali Pasha was like all other renegades avaricious, rapacious, and faithless: "come tutti gli altri rinegati avidissimo del danario e rapace e senza fede."<sup>978</sup> Thus, it is obvious that Gianfigliuzzi's views about the grand vizier and the grand admiral had a weight with the grand duke, as he made same point, though without personally accusing the two officials, in his responses to their letters (as discussed above).

Florentine–Ottoman negotiations did not come to an end with the grand duke's somewhat bitter letters to the grand vizier, the grand admiral, and Joseph Nasi. The contacts with Şemsi Pasha had apparently been continuing in the meantime, with the Ottoman courtier promising Gianfigliuzzi that he would see that the capitulations were confirmed by the sultan in the form the grand duke wanted. Compared to other Ottoman officials, Şemsi Pasha was referred to in quite a complimentary manner in Gianfigliuzzi's *relazione*. In this respect, the Florentine ambassador's opinion was in stark contrast to that of contemporary Ottoman chroniclers Mustafa Âlî and Peçevi as discussed above. Describing him as a peaceful, sincere individual, Gianfigliuzzi indicated that Şemsi Pasha

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<sup>977</sup> *Relazione del Gianfigliuzzi*, fol. 281r.

<sup>978</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 280r.

was just the opposite of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in character and moreover he favored the Florentine diplomatic attempt very much. Gianfigliuzzi also mentions Şemsi Pasha's brother Hacı Pasha (whom he refers to as "Aggi Pasha"), stating that these two men were the only people in the palace who were loyal, righteous, and really noble, attributing these features to their being descendants of the Byzantine Palaiologos family.<sup>979</sup> In fact, this latter bit of information does not reflect the truth; as already discussed, contemporary Ottoman histories reveal that Şemsi Pasha was descended from the Isfendiyarids, rulers of a Turkoman principality in Anatolia. Both Şemsi and his brother were quite friendly toward Gianfigliuzzi and offered their services in the interest of the grand duke. Thus, it seems that even after Gianfigliuzzi's return to Florence, Ottoman–Florentine contacts were maintained through Şemsi Pasha's mediation. In October 1579 Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was assassinated; it appears that Şemsi Pasha subsequently encouraged the grand duke to make another try at getting the capitulations confirmed.

### The Aftermath of the Second Attempt

Although no letters between Şemsi Pasha and Francesco are available to us, letters from the grand duke and Gianfigliuzzi to Hacı Pasha following Şemsi's illness and death—which took place in 1580, only a year after Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's assassination—throw some light on the earlier contacts. These letters were obtained by Venetian *bailo* Paolo Contarini through Ambrosio Grillo, a Perot dragoman,<sup>980</sup> who acted as an intermediary between Şemsi Pasha and Gianfigliuzzi. Grillo translated the letters into Turkish and also provided copies to Contarini, who sent them to the Heads of Council of Ten.

In these letters, both Francesco and Gianfigliuzzi expressed their condolences to Hacı Pasha for his brother's death.<sup>981</sup> Both letters imply that Gianfigliuzzi had been corresponding with Şemsi Pasha about the confirmation of the capitulations, and that the latter had promised to have the capitulations written out and confirmed in the form that the grand duke wanted. As Şemsi Pasha had died unexpectedly, Gianfigliuzzi was now

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<sup>979</sup> *Relazione del Gianfigliuzzi*, fol. 283v: [H]o trovati io quali soli in quel luogo huomini leali, e dritti, e nobili veramente, serbando forse in loro i semi dell'antica nobiltà, essendo della schiatta de' Paleologhi gia Imperi di Costantinopoli.

<sup>980</sup> The Grillo family was of Genoese origin, and had resided in Pera since Byzantine times. For more detailed information, see M. D. Sturdza, *Dictionnaire historique et généalogique des grandes familles de Grèce, d'Albanie et de Constantinople* (Paris, 1983) p. 579.

<sup>981</sup> ASV, CapiXLet, Costantinopoli 5, fols. 159-161 (30 April 1580).

requesting Hacı Pasha to carry out his late brother's promise regarding this issue. Along with the letters, Gianfigliuzzi sent gifts of various luxury textiles, from satin and damask silks to velvet fabrics.<sup>982</sup> The response of Hacı Pasha to this request is unknown. However, a letter to the Heads of Council of Ten from the Venetian *bailo* clearly indicates that the latter was assigned by the Council to create “every sort of obstacle” (“*ogni sorte impedimento*”) to an Ottoman-Florentine agreement and, along with the French ambassador, would do whatever he could in this regard.<sup>983</sup> The Venetians and the French thus seem to have had a hand in the failure of this second attempt.

Another letter sent by Gianfigliuzzi to Hacı Pasha in 1581 provides interesting details concerning the relations between Şemsi Pasha and Gianfigliuzzi. Like the earlier letters, this document exists in the form of a copy found among the Venetian *bailo*'s correspondence, indicating that Contarini closely followed developments and through various connections was able to acquire such letters and have them copied. In the 1581 letter, Gianfigliuzzi updated Hacı Pasha concerning a marble tombstone that had been prepared for Şemsi Pasha's sepulchre.<sup>984</sup> Apparently, before Gianfigliuzzi left Istanbul, Şemsi Pasha had ordered a Tuscan marble tombstone for himself. In 1580 Raffaello Carli, a stone-mason, was commissioned to carve the tombstone as well as a coffin. Besides tombstone, the coffin, canopy, pillars, and two turbans (customarily used to signify the rank of the deceased on Ottoman grave markers) of white marble. Carli completed the commission and sent the items to Livorno. However, the ship carrying them sank at sea and only a few of the pieces were recovered. Therefore, in 1582 the grand duke had to order the preparation of another sepulchre, which was not completed and shipped until 1584, four years after Şemsi Pasha's death; upon arriving in Istanbul, it was received with great interest and praise by the Ottoman court.<sup>985</sup> The delay in its delivery notwithstanding, the sepulchre had been used by the grand duchy as yet another diplomatic tool in its attempt to obtain the capitulations. In the 1581 letter informing Hacı Pasha about the then-current status of the tombstone, Gianfigliuzzi also noted all the favors Şemsi Pasha had done for the Florentines and all the efforts he had made to

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<sup>982</sup> Ibid.

<sup>983</sup> ASV, CapiXLett, Costantinopoli 6, fol. 5 (5 August 1581).

<sup>984</sup> Ibid., fol. 6r-v (14 January 1581).

<sup>985</sup> For the fascinating story of the preparation and shipment of the sepulcher, see Marco Spallanzani, “Una Tomba Rinascimentale per un alto dignitario di Murad III,” *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 59 i-iv (1985): 297-306

promote the negotiations, and requested his help in the matter of renewing of trade privileges, which, he said, had been about to be confirmed when Şemsi Pasha died.<sup>986</sup>

This gesture—i.e., the grand duke’s commissioning of the sepulchre—displeased the Venetian *bailo* as much as it pleased Hacı Pasha. In his letter to the Heads of the Council of Ten, Contarini expressed his unhappiness, declaring that the grand duke was using every possible means to secure friendship with the Sublime Porte at the same time he, Contarini, was making all possible efforts to disrupt the process (“*non mancavo con ogni mezzo de procurar[e] de disturbarlo*”). Referring to Şemsi Pasha’s sepulchre, the *bailo* complained that he was in a disadvantageous position, since he was acting through words while the grand duke was acting through gifts.<sup>987</sup>

Yet in the end, even the tombstone did not appear to be successful as a means of securing the friendship and the privileges the grand duke had sought. The attitude of the Venetian *bailo* in his letters indicates that his interference was an important factor in the failure of the final Florentine attempt to obtain capitulations (after Gianfigliuzzi’s unsuccessful mission). Thus, the long-running, on-and-off negotiations between the grand duchy and the Sublime Porte seem to have come to a halt until a further attempt in the 1590s during the rule of Ferdinando I de’ Medici, which will be the subject of the following chapter.

### Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the Florentine–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations that started soon after the Battle of Lepanto in 1573 and lasted almost a decade, until 1581. In fact, the intertwining of various individual interests with official interests initiated the diplomatic contacts between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire during this period. The first attempt at negotiation, which culminated in Ludovico Canacci’s diplomatic mission to Istanbul in 1574, did not succeed due to the grand duke’s stance concerning the galleys of St. Stephen. Therefore, in the following attempt in 1578, the grand duke approached the issue with a different mindset and offered a new explanation concerning the galleys. He sent Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi as ambassador and Jacopo Mormorai as future *bailo* to the Sublime Porte for the new round of negotiations. While a mood of optimism initially dominated, this was soon quashed by the intervention

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<sup>986</sup> ASV, CapiXLet, Costantinopoli 6, fol. 6r-v (14 January 1581).

<sup>987</sup> Ibid: “[S]a ben il dissavantagio sarà grande che io operi con parrole et lui con presenti.”

of various opposing parties within the court and the Ottoman capital; in the end the negotiations remained inconclusive due to the conflict over the issue of the galleys. Thus, on the surface, it was the galleys that brought the negotiations to an impasse.

This chapter, however—by bringing to light a significant number of archival documents, most of which have scarcely been consulted before—has been able to present an analysis of the entire negotiation process from a new perspective. Creating a bricolage of various sources, from diplomatic correspondence and secret letters to official reports and contemporary chronicles, we have arrived at a more comprehensive and coherent picture of Ottoman–Florentine relations during this period. One of the most striking features of this long-running negotiation process—with all its actors, diplomatic intricacies, stratagems, and exchanges—is its capacity to display the various modalities of conducting diplomacy during this period. It exposes the important role played by various individuals during the negotiation process; these include the translators, agents, ambassadors, merchants, courtiers, and court officials who mediated between different political and cultural settings and made themselves indispensable in the diplomatic sphere. The approach used here not only uncovers the complex informal networks that made these intermediaries part of the diplomatic process, but also demonstrates how the interweaving of informal networks and formal diplomacy fostered various sorts of exchanges for example diplomatic gifts between the two states.

Another important revelation afforded by analysis of this diplomatic venture concerns the intricacies of conducting diplomacy in the Ottoman capital during this period. In order to make his way in the complicated environment of the Porte, with all its possible pitfalls, an ambassador needed a considerable degree of skill and experience in diplomacy, and at the same time the support of influential figures and favorites at the Ottoman court. The story of Gianfigliuzzi's mission presents to us the complex web of internal rivalries and conflicts between the households of the vizier and the sultan, which significantly influenced the exercise of power and the decision-making process in the empire during this period. Thus, it can be said that not only Gianfigliuzzi's flaws as a diplomat, but also the increasing factionalism in the Ottoman court and the clash of the grand vizierate's power with the sultanic authority made the Florentine negotiations of 1578 inconclusive.

Lastly, while the chapter has focused on Florentine diplomacy, it has also put this into the wider context of the complicated diplomatic interchanges going on between other Mediterranean powers and the Ottoman Empire during those years. The Florentines'

attempt to secure a firm foothold for Florentine merchants in the Ottoman lands significantly threatened Venetian and French commercial interests in the Levant. Thus, the grand duchy's efforts to obtain the capitulations were in the end hindered by these forces. The grand duke and his ambassador Gianfigliuzzi seem to have eventually been defeated by the well-established information network of the Venetians and pro-Venetian factions at the Ottoman court. Looking at this second attempt in particular, it becomes clear that Venetians possessed a relatively extensive intelligence network of reliable contacts, who kept them informed of news from the court, that hotbed of intrigues and state affairs. This gave the Venetians a position superior to that of their rivals at the Sublime Porte. An approach that allows us to comprehend the involvement of all these actors, playing their separate parts in the negotiation process, presents a more complex story of Florentine–Ottoman diplomatic relations, taking us beyond the vicious circle of the conflict over the galleys of St. Stephen.

## CHAPTER VI

### A Second Chance for an *Ahidname*?:

#### Ottoman–Florentine Negotiations (1592-99)

Almost two decades after Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi's failed diplomatic negotiations, there was another attempt to reopen diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman court during the time of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici. The main motive was to obtain trade privileges for Florentine merchants in the Ottoman lands and to attract Ottoman merchants to Livorno, as was the case in the previous negotiations. The increasing emphasis on this issue in various reports and treatises written by the Florentine merchants during this period seems to have prompted the grand duke, who already showed close interest in the East.<sup>988</sup> Besides Jacopo Mormorai's detailed letter on the importance of the Levant for Florentine trade interests, there were also a number of letters and treatises that focused on the necessity of the Levant trade for the revival of *Arte della Lana*, as already mentioned in Chapter IV. All these suggestions and proposals certainly carried weight with the grand duke.

In addition to economic concerns, the political conjunctures of the time were quite favorable for making a new attempt to restore friendship with the Ottoman Empire. Unlike Francesco I, Ferdinando openly challenged the Spanish alliance, and during the internal strife in France, he financially supported Henry of Navarre against the French Catholic League and Spain. Ferdinando's marriage with Christine of Lorraine (daughter of Charles III of Lorraine and granddaughter of Catherine de' Medici) in 1589 also played an important role in the Medici–French partnership. This alliance influenced the grand duchy's relations with other powers, including the Ottoman Empire. In the case of the conflict in France, Ferdinando's foreign policy paralleled that of the Ottomans during this period, and this was certainly an encouraging factor for resuming diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte.

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<sup>988</sup> Christopher Pastore, "Bipolar behavior: Ferdinando I de' Medici and the East," in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750*, ed. James G. Harper (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011) pp. 129-154.

This chapter focuses on the second diplomatic attempt by the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, which was started as early as 1592 but negotiated only in 1598, and ended in failure for various reasons. As in the case of the 1578 negotiations, this diplomatic attempt has not received much attention in historical scholarship to date. Diaz too evaluated it in the context of the conflict regarding the galleys of St. Stephen. In his view, Ferdinando, just like his predecessor, tried to maintain two irreconcilable things at the same time: favorable relations with the Porte and the warlike activities of the galleys of St. Stephen. The grand duke continued to offer the same “childish excuse” (which had already been employed by Francesco and proved unsuccessful), asserting that the galleys of the order were independent from his authority.<sup>989</sup> In fact, the Order of St. Stephen inevitably came up as a matter of debate in these negotiations as well; however, it was hardly the main reason for their failure. Detailed examination of the negotiation process reveals the various undercurrents that influenced Ottoman–Tuscan relations and highlights a prominent but largely ignored aspect of diplomacy – mediation. This chapter will examine the important role played by state representatives, envoys, dragomans, merchants, and court officials as mediators during these diplomatic negotiations. Besides the increasing factionalism within the Ottoman court and the fierce competition and rivalry among the representatives of other European powers in Istanbul, the distinct forms of individual interactions unfolded intricate networks that once more left their mark on Ottoman–Florentine negotiations.

Concerning the negotiations of 1592, a significant part of the story is constructed from the evidence in the *Calendar of State Papers Venice*.<sup>990</sup> This multi-volume work, edited by Horatio Brown in the nineteenth century, comprises the dispatches sent by the Venetian ambassadors in Madrid, Paris, Prague, Rome, and Istanbul to the Senate in Venice. It was mainly intended to provide information regarding the early modern history of England; however, this rich compilation also sheds light on various other issues, including the grand duchy’s diplomatic attempt to negotiate with the Ottoman court and the reaction of different interested parties, including the English ambassador in the Ottoman capital, to this attempt. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the evidence provided by *CSP Venice* with the original dispatches of the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul to the Senate, as the relevant *filzas* in the Venetian State Archive are not available for use

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<sup>989</sup> Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana- I Medici*, p. 293.

<sup>990</sup> *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to the English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice* (hereafter CSP, Venice), vol. 9: 1592-1603, ed. Horatio Brown (London, 1897).



due to their poor condition.<sup>991</sup> The evidence in *CSP Venice* is, however, supported by the documents in the *Mediceo del Principato* (MdP) collection in the Florentine State Archive, presenting a relatively complete story of the 1592 negotiations.

For the second round of diplomatic negotiations, lasting from 1597 to 1599, most of the information is derived from the letters and reports preserved in the *MdP* collection. It comprises not only letters of the grand duke, the Florentine representative Neri Giraldi, and his dragoman, but also translations of the letters of Sultan Mehmed III, Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha, Grand Admiral Halil Pasha, and Ottoman envoy Müteferrika Mustafa Agha. In addition, the draft copy of the privileges and two Ottoman Turkish letters, one written by the sultan and the other by Halil Pasha, are found in the same collection. In order to grasp a full picture of the negotiation process, the Florentine documents are here analyzed in tandem with the Venetian sources. The letters of the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul and the reports of the Venetian diplomatic representatives in Florence not only fill in the missing pieces of the story but also vividly depict the extent of the rivalry between the two powers and the measures the Venetian state took to counter the grand duchy's diplomatic endeavor. From the Ottoman side, the sources are silent about the diplomatic attempts of both 1592 and 1598. However, Ottoman historian Mustafa Selânikî's chronicle is valuable in terms of providing a comprehensive narration of the events in the Ottoman Empire between the years 1563 and 1599.<sup>992</sup>

To conclude, this chapter reconstructs the diplomatic negotiations between the grand duchy and the Ottoman administration in the last decade of the sixteenth century in light of the evidence compiled from a variety of sources. Although both of these diplomatic attempts ended in failure, each contains a story in itself – offering us insight into diverse and fascinating aspects of cross-cultural interactions in the early modern Mediterranean as well as the peculiarities of early modern diplomacy. Before exploring each negotiation process, it is best to say a few words regarding the diplomatic and political landscape of Istanbul up through the end of the sixteenth century.

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<sup>991</sup> These are *Senato, Dispacci, Costantinopoli* filza 35 (March–August 1592) and filza 36 (September–February 1593).

<sup>992</sup> Mustafa Selânikî was originally from Salonica. He worked as a scribe in the imperial chancellery and was later appointed to various positions in the imperial service. Selânikî wrote his work in the form of a *Rûznâme* (imperial day-book of accounts). According to Babinger, the Ottoman chronicler provided a reliable account of the events of the late sixteenth century. Franz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, tr. Coşkun Üçok (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992) pp. 150-51.

## Diplomacy and the Political Setting in Istanbul

Istanbul began to hold a central place in diplomacy during the second half of the sixteenth century as a result of the growing desire of the European states to obtain privileges from the Ottoman court and gain direct access to trade routes, commercial networks, and raw and finished products of the Levant. Besides Venice and France, other states, namely those of northern Europe, also started to look for ways to negotiate with the Ottoman administration in order to secure an *ahidname* for their merchants. This stimulated an atmosphere of rivalry among the European states themselves, while facilitating closer diplomatic and cultural relations with the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, the role of the ambassador gained more importance. Much depended on his ability in networking and establishing political alliances with Ottoman officials, his being alert to all sorts of intrigues, and his skills in dealing with the factions and favorites at the Ottoman court.

Through the end of the sixteenth century, in addition to the Venetian *bailo* and the French ambassador, the English ambassador had increasing influence at the Sublime Porte. Compared to the previous negotiations in the 1570s, the fierce competition among the ambassadors of the European powers was much more visible in the 1590s, and it had a considerable impact on the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations. The English, obtaining an *ahidname* from the Ottoman administration after William Harborne’s negotiations (1578–83), could trade freely under their own flag, while the nationals of all other European states, except Venice, were required to conduct their trade in the Ottoman lands under the French flag. The negotiation process was not an easy one for the English, as they faced constant opposition from the Venetians and the French.<sup>993</sup> Both the Venetian *bailo* and the French ambassador tried hard to prejudice Ottoman officials against the English representative Harborne by raising doubts concerning his credentials.<sup>994</sup> However, through his skillful diplomacy and good contacts with influential figures at the Ottoman court, he was able to establish English trade in the Ottoman lands and remained as ambassador in Istanbul until 1588.

Besides commercial interests, political concerns were influential in Anglo–Ottoman relations. On behalf of Queen Elizabeth, Harborne exerted all efforts to convince

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<sup>993</sup> Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk–İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi*, pp. 28–30; Laura Coulter, “An Examination of the Status and Activities of the English Ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte,” p. 59.

<sup>994</sup> Christine Woodhead, “England, the Ottomans and the Barbary Coast in the Late Sixteenth Century,” in *State Papers Online The Government of Britain, 1509-1714*: gale.cengage.co.uk.

the sultan to collaborate with the English in a campaign against Spain. If an alliance with the Porte could be secured, the Ottoman sultan would send a fleet to attack the Spanish in the Mediterranean, which would make things easier for the English. Despite all the hard work done by Harborne and Edward Barton (the succeeding ambassador), especially while the preparations for the great Armada were under-way, no result was achieved. In 1588, Queen Elizabeth expressed her reaction in these words:

Philip is attacking us now and if he succeed, your turn comes next. Join with us and our arms will probably be successful. If we are divided, his force is so overwhelming that, though we are confident of success, who knows what the result may be?<sup>995</sup>

According to Barton, the reason for the Ottomans' lack of interest in organizing a naval attack against Spain was that Grand Vizier Siyavuş Pasha had been bribed by the Spanish and was able to dissuade the sultan from supporting the queen. However, the main reason was in fact financial. Having just ended an exhausting and financially draining war with Safavid Persia on the eastern frontier in 1590, the Ottomans were unwilling to immediately turn around and engage in a conflict with Spain. The Ottoman administration gave hope to the English concerning this issue, but never did take action.<sup>996</sup>

Although the English were unable to secure the military support of the Ottomans to counter Spain, they did successfully prevent Philip II's attempts to achieve a truce with the Ottoman court.<sup>997</sup> At around the same time as Grand Duke Ferdinando's request for negotiations in 1592, the Spanish king also sought to negotiate with the Ottoman administration for a truce. This attempt was, however, prevented by the Queen of England and the King of Navarre, who, in their letters to the sultan and the grand vizier, pointed out the indignity and the loss such a truce would bring to the Porte. In the end, the sultan decided not to respond to this request, and Spanish representative Margliani had to turn back to Spain halfway through his journey.<sup>998</sup> In this decision, Sultan Murad III's teacher and advisor Hoca Sâdeddîn Efendi, who promoted the interests of the English at the court, played an influential role.<sup>999</sup>

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<sup>995</sup> Edward Barton and Edwin Pears, "The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte," *The English Historical Review* 8:31 (1893): 439.

<sup>996</sup> Pál Fodor, "Between Two Continental Wars: The Ottoman Naval Preparations in 1590-92" in *The Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2000) pp. 171-190.

<sup>997</sup> Laura Coulter, "An Examination of the Status and Activities of the English Ambassadors," p. 63.

<sup>998</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:89 (10 July 1592); 9:104 (19 September 1592).

<sup>999</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:13 (24 January 1592); 9:45 (22 March 1592).

During this period, another significant issue was the situation in France. In fact, the reason for the reappearance of Spain as a source of conflict was connected to the chaotic conditions in France. Having already been divided as a result of religious wars, France was still in discord, and the external forces also took sides in this conflict. The Spanish Habsburgs supported the Catholic League, while England and the Ottoman Empire aligned themselves with Henri of Navarre and the Protestant Huguenots. This political factionalism and crisis within France also had an effect on the French representation at the Porte. At the time, the French ambassador in Istanbul was Jacques Savary de Lancôme (1585 to 1589). Lancôme was a strong supporter of the Catholic League and acted in favor of Spain. Thus, when the King of Navarre ascended to the throne of France as Henry IV, he appointed the English ambassador Edward Barton to represent France as well. However, Lancôme refused to recognize Henry IV as his sovereign and continued to act as French ambassador, supporting the interests of the League. In the end, he was arrested by the sultan and imprisoned until 1592.

Meanwhile, François Savary de Brèves, Lancôme's nephew, was appointed the new French ambassador in Istanbul.<sup>1000</sup> Savary de Brèves, who remained in this post until 1605, had served as secretary to his uncle Lancôme before becoming ambassador himself.<sup>1001</sup> During his stay in Istanbul, Savary de Brèves acquired a very good knowledge of Turkish and established close friendships with various Ottoman officials.<sup>1002</sup> According to the Ottoman chronicler Selânikî, Savary de Brèves (nicknamed Kabasakal) was sufficiently fluent in Turkish to be able to read and write in the language without the assistance of a dragoman.<sup>1003</sup> During his ambassadorship, de Brèves carried out various diplomatic tasks with success: for example, helping to bring about the subjection of Marseilles to Henry IV in 1593 by gaining the support of Sultan Murad III. De Brèves was able to persuade the sultan to pressure the inhabitants of the town by

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<sup>1000</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:89 (10 July 1592); 9:113 (14 November 1592); 9:114 (29 November 1592); De Lamar Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," p. 468; J. L. Bacqué-Grammont, Sinan Kunalalp and Frédéric Hitzel, *Représentants permanents de la France en Turquie (1536-1991) et de la Turquie en France (1797-1991)* (Istanbul-Paris: Éditions ISIS, 1991) pp. 15-16.

<sup>1001</sup> Viorel Panaite, "A French Ambassador in Istanbul and His Turkish Manuscript on Western Merchants in the Ottoman Mediterranean (Late 16<sup>th</sup> and Early 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries) *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, XLII, 1-4 (2004): 119.

<sup>1002</sup> It is also suggested that he was married to a Greek woman and had three children. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, p. 96. Some sources state that he was married to a Greek woman who was beautiful and rich and a niece of the grand vizier. Marcel Émerit, "Au temps de Saint Vincent de Paul. La mission de Savary de Brèves en Afrique du nord (1606)," *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-Mer* 186, (1965): 298.

<sup>1003</sup> "[L]isân-ı Türki'de fasîh okur-yazar tercümâna ihtiyacı yok." Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî vol. II*, p. 658.

threatening to cancel their trade privileges in the Levant unless they recognized Henry of Navarre as the French king; this pressure proved effective.<sup>1004</sup>

In 1596, he and Barton accompanied Sultan Mehmed III and his army as they besieged the fortress of Eger in Hungary.<sup>1005</sup> Upon the Ottoman victory, de Brèves visited the Ottoman court with a retinue of twenty-five people and presented his compliments and gifts to the sultan. Taking advantage of this opportunity, he also asked for the renewal of privileges and proposed to the sultan an alliance against the Spanish forces in the Mediterranean.<sup>1006</sup> For our purposes, this renewal in 1597 is particularly important, as Mehmed III, like his predecessors, confirmed that the Spanish, Portuguese, Catalans, Ragusans, Genoese, Anconitans, Florentines, and all other nations except the Venetians and the English would arrive and trade in the Ottoman lands under the French flag.<sup>1007</sup> Still, this treaty did not prevent the Ottoman court from welcoming the Florentines' request for trade privileges in 1598. Even though the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations did not reach any conclusion, the reason for this had more to do with Savary de Brèves' efforts to discredit the Florentine representative in the eyes of the grand vizier than with the agreement made with the French king in 1597.

The late sixteenth century was long regarded in Ottoman historiography as the period marking the beginning of the empire's decline. The military and economic crises of the era were considered to be signs of the deterioration. Besides the devaluation of the currency, the long-lasting wars with the Safavids on the eastern frontier (1578-1590) and with the Habsburgs in the west (1593-1606) depleted the financial and military resources of the empire significantly. Moreover, *Celali* uprisings in Anatolia put the new sultan, Mehmed III (1595-1603), in a difficult situation. While there was turmoil and strife at the periphery of the empire due to wars and economic decline, in the capital, the extravagance and corruption among court officials close to the sultan led to harsh criticism by contemporary observers.<sup>1008</sup> In fact, changes in the key institutions of the empire, especially the seclusion of the sultans from active participation in governance, the

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<sup>1004</sup> Viorel Panaite, "A French Ambassador in Istanbul," p. 121.

<sup>1005</sup> M. Le Comte de Saint-Priest, *Mémoires sur L'Ambassade de France en Turquie et sur Le Commerce des Français dans Le Levant* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1877), pp. 201-203.

<sup>1006</sup> *Tarih-i Selânikî*, vol. II, p. 658 (1596/1597).

<sup>1007</sup> *Archives Diplomatiques, Turquie Supplement*, 134CP/1 P845 fol. 111-117: "Traité et renouvellement d'alliance entre le Roi et le Grand Seig. en l'année 1597" (25 February 1597). The original document in Turkish is also available: BN, DO, Turc 130, f. 17r-25v.

<sup>1008</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, Koçi Bey, and Naima were among the contemporary intellectuals who reacted against the changes in the administrative circles of the empire in their *Nasihâtnames* (Mirrors for princes or Counsels to kings). Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," *Islamic Studies* I/II (1962): 75-83.

dominance of the imperial harem in state affairs, and the emergence of increasing factionalism in the Ottoman court, were considered major reasons for the misfortunes the empire experienced during the period. Contemporary intellectuals reflected their concern about the developments of the period through political advice literature (*nasihatname*) for the sultans. In these works they analyzed current problems and provided practical solutions for them. As a bureaucrat and historian Mustafa Âlî in his famous advice book *Counsel for Sultans (Nushat al-Salatin)*, which he wrote in 1581, focused on administrative, military and economic crises of the period and considered one of the main reasons of decline as the withdrawal of the sultan from governing the state affairs.<sup>1009</sup> While previously the sultans had been actively engaged in governing and accessible to their subjects, after the time of Sultan Süleyman they secluded themselves, instead the grand vizier gained enormous power as the deputy of the sultan. In the following period, the weakening power of the grand vizier let the stage open to palace favorites such as imperial women and courtiers to deal with state affairs. Thus for Mustafa Âlî, the rule of Sultan Murad III marked the beginning of decline. The increasing corruption and personal weakness of the sultans led to deterioration in the institutions and finally to a downturn. Similar reactions also could be found in *Kitâb-i Müstetâb*, *Hırzül-Mülûk* and Koçi Bey's *Treatise (Risale)* written in the early seventeenth century.<sup>1010</sup>

Current scholarship has called into question this “decline” paradigm in various ways and provided revisionist interpretations of the period.<sup>1011</sup> For our purposes, the focus here is only on those assessments related to changes in the government. According to the revisionist approach, during this period the Ottoman administration inevitably underwent certain transformations as the “empire of conquest” turned into a “sedentary

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<sup>1009</sup> It has been edited and translated into English by Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa Âli's Counsel for Sultans, 1581*, 2 vols (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979-1982). Also see Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali, 1541-1600* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

<sup>1010</sup> Koçi Beğ, *Koçi Bey Risâlesi*, ed. Yılmaz Kurt (Ankara: Ecdad Yayınları, 1994); Yaşar Yücel (ed.), *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatına Dair Kaynaklar: Kitâb-i Müstetâb, Kitabu Mesâlihi'l Müslimîn ve Menâfi'l-Mü'minîn, Hırzül-Mülûk* (Ankara: TTK, 1988). For an evaluation of these sources see Mehmet Öz, *Kanun-i Kadimin Peşinde, Osmanlı'da “Çözülme” ve Gelenekçi Yorumcuları (XVI. Yüzyıldan XVIII. Yüzyıl Başlarına)* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2009) pp. 63-86.

<sup>1011</sup> Recent scholarship approached these *nasihatnames* critically, considering them a tool used to express the political struggle for power among the ruling elite. See Rifaat Abou-el-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1991). He considered the criticisms of Mustafa Âlî and Koçi Bey deeply rooted from their personal experiences and regarded them as the losing party of their period who protested change. Also see Rhoads Murphey, “Review Article: Mustafa Ali and the Politics of Cultural Despair,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, 2 (1989): 243-255. For a comprehensive discussion of the issue, Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4 (1997-1998), 1-2: 30-75.

monarchy.”<sup>1012</sup> In this transition period, the sultan became more and more detached from ruling the empire; in the words of Kafadar, “the sultanic presence in government became ever more an icon and ever less a force.”<sup>1013</sup> Instead, the grand vizier, as deputy of the sultan, took over control of imperial affairs. This situation soon strengthened the authority of the vizier’s household. Being the head of a centralized bureaucracy, the grand vizier created his own faction within the administration by appointing his own clientele to important positions and gained enormous wealth from international trade and diplomatic relations with foreign powers.<sup>1014</sup> As seen in the previous chapter, the best example of this was the grand vizierate of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.

In response to the increasing authority of the vizier’s household vis-à-vis that of the sultan, Murad III empowered new political actors within the court.<sup>1015</sup> The sultan’s harem became a new power base within the imperial court, and began to take an active part in the decision-making process in state affairs during this period. In particular, Safiye Sultan, the favorite of Sultan Murad and mother of his successor Mehmed III, played a significant role in politics and diplomacy. Sultan Murad’s tutor, Hoca Sâdeddîn Efendi, also exerted considerable influence over the sultan’s decisions,<sup>1016</sup> as can be seen in the case of Anglo–Ottoman relations.

The post-Sokollu period witnessed a decrease in the influence of the viziers on the political stage. There were no more long-term grand vizierates after that of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha; on the contrary, the office of grand vizier changed hands very frequently, even more than once a year. For instance, during the Ottoman–Florentine negotiation process that took place between 1597 and 1599, the incumbent of the grand vizierate changed four times. First came İbrahim Pasha, who was holding the post for the second time (from December 5, 1596, to November 3, 1597); he was replaced by Hadım Hasan Pasha, who would remain in office until April 9, 1598. Because of the conflicts the latter had with the queen mother Safiye Sultan, he fell out of favor and was eventually

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<sup>1012</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, “Empires before and after the Post-Colonial Turn: The Ottomans,” in *Beyond Dominant Paradigms in Ottoman and Middle Eastern/North African studies: a tribute to Rifa’at Abou-El-Haj*, eds. Donald Quataert and Baki Tezcan (Istanbul: ISAM, 2010) pp. 67-68.

<sup>1013</sup> Cemal Kafadar, “The Ottomans and Europe,” p. 612.

<sup>1014</sup> Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, pp. 94-98.

<sup>1015</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>1016</sup> “Relazione di Matteo Zane, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Letta in Pregadi l’Anno 1594,” in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albèri, Serie III, pp. 435-436; Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, p. 28.

beheaded.<sup>1017</sup> In his place, Cerrah Mehmed Pasha was appointed, holding the post until January 6, 1599. During the final phase of the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations, with the support of Safiye Sultan, İbrahim Pasha became grand vizier for the third time and remained in office until July 10, 1601. These frequent changes certainly affected the negotiations, since upon the arrival of each new grand vizier, the grand duchy started the negotiation process over again, while striving to gain his favor.

It can be said that the transformations within the Ottoman administrative system also influenced the empire’s diplomatic relations with foreign states. The emergence of different power-holders at the imperial court led to increasing factionalism, most of the time prioritizing self-interest over the imperial good. The clash of individual interests among the various interest groups, including the harem and the vizier’s household, had significant influence upon the empire’s decision-making process and its diplomatic negotiations. During this period, foreign representatives and ambassadors were dealing with a highly developed bureaucracy; they achieved their aims mostly through intermediaries who held influential positions at the imperial court and would lobby for their interests. The grand duke also adopted this tactic; in each of its diplomatic attempts, the grand duchy sought the support of influential figures and officials in the Ottoman capital. This issue is discussed in more detail below in the context of the various negotiation processes.

### **Antonio Vecchietti and the Tuscan–Ottoman Negotiations of 1592**

The first attempt to renew friendship and privileges with the Ottoman court came in 1592, when Grand Duke Ferdinando I sent letters to Sultan Murad III and Grand Vizier Siyavuş Pasha through Antonio Vecchietti, a Florentine merchant active in Istanbul.<sup>1018</sup> In both of his letters, the grand duke stated that upon the desire of the Florentine merchants trading in Ottoman lands, he would be sending an envoy to obtain from the Porte the same privileges, exemptions, and good treatment the French and Venetians enjoyed in the

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<sup>1017</sup> Peçevi Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, p. 196. According to Peçevi, Hadım Hasan Pasha was very keen on bribery. He did not hesitate to complain everywhere that Safiye Sultan forced him to pay money to her; moreover he attempted to get rid of Gazanfer Agha, the white eunuch and kapı agha of the palace. For these reasons, he was killed and the position was given to Cerrah Mehmed Pasha.

<sup>1018</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 37r-v, fol. 40r. (30 August 1592). Antonio Vecchietti was most probably related to the Vecchietti brothers (Giovanni Battista and Gerolamo), who in the 1590s were among the first travelers in the Levant to collect manuscripts in Persian, Coptic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Turkish for the *Typographia Medicea*. See Francis Richard “Les Frères Vecchietti, Diplomates, Érudits et Aventuriers,” in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, eds. A. Hamilton, M. den Boogert, B. Westerweel (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 11-26.



Ottoman Empire.<sup>1019</sup> Ferdinando also stressed the idea of reciprocity of privileges, noting that Ottoman subjects, consuls, and dragomans would be able to trade in the Tuscan state and its ports; they would benefit from the exemptions confirmed by the grand duke.<sup>1020</sup>

The grand duke, on the other hand, made no mention in his letters of the question of St. Stephen's galleys, which had been a frequently raised issue in the previous negotiations. Presumably unwilling to stir up the conflict related to the galleys, the grand duke made his initial attempt purely trade oriented, aimed at securing for Florentine merchants trading in the Ottoman domains privileges similar to those enjoyed by the Venetians and French and, more importantly, attracting Ottoman merchants to Livorno, which had already become popular as a commercial free port during this period. Ferdinando's request was well received by the Ottoman court; however, the negotiations did not reach a conclusion due to intervention by a third party – the French. The details concerning this process were provided by the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul, Matteo Zane, in his letters to the Senate.

In fact, the representatives of other European powers in Istanbul, namely the English ambassador, French ambassador and Venetian *bailo*, followed the negotiation process closely. According to Edward Barton, the grand duke of Tuscany was much more in favor of Navarre than of the Catholic League and Spain; moreover, he was against Savoy's claim on Provence, which was supported by the Habsburgs.<sup>1021</sup> Thus, in Barton's view, "all this makes the Tuscan name more acceptable here [at the Ottoman court]."<sup>1022</sup> On the other hand, for Matteo Zane, the possibility of the Florentines having the same trade privileges as the Venetian merchants would be detrimental to Venetian interests in the Levant. De Brèves similarly considered this a threat to French interests, as the conclusion of such a negotiation would enable the Florentines to sail under their own flag instead of the French flag. Therefore, Zane and de Brèves agreed to act together against the Florentines' attempt to negotiate with the Porte.<sup>1023</sup>

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<sup>1019</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 37r: "La buona et antica amicitia che la mia natione fiorentina ha tenuto sempre con l'Eccelsa Porta della M.ta V. ricerca di essere abbracciata favorita et rinnovata nel suo Potentiss.o Imp.rio et à questo effetto quelli che negotiano in cotesti paesi desiderano per nunzio mio ottenere dall'Invittiss.a M.ta V. tutti quelli aiuti, commode esentioni [esenzioni] et buoni trattamenti, che ricevono li Franzesi et li Venetiani."

<sup>1020</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 37r-v

<sup>1021</sup> The duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel, made a claim to the French crown with the support of Spain and the French Catholic League and attempted to add Provence and the Dauphiné to his territory. Thus, France and Savoy continued fighting at intervals during the 1590s.

<sup>1022</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:87 (27 June 1592).

<sup>1023</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:114 (29 November 1592); 9:134 (26 February 1592 [1593]).

In opposition to the French–Venetian alliance, the Levantine Jews in Istanbul and the English ambassador were in favor of the Florentines. According to the Venetian *bailo*, the reason for the Levantine Jews supporting this negotiation was that many of them wanted to settle in Pisa and Livorno. Moreover, they had the English ambassador’s support in promoting the Florentines’ cause at the Ottoman court.<sup>1024</sup> As mentioned in Chapter IV, Ferdinando’s edicts of 1591 and 1593 provided privileges and freedom to merchants of all nations, among whom were Armenians, Jews, Turks, Moors, and Persians. These merchants would have tax exemptions, safe trade, housing, storage facilities, and freedom of religion, which was particularly significant for the Jews. Among the Jewish merchants, the group of particular importance to the grand duke was the Sephardic Jews, who had settled in the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The reason for this was not only their having extended international networks but also their knowledge of both European and Eastern languages, which would make them “ideal commercial intermediaries between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>1025</sup> Thus, both the grand duchy and the Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire had this in mind from the beginning as they strove to forward the negotiations.

Although the French ambassador Savary de Brèves tried hard to persuade the English ambassador to act together with him on this issue, Barton rejected this proposal, upon which both de Brèves and Zane assumed that the Florentines had bribed him and his close friend, Paolo Mariani, to secure their support. In his letter to the Senate, Zane expressed his views in these words:

M. de Brèves had orders from the French Ambassador in Venice to act in the matter of the Florentine trading privileges as I should direct. He tells me that he has spoken to the English Ambassador who is entrusted with the protection of French interests, which are involved in this question of the Florentine traders, because if the privilege is granted to them they will cease to sail under the French flag. The English ambassador, however, declines to move; says he has no money to spend, and words are worthless against those who employ deeds. But I am fully convinced that the Florentines have not moved in this matter without first securing the English ambassador and another of his chief counselors, Mariani, both of them in great straits for money, and ready to embrace any party.<sup>1026</sup>

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<sup>1024</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:114 (29 November 1592).

<sup>1025</sup> Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs*, p. 30.

<sup>1026</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:134 (26 February 1592 [1593]).

Mariani was a Venetian merchant and citizen by birth; he served as an official for the French and English embassies.<sup>1027</sup> He was secretary to Barton as well as his close partner in trade.<sup>1028</sup> Thus, unlike the French ambassador and the Venetian *bailo*, Barton and Mariani seem to have acted in favor of Florentine interests in Istanbul. In fact, this had something to do with Ferdinando's policy toward England at the time. The grand duke was interested in attracting not only Levantine Jews but also northern European merchants and ships to Livorno. A copy of the *Livornina* edict of 1593 was sent to Queen Elizabeth I, and in 1597 the first English consul was acknowledged in Livorno.<sup>1029</sup>

The initial step to prevent the confirmation of Florentine privileges by the Porte was taken by Savary de Brèves. When he went to the *Divan* to renew the previous capitulations negotiated between the Ottoman Empire and France, he offered to Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha<sup>1030</sup> that he would “conduct all the negotiations with Florence to the benefit of the Porte.”<sup>1031</sup> As already mentioned, the greatest advantage Savary de Brèves had was his ability to speak with Ottoman officials in Turkish, which put him in a favorable position vis-à-vis other foreign representatives. He could communicate with the former directly and establish close relationships. Moreover, in the meantime, Antonio Vecchietti, the grand duke's representative, had fallen ill with the plague and could not follow the negotiation process.<sup>1032</sup> Therefore, the grand vizier agreed to de Brèves' offer, and the French ambassador presented himself as mediator between the grand duke and the Sublime Porte to secure trade privileges for the Florentines. However ironic the situation was, the grand duke gave this intervention a positive reception and even sent a letter to de Brèves imploring him to obtain the privileges for the Florentine merchants.<sup>1033</sup> In the end,

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<sup>1027</sup> This shadowy character seems to have been involved in various networks, and besides being a merchant, he acted as an agent for different interest groups. For instance, in 1597 he was consul in Egypt for England and France; however, Savary de Brèves accused him of being a Spanish agent and asked the Ottoman court to remove him from the French consulship. Despite the intervention of the English ambassador, Sultan Mehmed III acceded to the French ambassador's request and asked for Mariani's case to be heard at the Ottoman court. See Viorel Panaite, “French Capitulations and Consular Jurisdiction in Egypt and Aleppo in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, ed. by P. Firges, T. Graf, C. Roth and G. Tulasoglu (Leiden: Brill, 2014) pp. 76-77.

<sup>1028</sup> Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>1029</sup> Lucia Frattarelli Fischer and Stefano Villani, “‘People of Every Mixture.’ Immigration, Tolerance and Religious Conflicts in Early Modern Livorno” in *Immigration and Emigration in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ann Katherine Isaacs (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2007) p. 98.

<sup>1030</sup> Koca Sinan Pasha was grand vizier for the third time during this period, from 28 January 1593 to 16 February 1595.

<sup>1031</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:159 (1 May 1593).

<sup>1032</sup> MdP 4274/A, fol. 502 (19 November 1592); CSP, Venice, 9:114 (29 November 1592).

<sup>1033</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:177 (21 June 1593).

as a result of some foot-dragging and other machinations by de Brèves, the negotiations did not reach any conclusion and Vecchietti had to return to Florence empty handed.<sup>1034</sup>

Meanwhile, the grand duke also sent representatives to Transylvania, who went there together with papal envoys to negotiate with Sigismund Bathory, the ruler of Transylvania and a vassal of the Ottoman sultan. The actual aim was to persuade Bathory to rebel against the Ottomans and participate in the papacy's plans for a crusade.<sup>1035</sup> In the background of the grand duke's action was also the intention of furthering Florentine trade interests in Eastern Europe. In fact, Simone Genga, a military architect who had worked in the service of the Medici, was in the service of Bathory during this period. He and his brothers acted as intermediaries between the grand duke and the Transylvanian ruler. In 1592 one of the Genga brothers arrived in Florence with lavish gifts to present Sigismund's request to marry a niece of Ferdinando I de' Medici and to report the wealth of resources in Transylvania, which was rich in mineral sources, silver and gold mines, and grain. A year after, in 1593, the grand duke sent his agent Matteo Botti to thank Sigismund for his kind proposition and the marriage proposal did not receive a positive reply, but the grand duke sent Bathory a load of luxury cloth and precious pieces of Florentine artisanship. In Giorgio Spini's view, the gift of textiles was intended to promote the Florentine cloth industry. Following this, the Transylvanian ruler sent Fabio Genga to Florence, promising the grand duke trading privileges for Florentine merchants in Transylvania while also asking for support from the grand duke and the pope in his rebellion against the Ottomans.<sup>1036</sup> Thus, it seems that the grand duke wanted to compensate, to a certain extent, for the failed negotiations with the Ottoman court by negotiating with the Transylvanian ruler.

In fact, the grand duke also adopted an anti-Ottoman stance in the conflict that had recently erupted between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, agreeing to provide financial and military support to Emperor Rudolf II in his war against the Ottomans in Hungary. In 1594 he sent troops under the command of his stepbrother Don Giovanni de' Medici, as well as military architects and engineers to serve the Habsburg emperor.<sup>1037</sup> Together with the Tuscan forces, Sigismund's collaboration with Emperor Rudolf and the revolt of

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<sup>1034</sup> CSP, Venice, 9:187 (22 July 1593); 9:223 (3 October 1593).

<sup>1035</sup> İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. III/2, p. 48.

<sup>1036</sup> Giorgio Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici e il Sistema degli stati Europei del Cinquecento," pp. 210-211; Gianluca Masi, *I Rapporti tra il Granducato di Toscana e il Principato di Transilvania (1540-1699)*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2013, p. 41; pp. 215-222; pp. 242-260; pp. 265-272.

<sup>1037</sup> Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici," p. 211; Masi, *I Rapporti*, pp. 97-100.

Wallachian and Moldavian princes against Ottoman rule resulted in the defeat of the Ottomans at Eztergom in 1595.<sup>1038</sup> However, in the following year the Ottoman army gained a major victory against the Habsburg forces, and the Tuscan troops returned to Florence with heavy losses.<sup>1039</sup> As the grand duke's expectations came to a naught as a result of the inconclusive Ottoman-Habsburg wars, he once again chose the path of reconciliation and started to look for ways to negotiate with the Ottoman court.

### Chaim Levi and Israel Çelebi Alamanoğlu

After the failure of 1592 negotiations, there was another attempt in 1597 through the mediation of a Florentine called Chaim Levi "il Fiorentino". There is no information about the person of Levi, but he was presumably a Florentine Jewish merchant conducting trade in Istanbul and had close contacts with the Jewish community there. In a letter to the grand duke, Levi stated that through Israel Çelebi, who was an intimate of the grand vizier İbrahim Pasha,<sup>1040</sup> he was able to enter the grand vizier's room to talk to him about the grant of capitulations to the Florentines.<sup>1041</sup> Levi also showed İbrahim Pasha the document previously presented by Antonio Vecchietti and suggested that the grand duke would present him a generous gift if Florentine ships were allowed to enter the Ottoman ports and other privileges were granted.<sup>1042</sup> İbrahim Pasha agreed to do whatever he could for the sake of his close friend, Israel Çelebi Alamanoğlu, who belonged to one of the leading Jewish families in Istanbul.<sup>1043</sup>

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<sup>1038</sup> Kate Fleet, "The Ottomans, 1451-1603: A political history introduction," in *the Ottoman Empire as World Power, Cambridge History of Turkey* vol. II, eds. S. Faroqhi and K. Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013) pp. 42-43.

<sup>1039</sup> Spini, "Il Principato dei Medici," pp. 212-213.

<sup>1040</sup> During this time İbrahim Pasha was grand vizier for the second time, replacing Cigalazade Sinan Pasha, from 5 December 1596 to 3 November 1597.

<sup>1041</sup> MdP 879, fol. 284 (23 May 1597): "[P]er mezzo di un hebreo che se chiama Israel Zelibi alaman hogli ch'e intimissimo (?) con il bascia grande che se chiama Hebraim Bascia che tiene per moglie la sorella del gran turcho, mi fecie doppo mezza notte intrar in camera del ditto Bascia grande e parlo sopra il fatto de S.A.S."

<sup>1042</sup> MdP 879, fol. 284: "V.A.S li avrebbe dato un gran presente se avesse fatto ch'li navi fiorentini navigassero in questi porti e tutti li capitoli..."

<sup>1043</sup> According to one account, the members of the Alamanoğlu family were originally from Buda, and during the conquest of Buda by Sultan Süleyman, they surrendered the keys of the castle to the sultan and in return received from him the privilege of exemption from all taxes for the members of the family and their descendants. About the story concerning the history of the family and the privileges it received from the Ottoman sultans, see Gilles Veinstein, "Retour Sur Les Privilèges des Alamanoğlu: Une Lignée Juive Ottomane à Travers les Siècles," in *The Ottoman Middle East: studies in honor of Amnon Cohen*, ed. by Eyal Ginio and Elie Podeh (Leiden: Brill, 2014) pp. 131-147.

Israel Çelebi enjoyed a high standing at the Ottoman court and had considerable influence in Ottoman affairs.<sup>1044</sup> According to Baron, he acted as an intermediary not only in the Tuscan–Ottoman negotiations but also those between the sultan and Austria.<sup>1045</sup> Moreover, in the early seventeenth century he played an important role in the Ottoman–Dutch negotiations. Thanks to his close contacts with Grand Admiral Halil Pasha (who held this office between 1609 and 1611), he mediated between Halil Pasha and the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga, and despite all opposition, the first capitulations were granted to the Dutch in 1612.<sup>1046</sup>

It is evident that in his efforts to obtain privileges for the grand duke, Chaim Levi also benefited from the mediation of Israel Çelebi and thus was able to negotiate with the grand vizier. But apparently this was not enough, as in his letter to the grand duke Levi stated that in order to make things work properly, it was necessary to gain the consent of the sultan’s mother, Safiye Sultan. The best way to reach her was through a Jewess who was a close companion of the *valide sultan*.<sup>1047</sup> According to Levi, with the help of the grand vizier, the *valide sultan*, and the Jewish individuals mentioned, the grand duke could obtain whatever he wanted. As there is only this letter available to us, it is not known what came out of Levi’s endeavors. However, the following events show that the grand duke was indeed quite determined to start negotiations with the Ottoman court at all costs.

### **A New Hope for the Negotiations: Ottoman Envoy Mustafa Agha**

It was only a month later, in June 1597, that a good opportunity fell into the grand duke’s lap. In fact, the circumstances occasioning the negotiations of 1598 were quite serendipitous. Mustafa Agha Müteferrika, who had been in Fez and France on a diplomatic mission, stopped at Livorno on his way back to Istanbul and sent a letter to the

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<sup>1044</sup> For instance, John Sanderson, a Levant Company merchant who came to Istanbul for the first time in 1595, in his letter (on March 30, 1600) to Nicholas Leate in London referred to Israel Çelebi as being among the principal Jews of Istanbul. *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602, with his autobiography and selection from his correspondence*, ed. Sir William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931) p. 201.

<sup>1045</sup> Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVIII, p. 145-146.

<sup>1046</sup> A. H. De Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations 1610-1630*, p. 113. De Groot points out that according to Sancy, the French ambassador at the time, Israel Çelebi was also working for Spanish interests at the Porte (p. 300 fn.16).

<sup>1047</sup> He was in fact referring to Safiye Sultan’s *kira* (lady-in-waiting) Esperanza Malchi. She acted as mediator between the *valide sultan* and the outside world and brokered important transactions between merchants and other government officials. She also played an active role in diplomatic negotiations. Maria Pia Pedani, “Safiye’s Household and Venetian Diplomacy,” *Turcica* 32 (2000): 9-32.

grand duke asking for safe passage through Florence to Venice. In addition, he offered his services should the grand duke desire to establish diplomatic negotiations with the Sublime Porte.<sup>1048</sup> Seeing this as a golden opportunity, Ferdinando summoned Mustafa Agha and spoke to him about the trading possibilities of the Florentines in Istanbul.<sup>1049</sup> The grand duke also penned letters addressed to Sultan Mehmed III and his mother Safiye Sultan. In his letter to the sultan, he stressed the point that the negotiations during the time of his brother Francesco could not be concluded because of some envious people (namely the Venetians) and he did not want to lose the present opportunity to reopen negotiations that would be beneficial for both sides. In his letter to Safiye Sultan, the grand duke praised the *valide sultan* for her noble attitude and prudent way of conducting the affairs of the empire, and asked for her support of the negotiations.<sup>1050</sup> Thus began Grand Duke Ferdinando I's second attempt at Tuscan–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations, in which Mustafa Agha agreed to be the mediator, promising to convey the grand duke's letters and to lobby at the Ottoman court in favor of the grand duke and the Florentine interests.

A year later, Mustafa Agha would again arrive in Florence for the negotiations. However, before his arrival, Florentine merchants Pandolfini<sup>1051</sup> and Neri Giraldi<sup>1052</sup> went to Istanbul. This situation aroused suspicion in Venetian *bailo* Girolamo Cappello concerning a possible attempt to secure trade privileges for Florentine merchants. In a letter to the Senate, Cappello elaborated on the issue, declaring that the Florentines would resort to all means, including bribery, in order to negotiate with the Porte, and at present anything could be obtained from the Porte through money.<sup>1053</sup> *Bailo* Cappello's main concern was that these merchants might ask for privileges in other ports, in Egypt and Syria, which would be detrimental for the Venetians even though the *robbe* (garments) brought from Florence did not conform to the taste there.<sup>1054</sup>

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<sup>1048</sup> ASFi, MdP 879, fol. 673 (23 June 1597). He wrote the letter from the ship of Marc' Antonio Bianchi in Livorno. In fact, we also have a letter from Bianchi, which provides information to the grand duke concerning the Ottoman envoy. Apparently upon the request of the Duke of Guise, Bianchi accepted Mustafa Agha, who was the ambassador of the sultan and a venerable and esteemed person, onto his ship. Bianchi also noted that the Duke of Guise strongly recommended giving this Ottoman envoy and his two white servants, all dressed in Turkish clothes, safe passage through Florence. ASFi, MdP 879, fol. 676 (23 June 1597); fol. 716 (27 June 1597).

<sup>1049</sup> ASFi, MdP 2863, fol. 60 (4 July 1597).

<sup>1050</sup> ASFi, MdP 2863, fol. 60 (4 July 1597). About Safiye Sultan: "...di animo nobilissimo et di cosi condotta prudenza che ella governa l'imperio del gran monarca Sultan Memet suo figliolo."

<sup>1051</sup> The name of Pandolfini does not appear in the letter.

<sup>1052</sup> Neri Giraldi would be later sent as a representative of the grand duke to the Ottoman court.

<sup>1053</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 23v (11 Marzo 1598): "Si faranno strada con il danaro che è solo mezzo à presenti tempi per ottener à questa porta tutto."

<sup>1054</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 23v (11 Marzo 1598).

The Venetian *bailo* was soon informed by the French ambassador that there was nothing to worry about, as the merchants' visit only concerned permission for safe transit of Pandolfini's commodities through the Ottoman domains.<sup>1055</sup> But, behind the scenes, this visit in fact served to catalyze the Florentine–Ottoman negotiations and enabled Pandolfini and Giraldi to contact Grand Admiral Halil Pasha and Mustafa Agha.<sup>1056</sup> They did this in such secrecy that neither the Venetian *bailo* nor the French ambassador appeared to think that there would be a diplomatic attempt by the Florentines to obtain privileges. Soon after the departure of Giraldi, Mustafa Agha set out for Florence with the long expected letters from the sultan and Grand Admiral Halil Pasha. Apparently the request had been received positively by the Ottoman court, and in these letters both the sultan and Halil Pasha as usual stated in a very diplomatic way that the Sublime Porte was always open to those who showed friendship and sincerity. They added that the grand duke should send an ambassador to Istanbul with Mustafa Agha in order to renew the privileges.<sup>1057</sup>

Halil Pasha was a strong supporter of this negotiation. According to Hammer, he was originally from Ancona and was known as a “renegade Paggi (Pasha).”<sup>1058</sup> Ottoman sources, however, indicate that Halil Pasha was a *devşirme* of Bosnian origin; he was educated at the Ottoman palace and during his career held various administrative positions, from janissary agha to the governor (*beylerbeyi*) of Anatolia. In 1593 he married Fatma Sultan, one of the daughters of Sultan Murad III, becoming brother-in-law of Sultan Mehmed III. Later, in 1595, he was appointed as grand admiral of the navy and in 1599 as vizier. He also served as deputy to the grand vizier for a few years and at the time of his death in 1603 was still second vizier at the Ottoman court.<sup>1059</sup>

When Halil Pasha replaced Cigalazade Sinan Pasha as grand admiral of the navy in 1595, some contemporaries considered this appointment a mistake. According to Selânikî's chronicle, the position (*kapudan-ı deryâlık*) was appropriate for someone who was shrewd, capable, and of good reputation; however, Halil Pasha was a weak-willed individual, and thus the appointment would only, and inevitably, cause the administration

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<sup>1055</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 37r (29 Marzo 1598).

<sup>1056</sup> ASFi, MdP 884, fol. 245 r/v; 246 r/v (18 March 1598)

<sup>1057</sup> The original copies of these two letters are still preserved in the *Mediceo del Principato* collection together with their Italian translations. ASFi, MdP 4275, fol. 8r-9r: Sultan Mehmed III's letter in Ottoman Turkish dated from 29 Cemazeyilahir 1006 (6 February 1598) and fol. 74r: Grand Admiral Halil Pasha's letter. The Italian translations of these letters are in MdP 4274, fol. 53r-54r and fol. 55r-56r.

<sup>1058</sup> Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, Vol. II, Book XL, p. 273: “renégat anconitain Paggi (Chalil)”

<sup>1059</sup> *Sicil-i Osmani*, vol. II p. 581; Peçevi, *Târih-i Peçevi*, vol. II, p. 269.



to regret the decision.<sup>1060</sup> In the end, Halil Pasha was replaced in his turn by Cigalazade Sinan Pasha in 1599.

During the Tuscan-Ottoman negotiations from 1597 to 1599, Halil Pasha actively participated in the negotiation process and lobbied at the court in favor of the grand duke and the Florentines. It is not clear why he supported this negotiation but it can be assumed that unlike Cigalazade Sinan Pasha, Halil Pasha was unwilling to engage in naval conflicts in the Mediterranean. According to Venetian *bailo* Marco Venier, Halil Pasha had no experience in seamanship and navigation and the people in his household were not as greedy as those surrounding Cigala Pasha. Therefore, in Venier's view, Halil Pasha would hardly put out to sea with a large fleet.<sup>1061</sup> By promoting the diplomatic negotiations with the Florentines, he presumably looked to bring an end to the harmful activities of the galleys of St. Stephen by peaceful means.



Figure 17: Portrait of Sultan Mehmed III, by Cristofano dell'Altissimo, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

<sup>1060</sup> Selânikî, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, vol. II, p. 438: "Kapudanlık nâm-dâr, kâr-âgâh elinde idi, bu re'y rekîkdür, sonunda nedameti mukarrerdür, hazz-i nefsdür didiler."

<sup>1061</sup> CSP, Venice, 9: 328 (31 January 1594 [1595]).

## Müteferrika Mustafa Agha in Florence

In May 1598, Mustafa Agha came to Florence. In accordance with his high-ranking status as *müteferrika*,<sup>1062</sup> he entered the city on a magnificent horse accompanied by twelve other horses (possibly to be presented as gifts of the sultan to the grand duke).<sup>1063</sup> Most of the information about how this Ottoman envoy was received and perceived by the Florentines was provided in rich detail by the Venetian permanent diplomatic representative (*residente*) in Florence, Giulio Gerardo. The arrival of Mustafa Agha raised questions in people's minds. Some argued that the grand duke wanted to reopen trade negotiations with the Levant, which had failed during the time of his brother Francesco. However, the audience was conducted in such secrecy that for a time nobody, including Gerardo himself, understood why this Ottoman envoy had really come to Florence.

Mustafa Agha had his first audience in Petraia, one of the Medici villas in Castello, near Florence. According to Gerardo's account, he was well received and lavishly entertained by the grand duke. Later, he was accompanied by the guards of the grand duke, who took a route behind the walls of the city to get to the house he was staying close to the Annontiatà (i.e., Piazza SS Annunziata) in order to avoid the large crowds of people.<sup>1064</sup> Such extreme covertness and confidentiality also aroused curiosity, and caused Gerardo to write to the Senate, "the negotiations are passing in such secrecy that it has not been yet possible to find out the truth."<sup>1065</sup> In addition to this secrecy, the

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<sup>1062</sup> In the Venetian sources the title was written as Mutahhar Aga and in the Florentine sources the name and title were written as Mustafa Aga Müteferrika; thus "Mutahhar" in the Venetian sources seems to be a distorted version of müteferrika. This was a high-ranking position in the Ottoman administrative system. The individuals holding it were responsible for the court service and when necessary were employed for political and diplomatic missions. Previously, men from the sultan's family such as the sons of sultan's sisters, or sons of other high-ranking officials such as viziers and governors were appointed to this position. However, from the second half of the sixteenth century, the post was also open to people coming from various ranks in the palace service, including converts from the sultan's and vizier's households (in fact Mustafa Agha, being a convert, belonged to this last category). In some cases, müteferrikas were tasked with conveying very important orders and conducting diplomatic negotiations with foreign rulers. See the article on "Müteferrika" by Erhan Afyoncu in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 32 (2006): 183-84.

<sup>1063</sup> ASV, Senato, Dispacci, Firenze (hereafter SDF) 13, fol. 30v (2 May 1598): [N]el sua entrata in Firenze lo fece anco' incontrare et accompagnare del suo cavallarizzo maggiore con circa altri XII cavalla."

<sup>1064</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 43r (9 May 1598): "Il Chiaus...hebbe audentia da lei Domenica passata alla Petraia, dove andò con alcuni pochi cavalla, et fù ricevuto, et accarezzato lietamente dal Sig.re Gran Duca. Nel suo ritorno à casa, tutto ch'egli venisse dentro via le muraglie della città per fuggire il concorso del popolo, fù seguitato dalla Porta di Prato fino alla sua casa, vicina all' Annontiatà." Unfortunately we do not have any details concerning the house the Ottoman envoy stayed.

<sup>1065</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 43r (9 May 1598): "le trattationi passano cosi segrete, che non è possibile ad haverne fin' hora il vero."

Ottoman envoy's not having had a second audience led to speculation concerning the person of Mustafa Agha and the authenticity of the letters he had brought.

There were rumors afloat that Mustafa Agha was indeed a scoundrel (*un gran scelerato*), who was originally a Jew, then converted to Christianity, and subsequently became a Turkish renegade. Also, due to the fact that he had experience of various places and was able to speak Spanish and Italian very well, some believed that although this man had come to Florence under the pretense of trade negotiations, he was actually a spy, whose real aim was to collect information about the Italian princes offering help to the Austrian Habsburgs in the war in Hungary. Others assumed that he had indeed come with the grand duke's knowledge, and that the latter had even sent Neri Giraldi to receive Mustafa Agha in Ancona.<sup>1066</sup>

It can be argued that all these rumors and information circulating around Mustafa Agha and his mission were deliberately disseminated by the grand duke, who wanted to keep the actual aim of the negotiation a secret from the Venetians and other European powers. If so, this was a successful tactic, as Venetian diplomatic representative Gerardo deemed this visit unlikely to be for the purpose of reopening trade negotiations, and even if it was, he believed it was doomed to failure because the matter had already been negotiated during the time of Francesco I and the outcome was not favorable. This *chiaus* would also return from Istanbul without any positive results, as none of the Florentine merchants were willing to trade certainty for uncertainty: any harm that would come to Ottoman subjects from the galleys of St. Stephen put them face to face with evident danger, thus nowadays these merchants were for many reasons very much fazed and timid. On the other hand, the grand duke did not want to risk his great capital; in other words, he did not want to stop his galleys from going *in corso* in the Levant. Thus, in Gerardo's opinion, this would be a hopeless attempt.<sup>1067</sup>

Meanwhile, Mustafa Agha was showered with many signs of ducal favor, including an invitation to a banquet organized by Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine within the palace, with concerts and enchanting music in the corridors of royally

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<sup>1066</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 43r (9 May 1598).

<sup>1067</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 43v (9 May 1598): “[E]t che convenirà detto ciaus ritornar in Costantinopoli senza frutto alcuno, perche non ci sarà mercante, che vogli perder lo certo per l'incerto, coll' andar a mettere il suo a manifesto pericolo di perderlo con ogni minima varia de danni o altri malic he venissero fatti à sudditi Turcheschi dalle galee di S.A. col loro andar in corso, oltre che hoggidi questi sig.ri mercanti sono per piu caggioni troppo snervati et indeboliti. Ne si può credere, che V.A.S. vorrà meno arrisigare un suo grosso capitale...”

furnished apartments.<sup>1068</sup> Music was an important component of splendor and an emblem of luxury and lavishness in courtly events during this period.<sup>1069</sup> The banquet given by the grand duchess was intended not only to honor Mustafa Agha upon his visit but also to leave him with a vivid impression of the grandeur of the grand duchy.

Besides the grand duchess, a group of leading noblewomen of the city were also present at the banquet. They were richly dressed and all of them treated the Ottoman envoy with due respect.<sup>1070</sup> Although it is not mentioned in the Venetian representative's report, it may be assumed that Mustafa Agha presented thanks and gifts and conveyed news from the *valide sultan*, namely Safiye Sultan, to the grand duchess. As already mentioned, during this period Safiye Sultan had great influence and authority at the Ottoman court, being closely engaged in political and diplomatic affairs. The grand duke was well aware of this fact, as in his letters he had addressed both Sultan Mehmed III and his mother Safiye Sultan. Considering this, and the *valide sultan*'s ongoing relations with Queen Elizabeth at around the same time,<sup>1071</sup> it would not be unlikely that she exchanged information with the grand duchess through the mediation of Mustafa Agha, who "was in high favor with the mother sultan."<sup>1072</sup>

The Ottoman envoy was received and treated with all due honor; yet, there was still suspicion concerning the originality of the letters he had brought. Thus, until the grand duke confirmed from secure sources that they were indeed real letters, Mustafa Agha was not allowed to speak to anyone. The grand duke kept a close eye on him; throughout his stay in Florence he was generally accompanied by those Jews whom the grand duke most trusted.<sup>1073</sup> Only after the grand duke was informed about the authenticity of the letters did he receive Mustafa Agha at another audience.<sup>1074</sup>

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<sup>1068</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 54v (17 May 1598): "Fu l'altr' hieri alla visita di essa S.ra Gran Duchessa il chiaus, che si trova qui, ricevuto da lei con concerti de musici et de diversi suoni mirabili nelli suoi corridoi in stanze regalmente."

<sup>1069</sup> Marina Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005) p. 189.

<sup>1070</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 54v (17 May 1598).

<sup>1071</sup> Susan Skilliter, "Three Letters from the Ottoman "Sultana" Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I," in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. S. M. Stern (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965) pp. 119-157; Christine Woodhead, "England, the Ottomans and the Barbary Coast in the Late Sixteenth Century," in *State Papers Online The Government of Britain, 1509-1714*.

<sup>1072</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 84v: "molto credito presso la Ser.ma Sultana"

<sup>1073</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 58v.

<sup>1074</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 71r (20 June 1598); 77v (27 June 1598).

### Mustafa Agha's Audience at the Medici Court

In this audience, the grand duke discussed the capitulations with the Ottoman envoy. Another Venetian representative Giovanni Francesco Marchesini in his letter to the Senate provided the details concerning the audience, which he had learned from reliable sources. According to this letter, the grand duke would send Neri Giraldi, “a valuable and experienced person whom the grand duke very much trusted,” together with Mustafa Agha in order to conduct the negotiations with the Ottoman court.<sup>1075</sup> Giraldi was already tasked with various trade commissions by the grand duke and had for a long time acted in Poland and Danzig in connection with the provision of grain. He fulfilled all these tasks with success and gained high favor with Ferdinando I.<sup>1076</sup> This was certainly influential in his being chosen as representative for the Florentine–Ottoman negotiations.

Besides the emphasis on reciprocal rights and granting of the same privileges enjoyed by the Venetians and the French to the Florentine merchants, another important issue discussed during the audience was the galleys of St. Stephen. When Mustafa Agha expressed the view that the grand duke should not send his galleys to the Ottoman ports, Ferdinando presented him with an argument similar to that his brother Francesco had used two decades ago, according to which the galleys of St. Stephen were not under his sole authority; therefore, he could not be responsible for their activities and could not stop them from going *in corso*. In fact, the capitulations to be presented at the Porte were the same as those already proposed by Francesco I in the 1574 negotiations.<sup>1077</sup> They were composed of twenty-two articles and an additional note concerning the galleys, according to which the Florentine merchants and their commodities would not be captured or pillaged in case of war between the Ottomans and the grand duke or any other Christian princes. Moreover, the merchants should not be held responsible for any conflicts provoked by the galleys, vessels, or ships of the grand duke or other rulers. They could freely come and trade in the Ottoman lands without fear of being captured and held by the Ottoman authorities, and they could send their ships to Alexandria and Syria.<sup>1078</sup> This additional clause had already created conflict and disagreement on the Ottoman side during the previous negotiations. Ferdinando's insistence on proposing the same clause

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<sup>1075</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 89r (4 July 1598): “*soggetto di valore et di isperientia et in che grandemente confida l'Alt.za Sua.*”

<sup>1076</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana*, Tomo III, Book V, p. 157.

<sup>1077</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>1078</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 35r-36r: “*Copia de Capitoli, gia molti anni sono concessi dal Gran signore alla natione fiorentina; sotto li quali, mercanti fiorentini hanno lungo tempo negoziato in quello imperio*”

was a sign that he did not want to back down concerning the galleys of St. Stephen. On the contrary, presumably with a view to profiting from the current conditions in the Ottoman Empire, which was fighting a war with the Habsburg monarchy on the western front while also struggling against the Celali uprisings in Anatolia, the grand duke intended to try again with the new sultan and Ottoman high officials.

Mustafa Agha agreed with this explanation and promised to strive at the Porte to get the Florentine capitulations, including the article on the galleys of St. Stephen, confirmed as desired by the grand duke. According to Venetian representatives Gerardo and Marchesini, however, the Ottoman envoy may simply have felt obliged to accede to the grand duke's request because he was received in Florence in such a courtly and respectful manner.<sup>1079</sup> The grand duke gave him robes for himself and his whole family, as well as quite a remarkable amount of money.<sup>1080</sup> Moreover, through the mediation of Neri Giraldi, Ferdinando bought various quantities of *panni di seta* (silk cloth) from the Florentine workshops to be presented at the Porte.<sup>1081</sup> The councils of *Arte della Lana* and *Arte della Seta* provided funds for Mustafa Agha and Giraldi's mission to Istanbul, giving most of the amount in cloth (*satin*), as this could easily be turned into cash in Istanbul.<sup>1082</sup>

In addition, the grand duke had a special robe made for the sultan, which was richly covered with gold and so elaborately designed and sewn that the result was a very costly and beautiful garment, worth six hundred *scudi*. But unlike the previous negotiations, at which Gianfigliuzzi had presented spectacular gifts, the grand duke this time sent only this robe and some cloth indicating that if the negotiation proved successful, he would send the customary gifts with the *bailo* appointed from Florence.<sup>1083</sup>

In his letters to the sultan and Grand Admiral Halil Pasha, to be delivered by Neri Giraldi, the grand duke focused on the same issues he had discussed with Mustafa Agha during the audience. The grand duke stressed the point that the galleys of St. Stephen had nothing to do with the merchants and the Florentine nation, as Mustafa Agha also recognized. Thus, both the latter and Giraldi would provide the necessary information concerning this issue to the sultan and other court officials. Ferdinando also added that for the time being, he would send only Neri Giraldi to negotiate the capitulations; once they were confirmed, including the article on the galleys of St. Stephen, he would send a

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<sup>1079</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 89r.

<sup>1080</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 91v (11 July 1598).

<sup>1081</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 89v; 91v.

<sup>1082</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 59 r/v (2 July 1598); ASV, SDF 13, fol. 91v.

<sup>1083</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 91v.

resident ambassador.<sup>1084</sup> In fact, the real intention of the grand duke was not to incur any more expenses before the capitulations were confirmed.<sup>1085</sup> However, this attitude would not be received positively by the Ottoman officials, for whom the rank of the envoy and the gifts he presented reflected the importance given to the mission as well as the sultan. Both Halil Pasha and the grand vizier would regard Neri Giraldi as an inappropriate person to be conducting diplomatic negotiations with the Porte and would ask for a proper ambassador to be sent to the Ottoman court by the grand duke.

In the instructions for his trip to Istanbul, Neri Giraldi was provided with the details concerning his task. He was to negotiate the capitulations with the Ottoman court through the assistance and favor of Mustafa Agha. Moreover, Giraldi should pay heed to getting the privileges sent by the grand duke accepted as they were, without any changes, and to having them confirmed with the imperial seal. The Florentine representative was also informed about the previous diplomatic effort, in 1578, having been disrupted by the Venetians and the French, who for the sake of their own interests did not wish the sultan to maintain friendships and trade relations with other states in Italy.<sup>1086</sup> Thus, Giraldi would need to beware of these two groups. His main aim should be to explain explicitly to the Ottoman authorities that the galleys of St. Stephen would not hinder trade and would not cause damage to any merchants or their commodities, because the merchants had nothing to do with the galleys.<sup>1087</sup> Giraldi should use all means to persuade the court regarding this matter and to have the capitulations confirmed.

It can be said that the position of the grand duke concerning the galleys of St. Stephen was rather precarious. On the one hand, he was giving a guarantee to the Ottoman officials that the galleys would not damage merchant ships and their commodities, as their target was not the merchants and their trade; but, on the other hand, he was declaring that he could not prevent the galleys from going *in corso* because they were not under his sole authority, although he was the grand master of the Order. In a way, Ferdinando was shirking any responsibility in this matter. Still, the negotiations

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<sup>1084</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 43 r/v (senza data); 47 r (1 July 1598); 57r/v.

<sup>1085</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 59 r/v (2 July 1598)

<sup>1086</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 45r (1 July 1598): “*non vorrebbero per interesse loro che il Gran Signore havesse in Italia altra amicitia et commertio che il loro.*”

<sup>1087</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 45r-46r: “Lo scopo principale vostro ha da essere che in detta cap.ne si specifichi chiaramente nel modo che stà, che il corso et piede delle Galere della Religione di St Stefano non possono impedire il commertio ne apportare danno ne alle soldi ne alle persone di mercanti; poi che loro non hanno che fare, ne trattare con esse.”

failed not only because of this tricky explanation concerning the galleys of St. Stephen, but also due to some diplomatic mishaps.

### Venetian and French Responses to Giraldi's Mission

On July 10, Neri Giraldi and Mustafa Agha left Florence for Istanbul. Even on the journey, Giraldi became disturbed by Mustafa Agha's attitude, and in his letter to Secretary of State Belisario Vinta, expressed his views concerning the Ottoman envoy:

This is a man of all sorts of wickedness, presumptuousness, and arrogance, and one full of ambition, as can be seen by all the world and which I learned through my conversations with him. He is such a man that you can in no way trust him. As he will be accompanying me there, one can say that I will be like a headless chicken. Not having any experience or any knowledge of the Turkish language, I won't be able to get around or distinguish the white from the black.<sup>1088</sup>

Moreover, considering the possible difficulties that would be created by the Venetians, from whose perspective these negotiations must be prevented at all costs, Giraldi recognized that he could be easily drawn into a deadlock. Therefore, he decided to look for an interpreter, and upon the suggestion of Cavalier Ragnina and Bartolomeo Bongiani, Florentine consul in Ragusa, selected Giovanni Evangelisti, who knew Turkish very well. Evangelisti was a trustworthy and honest person who would serve Giraldi loyally and exclusively. He would report everything to him and relay Giraldi's words correctly to the Ottoman officials. He would always look after the interests of the grand duchy and never collaborate with suspicious people (*nessuno sospetto*). Here, "suspicious people" refers to the Venetians, as both Bongiani and Giraldi gave utmost care to finding someone who had not had any previous contacts or relationships with the Venetians. Thus, in his letter to the grand duke, Giraldi noted that he had taken all sorts of measures to ensure security and secrecy so that the negotiations would be completed without any problems.<sup>1089</sup>

The Venetian *bailo* and the French ambassador had, however, already found out that Mustafa Agha had been in Florence to discuss privileges for Florentine merchants trading in Istanbul. In one of his letters, Venetian *bailo* Cappello dwelled on the issue,

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<sup>1088</sup> ASFi, MdP 886, fol. 242r-243r (28 July 1598): "Questo è un huomo di tristitia omnipotente, presuntuoso e vantatore di quella ambitione ripieno, che così è possuto scorgere, e così è tenuto da tutto il mondo, e di quello che ho possuto conversando seco cognoscere, è huomo che in modo alcuno bisogna fidarsi, perche conducendomi la dove si puo dire sarò un mosca senza capo, non havendo ne pratica ne lingua mi potrò aggirare e fare apparire il bianco per il nero."

<sup>1089</sup> ASFi, MdP 886, fol. 242r-243r (28 July 1598).



explaining that the French ambassador had informed him about it and that he, Cappello, disguising his real intentions from the French ambassador and others, responded to them that this attempt by the Florentines would bring little damage to Venetian interests because the trade in Venetian woolen and silk cloth was so well established in the Levant that it could never be cut off.<sup>1090</sup>

While Cappello may have masked his concern very well during his conversation with other European representatives, in his letter to the Senate he promised not to allow these negotiations to come to fruition in any way.<sup>1091</sup> For Cappello, the main threat was that the grand duke wanted to improve Livorno's position by attracting Ottoman merchants there; this could be incredibly harmful for Venice because Livorno was conveniently located between East and West for purposes of transit and navigation, and its use by Ottoman merchants would eliminate all the benefits of convenience and ease enjoyed by the Venetians.<sup>1092</sup> Therefore, he assured the Senate that he would do anything to prevent the success of this negotiation and would closely follow the actions of the soon-to-arrive Florentine representative.<sup>1093</sup>

### **Land of Beggars**

Neri Giraldi and Mustafa Agha arrived in Istanbul early in September of 1598. However, none of Giraldi's reports concerning the negotiations reached Florence except for one he wrote to Secretary of State Belisario Vinta on November 8. Giraldi noted that when he did not receive any response to his previous letters, he realized that the Venetians had seized his letters. In fact, this was not a case unique to the Florentine representative; in 1584 English ambassador Harborne had discovered that some of his letters had never reached London due to the actions of the Venetians.<sup>1094</sup> During this period, the European representatives in Istanbul had to rely mainly on the Venetians for the delivery of their correspondence, as Venice's postal system was the only "regular reliable mail service

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<sup>1090</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 199v/200r (13 June 1598): "[i]o lo [l'amb.re di Francia] reingratiai di questa confidenza et dissimulando gli interessi di Vostra Ser.ta dissi che credevo, che ciò havesse potuto apportarle poca molestia et minor danno alli nostri, perche le panine venetiane, et di lana et di seta, sono di conditione tale, che in nessuno tempo saranno abbatuto."

<sup>1091</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 199v/200r (13 June 1598).

<sup>1092</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 332r (8 August 1598): "Perche Livorno è comodissimo a tutte le navigationi et di Ponente e di Levante, leverebbe ogni utile et commodità di traffico à nostri."

<sup>1093</sup> ASV, SDC 47, fol. 332r (8 August 1598): "[N]on mancarò di porre ogni studio et opera et fra tanto arderò osservando quello che qui si opererà."

<sup>1094</sup> Christine Woodhead, "England, the Ottomans and the Barbary Coast in the Late Sixteenth Century," in *State Papers Online The Government of Britain, 1509-1714*.

between the Ottoman Empire and Europe.”<sup>1095</sup> This monopoly over mail service provided the Venetian state the opportunity to control and manipulate the delivery of letters and flow of information when necessary. Thus, for the Florentines, an alternative for secure and reliable mail service was provided by Ragusa. Indeed, Giraldi sent his final letter, in which he presented a lengthy account of the negotiations, via Ragusa — much safer than Venice.

To go back to Giraldi’s report, after explaining how stressful and dangerous his trip had been and how he had lost some of his servants on the way and hired new ones, Giraldi added that contrary to his expectations, he could not sell any of the cloth he had brought, and as he did not want to take it back with him, he would have to sell it at a lower price, and thus at a loss to himself. Moreover, the negotiations did not go as he had expected. Although Mustafa Agha had promised to do everything he could through the mediation of Grand Admiral Halil Pasha, he did not do anything. He was indeed such a terrible person and liar that the only thing he did was chatter and boast. According to Giraldi, the sultan was willing to have peace and friendship with the grand duke and ready to reconcile with anyone who wished to; but, “the poor prince is like a reckless person governed by women, and these viziers do whatever they want without showing respect to anyone.”<sup>1096</sup> There was no doubt that Halil Pasha, brother-in-law of the sultan, favored these negotiations for reasons both of honor and benefit. However, Grand Vizier Cerrah Mehmed Pasha regarded them in a negative light, as Giraldi had not initially established contact with him (*fatto capo a lui*).<sup>1097</sup>

The Florentine representative also noted that he was very sick when he came to Istanbul; however, as a result of strong pressure from Halil Pasha, he was forced to visit the grand vizier, during which visit he presented the latter with a valuable piece of green satin cloth. In his report, Giraldi also described in detail his audience at the court, which went well; all the viziers gave him promises concerning the grant of the capitulations. However, when it came to the issue of the galleys, the grand vizier engaged in such a long discussion that, Giraldi wrote, he returned home almost half-dead; he soon found out that he had in fact been poisoned by the sultan’s doctor, who was supposed to be treating his illness. Giraldi believed that this renegade doctor had been bribed by the Venetians to

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<sup>1095</sup> Eric Dursteler, “Power and Information: The Venetian Postal System in the Mediterranean, 1573-1645,” in *From Florence to the Mediterranean: Studies in Honor of Anthony Molho* (Florence: Olschki, 2009) pp. 602-603.

<sup>1096</sup> ASFi, MdP 888, fol. 33v: “Il povero principe sta come matto a governo delle donne, e questi visiri fanno tutto quello che vogliono senza un rispetto al mondo.”

<sup>1097</sup> ASFi, MdP 888, fol. 33v.

perform this task. He immediately informed Cerrah Mehmed Pasha about the issue, and the grand vizier sent his own doctor, a Portuguese Jewish physician. He saved Giraldi's life and meanwhile also sounded Giraldi out concerning the gifts he would present to the grand vizier. Giraldi bluntly responded that he would not give anything apart from the satin cloth he had already presented. He added that after he returned to Florence, a resident ambassador would arrive and present rich gifts not only to the sultan and the grand vizier, but also to all the other officials. Upon receiving this answer, the doctor, who was the right-hand man of the grand vizier, laughed at Giraldi, saying that he had been wrongly informed about the Ottoman court, as he would not accomplish anything there with petty offerings (*qua non si negotia con man vote*).<sup>1098</sup> Moreover, according to the doctor, it was a mistake for Giraldi not to make contact primarily through the grand vizier, but this problem could also be resolved by offering some gifts.

In his report, Giraldi indignantly accused Mustafa Agha of not having informed either him or the grand duke about the necessity of getting the support of the grand vizier. They had conducted the negotiations only with Grand Admiral Halil Pasha, as this was what the sultan had also stated should be done in his letter.<sup>1099</sup> But this was not Giraldi's only source of dissatisfaction. According to him, Mustafa Agha did not try very hard to forward the negotiations. The last straw for Giraldi was when the head of the imperial chancellery and other clerks of lower rank asked for certain sums in order to write the capitulations as desired by the grand duke. Fed up, Giraldi complained to Father Antonio da Pera, head priest of the Franciscan church in Galata, saying that it was as if he had arrived in the land of beggars.<sup>1100</sup> In the end, Mustafa Agha and Giraldi's dragoman Evangelisti had the capitulations written out in Ottoman Turkish and took the imperial decree to the *Divan*, but things did not go as expected. The official privileges were not confirmed by the grand vizier and the other officials.

Giraldi went once more to Halil Pasha to ask for his help, but it was useless. The latter informed him that French ambassador de Brèves and, especially, Venetian *bailo* Cappello had given abundant bribes to anyone they could at the *Divan* in order to persuade them to refuse to approve the capitulations. Thus, when Halil Pasha saw such a situation, he could not do anything. Moreover, both Cappello and de Brèves sent their dragomans to the *Divan* to state publicly that neither the *Signoria* nor the king had done

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<sup>1098</sup> ASFi, MdP 888, fol. 34r.

<sup>1099</sup> Here Giraldi refers to the sultan's letter that Mustafa Agha had brought to Florence.

<sup>1100</sup> ASFi, MdP 888, fol. 34v (8 November 1598). In his report to the grand duke, Giraldi used the expression "un paese di mendichi" for the Ottoman Empire.

anything to disturb the negotiations, as they had great friendship with the grand duke and did much in his favor. Although Halil Pasha reacted to this ironic statement and opposed the dragomans, this stance was not that influential, as he was only second vizier.

Losing all hope concerning the negotiations, Giraldi, as a last resort, sent his dragoman to the *Divan* more than once in order to ask for safe-conduct, so that he and his people could get back to Florence safely before the winter, but he did not receive reply. In the end, the response he got from Halil Pasha was that unless a person designated as ambassador came, there would be no negotiations. The capitulations would not be given to a person such as Giraldi.<sup>1101</sup>

From Giraldi's perspective, all of these people had acted unreasonably and were only looking out for their own gain. Although he had tried to fulfill his task as the grand duke desired, he had been stonewalled not only by the Ottoman officials but also by the Venetians and the French. Having been exposed to the various intrigues of the Venetians and treated as a soft touch by the Ottoman officials, the Florentine representative in his letter depicted himself as one who had been mistreated and was very much disgruntled concerning the negotiations. But, the subsequent letters of Mustafa Agha and Halil Pasha to the grand duke present quite a different account of the whole story.

### **An Inept Representative of the Grand Duke**

On February 15, 1599, a few months after Giraldi's letter of complaint was written, both Halil Pasha and Mustafa Agha penned letters to the grand duke expressing their resentment of Neri Giraldi. According to Halil Pasha, this man who had been sent with Mustafa Agha to Istanbul was neither capable nor experienced in negotiation.<sup>1102</sup> He was so two-faced that while, despite the need for secrecy, he had contacted other ambassadors and made every effort to have them learn about the negotiations, he presented himself as faultless. In Halil Pasha's view, it was due more to Giraldi's attitude than to the Venetian and French opposition that the negotiations could not proceed. Thus, the pasha implicitly criticized the grand duke for having sent such an inept person to

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<sup>1101</sup> ASFi, MdP 888, fol. 35r.

<sup>1102</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274 fol. 78r (15 Receb 1007 [11 February 1599]): "*non era sufficiente ne meno atto al negotio.*" Halil Pasha's letter was written originally in Ottoman Turkish but was translated into Italian. The original copies are unfortunately not available to us.

negotiate the capitulations and argued that if there had been a proper ambassador, there would not have been such disturbances and inconveniences.<sup>1103</sup>

In the long letter Mustafa Agha wrote to the grand duke, it becomes clear why Giraldi was not favored by the Ottoman officials.<sup>1104</sup> First of all, throughout the journey Giraldi acted in such a way that Mustafa Agha realized he was indeed a man without judgment and discretion (*un homo cosi senza iuditio et senza discretione*).<sup>1105</sup> However, the Ottoman envoy had tolerated everything for the sake of the grand duke and served Giraldi with all due honor and respect, though he was not a person deserving this kind of treatment. Mustafa Agha also complained that he always offered his services and help but never received any respect from the Florentine representative.

Giraldi's inappropriate actions continued after they arrived in Istanbul. Mustafa Agha and Halil Pasha made the utmost effort to hide the Florentine representative's arrival until his audience and wanted to situate him in a house far from prying eyes so that he would not make contact with anyone. However, Giraldi did not follow the pasha's orders, nor did he take into consideration Mustafa Agha's advice. He looked for another place to stay and sent his dragoman to Pera, a district of Istanbul inhabited mostly by the European ambassadors and Christian subjects of the empire. As a result, the fact that negotiations were to take place was disclosed to all. In particular, French ambassador de Brèves, a great enemy of the grand duchy, found out everything.<sup>1106</sup> But the story did not end there. Once when Mustafa Agha went to Pera to look for Giraldi, he found him sitting with other Christians (*Perots*) and Florentines, publicly talking about the negotiations he would conduct with the Porte. And despite Mustafa Agha's warnings, Giraldi rented a large house in Galata, presenting himself to everyone as the ambassador of the grand duke. He got carried away with this idea to such an extent that he created an ambassadorial entourage with janissaries, behaved pompously and arrogantly rejected being called a merchant rather than an ambassador. According to Mustafa Agha, all this showed that an imprudent man had been sent for the negotiations.

Giraldi, moreover, did not follow the diplomatic practices and procedures of the Ottoman Empire. He was supposed to visit the grand vizier once he arrived in Istanbul; however, Mustafa Agha declared, Giraldi was such a "hard-headed person" (*duro capo*) that he delayed this visit for a long time and in the end went to see the grand vizier only

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<sup>1103</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274 fol. 78v.

<sup>1104</sup> MdP 4274, fol. 67-68.

<sup>1105</sup> MdP 4274, fol. 67r.

<sup>1106</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 67v.

upon the latter's order. Therefore, already at the beginning of the negotiations, Giraldi made a negative impression on the grand vizier. Moreover, he got sick for three weeks, which allowed de Brèves and Cappello to take action in order to disrupt the negotiations, as they were against the interests of both. Seeing that the negotiations would end inconclusively, Mustafa Agha went to the head scribe of the imperial chancellery to have him write the capitulations as the grand duke desired, in return for a small sum. While he was trying hard to enable the negotiations to proceed, Giraldi brought the process to a complete halt with his final act. His adventure at the Süleymaniye Mosque would be the last straw.

### **Neri Giraldi's (Mis)Adventure in the Ottoman Capital**

One day, Giraldi and some of his servants went to see the Süleymaniye Mosque, one of the city's most important architectural monuments. Although it was forbidden by law for a Christian to enter a mosque, Giraldi violated this rule and went inside. Moreover, he and his servants climbed up one of the minarets, where he could see the harem of the sultan. For this, he was accused of spying on the harem, imprisoned, and sentenced to beheading for his crime.<sup>1107</sup>

The building complex visible from the minaret was the Old Palace, located very close to the Süleymaniye Mosque.<sup>1108</sup> The Old Palace (*Saray-ı Atik*) was the first palace built by Mehmed II after the conquest of Constantinople. It was the main residence of the palace women and the sultan's household until the early sixteenth century. During the reign of Sultan Süleyman, women of the royal family moved to the New Palace, namely Topkapı Palace. However, in 1595 with the accession of Mehmed III, the harem women associated with his father, Sultan Murad III, including the mothers of Sultan Murad's executed sons and all other wives, servants, concubines, and slaves were sent to the Old Palace.<sup>1109</sup> Thus, it was the harem of the deceased sultan that the Florentine representative must have seen, if he was actually trying to spy on it as the agha of the Janissaries

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<sup>1107</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 68r: “[L]ui...andò a S.ta Solimanlia Moschia con sua servitori et contra ordine et canone salivano in el canpanelle dela moschia con sua servitori e si fecie vedere sopra il canpanelle con barete negre dove si poteva vedere le donzelle del Gran S.or con molta mala sodisfatione di Aga di giannizzari, [Giraldi] fu messo in prigione che certo meritava che gli fosse levato il capo.”

<sup>1108</sup> Old Palace was on the site where Istanbul University stands today.

<sup>1109</sup> Selânikî, *Tarih-i Selânikî II*, p. 436; CSP, Venice, 9:328 (31 January 1594).

claimed.<sup>1110</sup> Indeed, it is a matter of question whether or not this was the motive for Giraldi to climb the minaret. Perhaps curiosity did get the better of him. Since the Süleymaniye Mosque was built in the heyday of the empire, it was also a source of curiosity for foreign visitors. Giraldi's dragoman Giovanni Evangelisti, who had been with the Florentine representative during his mosque adventure, in his letter to the grand duke implied that Giraldi was simply the victim of his own curiosity and inexperience.<sup>1111</sup> Whatever the reason, the Florentine representative with this act breached the boundaries of propriety and put the objectives of the diplomatic mission at risk. Although there is no mention of the incident in Giraldi's letters, Mustafa Agha saw this act of Giraldi's as the main reason for the failure of the negotiations.

Ironically enough, Giraldi was rescued from execution and prison through the agency of de Brèves and Cappello, who had tried hard to prevent the negotiations. Dragoman Evangelisti's report brings to light additional details of this turn of events. According to him, de Brèves requested his close friend, Şeyhülislam Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi, to negotiate with the agha of the Janissaries and prevent Giraldi from being beheaded. In the end, the Florentine representative escaped death but was put in jail. Meanwhile, Cappello also took action. He sent his secretary and dragomans to the grand vizier to beg him to release Giraldi. On that day, the grand vizier was giving a great feast at the palace for the wedding of his daughter; being in a good mood, he ordered Giraldi to be released.<sup>1112</sup> Thus, this diplomatic crisis was solved without any damage done. Giraldi left the city secretly, unbeknown even to Mustafa Agha.<sup>1113</sup> The Venetian diplomatic representative in Florence, Marchesini, thanked Cappello for his help in saving Giraldi's life, at the same time affirming that it was a mistake for Giraldi to go to a place that was prohibited and for that reason he deserved all sorts of bad treatment.<sup>1114</sup> However, according to Mustafa Agha, the fact that de Brèves and Cappello were mobilized to rescue Giraldi was not without reason. In return for their help, they proposed that Giraldi give up the negotiations and leave Istanbul, as this was what they had always wanted.<sup>1115</sup>

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<sup>1110</sup> The agha of Janissaries was responsible for the security and control of the capital city, supervising order within the city.

<sup>1111</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A fol. 646r.

<sup>1112</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A fol. 646v-647r.

<sup>1113</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 68r.

<sup>1114</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 289v (16 January 1599): "[H]avevo occasione di scrivere all' Illm. Sig. Baylo Capello lo ringratiassi delli favori fatti al Giraldi, essendo scritto à Sua Alt. che per opera et valor suo, haveva esso Giraldi scampata la vita ma, che stava perdere che si era meritato ogni male, andando in luoghi prohibiti et deve dati."

<sup>1115</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 68r.

Thus, the letters of both Halil Pasha and Mustafa Agha present very different accounts of the negotiation process than did those of Giraldi, indicating that the lack of success was due to the attitude and mistakes of the representative, who was in their view surly and unsympathetic. And indeed, they were not the only ones who regarded Giraldi as the faulty party. Giraldi's dragoman Giovanni Evangelisti also reported in detail the entire negotiation process and singled out the Florentine representative as the one responsible for its failure.

### **The Negotiation Process from Dragoman Evangelisti's Point of View**

Months after the negotiations failed, Giovanni Evangelisti, who had been hired by Giraldi in Ragusa to assist during the negotiations in Istanbul, penned a long letter to Grand Duke Ferdinando I in order to present all the details concerning the negotiation process. At the beginning of his nine-page report, Evangelisti particularly underlined the fact that his knowledge of Turkish and his previous experience at the Ottoman court played an important role in his being chosen for the mission. However, Giraldi rarely resorted to asking for Evangelisti's guidance; he rather went his own way without obtaining advice from anyone and thus made serious diplomatic mistakes.<sup>1116</sup>

First of all, he presented the letter and the gift sent by the grand duke for the sultan to Grand Admiral Halil Pasha instead of Grand Vizier Cerrah Mehmed Pasha. In fact, this was a major error, because the grand vizier, as the sultan's deputy, had the highest rank in the administration and was the sole authority who could guarantee success in any diplomatic negotiations. According to Evangelisti, anyone who took a devious route, would always be deceived – just like the previous Florentine ambassador, Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi, who had found himself tricked. Therefore, the negotiations should have been conducted with the grand vizier rather than Halil Pasha. With this act, Giraldi not only went against Ottoman diplomatic practice but also incurred the dislike of Grand Vizier Cerrah Mehmed Pasha.<sup>1117</sup>

Indeed, Halil Pasha presented the request of the Florentine representative directly to Sultan Mehmed III. However, conducting the negotiation without the grand vizier's knowledge was not acceptable to the sultan either; therefore, he ordered it to be carried

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<sup>1116</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A, fol. 643r.

<sup>1117</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A, fol. 643r/v.



out by Cerrah Mehmed Pasha. Finding out about the whole matter in this way, the grand vizier became enraged at not only Giraldi but also Halil Pasha for acting without his knowledge and for having designs on his position. Thus, this one error not only jeopardized the Florentine interests but also led to friction between the grand vizier and the grand admiral at the court.

Giraldi's second mistake, according to Evangelisti, was that the Florentine representative constantly delayed going to the grand vizier for an audience. At first he was ill, and sent Evangelisti to the Ottoman court to attend the audience on his behalf. This was not received positively by Cerrah Mehmed Pasha. More importantly, even after he recovered, Giraldi did not visit the grand vizier for a time. It was only when forced by Halil Pasha and after serious quarrels with Mustafa Agha that he went to the court, but the news of the negotiations had already spread to the whole city and also to the ears of other European representatives.

Evangelisti noted that Giraldi's audience at the court went well. The grand vizier dwelled in particular on the issue of the galleys of St. Stephen, asking whether Ottoman merchants could navigate securely at sea without being pillaged by the galleys of the grand duke, as it would not be right to ask for trade privileges from the Sublime Porte while at the same time doing damage to Ottoman merchants at sea. The response of Giraldi to this question was not different from the argument previously put forward by the former Florentine ambassador Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi. Giraldi claimed that the galleys that went to sea to pillage did not belong to the grand duke but were vessels of the cavaliers of the Order of St. Stephen. Although the grand duke was the master of the Order, he did not have the authority to command them not to go *in corso*. Upon receiving this answer, the grand vizier concluded the audience and asked Giraldi to come to the *Divan* again the following day with the copy of the capitulations so that they could be written out officially by the imperial chancellery. However, the next day Giraldi did not bring the draft copy of the capitulations, and he neither made an excuse for this nor went home to get it, as he felt overtired. Thus, due to Giraldi's carelessness, the capitulations could not be written out that day as ordered by the grand vizier. Although Evangelisti advised the Florentine representative to take advantage of the favorable response of the grand vizier, which he expressed using the Italian proverb "bisogna batter il ferro mentre ch'è caldo," Giraldi did not take his recommendation seriously.<sup>1118</sup> According to

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<sup>1118</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A, fol. 645r.

Evangelisti, Giraldi was not willing to put much effort into the negotiations because he believed that Florentine merchants would not come to trade in the Levant even if the privileges were obtained.

In the meantime, de Brèves and Cappello started lobbying at the Ottoman court against the confirmation of the privileges. They especially tried to prejudice the grand vizier concerning Giraldi, arguing that the grand duke showed little respect to the sultan, as he had sent an ordinary merchant instead of an ambassador with the honor and respect required for this mission. Thus, these defamatory remarks, together with Giraldi's reckless acts, influenced Cerrah Mehmed Pasha, and he soon changed his favorable attitude concerning the grant of the capitulations. For Evangelisti, the sole cause of all this was Giraldi's inattentive behavior and inappropriate actions.<sup>1119</sup> The last of them was the mosque adventure, which Evangelisti bluntly described in his report, as discussed above.

The Ragusan dragoman's remarks on Mustafa Agha also disclose certain details related to the negotiation process. Apparently, the grand duke offered the Ottoman envoy five hundred *zecchini* if he succeeded in having the privileges confirmed by the Ottoman court. Thus, in order to get this money, Mustafa Agha incessantly chased the grand vizier; but it was in vain. The grand vizier banished him from his presence with a string of insults, because he had conceived an equal hatred for Mustafa Agha for not having informed him about the negotiations.<sup>1120</sup>

It can be argued that the report of Evangelisti's report provides a relatively neutral narrative of the whole negotiation process, in comparison with the accounts of Giraldi and Mustafa Agha. It brings to light various actors and factors that played a role in the failure of the negotiations; however, it specifically points to the Florentine representative Neri Giraldi as the party mainly responsible. Giraldi's amateurish actions and diplomatic mishaps not only alienated the negotiation's main supporters at the Ottoman court, namely Halil Pasha and Mustafa Agha, but also strengthened the hands of its opponents, namely the French ambassador and the Venetian *bailo*, in their attempts to disturb the negotiation process. Thus, the increasing contempt that the grand vizier and other Ottoman officials felt toward Giraldi, and the confrontations that developed as a result, brought an end to the second attempt at the Florentine–Ottoman negotiations.

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<sup>1119</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A, fol. 644r-646r.

<sup>1120</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274/A, fol. 646r.

## The Florentine Expedition to Chios

Grand Duke Ferdinando greeted the outcome with fury and frustration, as he regarded the events that occurred in Istanbul as a humiliation and sign of the disrespect of the Ottoman administration towards his state – as might be expected after hearing the whole story from Giraldi's perspective. Moreover, he became enraged at Mustafa Agha, as he considered himself to have been tricked by the Ottoman envoy, and regretted having treated him with so much courtesy during his stay in Florence. According to the Venetian diplomatic representative in Florence, the most annoying thing for the grand duke was that all princes and rulers would learn that the negotiations had ended without any conclusion and in a humiliating way. For this reason, Giraldi was ordered to leave Istanbul as soon as possible, and more or less secretly.<sup>1121</sup> It is not known exactly when Giraldi left the Ottoman capital. However, in one of his letters, Mustafa Agha noted that eight days after Giraldi left, Grand Vizier Cerrah Mehmed Pasha was replaced by İbrahim Pasha. This took place on January 6, 1599, indicating that Giraldi's departure occurred some time around the end of December.<sup>1122</sup>

Soon after Giraldi's secret flight from Istanbul, the grand duke started preparations for an expedition to Chios in the Aegean Sea.<sup>1123</sup> According to Argenti, Jacques Ronse, a French captain, was the mastermind of this expedition. He encouraged the grand duke by saying that the island was but lightly guarded by the Ottomans and thus could be quite easily captured. Ronse's assessment was confirmed by a Chiot, Andrea Vestri, who had adequate information about the island and its defenses.<sup>1124</sup> The proposal sounded quite persuasive to the grand duke, as he now had a grudge against the Ottoman administration due to the treatment Giraldi had received in Istanbul. Still, it is not clear why the grand duke embarked on such an expedition. Argenti indicates that a similar proposal was presented to Cosimo I in 1549 by George of Chios, who suggested that the Florentine duke conquer the Genoese-controlled island.<sup>1125</sup> However, at that time Cosimo did not have a professional fleet for such a conquest, and he knew that even if he did conquer the island, he would not be able to protect it from the Ottomans or the Venetians. Thus, he

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<sup>1121</sup> ASV, SDF 13, fol. 226v (14 November 1598): "Ma piu di tutto è molesto all' Alt. Sua, che li principi habbiano a sapere il ritorno di esso Giraldi con nessuna conclusion et con manco honore; come se gli è dato ordine a ritornare quanto prima et piu quietamente."

<sup>1122</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 316r (29 May 1599).

<sup>1123</sup> Most of the details and archival sources concerning this expedition were compiled and published by Philip Argenti in *The Expedition of the Florentines to Chios (1599): Described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports and Military Dispatches* (London: John Lane, 1934).

<sup>1124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xiv-xviii.

<sup>1125</sup> It remained under Genoese control until the Ottoman conquest of the island in 1566.

rejected this proposal; yet five decades later, in 1599, his son Ferdinando I favored the enterprise. One of the motives for Ferdinando to send his galleys to Chios was undoubtedly to make a show of force in the area with the galleys of St. Stephen, along with taking revenge for the failed diplomatic mission.<sup>1126</sup>

The Tuscan galleys *Capitana*, *Patrona*, *Senese*, *Pisana* and *Livornina*, carrying military troops, set out for Chios in April 1599. Due to bad weather, the galleys were able to reach the island only at the end of April, at which time they besieged the fortress. However, the counter-attack of the Ottoman army soon weakened the Florentine forces, and the expedition ended in failure.<sup>1127</sup> The admiral of the navy, Marcantonio Calafati, argued that the poor condition of the galleys, the inexperience of the commanders, and their lack of authority and professional knowledge had brought about the failure.<sup>1128</sup> The Ottoman chronicler Selânikî also mentioned this expedition, confirming that the grand duke (*Duka-i França*) sent a fleet composed of five galleys, which attacked the fortress of Chios and captured it. However, Ottoman soldiers and local people fought against the “infidels” and overcame them. The Tuscan galleys had to escape, leaving many Florentines on the island. Some of them died and others were enslaved.<sup>1129</sup> Those of noble origin were taken to Istanbul; some of them were eventually ransomed through the mediation of French ambassador.<sup>1130</sup>

Although the repercussions of this “unsuccessful *coup de main*” did not last long, the defeat was a huge disappointment for the grand duke, bringing as it did disrepute instead of prestige and honor.<sup>1131</sup> For the Ottoman side, the Tuscan attack on Chios was surprising as well as upsetting, especially as the negotiations with the grand duke were still going on (as discussed below).<sup>1132</sup> Even though the Ottomans successfully defended the island, the Ottoman administration, and especially the supporters of the recent Ottoman–Florentine negotiations, Halil Pasha and Mustafa Agha, were stunned by this hostile enterprise of the grand duke, after having striven so hard at the Ottoman court for the confirmation of Florentine trade privileges.

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<sup>1126</sup> Argenti, *The Expedition of the Florentines to Chios (1599)*, pp. x-xiii.

<sup>1127</sup> For a vivid description of the expedition by a Florentine soldier who fought and was captured and enslaved by the Ottomans, see *BNF, Manuscrit Française* 16141, fol. 196r-206v: “Relatione del Viaggio delle Galere di Fiorenza partete de Livorne alle sesto d’Aprile 1599.”

<sup>1128</sup> Argenti, *The Expedition of the Florentines to Chios (1599)* p. xxiv.

<sup>1129</sup> For a list of the names of these people, see ASFi, CS I/143, fol. 41r.

<sup>1130</sup> Selânikî, *Tarih-i Selaniki II*, p. 805-806.

<sup>1131</sup> Argenti, *The Expedition of the Florentines to Chios (1599)* p. xxiv.

<sup>1132</sup> “Relazione di Girolamo Cappello in 1600,” in *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, vol. XIV, Costantinopoli, Relazioni Inedite (1512-1789)*, ed. Maria Pia Pedani (Padua: Bottega d’Erasmus, 1996) pp. 453-54.

### Mustafa Agha: An Obedient Servant of the Grand Duke

On May 29, 1599, Mustafa Agha arrived Naples and penned a letter to the grand duke via Riccardo Riccardi.<sup>1133</sup> In fact, this was not his first letter; after Giraldi left, the Ottoman envoy had sent letters to the grand duke about the developments concerning the negotiations, but he did not receive reply. The main motivation for Mustafa Agha to write this letter was in fact to express his disappointment regarding the Florentine attack on the Ottoman island: “After I had written to you, I was informed about the attack your galleys made on Chios and I became very much shocked and upset.”<sup>1134</sup> In fact, despite the conflicts they had had with Neri Giraldi, neither Halil Pasha nor Mustafa Agha had given up hope concerning the negotiations, and even after Giraldi’s departure they continued to lobby in favor of Florentine privileges at the Ottoman court.<sup>1135</sup> When Grand Vizier Cerrah Mehmed Pasha was replaced by İbrahim Pasha, Halil Pasha took the opportunity to inform the sultan about the recent Ottoman–Tuscan negotiations, noting that they had been hindered by the previous grand vizier. Thus, he was able to obtain from the sultan and the new grand vizier İbrahim Pasha letters expressing agreement to reopen the negotiations with the Tuscan state and promising to confirm the trade privileges.<sup>1136</sup>

In the sultan’s letter, it was stated that the capitulations would be confirmed as desired by the grand duke, and that Florentine merchants could come and trade freely and securely in the Ottoman lands. However, it was also declared that the galleys of St. Stephen should not do anything that would be in any way culpable.<sup>1137</sup> Moreover, the Florentine *bailo* would be received with all due honor and favor; no one would disturb him or do him harm.<sup>1138</sup> Similarly, Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha stated that the grand duke should send an ambassador, who would be received with honor and hospitality like all

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<sup>1133</sup> He was one of the owners of the Riccardi firm, which was active in trade between Livorno and the Levant during this period. The Riccardi family supported the Ottoman–Florentine negotiations in 1598. According to Malanima, Riccardo Riccardi was to provide the payment (1150 ducats) to Mustafa Agha for his mediation during the negotiations. Paolo Malanima. *I Riccardi di Firenze*, p. 89.

<sup>1134</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 316r: “Dopo havere scritto sono stato informato del corso che hanno fatto le galere de V.A. in Scio donde sono restate molto meravigliato e disperato.”

<sup>1135</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 316-318 (29 May 1599).

<sup>1136</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 316v.

<sup>1137</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 76r-v (27 February 1599): “[le] galere di Sto Step.no quelle non vengino essere colpevoli in nessun modo; et quando gli mercanti vostro verano in queste bande à mercantare nel mio potentissimo imperio possino far gli loro contratti et mercanti liberis.mente in quel tempo nessuno non ardira di tediare et dar fastidio veruno.”

<sup>1138</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 76r: “il vostro bailo quando venire in queste bande sara da noi riceputo con solito honore et amore che nescuno homo non ardira di dar fastidio ne disgusto veruno; ma con ogni degnia accoglienza et honore sara riceputo.”

other ambassadors.<sup>1139</sup> Consequently, both the sultan and the new grand vizier adopted a conciliatory attitude in their letters, written after Giraldi's departure, and they agreed to confirm the capitulations, including the additional clause concerning the galleys of St. Stephen as desired by the grand duke.<sup>1140</sup> Mustafa Agha brought these letters to Ragusa and presented them to the Senate there in the presence of the Florentine consul Bartolomeo Borgianni and his dragoman, who were informed about the whole issue and given copies of the letters.<sup>1141</sup>

While on the Ottoman side there still existed a positive attitude concerning the negotiations, the grand duke responded with the expedition to Chios. For this reason, Mustafa Agha assumed a reproachful tone towards the grand duke in his letter:

I have travelled three times to Florence, I have remained in the service of your highness for three years, and I have had to contend with so much opposition from the viziers, ambassadors, grand vizier, and court officials in Istanbul in order to carry out and conclude the negotiations.<sup>1142</sup>

However, this attack by the galleys on a fortress that held great importance for the sultan would have a very negative effect on the negotiation process, which the sultan greatly desired to continue. Moreover, as a result of this event, Mustafa Agha faced the risk of losing his *patria* and honor for supporting the grand duke's cause at the Ottoman court.

For all these reasons, Mustafa Agha came up with a proposal to the grand duke for restoring the relations with the Ottoman court, according to which the grand duke would not take any responsibility concerning this expedition. He would pretend to know nothing about the attack and indicate it to have been an uprising and showing-off on the part of the commander and the captain of the galleys. Moreover, it would be good if the grand duke were to have them imprisoned for a few days. The sultan would be informed about it and would be pleased to see that the grand duke had had nothing to do with this unacceptable attack. Thus, the negotiations could restart on safe ground. Mustafa Agha added that the grand duke should write a letter to the sultan in order to convince him that he had not been involved in this extraordinary expedition and had in fact imprisoned those

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<sup>1139</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 75r: “[il nostro sommo imperatore è stato comandato che si debba fargli capitoli e privilegi conforme al desiderio suo...lo amb.re quando venira sara riceputo come gli altri amb.ri con ogni accoglienza et honore.”

<sup>1140</sup> ASFi, MdP 4274, fol. 76r: “tutto gli sara concesso conforme al vostro desiderio senza dubito et mancamento nescuno.”

<sup>1141</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 317.

<sup>1142</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 316v (29 May 1599): “[H]avendo fatto tre viaggi e stato occupato tre anni in servizio di V.A. et in Costantinopoli havendo havuto tante contrarietà con li visiri, imbasciatori et consiglio del stato et sententatori nostri per effettuare et concludere il negotio di V.A.”

responsible. Another letter with a similar explanation should be written to Halil Pasha, who was a good friend of the grand duchy. In this way, according to Mustafa Agha, the conflict could be resolved.<sup>1143</sup>

The Ottoman envoy's appeal was of no avail. The grand duke responded neither to this proposal nor to Mustafa Agha's other letters. On June 15, 1599, the Ottoman envoy sent another letter full of lamentations and complaints. He expressed particular resentment at being treated so unjustly by the grand duke. After having striven hard in support of the negotiations and always remaining loyal and true in the service of the grand duke, it was difficult for him to understand why the latter was so furiously annoyed with him.<sup>1144</sup> He was sure that he had not done anything, either secretly or publicly, that could have displeased the grand duke. Thus, it was all because of Neri Giraldi who had misinformed the grand duke and not told the truth regarding Mustafa Agha's efforts to forward these negotiations and the difficulties he had experienced with the grand vizier, the Venetian *bailo*, the French ambassador, and other Ottoman officials.

In order to show his loyalty to the grand duke, the Ottoman envoy also noted that he had been offered money (3000 *talleri*) by the Venetian *bailo* and French ambassador to hinder the negotiations; however, he kept his word to the grand duke and did not pursue any other interests. Perhaps the most striking statement Mustafa Agha made in his letter was that he would rather lose his *patria* than lose the friendship of the grand duke.<sup>1145</sup> He added that he had always served the grand duke with fidelity and honesty and hoped that the latter would, with his judgment and wisdom, see the truth. It is intriguing that the Ottoman envoy showed such devotion and obedience to the grand duke. Whether he was really sincere in his words or was after a different agenda – like financial gain – remains unanswered.

However, given the fact that this trade negotiation between the Tuscan state and the Ottoman Empire was very much favored by the Levantine Jews in the Ottoman lands, as some of them wanted to settle in Pisa and Livorno, it can be argued that behind all Mustafa Agha's efforts, there may have been simply the urging and encouragement of the Jewish community in Istanbul, who desired this treaty more than anyone else. Taking into account their shared background and culture, Mustafa Agha might have had some close

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<sup>1143</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 316r-317v.

<sup>1144</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 449r (15 June 1599): “[Sono] stato tre anni occupato sempre in negotii de S.A. et spero che Dio lo sà et sono stato sempre gusto e diritto in suo servitio come Dio sà.”

<sup>1145</sup> ASFi, MdP 891, fol. 450v: “[mi] sono determinate per perdere la patria mia che perdere la servitiò et amicità del gran duca mio S.re.”

acquaintances whose interests lay in this treaty, or perhaps he was simply paid by the Jews in Istanbul for this service. Whatever the reason, Mustafa Agha's role may furnish a good example of the informal and less visible role of early modern mediators acting between different polities and cultures. Considering his position at the Ottoman court and his relations with the grand duchy, he can be regarded as a double agent serving both sides.<sup>1146</sup> The reliability and loyalty of this sort of agent were always questionable for both sides. Still, as an intermediary and agent, Mustafa Agha not only bridged Tuscany and the Ottoman world, but also enabled various sorts of exchanges, from information to the acquisition and exchange of luxury items.

### Conclusion

Two diplomatic negotiations marked Tuscan–Ottoman relations in the last decade of the sixteenth century – those of 1592 and 1598. Neither of them brought any results; however, close examination of the negotiation process, reconstructed from a variety of sources, sheds light on various issues in cross-cultural diplomacy during the early modern period, particularly the importance of mediation and the role of ambassadors and envoys in diplomatic relations between disparate politico-cultural entities. Each negotiation constitutes an intricate story in itself, with a host of actors, rivals, intrigues, and plots. Especially in the case of the 1598 negotiations, different narratives of the same event by the main actors provide us with valuable details concerning the individual relations and perceptions as shaped by rivalry, personal interests, and factional politics. In fact, all these played an influential role in the decision-making process and diplomatic relations at the state level.

In the case of the Tuscan–Ottoman negotiations, it can be argued that most of the time individual agendas and personal interests prevailed over imperial and state-level policies and paved the way for third party interventions, namely the Venetian and French machinations. Information about Antonio Vecchietti (the Florentine representative for the 1592 negotiations) and Chaim Levi (a key figure in the diplomatic attempt of 1597) was quite limited, making it difficult to gauge their efforts and positions in the negotiation processes. However, both were merchants active in Istanbul rather than proper ambassadors with a background in diplomacy. The same could be said for Neri Giraldi,

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<sup>1146</sup> Marika Keblusek, "Introduction: Double Agents in Early Modern Europe," in *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) p. 7.



the Florentine representative for the 1598 negotiations. As a merchant, Neri Giraldi took an approach to negotiation with the Ottoman court that was quite different from that of the Florentine ambassador Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi in 1578. Looking at the negotiations from a merchant's perspective, Giraldi was aware that conditions in the Levant were not the same any more due to the increasing rivalry with the merchants of other European states, as well as with local producers and merchants. The difficulty Giraldi experienced in Istanbul when selling his cloth seems to have influenced his attitude, giving rise to reluctance concerning these negotiations. Moreover, his inexperience and lack of knowledge concerning Ottoman politics and diplomatic practices led to unpleasant incidents and resulted in the failure of the negotiations.

On the Ottoman side, Mustafa Agha and Grand Admiral Halil Pasha favored the Tuscan–Ottoman diplomatic negotiations. They were motivated mainly by the honor and benefits to be gained. Especially for the grand admiral, the idea of bringing an end to the attacks of the galleys of St. Stephen in the eastern Mediterranean through peaceful means was quite compelling. Although the argument of the grand duke concerning this issue was quite precarious, the Ottoman administration approved the Florentines' proposal and agreed to confirm the privileges as the grand duke desired. However, as in the case of 1578 negotiations, the effort did not come to fruition. Although the expedition of the Florentine galleys to Chios brought about the end of the Ottoman–Tuscan negotiations, in the background there lie the attitude and actions of Florentine representative Neri Giraldi, which led to all the uproar and to the grand duke's choice of conflict over reconciliation in his Levant policy.

## CONCLUSION

In the last decade, there has been a growing interest in the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Italian cities besides Venice, i.e. Florence and Genoa. To this end, two exhibitions were held in Genoa in 2014: “Ottoman Art, 1450–1600. Nature and Abstraction: A Glimpse beyond the Sublime Porte” and “Turquerie: Reflections of Ottoman Art in Genoa.” While, in the former, Islamic works of art and Ottoman objects from various Italian and European museum collections were displayed, in the latter the focus was on the commercial and cultural relations between the Genoese and Ottoman worlds from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century through the display of documents, books, textiles, ceramics, and paintings.

In a similar vein, in 2003 the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in Istanbul held an exhibition of the Medici collection entitled “From the Medicis to the Savoia, Ottoman Splendour in Florentine Collections,” which featured Islamic works of art and objects, especially those of Persian, Mamluk, and Ottoman origin. The main intention of all these exhibitions was to demonstrate cross-cultural exchanges through material artefacts, underlining the historical and cultural relations that Genoa and Florence had with the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period. The exhibitions were successful in this endeavor insofar as, through the display of material artefacts, they were able to suggest possible connections and interactions between these different polities. Still, due to the lack of historical context, several questions remain unanswered. Such absences are part of a broader overall silence on Genoese and Florentine relations with the Ottoman Empire in the contemporary historiography on the sixteenth-century Mediterranean.

This dissertation has been an attempt to fill this gap in the historiography and to provide a comprehensive story of Genoese and Florentine relations with the Sublime Porte during the sixteenth century. It has examined the intricacies of cross-cultural diplomacy in the early modern Mediterranean, with a specific focus on these states’ diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the sixteenth century. In fact, both states had been active participants in trade in the Levant ever since the Byzantine period, and their commercial activities continued long after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. After this conquest, Sultan Mehmed II not only renewed the privileges the Byzantine emperors had formerly granted to Genoese and

Venetian merchants, but he also invited Florentine merchants to ply their trade in Ottoman territories, granting them guarantees of protection as well as trading concessions. The competition that the Genoese, Florentines, and Venetians engaged in to control key trade networks and acquire access to raw materials and products in the Levant allowed for closer diplomatic, political, and commercial contacts with the Ottoman Empire throughout the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, however, this situation took a different turn as a result of changing political and economic conjunctures in the Mediterranean. During this period, the Spanish Habsburgs' and the Ottomans' joint claims to supremacy over the Mediterranean were at their zenith. Within the framework of this Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, Venice and France mostly aligned with the Ottoman Empire, while Genoa and Florence—after having first gone through various internal crises and achieved stability with the help of the Spanish King—worked in correlation with the Habsburgs. As a result of these political configurations, from the 1530s onward, Genoese and Florentine interest in Levantine trade declined as they switched their focus to the western Mediterranean. Moreover, since they fought on the Habsburg side against the Ottomans in most of the era's naval battles and military confrontations, it has largely been taken for granted that these states' relations with the Sublime Porte were distant and tense throughout the sixteenth century. Accordingly, studies on the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic endeavors at the Ottoman capital have placed too much emphasis on these states' alliance with the Habsburgs, ultimately arguing that their negotiations with the Ottomans were always doomed to fail.

This dissertation has re-evaluated such presumptions by examining the relations between these states and the Ottoman administration in the light of Italian, European, and Ottoman sources. Through a close reading of the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic contacts, the dissertation has provided an alternative interpretation that challenges certain traditional assumptions and arguments by re-contextualizing Genoa's and Florence's motives and ambitions in terms of forming an alliance with the Ottomans. One of the premises of this dissertation has therefore been to sketch an image of the early modern Mediterranean not as a divided site defined by a set of rigid and static configurations, but rather as an interactive and dynamic space where economic considerations essentially dominated and shaped diplomatic and political strategies. As the dissertation has demonstrated, one of the major motives underlying the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic endeavors was to participate in the trade in the Levant and obtain a share of

the Ottoman market by exporting luxury textiles and goods in return for raw materials. Besides this desire to revive their Levant trade and expand into the Ottoman market, both states also considered such an endeavor to be an assertion of independence. The real challenge for Italian states throughout the sixteenth century was to survive as independent polities without yielding to any imperial power, as well as to legitimize their coexistence with all. Venice therefore became an especially significant model for both Genoa and Florence, who requested from the Ottomans that they be treated similarly to and hold the same privileges as the Venetians in the eyes of the empire. Thus, the diplomatic endeavors of both states should be evaluated in the context of their ambition to be treated as separate and independent entities.

Although their diplomatic attempts began successfully and were received positively by the Ottoman administration, they ultimately ended in failure. The reason for this failure, however, emerged primarily from intrigues and impediments devised by the Venetians and the French, who did not want to lose their privileged position and interests in the Levant trade in the face of the new competitors and factional politics at the Ottoman court, which affected the decision-making process and diplomacy of the empire in a significant way.

The main focus of this dissertation has been to analyze the failed embassies of Genoa and Florence through the negotiation processes. This analysis is important in two ways. First of all, there is an extensive body of documents that has revealed interesting details on each individual negotiation process and, uncovered the complex networks of relations and alliances as well as key figures and influential actors who have generally been invisible in the historiography. Among those thus brought to light are various Jewish, Christian, and Muslim go-betweens who mediated the relations between the Italian states and the Sublime Porte. Second, and more importantly, the analysis has brought the Ottoman perspective into the picture. While the traditional historiography has commonly perceived the Ottoman state as a monolithic entity, this study has brought forward the interplay of multiple powers in Ottoman imperial politics and diplomacy. The increasing power of vizier households vis-à-vis the sultanic authority and, later in the century, the emergence of court favorites and royal women as power brokers in state affairs and decision-making processes, significantly shaped the Ottoman Empire's diplomatic relations with foreign powers. As demonstrated in this dissertation, commercial interests and strategic concerns played an important role for certain Ottoman dignitaries in supporting the Genoese and Florentine negotiations.

It is also necessary to take into account the political struggle among court officials, who formed various factional groups in order to restore their authority and further their own interests. Most of the time this situation resulted in different choices in the Porte's domestic politics and foreign policies. This dichotomy becomes particularly clear in terms of decisions made as to whether to follow a policy of peace or war with the empire's archenemies—i.e. the Habsburgs and the Safavids—as well as in relations with smaller states. In the factional politics of the time, personal interests largely outweighed state interests, and diplomatic relations with European powers were determined less through ideological concerns and imperial policy-making than through individual relations and friendships. Thus, collaborating with the right (or most powerful) faction at the court and gaining the support of influential figures through personal favors became essential for the representatives of European states hoping to conduct successful diplomacy at the Porte. During the diplomatic negotiations of Genoa and Florence, it was not only the representatives of these states, but also those of other foreign powers, who sought to promote their interests through these factions. It is especially in the diplomatic correspondence of the Italian states that Ottoman factional politics comes to the fore. As court politics were of great concern to foreign representatives and ambassadors, they followed the factions and favorites very closely. Most of the factions took gifts and money from foreign ambassadors, often from more than one at the same time, and indeed offering such gifts became a common way of influencing decisions and gaining supporters. In line with all this, one of the contributions of this dissertation has been to evaluate the Genoese and Florentine diplomatic negotiations in the context of Ottoman factional politics and to map the interests of different power groups.

The dissertation's analysis of failed diplomacy has also demonstrated how conducting diplomacy at the time was especially complex and intricate, and in this way it has provided a lively picture of cross-cultural interactions in the early modern Mediterranean. Although the main actors involved in the circumstances behind each negotiation may have differed significantly from case to case, comparison of each state's connections with the Ottomans highlights certain aspects that they all have in common. Both states, for example, experienced a similar fate in regard to their failed diplomacy with the Sublime Porte; namely, resistance and opposition by the Venetians and the French, who had already secured privileges from the Ottoman administration and perceived any newcomer as a potential rival and a threat to their own interests. Additionally, both states also resorted to every possible means to disturb other European

powers' diplomatic negotiations with the Sublime Porte; thus, intrigues, conspiracies, plots, and various kinds of trick became an integral part of the diplomatic practice in Ottoman Istanbul. Such rivalry compelled the European states to be particularly delicate in their diplomacy at the Porte. It can also be said that, during this period, diplomacy as an art of communication was becoming more sophisticated. The lack on both sides of a deep awareness and knowledge of the other's culture, religion, and political, legal, and economic systems led to frequent diplomatic mishaps and crises. As such, the diplomacy of the Italian states and other European powers depended on the services of local informants and Ottoman dragomans, which made the mediation of "cross-cultural agents" indispensable in the diplomatic sphere. Indeed, one important characteristic of the negotiations examined in the dissertation was the role of various mediators taking an active part in the negotiation process.

### **Ideas For Future Research**

The present study has not dealt with all of the possible topics at which it has hinted. Because the dissertation has focused specifically on an analysis of diplomatic contacts from a broader political and economic context, it has not examined in detail the exchanges that occurred in the form of diplomatic/personal gifts between Italian representatives and Ottoman officials. While research on such gift-giving in early modern diplomacy has gained importance in recent years, there still needs to be a systematic examination of gift exchanges between European states and the Ottoman Empire in the contexts of gift-giving strategies, gifts as promoters of artistic creation and commercial interactions, and gifts as shapers of consumption habits among the elites. How these issues shaped the interactions and connections that existed between Italian states and the Ottoman Empire remains uncharted territory. Although the dissertation did make mention of Genoese and Florentine gift exchanges with the Sublime Porte, a comprehensive analysis of these issues was deliberately avoided, to be reserved for future publication.

The exchange of goods in the form of diplomatic/personal gifts or mercantile goods stimulated a variety of convergence between the disparate cultures involved. Accordingly, this triggered a convergence in matters of fashion/taste, industrial development, and the transfer of knowledge and know-how between the Ottomans and the Italian states. This exchange of objects in turn affected the domestic production of arts and crafts in both Europe and the Ottoman Empire. For instance, Ottoman textiles and Italian textiles came to stimulate one another, thereby encouraging the development of

these industries in both lands. Even among the Italian states, there was a competitive commercial war to gain access to the Ottoman textile market, and as a result, imitation and industrial espionage became essential to being able to penetrate this market. As discussed in the dissertation, while it had once been the Venetians who had imitated Florentine woolen cloth and replaced them in the Ottoman market, in the second half of the sixteenth century the Florentines followed precisely the same strategy, imitating Venetian wools so to be able to re-enter that market. In addition to spying on the Venetian woolen industry, the Florentines also sought out agents and merchants, mainly Jews, who had contacts with local Ottoman textile producers and could transfer technical knowledge about types, designs, colors, and weaving methods for woolen and silk cloth, which were fashionable among and in great demand by Ottoman consumers.

Currently, there is a large number of kaftans in the Topkapı Palace collection whose origin lies in the early modern period. Likewise, there is a wide variety of textiles and garments in the Ottoman style in the textile museums of Italy. It is in fact difficult to distinguish Ottoman manufactures from Italian ones, owing to similarities in terms of both designs and weaving techniques, which indicates a continuous interaction between Italian and the Ottoman workshops. This is due largely to the imitations of Oriental motifs and designs found on the silk textiles of Venice and other Italian states. As this dissertation has demonstrated, Ottoman Jewish merchants and craftsmen were instrumental in stimulating the cross-cultural transfer of textile weaving and manufacturing techniques. Thus, it was competition for the Ottoman market that proved to be the driving force behind the Italian states' transferring technologies, expertise, and skilled workers from the Levant to Italy by means of economic incentives. In this context, an important issue that the dissertation has brought to light has been how Ottoman merchants were attracted to Italian ports, in this case Livorno, and how certain Ottoman merchants and cloth manufacturers came to settle in Pisa and Livorno. This is nevertheless a topic that calls for further research. In particular, processes of exchange in the field of textiles and the identification of informal networks and mediators present very promising directions for future research.

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In short, together with the possible venues of research it hints at, the present dissertation should be seen as an initial attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the political, economic, and diplomatic interactions between the Italian states and the

Ottoman Empire just before the arrival of northern Europeans on the Mediterranean scene. It contributes in several ways to our understanding of the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, particularly with regard to political constellations, commercial competition, and cross-cultural interaction and exchanges. The dissertation adds a significant amount of empirical data that disclose details about how diplomacy was conducted, the role of intermediaries, and the material exchanges linking the Ottomans to their Italian counterparts. In so doing, the intent has been to shed light on the multilayered and complex character of conducting cross-cultural diplomacy and exchanges in the early modern Mediterranean during the second half of the sixteenth century. Throughout the dissertation, the emphasis on interactions, exchanges, and connectedness are intended to challenge traditional Eurocentric approaches by bringing the Ottomans more fully into the picture. While the story of the conflicts and wars against the Ottoman Empire that Genoa and Florence engaged in alongside the Habsburgs is well known, less often recognized is how both Genoa and Florence actually occasionally sought to restore commercial and diplomatic ties with the Porte. One might be tempted to read the failure of diplomatic attempts along confessional lines, disregarding economic, social, and political factors. However, close analysis of the relevant negotiation processes could mitigate this danger and help to map the various different levels of connections between Genoa/Florence and the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the sixteenth century. Diplomacy in the early modern Mediterranean was not a stable entity: it was a dynamic process that enabled various sorts of interactions and exchanges and was achieved through the efforts of the various actors involved in the negotiation process.







che capitando l'armata o gallerie del detto Gran S<sup>o</sup> nelli porti de for-  
stadi, che li sia dato vettouaglia e altre cose necesse, e non se li puossi  
denegar li porti, eccetto quello della città di Genova, quando l'armata  
fussi grossa, però che dann. S<sup>u</sup>essero dalle gallerie imperiale, non possino  
esser a lor imputati, massime nelli porti aperti, che puossino stampar  
Lucati soltanini, o altre sorte di quelli coorano, con  
de venetiam, come scioci, o vero della lor stampa, che tutte dette  
cose il Gran S<sup>o</sup> fara publicare per tutti suoi stadi, e comandera a  
tutti suoi sudditi che non offendano la Nation, ne sotto pena grand<sup>me</sup>.


## 2. Letter of Murad Agha (or Gregorio Bregante) to Genoa, 1562

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Ill<sup>mi</sup> et Em<sup>mi</sup> sig<sup>ri</sup>

Essendo ritornato cqui me Gio: maria Ronzo, che con grandissimo desiderio da me fu aspettato, per alcunij seruitij, che per il suo mezzo se in cominciorno, et hora finij di trattare, in seruitio di sua Mag<sup>te</sup>. Me ha molto caldamente Ragionato, et persuaso, a la deuotione di questa Ill<sup>ma</sup>, et Em<sup>ria</sup> sig<sup>ria</sup>: in dover star pronto a far li seruitio, quando aca schasse la occasione. Certo tal per suasionc in me è stata cosaouerchia, poi che senza bisogno d'essa, io sempre sono stato pronto, et parato a far a tal Republica seruitio, cossi como con effecti fu visto, nel trattato che della pace si fece li anni passati, del che poi li Insuasitorij cqui tanto poco conto ferno, como particolarmente dirra abacia alle sig<sup>rie</sup> Vre Ill<sup>me</sup> et detto Gio: Maria, al quale alongo sopra la seruitù mia Ragionarrà et particolarmente nel negozio di ritornare abattare tal pace, poi che intendo questa Republica tutta uia il desidera, et le di mostrazioni che cqui n'ha mostrate un certo Nicolò petro accino, se cossi farrà la uoluntà delle Ill<sup>me</sup> sig<sup>rie</sup> Vre, me faranno haminata dela maniera, et forma che detto Gio: maria quelle da una parte dirrà et che li farò conoscere la affezione mia, in sieme con il potere tanto in questa corte del gran sig<sup>re</sup>. et a presso sua persona, quanto con Sulhan Selim (bisognando con lui trattare) et como di si tanto in questo, como in qual si uaglia altro seruitio fattibile, io starro pronto in seruitio di quelle, a seruirle cossi como il detto deuoto et fedele di questa republica Gio: maria dirra, qual certo con le parole et affetti s'è mostrato esser quel fidel vaxallo

como quelle meritano / Cui Resta Gio: Agustino gilij: Scrittore  
 dela p<sup>re</sup>me, per no saper io bon scriuere quale p<sup>er</sup> la confidenza  
 che in lui tenemo, e consapevole de tutti miei rapporti secuti,  
 et parla p<sup>er</sup> parola per ordine mio agui p<sup>re</sup>me la scri<sup>se</sup> p<sup>er</sup> sua mano  
 da oggi hauante farro hami sate le p<sup>re</sup>me sig<sup>no</sup> Oro, di quello  
 mi occorrerà delle occorrenze, et nouita di questo paese che  
 alla giornata vi succederranno / et cosi quelle p<sup>er</sup> via sua con  
 la debita aduertenzia mi mandarranno la risposta di quello  
 che li occorrerà, secondo il buon ordine che mettera il detto  
 Gio: Maria, me p<sup>er</sup> questa dirro altro solo, desiderar che D<sup>eu</sup>s. p<sup>ro</sup>sp<sup>er</sup>  
 per i p<sup>re</sup>me, et p<sup>er</sup> me persone, delle sig<sup>no</sup> Oro como p<sup>er</sup> quelle  
 e desiderato / di Costantinopoli a di 9 di nouembre 1562

دولتو و عادتو لطافتو قمر ناری اسقاوه دد بنا و جا لسکوی بر ورا که عاقول فاروقن سر قوائتو سیاسینا تو  
 انوطاوی باسون دیندر رز عاقا لوسروج قولد قنوتونم القونم سالتو اتم قوماندر  
 مروینورده و ستر اسکوریا اسنله سار و علو و ستر قوماندر  


### **3. List of Florentine Bailos in Istanbul (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c.)**

Mainardo degli Ubaldini (1461-1469)

Bartolomeo di Simone del Nero (21 November 1471)

Carlo Baroncelli (3 September 1472) (he was recalled again on 24 April 1476)

Leonardo Salvucci (12 January 1481)

Leonardo di Benedetto Strozzi and Antonio Sostegni (19 September 1492)

Giorgio Bartoli and Antonio Sostegni (23 June 1498)

Andrea di Paolo Carnesecchi (25 May 1500)

Pandolfo di Bernardo Corbinelli (21 May 1504)

Niccolò di Girolamo Morelli (13 July 1508)

Giuliano di Gerolamo di Silvestro Lapi (27 January 1511-18 March 1512)

Zanobi d'Antonio di Giuliano di Gioenco de' Medici (18 September 1514-September 1519)

Giuliano di Piero di messer Luca Pitti (22 September 1519)

Giovanni di Rodolfo Lotti (15 April 1524)

Alessandro di Niccolò Sacchetti (28 April 1528)

Luigi di Francesco Gherardi (6 October 1531-1543)

Guglielmo da Sommaia (1543-1546)

Francesco Lapi (1546)

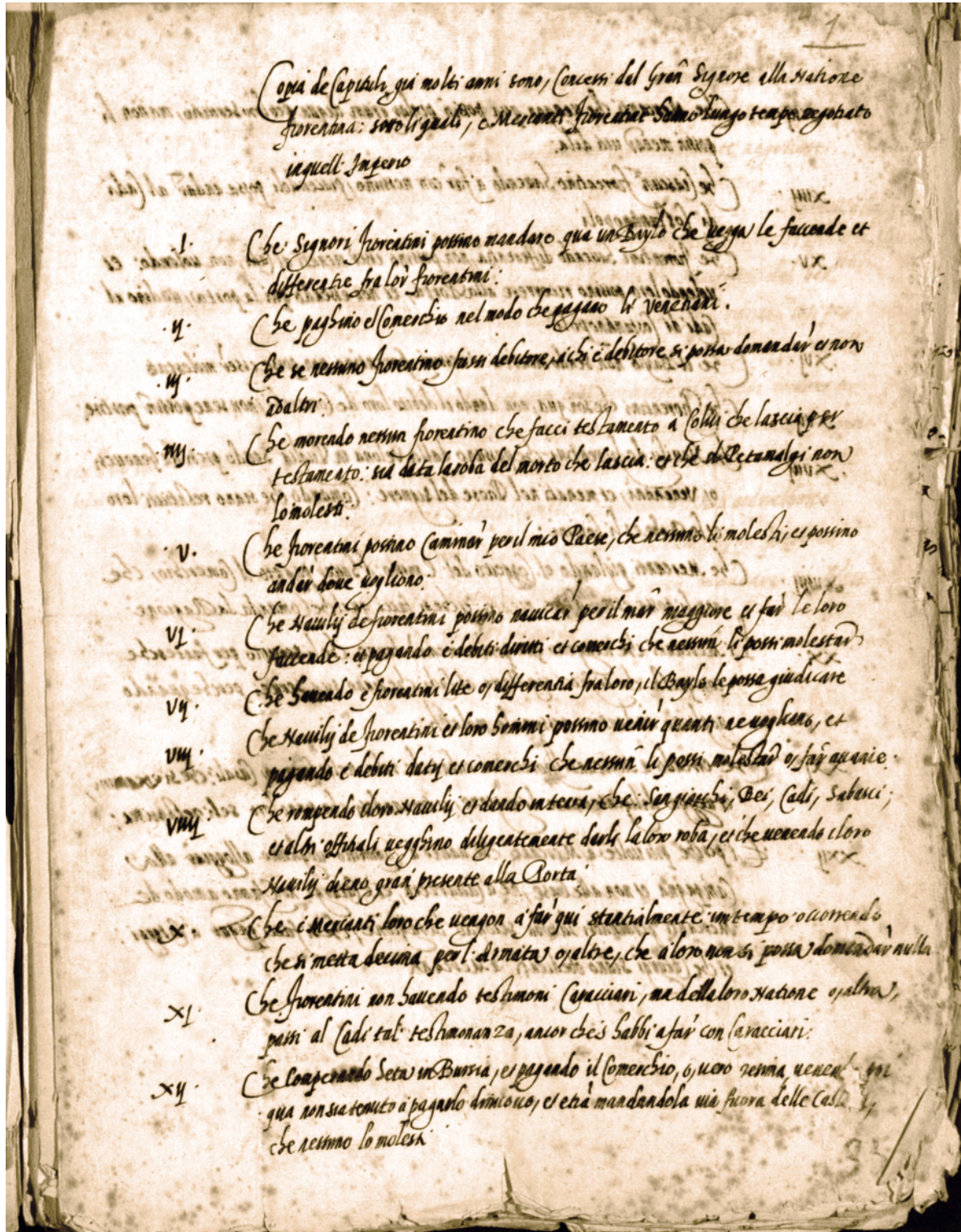
Alfonso Berardi (1546-1552)

Giovanbattista Buondelmonti (1552-1559)

Albertaccio degli Alberti (1559-1565)

Sources: Giuseppe Müller, *Documenti sulle Relazioni delle Città Toscane coll'Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno MDXXXI* (Firenze: Cellini, 1879), p. 528; Marcello del Piazzo, *Gli Ambasciatori Toscani del Principato (1537-1737)* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1953)

### 3. A Draft Copy of Florentine Capitulations, 1578



xiii. Che mercanti che uengano qua possino per lo' grani de qua per loro seruicio, ma non li  
possino menar uia d'ita.

xiiii. Che ciascun fiorentino hauendo a far con nessuno, piacendoli possa andar al Cadi  
di Costanzaopoli.

xv. Che fiorentini hauendo differenzia, non possino esser menati al Cadi, non uolendo: es  
uolendo loro possino ricorrere alla Porta, et non essendo qui la porta, uadino al  
Cadi di Costanzaopoli.

xvi. Che il Baylo non sendo uertta a nessun fiorentino non possa esser molestato.

xvii. Che fiorentini che son qua, non dando il debito loro de Comerci, non se ne possino partire.

xviii. Che Manily de fiorentini che passano dalla Velona in Puglia sendo preti de Genouesi  
o Venetiani, et menati nel Paese del signore: Comando che siano restituiti loro  
et se robe et li Sonimi.

xix. Che mercanti giulando el Cassetto del Corno: d'auer pagato il Comercio, che  
non li possa esser detto uicari: et che si facci qualche Comanda la Ragione.

xx. Che mercanti che uengano qua possino menar donne. Et li seruino per faste che  
con questo che si facci sigillato al Cadi che siano sua serue: perche quando  
uogliano andar se ne nessuno le molesti.

xxi. Che essendo a mercanti fiorentini rubato be robe nelle Citta di Casali: che si ex ammi,  
et uogga diligentemente di ragione, et trouandosi che siano loro se li restituisca.

xxii. Et perche piu uolte e Mercanti che uenno a Cammino vogliono alloggiar alla  
Campagna et non alle Case, ne a' Auarzeri, et e' Catangi non fanno amodo de  
Mercanti perdendosi la roba secondo la ragione, et si facci pagar a Catangi:  
et che Catangi siano obediuti a Mercanti.



Li Mercanti Fiorentini: Sendan per loro, per li tempi passati di piu d'anni cento:  
negotato in quell' Imperio: Desiderano che oltre alli Capitoli sopraincisi,  
sia ancora Concesso l'inscrutto: per poterli piu sicuramente negoziare  
in l'auenire, cioe:

*et che non sta ni manovra  
l'ouciarle*

*ni manovra o fuggi*  
Che li Mercanti Fiorentini, o loro Commercanti: Non Posino esser molestati, ne loro <sup>lor</sup>  
Vaselli: <sup>na</sup> le loro mercantie, et Robe, per sagioni di Guerre, che Nascessino dal Ser<sup>mo</sup>  
Gran Duca di Toscana, o da quel altro si voglia Principe <sup>et Principe</sup> (sichiano coti per  
Mare come per Terra; Ne ancora per conto delle Galere, o altri legni, o Vaselli  
del prefato Ser<sup>mo</sup> Gran Duca; per esser cose spettante a Principi et non a  
Mercanti; perche possino liberamente andar et negoziar per tutto l'Imperio  
del Gran Signore: et portar, Conduor, mandare, et trarre tutte le mercantie  
non proibite, pagando li debiti Comerci: altrimenti non andrebbono  
mandar le loro mercantie et Robe, per timor che le non fusser prese et  
ceterate: — Desiderano ancora di poter mandare in Aless.<sup>a</sup>  
in terra Galeata co' <sup>et</sup> <sup>presente</sup>.

Disposto  
in Aless.<sup>a</sup>

#### 4. Jacopo Mormorai's Letter to Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 1588

Ser.mo Gran Duca

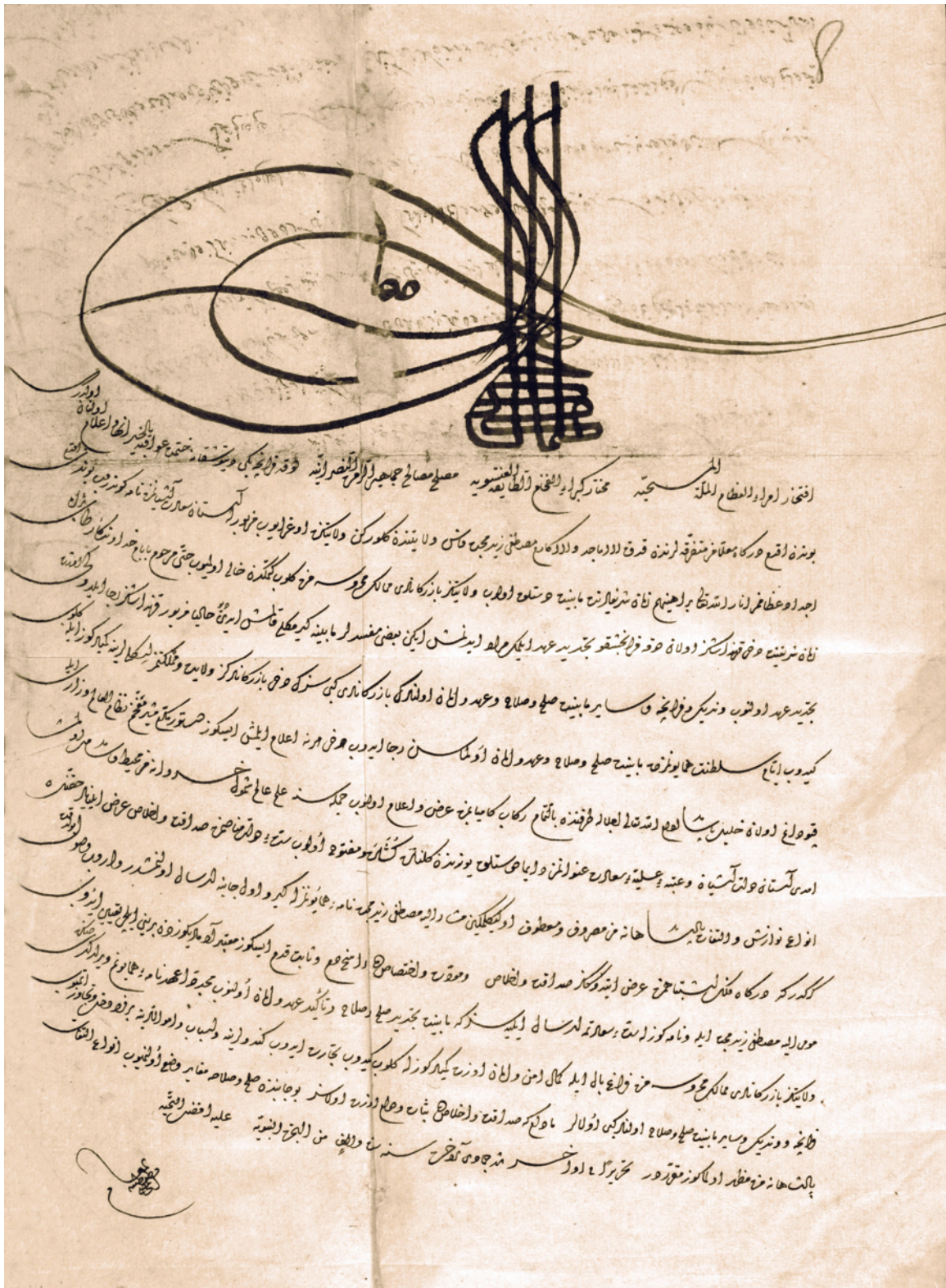
Quella non hebbe prima preso il governo di questi suoi felicissimi stati, che come suo aff.mo s.re et vasallo, mi venne in pensiero mostrarli quanto seria stato a lei in particolare utile, et honorevole et in universale beneffo et commodo a tutta la città di Firenze la confederatione et l'amicitia col Gran Signore di Costantinopoli, et solo restai di significarglielo, dubitando che puotessi essere, che mentre ch'io li palesavo questa verita, fussi tirrato per esser otioso al mondo, et haver in quelle parti pratica da esservi dentro impiegato et cosi mentre ch'io cercavo servire à lei, et giovare alla città, non havess' havuto il mio proponimento, o discorso, quello credito, ch'io giudico ch'habbia ad avere al presente, poiche non può di me più haver tal pensiero, havendomi dato tratenimento si honorato nel governo della città di Arezzo. Però vengo con lieto animo à dirli questa verità per esser stato in Costantinopoli due volte et haver considerato quanto l'amicitia di quell'eccelsa Porta, sia stata à questa città di Firenze sempre giovevole. Però ella saprà come nel 1479 fù il primo che fosse mandato in Costantinopoli à risiedere rappresentante la Republica Fiorentina per ambasciatore, o bailo, che noi chiamato lo vogliano, il quale dimorando là, introdusse tal amicitia et confederatione, che li Turchi à Fiorenza et i Fiorentini in Costantinopoli andavano scambievolmente pagando li Turchi à Firenze li datii di Firenze et li fiorentini in Costantinopoli li datii di Costantinopoli, con ogni sicurtà et ampli privilegi et volse la fortuna, che per spatio di quasi sessanta anni continui ebbero li Turchi con li Venetiani quasi continua guerra, se bene segui in questo spatio di tempo alcune sospette paci talmente che li Fiorentini impadronitosi di quel negotio, vi s'annidiorno di maniera, che sino à ventidue case di Nobili Fiorentini ho trovato io nel riordinare certe scritte, quando fui là Bailo, furono in un tempo med.mo in Pera et tanto si compiacquero di quel Paese, che molti vi s'annidiorno et vi presero moglie et di fiorentini diventorno Perotti, come sono li Gagliani, Verazzani, Doni et altri che'l tempo hà spenti. In oltre che ciaschedun' anno andavano di Gentilhuomini Fiorentini, nominati Bazzariotti due o tre carrovane et portavano cento et cento cinquanta milla ducati per ciascheduna et vendevano et se ne ritornavano à Firenze, et fù tale questo traffico, che tutte le ricchezze che sono in Firenze, che hann' havuto orrigine da cinquant' anni indietro, sono uscite di Costantinopoli, venne poi il 1537, dove i Venetiani fecero la pace col dar à Turchi la caggione della guerra che fù Napoli di Romania, et Malvagia et cosi

s'assicurarono à negoziare nell'Imperio de Turchi, et di più cominciò non molt'anni di poi ad introdurre l'arte della lana in Venetia et à Fiorenza disprezzar le pannine di Levante, per esser venuto impregio le rasse et talmente andò la città persistendo in tener conto solo delle rasse et disprezzare i negotii di Levante, che li Venetiani tutto quello ch'era prima de Fiorentini in tempo di guerra et in tempo di pace de Fiorentini et de Venetiani tutto s'arrugirno per loro et sono venuti à tale che con l'havere arricchita Venetia, smaltiscono l'anno venti, e ventiquattro milla capi di panni nel territorio de Turchi quantità che prima buona parte solevano mandarvisi di Firenze, si come con ci far la nuova confederatione succederia. Di poi venn' in pensiero al Gran Duca Cosimo d'armar gallere et mandarle à danni de Turchi et pigliar vasselli et huomini Turcheschi, onde fù chiamato da Maometto Bascia Albertaccio degli Alberti, allora residente balio in Costantinopoli et non con barbara crudeltà ma con piacevole humanità dettoli che d'havere il suo padrone mandata à pigliare huomini et vasselli Turcheschi, meritava che lo facessi carcerato lui, li mercanti et le robbe de Fiorentini, ma che per conoscerlo un vecchio da bene non lo voleva fare et che li rimandasse i capitoli à casa et se andasse del Paese del Gran Signore, dicendo al suo Padrone, che se voleva l'amicitia di quell' Eccelsa Porta lasciassi stare il mandar le gallere in corso in Levante et liberamente se ne riornasse che li renderebbe i medesimi capitoli o li migliorerebbe in ampla forma com' al Gran Duca et à lui piacesse et cosi partito di là se ne venne à Fiorenza, dove mai parve à S.A. di trattar altro per tale confederatione, ma venuto poi la guerra di Cipri si conobbe allora gli effetti quanto tal commertio et amicitia se si havess' havuto, sarebbe stato giovevole alla città di Firenze et cosi desiderando di rinnovar tal pratica ci fù mandato il Cavaglier Buongianni Gianfigliuzzi per Ambascitore et io scrittore per balio, la qual cosa per molte et vari caggioni, non essendosi da lui potuto ottenere, mi rissolsi à restare in Costantinopoli, et doppo molte dispute et controversie ottenuto le gallere andassino in corso à vasselli di Remo, e s'astenessino à vasselli de mercanti et restassi l'amicitia et che li Turchi venissero à Fiorenza et i Fiorentini in Costantinopoli à trattar ciascheduno i suoi negotii liberamente et con ogni sicurtà, la qual cosa non parve al Gran Duca Francesco d'accettare dissuasione contro la volontà sua da chi tale (sia mi lecito il dirlo) non util consiglio li dette, et cosi chiamato me ne ritornai, havendoci consumato la robba et affaticato la persona, ma molto più l'intelletto; hora conoscendo quanto l'arte della lana di Firenze è ita et va deteriorando, per non si vender più la rasse, come prima si faceva, si per lavorarsene in molte parti d'Italia, come per essersi gl'huomini avvezzi à vestir di grosse grane , ferrandine, buratti di seta et ciambelotti non meno di Ponente, che di

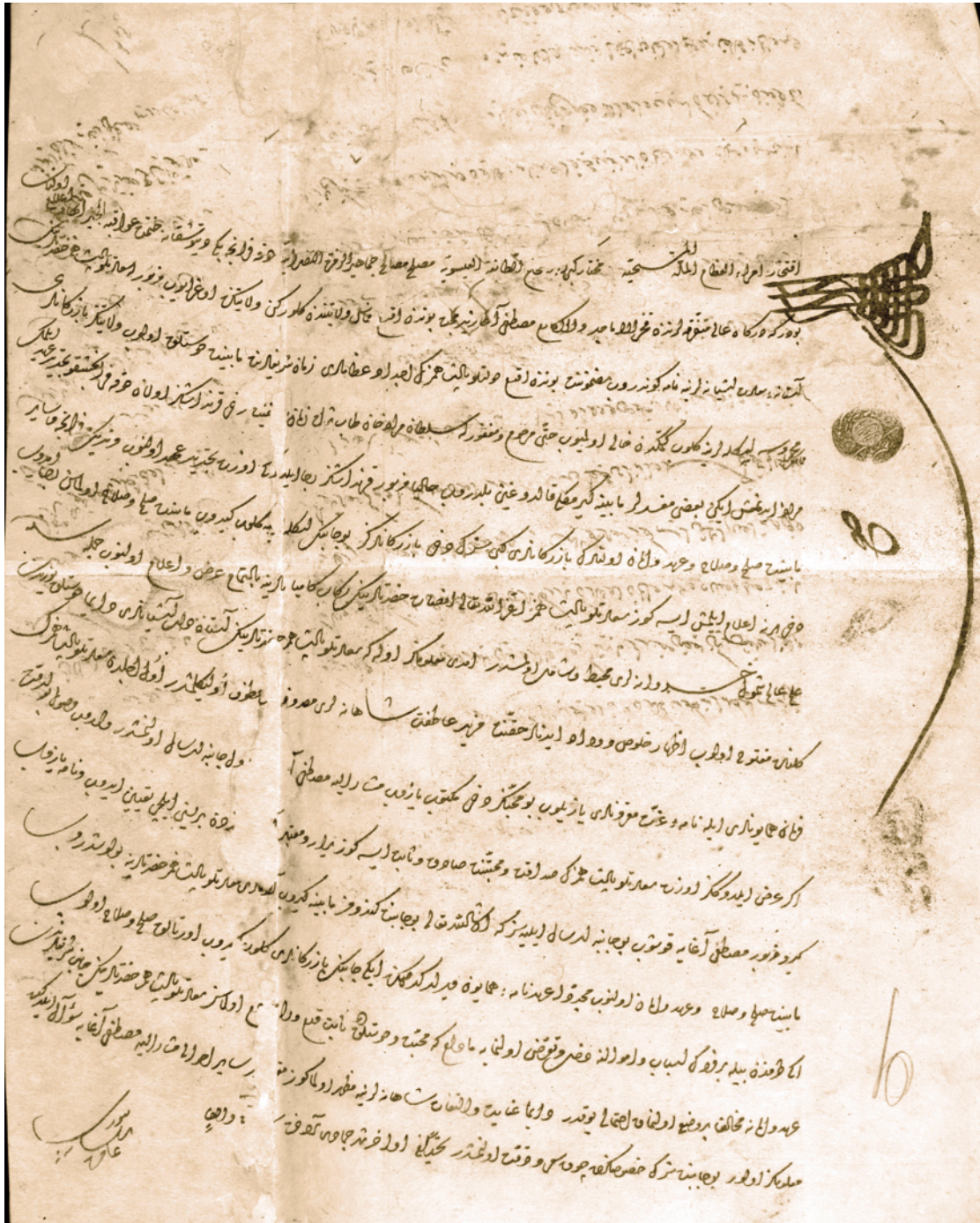
Levante et le pannine di Levante del tutto esser l'arte della lana mancata di lavorarne per non haver commertio di Levante. Però conoscendo io quanto beneficio saria alla città di Firenze, à tutti i suoi vassalli et à lei in particolare, mi è parso obligo mio infiamarla alla rinnovatione di questa confederatione per i benefici di sopra detti, et come huomo pratico in quei paesi et che vi ritengo importantissimi amicitie, offerirli la mia servitù in farne seguir l'effetto solo col mandar un mio creato altre volte statovi con esso meco con una lettera di V.A.S. à quel Gran Signore dal qual n'havrà rispa (?) che mandi ambasciatori a concluder le capitulationi, quali saranno, se sarà saputa negoziare della maniera che V.A. desidera, solo con il limitamento che le sue gallere non vaddino in corso à vasselli di mercantia, ma si bene à i corsari d'Argieri et à ladri, cosa s'io perciò non m'inganno conform' al giusto et all'honesto et alla legge nostra. Sappialo a dunque V.A.S ne lasci questa bell'occasione d'arricchire il suo stato, benificar ciascheduno et giovar à se stessa, dicendoli di più che tal confederatione non solo è utile, et giovevole alle cose di sopra nominate, à lei et ad altri ma in particolar à lei per molte rivoluzione, che il tempo in quest' instabil mondo suole seco apportare come col suo saldo giudizio meglio di me sa et più perfettamente considerar lo può et se qual si voglia minimo particolare ne volessi à pieno sapere sarò pronto con la propria voce sempre che lo comanderà a dargnen' ogni intera cognitione et bacciandoli con ogni debita reverentia la veste Iddio le doni ogni contento d'Arezzo il di XXIII di Settenbre 1588.

Jacopo Mormorai, Comessario

5. Sultan Mehmed III's Letter to Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 1598



6. Letter of Grand Admiral Halil Pasha to Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 1598



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