

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk Onuruna
Tarih Yazıları - 1

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk, günümüz Osmanlı-Türk tarih yazıcılığının önde gelen isimlerinden birisidir. 1980'lerden bu yana bilimsel çalışmaları ile Osmanlı sosyal ve iktisat tarihi alanına farklı bakış açıları getirmiştir. Özellikle Osmanlı para sistemi ve fiyat tarihi konusunda müteahhas bir isimdir. Osmanlı tarihi araştırmalarını eserleri ile zenginleştirmesinin yanı sıra pek çok öğrencisini de tarihçi olarak akademik hayata kazandırmıştır. Profesör Öztürk, arşiv kaynaklarını ustaca okuyup mukayeseli olarak yorumlama bilgisine sahip olduğu için Annales ekolünün Türkiye'deki önemli temsilcilerinden birisi olarak rahatlıkla ifade edilebilir. Ele aldığı herhangi bir konu spesifik de olsa her zaman büyük resmi görmeye çalışmış, öğrencilerine hep bu yönde telkinlerde bulunmuştur. Bu bakış açısı çalışmalarında kendini açıkça göstermektedir.

Öğrencileri ve çalışma arkadaşları tarafından kendisine armağan olarak hazırlanmış iki ciltlik bu kitapta, başta Osmanlı-Türk tarihinin çeşitli dönemleri olmak üzere Profesör Öztürk'e dair anı ve yorumlar ile onun akademik tarihçiliğe yapmış olduğu katkıları da içeren birbirinden seçkin makalelere yer verilmektedir.



EDİTÖRLER

İŞİL İŞİK BOSTANCI
AYŞE GÜL HÜSEYİKLİOĞLU
AYŞE DEĞERLİ
ORHAN KILIÇ

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk Onuruna
Tarih Yazıları

1

Essays in Honour of Professor Mustafa Öztürk / Volume - 1

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Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk
Onuruna

TARİH YAZILARI I

*Essays in Honour of
Professor Mustafa Öztürk
Volume I*

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk Onuruna

TARİH YAZILARI

I

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Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk
Onuruna

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Volume I*

Editörler

Işıl Işık Bostancı
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The Restoration of the Qadīmī Dostluq: Şoqollu Meḥmed Pasha and the Republic of Venice in 1573

*Kadim Dostluk'un Restorasyonu:
Sokollu Mehmed Paşa ve 1573 yılında Venedik Cumhuriyeti*

Vera Costantini*

The reiteration of imperial orders is a well-known issue to habitual readers of the sixteenth-century *Mühimme Defterleri*.¹ Nevertheless, Şoqollu Meḥmed Pasha's letter to the doge, dated on the same day as Selīm II's *nişān* to the same addressee, is more than a duplicate of the sultan's words.² The topics dealt with are different as is the general style of the discourse. The three common features shared by these two texts are the place of origin, the date and the destination, so as to let the recipient perceive a tacit and informal diplomatic connection with the Ottoman central power. Since the imperial *nişān* was an explicit response to the formal requests expressed by the *bailo* Marcantonio Barbaro,³ the architect of this strategy was probably the Grand Vizier himself, who wished to resume the conversation with the former-partner Republic in separate terms, stressing his own personal involvement while also having the chance to explain his interpretation of past events. Through the reasoning of this experienced statesman, some essential notions of political philosophy are displayed, show-

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1 Gilles Veinstein, *La voix du maître à travers les firmans de Soliman le Magnifique, Soliman le Magnifique et son temps, Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais (7-10 mars 1990)*, (ed. Gilles Veinstein), La documentation française, Paris 1992, pp. 127-144. On the Grand Vizier, Gilles Veinstein, *Sokollu Meḥmed Paşa*, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, IX, Brill, Leiden 1997, pp. 706-711.

2 Archivio di Stato di Venezia (from now onwards ASV), *Documenti Turchi*, b. 6, dd. 818 and 819 (3 Zi-l'qa'de 980). I would like to thank the students of Ottoman Paleography (Letteratura Turca 2, 2018 fall semester) and particularly Mert Pekdoğdu for the inspiring discussions on these texts.

3 Franco Gaeta, *Marcantonio Barbaro*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, VI, Treccani, Rome 1964, pp. 110-112.

ing the depth and substance of the theoretical foundations of the Ottoman *ars governandi*.

Starting with the definition of the recipient, the *incipit* of Şoqollu's letter conforms to the imperial chancellery's protocol: the doge and the lords (*beyler*) of Venice are accompanied by the traditional rhetorical expressions that are due to the heads of Christian states, with the specific plural tense reserved to the Venetian ruling class. Nevertheless, slight peculiarities may be observed, such as a sophisticated affectation in stating the inferior grade of the sender, humble servant of the State, *vis-à-vis* the recipients: "*let me precede the friendly communication that follows by pronouncing with a full and resonant voice the propitious prayers and praises that are convenient and suitable to you [...]*"⁴

Of particular note is the use of the verb "*inhā olunmaq*", used in official reports to a superior. Moreover, the adverb "*dostāne*" ("friendly") ushers in one of the most recurrent and relevant semantic areas of the text, pertinent to a political conceptualization of "friendship", meaning proximity, affinity, partnership, and, ultimately, the (future?) chance of military cooperation and alliance. In this article, I will present my translation of Şoqollu's letter and discuss the varied acceptations of the terms related to "*friendship*" / "*dostluq*" in the post-war context of the relationship between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire.

Soon after the outbreak of the war, with Famagusta still under Ottoman siege, the powerful Venetian judiciary office called the *Consiglio dei Dieci* (Council of Ten), which was seldom entitled to deal with issues related to foreign policy, gave the *bailo* Marcantonio Barbaro, then under house arrest, a secret mandate to start negotiations with the Ottoman Empire in order to reach a political settlement.⁵ The secrecy of the issue is implicitly confirmed by the initial statement of the sultan's *nişān*, where the imprisoned *bailo*'s personal signature and seal stood for an otherwise officially unexpressed proxy from above: "*the esteemed Marcantonio Barbaro, model among the chiefs of the nations of the Messiah, who is in charge of being bailo at my Seat of Felicity, has brought*

4 "[S]ize lāyiq ve sezāvar olan hayir du'ālar ve şenālar taqdīm ve tefhīm qılınıdın şoıra dostāne inhā ve i'lām olunan bu dur-ki [...]", ASV, *Documenti Turchi*, b. 6, d. 819 (3 Zi-l'qa'de 980).

5 The connection between Marcantonio Barbaro, the *Consiglio dei Dieci*, and Şoqollu Mehmed Pasha was kept thanks to the mediation of Solomon Ashkenazi, who had been appointed both the *bailo* and the Grand Vizier's official physician. Benjamin Arbel, *Medicine, diplomacy and trade: Solomon Ashkenazi and Venetian-Ottoman relations c. 1564-1573*, in Id., *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean*, Brill, Leiden/New York/Köln 1995, pp. 77-79.

up the topic of getting back to Peace and Amity, on behalf of the aforementioned lords [of Venice]. For this reason, he has brought to my Threshold of Felicity a letter signed and sealed by himself [...]"⁶

Exhausting negotiations lasted for months before the draft of a treaty could be agreed upon by both parties and written down in the *nişān*.⁷ The *bailo*'s son Francesco Barbaro, who along with his father had been under house arrest for three years, was entrusted with the responsibility to take it to Venice by way of Dubrovnik.⁸ In these circumstances, Şoqollu took the decision to give Francesco the custody of this other letter, which had been written, signed and sealed by himself.⁹

"[...] As universally known and agreed, the affairs of the sultanate, the condition of the world and of the worshippers are in His plentiful power [i.e. of the Almighty]. [...] It is the wish and purpose of this side and particularly of the High Threshold of Felicity that [the people] may always be in a state of tranquility and prosperity".¹⁰ From the mystical discourse to the fundamentals of internal politics, the text finally presents the diplomatic issue under consideration, which is introduced by a declaration that is particularly relevant:

*"because of the old friendship in your regard [emphasis mine], as agreed and stipulated by both sides in the previous correspondence and in respect of the pacts and conditions that are written in the sultan's imperial Capitulations, in order to let care be bestowed on the topics that are communicated to that side [i.e. the Republic of Venice] by way of imperial letters, they have been duly reported and officially proclaimed also to your bailo at the High Threshold".*¹¹

Coherent with the pillars of the cultural system he belonged to, Şoqollu put the concept of human "friendship"/"dostluq" at the bottom of the scale of

6 "[D]ergāh-i sa'ādet-i destgāhımda baylosluq hizmetinde olan qidvet-ül-ümerā-i al-millet-al-Mesihiye Mārğöntönyö Bārbarö nām maqbul adamları müşārileyhom beyleri cānibinden gerü şulh ve salāh hüşüşun[ü] i'lām ve iş'ār edüb bu bābda kendü haṭṭı ve mühür ile mektub Āstān-i sa'ādet-i āşiyānuma getirüb [...]", ASV, Documenti Turchi, b. 6, d. 818 (3 Zi-l'qa'de 980).

7 A complete dissertation on the topic has been written by the *bailo*'s son (Francesco Barbaro, *Il trattato del maneggio della guerra del 1570 fatto in Costantinopoli nel tempo del baillaggio del procurator suo padre* (Museo Correr di Venezia, cod. miscellaneo Cicogna 3186, pp. 43 r-170 r).

8 Gino Benzoni, *Francesco Barbaro*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, VI, Treccani, Rome 1964, pp. 103-106.

9 "*Tahrīren fi al-yevm-ül şalaşa şehr-i Zilqāde sene-i 980/March 7th 1573*", ASV, Documenti Turchi, b. 6, d. 819 (3 Zi-l'qa'de 980).

10 "[U]mür-i salṭanat, āhvāl-i 'ālem ve 'abād feyz-i qudretindedir. Ol 'ilm vedā'i'dir. [...] Dāyma āsüde hāl ve müreff'e el-bāl olmaları bu taraflıñ hüşüşen yüce āstāne-i sa'ādetiñ murād ve maqşüdi olmağın [...]", *ibidem*.

11 "[B]undan evvel size qadimi dostluq bināyen gönderilen mektublarda taraşeynden ma'hüd ve meşrūf olub 'ahdnāme-i hümayün pādişāhide vāq'i ve meşrūf olan şurūf ve 'uhüdu ri'āyet edüb nāme-i hümayünlar ile ol taraşa iş'ār olunan khusüşlarda ihtimām olunsun deyü sizlere dostāne iş'ār eyledüğümüzden gayri yüce astānelerinde duran baylosuñuza dāki bu khusüşlar bizzāt taqrir ve tenbih olunurdu. [...]", *ibidem*.

an unalterable order that descended from God, through the Sultan.¹² Though used here in the figurative sense required by diplomatic discourse, “*friendship*”/“*dostluq*” and all its connected actions conducted throughout centuries of territorial neighborhood and economic partnership between the two states, finds in this sequence a mystical and political projection. It is not by chance that this sequence is described at the beginning of the letter, in order to let the addressees locate their “*friendly*” relationship with the sender in a broader philosophical framework. As a consequence, all the decisions that had been and would be taken by both states for the sake of that “*friendship*”/“*dostluq*” might find a path for a correct interpretation within this framework.

Nevertheless, Şoqollu did not just provide a philosophical base to “*friendship*”/“*dostluq*”: by defining it “*qadimi*” (“old”), he also consolidated the concept on a historical basis. For the Ottoman and Venetian ruling classes, therefore, making peace was not an “*innovation*”/“*bid‘at*”, a term loaded with pejorative implications in the *Ancien Régime*’s typically conservative political reasoning. Vertically and horizontally – meaning philosophically and historically – the Grand Vizier’s words had created an ideal space, where “*pacts and conditions*” had to be respected. The explicit mention of imperial Capitulations (“*ahdnāme*”) in the same sentence gives a juridical and territorial substantiality to this ideal space that may be identified in the *dār al-‘ahd*, the world’s portion belonging to states with whose leading classes the Ottoman Empire stipulated reliable pacts.¹³

*“It was for the sake of friendship that matters and advice were communicated, as an ornament to [our mutual] Felicity. Removing them from their memories, your functionaries gave evidence of unpreparedness, unawareness, and negligence. They have not acted accordingly to the words that had been indicated by means of friendship. Because of their dishonest and greedy conduct, motivated by particular interests in specific times, they have caused bloodshed and the miserable state of afflicted rulers and ruled.”*¹⁴

While remaining within the semantic area of friendship/ “*dostluq*”, this sentence starts scrutinizing the events that led to the War of Cyprus. Up to this point, the characters in relation with the Ottoman state were the doge and the

¹² The same conceptual structure may be recognized in the three levels of interpretation (“the voice of religion”; “the voice of power”; and “the voice of emotion”) of Ottoman lyric poetry. Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry’s Voice, Society’s Song. Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, University of Washington Press, Seattle/London 1985.

¹³ A different interpretation is given in Halil İnalçık, *Dār al-‘Ahd*, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, II, Brill, Leiden 1997, pp. 118-119, where *dār al-‘ahd* includes countries and territories that were or had been formally part of the *dār al-islām*.

¹⁴ “*Dostluq üzere iş‘ar olunan umür ve naşihat pirāye-i sa‘adet iken vekilleriñüz khatırlarından gidirüb her ne vaq‘i olsa tedāriksizlikle muqayyed olub ve gaflet ve ihmāl olunub bi’l cümle dostluq tariqile işaret olunan kelimāta ‘amal olunmayub cüzüyi fevāid ve semtlerde irtikāb ve ‘am‘a olunmağla cüzüyi zamanda nice qanlar dökülmesine ve dertmend re‘āyā ve berāyāniñ paymāl ve perişān hāl olmalarına sebep oldular.*”, *ibidem*.

Venetian oligarchy (“*Venedik doju ve beyleri*”), and their representative in Istanbul (“*baylos*”). With the name of “*vekil*”, this sentence introduces previously unmentioned individuals who were to be held responsible for the progressively deteriorating relations between the two states. To whom was the Grand Vizier alluding? Philologically, the word is connected to the idea of an official appointment, while the context suggests local-scale decision-makers other than simple “agents”. The discussion topic here was probably the Venetian authorities in Cyprus in the years preceding the Ottoman campaign, mentioned in other sources as “*Qubrus beyleri*”, who had been accused of conducting themselves in contradiction to the formal agreements, ultimately inducing Selim II to launch a military offensive.¹⁵ Rather than being an objective reconstruction of historical events, this discourse served a double purpose: on the one hand, it was an ideological assumption in support of the sultan’s expansionist policy, on the other it winked at the letter’s recipients, by placing the blame on individuals who did not necessarily act according to their central government’s guidelines. Being motivated by “particular interests”, their conduct was furthermore deplorable for Islamic political thought, in whose tradition Şoqollu acted, since it showed the imperfection of a state unable to integrate virtuous men aiming for universal Felicity (Avicenna’s “philosophers”) into its ruling class.¹⁶

The reference to a philosophical concept needed a political generalization:

*“[w]hile in all nations it is legitimate and meritorious to perpetrate the best and the most beneficial for the country, the subjects, and the indigents, they [i.e. the Venetian functionaries based in Cyprus] have not acted accordingly. It is as clear and manifest as the daylight that they, who have caused bloodshed, slavery, and misery to the people, before God will never be able to justify their behavior. This is well-known even to your bailo, who has suffered hardships while carrying out the difficult assignments of his role in such hard circumstances”.*¹⁷

I am inclined to think that this sentence should be considered as an explanatory development of the two previous ones, since here the *bailo* is mentioned as the virtuous example of statesman, whose sufferings are comparable

15 Vera Costantini, *Il sultano e l’isola contesa, Cipro tra eredità veneziana e potere ottomano*, UTET Libreria, Torino 2009, pp. 11-26.

16 Oliver Leaman, *La filosofia islamica medievale*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1991, pp. 262-265.

17 “Cümle milletlerde memleket ve re’âyâ ve fuqarâya evla ve enfa’ olanıyla ‘amal olunmaq hâlâl ve şevâb iken ‘amal olunmayub dökülen qanlarda ve esir ve pâyımâl olan re’âyâ ve fuqarâya sebep ve ba’îs olanlar huzûr-u haqqa varıldıqda aşlâ cevaba qâdir olmayacaqları gün gibi vâzîh ve rüşendir. Ve bu def’a bu ‘âzîm maşlahat ve müşkül hizmetîñ içinde bulunub meşaaqatlar çeken baylosuñuza dâkhi ma’lûmdur-ki ol şarafa olan ihtimâm ve iqdâmımızdan murâd şulha noqşân gelmeyüb qanlar dökülmeyüb re’âyâ ve esir ve pâyımâl olmamaqdan ötürü idi. İnşallah huzûr-u haqqa dâkhi bir mesul olmayacağımız añlarız. Ve dâymâ iqdâmımız anuñ üzerine olduqu haqqa ma’lûmdur-ki [...]”, ASV, Documenti Turchi, b. 6, d. 819 (3 Zi-l’qa’de 980).

with the people's miserable condition. By creating a parallelism between subjects and good functionaries, based on a shared and unhappy status, the contrast between bad and good functionaries becomes even more significant, since it is to the lack of a sense of collective responsibility that the whole discourse referred. As a consequence, the purpose of the Grand Vizier was to invite the Venetian ruling class to figuratively throw rotten eggs and humbly accept the effects of Ottoman expansionism as an undeniable matter of fact. In this pan-Ottoman, ecumenical vision, diverging the path from the pursuit of imperial Felicity (“*sa’ādet*”) coincided with foreign functionaries’ unwillingness to take action for the benefit of their own nations, since the “*pax osmanica*”, like any other imperial peace, was to the ultimate advantage of all. Needless to say, the Venetian ruling class would have put forward relevant objections, but the problem, in 1573, was neither for them nor for the Grand Vizier to give an objective historical account of the then-recent events that occurred in the southeast Mediterranean. The point was to prepare the field for a mutual agreement that had to be ideologically acceptable to both sides in spite of unfavorable international circumstances.

The core of the letter is dedicated to describing the central role of the Grand Vizier himself as the key factor of the peace-making process: “*Our purpose, – wrote Şoqollu in majestic plural – “pursued with care and perseverance, was to avoid war and bloodshed, in order to prevent the sufferings of the people and the prisoners. We believe that, God willing, even before Him we will not be held responsible. Our incessant perseverance on the issue is well-known to Him. This being the situation, this time you all need to know it [...]”*”¹⁸

While the virtuous statesman’s actions are already known by God, the Venetian counterpart needed to be explicitly informed of them, this being one of the purposes of the letter.

“*[Y]our bailo who is at the High Threshold of His Excellency our prosperous and mighty sultan – may God exalt and glorify him! – has already sent numerous letters, sealed and signed by himself, to the Threshold of Felicity, advancing a formal request: that peace and formal agreements may subsist between our two states as it used to be. Out of the compassion that I have always shown for the miserable condition of the people [involved in the conflict], I have decided to take a personal interest in this great issue”*”¹⁹

18 “[O]l ʔarafa olan ihtimām ve iqdāmımızdan murād şulha noqşān gelmeyüb qanlar dökülmeyüb re’āyā ve esir ve pāymāl olmamaqdan ötürü idi. İnşallah hużūr-u haqqda dākhi bir mesül olmayacağımız añlarız. Ve dāymā iqdāmımız anuñ üzerine olduđu haqqa ma’lūmdur. Eyle olsa bu def’a cümleñüze bu khuşüşuñ i’lāmı lāzım geldiđi [...]”, *ibidem*.

19 “[S]a’ādetlü ve qudretlü pādīşāhımız e’azz Allah-u te’āla anşār hazretleriniñ yüce astānelerinde olan bāylosuñuz muqaddemā bu maşlahat için def’aatle kendü mührü ve khaṭṭıyla astāne-i sa’ādete bi’l def’aat mektub

Literally, the expression might be translated as follows: “I have entered and put my head upon these issues”. The personal involvement of the Grand Vizier is mentioned here to counterbalance the “particular pretexts” animating the functionaries, stressing the idea of the virtuous statesman who takes action out of his own political perception and not because of any specific order from above. “Above”, in the case of the Grand Vizier, meant the sultan, who, uncoincidentally, is the main character of the following sentence:

“[i]t has been as difficult and arduous as humanely possible to drive away from the prosperous sultan, Refuge of the World, the fire and fury that he nourished on this issue. By spending all my energies, the official request that had been written by your bailo – [who lives] at the highest step of the throne of the prosperous Guardian of the Koran – has been accepted. In order to reach this purpose, part of the troubles undergone by this friend of yours that I am [emphasis mine] is known also to your bailo. Thanks be to God – may His name be exalted! – my inclination for the [universal] prosperity, the order of the world, and the serenity of the people is not a specious excuse and the fury of our munificent and merciful emperor has changed into mercy. Therefore, Peace and Amity have been accepted, the arrival of an ambassador of yours has been allowed and imperial Capitulations granted and bestowed to the hands of your bailo, who has sent them to you via Dubrovnik, by way of his own son”²⁰

In Western sources, the sultan’s fury may be considered more as a literary *topos* than as an actual political instrument. Mehmed II’s fury was described as “boundless” by the Florentine merchant and spy Benedetto Dei, who had intercepted Venetian secret letters in the harbour of Chios and smuggled them in the sultan’s entourage.²¹ Deceitful functionaries could also become the target of the sultan’s fury, as in 1607, when the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet risked his head due to unsatisfactory conduct during a collision with an enemy fleet.²² In general, from the Western perspective, drawing attention to the

gönderüb mabeyn kemākān şulh ve şalāh ve emn-ü amān üzere olmasın[ı] istid’ā eylemeğin şimdiye deyin edegeldüğümüz gibi müceddeden perişān ve mużtarib ül-hāl olan re’āyā ve fuqarāya teraḥḥūmen bu ‘azīm maşlahatıñ içine girüb ve başımı üzerine qoyub [...], *ibidem*.

20 “[S]a’ādetlü pādīşāh-i ‘ālem-i penāhīñ bu bābda olan ateş ve gāzabları def’ gayet müşkül ve ‘asir iken şöyle-ki maqdur-i beşerdır. Bezl ve şarf edüb sa’ādetlü şāhib-i Qurān [ve] zaman ḥazretleriniñ pāye-i serir a’lālārında baylosuñuzuñ şulh kḥuşuşunda yazdığı istid’ā-i mücedded qabüle erişdirince ve gāzab khiddetleri def’ etdirilince neler çekildüğü bu dostuñuzuñ değıl mezbūr baylosuñuzuñ dākhi bir miqdār ma’lūmu olmuşdur. Elḥamdülillah te’āla bu khaire ve niżām-i ‘āleme ve hużūr-u re’āyāya olan qaşd ve delāletimiz şınā’i olmayub mürüvvetlü ve merḥamettlü pādīşāhımız ḥazretleriniñ saṭvet-i qāhire ve gāzabları şevqat ve merḥamete mütebeddil olub şulh ve şalāh qabul etdirilüb bu bābda müceddeden ... elçiñiz gelmesine ve şulh ‘ahdnāme-i hümāyün şadaqa ve ‘ināyet edüb baylosuñuzuñ eline verilüb müşārünileyh dākhi ‘ahdnāme-i hümāyünların[ı] kendü oğlu ile Dobravenik yolundan ol taraḥa irsāl eyledi.”, *ibidem*.

21 Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and his time*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1978, p. 255.

22 Phillip Williams, *The sound and the fury: Christian perspectives on Ottoman naval organization. 1590-1620, in Mediterraneo in armi (secc. XV-XVIII)*, II, (ed. R. Cancila), Quaderni – Mediterranea-ricerche storiche, n. 4, Palermo 2007, p. 561^a.

sultan's fury contributed to building the stereotype of Ottoman irrational despotism, as opposed to the calm wisdom of Christian rulers.²³ Was Şoqollu acquainted with this stereotype? Or did this stereotype rather coincide with an imperial, positive conception of the supreme ruler's rage against the obstacles to the practice of good government and the inexorable expansion of his state? The answer to these questions would require further research on comparable examples. Nevertheless it seems remarkable that the echo of a Christian stereotype resounds in the Grand Vizier's prose in the very sentence where he calls himself "friend"/"dost" of the Republic of Venice, claiming to have led the sultan onto the right path, basically rectifying his master's former political position towards a reconciliation with the former enemy. The peculiar role of the Grand Vizier's function within the Ottoman political and administrative system is particularly evident here.²⁴

The final part of the letter contains some general, concluding prescriptions:

"[n]ow, when the [i.e. this] friendly letter will have arrived, I sincerely hope that the issues agreed upon will be, as necessary, resolutely confirmed. Moreover, I hope that tumultuousness and hostility-harbingers' further behavior – unwelcomed by the Sublime Porte – will not occur. Observing the clauses that are mentioned, do not dare to create a general turmoil out of a particular pretext, with the intention of disturbing the peace. Let our agreements and the condition of Peace and Amity be extended day after day. Tranquil and comfortable, may the subjects, the merchants, and the pilgrims, together with the entire population of your provinces, raise prayers and devotions to His Excellency the prosperous emperor of the inhabited portion of the earth's surface, as well as to all those who are the cause and inspiration of Peace and Amity. God's unique, sacred will is connected to Peace and Amity. May the merchants and the other subjects be acquainted with the fact that God's benevolence is pure Felicity and a mere blessing. May they come and go in loyal friendship, buy and sell joyfully as before. The importance of this state of things is as clear and manifest as the sunlight. Particular pretexts and the lack of cohesiveness led to the end of peaceful circumstances that had been lasting among us for thirty-five years. I hope that you too will conform to that condition, taking great care not to be subjected to those who, out of particular pretexts, are cause of general turmoil. [Moreover,] according to the Felicity-harbingers' imperial Capitulations, sacred letters have been sent to the functionaries of the sea-shores

²³ Gino Benzoni, *Il "farsi turco", ossia l'ombra del rinnegato*, in Id., *Studi sul Quattro-Settecento veneto*, (ed. Da Palazzo Ducale), Marsilio, Venezia 1999, p. 51.

²⁴ For the issue of bureaucratization, see Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, Princeton Legacy Library, Princeton 1986; for the progressive transformation of the specific role of Grand Vizier in the early-modern Ottoman Empire, see Theochari Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs. The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)*, Brill, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001.

and to our sailing staff, not to let them attack, from now onwards, the territories and islands belonging to Venice. In harmony with this, you too do warn your men, one by one, on the aforementioned issues, in order to let the merchants and the pilgrims come and go in tranquility to the imperial well-protected domains”²⁵

In this last passage, the nature of Ottoman and Venetian “friendship”/“*dostluq*” is exemplified in terms of economic partnership and political cohesiveness, introducing the two topics that would become the *leitmotiv* of the relationship between the two states through the first half of the seventeenth century until the outbreak of the War of Candia (1645). In fact, in view of the establishment of a free port in Split, located in Venetian Dalmatia, the Venetian ruling class established close connections with the Ottoman authorities in Bosnia, in particular the *bey* of Klis, without whose cooperation the seventeenth-century re-launch of the Balkan trade routes would have been impossible.²⁶ It cannot have been a coincidence that the *bey* of Klis until 1574 was Ferhād, one of Şoqollu’s cousins, who then became *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia until 1588.²⁷ Although in 1573 the Portuguese-born Jewish merchant Daniel Rodriga had not yet presented the project of Split to the Senate,²⁸ the issue of a pacified neighborhood in Dalmatia was certainly perceived as a matter of survival for the members of the Şoqollu clan still living in Bosnia, who had just experienced the costs of a military clash against the Venetians.

Not improbably, knowing that the Venetians had lost Cyprus, the eagle-eyed politician Şoqollu Mehmed Pasha might have imagined that from then onwards the Republic’s unique chance to compete in trading with the Ottoman Empire

25 “İmdi mektub-u meveddet size vâsıl olduqda ümid dir-ki mu’âhede olunan khusûşlarda gereği gibi sâbit qadem olub dâkhi ziyâde tezelzül ve ‘adâvete sebep olacaq ve maqbûl-u dergâh-i ‘ali olmayacaq cüz-i muqaddemâyı re’âyet ve himâyet olunub cüzi bahâne ile külli dağdağa ve ikhtilal qaşdına cüret olunmayub mabeyn şulh ve şalâh ve ‘ahd-ü amân yevmân fi yevmân mümted ola. Ve re’âyâ ve berayâ ve tüccâr ve züvvâr ve bi’l cümle ahâl-i vilâyetiñiz âsüdehâl müreffê ül-bâl olub sa’âdetlü pâdişâh reb’-i meskün hazretlerine ve şulh ve şalâha ba’is olanlara khayir du’âlar ve şenâlar edeler. Ve çünki hazret-i haqq ... ve ‘alâ tek irâdet-i şerifi bu mertebe[de?] şulh ve şalâha müte’alliq oldu. Eger tüccâr ve eger re’âyâ ve berayâ haqq-i te’âlanın bu ihsânı mahz-i sa’âdet ve ni’met bilüb her kes şadâqat ve ikhlâşla mabeyne varub gelüb bey’-ü şirâ ve kemâkân ticaret edüb mesrur-ül-hâl olalar. Ve bu ma’na aftab-i ‘alem tâb gibi vâzih ve rüşendîr-ki şimdiye deyin mabeynde olan otuz beş yıl-lik şulhuñ bozulmasına sebep gayet cüzi bahâneler ve ‘adem-i itihâd olmuşdur. Ümitdir-ki siz dâkhi şulhi re’âyet edüb cüzi khusûşdan ötürü külli dağdağaya sebep olanların zabtında dâkhi ihtimâm eyleyerez. Ve ‘ahdnâme-i hümayûn sa’âdet maqrun muqtezâsinca yalılarda olan ümerâyâ ve qapudânlara ferman qazâ ce-reyanları şâdir oldu-ki min ba’d Venedik’e mute’alliq olan memleket ve cezâyire dakhil ve ta’arruz olunmaya deyü ahkâm-i şerife irsâl olunmuşdur. Aña göre siz dâkhi ‘alavech ... adamlarunuza tenbih ve tekid edüb her biri üslub-ü sâbiq üzere memâlik mahrûsa-i Pâdişâhiye gelüb gidüb tüccâr ve züvvâr âsüdehâl olalar.” ASV, Documenti Turchi, b. 6, d. 819 (3 Zi-l’qa’de 980).

26 Vera Costantini, *Fin dentro il paese turchesco. Stabilimento della scala di Spalato e potenziamento delle reti mercantili e diplomatiche veneziane nell’entroterra bosniaco*, in “Studi Veneziani”, n.s. LXVII (2014), p. 268.

27 Uroş Dakić, “The Sokollu family clan and the politics of vizierial households in the second half of the sixteenth-century”, (MA Thesis in Comparative History, Central European University), Budapest 2012, pp. 58-59.

28 Renzo Paci, *La “scala” di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra Cinque e Seicento*, Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, Venezia 1971, p. 54.

would have been elsewhere and not in the southeast Mediterranean, but more precisely on the eastern Adriatic shores, along the frontier with Ottoman Bosnia. In this context, showing the *doge* his personal involvement in the reconciliation must have been an excellent occasion for the Grand Vizier to move a step forward in the direction of a future, closer partnership to be based in Dalmatia and Bosnia. In other words, his family members and maybe also himself had everything to gain from the re-establishment of the “*qādīmī dostluq*” with the Republic of Venice. Taking into consideration the aura of novelty that would have pervaded the project of Split, as well as, more generally, seventeenth-century Venetian political discourse, we may truly say that, in the case of the Ottoman-Venetian partnership, new projects required old friendships.

Did this imply a conflict of interest? Was he committing the crime of acting out of “*particular pretexts*” that he had been imputing to his enemies? It is neither easy to reconstruct the complex political dynamics of the Ottoman court during the reign of Selim II, nor evident whether actual factions existed or not. Venetian diplomats and Ottoman historiographers have often deliberately opposed the figure of Şoqollu Mehmed Pasha, the wise and virtuous statesman, with that of Selim II, whose reputation as a heavy drinker (*sārḥōş*) certainly widened the distance from the myth of his father and predecessor, Süleyman the Magnificent. Considering the gap between these two sultans, Şoqollu must have emerged as a figure of continuity, the custodian of an idea of virtuous government that he in first person was unwilling to betray, as this letter clearly demonstrates. Somehow, it might be argued that the Grand Vizier’s position, while perhaps not precisely adherent to Selim II’s, was perceived by various contemporary observers as the most appropriate. After all, the Ottoman-Venetian frontier in Dalmatia actually wound through a region that at the end of the sixteenth century was about to experience a new golden age. In conclusion, not all “personal involvements” should necessarily be considered as “particular pretexts”.

Probably conceived as a present to the Grand Vizier, the portrait of Marcantonio Barbaro by Jacopo Tintoretto bears the inscription: “*Domino Muhemet Musulmanorum Visiario amico optimo*”.²⁹ Was that a quotation of Şoqollu’s “*dostluq*”? Or was *amicitia* part of the classical heritage revisited by the Venetian Renaissance? And, perhaps more importantly, are these two hypotheses necessarily antagonistic? In fact, to a conveniently trained ear, an echo of the

29 “To Lord Mehmet, Vizier of the Muslims, dear friend”. The portrait is reproduced in Michel Lesure, “Notes et documents sur les relations vénéto-ottomanes 1570-1573 (II)”, in “*Turcica*”, VIII/1 (1976), Planche III.

Ottoman Felicity might resound in the Venetian Serenity, stressing the common Aristotelian background of both political traditions. Analogously, the republican *iustitia* recalls the imperial *‘adālet*, both alluding to one of the most characterizing prerogatives of the respective rulers.

What about friendship? In spite of the vast classical repertoire concerning the concept of *amicitia*,³⁰ the Venetian ruling class does not seem to have included it in their political and moral discourse. Perhaps eclipsed by the obsessively repeated *paritas* of the oligarchic egalitarianism, *amicitia* was not numbered among the virtues and resources of the patrician. Indeed, the Venetian *pares* might very well elect their *primus*, in the person of the *doge*, but they still lacked an *amicus/dost*. In a deeply significant allegory, we may say that in 1573, out of “friendship”, Şoqollu Mehmed Pasha restituted a missing part of their common classical heritage to the Venetians.

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³⁰ The Ottoman *dostluq* was not unlikely to refer to the same repertoire. See, for instance, the analogies with Cicero’s concept of *amicitia* (*Letters of Marcus Tullius Cicero with his Treatises on Friendship and Old Age. Letters of Pliny the Younger, The Five Foot Shelf of Classics*, IX, (ed. Charles Eliot), Cosimo Books, New York 2009, pp. 7 and ff.).

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