

Through the “Mediterranean Rumour Mill”: The Flow and Manipulation of Information Between The Ottoman Empire and Europe

Ela Bozok

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

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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilisation

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ABSTRACT

Virgil described *fama* as a monster: “Her body is covered with as many eyes, mouths, tongues, and ears as it has feathers.” The more people see, hear, and talk, the more *fama* gains speed and grows. However, what exactly was this *fama*? It encompassed fame, reputation, news, and rumour. These elements were ambiguous, as they could be either true or false. They were linked to the senses of hearing, seeing, and speaking since individuals transmitted what they heard and witnessed. Moreover, the circulation of *fama* among a larger audience only fuelled its growth. A person’s reputation played a crucial role in this context, as it lent credibility to information, while a rumour could either enhance or damage a reputation. This classical monster is a fitting description of news and rumours during the early modern period.

This dissertation seeks to understand the patterns of news dissemination and management in the sixteenth-century eastern Mediterranean, focusing on the Ottoman Empire as the central unit of observation. It is structured around two main questions: First, did a systematic approach to news dissemination and management exist during the early modern period? Second, do the strict distinctions between news and rumours established by twentieth-century scholars apply to early modern contexts?

To address these questions, the dissertation examines two case studies. The first is the clash between the Ottomans and Christian powers during the Siege of Rhodes (1522). The second case study involves a complex internal affair that escalated into a diplomatic crisis within the empire, primarily involving non-European actors. This situation unfolded under the watchful eye of Christian Europe. It centred around the succession crisis, which began with Prince Bayezid’s rebellion, followed by his conflict with his elder brother Selim, eventual defeat, flight to Safavid Persia, and ultimate execution (1558-1562).

Keywords: The Republic of Venice, The Ottoman Empire, news networks, succession struggle, sixteenth century eastern mediterranean

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This entire experience has only been possible because of my cohort, with whom I have shared some of my best memories. Before coming to EUI, I was sceptical about the people I would meet; however, my cohort and others completely changed my perception. I feel fortunate to have met and befriended many extraordinary individuals on this long journey. One is my dear friend Thor-Oona, with who, through our mutual love for medieval art, I visited several museums and exhibitions in Florence and other nearby cities. Our long conversations in the Salviati garden, city tours, and trips to different towns were highlights of my time at EUI. I will miss discussions with my friend Vuk Uskoković, whose extraordinary wit always made me laugh during our study and lunch breaks. Our mutual interest in the history of the Republic of Venice, the Ottoman Empire, and information networks sparked rich exchanges of ideas and helped me develop new insights.

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To my dear parents,
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an attempt to understand the patterns of news dissemination and management in the sixteenth century eastern Mediterranean by taking Ottoman Empire as the central unit of observation. It seeks to analyse the various factors that played a role in shaping the patterns of news dissemination, such as the people involved, the locations acting as hubs, the content of the news, and the speed at which it spread. Through implementing an etymological study on words, a second purpose is to investigate the nature of early modern news and rumours in terms of accuracy and different forms of communication. The main argument presented in this study is that early modern news and rumours were closely connected phenomena that required a system of verification based on the factors mentioned above.

On July 15, 2016, a failed coup attempt took place in Turkey. This event had significant political, economic, and social implications and raised various questions that are the focus of this dissertation. Despite the prevalence of advanced technology and social media, the days following the event were chaotic regarding news dissemination. Many people speculated about the reasons for the event and the individuals and locations involved. The public sought to discern the truth by sorting through the sea of misinformation and disinformation from various media outlets. This crisis prompted me to contemplate the nature of news and its dissemination—considering the who, how, what, and why. Today, although we have instant access to news through various channels, it does not guarantee immediate access to accurate information. It requires critical evaluation of the information received, including assessing its source, credibility, and consistency. This led to my exploration of how historical crises impacted news management and dissemination and how people perceived news and rumours during those times. Did they also need to evaluate and filter the information they received critically? Whom did they trust to verify the information? While limited technology meant a more extended dissemination period, when did a news piece become outdated?

Hence, this dissertation is based on two main questions from this general line of thought. The first question was whether an established news dissemination and management system existed in the early modern period. The second question was whether the strict separation of the definitions of news and rumours that twentieth-century scholars established applied to early

modern news and rumours. However, answering these broad questions with a single study is impossible, and certain limitations were implemented. As the research scope of the study, the reign of Süleyman I was chosen as the focus period, and the eastern Mediterranean was selected as the primary geography for analysing news and rumours.

Furthermore, two case studies were chosen as they exemplify how news and rumours can escalate during crises. The first was a clash between the Ottomans and Christian powers: The Siege of Rhodes in 1522. The second was an intricate internal affair that evolved into an intra-empire diplomatic crisis, primarily involving non-European players, while Christian Europe was closely observing: the succession crisis, a convoluted series of events that began with Prince Bayezid's rebellion, followed by his battle with his elder brother Selim, his defeat, escape to Safavid Persia, and eventual execution (1558-1562). Various types of Ottoman primary sources were analysed to understand the role of news and rumours in the Ottoman context. Primary sources in Italian, mainly of Venetian and Florentine origin, were also thoroughly investigated, as these two political entities were the primary states that acted as mediators of information between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe, providing crucial insights into the transmission process between different political and cultural entities.

1) Literature Review

Historical studies on news and rumours have gained momentum in the last two decades. In 2008, Peter Burke, in his book about cultural history, stated that the “studies of news culture only just began to be explored”.¹ Throughout the twentieth century, studies on these phenomena, especially on rumours, were conducted mainly by psychologists and sociologists who sought to understand their nature and their impact on individuals and societies.² Few historians dealt with them *per se* prior to the twenty-first century. The earliest examples were military historian Charles Oman and founding member of the Annales School Marc Bloch, as both analysed “false news” during the war in their articles dated right after WWI.³ Decades following WWII saw the emergence of seminal works on media and communication theories influenced by the rise of “social history”.⁴ By 1970s, the shift in historiography was towards studies on printing and book which were increasingly analysed by the cultural and social roles they possessed.⁵ While studies on these topics created much debate that continued up into the millennium, the most important outcome of these debates for this study was the realisation of how Eurocentric the earlier statements were. Equally important was the recognition of the necessity to incorporate community perspectives in understanding how *they* created their historical processes.⁶

Before the advent of the millennium, studies on news generally analysed the relationship between early modern events and news, many were written in the context of history of

¹ Burke, Peter. *What is Cultural History?*. Polity, 2008, p.116.

² Allport, Gordon, and Leo Postman. *The Psychology of Rumour*. New York: Henry Holt, 1947; Knapp, Robert H. “A Psychology of Rumour.” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1944, pp. 22-3.; Peterson, Warren, and Noel P. Gist. “Rumor and Public Opinion.” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 57, 1951, pp. 159-167. Shibutani, Tamotsu. *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor*. Bobbs-Merrill, 1966.; Roslow, Ralph L. “Rumour as Communication: A Contextualist Approach.” *Journal of Communication*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1988, pp. 12-28.

³ Oman, Charles W. “Presidential Address.” *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 1, 1918, pp. 1-27. Bloch, Marc. “Réflexions D’Un Historien Sur Les Fausses Nouvelles De La Guerre.” *Revue De Synthèse Historique*, vol. 7, 1921, pp. 13-35.

⁴ Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution*. Pelican, 1973; Innis, Harold. *Empire and Communications*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950; McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. University of Toronto Press, 1962; McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*; McGraw Hill, 1964.

⁵ Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979; Darnton, Robert. *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775–1800*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979; Grafton, Anthony. “The Importance of Being Printed”, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1980, pp. 265- 28.

⁶ Johns, Adrian. “How to Acknowledge a Revolution”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 1 (February 2002), p. 109, 116.

England.⁷ Similarly, there was a particular focus on the evolution of newspaper in this specific context.⁸ However, changes in approach to news was slowly appearing in the studies that were done in following years. For example, in 2001, a book on politics and information edited by Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron explored the relationship between commercial and political aspects of news production and dissemination.⁹ However, this book was limited in its scope as it mainly focused on seventeenth century and focused on a number of political entities including England, Germany, Spain, Netherlands while leaving many out. There also appeared works that engaged a different approach on studies on news. Robert Darnton's article on news and media in eighteenth century Paris challenged the notion that early modern world was simple in terms of information networks as it lacked the technology we possess today. He negated this notion and stated that early modern information system was only different from today with its complex communication network with variety of now forgotten genres of media.¹⁰

Andrew Pettegree's book "The Invention of News" was one of the most comprehensive books that focused different aspects of news by scanning several centuries.¹¹ In it, he examines European news networks, the rise of the newspaper industry, and the commercialization and dissemination of news from the late medieval period to the end of the eighteenth century. His research covers a wide range of topics, such as the types of news, different agents involved, postal routes, and consumers over an extensive time frame. This book is valuable as it explains how various printed and written news forms were utilized in different parts of Europe, especially in Italy and Germany, and how they contributed to forming distinct news cultures. Another valid point he made was the emphasis on the importance of oral communication in news delivery. It was discussed that written reports were initially distrusted in the Middle

⁷ Cust, Richard. "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth Century England.", *Past and Present*, Vol.112, 1986, pp.60-90; De Lamar, Jensen. "The Spanish Armada: The Worst-Kept Secret in Europe.", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 19, No: 4, 1988, pp. 621-641; Fox, Adam. "Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England.", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No: 3, 1997, pp.597-620

⁸ Frank, Joseph. *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1961; Clark, Charles E. *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1666-1740*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Raymond, Joad. *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641-1649*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996; Raymond, Joad (ed.), *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain*, London: Frank Cass, 1999

⁹ Dooley, Brendan and Baron, Sabrina A. (eds.), *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, London: Routledge, 2001.

¹⁰ Darnton, Robert. "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris.", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 1, 2000, p.7

¹¹ Pettegree, Andrew. *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself*, Yale University Press, 2014

Ages, and oral news delivery from a trusted friend or messenger was seen as more reliable.¹² For example, news pamphlets, a specific type of printed news that narrates the most thrilling news, such as wars or crimes, developed their style from older oral traditions rather than replacing them.¹³ In similar approach, there were other studies also started to pay attention to oral communication which remained significant in the sixteenth century, with both orality and literacy coexisting, an important focus point of this study as well.¹⁴

After 2010, several edited volumes on the news were published, and a comparative approach was adopted to show cross-boundary transmission and reception of news. Brendan Dooley edited a volume on the dissemination of news which focused on transmission methods as well as news networks in a rich array of political entities of Europe.¹⁵ This volume negated the misplaced understanding that “early modern news were only circulated with print”, it highlighted that manuscript culture was active in the spread of news as well as the importance of oral communication. The Brill series “Library of Written Word” published the other volumes under the “The Handpress World” subseries edited by Andrew Pettigrew. This series began in 2010 with studies focusing mainly on European book and print cultures, echoing the older historiographical trend that began in the 1970s. However, in 2014, the volume “News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections”, edited by Simon F. Davies and Puck Fletcher, was published.¹⁶ This volume, a significant contribution to the field, brought forward new research on news. It was organized under four titles: dissemination of news, different usages of news (propaganda, entertainment), news overlapping social history, and usage of news in different literary forms such as plays and ballads. However important this work was as it was a volume focused solely on the news *per se* and showed the vast array of usages of news other than political means, it remained limited in its geographical scope as it focused on a few European countries.

¹² Ibid. p.2

¹³ Ibid. p.14

¹⁴ Jucker, Michael. “Trust and Mistrust in Letters: Late Medieval Diplomacy and its Communication Practices”, in *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 13: Strategies of Writing, Studies on Text and Trust in Medieval Europe*, edited by Petra Schulte et al., Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, pp. 222-223

¹⁵ Dooley, Brendan (ed.), *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, Ashgate: Farnham, 2010

¹⁶ Davies, Simon F. and Fletcher, Puck. *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections*, Leiden: Brill, 2014.

The second volume, “News Networks in Early Modern Europe”, edited by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, is an extensive study that includes thirty-seven articles by different authors.¹⁷ The main aim of this volume is to take the study of news circulation out of the national context and show that early modern news - whether written, oral, or printed - was primarily transnational. The book casts a broader net and includes political entities outside of Europe, despite the title initially suggesting a focus on Europe. This work is essential as it focuses on various aspects of news networks, including geographies, the issue of time, and the personalities involved. This study’s broad range of examples shows the differences and commonalities between different political entities. It expands on the news topics early modern people were dealing with, including natural disasters and ceremonies. The study also delves into using and managing different news media, such as pamphlets, gazettes, and manuscripts.

Organized under three subtitles - networks, modes, and studies - several of these articles are constructive for this study. For example, Joad Raymond’s article showcases the trends in the historiography of news, one of which was the emergence of interdisciplinary approaches.¹⁸ Raymond states that the history of news is a “field that stands at a point of convergence between several disciplines”, which allows it to benefit from different disciplines, an approach adopted by this study. The other relevant articles focus on the vocabulary of news. The first article, “Lexicons of Early Modern News”, presents the most common words that indicate news in different languages to investigate news’s transnational nature.¹⁹ This study reveals which words became transnational while others remained idiosyncratic in the European context, thus providing insight into the nature of news and how it operates in different information systems. The second article, penned by Mario Infelise, is about a specific term for news, *gazette*, that existed in different languages.²⁰ The etymological study was done on this particular word, which indicated a new medium of information by the late sixteenth century, and its comparison to older term, *avviso*, is beneficial to show how the understanding and management of news evolved in a certain time period.²¹

¹⁷ Raymond, Joad and Moxham, Noah, eds. *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden: Brill, 2016.

¹⁸ Raymond, Joad. “News Networks: Putting the ‘News’ and ‘Networks’ Back in” in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, 2016, p.108

¹⁹ Arblaster, Paul André Belo, Espejo, Carmen, Haffemayer, Stéphane, Infelise, Mario, Moxham, Noah, Joad, Raymond and Schobesberger, Nikolaus “The Lexicons of Early Modern News” in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* edited by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, Brill, 2016, pp.64-101.

²⁰ Infelise, Mario. “The History of a Word: *Gazzetta / Gazette*”, in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* edited by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, Brill (2016), pp. 243-261.

²¹ Similar approach was used by other historians: Johann Petitjean, “Mots et pratiques de l’information. Ce que aviser veut dire (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)” in *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome - Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, Vol. 122 (2010), pp.107-121 ; Jerome Hayez, *Avviso, informazione, novella, nuova:*

Therefore, since 2010, we have witnessed several trends in the studies of early modern news that continue to shape our research today. One of the most significant is the transformation of the “print paradigm”. Print, once considered the prime medium for news transmission, is now recognized as *one* of several media mediums. This shift in perspective has profound implications for our understanding of early *modern* news.²² Another key trend is the growing emphasis on other media, such as manuscript culture and oral communication, which have been shown to retain their importance throughout the early modern era.²³

However, these discussions remained strictly Eurocentric, in which the Ottoman Empire remained on the fringes for a long period. Events involving the Ottoman Empire were used as news content for case studies that tried to explain specific information systems that different states in Christian Europe used. An increasing number of case studies focused on other battles and rebellions in the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire, which attempted to show the workings of other intelligence systems that involved news management and disinformation. As the leading information centre for Ottoman-related news throughout the sixteenth century, the Republic of Venice took the prime place in these case studies.²⁴ For example, to show the intricacies of the fifteenth Venetian news system, which was considered a pioneer in terms of print and news management, two Ottoman-Venetian battles were used as news content that was discussed by the public and used by political agents in the Republic of Venice and other Italian states.²⁵

la notion de l'information dans Les correspondances marchandes toscanes vers 1400 in *Information et société en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge*, eds. Claire Boudreau, Kouky Fianu, Claude Gauvard, et al. (Paris : Editions de la Sorbonne, 2004), pp. 113-134

²² An early discussion on the matter of technology and print can be found in Edwards, Paul N., Gitelman, Lisa, Hecht, Gabrielle, Johns, Adrian, Larkin, Brian and Safier, Neil. “AHR Conversation: Historical Perspectives on the Circulation of Information,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 116, No:5, 2011, pp.1393-1435

²³ For the recent discussion on different forms of media in news: Daniel Bellingradt & Massimo Rospoche, “The Intermediality of Early Modern Communication. An Introduction,” *Cheiron*, no:2, 2022, pp.5-29.

²⁴ Palazzo, Chiara. “The Venetian News Network in the Early Sixteenth Century: The Battle of Chaldiran” in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (eds.) Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, 2016, pp. 849-869; Imber, Colin. “Fact and Fantasy: Venetian Reports on the Anti Ottoman Rebellion in Syria (1520- 1521)” in *The Byzantine-Ottoman Transition in Venetian Chronicles*, edited by Sebastian Kolditz, Markus Koller, Roma: Viella, 2018; 207-218; Imber, Colin. “After Mohács: How News from Hungary Reached Venice” in *Şerefe: Studies in Honour of Prof. Géza Dávid on His Seventieth Birthday*, edited by Pal Fodor, Benedek Peri, Nandor Kovacs, Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2019, pp. 105-127.

²⁵ Meserve, Margaret. “News from Negroponte: Politics, Popular Opinion, and Information Exchange in the First Decade of the Italian Press,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 440-480; Christ, Georg. “News from Aegean: Antonio Morosini Reporting on the battle of Gallipoli (Early 15th century)” in *The Byzantine-Ottoman Transition in Venetian Chronicles* (ed) Sebastian Kolditz, Markus Koller, Roma: Viella, 2018, pp. 1-21

Other states, particularly those that shared borders with the Ottomans during the sixteenth century, have also been the subject of exploration regarding their intelligence-gathering activities. For example, recent years have seen a surge in studies focusing on Ottoman-Habsburg intelligence-counterintelligence, which provide a comprehensive view of news gathering and management, paying attention to a wide range of actors, from diplomats to spies, active both in the capital and the borderlands.²⁶ Some of these studies tended to investigate the intelligence activities from the Ottoman perspective. These new studies, in contrast to those that merely highlighted sporadic spying activities, aim to present a comprehensive view of the Ottoman intelligence methods, dispelling the notion that the Ottoman Empire lacked any centralized and institutionalized information-gathering system.²⁷²⁸ However, similar studies concentrated on other borders of the Ottoman Empire is imperative for a thorough understanding of the Ottoman system(s). The examined case studies also operated in border/frontier zones within which the Ottoman Empire interacted with different political entities. The principal border/frontier zone was the Mediterranean on which a vast historiography exists.

Since the early decades of the twentieth century, renowned historians have been engaged in a lively debate about the nature of interactions in the Mediterranean among which Fernand Braudel's opus magnum is best known.²⁹ While earlier works tended to emphasize the clash of civilizations theory, particularly in the context of Islam and Christianity, more recent arguments have shifted the focus to the Mediterranean as a vibrant zone of interaction, where

²⁶ The historiography on diplomats and permanent ambassadors active in the Ottoman court is growing. For latest study that analyses via different actors active in the Ottoman court during sixteenth century, see Sowerby, Tracey A. and Markiewicz, Christopher (Eds). *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630*, London: Routledge, 2021. For Habsburg intelligence activities: Rodríguez-Salgado, María José. "Eating Bread Together: Habsburg Diplomacy and Intelligence-Gathering in Mid Sixteenth-Century Istanbul" in *Detrás de las apariencias. Información y espionaje (siglos XVI-XVII)*, edited by Emilio Sola Castañ and Gennaro Varriale, 2015, pp.73-101; Gürkan, Emrah Safa. "Dishonorable Ambassadors: Spies and Secret Diplomacy in Ottoman Istanbul," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, Vol.35, 2018, pp.47-61; Graf, Tobias F. "Knowing the 'Hereditary Enemy': Austrian-Habsburg Intelligence on the Ottoman Empire in the Late Sixteenth Century", *Journal of Intelligence History*, Vol.21, No:3, 2022, pp.268-288.

²⁷ Isom-Verhaaren, Christine. "An Ottoman Report About Martin Luther and the Emperor: New Evidence of the Ottoman Interest in the Protestant Challenge to the Power of Charles V," *Turcica*, vol. 28, 1996, pp.299-318.

²⁸ Emrah Safa Gürkan penned several articles highlighting Ottoman information gathering and management. Gürkan, Emrah Safa. "The Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence in the 16th Century", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 65, No.1, 2012, pp.1-38; idem, "L'Idra del Sultano. lo Spionaggio Ottomano nel Cinquecento", *Mediterranea Ricerche Storiche*, Vol. 38, 2016, pp. 447-476; Ágoston, Gabor. "Information, Ideology, and the Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry," in *The Early Modern Ottomans. Remapping the Empire*, edited by Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, 2007, pp. 75–103

²⁹ Braudel, Fernand. *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1966.

diversity and unity are now common points of discussion.³⁰³¹ In a compelling turn, contemporary works have begun to analyse the Mediterranean through the lenses of border and frontier paradigms, with the Ottoman Empire emerging as a pivotal element.

For example, Linda Darling's article explores the concept of space and borders in the Mediterranean and advocates for a "borderland paradigm" to understand the region.³² This paradigm emphasizes connectivity, interactions, and similarities in border zones, in contrast to the conventional frontier paradigm that focuses on enmity and diversity. Darling highlights the constant mobility and changing nature of borderlands, which can shift from enmity to integration depending on the historical context. Similarly, Filippo De Vivo describes the Mediterranean as a "crossroad region" characterized by various encounters, ranging from economic to military and often overlapping. He challenges the idea of decline in the Mediterranean, emphasizing interconnectedness and resilience resulting from global knowledge and contacts in the sixteenth century.³³ Therefore, this approach presents the Mediterranean as a complex space of constant shifts. It focuses on encounters and does not shy away from the conflicts that were a significant part of the early modern era. Instead, it seeks to "complicate" this era by challenging clear-cut boundaries. Consequently, this approach challenges traditional historiography and places the Ottoman Empire as a central element of the Mediterranean instead of being positioned as the other.³⁴

Therefore, studying news and rumours that have traversed various locations, disseminated by individuals with diverse backgrounds in a border zone like the Mediterranean, is a crucial endeavour that allows us to better envision the encounters that historians are eager to explore. This study also enhances our understanding of border dynamics by revealing how news and

³⁰ Pirenne, Henri. *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, Paris: F. Alcan Bruxelles, 1937; Lewis, Bernard. *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982.

³¹ Abulafia, David. *The Great Sea: A Human History of Mediterranean*, Oxford University Press, 2013; Horden, Peregrine and Purcell, Nicholas. *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2000; idem, "The Mediterranean and 'the New Thalassology'" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 3, 2006, pp. 722–740; Abulafia, David. "Mediterranean History as Global History", *History and Theory*, Vol. 50, 2011, pp. 220-228.

³² Darling, Linda T. "The Mediterranean as a Borderland", *Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2012, pp. 54-63.

³³ De Vivo, Filippo "Crossroads region: the Mediterranean" in *The Cambridge World History Volume 6: The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800 CE, Part 1: Foundations*. edited by Jerry Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp.415-444

³⁴ Brummett, Palmira. "Visions of the Mediterranean: A Classification", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2007, pp. 9-55; Dursteler, Eric D. "On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts" *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 15, 2011, pp. 413-434

rumours functioned not merely as information but as strategic tools that shaped these dynamics. This approach offers a nuanced view of the border as a complex space, where information and misinformation can significantly influence the course of events and the stability of the entire region.

2) Sources

As this dissertation aims to explore the patterns of news and rumours, it is imperative to look at documents produced *during* the time of the events selected for this study. Therefore, Ottoman and Italian primary documents dated from the precise dates these events had taken place were scanned and investigated, and they constituted the *vertebrae* of this study. Before the case studies, a preliminary investigation was conducted for words that indicate news and rumours in different linguistic context.

a) Sources for Chapter I: The Discussion on Rumour

Two early modern dictionaries were utilized as the main sources for this chapter. The first one was “*Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium*,” published in Vienna in 1680 by Fransiscus a Mesgnien Meninski. This dictionary was published in three volumes as a Turkish-Latin (Italian, French, German, and Polish) dictionary, along with a Turkish grammar book called “*Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae Institutiones seu grammatica Turcica*.”³⁵ In 1687, a Turkish-Latin dictionary supplement was published for the grammar book.³⁶ Due to its popularity, it was reprinted several more times. A revised edition was published a century later in Vienna in 1780, which was said to be “increased, diminished, and amended”, especially relevant that “useless synonyms” were omitted, which made the 1780 version inadequate for this current study. Hence, I utilized the first edition. This thesaurus was considered the most comprehensive polylingual dictionary of the Turkish language for at least a century.

The second dictionary I employed was “*Dittionario della lingua Italiana, Turchesca*” by Giovanni Molino, published in Rome in 1641, just several decades before Meninski’s.³⁷ I used a two-tier examination system to analyse words from Molino’s dictionary. Firstly, I referred to

³⁵ Meninski, Fransiscus. *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium, Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae, continens nimirum lexicon Turcico-Arabico-Persicum et grammaticam Turcicam, cum adjectis ad singular ejus capita praeceptis grammaticis Arabicae et Persicae linguae opera, typis et sumptibus*, Vol. I-III. Viennae, 1680; Alexander Chalmers ed., “*General Biographical Dictionary: Containing a Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Most Eminent persons of Every Nation*.” London: Nichols, Son and Bentley, (1815), p. 53

³⁶ Meninski, Fransiscus. *Complementum thesauri linguarum orientalium, seu onomasticum Latino- Turcico-Arabico-Persicum*, Viennae, 1687

³⁷ Molino, Giovanni. *Dittionario della lingua Italiana, Turchesca*, 1641

Elżbieta Świącicka's critical edition for the vocabulary as she "reversed" Molino's dictionary, unlike Meninski's Thesaurus, which listed Turkish words alphabetically based on Ottoman alphabets, the original version listed Italian words with Turkish equivalents. In contrast, Świącicka's edition lists Turkish words alphabetically based on the contemporary Turkish alphabet.³⁸

These "dictionaries" are both similar and distinct at the same time. They were similar because both were products of an orientalist trend that started in the sixteenth century and combined fascination and pragmatism towards the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, people responsible for producing polylingual dictionaries were polyglot scholars, travellers, priests, diplomats, translators, and interpreters who participated in this cross-cultural exchange. Thus, looking closely at the production processes of these dictionaries enables us to peek through their cross-cultural and historical context.

Franz de Mesgnien Meninski (1623–1698) was a Habsburg employed Polish diplomat, and linguist. He was born in the Lorraine region, received his education in Rome under the Jesuits.³⁹ While he was attached to the Polish ambassador's delegation in Istanbul, Meninski learned Turkish from Ahmed Çelebi, a dervish from Galata Mevlevihanesi, and Ali Ufki Bey, a court interpreter and translator.⁴⁰ Meninski consulted various existing dictionaries and grammar books on Ottoman Turkish, including Molino's Dittionario, the best and most widely used dictionary in Europe, until Meninski's Thesaurus was published.^{41,42} Molino and Meninski were both well-educated men who were proficient in multiple languages, including translation and interpretation.⁴³ Giovanni Molino was originally a subject of the Ottoman Empire, and he was

³⁸ Świącicka, Elżbieta (ed.). *Dictionary of Italian–Turkish Language (1641) by Giovanni Molino: Transcribed, Reversed and Annotated*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.

³⁹ Shefer-Mossensohn, Miri. *Science Among the Ottomans: The Cultural Creation and Exchange of Knowledge*, University of Texas Press (2015), 29; Yelten, Muhammet. "Meninski, François a Mesgnien (1620-1698)", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 29, 2004, pp. 144-145; <https://www.islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/meninski-francois-a-mesgnien>

⁴⁰ Ali Ufki Bey was a fascinating figure himself. He was a Polish convert whose original name was Wojciech Bobowski. He was captured and brought to Istanbul around 1630s. Educated in the Ottoman court, he was a polyglot who became a court interpreter, translator and teacher of Turkish to Europeans such as the famous "orientalist" Antoine Galland. Today, he is mainly known for his musical talents, including composing and creating anthologies of Turkish folk music. Aynuksa, İpek. "Ali Ufki Bey (Wojciech Bobowski) – Well-Known Musician, Forgotten Political Figure. A Luminary in the 600 Years of Turkish–Polish Diplomatic Relations" in *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 1, No. 52 (2016), pp.271-284

⁴¹ Umunc, Himmet. "Meninski'nin Türk Dili ve ve Kültürü Üzerine Görüşleri (Meninski's Views on the Turkish Language and Culture: An Assessment) in *Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (Journal of Faculty of Letters)* vol. 32, No:1, p. 252

⁴² Świącicka, *Dictionary of Italian–Turkish Language (1641)*, p.209

⁴³ In fact, it was stated that both were probably educated in same Jesuit College in Rome. Ibid.

born and raised in Ankara as an Armenian. This meant that he was a native Turkish speaker, unlike Meninski.⁴⁴ Molino used both courtly and vernacular Turkish words in his work, with the latter being the language he was most likely accustomed to since birth.⁴⁵ Meninski also used both courtly and Anatolian Turkish in his work.⁴⁷ *Meninski's thesaurus was used as the leading dictionary* because he presented the equivalent of words in five languages and showed synonyms in Ottoman Turkish while giving examples of several idioms.

For a comparative study, I also delved into John Florio's dictionary of Italian-English, first published in 1598. This was to ascertain whether, in a different context, the words were in use or not. I opted for Florio's dictionary, a significant work in its own right, containing over 40,000 words due to his consultation of seventy-two books, despite not being the first Italian-English dictionary-that distinction belongs to William Thomas' 1550 publication.⁴⁸

b) Sources for Chapter II: The Siege of Rhodes (1522)

Both case studies took place during the reign of Süleyman I, which lasted from 1520 to 1566. The first case study, the Siege of Rhodes, occurred at the beginning of his reign, during which Ottoman archival sources were scarce. Therefore, in this chapter, I utilized one primary source in order to inspect news and rumours that circulated before and during the Siege of Rhodes: *I Diarii* of Marino Sanudo (d.1536), a Venetian patrician who collected every news and rumours available to him that were produced or reached into the city of Venice between 1496-1533.⁴⁹ A team of Italian scholars compiled this compilation of news in fifty-eight volumes from 1879 to 1903. A comparison of the original manuscript with the printed version revealed no intentional

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.35

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.36

⁴⁶ Molino himself stated that "that he recorded 'the best variant' of the Turkish language. Probably he could have meant the 'middle' variant of Istanbul's common language formed in close relation to everyday life and served as a conversational language of the educated classes. On the other hand, Molino's Turkish was studied by linguist Asım Tanış who described his language as "Anatolian Turkish". Tanış, Asım. "*Giovanni Molino'nun İtalyanca-Türkçe Sözlüğü ve Halk Türkçesi*", Ankara: Şafak Matbaacılık, 1989.

⁴⁷ Umunç, "Meninski'nin Türk Dili ve Kültürü Üzerine Görüşleri", p.252

⁴⁸ O'Connor, D.J. "John Florio's contribution to Italian-English Lexicography," *Italica*, Vol. 49, No: 1 (1972), pp.49-50. Florio, John. "*A Worlde of Wordes or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English collected by John Florio*", London: printed by Arnold Hatfield, 1598.

⁴⁹ Sanudo, Marino. *I Diarii di Marino Sanudo* (Bologna): Forni Editore, 1969

omissions and minimal alterations. This chapter utilized volumes 33-34 out of the fifty-eight printed volumes.⁵⁰

i) Christian Sources

I Diarii is a significant collection of news and information from various locations, including major European centres like Rome and Vienna and more peripheral locations like Aleppo and Venice. These volumes contain written evidence such as letters, election lists, and events witnessed or heard by the author, Sanudo, in Venice. The work provides valuable insight into the daily life and governance of early sixteenth-century Venice and detailed events in the Mediterranean world. Sanudo originally intended to create an official history of Venice, and this work served as a draft for that project.⁵¹ This “draft” nature allowed for a rich and diverse collection of material, including governmental procedures, official letters, personal correspondence, daily rituals, and oral stories of early modern Venice. While Sanudo may have applied some selection in gathering and organizing the material, it is essential to consider his background and reasons for creating such a comprehensive work to understand his process and access to sources.

Marino Sanudo, born on 22 May 1466 in the Republic of Venice, came from a distinguished patrician family. Despite aspirations to achieve high offices, his refusal to serve abroad hindered his public career.⁵²⁵³ Thus, he became a “participant observer” of Venice to write his history of Venice and become the official historian of Venice.⁵⁴

Consequently, he turned to documenting the history of Venice, leveraging his insider status to gain access to official and personal letters of patricians. However, his access was limited, particularly regarding documents received by the secretive Council of Ten. Sanudo’s work, “I

⁵⁰ Labalme, Patricia H. and Sanguineti White, Laura eds., *Venice, Città Excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), xx. This work is constructive in understanding the system of *I Diarii* as it presents an analysis of both the manuscript and printed work.

⁵¹ Finlay, Robert. *Politics in Renaissance Venice*, Rutgers University Press, 1980, p. 276

⁵² Muir, Edward. “The Anthropology of Venice” in *A Companion to Venetian History*, edited by Eric Dursteler, Leiden: Brill, (2013), p. 489

⁵³ For the detailed account of the government posts he held, see. Labalme & White, “*Venice, Città Excelentissima*”, pp.6-28

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, this position was never bestowed upon him even though late in life, in 1531, he was awarded for his efforts with a yearly stipend of 150 ducats as the State wished him to continue writing until he was dead. Labalme & White, “*Venice, Città Excelentissima*”, p.37

Diarii,” reflects a selective process influenced by his personal preferences and perceptions. Despite his attempt to record everything, his subjective comments and omissions demonstrate his active participation as an author, filtering the data for future readers.⁵⁵

The structure of this work is a critical consideration in this study. Sanudo crafted his work as a diary, recording daily news without categorization or prioritization. While the record date for letters is always included, the actual day of arrival is noted only sporadically. There is typically a short delay, ranging from the same date to 4 days in the entries examined, between the arrival of the letters and their recording, suggesting thoroughness on Sanudo’s part. The letters were generally summarized rather than transcribed verbatim, with many being labelled as a “summary,” particularly during the period covered in this chapter. In the case of personal letters, Sanudo may have omitted potentially offensive personal details or considered other details unimportant. As the original letters are unavailable, his omissions remain unknown. The fact that he designated them as “summaries” is significant when interpreting this information.

Other than these *diaries*, which contained contemporary news and rumours about the Siege, other sources in various languages were utilized in order to make comparison and understand the accuracy of the news and rumours. To this end, eyewitness accounts produced during and after the Siege were used. Several of the Christian ones gained widespread recognition and circulation after publication. Among these, the account, *De Bello Rhodio* of a member of the Knights Council, Jacobus Fontanus, which was published in 1524 in Latin and the French account of Jacques de Bourbon was best known.⁵⁶ Due to time and language limitations, I only utilized second volume of Hakluyt’s famous *Navigations* which included the English translation of the Jacques de Bourbon’s eyewitness account.⁵⁷⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Finlay, Robert. “Politics and History in the Diary of Marino Sanudo”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (1980), p. 585

⁵⁶ For information on the editions of the work, see, Freeman, Arthur. “Editions of Fontanus, De Bello Rhodio,” *The Library*, vol. 24, no.4 (1969), pp.333-336. Also see notes 20-21 in Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (Vol.3)*, pp. 203-204

⁵⁷ “A Briefe Relation of the Siege and Taking of the Citie of Rhodes by Sultan Soliman the Great Turke,” in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, vol.2 (London: 1599).

⁵⁸ De Bourbon, Jacques. *Le Grande et Marveilleuse et tres cruelle oppugnation de la noble cite de Rodes*, initially printed at Paris in 1525; Freeman, “Editions of Fontanus,” pp.333-6

ii) Ottoman Sources

The second source that was most useful for this study was the *Rodos Seferi Rûznâmesi*, the campaign diary of Rhodes. The source type, *rûznâme*, was designed as a diary; hence, it was recorded every day of the campaign, presenting valuable information ranging from the army's movement, battles, and decisions of the war council to the capture of spies.⁵⁹ I utilized the transliteration that was published in 2017.⁶⁰ Their transliteration is based on the manuscript copy of sixteenth-century Ottoman statesman Feridun Ahmed Beg's *Münşeâtü's-Selâtin*, a major compilation of Ottoman diplomatic correspondence, which included the proclamation of accession, official proclamations of victory, campaign diaries, and various decrees.⁶¹

On the other hand, the Ottoman accounts existed as manuscripts, later edited and included in larger works by their authors. Most well-known among these was famous historian and court bureaucrat Mustafa Çelebi Celalzade's eyewitness account of the Siege called *Fetihname-i Cezire-i Rodos* (proclamation of victory for the island of Rhodes), which was incorporated into his great work *Tabakatü'l Memalik ve Derecatü'l-Mesalik* ("Layers of Dominions and Degrees of Principles,") which deals with historical events between 1520 and 1555.⁶² I utilized the critical edition of *Fetihname* which was published by Murat Yıldız.⁶³ Another essential Ottoman account was Tabib Ramazan's *El Risale el Fethiyye Er-Rodossiye Es-Süleymaniye*. As his title suggests, Tabib Ramazan was a court physician who participated in the voyage and Siege of Rhodes (1522). He wrote his eyewitness account in Arabic and in the form of *risale*, a pamphlet focusing on a single topic whose only copy is currently at Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. For this study, I utilized the critical transliteration of Necati Avcı that was published as his dissertation in 1993.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *Rûznâme*, literally meant "record of the day" in Persian, was a generic term used for records that kept the daily activities of the Sultan. Therefore, campaign diaries followed the movements and activities of the Sultan. In Rhodes's campaign diary, the movement of the army was recorded as Süleyman I headed it. In contrast, the movement of the navy, which headed out before the army, was not recorded. Sarıcaoğlu, Fikret. "Rûznâme", *IA*, Vol.35, pp.278-281

⁶⁰ Ertaş, Mehmet Yaşar, Kılıçaslan, Hacer. "Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Rodos Seferi Rûznâmesi" in *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi (Journal of Academic Inquiries)*, Vol:12, No. 1, 2017, pp.1-36.

⁶¹ Feridun Ahmed Bey, *Münşe'atü's-selâtin* (İstanbul : Darü'ttîbaatî'l-amire, 1858)

⁶² Celalzade Mustafa, *Tabakât ül-Memâlik ve Derecât ül-Mesâlik (Geschichte Sultan Süleyman Kanunis von 1520 bis 1557)*, edited by Petra Kappert, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1981

⁶³ Yıldız, Murat. *Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi: İnceleme-Metin*, İstanbul: Libra, 2013

⁶⁴ Avcı, Necati. *Tabib Ramazan: Er-Risale el-Fethiyye er-Radossiye es-Süleymaniyye*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi, 1993.

While these accounts were valuable for examining different perspectives on the Siege, their edited nature made them of secondary importance for this study. The eyewitness accounts in *I Diarii* remained the foremost sources as they reflected immediate concerns, beliefs, interpretations of the events, and the potential outcomes of the Siege when it was still unknown.

c) Sources for Chapter III: The Succession Struggle (1558-1562)

i) Ottoman Sources

This chapter aimed to delve into the intricate web of news and rumours produced and circulated during a diplomatic crisis, it also primarily drew upon contemporary primary sources. These sources, housed in *the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive* (BOA), are a treasure trove of reports, *arz*, and personal letters of Prince Bayezid and Selim, penned by a variety of informants and officials. These documents, forming the backbone of this chapter, are of immense significance in understanding the dynamics of information exchange during crises.

More than a hundred documents were read and analysed from the BOA collection. Seventy-four of these were constituted by the reports [*arz*] of the officials and replies to the imperial orders sent from the capital, providing crucial insights into the movements of Prince Bayezid.⁶⁵ However, most of these reports were undated, posing a significant challenge in chronological categorisation. Yet, they were penned by high-ranking officials, shedding light on the complex news network. Several of these *arz* also belonged to the low-ranking informants, adding another layer of complexity to the analysis.

The remainder of the documents consisted of letters, most of which were personal letters from the Princes. There are seventeen letters from Prince Selim dating from his time in Manisa and Konya.⁶⁶ Additionally, there are forty-one letters from Prince Bayezid, dating from his last months in Kütahya in October 1558 until he escaped to Safavid Persia in August 1559.^{67,68} Most

⁶⁵ Three of these *arz* were transliterated in Turan, Şerafettin. *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dönemi Taht Kavgaları*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi (1997), pp.166-169; 173-175

⁶⁶ Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi Evrakı* (TS.MA.e), 0753_0038

⁶⁷ Thirty of these were filed under (BOA), (TS.MA.e),0657_004. One separate file under (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0693_0031. Another ten were filed under (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0039.

⁶⁸ Three of Bayezid's letters to his father were transliterated in Turan, Şerafettin. "Şehzade Bayezid'in, Babası Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'a Gönderdiği Mektuplar" in *Tarih Vesikaları Dergisi*, Vol. 16 No:1, 1955, pp. 118-127

of these letters were addressed to his father, with one written to his brother-in-law, Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, and another to his sister, Mihrimah Sultan. The letters from Prince Bayezid are particularly valuable as they reveal his perspective and interpretation of the events and news he received and provide insights into his news network.

The other group of letters were diplomatic letters exchanged between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires after Prince Bayezid's escape. Several of these letters were exchanged between two high-ranking border officials, the governor of Erzurum Mustafa Pasha and the governor of Çukur-ı Sad Şahkulu Sultan, which show the news exchange in the border zone. Others were royal letters exchanged between the rulers, Sultan Süleyman I and Shah Tahmasb I. The latter also exchanged letters with the new heir apparent of the throne, Prince Selim, after Bayezid arrived at the Safavid court. These royal letters were transliterated and analysed by İsa Şefik, and I utilised this transliterated version.⁶⁹

The second primary source is the Register for Important Affairs [*mühimme defteri*] number 03, which contains copies of the Sultan's orders addressed to governors, judges [*kadı*] and foreign rulers that cover June 1559 to December 1560. Unlike 'arz' and reports, imperial orders were always presented with a date and consisted of a very standardised structure. These features allow us to understand how news arriving from different corners of the Empire was received, analysed and reacted to in the Ottoman capital.⁷⁰ The imperial orders presented the other end of the correspondence between the capital and imperial districts. However, no registers exist for months preceding June 1559 nor the one and a half years after December 160 until Bayezid's execution in July 1562. Therefore, only half a picture of the Ottoman correspondence during the succession struggle is presented.

In addition to the primary sources mentioned earlier, I also consulted two secondary sources to provide a comparison: The "İtaatnâme" of Derviş Mustafa and Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali's "Nâdiru'l-Mehârib". Both works specifically focused on the succession struggle between Prince Bayezid and Selim. The "İtaatnâme" is an unpublished manuscript written by Derviş Mustafa, a man from Damascus who identified himself as a member of the Mevlevi sect and a supporter of Prince Selim. Completed in 1560, just a year after the battle of Konya, this work

⁶⁹ Şevik, İsa. "Şah Tahmasb (1524-1576) ile Osmanlı Sarayı Arasında Teati edilen Mektupları İçeren "Münşe'ât-i 'Atîk"ın Edisyon Kritiği ve Değerlendirilmesi", MA Thesis, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, 2008

⁷⁰ Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), *Mühimme Defterleri* [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3

sheds light on the reasons for the brothers' struggle and the battle itself, offering valuable details not easily found elsewhere.⁷¹ I referred to Pınar Tarlak's transliteration of this work.⁷²

The second source originates from Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, a renowned bureaucrat and historian from the late sixteenth century. In 1567, he commenced his first historical work, "Nâdiru'l-Mehârib," which he completed a year later. This work exclusively focused on the power struggle among the princes. It likely drew from the accounts of Lala Mustafa Pasha, Ali's benefactor and a participant in the battle and its aftermath. Consequently, the work is considered biased and not an eyewitness account as it was dedicated to the newly enthroned Selim II.⁷³ I referred to Gülhizar Kara's transliteration and critical reading to analyse the source.⁷⁴

ii) Italian Sources

I utilized state archives of Florence and Venice to analyse the Italian news network. The sources are from Venetian archival collections, namely the Venetian baili reports found under the *Archivio Proprio Constantinopoli* under the *Dispacci*. The related *dispacci* are registered between filza 2-B under *Archivio Proprio Constantinopoli*, 5.⁷⁵ This filza included *dispacci* of bailo Marino Cavalli stationed in Istanbul from 26 September 1558 to August 1560. It also included the *dispacci* of bailo Girolamo Ferro from August 1560 until March 1561. As seen in the first chapter, the *dispacci* were crucial for informing the Venetian Senate about the ongoing Ottoman affairs. However, several of these *dispacci* are cyphered, which hindered the analysis process.

The Florentine documents constituted the bulk of the documents used for the Italian news. While the Republic of Venice was still the primary news source for Ottoman news, I deliberately chose the state archives of Florence, which provided another angle for the

⁷¹ There are two copies of the work, one in the Konya Library of Manuscripts [Konya Yazma Eserler Kütphanesi], considered the original copy written in 1560. The other copy, written in 1612 by an anonymous author, can be found in the Library of Süleymaniye. Derviş Mehmed, *İtaatname*, transcribed in Pınar Tarlak, "Klasik Dönem Taht Mücadeleleri: Kanuni ve Oğulları", MA thesis: Bahçeşehir University, 2016.pp. 6-10

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Fleischer, Cornell H. *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)*, Princeton university Press, 1986, p.44.

⁷⁴ Kara, Gülhizar. "Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli'nin "Nâdiru'l-Mehârib" Adli Eserinin Edisyon Kritiği ve Muhtevasinin Değerlendirilmesi", MA Thesis: Dokuz Eylül University, 2009.

⁷⁵ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Dispacci Costantinopoli*, fil. 2-B.

circulation of news in the eastern Mediterranean. The State archives of Florence presented rich sources for this case study.

Relevant documents can be found under several different volumes of *Mediceo del Principato*. I scanned the filze 2973, 3079 and 4277. The latter two filze included *avvisi* that reached the court of Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo I, and *avvisi* from Istanbul constituted the bulk of documents scanned. In the filza 3079, *avvisi* from 1559-1560 were scanned.⁷⁶ In filza 4277, related documents mainly were from the years 1560 and 1561.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the filza 2973 included letters from Pietro Gelido, also known by his signature Il Pero, the Florentine agent of Cosimo I who was stationed in Venice between 1552 and November 1561.⁷⁸ Gelido, similar to Sanudo, collected news and rumours that arrived in Venice from various cities including Istanbul. He observed Venetian statesmen, eavesdropped on Senate hearings and tried to acquire letters from the Venetian patricians. He also reported on the circulating news and rumours within the city of Venice. Therefore, his letters were crucial sources of information on the news about Prince Bayezid and proved a comparison point for news that arrived directly from Florentine baili in Istanbul.⁷⁹

The second source is *Carteggio Universale di Cosimo I*, which included *avvisi* and letters received by the first Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo I, who reigned between 1537 and 1574. The filze between numbers 474-491, which covered the correspondence between November 1558 and December 1561, was scanned.⁸⁰ These correspondence included letters of two Florentine baili: Giovanbattista Buondelmonti, who was on duty between 1553 and January 1560 and Albertaccio degli Alberti, who was on duty between 24 January 1560 and 1565. They also included letters of different agents of Cosimo I, such as Leonardo Corsini, who wrote from Venice, as well as the secretaries of baili, Tommaso Petrini, who left Istanbul on 12 February 1560.

⁷⁶ Archivio di Stato di Firenze., *Mediceo del Principato* 3079.

⁷⁷ Archivio di Stato di Firenze., *Mediceo del Principato* 4277.

⁷⁸ https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-gelido_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

⁷⁹ Archivio di Stato di Firenze., *Mediceo del Principato* 2973

⁸⁰ Archivio di Stato di Firenze., *Mediceo del Principato Carteggio Universali* 474-491.

4) CHAPTER I: A DISCUSSION ON “RUMOUR”

a) What is rumour?

Rumours are considered the oldest form of mass media and are prevalent today as well as in the past.⁸¹ Despite being a common phenomenon, rumours are difficult to define, and people often confuse them with other concepts such as gossip, hearsay, and misinformation. There are multiple definitions of rumours, and while they can be either true or false, they are mainly associated with falseness. In the past, rumours were primarily related to oral communication, which was thought to have lost its power with the advent of written media, including print, press, and today’s digital channels. However, rumours have adapted to new channels of communication. Due to the ambiguous nature of rumours and their hard-to-trace origins, they are one of the least studied phenomena. This is because people tend to stigmatize rumours instead of studying them.⁸² Nonetheless, academic works from different disciplines have attempted to explain what rumours are, why they are still around, and how to differentiate them from other types of communication. This section reviews several of the most relevant works for this current study.

Modern academic studies on rumours were initiated during the last years of World War I and continued well into the 1920s.⁸³ It is unsurprising that the studies on that period focused on “rumours during the time of the war”. However, war and rumours have always been intertwined since ancient times. Modern rumour theory has its roots in the analysis of wartime rumours.⁸⁴ World War I was a particularly significant event in this regard, as it was a novel type of war due to its duration and the involvement of multiple parties spread across different geographies. This made rumour a relevant subject for academic study.

⁸¹ Kapferer, Jean-Noel. *Rumour: Uses, Interpretations & Images*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2013, p. 1

⁸² Ibid. p. 2

⁸³ Some notable examples from this period: historian Oman, Charles W.C. “Presidential Address” in *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society* 1, 1918, pp. 1-27; linguist Dauzat, Albert. “Les faux bruits et les légendes de la guerre”. *Mercure de France* Vol. 128, 1918, pp. 241-262. *Légendes, prophéties et superstitions de la guerre*. Paris: La Renaissance du Livre (1919); sociologist Bysow, L.A. “Gerüchte” in *Kölner Vierteljahrs hefte für Soziologie*, vol. 7, No. 1, 1928, pp. 301-308; 416-26.

⁸⁴ Hasan-Rokem, Galit. “Rumors in Times of War and Cataclysm: Historical Perspective” in *Rumor Mills: The Social Impact of Rumor and Legend*, edited by Gary Alan Fine, Véronique Champion-Vincent and Chip Heath. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005, p. 33

Charles Oman's 1918 article delves into the topic of rumour during times of war. This article, his annual presidential speech for the Royal Historical Society, provides a unique insight into how historians perceived and approached the concept of rumour a century ago. Oman's emphasis on the enduring nature of rumour in pre-nineteenth century periods, despite the advent of technological advancements like the electric telegraph, is particularly enlightening.⁸⁵ He describes the 'old-fashioned rumour' of the early modern period as tendentious, often reflecting a psychological state of anticipation or dread.⁸⁶ Oman also attributes the resurgence of rumour during the World War I to the censorship that makes verification impossible, allowing rumour to spread unchecked.⁸⁷ This article raises intriguing questions about the lifespan of rumours and the influence of historical context on their dissemination and verification. What is essential to point out that factors like geography, seasons and the parties involved can influence the spread and verification of news or rumours both in the early modern period and today.

One of the critical contributions of Oman's definition of early modern rumour is his focus on its psychological aspect. His examples from the WWI period illustrate how rumour can be viewed as a manifestation of the psychological conditions of those affected by war. Oman also noted that historically, and in 'modern times', specific individuals strategically used rumours, sometimes even fabricating them, to serve their interests. However, he argued that in peacetime and from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the rapid verification of information due to technological advancements made such manipulation less feasible. These statements overlook two crucial points. Firstly, while the psychological aspect was significant in the early modern period, it was not the sole factor that made a rumour popular and widespread. Secondly, the advent of technology did not simplify the rumour process; it actually complicated it, as evidenced during WWI. New media emerged, and people became increasingly cautious about what to believe. This was not just a twentieth-century issue; it was also prevalent in the early modern period, albeit to a lesser extent. Sixteenth-century people had access to new and old media, constantly switching between them, altering their level of trust and the verification channels. However, it is essential to note that print and telegraph were only relevant within specific geographies during the early modern period, which distinctly influenced the rumour

⁸⁵ Oman, "Presidential Address", pp. 8-9

⁸⁶ *ibid.*p.5

⁸⁷ *ibid.*p.10

process in different places. Therefore, while Oman's definition remains valid, his suggestions are not comprehensive. Undeniably, the psychological aspect of rumour was a significant focus of study in the following decades. However, it is equally important to consider other factors contributing to the spread and impact of rumours.

Oman's article was not the only piece that drew attention to the rumours of those years. Another historian, Marc Bloch, also penned an article in 1921 about rumours that emerged during the war.⁸⁸ It is important to note that the article is not specifically about rumours but about "false news". However, the issues he discussed are similar to those of rumour. This similarity underscores the intricate relationship between rumours and the concept of news, a relationship that requires careful consideration. It is crucial to understand that rumour does not automatically equate to false news, despite the tendency in academia to define it as such. Delving deeper into this topic shows that rumour can be both true and false, but its defining characteristic is its inherent ambiguity.

Bloch's article introduces novel perspectives. He emphasizes the novelty of the "psychology of eyewitness accounts" in historical research. He proposes that investigating experiments such as "classroom experiments" can equip historians with a critical lens and guide them to pose pertinent questions.⁸⁹ Bloch poses an essential question about the reliability of eyewitness accounts. He asserts there is no perfect eyewitness, and almost no account is entirely precise. However, he probes which aspects of a sincere witness's testimony merit belief. This is a nuanced question, and according to him no universal answer holds true in all circumstances.⁹⁰

Eyewitness accounts, whether written or oral, play a pivotal role in the propagation of rumours. They can initiate or facilitate a rumour, but this hinges on the reputation and credibility of the eyewitness. This leads us to reputation and trust, which are intricately tied to the notion of "fama." This term, originating from Ancient Greek, denotes public speech, reputation, and

⁸⁸ Bloch, Marc. "Réflexions d'un historien sur les fausses nouvelles de la guerre," *Revue de Synthèse Historique*, vol. 7, 1921, pp.13–35. Due to my insufficient French, I have used an English translation of the article, and the references I am making are based on this translation. Bloch, Marc. "Reflections of a Historian on the False News of the War" trans. James P. Holoka (Michigan War Studies Review, 2013), pp.1-11. <http://www.miwsr.com/2013-051.aspx> last accessed 12.05.2020

⁸⁹ Bloch. "Reflections of a Historian on the False News of the War", pp. 1-3

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.1

rumour since the Middle Ages. It gained widespread usage for rumours during the sixteenth century.⁹¹ This concept will be further explained in the subsequent sections.

Secondly, Marc Bloch's article also delves into society's crucial role in spreading false news and rumours. His analysis underscores that false news can only thrive and proliferate if it discovers a receptive cultural milieu within society. Bloch posits that individuals often unwittingly manifest their biases, anxieties, and intense emotions through disseminating false news.⁹²

He commends Charles Oman for grasping the 'state of mind' that precipitated the spread of rumours during World War I. However, he criticizes Oman for not probing deeper into the circumstances that birthed these rumours and the simultaneous emergence of these rumours in England and France.⁹³ Bloch underscores the collective consciousness and its role in shaping perceptions, interpretations, and disseminating news about specific events. He poses a thought-provoking question: Are people's beliefs in the sixteenth century similar to today? Bloch contends that the notion of 'believability' is contingent on various factors, including the era, location, and cultural attributes, thereby highlighting the contextual nature of belief systems.

Bloch references Oman's work, which presents instances of individuals who 'envisioned' specific political events, and these visions subsequently materialized. Oman interprets this phenomenon as the 'realization of a rational expectation.'⁹⁴ Bloch, however, argues that for a news item or rumour to proliferate, it must be deemed credible by the audience. The notion of 'credibility' is not fixed, but rather, it is contingent on factors such as the era, location, and cultural attributes. In contemporary times, if one claims a 'vision' of a political event, many might dismiss it as 'irrational', yet there are factions in society where such 'visions' are considered rational and acceptable. Therefore, to understand how news or a rumour spreads, we must understand people's mentality. We need to know what constitutes their belief system and what is considered valid and false for them. Bloch suggested that one way to understand this is to look at the language they used.

⁹¹ Walker, Claire and Kerr, Heather. "Introduction: New Perspectives on Fama" in *Fama and Her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*, Brepols Publishers (2015) .pp. 1

⁹² Bloch, "Reflections of a Historian on the False News of the War". p.3

⁹³ Ibid. p. 6

⁹⁴ Oman, "Presidential Address", p.5

These historians bring forward relevant issues that need to be taken into account and should be put into further discussions; but they did not try to define what a rumour is or how it operated fully. For this, as was suggested by Bloch, I turned into other fields that were interested in rumours.

Academic interest in rumours resurfaced during World War II, and the number of studies increased during the post-war period. These studies, which began during the war, fell under the category of psychology and built on the research of the early twentieth century. The primary goal of this approach was to explain the existence of rumours and answer questions such as why people continue to believe them and how they spread.

Psychologists Gordon Allport and Leo Postman defined rumours as “a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present”.⁹⁵ Robert Knapp, a student of Allport, studied rumour types and transmission and defined it as “a proposition for the belief of topical reference disseminated without official verification”.⁹⁶ Both definitions emphasise that rumours are unconfirmed information correlated with beliefs and transmitted mainly through oral communication.

These studies also focused on human emotions to explain the emergence of rumours. Knapp indicated that rumours frequently serve emotional needs such as wish, fear, and hostility.⁹⁷ While these studies suggested relevant points, they oversimplified the meaning of rumours by restricting it to a concept that exists “to make sense of the world and give it closure”.⁹⁸ To them, it also aimed to gratify “the emotional needs of the community in much same way as dreams and fantasy fulfil the needs of an individual.”⁹⁹ The results of these studies, especially the emphasis on emotional needs and oral communication, corroborate the debates brought forward by Oman and Bloch, and like them, these particular explanations need to be revised to fully explain what rumours are, their origins, and their functions.¹⁰⁰ The main flaw in these studies is that they tried to view rumours as something “outside the constraints of reality” by

⁹⁵ Allport and Postman, “*The Psychology of Rumour*”, p. 9

⁹⁶ Knapp, “A Psychology of Rumour”, p.22.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.25

⁹⁸ Allport, Gordon and Postman, Leo. “An Analysis of Rumour,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4 1946-1947, p. 503

⁹⁹ Knapp, “A Psychology of Rumour”, p. 23

¹⁰⁰ In his article, Oman stated that literature on prophecies cannot be called rumour because “it is generally printed, and not passed from mouth to mouth”. Oman, “Presidential Address”, p. 25

focusing solely on their accuracy and association with false news. According to these studies, rumours were a reflection of the general mindset of a population that was gripped with fear and anxiety.¹⁰¹ Several studies were conducted to understand what made rumours spread quickly during WWII. However, it is essential to note that the definitions and conclusions drawn during this period reflect the mindset and attitudes of that era. Researchers at the time believed that rumours threatened the state's security, which was of utmost importance during the war. As a result, they portrayed rumours as a dangerous concept that was beyond control and divorced from both authority and reality, particularly in the context of WWII.

This outlook also led to a simplified explanation of the transmission process of rumours. According to experiments conducted by Allport and Postman, transmission was mostly by word of mouth, making rumours more subject to inaccuracy and capricious distortion than formal modes of transmission.”¹⁰²

During the same period, sociologist Theodore Caplow opposed the definitions of rumours put forward by Allport and Postman. While he agreed that rumours were unconfirmed information transmitted within a particular group, he believed the transmission process was more complex than the classroom experiment showed.¹⁰³ Caplow conducted experiments during WWII in liaison with the S-2 section of the army, which was responsible for “Intelligence, security, and information operations”. These experiments focused on how rumours originated and, more importantly, how they were transmitted within the army. Caplow stressed the importance of the “group” in this process and focused on the “channels” of diffusion. According to him, rumours were an “item of information with definite interest connotations transmitted only by informal person-to-person communication within a group”.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the selection, speed, and dissemination ratio were based on group interests. He also stated that most of the diffusion of rumours took place through relatively few well-established channels.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, he presented several scenarios in which channels were disrupted, or group interests changed, which affected the dynamics of the dissemination process. This focus on the group and established channels among them is crucial for this study.

¹⁰¹ This approach to rumours as a “pathological case” was also seen in the work of L.A. Bysow. See footnote 1.

¹⁰² Knapp, 22; Allport and Postman, “An Analysis of Rumour”, pp.504-505

¹⁰³ Caplow, Theodore. “Rumours in War,” *Social Forces*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1947, p.29

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 298-299

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 300

In the following decades after World War II, studies on rumour began to focus even more on sociological aspects of it. The approach devised by sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani, whose work on rumours is cited by many, is the one I found most relevant for this study. First of all, he took rumour as a collective act on societal level and choose to put an emphasis on the collaborative aspect of it rather on the accuracy of the rumour like previous psychologists. This approach prioritizes the process itself. Shibutani states, “Rumor content is not viewed as an object to be transmitted but as something that is shaped, reshaped, and reinforced in a succession of communicative acts.”¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the whole process of rumour content - its production, transmission, and delivery - is not a unilinear but rather a multilinear development. This aspect is also essential because I aim to examine not only the rumours themselves, however important they may be, but also how they might have changed within the transmission process.

Shibutani’s second point concerns the group dynamics in spreading a rumour. According to Shibutani, individuals do not act independently but as participants in a larger transaction. However, each participant does contribute differently, resulting in a division of labour.¹⁰⁷ Hence, like Caplow, Shibutani acknowledges that rumour requires a group of people in order to be dispersed and survive but also added that those in the group also put their individual contributions while transmitting the rumour so a rumour evolve in the process.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, Shibutani notes the importance of both group identity and individual interests. He further adds that once a rumour is out, it cannot be controlled by any participants.¹⁰⁹ However, if the rumour evolves with individual contributions, to what extent can it change? And is there a way to define individual contributions? Shibutani answers these by categorizing individuals within the rumour process: messenger, interpreter, sceptic, protagonist, agitator, auditor, and decision maker. The same individuals do not consistently enact these roles, a person who is a messenger in one context may be a sceptic or a protagonist in another. Additionally, some roles may not be found in every instance of rumour formation.¹¹⁰ For example, in a sixteenth-century context, one individual could become several of these roles simultaneously in the same rumour

¹⁰⁶ Shibutani. *Improvised News*, p.9

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 13

¹⁰⁸ Shibutani acknowledged the contribution of previous historians and sociologist and cites already mentioned Oman (1918), Dausat (1919), Bysow (1928) (see note 1.) along with Rose, Arnold M. “A Study of Rumor.” Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Chicago, 1940. Peterson and Gist, “Rumor and Public Opinion”, pp. 159-67.

¹⁰⁹ Shibutani. *Improvised News*, pp. 14-15

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 15-16

formation. Therefore, it is essential to remember that these roles are not definite, and different roles could appear within a historical context.

Regarding the content of a rumour, Shibutani remarked that:

“what appears to be transformation of rumour content—usually called "distortion"—is actually part of the developmental process through which men strive for understanding and consensus. Each participant ponders the meaning of what he has learned, integrates it into his own perspective, and thereby reconstitutes his own orientation toward the situation. That different words or phrases are used may or may not result in a significant change of direction for the transaction as a whole. But if something is actually added or dropped, this constitutes a reconstruction of the entire unit.”¹¹¹

It is essential to note the significance of the “editing part” mentioned earlier. Different words can alter the message’s direction and meaning, mainly when different groups of people are involved. This brings us back to the importance of context. Ralph Rosnow, with his contextualist approach, agreed with Shibutani’s emphasis on the *process* of generating rumours, explaining it as “an attempt to make sense of change or novelty and what it portends for the future”.¹¹² From a contextualist perspective, this process extracts meaning from and gives meaning to the context in which it is situated. Therefore, the context in which the process occurs is just as crucial as the process itself, and the choice of words is a crucial part of creating meaning. The words used can provide insight into how people perceived what a rumour is or was, and these definitions of rumours can offer clues to understanding the period’s mentality and thus become an essential part of the context. Therefore, studying rumour is not just important *per se* but it is also vital in making sense of the historical period being examined.¹¹³

The same paragraph indicates that rumour, defined by Shibutani as ‘improvised news’, was historically employed to create a sense of the unknown situation. In times when information was scarce, people sought to make sense of it by seeking news, and rumour was essentially a type of news.¹¹⁴ This statement raises compelling questions: Was it just associated with news? How can we differentiate rumours from other types of communication? Post World War II,

¹¹¹ Ibid. pp. 16-17

¹¹² Rosnow, Ralph L. “Rumour as Communication: a Contextualist Approach,” *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 38, No.1, 1988, p.16

¹¹³ Sociologists and historians were thinking along the same lines. Luise White, who studied colonial history rather than early modern, also suggested that “rumour provides details about the period of the rumour”. White, Luise. “Between Gluckman and Foucault: Historicizing Rumour and Gossip,” *Social Dynamics*, Vol.20, No.1 (1994), p. 75

¹¹⁴ Shibutani, *Improvised News*, p.17

psychologists associated rumour with ‘false’ news, a definition that sociologists Caplow and Shibutani opposed.¹¹⁵

Among historians, there were different approaches to rumour and news. Luise White associated rumour with false news, stating that ‘rumour was news one later learned was false’.¹¹⁶ She also compared rumour with gossip, noting that they are not similar, as gossip is more communal and closely linked to scandal.¹¹⁷ In a more recent article, Elizabeth Horodowich discussed gossip and its function in early modern Venice, stating that ‘gossip is talking about other people behind their backs’, becoming rumour as its volume is turned up and it reaches a broader audience’.¹¹⁸ This definition suggests a close interrelation between rumour and gossip. Torsten Wollina’s article about the fifteenth-century Mamluk Sultanate clearly distinguished between news and rumour. It was stated that “As a medium, rumour is of a purely transitory nature: Any information loses the status of rumour as soon as its truth value has been examined. Henceforth, it is not of uncertain or doubtful truth anymore. It is either exposed as misinformation, a lie or even slander or validated as real news”.¹¹⁹ The author added, “The same report can only be considered as rumour or as news, but never be both at the same time”.¹²⁰ Therefore, according to him, news and rumour were different, and once confirmed, a rumour can no longer be news.

In the late 1980s, a professor of marketing and communications, Jean-Noel Kapferer, introduced a paradigm-shifting view on the rumour process.¹²¹ Like Shibutani, he challenged the ‘stigma of rumour’ and its association with false news. However, he also asserted that not all rumours are tied to an event that requires explanation. Some rumours, in fact, have the power to create events.¹²² This alternative perspective is crucial in this study of rumours. Kapferer also diverged from Allport and Postman’s definition of rumour, which emphasizes dissemination without official verification. He argued that rumours persist even when officially declared false

¹¹⁵ For example, in 1960s France, philosopher Edgar Morin defined *rumours* as “lacking factual basis,” continuing another underlying statement that began after World War I: linking rumours with mental diseases.

¹¹⁶ White, “Between Gluckman and Foucault”, p.75

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 81

¹¹⁸ Horodowich, Elizabeth. “The Gossiping Tongue: oral networks, public life and political culture in early modern Venice”, *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2005, p.23

¹¹⁹ Wollina, Torsten. “News and Rumor — Local Sources of Knowledge About the World” in *Everything is on the Move. The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-)Regional Networks*, ed. Stephan Conermann, Bonn University Press (2014), p. 283

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 287

¹²¹ Kapferer, Jean-Noel. *Rumeurs: Le Plus Vieux Media Du Monde*, Seuil (1987). I have yet to use this version again due to my insufficient French. It came to my attention that in the French version of the book, the title says “The Oldest Media of the World,” but from 1990 onwards, the title was changed in the English translation of every edition to “Rumour: Uses, Interpretations & Images.”

¹²² Kapferer. *Rumour*, pp. 8-9. For a historical treaty on whether rumour can cause an event, see: Gibson, Bruce. J. “Rumours as Causes of Events in Tacitus” in *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, Vol.40, No:1, 1998, pp.111-129

and that their unofficial source defines their content.¹²³ He ultimately defined *rumour* as “the emergence and circulation in society of information that is either not yet publicly confirmed by official sources or denied by them”.¹²⁴

While I concur with the unconfirmed nature of a rumour, a vital part of a process that seeks to make sense of a situation, its application to a historical scenario can be problematic. Kapferer’s insights are pertinent to the ‘society of information, ‘specific to certain parts of the world in the twentieth century.’¹²⁵ I believe that, at least during the early modern period, there was a blurred line between official and unofficial. However, the line between official and unofficial sources was often blurred during the early modern period. In my current case study, there are instances of unofficial sources gaining official status, either through reference from the official or by being in the right place at the right time, and vice versa. An official source could be easily disregarded. Hence, it is crucial to delve into who was deemed ‘official’ and the prerequisites for such status in the early modern period. This discussion is intertwined with the notions of reputation, trust, and the organization of political and social life, all of which shaped the qualifications for becoming ‘official.’ Moreover, a rumour’s ambiguity makes it hard to control. It can turn it into a tool for manipulation, thus granting it the capability to affect established power relations. This aspect of rumours, as Kapferer has pointed out, is of utmost importance. Through rumours, the public can question “authorities.” In contrast, within the “authorities” or the public, it can become a tool for personal interest depending on the event itself. Thus, rumour is/was both political and social, a force that can shape and reshape power dynamics.

These efforts to explain rumours comprehensively were instrumental. However, most of the works discussed above are tied to the twentieth century, and even though the concepts they put forward regarding rumour- its unconfirmed nature, its ties to oral communication, the *mentalité* of the people- can also be valid points to previous periods, can we quickly assert that these definitions apply to previous centuries? Suppose we are all primarily influenced by our own periods’ *mentalité* and our own beliefs shaped by it. Can definitions we produce answer the question of what rumour was to people living five hundred years ago? We need to find a way to *historicize* the rumour to understand the situation. The transitory nature of rumour and

¹²³ Kapferer. *Rumour*, p. 13

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

a lack of sources may stand as obstacles, but it is not impossible. One way to find out what a rumour meant in the early modern period is to look at the language and words they used.

b) What *Was* Rumour?

This section aims to provide an introductory discussion of the early modern Mediterranean, focusing specifically on relevant languages. This study is comprised of two different case studies that posit the Ottoman Empire as its protagonist. These distinct case studies were explicitly chosen to understand rumour patterns in a specific geography: Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, to understand how rumour operated in this geography, a further understanding of what kind of a space it was during this period is deemed necessary.

The historiography of the Mediterranean is extensive, and historians have delved into various aspects of it. However, one topic that has been a subject of heated debate for a long time is the Ottoman Empire and its place in the Mediterranean. For much of the twentieth century, historians considered the Ottomans the “other” and the “symbol of Islam”. Their maritime dominance in the sixteenth century was perceived as temporary and an obstacle to Europe. The Mediterranean was seen as a space belonging to the Europeans, and the Ottomans were viewed as rivals and intruders.¹²⁶ However, recent studies on the early modern Mediterranean have put aside this century-old question and stepped into another level of discussion.¹²⁷ These studies accept the Ottoman Empire as one of the main elements of the early modern Mediterranean and aim to explain the intricate world of the Mediterranean, which was divided by complex, overlapping, ethnolinguistic, commercial, and cultural identities. Therefore, they focus on “encounters” between different groups.¹²⁸ The first sentence of the introductory chapter of a recent volume on the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean describes the Mediterranean as an intricately patterned kaleidoscope, which is perhaps the best metaphor to describe the Mediterranean in the light of modern scholarship.¹²⁹ Whether one argues for the fragmentary nature of the Mediterranean based on territorial and religious conflicts or its unity based on commercial and cultural relations, the kaleidoscope metaphor reflects the simultaneous

¹²⁶ Brummett. “Visions of the Mediterranean”, p. 11

¹²⁷ Darling. “The Mediterranean as a Borderland”, pp. 54-63; De Vivo. “Crossroads Region: the Mediterranean”, p.416; Dursteler. “On Bazaars and Battlefields”, pp. 413-434

¹²⁸ Brummett. “Visions of the Mediterranean”, p. 10

¹²⁹ Çaykent, Özlem and Zavagno, Luca. “Introduction” in *The Islands of the Eastern Mediterranean: A History of Cross-Cultural Encounters*. (eds.) Özlem Çaykent & Luca Zavagno London: I.B Tauris (2014), p. 1

fragmentation and fusion experienced in the early modern Mediterranean. Recent scholarship has addressed the Mediterranean as a space of exchange, conflict, and collaboration. It emphasizes cross-cultural and intercultural interaction and suggests a network approach for more precise understanding.¹³⁰ The Mediterranean has been analyzed through the lenses of the frontier and borderland paradigms, confirming the connectivity, fluidity, and porousness characterizing this maritime space.¹³¹¹³²¹³³ In conclusion, modern scholarship agrees that the Mediterranean remained a main route for communication and exchange throughout the sixteenth century, neither a distinctly unified and unitary space nor an absolute zone of conflict.¹³⁴

If the Mediterranean was a space of communication and exchange, the obvious candidate as a unit of analysis to comprehend the dynamics of this communication system, in which rumour was part, is languages. However, the early modern Mediterranean, bordered by different polities with people of diverse ethnicities, offered a range of languages which did not act as the main identity marker. In fact, “linguistic frontier, like political ones, were much less demarcated and were highly malleable.”¹³⁵ This could have been both uniting and dividing. On the one hand, there was a language used by those who “touched the water” *lingua franca*, which can be considered as an example of the “unitary nature” of this particular geography.¹³⁶ “The term *lingua franca*—the language of the Franks, the western Christians—referred to a language of convenience used throughout the Mediterranean, essentially a simplified form of Italian with an infusion of vocabulary from other languages, especially Arabic and Spanish.”¹³⁷ Never a

¹³⁰ Marzagalli, Silvia. “Maritimity: How the Sea Affected Early Modern Life in the Mediterranean World.” in *New Horizons: Mediterranean Research in the 21st Century*, edited by Mihran Dabag, Nikolas Jaspert, Achim Lichtenberger and Dieter Haller, Leiden: Brill (2016) p.310; Lugli, Emanuele. “Linking the Mediterranean: The Construction of Trading Networks in 14th and 15th-century Italy” in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art*, edited by Daniel Savoy, Leiden: Brill, 2017, pp. 158-185.

¹³¹ Brummett, Palmira. *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 244

¹³² Darling. “The Mediterranean as a Borderland, p.55

¹³³ Yelçe, N. Zeynep and Bozok, Ela. “Islands as Transit Posts in the News Networks of Early Sixteenth Century”, *European Islands Between Isolated and Interconnected Life Worlds: Interdisciplinary Long-term Perspectives* edited by Laura Dierksmeier, Frerich Schön, Anna Kouremenos, Annika Condit and Valerie Palmowski, University of Tübingen Press, 2022, pp. 113-131

¹³⁴ Kopaka, Katerina. “What is an Island? Concepts, Meanings and Polysemies of Insular Topoi in Greek Sources.” in *European Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 11, No. 2–3, 2008, p.190

¹³⁵ Dursteler, Eric R. “Language and Identity in the Early Modern Period” in *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era - Islands, Entrepôts, Empires*, edited by John Watkins and Kathryn Reyerson. Farnham: Ashgate, (2014), p. 36

¹³⁶ Abulafia narrowed the boundaries of the Mediterranean and, in contrast to the unity of Braudel, chose to write the history of the Mediterranean over those who “touched the water”, i.e. those who lived on the coasts and those traveling in the sea. Abulafia. “Mediterranean History as Global History”, pp.220-228

¹³⁷ Malette, Karla. “Lingua Franca” in *A Companion to Mediterranean History*, First Edition. Edited by Peregrine Horden, Sharon Kinoshita, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2014, p.331

written language, only traces of its evidence can be found within snatches of dialogue recorded by travellers through the Mediterranean.¹³⁸ This language was created through the communication of individuals who needed to interact, often for business purposes, in the Mediterranean region. As a result, it was only used as a secondary language for those who did not share a common native tongue.¹³⁹ It is worth noting that the lingua franca was not universally spoken by all people living in the Mediterranean region. The research on three major empires, namely the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Venetian Empires, reveals the diversity of languages spoken in the early modern period by the people who lived and interacted along their coasts. This study focuses mainly on two of these empires, namely the Ottoman and Venetian Empires.

The Ottoman Empire was “the epitome of an early modern polyglot and polyethnic realm” encompassing over 60 languages.¹⁴⁰ The ruling elite made no effort to impose linguistic homogeneity. At the same time, they spoke both Anatolian Turkish and bureaucratic “Ottoman”, which combined elements of Arabic and Persian with Turkish.¹⁴¹ The Ottoman language was developed within the palace sphere as the “Ottoman elite began to gain a consciousness of imperial power, certain stylistic registers emerged particularly for official correspondence and elite literature.”¹⁴² The texts survived from the pre-nineteenth century when a conscious effort to reform the state brought the epithet of “Ottoman” to this language - early modern Ottomans called it Turkish- and showed a high degree of variety. The texts range from simple registers, closer to the spoken idiom of the day, to highly elaborated styles comprehensible to the ruling elite. Christine Woodhead explains the language as “practical and flexible language working in differing registers, spoken and written, to suit the purpose and the

¹³⁸ Ibid. p.330

¹³⁹ The name of this elusive language can serve as an example of the circulation of information and knowledge formation in the early modern Mediterranean. “The name *franca* was given as a name by Romans to Germanic tribes, presumably derived from the Franks’ name for themselves. When Charlemagne was crowned as “King of Franks”, Byzantines used the term *phrangoi*—a Greek appropriation of the Latin *Franci*—to refer to Western Christians in general. The Arabs took the term from Byzantines and used it in an Arabized form (*ifranji*) to refer to Western Christians. Moreover, western Christians learned the word when they travelled in the Levant during the Crusades. Malette, “Lingua Franca”, p. 331. Also see Dakhliya, Jocelyne. “The Lingua Franca from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century A Mediterranean ‘Outside the Walls?’” in *New Horizons: Mediterranean Research in the 21st Century*, edited by Mihran Dabag, Nikolas Jaspert, Achim Lichtenberger and Dieter Haller, Brill, 2016, pp. 91-107

¹⁴⁰ Dursteler, “Language and Identity”, p.41

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Karlake, Celia. “Ottoman Language”, in *Turkic Languages*, eds. Lars Johanson, Éva Ágnes Csató Johanson, London: Routledge, 1998, p.179

occasion.”¹⁴³ She further discusses that Ottoman should not be seen as an “artificial language” but as an imperial idiom.¹⁴⁴ For the current study, several letters written by palace “officials” dating from the 1520s to the 1560s were examined. They exhibit great flexibility, oscillating between Arabic phrases and Anatolian Turkish words.

The Venetian overseas empire, *Stato da Mar*, comprised several islands and coastal colonies in the Adriatic, Ionian, and Aegean seas. However, the Venetian Republic did not impose the Venetian language on its subject dominions. Consequently, the Republic did not have an explicit language policy like the Ottomans.¹⁴⁵ This was probably a pragmatic and rational choice on both their part. This was likely a pragmatic and rational decision. However, the Venetian language underwent some changes in some regions. For instance, in Dalmatia, a zone of lingual interaction where many variants of Slavonic languages were spoken, Italian, heavily influenced by Venetian, was spoken in coastal colonies of the Republic.¹⁴⁶ These languages also interacted closely with Ottoman Turkish-speaking border zone sancaks, resulting in a complex collaboration and conflict.¹⁴⁷

On the other hand, in the city of Venice, Venetian was one of the written languages of the Venetian state until the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁸ The bureaucratic written language oscillated between Latin and Venetian throughout the fifteenth century. Venetian appeared in various written contexts, from wills and correspondence to historical works.¹⁴⁹ However, instead of becoming the dominant language in the text, it was highly influenced by the Tuscan dialect so much that by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, “uncontaminated high-register texts in Venetian were in rapid contraction or greater or lesser symbiosis with Tuscan. The latter phenomenon is most strikingly manifest in the hybrid prose of Marin Sanudo.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Woodhead, Christine. “Ottoman Languages”, in *The Ottoman World* edited by Christine Woodhead, London: Routledge, 2011, p.148

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Dursteler, Language and Identity”, p.37

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 38; Ferguson, Ronnie. “Venetian Language” in *A Companion to Venetian History (1400-1797)*, edited by Eric Dursteler, Leiden: Brill (2013), p. 932

¹⁴⁷ “The basic administrative-military units of the empire are called sancaks. Several sancaks comprised a province, generally called beylerbeyilik after its governor-general, the beylerbeyi, who was the “bey of the beys,” the commander-in-chief of the provincial forces and the highest administrative official of Ottoman provincial administration.” Gabor Agoston, “A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers” in *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9 (2003), p. 16

¹⁴⁸ Ferguson, “Venetian Language”, pp. 936-37.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 937

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p.938

i) A Comparative Analysis on Words: Dictionaries

This section presents an introductory approach to studying words, the fundamental building blocks of languages, in the context of historicizing rumours in the early modern Mediterranean. Our focus is on the specific vocabulary of news and rumours used in Ottoman and Venetian sources, acknowledging the linguistic flexibility of the period. While a similar study was conducted in 2016 for selected European languages, this research extends this exploration to the Eastern Mediterranean, a region rich in distinct cultural influences.¹⁵¹ This study is enlightening as it reveals how words such as ‘avviso’ became generic in multiple languages but underwent changes in meaning to some extent while maintaining their essential meaning. Moreover, each culture produced its terms for news based on its unique social and cultural context. However, the study only focused on Western European polities, which underwent similar social and cultural changes but not identical ones. In contrast, this current study focuses on geographically connected polities that interacted with distinct cultural components, particularly the rich and complex contributions of the Ottoman and Venetian sources. Therefore, the question arises regarding how to conduct a cross-cultural examination of a rumour that includes both the Ottoman and Venetian socio-cultural entities. Is it possible to identify a shared vocabulary? Can one distinguish between words that retain their specific meaning from those that become distorted? One way to conduct this analysis is to examine early modern dictionaries, which can provide insight into the words used to imply rumours and news. Additionally, further examination can help create the context of rumour and news in the communication space of the Eastern Mediterranean to understand better what rumour means to people.

ii) The Words

(1) The News and Rumours

In the Ottoman documents examined for both case studies, the most common words/verbs used to indicate news and news gathering in this particular context were *haber*, *mâlûm*, *istifsâr*, *tefahhus*. For rumour, *sedâ* was the most common word, followed by *tevâtür*. Apart from *sedâ*, derived from Persian, the rest is Arabic. *Haber* and *tevâtür* remained part of

¹⁵¹ Paul Arblaster, et al. “The Lexicons of Early Modern News”, pp. 64-101. They have focused on Italian, French, German, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese vocabulary.

contemporary Turkish, indicating news and rumour, respectively. On the other hand, in Italian sources, the most used words for rumour were *fama*, and *voce* whereas *zanze* appeared the most in Venetian context. The words *avviso* and *nova* were most common for news, whereas verbs *divolgare* and *riportare* were used to indicate transmission of news and rumours.

In the Ottoman documents, the word I encountered the most was “haber” (A), which, in contemporary Turkish, strictly indicates news. In M.T., its plurals were given as “ahbâr, ahâbir” (A), and synonyms as “söz” (T) and “peyâm” (P).¹⁵²¹⁵³ Latin equivalents were given as “sermo nuntius; nuntium; rumor; fama; historia; dictum propheta” whereas in Italian as “nuova; avviso; ragguaglio; novella; voce; rumore; istoria”.¹⁵⁴¹⁵⁵ “Söz” (T), in contemporary Turkish means “word; promise; unconfirmed news; rumour”. However, in M.T while it was given a detailed entry, it simply meant “word” explained with synonyms “kelime, lafz, kelâm” (A).¹⁵⁶¹⁵⁷ “Peyâm” (P) on the other hand in contemporary Turkish only mean “haber” and more known as part of the word “peygamber” which means “prophet”.¹⁵⁸ Whereas in M.T synonym of “peyâm” was “haber” while in Italian and Latin its equivalents meant both “news” and “rumours”.¹⁵⁹ In M.T. “arz-ı peyâm” which meant “submitting (presenting) news” also appeared in the description which was given in Italian as “fare l’ambasciata, esporre cio, che porta, o la sua commissione” henceforth presenting its strong correlation with news in early modern period.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² I will refer to Meninski’s Thesaurus as M.T. throughout this study, as it serves as a crucial reference point for our analysis.

¹⁵³ In this section, the origins of the Ottoman words were categorized as either Persian (P), Arabic (A), or Turkish (T). Due to the study’s focus, the German, Polish, and French equivalents of words were not included. In the Thesaurus, not every word was explained in the same depth, and some languages were omitted depending on the word. However, Latin and Italian equivalents were consistently provided. This variation in detail could indicate the significance of those specific words or their relevance in other contexts.

¹⁵⁴ The last equivalent, “dictum propheta,” means the “word of the prophet,” and it indicates a religious connotation that exists throughout the dictionary.

¹⁵⁵ Franciscus a Mesgnien Meninski, “Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcico Arabico Persicum”, Vol.1, p.1854

¹⁵⁶ <http://lugatim.com/s/s%C3%B6z>

¹⁵⁷ Its Latin and Italian equivalents also had same meaning: “verbum, vox, dictio, fermo” and “parole, voce, vocabola, ragionamento”. Meninski “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, 1707

¹⁵⁸ <http://lugatim.com/s/peyam>: peyam (news) + ber (“bringer” in Persian): “news bringer/ prophet.”

¹⁵⁹ In M.T. its Latin equivalent were “novum, nuntium, nuntius, qui advertur, evangelium, fama, rumor, legatio” and in Italian they were given as “nuova, avviso, fama, rumore, voce, missione”. Meninski “Thesaurus”, vol. 1, p. 997.

¹⁶⁰ *Arz-ı peyam* suggests the “act of bringing news” an inseparable element of diplomacy as ambassadors (or any envoy) were regularly seen as a source of information in the early modern period, and the act of diplomacy was based on how to use this exchange of information for your own/state’s interest.

It has been noted that the word “haber” appeared in Giovanni Molino’s *Dittionario*, with similar Italian equivalents to those given in M.T. These include “nova”, “novella”, “romore”, “fama”, and “novita”, but there are some differences.¹⁶¹ Molino distinguished between various types of “haber” in his descriptions. For example, “taze haber” was used as the equivalent of “fama”, while “haber; taze haber” was used as the equivalent of “nova”, and “iyi haber; haber” was used as the equivalent of “novita”.¹⁶² “Taze haber” means fresh news, while “iyi haber” means good news. Although Molino did not provide detailed examples, it is clear that he associated “fama” with freshness, probably in contrast to news that was old and confirmed.¹⁶³ This association suggests that rumours could be considered unconfirmed news. However, the equivalents in G.M.D also indicate that news and rumours were closely related, as in M.T. Even if the news was unconfirmed, it was still considered news.

The synonyms and equivalents of the principal words suggest that news and rumours were closely related during the early modern period. This affiliation is evident from the description of the word “haber” in M.T., whose Italian and Latin equivalents included both “avviso” and “rumore”, which shows that news and rumours were often used interchangeably. Therefore, the statement made in the previous section that “the same report can only be considered as rumour or as news, but never be both at the same time” is not entirely accurate.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, it is also evident that these words were transformed throughout the centuries. For example, even though it was described as a synonym of “haber”, M.T.’s description of the word “söz” did not seem to include the meaning of either news or rumour, unlike its contemporary description. The word “söz” appeared often in the analysed Ottoman documents indicating what was being discussed. However, the relationship between “söz” and news/rumours is a challenging aspect of this analysis. While in most cases, what was said from one person to another did not unquestionably signify news or rumours, several examples did use “söz” to indicate news and rumours. In these examples, it was used to suggest an information exchange or what was being talked about by a large group of people, which could easily be transformed into rumours.¹⁶⁵ This path seemingly led to “söz” being associated with rumours, which were already associated with oral communication.

¹⁶¹ This work is mentioned as G.M.D (Giovanni Molino’s *Dittionario*) to facilitate reading for the rest of the study.

¹⁶² Molino, *Dittionario*, p.201; pp. 273-274

¹⁶³ In G.M.D, equivalent of “romore” was given as “fama novella”. Ibid. p.362

¹⁶⁴ Wollina, “News and Rumor”, p.293

¹⁶⁵ BOA, (TS.MA.e), 0850_0013_001; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0521_0020.

This brings us to the second deduction: that news and rumours were both part of oral communication in the early modern period. This emphasis on oral communication contrasts the modern period, where news can be conveyed orally and in writing, while rumours remain primarily oral. Meanwhile, “peyam” was initially closely associated with news during the early modern era. However, as news slowly separated from rumours in the following centuries, it lost its connection to rumours.¹⁶⁶

In Italian and Latin, several words are equivalent to “haber”. Among these words, “fama” and “voce” mean rumour, while “nova” and “avviso” mean news which was evident in the examined sources.¹⁶⁷ These words exist in both M.T. and G.M.D. “Avviso” was the most used word, and its meaning constantly evolved during the sixteenth century. Mario Infelise explained how “avvisi” primarily referred to news in letters written by merchants, which gradually turned into signed news, i.e. personal letters by private authors and anonymous “avvisi”. The latter slowly took the format of a handwritten newsletter and became more professionalized throughout the sixteenth century.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, “avvisi” meant handwritten newsletters in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy. Another study by Johann Petitjean focused on the meaning of the word “avviso” and explained its evolution.¹⁶⁹ Like Infelise, he emphasized the role of merchants in turning this word into a term that evokes the meaning of “news” starting from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The word itself was initially derived from the old French “avis”, itself from the Latin “visus”.¹⁷⁰ According to Petitjean “the term rather evoked prudence or opinion in the twelfth century, ‘advice’ in the thirteenth century, to become synonymous with ‘warning’ in the following century. These strata of meanings did not

¹⁶⁶ In the nineteenth century, a Persian-English dictionary defined *peyam* as meaning “news”, “advice”, and “message”. Similarly, a Turkish-English lexicon from the same era defined it as “message”, “news”, “tiding”, and “information”. Therefore, by the nineteenth century, the word had lost its connotation as a rumour in the Ottoman context. However, it is unclear if the term ever had the meaning of “rumour” in the Persian context during the early modern period.

¹⁶⁷ In the two volumes (33 and 34) of Sanudo’s *I Diarii*, certain words such as “fama” and “zanze” appeared three times each, while “voce” appeared five times. Interestingly, “avviso” appeared thirty-four times, whereas “nova” appeared thirty-two times. This leads us to question whether news and rumours are closely intertwined and whether a rumour can also be considered a nova or avviso.

¹⁶⁸ Infelise, Mario. “From Merchants’ Letters to Handwritten Political *Avvisi*: Notes on the Origins of Public Information” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe Volume III: Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, eds. Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 33-53

¹⁶⁹ Petitjean, “Mots et pratiques de l’information », pp.107-121. Also see Hayez, Jerome. “Avviso, Informazione, Novella, Nuova: la Notion de l’Information dans Les Correspondances Marchandes Toscanes vers 1400” in *Information et Société en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge*, edited by Claire Boudreau, Kouky Fianu, Claude Gauvard, et al., Paris : Editions de la Sorbonne, 2004, pp. 113-134.

¹⁷⁰ Related to verb “video” (to see, discern, perceive), “visus” was explained as “a looking, look, act of seeing, power of sight, vision”. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=visus&la=la#lexicon>

completely disappear when while the avvisi became a documented reality in their own right in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”¹⁷¹

Looking at polylingual dictionaries would tell us about this word in a different context and further enrich the studies focusing on “avviso”. In G.M.D, the Turkish equivalent of “avviso” was given as the noun “arz”, and the verb “avvisare” was explained with verbs “bildirmek” and “arz etmek”.¹⁷² In M.T, “arz” and “arz etmek” were presented with a long description, and Latin equivalents were given as “oblatio, exhibitio, proposition, exposition, opponere, accidere, contingere”. In contrast, in Italian they were “esporre, offrire, presentare, rappresentare, proporre, accusare”.¹⁷³ Thus, in M.T., avviso and avvisare were not presented as equivalents of “arz” or “arz etmek”.¹⁷⁴ In this context, “avviso” referred to actions related to news such as “presenting” or “notifying”. Furthermore, in M.T., avviso was given as an Italian equivalent of “haber”.

In another contemporary context, “avviso” and “avvisare” were explained respectively: “advertisement, advise, confideration, notice, an opinion, account” and “to advertise, to marke, to note, to consider, to advise, to thinke, to view, to heed, to regarde, to informe, to warne, to judge, to imagine.”¹⁷⁵ Here, in the English context, it did not appear to have the direct meaning of “news”, instead possessing its previous meanings of “advice” and “warning”. The article by Petitjean stated that the meanings of “warning” and “advice” were not necessarily incompatible with the meaning of news. As the verb means “to see from afar, to have a vision”, avviso came to mean “to see from afar and warn and advice [about news].”¹⁷⁶ This etymological meaning of the avviso did not seem to exist in the Ottoman context. It existed as an act of “presenting” [the news] but to be warned or to be advised seemed to be left to the devices of the Ottomans themselves.

“Avviso” has several meanings, while “nova” has a more straightforward definition. “Nova” comes from Latin and means “new”. This meaning has remained consistent throughout the middle ages and early modern period.¹⁷⁷ It was stated that from the fifteenth century onwards,

¹⁷¹ Petitjean, “Mots et pratiques de l’information”, p. 108

¹⁷² Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 64; “Arz etmek” was also given as equivalent of “significare”. Ibid. p.404

¹⁷³ Meninski “Thesaurus”, Vol.2, p. 3245

¹⁷⁴ In modern Turkish, *arz* means “to present, to submit, to offer” whereas “*bildirmek*” literally means “to make it known” thus “notify”. For “*arz*” see <http://lugatim.com/s/arz>; for “*bildirmek*” see <http://lugatim.com/s/bildirmek>

¹⁷⁵ Florio, “*a Worlde of Wordes*”, p.34

¹⁷⁶ Petitjean, “Mots et Pratiques de l’Information”, p.108

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=nova&la=la#lexicon>

the term *avviso* “gradually partially replaced the terms *nuova*, *novità* and *novella* inherited from the Latin “*novus*”.¹⁷⁸ This was not the case for the documents found in *I Diarii*, yet the Italian documents dated from late 1550s did use *avviso* more than *nova*. However, this did not suggest that *avviso* completely superseded *nova*.

Neither was it the case for the polylingual dictionaries I analyzed for the current study. In G.M.D, the term “*avviso*” does not mean “news”, but “*nova*” means just that.¹⁷⁹ Also in English context, Florio gave equivalents of “*nova*” as “new, fresh, a novelty, a news report”.¹⁸⁰ In M.T. it is one of the Italian equivalents of “*haber*” and also for “*havadis*” (A).¹⁸¹ Also in M.T its equivalents were given in Latin as “*nova, res recenter accidents & casus, accidentia*” and in Italian as “*nuove del mondo, accidenti, emergenze, cose che pallano, casi*”.¹⁸² In this case, the news indicated here is not “news about a specific person or place” but rather more *general* news about recent happenings. *Avviso* did not indicate this type of general news, as neither in G.M.D nor in M.T. was it included. Therefore, in the Ottoman context, “*nova*” existed just as *news*.

Of the five words that indicate rumour and news in Sanudo, only “*zanza*” stood out as a unique term, not found in the dictionaries. This exclusivity suggests that it was a word specific to the Venetian context.¹⁸³ In a dictionary of Venetian dialect, the description for “*zanza*” was given as “*cose frivole e da nulla*” and its synonyms were “*ciancie, bagatelle*”.¹⁸⁴ In contemporary modern dictionaries “*ciancie*” means “tittle-tattle, lies, gossip” whereas “*bagatella*” means “trifle”.¹⁸⁵ “*Ciance*” also appears in G.M.D and its Turkish equivalents were given as “*yave*”

¹⁷⁸ Petitjean, “Mots et Pratiques de l’Information”, p.109

¹⁷⁹ Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 273

¹⁸⁰ Florio, “*a Worlde of Wordes*”, p. 241

¹⁸¹ <http://lugatim.com/s/havadis>, the word *havadis*, derived from Arabic, is the plural of the word “*hadise*” which means “event, happening”, but in modern Turkish, it is used as a singular word.

¹⁸² Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p. 1814

¹⁸³ This is interesting in the case of Giovanni Molino who had served for the Venetian Republic as an interpreter (*dragoman*) in different places for several years. Świącicka (ed.). “*Dictionary of Italian–Turkish Language*”, p.50

¹⁸⁴ Boerio, Giuseppe (ed.). *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano*, Venezia, 1829, p. 730. It has to be mentioned that in this particular dictionary, “*zanze*” was noted as “*antico*”, meaning that by 1829, this word was already old (and maybe out of usage?), and its usage in Sanudo proves that.

¹⁸⁵ In Florio’s dictionary, “*zanze*” was not listed, but “*zanzeani*”, which means “carelessly, wantonly, idle, foolish”, was listed. The English equivalent of “*ciancie*” was given as “chatting, babbling, tatlings, fables, tales, leafling” while “*bagatelle*” was given as “*bagatellerie*” which meant “a trifling trick”. S.v. “*zanzeani*” p. 459, s.v. “*ciancie*” 71, s.v. “*bagatelle*” p.36. S.v. “*zanzeani*” p. 459, s.v. “*ciancie*” 71, s.v. “*bagatelle*” p. 36. Their meanings did not change significantly. For the description of “*ciancie*”, lies and gossip were added. However, it necessitates another comparative examination of English vocabulary during the late sixteenth century to understand whether chatter or babbling also automatically means gossip. This further examination underscores the importance of understanding the evolution of meanings.

(P), lakırdı (T), laklak (A) and “musahabet” (A).¹⁸⁶ The first three are interrelated words and all mean “words” or “chatter.” On the other hand, “musahabet” refers specifically to a “conversation.”

The words mentioned are related to oral communication and speaking. It is important to note that some of these words have come to mean “gossip”, suggesting a connection between casual talk and gossip.¹⁸⁷ According to this analysis, it can be suggested that while “zanza” was related to the concept of “news” and “rumour”, it was not necessarily used for official or reliable news. Instead, it was commonly used for news of lesser importance or from uncertain sources. Here it is essential to remember Elizabeth Horodowich’s statement that rumours are essentially “gossip with the volume turned up” and can potentially reach a wider audience which implies a hierarchy within the rumour system.¹⁸⁸

Interestingly, in present-day Italian dictionaries, the word “zanza” is listed as “zanzara,” which means “mosquito”, which can be its original meaning.¹⁸⁹ Its association with “gossip” may have occurred because gossip or everyday talk was often considered a “loud

¹⁸⁶ Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 66; in Meninski “ciance” does not appear. “Musahabet” and “lakırdı” had their own entries whereas “yave” and “laklak” were not listed. For “Musahabet”, these Latin words were given as equivalents: “collocutio, colloquim, familiaritas, conversatio” and these in Italian: “ragionamento, conversazione, pratica, compagnia, familiarità, domestichezza”. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, p. 4671. For “lakırdı”, these Latin words were given as equivalents: sermo, confabulatio, garritus; and these in Italian: “discorso, parole”, Meninski, “Thesaurus”, p. 1620.

¹⁸⁷ In fact, there is a strong correlation between these Turkish words’ meaning of “chatter, conversation” to what “gossip” meant in the seventeenth century, which was “to talk idly, mostly about other people’s affairs; to go about tattling”. However, the term is derived from the Old English `godsibb, meaning a baptismal sponsor, which in Middle English was interpreted as “a familiar acquaintance, friend, chum”. This indicates a familiarity between people who gossip, which was also suggested in the word “musahabet”, whose equivalents in Latin and Italian indicate company and familiarity.

¹⁸⁸ Horodowich, “The Gossiping Tongue”, p.23

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.wordreference.com/iten/zanza>

voice or many people talking.” This led to the use of the word “voce,” which still refers to both “voice, sound” and “rumour” in modern Italian.¹⁹⁰¹⁹¹¹⁹²

There is also a strong correlation between rumour and voice in the Ottoman context. Its traces can be found mainly in M.T. Three words used in the Ottoman context that indicate rumour had the principal meaning of “voice”: “avaz” (P), “çav” (T) and “sıyt” (A). All had entries of their own in M.T. Latin and Italian equivalents, which were quite similar but slightly different.¹⁹³ While in M.T., all three words possess the meaning of rumour, in G.M.D, only “çav”, which has a Turkish root, possessed it.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, in G.M.D “avaz” meant only “voice, sound” whereas “sıyt” was not listed at all.¹⁹⁵ This can be evidence of Molino’s command of Anatolian Turkish while being less knowledgeable about words that have Arabic or Persian roots. Another critical point is that even though all three words have “rumour” as their ordinary meaning, only “çav” also possesses the meaning of “news” as “nova” was given in its description in M.T. Also in G.M.D, only “çav” possess the meaning “nova di qualcosa”.¹⁹⁶¹⁹⁷ No matter how the words were initially put in the dictionaries, examination of these words proves the close connection between “sound” and “rumour”, which again points out the oral feature of rumour along with closely aligned definitions of news and rumour as they were

¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, the word “laklak” which is supposedly an Arabized version of “legleg” which means “stork” in Persian (in Turkish, it is similar to Persian as well: leylek), in time acquired new meanings: “the sound storks did when they opened their mouth” and “vain talk” which was already in use seventeenth century. Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 66. In a nineteenth-century Persian-English dictionary, the word “laklak” existed as a separate word from “legleg,” which still retained its meaning of “stork”, the latter meant “idle talk” in this context as well. Steingass, Francis Joseph. *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary: Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to be Met with in Persian Literature, Being, Johnson and Richardson's Persian, Arabic, and English Dictionary, Revised, Enlarged, and Entirely Reconstructed*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1892, pp.1127-28.

¹⁹¹ This example can be an excellent example of the circulation of words in a shared geography, how they acquire meanings in a new context, and how those words can re-enter their country of origin. Also, these similarities between “sound, talk, chatter” and “sounds certain animals made” are intriguing. Mosquitos are known for creating loud (and annoying) voices, and so is a stock. Another example is the already discussed word “avaz”, which, along with the meaning of “sound”, also means “nightingale” (in Turkish: “bülbül”), a bird known for its beautiful voice. Meninski “Thesaurus”, pp. 479-80. Whereas, in modern Turkish, “avaz” is usually used as “avaz avaz bağırma”, which means “shouting very loudly”.

¹⁹² <https://www.wordreference.com/iten/voce>

¹⁹³ Latin descriptions of “avaze”: “vox, sonus, clamor, rumor, fama; echo, luscinia”; in Italian: “voce, suono, tuono, grido, rumore, fama, eco, rosignuolo.” Meninski “Thesaurus”, pp. 479-480. For “sıyt”, in Latin: “Vox, sonus, rumor, echo; fama” in Italian: “voce, suono, grido, rumore, eco, fama”. Ibid, p. 3017. For “çav” in Latin: rumor, novum, fama; in Italian: rumore, voce, nove, fama. Ibid. p. 1568

¹⁹⁴ Molino, *Dittionario*, p.141

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 411

¹⁹⁶ “Çav” stands out as the only word among the three to retain the meaning of ‘news’ in modern Turkish dictionaries. <http://lugatim.com/s/%C3%A7av>

¹⁹⁷ Considering the descriptions of the words, is it possible to discern a differentiation? I have hypothesized that “çav” was possibly included in Molino’s dictionary due to its Anatolian Turkish origin. I suspect it was included in Meninski’s dictionary because he took it from Molino’s, as this word has a considerably shorter description than the other two. This line of inquiry invites the reader to consider these words’ linguistic nuances and historical context.

intertwined in this specific period. For example, a thorough examination in French, English and Turkish provides compelling evidence of the close correlation that exists between “sound, noise” and “rumour” not only in the Ottoman context but also in several contexts of Europe other than Italy, shedding light on the linguistic and cultural aspects of these words.^{198 199}

(2) Reputation

These words, “avaz” (P), “çav” (T) and “sıyt” (A), have another common meaning that is relevant to this particular study. Apart from meaning “rumour” and “voice”, they also mean “fame”, whose Turkish equivalents are “şöhret” (A) “nam” (P) “, ün” (T) and these in turn related to the term “fama” which means both “reputation” and “rumour”, thus creating a cycle of meaning.²⁰⁰ An explanation of Turkish terms is necessary before focusing on the term “fama” itself. These three words can be found in M.T. with their descriptions, whereas in G.M.D, only “nam” (P) and “şöhret” (A) were listed. In M.T., “nam” (P), which has a very long description, was explained in Latin as “nomen, fama” and in Italian as “riputazione, nome, fama” whereas “şöhret” (A) was explained with given Turkish synonyms “iştihar, nam, aşikarelik” along with Latin “celebritas, divulgatio, fama” and in Italian “divolgamento, riputazione, fama, nome”.²⁰¹ “Ün” (T), on the other hand, was explained in M.T. solely with its principal meaning of “sound” and was given the previously explained term “avaz” as its synonym in Turkish. It was explained

¹⁹⁸ The word “rumour” itself is derived from a Greek word that means “howl” or “loud noise, din” which entered into Latin as “rumor” with meaning of 1- “common talk; talk of many, unauthenticated report, hearsay, rumour” and 2- “Common or general opinion, current report, the popular voice; and objectively, fame, reputation” and 3- “murmur of a stream”. This was then passed into Old French as “rumur” to Old Middle English as “rumour”. *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed., s.v “rumour”.

¹⁹⁹ In one of the early seventeenth century French *thesaurus*, it was listed as “rumeur” and its equivalents were “rumour and fama” in Latin. Nicot, Jean. *Thresor de la langue francoyse tant ancienne que modern T.2* (Douceur, Paris, 1606) <https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/publicdicos/navigate/2/6501/>; in another late seventeenth century French dictionary the entry for “rumeur” was given as “Bruit tendant à émotion, à querelle.” *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* 1694, t. 2 (Coignard, Paris,1694) <https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/publicdicos/navigate/4/5776/>. In the same dictionary, French equivalents of “bruit” was given as “nouvelle; reputation, renom; querelle; murmure, sedition”. <https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/publicdicos/query?report=bibliography&method=proxy&head=%22BRUIT%22&start=0&end=0>. By examining the entries in Florio’s Dictionary, we find that the word “fama” has equivalents of “fame, report, brute, renowne, reputation, credit.” Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes*, p.124. Here, the brute is the distorted version of French “bruit” which means, in this case, “rumour, talk”. In M.T as well, within French equivalents of “haber” it was not listed as “rumeur” but as “bruit” which in this case would mean noise but also news and reputation. Today “bruit” only means “sound and noise”. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/french-english/bruit>.

²⁰⁰ In modern Turkish dictionaries, all three words possess the meaning of “fame and reputation”, though the principal meanings of “nam” and “ün” are different. “Nam” first and foremost means “name”, whereas “ün” means “sound”. <http://lugatim.com/s/%C3%BCn> ; <http://lugatim.com/s/nam> On the other hand, “şöhret” (şuhret in Arabic) only means “fame” as being “famous”. <http://lugatim.com/s/%C5%9F%C3%B6hret>

²⁰¹ For “nam”: Meninski, *Thesaurus*, pp.5111-13; for “şöhret”: Ibid, pp. 2886-87.

as “vox” and “voce” in Latin and Italian.²⁰² In G.M.D only “nam” was given “fama” and “reputacione” as its Italian equivalents along with “honore” and “dignita” whereas interestingly, Italian equivalents of “şöhret” was “adornamento” “ornamento”, both mean decoration.²⁰³²⁰⁴²⁰⁵ Based on these meanings, it seems that even though they are not the same, “şöhret” and “nam” are closer in meaning to “reputation” and “fame,” while “ün” did not seem to have these meanings in the early modern period, at least according to M.T and G.M.D. In the Ottoman documents examined for the succession struggle, the word “nam” primarily referred to the names of people and places. Occasionally, it was also used to indicate a person's reputation, which could be described with added adjectives to indicate positive or negative qualities.²⁰⁶

The primary connection between these terms and rumour is based on the term “fama”, which is essential and requires further examination. The term is ancient and has a place in literature, history, politics and law. It is a term derived from the ancient Greek *pheme*, a word related to “speaking”, which was the personification of public speech. In Greek mythology, she was considered close to figures like Peitho and Eris, goddesses of persuasion and strife, respectively. Thus, she had the potential to become good or evil but is ultimately considered to possess a threatening nature, which “comes from the fact that through the many voices of her speech, the difference between fiction and truth and between opposed values is confused and rendered powerless”.²⁰⁷ Therefore, there are two attributed characteristics of *pheme*: it is related to public, and it is ambiguous, i.e. neither bad nor good but had the potential to cause both. Both of these characteristics later became part of the concept of rumour as well.

She was a feared figure in Greek mythology and later became one for Romans. Famous ancient Roman author Virgil defined her, now named *fama*, as a monster: “Her body is covered with as many eyes, mouths, tongues and ears as it has feathers.”²⁰⁸ In an alternative interpretation of Virgil’s text, eyes and tongues belonged not to *fama* herself but belongs to people whom she

²⁰² Ibid. p. 550

²⁰³ Giovanni Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 118 (s.v. “dignita”); p.141 (s.v. fama, reputacione”); p.176 (s.v. “honore”); p. 354 (s.v. “reputacione”)

²⁰⁴ Ibid.p. 20 (s.v. “adornamento”); 285 (s.v. “ornamento). This meaning of decoration brought to mind the “honorific decoration,” which can be done to “acknowledge a particular person,” thus giving some “authority”.

²⁰⁵ “Ün” was not listed in G.M.D which seemed peculiar as Molino seemed to be more knowledgeable about words derived from Anatolian Turkish such as this one.

²⁰⁶ Further investigation is conducted in chapter three, subchapter on words.

²⁰⁷ Scheuer, Hans Jürgen. “Fama” in *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World New Pauly*, (eds.) Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, Vol 5, Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 330

²⁰⁸ Ibid.p. 331

flies over and more they look at her, the bigger she grows. Thus, the more people see, hear and talk, the more *fama* gains speed and grows.²⁰⁹ This allegorical explanation makes sense if we think of *fama* about the rumour: the more it reaches people and more people believe the “rumour”, more influential it grows until they stopped believing it for a particular reason.

Another vital part of Virgil’s depiction of monstrous *fama* is that she filled the nations and sang alike of fact and false while flying.²¹⁰ Thus, she does not transmit only falsehood; she does both. Moreover, this is the dangerous part: the ambiguity. This feature is related to the discussions I have presented in the first section of rumour, where I explained the general tendency to associate rumour with falseness in academia. However, historically, the real danger lies in the ambiguity. On the other hand, we cannot equate *fama* solely to rumour. It is a very complex term that *also includes* rumour. One definition equates it with “rumour; fame; renown; ill repute; news”.²¹¹²¹² Another definition given by Hans Joachim Neubauer in his book about “rumour”:

“In Latin, the word has a host of meanings, such as fame, public opinion, reputation, idle talk and rumour. A good name as much as a bad reputation is called fama. The word's meaning is double-edged: for while meaning "information" in the sense of news, Fama also means the image that is formed of a person on account of this information.”²¹³

The third sentence of this definition is rather explanatory: *fama* can mean both “news” and “rumour” now; we can also add “reputation” to the equation of “rumour” and “news”. These three concepts are intertwined. Claire Walker’s article about *fama* also agrees with this point and argues that “any semantic separation of her meanings is problematic because...gossip or ‘idle talk’ and ‘rumour’ or hearsay are intimately connected with the construction and destruction of personal fame, or ‘reputation.’”²¹⁴ *Fama*, as it is to rumour, is also related to

²⁰⁹ Dyer, Robert Rutherford. “Virgil’s Fama: A New Interpretation of Aeneid 4.173ff” in *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Apr., 1989), pp. 30-31. *Fama* also exist in works of other major Roman authors such as Ovid.

²¹⁰ “...multiplici populos sermone replebat gaudens, et partier facta atque infecta canebat”. Walker, Claire. “Whispering Fama: Talk and Reputation in Early Modern Society” in *Fama and Her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Heather Kerr and Claire Walker, Brepols, 2015, p.10

²¹¹ *Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary: Latin-English*, 3rd ed., s.v. “fama”.

²¹² According to another Latin dictionary, the definition: 1-the talk of the multitude, like rumour; 2- That which people say or tell, the common talk, a report, rumour, saying, tradition; 3- The voice or judgment of the many, public opinion; more freq. objectively, the fame, character, reputation which a man has, either in general or in particular, as a good or bad reputation, etc. (very freq. and class.). a- popular fame or favour, b. In a good sense, fair fame, reputation, renown, = existumatio, fama bona, c. In a bad sense, ill fame, infamy, scandal.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry=fama>

²¹³ Neubauer, Hans Joachim. *The Rumour: A Cultural History*, London, New York: Free Association Books, (1999), p. 37.

²¹⁴ Walker, “Whispering Fama”, p. 12

gossip and hearsay. As *fama* includes all these communication types, differentiating gossip from rumour was/is always difficult. Points of discussion are *the space and the scale* they have operating in/with. As gossip indicates familiarity, people who intimately know each other usually associate it with private spaces. In contrast, rumours are linked to larger groups or people who do not know each other necessarily, i.e., the general public.²¹⁵ Then, related to this debate comes the discussion of “gossip turning into rumour” as it escapes the confinement of private spaces and enters into public, as discussed by historians such as Horodowich²¹⁶ At the same time, other studies have separated the two concepts in terms of content, space, and scale.²¹⁷ The close study of words has already shown us how tangled these two terms were in the early modern period. I also agree with Walker in her statement, “Gossip can become rumour and vice versa, and each has the potential to support or subvert `an individual, a community or a nation.”²¹⁸ Thus, *fama* can be considered as the culmination of oral acts that are related to unconfirmed information and *what* that particular information can do to a person’s image, i.e. reputation. Reputation, similar to the relationship between gossip and rumour, can be considered a distinct feature of *fama* linked to the other two. Most studies that focused on *fama* during the Medieval era emphasised this particular feature of *fama*, closely linked to Medieval law. In one of these books, it was stated about the reputation aspect of *fama* as:

“Regarding a person, therefore, *fame* is the public talk that continually adjusts honour and assigns rank or standing as the individual grows up, engages in such publicly performed acts as marriage, takes up offices or other public duties, wins or loses legal or physical contests, and begins to decline. *Fama*, in this sense, can be political, for it serves to define and rank competitors for public honours and functions.”

²¹⁹

Therefore, as *public talk*-which was the original meaning of it- *fama* became one of the factors that create reputation either bad or good way.²²⁰ This discussion on reputation is rather essential. In the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, the oral nature of communication allowed *fama* to act as more than one’s reputation; it also symbolized the “talk” that determined it. Called

²¹⁵ For *Fama*’s relationship with gossip, see Walker, “Whispering Fama”, pp.12-13. In her chapter, she also discusses the word “gossip” etymology and its meaning in medieval and early modern contexts. She focuses on the evolution of the term from a “familiar acquaintance” to the current meaning of “gossip” we understand today.

²¹⁶ Horodowich, “The Gossiping Tongue”, p. 23

²¹⁷ Botelho, Keith. *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumour and Early Modern Masculinity*, New York: Palgrave, 2009, pp. 10,13

²¹⁸ Walker, “Whispering Fama”, p. 17

²¹⁹ Fenster, Thelma and Smail, Daniel Lord. “Introduction”, in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, pp. 2-3

²²⁰ The neutrality of *fama* and the possibility of going both ways also exist in describing Turkish words that are related to reputation. See Chapter III.

pubblica fama, it was “what everyone knows”, and it had a good influence on decisions given in courts of Medieval Italy. Thus, it was “gossip” and “rumour” but also public knowledge, though a fickle one.²²¹ Chris Wickham further states that:

“In Italy, as elsewhere, local knowledge was sharply distinguished between *per visum*, direct witnessing, *per auditum*, merely hearing about it from someone, and *pubblica fama*, what everybody knew, common knowledge. Direct witnessing was the only fully legally acceptable knowledge, but *pubblica fama* ran a close second; it was what everybody knew, so it was socially accepted as reliable.”²²²

This statement is essential for two reasons. First and foremost, even though these discussions are related to the legal world of the Medieval period, *common knowledge* was still crucial in the sixteenth century in terms of accepting a specific person’s statement about affairs. In Sanudo, although *fama* was not used for indicating “reputation”, there were statements such as “man of good reputation” [buon riputation], especially for people outside of the Venetian ruling sphere, in order to notify the reader of the reliability of their source of information. The source of this reputation was usually not explicitly mentioned, and we can assume that it was *common knowledge*, i.e. *pubblica fama*.²²³ Thus, the importance of *fama* in terms of reputation seemed to persist into the sixteenth century when oral communication was still reigning.

²²¹ Kuehn, Thomas. “Fama as Legal Status in Renaissance Florence” in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, pp. 27-46

²²² Wickham, Chris. “Gossip and Resistance Among the Medieval Peasantry” in *Past and Present*, vol. 160, 1998, p. 4

²²³ In the Ottoman context, “nam” would best explain this type of fama. (see notes 124, 144) Other articles show that another fama exists: “Several authors consciously sought to eradicate any distinction between the fame of their texts and their fame. This fama was the Roman fama as worldly glory, which, for example, Dante, in particular, tried to reconcile with the self-effacement that Christianity demanded.” Fenster, Thelma and Smail, Daniel Lord. “Conclusion” in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 213. In the Ottoman context, this particular type of fama can be explained with “şöhret”. (see notes, 200, 201)

c) Conclusion

In this chapter, I conducted a preliminary cross-examination of words that indicated “rumour” and “news” in a specific period using several early modern dictionaries. This analysis revealed several points.

First, in the early modern period, news and rumours were intricately intertwined in both contexts, indicating a complex relationship that requires a nuanced understanding. This condition challenges the traditional view of them as distinct levels, a perspective that some studies have already begun to revise.

Secondly, my research has revealed that rumours and news were deeply embedded in oral communication, as evidenced by sound-indicating words in Italian and Ottoman contexts. Moreover, the shift from oral practices to writing did not eradicate rumours from oral communication. As news gradually became part of the written tradition, this transition began to separate them, a process that was in its infancy in the sixteenth century. This process likely varied between the two contexts, as exemplified by “avviso,” a word with a socially loaded meaning that was absent in the seventeenth-century Ottoman context.

Thirdly, rumours were not considered essentially false; they could go both ways, and this ambiguity was the real cause of the fear of rumours. This was also linked to rumours being unconfirmed, but as they were related to news, this did not make the news the confirmed versions of rumours. Lastly, rumours and news, when discussed under “fama”, were very much related to reputation.

The following chapters apply these points to the case studies to see whether they were valid for news and rumours produced and circulated within different events that had common points yet were distinct regarding people, locations and content involved.

5) CHAPTER II- THE SIEGE OF RHODES (1522)

a) Prelude: Changing Positions in Early Sixteenth Century Eastern Mediterranean

The first two decades of the sixteenth century proved vexing for the three major political and economic forces active in the Eastern Mediterranean trade zone: the Ottoman Empire, the Mamluk Sultanate and the Republic of Venice. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, the eastern spice trade controlled by the Mamluk Sultanate was interrupted due to the Portuguese ventures in India, a monumental event that caused the Sultanate to lose one of its most important sources of income. This disruption had far-reaching diplomatic and economic consequences, negatively affecting its relations with the Republic of Venice, one of its main trade partners for the European market. The Republic, which also suffered significant losses on its most important trade route, entered a three-year battle with the Ottoman Empire in 1499 and came out defeated. As a result, it began to lose its dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean by surrendering significant strategic outposts to the Ottoman Empire.²²⁴

The island of Rhodes, ruled by Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, also known as Knights Hospitaller since 1309, was also a part of this ever-changing balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Linking the eastern Mediterranean with the Aegean and Adriatic, Rhodes played an essential role in trade, piracy and traffic of pilgrims to and from the shrines in the Near East from the early ages.²²⁵ During the fifteenth century, with Mamluks consolidated in Syria and Egypt and the Ottoman Empire expanded in Anatolia and Greece, the Hospitaller Order slowly remained the sole representative of Christian hostile military power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Other Christian states operating in the region, the Republic of Venice and the Republic of Genoa, were mercantile powers with important maritime colonies that served their interests. They only resorted to conflict when these interests were in danger. The war of 1499-1502 between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice started a period of naval expansion on the part of the Ottoman Empire. This war not only established Ottoman naval supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean but made it apparent that Venice and Rhodes could

²²⁴ Hess, Andrew C. "The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt (1517) and the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century World War," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1, 1973, p.66

²²⁵ Soucek, Svat. "Rodos", *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2, VIII, pp. 568-569

not depend on Christian Europe for any substantial support.²²⁶ Consequently, during the late fifteenth and first two decades of the sixteenth century, the naval power of Rhodes was no match for Ottoman counterpart so they never directly challenged it. Nevertheless, they managed to aggravate Ottomans with their support for corsair activities which made Ottoman-Rhodian relations remain less than cordial in the period between 1502 and 1522, contrary to Ottoman-Venetian relations, which were stable in this period. Furthermore, The Republic of Venice itself was periodically alienated from the Knights due to piracy and competition for limited food resources such as grain.²²⁷²²⁸ Under these circumstances, Rhodes was quick to shift alliances and adapt depending on the situation.²²⁹ However, during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, neither these alliances nor their careful policy of “naval defence” against Ottomans managed to prevent them from getting besieged.

Rhodes was besieged several times by hostile forces during the rule of the Hospitaller order due to its strategic location and support for crusading activities. The city faced unsuccessful sieges three times by the Mamluk Sultanate between 1400 and 1444. In 1480, it was besieged by Ottoman forces under the orders of Mehmed II, who demanded tribute payments that the Order refused to pay. Tensions continued due to corsairs sponsored by Rhodes until Mesih Pasha laid siege to the city in May 1480. Protected by its great walls and defended by the garrison and civilian population, Rhodes withstood the siege, and the pasha had to raise it after the failure of the final assault launched on 28 July.²³⁰

For forty years between the first and second sieges, Rhodes oscillated between remaining neutral and planning secret hostilities under the label of “crusading” during conflicts such as the Ottoman-Mamluk war of 1485-1491 and the Ottoman-Venetian war of 1499-1502. The Knights of Rhodes were opportunistic as they tried to benefit from periods of weakness in the Ottoman Empire. Notable instances include the capture of the pretender to the throne, Prince

²²⁶ Brummett, Palmira. “The Overrated Adversary: Rhodes and Ottoman Naval Power,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, (Sep., 1993), p. 517

²²⁷ Soucek, Svat. *Studies in Ottoman Naval history and Maritime Geography*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008, p. 115

²²⁸ Brummett, “The Overrated Adversary”, pp. 522, 527

²²⁹ Vatin, Nicolas. “The Insertion of the Order of Saint John in the Eastern Mediterranean between two Sieges of Rhodes (1480-1522)” in *Union in Separation: Diasporic Groups and Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean (1100-1800)* edited by Georg Christ, Franz-Julius Morche, Roberto Zaugg, Wolfgang Kaiser, Stefan Burkhardt, Alexander D. Beihammer, Roma: Viella, 2015, p. 426

²³⁰ Vatin, Nicolas. “The Hospitallers at Rhodes and the Ottoman Turks, 1480-1522”, in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century Message and Impact* (ed) by Norman Housley. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK:2004, p.149

Cem, in 1482, and Rhodes' attempts to use the Safavid threat to the Ottoman Empire after 1502 to its advantage.²³¹

The conquest of Egypt and Syria by Selim I in 1516-1517 changed the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean once more. With the Mamluks gone and the Ottoman Empire emerging as the dominant power in the region, the remaining Christian powers, Venice and Rhodes, found themselves in precarious positions. By 1520, Venice feared a possible attack on its eastern colonies, Cyprus and Crete, while Rhodes feared for its survival.

b) Venetian *Stato da Mar* and the news' network in Eastern Mediterranean in early sixteenth century

In order to fully comprehend the functioning of the news production and circulation system before and during the Second Ottoman Siege of Rhodes, it is vital to grasp the major elements that constitute it. By 1522, the news network in the Eastern Mediterranean was established and controlled by the Republic of Venice, a role it had assumed since the fifteenth century. While other factors, such as the Ottomans or the Knights, also influenced this system, it was the Republic that created the necessary infrastructure that carried news from the eastern Mediterranean to Christian Europe. However, our understanding should continue beyond there. We also need to delve into the significant actors and locations that spread information about the siege and the complex political structure called "*stato da mar*", a structure that was integral to the dissemination of news during this period.

i) Actors

The city of Venice was the central hub where reports and information arrived from the eastern Mediterranean and were distributed to other Christian states. However, the city depended on the Republic's overseas territories, *Stato da Mar*, comprised of maritime colonies in the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean, which were expanded gradually during the late fourteenth

²³¹ Ibid. p.149, 152

and early fifteenth century.²³² These colonies were important hubs that served the Republic commercially and militarily. Most of them were under the direct rule of the Republic and controlled by an overseas administrative system called *reggimento* (college of governors). This system relied on patrician governors elected in Venice's Great Council and sent overseas for a pre-established term of office, for most of them, two years.²³³ This system was beneficial for effectively managing, gathering, circulating and delivering news in which these governors, generally called *rettori*, played a crucial role. As they were entrusted with looking after the Republic's interests and self-defence, they were required to be well-informed about their territory and the surrounding region. Consequently, most of these colonies also acted as hubs of news that arrived from the Ottoman Empire, which had already established itself as the premier force in the Eastern Mediterranean by the early sixteenth century. The governors of these colonies were tasked with gathering and selecting *any* news that might relate to the Republic's welfare, which required them to be both resourceful and selective. Therefore, apart from an established news network with other governors, the news' were gathered from/by various actors from every social stratum and nationality.

The Venetian patrician class had more than just governors involved in overseas operations. There were also *provveditori*, officials with supreme military and administrative powers in a territory. They were supposed to work alongside the regularly elected governors and captains.²³⁴ Initially, they were temporary officials overseeing the incorporation process of a new colony or addressing short-term threats like rebellions or attacks. However, due to ongoing threats in the Eastern Mediterranean during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, these officials became a permanent presence in several colonies of *Stato da Mar*. Therefore, they became increasingly involved in the circulation of news.²³⁵

The eastern Mediterranean information network included patrician members, such as the diplomatic corps of the Republic of Venice: bailo, consuls, and extraordinary ambassadors. The most important position was the bailo, the Venetian resident ambassador in Istanbul. This role existed since the eleventh century and continued into the Ottoman era after 1453. The bailo had

²³² For more information about Venetian expansion during these centuries, see O'Connell, Monique. *Men of Empire Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009, pp.21-36

²³³ Arbel, Benjamin. "Venice's Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period", in *A Companion to Venetian History (1400-1797)* edited by Eric Dursteler, Leiden: Brill, 2013, p. 146.

²³⁴ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 47

²³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 47-48; Arbel, "Venice's Maritime Empire", p.149

dual responsibilities—commercial and diplomatic—which were not mutually exclusive. Firstly, he acted as a “consul,” overseeing and promoting the Republic’s commercial interests while ensuring the welfare of the Venetian community in the Ottoman capital and commercial centres.²³⁶ Secondly, he acted as a “diplomat,” representing and protecting Venetian political interests in the Ottoman court.²³⁷ This responsibility required him to be continuously informed of Ottoman affairs. Therefore, the bailo played a vital role in the news network as he gathered, processed, and communicated information on the Ottoman Empire to Venice, especially during the turbulent first decades of the early sixteenth century when the Republic switched gradually from an offensive to defensive foreign strategy seeking protect its possessions.²³⁸ Bailos used an extensive network of informants from different social spheres and nationalities, including ruling elites, members of the court, and workers in the imperial arsenal, to stay updated.²³⁹ Due to his unique position and two-year incumbency, the bailo can be considered the prime news provider for both Venice and the Ottomans. Additionally, bailos shared some information with the Ottomans to gain favour with the court, which was essential for the continuity of their presence in the capital.²⁴⁰

The consuls, who were the lesser counterparts of the bailo and were located in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, played a vital role in the extensive communication network. Led by the bailo in Istanbul, the consuls acted as the representatives of the Republic in key commercial centers like Alexandria and Aleppo. Unlike the bailo, who were always chosen from the Venetian patriciate, these individuals could also be selected from the Venetian citizen class, known as the *cittadini*. The *cittadini* also held bureaucratic positions within the Republic, such

²³⁶ When the institution was reorganized after 1265 during Byzantine rule, this was the office’s primary function, along with judiciary responsibilities over the Venetian community. Fabris, Antonio. “From Adrianople to Constantinople: Venetian- Ottoman Diplomatic Missions,” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No.2, 1992, p. 156; also see note 3 of Dursteler, Eric R. “The Bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice’s Early Modern Diplomatic Corps,” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, Vol.16, No.2 (December 2001), p.22

²³⁷ Dursteler, “The Bailo in Constantinople”, pp. 3-4

²³⁸ For example, the evolving position of the bailo in the early sixteenth century can be seen in 1517 and 1521 *ahdnames*. No rule of negotiation or trial concerning the *bailo* appeared in the Ottoman *ahdnames* up to the *Ahdname* of 1517. It was formally added in 1521 when the peace between the Republic and the Ottoman Empire was renewed. Horii, Yutaka. “Capitulations and Negotiations: The Role of Venetian Consul in Early Ottoman Egypt,” *Mediterranean World*, Vol.19, 2008, p. 210

²³⁹ Gürkan, Emrah Safa. “Laying Hands on *Arcana Imperii*: Venetian baili as spymasters in sixteenth century Istanbul” in *Spy Chiefs volume 2* edited by Paul Maddrell, Christopher Moran, Ioanna Iordanou, Mark Stout, Richard Dearlove, Georgetown University Press 2018, pp. 69-75

²⁴⁰ From early on, it became apparent to the Ottomans that the *bailo* was essentially a ‘spymaster’, working against their interests. For instance, Bayezid II (d.1512), after sending *bailo* Girolamo Marcello back to Venice in 1493 due to ‘spying’, did not allow the Republic to send another *bailo* to Constantinople between 1493 and 1507, causing significant problems for Venice.

as secretaries or notaries, and constituted the second tier of government after the nobility.²⁴¹ Serving as heads of the Venetian merchant communities in these locations, the consuls had similar responsibilities to the bailo. They also had their own networks, which allowed them to become important sources of news. Particularly in the early sixteenth century, after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt and Syria, these positions became increasingly crucial for transmitting news from the eastern regions and from enemies of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Safavids of Persia.

The news network in Venice involved several key governmental bodies: The Senate, Council of the Ten, and Collegio. The Senate and the Council of the Ten were in direct and continuous correspondence with government representatives outside Venice, but they each received different information. Each representative would write three series of dispatches: one to the Senate (known as 'lettere pubbliche') and the others to the smaller bodies. Collegio was responsible for passing and managing information between different state bodies such as the Council of Ten and the Senate. The Council of Ten, the smallest state body, handled "delicate" and critical political matters. When it needed to pass information to the Senate, it had to do so through the Collegio, which would then decide whether or not to pass the information and when to do so. Governmental envoys reported after their return, and ambassadors delivered their relazioni to Collegio. Collegio was also in charge of dealing with foreign diplomats and representatives from subject territories, and it collected precise records of all their audiences.²⁴²

ii) Key Locations under Venetian rule

Apart from the actors, the Venetian news network functioned effectively due to the strategic locations of its commercial hubs, which were situated in the Adriatic and the eastern Mediterranean. For news from the Ottoman Empire, several Venetian colonies became prominent centres of commerce and information in the early sixteenth century.

²⁴¹ In 1586, a new decree ratified the old decree of 1443, adding only the most essential consular offices in the empire (bailo, consuls of Aleppo and Alexandria in Egypt) were chosen among the patriciate. Pedani, Maria Pia. "Venetian Consuls in Egypt and Syria in the Ottoman Age," *Mediterranean World*, vol. 18, 2006, pp.8-9

²⁴² De Vivo, Filippo. *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp.35-37

During the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the colonies lay on two main commercial routes linking the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean with the southern and, eventually, western coasts. One route passed through Corfu, Modon, Coron, and Negroponte to Istanbul from Venice, while the second route went through Corfu, the Peloponnese, and Crete to Alexandria and Syria.²⁴³ The first route became defunct as the most important Ionian possessions of Venice, namely Modon and Coron, fell to the Ottomans in 1500 along with Navarino (Zonchio) in 1501 during the Ottoman-Venetian war (1499-1502). After the loss of these strategic posts, Zakyntos (Zante) and Corfu filled their role, which enhanced the importance of these islands, of which the latter was already a safe port for Venetian fleet and merchant galleys travelling towards the west and Adriatic from the eastern Mediterranean.²⁴⁴

The older colony Corfu remained the more prominent commercial centre until Zakyntos (Zante) started to take its place as the main Ionian port in the 1540s. At the same time, Corfu gradually turned into a military outpost against the increasing Ottoman aggressions.²⁴⁵²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, in the early decades of the sixteenth century, Corfu was the obligatory port for all Venetian ships sailing towards the Adriatic.²⁴⁷ As a commercial centre and a garrison station, Corfu was one of the central information hubs, as trade and news went hand in hand. It was the nodal point for exchanging letters between Venetian officials and spies dispersed throughout the Levant, sent from Istanbul, Crete, Cyprus, Aleppo, Alexandria, Rhodes, Venice, and the Venetian fleet.²⁴⁸ Thus, ruled by a governor titled *bailo*, it resumed its role as a major information hub especially for Ottoman news arriving from Istanbul and Morea (Peloponnese).

²⁴³ Gertwagen, Ruthy. "The Venetian Colonies in the Ionian and Aegean Seas in Venetian Defence Policy in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, Vol.12 No.2, 2002, p. 352

²⁴⁴ Corfu had its mainland dependencies of Butrinto and Parga, and the island dependency of Paxos. Arbel "Venice's Maritime Empire", p.143

²⁴⁵ Corfu became a Venetian colony in 1386, whereas Zante became one in 1482. Ibid.p.134

²⁴⁶ Arbel, Benjamin. "The Ionian Islands and Venice's Trading System during Sixteenth century" Κέντρο Μελετών Ιονίου – Εταιρεία Ζακυνθιακών Σπουδών, Πρακτικά ΣΤ' Διεθνούς Πανιονίου Συνεδρίου [Acts of the 6th International Pan-Ionian Congress (Zakyntos, 1997)] 2 (Athens 2001), pp. 149,154,156. Also for Corfu's importance as a port and information hub during fourteenth and fifteenth century, see Gertwagen, "the Venetian Colonies", p. 354-367; for the struggle to gain the possession of the island of Corfu see idem, "The Island of Corfu in Venetian Policy in the Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries," *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (June 2007), pp. 181-210.

²⁴⁷ Arbel, "The Ionian Islands", p. 154

²⁴⁸ Gürkan, Emrah Safa. "Between Connectivity and Isolation: Insularity and Information Flow in Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean." in G. D. Pagratis (ed.), *War, State and Society in the Ionian Sea*, (2018) p.30

The most important colony for this study is the island of Crete, the earliest colony of Venice in the Eastern Mediterranean. Along with Cyprus, it was one of the Republic's biggest and most prized colonies. Crete lies at the intersection point of major maritime routes that connect Istanbul with Alexandria and, on the other hand, the Western Mediterranean with Syria.²⁴⁹ During the four-hundred-year direct Venetian rule from 1211 to 1669, the island was an important commercial centre whose strategic location made it invaluable as an information hub.²⁵⁰ The only colony purchased by Venice, Crete was also an obligatory port of call for the convoys of Venetian merchant galleys going from Venice to Cyprus from 1300 onwards.²⁵¹ As Crete was a customary stop-over for ships headed to Alexandria the range of news items ranged from corsair activities to trade, from the movement of the Ottoman navy to news from Egypt and Syria.²⁵²

The island was ruled by a governor called *duca* and the Venetian administration in Crete functioned in the same way as other colonies governed by a *Reggimento*: chief governor was assisted by two counsellors and one or two financial officers (*camerlenghi*) and military affairs were placed under the responsibility of a separate magistrate, mainly with the title of *capitano*, another appointed patrician official.²⁵³ Also like other extensive overseas territories such as Cyprus, it had separate patrician governors for provincial centres—in Chania (La Canea), Rethymno (Rettimo), and Sitia, with their respective counsellors (except for the last-mentioned).²⁵⁴ These provincial governors also operated within the news' network actively, gathering and sending news' and rumours that arrived in their port to the central city of Candia which was administrative seat of the entire island where the chief governor resided.²⁵⁵

The neighbouring islands of Scarpanto Karpathos (Scarpanto), Kythera (Cerigo) and Antikythera (Cerigotto), as well as more distant island of Tinos, were under the supervision of the Venetian administration in Crete following the conquest of Negroponte by the Ottomans in 1470 and until the fall of Crete itself.²⁵⁶ These islands, which were dependent on Crete in terms

²⁴⁹ Georgopoulou, Maria. *Venice's Mediterranean Colonies: Architecture and Urbanism*. Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.5

²⁵⁰ Arbel, "Venice's Maritime Empire", p.229

²⁵¹ Gertwagen, Ruthy. "The Concept of Ports in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean: Construction and Maintenance on Crete to the End of the Fifteenth Century," *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol.12, No.1 (2000) p. 202

²⁵² Lugli, "Linking the Mediterranean", p. 171

²⁵³ Arbel "Venice's Maritime Empire", p.147

²⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 148

²⁵⁵ Gertwagen, "The Concept of Ports", p.196

²⁵⁶ Arbel "Venice's Maritime Empire", p.149

of provisions also served as micro level hubs of information whose rulers were in constant communication with the governors of Crete. For example, Karpathos (Scarpanto), primarily due to its position between Rhodes and Crete, was very active in the news network during the siege. The island of Crete, due to its closeness to the scene of action, acted as the central hub of information where news and rumours about the siege of Rhodes gathered, circulated and distributed.

Several relevant islands for this study were outside the Venetian system of *reggimento*. The island Naxos (Nixia) was the most prominent in the middle of the Aegean Sea. Occupied by Marino Sanudo's namesake ancestor in 1207, the island was the central administrative unit of the Duchy of Archipelago (Duchy of Naxos) which entered under Venetian protectorate in the fifteenth century and remained there until its occupation by the Ottomans in 1566.²⁵⁷²⁵⁸

By 1522 it was ruled by the Crispo family since 1419 who, even though closely related to them, was not part of the Venetian patriciate. Thus, the island's rulers were more like feudal lords rather than appointed governors, giving them a certain independence, as opposed to colonies ruled directly by Venice. This semi-independence from Venice could have put the interests of the island and archipelago over the interests of Venice in the region. However, as Ottomans posed the same threat to all, they usually allied with the interests of the Venetian central government. By the early sixteenth century, Naxos had long lost its dominance to Crete over the commercial sea route from Egypt and the Levant to the northwest Aegean, but this did not hinder its importance as a strategic location in the news network. Its central position in the Aegean and close ties with the neighbouring islands made it an essential news hub, especially for the movement of the Ottoman navy as it left the Dardanelles and moved into the Aegean, which would prove crucial in the period before the siege of Rhodes.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ "The dukes claimed to be the feudal overlords of other islands of the Aegean Archipelago, including those ruled by Venetian families, such as Serifos (partly, and from 1430 entirely, held by the Michiel), Paros (held by the Venier and later by the Sagredo), Antiparos (held by the Loredan and later by the Pisani), Nio (Ios, held by the Pisani between 1508–37), Amorgos (held by Venetian families from Crete, then by the Querini), Stampalia (Astipalaia, from 1413, held by the Querini), Santorini (held by the Barozzi and, from 1480, by the Pisani), Namfio (Anafi, held by the Brabaro between 1466–1528 and later, until 1537, by the Pisani), Gia (Kea, Keos, Tzia, held by the Premarin), and Scarpanto (Karpathos, held by the Corner)". This claim was contested by Venice especially in sixteenth century. Arbel "Venice's Maritime Empire p. 145

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Gertwagen, "The Concept of Ports", pp.189-90

iii) Other Locations

It was not only islands under direct or semi-Venetian rule that acted as news hubs in the period of the 1522 siege. Other islands have proven crucial in information circulation due to their locations, such as Chios (Syo). Situated close to the Anatolian coastline, Chios was a Genoese commercial outpost that linked Istanbul to Genoa while profiting enormously from trade with Asia Minor.²⁶⁰ However, it was an island under the rule of a Genoese company of shareholders since 1346 rather than a direct Genoese rule. It paid an annual tribute to the Ottomans until 1566 when they could not pay it and were conquered by the latter.²⁶¹

The rule of Chios is important in order to understand the degree of autonomy the island held and how it affected their decision making. In 1346, when it re-entered the Genoese rule, the Commune of Genoa retained the right to rule under Genoese law while the local council of ship-owners called *maona* held the right to ownership and collect taxes, which granted them great power.²⁶²²⁶³ The government of Genoa sent a podesta to rule the island. However, his rule was nominal.²⁶⁴ From the late fourteenth century onwards, *maona* provided local governance and defence of Chios for the next two centuries. These functions had been delegated to it by an unstable and insolvent Genoese home government.²⁶⁵ Thus, nominally, under the Genoese rule, it was nearly independent because the authority remained with the governing council, who decided independently based on the existing situation without having permission from the Genoese State. This independence was the exact opposite of the situation in Crete, where the central government of Venice decided on every act. This autonomy proved critical during the siege of Rhodes when Chios acted in favour of both sides, the Ottomans and Knights of St. John. In this case, they provided the news' they gathered to both sides as, on the one hand, they

²⁶⁰ They traded variety of products with Ottomans which was mainly wheat, cloth, silk and the specialty of the island mastic, etc. Parlaz, Selim. "Osmanlı Ceneviz Ticaret'inde Sakız Adasının Yeri ve Önemi (1346-1566)," *ulakbilge*, Vol. 5 No: 14, 2017, p.1296

²⁶¹ Soucek, "Sakız", p. 890

²⁶² In the late Middle Ages, *maona* was a financial association under the guarantee of the State but with autonomous administration, through which the Italian municipalities, and especially the Republic of Genoa gave birth to large companies that otherwise would have exceeded the investment possibilities of governments and private individuals." <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/maona/>

²⁶³ It is thought that etymologically the word derived from Arabic word "ma'una" which meant "help, assistance". Soucek, "Sakız", p. 890

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Becker, Brian Nathaniel. "Life and Local Administration on Fifteenth Century Genoese Chios", , unpublished PhD thesis: Western Michigan University, pp.188-89

feared Ottomans' retribution. On the other, they also dreaded total Ottoman dominance in the Aegean if the island should fall.

The islands under the control of the Knights of St. John, who ruled from the city of Rhodes, were necessary to defend the island of Rhodes. After the failed Ottoman siege in 1480, these fortified locations, including Rhodes and other towns, were reinforced by Grand Master Pierre D'Aubusson (d.1503) to prepare for another attack.²⁶⁶ Some islands were especially crucial due to their size and location.²⁶⁷ The most significant one was Kos (Lango), which had a significant castle in the city strategically positioned opposite the Knight's only mainland dependency, the castle of St. Pierre in Halicarnassus (Bodrum).²⁶⁸ Together, they controlled the sea passage towards Rhodes and became vital for gathering and circulating news about the Ottoman navy before the siege. Since their captains were Knights members, their correspondence with the besieged was crucial for spreading news regarding Rhodes and keeping Christian Europe updated about the news regarding the ongoing siege.

²⁶⁶ Vatin, Nicolas. *Rodos Şövalyeleri ve Osmanlılar: Doğu Akdeniz'de Savaş, Diplomasi ve Korsanlık (1480-1522)*, (çev. Tülin Altınova), Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994, pp. 13-14

²⁶⁷ Other islands were Alimnia and Chalki, both very close to Rhodes, but the former was abandoned in the late fifteenth century. Tilos was a more significant and fortified island; Nissiros was a fertile island with two castles. Simi was a smaller island closest to the coast, and there were two very well-fortified, slightly distant islands, Kalimnos and Leros. Ibid, pp. 14-15.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 15-16

c) Act One: Possibility of a Campaign (January-June 1522)

The possibility of an Ottoman siege was genuine in the early sixteenth-century eastern Mediterranean. The beginning of the 1520s witnessed the change of ruler in the Ottoman Empire. Selim I died on 21 September 1520, and his son Süleyman was enthroned on 1 October 1520. At the time of his death, Selim was a feared and respected figure both in and out of the Ottoman Empire.²⁶⁹ He defeated his most ambitious adversary, Safavid Shah Ismail I, and conquered Egypt and Syria, abolishing the two-hundred-year Mamluk rule. Thus, he consolidated Ottoman rule in the empire's eastern borders and transformed it into a major commercial power in the eastern Mediterranean during his eight-year reign. Initially, his son Süleyman was considered the very opposite of his father. Venetian bailo at the time described him as “a learned, prudent and clear-headed man” who tended to leave actual ruling to his grand vizier Piri Mehmed Pasha, who also served Selim with the same capacity.²⁷⁰ He quickly proved them wrong. Even though a rebellion broke out in Syria by Governor Canberdi Gazali following Süleyman's enthronement, it was swiftly suppressed in February 1521. The new sultan first campaigned against Belgrade and conquered the city on 28 August 1521. This conquest alarmed the Christian powers, who hoped he would not turn out like his predecessor. By late 1521, reports arrived from Istanbul to Venice regarding the navy and rumours of a “new campaign”.

²⁶⁹ For Selim I's image in Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century see Çıpa, H. Erdem. “Sultan of a Golden Age That Never Was- The Image of Selim I (r. 1512-1520) in Ottoman Advice Literature”, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, Vol. 31, 2014, pp.129-156

²⁷⁰ Sanudo, *I Diarii*, 29: 391-2

i) **Earliest News and Rumours: The Ottoman navy (February-March 1522)**

The Ottoman navy was a common concern for the Venetian officials. In Istanbul, baili regularly used their extensive network of informants to gather information about the navy's status. Much of the information conveyed to Venice consisted of the Ottoman Arsenal's preparations and the potential targets of the Ottoman Navy during the sixteenth century.²⁷¹²⁷² They also utilized arsenal workers and sailors as go-betweens.²⁷³ The demand for navy information was high, sometimes leading informants to take extreme measures to acquire it. For instance, in late March 1522, a merchant-patrician named Zaccaria Trevisan climbed the walls of the shipyard in Istanbul and saw 150 ships in the imperial arsenal in Galata.²⁷⁴²⁷⁵

The status of the Ottoman navy was regularly commented upon in letters written by Venetian officials in the city, even if the main content of the letters was another issue. For example, the main focus of the letters written by Ambassador Marco Minio, who was in the Ottoman capital to congratulate Suleyman I for his enthronement and the renewal of the treaty between the two states, was the details of the ongoing negotiations. However, nearly all of his letters penned during his three-month stay in Istanbul also mentioned the status of the Ottoman Navy. On 30 October 1521, he wrote to his brother Alvise that the Ottomans would be back on campaigning within a year while the Ottoman navy arrived at the city to be decommissioned.²⁷⁶ On November 1521, Minio wrote that the Sultan visited the arsenal and appointed a new *sancakbey of Gallipoli* who was rumoured to be "a good man" as opposed to the previous one who was "an enemy of Venice". The Sultan ordered some of the ships to be put into repair, which was

²⁷¹ "The Imperial Arsenal (Tersane-i Amire, Ters'ane-i amire) was the administrative and production centre of the Ottoman naval forces. Established in Gelibolu (Gallipoli), it was later moved to Istanbul, on the Golden Horn (Haliç)." Bostan, Idris. "Imperial Arsenal", *Encyclopaedia of Islam Third Edition*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson, (2016-), p.142

²⁷² Gürkan, "Laying Hands on *Arcana Imperii*", p.71

²⁷³ Gürkan, Emrah Safa. "Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560-1600," *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 19, 2015, p. 123

²⁷⁴ "The Ottoman arsenal in Galata, established by Mehmed II (d.1481), and completed, with minor refinements, by his successor Bayezid II (d.1512), took its final form during the reign of Selim I (d.1520). In 1514, Selim I began significant expansions of the arsenal, in order to support an efficient Ottoman navy". Bostan, "Imperial Arsenal", p.142

²⁷⁵ "Referisse, come essendo in Pera vene a Constantinopuli e ave modo di farsi rampegar su li muri di l'Arsenal, dove ha visto *propriis oculis* e numerate galie 150 conze e lavorate, che altro non li manchava che butarle in aqua, et assaissime palandarie et che altre 200 galie levavase a furia in ditto Arsenal, che doveano esser in ordine di brieve." Sanudo, 33:269-70.

²⁷⁶ "Scrive, questi molto si gloriano di haver ottenuto Belgrado per esser loco di grandissima importantia; crede un altro anno ritornerano a la impresa. Heri gionse de qui l'armata di questo Signor per disarmar" Sanudo, 32:255-56. This letter was recorded in 17 December 1522 and was also read in Senate.

done in place of the rotten ships, and nothing else was heard from the navy.²⁷⁷²⁷⁸ On 29 December 1521, just before his leave, Minio wrote that there were no preparations regarding the Ottoman navy.²⁷⁹

Bailo Tommaso Contarini took over the reporting after Minio left the city on 13 January 1522. In total, he penned six letters until he departed for Venice in May 1522; Contarini continued reporting about the situation of the Ottoman navy. Earliest among them was the letter he wrote on 20 February 1522, the content of which suggested that the preparation of the navy had already begun by then. In this letter, he stated that the number of ships in the Ottoman navy was indicated to be around a hundred sails in total.²⁸⁰

Istanbul was one of many information hubs from which this news originated. Within February and March 1522, similar news pieces arrived in Venice from Corfu and Dubrovnik [Ragusi] with more details about their informants. From Corfu, two letters were written by bailo Andrea Marcello on 17 February 1522. In one, he talked about ongoing preparations conducted for the navy, which he heard from “a man who came from Istanbul” with whom Marcello conversed on 1 February.²⁸¹ In the other letter, dated the same day, he mentioned his informant as Caligero, who came to Corfu for provisions. This Caligero was friends with the *sancakbeg* [flambular] of Gjirocastro [Ergiri]. From him, Caligero heard that the Sultan made the previous *sancakbeg*

²⁷⁷ This official was the head of the Ottoman navy and was also called “kapudan” a word derived from the Italian word “capitano”. Until 1534, he was named after the sancak of Gelibolu (Gallipoli), where the first imperial Ottoman arsenal was found in the late fourteenth century. After 1534, he was called “Kapudan pasha” and elevated to *beglerbegi*, a higher-ranking position in the Ottoman government. In *I Diarii*, he was called “captain of Gallipoli”. Bostan, “Kapudan Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 24, 2001, p.354-355.

²⁷⁸ “Scrive poi, come il Signor a di... andò in uno..., fuora dil suo Seraio a veder l' arsenal insieme col capitano di Galipoli, ch' è capitano di l'armata; il qual capitano hessendo lì, li vene uno accidente, di sorte che fo portato a caxa, e trato sangue expirò; il qual era molto inimico de' christiani e di la Signoria nostra. El Signor à electo in loco suo capitano di Galipoli et sanzacho di Scutari, qual, **per fama**, è homo da ben. Scrive, el Signor à ordinato far alcuni....da aqua su l'armada ; *tamen* à inteso questo si fa quasi ogni anno in loco di quelli altri vien marzi. Nè di armata si sente altro.” Sanudo, 32:342-43

²⁷⁹ “Scrive che di armata non si fa preparation...” Sanudo, 32:499. Sanudo recorded this news on 27 February 1522.

²⁸⁰ “Come si atendea a far armata, et ara in hordine presto 75 galie sotil e il resto grosse, fin al numero di 100 vele. De li non se intende quella di Mar mazor dove voj andar, non si dice; però è bon star regardosi.” Sanudo, 33:110-11. This letter was recorded by Sanudo on 30 March 1522.

²⁸¹ “Come, per uno vien di Constantinopoli, parli a di primo Fevrer, si feva armata lavorando de di et di note *ut in litteris*, et era stà fato capitano di Galipoli, zoè di l'armata, uno di nation come dirò”. Sanudo 33:35-36.

of Janya [Giannina, Yanya] a 45-year-old Albanese man- the new sancakbey of Gallipoli.²⁸²²⁸³ On 20 February, Marcello wrote another letter. He said a man named Alvise de Coron, a citizen of Corfu, arrived on the island that day. Alvise left Istanbul on 1 February and arrived in Chalcis [Negroponte], from where he heard from Venetian ambassadors of Nauplion [Napoli di Romania] that in the imperial arsenal, they work in a great hurry with the Sultan visiting to oversee the preparation of two days of every week. He also heard that the Sultan wrote to his men to prepare the *sipahis* and made them ready to march when the order came, which Alvise did not know.²⁸⁴²⁸⁵

A month later, on 28 March, Agostino da Mula, the *provveditore di armada* who was also in Corfu, wrote that on 22 [March], he heard from Nafpaktos [İnebahtı, Lepanto]. On 23 [March], he heard from Giacomo Saguri, who acquired his news from Zakynthos [Zante] that they were preparing the navy in Istanbul, which would be out that year.²⁸⁶ Around the same time, a letter from Dubrovnik [Ragusi] penned by Michiel Pizignolo, a Ragusan citizen, on 24 March 1522 gave the number of Ottoman sails as two hundred, which he heard from Bosnia [Bossina].²⁸⁷

The letters reveal aspects of the news network in the Eastern Mediterranean. Despite the Ottoman imperial arsenal being located in Istanbul, other news centers reported similar news about the Ottoman Navy by February 1522. This suggests a well-functioning information network between Istanbul and these locations. Corfu was mentioned as a major port that was a necessary stop for ships heading to Venice, acting as a news hub for Ottoman news. The news also demonstrates Corfu's role as a hub for both Venetian (Zakinthos) and Ottoman (Ergiri, Negroponte) neighboring territories. Venetian officials in Corfu employed informants, including individuals from different nationalities, none of whom were Venetian patricians. The

²⁸² The governor of a *sancak*, main Ottoman administrative unit in the premodern period, under the jurisdiction of the *beglerbegi*. Able *kuls* (*slave of the Sultan*) promoted to higher ranks within the palace could be appointed as *sancakbegi*. Somel, Selçuk Akşin. "Sancakbegi" in *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, The Scarecrow Press, 2003, p.256

²⁸³ "Item, come eri, per uno calojero intrinsecho dil flambular di Argiro Castro solito a venir li a Corfù a referir a li rezimenti, ha dito aver inteso dal ditto flambular, che il Signor turco havìa fato capitario di Garipoli et di l'armata el flambular che l'anno passato fo di la Janina di nazion albanese, di età di zercha anni 45". Sanudo 33:36-37

²⁸⁴ Sanudo, 33:37. These three letters by Marcello were received in Venice on 12 March 1522, probably arrived with the same ship. For full letter, see Appendix I letter I

²⁸⁵ Sipahis were cavalrymen administering a *timar* in the provinces. *Sipahis* were originally *kuls* recruited by the child levy and trained in the palace. As representatives of the central authority, *sipahis* acted as administrators, policemen, and tax collectors in their *timars*. Somel, "Sipahi", p.271

²⁸⁶ "Acusa di aver avisi di 22 di Lepanto e di Zante di Giacomo Saguri, come pur si preparava armada a Constantinopoli, qual ussira questo anno." Sanudo, 33: 162

²⁸⁷ "...come a inteso per via di Bossina, il Signor Turco preparava armada di 20 galie sotil." Sanudo, 33:116

most socially prominent informant was Venetian Giacomo Saguri, a member of the cittadini class.²⁸⁸

The other informants were of lower social standing. The first of these, described as a “man from Istanbul,” whose profession and nationality were not provided, must have been deemed trustworthy by the bailo of Corfu, as the bailo reported the information to Venice. The fact that this informant brought news directly from Istanbul likely made the information more significant. The second informant of the bailo of Corfu obtained news directly from an Ottoman source: the sancakbey of Ergiri, described as his “friend.”²⁸⁹ This illustrates the close relationship between Venetian coastal possessions in the Adriatic and Ottoman lands bordering them, and how news networks surpassed nationalities and religious identities. This relationship was further evidenced by the location of the news obtained by provveditore armada Agostino da Mula and Pizignolo, who heard news from Nafpaktos and Bosnia respectively, both locations under Ottoman rule. Alvise de Coron, the third man employed by Marcello, presented a complex network of information. He reported news from Istanbul, claiming to have seen the Sultan on his horse multiple times, and from other centers such as Chalcis (Negroponte) and Nauplion (Napoli di Romania). Interestingly, he obtained news about the Ottoman navy not from Istanbul, but from Venetian officials located in another Ottoman city, Chalcis (Negroponte). This suggests that these officials, possibly ambassadors, had a more extensive network of informants. In this scenario, Alvise, due to his local Corfuite identity, was only a mediator for news about the navy’s preparation, which made him trustworthy.

Our analysis delves into the matter of accuracy. The information that Calogero brought to the Bailo Marcello is not only intriguing but also meticulously supported by the news reported by Ambassador Minio concerning the new sancakbey of Gallipoli. Despite Minio’s account being written earlier, Calogero’s account provided more details about the new head of the Ottoman navy, including his nationality, age, and previous occupation.²⁹⁰ At least two of these details (nationality and previous occupation) were accurate, indicating that the Ottoman source was well-connected and well-informed despite Calogero and his source being away from

²⁸⁸ Saguri, or Zaguri family was accepted into patriciate in 1646. Bettinelli, Giuseppe (ed). *Dizionario Storico-Portatile di tutte le Venete Patrizie Famiglie*, Venezia, 1780, p.161

²⁸⁹ The sancakbey of Ergiri was called a “intrinziicho” which meant “friend” based on an entry in the Dictionary of Venetian dialect on the word “intrinsecarse” which was given as “divenir intimo, amico, rendersi familiare”. Boerio (ed.), “Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano”, p. 293

²⁹⁰ It’s important to note the chronological order of the letters. Minio’s November letters, which were recorded by Sanudo on 10 January 1522, were followed by Marcello’s February letter, recorded on 12 March 1522.

Istanbul.²⁹¹ This situation suggests that proximity to the scene of action did not always guarantee the most accurate, reliable, or detailed news.

Upon re-evaluating the letter from Bailo Contarini dated 20 February, it is apparent that he mentioned the possible destination of the Ottoman navy, a detail missing from other letters analyzed during February-March 1522. He indicated the “Black Sea” [Mar Mazon] as the potential destination, marking the first instance of such a suggestion. Additionally, he noted that “he has not heard of that one”, indicating that by late February, the navy's destination(s) was already a topic of discussion in Istanbul. The suggestion of the “Black Sea” was just one among many, and as we move into the later months of spring 1522, we will see that the uncertainty surrounding this topic sparked numerous news and rumours.

ii) What news from Crete? - Destination of the Ottoman Navy

On 13 February 1522, Marco Minio took on the role of duca of Crete, arriving there directly from Istanbul. He held this position until late 1524.²⁹² Crete, being one of the most important colonies in Stato da Mar, required the presence of highly experienced officials. Minio's successful public career was a reflection of his expertise. Not only was he the ambassador of Venice to the Ottomans, but he also served as an ambassador to Rome from 1517 to 1520, which was a prestigious role. Pope Leo X referred to him as a “prudent and wise man”.²⁹³ Therefore, when he assumed the prestigious yet challenging office in Crete, he already had an established reputation from his previous roles, along with a commendation from the Pope. As the person in charge of the welfare of the valuable colony, Marco Minio maintained regular correspondence with Venice. His letters from March 1522 to the beginning of the siege in July 1522 focused on the position and movement of the Ottoman navy, as Venice was eager to know

²⁹¹ This new sancakbey of Gallipoli was a man named Palak (or Pulak) Mustafa Pasha (d.1533/34) who was the previous sancakbey of Yanina. This Mustafa bey was also the head of navy during the Siege of Rhodes and he was constantly confused with Mustafa Pasha (later known with the title Çoban, d.1529) who was the second vizier and *serdar of navy* during Siege of Rhodes, a higher position. Mehmed Süreyya “Mustafa Paşa (Palak)” in *Sicilli-Osmani*, Vol.4, p.1204; Emecen, Feridun M. “İhtişam Çağı'nın Başlangıcında bir Osmanlı Devlet Adamı: Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın İkinci Veziri Mustafa Paşa” in *Uluslararası Çoban Mustafa Paşa ve Kocaeli Tarihi-Kültürü Sempozyumu IV Bildirileri*, Kocaeli Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Kültür ve Sosyal İşler Dairesi Başkanlığı Yayınları 2018, p. 32

²⁹² Sanudo, *I Diarii*, 33: 43-44

²⁹³ “homo de prudentia et dexterità”. Sanudo, 28: 446

its destination and purpose. However, his letters revealed more than just this information; they also demonstrated the operation of another news network, along with other circulating news and rumors, while exposing the actors and their political interests under the shadow of an impending siege.

Minio's high position and the strategic location of the island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean enabled him to become the primary news source for the next five months. Ten letters from Minio have survived, four of which were penned with Sebastiano Giustiniani, the provveditore generale stationed in Crete since 1520.²⁹⁴

Giustiniani, a Venetian patrician who had held several important offices, had a somewhat controversial reputation due to his actions as podesta of Brescia and his involvement in events following the defeat of Venice in Agnadello in 1509.²⁹⁵ Despite criticism, Giustiniani was later pardoned by the Senate. In 1511, he was appointed as provveditore generale in Istria, where he faced disorder and criticism for his heavy sanctions. Upon his return from London around 1519, Giustiniani requested to be appointed to Crete, possibly to assist his relatives in Andros and Istanbul.²⁹⁶²⁹⁷

These two examples illustrate the differing reputations of officeholders in the Venetian administration. Despite both men holding high positions and having similar backgrounds, they had distinct differences. The Venetian nobility's reality differed from the idealized image of a united nobility working solely for the community's interests.²⁹⁸ Recent research has revealed that the nobility was divided and vied for government positions within the city and its empire, including Terraferma and Stato da Mar.²⁹⁹³⁰⁰ Positions in Stato da Mar often served as stepping stones for patricians like Minio, who aspired to attain the highest positions in the city. Others preferred overseas positions due to their mercantile and familial connections, as seen with

²⁹⁴ "Provveditore Generale di Candia" also called "capitano" was a superintendent specifically sent to oversee affairs in time of crisis. In time, especially by in sixteenth century this position had become a permanent one like *duca*.

²⁹⁵ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sebastiano-giustinian_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sebastiano-giustinian_(Dizionario-Biografico))

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p.152; Sanudo, 28: 478

²⁹⁸ For more information on the famous "myth of Venice", see Queller, Donald E. *The Venetian Patriciate: The Reality versus the Myth*, University of Illinois Press, 1986.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Iordanou, Ioanna. *Venice's Secret Service Organizing Intelligence in the Renaissance*, Oxford University Press (2019)

Giustiniano³⁰¹³⁰² Understanding these career ambitions and previous steps is crucial for comprehending the personal interests and beliefs of individuals serving as the Republic's representatives. Personal beliefs and reputation played significant roles in news gathering and filtering, as well as in establishing credibility.

(1) The issue of credibility

Marco Minio, as the head of the colony in the city of Candia, relied on information provided by various informants. However, he didn't simply pass on all the information without first selecting and commenting on it. As an authorized official representing the governing councils in Venice, Minio held legitimate authority in Candia. His responsibilities included carefully reading, selecting, and communicating news and information to other authorities in Venice.

As letters from different centres poured into Venice about the Ottoman navy and its possible destination, Minio's letters between March and July 1522 also focused on the same subject. The earliest two letters were written on 30 March and 10 April by Minio, Giustiniani, and the advisory council. In these, they spoke about the news [avviso] they had received from Istanbul about the Ottoman navy being prepared and ready to be out this year.³⁰³ Here, Minio shared his authority with the other officials. Giustiniani's duty as a *provveditore* made him focus on military affairs and the island's defence, whereas the council acted in an advisory capacity.

In some of Minio's other letters, he shared more about his beliefs, selection process, and informants. Two of his subsequent letters, dated 9 and 10 April 1522, can serve as good examples. The 9 April letter was personal to his brother Francesco, and he relayed news he had received from Rhodes.³⁰⁴³⁰⁵ The news pertained to the visit of an Ottoman janissary who had come to Rhodes with the envoy sent by Grand Master Philippe Villiers de l'Isle-Adam to the Ottoman capital.³⁰⁶ Minio obtained this information from two informants: The Venetian vice-consul of Rhodes and a "man of condition" whose name and nationality were not disclosed.

³⁰¹ He held very important positions in the city after his return from Crete in 1525 such as holding a position in the Council of Ten for several times. Mandelli, Vittorio. "Marco Minio", *DBI*, Vol 74 (2010).

https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marco-minio_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29

³⁰² For a better understanding of the complex world of Venetian maritime offices, career patterns and the importance of family ties, see O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp.48-56

³⁰³ Sanudo, 33: 191-92; Sanudo, 33:222

³⁰⁴ The letter was received on 3 May 1522 and recorded by Sanudo in *I Diarii* on 05 May 1522.

³⁰⁵ Sanudo recorded all letters of Minio from this period as summaries. Thus, this applied to all letters by Minio under examination in this study. If not, it will be otherwise mentioned.

³⁰⁶ Sanudo, 33: 224-25. For full letter see Appendix I Letter II.

Initially, given their shared social status, the vice-consul would seem to have been more credible to Minio. However, Minio expressed disbelief in the vice-consul's account in his letter to his brother, citing that it was "without reason". Additionally, he chose not to report the information from the vice-consul's letter to the authorities, which had stated that the janissary, acting as an envoy, claimed that the Sultan desired peace and that the Ottoman navy would not be deployed that year. Minio's actions show that being part of the same social group did not guarantee absolute credibility.

His other contact in Rhodes was referred to as "homo di condition," which likely meant "person of status" in this context, providing him with reputation and credibility.³⁰⁷ This individual relayed various news, including information about the envoy's return and Süleyman I's request for the Grand Master to send an ambassador to negotiate peace, similar to the arrangement during the reign of Beyezid II. The people in Rhodes were sceptical of this request and became even more fearful. Despite this, Minio chose to believe this news and mentioned it in his letter to the authorities in Venice dated 10 April. In addition to sharing the vice consul's letter, Minio also relayed the news from his other contact. According to this information, seventy *kadırga* [galleys] and twenty-five *mavna* [large galleys] were being prepared, and the Ottomans had ordered the *azaps* stationed in Marmaris [Flisco] to remain in place.³⁰⁸³⁰⁹ As a result, the Grand Master decided not to send an ambassador to Istanbul and distrusted the Sultan's words even more than before.³¹⁰

It is evident that Minio selectively chose which news to transmit, combining the parts he believed to be important from the vice consul's letter with the information he received from his other contact about the scepticism and fear in Rhodes. This indicates that Minio was discerning in his choice of news content, tailoring it based on both content and the intended audience. He omitted the parts he did not trust when transmitting the news to officials but shared the complete information with his brother. He combined the parts he considered necessary for the officials

³⁰⁷ Condition" is a Latin word that means 1- "an agreement, stipulation, condition, compact, proposition, terms, demand" 2- "the external position, situation, condition, rank, place, circumstances". <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=condition&la=la#lexicon> ;

³⁰⁸ Soucek, Svat. "Certain Types of Ships in Ottoman-Turkish Terminology," *Turcica*, Vol. 7, 1975, pp. 233-49

³⁰⁹ "Azap" originally meant "unmarried men" but in Ottoman military organization they were light infantry usually derived from Anatolian *eyalets*. Baykal, Bekir Sıtkı. "Tarih Terimleri Sözlüğü", Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi 1974, p. 19

³¹⁰ Sanudo, 33: 225.

without revealing his personal beliefs.

In letters written in April and May, it is clear that Minio's beliefs influenced his judgment. By mid-April, they started receiving news indicating that Rhodes would be the destination, almost two months before the Ottoman navy departed from Istanbul on 9 June 1522.³¹¹ In a letter dated 14 April to his brother Francesco, Minio mentioned receiving a letter from Chios dated 9 April. The letter from Chios stated that the Ottomans had built 200 ships and that the Sultan would allegedly pass through Anatolia to wage war on Rhodes. Minio noted that this information was consistent with other news he was receiving.³¹²

On 5 May, Minio wrote a letter with Giustiniani to relay news they had received from Istanbul and Chios, indicating that 100 ships were prepared for a campaign against Rhodes. They also learned from Rhodes that preparations were underway in the island and that they had expelled "useless people," indicating the islanders' belief that the attack would be on Rhodes.³¹³ The letter from Istanbul was likely written by bailo Contarini, who also sent two encrypted letters to Venice via Dubrovnik (Ragusa) dated April 10th and 16th. The latter was written the same day Minio received the letter from Istanbul. In these letters, bailo Contarini mentioned that 100 ships were ready, but he did not know the destination. Nevertheless, he cautioned Venice to be prepared.³¹⁴

Nevertheless, he cautioned Venice to be prepared. Suppose we assume that the letter from Istanbul to Crete was indeed from bailo, as it was likely due to its similar content. In that case, we can see that he did mention the destination as a "campaign for Rhodes," whereas in his letters to Venice, he claimed he did not know. Since the letters from Contarini and Minio were recorded in Sanudo as summaries instead of copies, it is possible that Contarini's second letter, dated 16 April, mentioned the destination. However, Sanudo did not catch that, as he clearly stated that he listened to the contents being read instead of seeing it. Alternatively, it could have been someone else who was notifying Minio from Istanbul.

³¹¹ Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, "Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü", p. 8

³¹² Sanudo, 33: 242-43. This letter was recorded by Sanudo on 14 May 1522. For full letter see Appendix I letter III.

³¹³ Acusano aver lettere da Constantinopoli di 16 April. Come erano preparate 100 galie per la impresa di Rhodi, e da Syo *etiam* hanno il medesimo aviso; et che a Rhodi haveano cazato fuora lo persone inutile et postosi in hordine. Sanudo, 33:271. This letter was recorded by Sanudo on 30 May 1522.

³¹⁴ "mandate apostata per messo fino a Ragusi e trate di zifra, benché mal si habbi potuto trar; ma scrive come il Turco fa grande armata, averà da 100 e più galie e solicitava a compirla. Per dove voy mandarla non si sà: ben è vero le zente da montar suso ditta armada, zoé asappi, non è ancor zonte. *Tamen* é bon star in hordine e far preparation." Sanudo, 33:244-45. These letters were recorded by Sanudo on 17 May 1522.

In various ways, reports were circulating about “Rhodes as a destination,” this information was reaching Crete from credible sources such as Istanbul and Chios. An example illustrates the level of trust in news from Istanbul in Venice. A ship owned by the Contarini family left Alexandria and arrived in Venice on 21 May 1522. It had departed from Alexandria on 11 March, and during a stop at Zakynthos [Zante], they received information that the Ottoman navy with 200 ships was at the mouth of the straits, prepared to depart on 16 April. However, Venetians did not believe this information, as the letters from Istanbul during that period did not mention it.³¹⁵ On the contrary, due to its strategic location and close relations with the Ottomans, Chios could have obtained this information before anywhere else. In a subsequent letter dated 17 May, Minio openly mentioned that they had sent a brigantine to Chios [Syo] to obtain “news with some certainty,” highlighting the location’s importance as a reliable news source. In other letters from Minio, Chios [Syo] appeared more prominently as a reliable source of information that transmitted the most accurate news about the Ottoman Navy and army movements.

However, Minio did not believe that the destination was Rhodes. In a letter dated 17 May, Minio mentioned receiving two letters from the Grand Master of Rhodes dated 2 and 3 May. The first letter from the Grand Master conveyed news he had received from the Castle of San Pietro (Bodrum) on 29 April. It stated that there were 30 Ottoman sails in the area and some infantry (azaps) stationed in the vicinity were heading towards Istanbul, while others were moving towards the Safavid border. The letter also mentioned that the Sultan planned war against Hungary, and the navy would travel to the Black Sea (Mar Mazor) to enter the Danube.³¹⁶ In the second letter, the Grand Master wrote that many Ottoman ships were in a hurry, but despite rumours that they were heading for Rhodes, no preparations were observed in Anatolia. He then repeated the news about the azaps.

After delivering the Grand Master’s letters, Minio added that he heard the Sultan set up his tent in Lüleburgaz (Lollivadi) on the way to Edirne (Andernopoli). From there, he was expected to

³¹⁵ “Gionse una nave di Alexandria di Contarini. Riporta, a di 11 Marzo parti et al Zante havia inteso l’ armada turchesca di vele 200 era a la bocha di Streto per ussir a di 16 April. Tamen, tal aviso non fu creduto, per esser letere di Constantinopoli di tempo che non patisse tal aviso sia vero.” Sanudo, 33:254

³¹⁶ Sanudo, 33:336-37. This letter was recieved in Venice on 10 July and recorded by Sanudo on 11 July 1522. For full letter, see Appendix I letter V

transfer to Hungary, and Minio always believed this was the intended destination.³¹⁷ In his letter on 24 May, he transmitted news from Chios (Syo). The Venetian consul in Chios wrote to Minio that the Sultan had to pass into Anatolia, and the army was waiting for him gathered in a place called Diggune (probably Dikili) between Bursa and Karahisar (Carasari). It was made known that they were going to Rhodes. After this, Minio said that they were receiving a variety of news (avvisi) daily, but they held the view that those in Rhodes interpret their news rather than those in Chios.³¹⁸

Minio finally accepted Rhodes as the destination in his letter co-written by Guistiniani on 11 June 1522, when the Ottoman navy was actually on the move and part of the Ottoman army had arrived in Marmaris [Flisco] just across from Rhodes.³¹⁹ This news piece also originated in Chios and arrived in Crete via Naxos [Nixia].

Minio's unwavering disbelief, despite evidence to the contrary, can be explained in several ways. One explanation is that the Venetians and the Knights of St. John engaged in wishful thinking. As Chapter One explains, rumours are often driven by the need to fulfil emotional needs such as wishes, fears, and hostilities. In this specific situation, there was a backdrop of war, an unclear target, and fear felt by both the Venetians and Knights of Rhodes due to this uncertainty. Both sides were aware that their islands could potentially be the target, so when rumours suggested a different target, such as Hungary, they may have been inclined to believe it. However, as early twentieth-century scholars suggested, these rumours were not divorced from reality; instead, they were interpretations of events influenced by the concerned parties' existing beliefs, which could have clouded their judgment.

This discussion brought us to a subjective interpretation. Minio firmly believed that the Ottoman campaign's target was Hungary. This idea was probably based on what he observed as ambassador in Istanbul in late 1521. While he did not witness any preparations of the Ottoman navy then, in a letter he sent to his brother Alvise on 31 October 1521, he wrote that Ottomans were very proud of conquering Belgrade as it was a location of great importance.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ "Come, per uno brigantin spazato a posta per il duca di Nixia, erano avisati a di 8 Zugno bona parte di lo exercito turchescho da terra esser gionto al Flisco, ch'è per mezo Rhodi; con altri avisi auti da Syo." Sanudo 33: 359.

They intend to return to make war in a year.³²⁰ In his *relazione*, which was presented to Senato on 8 April 1522 by his secretary Constantino Cavazza as Minio went to Crete directly from Istanbul to assume his duties, he mentioned a conversation he had with Mustafa and Ayas Pashas, the latter appeared in the text as Rumeli Beylerbeyi [belarbei di la Grecia] and a friend of Venice.³²¹ They told him that by conquering Belgrade, Ottomans had the keys of Christianity and further revealed to him that Sultan wishes to conduct war in Hungary. Mustafa Pasha also added that Venice should not be favourable to that king [of Hungary].³²² Hence, Minio probably made a political analysis based on his own experience and on his skill of reading political signs which he would have acquired by serving different courts such as Rome.

(2) News or rumours?

The Minio letters are crucial for understanding the type of news that was circulating at the time. Minio used different words to convey information about the destination of the Ottoman Navy in his letters. In several letters, he used both “fama” and “avviso” to indicate news and rumors. For instance, in the letter dated 14 April, the sail number in the Ottoman Navy was given as 200, consistent with previous letters sent between February and March from different locations, where it was always either 100 or 200. However, Minio did not comment on this information or the statement that the Sultan would pass to Anatolia. Instead, he used “fama” to indicate that the implied target was Rhodes. He mentioned that this information was in every “avvisi” they were receiving.³²³ In another letter dated 17 May, he again used the word “fama” to refer to the target being Rhodes. In this case, he used it to convey that this information was widely circulated news or rumor, as he mentioned that “even though it was stated as Rhodes, Ottomans were not making any preparations.”³²⁴

³²⁰ “Scrive, questi molto si gloriano di haver obtenuto Belgrado per esser loco di grandissima importantia; crede un altro anno ritornerano a la impresa.” Sanudo, 32:255

³²¹ “Beylerbeyilik was the largest administrative unit of Ottoman administration. The *beglerbegilik* consisted of *sancaks* and was governed by the beglerbeyi.” Somel, “Beylerbeyilik” *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.41

³²² “Li par haver ne le man le chiave di la christianità per haver tolto Belgrado, e dicono palesemente Mustaphà bassà, qual è belarbei di la Grecia, amico nostro, ch’ el voi far la guerra in Hongaria. El qual Mustaphà, parlando, mi disse la Signoria non li dagi favor a quel Re.” Sanudo, 33:315

³²³ “...per fama voleva andar a la impresa di Rodi; e questo si ha per tutti li avisi.” Sanudo, 33: 242-43. Also see Appendix I letter III.

³²⁴ “et benché la fama sia per Rhodi, *tamen* ne li lochi di la Turchia non si faceva alcuna preparatione nè de vituarie nè de cose pertinente a guerra” Sanudo, 33:336-37

In the first case, Minio used “fama” as a rumor because it was ambiguous information that could be either false or correct. In contrast, in the second letter, the ambiguity of “fama” as a rumor was used as evidence to suggest the information was false. While it was initially said to be Rhodes, observations made by different people in Rhodes and at the castle of San Pietro suggested otherwise. These examples demonstrate that a rumor did not necessarily mean false news; its main characteristic was ambiguity, as discussed in the previous chapter.

We can find traces of rumours in other letters as well. Shifting our focus from Crete, other sources of information in the Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic were also active during these months. Corfu served as the hub where news from Istanbul was gathered, particularly in letters written by bailo Contarini. These letters, written mainly by bailo of Corfu Andrea Marcello around April and May, conveyed news about the Ottoman navy, focusing on its numbers and the possible departure time.³²⁵ News from Zakynthos (Zante) and Dubrovnik (Ragusa), which also served as information hubs for news from Istanbul and neighbouring Ottoman lands such as Morea, had similar content. None of these letters mentioned the possible target of the Ottoman navy, and none transmitted a rumour as “fama.” Instead, they used “avviso” to describe the news they received. Could this indicate that “avviso” represented less ambiguous news?

In the previous chapter, the text discussed the original meaning of “avviso” as “to warn,” which did not disappear entirely in the sixteenth century. “Avviso” could mean news that also served as a warning, with greater certainty than fama. However, using the term “avviso” did not guarantee the absolute truth of the news received. The summary of letters written by the podesta of Budva [Budua] Marino Falier stated that he had “certain news” [*certi avisi*] of the Ottoman navy, which was said to be partially out.³²⁶ This news was contradicted by Sanudo, who stated that the most recent letters by the bailo of Istanbul did not give such information. This contradiction shows how specific locations, like Budva, remained out of the news network that provided the “fresh news”.

³²⁵ These letters were dated 16 April, 29 April, 21 May 1522.

³²⁶ “con certi avisi di l’armata turchescha, qual par parte sia ussita, *tamen* si ha lettere da Constantinopoli dil Baylo più fresche che non dice.” Sanudo, 33: 253. The date of this letter was not given, but given the distance from Budva to Venice, it was probably written in early or mid-May, as it was recorded by Sanudo on 20 May 1522.

By June 1522, the locations of Istanbul, Corfu, and Ragusa started to hear about the rumor that Rhodes was the target. In a ciphered letter written by the new bailo Andrea Priuli from Istanbul on 3 June, it was stated that the entire navy was about to leave and the rumor had it that the target was Rhodes.³²⁷ This letter arrived in Venice via Dubrovnik (Ragusa), where Giacomo di Zulian, a Venetian patrician residing there who regularly acted as a news source, added his letter stating that the Ottoman navy, which had left Istanbul, was heading to Rhodes.³²⁸ Interestingly, Di Zulian commented on what bailo Priuli had written in his letter, stating this information as “avviso” rather than “fama”.

This usage raises the question of whether “avviso” and “fama” were used interchangeably to indicate news or if it indicates the fact that news in that period was less clear-cut than the news we understand today. However, this did not mean that “avviso” and “fama” were the same concepts. As shown above, they were used for different purposes – “fama” indicating ambiguous and unconfirmed rumours more strictly than “avviso”, which indicated less ambiguous news about to be confirmed or already confirmed.

In a letter from Corfu, written by a member of the noble Atorami [Aurami] family on 27 June, the news was relayed from the writer’s brother, who had left Istanbul on 8 June. The brother reported that the navy had left the Straits by 6 June, and he speculated that the navy might have been heading to war with Rhodes.³²⁹ Here, neither word was used, yet the relayed message using the word reason [*ragionare*] stated that by late June, it was a sensible choice.

It was not always “fama” that was used to indicate rumour. In a letter written in Dubrovnik [Ragusa] on 15 June by Giovanni Capello to his brother Filippo, news about the Ottoman navy was relayed. Giovanni Capello left Istanbul on 15 May with other patricians and provided details about the number of Ottoman sails, the army, and essential information about the campaign participants. The letter mentioned rumours that the navy and army intended to go to

³²⁷ “Scrive mo’ in zifra, qual è stà mal possuto trazer, *tamen* se intende tutta l’armata era in ordine e in aqua, *videlicet* la grossa di le galie, et che la fama era per Rhodi”. Sanudo, 33:340. Sanudo recorded this letter on 4 July 1522.

³²⁸ Sanudo, 33:340-41. This letter was recorded by Sanudo on 4 July 1522.

³²⁹ “Che suo fratello li scrive esser zonto de li uno che partì da Constanlinopoli a di 8 Zugno. Referisse come l’armata era ussita di Streto a di 6 ditto, el il campo tragetato tutto sopra la Natòlia; et che haveano messo uno cadi in Syo, et se ragionava l’armada preditta tendeva a la impresa de Rhodi. *Tamen* in la Signoria non è lettera alcuna di questo dil Baylo.” Sanudo, 33: 358. This letter recorded by Sanudo on 14 July 1522.

war with Rhodes, Cyprus, or to take Nafplio [Napoli di Romania].³³⁰ In this case, it was used as subject that was talked and made known to many as the word meant to “make known” and it derived from the word “vulgare” which meant common.³³¹³³² Although this information was known to many, it did not mean it was confirmed news. The usage in this letter shows that it was part of the general talk, which also produced other possible destinations such as Cyprus and Napoli di Romania, important Venetian Stato da mar colonies. When this letter was known to others in the Venetian Senate, many feared and contemplated preparing the Venetian navy because they believed the Ottoman navy would target a Venetian colony. On the other hand, many in the Collegio opposed this and stated that it was headed to Rhodes.³³³

The same verb was also used in letters that arrived from Aegean. On 8 June 1522, Giacomo Crispo wrote a letter from Naxos [Nixia] to Giovanni Alvise Pisani of Venice in which he stated that they had sent a ship to Chios [Syo] in order to learn more about the progress of the Ottoman navy. Those in Chios stated that ten galleons and nine big fusta captained by Süleyman Reis [Salamagni] arrived there. These were considered the navy’s vanguards, and the army passed through Anatolia hastily. According to those writing in Chios, the rest of the navy will be all out by 10 June. It was commonly believed [*la divulgata*] that most of the navy headed towards Rhodes, although some believed the target was Cyprus.³³⁴ A letter on 3 June by the Venetian consul in Chios also mentioned the same events: that Süleyman Reis had arrived in Chios and went around İzmir [Smirne] to gather men and wait for provisions. It was added that the common voice [*La voce dil vulgo*] claimed the target was Rhodes, although Süleyman Reis was saying nothing.³³⁵

³³⁰ Sanudo, 33: 319-320. This was recorded by Sanudo on 23 June 1522. For full letter, see Appendix I letter IV.

³³¹ The verb “divulgare” was used in this letter, as it meant “to make common, to make known, to divulge” in the sixteenth century. Florio, “*A Worlde of Wordes*”, p.111; <https://www.wordreference.com/iten/divulgare>

³³² In M.T. “divulgare” was listed within descriptions of two Turkish verbs: “neşr etmek” (A) and “işa’a etmek” (A) and “yaymak” (T), all have the meaning of “to spread” but to a different degree. “Neşr etmek” was explained in Latin as “diffundere, divulgare, vivificare, resuscitare” and in Italian “spiegare, spandere, stendere, divulgare, distendere, dispergere, vivificare”. Meninski “Thesaurus”, p.5183. In this case, “to spread” did not necessarily mean to “make common” but more in the way of “spreading a sheet”. Thus, this word in the early modern Ottoman context was not used for publishing or spreading news; it acquired this meaning in later centuries. Whereas “işa’a etmek” was explained as “divulgatio, propalatio, diffusio” in Latin and “divulgare, propalare, diffundere” in Italian. In this case, it was a better candidate for “spreading news” as it acquired the sole meaning of “spreading news” in later centuries. Meninski “Thesaurus”, p. 229.

<http://lugatim.com/s/%C4%B0%C5%9E%C3%82A%E2%80%93%C4%B0%C5%9E%C3%82AT>

³³³ “Queste nove grandissime spauri molto tutti, et fo parlato in Colegio di far provision et armar il Capitano zeneral, far uno altro Provedador in armada, compir di armar fin 50 galie e sora tutto trovar danari, et mandar questi sumarii a tutti li Principi cristiani; ma si confortano quelli di Colegio, tenendo certissimo la debbi andar a la impresa di Rodi.” Sanudo, 33:320

³³⁴ Sanudo, 33: 362-64. This was recorded by Sanudo on 14 July 1522. For full letter see Appendix I letter V.

³³⁵ “La voce dil vulgo per tutta Turchia è per Rodi, et *tamen* questo Salman non lo dice.” Sanudo, 33: 364. This was recorded by Sanudo on 14 July 1522.

In this passage, we can observe that similar to Capello's letter from Dubrovnik [Ragusa], the word "divulgare" was used to convey widespread beliefs about the target of the Ottoman navy. As discussed in the previous chapter, "fama" was a word closely associated with talk, especially public talk. Even though it was not explicitly used here, we can see echoes of public discussion in the references to "divulgare" and "voce del vulgo". The information was not confined to private knowledge shared by the ruling elite of the islands or other significant locations. Instead, it had become publicly discussed information, making it more widely believed. This process gave power to "fama" – unconfirmed information that could be false or true.

iii) Politics of News and Rumours

News and rumours were used to inform individuals or states about ongoing events *and* gain political advantages. In the case of the Republic of Venice, they utilized their postal infrastructure and critical locations to dominate the news network of the eastern Mediterranean, using it to their advantage. The Venetian Senate regularly debated when and how to inform other Christian countries that relied on Venice for reliable news. However, this meant that the Republic could control only some aspects of news circulation. Other political actors could use the news for their ends once it was out, and the news could have been manipulated from the beginning, leading to discussions about disinformation. Examining every aspect of these processes was often challenging due to a lack of sources. This difficulty is also applicable to the case study under discussion. The first option, using news and rumours for self-serving purposes, is more demonstrable.

On 30 July 1522, it was confirmed in Venice that the target of the Ottoman campaign was indeed Rhodes. A letter from *duca* of Crete arrived alongside letters from Grand Master Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, who put the official letter sent by Süleyman I, who demanded the island's surrender.³³⁶ The Knights had already sent an envoy to Rome for help, who in turn sent his envoy along with the messenger called... di Martini from Rhodes. The papal envoy presented a letter from Pope Hadrian IV in which he prayed to Venice to send aid to Rhodes.³³⁷ However, Venice

³³⁶ The letter of Süleyman I was dated 01 June 1522. Sanudo, 33: 398-90

³³⁷ Sanudo, 33: 398-90

had its problems. Since news about the Ottoman navy accelerated in May and June 1522, the discussions in the Venetian Senate and Collegio turned to whether to arm the Venetian navy. Some feared that the Ottoman navy would attack Venetian colonies in the eastern Mediterranean, which was prevalent in the rumours surrounding the target of the Ottoman campaign. In contrast, others were hesitant to anger Süleyman I, while money needed for the venture was a constant issue of debate.³³⁸ When the siege was about to begin in early July, the Grand Master L'Isle-Adam had sent letters to duca Marco Minio with a knight of the Order called Antonio, whose real mission was to request the Venetian government: loan Gabriele de Martinengo to the Knights who as a military engineer specialized in fortifications and siege would be of utmost help for the defenders. However, Minio refused him, saying that Martinengo was currently working under a Venetian contract to fortify the defences of the island of Crete, which was also under the Ottoman threat. The knight was very offended and left, saying that without Martinengo, Rhodes would fall.³³⁹

In this episode, we see how the Venetians demonstrated both fear and diplomatic pragmatism when dealing with the Ottoman threat. It also serves as an example of how Venice started building its defenses effectively, thanks to its news system. Furthermore, the genuine concern for Minio and the island of Crete provided an excuse for other Venetian patricians in a different political context. In a letter dated April 30, 1522, future Doge Andrea Gritti, who was a procurator and provveditore general in campo, wrote from a location close to Bergamo. He mentioned that Odet de Foix Viscount of Lautrech and Marshal of France had requested 25,000 scudi for the French king. Gritti responded by stating that Venice had already spent too much and did not have additional resources. Venice needed to focus on preparing its navy against the Turkish preparations.³⁴⁰

“Ottomans as a threat” had appeared in other Christian courts differently. As early as 14 February, Lorenzo Orio, the Venetian ambassador to Hungary, wrote to Venice from Budin [Buda]. In this letter, he said they had received news [nova] that Süleyman I was in Edirne [Andernopoli] to conduct a war against Hungary. The Sultan ordered all his lieutenants [deputati] to be ready as he would march them in February. There were already many Turks

³³⁸ see note 284.

³³⁹ Sanudo, 33:417.

³⁴⁰ Sanudo, 33:216

gathered close to the borders.³⁴¹ Therefore, on 26 April 1522, a Hungarian ambassador, whose name was not given, arrived in Collegio and talked about the great peril the Kingdom of Hungary was in due to Ottomans who had already conquered Belgrade and wanted to rule over all of Hungary. He came to Venice to ask for money.³⁴² It can be understood that the ruling elite of Hungary, based on their previous experience with the siege and conquest of Belgrade in 1521, immediately considered the possibility of the Hungarian campaign as an indisputable fact.

On the other hand, in a distant court, this news' piece was used as a political threat. A letter dated 10 March 1522 written by Venetian ambassador to England Antonio Surian stated that some [in court] interpreted that it was Venice who was pushing Ottomans against the Kingdom of Hungary and so that they agreed to send help as [the King of Hungary] was brother in law of Emperor [Ceserae Maesta].³⁴³ This accusation was not surprising given the larger context: Venice was allied with France against Emperor Charles V who was in alliance with England.³⁴⁴

Another set of news' arrived from Sibenik [Sibinico] and Uljinc [Dulcigno] stating that Ottomans were preparing to move against Hungary.³⁴⁵ On 27 May, Alexandro Premarin, the bailo and capitano of Ulcinj [Dulcigno], wrote that an "important Turk" [un turco da conto] who came to work in Lezhe [Alessio] informed him that the navy was out in the Straits. A friend [intrinziho] of this Turk also told bailo Premarin that this year, the Ottoman navy would not be out, but instead, the Sultan would take care of the King of Hungary.³⁴⁶ In another letter, Andrea Balastro Conte of Sibenik [Sibinicho] wrote about his gift exchange with the new sancakbey of Skradin [Scardona], which recently fell to the Ottomans. This sancakbey told

³⁴¹ "Come era venuto nova il signor Turcho esser venuto in Andernopoli per tuor l' impresa di Hongaria, et haver fatto comandamento che tutti chi poi portar arme de li soi deputati a la guerra siano in hordine, perchè fata la luna di Fevver si meteria a camino per ditta impresa; et zà erano zonti assa' turchi a li confini." Sanudo 32: 495. This was recorded by Sanudo on 26 February 1522.

³⁴² Sanudo, 33:187.

³⁴³ "Item, che alcuni li havia fatto intender la Signoria nostra aver mosso il Turco contra il regno di Hongaria, aciò, per esser cugnado di Soa Maestà, li convegni mandar zente in ajuto; con altre parole, sichè è molto sdegnato." Sanudo, 33:133-34. This was recorded by Sanudo on 6 April 1522.

³⁴⁴ Setton, Kenneth M. *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571) Vol. 3.* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), p. 200

³⁴⁵ "Avisa aver, turchi tender verso l' Hongaria, sichè non è da temer che siano per venir in Dalmatia; et altri avisi.", Sanudo, 33: 238. The date of this letter is unknown, yet Sanudo recorded it on 12 May 1522.

³⁴⁶ "Come, per uno turcho da conto venuto per fabricar Alexio, ha inteso aver dito l' armata dil Signor ussiria di Streto; *tamen*, da uno suo intrinziho, che per questo anno non ussiria cosa da conto, ma atenderia a le cosse di terra contra il re di Hongaria. Sanudo 33:289 This letter was recorded by Sanudo on 10 June 1522.

Balastro not to worry about any harm that could be done by the Ottomans against Venice, as the Sultan wanted to maintain peace with them and intended to go to war with Hungary.³⁴⁷

Did the people in Venice believe this news? As previous examples from news networks have shown, the people in Venice considered news from Istanbul to be the most reliable while disregarding news that did not match reports from the Ottoman capital. In June, when this news was received in Venice, the reports from Istanbul and other sources focused on Rhodes and several other eastern Mediterranean colonies of Venice. Once again, this rumour about the Hungarian campaign was most beneficial for the Ottomans, as it helped divert the attention of other powers, such as Venice, away from their primary target.

The Ottomans attempted to use diplomacy and the Venetian news network to their advantage. Since there are few primary Ottoman sources from this period, it is difficult to prove this. However, several hints in Sanudo's entries suggest that the Ottomans used diplomacy to spread misinformation on at least two occasions.

First, they sent a janissary as an envoy to Rhodes in April 1522, claiming that the Ottoman navy would not be deployed that year and requesting the Grand Master to send an envoy for peace talks. However, despite this claim, the Ottomans were already preparing their navy in April. This indicates that the janissary may have been sent to distract the Knights and put them at ease, which had the opposite effect. Alternatively, he may have been sent to Rhodes as a spy. In any case, one of Minio's letters mentioned that after hearing about the Ottoman navy's preparation, the Grand Master promptly allowed the Ottoman envoy to depart and sent him to Marmaris [Flisco]. Then, the Grand Master and council convened to consider sending an ambassador to Istanbul.³⁴⁸ This episode shows that the Ottomans intentionally caused turmoil, and this was not an isolated incident.

The Ottomans also sent an ambassador to Venice, who arrived on 26 May 1522. His name was not given; it was only stated that he spoke perfect Latin and first came to Venice five years ago.³⁴⁹ This ambassador had already heard that Venice armed many galleys and inquired about

³⁴⁷ Sanudo 33:292. This letter was undated. Sanudo recorded it on 11 June 1522.

³⁴⁸ Sanudo, 33: 242-43. Also, see Appendix I Letter III.

³⁴⁹ According to Maria Pia Pedani, his name was Yunus, and this was indeed his second time in Venice. According to her, his first visit was in 1518, not around 1516, as Sanudo claimed. He was born in Modon as the son of Giorgio Taroniti from Zakynthos [Zante]. Later, he became famous as a dragoman of the Ottoman palace and returned to

this matter, which Sanudo received with great surprise. Furthermore, He also claimed that the Sultan did not arm more than sixty galleys and narrated a conversation between bailo Tommaso Contarini and one of the viziers. This pasha, his name was not given, asked Contarini about galleys Venice was arming and, seeing him not answering back, told him that his master, the Sultan, wanted to be in peace with Venice if that is what Venice wanted. Contarini confirmed that, indeed, Venice wanted to maintain the peace.³⁵⁰

This conversation served as a subtle warning to Venice to make them keep away during the siege. This ambassador also carried letters of bailo Contarini, dated 20 April 1522, in which bailo stated that the Ottoman navy consisted of only sixty ships. Even if they built more, only these sixty will be out this year.³⁵¹ Thus, their officials further supported the exact number the Ottoman ambassador gave. However, bailo Contarini probably wrote this information deliberately to appease Ottomans, knowing that it would be carried by the envoy who could read it as his previous encrypted letters, dated 10 and 16 April 1522, transmitted news that contradicted this. These letters, which arrived in Venice before the arrival of the Ottoman ambassador, claimed the exact opposite: Ottomans were building a great navy, which would be more than 100 galleys.³⁵²

The Ottomans used this as a warning and a display of power. They were aware of the effectiveness of the Venetian network, so they manipulated the news to mislead the Venetians. A letter from Minio dated 17 May serves as an example of disinformation. The letter stated that the Sultan had set up his tent in a place called Lüleburgaz [Lollivadi] on the way to Edirne [Andernopoli] and from there, he would transfer to Hungary.³⁵³ This could have been true, or it could have been a deliberate attempt by the Ottomans to deceive the Venetians and create a false rumor. These examples suggest that the news may have been manipulated from the beginning to serve the interests of the Ottomans.

Venice as an Ottoman ambassador in 1530, 1533, 1536, and 1542. Pedani, Maria Pia. *Osmanlı Padişahının Adına: İstanbul'un fethinden Girit Savaşı'na Venedik'e Gönderilen Osmanlılar*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2011, pp. 23, 173

³⁵⁰ Sanudo, 33: 266-67.

³⁵¹ "Come l'armata del Signor sarà da 60 galie solamente, benché fazi conzar di le altre, et per questo anno non ussirà più numero di 60, etc." Sanudo, 33: 268

³⁵² Sanudo, 33:244-45

³⁵³ Sanudo, 33: 336-37

d) Act Two: The Siege (July-December 1522)

The reports from Chios [Syo] accurately detailed the movements of the Ottoman navy. According to Ottoman sources, the navy departed from the capital on 4/5 June 1522, led by the second vizier and campaign commander, Mustafa Pasha. The army, under the command of Süleyman I, began its overland march on 16 June 1522. The navy reached Gallipoli on 7/8 June, spent seven days there, and then proceeded towards Chios [Syo], arriving around 20 June. They were warmly received by the island's rulers and stayed for three days.³⁵⁴ After stopping at the Ottoman-controlled island of Samos for several days, the navy attacked several castles under the control of the Knights: Kos [İstanköy], Yazıköy [Bedye], and Bodrum [Dünbeki]. Upon receiving orders from the Sultan to head directly to Rhodes, the navy arrived there on 28/29 June 1522, exactly a month before the Sultan's arrival on 28 July.³⁵⁵³⁵⁶ The official bombardment of the city of Rhodes began the day after the Sultan's arrival. However, skirmishes and blockades on the island had already commenced in July.

i) Early News: Examples from August 1522

The start of the siege changed how news was reported and disseminated. The event was known, but people were unsure how it would unfold. The blockade around the island disrupted the flow of news. As a result, the Aegean islands like Crete, Naxos, and Chios became crucial for gathering and sharing information about the siege. Even smaller islands played a significant role, creating an efficient micro-network of news around Rhodes. Two letters sent from Crete in August 1522, when the bombardment of Rhodes was intensifying, provide details about these locations and micro news networks and offer different narratives and information sources.

³⁵⁴ Avcı, *Tabib Ramazan: Er-risale*, pp.112-13

³⁵⁵ *ibid.* 114-115. The exact date given in this source was 22 Receb 928, corresponding to 17 June 1522, but it is faulty as the navy was around Chios on that date. The translator of the text made a note and added the date as 29 June 1522, which he took from another source, Feridun Bey's "Mecmua-ı Münşeat üs-Selatin". In *Ruzname*, the date was not given as the campaign diary followed the movement of the Sultan, who arrived with the army through the land. The arrival date, 28 June, was mentioned in a letter by Marco Minio dated 13 July 1522. Sanudo, 33:417.

³⁵⁶ Ottoman and Western resources stated the Sultan's arrival on the island as 28 July 1522. Öksüz, Mustafa. "Rodos Seferi'ne Dair Arapça Bir Kaynak: Abdurrahim el-Abbâsî, Minehu Rabbi'l-Beriyye Fî Feth-i Rodosî'l-Ebiyye (Gururlu Rodos'un Fethinde Mahlûkatın Rabbi'nin İhsanları)" in *Tarihün Peşinde bir Ömür: Abdülkadir Özcan'a Armağan*, edited by Prof. Dr. Feridun M. Emecen, Prof. Dr. Ramazan Şeşen, Prof. Dr. İdris Bostan, Mehmet İpşirli, *Kronik Kitap*, 2018 p. 161; Avcı, *Tabib Ramazan: Er-risale*, p.123; Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 12; Sanudo 33: 565-58; Sanudo 34: 63-66; Hakluyt, "A Briefe Relation of the Siege", p.80.

The first letter, dated 10 August, is from the Captain of Kos [Lango] to Agostino da Mula, provveditore di armada, who was located in Crete. The captain sent this letter along with one dated 13 August to Venice. In the letter, the captain provided news gathered from neighboring locations under the rule of the Knights of St. John, including the castle of San Pietro and the island of Nisyros [Nisaria], detailing the ongoing siege for July.³⁵⁷ The second letter, dated 22 August, was written in Crete and included news from Naxos [Nixia], Patmos [Palamosa], Genoa, and Naples.³⁵⁸ It was summarized, and attached to it was the translation of another letter, dated 22 August 1522, written to Duke of Naxos [Nixia] Giovanni Crispo by a monk of Mount Sinai of Patmos named Reverend Ygumeno. This particular letter described the ongoing attacks on the city of Rhodes within the first two weeks of August. These letters from Kos and Patmos are the focus of this section.

The content of these letters was similar, yet they also revealed different political aims. For instance, The Captain of Kos began his letter apologising for the delay in responding to de Mula's letter dated 2 August. He explained that he could not have provided news as their knight commander was away in Rhodes then, ending the letter with the phrase, "We are always at your service".³⁵⁹ Apart from suggesting an ongoing correspondence between the two locations, the varying levels of authority are also evident: the absent knight commander had better access to news. However, the Captain of Kos conveyed all the news he had and emphasized their strong relationship with Venice in various parts of the letter, expressing the desire to remain allies. The overall tone of the letter oscillated between hope and dread.

Monk Ygumeno's letter was respectful but cautious. After sharing some news, Ygumeno ended his letter with a warning about secrecy, stating that the monks of the island of Patmos were "in the mouth of the serpent," indicating their fear of the Ottomans discovering their correspondence with Venice.³⁶⁰ This caution shows that the monks of Patmos, acting independently outside of Ottoman and Venetian social networks, had different interests from the knights at Kos. They wanted to maintain their close relationship with the duchy of Naxos,

³⁵⁷ Sanudo, 33: 458-460. For the full letter, see Appendix I, Letter VI.

³⁵⁸ The date of this letter is faulty as in the text narrated two events were dated 23 and 25 August, so the date of the letter should have been later than 22 August. Sanudo, 33: 467-68. For the full letter, see Appendix I, Letter VII.

³⁵⁹ Sanudo, 33: 458-460.

³⁶⁰ "...Queste cose che habiamo visto scrivemo a vostra signoria, et la pregamo che siano secrete, perchè siamo in la bocha del serpente, aziò che non ne ingorgi." Sanudo, 33: 468-69. For full letter, see Appendix I Letter VIII.

under Venice's control, while also trying to appear neutral in the conflict to avoid angering the Ottomans.

In the first section, we encountered individuals from various social and cultural backgrounds involved in the news network. We examined how their background and reputation influenced their reliability and access to news. These letters also shed light on a specific group of individuals that became more prominent in news networks during the siege: eyewitnesses and spies.

In a letter from Patmosa [Palamosa], the primary source of information was Ygumeno, an eyewitness to the conflict. At the start of his letter, he mentioned that he had left the town of Rhodes eight days prior (corresponding to 14 August) and had been there for forty-two days, witnessing the beginning of the siege. He provided a detailed account of the attacks, including the names and positions of the Ottoman commanders. According to his report, the second vizier, Mustafa Pasha, attacked from the seaside alongside the corsair Kurtoğlu [Muslihiddin], while other pashas led attacks from the land: Anadolu Beylerbeyi [Kasım Pasha] and the grand vizier, Piri Mehmed Pasha, from one side, Rumeli Beylerbeyi [Ayas Pasha] on the side of Acussa, and other unnamed pashas on the side of the hill of St. Stephen. After several assaults, the Ottomans only managed to destroy the church bell of St. John and some parts of the St. Athanasios Gate.³⁶¹ Ygumeno also mentioned the arrival of ships from Egypt to join the Ottoman forces, specifying thirty-seven ships.³⁶²

The information provided by these sources largely supports the Ottoman accounts of the siege. According to these sources, the bell was destroyed on 10 August by the artillerymen of Ayas Pasha, a day after the arrival of ships from Egypt. It was reported that there were twenty-four ships in good condition.³⁶³ The letter from Kos mentioned that the primary informants were captured Turks who had left the Ottoman camp for undisclosed reasons. They were questioned at the castle of St. Pietro on 22 July and 2 August, respectively. The captured Turks provided

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² "Et è zonto Schaibei signor di Soria con 37 vele in soccorso suo, et sono molto bene armate et di zente non vi posso scriver." Ibid.

³⁶³ Yıldız, "Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi", p. 117-18; 121. "Bugün divân olup feth husûsunda müşâvere olundu ve kal'anın Çanlıkule demekle ma'rûf kulesi, Ayas Paşa kolunda bugün zir ü zeber oldu. Küffâr be-gâyet bi-huzûr olmuş. Paşa-yı mezbûr topçulara birer ra'nâ çatma kaftan in'âm eyledi." Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, "Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü", p. 13-14. "Divân olup Mısır cânibinden Hayır Bey'in yirmi dört pâre mükemmel donanması gelüp..." p. 14

information about Ottoman attacks being led from three points instead of five and mentioned only three Ottoman commanders: Mustafa Pasha, an unnamed Beylerbeyi, and Kurtoğlu [Muslihiddin]. Interestingly, this information did not mention the destruction of the bell and the arrival of ships from Egypt. This was because the captured Turk had left the camp around July 10th, before these events occurred. Additionally, the captured Turk provided new information about soldiers of Rhodes dressing as Turks and entering the Turkish camp, killing many and taking thirty-three janissaries as prisoners.³⁶⁴ This information was not mentioned in any Ottoman sources or in Ygumeno's letter. These informants provided the Knights with news that was unavailable to others, showing that even though all informants were eyewitnesses, the news they provided might differ based on their position and access. Furthermore, captured soldiers or spies found in Christian and Ottoman accounts were an essential segment of informants.

The letters highlighted an important issue related to timing and distance, which influenced the perception and analysis of news. The timing of news became crucial due to the unpredictable nature of events and their potential to change rapidly. A comparison with news from other locations can provide better insight. These particular letters reached Venice in late September.³⁶⁵ These particular letters reached Venice in late September. Two consecutive letters from Istanbul, dated 13 and 14 August, written by bailo Andrea Priuli, arrived slightly earlier.³⁶⁶ The first letter from Istanbul stated that there was no news from Rhodes and continued talking about the terrible plague that infested the city.³⁶⁷ The second letter reported that Süleyman I had moved to Rhodes with a large military force and a naval reinforcement from Alexandria was expected to assist the Ottomans.³⁶⁸ Although the content of the second letter was less comprehensive than news from letters of Kos [Lango] and Patmos [Palamosa], it indicated a well-established Ottoman news network, as the forthcoming naval support from Egypt was already known in the capital by 14 August. However, it also revealed that despite being well-connected during peacetime or in the months preceding the siege, the capital started

³⁶⁴ “Li nostri enseno fora vestili da turchi, et saliscono lo campo turchesco et ne amazano tanti, che non si sa il numero. Preseno vivi 33 janizari et li menorono in Rhodi. De nostri ne foro presi 3”. Sanudo, 33: 458-60.

³⁶⁵ The letter from Kos arrived in Venice on 19 September 1522 and recorded by Sanudo on 23 September. The letter of Ygumeno arrived 30 September 1522.

³⁶⁶ These were recorded by Sanudo on 15 and 16 September 1522.

³⁶⁷ “Come di Rhodi fin quella hora nulla haveano...”. Sanudo 33: 447-48

³⁶⁸ “Et che 'l Signor turcho era zonto al Fischio a di 18 Luio e passar su l'ixola con 300 milia turchi per haver Rhodi, e che 'l sperava di haverlo, et molte gente erano solo Rhodi, oltrà quelli andavano; et quelli dentro tiravano la artelleria rara. Et par che di Alessandria venisse un'altra armada a Rhodi con 10 milia combattenti.” Sanudo 33: 448

to lose its efficiency in the news network operating in the Aegean Sea due to the distance from the actual events.

Another significant example occurred with the news from Zakynthos [Zante] on the same day as reports from Istanbul. Provveditore Pietro Gritti wrote the news on 13 September, having received information from Rhodes on 2 September. The letter reported that the people in Rhodes had successfully repelled Ottoman soldiers and sank several Ottoman ships, prompting celebrations among the defenders on the walls.³⁶⁹ Sanudo, however, dismissed these reports as old news that should not be trusted. Another record by Sanudo on 15 August sheds light on why this news was considered “old” by 30 September. According to this record, the news was brought by a ship captain who had departed from Crete on 13 July and relayed what he had heard in the Creten town of Sitia [Fraschia]. According to this account, Rhodes valiantly defended their town while inflicting heavy casualties on Ottoman soldiers and sinking several of their ships.³⁷⁰ This news corresponds with the one from Zakynthos, indicating that this particular information was already known in Venice 45 days earlier, and by 24 September, there were discussions in Venice regarding the potential loss of the island.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ “Scrive haver aviso di 2 da Rhodi, come li turchi il hanno dato la bataglia et per quelli di la terra è sta amazù assi turchi e butà a fondi alcuni soi navilii, el in segno di alegrezza, quelli di Rhodi si hanno vestili di scartalo con colaine al collo, et sono venuti sopra le mure a mostrarsi alieгри a turchi; si che stanno di bona voia. È nove vechie: non se li presta fede.” Sanudo 33: 467

³⁷⁰ “Et zonse uno navilio con muschatelli di sier Alvise d’ Armer, partì a dì 13 Luio di Candia. Dice il patron, a la Fraschia intese Rodi aver auto 7 bataglie da turchi e aversi virilmente difeso, el amazà una infiniti di turchi, et aveano butà a fondi chi dise 14, chi 8, et chi 6 galie turchesche, che voleano tenir il porto, e aver frachassà e roti certi castelli di legno e reperi de turchi fati apresso la terra; sichè quelli di Rodi si portano valentemente.” Sanudo 33: 412-13

³⁷¹ “La matina non se parlava de altro che di queste nove di Rhodi, *unde* molti si dubitavano si perdesse.” Sanudo 33: 460

ii) The Information Vacuum (September-October 1522)

In October 1522, there needed to be more information about the outcome of the Siege of Rhodes due to the absence or shortage of news from the island. Fresh news was crucial due to the changing nature of the Siege as the Ottoman blockade around the island had caused desperation for fresh news as early as August. A letter from Crete in late August mentioned that the provveditore di armada Agostino da Mula had sent a commander to the Duke of Naxos with letters to pressure him to get news from Patmos as soon as possible because they had not received any news for several days.³⁷²

On October 17, two councillors arrived in Venice from Crete, stating that there was no news about the Siege. However, the *capitano generale di armada* Domenico Trevisan stationed at Crete had sent two ships to obtain news.³⁷³ Several letters from Trevisan arrived in Venice a week later. One of them, dated September 17, stated that the Turks had retreated after a large battle in which many Ottoman soldiers had fallen. The Sultan had also sent ships to obtain tar (or pitch) from Chios for his navy. However, Trevisan believed this news of retreat was “without basis” and sent two men to Rhodes to ascertain “the truth.”³⁷⁴

The second letter, dated September 27, carried news from the islands of Karpathos and Naxos. The content of this letter was similar to the previous one but with more details, such as the date of the battle that had already taken place (September 11) and the battle plans of Süleyman I around September 22. Although these two letters conveyed similar news from different locations, the author himself questioned the reliability of these pieces of news. At the end of the first letter, Trevisan clearly stated that neither the letters he had nor the news from the ship from Chios was certain, and he was expecting more letters to be sure.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Sanudo 33: 467-68.

³⁷³ “La matina se intese esser zonti do Consieri vien di l’isola di Candia in questa terra, sier Marco Manolesso qu. sier Marco, et sier Marco Antonio Basadona qu. sier Paulo, partino a di... Septembrio. Di Rhodi nulla; ma il Zeneral havia mandato 2 galie e una fusta per intender qual nova di Rhodi.” Sanudo 33: 482

³⁷⁴ “Come si diceva il Turcho aver dato bataglia a Rhodi, et esserne sta morti assai, adeo era ritratto lo exercito. Tamen non è con fondamento; et che l’havia mandi a tuor pegola a Syo per conzar l’armada, et che dito Zeneral havia mandato do exploratori poi su l’ixola, qual di hora in horo li aspectava. Di qual si saperà la verità” Sanudo 33: 487

³⁷⁵ “Tamen tutte queste cose non si ha por certe, nè per letere, si non a bocha per ditta nave che vien da Syo, qual die cussi haver inteso a Syo. Altro non si dice, si sia in aspectatione di qualche leterà overo bregantino.” Sanudo 33: 490-91

Two eyewitness letters arrived in Venice simultaneously from Crete, along with letters from Trevisan. One letter was written on August 26 by Gabriele Tadino di Martinengo, a military engineer who had been working for Venice but had left Crete to help defend Rhodes. The other letter was from Giovanni Antonio di Bonaldi, a Venetian ship owner active in Rhodes. Despite eyewitness accounts from essential individuals, these letters were considered old news when they arrived in Venice on October 23.

In these circumstances, other centres began providing various news items to Venice, filling the void left by unconfirmed or outdated news. Sanudo documented four of these occurrences in October, with only one being about the outcome of the siege. The other three contained news about the death of Süleyman I or the execution of his closest officials, particularly Grand Vizier Piri Mehmed Pasha. Rumors about the death of a high-ranking member of the palace, especially the Sultan himself, were not unusual during a crisis. For instance, in the fall of 1520, several letters from different locations, such as Cyprus, Corfu, and Germany, reported the death of Suleyman I. This rumour appeared during the rebellion of Canberdi Ghazali, the Mamluk governor of Syria, when Suleyman faced his first challenge as a newly enthroned ruler.³⁷⁶

In the case of Rhodes, the death of Suleyman was reported from Zakynthos [Zante], a location already out of the efficient network of news for this particular event, by a *provveditore* Sebastiano Contarini who heard this news from a ship arrived from Morea.³⁷⁷ The other two accounts were about the supposed execution of Piri Mehmed Pasha and Corsair Kurtoğlu [Muslihiddin].³⁷⁸ One was a letter dated 22 September from Dubrovnik [Ragusa] by Giacomo di Zulian, who reported back what was told to him by a group of people who had just returned from Istanbul. They stated that the seal of Suleyman I was at the door of the house of Piri Mehmed Pasha, who was said to have been executed due to a disagreement for the war.³⁷⁹ The

³⁷⁶ Sanudo 29: 587-89, 625-26; Sanudo 30:190-91. In these accounts, several letters mention the supposed death of Hayır Bey, who was the governor of Egypt until 1522.

³⁷⁷ “Vene in Colegio sier Sebastian Contarini, fo provedador al Zante, dicendo haver letere di 5 Octubrio, dil Zante. da uno suo. Come di li era nova, venuta per via di terra ferma, come el Signor turcho era morto. Etiam tal nova par sia venuta per la nave Coresa, qual zonse sora porto dicendo aver inteso al Cargador su la Moroa da quel signor turcho che il Signor era partito de l’ixola di Rhodi con grandissimo mal.” Sanudo 33:492-493. This was recorded by Sanudo on 27 October 1522.

³⁷⁸ Kurtoğlu Muslihiddin Reis, a significant figure in the siege, was the commander of the navy, serving under Mustafa Pasha. After the conquest, he was later appointed *sancakbey* of Rhodes, a testament to his importance in this historical event.

³⁷⁹ “Come per alcuni venuti da Constantinopoli, partino a di..., dicono esser sta posto il sigillo dil Signor su la caxa di Peri bassà, c si dice *etiam* l’ha morto per averlo disconseià la impresa de Rhodi. Si tien sia sta messo al Ponto. *Etiam* è stà ditto il Signor turcho esser levato di Rhodi et passà su l’Anatolia, dove preparava li alozamenti per invernarse.” Sanudo 33: 475. This was recorded by Sanudo on 6 October 1522.

other news about the execution of Piri Mehmed Pasha and Kurtoğlu [Muslihiddin] was provided by an unnamed shipowner from Marseilles to Collegio on 8 November 1522. While he made a stop at Corfu eighteen days ago – around 20 October- he embarked on a ship from Rhodes, which had left there a week ago- around 13 October- with letters from Grandmaster Philippe de L’Isle-Adam written for Pope and other rulers of Christendom. The knight carrying these letters gave the news about Rhodes to this shipowner. He told him four big battles had been fought by 13 October. The people of Rhodes defended the island valiantly, sending thirty ships of Kurtoğlu [Muslihiddin] to the bottom of the sea. Seeing they could not conquer the city, the Sultan had flayed Piri Mehmed Pasha alive, cut the head of Kurtoğlu [Muslihiddin], and the Ottomans retreated more into the island.³⁸⁰

Interestingly, none of these pieces of news was labelled as a “rumour”. Instead of using words like fama or divulgare to imply rumour, the word “nova” was used. In this context, “nova” generally refers to “fresh news”. Therefore, while “fama” indicated unconfirmed and widely discussed news, “nova” implied that fresh news during those specific months. However, it is essential to note that this does not mean these news pieces were confirmed.

In the oral account of a man called “Marseilleis”, Sanudo mentioned that the officials in Collegio did not believe this man because the letters he presented were not from the Generale. The Generale, Domenico Trevisan, was the primary news source about the siege then. The Collegio also doubted the news because there were no letters from the bailo of Corfu, who would have written to Venice about these events.³⁸¹

In a different account, it was suggested that Rhodes was conquered on 20 September. This information was heard by a Milanese merchant named Francesco Pellizon in Milan, where they received the news from Genoa, which had arrived from Chios [Syo].³⁸² In Venice, they initially refused to believe this account because just a few days prior, on 23 October, several letters arrived with details of the ongoing siege from Trevisan, as discussed earlier. Two other

³⁸⁰ Sanudo 33: 500-501.

³⁸¹ “*Tamen* non è letere dil Zeneral nostro, et quelli non credeno, dicono che il Baylo di Corphù harìa scritto qualcosa di questo a la Signoria, però che ditta marziliania siete 10 zorni a Parenzo per tempi contrarii, sichè di Corphù in qua saria venuto le letere.” Ibid.

³⁸² “Se intese esser nova da Milan nel Pelizon merchadante habita qui, come de li hanno aviso da Zenoa haver hauto da Syo, il Turcho haver hauto Rhodi a di 20 Septembrio. Tamen tal nova non fu creta.” Sanudo 33: 492

accounts, the letter of Zulian and the presentation of Contarini, also contained news that turned out to be false, but no commentary was provided about their reliability.

These examples show how Venetian institutions confirmed the news. Despite the said Marseillais being considered “a man of integrity” and a trustworthy source, the Venetian authorities chose to trust the reports from their officials, who were from the same patrician class. Therefore, the reliability of Zulian and Contarini was considered higher than that of the other two men, Marsillais and Pellizon, and no additional confirmation was deemed necessary.

These accounts also indicate that when there was no news from the event’s location, various news sources came forward with news and rumours. However, the news that did arrive was not entirely without basis. For instance, it is unsurprising that one of the rumours originated from Chios [Syo], considering the island’s position in the Aegean news network. Nonetheless, it was remarkable that news such as the loss of the Rhodes originated from this location, especially considering Chios’s relatively reliable status as a news source with connections to the Ottomans.

Several explanations can be offered. Firstly, around the specified date (20 September), a series of mining battles occurred, leading to two significant battles occurring on 21/22 and 24 September. The latter, which took place on the bulwarks of the castle, was one of the most critical battles. The battle on 21/22 September resulted in the deaths of many Rhodians as Ottomans set fire to their mines.³⁸³ In the battle on 24 September, both sides suffered heavy losses and the Ottomans were dissatisfied with the progress of the siege.³⁸⁴ Either of these battles might have been the one referenced in the news from Chios, leading to despair among the defenders as many perished. Therefore, if one of these battles was heard in Chios, people might have interpreted it as a sign of Ottoman victory, turning this rumour into a product of fear.

³⁸³ “Bugün Mustafa Paşa kolunda bir lağımı kâfirler kazup bulmak sadedinde iken, bizim lağımçılar duyup Paşa’ya haber eylediklerinde “Hemân od verin.” deyü emr edüp, ol hinde vâkı‘â od verilüp hayli kâfir helâk oldu ve hayli gözcü yeniçeri dahi şehîd oldu.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 19 “...a di 21 Settembrio il Turcho delle una gran bataia a Rhodi, qual fu zeneral, et faceano gran fumi et con questo orbavano quelli di Rhodi. El quelli dentro si hanno diffeso virilmente, in modo che’l campo si ritrasse un poco adrieto...” Sanudo 33: 508

³⁸⁴ This battle was referenced in nearly all sources I have analysed. Öksüz, “*Rodos Seferi’ne Dair Arapça Bir Kaynak*”, p. 162; Tabib Ramazan, *Er Risale*, p.53; 151, 156-159, Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 19; Yıldız, “*Celalzade’nin Rodos Fetihnamesi*”, p. 137-39; Hakluyt, “*A Briefe Relation of the Siege*”, p. 84, Sanudo 33: 513-14; 515-17; 565-66

The information might have been distorted during transmission. According to the oral account, the news was taken from Chios to Genoa and then to Milan, where the merchant Pellizon had heard it. This example relates to how rumours can evolve during transmission. In a context where news and rumours were intertwined, the involvement of more people in the transmission led to more interpretations and transformations of the content.³⁸⁵ In this case, only the merchant Pellizon was outlined as a participant. However, we can assume that the information underwent specific transformations as it travelled through different locations, with people holding different beliefs and knowledge about the siege. Therefore, the news or rumour might have started as “Rhodes would soon be lost” and transformed into “Rhodes has already been lost.”

The events surrounding the execution of Ottoman officials were also influenced by internal discord and competition among high-ranking officials. For instance, after making several trips to the castle, third vizier Ahmed Pasha, Beylerbeyi of Rumelia Ayas Pasha, and head of janissaries Bali Ağa were honoured with kaftans by the Sultan on 21 September 1522, showing the Sultan’s approval of their war efforts.³⁸⁶ However, just a few days later, on 26 September, Ayas Pasha was imprisoned for a day by the order of the Sultan due to accusations of negligence and delay during the attack on 24 September.³⁸⁷ According to another Ottoman account,³⁸⁸ Ahmed Pasha himself made the accusations.³⁸⁸ It is important to note that this account was edited in the years following the conquest and was not objective about Ahmed Pasha, who would later rebel and be executed in 1524. Nonetheless, it sheds light on his ambitious personality which was regularly mentioned in other sources.

During a war council on 11 August, Piri Mehmed Pasha suggested changing battle plans, arguing that bombarding a strong castle was futile. He proposed creating soil towers for gunmen to drive away the defenders on the walls, allowing Ottomans to dig mines. This suggestion caused an uproar and was opposed by Ahmed Pasha the next day. The grand vizier then applied his strategy, which ultimately proved successful.³⁸⁹ This episode hinted at an ongoing rivalry between high-ranking officials, especially between Ahmed Pasha and grand vizier Piri Mehmed

³⁸⁵ Shibutani, *Improvised News*, pp. 16-17

³⁸⁶ “Ahmed Paşa Hazretleri’ne ve Ayas Paşa’yla Balı Ağa’ya birer kaftan in’âm olundu.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 19

³⁸⁷ “Dîvân olup, Rumeli Beylerbeyisi Ayas Paşa mağzûb olup mahbûs oldu, yürüyüş günü sonra yürüdüğü için.” Ibid. p.20

³⁸⁸ Yıldız, “*Celalzade’nin Rodos Fetihnamesi*”, p. 139.

³⁸⁹ Celalzade, *Tabakatü’l Memalik ve Derecatü’l-Mesalik*, 88a, 88b. The date given in the source was 18 Ramazan 928.

Pasha, whom second vizier Mustafa Pasha supported.³⁹⁰ The Sultan seemed to act upon the perceived failure of his commanders, imprisoning Ayas Pasha and then releasing him a day later. Mustafa Pasha was dismissed as the campaign commander and sent to Egypt as governor on 25 October.³⁹¹ Ahmed Pasha replaced him and played a crucial role in the siege's successful outcome.³⁹² The implicit rivalry and growing frustration of the Sultan due to the inability to conquer the castle must have been known to both sides of the conflict, leading to rumours about executions, similar to news about the loss of Rhodes.

These news/rumours can be called interpretations of facts that suit the needs of the defending side, as rumours again fulfil a particular emotion: hope. The death of the Sultan or other high-ranking officials would have crushed the army's morale, which was already getting frustrated.³⁹³ Thus, the growing dissatisfaction of the Sultan for the failure of his officers was turned into exaggerated information.

As the contents of news articles differed in detail, we can also see a specific distortion of the information based on different people's involvement in the transmission process. While the news from Istanbul suggested only an "execution over disagreement" whose manner was not mentioned, other news transmitted by the man from Marsailles who had heard it from a knight from Rhodes mentioned the details of the manner of the executions. The fact that these details originated from a knight of Rhodes suggests wishful thinking as he was from the scene of the event where the siege started to take its toll on the defenders as well. Unsurprisingly, supposedly executed were the grand vizier, while the other, Kurtoğlu, was a much-hated figure among Knights and Venetians instead of the lesser-known Mustafa and Ahmed Pashas.

³⁹⁰ For the detailed account of Ahmed Pasha's rivalry with Piri Mehmed Pasha and Mustafa Pasha see. Şahin, Kaya. *Empire and Power in the Reign of Suleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman world*, Indiana University Press, 2013, pp.34; 42-45. Piri Mehmed Pasha was also the patron of Celalzade who remained biased against Ahmed Pasha in his major works detailing the period in question. Yıldız, "Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi", p. 34.

³⁹¹ "Bugün divân olup Mustafa Paşa Mısır muhâfazasıçün Mısır'a gitmek emr olundu." Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 23

³⁹² For example, as opposed to biased Celalzade, Tabib Ramazan praised Ahmet Pasha in his narration and applauded his efforts during the siege of the city of Rhodes, which was considered impregnable. Tabib Ramazan, *Er Risale*, pp. 164-169

³⁹³ In Tabib Ramazan's account, some soldiers were accused of acting cowardly, but the author, trying to cover the growing frustration of the camp, instead explained it by focusing on human nature being weak. Tabib Ramazan, *Er Risale*, p. 157 In Hakluyt, there is also a passage indicating the frustration and anger the Ottoman soldiers felt against Mustafa Pasha after a series of attacks in October. Hakluyt, "A Briefe Relation of the Siege", p. 86

These four accounts further proved how locations already proven to be essential hubs for Ottoman news, such as Istanbul, Dubrovnik [Ragusa], Corfu and Zakynthos [Zante] during peacetime started to remain outside of the news network during the period of the siege. For example, between September and December 1522, only three letters arrived from bailo Andrea Priuli from Istanbul. These three letters were about the decisions taken by Süleyman I concerning the siege, such as asking for provisions and men to spend the winter on the island. They functioned as supplementary news for the ones that were arriving from Crete.³⁹⁴ Due to their position as trade hubs, the other three locations transmitted news, which was carried by ships that stopped there during their voyage from Aegean or Ottoman-ruled locations such as Morea, yet these were also seldom.³⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, from September to December 1522, most news about the siege was transmitted via Crete.

iii) News from Crete: Domenico Trevisan and Informants

During the months leading up to the siege, Domenico Trevisan was responsible for gathering, analyzing, and transmitting news and rumours to Venice. When the Senate became aware of the Ottoman navy's campaign in the Aegean for the siege of Rhodes, they appointed Trevisan as the *Capitano generale da mar*, and he set sail for Crete on July 18, 1522.³⁹⁶³⁹⁷ As the captain-general of the Venetian fleet overseeing the overseas colonies of *Stato da Mar*, Trevisan arrived in Crete in late August and took charge of managing the news network. He monitored the Ottoman Navy's movements and the siege's progress. Until the siege ended in late December 1522, he sent nine letters to Sanudo and transmitted numerous letters from neighbouring islands and eyewitness accounts from Rhodes. Trevisan's primary focus was to gather reliable, up-to-date news about the progress and outcome of the siege of Rhodes, using a variety of informants similar to Minio.

³⁹⁴ Sanudo 33: 508; 533; 560

³⁹⁵ Sanudo 33: 507; 531; 561

³⁹⁶ Sanudo 33: 323;371.

³⁹⁷ *Capitano generale da mar* was the captain general of the Venetian fleet whose authority surpassed all officials of the overseas colonies *stato da mar*. Lane, Frederic C. *Venice, A Maritime Empire*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, p. 175

(1) Eyewitness Accounts

The initial informants, whose reports Trevisan had sent to Venice, were not just witnesses, but active participants in the siege. The significance of their reports was not just in their words, but in their direct involvement in the events. Their testimonies, whether written or oral, were a unique combination of viewpoints, including the author's and others. This distinction is crucial in understanding the different methods of obtaining knowledge.

In the early sixteenth-century context, the act of seeing an event augmented the reliability of information. In *I Diarii*, the phrase “to see it with his own eyes” was not just a figure of speech, but a testament to the high reliability of a news piece. Whereas, news passed “a bocha,” or from mouth to mouth, was considered less credible.³⁹⁸ Therefore, an eyewitness account that presents the event from a participant's perspective was a reliable way to acquire information. This shift in historical methods has been a topic of discussion among historians, with some referring to the eyewitness as the “authority of knowledge,” which increased the truth value of news. In contrast, others suggested eyewitness accounts gained importance during the sixteenth century through their use by contemporary historians. The authority of historians themselves gave credibility to the accounts.³⁹⁹⁴⁰⁰

Eyewitnesses have been important throughout history, especially in legal proceedings, where their accounts could heavily influence the outcome of a case. Eyewitnesses would share what they saw or remembered, which would then be spread as public talk or fama.⁴⁰¹ However, the reliability of eyewitness testimonies was often questioned due to the subjective nature of human perception. Just like the transmission and distortion of news and rumours, eyewitness accounts were influenced by the individual's beliefs and prejudices. Marc Bloch once said, “There is no good eyewitness; hardly any account is correct in all its details.”⁴⁰² This statement implies that instead of presenting an “objective truth,” eyewitness accounts reflected the personal interpretation of the events, leading to differing testimonies on the same subject. An

³⁹⁸ Several examples for the news “a bocha”: Sanudo 33:412-13; 490-91; 500-1

³⁹⁹ Wollina, “News and Rumor”, p.287.

⁴⁰⁰ Adorno, Rolena. “The Discursive Encounter of Spain and America: The Authority of Eyewitness Testimony in the Writing of History,” *The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Apr., 1992), p. 222

⁴⁰¹ Fenster and Smail, “Introduction”, p. 3

⁴⁰² Bloch. “Reflections of a Historian on the False News of the War”, p.1

eyewitness's social background and reputation also played a crucial role in determining the credibility and the extent to which their account would be believed and circulated.

In *I Diarii*, people from various social backgrounds and distinctive reputations can be found as eyewitnesses. For example, the previously mentioned monk Ygumeno and unnamed captured Turks were eyewitnesses. However, they were also outside of the social circle, which enabled its participants to be seen as trustworthy. Ygumeno's trustworthiness derived mainly from the monks' close relationship with *Duca* of Naxos Giovanni Crispo, who was a member of the patrician class and provided necessary credibility.⁴⁰³

In the case of the Turkish captive, his narrative was confirmed by another captive.⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, confirmation of more than one person from the same group was needed to deem a particular news believable. Other eyewitness accounts were derived from those participating in the defence since the beginning of the siege. These people also represent a broad spectrum, from Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L'Isle-Adam to several Venetian shipowners and merchants.

One of the most important among these eyewitnesses was Gabriele Tadino di Martinengo, the military engineer who would prove to be a vital asset for the defence of the island due to his knowledge of siege tactics.⁴⁰⁵ Sanudo recorded his six letters, of which three were written after the loss of Rhodes. Of the three written during the Siege, only two were recorded.

In his first recorded letter, dated 26 August, Martinengo wrote to Girolamo Correr, his benefactor and friend in Crete. Correr also received his second recorded letter.⁴⁰⁶ He tried to explain the magnitude of the assault and the diligence of the defenders in an exaggerated style, mainly focusing on the Ottoman mining activities he helped intercept.⁴⁰⁷ His second letter, dated 10 October, was more detailed. It listed the critical days of the siege with the narrative of the events that took place on those particular days, including the already mentioned battle on

⁴⁰³The Crispo family was accepted into patriciate in 1265 and were members until the family became extinct in the male line around 1600. Bettinelli, *Dizionario Storico-Portatile*, p.59

⁴⁰⁴“Havemo nova dal castel San Piero, come a di 2 dil presente hanno preso uno turcho vivo, che conferma ogni cossa *ut supra*, quelli del castello et tutti nui altri staremo forti per gratia dil nostro signor Idio, de loro sarano presi et morti et de nostri pochissimi”.

⁴⁰⁵ For his biography see [⁴⁰⁶ This was his second letter and there is a reference to his first letter in Domenico Trevisan's letter. Despite Sanudo's promise to present this first letter in detail, it is not the volume. It can be seen as demonstration of access on Sanudo's part. Sanudo 33: 458.](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gabriele-tadino_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/;Setton, <i>The Papacy and the Levant (Vol.3)</i>, p. 206</p></div><div data-bbox=)

⁴⁰⁷ Sanudo 33: 488-89. For full letter, see Appendix I letter IX.

24 September and another one on 6 October.⁴⁰⁸ This second letter of Martinengo arrived in Venice on 17 November, along with other eyewitness accounts from Rhodes, carried by a member of the order of St. John named Fra Giovanni, whom the Grand Master charged with delivering these letters.

Other recorded eyewitnesses were Marco Bognolo, Giovanni Antonio Bonaldi and the Grand Master de L'Isle-Adam, whose letter was mentioned but unfortunately not recorded by Sanudo. Both Bognolo and Bonaldi wrote similarly to Martinengo, listing dates and events, mainly focusing on the battles of the abovementioned dates.⁴⁰⁹ Yet these were not the same narratives. Martinengo, as the one orchestrating the defence during the mine wars, was writing in a first-person narrative focusing on his role in the battles, which he narrated in a quasi-theatrical way, the tone oscillating between dread and hope.⁴¹⁰

The other two accounts focused more on the collective spirit of the defenders. Bognolo's account had an ultimately optimistic tone, presenting the defence as a unified effort against their enemies, inclusive of the contributions of women.⁴¹¹ Bognolo, whose profession and social background were not mentioned, produced only one letter. In contrast, the patrician shipowner Giovanni Antonio Bonaldi produced three letters, which Sanudo recorded. His letters were directed to his relatives in different locations, and their dates (26 June, 27 August, and 10 October) show that he had been there since the beginning of the siege, witnessing the progress of the Ottoman army and navy.

In his first letter, he wrote to his maternal uncle in Corfu using colourful language to explain his presence in Rhodes. He mentioned that he was there to support the war effort against the Ottomans, whom he described as a “dragon set to devour the Christian population.”⁴¹² His strong Christian beliefs were evident as he referred to the upcoming war as “a war against a renegade dog,” possibly alluding to the janissaries' devsirne origin, demonstrating his

⁴⁰⁸ Sanudo 33: 512-13. For full letter, see Appendix I letter X.

⁴⁰⁹ The date of the battle on October was mentioned as 7 October instead of 6 in the other eyewitness accounts recorded by Sanudo. Ottoman diary of campaign also gives the date as 7 October. Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 21

⁴¹⁰ Sanudo 33: 512-13

⁴¹¹ Sanudo 33: 513-14. For full letter, see Appendix I letter XI.

⁴¹² “Non ne manca altro salvo la gratia del nostro Signor Dio, che ne vogli ajutar, dal qual speremo el suo ajuto contro de questo drago che pensa divorare el populo cristiano.” Sanudo 33: 386-87. For full letter, see Appendix I letter XII.

knowledge about the Ottomans.⁴¹³ In his second letter in August, he wrote to his merchant cousin Girolamo Bonaldi, based in Crete. In this letter, he described the attacks that took place between the 13 and 27 August, emphasizing the bravery of the defenders and the urgent need for assistance from Christian states due to relentless Ottoman assaults.⁴¹⁴ This letter is significant as it echoes the sentiments expressed by Martinengo, whose own letter dated 26 August arrived in Venice simultaneously.

At that point, the reputations of these two men were quite different. Martinengo's reputation was low among the ruling councils of Venice as he had left their employment to join the defence of Rhodes without notifying them. It was evident in his August letter that he tried to prove himself as a necessary asset to this island's defence, which he presented as an event bigger than himself or any other interest as the danger Ottomans posed to all [Christianity] was great. Bonaldi, in turn, had asked the authorities not to consider Martinengo a rebel or a bandit as he was working for the defence of Rhodes and Venice. It would be considered a "virtuous duty" in the whole world.⁴¹⁵

A similar strategy was also evident in the letters written on 10 October. Martinengo's letter was presented as proof of his virtues, listing what he did to aid the siege and complaining that his nephew was retained in Venice because of his "shame," which he tried to justify.⁴¹⁶ In contrast, Bonaldi again supported his case by praising how Martinengo fought and led the repairs on the bulwarks without rest, especially during the major Ottoman assault on 24 September.⁴¹⁷ As Bonaldi was an active participant in the defence, it is possible that these two knew each other personally. Martinengo was trying to change his reputation by pleading his case via two patricians: his benefactor Correr, who was stationed in Candia, and Bonaldi, who had his correspondence with other patricians. Thus, these letters were proof of the subjectivity of their eyewitness accounts, written to show the outside world the conditions of the ongoing siege while containing the author's personal choices, concerns, and wishes. These examples demonstrated that being an eyewitness made them valuable yet a subjective observer.

⁴¹³ "*Unum est, che havemo a far cum cani renegai de la nostra fede, et combatemo per la fede de Christo, dove se a Sua Maestà piacerà tuorne le anime nostre se rendono salve.*" Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Sanudo 33: 489-90. For full letter, see Appendix I letter XIII.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Sanudo 33: 512-13.

⁴¹⁷ Sanudo 33: 515-17. For full letter see Appendix Letter XIV.

he authors of these letters touched upon common issues. Both October letters of Martinengo and Bonaldi commented on the condition of the Ottoman navy. Bonaldi stated in his colourful language that the Ottoman navy was full of fear and deserted without ammunition.⁴¹⁸ This statement was supported by Martinengo's letter stating that the Ottoman navy was in bad condition and some ships had already left.⁴¹⁹ However, Bognolo's letter did not mention this news. This suggests that due to their respective positions, Martinengo, as one of the leaders of the defence, and Bonaldi, as a shipowner, had better access to certain types of news than Bognolo. In Martinengo's letter, he wrote that they were receiving many pieces of news [multi avvisi] about the condition of the Ottoman navy, which shows an existing news network surrounding the siege.

Another account penned on 14 November by patrician shipowner Girolamo de la Torre showed the extent of this news network. After listing the crucial days of the siege up until 14 November, the day he left the island, he added certain news he had from a ship from Patmos [Potamos], which arrived from Karpathos [Scarpanto]. Those on the ship stated that nobody [in the Ottoman camp] dared to suggest that the Sultan leave the island, and his navy was in lousy condition with only several oarsmen left on board. Because they spent their gunpowder during the bombardment, they took the gunpowder used by the navy.⁴²⁰

In the Ottoman campaign diary, several mentions were made of the ships and the lack of gunpowder. On 3 October, the Sultan ordered the ships to prepare to leave for another port, corresponding to what Martinengo wrote in his letter of 10 October.⁴²¹ On 1 November 1522, all ships were ordered to leave due to the approaching winter. A week later, they all left for the port of Marmaris (Marmaros).⁴²² The absence of gunpowder, mentioned as a significant problem faced by Ottomans in the October letters of Martinengo and Bonaldi, was also hinted at in the same Ottoman source. On 13 November, two ships from Istanbul arrived on the island

⁴¹⁸ "Questa armata diserta, senza monizion di polvere et artellaria. Et li morti di l'armata, perchè facevano voltar la terra a li homini da remo, di quali ne è amazati senza numero. Qual armata sta con paura; qual cosa è certa, se 1000 homeni havessero qui, si potria dir indubitata vittoria." Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ "...el l' armata soa si trova malissimo in ordine, per quello habiamo per molti avisi. La causa si è per la perdita, et hanno disformita de munizion per batter la terra, el horauiai sono al fine, per causa che la mazor parte de l'armata se sono partiti de zornata in zornata, che per mia fede, per iudicio de molti homini de qui, una minima armata li faria grandissima vergogna." Sanudo 33: 512-13.

⁴²⁰ Sanudo 33: 565-68. For full letter, see Appendix I letter XV.

⁴²¹ Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 20; Sanudo 33:512-13.

⁴²² "Divân olup Ferhad Paşa'ya gelmek emr olundu ve kışlamak tedbiri olunup, gemiler Marmaros limanına gitmeğe emr olundu." Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 23; "Bugün cümle gemiler Marmaros limanına gitdiler." Ibid. p.24

with gunpowder.⁴²³ While the Ottoman account mentioned these as inevitable everyday operations of an ongoing campaign, there was no mention of a “navy in crisis.” As the second case study demonstrates, Ottoman officials could have chosen to stay silent on the issue, a tactic they used while delivering news.⁴²⁴ However, the problems might not have been as drastic as the eyewitness letters suggested.

Bonaldi and Martinengo, in three letters discussing Ottoman navy issues, aimed to convey that Ottomans were close to exhaustion. They suggested that support from Christian states could have tipped the siege in favour of the defenders. Bonaldi mentioned that an additional thousand men would ensure victory for the defenders. Meanwhile, Martinengo indicated that many in Rhodes believed a small [Christian] navy could inflict great shame on them [Ottomans].⁴²⁵ These statements suggest that eyewitnesses may have been misinformed, leading to a distortion in news transmission or deliberately exaggerated Ottoman navy problems to provoke Christian states to help. Ultimately, comparing these different accounts shows that despite being under blockade, the defenders had an effective news network that provided accurate information about the Ottoman camp. This was made possible by another type of informant: spies.

(2) Spies

I Diarii and the official Ottoman campaign diary (*ruzname*) feature many individuals who willingly or forcibly switched sides and acted as informants. These individuals came from various social backgrounds, nationalities, and professions. The question arises as to whether it was appropriate to refer to them as “spies” in the Mediterranean of the early sixteenth century. Today, the term “spy” typically denotes individuals who are part of institutional organizations in most nation-states. However, in the sixteenth century, akin to news and rumours, the definition of a spy was ambiguous. Venice made an early attempt to define this term, which is not surprising, given that it served as the hub for various informants owing to its role as a centre for news. A spy was described as:

⁴²³ “Bugün İstanbul’dan iki gemi top otu geldi ve bir zencir gemisi azık getirürken küffâr, kayık ile arkuru çıkup aldı amma halkı denize dökülüp gelüp selâmete çıktılar.” Ibid. p.24

⁴²⁴ See Chapter III.

⁴²⁵ Sanudo 33:515-17; 512-13

“the sort of people that, in secret, follow armies and enter cities, exploring the affairs of enemies, and reporting them back to their people. And even if the profession is infamous and, if found, they are hung by the neck, these people are essential, as History and practice have shown.”⁴²⁶

Furthermore, in Venice, by the early seventeenth century, the word “spine” was used to denote enemy informants carrying a negative connotation. In contrast, one’s informants were referred to as “confidenti,” which, according to Iordanou, replaced the medieval term “explorator.”⁴²⁷

The etymology of the word “spy” in Italian and Ottoman languages supports the abovementioned definition. In Italian, the words “spione” and “spia” are derived from the Middle English word “spy,” which itself came from the word “to look.”⁴²⁸ Similarly, “explorator” meant a searcher, examiner, or explorer.⁴²⁹ In the Ottoman context, the word for spy was “casus,” derived from the Arabic root “cess,” which means “a wish to see and understand a secret”⁴³⁰ In examined Ottoman-Italian dictionaries, “casus” was found to be the equivalent of “spia,” “spione,” and “explorator,” while its synonyms were “speculator” and “nuntio captator.”⁴³¹ Another word used for spying was “çaşit,” which derived from the Turkish word “çasut” and had a negative connotation meaning slander.⁴³² “Speculator,” a synonym of “explorator,” meant a looker-out, spy, scout, or explorer.⁴³³ On the other hand, “nuntio captator” referred to a striving envoy, depicting the adventurous and dangerous nature of the profession and the envoys’ informant status.⁴³⁴ Therefore, a spy is a person who looks or searches for secret information with an ambiguous connotation depending on the context.

In the sixteenth century, spies were mainly associated with enemy armies, so war provided the best environment for them. Conversely, during peacetime, states sought to remain informed, especially about their enemies and rivals, leading to the activity of informants. These informants

⁴²⁶ Iordanou, Ioanna. “What News on the Rialto? The Trade of Information and Early Modern Venice’s Centralized Intelligence Organization,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2016, p.319

⁴²⁷ Ibid.pp. 319-20

⁴²⁸ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spy>

⁴²⁹ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=explorator&highlight=explorator>

⁴³⁰ <http://lugatim.com/s/casus>

⁴³¹ Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, 1550; Molino, “Dittionario”, p.421

⁴³² Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p. 1550; <http://lugatim.com/s/ÇASIT>

⁴³³ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=speculator&la=la - lexicon>

⁴³⁴ “*captator*” means the “one who eagerly reaches after, endeavors to obtain, or strives for something” <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=captator&la=la&can=captator0 - lexicon>

operated in secret and could also be referred to as spies. For instance, officials like Bailo in Istanbul or Ottoman envoys sent to Venice were accused of being spies despite their official roles. During the siege, officials and many other unknown informants were also active and proved imperative for the news network.

(3) The Battle for Intelligence: The Siege

Since the siege began in late July 1522, Christian and Ottoman sources documented the presence of multiple informants and spies. The Ottoman campaign diary, known as “*ruzname*”, had twelve records on spies. Some informants mentioned in “*ruzname*” were also documented in Christian records, but most did not match up. In “*ruzname*,” all informants and spies mentioned were captured or escaped from Rhodes. In contrast, no mention was made of individuals who escaped the Ottoman camp, except for one possible non-Ottoman spy. “*I Diarii*” and other Christian accounts referred to spies working for both sides. However, except for a few important ones, most spies mentioned in “*ruzname*” were unaccounted for, particularly in eyewitness reports. This absence may indicate that the author was unaware of the escapees or intentionally chose not to mention them, possibly to avoid portraying the defenders as weak. A thorough examination of these reports about spies can shed light on their role in an escalating war where both sides grew increasingly desperate each month.

When examining historical sources, it becomes evident that not every informant was labelled a “spy,” yet they did share or forcibly disclose information about the opposing side. In the Ottoman context, only four out of thirteen informants mentioned in the *ruzname* were referred to as “*casus*,” these individuals were spies employed by the Knights of St. John. This suggests that “*casus*” already carried a negative connotation, indicating an informant working for the opposing side. These individuals were dispatched to gather intelligence on the Ottoman camp but were apprehended by the Ottomans.

First of these were two men captured at the Mustafa Pasha flank on 11 August, who informed the Ottomans [*haber verdi*] that the situation of defenders had changed due to [Ottoman]

bombardment.⁴³⁵ The second *casus* was caught on 8 September, though this time the spy was a Muslim renegade [*mürted*] who was interrogated [*istifsar*] and revealed about the battle plans of the defenders.⁴³⁶ While knights sent these men out, Ottomans were not sitting idly. On 15 August, a physician named “John Baptist” working for the Knights was revealed to be a spy working for Ottomans and was executed.⁴³⁷ On 19 August, Knights organised a raid against Ottomans as three hundred men left the castle and attacked the flank of Piri Mehmed Pasha.⁴³⁸ According to *ruzname*, this attack was to “capture soldiers” to gain information from them.⁴³⁹ In this case, it was again Ottomans who captured several soldiers while defenders were retreating: two of them were executed by sword, and one was taken as captive.

In this account, a particular word was used for the informant: *dil*. This was a common word in Ottoman Turkish to indicate an enemy captive used as a spy.⁴⁴⁰ his word, unlike *casus*, was usually used for captives used by Ottomans to acquire information on their enemies. This example shows that it can also be used for the opposing side, suggesting a neutral connotation, unlike *casus*. This was also an excellent example of the importance of up-to-date intelligence, especially during a siege⁴⁴¹

Several days after this attack, two men had left the castle; one was an “infidel bombardier” who submitted to Ottomans and provided them with news about the defence.⁴⁴²⁴⁴³ The fact that

⁴³⁵ “Mustafa Paşa kolunda iki cäsüs tutulup kethüdâsı dîvâna getürdü ki birisi mukaddemâ bizim askerden kaçup varmış imiş. Melâ’inin “hava’î topdan ahvâli ziyâde diger-gündur.” deyü haber verdi.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 14

⁴³⁶ “Bir mürted cäsüs tutulup ahvâl-i küffârdan istifsâr olundukda “sâbikan od verilen lağım havaya perrân oldukda, cemî’-i hisâr dâ’iresinde olan lağımlara od verilüp, yürüyüş ederler zannedüp iç kal’a’ya revân olup, sehl zemân geçmedin def’i yerlü yerlerine gelüp cenge şürû’ eylediler.” deyü haber verdi.” Ibid.17

⁴³⁷ “The 15. day of the sayd moneth was knowen and taken for a traitor, Messire Iohn Baptista, the physicion aforesayd, which confessed his euill and diuelish doings, and had his head striken of.” Hakluyt, “*A Brieffe Relation of the Siege*”, p. 80. I can not be sure of the name of this phycisian as this was an English translation of the original French narration. This man was not mentioned in Sanudo.

⁴³⁸ Yıldız, “*Celalzade’nin Rodos Fetihnamesi*”, pp. 125-26

⁴³⁹ “Ceng-i azım olup Anadolu kolunda üç yüz mikdârı keferê Pîri Paşa’nın topların basup, dil almak kasdına, kal’adan taşra çıkup top hendeğine müteveccih oldukları gibi, bu cânibden dahi hücum olunup, melâ’in karâr edemeyüp yine kal’aya firâr etdiklerinde, iki baş kesilüp bir dil alındı.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 15

⁴⁴⁰ For the definition of *dil*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/casus>. The word *dil* means “tongue” and “language”. This usage of spy was not found in either dictionary, Meninski and Molino. This absence can indicate the limitations of these dictionaries as this is a word common in official Ottoman documents that were not accessible by all, or the word had lost this particular meaning by the seventeenth century.

⁴⁴¹ For other sixteenth century examples of Ottoman counter-intelligence and usage of *dil* in other context see. Gürkan, “The Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence”, pp. 1–38.

⁴⁴² “Bugün keferê topçularından bir şahıs gelüp itâ’at eyledi.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p.

15

⁴⁴³ “İçerüden bir kimesne kaçup haber verdi.” Ibid. 16

these men were called neither *casus* nor *dil* proved that these words were used for a specific type of informant.⁴⁴⁴ On the other hand, in *I Diarii* nor any other Christian sources, usual words for a spy, such as *spione* or *explorator*, were used.

It was not always Ottoman or Rhodian soldiers who acted as informants. On September 19, a captive within the castle of Rhodes, whose identity was not revealed, sent a letter to the Ottomans with his arrow, stating that the defenders did not have the power to continue defending the castle. This captive also exposed a spy working for Rhodes: a sailor named Pir Ali, who had arrived with the Egyptian navy in August. Ahmed Pasha personally investigated this man.⁴⁴⁵ Although the author of the *ruzname* criticised this man, he was not labelled as a spy, possibly because it still needed to be proven by Ahmed Pasha, who represented the authority. This case demonstrates a rare Ottoman example of credibility—although the captive man wrote the information he acquired within the castle, he was not immediately considered trustworthy. Instead, the Ottomans confirmed his information by relying on their authority. This example is similar to the cases in *I Diarii*, where most informants' news had to be confirmed with people in higher positions and reputations, such as a patrician. In this case, it was a member of the Ottoman ruling elite.

Some of the information these informants/spies provided was found in both Ottoman and Christian records. On October 7, a ship arrived from Otranto with news that help had been dispatched from Naples.⁴⁴⁶ A few days later, on October 10, the *ruzname* recorded that two spies were captured from a castle called Tahtalı. These spies confessed that a ship had arrived from the west (Frengistan) to the castle, informing them that a “navy of infidels” was on its way to help Rhodes.⁴⁴⁷ This example is one of the few cases where two accounts were corroborated

⁴⁴⁴ The other instance of *dil* in *ruzname* also proves that it was only used for captive enemy soldiers employed as informants. “Kal‘a-yı Tahtalı’dan bir dil getürdiler. Haber soruldukda “Rodos keferesinden dâ’imâ kayak ge- lip bizden top ve tüfenk talep eylerler.” deyü haber verdi.” Ibid.p.23

⁴⁴⁵ “Bugün kal‘a içinden bir tutsak, okuyla bir mektûb atup “Küffârın ahvâli diger-gündür, kat‘â mecâlleri kalmadı.” ve Hayır Bey’in gemileriyle gelen Pîr Ali nâm bahrî şahıs ‘Taşrada her ne kaziyye olursa [302a] küffâra tenbîh eder.” deyü yazmış. Bugünden Ahmed Paşa bi-nefsihî teftîş etmeğe başladı.” Ibid. p.18

⁴⁴⁶ “A di 7 Octubrio. Vene la fusta da Otranto et portò nova che 'I soccorso era partito da Napoli.” Sanudo 33: 565-68.

⁴⁴⁷ “Bugün Tahtalı nâm kal‘a keferesinden iki nefer cäsûs kâfir tutuldu. Frengistan’dan kal‘aya bir kayak geldüğü ve an-karîb küffârın donanması gelür deyü haber verdi.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 21. I did not manage to find where this “Tahtalı” castle was, it was probably somewhere close to the city of Rhodes.

entirely. The news was accurate as there were ships in Naples being prepared to aid Rhodes, but they never managed to set sail due to a lack of funds.⁴⁴⁸

On October 10, Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L'Isle-Adam and other eyewitnesses wrote several letters, which arrived in Crete around October 20. These letters, along with a letter from Domenico Trevisan, reached Venice on November 17. In summary, these letters stated that a Turk had escaped from the Ottoman camp, converted to Christianity, and claimed that Ottomans were ill-treated. At the same time, Mustafa and Piri Mehmed Pashas were injured by gunfire. The same letter also stated that a man from Rhodes escaped to the Ottoman camp and claimed that the bombardment should focus on the side of the Grand Master's palace and the hospital as they were the weakest points of the castle's defence.⁴⁴⁹

The escaped Turk is not mentioned in any Ottoman sources, and neither Mustafa nor Piri Mehmed Pasha were injured by a gun. The only prominent Ottoman official injured during the siege was Bali Bey, the ağa of janissaries.⁴⁵⁰ This happened on 12 October, two days after the letters from Crete were written, so it's unlikely that Bali Bey was the one mentioned in the letters. One possibility was recorded on 28 September, stating that the grand vizier Piri Mehmed Pasha was ill with his feet.⁴⁵¹ It is possible that the informant exaggerated Piri Mehmed Pasha's illness to gain confidence or lied, as it was difficult for those in the castle to be accurately informed about the high-ranking officials. Another possibility is that he could have acted as a double spy, actually entering to gain information for the Ottomans.

The following report was false, but we have more information about the individual who fled to the Ottoman camp. According to a ruzname, on 29 September, a Christian bombardier from Morea [Moralı] pledged his loyalty to the Ottomans and converted to Islam.⁴⁵² He provided information on the city's defence, the number of casualties, and the morale of the people, which was low following a previous assault, likely the one on September 24.⁴⁵³ Based on the date and

⁴⁴⁸ "Et come a Napoli era zonto 3 carachie con 1000 fanti per andar al soccorso di Rhodi a di 15 Octubrio, e che li fanti si andavano disfantando, non havendo danari. *Unde*, il Papa è disperato per non veder il modo di mandarle a Rhodi, nè haver danari, perché a Roma più non si fa nulla." Sanudo 33: 523; also see Appendix I letter VIII.

⁴⁴⁹ "et di uno fuzito di Rhodi andato in campo dil Turcho a dirli bombardi da la parte dil palazo e di l'hospital ch'è il più debil locho; et altre particularità." Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ "... Yeniçeri Ağası Balı Ağa mecrûh oldu..". Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 21

⁴⁵¹ "Ayas Paşa, cemî'-i Rumeli askeri ile Pîrî Paşa gedüğüne varmak emr olundu, Pîrî Paşa'nın ayak- ları zahmet edüp marîz olduğu için." Ibid. p. 20

⁴⁵² This man was called "Albanese" in another source. Hakluyt, "*A Briefe Relation of the Siege*", p. 85

⁴⁵³ "Bugün kal'adan Moralu bir topçu kâfir çıkup gelüp itâ'at eyledi ve İslâm'a geldi. "*Sâbıkan olan yürüyüşde, bir beyleri cehenneme mülâkî olup, bir beyleri dahi mecrûhdur ve üç yüz mikdârı kefere, ol gün toprağa düşüp topçu ve tüfenkçibaşısı dahi mecruhlardır.*" deyü haber verdi. Mezbûra hil'at verilüp istimâet olundu." Ertaş and

the valuable information he provided about the city's defence, he is likely the man mentioned in the letters of the Grand Master. This individual was extraordinary among the informants mentioned in Ottoman sources. He was awarded a hil'at, a ceremonial robe given to statesmen, foreign ambassadors, and those who performed vital deeds for the state and pledged their loyalty to the Sultan.⁴⁵⁴ While there were others who brought intelligence about the defense and pledged their loyalty [itaat eyledi], this man was officially pardoned [istimalet olundu] and particularly honoured by Ottomans. These actions indicate that the information he provided was crucial. Furthermore, the Ottomans considered the information credible even though he held a low position in the defence ranks. His voluntary conversion to Islam likely made him more trustworthy in the eyes of the Ottomans, as he was particularly praised for this act.⁴⁵⁵ This example also provides insight into the Ottoman credibility system in the early decades of the sixteenth century.

The identity of an informant was important, especially if that person was a high-standing member of society. Even though he was never called a spy, the most famous spy of the siege was a knight called Andrew Marall, a high-ranking council member.⁴⁵⁶ An eyewitness account dated 14 November stated that this knight was discovered to be a traitor [*traditor*] on 31 October, thrown into the tower of San Niccolo and was quartered on 5 November. His head was put on an entrance.⁴⁵⁷ In another letter penned in Crete by Giovanni Bragadin to brother-in-law Zaccaria Trevisan on 27 November, he stated that he was a Portuguese knight who was the "first man of Rhodes".⁴⁵⁸ The most detailed account was provided by an anonymous letter written in Crete on the same day. According to this letter, Marall was a Spanish knight, aged 70, who proved himself to be very valuable against the Muslims tempted by the Devil and commenced betraying knights to the Sultan, which was discovered with the grace of God. He was quartered, and so were his other three companions [executed].⁴⁵⁹ He was also mentioned in *ruzname* as a lord of the castle [*kal'a beylerinden biri*] who wanted to pledge his obedience

Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 20 The information this man had provided to Ottomans was also narrated in detail in Öksüz, "*Rodos Seferi'ne Dair Arapça Bir Kaynak*", p. 162.

⁴⁵⁴ For further information about *hil'at*, see <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hilat-2-osmanlilarda-hilat>

⁴⁵⁵ Yıldız, "*Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi*", pp. 139-140

⁴⁵⁶ Hakluyt, "*A Briefe Relation of the Siege*", p. 87

⁴⁵⁷ "A di 31. Fo retenuto fra...armirao et menato in castel di San Nicolò per traditor. A di 5 Novembrio. Fo squartato e messo la testa sul so' belguardo e li quarti a la posta, e fo discoperto per uno suo servitor, che trazeva fuora le letere, al qual fo tajà la testa." Sanudo 33: 565-68.

⁴⁵⁸ "Hanno scoperto uno tratato che menava un ferier portogalese, qual era el primo omo di Rodi, et era cazudo Gran Maestro da costui che è adesso, di 2 balote, et li hanno taiatola testa" Sanudo: 569-70. For full text, see Appendix I Letter XXIII.

⁴⁵⁹ Sanudo 33: 570-73. For full text, see Appendix I Letter XVII.

to Sultan. He was discovered and quartered, and body parts were put and exhibited on different breaches⁴⁶⁰

It is unclear from these records whether he was betraying knights for an extended period. Nevertheless, it was obvious that he had his network as his servants acting as messengers were also executed alongside him. Interestingly, one of these servants, a Creten woman who refused to participate in his betrayal, gave him away.⁴⁶¹ His high position enabled him to access information available to few others, such as decisions made in the council or weaknesses of the defences. He was also called a man of high reputation because of his previous efforts against Muslims, which were praised by knights, which lent him credibility. These two characteristics made his spying activities more dangerous than other informants. This episode was also disheartening in the current siege circumstances in which defenders were growing increasingly desperate against ongoing Ottoman attacks.

e) The Battle of Politics: Rhodes to Perdition

On November 1522, both parties of the siege were in a desperate situation. In multiple letters in November, two facts about the defenders were highlighted: their spirits remained high, yet they needed more help than ever.⁴⁶² In a letter dated October 27, 1522, Domenico Trevisan shared the news he had received from the Grand Master, dated October 14. In this letter, Trevisan conveyed desperate pleas to the Grand Master as the defence was crumbling under Ottoman assaults. The defenders believed they could hold the city until mid-November unless help arrived.⁴⁶³

The question of help from the Papacy had been lingering since July 1522. The Venetian ambassador at Rome, Alvise Gradenigo, reported that the ambassador of the Grand Master was at the court of Rome seeking help from the College of Cardinals, who promised him 3000 paid infantries. Gradenigo expressed his doubt, stating that this promise was merely words and that

⁴⁶⁰ “Kal’a beylerinden biri itâ’at etmek istediğiçün sâ’iri, mezkûru dört çeyrek edüp her gedikte bir pâresin salb eylediler.” Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, “*Rodos’un Fetih Günlüğü*”, p. 23

⁴⁶¹ “El fo scoperto per una femena candiota che’I vete trazer”. Sanudo 33:565-68

⁴⁶² Sanudo 33: 569-70. For full letter see Appendix I Letter XVI.

⁴⁶³ “Come havia auto lettere dil Gran Maestro di Rhodi, di 14 dito, che turchi lo molestavano molto, e che fin mezo Novembrio al più si potrà tenir; ma più non, non li venendo soccorso, e pareva il Turco con lo esercito non si voleva partir de l’ixola questa invernata. Pertanto rechiede soccorso, *aliter* si veniva per perso, perché turchii li haveano tolte tutte le difese di le mure.” Sanudo 33: 529. This letter recorded by Sanudo on 02 December 1522.

they would do nothing.⁴⁶⁴ This prediction turned out to be mostly true. There were preparations for help at several places in Italy throughout the siege. In September 1522, they were anticipating ships from Genoa, whose Spanish infantry were ready at Rome, while the members of the Order of St. John armed two galleys with their own money after receiving letters from the Grand Master.⁴⁶⁵ These ships first went to Sicily in early October and then sailed to Naples for reinforcements on 28 October.⁴⁶⁶ However, they remained there throughout November, when they were most needed, due to a lack of money for infantry, and Pope Hadrian VI was extremely worried as he could not send help.^{467,468} By December 1522, the situation in Naples became critical as they attempted to procure a ship to send to Rhodes with infantry, but the shipmaster refused.⁴⁶⁹ When Leonardo Anselmi, the Venetian ambassador at Naples, reported on 1 January 1523 that seven ships were ready to sail to Rhodes along with two ships waiting at Messina, it was already too late, as six days prior to this letter, the Knights had surrendered the island to the Ottomans after lengthy negotiations.⁴⁷⁰

The Papacy was not the only Christian power, if not the most obvious, as the Order of St. John was a military order under their jurisdiction that could help Rhodes. Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L'Isle-Adam has asked others to help them.⁴⁷¹ For example, as early as March 1522, he had written letters to Henry VIII, King of England, requesting help against the Ottoman threat. His letter to Henry VIII stated that he heard from a spy that the Sultan was making great preparations against them and hoped the King would assist them in this great emergency.⁴⁷² A similar letter was sent to Cardinal Wolsey with more details revealing that one of their spies returned from Istanbul and reported about the navy being prepared, which was said to be against Rhodes. He could not verify this yet, but he commenced his preparations against a possible attack.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁴ “Item, l’orator di Rhodi havia esposto, il Gran Maestro dubitava L’armada col campo turchescho non li venisse adosso, però dimandava ajuto; al qual haveano promesso mandarli 3000 fanti pagati di danari di la Chiexia. *Tamen* tutte erano parole, et nulla si faceva.” Sanudo 33: 350-51

⁴⁶⁵ Sanudo 33: 461

⁴⁶⁶ Sanudo 33: 480-81; 497

⁴⁶⁷ Sanudo 33: 523

⁴⁶⁸ There were several reasons for the Papacy’s inability to act, most important was that they were debt-ridden. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, Vol.3, p. 202

⁴⁶⁹ Sanudo 33: 538

⁴⁷⁰ Sanudo 33: 581

⁴⁷¹ He wrote to Charles V in Spain and François I in France. “Avisano esser zonta de li una fusta di 22 banchi, vien di Rodi, ha portato letere dil Gran Maestro a la Signoria nostra, qual le mandano; et erano do ferieri suso, uno va a l Imperador in Spagna, et l’altro in Franza con letere del ditto Gran Maestro.” Sanudo 33: 385

⁴⁷² S. Brewer (ed.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, vols.3-4 (London: Longman, 1867-1875). III: 2117.

⁴⁷³ *Letters and Papers*, III: 2118

The tone of the letters suggested that the Grand Master was almost sure that the destination was Rhodes by mid-March 1522. However, if we examine the letters he exchanged with the Duke of Crete, Marco Minio, in mid-May, there is still much doubt about the campaign's destination. In this sense, the Grand Master might have been trying to secure the promise of help from England as early as possible by knowingly presenting the Ottoman threat as imminent, which was a manipulation of the news he had received.⁴⁷⁴⁴⁷⁵

The Papacy also sought help from other Christian princes, urging Henry on 26 July to send aid without waiting for others. Despite this, the rivalry and hostility between Christian princes, especially between Charles V and François I, made them unwilling to prioritise helping.⁴⁷⁶ A letter from Charles V dated 8 September 1522, sent from Valladolid to Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey, demonstrates that news of the siege was used as a political tool for the impending conflict between Charles V and François I. This letter enclosed letters from the papal legate in France, who reported that François was willing to make peace with England and Spain and surrender forts and castles of Milan to the Pope's hands, on the condition that help was sent to Rhodes for the siege of the Turks, something he knew they would not do.⁴⁷⁷

Meantime, Sultan Süleyman became increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of progress in October after several major assaults. During that month, he made several changes, including demoting Mustafa Pasha as the campaign commander and appointing Ahmed Pasha. Additionally, he summoned Ferhad Pasha from Anatolia to join them at Rhodes with his forces.⁴⁷⁸ The Ottoman ruling elite also became concerned about possible assistance from Christian kingdoms, receiving reports about potential help. Spies captured on October 10 reported about this help, and in a letter from the maona of Chios to Süleyman I mentioned that several ships were prepared at Genoa and Messina, confirming news from Naples and Rome.⁴⁷⁹⁴⁸⁰

Although the undated letter was most likely sent at the end of 1522, around late October or November, it indicated that the island of Chios served as a reliable news hub for both sides,

⁴⁷⁴ *Letters and Papers*, III:2324

⁴⁷⁵ On June 17, the Grand Master wrote another letter to the King Henry, attaching the letter from Suleyman I asking for the island's surrender on June 1 as evidence of the attack.

⁴⁷⁶ Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (Vol.3)*, p. 203

⁴⁷⁷ *Letters and Papers*, III: 2522

⁴⁷⁸ "Divân olup Ferhad Paşa'ya gelmek emr olundu" Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 23

⁴⁷⁹ For spies, see page 106.

⁴⁸⁰ (BOA), (*TS.MA.e*), 750. For full letter see Appendix III. This document was also found in Vatin, "*Rodos Şövalyeleri ve Osmanlılar*, p. 454-458.

attempting to remain neutral in the conflict. Chios had previously provided information about the Ottoman Navy's movements in early April 1522 and continued to supply Crete with news about Ottoman forces in the following months.⁴⁸¹ At the same time, Chios was paying annual tribute to the Ottomans. The maona of Chios seemed to be playing for both sides and was cautious of the Ottomans.⁴⁸² This was evident in a letter from sopracomiti Francesco Bragadin and Domenico Zorzi in early November 1522, which mentioned news they received from a brigantine at Naxos, returning from Chios. The captain of the brigantine openly stated that the news was intentionally not written down but instead to be transmitted orally, as the lords of Chios had ordered. They feared retaliation from the Sultan if they recorded any news.⁴⁸³

The example of Chios highlights the Ottomans' recognition of the island's significance as a communication centre for Christian states. At one point, they likely cautioned the island's rulers. However, their strong ties with the Ottomans probably contributed to the high reliability of their news, which was consistently maintained. For example, during the siege, the Sultan regularly dispatched men to Chios for supplies.⁴⁸⁴ On 5 January 1523, following the surrender of Rhodes, Grand Vizier Piri Mehmed Pasha visited Chios, demonstrating goodwill towards the rulers. Additionally, a slave of the Sultan arrived on 2 January 1523, bearing a letter from his master, explaining his motivations for conquering Rhodes and expressing solidarity with the rulers of Chios as "brothers and friends".⁴⁸⁵ Therefore, the example of Chios illustrates how a small independent entity could navigate a politically charged environment, such as the Eastern Mediterranean, by leveraging information and news as a strategic asset.

The Republic of Venice was the other major party wary of the Ottoman campaign against Rhodes. During the period before the siege, their main concern was to find the destination of the campaign, for which they played a defensive but conciliatory stance by using their extensive news network. They maintained this position throughout the siege as well.

⁴⁸¹ Sanudo, 33: 242-43

⁴⁸² In Tabib Ramazan's account, the islanders were called "zimmi" which literally meant "protected people". Tabib Ramazan, *Er Risale* p.113. *Zimmis* were members "of a non-Muslim community officially acknowledged by the Ottoman state as "People of the Book" (*Ehl-i Kitab*)—that is, Christians and Jews. *Zimmi* status was given to non-Muslims who were willing to live under Islamic political domination." Somel, "Zimmi" in *Historical Dictionary*, pp.330-31

⁴⁸³ Sanudo 33: 534-35. For full letter, see Appendix I Letter XVIII.

⁴⁸⁴ Sanudo 33: 487

⁴⁸⁵ Sanudo 34: 62-63. For full letter see Appendix I letter XIX.

After presenting the Grand Master's plea for help to the College of Cardinals in Rome, the same envoy arrived in Venice on 3 August 1522 to request assistance against the Ottomans, but their plea was rejected.⁴⁸⁶ The Venetians had already turned down Pope Hadrian VI's request in a 24 July letter, citing strained finances due to previous wars. They planned to use their money to arm their ships as a precaution.⁴⁸⁷ The arming of ships had been a topic of discussion at Collegio since late June. Ultimately, they discreetly decided to arm several ships to avoid angering Süleyman I.⁴⁸⁸

The Venetians remained vigilant even after the siege officially began, as two of their most prized colonies, Crete and Cyprus, were nearby. They tried to appease the Ottomans in every possible way. For instance, on 23 August, the Council of Ten wrote a letter to bailo Andrea Priuli, informing him of the sudden departure of Gabriele Tadino di Martinengo from Crete to Rhodes. In this letter, Priuli was instructed to explain that if he was asked about Martinengo by the pashas, the Venetians requested him back from the Grand Master, who refused.⁴⁸⁹ They wanted to avoid the responsibility of Martinengo's presence on Rhodes.

On the other hand, the Ottomans attempted to prevent Venice from rising to aid Rhodes by using diplomatic means. On 5 September 1522, an Ottoman envoy arrived in Venice for the tribute of Cyprus.⁴⁹⁰ In a letter by bailo Priuli, it was mentioned that this envoy was sent to Venice to spy and was promptly taken to Casa Cixi.⁴⁹¹ In Venice, it was customary to treat foreign envoys, especially Ottomans, as potential spies, as they had access to high-security areas during their visits. Therefore, Venetians consistently attempted to restrict their movements and social interactions with other patricians. In this instance, the Ottomans sought to gather intelligence about the Venetian navy, which could aid Rhodes from their bases on Crete. This matter was openly addressed in the response to the Sultan's letter to Doge Grimani.

⁴⁸⁶ Sanudo 33: 404

⁴⁸⁷ Sanudo 33: 377

⁴⁸⁸ Sanudo 33: 320; 359; 372

⁴⁸⁹ "Da poi disnar, fo Consejo di X con Zonta, et fo scritto letere al Baylo nostro di Constantinopoli zercha la partita di Gabriel da Martinengo di Candia, e mandatoli letere di quel rezimento dil partir, *insalutato hospite*. Però se li scrive per sua information, acciò sii instruto, che se quelli bassà li parlasse, li possi responder, e come richiesto per il Gran Maestro fu negato di dargielo." Sanudo 33: 422

⁴⁹⁰ According Maria Pia Pedani, his name was Sinan çavuş. Pedani, Maria Pia. *In Nome del Gran Signore Inviati Ottomani a Venezia Dalla Caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia*, Venezia: Deputatazione Dittrice (1994), p.199

⁴⁹¹ "Scrive, l'Orator vene qui, qual fo per spiar se molti in locho non sia in mezo la terra. Et *immediate*, il Colegio l' ha posto in cha' Gixi, ch' è proprio in mezo." Sanudo 33: 447.

It was stated that Venice wished to maintain peace with the Ottomans, and thus, the tribute of Cyprus would be promptly paid. It was also emphasized that the Venetian navy was deployed for defence, not offensive purposes.⁴⁹²

During a critical point in the siege in late November, the Ottomans sent an envoy to Crete, who arrived on the island on 25 November. These events were reported in a letter by Giovanni Bragadin, who wrote to his brother-in-law Zaccaria Trevisan on 27 November 1522. In the letter, the envoy was described as a man of small reputation who likely came to assess the situation.⁴⁹³ In another letter by Francesco Boldu, dated 27 November, the reason for the arrival of the Ottoman envoy was explained in detail. Piri Mehmed Pasha explicitly sent this man with letters to be delivered to Capitanio Generale di Mar Domenico Trevisan and Doge Grimani. These letters were written in Greek and Italian, respectively. Although the author did not know the full content of these letters, he understood that the Turks acknowledged the unique trust between them and the Venetians. The letter expressed this with unprecedented kindness.⁴⁹⁴ The author hinted that the reason for this eloquence was evident: it was to accomplish their goal without any hindrance. Boldu implicitly suggested that the Ottomans wanted no obstacles in their path of conquest and used more appeasing diplomatic language to achieve their end.

It is important to note that on 26 and 29 November 1522, a few days after this visit, Ottoman forces launched major assaults. The first attack, led by Piri Mehmed Pasha, captured two critical towers. The second attack on 29 November, led by Ahmed Pasha and supported by ships, failed to achieve its goal, but a breakthrough seemed imminent.⁴⁹⁵⁴⁹⁶ The Ottomans might have wanted to prevent the Venetians from interfering with their final battle plans by sending help. Ottoman sources reported that continued rain made the conditions more challenging. This was also hinted in the abovementioned letter by Boldu, in which he stated that many judged the

⁴⁹² Fu posto, per li Savii tutti, expedir l'orator dil Signor turcho, el prima posto una savia letera in risposta di la soa, come volemo mantener la paxe et havemo scritto in Cypro subito, non lo harendo manda, li mandi il tributo.... Et che la nostra armada è fuora per difender e non ofender." Sanudo 33: 444-45

⁴⁹³ Sanudo 33: 569-70.

⁴⁹⁴ Sanudo 33: 570-73. For full letter, see Appendix I Letter XVII.

⁴⁹⁵ "Pîrî Paşa kolunda sâbikü'z- zikr Mesih Paşa Kulesi ile bir gayr kuleye tekrâr yürüyüş olup feth olundu ve Hüdâvendigâr sancağı beyi askeriyle gemilere girüp yürüyüş günü onlar da deryâdan yürümek emr olundu." Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 26; "Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi", p. 146

⁴⁹⁶ "Rûz-i mesfûrda Ahmed Paşa gedüğünden kal'aya muhkem yürüyüş olup, muhârebe-i azîm oldu ve gemiler dahi yürüdü. Vakt-i cengde muhkem yağmur yağdı ve hayli kimesne şehîd oldu. Feth müyesser olmadı." Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 26; Öksüz, "Rodos Seferi'ne Dair Arapça Bir Kaynak", p. 163; Yıldız, "Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi", p. 146-47. Tabib Ramazan, *Er Risale*, p.68-173; Sanudo 34: 63-66

purpose of the envoy's visit as a pretext to observe the Venetian navy, assess its strength and numbers, and check if naval reinforcements were coming from the west to aid Rhodes.⁴⁹⁷

The letter of Francesco Boldu finished with the statement that “as long as the help arrives within two months, all will be well”.⁴⁹⁸ Yet the expected help never arrived, and less than a month later Rhodes was officially surrendered on 20 December 1522 after lengthy negotiations that lasted for two weeks.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ The envoy visited several places on the island of Crete, arriving on the island on November 18 at Capo Salomon on the southeast end, visiting Sitia [Setia] with rector Giacomo da Canal, moving to Kalydon [Spinalonga] on November 22, and finally arriving in Candia on November 25 to meet with Trevisan and provveditore Da Mula. This visit enabled him to observe and gather various news by interacting with high-ranking Venetian officials on the island. Sanudo 33: 570-73.

⁴⁹⁸ “...purché li vegni soccorso avanti mexi do, tutti starà ben...” Ibid

⁴⁹⁹ Ertaş and Kılıçaslan, *Rodos'un Fetih Günlüğü*, p. 29-30; Öksüz, “*Rodos Seferi'ne Dair Arapça Bir Kaynak*”, p. 164; Yıldız, “*Celalzade'nin Rodos Fetihnamesi*”, p. 151. Tabib Ramazan, *Er Risale*, p.190-92; Sanudo 33: 600-601; 602-603; Sanudo 34: 59-61; Hakluyt, “*A Briefe Relation of the Siege*”, p. 93

f) Conclusion

This chapter delves into an in-depth analysis of two crucial phases of the Siege of Rhodes, a significant event that changed the power balance in the early sixteenth-century eastern Mediterranean. With the help of Italian (Venetian) and, to a lesser extent, Ottoman sources, the aim is to discern the emerging patterns of dissemination and management before and during the Siege of Rhodes.

First and foremost, the study underscores the indispensable role of information hubs in the various stages of the Siege. In the pre-Siege phase, the Venetians heavily relied on these hubs to gather crucial information about the size and movements of the Ottoman navy, which remained unknown for a prolonged period. The most reliable sources of this vital information were the established hubs of Venetian infrastructure that managed news from the eastern Mediterranean. The primary hub was Istanbul, where bailo relayed news and rumours about the navy. Other significant Venetian centres included Corfu, Zakynthos, and the independent state of Dubrovnik, which had access to neighbouring Ottoman lands and served as stopovers for ships travelling from the east.

However, as the Siege unfolded in early July 1522, the focus of information dissemination underwent a significant shift. The Venetian island of Crete, which had also speculated about the Ottoman navy in the preceding months, became the central news hub where information regarding the ongoing Siege was gathered, interpreted, and disseminated. The other islands surrounding Rhodes, including small islands under the rule of the Knights of St. John, such as Kos or the Venetian-controlled island Karpathos, formed a micro-network of news. This Aegean network also included the semi-independent island of Naxos, controlled by a Venetian feudal lord, the island of Patmos, controlled by monks, and the Genoese island of Chios. Only Chios remained consistently reliable among these hubs for fresh and verified news about the Ottomans before and during the Siege. This was likely due to its connection to the Ottomans, to whom they paid tribute and shared information, as well as its established network in the Aegean, which compelled them to remain neutral. This shift in locations signifies a change in *one* pattern of information dissemination during the Siege. The proximity to the action scene became crucial to gathering up-to-date news where much could change in a day.

Secondly, the analysis of both phases revealed a consistent pattern in the gathering and verification of news, despite changing locations. The Venetian news management system, notably hierarchical, was dominated by high-ranking officials. Their patrician background and familial ties bestowed them with the primary authority to interpret the news and rumours they collected and transmitted to the capital. This authority also empowered them to recruit individuals they deemed reliable. These informants, from diverse social, ethnic, and professional backgrounds, had varying levels of information access, which was then filtered and interpreted by the different Venetian officials. However, the relationship between these groups was not strictly top-down. The credibility of the lower-ranking informants also hinged on their reputation and confirmation from the officials. The high-ranking officials had to authenticate the reliability of their informants to ascertain the veracity of the news or rumours they received.

The horizontal rapport between the same groups was equally significant. The trusted informants had their networks from which they received news and rumours. When they transmitted this information, they had to establish their relationship with these people, ranging from acquaintances to friends. If they were not personally acquainted with these individuals, they would mention the social and professional backgrounds of these other informants to validate the extent of their access.

Conversely, in the case of high-ranking officials, their membership in the same social class did not always guarantee their credibility. Depending on other news they received or their interpretation, the officials could dismiss information they received from other officials. This underscored the subjectivity evident in the reports of the officials, influenced by their own experiences, beliefs, and emotions regarding the situation. This subjectivity was most pronounced in the accounts of eyewitnesses who described the Siege. While their high access to information was crucial, the scrutiny of these accounts also revealed their highly subjective nature, filled with personal beliefs and interests. Therefore, this subjectivity was a fundamental aspect of news and rumours as it influenced the selection and interpretation of the news. This issue also highlighted the distortion of information in the transmission process. The more people involved, the greater the likelihood of news distortion as individuals tend to incorporate their thoughts and emotions into the information received. This process underscored the close relationship between news and rumours and the human psyche.

Thirdly, the subjectivity of news and rumours was intricately entwined with their political nature. Research illuminates that in the early modern period, news and rumours were not mere information but strategic tools deftly wielded by various actors for political, economic, and social ends. The Venetians, for instance, leveraged their news network to safeguard their land interests and negotiate from a position of strength with diverse political actors. The Knights of St John deftly manipulated the news to compel rulers of Christian Europe and the Papacy to send them aid. In a twist, the Ottomans initially disseminated misinformation through Venetian news networks to shroud their operations in secrecy.

Fourthly, this analysis delves into the intricate interplay between news and rumours. The study of words reveals that these two were not distinct phenomena but closely intertwined. Both were unconfirmed, and both could be either false or true. This close association is underscored by the use of the words “avviso”, “nova”, and “fama”. However, this does not imply that all three words were identical. There was a subtle distinction. While “avviso” and “nova” were used to indicate either unconfirmed or confirmed information, “fama” was used to indicate “information that was circulating among many”, often used in conjunction with the verb “divolgore” [divulgare] which indicated information that had become public.

This chapter was unable to fully explore the Ottoman news management system in the early sixteenth century due to a lack of sources. The next chapter unveils a fresh perspective on a case study involving the Ottoman Empire. These findings highlight how the patterns of news and rumours operated in the sixteenth-century eastern Mediterranean and whether the Ottoman and Venetian information systems exhibited unique or shared patterns.

6) CHAPTER III- THE PRINCE BAYEZID AFFAIR (1558-1562)

a) Prelude: Background of the Struggle for the Ottoman Throne in Sixteenth Century

On 29-30 May 1559, Prince Bayezid, the third son of Süleyman I and his favourite Hürrem Sultan, confronted his elder brother Prince Selim in battle. This battle was the climax of the rising tension between the two remaining claimants of the Ottoman throne since the execution of their elder half-brother, Prince Mustafa, in October 1553. The battle occurred near Konya, where Prince Bayezid was defeated. Consequently, he escaped to Safavid Persia, a major rival of the Ottoman Empire with whom hostilities had ended only four years ago with the treaty of Amasya, seeking refuge. This situation quickly escalated into a diplomatic crisis between the two states as the dynastic struggle threatened the uneasy peace, and both parties initiated a process of negotiations in order to resolve this without any bloodshed. The pace of heated negotiations slowed down only with the execution of Prince Bayezid by the Ottoman delegation in Safavid capital Qazvin on 23 July 1562.

This episode was not unique in the history of the Ottoman Empire. It went through its share of dynastic power struggles since its formation as a *beglik* in the fourteenth century.⁵⁰⁰ While dynastic struggles were an inherent part of most monarchic rules, the Ottoman succession system further facilitated them. Instead of *primogeniture*, the system was based on the Turco-Mongolian principle, which dictated that “every male member of the dynasty was a potential beneficiary of the ‘divine grace’ and therefore was eligible to rule”.⁵⁰¹ Thus, the system allowed every prince to become the potential ruler of realm, creating a very competitive environment which enabled and later legalized fratricide.⁵⁰² Hence, dynastic wars sporadically continued

⁵⁰⁰ One of the most well-known examples was the Ottoman civil war that took place between the sons of Bayezid I after the latter’s imprisonment and execution by Timur, the founder of Timurid Empire, in 1403. Kastritsis, Dimitris J. *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402–1413*, Brill, 2007.

⁵⁰¹ Çıpa, H. Erdem. *The Making of Selim: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017, p.29.

⁵⁰² Although its authenticity is under debate, fratricide was legitimized by Mehmed II as a law: “it is appropriate for whichever of my sons attains the sultanate with divine assistance to kill his brothers for the sake of the world order (*nizâm-ı âlem*).” In the Ottoman context, fratricide included every male member of the family. For the scholarly debate about the law: Çıpa, “*The Making of Selim*”, p. 271, endnote 12.

until the seventeenth century, when preference for seniority was introduced.⁵⁰³ Under this context, two dynastic struggles - the famous “Cem Sultan affair” during the reign of Bayezid II (d.1512) and the peculiar enthronement of Selim I (d.1520)- are particularly relevant in order to understand the circumstances of the Prince Bayezid’s rebellion and escape in 1559.

The “Cem Sultan affair” took place during the early reign of Bayezid II in the late fifteenth century. Prince Cem, the younger brother of Bayezid II, opposed the latter’s enthronement after the death of their father, Mehmed II, in May 1481 and instantly rebelled against his brother. Prince Cem was defeated and promptly escaped to the Mamluk court in Cairo, where he planned his second rebellion in Anatolia, which also failed.⁵⁰⁴ Following this, on 29 July 1482, he escaped to the island of Rhodes, from where the rulers of the island, Knights of St. John, smuggled him to France. For the following thirteen years, Prince Cem would remain a hostage of several Christian rulers and was turned into a leverage against Bayezid II until his suspicious death in Italy on 25 February 1495.⁵⁰⁵ This affair was a cautionary tale for the following generations. An internal conflict, if unchecked, could turn into a crisis that involved other powers who sought to transform the claimant into a political tool, crippling the authority of the Ottoman ruler.

On the other hand, the enthronement of Selim I can be considered a success story because his endeavour resulted in success *before* the death of the ruling sultan, his father, Bayezid II. During the first decade of the sixteenth century, Prince Selim was seen as an unlikely claimant of the throne as he was appointed to one of the farthest princely governorates, Trabzon, in 1487. The Ottoman dynastic principle allowed princes to be part of the dynastic rule as district governors of *sancaks* located in Anatolia, where they were trained in ruling.⁵⁰⁶ As all these princes had

⁵⁰³ For debates about Ottoman succession practices: İnalçık, Halil. “The Ottoman Succession and its Relation to the Turkish Concept of Sovereignty” in *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society*, Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 1993, pp.37-69; Fletcher, Joseph. “Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 3–4 (1979–1980), pp.236-251.

⁵⁰⁴ For Cem Sultan’s time in Mamluk court : Muslu, Cihan Yüksel. *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World*, London: I.B Tauris, 2014, pp.136-39.

⁵⁰⁵ The scholarly interest in this affair commenced immediately after Prince Cem’s death. Several twentieth-century studies on the subject include İnalçık, Halil. “A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement Between Innocent VIII and Bâyezîd II on Djem Sultan,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* III (1979), pp. 209-230. Lefort, Jacques. *Documents dans les archives de Topkapı Sarayı. Contribution à l’Histoire de Cem Sultan*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1981. Vatin, Nicolas. *Sultan Djem. Un Prince Ottoman dans l’Europe du XV^e siècle d’après deux sources contemporaines : Vaki’at-i Sultan Cem, Oeuvres de Guillaume Caoursin*, Ankara: TTK, 1997.

⁵⁰⁶ As they were part of the dynastic rule, after being appointed as district governors, princes were called “sultan” (سلطان) while only the ruling sultan can be called “padişah” (پادشاه). Kunt, İ. Metin. “A Prince Goes Forth (Perchance to Return)” in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman world: a Volume of Essays in Honor*

the same right to ascend to the throne, the location of their gubernatorial seat, i.e., the proximity to the capital, was paramount. Therefore, Selim's gubernatorial seat Trabzon can be considered as an indication of Selim's unfavourable position in the royal court as opposed to Amasya, the seat of his elder brother Prince Ahmed, which established him as the "heir apparent".⁵⁰⁷ On the other hand, Trabzon's position as a frontier zone bordering with Shah Ismail I's newly established belligerent Safavid Empire, permitted Selim to antagonize Safavids and put himself forward as a "warrior prince" who was worthy of the throne especially in the minds of soldiers and common folk.⁵⁰⁸ While pro-Ahmed faction in the court, headed by grand vizier Hadim Ali Pasha, continuously tried to reflect Selim's actions as subordination, the real struggle between two princes, Ahmed and Selim, began with appointment of Selim's son Süleyman (future sultan Süleyman I) as district governor of Caffa [Kefe] in Crimea in 1509 as Selim started to carry out his plans.⁵⁰⁹ This critical three year period ended with the abdication of Bayezid II and enthronement of Selim I on 24 April 1512. Hence, this successful endeavour served as another advisory tale: a rebellious prince could also succeed and overthrow the current ruler if he played his cards well.

i) Infrastructure for news

In the Topkapı Palace Archives, there are around forty-six documents from when Prince Bayezid was ordered to change his *sancak* on 6 September 1558 to the battle of Konya, which took place on 30-31 May 1559.⁵¹⁰ Ten of these documents are from the two-month period when

of Norman Itzkowitz edited by Karl Barbir and Baki Tezcan, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007 pp.65-67

⁵⁰⁷ By the early sixteenth century, Amasya, along with other Anatolian centres such as Manisa, Kütahya, Sivas, Konya, Kastamonu, and Isparta, were among the established urban centres where princes served as district governors. Most of these cities served as capitals for other Turkish begliks, and the appointment of members of the dynasty was a conscious way to reaffirm their importance for the Ottoman Empire and consolidate the central power in provinces. Emecen, Feridun M, Mete, Zekai and Bilgin, Arif (eds.) *Osmanlı İdarî Teşkilâtının Kaynakları Şehzâde Dîvânı Defterleri*, Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi 2017, pp.21-22.

⁵⁰⁸ Çıpa, "The Making of Selim", p. 36-37; Yelçe, N. Zeynep. The Making of Sultan Süleyman: A Study of Process/es of Image-making and Reputation Management, Unpublished PhD Thesis: Sabancı University, 2009, pp.40-41.

⁵⁰⁹ The third brother, Prince Korkud, was the district governor of *Sancak* of Antalya. Unlike his brothers Selim and Ahmed, he did not have a son to succeed him, which was seen as a significant disadvantage. However, he was also part of the succession struggle, and his actions, escaping to Egypt in 1509 under the pretext of pilgrimage and his sudden arrival in the capital, caused important outcomes. Al-Tikriti, Nabil. "The Hajj as Justifiable Self-Exile: Şehzade Korkud's Wasilat al-ahbab (915-916/1509-1510)," *Al-Masaq*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2005), pp.125-146.

⁵¹⁰ This is an approximate number of documents, excluding the personal letters of Prince Selim and Prince Bayezid, written to their father (or to the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha) during this period. In the Topkapı Palace Archives.

Prince Bayezid was travelling from Kütahya to Amasya in late 1558. The rest were mainly reports of Bayezid's actions during his tenure on Amasya, starting around late December 1558 until he left the city with his army on 14 April 1559.

These documents revealed more than Prince Bayezid's actions and emotions; they demonstrated the existence of an effective news network supplied by diverse informants with different ranks from distinct news hubs. Furthermore, they also show us how a news item was produced, gathered and circulated within a confined geographical space and whether this confined space altered the formation of these news pieces. In this particular phase, between October 1558 and May 1559, the space was limited to central Anatolia, where both princes were located, and officials in surrounding cities acted as primary informants. Prince Bayezid's whereabouts were well known as his movements were strictly monitored. However, his unknown intentions created an ambiguous environment where all parties aimed to gather "correct" news "as fast as possible". Hence, to maintain a regular news flow, it was crucial to have a well-organized courier system that would allow informants to gather and send news. In the context of the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire, a recently renovated courier system was the necessary infrastructure that allowed the parties involved to communicate appropriately. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the *modus vivendi* of this infrastructure before moving forward to Prince Bayezid's case.

ii) Ottoman courier system

From the fourteenth century until the mid-sixteenth century, the Ottoman courier system "*ulaklık*", which as a term alluded to the Post-Mongol state courier system used in large parts of Western Asia and particularly in the Ottoman Empire, developed in an ad-hoc manner.⁵¹¹ The couriers [*ulaks*] were issued with courier order [*ulak hükmü*] authorizing them to travel on state business over -specified or unspecified- routes, essentially by confiscating remounts as necessary at places en route. As this system was susceptible to abuse at the hands of the said couriers, former grand vizier Lütü Pasha (d.1563) was tasked to reform the system during his grand vizierate (1539-41) and established a network of staffed posting stations

⁵¹¹ Heywood, Colin J. "Ulak", *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition* (eds) P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, (1980-2004), Vol. 10, pp.800-01.

[*menzilhanes*] on major routes of the Empire.⁵¹² This system also set forth certain general population members to work as horse breeders [*menzilci*] to provide horses for state couriers.

On the other hand, this establishment took more than a century to become fully institutionalized. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the responsibility of providing horses and provisions to the couriers fell to the provincial governors.⁵¹³ This is evident in registers for important affairs [*mühimme defteri*], which contain copies of Sultan's orders addressed to governors, judges [*kadı*] and also to foreign rulers.⁵¹⁴ In MD [*mühimme defteri*] number three which covers the period between June 1559-December 1560, there are numerous records of imperial orders sent to provincial governors ordering them to provide couriers with horses and provision. For example, in an order sent on 14 November 1559, a courier named Ali Çavuş was sent to the governor-general of Diyarbakır [İskender Pasha] with the imperial orders to which the latter had to forward to treasure officer [*defterdar*] of Haleb. The moment the treasure officer's answer arrived in Diyarbakır, the governor-general was to forward it to the capital with the same Ali Çavuş to whom the governor-general had to provide horses for his journey back.⁵¹⁵ In another record dated 23 August 1559, an imperial order was again sent to the governor-general of Diyarbakır by a courier named Mehmed Çavuş, who, upon arriving, was to be provided with sheep [or goat] to eat.⁵¹⁶

(1) The Routes

These records also demonstrate how the courier system worked, especially in terms of routes, stops and distances, which allow us to comprehend the approximate travel duration of a news piece between various locations in Anatolia and the capital, Istanbul. Some Anatolian routes have existed since the Byzantine Era, whereas others developed due to changing needs. -

⁵¹² Ibid. Also see, Haraçoğlu, Yusuf. "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Menzil Teşkilatı Hakkında Bazı Mülâhazalar," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, Vol. 2, 1981, pp. 124-125

⁵¹³ Çetin, Cemal. *Ulak, Yol, Durak: Anadolu Yollarında Padişah Postaları (Menzilhaneler) (1690-1750)*, İstanbul: Hikmet evi Yayınları, 2013, p.47-49

⁵¹⁴ Faroqhi, Suraiya. "Mühimme Defterleri", *EI2*, Vol.7, pp.470-472. These registers were initially known as "Miri Ahkam Defteri" until their names changed to "Mühimme Defteri" during the late seventeenth century. Emecen, Feridun M. "Osmanlı Divanının Ana Defter Serileri: Ahkâm-ı Mirî, Ahkâm-ı Kuyûd-ı Mühimme ve Ahkâm-ı Şikâyet," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Cilt 3, Sayı 5, 2005, p.117

⁵¹⁵ "...ve müşârünileyhden ulak hükmin alup Südde-i sa'âdet'üme gelmek için bârgîr viresin" Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), *Mühimme Defterleri [A.DVNS.MHM.d]*, No: 3, 501.

⁵¹⁶ "...ve mezkûr çavuşun elinden ulak hükmin alup yemek için davar viresin" (BOA), *[A.DVNS.MHM.d]*, No: 3, 237

Furthermore, throughout centuries following the consolidation of Anatolian lands under Ottoman rule in the early sixteenth century, there were divergences within these major roads based on distinct usages aimed for military and commercial purposes or pilgrimage.⁵¹⁷ Couriers travelled lighter, faster and more frequently than these groups yet due to scant documentation concerning the sixteenth century, it is hard to follow which routes and stops they use more often.⁵¹⁸ Yet, it is fair to say that in sixteenth-century Anatolia, three main roads linked the capital to Anatolian cities must have been used by couriers as well.

All three roads started as one at Üsküdar, located on the Anatolian side of the Bosphorus, and continued towards Gebze. From there, it followed either to Dil İskelesi or İzmit [*İzmitmid*], diverging into three main roads. The first of these main roads was the oldest among the three and was used by the Ottoman army and pilgrims. This route was called the “right arm” [*sağ kol*], which from İzmit [*İzmitmid*] turned southwest towards İznik and continued towards Eskişehir. From there, the road ventured southeast through Akşehir, Ilgın and Konya, continued towards Adana via Ereğli, and finally reached Antakya or Aleppo [Haleb].⁵¹⁹ From both of these locations, travellers could go to either Cairo [Kahire] or Hejaz [Hicaz] via passing Damascus [Şam]. However, these roads were considered secondary roads. The second main road was called “mid arm” [*orta kol*] and followed the same route as “right arm” until İzmit [*İzmitmid*] and, from there, continued east towards Sivas via passing towns of Bolu-Tosya-Amasya.⁵²⁰ Yet during the sixteenth century, this northern Anatolian route was of secondary importance and used mainly by trade caravans. In contrast, the main route towards Amasya and Sivas passed through Bursa-Eskişehir-Ankara.⁵²¹ This “mid-arm” route turned southeast from Sivas. It continued towards Diyarbakır, passed through Mardin and Musul, and ended in Baghdad. The third road, called “left arm” [*sol kol*], followed the same route as the “mid arm” road, the caravan route, until Merzifon, where it continued further east, passing through towns of Ladik, Niksar, Şebinkarahisar [Karahisar-ı şarki] and Aşkale reaching Erzurum.⁵²² From

⁵¹⁷ For example, while passing through bay of İzmit [*İzmitmid*], Ottoman army always went around the bay instead of passing through the sea as did pilgrimages. This was also the case for the Ottoman army during siege of Rhodes at 1522. Taeschner, Franz. *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu Yol Ağı*, İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınevi (2010), p.143

⁵¹⁸ It is possible to follow courier routes and stops from the late seventeenth century onwards as the system became fully institutionalized with reform in 1691 and became well-documented. Çetin, *Ulak, Yol Durak*, pp. 48-49

⁵¹⁹ For a detailed account of various stops on this route and how they evolved and changed throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Taeschner, *Anadolu Yol Ağı*, pp. 151-194, also see Map.

⁵²⁰ Çetin, *Ulak, Yol Durak*, pp.126-137. See Map

⁵²¹ The Northern Anatolian trade route was the main route during the seventeenth century. Taeschner, *Anadolu Yol Ağı*, pp. 228-29.

⁵²² Çetin, *Ulak, Yol Durak*, pp.152-53.

Sivas a secondary road also continued east and reached Erzurum via Erzincan and Aşkale.⁵²³⁵²⁴ From Erzurum, the route divided into several other routes, one going towards Kars and the other route towards Erciř and Van, while the main road continued towards Dođu Bayezid and Çaldıran finally passing into Safavid lands.

Delving into registers for important affairs [*mühimme defteri*] presents us a partial view of these routes couriers used in the mid-sixteenth century. For example, the aforementioned Ali Çavuş, who was sent to the governor-general of Diyarbakır [İskender Pasha] on 13 November 1559 [12 Safer 967] was also ordered to stop at both Amasya and Sivas to deliver imperial orders to judge [*kadı*] of Amasya and governor-general of Rum [Sivas] [Ali Pasha] respectively.⁵²⁵ Thus, it was clear that Ali Çavuş travelled on the “mid arm” main route, reaching first to Amasya to continue on Sivas and Diyarbakır. Unfortunately, it is hard to decipher the exact route he used to reach Amasya from the capital. However, it is possible to allege that he took the route from Eskişehir and Ankara instead of the northern Anatolian route from Bolu.

Another crucial factor about Anatolia’s news network was the couriers’ travel duration. Cross-examination of MD number three and letters of officials may provide us with an approximate travel time. In MDs, dates written above the text of that order indicated the date the courier picked up that particular imperial orders.⁵²⁶ Whereas dates which were shown as a heading to a series of orders were usually considered to be the day that the imperial council gathered and decided on those particular orders.⁵²⁷ On the other hand, within the letters of officials, the arrival date of a particular order was sometimes mentioned as some of these letters were primarily reports answering whether a particular order was executed and how. For example, an order was handed over to a certain Mustafa Çavuş on 18 September 1559 [15 Zi’l-hicce 966] to be carried to the third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha who was stationed at Diyarbakır, where he was responsible for overseeing the organization of the reinforcement of eastern borders against a possible incursion of Prince Bayezid who had already escaped to Safavid Persia. In this order, Mehmed Pasha was to send five hundred janissaries as reinforcements under the command of

⁵²³ Taeschner, *Anadolu Yol Ađı*, pp. 283.

⁵²⁴ During sixteenth-century eastern campaigns, the Ottoman army followed the “right arm” until Eređli, near Konya, then turned northeast and used the route passing through Niđe and Kayseri, reaching Sivas from where they continued on this secondary “left arm” route to reach Erzurum and further east. Ibid. p.227

⁵²⁵ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 502, 503.

⁵²⁶ Emecen, “*Osmanlı Divanının Ana Defter Serileri*”, p. 126.

⁵²⁷ There is an ongoing debate about the purpose of these dates as headings. Some support the idea that they show the days that the imperial council gathered, while others believe that these were the dates these imperial orders were recorded by scribes during or after the council gatherings. For further discussion: Ibid. p 122-23.

Abdi Ağa to the province of Baghdad as they feared that location was a possible target of Prince Bayezid.⁵²⁸ In Mehmed Pasha's letter, which was written possibly during the first weeks of October 1559, he mentioned several pieces of news he had, and one of these was about this particular order which he received on 30 September 1559 [27 Zi'l-hicce 966].⁵²⁹ Due to his repetition of the content of the order, we can be sure that it was the same order sent with Mustafa Çavuş. Therefore, if Mustafa Çavuş left the capital immediately on 18 September, he must have travelled to Diyarbakır in approximately 12 days. In the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century, when posting stations [*menzilhanes*] were formally established, the travel duration for a courier between the Üsküdar and *menzilhane* of Diyarbakır was around 12 days.⁵³⁰

(2) The Couriers

These records also show how the courier system worked in general. First of all, it was not the responsibility of the same courier to take orders to every location en route. For example, the abovementioned order sent to the governor-general of Diyarbakır [İskender Pasha] on 13 November 1559 [12 Safer 967] was to be forwarded to *the defterdar* of Haleb, and it was to be carried with a "suitable man" in service of the governor-general of Diyarbakır, not by Ali Çavuş.⁵³¹ In this sense, several locations were hubs where orders were gathered and forwarded to other cities. For instance, after Prince Bayezid's escape, Sivas acted as a news hub for several locations, such as Erzurum, Trabzon, and Maraş. The city of Sivas was a prominent stop at both "mid-arm" and "left-arm" routes used during the sixteenth century.⁵³² Another essential hub was Diyarbakır, which acted as a hub for the Ottoman Empire's eastern and southern borders. The town of Diyarbakır was especially prominent in forwarding imperial orders to Baghdad [Bağdad], a crucial Ottoman frontier city between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, which was put on high alert during Prince Bayezid's stay at Safavid capital Qazvin from October 1559 onwards.⁵³³

Secondly, in some cases, two different couriers were sent to the same location on the same date with different orders. On 23 January 1560 [24 Rebî'u'l-âhir 967], Rıdvan Çavuş was sent to the

⁵²⁸ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 330

⁵²⁹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0006.

⁵³⁰ Çetin, *Ulak, Yol Durak*, pp.143

⁵³¹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 501.

⁵³² (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3,1567; 35; 829/c. Also see map.

⁵³³ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 236, 829/f, 500

governor-general of Erzurum [Mustafa Pasha] with two orders. The first one was significant. It was about the reception of the incoming Safavid diplomatic delegation, which would pass Erzurum on their way to Istanbul.⁵³⁴ The second one Rıdvan Çavuş carried was about the renewal of the survey of people residing in Erzurum, which was sent back to İstanbul incomplete.⁵³⁵ Yet there was also a third order about the dispatch of a register for the privileges granted to men of the previous governor-general of Erzurum Ayas Pasha. This order was sent with a steward of the household [*kethüda*] of the current governor-general of Erzurum [Mustafa Pasha].⁵³⁶⁵³⁷ It is interesting as this *kethüda* was probably on his way back to Erzurum and could have acted as a courier for all three imperial orders as this was not uncommon as a practice.⁵³⁸ It is implied that depending on the type or importance of orders, the couriers could multiply in number even though they were travelling to the exact location. This condition seems to be the case for orders about the same Safavid diplomatic delegation who commenced on their return journey to Safavid Persia on April 1560. The order to greet the delegation was sent on 18 April 1560 to all governors en route to Erzurum, along with the governor-general of Sivas [Rum] [Ali Pasha] and governor-general of Erzurum [Mustafa Pasha] and these orders were carried by a man called Husrev Bey.⁵³⁹ On the other hand, the order regarding men of the previous governor-general of Erzurum Ayas Pasha was sent with a steward [*kethüda*] named Hurrem.⁵⁴⁰

An important question remains regarding the identities of these men who functioned as couriers. The examples above show that most of these couriers carried the title of sergeant [*çavuş*], an umbrella term used by palace officials and military corps. In the sixteenth century, three types of *çavuş* were active in duty. The first one was palace officials [*divan-ı hümayun çavuşları*], who performed a variety of duties.⁵⁴¹ They acted as couriers between the capital, Istanbul, and

⁵³⁴ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 729

⁵³⁵ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 730

⁵³⁶ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 731.

⁵³⁷ “The term *ketkhuda* is used in the Ottoman state administration from the 15th century onwards in the sense of someone who looks after the affairs of an important government official or influential person, i.e. the *ketkhuda* was an authorised deputy official. Hence there were *ketkhudas* below the *agha* or *re’is* in charge, e.g. of the treasury, the dockyards, the police guard, the Janissaries, the taxation registers, the Grand Vizierate, the imperial pantry, the bodyguard of *cavushs*, of the artillery corps, etc. Provincial governors (beylerbeyis) and district governors (sandjak-beyis) had their *ketkhudas*.” Orhonlu, Cengiz. “Ketkhuda”, *EI2*, Vol. 4, pp.893-94.

⁵³⁸ Several officials belonged to the household of the governor-general of Erzurum. They functioned as couriers carrying imperial orders, such as a steward [*kethüda*] named Hürrem and another “servant” called Abdüsselam. They both appeared in MD number three more than five times as couriers from Istanbul to Erzurum.

⁵³⁹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 980, 980/a, 981

⁵⁴⁰ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 982

⁵⁴¹ Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilatı*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014, pp.391-395.

the provinces while also serving as ambassadors to foreign states and tasked with receiving foreign ambassadors at the Topkapı Palace.⁵⁴² These corps were divided into two: those who were paid out of treasury funds called “*yevmli*” and those who were allotted *zeamets* called “*gedikli*”.⁵⁴³ Almost all of the *divan-ı hümayun çavuş* acting as couriers belonged to the latter group of *gedikli*. They formed the majority of officials sent to provinces to deliver imperial orders.⁵⁴⁴ Second type of *çavuş*, also called *kul çavuşu* to differentiate themselves from palace officials, were members of janissary corps. They were responsible for providing military discipline and distributing orders of the Sultan during campaigns.⁵⁴⁵ The third type of *çavuş* was a mixture of the abovementioned types. Most of these were palace officials [*divan çavuşu*] stationed in provinces. They served at the governors’ household with similar capacities to those serving at the Topkapı Palace, while the rest hailed from the janissary corps stationed at castles. Depending on the importance and location of these provinces, their numbers varied. In MD number three, officials belonging to the third group also appeared frequently. However, to differentiate them from the first group, they were mentioned with the locations where they were stationed.⁵⁴⁶ Thus, the first and third types of *çavuş* functioned as a vital part of the news system as they carried news both in written and oral form.

While couriers predominantly belonged to the rank of *çavuş*, other officials were also operating as couriers, including *subaşı*, translators [*tercemân/ dragoman*], *müteferrika* along with officials of the household of governors such as a steward [*kethüda*] or other servants. The *subaşı* were mainly used to carry imperial orders sent to judges [*kadı*]. At the same time, translators [*tercemân/ dragoman*] appeared only imperial orders sent to tributary states in the Balkans, such as Wallachia or Moldavia.⁵⁴⁷ Thus, however important they were for the

⁵⁴² These men were led by a *çavuşbaşı* who was responsible “for protocol and discipline in palace ceremonies and meetings of the Imperial Council.” Somel, “Çavuşbaşı” in *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.112; Köprülü, Orhan F. “Çavuş”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8, pp. 236-38.

⁵⁴³ Mantran, Robert. “Ca’ush”, *EI2*, Vol.2, p.16; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı*, p. 391

⁵⁴⁴ “Ze’amet/Zi’amet” was an Ottoman Turkish military and land tenure organisation term. The *zi’amet* was a more significant size fief (*timar*), a state-owned (*mirî*) unit of cereal-growing land. In the 10th/16th century, a *zia’met* was worth between 20,000 and 100,000 akces; in earlier periods, the limits were less clearly defined.” Faroqhi, Suraiya. “Zi’amet”, *EI2*, Vol.11, p.496

⁵⁴⁵ They were led by *başçavuş* who held a high-ranking position within janissaries. Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapukulu Ocakları*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988, pp. 205-8.

⁵⁴⁶ One example from MD: “[the order] was given to one of the *çavuş* of Damascus [Şam] who was in service of governor-general of Damascus” [*Şâm çavuşlarından mütevellîye hüdmet iden Ali Çavuş’a virildi*]. (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1267

⁵⁴⁷ *Subaşı*, originally a Turkish term for army commander, had two different functions in the Ottoman context. In the provinces, they had their fiefs (*timar*), and they exercised police control over the other *sipahis* and the inhabitants of the district under their charge. Administratively, they were under the authority of an *alay beg*, who again was subject to the district governor [*sancak beg*]. However, in the capital, they became one of the chief

circulation of news, due to their recipients being outside of the scope of this study, both of these officials remain out of this study.

There were also other groups outside of state officials who were involved in news transmission such as merchants. For example, a merchant named Mustafa who was doing business in Moldavia [Boğdan] and Muscovy [Moskov] showed up as a courier of imperial orders to the province of Caffa [Kefe]. One of these imperial orders, dated 31 March 1560 [4 Receb 967], was about the capture of men who were suspected of being sent to those parts of the Ottoman Empire by Prince Bayezid.⁵⁴⁸

The other group that often appeared in correspondences with Anatolian provinces were the officials with the title *müteferrika*. These men performed similar duties to *çavuş*, yet unlike the latter, those who served in the palace were chosen among the most distinguished people with high rank, such as sons of viziers or provincial governors.⁵⁴⁹ For example, after Prince Bayezid's escape to Safavid Persia, his household and belongings in Amasya were moved to Istanbul. A palace *müteferrika* named Ferhad Ağa was sent to supervise this transition.⁵⁵⁰ It is clear that he held a high position as he was called “the most honoured and benevolent Ferhad, may he be illustrious, a *müteferrika* of my exalted threshold” in an imperial order that was sent to Sinan Pasha, temporary governor of Amasya after Prince Bayezid's departure.⁵⁵¹ Conversely, such honorary titles were not used for other *müteferrika* mentioned in MD as they were not part of the palace corps.⁵⁵² Similar to *müteferrika*, palace sergeants [*divan-ı hümayun çavuşları*] were also held in high esteem. When the name of a *çavuş* was mentioned more than one time within the text of a imperial orders, he was mentioned with the high-ranking title *müşârünileyh*, which was used to say “above-mentioned”.⁵⁵³ These men were trusted with sensitive information. Their safety was of utmost importance; for instance, on 14 February 1560

officers of police, who assisted the *Cavuşbaşı*, whose function is most like that of minister of police. Here, *Subaşı* was responsible for carrying out all the judicial sentences and, in general, for obedience to the police regulations in the capital. Kramers, J.H and Bosworth, C.E. “Su Bashi”, *EI2*, Vol.9, pp. 736-37.

⁵⁴⁸ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 683.

⁵⁴⁹ These men only constituted a small part of *müteferrika* corps, yet they were paid the most. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı*, pp.411-413.

⁵⁵⁰ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 281

⁵⁵¹ “...Dergâh-ı mu‘allâ‘m müteferrikalarından kıldvetü'l-emâcid ve'l-ekârim Ferhâd zîde mecduhû...” (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 288

⁵⁵² (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1221.

⁵⁵³ “...Dergâh-ı mu‘allâ‘m çavuşlarından Abdî Çavuş irsâl olup buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, aslâ te‘hîr itmeyüp mezkûrî her kande ise ele getirüp kayd ü bend ile müşârün-ileyhe teslim idüp Südde-i sa‘âdet‘üme gönderesin.” (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1358.

[17 Cemâziye'l-evvel 967] an order was sent to the governor-general of Adana [Ramazanoğlu Piri Mehmed Pasha] about his bannerman [*sancakdar*] and commander [*çeribaşı*] who detained a certain Mehmed Çavuş who was on his way back to Istanbul from the province of Basra. While Mehmed Çavuş was passing through Gülek Strait on the Toros Mountains, these men accused Mehmed Çavuş of being a spy, took his clothes and put him in Gülek Castle. The Governor-general of Adana was ordered to capture these men and send them back to the capital for trial without delay.⁵⁵⁴ Thus, it was a grave offence to harass or even delay a *çavuş*.

These officials constituted a crucial part of the Ottoman Empire's news system, yet they were hardly the only informants active. The circulation of news depended heavily on informants of different ranks and access, especially during crises such as the Prince Bayezid Affair.

⁵⁵⁴ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 790.

b) Act 1: “Anywhere but Amasya” First Phase of the Bayezid Affair (October 1558-June 1559)

“Allâh saklasun, olmıya ki mâbeynlerinde fitne ve fesâd vâki’ olub ‘ırza halel gelmeğe bir olsun; akıbetinde nedâmet-i küllî fâide virmez”⁵⁵⁵

The previous succession struggles must have left their imprint in the mind of Süleyman I, who by 1543 had three grown sons- Mustafa, Selim and Bayezid- eligible for succession.⁵⁵⁶ The first event that prepared the ground for the “Bayezid Affair” was the execution of their elder half-brother, Prince Mustafa, on 6 October 1553. Born in 1515 to Mahidevran, a favourite concubine of Süleyman I, while he was still a prince ruling the *sancak* of Manisa, Prince Mustafa became the eldest remaining son of the Sultan during the 1520s due to the sudden deaths of his infant brothers. Between his appointment to his first gubernatorial seat, Manisa, in 1534 until his execution nearly twenty years later, Prince Mustafa was considered the *heir apparent* due to his perceived talents for ruling and warfare by various factions of the Empire. The most supportive faction was the janissaries, who were growing dissatisfied with the stagnant rule of Süleyman I, who had changed his foreign policy from territorial expansion to a more peace-oriented one by the 1540s.⁵⁵⁷ Thus, janissaries considered belligerent Mustafa as the worthy heir to his elderly father, their support echoing the one shown to Selim I during his struggle for the throne.⁵⁵⁸ Yet this support could have been one reason for creating a suitable environment for his execution. It was widely believed that Prince Mustafa’s sombre end was the outcome of Hürrem Sultan and the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha’s careful planning, as both had valid reasons to oppose his succession.⁵⁵⁹ Hürrem Sultan must have wished for one of her sons to succeed, which would have enabled her to attain the supreme position a woman could achieve in the palace hierarchy: mother sultana (*valide Sultan*).⁵⁶⁰ Furthermore, the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha

⁵⁵⁵ Süleyman I about the tension between his sons: “God forbid, if there is discord and malice between them and they harm the order, no repentance will help them.” (BOA), (*TS.MA.e*), 0758_0059.

⁵⁵⁶ Prince Mehmed, Süleyman I’s eldest son by Hürrem Sultan, died unexpectedly in 1543 while his youngest son by Hürrem Sultan, Prince Cihangir, was born with a physical deformity and therefore was excluded from the succession.

⁵⁵⁷ Atçıl, Zahit. “The Foundation of Peace-Oriented Foreign Policy in the Sixteenth- Century Ottoman Empire: Rüstem Pasha’s Vision of Diplomacy”, *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630* (eds.) Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz, Newyork: Routledge, 2021, pp. 132-153.

⁵⁵⁸ Atçıl, Zahit. “Why Did Süleyman the Magnificent Execute His Son Şehzade Mustafa in 1553?” in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, Vol. 48, 2016, p. 77.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. pp.79-81.

⁵⁶⁰ For the discussion of the position of the *valide sultan*, see Peirce, Leslie P. *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, 1993.

was the son-in-law of Hürrem Sultan, being married to her only daughter, Mihrimah Sultan, and it was also in his interest to support a son of Hürrem Sultan for the succession. On the other hand, scarce archival evidence indicates that Prince Mustafa was hardly a passive player in the ongoing power struggle. While not openly in rebellion, he actively tried to form his power networks and gain potential allies in and out of the Empire.⁵⁶¹ However notorious and interesting this case study is, the aim is not to prove or disapprove whether Prince Mustafa rebelled or how efficient the anti-Mustafa faction was in terms of his downfall. It is essential to point out that several recurring themes existed between the cases of Prince Mustafa and Bayezid, not in the least in terms of news and rumours, which further complicated their processes.

During the last years of his life, Prince Mustafa managed to draw more attention to himself by seemingly giving in to the adoration paid to him by the disgruntled janissaries and rumours about his supposed rebellion began to circulate when preparations for the new campaign against the Safavids began in September 1552.⁵⁶² Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha was appointed as the commander-in-chief, and during his stay in Aksaray, where he went to organize the army, he became anxious about rumours he had heard. These “talks” originated from the soldiers who allegedly pledged to Prince Mustafa should he take the throne from his father, who had grown sick and old, prompting the prince to take action to force his father to retire, like his grandfather Selim forced his father, Bayezid II in 1512.⁵⁶³ Rüstem Pasha immediately reported these back to the sultan. The exact reaction of Süleyman I to these news and rumours is unknown. However, he postponed the Safavid campaign to the spring of 1553, declaring his participation, possibly to show his strength to the soldiers and eliminate Mustafa as a threat to his rule.⁵⁶⁴ In Mustafa’s case, rumours of a rebellion exacerbated the growing distrust his father felt for him and set the stage for the Bayezid affair.

In Prince Bayezid’s case, his reluctance to go to his new gubernatorial seat, along with defying orders and recruiting soldiers, raised eyebrows in the capital and eventually culminated in him being declared a rebel [*bâgî*] by an official *fetva* in the Spring of 1559.⁵⁶⁵⁵⁶⁶ After their mother,

⁵⁶¹ Atçıl, “Why Did Süleyman the Magnificent Execute His Son Şehzade Mustafa in 1553?”, pp.78-79

⁵⁶² Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, pp. 33-35

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. pp.35-36

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. pp. 99-102.

⁵⁶⁶ “*Fetva or fatwa* is an “opinion on a point of law, the term “law” applying, in Islam, to all civil or religious matters. While technically, it could have been issued by anyone with prominent with necessary learning, by

Hürrem Sultan, died in March 1558, the rivalry between brothers Selim and Bayezid accelerated rapidly. Ruling over neighbouring *sancaks*, two princes were spying on each other constantly and complaining to their father via letters. In the end, Süleyman I decided to pacify them by distancing them: Prince Selim was appointed from *the sancak* of Saruhan [Manisa] to Konya, while Prince Bayezid was to leave *the sancak* of Kütahya for Amasya with an order dated 6 September 1558.⁵⁶⁷ Yet, Prince Bayezid was miserable due to this decision. Amasya was the relatively more distant *sancak* from the capital, which lowered his chances for a successful succession in the event of their father's death. He blamed his brother for this appointment.⁵⁶⁸ This quickly turned into defiance: first, he made several excuses not to commence his travel to Amasya whilst trying to change his father's mind. When he finally started to travel on 28 October 1558, nearly two months after receiving the order, he slowly journeyed while making several demands from his father, who tried to stall the unhappy prince until Bayezid settled into his new *sancak*.⁵⁶⁹ By the time Prince Bayezid reached Amasya in late December 1558 and commenced his official duties, he was sure his brother Prince Selim was his father's favourite. In contrast, Süleyman was wary of Bayezid due to his disobedience.

Thus, in both cases, the daily activities of the princes- Mustafa and Bayezid- were increasingly scrutinized by the central authority, which required a steady flow of correspondence between gubernatorial seats and the Capital, Istanbul. This correspondence led to news exchange, and the uncertainty of their situation created a viable environment for rumours.

sixteenth century Ottoman Empire it was limited to few select individuals of public position.” Walsh, J.R. “Fatwa”, *EI2*, pp.866-67.

⁵⁶⁷ Turan, *Taht Kavgalari*, p.57; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0969_0036.

⁵⁶⁸ Ironically, Amasya was also the *sancak* of Prince Mustafa by the time he was executed in 1553.

⁵⁶⁹ Turan, *Taht Kavgalari*, pp. 66-75.

i) The Informants and News

(1) High Ranking Informants

In the context of the Ottoman Empire, high-ranking officials served as primary intermediaries between the periphery and the centre, much like the Venetian network of informants. In Venetian society, membership in the ruling patrician class provided privileged access to sensitive information and exclusive reputation and credibility. These individuals, belonging to the same social class, were well-acquainted with each other and recognized each other's authority, thus facilitating the gathering and spreading of news.

The Ottoman ruling elite comprised a different category of individuals who held positions in the administrative and financial bureaucracies, with admission and upward mobility restricted to specific groups.⁵⁷⁰⁵⁷¹ This bureaucratic ruling elite included high-ranking informants such as viziers, governor-generals (beglerbegi), and governors (sancakbegi). Viziers, bearing the title of pasha, were the highest-ranking government officials, serving as members of the Imperial Council in ministerial roles. Governor-generals (beglerbegi) governed the most extensive administrative units of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, district governors (sancakbegi) presided over sancaks, central administrative units in the premodern Ottoman period, and operated under the jurisdiction of a beglerbegi.⁵⁷²⁵⁷³⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁰There is an extensive historiography on the Ottoman ruling elite and the various elements that shaped it. Several studies focus on sixteenth and early seventeenth-century elites: Kunt, İ. Metin. *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; Darling, Linda T. "Istanbul and the Late Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Elite: The Significance of Place" in *Osmanlı İstanbulu II*, Feridun Emecen, Ali Akyıldız, Emrah S. Gürkan (eds.), İstanbul: 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi Yayınları, (2014), pp. 89-97. Darling, Linda T. "The Sultan's advisors and their opinions on the identity of Ottoman Elite, 1580-1653" in *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries*, edited by Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull, Indiana University Press, 2016, pp.171-181. For transformation of the ruling elite from late sixteenth century onwards: Tezcan, Baki. *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁵⁷¹The educational-judiciary class [*ulemâ*], which granted access to Muslims, should also be counted among the elite. However, even though it was more inclusive than the administrative and financial bureaucracy, higher positions were still restricted to certain established *ulemâ* families during the sixteenth century. Tezcan, Baki. "Dispelling the Darkness: The Politics of 'Race' in the Early Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire in the Light of the Life and Work of Mullah Ali" in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman world: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* edited by in Karl Barbir and Baki Tezcan, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007, pp.74-75

⁵⁷² Somel, "Vizier", *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.399

⁵⁷³ Ibid. "Beglerbegilik", p. 41

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid. "Sancakbegi", p. 256.

Their ranks and social position in the Ottoman bureaucratic hierarchy established them as an authority within the information network and put them in the prime role of gathering and interpreting news. They regularly reported back to the capital in the form of *arz*, one of the most common official documents in sixteenth-century Ottoman bureaucracy. Following a very formulaic structure which evolved over centuries, these documents were produced when an official wanted to present information on a current issue or/and wished to make a petition.⁵⁷⁵ As these officials were repeatedly asked to give information about Prince Bayezid's situation, several high-ranking officials observed his two-month travel and his four-month stay at his new *sancak* at Amasya very closely.

For instance, Prince Bayezid's journey from Eskişehir to Ankara [Engüri] in mid-November 1558 was reported by fourth vizier Pertev Pasha, who was sent to him by order of Süleyman I to convince him to continue his journey to his new sancak Amasya without any more delay.⁵⁷⁶ While two existing documents in the archives were not written by Pertev Pasha *per se*, they included the news he had. One of these documents relayed the meeting between Prince Bayezid and Pertev Pasha in a location close to Ankara called *Oğlakçılar*, where the encampment of the prince was found. It was stated that the situation at the camp was calm as Prince Bayezid was alone in his protesting while rest of the people remained obedient to Süleyman I.⁵⁷⁷ This set of news was reported to the unnamed author of the letter via an unnamed man who had left Prince Bayezid's encampment recently. This man also stated that Pertev Pasha's servant would report further. The author wrote his decision to inform an unnamed governor-general [*beglerbegi*] with a letter about these recent events. Lastly, the author also stated that the sons of Prince Bayezid had already moved beyond Ankara [Engüri]. This latest news piece was brought by another informant: a labourer [*rençber*] who transmitted this news to a man the author placed explicitly as an informer.

The second document relayed more news about Pertev Pasha, who was already returning to the capital after meeting with Prince Bayezid. Similar to the previous one, the anonymous author of this particular *arz* was anxious to learn about the movements of Prince Bayezid and sent his *çavuş* to the encampment where many members of Bayezid's household were said to be

⁵⁷⁵ Kütükoğlu, Mübahat S. *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)*, İstanbul: Kubbealtı Akademisi Kültür ve Sanat Vakfı, 1998. p. 217

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 78.

⁵⁷⁷ BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0748_0014.

happy to receive Pertev Pasha. Locating the Pasha in a place close to Eskişehir called *Toğra*, the same *çavuş* gathered important news from him: Prince Bayezid was about to move towards Ankara [Engüri] in a few days due to harsh winter conditions.⁵⁷⁸ The same author probably penned these two letters, a high-ranking official possibly stationed in Eskişehir reporting news he had received back to the capital.⁵⁷⁹ Several implications indicated his elevated status.

First, in both letters, he had the authority to send a *çavuş*, who probably belonged to the third type of *çavuş* serving district governors in the provinces, and other men to gather information. Secondly, he stated his opinion about the accuracy of a news piece. He deemed news regarding the sons of Prince Bayezid moving forward correct, which implies that he had other sources of news reporting back to him to confirm the news. More importantly, he presented his observations about the ongoing situation. In both letters, it was clear that the author's primary concern was the possibility of a rebellion in the region due to Prince Bayezid's presence, and again in both letters, he claimed that the situation was quite the opposite. In the second letter, he also assured Süleyman I that in the case of a possible confrontation with Prince Bayezid's forces, they had twice the number of soldiers between where the author was stationed and Ankara [Engüri].

The importance of these high-ranking officials stemmed mainly from their accessibility to the inner circle of Prince Bayezid. Pertev Pasha's news was necessary because he could converse with the object of the news, the Prince himself, and observe his entourage. Similarly, the detailed account of an episode of Prince Bayezid's journey was provided in a letter by governor-general [*beglerbegi*] of Anatolia Cenabi Ahmed Pasha, who had greeted the Prince in Ankara [Engüri], where he stayed for a week in late November/early December 1558 before moving onwards to Çorum.⁵⁸⁰ Ahmed Pasha explained the reasons for Bayezid's dallying by providing several dialogues between the Prince and himself. In these conversations, Prince Bayezid voiced his displeasure for being forced to change his *sancak* while Ahmed Pasha advised him to obey his father. Moreover, the Pasha commented on the situation similar to the anonymous author above. He wrote to Süleyman I that even though Prince Bayezid's monetary power was

⁵⁷⁸ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0872_0020.

⁵⁷⁹ While the location was not mentioned explicitly, several sentences in these letters suggest that the location could have been Eskişehir. It was not Ankara [Engüri]. Thus, the official in question could have been *the sancakbeg* of Sultanönü, in which Eskişehir was the administrative centre. Unfortunately, his name was not mentioned in any of the primary resources.

⁵⁸⁰ See Map 1.

reduced, plenty of men of low reputation were rushing to his side. The Prince was honouring some of these men by giving them robe of honour [*hil'at*] or with promises of *istimâlet* yet, in reality, Bayezid lacked the means to do so.⁵⁸¹ Thus, while on one hand Ahmed Pasha was explaining to Süleyman I that Prince Bayezid's real reason of unhappiness was his supposed disfavoured position in comparison with his brother Prince Selim, on the other, he was also advising caution to the Sultan regarding his younger son whose actions he considered untrustworthy.⁵⁸² Here, it is essential to point out that Ahmed Pasha did not provide every single dialogue between himself and the Prince but presented selected quotes. By doing this, he was trying to emphasize their positions: himself as an impartial and experienced statesman against an impatient candidate for the throne who needed advice. This selection process was crucial to relaying the overall message these officials wanted to disclose, as the Sultan trusted these men to make observations and report reliable news.

Ahmed Pasha's credibility also derived from the distinct position he held. Serving as the governor-general of Anatolia since 1542, Ahmed Pasha was responsible for governing seventeen *sancaks* that were tied to his title. Along with his active years in duty, his established networks in the region made him a critical player within the news network.⁵⁸³ The fact that his seat in Ankara, an important stop at the most used route heading from Istanbul to Amasya during the sixteenth century, must also be seen as a contributing factor.⁵⁸⁴ This can be perceived from the fact that as soon as Prince Bayezid left Ankara towards Çorum, he was made responsible for providing news about the Prince and the overall region. A report by grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, written around the time Prince Bayezid reached Çorum in December 1558, stated that he sent a letter to Ahmed Pasha urging him to stay informed about every ongoing of that region and not abstain from reporting everything that happened. The grand vizier also

⁵⁸¹“Istimâlet”, which as a word meant “appeasement”, was a policy of accommodation which could have been applied to local subjects via tax relief or as a diplomatic tool for regions recently conquered by Ottomans. In this case, the first definition of *istimalet* is applicable: “not taking taxes beyond the capacity of the individual, and not causing discontent among the re'aya, the peasants in particular”. İnalçık, Halil. “State, Sovereignty and Law During the Reign of Suleyman” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, edited by Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993, p.84

⁵⁸² (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0007. The transcription of this text can be found in Turan, *Taht Kavğaları*, pp.166-67.

⁵⁸³ Dağlıoğlu, Hikmet Turan. “Ankara’da Cenabi Ahmed Paşa Camii ve Cenabi Ahmed Pasha”, *Vakıflar Dergisi*, Vol. 2, 1942) pp. 216-18; Varlık, Mustafa Çetin. “Anadolu Eyaleti”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 3, 1991, pp.143-44.

⁵⁸⁴ The capital seat of the governor-general of Anatolia was Kütahya since the fifteenth century, yet if the said place was ruled by a Prince as Prince Bayezid did before moving to Amasya, the seat was moved to Ankara.

wanted Ahmed Pasha to send any letters he received from Prince Bayezid *in verbatim* so that they would know why Prince Bayezid was writing to Ahmed Pasha.⁵⁸⁵

Unsurprisingly, he seemed to continue performing this duty well after Prince Bayezid settled into his new *sancak* at Amasya. In the spring of 1559, Ahmed Pasha penned two letters to the Porte. One of these letters forwarded selected contents of the letter Prince Bayezid wrote to Ahmed Pasha, in which the Prince mainly voiced his displeasure for being in Amasya and stated that he meant no enmity against his father.⁵⁸⁶ Yet, he defended his decision to recruit soldiers by pointing out his brother Selim's akin actions.⁵⁸⁷ Prince Bayezid also asked Ahmed Pasha to notify him about the opinions of the Sultan and Prince Selim. On the other hand, at the end of his letter, Ahmed Pasha re-affirmed his commitment to Süleyman I by promising him that he would send all the news he had about Bayezid without any delay. A second letter by Ahmed Pasha was written around March 1559 when Prince Bayezid left Amasya for Katarsarayı, a location close to Çorum, supposedly for hunting. With similar content, it also narrated Prince Bayezid's vow of obedience to his father, which he did by swearing on the Qur'an. This was relayed to Pasha by his servant, who was sent to the Prince with letters and witnessed the event.⁵⁸⁸ At the end of the same letter, Ahmed Pasha urged Porte to send the Prince new letters of assurance to take him off from a possibly rebellious path.

From these letters, it was clear that Ahmed Pasha acted as an important mediator of news between the Porte and Prince Bayezid throughout the initial stage of the succession crisis. He was evidently a useful informant for both sides, as his correspondence with Prince Bayezid proved that the latter also tried to get information out of him regarding his father and brother. It is notable that Prince Bayezid also swore an oath of obedience in front of a servant of Ahmed Pasha, enabling the Pasha as a middleman to relay this news back to Porte. It was Prince Bayezid who trusted Ahmed Pasha as an impartial informant who would transmit his words and actions without manipulating them, or he knew that Pasha was one of the remaining

⁵⁸⁵ "Anadolu Beglerbegisi kulunuza da kâğıd ile adem göndermişim ki ol dahi ol cânibin her ahvâlinde âgâh ve haberdâr olub vâkıf olduđu evzân îlâmından hâlî olmaya ve öteden kendüye gelen kağıdı dahi aynı ile bu cânibe göndere deyü ısmarlamışızdır ki ana dahi kâğıdı ne yüzden yazarlar mâlûmunuz ola..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0812_0030.

⁵⁸⁶ "...min-bâd pâdişah-ı zıllullâh hazretlerinin rızâ-yı şeriflerine muhâlefetim yokdur bu kadar amma Amasya havasından gayetle bî-huzurum duramazım..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0813_0059_002.

⁵⁸⁷ "...bu cemiyetlerden bî-huzur değilim amma madem ki Selim han adem yazar ve yanında cemiyetler olur..." Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ "...mezbûr hizmetkârın mahzarında Mushafları üzere kasem eylemişler ki benim bir veçhile pâdişah-ı alempenâh hazretlerinin rızâ-yı şeriflerine muhâlefetim bu kadar deyü..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0813_0059_001.

legitimate channels of communication with the Porte available to him. It was also possible that he was using Ahmed Pasha as a front to show his “obedience” when, in fact, he was readying his army for war. The two latter options were highly feasible as by spring 1559, Prince Bayezid had already become politically isolated. In a letter penned in early March 1559, it was stated that a confrontation with Prince Bayezid seemed inevitable, and several governor-generals were ordered to ready their soldiers for war by Nowruz, which corresponded around 20-21 March 1559.⁵⁸⁹

Prince Bayezid was aware of these preparations. In a letter written directly to his father, he complained about his father’s blatant favouritism towards his brother Prince Selim and the fact that several governors-general were sent to locations close to his brother, including Ahmed Pasha, who was to move to Karahisar with his men.⁵⁹⁰ Increasingly perturbed by the rising tension, Prince Bayezid believed that “some men” were manipulating his words or telling outright lies about him. In one of Ahmed Pasha’s letters, the Prince voiced his belief that his father preferred to accredit the words of intriguers [*müfsîdî*] instead of his.⁵⁹¹ In another letter he wrote to his father around the same time as Ahmed Pasha’s letters, Bayezid complained about the governor-general of Sivas [Rum] Ali Pasha, who openly defied him when the Prince went to Tokat for hunting. According to the Prince, Ali Pasha openly provoked the people of Tokat, claiming that if Prince Bayezid were to come to the city, it was to pillage and invoke levies on merchants, hence intimidating the general populace with his “lies”.⁵⁹² Furthermore, Ali Pasha wrote to Prince Bayezid stating that in the case of his arrival to Sivas- Ali Pasha’s gubernatorial seat- he would enter the castle and battle with him under the orders of Süleyman I.⁵⁹³ Naturally, Prince Bayezid was outraged of the treatment he had received. More importantly, he was shocked by the audacity of Ali Pasha, who, under normal circumstances, would not dare to treat Bayezid, a member of the imperial family, in this manner. Thus, thanks to Ali Pasha’s scandalous behaviour, he was sure his father was planning to attack him.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁸⁹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0878_0042.

⁵⁹⁰ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_028.

⁵⁹¹ “...pâdişah-i alempenâh hazretleri müfsîdînin kelimatlarına râğbet buyururlar...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0813_0059_002.

⁵⁹² “...geçende Tokat cânibine şikâra gitdim idi vallâhi billâhi bende hergiz yaramazlık yok idi amma ki Sivas beylerbeyisi olan Ali Paşa envâi fesâdlar edüb Tokat halkını ızlâl edib şehzade Tokat’a gelirse cümle Tokat’ı yağma eder gah cümle şehirlüye bâzergânlara salgun salar..” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_004_001.

⁵⁹³ “...bana dahi mektub gönderüb Sivas gelmeyesiz gelürseniz hisâra girüb ceng iderüm bana pâdişahın emri gelmişdir deyü nice bu-asıl sözler yazmış...” Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ “...bu ahvâllerden gayet şüphelendim eğer pâdişahımın gerçekden bana kasdı olmasa beglerbeginin ne haddidir ki bu asıl fitnelikler ide...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_004_002.

Therefore, in this atmosphere of heightened mistrust where all main parties were wary of each other, some high-ranking officials, such as “impartial” Ahmed Pasha, became palpable in news circulation. On the one hand, Ahmed Pasha portrayed Bayezid as a querulous prince who would be a possible threat to the peace of the realm, while on the other hand, he was also transmitting Bayezid’s letters of plea in an hour of extreme mistrust. However impartial they tried to present themselves outwardly, the intent of these officials should be called into question. While they usually avoided openly choosing sides until the situation was clear, as statesmen, they had their agenda, especially in the case of determining the future Sultan, which would affect their position at the imperial court. Concurrent documents pertaining to other high-ranking statesmen, such as third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, present more examples.

Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, a renowned Ottoman bureaucrat, held the prestigious position of grand vizier for three consecutive *padishahs*. His strategic role was evident even before the rebellion of Prince Bayezid started in late April 1559.⁵⁹⁵ In the last months of 1558, he was dispatched to Prince Selim, mirroring Pertev Pasha’s mission to Prince Bayezid. His task was to guide the Prince to his new *sancak* swiftly and peacefully, a testament to his diplomatic skills. Mehmed Pasha’s letters revealed his dual role as an informant on Prince Bayezid’s movements, showcasing the intense surveillance of the Prince. An imperial order received by Mehmed Pasha on 1 December 1558 instructed him to make Ahmed Pasha remain in Ankara until after Prince Bayezid had passed through, further emphasizing his pivotal role in the empire’s operations. Mehmed Pasha assured Süleyman I of Ahmed Pasha’s position and also penned what he had learned about the whereabouts of Prince Bayezid’s encampment from his informant, who had just returned to him. Mehmed Pasha’s informant reported that Prince Bayezid was three days away from Ankara. As soon as Bayezid entered the city, Mehmed Pasha’s other informants in the city would relay the information back to him.⁵⁹⁶

Mehmed Pasha’s letter also showed the advisory role he had assumed while travelling with Prince Selim as he reported two spying attempts. The first one occurred near Balıkesir,

⁵⁹⁵ Born in a Bosnian village called “Sokolovic” in the early sixteenth century where his epithet “Sokullu” - meaning “from Sokol” - derives from, Mehmed Pasha was recruited through the *devşirme* system and rose through imperial ranks holding various positions in the Palace. He had become the grand vizier in 1565, the last year of Süleyman I’s reign, and his grand vizierate lasted for fourteen consecutive years until 12 October 1579 when a petitioner assassinated him during the reign of Murad III (d.1595). Veinstein, Gilles. “Sokullu Mehmed Pasha”, *EI2*, Vol.9, pp.706-711.

⁵⁹⁶ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0073.

southwest of Bursa, where Prince Selim was out hunting. The second one occurred within Bursa, where Prince Selim stayed for several weeks on his way to his new *sancak* at Konya. The Porte already knew about these incidents and inquired about learning more details, which Mehmed Pasha provided. Both cases involved men who were supposedly from Bayezid's military retinue, a *çavuş* and a *sekban kethüdası*. The latter purportedly wanted to defect from Bayezid's ranks to join Selim.⁵⁹⁷ In the second spying case, Prince Selim was inclined to accept the man, Prince Bayezid's former *sekban kethüdası* who held an important position within the janissary ranks, into his retinue yet ultimately refused to do so with the advice of Mehmed Pasha who cautioned him not to accept any soldiers against his father's wishes. This episode was particularly important as Mehmed Pasha positioned himself similarly to Ahmed Pasha, a wise older statesman who would guide Prince Selim to see the "correct way to act". However, their approaches also diverged based on their circumstances. In the case of Prince Bayezid, Ahmed Pasha also distanced himself from the Prince by pointing out his disobedient ways to his father, the Sultan. He mentioned the gathering of unruly men around the Prince who were reeled in with false promises. He also added another observation to his letter: contrary to his claims of being peaceful, Prince Bayezid was most likely to attack his brother at the first chance he got.⁵⁹⁸ Mehmed Pasha, on the other hand, portrayed Prince Selim as "the obedient and trustworthy son" who refused to gather soldiers to himself after his father's orders, unlike his brother. For example, in the first case of spying, when several men proclaimed they had come to join Prince Selim, the latter answered by saying that nobody was getting recruited there.⁵⁹⁹

However, Mehmed Pasha was not an eyewitness to this particular event in Balıkesir. Instead, it was narrated to him by Lala Mustafa Pasha, a vital court figure as the tutor and advisor to Prince Selim. In the Ottoman court, being a *lala*, a tutor to a prince, was a position of great honour. It ensured a close relationship with one of the candidates for the throne, which paved the way to become a member of the imperial council.⁶⁰⁰ A compatriot of Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and

⁵⁹⁷ "*Sekbân kethüdâsı*" corresponds to a deputy official or overseer, *kethüda*, of the *sekban* order. The word *segbân*, originally meant "guardians of dogs" in Persian, alludes to the initial duty of the order: servants in charge of Sultan's hunting dogs. This position, during the reign of Mehmed II, evolved into being salaried infantry units serving within the Janissary order, stationed in both the capital and the provinces while several of them continued serving in imperial hunts. Özcan, Abdülkadir. "Sekban", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 36, 2009, pp. 326-28. Huart, Cl., "Segbân", *Encyclopaedia of Islam First Edition*, edited by M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann, 1913-1936.

⁵⁹⁸ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0007.

⁵⁹⁹ "...Şehzâde-i cevânbaht hazretleri Balıkesri'ye nüzul ildiklerinde ava binüb, tenhâda üç kimesneye rast gelüb, kimler idüğü tefâhhus buyurmuşlar, "Yazılmağa geldük" deyücevâb îdüb, anlar dahi, "Bunda kimesne yazılmaz, fe-ammâ siz kimlersiz?" (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0073.

⁶⁰⁰ Bosworth, C.E. "Lala", *EI2*, Supplement, p. 547.

possibly the brother of the former second vizier Deli Hüsrev Pasha (d.1544), who helped him enter into the palace corps, Mustafa Pasha was given the position of *lala* in 1556 and proved to be an essential figure within the succession struggle.⁶⁰¹ Due to being the *lala* of Prince Selim, a position which he continued until he was appointed governor-general of Van in late 1560, it can be assumed that Mustafa Pasha was explicitly partial towards Prince Selim which would influence his reporting.

An excellent example of this occurred when Lala Mustafa Pasha reported why Prince Selim deviated from the route from Manisa to Konya. When he received the imperial order to change his *sancak* in early September 1558, instead of journeying to Konya immediately, Prince Selim decided to wait more than forty days to start his journey. When he finally decided to relocate, instead of following the route from Karahisar [Afyon] without permission, he moved towards Bursa, a location dangerously close to the capital. When asked about the reasons for these decisions by the Porte, Lala Mustafa Pasha stated that while they were ready to move towards Konya, they also decided to wait due to Prince Bayezid's state of inertia. However, this delay angered transporters [*mekârî tâifesi*], who claimed to lose money and complained to the imperial authorities. Therefore, Prince Selim and his retinue finally started their journey on 28 October 1558 [15 Muharrem 966]. While contemplating going via Karahisar, they learned that Prince Bayezid was also moving from Kütahya towards Eskişehir. Realizing that following the route above would bring them very close to Prince Bayezid, who would cause trouble for them, they decided to move towards Bursa instead.⁶⁰² Blaming his brother Bayezid for every decision, Selim's position was further helped by this type of reporting. Lala Mustafa Pasha's narrative was openly partial, as Prince Selim was shown as a figure who was pushed to move towards Bursa due to external circumstances, not by desire. Mustafa Pasha claimed that the Prince did this "not to cause any trouble, but to protect the law and order of his father's reign", hence portraying Prince Bayezid as the "troublemaker".⁶⁰³

We have to remember that this five-month period, between late December 1558 and late April 1559, was a time when the outcome of the succession struggle was still ambiguous and constantly shifting, necessitating every official to remain *seemingly* neutral. However, Prince

⁶⁰¹ It is important to note that neither Rüstem nor Sokullu Mehmed Pasha favoured Lala Mustafa Pasha throughout his career. His biggest supporter was Prince Selim himself, and this support continued after he ascended the throne as Selim II in 1566. Costantini, Vera. "Lala Mustafa Paşa", *EİB*, pp.148-149. Kütükoğlu, Bekir. "Lala Mustafa Paşa", *İA*, Vol. 27, 2003, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁰² (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0969_0036_0001.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

Bayezid's actions were pushing him increasingly to the position of the disgraced son and the actions of these officials, in this case reporting, were crucial to strengthen or weaken this position. Thus, these pieces of reporting, which were presented as objective narratives as they were relaying eye-witnessed news, were subjective pieces which also served the self-interests of these officials who wanted to be seen as indispensable for the safety and well-being of the Empire.

(2) The Grand Vizier and the Communication Network

The most prominent figure in this news network of high-ranking officials was the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, who held the position from 1555 until his passing on 12 July 1561. Although he was often viewed as a villain during the Prince Mustafa Affair, his role in this particular conflict is open to interpretation. According to Şerafettin Turan's book, Rüstem Pasha was depicted as an official who sought to distance himself from his past failures and endeavored to regain favor with the ruler. Consequently, he chose not to take sides openly.⁶⁰⁴

Nevertheless, the exchange between Rüstem Pasha and Prince Bayezid revealed a sincere dialogue between two individuals who held mutual respect. Prince Bayezid sought Rüstem Pasha's assistance mediating between himself and his father, while Rüstem Pasha attempted to reassure him with comforting words. In the winter of 1559, Prince Bayezid expressed his disappointment, considering Rüstem Pasha as his brother and confidant yet feeling let down by him.⁶⁰⁵ Unlike Prince Bayezid's strong language, Rüstem Pasha used reconciliatory words when explaining the rationale behind Süleyman I's orders to his provincial governors to raise troops. Rüstem Pasha explained that the objective was to forestall potential conflicts arising from both princes amassing troops in their respective territories. He emphasized that this situation could jeopardize the Ottoman dynasty's and Prince Bayezid's interests if left unchecked. Rüstem Pasha implored him to remain obedient, underscoring that his father loved all his sons equally, but disobedience from either of them would not be pardoned.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ Turan, *Taht Kavğaları*, p.56, 70

⁶⁰⁵ "...benim lalacığım ben seni karındaşım bilip senden külli faydalar umardım amma bana asla bir faydan olmadı dünyada bana faydan bu denlü oldukdan sonra ahirette bana şefâat idecek değilsen eğer benim bu ahvalden haberim yokdur dersen ol söze dahi itimadım yokdur..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0003.

⁶⁰⁶ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0059. The transcription of this text can be found in Turan, *Taht Kavğaları*, pp.178-79

Prince Bayezid's tone and language notably changed upon his return to Amasya after the battle of Konya in June 1559. In a formal letter to Rüstem Pasha, Bayezid expressed that his brother's falsehoods and slander had driven a wedge between him and their father, leading to suspicions and enabling Selim to amass troops, thus threatening Bayezid. He acknowledged feeling a sense of anger and powerlessness, for which he genuinely repented.⁶⁰⁷ Prince Bayezid then explicitly asked Rüstem Pasha to convey his apology to the Sultan on his behalf, as he trusted him to deliver it with diligence and rigour.⁶⁰⁸ Notably, in his time of need, the grand vizier was seen as the means of seeking redemption. Furthermore, Rüstem Pasha's proximity to Prince Bayezid meant he was pivotal in transmitting news about the prince to Süleyman I.

In the archive are fourteen existing documents pertaining to Rüstem Pasha written between September 1558 and the Battle of Konya on 30-31 May 1559 in the style that could be called *proto-telhis*, a type of *arz*. *Telhis* were written reports that the grand vizier presented to the incumbent Sultan about diverse issues such as ongoing political affairs, petitions, and allowances of janissaries to which the Sultan was expected to respond with an order.⁶⁰⁹ This written document was an outcome of the change in the Ottoman bureaucracy during the mid to late sixteenth century when the officials of the imperial harem gained prominence in the imperial council. At the same time, the Sultan's public persona became less visible as his attendance at the imperial council faltered.⁶¹⁰ This led to diverse strata of people accessing the Sultan, diminishing the influence of the grand vizier. Therefore, this shift of political power gave grand viziers a more formal relationship with the Sultan than with less formal face-to-face meetings in the early sixteenth century. These written reports became the main type of in-palace communication in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. However, their proto form was already prevalent during Rüstem Pasha's second term as grand vizier (1555-61).⁶¹¹ Hence, the

⁶⁰⁷ "...lakin sene-i mâziyeden berü Selim han hakkımızda akılı ve fikre hutur etmeyan hususlar isnâd ve gamz ve nifâk etmekle bizi saâdetlü pâdişahın nazarlarından dür düşürüb ve gâh iftirâ-ı hıyânet eyleyüb envâ-i-bahane ve ifâte devletlü padişah-ı teşvîş ve gümâna biragıb her cânıbden bî-sebebe cemiyet ettirüb ve yanına mübalağa asker getürdüb bize kasd-ı mazarrat edüb âram ve karar idecek hal kolmamağın biz dahi tehevür ve gazab ile bî-ihtiyar bir iş idi mübâşeret etmiş olduk..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0693_0031.

⁶⁰⁸ "...bi-cümle kazıyye-ı marziyenin usulü sizin hüsn-ü ikdâm ve kemâl-ı ihtimâm mala-kelamınıza havâle olundu..." Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)*, pp. 206-207

⁶¹⁰ Fodor, Pal. "Telhis" in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.40, 2011, pp. 402-404; Fodor, Pal. "Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral "telhîş",” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 47, No. 1/2 (1994), pp. 67- 85.

⁶¹¹ It is not easy to distinguish the writing styles of *Arz* and *Telhis*, which shows that the latter style developed from the earlier. Fodor, "Telhis", p.402.

primary manner in which the Sultan perceived news and rumours surrounding Prince Bayezid was these reports, making Rüstem Pasha's position crucial within the news network.

Rüstem Pasha presented nine out of fourteen arz (or proto-telhis) to Süleyman I from when Prince Bayezid settled in Amasya in late December 1558 until his departure on 14 April 1559. Prince Bayezid drew intense scrutiny due to his ongoing recruitment of soldiers, which was viewed with suspicion by his father. Consequently, his governors-general (beglerbegi) were ordered to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions. The individuals who gravitated towards Bayezid's court in Amasya were primarily dissatisfied soldiers, including tımarlı sipahis and irregular military forces known as levends.⁶¹²⁶¹³ The latter group consisted of wandering peasants who enlisted in the army to meet the Ottoman state's growing demand for military units equipped with firearms. However, upon their dismissal from the army after military campaigns, these unemployed individuals caused disorder in the countryside, troubling peasants and rulers.⁶¹⁴ Despite their grievances, the central authority disregarded their concerns, prompting these groups to seek new patrons, including claimants to the throne. For instance, Prince Mustafa's followers later aligned with Prince Bayezid after Mustafa's demise.

The process discussed had already commenced even before Prince Bayezid moved to Amasya. The men travelling with him were described in a letter by the governor-general of Anatolia, Ahmed Pasha, as a "troublesome unruly pack" [*gulât-i şedaâd*] who struggled to follow orders and caused disturbances during their travels.⁶¹⁵ Rüstem Pasha also referred to them as "a company of poor savages" [*bir alay çıplak derendi tâifedir*] and hoped their shortage of provisions and clothing would lead to their dispersal before reaching Amasya. In reality, the Porte was concerned that these men might incite Prince Bayezid into action, disrupting social

⁶¹² "Tımarlı Sipahis were cavalymen administering a *tımar* in the provinces. *Sipahis* were originally slaves, *kuls*, recruited by the child levy and trained in the Palace. As representatives of the central authority, *sipahis* acted as administrators, policemen, and tax collectors in their own *tımars*." Somel, "Sipahi" in *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.339. "Tımar was state-owned (*mirî*) unit of cereal-growing land left to the administration of the *sipahi*." Ibid. pp. 372-373.

⁶¹³ *Levend* connoted two type of soldiers. First one was irregular naval units; second one was irregular cavalry units who became especially prominent during seventeenth century. The latter group applies to this case study. Somel, "Levend" in *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.339.

⁶¹⁴ These later transformed into *Celali Revolts* which ravaged Anatolian provinces during late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Somel, "Celali Rebellions" in *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.339. For further reading, Akdağ, Mustafa. *Celali İsyânları (1550-1603)*, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, (1963).

⁶¹⁵ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0007

harmony and posing a direct challenge to the state/sultanic authority whose legitimacy was closely tied to its ability to maintain social order.⁶¹⁶

In the nine letters by Rüstem Pasha, the focus was often on the unruly men and Prince Bayezid's strategies concerning them. Similar to correspondence from other pashas, these reports included Rüstem's insights and opinions on the unfolding events. The documents present a narrative that alternates between subjective and objective viewpoints. Within these records, Rüstem Pasha addressed the Sultan's inquiries and explained events that had come to the Sultan's attention. The Grand Vizier's tone in his responses varied depending on the circumstances, and it was evident that he did not overtly display his close relationship with Prince Bayezid in the narrative.

In two separate communications, Rüstem Pasha disregarded Prince Bayezid's concerns. When the Sultan inquired about a letter from Prince Bayezid, Rüstem Pasha confirmed its arrival, remarking that it contained nothing of significance.⁶¹⁷ Additionally, Rüstem Pasha rejected Prince Bayezid's request to leave Amasya due to a growing number of his men, arguing that his grandfather, Selim I, had previously remained there during winter with his army without issue.⁶¹⁸

In the third arz, Rüstem Pasha conveyed the contents of Bayezid's letter to Süleyman I. He emphasized that the Prince had addressed various concerns, the most significant being the misconduct of Prince Bayezid's soldiers, who posed a security threat by engaging in lawless behaviour on the roads. According to the grand vizier, these men had previously caused disturbances while stationed at Kütahya, leading to their temporary imprisonment and release after a few days.⁶¹⁹ Conversely, Prince Bayezid asserted to the Grand Vizier that he harboured no hostility towards his brother and refuted the allegations, claiming that his men were wrongly accused.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁶ Ferguson, Heather L. *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourses*, Stanford University Press, 2018, p.14

⁶¹⁷ "Arzı bende-i bî-mikdâr budur ki sultan Bayezid'den kâğıd geldiği buyurulmuş herbar ki kâğıd gelür çendân nesne yazmaz kâğıdları itibâr olunacak kâğıdlar değildir..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0755_0016_0001.

⁶¹⁸ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0872_0025_0001.

⁶¹⁹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0883_0007_0001.

⁶²⁰ "...benim karındaşıma yaramaz kusurum yokdur deyü yemin iderler bu fesâdı iden ademlerine değildir deyü yemin iderler bana bu hususlar buhtândır derler..." Ibid.

The critical point to remember from this study is that the documents clearly show Süleyman I's desire for Rüstem Pasha to interpret the letters he received despite the Sultan having absolute authority to make decisions on his own. This situation has two implications. Firstly, it highlights the trust Süleyman I placed in his grand vizier, the significance of the vizier's role as the primary interpreter of information, and the authority he held within the communication network. Not only did he receive news, but he also selectively chose and presented the most critical information based on his judgment. As a result, his position not only facilitated interpretation but also allowed for the manipulation of news when deemed necessary.

During the "Prince Mustafa's Affair," Rüstem Pasha was accused of withholding information while serving as grand vizier, leading to Mustafa's execution in 1553. Rüstem Pasha, due to his close relationship with Prince Bayezid, may have refrained from revealing Bayezid's complaints to ease tensions between father and son. However, his impartial demeanour makes it difficult to draw a definitive conclusion.

The second related outcome under consideration was the objectivity of the grand vizier's announcements. The narrative structure of arz (or proto-telhis) was patterned after a dialogue, beginning with question(s) or demand(s) from the Sultan and followed by the grand vizier's responses outlining his thoughts and opinions. While Rüstem Pasha expressed his viewpoints clearly through his selection of news and frequent use of a first-person narrative, the narrative was not entirely subjective. The grand vizier substantiated his opinions by citing other information and examples. For instance, in an arz, Süleyman I inquired about the news in a letter from Ahmed Pasha, to which Rüstem Pasha conveyed information about Bayezid's recruitment of soldiers and verified the news about Bayezid's request for money from certain financial officials. However, he also mentioned that he could not confirm whether Prince Bayezid had received the requested money.⁶²¹

Additionally, in the same arz, Süleyman I noted that Prince Selim had requested additional allowance for his son and his religious mentor, to which the grand vizier responded negatively, stating that it was not the appropriate time for such allocations. When asked about the provisions made for Prince Selim in preparation for a potential attack from his brother, Rüstem

⁶²¹ "...Anadolu Beglerbeginden kâğıd gelüb ahbârı beyân buyurulmuş adem yazardılmış ol kaziye vâkidir vukufat nâzırından ve gayri ümenâdan akçe istediği sahîhdır amma henüz alub kabz eylediği mâlûmumuz olmadı..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0642_0024.

Pasha stated that they had already been provided in two ways, as previously reported to the Sultan.⁶²² According to the grand vizier, obtaining additional soldiers under the command of the governor-general of Rumelia [Kızılahmedli Mustafa Pasha] was vital at that moment as Selim's soldiers were insufficient.⁶²³ The grand vizier responded explicitly to questions based on the information he received. Consequently, the design of the arz and the presentation of information facilitated an objective narrative, constituting a specific form of communication distinct from other correspondences from high-ranking individuals.

Rüstem Pasha's influence in reporting news was closely tied to the accuracy and depth of his information. By early 1559, as Prince Bayezid's plans remained uncertain, there was a sharp increase in the demand for news, compelling the grand vizier to maintain a comprehensive understanding of unfolding events. In his arz to the Sultan, the grand vizier referenced a range of news sources to ensure the reliability of his information. These sources encompassed individuals with varying degrees of access to information. The relationship between these informants and the grand vizier was mutually advantageous. Rüstem Pasha's esteemed reputation and status lent credibility to these individuals' accounts in the Sultan's eyes as the grand vizier validated their reports. Concurrently, these individuals supplied the grand vizier with information gathered from diverse sources, which he used to substantiate his statements and viewpoints, enhancing his credibility.

⁶²² "...ve sultan Selim Han hazretleri oğluna terakkî ve hâcesine arpalık istediği buyurulmuş şimdi anun vakti ve zamanı olmadığı mâlûm-u şerîfdir ve bu cânibden ne tedârik gerekdir buyurulmuş tedârîki iki dürlü olduğu ol gün hâkipayi-saâdet-âsârlarına olunmuşdu..." Ibid.

⁶²³ "...zirâ Rumeli olmayunca yalnız kapu halkı ile maslahat bitmez Rumeli'nden asker lazımdır vakti bâîd olan sipâhîlerden lazım değildir karib yerlerde olan beylerine ve sipâhîlerine emr-i şerîf gönderilse câizdir..." Ibid.

(3) Other Informants

The crucial element of the Ottoman news network was the presence of low-ranking informants who were working for the ruling elite and providing them with necessary information. Archival documents reveal numerous informants from both genders with different socio-cultural, ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds. For example, during Prince Bayezid's travel to Amasya, a mid-level military official named Hızır with the rank "serbölük" had written directly to the Porte what he had witnessed in Eskişehir.⁶²⁴ Hızır stated that he went riding with Prince Bayezid, who complained to an accompanying Pasha about his father's delay in leaving the capital for Edirne, implying his bitterness for being the object of his father's suspicions. The Pasha replied that the Sultan's departure to Edirne would happen when the Prince recommenced his journey to Amasya.⁶²⁵ Would Hızır's account be immediately considered reliable? The fact that he eye-witnessed the event could have made his information more significant, yet there were other factors that needed to be taken into account when one talks about an informant's credibility who hailed outside of the ruling elite. Hızır held an essential position within the janissary ranks, which provided him with access to the Prince, yet it did not guarantee his credibility. Similar to the Venetian news-gathering system, two related issues were most critical regarding these low-ranking informants: the issue of their trustworthiness and the credibility of the news they carried.

ii) The Issue of Trust

The strategic role of social networks in the Ottoman Empire was crucial in establishing a network of trust. It was intriguing to note that informants were often part of multiple social networks, enabling them to access diverse information from different hubs.

One of the most relevant social networks in the early modern Ottoman Empire was the "household" [*kapı*]. It alluded to the central administrative structure in virtually all pre-modern

⁶²⁴ "Ser-bölük" (also "bölükbaşı") literally meant the "head of a *bölük*". In the old Ottoman military organisation, the term *bölük* was used within the Janissary corps, provincial troops, and senior official military retinues. The size of the *bölük* varied. In the Janissary Corps, for example, which numbered 1,000 men, there were ten *bölüks* of 100 men each. The term *serbölük* or *Bölükbaşı* alluded only to the commanders of the "bölük of the agha," a separate organisation within the Janissary corps. Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. "Bölük", *EI2*, Vol 1, p.1256.

⁶²⁵ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0754_0007.

Muslim polities, including Ottomans.⁶²⁶ Headed by the ruling Sultan, the imperial palace household was the most important and grand of the households, and the early modern Ottoman government grew out of this structure.⁶²⁷ The imperial palace household was two-tiered: the inner sanctum “harem” was occupied by the Sultan’s family, relatives and his closest slaves, whereas the outer part consisted of a variety of salaried slaves, including administrators and elite soldiers [*kapıkulu*] supported by the imperial funds.⁶²⁸⁶²⁹ Thus, the imperial household performed a dual role: it was both administrative and militaristic. Most importantly, the household was a combination of kinship and patron-client ties.⁶³⁰ Lower-ranking members depended entirely on their patron-client relationship with the head of the household in order to rise in the ranks. Thus, loyalty to the head of the household was of utmost importance and determined their position within the hierarchy.⁶³¹ Consequently, viziers, princes appointed to the provinces and all the governor generals had their households modelled after the imperial palace. Administrative and military personnel of these households served as informants, depending on their rank. Furthermore, their patron-client relationship provided a certain degree of trustworthiness, crucial for being considered a reliable informant. For example, as discussed in the news network infrastructure, most men tasked to carry imperial orders or letters were sergeants [*çavuş*] who were members of different households. Apart from evoking loyalty, the affiliation with a household also provided specific protection for its members.

For instance, in an *arz* by grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, dated around late 1558, it was revealed that several military officials were entrusted with the delicate task of distributing money in the name of Prince Bayezid, all in the pursuit of gaining alliances. This move led to a delay in Bayezid’s journey to Amasya. In his report, the grand vizier pointed out that the key figure in this operation was a certain *sekbanbaşı*, a man of significant influence, second only to the *agha* of Janissaries. This individual, however, became a thorn in the grand vizier’s side, not just because of his actions but also due to his close association with a certain Ali Pasha, as he

⁶²⁶ Hathaway, Jane. “Household”, *EI3*, pp. 111-113.

⁶²⁷ Kunt, İ. Metin. “Sultan, Dynasty and State in the Ottoman Empire: Political Institutions in the Sixteenth Century,” *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol.6, No:2 (2003), p. 228.

⁶²⁸ Hathaway, “Household”, p.112.

⁶²⁹ “Literally meaning “slave of the gate,” the term *kapıkulu* was used specifically for the Sultan’s personnel recruited by the child levy. Janissaries, *kapıkulu* cavalry, artillery, mining and sapper units, and higher government officials of Janissary origin belonged to this category.” Somel, “Kapıkulu”, *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, p.148.

⁶³⁰ Hathaway, Jane. “Households in the Administration of Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 40, 2013, p. 128-129.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.* p. 127.

was a highly-trusted member of Ali Pasha's household. This affiliation proved to be a shield for the *sekbanbaşı*, making it difficult for Rüstem Pasha to take decisive action against him.⁶³²⁶³³ Instead of dismissing the *sekbanbaşı* and risking Ali Pasha's wrath, the grand vizier opted to place several 'useful' officials to monitor the *sekbanbaşı*'s *activities* and report back to him.⁶³⁴ Only due to *sekbanbaşı*'s recent illness, Rüstem Pasha was able to dismiss him and appoint someone else in his place. On another note, the *sekbanbaşı* could have proved helpful as they would know more about the actions and plans of janissaries or Prince Bayezid by following him. This intricate web of social affiliations and political manoeuvring was a testament to the complex nature of Ottoman politics.

The grand vizier strategically employed these "useful men" [*yarar adem*] from diverse societal segments. These men, loyal to his service, included a certain *zağarcıbaşı*, a crucial official within the janissary ranks.⁶³⁵⁶³⁶ In the final months of 1558, the janissaries were discontent with their involvement with Prince Bayezid and the money they would receive from him. The grand vizier, constantly vigilant, had heard about this from several sources. First, a man named Hasan heard it from one of the stewards [*kethüda*] of Prince Bayezid, who relayed a quote from the abovementioned *sekbanbaşı*. The latter stated that it would not matter if Prince Bayezid paid ten times more as he had turned his companions into traitors.⁶³⁷ Yet, the words of this *kethüda* were considered doubtful by the grand vizier even though he had access to certain information due to his position within the Prince's household. Henceforth, the grand vizier sent his man *zağarcıbaşı* amongst janissaries who confirmed this restlessness, especially among those who decided to join Prince Bayezid's forces. *Zağarcıbaşı* was then charged with finding these recruits and bringing back "correct news, not lies".⁶³⁸ Thus, it was evident that possessing

⁶³² Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain which Ali Pasha the grand vizier was referencing as he did not mention Ali Pasha's official position within the text. In late 1558, there were three pashas relevant to this case study named Ali: the governor-general of Sivas [Rum], the governor-general of Maraş, and the second vizier of the imperial court, Semiz Ali Pasha, whose rank was only surpassed by the grand vizier.

⁶³³ "...bu şimdi çıkan sekbanbaşı Ali Paşa kulu gerek çırağı idi yarar itimad ettiği ademisi idi..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0551_0087.

⁶³⁴ "...mübaşir bir bölükbaşı koşdum ne olursa bana haber göndere buna tâbi olduğu için Arzurum'da bölük başına tımar verdim bir yarar yayabaşı bir bölükbaşı bunların ardından görüp gözedirdi çıkarırdım bunu dahi Ali Paşa kulunuz katı incinir deyü çıkarmadım..." Ibid.

⁶³⁵ *Zağarcıbaşı* was "the title of one of the three commanders who formed the *diwan* or administrative focus of the Janissary corps of the Ottoman army (the other two being the Shamsundji Bashi and the Turnadji Bashi)." Ed. "Zaghardji Bashi", *EI2*, Vol.11, p. 384

⁶³⁶ "...zağarcıbaşı Rüstem Paşa kullarına tâbi oldukça ademdir..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0062.

⁶³⁷ "...Hasan ötede olduğunu şehzade hazretlerinin kapı kethüdâsından haber almışdır söylemiş iki üç ol kadar dirlik etdi şehzade hazretleri demiş tâife-i şehzade hazretlerini söverlerimiş yoldaşlarımızı hain etdi on ol kadar ulufe verse ne fayda derler imiş..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0551_0087.

⁶³⁸ "...zağarcı kulunuza ol yeniçerilere muhkem ismarlarım elbette göreyim sizi bula yeni bir sahihçe haber alub getüresiz bühtân olmaya..." Ibid.

a patron-client relationship with an essential high-ranking official could grant an informant certain dependability.

The grand vizier used other men outside his household to inquire about the conglomeration of different groups in the court of Prince Bayezid during the early months of 1559. Most of these men, as discussed above, were a discontented group of soldiers, yet there were other interested parties. In an anonymous letter written around early March 1559, the author gathered news about the congregation of Kurdish tribe leaders with their men at Amasya. The author relayed the information he had obtained from a Kurdish man, Davud Beg, according to whom several Kurds had arrived at the court of Prince Bayezid who sent several robes [*kaftan*] to Kurdish leaders as a sign of reciprocal respect. Davud Bey also relayed the news of a man named “Mahmud the Kurd”, whom he called “a reasonable man [*makul adem*] in the service of Rüstem Pasha”. This Mahmud had been in secret negotiations with Prince Bayezid for three days, bringing him gifts from Rüstem Pasha and then went back to Çorum and wrote a letter to his master.⁶³⁹ It was clear that there were diverse layers of news gathering activity operating simultaneously in the same region which would enable updated reliable news reaching to capital.

Mahmud and Davud Bey were from the same ethnic group, but their credibility was based on different factors. Mahmud’s reputation and trustworthiness were based on his affiliation with Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, who trusted him to negotiate with Prince Bayezid. On the other hand, Davud Bey’s reputation was based on his position within the Ottoman bureaucracy. The letter mentioned *twice* that he was granted the *sancak* of Medine in the Basra region, a respectable endowment. Hence Davud Bey’s decent position, combined with his ethnic background, made his explanation of the restlessness felt among Kurdish leaders and their dealings with Prince Bayezid more plausible. Moreover, Davud Bey also vouched for Mahmud as a reasonable man. Hence, having informants with ties with different social networks enabled access to diverse types of information and, in some cases, proved their reliability. Zağarcıbaşı had access to Janissaries, a vital group whose support could determine the outcome of a succession struggle. At the same time, Mahmud and Davud were invaluable for their access to

⁶³⁹ “...Basra cânibinde Medine sancağı inâyet olunmuş adına Davud Bey derler ana sordum mâkul ademlerimiz [den] Rüstem Paşa kulunuzun Kürd Mahmudu vardır şimdi bunda değildir bundan hazine ilen [ile] bağzı nesne ilen gittü Amasya’ya şehzâde hazretlerine varmış üç gün gizli ötermiş gerü dönmüş Çorum’a gelmiş Paşa’ya mektub göndermiş Çorum’dan...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0076.

the Kurds, an ethnic group that acted as an intermediary between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. Their prominence as informants significantly heightened when Prince Bayezid escaped to Safavid Persia, and the communication zone shifted to the Ottoman Empire's eastern borders.

On the other hand, most of these men had limited contact with Prince Bayezid, and proximity to him was crucial in acquiring the most updated news. As discussed in the previous section, news transmitted by viziers and governor generals who had direct contact with Bayezid physically or via letters was considered particularly important. Nevertheless, others in the princely *sancak* court with better access to Prince Bayezid were providing eye-witnessed information.

A letter written by a “former servant” [*bende-i dîrîne*] reveals the intricacies of intelligence gathering in proximity to the subject of the news. This letter was addressed to Prince Selim at Konya. It showed that this informant was explicitly tasked with supplying him with news about Prince Bayezid.⁶⁴⁰ The Prince was suspicious of this man recently arriving in Amasya. The informant was questioned thoroughly, yet he managed to elude the questions and, in the end, was not accused by Prince Bayezid. After securing his position, the informant passed on what he had witnessed within the court of Amasya: Prince Bayezid was surrounded by “ill-speaking men” and acted on their counsel. Furthermore, the Prince felt very distressed after receiving news of governor generals [*beglerbegi*] gathering their men under the orders of Süleyman I.⁶⁴¹ According to the informant, this news had caused some men at court to switch their allegiances to Prince Selim. However, others in court did not trust this informant and were about to tell him on to Prince Bayezid. Consequently, the informant could not send his letters out of fear of getting caught. Instead, he devised a pretext for sending information out of the court: he was to write about allowances to be paid to Prince Bayezid and send his report along with these letters.⁶⁴² The position of this informant was precarious: he was technically a member of Prince

⁶⁴⁰ “...bundan evvel bu kemînenüze vâki olan ahvâli bu cânibe îlâm etmeden hâlî olmayız deyü fermân-ı şerîfiniz olub...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0858_0091_001.

⁶⁴¹ “...haliya kapucular gelüb öte cânibe beglerbegiler varmak emr olunduğu ve sâir beglerbegiler dahi cemiyet etmek emr olunduğu ve bu cânibe sefer-i hümâyun çağırıldığı haberi geldikde nihâyet mertebe bî-huzur ve müteallim imdi her biri hayret vadisine düşüb perişan olmuşlardır...” Ibid.

⁶⁴² “... âsitâne-i saâdet cânibi ile ittifâk vardır deyü kulunuzu muttasıl gamz etmek üzerinedirler bir nice gün tagayyür vaz etmişlerdir hatır-ı şerîflerinde ne var idüğün bilmeziz bir nice defa mektub tesvid olunmuşdur irsal etmeye fırsat bulamayub bilâhire inâyet olunan terakkînün husûlünü bahane edüb adem irsâl edülüm deyü izin taleb olduk da cevâz gösterüb şefaathane inâyet eyleyüb sen dahi mektub irsal eyle deyü emr edüb buyurdıkları cevablar ayrı tezkire yollanub mektubun içüne konulub bile irsâl olundu...” Ibid

Bayezid's household which granted him access to valuable information for Prince Selim, who was expecting a military attack from his brother. On the other hand, the lack of trust towards the informant, especially felt by the courtiers who influenced Prince Bayezid, made transmitting news increasingly difficult. Due to this fact, we can discern the solutions he came up with and see the glimpses of an intelligence operation. In the letter's last paragraph, which was added as a postscript, the informant laid out his plan to continue his news operation. He suggested that for future news transmission, one of two merchants [*bezirgân*] from Bursa, either Hoca Müslihiddin or Mehmed İbrahim, should be sent to Amasya with the pretext of stopping by on their way to Aleppo [Haleb] and the news would be given to them. The informant stated that he could not send any news independently as he was under surveillance and would not trust the letters to a random person.⁶⁴³⁶⁴⁴ This clearly shows that men with different professions were actively involved in the news network as their distinct positions allowed them to have diverse levels of access and manoeuvring space. On the other hand, one *had* to be within trust boundaries by associating with higher-ranking men or someone in the network vouching for them.

iii) The Credibility of News

The second issue was about the reliability of the news these informants gathered and carried. The credibility of their news was a pressing concern due to the erratic nature of the growing crisis. We can observe palace officials' persistence in receiving a constant supply of news within the reports and letters. However, the presented news item was not immediately treated as "correct news", even if the informant was considered trustworthy. On the contrary, there was a precise differentiation between correct and false news, indicating that a news item was initially considered "neutral and ambiguous" and needed further validation or negation to be treated accordingly. In the texts, the authorities usually demanded "whatever news there is"

⁶⁴³ "...kendülüğümüzden bahane olmayınca âdem göndermeye kâdir değilüz bendenizi muttasıl dest-u-cû üzerinedirler ve hem değme kimesneye itimâd edib mektub vermezüz..." Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ In Şerafettin Turan's book, there is a mention of a certain Veli Ağa who was a former servant of Prince Mustafa. He was executed by Prince Bayezid in Çorum when he was marching towards Konya after 14 April 1559. It is highly probable that this man could have been the nameless informant as he called himself a "former servant". Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, p.99.

[*her ne haber*] to be sent over them. ⁶⁴⁵⁶⁴⁶⁶⁴⁷⁶⁴⁸ Yet it appears that after a certain amount of news flow which delineates the situation at hand, the authorities began to demand “correct news” regarding a particular issue in order to act accordingly. For example, in a report [*arz*] from the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, it was stated that they already knew that Prince Bayezid sent some men to the *sancak* of Niğbolu to a man named Yahşi/Bahşi Tuğca who, in fact, was the infamous [*be-nâm*] Üveyl Tavıca.⁶⁴⁹⁶⁵⁰ Furthermore, if Süleyman I willed it, they could send some men to the *sancak* of Niğbolu to gather “correct news” [*sahih haber*].⁶⁵¹ The grand vizier also wanted the Sultan to permit him to send some men to Yozgat [Bozok] to gather information from men related to Keser İsa Bey (d.1552), former governor of the *sancak* of Bozok.⁶⁵² These men were called “our friends” [*âşinâlarımız*], and the grand vizier assured the Sultan that if anything were going on in that region, they would dispatch “correct news”.⁶⁵³ The case was about the recruitment of men to Prince Bayezid’s side, a fact that the Porte was already aware. Nevertheless, the central administration must have had an influx of news regarding this issue. Therefore, they must have wanted to ascertain the information and gather reliable news, which they demanded from people they already knew and trusted.

It is worth noting that despite the authorities’ efforts to gather intelligence about Prince Bayezid’s recruits, the information they obtained was notably incomplete. This situation is particularly intriguing when considering the names of Turkmen leaders who had joined the

⁶⁴⁵ “...bundan evvel bu kemînenüze vâki olan ahvâli bu cânibe îlâm etmeden hâlî olmayız deyü fermân-ı şerîfiniz olub...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0858_0091_001.

⁶⁴⁶ “...ne haber îrâd ederse bilâ-tevakkuf mübârek hâkipâyî- şerife î'lâm olunur...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0813_0059_001.

⁶⁴⁷ “...Ve ne habere vâkıf olursan 'arz idesin deyü ferman olunub...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0073_001.

⁶⁴⁸ “...her ne haber getirirlerse ayn-ı ile hakipayı saadet âsarlarına arz olunur...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0730_0011.

⁶⁴⁹ The *sancak* of Niğbolu was located in Bulgaria and it was created as a *sancak* as soon as the region passed unto the Ottoman rule during late fourteenth century. Demir, Selçuk. “XVI. Yüzyılda Niğbolu Sancağı”, Doktora Tezi, Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tarih Anabilim Dalı, 2014. p.33

⁶⁵⁰ This particular news is interesting because the man they were after, Üveyl Tavıca, was the “grand vizier” of the False [*Düzme*] Mustafa, a pretender who assumed the identity of the slain Prince Mustafa and rebelled in Rumelia with 10.000 forces in May 1555. According to Ottoman chronicles, this Üveyl realized the real identity of the pretender and betrayed him to the authorities. The False Mustafa was captured in Edirne and was executed in İstanbul on 18 August 1555, while Üveyl Tavıca was granted a prominent timar land [*zeamet*] for his services. Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, p.46-48.

⁶⁵¹ “...sultan Bayezid Niğbolu sancağına adem gönderüb Yahşi Toyca'nın anda üç gün durduğı buyurulmuş asıl be-nâm Toyca Adil nâm kimesnedir emr-ü şerîfleri üzere adem hazırlayub yarın inşaallah Niğbolu'ya gönderelim ki varub sahîh haber getüre...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0062.

⁶⁵² Çayırdağ, Mehmet. *Kayseri Tarihi Araştırmaları*, Vol.1, Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları (2022), p. 288

⁶⁵³ “...emr-i şerîfleri sâdır olursa Bozok'a dahi âdem gönderelim ki Bozok'da Keser İsa müteâllik bağızı âşinâlarımız vardır eğer nesne var ise anlar sahîh haber verirler” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0062.

Prince and the size of their respective forces, which were detailed in a report.⁶⁵⁴ However, crucial details were still missing. For instance, it remained uncertain whether the Dulkadiroğlu, the former ruling family of the province of Maraş [Dulkadir], were involved in this recruitment or if some of the individuals who joined Prince Bayezid were actually members of this specific Turkmen tribe.⁶⁵⁵

Therefore, whenever the officials had the opportunity to acquire more reliable news, they seized it. For instance, Prince Bayezid dispatched several men to the capital and other locations to deliver his letters. These men presented an opportunity for the officials to gather the most updated news about the Prince. One of these men, Mehmed, was sent twice to convey the Prince's demands to his father, Süleyman I, in late 1558. During his first visit, Mehmed was investigated at night and narrated the dialogue between himself and Prince Bayezid. Mehmed claimed to have told Prince Bayezid that the authorities in the capital would request "correct news" [*sahîh haber*], and he needed to say something that would not cause the circulation of lies [*kizb*]. Following this, Prince Bayezid swore on the Qur'an that he was about to leave [Kütahya] as soon as possible and bore no ill will.⁶⁵⁶

Like Mehmed, a Kurd Beg with the title of "barley commissioner" [*arpa emini*] was sent to the capital to deliver Bayezid's letters in the spring of 1559.⁶⁵⁷⁶⁵⁸ When questioned, Kurd Beg portrayed the Prince as a well-intentioned man who did not intend to move from Amasya, even for hunting. He also stated that Prince Bayezid would go against his brother Selim if he had enough power. Nevertheless, the Prince was now silent, wearing simple green clothes,

⁶⁵⁴ For example, Pir Hüseyin Bey who belonged to the Turkmen tribe Turgutlu was mentioned to join Prince Bayezid with two hundred and fifty men. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0752_0028.

⁶⁵⁵ Among these recruits was Ağa Velioğlu Tanrıverdi, a notable figure who joined Prince Bayezid's forces with an army of four hundred men. Tanrıverdi's involvement in the Battle of Konya, where he fought alongside his brother Çalabverdi for Prince Bayezid's army, was a testament to his loyalty. Following the battle, he accompanied the Prince in his escape to Persia. Interestingly, his brother Çalabverdi was still at large in Anatolia by August 1560, when an order for his capture was issued. [3] This sequence of events underscores the complex and dynamic nature of the recruitment process. (BOA), (TS.MA.e),_0752_0028; (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1419.

⁶⁵⁶ "...ben âsîâne-i saâdete varıcak benden sahîh haber isterler bende anda bir söz söylemek gerekim ki sonra kizbî zâhir olmaya deyü hakikat halî isti'lâm eyledik de minbâ'd asla eyleneüyüb çeküb giderüm deyü Allah saklasun noksân ırz ve nâmus-ı saltanatı i'câb eder bir yaramaz fikrim yokdur bu cemî ahvâl bana isnâddır deyü Mehmed kulunuzun önünde kelâm-i kadîm üzerine yemin eylemişler..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0050_001.

⁶⁵⁷ "The primary meaning of *emin*, in Ottoman official usage, was a salaried officer appointed by or in the name of the Sultan, usually by *berat*, to administer, supervise or control a department, function or source of revenue. There were *emin* of various kinds of stores and supplies. Barley commissioner [*arpa emini*] along with kitchen commissioner [*matbah emini*] concerned respectively with fodder and food for the imperial kitchens." Lewis, B. "Emin", *EI2*, Vol. 2, p. 695-96.

⁶⁵⁸ His name was revealed in two different letters of Prince Bayezid written to his father. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0442_0035, (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0039_0008.

indicating a religious stance. Furthermore, according to informant Mehmed, Prince Bayezid was also able to pay his soldiers, to which the interrogator expressed his surprise.⁶⁵⁹ This information contradicted reports from other informants, such as the governor-general of Anatolia, Ahmed Pasha, who reported Bayezid's lack of funds as early as autumn 1558. Another report from early 1559 further asserted that it was inconceivable that Prince Bayezid had the means to pay the men joining him. However, if he could pay, it must mean that his "unfortunate friends" [*bedbaht dostlar*] were helping him.⁶⁶⁰ Also, Bayezid declared his lack of funds in a letter to his father in the spring of 1559, explaining that his men were joining him voluntarily despite the lack of wages [*ulûfe*].⁶⁶¹ These contrasting pieces of information present a valid example of the urgency of gathering "correct news" felt by all interested parties while also explaining the environment of mistrust. For example, the interrogator wanted the barley commissioner to stay at the palace for several days to obtain correct information, indicating that even though these men had access to sensitive information, their loyalty was openly questionable due to their connection to Prince Bayezid, and they could have been used to spread false information.⁶⁶²

While palace authorities used their position to force these messengers to disclose "correct news", Bayezid's informants, in turn, employed covert strategies for the same purpose. For example, some of Prince Bayezid's informants manipulated their established relations to determine a news item's accuracy. A servant of Prince Bayezid named Haydar arrived in the capital and met with a steward [*kethüda*] named Hasan, whom he knew from the time they served the same man: İznikli Ali Beg, who was briefly the governor [*sancakbeg*] of Bursa from August 1549 to January 1550.⁶⁶³ Hence, when Haydar arrived at the capital ostensibly "to handle a certain job at the palace", Hasan trusted him and exchanged information about Prince Selim's movements. He asked Hasan if the latter had heard about the news regarding Prince

⁶⁵⁹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0482_0014_001.

⁶⁶⁰ "...zaman gözlemeye vâfir hazîne gerekdir ki levendât tâifesini besleyüb perâkende olmayalar kendüsünde denlü hazîne fehmi olunmaz [anlamak] meğer ki bazı bedbaht dostları muâvenet edeler..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0877_0084_001

⁶⁶¹ "...benim sultanım ben adem yazmakdan bi-zârım ulûfe virmeğe kâdir değilim ben kimesne yazmağa çağırılmazım kendülerinden gelürler..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_0024

⁶⁶² "...üç dört defa ikdâm ittüm kal deyü çare olmadu bunda kalsa sahîh haber almak âsan idi ol takdirce her nesne-i sormadum..." Ibid

⁶⁶³ Kılıç, Orhan. "16. Yüzyılda Hüdâvendigâr Sancakbeyleri" in *Sultan II. Selim Dönemi ve Bursa*, ed. Fırat Yaşa, (2020), p. 80; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0482_0014_002.

Selim passing to the region of Rumelia. Hasan stated that this was the first time he heard this.⁶⁶⁴ Haydar made Hasan believe that he would go and tell the grand vizier what he knew, but in reality, he never intended to do so. Haydar's mission was to ascertain the "news" about Prince Selim, which was "heard by all" in Amasya. He even went to Konya to gather reliable information, and only after failing to do so, he came to the capital. Another document revealed that Haydar easily manipulated Hasan because the latter had a reasonable opinion of him. In this document, Hasan recommended Haydar as "a reasonable and useful man" who was in the good graces of Prince Bayezid.⁶⁶⁵ It was apparent that Hasan saw Haydar as a way of gathering fresh news about Prince Bayezid. In contrast, Haydar exploited Hasan's good demeanour against him to verify the news. At that point, Hasan was employed by the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, who heard about this exchange of news later, and when questioned, the grand vizier defended Hasan. Rüstem Pasha stated that the fault ultimately lay with Haydar, who deceived Hasan, from whom the grand vizier never encountered wrongdoing within years of his service. Furthermore, even though Hasan was called into service repeatedly by Prince Bayezid, he always refused, and this should have been seen as a testimony of his good intentions.⁶⁶⁶ This was an excellent example of how horizontal and vertical trust systems operated and the lengths these men would go to gather "correct news".

iv) The News Hubs and the Question of Time

In order to fully comprehend the news circulation during the early modern period, it was crucial to identify the location where the news pieces were produced and circulated, as well as the time it would take for the news to travel from one place to another. During the eight months preceding the battle of Konya, both princes were dislocated from their former *sancaks*, travelled to new ones and stayed in there. This limited geography led to news being produced, gathered and circulated within a confined space, i.e. central Anatolia, or transmitted to/from the capital

⁶⁶⁴ "...Amasya'da bizim aramızda şâyi olan budur ki Sultan Selim hazretleri Rumiline geçer sen ne işitdün deyü sorduk da ben bu asıl haber işitmedüm bunu yine senden işitdüm deyü cevap vermiş Hasan kulunuzun deyişi budur ki..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0850_0013_001.

⁶⁶⁵ "...Hasan kethüdâ da gelüb kulunuza işitdügini nakl eyledi Haydar için hayli söz anlar yarar ademdir deyü çok tâ'rif eyledi bilfiil anlarım yanında da hayli makbûl imiş deyü söyler..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0482_0014_002.

⁶⁶⁶ "Bundan sonra bu Kütahya'dan kalkıldan berü niçe defa buna adem gönderüb ol cânibe davet eylemişler asla mültefit olmamış iyülük üzere olduğunu bundan anlarım bâtinini Allah bilür amma hele zâhirinde kulunuz bir yaramazlık anlayamazım bu yohsa Allah saklasun cüz'iden ve külliden bir yaramazlığına vâkıf olsam bunu yanımda uğrattırdım bundan mâadâ yigirmi yıl mikdârı vardır ki bunu kullanuruz hilâf-ı savâb nesnesine vâkıf olmak vâki olmamıştır..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0850_0013_001.

city of Istanbul. The relevant Anatolian hubs comprised the *sancak* cities of Amasya and Konya and the surrounding cities of Eskişehir, Ankara, Sivas, Çorum, and Tokat. Although tracking the pattern of news hubs was relatively more straightforward, determining the time required for the news pieces to circulate remained challenging. Unfortunately, few references in Ottoman documents about the first phase of the Bayezid Affair showed the time needed for news to be transmitted. However, the urgency of the issue sometimes compelled the authors to mention the length of time a courier or a particular person spent on the road.

For instance, in *Serbölük Hızır*'s account, it was noted that Prince Bayezid departed from Eskişehir on Wednesday, 10 November 1558 [28 Muharrem 966] and there were 9 '*konak*' between Eskişehir and Ankara.⁶⁶⁷ In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman measurement unit '*konak*', along with *menzil* and *merhale*, denoted the time travelled within a day.⁶⁶⁸ The term *konak* was especially crucial in understanding the travel time and distance in Ottoman travel accounts. On average, one '*merhale*' [and '*konak*' and '*menzil*'] was equivalent to 45.48 km travelled daily by 8 hours of walking. However, the distance covered could vary due to external factors such as the size of the travel company, means of travel (by horse, camel or on foot), or season.⁶⁶⁹ Moreover, '*konak*' and '*menzil*' were also used intermittently to indicate locations where one had to halt during their journey, further complicating the process of understanding the travel time in the early modern Ottoman context.⁶⁷⁰ During Prince Bayezid's journey, several locations where they camped (*Toğray* and *Oğlakçılar*) were reported as '*konaks*'.⁶⁷¹ In this case, if we consider '*konak*' as the travel time, the road between Eskişehir and Ankara should take roughly 6 '*konak*' based on the road that is used today between these cities. While the route differed according to sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources, the travel time did not change from 6 '*konaks*'.⁶⁷² Therefore, 9 '*konak*' in the text must have meant 9 stops instead of indicating 9 days of travel. In fact, based on other documents from this time,

⁶⁶⁷ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0754_0007.

⁶⁶⁸ Çetin, Cemal. "Osmanlılarda Mesafe Ölçümü ve Tarihî Süreci" in *Tarihçiliğe Adanmış bir Ömür: Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç'e Armağan*, Selçuk Üniversitesi Matbaası, 2013, pp. 454-55

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 455. For example, during Bayezid's travel in November and December 1558, the winter conditions were mentioned to be harsh by different accounts. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0872_0020

⁶⁷⁰ Çetin, "Osmanlılarda Mesafe Ölçümü ve Tarihî Süreci", p. 457

⁶⁷¹ "...Toğray ötedir bu adem dahi anda iken Pertev Paşa kulunuz gelüb buluşmuş hatta Pertev paşa bendeniz gelmekle anda oturmuşlar ol konaktan Engüri'ye dört konak var" (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0748_0014. This example shows how the term *konak* was used to indicate both location "ol konak (Toğra)" and the time necessary to travel from one location to another "dört konak var" (4 days' time).

⁶⁷² These locations and other stops between these two cities were also mentioned by the contemporary travel account of the ambassador to Holy Roman Emperor Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq who journeyed to Amasya via Ankara in 1555 as part of a diplomatic delegation seeking audience with Süleyman I. Taeschner, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu Yol Ağı*, pp. 263-64. Also see Ibid, Appendix Tafel 31.

Prince Bayezid and his household arrived in Ankara around 26-27 November 1558, two weeks after they left Eskişehir.⁶⁷³

While these documents particularly pointed out the travel time between Bayezid's encampments and his new *sancak*, it was not the only period in which travel time was mentioned. For example, in May 1559, when Prince Bayezid was moving against his brother Selim, the Porte wanted to know about his movements. Hence, in one of the anonymous *arz* that was written during this particular time, the amount of time a courier and a spy spent on the road were mentioned in detail. A *çavuş* was sent to Sivas to check up on and report back the conditions of the army of the governor-general of Sivas [Rum] Ali Pasha. On his return, it took him four days [*gün*] to reach from Sivas to Kayseri where the said *çavuş* observed the preparations of governor-general of Maraş [Dulkadir] Ali Pasha who was tasked to stand guard against Prince Bayezid with his army. Later, it took the same *çavuş* another six days to travel from Kayseri to the author's location.⁶⁷⁴ The sixteenth-century route between the cities of Sivas and Kayseri was roughly the same as today (198 km); hence, according to the calculation of 45,48 km of a daily walk, the output is four days of travel as the document stated.⁶⁷⁵ Yet, the *çavuş* was mentioned as travelling with a horse, which should have made him arrive in Kayseri more swiftly. Hence, either he stopped in a specific location between these cities or derailed from the route due to additional tasks he had, yet none were acknowledged in the text.

The same type of deduction could give hints about the author's location. Based on the content of the document, which included detailed orders given to several governor generals by the author, the document was most likely written by the third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, who was in the town of Konya, in order to supervise the movements of governor generals and continue the surveillance on Prince Bayezid. Based on regular calculations, it should take a man roughly 7-8 days to reach Kayseri, and the *çavuş* seemed to conclude the journey with a horse in 6 days. The same document also mentioned the return of a man sent to spy on Prince Bayezid's army. According to this man, Bayezid's army was stationed at Katarsarayı, a location between Çorum and Ankara when the said spy left seven days ago. The distance between Katarsarayı and Konya required approximately 10 days to travel by walk. However, the fact

⁶⁷³ "...Ve ne habere vâkıf olursan 'arz idesin deyü ferman olunub: Safer'in on yedisinde yukarudan adamımız gelüb halkından haber itmiş ki, Engüri'ye varıcak üç gün oturak söylenürmüş; lâkin Engüri'de adamlarımız vardır, inşa'ltâhu te'âlâ geçdikleri haberini getürdüklerinde Der-sa'âdete 'arz olunur..." Here the date 17 Safer 966 was equivalent to 29 November 1558. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0073.

⁶⁷⁴ "...bu çavuş gönderildidi gidişde ulağıla idi dönüşde kendü atıyla yürüyüb Sivasdan Kayseriyeye dört günde kayseriyeden bunda altı günde geldi..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0082.

⁶⁷⁵ Taeschner, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu Yol Ağı* pp. 222-23.

that this man travelled this distance in 7 days suggested he must have had a horse. Furthermore, he must have been in a hurry to deliver the pieces of news he had from Prince Bayezid's army. According to him, the soldiers were half-paid and were complaining. He also heard that there were two possible routes his army could take in order to confront his brother in Konya: through Ankara [Engüri] or Hacıbektâş, though they were unsure about either.⁶⁷⁶

These documents present a rare opportunity to glimpse through the workings of routes and speed of news in mid-sixteenth-century Central Anatolia. The news speed depended on several factors: first, knowing *who* was carrying them by *what means* was essential. The travel time of an official courier with a horse deviated from that of an informant who walked or journeyed with a larger company. In these abovementioned examples, there was a clear distinction between travel times, with couriers unsurprisingly being the fastest.

The second factor was knowing *which* route they had taken and which stops they had stopped. As *the menzil* system, which established official stops for couriers to change horses, was yet to be institutionalized in this period, knowing the exact route a courier could take was challenging as these documents rarely mentioned the stops a courier made. Another major factor that stood as an impediment to understanding the travel time was the lack of dating on documents. None of the *arz*, which constituted the bulk of the Ottoman documents from the period before the battle of Konya, included a date as it was not part of their structural formula.⁶⁷⁷ Instead, circumstantial evidence such as the content or a date within the document provided hints to understand which specific period these documents belonged to.

⁶⁷⁶ "...ordularına bir adem gönderdidim bu kağıd yazılırken geldi içlerinden gideli bugün yedinci gün imiş ben anları kattar sarayında alıkodum deyü haber virdi ordusunda leşkerini yokladalar imiş ve hem ulufe verilir imiş amma ulufeyi tamam virmezler imiş bundan ötürü orada leşker dalağılık iderlermiş bir yol HacıBektâş üzerine gider imiş bir yol da doğru Engüri gider imiş işte bu iki yolun tangısından gidecekleri malum değil imiş..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0082.

⁶⁷⁷ Putting a date on *arz* documents was rare. Usually, those *arz* presented by judges included dates, but these are not part of this study. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)*, pp. 211; 219

c) Act 2: Second Phase of the Bayezid Affair (June 1559-July 1562)

i) Introduction: Veni, Vidi, Victus sum⁶⁷⁸

Eventually, Prince Bayezid took the Ankara route and reached a location called Keykuş near Konya on 29 May 1559 [21 Şabân 966]. The actual battle commenced the next day, and Bayezid's forces were crushed by the end of Wednesday, 31 May 1559 [23 Şabân 966].⁶⁷⁹ After the defeat, Prince Bayezid and his remaining army had to retreat to Amasya, where he only stayed for a month. When Prince Bayezid heard about his brother's move against him with a formidable force, he realised his father's unwillingness to forgive and left the city on 7 July 1559 [1 Şevvâl 966] with his four sons and remaining men.⁶⁸⁰

This defeat and the following events sealed Prince Bayezid's fate. He was now officially declared "the rebel" [*bâgî*] with imperial orders sent to most of the eastern and southern provinces of the Empire for his capture, dead or alive. He moved east and reached the province of Erzurum, where he sent letters of plea to his sister, Mihrimah Sultan and her husband, Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, decrying his reluctance to move further east and begging for mercy.⁶⁸¹ Unfortunately, he did not have time to wait for their responses. When he left Amasya, a manhunt for him had already begun under the lead of third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and his elder brother Prince Selim. Several governors-general were to follow and corner Prince Bayezid before he could escape, but he acted more swiftly and reached Erzurum before them. After his arrival, he started negotiating with governor-general Ayas Pasha, who thought he could mediate between the Porte and the Prince. Yet, arriving governor generals refused to comply, and Prince Bayezid moved further east to avoid fighting with them. They eventually battled near the Safavid border close to river Aras. Prince Bayezid defeated the combined forces of the governor of Malatya Mustafa Pasha and the governor of Antep [Ayıntab] Hüsrev Pasha and passed the border in mid-August 1559, officially seeking asylum in the Safavid Empire.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁸ "I come, I saw, I was defeated."

⁶⁷⁹ Derviş Mehmed, *İtaatname*, transcribed in Pınar Tarlak, "Klasik Dönem Taht Mücadeleleri: Kanuni ve Oğulları" (MA thesis, Bahçeşehir University, 2016), pp.142-43; 147-48

⁶⁸⁰ Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, pp. 105-108. He left his newborn son and daughters in Amasya with most of his household. Later, the Porte relocated them to Istanbul in July and August 1559. (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 153, 210

⁶⁸¹ He wrote a letter to his sister when he was still in the Ottoman territory, in late June 1559. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0037. The arrival of his letter was mentioned by Venetian bailo Marino Cavalli in a letter dated 29 June 1559. ASV, *Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli*, fil. 2B, cc.264-65. For his letter to the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, written after passing the border in August, see (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0074.

⁶⁸² Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, pp. 109-113.

Following Prince Bayezid's defeat and escape, the communication zone expanded east. While this zone was previously limited to central Anatolia and the capital Istanbul, it now also comprised Eastern Anatolia, Syria, a recently established border zone with Safavid Persia including parts of Caucasia and Baghdad province. This expansion of the communication zone also brought forth a plethora of new informants with a myriad of backgrounds. The primary informants involved in the initial stage of the Bayezid Affair mainly consisted of Ottoman subjects as the issue was confined to the Ottoman mainland. In this second stage, in addition to Ottoman officials and the variety of men they employed, high and low-ranking Safavid officials and members of Kurdish clans with fluctuating loyalty also contributed to the news flow about Prince Bayezid.

Furthermore, Prince Bayezid's exodus transformed this distinctively internal issue into a trans-imperial crisis. Hence, foreign communities in Istanbul turned their full attention to this affair and reported every news and rumour they gathered. While these communities were not limited to Italian city-states, for the scope of this study, the focus is on the information transmitted by Venetian and Florentine agents in Istanbul, whose news networks were trusted by other Christian powers. Thus, these informants also joined in the news flow and expanded the communication zone towards the Mediterranean.

This period following the battle of Konya contained a greater variety of sources than the first stage of the Bayezid Affair in which *arz* of officials and the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha were the leading sources for analysing the news. In addition to having this type of documents, a register for important affairs [*mühimme defteri*] in which copies of imperial orders sent from the capital to every province of the Ottoman Empire during the period between June 1559-December 1560 were recorded, added another layer to the evaluation of the news during this period. Unlike *arz* reports, imperial orders were always presented with a date and consisted of a very standardised structure. These features allow us to perceive how pieces of news arriving from different corners of the Empire were received, analysed and reacted to in the Ottoman capital.⁶⁸³ Moreover, as the Prince Bayezid Affair quickly transformed into a diplomatic crisis, Ottoman and Safavid Empire officials exchanged numerous official letters. These documents also differ from the regular *arz* reports regarding their language and structural formulae.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸³ For a better understanding of the structure and language of imperial orders, see Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)*, pp. 99-124. For the issue of dating, Ibid. p. 120

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 221-28

Nevertheless, they served as important sources to understand the circulation of news as they included the information these officials received. In addition to these sources, the letters written by resident ambassadors of the Republic of Venice, the Duchy of Florence, and other agents also supplied the news flow. These letters were essential for discerning the details deliberately or unintentionally missing in Ottoman sources. Comparisons between these and Ottoman sources were also helpful for examining the degrees of variation of a piece of news while being transmitted from one interested party to another.

Hence, utilising these primary sources dating from June 1559 to July 1562, this section aims to analyse the news flow of an evolved crisis operating in a broader region with new and old informants with varying interests. To better scrutinise the data, I divided these three years into three successive terms that shaped and changed news content. The first term covered the five months between Prince Bayezid's retreat to Amasya in June, followed by his subsequent escape in July that officially ended with his grandiose greeting in the Safavid capital Qazvin on October 1559. The second term focused on the period between Prince Bayezid's arrival at Qazvin and the end of 1560. During this period, Prince Bayezid was first welcomed as an "honourable guest" and then turned into a prisoner of Shah Tahmasb in April 1560, an event that accelerated the news flow considerably. The third term covers the year and a half that took place between the end of 1560 and the execution of Prince Bayezid in July 1562. Ottoman-Safavid diplomatic exchanges were expedited during this period, while news sources became scarce.

ii) *Quo Vadis Bayezid? The Hot Pursuit of a Wayward Prince*

(1) The Content of News and Rumours: Escape Routes

“...her biri bu husûsda gereği gibi mukayyed olup tetebbu‘ eyleyüp gereği gibi ol cânibe varılı olursa mecâl vormeyüp eger ölüsid[ür], eger dirisidür, ele getüresin.”⁶⁸⁵

Prince Bayezid’s retreat to Amasya in June 1559 initiated a period that witnessed a boom in correspondence, which can be observed by examining the imperial orders [*hüküm*]. In MD [*mühimme defteri*] number three, the imperial council sent twenty-seven orders to notify and warn rulers and governors of different regions about Prince Bayezid in only eight days between 19 and 27 June 1559. Written during the latter part of June when Prince Bayezid was stationed at Amasya after his defeat, these orders were mainly about one particular dilemma: the possible flight of Prince Bayezid and his men to a specific region and the precautions taken for their immediate capture. The frequency of these orders shows the imminence of the issue felt by the authorities in the Ottoman capital. This correspondence allows us to inspect the news hubs and other connected locations, the informants, and the versatility of news in a limited period.

(2) The Primary Source: The Structure of the Imperial Orders [*hüküm*]

Before looking into these orders, it is crucial to understand the formation of the structure of an imperial order and how it could serve the news network. The structural formula of an imperial order was standard in the sixteenth century. It began with repeating a previous order issued by the imperial council in the name of the ruling Sultan or/and summarising a report or a letter sent by an official to the Porte to which the particular order aimed to answer.⁶⁸⁶ Hence, this initial part of the order [*narratio/ expositio*] acknowledged the pieces of news that were in circulation

⁶⁸⁵ “...all of them should be attentive to this matter, make thorough inquires and in the event of his coming to that region, he [Prince Bayezid] should be given no opportunities and be apprehended dead or alive” (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 44

⁶⁸⁶ Imber, Colin. *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 173. The degree of involvement of the Sultan in the decision-making process of the imperial orders is difficult to assess even though they were decreed in his name. Ibid. pp.174-75.

even if the letter/report of the official did not exist today. For example, the first script to the governor-general of Diyarbakır İskender Pasha on 19 June [13 Ramazân 966] began with repeating the recap of previous orders: The Pasha was to gather his armies in an appropriate location and stand guard.⁶⁸⁷ At the beginning of the second order sent on 22 June 1559 [16 Ramazân 966], however, along with repeating the previous order, there was the summary of the relevant content of İskender Pasha's most recent letter to Porte. In his letter, İskender Pasha stated that Kurdish lords of the region were ready with their soldiers to act according to the will of Süleyman I and to serve him with great loyalty and zeal.⁶⁸⁸ Hence, through this, we know about İskender Pasha's most updated news about his regional preparations. The third order to İskender Pasha, sent a day later, on 23 June 1559 [17 Ramazân 966], reveals another layer of the news flow. In the *narratio* part, after repeating a previous order, the summary of the content of the governor-general of Sivas [Rum] Ali Pasha's letter was presented. This letter transmitted news about Prince Bayezid's arrival to Amasya and his intention to leave again as he was demanding sheep and money from the people.⁶⁸⁹ Hence, by repeating the content of Ali Pasha's letter, this part also exposes news from other officials whose letters were otherwise lost.

The *narratio* part of the script was followed by *dispositio*, which declared the specific orders of the Sultan based on the situation explained in the previous section.⁶⁹⁰ The *dispositio* revealed the fluctuating priorities of the Porte and the demand for news on their part. In the first of the abovementioned orders to İskender Pasha, Süleyman I demanded to be notified about any word he had received.⁶⁹¹ On the other hand, in the *dispositio* part of the second abovementioned order, İskender Pasha was ordered to stay vigilant and report back every *correct* news [*ahbâr-ı sahîha*] about Prince Bayezid regularly.⁶⁹² Hence, this part reveals that the Porte already received news about Prince Bayezid and wanted İskender Pasha to act as the authority to filter information and send Istanbul only the correct ones according to his assessment. At the end of this particular order, İskender Pasha was to relay when and where he received this document.⁶⁹³

⁶⁸⁷ “Bundan akdem sana niçe def’a ahkâm-ı şerîfe gönderilüp münâsib olan mahalde cem‘iyyet üzre olup etrâf ü cevânibe nâzır olup bir maslahat vâkı‘ olursa bezl-i maktûr eylesin diyü emrüm olmış idi.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1

⁶⁸⁸ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 22

⁶⁸⁹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 32

⁶⁹⁰ Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)*, pp.109-11.

⁶⁹¹ “Her ne mahalle gelüp ve ne tedârük üzre olup ve ne haber aldığın yazup bildüresin” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1

⁶⁹² “...ma‘lûmun olan ahbâr-ı sahîhayı mütevâliyen i‘lâmdan hâli olmayasın.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 22

⁶⁹³ “Bu hüküm-i şerîfüm sana ne târîhde varup ve ne mahalde ve ne tedârükde olup ol cânibden ne haber aldığın yazup bildüresin.” Ibid.

Furthermore, in the *dispositio* part of the third order, İskender Pasha was ordered to be in constant correspondence with other officials specified as the governors-general of Sivas and Erzurum, third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and Prince Selim regarding the capture of Prince Bayezid.⁶⁹⁴ These examples show that the Porte was meticulous about controlling the news flow as they compared various news arriving from different informants and decided to act accordingly.

The *dispositio* parts proved that the Porte received contrasting information regarding Prince Bayezid's escape routes and warned the officials to be attentive for any news about the issue. In the twenty-seven imperial orders written in late June 1559, four possible locations- provinces of Circassia [Çerâkise], Shirvan, Damascus [Şam], and Baghdad [Bağdad]- were suggested as destinations. Thus, the Porte expected Prince Bayezid to move either towards northern tributary states, southern imperial provinces or enemy territory. Moreover, according to the Porte, both directions were feasible based on two orders sent on the same day, 19 June 1559 [13 Ramazan 966]. In the very first order recorded in *MD* number three, the imperial council warned İskender Pasha to be on guard and handle Prince Bayezid and his men if they were to come to Malatya Pass.⁶⁹⁵ While it is unclear which specific pass they meant, protecting the mountain passes around Malatya was crucial as they were gateways from central Anatolia to Aleppo and then further into Syria.⁶⁹⁶ The following order sent on the same day was an *hatt-ı şerif* directed to Devlet I Giray Khan, the ruler of the Crimean Khanate.⁶⁹⁷ It stated that Prince Bayezid might have fled to Caffa [Kefe] or the region of Circassia [Çerâkise] with a ship. The council advised Khan to be cautious and capture Bayezid dead or alive in the event of his arrival.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁴ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 32

⁶⁹⁵ “Vusûl buldukda, te’hîr itmeyüp cem’iyyet ile Malâtiyye geçidi’ne gelüp bir münâsib olan mahalde hâzır u müheyâ olup etrâf ü cevânibe nâzır olup ahvâl ü etvârın dâ’imâ tetebbu’ u tecessüs idüp dahı her ne cânibe teveccüh iderse arkurı yolına varup inâyet-i Hakk ile hakkından gelesin.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1

⁶⁹⁶ Selim I and his army used these passes during his campaign against Syria and Egypt in 1516-17. Taeschner, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu Yol Ağı*, pp. 39-43.

⁶⁹⁷ From the late fifteenth century onwards, Crimean Khanate was a “vassal” state to the Ottoman Empire. Yet, it retained a unique position among other vassal states due to the acclaimed status of the ruling dynasty Girays as “heirs to Genghis Khan and the Golden Horde”. Furthermore, their dependency on the Ottoman Empire did fluctuate throughout the centuries. For an understanding of the turbulent relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Khanate, see Królikowska, Natalia. “Sovereignty and Subordination in Crimean-Ottoman Relations (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)” in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* edited by Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević, Leiden: Brill (2013) pp. 43-67; Fisher, Alan. *Between Russians, Ottomans and Turks: Crimea and the Crimean Tatars*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1998.

⁶⁹⁸ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 3

(3) The Northern Routes

These destinations had a factual basis and significant political implications. For example, the suggestion of the province of Circassia [*Vilâyet-i Çerâkise*] derived from the information provided by the governor-general of Sivas [Rum] Ali Pasha. Due to the vicinity of his seat Sivas to Amasya where Prince Bayezid was stationed in June 1559, Ali Pasha could gather information about him faster than any other informant. Hence, he was first to inform the Porte about Prince Bayezid's "secret" arrival to Amasya and provide them with a possible destination of Circassia.⁶⁹⁹ While we do not know how Ali Pasha gathered this information as his actual letter is lost, the wording used in the order, "most probably" [*ekser ihtimal*], suggested that he was not completely sure about this destination. Accordingly, Ali Pasha's suggestions differed in two orders. In the order sent to İskender Pasha on 23 June 1559 [17 Ramazan 966], the destination was the "province of Circassia through Georgia". Yet, in the order sent a day later to Ali Pasha, the region he mentioned in his letter was given as Shirvan [Şirvan].⁷⁰⁰ While both were situated close to the northeast borders of the Ottoman Empire, these two were different regions with distinct political structures and allegiances.

Province of Circassia [*Vilâyet-i Çerâkise*] was a rather vague term used by Ottomans to indicate lands occupied by Circassian clans, roughly corresponding to the lands south of river Kuban.⁷⁰¹ While the Ottoman *sancak* of Caffa [Kefe] controlled the north-west of these lands, the province of Circassia was an area of contestation between the Crimean Khanate and the Muscovy, who expanded its territories considerably towards the south during the mid-sixteenth century. Left to their own devices, Circassian clans, along with Cossacks and Nogay Tatars, often allied themselves with Muscovites and attacked and pillaged the lands of the Crimean Khanate and Ottoman towns of Azov [Azak] and Taman.⁷⁰² In response, the Khanate, supported by Ottomans, embarked on several campaigns against various trouble-making Circassian clans starting in 1539. During the sixteenth century, Ottoman policy regarding Circassian clans

⁶⁹⁹ "Hâliyâ Rûm beglerbegisi mektûb gönderüp müşârün-ileyh hufyeten Amâsiyye'ye varup şehri küçe-bend eyleyüp, tekrâr âdem gönderüp davar cem'eyleyüp ve halka mâl salup bir cânibe firâr itmek üzere olduğın bildürmiş, ekser ihtimâl Gürci içinden Çerâkise vilâyetine duhûl fikrinde olmuştur." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 32.

⁷⁰⁰ "Hâliyâ mektûb gönderüp emr üzere irsâl olınan ahkâm-ı şerîfe yirli yerine irsâl olunup ve andan gayrı münhezim olan oğlum Bâyezîd'ün Amâsiyye'ye gelüp at ve katır ve asker cem'eyleyüp Amâsiyye'yi küçe-bend eyleyüp ve etrâf ü cevânibe mâl salup, şöyle ki müzâyaka ola, Şirvân câniblerine gitmek ihtimâli vardur diyü bildürmüşsin." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 34.

⁷⁰¹ See Map

⁷⁰² Öztürk, Yücel. *Osmanlı Hakimiyetinde Kefe (1475-1600)*, Fırat Üniversitesi PhD Thesis (1999), pp. 68-71.

oscillated between the approach of reconciliation [*istimâlet*] and using force against them by exploiting the Crimean Khanate.⁷⁰³⁷⁰⁴ Yet, these policies seemed to fail, and Circassian attacks on the towns of Azov [Azak] and Taman intensified. Allied with Cossacks, Circassians appeared to threaten the *sancak* of Caffa [Kefe] for a year and a half starting in the spring of 1559.⁷⁰⁵ Hence, when Prince Bayezid was about to escape from Amasya in June 1559, the situation in that region was turbulent. The Ottoman authorities must have thought Prince Bayezid could take advantage of this unruly situation and cause further problems. It is also noteworthy to remember that half a century ago, Crimea served as the base of Selim I's plans to win the succession struggle, out of which he emerged victorious.⁷⁰⁶ This fact must have been in Süleyman I's mind as he participated in the previous endeavour as a young prince. He could have been afraid that history could repeat itself and he could end up dethroned like his grandfather Bayezid II.

The other suggested destination, Shirvan, was also a problematic region. It was a prosperous Transcaucasian region which the Safavid Empire annexed during Shah Tahmasb's reign.⁷⁰⁷ Its former ruling dynasty, Sirvanshahs, sought to re-establish its power with Ottoman help, and it was formally ceded to Ottomans in 1590 at the end of the Ottoman-Safavid War.⁷⁰⁸ Hence, between 1538 and 1590, it was nominally under the Safavid rule, yet its distinct political, cultural and religious identity made the assimilation of the region challenging.⁷⁰⁹ The fact that the people in the area predominantly belonged to the Sunni denomination caused several rebellions throughout the sixteenth century. Thus, this semi-independent body politic might have presented an opportunity for Prince Bayezid and his followers to settle and regain their strength for future endeavours. The Safavid officials must have thought the same, as reflected in a letter written in early September 1559. According to this, the Safavid governor of *Sa'd*

⁷⁰³ Ibid. p. 75

⁷⁰⁴ *Istimâlet* was a political term that was used by the Ottomans for a variety of purposes especially from fifteenth century onwards. While historiography tends to explain the term as a method of reconciliation or accommodation aimed towards “non-Muslims” during time of conquest, it was in fact a polysemous term which included the abovementioned meaning of reconciliation along with policy of encouragement for soldiers as well as local Muslim lords via providing them with grants or permissions. Kolovos, Elias. “İstimalet: What do we actually know about it?” in *Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire* edited by Marinos Sariyannis, Crete University Press (2019), pp. 59-71.

⁷⁰⁵ Öztürk, *Osmanlı Hakimiyetinde Kefe*, pp.77-82.

⁷⁰⁶ Çıpa, “*The Making of Selim*”, pp. 37-39.

⁷⁰⁷ Bosworth, C.E. “Shirwan” in *EI2*, Vol. 9, pp. 487-88.

⁷⁰⁸ Tucker, Ernst. “Safavid Relations with Muslim Neighbours” in *The Safavid World* edited by Rudi Mathee, London: Routledge, 2022, p.551.

⁷⁰⁹ Mitchell, Colin. “Custodial Politics and Princely Governance in Sixteenth Century Safavid Iran” in *The Safavid World* edited by Rudi Mathee, London: Routledge, 2022, pp. 93-94.

Çukuru Şahkulu Sultan Ustaçlı, and other Safavid officials feared that Prince Bayezid was planning to go to Shirvan and were reluctant to grant him asylum. Shah Tahmasb, fearing the same, yet unwilling to lose the leverage against the Ottoman Empire, tried to entice Prince Bayezid to move towards Qazvin with gifts and pleasantries.⁷¹⁰

While Shirvan appeared only once within the orders sent from the Porte within these eight days, the province of Circassia turned up several times. Through these, we can see the news network in a particular region. Two consecutive orders were sent to Crimean Khan Devlet Giray I on the 19 and 24 June, respectively. Copies of these orders were also sent to the governor of Caffa [Kefe] Sinan Beg, allowing him to be notified and take necessary precautions. Two different *çavuş* carried these orders: Mahmud Çavuş on 19 June and Mehmed Çavuş on 24 June. Through these orders, we can roughly follow the route these men had taken to reach Crimea. In both cases, their course brought them to Akkirman, an Ottoman town in Bessarabia, on the west bank of the estuary of the Dniester River in present-day Ukraine.⁷¹¹ These two men also carried orders for the governor of Akkirman, whose task was to provide safe passage for *çavuş* either by sea or land. Hence, these couriers must have reached Akkirman first and then proceeded to Caffa and Bahçesaray, the capital of the Khanate. Other orders in MD number three prove that *çavuş* regularly travelled to Crimea via Akkirman.⁷¹² In one of these orders, the custodian of the castle of Giurgiu [Yergöğü] was to provide safe passage for *çavuş*, which suggests that this was also a possible stop on the route to Crimea.⁷¹³

Examining these orders also reveals another crucial matter: the imperial council that issued these orders appeared to share the information about Prince Bayezid only with designated individuals. In this case, while the imperial council repeated the detailed information about the Prince's possible escape for the governor of Caffa, the orders for the governor of Akkirman did not include any information about this issue. Instead, they only stated that the *çavuş* were going to Caffa with a particular matter, and their safety was paramount.⁷¹⁴ Hence, Ottoman authorities did not entrust this sensitive information to every official. The Porte might have tried to contain

⁷¹⁰ "...evvel Şahkulu sultan ve sair kızılbaş beyleri sultan Bayezid gelip ülkelerine girdiğinde gayetle havf ve ıztırab çeküp Bagdad ve Şirvan'a gitmesi zan etmekle şaha ilam eylemişler. Şah dahi ihtiraz-i külli edüp nagah vilâyetlerin nehb ve garet edüp çıkup gitmeye deyu mezkur sultana hafiyeten ademler gönderüp madara edüp külli riayetler idesün ve hoşluk ile toğru çeküp getüresün deyü tenebbüh eylediğin iş'ar ider" (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0701_0029. For the translation of the text, see Appendix III.

⁷¹¹ See Map.

⁷¹² (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 216, 217; 1368, 1370.

⁷¹³ See Map. (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1370.

⁷¹⁴ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 5. For the order sent on 24 June, (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 45.

the information with interested parties as Prince Bayezid's possible escape routes included the *sancak* of Caffa [Kefe] and the eastern lands of the Khanate. In contrast, the *sancak* of Akkirman remained on the western shores of the Black Sea and stayed out of scope. Yet, delving into other orders sent to these locations showed that the imperial council regularly applied this policy of selection. For example, in an order dated 15 April 1560, the governor of Akkirman Hüseyin Beg was ordered to refrain Cossacks of the region from any attack on the lands of the Kingdom of Poland as the Khanate paid the taxes, and the two states recently renewed the treaty.⁷¹⁵ This information did not prevail in the two orders sent to Devlet I Giray Khan and Sinan Beg, governor of Caffa, three days later. Both of these orders were mainly about capturing certain Nogay Tatars who sought refuge in the castle of Azov [Azak] and started to loot the animals of the inhabitants of the said castle.⁷¹⁶ Yet, the order for Devlet I Giray Khan also included information about the war preparations of the Muscovites obtained by the spies that were sent there by the Ottomans and news about the King of Poland [Sigismund II], both of which were missing from the order that was sent to the governor of Caffa. Hence, even though the *sancak* of Caffa and Crimean Khanate usually worked together against common adversaries due to their proximity, the information they shared was only sometimes interchangeable. Hence, these orders allow us to see how the imperial council filtered their shared data.

(4) The Southern Routes

The rest of the orders from the week of 19 June 1559 showed that the provinces of Damascus and Baghdad were also considered likely destinations. However, unlike northern regions, the orders did not reveal the source for these destinations. Nonetheless, examining the details shows that the wording used can give an idea about the credibility of the information received.

In the case of Damascus, the first order sent to the governor-general Ahmed Pasha treated Prince Bayezid's arrival to the region as an *if* scenario [*ol câniblere varmalu olursa*] with no indication of a specific location.⁷¹⁷ The following order to Ahmed Pasha sent on 26 June 1559, showed

⁷¹⁵ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 951.

⁷¹⁶ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 953, 954.

⁷¹⁷ "...müşârinileyhün evzâ' u etvârın ve ne mahalle teveccüh üzere idüğün ma'lûm idinüp anun gibi ol câniblere varmalu olursa ele getürmek bâbında emr-i sâbık üzere ikdâm ü ihtimâm eyleyüp gaflet ile bir cânibe firâr itdürmekden ziyâde hazer idesin." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 8.

that within two days, the Porte had received further information about Prince Bayezid's possible destination: Arabistân.⁷¹⁸ Yet, in the sixteenth-century Ottoman context, this term alluded to a wide area: "Arab-speaking regions of the Empire, especially that of Syria".⁷¹⁹⁷²⁰ Hence, the Porte did not pinpoint a location similar to the abovementioned northern provinces. On the other hand, the regions of the north were immediately considered highly probable destinations, possibly due to their source being Ali Pasha. In an order sent to the governor of Trabzon Hasan Beg on 23 June 1559, the escape was again interpreted as a high probability [*ekser-i ihtimâl*] and the information was mentioned as "being presented" [*arz olunup*] to the Porte.⁷²¹ On the contrary, in the imperial order to Damascus, the Porte had "heard" [*istimâ'olmağın*] about "Arabistan" without designating their source of news. While these differences in the wording might have represented a conceivable hierarchy of credibility between cases, it did not seem to prevent the Porte from taking action against all possible scenarios. For example, in an order to the governor-general of Diyarbakır on 27 June 1559, the province of Baghdad was mentioned as being "rumoured" [*tevâtür*] as a destination.⁷²² Yet the order sent on the same day to the governor-general of Baghdad Hızır Pasha proved that the Porte took this "rumour" very seriously. Hızır Pasha was to make the castle of Baghdad well-provisioned while supervising all regions in collaboration with Kurdish leaders and capture Prince Bayezid in any way necessary.⁷²³ Similarly, the Porte also warned the governor-general of Basra.⁷²⁴ Furthermore, in the *dispositio* part of the 27 June order, İskender Pasha was ordered to block the roads around Mardin, Mosul and Cizre [Cezîre] to prevent the Prince's escape towards the south.⁷²⁵

The tendency to consider these locations, even though evidence was scarce for Prince Bayezid's movements towards the area, was based on several reasons. First of all, both of these provinces

⁷¹⁸ "...bakıyyetü's-süyûf olan etbâ'u eşya'ıyla Arabistân'a firâr itmek üzredür diyü istimâ' olmağın..." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 57.

⁷¹⁹ Ed. "Arabistan", *EI2*, vol.1, p. 561. Darling, Linda T. "From Border Province to Imperial Hub: The Geopolitical Transition of Syria from Mamluk to Ottoman Rule" in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilad Al-sham in the Sixteenth Century*, 2, (eds.) Stephan Conermann & Gül Sen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (2022), p.25.

⁷²⁰ On the other hand, in the Safavid context, the term was used to indicate the western part of Khuzistan, an ancient region between the southwest of Persia bordering the coast of the Persian Gulf. Savory, R.M. "Khuzistan", *EI2*, vol.5, pp. 80-81. Also see Soucek, Svat. "Arabistan or Khuzistan", *Iranian Studies*, Volume 17, Nos. 2-3, (1984), pp.195-213.

⁷²¹ "Haliyâ Amâsiyye'ye varup girü re'âyâdan akça ve davar cem' idüp bir cânibe firâr itmek üzre olduğı arz olunup ekser-i ihtimâl ol cânibden deryâ ile Çerâkise ve yâhûd bir taraf-ı âhara firâr itmek [ihtimâli] vardır." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 35.

⁷²² "...Hâliyâ Bagdâd câniblerine teveccüh murâdı idüğü tevâtüre karîb olmışdur..." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 62.

⁷²³ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 60.

⁷²⁴ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 61.

⁷²⁵ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 62.

were crucial for the Empire. The province of Damascus was officially created in 1518 by Selim I following the conquest of Syria and Egypt.⁷²⁶ In the following decades, Damascus became an essential hub for the pilgrims travelling to/from Mecca.⁷²⁷ On the other hand, during the reign of Süleyman I, the city of Aleppo had become the third biggest city of the Empire after Istanbul and Cairo, hence a significant economic hub with a solid military presence *per se*.⁷²⁸ The provinces of Damascus and Aleppo were also critical for the high revenue they created and the workforce they supplied to various Ottoman campaigns.⁷²⁹ Yet both Syrian provinces and Bagdad, as recently incorporated regions to the Empire, were prone to insurgencies and required constant attention and negotiation on behalf of the Ottoman officials. Ottoman Syria witnessed one major rebellion in 1520 and continuous skirmishes with local groups such as Druze and several tribes of Bedouins.⁷³⁰ Hence, Ottoman officials were treading carefully with these tribes to ensure the region's safety. Depending on the situation, they either punished the insurgents or tried to negotiate by using rewards as incentives. For example, on 26 June 1559 order, General Ahmed Pasha was to gather men from Arab tribes, promising them rewards in the event of the capture of Prince Bayezid and his men.⁷³¹ The following order, dated 27 June 1559 and drafted by Prince Selim, elaborated on the previous order and was sent to both Ottoman governors and different tribes of the region. It ensured grants and gifts on the condition of defeating Prince Bayezid and his men in the event of their arrival in the area.⁷³² Hence, this shows how seriously the Porte took Bayezid's potential arrival to the region as it might have caused a disruption. It also showed that central authorities' policies changed depending on the context. These men were promised rewards with no mention of any punishment in the case of failure. On the contrary, the order written for the governor of Trabzon assured him a severe punishment in case

⁷²⁶ Rafeq, Abdul-Karim. "Damascus, Ottoman" in *EI3*, p. Darling, Linda T. "Resource Extraction in a Newly Conquered Province: Ottoman Syria in the mid-Sixteenth Century" in *Life on the Ottoman Border Essays in Honour of Nenad Moačanin*, ed. Vjerran Kursar, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences FF press, 2022, p.238.

⁷²⁷ Darling, "From Border Province to Imperial Hub", p. 38

⁷²⁸ Ibid. Peirce, Leslie. "Süleyman in Aleppo" in *Turkish Language, Literature and History: Travelers' Tales, Sultans and Scholars since the Eight Century*, (eds.) Bill Hickman and Gary Leiser, London: Routledge, 2015, p.305.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. p.54-55; 59-60. For janissary troops recruited from Syria, also see Darling, Linda T. "Istanbul and Damascus: Officials and Soldiers in the Exercise of Imperial Power (C.1550-1575)" in *Osmanlı İstanbulu IV*, edited by Feridun Emecen, Ali Akyıldız, Emrah Safa Gürkan, İstanbul: İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi (2016), pp. 327-336. Darling, "Resource Extraction in a Newly Conquered Province", p. 242-244.

⁷³⁰ Bakhit, Muhammad. *Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century*, PhD Thesis, SOAS London, 1972. pp. 187-200; 254-265.

⁷³¹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 57.

⁷³² (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 59.

Prince Bayezid escaped from that region, showing the flexibility of the Porte's responses to the rising circumstances.⁷³³

Hence, once a frontier region between Ottomans and Mamelukes, Syria became a crucial imperial hub that called for a cautious policy with local elements. However, Baghdad continued to be a frontier city that caused friction between Safavids and Ottomans in the first half of the sixteenth century. Conquered by the Safavid Shah Ismail I in 1508, it was annexed by Süleyman I during the 1534-35 “Campaign of Two Iraqs” [*Irakeyn Seferi*] and officially acknowledged as Ottoman territory in 1555 with the Treaty of Amasya signed between two empires.⁷³⁴ Hence, during Prince Bayezid’s rebellion, the province of Baghdad and the nearby provinces of Basra and Lahsa continued to serve as border regions.⁷³⁵⁷³⁶ These provinces were buffer zones between Ottomans, who tried to consolidate their rule in the region, and their major rivals, the neighbouring Safavids and the Portuguese ruling the island of Hormuz, who contested with Ottomans during the 1550s.⁷³⁷ Thus, Prince Bayezid’s presence would jeopardise the fragile new-born peace between Ottomans and Safavids and affect the balance of power in the region. And while there was scant evidence for Prince Bayezid’s movement towards the southeast provinces in the orders, several of his letters dated from late 1558/early 1559 *did* include his inclination to move to Baghdad. It thus gave the “rumour” a factual basis.

The earliest letter that acknowledged Prince Bayezid’s intent was one of many letters he wrote to his father from Kütahya in October 1558, conveying his unwillingness to move to Amasya. In this letter, he expressed his wish to rule the *sancak* of Ankara [Engüri] instead of Amasya and, in the event of a campaign, his willingness to go and rule Baghdad or Basra.⁷³⁸ The second letter was written to the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha in 1559, after his arrival to Amasya. In this

⁷³³ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 35.

⁷³⁴ Halaçoğlu, Yusuf. “Bağdat: Osmanlı Dönemi”, *İA*, Vol. 4, pp.433-437; Aslan, Halil Kürşad. “Ottoman-Persian Treaties”, *The Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*, edited by Gordon Martel, 2018.

⁷³⁵ Basra was also conquered by Ottomans during the 1534 campaign, yet officially made Ottoman territory in 1538. First ruled by a local dynasty, a governor-general was appointed in 1545. It shared a close relationship with the province of Baghdad, on which it was dependent in terms of supply of money and soldiers. Bayatlı, Nilüfer. “XVI. Yüzyılda Basra Eyaleti’nin Osmanlı Devleti İçin Önemi” in *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, vol. 144 (2003), pp.91-105.

⁷³⁶ Lahsa was the name Ottomans gave to Al-Hasa, which was found in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Bahrain. The region was under Ottoman control since late 1552/early 1553, and it was a defensive frontier outpost against the Portuguese to regulate local power in the area. Mandaville, Jon. E. “The Ottoman Province of al-Hasā in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol.90, No:3 (1970), p. 489.

⁷³⁷ “...üç dört defa ikdām ittüm kal deyü çare olmadu bunda kalsa sahîh haber almak âsan idi ol takdirce her nesne-i sormadum...” Ibid.

⁷³⁸ “...bari Engüri sancağını viresiz eğer evvelbaharda sultanım sefere giderseniz ol vakit emriniz ile Amasya değil Bağdad’a ve Basra’ya dahi derseniz giderim...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e),0753_0039_002.

letter, the Prince indignantly voiced his displeasure for the unfulfilled promises that were assured to him in the case of his passage to Amasya. After delivering his grievance about being the “disfavoured son”, Prince Bayezid suggested being transferred to one of the provinces of Bagdad, Basra or Lahsa to rule over a *sancak* there as they were “distant provinces” where he would not cause any more disturbance.⁷³⁹ In a letter to his father, most likely written around the same time as the abovementioned letter to Rüstem Pasha, Prince Bayezid dismissed the idea of Amasya being a prominent location for the princes. According to him, Amasya *was* a prominent *sancak* when it used to be a border province, which provided great esteem to those who ruled it. Thus, he would have consented to be sent to a current border province such as Bagdad or Erzurum to gain respect.⁷⁴⁰ While Prince Bayezid’s intent was not straightforward when he wrote these suggestions, the critical point was that he *did* make these suggestions. Hence, the Porte have taken this into an account when they heard “the rumour” about Bagdad and immediately acted upon it. Henceforth, when Prince Bayezid left Amasya in early July and continued to move towards the east, the provinces of Bagdad and Circassia remained as possible destinations while the other locations, Shirvan and Damascus, were already set aside. An *arz* written by third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha demonstrated that Bagdad, Circassia, and Crimea were considered highly probable destinations even in late August 1559 when Prince Bayezid had already passed the Ottoman-Safavid border.⁷⁴¹⁷⁴²

When Prince Bayezid was in Amasya between January and June 1559, the Porte knew his movements and plans thanks to the rigorous and constant surveillance they put him under via using a variety of informants and established news hubs. Yet, after he made his intentions clear and battled with his brother Prince Selim and came out defeated, few options were available to him: seeking clemency or escaping with his forces. Ultimately, he sought to do both, and his actions caused contrasting news arriving in the capital. This also led the communication zone to widen from June onwards as the Porte deemed several options feasible due to the ambiguity

⁷³⁹ “...bari bana bir uzak yere Bağdad’a veyahud Basra’ya ve Lahsa’ya sancak verin varayım gideyim rahat olasız ve vallah-ül azim rıza ile tayib-i hatır ile giderüm bilmiş olasız asla bi-huzur olmazum bu ezayı çekmekden Bağdada veya Basra’ya varmak bana Firdevs-i âlâ bilürüm...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0003.

⁷⁴⁰ “...İmdi şimdilik Amasya’da pâdisah ogullar olмага ihtiyac yokdur; çünkim bizi Kütahya’dan giderdün bâri bir serhadde gönder ki kailem ya Bağdat ya Erzurum beglerbegliğini vir razîyem...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_0019_001. The transcription of this letter can be found in Turan, “Şehzade Bayezid’in, Babası Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’a Gönderdiği Mektuplar”, pp. 124-125.

⁷⁴¹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0003.

⁷⁴² Crimea, or specifically the *sancak* of Caffa [Kefe] did re-appear in an order dated 03 January 1560. The order warned the governor of Caffa to stay vigilant for men who were sent by Prince Bayezid to that region. This order implied that even in 1560, the Porte feared Bayezid’s possible designs for the region. (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 683

of the situation. From Caffa to Baghdad, the news network operated through several principal hubs and informants. Looking at these offers us a peek into a news network with already established routes and hubs and a flexible structure that adapted to changing circumstances by utilising different types of informants. It also demonstrated how the Porte sought to organise and contain information flow between the administrative centre and provincial hubs. The following sections aim to expand this discussion by further examining the news hubs and informants.

iii) The Interim Period: The Ottoman News Network between June-September 1559

(1) Back to Amasya

During June 1559, the town of Sivas -the seat of governor-general Ali Pasha- was the central news hub, with Ali Pasha acting as the leading informant.⁷⁴³ Located at the crossroads of other Anatolian towns and, more importantly, having the proximity of Prince Bayezid allowed Sivas to step forward as a hub before the battle of Konya. The archival documents proved that Ali Pasha was a crucial player during Prince Bayezid's sojourn in Amasya between January and May 1559, even though the leading news supplier was governor-general of Anatolia Ahmed Pasha. Yet, as Ali Pasha did not partake in the battle of Konya and stayed in Sivas, he remained the closest high-ranking official to Prince Bayezid when he relocated to Amasya in mid-June 1559.⁷⁴⁴

By 19 June 1559, Ali Pasha had already reported Prince Bayezid's return to Amasya. The Porte demanded to know further in an order dated 23 June 1559 [17 Ramazân 966]. They asked Ali Pasha to write about the reinforcements he had received and, more importantly, about the "sinister plans and designs" [*fikr-i fâsîd*] of Prince Bayezid and his preparations.⁷⁴⁵ On the same day, another set of orders about Prince Bayezid were sent to Sivas to be forwarded to

⁷⁴³ He was known by the epithet "Temerrüd," which meant rebellious or obstinate. For his career in the Ottoman bureaucracy, see Afyoncu, Erhan. "XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Beylerbeyleri: Temerrüd Ali Paşa" in *Belleten*, Vol. 65, No: 244 (2001), p.1007-1034.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid, p.1013.

⁷⁴⁵ "Vusûl buldukda, bi'l-fi'l ne mahalde olup ve beglerden ve zu'amâ vü erbâb-ı timardan yanuna kimler geldüğün yazup bildüresin ve andan mâ'adâ oğlum Bâyezîd münhezim olup varalıdan berü ne halde olup ve fikr-i fâsîd ve hayâl-i kâsîdi nedür? Ne tedârük üzredür? Tamâm tettebbu'ü tecessüs idüp dahı ma'lûmun olan ahbârı i'lâmdan hâlî olmayasın." (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 39.

Diyarbakır, Erzurum and Trabzon. The governors-general of the former two were to be vigilant and remain in correspondence with each other and Ali Pasha.⁷⁴⁶ On the other hand, the governor of Trabzon Hasan Beg was to safeguard the coast from where Prince Beyezid could escape to Crimea. Furthermore, he was to stay mindful of every possible news and inform the Porte regularly.⁷⁴⁷ Ali Pasha received all these orders and was ordered to forward these to the said locations as quickly as possible, acting as the leading intermediary between the capital and provincial governors.⁷⁴⁸

Sivas's geographical position allowed it to be connected with Erzurum and Diyarbakır via major routes. Therefore, in late sixteenth century Sivas was a hub for forwarding orders, especially to Erzurum.⁷⁴⁹ For example, copies of an imperial order about the preparation for a possible campaign against Safavids, were sent to various locations on 4 December 1559 [4 Rebî' u'l-evvel 967], and Abdülkadir Çavuş carried the copies for both Sivas and Erzurum. On the other hand, Ramazan Çavuş took a copy to Diyarbakır as well as to the governors-general Maraş [Dulkadir], Karaman and Anatolia.⁷⁵⁰ Hence, Sivas and Erzurum were closely associated with one another as hubs, whereas Diyarbakır was usually more linked with southern crossings.

The management of the *çavuş* further contributed to understanding the news network. For example, for the abovementioned orders dated 23 June 1559, instead of sending different *çavuş* to Erzurum, Diyarbakır and Trabzon, the Porte decided to send three men named Hüseyin, Üveys and Cafer to Sivas with all orders. These men were part of Ali Pasha's household, and their presence in the capital suggested they already acted as couriers for the Pasha, relating news about Prince Bayezid's movements. Hence, it was logical that these men carried orders as they returned to their posts.

However, various examples show that this was different from the norm, and the Porte was flexible in managing the system. When two orders were sent in February and March 1560, the

⁷⁴⁶ “Vusûl buldukda, bu bâbda gaflet üzere olmayup etrâf ü cevânibi ve müşârün-ileyh Bâyezîd'ün ahvâl ü etvârın ve fikr-i fâsîdin teccüsüs ü tetebbu'idüp dahı her ne cânibe teveccüh-i nâ-müvecceh iderse Rûm ve Erzurum beglerbegileri ile haberleşüp.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 33.

⁷⁴⁷ “...Ana göre mukayyed olup dâ'imâ ahvâlin ve fikr-i fâsîdin ma'lûm idüp dahı ana göre tedârükün göresin ve vâkıf olduğun ahvâlin yazup bildüresin.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 35.

⁷⁴⁸ “...Şöyle ki, fırsat el vire, birbirinüz ile haberleşmeğe tevakkuf itmeyüp vech ü münâsib olduğu üzere fırsatı fevt itmeyesin ve sana ırsâl olınan hükümleri mu'accelen yirlü yirine îsâl idesin.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 34.

⁷⁴⁹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 502; 670.

⁷⁵⁰ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 576.

Porte tasked different men to deliver these to Sivas and Erzurum. The governor-general of the Erzurum Mustafa Pasha received orders through two stewards [*kethüda*] belonging to his household named Hürrem and Murad, respectively.⁷⁵¹ As explained in the previous section of this thesis, utilising household members as couriers was common practice in sixteenth-century Ottoman news networks, and stewards [*kethüda*] were a crucial part of it. They were high-ranking household members and regularly acted as agents and managed the affairs of a *beglerbegi* or other provincial administrator to the government.⁷⁵² This agency also allowed them to gather news from other officials and informants in the capital. It made them part of the oral news network, a fact hard to discern from the available documents yet a crucial part of the sixteenth-century news circulation system. Nonetheless, the Porte was cautious about utilising men outside the palace. In an *arz* written by grand vizier Rüstem Pasha to Süleyman I, he asked the Sultan if it was appropriate to use the steward of Ali Pasha who was already in the capital as a courier instead of sending a separate sergeant [*çavuş*] regarding the capture of a man belonged to the Prince Bayezid's household.⁷⁵³

(2) The Hunt for the Royal *Bâgî*: the Erzurum Events (July-August 1559)

The ongoing events in July and August shifted the hubs and informants involved once more. Understanding that the tides were against him as his efforts to gain clemency failed, Prince Bayezid left Amasya in early July with his army of ten thousand men. Even though some of the men who joined Prince Bayezid were granted amnesty before they left Amasya, most of his remaining army joined him.⁷⁵⁴ Understandably, the Porte first ordered the governor-general of Sivas [Rum] Ali Pasha to prevent Prince Bayezid from advancing further. During June 1559, reinforcements were sent to Pasha specifically for this reason. Yet, Ali Pasha opted to stay in the castle of Sivas and Prince Bayezid passed around the town.⁷⁵⁵ They continued towards Şebinkarahisar [Karahisar-ı Şarki], where the castellan [*dizdâr*] welcomed Prince Bayezid and

⁷⁵¹ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 769, 829.

⁷⁵² Somel, "Kethüda", *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003, p.153

⁷⁵³ "Sivas Beglerbegisi kulunuzun kethüdâsı bundadır şimdi ol cânibe gitmek üzere dir câiz değil mi ki müstakil çavuş gönderilmeyüb emr-i şerîfi bu ademin eline verüb göndersin deyü..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0816_0008.

⁷⁵⁴ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 87. The date of this order was 4 July 1559 [28 Ramâzan 966]. The imperial council sent this order to the judges of Kütahya, Afyon-Karahisar [Karahisar], Sandıklı [Sanduklu], Çivril [Şeyhlü] granting amnesty to men who left those areas to join Bayezid's army. These locations were all nearby and were administrative units that belonged to the province of Anatolia.

⁷⁵⁵ Kara, "Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli'nin "Nâdiru'l-Mehârib", p. 126.

supplied his army with provisions.⁷⁵⁶ Afterwards, Ali Pasha was ordered to go to Erzurum with the governors-general of Karaman [Ferhad Pasha] and Diyarbakır [İskender Pasha] and stop Prince Bayezid from continuing to move eastwards.⁷⁵⁷⁷⁵⁸ Prince Selim, third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and governor-general of Rumelia Mustafa Pasha were already in pursuit and gathered in Sivas. They left the town between 16-26 July 1559, with Mehmed Pasha moving ahead of them to reach Erzurum.⁷⁵⁹

From June until autumn 1559, the third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, was the highest authority responsible for overseeing the pursuit and capture of Prince Bayezid in collaboration with Prince Selim. Mehmed Pasha's responsibilities included maintaining the safety of the surrounding areas they were passing and, more importantly, regulating the news correspondence between officials involved in the operation.⁷⁶⁰ All governors-general involved were to notify him and Prince Selim about the whereabouts and movements of Prince Bayezid constantly.⁷⁶¹ As anticipated, the Porte inquired Mehmed Pasha about the ongoing search for Prince Bayezid. They sent him a *ferman*, which Pasha received on 21 August 1559 [17 Zi'l-ka'de 966]. Mehmed Pasha answered every question in the *ferman* in detail, repeating the order's contents. The questions asked by the Porte demonstrated the efficiency of the news system and how well-informed the authorities in the capital were.

The Porte's main aim was to discover the reasons for the failure of capturing Prince Bayezid and his forces. To understand the issue, the Porte asked specific questions about the movements and positions of governors-generals. In turn, Mehmed Pasha explained their routes and strategies in detail in the first half of the report. For example, when asked about İskender Pasha and whether he arrived at Erzurum in time, Mehmed Pasha explained that İskender Pasha first intended to reach Erzurum via the Kemah route as previously discussed and decided. Yet,

⁷⁵⁶ In an order dated 7 December 1559 [7 Rebî'u'l-evvel 967], the current governor and the judge of Şebîn Karahisar [Karahisar-ı Şarki] were to lead an investigation on the castellan of Karahisar-ı Şarki who was accused of kissing hands of Prince Bayezid on arrival and helping him by providing horseshoe and barley. (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 584.

⁷⁵⁷ Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, p. 109.

⁷⁵⁸ It is important to note that Ali and İskender Pashas held the title of governor-general of Erzurum in 1544-48 and 1550-53, respectively. Both fought with Georgians and Safavids several times and knew the region well. Afyoncu, "Temerrüd Ali Paşa", pp. 1009-10, Aydın, Dündar. *Erzurum Beylerbeyliği ve Teşkilatı: Kuruluş ve Genişleme Devri (1535-1566)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu (1998), pp.98-102; 122-134.

⁷⁵⁹ Kara, "Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî'nin "Nâdiru'l-Mehârib", p. 128.

⁷⁶⁰ Mehmed Pasha was to maintain order in the *sancak* of Ankara [Engüri], where some had seen Prince Bayezid's rebellion as an opportunity and started to pillage villages. (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 36.

⁷⁶¹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 32; 34.

hearing that Prince Bayezid was already eight days ahead of them, the Pasha chose to use the Bingöl route to cut off Prince Bayezid.⁷⁶² Though they reached Erzurum in shorter time, the governor-general of Erzurum Ayas Pasha's attempts to negotiate a truce with Prince Bayezid impeded the capture of the Prince.⁷⁶³

In the first half of the report, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha acted as the intermediary of news, which was primarily relayed to him by İskender Pasha who was already in Erzurum. The fact that İskender Pasha was an eye-witness to the events contributed to his credibility. The most critical news İskender Pasha relayed to Mehmed Pasha was the details of the negotiation attempts between Ayas Pasha and Prince Bayezid. Knowing that İskender Pasha had arrived in the region, Ayas Pasha sent him a letter stating that he was already in correspondence with Prince Bayezid. According to his account, Ayas Pasha cautioned the Prince that the soldiers pursuing him were numerous, and it would be better for him to wait and negotiate instead of fighting or becoming an actual rebel by defecting to a foreign land.⁷⁶⁴

This negotiation attempt was a controversial move with future repercussions. Considered responsible for aiding Prince Bayezid's escape, Ayas Pasha was dismissed from his position in mid-September 1559. He tried to explain the reasons for his disobedience and perceived assistance to the Prince during his interrogation. He presented the superior number of Prince Bayezid's forces and the insistence of *sipahis* for forgiveness as excuses which were deemed as "baseless words" [*efsane*].⁷⁶⁵ In the end, Ayas Pasha was executed before 27 November 1559.⁷⁶⁶

Hence, it was logical that in a politically delicate matter such as this incident, neither İskender nor Mehmed Pasha relied solely upon their narratives. Similar to the grand vizier listing his informants to make his *arz* to the Sultan more credible, Mehmed Pasha tried to consolidate his narrative by forwarding all letters of the Ayas Pasha to the capital *in verbatim*.⁷⁶⁷ For the same

⁷⁶² "...Kemah yolundan gitmeğe mukarrer etmiş iken bâgînin sürat ve ılgar ile önümüzce gittiği haberin aldık Kemah yolundan gidecek arında kalup yetişmemek hafvından önünü almak için Bingöl yolundan dolaşıp Pasin-abada yürüdüm" (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0034. Also see Map. [Bayezid escape at Erzurum].

⁷⁶³ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁴ "...ademim varmaksızın erişdüğümü duyup Arzurum ümerasından Ardanuç sancağı begi Hasan begi ve nazır-ı emval Ömer Çelebiyi mektubu ile göndermiş asker çokdur mukabele edersin hakkında gelinmez yad vilayete gidüp arz-ı saltanata muhalif ve men olmakdan ise bir yerde tevakkuf idesin arz olunmuştur" Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ Kara, "Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî'nin "Nâdiru'l-Mehârib", p. 130.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. Aydın, *Erzurum Beylerbeyliği ve Teşkilatı*, p.142.

⁷⁶⁷ "...Ayas paşanın zikr olunan ahvale mutâbik mektubların ibraz eyleyüp ol mektublar alınub aynıyla südde-i saâdete irsâl olundu..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0034.

end, Mehmed Pasha also named the officials who carried the said letters from Ayas Pasha to Prince Bayezid: the governor of Ardanuç Hasan Beg and *nâzır-ı emvâl* Ömer Çelebi as in case of an interrogation, these important officials would act as both eye-witnesses and informants.⁷⁶⁸ In fact, these methods of solidifying their statements - transmitting letters of interested parties alongside with their own as well mentioning or dispatching men who were eyewitness to the crucial events to the capital- continued to be employed by high-ranking Ottoman officials in the following phases of Prince Bayezid Affair.

In the subsequent half of Mehmed Pasha's report, men from different ranks and professions were also shown to be informants. As soon as Prince Bayezid passed to Safavid lands, governors-general of the border [*serhad beglerbegileri*] sent spies [*câsus*] beyond the border to pinpoint the exact location of the Prince. These men and the merchants operating in the area reported back to Mehmed Pasha that Prince Bayezid was in a place close to Yerevan [Erivan]. The statements of these men had also been written down to a separate short report [*tezkire*] to be sent separately to the capital, another indicator of the emphasis made on the issue.⁷⁶⁹ A concurrent letter written by Prince Bayezid to the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha asking for mercy confirmed this news about his location brought back by these informants.⁷⁷⁰

On the other hand, Mehmed Pasha also acquired information from Prince Bayezid's men, who were captured during the skirmish near river Aras by an Ottoman official named Mirza Ali Beg.⁷⁷¹ These men had provided Ali Beg with the information that while in Amasya, Prince Bayezid had contacted several Georgian rulers who remained under Safavid suzerainty after the 1555 Treaty.⁷⁷² Prince Bayezid pledged to leave his two sons with them if they granted him

⁷⁶⁸ “Nâzır-ı emvâl” literally meant “overseer of the assets”. “Nâzır” was an important position which entailed financial responsibilities, including organising taxation of the lands. This position was held by sergeants, müteferrikas, local tımar or zeamet holders. “Nâzır-ı emvâl” was a title held by higher-ranking officials such as governors. Genç, Mehmet. “Nazır”, *IA*, Vol. 32, pp. 449-450. The title of the abovementioned man, “Çelebi”, suggests that he had a high status within the province, hence explaining the title of “nâzır-ı emvâl” even though he was not a governor. Other sources stated that he was a “zaim”, a *zeamet* holder.

⁷⁶⁹ “...serhad beglerbegileri tarafından câsuslar gönderilmiştir bazıları gelmiştir ve bazı tâcirler dahi gelüp mezkurlardan alınan ahbâr müstakil tezkire olunup irsâl olundu...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0034.

⁷⁷⁰ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0074.

⁷⁷¹ This Mirza Ali Beg was likely the governor of the *sancak* of Narman [Mamervan], which was part of the province of Erzurum. An order dated from August 1560 showed his name and title. (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1490.

⁷⁷² (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0034. Mehmed Pasha called them “Georgian Kings” [*Gürce Melikleri*]. Their names were Keyhüsrev and Yurtar. The first one was Kaikhosro II Jaqli, ruler of the principality of Samtskhe, one of the five regions formed out of the partitioned Kingdom of Georgia. Ottomans and Safavids divided this principality after the 1555 Treaty. Ottomans gained the western part of the lands while the eastern part continued to be ruled by Kaikhosro II under the Safavid suzerainty. Kırzioğlu, Fahrettin. *Osmanlıların Kafkas Ellerini Fethi (1451-1590)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu (1993), pp. 162; 247-48.

passage to Circassia, confirming the Porte's fear that the Prince would likely go to northern tributary states.⁷⁷³ Hence, Mehmed Pasha explained in the report that they had already contacted Georgian rulers who were vassals to the Ottoman Empire to prepare in case of Prince Bayezid's arrival.⁷⁷⁴ Yet, Mehmed Pasha's detailed explanation of the preparations taken against the Prince's movements suggested that he questioned the trustworthiness of these accounts. The fact that he mobilised the forces of the governors-general of Van and Diyarbakır and sent imperial orders to the governor-general of Baghdad in case of Prince Bayezid's arrival to the region indicated that Mehmed Pasha continued to consider these options likely.

Hence, the Ottoman sources dating from the summer of 1559 reaffirm the fact that high-ranking officials were the most essential elements of the news circulation within the Empire. As seen in the previous section focusing on Prince Bayezid's time in Amasya, these men had the authority to gather and filter the news when forwarding them to the capital. Further documentation in the form of *mühimme defteri* also reveals the Porte's system for gathering, filtering and circulating information. This section also shows that similar to Venetian officials speculating about the destination of the Ottoman navy before the siege of Rhodes, Ottoman intelligence also laid out several different plausible localities for Prince Bayezid's ultimate destination. Similar to the Venetian case, these conjunctures had factual basis. Most substantial ones were based on solid references such as news reports of officials or Prince Bayezid's own words, yet those with less credibility were also taken into account as the past and current political situation enabled them to be considered viable options.

In times of conflict, where ambiguousness was the critical defining factor, the authorities were desperate to acquire more information about the subject of their interest in any way possible. In this particular phase of the crisis, it was not only the fickle nature of desertion that added difficulties for the Porte's intelligence system; the geography they were operating on also presented a hindrance. Previously, the Ottoman mainland was the surveillance zone where nearly all interested parties were Ottoman subjects. Setting aside deeper nuances of trust and reputation, these people were subject to Ottoman law and governance, which eased the Porte's ability to manage and organise them. However, with his escape to enemy lands, the geography of communication was shifted to a border zone stabilized only a few years before the Bayezid Affair. Hence, it was a zone in the process of political settlement abundant with players

⁷⁷³ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0034.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

possessing diverse backgrounds, professions, and, most importantly, shifting allegiances. Thereby, from September 1559 onwards, the border zone between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires that included eastern Anatolian provinces of Erzurum, Van, and Diyarbakır along with parts of Georgia and Baghdad province became the axis of news and rumours about the wayward Prince.

iv) An Ottoman Prince in the Safavid Court

(1) Tiers of communication: Courts and Diplomacy

“...anun gibi mezbûr oğlum varup vilâyetlerine dâhil olursa eger mâbeynimüzde olan sulh u salâhun istihkâmı murâdlariyse mu‘âhede-i şerîfüm üzre ele getürüp dahı bu cânibe gönderüp teslîm ideler. Ammâ şöyle ki, varmalu olursa ele getürüp atebe-i ulyâ-menziletüme irsâl ideler”⁷⁷⁵

The Porte did anticipate and fear that Prince Bayezid could have taken refuge in the Shah Tahmasb’s court, only that it appeared later than the other options. A month after the heavy inner correspondence discussing the possible destinations for Prince Bayezid, an imperial order was sent to Sinan Beg, the governor of Ardahan, on 26 July 1559. He was to carry Süleyman I’s royal letter [*nâme-i hümayun*] to Shah Tahmasb I in the event of Prince Bayezid’s arrival to his lands. The content of the order included the instructions for Sinan Beg: in the case of Prince Bayezid’s arrival, he was to remind the Shah about the existing peace between the two states and how surrendering the Prince would help them keep it while not-so-subtle threatening the Shah by stating that governors-general were amassed at the border.⁷⁷⁶

This plan was activated as soon as the Porte realised Prince Bayezid had passed the border. It was reported in late August 1559 that Sinan Beg was already on his way to Qazvin along with the *mirahur* of Prince Selim, Durak Ağa who was carrying the Prince’s letter [*nâme-i şerif*].⁷⁷⁷⁷⁷⁸ This first mission paved the way for several diplomatic exchanges that would take place between the two states over three years. It also initiated the highest tier of news communication between two states: diplomatic correspondence.

Between September 1559 and July 1562, Ottomans sent five delegations to Shah Tahmasb I, who in return sent four delegations to Istanbul to negotiate the surrender of Prince Bayezid.

⁷⁷⁵ “If they want to keep the peace between us strong, in case of my aforementioned son’s [Bayezid] arrival to their lands, they should capture him and hand him over to us according to the honourable accord between us...but if he [Bayezid] arrives there, they should capture him and send him to my high throne...” (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 144.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁷ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0034.

⁷⁷⁸ “Mir-i ahur” (also *emir-i ahur*) meant “master of stables”. It was the title of the official given charge of all aspects relating to the supply and maintenance of the Ottoman Sultan’s stables. Murphey, Rhoads. “Mir-i akhur”, *EI2*, Vol. 7, pp.88-89.

These delegations carried royal letters between Süleyman I, his heir apparent the auspicious Prince [*şehzâde-i civân-baht*] Selim and Shah Tahmasb I.⁷⁷⁹ These letters first discussed the conditions of Prince Bayezid's pardon and, after his imprisonment in April 1560 by Shah, focused on the Safavid ruler's demands for the surrender, some of which Süleyman I acquiesced.⁷⁸⁰⁷⁸¹ Apart from the written correspondence, these delegations carried news orally by voicing their master's opinions and wishes.⁷⁸² This communication channel had its own language and practices, creating both limitations and opportunities.⁷⁸³⁷⁸⁴

Being part of a delegation delineated the level of access an official could have had as the courts attempted to control the environment these officials were permitted into. For example, Ottoman officials accompanied Safavid delegations throughout their journey through Anatolia to prevent them having any interactions with locals in the name of the Shah.⁷⁸⁵ Upon their arrival to Anatolian shores of the capital, Üsküdar, an Ottoman delegation headed by *çavuşbaşı* received them. Later, the Safavid delegation was taken to the city proper and was put in a designated house.⁷⁸⁶ Furthermore, while in Istanbul, members of Safavid delegations were strictly supervised and not permitted to socialise with other diplomatic corps to restrict the information exchange.⁷⁸⁷ Instead, ambassadors and their retinue were to interact with Ottoman officials in controlled environments such as the Topkapı Palace and vizierial households. On the other hand,

⁷⁷⁹ Twenty-one letters in total were exchanged between two courts between 1559-1562. Mitchell, Colin P. *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris (2009), p.126.

⁷⁸⁰ Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, pp. 121-128.

⁷⁸¹ The letter exchange between royals became extensive especially after the imprisonment of Prince Bayezid in April 1560. For the copies of letters, see. Şevik, "Şah Tahmasb (1524-1576) ile Osmanlı Sarayı Arasında Teati edilen Mektupları", p. 85.

⁷⁸² Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*. p. 125.

⁷⁸³ For a thorough discussion on the language and style of the royal letters exchanged between Ottomans and Safavids: Mitchell, Colin P. "Am I My Brother's Keeper? Negotiating Corporate Sovereignty and Divine Absolutism in Sixteenth Century Turco-Iranian Politics?" in *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and Society*, edited by Colin P. Mitchell, London & New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 33-58. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, pp. 126-136.

⁷⁸⁴ For example, one of the most critical aspects of the "diplomatic language" between Ottomans and Safavids was gift-giving. Casale, Sinem. *Gifts in the Age of Empire: Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Exchange, 1500–1639*, University of Chicago Press, 2023.

⁷⁸⁵ This was considered a "counter-intelligence" measure taken by the Ottomans against Safavid propaganda. Gürkan, "The Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence", p. 17

⁷⁸⁶ Turan, Şerafettin. "1560 Tarihinde Anadolu'da Yiyecek Maddeleri Fiyatlarını Gösteren Bir İnan Elçilik Heyeti Masraf Defteri" in *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 22, no. I-IV, 1965, p. 273.

⁷⁸⁷ Tracy A Sowerby, "Sociability and Ceremony: Diplomats at the Porte, c.1550–1632" in Tracey A. Sowerby & Christopher Markiewicz (Eds). *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630*, London: Routledge, 2021, p.217-218.

this would allow the ambassadors to have a vis-à-vis meeting with high-ranking officials, especially with the grand vizier, and gain valuable information from the top source.⁷⁸⁸

Similar practices were carried out by the Safavids, showing the unease felt by the authorities for a leak of information. The ambassadors and their retinue were accompanied from the moment they passed the border until they arrived in the court by assigned officials called *mihmândâr* who were officials appointed to receive and to provide hospitality for guests, including foreign ambassadors and envoys.⁷⁸⁹ When the embassy arrived in the capital, they were assigned to a specific villa and could not move into the city; hence, their interactions were limited to certain court members.⁷⁹⁰ On the other hand, the ambassadors in the court had access to vital information not available to all interested parties hence their observations were sought after. This emphasis can be detected in imperial orders related to Ottoman ambassador Sinan Beg's return.

The first Ottoman delegation stayed in Qazvin for roughly two months, leaving the city around mid-December 1559 with the Safavid delegation headed by ambassadors Akçasakal Ali Beg and Seyfeddin Erişdi carrying Shah Tahmasb's letters to Süleyman I and Prince Selim respectively.⁷⁹¹⁷⁹² The imperial orders sent on 27 and 28 December 1559 [27-28 Rebî'u'l-evvel 967] indicated that the delegations had already left Qazvin and were on their way to Ottoman lands. These orders, sent to governors-general of Erzurum and Van respectively, emanated a great urgency: the Safavid delegation and Sinan Beg, whether they arrived together or not, were to be sent to the capital immediately with capable men [yarar adem] accompanying them who were to be advised not to idle around during the journey.⁷⁹³ Apparently, the Porte was enthusiastic to learn about Shah Tahmasb's responses on the issue as soon as possible. The

⁷⁸⁸ In order to better grasp how Istanbul was the hotbed of intelligence activities of various parties associated with different embassies, see Gürkan, "Dishonorable Ambassadors", pp. 47-61

⁷⁸⁹ C. E. Bosworth, "Mihman", *EI2*, Supplement, p. 618.

⁷⁹⁰ Floor, Willem. "The Safavid Court and Government" in *The Safavid World*, edited by Rudi Matthee, London: Routledge, 2022, p. 209.

⁷⁹¹ Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, pp. 120.

⁷⁹² Akçasakal Ali Beg (d.1567-68) was a member of the Turkoman Kaçar tribe, one of the major tribes that helped the foundation of the Safavid state. Sümer, Faruk. *Safevi Devletinin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin Rolü*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999, p. 98. On the other hand, Ottoman sources stated that Seyfeddin Erişdi (also known as Seyfüddin İrşitî Ali Ağa Zü'l-Kadiri or Çavuşbaşı Ali Ağa) was a member of the Prince Selim's household. Şevik, "Şah Tahmasb (1524-1576) ile Osmanlı Sarayı Arasında Teati edilen Mektupları", p.33

⁷⁹³ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 653; 654.

orders sent several days later further enhanced the imminence felt in the capital regarding the problem as they demonstrated a change in the strategy.

In an order dated 3 January 1560 [4 Rebî'ü'l-ahir 967] carried by Abdi Çavuş to Van via Sivas, the governor-general Kubad Pasha was told to send Sinan Beg to the capital as fast as possible while the Safavid ambassador and his entourage were to follow in slower pace.⁷⁹⁴ A similar order was repeated for Sinan Beg, stating that wherever Abdi Çavuş would meet him, he was to leave the Safavid delegation and come quickly to the capital.⁷⁹⁵ The delegation had arrived at Erzurum in January 1560. Similar orders were sent to governor-general Mustafa Pasha, who was responsible for arranging the accommodation and logistics for approximately three hundred men making up the Safavid delegation.⁷⁹⁶ In an order dated 10 February 1560 [13 Cemâziye'l evvel 967], Mustafa Pasha was to use winter conditions as an excuse to urge them travel slowly. He was also to count and list the names of the men of the delegation and send those to the capital.⁷⁹⁷ This change in the orders indicated that the Porte wanted to interrogate Sinan Beg before the arrival of the Safavid ambassador Akçasakal Ali Beg so that he could provide them with the necessary intelligence to decide accordingly when the said ambassador arrived.

This episode showed that although we did not possess the details of either meetings of Sinan Beg or the Safavid ambassador Akçasakal Ali Beg with the Sultan Süleyman I or the Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, the diplomatic correspondence was an essential tier of communication that provided parties with much craved inside information. Yet, this diplomatic process was only one layer of communication that provided news and rumours about Prince Bayezid. The bulk of the data was processed and circulated through the second tier of correspondents: the governors of border regions who, in turn, extracted news from a stream of informal channels of communication sustained by reports of Ottoman and Safavid officials, semi-independent Kurdish leaders and variety of men that oscillated within the spectrum of spying.

⁷⁹⁴ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 668.

⁷⁹⁵ “Her ne mahalde sana mülâki olursa eger yanunda ilçî dahî var ise ilçiden ayrılıp müşârün-ileyh ile mu‘accelen Südde-i sa‘âdet’üme mülâki olasin ve ilçî yanında dahî âdemlerün koyasin ki yâb yâb gelüp mülâki olalar.” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 669.

⁷⁹⁶ Turan, “İran Elçilik Heyeti Masraf Defteri”, p. 274-75.

⁷⁹⁷ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 763.

(2) Tiers of Communication: Border Zone News and Rumours

The relationship between Ottoman and Safavid Empires was tense from the beginning. The rivalry was born during the reign of the first Shah of the Safavid State Ismail I (d.1524), who established the new state and declared Shi'ite Islam as the official religion in 1501. In the following decades, Ismail I's meteoric rise as the leader of *kızılbaş* Turkmen groups with roots in various parts of Anatolia created a significant challenge for Ottoman territorial stability.⁷⁹⁸ This rivalry had resulted in one chief battle in 1514 at Çaldıran and three major Ottoman eastern campaigns in 1533-35, 1548-49 and 1553-55, while "soft war" tactics were abundant via skirmishes, fiscal sanctions and propaganda wars. Only in 1555, with the Treaty of Amasya, did the two states end their half-a-century struggle until the beginning of the war of 1578-1590. This treaty was the first accord between the two empires in which Ottomans officially recognised the legitimacy of the Safavid State while lands of Transcaucasia were divided into two.⁷⁹⁹ According to this accord, Armenia and Georgia were equally shared by the two empires. At the same time, Shah Tashmab I agreed that Baghdad, Basra, Luristan, Kurdistan, Van, Kars, Erzurum, and Georgia would remain under Ottoman sovereignty.⁸⁰⁰⁸⁰¹ Hence, for the first time, the border between the two empires was officially drawn and would serve as the basis of future treaties between the two states. On the other hand, this treaty raised several questions regarding if we could call these regions borders or frontiers, or categorisations like these could serve to understand the communication within the semi-consolidated areas that stretched from Caucasia to Basra.

Maria Pia Pedani's work on the Venetian-Ottoman border can be helpful in this sense. It focuses on these "border and frontier" categorisations and how they could operate in an Ottoman context that inherited both Islamic and Roman law. According to her work, "frontier is a belt of territory that holds in itself the idea of 'front': the enemy who may advance or fall back is

⁷⁹⁸ Atçıl, "The Foundation of Peace-Oriented Foreign Policy", p.135.

⁷⁹⁹ Atçıl, Zahit. "Warfare as a Tool of Diplomacy: Background of the First Ottoman-Safavid Treaty in 1555," *Turkish Historical Review* Vol. 10 (2019), pp. 2-24; Matthee, Rudi. "Safavid Iran and the 'Turkish Question' or How to Avoid a War on Multiple Fronts," *Iranian Studies*, Vol.52, 3-4 (2019), pp.519-524; Murphey, Rhoads. "Süleyman's Eastern Policy" in *Süleyman the Second and his Time* eds. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993, pp.229-248; Işıksel, Güneş. "L'emprise ottomane en Géorgie occidentale à l'époque de Süleymân Ier (r. 1520-1566)" in *Collectanea Islamica* (2012), pp.89-105; Svanidze, Mikheil. "The Amasya Peace Treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Iran (June 1, 1555) and Georgia," *Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2009), pp. 191-197.

⁸⁰⁰ Aslan, "Ottoman-Persian Treaties", p. 3; Atçıl, "Warfare as a Tool of Diplomacy", p.21.

⁸⁰¹ For the treaty's details regarding the partition of the Transcaucasian lands, see. Kırzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas Ellerini Fethi*, pp. 244-49.

beyond it.”⁸⁰² The word appeared in the European context during the medieval age and was transformed by the American experience in nineteenth century, which turned the concept into “a passage area that was open to any possibility and where the enemy was the hostile nature in place of the neighbour: it became a region inhabited by free and self-sufficient men.”⁸⁰³ This interpretation influenced the historians studying the Ottoman Empire as well. In short, the frontier was a territory that could expand or fall back where different ethnic and religious groups could cohabitate more easily. “Border” on the other hand was a Roman concept that meant a line that divided two lands, a clear-cut separation involving interested parties. Hence, the frontier implied a state of war, while the border required established peace conditions.⁸⁰⁴

According to the definitions above, Eastern Anatolia, parts of Caucasia and Iraq were frontier zones for the fifty years preceding the Treaty of Amasya which created the definitive peace conditions necessary to create borders for the first time. However, can we talk about an immediate transition from frontier to border zone after the treaty was signed? Or is it possible to talk about a specific process?

While the general hostilities ceased and conditions of peace-keeping were established with the treaty, it did not necessarily mean that the said areas automatically fell under direct Ottoman or Safavid rule where the imperial centre was the ultimate decision maker and applied similar integration policies. Policies imposed to those regions diversified according to the varying necessities and conditions of these localities, as people inhabiting these regions were varied regarding their political and religious allegiances and economic needs. The Ottoman Empire had to adapt itself and constantly re-negotiate its position vis-a-vis local populations, which afforded a certain freedom to the people in question. For example, the *Kızılbaş* (literally meant “red-head” due to their crimson headpiece) population, the followers of the Safavid religious movement who populated central and eastern Anatolia as well as Syria and Iraq to a lesser

⁸⁰² Pedani, Maria Pia. *The Ottoman-Venetian Border (15th-18th Centuries)*, Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2017, p.12.

⁸⁰³ Ibid. p. 13.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 49.

extent, was one of these groups.⁸⁰⁵ Hence, in 1559, these regions were transitioning from frontier to border zone where identities remained hybrid and flexible.⁸⁰⁶

v) News and Rumours from the Safavid Lands: The Background

An imperial order was sent to governor-general of Van Kubad Pasha on 28 October 1559 [26 Muharrem 967]. In it, the Porte stated that even though they have already commanded him to send news regularly, no letters nor any men arrived from his seat lately.⁸⁰⁷ Kubad Pasha was to dispatch “useful and trustworthy men” [*mu‘temedün-aleyh yarar âdemler*] across to border to gather “any news” about Prince Bayezid and the Safavid state and send those news with “much haste” to the capital.⁸⁰⁸

First, this order showed the general anxiety and vigilance in the imperial capital. By September 1559, the smell of obscurity was again in the air. The Ottoman ambassador Sinan Beg was still on his way to the Safavid capital while Prince Bayezid was either in Yerevan or on his way to Qazvin.⁸⁰⁹ Hence, the imperial council still needed to learn the intentions of Shah Tahmasb and Prince Bayezid and this uncertainty put them on high alert. On 18 September 1559 [15 Zi'l-hicce 966], the Porte handed a general order to Mehmed *çavuş* who was tasked to take it to governor-generals involved in the chase of Prince Bayezid demanding scrutiny about the Prince’s plans, forces and allies within the Safavid realm and whether he reached out to Shah Tahmasb and received back news.⁸¹⁰ On the same day, another *çavuş* named Mustafa, was

⁸⁰⁵ Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, Ayşe. “Neither Victim nor Accomplice: The Kızılbaş as Borderland Actors in the Early Modern Ottoman Realm” in *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750*, edited by Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu, Leiden: Brill, 2020, pp. 423, 427-28.

⁸⁰⁶ Zarinebaf, Fariba. “Rebels and Renegades on Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Porous Frontiers and Hybrid Identities” in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective* (ed) Abbas Amanat & Farzin Vejdani, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 79-80.

⁸⁰⁷ “Bundan akdem sana bir-iki def’a hükm-i hümâyûnum gönderilüp oğlum Bâyezid’ün ve öte cânibün vâkı‘ olan ahvâllerin mütevâliyen i‘lâmdan hâli olmayasın diyü emrüm olmuş idi. Hâliyâ haylî müddetdür ol cânibe müte‘allık ne mektûb ve ne âdemün geldi.” (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 458.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ According to Hamidreza Mohammednâjed’s book, Ottoman ambassadors arrived in Qazvin ahead of Prince Bayezid who was escorted first to Tabriz on his journey from Yerevan to Qazvin. He referenced Shah Tahmasb’s own account in Persian “Tezkire” which narrated important events of his reign written in order to guide his children. Mohammednâjed, Hamidreza. *Osmanlı-Iran İlişkileri (1482-1576)*, İstanbul: Doğu Kitabevi (2017), p. 465.

⁸¹⁰ “...yanında ne mikdâr âdemi olup ve öte cânibden dahı yanında kimler olduğın ve anların ne mikdâr askeri olduğın ve ne tedârük üzere olup öte cânibe kimesne göndermiş midür ve gönderdüğü âdemi gelüp haber getürmüş midür, ne haber getürmüş ve bi’l- cümle cem‘î-i ahvâl ü etvârın ve fikr ü firâseti ne idüğün ve sâ’ir ol cevânibün evzâ‘ u etvârın mufassal ma‘lûm idinüp dahı mezbûr ile yazup bildüresin.” (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 332.

dispatched to governor-generals of Diyarbakır and Van carrying an order about safeguarding the border with the collaboration of Kurdish subjects of Süleyman I against a possible attack.⁸¹¹ Precautions were also taken in Baghdad as it was singled out as a target by the Porte who ordered Sokullu Mehmed Pasha to send five hundred janissaries to the governor-general of Baghdad Hızır Pasha.

Secondly, the imperial order also showed that an escalating pressure was specifically put on Kubad Pasha due to the proximity of the recently established province of Van to the Safavid border.⁸¹² While other governor-generals were tasked to prepare, and mobilize their troops against a possible incursion, Kubad Pasha's primary task was to gather news. The Porte's frustration and high expectancy were evident within their continuous demand for news from Kubad Pasha mid-August 1559 onwards.⁸¹³ For example, in an order dated 04 December 1559 Kubad Pasha was again reprimanded for lack of news. Hence, gathering news about Prince Bayezid was further stressed as his "most important duty" in this particular order.⁸¹⁴

The Porte continued to maintain their strict policy on expected news flow throughout the year 1560. During one-month stay of Safavid ambassador Akçasakal Ali Beg in Istanbul, the Porte again berated Kubad Pasha for not transmitting any news from the Safavid lands since the arrival of the said ambassador in the capital at March.⁸¹⁵ No doubt, the officials in the capital demanded news to stay updated during the ongoing negotiations with the Safavid ambassador. Yet, however important his position within the news network, Kubad Pasha was not the sole high-ranking official responsible for accumulating and circulating news from the border zone. The governor-generals of Erzurum and Baghdad were also warned regularly for news update and their locations enabled them to cover news from different regions.⁸¹⁶

The city of Erzurum served both as a prominent military base and a trade hub for the Ottomans in the Eastern Anatolia since its annexation in 1535.⁸¹⁷ Hence during preparations for a possible

⁸¹¹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 334, 337.

⁸¹² The regular *sancak* system was introduced for the principality of Van only after 1548. Sinclair, Tom. "Administration and Fortification in the Van Region under Ottoman Rule in the Sixteenth Century," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 156 (2009), pp.211-224.

⁸¹³ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 198, 228, 264.

⁸¹⁴ "Husûs-ı mezbûr ehemmi-i umûrdandır." (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 573.

⁸¹⁵ "Hâliyâ ilçî geleliden berü ol cânibün ahvâli ma'lûm olmadı." (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 919

⁸¹⁶ For example, the copies of 4 December order were also sent to the said officials, Mustafa and Hızır Pasha respectively. (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 573/a, 573/b.

⁸¹⁷ Aydın, *Erzurum Beylerbeyliği ve Teşkilatı*, pp.59-50; İnalçık, Halil. "Erzurum", *EI2*, Vol.2, p. 712.

eastern campaign in autumn 1559 and February 1560, the governor-general of Erzurum occupied one of the primary positions for organizing the forces.⁸¹⁸ It was also a major news hub where the governor general gathered and distributed news about Persia and Georgia during times of both peace and war as well as managing diplomatic exchanges between two states.⁸¹⁹ For example, during 1553-55 Nakhichevan campaign, previous governor-general of Erzurum Ayas Pasha was one of the main correspondents who were exchanging letters with Safavid officials as well playing a leading role in the negotiations leading up to peace treaty of Amasya in 1555.⁸²⁰ Similarly, Mustafa Pasha acted as an intermediary within the diplomatic exchanges between Ottomans and Safavids starting from early months of 1560 until the very end of the Bayezid Affair in July 1562. In that sense, apart from being responsible for managing and hosting the Safavid ambassadorial delegations both on their arrival and return journey, he also exchanged a number of diplomatic letters with the Safavid governor of Sa'd Çukur Şahkulu Sultan regarding the negotiations for Prince Bayezid and other border issues.⁸²¹ Mustafa Pasha's counterpart Şahkulu Sultan was member of a major Turkoman clan, *Ustaçlı*, who played major role in the formation of Safavid Persia and maintained their privileged position in the Safavid court throughout the sixteenth century.⁸²² Consequently, this clan received governorships of the provinces of Sa'd Çukur, Nakhichevan [Nahcivan] and Khalkhal [Halhal]-Tarum in a nearly hereditary way.⁸²³ The region Şahkulu Sultan was governing, also known as *Çukur-i Sa'd*, with Revan [Yerevan] as its capital was a border province that interacted directly with the Ottoman provinces of Van and Kars.⁸²⁴ Therefore, Şahkulu Sultan also played a crucial role in the news network of the Eastern Anatolian border zone as his letters revealed the inner workings of the Safavid court and other players involved in the circulation of news.

On the other hand, Prince Bayezid's arrival to Safavid capital Qazvin on 23 October 1559 [21 Muharrem 967] urged the communication zone to further expand into south-east border that included Baghdad, Basra and other smaller locations such as Şehrizol and Erbil. Since the Ottomans were concerned of any attack on these regions, the content of the orders from mid-

⁸¹⁸ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 769.

⁸¹⁹ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 477.

⁸²⁰ Aydın, *Erzurum Beylerbeyliği*, pp.137-38; Şahin, Kaya. *Peerless Among Princes: The Life and Times of Sultan Süleyman*, Oxford University Press, 2023, p.240.

⁸²¹ For the imperial orders regarding the arrival and return of the Safavid delegation of 1560, see (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 653, 729, 981.

⁸²² Sümer, *Saefevi Devletinin Kuruluşu*, p.44-46; 83; 96-98.

⁸²³ Floor, "The Safavid Court and Government", p. 221.

⁸²⁴ Bilge, Sadık Müfit. *Osmanlı Çağ'ında Kafkasya 1454-1829 (Tarih-Toplum-Ekonomi)*, İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2015, p. 136.

1559 onwards were mostly related to military preparations. After Prince Bayezid fled to Persia, soldiers and provisions began to be dispatched, especially to Baghdad in order to fortify the castles in the province.⁸²⁵ Concurrently, the officials of these regions were also ordered to relay news they had on Prince Bayezid.⁸²⁶ Correspondence from these particular regions gained momentum during Prince Bayezid and his sons' imprisonment in April 1560 due to their locations vis-à-vis to the Safavid capital. This major incident was reported in detail by different officials of the region that included governor of Şehrizol Ebubekir Beg, governor-general of Baghdad Ferhad Pasha and Kurdish ruler of İmadiye Sultan Hüseyin who was allied with Ottomans.

⁸²⁵ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 339, 500, 605, 615, 641; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0006.

⁸²⁶ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 391, 500, 919.

vi) A Quest for Truth: How to Get “Correct News?”

(1) An intelligence Operation in the Border Zone

In the sixteenth century, two aspects set Ottoman intelligence apart from its Venetian and Habsburg counterparts. Firstly, it was not institutionalised. Secondly, due to this lack of institutionalisation, provincial rule developed its information-gathering system, which was relatively independent from the central authority which was more interested in results rather than methods employed.⁸²⁷ I concur with these suggested aspects. The first section of this chapter demonstrated that instead of institutionally controlled surveillance, the information-gathering on Prince Bayezid was primarily managed by the personal efforts of Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, who answered to the Sultan. The grand vizier used various informants in his employ and also accumulated intelligence assembled by other provincial officials who rivalled with each other.⁸²⁸ Hence, the intelligence system did lack institutionalisation that required specific regulatory rules and organisation as was developed in the Republic of Venice throughout the sixteenth century. However, Ottoman intelligence did evolve out of another type of institution: the household [*kapı*], which was designed after the dynastic household of the Sultan, hence implying the patrimonial character of the intelligence system. The household system, which allowed provincial governors to have their council, scribes, secretaries, and servants similar to the one Sultan had in Topkapı Palace also allowed them to have their own espionage system via spies and agents.⁸²⁹ Hence, ironically, intelligence gathering required a certain de-centralisation to make central authority’s decision-making process more effective even though the Porte was in process of intense bureaucratization and centralization especially from mid-sixteenth century onwards.⁸³⁰ This decentralised intelligence system was even more evident in the border zones where ethnic, religious and political allegiances multiplied and necessitate a system that could exploit this aspect.

As the border zone became the central communication zone during the next phase of Bayezid Affair, the information flow operated with informants whose loyalty was questionable. As

⁸²⁷ Emrah Safa Gürkan, “L’Idra del Sultano”, pp. 447-476.

⁸²⁸ Ibid. p. 452.

⁸²⁹ Gürkan, “L’Idra del Sultano”, pp. 449-451.

⁸³⁰ Ibid. p.450.

examined in the previous chapter, personal agendas usually played a part in gathering and filtering news and rumours from high to low-ranking informants. On the other hand, however fluid, there was also a hierarchy of people responsible for gathering and circulating information in the border zones. For example, the imperial orders sent to Kubad Pasha emphasized his essential role in gathering and assessing intelligence regarding the Safavids and Prince Bayezid in the region. Furthermore, his two letters written in early September 1559 reveal the intricacies of an intelligence operation in a border zone, including various locations, intermediaries, and conflicting and corresponding interests of the parties involved.

According to his letters, as soon as they realized that Prince Bayezid passed the border, Kubad Pasha charged Haydar Beg the governor of Adilcevaz to gather information about Bayezid's movements. In turn, Haydar Beg acquired news about Prince Bayezid from a certain Yadigar Beg, the ruler of Eleşkird, a town further up north. This Yadigar, unlike Haydar Beg and Kubad Pasha, was not an appointed official. Instead, he was the leader of the Kurdish clan "Pazuki" whose lands stayed within Safavid rule after the treaty of Amasya situating right next to the Ottoman border.⁸³¹⁸³²

Yadigar Beg delivered his news to Ferhad, a man working for Haydar Beg, in Üçkilise a village located at the east of Eleşkird.⁸³³ Yadigar's letter to Haydar Beg was written in Persian and the latter sent this letter attached to his own to Kubad Pasha which arrived in Van on 6 September [3 Zi'l-hicce 966]. Yet, the news that were listed in Haydar Beg's own letter were news that were provided to Ferhad via oral communication.⁸³⁴ It is highly indicative that the news items about Prince Bayezid's movements and Safavid officials were presented orally by Yadigar Beg instead of a written document. While his pieces of news were all about Prince Bayezid, one of them was particularly incriminating: the disclosure of Shah Tahmasb's double game. On one

⁸³¹ Şeref Han. *Şerefname: Kürt Tarihi*, trans. Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, İstanbul: Ant Yayınları (1971), p.378.

⁸³² Eleşkird became part of the Ottoman *sancak* system after 1578 after the creation of the *sancak* of Bayezid (a town) when the region became part of Ottoman Empire definitely. Kaya, Hakan. "*Osmanlı-İran Sınırında Bir Serhad Sancağı: Bayezid (1578-1848)*", Hacettepe University, Phd Thesis (2018), p.28

⁸³³ In the eastern border, there were three locations called "Üçkilise" and only one of them was located between Eleşkird and Adilcevaz. I believe the location in the text indicated this particular village which is now called "Taşteker", part of Ağrı Province. On the other hand, a town of religious importance close to Yerevan was also called Üçkilise by the Ottomans (now called Vagharshapat, historically known as Etchmiadzin). Yet this location would put Ferhad in proximity to the Safavids more than the abovementioned village, hence I tend to believe they have met in abovementioned Taşteker village instead of Vagharshapat. <https://nisanyanyeradlari.com/>

⁸³⁴ "Budur ki bazı kullarımız ibakat etmekle Eleşkirt beyi olan Yadigar beye işbu ademimiz Ferhad bendeleri irsâl olunmuşdu. Mezkûr Yadigar beyden Üçkilise nâm mahalden ayrılıp mektubun getürüp ve mezkurun ağız cevabın nakl edip..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0701_0029.

hand the Shah was assuring Süleyman I that he would do nothing against his royal consent while on the other he was making arrangements to receive Prince Bayezid with a royal pomp, charging his high-ranking officials to supervise his journey through several major Safavid towns including Nakhichevan and Tabriz.⁸³⁵

Therefore, Yadigar Beg was probably wary of possible outcomes: the letter could have fallen into wrong hands while travelling and/or could have been exploited as a leverage he could not refute which would reveal his role as an intermediary who exposed sensitive information about the ruler to whom he owed his allegiance. The Safavid governor of *Sa'd Çukur Şahkulu Sultan* who exchanged numerous letters with governor-general of Erzurum Mustafa Pasha from late 1559 onwards, also used a similar method to transmit news to the Ottomans. At the end of one of his letters that were sent on late May 1560, he insinuated that Mustafa Pasha should question Mustafa çavuş, who carried the letter from Şahkulu Sultan, for “oral news”.⁸³⁶ The news Mustafa Pasha was most interested in was about Prince Bayezid’s recent imprisonment and apparently Şahkulu Sultan abstained to put the real reason into writing due to his allegiance to Shah Tahmasb.

In his oral news transmission, Yadigar Beg also told Ferhad that Safavid officials were highly fearful of Prince Bayezid’s presence. They thought that Bayezid would continue his march and attack either Baghdad or Shirvan with his army, the first would be a serious jeopardy to the treaty. This piece of news showed that officials of both empires concurred in their fears of Prince Bayezid’s potential destinations which in turn suggested that these locations were plausible deductions based on the current political situation. Furthermore, it also indicated that news (or rumours) of these destinations were possibly circulated between two empires demonstrating the existence of a valid news network utilizing men like Yadigar Beg. On the other hand, the question remains about Yadigar Beg and in what manner he had access to the abovementioned discreet information which was mostly about the nascent Safavid strategy about Prince Bayezid situation. The second letter penned by Kubad Pasha reveals the way in which the Yadigar Beg was able to obtain the said information.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ “...Mustafa Şahkulu Sultana gönderilmiş idi ol dahi Şahkulu Sultandan mektub getürdü lâkin bu tafsil ol mektubda mastûr olmayub heman mektubun zeylinde bazı ağız haberlerin nakl mektubdan suâl idesiz deyü işâret olunmağın merkûm Mustafa’dan ağız haberleri suâl olundukda heman kendü takrir arz olunub...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0069.

Kubad Pasha's letter affirmed that he employed other Ottoman officials to procure more news from the "far side" [*öte canib*] i.e. Safavid lands, one of them being Hacı Hüsrev Beg, the governor of Erciş, who dispatched a spy across the border. This man arrived in Van on 1 September 1559 [28 Zi'l-ka'de 966] and relayed the news about the camp of Prince Bayezid. In his account, the said camp was found in Sharur [Şerur], a location between Yerevan and Nakhichevan. Several Safavid officials were tasked to supervise Prince Bayezid and his forces, the latter group were deeply unsettled about their situation with many deserting as a result. Yadigar Beg's name was among the names of Safavid officials provided by the spy.⁸³⁷ Hence, Yadigar was an eyewitness to the events taking place in the camp while also being privy to the abovementioned information, making his pieces of news more accurate.

On the same day with the spy above, a certain Mehmed arrived in Van after fleeing from the camp and relayed the ongoing situation to Kubad Pasha. This Mehmed was a servant to Yahya Subaşı, who belonged to Prince Bayezid's "rebel forces". Hence, he was an inside man providing another eyewitness account. In his letter, Kubad Pasha stated that the two accounts - anonymous spy and fugitive Mehmed-correlated each other. Thus, he sent this Mehmed to the capital with a *çavuş*, presumably to be interrogated further.⁸³⁸ All of these pieces of news - eyewitness accounts of Yadigar Beg, the spy and Mehmed- were forwarded with the same man to the capital. This testified to the complex system of verifying different sets of news gathered by informants who belonged to diverse social, ethnic and professional backgrounds, none of whose narratives were deemed trustworthy on their own by the highest authority in this case: Kubad Pasha, who used cross-examination to verify the news. This example also set the tone of the informants mainly involved in procuring news about Prince Bayezid in the second phase of his exile: Ottoman and Safavid officials, semi-autonomous Kurdish leaders and eyewitnesses involving numerous anonymous spies and servants of Prince Bayezid.

⁸³⁷ "...kızılbaşdan İlyavud İbrahim Bey ve Yadigâr Bey ve Nazar Sultan ve Şah kulu Sultan bâgî askerinin ihâta eyleyüp kendüyü orta yere kondurup çadırından gaybet etmek ihmâlinden şikâr bahanesiyle her gün kendüyü bindirip görürlermiş ve ademleri her gün firâr edüp yollara kızılbaş iki yüz adem koyup firâr eden ademlerin katl edüp esbâbların alırlarmış" (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0701_0029.

⁸³⁸ "yevm-i mezbûre bâgî ademlerinden Yahya subaşının Mehmed nâm hizmetkârı firâr edüp Van'a gelüp haber suâl olunduk da kelimâtı câsus-u mezbûr haberine muvâfık olmagın bi-nefsîhî Van çavuşlarıyla ol cânibe irsâl olundu" Ibid.

(2) The Informants on the Border: Servants, Soldiers, Kurds and Spies

(a) Spying During time of Peace

The intelligence operation of Kubad Pasha re-affirmed one of the most crucial points of gathering and circulating news during times of crisis: the dependence on various intermediaries. It was evident in the numerous imperial orders that was dispatched to him, one of Kubad Pasha's primary responsibilities was to select and oversee "trustworthy men". He could choose them among his gubernatorial household or entrusted the task to other Ottoman officials under his jurisdiction. Most importantly, in the array of men under his employ, many were openly called "spies" (*câsus*) in the *arz* that were sent by Kubad Pasha. This existence of "spies" contrasted with the fact that none of the informants who were tasked to collect intelligence on Prince Bayezid during his time in Amasya were called "spies" even though their endeavours were in the spectrum of espionage.

In fact, available documents showed that the word "spy" was used only once during the first phase of the struggle between the two princes. It was used in a letter by Prince Bayezid dated late November 1558 when he was journeying while Prince Selim was still in Bursa. Bayezid wrote to his father about the actions taken by his brother Selim as the latter accused certain men in Bursa of being "Bayezid's spies" and imprisoned them.⁸³⁹ Hearing about these events, Prince Bayezid demanded the release of these men whom he claimed were "innocent Muslims" imprisoned because of his brother's baseless fears about him. While acknowledging several of these men as his commercial agents, Prince Bayezid claimed not to be acquainted with most of them. For example, he denied any association with a particular Ottoman official named Karakoçoğlu or other merchants imprisoned for being "Bayezid's spies".⁸⁴⁰

During same months, two separate incidents in Balıkesir and Bursa were reported in a letter written by Sokullu Mehmed Pasha. These incidents could easily be considered espionage attempts as both involved two men trying to infiltrate Prince Selim's forces to gather intelligence. Notably, the incident in Balıkesir involved a *çavuş* who "confessed" to being

⁸³⁹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0753_0039_006.

⁸⁴⁰ "...Karakoçoğlu Alaiye alaybegisini İstanbul'a götürün sorun görün bilâ-sebeb nice dutmuşlardır benim ademim sanmışlardır imdi nice bu asıl nâ-hak yire Müslümânları habs edüb kanlarına girmişlerdir vallah billah benim asla Karakoçoğlu ne asıl adem idiğini bilmezüm âşinâlığım yokdur Burusa'da nice bâzergânları da dutmuşsuz Bayezid'in câsusuz deyü..." Ibid.

employed by Prince Bayezid to spy on Prince Selim. This man stated that after failing to get a *tumar* in the province of Van, he joined Prince Bayezid's ranks for better payment. In exchange, he was expected to come to Bursa, gather news about Selim, and report them.⁸⁴¹ Hence, this incident could be considered a typical example of an espionage attempt. However, the actual words for spy [*câsus*] or spying [*tecessüs*] were not used in the text as opposed to letters written by Prince Bayezid. This situation brought forward several questions. One question was whether the word itself had a negative connotation and it was consciously omitted/added. In that sense, it could mean that Mehmed Pasha cunningly refrained from using it to not implicate Prince Bayezid based on narratives of soldiers, which would have been considered offensive if proved otherwise. In contrast, Prince Bayezid's position allowed him to accuse his brother more openly. While these possibilities are out in the open, other examples from the succession crisis showed that the connotation of this word and its usage depended on the context, as discussed in the first chapter.

Contrary to the period preceding the battle of Konya, documents dated from late 1559 onwards displayed a noticeable increase in the usage of the word "spy". In MD number three, the main for spy, *câsus*, can be found in orders in the Empire's northern, eastern and western borders. However, the imperial orders from the western border outnumbered the other two.⁸⁴² There were examples from the Ottoman provinces of Buda [Budin], Mohács [Mohaç], Bosnia [Bosna] and Timișoara [Temeșvar] from which the governors of the said regions exchanged spies across the Habsburg border to gather news which ranged from bandits, border skirmishes to royal marriages.⁸⁴³ While some were declared "our spies" [*câsuslarımız*]; there was no bias against any of the people involved as all were an essential part of the news circulation around the border regions.

In the case of the eastern border, there were two instances of the *spy* in the imperial orders, one directed to Mustafa Pasha and the other to Kubad Pasha.⁸⁴⁴ The order to the latter involved "wicked men" [*eşirrâ*] who passed into Safavid lands to join the "rebellion", possibly alluding to the ones who travelled to join the army of Prince Bayezid. This news was transmitted to the Porte via Mustafa Pasha, who received it from an informant who arrived from the Safavid

⁸⁴¹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0073.

⁸⁴² For the usage in the northern provinces: (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 954.

⁸⁴³ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 516, 1210; 702, 1153; 1305; 1208.

⁸⁴⁴ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1039; 1138.

border.⁸⁴⁵ While this man was openly called a *câsus*, in MD number three, none of the men sent across the border about Prince Bayezid were called that. Instead, officials sent “capable men” [*yarar adem*] across the border, which was a rather generic phrase used for men who were considered capable enough to execute essential tasks demanded by the Porte such as escorting the ambassadors, being couriers for officials as well as being tasked with protecting borders.⁸⁴⁶

Additionally, another quality that was sought in men who were specifically charged with accumulating information “beyond the border” was trustworthiness which was expressed by the phrase “*mu’temedün-aleyh ademler*” [trustworthy men] that was frequently used alongside with “*yarar adem*”.⁸⁴⁷ Similarly, in the order sent to the governor-general of Timișoara [Temeșvar] Kasım Pasha on 5 June 1560, the same adjective was also used to indicate the trustworthiness of the spies [*mu’temedün-aleyh câsuslar*] who were dispatched to the “enemy lands” [*adû cânibine*], i.e. lands belonged to Habsburgs to gather more intelligence on the movements of the army of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I.⁸⁴⁸ Hence, this suggests that whether called spies or not, the informants were required to be capable and trustworthy so that the news they brought would be deemed credible. Furthermore, these terms were not specific to the Ottoman context. They were close to the expressions such as “*homo pratico*” or “*homo prudente*” that were employed by the Venetian officials to define the capabilities of informants who were not strictly under the permanent government contract.⁸⁴⁹

This discussion further proved the two points discussed during the chapter on the Siege of Rhodes: Throughout the sixteenth century, the “spy” remained an ambiguous term, and spying was not a profession *per se*.⁸⁵⁰ Another point in the first case study was also valid for the Bayezid affair: it was more convenient for certain professions to incline towards espionage due to access to specific environments or existing social contacts that were useful for information

⁸⁴⁵ “Hâliyâ Erzurum beglerbegisi mektûb gönderüp öte cânibden câsûs gelüp Van cânibinden üç yüzden ziyâde eşirrä isyân iden tâ’ifeye varup mülâki olup...” (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3,1039.

⁸⁴⁶ For those who were tasked with escorting the Safavid embassy during their journey through Anatolia (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3,653, 654, 668, 763; for those tasked as couriers, see 769; for border protection, 334.

⁸⁴⁷ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 413, 458, 477.

⁸⁴⁸ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1028.

⁸⁴⁹ Iordanou, “What News on the Rialto?”, p.320; Also see chapter II.

⁸⁵⁰ Another common word in Ottoman documents that constituted spying was “*dil*,” used for captives exploited as spies. It was a term frequently used in documents during the Siege of Rhodes, and four decades after, it continued to be strictly associated with conditions of conflict such as war and border skirmishes, unlike *casus*. In MD number three, there were two events in which people were called “*dil*”: the combined Circassian/Tatar/Russian attacks on the province of Caffa since the Spring of 1559 and the naval battle of Djerba [Cerbe] in May 1560. For the orders regarding Caffa: (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 305; 961; 1265; 1390; for the orders regarding Djerba: (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 878; 1268, 1504.

gathering.⁸⁵¹ One group that was common in both case studies was merchants. In the case of the Siege of Rhodes, there was an example of Turkish merchants acting as informants for the Knights of Rhodes regarding the conditions of the Ottoman army just before the beginning of the Siege.⁸⁵² Similarly, in the Bayezid affair, there were several instances of merchants acting as “informants/spies”, such as the two merchants from Bursa who were asked to come to Amasya in order to relocate the intelligence gathered by Prince Selim’s servant who could not leave the city or travelling merchants who brought back news to Sokullu Mehmed Pasha about Prince Bayezid who had already passed the border.⁸⁵³ In that sense, it would not be wrong to call the members of the gubernatorial household who already held positions in provincial bureaucracy “spies” when they were gathering intelligence on behalf of their masters. However, as seen in Kubad Pasha’s operation, the specific group of people who were most involved in the amassing information beyond the border were members of the Kurdish tribes, such as Yadigar Beg.

(b) The Kurdish Espionage

The position of Yadigar Beg was not atypical for a border region such as the aforementioned locations- towns of Van, Adilcevaz and Eleşkird- were found. These areas frequently changed hands during the first half of the sixteenth century when this region became a “frontier”. One of the main powerholders of these regions was local Kurdish clans. Following the Battle of Çaldıran in 1514, which paved the way for developing Ottoman strategy for eastern lands, the Porte’s primary policy to ensure the loyalty of these frontier clans was to grant a certain degree of autonomy to them if they swore fealty to the Sultan and collaborate against the Safavids in case of war.⁸⁵⁴ The degree of this autonomy was prone to change due to several factors, such as the internal strength of the clan or proximity to ever-changing borders before the Treaty of Amasya.⁸⁵⁵ Hence, depending on the importance of their location, the Ottoman Empire had chosen to switch to direct rule by establishing the *sancak* system or opted for semi-direct rule

⁸⁵¹ Gürkan, "The Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence", p. 17

⁸⁵² Sanudo 33: 362

⁸⁵³ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0858_0091_001; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0074

⁸⁵⁴ Şeref Han, *Şerefname*, pp.374-75; Özoğlu, Hakan. “State-Tribe Relations: Kurdish Tribalism in the 16th and 17th Century Ottoman Empire” in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 23, No. 1 (1996), pp. 17-19. Yadırgı, Veli. *The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic*, Cambridge University Press (2016), p. 65-66.

⁸⁵⁵ Özoğlu, State-Tribe Relations, p. 20.

by allowing the authority to stay with the ruling Kurdish dynasties via the application of “yurtluk-ocaklık” system. This system allowed the local dynasties to remain in power as rulers of their lands as *sancakbegs*. This title was passed onto their families in a hereditary way, unlike appointed *sancakbegs*. Nevertheless, these men were also subjected to a governor-general to whom their obedience was expected.⁸⁵⁶ The 1555 peace treaty introduced further changes to the existing system in Eastern Anatolia as the Ottoman Empire emphasised repudiating “border transgressions”. This policy would limit the manoeuvrability of the Kurdish clans, whose lands usually overlapped two empires, as the “border” was a vague term.⁸⁵⁷

However, none of these changes meant that this region was immediately transformed into a singular entity where social roles, allegiances and interests had become one-sided. Kurdish leaders were prone to use their station to their advantage, switching allegiances or playing to both sides to better negotiate their position.⁸⁵⁸ For example, in September 1559, the correspondence between the Porte and the third vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, stationed in Diyarbakır, demonstrated the sensitive policies regarding certain Kurdish leaders. In his report, Mehmed Pasha commented on an order issued on 4 September 1559 regarding the Kurdish emirate of Bradost [Bıradost], which ruled over a region that stretched on both Ottoman and Safavid lands.⁸⁵⁹ After the death of its founder, Yusuf Beg c.1543-44, known by his epithet Gazi Kıran (or Kazıkkıran), who pledged to Selim I following the Battle of Çaldıran, the lands remained in the family’s rule yet were divided into two.⁸⁶⁰ The abovementioned order changed the rule of certain districts of this emirate within the members of the same family.⁸⁶¹ Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, although distrustful of these Kurdish lords due to their questionable loyalty to the Sultan, advised that in order to sustain the help of their overlord Şah Mehmed Beg and his son during this “time of need” it was better not to make any changes in the rule of the region as

⁸⁵⁶ This system could also be found in the Balkan regions such as Bosnia. Yet in case of eastern Anatolia, some of these lands were called “ülkelik” (or hükümet) which allowed the leader of the clan to stay exempt from the Ottoman tax system [*tahrir*] and keep all income to himself while those with “ocaklık” were subjected to *tahrir* and *tumar* system. Saito, Kumiko. “Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Yurtluk ve Ocaklık, Ülkelik, Eyalet ve Hükümet Terimleri Üzerine” in *Osmanlı Devlet’inde Yurtluk-Ocaklık ve Hükümet Sancaklar*, edited by Erdal Çiftçi, Veysel Gürhan, Mehmet Rezan Ekinci, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları (2022), pp. 85-86; Kılıç, Orhan. “Ocaklık”, *İA*, Vol. 33, 2007, pp. 317-18.

⁸⁵⁷ Özçoşar, İbrahim. “Sultan ve Mir: Osmanlı Kürt İlişkilerine Giriş” in *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kürtler* edited by İbrahim Özçoşar and Shahab Vali, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi (2017), p. 25-26.

⁸⁵⁸ Özoğlu, State-Tribe Relations, p.26.

⁸⁵⁹ See Map.

⁸⁶⁰ Dehqan, Mustafa and Genç, Vural. “The Kurdish Emirate of Brādöst, 1510-1609,” *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. 99, No:3 (2019), pp. 310-11; 312-16. Pelister, İsmail Naci. (Doktor Friç). *Kürdler: Tarihi ve İçtimai Tedkikat*, (çev: Tuba Akekmekçi), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı (2014), pp.150-154.

⁸⁶¹ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 233, 273.

it would nullify the “grants” [*istimâlet*] that were provided to entice them to join Ottoman forces.⁸⁶²⁸⁶³ It was clear that the Porte needed these local lords to keep the border secure. Hence, providing grants to this particular family enabled Ottoman officials to remain prepared in case of Prince Bayezid’s arrival to these lands on the way to the province of Baghdad, where they feared the Prince would attack.⁸⁶⁴ Ultimately, the succession crisis presented an opportunity for Şah Mehmed Beg and his son Budak to negotiate their positions *vis a vis* their immediate family members, such as Şah Mehmed Beg’s brother Ali. Hence most of these local powerholders continued to juggle two sides in order to ensure their survival which was further facilitated by the flexible political structure of the region.

More importantly, documents regarding the region, also known as “Kurdistan”, showed that Kurdish local lords played a vital role in the intelligence-gathering activities for both sides from the early sixteenth century onwards.⁸⁶⁵ For example, the abovementioned Yadigar Beg was also referenced in Shah Tahmasb’s account as a supplier of news regarding Prince Bayezid. Immediately after the Battle of Konya, Shah tasked him to send spies to investigate Bayezid’s situation. Later, in August 1559, he notified the Shah of Bayezid’s arrival at the border.⁸⁶⁶ The Ottoman and Safavid Empires valued the espionage activities of the Kurdish emirs due to their knowledge of the frontier zone, competence in several languages and access to both courts.⁸⁶⁷ This was an old practice as these semi-autonomous local lords were expected to provide more than forces. For example, after joining the Ottoman side, the abovementioned Gazikıran Yusuf Beg acted as a negotiator and a source of information on Safavids, which was welcomed by the Ottoman officials of the time.⁸⁶⁸

There were already examples of men of Kurdish descent being used as informants by Ottoman officials when Prince Bayezid was in Amasya during the initial phase of the succession crisis. In a document discussed in the previous chapter, a man known as “Mahmud the Kurd” and a certain Davud Beg who was granted lands in Medine worked as informants. These men were

⁸⁶² Ibid. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0006.

⁸⁶³ This was an example of “*istimalet*” as a “policy of carrot” via providing grants/permissions to local powerbrokers in order to entice them to support the Ottoman forces. Kolovos, “*Istimalet*”, pp. 62-63.

⁸⁶⁴ See map.

⁸⁶⁵ Dehqan, Mustafa and Genç, Vural. “Kurds as Spies: Information-gathering on the 16th Century Ottoman-Safavid Frontier”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 71, No:2 (2018), pp. 197-230.

⁸⁶⁶ Mohammednâjed, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri (1482-1576)*, pp.460-61.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 200-203.

⁸⁶⁸ Bacqué-Grammont, Jacques Louis. “Etudes Turco-Safavides, XIV. Quatre Lettres de Bıyıklı Mehmed Paşa”, *Bulleten*, Vol.56 (1992), pp. 707, 717.

necessary due to their access to Kurdish clans and their ability to gather inside information regarding the approach these clans would assume towards Prince Bayezid. Furthermore, the same document also demonstrated the extent of their access and why both Ottomans and Safavids actively sought to use their intelligence-gathering means for themselves.

In the latter part of the document, it was evident that Rüstem Pasha's man Mahmud was in touch with the son of Şeref Han (d.1533), the former Kurdish ruler of the region of Bitlis who was allied with the Ottomans after the battle of Çaldıran but then defected to the Safavids during Nachkcivan Campaign of 1533-35.⁸⁶⁹ Sometime before the events of the succession crisis, this son -possibly Şemseddin, who remained in the Safavid lands until his death- sought to regain his hereditary lands and got in touch with Mahmud for this very aim.⁸⁷⁰ After the death of Şemseddin, his son Şeref Han II, who would later become famous for his work *Şerefname* which narrated the history of Kurdish families, also started a correspondence with the same Mahmud in 1559. Even though he dismissed Şemseddin's claim then, Mahmud promised Şerefeddin Han his ancestral lands in return for showing allegiance to Prince Bayezid. Furthermore, he arranged a meeting with his man in Diyarbakır, bringing gifts from the Prince. This event was possibly a machination designed by the grand vizier to gain evidence of Bayezid's "scheming" with Kurdish clans, who became outraged with Rüstem Pasha and Mahmud.

Apart from showing the thin ice these clans had to tread upon to survive the region's politics, this event also proved the degree of political reach a regular man could possess. In Mahmud's case, it ranged from the highest-ranking bureaucrat in the Ottoman Palace towards another high-ranking member of the Safavid court, Şeref Han, who was educated as a member of the palace elite and gained influential positions within the Safavid bureaucracy.⁸⁷¹ This brings several questions: Was Mahmud employed because of his existing networks? Or did he attain the access he had due to his patron, the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, who already possessed a rather extensive and effective network of informants, as was discussed in the previous section? The

⁸⁶⁹ Bajalan, Djene Rhys. "Şeref Han's Sharafname: Kurdish Ethno-Politics in the Early Modern World, Its Meaning and Its Legacy," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 45, No: 6, 2012, p.800-801.

⁸⁷⁰ "Şeref begün oğlu varmış zamaniyla Kürd Mahmud'a mektub göndermiş anda varmağa murâd idinirüm ne dirsın dimiş Kürd Mahmud ana haber göndermiş gelürsen amma yerünü vermezler dimiş Bitlis'i murâd edünür imiş..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0076.

⁸⁷¹ Özgüdenli, Osman Gazi. "Şeref Han", *İA*, Vol. 38, p. 548; Yamaguchi, Akihiko. "Shah Tahmasb's Kurdish Policy", *Studia Iranica* Vol. 41, No:1 (2012), p.103.

answer to these questions is a chicken and egg situation as it developed interchangeably. Then comes the following questions: How effective were the Kurdish spy networks? Did Ottomans trust them completely? The correspondence from a particular episode in the succession crisis might answer all these questions.

(c) An Imprisoned Prince and the News Network

In April 1560, Shah Tahmasb made a dire move: he ordered the imprisonment of Prince Bayezid and his sons, his possessions were plundered while his closest men were executed.⁸⁷²⁸⁷³ This perplexing news was first mentioned in a report by Prince Selim, which was sent to the capital from his seat, Konya, around mid-May 1560. Unsurprisingly, Selim first read this news from a letter from Kubad Pasha, whose border espionage continued to work smoothly. As the standard procedure, Prince Selim repeated the order he received from the Porte, who demanded more news from Kubad Pasha and Kurdish lords. As an answer, Prince Selim advised the governor-general of Erzurum Mustafa Pasha and Kurdish lords that they should urgently gather *any news* with their spies.⁸⁷⁴ Evidently, the Porte considered the espionage activities of the Kurdish lords as crucial as the news flow provided by the two most critical Ottoman officials responsible for managing information from “the other side”: Mustafa and Kubad Pashas. Already enjoying an active correspondence with Kurdish lords, another *arz* from Kubad Pasha further exhibited his practice of employing Kurdish spies and the access level these men possessed. In a report, he sent a Kurdish man named Abdal who hailed from Hizan, a location under the jurisdiction of the governor-general of Van by 1559, to Qazvin.⁸⁷⁵ This Abdal was sent in secret [*hufyeten*]

⁸⁷² (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059; For the detailed account of events: Turan, *Taht Kavgalari*, p.123-25.

⁸⁷³ Solakzade (d.1658), a seventeenth century historian, stated that Prince Bayezid’s imprisonment date was 14 February 1560. Solakzade utilized another chronicler of seventeenth century Hasanbeyzade Ahmed Pasha (d.1636) who in turn used various sixteenth century sources to write about the reign of Süleyman I. However, contemporary primary documents, both Ottoman and Italian, suggested that Prince Bayezid was imprisoned in April 1560, hence I disregard the February date. Mehmet Hemdemi Çelebi Solakzade, *Solakzade Tarihi*, Haz: Dr. Vahit Çabuk, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, (1989), pp. 283-86.

⁸⁷⁴ “Arzurum beglerbegisi kullarına ve ümerâ ekrada câsuslarınız ne haber getürdülse muaccelen arz idüp birbirine müteâkib câsuslar göndermekden hâlî olmayasın deyü tenebbüh olundu...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0760_0016.

⁸⁷⁵ Due to its location as a border province, the *sancaks* of the province of Van were subject to change more frequently than other provinces. Hizan was not listed as a *sancak* of Van in the records showing the administrative units of the province between 1558 and 1576. Nevertheless, in the orders dated from 1565, Hizan was counted among the *sancaks* of Van. Furthermore, in MD number three, an order issued to the governor-general of Diyarbakir İskender Pasha on 22 August 1559 put the Kurdish ruler of Hizan Sultan Ahmed under the jurisdiction of the governor-general of Van, which proved that Kubad Pasha was the one responsible for the local population

as opposed to an Ottoman *çavuş* sent alongside a servant of Kubad Pasha who went to Safavid lands publicly [*alâniyeten*] in order to confirm the news.⁸⁷⁶ When these Ottoman officials reached Tabriz on the way to Qazvin, Abdal was already returning from the Safavid capital and met with them. The pieces of news he carried must have been considered substantial hence, instead of continuing their way to Qazvin, Ottoman officials returned to Van where Abdal narrated what he had learned regarding Prince Bayezid's imprisonment to Kubad Pasha, who sent him to the capital to be interrogated further.⁸⁷⁷

Kurdish espionage was not only carried out by the initiative of the Ottoman officials, the Kurdish lords of the region managed it as was seen in Yadigar Beg's case. In Prince Bayezid Affair, two influential Kurdish *emirs* stood out: the ruler of İmadiye Sultan Hüseyin and the ruler of Hakkari Zeynel Beg, as both operated lucrative espionage rings. Among these two, Zeynel Beg was a particularly well-known figure within the Ottoman high circles as for decades he was mentioned in Ottoman sources for his regional politics and efficient intelligence system.⁸⁷⁸ A descendant of a prestigious family that had been ruling the region of Hakkari for several centuries, Zeynel Beg became the sole ruler of the said region in 1552 with permission of the Porte after a period of interfamilial struggle with his uncle and his brother who were both supported by Shah Tahmasb.⁸⁷⁹⁸⁸⁰ He remained a loyal ally of the Ottomans until his death in 1585, apart from an earlier episode in 1533-34 when his loyalties shifted towards Safavids.⁸⁸¹ Most importantly he immediately established (or re-activated an existing one) an effective spy network that was evident in orders from 1553.⁸⁸² The trust Ottomans shown to him was evident in the orders from 1578 which were directed to *qadis* of the Anatolian towns when Zeynel Beg's

there and utilised local men as spies. Kılıç, Orhan. *Doğu Serhaddinin Kilidi Van 16.- 18. Yüzyıllar*, Van Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür ve Sanat Yayınları, 2021, pp. 124-25; (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 234.

⁸⁷⁶ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0575_0028_001.

⁸⁷⁷ "...Van'a gelmeğın tafsilî üzere haber alınmak için mezbur câsus çavuş kullarıyla koşulub Tebriz hakimi gönderdiği mektub ile südde-i aliyye irsâl olundu..." Ibid.

⁸⁷⁸ Dehqan, Mustafa and Genç, Vural. "Kurdish Emirs in the 16th-Century Ruus Registers", *Der Islam*, Vol.96, No:1 (2019), pp. 103-104.

⁸⁷⁹ While Hakkari is the name of the town and the province today, during the sixteenth century, it was only the name of the region whose borders were more extended than the borders of the contemporary province. The sixteenth-century borders stretched out from the south of Lake Van, encompassing the mountainous region in the south. Furthermore, the town where the rulers of the region resided was known as Çölemerik [also written as Cülâmerik, Cülûmerik, Çelemerik] in the Ottoman sources. Tuncel, Metin. "Hakkari", *İA*, Vol. 15, pp. 205-207.

⁸⁸⁰ Şeref Han, *Şerefname*, pp.118-120.

⁸⁸¹ Dehqan, Mustafa and Genç, Vural. "In Search of Allegiance: Shah Tahmâsp's Communication with Zaynal Bayg of Hakkârî", *Archiv Orientalni*, Vol. 87, no:3 (2019), pp.415-420.

⁸⁸² Dehqan, Mustafa and Genç, Vural. "Kurds as Spies", p. 212.

men were granted passage towards Istanbul so that they could carry the intelligence he acquired directly to the capital, an act that was not granted easily due to the fear of infiltration of spies.⁸⁸³

Therefore, it was no surprise that the Porte made use of Zeynel Beg's espionage networks during the Bayezid Affair. In late September 1559 Sokullu Mehmed Pasha stated that a servant of Zeynel Beg named Adi was already dispatched to the capital carrying news regarding Prince Bayezid.⁸⁸⁴ Instead of transmitting his news to the governor-general of Van to whom he was subjected to, Zeynel Beg corresponded with the highest authority in the region Mehmed Pasha who considered his news essential enough to be send directly to the capital. A year later in September 1560, Kubad Pasha received an outraged order from the Porte reprimanding him for his lack of "correct news" and commanded him to acquire news regarding Prince Bayezid and Safavids without any delay to which no excuse would be accepted.⁸⁸⁵ The copy of the same order was also dispatched to Zeynel Beg with the same *çavuş*, indicating the same level of expectancy from Zeynel in acquiring news "beyond the border".⁸⁸⁶ Another example of Zeynel Beg's intelligence gathering activities took place at the very end of the Bayezid affair after the Prince and his family's execution took place in July 1562 at Qazvin. Pertev Pasha who was tasked to deliver the gifts and money to Shah Tahmasb transmitted the detailed news about execution and transportation of the royal bodies carried out by Husrev Pasha via two separate letters of governor-general of Mustafa Pasha and Zeynel Beg.⁸⁸⁷

The other Kurdish lord who had a similar position with Zeynel Beg was Sultan Hüseyin. Ruler of a crucial border zone İmadiye which lies south of Hakkari, Sultan Hüseyin was also frequently mentioned in the imperial orders in regards to keeping the border zone secure as well as implementing orders the Porte issued on Kurdish tribal matters including keeping pace within different tribes or preventing mass excursions to the Safavid lands.⁸⁸⁸ A respected figure within

⁸⁸³ Ibid. p. 212.

⁸⁸⁴ "ve kızılbaş ve bâgî tarafından ne haber aldın ve memleket hali ve askeri hali nedir ve kızılbaş tarafına câsus eksik etmeyesün her ne habere vâkîf isen bildiresin İskender paşa ile müşâvereden hâlî olmayasun deyü buyurulmuş bundan evvel südde-i saâdete irsâl olunan Zeynel bey ademisi Adi nam kimesneden..." (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0006

⁸⁸⁵ "Buyurdum ki: Bu def'a vusûl budukda teyakkuz u intibâh üzre olup her ne tarîkla olursa öte cânibin ahvâl ü etvârından ve fikr ü firâsetlerinden sahîh haber alup mu'accelen i'lâm idesin. Bu husûsı sâ'ir umûra kıyâs itmeyüp gaflet üzre olmayup emrüm üzre bu def'a sahîh haber alup bildüresin. Şöyle ki, girü sahîh haber alup bildürmeysin, özrün makbûl olmaz; bilmiş olasin." (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1559

⁸⁸⁶ (BOA), [A.DVNS.MHM.d], No: 3, 1559/a

⁸⁸⁷ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0759_0062

⁸⁸⁸ For example, in an order dated 31 August 1559 [27 Zilkade 966], the Porte charged Sultan Hüseyin to take care the abovementioned case of the handover of lands of Şah Mehmed Beg to his brother Ali. Sultan Hüseyin was to ensure the process went smoothly, and in case of Şah Mehmed Beg or his son's insubordination he was to capture

the Kurdish tribes with connections all over the border zone, Sultan Hüseyin also acted as a source of information regarding the Safavid lands and Prince Bayezid. Therefore, when the prince was imprisoned, he reported on the current situation as was expected of him.⁸⁸⁹

Sultan Hüseyin's letter presented one of the earlier accounts of the event, written on 14 June 1560 and arrived in the capital along with the letter of Ebubekir Beg, the governor of Şehrizor as *çavuş* Mehmed carried both letters indicating a connected route.⁸⁹⁰ Sultan Hüseyin resorted to his espionage network as he openly remarked sending his "capable spies" [*yarar câsuslarız*] across the border to acquire "fresh news" [*haber-i cedid*] the Porte demanded of him.⁸⁹¹ On the other hand, Ebubekir Beg's district Şehrizor was a region at the border of Safavid Persia, which enabled the governor to be well-informed about the ongoing situation.⁸⁹² The simultaneity of the reports made a unique case for comparing their contents as both addressed the same issue: Prince Bayezid's imprisonment. Although they narrated on the same topic, their content *did* differ in terms of the details. For example, both reports affirmed the news of Bayezid's imprisonment, yet Ebubekir Beg added information about the imprisonment of the Prince's two sons.⁸⁹³ In contrast, Sultan Hüseyin delivered the dates of Bayezid's imprisonment with no mention of his sons.⁸⁹⁴ Moreover, both accounts concurred that Bayezid's soldiers were executed, yet their wording differed. Ebubekir Beg wrote that "his soldiers were all executed" [*askeri külliyyen kılıçdan geçirilip*]. In contrast, Sultan Hüseyin stated that "his men were killed" [*ademlerini kırıp*], which could imply Prince Bayezid's inner circle, the more problematic of the two groups in the eyes of the Porte.⁸⁹⁵ Furthermore, Ebubekir Beg added that Pir Hacıoğlu

and execute them. (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 273. For an example of the order that required his collaboration in keeping the peace of the border (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1168

⁸⁸⁹ In MD number three, there was no order dated from spring 1560 that was directed to Sultan Hüseyin, yet a latter order from 16 October 1560 indicated the Porte expected regular news flow from him. (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1600.

⁸⁹⁰ Şehrizor was a district [*sancak*] located in northern Iraq, which the Ottomans conquered during the eastern campaign of 1533-34. However, the Ottoman rule was consolidated following the 1554 Nakhichevan campaign after several years of subordination caused by the Kurdish ruler of the region who changed his allegiance to Shah Tahmasb as soon as he came to rule. This region was also called Şehrizur, Şehrezur, Şehrizol, Şehrezul and Şehrizul in the Ottoman sources. Gündüz, Ahmet. "Şehrizor", *İA*, Vol. 38, p. 474.

⁸⁹¹ BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059.

⁸⁹² The seat of the governor during the reign of Süleyman I was at the castle of Zalm which was located in the southeast of contemporary Suleymaniyah in Iraq. Koç, Hasan. "Osmanlı Döneminde Şehrizorun Yönetim Merkezleri: Zalim ve Gülanber Kaleleri", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 33, No: 56 (2014), pp. 194-201

⁸⁹³ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0049.

⁸⁹⁴ The dates of imprisonment were given as the last 10 days of the month of Receb [*Receb ayının evâhinde*] which corresponded to 16-26 April 1560. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059.

⁸⁹⁵ For example, in early September 1559, Kubad Pasha's asked former servant Mehmed about the situation in Bayezid's camp wondering about the behaviour of Prince's entourage. The said Mehmed stated that certain Turkoman groups (Karamanlı and Turgudlu) were impertinent towards Prince Bayezid and fought with Safavid soldiers calling them "heathens" [*melâhide*]. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0701_0029.

Budak Sheikh, a Kurdish lord who was a member of Bayezid's entourage, was thrown in prison. At the same time, Sultan Hüseyin did not mention the said follower or any of Bayezid's inner circle.⁸⁹⁶

These nuances pointed towards several outcomes. First of all, although the primary content of the news was essentially the same [the imprisonment], the contribution of different informants created a variety of details regarding the news due to the different levels of access these informants possessed. For example, as seen above, Kubad Pasha's various informants and his incessant efforts to gather news due to the Porte's pressure made him the first to report on the news of imprisonment. Nevertheless, the content he provided in both of his letters, dated May and Summer of 1560, remained the same: "Prince Bayezid was imprisoned, and his men were slaughtered", which were already sent to the capital for three times as stated in his later dated letter.⁸⁹⁷ Similar to Kubad Pasha, governor-general of Baghdad Ferhad Pasha reported nothing new on the issue in his *arz* dated 08 July 1560 even though he sent men to gather news and also located in a closer proximity to the Safavid border similar to abovementioned Ebubekir Beg with whom he worked closely.⁸⁹⁸⁸⁹⁹

On the other hand, letters of Mustafa Pasha, dated May and September of 1560, presented certain details on the same issue. In his May letter, he supplied the names of the men (Karaağzılı, Nişancı, Atmacabaşı and Arab Muhammed) who were executed *before* Bayezid's imprisonment, all members of Prince Bayezid's inner circle.⁹⁰⁰ However, in this letter, Mustafa Pasha did not mention any imprisonment; he only stated that Shah Tahmasb gave some advice [*pend u nush*] to Prince Bayezid.⁹⁰¹ In his other letter written nearly six months later, Mustafa Pasha stated that the imprisonment continued, but soon "Bayezid and his son" would be sent somewhere "closer" [*berü canib*] following the festivities for *eid-al adha* which corresponded

⁸⁹⁶ Pir Hacıoğlu Budak Şeyh was mentioned in *Şerefname* as "Hacı Şeyh", son of Budak Beg, the ruler of the Kurdish region of Baban. Budak Beg was also a supporter of Prince Bayezid until the Prince executed him in Kütahya to appease his father. His son Hacı Şeyh continued to serve the Prince and joined his exodus to Safavid Persia. Şeref Han, *Şerefname*, pp.318-19.

⁸⁹⁷ "...bundan akdem Sultan Bayezid habs olunub ve adamlari katl olunduğ üç nevbet der-i devletmeâba arz olunub... (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0575_0028_001.

⁸⁹⁸ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0079.

⁸⁹⁹ Ferhad Pasha (known by his epithet Solak) was the governor-general of Baghdad from January 1560 onwards until his death during duty at Baghdad. He was previously the governor-general of Karaman, who was ordered to help Prince Selim with his soldiers just before the battle of Konya. Mehmed Süreyya, "Ferhad Paşa", *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol.2 İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları (1996), p.519; Turan, *Taht Kavgaları*, pp.92-93.

⁹⁰⁰ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0069.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid.

to 1-5 September 1560.⁹⁰² He also added the confirmation of the good health of Shah Tahmasb and his sons possibly due to an inquest by the Porte, who had heard from an eyewitness that Shah was ill right after Bayezid's imprisonment and was not seen by the public for two months.⁹⁰³

Mustafa Pasha's unique advantage over Kubad and other officials involved in gathering information lay in his primary source: Şahkulu Sultan. As a prominent member of the Safavid bureaucracy, Şahkulu Sultan had direct access to Shah Tahmasb and his court, allowing him to obtain information inaccessible to others. Consequently, the news relayed by Mustafa Pasha was not found in any other available reports. Moreover, the absence of any mention of the imprisonment in Mustafa Pasha's letter from late May also sheds light on the dynamics of news distribution among these officials. According to Italian sources, by late May 1560, the knowledge of the imprisonment had already reached the Ottoman capital.⁹⁰⁴ The omission of this particular news suggests that either Şahkulu chose not to disclose it or Mustafa Pasha himself was uncertain about its veracity and opted to exclude it, consistent with the practice of Ottoman officials to withhold news they deemed unreliable.

However, Mustafa Pasha did corroborate with Sultan Hüseyin on one issue: the cause of Shah Tahmasb's actions. Both of their reports indicated that it was Shah Tahmasb's willingness to obey Sultan Süleyman's orders that caused him to kill Bayezid's men and then led to his imprisonment.⁹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Sultan Hüseyin, whose *arz* was written only a few weeks later than Mustafa Pasha's, further added that it was Shah Tahmasb's wish to "strengthen the peace accord" [*istihkâm-i ahd*] between two states that also led him to imprison Bayezid.⁹⁰⁶ This suggests that Sultan Hüseyin also had a certain level of access to the Safavid court which was further proved by the fact that he also reported news regarding events in Tabriz.⁹⁰⁷ This accessibility must have made Sultan Hüseyin invaluable in the eyes of the Ottomans as however

⁹⁰² In this case, I would like to interpret "berü canib" as a location close to the Ottoman border. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0583_0020.

⁹⁰³ Ibid; For the narrative of the eyewitness: (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0057.

⁹⁰⁴ ASF., *Mediceo del Principato* 3079, c. 130; ASF., *MdP*, 2973, c. 138 r.

⁹⁰⁵ Mustafa Pasha's earlier *arz*, dated in late May 1560, dispatched this news. In those days, he was either unaware of the imprisonment and/or had his suspicions yet tried to confirm them before reporting. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0069.

⁹⁰⁶ BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059.

⁹⁰⁷ The governor of Tabriz on par with Shah Tahmasb's order executed some of Bayezid's men while others were imprisoned. Ibid.

an efficient informant Şahkulu Sultan was, he was a Safavid official; therefore, his credibility was questionable.

The second pointed outcome was the possibility of distortion of news during transmission. Discussed in the previous chapter on the Siege of Rhodes, as the information passed along different locations and people, news was more susceptible to distortion due to different input added by new people involved in the circulation.⁹⁰⁸ Is it possible to talk about a similar process here? Unfortunately, the news transmittance was not easily discernible due to lack of documents/information. However, certain points could be recognized via available documents. For example, Mustafa Pasha's (supplied by Şahkulu Sultan) and Sultan Hüseyin's reasoning for the imprisonment and executions seemed to corroborate with Shah Tahmasb's official reasoning indicated in his letter to Süleyman I.⁹⁰⁹

The following section explores news dissemination within two Italian communities, Florentine and Venetian, in the context of Prince Bayezid. This analysis demonstrates how news and rumours about Prince Bayezid were spread, interpreted, and mirrored by political figures outside the Ottoman news network following the onset of the internal crisis in late 1558. Unconstrained by the limitations imposed on Ottoman officials and beyond the reach of the Ottoman news management system, these sources provide insight into various news and rumours circulating in the Ottoman capital and other cities, which may not be found in Ottoman primary sources. The similarities and differences among sources highlight distinct news filtering systems and varying political agendas associated with the aforementioned news and rumours.

⁹⁰⁸ For the Siege of Rhodes, it was “news of defeat of one battle” which had transformed into the “loss of the island of Rhodes” as the news circulated through the island of Chios, and the cities of Genoa and Milan before reaching to Venice. Sanudo 33: 492. See Chapter II.

⁹⁰⁹ For the transliteration of Shah Tahmasb's letter to Süleyman I see Şevik, “Şah Tahmasb (1524-1576) ile Osmanlı Sarayı Arasında Teati edilen Mektupları”, pp. 124-28.

vii) A Quest for the Truth: Examination of Words

(1) Correct News

All imperial orders repeated one essential demand of the Porte: the transmission of “correct news” [*ahbâr-ı sahîha*] instead of “any news”.⁹¹⁰ This emphasis on “correctness” proved the ambiguous nature of news which could be false or true until certified by authorized channels. In that sense, examining the connotation of the words used in these documents provide us the manner in which certain pieces of information was certified, discarded or remained inconclusive.

In every type of document examined for this succession struggle, “haber” remained the most prevalent word to indicate pieces of information that were already out yet not validated or discarded. Instead, in order to demonstrate the nature of the news variety of adjectives were used next to “haber”. For example, for correct news, adjectives such as “sahîh” “asıl” “essah” “sıhhat” were most frequently observed.⁹¹¹ Apart from “asıl”, other three words were interrelated. The words “sahîh” and “essah” both derived from “sıhhat” which had two primary meanings: “truth” and “health”.⁹¹² Hence in the Ottoman context, there was a clear correlation between being “healthy” and being “correct”, a correlation that also existed other languages as the latter word derived from Latin word “correctus” which meant “straightened, improved, healed”.⁹¹³ On the other hand, the word “asıl” meant “origin, source” but not necessarily “truth”.⁹¹⁴ Yet, in this sense “asıl haber” meant “real news” or “original news” hence a piece of information that was not distorted or changed. Therefore, acquiring “correct news” required an effort to *unearth* “the original information”. In turn, this effort pushed the actors involved in the news network to deploy variety of words that signify “to investigate”.

⁹¹⁰ “...ahbâr-ı sahîhayı i‘lâmdan hâlî olmayasın”

⁹¹¹ See chart for words.

⁹¹² These meanings of the word were referenced in Meninski’s Thesaurus in which its equivalents in Italian were “sanità, salute, integrità, verità”. Meninski “Thesaurus”, Vol.2, p.1937. In contemporary usage, this word indicates only “health” while the meaning “truth” became obsolete. <http://lugatim.com/s/s%C4%B1hhat>

⁹¹³ The Latin word “correctus” was the past perfect of the verb “corrigo”.

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=correctus&la=la&can=correctus0&d=Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=correctus&i=1>

⁹¹⁴ The Italian equivalents of this word were “causa, origine, originale”. Meninski “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p.256; Giovanni Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 183

In the documents, most frequent words that suggested the act of investigation were “tefahhus”, “tetebbu”, “istifsâr” and “tecessüs” which were used concurrently. These words indicated a process of news gathering through which any kind of informant was expected to go through. While they possess similar meanings, conscious (or unconscious) selection of these words can demonstrate nuances of news gathering during particular phases of the succession crisis. For example, in *MD* number three, the word “istifsâr” was notably less observed than abovementioned words. It was not used in any imperial order regarding Prince Bayezid, while instead it was mostly found in judicial orders regarding an investigation of a crime where people were “interrogated”.⁹¹⁵⁹¹⁶ Similarly, in most reports sent by officials during early months of 1559, this word was found in cases where diverse sources of information were interrogated regarding Prince Bayezid’s ongoing affairs including a servant interrogated by the Prince himself.⁹¹⁷⁹¹⁸ Yet, in the diplomatic letters penned after 1560 it was also employed as a formal way of “demanding information”.⁹¹⁹ Hence, while related to other three words, “istifsâr” suggested the act of asking questions in order to learn the truth and was used accordingly.

On the other hand, the remaining three words were almost always employed adjacently as all attested for “a pursuit or exploration of an issue thoroughly in order to understand it better”.⁹²⁰⁹²¹ For example, the fact that “tetebbu” and “tecessüs” were nearly always wielded *in tandem* in the imperial orders was a clear implication of the Porte’s expectation of in-depth inquiry regarding news about Prince Bayezid.⁹²² In a broader sense, both words were employed often in the imperial orders that answered political and diplomatic issues such as demands of inquiry regarding news about a possible Habsburg wedding or more information about ambassador of Muscovy to Crimean Khanate and the Cossack rebel Dmytro Vyshnevetsky who was known as “Dimitraş” in Ottoman sources.⁹²³ Furthermore, in reports and letters of the

⁹¹⁵ The word “istifsâr” is derived from the verb “fesi” which means “to explain” in Arabic. <http://lugatim.com/s/istifsar> .

⁹¹⁶ For different examples: (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3; 904, 1150

⁹¹⁷ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0062; (BOA), (TS.MA.e),0745_0076

⁹¹⁸ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0858_0091

⁹¹⁹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0659_0027_001; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0575_0028_002

⁹²⁰ “Tetebbu” and “tefahhus” both signify “to search/examine thoroughly”. “Tetebbu” is a word that derived from “teba” which means “to follow” whereas “tefahhus” derived from “fahs” which meant “to examine”. <http://lugatim.com/s/tetebbu> ; <http://lugatim.com/s/tefahhus>. Meanwhile, the word “Teccessüs” also suggest “to investigate” and its derived from Arabic word “cess” which means “to probe”. “Cess” is also the root for the word “câsus” which means spy. <http://lugatim.com/s/teccess%C3%BCs>

⁹²¹ These words were presented as each other’s synonyms in Meninski’s dictionary. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol. 1, p.1066; 1077; 1281.

⁹²² (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3; 1, 22, 61, 62, 413, 477, 919

⁹²³ (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3; 1266; 1457

officials, “tefahhus” appeared in documents dated from every phase of Bayezid Affair yet “tetebbu” and “tecessüs” appeared mostly in documents dated after Prince Bayezid’s relocation to Safavid Persia, especially in those dated in spring 1560 when news about his imprisonment started to circulate.

For example, in early June 1560, governor-general of Erzurum Mustafa Pasha transmitted news about Prince Bayezid’s imprisonment which he acquired via his correspondence with Şahkulu Sultan. In this document, Mustafa Pasha used “tetebbu” when he decided to send his sergeant [çavuş] Kara Hüseyin to Şahkulu Sultan in order to find out more about Bayezid’s current situation.⁹²⁴ In the following part of the letter, “tefahhus” and “tecessüs” were employed together when Mustafa Pasha pointed out his various efforts to acquire “correct news” [*ahbâr-ı sahîha*].⁹²⁵ Therefore, this example demonstrates that these three words could have been applied interchangeably. On the other hand, the concentration of the words “tecessüs” and “tetebbu” to the documents produced during a period when Prince Bayezid’s status quo in the Safavid Court had changed drastically testifies to the fact that they were mostly employed in times of transition during an ongoing crisis.

In the same period, the officials reporting about Prince Bayezid’s imprisonment also frequently utilized two Arabic words, “*isti’lâm*” and “*iş’âr*”, that rarely appeared in documents before 1560. In contemporary dictionaries, “*isti’lâm*” means “to demand accurate information” and “to demand information in script”. On the other hand, “*iş’âr*” was the response of “*isti’lâm*”: “to notify with a script”.⁹²⁶ Therefore, today, these words appear to indicate “written communication”, yet the “written” part does not exist in Meninski’s dictionary, suggesting that in an early modern context, they indicated “ask/give information” in either format, written or oral.⁹²⁷ However, in nineteenth-century dictionaries, “*isti’lâm*” had already transformed into “requesting official information,” hence suggesting an evolution of meaning, whereas “*iş’âr*” only appeared as “a communicating”.⁹²⁸

⁹²⁴ “...Şah’ın Sultan Bayezid ile keyfiyet-i ahvâlin tetebbu’ için serhad sultanı olan Şahkulu sultana mektubla Arzurum çavuşlarından Kara Hüseyin bendeleri irsâl olunmuş idi.” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0069

⁹²⁵ “...hâliyâ dahi müteâkiben yukarı cânibe bazı câsuslar ve bazı mektublar dahi gönderilmiştir ve Şahkulu sultandan dahi mektub gelecektir inşallah minbad dahi ahbâr-ı sahîha mütevâlîyen ve müteâkiben arz olunur biran tecessüs ve tefahhusdan hâlî değilüz” Ibid.

⁹²⁶ <http://lugatim.com/s/i%C5%9Far>; <http://lugatim.com/s/istilam>

⁹²⁷ In Meninski, description of *isti’lâm* was “*informationem petere*” in Latin and “*voler sapere, dimandar nuove o avvîsi*” in Italian, all meant “ask for information or news”. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p.193-94. For *iş’âr*, a Turkish synonym was given as “bildirmek” (to notify), while its equivalents in Italian were “significare, notificare, indicare”. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p.238. Neither of these words were mentioned in Molino’s *Dittionario*.

⁹²⁸ Redhouse Lexicon, s.v. “*isti’lâm*”, p. 100; “*iş’âr*”, p. 121

Looking closely at the documents in which these words appeared, it was evident that “*isti’lâm*” was used “to demand information” in official settings. For example, it appeared in a document written by Kapıcıbaşı Hasan Ağa, who had travelled to Safavid Persia in early 1561 with the governor-general of Maraş Ali Pasha as Ottoman ambassadors.⁹²⁹ They left the capital Qazvin on 1 July 1561 [17 Şevvâl 968], and Hasan Ağa penned this letter to Şahkulu Sultan, who forwarded it to another Ottoman official, most probably Mustafa Pasha. In this letter, Hasan Ağa used “*isti’lâm*” for the asking “about the health/condition” of Shah Tahmasb.⁹³⁰ On June 1560, it also appeared in Sultan Hüseyin’s report as the “demanded information” on the part of the Porte, who wanted to know more about Prince Bayezid’s situation.⁹³¹ The grand vizier Rüstem Pasha also used the same word when he “demanded the truth” from Prince Bayezid’s man, Mehmed, in late 1558.⁹³² Therefore, in the early modern Ottoman context, “*isti’lâm*” did not necessarily indicate written communication. However, it was used in official settings, which paved the way for its later meaning in the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, “iş’âr” was utilized much frequently than “*isti’lâm*”. For example, it appeared half of the reports about Prince Bayezid’s imprisonment. However, in some of these reports it *did* suggest a written communication. In both Mustafa Pasha’s reports, Şahkulu Sultan “notified” him via his letters while Ebubekir Beg’s report started with the Porte’s demand of him to notify them with news of Safavid lands in script.⁹³³⁹³⁴ In these reports, the most common word used for informing someone, “î’lâm”, was also utilized however they did not indicate the same act by definition.⁹³⁵ While both meant “to inform”, “î’lâm” was the more general one hence its prevalence in the document while “iş’âr” could be strictly associated with written official communication. The difference between two words was the most obvious in one of

⁹²⁹ They left Istanbul on 23 December 1560 according to the Florentine bailo Albertaccio degli Alberti. ASF., *Mediceo del Principato Carteggio Universali* 487, c. 336-37

⁹³⁰ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0757_0007

⁹³¹ “...hâliyâ Şah canibinden bazı haber-i cedîd hayr-itmâm istima’ ve isti’lâm olunub mektub ile Mehmed çavuş zîde-kadruhû vüsûl bulduk da...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059

⁹³² (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0050

⁹³³ “...deyü iş’ar olunmağın Şahkulu sultanın ve kethüdâsu olan merkûm Cemşid’in mektubları aynı ile der-i devlete gönderildi...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0583_0020; also see (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0069.

⁹³⁴ “...Şah cânibinden şimdiye dek sâdır olan ihbâr mâlûmunuz olduğı gibi yazub iş’âr idesiz deyü fermân buyurulmağın...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0049_001

⁹³⁵ The word *î’lâm* could be found in 22 documents from different phases of the crisis. In Meninski’s thesaurus, its Italian equivalents were “avviso, informazione, ragguaglio” whereas “bildirmek” “haber vermek” “inha” and “almetlendirmek” were given as synonyms. The first three of synonyms meant “to inform” while the last verb derived from “alâmet” which meant sign. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p.290. This word was not mentioned in Molino’s *Dittionario*.

Mustafa Pasha's reports when he stated that Şahkulu Sultan *wrote* to inform him [*iş'âr*] that he was about to update him with details [*tafsîlen îlâm etmek*] about the events that took place after Mustafa Pasha's man came and left.⁹³⁶ These subtle usages of distinct words suggested that communication in the early modern Ottoman context had a complex system that differentiate between distinct types of communication however small these nuances were.

(2) False News and Rumours

The necessity to “investigate” correct news implicated one crucial fact: the circulation of variety of news, among which the “correct ones” were expected to be sorted out based on reliable sources. This variety of news included two categories which were not mutually exclusive: false news and rumours.

False news could have been the news that was not certified yet *believed* to be false or the one after the said investigation process proved to be false. However, except for two instances, very few adjectives were employed next to “haber” to indicate the inaccuracy of the news contrary to “correct news”. One example can be found in a letter written by Şahkulu Sultan to Mustafa Pasha in the year 1561, during which these officials continued exchanging diplomatic letters. Most of these letters were about ongoing negotiations in Qazvin, where the second major Ottoman delegation, headed by the governor-general of Maraş Ali Pasha and Kapıcıbaşı Hasan Ağa, was received in April 1561 to resolve the ongoing Bayezid crisis. In one of these letters written in July 1561, Şahkulu Sultan stated that Shah Tahmasb was “utterly devastated” [*nihâyet mertebe kûdüret ve melâl*] for hearing “news” of Süleyman I being ill. Not believing and calling these “absurd news” [*abes haberler*], he demanded his governor Şahkulu Sultan to send out a man to “acquire indisputable news fast” [*tahkik haberi tez aldurub*] in order to learn “the truth” [*hakikat*].⁹³⁷ In this example, the chosen word to indicate “falseness” was “abes” which meant “absurd, nonsense, useless”.⁹³⁸ Nevertheless, the “absurdity” of this piece of news was highly questionable. It was a known fact that Süleyman I was suffering from ill health

⁹³⁶ “...adem geldikten sonra vâki olan ahvâli bu bendelerine tafsîlen îlâm etmek üzere olduğunu iş'âr eylemişdir...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0069.

⁹³⁷ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0659_0027_002.

⁹³⁸ <http://lugatim.com/s/abes>; Also in Meninski, Italian equivalents of the word “abes” were “vano, inutile, vanita, baia”. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.2, p.3205

(mainly from gout and other ailments) for at least for a decade by 1561.⁹³⁹⁹⁴⁰ Yet, the important part here was the fact that Shah Tahmasb claimed to *believe* this piece of news was “nonsense” and asked for an “inquiry” even though it was highly improbable for him not to know about his rival’s long-term illness.

Apart from the example above, other words were employed to indicate “falseness” such as “yalan”, “kizb”, “erâcif”.⁹⁴¹ These words signify “lie(s)”. For example, during an interrogation at the capital in late 1558, Prince Bayezid’s servant Mehmed revealed what he had told his master: that those in capital would demand “correct news” [*sahih haber*] from him [Mehmed] and he needed to say something so that he would not cause “lies” [*kizb*].⁹⁴² Here, the “lies” were used as the exact opposite of “correct news” as in the absence of the latter, false news would fill the vacuum of information which would damage Prince Bayezid’s reputation. Similarly, in a letter from Mustafa Pasha to Şahkulu Sultan penned in the spring of 1562, “erâcif” was also employed to suggest “false news”.⁹⁴³ In this elaborate letter written with heavy diplomatic language, Mustafa Pasha stated that some time ago, his master the Sultan, heard some “false news” [*erâcif*] regarding the delay of Prince Bayezid’s pending surrender. Ottomans accepted the extension of this period of delay as evidence of the truthfulness of the “false news that were heard” and were *compelled* to prepare for a campaign.⁹⁴⁴

The word “yalan” on the other hand was almost solely employed by Prince Bayezid in his numerous letters written to his father.⁹⁴⁵ In several of these letters, he used the word while accusing his father for “telling lies regarding promises made”.⁹⁴⁶ Yet there were other instances where he utilized the word to indicate “false news”. In one letter which he penned while he was at Çorum in December 1558, he stated that he was about to reach Amasya as his father

⁹³⁹ Genç, Vural. “Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’ın Nikris Hastalığına Atfedilen Farsça bir Reçete” in *Belleten*, Vol. 80, No: 287 (2016), p.43

⁹⁴⁰ For example, Prince Bayezid mentioned his father’s illness in one his letters written in late December 1558/January 1559 in which he stated being “greatly troubled” after hearing about his father’s malady causing him pain in the feet. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_013

⁹⁴¹ See chart for words.

⁹⁴² “...mezburu bu cânibe göndermeli olacak hâkipâyilerine varub demiş ki ben âsîâne-i saâdete varıcak benden sahîh haber isterler bende anda bir söz söylemek gerekim ki sonra kizbî zâhir olmaya deyü...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0749_0050

⁹⁴³ “Erâcif” was plural of the word “ürçûfe” which means “lie”. <http://lugatim.com/s/%C3%9CRC%C3%9BFE>

⁹⁴⁴ “...bundan akdem pâdişahı alempenâh hazretlerinin sem’-i şerîflerine sultan bayezidin virilmemesine müteallik bazı erâcif vasil olub tesliminde bu zamana dek vuku bulan ta’vîk tehir zikir olunan erâcif mesmua’nın sîdkına delâlet eylemeyin tedârik-i sefer görülüb...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0756_0125

⁹⁴⁵ Derived from old Turkish word “yalgan”, “yalan” means “lie” as a noun, “baseless, false” as an adjective. <http://lugatim.com/s/yalan>

⁹⁴⁶ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_017; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_019_002

expected of him. Yet despite his efforts, Süleyman I always chose to believe the words of “intriguers” [*müfsid*] even though the news they brought were revealed to be “false news” [*yalan haberler*] eventually.⁹⁴⁷ Similarly, in an earlier letter, he blamed his brother Prince Selim for relaying “false news” [*yalan haberler*] to their father in order persuade him to send Bayezid away, a feat Selim ultimately managed to achieve when Süleyman I decided to send Bayezid to Amasya.⁹⁴⁸ These examples clearly demonstrated that “yalan” was used along with “haber” to indicate “false news”. Yet the question remains regarding the scarcity of this word in *arz* of officials or within imperial orders. One possible reason could have been that officials were hesitant about employing a word that suggested inaccuracy indisputably. The only example by an official that employed this word to implicate “false news” was an anonymous report. After narrating what was told to him by an informant, the author stated that “God only knows what he had told me was the truth or a lie”, hence abstaining from presenting a definite verdict.⁹⁴⁹ Evidently, there was a certain absence of “false news” within the Ottoman documents covering this particular episode of succession. As officials were pressured to procure “correct news”, and in their efforts to reveal the truth about a specific incident, it would have been logical for them to act prudent about giving judgment regarding news they obtained as there could have been repercussions.

This absence presented a stark contrast with the studied Venetian examples in which the presumed falsity of a piece of news was clearly stated and if proven otherwise corrected. As discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, there were several examples of Venetian officials stating their clear disbelief regarding a piece of news they had just heard or read about the ongoing Siege of Rhodes. However, these examples were usually information they had received from a non-verified source. For example, during months preceding the siege a news regarding the movement of the Ottoman navy was reported by a Venetian ship arriving from to the city from Alexandria that had stopped at the island of Zakynthos and heard the said news. Yet, the officials stated that they did not believe this news to be true because it was not reported in the letters from İstanbul which were considered the most credible source regarding Ottoman

⁹⁴⁷ “...her zaman müfsid sözünü istimâ edüb bana sûizan idersiz bu ortalıkta ne iftirâlar olubdur hep bilirim size neler demişler hep bilirim sonra gördünüz hep yalan çıktığını ne için size yalan haberler söyleyene inanırsız...” (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_021

⁹⁴⁸ “...âhar çâre bulmayüb yalandan iftirâlar çıkarıb Bayezid Han benim üstüme gelür deyü yalan yire pâdişahıma haberler göndere göndere kendünün murâdını hâsil edib beni Amasya’ya göndermeğe sebep oldu...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_003_002

⁹⁴⁹ “...yalan gerçek idiğün Hak Celle ve Âlâ hazretinden gayrı kimse bilmez...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0745_0076

navy.⁹⁵⁰ In other cases, Venetian officials also used different words to indicate their *absolute* disbelief. A letter written by a Venetian patrician situated in Crete, Giovanni Bragadin, to his brother in law in Venice, Zaccaria Trevisan, on 15 November 1522 when the siege of Rhodes was entering its final stages stated that a ship to Crete had brought news about the imminent arrival of the help that was expected from Christian Europe. Yet Bragadin believed all these talks were “nonsense, lies” as till then nothing had arrived and according to him “no help *will* arrive in the coming winter”.⁹⁵¹ The word used to indicate his disbelief was “zanza” an old Venetian term that meant “trifle and lies”. However, this was a personal letter, and it was more straightforward to comment than official letters.⁹⁵²

Twentieth-century scholars promoted the idea of rumours correlating with false news or misinformation.⁹⁵³ On the other hand, these case studies showed that early modern rumours and news were closely associated phenomena, as both indicated circulating information not yet confirmed to be correct or false. Therefore, rumours *could* be “false news” but should not be equated with falseness by definition. For example, Meninski’s Thesaurus gave the Italian equivalent of “erâcif haberler” as false rumours [*rumori falsi*].⁹⁵⁴ This implies that rumour was not intrinsically false as it required an adjective to acquire falseness. Second, “haber” was presented as a correlative of rumour. Therefore, it would be plausible to suggest that the word “haber” indicated both news and rumours in the early modern period. However, it was a rather complex than straightforward suggestion. Theoretically, as discussed within the first chapter of this study, etymological cross-examination of “haber” *did* reveal the close association of rumour and news in the early modern period.⁹⁵⁵ On the other hand, in the Ottoman context as were in Italian, there were other words to demonstrate “rumour”. The existence of these words and their different implications show that, depending on various factors, rumours could be discerned from the news in the early modern era. At the same time, a plausible hierarchy could prevail between them depending on the context.

⁹⁵⁰ “...*Tamen*, tal aviso non fu creduto, per esser letere di Constantinopoli di tempo che non patisse tal aviso sia vero”. Sanudo 33: 254

⁹⁵¹ “Dil soccorso di Rhodi si ha, per la nave Zustignana, che vien di ponente, come doveva venir 8 barze di ponente, le qual si aspetta di zorno in zorno. *Tamen* credo che siano zanze, perchè, non hessendo venuto niente fin bora, non credo vegnirà più niente per questo inverno, si non vien a questa averla.” Sanudo 33: 568-69

⁹⁵² For example, see Marco Minio’s letters.

⁹⁵³ See Chapter I.

⁹⁵⁴ Meninski “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p.125

⁹⁵⁵ See chapter I, p.

Several words indicating “rumour” within the early modern dictionaries of Meninski and Molino also appeared in the examined Ottoman documents. The most common among them was the word “sedâ” [or sadâ] which primarily meant “sound”.⁹⁵⁶ In Molino’s dictionary, its equivalents in Italian were given as “suono, voce, risonanza, armonia” with no indication of rumour.⁹⁵⁷ On the other hand, in Meninski, rumour [as *rumore*] appears following its equivalents of “voce, suono”.⁹⁵⁸ Accordingly, it did emerge as a rumour in four out of five documents.

The word’s primary meaning can be found in a document dated November 1558. Here, it was used to indicate “dissident/rebel voices” [*yaramaz sedâ*] that were expected to be found in Prince Bayezid’s camp.⁹⁵⁹ Yet, in a later document written by an informant of Prince Selim, it was used to imply the rumour of a campaign. As discussed in the previous section, due to increasing tension between two princes, the Porte took preventive measures by ordering several governors-general to ready their men by February 1559. In this document, this preparation was clearly perceived by Prince Bayezid as a “campaign against him” as the informant stated that the Prince was utterly devastated [*nihayet mertebe muztarib*] after hearing this “campaign rumour” [*sefer sadâsı*]. On the other hand, in the exact text, this piece of information was earlier mentioned as the arrival of the “news of a royal campaign” [*sefer-i hümayun çağırıldığı haberi geldikde*] that saddened the Prince.⁹⁶⁰ Hence, in this example, “haber” and “sadâ” were used interchangeably, which served as another example of the contiguity between news and rumours in the early modern context. However, this unconfirmed piece of news was also reported in other documents with different words. In an *arz* dated from February 1559, the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha stated that it would be prudent to send imperial orders to certain governors-general to inform them to ready their forces before Nowruz, i.e. late March 1559. He also explained that these officials were advised to stay alert as the “rumour of a royal campaign” was already circulating.⁹⁶¹ In this example, the word for rumour was “âvâze”, another equivalent of the word “sedâ”.^{962,963}

⁹⁵⁶ Also in the contemporary dictionary, no indication of rumour is provided. <http://lugatim.com/s/seda>

⁹⁵⁷ Molino, *Dittionario*, p. 422

⁹⁵⁸ Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.2, p. 2941

⁹⁵⁹ “...Allah saklasun hiç anun gibi bir yaramaz sedâ kalmamışdır cemi’ il ve memleket emn-u emân üzeredir...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0748_0014.

⁹⁶⁰ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0858_0009.

⁹⁶¹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0878_0042.

⁹⁶² <http://lugatim.com/s/%C3%82VAZ>

⁹⁶³ In the abovementioned Italian dictionaries the description for “âvâze” was also the same as “sedâ”. In Molino’s dictionary, it only meant “sound”, while Meninski added other meanings, including rumour and fame [*fama*]. Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p. 479-80.

The question remains on the usage of these particular words. Various examples already proved that the word “haber” was usually sufficient to suggest unascertained information. Therefore, my suggestion is that the answer was connected with the audience. It was the matter of *who* was involved in this circulation of news that discern it from others. This rumour of a campaign was not dispersed only within the circle of officials and their variety of informants, it was also widespread among the general public as was emphasized in two documents. In the abovementioned *arz*, it was stated that this rumour was already widespread [*müntesir olmuştur*] in various areas without pointing out the specific audience yet alluding to the general public.⁹⁶⁴ In another concurrent document, it was clearly expressed that some sections of public [*bazı halk*] was talking about the campaign being against Prince Bayezid.⁹⁶⁵ These examples proved that two main points were essential for the production of rumour in the early modern context: the oral nature of circulation and the inclusion of general public.

Various scholarly works proved that oral and written communication were intertwined in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean. These works, which focused on communication in Italian city-states, showed that in that period, orality was not disregarded for the sake of written communication.⁹⁶⁶ Instead, orality was re-defined par its relationship with different types of media, especially with the advancement of printing.⁹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, some of these advancements did not correspond to the specific conditions of communication systems of the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire, even though oral communication *did* retain its importance. First, the print was not a factor for all Ottomans, as various religious communities of the Empire responded differently to the printing press. Ottoman Jews started to employ printing as soon as it was available from the late fifteenth century onwards, whereas other non-Muslim communities followed suit in succeeding centuries. On the other hand, Ottoman Muslims did not commence printing until the early eighteenth century, and they possessed an efficient system of manuscript production.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶⁴ “...sâir etrâf ve cevânibe sefer-i hümâyun âvâzesi hep müntesir olmuştur herkesi mütenebbih olmak üzeredir...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0878_0042.

⁹⁶⁵ “...sefer-i hümâyun sultan Bayezid üzerinedir deyü bazı halk söylermiş...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0730_0011.

⁹⁶⁶ Palmieri, Pasquale. “Interactions between Orality, Manuscript and Print Culture in the Sixteenth century Italy: Recent Historiographical Trends,” *Storia della Storiografia*, Vol. 73 (2018), pp.135-36.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid. pp.136-139.

⁹⁶⁸ Osborn, J.R. “The Ottoman System of Scripts and the Mütferrika Press” in *Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradition*, edited by Scott Reese, 2022, p. 61

The question of why Ottoman Muslims adapted printing this late has been a hotly debated topic within academia.⁹⁶⁹ Yet, the outcome for this study is simple: official Ottoman news system which was organized and maintained by the Porte did not make use of the printing for this particular period. It did not have printed pamphlets or newsletters already circulating in Christian Europe which altered the oral communication as suggested by recent scholarly works. For them, several media systems did not only co-exist but instead interacted with and modified each other in the early modern European context.⁹⁷⁰ They further argued that the printed works presented a limited view of oral communication as the latter involved mannerisms, performance, and other factors that enabled it to have a more social and cultural impact. It was impossible to imitate these factors in a written document.⁹⁷¹ There was a similar constraint in the sixteenth-century Ottoman context, where oral communication was visible only via manuscripts. However, there were several glimpses of “general talk” for this particular case of study.

In these glimpses that could be observed from the *arz* of the officials, the reactions of these men varied depending on the political situation they were addressing. For example, in one of the *arz*, the author emphasized the tendency of the public to talk and discredited their credibility.⁹⁷² Yet, they did not always approach public opinion this dismissively. For example, in autumn 1559, governor-general of Anatolia Ahmed Pasha mentioned the order he received from the Porte regarding the truth of the “rumour” [*güft ü gû*] they heard about the people complaining of bonus grants [*terakkî*] given to Lala Mustafa Pasha after the battle of Konya.⁹⁷³ Many were disgruntled about these grants as Lala Mustafa Pasha was “unworthy” to receive those grants.⁹⁷⁴ Ahmed Pasha further explained that these talks were born out of the fact that the promised payments of bonus grants were postponed due to expenditures allocated to preparation for an actual campaign [alluding to the general preparation for a possible Safavid campaign in autumn 1559].⁹⁷⁵ On the other hand, Ahmed Pasha also penned this *arz* to

⁹⁶⁹ For the historiography on the subject: Sabev, Orlin. *Waiting for Müteferrika: Glimpses on Ottoman Print Culture*, Boston: Academic Studies Press, (2018), pp. xi-xxiii.

⁹⁷⁰ Bellingrad, Daniel and Rospocher, Massimo. “The Intermediality of Early Modern Communication. An Introduction,” *Cheiron*, Vol. 2 (2021), p. 9

⁹⁷¹ Palmieri, “Interactions between Orality, Manuscript and Print Culture”, p. 137

⁹⁷² “...halkın sözleri çokdur her kişi bir dürlü söyler anlarun sözlerine îtibar yokdur” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0730_0011.

⁹⁷³ “...terakkî hususunda nice güft-gû olunur vâki midir...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0482_0015

⁹⁷⁴ *Terakki* was an additional allowance given to *kapıkulu* soldiers for their superior success and usefulness in wars, during the enthronement, and when various servants successfully completed their terms of service. Recep Ahışalı, “Terakki”, *İA*, Vol. 40, pp. 479-481.

⁹⁷⁵ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0482_0015.

exonerate himself because evidently, the “general talk” also accused him of being “greedy” and keeping the money to himself, which disturbed him the most. In fact, Ahmed Pasha openly stated that he acted according to the orders of Prince Selim and excused himself.

In this case, the used expression “güft u gû”, which meant “those who talk” in Persian, was explained in the Meninski with Latin “rumor populi,” i.e. common talk.⁹⁷⁶⁹⁷⁷ This word indicated a widespread rumour among the general populace. This *arz* showed that the Porte was worried about the “common talk” because even though the battle was won in Prince Selim’s favour, Prince Bayezid was still alive, and the “seed of discontent” already sowed due to his actions could grow even more and “güft u gû” could ease this process. Ahmed Pasha’s emphasis on the “investigations” [*tefahhus*] conducted to find perpetrators of the rumour further proved the Porte’s dread about the ongoing situation, which would be unacceptable on the eve of a campaign.⁹⁷⁸ Similarly, in an *arz* by the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha dated in late 1558 emphasized the importance of Prince Selim’s safe and quick arrival to his new *sancak* at Konya so that “common talk” [*güft u gû*] would cease indicating the perceived high tension between royal brothers which caused people to talk and create a viable environment for disorder.⁹⁷⁹

The synonyms of the word the expression “güft u gû” also pointed out the perception of common talk being a strong incentive for public disorder. For example, the word “dağdağa” which was presented as a synonym of “güft u gû” meant “noise, turmoil”.⁹⁸⁰ This word was used along with the word “teşviş” (which also meant disorder and presented as a synonym of “dağdağa”) in Kubad Pasha’s *arz* from early September 1559.⁹⁸¹ According to this *arz*, Yadigar Beg transmitted a news/rumour circulating beyond the border stating “they” were causing disorder by stating how appropriate it would be if Prince Selim would attack Prince Bayezid’s men.⁹⁸² First, while this information was presented as “haber”, this situation pointed out to a

⁹⁷⁶ <http://lugatim.com/s/g%C3%BCft> ; Other equivalent Latin words were: “confabulationes populi, sermones vulgi, discorsus, rumor” Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.2, p. 3979.

⁹⁷⁷ In ancient Rome, “*rumor populi*” meant “popular conversation” similar to the word *sermo populi* that indicated talk that took place in unofficial settings. Therefore, it alluded to oral communication that involved number of people. Rosillo-Lopez, Cristina. *Public Opinion and Politics in the Late Roman Republic*, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 77-78

⁹⁷⁸ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0482_0015.

⁹⁷⁹ “...heman Sultan Selim hazretleri de sağlıkla sancaklarına varub dahil olsalar bu güft u gû dilin kesilirdi...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 812_0030.

⁹⁸⁰ <http://lugatim.com/s/DA%C4%9EDA%C4%9EA> ; Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, pp. 2093-94.

⁹⁸¹ Meninski, “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, pp. 1202-1203

⁹⁸² “...mezkur Yadigar beye ol cânibden bir haberi layih olmuş ki Sultan Selim Han tâle bekâhu hazretleri cümle asker ile sultan Bayezid üzerine ilgar eylese gerekdir deyü dağdağa ve teşviş çekdiklerin ilâm eyleyüp...”

circulating rumour that would disrupt the uneasy alliance between Prince Bayezid and Safavids. Therefore, these two words, “güft u gû” and “dağdağa”, were located precisely in the rumour section of the spectrum of news: it was a word that was circulating among multitude of people that could cause problems for authorities as their secondary meanings suggest “tumult, disorder”. Second, it is crucial to indicate that neither Yadigar Beg’s nor Kubad Pasha’s explanations were explicit about *who* was precisely causing these rumours. The anonymity of the “auctor(s)” is how rumours gained power/were discredited at the same time.⁹⁸³ Therefore, from the Porte’s point of view, this type of rumour/ common talk was like a “headless menace” that could cause disorder as opposed to the Ottoman sultan who was the “head of the state” to sustain and protect the “world’s order” [*nizâm-ı âlem*].⁹⁸⁴ For example, in another *arz* written when Prince Bayezid was on the move against his brother in May 1559, the author confirmed via a steward [*kethüda*] named Oruç that Bayezid and his army indeed reached the city of Çorum. However, the author stated that the general public was cursing the Prince, who was now involved in mischief.⁹⁸⁵ This meant that public opinion had turned against Bayezid who was deemed responsible for creating disorder. Therefore, also in this case, the officials took public opinion seriously. Hence the words of public were interpreted according to their stance in a political and social situation and the possible role they could play.

The Porte was also adamant about controlling the information flow even within its officials who in turn paid heed to manage the news they were passing on. On September 1559, Ayas Pasha, the previous governor-general of Erzurum, written a letter to the Porte regarding the men he had paid to assassinate Prince Bayezid possibly as a vain attempt to re-gain favour with the Porte who earlier suspected him aiding the Prince. In this letter after explaining the number and origin of these men, he suggested them to burn his letter after reading it to avoid circulation of this piece of news.⁹⁸⁶ The verb Ayas Pasha utilized for “being widespread” was “şâyi olmak” which means “to be heard and known by all”.⁹⁸⁷ Therefore, it suggested an information turning into public knowledge, a notion he was clearly strived to avoid. Ayas Pasha was right to be unwilling to share news with public. The memory of Prince Mustafa’s demise being fresh, a

⁹⁸³ Bettini, Maurizio. “Weighty Words, Suspect Speech: *Fari* in Roman Culture”, *Arethusa*, Vol. 41 (2008), p. 358.

⁹⁸⁴ For Süleyman I’s cultivated image of an “just ruler” to protected and sustained the order see Yelçe, “*The Making of Sultan Süleyman*”, pp. 150-58

⁹⁸⁵ “...kul tâifesi arasında ve sâir halkın arasında olan söz ve geleceği iyülükdür şimdiki halde elhamdülillâh ekseriyâ işidürüz şehzâde hazretlerine bedduâlar iderler ki fesâda mübâşeret ettü deyü...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0521_0020

⁹⁸⁶ “...bu haber şâyi’ olmağa için bad-el mutâlâa bu mektubun ihrâkına inâyet buyurula.” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0757_0070

⁹⁸⁷ <http://lugatim.com/s/%C5%9Fayi>

similar action could incite public reaction as certain factions of society were already showing their discontent with the central authority.

(3) Reputation

The public talk also played a role in establishing the reputation of a person. As discussed in the first chapter through the term “fama” which meant both “rumour” and “reputation”, the latter was based on image that is formed of a person on account of circulated information. Also in this case, public talk was considered decisive in forging the reputation of both low and high ranking people. For example, Prince Bayezid did care about what general public said about him. In a letter written in October 1558 before he left Kütahya, he stated that by forcing him to travel in winter conditions his father was allowing people to think that he was furious with Bayezid.⁹⁸⁸ He further stated that he had to “endure these talks” voicing his ordeal. In a letter written approximately six months later, he claimed that by surrounding him with soldiers, his father had given him a bad reputation [*bed nâm*] within the realm.⁹⁸⁹ Bayezid did not wish to be perceived as the “disregarded son” or a “mischief maker” who sowed seeds of disorder, as both would harm his reputation as a contender for the throne. In turn, he depended on “public knowledge” to discredit his brother’s reputation. In a letter written in late 1558 to his father, he accused his brother Selim of participating in “illicit sexual activities” [*zinâ*] recently in Bursa as well as in Maraş and Antep when the army wintered in the region.⁹⁹⁰ He further implicated his brother having numerous illegitimate children out of these forbidden affairs. In order to make himself more credible, Bayezid referenced these affairs being “well known by all”.⁹⁹¹

In these cases, different words were used to indicate reputation. Most common among them was the word “nâm” which primarily suggested good reputation yet with the proper adjective

⁹⁸⁸ “...cümle alem ne dirler pâdişah hazretleri Bayezid’a gazab eyledi Kütahya’dan çıkarub Amasya’ya bıraktı derler bu nice il sözüne kim mütehammil olur...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_003_001

⁹⁸⁹ “...amma ki cümle etrâfımı asker ile kuşadıb âleme bed nâm eyledinüz...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_004_001

⁹⁹⁰ These events in Maraş and Antep must have taken place during the Nakhichevan Campaign of 1553-55, as Prince Selim was at Edirne as a stand-in [*muhafiz*] for the sultan to keep order in the western provinces during the previous campaign against Safavids in 1548-49. He joined his father in Aleppo in December 1553 after his brothers Mustafa and Cihangir died in October and November. They stayed in the region until April 1554, when the campaign presumed. Şahin, *Peerless Among Princes*, pp.229; 238-39

⁹⁹¹ “...bu sözlerimi yalan sanmayasız vallah billah yalan söylemezüm hep sahihtir cümle alemin hep mâlûmudur... bu kazıyye gayet meşhûrdur hatta şimdilik bazı yerlerde söylenir ki Zulkadirde Selim Han’ın oğlu kızı var imiş deyü meşhûr olmuş” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_020

also gained a negative meaning such as “bed-nâm”.⁹⁹² Similarly, interrelated words “iştihâr” and “meşhûr” were used strictly to demonstrate one’s fame.⁹⁹³ However, these words did not possess an innate negative or positive connotation, instead their meaning were determined by the context. For example, in the abovementioned example Prince Bayezid stated that his brother’s adultery cases were “well known” [*meşhûr*] in a negative sense. In this case, becoming public knowledge served as a basis of credibility for Bayezid while undermining Selim’s reputation.

In another example, we can observe how one’s own reputation could affect others’ reputations around him/her. In Spring 1559, an *arz* was written to brief the Sultan about a certain follower of Prince Bayezid known by the sobriquet “teğeltici” possibly based on his profession.⁹⁹⁴ An alleged descendant of Şah Veli (also known as Celal oğlu) who rebelled against the Porte in 1519, this versatile man had put himself in Prince Bayezid’s employ.⁹⁹⁵ Hence, he was constantly touring in the province [of Amasya] to give Bayezid “recognition and respect” [*iştihâr ve i’tibâr*] while tempting inhabitants of the area who were “capable of evil deeds”.⁹⁹⁶ In this case, this man’s efforts indicated an attempt to provide Bayezid a good name among common people yet due to his own bad reputation, bad deeds and family legacy, he was actually causing trouble. This was mainly a veiled attempt to accuse others for Bayezid’s actions as the Prince and people around him were presented to be “bewitched with tricks”. Furthermore, this example shows how one’s reputation could affect others in both ways, and more importantly how reputations were built or destroyed with “words”.

⁹⁹² The principal meaning of “nâm” was “name”. In the Ottoman documents, it was commonly used to indicate the name of a location or a person. <http://lugatim.com/s/nam>

⁹⁹³ Both of these words were derived from the word “şöhret” which primarily means “fame”. <http://lugatim.com/s/%C5%9F%C3%B6hret> In Meninski’s, Latin equivalents of “iştihâr” were “celebritas, fama, publicatio”, whereas equivalents “meşhûr” were similar: “celebrates, vulgarus, notus, celebris, illustris”. Meninski “Thesaurus”, Vol.1, p. 236; Vol.2, p. 4688.

⁹⁹⁴ “Teğelti” was a type of felt cloth that was put under the saddle of horses which was common in Turkic societies. “Teğeltici” was the person who produced this type of cloth. <http://lugatim.com/s/TE%C4%9EEELT%C4%B0>

⁹⁹⁵ Şah Veli (b. Şeyh Cemal) was one of the “religious leaders” who was in league with Shah Ismail I who used this type of local figures to cause disruptions in Central Anatolia throughout his reign. This short rebellion was one in a series of rebellions that erupted in the regions where Turkoman and Kızılbaş populations who followed the *Safaviyye* order inhabited. Bacqué-Grammont, Jacques Louis. “Etudes Turco-Safavides, III, Notes et documents sur la révolte de Şâh Veli b. Şeyh Celâl”, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, VIII, (1982), pp.5-69; Emecen, Feridun M. *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları (2016), pp. 342-45.

⁹⁹⁶ “...vilâyeti gezüb Sultan Bayezid’a iştihâr ve i’tibâr verüb kâbil-i ifsâd olan ehl-i bilâdı izlât etmekle mübâşir fitne ve ihtilâl olmuş eğer arsa-ı arza gelüb erkenceden tedârîki görölmez ise an-karib fesâd-ı külliye bâ’is olmak mukarrerdir”. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0754_0012.

d) *Avvisi* on Sultan Baiazetto/Baisit/Baiazet/Bajaset

The news of the Bayezid Affair circulated beyond the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. When two remaining heirs to the Ottoman throne decided to battle for the succession, the foreign communities residing in the Ottoman capital turned their full attention to this affair and followed the developments. Their permanent representatives immediately started to report as it would be in their rulers' interest to know who would be the next ruler of the Ottoman Empire. These men routinely gathered news about various issues ranging from military and economic issues to daily interactions with the imperial court and gossip. In the first decades of the sixteenth century, the Republic of Venice was the foremost of these communities and had a permanent residence in the capital that frequently gathered, circulated and forwarded news and rumours.⁹⁹⁷ In the following decades, other communities also appeared and took their place on the diplomatic stage in the Ottoman capital.⁹⁹⁸ While the Republic of Venice maintained a *bailo* from 1454 onwards, throughout the sixteenth century, residents from France (1534), the Holy Roman Empire (1547), and England (1583) would join them and create an atmosphere of intense diplomatic rivalry.⁹⁹⁹ One of the communities competing with the Venetians was the Florentine community in Istanbul, which had established itself as a trading nation since the late Byzantine Era. For the sake of the scope of this study, the Florentine news network was analysed along with the Venetian system, while other agencies belonging to diverse nations were left out.

i) The Florentine news system

Ottoman-Florentine relations date back to the beginning of the fifteenth century when the latter established itself as a prominent trading nation in Bursa. The relations between the two states gradually flourished after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 when trade privileges were handed to Florentines and Genoese instead of Venetians, whose support to the besieged Byzantines was thus punished by Mehmed II. Throughout his reign, the Republic of Florence consolidated

⁹⁹⁷ Chapter II news circulation during the Siege of Rhodes (1522) explained and discussed thoroughly the Republic of Venice's position in the Mediterranean news network.

⁹⁹⁸ Sowerby and Markiewicz, Christopher (Eds). *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court*, 2021.

⁹⁹⁹ Sowerby, Tracey A. and Markiewicz, Christopher. "Introduction: Istanbul as the centre of Diplomatic Culture" in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630*, p.7

diplomatic relations with the Ottoman court while the Sultan created a prolific environment of cultural exchange.¹⁰⁰⁰ Hence, from 1460 onwards, a Florentine permanent ambassador in the city -also called “bailo” like his Venetian counterpart- reported back the news.

The diplomatic relations continued seamlessly until 1530s when turbulent Italian wars, subsequent occupation of the city of Florence by Spanish and the growing influence of the Habsburgs caused rupture in relations.¹⁰⁰¹ As the city was re-instated to the exiled Medici family and the Republic was transformed into a Duchy, its second Duke Cosimo I Medici (d.1574) sought to re-establish the trade relations with the Ottomans and paid particular attention to impress the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha who had first attained the office in 1544.¹⁰⁰² Yet increasing rivalry between Ottoman Empire and the Habsburgs in the Mediterranean during the 1540s put the nascent Duchy into a precarious position as Duke Cosimo I was allied with Habsburgs against the French who in turn were allied with the Ottomans since 1535.¹⁰⁰³ During the 1550s, this Franco-Ottoman alliance started to cause trouble for Florence via corsair attacks on Italian shores. Hence, the diplomatic efforts of the Florentine *bailo* turned increasingly towards complaining about harassed ships and ransoming prisoners of war while continuing to find ways to improve trade relations.

In this environment, Duke Cosimo I was aware of the importance of “staying notified” as much as other rulers of the time. He organized and managed an extensive system of informers and spies ranging from high-ranking ambassadors to low-key personalities to gather information from various places. The *dispacci* and *avvisi* derived from Italian states and cities (Lucca, Massa, Genoa, Ragusa, Parma, Mirandola, Ferrara, Mantua, Savoy, Venice, Milan, Rome, Bologna, Urbino, and Naples) and from European states (Swiss Cantons, Malta, England, Flanders, Holland, the Ottoman Empire, Lorraine, Bavaria, Poland, the Holy Roman Empire, France, and Spain) supplied him with constants news and rumours.¹⁰⁰⁴¹⁰⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰⁰ Acıpinar, Mikail. *Osmanlı-Floransa İlişkileri (XV-XVI. Yüzyıl)*, PhD Thesis, Ege Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü: Yeniçağ Tarihi Anabilim Dalı (2011), pp. 31-65

¹⁰⁰¹ Baker, Scott. “The Emperor and the Duke: Cosimo I, Charles V, and the Negotiation of Sovereignty” in *A Companion to Cosimo I de’ Medici* edited by Alessio Assonitis and Hank Th. van Veen, Leiden: Brill (2022), pp. 115-160.

¹⁰⁰² Acıpinar, *Osmanlı-Floransa İlişkileri*, pp. 98-99

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.* pp.103-105

¹⁰⁰⁴ Assonitis, Alessio and Van Veen, Hank Th. “Introduction: Cosimo I de’Medici (1519-2019)” in *A Companion to Cosimo I de’ Medici* edited by Alessio Assonitis and Hank Th. van Veen, Leiden: Brill (2022), p.6-7

¹⁰⁰⁵ To see how the *avvisi* were gathered and used in the Medici court, Barker, Sheila. “Secret and Uncertain: A History of *Avvisi* at the court of Medici Grand Dukes” in *News Network in the Early Modern Europe* edited by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, Leiden: Brill, (2016), pp. 716-738

The archival documents in Florence showed that Duke Cosimo I primarily depended on his *bailo* in Istanbul and members of the *bailo's* entourage, such as his secretary on the news on Ottomans, as these men sent him regular news dispatches, also known as *dispacci*. He also used his agents in Venice as they sent him the information they had learned from other Venetians or their contacts from Istanbul. Secondly, as Rome became a vital news centre from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, where pieces of news were gathered and broadcasted to Europe, handwritten newsletters, also known as *avvisi* from this particular location, supplied him with fresh news on Ottoman affairs.¹⁰⁰⁶

In the mid-sixteenth century Mediterranean, the Venetians continued to remain leading authorities on gathering and re-exporting news about the Ottoman Empire to the Christian states even though their supreme position was being challenged by other nations, especially by the agents working for the French and Habsburgs. Looking at one of their rivals in the news-gathering scheme would allow us to understand how news items were interpreted by different agents operating in the same hubs by cross-checking *dispacci* and *avvisi* penned simultaneously. Hence, the following section analyses how news about the Ottoman succession struggle was gathered, interpreted and circulated in/from the Ottoman capital by the Venetian and Florentine agents. For this analysis, the *dispacci* written by different Venetian *baili* at the time, along with *dispacci* penned by Florentine *baili* and his secretaries from Istanbul, were utilized. The *dispacci* from Cosimo I's agent in Venice were also examined and served as points of cross-reference for the writings of the *baili*. Anonymous *avvisi* from Istanbul were also investigated.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Infelise, Mario. "Roman *Avvisi*: Information and Politics in the Seventeenth Century" in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700* edited by Gianvittorio Signorotto, Cambridge University Press, (2002), pp.212-228

ii) The Duke, the Bailo(s) and the Sultan: *Avvisi* on ‘Baiazet and Selim’

*“L’importanza sarà, se la guerra intestina de figli farà qualche progresso, onde venga a risultare o la morte sua o la divisione et travaglio gagliardo di quello imperio illud tutto sta in mano di Dio, però ce ne rimetteremo al volere di Sua Maestà Divina.”*¹⁰⁰⁷

These were the words of Duke Cosimo I penned on 13 January 1559 in a letter sent to his agent in Venice, Pietro Gelido. This short paragraph pointed out the importance of a possible internal war between the two remaining sons of Süleyman I and how it would cause either the death of the reigning Sultan or the empire to be divided into two, both desirable outcomes for the Duke. While it indicated how an internal issue could serve the political aims of those outside its immediate influence zone, this paragraph also presented several hints about the news system between the Ottoman Empire and Italy.

In January 1559, a letter was written when the Princes had just arrived at their sancaks after an extended travel period. This news suggested the possibility of a war between two brothers, with parties outside of the Ottoman bureaucracy closely following the issue. The turmoil caused by the Princes was being discussed outside the palace walls in the capital and was reported to Italy. While other correspondence between Cosimo I and his agent did not specifically indicate when and how Cosimo I became aware of the succession struggle, an earlier *avviso* from Istanbul revealed that the Italian community was already aware of the discord between princes even before they started to move towards their new sancaks. An *avviso* dated 23 October 1558 stated that Prince Bayezid was having difficulty leaving for his new sancak of Amasya while Süleyman I insisted on sending him.¹⁰⁰⁸

Secondly, there was the question of the accuracy of these news pieces. For example, the *avviso* about Prince Bayezid was correct compared to news circulating in the Ottoman context and the information acquired from the Prince’s letters. On the other hand, the information circulating about Prince Selim was more contradictory. According to the said *avviso* of 23 October 1558, Prince Selim -who by that date was still at Manisa- had confiscated

¹⁰⁰⁷ ASF., *Mediceo del Principato* 2974, c. 38

¹⁰⁰⁸ “Che Baisith l’altro figliuolo si rendeva difficile di partirsi del suo sangiaciato per andar in Amasia, dove il Signore era deliberati che in ogni modo vi andasse.” ASF., *Mediceo del Principato* 3079, c. 74

the annual payment from Egypt [*Mısır irsâliyesi*] for himself with an excuse of needing it and amassed twelve thousand horses.¹⁰⁰⁹ His father doubted his intentions and did not want to leave Istanbul for the campaign of Hungary due to his suspicions and the discord between his two sons.¹⁰¹⁰

This information about Prince Selim was both true and false: he did not confiscate the “annual tribute of Egypt” [*il tributo del Caiero*], which would be considered a highly treacherous act. On the other hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, Prince Selim *gathered* men and horses but did not leave Manisa on time showing his brother’s refusal to Kütahya as an excuse. More importantly, Süleyman I was increasingly growing uncertain of the intentions of Prince Bayezid, not Selim. A letter penned by Prince Bayezid to his father while he was still in Kütahya in September/October 1558 proved that Süleyman I was not leaving for Edirne because Prince Bayezid was not leaving for Amasya, hence proving he had doubts about his son.¹⁰¹¹ In fact, the *arz* of Serbölük Hızır indicated that in the early days of November 1558, Süleyman I was still refusing to go to Edirne unless Prince Bayezid continued his journey.¹⁰¹² Hence, the *avvisi* from Istanbul was half accurate. There was a preparation for a campaign and a growing discord between the two princes. However, they were not accurate about the identity of the Prince towards whom Süleyman I felt suspicious.

A further study of the Italian primary sources revealed two significant spikes in news and rumours. The first spike occurred two months following the Battle of Konya on May 30, 1559, while the second spike happened after Shah Tahmasb I imprisoned Prince Bayezid in the spring of 1560.

¹⁰⁰⁹ It is important to note that “irsaliye” referred to the annual “remittances” of cash and kind sent to the personal treasury of the sultan (*Harem-i Hümayun hazinesi*) in Istanbul. These remittances were sent by the holders of the non-feudal sancaks as well as by the governors of the non-feudal Arab province. The most well-known and the largest among them was the “*Mısır İrsaliyesi*”, the one sent by the governors-general of Egypt from its conquest to the 19th century. Shaw, S.J. “İrsaliyye”, *EI2*, Vol.4, pp. 79-80.

¹⁰¹⁰ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 74

¹⁰¹¹ “...buyurmuşsınız ki sen gitmeyince ben Edirne’ye gitmezim bizi de kışa komayasız deyü benim pâdişahım ben ne kelbiyim ki böyle dersiz sıhhat ve selâmet ile Edirne’ye varın...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e),0753_0039_0010.

¹⁰¹² (BOA), (TS.MA.e),0754_0007

(1) A Comparison of Narratives: The Battle of Konya and immediate aftermath

The primary sources from the Ottoman Empire provide news and rumours about Prince Bayezid's movements and intentions before and after the Battle of Konya. However, they do not describe the battle itself. The only existing eyewitness account of the battle is the "İtaatname", written by "Derviş Mustafa".¹⁰¹³ On the other hand, Venetian and Florentine primary sources contain multiple accounts of the battle. These accounts discuss the number of combatants, the names of the commanders, and the tactics used by both sides. Some even provide rich details, such as Prince Bayezid's supposed speech to his soldiers before the battle.¹⁰¹⁴ These sources also extensively cover the following two months, July and August 1559, including Bayezid's escape to Safavid lands.

Two key concerns arose regarding these sources, composed of letters and anonymous avvisi: the identity of the sources and their reliability. The news sources included several individuals stationed in Istanbul and Venice. The primary news sources were the Florentine bailo Giovanbattista Buondelmonti and the Venetian bailo Marino Cavalli, who served until January and August 1560, respectively. However, there were additional sources as well. Regarding the battle, the detailed account from Buondelmonti's secretary, Tommaso Petrini, was crucial as he also described the preparations in Istanbul. Meanwhile, Leonardo Corsini and Niccolo Ferranti reported news from Venice based on correspondence from Istanbul.

Corsini and Ferranti based their accounts on letters from Istanbul dated 6, 8, and 9 June 1559.¹⁰¹⁵ On the other hand, Petrini wrote directly from Istanbul on 8 June 1559. Upon close examination of these letters, it was evident that Petrini's account differed from Corsini's and Ferranti's, which were quite similar. For instance, Petrini's letter indicated that Prince Bayezid's army (almost 30,000) was outnumbered by Prince Selim's army (almost 100,000). Following the two-day battle, both sides lost 10,000 of their finest men.¹⁰¹⁶ Petrini's estimates closely matched those provided by the Ottoman secondary sources, which stated that Prince Bayezid had 30,000 men as opposed to Prince Selim's significantly larger army. Both sides

¹⁰¹³ Derviş Mehmed, *İtaatname*, transcribed in Pınar Tarlak, "Klasik Dönem Taht Mücadeleleri: Kanuni ve Oğulları" (MA thesis, Bahçeşehir University, 2016).

¹⁰¹⁴ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.249.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ferranti and Corsini sent their letters to Duke Cosimo I from Venice on 8 and 9 July 1559, respectively.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ibid.*

reported losing 8,000 men, aligning closely with Petrini's estimates.¹⁰¹⁷ On the other hand, while Ferranti did not specify the total number of soldiers, aside from mentioning that both sides lost 30,000 men each, Corsini suggested that 60,000 men fought for Selim's army and 35,000 for Bayezid's army.¹⁰¹⁸ Corsini's estimates were proven to be accurate, while Ferranti's numbers appeared to be greatly exaggerated.¹⁰¹⁹

The accounts also highlight that during the second day of the battle, Prince Bayezid nearly succeeded in breaking through Prince Selim's army lines. However, according to Petrini, the timely intervention of Ahmed Pasha, the governor-general [*beglerbegi*] of Anatolia, and his two sancakbegs caused Prince Bayezid's forces to withdraw and scatter, ultimately saving Prince Selim's army.¹⁰²⁰ On the contrary, Corsini and Ferranti both identified this individual as an anonymous "sangiaco" [*sancakbeg*] who was dispatched by his father to aid Prince Selim. This individual was named in the *İtaatname* as Lala Mustafa Pasha. According to this source, he initiated a counter-attack against Prince Bayezid's forces, first on the left and then on the right flank, compelling them to retreat.¹⁰²¹

Regarding subsequent events, Petrini only reported that Prince Bayezid had abandoned 4000 prisoners and had withdrawn them to the mountains. Corsini and Ferranti's narratives closely aligned in describing Bayezid's retreat: he returned to the city of Amasya with 3000 men (Ferranti referred to the city as Cappadocia), leaving 2000 of those men to safeguard his wives and children.¹⁰²² Both accounts also stated that the third vizier [Sokullu] Mehmed Pasha was ordered to bring Bayezid dead or alive. Ferranti also estimated Mehmed Pasha's forces as 50.000 horses with 2500 janissaries.

The analysis of these correspondences revealed that they accurately depicted the battle and its aftermath. However, they varied in the specific details they provided. Petrini's narrative was the most comprehensive, commencing with the news of Süleyman I's decision to move to the Anatolian side with his army, where he set up camp between Scutari [Üsküdar] and Chalcedon [Kadıköy]. At this location, Süleyman received information about the battle of Konya and its

¹⁰¹⁷ Turan, *Taht Kavgalari*, p. 103-104.

¹⁰¹⁸ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.445; 473.

¹⁰¹⁹ An avviso from Istanbul, dated June 8, 1559, reported that Bayezid's forces numbered 25,000, while Selim had an army of 40,000 soldiers. ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 77.

¹⁰²⁰ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.249

¹⁰²¹ Derviş Mehmed, *İtaatname*, v.42b-43a.

¹⁰²² ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.445; 473

outcome. Petrini then started to describe Prince Bayezid's decision to engage in war against his brother, including his address to his soldiers before the battle. Petrini likely obtained this information and news about the battle during his visit to the Ottoman camp on 6 June 1559 with a dragoman, spending the entire day there while the Sultan presided over an imperial council.¹⁰²³ Given the prevalence of news about Prince Bayezid in the camp, Petrini's news was considered valuable inside knowledge.

Nevertheless, this did not imply that Corsini and Ferranti's narratives were inaccurate; as previously mentioned, most of the information they conveyed was factual, with minor discrepancies in details. What matters is the uniformity of their accounts, particularly concerning Prince Bayezid's escape and [Sokullu] the orders given to Mehmed Pasha, which suggests that their source(s) in Istanbul were the same person. For example, an *avviso* from Istanbul dated 13 June reiterated the same news as Corsini and Ferranti, pointing to a common source of information.¹⁰²⁴ Alternatively, the same information could have been circulating in Istanbul and transmitted to them via different parties.

(2) A Conspiring Prince

The Italian sources also emphasized Prince Bayezid's potential escape routes, a subject extensively discussed in the Ottoman sources.¹⁰²⁵ Ferranti mentioned that Bayezid could escape to either Persia or Egypt, a claim repeated in the *avviso* of 13 June. Meanwhile, Corsini suggested that the Prince would most likely flee to Persia, as going to Egypt was now considered impossible due to [Sokullu] Mehmed Pasha's forces. The significance of these locations lies in their pre-existing notoriety before the Battle of Konya, linking Prince Bayezid to various factions in his struggle to win the throne.

In the case of Egypt, there was concern about the confiscation of the annual payment [*Mısır irsaliyesi*] known as the "tributo del Cairo et di Egitto," as indicated in Italian sources. This apprehension was initially reported in an *avviso* dated 23 October 1558, which accused Prince

¹⁰²³ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.249

¹⁰²⁴ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 81

¹⁰²⁵ See, Chapter III, section III.

Selim of planning to seize the payment.¹⁰²⁶ Subsequent correspondence from spring 1559 onwards suggested that this fear was now directed towards Prince Bayezid, who was considered a “rebel” by the imperial court. On 24 June, Leonardo Corsini sent a letter from Venice relaying news from Alexandria, dated 2 June 1559, stating that forty Ottoman galleys had been dispatched to collect the payment, estimated to be around one and a half million gold. This action was taken as a precaution as Süleyman I feared that his son Bayezid might attempt to seize it by force with his growing army.¹⁰²⁷ Interestingly, Prince Bayezid’s forces were defeated and retreating on the day the letter was written, suggesting that this rumour had already been circulating.

The other hinted issue was the loyalty of İskender Pasha, the governor-general [*beglerbegi*] of Egypt who was demoted in April 1559.¹⁰²⁸ The letter by Florentine bailo Buondelmonti, dated 22 May 1559, mentioned that instead of the forty ships, fifteen ships had set sail from Istanbul to Alexandria and Cairo on 22 April to transport the new governor-general of Egypt, Hadım Ali Pasha. Buondelmonti also heard talks that the former governor-general, İskender Pasha, was reluctant to accept the new governor and may have conspired with Prince Bayezid.¹⁰²⁹ This allegation can also be found in one of the Ottoman *arz*. This was an undated document written by the deputy judge [*kadı naibi*] of Bursa named Kubad who talked about the accusations pointed towards a man named Mercanoğlu. This man was accused of falsifying letters in Prince Bayezid’s name addressed to Shah Tahmasb I and İskender Pasha, urging them to support Bayezid’s in his conflict with his father.¹⁰³⁰ Both men responded affirmatively to these letters, which allegedly led to İskender Pasha’s dismissal. Kubad added more allegations for Mercanoğlu, which prompted a legal case.¹⁰³¹ This incident was intriguing as it specifically

¹⁰²⁶ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 74

¹⁰²⁷ “le 40 galere turchesche erano arivate in quel luogo bene armate per levare il tributo del Cairo et di Egitto il quale dicono essere un milione e mezzo d'oro, et ciò aveva fatto il Gran Sig.re con più sicurezza, dubitandosi che Sultan Baisit suo secondo genito non andassi a quella volta per toglielo atteso che si intende che detto Baisit è propinquo a quella parte con un grossissimo esercito et ogni giorno lo fa maggore...” ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.325.

¹⁰²⁸ This pasha should not be confused with the governor-general of Diyarbakir, also named İskender Pasha known by his epithets “sarı” (blonde) or “Çerkes” (Circassian) who participated in the man-hunt of Prince Bayezid in summer of 1559. The abovementioned İskender Pasha served as the governor of Egypt from 1556 to 1559 and was later appointed as the governor-general of Budin until 1565. Mehmed Süreyya, “İskender Paşa”, *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol.3, p. 809.

¹⁰²⁹ “...alcuni l'ultima secretamente hanno detto che il governatore del Chayro vecchio non ha voluto accettare il governatore nuovo ne li giannizeri 1600. et che é d'accordo col detto Baiazitto, presto se ne intendere il vero et di questo articolo, come nelle mie ho detto, se ne e, sempre dubitato.” ASF., *MdP*, 478, c.552

¹⁰³⁰ “...bundan gayri yine saadetlü padişah hazretleri sultan Bayezid hazretleri ağzından Mısır paşası İskender paşaya dahi bir düzme mektubmuş ki babam ile mabeynimizde adavet vaki olub katlime kasd eyledi şimdiki halde ol canibe varsam beni kabul edermisiz didik de anlar dahi kabul iderüz ecilden mâzul olmuşlardır deyü...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e),0867_0015

¹⁰³¹ In MD number three, there is an order dated 26 July 1560 related to the legal documents of Mercanoğlu, which instructed these documents to be sent from Bursa to Istanbul. (BOA), [*A.DVNS.MHM.d*], No: 3, 1328. This necessitates a further inquiry into sources of legal documents, namely *şer'iyye sicilleri*.

implicated İskender Pasha as a potential ally of Prince Bayezid. This implication could indicate the existing doubt regarding İskender Pasha's loyalty or highlight the significance of Egypt as a revenue source for the imperial court, hence an outcome of their fear of losing it.

In a letter dated 15 June 1559, Venetian bailo Marino Cavalli presented the alternative route discussed in Ottoman sources: the northern route that would have led Prince Bayezid to a city on the Black Sea coast, enabling him to reach Crimea or Georgia. In that sense, Cavalli stated that thirteen Ottoman vessels were sent to the Black Sea with two purposes. One was to send help to Crimean Khans in their efforts to fight the Russians; the second was to control the Black Sea ports to prevent Prince Bayezid's escape to Georgia [Kossia]. However, Cavalli also stated that many doubted Bayezid would take that route because Shah Tahmasb I would refuse to jeopardize the peace between Ottomans and Safavids.¹⁰³²

Discussion in these letters revolved around potential routes and allies, with an implied suggestion of an alliance between Prince Bayezid and the Safavids. The earliest reference to this supposed alliance can be traced back to a letter from Leonardo Corsini, dated 10 June 1559 and sent from Venice. In this letter, Corsini mentioned receiving correspondence from his "friends" in Istanbul, dated 28 April, reporting an attack by the Safavids on the land of Arabia.¹⁰³³ Süleyman I suspected his son Bayezid of being involved in this attack, possibly in collusion with a son of Shah Tahmasb I, intending to position himself to ascend the throne in the event of his father's death who was mentioned to be severely ill at the beginning of the said letter.¹⁰³⁴ Additionally, in another letter from Corsini dated 1 July 1559, which conveyed news from Istanbul dated 2 June, it was stated that Prince Bayezid would not have mobilized his army from Ankara [Angora] unless he was confident of assistance from the Safavids and other populations not loyal to Süleyman I.¹⁰³⁵ On 14 August 1559, an *avviso* presented the culmination of the fear of a potential alliance between Prince Bayezid and Shah Tahmasb, suggesting that they could launch a joint attack on Syria and Egypt. Furthermore, Bayezid reportedly pledged to return the lands conquered by his father to Shah Tahmasb as part of their agreement.¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰³² ASV, *Dispacci Constantinopoli*, 2B, c. 154

¹⁰³³ The land of "Arabia" possibly alluded to the Ottoman-Safavid border that constituted today's Iraq.

¹⁰³⁴ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.264.

¹⁰³⁵ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.400

¹⁰³⁶ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 91

The news and rumours about the alliance were rooted in Ottoman primary sources, which hinted at Safavid involvement in the succession struggle before the battle of Konya. Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha warned Prince Bayezid in a letter written in Spring 1559, stating that the ongoing dispute between the two brothers had been made known to Tahmasb I [*Kızılbaş-ı bed-ma'aş*], who secretly ordered his lords to be prepared as the struggle between the “sons of Osman” would soon present an opportunity for them.¹⁰³⁷ In another report dated before the Battle of Konya, it was mentioned that there were individuals from the Shah’s entourage in the court of Prince Bayezid. However, the report’s author was unsure whether this information was true or false.¹⁰³⁸

These examples showed that the information provided by Italian sources was based on news circulating within the Ottoman news network, but the details were altered during transmission. For instance, while the Ottoman primary documents did not openly discuss an alliance between the Shah and Bayezid, they did emphasize the Shah’s interest in the Ottoman succession struggle, which was not uncommon for a rival ruler. This interest in Ottoman affairs was also observed among Christian rulers such as Duke Cosimo I or King Philip of Spain, who sought information to shape their political strategies in the Mediterranean.

(3) Interpreting The News

The foreign communities residing in Istanbul closely followed the developments of the succession struggle, intending to relay crucial information to their rulers. This information would then influence the political and military decisions of their rulers. Consequently, the rulers relied on their primary informants to gather intelligence, interpret and analyse news and rumours.

Florentine Bailo Buondelmonti, for instance, confidently communicated his foresight in predicting the escalating tensions between two Ottoman princes to his master, Duke Cosimo I.

¹⁰³⁷ “Kızılbaş-ı bed-maâş dahi bu ahvâllerin ma ûm idinüb, ‘Osman-oğullarının mâbeynlerinde biribirine buğz u ’adâvetieri olub muharebeleri var, fırsat mahallidir, hazır olunuz’ deyü hafiyeten sultânlarına ve korucularına tenbîh eylemekden hâli olmaduğın serhad Beğlerbeğileri dergâh-ı ’âliye ‘arz eylemişlerdir.” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0059.

¹⁰³⁸ “...halkdan işidürüz ki Şah’ın muhkem cemiyeti vardır bilmezim sahih midir sahih değil midir sahih olduğu takdirce sultan Beyazid’a bir al mıdır yohsa bunda olundu... nicekim baştan çıkardıysa mugâyirde böyle bir fesâda mübâşeret ettirim...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0010.

In a letter dated 12 May 1559, he reaffirmed his earlier predictions and further interpreted the situation, mentioning that Prince Bayezid and his army were already mobilizing.¹⁰³⁹ Buondelmonti remarked that while it was uncertain whether Bayezid would emerge victorious, what mattered most to Süleyman I was to prevent a civil war at all costs hence eliminating one brother, Selim or Bayezid, a viable solution. Süleyman I aimed to preserve peace and stability, emphasizing the importance of responding calmly to the current situation, given the newfound peace among Christians following the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, signed on 2-3 April 1559, which brought an end to longstanding conflicts between England, France, and Spain.¹⁰⁴⁰ In the aftermath of the battle on 18 July 1559, Buondelmonti continued to analyse the events surrounding Prince Bayezid's escape. He observed the prevailing fear and paranoia in the city and the Sultan as the Prince's whereabouts remained unknown. Many believed that Bayezid was amassing wealth and troops, yet Buondelmonti calmly pointed out that his forces had actually dwindled, which aligned with Ottoman reports. Buondelmonti suggested that despite Bayezid's intent to prolong the conflict, Süleyman I held the advantage with his vast forces under his command.¹⁰⁴¹

Consequently, Buondelmonti was able to maintain both objectivity and subjectivity in his interpretation of the news. He presented himself as a reliable news interpreter, earning the appreciation of Cosimo I.¹⁰⁴² However, his interpretation was also marred by his personal views on the Ottomans, whom he called "people with barbaric ignorance who were easy to predict".¹⁰⁴³ Nevertheless, he approached the news with caution and scepticism, as seen in his doubts about the alliance between the old governor-general of Egypt, Iskender Pasha and Bayezid.¹⁰⁴⁴ A comparison of Buondelmonti's letter dated 14 August 1559 with anonymous *avviso* from the same date highlighted the distinction between the news filtered by Buondelmonti and the rumours circulating in the city.

¹⁰³⁹ "...sé le mie lettere saranno comparse Vostra Eccellenza Altissima heva visto che io li ho quasi in tutte preditto e futuri tumulti tra li due signoretti ottomani quanto prima il tempo ne concedesse loro occasione..." ASF., *MdP*, 478, c.552

¹⁰⁴⁰ "...et di molti si pensano che al Signore basterà levarne uno di mezzo, o, il maggiore o il minore, li bastera et cercherà in qualunque modo estinguere le guerre civile rispetto alla pace costretta di Constantinopoli... che stante la pace tra li christiani, lui intende assicurare é sua regno, nel miglior modo che lui potevã et quanto prima per possèr rispondere quietamente à chi lo vorrà inquietare" Ibid.

¹⁰⁴¹ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.564

¹⁰⁴² In his letter of 14 August, he again stated that since last winter, hence since late 1558, he had foreseen this war. ASF., *MdP*, 480, c.243

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid. c. 244

¹⁰⁴⁴ ASF., *MdP*, 478, c.552

The accounts detail the events in Erzurum, where Prince Bayezid successfully evaded his pursuers and crossed into Safavid territory.¹⁰⁴⁵ Buondelmonti reported that Bayezid found himself trapped, and Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, his principal pursuer, attempted to deploy forces through the governor-general of Erzurum [Ayas Pasha]. However, the governor-general refused and pledged loyalty to Prince Bayezid.¹⁰⁴⁶ According to the *avvisi*, the governor-generals of Sivas and Erzurum both supported Bayezid's rebellion.¹⁰⁴⁷ Both Buondelmonti and the *avvisi* claimed that slaves and various populations preferred Bayezid over Selim as the heir to the throne, causing great unease for Süleyman. On the other hand, Buondelmonti described Prince Selim's struggles with soldiers who refused to follow him and highlighted how this internal unrest affected the political aspirations of several Christian powers. Additionally, the *avvisi* emphasized the Ottoman fear of a potential alliance between Shah Tahmasb and Prince Bayezid, a point that Buondelmonti did not mention.

It is crucial to analyse the similarities and differences in the news specifics to grasp the debates and interpretations of events. Buondelmonti, with his ties to the Ottoman court and diverse sources of information, had access to more comprehensive insights into the ongoing events. Nevertheless, *avvisi* must have had a reliable source of information. For example, both accounts accurately identified the governor-general of Erzurum Ayas Pasha, who was accused of aiding Prince Bayezid and subsequently executed.¹⁰⁴⁸ However, unlike these narratives suggested, Ayas Pasha never declared his loyalty to Prince Bayezid. Instead, he claimed his efforts were to delay Prince Bayezid before he crossed the Safavid border. The most accurate narrative on this matter was Venetian bailo Cavalli's letter dated 21 August 1559, which detailed the reasons provided by Ayas Pasha and indicated that it was not his fault that Bayezid escaped, yet the Porte eventually blamed him.¹⁰⁴⁹ This letter showcased the high credibility of the Venetian news network led by the bailo.

¹⁰⁴⁵ For the Erzurum events, see, chapter III, pp. 178-181

¹⁰⁴⁶ ASF., *MdP*, 480, c.243

¹⁰⁴⁷ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 91

¹⁰⁴⁸ On the other hand, the governor general of Sivas [Ali Pasha] who supposedly pledged to Prince Bayezid was accused by Mehmed Pasha of failing to intercept Prince Bayezid as he passed through Sivas on his way Erzurum, although he was never formally blamed. Ali Pasha's previous interactions with Prince Bayezid were generally hostile, and it is possible that he evaded the Prince's forces out of fear rather than favouritism. To see their interactions, see Prince Bayezid's letters to his father complaining about the insolence of Ali Pasha: (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_004_001; (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_004_002.

¹⁰⁴⁹ ASV, *Dispacci*, c. 182

The primary difference between these narratives was the portrayal of the alliance between Bayezid and Shah Tahmasb I, which was emphasized in the *avvisi* but not mentioned by Buondelmonti. It is highly likely that Buondelmonti had heard these rumours but chose not to give them credence. In contrast, the *avvisi* encompassed all the circulating news about Prince Bayezid. Furthermore, in this analysis, two key themes around which the news revolved were highlighted: the public perception of princes and the influence of news on the perspectives of various political actors with distinct agendas.

For example, in May 1559, the Republic of Venice experienced a diplomatic stagnation with the Ottomans following an incident at the Ottoman port of Durres [Durazzo] in Albania. This incident occurred when the *provveditore dell'armata* Pandolfo Contarini pursued a pirate ship that sought refuge in Durazzo. His decision to bombard the harbour to draw out the pirate ship clearly violated the 1540 Treaty [*ahdname*] between the two states.¹⁰⁵⁰ As a result, negotiations transpired in the following months between Venetian bailo Cavalli and Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha.¹⁰⁵¹ A letter from Corsini dated 24 June 1559 mentioned the contentment of the Venetians due to the disputes between the two Princes and the overall decline of Ottoman affairs in the east while they eagerly awaited the results of the negotiations on Durazzo.¹⁰⁵² Venetian officials believed that the perceived weakness of the Ottomans could impact the negotiations. Buondelmonti shared this view, emphasizing in his letter dated 14 August 1559 that the internal strife of princes had influenced Süleyman's response to the Venetians regarding Durazzo.¹⁰⁵³ He also noted that the succession struggle played into the hands of King Philip II, facilitating the realization of his objectives.¹⁰⁵⁴

The second issue, the reputation of the Princes, was a contentious issue, and it was extensively discussed in the Italian primary documents. These documents portrayed Prince Bayezid as the publicly favoured and popular heir to the throne, contrasting with Prince Selim, who was described as “unpopular” with the public for various reasons.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Costantini, Vera. “The Affair of Durazzo (1559) and the Controversial Destitution of the *Provveditore all'Armata*” in *«A Mari Usque ad Mare» Visual and Material Culture from the Adriatic to India* edited by Mattia Guidetti & Sara Mondini, Venezia: Edizioni Ca Foscari, 2016, p. 311

¹⁰⁵¹ ASV, *Dispacci*, c. 158-160; 176-178.

¹⁰⁵² “Signor mio, qui si sta molto contento perchè si sente da ogni parte di Levante che le faccende del turcho vanno in declinatione, una per la discordia de' figliuoli che ogni dì si fan maggiori et con le armi in mano, et l'altra per la indispositione e vechiezza et mal contento animo di quello, sentendosi mancare la obediencia quando ne ha piu di bisogno e si sta d'ora in ora aspettando di intendere che resoluzione il turco faro sopra la cosa di Durazzo” ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.325

¹⁰⁵³ ASF., *MdP*, 480, c.244

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

The earliest reference to public preference for Prince Bayezid can be found in bailo Cavalli's letter dated 29 June 1559, where he described the prince's dramatic escape from Amasya after his defeat in the battle of Konya as earning him "universal affection from all" and attracting widespread support for his claim to the throne.¹⁰⁵⁵ Other accounts written in August 1559 detailed the individuals who preferred Bayezid, primarily soldiers who wanted him to become Sultan after his father's passing. In Buondelmonti's letter, he recounted the events involving the soldiers of the governor-general of Erzurum [Ayas Pasha], who refused to take up arms against Bayezid even after Prince Selim ordered them to do so, following Ayas Pasha's pledge of loyalty to Bayezid. Some of these soldiers informed Selim that in the event of an "attack," his men would end up dead. Prince Selim promptly reported this to his father, stating that the soldiers did not support him or his father [referred to as "old man" in the text] and instead chanted Bayezid's name.¹⁰⁵⁶ This letter made Süleyman very distrustful of his soldiers. Similar content was repeated in the *avviso* dated 14 August, and in the *avviso* dated 19 August, it was mentioned that "Turks were willing to sacrifice themselves and fight for Bayezid's cause."¹⁰⁵⁷

In contrast to his brother, who was praised as a "courageous young man" and admired for his ability to inspire his soldiers before battle, Prince Selim was depicted negatively.¹⁰⁵⁸ In a letter dated July 1, 1559, Leonardo Corsini described Prince Selim as deserving "little consideration" and unsuitable for matters of military and state. Corsini also suggested that Selim was only suited for "intoxication" and "venereal tasks," alluding to his drinking and sexual behaviour.¹⁰⁵⁹ Another letter, written on February 6, 1560, in Famagusta by Pedro de Luxan, mentioned that Prince Selim was ill-liked due to his habitual drinking and lack of religious observance.¹⁰⁶⁰ These allegations against Prince Selim, especially those about sexual misconduct, can be found in the letters of Prince Bayezid, who was naturally biased against his rival.¹⁰⁶¹ However, other Ottoman primary documents provided little insight into this issue. Despite the negative portrayal, it is essential to note that the abovementioned Italian documents also depicted Prince Selim as his father's favourite, indicating that despite the dissatisfaction with the favour shown to his son Bayezid, Süleyman was resolute in his preference for Prince Selim.

¹⁰⁵⁵ ASV, *Dispacci*, c.164

¹⁰⁵⁶ ASF., *MdP*, 480, c.243.

¹⁰⁵⁷ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 91; 92.

¹⁰⁵⁸ ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.249.

¹⁰⁵⁹ "Conosciuto Baisit di maggore speranza nel imperio turchesco che Sultan Salim, il quale tengono per persona di poca considerazione più per esso atto alla crepula, et agli ufiti venerei.." ASF., *MdP*, 479, c.400.

¹⁰⁶⁰ ASF., *MdP*, 483, c. 389.

¹⁰⁶¹ (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0657_0043_020

The Christian communities and the Ottoman officials had their own political reasons for portraying Bayezid in a certain way. The Christian rulers believed Bayezid's growing popularity could lead to unrest within the Ottoman Empire, weakening them politically and diverting their attention from Christian matters. According to Buondelmonti's letter, Süleyman's determination to make Selim the next Sultan and the public's support of Bayezid suggested a potential two-year power struggle, which could lead to Bayezid becoming the ruler of Anatolia after Süleyman's death, and the empire being divided.¹⁰⁶² On the other hand, Ottoman officials wanted to depict Prince Bayezid as a troublemaker to delegitimize his actions in the eyes of the public.¹⁰⁶³

In both instances, Prince Bayezid symbolized the turmoil within the Ottoman Empire. The distinction lay in the varied interpretations of this symbolism within different political environments. Consequently, the issue surpassed the extent of Prince Bayezid's actual public renown. The critical factor lies in the manipulation and interpretation of information through the filtering of news and rumours.

(4) A Comparison of Narratives: The Imprisonment of Prince Bayezid

The news and rumours resurfaced when Prince Bayezid and his sons were abruptly imprisoned in April 1560.¹⁰⁶⁴ As discussed in the previous section, Ottoman officials were eager to ascertain the cause of this sudden turn of events and employed various informants to gather information.¹⁰⁶⁵ The Christian communities were equally curious, although the reasons suggested by different sources varied, with Italian accounts providing explanations not found in Ottoman records.

In the Italian sources examined, the earliest reference to the imprisonment was found in two *avvisi*, one in Italian and other in Spanish, from Istanbul dated 22-23 May 1560. These dates

¹⁰⁶² ASF., *MaP*, 480, c.243

¹⁰⁶³ Prince Bayezid was also wary of his reputation as his letters before the battle of Konya emphasized that the actions of his father and governor-generals surrounding were giving him a "bad reputation" [*bed-nam*] among people. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0758_0073_004_001. For the discussion on reputation of Prince Bayezid in the Ottoman documents, see Chapter III, pp. 228-229

¹⁰⁶⁴ An Ottoman document presented that the imprisonment occurred within the last ten days of the month of *Receb* [*Receb ayının evâhîrinde*], which corresponded to 16-26 April 1560.

(BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059.

¹⁰⁶⁵ see Chapter III, pp. 205-211

aligned with when the Porte received information from its eastern provinces.¹⁰⁶⁶ Similarly, Pietro Gelido, Duke Cosimo's agent who regularly reported news from Venice, had seen letters from Istanbul dated 22 and 27 May 1560 written by the French ambassador detailing the imprisonment of Prince Bayezid and his sons.

The Italian *avvisi* from 22 May described how Prince Bayezid grew suspicious of his treasurer [*defterdar*], who had accompanied him to the Safavid court and assisted in negotiations with Shah Tahmasb, earning the trust of the Safavid ruler. The treasurer spent an extended period with the Shah, leading Bayezid to become distrustful and order the treasurer to have his eyes gouged upon his return from the palace. Upon learning this incident, Shah Tahmasb felt greatly offended and responded by imprisoning Bayezid and his sons in iron cages, executing half of Bayezid's retinue and dispersing the other half to different provinces of Persia.¹⁰⁶⁷

The initial portion of the news relayed by Gelido through the French ambassador's letters, dated 22 and 27 May, aligned with the *avviso* as mentioned earlier. It also detailed the imprisonment of Prince Bayezid, who had executed one of his slaves after a failed negotiation with a group associated with the Shah during a hunt. However, Gelido did not mention the slave's profession or his amicable relationship with the Shah in his account. Furthermore, Gelido enumerated other reasons for the prince's imprisonment, including his alleged conspiracy to provoke unrest among Sunni groups in Persia. Another reason for his confinement was the negotiation between the Safavid ambassador and Süleyman, in which the Shah offered to return Bayezid in exchange for the region of "Mesopotamia", present-day Iraq.¹⁰⁶⁸

The Spanish *avvisos* from Istanbul align with both narrative. Bayezid's alleged instigation of several Persian towns to rebel mirrors the Gelido account. Conversely, the execution of his slave after observing him conversing with the Shah, leading him to suspect that his slave was divulging his secrets to the Shah, resembles the Italian *avvisi*. However, this *avviso* stated that

¹⁰⁶⁶The news of imprisonment was first reported in Prince Selim's letter from Konya, who transmitted news he received via letters sent by the governor-general of Van Kubad Pasha and the governor-general of Baghdad Ferhad Pasha which included oral news relayed by the latter's two *çavuş* who carried the letter to Prince Selim. (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0760_0016.

¹⁰⁶⁷ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 130. See Appendix.

¹⁰⁶⁸Gelido also reported a letter from Istanbul, received by his Portuguese friend in Venice on 27 May 1560, confirming that Bayezid had been blinded and transported to a location four days' journey from the Ottoman border. ASF., *MdP*, 2973, c. 114

negotiations between the Safavid ambassador and the Sultan, in which the Sultan purportedly agreed to cede certain lands near Persia in exchange for his son was the “truest cause”.¹⁰⁶⁹

Upon closely examining these accounts, it becomes evident that the initial news reaching Istanbul shared striking similarities, with only minor discrepancies in details. The prevalent piece of news circulating in all three narratives was the “execution of Bayezid’s slave.” However, in both *avvisi*, the slave was executed for allegedly betraying Prince Bayezid, whereas in Gelido, he was executed for failing to negotiate with certain Safavid court members. Interestingly, this “execution” story was absent in the examined Ottoman primary sources, such as letters and reports from Ottoman border officials. However, contemporary Safavid sources and several Ottoman chronicles did mention a narrative involving a member of Prince Bayezid’s inner circle informing Shah Tahmasb of an assassination plot, leading to the subsequent execution of the said servant with order of Prince Bayezid.¹⁰⁷⁰ The silence of Ottoman primary documents raises the possibility that they either refrained from documenting this news to ascertain its accuracy or that a version of the story may have been mentioned in now non-existent Ottoman documents. For instance, in a letter dated late May 1560, Prince Selim mentioned that his brother's imprisonment was due to an assassination attempt against Shah, a piece of news conveyed to Selim by the governor-general of Van Kubad Pasha whose original letter could have contained the longer story of the assassination attempt.¹⁰⁷¹ Therefore, investigating alternative news systems could shed light on the missing pieces of news.

The only cause close to the one presented in the Ottoman primary sources was the negotiations between the two states. According to a letter from a Kurdish nobleman, Sultan Hüseyin, who had an extensive spy network operating along the Ottoman-Safavid border, Shah Tahmasb imprisoned Prince Bayezid to please the Sultan and maintain the existing peace accord between the two states.¹⁰⁷² However, this report did not mention a land transaction between the two states as suggested by the *avvisi*. Shah Tahmasb’s demands only became apparent in 1561 as negotiations for the handing over of Prince Bayezid intensified. Additionally, Sultan Hüseyin’s

¹⁰⁶⁹ “...y otros scriven que la causa mas verdadera hasido la negoçiaçion que ha havido entre el Turco y el embaxador del sophi al qual porque le embie a Bayasit y a sus hilos le ha prometido inviolable armistad, y algunas tierra circumvezinas a Persia.” ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 66. See Appendix

¹⁰⁷⁰ Turan, *Taht Kavgalari*, p. 123-24

¹⁰⁷¹ “Şaha kasd ittigü duyulmağın Şah kendüyü muhkem habs edüb külliyen ademisin katl ittügüne Kubad Paşa kulları haber alıb bu bendeye mektub göndermiş aynıyla mektubu pâye-i serir-i âlâ’ya irsal olundu...” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0760_0016.

¹⁰⁷² “...Amma tutub habs eyledüğüne akvâl ve rivâyât-ı muhtelife çokdur essah akvâl budur ki padişâhının rızâ-ı şerîfleri ve istihkâm-ı ahd için tutub habs eylemiştir.” (BOA), (TS.MA.e), 0851_0059

report was written on June 14, 1560, a month later than the appearance of the news of the “negotiation”. Therefore, I propose that this news was based on the recent visit of the Safavid ambassador, who had departed Istanbul a month earlier on April 20, 1560, after being unable to reach a settlement regarding Prince Bayezid rather than Ottoman news arrived from the border.¹⁰⁷³

The negotiation process between Süleyman I and Safavid ambassador, Akçasakal Ali Beg, was scrutinized by the different communities who wrote about his arrival, the reception of him and his entourage which were described vividly as well as his accommodations and gifts presented to him.¹⁰⁷⁴ As the access to the Safavid delegation was severely limited due to Ottoman customs regarding foreign ambassadors, several rumours started to appear in the absence of information.

The first of these rumours pertained to the kidnapping of a high-ranking member of the Safavid embassy. An anonymous letter dated March 16 1560, detailed the appearance and attire of Ambassador Akçasakal Ali Beg and mentioned that another ambassador was supposed to accompany him but was rumoured to have been kidnapped by the orders of Süleyman, brought to the Palace, interrogated, and then put to death.¹⁰⁷⁵ Another report suggested that Prince Selim was responsible for this abduction, interrogation, and subsequent execution to obtain detailed information about the Shah’s intentions.¹⁰⁷⁶ While these rumours seemed unlikely, they were based on factual events. For instance, another Safavid ambassador, Seyfeddin Erişti, was sent to Prince Selim in Konya and arrived in Ottoman lands alongside the Safavid embassy but got separated from Ali Beg after stopping in Erzurum.¹⁰⁷⁷ The Ottoman court’s eagerness to learn about Tahmasb’s intentions was also confirmed by the immediate dispatch of the Ottoman ambassador to Persia, Sinan Beg, before the arrival of the Safavid embassy in the capital.

Hence, the presence of the Safavid embassy in the capital resulted in the circulation of various unverified reports and speculations unrelated to information originating from the Empire’s

¹⁰⁷³ The departure date was mentioned in the letter of the Florentine bailo Albertaccio Alberti. ASF., *MdP*, 484/A, c. 748

¹⁰⁷⁴ He arrived with a great pomp on 16 March 1560. ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 50-51; 55; ASV, *Dispacci*, 2B, c. 234

¹⁰⁷⁵ “Ve ne dovea esser anche un’altro, ma prima che l’ambasciatore sia stato a Constantinopoli s’è smarrito, et s’è detto che il Turco l’ha fatto rubare, et condurre qui nel seraglio, ove é stato tormentato perche dicesse il segreto della commissione data dal Soffy al suo ambasciatore et cio che disegna di fare et poi fattolo morire.” ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 50

¹⁰⁷⁶ “Ma che il figlio Selim ha fatto robare due di loro, l’uno di quali fu introdotto nel seraglio, e non é mai stato mandati fuori, et altro che dicono esser il secreto. a forza de tormenti é stato morto perche selim voleva informazione da lui minutamente dell’intenzione” ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 54

¹⁰⁷⁷ Turan, “İran Elçilik Heyeti”, p. 275

eastern frontiers. For example, in an *avviso* dated 25 April 1560, just five days after the Safavid delegation departed Istanbul, it was reported that during negotiations, Süleyman insisted on receiving Bayezid's head and threatened the Safavids with war if his demand was not met. It was also rumoured that Shah Tahmasb had married one of his daughters to Prince Orhan, the first-born son of Bayezid.¹⁰⁷⁸

The reports of marriage or relationships between Prince Bayezid and female members of the Safavid royal family continued to surface, with the content varying based on Bayezid's status. A Spanish *avviso* from Istanbul dated 19 June 1560 stated that three reports had been received confirming the imprisonment of Prince Bayezid. However, the exact reason for his incarceration remained unclear. One of the rumoured causes was Bayezid's alleged romantic involvement with one of Shah's sisters.¹⁰⁷⁹ Same story was repeated in a letter of Pietro Gelido, written in 20 July, transmitting news he had received from Cavalli's long awaited letters from Istanbul dated 14 and 20 June. Gelido's letter underscored the state of confusion that the Italian communities were experiencing due to the lack of information. As of 14 June, no fresh updates regarding Bayezid's condition had arrived from the eastern borders of the Ottoman Empire. The 20 June letter from the bailo contained conflicting reports about the Prince. One report solemnly described the circumcision of his sons in the "Persian way," which was met with scepticism by the Venetians. Conversely, another report claimed that Bayezid had been imprisoned for having an affair with the Shah's sister.¹⁰⁸⁰¹⁰⁸¹

These examples imply that rumours and interpretations of existing news fill the information vacuum void in the absence of fresh news. For instance, the rumoured "marriage" between two royal households was speculated upon before the news of Bayezid's imprisonment reached Istanbul. The interpretation of this news depended on the prevailing political situation. When Prince Bayezid was perceived as a favourite of Shah Tahmasb and a threat to his father, a marriage between Bayezid (or his sons) and a member of the Safavid family would have bolstered his position and potentially caused more trouble for the Sultan. However, once his

¹⁰⁷⁸ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 122

¹⁰⁷⁹ The other suggested cause was Bayezid's alliance with a son of Shah Tahmasb, Şahzade Ismail. "...que haviar recebido tres havisos conformes de la certinidad de la prision de Bayazith avunque diferentes en narrar la causa: porque onos dizen que por haver el dormido tres or quatro vezes con la hermana del Rey, otros que por haver hecho lega con serach ismael hijo del rey el qual avisar que tambien ha sedo detenido, y otros por otros causa." ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 67.

¹⁰⁸⁰ ASF., *MdP*, 2973, c. 138r.

¹⁰⁸¹ Circumcision news was repeated in an *avviso* in Spanish dated 20 July 1560. ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 133.

imprisonment became known, the “marriage” news morphed into an “illicit affair” as a means to explain the reason for his imprisonment, although no one was entirely certain. This news of a “marriage” resurfaced a year later in another letter dated 21 May 1561. It detailed the diplomatic impasse in the ongoing negotiations between the two states, as the Shah continued to delay the Ottoman delegation, led by the governor-general of Maraş, Ali Pasha, regarding the handing over of Bayezid. It also mentioned that a spy of Süleyman had returned from the Safavid lands and that the Shah was now related to Prince Bayezid after giving one of his sisters or daughters in marriage.¹⁰⁸²

This section involves an initial study to examine the Florentine and Venetian news mechanisms operating in the eastern Mediterranean during the mid-1500s by focusing on news and rumours related to Prince Bayezid Affair. The assessment of intelligence collected by diverse operatives revealed the effectiveness of the news administration systems within these communities. Primary sources illustrated the participation of multiple entities in the intelligence-gathering system and their adeptness in accessing information disseminated within the Ottoman intelligence network.

The information and rumours disseminated by these actors were based on ongoing events and often aligned with reports gathered by Ottoman officials or rumours circulating in Istanbul. The absence of primary Ottoman documents was the first reason for certain information not being found in the Ottoman context, despite secondary sources indicating that the said information existed, such as the case of the “executed servant.” The second reason was that some news and rumours reflected political needs and the prevailing state of mind, especially when fresh news was lacking. This condition was particularly evident in late 1560 when information about Bayezid's imprisonment became scarce, leading to contradictory news about his return with a great army, purportedly to attack Syria or replace his father, similar to his grandfather Selim I.¹⁰⁸³¹⁰⁸⁴ In reality, Bayezid and his son were still imprisoned. The content news depicted the mind-set of both parties. The Christian rulers were eager for the Ottomans to remain preoccupied with internal conflicts, particularly following the devastating Battle of Djerba in

¹⁰⁸² “...e tanto piu essendo venuto una spia del Signore: che ha detto per cosa certa ch'el Sophi ha fatto parentado con Baiazetto, al quale ha dato una sua sorella, o figliuola per moglie.” ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 77

¹⁰⁸³ ASF., *MdP*, 3079, c. 145

¹⁰⁸⁴ “Per via di Ragusa, si era inteso qualche di prima che Bayezid era in compagnia con 25 milla cavalli soldati grandissima che si disegneva passar il mar maggiori al Bosphoro e andarsene alla volta d'adrianopoli apparso come fecesseno avo Selim scacciò il padre [Bayezid II] dell'imperio, ma costoro di questa particularita non dicono cosa altra” ASF., *MdP*, 2973, c.176

May 1560. The transmitted news from the agents reflected this apprehension.¹⁰⁸⁵ Additionally, reports about Bayezid's possible return indicated the Ottoman court's vigilant and concerned state of mind, as their concerted efforts to gather more information on Bayezid showed. Therefore, the study further proved that news and rumours were highly political and were prone to be used in different contexts for different purposes as was discussed in the previous chapter on Siege of Rhodes.

¹⁰⁸⁵ ASF., *MdP*, 2973, c.114; ASF., *MdP*, 4277, c. 74; 96

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the news and rumour patterns in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean by analysing two case studies that put Ottoman Empire as the center stage: The Siege of Rhodes (1522) and The Prince Bayezid Affair (1559-1562). It also critically assessed various theories on news and rumours from different social disciplines in the twentieth century to determine their relevance within a specific historical context.

This research focused on two systems: The Ottoman and Venetian news networks. While the Venetian news network has been extensively studied due to the Republic of Venice's prominence as the leading news supplier of the Ottoman Empire for Christian Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the same area of study has yet to be lacking in Ottoman news management. This study seeks to fill this void by investigating the intricacies of the Ottoman news administration in itself and using Venice's news system as a reference point for comparison. This dissertation aims to gain insight into the traits and trends of a broader system by analysing two case studies within a specific geographic area and timeframe. The study refrains from making definitive statements and encourages further investigation and redefinition of news and rumours through a historical lens. Additionally, it tests whether social theories on news and rumours apply to early modern news, ultimately aiming to enhance our understanding of contemporary news and rumours.

The academic discourse in the twentieth century surrounding news and rumours focuses on five key interconnected points: accuracy, transmission processes, the human element, contextual influences, and functional purposes. Firstly, rumours are posited as predominantly untrue or unverified news. Secondly, rumours undergo metamorphosis during transmission, as individual contributions shape them during dissemination. Thirdly, rumours are closely linked to human psychology, allowing individuals to express their beliefs, biases, anxieties, and intense emotions. The fourth point emphasizes the critical role of contextual factors in the production and distribution of rumours, as cultural and social disparities significantly influence the involved parties. Lastly, rumours are recognized as wielders of political influence, capable of moulding power dynamics between authorities and the public. These considerations contribute to the broader debate on the distinguishability of news and rumours.

The prevailing consensus among scrutinized studies is that rumours and news were seen as separate categories, with rumours being unconfirmed information that transformed into the news once confirmed. However, upon delving into the etymology of words and consulting early modern dictionaries, it became apparent that words meaning news also encompassed the notion of rumour. Subsequently, an analysis of primary documents revealed that these words were used interchangeably, indicating a correlation between the two concepts. As a result, this study propagates that these two forms of communication were not distinct categories during the early modern period, contradicting the previously mentioned suggestion.

In academic studies, rumours have been associated with unverified and false information, while the news is considered to be confirmed and accurate. During the early modern period, news and rumours were initially vague, making them more influential and easily open to interpretation and manipulation. This neutral stance was evident through etymological analysis of primary documents as seen in the Ottoman context through adjectives used with the words for news and rumours indicated their correctness [*haber-i sahih*], falsity [*yalan haber*], freshness [*taze haber*], or auspiciousness [*haber-i meserret*]. They could be true or false until their authenticity was confirmed or dismissed. Authentication of early modern news and rumours was therefore critical. The process of authentication involved gathering, comparing, and filtering information. This research suggests that some aspects of this authentication process were similar in both Ottoman and Venetian contexts, while others were unique to each system.

In Venetian and Ottoman news networks, establishing credibility and trust posed a significant challenge, requiring a complex interplay of vertical and horizontal relationships. The involvement of high-ranking officials was crucial in both systems, as their social and political standing endowed them with the authority and trustworthiness needed to collect and validate news and rumours. These authorities, in turn, depended on their lower-level colleagues, subordinates, and individuals from diverse professional backgrounds. This hierarchical trust structure was indispensable for the verification of news and rumours. The horizontal trust dynamic within the same social stratum was also crucial. Lower-ranking individuals depended on connections through family, friends, or work to obtain reliable information. Furthermore, trusting those outside their inner circle was usually done through recommendations from trusted peers or higher officials.

In the Ottoman context, the news network was structured around the “household” [*kapi*] model, mirrored the hierarchical Ottoman administrative system. The household encompassed kinship and patron-client relationships that facilitated vertical and horizontal trust formation. In sixteenth century, each prince who was dispatched to the provinces, and every provincial governor had their own household, whose members served as their primary sources of information. The credibility of these informants stemmed from their patronage ties with the household head and other members. Additionally, the horizontal relationships between members of different households were essential for gathering and authenticating news and rumours.

The Venetian news system in the Eastern Mediterranean was structured around the *Stato da Mar* and the *reggimento* system. The *Stato da Mar* denoted the Republic’s overseas territories governed by a college of officials operating under the *reggimento* system. This system centred on the selection of patrician governors from Venice’s Great Council, who were then sent overseas for a specific tenure. These governors wielded the highest authority in acquiring and assessing information. Their social standing empowered them to verify news and rumours, and their familial ties facilitated the development of interconnected trust networks. They also leveraged a diverse array of informants outside their social stratum, whose reliability they referenced in their reports, akin to Ottoman governors. The trustworthiness of these informants stemmed from their standing or endorsement by trustworthy individuals. These informants were chosen based on their varying access to information, typically from their respective professions, including diplomats, merchants, or soldiers.

While appointed by the central government like Ottoman governors, the Venetian governors differed in their organizational structure. The ruling elite of the Republic of Venice, including the governing councils of Venice and the Doge, comprised individuals from the same social strata. In contrast, the sixteenth-century Ottoman administrative system, while also having officials with family ties, was less structured than the Venetian system. Furthermore, the Ottoman state and its administrative and military staff were part of the Sultan’s household, with the Sultan being the ultimate authority, while others were his subjects.

Therefore, different political and administrative systems in Venice and the Ottoman Empire influenced how high-ranking officials filtered and presented news and rumours. A notable contrast can be observed in their approach to false information. Venetian officials regularly

indicated whether they believed the news or rumours they received to be true or false. While *I Diarii* showed that patricians were likelier to openly comment on news in their personal letters rather than in official reports, they still commented, especially when receiving conflicting information. On the other hand, Ottoman officials seldom explicitly stated that they believed news to be false. This restraint was likely due to the pressure they faced from central authorities, who regularly demanded accurate news about Prince Bayezid and issued threats in cases of delays or omissions. In contrast, personal letters from princes often contained statements denying the truth of certain news or rumours, as they could express their opinions more freely. While Ottoman high-ranking officials did discuss the ongoing situation, they refrained from explicitly labelling news or rumours as false.

The reliability of the narratives provided by informants was also a matter of concern. Analysis of Venetian accounts revealed a significant degree of subjectivity in portraying news and rumours, reflecting personal perspectives and biases. This subjectivity significantly influenced the selection and interpretation of information, thus playing a pivotal role in disseminating news and rumours. Notably, during the Siege of Rhodes, eyewitness testimonies varied in perspective based on the informants' access to information and their positions. Moreover, these narratives openly reflected the informants' interests, beliefs, and concerns.

Before the Battle of Konya, Ottoman high-ranking officials presented seemingly objective reports when the outcome of the struggle was unclear. They aimed to establish themselves as crucial for the Empire's safety and well-being, thus seeking to remain neutral in the ongoing conflict. However, these accounts were also influenced by personal interests, and their level of subjectivity varied based on their individual relationship with the imperial family, as demonstrated by the examples of Lala Mustafa Pasha and Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha.

Hence, this study aligns with the suggestion that human emotions and experiences play a role in shaping the creation and spread of news and rumours. However, it challenges the notion that rumours stem solely from irrational emotional states. The study illustrates that even seemingly unrelated news or rumours have a basis. The critical factor is that as information is transmitted through more individuals and locations, it becomes increasingly distorted. This phenomenon is evident in both contexts, but due to the detailed nature of *I Diarii*, most of the examples analysed in this study are derived from that source. For instance, during the Siege of Rhodes, reports of the fall of the island circulated even as the siege was ongoing. These reports were

products of individuals sharing accounts of a fierce battle that had devastated both sides. As the information spread through different locations and people with varying perspectives, it became a report of the “fall of the island” upon reaching Venice. Similarly, in the case of Prince Bayezid, Italian primary sources reveal rumours circulating in the Ottoman capital, absent from Ottoman sources. The slight changes in these news and rumours also exemplify the distortion of information.

During the period under study, the Venetian and Ottoman news systems exhibited analogous procedures for disseminating news and rumours. Both systems possessed well-established infrastructures, with designated focal points that functioned as information hubs for the Eastern Mediterranean region. Analysis indicated that minor news networks demonstrated increased activity during periods of crisis. For example, the Aegean micro-network, encompassing several islands near Rhodes, operated exceptionally efficiently during the Siege due to its proximity to the primary events. This transition resulted in reduced activity at other news hubs, such as Istanbul and Corfu, during the Siege, followed by a resurgence of their significance after the conclusion of the crisis. This pattern suggests a flexible news system capable of adapting to evolving circumstances.

During the initial phase of the Prince Bayezid Affair in the Ottoman context, communication was initially limited to central Anatolia, where the princes were located. However, over eight months, a micro-news network emerged in the cities surrounding Amasya, the residence of Prince Bayezid, focusing on cities like Ankara and Sivas, which were seats of high-ranking officials such as the governor-general of Anatolia. The communication scope expanded significantly when Prince Bayezid fled to Safavid Persia, encompassing Eastern Anatolia, Syria, parts of Caucasia, Baghdad province, and cities in Persia such as Tabriz and the capital Qazvin.

The two case studies examined the dynamics of frontier and border regions involving multiple actors. The Siege of Rhodes focused on a maritime frontier characterized by competing political and economic interests among key players such as the Republic of Venice, The Knights of St John, and the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, smaller entities, including the Genoese, ruling the island of Chios, the monks of the island of Patmos, and semi-independent Venetian rulers outside the *reggimento* system, also exerted significant influence. The alignment and

disjunction of the political interests of these entities, particularly during the Siege, significantly impacted the ever-shifting frontier dynamics.

In the context of the Prince Bayezid Affair, the relocation of the communication zone from central Anatolia to the border area between the two empires marked a significant shift. This border area, undergoing settlement, was exploited by certain groups, notably the Kurds, who leveraged their networks on both sides. Consequently, the study of news and rumours revealed the complex power dynamics of this frontier zone. Political interests intertwined, influencing the generation and interpretation of information as various actors sought to establish or strengthen their influence in the region.

The etymological analysis of words uncovered critical aspects of the sixteenth-century news network in the Eastern Mediterranean, shedding light on the significance of oral communication during the early modern period. Recent research has emphasized the importance of oral communication alongside the rise of print media. In the Ottoman context, the primary word for news was “haber,” often supplemented with the adjective “ağız haberi” (news by mouth) to denote oral transmission. Another term, “söz,” meaning “talk,” directly conveys the idea of oral communication. Its frequent usage underscores the prevalence and acceptance of oral transmission in the Ottoman context. The practice of Ottoman officials dispatching eye-witnesses to the capital for interrogation instead of relying solely on written accounts further underscores the significance of oral communication in verifying news during that period.

The discussion of oral communication was particularly relevant in the study of rumours. Academic works commonly agree that rumours are closely linked to oral communication. This research has shown that words explicitly indicating rumour did have oral connotations in both contexts. In the Ottoman primary documents, the most commonly used words for rumour, “sedâ,” “Güft ü gû,” and “âvâze,” originally meant “talking,” “sound,” and “voice.” On the other hand, the words “tevâtür” and “rivâyet” were associated with the religious tradition of orally transmitting the “hadiths of the Prophet.”

In the Venetian context, the term “fama” was particularly significant as it denoted both rumour and reputation. It frequently appeared in the reports from *I Diarii*, where “voce” was also used to signify rumour. However, a shift in word usage can be observed in the documents between the early and later decades of the sixteenth century. For instance, while primary documents

about the Prince Bayezid Affair continued to use “avviso” and “nova” to convey news, the term “fama” was notably absent. Instead, the verb “divulgare” indicated information circulating orally.

The presented observation should be acknowledged as a preliminary finding, necessitating further examination of additional sources for a more comprehensive analysis. The research reveals that in addition to its link to oral communication, rumours possess a distinct characteristic distinguishing them from the news: they consistently involve the general public. This distinction was particularly evident in the Ottoman primary sources about the Bayezid Affair, where terms signifying rumours also indicated general discourse, signifying information circulating among the public. These instances also illustrated the responses of authorities who recognized the potency of public discourse, or rumour, in undermining order. The Ottoman cases align with the concept of “fama,” initially conceived in antiquity as a mythological creature that gained strength as more individuals discussed it. Similarly, in the Siege of Rhodes examples, “fama” and “divulgare,” as suggested by the latter’s definition, were employed to describe information circulating among the general populace. Certain rumours led to disturbances in the Venetian Senate, endeavouring to differentiate accurate news from false information. Therefore, this study concurs with the statement that rumours held significant political power and they can be used to change power dynamics between different groups.

This study concludes that news and rumours are closely linked concepts rather than distinct communication categories. However, they differ because rumours are more associated with oral communication and the general public than news. They are used as political tools, sometimes between authorities and the general public, making them more challenging to observe. They also serve as a tool for different actors with varying political interests. During transmission, rumours evolve and distort, demonstrating how human emotions and experiences influence both rumours and news and vice versa.

The current study offers an initial understanding of the subject matter. However, to achieve a more thorough grasp of the topic, additional in-depth research is crucial to uncover the full extent and depth of its scope. The news and rumours are intricately linked to various aspects of history, emphasizing the necessity for a more rigorous and exhaustive exploration.

APPENDIX I: *I DIARII* LETTERS

Letter I

[Sanudo 33: 37] Dil dito di 20.

Come ozi era zonto li sier Alvise da Coron citadin curfioto, parte da Constantinopoli a di primo Fevrer. Referisse di l'Orator nostro si dovea partir da Costantinopoli con la galia Liona a di 13, et havia confirmà la paxe con la Signoria nostra, e tra le altre cosse havia ottenuto che le nave nostre più non si facesse zercha a Garipoli, etiam dilatazion di confini di Napoli di Romania; et che zonto a Negroponte, havia inteso da li ambasatori di Napoli di Romania come li comandamenti dil Signor Turco non erano stà accettati, e che il Signor feva lavorar la sua armata in gran freta lino a lume di candela, havendo fato tirar in terra tulle le sue galle grosse, et che ogni settimana l'andava do volte in persona a veder lavorar ditta armata.

Item, dice aver inteso, che il Signor havia mandato a scriver li homeni da remo e fatò far comandamento che tutti li spachi stessono preparati, sichè al primo comandamento dovessano cavalcar, nè sà sa per dove.

Item, che uno bassa con le sue zente doveva cavalchar a le bande di Hongaria, fate le noze et feste di la sorella dil Signor turco maridada in Ferach bassa, ch' è uno di quatro consieri dil Signor turco; e che Perì bassa è quello governava et comandava el tutto; et come era stà fatto capitatito di Garipoli uno di Natòlia per li benemeriti di soi progenitori.

Item, dice aver visto più volte il Signor cavalchar per Constantinopoli con tre o quatro cavalli, et che è molto inimico di la italioti cristiana, e che havia tolto le provision a tutti li sui spachi cristiani sono in la Morea.

Item, dice che per l' armata turchescha era stà preso sopra l'ixola di Cìpri una barza rhodiota, patron Nizala, per Cholumbaro, carga di zenere, et che do nave syote se haveano rote per cativi tempi verso Stalimene.

Letter II

[Sanudo 33: 224-25] Sumario di lettere di sier Marco Minio ducha di Candia, date a dì 9 Aprii, drizzate a sier Francesco Minio suo fratello, ricevute a dì 3 Maso 1522.

Scrisse a dì 6. Hora per questo gripo scrive come va scorendo. Ogni zorno ense di caxa, ma risanarsi non si poi. Et come hanno per lettere del Viceconsolo nostro di Rodi di 23 Marzo, a le quale non prestano fede, perchè scrive senza fondamento, dice che era ritornato il nuntio dil Gran Maestro di Rhodi da Constantinopoli, et con lui era gionto uno gianizaro da la Porta, et che se diceva erano per fare la pace et che l' armata dil turcho per questo anno non ussirla; e di questo non li par di scriver a la Signoria.

Post scripta, hanno hauto una lettera di homo di conditione da Rhodi, che scrive dil ritorno dil ditto nuntio, e come il Signor turcho richiedeva che esso Gran Maestro mandasse uno ambassador a la Porta, che faria la pace come haveano con Baiaxit al tempo de li altri Gran Maestri di Rhodi; et che loro di Rhodi non li prestavano fede a questa richiesta, anzi più temevano.

Letter III

[Sanudo 33: 242-43] Di Candia, fo letere di quel regimentó, di 14 April et per una particular di sier Marco Minio ducha, drizata a sier Francesco Minio suo fratello, pur di 14, qual dice cussi.

Come a dì 10 dil presente scrisse, ed adesso per via di Corfú expedisse queste altre, dove mandano uno brigantin a posta, et questo per haver alcune nove da Syo, per diverse letere date a dì 9 April, come il signor Turcho feva da 200 vele, e che lui doveva passar sopra la Natòlia e per fama voleva andar a la impresa di Rodi; e questo si ha per lutti li avisi. Ben è vero qualche uno dice anderà contra venitiani, et mandano li capitoli di le letere a la Signoria, a ciò intendino quanto hanno et fucino quel iuditio che a loro parerano. Scrive come è stato alcune fuste turchesche a quella insula di Candia, et hanno messo in terra ad uno casale sotto Jerapetra, et hanno robato zercha anime 30, e questo è seguito per le male guardie che sono stà negligente. Hanno scritto a li Sopracomiti sono a Cerigo, che do galie debano dare una volta verso dito loco; et hanno etiam deliberato di armar le do galie di Rethimo e la Cania, perchè per lo armar di quelle hanno et dinaro diputado. Et scriveno più danari non hanno per armar altre galie de lì, però aspectano che 'Isia provisto di danari di qui, volendo si armi questo anno; nè di questo hanno hauto alcuna letera di la Signoria, come sono soliti di scriver.

Item, scrive hozi terzo zorno zonse lì una fusta di Rodi, et sopra di quella era una persona da conto. Vanno zercando tre ferieri, dicono esser fuzidi da Rhodi per dissensione nassute in quella Religione, però desideravano li prenderli e condurli a Rhodi; li qual ferieri è zorni 15 partirono di qui per Italia. La fusta è ritornata a Rhodi, et questo ha dito di novo, che havendo il Gran Maestro inteso di la preparatione di l'armata Turchescha, subito licentiò il nuntio dil Signor turcho et lo mandò al Flisco; el qual, come per le altre scrisse, era andato de li per rechieder dovesse mandar uno suo ambassador al Signor che faria la pace. Et che licentiato dito nuntio, erano stati in consulto quel Gran Maestro zercha il mandar di lo ambassador dimandato, el al partir di essa fusta da Rhodi non era sta fata conclusione alcuna.

Letter IV

[*Samudo 33: 319-320*] *Da Ragusi, di sier Zuan Capelo qu. sier Lorenzo, qu. sier Zuan procurator, fo letere, di 15 di l'istante, drizate a sier Filippo suo fratello.*

Come a dì 15 Mazo parti di Constantinopoli con sier Marco Loredan qu. sier Lorenzo, sier . . . Valaresso di sier Polo, e sier Vincenzo Pixani qu. sier Nicolò, et erano zonti a salvamento li a Ragusi. Avisa, al suo partir l'armada era in ordine tutta in aqua, galie grosse 35, sotil 75, palandarie per cavali numero 60, et altri navilii sarà a la somma di velie 300, et dovea ussir dil Stretto, capitano di la dita armata bassà; et che havia *etiam* voluto che Curtogoli ed uno altro, corsari, andasseno con la dita armada, et havia fato proclamo che tutti li corsari venisseno con la dita armata securamente; et che aria altre 50 galie a Galipoli in ordine, et li biscoti e lutto era preparato, et li axapi per montar su le galie a furia zonzevano. *Item*, havia retenuto la nave, di sier Polo Nani qu. sier Giacomo, et altre nave, e quelle fate discargar per meter suso vituarie per la ditta armada, et che il campo era uno mio lontan di Constantinopoli, capo Peri bassà, et havia preparato 300 carele di artellarie; il qual campo teniva la volta de la Natòlia; e dovendo venir 200 spachi e montar su l'armada, perchè non fono cussi presti, il Signor mandò a taiar li pavioni dove erano alozati acciò non dimorasseno a vegnir. Et si divulgava volesse andar a la impresa di Rodi; chi diceva in Cypro, et chi a tuor Napoli di Romania. Et come nel loro venir per camin hanno scontrato zenle assa' andavano a la Porta, et *etiam* per letere di Giacomo di Zulian da Ragusi par habino avisi più freschi parte di l'armata esser ussita.

Letter V

[Samudo 33: 362-64] Copia di una altra letera scritta al prefato sier Zuan Alvisè Pixani per missier Giacomo Crispo da Nixia, sotto 8 Zugno.

De quanto havemo da novo, far parlizipe la magnificentia vostra, come havendo lo signor Duchà mandato a Syo lo gripo de Dasfogia per intender quello siegue de l'armata, ditto Dasfogia è ritornato, perchè tutti dubitano di scriver per ogni bon rispetto. Niente di meno haverno, come a Syo erano giunte 10 galee et 9 fuste grosse, capitano in quelle Salamagni, qual altre volte fo in Soria con lo Soltan. Dicono che sono l'antiguarda de l'armata, e li exerciti dicono che con furia passano a la Natòlia. De lo resto de l'armata, secondo scrivono da Syo, lino a dì 10 dil presente sarà tutta fuora; che Dio la sconfondi! La divulgo la più parte per Rodi, tamen se ne trovano alcuni in opinion per Cypri: e questo è quanto havemo da novo. In questi zorni, havemo auto lettere da Rodi da lo reverendissimo monsignor Gran Maestro. Ne scrive, cussi al signor Duchà come etiam a mi, che in quelli zorni sono stato in uno loco deputato al Fisco de li spioni di Rodi, che sempre che vcgnivano de Turchia portava novità per Rodi, andavano in ditto loco deputato e fevano luogo, et in quel instante la Religion mandavano uno brigantino e mandavano lo secretano di tal cosse, el turziman, ch' era uno Antonio Giaxi, homo suficiente, et parlava con ditti spioni, poi retornava a Rodi, et con questo modo sempre la Religion era avixala. Et ora, havendo fato lo fuoco in lo loco deputado, ditto Antonio dal reverendissimo monsignor Gran Maestro è siato mandato ditto secretario con una fusta, e zonto che fu in ditto loco, Io ditto Antonio vete li tre spioni, et con loro erano qualche sette che se avevano mostrato. Et subito li spioni disseno a Antonio che l'andasse in terra, e ditto Antonio, avendo visto altri in lor compagnia, dubitò di ussir fora, et li risposo che 'I non voleva disender in terra se prima loro non metevano uno de li principal turchi in fusta. E tanto fo lo contrasto, che insieme se contentono, et meseno uno de li primi a la fusta, a lo qual havevano dato ordine, che subito elio insiva in terra Antonio, allora esso turcho se mota a fuzer de la fusta, over gitarse in aqua, o loro con li turchi lo haveriano defeso e tolto in terra. Et essendo lo turco a la fusta, Antonio se misse in terra, et subito il turcho si volse butar in mar e da la zurma non fo lassato, imo prexo, per tal modo che vedendo li turchi esser rimasto el Turcho a la fusta, comenzono con li archi e piere trar dentro a la fusta e hanno morto qualche uno et ferido 6, e la fusta si elferò (?) per modo che scapolò, e andata a Rodi, et il patron Giaxi

rimase in le man de turchi, e mai fu possibile poder far dir una minima parola de volontà al turcho. Infine lo mandò al tormento, e volendolo ligar, el ditto confessò el tutto: come sono stà discoperti li spioni, et che fo mandato a posta a far il segno, e cussi hanno ingannato li cristiani, e confessò come lo Signor turcho era fra pochi zorni per cavalchar e andar a Rhodi de certo, sichè lo Gran Maistro aspetta l'armada a Rodi senza altro. Et perchè de sopra fo desmentegato dechiarir a la magnificentia vostra quello hanno descoperto la zurma de la fusta a Fisco, dico ch'è stà descoperto turchi a cavallo più di 300 e a piedi assai, el lo turcho prexo ne la fusta ha ditto come, apresso al Fisco, in certi lochi deputati, se asunava a la zornata li exerciti. A Rodi hanno fato la mostra, else trovano homeni da fati in tutto 14 milia, viluaria assai, artellaria, et munizion assai, el tutti ben disposti con bon cuor l' aspetano. Idio habia b proveder el meglio de li cristiani!

Letter VI

[Sanudo 33: 458-60] *Copia de una letera dîi capitano di Lango de di 10 Avosto 1522, in risposta de una letera dil magnifico Provedidor di l'armata, ricevuta in questa terra a di 19 Settembrio.*

La letera di Vostra Signoria de di 2 dil presente mese, ricevuta a di 6 dito, ne è stata si achati, che non replichò, nè pare poterli satisfarli *maxime* per non esser qui lo signor comendator nostro, ch'è in Rhodi. Sei si manetta in alchuna cosa, resta per non haver notitia. Se per lo avenir nui potremo si qui come in altro loco fare per quella, sempre saremo parati. De le nove che havemo fina questa hora sono queste: a di 22 dil passato al castel San Piero fo uno turcho, che'era parlilo dai campo a di 10 dil ditto. Disse che lo Turcho haveva falò molle mine in Rhodi, e in ogni loco haveva trovalo aqua, *ita* che per mine non hanno possulo far nulla. Ordinò dar la battaglia in tre loci e fece tre capitani, l'uno era Mustaphà bassa, l'altro era Beliarbei e l'altro era Mustaphà Cortogoli con grandissima zente, et reperi tonti erano. A lo primo li nostri li feceno acostare, che fo Mustaphà bassà, apresso le loro liti si faceno avanti con loro ripari, li nostri li salutorono sichè ne furono morti assaissimi et ogni loro ripari fu minati. Li altri do capitani feceno tutto quello che poteno contra nostra cità ; non hebbeno altro danno che poseno a terra certi merleti nostri, el di loro ne furono morti tanti, che credemo loro sieno pentiti esser venuti a Rhodi, che con lo aiuto del nostro signor Dio serano tutti ruinati da Dio et da nui. «Si fecero indriedo et per tre di non possero litar pure uno sol colpo de loro artellarie. Sono in tanta quantità, chpla nostra artellaria ne fa fracasso. Li nostri enseno fora vestili da turchi, et saliscono lo campo turchesco et ne amazano tanti, che non si sa il numero. Preseno vivi 33 janizari et li menorono in Rhodi. De nostri ne foro presi 3. Havemo nova per via de Nisaria, che hanno preso unii bregantino turchesco nel qual erano turchi 33, parte furno morti a la bataglia, et parte qui li havemo fati morire per loro meriti. Dissero che a di 23 dil passato il Turcho passò in Rhodi, et che li nostri hanno posto a fondi galie 7 et una galiaza con doe nave et altri fusti, et più dicono che non hanno vituaria, moreno come cani, sì da sete come da una infermità per.....dil signor Idio. El è andato al Tito (?) lo capiano Mustaphà bassà con 22 galie; sono siate da nostri ben salutati, non hanno fatò altro se non che hanno posto foco a la villa, che era abandonata perchè tutti sono tirali al castello. Havemo nova dal castel San Piero, come a di 2 dil presente hanno preso uno turcho vivo, che conferma ogni cossa *ut supra*, quelli del castello et tutti nui altri staremo forti per gratia dil nostro signor Idio, de loro sarano presi et morti et de nostri pochissimi. Pur havemo speranza in Dio et ne li signori potentati christianissimi, che farano loro debito in donare aiuto per minare questo gran cane ; che se non farano ne ruinerano la

nostra fede, perchè sono in tanto numero per mar et per terra che non lo potriamo mai dire. Credemo che sia più de 400 vele grande et pizole. Idio ne sano quanti ne sono di mali christiani et ogni di ne passano. *Item*, non zè ordene mandare né bregantino né altro per hora. Havemo retenuta la barcha fino hora per possere donare a Vostra Signoria alcuna altra nova ; non zè ocorsa; acadendo faremo lo debito. Ogni di se sentono grandissimi tiri de artellaria, nè altro ne ocore. Sempre semo a li comandi de Vostra Signoria.

Letter VII

[Sanudo 33: 467-68] Sumario de una letera data in Candia, a di 22 Avosto 1522, ricevuta a di . . . Septembrio.

Come, per il Provedador di l'armada Mulla, fo comesso a sier.....soracomito andasse a Nixia con letere a quel Ducha, per le qual li scrivea el dovesse subito spazar uno brigantin a quel prior di San Zuan di Palamosa per poter intender qualche nova di Rhodi, perchè zà molti zorni nulla si havea saputo. Unde sua signoria spazò ditto brigantin a quella volta cum letere direttive a quel prior. Il qual prior si trovava manchar zà 8 zorni dil campo turchesco, et rescrisse al ditto signor Ducha una letera, qual sarà di sotto scritta. Et dito soracomito tornò in Candia a di 25 dil presente, dove trovono a di 23 esser zonto de lì il datissimo Zeneral con alcune galie venetiane. Siché fino al presente sono qui in porto galie 26 senza quelle 5 fo mandate in Cipri. Scrive come, siando con la galla a Nixia, trovono sora Paros la nave di sier Pandolfo e Ferigo Morexini, patron Cabriel da Monte, la qual veniva da Zenoa e andava a Syo. Il patron disse haver lassato in colfo de Schilazi in Puia Andrea Doria con 14 galie sotil, el 4 galeaze et fra Bernardin con 4 galle ben armate, le qual aspetavano de zorno in zorno 4 nave di 3000 bote l'una, che si armavano a Napoli di reame, le qual si cargavano di victuarie e zente, e cadauno haveva 5 ducati per testa quelli che montavano su ditte nave, e si voleano unir a uno per andar ad ogni modo in Rhodi. Disse ditto Gabriel esser stato in persona su ditte galie, le qual non aspedavano altro se non le nave per far conserva e andar insieme a Rhodi.

Tenuta fin 28, questa matina è zonta qui la galia Querina, che era a Constantinopoli, con il baylo suso sier Thomà Contarini el Zorzi Griti fio natural di sier Andrea procurator, e per venir da Costantinopoli dove si muor da peste non è sia lasciato pratichar con il resto di l'armata: è stà a la Fraschia.

Letter VIII

[Sanudo 33: 468-69] Copia di la letera scritta da lo reverendo Ygumeno, sacerdoti et monachi di Monte Sina, zoè da Palamosa, direttiva a lo illustrissimo signor ducha di Nicsia, data a dì 22 Avosto 1522.

Excellens, illustrissime, sapientissime signor ducha de Arzipielago saluto la S. V. insieme cum li hieromanachi. Le letere di la signoria vostra habiamo recepute, et cum dilectation habiamo inteso quanto la ne scrive; per il che sapia la signoria vostra, come sono zorni 8 che scampai da Rodis, dove steli zorni 42, et cussi la baltaglia comenzò da li 18 di Luio, et combateva con li trabuchi Mustaphà bassà cum el Cortogli da la parte de Elimonitria. Tamen li christiani non lassano meter le bombarde et combateno cum li trabuchi et la combateno da cinque bande. Da la banda de la Natolia el bilarbei di Natolia cum el Peri bassa et da Acussa el Bilerbei de l'occidente, et da San Stehano da la Perpetrerà e Magliume li bassa, et da Ctirim el Destorteri cum el Sarmani, et tutti combateno con li trabuchi e vano dentro la terra, et de la terra non è ruinado altro se non el campaniel de San Zuane in la cima, et a Santo Athanasio li merli del belguardo, et altra lesion la terra non riceve se non da li trabuchi. Et sono usciti do homini de la terra, et portavano letere et andavano verso Lindo, et in lo Faraelo sono sta presi et examinati. Hanno dito che non offende la terra altro se non i trabuchi, et el signor Dio ha permesso che sono scampati et sono liberati. Et hanno trovato adesso un'altra invention li turchi, che zà zorni 18 cava terren cum badili numero 77 milia da la parte de Elimonitria per butarla dentro de li fossi de la terra, el che la sua mente è che immediate che farano la sua Pasqua far la prima bataglia zoè forzo; la qual sarà a dì 23 dil presente mese. El è zonto Schaibei signor di Soria con 37 vele in soccorso suo, et sono molto bene armate et di zenle non vi posso scriver. Et se Dio non aiuta et che da le baude de sopra non vegni soccorso, perduta è la christianità. Queste cose che habiamo visto scrivemo a vostra signoria, et la pregamo che siano secrete, perchè siamo in la bocha del serpente, aziò che non ne ingorgi.

Letter IX

[Sanudo 33: 488-89] Copia di una letera dà Rhodi, scritta per domino Gabriel da Martinengo al magnifico missier Hironimo Corner dil clarissimo missier Zorzi cavalier procurator, in Candia, date a dì 26 Avosto 1522.

Signor mio. El primo dì de Avosto mi fu donato l'habito con una croce granda, et in questo Sacro Consejo el reverendissimo mi donò il baston zeneral di questa impresa ; la qual è gaiardissima. Et a ciò che lei conosca, hormai da ogni banda siamo stati tentati de grandissima furia de artellaria, et de grandissime mine, trincee, et manazati di voler impir li fossi di terra et legne, non di meno siamo a tutte le provision loro a l' incontro gaiardamente, sì a le baterie, come a le mine, trincee, el cum lo aiuto dii nostro signor Dio spero si prevalermento gaiardamente. Vero è che lo assedio è grandissimo, sì per mar. come per terra. Prego Vostra Signoria, che me habbi per excusato si non li ho scripto avanti.

In Rodo, a dì 27 Avosto 1522.

post scripta. Zorzi da Conversano è siato ferito nel fosso da uno schiopeto el passato uno brazo el una cossa, nondimeno spero non havera male; ma prima el fusse ferito lo feci salir sopra li inimici con forsi 50 homini. Et uno altro zorno ho fato salir missier Beneto, di sorte che in quelli due arsitili furono morti più di 200 turchi, et pur assai feriti. Li inimici me bateno el fosso con la lor schiopeteria, più anchora lo caminano, me hanno fato baiaria assai, pur quello me bateno el zorno lo refacemo la note de reparo. Come Vostra Signoria intenderà dal presente latore. Questi vieneno con uno modo, che mai più è stato visto. Hanno comenzato quasi uno miglio lontano da Rhodi, el si vanno portando la terra innanzi per loro riparo ; cosa da non creder chi non la vedesse. Non è hora niuna che loro dormano ne riposano, perchè mai nè giorno nè notte non manchano de lavorar, con tanto numero di gente che non è numero, et per esser hora qui sul fosso, de hora in hora aspectemo lo asalto, et se non son abandónato, haveremo indubitata victoria. Le mine loro spero farle reusir nulla, anzi spero cum lo aiuto de Dio hozi over dimane scoprirli una mina et brasarli dentro, perchè ho fato provisione. Signor mio, post scripta, già 4 giorni son stato continuamente drio a una mina fata a nome del Signor Turcho contra di noi, el hozi a hore 20 l'ho scoperta, et ho brusati et affogati li minatori et sua compagnia, et è siata

cosa signalata, et di grandissimo contento di tutta questa terra, come dal presente lator li sarà referito.

In Rhodi, a di 27 Avosto 1522, a hore 23.

Letter X

[Sanudo 33: 512-13] Copia di una lettera di domino Gabriel da Martinengo, scritta in Candia, data in Rodi a dì 10 Octubrio 1522.

Quanto fratello carissimo. Per li successi de quà da poi la partita de frate Antonio, sono sta de sorte, che a dì 3 Septembrio a continuar el belguardo di Santo Athanasio, conobbi non poter adutardi le mine turchesche. Subito pigliai expediente de farmi una traversia in la terra el asserarsi di fuori quelli mi possa ruinar *cum* le mine, et *cum* altro la feci far la notte. Et la matina li turchi, che fono a dì 4 ditto, meseno fuoco a la mina et me tolse quella parte havea serato di fuori di belguardo *cum* la mia traversia ; la qual traversia fu causa de la salvazion nostra, perchè li turchi haveano aparechiato lor bataglie, et veneno a loro assalto. Più di una hora combattesemo ditta traversia, che senza essa non podevamo resister a la loro battaglia et però restavemo tutti . . . da le loro artellarie et la sua gran schiopetaria ; sichè hebene pacientia, con sua grande occisione. A d i.....ditto messemi fuoco a doe mine, una in Avernia e l'altra a Santo Athanasio, quale non ebbero effecto, perchè subito sbororono per la mina che io li liavea continuamente nel medesimo tempo, et messe fuoco a una altra mina a belguardo prima che avesse traversalo, et me tolse una minima parte di fuori via: et veneno subitamente a lo arsalto et montorono forsi bandiere 10 sopra la traversa. Nondimeno li rebatemo con suo grandissimo danno el mortalità.

A dì 18 ditto. Dete fuoco a una mina in Spagna, et veneno a uno arsalto in Spagna el al belguardo de Santo Athanasio, et cussi sue mine non hebene efecto et uui li rebutasemo con sua vergogna.

A dì 23 ditto. Deteno fuoco a una altra mina, et non hebbe effecto perchè là sborò, et haveano aparechiato la lor zente per venir a lo arsalto, el non li bastò l'animo a venir.

A dì 24 ditto. A hora meza avanti zorno, sparono tutte le artellarie loro, et con el fumo montorono da 70 bandiere in zima le batarie el mure et ne tolse mezo el belvardo, el fu quello di Spagna, et lo arsalto durò più di quadro hore continue combattendo, et per la gratia de Dio recuperasemo belguardo et li rebutasemo con grandissima vergogna et mortalità, de sorte tal che da li a due zorni non si poteva star a la bataria per causa de la putrefazion de li corpi morti, che restorono in le fosse.

A dì 6 Octubrio. Tornono a lo arsalto nel belguardo di Spagna et li montorono, et perhò subito

lo recuperasemo; et fra quello intervallo mai lassorono di far nova provision, zoè nove mine, che sopra la fede mia ne haverno brusati più di 10 milia in le mine, et si non havessimo previsto, haveria ruinato Rhodi. Provision nove ogni zorno de artellarie e altro, et nove mine che mai cessano, et siamo trovati molte volte con loro a le mane sodo terra, et habiamo combatuto sotto terra molte volte con le artellarie et schiopelarie et l'uogi che habiamo con loro combattuto, et sempre habiamo reso bon conto; et hanno portato una montagna di terra sopra la ripa del fosso per venir coperti, che chi non vedesse non lo crederia, che è di sorte che zà zorni 3 sono in el fosso; et me taglia la muraglia, et io la contrataglio, et aspetto tutta hora combatter con loro in ditta muraglia, lo non posso scriver quanto sono et sono sta le provision grande; perhò le zente ne sono invilite, el 1' armata soa si trova malissimo in ordine, per quello habiamo per molti avisi. La causa si è per la perdita, et hanno disformita de munizion per batter la terra, el horauiai sono al fine, per causa che la mazor parte de l'armata se sono partiti de zornata in zornata, che per mia fede, per iudicio de molti homini de qui, una minima armata li faria grandissima vergogna. Et con lo aiuto de Dio spiero se prevaleremo ad honore de li principi christiani. lo mi duglio che non mi havete avisato di le cosse di Italia, et ben ho inteso esser sta retenuto uno mio nepote. Sia con Dio ! la vergogna mi farete, non la fano a me, ma la fano a un fidel servitor del Stado suo. lo mi credeva che la servitù mia non dovesse esser remeritata de tanto disonor et vergogna. Io ve lo racomando quanto so et posso R. (?) sopra el tutto, et prometto al servizio vostro.

Data in Rhodi, a dì 10 Octubrio.

Letter XI

[Sanudo 33: 513-14] Copia di una lettera data in Rhodi a dì 10 Octubrio 1522, scritta per sier Marcho Bognolo.

Da novo de qui, li inimici fanno mine atorno le mure, et per Dio grutia le trovamo el forzo; ma con tutte le bone custodie ge hanno dà fuogo, come qui sotto li narerò.

A dì 4 Septembrio. Li inimici meseno fuogo in una mina sotto il baluardo di San Athanasio, et feze resentir un poco la muraia. Fo dalo a le arme, el fo amazato de li inimici da mille, et li veneno con scale et non li bastò l'animo di vegnirdentro el candago (?).

A dì 9 Septembrio. Li inimici messeno fuogo a tre mine, una sotto el belvardo di San Athanasio, el do verso terra piana pur in ditto loco, et non feze mal niuno. Li inimici messe quattro bandiere sopra il belvardo e li fo tolte do da nostri, et de li nemici forono brusadi et morti assai de artellarie, da turchi 3000.

dì 17 Seplembrio. Li inimici messe foco a do mille, una in Alvernia et do là in la posta di Spagna. Feze tremar tulta la terra. Montorono in su le mure, et meseno 4 bandiere, 3 fu tolte da nostri et fonno butati zoso e mal menadi et morti assai.

A di 22. Li inimici messeno foco a Sant' Athanasio, et a di dito li trovarono 5 mine di belvardo nuovo, zoé el pasarato. A di 23 avanti zorno, li inimici meseno fuogo a una mina in la posta dil vignir apresso la chiezia di San Salvador di griegi, et le mure resentì un pocho, et una nostra mina la sborò.

A dì 24. Li inimici dete la bataglia grauda. Durò da una hora avanti zorno fino a hore 5 di zorno a la volta di la Vitoria, dove deteno 5 bataglie crudelissime. Multi turchi forono morti. Deteno la bataia in Provenza et in belvardo de Inghilterà, zoè a Sant' Athanasio, et li inimici montorono suso el furono butadi zoso con gran suo danno.

Al belvardo di Spagna deteno la bataia a la posta de Visenia. Meseno sopra la calastra bandiere 25, tutte fono butade zoso, prese da' nostri con gran mazello di la dita canaia sopra la calastra, et hanno pieno le fosse di ditti cani, el forono li soi primi homini che haveano in campo.

A dì 7 Octubrio. Do hore avanti zorno, li nimici meseno focho a una mina in el turion pien de Italia, e fezeno resentir un poco dil lurion pian, et a l'horsi di vesporo deteno uno altro arsatto a la calastra di Avernia et non fezeno nulla. Li nimici sono venuti sopra detta muraia di Vernia a la calastria, et hanno scomenzado a tagliar la muragia et sono coverti, et non se li poi nozer. Li nostri ancora loro tagliano la mina, et vano verso loro. Speramo in Domino di darli il malanno.

Altro non zè da novo. Speratilo in Dio haver bona vitoria contra li nostri nimici, perchè loro tremano acostarse a nui, che sempre li demo el malanno, et tutti nui se defendemo valorosamente, el fino le done portano piere su le muragie. Item, portano da manzar, vin, pan, carne, formazo sopra le mure, dove se combatano. Per quanto speta a nui, siamo tutti de un pezo da defendersi da li nostri nemizi.

Letter XII

[Sanudo 33: 386-87] Copia di una lettera venuta di Corphù dal rezimento, qual manda una lettera scritta in Rodi a dì 26 Zugno 1522 per Zuan Antonio di Bonaldi, drizzata a Bernardin de Florio cavalier in Corphù.

Messer barba carissimo, saluti infiniti etc. Questa sera per dirvi, con l'ajuto divino mi atrovo con la mia nave qui in Rodi, dove sempre son tenuto a Sua Maestà mi habbi donato tal gratia di ritrovarmi in questa cita a questo tempo, per poder dimostrar le poche mie forze contra questo drago, che a mior impresa et più notabile me podeva reservar, e per questa ve dirò brieve come le cose pasano. Son zorni 12, che 30 vele veneno qui in canal de Rodi, e sono state sempre ne la Turchia salvo ozi tre zorni veneno qui su l'isola mia venti a largo di la terra, e rumorno alcuni campi, et uno castello abandonato. Hozì, che sono a 26 Zugno, a hore 3 di zorno, sono levate da la Simia et Malfata da vele 150 in suso, quale sono venute qui su l'ixola a Filermo e danno principio a meter la zente in terra per veguir al conquisto di questa citi, dove me penso haverano patientia, perchè questa terra è benissimo prevista al modo intendereli, fortissima de homeni e dove è sta ditto era ruinata, tutta è sia fabricada in colmo. E sono in questa terra da homeni 8000 in suxo, de li quali ne sono 3000 messi a la posta ferma de la lerra partiti in 8 poste nominate 8 lengue, dove ha il suo capitano d'ogni lingua. Da poi li sono 4 capitani de soccorso, che hanno a soccorrer due poste por uno, e questi tali, in pena di la testa, per ninna condition se hanno da mover da le loro posterei questi capitani hanno homini 2000 per uno. Da poi li è el Reverendissimo Gran Maestro, chiamato Gran Capitano de soccorso, qual si è con tutto el restante a la terra; e tutte queste zente sono disposte el aliegre, par siano a noze. Mi rendo certo, el confalon di questa cita missier san Zuan Batista li ispirerà a esser disposti, et nui insieme con loro. Poi li sono in questa cita più de pezi 3100 de artellarie, pien per ogni buso, che ve imprometo più di quello si pensa; de le qual artellarie ne sono da pezi 300 in suso per rispetto, et homeni deputadi con quelle a socorer dove aebaderà, e più hanno polvere bone per tirar diete artellarie per anni tre a colpi 25 al zorno per cadaun pezo, et io ne ho balote 25 milia; e sono balote di ferro 2500, munition di piombo e ferro, assai fermento per anno uno e mezo, el altre vituarie asaisseme. Non ne manca altro salvo la gratia del nostro Signor Dio, che ne vogli ajutar, dal qual speremo el suo ajuto contro de questo drago che pensa divorare el populo cristiano. Non me acade dir altro, salvo state aliegri et nou dubitati de nui per niun modo. Unum est, che havemo a far cum cani renegai de la nostra fede, et combatemo per la fede de Christo, dove se

a Sua Maestà piacerà tuorne le anime nostre se rendono salve. Siche messer barba carissimo,
se a Messer domino piacerà che mori in questo loco, ve ricomando mia madre vostra sorela.

In Rodi, a di 26 Zugno 1522.

Zuan Antonio Bonaldi.

Letter XIII

[Sanudo 33: 489-90] Qui siegue la letera scritta per Zuan Antonio caxaruol a Hironimo Bonaldi suo cuxin merchadante in Candia, date in Rhodi, a dì 27 Avosto 1522.

Sumario e copia di una lotera data in Rhodi, a dì 27 Avosto 1522, scritta por Zuan Antonio Bonaldi caxaruol di qui, a suo....

Da dì 13 fin hozi, che sono a dì 27 Avosto, molti pezi de artegliaria hanno butato alle poste di Spagna a venir a ponente da le poste de Inghelterra; hanno ruinato da passa 20 di tutte le difese, et vano driedo baiando le muraglie con tutte 5 poste. Per la gratia de Dio non hanno danizalto il muro di dentro, et ancora l'altro nostro muro nel più stretto son da passa tre largo, ila che hanno molto da bater. Da driedo onde baseno se fa un fosso con fuogi e suo inine, davanti boni fianchi, ita che fata la baiaria si vorano firmar per li, li daremo conto di noi. A le altre mine se li fa le loro traverse gagliarde, che se non saranno più che ocelli, non intrerano dentro. Per la terra tirano infiniti colpi de artegliaria con gran ruina, et amazorno qualche uno, tamen per la gratia de Dio fina hora non son morti da anime 130, che è manifesto miracolo a tanto tirar hanno fato. Più sono aproximadi nel fosso di la terra a bruodo del fosso con trazer, ove continuo dimorano gran zente. Iudichamo se aparechiano dar presto assalto, perchè di raxon il Signor non die poter più starvi, et avanti se parli vorà veder qualche baiagli», qual spero in Dio non ne nocerà ; ma sarà sanguinosa. Da mine siamo minaciati, et in effeto ne habiamo scoperto due nelli fossi, però dubitemo ne siano de le altre ; tamen si fa provision de pozi di dentro e di fuora, dove speramo manco exilo con pocho danno di nostre murate. L'è venuto zà zorni 4 un bragantino con do cavalieri, quali ne hanno molto alegrati, considerando che 'I Nostro Signor acompagna le cosse de questa terra, che ogni bregantino o barcha vien e va a salvamento. Per mia fede che lai bregantino è partido de qui et andato su l'armata in fino in terra, che ha portato 15 turchi presoni, oltrà li altri che di continuo fanno questi cavalieri. Intendemo il Martinengo esser bandito et messo rebello. Cerio non merita reprehensione, che essendo a defension di questa terra, el defende el Stado di la Illustrissima Signoria, et penso da tutto il mondo sera reputato offitio virtuoso. Qui l'è Zeneral con croxe con expetativa di priorado o baylado primo vacherà in Italia, fin tanto, con ducati 1200 veneti et le spexe. Molto se afaticha, et era necessario a questa terra, l'edio el guardi.

In conclusion, stiamo a la misericordia de Dio, aspetando un gran arsalto da terra el da mar. Le cose de la guerra sono pericolose, l'Idio meta la sua mano. Ogni pocho de aiuto ne poderia dar indubitata vitoria. Se altro sarà de noi, chi ne haverà potuto socorer el non l'averà lato se pentirano, et non li valerà, perchè questa serà la festa anche di loro. Nostro Signor Dio, aiuti li cristiani, altro non dirò.

Letter XIV

[Sanudo 33: 515-17] Copia di una lettera, data in Rhodi, a di 10 Octubrio 1522, scritta per sier Zuan Antonio Bonaldi, directiva a Veniexia a suo barba caxaruol.

Da di 27 Avosto fin hora, che son le ultime mie per frale Antonio, per le qual te dissi quanto era occorso, le qual cosse sono degne de memoria et de esser notarle apresso christiani per la salute loro. et prima, le batterie principal de Spagna, Avernia, et Ingalterra, quale te scrissi, continue sono frequentade fino a li asalti dati, quali intenderai, con bellissima furia de artellarie sia possibel esser. Et per quattro zorni molto fu da tirar, poi noviter hanno principiado el facendo di zorno in zorno nova provisión de mine, de piantar artellarie, de far trinzee, con uno forzo ad extirpar non Rhodi ma tutto il mondo, et a le gran gente et provisión hanno, che credo mai fusse lai exercito a l'assedio de una povera terra come questa; ma spiero in Dio sti cani non harano il suo intento. Lo primo arsalto fu a li 4 de Septembrio al belguardo de Ingalterra passato vespero, i qual deteno fecho a una mina, qual era stà contra ritrovata, che era sta cognossuta per el Martinengo la natura di essa mina ; il giorno avanti ordinò una traversa d'alto contraminada quanto successo (occorresse), poi assignanter di quanto faria la mina. Qual traversa, al di de lo arsalto non era finita. Dove fo dato foco a la mina, e turchi aveano ordinato le sue artelarie et schiopetarie de fuora, et erano aparechiati a la bataglia. Item, montonino parecchie bandiere, quali con el favor de Dio in tempo de hore due furono rebatuti con vergogna el ocisione. Nui, con bote, tavole el terra se riparassimo dove non era finita la traversa, el stando a discretion de schiopeli, dove de nostri ne morseno da 20; et se dita traversa era finita niuno moriva. Di loro penso molti ne morisse, perchè da ogni banda erano trovali. Lo secondo arsalto fo a di 9 di Septembrio, che deteno focho a tre mine, et una in Spagna, l' altra nel belguardo de Alvernia, l'altra al belguardo d' Ingalterra a Santo Athanasio, et veneno a lo arsalto del belguardo primo dove inonlorono su li nostri reperi con le bandiere e li lo combatulo per hore 3, et rebatuti con loro vergogna e danno. Lo terzo arsalto fo a di 17, et deteno fuecho a due mine, una in Spagna e l'altra in Avernia, qual mine sfogorono per le contro mine per el nostro capitano ordinate in dite due poste, et al belguardo d e Ingalterra venero a lo arsalto montali sopra le mure per le batarie con forsi 30 bandiere: con lo aiuto divino in spatio di hore due fonno rebatuti con loro danno et mortalità. Et oltrà le batarie diete, haveanofacto tre altre batarie, una in Provenza, l' altra in Italia, et l'altra a la lore de San Nicolò. A di 23, deteno fuecho a una mina in Avernia, qual sborò per la conira mina, et in ditto giorno erano preparadi di venir a lo arsalto; ma vedendo

la mina non liaver effecto, restorno. A li 24, meza hora avanti di, tirorono tutte le artellarie a la bataria a un tempo, et con el fumo montorono ad allo per le batarie almeno da bandiere 70, quale se presentorono fin a la traversa de la muraglia, et ne li fossi per luto era pieno, quali per spazio de hore 5 fono rebatuti et malamente cazati per tutto, et maxime che haveano quasi preso el belguardo di Spagna et tegnendolo in loro potere più di due hore; tandem con lo aiuto de Dio per tutto amaramente fono cazati con grande loro occisione, ita che per i avisi si ha, sono morti in questo altro arsalto più di 3000 di loro, et di nostri ne morseno 40 homini. Manifesto signsl habbiamo, che di fetor di corpi morti ne i fossi, non poteano star apréso la bataria a molto per la puza. La bataria fu a tutte bande, excepto a la tore de San Nicolò. In dicto arsalto, era preparate galle sotil, plate, bregantini et barche per venir per mar, a li quali non parse di venir, benché il tempo bollissimo li serviva. Et capitano Martinengo se ritirava in Italia, et cognossudo maggior bisogno in Spagna corse li, ch'era mazor bisogno, che oltrà le preste provision de la sua virtù fece da Cesare, essendo sora de la traversa driedi i dicti repari con una picha combattendo a faza a laza con turchi; qual ave de molte sasate, ita che per quatro di non si potè aidar. Certo a lui se poi retribuir la salvatimi de Rhodi, mediante el nostro signor Dio, il qual promette per sua misericordia le provision a lui date ; che Dio volesse fusseno stà in tempo eseguide.

A di 3 dil presente deteno el quinto arsalto al belguardo de Spagna, qual montorono ma preste retraendose. Sichè di 5 arsalti ne hai notitia di le cose. Mi manca dir il resto di le cose el novo modo di combater, che li ha combatuto sotto terra con le artellarie et schiopeti al conquistar de qualche mina loro imbracavano in quella..... (?) che oltra hanno.... et dato foelio, nui almeno ne habiamo afochiato da 20; che se havesseno havuto effecto haria ruinato tutta questa terra, habiamo'conibatuto sotto terra, in aqua, dove venivano a minar, come per l' altra le dissi. Del teren venivano voltando a la posta mai hanno cessato di lavorar, ita che hanno portado al dispeto di.....(?) che continue venivano tirarie, che manifestamente li amazavano, una montagna di terra, qual è cavaliera a tutta la terra; cosa incredibile. Di la qual montagna sempre hanno butà nel fosso (?) che portano lontan almen 4 mia, tanto che oltrà nui, per tre busi levorno hanno superato parte, et quasi tulli li fianchi primi, et ha- vemo nel belguardo de Spagna et Avernia in modo, che zà 3 zorni sono nel fosso et tagliano la muraia di dita bataria. Et nui contaiamo a la volta meno del scoso, et nui siamo incontradi ozi a mezzozorno al mezzo de la muraia, dove se combaiò con loro. Cerchamo venir per taiarla tutta; li andari qualche interdiction, e benché fusse tutta tagliata quanto havenio principiato, non cascherà per esser tutto uno corpo rocha

vecchia di anni 80. Da poi li è uno mazezo di passa 7, che non ha il paro con la muraia dentro, el poi dentro per el capitano si rifanno di combaterlo ordinatamente si altro occorresse di dita muraia. Parmi ben haver dito il successo di le cose nostre; ma bene miraculo le tante provision fanno continuamente lo inimico de mine, artellarie, cavar fossi, che non è palmo di terra di qua del monte che i ne habi voltato solo sopra, non cessando una hora. Havemo per uno turcho qui dentro fuzito, qual dice ispirato da la Madona, et rechiedendo il batesmo, qual immediate zonto, disse de una mina facta et altro, qual pensamo non sia con fraude, come in campo tra li asalti, morte esser disse da persone 20000 el fior de la gente, et esser invilidi, et mal volentiera vengono a lo arsalto. Quello etiam nui cognossemo, perchè si vede esser comparsi a colpo di bastonate. L'è vero che sono assai gente; ma li bisogna perchè nui tutti havemo deliberato combater fino con li denti ad honor de la fede del nostro Signor missier Jesu Christo ; ma desideremo il soccorso vengi presto. Non se hanno advisi vegnir, Dio el meni. Questa armata diserta, senza monizion di polvere et artellaria. Et li morti di l'armata, perchè facevano voltar la terra a li homini da remo, di quali ne è amazati senza numero. Qual armata sta con paura; qual cosa è certa, se 1000 homeni havessimo qui, si potria dir indubitata vitoria.

Letter XV

[Sanudo 33: 565-68] 1521 a dì 14 Zugno, in Rhodi.

Quello è seguito in Rhodi de dì in dì, da dì sopraditto fino a dì 14 Novembrio, per relation di Hironimo di la Torre patron di nave.

A dì 14 Zugno. Vene nova certa per uno bregantin, come in canal di Lango era 40 vele turchesche.

A dì 16. Le vedesemo intrar in porto de Malfater.

A dì 24. El di de san Zuane fo visto da vele 25 in canal, et si preparò le nave de la Religion, et i corsari et le galie, et ussitenò fuor di la caena per andar a trovarle, et la sera tornò dentro perchè fo discoperta armada grossa et era tra Malfata el la Simia.

A dì 25. Sorse soto l'isola de Rhodi da vele 100 in suso.

A dì 26. Fono discoperti et fino vespero passò da vele 110, et forse da 100 verso la terra, et foli trato dal muolo de molini da colpi 10 de aftellarie, et niun non zonse, e quella sera fo spazato uno bregantin cum ferieri per soccorso, per dar avviso per tutto. (herkese haber versin diye gemiler yollanmış!)

A dì 27. Passò da vele 25 tra latine e quadre, et scampò uno corso di l'armada, che era cognosuto a Rhodi, et haveva navigato, et disse come el portava assai munizion, et assai homeni da cavar sotto per far mine, el chel' haveva, tra galie solile grosse 175, lo resto nave, palandarie et altri navilii.

A dì 29. Scomenzò trar schiopeti el freze, et ogni di passava navilii da terra ferma su l'isola, et de l'ixola su l'altra banda.

A dì 30. Passò galie grosse 20 et altre vele.

A dì 2 Luio. Turchi comenzò acostarse, et stevano driedo i muri di zardini, et trazevano schiopeti et nui a loro.

A dì 7. Intendassemo come el Turco havea tirado in terra pezi 15 artellarie, et ogni di passavano le zente di la Turchia su l' isola, et ogni di schiopetavano uno a l'altro, et la nocte partì do brigantini di nostri.

A dì 8. Ussite fuora di nostri homini e fo amazà uno di nostri, et de loro assai cum le artellarie, et ogni di passava vele su e zò.

A dì 12. Principiò a bombardar, et tirò colpi 11, el nostri dete bote 4 ne li reperi, et più per quel di non trasseno.

A di 18. Zonse pre' Joan di Lango, et fo alegreza a la terra per esser homo pratico.

A di 19. Principiò trar moderi, et messe in conzo reperi et Irazevano bombarde, el nui a loro.

A di 20. Trazando bombarde, fo amazà uno di nostri bombardier.

A di 23. Vene frate Antonio et menò cum esso missier Gabriel da Martinengo, et in quel di fo levado remor contra schiavi e fone amazado da 100.

A di 25. Ussite a scaramuza homini 25 di nostri et amazò 4 turchi et ferite de i altri, et cum le artellarie amazò assai, e portò dentro tre badili, una zapa et uno arco et uno tulupanto, el una larga, et nostri non ave mal algun.

A di 28. Fu facto festa su l'armà dil Turco cum artellarie, bandiere ; et vene da vele 50 dal Fisco, che era passato il Gran Turco.

A di 31. Fo menato da uno de nostri brigantini turchi 11, e a uno taiò la testa, perchè in porto di Rhodi dele al patron del bregantin con uno coltello in la cossa ; i qual turchi tolse a Trianda, et disse di miue avevano principialo.

A di primo Avosto. Fo dà li croce grande a missier Gabriel da Martinengo con ducati 1200 a l'anno del thesoro, et a doi soi homini ducati 100 a l'anno per uno, el fato capitano zeneral, et che vacando balio che li piazza, li puossi tuor senza altro, el vacando mior bailazo, possi lassar quello el tuor el mior. El ogni di si bombardava, et passava navilii su e zò, el haveva morteri 13, et trazevano di e nocte.

A di 10. Fo compido di butar la capa dil campanil di san Zuane, per terra.

A di 24. Vene uno bregantin con do ferieri, et disse che doveva vegnir soccorso.

A di 28. Se parti frate Antonio per Italia con uno bregantin, et levò man di trar più mortari.

A di 4 Septembrio. Fo dato fuoco a una mina solo il bolguardo di Santo Alhanasio, e fo fato gran scaramuza. De li nostri fra morti e feridi zercha 20; ma de li soi assai, non potemo saper il numero.

A di 9. Deleno fuoco a tre mine e fo scaramuzà sul belguardo di Santo Athanasio, e fo amazà di nostri da 20, et de li soi senza numero.

A di 15. Fu preso un zudeo baptizado per traditor, nominato Piero Antonio, perchè scriveva tutto quello si feva in la terra, et avisò come li morteri non feva danno.

A di 17. Deteno fuoco a do mine, el nel fumo montò da turchi 25 su le mura, dove haveva principiato far Calastra, et fono ributati e morti. Et mostrò di voler dar battaglia, e fese mover parte di l'armada, et vene fino a la porta, et poi tornò indriedo, et li turchi era per le tracie e nui le trazevamo artellarie et in quel di fo morto uno turcopolier con uno schiopo.

A dì 24. Fo la bataglia general, e principiò a la diana e durò fino hore 4 de zorno in quatro luogi: su la terra pian di la Victoria, sul belguardo di Santo Athanasio, belguardo di Spagna, et a la Calastra, et prese il belguardo di Spagna, et siete signori bore 2 e poi fono rebaluti, e morti turchi.....el de li nostri niun pur ferido, e portò da bandiere 30 su la Calastra ne fo tolte 6, et lo resto scampò con vergogna. E fo morti in tutto de li nostri 30, ne i qual fo monsignor di la Romagna.

A dì 7 Octubrio. Vene la fusta da Otranto et portò nova che 'I soccorso era partito da Napoli ; e in quel dì fo un poco de scaramuzo, et a dì deto dete fuoco a una mina sotto el terrapien di la Victoria, et non fece troppo danno.

A dì 11. Parti una fusta per ponente.

A dì 14. Fo ferido missier Gabriel da Martinentgo con uno schiopo dentro l'ochio, et ogni di avevemo qualche scaramuza.

A dì 28. Parti do bregantini per Lango per Zene.

A dì 30. Vene una barcha da Lendo.

A dì 31. Fo retenuto fra....armiraio et menato in castel di San Nicolò per traditor.

A dì 5 Novembrio. Fo squartato e messo la testa sul so' belguardo e li quarti a la posta, e fo scoperto per uno suo servitor, che trazeva fuora le lettere, al qual fo tajà la testa. El fo scoperto per una femena candiota che'I vele trazer. (Casus?)

A dì 8. Tornò li brigantini da Lango cum ferieri 45 per soccorso.

A dì 14. Da sera me parti da Rhodi.

Noto. Come è stato trato a Rodi artellarie 40000 non metando nè saeri, nè falconeti. La piera mazor voltava pie 6, fo pesada di la misura, pesava libre 500 grosse, et ballote di bronzo mazor di basilisco.

Item, mortari 2000.

Item, ha fato mine 63, havemo scontrado 50 e a 13 ha dato fuoco, el non ha fatto danno de momento.

Per uno gripo de Potamos trovassemo a Scarpanto cargo di fasuoli, era stato ne l'arma' dil Turco, ne ha ditto, come il Gran Turco si trovava su l'isola et che non ardiva niun di parlar di partir, et che la sua armada stava solum cum li homeni da remo dentro, et che non faveno guardia et era mal in ordine, et che non aveva in terra salvo quattro bombarde, el che '1 non haveano polvere, et che l'aveva tolto la polvere de l'armada. A San Nicolò di Charchi era 10 galie turchesche mal in ordine, et a Malfala era due barzete et tre fuste per guarda del canal.

Letter XVI

[Sanudo 33: 569-70] Copia di una letera di sier Zuan Bragadin di sier Zuan Francesco, data in Candia a dì 27 Novembrio 1522, drizata a sier Zacaria Trevixan suo cognato.

Come l'è venuto uno ambasciator dil Turcho di qui, el qual non si sa quello sii venuto a far. È stato do zorni, et per esser homo di pochissima reputation, se iudicha sia venuto più per veder quello si fa. Per altro eri zonse de qui uno brigantin di Rodi cum un ferier, qual va in ponente a solizitar il soccorso. Dice come in Rodi stanno di bon animo e non hanno paura di niente e non voriano altro se non 500 homini freschi, perchè ne sono assai feriti, et tutti da schioppi, perchè li turchi hanno facto da una banda un monte di terra, che soperchia la terra et stanno a bresaiar quelli di dentro con li schioppi. Et el Martinengo ha perso uno occhio da un schiopo. Tamen li turchi non vogliono più darli bataia, né andarli sotto, anzi cusì come in prima i corevano tutti come cani rabiosi, cussi adesso bisogna che li soi capi li cazano cum le similare, et ancora non li voi andar sotto. Et li turchi hanno ruinato da una banda circa passa 15 de muro, che poleno entrar dentro a suo piacer; ma non osano et hanno paura, perchè quelli de la terra hanno facto altra tanto moro de dentro via per mezzo quello ch'è ruinato, et hanno messo le bombarde, per modo che se intraseno li amazeriano tutti. E il Turcho si dispera. Ha fatò una caxa a Filerno per lui per star questo inverno, et ha mandato a tuor zente et monition, perchè ne sono morti tanti che non ge n' è più. Quelli di dentro stanno di bona voglia, et al combater, combateno done e puti e li frati e tutti. Vero è che hanno pocho vino; ma hanno assai munition, pan, risi et aqua, et aspetano il socorso di ponente, e sono tanto inanimali contra turchi, che dicono non li lasserà più andar dentro, e li voleno taiar tutti e brusar la sua armada ; la qual è tanto malissimo in ordine, quanto sia possibile. Hanno discoveredo uno tratato che menava un ferier portogalese, qual era el primo omo di Rodi, et era cazudo Gran Maestro da costui che è adesso, di 2 balote, et li hanno taiatola tesla. E tutti dentro stanno di bon animo. El datissimo Zeneral ha mandato sier Fantin Zorzi di sier Nicolò, suo nobile, Provedador al Zante in loco dil Provedador è morto, e si parte questa sera con la galia brexana; el sier Zuan Baptista Baxadona qu. sier Zuane Francesco, altro suo nobile, Capitanili de le Saline de Cypri, per esser morto quello vi era. Scrive, che piacendo a Dio, diman da sera la sua galia con el proveditor Mula, el qual vai a Schiati, e Schiro, et a Napoli, et a Malvasia e poi lui Proveditor va a la volta de Corphù, et lui tornerà in Candia, e tien poi anderano in Cypro a dar cambio a quelle galie sono de lì.

Letter XVII

[Sanudo 33: 570-73] Copia di una lettera, data in Candia, a di 27 Novembrio 1522.

Da novo, circha le cose di Rodi, vene una galia et una fusta turchescha *cum* ledere dil Signor el di Peri bassa *directive* ul durissimo Zeneral el al magnifico Duca. Quella veramente se radreza al clarissimo Zeneral, xe scritta grecha, quella dil magnifico Duca è scritta francha. La qual li scrive Peri bassa: el tenor de la qual non se poi ampiamente saper; ma per quello si poi solrazer, é piutosto bone nove che altramente, et par che sia le dite di tal tenor, digando conoscer veramente la fede dei veneziani esser unica, et che mai non è di mancharli la fede ai detti; et simel parole con tanta benignità, el si puoi dir sogetion, che *nihil supra*. Talmente che mai da poi che si ha da far con i ditti, non si ha auto simil parole tanto onorevole. La causa dil qual ben poteti comprender, che non tanno per altro, *solum* per adempir il fatto senza nulla contradiction. El ditto ambassador arivò a Cao Salamon a di 18 ditto, e per tempi stete fino a di 21 li in Setia, dove li è retor missier Jacomo da Canal, dil qual il ditto ambassador molto si lauda, et il simile fa il clarissimo Zeneral, per li sui portamenti el continui avisi che dal dito si ha. Et a di 22 vene a Spinalonga con la sua galia acompagnata da due nostre, le qual si atrovava a la guardia del ditto Cao, dove che por tempi se deliberò per expedition venir per terra, et vene a di 24 a hore 2 di note in la terra. A di 25, a hore 20, el dito ambassador fu a parlamento con il clarissimo Zeneral et magnifico proveditor Mula, al qual el ditto apresentò le lettere, *ut supra*. È sta messo in ordine un presente per vito ne la sua partita, circha il viver assai rasonevole. La venuta dil ditto ambasador se iudica non esser per altro salvo per esplorar di l'armata nostra, qual e quanta quantità se atrova, come *etiam* di l'armata over soccorso di ponente il qual die andar a Rodi; el questo ogniuri tien certissimo non sia sta per altro la sua venuta, et *etiam* per veder con che mezzo et che risposta li sarà fata. Et inteso il tutto che averà, il Signor si judica più tosto che farà de li la invernala che altramente, tuttavia non li andagando soccorso.

Item, per uno schiavo scampato di ditta galia turchesca, dise, *qualiter* nel campo dil Signor turco li su l'ixola li era sta fato una infinità de forni de cuoser pan, el che veramente vituarie non le mancava, ma ne aveva abundantissimamente, et che 'l Signor haveva fatto uno belguardo a San Daniel murado intorno intorno con grossissime muraglia, dove in prima li è una chiesa dil ditto san Daniel. El qual è lontano da la terra di Rodi da mia 3, et è su una colina apresso marina ; qual è fortissima senza altre muraglie. Et in ditta seraia over forteza li poi star da persone 2000 *nel* zircha. Li vieti dato *etiam* in compagnia dil ditto galie do, le qual debia andar

fino dove lui ambasciator vorrà. Le qual galie si è missier Polo Zustinian e missier Vincenzo Zantani, el questo per rispetto che tutti due anno la lingua turchescha, aziò i possano sottrazer qual cossa dai ditti over dove i andasseno, et *etiam* per darli remurchio. Et questo dico senza fola niuna, ma certissimamente è la verità questa esser. La più bona et mior armata ch' è ne l'armata dil Turco, si atrova et non si può muover sì de remi come a la vela, et habiamo inteso per el sopraditto schiavo scampato de dita |galia, *qualiter* hanno cernilo uno homo per ciascheduna de le galle de lì, et messo su questa galla el fusta : *tamen* habiamo de certeza, la dita esser tanto mal in ordine che *nihil supra*. Sichè potete meter in regola, se la ditta esser cernida il bon et miglior di cento, quello di esser il resto, che invero per quello si ha di certeza, 30 galie *solum* ben in ordine saria suficiente ruinar et somerger dicta armata turchescha, la qual non è possibil pezo di quello è.

Item, a di 25 detto di note là zonse sier diremmo di Mathio patron di la nave Caxaruola, parte di dentro Rodi a di 13 ditto. Disse da novo *qualiter* ne la terra di Rodi tutti sta con bona speranza, et à poca paura et che nulla dubita di le forze turchesche. Fin a bora ben à vero che da poi el Turcho è soto Rodi fino hora li è morto di la terra da 900 persone in suso, et nel ditto campo turchescho di certeza si ha esser morie da persone . . . milia, *vel* zircha Et queslo si ha da la occisione fata, come di algune malizie intrate nel ditto campo rispetto di le aque, le qual produxeno mal di fluxo, *maxime* bevendole cussi pure come i diti fano. Ben è vero che per turchi li è sta tolto dui fianchi de la terra, i qual da uno a l'altro poteno esser da passa 15, et che i ditti turchi, perquanto aspetta ditta guardia di passa 15, sono in so libertà di poler montar e dismontar su le mure. *Item*, che quelli dentro di Rodi, per quanto aspetta a quel spazio di passa 15, hanno fatto contrafosso di dentro via con infinità di fuochi artificiali, e hanno fatto alcune traverse si da una parte come da l'altra di ditti passa 15, con governi el guardie perfettissime.

Item, hanno....scarpelato il muro et fatto da cima a piedi a modo di uno fosso, di sorte che per dite mura prese non si puoi montar su le sopradite traverse. Circha veramente a vituarie, disse star mediocrementemente per poter scorer ancor mesi doi. Ancora disse che uno nominato fra.... armiragio primo homo sotto il Gran Maistro, homo de 70 anni, de continuo da puerizia fino allora presente ha fato di gran prove in la Religiòn, et *maxime* contra infedeli, la nation sua è spagnolo, ma hora tentato dal diavolo haveva comenzalo a tratar tradimento con il Signor turcho per volerli dar la terra; la qual cossa era fata se Dio non li prevedeva, ma per sua bontà fo scoperto ditto tradimento, et fu squartato, et altri tre sui compagni, con tanto contento de tutta la terra per esser sta discoperto ditta cossa, che *nihil supra*. Et sequito questo, tutti con bon

animo di nulla si dubitava, ma con più cuor che mai havessero stava, purché il soccorso di ponente vegna, come di qui si dice esser certissimo el di brieve dover azonzer, mediante il qual si potrà star *cum* sincerità, e senza nullo dubbio ; ma mancando el ditto non si ha altra speranza. *Item*, disse, che da di 24 Septembrio fino hora non li è stà dato bataglia niuna ; ma alendeno ad amazar persone in la terra et a le mure driedo alcuni busi, dove non lassano comparir mai alcun con schiopi. Il sopradito sier Hironiino di Mathio dise esser stà trato dal campo dil Turcho a la terra bote de artellaria numerate 40 milia, et 2000 bote di trabuchi, et mortari, et questo senza li falconeti, schiopi, et altre minudege, et che l'artellaria più grossa dil Signor volta in bocha piè sie di nostri, et la menor palmi 5, et questo hanno misurato per le balote è venute in la terra. Vero è che tutte traze piere et algune minorete fero. Tutte queste certissimamente è cosse degne di fede, e non si puoi far di manco di creder, et questo perchè vien referito da persone *fide dignae*, ma l'ultima conclusion è questa: purché li vegni soccorso avanti mexi do, tutti starà ben.

Letter XVIII

[Sanudo 33: 534-35] Successo di nove portate per noi Francesco Bragadin et Domenego Zorzi sopracomiti di Arzipielago.

A di 30 Octubrio zonse uno bregantin a Nicholsia, qual fu spazato per el ducha de Nicholsia a Syo per intender del successo di le cosse di Rhodi e de l'armata turchescha. El patron del ditto bregantin referisse a bocha, et non ha portato lettere alcuna per rispetto de quelli signori de Syo hanno comandato expresse, in pena di la disgratia dil Signor di non scriver, e non lassano scriver alcuna cossa da novo. Unde disse el ditto patron, che subito che fu zonto a l'insula di Syo andò per terra a la terra con la lettera dil signor di Nicholsia, et presentate a quel Podestà, qual subito lecte, commesse al dicto patron, che quanto più presto potesse partisse aziò non fusse retenuto, et disseli a bocha dovesse riferir al suo signor le infrascripte cose. Questa Domenicha prossima passata, che fu a di 26 dil presente, zonse a Syo uno sioto partito dil campo dil Signor turcho di sotto Rhodi ozi fanno 8 zorni, che fu a di 23 dil presente, qual disse come Rhodi si manteneva benissimo, et che il Signor turcho l'altro Venere passalo, che fo a di 17 ditto, dete una grandissima bataglia, la più aspra el crudel che fin quel hora l'havesse dato, et volsesi trovar presente vestito di veludo cremesino, et sperava certo quel zorno intrar in la terra; ma quelli di la terra se diffeseno gagliardissimamente; et che per quelli de dentro pur fu ruinato quel belguardo che turchi ne la bataglia passata erano montati, et impiantale assai bandiere, et che non li è romaso li altro che un largo fosso. Et che da poi el zorno de ditta bataglia doi over tre zorni, zonseno le 4 galie grosse liaveva mandato il Signor turcho in Negroponte per monition, le qual portono due bombarde grosse et polvere, et che 'I Signor turcho haveva dicto, che per Venere che vien, che fo a di 24, voleva dar un'altra bataglia a la terra, et far tutto el suo forzo de haverla, et non li succedendo ad vota, voleva partirsi al tutto si con lo exercito, come con i l'armata. El ditto syoto disse che nel suo partir zonseno tre nave in Rhodi in soccorso, Et queste cosse si afronta con li altri avisi che hanno missier Zuan Francesco Justinian, qual dice che a Palermo si metevano in ordine quatro grosissime carachie per questo effecto. Havemo anchura adviso da quelli di Santurini, haver visto passar in questo tempo a presso la insula tre nave grossissime, qual tendevano in levante.

E a di ultimo ditto, zonse el bregantin spazato per noi a Palamosa, per el qual havemo lettere da quel Calogero drizate al signor de Nicholsia. Come Venere passato, che fu a di 24 dil presente, el Signor turcho dete un'altra bataglia crudelissima più di tutte le altre passate, et coti mortalità

grande di l'una et l'altra parte, et che pur furono rebatuti quelli di fora al solito. Scrive anchora el ditto calogiero, come el xé morbo grandissimo nel campo turchescho, et dico che nel dar de questa ultima bataglia l'armata turchescha si presentò con grandissimo impeto al porto ad uno locho dicto la Torre Lemnia (?), la qual fo rebatuta, et malmenata per quelli di la terra. Havemo per diete lettere anchora, come si diceva nel campo che 'I Signor turcho era per levarse de l'impresa per veder la cosa disperata; ma che ussito uno albanese fuori di la terra, et apresentatosi al Signor, li fece intender come la terra era fortissima excepto da una parte.

Letter XIX

[Sanudo 34: 62-63] Copia di un capitolo contenuto in lettere da Syo di 28 Zener, directive a domino Michiel Coresi..

Per questo brigantino intenderete, come è capitado qui Peri bassà, et è stato in questo porto zurni 5, et ha mostrato bona ciera a questi nostri signori, et dicte molte parole per bocha dil Signor, et se li è facto per contra el debito suo, et cusì è partito. Poi è capitate tutte le galeazze et parte di le galie. Al presente ti qui in porto el Captanio di l'armata con galie 7 et fuste 6, e lo resto a li 23 passorono per canal, et spero se ne sian perdute qualche parte et esser state grande fortune de ostro; habbiamo inteso de alcune che son perdute. Dicto sanzacho de Galipoli, come se bonaza, se parte in frequentia. Ancora lui ha avuto da questi nostri, grandi presenti. Item lo figlio di Peri bassa per avanti capitato qui con alcune galie, ancora lui à havuto presententi assai. Per aviso vostro, ozi è arivato qui lo sanzacho di Methelin con una galiota et una fusta, el qual va a star in guardia et sanzacho di Rhodi. Etiam lui à hauto il suo presente, per modo che questi signori hanno exborsato più di duchati 16 milia. Se le cose anderano come el Signor monstra et li sui intrinichi ogni cosa va bene. Et per aviso vostro, a li 2 è arivato el schiavo del Signor con la sua lettera, la qual scrive molto amorosa, tra le altre parole si contiene come vui lezerete : “ In le mie mano et de lo imperio mio è venuta la terra di Rhodi, che erano grandi ladri et mi davan grandi affanni et a vui grandi cargi contra lo Imperio mio ; hora sarete securi, abenchè me hanno morti assai del mio populo avanti che li habbia dominati et etiam per far più male; ma Dio ha voluto che con parole sono venuti sotto al mio imperio; di la qual cossa sono restati contentissimi, el li habbiamo osservato quanto li havia promesso, et essendo vui mei fratelli et amici del mio imperio, ne farete victoria el de quello bisognerà dar la mia Signoria mi darete aviso” parole amicabile pur assai. Quel capitano è partito da Rodi a li 22. Dicono che non li è restato se non le palandarie di'l Signor per passar le zente al Fisco et Rodi. Tutte le altre sono venute qui in porlo, el Curtogoli venuto avanti duo zorni dil capitano, el qual etiam lui va verso Pera. Qui havemo come el Signor va a dretura verso Constantinopoli; non si astallerà in Bursa niente.

APPENDIX II- OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS

باغي برتفاق عاد لجواز سخايتي بكي حيدر بك قولون ذبي الحجليل
 اوجي كوندن بوندن به وارد اولان مکتوبي صورتيں ر که المکر سلطانہ کو بند دني
 دھاد نام ادبي الہدن واصل اولمشد

بود کہ بعض قولون امانت انکھ انکھ بکي اولان یاد کار بکہ اشہاد محمد فرهاد بند لوب
 ارسال اولمشد دي مذکور یاد کار بکہ اوج کليسا نام محمد ن اربوب مکتوب کتور ووب
 و مذکورک اغيز جواي نقل ايدوب شہ قولی سلطانہ شاہ يعا وک کو بندر سلطان بايزيد
 کو چور ووب بخوانہ کتور ووب بن کتب ووب عزت اير سن و اول جاہدن دھي قناس سلطان
 او علي منصور سلطان اوکے دو شوب رعایتہ تبرین ایلہ و تبر چاکي بر غائب سلطان دھي
 کار شاپوب کتور ووب ش کون تبر زدہ ضیافت ایدن انڈنا شاہ حلفت وهدا یا ایلہ باي
 اوق فرج بي اولان حسن بکي کو بندر ووب حلقہ بوب شاہ طوغری المبتکر ککر
 و شاہ دھي بزنجہ قوناق کلوب استقبال ایلہ ککر ديو اعلام ابتدا و کني جبر و ورو
 بوندن اڈل شہ قلی سلطان و سایر قولبا بن بکوي سلطان بايزيد کلوب اوکل لوب ککر ککن
 غایتہ خوف واضطراب کلوب بغداد و شير و انہ کتمسي طن انکھ شاہ اعلام شير
 شاہ دھي احتراز کلي ايدوب ناکا و ولايتون نهب و غارت ايدوب چوب کتبه ديو
 مذکور سلطانہ حقیقاً ادمر کوندر ووب مداد ايدوب کلي رعایتہ ایدن و خوشلق ایلہ
 طوغر و کلوب کتور سن ديوتہ ایلکن اشعار ایدر اما شاہد ہر جواي بوايت کہ
 ماد امکہ بادشاہ عالمناہ صفہ بوي صحت و سلاستہ سعادتہ بوقرار دون لوب باہر ہر
 اعلام لوب ایلدکم اوکلي عہد و اقرار حکم در من بعد رضاي طابونہ مخالف اوضاع الملک
 امر محالدر ديو بست ايرش و مذکور یاد کار بکہ اول جاہندن بر جبر لاج اوکھ
 سلطان بيم خان طال بقاہ صفہ بوي جملہ عکریہ سلطان بايزيد اوزرہ بلغار ایلہ ککر
 ديو دفعہ و تشویش چکد کلون اعلام ایلوب عينیلہ کا عذبي دھي در کتوب اولوب
 ارسال اولندي یاد کار بک حيدر بک قولکن کوندر ووب ککونک
 صورتيں

Translation

TSMA_E_0701_0029_001

Translation of the text*

The copy of the letter sancakbey of Adilcevaz Haydar Bey who had received [news] from the lord of Eleşkird on third day of Zilhicce [6 September 1559] by the hands of his man Ferhad which was then sent to this servant [name not given]

As some of our slaves [kul] ran away, we have sent our man Ferhad to the lord of Eleşkirt [Eleşkirt Sultanı] Yadigar Bey. He parted with the said Yadigar in a location called Üçkilise, brought his letter and transmitted his oral reply [ağız cevabı]. Yadigar told Ferhad the news [haber] that Shah [Tahmasb] had sent an usher [yasāvol] to Şahkulu Sultan [governor of Yerevan/Erivan] to transfer Prince [Sultan] Bayezid to Nakhchivan [Nahçıvan], who [was ordered to] to treat him with respect, presenting him gifts. From Nakhchivan, [Bayezid] was to be transferred to Tabriz [Tebriz] by Maksud Sultan. In Tabriz, [Bayezid] was to be welcomed by Pürgayib Sultan lord of Tabriz and a five-day banquet was to be given for him where he [Bayezid] was also bestowed with hil'at [ceremonial robe], and gifts. Accompanied by Hasan Bey, [Bayezid] was to be presented to Shah [Tahmasb] who was to come many distances to greet him [Bayezid]. Yadigar also stated that when Prince [Sultan] Bayezid entered Safavid lands, the said Şahkulu sultan [governor of Erivan], and other Safavid lords fearfully and anxiously thought that he [Bayezid] would go Baghdad [Bagdad] and Shirvan [Şirvan] and told this to Shah [Tahmasb] who feared the [possibility of] looting on his [Bayezid's] account and secretly sent men to Şahkulu Sultan to urge him to expose him [Bayezid] and treat him [Bayezid] with complete respect and direct him with pleasantness. On the other hand, Shah [Tahmasb] gave his response to Padişah [Süleyman I] every time as “the previous agreement and promise which was made to his high throne [pâye-i serir-i âlâ] is strong. Henceforth, it is forbidden to engage in acts that are averse to his [Süleyman's] royal consent”. A[nother] piece of news [haber] was made known [lâyiğ olmuş] to said Yadigar Bey from there [Safavid lands?] about those who create noise [dağdağa] and provocation [teşviş] stating that Prince [Sultan] Selim, may he live long [tâle bekâhu hazretleri], should attack with his soldiers against Prince [Sultan] Bayezid. These were all sent with the same sac [derkese].

* The translation of the text belongs to the author

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