

ESPIONAGE IN THE 16TH CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN: SECRET DIPLOMACY,
MEDITERRANEAN GO-BETWEENS AND THE OTTOMAN HABSBURG RIVALRY

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By

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HABSBURG RIVALRY**

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ABSTRACT

Spies played a crucial role in early modern imperial rivalries. While past scholars have emphasized the Islam/Christendom divide in the Mediterranean, these go-betweens, who mastered the codes of both cultures, easily crossed invisible boundaries between civilizations and connected the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, two imperial powers at each other's throat. Apart from providing both empires with regular information on political and military developments, these entrepreneur information brokers played an active diplomatic role between two capitals and even participated in Ottoman factional politics.

This dissertation compares both empires' secret services and explains the differences between the two systems of information gathering based on these empires' differing organizational structures. It argues that the Habsburgs tried to institutionalize and standardize their secret services in accordance with their general efforts of bureaucratization and centralization, even though the effect of such efforts remained rather limited in the Levant. The Ottomans, on the other hand, maintained their longstanding decentralized approach and delegated the responsibility of gathering information to pashas and court favourites who established their own intelligence networks. This created a rather different situation whereby these networks served their masters's interests rather than that of the state, thus giving the

historian ample information on Ottoman factional politics. In relying on oral communication and not following the recent developments in steganography and cryptography, the Ottoman secret service was more personal than institutional.

Still, the Ottoman secret service produced good results. In spite of these differences that could have been otherwise considered shortcomings and contrary to the unwarranted assumptions that prevailed in Western historiography, the Ottomans successfully developed a functional information gathering mechanism which in itself was coherent. The real factor that negatively affected the efficiency of both empires was the lack of direct diplomacy between two capitals. While both empires kept themselves informed of political developments and military preparations, they failed to develop an awareness of each other's legal, political and economic systems as well as cultural, linguistic and religious particularities.

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I take full responsibility of any factual errors in this dissertation. If there are many, I can but quote Seneca the Younger: *Errare humanum est perseverare autem diabolicum*.

Emrah Safa Gürkan

Erenköy, Istanbul

April, 2012

Kızım Zeynep'e

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Archives and Libraries

AGS	Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid
AMAE	Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AMSC	Archivo del Marqués de Santa Cruz, Madrid
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Florence
ASG	Archivio di Stato di Genova, Genoa
ASN	Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Naples
ASV	Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice
AV	Archivio Vaticano, Rome
BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlık Arşivleri, Istanbul
BM	British Museum, London
BMC	Biblioteca del Museo Correr, Venice
BNCF	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze
BNM	Biblioteca Marciana, Venice
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid
DAD	Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku, Dubrovnik
IUK	Istanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul
TSK	Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Istanbul

Frequently used Archival fonts

CCX-LettAmb	Capi del consiglio di dieci, Lettere di Ambasciatori
CCX-LettRett	Capi del consiglio di dieci, Lettere di rettori et di altre cariche
CCX-LettSec	Capi del consiglio di dieci, Lettere secrete
COSP	Calendar of State Papers
CX-ParSec	Capi del consiglio di dieci, Parti Secrete
DocTR	Documenti Turchi
E	Papeles de Estado
IS	Inquisitori di Stato
MD	Mühimme Defterleri
MZD	Mühimme Zeyli Defterleri
SAPC	Senato, Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli
SDC	Senato, Dispacci, Costantinopoli
SDelC	Senato, Secreta, Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli
AMP	Archivio Mediceo del Principato

b. busta, box/volume
fil. filza, folder
c. carta, page
col. column
fol. folio

no. number
reg. registro, register

Note on dates. The Ottoman calendar was the lunar *Hijri* calendar, which was marked by “H.” in the references, followed by the conversion of its dates to the Gregorian calendar, marked by “A.D.” The Venetian calendar year began on March 1. When they differed from the Gregorian calendar in the months of January and February, dates in Venetian documents are marked by “m.v.” (*more Veneto*). For instance, 16 January 1581, m.v. corresponds to 16 January 1582 according to the Gregorian calendar. All dates in the body of the text have been modified to follow the Gregorian calendar.

Abbreviations for lunar months (*Kamerî aylar*) in the Ottoman calendar

Muharrem M
Safer S
Rebieulevvel Ra.
Rebiulahir R
Cemaziyelevvel Ca.
Cemzzaiyelahir C
Receb B
Saban Ş
Ramazan N
Sevval L
Zilkade Za.
Zilhicce Z

Gurre: The first day of the month in the Hijri Calendar
Evasit: The time period between the 11th and 20th day of the month.
Selh: The last day of the month in the Hijri calendar

Other abbreviations

Ar. Arabic
It. Italian
Fr. French
Gen. Genoese
Lat. Latin
o. office
Ott. Ottoman
r. reign
Sp. Spanish
Tur. Turkish
Ve. Venetian

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1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the secret diplomacy in the 16th-century Mediterranean within the context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry. By focusing on a wide range of European and Ottoman sources, it focuses on how both empires tackled the issue of establishing intelligence networks and tries to explain the basic differences between the secret services of both empires based on their differing organizational structure. It also questions predetermined conclusions and unwarranted assumptions regarding the efficiency of Ottoman secret service by presenting new evidence.

Secondly, it concentrates on the human element of secret diplomacy and seeks to situate information brokers within the larger group of Mediterranean go-betweens that mastered the codes of both cultures and thus could easily cross invisible boundaries between two civilizations, Christianity and Islam, which supposedly separated the two halves of the Mediterranean with an iron curtain. It includes ample information on the activities of Ottoman, Habsburg and Venetian spies. Furthermore, a separate chapter on an operative intelligence network that gathered information in Constantinople furnishes the historian with important details regarding Ottoman factional politics and the 16th-century Constantinople as a center of information.

Finally, it analyzes the multi-layered relation between information and politics and accentuates the importance of studying information in order to deconstruct the decision-making process and to better understand how empires formulated their strategies and made their policies. It also underlines the political and strategical benefits of accurate information and focuses on how an intelligence edge created an advantage for either party in the imperial rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs.

1.1. JUSTIFYING THE TOPIC

1.1.1. Why the 16th century?

Historical conditions of the 16th century as well as the international situation brought espionage “what could perhaps be considered its first Golden Age” for a number of reasons.¹ First, the information or the news itself, *nouvelles*, *avisos*, *avvisi*, *ahbar*, *ahval*, *evza*’ or whatever its name, gained a special importance in the 16th century because of diverse but related factors such as the development of international exchange, opening of new trade routes, the invention of the printing press, the Reformation, the founding of public postal systems and the intensification of human relations. Thanks to these developments, political, economic, intellectual, religious and social life acquired an international and world-wide character that it had not possessed before. News itself expanded its domain; it acquired a more evident role in the daily lives of the ordinary people. The general development of riches, culture and technique permitted the constitution of indispensable sources for the study of information, evident from a number of examples demonstrated by Pierre Sardella in 1948.² Newsletters changed the nature and the scope of information between the last decades of the 15th and the first of the 16th century in Italy.³ The best example of these newsletters was the Fugger *zeitungen*.⁴ These not only demonstrate the extent to which the Augsburg firm efficiently gathered information from all parts of the world, but also the relationship between

¹ Carlos Garnicer and Javier Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II: Los servicios secretos del Imperio español* (Madrid : La esfera de los libros, 2005), 13.

² The developments in book-keeping, the frequency of resorting to public or private acts in daily transactions and thus the multiplication of diarists. Pierre Sardella, *Nouvelles et Spéculations à Venise au début du XVI^e Siècle* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1948), 16.

³ Merchant letters of private nature gave way to handwritten newsletters about political events in Europe. Before the invention of newspapers in the 17th century, these newsletters provided a regular source of information for the public which sought to appease its “fever of information”. In the words of Pius V in 1568, “a new art” emerged, the art of compiling newsletters. Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali: Assle origini della pubblica informazione (secoli XVI e XVII)* (Roma: Editori Laterza, 2002), vi. This liberal flow of information in centers like Venice should have facilitated spies’ jobs.

⁴ Victor von Klarwill, ed. *The Fugger Newsletters: Being a Selection of Unpublished Letters from the Correspondents of the House of Fugger During the Years 1568-1605*, trans. Pauline de Chary (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1926) provides an English translation of some of the newsletters.

the diffusion of information and the revolutionary developments in exchange systems, overseas communication and international trade networks in the 16th century.

Secondly and more importantly, since the focus of this study is on the central governments, I should explore the relationship between the development of “administrative-bureaucratic structures”⁵ and the complexity and efficiency of the mechanisms of secret diplomacy. During the 16th century, several concomitant trends expanded the influence of central governments and thus rendered espionage more important. The emergence of the bigger polities meant the development of more complex institutions for the central governments to achieve political ends with the financial resources at their disposal. Certain by-products of bureaucratization and centralization such as the establishment of reliable postal services, appointment of resident ambassadors and the development of the techniques of steganography, cryptanalysis and cryptography helped the development of information-gathering mechanisms and consequently raised the importance of counter-intelligence efforts for policy makers.

Even though diminished in its economic and political power, Venice remained the “center of information” in the 16th century. The Republic of San Marco and its agents gradually built up an intelligence network over the centuries; they relied on the specific advantages that the *Stato di Mar* brought. Elsewhere in the continent, there was a direct correlation between the size of the states, and the investment in bureaucratic, diplomatic and military apparatus, even though the direction of the casual relation is open to discussion.

This process of bureaucratization and institutionalization brought another advantage for our study. Starting from the mid-16th century, early modern states produced more documentation which enables enhanced historical analysis. Most of the archives that were

⁵ Paolo Preto, *I Servizi Segreti di Venezia* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1994), 25-38.

consulted produced little documentation of relevance before the mid-16th century. Neither in quality nor in quantity, do these records allow one to draw too many conclusions.

The imperial rivalry between the Ottomans and Habsburgs gave the 16th-century Mediterranean international politics a rhythm that tempts the historian: an inter-dynastical war without a pause as a result of which more or less every polity along the shores of the Mediterranean had to invest their resources in the struggle. The “Great War” of the Mediterranean, the imperial rivalry between two dynasties on both edges of the sea, resulted in an unrepeatable state investment to the extent that the decision-makers led their empires to bankruptcies on more than one occasion. This rivalry ended in a stalemate because of these bankruptcies.

In such a heated political arena, information became ever more important in the Mediterranean. The scope of information-gathering mechanisms in the 16th century moved in tandem with the increasing and decreasing intensity of the military confrontation between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. No geographic region went unnoticed by policy makers. The nature of the gathered information also reflected a similar universalist tendency. Reports that arrived in Naples, Messina and Constantinople not only brought news from where they were sent; but also contained information concerning different geographies from a variety of sources in an effort to harmonize their narrative and to get a sense of the bigger picture. Experienced spies were aware of the interconnectedness of the events they mentioned. The answer to the biggest question in the minds of Habsburg viceroys come February or March – whether the Ottoman navy would sail to the Western Mediterranean or not, – depended not only on the military preparations in the Imperial Arsenal in Constantinople, but also the harshness of Persian winters, the fate of a revolting son or a bad season of crops. Habsburg informants needed to know about ambassadors that arrived from the vassal states such as Wallachia or Moldavia or about a rebellion in a far away province such as Yemen. Similarly,

the Ottomans had to be informed of the events in farther geographies such as the Dutch Revolt, the French Wars of Religion, the Great Armada, the fate of the Portuguese crown, and the like.

1.1.2. Why the Mediterranean? The case of Mediterranean espionage and the issue of conflicting civilizations

The Mediterranean, as the geographical focus of our study, gives the researcher a number of advantages that other geographical areas do not. It represents a different case, espionage in a religious and civilizational frontier, which allows us to test the validity of historical theories that divide the Mare Nostrum into two distinct cultural and religious spheres of influence. These theories present a binary opposition between Christianity and Islam that was the engine not only of political relations between states, but also, in its omnipotence, of relations between societies and communities along the Mediterranean shores. The extent of information gathering networks as well as the stories of spies operating in between geographies with undeniable religious, linguistic and cultural differences will demonstrate in the following pages both the permeability of civilizational frontiers and a special type of people who were accustomed to operate in the borderlands, “those who come and go”, as Emilio Sola so conveniently labeled his book after a contemporary term that frequently appears in the documentation of AGS.⁶ These people in between polities and civilizations were the ones from among whom the states recruited their spies and thanks to whom the information flowed towards political centers with an acceptable regularity and accuracy.

One of the major issues that informed Mediterranean as well as Middle Eastern History is the relations between different cultures and religions, namely Christianity and Islam. The historiography has witnessed a debate between two schools of thought and their

⁶ Emilio Sola, *Los que van y vienen: Información y fronteras en el Mediterráneo clásico del siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2005).

different representation of the Mediterranean, in Eric Dursteler's words, "the bifurcated Mediterranean of the battlefield and the linked Mediterranean suggested by the region's many bazaars and other places of encounter and exchange".⁷

The advocates of "the bifurcated Mediterranean of the battlefield" in the first school of thought accentuated the clash between two civilizations that divided the Mediterranean in a so-called dichotomy of Christianity and Islam. This idea came to the fore when the famous Belgian historian Henri Pirenne's post-humous book, *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, appeared in 1937.⁸ According to Pirenne, what destroyed the Mediterranean unity of Roman times and fractured the sea was not the Germanic invasions of the 5th century as was generally assumed, but the advent of Islam and its expansion along the sea's shores in the 7th and 8th centuries. An inherent and irreconcilable rivalry between Christianity and Islam followed and cut off all communication and exchange, effectively dividing the Mediterranean into two hostile zones.

Later historians took Pirenne's hypothetical proposition about the reasons for the fracturing of the Mediterranean world and developed into the basis for a theory of an inevitable clash between Islam and Christianity. Bernard Lewis, a nonagenarian professor of history whose career has spanned from the 1940s to the 2010s, had long written extensively on the encounters between Christians and Muslims along the Mediterranean,⁹ prior to his books of the last decade, intended for a larger audience seeking a superficial grasp of Islam in the chaotic and paranoid post-9/11 environment. Hence the titles of his books and articles:

⁷ Eric R. Dursteler, On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15 (2011): 414.

⁸ Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris, F. Alcan; Bruxelles, Nouvelle société d'éditions, 1937). Even though the book was published post-humously, Pirenne wrote a preliminary essay on the subject in 1922 and gave an outline. Idem, "Mahomet et Charlemagne", *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'histoire*, 1 (1922): 77-86.

⁹ His major work on the subject is Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York and London: W.W. Norton&Company, 1982). However, he had already expressed the same views on encounters between Islam and Christendom in an article he wrote a quarter century before the book, see. idem., "Muslim Discovery of Europe", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* vol. 20, no.1/3 (1957), *Studies in Honour of Sir Ralph Turner, Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 1937-57*, 409-416.

What went wrong?,¹⁰ *Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*,¹¹ *The Roots of Muslim Rage*.¹² Treating Islam as a monolithic entity with no regard to its plurality, historical evaluation and internal dynamics, Lewis asserted that Muslim societies remained backward compared to their European counterparts because of internal reasons such as their resistance to innovation and “cultural arrogance”, fueled by their sense of superiority. He rejected explanations focused on external causes such as the Crusades or western imperialism, i.e., on relations of power between the West and the East. The final picture was thus a “medieval iron curtain...between Islam and Christendom [which] seems to have kept cultural exchanges at a minimum and greatly restricted even commercial and diplomatic intercourse.”¹³ This line of thought has been fiercely criticized by many scholars, leaving Lewis totally discredited in certain academic circles, especially after the appearance in 1978 of Edward Said’s *opus magnum Orientalism*,¹⁴ an audacious attack on the Western representations of the Orient which argues that the products of Western Orientalists’ Eurocentric history writing were rather tools for Western imperial ambitions than objective academic studies.

On the other side of the debate was perhaps the most influential historian of the 20th century whose *opus magnum*, *La Méditerranée et le monde Méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, defended the Inner Sea’s unity and presented a rather different picture.¹⁵ Fernand Braudel’s Mediterranean, which he scrutinized in every possible aspect (physical, social, economical and political), was not divided by a religious or civilizational line. It comprised “a

¹⁰ Bernard Lewis, *What went wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Bernard Lewis, *Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: Modern Library, 2003).

¹² Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, *The Atlantic Monthly* (September 1990), <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/4643/>

¹³ Lewis, “Muslim Discovery of Europe”, 411.

¹⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

¹⁵ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde Méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*. The First edition of the book appeared in one volume, published by Librairie Armand Colin in Paris in 1949. A revised and enlarged second edition, consisting of two volumes and 1200 pages, was published by the same publishing house in 1966. The English translation of the work appeared very late. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 2 vols, compared to Spanish (1953) and Italian (1953). It was translated into Turkish in 1989.

hundred frontiers, not one, some political, some economic, and some cultural”.¹⁶ The civilizations it hosted were affected by the same general trends and shared “common destinies” imposed by structural factors such as environment, ecology and the consequent socio-economic relations.¹⁷

In spite of the book’s importance on 20th century historical methodology, few historians followed Braudel’s footsteps and studied the Mediterranean in general. What followed *La Méditerranée* were several works that concentrated on a given region of the Mediterranean. In short, *La Méditerranée* “marked an end rather than a beginning in the Mediterranean studies”.¹⁸ No historian would try to write a “history of” the Mediterranean, restricting themselves to writing “history in” until Horden and Purcell wrote the first volume of their colossal work, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* which differs from Braudel’s *La Méditerranée* in that it accentuates the diversity of local microecologies and contends that the unifying force was rather “the connectivity” of the Mare Nostrum via its seaborne communications between these localities.

Many of these specific works that concentrated on the “history of” the post-Braudelian Mediterranean continued to inform the debate over the dichotomy of Islam and Christianity. Within the context of relations between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe, some historians, such as Paolo Preto¹⁹ and Andrew Hess²⁰ sided with the Pirenne camp, while

¹⁶ Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 168–170.

¹⁷ For a recent review of *La Méditerranée* and an interesting discussion of how efficiently Braudel used Ottoman sources that were available to him, see. Colin Heywood, “Fernand Braudel and the Ottomans: The Emergence of an Involvement (1928-50)”, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 23:2 (2008): 165-184. Also see. Ruggiero Romano, *Braudel e noi: Riflessioni sulla cultura storica del nostro tempo* (Roma, Donzelli, 1995) and Maria Fusaro et al. (eds.), *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Mediterranean: Braudel’s Maritime Legacy* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), especially Maria Fusaro’s introductory article that outlines the Mediterranean historiography, “After Braudel: A Reassessment of Mediterranean History between the Northern Invasion and the Caravane Maritime”, in *ibid.*, 1-22.

¹⁸ Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 37.

¹⁹ Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi* (Firenze: G.C. Sansoni Editore, 1975).

²⁰ Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); *idem*, “The Moriscos: An Ottoman Fifth Column in the Sixteenth-Century Spain”, *American Historical Review* LXXIV (October 1968): 1-25; *idem*, “The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History”, *Past and Present* 57 (1972): 53-73; *idem*, “The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt (1517) and

others such as Pedani,²¹ Dursteler,²² Kafadar,²³ Arbel²⁴ and Rothman²⁵ followed Braudel's representation of the Mediterranean. Following the footsteps of the "new cultural history" that originally concentrated on the cultural encounters of the West with the societies of Asia, America and Africa, these authors in the latter group accentuated the civilizational contact along Mediterranean shores and the cultural pluralism of its metropolitan centers. "Because of their long and unique shared history, their abundant archival resources for the early modern period, and the richness of their modern historiographical traditions",²⁶ the relationship between Venice and Constantinople received special attention from these historians who sought to demonstrate the cultural contacts in the Mediterranean.

Perhaps, this uniqueness of the relationship between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, which others thought of as a merit, becomes instead a liability for the case for Mediterranean pluralism. This relationship was the exception rather than the rule and generalizations based

the Beginning of the Sixteenth-Century World War", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 4/1 (1973): 55-76. Hess insists on the prevalent hostility between two religions in the "Forgotten Frontier" of the Mediterranean, North Africa.

²¹ Maria Pia Pedani, "Presenze Islamiche a Venezia", *Levante* XXXV/4 (December 1993): 13-20; eadem, *In Nome del Gran Signore: Inviati Ottomani a Venezia dalla Caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia* (Venezia: Deputazione Editrice, 1994); eadem, *La Dimora della Pace: Considerazioni sulle Capitulazioni tra i Paesi Islamici e l'Europa* (Venice: Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, 1996); eadem, "Veneziani a Costantinopoli alla fine del XVI secolo", *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 15 (1997): 67-84; eadem, "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy", *Turcica* 32 (2000): 9-31; eadem, *Dalla Frontiera al Confine* (Venezia: Herder Editrice, 2002); eadem, *Venezia: Porta d'Oriente* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010).

²² Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); idem, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); idem, "Commerce and Coexistence: Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Early Modern Era", *Turcica* 34 (2002): 105-133; idem, "Fatima Hatun née Beatrice Michiel: Renegade Women in the Early Modern Mediterranean", *The Medieval History Journal* 12/2 (2009): 355-382; idem, "On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts", *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011): 413-434.

²³ Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima", *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986): 191-218; idem, "The Ottomans and Europe" in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600, Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation: Volume I: Structures and Assertions*, eds. Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, James D. Tracy (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 589-635.

²⁴ Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995). Also see his several articles.

²⁵ E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); eadem, "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth Century Mediterranean", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21/1 (June 2006): 39-75; eadem, "Self-Fashioning in the Mediterranean Contact Zone: Giovanni Battista Salvago and his Africa ovvero Barbaria (1625)", in *Renaissance Medievalisms*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009): 123-143; eadem, "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/4 (October 2009): 771-800.

²⁶ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 2.

on episodes and anecdotes from the harmonious and cooperative relations between these two empires as well as their elites run the risk of overreaching. Venice had always been a part of the larger trade networks of the Eastern Mediterranean, both in Byzantine as well as in Ottoman times, and the political, cultural and artistic influences of the Eastern Mediterranean on Venice, the celebrated “center of meditation between the West and the East”, had long been appreciated.²⁷ Venetian colonies, composed of every segment of Venetian society, were dispersed along the Levantine ports, while the Ottoman merchants frequented not only Venice itself, where their growing numbers would justify the allocation of a *Fondaco* to their service in the 17th century, but also other Venetian possessions that constituted the *Stato da Mar*. The elites of both empires cooperated to the fullest extent, perfectly exemplified by the trade relations between the Ottoman and Venetian elite as well as the Ottomans’ incessant requests from the Venetians for special favors,²⁸ and personal presents so well documented in almost every archival font in ASV, relevant to the Ottoman Empire.²⁹ The relations between the Ottoman Empire and Venice should not be an example of the smooth relations between Islam and Christianity in the Mediterranean any more than Turco-Israeli relations in the 20th century are an example of harmonious relations between Israel and the Muslim world. In short, the exceptionality of these relations weakens the case for cultural pluralism and civilizational contact in the Mediterranean: obviously, for Mediterranean go-betweens, overcoming cultural barriers and traveling across political frontiers that separated the Ottoman lands from those of Venice was less difficult than it would have been elsewhere in the Mediterranean and the two polities were closer to each other more than the historians of both, plagued by notions of civilizational approach, have been ready to accept. Yet, to what extent could this close

²⁷ Agostino Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1966); idem, *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1973); William McNeill, *Venice: The Hinge of Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974); Hans G. Beck et al., eds., *Venezia Centro di Mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente, secoli XV-XVI: Aspetti e problemi* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1977).

²⁸ The favours might be a license to open a shop or a position in the government for a relative, a *sanseria* for Jews in Rialto, safe-conduct for *banditi*, etc.

²⁹ ASV, SDC, SDeIC, CX-ParSec.

relationship between a Muslim and a Christian power be generalized to the entirety of the Mediterranean in which religion was still the primary marker, empires embraced religious propaganda and the Holy War rhetoric for political ends and corsairs from both sides used religious justification to reclaim the Middle Sea with their little wars by ravaging its coasts, enslaving its people, and jeopardizing its internal communication and transportation?

1.1.3. Why the Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry?

The geographical focus of this study determined its political focus as well. The particular character of the imperial rivalry between Constantinople and Madrid brought the aspect of information and secret diplomacy to the fore. The lack of diplomatic ties and of diplomatic representation in each other's capital created two particular situations.³⁰

I could have chosen a number of different scenes to concentrate on while studying the early modern espionage in the Mediterranean. For one, the Venetian-Ottoman or the Venetian-Habsburg Rivalry would be ideal as the intensity of relations, frequency of contact and the volume of documentation would justify such a choice. In the end, however, I opted for the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, at the risk of neglecting the most efficient Secret Service in the early modern Mediterranean, that of Venice, on which a thorough study has already been published in 1994, and to whose details we will often return in order to delineate the general characteristics and methods of Secret Diplomacy. The reason I chose the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry was to ascertain the fluidity of civilizational boundaries in the Mediterranean by

³⁰ It could be hypothesized that close relations between Vienna and Madrid should have compensated for the side effects of the lack of direct diplomatic relations between the two empires to a certain extent. The Spanish Habsburgs' ambassador in Vienna was actively involved in gathering information on things Ottoman and the Austrian diplomatic presence in Constantinople was definitely a positive factor for the efficiency of Spanish Habsburgs' information gathering. The Austrian ambassador could even be instrumental, to a certain extent, in inspecting the activities of the Habsburg spies in Constantinople. Did the Viceroy of Naples not rely on him when he could not figure out whether Guglielmo de Saboya, who came to Naples to offer some clandestine operations, was an Ottoman spy or not? AGS, E 1090, fol. 116 (2 September 1589). Still, the active role that the Habsburg spies in Constantinople played in the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry as well as their intermediation between imperial elites may be a proof of the limited role that Austrian ambassadors played after the break-up of Charles V's patrimony. I could have analyzed the issue more thoroughly, had I been able to undertake a comprehensive study of the relevant archival fonds in AGS and in *Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv* (HHStA) in Vienna (Österreichische Staatsarchiv-ÖStA). Unfortunately, logistical reasons forced me to shy away from a comprehensive study and to leave the issue a side for now, apart from a brief analysis of Vienna's contribution to Habsburg secret diplomacy in Chapter Four.

testing the case for cultural pluralism and civilizational contact at its weakest point where the two actors of the focused rivalry had shaped their ideology and propaganda in a spirit of total rejection of and absolute confrontation with each other while the relation between the two were plagued by imperial wars, justified with religious reasons and the “Otherness” of the rival. The relations between Naples/Messina/Madrid/Barcelona and Constantinople/Algiers by no means resembled those between Constantinople and Venice because the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier presented harsher conditions for these Mediterranean go-betweens as opposed to the Ottoman-Venetian frontier. Devoid of the advantages that legality and reliability provided the go-betweens who operated in the Ottoman-Venetian borders, the protagonists of this dissertation had to cope with several obstacles and rely on more complex networks that would have rendered possible for them to travel through imperial frontiers and operate between the cities of two empires at each other’s throats. Stories of these hardly visible agents of Secret Diplomacy show us the extent to which they managed to overcome these obstacles as well as cross cultural and civilizational boundaries while operating on the field, brokering information on the one hand and linking imperial centers in a network of spies, agents, saboteurs, slaves and diplomats on the other. Once passed, this test of the Mediterranean cultural pluralism and civilizational contact, albeit a difficult one, would consolidate the case in its defense decisively.

The first situation, particular to our case, the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, was the difficulty with which both states gathered and transmitted reliable and accurate information on each other for long time periods. The information gathering systems of both empires suffered from several disadvantages which the Venetian ambassadors in Constantinople and Madrid, or the Habsburg Secret Service in Flanders and France did not.

The first disadvantage was the problem of quality, both in terms of the recruitment pool and the information received. Both empires had to rely on occasional spy reports

produced by agents of questionable loyalty whom they had to employ and supervise, even if not directly from the capital, from provincial centers, still distant to the networks. The Habsburg authorities often complained about the character of these spies and the unreliability of the information they transmitted. This problem was only natural given the harsh conditions of frontier espionage that impeded intelligence networks operating more in a safer and more complex manner. To give two examples: the Habsburg secret service in Flanders recruited agents with contracts, transferred money and couriers relatively easily and most surprisingly, even came to a mutual understanding with the enemy to exchange the captured spies.³¹ In the Mediterranean borderlands, one could not even dream of such pleasant conditions. Alain Hugon asserted that the majority of Habsburg spies who were detained in France managed to leave prison after a short duration and continued their activities, a stark contrast with the frequent executions of spies that operated in the Ottoman-Habsburg borderlands.³²

The second disadvantage was the problem of ensuring the continuity of information gathering networks. Well-educated and specifically trained Venetian diplomats followed one another in foreign capitals and left for their successors as well as the political elites in the center, an accumulated knowledge with which they could fulfill their diplomatic duties that obviously also included information gathering. Apart from the *dispacci* of momentary nature, these Venetian diplomats left *relazioni*, long reports about the state structure, factional politics, financial and military resources and provinces of both empires. Venetian diplomats were *required by law* to submit those *relazioni* to the Senate. This public access in turn created a profound awareness of the conditions in foreign capitals where future diplomats would serve and helped the professionalization of information gathering, headed by a well-

³¹ Miguel Angel Echevarría Bacigalupe, *La Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes, 1598-1643* (Leioa-Vizcaya: Argitarapen Zerbitzua Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 1984), 51-67.

³² Alain Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique "Honorable Ambassadeurs" et "Divins Espions": Répresentation Diplomatique et Service Secret dans les Relations Hispano-Françaises de 1598 à 1635* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2004), 463. Even though the lack of diplomatic representation should have affected the Ottomans as well, theirs was a general problem. They did not suffer specifically within the context of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, nor with regards to their information-gathering in Naples and Sicily, because they would not appoint resident ambassadors in European capitals until the last years of the 18th century.

educated diplomat, familiar with the diplomatic customs and aware of political realities in these capitals. A professional Venetian diplomat had a lot more to offer their employees than Ottoman and Habsburg agents who were given the task to organize and supervise local information-gathering networks.

Furthermore, the ongoing presence of resident ambassadors ensured the continuity of established intelligence networks. Compared to Ottoman and Habsburg information gathering in each other's territories, this was no small advantage. Both empires had to go to great lengths not to lose contact with these local elements. Even the best documented example, the Habsburg information gathering network in Constantinople was too disorganized. The Habsburgs had trouble keeping them in check and organizing them efficiently. The hierarchy of the organization was imperfect. Its leader was always on the move between Madrid, Naples and Constantinople, while two of his assistants were not fully aware of each other's networks. Neither the Habsburg officials in Naples, nor those in Sicily had a clear picture of how many agents were employed apart from the ones who received money from the center and even then they were ignorant of who exactly these agents were. Finally, the original network that the Habsburg spies established in the 1560s did not seem to be perfectly inherited by their successors who were operating in Constantinople in the 1590s. The continuity and consequent improvement of the information gathering system could not be maintained.

A third disadvantage was that these two states could not use diplomacy as an information-gathering tool. Compared to the Venetian and French ambassadors in the Ottoman capital who took advantage of their elevated status and audiences with important state officials from whom they could acquire as much information as possible, the Habsburg and the Ottoman networks were doomed to operate by means of intermediaries (small-scale government officials such as secretaries, translators and couriers) between their spies and the decision-makers, the source of crucial information. They had to solve this problem by relying

on other powers: while the Habsburgs relied on Venice and the Austrian Habsburgs; the Ottomans sought and at times demanded information from Venice, Ragusa, England, France and, later in the 17th century, the United Provinces. This practice in turn created a second problem. All of these states had a separate diplomatic agenda, and a fixed position in international diplomacy vis-à-vis the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. The information they transmitted was less than perfect. Most of the time, these states manipulated and selectively represented information in an effort to serve their own interest by influencing the decision-makers of both empires rather than providing them with impartial information.

The second particular situation produced by the lack of diplomatic relations and resident ambassadors was that the states had to use their information gathering networks in order to ensure communication between each other. To a certain extent, the Austrian envoys solved this problem, especially before the breakup of Charles V's patrimony. Yet, correspondence between the Ottoman and Spanish Habsburg political elites required more than that. The diplomatic gap was filled and the problem of communication and correspondence was solved by spies that eagerly undertook further responsibilities in pursuit of financial gain, sometimes authorized by the center and sometimes on their own initiative, as was the case of Santa-Croce who single-handedly instigated Ottoman-Habsburg negotiations for a truce in 1577.

The agents of secret diplomacy that operated in both central governments' service did more than just carry information; they also bridged the communication gap between imperial centers. They provided necessary channels of communication and accelerated the pace of correspondence and cooperation between imperial elites not only by engaging in espionage, but also by serving in other positions such as diplomats, slave ransomers, merchants, translators, and the like.

Although the two empires were continuously fighting with each other, among the governing elites, instances of courteous relations were many. First of all, in spite of the lack of direct diplomatic channels, there was still correspondence between the political elites of both empires, between commanders, viceroys, governors and even the royalty. For instance, in 1548, the Ottoman Grand Admiral Sokollu sent a letter to his colleague, Juan de Vega, the viceroy of Sicily, to congratulate him on the recently signed truce between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs and offer his respects to the Emperor whose hands he would like to kiss.³³ A similar correspondence between the Ottoman Sultan and Don Juan, the Admiral of the allied Christian fleet, after the Battle of Lepanto conveys a similar tone of courtesy and esteem.³⁴ An even more astonishing series of correspondence took place between the Ottoman Grand Admiral Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha, *alias* Scipione Cicala and the Viceroy of Sicily, the Duke of Maqueda, when the former anchored off Messina with the Ottoman fleet and asked the latter for permission to see his mother, brothers and nephews who lived in the city.³⁵ Leaving aside the curious fact that a renegade Ottoman Grand Admiral stopped with a large Ottoman fleet to visit his mother in a Christian land, the friendly tone in the letters as well as an apparent elite consciousness between the Viceroy and the Grand Admiral is indicative of the usualness and frequency of such correspondence. The cooperation as well as the common decorum and customs between imperial elites on both sides are evident from the indignation of Cigalazade when he was asked to send his son as a hostage. The Pasha managed to have the decision reversed by evoking the memory of past favors granted to Habsburg elites in Constantinople such as Suleiman I's decision to liberate Sancho de Leyva, the father of Pedro de Leyva, Sicily's *general de las galeras* without asking for hostages. He also accentuated the

³³ AGS, E 1118, fol. 105. 24 June 1548.

³⁴ AMAE, *Mémoires et document divers: Originaux et copies du XVI^e et XVII^e siècles sur la période de 1520 à 1648*, fols. 40-42; BNCF, *Collezione Capponi*, cod. CLXXIII, pp. 41-44, reproduced in Spanish in Emilio Sola Castaño, *Uchalí: El Calabrés Tiñoso, o el mito del corsario muladí en la frontera* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2011), 194-197.

³⁵ AGS, E 1158, fols. 186 (1 October 1598), 187 (15 letters between the Grand Admiral, his family and Habsburg authorities dated September 1598).

good relations between the House of Cicala and Leyva and pointed out to the fact that among these imperial elites precautions that hinted at distrust were not the norm for them, “*che fanno professione di honor*”, would not break their words.³⁶

Secondly, several clandestine operations functioned in such a way that it linked the political elites of the two empires. It was a custom in the Ottoman capital to give presents to dignitaries in order to attain certain diplomatic ends.³⁷ This custom convinced the Habsburgs to extend their patronage to the Ottoman elites some of whom they kept on their payroll. The list included influential figures such as the Grand Vizier Mustapha Pasha,³⁸ the former Governor-General of Algeria Mehmed Pasha,³⁹ members of the Ottoman bureaucracy such as the Dragoman Hürrem Bey⁴⁰ and other influential figures outside the state mechanism such as Joseph Nasi, David Passi and Doctor Salomon Ashkenazi.⁴¹

Thirdly, there were several instances which demonstrate that imperial elites could change employers. Examples of negotiations concerning defections are many. Even though almost none of them was successful in the end, secret negotiations between the Habsburgs and prominent figures from every aspect of the Ottoman state structure (renegade vs. free-born Muslim, Enderun-educated vs. self-made) demonstrate that such a move between imperial elites was at least considered a realistic possibility and was thus worthy of negotiation. Furthermore, the Ottoman elites entered into similar defection negotiations with important political and military figures on the other side of the political spectrum, as was the case with

³⁶ Scipione wrote to the Viceroy that he did not expect “*cusi dura risposta*” and pointed out that leaving his son as a hostage would delay him on his voyage back to Constantinople, a just complaint given that it was the end of the sailing season. He also asserted that in a similar situation he would not have thought of asking for hostages. The answer was affirmative stating that “believing and esteeming your word as it should be, given your “*estado y discreción*” which the obligations of *los grandes hombres* recognized.

³⁷ This custom could not be more observable and easily documentable than it is in the Ottoman-Venetian relations. A quick look to the ASV, *CX-ParSec* would demonstrate the frequency of the practice of giving presents to the Ottoman dignitaries who themselves did not shy from directly requesting them.

³⁸ AGS, *E* 1337, fols. 161 (18 June 1580), 162 (3 July 1580), 167 (7 August 1580).

³⁹ AGS, *E* 488, Mehmed Pasha to Philip II (21 June 1576).

⁴⁰ AGS, *E* 1082, fol. 193 (1 July 1580).

⁴¹ Documents related to the activities of dragoman Hürrem, Ashkenazi, Passi and Nasi for Habsburg secret and open diplomacy will be subject to scrutiny later. Suffice it to call attention to two letters that Philip II wrote to Hürrem (AGS, *E* 1082, fol. 194) and Ashkenazi (fols. 195), both dated 1 July 1580, in recognition of their services for the crown.

Christophe de Roggendorf, a hereditary grand master of Austria, who found employment in the Ottoman palace without being forced to convert.⁴² Often, they were invited to Islam as well. Mehmed III took a close interest in the Genoese Carlo Cicala, a spy-cum-corsair on Habsburg payroll and the brother of the Ottoman Grand Admiral Cigalazade. The Sultan offered him the opportunity to follow his brother's footsteps and voluntarily adopt Islam in order to become a part of the imperial elite. A man of such quality had a lot to offer the Empire.⁴³ Even though he refused to convert, his brother still secured him the governorship of the Aegean Archipelago (Naxos).⁴⁴ His was not the only example of a member of the renegade Ottoman elite bringing his kin to his side.⁴⁵

Fourthly, one area in which imperial elites came into frequent contact and favored each other was the exchange of slaves. The practice of ransom put elites into contact because valuable prisoners-of-war generally ended up at the hands of the other side's elites who sought to preserve for themselves these prestigious slaves with the hope that they could be ransomed for large amounts. The fact that prominent people who constituted the human capital of both empires were ransomed rather than eliminated demonstrates to us the cooperation between imperial elites as much as a curious example where the financial motives of individuals outweighed the *raison d'état*. The release of these prisoners-of-war created far-reaching consequences from the point-of-view of the state which the ransom money would not have compensated. For example, the prominent corsair, Turgud, who was ransomed at Barbarossa's instigation by the Dorias, would go on devastating Italian coasts for two decades

⁴² Following a dispute with Charles V, he entered the Ottoman service to become a *müteferrika* in the palace. After having realized his career would not take off without conversion, he ran away from Constantinople, only to be caught on the way, brought back to the capital and imprisoned. The French ambassador d'Aramon saved him and Roggendorf entered French service where he served Henry II, Charles IX and Henry III. Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Shifting Identities: Foreign State Servants in France and the Ottoman Empire", *Journal of Early Modern History* 8/1-2 (2004): 130-2.

⁴³ AGS, E 1344 K 1675, fol. 44 (30 April 1591); E 1158, fols. 53 (15 June 1595), 55 (30 March 1595) and 62 (10 May 1595).

⁴⁴ ASV, *Inquisitori di Stato*, busta 460, 25 July 1600.

⁴⁵ Antonio Fabris, "Hasan 'il Veneziano' tra Algeria e Costantinopoli", *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5 (1997), 59-61. Pedani Fabris, "Veneziani a Costantinopoli".

following his release. In the Ottoman capital, spies-cum-ransom agents negotiated the ransom of several important Christian nobles from the hands of the Ottoman elite with notable exceptions of Scipione Cicala and Diego Pachego, both of whom were young enough to be inducted to the Ottoman palace. Likewise, the Ottoman elites that had fallen captive at the Battle of Lepanto were ransomed and therefore escaped the unfortunate fate of the Ottoman sailors who were executed with the intention to debilitate the Ottoman navy by depriving it of its hard-to-train human capital. Apparently, the *raison d'état* only prevailed where it did not affect the elites.⁴⁶

In short, every segment of the imperial elites conspired with their counterparts on the other side, the “enemy”. In this picture of great complexity and profundity, cultural barriers and religious differences, although still decisive to a certain extent, failed to prevent communication, conspiracy and cooperation between these elites. Secret diplomacy as an institutionalized practice and spies as a professional group actively fostered this cooperation.

1.1.4. Why a comparative study?

A comparative study between the secret services of the Habsburgs, the Ottomans and, to a limited extent, the Venetians contributes to our understanding of Mediterranean history in two ways. First, it demonstrates to us how polities with different political systems, administrative structures and diplomatic practices tackled the issue of gathering information, an issue which will be scrutinized in Chapters Four and Six.

Secondly, such a comparative study informs the historiographical discussion concerning the issue of the reintegration of Ottoman history into the broader spectrum of European history.

⁴⁶ This was a standard practice in the Christian West. Throughout the Middle Ages, elites ransomed their elite captives and murdered foot soldiers taken prisoner. Kings could intervene directly about a key prisoner, as was the case of Charles, the Duke of Orléans, and Henry V of England – who, on his deathbed, made his brother, soon-to-regent, swear never to release Orléans until the infant Henry VI had reached adulthood. I thank Prof. Collins for these remarks.

From the very beginning, European interest in Ottoman history presupposed an inevitable clash between the European civilization and that of the “other”, the world outside Europe, in this context, Islam and the Ottoman Empire. Early Ottoman histories written by non specialist historians such Zinkeisen⁴⁷ and Iorga⁴⁸ all shared a Eurocentric worldview and tried to explain the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Europe, shying away from studying a dialogue between the two or from rendering agency to possible Ottoman influence on Europe. Hammer-Purgstall provides the sole exception.⁴⁹ The historians of Europe from the 20th century, with notable exceptions such as Braudel, were not more careful. Under the influence of the notions of nation-states and civilizations, they systematically excluded the Ottoman history from the general currents of European history.

Thanks to a substantial scholarship, today it is hard to deny that the Ottomans enjoyed extensive commercial⁵⁰ and diplomatic⁵¹ ties with European states in the early modern period, while recent studies argue for Ottoman contributions to innovations and developments which were long assumed to be one hundred percent European products.⁵² Recent scholarship has discredited the prevailing view, particularly strong among the military historians, that the

⁴⁷ Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa* (Hamburg, F. Perthes, 1840-63), 7 vols.

⁴⁸ Nicolae Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1990), 5 vols.

⁴⁹ Dursteler, “On Bazaars”, 428-9.

⁵⁰ Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Maurice Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé pendant la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, EHESS, 1966), especially 125-140. Dursteler, “Commerce and Coexistence”.

⁵¹ It is hard to enlist all of these works here, but a number of interesting works should be given credit. Apart from Braudel, Kenneth Setton successfully reintegrated Ottomans into European diplomatic history. Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976-1984), 4 vols; idem, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1991). Also see. Halil İnalcık, “A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bâyezîd II on Djem Sultan”, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 3 (1979-80) : 209-230; Nicolas Vatin, *Sultan Djem: Un prince ottoman dans l'Europe du XV^e siècle d'après deux sources contemporaines: Vâkî'ât-ı Sultân Cem, Oeuvres de Guillaume Caoursin* (Ankara: Imprimerie de la Société Turque d'histoire, 1997) ; Özlem Kumrular, *Las Relaciones entre el Imperio Otomano y la Monarquía Católica entre los Años 1520-1535 y el Papel de los Estados Satélites* (Estambul: Editorial The Isis Press, 2003); eadem, *El duelo entre Carlos V y Solimán el Magnífico (1520-1535)* (Estambul: Editorial Isis, 2005).

⁵² Daniel Goffman, “Negotiating with the Renaissance State: The Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy”, in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61-74.

Ottomans resisted innovations; this older view provides much of the “evidence” for Ottoman “decline”.⁵³ Moreover, a number of recent studies demonstrate that the Ottomans were as much products of and affected by the general trends that affected European history, be it price revolution,⁵⁴ military revolution,⁵⁵ age of confessionalization,⁵⁶ apocalyptical traditions,⁵⁷ changing dynamics of international trade,⁵⁸ and even geographical explorations.⁵⁹ By focusing on similar general trends, such as the rise of the administrative-bureaucratic structures, the development of techniques of steganography, cryptanalysis and cryptography, the establishment of regular postal systems, the institution of permanent resident diplomacy and the globalization of information, as well as on these trends’ effects on the institutionalization of secret services, this dissertation seeks to qualify the position of the Ottomans regarding these developments, i.e., to what extent these affected the Ottomans and in which particular manner.

1.2. HISTORIOGRAPHY

Few of the academic works that have been written on the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry use both European and Ottoman sources and present a comprehensive perspective that goes further than concentrating on a single battle such as that of Lepanto. A number of historians

⁵³ Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultans: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁵⁴ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6/1-2 (1975): 3-28; Şevket Pamuk, “Price Revolution in the Ottoman Empire Reconsidered,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 33 (2001): 69-89.

⁵⁵ Gábor Ágoston, *The Guns for the Sultans*.

⁵⁶ Tjana Krstić, “Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009): 35-63

⁵⁷ Cornell Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân”, in *Soliman le magnifique et son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159-77; idem, “Shadows of Shadows: Prophecy in Politics in 1530s İstanbul”, in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honour of Norman Itzkowitz*, eds. B. Tezcan and Karl K. Barbir (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 2007), 51-62.

⁵⁸ Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*.

⁵⁹ Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Benjamin Arbel, “Maps of the World for Ottoman Princes? Further Evidence and Questions concerning the “Mappamondo” of Hajji Ahmed”, *Imago Mundi* 54 (2002): 19-29.

such as Hess,⁶⁰ Veinstein,⁶¹ Ágoston,⁶² Dávid,⁶³ Fodor,⁶⁴ Murphey,⁶⁵ Skilliter,⁶⁶ Bacqué-Grammont,⁶⁷ Gülru Necipoğlu,⁶⁸ Salgado,⁶⁹ Raffa,⁷⁰ Cabanelas,⁷¹ Gürkan,⁷² and John Elliott,⁷³ penned articles on this imperial rivalry that dominated the political scene in the 16th century. Muzaffer Arıkan and Paulino Toledo's rather neglected book, now out-of-print, contains articles as well as the translation of a number archival documents from Spanish to

⁶⁰ Hess, *Forgotten Frontier*; idem, "An Ottoman Fifth Column"; idem, "The Battle of Lepanto"; idem, "The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt".

⁶¹ Gilles Veinstein, "Charles Quint et Soliman le Magnifique: le grand défi", in *Carlos V: Europeísmo y universalidad: Congreso internacional, Granada, mayo de 2000*, eds. Juan Luis Castellano and Francisco Sánchez-Montes González (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal Para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001), 519-29.

⁶² Gábor Ágoston, "Habsburgs and Ottomans: Defence, Military Change and Shifts", *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 22/1 (1998): 126-141; idem, "Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry", in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75-103.

⁶³ Géza Dávid, "The Mühimme Defters as a Source in Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry in the 16th Century", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 20 (2002): 167-209.

⁶⁴ Pál Fodor, "Between Two Continental Wars: The Ottoman Naval Preparations in 1590-1592", in *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Pál Fodor (Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2000), 171-190.

⁶⁵ Rhoads Murphey, "A Comparative Look at Ottoman and Habsburg Sources and Readiness for War circa 1520 to circa 1570", in *Guerra y Sociedad en la Monarquía Hispánica: Política, Estrategia y Cultura en la Europa Moderna (1500-1700)*, vol. I: *Política, Estrategia, Organización y Guerra en el Mar*, eds. Enrique García Hernán and Davide Maffi (Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2006), 75-102.

⁶⁶ S.A. Skilliter, "The Hispano-Ottoman Armistice of 1581" in *Iran and Islam: in memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 491-515.

⁶⁷ Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, "Autour d'une Correspondance entre Charles Quint et İbrahim Paşa", *Turcica* XV (1983), 231-246.

⁶⁸ Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleymân the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg-Papal Rivalry" in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1993), 163-194.

⁶⁹ M. J. Rodríguez Salgado, "¿Carlos Africanus?: El Emperador y el Turco", in *Congreso Internacional: Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en la Europa (1530-1558), Madrid 3-6 de Julio de 2000*, vol. I, eds. Jose Martínez Millán and Ignacio J. Ezquerro Revilla (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001), 487-530. Salgado also wrote an illuminating book about the truce negotiations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, idem, *Felipe II, el "Paladín de la Cristiandad" y la paz con el Turco* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2004).

⁷⁰ Angelo Raffa, "L'ultima impresa di hayreddin (Barbarossa). La guerra marittima turco-franco-spagnola del 1543-4", in *Aspetti ed attualità del potere marittimo in Mediterraneo nei secoli XII-XVI*, ed. P. Alberini (Roma, Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1999), 397-424.

⁷¹ Cabanelas, "Proyecto de alianza entre los sultanes de Marruecos y Turquía contra Felipe II", *Miscelanea de Estudios Arabes y Hebraicos* VI (1957): 57-78; idem, "Proyecto de 'Ulug Ali para la conquista de Orán", in *Études d'orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal*, vol. II (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1962), 69-78.

⁷² Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Osmanlı-Habsburg Rekabeti Çerçevesinde Osmanlılar'ın XVI. Yüzyıl'daki Akdeniz Siyaseti", in *Osmanlı Dönemi Akdeniz Dünyası*, eds. Haydar Çoruh et al. (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2011), 11-50.

⁷³ John Elliott, "Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry: The European Perspective", in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1993), 153-62.

Turkish.⁷⁴ The prolific Spanish historian Floristán Imízcoz contributed to the field by studying, in a book and tens of articles, the abundant documentation in AGS regarding the Habsburgs' relations with the dissident Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Sultan.⁷⁵ Özlem Kumrular wrote two books, published in Turkey, yet written in Spanish,⁷⁶ as well as a number of articles which she recently put together in a book.⁷⁷ Finally, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra worked extensively on Ottoman-Habsburg relations, shedding light on many different aspects in several articles he published.⁷⁸

Yet all these efforts remained rather uncoordinated and the cumulative scholarly effect of these works is rather disappointing. Written in different languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Turkish) and published in different countries (USA, England, Turkey, Hungary, Spain, France), these academic works, all of which are well-crafted, failed to create a forum for discussion and instigate interest for further studies.

It is interesting to see that this most important political rivalry of the 16th century, which forced all the political actors of the era to take a position, received little attention from the historians of both the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. This dissertation tries to shed light on one aspect of this rivalry, relying on a vast corpus of both Ottoman and European

⁷⁴ Muzaffer Arıkan and Paulino Toledo, eds., *XIV.-XVI. yüzyıllarda Türk-İspanyol ilişkileri ve denizcilik tarihimize ilgili İspanyol belgeleri = Las relaciones Turco-Españolas en los siglos XIV y XVI. Documentos Españoles relativos a la historia naval Otomana* (Ankara: Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı, 1995).

⁷⁵ José M. Floristán Imízcoz, *Fuentes para la Política Oriental de las Austrias, volumen I: La Documentación Griego del Archivo de Simancas (1571-1621)* (León: Universidad de León, 1988). Even though the book deals mostly with the 17th century, he also penned several articles that covered the 16th century, most of which are reproductions of a couple of primary documents. Their number forced me to leave them out of this footnote.

⁷⁶ Özlem Kumrular, *Las Relaciones*; eadem, *El duelo*.

⁷⁷ Özlem Kumrular, *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Osmanlı-Habsburg Düellosu* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011).

⁷⁸ Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, "Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, Barbaros Pasha and Charles V: The Mediterranean World" in *The Great Ottoman Turkish Civilization, vol. 2*, eds. Kemal Çiçek et al. (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2000), 343-376; idem, "The Maritime War between the Ottoman and Spanish Empires during the Time of Sultan Selim and Süleyman", in *The Turks, volume 3: The Ottomans*, eds. Hasan Celal Güzel et al. (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 287-295; idem, "Charles V and the Ottoman War from the Spanish Point of View", *Eurasian Studies* 2 (2002): 165-186; idem, "Venecia y la Sublime puerta: La embajada de Diego Hurtado de Mendoza", in *Congreso Internacional: Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en la Europa (1530-1558), Madrid 3-6 de Julio de 2000, vol. I*, eds. Jose Martínez Millán and Ignacio J. Ezquera Revilla (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001), 487-530; idem, "Carlos V frente al Imperio otomano", *Torre de los Lujanes* 41 (2000): 63-76. Also see, idem (with Mercedes García-Arenal), *Los españoles y el Norte de Africa, siglos XV-XVII* (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992). For his other works on the subject, see his Curriculum Vitae in <http://www.irishinspain.org/bunes.html>.

primary and secondary sources and with the hope that its findings will be supplemented by other focused studies on related aspects such as naval power, financing of warfare, employment of irregular forces, making of a capital, utilization of diplomatic resources, application of imperial ideology, formulation of foreign policy, imposing Orthodoxy and the justification of imperial ambitions by religious discourse. Only then can a truly original, comprehensive history of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry in the Mediterranean be written.

In this vein, this dissertation tries to contribute to the field by focusing on the aspect of gathering information in the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, not only by scrutinizing the secret services of both empires, but also by analyzing them in a comparative context and thus explaining how differences in each empire's political and administrative structures affected their information gathering practices and the institutionalization of their secret services. In this way, it would restore the importance of "information" to the field of early modern political history and fight the prevalent historiographical prejudices that assumed, in a tautological circle according to Paolo Preto, that espionage is a light subject and should only be of concern to novelists and journalists.⁷⁹

The proliferation of studies that engage in political history and more specifically in espionage in the last three decades hint at a newly emerging interest. Before the 1980s, few works of academic quality bothered with espionage in the early modern period.⁸⁰ Even though Bacigalupe published his study on the Habsburg secret service in Flanders, *La Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes*,⁸¹ in 1984, it was actually Lucien Bély's monumental work of 900 pages on every aspect of diplomacy and espionage around the time of the Treaty of Utrecht that

⁷⁹ Here is the tautology Preto summarizes: There is little documentation, therefore there is little history; there is little history, therefore espionage is of little importance in history and therefore a light subject for novelists and journalists, thus not real history. Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 13.

⁸⁰ Exceptions are James Westfall Thompson and Saul K. Padover, *Secret Diplomacy and Cryptography, 1500-1815* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1937, 2nd edition 1965), a well-written study on espionage in general; Peter Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of the State and their Monopoly of Licensed News, 1660-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) which accentuates the central role of state secretaries in the running of intelligence operations, and Charles Howard Carter, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs, 1598-1625* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1964).

⁸¹ Bacigalupe, *Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes*.

initiated an interest on the subject among the historians of early modern Europe.⁸² Several other works soon followed Bély's suit and a large number of works on espionage in the early modern world appeared in several European languages.⁸³ One which should be given special consideration is Paolo Preto's detailed and diligent work on the "Secret Services of Venice", an impressive effort that engages in an enormous amount of archival documentation and covers the subject in its entirety from the first recorded instance of espionage to the last one.⁸⁴

Bacigalupe's works have remained more influential among the Spanish historians who have penned a number of works on espionage in the last two decades.⁸⁵ Some of these works are directly related to our subject as they concentrated on espionage targeting the Ottoman Empire. Sola's works on Habsburg agents that operated in North Africa and the Levant contributed to this essay on both a theoretical and practical level.⁸⁶ Moreover, Sola's internet

⁸² Lucien Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1990).

⁸³ Romano Canosa and Isabella Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo: Aspetti della Guerra Secreta Turco-Spagnola in Mediterraneo nel Cinquecento* (Palermo: Sellerio Editore, 1991); Alan Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II, 1660-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, especially Part III, Chapters 8-10; Jean-Michel Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage: Les Ambassadeurs du roi de France auprès de Philippe II du traité du Cateau-Cambresis (1559) à la mort de Henri III (1589)* (Paris: Honoré Champion Editeur, 2007), especially Part II. I skipped John Michael Archer's *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), because it entirely focuses rather on the relationships between surveillance and power as well as the process by which the royal court expanded its influence by increasing its knowledge on its aristocracy. For Portuguese agents in the Indian Ocean and the Ottoman Empire, see. Vasco Resende, "L'Orient islamique dans la culture portugaise de l'époque moderne, du voyage de Vasco de Gama à la chute d'Ormuz (1498-1622)" (Ph.D. Diss., École Pratique des Haut Études, 2011), Chapter 3.

⁸⁴ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*.

⁸⁵ David Salinas, *Espionaje y Gastos Secretos en la Diplomacia Española (1663-1683) en sus Documentos* (Valladolid: Ámbito Ediciones, 1994), a work on the financing of espionage; Emilio Sola and José F. de la Peña, *Cervantes y la Berbería: Cervantes, mundo turco-berberisco y servicios secretos en la época de Felipe II* (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995); Carlos J. Carnicer García and Javier Marcos Rivas, *Sebastián de Arbizu, Espía de Felipe II: La diplomacia secreta española y la intervención en Francia* (Madrid: Editorial Nerea S.A., 1998); Sola, *Los que van y vienen*; Javier Marcos Rivas and Carlos Carnicer García, *Espionaje y Traición en el Reinado de Felipe II: La historia de vallisoletano Martín de Acuña* (Valladolid: Diputación Provincial de Valladolid, 2001); eidem, *Espías de Felipe II*; Maria José Bertomeu Masiá (ed.), *Cartas de un Espía de Carlos V: La Correspondencia de Jerónimo Bucchia con Antonio Perrenot de Granvela* (València: Universitat de València, 2006); Diego Navarra Bonilla (ed.), *Cartas entre espías e inteligencias secretas en el siglo de los validos, Juan de Torres Gaspar-Bonifaz, 1632-1638* (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2007). For a detailed bibliography of works on Spanish information gathering from Medieval Age to Present, see Juan R. Goberna Falque, *Inteligencia, Espionaje y Servicios Secretos en España* (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2007).

⁸⁶ Sola and de la Peña, *Cervantes y la Berbería*; Sola, *Los que van y vienen*. One should not forget Sola's less-known article, "Moriscos, Renegados y Agentes Secretos Españoles en la Época de Cervantes", *OTAM* 4 (1993): 331-362 that focused on Habsburg spies who operated in the Levant for the first time. David García Hernán's 1994 article, "Algunas Notas sobre el Servicio de Información de la Monarquía Católica en el Mediterráneo en tiempo de Felipe II", *Espacio, Tiempo, Forma, Serie IV, Historia Moderna* 7 (1994): 245-258 is very revealing

project *Archivo de la Frontera*,⁸⁷ where he and his students transcribe, according to Sola's unique method of breaking down the text into verses, archival documents from AGS with a summary introduction and necessary comments, should be given due consideration. This website provides a unique opportunity for non-specialist historians: access to primary material. The works of García and Marcos are of relevance and should be given credit as well. Having extensively written on the subject of espionage,⁸⁸ in 2005, these two authors finally engaged in a comprehensive analysis of Philip II's secret services without any specific geographical concentration.⁸⁹ A year later, Maria José Bertomeu Masiá published the letters exchanged between the Habsburg authorities and a spymaster, Jerónimo Bucchia, who used his familial ties to establish an intelligence network in several cities of Dalmatia which he remotely coordinated from Turin and Naples.⁹⁰ Finally, a recently published edited volume contains, among many interesting works, several essays directly relevant to our topic.⁹¹

On the Ottoman side, there are, unfortunately, fewer works. The only book that has been written on espionage in the early modern Ottoman Empire is a short work of 23 pages published in 1943, Robert Anhegger's *Ein angeblicher schweizerischer Agent an der Hohen Pforte im Jahre 1581*.⁹² This interesting book, now out of print, does not engage in any scientific analysis at all; it basically consists of the transcription of 10 documents in German

as well. Also See. Enrique García Hernán's 1994, "The Price of Spying at the Battle of Lepanto", *Eurasian Studies* II/2 (2003): 227-250; idem, "Espionaje en la Batalla de Lepanto", *Historia* 16 27 (2003): 8-41.

⁸⁷ <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/>

⁸⁸ Their earlier books were biographies of certain spies that worked for the Habsburgs. García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*; eidem, *Martin de Acuña*. The latter figure spied in Constantinople as well. Even though his tenure was short, he played an important role by instigating the diplomatic talks for a truce between both empires on his own incentive. (See Chapter 4).

⁸⁹ García and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II: Los servicios secretos del Imperio español* (Madrid : La esfera de los libros, 2005).

⁹⁰ Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*.

⁹¹ Diego Navarro Bonilla, "Espías Honorables, Espías Necesarios: De la Información a la Inteligencia en la Conducción de la Política y la Guerra de la Monarquía Hispánica", in *Ambassadeurs, Apprentis Espions et Maîtres Comploteurs : Les systèmes de Renseignement en Espagne à l'époque Moderne*, ed. Béatrice Perez (Paris : Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2010), 31-47 ; Michèle Escamilla, "Antonio Rincón: Transfuge, Espion, Ambassadeur et *Casus Belli* au temps de Charles Quint" in Ibid., 87-160 ; Raphaël Carrasco, "L'Espionnage Espagnol du Levant au XVI^e siècle d'après la Correspondance des Agents Espagnols en Poste à Venise", in Ibid., 203-222 ; Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, "Avis du Levant: Le Réseau d'Espionnage Espagnol dans l'Empire Ottoman à partir du Sud de l'Italie, à la Charnière des XVI^e et XVII^e Siècles", in Ibid., 223-240.

⁹² Robert Anhegger, *Ein angeblicher schweizerischer Agent an der Hohen Pforte im Jahre 1581* (İstanbul: Marmara Basımevi, 1943).

and Latin from the Austrian archives and their Turkish translation. A small number of relevant articles that were written in English do not bother with a comprehensive analysis either; their scope remained rather limited to either the operations of a particular agent,⁹³ the exchange of information between Constantinople and a vassal state,⁹⁴ or the reproduction of a number of intelligence reports from the archives, accompanied by a short commentary.⁹⁵ The only exception is Gábor Ágoston who attempted a systematic study of Ottoman information gathering in the 16th century within the context of the “Ottoman grand strategy”.⁹⁶

This dissertation, therefore, aims to make a significant contribution to the study of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry in the 16th century by instigating new discussions on the subject and undertaking a comparative study of both empires’ secret services. By focusing on how both empires tackled the issue of developing efficient intelligence gathering mechanisms in order to derive political benefit from information, it tries to explain the differences between the secret services of both empires within the context of their differing organizational

⁹³ Victor L. Ménage, “The Mission of an Ottoman Secret Agent in France in 1486”, *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1965): 112-32; S. A. Skilliter, “The Sultan’s Messenger, Gabriel Defrens; an Ottoman Master Spy of the Sixteenth Century”, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* LXVIII (1976): 47-59; Güneş Işıksel, “Hacı Murâd (Agi Morato): An Elusive Algerian Dignitary”, *Oriente Moderno*, (in press, 2012).

⁹⁴ N.H. Biegan, “Ragusan Spying for the Ottoman Empire: Some 16th-Century Documents From the State Archive at Dubrovnik”, *Belleten* 26/106 (1963): 237-255.

⁹⁵ John E. Woods, “Turco-Iranica I: An Ottoman Intelligence Report on Late Fifteenth/Ninth Century Iranian Foreign Relations”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38-1 (1979): 1-9; Percy Kemp, “An Eighteenth Century Turkish Intelligence Report” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 (1984): 497-506; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, “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* 28 (1996): 299-318; Giancarlo Casale, “An Ottoman Intelligence Report from the mid-sixteenth century Indian Ocean”, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 31 (2007): 181-188; Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, “Ottoman Spy Reports from Hungary”, in *Turcica et Islamica. Studi in Memoria di Aldo Gallotta, vol. I*, ed. Ugo Marazzi (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”, 2003). See p.121 fn. 1 for studies in Hungarian on the Ottoman information gathering in Hungary, which I could not consult.

⁹⁶ Gábor Ágoston, “Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry”, in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75-103; see especially 78-92. For his other articles on Ottoman information gathering, in Hungarian, see. idem. “Információszerzés és kémkedés az Oszmán Birodalomban a 15-17. században” in *Információáramlás a magyar és török végvári rendszerben*, eds. Tivadar Petercsák and Mátyás Berecz (Eger: Heves Megyei Múzeum, 1999), 129-54; idem. “Birodalom és információ: Konstantinápoly, mint a koraújkori Európa információs központja” in *Perjés Géza Emlékkönyv*, eds. Gábor Hausner and László Veszprémi (Budapest: Argumentum, 2005); 31-60. See also Panteleimon Roberts’ unpublished article recently submitted to a journal, “Intelligence and Security in the Ottoman Empire in the time of Murad IV”,

http://independent.academia.edu/PanteleimonRoberts/Papers/474536/Intelligence_and_Security_in_the_Ottoman_Empire_in_the_Time_of_Murad_IV

structures. Furthermore, it proposes a new method for studying both empires' strategies and policies vis-à-vis each other and defends that decision-making processes should be analyzed with a thorough study of primary sources, taking into account a number of factors, some related to the aspect of information such as perception, prejudice and paranoia, some related to the aspect of factional politics. Thus it underlines the importance of secret diplomacy in order to achieve political ends and argues that states that were better informed formulated their strategies and policies better.

1.3. A NOTE ON SOURCES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION

This dissertation tries to amalgamate European and Ottoman sources in an effort to broaden the source base for the study not only of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, but also of Ottoman political history *per se*. Apart from a large number of secondary sources, it relies on printed primary sources as well as archival material in Ottoman, Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Latin.

European archival sources that were consulted in this dissertation are mainly located in the *Archivo General de Simancas* (AGS) in Valladolid and *Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (ASV) in Venice, even though occasionally documentation from other archives were used when necessary. Furthermore, manuscripts in a number of libraries supplemented these archival sources. A large number of printed primary sources provided crucial information as well. Comprehensive works like Sanudo, Charrière, Priuli and Albèri, compilations of ambassadorial letters and of state documents, travel reports, diaries and court histories are of utmost importance to any historian who studies the 16th century Mediterranean.

These European sources give detailed information in a very precise manner. A quick comparison between these and Ottoman sources presents a stark contrast. The nature of Ottoman sources restrains the investigator by not rendering detailed information and a complete picture of Ottoman information-gathering mechanism; as Dávid and Fodor put it,

only “tactics of small steps” can be followed.⁹⁷ Main sources in the *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri* (BOA) such as *Mühimme Kalemi* (MD and MZD) include only the correspondence between the center and the provinces and reflect only the outgoing orders reducing the investigator to seek sparse traces of Ottoman information gathering. These traces appear only when the result of such gathering was consequential to the order and thus there was a reference to it in the previous section of the *hükm* which mentions the previous correspondence on the issue and gives context to the order to be sent out. Hence, only in cases where the Ottoman chancellery considered it expedient to mention the *results* of previous intelligence activities (orders sent to the frontier provinces asking the officials to continue gathering information or to act on an information gathered by Constantinople from other sources and remitted to the province, etc.), we have clues as to what kind of information received by the central government. Even then, these succinct documents are no match for their counterparts in AGS and ASV; they relate almost no detail about the organization of Ottoman information gathering networks. A number of spy reports, extant in the *Evrak* section of the TSMA and some of which were already published, are not more illuminating on the subject, either.⁹⁸ Lacking any chronological or thematic consistency, these reports hardly give us an idea about the extent of Ottoman networks in the Western Mediterranean and Europe, falling short both in volume and in quality of what is required for a systematic study of Ottoman intelligence gathering.⁹⁹ In short, “Ottoman historians cannot dream about the nuanced studies of collection and processing of information we possess, say, regarding the Venetians or the Spanish Habsburgs”.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Dávid and Fodor, “Ottoman Spy Reports”, 122.

⁹⁸ Şerafettin Turan, “Barak Reis’in Şehzade Cem Mes’elesiyle İlgili Olarak Savoie’ya Gönderilmesi”, *Belleten* 26/103 (1962): 539-551; cf. Victor L. Ménage, “Mission of an Ottoman Secret Agent”; John E. Woods, “An Ottoman Intelligence Report”; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, “An Ottoman Report”; Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, “Ottoman Spy Reports”. Also see the appendix of Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* for TSMA *Evrak* 6320.

⁹⁹ Giancarlo Casale recently pointed out the scarcity of documentation on the Ottoman’s involvement in the Indian Ocean as well. Casale, “An Ottoman Intelligence Report.”

¹⁰⁰ Gábor Ágoston, “Information, Ideology and Limits”, 79.

I would like to propose a number of reasons for these limitations. The first is that the Ottoman chancellery did not have the habit of producing descriptive long documents; there is nothing equal, neither in quality nor in length, to Sanudo's Diaries or Venetian *relazioni* among the documents and literary works produced by the Ottoman elite. Nor was there a wide range interest that would justify the copious circulation of such political texts, as demonstrated by the late arrival of the printing press. Compared to Europe, where a large number of books, pamphlets and newsletters were printed and became part of the public sphere, Ottoman Constantinople lagged behind in developing a written political culture.

The Ottoman insistence on clinging to the oral communication, especially while transmitting important information, further aggravated the problem. The Ottoman chancellery failed to keep up with developments in European cryptology and relied instead, more often than their Habsburg and Venetian counterparts, on the memory of their messengers.¹⁰¹ Even though they carried a letter, these messengers have to keep the important part of the message in their minds in order not to risk that it fell into the enemy hands. The result was a *dualité du message et du messenger*, as Nicolas Vatin described it.¹⁰² The letter that Suleyman I wrote the prisoner Francis I in 1526, for instance, finishes abruptly, after a long *intitulatio* and a short text of encouragement, with the following words: "your afore-mentioned envoy was charged with telling you, *de bouche*, the news and affairs relevant to his mission."¹⁰³ As one could see, the real message was to be transmitted orally. The letter served a different purpose: that of introducing the messenger and proving the authenticity of the message he was to transmit.¹⁰⁴

Thirdly, the lack of permanent ambassadors abroad should have resulted in the production of a lesser number of documents that engaged in international politics; an

¹⁰¹ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 8, cc. 79r-80r (18 February 1566, m. v.).

¹⁰² Nicolas Vatin, "Remarques sur l'oral et écrit dans l'administration ottomane au XVI^e siècle", *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 75-76 (1995), 147. Vatin engages in a brilliant discussion of the issue with interesting examples in this rather overlooked article.

¹⁰³ BNF, N.a.f. 7669, fols. 305-6; Annie Berthier, "Un Document Retrouvé: La Première Lettre de Soliman au François I^{er} (1526)", *Turcica* XXVII (1995): 263-266.

¹⁰⁴ Vatin, "Remarques sur l'oral", 149-50.

important portion of the documents in European archives are the correspondence between the central government and the ambassador who was in charge of gathering information in foreign capitals. This explains the lack of documentation such as *dispacci* in the Ottoman archives from which we could learn more about the activities of Ottoman secret service in Europe. However, it fails to explain why the Ottoman ambassadors who visited Europe not with less interest in gathering information than their European counterparts did not leave any written reports, similar to Venetian *relazioni*, before the mid-17th century.¹⁰⁵ In a similar vein, in stark contrast with Venetian and Habsburg provincial officials who were required *by law* to submit the relevant documentation, summarizing their tenure in office, the Ottomans did not have such a custom. The provincial nature of the early modern intelligence further aggravated the problem, especially given that the Ottoman intelligence activities came under the control of the central bureaucracy to a lesser extent than those of the Habsburgs and the Venetians. Compared to the *Papeles de Estado Nápoles* and *Sicilia* sections of AGS where I had the luxury of consulting more than 100 *legajos*, each of which contain an average of 150-200 documents, one can find no comprehensive corpus of documents in the Ottoman archives that arrived with a returning Governor-General who should have employed a good number of spies. This brings us back to our first two reasons, intrinsically linked to each other: the underdevelopment of Ottoman chancellery methods and the Ottoman failure to develop a written political culture. To these two, we shall return later in Chapter Six and explain how, in spite of these disadvantages, the Ottomans still succeeded in operating an efficient secret service.

A further problem is the under-representation of Mediterranean politics in the works of contemporary Ottoman historians. Few contemporary Ottoman court historians engaged the issues regarding the Mediterranean and relate us the details of Ottoman strategy, objectives

¹⁰⁵ Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1968).

and operations in the Western Mediterranean. Simply, the background of these palace historians as well as of their intended audience sparked little interest for these naval expeditions which were undertaken without the presence of the Sultan or the Grand Vizier and in faraway lands of the Western Mediterranean. For instance, a series of Ottoman naval operations that ravaged, with partial French participation, the Habsburg shores in the Western Mediterranean (1543, 1544, 1551, 1552, 1553, 1554, 1555 and 1558) provoked surprisingly little attention in these historians who were generally very eager to provide military details when they covered a land war. The activities of the Levantine corsairs were not given their due attention, either, especially, but not exclusively before 1534.¹⁰⁶

To overcome the limitations this corpus of sources imposed upon the researcher, one has to rely on European primary sources which would provide important information about Ottoman espionage. These not only demonstrate to us the complexity and the success of the Ottoman information gathering, but also provide us with case studies and important details about the Ottoman intelligence network in the Venetian and Habsburg lands.

This should be the most important contribution that these sources brought to Ottoman studies. However, it is not the only one. European sources provide interesting details about Ottoman politics in general as well. It is thus essential to incorporate these sources into Ottoman political history and shed light on its many aspects which remained in the dark because of the restricting nature of Ottoman sources.

Firstly, Venetian and French ambassadorial reports as well as spy letters on several European governments' payroll provide a rich source base for the study of Ottoman politics. While Ottoman court histories and archival documentation produced by the government do not reflect the divisions within the government, European sources help us understand factional politics in the 16th-century Constantinople. In the light of these sources, this dissertation

¹⁰⁶ Gürkan, "The Center and the Frontier", 130-1.

presents new information on rivalries between different political actors such as the Pashas, power brokers and courtiers and thus between different political factions. Therefore, it enhances our understanding of how political decisions were made in the Ottoman capital. It helps us deconstruct the Ottoman decision-making process and see that most of the time the corporate interest of a faction prevailed over the abstract concept of state interest. This is a significant contribution to a historiography which studied Ottoman Empire as a monolithic state for so many years. In contrast to the prevalent attitude among the Ottomanists to discuss Ottoman strategy and policy with sentences such as “the Sultan did”, “the Ottomans decided”, etc. this dissertation’s broadened source base demonstrates how there were conflicting agendas within the Ottoman government and how Ottoman decision-making was a constant negotiation between different factions that vied for power.¹⁰⁷

Secondly, while most diplomatic negotiations between the Europeans and the Ottomans were covered insufficiently in Ottoman sources, European ambassadors left important details regarding their tenure in Constantinople. Their reports demonstrate to us what kind of negotiations took place between these ambassadors, the Ottoman government and the factions that vied for power in the Ottoman Empire. They also provide crucial insights on the intricacies of what I call “diplomacy *alla Ottomana*”, that is the particularities and customs of negotiating in Constantinople. In spite of the availability of printed primary sources such as the Venetian *relazioni*, ambassadorial diaries, travelogues, etc., a comprehensive study of diplomacy in the 16th-century Constantinople has not been undertaken yet. Nor does this dissertation aspire to engage in a comprehensive study of the

¹⁰⁷ For other studies that rely on European documentation while studying Ottoman political history, see. Günhan Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) and His Immediate Predecessors” (Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State University, 2011) and Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*. The latter work created a controversy among the historians. While it was praised by non-specialists, it also suffered from the harsh criticisms of some Ottomanists. See. Svat Soucek, “About the Age of Exploration”, *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010): 313-342; Güneş Işıksel, “Entre désirs et réalités: À propos de *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* de Giancarlo Casale”, *Turcica* 43 (2012): forthcoming.

subject by exhausting available information on the subject. Still, Chapter Five includes new information that would be illuminating for further studies.

Thirdly, European sources allow us to render agency to the often neglected individual in Ottoman political history. Accessible Ottoman sources do not give much detail on individuals; even the greatest actors of politics in Constantinople such as İbrahim and Rüstem Pashas were poorly covered.¹⁰⁸ Less important figures such as power brokers, courtiers, medium-ranking government officials, members of pasha households, informants, spies, go-betweens and the like remained almost invisible. This is a deficiency given that these are the ones who conducted the day-to-day operations of politics in Constantinople. Figures such as David Passi, Joseph Nasi, Salomon Ashkenazi, Carlo Cicala, Hürrem Bey, several members of Uluç Ali's household are all indispensable for a comprehensive study of politics in the 16th-century Constantinople.

In short, this dissertation makes a significant contribution by providing new information on a number of issues which Ottomanists could not study in detail because of the nature of Ottoman sources. Obviously, the major contribution would be in the field of Ottoman information gathering. But it also includes significant insights that shed light on factional politics and diplomacy in Constantinople and highlight the careers of otherwise overlooked individuals who played an important role in 16th-century Constantinople politics.

1.4. CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter Two delineates the complex and multilayered relation between information and politics. Firstly, by concentrating on different categories of information used by states, I discuss the processes by which governments made use of information while formulating strategy and policy, making military decisions and engaging in diplomatic negotiations. I furthermore describe the impediments to objective political assessment of information in an

¹⁰⁸ See for a successful integration of European sources into Ottoman political history and thus rendering agency to the individual, Ebru Turan, "The Sultan's Favorite: Ibrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Suleyman (1516-1526)" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2007).

effort to demonstrate the imperfect nature of the decision-making process. Secondly, I situate a number of developments, crucial for the increased efficiency of intelligence operations as well as the quality of information, within the larger historical processes of bureaucratization and centralization. Finally, I demonstrate the severity of international crises which were unintended consequences of secret diplomacy and which crippled relationships between states.

Chapter Three focuses on spies as a sociological group and espionage as a profession. It first concentrates on the professional, social and cultural background of Mediterranean spies in an effort to situate them among a larger group of people, the crossers of so-called civilizational boundaries, whom the historians for long labeled as go-betweens. Secondly, I deliberate on other specialists of secret diplomacy who led and operated intelligence networks in different capacities during several stages of intelligence operations. Thirdly, I describe the required level of specialization in the trade of espionage and the complexity of methods by which secret diplomacy was conducted. Fourthly, in order to demonstrate the entrepreneurial nature of early modern espionage, I examine the motivations of early modern spies and the diverse methods by which central governments rewarded their spies. Finally, I demonstrate the importance of familial ties and related networks for Mediterranean go-betweens and more specifically for the agents of secret diplomacy.

Chapter Four describes the Habsburg secret service in the Eastern Mediterranean which underwent a slow process of evolution into an institutionalized apparatus at the service of the central government. These efforts produced mixed results because of logistical, technological and financial difficulties as well as the resistance of the practical nature of espionage. By delineating the structure of Habsburg secret diplomacy and focusing on the role that the central government and the officials in the provinces played, I can analyze the special case of the Habsburg secret service in the Eastern Mediterranean and demonstrate how unique

factors – the geographical distance, the hostile environment of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier and the imperial clash between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs – rendered the flow of regular and reliable information more difficult than it was elsewhere. The Habsburgs had to employ different methods and means in order to overcome the harsh conditions of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier and solve problems of communication, coordination and transmission. I also focus on the components of the Habsburg secret service in the Mediterranean, i.e., separate intelligence networks and sources of information about things Ottoman. Moreover, this chapter delineates the financial details of secret diplomacy and demonstrates the inevitable conflict between authorities facing chronic budgetary problems and entrepreneur spies who constantly sought embezzling government funds. Finally, I deliberate on the efficiency of the Habsburg secret service in the Levant and the type of information which the Habsburg decision-makers sought.

Chapter Five is a close look at the activities of an intelligence network, the one which the entrepreneur go-betweens established in Constantinople on behalf of the Habsburgs. Stories of these agents who brokered information between rival empires demonstrate how a central government operated an intelligence network on the other side of the frontier. Furthermore, it reflects the complex set of relations and details of negotiations among men of all sorts from diverse religious, ethnic, geographical and cultural background who operated in a rather hostile environment. Their success in gathering information underlines the fact that the 16th-century Constantinople was a true center of information towards which news, ideas flowed. Moreover, in an effort to render agency to the often neglected individual in Ottoman historiography, this chapter concentrates on the activities of a group of select power brokers, the “invisible figures” of Ottoman politics. Therefore, it delineates the intricacies of politics (internal and external) in Constantinople, not on the highest level between Ottoman grandees and foreign ambassadors, but on lower levels: between information-brokers, spymasters,

unofficial diplomats, translators, ransom agents and merchants who conducted, as agents of these grandees and ambassadors, day-to-day operations of Constantinople politics. In short, I tried to accentuate Constantinople's chaotic plurality in which our information brokers of cross-border background, the long-forgotten protagonists of politics and espionage in 16th century Ottoman politics, operated.

Chapter Six deals with the Ottoman methods of gathering and processing information by building upon Ágoston's findings. It discusses the particularities of the Ottoman Empire, such as its patrimonial structure, the provincial nature of gathering information and the underdevelopment of a written political culture, which distinguished the Ottoman secret diplomacy from that of the Habsburgs. It argues that these particularities should not necessarily be read as shortcomings. In spite of predetermined conclusions and unwarranted assumptions that prevailed in Western historiography, the Ottomans developed an interest in political developments around them and managed to operate an efficient intelligence gathering mechanism. The real particularity which restricted the flow of information between the two empires was the lack of direct diplomatic relations between them. The main argument of the chapter then is that while both empires kept themselves informed of political developments in each other's capitals or certain provincial centers, to the greatest extent possible given the logistical difficulties of the time, they failed to develop an awareness of each other's legal, political and economic systems as well as cultural, linguistic and religious particularities. This unawareness is in stark contrast with the example of the Venetians whose diplomatic presence in Constantinople educated the Venetian elite on things Ottoman in such a profound way that even prompted the Venetians to use the Ottoman political system as a point of reference while producing texts that discuss their own system of government.

1.5. DEFINING CONCEPTS OF SECRET DIPLOMACY

I use several terms with different meanings in order to describe different components and stages of early modern “secret diplomacy”, the generic term I use for all intelligence activity of the Habsburg, Venetian and Ottoman “secret services.” While the former term refers to an activity, the latter denotes an institution. I use the term “secret diplomacy” to denote the central governments’ efforts to reach their objectives with extra-diplomatic methods. On the one hand, states engaged in a number of methods in order to create for themselves an advantage by using information, i.e., by engaging in “politics of information”. On the other hand, they sought to achieve their political ends by using clandestine measures (or covert actions if you will) such as sabotage, bribery, fomenting rebellion and assassination.

1.5.1. Politics of information

I study secret diplomacy in two basic categories. The first is the “politics of information” which covers much of the secret diplomacy under scrutiny in this dissertation that had information at the center of its analysis, Politics of information is a larger concept than “gathering” of information. Even though information gathering constitutes an important part of the state efforts to take advantage of information in their rivalries with other powers, i.e., in formulating their strategy, in employing their military capability and in preparing their defenses, the “politics of information” encompassed a wider range of activities. It is the states’ efforts to create for themselves political advantages by using information. This “politicization” of information created different methods by which states sought to maximize their power. The control of information by central governments in the internal sphere (domestic affairs) came under the scrutiny of historical studies, most recently by Filippo Vivo,¹⁰⁹ but what about similar activities concerning the external sphere (foreign affairs)? We

¹⁰⁹ Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

know too much about how states concealed and manipulated information that was available to its own subjects, but what about the struggle over information between rivaling sovereign states? This brings another dimension to the relationship between information and politics and accentuates the role of information in war-making, diplomacy, decision-making and strategy formulation.

1.5.1.1. Information gathering

Polities of all size engaged in information gathering in order to increase the quality of their decision-making processes. Both empires of vast geographical dimensions and therefore various political responsibilities had to use information in a number of ways in order to maximize their interests. Firstly, they developed their strategies that defined their long-term objectives and shaped their political tendencies as well as their position in the prevalent alliance systems. Secondly, depending upon the political developments, they formulated policies in order to react to the opportunities or threats that they perceived. Finally, in warfare, information was essential, both in the planning of the campaign and the operation on the battlefield. These are all subjects of the following chapter.

Chapters Four to Six give a detailed picture of the different information-gathering mechanisms that the Habsburgs and the Ottomans utilized in different parts of the Mediterranean. In order to prove the existence of a mechanism, this study focuses on a well defined and institutionalized intelligence activity with established norms and common methods rather than individual efforts of little analytical value. It tries to demonstrate a mechanism which operates as an extension of the state itself which employed, supervised and financially supported the intelligence activity.

Furthermore, the *condicio sine qua non* of a reliable information-gathering mechanism is the availability of more than one channel of communication. This would diversify the sources of information and provide the decision-maker with possibility to compare and

contrast the incoming information. Information gathered in different geographies as well as from different networks in the same geography would prevent the possibility of misinformation and disinformation and help formulate policy with more reliable and updated information which was double or triple-checked.

1.5.1.2. Counter-intelligence

If the goal of “politics of information” is to make use of information for political ends, its function could not only be to gather information. Given that information is a commodity which enhanced the quality of the decision-making process, states had to prevent their enemies from acquiring information about them. Central governments developed several methods that restricted the movement of people, regulated the transmission of letters and limited the access to “state secrets”, all in order to control the information. The efficiency of the “politics of information” depended upon that of the “counter-intelligence”, i.e., preserving important secrets and impeding enemy intelligence, as much as information gathering per se.¹¹⁰

1.5.1.3. Disinformation

Central governments sought to manipulate information in order to affect the decision-making process of their enemies by spreading false rumours and fabricated news. As a part of their “politics of information” and in a similar vein to state efforts to manipulate public opinion, decision-makers developed strategies of “disinformation” in order to make political use of information.

1.5.1.4. Analysis

Information received at the center, however, could not be used in its crudest form. It has to be verified, processed, simplified and then made ready for consumption for decision-makers. Intelligence mechanisms provided the information, but it was the central governments

¹¹⁰ For a detailed study of the methods of Ottoman counter-Intelligence in the 16th century, see. Emrah Safa Gürkan, “The Efficacy of Ottoman-Counter-Intelligence in the Sixteenth Century”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricum* 65/1 (2012): 1-38.

who had to convert information into knowledge by “following an efficient procedure of processing and internalizing”.¹¹¹ As Alain Hugon asserted, the issue was not the production of information, but rather a construction, a “mise en ordre of facts that were more or less verified by the informers.”¹¹²

States tried to diversify the channels of information in order to be able to increase the quality of the gathered information by comparing and contrasting. They could thus better determine the veracity of the information which they received under less-than-perfect circumstances. A number of factors should have advised further caution. Firstly, as will be demonstrated throughout this dissertation, central governments could not fully trust their spies. In an effort to conceal their inefficiency or increase their stipend, spies frequently manipulated the information that they have sent. The scale of their intervention changed from fabricating from the scratch to exaggeration. Secondly, states frequently received false information since spies who failed to make observations and gather accurate information tended to transmit rumours that they heard on the roads, streets or the marketplace. In another chapter, we will witness the extent of some Habsburg authorities’ indignation against spies who fabricated information and transmit baseless rumours.

The question was not only to verify these facts, but also to make meaningful political decisions. No matter how efficient intelligence networks were and how solid the information they provided was, in the end what mattered was how aptly decision-makers used the information. The historian has to make a difference between the “factual part” of the information gathering that produced raw information of certainty (*aviso*) and the “evaluative part”, the discourse (*discurso*), where decision-makers developed an assessment of certain

¹¹¹ Bonilla, “Espías Honorables”, 46-47.

¹¹² Alain Hugon, “L’Information dans la Politique Étrangère de la Couronne d’Espagne”, in *L’Information à l’Époque Moderne : Actes du Colluque de 1999*, *Bulletin no. 25* (Paris : Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2001), 25.

information in order to read the political situation accurately.¹¹³ To give an example: the information that the Ottoman fleet would set sail the next spring is a fact which carries certainty. On the other hand, the conclusion that this was the sign of an approaching war, or that the Ottoman fleet intended to attack target X, or that such and such preparations had to be made is an evaluation, a political statement on what could happen, “podria ser”,¹¹⁴ a point which decision-makers reached only after a diligent process of verification, comparison and assessment of the gathered facts. In a further example, we see how the Count of Miranda evaluated an information he received from his resident spy in Ragusa, Ruggero Margliani. The information he received, that the Ottoman navy would leave the Dardanelles that year, he decided, should be an Ottoman disinformation because of a number of factors. It was inconsistent with other intelligence he received. The Ottomans could not have managed to hide their war preparations so successfully; he had received other intelligence accentuating the miserable conditions in the Imperial Arsenal. It was also too late in the sailing season for the Ottoman navy to be able to make an impact.¹¹⁵

Decision-makers were not the only ones who passed judgment on the incoming information; information traders also participated in evaluating information by adding their own points-of-view, to a very limited extent constituting an intelligence community in the modern sense. For instance in 1563, when they could not verify the target of the Ottoman navy, the Habsburg spies had to make assumptions. Given that the navy would leave the Dardanelles rather late, they concluded that it should have been destined for the Aegean Sea rather than the Western Mediterranean and the westernmost point it could have reached would be Modon and Koron.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 9-11.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁵ AGS, E 1093, fol. 62 (12 August 1592).

¹¹⁶ AGS, E 1052, fols. 129, 130 and 131 (2 March 1563).

I discuss the details of the analysis of raw information as well as the importance of information on strategy formulation, policy-making and warfare in Chapter Two. I also scrutinize factors affecting the perception of decision-makers, such as dis/misinformation, perception, prejudice and paranoia in the same chapter.

1.5.1.5. Cryptanalysis

Hand in hand with the growing size and the increasing complexity of imperial chancelleries, an important development in the fifteenth and sixteenth century was in the sciences of cryptography (the science of enciphering/encoding and deciphering/decoding the correspondence) and steganography (the science of writing hidden messages by using special methods such as invisible links, microdots, etc.). These sciences had a dual function. States used these methods to ensure the safety of their transmission of news and the exchange of correspondence between networks and authorities on the one hand, and tried to penetrate to their enemies' secrets from the intercepted correspondence on the other.

1.5.1.6. Domestic intelligence

Domestic intelligence in both empires as well as the intelligence between different factions within a government has been left out of the scope of this study as the importance of information in decision-making within the context of the imperial conflict in the Mediterranean is the real focus. Mechanisms that the states used to control their own citizens became relevant only when related to the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, i.e., when there was foreign patronage and the domestic intelligence became a part of empires' counter-intelligence.

1.5.2. Clandestine operations

Even though one of the arguments of this dissertation is to accentuate the weight of “politics of information” in the overall “secret diplomacy”, one should still spare room for clandestine operations, i.e., bribery, sabotage, assassination, fomenting rebellion and

defection, in order to abstain from equating “politics of information” with “secret diplomacy”. It is not that these operations produced important political results. Nonetheless, the details of these projects and the methods applied in their execution give us, as will be evident in Chapter Five, important details about the extent to which central governments could project their power abroad by undertaking such risky operations on the one hand, and the extent to which they could control and supervise their intelligence networks abroad on the other. Before the modern era, most of these clandestine operations bore little fruit and became rather means to defraud central governments by proposing ambitious but implausible projects, a tactic that was especially efficient in the Ottoman-Habsburg borderland where spies were operating without the supervision of a resident ambassador.

1.5.3. Usage of modern terms

As can easily be seen, I take the liberty of using several modern terms in explaining pre-modern practices and institutions. This is a necessary narrative strategy to which historians resort very often. However, I should warn the reader that modern terms such as “secret service”, “counter-information”, “mis-/disinformation”, “covert operation” and even “diplomacy” (first used in Mabillon’s *De Re Diplomatica*, 1681) should still be understood in inverted commas. Some modern terms, on the other hand, were already in use in the 16th century: “intelligence” (albeit with a different meaning more in the sense of a connection or understanding), “spy”, “informant” or “plot” (*conjura*), etc.

1.6. A COUPLE OF CLARIFICATIONS

Before we proceed to Chapter Two, I would like to make a couple of clarifications. The first is regarding the use of the word “Habsburg” throughout the text. I mean by this term the Habsburg possessions excluding those of the junior branch of the family. In 1521, the hereditary Habsburg lands of the Archduchy of Austria were left by Charles V to the control of his brother Ferdinand, his lieutenant and later successor in the Holy Roman Empire. Upon

the death of the last King of Hungary, Louis II, in 1526 while fighting against the Ottomans on the plains of Mohács, Ferdinand put a claim on the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia. With the abdication of Charles V, the break-up of his patrimony became official. Ferdinand took the afore-mentioned territories as well as the imperial crown for his issue, while Charles' son Philip II retained the remaining territories in Italy, Spain, the Americas and the Low Countries, adding to them Portugal, whose crown he inherited via his mother in 1580. The term "Habsburg" in the text refers to the empires of Charles V, Philip II and Philip III; it always excludes the Archduchy of Austria's lands including the Empire. My preference is a narrative strategy that focused on the Mediterranean, so the cadet branch of the Habsburg family moves to the sidelines. When I have to address the Austrian Habsburgs, I always use an explicit expression, such as the "Austrian", "Austrian Habsburgs" or simply "Vienna".

I use the terms "prisoner-of-war" and "war captive" interchangeably, both referring to the slaves that fell captive to the victors in a battle; these slaves could theoretically be ransomed. I make a distinction, as will be explained Chapter Three, between a "spy" and an "informant", while I use the more inclusive term "agent" for spy, informant and broker. What I mean by a "broker" is an agent who negotiates and arranges transactions between two parties, in this case, between rival states, political factions, different interest groups and prominent political figures. The term "renegade" is used in its 16th century meaning, a convert from one religion to another. I would also like to accentuate the distinction between a "pirate" and a "corsair". The former is a lawless sea bandit, while the latter is a privateer in the Mediterranean; he operated under the aegis of a sovereign and followed certain codes of conduct. For the activity, I translated the contemporary term "*corso*" as "corsary", rather than privateering as I believe introducing a third term would confuse the reader, while substituting privateer for corsair and privateering for corsary seemed ahistorical. Finally, I used "Ottoman

grandees” as an inclusive term that refer to not only high-level Ottoman officers, but also courtiers and power-brokers that were influential in Ottoman politics.

I abstain from using appellations that can be affiliated with ethnicities or nations to the greatest extent possible. It is not because these were not used by contemporaries; terms like Greek, Turk, Spanish, Italian were widely in circulation in the 16th century. However, their direct importation to a modern text can create problems. To give an example: a “Turk” in the 16th century might refer to an ethnic Turk, a Turcophone Muslim who may not be ethnically Turk or just a Muslim (remember how Persians had to stay in *Fondaco de’ Turchi* in Venice), including a renegade, who became (so being a Turk was something that one could become), a Turk by profession, *turco de profesión*. Therefore, I make a distinction between a Turk, an Ottoman, a Muslim and a renegade. Similarly, Italian or Spaniard were very vague terms in the 16th century context; so I try to use more specific ones such as Venetian, Genoese, Vallisolitano, etc. Furthermore, the usage of terms like Turkey, Spain and Italy in political context can be misleading, because not only today’s frontiers did not correspond to those of the past, but also such usage underestimates the plurality of ethnicities in and thus conceals the political nature of empires we are dealing with.

Most of the spies mentioned in our documentation had names spelled differently depending on the linguistic background of the scribe. When documents diverge on the spelling of a name, I try to resolve the ensuing chaos by using the spelling in the spy’s native tongue. Thus Aurelio Santa Cruz became Aurelio Santa Croce and Juan Agustino Gilli became Giovanni Agostino Gigli. When I could not determine the spy’s origin or the spelling of his name in his native tongue, I used the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean, Italian. Thus, I kept the Italianized versions of most Greek and Albanian names, such as Bartolomeo Brutti.

Regarding titles and terms in Ottoman, Spanish and Italian, I try to supply the reader with English equivalents to the greatest extent possible. In order not to confuse the specialists,

I chose to keep most titles and terms in the original language and thus to oblige the English reader to memorize these terms, all of which were extensively used by the historians of Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Regarding several characters mentioned throughout the text, I give as much information as possible. I also added two glossaries. Appendix I explains basic terms, alien to non-specialists. Appendix II gives extensive biographical information on main personae in the text.

CHAPTER TWO

SECRET DIPLOMACY: INFORMATION AND POLITICS

2.1. INTRODUCTION:

Information is of central importance to studies that concentrate on international political history. In order to avoid teleological conclusions and reading motivations from the result of an action, the historian has to make the necessary effort in order to deconstruct under what kind of circumstances strategies and policies were formulated, warfare was waged and diplomatic negotiations were undertaken. He has to take into account the aspect of information, i.e., how well-informed statemen and diplomats were of recent developments and thus political options available to them.

In this chapter, I will try to explain the multilayered relation between information and political action. Firstly, by concentrating on different categories of information in accordance with the needs of central governments, I will seek to show the processes by which raw information will be subjected to analysis in an effort to reach political and military decisions or will be put into political use by manipulating decision-making processes or getting the upper hand during diplomatic negotiations. Then, I will discuss the impediments in front of the objective assessment of the incoming raw information and underscore the importance of certain factors such as mis-/disinformation, prejudice and paranoia and the realities of factional politics in decision-making process of early modern empires.

Secondly, I would like to place the developments of secret services of the 16th century within the larger historical processes of bureaucratization and centralization which incorporated the intelligence activity to the newly emerging bureaucratic state. The offshoots of these afore-mentioned processes, key developments such as the improvements in cryptography, steganography and the introduction of regular state-run postal systems, not only

increased the efficiency of intelligence operations as well as the quality of information, but also brought the intelligence activities of the 16th century under closer control and regulation of central governments. The result was the first signs of institutionalization.

Thirdly, I will conclude the chapter by discussing how secret diplomacy converged with open diplomacy, i.e., how states that had open diplomatic relations reacted to each other's activities that were within the realm of secret diplomacy. With a number of examples whereby international crisis of full scale erupted because of such activities, I will try to show how serious the consequences could be for the relationship between two states once the very blurry line between the tolerable and intolerable action was crossed.

2.2. INFORMATION AND POLITICS: DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Very few works have been written that shed light to the relation between information and politics in the 16th century Mediterranean. Paolo Preto, for instance, does not discuss the use of information in Venetian decision-making at length in his extensive study, otherwise full of details.¹ Among the Ottomanist, in spite of a recent article by Gabor Ágoston on the subject,² there is little enthusiasm towards political subjects such as espionage, decision-making and strategy formulation, an indirect result of the domination of the field by socio-economic history as a result of the efforts and pioneering works of Professors Köprülü, Barkan and İnalcık. Concerning the Habsburgs, Geoffrey Parker accentuates the role of information in the decision-making process and the Grand Strategy of Philip II,³ while Carter's book includes a 16 page chapter named "The informational base of foreign policy".⁴ Alain Hugon concentrates rather on the relation between the leakage of information and the

¹ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*.

² Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits".

³ Nevertheless my case is different than his as mine puts greater emphasis on the information that was gathered as a result of an intelligence activity and concentrates on the information concerning the events in the Mediterranean and hence its effects on the Mediterranean strategy of Philip II as opposed to that of Parker, which has a more northern concentration, only natural for a historian who wrote extensively about Habsburg monarchy and the Dutch Revolt.

⁴ Carter, *Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs*, Chapter 8.

decision-making process.⁵ Other works which concentrated on the Habsburg espionage in different geographies and time period do not engage the issue in detail at all.⁶ Given this dearth of scholarly studies that discuss the relationship between information and politics, the following part can only aim to open a discussion on the subject rather than concluding it.

Before I go any further, I have to explain what I mean by strategy. I use the term in a strictly political sense and excluded its military usage. The term, as used in this dissertation, denotes a state's complete plan of actions formulated, in tandem with economic, psychological and moral factors, as a response to possible threats and opportunities in the international system. It requires a profound understanding of political dynamics that shape the decisions of actors in the international arena. Furthermore, I should also differentiate two levels of decision-making. On the upper-level, states developed grand strategies which were carefully planned and changed only slowly. On the lower-level, however, states engaged in policy-making processes of more momentary nature in order to react in accordance with the foreign as well as the domestic conjuncture.

2.2.1. Information gathering and grand strategy

A Grand Strategy is a blueprint for states. It encompasses their decisions regarding their overall security, i.e., how to react against a perceived threat. It is a broader concept than “strategy” that was designed to win a particular battle or campaign. The “Grand Strategy” is “a complex and multilayered thing”⁷ that primarily deals with how a state allocates its resources among various goals and integrates “...the state's overall political, economic and military aims, both in peace and war, to preserve long-term interests, including the management of ends and means, diplomacy and national morale and political culture in both

⁵ Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 366-373.

⁶ Bacigalupe, *La Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes*; García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*; eidem, *Martin de Acuña*; eidem *Espías de Felipe II*.

⁷ Paul Kennedy, “Grand Strategy in War and Peace”, in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 1-7.

the military and civilian spheres.”⁸ In the pre-modern times, one should not look for an “official position paper” that outlines the details of a grand strategy which was rather a shared vision and determination of the ruling elite.⁹ Albeit rather unwritten and implicit than formal and explicit, it still gives us the outline of a polity’s “operational code”.¹⁰

Even though historians penned well-crafted works that exhausted available resources and concentrated on a well-defined and manageable period of time,¹¹ there are many others who suffer from methodological problems. Firstly, these works attributed Grand Strategies to empires with *a priori* assumptions and frameworks that relied on logical reasoning rather than primary sources, a problem which becomes more palpable in works that dealt with a number of polities.¹² They did not properly concentrate on each of them sufficiently and could not even keep themselves up-to-date with the latest historiography. Most of the time they based their conclusions on old-fashioned analyses which had little room for alternative explanations. Furthermore, even though their focus is on the strategy, these authors had little idea on how this strategy was formed. Their inability to use archival sources, among which they would find the details of discussions during the decision-making process and reports that advocate a certain point-of-view, hindered them to realize that decision-making process was not immune to misperceptions and ignorance on the one hand (the aspect of information) and factional politics and rivalry on the other (the aspect of politics).¹³ As a result of these factors, most of

⁸ Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 1.

⁹ John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6-8.

¹⁰ Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 409.

¹¹ J. H. Elliott, “Managing Decline: Olivares and the Grand Strategy of Imperial Spain”, in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 87-104; John B. Hattendorf, “Alliance, Encirclement, and Attrition: British Grand Strategy in the War of Spanish Succession, 1702-1713”, in *Ibid.*, 11-29; Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*; LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*.

¹² Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987); Jakub J. Grygiel, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

¹³ In a work that concentrates on the Ottoman Venetian rivalry, Palmira Brummett justly underlined the importance of the analysis of “notable politics” in order to perceive the motives behind political actions and the decision-making process better. Such focus on the notables who participated both in politics and commerce allows the historian to see beyond the abstract concept of “state interest” and realize the corporate interest.

the time, there may be fluctuations and ups-and-downs in the application of imperial grand strategies that were far from being perfectly defined. One should not forget even the most profound strategies evolved, albeit very slowly, with the information received and even abandoned altogether, even if sometimes only to resume later, as a result of the balances between factions each of which advocate a different strategy. In short, a student of strategy should be concerned more with the process before the action was taken rather than on the result of the political action.

Nor could such works concentrate on the intricacies of complex diplomatic negotiations so well documented in primary sources and so thoroughly analyzed by diplomatic historians since the 19th century. The details of such negotiations would check the validity of afore-mentioned works' *a priori* assumptions that explain strategy with a teleological methodology: by presenting political actions necessarily as products of long-lasting strategies, rather than a loosely connected series of reactions to threats and opportunities perceived at a given time by a given faction.¹⁴

The second methodological problem was the hardness of the task to frame a Grand Strategy that spanned through a long period of time such as centuries.¹⁵ It may be easier to present such presumptuous theories for pre-modern times on the political realities of which

Palmira Brummett, "The Ottoman Empire, Venice, and the Question of Enduring Rivalries", in *Great Power Rivalries*, ed. William R. Thompson (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1999), 240.

¹⁴ A good example of how the study of diplomatic relationship can demonstrate a slow shift in strategy is Palmira Brummett, "The Transformation of Venetian Diplomacy prior to the Ottoman Conquest of Cairo (1503-1517)", in *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History, vol. I*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp, (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1987), 11-26. For how a study of states' military capabilities can be used in understanding their political sets of preferences, see eadem. "Foreign Policy, Naval Strategy and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire in the Early Sixteenth Century", *The International History Review* 11/4 (1989): 613-627. See also her book, eadem. *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

¹⁵ For instance, Gábor Ágoston accentuates the importance of limiting the time period while studying strategy. He adds that even though he does not believe that "a single overarching Ottoman grand strategy...guided Ottoman conquest and rule throughout the centuries", one still could focus on a strategy applied by an individual ruler or an omnipotent grand vizier such as Sokollu, İbrahim Pasha or Çandarlı. Gábor Ágoston, "The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality to Empire", in *The Practice of Strategy: From Alexander the Great to the Present*, eds. John Andreas Olsen and Colin S. Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 108.

we know less;¹⁶ none the less, it is unacceptable when there is a huge corpus of archival, primary and secondary sources that awaits the researcher for every single year of the early modern centuries. Moreover, political realities, economic opportunities and finally geopolitical picture evolve so rapidly over the centuries that it is impossible to speak of a constant set of preferences that make up a Grand Strategy or define the fundamentals of inter-state rivalries. These authors, even though one of them wrote a book whose title include the word “change”, could not undertake a diligent study of available sources that would help them reflect the element of dynamism behind the decision-making and strategy formulation. What they did instead, was to apply two basic principles of political realism (1. States are rational actors. 2. States are unitary.), and present a simplistic picture of international politics.

Let us now concentrate on the information aspect of strategy making. In the making of the Grand Strategy, decision-makers had to rely on regular and reliable information-gathering channels which accumulated enough knowledge and help them form a perception concerning certain political and military options available to them. These perceptions, once formed, changed only very slowly. For instance, the Ottoman perception of the Protestant threat as a political tool against the Habsburg challenge to the Ottoman universal sovereignty was a constant in the Ottoman decision-making process. For all purposes, the Ottomans did not seem to care for the difference between Lutherans, Calvinists and the Anglicans and drew little distinction between the Lutheran struggle against Charles V in the Holy Roman Empire, the Calvinist struggle against Philip II in the Low Countries and the rivalry between the

¹⁶ Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); idem, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*. Luttwak’s work on the Roman Grand Strategy sparked a vigorous debate among the specialists of Roman history. Arther Ferrill, *Roman Imperial Grand Strategy* (Lanham.: University Press of America, 1991); idem, “The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire” in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 71-86; Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Everett Wheeler, “Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy”, *Journal of Military History* 57 (1993): 7-41, 215-40; C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Kimberly Kagan, “Redefining Roman Grand Strategy”, *The Journal of Military History* 70 (2006): 333-62.

Catholic Habsburgs and the Anglican Tudors.¹⁷ They both were necessary political tools against the Habsburg monarchs and their bid for universal hegemony, a challenge to similar claims by the Ottomans. This slowness of change attests to the fact that when it comes to strategy formulation, the gathered information played the least decisive role in all the three fields it was used (the other two being policy-making and warfare, see *infra*.)

Even though the knowledge both empires had on each other were limited, they developed a number of political objectives and established political alliances based on their awareness of the political and diplomatic realities of the time. The formulation and achievement of these objectives as well as the operation of these alliances necessitated a certain level of knowledge which both empires had.

The Ottomans' awareness of the political situation in Western Europe was sufficient enough to realize which political options were open to them. We know little on how much the Ottoman elites knew about the world around them, even though recent historiography suggests that they knew more than which historians that followed the lead of contemporary orientalist such as Bernard Lewis would be ready to accept a couple of decades ago.¹⁸ For instance, in an interesting discussion of two distinct Ottoman image of "European" in two 16th century manuscripts,¹⁹ Baki Tezcan recently argued that just like their European counterparts, the Ottomans demonstrated an interest in alien cultures within the confines of their own political context. With what we have at hand, it is possible to hypothesize that in the 16th

¹⁷ BOA, MD, XXIII, no. 645 (H. 22 Z. 980/A.D. 25 August 1573) names the Calvinist Dutch as Lutheran for instance. Even though they had been interested in and informed of Protestantism from the very beginning (See for an early intelligence report on Martin Luther that survived, Isom-Verhaaren, "An Ottoman Report about Martin Luther"), it is interesting to see how the Ottomans still could not differentiate Lutherans from Calvinists in the 1570s. They considered the Anglican English Lutherans as well. Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, vol. 1 (971-1003/1563-1595), ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 334 names the English as the Nation of the Lutherans, "*Luteraniyyet milleti*".

¹⁸ Lewis, *Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 39, 42-3. Cf. Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (New York and London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). Giancarlo Casale demonstrates the awareness of the Ottomans on politics of the Indian Ocean in the 16th century in his *Ottoman Age of Exploration*.

¹⁹ Baki Tezcan, "The Frank in the Ottoman Eye of 1583" in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, ed. James G. Harper (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011): 267-96.

century, the Ottoman elite had sufficient means to acquire information on European politics, even though with certain limits which I will discuss in Chapter Six.

First of all, their negotiations with the foreign ambassadors should have helped their understanding, no matter the extent to which these ambassadors at times manipulated information.

Secondly, there was a corpus of manuscripts that help the Ottoman elite to perceive the realities of European and Mediterranean geography and politics. We know, for instance, that the author of the famous *Münşeât*²⁰ and the head of the Ottoman chancellery in the first half of the 1570s, Feridun Bey, had a history of the French kings translated into Ottoman.²¹ Feridun was a protégé of the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha who himself was one of the masterminds behind the Ottoman strategy in the West. Similarly, the dragoman Mahmud, a German renegade from Vienna named Sebold von Pribach, ordered two copies of Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the first modern atlas that contained uniform maps and supporting text, in 1573, i.e., only three years after the publication of the work.²² Another important contribution that familiarized the Ottoman elite with their outside world was the works of Pîrî Re'îs. Based on contemporary maps, the famous corsair presented the Ottoman Sultan with two *mappae mundi*²³ that included the newly discovered shores of Americas, demonstrating that the Ottomans were up-to-date with the geographical explorations and the recent developments in cartography.²⁴ Furthermore, he penned the finest

²⁰ Feridun Beg, *Mecmua-ı Münşeât-ı Selatin* (Istanbul, 1274-75).

²¹ J.H. Mordtmann, "Ferîdûn Beg" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, vol. II, 881.

²² Gábor Ágoston, "Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet: Rivers, Forests, Marshes and Forts along the Ottoman-Hapsburg Frontier in Hungary", in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 57-79.

²³ Both maps only partly survived. TSK, R. 1633, mük. (H. 919/A.D. 1513); H. 1824, (H. 935/A.D. 1528-1529).

²⁴ His was not the only work that concentrated on the New World. See for details, Thomas D. Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World: A Study of "Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi" and Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Americana* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1990); idem, "Ottoman Americana: The Search for the Sources of the Sixteenth-Century Hind-i Garbi", *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 85 (1982): 269-94. For a discussion of other Ottoman portolan charts and atlases produced in the 16th century, see Svat Soucek, "Islamic Charting in the Mediterranean", in *History of Cartography, Vol. II, Book One: Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, eds. J.B. Harley et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 279-284.

example of Ottoman cartography with *Kitâb-ı Bahriyye*,²⁵ a manual for sailing directions which contained ample geographical information on the Mediterranean shores.²⁶ From what could be deduced from the works' concentration on military details, this was not a work of pure science. Rather the text and the maps are clear manifestations of a political desire to give useful information for naval warfare, the most evident audience being the Ottoman corsairs.²⁷ The members of the dynasty also demonstrated a genuine interest in maps that would help them achieve their ambitions to rule the universe. Suleyman's three sons, for instance, ordered world maps from Venice in the early 1550s.²⁸ Another important manuscript is the *Gazâvat-ı Hayreddîn Paşa*²⁹ which concentrated on the activities of the famous Ottoman corsair and later Grand Admiral Hayreddin Pasha *alias* Barbarossa. Albeit written for purposes of propaganda, it should have played an important role in shaping the Ottoman elite's perception of the Mediterranean world by presenting the complex picture of North African and Western Mediterranean politics.

Thirdly, the Ottoman interest in Europe is evident from their familiarity with European formulas and symbols of sovereignty which they did not hesitate to use when they wanted to lay claim to the political loyalty of their Christian subjects or to claim superiority to their Christian rivals.³⁰ Mehmed II's medals with his portrait were widely circulating in 15th century Europe. A century later, with the instigation of his Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, Suleyman I would make a majestic parade with his forces in Belgrade, with a European-style

²⁵ There are two versions of the book. There are several copies of both versions in different libraries all around the world. See for a full list, Soucek, "Islamic Charting", Appendix 14.2. See for a reprint in Ottoman, Piri Reis, *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002).

²⁶ For a good discussion of sources which Pîrî used while composing his works, see. Soucek, "Islamic Charting in the Mediterranean", 269-279.

²⁷ For Pîrî's works' contribution to the Ottomans' knowledge of Spain, see. Francisco Franco Sánchez, "El Almirante Pîrî Re'îs y la información de los Turcotomanos sobre los dominios Españoles", *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islamicos en Madrid* 35 (2003): 153.

²⁸ Benjamin Arbel, "Maps of the World for Ottoman Princes? Further Evidence and Questions concerning the 'Mappamondo' of Hajji Ahmed", *Imago Mundi* 54 (2002): 23. Also see. Antonio Fabris, "The Ottoman Mappa Mundi of Hajji Ahmed of Tunis", *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies* 7-8 (1993): 31-7.

²⁹ IÜK, MS 2639; also see. Murâdî. *Gazavât-ı Hayreddîn Paşa: (MS 2639 Universitätsbibliothek Istanbul): kommentierte Edition mit deutsche Zusammenfassung*, ed. Mustafa Yıldız (Aachen: Shaker, 1993).

³⁰ Tezcan, "Frank in the Ottoman Eye", 288.

crown commissioned to Venetian jewellers on his head, as a response to Charles V's coronation as the Holy Roman Emperor in Bologna.³¹

Fourthly, renegades such as the afore-mentioned dragoman Mahmud in the Ottoman administration had familiarity with European culture. Furthermore, they had personal acquaintances and kinship relations in Europe could be important assets. Some of these renegades of Christian/European background reached the highest echelons of the Ottoman administration, actively participating in the decision-making process as well as the political forums which shaped the perceptions of the Ottoman elite.

Fifthly, certain trans-imperial communities, such as Jews and Moors familiarized the Ottomans with the Western world by bridging both halves of the Mediterranean with their communal networks along the Mediterranean shores.

Finally, the Ottoman intelligence in the West provided Constantinople with supplementary information that they could use while shaping their strategy.

In the 16th century, the Habsburg Grand Strategy regarding the Mediterranean had little realistic ambitions in the Levant; the overextended Habsburgs had a lot more at stake in Italy (their hereditary possessions and alliance systems) and North Africa (their *presidios* that gave hope for a further *Reconquista* and that were threatened by the presence of nearby corsair bases). Concerning North Africa, the Habsburgs had first hand knowledge and previous experience on this vast geographical and politically fragmented space where they had been prior to the Ottomans. We could not talk about the same depth regarding the level of information they had on the Eastern Mediterranean, even though they could rely on Vienna and Venice for further information and there are examples of extensive *relazioni* on the Ottoman Empire extant in Spanish archives.³² As they were on the defensive against the

³¹ Necipoğlu, "Representation of Power", 163-194.

³² A good example is a *relazione* penned by Antonio Xepuli during the war between the Ottomans and the Holy League (1570-1573) and sent to Madrid by the Viceroy of Sicily. AGS, E 1147, fol. 174. Another is the one written by a seasoned go-between and a former slave that escaped Constantinople, António Echevárri entitled

Ottomans, they were only interested in creating diversions to prevent them from sending their fleet to the Western Mediterranean. To this end, they sought to ally themselves with the Safavid Persia, supported Orthodox resistance against the Ottoman rule in the Balkans and kept a close eye on the Ottoman navy thanks to their extensive intelligence network in Constantinople, Ragusa, Chios and the Ionian Islands. The fact that these networks reported to the provinces (Naples and Messina) rather than Madrid demonstrates us that the Habsburgs rather used gathered information on the policy-making level than on that of strategy formulation. In other words, provincial centers reacted to the dangers and opportunities in accordance with the information they received.

2.2.2. Information and Policy

On the lower level, states used information to make short-term policies based on incoming information. These policies are more prone to change in accordance with the changing dynamics of the time. States revised their policies quickly according to the gathered information and short-term conjunctures such as domestic stability as well as military and financial capabilities. Hence, the information was meant for immediate consumption; it must be gathered and transmitted as soon as possible.

This study proposes different model for the study of 16th century Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry. Historians wrote this political history without accepting information as an element in decision-making. In this kind of history writing, almost all political decisions were made with perfect knowledge and almost all logistical difficulties that constrained the optimal choice among several policy options were disregarded. If the Ottomans attacked Malta, for instance, it should have been because they had a long-term strategy in mind. The conquest of Malta should be just one stage of this long-term strategy rather than a quick response to a perceived

“La orden que ay en la armada del Turco”, AMSC, leg. 18, no. 15. This *relación* specifically focuses on the Ottoman Navy and Arsenal, but also mentions other issues, resembling a Venetian *relazioni*, albeit shorter and less detailed: It is accessible on line, Rosa López Torrijos, “Antonio de Chávarri: Un marino y espía vasco en Estambul”, <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/CLASICOS017.pdf>.

threat as a result of incoming information, or than an outcome of factional struggles which, hand in hand with internal dynamics of the empire, shaped the decision-making.

The model that I apply in this work while studying political history is based on two methods. One is to use the information as a variable in determining the quality of imperial strategies and thus the fate of military expeditions. Second is to deconstruct the process of decision-making and consider it as the result of a dual process of information analysis and factional politics.

Information could be beneficial in the policy-making in a number of ways. First, a timely transmission of information that shed light on the future military projects of the enemy could help the decision-makers allocate their resources for defensive purposes on the one hand and decide on their own military projects on the other. This relation could not be more obvious than it was in the correspondence between the Habsburg agents in the Levant, viceroys in Naples and Messina and the central government in Madrid. Each year, viceroys sought to put together information they received from different channels in order to decide whether the Ottoman fleet would sail to the West or not. If it would, it was imperative to learn its target. Especially during the years when the Ottomans had the upper hand in the Mediterranean, roughly the 1550s and the 1560s, the Habsburg decision-makers, constantly under the pressure of financial troubles, had to wait for this information before risking any action and mobilizing their resources elsewhere. Similarly, the Venetians sought to acquire information regarding the Ottoman Empire, relying on their correspondence with their diplomats, merchant and spies in the Levant.³³ The Ottomans kept a close eye on their enemies' preparations as well, especially during the wartime, such as the War of 1570-1573.³⁴

³³ ASV contains ample documentation in this regard, such as *SDC* and *CCX-LettAmb* where one can see the fundamental role of the Venetian bailo. Also for correspondence among the Venetian diplomats in the Levant, see. BMC, mss. Donà delle Rose 147, *Lettere di Marco Venier, bailo a Costantinopoli*, 1594.

³⁴ The Ottomans employed a number of corsairs to spy on the Christian navy. Kara Bıyık, the captain of the corsairs of Santa Maura, for instance was assigned to gather information, *a la caza de avisos*, about the enemy navy *en aguas de Calabria y Sicilia*, and to capture informants. AGS, E 1124, fol. 110 (1558). For information

Information is also important on the offensive. Information concerning political events abroad may persuade the central governments to arrange their diplomatic moves accordingly. A piece of solid information could tip an already fragile balance between war and peace in favour of the former. Before undertaking his glorious campaigns against the Mamluks, for instance, Selim I was well informed about the chaos that reigned in Egypt and how Kansuh Gavri was hated by his subjects, thanks to one of Gavri's slaves, Hoshkadem, who also added that Egypt could easily be conquered.³⁵ An order dispatched to Hasan Pasha, the Governor-General of Algeria, states that a navy was being sent to the Western Mediterranean (which eventually would attack Malta) because of the information he sent, warning the center of the enemy's military preparations, '*azim tedarik*'.³⁶ Furthermore, factors that would facilitate the conquest of a given place (a weakness in the fortifications, lack of personnel, provisioning of a garrison, epidemics, draught or a plot with some of the soldiers) could determine the target of the operation. The Ottoman decision to attack Cyprus is a perfect example in order to demonstrate the afore-mentioned process of information analysis and factional politics in the making of decisions. It is true that the Ottoman strategy fixated Cyprus as its prime target in the Eastern Mediterranean since the 15th century,³⁷ and that the Ottoman secret service had started to show signs of suspicious activity in the island at least a couple of years before they

gathered during the 1570-73 Ottoman Venetian war. See. BOA, *MD*, XIV, no. 517 (H. 24 Ra. 978/A.D. 26 August 1570); *MD*, XVI, no. 640 (H. 23 Ca. 979/A.D. 13 October 1571); *MD*, XIX, nos. 255 (H. 3 Ra. 980/A.D. 13 July 1572), 629 (H. 18 Ra. 980/ A.D. 27 August 1572), 631 (H. 9 Ra. 980/ A.D. 18 August 1572) and 688 (H. 16 B 980/ A.D. 22 November 1572). In 1570, while the Ottoman navy was engaged in Cyprus, a small squadron under the commands of Uluç Ali and Kara Hoca entered the Adriatic to learn whereabouts of the Christian navy. They encountered a Venetian galley which took refuge in Ragusa. When Ragusans refused to give back the ship, Uluç convinced them to provide important information about the preparation of the Christian navy. Uluç Ali then sent Kara Hoca to Sicily where the latter managed to approach the navy, anchored in Messina at night, counted 130 to 140 ships, and proved the importance of corsair mobility. He then disembarked with some of his men on the Calabrian shores and captured a Calabrese, a relative of Uluç Ali, who told the corsairs that the Christian navy was about to set sail to meet the Ottoman navy, Gustavo Valente, *Vita di Occhiali* (Milano: Casa Editrice Ceschina, 1960), 121-5. In 1572, a Venetian nobleman leaked the information that the Venetians would attack Castelnuovo. The Ottomans learned this four months before the expedition and made necessary preparations. According to the Habsburg spy, the Venetians could not take the castle as they could not conceal their intentions. AGS, *E* 1331, fol. 221 (20 May 1572).

³⁵ Selâhattin Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969), 117.

³⁶ BOA, *MD*, VI, no. 904 (H. 22 S 972).

³⁷ Camillo Manfroni, *Storia della Marina Italiana* (Roma: Forzani E C. Tipografi Del Senato, 1917), vol. II, 197.

attacked. Still, the time of the operation was the direct result of incoming information (The revolt of Alpujarras in Spain that tied the Habsburg's hands and the fire in the Venetian Arsenal, both in 1569) and the change in the balance-of-power between different factions in Constantinople. (The Nasi faction overcoming the Sokollu faction).

Similarly, a close connection is observable between the Habsburg policy vis-à-vis the Low Countries and the Ottoman interventionism in the Mediterranean. Every year, the Habsburg decision-makers were all eyes and ears to know whether the Ottomans would send their navy or not before deciding the extent of their military engagement in the North. The Ottoman siege of Malta in 1565, for instance, prevented Philip II's departure for the Low Countries a year before the revolt took place. The loss of la Goleta in 1574 gave incentive to the Habsburgs for a peace in the Low Countries.³⁸ The relationship between the information regarding the future actions of the Ottoman navy and the Habsburgs' deployment of their military resources elsewhere is more discernible in the following example. Having been assured on August 31, 1577 that the Ottoman fleet would not set sail for the Western Mediterranean, Philip II immediately sent his veteran soldiers to Low Countries.

2.2.2.1. Perception

Due to the physical and cultural barriers between imperial centers, imperfect methods of the gathering and transmission of information as well as the irregularity of channels of communication, process of analysis depended upon the perception more than one would imagine in the 21st century. Therefore, information was processed by the decision-makers after careful analyses of verification and contextualization with the database that shaped their perception of the overall picture and according to which, as I had stated above, they formulated their Grand Strategy as well. No matter how careful they were in their analyses, the conflict between the stagnant nature of this database and the flexible nature of incoming

³⁸Geoffrey Parker, *Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 166, fn. 49.

information undermined the objective employment of information. Decision-making process was a mixture of permanent perceptions that were shaped by knowledge, paranoia and prejudice and the changing examinations of the political realities where the possibility of dis/misinformation entered the frame. While talking about decision-making process, simply in Faroqhi's words, "we must never lose sight of this give and take between 'hard' economic, political and military realities on the one hand, and 'soft' perceptions on the other."³⁹

A good example of the importance of perception is evident from the following example where the Venetians had to assure the Ottomans, with whom they had otherwise good relations, that their recent military build-up was only directed against the recent "amassing" of the Habsburg forces in the Duchy of Milan. And still then, they continued, it was not that the Venetians or other princes in Italy were at war with each other. They just had to be precautions. The Venetians knew how wrong impressions and perceptions would quickly change the mood in Constantinople and affect Ottoman decision-making in the short-run, even in 1601 when Venice or Italy in general was not considered feasible targets in Constantinople whose hands were tied in a long war against the Austrian Habsburgs in Central Europe. The Venetian rationale was that the Ottomans might have sensed a threat by a concerted action among the Italian states or believed that there was an open war in Italy that might increase the feasibility of an Ottoman intervention in the fragmented peninsula, a long-time fear for the Italian states and a solid plan for the Ottoman decision-makers in harmony with their Grand Strategy. The Venetian Senate expressed its caution with the Ottomans' perception of political events and the military balance-of-power with the following words they wrote to the bailo in Constantinople:

"It often occurs that the further the things are brought from, the greater becomes their fame as well as the derivation from their true meaning. We suppose that all these rumours have already reached the Sublime Porte and that

³⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Ottoman Empire and the World around it* (New York and London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 18.

hearing these, the Turks could agree on the fact that such preparations, with the mutual agreement between Christian princes, were aimed at them or, on the contrary, that there was an open war between these princes. Provoked by that, they might decide to make new and great preparations, especially in the Navy.”⁴⁰

As they had an efficient intelligence network as well as a centuries-long expertise of manipulating and servicing information to governments of Constantinople, the Venetians were the last to panic in front of such a problem. If they were overcautious, it should be for a good reason.⁴¹

This element of perception could result in different sets of preferences for decision-makers in the center and provinces. Alain Hugon already explained the differences between the attitudes of Habsburg officials in Madrid and Valladolid and those in Italy and Low Countries with their relative geographical positions and perception of information.⁴² A similar difference can be observed within the context of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, where the provincial authorities at times overlooked the decisions of the center, the best examples of which being Don Juan’s decision to conquer Tunis in 1573, or Viceroys of Naples’ decision to harbour corsairs in spite of repetitive prohibitions of Madrid.⁴³ This difference does not have to be only between the center and its provinces, but also between different authorities, say the Habsburg ambassador in Venice, Francisco de Vera y Aragón and the Habsburg viceroy in Naples, the Count of Miranda. These two, for instance, were at a disagreement over which policy to be followed regarding the Habsburg secret service in the Levant. De Vera

⁴⁰ “...suole occorrer che quanto piu da lontano vengono portate le cose, tanto maggiormente sia accresciuta la fama et la relatione di esse con diversificatione dal vero senso et supponendo noi, che tutte queste voci siano hormai pervenute a quella porta; et che intesa da turchi, possano essi far concerto che simili preparationi con universal intelligenza de principi christiani tendino a loro danni o che per il contrario possa esser tra essi principi aperta guerra; da che eccitati si rissolvano a fare nove et maggiori provisioni et particolarmenti di armata.” ASV, *SenDelC*, reg. 9, cc. 153v-155r (10 April 1601).

⁴¹ A similar example, again from Venetian sources: In 1500 when the Venetians and Ottomans were in a war, the Venetian senators were discussing what to do with the Ottoman *orator* that was destined for France. One of the arguments against granting him permission to proceed was that he might have seen how rich the cities of Italy were. He could then put fantasies in the head of Bayezid II and had him attack Italy. Arturo Segre and Roberto Cessi, eds., *I Diarii di Girolamo Priuli* (AA. 1494-1512)(Città di Castello: Casa Editrice S. Lapi, 1912-1938), vol. II, 21.

⁴² Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 75.

⁴³ AGS, *E* 1162, fol. 50 (24 April 1606), *E* 1889, fols. 11-12 (14 March 1615); *E* 1892, fol. 152 (24 March 1620).

advocated for the efficiency of the Habsburg spies in the Levant and protested when the Count abstained from paying their salaries. Obviously, their relative position determined each official's stance in the debate. De Vera, a diplomat in Venice, was pro-espionage since an important part of his duty was to gather information. The Count of Miranda, on the other hand, was the one who had to govern an entire Viceroyalty and allocate finite resources in the most efficient way possible. Espionage was one of his many tasks, and not the most important one in his eyes, one gets the impression.⁴⁴ There was a similar chronic disagreement over which policy to follow in the Western Mediterranean between the Ottoman corsairs in North Africa and the Ottoman elite in Constantinople. Corsairs lobbied for a more active policy vis-à-vis Western Mediterranean and North Africa and saw in the Morisco Revolt of las Alpujarras or the instability in Morocco a realistic opportunity that justified intervention. The Ottoman authorities in Constantinople, on the other hand, did not share their enthusiasm for such far-reaching objectives. They concentrated more on relieving the French from the Habsburg pressure, seeking naval bases such as Malta and la Goleta and using their navy to provide booty and slaves for the imperial capital.⁴⁵

The world of information was one filled with prejudices, paranoia and dis/misinformation that undermined the quality of decisions taken. There is a positive correlation between these factors that impeded the decision-makers to engage in a fully objective analysis of a political situation and the importance of states' intelligence capabilities which aimed to overcome these impediments by verification and contextualization on the one

⁴⁴ Especially see the disagreement of the two concerning the money owed to Marco Antonio Estanga who died in 1593 without recovering his stipend for many years, in spite of the impressive traffic of correspondence between Venice, Madrid and Naples and repetitive orders of the Crown authorizing the pending payment. AGS, *E* 1343, *K* 1674, fols. 131 (3 March 1590), 137 (31 March 1590), 156 (21 July 1590); 164 (18 August 1590), 168 (10 September 1590), 169 (13 October 1590), 180 (10 November 1590), 186 (8 December 1590); *E* 1541, fols. 195 and 222; *E* 1344, *K* 1675, fols. 26 (8 February 1591), 182 (15 October 1592), 196 (21 de Agosto 1592); *E* 1345, fols. 5 (16 January 1593), 20 (10 April 1593), 25 (24 April 1593), 28 (15 May 1593), 34 (5 June 1593), 56 (11 September 1593), 79 (4 December 1593), 81 (11 December 1593), 115 (12 February 1594).

⁴⁵ Gürkan, "Osmanlı-Habsburg Rekabeti", 22-44.

hand and tried to damage the decision-making process of other states by engaging in counter-intelligence and by extension forcing them to decide with imperfect information on the other.

2.2.2.2. Factional rivalries

Another factor that impeded the objective assessment of the facts was the reality of factional rivalries. Historians should not consider decision-making process as the product of a “monolithic” state”.⁴⁶ Decisions regarding what we today consider “foreign policy” might not necessarily be taken on the basis of abstract notions of the state’s best interests.⁴⁷ Different interest groups, organized around relations of parentage or patronage/clientele, challenged each other in both capitals, advocating different points-of-view in accordance with their own collective interest. For instance, a hawkish faction led by Joseph Nasi overcame the dovish Sokollu faction and persuaded the Sultan to undertake an expedition against Cyprus, while in Madrid, the rivalry between the Ebola and Alba factions determined the crown’s policy.⁴⁸ As I will explain in Chapter Five, the faction that I labeled as the “Mediterranean faction”, led by the corsair-cum-Grand Admiral Uluç Ali, was an important factor in determining the Ottomans’ Mediterranean policy. These factions tended to use gathered information as a political tool in order to convince their monarch. This flawed the objectivity and the efficiency of the decision-making process. A very good example is the following one where the Ottoman Grand Admiral Uluç Ali, the ardent opponent of the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations, used gathered information in the service of factional politics, i.e., to debilitate the negotiation process that his faction of corsairs and naval officers vehemently opposed. When the captain of the Algerian galleys Arnavud Memi sent him a chaus with a Neapolitan slave, Uluç sent both to Mustafa Pasha where the Neapolitan gave the news that Philip II conquered Portugal and argued that he was planning to attack North Africa, playing with the

⁴⁶ Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 366.

⁴⁷ Faroqhi, *Ottoman Empire and the World around It*, 48.

⁴⁸ For factional rivalries in the Ottoman Empire between the 1570s and the 1620s, see. Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites”.

Ottomans' already aroused fears and suspicions. Uluç moreover had a letter, which Arnavud Memi intercepted and sent him, translated into Ottoman in order to use this as a document for his anti-truce argumentation.⁴⁹ He furthermore used the Neapolitan's statement that all Habsburg ships were in Spain in order to convince the Sultan to give him permission to sail West with the Ottoman fleet.⁵⁰ Even though he failed in the end, in this particular case, his efforts of manipulation are revealing. The information did not even have to reflect the truth; some daring figures did not hesitate to engage in disinformation against the very ruler that they were supposed to serve in order to manipulate the decision-making process. Uluç Ali, for instance, had one of his agents spread the rumour that the Habsburgs were preparing a great armada, in an effort to convince the Sultan to spare funds for a major naval campaign a year after the Ottoman-Habsburg truce was signed and a Moroccan expedition was aborted at the last minute.⁵¹

Perhaps, factional rivalry was also an important factor that facilitated the diffusion of information. Had decision-making process been monolithic, state secrets would have been kept better. Because of these rivalries and the ensuing process of discussion, negotiation, and reformulation, a number of outsiders that assisted the faction leaders indirectly participated in the evaluation of information and evolution of policy. Most of the time, it was they who spread the news, rather than high ranking officials.

2.2.2.3. The issue of the continuity of information

Central governments had to make sure that the flow of information continued without interruption. This objective was harder to achieve in the Ottoman-Habsburg borderland than elsewhere, given the lack of diplomatic relations, geographical distance and the hostility between two empires. One reasonable way to solve this problem was to diversify the channels of communication and multiply intelligence networks that operated at times unaware of each

⁴⁹ AGS, *E*, 1338, fol. 15 (30 June 1580).

⁵⁰ AGS, *E*, 1338, fols. 19 (2 July 1580) and 20 (7 July 1580).

⁵¹ AGS, *E* 1152, fol. 40 (6 April 1582).

other, as was the case of the Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople in the 1560s or that of two Venetian spies that the Governor of Catharo employed in Ragusa in 1570.⁵²

The flow of information became especially harder to sustain during wartime, even when there is a resident ambassador who could transmit information more efficiently than a spy. The Venetian bailo in Constantinople during the War of 1570-1573, Marc'antonio Barbaro, brilliantly overcame many obstacles that the Ottomans put on his way⁵³ and informed his capital on a regular basis.⁵⁴ However, his was an astonishing accomplishment; the harshness of Ottomans' methods of counter-intelligence and surveillance should not be overlooked.

Therefore, warfare ironically created two opposing conditions. On the one hand, anxious decision-makers who had to decide and act in the swiftest manner created a huge demand for regular and reliable information. On the other, however, the paranoia surrounding capitals, random prosecutions of any suspicious figures (most commonly Jews and foreigners) and states' counter-intelligence mechanisms created a supply problem. In short, the real difference between an efficient and an inefficient intelligence network became more obvious during wartime.

2.2.2.4. Conclusion

In short, the efficiency of the information gathering did not necessarily result in appropriate decisions; accurate intelligence does not mean good policy.⁵⁵ Several factors

⁵² ASV, *CCX-LettRet*, b. 275, fols. 137-138 (26 October 1570).

⁵³ The Ottomans tried to keep him secluded at home without any contact with the outside world and searched his servants while entering and leaving the house in order to prevent them from carrying correspondence. There were also janissaries who accompanied the bailo and even his son all the time so they could not talk to anybody. When the bailo used his chaplain to carry his letters, the Ottomans arrested the latter and put him in prison. The bailo could liberate him only thanks to the large sum he paid; but his conditions became even harder to endure: his windows were walled, one of his agents was executed and in a terrifying scene, the Ottoman soldiers passed under the bailo's windows with his head on a pole. BOA, *MD*, XVI, no. 173 (H. 9 C 979/A.D. 29 October 1571). Michel Lesure, "Notes et Documents sur les Relations Vénéto-Ottomanes, 1570-1573, I", *Turcica* 4 (1972), 152-156, 163.

⁵⁴ See his letters in ASV, *SDC*, fil. 6E.

⁵⁵ Ohad Leslau, "The Effect of Intelligence on the Decisionmaking Process", *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 23 (2010), 443.

related to perception (misperception, prejudices, paranoia, etc.) as well as the realities of domestic politics and factional rivalries prevented the objective assessment of facts and hindered the optimal use of information. Decision-making may have shaped politics but politics shaped decision-making as well. It is precisely this imperfect nature of information-gathering that required the processing of the gathered information and it is exactly this flawed nature of decision-making process that rewarded those central governments who invested in secret diplomacy and punished those who did not.

2.2.3. Information gathering and war

Information was important for not only the carefully formulated grand strategies or policies, but also military decisions where the correlation between the quality of information and the material result is stronger.⁵⁶ Apart from the information that had been prepared for the consumption after a careful process of analysis, information that was gathered from the enemy after a reconnaissance mission or via a double agent had to be responded to in a more immediate manner. Thus, the benefit from this type of information depended upon the decision skills of the commander which had to take further responsibility. Nevertheless, it offered in return more than the analyzed information would offer since the former was fresh information which did not suffer from the effects of time.

States started using the means of secret diplomacy even before taking military action. They not only gathered information on a possible target, but also take the possibilities of defection, sabotage and assassination into account. For instance, the Habsburg secret service was unusually active in Tripolis before their navy set sail for North African shores. It secured a number of connections from among the renegades in Turgud Re'îs' entourage in the castle of Tripolis via spy-cum-merchant Matheo de Lione. These discontented renegades provided Matheo with important military information regarding the castle's defenses, and in case of a

⁵⁶ Diego Navarro Bonilla made a case for the correlation between the efficiency of secret diplomacy and success in warfare, claiming that Richelieu owed his military success over the Habsburgs in the 17th century, partly to the enormous sums he spent on spies. Bonilla, "Espías Honorables", 41-2.

siege, agreed to set the weapon arsenal on fire, arrange the cooperation of local nomadic Berbers (*alárabes*) and surrender the castle to the Habsburgs. Their help could have been crucial had the intended siege been realized in 1560.⁵⁷ Similarly, the Ottomans acquired as much information as possible on an intended target. There are surviving maps and siege plans in the Topkapı Palace that were prepared before the undertaking of major military expeditions.⁵⁸ Similarly, during the Hungarian campaign of 1541, an unknown author prepared a “plan of conquest”, listing strategic Hungarian castles to be conquered, indicating their location, short history and owners.⁵⁹ Before a major military expedition, Ottoman spies’ activities intensified as well; information they acquired and covert operations they undertook could be of great service to Ottoman military efforts. For instance, in 1561, an Ottoman spy in Sicily corrupted a number of soldiers in the fortress of la Goleta so that when the Ottoman navy arrived, they would poison the wells, jam the artilleries, explode the weapon arsenal, torch the houses and start a revolt among the soldiers of the garrison. The Governor-General of Tripolis, Turgud Re’îs and the ruler of Tunis, nominally a Habsburg ally, had furthermore 20-30 Moors among the soldiers that secretly re-converted to Islam and were ready to help the Ottomans.⁶⁰ History repeated itself thirteen years later when la Goleta finally fell to the Ottomans. The commander of the castle realized the existence of an Ottoman plot from the insistent unanimous messages sent inside the castle with arrows. On the predetermined date of the Ottoman general assault, five Spanish soldiers would not only explode the weapon arsenal, but also put two flags in the thinnest part of the city wall so that the Ottoman soldiers knew where to charge.⁶¹ During the years preceding the expedition, the Ottoman secret

⁵⁷ AGS, E 1124, fol. 150

⁵⁸ Belgrade (1521?), Malta (1556), Szigetvár (1566) and Vienna (1683). Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet”, 64.

⁵⁹ You can find this plan in Pál Fodor, “Ottoman Policy towards Hungary”, in *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Pál Fodor (Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2000), 146-51.

⁶⁰ AGS, E 1126, fols. 152 (30 April 1561), 47 (11 May 1561), 48 (8 May 1561), 107 (4 October 1561), 141, 168, 169 and 176 (26 July 1561).

⁶¹ ASF, *Archivio Mediceo del Principato*, fil. 4148, fol. 12; Sola, *Uchalí*, 216.

service was very active in Cyprus as well.⁶² These efforts paid off. The Ottomans had the luxury of doing their military planning with the designs and plans of important Venetian fortifications such as Famagusta which their spies acquired.⁶³ Furthermore, the Ottomans resorted to their traditional policy of *istimalet*, i.e., winning the local communities' alliances against their lords with a carrot-and-stick strategy. Letters were dispatched by the Governor of İçel, urging the Cypriotes to defect to the Ottomans, so that they could keep their lands and possessions; if they helped the Venetians, their women and children would be enslaved and their property would be confiscated.⁶⁴ During the siege, several soldiers on Venetian payroll changed sides to become Muslims; these were inducted into the Ottoman military.⁶⁵ The contribution of Ottoman collaborators within the castle of Kyrenia also proved decisive as they convinced the population to surrender.⁶⁶ Similarly, the fact that the Christian navy easily located and tried to rob the Ottoman grain depots in imperial *havass*, demonstrate that they (most probably the Venetians rather than the Habsburgs) had before-hand knowledge about their locations.⁶⁷

⁶² Paolo Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 100.

⁶³ ASV, CCX-LettAmb, b. 3, fols. 146-147 (11 May 1568).

⁶⁴ "...sabıka gönderilen istimalet hükmü mucebince cezirenün re'ayasına girü kendü canibünden mektublar gönderüb her birine yeni istimalet virüb şöyle ki düşman tarafına meyilleri ve mu'avenetleri olmayup Südde-i Sa'adetüm canibine togrılık üzre teveccühleri mukarrer ola, inşa'a'llah fethi müyesser oldukda her birisi mutasarrıf oldukları tımarları ve evleri ve sa'ir emlakı ile mu'af u müsellemler olup bir nesneleri ellerinden alınmayub ve kimesneye dahl ü ta'arruz itdürilmeyüb ancak zira'at itdükleri yirlerinden şer' ile öşrin virürler ve eğer Dergah-ı Mu'allam'a ita'atleri olmayub düşman tarafına malları ve nefsleriyle mu'avenetleri olub mu'in ü zahir olalar, sonra inayet-i Hakk celle ve ala ile fetholundukdan sonra ol asıl düşmana mu'avenet ü muzaheret idenlere asla himayet olunmayub kendüler katlolunup etfal ü ezvacı esir ve emval ü esbabları nehb ü garet ve yağma ve talan u tarac olmak mukarrerdür. Ana göre ferman-ı şerifümü i'lan idüp ve mümkün olduğu üzre sa'y ü ihtimam idüb bu canibe ita'at idenler kemal mertebe ri'ayet olunur. Dirlik rica idenlere muradları üzre ağır dirlikler virilüb mu'afıyyet taleb idenler dahi mu'afnameler virilür diyü her birin ita'ate tergib itdüresin ve muttasıl yarar casuslar gönderüb sahih haberler alub i'lam itmekden hali olmayasın." BOA, MD, XII, no. 19. There are many similar examples throughout the MD.

⁶⁵ BOA, MD, XIII, nos. 110 (H. 9 Za. 978 / A.D. 4 April 1571), 134 (H. 7 Za. 978 / A.D. 2 April 1571), 498 (H. 16 Z 978 / A.D. 11 May 1571), 1211 (H. 20 M 979 / A.D. 13 June 1571), 1340 (H. 25 M 979 / A.D. 18 June 1571) and 1072 (H. 14 M 979 / A.D. 7 June 1571). There were even nobles (*beyzade*) among those who defected. BOA, MD, XII, 290 (H. Gurre-yi Z 978 / A.D. 26 April 1571), 353 (6 Z 978 / A.D. 1 May 1571) and 713 (H. 28 Z 978 / A.D. 23 May 1571).

⁶⁶ BOA, MD, VIII, no. 356 (H. 14 Ca. 978 / A.D. 14 October 1570). XIII, no. 684 (H. 26 Z 978 / A.D. 21 May 1571).

⁶⁷ BOA, MD, XVIII, nos. 48 (H. 28 N 979/ A.D. 13 February 1572), 49 (H. 25 N 979/ A.D. 10 February 1572), 50 (H. 27 N 979/ 12 February 1572) and 56 (H. 29 N 979/14 February 1572).

Incoming information could effectively decide the military target. The authorities sent their agents to gather information about a number of possible targets according to which they decided their next step. The Ottoman naval campaign in 1534 is a clear indication of the correlation between the intelligence gathered in the last minute and the planning of military campaigns. In 1534, the Ottoman Grand Admiral Hayreddin's success (his successful raids of the Neapolitan shores, the burning of six Christian galleys, the capture of Giulia Gonzaga, his attack on the undefended shores of Calabria instead of fortified places such as Gaeta and Pozzuoli) is a sign of how well-informed he was. The Habsburg intelligence suggested that Hayreddin would attack either Otranto or the Apulian coast, while Hayreddin, informed of Habsburgs preparations, changed course and attacked the Tyrrhenian coasts which were unguarded, save for Naples and a couple of well fortified places. Furthermore, it could be inferred from the complete silence of Marquis de la Tripalda's intelligence network about an Ottoman attack on Tunis that Hayreddin changed his target after he realized, via incoming intelligence, the infeasibility of an attack on the kingdom of Naples itself.⁶⁸ To decide on their next target after their victory at Lepanto, the Habsburgs sent Battista Corso who managed to acquire crucial military information regarding the defenses of possible Habsburg targets in the region, Tlemcen, Bugia, Bone, and Constantine.⁶⁹ Similarly, the year following the Battle of Lepanto, Uluç Ali and Piyale Paşa also discussed incoming information and decided that they should not risk the newly built Ottoman navy by setting sail for North Africa when the allied Christian navy left Messina.⁷⁰

When all measures fail, the authorities were reduced to a system of alarm which gave them an advantage of only hours, not days. The Habsburgs, for instance, built a defense

⁶⁸ José María del Moral, *El Virrey de Napoles Don Pedro de Toledo y la guerra contra el Turco* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1966), 170. The viceroy of Naples, Don Pedro de Toledo frequently complained about Hayreddin's spies in the kingdom of Naples who were sending information about defense preparations, *Ibid.*, 201 fn 42.

⁶⁹ AGS, *E* 1137, fol. 123.

⁷⁰ AGS, *E* 1063, fol. 55 (8 August 1573).

system based on a network of towers that aimed to provide both defense and alarm functions.⁷¹ The amount of effort and money that the Viceroy of Naples and Sicily such as de Toledo, de Rivera, Gonzaga (he alone built 137 of them!) spent on these towers clearly reflect their significance. Although less studied, similar defense-cum-alarm systems were built in other Habsburg territories such as Sardinia and the Spanish coasts and by other states such as Florence and Papacy.⁷² The Habsburgs also developed special methods, to an astonishing degree of innovation, to provide continuous communication between the towers that made up the system, so that the tower that was assaulted by the Ottomans could alert the next one.⁷³ Similarly, the Ottomans entrusted certain villages (*dilci*) in strategic locations with providing information against smugglers, pirates, corsairs and the incoming enemy in exchange for certain tax exemptions.⁷⁴

Military decisions were given on the battlefield. As Guilmartin states, “...no amount of communications can replace a competent and responsible commander on the scene. To attempt to do so is to invite disaster”.⁷⁵ Hence, the commanders of early modern armies had to rely on information gathering *in situ*. Where central governments intervened, their orders were most of the time outdated, given the speed of communications of the time. This would imperil the strategic accuracy of the decision taken, a good example being the Battle of Lepanto (1571) where the Ottoman high command gave in to the pressures from the centre and engage the enemy with a worn-out fleet and an exhausted crew despite the warnings from the experienced corsair, Uluç Ali. Similarly, the Duke of Medinaceli ignored warnings from his experienced lieutenant Gianandrea Doria that he should not risk the worn-out Habsburg

⁷¹ There were two types of those: The more expensive square towers were built according to the new developments in the military technology and could host cannons. The cheaper circular towers were mostly built before the 16th century and therefore were not suitable for cannons; their main function was to give the alarm.

⁷² Salvatore Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo: Cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio* (Milano: Mondadori, 1993).

⁷³ All these methods are explained in *Ibid.*, 166-9.

⁷⁴ BOA, MD, XVIII, no. 217 (H. 3 § 979 / A.D. 20 December 1571). Also, see. Chapter Six.

⁷⁵ John Francis Guilmartin, *A very Short War. The SS “Mayaguez” and the battle of Koh Tan* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 157, quoted by Parker, *Grand Strategy of Philip II*, 74.

navy in the Tripolitan waters given the possibility of an Ottoman relief. He had direct orders from the king, he answered, and set sail for disaster.

A good example of sensitive strategic decisions taken with an efficient intelligence network would be Don Garcia de Toledo's intervention in the siege of Malta in 1565. The Habsburg admiral kept a close eye on the Ottoman siege of Malta and made a very hard decision while choosing the right moment to intervene and break the siege. The geography of Malta would make it harder for the relieving force to achieve its objective. Therefore, if he attacked prematurely, he would have to directly face the fresh Ottoman forces that had superior numbers. On the other hand, had he waited for too long, the island might have fallen.⁷⁶ Thanks to his intelligence network which kept him up-to-date with the situation of the siege and the wear and tear of the Ottoman forces, he came at the right moment and forced the worn-out Ottomans to retire.⁷⁷

De Toledo's military decision-making *in situ* presents a stark contrast with decisions taken by the Ottomans before the Battle of Lepanto. The Ottomans generally decided on military matters in a War Council. In these councils, a number of leading Ottoman commanders discussed the information and options available to them in an effort to maximize the efficiency of the decision-making process. Generally, these War Councils were also attended by either the Ottoman Sultan or the Ottoman Grand Vizier and thus there was no higher authority in the capital to intervene in the decision-making process by giving pre-meditated orders. This, however, was not the case at the Battle of Lepanto. The newly appointed Ottoman Grand Admiral Muezzinzade Ali Paşa had clear orders from the Sultan to engage the enemy. Furthermore, thanks to the realities of the factional politics in the Ottoman Navy, he was in fear of criticisms of his political adversaries. He could have stayed in the Gulf of Patras and shied away from engaging the enemy fleet, a tactic that served Barbarossa

⁷⁶ Francis Guilmartin Jr., *Gunpowder and Galleys: Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 191-3.

⁷⁷ For examples of de Toledo's information gathering on the siege, see. AGS, E 1054, fols. 113 and 117.

so well thirty-three years before at the Battle of Prevesa. However, he chose to accept the battle with the worn-out and partially manned Ottoman fleet, in spite of warnings from his lieutenants who were expert on naval affairs. The result was, as well known, a disaster for the Ottomans.

The contribution of espionage is more visible during sieges because of the stagnant nature of siege warfare where forces confronted each other for a long time, allowing ample time and opportunity to conduct business with the other side. Barbarossa was the real expert of employing spies and using secret diplomacy as an effective tool in siege warfare. He established contacts with the besieged populations,⁷⁸ expedited his own spies to major targets along the Mediterranean⁷⁹ and received information from those who voluntarily came to him for political or financial reasons.⁸⁰ His well-functioning intelligence network helped him during important military decisions. For instance, information brought at the last minute by the fugitive Granadine soldiers convinced him to continue the siege of Castelnuovo in 1539,⁸¹ while the news that the Habsburgs forces were approaching made him lift the siege of Nice in 1543.⁸² The operational importance of information on the siege warfare is most evident in the following example. In 1536, Hayreddin asked Sinan “the Jew”, the famous corsair and his second in command, whether he should attack the castle first or immediately launch an assault on Crotone itself. Sinan provided detailed information about the Habsburg defences in

⁷⁸ For instance, he conquered Tlemcen thanks to his contacts with the local population who agreed to surrender. Murâdî, *Ġazavât-i Hayreddîn Paşa*, fols. 153b-154b.

⁷⁹ For instance, in 1543, an Ottoman spy was captured in Messina. According to his confession, he had previously spied in Messina for four years. This time, he was sent to spy and then return to the island of San Giovanni to meet with the navy and submit his report. Angelo Raffa, “L’ultima impresa di hayreddin (Barbarossa). La guerra marittima turco-franco-spagnola del 1543-4”, in *Aspetti ed attualità del potere marittimo in Mediterraneo nei secoli XII-XVI*, ed. P. Alberini (Roma, 1999), 408.

⁸⁰ For instance, in 1544, renegades from the island of Lipari approached and furnished him with information concerning the island’s defenses. AGS E 1116, fol. 69 (1 September 1544).

⁸¹ Francisco López de Gomara, *Crónica de los Barbarrojas*, in *Memorial histórico español: Colección de documentos, opúsculos y antigüedades* (Madrid: la Real Academia de la Historia, 1853), Vol. VI, 428.

⁸² Sagredo, p. 287 cited by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l’Empire Ottoman depuis son origine jusqu’à nos jours*, trans. J. J. Hellert (Istanbul: Les éditions Isis, 1996), vol. V, 175.

Crotone which proved vital in the sacking of the badly defended castle.⁸³ Information mattered for the besieged as well. In 1533, for instance, the Habsburg garrison chose to hold on much longer because one of ships sent by Andrea Doria sailed past the Ottoman navy's blockade and brought the auspicious news that a relief force was being prepared.⁸⁴

The price of neglecting information could be disastrous. The Viceroy of Naples, Cardinal Granvela, for instance, ignored several letters sent by Aurelio Santa Croce, the long-time spymaster in Constantinople, informing that the Ottomans would attack la Goleta.⁸⁵ Cardinal could be excused to a certain extent given the unreliability of the Habsburg spies in Constantinople in ascertaining the destination of the Ottoman fleet. (Who could blame them given that sometimes even the Ottoman Grand Admiral did not have a clear idea where the navy was heading, showing us once again the importance of the incoming information on determining military targets?) But the story was rather different with the Duke of Medinaceli, the Viceroy of Sicily and the Admiral of the Habsburg fleet, who suffered both from the inefficiency of his intelligence network as well as his own neglect of the incoming information. If he took the incoming information seriously, he could have avoided the unhappy end that awaited him and his fleet. Firstly, as mentioned above, he risked the navy by sailing to North Africa in February ignoring Doria's information that the Ottomans were preparing a fleet. Secondly, when he arrived to the canal of Al-Qantara on the island of Djerba, he could not realize that Turgud was in the island. He should have been suspicious by the activities of an invisible hand that provoked the otherwise pacific Berbers of the island to attack Habsburg soldiers that went on shore to find water. Had he been aware of Turgud's presence, he could have caught him either by directly attacking Djerba or by negotiating with the population for the surrender of the corsair. Instead he set sail for Tripolis, totally

⁸³ AGS, E, 1025, fol. 105, "declaración que presta en la Cárcel de Nápoles Francisco de Alderete", cited by Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 82-5.

⁸⁴ Jurien de la Gravière, *Doria et Barberousse* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1886), 209.

⁸⁵ AGS, E 1071, fol. 171, Aurelio's letters dated 1 May and 20 September 1574.

outmaneuvered by Turgud who learned the destination of the Habsburg fleet and left Djerba for Tripolis. He arrived there before the indecisive Viceroy, who, unaware of Turgud's activities, lost precious two weeks by resting his fleet in between Djerba and Tripolis. Neither could he realize that the galiot that mysteriously vanished in the canal of Djerba after seeing the Habsburg navy belonged to Uluç Ali who immediately set sail for Constantinople in order to ask for help. Unfortunately, his inefficient intelligence network did not furnish him with any of these crucial information. Only thanks to Arabs who came with their small ships to sell fruit and vegetables to the Habsburg fleet, he learned the truth, and only too late, on March 1, instead of February 14. A day later, he decided to return and conquer Djerba. From his activities afterwards, one already gets the impression that he would not have reacted to the accurate information anyways. After the conquest of Djerba, he continued to ignore incoming intelligence. He may not have his own network, but the Habsburg authorities, spies and allies were sending several intelligence reports alarming the arrival of the Ottoman fleet. Could he not at least have listened and heeded to those who advised him to leave? On the contrary, the Viceroy's reaction to these reports was to spend two months with building a castle and strengthening the defenses. On May 10, a report arrived informing that on May 7 Ottoman fleet was observed doing *acquata* in Gozo and heading for the southwest where the island of Djerba laid. The Viceroy hesitated to leave and chose to stay despite warnings from his lieutenants, Gianandrea Doria and Flaminio Orsini, both naval experts. With his stubbornness and refusal to listen to his more able lieutenants, does he not resemble Müezzinzade? He chose to take his time and wait one more day to retire, assuming (which is most of the time a dangerous activity while deciding on the battlefield) that the Ottoman fleet would first go to Tripolis to meet Turgud and therefore could not reach Djerba in less than four or five days. He missed his last opportunity to escape, waiting to do *acquata* and recall his soldiers. Obviously he was not aware of the good example of Andrea Doria who left 400 of his soldiers

on the beach at the enemy's mercy when he saw Hayreddin's fleet in 1532.⁸⁶ When the next day the Ottoman fleet appeared on the horizon, not only everybody was in a state of panic, but also the day before's favorable winds gave way to the northern Tramontane (*greco-tramontana*). It was impossible to leave and the Habsburgs lost almost their entire fleet without fighting. The Ottomans expected a battle but what they found was a massacre.⁸⁷

The result of the Battle of Djerba reflects us the importance of information gathering on the battlefield; should perhaps the maxim change to "Information is the sinews of war"?

2.2.4. Information gathering and diplomacy

The efficiency of state's secret diplomacy gave them the upper hand in their diplomatic relations. This became more evident in peace negotiations where the parties tried to measure the strengths and weaknesses of each other in order, on the one hand to formulate their demands and concessions on the negotiation table and on the other to use this information as leverage against each other during the negotiation process.

Information during negotiation would be a precious commodity as argued in the instructions given to the Venetian ambassador Andrea Gritti in 1503. In order to gain advantage during the negotiations, to *avantazar le cose nostre*, he should try to learn all the recent events that took place not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in Persia where a potential political ally, Shah Ismail, had recently risen to power.⁸⁸ Similarly during the peace negotiations of 1540, the Ottomans increased their demands and asked for Nauplia and Malvasia after having learned from a Neapolitan exile that the Venetians were worn out by the war and could not go on fighting.⁸⁹ In another example, the Ottoman Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha freed the Austrian ambassador Busbecq's men just because he sought to have the upper

⁸⁶ Gravière, *Doria et Barberousse*, 199.

⁸⁷ Rinaldo Panetta, *Pirati e corsari turchi barbareschi nel Mare Nostrum: XVI secolo* (Milano: Mursia, 1981), Chapters 22 and 23.

⁸⁸ BNM, IT. VII. 878 8652, Andrea Gritti, *Copialettere*, "Nos Lauredanus dei gratia Dux Venetiarum..."

⁸⁹ L. Bonelli, "Il Trattato Turco-Veneto del 1540" in *Centenario della Nascita di Michele Amari*, ed. Giuseppe Salvo Cozzo (Palermo: 1910), 332.

hand in the negotiations with the Persian ambassador by convincing him that the Ottomans were ready to make peace in the West in order to have their hands free against the Safavids in the East.⁹⁰

The details of the negotiation process itself became the target of intelligence efforts. The Venetians were the most efficient in this respect, thanks to their extensive network of diplomats all over Europe who informed them of such negotiations immediately and then intervened in the most efficient manner. Their activities in Constantinople are illuminating of the relationship between intelligence and diplomacy. When they could, they sought to manipulate the negotiation process between the Ottomans and another power to their advantage. The correspondence between the *Serenissima* and its bailo in Constantinople reveals the Venetian intervention to prevent the normalizing of diplomatic relations between other Italian states such as Genoa and Florence and the Ottoman Empire. For instance, the French ambassador (1558) as well as the Venetian bailo (1562) managed to prevent the efforts of the Genoese diplomats that arrived in Constantinople by means of a number of convincing arguments.⁹¹ The Venetians had a similar negative attitude towards the Florentine efforts of opening diplomatic relations with Constantinople.⁹² They even spoke against a truce between the Ottomans and Philip II in 1573.⁹³ Nonetheless, they shifted their position later when the possibility of a truce seemed evident. The traffic of correspondence between the Council of Ten and the Venetian diplomats in Madrid, Naples and Constantinople all aimed to make sure

⁹⁰ This tactic did not work as the Persian ambassador was well informed thanks to his own intelligence network. Michel Lesure, "Michel Černović "Explorator Secretus" à Constantinople (1556-1563), *Turcica* 15 (1983): 136.

⁹¹ The arguments were the following: Genoa was a Habsburg subject, evident from its inclusion in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis and Philip II's insistence on the return of the Genoese rule in Corsica. There were also numerous Genoese captains in the Habsburg navy. Furthermore, once allowed with capitulations, the Genoese would flood the Ottoman Empire, only in order to spy for the Habsburgs. Finally, they argued that the grandeur of the Ottoman Sultan would not allow for an alliance, (*unirsi in confederazione*) with a power that was subject to the King of Spain. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 7, cc. 100v-102v (13 and 18 January 1562, m.v.). The Venetians felt that their interests would be threatened by such close relations between the Ottoman Empire and Genoa. See. ASV, *CCX-ParSec*, fil. 11 (14 January 1562, m.v.). The Venetian bailo continued to keep a close eye on the Genoese diplomatic efforts in Constantinople, ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 7, cc. 144v-145r (19 January 1563, m.v.); reg. 9, cc. 43v-44v (9 December 1569).

⁹² ASV, *CCX-ParSec*, reg. 7, cc. 41r-41v (12 february 1560, m.v.); reg. 12, cc. 50r-50v (4 October 1580).

⁹³ The bailo argued that such a truce would be impossible, because Philip II would not risk losing the financial support of the Pope. ASV, *CCx-ParSec*, reg. 10, cc. 133r-133v (16 july 1573).

that the Venetians had the latest information and Venice was included in this general truce, intriguingly, as an Ottoman ally.⁹⁴

To demonstrate a second point where information can become leverage in the negotiation process, let us focus on the indirect and unofficial negotiations in Venice between Charles V's ambassador, Rodrigo Niño and the Ottoman envoy to Venice, the Dragoman Yunus Bey,⁹⁵ through an intermediary, Lorenzo Belojo. In an effort to achieve one of the key objectives of the Ottoman Grand Strategy and make their rivals send an envoy to Constantinople asking for a truce,⁹⁶ Yunus Bey enumerated Charles V's problems in the international arena, relying on the information he should have collected thanks to his contacts in the city. The Emperor had better sent an ambassador to Constantinople for a truce because he was diplomatically isolated and threatened from both inside and outside. Christian monarchs such as the kings of England and France envied the Emperor and always wanted him in trouble. Furthermore, given that the Emperor would not negotiate for a council with the Pope, all Lutherans would be his enemies and the Catholics in Germany would convert to Lutheranism. In fear of Charles V's brother and lieutenant Ferdinand, all would be friends to the Ottomans. Yunus Bey furthermore made allusions to several letters written by the French king and Protestant nobles in order to document his claims. When this message was transmitted to Niño, he refused the offer, yet did not fail to appreciate the efficiency of the

⁹⁴ ASV, *CCX-ParSec*, fil. 20, 22 August 1577, 11 September 1577, 21 September 1577, 26 September 1577, 6 June 1578, 12 July 1578, 23 July 1578, 23 August 1578, 10 December 1578 and 17 December 1578. They already had a similar position in 1564 when the possibility of a truce was again on the table. ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 2, c. 103r (13 March 1564). They also sought to be included in the capitulations between Suleyman I and Maximilian II, *Ibid.*, c. 113v (30 May 1564).

⁹⁵ The document does not mention Yunus Bey's name; however, according to Pedani's list, Yunus Bey arrived in Venice 10-13 December 1532, approximately two weeks before the Habsburg ambassador mentioned this event. Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 206.

⁹⁶ According to the Ottomans, sending an ambassador to negotiate a truce was a sign of submission and therefore humiliating. This belief was also shared by the Habsburgs, as evident in Charles V's categorical refusal to send an envoy and Philip II's insistence that the truce negotiations in 1578-1581 be conducted without the presence of an official ambassador who had to arrive in Constantinople with presents for the Sultan.

Ottomans' intelligence. He ordered Belojo to learn the content of the afore-mentioned letters.⁹⁷

2.3. BUREAUCRATIZATION IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SECRET DIPLOMACY.

The expansion of the influence of central governments in the 16th century resulted in the bureaucratization that in its turn absorbed secret diplomacy into the sphere of central governments. States could then establish institutionalized secret services, rather than employing spies occasionally. Even though the extent to which central governments could control their spies' activities should not be exaggerated especially in the Ottoman-Habsburg borderlands, they developed certain methods in order to enhance the quality of operations. These developments could not have been possible without the rising number of chancellery personnel, some of which, started to professionalize in the conduct of secret diplomacy.

2.3.1. Improvements in cryptography and steganography

Gathered information must be transmitted the fastest and the safest way possible. Central governments had to organize the transmission of news so that the flow of information would not suffer from the activities of enemy counter-intelligence. Chancelleries increasingly employed new techniques of steganography or cryptography in order to better conceal the nature of their correspondence and to penetrate to the enemy correspondence which was written with the same techniques. The development was swift. From a primitive medieval practice that existed in a very simple form and applied in games and magic formulae, the early modern steganography and cryptology turned into a complex science. Even though this development mostly was the result of the demand created by central governments and permanent embassies, it also attests to a change of mentality that occurred in the 13th century

⁹⁷ AGS, *E* 1310, fol. 42 (24 December 1532).

which in itself was intertwined with the birth of the modern state and diplomacy: the integration of writing in society and of the written word in legality.⁹⁸

Firstly, I should explain the terminology. Steganography is the science of hiding a written text with some arrangement such as invisible links, microdots, and the like. Cryptography, on the other hand deals with making the text unintelligible rather than hiding it. By using a number of different methods, it aims to encipher/encode the text. Encipher/encode means hiding a text with a cipher/code while decipher/decode is to break this cipher/code.

2.3.1.1. Steganography techniques:

In spite of the primitiveness of early modern technology, central governments had at their disposal an impressive number of methods to hide the text. By using invisible inks, they managed to conceal the true nature of their correspondence which could only be read by special methods such as reading with the light of the burning coal or putting the letter under the water.⁹⁹ An invisible ink commonly used, for instance, was the Roman vitriol (Sulfate) which had to be pulverized and mixed with normal water. Once the hidden text was written with this special substance, the normal message had to be written with a solution of *carbón de sauge* with water, covering the hidden text. To make the hidden text legible, sufficed it to scrub the text with *galla de Istira*, pulverized and mixed with water as well; the hidden text appeared while the normal text became obscure.¹⁰⁰ Another invisible ink was the lemon juice. According to this, the informant/spy would write a normal letter that included relevant information such as commercial details that would not raise any suspicion in case of its interception. Between the two faces of front pages, the informant/spy would write the secret

⁹⁸ Desiree Scholten, "Trust in Untrustworthy Businesses: Communication in Diplomatic Espionage from the Early Middle Ages to the 16th century", paper written in September 2009, http://cambridge.academia.edu/DesireeScholten/Papers/188764/Trust_in_Untrustworthy_Businesses_Communication_in_diplomatic_espionage_from_the_early_middle_ages_to_the_16th_century

⁹⁹ Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 203.

¹⁰⁰ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 237.

information with lemon juice which could only be read after having been “tormented” with fire.¹⁰¹ There are several examples of these “tormented” letters extant in AGS whose red ink and careless handwriting make them so hard to read that in the end, these letters ironically “torment” the researcher. Written with a *manera que se han sacado al fuego*, on the first page there was a letter written by a slave asking for ransom money from his relatives, followed by the red-inked “tormented” part on the following pages.¹⁰² Fortunately for debutants in paleography, some of the deciphered copies,¹⁰³ as well as the *relazioni* that central government’s chancelleries compiled, summarizing the incoming information in several such letters, survived.¹⁰⁴ The receiver could only know that these letters were actually written by spies thanks to the name of the recipient and a code word. The Habsburg spies in Constantinople, for instance used the word “*honorando*” in the beginning of the letter (“nobile et *honorando*”, “Ill.e et *honorando* S.or”, “*honorando* miser Antonio/Gioane”, “mag.co et *honorando* miser Antonio”, “ille et *honorando* ms. Bartolomeo”, etc.) and/or before the name of the recipient (“a Dominio Antonio Rimini suo *honorando*”, “a Domino Anibal pinto suo *Carmen*” (another codeword?), “al nobile ms. Bartolomeo Tupuri suo *honorando*”, etc.) in order to inform the authorities that such letters, which otherwise seemed uninteresting correspondence penned by merchants and slaves, contained ample information hidden with steganography techniques.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ For instance, in 1563, the Genoese agent in Constantinople in Habsburgs’ employ, Giovanni Agostino Gigli wrote: “They torment all the letters to the heat of the burning coal and put it in a warming pan (*scaldaletto*) inside of which the letters would be heated up with diligence in order not to burn them. They do this, because the letter, feeling the heat, had the words written on it appear.” The letter of Giovanni Agostino Gigli al Doge e ai Governatori (8 January 1563). Carlo Bornate, “La Missione di Sampiero Corso a Costantinopoli”, *Archivio Storico di Corsica* XV (1939): 485.

¹⁰² AGS, *E* 1392, fols. 63 (18 January 1563), 65 (21 January 1563), 67, 68 (18 January 1563), 75 (29 March 1563) and 76 (30 March 1563); *E* 1324, fol. 128 (18 January 1563); *E* 1326, fols. 46 (23 September 1565), 47 (23 September 1565), 48 (24 September 1566), 49 (23 September 1566), 50 (26 September 1566), 53 (27 October 1566), 56 (16 November 1566), 60 (November 1566), 61 (November 1566), 64 (16 December 1566), 68 (29 December 1566), 69 (29 December 1566), 75 (January 1567) and 80 (9 March 1567).

¹⁰³ AGS, *E* 1392, fols. 64 (18 January 1563), 66 (21 January 1563), and 68; *E* 1326, fol. 51 (26 September 1566).

¹⁰⁴ AGS *E* 1326, fol. 99 (15 November 1567), 103, 152 (6 January 1568), 179 (4 May 1566), 307 (15 October 1569), 312 (26 November 1569), 314 (26 December 1569), 315.

¹⁰⁵ AGS, *E* 1326, fols. 53, 56, 60, 61, 64, 68, 69 and 75.

Surely, there were other steganography techniques that remained more in theory than in practice, such as the Cardano grille¹⁰⁶ and many other interesting ones mentioned by Giambattista della Porta in the sixteenth volume of his *opus magnum*, *Magia Naturalis*. They attest further to the complexity of a flourishing science of steganography in the 16th century; however, for the sake of brevity, I will not go into further detail.

2.3.1.2. Cryptography techniques:

Renaissance Europe produced a vivid interest in cryptology; intellectual figures of the time developed an amateur interest in this science. Leon Battista Alberti, for instance, wrote a 25-page manuscript on the subject for the papal secretary and made two key contributions: 1) the polyalphabetic substitution,¹⁰⁷ thanks to his invention of the cipher disc with which the writer could easily shift to a different cipher key, 2) the enciphered code.¹⁰⁸ The development in cryptology went hand in hand with the development of chancelleries and the establishment of modern diplomacy following the introduction of permanent representation. These developments that started slowly in the 1390s accelerated after the mid-16th century. Throughout Europe, the increasing number of secretaries in the chancelleries of central governments and of embassies abroad developed and utilized a wide range of techniques from simple transposition (rearranging the places of letters in the text) to substitution (replacing letters by numbers, symbols, signs, pictograms, musical notes or other letters) which developed in itself from simple homophonic and slightly more complex but rare polyphonic substitution to Alberti's polyalphabetic substitution. Further inventions such as the square table, diagraphic cipher (two letters were represented by a single symbol), mnemonic key

¹⁰⁶ David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1967), 144-5.

¹⁰⁷ In polyalphabetic substitution, different alphabets use the same symbols for the ciphertext and a given symbol can represent different plaintext letters, a novelty which intended to confuse the cryptanalyst. Unlike a simple homophone which always represents the same letter or a slightly more complex polyphone which always represents the same set of plaintext letters, in polyalphabetic substitution, the relation between the symbol and the letter is not fixed, creating a great complexity which brought Alberti the nickname, "the father of Western cryptology".

¹⁰⁸ Kahn, *Codebreakers*, 125-130.

(writing out the keyword, omitting any repeated letters and then following it with the remaining letters of the alphabet) and autokey (where the message itself is its own key) followed, creating a great diversity and paving the way for modern cryptology.¹⁰⁹ Still, a reservation should be made. One should not be overwhelmed by the theoretical progress that European cryptologists assured for the chancelleries. Those which were in practice were less complex than would be expected.

The correlation between the rise of the Habsburgs as a political power and the proliferation of her ciphers is most discernible after 1556 when Philip II decided to take initiative and change all the ciphers by introducing the general cipher of 1556, the best example of *nomenclator*, a mixture of codes and ciphers. In its complexity, it set the pattern for the Habsburg cryptography into the 17th century.¹¹⁰ The Habsburgs instituted a *secretario de cifra*, under the control of the *secretario de estado*. Luis Valle de la Cerda, for instance, was a famous cryptologist who served under Alessandro Farnesio in Flanders and then the *secretario de estado* Juan de Idiaquez.¹¹¹ Philip II and his omnipotent secretary Antonio Pérez were also interested in cryptology.

The Venetians similarly demonstrated a close interest in cryptography and kept themselves updated with the latest development in the field. In the 16th century, they developed two sets of cipher, *zifra grande* and *zifra picciola*,¹¹² which they used in their correspondence and the keys of which they carefully guarded from the outsiders.¹¹³ The

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 108-124.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 114-116.

¹¹¹ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 244-246.

¹¹² ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 10, cc. 49v-50r (31 July 1572), 51r-51v (9 August 1572).

¹¹³ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 11, c. 135r (2 July 1577) warns the Captain of Corfu that the cipher should not be left in the couriers' possession. Only the secretary sent by the ducal chancellery should have access to it. Less than two months later, a similar order (cc. 137v-138r (27 August 1577)) was sent to the *Provedditore-General* of Candia, accentuating the dangers of the fact that an ex-criminal had the responsibility of the cipher, *carico della ciphra*. It should be touched by nobody, let alone a criminal, except the Grand Chancellor of the island. Once exiled, an officer had to submit all the ciphers, letters and *disegni* in his possessions to the State. Ibid., reg. 13, cc. 22 r (5 February 1584, m.v.) When the cipher secretary Francesco Marin died in 1578, all his writings were confiscated and inventoried to be kept in the office of the Heads of the Council of Ten under lock-and-key, accessible only to three other cipher secretaries. Ibid., reg. 11, cc. 158r-158v (23 May 1578). In 1601, when there was a disorder in the handling of the cipher, the authorities set up a commission that consisted of five

number of cipher secretaries who were employed in the Venetian chancellery (there were also those in the provinces) quickly grew from one to four in less than a century, hinting at the rising importance of cryptography as well as the swift expansion of the chancellery.¹¹⁴ The necessity of new secretaries and more complex ciphers due to the intensification of written correspondence between government officials forced the hands of the Venetian central government. The authorities tried to fill the gap by encouraging the extant secretaries to train their sons and relatives¹¹⁵ and promoting the science of cryptography. The Council of Ten seemed interested in proposals for new ciphers that their experts perfected and authorized handsome rewards for such useful inventions.¹¹⁶

Most of the afore-mentioned developments took place in the Christian world. But what about the Ottomans? Unfortunately, our knowledge is limited regarding methods of cryptology used by the Ottomans who used the Arab alphabet and therefore might have developed different techniques, as they did with musical notes. There are indications that the Ottomans utilized cryptography at least partially. One of the rare studies on Ottoman cryptography, published in 1899, enumerates four cryptology systems used by the Ottomans, not only in the 16th century, but also later.¹¹⁷ All four systems, (*kentüklü, orduyi, damgalu, misırlu*), however, were based on simple homophonic substitution and therefore were far from the complexity of their Western counter-parts, hinting that the Ottomans were not actually up-to-date with Western cryptology. To concentrate specifically on the 16th century, there is only

nobles. The comission's duty was to declare their opinion on how to preserve the secrecy of the cipher. Ibid., reg. 14, cc. 109r (27 February 1600, m.v.)

¹¹⁴ According to ASV, *CCX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 158r-158v (23 May 1578), the number of these secretaries should always be three. However, this rule was not observed. In the beginning of the 17th century, there were only two of them. In 1605, the "*moltiplicita degli affari et negotii publichi*" convinced the Venetian Council of Ten to appoint two new secretaries to help the two extant "secretaries of the Senate with the special duty of writing and extracting all the ciphers". Ibid., reg. 14, cc 177r-177v (31 August 1605).

¹¹⁵ See Chapter Three.

¹¹⁶ For an innovative new cipher that Girolamo Franceschi developed with a false *sconto*, see. ASV, *CX-ParSec*. For those developd by Piero Partenio, see. Ibid., reg. 13, cc. 92v-93r , 107r (24 March 1593), 113r (30 August 1593); reg. 14 cc. 180r-180v (30 January 1605, m.v.). Also see. Ibid., reg. 13, cc. 40v (26 August 1587); reg. 11, cc. 166r-166v (18 August 1578).

¹¹⁷ M. J. A. Decourdemanche, "Notes sur quatre system turcs de notation numerique secrete" *Journal Asiatique*, *Neuvième Série* 14 (1899): 258-271.

one reference to the Ottomans' utilization of cipher. The famous cryptographer Blaise de Vigenère saw a Turkish cryptogram solved in six hours in Rome.¹¹⁸ The conversation between the Ottoman Grand Vizier and the Venetian bailo, however, suggests that the Ottomans did not use cipher. According to the instructions sent to the Venetian bailo, if the Ottoman Grand Vizier insisted that the Venetian should not use cipher since the Ottomans did not use it either, he should have protested that the Ottomans did not have to use it. They did not have permanent embassies (and therefore they did not need to regularly send letters to their representatives in foreign countries) and they sent important correspondence with a *çavuş* and *homini espressi* (*ulaks?*) so that it did not fall in the hands of their enemies.¹¹⁹ As will be explained in Chapter Six, the Ottomans seemed to have resorted to oral communication more than the Venetians and the Habsburgs.

When it comes to cryptanalysis, the Ottomans utilized specialists who were familiar with foreign embassies' chancellery methods. For instance, the Ottomans managed to cryptanalyze the letters of the Venetian Bailo Vettore Bragadin only with the help of one of their "*giovani di lingua*", Colombina, who was sent to Constantinople to study Ottoman. According to Bragadin, this young apprentice, who converted to Islam and defected to the Ottomans, knew the Venetian cipher because he should have seen and perhaps even helped the Venetian scribes in Bailo's house decipher letters.¹²⁰ It is not hard to guess how efficient somebody like Colombina, who did not have a proper education but only learned a specific cipher by helping others use it, would be. The Ottomans had mixed success in cryptanalysis.

¹¹⁸ Kahn, *Codebreakers*, 146.

¹¹⁹ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 8, cc. 79r-80r (18 February 1566, m.v.).

¹²⁰ ASV, *Capi del consiglio di dieci, Lettere di Ambasciatori* (hereafter *CCX-LettAmb*), b. 3, fol. 55; Christiane Villain-Gandossi, "Les dépêches chiffrées de Vettore Bragadin, baile de Constantinople (12 Juillet 1564 – 15 Juin 1566), *Turcica* X (1978): 77. Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 42. Colombina would serve in the Ottoman chancellery for years, appearing frequently in correspondence between the bailo and the Council of Ten. In 1578, he was even designated as the Ottoman envoy to the *Serenissima*, to the great chagrin and protest of the Venetian authorities. ASV, *Consiglio dei dieci, Parti Secrete* (hereafter *CX-ParSec*), reg. 11, cc. 154v (24 March 1578), fil. 20 (24 March 1578).

For instance, they succeeded in deciphering the Venetian bailo's letters in 1492,¹²¹ but failed to decipher the correspondence of the Austrian ambassador which they intercepted on two occasions in 1580.¹²² The fact that the Ottomans were frustrated with foreign ambassador's utilization of cryptography techniques and tried to put pressure on them to write without cipher/code or hand down their keys to them suggests that they had troubles in cryptanalysis. In 1567, Sokollu warned the Venetian bailo not to write in cipher and Ibrahim Bey, the Ottoman envoy to Venice, made it known that the Pasha wanted a special clause prohibiting the use of cipher added to the to-be-renewed capitulations. This created an interesting traffic of diplomacy between Constantinople and Venice which tried to avoid such limitations at all costs.¹²³ Even though the issue was left aside, it resurfaced when Sokollu warned Marc'antonio Barbaro once again in 1570 and even went as far as to ask him, albeit with a laugh in his face, to teach one of his own men how to write in cipher. The bailo kindly refused the offer, saying it would take too much effort and time.¹²⁴ The Ottoman chancellery fell short of expectations when it comes to detecting the steganography techniques that the European ambassadors used in their correspondence with their capitals; a failure which would have

¹²¹ Francesco Longo, ed., *Annali Veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500 del Senatore Domenico Malipiero* (Firenze: Gio. Pitro Viessieux, Direttore-Editore, 1843), vol. I, 141-142.

¹²² AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 15 (30 June 1580).

¹²³ According to the instructions given by the Council of Ten, the bailo and the ambassador should argue that such a limitation would jeopardize the safety of their correspondence in case their letters were intercepted. They should at all cost reject the novelty of adding a clause to the capitulations and tell the Pasha that Venice should not be singled out: Diplomatic representatives of other "princes" were also writing in cipher. If Pasha said that the Ottomans themselves did not use cipher, then the ambassador should point out to the fact that the Ottomans did not have permanent embassies and that they sent important correspondence with a *çavuş* in order to prevent enemy interception. Unless these arguments convinced the Pasha, the bailo then should accept the demand but make sure that it was not written down as a clause in the capitulation arguing that this would be best for the "dignity" of the *Serenissima*. Interestingly, the bailo was also advised to remind the Ottomans, had the Venetians been forced to write without cipher, this would have meant they would be able neither to provide the Ottomans with information nor to transmit Constantinople's messages to the Ottoman navy operating far away in the Western Mediterranean, if need be, as was the case in 1565 during the siege of Malta. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 8, cc. 76v-77r (27 January 1566, m.v.), 79r-80r (18 February 1566, m.v.), 92v-93v (19 July 1567); BOA, *MD*, VI, no. 1424 (H. Evasit-ı Z 972, A.D. 9-18 July 1565). When they learned that Sokollu made a similar demand to other representatives, the Venetians changed their strategy by on the one hand telling the Ottomans that they would follow the example of other diplomats, and on the other trying to form a unified diplomatic front against such excessive demands with other European powers. If all this failed, the final resort was, unsurprisingly for the students of Ottoman-Venetian relations, to bribe Sokollu and other pashas. Ibid., cc. 93v-94r (19 July 1567), 96r (20 August 1567), 97r (2 October 1567).

¹²⁴ ASV, *SDC*, fil. 5, fol. 12 (21 April 1570).

neutralized the possible benefits of Sokollu's policy of forcing ambassadors to write without a cipher. When, for instance, he forced the Austrian ambassador to submit the correspondence destined for Vienna for Ottoman investigation in 1576, his men failed to realize the existence of the scripture written with an invisible ink.¹²⁵

2.3.2. Improvements in the transmission of news:

The bureaucratization and the centralization of the 16th century enabled the states to establish a regular postal system. This system brought two major advantages. Firstly, it gave a great advantage to central governments who used this efficient monopoly of the flow of information by better controlling their otherwise centrifugal provinces (one could understand how great a problem this would be in large polities such as the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire). Secondly, it also increased the efficiency of decision-making process by providing regular information the fastest way possible. Aware of these advantages, both empires centralized the flow of information; but the details of this process are the subject of Chapters Four and Six.

2.4. ESPIONAGE AND INTERNATIONAL CRISES

States that do not have open diplomatic relations can easily engage in espionage without suffering any diplomatic consequences. However, the war of information in the Mediterranean was not waged with only two actors; other participants of the imperial rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs used their secret services as well. As a result, secret diplomacy went hand in hand with open diplomacy and at times created diplomatic tensions between states that maintained, or feigned to maintain, otherwise good relations.

When there were open diplomatic relations, it was the ambassador who suffered the consequences of an international crisis sparked by espionage. For instance, in 1492 when the Ottomans intercepted and deciphered the Venetian bailo's correspondence, they realized that

¹²⁵ Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, ed. Kemal Beydilli, trans. Türkis Noyan (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), vol I, 285.

he was sending information to Venice. They immediately ordered him to leave, sparing merchants, though, who could stay in the Empire. The Venetian response to this was the dispatch of an ambassador, Domenego Trivisan, to correct the situation.¹²⁶ In another example, this time it was Venice that was the victim of ambassadorial espionage. In 1542, The French ambassador Guillaume Pellicier acquired from the secretaries of the Council of Ten the instructions of the Venetian ambassador who negotiated the peace treaty with the Ottomans. When the Venetians realized that he sent this vital information to the Ottomans, giving them an upper hand in the negotiations, an international crisis of full scale erupted. When Pellicier did not want to surrender his agents who gathered information from the secretaries, the Council of Ten besieged the French embassy with soldiers, threatening to demolish the building, while there was also an angry mob outside. Unsurprisingly, the French ambassador had to surrender his agents and leave Venice.¹²⁷

Ambassadors were accused of more than simple espionage. In two occasions, foreign ambassadors were implied in overthrowing governments. In 1583, Bernardo de Mendoza, the bellicose and intransigent Habsburg ambassador in London, participated in a plot led by Francis Throckmorton to overthrow the queen. When Walsingham's counter-intelligence managed to uncover the plot and discover Mendoza's participation, the Habsburg ambassador was declared *persona non grata* and was given, in an ironically friendly conversation full of decorum and courtesy, fifteen days to leave the kingdom.¹²⁸ A passionate employer of spies, the Habsburg ambassador in Venice, the Marquis of Bedmar, managed to establish a wide network of spies and informants who provided him, in spite of the Venetian *Inquisitori di Stato*'s vigilant eyes, with crucial information during his tenure (1606-1618) which coincided

¹²⁶ Longo, *Annali Veneti*, vol. I, 141-142.

¹²⁷ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 75. For Pellicier's activities in Venice that resulted in his expulsion, see his published correspondence. Alexandre Tausserat-Radel (ed.), *Correspondance Politique de Guillaume Pellicier, Ambassadeur de France à Venise, 1540-1542*, 2 vols. (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Baillière et Compagnie, 1899).

¹²⁸ Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la Diplomacia Española, VI: La Diplomacia de Felipe II* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 2000, 2nd edition 2003), 178.

with a worsening of relations between Venice and the Habsburgs. When the *Serenissima* realized the *Congiura di Bedmar*, however, her tolerance for ambassadors' intelligence networks gave way to indignation and the ensuing international crisis that paralyzed relations between Venice and Madrid even further. According to this plan proposed by Bedmar and the Duke of Osuna, the Viceroy of Naples, Habsburg agents would set the Arsenal and the Mint, *zecca* in fire, deflect the Dutch soldiers in the city and attack the *Palazzo Ducale* with the Habsburg fleet that would arrive from Naples in order to sack the city and invade it. Amidst the swift persecution of the Habsburg spies implicated in the plot, the Habsburg ambassador also took its fair share of authorities' outrage and populace's fury. In order not to jeopardize the relations further, Bedmar, in spite of his insistence on his innocence, fled the city and moved to Milan where he waited the royal order for his transfer to the Low Countries.¹²⁹

Documents related to secret diplomacy frequently mention assassination plans, even though most of the time these did not succeed. When they did, however, they might create an international crisis and a propaganda war that might be problematic for the culpable central government who authorized the mission. Leaving many famous cases of assassination, such as that of Henri de Valois, Henri de Navarre and William of Orange aside, in our context the best documented example is the assassination of the French diplomats Antonio Rincón and Cesare Fregoso on their way from France to Constantinople at the hands of a band of soldiers who, the French justly claimed, were sent by the Habsburg Governor-General of Milan. Paris pressed the matter further, raising the issue of diplomatic immunity and used the incident as a tool of propaganda against Charles V.¹³⁰ The affair caused a tremendous stir in European

¹²⁹ Preto has argued that the *Inquisitori* and the Council of Ten never believed in a real plot, but rather used the occasion to achieve a number of objectives: 1) The recalling of Bedmar, a proponent of an anti-Venetian policy among Habsburg circles, 2) forcing the Duke of Osuna to obey Madrid's orders and to retreat the fleet from the Adriatic Sea, 3) dismantling of the Habsburg intelligence network in Venice, 4) elimination of riotous elements among the Dutch mercenaries, and 5) the weakening of the party of the "Old". Paolo Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, chapter 7.

¹³⁰ Michèle Escamilla, "Antonio Rincón".

capitals and proved itself costly for the Emperor's image and reputation in the international arena.

These were episodes of exceptional importance, but there were other minor issues that created tensions in the international scene. One recurring problem was related to the secrecy of correspondence and couriers' right of safe-passage, both of which were often overlooked by counter-intelligence mechanisms. For instance, a diplomatic incident occurred in 1589 between the Papal authorities and the Habsburg ambassador in Rome, the Count of Olivares. First the Pope ordered that the Habsburg correspondence arriving from Milan be first brought to the house of a Papal "governor" where the bags would not be opened. Then when one day, the Habsburg *correo mayor* in the city failed to show up to take the bags, the authorities opened them to take letters that were written to the Papal authorities. Then, the Papal *maestro de postas* distributed the rest of the letters instead of the Habsburg *correo mayor*. The Habsburg ambassador responded to this transgression by immediately requesting an audience with the Holy Father.¹³¹ As states regulated their own postal system, they also claimed the monopoly of all correspondence that passed from their possessions. Starting from 1601, the Valois, for instance, forced the Habsburgs to submit their correspondence to French couriers in Lyon and Bordeaux. These French couriers would carry Habsburg correspondence within the French territory to finally submit either to the Habsburg ambassador in Paris or to other Habsburg couriers outside of France, in Italy and Low Countries. Even though these couriers should not keep the correspondence for more than one day, transgressions were many as Alain Hugon so well put into a graphic.¹³² Such problems damaged the Habsburg-Valois relations, but the casual relationship was two sided. As the relations between the two powers deteriorated, the French used their central position between the Habsburg center and the

¹³¹ AGS, E 1540, fol. 34 (11 July 1589), 36 (22 July 1589), 37 (29 July 1589) and 39 (12 August 1589).

¹³² Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 24, Graphic 1.

provinces, in order to wage a “war of couriers” and violated the secrecy of the Habsburg correspondence without hesitation.¹³³

There were clear violations of couriers’ right of safe-passage. In 1553, for instance, the Duke of Mirandola’s men stopped a Habsburg courier, confiscated the letters he was carrying and took them to their lord. When the Duke refused to restitute the letters to the courier, the latter did not give up and protested to the Duke of Ferrara of the maltreatment he suffered in the latter’s possessions. The Duke of Ferrara first refused responsibility on the ground that the transgressors were not his vassals. However, when the courier outwitted him by presenting detailed information (their names, origins, the names of their relatives) about the soldiers that robbed him and even gained the upper hand by asking where all the victuals and gunpowder were being transferred to (a courier was also a spy), the Duke had to relent. Threatened with the wrath of Charles V, he caught the transgressors (cowboys in soldiers’ disguise) and restituted his goods even though he failed to recover the letters.¹³⁴ Similar incidents came more frequently from the hands of the Ottoman authorities. The employment of local couriers who were Ottoman subjects by foreign powers created a legal problem and a political opportunity for the Ottomans who wanted to use the occasion to hamper the correspondence of other states and control the flow of information in their possessions better. They frequently complained to the Venetians who chose their couriers from among the Ottoman subjects since the Byzantine times, especially from two regions in Montenegro, Katun and Ljubotin.¹³⁵ That this created a problem over the political status of these couriers, Ottoman subjects under Constantinople’s jurisdiction, and justified the Ottoman intervention is evident from the discrepancy between the attitude of the Austrian ambassador in claiming the detained letters and the fate of two detained couriers in two different cases. In 1580, the

¹³³ Ibid., 22-7.

¹³⁴ AGS, *E* 1045, fol. 101.

¹³⁵ Eric R. Dursteler, “Power and Information: The Venetian Postal System in the Early Modern Mediterranean”, in *From Florence to the Mediterranean: Studies in Honor of Anthony Molho*, eds. Diogo Curto, Eric Dursteler, Jules Kirshner and Francesca Trivellato (Florence: Olschki, 2009), 611.

Austrian ambassador refused responsibility when *un turco di nazione unghera*, a Muslim and an Ottoman subject, was caught with letters addressed to the Emperor and the Ottomans sent the courier to galleys.¹³⁶ A couple of days later, however, upon the capture of another courier with similar letters, the ambassador took a different approach and demanded the restitution of his letters and the return of the courier; a request which the Ottomans, after an initial resistance, had to fulfill.¹³⁷ Galley was not the only form of punishment that awaited Ottoman couriers under foreign employ. In 1582, a Muslim courier from Macedonia was hung, accused of spying.¹³⁸ In 1584, the Ottomans detected that the Venetians employed fifty or sixty Ottoman subjects from the Karadağ village in the district of Iskenderiye (Shkodër) as couriers. They were to be thrown into prison while the letters they carried were to be sent to Constantinople.¹³⁹ In 1605, the governor of the afore-mentioned district had several Venetian couriers stopped and beaten, and their mail sacks thrown into the river.¹⁴⁰ All these transgressions had little diplomatic echo than was due them because of the unequal relationship of power between the Ottoman Empire on the hand and Venice and Vienna on the other.

One state's secret service could create an international crisis for another state that hosted its activities. In the context of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, two city-states, Ragusa and Venice, that were stuck between two mighty empires, unwilling to break with neither and eager to maintain the friendship of both, were occasional victims of Constantinople's wrath because they harbored Habsburg spies. I will return to this subject later; suffice it to say that the Ottomans' threatening tone was an important component of their counter-intelligence

¹³⁶ Being sent to galleys was a form of punishment. Slaves and convicts were one major source of rowers in the 16th century.

¹³⁷ AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 15 (30 June 1580).

¹³⁸ Dursteler, "Power and Information", 609.

¹³⁹ BOA, *MD*, LV, no. 166 (H. 21 Z 992, A.D. 24 December 1584).

¹⁴⁰ Dursteler, "Power and Information", 610.

mechanism. It was sometimes enough to convince the authorities to give in and dismiss Habsburg agents from their possessions.

Interestingly, there were instances where secret services sought using the means of diplomacy in order to recover their spies that were detained. For instance, the Ottomans tried to have one of their agents, a certain Mahmud from Castelnuovo, released from Venetian prisons. The Venetians, however, were aware of the true nature of this enemy of religion who not only committed the most enormous crimes, homicides and assassinations, but also organized a plot against the Venetian city of Cattaro.¹⁴¹ The Ottomans were obviously trying to recover one of their key spies. Unfortunately for Mahmud, things were different in the Mediterranean borderlands and we are still far from the friendly environment for espionage in Flanders where secret services exchanged spies that they caught.

2.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I tried to delineate the relationship between information and politics in an effort to fill a gap in the relevant historiography and make a meaningful contribution. Most studies on early modern espionage bothered little with how information was analyzed by central governments and what kind of an effect it had on decision-making processes.

Firstly, I have argued that states needed and used information on a number of different levels of decision-making according to which the content and type of the information varied. What is constant is the central role the information played on all these levels. Any study that concentrates on any of these levels (strategy formulation, policy making and warfare) needs to focus on the information available to decision-makers and to analyze how these perceived the available information. States with better intelligence mechanisms benefitted from the intelligence edge by better allocating their sources and more efficiently reacting to threats and

¹⁴¹ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 83v-83r (15 February 1575, m.v.), 84v-85r (17 February 1575, m.v.), 85v-86v (22 February 1575, m.v.).

opportunities. In short, intelligence was decisive in the imperial rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, a fact that both empires were aware of.

I made a critique of the current historiography of imperial strategies and introduced a rather alternative method for further studies in the field. In what perhaps could be seen as a historian's attempt to reclaim the field for historians, I criticized that these studies put forward a constant set of preferences and allowed little room for change while explaining the decades- or centuries-long history of otherwise very complex processes of strategy formulation which should only be scrutinized by a close reading of primary sources. In an effort to overcome the teleological assumptions that equate military result with political intention, I have argued that the decision-making process should be deconstructed in accordance with primary sources. It should be reconsidered as a result of a dual process of information analysis and factional politics and by taking into account the ensuing impediments in front of the objective assessment of the incoming information and the optimal political action. I concluded that an objective analysis will suffer not only from misperceptions, prejudices, paranoia and dis-/misinformation, but also from factional politics and the corporate interests that overcame those of the state. I then explored how information was used in the making of policies of more momentary nature as well as of military decisions and tried to demonstrate the importance of information by providing examples whereby its neglect or mishandling resulted in devastating consequences.

Secondly, I have tried to show that certain developments became the catalyst of the institutionalization of secret diplomacy and its incorporation into the central administration in the 16th century. Developments such as improvements in cryptography, steganography and the introduction of regular state-run postal systems increased the quality of information and the efficiency of intelligence operations. All these should be seen as a part of the state building

process and were direct results of larger historical processes of bureaucratization and centralization.

Finally, I concluded the chapter by revealing the complex relation between the secret and open diplomacy. The agents of the latter, the diplomats, were also entrusted with the task of engaging in espionage, i.e., secret diplomacy. As will also be discussed in the following chapters, they recruited spies, informants, saboteurs and even plotted against the very government that hosted them. When discovered, such activities seriously jeopardized the relations between two powers as well as the implicated diplomats' position in a hostile capital. Furthermore, other issues such as assassinations, hosting enemy spies, the violation of the secrecy of correspondence and of couriers' right of passage created full scale international crises as well.

The world of espionage was a seller's market; it was hard for governments to neglect secret diplomacy. They had to gather information in order to shape their decision-making process better and engage in clandestine operations in order to debilitate their enemy. Thanks to these central governments' patronage and financial backing, opportunist and entrepreneur agents thrived in their business and held, at least most of the time, the upper hand in their negotiations with their employers. The next chapter is their story.

CHAPTER THREE

SPIES AND ESPIONAGE AS A PROFESSION

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will engage in a sociological study of spies who operated in the 16th century Mediterranean. The 16th century espionage was an industry whose agents, seeking material benefits, most of the time did not have particular regional, communal or dynastical allegiances. Therefore, a differentiation has to be made between secret services that central governments established and spies that they employed. Spies were not mere extensions of the administrative and military apparati of central governments, even when they operated under their scrutiny and protection. As these information traders were more than eager to share their loyalties among the bidders, several of them were, while many others were suspected to be, double, triple or even quadruple agents. In a spirit of entrepreneurship, these go-betweens took advantage of their privileged position in between different cultures and civilizations while negotiating with state officials and maneuvering between central governments in an effort to raise their profits. The fact that the Habsburg/Papal agent Rinaldi, who was saved from the Ottoman prison with the money provided by English ambassador, still complained that he was left alone by the Habsburgs as well as the French and the Venetian ambassadors demonstrate the number of allegiances a spy might have.¹

Spies came from similar social, educational and professional backgrounds. They followed similar tactics and faced similar opportunities, rewards and dangers. Therefore,

¹ ASV, *IS*, b. 416, 24 January 1607, 3 March 1608.

it would be more accurate to study spies in the Mediterranean borderlands by concentrating on the afore-mentioned common traits, regardless of governments that employed them, be it Ottoman, Habsburg or Venetian. In short, this chapter aims to study the extra-state aspects of the early modern espionage and delineate the common characteristics observed in spies' backgrounds, demands, actions and operations.

First, I focus on the professional, social and cultural background of Mediterranean spies in an effort to situate them among a larger group of people, the crossers of civilizational boundaries which historians long labeled as go-betweens. Secondly, I focus on other specialists of secret diplomacy who led and operated intelligence networks in different capacities during several stages of intelligence operations. Thirdly, I delineate the prerequisite skills that early modern espionage required such as linguistic and educational skills. Then I concentrate on the reasons that motivated these spies to participate in secret diplomacy, facing many hardships and perils and risking their lives. With a special emphasis on financial motivations of early modern espionage, I describe the diverse methods by which central governments rewarded their spies and thus demonstrate the entrepreneurial nature of early modern espionage. Finally, I demonstrate the importance of familial ties and of related networks for Mediterranean go-betweens and more specifically agents of secret diplomacy.

3.2. PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND OF SPIES

Early modern espionage was not a profession per se. As was the case with the profession of diplomacy in the 15th century,² the 16th century espionage did not have well-defined boundaries even though its agents developed an *ad-hoc* specialization in

² Paul M. Dover, "Economic Predicament of Italian Renaissance Ambassadors", *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008), 165.

unique techniques and methods such as cryptography, steganography and the use of special signs (*señal*). Different people from different social groups and occupations engaged in information brokering at one point in their lives for one or more parties interested in their services. In short, among the ranks of spy, there were men from diverse professional and social backgrounds who did not seem to have been content with restricting their activity to spying. It was the age of spy-cum-diplomats, ransom agents, merchants, clerics, corsairs, engineers, etc.

One reason for this multiplicity of professions should be the unreliability and irregularity of payments. For most, spying was a means to an end, to extract money, *sacar dinero*, and to enjoy royal favours in exchange for the services that the agents provided or pretended to have provided. Still, even for those who had other motives than money, economic hardship was a constant problem in the 16th century, especially given the deep fiscal crises which central governments, especially that of the Habsburgs, found themselves in. In the long run, financial remunerations were simply not enough to sustain one's self and make ends meet without engaging in another profession. A second reason was the need to disguise one's self with another profession in order to justify his presence where the information was gathered. In the borderlands of the early modern Mediterranean, one needed a good alibi to travel.

Certain professions seemed to have created a favorable environment in which one could establish social networks and political connections, as well as easily cross the political borders and so-called civilizational barriers that supposedly separated the two halves of the Mediterranean.

3.2.1. Merchants

Since they frequently travelled between the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean, merchants were ideal candidates for recruitment. Frontiers that were otherwise closed were open to them, even during the time of the war, guaranteed by the insatiable appetite of the ruling elites for their goods. They did not hesitate to cash this advantage in by offering their services to secret services. In some cases, spies travelled in merchant's disguise by either joining a caravan or embarking on a ship to be able to easily reach their final destination. Central governments even gave some of these spy-cum-merchants additional money so that they can buy goods.³ More frequently though, one encounters information provided by merchants who, thanks to their trade networks, not only familiarized with local elites, but also eavesdropped on rumors and news on the streets and in the marketplace, *vox populi*.⁴ Some of these became seasoned spies and directly engaged in building up intelligence networks, as was the case with the leader of the Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople, Aurelio Santa Croce. Some even engaged in diplomacy such as the Persian Hüseyin who contacted the Venetian bailo in Constantinople and offered his services as an intermediary between the *Serenissima* and the Safavid Shah.⁵ Trade networks established between cities can also be used for gathering information. Prominent merchant houses/partnerships who engaged in long-distance trade had to be aware of political developments abroad. Their partners, correspondents and agents informed them regularly so that these merchants could safely

³ AGS, E 1399, fols. 8-9 (30 January 1570) mention the authorization of the payment of 200 *escudos* to buy merchandise for a ship captain destined for a mission in North Africa, so that he could go there in disguise, or as it was said in 16th century Spanish, under the “color” of a merchant. Furthermore, according to BOA, MD, III, no. 1457 (H. 22 Za. 967/A.D. 14 August 1560), the Ottomans sent to Venice, a spy in merchant disguise who on his return visited *Peç* as well, where the Emperor Ferdinand was and therefore which should be another city than the Ottoman Pécs.

⁴ This expression is first used in this context by Prof. Emilio Sola.

⁵ ASV, CCX-LettAmb, b. 5, fols. 81 (7 May 1579) and 95 (1 October 1579).

invest their capital and “better govern” their business.⁶ These prominent merchants conveniently shared valuable information with central governments, as proven by the fact that this information exchange worried the authorities who would not have otherwise produced such an impressive amount of documentation on these merchant’s activities.

The importance of these merchants’ services for information gathering was such that it convinced Hans Kissling to argue, not so much unjustifiably, that a mercantile state, such as Venice, which relied on the intelligence provided by their large colonies in trade centers along the Mediterranean, had an advantage over other types of states (the non-mercantile state and the military state, *Stato di Guerriglia*) that had to rely only on information provided by their agents. The former enjoyed the cooperation of her citizens who, in accordance with their own interest, provided a more diverse pool of information, while the latter two had to rely on salaried agents, dispatched for specific missions and could only provide occasional information and build a “dead” network.⁷

Merchants not only provided both empires with information, but also helped the transmission of news as well as the transfer of money for central governments by generously offering their services, obviously always in exchange for some benefit. Their contribution proved significant especially within the context of war of information between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, given that the lack of open diplomatic relations and a reliable postal service hindered the transmission of news and transfer of money

⁶ ASV, *IS*, b. 433 (13 January 1585).

⁷ Hans J. Kissling, “Venezia come Centro di Informazioni sui Turchi”, in *Venezia Centro di Mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente, secoli XV-XVI: Aspetti e problemi*, eds. Hans Georg Beck et al. (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1977), vol. I, 98-9. A similar argument could be made for the Ragusans who relied on several Ragusans living throughout Europe and the Ottoman Empire to gather information. See. I. Mitich (in Croat), “Consuls and the Consul Service of the Old Dubrovnik,” *JAZU*, 1973.

between Ottoman and Habsburg cities in many respects, compared to those, say between Habsburg and French, or Ottoman and Venetian cities.

3.2.2. Ransom agents

A second profession, which could as well be categorized under that of merchants, is the ransom negotiator/agent. In the early modern world where slavery was common, these agents negotiated the payment of ransoms on the one hand, and secured the liberation and transfer of the slaves/prisoners-of-war back to their homeland, on the other. Thanks to their profession, they were as mobile as merchants, but with an extra advantage. Since only the families of rich slaves could offer ransom money, these ransom agents got into contact and familiarized themselves with the political elite, who spared for themselves the *crème de la crème* of captured slaves. Therefore, they gathered information from different parts during their journey back and forth. They could also contact local officers easily without arousing too much suspicion, and consequently, brokered information and engaged in other clandestine operations, one example being Scipion Ansalon whom the Viceroy of Sicily sent to Tripolis to negotiate the defection of prominent Ottoman officials.⁸ Needless to say, resident spies used their established connections to ransom prisoners-of-war, proven by the efforts of the Habsburg network in Constantinople, following the capture of several prominent Habsburg officials when la Goleta fell to the Ottomans in 1574.⁹ Other prominent ransom agents who engaged in espionage were Bartolomeo Brutti, who negotiated the exchange of prominent Ottoman slaves that had fallen captive to the Christians at the Battle of Lepanto for those whom

⁸ AGS, *E* 1144, fol. 137 (3 December 1575); *E* 1147, fol. 10 (28 February 1577).

⁹ AGS, *E* 1066, fols. 16 (1 April 1575) and 123 (24 February 1575).

the Ottoman captured when they conquered la Goleta,¹⁰ Gulliermo de Saboya, who negotiated the ransom of a number of Habsburg elites in Constantinople,¹¹ Antonio Avellan,¹² Agustin Manuel,¹³ Giovanni Barelli,¹⁴ Hieronimo Paronda,¹⁵ and finally the Habsburg network leader in Chios, Nicolò Giustinian.¹⁶

3.2.3. Clergy

An impressive number of clerics directly participated in information gathering by using their privileges in the employ of secular sovereigns, surprisingly sometimes including those of a different religion.

Traveling disguised as a monk or a pilgrim provided a good excuse to travel. A French spy, who came to Malta in 1602, *en abito de peregrine*, in order to spy on the military forces of the island, was caught and tortured to death.¹⁷ It was not only the Christians who used the disguise of a pilgrim. In 1570, having been sued by a number of Jews with whom he did business in Thessalonica, a priest confessed in front of the Ottoman *kadı* to be an Ottoman spy named Mustafa who was going to Corfu for spying.¹⁸ A prince from the dethroned Hafsid family, the *infante* of Tunisia, went in the winter of 1581 to his motherland, disguised as a pilgrim and accompanied by the Habsburg agent Augustin Manuel, in order to start a rebellion against the Ottomans who dispossessed his family.¹⁹

¹⁰ AGS, *E* 1066, fol. 123 (24 February 1575). ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 4, cc. 101r-101v (18 March 1575).

¹¹ AGS, *E* K 1675, fol. 141 (18 and 19 April 1592).

¹² AGS, *E* 1144, fol. 282.

¹³ AGS, *E* 1152, fol. 83 (15 August 1582). ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 6, fols. 67-69 (3 February 1581).

¹⁴ AGS, *E* 1337, fol. 66.

¹⁵ ASV, *IS*, b. 460, 5 September 1606.

¹⁶ AGS, *E* 1127, fol. 88 (3 October and 2 December 1562).

¹⁷ AGS, *E* 1160, fol. 150.

¹⁸ BOA, *MD IX*, no. 59.

¹⁹ AGS, *E* 1151, fol. 145 (5 October 1581). Also see. fol. 306.

Apart from the secular spies traveling in monk disguise, there were also real monks who participated in espionage. In 1553, a friar of St. Francis travelled all around Naples and spied for the French.²⁰ The Habsburg authorities encouraged the Catholic monks who wanted to go to the Ottoman Empire for pilgrimage²¹ and even directly recruited some, such as a Father Felice Torre who was given his cipher before he took off for Constantinople in 1582.²² In Galata, the Latin quarter of Constantinople, there was a Franciscan community who not only ransomed Christian slaves,²³ but also engaged in espionage by sending information to the Habsburgs,²⁴ as well as facilitating the Christian slaves' escape attempts and the transmission of news to Naples. The Ottomans detected their services for Habsburg secret diplomacy and prosecuted them harshly.²⁵ Also several monks, who travelled to the Ottoman North Africa, generally for ransoming Christian slaves, at times provided interesting intelligence reports. For instance, a cleric named Francisco Nuñez befriended, by means of lavish banquets, important political figures among the "wine-friendly Turks", *turcos de vino*, including the Governor-General himself. Moreover, he managed to send valuable information regarding the fortifications of Algiers which he extracted from the renegades working there, at such a critical time in 1572-3, in the aftermath of the Christian victory at Lepanto when an attack on the city was a realistic possibility. After 20 years in Algiers, his network was so vast that he even gained the confidence of governors' (*alcayde*) wives who narrated their dreams for him to interpret them.²⁶

²⁰ AGS, E 1121, fol. 122.

²¹ AGS, E 1525, fol. 23; E 1526, fol. 10 (8 September 1582).

²² AGS, E 1526, fol. 202, 31 October 1582.

²³ AGS, E 1144, fol. 211.

²⁴ AGS, E 1120, fol. 242, 23 March 1552; 1928, fol. 85 (30 January 1603).

²⁵ AGS, E 1060, fol. 140 (5 May and 15 June 1571).

²⁶ AGS, E 487, Francisco Nuñez.

The quality of information that a cleric could have provided and the efficiency of their participation in clandestine operations such as assassination could not be as blatant as it is in the following example where a number of clergy were employed by different secret services (Habsburg, Ottoman) for different purposes (intelligence, counter-intelligence, assassination). In 1622, a certain Friar Angelo decided to go to the Levant after continuing his studies in Pavia and befriended a Venetian merchant named Giovanni Antonio Poleni with whom he travelled to Spalato and Sarai. In the former, he met the merchant's brother Pietro who was both a Venetian and an Ottoman spy. In Sarai, he encountered a Spanish preacher belonging to the Order of the Holy Trinity, using the *alias* Mehmed Bey, who was a double agent as well, working for both the Viceroy of Naples and the Ottomans. Mehmed Bey asked him too many questions on his natal land Sicily and its Viceroy, Prince Emmanuel Filibert of Savoy, whose assassination the Ottoman Sultan commissioned to Mehmed Bey. The story got more interesting when on his way back Friar Angelo encountered in the port of Palermo one of Mehmed Bey's companions, also a priest of the same order, and another Venetian which he had seen before in Pietro Poleni's house in Spalato. Realizing the danger of being detected, these offered money to the friar in return for his silence and asked him questions regarding the island as well as when the Viceroy will be returning to Palermo. Friar Angelo countered their move by asking where they would stay, a question which these veteran spies naturally did not answer correctly. Having eventually lost track of the two spy-cum-assassins, he contacted the authorities, accentuating the miserable condition of the Habsburg counter-intelligence and the fact that Sicily was full of enemy spies. He furthermore offered to go to Venice and contact Giovanni Angelo Poleni in order to learn

the names of Ottoman spies who operated in Sicily. The viceroy answered that it was enough to write to Poleni with some other pretext in order to learn more about the issue.²⁷

High level clerics in key positions could also participate in information gathering, at least as employers, such as the Milanese born pro-French archbishop of Ragusa, Filippo Trivulzio who furnished both Paris and Constantinople with information. He did more than sending information he overheard; he actively contributed to the French and the Ottoman counter-intelligence as well. In July 1537, for instance, he had the Venetian courier that carried letters to Kotor robbed. He then sent the letters to the French ambassador in Constantinople to be deciphered and transmitted to the Ottomans.²⁸ His example should be the reason why the Habsburg network leader Jerónimo Bucchia argued the benefits of having a native pro-Habsburg archbishop in Ragusa for the Habsburg intelligence network two decades later.²⁹ Another good example is Zaccaria Delphino, the Bishop of Lesina and the papal nuncio to Vienna, who set up an intelligence network in Constantinople that provided the Emperor Ferdinand I with information.³⁰ Finally, the Roman/Greek Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople provided the Venetian bailo with information regarding the Ottoman campaigns in the East, a crucial information coming from a region otherwise inaccessible to the Venetian secret service.³¹

²⁷ AGS, *E* 1894, fols. 94 (21 October 1622), 95 (20 October 1622) and 96 (20 October 1622).

²⁸ J. Tadić, *Španija I Dubrovnik*, (Belgrade: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, 1932), 60-2, quoted by Robin Harris, *Dubrovnik. A History* (London: Saqi Books, 2003), 111. AGS, *E* 1028, fol. 23 (20 April 1538); *E* 1311, fols. 83-5 (19 March 1534).

²⁹ With the patronage of this pro-Habsburg archbishop, it would be easier to gather information about the Ottoman Empire and transmit those to Naples with no extra cost. Unlike the current archbishop, Giovanni Angelo de' Medici, he would know the language and the customs of the region and reside in his See where he would have extensive connections. See. BNE, *Correspondencia del Cardenal Granvela*, ms. 7905/174, ff. 2v-4r. Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 94-7.

³⁰ Lesure, "Michel Černović, 127-154.

³¹ AGS, *E* 1078, fol. 29 (14 April 1579).

It was not only the Christian princes who used men of religion as spies. Apart from the afore-mentioned Mehmed Bey and the men he sent to Sicily for the assassination of the Viceroy, I found two interesting examples. In the first, the Archbishop of Thessalonica, Macharius Chiensis,³² contacted the Habsburg authorities when he came to attend to the Council of Trent in 1551³³ and offered his help in a number of implausible anti-Ottoman plots.³⁴ The Habsburgs later realized that he was an Ottoman spy who used the excuse of such negotiations to come to the court of Charles V in Germany.³⁵ It made perfect sense for the Ottomans to send him as a spy. Who else could have travelled in Christian Europe easier than a Christian, albeit Orthodox, archbishop? What better excuse could there be than to attend to the Council of Trent in order to travel in Christian lands? In the second example, it was this time a certain Scipione, a hermit from Mallorca who became Muslim and migrated to Algiers, was reported to be contemplating to come to Rome to talk with the Muslim prisoners there and *far la spia*.³⁶

When it comes to Muslim clergy, the Ottomans could not use them given the difficulties with which a Muslim would travel in Europe. This, nevertheless, did not mean that the Ottomans categorically refused to employ them; a quick look at the Ottoman-

³² Original documents mention him as the Bishop of Heraclea; however, he should be the Archbishop of Thessalonica. Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 40.

³³ He could not attend the Council, because the Catholic clergy insisted on an express profession of the Catholic faith and obedience to Pope as a prerequisite.

³⁴ The Habsburgs tried to contact and support Prince Selim who, they calculated, would lose against his half-brother Mustafa in the struggle for the Ottoman throne. On the other hand, others who were fearful of Mustafa's ascension to the throne, such as Sinan Pasha (the Grand Admiral and the brother of the Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha), would join the alliance. The Habsburgs would thus have created division within the Ottoman Empire and conquered the Balkans. Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 37. Macario offered to contact Rüstem and Sinan and negotiate an alliance between Charles V and the Safavid Shah against the Ottomans.

³⁵ BNE, *Correspondencia del Cardenal Granvela*, ms. 7905/189 8r, quoted by Masiá *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 168.

³⁶ AV, *Principi*, no. 37, f. 204.

Safavid border would present several occasions where men of religion were engaged in secret diplomacy for both empires.

Spies needed safe lodgings during their perilous travels and some tried to solve this problem by staying in monasteries; this was what Martin de Acuña did while travelling in the Ottoman Balkans.³⁷ This practice increased the importance of news that monks sent. For instance, a Franciscan friar in a monastery in Zante, Pedro de Sanct Pedro, informed the viceroy of Sicily about the intentions harboured by spies sent to Constantinople by the Prince of Salerno, an ally of the French, and by extension the Ottomans. He managed to familiarize with them during their visit in the monastery and discovered a plot to help an Ottoman attempt to conquer the city of Naples.³⁸

In their quality as confessors, clerics had access to important information. A Franciscan friar Arcangelo, living in the Ottoman Empire for 18 years, 8 of which he spent as a slave, managed to establish good relations with the French ambassador who invited him to recite mass in his house. He used this acquaintance to inform the Habsburgs about French and Ottoman plans against Malta and Genoa which he heard during one of his regular visits to the ambassador's house. He also mentioned a renegade from Messina who told him during a confession that he heard Turgud and Salih Re'is, prominent Ottoman corsairs, discussed with Sinan Pasha, the Ottoman Grand-Admiral, which military tactics to apply while attacking the castle of Trapani.³⁹

3.2.4. Engineers and Soldiers

When it comes to gathering information about a military target, states relied on the expertise of soldiers, and even better, military engineers who could observe the

³⁷ AGS, *E* 1074, fol. 108 (5 March 1577).

³⁸ AGS, *E* 1121, fols. 105-6, 111-2 (25 March 1553).

³⁹ AGS, *E* 1120, fol. 242 (23 March 1552).

enemy defenses and compile a report to inform the authorities on the weaknesses to be exploited and military strategies to be applied in case of an expedition.

These spy-cum-engineers traveled around and observed enemy fortifications. Juan Sebastian, upon having been detained as an Ottoman spy by the Habsburg in Castille in 1577, confessed that he was an engineer, *matematico*, and an expert on fortifications. He was in Venice in 1575 where he spied on Venetian fortifications for the Ottomans. The cunning Habsburg ambassador grew suspicious of his activities and tried to have him captured; however, Don Sebastian, as he was known in Venice, fled the city for Padua and vanished, only to be later captured in Castile.⁴⁰ In 1573, Sokollu sent a number of spies to Corfu to pass to Puglia, one of which was a military engineer destined for Messina. He had previously gone to Corfu in 1572 to investigate the fortifications of possibly the next Ottoman target.⁴¹

The Habsburgs used the services of military experts as well. In 1547, a captain Polidoro Corso offered to enter the city of Algiers and measure inch by inch, *paso por paso*, the city's "disposition and inner and outer fortress".⁴² In 1574, the Duke of Terranova accepted the offers of two *bombardieri* to go to Constantinople and torch the Ottoman Arsenal because, thought he, their quality would be apt for such a task.⁴³ Pantoleo Carrago whom the Duke of Maqueda sent to the Levant in 1602, gave detailed information on a number of Ottoman fortifications: the number of soldiers, the height as well as the size of the city walls, the number of artilleries, etc.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ AGS, *E* 1336, fol. 132 (18 March 1577).

⁴¹ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 100.

⁴² AGS, *E* 1497, Libro E 79, fols. 8 (12 June 1547), 13 (26 July 1547) and 18 (23 August 1547).

⁴³ AGS, *E* 1141, fol. 11 (25 February 1574).

⁴⁴ AGS, *E* 1160, fol. 100 (21 May 1602).

Some of these soldiers had acquaintances with their colleagues in their target city from whom they gathered first-hand information. Pantoleo Carrago, for instance, learned from the janissaries of Constantinople, that the Sultan was determined to lead the army to Hungary in person. The afore-mentioned engineer, who was sent to Corfu to investigate on Venetian defenses by Sokollu in 1572, had dined with the Venetian *provveditore* Marco Querini. The *provveditore* even invited him to his galley on several occasions. This friendship would be costly for our engineer. Next year, when he was dispatched on a mission to Messina, he could not pass through Corfu, fearful of being recognized by Querini who was on the island at the time.

Both empires tried to establish contacts with each other's soldiers and sailors. The Habsburgs managed to penetrate into the Ottoman navy and Arsenal which included several renegades on every level: high-ranking officials, ship captains, experts in the Imperial Arsenal, sailors, slave rowers, etc. These wrote a plethora of letters and reports which included crucial information about the Ottoman Empire, first and foremost of all, regarding the military preparations and the destination of the Ottoman navy. Given that Ottoman centers such as Constantinople and Algiers were full with renegades, the Christian powers had a natural advantage over the Ottomans whose efforts of recruiting spies from among the enemy soldiers and sailors produced more mediocre results.

3.2.5. Corsairs

In spite of a tendency towards centralization, bureaucratization and standardization, states in the 16th century still frequently employed irregular forces in their military apparatus, especially in the borderlands. Ottoman *gazis* that were the main actors of Ottoman conquest in the Balkans in the 14th and 15th century survived, albeit

with less political relevance, through our time period, while the adventurers and soldiers of the *Reconquista* found themselves a new frontier in Americas, rich with opportunities of plunder and away from the oppression and control of the center. The irregular forces of the Mediterranean were corsairs who not only ruled the sea by intercepting its traffic and ravaging its coast with regular raids (*razzia*), but also managed to accomplish something which their colleagues in the Balkans and Americas failed to do. They developed independent political bodies and preserved their autonomy even when they were operating under the aegis of empires, North African corsairs under that of the Ottomans and the Knights of St. John and the Uskoks under that of the Habsburgs. In short, corsairs and *corso* were the major force in the Mediterranean warfare. In spite of historians' interest in the "Great War", the struggle between colossal empires and significant military clashes such as Djerba and Lepanto,⁴⁵ "little wars" prevailed and claimed the Mediterranean. States, aware of these factors, eagerly accepted these corsair states as their vassals.

Much more importantly for our study, both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans relied on these corsairs' expertise in navigation and their knowledge of the enemy shores by sending them on reconnaissance missions. This was by no means a trivial task. Time and time again, corsairs' contribution proved useful thanks to their swiftness and precision. One other advantage was that these corsairs were content with the letter of marque that provided them with authorization for their *corso* and did not demand

⁴⁵ John Guilmartin aptly demonstrated the inapplicability of Mahan Thesis, which was developed for naval warfare in the Atlantic Ocean, on the Mediterranean galley warfare. He thus relegated decisive naval battles to a position of secondary importance in the 16th-century Mediterranean world where logistics determined the fate of military expeditions. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys*. This increased the importance of corsair warfare waged by small and highly mobile corsair ships that needed few men and thus suffered less from logistical limitations.

financial remunerations from the state in return for their intelligence activities apart from any stipend or fief that was assigned to them because of other offices they simultaneously held.

At least in the Ottoman case, corsairs enjoyed extensive relations on the other side of the frontier. Some of these corsairs were landless peasants who fled the rigid seigneurial order⁴⁶ of the poor and overpopulated Western Mediterranean islands such as Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily which, colonized from the continent, were already facing economic difficulties because of the imposed export agriculture.⁴⁷ Attracted by the opportunities of *corso*, these changed their religion, and made themselves “Turk” (*farsi turco*) and became renegades or, as contemporaries would say, “Turk by profession”, *turco de profesión*. These renegades, therefore, could rely on their familial ties and acquaintances in their homeland which they had not so long ago left, and therefore with whose language, culture and customs they were familiar. For instance, in 1570, corsairs learned that the Christian navy was about to set sail to meet the Ottoman navy from a relative of the Ottoman Grand Admiral Uluç Ali in Calabria.⁴⁸ Sometimes, they even recruited spies among their relatives and compatriots, such was the case, at least, with Hasan Veneziano who brought his cousin Livio Celeste from Venice and recruited him as a spy.⁴⁹

It was not only the Ottomans who were aware of these renegades’ ties with Christian Europe. The Habsburgs tried to capitalize on their personal background by offering them to come back to their old faith and obedience to their legal monarch, the

⁴⁶ Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 99-200.

⁴⁷ Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, vol. I, 139-46.

⁴⁸ Valente, *Vita di Occhiali*, 121-5.

⁴⁹ Fabris, “Hasan ‘il Veneziano’”, 51-66.

Habsburg king, against whom they ironically waged a so-called *gaza*, the “holy war” in the name of Islam. Well documented examples of such negotiations are those with the Ottoman Grand Admirals Hayreddin (1534-46), a born Muslim from the island of Mytilene to a Greek Orthodox mother and a renegade father,⁵⁰ Uluç Ali (1571-87), a Christian fisherman from Le Castelle in Calabria,⁵¹ Hasan Veneziano (1588-1591), a Venetian and a childhood friend of the bailo in Constantinople⁵² and finally the Governor of Algeria Hasan Ağa (1535-1544) from Sardinia.⁵³ The Habsburgs did not limit such offers to high-ranking corsairs; it is just that they produced more documentation for those lengthy negotiations with more promising political and strategic benefits. Still, middle-ranking corsairs, such as Kara Mustafa, resentful of having been dismissed from the governorship of Mitylene, also participated in similar negotiations.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the Habsburgs successfully penetrated to Uluç Ali’s household and managed to recruit some of his men as spies. Regular report that especially Sinan (Juan Briones) and Haydar the English (Robert Drever) sent to Naples and Sicily contained invaluable information about the military preparations in the Arsenal, conditions of the navy and the target of the forthcoming Ottoman expedition.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ AGS, *E* 1027, fol. 13; *E* 1031 fols. 26, 58, 98 and 99; *E* 1033, fol. 160; *E* 1372, fols. 57, 60, 64, 66, 73 and 84, (1539); *E* 1373 fols. 15, 18, 19, 20, 28, 30, 41, 42, 85, 88, 117, 118, 119, 151, 156, 160, 165, 176, 178, 181, 187 and 226 (1540); *E* 1376, fol. 34 (1543-4). See also *E* 1027, 1031, *E* 1033, *passim*. For a good summary of the negotiations between Charles V and Hayreddin, see Capasso, “Barbarossa e Carlo V”, *Rivista Storica Italiana* 49 (1932): 169-209.

⁵¹ AGS, *E* 1061, *passim* (1573), *E* 1400, fol. 34 (1570), *E* 1061; D. Luciano Serrano, *Correspondencia diplomática entre España y la Santa Sede durante el pontificado de S. Pio V* (Madrid: Imprenta del Instituto Pio X, 1914), vol. IV, 516-7.

⁵² AGS *E* 1417, fol. 41, 62 and 109 (1583). ASV, *SDC*, fil. 30, c. 38 (20 January 1590) quoted by Fabris, “Hasan ‘il Veneziano’”, 52, fn.5.

⁵³ AGS, *E* 1374, fol. 171, (1541). Also see. A. Berbrugger, “Négociations entre Hassan Agha et le comte d’Alcaudete, gouverneur d’Oran, 1541-1542”, *Revue Africaine* IX (1865): 379-385.

⁵⁴ AGS, *E* 1127, fols. 81 (4 October 1562), 87 (2 December 1562) and 88 (3 October and 2 December 1562).

⁵⁵ AGS, *E* 490, 17 October 1579, 18 October 1579, 22 October 1579; *E* 1080, fol. 51 (1579); *E* 1081, fols. 93 (7 June 1580) and 163 (14 November 1580). For another Habsburg spy Uluç Ali’s household, Pedro

A corsair was also an adventurer. There were instances where corsairs left their ships and operated as normal spies as well. The Viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Osuna, sent the corsair Jacques Pierre to Venice where he was executed by the authorities who discovered his involvement in the “Bedmar plot”.⁵⁶ Similarly, the Corphiote Pietro Lanza served the Viceroys of Naples for many years as a corsair and spy. After many years in service, he even offered, at a very old age, an interesting plan, worthy of the caliber of this seasoned corsair. He would go to Constantinople and engage in a number of clandestine operations including the assassination of the Ottoman Sultan with a fake present in whose lower part there would be explosives.⁵⁷

3.3. LEADING AND OPERATING A NETWORK

Intelligence networks required more than spies who gathered information on the field. Information had to be encrypted, protected, transmitted, decrypted and finally processed. Each of these different stages of intelligence operations required specialized personnel as well as special means in the disposal of state officers. States tried to train some of their officers to specialize in some of these functions while they also recruited non-official auxiliaries who helped the transmission of news, wages and the dispatch of spies. The two formed what García and Marcos called instrumental spies.⁵⁸

3.3.1. Spy-cum-diplomat

Several historians accentuate the importance of ambassadors in early modern espionage; one even labeled them “honorable spies”, *spie onorate*.⁵⁹ Enjoying the

Brea see. *E* 1338, fol. 72 (22 December 1580); *E* 1414, fol. 164 (18 November 1581); *E* 1538, fol. 286 (20 December 1585).

⁵⁶ Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 457.

⁵⁷ ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 19, fol. 81 (16 December 1608).

⁵⁸ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 81.

⁵⁹ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 197. The term was coined, however, by François de Callières, the writer and the diplomat of Ludovician France. *De la Manière de négocier avec les souverains* (Amsterdam: La

privileges granted by their diplomatic immunity, no matter how imperfectly states observed such status in the 16th century, ambassadors operated nothing short of a network leader; the best example of which would be the Venetian ambassadors in Constantinople and Rome or the Habsburg ambassador in Venice and Genoa. These not only eavesdropped in social circles, but also recruited spies, bribed officials, resorted to clandestine operations to kidnap or remove undesirable elements and thus engaged also in counter-intelligence. The ambassador was not only an information broker, but also a part of the information processing and by extension decision-making. He was an expert on the politics, institutions and customs of the capital in which he served. Therefore, central governments paid attention to his opinions and commentaries on the gathered information and relied on him to perceive the information within the greater context. Even though the non-permanent Ottoman representatives could not offer their services with the quality and efficiency of their Venetian and Habsburg counter-parts,⁶⁰ we still do know they used the occasion to gather as much information as possible.⁶¹

The weight of the ambassadorial correspondence as a source of information for central governments is evident from the calculations of Alain Hugon. The Habsburg resident ambassadors in Paris between 1598 and 1635 transmitted almost two thirds of information concerning France (%61.6) in spite of the small number of the embassy personnel that only constituted %7.1 of the entire personnel whose activities were related

compagnie, 1716), 30 : “We call an ambassador an honorable spy [*honorable espion*], because one of his primary responsibilities was to discover the secrets of the Courts where he was and he fails his duties if he does not make the necessary spending on those who could inform him.

⁶⁰ According to Graphique 3 in Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 123, there is an abyss between permanent ambassadors’ contribution to information gathering (%61.6 of all the information remitted to the capital) and those of extraordinary ambassadors who came with a specific mission and left the capital after a short visit (only %2.4). Also see p. 129.

⁶¹ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 98-9. Also see. Chapter Six.

to the Habsburg-Bourbon relations.⁶² This effective role in intelligence that the ambassadors played did not go unnoticed by the states which looked for a legitimate excuse to put pressure on and control their actions. Their effectiveness is also proven by the frequency and severity of international crises that plagued relations between states when one's ambassador was accused of spying in other's territory. The Habsburg ambassador Bernardino de Mendoza had to leave London in 1584 because he was implied in a plot to overthrow Elizabeth I.⁶³ Likewise, the French ambassador, Guillaume Pellicier, was dismissed from Venice in 1542 because he corrupted the secretaries of the Council of Ten and acquired from them the instructions given to the Venetian bailo for peace negotiations in Constantinople.⁶⁴ The Ottomans, always more merciless with foreign ambassadors, expelled the Venetian bailo Girolamo Marcello in 1492 because he was sending information to his government.⁶⁵ Some of these ambassadors also informed other governments, such as the Austrian ambassadors and Venetian baili in the Ottoman capital who occasionally provided Madrid and Naples with crucial information. Madrid even corrupted the Venetian bailo, Girolamo Lippomano, who paid the price of sending confidential information to the Habsburgs with his life; a Venetian civil servant should have known better what state secret meant.⁶⁶

In addition to setting up intelligence networks, ambassadors were also useful tools of counter-espionage; they were expected to eliminate undesirable elements such as spies,

⁶² See Graphique 2 and 3 in Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 122-123.

⁶³ Brun, *La Diplomacia de Felipe II*, 178.

⁶⁴ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 75.

⁶⁵ Longo, *Annali Veneti*, vol. I, 141-142.

⁶⁶ As soon as he saw Venice on the horizon, Lippomano committed suicide (if not assassinated, a less likely possibility) by jumping from the ship that brought him to face justice. P. Augusto Tormene, "Il Bailaggio a Costantinopoli di Girolamo Lippomano e la sua tragica fine", *Nuovo archivio veneto*, n.s. 3, t. 6 (1903): 375-431; n.s. 4, t. 7 (1904): 66-125, 288-333; t. 8 (1904): 127-161. On the concept of "state secret" and the severity of the Venetian Council of Ten and Inquisitors of the State in punishing those who betrayed state secrets, see: Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 55-74; Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 40-45.

informants and dangerous exiles. The role that the Habsburg ambassador to Venice, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza played in the infamous assassination of the French envoy to Constantinople, Antonio Rincon,⁶⁷ as well as the requests made by the Council of Ten to their *baili* to eliminate Venetian exiles in Constantinople⁶⁸ prove the central position of diplomatic representatives in central governments' counter-intelligence efforts abroad.⁶⁹

More interestingly, in our context, spies could be ambassadors as well. The diplomatic gap between Madrid and Constantinople were too big to be covered by the intermediaries such as the Venetians and the Austrians, and with the complicity of both sides, these spies appeared to be the closest thing to a representative, no matter the extent to which they lacked proper training or *decorum* required by diplomatic finesse and thus were subject to authorities' constant criticism and suspicions of ill-will. Relationship between the capitals as well as the elites of both empires was conducted thanks to the intermediary role of these semi-official representatives. The instigator of the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations in 1577 were Habsburg spies, Martin de Acuña and Aurelio Santa Croce, who improvised an offer of truce on behalf of Philip II in order to save their own skin. This was by no means an isolated incident where unofficial intermediaries dealt with diplomacy in the Ottoman capital, hinting that still the rules and institutions of

⁶⁷ Although Spanish, Rincon was a *Comunero* and a fervent enemy of his monarch, Charles V.

⁶⁸ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, c. 119v; Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 103.

⁶⁹ A good example of how important an ambassador was for the central government's counter-intelligence efforts could be found in the correspondence between the Venetian *Inquisitori di Stato* and the bailo in Constantinople. ASV, *IS*, b. 148, *Lettere ai baili ed ambasciatori Costantinopoli (1585-1688)* and b. 416, *Dispacci dai baili a Costantinopoli (1585-1630)*. Baili in Constantinople were, however, exceptional figures among the Venetian diplomats. They had the convenience to open the correspondence of diplomats and spies in the Ottoman capital, thanks to the Venetian monopoly of postal services between Constantinople and Europe until the French established one for themselves. For a good example of how the Venetian bailo guessed the author of a letter he opened from the characters in the letter, see the document dated 28 October 1617 in b. 416.

diplomacy allowed exceptions. In 1539, the Ottoman translator-cum-diplomat⁷⁰ Yunus Bey tried to use a friend from his native Modon, Antonio de Modone, who came to Adrianopolis to ransom some of his family members. Yunus advised him to tell the Venetians that they could send an ambassador to ask for a truce.⁷¹ In 1559, it was the merchant-cum-spy Francesco de Franchis who carried a similar message from the Ottomans for the Habsburgs.⁷² In a similar fashion, there were rumors that the Ottomans entrusted the Habsburg spy Michel Černović with the task to instigate truce negotiations with Philip II.⁷³ Three decades later, when Carlo Cicala arrived in Constantinople to spy for the Habsburgs and to visit his brother, the Ottoman Grand-Admiral, the rumour was that he came in order to negotiate a new Ottoman-Habsburg truce.⁷⁴ The rumour turned out to be false, but it is evident that Carlo saw himself more than a spy or a confident. In spite of his lack of appropriate credentials, he refused for instance to walk in after the French ambassador and be seated in an inferior seat during the Venetian ambassador's usual banquet.⁷⁵ In 1614, an *alferez*, Pedro Munez Montefrio negotiated a truce on behalf of Philip III with the Ottoman Grand Vizier, even though he had been originally sent by

⁷⁰ The Ottoman translators or *dragomans* were experts in diplomacy and played a significant role in the conduct of foreign affairs. They were sent to the West as ambassadors (Yunus Bey for one went to Venice six times, see. Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 40-44 and Appendix I), and allowed to negotiate directly with foreign diplomats in the Ottoman capital, one example being the negotiations between Hürrem Bey and Giovanni Margliani.

⁷¹ AGS, *E* 1314, fols. 126 and 131 (16 March 1539). ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 4, cc. 111v-112r (14 March 1539).

⁷² AGS, *E* 1323, fols. 232 (6 October 1559), 243-244 (20 January 1559) and 281 (8 April 1559).

⁷³ This rumour that the Venetian bailo Barbarigo (ASV, *SDC*, fil. 4D (5 February 1564) related is plausible since the Ottomans treated this agent, who had been sending information to the Habsburgs for years, exceptionally well. They not only refused to hand him down to the Venetian bailo, saving him from the Venetian prosecution, but also gave him a safe-conduct assuring the cooperation of local authorities while leaving the Empire.

⁷⁴ COSP, vol. 9, nos. 150 (4 April 1593), 170 (3 May 1593), 172 (24 May 1593) and 174 (9 June 1593).

⁷⁵ COSP, vol. 9, no. 273 (3 May 1594).

the Emperor in order to negotiate the ransom of certain Hungarian *cavalleros*.⁷⁶ Finally, in 1630, Iuseppo da Messina, a spy-cum-courier-cum-friar, sent from Naples, was also entrusted with the task of secretly negotiating with the Grand Vizier so that the Ottomans did not send the navy to attack Puglia and Calabria.⁷⁷

3.3.2. Secretaries

The real operators of these intelligence networks, however, were not governors, commanders or ambassadors. The continuity of operations as well as the increased specialization in espionage required a level of expertise that officials who were appointed for short terms and had very little knowledge on cryptography and steganography could not provide. The responsibility of such specialization fell on the shoulders of secretaries who were the real head of intelligence networks on every level. The Habsburg *secretarios de Estado* such as Pérez, Vázquez, Idiáquez and Zayas were the “real eminent-gris”⁷⁸ of the entire Habsburg intelligence network in Madrid where there was also a *secretario de cifra*.⁷⁹ Cipher secretaries in the Venetian chancellery proved their worth in more than one occasion by inventing new ciphers, developing new techniques, training new pupils and adding new members to their cadre.⁸⁰ The secretaries in provinces and embassies also played an important role in the conduct of secret diplomacy by supervising intelligence networks and providing the required continuity of operations. The Habsburg secretaries

⁷⁶ AGS, *E* 1168, fols. 59 (22 October 1614), 60 (FES 2423), 61 (H. 15 Cemaziyelevvel 1023, A.D. 23 June 1614) and 62.

⁷⁷ AGS, *IS*, b. 148, fol. 41 (6 July 1630).

⁷⁸ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 94.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 103. The instructions given to the secretary Antonio Milledonne by the Heads of the Council of Ten, *CCX* is very revealing. Milledonne was instructed to teach a potential spy, which cipher he should use, how much money he could spend, which information he should send and how he should relate the information he acquired, i.e., that he had to relate the information he had for sure as well as his sources. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, c. 180r (10 October 1571).

⁸⁰ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 77v (25 January 1575), 117v-118r (8 January 1576, m.v.), 135r (3 July 1577), 137v-138r (27 august 1577), 142r-142v (23 October 1577), reg. 13, cc. 40v (26 August 1587), 48r-49r (10 March 1588), 52v-53v (13 July 1588), 57r-58r (18 April 1587), 61v-62r (27 August 1587), 82r-82v (23 January 1590, m.v.), 92v-93r (16 Mart 1592), 107r (24 March 1593), 113r (30 August 1593).

in Venice even took up the duties, if not the title, of the absent ambassador between 1558-1571 and 1580-1587,⁸¹ while in Madrid Pierre de Segusson, sieur de Longlée, secretary of the French embassy, succeeded the ambassador in 1582, although with the title of a permanent resident.⁸² Finally, some of them, such as the secretary of the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, actively participated in information-gathering as well.⁸³ The Ottomans also developed a complex bureaucracy in the 16th century that consisted of the members of the scribal *kalemiyye* class. These members, not the military elite, ran the day-to-day operations of the Ottoman diplomacy and intelligence. The Ottomans hired specialists, such as dragomans and cryptology experts,⁸⁴ who were familiar with Western languages as well as diplomatic and espionage techniques.

Unsurprisingly, some of these secretaries abused their privileged position and easy access to information. Authorities had been in contact with those with the hope of acquiring important information, the afore-mentioned Pellicier who had corrupted the secretaries of the Council of Ten being an example among many.⁸⁵ An interesting series of correspondence between the secretary of Madrid's embassy in Venice, García Hernández and the secretary of Vienna's embassy in Constantinople, Juan de Trillanes is a good example of the central position of the secretaries in information exchange.

⁸¹ Brun, *La Diplomacia de Felipe II*, 225-227.

⁸² Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage*, 97.

⁸³ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 8, cc. 114v-115v (23 May 1568).

⁸⁴ For instance, the Ottomans managed to cryptanalyze the letters of the Venetian Bailo Vettore Bragadin only with the help of one of the "*giovani di lingua*" who were sent to Constantinople to study Turkish named Colombina. When he attacked his classmate Matheco Salvega with a knife, the bailo had him arrested, but he managed to escape and then converted to Islam. According to Bragadin, he knew the Venetian cipher because he could have seen and even helped the Venetian scribes in Bailo's house decipher letters. ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 3, fol. 55; Villain-Gandossi, "Les Dépêches Chiffrées", 77. Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 42. In spite of the contemporary belief (ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 8, cc. 79r-80r (18 February 1566, m.v.) repeated by modern historians (Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 273) that the Ottomans did not write in cipher, I could locate at least one example in which they did so. The famous cryptographer and father of polyalphabetic substitution Blaise de Vigenère saw a Turkish cryptogram solved in six hours in Rome. Kahn, *Codebreakers*, 146. Still, this issue requires further investigation. See Chapter Six.

⁸⁵ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 75-6.

Trillanes, a Vallisolan who had fallen captive to the Ottomans at the Battle of Djerba, offered to provide his compatriot and colleague Hernández with information that reached the Austrian embassy, in exchange for 20 escudos *per mensem*.⁸⁶ Secretaries might have more than information to offer, hinting at the possible damages that their betrayal might have caused to central governments. In 1606, a secretary of the Habsburg chancellery in Naples did more than offering the Venetian representative in the city all the letters that the viceroy and his colleague in Milan exchanged. He could as well lend the cipher that the Habsburg authorities used in their correspondence and name three Habsburg spies whom the Governor of Milan employed in a plot to take over two Venetian fortresses.⁸⁷

3.3.3. Translators (Dragomans)

Translators that helped the functioning of diplomacy between capitals actively participated in secret diplomacy. Their role is especially relevant when it comes to the diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and European states, given the cultural differences and linguistic difficulties that awaited European envoys when they arrived in Constantinople. The *dragoman* (from Arabic *tarjuman* and Turkish *tercüman*), was a common figure in this diplomacy; foreign diplomats had to rely on these dragomans who came from a handful Periot families and who used their position between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the service of both sides in order to further their interest.⁸⁸ With the comfort provided with their in-between position, these “trans-imperial subjects” relied on their linguistic skills as well as their expertise on Ottoman diplomatic protocol,

⁸⁶ AGS, *E* 1324, fols. 113 (9 June 1563), 117 (22 February 1563), 133 (8 August 1563), 188 (1 October 1563) and 214; *E* 1325, fols. 16 (12 April 1564) and 35 (11 August 1564). Also see. *E* 1324, fols. 129, 131, 133, 180 and 188. Cf. Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 182-3.

⁸⁷ ASV, *IS*, b. 460, 1606, ff. Always in financial trouble, the Viceroys of Naples frustrated their employees by not paying their salaries. That was the main motive behind the secretary’s betrayal. “*Morimo da fame*” he lamented. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1606. A similar problem of payment was an important issue between Naples and the spies on its payroll, something I discuss elsewhere.

⁸⁸ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*.

bureaucratic hierarchy and court ceremony and thus provided foreign diplomats with services of crucial significance. Without their presence, these diplomats could neither communicate nor negotiate with the Ottomans. The problem was that their loyalties were always questionable as their familial relations with other translators in other embassies suggest. Furthermore, as Ottoman subjects, most of these dragomans cooperated with European ambassadors with the knowledge of their Ottoman superiors. In most cases, they deliberately leaked information in order to get the Porte's message out, to warn enemies and friends and with the purpose of misinformation.⁸⁹

These dragomans did not only work in the embassies. The Ottomans employed their own *terciimans* as middlemen in their dealings with European envoys. These played an extraordinarily important role in diplomatic negotiations. For instance, as will be seen in Chapter Five, Hürrem Bey was instrumental in the conclusion of truce negotiations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in 1577-1581. Needless to say, he also worked for the Habsburgs in these negotiations and played an astute double game, outmaneuvering the historian who tries to realize which ones, among his acts of friendship, assistance and leakage of information, were actually his own initiatives for furthering his personal ends and which ones were ordered by the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu for purposes of disinformation, manipulation and pressure on the Habsburg diplomat. Similarly, the Venetian central government employed in Venice its own Public Dragoman who had a dual role. His responsibilities included state matters such as translating letters sent to the Doge by the Sultan, accompanying Ottoman dignitaries on official audiences and producing reports on such occasions, traveling to the Ottoman frontier during the negotiations for border disputes. They also protected the Ottoman as

⁸⁹ Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits", 86.

well as, surprisingly, Safavid merchants (regardless of ethnicity and religion) during their commercial transactions in Venice against incidents of possible fraud at the hands of the local merchants and commercial brokers.⁹⁰ With this range of responsibilities, one could only imagine the extent of their connections and access to information.

3.3.4. Network leaders (Spymasters)

Another important figure in the intelligence networks was the network leader who was responsible from the operational efficiency of intelligence networks on the field. He was the one who set up the network by choosing spies and informants, transmitting news and delivering wages. He furthermore sought to consolidate it by securing the financial support and the good-will of the Habsburg authorities, keeping channels of communication open, inspecting (double) agents, establishing social and political networks essential for reliable information and devising clandestine operations such as bribery, sabotage, defection and assassination. In short, negotiations between spies and the central government went through his hands.

Some network leaders controlled their networks from afar, as was the case with Jerónimo Bucchia who used his extensive familial connections to establish an intelligence network in Dalmatia.⁹¹ Other network leaders such as Giovanni Maria Renzo preferred to travel, carrying letters and wages between the Habsburg authorities and his network, while others remained *in situ*, spying themselves and employing other spies and informants, such as Balthasar Prototico and Nicolò Giustinian. In certain cases, there

⁹⁰ Ella-Nathalie Rothman, "Between Venice and Istanbul: Trans-Imperial Subjects and Cultural Mediation in the Early Modern Mediterranean" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2006), 347-356.

⁹¹ A former classmate of Cardinal Granvela, he was from an influential family from Cattaro. Formerly, the ambassador of Duke of Bavaria in Venice, he entered the Habsburg employ and remotely coordinated from Turin and Naples his vast intelligence network that gathered information from quite an impressive number of different cities: Ragusa, Cattaro, Antivari, Valona, Venice and even Constantinople. Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*.

were more than one network leader. In Constantinople, for instance, in Renzo's absence, Aurelio Santa Croce and Adam de Franchis stepped up and assumed his duties, creating the awkward situation in which the Habsburg's Constantinople network was divided into two as Santa Croce and Franchis were unaware of spies on each other's payroll.⁹²

3.3.5. Auxiliaries

Apart from spies and Habsburg officials, there were also others who functioned as auxiliaries and helped the well-functioning of networks. Without their less frequently but not ungratefully appreciated help, information could neither be gathered nor transmitted, and spies could neither travel nor receive their payments from the center.

3.3.5.1. Couriers

The most important problem that central governments had to overcome was the transmission of news. The speed, the reliability and the predictability of the transmission was as important as the quality of the gathered information. In the 16th century, as the political power and the financial means at the disposal of central governments expanded, states sought to overcome this problem by establishing regular postal services between important cities. Couriers that carried letters between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburgs and connected the intelligence networks to their consecutive center, however, faced additional difficulties. The lack of established postal routes and of open diplomatic channels as well as the continuous air of distrust and enmity between two empires (think of the reported paranoia and hatred towards the Christians in major Ottoman cities after the crushing Ottoman defeat in battle of Lepanto), added the dangers of being identified, caught and persecuted in a hostile environment, to those already existed in the life of a

⁹² AGS, E 487, lo que scrive Baptista Ferraro y Compania de Constantinopla (16 April 1569).

courier that carried letters in Europe: the discomfort of long voyages, the risk of being attacked by bandits or corsairs, unpredictable weather, illnesses, epidemics, etc. The Ottomans frequently prosecuted couriers in foreign employ with the hope of preventing enemy intelligence as well as intercepting correspondence which could include important information.⁹³ Couriers that carried Ottoman letters in Habsburg lands were not more welcome; in the 16th century, no-one liked those who travelled with suspicious letters in their bags.

The line between a courier and a spy was not always clear. Given the difficulties involved in such a dangerous task, network leaders and spies who travelled and back and forth carried letters with them, such as Giovanni Maria Renzo in 1567, in spite of the risks involved while the Ottomans were looking for him everywhere.⁹⁴ Still, the dangers involved required specialization. The Habsburg intelligence network in the Levant relied on seasoned couriers, such as Giovanni Stefano Ferrari and Giovanni Antonio Santa Croce, who acted as intermediaries between Naples and Constantinople by carrying letters, transferring money and helping coordination. It was not only the spies who turned out as couriers, but also vice versa. First, their voyages gave them plenty of opportunity to gather information. The *messi* that carried the letters sent by the Jerónimo Bucchia's network, for instance, also related their own observations concerning the Ottoman war preparations as well as the rumours they heard during their travels.⁹⁵ The courier who was robbed by the men of the Duke of Mirandola managed to detect the suspicious

⁹³ Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits", 84; Dursteler, "Power and Information", 609-10; BOA, MD, LV, no. 166 (H. 21 Zilkade 992/A.D. 24 December 1584). AGS, E 1338, fol. 66 (12 November 1580) reports the death of a Habsburg courier carrying letters from Constantinople near Ragusa, but it is not clear whether he was killed by the Ottomans or not.

⁹⁴ AGS E 1056, fol. 43 (20 April 1567).

⁹⁵ Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 29-30.

transfer of victuals and gunpowder, information of critical importance with which he threatened the Duke of Ferrara to take action against the transgressors.⁹⁶ Second, as carriers of secret information back and forth, they could make handsome profits by selling information to other governments. Given that the Ottomans transmitted important information orally, they had access to tradeable information. In several instances, we see that the Ottoman couriers were more than willing to share information with Habsburg agents.⁹⁷ Whether the information they provided was of quality or whether this was a deliberate effort of Ottoman disinformation or not is another debate. In either case, the central role of couriers in intelligence services is obvious.

3.3.5.2. Guides

In order to penetrate through enemy borders and evade border patrol, spies needed the cooperation and guidance of local people. Martin de Acuña mentioned that two guides that took him until Constantinople were so specialized and experienced in their profession that they had previously followed the exact same trajectory forty-one times.⁹⁸ The Habsburgs found a natural ally among the dissident Orthodox population in the Ottoman Balkans, ready to take up arms against the Ottomans with the encouragement of the Habsburgs. The cooperation of these locals was crucial for the safe passage and travel of Habsburg spies. A good example is the case of Duli, an Albanian noble and the leader of villages near Bastia on the Adriatic shores facing Corfu. Although in Ottoman employ, he had been helping the Habsburg agents who traveled to and from Constantinople and providing them with lodgings since 1564. If not for him, it would be impossible for these

⁹⁶ AGS, *E* 1045, fol. 101.

⁹⁷ AGS, *E* 1040, fol. 28 (7 March 1551); *E* 1063, fol. 35 (30 June 1573) ; *E* 1068, fols. 32 (5 February 1575) and 103 (16 May 1575); *E* 1079, fol. 15 (12 November 1578). Sometimes, informants overheard couriers discussing the orders they carried. ASV, *SDC*, fil. 6E, fol. 4 (13 December 1572).

⁹⁸ AGS, *E* 1074, fol. 104 (3 January 1577) quoted by Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 332.

agents to travel between the Ottoman lands and Corfu without being inspected in the port by the Ottoman commissary who was sent there only to catch spies and run-away slaves.⁹⁹

Road guides (*kılavuz*) were frequently mentioned in Ottoman campaign journals, chronicles and geographical descriptions as well. The Ottomans resorted to their services during military campaigns so much so that they even used them while marching between Niš to Belgrade, a familiar terrain and a usual campaign route, underlining “the importance of up-to-date topography” and illustrating “the difficulties and hazards associated with moving large forces even in familiar territory”.¹⁰⁰ Ottoman spies also used guides. In 1552, Pîrî Re’is sent a spy to Salerno to meet with his informants in order to gather information and conspire for an anti-Habsburg rebellion. He attached to the mission one of his Greek slaves as a guide. The latter had a brother in a nearby hamlet and thus knew the region. Much to the spy’s chagrin, however, the Greek guide Nicolò left him on his own and went to see his brother, causing him many inconveniences. He was first robbed and then caught.¹⁰¹

3.3.5.3. Recruiters

The authorization of a new spy, the allocation of his salary and the assignment of a specific mission generally had to go through officials such as ambassadors, secretaries, viceroys and military commanders. There were, however, entrepreneur recruiters who looked for suitable spies for specific missions in the name of official authorities. In 1602, the French spy who was caught in Malta in pilgrim disguise, for instance, confessed that

⁹⁹ AGS *E* 487, Giralomo Combi Albanes, 20 April 1577; *E* 488, Dulis Albanes, 14 July 1576.

¹⁰⁰ Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet”, 65.

¹⁰¹ AGS, *E* 1043, fol. 71 (1552).

he was recruited by a French doctor who was living in Venice.¹⁰² In another example in 1610, a Mehmed Çelebi *alias* Manuel Enriquez, a Granadine Moor from Murcia, was recruiting the Moors that arrived in Venice and other parts of Italy in in great numbers in the aftermath of their final expulsion from Iberia in 1609 by the royal decree of Philip III.¹⁰³ These Moors would enroll in the Ottoman army and most probably function as spies. Network leaders were also important recruiters as they were the ones who built their networks.

3.3.6. Factota

Among many functions and professions cited above, there was not a clear cut distinction. Many agents, in quite a spirit of entrepreneurship, performed several of these functions and sought to increase financial remunerations they enjoyed. The celebrated Ottoman spy, Gabriel Defrens was a spy-cum-diplomat that travelled with the alibi of buying clocks and mechanical instruments for the Sultan; he may also have worked as a translator in the French embassy in Constantinople.¹⁰⁴ Antonio Avellan was a spy, ransom agent and diplomat;¹⁰⁵ Jaime Losada, added military engineer to the aforementioned three.¹⁰⁶ Antonio Sanz was a spy, ransom agent and the translator of the Habsburgs diplomat Giovanni Margliani.¹⁰⁷ Ambrodio Benedetti was a ransom agent, military expert (*professor di cose militari*) and by extension an Ottoman spy.¹⁰⁸ Nicolò Giustiniani spied for the Habsburgs in Chios, ransomed their prisoners in Constantinople

¹⁰² AGS, *E* 1160, fol. 150.

¹⁰³ AGS, *E* 1929, fols. 12 (9 de abril 1610), 41 (4 February 1611), and 52 (13 March 1611).

¹⁰⁴ Skilliter, "Gabriel Defrens", 51, 53. Also see for instructions given him on what to buy, BOA, *MD*, XLIII, nos. 340 (H. 7 B 988/A.D. 18 August 1580) and 402 (H. 24 B 988/A.D. 4 September 1580).

¹⁰⁵ AGS, *E* 1144, fols. 280, 281 and 282.

¹⁰⁶ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 191 (5 March 1577); *E* 1138, fols. 52 and 53; *E* 1139, fols. 85 (5 June 1573) and 86 (20 May 1573); *E* 1142, fol. 26 (26 January 1574).

¹⁰⁷ AGS, *E* 1085, fols. 80 and 81. Margliani, however, was not satisfied with his translator's Italian. AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 46 (16 August 1580).

¹⁰⁸ ASV, *IS*, b. 460, 25 July 1600.

and negotiated a trade capitulation with the Ottomans on behalf of the Genoese.¹⁰⁹ Mehmed Çelebi *alias* Manuel Enriquez was a commercial agent (*factorias de mercaderes*) as well as a recruiter of soldiers and spies.¹¹⁰ The Habsburg spy-cum-diplomat Michel Černović in the Ottoman capital worked for both branches of the dynasty. He sent information to Vienna and Naples and negotiated on behalf of the Emperor Ferdinand I with the Persian ambassador in Constantinople for a possible anti-Ottoman alliance. Who can know for sure he did not work for the Ottomans as well? Could he have not passed information in one of his many private conversations with Ottoman grandees?¹¹¹ Be that as it may, his talents were not limited to espionage. He furthermore secured himself the office of grand dragoman in the Venetian bailo's house and gained the confidence of the *Serenissima* to such an extent that when the new bailo had to pass to Anatolia to pay homage to the winner of the Ottoman civil war, Prince Selim, he was ordered to leave his duties in Černović's care. Finally, he was a ransom agent who secured the liberation of several Spanish and Italian slaves in the Ottoman capital.¹¹² Another good example of the *factotum* spy, Bartolomeo Brutti, ransomed slaves, spied and engaged in official diplomacy on more than one occasion, each time in the service of a different master. He helped the negotiations between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans until he lost the confidence of the Habsburg ambassador Margliani who excluded him from the negotiations. He then secured himself a career as a statesman when he used his connections with his kin Sinan Pasha and managed to secure the

¹⁰⁹ AGS, *E* 1127, fols. 87 and 88 (2 December 1562); ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 43v-44v (9 December 1569).

¹¹⁰ AGS, *E* 1929, fols. 12 (9 April 1610), 41 (4 February 1611), and 52 (13 March 1611).

¹¹¹ This is possible since the Ottoman grandees unusually protected this Habsburg spy against the Venetian bailo who wanted Černović to be handed down to him because he was passing information to the Habsburgs while in his service.

¹¹² Lesure, "Michel Černović", 127-154.

enthronement of the Moldavian prince, Iancu Sasu, who returned the favor by making him a high official in Moldavia. He will assume a diplomatic role at least two more times: when he came to Constantinople as the ambassador of the Moldavian prince and when he went to Poland as the Ottoman ambassador.¹¹³

3.4. ESPIONAGE AS A PROFESSION

Let us now concentrate on the details of espionage as a profession. In the following pages, in an effort to delineate the characteristics of early modern espionage, I will seek answers to the following questions: what was the social background of the recruitment pool from which central governments had to choose their spies? What were the employment standards as well as the training and education required for 16th century espionage? What were the motives of spies and material benefits of espionage? How did central governments compensate their agents for their services?

Before we go any further, I would like to make one final clarification. Some historians suggested categorization of spies according to their function. García and Marcos, for instance, enumerated five different categories.¹¹⁴ I prefer not to use such categories which contemporaries did not use, since the terminology will be an invented one that did not depend on “an institutionalized, hierarchical organization in operation”.¹¹⁵ In addition, even García and Marcos acknowledge that the distinction between these different categories is not always clear and one person can be placed in

¹¹³ AGS, E 1080, fols. 44 (4 July 1579), 46 (4 July 1569), 47 (18 July 1579), 59 (3 August 1579), 60 (11 August 1579) and 61 (18 August 1579); E 1085, fol. 81. ASV, *IS*, b. 416 (4 September 1590). For more information about Bartolemeo as well as Brutti family in general, see. Cristian Luca, *Dacoromano-Italica: Studie e ricerche sui rapporti italo-romeni nei secoli XVI-XVIII* (Cluj-Napoca: Accademia Romena, Centro di Studi Transilvani, 2008), 107-128. Also see. Rothman, “Between Venice and Istanbul”, appendix 14.

¹¹⁴ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 72-90; eidem, *Espías de Felipe II*.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 303.

more than one category easily.¹¹⁶ The only useful distinction, although still an invented one, should be the one between a spy and an informant. A spy was a covert agent in disguise who was sent by the central authorities on a specific mission. An informant, on the other hand, was source of information, in Luttwak's terms, a "secret friend" or an "agent-in-place".¹¹⁷ Most of the time, he was a government official or a member of the military who used his important political and social connections to sell information to other governments.¹¹⁸ Venetian officers who frequented the house of the Habsburg ambassador and passed him the details of secret dealings of the *Serenissima*, renegades in the Ottoman military and administrative mechanism providing information to the Habsburgs, the bailo Girolamo Lippomano on Habsburg payroll, Venetian secretaries corrupted by the French ambassador Pellicier were all informants, not spies.¹¹⁹

3.4.1. Social background

As there was a concentration of spies among the practitioners of certain professions, spies' social background was also an important variable in creating the favorable environment for the ideal spy by facilitating their operation in both sides of the Mediterranean borderlands. Renegades, exiles, convicts and rebels resorted to espionage more often than others; while no women appeared on the scene save for those who played only a partial role.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 305.

¹¹⁷ Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, 62.

¹¹⁸ Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage*, 181.

¹¹⁹ The difference between them is more explicit in the financial remunerations allocated to them. For instance, a Habsburg informant in Venice, Angelo Badoer, had a yearly salary of 2.000 ducats, an enormous amount compared to yearly spy salaries which changed between 100 and 400 ducats. AGS, *E* 1355, fols. 154 (15 August 1611) and 253 (20 November 1611); *E* 1356, fols. 97, 98, 99 and 100 (25 April 1612).

3.4.1.1. Renegades

The early modern Mediterranean, as a borderland between Islam and Christianity, hosted a significant number of renegades, especially, but not exclusively, in more cosmopolitan Ottoman cities such as Constantinople and Algiers which attracted poor Christians with their opportunities as well as relative tolerance. In a world where the impediments created by physical and political boundaries were exacerbated by cultural and linguistic ones, a turncoat would be an ideal spy. In the absence of the concept of training (even the armies did not have drills until the counts of Nassau came up with them in the closing decade of the 16th century),¹²⁰ states had to make use of people who were familiar with certain practices and techniques. As the Moors who left Spain in 1492 were valuable for Ottoman corsary in North Africa thanks to their skills in sailing and familiarity with the Iberian coasts, renegades who knew the language, customs and geography of and had connections in “the land of the infidel” were invaluable assets for governments that gladly employed and generously rewarded them. The composite identity of these men of two worlds furthermore facilitated the process and hence their increased number among information brokers.

The Habsburgs’ appreciation of the contribution of Christian renegades in Constantinople is evident from their response to renegades who complained of living like Turks, *desordinato e dannoso modo de turchi* and asked help to return to their former faith and fatherland. Surprisingly, the Habsburgs responded to their petition by advising them to stay in the Ottoman capital where they would be more useful for “all the

¹²⁰ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 20-22.

Christianity”.¹²¹ The Venetian bailo would have a similar attitude when the Venetian expert sent to help the Ottomans in their Arsenal, Zuan Francesco Giustiniani, protested that he was helping the enemy.¹²² Numerous renegades working in strategic places in the Ottoman Empire were important for both Habsburg and Venetian intelligence. Those who worked in the Arsenal could send information regarding the preparations in the Arsenal, the size and the destination of the Ottoman navy as well as the time of the departure from the capital. Those who worked in the fortifications, such as those in Argel whom the cleric Francisco Nuñez managed to contact,¹²³ could inform about the weaknesses in enemy defenses. A fifth column that could jeopardize the Ottoman military production, these renegades also proposed and participated in several sabotage attempts, especially in the Ottoman Navy and Arsenal. There were also a few examples of Muslim renegades who converted to Christianity and offered their services to the Habsburgs, such as a “Turkish” convert named *Pedro Aldobrandino*, once primary *çavuş* of the Ottoman Sultan who was at the time living in Rome with his wife.¹²⁴ Add to this, the nominally Christian Moors who joined the Habsburg military.

Given that the Ottomans preferred to choose spies from among those with local access and that conversion to Islam, although not obligatory, brought advantages for those who sought lucrative opportunities of Ottoman employment, it should not be surprising to see renegades working for Ottoman intelligence. In fact, their numbers should be considerably high, proven by the fact that an unanimous report on the precautions to be taken “for the conservation and defense of the kingdom of Naples”,

¹²¹ AGS, *E* 1140, fol. 108.

¹²² Sanuto, *Diarii*, LVI, 105-7; LVIII, 442-5.

¹²³ AGS, *E* 487. Francisco Nuñez.

¹²⁴ AGS, *E* 1100, fol. 136 (20 September 1603).

presented to Philip II in 1559 suggested that the Greek sailors who frequented the Neapolitan ports should be checked whether they were circumcised or not. Although dressed like Westerners; these could still be renegade Ottoman spies.¹²⁵ Other Christians should have followed the Greeks in benefitting from the employment opportunities offered by the Ottoman secret service with no more scruples than they demonstrated when they converted to Islam in order to take advantage of similar opportunities offered by the North African corsary. Even men of religion were tempted. The Spanish Trinitarian Friar Cristobal Perez, who came to Constantinople to ransom Christians, decided instead to become a Muslim. He would almost have two Habsburg spies, who revealed their identities during a confession, caught if not for Giovanni Margliani who managed to keep him under lock and key in his house and then hand him to the Inquisition in Rome.¹²⁶ Especially the Iberian Moors who were more likely to be sympathetic towards Islam as well as to have the required knowledge and expertise required from an Ottoman spy to operate in the Western Mediterranean would be perfect candidates. In 1552, a Múdejar, Alonso de Ayala ran away from the fortress of Djerba to the Ottoman side to once again become Muslim in front of Turgud Re'is. He would later settle in Constantinople and provide the Ottomans with information he received from his brothers in the fortress of la Goleta.¹²⁷ In 1561, the Governor-General of Algeria was in secret negotiations with the Habsburg soldiers, of Morisco origin, in an island between Algerian coasts and Sardinia.¹²⁸ In 1621, two Moors who had been “soldiers and officers”

¹²⁵ AGS, *E* 1049, fol. 145 (1559).

¹²⁶ AGS, *E* 1081, fol. 154 (4 November 1580) ; *E* 1081, fols. 163 (14 November 1580) and 170 (21 November 1580) ; *E* 1083, fol. 58 (28 February 1581) ; *E* 1084, fol. 35 (6 June 1581); *E* 1338, fols. 22, 36 (27 July 1580), 59 (15 October 1580) and 74 (30 December 1580); *E* 1339, fol. 127 (7 February 1581).

¹²⁷ AGS, *E* 1132, fol. 28 (4 December 1567).

¹²⁸ Canosa and Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo*, 73.

in the Sicily and Naples for years, converted to Islam in the presence of the Sultan and offered him a plot to easily conquer Augusta and Terranova in Sicily.¹²⁹ Interestingly enough, there were Moors who worked for Christians as well; there is no trusting to the barriers we presumed to have been created by religious and civilizational differences. With those, it would be hard to explain how come two Moors captured in Constantinople, shortly after the Ottoman attack on Malta failed in 1565, ended up in the employ of the Knights of St. John.¹³⁰

3.4.1.2. Exiled, convicts and rebels

Another group from among whom the states recruited their spies was the outlaws: exiles, convicts and rebels. Some of these offered their services to their own governments with hope of revoking their sentences. The Habsburg resident agent in Ragusa Don Cesar de la Mara, for instance, is a good example. Exiled from the kingdom of Naples after having murdered his mother, he agreed to work for the Habsburgs in exchange for the ransoming of his son and the revoke of his exile, the *bando*.¹³¹ In hard-pressing times, central governments rehabilitated these exiles in advance so that they could use them in the operations of their secret services. In March 1570, the Venetian Council of Ten revoked the *bando* of and distributed safe-conducts to *banditi* in Dalmatia who were ready to become spies.¹³² Some, on the other hand, turned against their own governments and offered their knowledge and skills to others. A Venetian, Tristan Savorgnan who shot

¹²⁹ AGS, *E* 1893, fol. 144 (1 February 1621).

¹³⁰ AGS, *E* 486, Avisos de Constantinopla de 27 de diciembre 1565.

¹³¹ AGS, *E* 1332, fol. 72 (26 July 1573).

¹³² Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 250. For instance, the Venetian *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* considered Benetto Bolizzo, exiled from Catharo, as a suitable resident agent in Ragusa even though in the end they appointed somebody else. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 89r-90r (13 sett 1570); 122r-122v (15 January 1571, m.v.).

his enemies in the middle of the *Canal Grande* in 1551, unsure of his end, fled Venice only to appear in the house of an Ottoman Pasha, arousing fear among the Venetians.¹³³

Some high-ranking officials and military elite could be important information providers when they decided to defect to the other side, thanks to their familiarity with the state apparatus, local connections and their own intelligence network. The best documented as well as the most famous case is that of Antonio Pérez. Philip II's once omnipotent secretary of state fell from power after having been accused of ordering the assassination of the secretary of Don Juan (1578). He was prosecuted and imprisoned. He finally managed to escape from prison in 1590 and ended up in the court of Catherine of Bourbon in Pau, Béarn, near the Spanish-French border where he offered his intelligence network, political connections and vast knowledge of the Habsburg affairs. Needless to say, he started working for the Habsburgs as well, in search for financial remunerations and with the hope of a royal pardon.¹³⁴ In the case of the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, even though we do not have similar high-level government figures that were willing to change sides, there were out-of-favor noblemen who offered their services to other governments. In 1568, the Habsburg resident spy in Zante, Balthasar Prototico mentioned the desire of Count Antonio Martinengo from Brescia, whom the Venetians exiled to Cephalonia for life, to run away and serve the Habsburgs.¹³⁵ The Ottomans had close contact with the Prince of Salerno, the Neapolitan noble who rebelled against the Habsburgs and Sampiero, the leader of the Corsican rebellion against the Genoese. With the hope of recruiting the Ottoman navy for his cause, the latter would even come to Constantinople

¹³³ ASV, *SAPC*, fil. 5, cc. 29r-34v, (1 January 1550); AGS, *E* 1319, fols. 200-1 (8 February 1551).

¹³⁴ AGS, *E* 1593 (30 August 1604) ; Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 435-436.

¹³⁵ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 217.

in 1562.¹³⁶ Needless to say, both nobles had extensive intelligence networks in their respective countries which could provide information to the Ottomans.

There were certain communities more deeply involved in the espionage exactly because they were exiled from their fatherland. Their knowledge and experience on the other side of the border as well as psychological motives made them competent spies. The Ottomans used the exiled Jews and Moors, while the Habsburg capitalized the Greeks who left the Ottoman lands.

3.4.1.3. Women

The world of the espionage in the early modern Mediterranean was misogynist *ante litteram*. Women were not recruited as spies and there was no 16th century Lady Carlisle or Mata Hari. It is not surprising given the total absence of women from the administration and military save for a couple of examples from the high aristocracy in Europe. The mentality of the time and the social restrictions placed upon the female gender would have rendered a woman spy inefficient. So far, I could encounter only one mention of a woman who seemed to have indirectly engaged in intelligence by carrying the letters of his husband, Luis de Portillo, from Ragusa to Venice.¹³⁷ This is a surprising exception as it was implausible, or at least impractical, to choose a woman to undertake the dangerous task of a courier. As Alain Hugon put it, in this “*monde viril*”, a woman like Fausta, the heroine of Michel Zévaco’s *opus magnum*, *les Pardaillan* could hardly overcome physical hardships and dangers of long voyages.¹³⁸ Neither did the

¹³⁶ Bornate, “Sampiero Corso a Costantinopoli”, 472-502.

¹³⁷ AGS, E 1331, fol. 127 (29 November 1572).

¹³⁸ In the ten-volume novel, Fausta travels between Paris and Madrid alone on horseback, passes the Pyrénées, full with *bandoleros* and sails between Genoa and Barcelona without a large entourage. Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 402.

“prostitution-espionage”¹³⁹ played a role in the brokering of information within the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry. In a similar fashion to Echevarria Bacigalupe who encountered two cases of female participation in espionage in the Dutch War,¹⁴⁰ and Alain Hugon who found only one case among Habsburg spies who operated in France¹⁴¹ I will state that the rareness of such examples demonstrate to us that women did not significantly participate in the *gathering* of information.

Perhaps, should we search for them among the informants instead of spies? Did they play a less visible but equally important role in the *diffusion*, instead of *gathering*, of information? The answer is affirmative as women appeared in documents, tearing down their confinement, albeit in the capacity as wives, sisters and mothers.¹⁴² Antonio Pérez escaped from his Madrid prison with the help of his wife, while probably it was Martin de Acuña’s wife who denounced his husband as a French spy.¹⁴³ The last case proves that women had access to certain secrets of their husbands and suggests that they could certainly be great sources of information. If not, why should the cleric Francisco Nuñez have bothered to gain the trust of the wives of the North African governors by interpreting their dreams?¹⁴⁴ In a similar fashion, the Venetian bailo found a reliable informant in his compatriot Beatrice Michiel, the renegade sister of the chief of the white eunuch in the Topkapı Palace, Gazanfer Ağa. She had access to important information since, with her brother’s insistence, she first entered the Imperial Harem and then married

¹³⁹ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 479.

¹⁴⁰ Bacigalupe, *La Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes*, 46.

¹⁴¹ Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 402.

¹⁴² For similar examples of women’s participation in the war of information between the Habsburgs and the Valois, see. Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 162-3.

¹⁴³ Rivas and García, *Martin de Acuña*, 85-6.

¹⁴⁴ AGS, E 487, Francisco Nuñez.

to one of her brother's protégée, Ali Ağâ.¹⁴⁵ Some of the information she shared with the bailo was of exceptional quality thanks to her access to the inner palace and other places which foreign diplomats or spies could not even dream of entering.¹⁴⁶ There is also the exceptional figure of Lucia de Flores whose daughter and niece were wives of the Ottoman Sultan, while her other daughter was married to a renegade, favourite of the Sultan. Her access to palace rendered her as a suitable informant. Her cousin Jason Buytron quickly became one of the Habsburg spies who operated in Constantinople.¹⁴⁷ The wife of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed III and the future *Valide Sultan*, communicated with the Austrian ambassador via her Jewish *kira*, also a woman, and kept him informed of Ottoman military preparations on the eve of the War of 1593-1606.¹⁴⁸ One should not take these incidents as exceptions; women's role in the diffusion of information was common knowledge for contemporaries; it was even asserted in Juan Antonio de Vera's famous manual for early modern ambassadors, *El Embajador*.¹⁴⁹

3.4.1.4. Spies' place in the early modern society

Espionage was a difficult profession in so far as spies were not held in high esteem by the rest of the society. It is hard to make generalizations as most of our spies had a second identity, another profession apart from that of espionage and a normal life with families and friends, the details of which the documentation reflects very little and we could do nothing but speculate. It is apparent, however, from those who had a high profile as spies and appeared frequently in the documentation under study as well as from

¹⁴⁵ Pedani, "Veneziani a Costantinopoli", 74-76, fn. 19. Also see. Dursteler, "Fatima Hatun née Beatrice", 355-382.

¹⁴⁶ ASV, *SDC*, b. 39, cc. 282r-282v (20 May 1594); *Senato, Dispacci, Copie moderne*, r. 11, cc. 183-185 (11 November 1596).

¹⁴⁷ AGS, *E* 1346, fols. 38 (1 July 1595) and 133 (30 August 1595).

¹⁴⁸ A. H. Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862), 103, 109-116. See also Chapter Six.

¹⁴⁹ Juan Antonio de Vera y Zuñiga, *El Embaxador* (Kesinger Publishing, no date or place), 103-6.

the public opinion about espionage in general that spies were disdained by others because of the nature of their activity and not trusted even by the officials who recruited them. In the West, the word itself had always had negative connotations since the beginning of its appearance in the 13th century.¹⁵⁰ Even though this seemed to have changed in the 16th and 17th centuries and even an influential office with the flamboyant title of the “Grand Spy” was created in 1613, only seven years later, Juan Antonio de Vera would have a subchapter in his *El Embajador* named “The ambassador should not be a spy”,¹⁵¹ hinting at a contrast between the ambassador, a man of reason and peace and the spy, a man of military conflict and trouble.¹⁵² The contemporaries should have agreed with him; if not why should they name these ambassadors, “honorable” spies?

It was not only a problem of what others thought of these spies; there were more concrete disadvantages. They enjoyed almost none of the protections and advantages that their colleagues in the military and administrative apparati of central governments enjoyed. They were the ones whose names were quickly erased from the payroll with the first budgetary problem and who had to operate facing so many dangers with no hope of even saving their lives when caught by the enemy, let alone the extra comfort of being ransomed or exchanged as would be the case with soldiers and even corsairs, for instance.

3.4.2. Educational background

There were some educated figures who engaged in espionage, such as Jerónimo Bucchia who was recruited by his classmate Cardinal Gravela, with whom he studied

¹⁵⁰ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 42-6.

¹⁵¹ Vera y Zuñiga, *El Embaxador*, 28.

¹⁵² Bacigalupe, *La Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes*, 47-8.

Law in the University of Padua in 1537,¹⁵³ Sébastian Arbizu, the doctor of law and a laureate of “Colegio y Universidad de Gran Noble”,¹⁵⁴ and Luigi Bassano who wrote a book about the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, these were isolated incidents. Most of the spies lacked formal training, not surprisingly, because the profession required very little of it. Although preferable, even the ability to read and write was not a prerequisite, especially for those who were operating as a resident spy belonging to a large network. Two Habsburg spies in Constantinople, Simon Massa, and Giovanni Battista da Sorrento *alias* Mahmud, for instance, had another agent, Giovanni Agostino Gigli, write their letters in 1562 and the latter of the two confessed he did not know how to read and write in either language, “*ne in turchescho ne in cristianesco*”.¹⁵⁶

Knowledge of languages and customs would provide a real advantage for those who had to travel between different cities and cross cultural boundaries. The strategic value of linguistic capital for information gathering was appreciated also by the contemporaries. For instance, Hayreddin Barbarossa initially agreed to allow sixty Spanish soldiers in his army, remnants of Don Hugo’s failed 1518 expedition, to leave for Spain. When one of his renegade lieutenants, however, pointed out to the fact that their knowledge of the land and the Arabic language would make their services valuable to the Habsburgs, Hayreddin changed his mind and imprisoned them in order to force them to

¹⁵³ Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 15-6. His educational background can also be observed in his prose. See. pp. 52-6 to see how Bucchia’s educational background affected his prose: The usage of less-known abbreviations, numerous Latin phrases and expressions, complex grammar and his loyalty to words’ original Latin spelling.

¹⁵⁴ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 21.

¹⁵⁵ Luigi Bassano, *I costumi et i modi particolari de la vita de’ Turchi* (Roma: Antonio Blado, 1545); for a reprint see. *I costumi, et i modi particolari de la vita de’ Turchi. Ristampa fotomeccanica dell’edizione originale* (Roma, Antonio Blado, 1545) *corredata da una introduzione, note bio-bibliografiche ed un indice analitico a cura di Franz Babinger* (Monaca di Baviera: Casa Editrice Max Hueber, 1963).

¹⁵⁶ AGS, E 486, Simon Massa’s letter (9 November 1562), Gio. Battista Napolitano de Sorrento in Turchesco Mamut’s letter (24 October 1562).

convert.¹⁵⁷ Generally, problems caused by cultural and linguistic differences were sought to be solved by employing people familiar with both worlds such as the afore-mentioned Luigi Bassano who lived in Constantinople between 1532 and 1540,¹⁵⁸ or Domingo Cigala who was given the task to accompany the *çavuş* sent by the exiled Ottoman prince Bayezit, to Spain, because he grew up in Chios and thus could speak and read Turkish.¹⁵⁹ Exposure to different cultures and societies diversified the linguistic pool of spies. Thanks to large foreign communities, living in foreign lands was not a *condicio sine qua non* for learning languages. For instance, in 1552, an Ottoman soldier from Bursa was caught spying in Salerno, pretending to be Spanish. In his interrogation, he said he learnt Spanish by talking to Christians in Constantinople.¹⁶⁰ Even though there were some polyglot agents among the spies of our period,¹⁶¹ linguistic ability was still a rare commodity which should have paid off well. One should not take language barriers lightly; even officers had problems of communication. Upon receiving two contradictory orders, the Habsburg diplomat and spymaster in Ragusa, the *Count* Ruggero Margliani wanted clarification in his own native tongue, “*alla grammatica di milano*”.¹⁶²

3.4.3. Recruitment methods and employment standards

Recruitment of a spy was by no means a random process. After careful analysis, central governments tried to find the most suitable and trustworthy candidates. Still,

¹⁵⁷ Gomára, *Crónica de los Barbarrojas*, 390-3.

¹⁵⁸ Allain Servantie, “Information on Ottoman Shipbuilding and on the Moves of the Turkish Fleet to the West (1522-1547)”, *Archivo de la Frontera*, <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/pdf/A-MED28.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ AGS, *E* 1125, fols. 73 (8 June 1560) and 75.

¹⁶⁰ AGS, *E* 1043, fol. 71.

¹⁶¹ Amerigo Balassa is reputed to know twelve languages. AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 217. For Astrume Elia, see. Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 80-2; for Altobello Palavicino, see. Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 55; for Pedro Aldobrandino, see. AGS, *E* 1100, fol. 136 (20 September 1603), for Giovanni Battista Cules, see. ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 19, fol. 59 (22 May 1607), for Gil Hernandez, see. ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 7, c. 30v (12 February 1585). For Marxeben Lener, see. AGS, *E* 1072, fol. 232.

¹⁶² AGS, *E* 1541, fol. 201 (25 December 1591).

circumstances of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier in the Mediterranean forced both central governments to drop some of this prudence. The life of a spy was riskier, the conditions of communication channels were less than perfect, close inspection and surveillance was not possible; in short, central governments could not be as exigent as elsewhere and had to lower their standards.

3.4.3.1. Required skills

Linguistic ability as well as the familiarity with the culture of the target region, as mentioned above, was a decisive factor in the employment of spies. Spies acquired other skills useful for their trade, thanks to their professional or social background. Merchants would know how to read and write, soldiers would be expert on fortifications. Clerics would easily contact the disgruntling Christian populations and have access to the true intentions of those who confide in them during confession. Jews would enjoy the hospitality and cooperation of Jewish communities along the Mediterranean coasts. Renegades and exiles would have the prerequisite linguistic and cultural background. So on, so forth...

There are not too many clues that demonstrate which traits the authorities sought in a good spy. We can only speculate based on the opinions of seasoned spymasters and recruiters which we have at hand today. Let us turn to what Giovanni Margliani, an expert spy-cum-diplomat who negotiated the Ottoman-Habsburg truce and led the Habsburg network in Constantinople between 1578 and 1581, had to say about the characteristics of a good spy. According to him, a good spy should be precautions, have a good memory and discretion and know how to talk politely and write as well as how to relate information as was instructed to him. He should speak in a certain manner, saying

certain things with sweetness, others with seriousness, and others with resolution, an ability which “could not be taught to those who were not blessed with a certain level of farsightedness and discretion.”¹⁶³ Thus, Margliani believed that these good qualities depended upon one’s “nature”, i.e., intrinsic traits that came by birth. In another document, he advised the employment of a potential spy, Giacobbo Bernardini, a Florentine merchant who had been living in Constantinople for five years where he was sent by his father Giuseppe.¹⁶⁴ Margliani exalted his social standing and citizenship as “well-born” from a “free” fatherland under the Habsburg protection and praised his quiet nature, suitable for living for a long time (*lungamente*) with anybody in any place. He furthermore mentioned another Florentine renegade who was living in Bernardini’s house. Margliani knew this Siyavuş Pasha’s *çavuş* who had previously served him as well. He would be a great informant as he had important connections in the Ottoman capital. He befriended one of Venetian bailo’s dragomans named Marucini and his compatriot the Ottoman dragoman Hürrem Bey. He frequented the houses of the French ambassador and the Venetian bailo. Moreover, he had a garden in a good part of the city, “suitable for receiving spies if necessary”.¹⁶⁵ In addition to one’s social standing (well-born), familial ties (the son of Giuseppe from Florence) and citizenship (from a “free” fatherland), other factors such as his immediate social environment, a post in government or possession would also add to one’s trustworthiness. For instance, a Habsburg spy in Ragusa, most probably Don Cesar de la Mara, used all these factors to discredit Secondo

¹⁶³ AGS, E 1338, fol. 30 (22 July 1580).

¹⁶⁴ AGS, E 1338, fol. 66 (12 November 1580).

¹⁶⁵ AGS, E 1338, fol. 42 (10 August 1580).

de Poço, a rival spy. He was not only a friend of the renowned liar Luis de Portillo, but also he never held any office or benefice in Ragusa.¹⁶⁶

Expertise was an essential factor. The fact that spies did not require too much of a formal training does not mean that they were not specialized in their profession. The instructions on how to transmit information from Constantinople to Naples that Giovanni Agostino Gigli gave to Giovanni Maria Renzo in 1562 to be remitted to the Habsburg authorities is a very good example. The amount of details included attests to the high level of specialization in and the complexity of methods of early modern espionage. According to this, Giovanni Agostino Gigli would send his correspondence from Constantinople to the Habsburg resident agent in Ragusa, Lorenzo Miniati, with the *alias* Domino Simeone de Zaqueria, an Anconite merchant. Miniati would in turn send the letters to Barleta, Trani or Manfredonia in the Kingdom of Naples. This was not the only way to transmit the news. The Governor of Otranto would send two frigates to Zante in April, so early that neither the captain nor the rowers of the ship would know anything about the preparation of the Habsburg fleet, a precaution to prevent them from giving information under torture in case they were captured by the corsairs. There the captains would meet the sacristan of a church on the coast, and ask him during a confession whether a foreigner asked for two sailors from Otranto. That foreigner would be the courier who set sail from Constantinople to Negroponte and then passed to Casteltornes on the Dalmatian coasts across Zante in three hour distance. When these sailors met the foreigner they had to give him the special signal (*el señal*) by biting his right ear and upon receiving the letters, handing a written receipt where at the below of the signature they would write “Jesus”. Then the courier would hand in two folders, *pliegos*, one to the

¹⁶⁶ AGS, E 1332, fol. 197 (8 Julio 1573).

Viceroy of Naples and the other to the Viceroy of Sicily and the Admiral of the Catholic Navy. The courier would take these pliegos to Otranto where the castle commander would transmit them to Naples and Messina accordingly. The most important news for the Habsburg authorities were those regarding the Ottoman navy; so it was expected from Gigli and his network to provide the most accurate information about the destination of the Ottoman fleet as soon as possible. To do that, when the Ottoman fleet set sail, Gigli would sail until Chios on the *capitana* of the Ottoman Grand Admiral and gather information from the pages of Ottoman renegades who were always ready for conversation. From the Genoese Chios, he would send a frigate to Negroponte with dispatches informing the Habsburgs of the Ottoman fleet's arrival to Chios and its future destination. His agent, upon reaching Chios would contact another frigate captain who would use a different *señal* by biting the nose and write "Jesus Christ" below the signature in the written receipt. Gigli would not follow the navy farther than Chios, but would send a ship to sell food to the Ottoman fleet. This ship would follow the navy with the excuse of carrying "fat" until the right moment when it would leave to find the Habsburg admiral to inform him about the details of his voyage. Gigli furthermore suggested he should send this frigate to Cerigo where he would meet a Habsburg agent and even offered to go to Negroponte himself if need be, with the alibi of ransoming a relative, and to write "fresh news". Other precautions followed. He pointed out that those who came to pick his letters in Casteltornes should look like Turks for otherwise guards would not let them embark for Zante, thinking they were runaway slaves or renegades. He ended his report by asking for money so that he could save himself from slavery if he was discovered and suggesting that the Admiral of the Catholic Navy and the Viceroy of

Sicily should also be informed of “the secret of writing”, i.e., which steganography technique used in each letter. From the shape of the cross in the beginning of the letters, could one know whether he should put the letters on the burning coal (this technique was called “tormenting the letter” in 16th century Italian and Spanish), or put them underwater and read the true version of the information in an obscure part with a candle behind the letter.¹⁶⁷

3.4.3.2. Offering one’s self as a spy

The authorities recruited spies from among those who fit the above criteria; nonetheless, it was often the spies, these restless entrepreneurs themselves, who contacted the authorities and offered their services. In 1540, two spies contacted the Habsburg ambassador in Venice; one offering to go to Constantinople, and the other, who knew Persian and Turkish, to Persia where he had been before as a merchant.¹⁶⁸ In 1560, the Genoese Domingo Cigala from Chios, who knew Persian and Turkish, contacted in a similar fashion, the Habsburg ambassador in Genoa, Lope de Figueroa.¹⁶⁹ There are several examples where potential spies even offered to visit the capital, and thus circumvent provincial authorities, present a plan, offer their services or transmit a correspondence, such as Galeazzo Franchis from Venice who was transmitting the news his friend sent from Constantinople,¹⁷⁰ or Luca da Sorgo, a double agent from Ragusa.¹⁷¹ The Habsburg authorities rejected such proposals, unless they were familiar with the agent, as was the case with Nicolò Prototico. They simply feared the possibility that

¹⁶⁷ AGS, *E* 486, Instruxion para el s.r. Ju^o Maria Renzo que a da procurar de dar orden que se exigua, sino se allare mas perfeta, y si se allare que se ordene la condicion della para exeguirse. Juan Agustino Gilli, Constantinople (8 November 1562).

¹⁶⁸ AGS, *E* 1316, fols. 101 and 118 (8 January 1540).

¹⁶⁹ AGS, *E* 1389, fol. 29 (6 July 1560).

¹⁷⁰ AGS, *E* 1526, fol. 159 (18 August 1582).

¹⁷¹ AGS *E* 1331, fol. 228 (25 July 1572).

double agents penetrated to Castile and Aragon. In some cases, agents who were already working for central governments in some capacity tried to use their position to attain more prestigious posts. Nicolò Prototico, already under Habsburg employ with a generous stipend of 400 ducats, for instance, asked for the more lucrative position of the deceased Gioantomaso who was the captain of the frigates in Otranto that sailed to Levant to gather information and to pick up the correspondence of the Habsburg intelligence network in the Ionian islands led by the father Prototico, Balthasar.¹⁷² Similarly, Jerónimo Bucchia wanted to be appointed by Charles V to a post in the Neapolitan *Conseglio Colateral Regio* in 1553.¹⁷³ In another example, the Genoese Phelipe Balestrin, who served the Habsburgs for years in the Levant, asked for a *ventaja* in the galleys of the Kingdom of Naples. He was counting on the reference that the veteran Habsburg spy in Constantinople, Pedro Brea, wrote for him.¹⁷⁴ In one of his comeback attempts in 1584, the former network leader Aurelio Santa Croce, recently released from a Madrid prison, asked for one of the two prestigious posts. One was the post of the senior network leader of the Habsburg intelligence in Constantinople which was vacant after his superior Giovanni Maria Renzo died in 1577, while the other was the captain of frigates in Otranto.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 243.

¹⁷³ BNE, *Correspondencia del Cardenal Granvela*, ms. 7905/189, ff.1r-10r, Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 149-175.

¹⁷⁴ He was originally a slave of an important naval officer and the “scribe of the Christians”, meaning the Christian slaves in the *baños* of the Ottoman Arsenal. Pedro Brea convinced him to run away when the navy set sail and carry his letters to Naples; however he was caught and put into chains. Brea then had to ransom him for 1.000 ducats, probably an exaggerated amount. AGS, *E* 1094, fols. 234 and 238 (27 September 1596).

¹⁷⁵ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 161 (4 June 1584). The office that Nicolò Prototico asked for two decades ago, was once again available when the Habsburgs had to move the incumbent Pietro Lanza to another post because of an international crisis caused by his misdemeanors against Venetian subjects.

3.4.3.3. Approval and instructions

In the Habsburg case, once a spy was recruited by viceroys, ambassadors or network leaders, he still had to be approved and assigned a stipend by the center. At times, the monarchs themselves wrote letters to spies authorizing their employment with words of encouragement and assurances.¹⁷⁶ Such letters were extremely important for those spies who were recruited by network leaders *in situ* in so far as these gave recruitment efforts of these network leaders an official status in a place like Constantinople where spies faced further risks and sought additional assurances. Sometimes spies themselves wrote letters to the monarchs, assuring their goodwill and zeal for royal service.¹⁷⁷ After the approval of the recruitment, central governments produced specific instructions for agents explaining their mission.¹⁷⁸ Sometimes, it was the spies themselves who left instructions for the authorities. One good example is the very detailed instruction that the Habsburg agent in Constantinople Giovanni Agostino Gigli gave to Giovanni Maria Renzo in 1562 to be remitted to the Habsburg authorities on how to receive the information transmitted from the recently set up intelligence network in Constantinople.¹⁷⁹

3.4.3.4. The issue of trust

An important issue was spies' trustworthiness. Early modern espionage was an enterprise where economic motivations outweighed others. There were often liars, double

¹⁷⁶ There are several such letters written by Philip II to agents in Constantinople in AGS, *E* 486, 487, passim. Constantinople was not the only place where spies sought assurances from the king. In 1568, Balthasar Prototico asked a letter of assurance for Count Antonio Martinengo, exiled by Venetians to the island of Cephalonia. AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 217.

¹⁷⁷ AGS, *E* 1071, fols. 184-187 (28 February 1575).

¹⁷⁸ AGS, *E* 1503, fol. 32 (28 September 1572).

¹⁷⁹ AGS, *E* 486, Instruxion para el s.r. Ju^o Maria Renzo que a da procurar de dar orden que se exigua, sino se allare mas perfeta, y si se allare que se ordene la condicion della para exeguirse. Juan Agustino Gilli, Constantinople (8 November 1562).

agents and cheaters among spies who, in order to better off themselves financially, had no scruples in fabricating news, working for other governments and engaging in all kinds of fraudulent activity. In an effort to prevent disinformation by the enemy, infiltration of enemy agents to their own intelligence networks and spies' embezzlement, central governments had to be careful while employing a new agent. They developed a couple of methods.

Firstly, they investigated the background of the potential spy. In fact, most of them were employed thanks to references from the authorities or men of credibility. Spymasters, ambassadors, governors and viceroys had to vouch for spies they recruited and take responsibility when they turned out to be rotten apples. When he realized one of the spies that he advised for recruitment four years ago, Luca da Sorgo, was a double agent selling information to the Ragusan authorities; Cesar de la Mara had to confess: "I feel bad for I have vouched for him and presented him as a good man even though what he wrote was always of little substance."¹⁸⁰

Authorities occasionally received letters of recommendation which praised the nature and deeds of a certain spy and were written by people of credibility such as Vincente de Herrera, a friar and a theologian.¹⁸¹ It was also common for those who wanted to prove their services to the crown to submit a report full of testimonies that supported their case. A number of Habsburg officers and soldiers that fell captive to the Ottomans after the fall of Tunis (1574) signed a testimony which attested that the Franciscan Diego de Mallorca was a good Christian who tried to incite the spirit of the soldiers during the siege, converted Muslims and Jews who came to Tunis and attended

¹⁸⁰ AGS, *E* 1331 fols. 227 (18 July 1572), 228 (25 July 1572), fol. 236 (1 November 1572); *E* 1335, fol. 80 (30 January 1576).

¹⁸¹ AGS, *E* 487, 4 October 1570, de Argel.

to the spiritual needs of the slaves in their barracks (*baño*) in Constantinople by preaching and saying mass with them.¹⁸² Sometimes, authorities made inquiries as was exemplified in a document called “[r]eport on the character (*ser*) and quality of Adam de Franquis” which consist of the declarations of a runaway from Constantinople named Bernal and a captain Çapata Stevan de Monrreal who personally knew the Genoese spy.¹⁸³

In the early modern era, it was common to leave a family member hostage as a guarantee. In order to control their vassals better, the Ottomans demanded from them to send their sons as hostages to Constantinople.¹⁸⁴ The Habsburg followed a similar pattern; when Francis I was released from his captivity from Madrid in 1526, having signed the impracticably disadvantageous Treaty of Madrid, his two sons had to be delivered to Charles V as hostages. In a similar fashion, spies offered their sons as hostages to assure the authorities of their well intentions.¹⁸⁵ One of his spies from Castelnuovo even told Cesar de la Mara that if he did not do his duty, he could cut his hostage son’s head.¹⁸⁶ An exceptional self-confidence! The idea of keeping relatives as hostages should have appeared even more reasonable to those such as the governor of the newly conquered Mahdiyya, Hernando de Vega, who had to rely for intelligence on locals of questionable loyalty. When he sent the local Moors on a reconnaissance mission to learn the whereabouts of Turgud Re’is, he made them leave their brothers as hostages.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² AGS, *E* 1144, fol. 206 (December 1574).

¹⁸³ AGS, *E* 1127, fol. 106.

¹⁸⁴ Among these elite hostages who were trained in the Ottoman palace one can find interesting figures such as Vlad Dracul and Georg Kastriot.

¹⁸⁵ One of the two spies that came to offer “great things for the service of His Majesty” offered to leave his son as a hostage. AGS, *E* 1136, fol. 38 (5 February 1571).

¹⁸⁶ AGS, *E* 1332, fol. 167 (1 February 1573).

¹⁸⁷ Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 80.

3.5. MOTIVES

A number of motives for early modern espionage have been asserted by the historians. García and Marcos enumerated three motives in 1998, the first being ideological and religious motivations, the second the judicial rehabilitation, i.e., the revoke of a sentence and the third economic motivations.¹⁸⁸ In 2005, they diversified their lists: loyalty to the monarch, defending ideals such as religion, honor, family, property, and fatherland, money, coercion, vengeance and thirst of power.¹⁸⁹ Hugon repeated some of the aforementioned reasons and asserted new ones such as disappointment because of ingratitude of one's master and blackmail.¹⁹⁰ Carrasco recently added to the financial motives other ones such as patriotism, refusal of foreign domination, religious attachments and a desire for liberty.¹⁹¹

I will rather concentrate on the financial motives for two reasons. The first is my opinion that material benefits seemed to have outweighed religious and psychological motives, attesting to the entrepreneurial nature of the early Mediterranean espionage, similar to that of Mediterranean corsary (Hence it is not surprising some were both). Most of these Mediterranean go-betweens were crossing cultural and religious borders, trying to survive in the hardships of the 16th century and their sole *modus operandi* was to further their own interest in one way or another. This is why most of them, if not all, were double, triple or even quadruple spies or swindlers who made up information much to the authorities' chagrin such as the frustrated viceroys of Naples who repeatedly refused payment to spies even at the expense of indignation of the Habsburg ambassador in

¹⁸⁸ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 90-1.

¹⁸⁹ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, Chapter 9.

¹⁹⁰ Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 395-403.

¹⁹¹ Carrasco, "L'Espionnage Espagnol du Levant," 215.

Venice. In short, spies mentioned in this study are, as Emilio Sola once mentioned to me in a private conversation, simply *homo economicus*.

This argumentation has one obvious flaw though. The fact that financial motives outweighed others could be because of the nature of correspondence that survived in the archives. What is more natural than finding documents filled with financial details while studying the correspondence between an employee and employer? Thus, it can be argued that I exaggerated the importance of financial motivations and exported an idea from the field of Mediterranean corsary to that of Mediterranean espionage: that in the world of Mediterranean borderlands, both professions were financial enterprises.

However, even if one accepts this is the case, there is still one problem in accentuating the religious and psychological factors: the hardness of verifying whether motivations such as religious zeal, obedience to the monarch, patriotism, refusal of foreign yoke, desire of liberty, etc. were statements that reflected the truth or basic rhetoric that accentuated one's moral duty in order both to prevent the negative implications attached to the activity of espionage and to promote one's self in the eyes of the employer. Even García and Marcos who proposed such motivations acknowledge this problem.¹⁹² The fact that among the spies who mentioned such moral duties, very few actually abstained from negotiating for financial remuneration and volunteered to serve without them suggests that even if some of these had religious and psychological motives, they also had more pressing financial ones.

To conclude, I claim, yet not to a full extent prove, that financial motivations were the main ones for espionage. I can comfortably state, on the other hand, that these are the only ones that could come under a methodological study given the nature of the

¹⁹² Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 252.

documentation, i.e., correspondence between the spy and the government or the employee and the employer where personal convictions were declared to a superior from whom some sort of benefit was expected. It would be problematic to take such declarations at face value.¹⁹³ In short, unless somebody discovers diaries written by sixteenth century spies, it is impossible to know the extent to which these were motivated by religious and psychological factors.

So, what is the role of religion in this profession depicted as an enterprise in the frontier world of material benefits? Even though it is hard to give a complete answer to this question, again because of the nature of documentation, I can still propose that the religion became a positive factor rather than a negative one and provided cooperation and solidarity among coreligionists rather than preventing contact and collaboration between those from different religions. In short, it did not deter, but encouraged. Religious boundaries do not seem to have worried the decision makers who gladly employed infidels and renegades and even negotiated the defection of prominent military commanders from the other side. The Habsburg negotiated the defection of not only the renegades in Ottoman service such as Uluç Ali, Hasan Ağa, Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha and Hasan Veneziano, but also free-born Muslims such as Barbarossa and Mehmed Pasha, the son of Salih Re'is and the former Governor-General of Algeria. There were similar examples in the more tolerant Ottoman world. For instance, Alvise Gritti, the illegitimate son of the Venetian *doge* Andrea Gritti and an important political

¹⁹³ A similar case for the difficulty of judging sincerity and motivation from the available documentation of early modern conversion as well as the lack of analytical rigor in doing so was made by Webb Keane, "From Fetishism to Sincerity: Agency, the Speaking Subject, and Their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39 (4): 674–93, Talal Asad, "Comments on Conversion." in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter van der Veer (New York: Routledge, 1996), 263–73 and recently reinforced by Ella-Natalie Rothman, "Between Venice and Istanbul", 120-1.

figure in Constantinople, negotiated on behalf of the Ottomans the defection of Andrea Doria, Charles V's admiral and the de-facto ruler of Genoa. An Austrian noble who fought against the Ottomans, Christophe de Roggendorf, could find employment in Constantinople without converting to Islam.¹⁹⁴ Religion's positive role was that at times it may have convinced decision makers to engage in certain implausible strategies and employ spies who relied on sentiments of solidarity between coreligionists. The best example of this can be seen in the relationship between both governments and their respective "fifth column" in each other's lands: the Moors in the Habsburg Castile and the Orthodox in the Ottoman Balkans.

3.6. ESPIONAGE AS AN ENTERPRISE: REWARDS

If early modern espionage was a financial enterprise, what were the rewards that spies sought in exchange for their services?

3.6.1. Financial rewards

Financial remunerations varied according to the quality and the social standing of the person. Officers and nobles who were offered bribes for betrayal and defection as well as informants who held office in foreign governments and provided important information all received more money than regular spies and saboteurs who themselves were paid according to their rank and duty, quoting a contemporary document: *cada uno en su grado y cargo respectivamente*.¹⁹⁵

According to Garnicer and Marcos, the Habsburg spies in England and France received more than those operating in the Eastern Mediterranean, because the Habsburg

¹⁹⁴ Isom-Verhaaren, "Shifting Identities", 109-134.

¹⁹⁵ AGS, E 486, Relacion de lo que se escrivio al Comendador Mayor de Castilla con Juan Maria Renzo de Madrid a XXV de março 1568.

authorities did not trust these “Turks, Greeks, Albanians and renegades”.¹⁹⁶ A couple of things should be added to this statement. First, it should be stated that it was the lack of open diplomatic relations between two empires that hindered the operations. The consequent deficiency in the quality of recruited spies created distrust towards them among the Habsburg authorities. Things would have been different had there been a Habsburg ambassador in Constantinople who would advocate the allocation of more resources for spies in the Levant whose quality and trustworthiness would not be a matter of debate as long as the ambassador would employ and inspect them personally. Secondly, two further questions appear: could this difference Garnicer and Marcos state attest to a difference of nominal prices and wages in these two distinct regions? Or could it show us that Philip II did not invest as much in the conflict with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean as in that with the British and Netherlands in Northern Europe? Both of these questions require comparative studies that are outside the scope of this dissertation: first, that of wages of soldiers and officers in both empires, second that of Habsburg military expenditures in both regions.

Central governments resorted to different forms of payment. For instance, in the Habsburg administration, there was a difference between *ayuda de costa*, the one-time lump sum payment made to the newly recruited spies to cover their travel and other expenses, and *entretenimiento*, annual salary that generally ranged between 100 to 400 ducats.¹⁹⁷ Some spies had to endure a trial period during which they would be given a limited amount of money until they produced results. The Habsburg ambassador in Venice Guzman de Silva suggested such a method for Luis de Portillo who should be

¹⁹⁶ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 372.

¹⁹⁷ Garnicer and Marcos gives different figures. According to *Espías de Felipe II*, 291, Habsburg spies received an average monthly stipend of 25-40 ducats, which means 300-500 ducats per annum.

given money, but not *entretenimiento ordinario y señalado*. 200 ducats for once would be enough to give “the hope of more” to this spy against the employment of whom the ambassador advised caution.¹⁹⁸ There were instances where spies also asked for additional money for specific operations. For instance, Giovanni Agostino Gigli asked for money to employ necessary people among the renegades who would realize the impractical Habsburg plot to torch Ottoman ships in the Arsenal.¹⁹⁹ Gigli had to ask the center for he requested a large sum, but other spies would go to their network leaders to ask for smaller sums as well. In Ragusa, Don Cesar de la Mara paid 20 tallers “*impromptu*” to one of spies in his network even though he already received 60 escudos sent by the center a couple of days ago.²⁰⁰ A more lucrative form payment was the assignment of a fief or *rentas*, offered rather in defection negotiations, since assigning fiefs would be an impractical method of payment for spies on the field who could not make use of a fief in a far away land.²⁰¹

There is less information shedding light on the Ottoman financing of espionage. The reason for this could be our source base. Most of our conclusion for the Ottoman

¹⁹⁸ AGS, E 1506, fols. 86 (16 April 1573) and 94 (20 July 1573). He would be proven right when the Habsburgs realized what kind of a scoundrel Portillo was.

¹⁹⁹ AGS, E 1392, fol. 74 (16 March 1563).

²⁰⁰ AGS, E 1332, fol. 207 (14 September 1573).

²⁰¹ For instance during the negotiations of submission of Algiers to the Habsburgs, the authorities offered Uluç Ali 10.000 ducats *de renta* in the kingdom of Naples that he could pass to his descendants as well as the title of Count, Marquis or Duke. Other less important figures offered similar compensations. Catania would receive 4.000 ducats *de renta* in the kingdom of Sicily with the title of Baron or Count, Chiaya 3.000 ducats *de renta* in either one of the two kingdoms with the title of Baron or Count. AGS, E 487 (28 July 1569) Instruction primera a Andrea y Francesco Gasparo sobre el negocio de Argel. Similarly, Maranca, a *Comite General* of the Ottoman Navy was offered 5.000 ducats *de renta* as well as 5.000 ducats *de ayuda de costa* in return for his defection with a part of the Ottoman navy. E 486, Relacion de lo que se escribió al Comendador Mayor de Castilla con Juan Maria Renzo, de Madrid a XXV de março 1568. The French ambassador in Constantinople requested, in case of a likely negative response to his request to be included into Venetian nobility, a 3.000 ducats *d'intrata* with another thousand to be divided between his two dependents in exchange for his services to Venetian secret service and (voluntary) defection to the Serenissima. ASV, CCX-LettAmb, b. 3, fols. 85-88 (13 January 1566, m.v.), 98-100 (8 February 1566, m.v.).

information gathering was based on the documents issued by the Ottoman central government or documents regarding Ottoman intelligence that were kept in the foreign archives. Contrary to the case with the Habsburgs, we do not have the documentation issued by the Ottoman local administration which may have given us further details on the Ottoman financing of their own intelligence. Documents issued by local authorities would have been even more useful in the Ottoman case since it was relatively more decentralized than the Habsburg one. Most Ottoman spies were either employed by local governors without any authorization from the center or by private entrepreneurs such as Alvise Gritti and Joseph Nasi and statesman such as İbrahim Pasha, Uluç Ali and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. Our conclusions could have been different if we could find documents regarding the activities of the Governor of Avlona, or at least the Governor-General of Rumelia in a similar manner that we could find documents regarding those of their counterparts in the Habsburg administration: the Governor of Tierra de Otranto y Bari and the Viceroy of Naples.

The Ottoman documentation regarding the Ottoman financing of espionage generally refer to the assignment of military fiefs (*timar*) to those who participated in intelligence, most of the time during a military expedition, by bringing information or catching enemy soldiers and spies.²⁰² Still, there are indications that Ottomans paid their spies in cash. Upon the discovery of an Ottoman plot to capture la Goleta with the help of

²⁰² For examples of promotions and increase (*terakkî*) in the value of their *timars* granted to those who brought information or caught enemy spies. BOA, *MD*, I, nos. 13, 15, 18 19, 20, 22, 42, 54, 123, 135, 166 246, 247, 378, 610, 639, 996, 1056 and 1593; II, nos. 576 and 1039; XLII, no. 1792. Some of these promotions were lucrative. Sometimes even *ze'âmet*s were directly assigned (BOA, *MD*, XLII, no. 1791) or *timar* holders were promoted and given *ze'âmet*s, (BOA, *MD*, I, nos. 46 and 140). New *timars* (*ibtidâ'*) were also assigned to volunteers who participated in intelligence, see BOA, *MD*, I, no. 132; II, nos. 47 and 576; VIII, no. 132, 151, 849 and 943; LIII, no. 7; LVI, no. 70. Dismissed timariots could hope for their reappointment and the reassignment of *timar* when they brought important information. (BOA, *MD*, VIII, no. 1040).

some artillerymen and soldiers in the castle, the Habsburgs interrogated the culprits under torture. One of them confessed that an Ottoman spy in Sicily recruited them and assured them of good payment.²⁰³ The document does not mention an amount, but there are no indications as to why the Ottoman should be more generous than the Habsburgs. The Christian who convinced the population of Kyrenia to surrender to the besieging Ottoman forces was given a non-impressive amount of 30 *akçe* (app. half ducat) per diem from the Cyprus budget (*Kıbrıs ceziresi mahsulünden*).²⁰⁴ Most of the spies were more interested in posts in the Arsenal and the Navy; this meant that the Ottomans had to pay them in cash a salary, *ulûfe*,²⁰⁵ contrary to the case with the Persian front where most of the payments related to intelligence activity could be made by the assignment of *timar* revenues, the most common form of payment in the Ottoman army. A similar situation occurred for the appointments of those who brought information to military posts in the *salyaneli eyalets*, semi-autonomous provinces such as Egypt and Damascus. The Ottomans paid them in cash since military and administrative officers in *salyaneli* provinces were paid from the provincial treasury.²⁰⁶ In short, Ottoman spies were paid in different methods based on their function and the military corps they belonged.

The Ottomans assigned lavish military posts and fiefs to those who brought critical news. This news could be an auspicious one such as the fall of la Goleta brought by the Gran Admiral Sinan Pasha's lieutenant, *kahya*. He was given the *sancak* of

²⁰³ AGS, E 1126, fols. 41 and 152 (30 April 1561).

²⁰⁴ BOA, MD, VIII, no. 356 (H. 14 Ca. 978/A.D. 14 October 1570).

²⁰⁵ For assignment of the office of *re'islik*, captaincy of a ship, with an *'ulûfe* to a corsair (*gönüllü re'is*) that brought information, see BOA, MD, VIII, nos. 18, 2804. For an assignment in the Arsenal to those who brought information, see BOA, MD, XLV, no. 2529 (*kalafatçılık*). For an increase in the amount of the *'ulûfe* of a ship captain (*re'is*) that brought information, see BOA, MD, VIII, no. 15; LXV, no. 96.

Sometimes, corsairs (*gönüllü re'is*) were awarded *timars* as well (BOA, MD, XXV, 2686). A promotion could mean shifting from one form of payment to another. For an example of an allocation of *timar* to an *'ulûfe* holder, see BOA, MD, XXV, no. 17.

²⁰⁶ For an example, see BOA, MD, VIII, no. 951.

Mytilene in return.²⁰⁷ A bad news which would give the Ottomans the time to do necessary preparations would bring reward as well. For instance, a *granadino* broke the news that the Ottoman siege of Malta failed. The Ottomans convinced him to convert and appointed him as galiot captain with 15 *akçe* per diem.²⁰⁸

The Ottomans had a practice of giving tax concessions to local people who cooperated with them. This cooperation included their participation in clandestine operations. For instance, a Mehmed who convinced the population to peacefully surrender the castle of Kyrenia and brought the keys to the Ottomans was given such a concession; he would not pay “*tekalif-i örfiyye ve avarız-ı divaniyye*”.²⁰⁹ There were also villages (*dilci*) that were entrusted, in exchange for similar tax concessions, with the task of informing the nearby military garrisons of incoming pirates, corsairs and smugglers.²¹⁰

3.6.2. Favours

Spies used all the advantages of state employment and sought other types of rewards in addition to their salaries. Requests for favors followed one another, demonstrating the great diversity of ways in which governments could compensate their agents' services.

The authorities found themselves responsible for their spies' families. On several occasions, they asked favors for family members. Some extracted money using their families as an alibi. In 1565, Giovanni Maria Renzo lamented that he was penniless after having spent a fortune while moving his household from Genoa to Naples on Viceroy's

²⁰⁷ AGS, E 1068, fol. 31 (9 January 1575). In another example, Ka'id Mehmed who brought information from Algiers was given the *sancak* of Cherchell. BOA, MD, XXV, no. 1163 (H. 13 Zilhicce 981/A.D. 13 December 1574).

²⁰⁸ AGS, E 1054, fol. 215 (19 October 1565).

²⁰⁹ BOA, MD, XIII, no. 684 (H. 26 Z. 978/A.D. 21 May 1571).

²¹⁰ BOA, MD, XVIII, no. 217 (H. 3 Ş 979 / A.D. 20 December 1571).

orders. Her sick wife got worse with the change of air and his family needed the crown's help in order to survive during Renzo's absence while in mission.²¹¹ In 1577, Aurelio Santa Croce used his 19 year-old daughter to ask for an *ayuda de costa* which would relieve his financial troubles. His king would help his daughter marry, as he had done so with his other daughter before, by conceding this money.²¹² Even though most of the times should one take such declarations with a grain of salt,²¹³ some of these spies were genuinely looking out for their relatives. Jerónimo Bucchia asked for a *merced* for his widower sister who was financially struggling since his husband died.²¹⁴ In 1579, the Habsburg informant on the Ottoman Navy, Juan Briones, asked for the crown's help for his brother who worked as a scribe for a Spanish noble. He was maltreated and persecuted on the ground that his mother was a *Moro*; a slander to the poor woman who was currently a slave in Algiers and had been born in Tripolis to Christian parents.²¹⁵ Pedro Brea asked for a *merced* of 40 ducats for his sons until they reached the age of service to the king and a special *gracia* to his oldest son: a reserve spot for the office *capitan de campana de tierra de lavoro*.²¹⁶ It was not Brea's first time asking for a position for a family member. In 1580, Giovanni Margliani wrote to his superiors to convince the Bishop of Albegna to allow Pedro Brea's brother to be a priest.²¹⁷ 16 years later, this time Pedro Brea himself asked for a suitable position in the Church for his

²¹¹ AGS, *E* 1054, fol. 189 (7 September 1565).

²¹² AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 190. He succeeded and was given a *merced* of 500 ducats. AGS, *E* 1074, fol. 56 (20 October 1577).

²¹³ The fact that Aurelio wanted the payment to be made secretly without notifying his creditors clearly demonstrates the credibility (or lack thereof) of this debt-ridden spy, under the suspicion of many financial irregularities.

²¹⁴ BNE, *Correspondencia del Cardenal Granvela*, ms. 7905/168, Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 104-5.

²¹⁵ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 24 (19 February 1579).

²¹⁶ AGS, *E* 1094, fols. 231 and 237.

²¹⁷ AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 66 (12 November 1580).

brother who had then become a Franciscan and a doctor in theology.²¹⁸ In another example, Papa Acida secured the office of *viceportulano* in Messina for his brother.²¹⁹ Families of the deceased spies also sought state employment, accentuating the fact that a relative of theirs sacrificed his life in the service of the state, such as the son of Antonio Barato whose wish to be appointed as either a *sansaria* in *Fontego dei Tedeschi*, a *fantaria* or a *massaria* was rejected.²²⁰ Finally, the crown could also solve family members' legal problems as it did in 1582 by having Don Cesar de la Mara's sons legitimized.²²¹

The Habsburgs used religious posts as means of reward as well. Giovanni Barelli was given an *encomienda* in the order of St. John²²² while Martin de Acuña was rewarded with an entrance to that of St. James.²²³ Süleyman Pasha's brother who offered his services to go to Constantinople for talks of a truce in 1543 was offered the post of a bishop.²²⁴ Jerónimo Bucchia went so far as to ask for the intervention of the Habsburg ambassador in Rome, Diego de Mendoza, to secure the Archbishopric of Ragusa for one of his relatives, even though in the end he had to settle for his acceptance to the Dominican congregation in Ragusa.²²⁵

Some sought central governments' intervention in solving a problem. A slave in Algiers, Captain Geronimo de Mendoza, for instance, was sending information with the

²¹⁸ AGS, *E* 1094, fol. 233 (c. 1596). Although acknowledging the need to compensate his useful services, the former Viceroy of Sicily still advised against such nepotism. AGS, *E* 1094, fol. 236. For other similar examples, see. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 164r-164v (30 June 1571).

²¹⁹ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 259.

²²⁰ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 78v (27 January 1575, m.v.).

²²¹ AGS, *E* 1527, fols. 100 (4 January 1582) and 129 (6 October 1582).

²²² AGS, *E* 1132, fol. 194 (12 November 1569).

²²³ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 259.

²²⁴ AGS, *E* 1497, libro *E* 66, fol. 63 (7 January 1543).

²²⁵ BNE, *Correspondencia del Cardenal Granvela*, ms. 7905/174, ff. 2v-4r; ms. 7905/187, f. 1r; Masiá, *Jerónimo*, 94-7, 143-4.

hope that the authorities could exchange him for a Muslim slave.²²⁶ In 1563, Philip II authorized the ransoming of a slave called *Esmeradin Calfa* from the Knights of St. John in Malta and fulfilled Giovanni Maria Renzo's promise to one of Habsburg informants in Constantinople called Murad Ağa alias Gregorio Bregante.²²⁷ A Habsburg informant and an important figure in Ottoman-Habsburg negotiations, Salomon Ashkenazi was similarly given compensation for his goods captured by the Sicilian fleet.²²⁸ When he asked for the *assoluzione* of a Jew who was sentenced to 12 year confinement in Cerigo, he would face rejection from the Venetian authorities. Even though they held Ashkenazi in high esteem, the Venetians cited their hesitation to disturb "the matters of justice." Nonetheless, they saw no harm in authorizing the payment of a large sum to appease Ashkenazi.²²⁹

A more interesting petition came from the renegades in Constantinople who asked for the intervention of the Habsburg ambassador in Rome in securing the benediction and absolution of the Pope, in case they were to die doing their duty in Constantinople.²³⁰ Some sought concessions to better their insufficient funds. Marino Zamagni, the Habsburg resident agent in Ragusa, asked for the concession to carry and sell wheat in Naples in 1539.²³¹ In 1552, Jerónimo Bucchia made a similar request. He asked for the concession of the "*tratta ordinario*" to carry 300 carts (*carros*) of grain and as much wine with the profit of which he promised to send several spies to Constantinople.²³² Grain and wine trade were lucrative business at the time and it was only natural for spies who had connections on both sides to ask for similar concessions. Another interesting example in a

²²⁶ AGS, *E* 487, 19 March 1570 and ff.

²²⁷ AGS, *E* 1056 fol. 56 (28 July 1563).

²²⁸ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 98 (1 April 1579).

²²⁹ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 23r-24r (18, 23, 25 and 30 August 1574).

²³⁰ AGS, *E* 1140, fol. 108. (8 May 1567).

²³¹ AGS, *E* 1314, fol. 134; his proposal, however, was rejected by the authorities, *E* 1315, fol. 212 (23 May 1539).

²³² AGS, *E* 1044, fol. 40 (8 April 1552).

similar fashion, even though not from the Mediterranean, is that of the Viscount of Chauz who was granted the license to pass two horses through the Spanish-French border.²³³

The following example can tell us the diversity of favours that states could grant. After the disastrous fire in the Arsenal in 1569, the Council of Ten decided to offer Lorenzo Cuchini, who offered to denounce the criminals, a series of favours. According to this, apart from the lump sum money he was to receive, he was also offered a *voce liberar bandito* with which he could revoke the *bando* of anybody who were exiled from the Venetian possessions, save for those who had certain exceptional conditions. Furthermore, he would also receive half of the goods to be confiscated from the criminals he would denounce.²³⁴

When states neglected their responsibilities towards their agents, they risked the efficiency of their intelligence networks and security of their spies. In 1564, Amerigo Balassa, one of the spies whom the viceroy of Sicily sent to Constantinople, was frustrated because he was not paid what was due to him. When he decided to take his vengeance, he offered the Ottoman Grand Admiral to catch Balthasar Prototico in Corfu, and almost succeeded.²³⁵ Another Habsburg spy, sent from Naples to Morea, was furious because the Viceroy refused him both the safe-conduct to return and his overdue payments. Furthermore, he had the agent's father imprisoned in Naples. Martin de Acuña had to intervene on his behalf to the Habsburg authorities, as the furious agent threatened to denounce to the Ottomans the special signals (*las señas*) used by the Habsburg spies in

²³³ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 104.

²³⁴ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 48r-48v (29 December 1569) and 63r-64r (31 march 1570). There was also an improved offer on the table, three times the money (2000 ducats) and two *voci liberar banditi*.

²³⁵ He went to the nearby island of Zante with a frigate and pretended to have come from Sicily to collect the letters for the Viceroy. When Prototico was about to fall into the trap and bring the letters personally, the frigate left the port hurriedly, having seen a Maltese ship coming into the port. AGS, E 1056, fol. 217.

Constantinople as well as their identities. Fortunately, he was given a safe-conduct to return to Naples and if the authorities heeded de Acuña's advice, he must have never returned to the Levant.²³⁶

From certain petitions, it is possible to get a grasp of additional assurances the state employment brought to these spies.

First, spies expected to be taken care of in one way or another in case things were to go wrong. After having to leave Zante because he was in danger, the Rhodesian Michel Candi, one of Balthasar Prototico's couriers, petitioned for the crown's help in settling him and his family in Messina and asked for a *tratenimiento* "in accordance with his merits" in the Kingdom of Sicily.²³⁷ States extended their care and protection and ensured the security of their spies' families as well when some misfortune befell them during a mission in a far away land. For instance, the Duke of Terranova accepted without hesitation the responsibility of the child which Francisco Peloso entrusted to his care before he went to the Levant on a dangerous mission.²³⁸ Similarly, when he was a target of Venetian assassins, Michel Černovic entrusted the future of his children to the care of his employer, the Emperor himself.²³⁹ The Venetian Council of Ten was the most generous. They gave Giovanni Antonio Barata, a potential spy set for the Levant, the assurance that his family would be well taken care of. His wife and children were to be given 50 ducats to move to Bergamo where they would live under Venetian protection with a monthly stipend of 6 ducats for the duration of Barata's mission in the Levant. This amount could be increased based on the success of his mission. In case of his death,

²³⁶ AGS, *E* 1078, fol. 60, Five letters of Martin de Acuña, see 16 and 27 January.

²³⁷ AGS, *E* 1056, fols. 218-220 (c. 1568).

²³⁸ AGS, *E* 1144, fol. 96 (9 August 1575). The mission was to poison Uluç Ali and his captains and set the imperial powder magazine on fire.

²³⁹ Lesure, "Michel Černović", 149.

this money would become a permanent pension for his wife and children for the duration of their lives. When he was decapitated in Constantinople shortly after, the Venetian authorities fulfilled their promise.²⁴⁰ Similarly, the Venetians assured the payment of 200 ducats for one of Giovanni Maria Renzo's sons in case the Renzo was to die during his mission.²⁴¹

Secondly, the authorities transferred unpaid stipends to the inheritors of the deceased spies. In 1584, Rodrigo Zapata left a will asking the transfer of his unpaid 4800 ducats to his inheritors, a request which the Viceroy of Naples approached cautiously and asked for verification.²⁴² More humble amounts met less resistance from the authorities. It was the Habsburg ambassador in Venice, Francisco de Vera, himself who asked that the mother and the sister of his Franciscan spy in Constantinople had to be given "satisfaction" and paid from "extraordinary expenses".²⁴³ Similarly in the Ottoman case, there are examples where sons inherited the *timars* that their fathers who died while gathering information left vacant.²⁴⁴

Thirdly, spies could retire on state pension. Even though he was refused the increase he requested, Don Cesar de la Mara kept his stipend of 200 ducats when, expelled from Ragusa, he had to retire and settle in the Papal States.²⁴⁵ Mathias Vicudo,

²⁴⁰ His family was first given 6 ducats as indicated, ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 48r-48v (29 December 1569), 126v-127r (22 January 1570, m.v.), 198r (15 December 1571). Later, with the supplication of the deceased's wife, this amount was increased to ten. Ibid., reg. 11, cc. 78v (27 January 1575, m.v.).

²⁴¹ Although a Habsburg agent, Renzo also worked for the Venetians. During his visit to the laguna in 1571, he proposed a plot to incite a rebellion in Narenta as a result of which he would, in cooperation with the Venetian Captain-General of the Sea, conquer the Ottoman Castelnuovo. The Venetians took the plan seriously and gave him and two of his accomplices considerable amount of money as well as war materials. They also assured the security of the families of two other accomplices in case the plan failed and given that the two did their part. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 160r-160v (10 May 1571); 162r (12 May 1571, 15 May 1571).

²⁴² AGS, *E* 1087, fol. 244.

²⁴³ AGS, *E* 1348, K 1677, fol. 135 (30 June 1601).

²⁴⁴ BOA, *MD*, I, nos. 13 and 610.

²⁴⁵ AGS, *E* 1527, fols. 131 (4 October 1582) and 156 (17 June 1582).

another Habsburg resident spy in Ragusa, mentioned his desire to leave the city and enjoy his *jubileo* as his age and “*indispositiones*” required, hinting that it was time for him to retire. He had asthma and was limping so bad that it “could have moved a tiger to compassion”.²⁴⁶ Giovanni Margliani after having successfully completed his mission and returned to Madrid, was given a benefice (*feudo*) in the Duchy of Milan worth 450 escudos per annum; an amount which, after six years of work and 40 months of troubled residence in Constantinople, did not satisfy the spy-cum-diplomat at all.²⁴⁷

3.6.3. Hardships

In exchange for all these pay-offs, spies had to endure many hardships and perils. Firstly, states’ counter-intelligence went to great lengths in order to detect enemy spies, whom they often punished severely: imprisonment, torture and even execution. Even when they were operating in the territory of a neutral state such as Venice and Ragusa, the authorities, aware of the potential problems their activities may cause, expelled them.

During one of his voyages, a spy might contract an illness that would cause much inconvenience in a far away and hostile land. In 1575, Giovanni Antonio Santa Croce, for instance, was stuck in Dalmatia for two months when he almost died from an illness.²⁴⁸ Problems created by epidemics that were rampant in early modern cities were further aggravated by the fact that most of the intelligence activity was concentrated on capitals and that spies had to travel through trade centers. A spy could easily perish in a plague epidemic; if he managed to survive, what awaited him on his return would still be the quarantine, as was the case with the Habsburg spy Miguel Sagui in Corfu.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ AGS, E 1517/cuaderno IV, fol. 1 (29 August 1575).

²⁴⁷ AGS, E 1528, fol. 161 (18 May 1583).

²⁴⁸ AGS, E 1066, fol. 123 (24 February 1575).

²⁴⁹ AGS, E 1047, fol. 163 (6 June 1554).

Spies were constantly afraid of being denounced by enemy agents or detected by counter-intelligence mechanisms. However, sometimes personal rivalries among spies in the same network could create similar problems. These rivalries were more than natural between spies who had to compete for governments' favor and who generally showed no contempt for unscrupulous means such as assassination, fraud, theft, sabotage and deceit for reaching their personal ends. Three Habsburg agents that were part of the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations, Bartolomeo Brutti, Aurelio Santa Croce and Giovanni Margliani, for instance, fell out with each other. The division among them not only exasperated the Habsburg authorities who eventually removed Brutti and Santa Croce from the mission, but also gave leverage to the Ottomans who took advantage of such divisions in the negotiations. Being left in Naples and out of the negotiation process of a truce, Santa Croce wrote letters to the Ottomans, denouncing Margliani's conduct and urging them not to sign the truce without the dispatch of an official ambassador.²⁵⁰ When Margliani finally signed the truce, Aurelio complained to the Habsburg authorities about its content, this time from his prison cell in Madrid where he was because of his debts.²⁵¹ Similarly, Bartolomeo Brutti on the one hand complained about Margliani to the Habsburg authorities,²⁵² and on the other tried to sabotage his mission in Constantinople.²⁵³ Two examples of his intrigues would suffice to demonstrate the extent of the damages these may have caused. When the negotiations are at a deadlock and the Ottomans refused Margliani the license to return, Brutti offered him to arrange his escape from the Ottoman capital. When Margliani rejected, he then accused him of planning to

²⁵⁰ AGS, *E* 1076, fol. 45 (24 October 1577); *E* 1077, fol. 25 (25 January 1578).

²⁵¹ AGS, *E* 1083, fol. 86 (1581).

²⁵² AGS, *E* 1337, fol. 21 (10 February 1580).

²⁵³ AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 2 (2 February 1580).

run away from Constantinople in front of the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, in an effort to destroy his reputation.²⁵⁴ In the second example, he told Uluç Ali's slaves that Margliani usurped the money that Philip II gave him to ransom them and created a tumult in Uluç Ali's slave barracks. Margliani, who himself employed a number of informants in these barracks, was barely saved from the disastrous consequences of being denounced by one of the infuriated slaves, Gaspar Ligerio, when another slave fought with him.²⁵⁵ There was a similar enmity between Martin de Acuña and Pietro Lanza, the Habsburg corsair-cum-spy in Naples. One of de Acuña's men, Fabio Bordon accused Lanza of informing his arrival to Janina and thus being responsible for the attack targeting him.²⁵⁶ Among the rank-and-file of intelligence networks, less responsible spies could even shed each other's blood. While a company of five Habsburg spies were travelling from Constantinople, two of them killed another, an old enemy of theirs, and then ran away taking two of the best horses. Needless to say, this jeopardized the security of what was left of the entire company at a time when the Ottomans were searching for them in every ship.²⁵⁷

3.7. FAMILIAL CONNECTIONS AND ESPIONAGE

If espionage was about establishing networks, it was natural that familial relations played an important role in the process. A couple of factors increased the importance of families in early modern espionage.

²⁵⁴ AGS, *E* 1080, fols. 44 and 46 (4 July 1579). Margliani was furious: "I did not have to write that he was a traitor; no, this is the greatest betrayal in this world."

²⁵⁵ Armed with clubs (*palo*), the two slaves would almost kill each other if the Habsburg agent Pedro Brea did not intervene. AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 5 (29 February 1580).

²⁵⁶ AGS, *E* 1077, fol. 25 (25 January 1578).

²⁵⁷ AGS, *E* 1059, fols. 51 and 52 (14 June 1571).

First of all, in the early modern Mediterranean there was a general tendency among the families towards specialization in a profession. This trend became more apparent when families sought lucrative position in the military and administrative apparati of empires. Fathers trained their sons from an early age and the latter succeeded the former. Requests were made to ensure the employment of a kin and such favors were occasionally granted. It was a prerogative to be employed by central governments, a fact which spies were aware of as well.

Given that there was no established concept of training in the 16th century, those who attained the required level of specialization and complex skills of secret diplomacy from their families had a natural advantage. This was true especially in those cases where the head of the family was also the head of an intelligence gathering network, such as Balthasar Prototico who used his sons Anibal and Nicolò and his nephew Juan Manioti in different positions in his network.²⁵⁸ His was not the only family that gathered information in the Ionian Islands under Venetian control. The Habsburgs employed others such as Latinos who served in Zante and Venice.²⁵⁹ It was common that a relative inherited the task of a deceased network leader. This was what happened in 1567 when Lorenzo Miniati, the Habsburg spymaster in Ragusa, died and his nephew Dino replaced him.²⁶⁰ Even though Dino was shortly after expelled from the city because of the

²⁵⁸ He also had another nephew, Alexander Manioti who worked for the imperial ambassador in Constantinople and sent Balthasar regular information. See. AGS, *E* 1056 fols. 229 and 230 (30 April 1569).

²⁵⁹ Giovanni K. Hassiotis, "Venezia e i domini Veneziani tramite di informazioni sui Turchi per gli Spagnoli nel sec. XVI", in *Venezia centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente, secoli XV-XVI: Aspetti e problemi*, ed. Hans Georg Beck et al., vol. I, 129. A Zorzi Latino was active in 1617. ASV, *IS*, b. 416, (28 October 1617).

²⁶⁰ AGS, *E* 1056, fols. 84 (13 September 1567)

Ottoman pressure on Ragusa,²⁶¹ the Florentine family moved to Otranto and continued their regular business. In 1571, a Juan Miniati was spying for the Habsburgs in Corfu.²⁶²

Apart from the expertise, connections that these families enjoyed in strategic places were important as well. First of all, some of these families belonged to the local elite such as the Bucchia family from Cattaro that enjoyed extensive connections in the coastal cities of Dalmatia under Venetian control. Jerónimo's father and cousin were captains of the Venetian galleys in the region. Two of his relatives became professors of theology while he himself may have died as the Bishop of Cattaro.²⁶³ One did not have to come from a local family to establish good relations and important connections. When Ruggero Margliani, for instance, arrived in Ragusa as an unofficial Habsburg envoy destined for Constantinople, he was welcomed by the Ragusan authorities in great enthusiasm. He was even allowed to stay in Archbishop's house until he found himself one, all thanks to his father Giovanni Margliani's connections in the city.²⁶⁴

Certain families used their trade networks in different parts of the Mediterranean for gathering information. The best example of how merchant families used their agencies to gather information should be the letters sent by the correspondents of the House of Fugger, the "*Fugger zeitung*" that brought together information from all around the world for one of the richest and most influential banker families of the 16th century.²⁶⁵ There were other families with more modest networks that lent their services to both empires. These little Fuggers made important contribution not only in information

²⁶¹ AGS, *E* 1056, fols. 84 and 118.

²⁶² Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 210.

²⁶³ We cannot be sure whether Jerónimo Bucchia who died in 1603 as the Bishop of Cattaro was the same person with our network leader. Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 13, 26-7.

²⁶⁴ The owner was away. AGS, *E* 1541, fol. 198, (12 November 1591). Giovanni Margliani had a second son, Ercole, who was also employed by the Habsburgs. AGS, *E* 1539, fol. 272 (6 May 1587).

²⁶⁵ Klarwill, *Fugger Newsletters*. See for the author's criticism of some historians who depicted these newsletters in a fashion almost similar to newspapers, pp. xiii-xix.

gathering, but also in other aspects of the secret diplomacy in the 16th century Mediterranean. For instance, five Gasparo Corso brothers each of whom resided in a different Mediterranean port city such as Valencia, Algiers, Barcelona and Marseille offered their family networks to central governments' employ. These Corsican merchants not only ran a trade agency between these port cities, but also coordinated diplomacy and trade between northern Mediterranean and North Africa by engaging in information gathering, translation of documents, ransoming Christian slaves and the negotiation of commercial agreements between Europe and North Africa. The brother in Algiers, Andrea negotiated the defection of a number of important corsairs including Uluç Ali to the Habsburg side, while Francisco, his brother in Valencia, reported the details of these negotiations and transmitted the information that he sent to the Habsburg authorities.²⁶⁶ Andrea also befriended the pretender to the Moroccan throne Abdu'l-Melik who was in exile in Algiers. When the latter acquired the throne with the Ottoman help in 1576, Andrea accompanied him to Morocco and became the middleman in his dealings with Lisbon and Madrid.²⁶⁷ A third brother, Felipe carried information between Algiers and Barcelona.²⁶⁸

Family members dispersed along the Mediterranean shores were useful as well to the extent that relatives kept their connections. Another good example of how such connections could be useful for information gathering is the story of the Ayala family which consisted of three "*Múdejar*" brothers from Malaga. One of them, Alonso de

²⁶⁶ AGS, E 487, passim.

²⁶⁷ Dahiru Yahya, *Morocco in the Sixteenth Century: Problems and Patterns in African Policy* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), 71. When Abdu'l-Melik died, Andrea was also proposed as the medium between Philip II and the new Sultan of Morocco, Ahmed al-Mansur, Ibid., 102.

²⁶⁸ AGS, E 487, Bishop of Cuenca to Francesco Gasparo Corso (30 November 1569), AGS E 487 Philip II to Count of Benavente (30 November 1569).

Ayala ran away from the Habsburg fortress of Djerba and defected to the Ottoman side to once again become Muslim in front of the famous corsair, Turgud Re'is. After a two year stay in Tripolis, an Ottoman city since 1551, he went to Constantinople where he got married with another “*Múdejar*” and opened a shop in the Galata quartier. After learning how to mint coins (*l'arte d'argentero/monedero/thesorero*) in Trapani, the other brother Ernando de Ayala ended up in the fortress of la Goleta as a soldier. A third, whose name is not cited in the document, was a scribe to the commander of the same fortress. Three brothers set up an intelligence network through which crucial information from la Goleta flowed to the renegade brother in Constantinople who in turn informed Sokollu Mehmed and Piyale Pashas. The Habsburgs were caught off guard, only to detect this network thanks to the warning of the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John in Malta.²⁶⁹ The Genoese Franchis family used their trade connections in the service of secret diplomacy as well. Spy-cum-merchant Francesco de Franchis, not only negotiated for the Genoese in the Ottoman capital,²⁷⁰ but also tried to start talks between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in 1558-9 for a tentative truce, yet in vain.²⁷¹ In the following years, other members of the Franchis family performed important functions for both the Habsburgs and the Venetians.²⁷² Adam de Franchis negotiated the ransoming of Spanish and Italians who had fallen captive at the Battle of Djerba, and became one of the leaders of the

²⁶⁹ AGS, *E* 1132, fol. 28 (4 December 1567).

²⁷⁰ ASG, *Costantinopoli*, 1.2169.

²⁷¹ AGS, *E* 485, Instruction del Rey a Nicolò Secco para tratar con el Turco (6 March 1559); *E* 1323, fols. 232 (6 October 1559), 243-244 (20 de Enero 1559) and 281 (8 April 1559).

²⁷² Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 34.

Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople. His brother, Galeão de Franchis²⁷³ and his nephew Francesco Piloso²⁷⁴ also offered their services to Habsburgs authorities.

For those who had relatives in important positions, family connections appeared as a precious commodity. The Habsburgs employed several agents who offered to capitalize on their familial connections in Constantinople and Algiers. For example, in 1553, the Habsburg ambassador in Genoa offered the authorities to send Antonio Salvarezza to Constantinople under the pretense of trading and ransoming slaves where he in fact would contact his relative, the “principal dragoman” of the Ottoman Sultan, Giorgio Salvarezza and send information to the Habsburgs.²⁷⁵ Spy-cum-conspirators Dionisio and Joan de la Vecchia, who offered Habsburgs, among many things, the surrender of the Ottoman castle of Scutari,²⁷⁶ were relatives of the Ottoman vizier Ayas Pasha. The nephew Joan even stayed in the Pasha’s house in Constantinople. The Pasha even ironically ordered to the newly appointed governor of the very castle which the two conspirators tried to surrender to the Habsburgs to favor the uncle Dionisio.²⁷⁷

Some tried to convince their relatives in the Ottoman palace to return to Christianity. For instance, after having found himself in Constantinople as a prisoner-of-war, Diego de Mallorca, the *Padre Vicario* of la Goleta, negotiated in such fashion with his relatives. He contacted his renegade cousin, Hasan Ağa, *alias* Marco Antonio, the secretary of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Hasan’s mother Leonora Spalleta, a maid of Piyale Pasha’s wife, an Ottoman princess. Both expressed their desire to return to

²⁷³ AGS, *E* 1334, fol. 17 (5 March 1575).

²⁷⁴ AGS, *E* 1137, fol. 53 (17 March 1572); *E* 1144, fols. 96 (9 August 1575) and 122 (21 October 1575); *E* 1145, fol. 54 (9 February 1576).

²⁷⁵ AGS, *E* 1383, fols. 51 and 113.

²⁷⁶ AGS, *E* 1310, fols. 76 (29 November 1533) and 195-197; *E* 1312, fols. 121-122 (11 May 1536).

²⁷⁷ AGS, *E* 1312, fol. 161 (8 September 1536)

Christianity and asked Philip II's intervention in securing the benediction and the absolution of the Pope.²⁷⁸ Carlo Cicala, the brother of the Ottoman Grand Admiral, Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha *alias* Scipione Cicala,²⁷⁹ went to the Levant with permission from Habsburgs authorities²⁸⁰ in order to enter into negotiations with his brother. Needless to say, he received instructions from the authorities before he settled in the island of Chios whence he sent regular information to the Habsburg authorities.²⁸¹ He stayed in the Ottoman Empire for a long time, -he was still negotiating his brother's defection in 1602,²⁸² making one think that the information he sent justified his presence in the Levant despite his failure in convincing his brother to return to Christianity.²⁸³

The renegade Ottoman grandees also tried to use their familial ties for the sake of secret diplomacy, proving Krstić's point that conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Empire does not necessarily entail severance with one's former ties.²⁸⁴ Carlo Cicala may have gone to the Levant to negotiate with his brother; nevertheless, it should not be forgotten

²⁷⁸ AGS, *E* 1144, fols. 207 and 208 (identical, 24 February 1575) and 209 (24 March 1575). Even though on the back of the document in fol. 207 reads "*de la muger de Pialy Bassa*", Leonora should be the maid of Piyale's only wife. (According to the Ottoman custom, one had to divorce all his other wives when getting married to an Ottoman princess, which Piyale did in 1562) Still, someone else's hand added the following inexplicable statement to the end of the letter: "*la señora tia del padre vicario [Leonora] juntamente con la sultana nuestra hermana besan las reales manos de su real alteza*". Since he also had a Christian name, Hasan should have been born as Christian before his mother was brought to Constantinople as a slave.

²⁷⁹ See. Iliaro Rinieri, *Clemente VIII e Sinan Bassà Cicala* (Roma: Civiltà Cattolica, 1898); Gaetano Oliva, "Sinan-Bassà (Scipione Cicala), celebre rinnegato del secolo XVI", *Archivio Storico Messinese Anni VIII-IX* (1907-1908): 266-303; Gino Benzoni, "Cicala, Scipione (Čigala-Zade Yûsuf Sinân)", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 25 (1981), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scipione-cicala_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scipione-cicala_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

²⁸⁰ The permission was granted after long correspondence between Habsburg authorities. AGS, *E* 1344 K 1675, fols. 4 (13 September 1590), 8 (8 December 1590), 44 (30 April 1591), 70 (3 July 1591), 125 (16 February 1592) and 150 (12 December 1592); *E* 1885, fol. 6 (June 1592).

²⁸¹ Carlo received specific instructions in Venice and Naples. AGS, *E* 1157, fols. 151 (26 February 1593) and 152.

²⁸² AGS, *E* 1160, fols. 116 (9 June 1602), 139 (25 September 1602) and 140 (12 October 1602); *E* 1885, fol. 144 (15 December 1602).

²⁸³ He had regular access to his brother; at one point Scipione even stayed at his house in Chios with the Ottoman navy anchored in the port. AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 26 (3 November 1594). This access allowed him to send precise information whose quality was exalted by the Viceroy of Naples, the Count Olivares. AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 30 (30 December 1594).

²⁸⁴ Tijana Krstić, "Narrating Conversions to Islam: The Dialogue of Texts and Practices in Early Modern Ottoman Balkans" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2004).

that it was Cigalazade who first wanted to see his brother.²⁸⁵ In addition, ironically as Carlo failed to convert his brother to Christianity, the Ottomans tried to convert Carlo to Islam as well.²⁸⁶ Theirs was by no means a doomed effort. A nephew of Cigalazade had already converted and become the *kapucıbaşı* Mustafa Ağa, while his mother was in fact born a Muslim. The daughter of an Ottoman notable from Castelnuovo, she had fallen captive to corsairs, converted and then got married with the father Cicala, Visconte.²⁸⁷ When he invited his brother, “the apple of his eyes”, could Cigalazade have thought of using him as a spy? According to the Venetian documents, even though he refused to convert, Carlo seems to be well-integrated in Ottoman circles. He was highly esteemed by the Venetian bailo who agreed to give a letter of reference for his brother-in-law who would go to Venice with letters written by Scipione.²⁸⁸ The latter not only secured for Carlo the governorship of the “Aegean Archipelago” (Naxos), but also used him for his intelligence activities, resulting in the awkward situation where an Ottoman governor was recruiting spies in his native Sicily. In 1600, he sailed off from Messina accompanied by a Genoese spy-cum-ransom agent-cum-military engineer (*professor di cose militari*) for Chios. The two stopped in Corfu where the Genoese copied the designs of the fortress to

²⁸⁵ AGS, E 1344 K 1675, fol. 44 (30 April 1591).

²⁸⁶ The Venetian bailo Marco Venier reported that there were some who asked *Müfti* whether Carlo could be forced to convert given that he was born to a Muslim woman. COSP, vol. 9, no. 198 (3 August 1593). In order to convince Carlo to change his religion, Mehmed Ağa, the Sultan’s favourite, even sent him a book named *Apologia* penned by a former Genovese Augustinian friar who himself converted to Islam. The author was an important person. He was a priest, preacher, theologian and finally a general of the Augustinians for 3 years and twice the nuncio of Pope Sixtus V in England. AGS, E 1158, fols. 53 (15 June 1595), 55 (30 March 1595) and 62 (10 May 1595). For other Christian clergy who converted to Islam and wrote similar treatises, narrating the process of their conversion and accentuating the superiority of Islam over other religions, see. Tjana Krstić, “Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009): 35-63.

²⁸⁷ Pedani, “Veneziani a Costantinopoli”, 71-72. Also see. AGS, E 1080, fol. 58 (3 August 1579).

²⁸⁸ BMC, mss. Donà delle Rose 147, *Lettere di Marco Venier, bailo a Costantinopoli*, 1594, letters dated 25 July 1594.

be given to the Ottomans.²⁸⁹ Cigalazade was not the only renegade who brought a family member and sought employment opportunities for them. Suleyman I's favourite and brother-in-law, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha had both his parents convert to Islam, secured the governorship of a *sandjak* near Parga for his father and ensured the induction of his two brothers to the Palace School (*Enderûn*).²⁹⁰ In a similar fashion, the Grand Admiral Hasan "Veneziano" was in contact with his family members in Venice. His brother-in-law came to Constantinople to ask for Hasan's reference for the *Signoria*. Hasan also brought to his side his cousin Livio Celeste who spied for him, albeit with poor results. He was caught and imprisoned on several occasions, in Malta, Marseille and Naples.²⁹¹ Other similar examples of influential renegades who brought their relatives to Constantinople for whom they sought to secure important positions in the capital included the chief of the white eunuch in the Ottoman palace Gazanfer and one of his *ağas*, Ömer.²⁹²

One family deserves special attention even though we will return to them in Chapter Six. The Gritti network that consisted of spies and confidants employed by Alvise Gritti, became a key component of the Ottoman intelligence during the time of Ibrahim Pasha (o. 1523-1536), Alvise's protector. The illegitimate son of the Venetian doge Andrea Gritti (o. 1523-1538) and the mistress he had while he was a grain merchant

²⁸⁹ ASV, *IS*, b. 460, 25 July 1600.

²⁹⁰ Eugenio Albèri, ed., *Le Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto* (Firenze: Società Editrice Firoentina, 1855), Serie III, Vol. III, 97 and 103.

²⁹¹ In his final capture in 1590, Hasan Veneziano vowed to roast all the Neapolitan and Spaniards that fell in his hands alive if the Viceroy of Naples was to kill his cousin. The Viceroy seemed to have taken him seriously given that Livio returned to Algiers where he died and buried in the *türbe* of Hasan Veneziano. Fabris, "Hasan 'il Veneziano'", 59-61.

²⁹² For details, see. Pedani, "Veneziani a Costantinopoli", 67-84; Dursteler, *Renegade Women*, Chapters One and Two. The Venetians were aware of all these, ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 8, c. 3v (14 Luglio 1590), 32r (15 February 1590, m.v.). There were also other similar examples. ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 19, fol. 81 (16 December 1608).

in Constantinople, Alvise followed the example of his father who managed to build important connections in the Ottoman capital, sent regular information to Venice and, at the absence of an official bailo, negotiated the treaty that ended the 1499-1503 War.²⁹³ Alvise left Venice for Constantinople where he befriended, obviously capitalizing on his father's connections in the city, the Ottoman Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha and even Sultan Suleyman. Engaging in the game of high politics, he used his connections on both sides of the Mediterranean and lent his personal network to the Ottoman service. Although his father, a war hero and the Doge of Venice, was never comfortable with his son's influential position in Constantinople,²⁹⁴ Alvise refused to return to Venice and stayed in Constantinople where he seemed to have other members from his family by his side. His son Antonio was along his side in his adventures in Hungary,²⁹⁵ while his brothers, Zorzi and Lorenzo, were a part of his network of intelligence and diplomacy and, after Alvise's death, still influential diplomatic mediators between the Ottomans and the Venetians.

Among other participants of secret diplomacy, certain families gained prominence, once again attesting to the importance of familial relations and patronage in the early modern military and administrative structures. The families of Pérez and Idiáquez dominated the prestigious and influential office of "secretary of state" for decades. Gonzalo Pérez, the secretary of Charles V since 1543, trained his son Antonio

²⁹³ J.C. Davis, "Shipping and spying in the early career of a Venetian doge, 1496-1502", *Studi Veneziani* XVI (1974): 97-108. Andrea was also sent as an ambassador to Constantinople for the final ratification of the treaty. Obviously the Serenissima was trying to capitalize on "*la gratia che ha[i] appresso quelli signori*". For the instructions given to him and the letters he sent to Venice during his voyage to and stay in Constantinople in 1503, see the first two parts of the BNM, IT. VII. 878 (8652) Andrea Gritti, *Copialettere*.

²⁹⁴ For correspondence between the father and the son, see. ASV, *SDC*, fil. 1-A, the separate folder entitled *lettere di Alvise Gritti al padre Andrea Doge, da Costantinopoli*, fols.1-9 (1525). Not that Andrea Gritti refrained from using his son's influential position in the Ottoman capital for solving Venice's problems. For instance, in 1533, a year of bad harvest and *penuria di grano*, he asked for his son's mediation for the Sultan's permission for Venetian ships to import grain from the Ottoman Empire. Francesco della Valle, *Vita di Alvise Gritti*, Biblioteca Marciana, It VI 122 (6211), cc. 19r-20r.

²⁹⁵ Francesco della Valle, *Vita di Alvise Gritti*, Biblioteca Marciana, It VI 122 (6211), Mss. Italiani, Serie VI, 122 (6211), ff. but especially 12v, 18r.

who succeeded him a year after his death in 1566. After Antonio's fall in 1579, another family took the reins of the office. Juan de Idiáquez, the former ambassador to Venice and the son of Charles V's secretary Alonso de Idiáquez, replaced him. When he decided to retire, two of his relatives resumed his tasks. Francisco took charge of those regarding the Mediterranean and Martin, those concerning Flanders.

In the transmission of news, an important component of information gathering, certain families dominated the scene as well. De Tassis family that had been organizing the couriers between Spain and other Habsburg lands since 1505, monopolized the office of *Correo Mayor General* after Charles V ratified their *asiento* in 1516. Members of this family served the crown in other capacities as well, such as that of an ambassador. Juan Baptista de Tassis negotiated the Treaty of Vervins and defended the interests of his king in Paris for years. Another family who specialized in carrying correspondence was the Balaban family that took charge of carrying Habsburg correspondence between Lyon and Madrid.²⁹⁶ The veteran Habsburg courier between Constantinople and Naples, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari also had a brother Giovanni who was receiving the letter his brother sent from Constantinople to Venice.²⁹⁷

The training that a family member could provide was unsurprisingly a decisive factor in the demanding science of cryptography. The remarkable family of cryptologists, the Argenti, monopolized the office of cipher secretaryship of the Papal States and "left their impress upon cryptology" in spite of remaining in office for less than 20 years.²⁹⁸ The remarkable talent of cipher secretary Zuanne Francesco Marin persuaded the Council of Ten to order him to train his son, who would share his "natural inclination" to

²⁹⁶ AGS, E 1344 K 1675, fols. 66, 74 (13 July 1591) and 89 (16 August 1591).

²⁹⁷ AGS, E 1539, fol. 276 (1 April 1587).

²⁹⁸ Kahn, *Codebreakers*, 112-3.

cryptography, alongside his nephew.²⁹⁹ The Marin family would occupy the position of *cifrista* for generations.³⁰⁰ When a talented *cifrista* died and the burden of his family fell upon the state's shoulders, it was a common practice of the Council of Ten to secure a place for his underage sons in the Venetian chancellery with special provisions, hinting at their belief that the father's talent would pass to his sons as well.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 77v (25 January 1575, m.v.), 117v-118r (8 January 1576, m.v.), 142r-142v (23 October 1577). Both the son and the nephew successfully passed their exams and inducted among the secretaries of cipher when they reached the age of twenty-five. Ibid., reg. 13, cc. 61v-62r (27 August 1587), 82r-82v (23 January 1590). *Tabelle nominative e cronologiche dei segretari della Cancelleria Ducale*, (BNM, IT. VII. 1667 (8459)) gives us a complete picture of the careers of the members of the Marin family as well as many other secretarial families such as Cavazzo, Milledonne and Assanocia (for the family tree of the latter, see fol. 1v) that have filled the ranks of the secretaries of the Venetian Ducal Chancellery. The founder of the family, Alvise Marin del Zuanne, became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 24 February 1496, m.v., and was promoted first to *Secretario Ordinario* on 17 September 1505 and then to *Secretario di Pregadi* on 12 June 1510 (fol. 4v). Alvise's brother, Marin Marin became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 11 August 1498 and *Secretario Ordinario* on 30 April 1513 (fol. 4v). Alvise had two sons who managed to enter the Chancellery. Zuanne Francesco Marin, the afore-mentioned *cifrista*, became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 21 August 1532, a *Secretario Ordinario* on 29 December 1534, a *Secretario di Pregadi* on 30 December 1545, and finally a *Secretario di Consiglio di Dieci*, on 29 December 1572 (fol. 6r), the second-highest ranking position in the hierarchy of the Ducal Chancellery, the highest being the *Cancellier Grande*. The other son was less successful. Ferigo Marin could not reach further than a *Secretario Straordinario* (fol. 6v, 18 June 1544). Zuanne Francesco Marin also had three secretary sons. Alvise Marin became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 22 September 1561 and a *Secretario Ordinario* on 20 February 1565, m.v. (fol. 7v), while Zuanne remained a *Straordinario* without a promotion (fol. 8r, 27 June 1571). The afore-mentioned Ferigo Marin whom the father was supposed to train as a *cifrista*, had a more successful career than his brothers, demonstrating us the benefits of the art of "*cavar la ziffra*" (Note that the Zuanne Francesco Marin was also more successful than both his father and brother) Ferigo became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 25 January 1575, a *Secretario Ordinario* on 23 September 1577 and a *Secretario di Pregadi* on 22 August 1589 (fol. 8r). Zuanne Francesco's second student, the nephew Alvise became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 23 November 1576 and *Secretario Ordinario* on 29 November 1590 (fol. 8v). Ferigo also secured for his sons two secretarial positions: Zuanne Francesco became a *Secretario Straordinario* (fol. 10r, 23 July 1607) and Antonio became a *Secretario Straordinario* on 24 November 1608 and *Secretario Ordinario* on 9 June 1616 (fol. 10r). For other members of the family, see, fols. 8v and 12v.

³⁰⁰ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 276.

³⁰¹ When a teacher of *cifra*, Agostin Amadi (not a ducal secretary) died and left his wife and two underage sons to the care of *Serenissima*, the Council of Ten decided to employ his sons as secretaries when they reached the age of fifteen. They would not be examined with standard examination, however, but with the *esame alla ziffra* since the Council of Ten expected at least one of these would be inducted among the *cifristas*. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 13, cc. 48r-49v (10 and 16 March 1588). One of these under-aged sons, Piero would be trained by Girolamo de Franceschi as a *cifrista* and would be inducted among the *Secretari Straordinarii* on 29 Nov 1591, to be a *Secretario Ordinario* on 30 July 1602 and a *Secretario di Pregadi* on 22 November 1610, ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 13, cc. 73v (18 June 1590). BNM, IT. VII. 1667 (8459), *Tabelle nominative e cronologiche dei segretari della Cancelleria Ducale*, fol. 9r. Given that Venice was an oligarchy based on a close caste system; could the patricians in charge of the Council of Ten have intended to distinguish their secretaries from the rest of the populace by supporting their familial specialization? Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 51, fn. 31.

In the Ottoman Empire as well, certain families specialized in diplomacy and chancellery methods. Careers of the families in foreign ambassadors' employ which can easily be tracked down have a demonstrative value. The Brutti family appears as the best example of how families can benefit to a surprising extent from their specialization and familiarity with the bureaucracy as well as diplomatic customs of early modern states. One of the members of the family, Bartolomeo Brutti, had the most interesting career. Coming from a family whose origins went back to Durazzo and whose members served in the Venetian military, Bartolomeo entered the service of the bailo in Constantinople as a *giovane di lingua*, an apprentice dragoman schooled in the Venetian bailo's house to learn Turkish. After two short spells, he decided that being a dragoman was not his cup of tea,³⁰² and left his post to make himself a ransom agent. He ransomed important members of the Ottoman elite who had fallen captive at the Battle of Lepanto. Then he became a part of the Habsburg intelligence network in the Levant and conspired with the Habsburgs for the surrender of Algiers with the help of its former governor-general Mehmed Pasha (the son of the famous Salih Re'is) whom he had ransomed from Rome.³⁰³ He also accompanied the Habsburg envoy Giovanni Margliani from Naples to Constantinople to help him negotiate a truce with the Ottomans. Later in 1579, when he fell out with Margliani and the Habsburgs were no more interested in his services, he left Constantinople with the new prince of Moldavia, Iancu Sasul, whose release from the exile in Rhodes and the appointment to the principality he himself secured from the Sultan with the help of his kin Sinan Pasha, to the great chagrin of Sokollu Mehmed

³⁰² ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 5, fol. 11 (2 August 1576).

³⁰³ AGS, *E* 488, Mahamet Pasha to Philip II (21 June 1576). ASV, *SDeIC*, reg. 4, cc. 101r-101v (18 March 1575). ASV, *SDC*, fil. 8, c. 20 (12 March 1575).

Pasha who supported a rival candidate.³⁰⁴ Despite Bartolomeo's poor performance as a *giovane di lingua*, the family's kinship relationship with Sinan Pasha convinced the Council of Ten to authorize the induction of his brother Christoforo among the *giovani di lingua*.³⁰⁵ Before he set for Moldavia where he became an influential statesman and at one point his prince's ambassador to Constantinople, Bartolomeo managed to make his son a *giovane di lingua* as well.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, one of his brothers, Benedetto, was in Aurelio Santa Croce's entourage when the latter came to Naples in order to start the negotiations for an Ottoman-Habsburg truce.³⁰⁷ Bartolomeo finished his interesting career in Ottoman service and became the Ottoman envoy to Poland in 1590, again thanks to Sinan Pasha.³⁰⁸ Other members of the family followed the suit and worked for the Venetians not only as translators but also as envoys and diplomats. The choice of the Brutti family to enter into familial relationship through marriages with other families that also served as dragomans for foreign ambassadors demonstrates us the importance of family networks even more blatantly.³⁰⁹ Among the members of the Habsburg spies in Constantinople, it is possible to find dragomans in the employ of other states' ambassadors, such as Matheo dal Faro, the dragoman of the imperial ambassador, who contributed to the efficiency of the Habsburg intelligence network that was led by his

³⁰⁴ AGS, E 1080 fols. 44 (4 July 1579), 46 (4 July 1569), 47 (18 July 1579), 59 (3 August 1579), 60 (11 August 1579), 61 (18 August 1579); E 1085, fol. 81. ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 5, fol. 113. For more information about the Brutti family, see. Luca, *Dacoromano-Italica*, 107-128.

³⁰⁴ AGS, E 486, Battista Ferraro, Gregorio Bergante, Simon Massa, (20 Aprile 1567); E 1056 fol. 43.

³⁰⁵ ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 6, fol. 1 (5 March 1581). Cristoforo would undertake important diplomatic tasks for both Venetians and the Moldavians.

³⁰⁶ Francesca Lucchetta, "La scuola dei "giovani di lingua" veneti nei secoli XVI e XVII", *Quaderni di studi arabici* 7 (1989): 19-40. It was an accepted tradition for the dragomans in the Venetian bailo's service to propose their kins as potential interpreters. Cristian Luca, "Documentary Notes Relative to the Kinships of Levantines and Venetians with the Princely Families from Wallachia and Moldavia (16th-17th Centuries), in *Românii în Europa medievală : (între Orientul bizantin și Occidentul latin) : studii în onoarea profesorului Victor Spinei*, eds. Dumitru Teicu and Victor Spinei (Brăila : Ed. Istros, 2008), 663.

³⁰⁷ AGS, E 1073, fol. 157 (25 October 1577).

³⁰⁸ ASV, *IS*, b. 416 (4 September 1590).

³⁰⁹ Rothman, "Between Venice and Istanbul", Chapter 6.

father-in-law Aurelio Santa Croce.³¹⁰ Aurelio's brother, Giovanni Antonio, was also a part of the network. He carried letters between Naples and Constantinople.³¹¹

Close personal ties that could be exploited in the service of information gathering did not always come from familial ties. We had already demonstrated how Yunus Bey tried to use his native Antonio de Modone to start negotiations for a truce between the Ottomans and the Venetians in 1539. In a similar fashion, friendships can be presumed to provide an important rapport between people from opposite sides. Childhood friends, the Ottoman Grand Admiral, Hasan Veneziano and the Venetian bailo, Lorenzo Bernardo, have benefitted from such a rapport. Uluç Ali similarly could have relied on his old acquaintances, even though these came from humbler backgrounds. The Habsburgs recruited a childhood friend, Juan Baptista Ganzuga, to negotiate his defection in 1569.³¹² In 1555, a Habsburg spy from Zante also offered to send an agent to Morea where he would use his friendship with the Ottoman Governor of Morea to learn crucial information.³¹³

3.8. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I tried to engage in a sociological study of spies that operated in the 16th-century Mediterranean and study in detail espionage as a profession. This chapter calls for a necessary distinction between secret services that central governments established and spies that they employed and accentuates the fact that a spy was not an extension of the administrative and military apparati of central governments. Therefore, it

³¹⁰ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 136 (17 February 1574); For Matheo and Aurelio's daughter's wedding, see. Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. I, 278-281.

³¹¹ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 136. (17 March 1574).

³¹² AGS, *E* 487, Relación que hizo el theseorero Alonso Sanchez; *E* 487, the Duke of Alcala, Naples, 18 March 1569.

³¹³ AGS, *E* 1123, fol. 106 (20 November 155).

focuses on spies that operated in the Mediterranean rather than those that operated on behalf of a given government; in short, “Mediterranean spies” is a better unit of analysis than spies of Philip II, the title of García and Marcos’ work.³¹⁴

Given that the early modern espionage was not a profession per se, men of diverse professional and social backgrounds filled the ranks of spies at central governments employ. This chapter explained how each group in this recruitment pool had specific advantages that granted its members easier access to information and contact with key officials, main sources of information. Furthermore, I concentrated on other agents of secret diplomacy, “instrumental spies”,³¹⁵ such as ambassadors, secretaries, translators and other auxiliaries without whose contributions crucial stages between gathering information and political action could not have been realized.

Then I tried to give a picture of what constituted an able spy, i.e., what kind of background and skills central governments expected them to have. I argued that even though early modern espionage was a highly specialized trade whose agents had to engage in several complex methods during their operations, most of the potential spies in the recruitment pool fell short of central governments’ expectations. Special skills required from spies on the one hand and the lack of a formal training on the other created a supply problem for central governments that had already gradually started to train their officials and soldiers and had constantly been expanding their influence in political, military and social sphere in the 16th century. Exigencies of secret diplomacy as well as the impediments that spies had to overcome while operating on the field, crossing the frontiers, evading enemy counter-intelligence, penetrating to the state secrets,

³¹⁴ García and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*.

³¹⁵ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 81.

transmitting information, engaging in assassination and sabotage resulted in specialization and the monopoly of the profession in the hands of a group of people that came from similar social and professional backgrounds. In the end, central governments were aware of the limitations of the recruitment pool and the common characteristics of a good spy. Their social (familial and professional networks) and cultural (linguistic knowledge and cultural familiarity) capital³¹⁶ as well as their ability to master the codes of both empires rendered them as expert information brokers and ideal intermediaries. They were the ones who offered themselves willingly and from among whom the central governments had to choose their spies, going to great lengths not to fall victim to embezzlement in the hands of these Mediterranean go-betweens, able negotiators and astute entrepreneurs.

The relationship between the central government and the spies in their employ was a difficult one. I believe I made a compelling case for the entrepreneurial nature of early modern espionage by demonstrating how our information brokers were mostly motivated by personal interests and financial betterment. Realizing the benefits of state employment, these developed different strategies to make the most of this opportunity. In addition to regular financial benefits which they tried to increase by introducing several inventions, they also petitioned their employers for several favours for themselves and their families.

Finally, networks around the kinship relations proved to be a key factor in the world of secret diplomacy. Following a general trend of the time, some families

³¹⁶ For a discussion of social and cultural capitals, see. Pierre Bourdieu, "Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital." in *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, ed. Reinhard Kreckel, (Goettingen: Otto Schartz & Co., 1983), 183-98; reprinted in English in 1986, "The forms of capital", in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241-258.

specialized in different trades related to different aspects of secret diplomacy such as spies, spymasters, couriers, cryptologists, translators and secretaries. Given the lack of the concept of training at the time, states found themselves compelled to hire among those who attained the required level of specialization and learned the complexity of the methods of secret diplomacy at an early age from a relative. Furthermore, familial connections brought other advantages in the form of social capital, crucial for operations of information gathering: key political connections, trade networks, kinship relations in different localities, and the like.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HABSBURG SECRET SERVICE IN THE LEVANT

4.1. INTRODUCTION: EFFORTS OF CENTRALIZATION

This chapter deals with the Habsburg secret service in the Eastern Mediterranean. Throughout the 16th century, the Habsburg secret service underwent a slow process of evolution into an institutionalized apparatus at the service of the central government. In a process that accelerated, albeit hardly completed at the turn of the 17th century, the Habsburg administrators introduced methods and regulations by which they sought to centralize their secret services, an effort which faced logistical, technological and financial difficulties as well as the resistance of the practical nature of espionage. The extent to which these efforts of centralization, institutionalization and standardization succeeded is one of the subjects of this chapter.

To this end, I will outline the structure of the Habsburg secret diplomacy. After a brief summary of its general organization, I will more specifically concentrate on the role that the Habsburg officials in the provinces played and argue that this role was more significant in the case of the Habsburg secret service in the Levant given the distance between Madrid and Constantinople as well as the hostile environment of the Mediterranean borderlands due to the imperial clash between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. The lack of open diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs rendered the flow of regular and reliable information difficult. I will discuss the methods and means employed in order to overcome the harsh conditions of the

Ottoman-Habsburg frontier and solve problems of communication, coordination and transmission. I will then describe the components of the Habsburg secret service, i.e., separate intelligence networks that operated in the Levant and other sources of information on things Ottoman. Finally, I will discuss the financial details of secret diplomacy and the inevitable conflict between the authorities facing chronic budgetary problems and entrepreneur spies who constantly sought to embezzle governments.

Finally, I will deliberate on the overall efficiency of the Habsburg secret service in the Eastern Mediterranean. I will argue that the Habsburg secret service had specific objectives in the Levant, in accordance with the Habsburg strategy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. Given that the Habsburg sphere of influence laid rather in the Western instead of the Eastern Mediterranean and that the Habsburgs remained on the defense against the Ottomans, Madrid, Naples and Messina were interested in a specific type of information, those regarding the military preparations in the Ottoman Arsenal, the destination of the Ottoman navy and the results of Ottoman wars in other frontiers. The Habsburg officers, unlike their Venetian counterparts, neither showed, nor had any reason to show, any interest in engaging in a detailed study of the Ottoman state, society, culture and economy.

4.2. THE HABSBURG CENTRAL ORGANIZATION

A large number of officials were required to govern the 16th century Habsburg Empire, mostly because of its quick expansion due to the discovery of the New World and the addition of new territories after the enthronement of Charles V. New bureaucratic methods and administrative procedures gradually prevailed in the court as the number of royal secretaries increased, a permanent capital was selected, a number of advisory

councils were formed, the state archives were instituted and, in an arduous task of producing “a large and encyclopaedic corpus of information”¹ on the realms of the monarchy, several geographical and demographic surveys were prepared. With this process of bureaucratization that started in the 1520s and continued throughout the 16th century, the crown sought to assume a number of responsibilities in order to govern more efficiently and expand its sphere of influence. Secret Diplomacy was well within the boundaries of this sphere.

As the very head of the system, the king himself demonstrated a keen interest in secret diplomacy. Even though the last word in all matters always belonged to the king, his role in the conduct of secret diplomacy was more than that, at least in the case of Philip II who, in every step of an operation, was an active participant. He was the one who authorized the recruitment of agents, approved their stipends as well as the allocation of secret payments, determined the usage and the change of the cipher, coordinated information, gave instructions for the transmission of news and chose the precautions and security measures to be used for intelligence and counter-intelligence.²

A small number of advisers participated in the decision-making process, via the advisory councils which the Grand Chancellor Gattinara’s reforms in the 1520s re-organized along the following lines. In an effort to advise Charles V and make up for his long absences in the Iberian Peninsula, a number of new Councils, *Consejos*, were added to the existing ones, divided broadly in two groups. The first group comprised those that dealt with the entire empire with a thematic focus, such as the Council of Inquisition (1483), Council of Orders (1495), Council of *Cruzada* (1509), Council of War (c. 1517),

¹ Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 238.

² Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 81.

Council of State (1522) and Council of Finance (1523). In the second group, there were councils with specific territorial foci, such as the Council of Castile (1480), Council of Aragon (1494), Council of Indies (1524), Council of Italy (1555), Council of Portugal (1582) and Council of Flanders (1588). Decisions and policies regarding different fields such as war, diplomacy and economy as well as different realms of the monarchy were discussed by the members of the relevant council. The result of these discussions was presented in the written form of *consulta* to the King who did not generally attend the sessions to leave his councillors in relative freedom and autonomy.³ These *consultas*, albeit advisory, influenced the crown's policy decisively.

The most important Council for our purposes was the Council of the State (*Consejo de Estado*). Originally lacking a specific description of duties and responsibilities, it started to deal with the important issues regarding the Monarchy and the relations with foreign powers. The only council directly presided by the King, it had the control of embassies in European capitals. Furthermore, all the ciphered letters that the provincial officials, be they ambassadors, viceroys or governor-generals, sent to the capital, had to be directed to this Council.⁴ Expertise in diplomacy and secret diplomacy was an essential factor for being a part of this council; several of its members had experiences as viceroys, military commanders and most importantly ambassadors and by extension spymasters.

During the final years of Philip II's reign, however, a newly created institution, the *Junta de Estado*, took over these councils' various responsibilities including the conduct of foreign affairs and became a clearing house for the *consultas* produced by

³ Feliciano Barrios, *El Consejo de Estado de la monarquía española, 1521-1812* (Madrid: Consejo de Estado, 1984), 95.

⁴ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 52.

various councils. The Prudent King's ailing health convinced him to rely exclusively on this *Junta* that was composed of his three immediate advisors (thus it was also called *Junta de Tres*) with the addition of his personal secretary, Mateo Vázquez and which met during the night (hence the name, *Junta de Noche*). Even though it was abolished with the death of Philip II, councils could not regain their former prominence. In an effort to prevent the intervention of the aristocratic magnates who managed to penetrate into the councils from which they had been successfully barred by Charles V and Philip II, the Duke of Lerma, Philip III's favourite, preferred to go on without these councils. He instead instituted special *juntas*, small committees of ministers, operating independent of the councils.

Working in tandem with these councils were secretaries who, by their meticulous work, assured the well-functioning of the system and the expansion of the central government's sphere of influence. Given Philip II's habit of relying on a small number of confidants and therefore circumventing the Council of State, these secretaries furthermore increased their power. They not only provided the link between the monarch and the councils; but also made crucial decisions regarding the functioning of these councils, i.e., when to convene, which issues to lay down for discussion and which information to relate to the members of the council. Some, such as the Secretary of the State Antonio Pérez, even directly participated in high politics as a member of one of the two factions that vied for power in the court. From recruitment to transmission, from deciphering to financing, on every level of secret diplomacy, these secretaries were the real head of the Habsburg secret services, for as mentioned in Chapter Three, only their expertise and longevity in office could provide the necessary continuation and efficiency.

Therefore, it is not surprising to see among the secretaries of state those with experiences in secret diplomacy, such as Juan de Idiáquez, who supported and supervised several Habsburg agents during his tenure as the ambassador in Genoa and Venice.

4.2.1. Centralizing tendencies

Let us now concentrate on the methods, regulations, practices and institutions by which the crown sought to centralize secret diplomacy.

4.2.1.1. Centralization of information

First, the king and his advisers insisted upon the centrality of Madrid toward which all the correspondence should flow. In an effort to monopolize the information, Philip II was anxious to receive all the available information in order to make sure the best decision had been made. This diligence should explain his habit of procrastination of decisions. His secretaries of the State should have the control of incoming information and even the members of Councils were not allowed to intermingle. After the creation of the Council of Italy, its members were explicitly warned that they should not intervene with the affairs that fell within the secretary of the State's sphere of influence, i.e., the correspondence of Habsburg officials in the provinces with officials of other provinces as well as with foreign princes, states and ambassadors. Later in 1620, factional concerns in the capital resulted in the banning of the correspondence between Habsburg officers in the provinces. The viceroys, governor-Generals and ambassadors should not communicate with each other due to the evident danger this may have caused for the ruling faction in the capital; they may conspire against the King's favourite, the *valido*.⁵

⁵ Hugon, "l'Information dans la Politique Étrangère", 33-4. On the importance of favourites in 17th century Spain, see. Antonio Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598-1621* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

4.2.1.2. Centralization of Transmission of State Correspondence

Secondly, the Habsburg central government established an institutionalized postal service and closely monitored the transmission of state correspondence. A centralized position under the name of “the Grand Master of hosts and couriers” had already been institutionalized in 1477 by the Catholic Kings. In 1505, the Tassis family took control of the post, then called the *Correo Mayor General* (The General Grand Courier). The family guaranteed the crown reliable and regular transmission of correspondence (post stations at regular intervals with two horses) in exchange for a lucrative lease contract. When the young Charles V acquired the crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1516, he made a contract with the Tassis, worth 6.500 ducats, hinting that from the beginning he was well aware of the problem of coordination and correspondence that awaited him in his empire composed of scattered possessions.⁶ The Tassis family retained the control of the post for generations and created a complex system nominating *correo mayores* in major cities.⁷ With several regional agencies throughout Europe, they contributed to the Habsburg efforts to standardize and institutionalize state correspondence.

State postal service provided regularity, but not unity. In spite of the capital’s warnings, several extraordinary couriers were used by the Habsburg authorities in the provinces and embassies. Furthermore, this system offered little to the public. Big private

⁶ Juan Caramazana, *Asiento con Baptista y Maffeo de Taxis sobre los Correos del Imperio: 1517, Diciembre 20, Valladolid*, Archivo General de Simancas: edición facsímil (Madrid: CTA Auditores y Ars Millenii, 2000).

⁷ The system was hierarchically organized in Madrid and the secretary of the state was also that of *Despacho Universal*, the correspondence coming from the Habsburg provinces in all parts of the world. At large towns, there was a *correo mayor*. Most of these were family members, while in certain occasions, the family chose to lease out. The distance between two stations varied between 5 and 24 kilometers and below the *correo mayor* came *maestros de postas* who had several responsibilities: The reception and distribution of dispatches, the provisioning of horses and military equipment for couriers, the compiling of a register of incoming and outgoing correspondence, delays and their reasons. At his command there were a number of men, called “*postillones*”, who took the package from the courier to distribute the letters immediately to their recipients. Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 202-3.

postal systems such as the Antwerp mail of the Genoese banking family of Affaitadi existed and even surpassed the royal postal services' efficiency.⁸ The volume of the public correspondence, triggered by the flourishing trade and the intensified relations of international finance, convinced the Habsburgs to declare their postal service in the Low Countries, open to the public in 1551.⁹ Later Philip II would lay his hands on the public postal service as well and create the ordinary courier in order to assure a constant flow of information. Its creation not only served the merchants and private figures anxious to send their letters but also intensified the communication between the center and its ambassadors, viceroys and governor-generals who could now rely on a regular system. The Habsburg ambassador in Venice for instance assured the center of the benefits of the system which allowed him to communicate only the most pressing matters with special couriers and thus save money.¹⁰

In spite of irregularities and shortcomings, the crown could extend its information gathering networks and make use of information in a better way, thanks to this institutionalized postal service. Considering the "hands-on-approach" of the Prudent King, the efficient functioning of the Habsburg secret service depended upon reliable transmission of news and the consequent solution of problem of coordination between the center and the Habsburg officials in the provinces. For otherwise, the gathered information, no matter its accuracy, could not be a part of the decision-making process and would produce little direct political benefit.

⁸ John B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), 9.

⁹ J. Devos, "La poste au service des diplomates espagnols accrédités auprès des Cours d'Angleterre et de France, 1555-1598", *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire* CIII (1938), 216.

¹⁰ AGS, E 1329, fol. 64 (14 June 1577).

This centralization was also an attempt to supervise all the correspondence and regulate the flow of information as a part of counter-intelligence efforts. For instance, until 1582, parallel to the state postal service, there was also a private courier service at the hands of merchants in Milan. Considering that these couriers could be a useful tool for enemy secret services, the Governor banned them. In Naples, the Viceroy, in a similar spirit, proclaimed that no private courier should be dispatched without royal license.¹¹

4.2.1.3. Centralization of intelligence networks

The centralization and the institutionalization of the Habsburg secret diplomacy was a slow process. Before the de-facto appearance of the office of “The Grand Spy” (*Espia Mayor*) in the final years of Philip II’s reign, no ad-hoc state institution in charge of Habsburg secret diplomacy existed. Still, the center tried to keep intelligence networks and clandestine operations in the provinces under close surveillance.

First of all, the center insisted on keeping a close eye on potential spies right from the beginning, their recruitment. Especially secretaries of state such as Pérez and Idiáquez paid special attention to the quality of potential spies and examined those whom they personally recruited. In the provinces, it was the viceroys and ambassadors who recruited informants and spies on their own volition and choice. Nonetheless, central authorities still sought to retain the last word in the recruitment process. Most of the time, provincial authorities’ role was relegated to recommendation to the center which recruited the spy and determined his stipend.

Secondly, payments related to the secret diplomacy, or “*gastos secretos*” constituted the major part of the extraordinary expenses that were reserved for wages, couriers, bribes, presents, charities and obviously information gathering. These were

¹¹ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 220.

authorized directly by the king and the amount was generally transmitted by the authorities of the Treasury (*Hacienda*), even though in our case, payments were occasionally made from the provincial treasuries of Naples and Sicily. The recipient of these extraordinary expenditures could use this money to whatever end, without having to give a formal justification to the Treasury.¹² He was only responsible to the King.

Provincial authorities had to inform the center before undertaking clandestine operations that required money for the simple reason that they need the authorization of the Treasury. Even though the extent of the center's involvement in the details of the operation was still limited in most cases, there was also direct communication between the members of remote intelligence networks and the authorities in the center, sometimes by-passing provincial authorities. For instance, Brutti and Margliani's mission to negotiate a truce with the Ottomans had been kept away from the Viceroy of Naples who was hostile to the idea of a truce with the infidel. Even though the two travelled to Constantinople via Naples, the Viceroy could not learn the true content of their mission and found himself totally excluded from the rest of the negotiations. Discontented spies could directly contact central authorities as well. For instance, Nicolò Prototico, the son of the leader of the Habsburg intelligence network in the Ionian Islands, travelled to Madrid in order to ask for more money and even tried to embezzle the central government by forging documents with the help of Pérez's page. To this story, however, we shall return later.

¹² There were exceptions. The officials of the Treasury investigated these extraordinary expenditures when there were suspicions of embezzlement. For instance, the ambassador to London, Bernardino de Mendoza and the Captain-General of Oran, Tremecen and Mazalquivir, Martin de Córdoba had to endure such invasive investigations. *Ibid.*, 376-8.

In order to regulate intelligence activity, the Habsburgs imposed uniform regulations and methods. A very good example of this is the establishment of the office of the “*Superintendente de las inteligencias secretas*” or shortly, the Grand Spy, *Espia Mayor*. Even though this office existed de-facto since the final years of Philip II’s reign, it was officially created in 1613 in order to synchronize the actions of different intelligence networks, solve the problems of coordination between these networks and the Habsburg authorities and better regulate financial matters, often reasons of conflict between the agents and the authorities. Even though it is an explicit proof of state efforts to centralize and institutionalize secret diplomacy, this office will be of limited importance for our case as its sphere of influence mostly could not extend beyond the Iberian Peninsula and the Low Countries, definitely not as far as the Levant. It will lose its political relevance and will be an honorific title after the middle of the 1620s for reasons unexplained.¹³ This last point is also important in demonstrating us that the state efforts of centralization is not necessarily a *marche en avant* and a linear progress of constructing a modern state without setbacks, but rather a “course of ups and downs”.¹⁴

The Habsburg also created a number of regulations regulating the intelligence activity, such as the regulation that was promulgated in the Kingdom of Sicily, concerning vagabonds, foreigners, drunkards and spies and explaining the duties and responsibilities of royal censors who had to fight these problematic elements,¹⁵ regulations given to the provincial *Correo-Mayores*¹⁶ or several instructions that the

¹³ Hugon, *Au Service de Roi Catholique*, 508.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 519.

¹⁵ AGS, *E* 1157, fol. 5 (9 March 1590).

¹⁶ For two surviving examples of such *ordenanzas*, see. for Naples, AGS, *E* 1049, fol. 178 (28 September 1559) and for Milan, AGS, *E* 1255, fol. 98 (1582).

central government gave to ambassadors, viceroys and governor-generals before the start of their mission.¹⁷

4.2.1.4. Conclusion: Lack of uniformity

In spite of all these efforts of centralization and institutionalization, the crown failed to create a unified system, unable to overcome the technological and logistical restrictions of the 16th century as well as the financial difficulties of the Habsburg Empire. Some historians of the Habsburg secret service, such as García and Marcos, failed to acknowledge the fact that there existed several independent networks that were very loosely connected to each other and shared very few common traits. Raphaël Carrasco justly stated that the two authors failed to address specific problems and to accentuate the particularities of each network in an effort to present a homogenous Habsburg secret service. This specificity could not have been more explicit in the Habsburg intelligence network in the Levant which had its own way of operating. For instance, the Habsburg spies in England and France enjoyed several benefits that their colleagues in the Eastern Mediterranean, neglected by the center, could not even dream of enjoying.¹⁸ In short, “the Levantine spies on Habsburg payroll” is a better unit of analysis than “spies of Philip II”.

The proximity determined the extent of intervention from the center. For instance, in Navarre, Madrid intervened in every aspect of Habsburg secret service. All instructions were sent from the Council of State and Philip II made all the decisions on the recruitment of agents, the strategies to follow in operations, stipends assigned to each spies as well as the form of their distribution. Situation in Naples, as would be described

¹⁷ Garnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe II*, 120.

¹⁸ Carrasco, “L’Espionnage Espagnol du Levant”, 206.

below, was far from this and the intervention from the center was rare. Philip II might have known the names of his agents in Béarn,¹⁹ but he did not know those in the Levant. Or at least viceroys thought so, reminding the king in their letters the names of even the most prominent agents operating in the Levant on Habsburg payroll. Recognizing the shortcomings of a centralized system, Madrid gave in and delegated the organization and operation of intelligence networks to local hands.

Most of the afore-mentioned efforts of centralization produced mixed results on the Habsburg secret service in the Levant. First, information could not be monopolized to the fullest extent of intention, at least on the level of policy making. It was vital for provincial Habsburg officials of all ranks to be informed as soon as possible, so that they could react and decide in the most appropriate manner. The immediateness of the threat did not leave any time for transmitting information directly to Madrid and then wait for instructions. Because of practical reasons, the crown had to be left out of the policy-making process most of the time, even though its role in the formulation of strategy and in the approval of clandestine operations of a certain importance faced no challenge. Secondly, centralizing institutions such as the regular postal system or later the *Espia Mayor* were of little relevance for Habsburg spies who operated in the Levant. In the Ottoman-Habsburg borderland, the center had to trust its provincial officials in assuring the safety of the transmission of news, synchronizing different intelligence networks and inspecting their operations.

It was not only Madrid that failed. Provincial centers such as Naples and Messina and embassies such as Venice and Genoa were frustrated as well in effectively controlling and inspecting agents on their payroll. The specific characteristics of the

¹⁹ García and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, 53.

Ottoman-Habsburg frontier as well as the hostility and the lack of diplomatic relations between the two empires constrained them. The details are the subject of the following pages.

4.3. THE ORGANIZATION OF HABSBURG SECRET SERVICE IN THE PROVINCES

In the far away provinces, the Habsburg secret diplomacy had to rely on the (dis)coordinated efforts of a combination of Habsburg officials. Viceroys, governor-generals, ambassadors, captain-generals, provincial governors and castle commanders all participated in secret diplomacy, subject to the intervention from the center to varying degrees, depending on the particularities of the centre-province relations which were shaped by several different factors such as the distance between the province and the center, the degree of local autonomy, the size of operations, the political situation and the imminence of the threat. For the functioning of secret services, secretaries had an important role on the provincial level as well both in provincial capitals at the service of the viceroys and governor-generals and in embassies helping ambassadors. These secretaries are the secretaries of a province or an embassy, rather than the personal scribe of the Habsburg official; therefore, in spite of frequent changes of viceroys and ambassadors, they assured the continuity of operations. Secretaries in provincial capitals undertook the recruitments, surveillance, payments as well as enciphering, deciphering and archiving of documents. Secretaries in embassies were not less important, evident from the fact that some even led intelligence networks personally in the absence of an official ambassador. Such was the case with secretaries of the embassy in Venice, García

Hernández between 1558 and 1567, Julián Lopez between 1567 and 1570 and Cristóbal de Salazar between 1580 and 1587.

The Habsburg rule in Italy was protected and operated by a number of officials with varying duties and responsibilities. The Governor of the Duchy of Milan in the North, the viceroys of the Kingdom of Naples and of Sicily in the South all had different agendas with their own military forces and spies. The Habsburg ambassadors in Rome, Venice and Genoa differed in their job descriptions as well.

The Habsburg secret service operated against the Ottomans in two fronts, the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. The semi-official head of the Habsburg intelligence in the Levant was the Viceroy of Naples who had the control of the financing of the operations. Since Naples was the first line of defense against a possible Ottoman attack, this was only natural. The Habsburg ambassador in Venice and governors of provinces prone to Ottoman attack, such as the “Land of Otranto and Bari”, were also important figures. The Habsburg operations in North Africa, on the other hand, fell more under the responsibility of the Viceroy of Sicily (who sent spies to the Levant as well), the ambassador in Genoa and even at times, officials from the Iberian Peninsula who could intervene given the proximity of Algiers to the Iberian shores.

According to del Moral, the Kingdom of Naples played a central role in Habsburg intelligence as it had a spy network not only in Italy and Ottoman Empire, but also in several European cities; it was the centre of reception and distribution of information for the Habsburg power.²⁰ One of the Viceroy’s many responsibilities was to prepare the defenses of this bulwark of the Habsburg Empire against a possible Ottoman attack or even an invasion, a duty for the accomplishment of which he needed the most recent and

²⁰ Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 78.

most reliable information. Furthermore, most of the Habsburg clandestine operations against the Ottoman Empire in the Adriatic Sea, the Balkan Peninsula and the Aegean Sea were organized in Naples and financed from Neapolitan coffers.

The Viceroy at times actively participated in secret diplomacy by personally recruiting and giving instructions to spies who were dispatched to the Levant. Most of these spies made seasonal voyages into the Ottoman Empire where they travelled and befriended, if they could, merchants, mariners, Arsenal workers and soldiers in order to learn the news that their mission required. However, reliance on these spies that were sent on an ad-hoc basis can demonstrate the fragility rather than the strength of Habsburg service. What is more striking is the existence of an institutionalized structure which Naples financed. This structure was based on a number of (at times) interrelated intelligence networks throughout the Eastern Mediterranean basin.

Even in the Kingdom of Naples, the role of the center was limited. An alternative center of Habsburg intelligence against the Ottoman Empire was under the control of the Governor of the “Lands of Otranto and Bari”. Due to its geographical proximity to the Ottoman possessions on the other side of the Adriatic Sea, this province’s governor had to actively participate in secret diplomacy, not only to be informed of the Ottoman war preparations, but also to organize the coordination between the Habsburg authorities and the Christian rebels in the Balkans who continuously asked for help from the Habsburg territories.²¹ Governors then transmitted the information that their spies brought not only to the Viceroys of Naples and Sicily, but also directly to the center, as evident from the

²¹ AGS, *E* 1035, fols. 84 and 86; *E* 1040, fols. 100, 117, 118, 150, 174, 185 and 205; *E* 1041, fol. 10; *E* 1043, fols. 59, 60 and 65; *E* 1044, fols. 113; *E* 1055, fols. 132, 159 and 183; *E* 1056, fols. 13, 47, 76, 78, 80, 86, 123, 127, 131, 136, 139, 163 and 171, ; *E* 1063, fol. 18; *E* 1119, fol. 123.

correspondence between the Marquis of Tripalda and Charles V.²² The governor transmitted news to the Emperor and established extensive relations with the Christian insurgents in the Balkans, including important ecclesiastical figures such as the metropolitan of Coron who offered his loyalty and submission to the emperor and the metropolitan of Salonica who was sending information to the governor.²³ Another provincial governor who seemed to have participated in Habsburg secret service was the governor of Calabria,²⁴ even though the degree of his efficiency was no match for that of his colleague in “Otranto and Bari”.

Agents who returned from their missions and letters that were sent from different intelligence networks in the Levant flooded the ports of the “Lands of Otranto and Bari”, such as Otranto, Bari and Brindisi. In the port of Otranto, “70 miles from Turkey”,²⁵ there were royal frigates whose duty was to regularly collect letters from Habsburg intelligence networks on the other side of the Adriatic, mainly in the Ionian Islands under the Venetian control. The system was effective enough to closely monitor an approaching enemy fleet. Facing a menacing Ottoman navy in 1594, these provincial centers of information proved their worth by effectively informing Naples of the daily trajectory of the enemy fleet. Between the months of August and October, in collaboration with the Habsburg intelligence networks in Corfu and Zante with which they communicated via royal frigates, local authorities in Otranto and Cotrone furnished regular information on the activities of the Ottoman fleet and updated an anxious Viceroy in Naples.²⁶

²² AGS, *E* 1011, fols. 155-199; Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 64.

²³ *Ibid.*, 68, 71.

²⁴ AGS *E* 1122, fols. 42 (25 February 1554), fol. 102 (4 June 1558).

²⁵ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 241.

²⁶ AGS, *E* 1094, fols. 89 (25 August 1594), 90 (27 August 1594), 92 (24 August 1594), 94 (25 August 1594), 96 (28 August 1594), fol. 97 (28 August 1594) 100 (2 and 4 September 1594), 105 (11 and 13 September 1594), 106 (14 September 1594), 111 (5 October 1594), 112 (28 September 1594), 113 (11 and

The importance of Venice as a centre of information in the early modern Mediterranean has long been appreciated.²⁷ Thanks to the *Serenissima*'s historical, political and economic ties with the Eastern Mediterranean, Venice was also a meeting point where men of all religions, ethnicities and professions negotiated and traded. The prospect of getting into contact with so many people familiar with the Ottoman world and who could be useful for espionage increased the importance of the Venetian ambassador for the Habsburg secret service in the Levant. First and most important of all, relying either on the goodwill of Venice or on his informants in the Venetian state structure, the ambassador tried to acquire information received by the Venetian authorities that had by far the most efficient intelligence networks in the Levant. Secondly, he furthermore collected information from a number of Habsburg intelligence networks that were located in the Ottoman Empire. Some of this information came from Naples' agents who had the habit of sending a duplicate to Venice in order to secure the uninterrupted transmission of news. Some, however, came from the ambassador's own network and agents whom he employed with his rather limited funds.²⁸ Thirdly, he was in close contact with the Viceroys of Naples, Sicily and Governor-General of Milan as well as Habsburg diplomats in Rome, Paris and Vienna with whom he exchanged information.²⁹ Thanks to

14 September 1594), 114 (13 September 1594), 115 (18 September 1594), 116 (9 October 1594), 117 and 122.

²⁷ Kissling, "Venezia come Centro di Informazioni"; Giovanni K. Hassiotis, "Venezia e i domini Veneziani"; Robert Mantran, "Venise: centre d'informations sur les turcs", in in *Venezia, Centro di Mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente, secoli XV-XVI: Aspetti e problemi*, eds. Hans Georg Beck et al. (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1977), vol. I, 111-116;

²⁸ For instance, Francisco de Vera y Aragón, the spy-friendly Habsburg ambassador to Venice was allocated only 834 ducats from the treasury of Naples for his extraordinary expenses, more specifically "to spend in secret things in the service of his majesty for which the afore-mentioned ambassador did not have to give justification". N. F. Faraglia, "Bilancio del reame di Napoli degli anni 1591 e 1592", *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 1 (1876), 428.

²⁹ All from AGS *E* 1333 and dated 1574. For Rome: fols. 145 and 146. For Paris: fols. 138, 139, 140, 141, 142 and 147. For Vienna: fols. 135, 136 and 137. Also again for Vienna, AGS *E* 1330 (all in this folder are dated 1572), fols. 57, 58, 59, 60-7, 93-4, 97, 152, 168 and 180; *E* *K* 1675 (dated between 1590 and 1592),

these extensive networks, the Habsburg ambassador in Venice, (or during the years in which he was absent, his secretary), was no less an influential figure than the Viceroy of Naples for the conduct of Habsburg secret diplomacy in the Levant.

As the focus of the chapter is the Habsburg information gathering in the Levant, I will rarely mention other two centers of the Habsburg espionage, Messina and Genoa, whose specialty was rather the operations in North Africa. Even though the Kingdom of Sicily sent his own spies to the Levant, these were mostly sent for a specific mission.³⁰ In spite of the fact that the stipends of some of the resident agents in the Levant were partly paid by the Sicilian Treasury, the viceroys of Sicily did not seem to put up an extensive intelligence network that operated independently from those established by Naples and Venice. They left this task to others and were content with supplementing the information which Naples and Venice sent with the reports written by their ad-hoc spies as well by those who arrived in Sicilian ports from the Levant. The ambassador in Genoa as well had a very little direct interest in the affairs of the Levant. His sphere of influence included the North Africa, Northern Italy and Southern France where he collaborated with the Governor-General of Milan, the Duke of Savoy³¹ and the Grimaldis of Monaco.³² Functioning in a similar manner to his colleague in Venice, he depended on

fols. 14, 24, 28a, 28b, 34, 39, 48, 56, 67 and 73; *E K* 1676, fol. 108 (9 Aprile 1598). According to *E* 1345 and *E* 1346, information reached the Spanish court from a number of places that were ruled by the Austrian Habsburgs, such as Gratz, Cracovia, Strigonia and Prague as well as from the camp of the imperial army and the secretariat of Archduke Mathias.

³⁰ AGS, *E* 1120, fols. 243 (25 March 1552), 251-253 (17 to 27 mayo 1552), 256-7 (18 June 1552), 264, 267 (12 December 1552) and 268 (December 1552); *E* 1121, fols. 110, 113 (21 March 1553); *E* 1123, fol. 18 (15 April 1555). Juan d'Orta was a regular which the Viceroy sent to the Levant with two frigates every year. *E* 1147, fol. 10.

³¹ For a good example of cooperation between the Duke and the ambassador in an operation targeting North Africa, see. AGS, *E* 1399, fols. 8 (30 January 1570), 9, 10 (11 January 1570), 11 (6 September 1569), 42 (25 April 1570), 43 (2 May 1570), 50 (14 June 1570), 58, 98 (22 September 1570), 99 (20 October 1570), 103 (17 October 1570), 150 (26 April 1570) and 158 (12 May 1570); *E* 1327, fols. 43 (12 May 1570) 87 (16 August 1570).

³² AGS, *E* 1404, fol. 58 (27 September 1574).

the goodwill of a friendlier, but less knowledgeable Genoa that was not as informed about Ottoman affairs as Venice was. Apart from a number of ad-hoc spies,³³ he did not establish contacts in the Levant. He neither attempted, nor had the financial resources to set up and operate a separate intelligence network.

4.4. HABSBURG INTELLIGENCE NETWORKS IN THE LEVANT

The Habsburgs established a number of separate intelligence networks in the Levant, the most important of which was the one that they set up in the Ottoman capital, following the influx of Spanish and Italian soldiers and sailors that had fallen captive at the Battle of Djerba (1560) to Constantinople. Leaving aside this best documented Habsburg network in the Levant for further elaboration in the next chapter, I will focus on other ones in order of efficiency.

4.4.1. Ragusa

The Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) had a special position between the “East” and the “West” similar to that of Venice. As a Catholic power, it entertained close relations with the Catholic World, while as a tributary state it enjoyed the protection of the Ottoman Sultan. This dual role made this city-state particularly important for both the Habsburg and the Ottoman secret services.³⁴

Ragusa was not only a venue for information gathering, but also a point through which the Habsburgs transferred money to its agents in the Levant and the news and directives flowed between the Habsburg authorities and intelligence networks. This importance increased especially after the establishment of the Habsburg network in

³³ AGS, *E* 1382, fols. 119-20 and 319; *E* 1383, fol. 379.

³⁴ Other powers as well had agents in Ragusa. For instance, on the information concerning the Ottomans Empire, sent from Ragusa to Rome in the 17th century, see. Ivan Dujčev, *Avvisi di Ragusa: Documenti sull'impero Turco nel sec. XVII e sulla Guerra di Candia* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studium, 1935).

Constantinople in the early 1560s as the letters from Constantinople were generally sent to Ragusa to be remitted to Habsburg ports in Italy such as Barleta.³⁵

Ragusa had another strategic importance. First of all, it was the entrance and exit point for official visitors, such as foreign diplomats and envoys who traveled to Constantinople by land. These had to have the necessary safe-conduct (*'amân*) in the form of an imperial diploma (*berât*) and then wait for the Ottoman *çavuş* that would accompany them. Furthermore, Ottoman messengers who carried letters for European states and spies that went on a mission in Habsburg territories also used Ragusa as their point of embarkment on their way to the West.³⁶ This made Ragusa an important venue for exchanging information between ambassadors, messengers and spies. The Habsburg spies in the city contacted foreign ambassadors frequently and easily. In 1572, with the hope of acquiring information from him, one of these spies offered his services to the French ambassador, the Bishop of Aix who arrived in the city on his way to Constantinople.³⁷ In 1592, Rugier Margliani contacted the Venetian bailo in a similar fashion.³⁸ Secondly, as several Ottoman spies sent their letters to Constantinople via Ragusa, the importance of Ragusa for the Habsburg counter-intelligence became more evident; thanks to this correspondence, one of the Habsburg spies could easily name two Ottoman spies of key importance in Naples and Rome in 1554.³⁹ Thirdly, several

³⁵ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 84.

³⁶ AGS, *E* 1058, fol. 40 (7 April 1570).

³⁷ He convinced the ambassador to show him a letter that the French ambassador in Venice wrote as well as the jewelry he carried to Constantinople. The Bishop accepted to recruit him and told him to contact his own spymaster in the city who would provide him with the necessary cipher and countersign. AGS *E* 1331, fol. 236 (1 November 1572); *E* 1332, fol. 167 (13 January 1573).

³⁸ AGS, *E* 1542, fol. 122 (7 April 1592).

³⁹ AGS, *E* 1047, fol. 8 (22 March 1554).

Ragusan merchants, these “eyes and ears” of the Republic⁴⁰ dispersed in Ottoman cities, as well as diplomats and envoys who were sent to the Ottoman central and local authorities provided their own government with important news, some of which the Habsburg agents managed to intercept.⁴¹ Fourthly, merchants of different origins frequented the port of Ragusa and brought fresh news from all around the world in which the Habsburg authorities were very much interested.

At times the Ragusan authorities found themselves compelled to share information with the Habsburgs. As was the case in Venice, the Habsburg secret service operated on three different levels. Apart from employing spies on the field as well as informants within the government, on a third level, the Habsburgs officially requested and acquired information from the Ragusan authorities, even though it is evident that the latter was most of the time uncooperative. They sent information intentionally so late so that it could not be used against the Ottomans⁴² and copied documents of no importance, such as the *zafernâme* that Suleyman I sent to foreign rulers, a propaganda text which was prepared in celebration of Ottoman victories in the East and which the Ottoman government intended to circulate anyways.⁴³

Enjoying all these advantages, the Habsburg intelligence network in Ragusa became the major source of information, after Constantinople. In a regular fashion, thanks to the royal frigates that went back and forth between Ragusa and the Neapolitan ports, the Habsburgs acquired information of critical importance regarding the Ottoman-

⁴⁰ Steven Dedijer, “Ragusan Intelligence and Security (1301-1806): A Model for the Twenty-First Century”, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 15:1 (2002), 107.

⁴¹ A good example is AGS, *E* 1040, fol. 28 (7 March 1551) whereby the Habsburg agent sent the information that a Ragusan envoy, carrying presents to the Governor of Herzegovina, transmitted to the Ragusan authorities. The Habsburg agent in Ragusa even managed to put one of his men among the Ragusan envoys that brought yearly tribute to Constantinople. AGS, *E* 1047.

⁴² AGS, *E* 1331, fol. 220 (10 May 1572).

⁴³ AGS, *E* 1319, fols. 118 and 119.

Venetian relations (it was through Ragusa they learned that the truce between the two was signed in 1573), military preparations in strategic places around Ragusa, such as Cattaro and Castelnuovo, and the details of diplomatic relations between European powers and the Ottoman Empire. Add to those the letters of Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople that were remitted through Ragusa.

This intermediary position of strategic importance became a disadvantage as much as an advantage for the Ragusans. Stuck between two empires, the Ragusan authorities had to follow a careful policy. The Ottomans, who themselves had several agents in Ragusa, had a threatening tone when they noticed the activities of Habsburg agents in one of their vassal states. The authorities tried to take measures against a possible Ottoman reaction and sought to control the intelligence activity in the city. As early as December 1526, they forbade everyone from sending information about the Ottomans abroad, albeit under the threat of a light punishment.⁴⁴ Repeated prohibitions did not work, due partly to the incentive created by the strategic location of Ragusa, partly to the reluctance of the Ragusan authorities to offend the Habsburgs. The Ottomans could have persuaded the Ragusans to drag their feet over sending information to Habsburgs, but neither they nor Ragusans could do little to prevent several opportunist entrepreneurs who one after another contacted the Habsburgs and offered their services. Central governments were helpless to contain the information exchange.

The first important figure that appears in our documents is the patrician Marin Zamanja who was sent by the Republic as an ambassador to Spain in 1533. Having earned the Charles V's favour, he returned from his mission in 1536 as a Habsburg spymaster and played such an active role for the Habsburg secret service that in the end

⁴⁴ Dedijer, "Ragusan Intelligence and Security", 111.

the disturbed Ottomans ordered the Ragusans to expel him in 1547. The Ragusan authorities could not do better than relenting and prohibiting him from writing to the Habsburg authorities under the penalty of death.⁴⁵ He died soon after from gout; nevertheless the Habsburgs kept receiving information from Ragusa, sent by anonymous agents whom the documents mention as “*un particular*” or “*persona que suele avisar*”.⁴⁶ In 1551, the governor of the “Lands of Otranto and Bari” sent a certain captain Juan Busto as a grain merchant who managed to establish good relations with the Ragusan authorities and sent crucial information.⁴⁷ He returned with the recommendation that the polyglot Altabello Pallavicino would be a good candidate for Habsburg intelligence in the city.⁴⁸ In 1560, appears the famous Jerónimo Bucchia, the class-mate of Cardinal Granvela, who established his own intelligence network which operated extensively along the Adriatic coasts, in Ragusa, Cattaro, Antivari, Venice, Valona and Albania.⁴⁹ With the establishment of a new network in Constantinople, the importance of Ragusa once again increased. A new spymaster, who would ensure the transfer of money and transmission of correspondence between Constantinople and Habsburg centers, was essential. With the recommendation of Giovanni Maria Renzo, the Florentin Lorenzo Miniati became the new spymaster in 1563;⁵⁰ and upon the assassination of the latter in 1566, his nephew Dino and a certain Donato Antonio Lubelo succeeded him. Nevertheless once again the Ottomans learned about the presence of a Habsburg agent so close to their borders and in such a strategic location. An international crisis of full scale

⁴⁵ AGS, *E* 1318, fol. 222 (23 August 1547).

⁴⁶ AGS, *E* 1124, fol. 152 (15 March 1559).

⁴⁷ AGS, *E* 1040, fols. 98, 101, 122, 123, 135. (1551).

⁴⁸ Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 52.

⁴⁹ Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 16.

⁵⁰ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 56 (28 July 1563).

erupted when the Ragusans dismissed the two from the city. When the Viceroy of Naples gave an ultimatum to the Ragusans, warning them that they would suffer the consequences unless they readmitted the two to the city, a solution was quickly found.⁵¹ The Habsburgs should send new agents, yet without informing the Ragusans of their identity.⁵² In 1568, they sent the Florentine merchant Luca Renier who shortly after left the Habsburg service with permission.⁵³ Renzo had to arrange a quick replacement and found a certain Juan Popilescu.⁵⁴ Around the same time, a fraudulent who claimed to be a cavalry of Jerusalem and to have a cousin in the Ottoman palace, a secretary of the Sultan, started to send letters to the authorities on his own initiative. One of the most interesting figures among the Mediterranean spies, Luis de Portillo sent several letters that included crucial but fabricated details of discussions in the Ottoman *Divan-ı Hümayun* (Imperial council) as well as fantastic yet incredible news. Having first sent him 200 escudos, the Habsburgs realized the truth and cut him out even though he kept sending information and demanding money and cipher until he met his unfortunate end. The Ragusan authorities, amidst rumours of an Ottoman attack because of foreign agents in the city,⁵⁵ could not tolerate the likes of Portillo. They cut his ears and put him in galleys *ad vitam*; he was still lucky because there were also those who voted for chopping him up to four pieces.⁵⁶ The War of 1570-1573 intensified the war of information between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs and thus the increased volume of intelligence activity of the Habsburgs in the city. In 1573, an anonymous Habsburg agent, most

⁵¹ AGS, E 1056, fol. 84

⁵² AGS, E 1065, fol. 118; Sola, *Los que van*, 208.

⁵³ Enrique García Hernán, "The Price of Spying at the Battle of Lepanto", *Eurasian Studies* II/2 (2003): 237-238.

⁵⁴ AGS, E 1060, fol. 129 (9 May 1571).

⁵⁵ AGS E 487, advertimientos de turquia y otros de importancia.

⁵⁶ AGS, E 1331 and E 1332, ff.; E 1063, fol. 18; E 1503 fol. 162; E 1506, fols. 86, 94 and 195; E 1512, fol. 77.

probably Don Cesar de la Marea whom the Viceroy of Naples sent to Ragusa to lead the network, mentions six spies, including Portillo, extant in the city.⁵⁷ More agents of serious background joined this Marea's network in time: the brother of Ali Pasha, named Estefano Kendresi, who used his connections and managed to acquire the internal correspondence between the Ottoman center and provincial governors⁵⁸; Mathias Vicudo who always complained of his old age, poverty and the neglect of the Habsburg authorities,⁵⁹ and the Jewish David Passi who also worked for other powers, and on whom we will read more in the following two chapters.⁶⁰ Marea successfully operated in Ragusa until 1581, when the Ragusans, once again pressurized by the Ottomans, expelled him. Then the same old story: the Viceroy of Naples protested, gave 20 days to the Ragusan authorities to revoke their decision, imprisoned six of their richest merchants in Naples and froze all Ragusan merchants' accounts in Neapolitan banks.⁶¹ Even though this time he did not succeed (Marea could not return to Ragusa and passed away in 1583), the Habsburg agents continued to frequent the city. How could they not, when Madrid started to send unofficial ambassadors, envoys and couriers to Constantinople who had to take the route of Ragusa? For instance, in 1584, Stefano Ferrari, the long-time courier between Constantinople, Naples and Madrid, contacted in one of his many stays in the city a Nicolo Sfondarati, who seemed to have inherited the position of Marea.⁶² A more

⁵⁷ AGS, *E* 1332, fol. 167 (13 January 1573).

⁵⁸ AGS, *E* 1062, fol. 206 (18 June 1573); *E* 1063, fol. 29 (18 June 1572).

⁵⁹ AGS, *E* 1514, fol. 129 (28 October 1574); *E* 1517/cuaderno IV, fols. 1 (29 August 1575), 9-10 (13 October 1574), 23 (1 October 1575), 24 (9 November 1575) and 30-1 (7 November 1575); *E* 1519, fol. 1 (23 January 1576).

⁶⁰ He worked for the Venetians as well. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, r. 9, cc. 89-90, 101v; AGS, *E* 1331, fols. 78 and 233; *E* 1332, fol. 110. He would later become representative of Dom Antonio in Constantinople (Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: The Duke of Naxos* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1948, 204-12) and Murad III's confidant (Pál Fodor, "Between Two Continental Wars", 179). For more details, see Chapters Five and Six.

⁶¹ AGS, *E* 1083, fol. 88; *E* 1084, fol. 44 (21 June 1581).

⁶² AGS, *E* 1083, fol. 58 (28 February 1581); *E* 1533, fol. 285 (12 April 1584).

interesting figure, the son of the negotiator of the Ottoman-Habsburg truce in 1581 and the former commander of the Milanese cavalry in Savoy, the Count Ruggero Magliani arrived in the city in late 1591.⁶³ His original duty was a diplomatic visit to Constantinople, but the Habsburg court repeated the tradition by ordering his envoy not to proceed at the last minute.⁶⁴ Ruggero Margliani stayed in the city and coordinated Habsburg intelligence network for many years.

The importance of Ragusa for Habsburg secret service increased even further in the early decades of the 17th century as the relations between the Habsburgs and Venice soured. Ragusa, the perennial rival of Venice, became an important ally and contributed to Habsburg military and intelligence efforts in the region.⁶⁵ However, since it is outside the scope of this study, I will not enter into further details.

4.4.2. Ionian Islands

The Habsburgs established another intelligence network in the Ionian Islands which constituted a part of the Venetian *Stato da Mar* with the exception of St. Maura, an Ottoman possession since 1503. These islands, most importantly Corfu, were strategic locations. Firstly, lying at the entrance of the Adriatic Sea, every ship that wanted to sail there had to pass by those islands. This was how Venice could realize their theoretical claims on the Adriatic Sea. Captains and crews of ships that arrived in these islands from all corners of the Eastern Mediterranean were interrogated at the port first by the Venetian authorities, and then by sociable Habsburg agents who were always interested

⁶³ AGS, *E* 1092, fol. 196 (25 October 1591); *E* 1541, fols. 196-201.

⁶⁴ AGS, *E* 1542, fols. 2 (29 April 1592) and 3 (8 July 1592); Rubén González Cuerva, “Mediterráneo en tregua: Las negociaciones de Ruggero Marliani con el Imperio Ottomano (1590-1592)”, in *Actas de la X Reunión de la Fundación Española de Historia Moderna*, ed. Manuel Reyes García Hurtado (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad, 2009), Vol. 2, 209-220.

⁶⁵ Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, “Avis du Levant”.

in listening to *vox populi* in the “public sphere”, marketplaces, bars, taverns, etc. These provided information of not only incredible diversity (activities in the Arsenal, whereabouts and the target of the Ottoman Navy, Ottoman military preparations in provincial centers, political struggles and rumours in the streets of Constantinople), but also, at times, of impressive quality.

Secondly, the proximity of these islands to the Ottoman coasts created a number of advantages. Firstly, the Habsburg agents who wanted to enter the Ottoman Empire could easily do so,⁶⁶ facilitated by the incredible volume of commercial traffic between these islands and the Levant and evident from the easiness with which the Prototico network sent several agents not only to Constantinople, but also to Ottoman provincial centers.⁶⁷ Corfu was also important for the transmission of letters; one of the duties of the intelligence network there was to collect the letters that were sent from Constantinople and then to quickly remit them to the Neapolitan ports. The network also operated in nearby Ottoman provincial centers with an incredible efficiency so that it could even intercept orders sent from the center to provincial governors.⁶⁸ Secondly, the Venetians also had an active intelligence network that gathered information from the Ottoman lands. The Habsburg agents seemed to have laid their hands on the information that reached the Venetian authorities on these islands, either by intercepting letters or corrupting the Venetian spies and couriers who brought the news.⁶⁹ Even though Venice

⁶⁶ AGS, *E* 1124, fols. 73 (10 and 18 April 1557) and 83 (4 April 1558).

⁶⁷ See. AGS, *E* 1056, fols. 218-220 for the interesting range of activities of one of Prototico's agents, Michel Candi Rodioto. He traveled several times, in search for information, Lepanto, Modon, Coron, Negroponte, Thessalonica and Constantinople.

⁶⁸ For instance, see. AGS, *E* 1068, fol. 103 (16 May 1575). A friend of the Governor of Morea agreed to send information to a Habsburg agent in Zante. *E* 1123, fol. 106 (20 November 1555). Also see. *E* 1056, fol. 217 (c. 1568).

⁶⁹ AGS, *E* 1048, fol. 53; *E* 1055 fols. 2 (21 May 1565) and 154 (2 July 1566), *E* 1056, fols. 86 (27 September 1567) and 163, *E* 1407, fol. 152 (4 October 1554).

was a formidable rival in information gathering,⁷⁰ there were times when the Venetian authorities shared the information themselves,⁷¹ obviously choosing the right time and the right information to do so, always in accordance with the interests of the *Serenissima*. Thirdly, another good source of information was the fugitive renegades and slaves who arrived in the Ionian Islands. The Habsburg agents were always eager to hear what these renegades and slaves, most of whom used to work in the Ottoman Arsenal or sail with the Ottoman Navy, had to say.⁷² Fourthly, Corfu was conveniently close to the areas where the Christian subjects of the Sultan were constantly in revolt and were always asking the Habsburgs for military help. These were of crucial importance for the Habsburg secret service as well as their eastern policy. Finally, some Ottoman envoys with destinations in the West passed from the Ionian Islands, such as Hacı Murad, Süleyman I's çavuş who was set for North Africa with a secret diplomatic mission that Habsburg agents quickly discovered.⁷³

The earliest corpus of documentation that refers to an operational Habsburg intelligence network dates back to the 1550s. Balthasar Prototico was sent to the islands in 1552,⁷⁴ with the stipend of 320 escudos per annum,⁷⁵ in order to inform the authorities about the “*andamientos*” of the Ottoman Navy.⁷⁶ There he established an efficient network which provided the authorities with regular and reliable information. Balthasar

⁷⁰ A document dated c. 1571 (AGS E 487, *advertimientos de turquea y otros de importancia*) argued against the employment of Greeks and Italians in the Ionian Islands, precisely because these passed the incoming information to the Venetians towards whom they were more “affectionate”. The Venetians kept the good information for themselves and only shared the irrelevant ones, according to the same document.

⁷¹ AGS, E 1047, fol. 24 (16 February 1554); E 1062, fol. 82 (15 May 1573); E 1063, fol. 164 (27 July 1573); E 1064, fol. 31 (6 May 1574); E 1066, fol. 61 (2 August 1575).

⁷² For instance, AGS, E 1060, fol. 14 (26 April 1571).

⁷³ AGS, E 1123, fol. 106 (20 November 1555). On his activities, see. Güneş Işıksel, “Hacı Murâd (Agi Morato): An Elusive Algerian Dignitary”, *Oriente Moderno* (in press, 2012).

⁷⁴ AGS, E 1056, fol. 213.

⁷⁵ AGS, E 1056, fol. 215.

⁷⁶ ASN, *Regia Cammara della Summaria, Segretaria, Consultationum*, vol. II, fols. 42v-48v, 1562-5; Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 53-4.

himself settled in Zante while his son Anibale and his nephew Juan Manioti were operating in Corfu. Another son, Nicolò, appears in the documentation in the late 1560s. His father sent him to Madrid,⁷⁷ in order to present a project to capture Modon, ask for a raise (to 400 escudos per annum) and recover the unpaid stipends.⁷⁸ Evidently, he was a part of the network as well, given that he claimed to have fallen captive to the Ottomans.⁷⁹ Nicolò wanted for himself the office of the captain of the frigates that sailed to the Levant in order to gather information and pick up the correspondence of the Habsburg intelligence network in the Ionian Islands led by his father. According to Nicolò's petition, the Prototicos established intelligence networks in a number of places, such as Corfu, Lepanto, Algiate, Cefalonia, Modon, and Negroponte as well as in the court of the Governor of Morea. They furthermore had a contact in Constantinople, Atanasi Scoloyeni who had acquaintances with several Ottoman "ministers". To what extent these claims reflect the true is uncertain though, because Nicolò was a swindler who forged documents in order to embezzle the Habsburgs.⁸⁰ Still, the Prototico network seemed to have operated efficiently by sending regular information and keeping the channels of communication with the Habsburg network in Constantinople open during the critical time of the War of 1570-3.⁸¹ Prototicos remained in Habsburg service for a

⁷⁷ AGS, *E* 1127, fol. 193 (9 December 1563)

⁷⁸ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 217 (c. 1568).

⁷⁹ AGS, *E* 1057, fol. 94.

⁸⁰ Unfortunately for him, the Habsburgs realized what he did and put him in prison. AGS, *E* 1132, fols. 136 (28 February 1569) and 187 (12 July 1569); *E* 1056, fols. 226 (24 January 1569, 227 (8 March 1569), 228 (9 March 1569), 229 (24 August 1569) and 230 (30 April 1569).

⁸¹ AGS, *E* 1059, fol. 59, 62(4 February 1571) and 65; *E* 1060, fols. 10, 13 (29 March 1571) and 138 (4 February 1571).

long time; Anibale left Habsburg service in 1577,⁸² while the father was still mentioned in the Neapolitan budget of 1591-2.⁸³

Prototicos were not the only agents in the islands, and the extent to which other information providers were connected to their networks is uncertain. Several names appear for once or twice, hinting that these may be volunteers who pushed their chances of receiving a stipend by providing information. There were also permanent spies, most of whom were members of the leading families of these islands such as Latinos, Palma and Siguro families. A certain Cesare Palma, for instance, was operating for a long time in Corfu, Cefalonia and Zante.⁸⁴ In Corfu, in 1577, Francesco Sforçio replaced Anibale Prototico,⁸⁵ while Angelo Salviati replaced a Francesco Blanco⁸⁶ under the orders of Juan d'Orta,⁸⁷ who was the captain of the royal frigates that carried correspondence between the Ionian Islands and Otranto.⁸⁸ A very active agent, Antonio Lipravoti, appeared in Corfu in the 1580s and operated throughout the 1590s.⁸⁹

4.4.3. Chios

Another conveniently located location was the island of Chios, in the middle of the Aegean Sea and a couple of miles away from the Anatolian shores. As Chios anachronistically remained in Genoese hands until 1566, years after Genoa, the *República de Zêna*, abandoned its colonial empire in the Levant and the Ottomans started

⁸² AGS, *E* 1336, fol. 46 (13 July 1577).

⁸³ Faraglia, "Bilancio del reame di Napoli", 397-9.

⁸⁴ AGS, *E* 1055, fol. 491; *E* 1073, fol. 120 (6 July 1577); *E* 1074, fol. 48 (2 October 1577); *E* 1077, fol. 90 (28 June 1578).

⁸⁵ AGS, *E* 1336, fol. 46.

⁸⁶ On Branco, see, AGS, *E* 1073, fol. 120 (6 July 1577).

⁸⁷ AGS, *E* 1147, fol. 10 (28 February 1577).

⁸⁸ AGS, *E* 1066, fol. 148; *E* 1070, fol. 107 (23 July 1576).

⁸⁹ AGS, *E* 1536, fol. 224 (10 July 1586); *E* 1537, fol. 294 (January 1586); *E* 1538, fol. 289; *E* 1093, fols. 86 (12 October 1592), 205 (14 September 1593), 206 (14 September 1593), 208 (21 September 1593) and 209 (22 September 1593); *E* 1094, fols. 169 (12 July 1595) and 171 (8 July 1595). In 1584, he was replaced for a short time by a Juan Baptista Estaybano. *E* 1340, fol. 97 (27 April 1584).

to consolidate their rule in the Eastern Mediterranean. It was the final checkpoint where the ships that Naples and Messina sent on information gathering missions frequented since the Ottoman fleet that left the Dardanelles had to pass by the island. Moreover, it was a stepping stone for spies on their way to Constantinople; in 1562, both Renzo and Gilli came to the island and contacted the spymaster Nicolò Giustiniani who carried the surname of the extended Giustiniani family, a “society” of investors who controlled the partnership, *Maona*, which ruled the island and appropriated its resources in Republic’s stead, in a similar fashion to how East India Companies controlled French and English colonies later.⁹⁰ Giustiniani did more than leading an efficient network that worked in tandem with the newly established network in Constantinople; he made voyages to Constantinople to ransom soldiers that had fallen captive at the Battle of Djerba and negotiated the defection of a prominent corsair, the former-governor of Mytilene, discontent after being removed from his governorship.⁹¹

The network on which we know little because of the paucity of documentation seemed to have survived the Ottoman conquest of the island. Giustiniani disappears from the AGS documentation only to reappear in a Venetian document dated 1569; apparently he was in Constantinople negotiating on behalf of the Genoese possibly, the Venetians feared, for a trade capitulation.⁹² A certain Francisco Peloso appears in documents in the 1570s.⁹³ Apart from sending information, he also proposed a plot to poison Uluç Ali and torch the Ottoman Arsenal.⁹⁴ These agents’ operations might have suffered from logistical problems, since Philip II ordered in 1580 that the agents in “Chios and other

⁹⁰ AGS, *E* 1127, fol. 81 (4 October 1562).

⁹¹ AGS, *E* 1127, fols. 87 and 88 (2 December 1562).

⁹² ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 43v-44v (9 December 1569).

⁹³ AGS, *E* 1068, fol. 31 (9 January 1575); *E* 1145, fol. 54 (9 February 1576).

⁹⁴ AGS, *E* 1144, fol. 96 (9 August 1575).

islands of the Archipelago” should not be paid anymore, because when their letters arrived, the information they contained had already arrived via Venice anyways.⁹⁵ Still, Chios continued to be a safe haven for the incoming Habsburg agents. When Carlos Cicala requested permission to leave for the Ottoman Empire in 1590, invited by his renegade brother, the Ottoman Grand Admiral Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha, he was commissioned to settle in Chios. From there, he would seek to set up an intelligence network and negotiate the defection of his brother to the Habsburg side, to the obedience to his *re naturale*.⁹⁶ He seemed to have played a double game; even though he resisted the Ottoman offers for conversion,⁹⁷ still he entertained friendly relations with the Ottomans. He enjoyed the protection of his brother⁹⁸ and according to a Venetian document, he became the governor of the “Aegean Archipelago”, i.e., the Ottoman Duchy of Naxos. He even recruited spies for the Ottomans in Sicily in 1600.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, he still did his duty, remitting information he acquired during many conversations with his brother,¹⁰⁰ the spies that he sent to Constantinople and the prisoners-of-war that he ransomed from the Ottoman hands.¹⁰¹ The Habsburg authorities were content with him and the information he sent.¹⁰² The Habsburg intelligence activity in Chios seemed to have continued up until the 17th century. One of them, a Cassano Giustiniano was arrested by the Ottomans in 1609. He could only liberate himself with a

⁹⁵ AGS, *E* 1151, fol. 245 (10 April 1581).

⁹⁶ AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 26 (4 November 1594). Also see. *E* 1344 K 1675, fols. 4 (13 September 1590), 8 (8 December 1590), 44 (30 April 1591), 70 (3 July 1591), 125 (16 February 1592) and 150 (12 December 1592); *E* 1885, fol. 6 (June 1592); *E* 1157, fols. 151 (26 February 1593) and fol. 152.

⁹⁷ AGS, *E* 1158, fols. 53 (15 June 1595), 55 (30 March 1595) and 62 (10 May 1595).

⁹⁸ AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 26.

⁹⁹ ASV, *IS*, b. 460, 25 July 1600.

¹⁰⁰ AGS, *E* 1157, fol. 151 (26 February 1593), *E* 1158, fol. 187; *E* 1160, fol. 139 (25 September 1602).

¹⁰¹ AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 53 (15 June 1595).

¹⁰² AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 30 (30 December 1594). According to the Count of Olivares, the Viceroy of Sicily, he was the “*autor mas digno de fe que los otros*”.

handsome sum he paid to the Ottomans, he implored, and added that other spies would not be able to write for a while as they feared being caught.¹⁰³

4.4.4. Other networks in the Levant:

The Habsburgs sent spies to other locations even though it is hard to trace their activities in a chronological order or to decide whether these spies went there in order to set up a separate network, operate in accordance with an existing one or just gather information and return on an ad-hoc mission. The documentation that survived consists of reports sent by agents from those locations and references by the Habsburg authorities to their sources in these regions.

The island of Crete, for instance, seemed to have hosted a number of Habsburg spies, curiously though, to a lesser frequency than one would expect. The reason could be that ships, merchants, spies and therefore news that reached Crete had to pass through the more conveniently located Ionian Islands or Chios as well. Another location of importance was the Ottoman Valona, an important port city and a provincial center, where the Habsburgs sent several spies, even though they did not seem to set up a separate network than the one that operated in the Ionian Islands. This would be unnecessarily risky. Valona was not Constantinople and there were nearby bases given the proximity to the Otranto, from where spies could easily come and go. A third place was Cattaro, which remained in Ottoman hands between 1540 and 1571. There, the Habsburgs relied on the network that the famous Jerónimo Bucchia, on whom a well-written monograph written in Spanish exists,¹⁰⁴ established from afar and controlled

¹⁰³ AGS, E 1163, fols. 238 (14 May 1609) and 239 (21 August 1609).

¹⁰⁴ Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*.

thanks to his familial relations in the region.¹⁰⁵ To avoid repetition, I will not go into further details.

4.5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND METHODS OF INFORMATION GATHERING

Not all the information came from reports produced by networks that were established or spies who were recruited directly by the center. There were other sources of information and methods of information gathering that produced an impressive amount of information, surpassing in number, albeit not in quality, regularity or accuracy, those which the spies in central governments' employ sent.

4.5.1. Interrogation in the ports

One frequent method was to rely on the testimonies of the merchants who frequented the ports of the Eastern Mediterranean. With no extra cost, these could provide the authorities with the most updated information on the Ottoman military preparations and relate the *vox populi*, rumours that circulated in Ottoman centers. Some of these merchants were sent by the authorities on ad-hoc missions, while the majority of the hundreds of reports extant in AGS came from the testimonies given by regular merchants who went to the Levant for purposes of trade. The Habsburg authorities interrogated the captains and the crews of these ships that arrived in Sicilian and Neapolitan ports, especially when an imminent Ottoman military threat was expected, such as the first half of the 1550s when the relation between information, war and perception became more apparent as accentuated by Emilio Sola.¹⁰⁶ Merchants were not

¹⁰⁵ I extensively rely on the book because AGS does not have too much documentation for the period when this network was operational, except for a few documents such as AGS, E 1044, fols. 39, 40 (8 April 1552), 54 (8 May 1552).

¹⁰⁶ Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 45-111.

the only ones that arrived in these ports and the authorities were well aware of that fact; they interrogated everybody useful who set foot in a port: renegades who decided to return, Ottoman soldiers, sailors and corsairs who were recently captured and slaves who either ran away, seized their ship after a successful rebellion or were ransomed after spending years in the Levant.

4.5.2. Disgruntled communities: Habsburg fifth columns in the Ottoman Empire

A second source of information was the Habsburg “fifth column” in the Ottoman Balkans.¹⁰⁷ These Christian Orthodox subjects of the Ottomans were in a constant rebellion against Constantinople especially in remote areas where the physical impediments hindered Ottoman military deployment.¹⁰⁸ The Ottoman and the Spanish archives contain a large amount of documentation that relate us the precariousness of the situation. Endemic rebellions and intensive correspondence between Orthodox nobles, clergy, towns and European rulers leave no doubt about the problems that the Ottomans faced in ruling their Christian subjects. They were reduced to a policy of carrot and stick. On the one hand, they used brute force by executing and imprisoning the rebels,¹⁰⁹ sending them to galleys,¹¹⁰ removing entire populations from strategic locations,¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ José M. Floristán Imízcoz extensively published on this subject, see his book, *Fuentes para la Política Oriental*. Also see. idem, “Felipe II ya la Empresa de Grecia”, *Erytheia* 15 (1994): 155-190.

¹⁰⁸ The center of these rebellions were the Adriatic coasts and the Morea: The districts of İskenderiyye, Ohri (Eng. Ohrid), Elbasan (which included the port of Dıraç –Eng. Durazzo), Avlonya (En. Valona/ Vlorë which included the cities of Arnavut Belgradı and Delvine), Yanya (Eng. Ioannina), Karlı-eli (especially Engeli-kasrı) and Mora (En. Morea, especially Manya/Mayna -Mani Peninsula, Kalamata, Mezistre -Mistra, Cimarra, Anapoli -Nauplia/Nafplion) and finally the Aegean islands.

¹⁰⁹ BOA, MD, XLVI, nos. 405 and 406 (H. 17 L 988/A.D. 25 November 1580).

¹¹⁰ BOA, MD, XIX, no. 5 (H. 3 M 980/A.D. 15 May 1572); XIX, no. 344 (H. 19 S 980/A.D. 30 June 1572); XXI, no. 762 (H. 11 M 981/A.D. 13 May 1573).

¹¹¹ AGS, E 1329, fol. 134 (16 December 1571); BOA, MD, XII, no. 1217 (H. 27 Z 979/A.D. 11 May 1572).

pillaging villages,¹¹² ruining the crops¹¹³ and kidnapping the families the rebels left behind on the plains.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, however, they tried to appease them and repeatedly offered amnesties (“the policy of *istimalet*”, “*meclis-i şer’e davef*” or “*şer’-i serîfe davef*”),¹¹⁵ invited them to come and settle in the low plains¹¹⁶ and even bribed them,¹¹⁷ all with the hope of ending the rebellion. Repeating *MD* records prove us the failure of these policies in establishing order in these provinces and preventing the cooperation between the Europeans and their own subjects.¹¹⁸

These rebels sent several ambassadors to induce the Habsburgs to intervene on their behalf, using a religious rationale accentuating the tyranny of the Turk and the misery of the Christians at the hands of the Muslims, but without neglecting the persuasive promises that would be more influential in the pragmatic minds of decision-makers. Prospects of an overall rebellion that would destroy the Ottoman rule in the Balkans and projects for the defection of strategic locations to the Habsburgs followed

¹¹² BOA, *MD*, XLVIII, no. 708 (H. 23 Z 990/A.D. 18 January 1583).

¹¹³ BOA, *MD*, XIX, no. 14 (H. 5 M 980/A.D. 17 May 1572).

¹¹⁴ BOA, *MD* VI, no. 677 (H. 4 B 972/A.D. 5 February 1565); XIX, no. 211 (H. 29 M 980/A.D. 10 June 1572); XXXI, no. 537 (H. 27 C 985/A.D. 10 September 1577); XXXV, no. 876 (8 N 986/A.D. 8 November 1578). These kidnapped families were used to convince the rebels in the mountains to end their rebellion. They were to be returned once the rebels descended from the mountains. BOA, *MD*, nos. 689 and 788 (H. 26 B 972/A.D. 27 February 1565.)

¹¹⁵ BOA, *MD*, XXVII, nos. 39 (H. Gurre-yi B 983/A.D. 5 October 1575) and 67 (H. 4 B 983/A.D. 8 October 1575); XLVI, no. 425 (H. 21 L 989/A.D. 18 November 1581); LV, no. 370.

¹¹⁶ BOA, *MD*, XII, nos. 390 and 647 (H. 6 S 979/A.D. 29 June 1571); XXVII, nos. 298 (H. 27 B 983/A.D. 31 October 1575), 343 (H. 12 N 983/A.D. 15 December 1575), 353 (H. 12 N 983/A.D. 15 December 1575); XXXV, no. 213 (H. 19 Ca. 986/A.D. 24 July 1578); XLIII, no. 81; XLVIII, no. 424 (H. 6 L 990/A.D. 2 November 1582); LVIII, no. 125 (H. 3 Ca. 993/A.D. 3 May 1585). They even sent delegations that consisted of “trustworthy Muslims” in order to convince them. *MD*, XLVIII, nos. 266 (H. 25 B 990/A.D. 14 August 1582), 267 (H. 29 B 990/A.D. 18 August 1582) and 274 (H. 8 N 990/A.D. 25 September 1582).

¹¹⁷ BOA, *MD*, XIV, nos. 514 (H. 24 Ra. 978/A.D. 26 August 1570) and 759 (H. 28 C 978/A.D. 27 November 1570).

¹¹⁸ There are several records in both Ottoman and Spanish archives, especially in *Mühimmes* nos. VI, X, XII, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XIX, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXIII, XXXV, XXXVI, XXXIX, XL, XLVI, XLVIII, XLIX, LI, LVIII and *Mühimme Zeyli Defterleri* (hereafter *MZD*) V. There is also a myriad of related documents scattered in the *Venecia* and *Nápoles* sections of AGS. See also. Floristán-Imizcoz, *Fuentes para la Política Oriental*.

one another. It is not clear to what extent the Habsburgs believed in the feasibility of the project, (I tend to hypothesize they did not¹¹⁹) they certainly realized the importance of this “fifth column” in the Ottoman Empire for its disruptive effect. Such an endemic rebellion could divert Ottoman forces¹²⁰ and help Habsburg secret service in many ways.

The military and political aspects of these rebellions are out of the scope of this study; suffice it to demonstrate, then, their role for the Habsburg secret service in the area. The War of 1570-3, when the Ottomans were fighting a Christian coalition formed by Spanish Habsburgs, Venice, the Papal States, Genoa, Florence and Malta and the long-yearned military help from their fellow Christians seemed imminent to the rebels, would be an ideal case study to do that demonstration. The Christian fleet under the command of the young Habsburg prince Don Juan made good use of Christians’ cooperation in order to learn the whereabouts of the Ottoman navy and gain a strategic advantage. Members of the Orthodox Church in the afore-mentioned areas were primary accomplices. The metropolitan of Balya Badra (Patras), for instance, not only organized a local rebellion against the Ottomans in cooperation with rebels of Manya, but also provided critical information for the Christian navy. He sent letters including his observations about the Ottoman navy when it reached the shores of Balya Badra. The galleys were not fully manned and it was the time for Christians to attack.¹²¹ Around the same time, the Ottomans issued an order for inspection against the monks of a monastery in Eğriboz (Negroponte/Euboea) who were suspected to be sending information to the

¹¹⁹ For instance, Charles V dismissed a proposal for the submission of Valona in 1555 because he gave “little credit to most of those Greeks” and thought that “similar inventions” intended nothing but squeeze money, “*sacar dinero*”. AGS, *E* 1323, fol. 24 (31 May 1555); *E* 1332, fol. 144 (23 April 1555).

¹²⁰ A good example of how these rebellions diverted Ottoman military capabilities is BOA, *MD* XIX, nos. 493 (H. 18 N 980/A.D. 22 January 1573) and 495.

¹²¹ BOA, *MD*, X, no. 174 (H. 28 Şaban 979, A.D. 15 January 1572).

enemy.¹²² In a very critical moment, at the beginning of the naval campaigning season in 1572, a year after the destruction of almost the entire Ottoman navy at Lepanto when according to a Spanish agent in Ragusa “*toda la Turquía comiença a llamar España, España*”,¹²³ the Ottomans detected that Don Juan asked the metropolitan of Rhodes to inspect secretly the fortifications of the island. They ordered the elimination of the responsible clergy immediately.¹²⁴ Other Christian powers made use of this “fifth column” as well. During the same period, monk-cum-spies who were caught in Wallachia and sent to Constantinople for interrogation revealed that the Patriarch of Thessalonica, Yasef, dispatched certain Christians with letters to Poland and Muscovy.¹²⁵ The Ottomans ordered an overall investigation of the issue and the dispatch of the accused to the capital for interrogation; unfortunately no documentation concerning the result of the interrogation could be located in the archives.

The Habsburgs found important allies among the Balkan nobility as well. Exiled nobles who were trying to get back their lost possessions and vassal princes who strove to get rid of Ottoman suzerainty were potential accomplices. Their letters, which invited the Europeans to fight the Ottomans and offered cooperation, were also important sources of information concerning the Ottoman affairs. One of the princes of Wallachia, for instance, was in correspondence with both the Habsburgs and the Venetians. He offered to send them information not only concerning Wallachia, but also regarding Moldavia,

¹²² BOA, MD, X, no. 299. The order also took the possibility of a military cooperation into account. It authorized the inspection of the monastery to see whether it was fortified and it had guns stored in it.

¹²³ AGS, E 1332 fol. 170 (12 February 1573).

¹²⁴ BOA, MD, XIX, no. 75 (mükerrer) (H. 13 Muharrem 980 / A.D. 26 May 1572).

¹²⁵ BOA, MD, X, nos. 325 and 326 (H. 3 Ramazan 979 / A.D. 19 January 1572).

Podolia, Transylvania and Bulgaria, a valuable service given that the Spanish Habsburgs had no intelligence network in these provinces.¹²⁶

Rebels played an active role for the Habsburg secret service not only by gathering information, but also by engaging in other aspects of secret diplomacy as well. For example, the Christian Ottoman subjects in the district of Dukakin were in cooperation with the Venetian garrison in the nearby castle of Kotron (Kotor/Càttaro). The rebels were plundering Ottoman villages, taking victuals to the Venetian castle, setting up ambushes on the roads and finally engaging in intelligence activity.¹²⁷ Some of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire provided invaluable services to Christian information gathering not only by directly sending information to their coreligionists, but also by providing lodging and scouting services for the incoming enemy spies. One of the most interesting examples is the cooperation between the Spanish Habsburgs and an Albanian noble, Duli, the leader of villages near Bastia on the Adriatic shores facing Corfu. He was favoured by the Ottoman governors of both Delvine and Avlonya (Valona) who gave him important military tasks and shared military secrets with him. Although in Ottoman employ, however, he had been helping the Habsburg agents who traveled to and from Constantinople since 1564. It was impossible for these agents to travel between the Ottoman lands and Corfu without being inspected in the port by the Ottoman commissary who was sent there only to catch spies and run-away slaves. Duli helped these agents enter and leave the Ottoman lands and gave them lodgings. He furthermore provided information to the Spanish consul/spy in Corfu. Finally, he was also considered by the Habsburgs a necessary ally that would join the *Empresa de Grecia*

¹²⁶ AGS, E 1329, fol. 78 (2 August 1571).

¹²⁷ BOA, MD, X, no. 451 (H. Gurre-yi Receb 979, A.D. 19 November 1571).

with his 5.000 men when the Habsburgs invaded Ottoman shores in cooperation with Christian insurgents.¹²⁸

4.5.3. Corsairs

Another important component of the Habsburg secret service in the Levant was the corsairs that the Viceroys of both Naples and Sicily employed. These corsairs were given specific instructions by the authorities, regulating where to sail for purposes of reconnaissance missions as well as of *corso*, that is the Mediterranean privateering, when and with which frequency to send information to the Habsburg authorities, where to send the captured ships, what to do with the captured slaves and how to share the captured booty among themselves.¹²⁹ The details of the arrangement between the corsairs and the authorities were also quite clear. The Habsburg authorities legalized their activities (thus they were privateers, not pirates)¹³⁰ and provided them with safe harbours to winter and refresh their crew as well as with marketplaces where they could sell their booty and buy necessary raw materials to repair their ships. In exchange, these corsairs provided these authorities with certain benefits, one of which was their information-gathering capabilities. With their knowledge of the enemy coasts, connections in port cities and the swiftness of their ships, corsairs were ideal candidates for reconnaissance and information gathering missions. Every year, with the start of the sailing season, a fleet that consisted of a small number of corsair ships (four in 1576, for instance) penetrated

¹²⁸ AGS E 487, Giralomo Combi Albanes, 20 April 1577.

¹²⁹ AGS, E 1519, fols. 138 (25 March 1576) and 139. E 1336, fol. 78 (21 May 1577) clearly demonstrates the entrepreneurial nature of the Mediterranean *corso* and the detailed methods by which the booty was meticulously divided into three among the captain of the ship, the investors who armed it and the crew.

¹³⁰ For the difference between these two terms, see. P. Alberto Guglielmotti, *Storia della marina pontificia* (Roma: Tipografia Vaticana, 1886-1893), vol. 3, 49; Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, vol. II, 191; Salvatore Bono, *I corsari barbareschi* (Torino: ERI-Edizion RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1964), 12.

deep into the Levantine waters in order, among acts of *corso*, to gather information from the ships they captured and the shores they sacked.

The employment of corsairs was a double-edged sword. These corsairs frequently created problems with neutral states, as well as allies, as I mentioned in one of my articles,¹³¹ and corsairs working for the Habsburgs were no exception. Even though some local authorities eagerly supported these corsairs, (at one point even the son of the Viceroy of Sicily participated in *corso*),¹³² the central government was not amused when things got complicated. When in 1577, one of them, Pietro Lanza attacked Venetian ships and created too much tension with the *Serenissima*, they quickly ordered that the Venetians were compensated and Lanza should be employed elsewhere, a decision which was taken with the intention of appeasing the Venetians, rather than dismissing the corsair who was a “*hombre de servicio*”¹³³ and would continue to serve until the first decade of the 17th century.¹³⁴ Still, it seems that the authorities gradually grew tired of the activities of this unruly lot; in 1599, the ambassador in Venice argued for the prohibition of their employment, accentuating the fact that their activities might provoke the Ottomans to send their fleet to Italian waters. Furthermore, occasionally these did not make any difference between Christians and Muslims and thus disturbed commerce.¹³⁵ The central government acquiesced to its ambassador’s advice. The prohibition met resistance, however, from the Habsburg local authorities, most importantly the Viceroy of Naples who argued that such a prohibition would negatively affect the information

¹³¹ Gürkan, “The Center and the Frontier: Ottoman Cooperation with the North African Corsairs in the Sixteenth Century”, *Turkish Historical Review* 1/2 (2010): 151-5.

¹³² AGS, *E* 1121, fols. 236-238 (1553).

¹³³ AGS, *E* 1521, fol. 103 (22 February 1578).

¹³⁴ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 14, c. 191v (1 December 1606); *IS*, b. 460, 26 September 1606.

¹³⁵ AGS, *E* 1928, fol. 22 (31 January 1599).

gathering capabilities and proposed a reform plan instead which would prevent the undesired consequences of these corsairs' activities and unburden the Habsburg authorities from any responsibility.¹³⁶ In the end, despite repeated orders, the Viceroy continued, at the risk of being reprimanded, to support corsairs.¹³⁷

4.5.4. Renegades and Christians in Ottoman employ

Renegades in Ottoman employ unsurprisingly became the main target of the Habsburg secret service that wanted to use these renegades' expertise and knowledge on things Ottoman. A number of different factors persuaded them to accept Habsburg offers. Some of them, especially those who were of slave status, were basically discontent with their conditions. Some who were employed in strategic locations, such as the Imperial Arsenal, Navy or an important castle, sought to enjoy the material benefits of double employment by providing information of value or offering projects of defection, sabotage and betrayal. Certain high-ranking ones also negotiated in order to capitalize on alternative possibilities, a plausible exit strategy in case they found themselves politically isolated and thus under the threat of elimination.

A number of sources in the Ottoman capital provided the Habsburgs with important information; renegades were among the most useful. Even though, these will be delineated in the next chapter, I would like to briefly examine the successful penetration of the Habsburg secret service into the Ottoman system by establishing contact with and gathering information from a number of important people on several levels of the Ottoman military and administrative cadres.

¹³⁶ AGS, *E* 1162, fol. 50 (24 April 1606)

¹³⁷ AGS, *E* 1889, fols. 11 (14 March 1615) and 12 (27 April 1615).

On the lower level, several Christians, some but not all of whom converted to Islam, worked in strategic locations such as the Imperial Arsenal and the Navy. These regularly provided the Habsburg agents or directly the authorities with information regarding the Ottoman military preparations. They furthermore engaged in a number of sabotage projects by which, one can conclude from the success rate of these projects, (zero percent) they tried to provoke the Habsburgs' appetite and defraud them (see Chapter Five). The insatiable Habsburg desire to learn every detail about the Ottoman navy made them invest in an extensive network that managed to extend its operations to every segment of the Ottoman naval structure; its success is evident from the extent to which the Habsburgs managed to penetrate into the extended household of the Ottoman Grand Admiral Uluç Ali and to get into contact not only with several Christian slaves who were experts on naval warfare and lived in the barracks near the Arsenal, but also with high-ranking figures such as Uluç Ali's officers, his corsair lieutenants, captains and sailors. Two of his men, for instance, regularly sent information on whereabouts of the Ottoman navy to the Habsburg authorities. In the corsair centers of Ottoman North Africa, the Habsburgs enjoyed the cooperation of renegades as well. Their spies contacted not only several renegades that worked in military projects, but also a good many renegade local authorities of strategic importance, such as the *ka'ids* of the North African district-provinces (*sancaks*) who were implied in an extensive plot with the Habsburgs to change sides with the military forces and territories under their command.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ AGS, E 1140, fol. 137 (12 July 1573); E 1144, fols. 92 (8 August 1575), 128 (24 November 1575) and 137 (3 December 1575); E 1145, fols. 118 (2 November 1576) and 119; E 1147, fol. 4 (9 January 1577); E 1149, fols. 9 (10 February 1579), 13 (1 March 1579), 18 and 21.

Renegades were also important in the Ottoman chancellery, thanks to their knowledge of the prerequisite languages; most of the *çavuşes* and *ulaks* who carried information and of the dragomans who specialized in diplomatic negotiations with European powers were of Christian origin. The Habsburgs seemed to have successfully acquired the content of the correspondence carried by some of these *ulaks* and *çavuşes* and, in the case of Hürrem Bey, managed to corrupt one of the dragomans, at a crucial time during the Ottoman-Habsburg negotiations for a truce, when Madrid desperately needed both the information he provided and his expert opinion on the process of negotiations.

4.5.5. Negotiating with the infidel: Muslims in the Ottoman administration

Renegades were not the only connection that the Habsburg secret service established among the members of the Ottoman elite. In search of material benefit, several Muslim-born Ottomans sought Habsburg employment. A good example is Mehmed Pasha, the son of famous corsair Salih Re'is. He negotiated with the Habsburgs his defection and the submission of Algeria, in exchange for their financial support with which he planned to bribe the Grand Vizier Sokollu and ensure his re-appointment as the Governor-General of Algeria. Even though these negotiations came to naught and were forgotten amidst the truce negotiations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, this example is still demonstrative of the possibility that a free born Muslim, a former Governor-General and the son of a renowned Ottoman corsair, could contemplate conspiring with the Catholic King and even retire to Christian lands, retaining his religion, in case of failure.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ AGS, E 488, 21 June 1576.

4.5.6. European diplomats in Constantinople

The Habsburgs managed, albeit to a limited extent, to gather information from European diplomats as well. We had already mentioned how they corrupted the Venetian bailo, Girolamo Lippomano who paid dearly the price of leaking information and sharing state secrets with others. More important than penetrating to the internal communication of a neutral power such as Venice that retained a position (in spite of the zig-zags that her independent foreign policy and his geo-strategic position between the Eastern (Ottoman) Mediterranean and the Catholic World dictated) within the Habsburg system of alliances, was to acquire information brokered by the diplomats of other less friendly powers to the Habsburgs. For one, the latter managed to corrupt the dragoman of the French ambassador in Constantinople, Battista Bendoria.¹⁴⁰ In 1576, the Habsburg ambassador in Venice learned the number of galleys in the Ottoman navy from the correspondence between the French ambassador in Constantinople and his colleague in Venice.¹⁴¹ In 1593, the Viceroy of Naples detained, for a couple of days, Jacques Savary de Lancosme, the Catholic French ambassador who refused to recognize his new King, Henri IV and to give up his ambassadorial post. The Viceroy managed to use the occasion and persuaded the disgruntled and impoverished diplomat, with bribes and presents, to share information.¹⁴² The Viceroy of Sicily, the Prince Filiberto of Savoy, made a likewise deal with the English ambassador who was passing from Messina on his way to Constantinople. The ambassador agreed to write him about things Ottoman if the Viceroy agreed to free some English *forzados* that rowed in his galleys.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 102.

¹⁴¹ AGS, *E* 1070, fol. 30 (10 March 1576).

¹⁴² AGS, *E* 1093, fols. 133, 134 and 167 (24 June 1593).

¹⁴³ AGS, *E* 1894, fols.3 (15 February 1622) and 24 (27 February 1622).

4.5.7. Jewish communities

Similarly, from among the Jewish communities, dispersed along the Mediterranean shores, came several Habsburg agents and informants. These agents enjoyed the benefits of the interconnectedness of Jewish communities thanks to which they could easily travel, trade and contact with locals as well as imperial elites who had to cut deals with these Jews for purposes of luxury trade and certain business relations.

Their role and influence in politics was particularly significant in the Ottoman Empire where they immigrated in great numbers after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 and where they managed to ally themselves with the ruling elite and gained important positions. The well-known story of João Miches, *alias* Joseph Nasi,¹⁴⁴ for instance, is a good example of how fast an exiled Marrano family could reach prominence in the Ottoman Empire. We will talk about Nasi in the following chapters since he established an intensive intelligence network that provided the Ottomans with information and proved once again the importance of the interconnectedness of Jewish communities in early modern espionage. What was surprising was, however, that he also worked with (not for!) the Habsburgs as well.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Doctor Salomon Ashkenazi became an important figure in the Ottoman court and played a crucial role by helping the Habsburg diplomat-cum-spy-master Giovanni Margliani in the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations. Two other important figures, David Passi and Guillermo de Saboya also worked for the Habsburgs, albeit for other powers as well. We will soon come to their stories.

¹⁴⁴ Roth, *The House of Nasi*.

¹⁴⁵ Norman Rosenblatt, "Joseph Nasi, Friend of Spain", in *Studies in Honor of M. J. Benardete (Essays in Hispanic and Sephardic Culture)*, eds. Izaak A. Langnas and Barton Sholod (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1965), 323-332. AGS, E 1072, fol. 232. Also see. E 1071, fol. 191 (5 March 1577).

4.5.8. Information provider allies

4.5.8.1. Austrian Habsburgs

The Habsburgs cooperated with other polities and their secret services as well. Even after the Habsburg axis split up with Charles V's abdication (1556) and death (1558), two branches of the family kept close ties with each other well into the seventeenth century. They not only contracted several marriages between their princes and princesses,¹⁴⁶ practicing endogamy, but also hosted¹⁴⁷ and employed¹⁴⁸ each other's members. Even though Madrid and Vienna may have differed on minor issues, during the time under investigation they shared information with no prejudice. Madrid's ambassador in Vienna was the most active, contacting authorities and providing Madrid with information that reached the Austrian capital.¹⁴⁹ These information, however, were more concerned with the political realities of Central Europe, rather than those of the Mediterranean; so it is only natural to see that such relations intensified during the Ottoman-Austrian Wars, such as that of 1593-1606 when all of a sudden letters not only from Vienna, but also from other places such as Cracow, Strigonia, Possonia and Prague started to arrive in Madrid.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Vienna's ambassador in Constantinople sent regular information¹⁵¹ and even helped the operations of the Habsburg intelligence

¹⁴⁶ Bartolomé Bennassar, *Histoire des Espagnols: VI^e-XX^e siècle* (Paris : Éditions Robert Laffont, 1992), 320-4.

¹⁴⁷ The Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, for instance, grew up in Spain while his son and successor, Rudolf II, spent 8 years in the Peninsula, where he received his education with his brother Archduke Albert III.

¹⁴⁸ Archduke Albert III of Austria, for instance, was the Governor-General of the Habsburg Low Countries and Bourgogne (o. 1596-8). He was made the sovereign of the same territories (r. 1598-1621), jointly with his wife, Isabella Clara Eugenia, the daughter of Philip II.

¹⁴⁹ For Count of Montagudo's activities, for instance, see. AGS, *E* 1330, fols. 57-67 (April-August 1572), 93-4, 97, 152, 168, 180, ff.; *E* 1333, fols. 138-143 (January-April 1574) and 147 (15 October 1574).

¹⁵⁰ AGS, *E* K 1675, fols. 14, 24, 28a, 28b, 34, 39, 48, 56, 67 and 73 ; *E* 1345, ff. ; *E* 1346 ff.; *E* K 1676, fol. 108 (9 April 1598).

¹⁵¹ AGS, *E* 1062, fol. 84 (3 March 1573); *E* 1080, fol. 31 (14 May 1579); *E* 1338, fol. 48 (20 August 1580); *E* 487, por carta del embaxador del emperador que residen en constantinopla de dos de noviembre 1573.

network in the Ottoman capital.¹⁵² Still, the extent of the Austrian contribution to the Spanish Habsburg secret service requires a comprehensive study of the relevant documentation in the *Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv* (HHStA) that I could not undertake. Until then, suffice it to say, Austrian cooperation should have meant much for the Spanish Habsburgs who lacked any diplomatic means at their disposal.

We had already mentioned the details of the Habsburgs' cooperation with the Venetian and the Ragusan authorities. Two Habsburg allies followed the suit and exchanged information with the Habsburg authorities.

4.5.8.2. The Knights of St. John in Malta

The first was the Knights of St. John in Malta whose contribution to the Habsburgs was unproportional to the size of their state. These remnants of the Crusades, who were expelled from Rhodes by the Ottoman in 1522, had come under Charles V's wings and received from the Emperor the small yet strategically located island of Malta and the castle of Tripolis, only to lose the latter to the Ottomans in 1551. These "Maltese" knights, in quite a crusading spirit, engaged in *corso* from their well-protected (the failure of the Ottomans' 1565 expedition is a good witness to that) base in Malta and attacked Muslim ships, at times penetrating deep into the Levantine waters, despite the repeated Ottoman attempts to contain them. The sea belonged to corsairs' fast and mobile ships and the Ottomans were not more successful in containing *corso* than their adversary, the Habsburgs.

¹⁵² Margliani praised the information he received from the imperial ambassador. AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 48 (20 August 1580). This is not surprising given that one of the basic arguments of this dissertation is that resident diplomacy is crucial for efficient information gathering.

Therefore, the Maltese ships sailed freely in the Mediterranean and gathered information regarding the whereabouts of the Ottoman navy¹⁵³ as well as the preparations in the Ottoman Arsenal. Moreover, they could gather information from several ships that frequented the port of Malta; in 1585, they would even encounter one of these ships the Ottoman *çavuş* that was traveling with letters for Algiers and France.¹⁵⁴ They even had their own spies who operated in Constantinople, some of whom belonged to the order,¹⁵⁵ and some not, such as the two Moors captured in 1565.¹⁵⁶

Evidently, even after their expulsion from Rhodes in 1522, they kept their intelligence ties. It should not be a coincidence that the first French ambassador to Constantinople, Jean de la Forest was a Maltese knight and the first book published in French on the Ottoman Empire, *estat de la cour du gran turc* (1542),¹⁵⁷ was written by another knight.¹⁵⁸

In short, the Maltese did not hide any information from the Habsburgs, because their survival depended on the alertness of the Habsburgs to the Ottoman threat, as the siege of 1565 clearly demonstrates. Therefore, the Grand Master of the Order informed the Habsburg center as well as the provincial centers such as Messina and Naples. The quality of information he sent deserves attention; thanks to him, the Habsburgs could

¹⁵³ For instance, had the Duke of Medinaceli listened to the information brought by Maltese ships, things would have been different in 1560. See. Chapter Two.

¹⁵⁴ The ship had to take shelter in the port of Malta because of a storm. When the Maltese interrogated the captain, he confessed the presence of an Ottoman *çavuş*. The Maltese then immediately informed the Habsburgs and asked him what to do, whether to burn the ship with the *çavuş* and his three men in it and kill the captain or let them go when eventually the King of France would demand their restitution. AGS, *E* 1155, fol. 144 (7 December 1585). Meanwhile, they sent the translations of the letters that the *çavuş* carried, fols. 145-8.

¹⁵⁵ AGS, *E* 1124, fol. 125 (4 January 1558).

¹⁵⁶ AGS, *E* 486, Avisos de Constantinopla de 27 de diciembre 1565.

¹⁵⁷ There is also a contemporary English translation. Antoine Geuffrui, *The order of the greate Turckes courte, of hys menne of warre, and of all hys conquestes, with the summe of Mahumetes doctryne. Translated out of Frenche. 1524 [sic]*. (London: Ricardus Grafton, 1542).

¹⁵⁸ Servantie, "Information on Ottoman Shipbuilding", 5.

discover an Ottoman intelligence network that operated between Constantinople and la Goleta.¹⁵⁹

4.5.8.3. The Grand Duchy of Tuscany (Florence)

A second Habsburg ally was Florence, even though their contribution was more mediocre and less related to the Mediterranean. Still, the Florentine documentation attests to an active exchange of information between the Viceroy of Naples and the Duke of Florence in the early 1550s; how else could we explain the existence of the correspondence between the Habsburg spies and the Viceroys of Naples and Sicily in Florentine archives?¹⁶⁰

4.6. “EVERYTHING IS DONE WITH MONEY AND WITHOUT IT NOTHING GETS DONE”: THE FINANCING OF OPERATIONS

If early modern espionage was an enterprise and its spies were information traders, then *a fortiori* there had to be a direct correlation between the financial capabilities at the disposal of central governments and the efficiency of their secret services. “*Omnia per pecuniam facta sunt et sine ipsa factum est nihil*”, lamented a Habsburg agent in Ragusa in 1573;¹⁶¹ to gather information “*de tal calidad que es menester*”, the authorities had to have an open purse in order to pay and give presents to those who could provide secrets, warned another from Constantinople in 1588.¹⁶²

The authorities begged to differ and penny-pinched instead when it comes to paying their agents. Without going into too much detail, suffice it to say, a good many

¹⁵⁹ AGS, E 1132, fol. 28 (4 December 1567).

¹⁶⁰ ASF, AMP, fils. 4148, 2863, 4178, 4277; Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 66-7.

¹⁶¹ AGS, E 1332, fol. 167 (1 February 1573).

¹⁶² AGS, E 1090, fol. 8 (10 September 1588). Juan Segui de Menorca.

number of agents complained of crown's frugality.¹⁶³ Even those who received their payments were not content with the amount;¹⁶⁴ their greed seemed to be coupled with the rise of real prices in the inflationary 16th century. Still, none could top the fury of Juan Segui de Menorca, who lost a portion of his stipend when he was asking for the payments in arrears as well as a raise for the future.¹⁶⁵

A series of criticism, penned by the Habsburg spymaster, Balthasar Prototico, demonstrate the importance of money in the conduct of secret diplomacy.¹⁶⁶ According to Prototico, these Viceroy's habit of not regularly paying their agents paralyzed intelligence operations. First of all, disgruntled agents who could not receive their payments created a security problem for other spies on the field. For instance, Amerigo Balassa, one of the spies whom the Viceroy of Sicily sent to Constantinople, defected to the Ottoman side, much to Prototico's chagrin, since it was with the information he provided that the Ottomans organized an expedition in order to capture Prototico. Likewise, the son of a certain Murad Ağa who died while on Habsburg payroll, blackmailed the authorities that had the money that was due his father not been paid, he

¹⁶³ For Cesar de la Marea's complaints from Ragusa, see. AGS, *E* 1517/cuaderno VI, fols. 18-9 (27 May 1577). For Brutti, *E* 1337, fol. 15 (25 January 1585). For extensive correspondence on Marco Antonio Estanga *alias* Bartolomeo Pusterla whose payments were in arrears for five years and who died before receiving his money, see. AGS, *E* K 1674, fols. 131, 137, 156, 164, 168, 180 and 186 (all 1590); *E* K 1675, fols. 26 (8 February 1591), 182 (15 October 1592) and 196 (21 August 1593); *E* 1345, fols. 20, 25, 28, 34, 56, 79, 81 (all 1593) and 115 (12 February 1594). Juan Segui de Menorca were luckier than Estanga and received his money shortly. See. AGS, *E* 1090, fols. 8 (10 September 1588), 193 (25 October 1591) and 194 (25 October 1591). 6 years later, though, after Margliani's death, payments stopped. AGS, *E* K 1676, fols. 79 (3 November 1597), 80 (3 November 1597). For Ambrosio Grillo, see. AGS, *E* 1345, fol. 193 (24 September 1594). For payments that were not honored in 1608, see. AGS, *E* K 1678, fols. 14, 20, 32, 43a, 43b, 70, 81 and 85. For Andrea Rinaldi's fury the same year, see. ASV, *IS*, b. 416, 3 March 1608 and 2 March 1608.

¹⁶⁴ AGS, *E* 1044, fol. 40 (8 April 1552); *E* 1056, fol. 241; *E* 1528, fol. 161 (18 May 1583); BNM, ms. 7905/168, fols. 1r-2v; Masiá, *Jerónimo Bucchia*, 104-5. Some of these demands were met; For instance, for the raise in the stipends of the leading spies in the Constantinople network, see. *E* 1071, fol. 171. Sometimes, the authorities themselves demanded a raise for their spies. *E* 1148, fol. 3 (9 September 1577).

¹⁶⁵ AGS, *E* K 1676, fols. 79, 80 and 81 (all 3 November 1597).

¹⁶⁶ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 217.

would have denounced Habsburg agents and used a letter that Philip II wrote to his father as a proof.¹⁶⁷ Even though less troublesome than defection per se, the frequency of agents leaving networks and ceasing operations still decreased the efficiency of the Habsburg secret service. Prototico warned that the irregularity and unreliability of payments played into the hands of the Ottoman Sultan who wanted to use the occasion to employ the disgruntled Habsburg agents. Furthermore, the words of Cesar de la Marea undoubtedly demonstrates how the well-functioning of the system was jeopardized: “[a]ll [our agents] are lost and getting lost because we do not honor promises we made to them and I lose here the credit, honor and reputation and *se perde el servitio*”.¹⁶⁸ It was the crown that lost in the end! Not only the operations of information gathering, but also covert operations suffered. For instance, Prototico claimed to have secured the cooperation of people who had important connections in the Ottoman palace as well as two renegade tax collectors that offered to hand the castle of Modon to the Habsburgs. In both operations, however, money was essential. His connections in the capital had to be appeased with bribes and presents. Renegade tax collectors, on the other hand, wanted 100 escudos per capita and the opportunity to plunder the Customs House. Among the Levantine renegades, he added, “*suona in levante una fama infra renegati*”, the rumour was that “all who have returned to Christianity were dying of hunger and nobody was getting any *merced*”. Thanks to these rumours, renegades did not wish to work with the Habsburgs; according to Prototico, Philip II had to warn his ministers.

For sure, none of these criticisms was novelty for the Habsburg authorities, nor were they things that they themselves could not think of. They insisted, however, on

¹⁶⁷ AGS, E 1071, fol. 171.

¹⁶⁸ AGS, E 1517/cuaderno VI, fols. 18-9 (27 May 1577). With a similar argument, Mathias Vicudo also stated that he was losing credit and his honor. Fol. 23 (1 October 1575).

jeopardizing the well-functioning of the system, despite the resistance from within the system; the protests of those like Francisco de Vera¹⁶⁹ or Duke of Sessa,¹⁷⁰ as well as explicit orders from Madrid¹⁷¹ fell mostly on deaf ears. The Viceroys of Naples were not willing to indulge these agents by fulfilling their obligations.

There were basically four reasons behind their dragging feet when it comes to do the payments. Firstly, given that the Viceroys of Naples were more experienced in the daily conduct of the secret diplomacy, their unwillingness to pay these agents' or support their operations might as well demonstrate their disillusionment with the overall performance of these spies. Some of the expressions they used and the observations they made, while defending their decision not to pay, support this idea.¹⁷²

The second reason could be the chronic financial problems that the Habsburgs had to endure as a consequence of a series of bankruptcies (1557, 1560, 1575, 1596) triggered by the military costs of Charles V's and Philip II's overextended empire. It would be unrealistic to expect that the Habsburgs regularly paid these spies who were at the bottom of the Habsburg administrative hierarchy, while they could hardly pay their military and

¹⁶⁹ The Habsburg ambassador in Venice. AGS, *E K* 1674, fols. 131, 137, 156, 164, 169, 180 and 186 (all 1590); *E K* 1675, fols. 26 (8 February 1591), 182 (15 October 1592) and 194 (2 April 1593); *E* 1345, fols. 5, 20, 25, 28, 34 and 56 (all 1594).

¹⁷⁰ The Admiral of Naples. *E* 1075, fol. 18 (14 January 1575).

¹⁷¹ AGS, *E K* 1674, fol. 168 (10 September 1590); *E K* 1675, fol. 196 (21 August 1593).

¹⁷² See especially Cardinal Granvela's disappointment and chagrin. According to him, the information these agents in Constantinople sent was inconclusive, imprecise, contradicting each other and therefore useless. They claim to have intercepted Ottoman correspondence and sent fake letters that were supposedly written by the Sultan. They were sending information about events that had already occurred by putting an old date on letters and then blaming the slowness of couriers. Granvela was further amazed that they did not even care to use aliases and signed their reports with their own names. It was that either they were double agents, or the Ottomans tolerated their presence to feed the Habsburgs with incorrect information. The only aim of their leader, Renzo, the "*gran palabrero y mentiroso*", and his equally deceiving men was to extract money which they did not deserve; none of the information that they sent was "worth a *tornes*". "Better without them", complained the viceroy and asked the Habsburg ambassador in Venice to look for men of quality there. AGS, *E* 1329, fol. 57 (2 June 1571); *E* 1061, fol. 3; *E* 1064, fol. 61 (23 December 1574); *E* 1140, fols. 97 (20 May 1573) and 98 (9 November 1571), *E* 1500, fol. 60 (12 June 1571).

administrative personnel. The Viceroy of Sicily confessed, for instance, that he could only pay these spies 500 escudos, simply because he did not have the money.¹⁷³

Thirdly, the Habsburgs' reluctance to pay their spies can be considered a part of an overall tendency. The reluctance of the newly emerging bureaucratic state in the second half of the 15th century to honor its obligations to its ambassadors and *condottieri* in the face of new financial responsibilities caused by the broader administrative challenges clearly resembles the Habsburgs' case in the 16th century. The reason why the Habsburg authorities did not regularly pay their spies could be that early modern espionage was not considered a distinct profession. This imprecise nature of the profession is at least how Paul M. Dover explains a similar irregularity of payments to diplomats and *condottieri* in the second half of the 15th century.¹⁷⁴ Shortly, spies were not officers of the state and therefore could be neglected.

Finally, this could be the effect of the diminishing importance of the Great War in the Mediterranean. Even though there were similar complaints prior to the Ottoman-Habsburg truce, the Habsburg authorities seemed to honor their obligations more responsibly in the 1560s and the 1570s. Lavish payments that were made to the agents in Constantinople, and generous resources that were allocated to covert operations such as sabotage and bribery clearly highlight the direct correlation between the tenor of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry in the Mediterranean and financial resources allocated to secret diplomacy in the Mediterranean borderlands. When the memory of an Ottoman Navy in the Western Mediterranean was fresh and the Viceroys had to invest huge sums of money in defense preparations every year come sailing season in March, they showed

¹⁷³ AGS, E 1163, fol. 32 (27 June 1608).

¹⁷⁴ Paul M. Dover, "Economic Predicament of Italian Renaissance Ambassadors", *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008), 165.

more interest in what their spies had to say and therefore were more willing to pay. With the changing dynamics of international politics and inter-dynastical rivalry, they may not be so receptive in the 1590s. In short, the Viceroy had several military and administrative responsibilities according to which they had to allocate their dwindling financial resources wisely; the payments to spies of questionable loyalty and mediocre quality may not have been their priority, especially during the times when the Ottoman threat seemed less imminent.

An interesting dispute between the ambassador in Venice, Francisco de Vera, and the Viceroy of Sicily, Count of Miranda, over the payments to spies in Constantinople demonstrate to us how each Habsburg officer had his own view, in tandem with their official duties and responsibilities, regarding the necessity of gathering information in the Levant. The Viceroy, his hands full with several other responsibilities and pressing financial needs of an entire viceroyalty, stopped paying one of the most efficient Habsburg spies in Constantinople, Marco Antonio Stanga. De Vera, an ambassador whose primary task was to gather information, intervened in January 1590, accentuating the qualities of Stanga, “the best piece that His Majesty had in Constantinople” who sent punctual and reliable information every fifteen days with great care and at the risk of his life. When de Vera did not hear from the Viceroy who was supposed to pay Stanga’s 4 years of salaries as well as 1.000 ducats that he spent on the Ottoman grandees in the last 11 years, he wrote to Madrid on March. The very person who originally allocated Stanga’s salary as the Habsburg ambassador in Venice (o. 1577-1579) and the then Secretary of the State in 1590, Juan de Idiáquez, approved the payment on September. Francisco de Vera, in the meantime, continued his lamentations. Marco Antonio Stanga

was essential for gathering information especially given that he could not gather fresh information in Venice. News sent by bailo should not be trusted, because the Venetians were generally manipulating information in order to reach their own political objectives. The ambassadors in Venice were kept under close surveillance, almost besieged, *assediados*, and thus could learn no more than the rumours on the street, *vox populi*. In February, the Viceroy sent a *cédula* worth 834 escudos, excluding the salary of 1590 and declared that he would pay no more. De Vera reacted immediately asking the center whether it was they who took Stanga off the crown's payroll or whether the Viceroy himself took the initiative. The issue was not resolved until August-September 1593, when Stanga perished in Constantinople, with four years of his salaries unpaid.¹⁷⁵

In several instances, there were financial irregularities that demanded the attention of the authorities. We had previously mentioned Luis de Portillo's attempts to defraud the Habsburgs with fabricated information;¹⁷⁶ he should be encouraged with his early success in persuading the Viceroy to, albeit half-heartedly, reward him with a pension. In 1573, Portillo even sent a *quenta* summarizing his expenditures, only to be reprimanded by the cynical Viceroy.¹⁷⁷ The same year, Aurelio Santa Croce demanded 15.000 ducats for his network, surely an inflated one.¹⁷⁸ Six years later, his successor, Giovanni Margliani could now make himself rich by sending a letter to the Viceroy of Naples and demanding thousands of ducats to be paid as bribes to the Ottomans during the negotiations of truce, or at least thought so the corsair Mustafa Bey, Margliani's former owner.¹⁷⁹ Even though

¹⁷⁵ AGS, E K 1674, fols. 131 (3 March 1590), 137 (31 March 1590), 156 (21 July 1590), 164 (18 August 1590), 168 (10 September 1590), 169 (13 October 1590), 180 (10 November 1590) and 186 (8 December 1590); E K 1675, fols. 26 (8 February 1591) and 182 (15 October 1592); E 1541, fol. 222.

¹⁷⁶ AGS, E 1332, fols. 33, 34, 35, 37, 103, 131, 180, 188 and 192 (all 1573).

¹⁷⁷ AGS, E 1332, fol. 200 (28 July 1573).

¹⁷⁸ AGS, E 1071, fol. 171 (29 November 1573).

¹⁷⁹ AGS, E 490, 22 October 1579.

Margliani, more diplomat than a spy, abstained from doing so, he was an exception. These spies would defraud anybody, even their own kind. In 1566, Ambrosio Giudice came to Ragusa in order to receive the payments sent from the Habsburgs. After having spent 600 ducados of 1000 he received, this wine-drinker returned to Constantinople with the rest of the money and claimed to have been robbed in Rome.¹⁸⁰

The most interesting story of fraud was that of Niccolò Prototico who came to the court in Madrid in late 1566 to request lavish financial concessions on behalf of his father (the honoring of the payments in arrears, the reimbursement of certain expenditures such as the 718 ducats spent in the ransom of Niccolò and even a raise in Balthasar's salary) as well as the post of the captain of the royal frigates who carried the correspondence between Otranto and the Ionian Islands for himself. Surprisingly, certain documentation records that all of these excessive demands were accepted. The mystery was resolved when the Secretary of State Antonio Pérez discovered the discrepancies between the king's letters and those of the Viceroy of Naples regarding the appointment of Niccolò to the afore-mentioned post. After a brief interrogation, he quickly discovered that Prototico befriended one of his officers, Martín Ruiz de Velasio. The two contacted, on a Sunday morning while everybody was attending the mass, one of his pages, Francisco de Salinas, and made him copy certain letters, ordering the Viceroys of Naples and Sicily that Prototico's demands be accepted. Having realized the scheme, Pérez immediately ordered the local authorities to detain Prototico and confiscate his papers. Despite the pleas of his

¹⁸⁰ García Hernán, "Algunas Notas", 253.

father who even came to Otranto to recover his son, he was sent to Spain for imprisonment.¹⁸¹ From him, we hear no more.

Central authorities developed a couple of methods to increase their control over the financing of secret diplomacy and to more effectively deal with these financial irregularities. Firstly, financial bestowments could not have been realized without the approval of the center while an official of the provincial Treasury kept a close eye on the distribution of the approved amounts.¹⁸² An extant document in AGS, a *quenta* listing, to an impressive extent of detail and precision, the payments that were due and those that had been made to the Habsburg spies in Constantinople over the years, clearly proves the efficiency of central governments in supervising their finances, even when it was regarding the “secret expenditures”.¹⁸³ Furthermore, even though the authorities whose responsibilities included secret diplomacy were allocated a generous sum of money for these “secret expenditures”, they still had to give detailed reports every six months, justifying the usage of these special funds.¹⁸⁴ These reports were only for the eyes of the king and his secretaries of the state,¹⁸⁵ even though as mentioned, there were exceptions. To prove the legitimacy of their expenses, these authorities in turn occasionally demanded from their agents, statements or detailed lists explaining the money they

¹⁸¹ AGS, *E* 1057, fol. 94; *E* 1127, fol. 193 (9 December 1563); *E* 1132, fols. 136 (28 February 1569) and 187 (12 July 1569); *E* 1056, fols. 226-230 (all 1569).

¹⁸² These officials in Naples were in chronological order, Lope de Mardones, Alonso Sánchez and Juan Baptista Carachiolo. AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 129; *E* 1073, fol. 68 (17 April 1577).

¹⁸³ AGS, *E* 1073, fols. 48 and 49.

¹⁸⁴ For reports submitted by the Habsburg ambassadors to Venice regarding their semiannual expenditures (1589-1593), AGS, *E* K 1675, fols. 1, 3, 12, 78, 157 and 192.

¹⁸⁵ AGS, *E* 1408, fol. 192. Garnicer and Marcos, 85.

received from them.¹⁸⁶ These written statements would be a legal defense in case the authorities wanted to audit these expenditures.

Given the primitiveness of the early modern financial system, the transfer of money to spies on the field was an issue to be reckoned with. Even though, the Habsburgs' unwillingness to pay to begin with might give the impression that the geographical and logistical difficulties impeded the transfer of money, the economic ties between the two halves of the Mediterranean helped the authorities overcome these difficulties. The money flowed in the Mediterranean at a relative freedom and the Habsburgs did not lack the means to transfer money when they wanted to so.

First of all, there were always itinerant agents and couriers that traveled back and forth between Constantinople, Ragusa, Naples, Messina and Madrid. They obtained from the authorities either a letter of credit (*litera di credito*) or a bill of exchange (*cédula*) that authorized the payment of a certain sum.¹⁸⁷ Surprisingly for such large amounts, they were paid in cash as well.¹⁸⁸ Also merchants carried the money, even though this should be less secure and less often.¹⁸⁹ Still, this system brought several disadvantages, such as delays, inconsistencies and ruptures. Gigli for instance made a case for the presence of a resident *pagador* that would be in charge of distributing the money *in situ* with the authority to dispense at his own discretion, “*con su consulta y sabida y por su mano*”.

¹⁸⁶ One good example is the detailed *quenta* that Cesar de la Marea gave to Guzman de Silva. AGS, *E* 1527, fols. 311 and 312. (8 September 1582). Also see those of Manuel Glinzon. AGS, *E* 1540, fols. 141, 385, 386, 388 and 401; *E* 1542, fols. 127-8 (1 February 1591); *E* 1543, fol. 139; *E* 1545 fols. 162 and 192. For simple statements, see. AGS, *E* 487, 21 Julio 1569; 488, 18 October 1577.

¹⁸⁷ For examples of *litera de credito* and *cédula*, see. AGS, *E* 1071, fols. 162-164 (1566); *E* 1140, fols. 99, 104, 109, 110 and 111.

¹⁸⁸ Ambrosio Giudice, for instance, went to Ragusa in order to receive the “provisions of all the spies”, even though he seemed to have spent some of the money he was supposed to bring back. The fact that he claimed to have been robbed in Rome shows that he was paid in cash. García Hernán, “Algunas Notas”, 253.

¹⁸⁹ AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 129 (9 May 1571).

Obviously he was after more money which, according to him, was prerequisite for the well-functioning of the network as well as the realization of many of his projects, such as torching the Arsenal. His argument would have still had a rationale, had any of the covert operations he proposed been plausible.¹⁹⁰ His offer seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. Thanks to the extant networks of international trade and finance, spies continued receiving their payments with letters of credit signed by the Habsburgs. Venice's central position in the process of the transfer of money is obvious. The *cédula* to be made for the bribes proposed to the Ottoman pashas in 1579, for instance, could not be produced in Naples, because "here, there is no correspondence with Constantinople, or merchants who can give these *cédulas*". Given the risk of carrying 30.000 escudos in gold, the authorities had to exchange money in Venice that had "great correspondence" with Constantinople and that were filled with merchants who were ready to give "*cédulas muy ciertas*".¹⁹¹ Sometimes, even the Venetian bailo himself participated in these transfers and paid the salary of certain agents such as Juan Segui.¹⁹² The Florentine bailo played a similar role as well.¹⁹³ Finally, there were instances when the payees sent agents to receive what was due to them from the Habsburg authorities.¹⁹⁴

4.7. THE PROBLEM OF COORDINATION AND TRANSMISSION

One other problem was related to the coordination of operations and the transmission of news. The communication between Habsburg centers in Europe was

¹⁹⁰ AGS, *E* 1392, fol. 74 (16 March 1563).

¹⁹¹ AGS, *E* 1079, fol. 6 (10 January 1579).

¹⁹² AGS, *E* 1090, fol. 8 (10 September 1588).

¹⁹³ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 56 (28 July 1563).

¹⁹⁴ We had already mentioned *supra* how Balthasar sent his son to recover his unpaid stipends. With same intentions, Salomon Ashkenazi's nephews came to Venice in 1583 as well. AGS, *E* 1529, fols. 51, 52 and 53 (30 December 1583). Isaac Passi visited the city three years later and requested a safe-conduct in order to proceed to the Habsburg court from which he hoped to recover the money due his brother David Passi. AGS, *E* 1537, fols. 206 and 207 (both 23 July 1586).

realized with the institutionalized postal services as was mentioned before. The Habsburgs leased these services to the Tassis family that monopolized the office of the “*Correo Mayor General*”. These established in their turn, courier centers and appointed *correo mayores* and postmasters in order to ensure the reliability and the continuity of the correspondence as well as the coordination between the Habsburg authorities. This system was not only used within the Habsburg territories, but also extended to the embassies abroad. The nature of the Ottoman-Habsburg relations, however, impeded the utilization of such a system. Given the geographical distance and the lack of “correspondence” between the Habsburg centers and the Ottoman cities, communication and coordination between different Habsburg centers and separate intelligence networks became issues to be dealt with. The gravity of these issues was further exacerbated by the fact that the Habsburgs were more interested in using information for making decisions regarding military matters. Therefore, when the letters sent by these agents informing the sailing date, the whereabouts and the possible target of the Ottoman navy arrived too late, the information would be useless. Furthermore, the authorities sought to gather information from a number of different networks in order to be able to compare and contrast the incoming information more efficiently. Finally, the flow of information must be continuous, at least between March and October, the sailing season in the Mediterranean.

In order to overcome this problem, the Habsburgs developed a frigate system. A small number of “royal” frigates collected the letters that Habsburg spies who operated in Adriatic ports such as Ragusa, Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, Cattaro wrote and brought those to the port cities in the Kingdom of Naples such as Barleta, Brindisi and Otranto.

Needless to say, the Habsburg authorities in Naples, Messina, Otranto, Genoa, Rome, Florence and Venice exchanged information via either the same system of frigates¹⁹⁵ or regular couriers.¹⁹⁶ The Habsburg agents also used Venetian frigates when it served them. This met resistance from the Venetian authorities, however. In 1592, the governor (*provveditore*) of Cattaro, who rather wished that his government received the information that reached Cattaro before the Habsburg authorities, banned the frigate that sailed between Cattaro and Venice to stop in Ragusa or touch the shore elsewhere. This way, he aimed to delay the communication and the timely flow of information between Habsburg agents in Constantinople, the spymaster in Ragusa, Ruggero Margliani, and the Habsburg ambassador in Venice.¹⁹⁷

Apart from information the networks in these port cities and islands provided the frigates, itinerant spymasters such as Renzo, spies such as Nicolò Curenzi, Ambrosio Giudice *alias* Murad Ağa Napolitano and regular couriers such as Giovanni Stefano Ferrari and Giovanni Antonio Santa Croce¹⁹⁸ carried letters between Constantinople and the port cities from where the information was re-collected by the afore-mentioned frigates. It was also common to place a resident agent or a courier in strategic locations such as the islands of Chios and Mytilene, conveniently close to Constantinople, but far

¹⁹⁵ From Otranto and Lecce, these frigates rapidly carried letters for both Viceroy. Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 49.

¹⁹⁶ AGS, E 1124, fol. 100 (18 May 1558); E 1547, fol. 96; E 1552, fols. 243-4.

¹⁹⁷ The *provveditore* seemed to have succeeded; Margliani was complaining that the letters which arrived from Constantinople to Cattaro was reaching nearby Ragusa later than they reached far-away Venice. AGS, E 1542, fols. 117 (5 January 1592), 118 (15 January 1592) and 124 (8 and 12 May 1592). A similar order was given in 1601 as well. AGS, E K 1677, fol. 118 (21 April 1601).

¹⁹⁸ These two were regular couriers that worked for decades. A document dated 1576, however, enlisted some others that appear otherwise less frequently in the documentation. AGS, E 1071, fol. 189.

from the repressive Ottoman surveillance.¹⁹⁹ Still, agents in Constantinople experienced difficulties while sending their letters, especially when they could not find a courier to carry them until the afore-mentioned port cities and when the routes were interrupted, both possibilities testifying to the success of the Ottoman counter-intelligence.²⁰⁰ The only regular postal system between Europe and the Ottoman Empire belonged to the Venetians. Even though Habsburg agents tried to use this postal system to send their letters to the ambassador in Venice, at least some of the *baili* resisted the idea. For instance, Lorenzo Bernardo (o. 1585-7) refused the letters Juan Segui gave him to be sent to Venice,²⁰¹ while his successor, Lippomano (o. 1589-91), a traitor and a Habsburg informant, was more sympathetic to the idea.²⁰² Apparently, the Franciscan monks in Constantinople also helped the dispatch of the letters.²⁰³ In short, the results were mixed, depending on the conjunctural factors of the time. At times, such as during the period of truce negotiations, Margliani managed to send a letter every two or three days. There were times as well, however, when the Habsburg agents in Constantinople were reduced to risky measures and impressive innovations. In Chapter Three, we had already mentioned the detailed instructions given by Gigli for the transmission of news between Constantinople and Naples. Another good example is Pedro Brea's method. He

¹⁹⁹ That was the main rationale behind Niccolò Giustiniani's presence in Chios. Similarly, one of Carlo Cicala's functions was to provide a bridge between the network in Constantinople and Habsburg authorities in Naples and Sicily. Also see, AGS, *E* 1120, fols. 238 and 246.

²⁰⁰ For instance, after the expulsion of Dino Miniati and Donato Antonio Lubelo from Ragusa because of the Ottoman pressure, couriers could not arrive and letters could not be sent via Ragusa. They had to send the duplicate letters via Venice. AGS, *E* 1056, fols. 86 (2 August 1567).

²⁰¹ ASV, *IS*, b. 416, 30 November 1591.

²⁰² ASV, *CX-ParSec*, c. 130. (22 April 1591).

²⁰³ AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 140 (15 June 1571).

convinced a certain Filippo Balestrin, a slave of Uluç Ali, to sail with the Ottoman navy to escape at the nearest opportunity and bring his letters to Naples.²⁰⁴

The Habsburgs employed a couple of methods to transmit information safely and without interruption. One was to send two or more separate couriers in order to circumvent the enemy counter-intelligence and decrease the chances of a letter being lost because of the hazards that awaited the couriers on the roads.²⁰⁵ Another method was to send couriers via unusual routes where there would be less enemy patrol. In order to ensure the continuity and the integrity of correspondence, the sender generally included in his letters the dates of the other letters he wrote so that the receiver could actually make sure that all the letters reached him without getting lost or being interrupted. The receiver, in turn, returned the courtesy by including the dates of the letters he received.

The third method was to write with aliases in order not to be identified by the enemy. The fact that Cardinal Granvela was shocked with the example of the Habsburg agents in Constantinople who did not bother to use aliases (he even thought that they were double agents!)²⁰⁶ suggests that this was a common method in the 16th century. In fact, Habsburg spies who operated in Constantinople used aliases, in stark contrast with their colleagues in Corfu, Zante or Ragusa who saw no harm in using their own names. That should tell something about the dangers of spying in the very center of the Ottoman Empire.

²⁰⁴ The Ottomans realized the scheme and put him in chains. Brea claimed to have spent 1.000 ducats to save him from prison. Balestrin showed up in Naples and asked for a *ventaja* in the galleys of the Kingdom. Could the entire story be a fabrication, a scheme to convince the authorities to grant him his wish and, even better, compensate Brea with the ransom money? AGS, *E* 1094, fol. 234 and 238 (27 September 1596).

²⁰⁵ For instance, letters sent from Constantinople in 1576 were sent to Venice, Corfu and Ragusa simultaneously. AGS, *E* 1070, fol. 27 (27 December 1576).

²⁰⁶ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 61 (23 December 1574).

Finally, oral transmission was another method that was utilized more by the Ottomans than the Habsburgs. As Michael Jucker states in opposition to Werner Faulstich,²⁰⁷ in the late medieval diplomacy written messages did not directly replace oral ones; what we see is rather a “superimposition of media” instead of the succession of one medium by another and thus the co-existence of orality and literacy.²⁰⁸ Especially, spies who were sent on ad-hoc missions and were to come back in a matter of months lacked the means to send their letters; in a hostile environment which they knew little, they could not find a way to establish a new route. Therefore, these either brought back news in an oral form when they returned or sent one of their men to the authorities.²⁰⁹ On certain occasions, Habsburg spies sent, in addition to the letter, an oral message to be delivered by the courier *a bocca*.²¹⁰ Furthermore, agents, who brought important projects of covert operations or wanted to recover their unpaid stipends, personally appeared before the authorities; the discomfort of a long voyage was nothing compared to the amount they attempted to defraud the authorities. In spite of the fact that written documentation regarding the details of their contacts with the authorities survived; these are only partial; by bits and pieces we know what kind of information they exchanged. The method of oral communication was even used between the Habsburg authorities, especially while exchanging information of value. It was recommended by the *Junta de Tres* in 1602, for instance, that the Duke of Sessa should not write to the Duke of Feria about the secret

²⁰⁷ W. Faulstich, *Die Geschichte der Medien, vol.2 :Medien und Öffentlichkeiten im Mittelalter: 800-1400* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1996), 267-272.

²⁰⁸ Michael Jucker, “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*, eds. Petra Schulte et al., (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 222-223.

²⁰⁹ For instance, a certain Antonio Pantaleo sent back his brother-in-law from Mytilene as soon as he realized the date of the departure of the Ottoman fleet. AGS, *E* 1120, fol. 246.

²¹⁰ AGS, *E* 486, Simon Massa, 9 November 1562.

negotiations of defection with the Ottoman Grand Admiral Cigalazade, but rather sent one of his trustworthy men to relate the issue orally.²¹¹

4.8. THE QUALITY AND NATURE OF INFORMATION:

The Habsburgs tried to increase the efficiency of their information gathering and therefore raise the quality of their decision-making process by comparing and contrasting information that arrived from a number of different channels.²¹² They tried to put together reports that were provided by multiple Habsburg networks in the Levant or by spies who were sent on ad-hoc missions as well as the information that were gathered by several other methods described above.

The most frequent information that appeared in our documentation is regarding the strategic calculations in the Ottoman capital and military preparations in the Arsenal. The Habsburg decision-makers had to allocate their limited military and financial resources in accordance with the actions of the Ottoman Navy. Therefore, the sooner they were informed whether it would sail the next year or not, and if it would, when it would do so, how many ships it would have and where its target would be, they could start doing the necessary defensive preparations. Certain examples suggest that the Habsburg intelligence gathered precise and crucial information regarding the Ottoman military preparations. In 1554, they were informed of the arrival of a *çavuş* to Lepanto to demand rowers to be sent to Constantinople with celerity. These rowers would be used in the eighty galleys that would soon be put on the sea. Seventy of these would be given to the French service, while the remaining ten would sail to Algiers with Hasan Pasha. From another source, it was also learned that another *çavuş* arrived in Valona to collect rowers

²¹¹ AGS, E 1885, fol. 144 (15 December 1602).

²¹² A good example of compare-and-contrast is AGS, E 1092, fol. 146 (19 April and 4 May 1591).

and the tax for it (*avarız akçesi*). From the number of men and money he collected, it was guessed that the Ottomans were preparing a navy of 80-100 galleys.²¹³ In 1558, from a number of different sources, the Habsburgs succeeded in learning that the Ottoman navy arrived in the “waters of Corfu” on August 11 and started to do an inspection towards the end of the month, as a result of which it was noticed that 1700 men, including the governor of St. Maura, died. On August 27, a Genoese renegade provided the Habsburgs with the Sultan’s orders for the Grand Admiral Piyale Pasha not to return to the capital for the entire month of September.²¹⁴

When it comes to informing the next year’s targets, the Habsburg spies in Constantinople proved their worth. In three instances I could document, agents in Constantinople succeeded in sending precise information regarding Ottoman naval preparations. In 1563, in spite of the initial recalcitrant reports dated March 2 that could not tell whether the Ottoman fleet would sail to the Western Mediterranean or not,²¹⁵ in two-weeks’ time, (March 16) they ascertained that it would stay within the Ottoman waters for the “*guardia del arcipelago*”.²¹⁶ On March 29, they started to give hypothetical numbers (60)²¹⁷ and verified for sure, on April 14, that no more than 15 ships would sail out of the Dardanelles.²¹⁸ Even though in the end, their supposition that these 15 ships would not sail to the Western Mediterranean were erroneous,²¹⁹ this was something that the Habsburg spies could not see. A small expedition led by a prominent corsair lacked any strategic objective and probably a fixed destination that could not have

²¹³ AGS, E 1047, fol. 24 (16 February 1554).

²¹⁴ AGS, E 1124, fol. 1124, fol. 136 (August 1558).

²¹⁵ AGS, E 1052, fols. 129, 130 and 131 (all 2 March 1563).

²¹⁶ AGS, E 1052, fols. 137 (16 March 1563), 139, 140 and 141 (all 26 March 1563).

²¹⁷ AGS, E 1052, fol. 142 (29 March 1563).

²¹⁸ AGS, E 1052, fol. 178 (18 April 1563). The report provides important details concerning these 15 ships.

²¹⁹ AGS, E 1052, fol. 202 (28 June 1563).

been ascertained beforehand anyways. If Ali Portuk encountered defensive military preparations when he arrived in Capo d'Otranto, he would simply choose another target. Two years later, the Habsburg intelligence learned about the planned Ottoman attack on Malta in December, soon enough to leave time for military preparations.²²⁰ Similarly in 1573, agents successfully warned the authorities that the Ottomans sent two galleys to Algiers with the order for corsairs to be ready for the next year's expedition against la Goleta.²²¹ There were episodes of failure as well; even though Renzo received the information from Constantinople that the navy would set sail in 1570, his agents named other targets such as Malta, la Goleta and even Granada rather than Cyprus.²²² They seem to have fallen prey to Ottoman disinformation. Two of them wrote around the same time and related that even though there were rumors of a Cyprus expedition, some informants told them that this was an Ottoman disinformation in order to conceal the actual target, which is either la Goleta or Malta.²²³ If there was such a disinformation, it was not the rumor of a Cyprus expedition but rather what these informants related to two Habsburg agents; the information of a possible Ottoman disinformation seemed to be the actual disinformation.

The information that reached the Habsburgs had an impressive geographical scope; their spies and informants in the Levant related more than information regarding the Ottoman strategic plans and military projects for the Western Mediterranean. Ottomans' other endeavors were worthy of the attention of the Habsburg decision-makers who were aware of the interconnectedness of events in international politics. Detailed

²²⁰ AGS, *E* 1054, fol. 71 (29 December 1564).

²²¹ AGS, *E* 1063, fol. 35 (30 June 1573); *E* 1506, fol. 189 (1573).

²²² AGS, *E* 1057, fols. 81 and 82 (both 14 October 1569); *E* 487, ff. several letters by Baptista Ferraro, Juan Sarrahal and Adam de Franchis in 1569.

²²³ AGS, *E* 1326, fol. 314 (26 December 1569).

information concerning the developments that might divert the Ottoman military forces and relieve the Habsburg defenses from the Ottoman pressure (be it of international nature such as the expedition in the Kipchack steps²²⁴ and negotiations of a Persian ambassador in the Ottoman capital,²²⁵ or of domestic nature such as the rebellion in Yemen²²⁶ and civil wars between the sons of Suleiman²²⁷) was precious intelligence.

The success of the Habsburg intelligence is evident from the correspondence that their agents managed to intercept via their informants within the Ottoman military and administrative apparatus. Firstly, the translations of a good many number of imperial orders addressed to the local authorities and correspondence between the Ottoman center and the provinces are extant in *AGS*.²²⁸ Secondly, *AGS* hosts correspondence between the Ottoman Sultan and the European powers, especially those with which the Habsburgs had sour relations. Several letters exchanged between the Ottoman Sultan and the French king informed the Habsburg authorities who did not lose time to translate those.²²⁹ In 1579, the passport that the Ottomans sent to the men of the Prince of Orange fell into Habsburg hands.²³⁰ The Habsburg spies managed to acquire and translate a number of letters, shedding light on the negotiations between the Ottoman Sultan, the Queen of England, the King of France and the pretender to the Portuguese throne, Dom Antonio in 1591, a

²²⁴ *AGS, E 1326*, fols. 219, 220, 223, 285, 299 and 314 (all 1569).

²²⁵ *AGS, E 1124*, fol. 112 (27 December 1557).

²²⁶ *AGS, E 1326*, fol. 198, 212 and 219 (All April 1569). There is even a map of the region whose name demonstrates a political interest rather than a geographical one. "description of the part of Arabia where the Turk had a war". *AGS, E 1326*, fol. 230.

²²⁷ For the information concerning the rivalry between prince Mustafa and his father that ended with the execution of the prince, see. *AGS, E 1322*, fols. 17, 29, 201, 237, 251 and 252 (all 1554); *E 1046*, fol. 32 (29 December 1553); *E 1047*, fol. 24 (16 February 1554). For those regarding the civil war between Selim and Bayezid, see. *AGS, E 1124*, fol. 151, 181, 182, 208 and 212 (All between November 1558 and June 1559)

²²⁸ *AGS, E 1064*, fol. 37; *E 1066*, fol. 15; *E 1071*, fols. 174, 198, 200, 201, 203 and 205; *E 1077*, fols. 145 and 147; *E 1033*, fol. 197; *E 1339*, fol. 123.

²²⁹ *AGS, E 1062*, fols. 119, 206 and 208; *E 1063*, fols. 29 and 32; *E 1064*, fol. 38; *E 1068*, fol. 101; *E 1071*, fols. 175, 178, 182, 183, 199 and 206.

²³⁰ *AGS, E 1546*, fol. 185. Passport's date is H. 1 Za. 987/A.D. 18 January 1580.

crucial time when the Ottomans were prepared to intervene on behalf of both Dom Antonio and Henri de Navarre.²³¹ In times of warfare, instances of interruption intensified; between 1570 and 1574, the Habsburg secret service intercepted letters that the Ottoman Sultan and the French king exchanged,²³² as well as the internal correspondence among the Ottoman authorities which contained crucial information regarding Ottoman military preparations.²³³

After all these efforts, the Habsburg secret service produced results of quality albeit there was room for improvement. False news, for instance, should have confused the authorities, even though their numbers do not exceed tolerable levels. Entertainingly, most of these were rumors that informed the premature death of prominent figures in the Ottoman Empire, such as the Sultans Suleiman²³⁴ and Selim (on the accuracy of the news of his death, people even started to place bets in Ragusa),²³⁵ the Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha,²³⁶ the Grand Admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa²³⁷ and the prominent corsair Turgud.²³⁸ There were also fabricated news, such as those sent by the swindler Luis de Portillo, the nature of which the authorities were quick to realize. Rather than the falsity, what was more frustrating for the authorities should be the ambiguity, especially when the Ottoman threat seemed imminent and the reports were unable to provide precise information with which decisions regarding military matters had to be made. This

²³¹ AGS, *E* 1092, fols. 217, 218, 219 and 220 (all January 1591).

²³² AGS, *E* 1062, fol. 119 (September 1572), 206 (18 June 1573) and 208 ; *E* 1063, fols. 29 and 31, *E* 1064, fols. 36 and 38.

²³³ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 37; *E* 1066, fol. 15; *E* 1071, fols. 174, 198, 200, 203 and 205.

²³⁴ AGS, *E* 1011 (1532) *E* 1124, fol. 56 (1557).

²³⁵ AGS, *E* 1332, fols. 66, 69, 74, 193, 196, 197 and 216 (all 1573). *E* 1332, fol. 195 even stated that Uluç Ali fomented a janissary rebellion and had Mehmet Pasha killed. According to, *E* 487, 4 July 1573, Sokollu enthroned the Selim's two-year old son.

²³⁶ He was assassinated by the janissaries. AGS, *E* 1123, fol. 100 (8 November 1555).

²³⁷ AGS, *E* 1315, fol. 40.

²³⁸ AGS, *E* 1124, fol. 56 (1557).

problem was so chronic that it convinced some Habsburg authorities, such as Cardinal Granvela, who neglected the incoming information about an Ottoman attack against la Goleta in 1574, that these spies were nothing but swindlers who sent inconclusive, imprecise information that contradicted each other which one could learn in taverns.²³⁹

Still, the Habsburg officers, both in the capital and provincial centers such as Naples and Sicily, were only interested in information that would help them to react to the danger of an Ottoman expedition. The Ottoman Empire, per se, did not seem to have occupied the minds of these decision-makers who never developed an interest, unlike their Venetian counterparts for instance, in understanding the nature of the Ottoman state, society and economy. Sufficed it to learn whether the Ottomans were coming or not.

One reason was the lack of diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. Apart from the brief period of 1578-81, when the unofficial Habsburg diplomat Margliani was in Constantinople to negotiate a truce, the Habsburgs did not have a resident ambassador in the Ottoman capital. The members of a permanent embassy, the chancellery, the ambassador and his retinue, could have not only furnished the Habsburgs with regular and more reliable information, but also observed the Ottoman state, society and economy just was the case with the Venetian bailate.

Furthermore, the relations between the Habsburg centers and Constantinople were limited in other respects as well. Few people coming from the Ottoman Empire were given permission to travel freely in the Habsburg provinces, because the authorities feared that those Ottoman subjects, most of whom came with the excuse of offering secret plans of clandestine operations, might have in fact come for spying. Philip II gave an explicit order to his ambassador in Venice in 1574 that he should not give *licencia* to

²³⁹ AGS, E 1064, fol. 61 (23 December 1574).

David Passi, because people like him came more often for spying than serving the crown.²⁴⁰

There were no direct economic relations between these centers. As mentioned above, when he had to make a bill of exchange (*cédula*) to transfer money to Constantinople, the Viceroy could not send it directly from Naples, because there was no “correspondence with Constantinople”. Neither were there merchants who had credit in Constantinople so that their bills of exchange would be valid. Instead, the Viceroy had to send the money to Venice that had “great correspondence” with Constantinople and that was filled with merchants whose bills of exchanges were “very certain”.²⁴¹

In short, the Habsburgs did not engage in a detailed study of the Ottoman world and kept their activities limited to the realm of international politics. They had no reason to do so, given that they were usually on the defensive against the Ottomans and had no long-term strategy concerning the Eastern Mediterranean, apart from implausible projects of crusades and cooperation with the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Their sphere of influence was the Western Mediterranean and their targets were in North Africa, not in the Balkans, especially after the break-up of Charles V’s empire when the Archduchy of Austria fell under the control of the junior branch of the family. During the War of 1570-3, the Habsburgs showed little inclination to follow the example of the siege of Castelnuovo in 1538. Two years after the total annihilation of the Ottoman navy at the Battle of Lepanto, Don Juan, Philip II’s brother and the Admiral of the Christian fleet, would choose to attack Tunis instead of Cyprus or any other Ottoman possessions in the Balkans.

²⁴⁰ AGS, E 1333, fol. 106 (18 February 1574).

²⁴¹ AGS, E 1079, fol. 6 (10 January 1579).

4.9. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I summarized the slow process of institutionalization and centralization that the Habsburg secret service underwent. I showed how the central government sought to centralize the information in the hands of few decision makers in the capital and closely regulated the transmission of state correspondence by establishing a regular postal system. Moreover, it started to expand its influence by directly intervening in the recruitment, or at least approval, of agents, the authorization of clandestine operations as well as of salaries allocated to Habsburg spies. At the close of the century, they even created a centralized office, that of the “Grand Spy”, in order to synchronize the activities of different intelligence networks and solve the problems of coordination between these networks and the center. Even though unsuccessful in the end, the creation of this office clearly demonstrates central government’s efforts to closely regulate intelligence activity within the framework of an institutionalized state apparatus.

In spite of these efforts, this process of centralization and institutionalization was by no means complete at the turn of the century. Special factors that affected the Habsburg secret service in the Levant, such as technological and logistical difficulties, the harsh conditions of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier as well as the enmity between two empires hindered these efforts of centralization further. The central government had to delegate more responsibilities of secret diplomacy to its viceroys and ambassadors, even though in the end it kept the last word to itself, never renouncing its claim to the control and supervision of the Habsburg secret service. There was a certain division of labor between the viceroys of Sicily and Naples and ambassadors in Venice, Rome and Genoa,

in accordance with each one's description of duties and sphere of influence. This chapter concentrated more on the role of Naples and Venice given that these were more central to the Habsburg intelligence activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

A historical study that engages in a comprehensive study of Habsburg espionage without a special focus on regional differences is misleading exactly because of this failure in creating a unified system of intelligence gathering. For instance, as mentioned above, García and Marcos overlooked the fact that the Habsburg secret service relied on several independent networks that shared very few common traits. They studied this secret service as a homogenous entity and shied away from accentuating each network's particularities and dealing with problems specific to it. The independence of Habsburg networks that operated away from each other in a large geography could not have been more apparent than in the case of Habsburg intelligence networks in the Levant. Operating under the harsh conditions of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier, these networks had to deal with other issues and face additional difficulties. Analyzing them with Habsburg networks that operated in Flanders or Paris brings little benefit.

The heat of the Ottoman Habsburg rivalry compelled the Habsburgs to develop a complex system of espionage that gathered information from a number of spies that traveled between Habsburg and Ottoman centers, intelligence networks dispersed in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as other sources of information such as merchants, sailors and pilgrims that frequented the Levantine ports, slaves that returned from captivity, the rebellious Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire, corsairs that roamed the enemy waters, informants within the Ottoman administrative and military hierarchy, foreign diplomats in Constantinople, Jewish communities and other sovereign powers.

This complex system compelled the authorities to tackle certain problems. For instance, the willingness of the Habsburgs to allocate their already strained financial resources for operations of secret diplomacy depended upon the tenor of the Ottoman-Habsburg confrontation, the condition of the crown's finances at a given time and the authorities' evaluation of spies' performance. There was an inevitable clash between the authorities who, having too many obligations and too little money, were reluctant to honor their financial obligations and entrepreneur spies who were always innovative in devising the most innovative methods to squeeze money from the authorities. Regarding the necessity of gathering information in the Levant and the issue of the crown's financial obligations to its spies, there were also differing opinions between the Habsburg officials in accordance with responsibilities attached to their office.

Moreover, the coordination of operations and the safe transmission of news without interruption were chronic problems given the logistical limitations of the 16th century; in our case, the distance, the lack of a regular postal system and the enmity between two empires further exacerbated the problem. The Habsburgs tried to overcome these problems by using a number of methods such as setting up a frigate system between the Neapolitan and Adriatic shores, using multiple specialized couriers, writing with aliases and even resorting to oral transmission of information.

Finally, I argued that the Habsburg secret service had specific objectives in the Levant, in accordance with the Habsburgs' Mediterranean strategy. They were interested in a specific type of information, i.e., those regarding the whereabouts of the Ottoman navy, military preparation in the Ottoman Arsenal and any political development that would distract the Ottoman military might away from the Western Mediterranean. Their

main sphere of influence remained the Western Mediterranean and their main concern in the Levant was to learn whether the Ottomans would attack them and thus what kind of preparations should be made. The reports that Habsburg agents sent to Naples, Messina and Madrid contained very little information on other aspects of the Ottoman Empire. Neither did the authorities inquire about them; they showed little genuine interest in a detailed study of the Ottoman state, society, culture and economy, unlike their Venetian colleagues.

CHAPTER FIVE

ESPIONAGE IN THE SUBLIME PORTE: THE HABSBURG INTELLIGENCE NETWORK IN CONSTANTINOPLE, 1560-1600

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter tells us the story of a number of entrepreneurs who used their dual position and brokered information between clashing empires. Their stories are important, not only because they demonstrate how the Habsburgs set up and operated an intelligence network at, from a Habsburg-centered world-view, the farthest corner of the Mediterranean, or how these information brokers furthered their own interest while negotiating with central governments. It is also significant because it gives us an alternative vision of political life in the Ottoman capital which could not be delineated by relying on Ottoman sources alone. This chapter also seeks to elucidate the details of relations and negotiations not only between Muslims and non-Muslims, in a similar fashion to Dursteler's book on the Venetian community in Constantinople, but also between men of all sorts from diverse religious, ethnic, geographical and cultural backgrounds that operated in Constantinople. Furthermore, this chapter is an effort to give some agency to the often neglected "individual" in Ottoman historiography by concentrating on the activities of a group of select power brokers in the Ottoman capital, the "invisible figures" of Ottoman politics whose existence often escaped chronicles and government documents. Thus, it seeks to delineate the intricacies of politics (internal and

external) in Constantinople, not on the highest level between Ottoman grandees and foreign ambassadors, but on lower levels: between information-brokers, spymasters, unofficial diplomats, translators, ransom agents and merchants who conducted, as agents of these grandees and ambassadors, the day-to-day operations of Constantinople politics. This is the story of these long-forgotten protagonists of politics and espionage in the 16th century Ottoman capital, whose centrality and importance vis-à-vis the provinces was cemented by the monetarization of Ottoman economy and the expansion of the state apparatus.

5.2. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF DJERBA (1560)

The commencement of direct Ottoman-Habsburg confrontation in the Mediterranean can be dated as early as 1534, when the Ottomans sent their navy to the Western Mediterranean under the command of the Grand Admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa and conquered Tunis, a Habsburg vassal. Even though the Habsburgs quickly pacified the threat of an Ottoman base so close to Sicily, the need to be informed about Ottoman war plans became apparent to the authorities. As the struggle for the mastery of the *Mare Nostrum* intensified, the Habsburgs found themselves helplessly on the defense. The Ottoman victory against the united Venetian and Habsburg navies at Prevesa (1538) and the consequent withdrawal of Venice from the struggle clearly demonstrated what was to come for the Viceroy of Naples and Sicily in the following years. The Ottoman-Valois rapprochement furthermore deteriorated the situation and tipped the already negative balance-of-power further against the Habsburgs. The Ottoman navy, thanks to French complicity and cooperation, easily roamed the Western Mediterranean. It wintered in Toulon in 1543-44 and even undertook a joint military venture against Nice with the

French forces. In 1551, 1552, 1553, 1555 and 1558, other naval operations of mass scale followed, threatening Habsburg possessions, exhausting provincial budgets, alerting the authorities, and reminding them once again of the importance of gathering information on time and subsequently making necessary preparations.

The Habsburg authorities sought to solve the problem through a couple of methods, already described in Chapter Four. They sent their trusted men on ad-hoc missions to gather information and return as soon as possible. More frequently, however, they sent agents with necessary cultural and social capital, i.e., those who knew the area and the language and could capitalize on their local connections and acquaintances in order to gather information. Former prisoners-of-war who were slaves of important Ottoman figures, for instance, were ideal candidates since they could contact their old masters and the members of their household. These, however, were in moderate numbers and were not aware of each other. Thus, they were not operating together as a network. In order to supplement the information that these spies were supposed to send, the authorities adopted other strategies for gathering information. They interrogated anybody who might have information on the Ottoman Empire, such as captured Ottoman soldiers, Christian slaves who ran away and returned from the Ottoman Empire, the crews of the ships who arrived from the Eastern Mediterranean, pilgrims who visited the Holy Places in the Levant, and the like. Furthermore, they relied on other states' goodwill and used their diplomatic network to convince them to share information.

With so many limitations and uncertainties these methods hardly ensured a full-functioning system. The results were mediocre, or in other words, there was always room for improvement. But there was little that could be done. Such a network could not be

easily organized and supervised from such a distance, especially given the lack of diplomatic relations between the two empires.

All this changed with the resounding Ottoman victory at the Battle of Djerba in 1560. This victory more clearly demonstrated to the Habsburg authorities the need to gather reliable information on the activities of the Ottoman navy; it was the Habsburg Admiral's mistrust and neglect of the information he received that paved the road to perdition for the Habsburg navy. More important than giving the Habsburgs a solid reason to establish a network that would provide reliable information was that it gave them an opportunity to do so. The influx of several Christian prisoners-of-war that fell captive during the battle into Constantinople created the supply that met the high demand for a network composed of resident spies. Furthermore, the ransom negotiations for some of these soldiers created a convenient alibi for Habsburg agents to easily travel between the two empires and coordinate the establishment of the network.

5.3. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RENZO'S NETWORK

A Genoese from San Remo named Giovanni Maria Renzo arrived in Madrid in 1561 and contacted the Habsburg authorities with an interesting proposal. He had brought letters written by renegades and prisoners-of-war that lived in Constantinople, some of whom worked in the Ottoman Arsenal. These were offering their services to the Catholic King. Renzo quickly convinced the authorities, partly thanks to a letter written in his favour by Captain Rodrigo Çapata, a former slave in Constantinople and a Habsburg soldier-cum-ransom agent.¹ He then immediately returned to Constantinople with royal letters as well as 4.000 ducats. There he organized a network of spies, to which the contemporary documents give a number of different names such as *la compania*, *los*

¹ Sola, "Moriscos, Renegados y Agentes Secretos", 338 ; idem., *Uchalí*, 90-1.

renegados, los ocultos and *gli amici*. He immediately found reliable lieutenants: the Neapolitan Giovanni Agostino Gigli, who was in charge of arranging the transmission of correspondence; Adam de Franchis, a Genoese merchant from Chios who knew Turkish, made translations for Christian merchants and at one point even functioned as the ransom agent of the Viceroy of Sicily; Aurelio Santa Croce, a merchant who was born in the Italian dominions of Venice and had been trading and living with his family in Constantinople since 1552; and two Genoese renegades from within the Ottoman military-administrative apparatus: Gregorio Bregante de Sturla from Santa Margarita, (Tur. Murad Ağa), who was the eunuch of the Ottoman Sultan and the commander of a force of 6.000 horsemen and Simon Massa, the mastermind behind the sabotage plans of the Ottoman Arsenal and most probably the same person with Mustafa Genoves *alias* Gregorio Bucon/Gregorio Barian, a galley captain in the navy who fell captive to the Ottomans in Tunis and then converted to Islam. When he fell captive, this time, to the Christians at the Battle of Lepanto, his relatives in Constantinople would cause much trouble for the network as explained below.²

Several other names are indicated in the documents: Ambrosio Giudice *alias* Murad Ağa Napolitano who had the task of carrying the letters to the Habsburg authorities with his frigate; Melchor Stefani de Insula (Tur. Ferhat Bey) who was the nephew of one of Charles V's colonels; the Neapolitan Giovanni Battista from Sorrento (Tur. Mahmud) who had confidants both in Constantinople and the fortress of Gallipoli; Ambrosio Corvato (Tur. Hasan Bali) who was a member of the Grand Admiral's household; the Venetian merchant Camillo Strozzi, Giovanni Sarimbal and two galley

² AGS, E 486, 20 August 1566; E 1052, fol. 89 (20 January 1562); E 1056, fol. 83; E 1127, fol. 106; Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 201-2.

captains (Ott. *re'is*) from the Ottoman Navy, Francesco de Bisagno (Tur. Ahmed Re'is) and Hamid Re'is. There were also two religious figures among the members of the network: Stefano Gatalusio, the Bishop of Milos and the abbot of a monastery in Constantinople, who helped the ransoming of several prisoners-of-war and Fra Marino Genovese Carvo, a Genoese friar who travelled back and forth between the two empires.³ In order to exonerate themselves in case their letters were captured by the Ottomans, these spies wrote with aliases and thus had alternative names: Santa Croce/Battista Ferraro, Melchor Stefani de Insula/Renato, Simon Massa/Gregorio Barian or G.B., Gigli/Urban de Mengrelia and later after Gigli's death, Hürrem Bey/Urban de Mengrelia and in the 1570s, Matheo dal Faro/Jorge Riese.

Renzo would be the intermediary between the network and the authorities while his lieutenants would supervise the operations and ensure the well-functioning of the system. The network would operate in cooperation with other Habsburg spies nearby. The spymaster in Chios, Niccolò Giustiniani, for instance, played an important role in these early years. When Renzo arrived in the island of Chios in 1562 on his way to Constantinople, it was him who ordered Gigli to give up his voyage to Italy and escort Renzo to Constantinople.⁴ Furthermore, Renzo chose Lorenzo Miniati to reside in Ragusa; he would ensure the continuity of information flow by transmitting the letters that arrived from Constantinople to the Habsburg authorities.⁵ According to the instructions which Gigli gave to Renzo to be remitted to the Habsburg authorities, agents

³ AGS, *E* 486 ff. Relación a Juan Baptista Corso, also several letters written by these spies, dated 8, 9, 11, 14 and 17 November 1562. García Hernán, "Price of Spying", 237.

⁴ AGS, *E* 1127, fol. 81 (4 October 1562).

⁵ AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 56 (28 July 1563).

would send letters to the Ionian Islands as well. From here, the men sent by the Governor of the “Lands of Otranto and Bari” had to pick them up.⁶

These newly employed Habsburg spies offered two things. The first was gathering reliable and updated information about Ottoman military preparations. In this task, they seemed to have succeeded. In 1563, they immediately informed the authorities that the Ottoman fleet would not set sail for the Western Mediterranean and assuaged the Habsburg fears of an Ottoman naval attack.⁷ As mentioned earlier, thanks to their diligence and aptness, the Habsburgs learned beforehand of the Ottoman attacks on Malta in 1565,⁸ and la Goleta in 1574.⁹

Secondly, spies offered to undertake covert operations that would debilitate the Ottoman military capabilities. They offered to torch the Imperial Arsenal among whose workers they had agents, to ensure the defection of Ottoman galleys with the complicity of some high ranking officers, and to sabotage the Ottoman galleys during either a naval battle with the Christians or a siege operation. None of these covert operations succeeded, showing us the true nature and the entrepreneurial character of early modern espionage. No doubt that all these were just schemes to manipulate the fears and appetites of Habsburg authorities and to defraud them.

Renzo stayed in Constantinople for two months and left in November 1562. In June 1563, he was in Spain, in talks with Philip II who authorized payments to be made to the spies via the intermediation of the Florentine bailo. The fact that the king did not

⁶ AGS, *E* 486, Instruxion para el s.r. Ju^o Maria Renzo que a da procurar de dar orden que se exigua, sino se allare mas perfeta, y si se allare que se ordene la condicion della para exeguirse. Juan Agustino Gilli, Constantinople (8 November 1562).

⁷ AGS, *E* 1052, fols. 129, 130 and 131 (all 2 March 1563), fols. 137 (16 March 1563), 139, 140 and 141 (all 26 March 1563).

⁸ AGS, *E* 1054, fol. 71 (29 December 1564).

⁹ AGS, *E* 1063, fol. 35 (30 June 1573).

refuse a favor to Renzo in a rather unusual matter, in spite of a negative reference of his veteran ambassador in Genoa,¹⁰ demonstrate the reputation and the level of credibility these spies enjoyed in the Habsburg capital in these early years. The issue was as follows: a friend named *Morfeti*¹¹ requested the intervention of Gregorio Bregante alias Murad Ağa for the ransoming of *Esmareddin* Kalfa, an aged slave in Malta. Renzo promised to relate the issue to the Catholic King and ensure his release. Philip II took the matter at hand and immediately ordered the Viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Alcala to ransom him from Malta, a task that would cost royal coffers more or less 100 ducats.¹²

Around the same time, reports from Constantinople streamed in with regularity, informing Habsburg centers that the Ottoman navy would not set sail except for a small number of galleys that would protect the Ottoman coasts (*guardia del archipelago*) under the command of the famous corsair Ali Portuk. This small fleet would not leave the Aegean Sea and pass further than Modon and Coron.¹³ Even though, as mentioned in Chapter Four, Ali Portuk staged a quick assault on the Capo d'Otranto; nonetheless, the network proved its value by informing the authorities regularly of military preparations in the Arsenal and that a sizable Ottoman fleet would not sail in the Western Mediterranean.

Spies continued, on the one hand sending information regarding military preparations and the political situation in Constantinople, and on the other exhorting Renzo's return with *Esmareddin* Kalfa and more money. Their avidity seemed to have forced them to put pressure on the authorities to send Renzo. When they realized Renzo

¹⁰ According to Figueroa, in Genoa, he was considered a swindler, a *barbullista*, an untrustworthy man who left the city because of his debts. The experienced ambassador did not have high hopes for these spies' contributions as well. AGS, *E* 1392, fols. 20 (30 April 1563) and 32 (10 July 1563).

¹¹ AGS, *E* 1392, fol. 74 (16 March 1573) cites him as *Musti*.

¹² AGS, *E* 1056, fol. 56 (28 July 1563).

¹³ AGS, *E* 1052, fols. 129, 130, 131, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 177, 178 (a very detailed report) and 195.

would not come on time, they directly asked for money to be used for the execution of the plot, *efectuación desta conjura*.¹⁴ Furthermore, Gigli wrote a letter accentuating the importance of funds for the proposed covert operation of torching the Ottoman Navy. He needed at least 15 *renegados* who would torch 30-40 galleys which were on water at night, using “artificial fires”. Furthermore, he had to wait for the right winds to arrive and spread the fire to other galleys ashore. All these required money, which Gilli could not recover from the paymaster in Naples without royal authorization. He then made a daring move and offered that a resident supervisor who would authorize the expenditures made by the network, a *veedor*, be appointed in order to ensure the regular flow of money to the Habsburg spies’ coffers. His willingness to serve the Habsburgs (!) was such that he even offered to secure a safe-conduct for the *veedor* from the Ottomans by claiming that he was his brother. If not, another solution could be to ransom one of the Habsburg *tercio* captains in Constantinople and to appoint him as the *veedor* of the network. Evidently, spies were confident that their scheme deceived the authorities who would not hesitate to invest further in the realization of these infeasible covert operations.¹⁵ Gigli made another strategic move by suggesting that Renzo, who had aroused the suspicion of many in the Ottoman capital including the Venetian bailo, should not come without Esmareddin Calfa or a letter written by him. If his Majesty were to tell him that Renzo would be the *veedor*, he added, he would like to remind him that even though he was a fine fellow and a great servant to his Majesty, such negotiations required men of more trustworthiness, prudence and knowledge.¹⁶

¹⁴ AGS, E 1392, fols. 68 (18 January 1563) and 72 (17 February 1563).

¹⁵ AGS, E 1392, fol. 74 (16 March 1563).

¹⁶ “...mas confiança, mas prudencia y mas saber”.

His Majesty seemed to have heeded to Gigli's advice, because Renzo stayed in Naples and his pleas to come to the court to receive new instructions fell on deaf ears. His luck would change in 1565 when Gigli, Ambrosio Corvato and the Bishop of Milos died and Ambrosio Giudice arrived in Naples to discuss *diversas cosas*. Evidently, the death of the three affected the sabotage operations since no one else knew all the saboteurs who would be distributed among Ottoman galleys once the Ottoman fleet set sail. His lieutenants asked for the return of Renzo who quickly took the opportunity and offered to go to Constantinople, with money needless to say, in order to renew the orders and instructions so that the sabotage plans could be put into effect. In the end, the authorities realized that they could not find a better person to send to Constantinople than Renzo who, as the "first founder, inventor and director of the plot and the plotters",¹⁷ was the only other person who knew everybody implicated in the plot. Renzo showed his expertise on the trade of information by asking for blank checks (*polise con nomi in bianco*) signed by Philip II to be distributed to agents in Constantinople on the one hand, and enumerating the struggles he had to face after he moved his family from Genoa to Naples with the Viceroy's orders on the other. Not only did he have to spend 600 ducats, 300 of which were debt, but also his wife got sick because of the change of air and the great scarcity. He furthermore repeated the example of Gigli by seeking to discredit a rival, Niccolò Giustiani, who came to Madrid to recover the money he spent on ransoms. He was of little service to the crown and a great disturbance to other agents (*nostri consorti*) while his projects were useless. It is not surprising these spies were in bitter

¹⁷ "...il primo inventor, fundator et essectuore della congiura et congiurati".

rivalry; there were several of them, while there was only one Philip II to pay these generous sums.¹⁸

Renzo left Naples and arrived in Madrid in 1566. He then traveled to Constantinople, in spite of warnings from his friends that the Ottomans, who were informed via Ragusa that he was coming as a Habsburg spy, were looking for him everywhere. Refusing to relent, he changed his name and followed unusual routes in order to evade patrols. When he arrived at his destination in April 1567, agents in Constantinople hid him in a house and advised him to return immediately and leave the matter to them. He refused once again. He brought a *patente* from Philip II as well as 500 *cédulas* to distribute among agents according to their merit. Furthermore, he was allocated 5.000 ducats from the Neapolitan treasury. He was also authorized to negotiate the defection of a certain Genoese renegade from Santa Margarita named Marança (Tr. Durmuş Re'is) who, as the *comite general* of the Ottoman Navy, offered to defect to the Habsburg side with all or at least some part of the Ottoman navy. Renzo offered Marança 5.000 ducats per year and another 5.000 for once. Nor did he forget others who would participate in this tri-partite covert operation of torching the Ottoman Arsenal, ensuring the defection of the Ottoman galleys and sabotaging the Ottoman fleet during combat with the Habsburg one. Even though these received less extravagant amounts, the total amount still reached the outrageous figure of 30.000 ducats.¹⁹ Renzo was aiming high

¹⁸ AGS, E 1054, fols. 71 (29 December 1564), 189 and 190 (both 7 September 1565).

¹⁹ For instance, the other ten to twelve galley captains that would defect with him would get 500 ducats for once and another 500 as rent for life, except for the three leading ones who would get 1000 ducats for once and 500 as rent for life. Those who participated in torching the Arsenal or cutting the ropes of the lateen yard of the Ottoman galleys would get 500 escudos for once and another 500 as rent for life. Furthermore, the eunuch Murad Ağa (Gregorio Bregante) and the captain of galleys and the principal guardian of the Arsenal, Mustafa Genovés (Simon Massa) would get 1000 ducats as an annual rent. Renzo moreover left the door open to spend more by stating that he could offer smaller amounts to others in a manner that

and making full use of the Habsburgs' naïve eagerness. Everything fell apart when Marañón, afraid of being discovered, refused to take Philip II's letter and participate in the plot, albeit leaving the door open for future negotiations, at least according to what Renzo told the authorities. Renzo distributed the money among others in the presence of four *pensionarios* who, it seems, replaced Gigli as network leaders: Santa Croce, Franchis, Massa and Bregante. Then, he returned to Naples via Ragusa disguised as the French ambassador.²⁰

Upon his return, Renzo compiled a report that delineates the details of the covert operation which interestingly included a new mission: the sabotage of the Ottoman Navy during a siege. According to the plan, when the Ottoman Navy unloaded its infantry and artillery to begin a siege, renegades in the Navy would send one of their men to the city, carrying a *cédula* signed by the king as proof of his identity. His mission would be to inform the Governor so that he could invite the Habsburg "Governor-General of the Sea". The two would then agree on the details of the plot. As a signal, the first guards of the night put up a fire on two towers of the besieged city, high enough to be seen from the navy. The renegades would start the operation the next day, leaving 24 hours for those ashore to come aboard. Each would put explosives in four or five different parts of the Ottoman galleys and start shouting for help, in order to create confusion so that no one realized that these were taking water. The Ottoman soldiers who saw that their galleys were sinking would soon realize the treachery and panic in fear. Next thing, the Ottoman admiral would call the soldiers and sailors back aboard to do *a la vanda*. Amidst this

would not exceed 30.000 ducats in total. AGS, E 486, Relación que dixo Juan Maria Renzo quando partió de Segovia para Constantinopla, 20 August 1566.

²⁰ AGS, E 486, 8 May 1567 and 25 March 1568. We know the names of the four from other documents. E 1056, fol. 43 (20 April 1567).

confusion, the garrison in the city would use the advantage and attack, while a Habsburg navy would be waiting nearby, casting further fear into the hearts of the Ottomans. Saboteur renegades would defect to the other side when they accomplished the last stage of their plan: to incite a rebellion among Christian slave-rowers.

More details regarding other parts of the plot come to light in the same report. For instance, when the Ottoman navy confronted the Habsburg navy, Renzo's agents would cut the robes that held the lateen yard (*antenna*), sink the galleys by exploding the middle room, and incite a rebellion among the Christian slave-rowers so that the outnumbered Ottomans would jump into the sea and leave their galleys defenseless. Meanwhile some of the Ottoman galley captains would defect to the Habsburg side with their ships. If the Ottoman navy did not set sail, or there occurred no occasion of realizing this plot, there was the contingency plan of torching the galleys in the Arsenal. According to Renzo, the right time was when the Ottoman fleet was being prepared, in February or March. When they left the Arsenal three or four hours after the nightfall, Greek, Spanish and Italian *maestros* whom Renzo hired would leave their tools in rooms in the galleys which one could only enter with a candle. This would give them a good alibi to hide balls (*pelotas*) of artificial fire composed of tar in galleys ashore; the wicks would assure that by midnight all the galleys would start to burn simultaneously. To make sure of the effect of the fire, they had to choose a windy night; some of these strong winds lasted for six to eight days in Constantinople. With the cold and the wind, the Ottomans could do nothing but watch. The blame would fall on the guards of the Arsenal, and even if it did not, it would still be impossible to distinguish the Renzo's *maestros* from among three to four thousand others who were working in the Arsenal. In case things went wrong, Renzo had

a reserve team as well, composed of three Italian *maestros* who did not want to do business with the rest. Each would go to one of the three quarters of the Arsenal to torch the galleys and then run away to a previously designed safe house. From there, they were to go to Naples, carrying Philip II's letter as a proof (*contraseña*) and expecting their rewards. If these failed too, then Gregorio Bregante heroically offered to do it himself.²¹

In the meantime, the go-between who was supposed to carry letters and stipends, Ambrosio Giudice, defrauded his own friends. He arrived in Ragusa to receive the stipends in May 1566. His friends in Constantinople had already grown suspicious of him because this wine-lover was talking too much. They sent letters to the authorities urging them to neither pay him nor let him leave Ragusa. Unfortunately for them, the letter arrived too late. Ambrosio had already taken the money and gone to Venice where he did not abstain from arousing the vigilant eyes of the Council of Ten. He then returned Constantinople via Candia with only 400 of the 1000 ducats he was supposed to receive, claiming that he was robbed in Rome. He was then sent away from Constantinople to Ragusa and passed to Naples with his family in 1569. Still, not only was he paid the two year stipend in arrears,²² but also spies wrote a letter to the authorities in Naples recommending them to give him some allowance, so that he did not blow the whistle.²³

The four *pensionarios*, expecting the return of Renzo with more money, continued sending letters full of information on things Ottoman and recommendations of new agents.²⁴ Renzo reached Naples on July 2, 1567, gave a brief report and submitted letters from Constantinople to the Viceroy. Then, he started to complain right away of the poor

²¹ AGS, E 486, 8 May 1567. Another document dated 1567, entitled *relación de lo que Juan Maria hize en levante y dexó concertado con los amigos pensionarios y renegados de la conjura*.

²² García Hernán, "Algunas Notas", 253.

²³ AGS, E 487, 16 April 1569; E 1060, fol. 129 (9 December 1571).

²⁴ AGS, E 1326, fol. 99; E 1140, fols. 99, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110 and 111 (all 1567).

condition of his motherless daughters (it seemed like the afore-mentioned illness took the life of his wife) who had to live away from their natal land, aging without a husband's hand.²⁵ One of the letters he brought relates an interesting story, giving us one of the few proofs of the religious motivations behind early modern espionage. Apparently, certain renegades in Constantinople had already written to the authorities and informed them of their dissatisfaction with having to live like Turks and their desire to return to the Christianity. Given that the authorities kindly rejected this request, reminding them of their usefulness to the cause of Christianity, they now asked for the intervention of the Habsburg ambassador in Rome in securing the benediction and absolution of the Pope in case they were to die doing their duty in Constantinople.²⁶

Renzo then went to Madrid where he was given his cipher.²⁷ The next year, he was lobbying once again for his return to Constantinople in order to embark on Mustafa Re'is' galley and join the Ottoman navy that would definitely set sail for the waters of Spain. He was obviously trying to capitalize on the Habsburgs' fear of an Ottoman intervention in the face of the recently erupted Morisco Revolt of Las Alpujarras. Having married once again and found a husband for one of his two daughters, he was still ready to risk his life for the crown, parting from his son Angelo and unwed daughter. His presence and another 5.000 ducats would for sure bring success this time; he also guaranteed to put an end to spending and come back with the money if the Ottoman navy did not leave that year.²⁸

²⁵ AGS, *E* 1056, fol 75 (11 June 1567).

²⁶ AGS, *E* 1140, fol. 108. (8 May 1567).

²⁷ AGS, *E* 1140, fol. 112 (21 May 1568).

²⁸ AGS, *E* 1057, fols. 81 and 82 (Both 14 October 1569).

The authorities must have been fed up with Renzo and his machinations; they refused to let him come to Spain or go to Constantinople. When Renzo declared that he would go with his own money, they had to pay him 500 ducats, however.²⁹ He decided to bring along Ambrosio Giudice who was hardly convinced to return to Constantinople because he feared evil might befall him given his taste for wine. As soon as they reached Ragusa, however, the recalcitrant renegade ran away from Renzo's company and returned to Naples, leaving the orbit of the Habsburg secret service.³⁰

In the meantime, a problem with the distribution of the money sent by the authorities demonstrates the disorganization of the network as well as the lack of trust between its members. Apparently, the authorities sent Adam de Franchis 1.000 ducats to distribute among Habsburg agents. Shortly after, however, Aurelio Santa Croce complained that Adam de Franchis did not know all the spies in the network which totaled an impressive number of 112, 100 renegades as well as 12 Christian masters from the Arsenal. He then distributed it among the 44 whom he knew, leaving 68 agents without allowance. Apparently, these 68 agents did not want Adam de Franchis to know their identity, even though Aurelio showed them a letter that made obvious that the authorities wanted them to work with Franchis. They insisted that they would serve more efficiently on their own and that the authorities should send them money without the knowledge or intervention of Adam de Franchis.³¹ The authorities had no idea of who these 112 agents were; only a handful spies were allocated regular allowances, even then irregularly paid. Therefore, such efforts should be read as these entrepreneur agents'

²⁹ AGS, *E* 1058, fols. 23 and 24 (Both 28 January 1570).

³⁰ AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 129 (9 December 1571).

³¹ AGS, *E* 487, 16 April, 25 June and 17 September 1566; *E* 1060, fol. 129 (9 May 1571).

pretenses of making progress on the realization of clandestine operations and thus attempts of convincing the authorities to allocate them more money.

The next year, Santa Croce and Sarimbal wrote that they succeeded in starting fire in the Arsenal on 27 December, 1570. A certain Corsican Suleiman Bey found an accomplice in a twenty-year old Cypriot slave who was a master (*capo*) of *fila caneви*³² in the *Magazen Grande* of the Arsenal. He offered him and his friends to take them back to the Christian lands after the sabotage mission. The group calculated the full-moon and waited for the day of St. John the Baptist so that they could observe the change of weather. Convinced of favourable winds, they started the fire and closed the *Magazen's* doors. However, since the *caneви* were humid, the fire could spread only slowly and with too much smoke and odor that alerted the guardians who passed before the door. Guardians informed the Grand Admiral who came and had the fire put out. Furthermore, after a brief investigation, the Cypriot and his men were caught and tortured. When asked whether the Venetian bailo or some merchant was behind all this, the Cypriot claimed to have done the deed for his own personal reasons.³³ His men, however, told the Ottomans that he offered them a return to the Christian lands. The Cypriot, however, proved his intransigence when he said that he lied in order to convince them to help him. The Ottomans had him impaled. Suleiman, after waiting for some time in their rendez-vous spot, heard the rumours and then fled. The Ottomans forbade any Christians to come close to the Arsenal under the penalty of death and put three guards for each galley, some

³² *Filo de canevo*: the thread made of hemp, It. Canapa, Ven. canevo and Lat. *cannabis*. Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano*, 3rd edition (Venezia: Giovanni Cecchini Edit., 1867), 128.

³³ He was still not franchised after 22 years of slavery. Moreover, he told them that he wanted to avenge the destruction of his natal city, Nicosia, at the hands of the Ottomans.

of whom were captains themselves.³⁴ Suleiman Bey was supposed to go to Naples in order to claim his reward, but, the Ottomans caught and executed him shortly thereafter.³⁵

One wonders to what extent this story was true; yet Renzo's audacity in claiming that his men impeded 60 Ottoman galleys from firing their cannons during the Battle of Lepanto surprises one even further.³⁶ Renzo could not reach Constantinople. With the outbreak of the war, he was stuck in Ragusa where he tried every method to leave, only to be barred each time by the Ragusan authorities anxious not to provoke the Ottomans. Soon it became evident why Renzo insisted on this fourth voyage and even volunteered to pay from his own pocket. A true entrepreneur, he sought to make full use of the opportunities of wartime and sought new employers. As he had once capitalized on the Habsburg fears following the defeats of Djerba (1560) and Mostaganem (1562), he was quick to act when the Venetians found themselves in a war against the Ottomans in which they already lost Cyprus. He contacted the Venetian authorities and offered them the execution of a covert mission. He claimed to have an agreement with a certain Nicolizza Costanich, the Count of Claina, who would rebel against the Ottomans with his men in Narenta near Castelnuovo, in exchange for generous recompensation, a good portion of which the Venetian authorities should guarantee to pay even if the mission failed. These would help the allied Christian navy that would attack Castelnuovo where Renzo's men would nail down the cannons and burst them with *argenti vivi* and *acque forte* and where another Venetian agent, Triffon Zaguri, was seeking to take advantage of the plague and the consequent shortage of guards in order to explode the weapon arsenal. Moreover, Renzo's men on the Ottoman Navy would sink the galleys. Renzo, after having boasted

³⁴ AGS, *E* 1059, fols. 56-7.

³⁵ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 171 (19 June 1571).

³⁶ AGS, *E* 1133, fol. 124 (1570).

of his success in starting a fire in the Ottoman Arsenal, went even further and suggested that he could secure the conquest of Ragusa itself where he had been for a year as a resident Habsburg spymaster. The Council of Ten accepted the plan and dispatched Renzo to meet with the Captain-General of the Venetian fleet to do the planning and gave him money and certain war materials such as *chiodi di artiglieria*, *acqua forte* and *argento vivo*. Unfortunately, the plan could not have been realized and the next year, the Venetian authorities seemed less willing to undertake such a risky operation, especially after the Christian victory at the Battle of Lepanto.³⁷

Meanwhile, the network lost nothing of its dynamism when it comes to recruiting agents. New agents were coming in to replace the old ones, such as Marco Antonio Stanga³⁸, the Ottoman dragoman (*divan-ı hümayun tercümanı*) from Luca, Hürrem Bey, who replaced the deceased İbrahim Bey, the secretary of the Ottoman Grand Chancellery, Hasan Bey, and the dragoman of the Austrian ambassador and Aurelio's nephew Matheo dal Faro.³⁹ In 1570, one of the most efficient members of the network, Adam de Franchis, passed away. It is not surprising to see that the Battle of Lepanto hit the Habsburg network hard given that most of these Habsburg spies were also Ottoman officers who fought at the battle. When a second *pensionario*, Simon Massa *alias* Mustafa Genoves,

³⁷ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9 cc. 159v (9 May 1571), 160r-161v (10 May 1571), 162r (12 and 15 May 1571), 192v-193r (24 November 1571), 195r-195v (1 December 1571); fil. 15, 9 March, 1 December (two documents), 24 December 1571 and “al Zaguri in Ragusi”, 1571; *LettRett*, b. 302, 5 May 1571.

³⁸ ASV, *LettRett*, b. 292, fol. 175 (1571). According to Gerlach, the Ottomans imprisoned Stanga in November 1573 and then released him a month later, thanks to the intervention of the Austrian ambassador. Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. I, 109, 111. Gerlach does not indicate why he was imprisoned, but it is tempting to think that the issue was related to his activities as an information trader. Even though it could be argued that this rich merchant could as well be imprisoned because of another reason such as an unpaid debt, I would like to add that he was originally thought to be strangled and thrown into the sea. These rumours might reflect the fact that he was caught on charges against the state that deserved, at least in the imagination of *vox populi*, such a severe punishment. The fact that the Austrian ambassador intervened on the behalf of an Italian also supports this argument. It was possible in the Ottoman Empire for foreign ambassadors to negotiate the release of even those who were accused of spying.

³⁹ AGS, *E* 1071, fols. 171.

fell into the Habsburg hands, this created the problem of what to do with him. Even though it was agreed that the decision of what to do with important prisoners-of-war fell to the Pope, Mustafa was kept in Naples by the Viceroy, Cardinal Granvela *pro servitio sacri foederis*,⁴⁰ recognizing his past services to the crown. However, he was not freed. Ironic is indeed that while the *Comendador Mayor* argued for his liberation, Renzo, his employer, opposed the captain's release; he was still a Turk and would only do harm if he was allowed to return.⁴¹ In 1574, Aurelio Santa Croce warned the Viceroy of Naples not to allow Mustafa to write any letters for this might jeopardize their mission. He feared that this able agent might somehow reveal their identity.⁴² A couple of months before Mustafa's captivity, either Murad Ağa *alias* either Giovanni Battista Napolitano⁴³ or Gregorio Bregante, was first reported to have been executed by the Ottomans who realized that he was a "friend of Christians".⁴⁴ Whichever of these two agents the executed spy may be, both spies disappeared from documentation after 1571.⁴⁵ Only Aurelio, a merchant, survived without a scratch.

Around the same time, in 1569, another entrepreneur appeared with an interesting plan. The Corphiote friar Giovanni Barelli, recommended by the Grand Master of the Order of Hospitalliers in Malta, contacted the Marquis of Pescara, the Viceroy of Sicily.

⁴⁰ Rosi, "Alcuni documenti relativi alla liberazione dei principali prigionieri turchi presi a Lepanto", *Archivio della R. società romana* XXI (1898): 142.

⁴¹ AGS, E 1140, fols. 97 (20 May 1573) and 98 (9 November 1571).

⁴² AGS, E 1064, fol. 136 (17 February 1574).

⁴³ In one of the letters, Giovanni Battista Napolitano da Sorrento was named Murad Ağa instead of Mahmud. AGS, E 1059, fol. 42. This induced Emilio Sola to speculate that the executed spy might in fact be Giovanni Battista rather than Gregorio Bregante, idem, *Los que van y vienen*, 203.

⁴⁴ AGS, E 1060, fol. 140 (5 May and 15 June 1571); E 1071, fol. 171.

⁴⁵ I found a letter dated 1574 (AGS, E 1064, fol. 103 (14 February 1574)) and written by a eunuch named Murad Ağa. According to his story, he was brought to Constantinople as a child and rose to important positions in the Ottoman palace during the reign of Suleiman I. Then he was expelled from the palace for being (note that the expression is identical) "a friend of Christians" and drinking too much. If this person was Gregorio Bregante, then, the executed Murad Ağa should be Giovanni Battista Napolitano da Sorrento. However, this could not be the case as the eunuch Murad Ağa of 1574 claimed to be a *Romano* from the family of "Oliva", while Gregorio Bregante was Genoese.

He offered him to undertake a number of clandestine operations, which he originally planned with the recently deceased Grand Master of the Order of St. John and the famous defender of Malta, Jean de la Valette, who had opposed the Ottoman navy a couple of years ago. The operation consisted of torching the Ottoman navy or the Arsenal, poisoning the Sultan's son with the help of a certain renegade named Mustafa Lampudis and killing or imprisoning Selim II's Jewish courtier, Joseph Nasi, whose intelligence network was a great menace to the Habsburgs. Moreover, he could secure the defection of the castles of Napoli of Romania, Corinth and Napoli of Malvasia as well as of Nicolao Cernota (Tsernotades, a noble Greek family from Morea) Bey, an Ottoman renegade who wanted to return to Christianity. Finally, he could negotiate with the Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople, Metrophanes III, and ask him to supply information, a service which he had been undertaking for the Maltese knights anyways, and to help the negotiations for defection. All of these plans received enthusiastic support from Philip II. The Marquis of Pescara dispatched Barelli with necessary supplies, clothes and money; the two, however, had to return from Crete without finalizing their mission. Moreover, failing to give a full account of his expenditures, Barelli found himself in a Palermitano prison, only to leave thanks to the intermediation of the Habsburg ambassador to Venice, Diego Guzmán de Silva, who vouched for some of his expenditure. He resumed the operations after he was released. In 1572, Barelli's co-conspirator, Papa Juan Acida, a cleric from Rhodes, was still asking for his dispatch to the Levant with the 6.000 ducats to be paid to the defectors. It was decided that he should travel under the disguise of negotiating the ransom of the two sons of the deceased Ottoman Grand Admiral Ali Pasha and Mehmed Bey, the Governor of Negroponte (Ott.

Egriboz).⁴⁶ There was a change in plans however. Another agent, Agustin Manuel, was then acting as a middleman between Philip II and Joseph Nasi who, at the height of his power, was expecting to be appointed by the Sultan as the Governor of the newly conquered Cyprus. Nasi offered to re-convert to Christianity, pass to the Habsburg lands with his large patrimony and secure the Ottoman Castelnuevo for Philip II. Unsurprisingly and probably much to the authorities' chagrin, once again none of the afore-mentioned operations could be realized.⁴⁷

5.4. THE WAR OF 1570-1573 AND THE NETWORK AFTER THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO (1571)

After the battle of Lepanto, Renzo and his friends seemed to have lost a good deal of credibility in the eyes of the authorities. First of all, the Habsburg officials were not convinced of arguments of Renzo and Aurelio that the renegades had sabotaged the Ottoman navy during the battle of Lepanto. The truth was quite the contrary, at least according to the *Comendador Mayor*, Luis de Requeséns, who warned that one should not believe this great liar Renzo, *gran palabrero y mentiroso*, from whom nothing could come worth a *tornes*. His men on Ottoman galleys did not carry out what they promised to do during the battle; nonetheless, they fought so well that, one of them, the famous Marança, died fighting valiantly. Furthermore, Renzo was a known gambler with a game table, *tabla de juego*, in his house; in an effort to impress his friends, he did not abstain from revealing that he was a Habsburg spy. Thanks to his libertine ways, the Ottomans

⁴⁶ “*di Mehmet Bechasan Giaco di Negroponte*”. AGS, E 1137, fol. 66.

⁴⁷ AGS, E 1132, fols. 155 (26 July 1569), 164 (15 September 1569), 193 (23 October 1569), 194 (12 November 1569), 196, 205 and 207; E 1137, fols. 53 (17 March 1572), 65 (21 April 1572), 66, 130 (17 August 1572), 223 (20 February 1572); E 1141, fol. 11 (15 February 1574). I cut Barelli's story short, for the rest of the story, see. Jose. M. Floristán Imízcoz, “Felipe II ya la Empresa de Grecia Tras Lepanto (1571-1578)”, *Erytheia* 15 (1994): 155-190.

knew that there was a Habsburg agent in Ragusa and pressurized their vassal to expel him from the city. Furthermore, as the *Comendador Mayor* indicates, after the death of Adam de Franchis, the quality of information dropped significantly. They sent information they heard in taverns, *bodegones*, and wrote about events that had already occurred by putting an old date on letters and then blaming the slowness of couriers. Finally, he even argued that these spies should be double agents; otherwise one could not explain why the Ottomans could not catch them.⁴⁸ He was not the only Habsburg official who had a negative opinion about the spies in Constantinople. The Viceroy of Naples shared a good deal of his comments and even asked the ambassador in Venice to find men of quality,⁴⁹ while the new paymaster, *pagador*, in Naples, Alonso Sanchez could not restrain himself from adding his personal comments on the feasibility of the operations to a *relación* that explained the funds remitted to the Habsburg spies in Constantinople: the sabotage mission could have no other aim but to defraud the government, since the chances of success were zero in such a dangerous mission with the participation of 112 agents.⁵⁰ Finally, the newly appointed resident spymaster in Ragusa, don Cesar de la Marea, was also of the opinion that Aurelio might be a double agent that worked for the Venetians and even for the Florentines.⁵¹

The War of 1570-3 not only increased the importance of gathering information concerning the decisions taken and the military preparations made in the Ottoman capital, but also created a temporary center towards which all the information should flow: the allied Christian fleet that sailed in the Mediterranean. During wartime, when the channels

⁴⁸ AGS, *E* 1140, fols. 97 (20 May 1573) and 98 (9 November 1571).

⁴⁹ AGS, *E* 1061, fol. 3.

⁵⁰ AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 129 (9 May 1571).

⁵¹ AGS, *E* 1332, fols. 178 (19 April 1573) and 201 (1 August 1573).

of communications were under duress, Cardinal Granvela, the Viceroy of Naples, on the one hand sent Nicolo Curenzi to contact the network and on the other remitted any information that reached him to the Admiral of the Allied Christian Fleet, Don Juan, as soon as possible.⁵² Don Juan dispatched his own spies to Constantinople such as Francesco Piloso who was the nephew of the late Adam de Franchis, Agustin Manuel who secretly established contact with the Sultan's prestigious advisor Joseph Nasi,⁵³ and the afore-mentioned friar Giovanni Barelli who would travel under the alibi of negotiating the ransom of important prisoners-of-war held by the Habsburgs, while in fact his real mission was to negotiate with the Orthodox Patriarch in tandem with the everlasting Habsburg desire to ensure the cooperation of the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan.⁵⁴ In spite of this renewed vigor behind the Habsburg secret service in the Levant, Don Juan was still unimpressed with the results and accentuated in one of his letters to the ambassador in Venice the necessity to have efficient spies and establish different channels of communication.⁵⁵

Agents that survived the war such as the dismissed eunuch Murad Ağa,⁵⁶ the dragoman of the French ambassador Giovanni Battista Bendoria, Chaim de Selenia and the Genoese Ahmed Re'is *alias* Francesco di Bisagno were more concerned with recovering their unpaid stipends, rather than sending fresh information.⁵⁷ Having lost several agents, Aurelio started to introduce new ones in order to strengthen the network. Now that both masterminds of the sabotage plans, Massa and Bregante, were gone,

⁵² AGS, *E* 1063, fols. 13 (27 April 1573) and 35 (30 June 1573); *E* 1506, fol. 189.

⁵³ AGS, *E* 1137, fol. 130 (17 August 1572).

⁵⁴ AGS, *E* 1137, fols. 53 (17 March 1572), 65 (21 April 1572) and 66.

⁵⁵ AGS, *E* 1506, fol. 94 (12 July 1573).

⁵⁶ He was not the Genoese Gregorio Bregante, but another figure, a *Romano* from the family of Oliva. AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 103 (14 February 1574).

⁵⁷ AGS, *E* 1064, fols. 102-5. (all 14 February 1574).

Aurelio also gave up on presenting the already suspicious Habsburg court with infeasible sabotage plans, the only exception being a brief mention of an insignificant fire in the foundry of the Arsenal on March 1574.⁵⁸ This cunning merchant's new strategy seemed to secure the friendship of dragomans of Constantinople, who in their capacity as translators, were dealing with the daily function of diplomacy in Constantinople. It should not be a coincidence that he now succeeded in securing the friendship of Hürrem Bey whom Renzo wanted on Habsburg payroll since 1562⁵⁹ and furthermore added the afore-mentioned dragomans of the French and Austrian ambassadors. Among the 9 people who were to be paid by Madrid, 3 were dragomans.⁶⁰ These moves were obviously attempts on Aurelio's part to make up for the Habsburg disadvantage in the Ottoman capital. If Madrid lacked a permanent ambassador in Constantinople who would try to gather information and gain impressions during his negotiations with Ottoman Pashas, it was Aurelio's duty to make sure Philip II was not deprived of at least the information that was already available to other diplomats in the capital.

Aurelio was quick to diversify his activities and intervened on behalf of the Spanish nobles who wanted to ransom their kins that had fallen captive to the Ottomans when they conquered la Goleta in 1574. Philip II also sent him money to ransom some of his men such as a certain Lorenzo and Gabriel Cervellón, the commander of the castle of la Goleta, while Aurelio's brother, Giovanni Antonio went to Spain where he met Ana de

⁵⁸ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 36 (4 May 1574).

⁵⁹ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 189.

⁶⁰ The remaining six were Aurelio, Sarimbal, Ahmed Re'is, Murad Ağa, Chaim de Selenia and Friar Benedetto Lipareli Zaralino, see. AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 136 (17 March 1574). There were other names mentioned in the documents. These sent information without receiving any money. For instance, Mehmed Re'is and a certain Juan appear in documents in 1575; AGS, *E* 1071, fols. 187 and 188. It is natural to volunteer given that there were others such as Sarimbali and Chaim who were given stipends only after having worked for free for some time. AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 129 (9 May 1571).

Toledo, the mother of García de Toledo, captive in Constantinople.⁶¹ When Giovanni Antonio, however, failed to secure the liberation of the captive *pensionario*, Mustafa *alias* Bregante, the latter's family threatened Aurelio with *molti vanni*. Alarmed by the danger of being discovered, Croce found the solution in sending away his brother, the target of the family's anger, and advised the Habsburg authorities to send Mustafa to Spain and spread rumours that he re-converted to Christianity so that his family gave up on him.⁶² In the end, Aurelio had to buy the family's silence with a large sum, 3.000 escudos.⁶³

One of the agents that the Habsburgs sent to Constantinople to reside there and send information, Francisco Peloso, returned to Sicily in 1575. Like so many failed spies who could not gather important information, he changed strategy and came up with an interesting offer. Having realized the danger of a renewed Ottoman naval vigor under the leadership of the new Grand Admiral Uluç Ali, an experienced corsair, Peloso followed the example of his colleagues in Constantinople and found a quick solution to the problem. He would poison the Grand Admiral as well as other important captains in the Ottoman navy on the one hand and explode the ammunition depot in the Arsenal on the other. Even though the Viceroy of Sicily, the Duke of Terranova, did not categorically refuse the offer; having perhaps learned from past mistakes, he was still cautious, saying "I know very well the difference between word and deed." Even though Peloso returned to the Levant, there is no further mention in the documents about the plan.⁶⁴

⁶¹ In the end, it was the Austrian ambassador, David Ungnad who secured the liberation of García de Toledo, Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol I, 158.

⁶² AGS, E 1066, fols. 16 (1 April 1575), 17 (18 April 1575) and 123 (24 February 1575).

⁶³ AGS, E 486, 20 August 1566; E 1052, fol. 89 (20 January 1562); E 1056, fol. 83; E 1127, fol. 106; Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 202.

⁶⁴ AGS, E 1144, fol. 96 (9 August 1575). For his letters from Scio in 1576, E 1145, fols. 54 (9 February 1576) and 60. Also see. E 1144, fols. 113-4 (29 September 1575).

In 1573, Don Juan had Antón Avellán and Virgilio Polidoro on an official visit to Constantinople, to accompany the ransomed Ottoman slaves, among whom the son of the Ottoman Admiral at Lepanto, Müezzinzade Ali Pasha. According to the French ambassador, François Noailles, the Bishop of Dax, the duo also tested the water for a five-year truce. Unofficial negotiations could not proceed as the Ottomans rejected the duo's offer of including the Habsburgs in the capitulations of the Ausrian branch of the family and insisted on a yearly tribute brought by an official ambassador (*par personnage exprès, pourtant tiltre et qualité d'ambassadeur resident*).⁶⁵ Still, Madrid was satisfied with their diplomatic skills, as two years later, the duo traveled once again to Constantinople, ostensibly to negotiate the ransoming of Christian soldiers that had fallen captive in la Goleta. They received a safe-conduct from Sokollu with the condition that they returned with more Ottoman captives to be exchanged for Christians. They also contacted Aurelio, Hürrem and two new potential informants, Murad Ağa, the Lucano *mayorduomo* of Uluç Ali and Lorenzo Saminiate, the resident of Luca in Constantinople and a relative of a Habsburg official. They were carrying letters of encouragement from Philip II addressed to Aurelio, Hürrem and Murad Ağa. The Prudent King congratulated their decision to “reduce themselves to their holy Catholic faith” and asked Murad Ağa to intervene in securing a similar reduction from Uluç Ali as well,⁶⁶ following the earlier

⁶⁵ Ernest Charrière, ed., *Négociations de la France dans le Levant, ou, Correspondances, mémoires et actes diplomatiques des ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople et des ambassadeurs, envoyés ou résidents à divers titres à Venise, Raguse, Rome, Malte et Jérusalem, en Turquie, Perse, Géorgie, Crimée, Syrie, Egypte, etc., et dans les états de Tunis, d'Alger et de Maroc* (Paris: Impr. Nationale: 1848-60), vol. III, 416-424.

⁶⁶ Avellán's first letter, AGS, E 1144, fol. 281 (6 June 1575). For Philip II's letters, fols. 283-5. Full text online in Emilio Sola, “Antón Avellán, un eficaz agente español en estambul al descubierto”, *Archivo de la Frontera*, <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/pdf/A-MED03-avellan.pdf>. Interestingly, the letter written to Murad Ağa fell into the Ottoman hands. Avellán was shocked when the son of an Ottoman Pasha, a prisoner-of-war whom he ransomed and brought to Constantinople (he should be the son of Müezzinzade

attempts of securing the corsair's defection when he was the Governor-General of Algeria.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Avellán managed to recruit five renegades from Uluç Ali's household.⁶⁸

5.5. AN UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCE: THE TRUCE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMANS AND THE HABSBURGS (1575-1581)

In March 1575, a former slave of the Grand Admiral Uluç Ali, named Jaime Losada, set sail from Messina for Constantinople, seemingly to negotiate the exchange of slaves with the Ottomans, while in fact, he had a secret mission: to contact his former master and negotiate his defection. Even though he refused the offer, Uluç welcomed him warmly and even secured an audience with Sokollu, advertising his former slave's expertise in Habsburg affairs with the hope of acquiring information from him. The Grand Vizier initially requested Losada's intervention in securing the restitution of a ship whose crew rebelled and took refuge in Malta. The conversation took a different turn, however, when the issue came to the possibility of a truce, an opportunity of which both the Grand Vizier and Jaime were quick to realize the importance. The Grand Vizier told him that if Philip II sent them a diplomat, he would be welcome and well-treated. Losada showed an impressive acumen, arguing against a possible tribute and refusing to say something binding. Moreover, he quickly socialized within the diplomatic circles of the Ottoman capital by befriending the Venetian, French and Austrian ambassadors. Setting sail to relay the message, he died in Otranto before completing his mission, leaving

Ali Pasha), gave him the letter so that he cryptanalyzed it. Avellán managed to lie about its content and destroyed the letter.

⁶⁷ AGS *E* 487, ff.; *E* 1134, fol. 199 (20 December 1571); *E* 1400, fol. 34 (22 September 1570).

⁶⁸ AGS, *E* 488, Antón Avellán, Constantinopla, 1576 and the two letters written by two of these renegades.

behind a detailed report. It was one of his men who went to Naples and informed the Viceroy.⁶⁹

Two more key figures appeared in 1576. The first was perhaps one of the most impressive factota and go-betweens of the 16th century; a former *giovani di lingua*,⁷⁰ the young trainee dragoman in the Venetian embassy, who travelled to Italy and negotiated, as the agent of the Venetian ambassador and on behalf of the Ottomans, the exchange of slaves that had fallen captive at Lepanto and la Goleta. This Albanian, named Bartolomeo Brutti, came to Naples and contacted the Habsburg authorities with an interesting offer from one of the Ottoman grandees who had fallen captive at the Battle of Lepanto and could only return to Constantinople four years later with the help of Brutti.⁷¹ When this former Governor-General of Algeria and the son of famous corsair Salih Re'is, Mehmed Pasha, realized upon his return that he was out of favour with no hope of recovering his former position (he was in fact appointed to the inferior position of a *sancakbeyi*), he offered to defect to the Habsburg side with the following conditions. If Philip II could lend him 30.000 ducats with which he could secure his re-appointment as the Governor-General of Algeria,⁷² he would then accept Philip II's suzerainty and became his vassal without changing his religion, a first step in forming an anti-Ottoman coalition in North Africa with the further participation of Abdu'l-Melik, his close friend and the Moroccan prince whom Ramazan Pasha, the Governor-General of Algeria at the time, only recently had put on the throne as an Ottoman vassal. He also sought the assurance that, in case the

⁶⁹ AGS, *E* 1072, fol. 14, (10 December 1575); ASV, *SDC*, fil. 11, fol. 12 (23 March 1577).

⁷⁰ He quit the job twice and finally left his brother, Cristoforo in his stead in the Venetian embassy. See. ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 5, fol. 11.

⁷¹ ASV, *SDeIC*, reg. 4, cc. 101r-101v (18 March 1575).

⁷² It was a common practice in Ottoman political culture to resort to bribery in order to secure appointment to important positions.

mission failed, he could settle in Sicily where he should be allowed to live as a Muslim, demonstrating us the differences in dealing with renegades and Muslims during defection negotiations.⁷³

The second figure, Martin de Acuña,⁷⁴ a Spanish knight from Valladolid, was a former slave as well. After he was ransomed, he came to Madrid and proposed a sabotage plan that targeted, unsurprisingly, the Ottoman Navy and the Arsenal. His project was taken seriously in the ever-optimistic and naïve Madrid, and he was sent to Naples to negotiate the details with the Viceroy.⁷⁵ There he met Bartolomeo Brutti, who was already in talks with the Viceroy concerning the defection of Mehmed Pasha. Brutti, however, vehemently opposed the plan, arguing a number of interesting points that shed light on the feasibility of such plans that these spies offered the authorities over and over again. According to him, it was already too late in the season and that they would never arrive in Constantinople on time. When they did, all the galleys would be on water and not on land as de Acuña believed. Moreover, he accentuated the impossibility of acquiring artificial fires without being discovered given that the production of these materials was in the hands of a few people. Likewise, it was impossible to get close to the galleys as the Arsenal was well-guarded at all times by patrols of small boats (*caicchi*) and it was prohibited to sail into the Golden Horn after “the second hour of the night”. De Acuña’s plan to ransom slaves in important positions could not be realized either as it was impossible to ransom them with money; the only possible way was to exchange them for Christian slaves.⁷⁶ His contacts among Uluç Ali’s men were useless as well. His main

⁷³ For details of these negotiations, see. AGS, *E* 488, 21 June 1576.

⁷⁴ For a detailed monograph on him, see. Rivas and García, *Martin de Acuña*.

⁷⁵ AGS, *E* 1072, fol. 177 (28 August 1576).

⁷⁶ Brutti, an expert on the trade of ransoming, was right. See. AV, *Nunziature di Spagna*, no. 15, fol. 367.

contact, Soliman Veneziano, was inexperienced and others should not be trusted. Most of Uluç Ali's renegades generally wanted at first to return to Christianity; but when their enthusiasm, *colera*, passed, they changed their minds and started accusing anybody who negotiated with them. Brutti did not only enumerate the possible impediments, but also left his own version explaining under which circumstances such a plan of sabotage could be realized. With the knowledge of a handful of people, everything had to be carefully planned and executed on a gloomy night in December when the galleys were taken to land and the Arsenal was little guarded because of the cold weather, snow and wind.⁷⁷

Brutti's arguments could not dissuade the authorities and de Acuña arrived in Constantinople on 24 February 1577, under the pretense of negotiating the ransom of prisoners-of-war,⁷⁸ and travelling with Avellán's passport which the latter obtained during his third visit in Constantinople in 1576.⁷⁹ Aurelio made the necessary arrangements and placed de Acuña in his son-in-law Matheo dal Faro's house. He also warned him and the three men he brought himself to be careful and not leave their lodgings. When these warnings fell on deaf ears and one of de Acuña's men took a walk in the city, a certain Greek named Esteban, a former Habsburg spy who had run away from Naples, converted to Islam and entered Ottoman service, recognized him and had him captured. When he confessed under torture, he panicked de Acuña and Santa Croce came up with an interesting story. Evoking the memory of Jaime Losada's mission, Santa Croce contacted the dragoman Hürrem and claimed that de Acuña was the long-awaited envoy that Philip II would send to the Ottomans. Hürrem asked whether de Acuña

⁷⁷ AGS, *E* 1073, fol. 22.

⁷⁸ ASV, *SDC*, fil. 11, fol. 2 (9 March 1577).

⁷⁹ AGS, *E* 1074, fols. 6, 102, 104 (3 January 1577), 105 (16 January 1577), 106 (21 January 1577), 107 (27 January 1577), 108 (5 March 1577).

brought a safeconduct or a letter of credence from the king; such a document would ease the minds of the Ottomans who had just caught three Habsburg spies, one of whom confessed that they had come with their boss, a gentleman (*cavallero*). Aurelio immediately solved this problem. He forged a letter of credence by putting the name of the Grand Vizier on the letter that Philip II had originally written to Joseph Nasi in recognition for his services to the crown. He also came up with the story that de Acuña arrived secretly not to diminish Philip II's reputation by publicizing his mission and the three men who were caught were his guides, not spies. With Hürrem's intermediation, all was square. Having acquired the necessary clothes for an ambassador and a suitable present for the Grand Vizier, Aurelio quickly prepared de Acuña for an audience with Sokollu. The contented Grand Vizier assured his goodwill towards the possibility of a truce and sent de Acuña back to his king.⁸⁰ As could easily be seen, the merchant-cum-saboteur-cum-spy-master-cum-ransom agent Aurelio quickly invested in another trade, that of diplomacy and proved himself to be a master entrepreneur and apt broker who continually improvised to find new means of survival and further his own interest in the world of secret diplomacy, second perhaps only to Bartolomeo Brutti in the diversity of his activities.

It is not certain, to what extent the Ottomans were convinced of this story, especially given the suspicions among Habsburg authorities as well as other spies such as de la Marea and Diego de Mallorca, "the Friar of la Goleta,"⁸¹ that Aurelio was also an Ottoman agent. It might be the case that everything was a set up to create a favourable environment and persuade the Catholic King to send an ambassador to Constantinople,

⁸⁰ AGS, E 1071, fol. 191 (5 March 1577).

⁸¹ AGS, E 1144, fol. 212.

one of the main objectives of Ottoman diplomacy since the time of Charles V.⁸² Relations between both empires were hitherto conducted via Austrian ambassadors. Nonetheless, the conflict between Madrid and Constantinople could only be repaired by direct diplomatic relations and the two empires could only negotiate through go-betweens, those capable of crossing the insivible boundary between the two halves of the Mediterranean. It could alternatively be argued that Aurelio and de Acuña genuinely came up with the plan with the hope of saving their skins. If this was the case, three possibilities arise. The Ottomans could have decided to use the occasion even though they were not convinced of Aurelio's story. As long as it ensured the arrival of an official ambassador from Madrid, they would have no reason to complain. As will be explained later, the Grand Vizier Sokollu was a proponent of an Ottoman-Habsburg truce in the Mediterranean and he might have intended to play along in order to overcome the resistance of what I would call the "Mediterranean faction", led by the Grand Admiral Uluç Ali. Alternatively, even

⁸² One of the basic tenets of Ottoman diplomacy vis-à-vis the Habsburgs was to compel them to send their diplomats to Constantinople, an act which they considered a sign of submission. In accordance with the Ottoman imperial ideology, this was an effort to claim the superiority of the eternal "Empire", the heir to the Roman throne, and to delegate other claimants such as Charles V, to the status of kings, that is those who received their crowns from the dispenser of the crowns, the Ottoman Sultan. However, Charles V skillfully dodged the danger of recognizing the Ottoman superiority and publicly entering into an impious alliance, *impium foedus*. He refused to send an official envoy and tried instead to have himself included in the negotiations between the Ottomans and his brother Ferdinand. When he sent an envoy, such as Cornelio Duplicio Schepper or Gerhart Veltwyck, these officially appeared as Ferdinand's envoys rather than that of the Emperor. Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la Diplomacia Española, V: La Diplomacia de Carlos V* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1999, 2nd edition 2003), 452-3. Such diplomatic gestures should by no means be considered trivial. The issue of *intitulatio*, for instance, was a serious aspect of the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry. In Ottoman diplomatics, there was a clear distinction between the Ottoman Emperor, the sole ruler of the world, and several other "kings". The title of "king" was also used for the very person of the Emperor, Charles V, "the King of Spain". It was not a unique Ottoman practice to insist on denying other sovereigns equal titles in an effort to apply the imperial prestige in the implementation of their grand strategy. The Ottomans could have (willingly or unwillingly) adopted this from the Byzantines of whom they considered themselves the legal heir. To the Ottomans, Charles V was what Charlemagne was to the Byzantines: a usurper of the imperial title and a staunch rival. For similar attitudes of the Byzantines regarding how the Emperor and his ambassadors should address the envoys of lesser barbarian rulers, see. *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, a 10th-century book on ceremonial procedures in Constantinople, generally attributed to the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos, in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, ed. J. Reiske (Bonn: Weber, 1829), 679-92.

though they realized that de Acuña was the employer of the three spies that they caught, the Ottomans might not have seen a contradiction. After all, weren't all ambassadors "honorable spies"? Finally, the Ottomans might have simply believed in Aurelio. His story would not have been outlandish given the frequency with which in sixteenth-century states employed unofficial intermediaries who lacked the career and decorum of an official diplomat. The fact that only a couple of days after de Acuña had an audience with the Ottoman Grand Vizier, the Venetian bailo was convinced that he was sent by Philip II to negotiate a secret treaty furthermore illustrates the potential credibility of Aurelio's story.⁸³

Be that as it may, the negotiations for an Ottoman-Habsburg truce commenced under these rather unorthodox circumstances. Having secured an armistice, a *suspensión de armas*, for a year, de Acuña returned to Naples with the mission of informing the authorities that the Ottomans consented to an incoming Habsburg ambassador.⁸⁴ When he failed to show up, however, Aurelio faced another problem. The Ottomans were already uneasy because of the rumours of a possible Habsburg participation in the Portuguese king Sebastian I's campaign against Morocco. Their suspicion forced Aurelio to forge two more letters, one for the Grand Vizier, the other for the Dragoman Hürrem, testifying to the illness of Martin de Acuña. Unable to write in Spanish, he had one of Uluc Ali's slaves translate his version to proper Spanish and dismantled the Prudent King's seals in other letters and put it on the new ones. Sokollu, convinced by this fraud, decided to send

⁸³ ASV, SDC, fil. 11, fol. 2 (9 March 1577).

⁸⁴ For Constantinople's orders to local judges, corsairs and port officials (*iskeleler eminleri*) that "*Don Martine nam adem dört nefer adem ile*", de Acuña and four of his men, should be escorted and not be molested on their way to and from Madrid, and that no attack should be undertaken against the Puglian coasts, see. BOA, MD, XXX, nos. 76 (H. 28 M 985, A.D. 17 April 1577) and 78.

a second person to Naples, which ended up being, thanks to the dragoman Hürrem's instigation, none other than Aurelio himself!⁸⁵ He arrived in Naples on August 1577.

In the meantime, de Acuña arrived in Madrid. Instead of this sketchy adventurer, Philip II and his ministers chose a former slave named Giovanni Margliani to further negotiations in Constantinople. Margliani, accompanied by Antonio Echévarri, arrived in Naples, where they teamed up with Bartolomeo Brutti who by then was familiar with the Habsburg authorities and secured himself a spot in the negotiations, thanks to his social capital in Constantinople as well as his experience in Ottoman diplomatic circles. He was to help Margliani in Constantinople and continue negotiating with Mehmed Pasha, the son of Salih Re'is. It is interesting to see that Madrid was seeking to secure on the hand a truce for two or three years and on the other the defection of an Ottoman pasha who would submit the most strategic Ottoman port in North Africa to the Habsburgs. This double game demonstrates not only the multi-layeredness and complexity of inter-imperial diplomacy, but also the faith (or lack thereof) Philip II and his ministers put in Ottoman good intentions. It should still be recorded that in order not to jeopardize the diplomatic talks, they abstained from capitalizing on Antón Avellán's offer to arrange the defection of five principal renegades of Uluç Ali.⁸⁶

Margliani insisted on excluding Aurelio (who was in Naples as well) from the negotiations in order to avoid too much publicity. Everybody knew that he was in the city

⁸⁵ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 197. For Sokollu's reply to one of these fake letters, see *E* 1073, fol. 135. For Ottoman order to governors, local judges, corsairs and port officials that "*Sante Kroje nam zimmi*," Aurelio, who was sent to Spain for the handling of some important issues, "*bazi mesalih-i mühimme*", should not be molested, see BOA, *MD*, XXXI, fol. 49 (H. 28 R 985 / A.D. 8 December 1577). It is interesting to see that the Ottomans were not less tightlipped than the Habsburgs when it comes to revealing information about the truce negotiations to the local authorities. Other similar orders that ordered the provisioning of postal horses to "*Civani Istefano ve refiklari*", Giovanni Stefano Ferraro and his companions, see. BOA, *MD*, XXXIII, nos. 560 (both H. 27 Za. 985 / A.D. 4 February 1578) and 637 (H. 18 Z 985 / A.D. 25 February 1578).

⁸⁶ For instructions given to Margliani, Brutti and Avellán, see. AGS, *E* 1074, fols. 101 and 103.

for the “*neg[oti]o di Constantinopoli*”. He and Brutti decided to buy some time by telling Aurelio that Brutti had not yet arrived in the city and that he was coming by land from Civitavecchia. Aurelio was quick to discover the truth from Brutti, however. Margliani complained harshly of the indiscretion of the Albanian who even dined with Aurelio. Brutti defended himself on the ground that he could not restrain himself from contacting his brother Benedetto who was in Aurelio’s company. He had not seen him for many years and his intention was only to inform him, not Aurelio. Margliani, however, was not convinced, insistent that this was “*un procedere da mal hombre*”, the deed of an evil man. This could have created an irreparable antagonism between Aurelio and Margliani, unless the latter succeeded in convincing the former that he had lied in order to keep Brutti’s presence in Naples secret from Giovanni di Cardona in whose house they had met that night. Furthermore, even though Brutti told him that he did not reveal their secret mission to Aurelio, this was not true.⁸⁷ Fortunately for them, Aurelio could neither secure a passport from the Viceroy and nor prevent Margliani from proceeding to Constantinople. Nevertheless, he showed tact by writing a letter to Hürrem Sultan and jeopardizing Margliani’s mission. He informed the dragoman that Margliani not only came with too little money to give to Sokollu, Hürrem and Aurelio (15.000 escudos), but also intended to defraud them by keeping a large portion of the money to himself (9.000 escudos). If Hürrem could persuade Sokollu to stall the Ottoman Navy for a year and send a capitulation to Philip II via Brutti, the king, who was in need of peace so badly, would actually agree to give more money. Obviously, Margliani had to be kept in Constantinople without contact with the king while Aurelio and Brutti were furthering

⁸⁷ AGS, E 1073, fol. 157 (25 October 1577).

negotiations.⁸⁸ His schemes seemed to have worked; Margliani reported in January 1579 that, thanks to Aurelio's warnings, Sokollu was now demanding a bombastic entry of the Habsburg ambassador to Constantinople.⁸⁹

It was not only Aurelio whom Margliani sought to exclude from negotiations. With direct orders from the king, he abstained from revealing the true nature of his mission to the Viceroy of Naples who had earlier demonstrated his intransigent opposition to a truce.⁹⁰ If Madrid's choice to exclude him from the negotiations could be explained with the fear that he might retard Margliani and try to sabotage the mission, this explanation clearly demonstrates the importance of the Viceroy and the extent to which he exercised power with great autonomy in the matters regarding the Levant. He was the one with whom Margliani and Brutti had to deal with regarding the safe-conducts as well as the credits so that they could bribe the Ottoman pashas, a common diplomatic practice for those who wanted to negotiate in 16th-century Constantinople. Margliani tactfully kept the secret and did not yield to the Viceroy's pressures and threats.⁹¹ He arrived in Constantinople on 14 December 1577 with Brutti and without Aurelio. Having quickly secured an armistice, or gentleman's agreement in Braudel's words,⁹² for a year in February 1578, he officially agreed to the dispatch of an official ambassador.

The details of diplomatic negotiations and Margliani's three years in Constantinople are out of the scope of this study; the issue has already been studied in detail, first by Fernand Braudel,⁹³ then by Skilliter⁹⁴ and Rodríguez Salgado.⁹⁵ Suffice it

⁸⁸ AGS, *E* 1076, fol. 45 (24 October 1577).

⁸⁹ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 22 (29 January 1579).

⁹⁰ For his arguments against the truce, see AGS, *E* 1074, fols. 20 and 21.

⁹¹ AGS, *E* 1073, fol. 160 (27 October 1577).

⁹² Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, vol. II, 441

⁹³ Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, vol. II, 439-450.

⁹⁴ Skilliter, "Hispano-Ottoman Armistice", 491-515.

to give a brief analysis of factional balance-of-power in the Ottoman capital which directly affected these negotiations. The main proponent of a truce was the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha who had no interest in continuing a costly confrontation of little benefit to his faction, while its main opponent was Uluç Ali and his men, “the Mediterranean faction”, which comprised sea governors, North African elites, corsairs, sailors, people of the Arsenal and the like whose livelihoods depended upon the continuation of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry and the consequent Ottoman investment in the navy and the Arsenal. To elaborate the issue further, let us return to the Venetian baili: according to Giovanni Correr, Uluç Ali had 3.000 slaves. Even though he arranged positions in the Arsenal with 10 *akçe per diem* for 600 of those, he still had to feed the rest of this “three thousand mouth on his back” from his own pocket. These expenditures were so burdensome that they were one of the two reasons why the Grand Admiral asked the Sultan to demote him and dispatch him to North Africa as the Governor-General of Algeria with supreme control over the other two North African provinces. His lieutenants, who had their own households filled with slaves to feed, were in no better situation.⁹⁶ One of Correr’s successors, Paolo Contarini would make the same argument in his *relazioni* dated 1583: Uluç was trying to convince the Sultan to authorize an expedition against Morocco on the one hand and to break the truce with the Habsburgs and the peace with the Venetians on the other. These he was doing, “...because it [was] in so much his interest that the Ottoman navy [left] for some expedition that he would even be convinced to turn against one of his own sons.”⁹⁷ Apparently, without a war in the Mediterranean, their economic situation will deteriorate further. Moreover, Ottoman

⁹⁵ Salgado, *Felipe II, el “Paladín de la Cristiandad”*.

⁹⁶ ASV, SDC, fil. 12, c. 353r (9 January 1576, m.v.).

⁹⁷ Albèri, *Le Relazioni*, Serie III, Vol. III, 225.

corsairs in North Africa depended upon the continuous political help from Constantinople, especially in the late 1570s when a joint Portuguese-Habsburg intervention in North Africa seemed a strong possibility. In order to hinder the truce negotiations, Uluç Ali and his corsair network resorted to every method from misinformation (exaggerating Habsburg activity in the Western Mediterranean) to persuasion (Uluç Ali's '*arzes* to the Sultan against a truce) and threat (Uluç Ali's threatening tone against Margliani). If in the end if they failed in spite of the Habsburgs' resistance to send an official ambassador, it was thanks to Sokollu's resistance, Margliani's diplomatic aptness and the Ottoman-Safavid War that erupted in 1578.

The year 1577 represented a milestone for the Habsburg network in the Levant. Renzo died that year and the authorities ignored Aurelio's advice that he should be replaced by a Diego de Squiva, a former slave of Hasan Pasha and an agent already in Habsburg service.⁹⁸ Aurelio himself would never return to Constantinople where he left his family. The Habsburgs had grown too suspicious of him. Cardinal Granvela considered him a double agent who was more beneficial to the Ottomans than to the Habsburgs.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Aurelio's connections with the Venetian resident in Naples did not go unnoticed; the Venetians decided not to directly communicate with him regarding the details of truce negotiations anymore, but to use his brother in order not to provoke Habsburgs' suspicions further.¹⁰⁰ When Margliani intercepted his aforementioned letter addressed to Hürrem Bey, the secretary of the State and the unofficial

⁹⁸ AGS, *E* 1073, fol. 171. Diego had been a slave of Hasan Pasha for 16 years and was very knowledgeable in things regarding the Ottoman government and military. Aurelio had ransomed him and used him as a go-between in the defection negotiations with some important Ottomans from the palace (*E* 1332, fol. 172 (28 February 1573)). He also participated in other clandestine operations. Aurelio met Diego in Naples when the latter was going to Flanders.

⁹⁹ AGS, *E* 1521, fol. 27 (23 January 1578).

¹⁰⁰ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 147r-147v (8 January 1577, m.v.).

head of the Habsburg secret service, Antonio Pérez, had it with Aurelio: he should be punished.¹⁰¹ When, in spite of all these, he managed to receive a safe-conduct from the Viceroy to go to Madrid, this voyage became his undoing. There he was imprisoned, surprisingly, not because of his double games and betrayals, but because of the issue of an unpaid debt.¹⁰² It took him some time to leave the scene completely however. In 1581, he was still in prison from where he was on the one hand commenting on issues regarding the Ottomans (Persian War, Sinan Pasha's Grand Vizierate, a detailed critique of the truce Margliani signed, etc.) and on the other begging to be released so that he could resume his services to the crown.¹⁰³

With the negotiations, new faces entered the picture, both on the level of open diplomacy, helping Margliani in negotiations, and that of secret diplomacy, spying and sending information. During the entire negotiation process, Margliani had to work closely with Dragoman Hürrem Bey and the Jewish courtier and power broker Salomon Ashkenazi. Hürrem might have been a dragoman of the court, yet he was not a simple translator. He was a key figure in the diplomatic negotiations of Constantinople whose intermediation and brokerage were of cardinal importance for the Venetians as well as the Florentines. An entrepreneur with extensive trade connections throughout the Mediterranean, Salomon Ashkenazi was not only a close confidant and political advisor of the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu, but also the physician of European ambassadors in

¹⁰¹ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 98 (1 April 1579).

¹⁰² Apparently, Aurelio vouched for two Moors who ransomed some Muslim slaves from the Marquis of St. Croce for a total amount of 12.000 ducats. When these Moors failed to honor their obligations and did not send the money from Constantinople, the Marquis had Aurelio, who had just arrived in Spain, imprisoned. AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 62 (18 November 1579).

¹⁰³ AGS, *E* 1083, fols. 85 and 86 (22 May 1581). According to Santa Croce, the truce was of little value because it did not include the oath, *juramento*, that the Sultans usually swore in similar documents signed with the Venetians and the Austrian Habsburgs. It was just a document signed by the Grand Vizier that was not binding for the Ottomans at all. Furthermore, it did not include Ottoman corsairs who were the real problem to be dealt with.

the Ottoman capital. It could be assumed that he was helping not Margliani, but Sokollu by trying to learn what Margliani had on his mind; a possibility that Margliani himself reported.¹⁰⁴ However, considering him only as an agent of Sokollu would be a simplification of a complex set of reasons behind the actions of intriguing figures of information traders, power-brokers and go-betweens. His intermediation during the War of 1570-3 clearly demonstrate how self-centered and interest seeking Ashkenazi was; with no special attachment to either party, he used his unique position by brokering between them and furthering his own interest. The main figure behind the secret negotiations between the Venetian bailo and Ottoman Grand Vizier for a tentative truce, he did more than simply acting as Sokollu's agent. On the one hand he negotiated with the Bailo on behalf of Sokollu, while on the one other he assured the communication between the bailo and the Venetian authorities by smuggling bailo's letters from his house; a perilous operation as a result of which he found himself twice in Ottoman prisons. His influence in both capitals was undisputed. He could exert pressure upon the Venetians regarding the ban on the Jews of the city.¹⁰⁵ He was the one who compiled the text of the 1573 capitulation and it was to him that Sokollu entrusted the task of finalizing the negotiations for the Dalmatian borders between the two states. He came to the Lagoon as the Ottoman envoy in 1574.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, even after the death of Sokollu, he resumed his key position in the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations; Margliani praised his contributions and the familiarity (*domestichezza*) with which this

¹⁰⁴ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 48 (18 July 1579).

¹⁰⁵ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 89-91.

¹⁰⁶ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 25-6. Even though he arrived in Venice with letters of Sokollu and not the Sultan, the Venetians immediately treated him as an official envoy. *Ibid.*, 166. Also see. ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 4, cc. 52v, 56v, 59v, 80v-81v, 84, 85, 88, 116.

power broker negotiated in Mustafa Pasha's household in 1580.¹⁰⁷ A couple of months later when the factional balance-of-power was reconfigured once again after the death of Mustafa Pasha, however, Margliani added that Ashkenazi did not have "*introduzione*" with either Siyavuş or Sinan Pasha and could in turn have become an agent of the French ambassador with whom he started to entertain unusually good relations.¹⁰⁸ Margliani's growing distrust for Ashkenazi is justified given that the latter worked for the Venetian bailo, supplying him letters written by Philip II and Viceroy of Naples regarding the truce.¹⁰⁹

Margliani was less reluctant to accept the intervention of other pretenders. For instance, he responded to another influential Jewish courtier and power broker, the *Grand Giudio* Joseph Nasi's offer of help with a visit and empty words, thus walking a fine line between offending a once-powerful courtier and infuriating his arch-rival, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.¹¹⁰ Similarly, another dragoman named Mehmed Bey approached Margliani, who preferred to keep him at bay because he was in total disgrace in the eyes of Sokollu and Uluç Ali.¹¹¹ After the death of Sokollu and the reconfiguration of balance-of-power between factions, even though Hürrem and Ashkenazi retained their positions, new power brokers, such as the Jewish Benvenistes, close confidant of Siyavuş Paşa, rose to prominence.¹¹²

Margliani started to set up his own intelligence network by recruiting new informants in key positions in the Ottoman military and administration. Uluç Ali's

¹⁰⁷ AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 30 (22 July 1580).

¹⁰⁸ AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 71 (21 December 1580).

¹⁰⁹ ASV, *CCX-LettSec*, b. 5, fol. 212 (8 January 1580, m.v.).

¹¹⁰ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 23 (3 February 1579).

¹¹¹ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 59 (3 August 1579).

¹¹² AGS, *E* 1338, fols. 52, 59, 65 and 68 (all 1580).

household, the very headquarter of the anti-truce Mediterranean faction, was the primary target. There Margliani found several discontent renegades, not so surprisingly given the frequent notices in contemporary documents to flights and riots among the Grand Admiral's slaves as well as several projects of assassination and sabotage they offered to European governments. Two of Uluç Ali's men, Sinan (Juan de Briones) and Haydar (Robert Drever), agreed to furnish the Habsburgs with regular information as to whereabouts of the Ottoman Navy on which they sailed.¹¹³ They duly delivered and proved themselves able informants; a good number of their letters,¹¹⁴ some of which written aboard the Ottoman Navy,¹¹⁵ survived in AGS. The Habsburg authorities also considered the possibility that these might assassinate Uluç Ali,¹¹⁶ while Sinan's plan to escape to Christianity was endorsed as well.¹¹⁷ Margliani recruited another slave of Uluç Ali, Pedro Brea, who provided him with letters his master wrote to Christian rulers¹¹⁸ and used his social capital to gather information from among the Ottoman dignitaries such as Gazanfer Ağa. Furthermore, in order to go to Margliani's house freely, he tricked Uluç Ali into believing that he corrupted one of Margliani's men who would write for him in a notebook, in exchange for the liberty of one of his kin, all the letters exchanged between Margliani and the Habsburg authorities.¹¹⁹ Margliani furthermore secured the allegiance of a chaus of Siyavuş Pasha who had extensive connections beyond the household of his master. He was a close friend of the bailo's dragoman Marucini and his compatriot

¹¹³ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 33 (3 and 18 June 1579).

¹¹⁴ AGS, *E* 490, 17, 18 and 22 October 1579; full text in Emilio Sola, "Un Ferrarés en Estambul, Regef Bei Uglan o Recep Oglan Bei", *Archivo de la Frontera*, <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/pdf/A-MED24.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ AGS, *E* 1080, fols. 41 (14 May 1579), 51, 58 (3 August 1579) and 93 (7 June 1580).

¹¹⁶ AGS, *E* 1081, fol. 61 (24 March 1580).

¹¹⁷ AGS, *E* 1083, fol. 58 (28 February 1581); *E* 1338, fol. 59 (15 October 1580).

¹¹⁸ AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 13 (13 June 1580).

¹¹⁹ AGS, *E* 1338, fols. 36 (27 July 1580) and 70 (14 December 1580).

Hürrem Bey; furthermore, he was also well-connected in the house of the French ambassador. Finally, he had a garden in a “good part” of the city and thus could receive spies if need be.¹²⁰ Moreover, Margliani dismissed from his service in December 1580, a scribe in the Ottoman administration, a relative of a certain Pietro Vesti, from whom he at one point hoped to obtain a copy of the draft of the proposed peace treaty with the Persians.¹²¹ Bartolomeo Pusterla a.k.a. Marco Antonio Stanga, a rich and generous Italian¹²² who was already sending information for some time, returned from Venice and resurfaced again. His familiarity with Mustafa Pasha made him an important figure for the Habsburg secret service, an importance which continued even after the Pasha’s death a couple of months later, in August 1580.¹²³ Margliani had his agents in the Ottoman Arsenal as well: an unnamed *capo maestro*¹²⁴, Giovanni da Agreda from slave barracks, the *baño*, of Constantinople¹²⁵ and Matheo Boncuchillo.¹²⁶ In 1580, the Ottomans caught Margliani’s other spy who carried letters and put him in prison from where he managed to escape shortly after.¹²⁷ Finally, a number of other names appear in the documentation: Vincenzo Corrado who was sending information from Sofia,¹²⁸ Jacopo Mormoray,¹²⁹ Tobia de Juan,¹³⁰ and Giacomo Bernardini.¹³¹

Even though he was originally sent to secure a safe-conduct for the incoming Habsburg ambassador, Juan de Rocaful, Margliani soon found out that it was him who

¹²⁰ AGS, E 1338, fol. 42 (10 August 1580).

¹²¹ AGS, E 1338, fols. 51 (21 August 1580) and 60 (10 December 1580); E 1339, fol. 123.

¹²² Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. I, 109.

¹²³ AGS, E 1337, fols. 161, 162, 163, 169, 171 and 174 (all 1580).

¹²⁴ AGS, E 1338, fol. 65 (12 November 1580).

¹²⁵ AGS, E 1338, fol. 59 (15 October 1580).

¹²⁶ AGS, E 1338, fol. 65 (12 November 1580) and 72 (22 December 1580).

¹²⁷ AGS, E 1338, fol. (30 June 1580).

¹²⁸ AGS, E 1338, fol. 6 (31 May 1580).

¹²⁹ AGS, E 1338, fol. 30 (22 July 1580).

¹³⁰ AGS, E 1337, fols. 164, 165, 169, 172 and 173 (all 1580).

¹³¹ AGS, E 1338, fols. 42 (10 August 1580) and 66 (12 November 1580).

had to negotiate the Ottoman-Habsburg truce. Rocaful never arrived and remained in Naples even though a chaus named Ali waited for him in Ragusa for months.¹³² Sokollu was quick to realize what was going on. His efficient secret service soon found out that Rocaful was far from being ill, as Margliani claimed to be. He was seen walking around in Naples. Moreover, Sokollu was also informed of the Habsburg military preparations in Naples which, he feared, might target Algiers.¹³³

In the meantime, a new go-between, Antonio Echevarri, appeared as a potential Habsburg ambassador.¹³⁴ Margliani vehemently opposed the idea, however, because Echevarri was once a slave in the Ottoman capital. This “*scrivano mayor de los esclavos del Gran Señor*”, had run away from the Ottoman capital with other slaves on January 25, 1571, causing much trouble for other Christian slaves left in the capital and the Franciscan monks amidst rising intercommunal hatred, typical of wartime.¹³⁵ Therefore, it would have devastating consequences if somebody recognized Echevarri.¹³⁶ In August, Margliani reported that he was being mocked because Rocafull did not arrive; he also suggested new agents for the Habsburg secret service. A certain Giovanni Volpe Vicentino, who came to Constantinople in order to ransom his brother, could be a possible source of information. He also added that a Roman named Paolo earned the Grand Vizier’s favor because he had “stolen” three Christian slaves, one from Naples and two from Rome and submitted them to the *emin* of the Ragusan customs house, in

¹³² As soon as Margliani arrived in Constantinople, Ali Chaus was dispatched to Ragusa to wait for the incoming ambassador. BOA, *MD*, XXXV, no. 42 (H. 19 R 985, A.D. 19 November 1578); XXXVI, nos. 107, 108 and 109 (all H. 19 Za. 986 / A.D. 17 January 1579); also see. XL, nos. 276-277 (H. 20 Ş 987 / A.D. 11 October 1579).

¹³³ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 48 (18 July 1579). The target was Portugal.

¹³⁴ AGS, *E* 1079, fols. 185 and 186 (both 9 August 1579).

¹³⁵ These monks were enslaved and sent to galleys because the Ottomans realized that they were assisting the transmission of letters written by Habsburg spies. AGS, *E* 1060, fol. 140 (5 May and 15 June 1571).

¹³⁶ AGS, *E* 1080, fol. 22 (29 January 1579). Aurelio made a similar warning as well. *E* 1080, fol. 98 (1 April 1580).

exchange for the liberty of his brother who was a rower in Ottoman galleys. The fact that he refused the Sokollu's offer for conversion brought him further credit in Margliani's eyes.¹³⁷ In October, Antonio Echevarri arrived in Constantinople, only to leave for Naples soon after because, just as Margliani had suggested, the face of this slave on the run was familiar to many in Constantinople.¹³⁸

Margliani and Brutti on the other hand, fell out with each other quickly. Margliani's correspondence is full of complaints about Brutti's bad intentions, while Brutti, frustrated with Margliani's efforts to exclude him from the negotiations, devised a couple of interesting plans to get rid of his colleague.

First, he told Margliani that Sokollu was angry with him because Rocaful had not arrived and that he should ask from the Pasha the licence to leave Constantinople. If he did not allow him to leave, then they would ask the Sultan when he left Constantinople for hunting. There Brutti could talk in Albanian with the Sultan's men so that Sokollu could not understand what he said. If this did not work either, then he would secretly take him to Anatolia from where he could pass to Chios and then to freedom. When Margliani kindly but astutely rejected the offer, Brutti informed the Grand Vizier that Margliani was contemplating to escape and added that Rocaful was not coming because the Habsburgs were planning an expedition against Algiers. When Ashkenazi broke the news to him, Margliani was appalled by this "greatest betrayal of the world".¹³⁹

Rest of Brutti's story is indicative of the realities of factional politics in the Ottoman capital. Brutti quickly alienated everybody including the Grand Vizier and found himself busy with other problems that closed one page in his career, but opened

¹³⁷ AGS, E 1080, fols. 58 (3 August 1579).

¹³⁸ Sola, *Uchalı*, 298, 300.

¹³⁹ AGS, E 1080, fols. 44 and 46 (both 4 July 1579).

another. His activities were by no means restricted to espionage, diplomacy and slave ransoming; he also directly participated in Ottoman court politics. He was a relative of the rival of Sokollu, Sinan Pasha. Furthermore, he acted as an agent of the Moldavian prince who was seeking to assume the crown from Rhodes where he was kept by the Ottomans in exile. Brutti's machinations against the reigning prince, a client of Sokollu, had already infuriated the Pasha. When he furthermore learned that Brutti lied to him on several occasions, he had him imprisoned. Margliani then found himself in an awkward position because he was obliged to defend Brutti in compliance with his instructions that he had received from Philip II before undertaking his voyage. Furthermore, he feared that Brutti might convert to Islam in order to save his skin and confess the details of negotiations for Mehmed Pasha's defection. He sent Hürrem to Sokollu and argued that Brutti came with him and therefore, as a part of his mission, should be treated with respect, no matter what he did. If he was executed, the negotiations could not proceed. Meanwhile, Sokollu had already made his case in front of the Sultan who ordered that the Albanian should be impaled. Sinan Pasha, as the recipient of 8.000 ducats that Brutti secured from the candidate prince, knew that Sokollu's real target was none other than himself. He quickly made an *'arz* to the Sultan, arguing that Sokollu was trying to punish Brutti because he was involved in factional politics. In order to convince the Sultan that Brutti was a Habsburg spy, Sokollu even went as far as to forge a letter written by the Viceroy of Naples who thanked the Albanese for the information he sent. Sinan then made another *'arz*, arguing that Sokollu's man, Ashkenazi, deceived Margliani into submitting a document (*scripture*) which, although used as a proof to Brutti's culpability, should be given no credit. Sokollu then agreed to release him with the condition that he

should immediately leave for Naples where he would be punished by the Viceroy. Brutti was told that he was going to welcome the incoming Habsburg ambassador Rocafull. He met in Ragusa Giovanni Stefano de Ferrari and Antonio Echevarri who informed him that this was a ruse and Rocafull was not coming. He tried to return with the two to Constantinople; yet the authorities forced him to return to Ragusa from where he was put, on Sokollu's orders, on a ship that set sail for Barleta. Unfavourable winds saved Brutti from a compulsory trip which might have been the end of his career as a power broker in the Ottoman capital. When his ship had to take refuge in a Ragusan island, he easily passed to a nearby Venetian island and from there to Alessio in his native Albania. There he was once again detained by the men sent by the Ragusan authorities upon the instigation of Margliani. In the meantime, the balance-of-power in Constantinople changed decisively after the assassination of Sokollu and the consequent purging of his faction. Upon learning Brutti's detention, Sinan Pasha's sister (a rare reference to a woman) sent one of her sons with 25 men to recover Brutti by force and bring him back to Constantinople. The brother Christoforo Brutti and a chaus sent by Sinan Pasha arrived in Alessio with an imperial order for Brutti's release. Unable to find him in the city, the chaus arrested the Ragusans who detained the Albanian at the first place.¹⁴⁰

As soon as he returned to Constantinople, Brutti at once resumed his machinations against Margliani. He first contacted Uluç Ali, the ardent opponent of the truce and the leader of the Mediterranean faction who was looking for any excuse to hamper the negotiations. Then he told Ahmed Pasha that Margliani's real mission was to buy time rather than to sign a truce. Furthermore, via one of his men in the *baño*, the

¹⁴⁰ AGS, E 1080, fols. 47 (18 July 1579), 60 (11 August 1579), 61 (18 August 1579); E 1337, fol. 15 (25 January 1580).

lodgings of the Christian slaves working in the Arsenal, he spread the rumour that Margliani usurped the money Philip II gave him for the ransoming of Spanish slaves. The provoked slaves were almost making “*ciertas informaciones y poderes*”, a written statement against Margliani, if not for a certain Gaspar Ligerio who opposed to sign and even fought fist to fist with another slave. Fortunately for Margliani, Brutti’s machinations against him did not work. He would soon leave Constantinople for Moldavia where he would become the high dignitary of the new prince.¹⁴¹

While Margliani was negotiating the details of truce and expanding his network of spies and informants, an unexpected visitor jeopardized the entire Habsburg operation. A Trinitarian Friar named Cristobal Perez arrived in Constantinople for ransoming Christian slaves. When he suddenly wished to convert, however, Margliani was on alert because two of his agents in Uluç Ali’s household (Sinan and Haydar?) made confessions in front of him. He secretly arrested the friar in his house. The Dragoman Mehmed Bey, on the other hand, could not keep his silence about the issue and mentioned it to the Venetian bailo. The bailo in turn informed the papal authorities who, always jealous of their jurisdiction over the clergy, intervened at once. When Margliani contemplated poisoning the friar, for instance, they opposed and asked that the Friar be returned to Inquisition. Margliani then had to keep him under lock-and-key in his house until the end of his mission in February 1581. Perez would have to travel back with him until Rome.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ AGS, *E* 1338, fols. 1 (24 January 1580), 2 (2 February 1580), 4 (4 February 1580), 5 (29 February 1580), 13 (13 February 1580), 30 (22 July 1580), 45 (August 1580) and 48 (20 August 1580).

¹⁴² AGS, *E* 1081, fols. 154 (4 November 1580), 163 (14 November 1580) and 170 (21 November 1580); *E* 1083, fol. 58 (28 February 1581), *E* 1084, fol. 35 (6 June 1581); *E* 1338, fols. 22, 36 (27 July 1580), 59 (15 October 1580) and 74 (30 December 1580); *E* 1339, fol. 127 (7 February 1581).

5.6. THE NETWORK AFTER MARGLIANI'S DEPARTURE (1581-1600)

When Marglini signed a three year truce¹⁴³ and set sail for Spain, he left behind a functioning intelligence network, composed of the afore-mentioned agents. He made necessary arrangements for the transmission of letters and distributed ciphers to prominent agents such as Sinan, Haydar, Pedro Brea and Giacomo Bernardini.¹⁴⁴ These seemed to have adapted to the new situation given that soon their letters started to arrive. In April, the Viceroy of Naples learned that Uluç Ali would leave Constantinople with 60 galleys for an expedition against Morocco.¹⁴⁵ In August, he received a letter from Sinan which stated that due to the newly signed truce, Uluç Ali would not attack the Habsburg coasts as well as another which Pedro Brea wrote before setting sail with the Navy, informing the arrival of one of his men to Catalonia with information.¹⁴⁶

Another Habsburg agent, Antonio Sanz, arrived in Ragusa in March 1582 where he encountered Dragoman Pasquale and three janissaries that was accompanying Giacomo Soranzo, the Venetian ambassador who came to Constantinople with presents for the festival in honour of Ottoman princes' circumcision. Two of the janissaries previously served, or was entrusted with the task of supervising, Margliani in Constantinople. So they knew Sanz, who was then Margliani's interpreter, very well, which may mean that they were well bribed. They offered him to join them, giving us another example where a well treated Ottoman officer helped a Habsburg spy. Once

¹⁴³ For the text of the truce, see. BM, *Add. MS* 28415, fols. 123-4, reprinted and translated in Skilliter, "Hispano-Ottoman Armistice", 492-6.

¹⁴⁴ AGS, *E* 1083, fol. 58 (28 February 1581); *E* 1338, fol. 66 (12 November 1581); *E* 1339, fol. 127 (7 February 1581); *E* 1414, fol. 164 (18 November 1581). For instance, according to AGS, *E* 1081, fol. 163 (14 November 1580). Sinan and Haydar should write their letters with the name of another Christian and could send their *pliegos* via the Ragusan ambassador to Nicolao Sfrondato, addressed to, or with the *sobrescripto* for, Diego Felices, the *castellano* of Barleta.

¹⁴⁵ AGS, *E* 1084, fols. 32 (26 May 1581) and 36 (June 1581).

¹⁴⁶ AGS, *E* 1084, fol. 57 (4 August 1581).

reaching Constantinople, Sanz immediately started gathering information. The precision and detailedness of observations (news of the census, *reseña general*, in the Arsenal, arrival of Greeks from Candia offering a port in case of an Ottoman attack, negotiations with the Persian ambassador, foreign diplomats arriving in Constantinople for the circumcision festival, future Ottoman targets in the Mediterranean, and finally a detailed report of the physical conditions of the galleys left in Constantinople, the layout of and the materials in the Arsenal as well as missions and whereabouts of small fleets that left Constantinople) Sanz made in just eleven days (May, 12-23) demonstrate to us the importance of resident ambassadors if one accepts the hypothesis that Sanz already established these connections as a part of Margliani's mission. Unfortunately for Sanz, however, Brutti in the meantime came to Constantinople as an ambassador of his prince and quickly informed Sinan Pasha of Sanz's identity and real intentions. They took him in front of Sinan Pasha who accused him of treason and abandoning "*el tuerto de [s]u patron*", his one eyed boss, a common insult among Ottoman circles to Margliani who had lost an eye on the battlefield. Sanz insisted that he came to see his family and left Margliani in the Habsburg court. He also wished to receive a safe-conduct to be able to exchange Muslim slaves for Christians. Sinan Pasha should have thought it wiser not to go further with Sanz and risk the truce, about the validity of which he was already anxious. Instead, he sent him to Uluç Ali who could give him the necessary safe-conduct. Sanz, on the other hand, knowing Ottoman customs very well, had already visited the Grand Admiral and acquired a safe-conduct. The next day, he would immediately leave Constantinople without informing anyone including his wife.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ AGS, E 1085, fols. 80 and 81.

In the meantime, Margliani arrived in Madrid on 4 January 1582 and talked to Cardinal Granvela and Antonio Pérez who still seemed to have exercised some sort of an influence even while he was in total disgrace with the sword of Damocles hanging over his head because of an assassination he was implicated in.¹⁴⁸ Margliani then proceeded to Lisbon where Philip II stayed for three years after he became the King of Portugal. During this time, Margliani was regularly supplied with information by Crisobal Salazar, the Habsburg secretary in Venice, who sent him not only the results of his own network, but also the *pliegos* which a certain Federigo Curelli brought from Constantinople and submitted to him. Margliani, in return, was keeping him informed of events in the court. It is interesting to see how the three year experience as a diplomat in Constantinople promoted Margliani to an expert on things Ottoman. Unlike a spymaster or a decision-maker of mediocre quality, Margliani exhibited a profound proficiency in making meaningful interpretations and political use of the received information, or in other words, in transforming information into knowledge. For more than once he dismissed the information he received because it did not correspond to other sources of information he had and/or it simply did not make sense, i.e., fit in, according to his own view, the dynamics of politics in the Ottoman capital and the logistics of the time. For instance, in 1581, he commented on the information that arrived in Naples that Uluç Ali was leaving with 60 galleys for an expedition against Morocco. Given that the War with Persia went on, the Ottomans would have to send 40 galleys to Black Sea in order to transport munition; therefore Uluç Ali could not leave. Even if he did, he would be of no harm to the Habsburg possessions since the Ottomans desired that the armistice, *suspensión de*

¹⁴⁸ For a good biography of Pérez as well as a detailed study of his prosecution, see. Gregorio Marañón, *Antonio Pérez* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1947); idem, *Los procesos contra Antonio Pérez* (Madrid : Viuda de E. Maestre, 1947).

armas, would be followed by a truce, *tregua*.¹⁴⁹ The next year, he commented that neither the Persians, nor the Ottomans could engage in a major military operation because the former does not have enough power while the latter's supply lines would not support an operation with so many men and so far away from the capital. When Salazar informed him of Sinan Pasha's demands that Venice should compensate the Ottomans for the losses inflicted by the Knights of St. Stephen,¹⁵⁰ because these corsairs were getting supplies from the Venetian island of Cythera (Cerigo), he was quick to remind that as soon as the Persian War ended, the Ottomans, in order to appease the soldiers, could try their luck with an easier target. Given that they used the same excuse, the corsairs' depredations, to legitimize the abrogation of capitulations with Venice and the invasion of Cyprus in 1570, this target would most probably be Crete.¹⁵¹ Having been given, as a compensation for his services in Constantinople, a fief worth, much to his dismay, only 450 ducats, and the title of the *Conde de Intelvi y los Cuatro Valles*, Margliani was still sending letters to Constantinople via Venice in 1583.¹⁵² He also sent the seasoned courier Giovanni Stefano Ferrari to Constantinople with the diplomatic mission of negotiating with the Ottomans so that Uluç Ali could not undertake a naval expedition, a mission in which he succeeded.¹⁵³

Santa Croce was finally free in 1584 with a safe-conduct from the Marquis of St. Croce who had him imprisoned him at the first place. As an expert information specialist

¹⁴⁹ Apparently, Margliani considered what he signed as an armistice, while in fact it was a truce for three years. Then, what the Ottomans wanted to have should be a treaty rather than a truce.

¹⁵⁰ Resembling the Knights of St. John of Malta, the Knights of St. Stephen were operating under the aegis of Florence instead of Venice. It was the very Duke of Florence (later the Grand Duke of Tuscany with the Papal bull in 1569) that officially created the order on March 15, 1562 with a ceremony in the Cathedral of Pisa. He was the Grand Master of the Order and even compiled its first statutes. Salvatore Bono, *I corsari barbareschi* (Torino: ERI-Edizion RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1964), 125-135.

¹⁵¹ AGS, *E* 1084, fol. 32 (26 May 1581); *E* 1527, fols. 208-218 (all 1582), especially fol. 210 (7 May 1582).

¹⁵² AGS, *SP*, 1340, ff. 197r-202r; *E* 1528 fols. 160-3 all (February-August 1583).

¹⁵³ AGS, *E* 1528, fol. 161 (18 May 1583); *E* 1340, fol. 31 (25 June 1583).

and a consummate entrepreneur, Aurelio quickly asked for three favours: 1. to be “given satisfaction” for the duration of time he spent in prison, 2. to be given *merced* for the services he rendered for the crown, 3. to be appointed to a post that would provide him with income, essential for his return to Constantinople. What is striking is that Margliani backed all these three demands and suggested that Aurelio should either be appointed in place of Renzo, in charge of “taking care of people sent to Constantinople” or Pietro Lanza, the adroit corsair-cum-spy who was the captain of the royal frigates in Otranto, before being dismissed with the instigation of the Venetians.¹⁵⁴

In 1583, the artful courier-cum-diplomat Giovanni Stefano Ferrari was sent to Ragusa, from where he would pass to Constantinople to renew the truce of 1581, if authorization arrived from Margliani who, in the meantime, would try to assess the inclinations of the new Grand Vizier in Constantinople. Ferrari accomplished his mission in spite of the English ambassador William Hareborne’s efforts to convince the Ottomans to join England against the Habsburgs.¹⁵⁵ In the meantime, Don Martin de Acuña, whom we left in Madrid in 1578, was imprisoned, because of, according to Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, his contacts with the Ottomans.¹⁵⁶ However, this was not actually the case; recent scholarship successfully established that the reason was that he was spying for the French with the *alias* Pero Rondela.¹⁵⁷ He was shortly strangulated in February 1585.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 161 (4 June 1584). For the diplomatic crisis between the Habsburgs and Venice that Lanza’s activities caused, see. *E* 1336, fols. 39, 46, 52, 60, 78, 79, 118, 161, 219 and 220; *E* 1520, fols. 60 and 61; *E* 1521, fols. 39 and 103 (all between June 1577-February 1578).

¹⁵⁵ Edwarde Barton and Edwin Pears, “The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte”, *English Historical Review* 31 (1893): 439-466.

¹⁵⁶ AGS, *E* 1532, fols. 109-113 (all June-October 1584).

¹⁵⁷ Rivas and García, *Martin de Acuña*, 74-88.

¹⁵⁸ Fernand Braudel, “La Mort de Martin de Acuña, 4 Février 1585”, in *Melanges offerts à Marcel Bataillon par les hispanistes français*, eds. Maximie Chevalier, Robert Ricard and Noël Salomon (Bordeaux: Féret & Fils, 1962), 3-18.

Margliani's network lost an important agent when Pedro Brea ran away from Constantinople first to Naples and then to Spain. The Habsburg authorities secured the liberation of Pedro Brea's family who arrived in Venice from Constantinople on March 31, 1585, an auspicious event in the honor of which Brea bought 92 pounds of candels worth 37 ducats.¹⁵⁹ The long-time Habsburg spy Bartolomeo Pusterla a.k.a. Marco Stanga, however, kept the network alive by continuously sending fresh information.¹⁶⁰ The Habsburgs established contacts with two new figures that rose to prominence in the Ottoman capital as powerful agents of factional politics and were ready to offer their services to whomever willing to pay for it: the Portuguese Marrano David Passi and his go-between Guglielmo de Saboya.

Passi was a Levantine merchant who first appears in Venetian sources as a Jewish merchant in Ragusa from where he warned the Venetian authorities of the imminent Ottoman attack on Cyprus and acted as an active Venetian agent during the war.¹⁶¹ After the war was over, he returned to Venice where he ran a salon attended by Venetian patricians, a venue for information exchange; thus he found a perfect trade for an information broker.¹⁶² From there he moved to Constantinople where he rose to prominence as a confidant of Murad III and acted as the agent of Dom Antonio, the pretender to the Portuguese throne which Philip acquired in 1580. His reputation in the eyes of the Sultan was such that he was influential not only in determining the domestic

¹⁵⁹ AGS, *E* 1533, fol. 284 (3 April 1585); *E* 1538, fol. 286 (20 December 1585).

¹⁶⁰ AGS, *E* 1517/cuaderno XI, fols. 3, 8, 18, 21, 30, 32, 36, 38 and 48, cuaderno XII, fols. 4, 9, 14, 30, 34, cuaderno XVII, fols. 1, 19, 28, 34, 37 and 43; cuaderno 19, fols. 10, 20, 24 and 36; cuaderno XXI, fols. 7, 11, 28, 34, 43, 44 and 49; cuaderno XXII, fols. 1, 4, 9 and 37; cuaderno XXV, fols. 14, 23, 26, 33 and 40; cuaderno XXVIII, fols. 3, 10, 13, 28, 34 and 50; cuaderno XXX, fols. 1, 4, 8, 13 and 19; *E* 1340, fols. 3, 48, 53, 58, 61, 62, 65 and 69; *E* 1341, fols. 62 and 65; *E* 1536 fols. 192-200; *E* 1537, fols. 262-3 (All between 1582-1586).

¹⁶¹ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 100; ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, c. 101v (16 November 1570); reg. 10, cc. 91r-91v (13 February 1572, m.v.); fil. 16, 13 February 1573, m.v.; *CCX-LettRett*, b. 300, 28 August 1573.

¹⁶² Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 164.

and foreign policy, but also in financial matters, such as taking charge of the Constantinople mint. He was also assumed as the mastermind behind Sinan Pasha's ingenious plan to impose on local officials the responsibility to equip galleys for the state from their private wealth.¹⁶³ As the master of an impressive intelligence network, he provided the Ottomans, the Venetians and the Habsburgs with information.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Passi and his man Guglielmo de Saboya negotiated the ransom of a number of Spanish nobles in Constantinople on behalf of their families, the money being transferred via Habsburg authorities, most notably Cristobal Salazar in Venice.¹⁶⁵

In 1585, Passi informed the Habsburgs of his desire to leave Constantinople for going back to Christianity with his family and asked Philip II to write a letter to the Venetian authorities in his family's recommendation. He also added, however, he could not leave Constantinople in the meantime, because the Sultan, willing to profit from his services, detained him and offered handsome rewards, a piece of information by which Passi engaged in a strategy of self-promotion in order to raise its status and thus enhance the range of possible financial remunerations and other favours he might expect.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Passi's network was detected by the Venetian *Inquisitori di Stato* who warned the bailo in Constantinople that Passi's agents all over the Christianity were sending him letters hidden among merchant correspondence. They asked him to search

¹⁶³ Pál Fodor, "An Antisemite Grand Vizier? The Crisis in Ottoman Jewish Relations in 1589-1591 and its Consequences", in *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Pál Fodor (Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2000), 197. Another Ottomanist who penned an article on this important broker of Constantinople politics is Suraiya Faroqhi. "Ein Gunstling des osmanischen Sultan Murad III: David Passi", *Der Islam* 47 (1971): 290-7.

¹⁶⁴ For his first contact with the Habsburg authorities in 1572, see. AGS, *E* 1331, fol. 233. He was shortly after accepted to the Habsburg service. *E* 1332, fol. 110 (18 November 1573), *E* 1333, fols. 42 and 106 (18 February 1574); *E* 1334, fols. 8 (15 January 1575) and 125 (11 July 1575).

¹⁶⁵ AGS, *E* 1531, fols. 107, 111, 134, 136, 137, 144-9, 163 and 183; *E* 1532, fols. 149-51, 154, 169, 172, 174, 175, 178-80 and 183 (all 1584); *E* 1533, fols. 202, 222, 257-62 and 296-8; *E* 1584, fols. 130-6 and 165-6; *E* 1535, fols. 121-2; *E* 1537, fols. 203-5, 317, 330, 342 and 417; *E* 1538, fols. 109, 180-4, 276, 293 and 367; *E* 1539, fols. 234-9, 360-2 and 493-8.

¹⁶⁶ AGS, *E* 1535 fol. 183 (9 July 1585).

the letters submitted him by the Jews in Constantinople to realize with whom he was in correspondence in Venice and the extent of their operations. The bailo responded that, given that the “Consul of the Jews” brought the letters together, he could not know for certain which ones were written by Passi. From his other sources he acquired the information, however, that Passi had agents in Ancona and his brother was in Venice. The only letters he could intercept were the ones that Passi directly gave the bailo’s secretary to be mailed to Venice. Even then, fearful of Passi’s power in the Ottoman capital, he did not risk more than sending these letters to the *Inquisitori* without opening them.¹⁶⁷

Margliani in the meantime continued his correspondence with the Habsburg secretary in Venice, Cristobal Salazar and went on exchanging information about the political situation in Philip II’s court with those regarding the activities of, and letters sent by, the Constantinople network. Apart from signing the follow-up truce after nine months of hard work in 1584, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari was the go-between and the nodal point between Margliani in Madrid, Salazar in Venice and the network in Constantinople, providing information, carrying letters, instructions and wages. He was so efficient in this role that he was awarded a one-time payment of 1.000 escudos in 1586.¹⁶⁸ He was less successful in the next round of truce negotiations, however. In spite of all his efforts, the Ottomans did not renew it and thus unsettled the Habsburg decision-makers, leaving Habsburg coasts susceptible to a potential Ottoman attack at a crucial time when the Habsburgs’ troubles culminated in Flanders and a major naval expedition against

¹⁶⁷ ASV, *IS*, b. 148, 25 September 1585; b. 416, 8 January 1585, m.v., 22 January 1585, m.v., 25 March 1585.

¹⁶⁸ AGS, *E* 1533, fols. 284-6 (all 1585); *E* 1535, fol. 174 (12 January 1585); *E* 1536, fols. 189-191 (all 1586); *E* 1340, fol. 78 (17 March 1584); *E* 1080, fol. 149 (28 July 1586).

England was being planned in Madrid. Margliani himself quickly realized the danger and submitted a report, arguing for the necessity of another attempt for the renewal of the truce.¹⁶⁹ Rumours of military preparations in Constantinople started to circulate immediately in 1587, once again oiling the gears of the Habsburg secret service in the Levant.¹⁷⁰ Information regarding the activities of the Ottoman navy as well as of North African corsairs flowed not only from Constantinople, but also from other networks in the Levant.¹⁷¹

In the meantime, Margliani passed away, leaving in his stead his son Ruggero who inherited not only his father's title of "count", but also his skills in espionage and diplomacy. His death proved to be a harsh, if not fatal, blow to a handful Habsburg agents. Juan Segui de Menorca, who was sent to Constantinople in 1586 by Margliani and Idiáquez,¹⁷² could not receive his stipend from the Venetian bailo Lorenzo Bernardo. Now that Margliani was dead, he had no more credit with the bailo. Juan Segui, of whom Bernardo was not very fond at all,¹⁷³ traveled to Naples to reclaim his wages in arrears for 15 months.¹⁷⁴ According to his own testimony nine years later, his voyage proved to be fruitful; the Viceroy increased his salary to 440 ducats.¹⁷⁵

Simultaneously, Passi's go-between, Guglielmo de Saboya, a Portuguese Marrano, arrived, after visiting Malta and Messina, in Naples. Apart from sending information, he offered many other projects. He could have the Ottoman galleys captured; in Malta he had negotiated with the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John to

¹⁶⁹ COSP, vol. 8, nos. 576 and 577 (4 September 1587).

¹⁷⁰ AGS, *E* 1089, fols. 7 (25 February 1587), 28 and 81 (20 December 1587).

¹⁷¹ AGS, *E* 1089, fols. 258, 259, 262, 263, 265, 290 and 306 (all 1588).

¹⁷² AGS, *E* K 1675, fol. 21 (19 January 1591).

¹⁷³ Lorenzo Bernardo refused to include his letters in his own mail and advised him to use the Venetian *spazzi pubblici*, public postal service, instead. ASV, *IS*, b. 416, 30 November 1591.

¹⁷⁴ AGS, *E* 1090, fols. 8 (10 September 1588), 9 (20 September 1588).

¹⁷⁵ AGS, *E* K 1677, fol. 79 (3 November 1597).

this effect. He boasted of enjoying the confidence of the Ottoman Grand Admiral Hasan Veneziano so much so that the latter even asked him where he should conquer in the land of the Christians. This confidence should be used in order to deceive him. He also claimed that he could discover the Ottoman spies abroad. Moreover, if the Habsburgs could send somebody to Constantinople, Passi was willing to negotiate things of much importance, *tratar cosas de mucha importancia*, the details of which de Saboya did not wish to trust with the Viceroy. The latter, however, was informed of certain misdeed de Saboya committed a couple of years ago. He tried to defraud Doña Maria de Castro who sent him to Constantinople to search for his son, Duarte de Meneses, who had fallen captive at the Battle of Alcácer Quibir (1578). When de Saboya claimed to have found him and then asked for 6.000-7.000 escudos as ransom money, the suspicious de Castro sent another agent who quickly revealed de Saboya's scheme; the son was not in Constantinople. Given his past, the Viceroy grew suspicious that de Saboya might be a double agent who was working for the Ottomans and that, once discovered, he may have made all these up in order to save his skin. He had him incarcerated in Naples' Castelnuovo where he was treated well and then wrote to the imperial ambassador in Constantinople in order to learn who this man actually was. Fortunately, the ambassador accentuated his services in the past and vouched for him. He knew de Saboya from the household of the Venetian bailo, Gianfrancesco Morosini (o. 1582-4) where he was under the pretext of ransoming prominent Portuguese slaves. Even though considered by *vox populi* as Dom Antonio's spy, he was always well-inclined towards the Habsburgs. The Viceroy released him from the prison and told him that he had him incarcerated for his own good, in order to keep his mission in secret and to have Hasan Veneziano trust him

even more. He was contemplating to send him back to Constantinople, with letters, written by him and the Viceroy of Sicily, for Passi. According to the Viceroy, the only useful service Passi and de Saboya could offer was to send information. Other schemes, *otros effectos*, such as seizing or torching the Ottoman galleys, burning down the Arsenal and the warehouse, were of little value. It was established by experience that all these schemes in the end turned out to be ineffectual, in vain, *per averse visto per experiencia que todos los sobredichos effectos salen vanos*. In the meantime, however, another letter from the Austrian ambassador arrived. Passi, upon learning the incarceration of his man, showed letters from Cristobal Salazar and other important Habsburg officials in recommendation of de Saboya. Passi furthermore mentioned that he had other plans, *magiori et cosi altri pensieri*, for his Majesty's service for the benefit of which he had already spent more than 10.000 escudos. Evidently, he was expecting remunerations for his services that included preventing the Ottoman Navy from sailing to the Western Mediterranean by opposing the Ottoman Pashas and the Sultan himself, all resolute to attack the Habsburg lands. Having learned all these pretenses, the Viceroy *nolens volens* let de Saboya proceed with his dispatches to the Habsburg court in order not to offend Passi. He added, however, that all these schemes were useless. They had nothing to do with acquiring information from Constantinople, a task so essential at a time when the information that arrived was "of little substance". These too costly schemes should be intended but for embezzling the court and squeezing money, *sacar dinero*.¹⁷⁶ De Saboya arrived in court in Spring 1590 and offered the defection of the Ottoman navy under the command of Hasan Veneziano as well as Passi's intermediation on behalf of Philip II in Ottoman circles. He could not only keep the Ottoman fleet away, but also help the

¹⁷⁶ AGS, E 1090, fol. 116 (2 September 1589).

Habsburgs secure a truce. Even though his proposals were considered unfeasible, Madrid ordered the Viceroy of Naples to give de Saboya letters of encouragement to be delivered to Passi.¹⁷⁷ De Saboya proved himself a productive informant by sending several letters which he wrote with the alias, Galeazo Berno and to which the Habsburgs would respond with the alias, Francisco Americo.¹⁷⁸

Passi would leave the scene of Constantinople politics and *a fortiori* dropped out of Habsburg payroll in 1591 in one of many turning points of factional rivalries in the Ottoman capital. His arch-rival at the time was the omnipotent Sinan Pasha whom we have mentioned before as Brutti's relative. During his second tenure as Grand Vizier (April 1589-August 1591), in an effort to weaken his competitors in the court, Sinan Pasha tried every method to eliminate this Jewish courtier who was too influential in the making of important decisions. He wrote several *telhises*¹⁷⁹ to the Sultan, full of arguments against Passi, some of which were extremely anti-semitic *ante litteram*. Nonetheless, all these efforts were to no avail. Passi retained his influence in Constantinople and continued to play a key role in the Ottoman decision-making process as well as military preparations and to enjoy extensive financial privileges and contracts. Moreover, he remained at the heart of the negotiations for a comprehensive anti-Habsburg alliance between England, Ottoman Empire, Henry of Bearn (France's future Henry IV), and Dom Antonio, the pretender to the Portuguese throne. Given that he was

¹⁷⁷ AGS, E 1092, fol. 72 (3 April 1590).

¹⁷⁸ According to AGS, E 1092, fol. 202. For examples of such letters, see. AGS, E K 1675, fols. 55 (31 May 1591) and 110 (28 November 1591)

¹⁷⁹ For the Ottoman *telhis* institution, see. Suraiya Faroqhi, "Die Vorlagen (telhise) des Großwesirs Sinān paša an Sultan Murād III", (Ph.D. Diss., University of Hamburg, 1967); Pál Fodor, "Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral *Telhîs*," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47/1-2 (1994): 67-85; and idem, "The Grand Vizieral *Telhîs*: A Study in the Ottoman Central Administration, 1566-1656," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 15 (1997): 137-188.

also on Habsburg and Venetian payroll, it was not surprising that he tried to start a war between Poland and Ottoman Empire. The two states were in the brink of war in the late 1580s and the relations could only be bettered with the intervention of the English ambassador who was trying to keep the Ottoman hands free so that they could send their navy against the Habsburgs. When the Ottomans accepted a compromise, however, the Poles did not send an ambassador to Constantinople as agreed beforehand, much to Sinan Pasha's chagrin. The infuriated Grand Vizier then realized that it was Passi who was impeding an agreement with the help of his brother in the Polish court in order to relieve the Habsburgs and the Venetians from the worries of an Ottoman attack, already aroused with the conclusion of peace between the Ottomans and the Safavids.¹⁸⁰ This gave Sinan Pasha the necessary alibi to eliminate his arch-rival; only months before Sinan would lose his post in July 1591, Passi was in Yengihisar prison. Although Sinan pushed for an execution and even demanded "the greatest holy war", *gaza-yı ekber*, against Passi, the Sultan did not abandon his favourite altogether. He was only exiled to Rhodes.¹⁸¹ Although he was pardoned with the instigation of his ally Ferhad Pasha and allowed to return after Sinan's dismissal,¹⁸² he never regained his influence. Nevertheless, even after his fall from power, he kept sending letters to the Habsburg officials and claimed, with the hope of being compensated, that he was the main reason why the Ottoman navy did not leave in 1591.¹⁸³ Unfortunately for him, the Count of Miranda was convinced of his duplicity, that he was the mastermind behind the alliance between the Ottoman Empire,

¹⁸⁰ Fodor, "An Antisemite Grand Vizier?," 197; Halil Sahillioğlu, ed., *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın Telhisleri* (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2004), no. 8.

¹⁸¹ Sahillioğlu, *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın Telhisleri*, nos. 9, 62, 142, 143; BOA, MZD, V, no. 266. AGS, E 1092, fol. 177 (24 July 1591).

¹⁸² AGS, E 1092, fol. 202.

¹⁸³ AGS, E 1092, fol. 177 (24 July 1591).

England, Henry of Bearn and Dom Antonio.¹⁸⁴ Passi's double game became his own undoing. As an agent of Dom Antonio and the negotiator of the alliance, he lost credit in the Habsburg court; as a Habsburg and Venetian agent who started to instigate an Ottoman-Polish War, he gave his rival Sinan Pasha the necessary excuse to remove him from power. Passi was of no relevance any more even though we hear of him occasionally. In 1592, he wrote a letter, asking for his two-year salary and the crown's intervention in the matter of an unpaid debt.¹⁸⁵ In 1593, letters from Constantinople indicated that Passi lost the influence he had during the time of Siyavuş Pasha.¹⁸⁶ Having been arrested a couple of times in 1593 and 1594, due to his connections with the Habsburgs, he left the scene of Ottoman politics. Even though de Saboya was no less immune to Miranda's suspicions; he continued as a Habsburg agent.¹⁸⁷ In 1592, Baron de la Fage, a French renegade and an agent for the English, revealed the identity of a number of leading Habsburg spies, among them de Saboya and David Passi. The English ambassador intervened at once. The Ottomans detained de Saboya who was about to embark with several slaves that he ransomed on a Venetian ship with the intention to pass first to Venice and then to Naples. He was carrying letters written by Passi addressed to Philip II and the Habsburg authorities regarding the money which the Empress owed to Passi. When he was imprisoned, de Saboya showed the orders and safe-conducts he carried; he had been serving the Ottomans for eight years by simply using such occasions to gather information about the Christianity. Passi disappeared first, but then showed up and made a similar case, accentuating the necessity of giving the Habsburgs the

¹⁸⁴ AGS, *E* 1092, fol. 202.

¹⁸⁵ AGS, *E* K 1675, fol. 131 (20 March 1592)

¹⁸⁶ AGS, *E* 1345, fol. 31 (25 April 1593).

¹⁸⁷ AGS, *E* 1092, fols. 99 (25 February 1591), 110, 138 (May 1591), 151 (31 May 1591) and 177 (24 July 1591); *E* K 1675, fol. 138 (11 April 1592).

impression that one was well inclined towards their cause, *mostrarse aficionado al servicio del rey catholico*, in order to serve the Sultan better. Once again, fluid boundaries of allegiances in the Ottoman capital proved to be the rule. Passi was shortly out, never to reappear as an actor in Ottoman factional politics and a broker of information; nevertheless Saboya died in prison.¹⁸⁸

Giovanni Margliani's report on the necessity of making another attempt to secure a truce in Constantinople did not fall on deaf ears. The rapprochement between England and the Ottoman Empire, thanks to the new ambassador Barton's efforts, on the one hand and the end of the Ottoman-Persian War in 1590 on the other should have demonstrated the expediency of another diplomatic move.¹⁸⁹ In the final months of 1589, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari contacted Siyavuş Pasha in Constantinople. Much to Barton's chagrin, the Pasha told the seasoned courier-cum-diplomat that he would negotiate a truce if Philip II sent an ambassador. After a full circle, once again the point of contention was the Ottoman insistence of receiving an official ambassador. In reply, once again, the Habsburgs refrained from sending a prominent figure as an ambassador, but rather chose Giovanni Margliani's son, Ruggero. Ferrari received oral instructions in Madrid from the state secretary Juan de Idiáquez and teamed up with Margliani in Milan where the latter was the captain of light cavalry. The two passed to Naples in September 1591 where they received instructions from the Viceroy who tried so hard to conceal the true nature of Margliani's mission. Successful brokers and negotiators they may be, majority of our protagonists were indiscreet. Margliani was no exception; he could not wait until

¹⁸⁸ AGS, E K 1675, fols. 138 (11 April 1592), 141 (18 and 19 April 1592), 142, 144 (2 and 3 May 1592), 167b (15 August 1592), 172 (5 September 1592) and 183 (24 October 1592).

¹⁸⁹ For a detailed explanation of how financial difficulties as well as changing balances-of-power, both in Europe and among the factions of Constantinople, determined the Ottomans' Mediterranean policy during the troubled years of 1590-1592, see. Fodor, "Between Two Continental Wars", 171-190.

reaching Naples to share this important information with others. To overcome this chronic problem of Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations, the Viceroy spread the rumour that Margliani's original destination was Rome and he only came to Naples in order to see the city. Ferrari in the meantime recovered from *gastos secretos* 1.200 escudos for his last trip to Constantinople as well as a one time 1.000 ducats granted by Philip II. Moreover, he was to pay 330 ducats to Juan Segui de Menorca who was not paid for 20 months.¹⁹⁰ The Viceroy then ordered the two to immediately proceed to Ragusa where Margliani would wait until Ferrari obtained a safeconduct from the Pasha. In Fall 1591, the wind started to blow, once again as usual, against the dispatch of an official ambassador. The ambassador in Venice, Francisco de Vera, whom Madrid preferred to keep in the dark regarding the truce, learned about it and made a quite convincing case for the dangers of such a move, supplementing his own arguments with those of the imperial ambassador in Constantinople. Margliani reached Ragusa in November and Ferrari arrived in Constantinople the next month. When the Ottomans offered Ferrari a one-way safe conduct for Margliani, the former quickly realized their intentions, remembering the hard days of the father Margliani who was refused licence to leave and was constantly harrassed and pressurized during the negotiations of 1581 truce. He left the Ottoman capital in January¹⁹¹ to which he returned shortly thereafter; the Ottomans *nolens volens* relented and issued a two-way safe-conduct. In spite of the machinations of the English ambassador and the Venetian bailo as well as the opposition of Sinan Pasha and the *Müfti*, the two protagonists of the negotiations, Siyavuş Pasha, back in power in April, and Ferrari succeeded to come to an understanding. The Pasha sent to Ragusa a

¹⁹⁰ Even though Segui was supposed to receive 396 ducats per annum, the authorities decided that it was too much and paid him only 330. AGS, E 1092, fols. 193 and 184 (both 25 October 1591).

¹⁹¹ E K 1674 fol. 121 (5 January 1590).

draft document for a truce for one or two years. When his agent, rather than Margliani himself, arrived in Constantinople in May, the tide once again turned against the Habsburgs in the Ottoman capital: a dead end for negotiations. Margliani received new instructions in June. Philip II, always recalcitrant to buy the tranquility of mind with a loss of reputation, revoked his mission. Ruggero arrived in Naples in August, only to return short after to Ragusa, however. There he would operate as a spymaster in the following years.¹⁹²

The *relación* of the state of affairs in the Levant given by the Count of Miranda to Ruggero Margliani before he set sail for Constantinople reveals the identities of operational Habsburg spies in Constantinople in 1591. Apart from Passi and Saboya, the network included Juan Segui de Menorca, the dragoman Ambrosio Grillo, a certain spy who did not wish to reveal his name and a certain Turk who was giving information orally, *a boca*. Furthermore, the same report mentions one of Margliani's former men, a Greek named Horatio, who converted to Islam and was now threatening to reveal the identities of the Habsburg spies.¹⁹³ Another operative Habsburg agent not mentioned by this *relación* should be Marco Antonio Stanga *alias* Bartolomeo Pusterla whom the Habsburg ambassador in Venice, Francisco de Vera praised as "the best piece that His Majesty had in Constantinople". He was for long at the center of a fierce dispute between de Vera who exalted his qualities and the Viceroy of Naples who refrained from paying the agent. (This alone could explain why he was not mentioned in the Count of Miranda's *relación*). Vera managed to force the Viceroy, thanks to crown's intervention, to pay Stanga's salaries until 1590; in February 1591, the Viceroy sent a *cédula* worth 834

¹⁹² For a diligent study of Ruggero's activities in 1590-2, see. Cuerva, "Mediterráneo en tregua".

¹⁹³ AGS, E 1092, fol. 202.

escudos. A certain Benedero Bramero made the payment in Constantinople, according to the receipt, to Bartolomeo Pusterla, not Stanga. The shrewd agent apparently preferred to use his *alias* while receiving his stipend for security purposes. He continued sending information and the dispute continued; when he died in August or September 1593, his salaries for almost four years were unpaid by the obdurate Viceroy.¹⁹⁴

When the Ottoman threat once again seemed imminent in the turbulent years of 1590 and 1592, the efficiency of the Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople is impressive. Regular information, mostly but not exclusively from de Saboya and Segui de Menorca,¹⁹⁵ regarding the military preparations in the Ottoman Arsenal started to flow once again,¹⁹⁶ while the authorities tried to realize the extent of the Ottoman commitment to a possible alliance with England, even acquiring copies of letters exchanged between the Sultan, the English ambassador, Elizabeth I, Henry of Bearn and Dom Antonio.¹⁹⁷ In the meantime, a great scandal erupted when the Venetians realized that their bailo, Girolamo Lippomano, was on Habsburg payroll, not only sending information to Philip II at whose court he was first an extraordinary (1581) and then a resident ambassador (1585-8), but also giving Segui de Menorca the afore-mentioned letters.¹⁹⁸ The Venetians quickly dispatched Lorenzo Bernardo who arrived in Ottoman capital, detained Lippomano and put him on a ship that set sail for Venice. The Ottomans were perplexed

¹⁹⁴ AGS, *E K* 1675, fols. 131 (3 March 1590), 137 (31 March 1590), 156 (21 July 1590), 164 (18 August 1590), 168 (10 September 1590), 169 (13 October 1590), 180 (10 November 1590) and 186 (8 December 1590); *E K* 1675, fols. 26 (8 February 1591) and 182 (15 October 1592); *E* 1340, fol. 5 (16 January 1593), 20 (10 April 1593), 25 (24 April 1593), 28 (15 May 1593), 34 (5 June 1593), 56 (11 September 1593), 79 (4 December 1593), 81 (11 December 1593) and 115 (12 February 1594); *E* 1541, fol. 222.

¹⁹⁵ For instance, *E* 1675, fol. 36 (30 March 1591) cites Ambrosio Grillo and fol. 63 (12 June 1591) mentions Giovanni Casteche. According to *E* 1092, fol. 195 (25 October 1591), a certain Pelegrin Castellin who resided in Constantinople was allocated a modest wage of 6 escudos *per mensem*.

¹⁹⁶ AGS, *E* 1092, fols. 15, 18, 23, 24, 33, 54 (all 1590), 93, 138, 146 and 151; *E* 1541, fol. 125. 159 and 162; *E K* 1675, fol. 16 (all 1591)

¹⁹⁷ AGS, *E* 1092, fol. 217, 218, 219 and 220; *E K*, 1675 fols. 9a, 9b, 15, 21, 22 and 23.

¹⁹⁸ AGS, *E K* 1675, fol. 21 (19 January 1591).

by this sudden change and the arrival, without their authorization, of a new bailo. Trying to realize what was going on, and perhaps sensing an unusual opportunity, the Grand Vizier wanted to see Lippomano who, he argued, should appear before him in order to receive a licence to leave the Ottoman capital. Nevertheless, the astute Lorenzo, a seasoned diplomat who previously served in Constantinople (1584-1587), and thus familiar with the politics and “diplomacy *alla Ottomana*”,¹⁹⁹ found a way to prevent such a dangerous meeting by arguing that it was not the custom that such a dismissed person, *ma’zul*, should appear before the Grand Vizier. Upon seeing Venice on the horizon from aboard the galley, Lippomano jumped to the sea and perished. To this day, it has remained a mystery whether this was a suicide or an execution on the orders of the Venetian Council of Ten.²⁰⁰

Philip II responded favourably to the insistence of Francisco de Vera who lamented the loss of Stanga as well as the stinginess of Count of Miranda and accentuated the need to recruit new spies. Information from only Venice would not suffice; de Vera could recruit his own spies.²⁰¹ The Count of Miranda, on the other hand, was building up his own network in fierce rivalry with de Vera, demonstrating that, if not to the extent in the Ottoman context, personal rivalries among Habsburg officials resulted in rivaling parallel intelligence networks that occasionally operated independently from and even unaware of each other. In January 1593, he sent a certain Neapolitan named Gioseffo

¹⁹⁹ The expression is mine. For the particularities of Ottoman diplomacy, see. A. Nuri Yurdusev, ed., *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), especially the first two articles that specifically focus on the Ottoman diplomacy in the Classical Age. A. Nuri Yurdusev, “The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy”, in *Ibid.*, 5-35; Bülent Arı, “Early Ottoman Diplomacy: Ad Hoc Period”, in *Ibid.*, 36-65.

²⁰⁰ Tormene, “Girolamo Lippomano”, all four parts.

²⁰¹ AGS, E 1345, fols. 115 (12 February 1594), 153, 203 (22 October 1594) and 215 (8 April 1594).

Rossiglia to reside in Constantinople and receive incoming spies.²⁰² Next year, the Count dispatched two more spies, Giovanni Masi and Marco Collato.²⁰³

On de Vera's camp, Ambrosio Grillo arrived in Venice in September 1594. He complained that the Viceroy owed him 3 years of salary and added that he felt "defrauded of what he gained with risking his life".²⁰⁴ In 1595, de Vera was still looking for his own agents that would operate in Marco Antonio Stanga's stead and supplement Grillo and Segui de Menorca in Constantinople. He found a certain Jason Buytron, a man of interesting cross-border background. Born in Cyprus, he claimed to have descended from a Spanish noble family. Centuries ago, one of his great grandfathers had followed a certain king of Cyprus who brought many nobles to the island after his marriage in Rome. Jason and his family moved to Venice after the loss of the island to the Ottomans. He spent three years in Constantinople and Anatolia as a merchant and knew perfect Latin, Italian and Turkish. Furthermore, he had an aunt in Constantinople, named Lucia Flores, whose two daughters were well connected in the Ottoman capital. One was the wife of Mehmed III and the mother of an Ottoman princess while the other was married to an important figure and a renegade who was the favourite of the Sultan and whom the document names as a *vayvoda flangrino*, the first word meaning an agent, namely a *voivoda*. In addition, Lucia's niece was married to the Sultan; she was in fact the mother of his first-born son, the heir to the throne in de Vera's undersanding, even though the Ottomans did not have an established rule of primogeniture.²⁰⁵ This niece was from a

²⁰² ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 8, c. 106v (20 March 1593).

²⁰³ ASV, *SDelC*, reg. 8, c. 140r (26 March 1594).

²⁰⁴ ASV, *E* 1345, fol. 193 (24 September 1594).

²⁰⁵ Halil İnalçık, "Osmanlılar'da Saltanat Veraseti Usulü ve Türk Hakimiyet Telakkisiyle İlgisi", *Siyasi Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* XIV (1959), 69-94; idem, "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*, ed. Halil İnalçık (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 37-69.

Cypriote noble family named Saflatro, descending on the mother's side from the Buytrones, Jason's family. Even though this means that the Ottoman heir-apparent and his mother were of Spanish origin, what mattered more for the Habsburgs was Lucia's connections. Thanks to these two *Sultanas*, she could at will enter the Ottoman Palace which increasingly became the focal point of Ottoman politics and administration with the rising importance of the Imperial Harem²⁰⁶ and the court favourites.²⁰⁷ There she could get hold onto information of utmost quality and *penetrar muchas cosas importantes y secretas que no se entiendan fuera del serrallo*. Jason set for Constantinople after having received from de Vera the six-month payment in advance, his cipher and an *alias*, Federico Mazi.²⁰⁸ From there, he sent information of quality according to what de Vera wrote in 1601, and traveled frequently between Madrid, Naples and Constantinople. In spite of his efficiency, it was not long before he met the chronic stinginess of the Habsburg viceroys; in 1603, he was not paid for two years.²⁰⁹

Another important figure worth mentioning is Carlo Cicala, the brother of the Ottoman Grand Admiral, Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha *alias* Scipione Cicala.²¹⁰ In 1561, Turgud Re'îs captured Scipione and his father, the famous corsair, Visconte Cicala. The young Scipione was then inducted into the Ottoman palace school, *Enderun* and reached, with his new Muslim name Yusuf Sinan, the highest echelons of the Ottoman administration. In 1591, after a career as a palace officer, governor, Janissary Agha,

²⁰⁶ Leslie P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), Chapters 3 and 4.

²⁰⁷ For the commencement of "the era of favourites (ca. 1580 - ca.1650)" with the appearance of the institution of royal favourite, *musahib*, and the decline of the importance of the post of Grand Vizier, see. Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", Chapter 3.

²⁰⁸ AGS, E 1346, fols. 38 (1 July 1595) and 133 (30 August 1595).

²⁰⁹ AGS, E K 1677, fol. 122 (12 May 1601); E 1349, fols. 5 (2 February 1602), 17, 45, 113 (4 January 1603) and 119 (1 February 1603).

²¹⁰ Rinieri, *Sinan Bassà Cicala*; Oliva, "Sinan-Bassà".

governor-general and vizier, he was appointed as the Ottoman Grand Admiral and thus given the opportunity to prove the naval skills that he must have acquired during his teenage years. Meanwhile, he managed to keep contact with his family; in 1598, he would anchor off Mesina and asked the Viceroy that his mother and friends be brought aboard and the result was the most unusual family reunion.²¹¹ In 1590, he called his brother Carlo Cicala to Constantinople. Carlo, a corsair in Habsburg employ like his father,²¹² asked for permission from the Habsburg authorities to whom he offered to secure the defection of his brother. After long correspondence and negotiation, Carlo was granted permission.²¹³ Having received specific instructions from both the Count of Miranda in Naples and de Vera in Venice,²¹⁴ he set sail for the Levant and settled in Chios. From there he would send several letters to the Habsburg authorities,²¹⁵ full of information which he received not only from his brother, but also from his own contacts in Constantinople.²¹⁶ Amidst the rumours that he came in order to negotiate a new truce on behalf of Philip II, he arrived in Constantinople in August 1593 and started to wait for the return of his brother with the Ottoman fleet.²¹⁷ The Venetian bailo, Matteo Zane immediately speculated that he was expecting to receive, with his brother's intervention,

²¹¹ AGS, *E* 1158, fols. 186 (1 October 1598) and 187 (15 letters between the Grand Admiral, his family and Habsburg authorities dated September 1598).

²¹² An Ottoman document (BOA, *MD*, XLIV, no. 486 (H. 989 / A.D. c. 1581)) mentions that a brother of Yusuf Sinan, *Cigalaoglu'nun kafirde olan karındaşı*, was equipping 15 galleys to come to the Levant; this brother should be none other than Carlo.

²¹³ AGS, *E* 1344 K 1675, fols. 4 (13 September 1590), 8 (8 December 1590), 44 (30 April 1591), 70 (3 July 1591), 125 (16 February 1592) and 150 (12 December 1592); *E* 1885, fol. 6 (June 1592); COSP, vol. 9, no. 198 (3 August 1593).

²¹⁴ AGS, *E* 1157, fols. 151 (26 February 1593) and fol. 152.

²¹⁵ The Viceroy of Naples praised the quality of information Carlo sent. AGS, *E* 1158, fol. 30 (30 December 1594).

²¹⁶ For instance, he received information from a Spanish slave, Francesco de Leone, whom he ransomed from Halil Pasha. Francesco had worked in the Ottoman Arsenal for 25 years. There was also a certain Musa Bey. A navy captain named Geronimo Giustiniano was carrying his letters from Chios to Naples. AGS, *E* 1158, fols. 53 (15 June 1595), 54 (29 March 1595) and 67 (21 April 1595).

²¹⁷ COSP, vol. 9, no. 197 (2 August 1593).

the throne of either Moldavia or Wallachia, both Ottoman vassals. When this proved impossible, he sought the Duchy of Naxos, following the example of Joseph Nasi, again, however, to no avail.²¹⁸ In May 1594, the new bailo Marco Venier heard that Carlos spent the night in the Arsenal, drinking, eating and “sharing the same bed” with his brother, a cliché expression often used in diplomatic correspondence to accentuate cordial relations.²¹⁹ Months later when Carlo returned to Chios, it was his turn to show his hospitality. When Yusuf Sinan anchored in Chios with the Ottoman fleet, the two spent the night together, chatting and trying to persuade each other to change allegiances.²²⁰

Carlo right away showed his ability in the trade of information and politics. His arrival was interpreted by the Venetian diplomats in Rome and Constantinople as another Habsburg attempt to secretly negotiate a truce that would rest their minds in peace without losing reputation, with the intermediation of an unofficial diplomat such as Carlo.²²¹ Even though I could not locate any proof in *AGS* to this effect, Carlo’s behaviours gave the impression that at least he was acting like a diplomat. The first thing he asked, as soon as he arrived, was how Giovanni Margliani dressed up when he was in Constantinople.²²² Moreover, in spite of his lack of appropriate credentials, he refused to walk in after the French ambassador and be seated in an inferior seat during the Venetian ambassador’s usual banquet; he did not recognize him as an ambassador as he was not aware that there was a king in France.²²³ Apart from diplomacy, it is possible that he engaged in disinformation as well. If Marco Venier’s fears and suspicions were justified,

²¹⁸ Benzoni, “Cicala, Scipione.”

²¹⁹ *COSP*, vol. 9, no. 273 (3 May 1594).

²²⁰ *AGS*, *E* 1158, fol. 26 (3 November 1594). This was one of many instances where two brothers shared intimate moments.

²²¹ *COSP*, vol. 9, nos. 150 (4 April 1593), 170 (3 May 1593), 172 (24 May 1593), 174 (9 June 1593).

²²² *COSP*, vol. 9, no. 197 (2 August 1594).

²²³ *COSP*, vol. 9, no. 273 (3 May 1594).

he was the one behind the false rumours that the Venetians were equipping a sizeable fleet in alliance with the Pope and the Habsburgs to attack the Ottomans.²²⁴ According to the French ambassador, the reason why Carlo chose to evoke in the Ottoman minds the distasteful memories of the past, that of a Christian holy alliance that challenged Ottoman supremacy in the Mediterranean, was that he was trying to induce the Ottomans to wage war against Venice. This way he would force the Pope, Venice, Florence, Savoy and other Italian states into an alliance with the Habsburgs.²²⁵ It is also obvious that such rumours would also serve his brother who, as the Ottoman Grand Admiral, had vested interest in an interventionist policy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean.

Even though his brother welcomed him with enthusiasm, his presence in Constantinople was not immune to rumours and resentment. In December 1594, he wrote from Chios that he could not at the moment pass to Constantinople, because the ambassadors of Elizabeth I and Henry IV were spying on his movements.²²⁶ No doubt that these were planting doubts in Ottoman hearts and inciting Yusuf Sinan's enemies to that effect. For instance, when Yusuf Sinan warned his captains that there were spies among their ranks, the latter furiously accused the Grand Admiral of being the actual spy for bringing his brother, on Habsburg payroll, to Constantinople: "[y]ou are the real spy, for you keep your brother here, a Christian and paid subject and spy of the King of Spain."²²⁷ In spite of such rumours on Carlo's allegiances and Ottoman pressures to convert, to which Carlo did not yield,²²⁸ Yusuf Sinan successfully incorporated his brother into the Ottoman administration. According to a Venetian document, he secured

²²⁴ COSP, vol. 9, no. 273 (3 May 1594).

²²⁵ COSP, vol. 9, no. 264 (3 April 1594).

²²⁶ AGS, E 1158, fol. 29 (1 December 1594).

²²⁷ COSP, vol. 9, no. 273 (3 May 1594).

²²⁸ AGS, E 1158, fols. 53 (15 June 1595), 55 (30 March 1595) and 62 (10 May 1595).

the governorship of the “Aegean Archipelago” (Naxos) for his brother. The same document dated 1600 also states that Carlo was recruiting agents for Ottoman employ in Messina. He arrived in Corfu with one such agent, a Genoese spy-cum-ransom agent-cum-military engineer (*professor di cose militari*) named Ambrosio Benedetti. The latter quickly copied the designs of the Venetian fortress to be remitted to Constantinople.²²⁹ As an Ottoman governor recruiting spies in Habsburg lands (apparently he informed the Habsburgs of his appointment as the Duke of Naxos), Carlo showed impressive aptitude with remaining on Habsburg payroll, in spite of a suspicious Viceroy of Sicily, the Duke of Maqueda. The latter responded to his king, who authorized Carlo’s departure for the Ottoman Empire to assume his ducal post, that he preferred this *vanissimo* Carlo away for then the Ottomans would have less news on “the affairs of this kingdom”.²³⁰ When he returned, Carlo immediately resumed negotiating the defection of his brother.²³¹ The latter died in the Ottomans’ eastern front in the first days of February 1606; nonetheless, Carlo’s relations in the Ottoman capital did not seem to disappear immediately. In 1630, he would surprisingly appear in the Ottoman capital once again, trying to have his son appointed to one of the two principalities he sought for himself almost 40 years ago, those of Wallachia and Moldavia.²³²

The Habsburgs still considered the defection of a prominent Ottoman official to the Habsburg side a possibility for which it was worth sending an agent. The aforementioned Pedro Brea, the former slave of Uluç Ali who ran away from Constantinople in 1585, appears once again in the documentation when he left Naples on April 30, 1594

²²⁹ ASV, *IS*, b. 460, 25 July 1600.

²³⁰ AGS, *E* 1159, fol. 243 (23 June 1601).

²³¹ AGS, *E* 1160, fols. 116 (9 June 1602), 139 (25 September 1602) and 140 (12 October 1602); *E* 1885, fol. 144 (15 December 1602).

²³² Benzoni, “Cicala, Scipione”.

for Venice. There he took a ship for Tripolis of Syria on June 26 with clothes to be given to Cafer Pasha, the former Governor-General of Tunisia with whom Brea had previously negotiated in 1591 in Tunis. Brea could not find the Pasha neither in Tripolis of Syria, nor in Cyprus where he passed with another Venetian merchant ship. Thanks to the help he mustered from Ottoman local officers with presents, he arrived in Constantinople where Cafer Pasha was again nowhere to be found. In the meantime, in Constantinople, he was seen by a Venetian who had been previously imprisoned in the Castelnuovo of Naples, on charges of spying on behalf of French and English ambassadors. He informed the same ambassadors of Brea's real identity. Juan Segui de Menorca quickly warned Brea who retired to Cafer Pasha's house, an action which dissuaded both ambassadors to push the matter further; they could not risk offending an Ottoman Pasha. Brea then learned that the Pasha was appointed as the Governor-General of Tripolitania of North Africa and thus not coming back to Constantinople. Luckily for him, when Murad III died in 1595, in one of these moments of what Günhan Börekçi calls "reconfiguration of power and patronage relations within the Ottoman administration, at the faction-ridden imperial court and among broader Ottoman ruling elite", ²³³ Memi Pasha was appointed in Cafer's stead. Cafer returned to Constantinople and the two started to negotiate. Brea soon realized that it was impossible to conclude such a deal with such a timid person. Nonetheless he still recognized the fact that it was still essential to assure, "with letters and *qualche gentilesa*", the friendship of such an important figure who might soon be the next Ottoman Grand Admiral. In order to communicate safely with the Viceroy of Naples, Brea also devised an interesting method. He convinced a Genovese "scribe of Christians", Phelipe Balestrin, to set sail with the Ottoman navy, run away when it was

²³³ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 143, 146, 189, 202.

ashore and go to Naples with his dispatches. Unfortunately, the Ottomans grew suspicious of him and put him in chains. Brea then had to ransom him for 1.000 ducats, surely an inflated amount that makes one wonder whether this was one of these usual ruses to defraud the authorities. Brea returned to Naples in November 1596 with Cafer's letter and presents for Philip II. He was compensated the money he spent during his two voyages to Tunis and Constantinople; nevertheless, it was decided that somebody else should go on with negotiations given the risks of sending such a renowned person for such a secret operation. Phelipe returned to Naples as well, seeking, with Brea's backing, "a *ventaja* in the galleys of the Kingdom of Naples". Brea himself, after 17 years of service, six of which in Constantinople, asked for many things: a *merced* of 40 ducats until his sons reached the age of service to the king, a special *gracia*, a reserve spot for the office *capitan de canpana de tierra de lavoro*, for his oldest son and a suitable position in the Church for his brother, a Franciscan and a doctor in theology. Madrid sent a memorial to the Viceroy, approving the petitions of Phelipe and Brea, excluding only Brea's last wish regarding his brother.²³⁴

Juan Segui de Menorca continued sending information²³⁵ and receiving most of the 440 ducats allocated to him as a salary from the Neapolitan coffers until 1595, when the new Viceroy, the Count of Olivares, refused him the 140 ducats increase assigned to him by his predecessor and paid only 300 ducats. The rest is the usual story, an agent who bombards the authorities with letters that accentuate his misery and astonishment in

²³⁴ AGS, E 1094, fols. 227, 228, 229 (20 September 1596), 234, 235, 236, 237, 238 (27 September 1596), 272 (2 November 1596) and 312 (27 November 1596).

²³⁵ AGS, E 1346, fol. 33 (24 June 1595); E K 1676, fol. 80 (3 November 1597).

seeing his services to the crown be punished with a decrease in his salary rather than rewarded with an increase, say, to 500 ducats.²³⁶

In order to avoid repetition, it is time to leave aside our protagonists with cross-cultural background, agents of Constantinople politics, brokers of information and entrepreneur spies. Their collective stories should have by now given enough clues about the operational principles of an intelligence network in the 16th-century Mediterranean as well as rules of politics and realities of factional rivalries in the Ottoman capital.

Habsburg officers by no means gave up on sending spies to Constantinople and keeping the network alive. In spite of negative factors such as the decreasing tension of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, chronic problem of payments from the Neapolitan and Sicilian coffers and the passing away of Juan de Vera in 1603 before receiving 4.000 ducats for *gastos secretos* that would finally arrive from Naples,²³⁷ Constantinople of the first two decades of the 17th century still hosted several Habsburg spies such as Jason Buytron, Antonio Paronda, his father Hieronimo Paronda, Fray Eustachio Fontana (the Catholic Bishop of Andros and the Vicar-General of the Dominicans in the Levant), Pantoleo Carrugo, Jacobo de Marin, Nicolas Renault, Dionisio Roca, Geronymo Espata (the doctor of the Ottoman Palace). These still impressed the researcher with their performance and flexibility. Yet, at one point, the researcher should restrain his enthusiasm and refrain from bombarding the reader with too much information; a crime which I may have already been culpable of. After all, few people would find this chapter not illuminating enough if the issue was to decorate it with details.

²³⁶ AGS, E K 1676, fol. 79, 80 (both 3 November 1597) and 81.

²³⁷ AGS, E 1349, fol. 140 (20 April 1603).

5.7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I attempted to present a very detailed picture of the best documented example of an operational intelligence network in the 16th-century Mediterranean and tried to answer a number of questions: how was such a network founded? Under what conditions did it operate? How efficient was it? How was it financed? How was regular and reliable communication between the network and the Habsburg authorities ensured? What were the relations between the officers of the crown and the spies on field? How did the first supervise the latter? What were the points of contention between the authorities and the network?

Moreover, the chapter offers preliminary findings that could contribute to the history of politics in the 16th-century Constantinople, a cosmopolitan center where people of different geographical, ethnic, cultural and religious background intermingled with such an ease and beyond the control of the watchful eyes of the Ottomans. The result was a chaotic plurality in which our information brokers of cross-border background operated. This aspect of the Ottoman imperial capital had long been appreciated; but, with notable exceptions,²³⁸ more in the form of an axiom than of a scientific argument supported by factual examples emanating from primary sources. The collective stories, presented in this chapter, of our agents of secret diplomacy and power brokers introduced important insights and detailed descriptive information shedding light on the day-to-day relations between men of diverse background.

Constantinople in this chapter also presents a stark contrast with Naples and Madrid. As a port city and an imperial capital that hosted a myriad of foreigners, different communities of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, it was a true center of

²³⁸ Pedani, “Veneziani a Costantinopoli”, 67-84; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*.

information towards which news, rumours and ideas diffused.²³⁹ Madrid, an administrative capital that lacked the vigor of Constantinople, was visited by fewer traveling merchants and fewer foreigners, while port cities such as Messina and Naples could not be a match for Constantinople in term of diversity of communities, religions and cultures.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, the presence of a large number of renegades in the highest echelons of Ottoman military and administration facilitated the leak of information. This was hardly the case with the Habsburg military and administration. Apart from a couple of Moors that served at the very bottom of the Habsburg military (See Chapter Six), the Ottomans could find no former Muslims who had access to important state secrets.

Obviously this meant that the Ottoman Empire was easier to penetrate than its rival, the Habsburgs. Early modern empires considered enemy access to the nerve center of their empires as a great menace to their security. Take for instance, the Venetian diligence in controlling the activities of Ottoman envoys who arrived in the Laguna. The Ottomans were no exception.²⁴¹

This particularity of Constantinople also meant, however, that the Ottomans had the convenience of relying upon this diversity and benefitting from the consequent flow of information that reached Constantinople. Even though the presence of so many different communities, religious groups and adventurers made it hard for the Ottomans to control the traffic of sensitive information, it also gave them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with developments all around the world on the one hand, and to

²³⁹ See. Gábor Ágoston, “Birodalom és információ: Konstantinápoly, mint a korai európai információs központja,” [Empire and Information: Constantinople as Center of Information Gathering in Early Modern Europe], in *Perjés Géza Emlékkönyv*, eds. Gábor Hauser and László Veszprémi (Budapest: Argumentum, 2005), 31-60.

²⁴⁰ I owe this point to Prof. McNeill.

²⁴¹ Throughout the dissertation, I gave a couple of examples whereby Ottoman officials tried to control this flow of information. I also discussed this issue in a separate article. Gürkan, “The Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence.”

easily manipulate the information that enemy agents gathered and transmitted to the their rivals on the other. That could be the reason why the Ottomans, who must have mostly been aware of the existence of many information traders such as Santa Croce in their capital, did not move against them as long as these agents did not cross the line by, for instance, engaging in sabotage. The Habsburg authorities' suspicions to this effect should be well grounded; the Ottomans manipulated their agents and perhaps even used them to start truce negotiations without having to openly ask for one.

Finally, this chapter has shown how agents of secret diplomacy did more than only gathering and manipulating information, participating in counter-intelligence or proposing clandestine operations. They participated in international diplomacy as unofficial diplomats (truce negotiations), thus reversing the direction of the often assumed relation between an ambassador and a spy. Furthermore, as summarized in the careers of prominent factota such as Bartolomeo Brutti and favourite-cum-spymasters such as Joseph Nasi and David Passi, our spies acted as agents of Ottoman factional politics in the imperial capital, whose centrality to the Ottoman system of administration was strengthened by the monetarization of Ottoman economy in the 16th century that tipped the balance-of-power between the central and provincial elites in favour of the former.²⁴² This plethora of activities that our information brokers engaged in simply blurred the line between espionage, international relations and court politics.

This is an important contribution given the fact that works on Ottoman politics have mostly been written with little or no focus on the individuals who run the politics.

²⁴² Baki Tezcan, "Searching for Osman: A Reassessment of the Deposition of Sultan Osman II (r. 1618-1622)" (Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University, 2001), Chapter 3; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapter 1.

Few works were dedicated to the Ottoman elite and the realities of factional politics, giving life to many important individuals who operated an empire which seemed perplexingly complex and immensely large to a modern mind. But given the patrimonial nature of the empire (see Chapter Six) and the small size of the 16th century Ottoman administration, these individuals were even more important than they would normally be in an empire that was relatively more centralized than its contemporary counterparts. Hand in hand with recent works of Tezcan²⁴³ and Börekçi²⁴⁴ on Ottoman factional politics, this chapter focused not only on the high-level political life between the great players of Ottoman politics, i.e., the Sultan, Pashas, courtiers and foreign ambassadors, but also on low-level daily operations of Ottoman politics in the hands of small players, i.e., information-brokers, spymasters, unofficial diplomats, translators, ransom agents, merchants, etc., in short, agents of great players of politics and diplomacy in Constantinople.

²⁴³ Tezcan, “Searching for Osman”, idem, *The Second Ottoman*.

²⁴⁴ Günhan Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites”.

CHAPTER SIX

“TONGUES” FOR THE SULTAN: THE OTTOMAN SECRET SERVICE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the Ottoman methods of gathering and processing information. It explains the particularities of the Ottoman Empire that directly affected the organization and day-to-day operations of Ottoman secret service and demonstrates how the latter differed from that of the Habsburgs. First, I make a case for the provincial nature of Ottoman espionage and accentuate the autonomy that provincial authorities enjoyed in accordance with Ottoman imperial pragmatism. Then I argue that the Ottoman Empire retained its patrimonial character by delegating government responsibilities to its grandees who established their personal intelligence networks with the financial resources granted to them by the state. I examine a couple of such personal networks, most relevant for the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, and demonstrate how factional/personal rivalries led to the manipulation of information at the hands of the factions. Next, I study the sources which provided information for the Ottoman secret service. While discussing the role of ambassadors for Ottoman secret diplomacy, I demonstrate how Ottoman abstinence from sending resident ambassadors abroad affected the efficiency of their secret service. I then describe how the Ottomans transmitted news and discuss the efficiency of Ottoman secret service.

I finally argue that particularities such as the patrimonial structure of the Empire, the provincial nature of information gathering and the underdevelopment of a written political culture, all of which can also be read as shortcomings, did not impede the Ottomans from developing an efficient intelligence gathering mechanism that matched that of their arch-enemy, the Habsburgs, if not that of the Venetians of exceptional efficiency. My argument is that the Ottomans managed to operate a functioning system which in itself was coherent and that the real difference maker was none of these, but the diplomacy. The lack of direct diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs created a disadvantage and hindered the flow of information. The main argument of the chapter then is that while both empires kept themselves informed of political and military developments in each other's capitals or certain provincial centers to the greatest extent possible given the logistical difficulties of the time, they failed to develop an awareness of each other's legal, political and economic systems as well as cultural, linguistic and religious particularities. This is in stark contrast with the example of the Venetians whose diplomatic presence in Constantinople educated the Venetian elite of things Ottoman in such a more profound way that even prompted the Venetians to use Ottoman political system as a point of reference while producing texts that discussed their own system of government.

The only systematic study of Ottoman information-gathering has recently been undertaken by Gábor Ágoston who opposed the "sweeping generalizations regarding the Ottomans' supposed lack of knowledge about Europe, their allegedly insufficient understanding of European politics and flawed foreign policy decisions vis-à-vis

European affairs [that] continually resurface in the literature”.¹ Ágoston proposes four levels of information gathering that provided the Ottomans with sufficient information to formulate a grand strategy: “1) central intelligence in Istanbul, 2) information gathering undertaken by local Ottoman authorities, especially along the Empire’s frontiers, 3) intelligence provided by Istanbul’s client or vassal states, and 4) espionage carried out by the Porte’s spies and saboteurs in foreign countries.”² This useful classification is instrumental to the organization of this chapter. However, in the end, I chose to organize it differently by first focusing on provincial information gathering and personal intelligence network at the hand of the Ottoman grandees separately and then dealing with all other sources of information, from vassal states to European ambassadors in the capital, from fifth columns in Habsburg lands, to “men of both worlds.”

This chapter expands on Ágoston’s findings, developing some and criticizing others. I agree with Ágoston on a number of issues such as the efficiency of Ottoman information gathering system in furnishing the central government with information of sufficient quality to develop a meaningful grand strategy, I differ from his model on a number of issues. First, I make the additional argument that the Ottoman secret service was not directly run by the state. It was rather based on personal networks led by rival Ottoman pashas, courtiers and power brokers, demonstrating to us the interconnectedness of information gathering and factional rivalries. Consequently, I also give more emphasis on the provincial nature of Ottoman espionage and argue that along the lines of Ottoman pragmatism,³ Constantinople allowed greater freedom to its frontier officials, especially

¹ Ágoston, “Information, Ideology, and Limits”, 78.

² Ibid., 81-2.

³ Ágoston, “A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers”, *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9/1-2 (2003): 15-31; idem, “From Frontier to Empire”. Also see. Halil İnalcık,

in military matters that required prompt reactions, including the duty of gathering information. Thirdly, this chapter provides ample information on the activities of the Ottoman spies abroad and focuses on the operational level of the Ottoman secret service in an effort to demonstrate the extent of its operations.

6.2. THE PROVINCIAL NATURE OF OTTOMAN ESPIONAGE

I have already mentioned a few times the provincial nature of early modern espionage and accentuated the autonomy that provincial authorities enjoyed. The degree of this autonomy was far greater in the case of the Ottoman Empire for two basic reasons.

First, their imperial pragmatism convinced the Ottoman elite to keep their centralizing tendencies in check when it comes to the frontier provinces. Giancarlo Casale recently accentuated “the special administrative role played by Egypt as an intermediary between the central government and its frontier to the southeast” and described how intelligence reports regarding the Indian Ocean first arrived in Cairo where they should have been archived and then sent, in a summarized form, to Constantinople.⁴ This role may be special, but not unique to the province of Egypt, one of the most important Ottoman provinces whose capital Cairo Casale took for a “second capital” of the Ottoman Empire. As a general rule, the Ottomans very often employed irregular forces, both on land (*akıncıs*) and on sea (corsairs), in “little wars” of the Balkans as well as the Mediterranean. They also kept their intervention to a minimum which created a relatively greater degree of autonomy in frontier provinces, in stark

“Ottoman Methods of Conquest”, *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 103-129; idem, “Stefan Dušan’dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’na: XV. asırda Rumeli’de hristiyan sipahiler ve menşeleri”, in *60. Doğum yılı münasebetiyle Fuad Köprülü Armağanı: Mélanges Fuad Köprülü* (İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1953), 207-248.

⁴ Casale, “An Ottoman Intelligence Report”, 186.

contrast with other territories located in the inland and away from the threat of an enemy attack.⁵

The second reason is the differences in the administrative structure of the two empires. The Habsburgs had to rule an empire that lacked physical cohesion, composed of non-adjacent territories dispersed all around the world from Peru (and later the Philippines) to Sicily and from Antwerp to Oran. Furthermore, apart from the territories that constituted the core of their empire (The Crown of Castille, enlarged with the addition of Granada, Navarre and the Americas), other territories that the Habsburgs inherited in accordance with feudal laws brought their own rules and customs which the Habsburg monarchs swore to observe. In the end, the Habsburg Empire consisted of a number of loosely related provinces which shared little in common, except for the fact that they were ruled by the same monarch.⁶ In order to overcome the problem of cohesion and distance, the Habsburgs sought to create a centralized system that would harmonize the action between these different parts of the Habsburg governing machine. This effort of centralization and harmonization to a certain extent affected the conduct of secret diplomacy; as described in Chapter Four, Madrid jealously guarded its right to say the final word in many instances.

This was not the case in the Ottoman Empire. The particular characteristics of the frontier forced Constantinople to allow greater freedom to its governors and governor-generals, at least in military matters, given the promptness with which they had to react to

⁵ I had already discussed the limitations of Ottoman power in North Africa in the 16th century. See. Gürkan, "The Center and the Frontier", 156-163.

⁶ J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain (1469-1716)* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 167-8; Henry Kamen, *Golden Age Spain* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1988), 37-49.

threats and opportunities.⁷ Moreover, it was a custom for an Ottoman official to have a large number of retainers, *kapu halkı*, in their households which mirrored that of the Ottoman Sultan. In a less monetarized economy, Ottoman officials were paid in kind instead of in cash. They were allocated the right to collect certain taxes with which they were to maintain their retainers and feed their household that was of central importance for the career of an Ottoman officer. The members of a household fulfilled certain tasks on behalf of their master who tried to secure for his *kapu* lavish positions in the military and administrative apparatus of the Empire. Along the same lines, with the funds allocated to them by the state, these governors and governor-generals established their own private armies and chancelleries. They kept the rest of the money for their personal expenses and in order to assure themselves a more important position by giving “gifts” (*pişkeş*) to their superiors.⁸ If gathering information about the enemy was one of the most important responsibilities of a governor in the frontier, then it was only natural that he employed several spies without, unlike the Habsburg officials, either the knowledge or the authorization from Constantinople which, unlike Madrid, was more interested in results, rather than the means.

It was also more convenient given the primitiveness of early modern logistics to process most of the information in the provinces immediately. The governor was in a better position to decide whether the incoming information should be acted upon in the

⁷ Still, one has to make a reservation at this point. Theoretically, frontier officials had to ask Constantinople for authorization in many instances such as appointments, making repairs, assignment of timars (excluding those of smaller value) and the like. In practice, however, Constantinople’s influence over its frontiers was limited. This limitation depended upon the particular circumstances of a given time, i.e., the character of the governor, whether it was a wartime or not, the political stability of the empire, etc. In any instance, however, the Ottomans had a few reasons to be concerned with how information was collected in the provinces as long as its officers produced concrete results.

⁸ On the widespread practice of *rüşvet*, bribery in the Ottoman Empire, see. Ahmet Mumcu, *Osmanlı Devletinde Rüşvet (Özellikle Adli Rüşvet)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları, 1969), especially pp. 86-92 with a special focus on the venality in the Ottoman Empire.

most immediate manner, or if not, whether it was important and relevant enough to be remitted to Constantinople with an express courier. First of all, the time might be of essence especially during wartime when most of the information that arrived was of military nature that deserved a prompt reply. During the War of 1570-3, the Ottomans appointed Vezir Hüseyin Pasha as the commander-in-chief (*Serdar*) in the Balkans with the task of organizing the Ottoman defenses in the absence of many governors and soldiers that were sailing with the Ottoman fleet.⁹ As the sole responsibility fell on Hüseyin Pasha under these dire circumstances, the Ottomans expected the remaining governors to communicate important information to him rather than to Constantinople; it was the Pasha who needed it in order to organize a defense in cooperation with the Ottoman Navy.¹⁰ Secondly, to send the information with an express courier cost a lot of money. Philip II himself warned his ministers to differentiate between information that deserved a prompt reply and those that did not, and therefore not to use the express courier instead of the regular ones simply because it cost too much.¹¹ In a similar fashion, the Ottomans warned their governors not to use the *menzil* system (see *infra*) for information of minor importance and their own private purposes, on the ground that such abuses were suppressing the local people.¹² One such order even precluded the governors' authority to issue *ulak hükmü*, diploma for a courier, and warned the provincial judges (*kadı*) that only those who received their *hükm* from the Governor-Generals should be given a horse.¹³ Thirdly and most importantly, this way the

⁹ BOA, *MD*, XIX, no. 547.

¹⁰ BOA, *MD*, XIX, nos. 521 (H. 2 R 980 / A.D. 11 August 1572) and 527 (H. 26 N 980 / A.D. 30 January 1573).

¹¹ AGS, *E K* 1675, fols. 66, 74 (13 July 1591) and 89 (16 August 1591).

¹² BOA, *MD*, XIX, nos. 487 (H. 24 N 980 / A.D. 28 January 1573), 488 (H. 22 N 980 / A.D. 26 January 1573) and 521 (H. 2 Ra. 980 / A.D. 12 July 1572); XLIV, no. 233, XLIX, no. 499, LI, no. 63.

¹³ BOA, *MD*, XLIV, no. 233.

information of little relevance or credibility was being filtered out, surely an important factor in increasing the quality of the decisions taken as well as in assuring the indirect participation of the experienced provincial officials in the decision-making process. In the light of the fact that Geoffrey Parker demonstrated how the excessive overflow of information paralyzed the decision-making abilities of Philip II,¹⁴ the importance of delegating to other officials could better be understood. In conclusion, by filtering out the information and distributing the responsibility within the Ottoman hierarchy, the Ottomans reacted swiftly on the one hand and took the weight off the back of the central government on the other.

This did not mean that the Ottoman central government did not wish to participate in information gathering. Provincial authorities for instance were required to dispatch the prisoners-of-war to Constantinople for their further interrogation.¹⁵ Ottoman officials personally attended these interrogations in order to find answers to specific questions that would shed light on many important details and affect the decision taken in the Imperial Council.¹⁶ The criterion here seemed to be the information that could be extracted from the prisoner. For instance, the Ottomans did not want to interrogate a Christian soldier which the Governor of Iskenderiye caught during the War of 1570-3 and sent to Constantinople,¹⁷ probably because the information that could be extracted from such people, i.e., the condition and the whereabouts of the Christian navy, would lose its importance before it reached the capital or at least before the central government

¹⁴ Parker, *Grand Strategy of Philip II*, 70-5.

¹⁵ BOA, MD, XII, no. 787; XVIII, no. 21 ; XIX, nos. 136, 490 (H. 24 N 980 / A.D. 28 January 1573) and 521 (H. 2 Ra. 980 / A.D. 11 August 1572); LVIII, no. 294 (H. 17 Ca. 993 / A.D. 17 May 1585); LXVII, no. 188 (H. Selh-i Ra. 999 / A.D. 26 March 1591).

¹⁶ ASV, SDC, fil. 5, fol. 19 (11 June 1569).

¹⁷ BOA, MD, XIX, no. 521 (H. 2 R 980 / A.D. 11 August 1572).

extracted and processed the information and sent its decision to the *Serdar* Hüseyin Pasha to whom the prisoner should have been sent in the first place. In a similar example, Şaban Re'is caught five enemy sailors; however, since none of them was an “informed infidel”, he sent their “letters”, instead of themselves.¹⁸

In the end though, Constantinople retained its central position as a supervisor. The center used the information which the provincial authorities deemed worthy enough to relate in a number of ways. An important portion of the Ottoman MD registers were responses to the information sent from the provinces, informing them of the arrival of the information (generally formulated as, “*her ne demiş isen ma'lum oldu*” or “*ma'lum-ı şerifim olmuştur*”) and ordering to go on gathering information on the one hand and making necessary preparations on the other.¹⁹ Sometimes, these orders mentioned a specific topic to be informed of or a mission to be assigned to a spy, mostly concerning the military preparations on the other side of the frontier.²⁰ The Ottomans occasionally sent *chauses* that visited local authorities to gather information. On the eve of the Malta expedition and a new war between the Ottomans and the Austrians, an order was sent, for

¹⁸ “... içlerinde çendan haber bilür kafir bulunmamağın gönderülmediğın ve mektubların gönderdiğın...”, BOA, MD, XII, no. 403 (H. 16 Za. 978 / A.D. 11 April 1571).

¹⁹ BOA, MD, III, nos. 518, 878 (H. 27 Ca. 967 / A.D. 24 February 1560) and 1208 (H.11 N 967 / A.D. 6 June 1560); XII, no. 938 (H. 7 Ra. 979 / A.D. 29 July 1571); XIV, nos. 356 (H. 14 Ra. 978 / A.D. 16 August 1570) and 786 (H. R 978 / A.D. September 1570); XVI, no. 410 (H. 27 Z 979 / A.D. 10 May 1572); XVIII, no. 109 (H. 22 N 979 / A.D. 7 February 1572); XIX, no. 8 (H. 5 M 980 / A.D. 17 May 1572); XXVII, no. 486 (H. 19 L 983 / A.D. 21 January 1576); XXVIII, nos. 245 (H. 25 B 984 / A.D. 18 October 1576), 801 (H. 8 Ş 984 / A.D. 30 October 1576) and 520 (25 B 984 / A.D. 18 October 1576); XXX, nos. 513 (H. 13 Ra. 985 / A.D. 31 May 1577), 610 (H. 28 Ra. 985 / A.D. 15 June 1577) and 611; XXXI, no. 76 (H. 28 R 985 / A.D. 15 July 1577); LXI, no. 953 (H. 12 Za. 988 / A.D. 19 December 1580); LXIX, no. 65 (H. 991 / A.D. 1583), LXI, no. 46 (H. 9 B 994 / A.D. 2 October 1576).

²⁰ TSMA, *Evrak* 12321, no. 434; Halil Sahillioğlu, ed., *Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi H. 951-952 Tarihli ve E 12321 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* (İstanbul, IRCICA, 2002); BOA, MD, VI, no. 1134 (H. 13 L 972 / A.D. 14 May 1565); VII, no. 630 (H. 975-6 / A.D. 1567-9); XII, no. 851 (H. 2 R 979 / A.D. 23 August 1571); XVI, nos. 192 (H. 10 Za. 979 / A.D. 25 March 1572), 411 (H. 27 Z 989 / A.D. 22 January 1582) and 636 (H. 21 C 979 / A.D. 9 November 1571); XIX, nos. 268 (H. 3 S 980 / A.D. 14 June 1572) and 300; XLVII, nos. 165 and 166 (both H. 24 Ra. 990 / A.D. 18 April 1582); LX, nos. 273 (H. 17 Z 993 / A.D. 9 December 1585), 570, 571 (both H. 8 Ca. 994 / A.D. 27 April 1586); MZD, V, no. 27 (H. 24 L 999 / A.D. 14 August 1591).

instance, to all the governors, judges and castle commanders that they should present the incoming chaus with the results of their mission of gathering information on whereabouts of the enemy navy.²¹ That the Ottomans delegated the responsibility of gathering information to local authorities and were little concerned with the means by which this information was gathered is evident from the fact that the person to be sent out to gather information was almost always named as *casus*, spy, without any specific instructions as to his identity, quality, personality or profession, the only adjective used being *yarar*, useful or competent.²² As the final hub of important information, Constantinople also coordinated action among its officials not only by harmonizing their military action with orders sent from the center, but also by updating each of them of the recently arrived information.²³ Furthermore, by cross-checking the information it received from less reliable sources such as vassal states, it sought to diversify its sources and increased the quality of information.²⁴ Moreover, it supervised, to the greatest extent possible given the distance, the activities of its provincial authorities in the frontiers; the harsh tone of the center when these authorities failed to fulfill their military duties because they were not

²¹ BOA, MD, VI, no. 1287 (H. 20 Za. 972 / A.D. 19 June 1565).

²² TSMA, *Evrak* 12321, no. 215; Sahillioğlu, *Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi*; BOA, MD, XVI, no. 410 (H. 27 Z 979 / A.D. 10 May 1572); XIX, nos. 8 (H. 5 M 980 / A.D. 17 May 1572) and 194 (H. 29 M 980 / A.D. 10 June 1572); MZD, V, no. 27 (H. 24 L 999 / A.D. 14 August 1591); XXVIII, nos. 520 (H. 25 B 984 / A.D. 18 October 1576) and 801 (H. 8 Ş 984 / A.D. 30 October 1576); XLII, no. 953 (H. 12 Za. 988 / A.D. 19 December 1580); XLIX, no. 65 (H. 991 / A.D. 1583); LXIII, nos. 48 (H. 15 R 996 / A.D. 13 March 1588) and 56 (H. 19 R 996 / A.D. 17 March 1588). The only exception I could find is LVII, no. 486 (H. 19 L 983 / A.D. 21 January 1576) which orders the dispatch of a *muktedir levent re'isi*, an able corsair to gather information from the enemy.

²³ BOA, MD, III, no. 1265 (H. 23 N 967 / A.D. 18 June 1560); VII, no. 202 (H. 975-6 / A.D. 1567-9); X, nos. 166 (H. 21 Ş 978 / A.D. 18 March 1571) and 198; XII, no. 1194 (H. 24 Za. 979 / A.D. 8 April 1572); XIV, nos. 343 (H. 20 S 978 / A.D. 24 July 1570) and 463 (H. 12 Ra. 978 / A.D. 14 August 1570); XVI, nos. 109 (H. 7 B 979 / A.D. 25 November 1571) and 649 (H. 9 B 979 / A.D. 27 November 1571); XIX, nos. 268 (H. 3 S 980 / A.D. 14 June 1572) and 300; XLIX, no. 96; LVIII, no. 518 (H. 8 Ş 993 / A.D. 4 August 1585). LX, no. 650 (H. 5 C 994 / A.D. 24 May 1586).

²⁴ BOA, MD, III, no. 1256 (H. 23 N 967 / A.D. 18 June 1560); XIX, nos. 710 and 711. (both H. 980/A.D. 1572).

informed of enemy's intentions,²⁵ sent incomplete information to Constantinople²⁶ or failed to inform at all²⁷ accentuates the diligence of the Ottoman center.

The local authorities that were responsible with gathering information were not only governor-generals (*beylerbeyi*), governors (*sancakbeyi*) and provincial judges (*kadı*),²⁸ but also other figures of lesser rank such as castle commanders (*dizdar*),²⁹ regiment commanders (*alaybeyi*),³⁰ and the commander of corsair captains in a port such as the *Avlonya Azebleri Ağası* and *Gönüllü Levend Re'isleri Kapudanı*.³¹ Local military forces penetrated deep into the enemy territory on reconnaissance missions, bringing back captives for interrogation, which in Ottoman was referred to as *dil*, “the tongue”. In 1572, the governor of Ohri sent Ibrahim and Pervane to *Darü'l-Harb* (the Abode of War) to bring back *dils* and *esirs* (slaves).³² For instance, in 1573, a certain Şahin Ağa among the *Faris Ağaları* of İstolni-Belgrad and Sefer, a timariot cavalry (*tımarlı sipahi*) of 8.000 *akçes*, returned from their mission of *dil almak* (literally “taking a tongue”, cf. in Spanish “*tomar lengua*”, i.e., capturing captives that would give information) after they killed a good number of enemy soldiers they encountered on their route.³³ These reconnaissance missions, as seen above, needed not be undertaken by large forces. The governor of Akkirman soonafter sent a expeditionary force led by his lieutenant, *kethüda*, Süleyman who defeated the enemy and captured eight enemy soldiers, keeping three to be

²⁵ BOA, MD, X, nos. 209 (H. 27 N 978 / A.D. 16 February 1571) and 274; XII, no. 1021 (H. 29 L 979 / A.D. 14 March 1572); LI, no. 246 (H. 983 / A.D. 1585).

²⁶ BOA, MD, VI, no. 1288 (H. 20 Za. 972 / A.D. 19 June 1565).

²⁷ BOA, MD, IX, no. 246 (H. 977-8 / A.D. 1569-70); XIV, nos. 781 (H. R 978 / A.D. September 1570) and 816 (H. Selh-i Ca. 978 / A.D. 30 October 1570).

²⁸ BOA, MD, VI, no. 1287 and 1288 (both 20 Za. 972 / A.D. 19 June 1565).

²⁹ BOA, MD, VI, no. 1287 and 1288 (both 20 Za. 972 / A.D. 19 June 1565).

³⁰ BOA, MD, VI, no. 1288 (20 Za. 972 / A.D. 19 June 1565).

³¹ BOA, MD, XII, nos. 403 (H.16 Za. 978 / A.D. 13 April 1571), 532 (H. Gurre-yi S 979 / A.D. 24 June 1571) and 787.

³² BOA, MD, XIX, no. 119 (H. 21 M 980 / A.D. 2 June 1572).

³³ “...*dil almak için irsal olunub küffara rastgeldükde yarar cebelü kafır yıkub baş kesüb yoldaşlık itmişdür...*” BOA, MD, XXV, no. 16 (H. 13 Ş 981 / A.D. 8 December 1573).

interrogated and killing five.³⁴ Some reconnaissance missions preceeded a larger expeditionary force. Preparing for a punitive raid attack to the “Venetian possession of Styria” with a large force including the Crimean cavalry, the Ottomans ordered the governors of Kilis and Hersek to dispatch spies to learn the conditions of the roads and passes, enemy’s military forces as well as whether the enemy was informed of the incoming expedition or not.³⁵ These missions were extremely important for those who wanted to be re-appointed to a lucrative position or getting a promotion. The afore mentioned Şahin Ağa, for instance, received a promotion and a new tımar.³⁶ Furthermore, Mustafa Bey, dismissed from a tımar in Semendire and was waiting for his re-location to Temeşvar crossed the border and came back with *dil*, his reward being a promotion.³⁷ Similarly, Mehmed, dismissed from a tımar in the province of Silistre, was sent by the governor to bring *dil*. When he managed to bring back a soldier from the enemy regiment, with his arms and shield intact, he received, with governor’s recommendation, a promotion as well.³⁸

In a similar vein, corsairs in Ottoman employ were frequently sent on reconnaissance missions which constituted an important part of their responsibility to the state, evident from their complaints to Sokollu that their ships, which were sailing on an information-gathering mission and not of corsary, were sunk by the Venetian ships. This responsibility seemed to have been recognized even by the Venetians; when Sokollu took

³⁴ BOA, MD, XXVIII, no. 315 (17 N 981 / A.D. 11 January 1574).

³⁵ “...vilayet-i mezbureye yarar ve mu'temedun-aleh casuslar gönderüb vilayet-i mezbure keferesinin ahval ü etvarın tetebbu' idüb garet olacaklarını haber almışlar mıdır yohsa gafler üzre midür yat u yarağı ve atlı askeri var mıdır nicedür tamam mertebe vukuf tahsil eyleyüb...”, BOA, MD, XIX, no. 194 (H. 29 M 980 / A.D. 10 June 1572) and 201.

³⁶ BOA, MD, XXVIII, no. 17 (H. 3 Ş 981 / A.D. 28 November 1574).

³⁷ BOA, MD, XXVIII, no. 1846 (H. 9 Ra. 982 / A.D. 28 June 1574).

³⁸ “...düşman taburundan cebeli ve cevşenli bir dil tutub...”, BOA, MD, XXVIII, no. 2193 (H. 20 R 982 / A.D. 8 August 1574).

the issue with the bailo, he denied Venetian responsibility rather than simply accusing them of being corsairs.³⁹ Some of these corsairs were directly employed by the center in the Navy and Arsenal. In 1562, the rumour was that the Sultan sent Uluç Ali (*Beciali*) with three galiots to the Western Mediterranean, to “use diligence in learning whether his Catholic Majesty” was putting a fleet together or not.⁴⁰ In 1589, a *hassa re’is*, Yusuf received a five-*akçe terakki* because he set sail from Navarino, caught a *yarar dil* from the enemy and returned to Tripolis.⁴¹ Some, however, were operating in the provinces, situated generally in strategic ports in the Adriatic and acting under the protection of local governors.⁴² In 1566, the Venetians confessed that these corsairs, who had recently taken one of their ships with the letters it carried, were great menaces.⁴³ In 1572, the governor of İlbasan sent two corsairs, Memi and Şaban to gather *dil*.⁴⁴ Another corsair in Ottoman employ (*gönüllü re’is*) named Cafer captured one of Don Juan’s galiots, carrying two recently captured Ottoman *dils* to the Habsburg admiral.⁴⁵ In 1576, two Ottoman corsair ships came to the Calabrian waters to take tongue, “*tomar lengua*”.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the captain of the corsairs that operated in the Adriatic (with the dual office of the *Avlonya Azebleri Ağası* and *Gönüllü Levend Re’isleri Kapudanı*), named Kara Hoca, played an important role during the War of 1570-3 for the Ottoman secret service by gathering

³⁹ ASV, *SDC*, fil. 2, fol. 24 (28 May 1567).

⁴⁰ AGS, *E* 1052, fol. 27.

⁴¹ BOA, *MD*, LXV, no. 96 (H. 24 L 997 / A.D. 5 September 1589).

⁴² İdris Bostan, *Adriyatik’te Korsanlık: Osmanlılar, Uskoklar, Venedikliler, 1575-1620* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2009), 36-56.

⁴³ ASV, *SenDelC*, reg. 3, cc. 51v (29 August 1566).

⁴⁴ BOA, *MD*, no. XIX, no. 87 (H. 28 S 980 / A.D. 9 July 1572).

⁴⁵ BOA, *MD*, XXV, no. 2686 (H. 26 C 982 / A.D. 12 October 1574).

⁴⁶ AGS, *E* 1070, fol. 77.

information of crucial importance.⁴⁷ The employment of corsairs, however, was a double edged sword for the local authorities and there was a fine line between a legitimate corsair and a lawless pirate. Ottoman documentation is full of examples that demonstrate the tensions between these corsairs and Ottoman authorities.⁴⁸ A good example where corsary, piracy and espionage were intertwined was the case of Şaban, Yusuf and Köse Mustafa, Barbarossa's three men who were arrested by the Governor of Lepanto. Constantinople ordered the release of these prisoners who went on an expedition and returned with *yarar diller*.⁴⁹ Needless to say, that the corsairs' reconnaissance missions were even more important in the Western Mediterranean, where the prospects of gathering information by other means were meager for the Ottomans.⁵⁰ Also, their expertise on enemy shores, even recognized by competent Habsburg naval commanders such as Gianandrea Doria,⁵¹ was an important asset for the Ottomans.

Ottoman governor-generals in North Africa enjoyed an even greater autonomy than the governor-generals in the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier in the Balkans or the Ottoman-Safavid frontier in Eastern Anatolia. Therefore, their role for the Ottomans' Mediterranean policy was more important. Similarly to the Indian Ocean, the Western Mediterranean remained out of the reach of Constantinople which therefore had to delegate parts of its authority to these provincial authorities. Without French or North African bases, the traditional Ottoman area of naval operation was limited to the Eastern

⁴⁷ BOA, MD, XII, nos. 403 (H.16 Za. 978 / A.D. 13 April 1571), 532 (H. Gurre-yi S 979 / A.D. 24 June 1571) and 787; XIV, no. 469 (H. 12 Ra. 978 / A.D. 14 August 1571); ASV, SDC, fil. 5, fol. 19 (11 June 1569).

⁴⁸ Gürkan, "The Center and the Frontier", 151-5.

⁴⁹ TSMA, Evrak 12321, no. 380; Sahillioğlu, *Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi*.

⁵⁰ BOA, MD, III, no. 139; XIV, no. 539 (H. 27 R 978 / A.D. 28 September 1570); XVI, no. 640 (H. 23 Ca. 979 / A.D. 13 October 1571); XIX, nos. 629 (H. 18 R 980 / A.D. 8 September 1571), 631 (H. 9 R 980 / A.D. 30 August 1571) and 668.

⁵¹ AGS, E 1541, fol. 159 (20 November 1591).

Mediterranean until the Strait of Otranto in the North and the Strait of Sicily in the South. This increased the importance of information sent by the provincial administrations of North Africa. The three provinces in the region, Algeria (est. 1519), Tripolitania (est. 1551) and Tunisia (est. 1534-5, 1569-73, 1574) retained their relative autonomy, each to a varying degree, given the realities of the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry in the Mediterranean and the logistical difficulties caused by the communication capabilities and the military technology of the time.⁵² Furthermore, as these were “corsair” provinces, information regularly flowed to their lively port cities which hosted not only a good number of corsair and merchant ships that roamed the Mediterranean and came back with fresh news, but also slaves, merchants, ransom-agents and all sorts of adventurers from all parts of the Western Mediterranean. These made these port cities information markets. In short, the unique position of as well as the autonomy granted to these provinces of the “Forgotten Frontier”⁵³ of North Africa, imposed upon the provincial authorities (not only the governor-generals) several diplomatic and military tasks. Local authorities did not only play a decisive role in the conduct of the Ottoman-French, Ottoman-Moroccan and Ottoman-Morisco relations, but also built their own separate information gathering networks in areas outside the Ottoman influence.

This was a process that Constantinople, conscious of its limits, actively supported, demonstrating once again the pragmatism Ágoston accentuated.⁵⁴ The Ottomans repeatedly ordered their governor-generals to develop reliable information-gathering

⁵² Gürkan, “Osmanlı-Habsburg Rekabeti”.

⁵³ Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*.

⁵⁴ Gábor Ágoston, “A Flexible Empire”; idem, “From Frontier Principality to Empire”.

networks.⁵⁵ The threatening tone of the Ottoman documents when Constantinople did not receive information proves that the Ottomans highly appreciated the news that arrived from North Africa.⁵⁶ Apart from the indirect information gathering, thanks to the advantages of geographical proximity to and close trade relations with Western Europe, these governor-generals took the initiative by sending spies, mostly chosen from the renegades, to Habsburg lands,⁵⁷ dispatching corsair ships on reconnaissance missions,⁵⁸ entering into secret negotiations with Habsburg soldiers,⁵⁹ and interrogating the slaves that arrived after each year's plunder, *razzia*.⁶⁰ This regular flow of information kept Constantinople up-to-date about current political events in the Western Mediterranean on the one hand,⁶¹ and about Habsburg military preparations and whereabouts of their navy on the other.⁶² North African provinces' contribution did not only give the Ottomans time

⁵⁵ For orders sent to the governor-general of Algeria, BOA, *MD*, VI, nos. 561 (H. 29 Ca. 972 / A.D. 2 January 1565), 904 (H. 22 Ş 972 / A.D. 25 March 1565); XLIV, no. 287 (H. c. 23 M 991 / A.D. 16 February 1583), to the Governor-General of Tripolitania, VII, nos. 653 (H. 6 B 975 / A.D. 6 June 1568), 1060 (H. c.14-16 N 975 / A.D. 13-15 March 1568), 1472 (H. 25 Z 975 / A.D. 22 May 1568).

⁵⁶ See, for instance, the order sent to the governor-general of Algeria, BOA, *MD*, XLIV, no. 297 (H. c. 28 M 991 / A.D. 21 February 1583).

⁵⁷ AGS, *E* 1127, fols. 103-4 records a renegade spy sent by Turgud, Constantino de Candia alias Muhammed. Having been interrogated, he gave the names of other spies sent by other corsairs, such as a Greek named Juan employed by Memi Re'is and a Genoese employed by Ali Re'is. See also *E* 1070, fol. 77. According to *E* 1119, fols. 95-2^o (14 December 1547), Turgud's nephew, who was captured by the Habsburgs in Messina, was travelling in Sicily with such a familiarity that it gave the impression that he had agents in the island that provided him with information regularly.

⁵⁸ *Gazavât*, fols. 280b-281a and 296b. In 1558, the future's famous *Kapudan-ı Derya*, Uluç Ali participated in one of these reconnaissance-cum-corsary missions. AGS, *E* 1124, fol. 135 (25 August 1558).

⁵⁹ Canosa and Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo*, 73.

⁶⁰ According to the *Gazavât*, Hayreddin made a habit of interrogating the leading captives as soon as they arrived in Algiers. "*Bellü başlu söz anlar kafir var ise huzurına getirüb kafir yakası havadislerinden dahi ne var ise su'al idüp her şeyden haberdar olurdu*", *Gazavât*, fols. 233b-235a, also see fol. 238b.

⁶¹ For information Murad Re'is extracted from the Christians he captured in Sicilian waters (*Cicilye canibi*) and sent to Algiers, to be transmitted to Istanbul, regarding the naval struggle between Spanish, English and Lutheran (i.e., Calvinist, the Dutch rebels) ships, see BOA, *MD*, XXIII, no. 645 (H. 22 Z 980 / A.D. 25 August 1573). The responsibility to inform the centre of the events in Morocco, *Fas* and *Marakeş* fell upon the shoulders of the Governor-General of Algeria. *MD*, XXX, nos. 348 and 424.

⁶² BOA, *MD*, VII, nos. 653 (H. 6 B 975), 1060 and 1472; XIX, no. 255 (H. 3 Ra. 980); XXVII, no. 555 (H. 2 Za. 983); LV, no. 283 (H. 22 S 993).

to react to the dangers and opportunities every year,⁶³ but also shaped the Ottoman policy by providing a detailed picture of European and North African politics.

Given the dearth of precious metals and the agricultural nature of Ottoman economy, the Ottomans had to develop a complex system of taxation in order to make the most of their resources which they could not channel to the center and had to collect *in situ*. As a part of this system of taxation, they delegated certain duties to its tax-paying subjects, *re'aya*, in exchange for exemption from certain taxes.⁶⁴ In order to maintain and supervise strategic routes and locations, nearby villages undertook certain responsibilities, such as supervising the roads and passes (*derbendci*), repairing bridges (*köprücü*) and aqueducts (*suyolcu*), transporting people with boats (*gemici*), maintaining postal stations (*menzilci*). I encountered a *MD* register that refers to a village which seems to be entrusted with the task of informing the castle whenever pirates, corsairs and smugglers approached the port.⁶⁵ The name of the village makes one think that the Ottomans may have entrusted this strategically located *dilci demekle ma'ruf karye* with the duty of informing the authorities of possible threats in exchange for tax exemptions. We also know that both the Ottomans and the Austrians forced the village people that

⁶³ BOA, *MD*, VI, no. 904 (H. 22 S 972) states that the reason why Constantinople sent the navy to the Western Mediterranean (the navy would eventually besiege Malta) was because the Governor-General of Algeria informed Constantinople of immense Habsburg naval preparations.

⁶⁴ “*cemi avarız-ı divaniyye'den, tekalif-i örfiyye'den, ulakdan sekbandan, cerehordan, naibden ve salgundan muaf ve müselleme*”. Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı*, 2nd edition (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1990), 15.

⁶⁵ “*Gelibolu kadısına hüküm ki: Hala taht-ı kazanda dilci demekle ma'ruf karye, hisardan aşağı vakı' olan limanı kadimden bekleyügelüb, anun gibi gemi gördüklerinde gelüp hisara haber viregelmişler iken şimdiki halde bekletmeyüb haber vermedikleri sebebi ile ba'zı tereke gemilerin ele geçüb ve küffar gemileri ol taraflara varup zarar ü ziyan eyledikleri ilam olundu. İmdi buyurdum ki: Vusul buldukda, bu hususı onat vech ile teftiş eyleyüb göresin. Fi'l-vakı' karye-i mezbure halkı zikr olunan limanı kadimden bekleyegelüb haber vermişler midir, nicedür, bekleyegelmişler ise ne mukabelede bekleyegelmişlerdir, ma'akabet eyle midir, yohsa şartlarımız vardır, aslı nedir şimdiye dek bekleyüb haber viregelmişler iken hala beklememeğe sebeb nidür? Aslı ile ma'lum idinüb vuku' üzere yazub südde-i sa'adetime bildirsin.*” BOA, *MD*, XVIII, no. 217 (H. 3 Ş 979 / A.D. 20 December 1571). Transliteration from: Kazım Kürşat Yücel, “18 numaralı Mühimme Defteri”, (M.A. Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1996), no page number.

lived in the contested territories of the Ottoman-Austrian frontier to give information about the other side.⁶⁶

Reiterating the provincial nature of the Ottoman espionage once again, we should now concentrate on Constantinople. The Ottoman officials in the center established their own intelligence networks as well, again as a part of their household and operating in tandem with their official responsibilities. These are the subject of the next sub-chapter.

6.3. AN EMPIRE OF PATRIMONIES: DELEGATING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE

One important feature that separated the Ottoman Empire from their European counterparts was that it retained its patrimonial character by delegating certain governmental functions to its grantees who used the financial resources that the central government assigned to them. Therefore, the allocated amount was a share from the Treasury, rather than a wage, and this share was given in exchange for the services that the grantee was supposed to undertake. This was why the central government created a habit of confiscating the income that the deceased grantees left. Given that they were no longer in state service, and therefore unable to undertake the governmental functions that had been assigned to them, it was time for their share of the state money to return to Treasury to be assigned to other grantees who were still sharing the burden of government by undertaking these functions. The Ottomans saw no contradiction in confiscating⁶⁷ the riches that these grantees accumulated using the authority bestowed

⁶⁶ Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. I, 223.

⁶⁷ On the Ottoman practice of confiscation, *müsadere*, see. C. E. Bosworth, "Musâdara", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed. Vol. VII, 652. Klaus Röhrborn, "Konfiskation und intermediäre Gewalten im Osmanischen Reich" *Der Islam* 55 (1978): 345-51; Pál Fodor, *Vállalkozásra kényszerítve: az oszmán pénzügyigazgatás és hatalmi elit változásai a 16 - 17. század fordulóján* (Budapest: História MTA Történettudományi Intézete [u.a.], 2006), 125-144.

upon them by the state in whose stead they acted. There were times when these confiscations extended even to figures not directly related to the Ottoman military and administrative structure, such as the Greek banker Michel Cantecuzenus or even better several *vakıfs* that lost their land during Mehmed II's land reform. Furthermore, the state demanded at times the financial participation of its officers in military expenditures. Given that the Ottoman elite, the '*askeri*' class, did not pay taxes, it was a form of securing their contribution. For instance, when the Treasury could not afford to build a fleet in 1590, the Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha came up with a solution that Selim II had resorted to during the War of 1570-1573. He ordered the high level Ottoman officials in Constantinople and the provinces to arm, with their private funds, a certain number of galleys for the state. This method once again demonstrates to us that the Ottoman State considered its officers' personal riches belonging to itself.⁶⁸ As was the case with the Ottoman land system, what was granted to these officers was just the right of the usufruct, *usus fructus*, rather than the full possession, *abusus*, of the money and the property that they accumulated by using the privileges their offices provided them, totaling an amount that exceeded far beyond the revenues allocated to the office itself.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Sinan's original plan was to directly tax these provincial governors. When this plan was opposed, however, he concealed the fact that he was indirectly taxing the tax-exempt '*askeri*' class and came up with a new plan. According to this, the taxes in arrears, unpaid by tax collectors and inspectors for nine years, would be reserved for the reconstruction of the Navy while the provincial authorities responsible for collecting these taxes would pay in advance, given the urgency with which the fleet had to be put together, and then collect the money from the taxes. Given that these taxes were hard to be collected (they were "taxes in arrears" for a good reason: A hundred or so tax collectors who defaulted on their debts were in jail at the time), Sinan Pasha basically followed the example of Selim II and used the private wealth of the Ottoman elite for state business, proving the blurriness of the line between state coffers and those of its officers. Fodor, "Between Two Continental Wars", 179.

⁶⁹ Baki Tezcan gives a couple of interesting examples of Ottoman elites who left behind huge fortunes that they could only have amassed by using their political power and personal connections. For Rüstem and Semiz Ali Pashas see. Tezcan, "Searching for Osman", 147-8. One needed be neither a Pasha, nor a high level officer to produce extra income from his personal connections; for the example of Ali Efendi, the newly appointed judge of Mecca, see. Ibid., 111-2.

One of the many functions that the Ottoman grandees had to undertake on behalf of the state was espionage. The responsibility of building up intelligence networks and recruiting spies mostly fell on them, rather than the central government, quite contrary to the Venetian and Habsburg examples where spies were employed and supervised by the bureaucracy. The Sultan and the Ottoman grandees employed, as a part of their household, several spies whom they generally reimbursed from the financial resources at their disposal. This plurality of employers behind Ottoman spies did not escape the attention of the contemporaries either. The Habsburg ambassador in Venice, Lope de Soria, for instance, detected an Ottoman spy, *sea del Turco o de Abrayn Bassa o del Gritti*.⁷⁰ This created the awkward situation whereby agents we presume to be in Ottoman service may serve not the abstract concept of the state interest, but rather those of their employers who, even though part of the Ottoman elite, may have different sets of preferences than the state, especially given that their careers depended on the presents and the bribes they were supposed to distribute to their superiors, including the Sultan.

The following examples would illustrate my point better: Salomon Ashkenazi, a close advisor to the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu, for instance, smuggled in his shoes the letters that the Venetian bailo was sending to Venice during the War of 1570-3. Ashkenazi was sending these letters to Crete among his own correspondence with a ship that he chartered for that purpose. When one day his courier died in the Duchy of Naxos, his rival Joseph Nasi's men sequestered the letters and sent them to their boss. Nasi immediately went to the Sultan and had Ashkenazi imprisoned. The latter was almost

⁷⁰ AGS, E 1310, fol. 155 (7 August 1534).

executed if not for his master Sokollu who intervened and saved his life.⁷¹ Shortly after when he was arrested for the second time, Sokollu would save him once again. Now, who did Ashkenazi work for? Definitely, not the Ottoman Empire to which he betrayed. He could be furthering his own interests, given his close relations with Venice⁷² in whose territory he was born, of whose bailo he was the physician and whose favours he needed because of his extensive commercial ventures.⁷³ Even if Ashkenazi served Venice for his own private reasons; what about when he was helping the Habsburg envoy Margliani during the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations; did he have similar connections in Naples or Spain as well? Hardly. Therefore, it could alternatively be argued that by helping the Venetian bailo, Ashkenazi was serving, at least partly, the interests of his master as well. Even though his betrayal was undisputed, the Ottoman Grand Vizier saved this Jewish physician from an Ottoman prison twice and did not heed to Uluç Ali's advice to hang him.⁷⁴ What could this mean other than that the Pasha endorsed his actions and that everybody was aware of the fact that Sokollu himself was in a double game, walking a fine line between furthering his own interest (the humiliation of his rivals Nasi, Piyale and Mustafa who started the War of Cyprus that Sokollu opposed as well as handsome Venetian bribes he might expect) and proving his worth to the state (negotiating a preferable treaty). Would the same Grand Vizier not order Ashkenazi to bribe his influential colleague Ahmed Pasha so that he had the order to imprison the bailo

⁷¹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*; idem, "Salomone Ashkenazi: mercante e armatore", in *Il mondo ebraico: gli ebrei tra Italia nord-orientale e impero asburgico dal medioevo all'età contemporanea*, ed. Giacomo Todeschini and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini (Pordenone : Studio tesi, 1991), 116.

⁷² Born in Udine, he took, or at least pretended to have taken, pride in being a Venetian citizen. He was originally a client of the Venetian bailo who was the very person who first introduced him to Sokollu. His reputation in Venice was so much that he could intervene on behalf of the Jewish community in Venice that was banished from the city by the authorities.

⁷³ A Venetian document (ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 12, cc. 50r (4 October 1580)) reads: "As you know that the Doctor [i.e., Ashkenazi] makes the profession of serving our Signoria."

⁷⁴ ASV, SDC, fil. A7-6E, fols. 14-7; Sola, *Uchali*, 206.

abrogated?⁷⁵ We should finally add that among the things Ashkenazi, authorized by Sokollu, negotiated with the bailo towards the finalization of a peace treaty was a lump sum payment to be made to his master in exchange for his good-will towards the Republic, separate from the compensation money destined for the Ottoman state.⁷⁶

Similarly in 1567, Joseph Nasi informed the Venetian bailo that the Ottomans were planning an attack on Cyprus.⁷⁷ It seems surprising at first glance that this information came from the very person whom the Venetians would curse three years later as their greatest enemy and the mastermind behind the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus and by extension the consequent War of 1570-3. He would even be held responsible for the fire in the Venetian Arsenal in 1569. The explanation is simple however: by betraying this information, Nasi, who had troubles with the French crown at the moment over an unpaid loan, was basically trying to better his relations with Venice for his own commercial purposes.⁷⁸ In a more daring way, the Ottoman Grand Admiral Uluç Ali was manipulating the Sultan with false information in 1582, in order to persuade him to send the navy to the West. One of his agents, Agustin Manuele, who worked for the Habsburgs as well and who was saved from possible execution with the intervention of Uluç Ali, spread the (false) rumour that the Habsburgs were preparing a great armada.⁷⁹

These were by no means isolated incidents. It was a part of the Ottoman political culture to accept bribes from foreign ambassadors; a quick look at the *Parti Secrete* and *Dispacci* in ASV as well as several printed contemporary works penned by these

⁷⁵ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 80.

⁷⁶ ASV, SDC, fil. A7-6E, 29 January 1572, m.v.; Romano Canosa, *Lepanto: Storia della "Lega Santa" contro i Turchi* (Roma: Sapere, 2000), 256.

⁷⁷ ASV, SDC, fil. 2, fol. 137 (10 July 1567).

⁷⁸ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 58-9.

⁷⁹ AGS, E 1152, fol. 40 (6 April 1582). ASV, CCX-LettAmb, b. 6, fols. 67-69 (3 February 1581, m.v.).

ambassadors would demonstrate to us the extent to which these diplomats were defending the interests of their masters by bribes. Ranging from *ulaks* who gave away the secrets they carried,⁸⁰ to chausers who turned a blind eye to foreign ambassadors' very actions which they were assigned to prevent,⁸¹ from the *ağas* of the Palace who sold information to foreign ambassadors,⁸² to imperial dragomans who related the details of discussions in the *Divan*⁸³ and mistranslated documents in favour of their benefactors,⁸⁴ officers from all ranks were engaged in secret diplomacy in the corruption-ridden Ottoman capital. A handsome present would make sure that an Ottoman pasha advocated for a given state's interests in the *Divan* to the greatest extent possible, walking a similar fine line as Sokollu. The deal for sure included the exchange of information; from bottom to the top, everybody in the Ottoman administration sold information, including the members of the imperial family. The Jewish *kira* of the Sultan's wife, Safiye, for instance, was providing the Austrian ambassador with information regarding the Ottoman plans against Hungary at such a crucial time, right before the start of the War of 1593-1606. The *kira* obviously was rewarded handsomely by the ambassador; but the Sultana was directly involved as well.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 5, fols. 57-8 (26 October 1578); AGS, *E* 1063, fol. 35 (30 June 1573); *E* 1068, fol. 32; *E* 1079, fols. 15 (12 November 1578), 60 (25 March 1579) and 136.

⁸¹ Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas*, 115; AGS, *E* 1338, fol. 36 (27 July 1580).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 102.

⁸³ AGS, *E* 1072, fol. 14 (15 December 1575).

⁸⁴ Charrière, vol. III, 85.

⁸⁵ When one of the ambassador's men became a Muslim and brought the letters incriminating the Sultana, however, the cunning Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha did nothing but to keep it to himself. Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas*, 103, 109-116. Baron Wratislaw identified this Empress as the mother of the Ottoman Sultan. However, this is not possible since the mother of Murad III, Nurbanu, died in 1583 and the mother of Mehmed III, Safiye, became the *Valide Sultan* only when his son ascended to the throne in 1595. Baron Wratislaw must have been confused because when he left Constantinople, Safiye was the *Valide Sultan*. Therefore, in 1593, she was selling information in the capacity of the wife, and not the mother, of the Ottoman Sultan.

Even for Ottomans themselves, it was conventional wisdom that relations and networks established by bribes and presents were essential tools in participating in factional politics and affecting the decision-making process. For instance, when the Governor-General of Algeria Hasan Pasha asked for the Ottoman Navy in Western Mediterranean in 1564, he was immediately reminded that he sent very few presents. When his predecessor Salih Pasha made a similar demand in 1555, he had sent 100.000 ducats, excluding the presents to the pashas in the *Divan*. The next year, Hasan Pasha would not repeat the same error of neglecting this essential rule of Ottoman politics and underestimating Constantinople's greed. Thus he would convince the Ottomans to send their navy to the Western Mediterranean and undertake the siege of Malta.⁸⁶

In short, the Ottoman secret service as well followed the suit and remained in a rather more different, even though not necessarily less effective, form than its Habsburg and Venetian counterparts. Therefore, in order to understand the true nature of Ottoman information gathering systems, it is necessary to focus on intelligence networks that worked for not directly the state, but some of these grandees. The following pages focus on some of these networks.

6.4. PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE NETWORKS AT THE SERVICE OF THE OTTOMAN STATE

Naturally, the responsibility of gathering information regarding the developments in the Mediterranean fell on the shoulders of those grandees who took a close interest in the Ottomans' Mediterranean policy and thus who had a stake at using information for their own political ends, i.e., advocating for the policies that would serve their interests the most.

⁸⁶ Sola, *Uchalı*, 111.

6.4.1. Uluç Ali's network

The Grand Admirals, for instance, had to develop such intelligence networks, not only in order to be informed of recent developments, but also in order to be able to defend their own position in the Ottoman *Divan* regarding the Ottoman foreign policy. For instance, Uluç Ali, the ardent opponent of the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations,⁸⁷ used the gathered information, the intercepted documents and a captured slave, all attesting to a Habsburg attack on North Africa, in order to lobby against the Ottoman Habsburg truce.⁸⁸ Habsburg suspicions that his relatives might be spying for him notwithstanding,⁸⁹ Uluç entertained a good number of spies dispersed along the Mediterranean shores. In 1572, one of his spies in Messina wrote him that the Christian fleet set sail, urging him not to return to the capital and stay on the sea.⁹⁰ A year later, Uluç was reported to have sent *molte spie* to Naples in order to learn how the Ottoman-Venetian peace was taken there. In my opinion, this was just another move on his behalf to gather useful information that would consolidate his position vis-à-vis the Ottoman foreign policy; he was looking for a proof to back him in front of the Sultan to whom he kept writing that the Venetians could not make peace with the Ottomans without Habsburg consent.⁹¹ Among his many spies in Naples, reported Diego de Mallorca, the friar of la Goleta and then captive in Constantinople, there was a *Morisco* of Valencia

⁸⁷ Grand Admirals' fortunes were directly related to the Ottoman foreign policy; this is why they (especially those with a corsair background) constantly lobbied for war in the Mediterranean which meant more money, slaves and lavish positions in the state for their followers.

⁸⁸ AGS, E 1338, fols. 15 (30 June 1580), 19 (2 July 1580) and 20 (7 July 1580).

⁸⁹ For instance, his cousin Ruger Belhomo became subject to such suspicions which were not totally unjustified. It was one of his relatives during the War of 1570-3 that informed Kara Hoca of the enemy navy's whereabouts. Sola, *Uchalí*, 59; Valente, *Vita di Occhiali*, 125.

⁹⁰ AGS, E 1331, fol. 232 (10 September 1572).

⁹¹ AGS, E 1332, fol. 179 (6 May 1573).

who was easily entering the palace and the castle.⁹² In 1576, he sent the engineer of the castle of Navarino to Corfu; the engineer successfully “took the plan of the entire island, especially the fortress”.⁹³ In 1584, four of his spies arrived in Venice, two Calabrian renegades with the plans of the castle of Candia with other two arriving from Naples where they had several contacts.⁹⁴ In August, in the island of Tabarca was discovered one of his agents, a Sicilian renegade, who confessed that every year he was visiting the Spanish shores, especially Valencia, on the orders of the Ottoman Grand Admiral. There were others entrusted with the same task, he added, and named two of them.⁹⁵ A couple of months later, three of his spies were reported, with their full names, to be traveling to Valencia and Naples from Bizerta.⁹⁶

6.4.2. İbrahim Pasha’s network

It was not only the Grand Admirals, however, who had a stake at the Ottoman foreign policy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean. Depending on their personality and the political interests, some of the Ottoman Grand Viziers also employed spies in the Mediterranean. A good example would be Ibrahim Pasha (o. 1523-1536), whose interest in European politics recently provoked the attention of the Ottomanists.⁹⁷ Gülru Necipoğlu showed us in detail how well-informed he was of political developments in Italy such as the coronation of Charles V, a pompous celebration of Habsburg imperial claims against which he felt obliged to stage a counter ceremony in Belgrade.⁹⁸ No

⁹² AGS, *E* 1144, fol. 212 (c. 1575).

⁹³ AGS, *E* 1335, fol. 77 (10 September 1576).

⁹⁴ AGS, *E* 1517, cuaderno XIII, fol. 21 (21 January 1584).

⁹⁵ AGS, *E* 1417, fol. 172 (7 August 1584).

⁹⁶ AGS, *E* 1417, fol. 181 (28 October 1584).

⁹⁷ Turan, “The Sultan's Favorite”; Necipoğlu, “Representation of Power”. On Ibrahim Pasha, also see. Hester Donaldson Jenkins, *Ibrahim Pasha, the Grand Vizir of Suleyman the Magnificent* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911).

⁹⁸ Necipoğlu, “Representation of Power”.

wonder given the extent of the Gritti network which worked under his patronage as well as his own spies who roamed Italy! A certain Venetian named Marco de Nicolo, most probably one of the jewelers which Lorenzo Gritti took to Constantinople in 1534,⁹⁹ arrived in Venice, accompanied by one of Ibrahim's men. Ibrahim asked for a safe-conduct for Marco who was banished from the city because of a crime that he committed in the past, The Serenissima did a surprising favor to the Pasha and authorized a safe-conduct. Sent from the Ottoman army, Marco's mission seemed to be spying on Venice as well as the Habsburgs and then proceed to France. While in Venice, he contacted the Habsburg ambassador Lope de Soria. He not only revealed that he was a spy of Ibrahim Pasha, but also offered his services to the Habsburgs stating that he was working for the Ottomans by force. His asking too many questions about the Habsburg Navy as well as his desire to come meet the Emperor, however, made the ambassador suspicious who "would cut [his] finger to catch him outside the Venetian dominions". When Marco left Venice, he informed the authorities so that they could catch him.¹⁰⁰ Marco would meet his end, not in Habsburgs' hand, however. The Ottomans, upon learning that he was a double agent, would decapitate him in 1536.¹⁰¹ Another spy that worked for Ibrahim, a Jew named Astrume Elia, was arrested and confessed under torture to have been a spy for the Grand Vizier and, upon the latter's death, to have returned with letters of recommendation to join the many Jews in Naples that worked for the Ottomans anyways.¹⁰² In 1534, the Habsburg counter-intelligence detected a band of spies of "the

⁹⁹ AGS, *E* 1311, fol. 23 (21 May 1534).

¹⁰⁰ AGS, *E* 1311, fols. 40-2 (9 August 1535), 45-7 (15 July 1535), 48-51 (6 July 1535), 60-1 (24 June 1535) and 149. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 4, cc. 38r-37v (7 October 1534), 50r (23 June 1535), 50v (12 July 1535), 51r (8 August 1535).

¹⁰¹ *E* 1312, fol. 12 (27 March 1536).

¹⁰² Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 80-2.

same league” that Ibrahim Pasha, using the Gritti network, sent to Venice, Their mission was to spy on the Habsburgs under the pretension of “serving His Majesty”, that is feigning to offer projects of clandestine operations in order to freely travel in Habsburg lands: 1. a spy that offered to come to Genoa to discuss Barbarossa’s defection; 2. Juan Mida, an engineer and a friend of Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti; 3. Fray Ludovico de Martinengo from Brescia who was spying for both the Ottomans and the Valois; and 4. Count Abbatis de Villanova who, formerly in the service of Emperor Maximilian II, was hired by Lorenzo Gritti in Venice and recently joined the three.¹⁰³

6.4.3. The Gritti Network

In order to set up a network, one did not have to be a member of the Ottoman administrative and military structure. The influential courtier Alvise (Ludovico) Gritti¹⁰⁴ and his brothers in this context played an important role in supplementing the Ottoman secret service. Alvise was one of the three illegitimate children that Andrea Gritti had while he was in Constantinople. Andrea was a grain merchant when the Ottoman-Venetian War erupted in 1499 and ended up being the very person who conducted the

¹⁰³ AGS, *E* 1310, fols. 55 (7 August 1535), 166 (30 October 1534), 189 (17 August 1534) and 191 (11 August 1534); *E* 1311, fols. 67 (7 April 1535), 80 (13 March 1535), 103 (11 January 1534) and 124 (28 November 1534).

¹⁰⁴ There are several works on Gritti. See for instance. Francesco della Valle, “Una breve narrazione della grandezza, virtù, valore et della infelice morte dell’Illustrissimo Signor Conte Alouise Gritti, del Serenissimo Signor Andrea Gritti, Principe di Venezia, Conte del gran Contado di Marmarus in Ongaria et General Capitano dell’esercito Regno, appresso Sulimano Imperator de Turchi, et alla Maesta del Re Giovanni Re d’Ongaria”, *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 3 (1857), 9-60; Heinrich Kretschmayr, *Ludovico Gritti: Eine Monographie*, (Wien: Gerold, 1896); Carla Coco, “Alvise Gritti fra Veneti, Turchi e Ungheresi”, in *Studi Miscellanei Uralici e Altaici*, no: 20, ed. Andrea Csillaghy (Venice: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 1984), 379-396; Aurel Decei, “Aloisio Gritti au service de Soliman le Magnifique d’après des documents turcs inédits (1533-1534)”, *Anatolia Moderna-Yeni Anadolu*, eds. Jean Louis Bacqué-Grammont et al., 3 (1992), 103; Ferenc Szakály, *Lodovico Gritti in Hungary: 1529-1534 : a Historical Insight into the Beginnings of Turco-Habsburgian Rivalry* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995); Gizella Nemeth and Adriano Papo, *Ludovico Gritti: Un principe-mercante del Rinascimento tra Venezia i Turchi e la orona d’Ungheria*, (Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna, 2002); Gábor Barta. “Gritti Ludovicus’un Macar Valiligi (1531-1534)”, *Bulleten* 263 (2008): 251-293, Elvin Otman, “The Role of Alvise Gritti within the Ottoman politics in the Context of the “Hungarian Question” (1526-1534)” (M.A. Thesis, Bilkent University, 2009). Note the differences in the spelling of Gritti’s first name.

peace negotiations between the two powers in 1503.¹⁰⁵ Thus, he gained an impressive influence in both Venice and Constantinople. As Andrea was furthering his career in other fields, as a renowned general who saved Venice from utter destruction during the League of Cambrai (1508-1516) and later as the Doge of Venice (o. 1523-1538), Alvise sought his fortunes elsewhere. In 1506, he left Venice for Constantinople where he befriended Ibrahim Pasha and Suleyman I. He became an important advisor to both in European affairs and became influential on the Ottomans' policy vis-à-vis Hungary whose crown of St. Stephen he sought for himself. In order to achieve his ends, he naturally had to develop a large network of spies and informants whose activities showed an impressive diversity, judging from the rumours and gossips attributing him several projects: guiding the Ottoman fleet against Italy, provoking French to enter Milan, aspiring to be the King of Naples, organizing a Protestant revolt, governing Vienna on behalf of the Ottomans and destroying Venice.¹⁰⁶ He even sent a Genoese to offer Andrea Doria to leave the Habsburg service for that of the Ottomans.¹⁰⁷ In November 1533, for instance, two of his spies that fell in Habsburgs hands, made very interesting confessions. According to them, Gritti was negotiating an anti-Habsburg alliance with the Valois and the Tudors as well as several other princes on behalf of the Ottoman Emperor. While a large Ottoman army, paid by France, attacked the Habsburgs, Gritti himself would invade Croatia, Slavonia and Hungary with his allies. In the meantime, Charles V's enemies in the Empire, namely the Dukes of Bavaria and Württemberg and the Count of Hesse would

¹⁰⁵ For his mission for the ratification of the treaty, see. BNM, IT. VII. 878 8652 Andrea Gritti, *Copialettere*.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Finlay, "Al Servizio del Sultano: Venezia, i Turchi e il Mondo Cristiano, 1523-1538", in *Renovatio Urbis: Venezia nell'età di Andrea Giritti*, ed. Manfredo Tafuri (Roma: Oficina Edizioni, 1984), 100.

¹⁰⁷ AGS, E 1367, fol. 60.

create disturbances in Germany.¹⁰⁸ Even if mostly exaggerated, these rumours reflected Gritti's extensive contacts and networks as well as his perceived influence on Ottoman politics.

Alvise Gritti aptly used his familial connections in the service of his intelligence network. His father, the Doge of Venice, regularly sent him information regarding European politics to be remitted to Ibrahim Pasha.¹⁰⁹ Alvise also found in his brothers able lieutenants who contributed to the well-functioning of the Gritti network. In 1531, Zorzi (Giorgio) Gritti was reported to be spying on what went on in the Christendom for the Ottomans.¹¹⁰ In February 1531, on Alvise's orders, he went to Venice and then to Paris on a secret mission with the alibi of recovering 10.000 ducats that a French agent in the court of János Zápolya owed to Alvise. He arrived to the French capital in May and was arrested by an imperial agent on his way back, in a tavern in Chambre, Savoy, only to be released a week later at the Emperor's orders. An envoy to France and the son of the Doge of Venice, Zorzi was not even tortured so that his secrets could be "strapped".¹¹¹ When the Habsburgs captured the Ragusan Serafin de Gozo, an intermediary between Ottomans and the French in 1535, they found in his sack letters written by no other than the same Zorzi, leaving the Doge in a very difficult position. He had some explanations to make not only to the Emperor, but also to the Sultan and the French king.¹¹² Alvise's other brother Lorenzo reported to be bringing jewelers, among

¹⁰⁸ COSP, Spain, 4/2 (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1882), 858-868 (19 November 1533).

¹⁰⁹ ASV, *Ducali et Atti Diplomatici*, b. 22; Carla Coco, "Alvise Gritti fra Veneti, Turchi e Ungheresi", in *Studi miscellanei Uralici e Altaici dedicati ad Alessandro Körösi-Csoma nel secondo centenario della nascita (1784-1984)*, ed. Andrea Csillaghy (Venezia: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 1984), 383.

¹¹⁰ AGS, E 1308, fol. 186.

¹¹¹ Finlay, "Al Servizio del Sultano", 94.

¹¹² AGS, E 1311, fols. 140-3 (5 October 1535), 144 (8 October 1535) and 194-6 (11 October 1535).

them the afore-mentioned Marco de Nicolo, from Venice to Constantinople in 1534.¹¹³ Even after the deaths of Alvise, his two teenage sons and Zorzi in 1536 and that of Andrea in 1538, Lorenzo went on using his dual position as a trans-imperial subject. Having received authorization from the Venetians for a truce, Lorenzo went to Edirne under the pretense of recovering his brother's patrimony and contacted the Chief Dragoman (*Baştercüman*) Yunus Bey. Hethus instigated the peace negotiations that ended the Ottoman-Venetian War in 1540.¹¹⁴

Here, too, it is possible to see that the Gritti network furthered the interests of the Gritti family and did not hesitate to play a double game and injure the interests of the Ottoman Empire. An expert on using information for his own political ends, this son of the Doge (and thus the Turkish name for Pera where he lived, *Beyoğlu*) regularly furnished Venice with information on things Ottoman.¹¹⁵ In 1531, for instance, Alvise not only informed the Venetians that the Ottomans would attack Austria and Italy simultaneously next year,¹¹⁶ but also warned the Pope that an Ottoman attack was imminent and offered his mediation.¹¹⁷ Needless to say, the information he sent was accurate; the Ottomans staged simultanous attacks on both fronts in 1532.

We know relatively less on Gritti's activities, because he lived in the first half of the 16th century that left us a less amount of documentation compared to the second half of the same century. Had his career not ended abruptly in 1534, while fighting for the Hungarian crown with his private army, one wonders what other episodes the Gritti

¹¹³ AGS, *E* 1311, fol. 23 (21 May 1534).

¹¹⁴ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 4, cc. 106r-107v (6 January 1538, m.v.), 109r-110v (19 January 1538, m.v.); AGS, *E* 1314, fols. 120 (8 October 1539), 126, 144 and 147 (25 February 1539).

¹¹⁵ For instance, see. Sanudo, *I Diarii*, vol. LI, 312, 379, 434 and 517-8.

¹¹⁶ Jean Aubin, "Une frontière face au péril ottoman: la Terre d'Otrante (1529-1532)", in *Soliman Le Magnifique et son Temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 Mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation, Française, 1992), 476.

¹¹⁷ Finlay, "Al Servizio del Sultano", 95.

network would have provided us; let us hope these illustrative examples sufficed to demonstrate to the reader the extent of this network.

6.4.4. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's network

Another important Ottoman grandee who demonstrated a keen interest in Mediterranean and European politics was the omnipotent Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (o. 1565-1579). His interest in espionage as well as the personal relationship between Ottoman spies and their employers is evident from the insistence and diligence the Pasha showed in order to rescue one of his agents from the prisons of Venice. Sokollu had the idea that his spy, Mahmud from Castelnuovo, had to be delivered to him as a part of the exchange of prisoners-of-war. The Venetians, considering Mahmud a very dangerous spy, however, had no intention to set him free, especially given that he was caught during the *peacetime*, and thus could not be considered part of the deal for exchanging prisoners. For years, they stalled the Pasha by presents and good words. After 11 years of negotiation, they finally poisoned him, informing the Ottomans (Sokollu was already dead) that he passed away in prison after a long illness. Mahmud was not the only spy that the Pasha had in the West.¹¹⁸ In September 1572, one of his agents who had previously been to Naples and other places and sailed on the *capitana* of the Maltese knights, left Ragusa for Rome under the cover of a ransom agent.¹¹⁹ In January 1574, one of the Governor of Delvine's men named Kasım Çelebi informed the Habsburgs of the arrival of two renegade engineers with letters from the Pasha. One of them had previously spied on the fortifications of Corfu for

¹¹⁸ ASV, *ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 83v-83r, 84v-85r, 85v-86r and 86r-86v (all February 1575); reg. 12, cc. number lost (21 May 1579); reg. 13, cc. 6r (23 June 1583), 30v (20 January 1585, m.v.) and 34v (9 July 1586); fil. 20, 16 October 1577 and 26 October 1577; *LettAmb*, b. 6, fols. 56-7 (22 December 1582).

¹¹⁹ AGS, E 1331, fol. 232 (10 September 1572).

the Ottomans. Their mission was to go to Corfu and then to Puglia under the disguise of ransom agents.¹²⁰ Sokollu's network had an impressive geographical scope. In 1567, he sent a number of Moriscos to spy in "Sicily, Spain, Italy and Germany";¹²¹ the same year the Habsburgs realized that through a *Mudejar* of Malaga that had a shop in Galata, he was receiving regular information even from the strategic castle of la Goleta in North Africa.¹²² In 1578, he sent a Flemish renegade to his native Antwerp in order to learn the situation of the Dutch War, a critical piece of information amidst the negotiations for an Ottoman-Habsburg truce and rumours of a joint Avis-Habsburg expedition against Morocco where the Ottomans had only recently enthroned their candidate.¹²³

6.4.5. The Nasi Network

Sokollu found a staunch rival in the person of Joseph Nasi, not only in terms of factional politics, but also those of espionage as well. This influential Jewish courtier was born as a Portuguese *Marrano* in 1520 and a member of the Mendes/Benveniste family of bankers. Escaping persecution, he moved all around Europe. In the meantime, his banking business thrived, allowing him to familiarize with Charles V and Mary of Hungary (he was even knighted jousting partner of Prince Maximilian) and to lend money to the French king. In 1554, He came to Constantinople where he could openly profess his religion and reached to prominence when the Ottoman prince with whom he established a personal relationship, Selim, became the next Ottoman Sultan.¹²⁴ Enjoying the advantages of his extensive financial networks along the Mediterranean as well as the connections that the Jewish communities would have provided him, Nasi was in a unique

¹²⁰ AGS, *E* 1064, fol. 100.

¹²¹ Sola, *Uchalí*, 141.

¹²² AGS, *E* 1132, fol. 28 (4 December 1567).

¹²³ ASF, *AMP*, fil. 4277, fol. 222.

¹²⁴ On Nasi, see. Roth, *The House of Nasi*.

position to broker information. Furthermore, as the close confidant of Selim II who did not hesitate to create him the Duke of Naxos in 1566,¹²⁵ and as a participant in Ottoman factional politics (he was a close ally of Mustafa and Piyale Pashas against the omnipotent Grand Vizier Sokollu Pasha), Nasi had to engage in information gathering. The Sultan's trust in the efficiency of his network as well as his expertise on European affairs is evident from his reply to Sokollu when the latter told him that a Jew should not have the government of an Ottoman province: Nasi was a good servant and there was nobody who was better informed of "Christian affairs".¹²⁶

An interesting document from AGS reveals the names of tens of Jewish spies that belonged to Nasi's network, dispersed all around Europe, in Bologna, Ferrara, Prague, Candia, Lvov, Lublin, Cracow, Cutin, etc.¹²⁷ Again, as was the case with Gritti, rumours may have exaggerated, if not his political power, at least the efficiency of his secret service. Especially during the war which erupted between the Ottoman and Venice in 1570, he became a scapegoat amidst the war-time anti-Semitic paranoia that dominated the Serenissima that took things as far as banning the Jews from the city. Nasi's special position in the Ottoman court as well as the anti-Venetian policy he advocated made things even worse. The mysterious fire in the Venetian Arsenal in 1569 was attributed to

¹²⁵ Even though his successor in Naxos was appointed with the title of governor, *sancakbeyi*, Nasi's title was the Duke of Naxos, *Nakşe Dükası*. See for a document where Nasi was mentioned as a Duke and his successor as a governor. BOA, MD, XLI, no. 561 (H. 21 L 987/A.D. 10 December 1579). See also. BOA, MD, XXXI, no. 153 (H. 7 Ca. 985/A.D. 23 July 1577). The Ottomans conquered the islands from the Venetians in 1540, but they kept the Duke of the island in power in exchange for a yearly tribute of 4.000 ducats. The reigning Duke John was deposed in 1566 and imprisoned in Constantinople. Apparently when Nasi was given the island, its status as an Ottoman vassal continued and it did not become a full fledged Ottoman territory until the death of Nasi in 1579. There are proofs in the Ottoman archives that the Ottomans used the title of the Duke for Nassi's predecessors. BOA, MD, VI, no. 536 (H. 16 Ca. 972/A.D. 20 December 1564) calls Nasi's predecessor "*Nakşe Ceziresi Dükası*" while MD, VII, no. 1555 cite the Duke as "*Nakşe cezireleri zabiti olan Düka nam*".

¹²⁶ ASV, CX-LettAmb, b. 3, fols. 179-180 (26 March 1569).

¹²⁷ AGS, E 656, fol. 2; E 664, fol. 91.

his agents,¹²⁸ unjustly, but not so unexpectedly, given that he had an extensive network of spies in Venetian possessions. In Venice, he had been seen as a threat since the 1560s. In 1564, he was thought to incite Emanuele Filiberto, the Duke of Savoy to reclaim his right on Cyprus. In 1568, a Venetian renegade from the Ottoman navy informed the Serenissima that Nasi was given the task to go personally spy on some Venetian fortresses in the Archipelago with his galley. The same year, he was thought to be devising a plot to seize Famagusta which the Ottomans would conquer two years later on his advice.¹²⁹ In January 1570, the Council of Ten warned the Bailo of Crete to keep an eye on the Jews, especially those who were Nasi's agents. With necessary caution and secrecy, he should try to intercept the letters that these agents wrote to Nasi and learn their true intentions.¹³⁰ These rumours were not confined to the sphere of Ottoman-Venetian relations. Months before the Moriscos' Revolt of the Alpujarras erupted, there were rumours that he was going to conquer Granada at the head of an Ottoman navy.¹³¹

During the war, however, the Venetians detected and caught several of his spies with their fear and hatred having been further consolidated. In June 1570, the bailo protested against Ragusa who allowed the passage of one of Nasi's agents who would later be captured in Naples.¹³² In July 1570, one of his men, Salamon Zise was captured and the letters, which he was supposed to carry, dressed up as a Christian merchant, to

¹²⁸ Bartolomeo Sereno, *Commentari della Guerra di Cipro e della Lega dei Principi Cristiani contro il Turco* (Monte Cassino: Tipi di Monte Cassino, 1845), 16-7.

¹²⁹ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 101.

¹³⁰ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 9, cc. 50v-50r (25 January 1569, m.v.).

¹³¹ AGS, *E* 1326, fol. 117 (29 May 1568).

¹³² Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 102. In April, Nasi was reported to have sent two agents from Lucha to spy on the Venetians, named Carlo Saminati and Benedetto Simoni, AGS, *E* 1058, fol. 40 (5 April 1570). Simoni was captured in Naples and put to torture. Threatened with execution, he did not confess, however, even when the Habsburgs brought a sacristan to scare him. AGS, *E* 1058, fol. 42 and 214.

Venice, Bologna and other cities, were sequestered.¹³³ In August, the bailo denounced another of his agents, this time located in Thine.¹³⁴ Even after the conclusion of the war and the fall of Cyprus to the Ottoman hands, Nasi's networks seemed active in Venetian territories. In 1577, the Bailo reported that Nasi's lieutenant in Naxos had an operational intelligence network in Candia and was in direct contact with both Nasi and Uluç Ali.¹³⁵ A month later, the Council of Ten warned the *Provveditor Generale* of Corfu that he should be careful with Aron Mazza, Nasi's spy.¹³⁶

He also had close connections in the Low Countries where erupted a revolt that would drain the financial resources of the Habsburg Empire for many years to come. If the Ottomans did have a strategy concerning the "Dutch Revolt", Nasi's connections played the central role in the shaping of this strategy as well as in the execution of policies. He knew certain local leaders of the revolt, of *Marrano* origin like himself, from Antwerp where he spent his youth.¹³⁷ A 17th century historian mentions, although without citing a source, that Nasi sent a letter to Antwerp in 1566, urging them to revolt against the Habsburgs.¹³⁸ Furthermore, in 1569, with the hope of using his influence in the Ottoman court, the leader of the revolt, William of Nassau, the Prince of Orange sent him an envoy.¹³⁹

The following interesting example would demonstrate to us the extent of Nasi's interests and networks. Zuan Vancimuglio from Vicenza, the assistant of an Inquisitor in Rome, learned a precious truth in the prisons of the Inquisition from the father of the very

¹³³ ASV, CX, *Parti Criminali*, reg. 11, cc. 78r-78v (3 July 1570); Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 102.

¹³⁴ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 9, c. 87r (19 August 1570).

¹³⁵ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 11, cc. 118r-118v (16 January 1576, m.v.).

¹³⁶ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 11, cc. 119v-120r (15 February 1576, m.v.), 130v (17 May 1577).

¹³⁷ Roth, *The House of Nasi*, 58.

¹³⁸ F. Strada, *De Bello Gallico* (Frankfurt am Main, 1699), 163-4; Roth, *The House of Nasi*, 33-4.

¹³⁹ Charrière, III, 61.

person who poisoned the Queen of Poland, Bona Sforza. The Queen had retired to Bari, her patrimony, upon the death of his husband, the King of Poland. Her favourite Gioan Lorenzo Pappacoda not only poisoned her in 1557, upon the orders of Philip II who borrowed a huge sum from the Queen, but also forged a will which left Bari to the Habsburgs. Surprisingly, Vancimuglio had also met a heretic in prison who had been in talks with Nasi so that the latter could make sure the Ottoman fleet attacked Italy. Vancimuglio quickly made up his mind and descended to Bari whose population was discontent with ending up with the assassin of their queen as their governor and wanted the rule of the King of Poland. If he rejected, they were even ready to accept the Ottoman rule under which they would happily live, paying only the more acceptable Ottoman tax imposed upon the People of the Book, *harac*, or, as the document states, *caraggi minima*. Vancimuglio passed to the Balkans, with a letter of recommendation written by a Christian prelate to Nasi in his pocket, and went to Herzegovina. He was caught by the local authorities, though, who sent him to the Grand Vizier. Sokollu, realizing the opportunity of discovering Nasi's clandestine measures without authorization, took him in front of the Sultan. Nasi was dismissive, stating that he had *amicitia* all over the world in the Sultan's service in order to inform him of events in Christianity. The Sultan was content with his reply, consolidating our argument that the Ottoman secret diplomacy was based on personal networks that operated not necessarily with authorization from and under the supervision of the center and that personal rivalries meant separate intelligence networks that did not work in cooperation. Nasi could employ spies that sent him information from Europe and the Mediterranean without the knowledge of the Sultan and much to the chagrin of his rival, the Grand Vizier Sokollu. The triumphant Nasi had

Vancimuglio liberated and even gave him an escort on his way to Poland, with the sole condition that he should return to Constantinople. Before taking his voyage, Vancimuglio stayed six months in Nasi's house, once again proving us the importance of personal households in Ottoman information gathering efforts.¹⁴⁰ I should cut the story short,¹⁴¹ and just add that Vancimuglio was impressed with Nasi's intelligence networks in Poland. According to letters of warnings he sent to the Venetians that Nasi had agents everywhere in Poland; all the Jews in Leopoli (Lviv), for instance, were his kin and they were regularly sending him information.¹⁴²

Once again we see that the interests which served the Nasi network did not necessarily coincide with those that served the Ottoman Empire. At the zenith of his influence in the Ottoman capital, he saw no contradiction in negotiating with the Habsburgs for personal gains. True, he had an unstable relationship with Philip II who even acquiesced to Giovanni Barelli's advice to either kidnap or assassinate Nasi, because he had an extensive network that worked against the Habsburgs.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, there were better episodes as well. His alleged hatred for the Spanish should not be as deep as Baron suggested.¹⁴⁴ In 1567, during the peace negotiations between Vienna and Constantinople, for instance, he sent an agent to France to meet with the Habsburg ambassador in an effort to capitalize on Philip II's desire to be included in the treaty

¹⁴⁰ ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 3, fols. 147 (10 June 1568), 179-80 (26 March 1569).

¹⁴¹ For a comprehensive study on Vancimuglio that I have only recently discovered, see. Francesco Giannini, "La carriera di una spia: Giovanni Vancimuglio da Vicenza (1527-1571?)" (Tesi di Laurea, Università di Pisa, 2011).

¹⁴² ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 19, fol. 211 (6 July 1570).

¹⁴³ This was not Barelli's only objective. See. AGS, *E* 1132, fols. 155 (26 July 1569), (15 September 1569), 193 (23 October 1569), fol. 194 (12 November 1569), 196, 205, 206 and 207.

¹⁴⁴ Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, volume XVIII: The Ottoman Empire, Persia, Ethiopia, India and China*, 2nd ed. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), 92.

indirectly without sending an official ambassador and thus without losing reputation.¹⁴⁵ Nasi should have known that the position of the Ottoman Empire was to sign only a separate truce with Philip II who had to bear the humiliation of sending an ambassador. Therefore, his offer should be designed for no other reason but to further his personal interests. Even though this came to naught, in 1570, he entered into negotiations with Madrid once again, asking for a safe conduct for his entire household and expressing his desire to re-convert to Christianity.¹⁴⁶ The negotiations were still going on in 1577; Philip II's letter which Aurelio Santa Croce forged in 1577 was originally written to Nasi, thanking for his contributions to the crown.¹⁴⁷ Again, the documentation describe a different Nasi than Baron's idealized version who made deliberate efforts to undermine the overwhelming power of Spain" because "he felt that such a policy was dictated by the genuine interest of both his newly adopted fatherland and world Jewry".¹⁴⁸ To me, it seemed any policy he may adapt would be dictated by pure self-interest.

In the light of the afore-mentioned evidence, it is hard to share Baron's apologetic opinion that Nasi was not spying for the Ottomans and that he "felt obliged" to remit the information he had learned "in the course of his business activity, or from correspondence with his agents or customers", and definitely not as a result of a "cloak

¹⁴⁵ Rosenblatt, "Joseph Nasi".

¹⁴⁶ AGS, *E* 1137, fols. 130 (17 August 1572) and 223 (20 February 1572); *E* 1141, fol. 11 (15 February 1574). Even though Rosenblatt ("Joseph Nasi", 330-1) considers his move as a sign of his fall in disfavour with the Ottoman Sultan, this could not be the case. In 1570, when his faction overcame Sokollu and convinced the Sultan to attack Cyprus, Nasi was at the height of his power. Could he have genuinely thought of going back to Europe? Or did he try to gain the trust of the Habsburgs, so that with the excuse of negotiating with them he could more easily send his spies to the Habsburg lands? The latter is not unlikely. Most Ottoman spies offered to visit the Habsburg monarch with interesting plans of sabotage and defections in order to receive an official permission so that they could easily travel in Habsburg territories.

¹⁴⁷ AGS, *E* 1071, fol. 191 (5 March 1577).

¹⁴⁸ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVIII, 92. Note Baron's apologetic tone on p. 95 while dismissing Nasi's letter to Philip II, in which he offered to return to Christianity, as simple forgery or if not, a "temporary aberration of a man who, under the impact of the Turkish defeat at Lepanto, feared being executed or at least being deprived of his great fortune because of his earlier "hawkish" stand in the war". Nasi's move, according to the author, "represented no more than an impulsive reaction."

and dagger affair.”¹⁴⁹ Even though, some of the conspiracies attributed to Nasi’s spies, such as the 1569 Fire in the Venetian Arsenal, should be taken with a grain of salt, it is obvious that Nasi was an eager spymaster who used the information his spies transmitted to him for his own personal interests

6.4.6. The Mendes Network

Let us conclude this part with two other Jews who seem to have established European-wide networks that enabled them to broker information. Alvaro Mendes, born in Portugal as a member of a new Christian family, lived in India for ten years where he made a fortune by farming diamond mines. Then he returned to Europe where he became an intimate of the king of Portugal and established good relations with other European monarchs. After embracing in 1580 the cause of Dom Antonio, the pretender of the Portuguese throne against Philip II, he came to Constantinople in 1585 where he returned to Judaism. His arrival was anticipated by the Ottomans who even sent a letter to the Doge of Venice, indicating that he was invited from France and warning that he should safely be transferred with his family and belongings from Venice to Ragusa, accompanied by a trusted man.¹⁵⁰ Imported thus, he became an influential figure in Ottoman foreign policy regarding Europe and lobbied for an Ottoman English alliance against the Habsburgs as well as an Ottoman military intervention on behalf of Dom Antonio. In 1592, one of his agents went to England to secure the England’s neutrality at the dawn of a new Ottoman-Austrian War. In 1596, the same agent was this time in

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 90.

¹⁵⁰ ASV, *DocTR*, b. 7, no. 931 (2-11 April 1584). Also see. BOA, *MD*, LX, no. 175 (H. 21 Za. 993 / A.D. 13 November 1585) for a similar order sent to *kadis*, informing the arrival of a certain Musa from Portugal. This Musa could be Alvaro Mendes who had not yet adopted his Jewish name, Solomon, in 1585.

Spain, discussing the exchange of prisoners-of-war.¹⁵¹ He was a regular information broker thanks to his extensive connections among the Jewish communities in Europe. In 1586, the Venetian bailo noted that he may be receiving information from his brother and nephew that lived in Venice.¹⁵² If this is so, his connections were not only confined to Venice. He was closely connected with Marranos in London and via his brother-in-law, the Queen's physician, he was in direct contact with the English government. He was the one from whom the Ottomans first learned the defeat of the Armada in 1588.¹⁵³ The same year, a Habsburg spy noted that he became Siyavush Pasha's adviser on Indian Ocean, providing him with detailed information on Portuguese fortifications.¹⁵⁴

6.4.7. The Passi Network

Another such figure was David Passi (known by the Ottomans as *Firenk David*), a Jewish courtier and a confidant of Murad III. He played a decisive role in the Ottoman factional politics and foreign policy by acting in many different roles and thus epitomizing the factotum entrepreneur broker of this dissertation. Passi was an agent of the pretender to the Portuguese throne, Dom Antonio, on whose behalf he negotiated a joint alliance between the Ottoman Empire, England and King of France against the Habsburgs with such power and influence in Constantinople that he was always present in political discussions alongside other important figures such as the Grand Vizier, Grand Admiral, the Janissary Agha, the Sultan's secretary and the English ambassador. When Sinan Pasha refused the Sultan's orders to consult with David Passi in all matters

¹⁵¹ Roth, *The House of Nasi*, 213-4.

¹⁵² ASV, *IS*, b. 416, 15 October 1586.

¹⁵³ COSP, vol. 8, no. 753 (9 October 1588); Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVIII, 144; Avram Galanti, *Türkler ve Yahudiler* (İstanbul: Gözlem Gazetecilik Basın ve Yayın, 1995), 138; Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits", 83.

¹⁵⁴ AGS, E 1090, fol. 9 (20 September 1588).

regarding this alliance, evoking the *ante-litteram* anti-Semitic¹⁵⁵ 51st and 82nd verses (*ayat*) from the *Surah al-Mai'dah* and accusing him of being a Venetian and a Habsburg spy,¹⁵⁶ the Sultan warned him, according to the Venetian bailo Lippomano, that “slaves like [him] he had in abundance, but never a one like David, probably alluding to all the information about Christendom with which Passi furnishes the Sultan”¹⁵⁷ Although working for many other governments as well, he also lent his intelligence network to the Ottomans. In September 1585, the *Inquisitori di Stato* warned the bailo Lorenzo Bernardo in a secret correspondence that from Venice and any place in Christianity, his agents were regularly writing to Passi. The Inquisitors wanted him to check letters sent by the Venetian postal service to learn their content as well as to whom these were addressed in Venice.¹⁵⁸ The bailo agreed that Passi had correspondents on Ottoman payroll “in all Christian courts” and furthermore added that in four days, one of his agents would leave the Ottoman capital for Ragusa in the presence of a *chaus* with explicit instructions to go to Venice to spy on the preparations in the Venetian Arsenal and then pass to Flanders. There he would gather information about the Dutch War and return the next spring.¹⁵⁹ No doubt was he playing a double game between Don Antonio, Philip II and the Ottoman Sultan. In spite of the fact that he was one of the architects and mastermind behind this expedition, he was the one who was contemplating, shortly before his fall, to send his right-hand guy Guglielmo di Savoya to warn Philip II of an incoming Ottoman descend

¹⁵⁵ On Sinan Pasha's anti-semitic views related to his rivalry with Passi, see. Fodor, “An Antisemite Grand Vizier?”

¹⁵⁶ Sahillioğlu, *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın Telhisleri*, no. 8.

¹⁵⁷ Lippomano goes on: “*Passi is a man of natural ability, and sufficient knowledge. I carefully weigh and balance all he says, but I have frequently had occasion to find him correct; and so I think it well to attach him as much as may be, for he is able to do great harm and great good.*” COSP, Vol. 8, No. 994 (5 January 1590, m.v.).

¹⁵⁸ ASV, IS, b. 148, fol. 1 (25 September 1585). Also see. b. 416, 8 January 1585, m.v., 25 March 1586 and 2 August 1590.

¹⁵⁹ ASV, IS, b. 433, 30 October 1585.

upon the Iberian coast and advise him to divert the expedition with money.¹⁶⁰ No other than the same Lippomano described perfectly how adroit a broker of information and factional politics David Passi was: “[t]his David, for one truth tells a hundred lies; he would betray us if he could; he is agent for Don Antonio of Portugal and in the confidence of the King of Spain; he is the warm supporter of Venice, and the trusty spy of the Sultan”¹⁶¹

6.5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

In addition to the reports of agents that were sent on ad-hoc missions as well as information provided by provincial governors and personal networks, there were other sources of information.

6.5.1. Men of both worlds

The Ottomans were diligent in acquiring information from the people who had recently arrived from the enemy lands. As mentioned above, they frequently interrogated the soldiers and sailors that were captured, the famous *dils*, who might either be forced to reveal information or voluntarily offered it with the hope of recovering their liberty.¹⁶² Furthermore, Muslim slaves that arrived from Western Europe shared with the authorities the observations that they made and the rumours that they heard during their captivity. Some of these were run-aways; escape was a viable option especially for corsairs since

¹⁶⁰ COSP, vol. 8, no. 1008 (2 February 1590, m.v.).

¹⁶¹ COSP, vol. 8, no. 1015 (16 February 1590, m.v.).

¹⁶² Ottoman documents do not specify whether some of these *dils* volunteered to give information. BOA, MD, XII, nos. 60, 477, 478, 1005 and 1217 (H. 27 Z 979/A.D. 10 May 1572); XIV, nos. 517 (H. 24 Ra. 978/A.D. 26 August 1570), 520 (H. 21 Ra. 978/A.D. 23 August 1570), 816 (Selh-i Ca. 978/A.D. 30 October 1570) and 1313 (26 N 978/A.D. 23 January 1571); XVI, nos. 34 (H. 20 Ca. 979/A.D. 10 October 1571), 640 (H. 23 Ca. 979/A.D. 13 October 1571) and 649 (H. 9 B 979/A.D. 27 November 1571); XXII, no. 429 (H. 14 R 981/A.D. 23 August 1571); XXXI, no. 717 (H. 20 B 985/A.D. 3 October 1577); Murâdî, *Ğazavât-i Hayreddîn Paşa*, ff. 235a and 238b. Cf. with the Ragusans who chose to reveal information himself. AGS, E 1158, fol. 26 (3 November 1594) and a slave that offered Barbarossa the opportunity to sack his own village in exchange for his liberty and some money, Gomára, *Crónica de los Barbarrojas*, 405.

they would be useful to a nearby galley or could find another way to leave the Christian territories by sea.¹⁶³ Some, on the other were either liberated by the sheer military force of Ottoman galleys,¹⁶⁴ or exchanged for Christian prisoners.¹⁶⁵ Ottoman agents who crossed the border to negotiate such exchanges gathered information as well.¹⁶⁶ The Ottomans moreover seemed to have established contact with Muslim slaves during their captivity. In 1573, Scipione, a Christian hermit from Mallorca that converted to Islam was travelling to Rome to establish contact with Ottoman prisoners.¹⁶⁷ In their correspondence with their families, these slaves seemed to have included information that they overheard. For instance, when in 1574 a *Morisco* ransom agent arrived in Constantinople with letters written by Muslim slaves, the Habsburg spies in the city were quick to realize that these slaves were writing “all that happen in those parts.”¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the turn-coats were ideal sources of information given their expertise on the other side’s politics and military as well as the fact that they recently came and therefore could have the latest information.¹⁶⁹ The Ottomans sought to make use of a similar expertise by employing potential renegades, some of whom accepted to change

¹⁶³ BOA, MD, XXI, no. 709 (H. 29 Z 980/A.D. 2 May 1573); XXVI, no. 833 (H. 15 B 982/A.D. 30 October 1574); LII, no. 816 (H. 13 Ra. 992/A.D. 26 March 1584); LV, no. 315 (H. 8 S 993/A.D. 8 February 1585); AGS, E 1063, fol. 40 (June 1573). Certain documents use the verb “*gelmek*”, to come, from which I understand that they were not ransomed or liberated, but rather ran away. MD, X, nos. 5 and 171 (H. 21 B 978); XIV, no. 1532; LVIII, no. 60 (H. R 993/A.D. c. April 1585). The fact that in 1580, the Viceroy of Naples threatened those who contemplated escape with execution and ordered the captains of the ships to guard their ships during the night time to prevent that slaves who ran away use them proves that such escapes were common. Gustavo Valente, *Vita di Occhiali* (Milano: Casa Editrice Ceschina, 1960), 139. See for 14 re’ises that ran away from the castle of Naples in 1591, AGS, E 1541, fol. 125 (12 March 1591).

¹⁶⁴ BOA, MD, LII, no. 718 (H. 20 S 992/A.D. 3 March 1584).

¹⁶⁵ BOA, MD, X, no. 292; XVI, no. 312 (H. 23 Z 979); LX, no. 606 (H. 26 Ca. 994 / A.D. 15 May 1586). Rosi, “Alcuni documenti”; idem, “Nuovi documenti”.

¹⁶⁶ BOA, MD, X, no. 147 (H. 15 S 979 / A.D. 1 January 1572).

¹⁶⁷ AV, *Principi*, no. 38, fol. 206 (11 July 1573).

¹⁶⁸ AGS, E 1064, fol. 36 (4 May 1574).

¹⁶⁹ BOA, MD, XIX, no. 472 (H. 16 N 980); Gomára, *Crónica de los Barbarrojas*, 375, 428.

their religion with the sole prospect of becoming a spy.¹⁷⁰ A ransom agent and the Trinitarian friar Cristobal Perez, for instance, would have almost converted to Islam had the unofficial Habsburg ambassador/spymaster Margliani not imprisoned him in his house and shipped him to the Inquisition in Rome.¹⁷¹ In 1570, arrived in Algiers a Neapolitan who converted to Islam and offered the Governor-General a military strategy to easily seize the Habsburg ships in a military confrontation.¹⁷² In 1571, when a number of Hungarian nobles wanted to defect with the castles under their control to the Ottoman side and convert to Islam, the Ottomans had to reject their defection in order not to break the *'ahdname* signed with Vienna, especially at such a crucial time when they were fighting a war against a coalition of the Habsburgs, Venice and the Pope. What they did instead was to assure that they would accept their offer in the future and to tell them that they should send information regarding their vicinities in the meantime.¹⁷³ There is also the example of Gabriel Defrens, a French renegade who travelled in Europe as an Ottoman spy for years and engaged in diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire, England and the leader of the Dutch rebels, William of Orange.¹⁷⁴ Some of these renegades achieved higher status in the Ottoman capital and received honors and positions in the Ottoman military.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ BOA, *MD*, IV, nos. 742 and 743; ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 10, cc. 101v (2 March 1573) and 146v-147r (25 September 1573); AGS, *E* 1094, fol. 145 (1559); 1893, fol. 144 (1 February 1621).

¹⁷¹ AGS, *E* 1081, fols. 154 (4 November 1580), 163 (14 November 1580) and 170 (21 November 1580); *E* 1083, no. 58 (28 February 1581); *E* 1084, fol. 35 (6 June 1581); *E* 1338, fols. 22, 36 (27 July 1580), 59 (15 October 1580) and 74 (30 December 1580); *E* 1339, fol. 127 (7 February 1581). Margliani was disturbed by the fact that two of his spies confessed to the friar,

¹⁷² AGS, *E* 487, 22 February, 1 April and 6 April 1570.

¹⁷³ BOA, *MD*, XII, no. 826 (H. 22 Ra. 979 / A.D. 13 August 1571).

¹⁷⁴ Skilliter, "Gabriel Defrens".

¹⁷⁵ BOA, *MD*, XXV, no. 1615 (H. 10 S 982 / A.D. 31 May 1574) mentions the induction of a Spanish noble from Valencia to the *sol ulufeciler* while AGS, *E* 1077, fol. 44 (4 and 5 April 1576) names a don Francisco de Zorrilla who were given a handsome provision of 800 *sultanîs* from Sokollu.

The Ottomans not only interrogated the merchants and merchant ships that arrived in their ports,¹⁷⁶ but also employed them in their secret service. Using the ease with which they could travel relatively unmolested, some of these roamed the Mediterranean as Ottoman spies,¹⁷⁷ while some facilitated the voyages of other spies by carrying them between Ottoman and Christian ports with their ships.¹⁷⁸

6.5.2. Disgruntled communities: Ottoman fifth columns¹⁷⁹

Disgruntled communities constituted a veritable “fifth column” for the Ottomans and provided them with information with the hopes of provoking an Ottoman military campaign against their rulers.

6.5.2.1. The Last Muslims of the Iberian Peninsula: The *Moriscos*

First of these communities were the *Moriscos*, the Muslims of the Iberian Peninsula who, having converted at gunpoint, continued practicing Islam and hardly forgot their Muslim past. Between the fall of Granada in 1492 and their final expulsion from Castile and Aragon in 1609-1613, the Moorish communities in the Iberian Peninsula posed a veritable threat to the Habsburg rule by establishing direct communication with the Ottoman Sultan whom they invited, as the leader of the Muslim world, to liberate his fellow Muslims from the Habsburg yoke. The Ottomans seemed to be informed of their revolt in 1568 in advance.¹⁸⁰ They supported it with weapons and

¹⁷⁶ Isom-Verhaaren already demonstrated how an Ottoman *subaşı* interrogated an Albanian merchant who travelled all around Europe for three years. *Subaşı* immediately informed the center with a report (TSMa, *Evrak* 7671) of his investigation. Isom-Verhaaren, “An Ottoman Report”, 299, 301. Also, see. AGS, *E* 1070, fol. 30 (10 March 1576).

¹⁷⁷ AGS, *E* 1894, fols. 94 (21 October 1622), 95 (20 October 1622) and 96 (20 October 1622).

¹⁷⁸ AGS, *E* 1043, fol. 26 (1552).

¹⁷⁹ Even though the term was first used in this context by Hess, “Moriscos: An Ottoman Fifth Column”, 1-25, it was originally coined by Emilio Mola in 1936 (see “fifth column”, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*).

¹⁸⁰ AGS, *E* 1324, fol. 84 (2 February 1561); *E* 1056, fol. 197 (31 August 1568).

ammunition on the one hand,¹⁸¹ and envoys that brought encouragement and promises of further assistance on the other.¹⁸² Even though these close relations came to naught from a military perspective, the Ottomans showed an impressive aptness in acquiring information from these Moors. In 1565, a Moor confessed under torture, that the Ottomans had an agent in Lyon who was passing the information he received from the Moors to Constantinople, while the Moors from the Granadine coasts were sending information to the Governor-General of Algeria, a contribution that facilitated the corsair attacks against the Habsburg shores.¹⁸³ In a letter dated 1571, the Ottomans excused themselves of not being able to send the Navy because of the War of 1570-3 and urged them to continue not only fighting, but also sending information.¹⁸⁴ Even after the revolt was crushed, communication did not cease between the Moors and the Ottomans.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, a good number of Moors migrated to the Ottoman Empire with their own free will, “*buena voluntad*”¹⁸⁶ where they could get circumcised and openly practice Islam again. The Ottomans treated them well and used them as soldiers and spies.¹⁸⁷ For instance, a Moorish spy who was sent by the Governor of Valona, Suleyman Pasha, to spy on fortifications in Puglia, Naples and Gaeta was caught in 1552.¹⁸⁸ In 1610, a

¹⁸¹ BOA, MD, IX, nos. 204 and 231.

¹⁸² AGS, E 1327, fol. 7 (28 January 1570); E 1499, fol. 189 (22 February 1570).

¹⁸³ M. L'Abbé Douais, ed., *Dépêches de M. De Fourquevaux ambassadeur du Roi Charles IX en Espagne, 1565-1572* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1896), vol. I, no. 5.

¹⁸⁴ BOA, MD, no. 283 (H. 23 S 979 / A.D. 16 July 1571).

¹⁸⁵ AGS, E 1073, fol. 52 (24 March 1577).

¹⁸⁶ AGS, E 1043, fol. 26 (1552).

¹⁸⁷ AGS, E 1324, fol. 84 (2 February 1561).

¹⁸⁸ AGS, E 1043, fol. 26 (1552).

Moorish chaus passed to France via Venice.¹⁸⁹ There were Moors within the Habsburg military who provided important information to the Ottomans as well.¹⁹⁰

Even after their expulsion, they continued for some time to be an important component of the Ottoman secret service in the Mediterranean. The Habsburgs seemed to have lost control over where these expelled Moors would end up.¹⁹¹ This created a serious security problem for the Habsburgs and a great opportunity for the Ottoman secret service. Aware of these Moors' value to the Ottomans, in 1610, the Habsburgs were trying to assassinate a certain Moor, Mehmed Çelebi alias Manuel Enriquez who was arranging the transport of the Moors to Constantinople. This trade agent-cum-spy who resided in Venice for many years was convincing the expelled Moors to enroll in the Ottoman army, collecting the letters of exchange they brought from Spain and urging the Sultan to send his ships to transport 80.000 thousand Moors that ended up in North Africa.¹⁹² In 1613, the Viceroy of Sicily detained in a French ship a number of Moors who told during their interrogation that they were going to Marseille to settle there, a statement which the Viceroy hardly believed because they left their families in Tunis. Unable to decide what to do, given that he had no authority to detain these Moors who were sailing under the banner of France with whom the Habsburgs had peace, the Viceroy contacted the center for further instructions.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ AGS, *E* 1887, fol. 5 (10 April 1610).

¹⁹⁰ AGS, *E* 1126, fols. 152 (30 April 1561), 47 (11 May 1561), 48 (8 May 1561), 107 (4 October 1561), 141, 168, 169 and 176 (26 July 1561); *E* 1132, fol. 28 (4 December 1567); *E* 1893, fol. 144 (1 February 1621). Also see. Canosa and Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo*, 73.

¹⁹¹ AGS, *E* 1928, fol. 334 (14 December 1609).

¹⁹² AGS, *E* 1929, fols. 12 (9 de abril 1610), 41 (4 February 1611), and 52 (13 March 1611).

¹⁹³ AGS, *E* 1166, fol. 18 (27 March 1613).

6.5.2.2. The Neapolitan *fuorusciti*

An important connection which the Ottomans managed to establish among the Habsburg subjects was with the opponents of the Habsburg rule in Naples, the *fuorusciti*. Important Neapolitan nobles in exile allied themselves to the Ottomans as a part of the Ottoman-French alliance that would relieve Naples from Habsburg rule. For instance, the Ottoman navy hosted a good number of Neapolitan exiles, including the Prince of Melfi, his son, the Duke of Soma and the Count of Nicastro in 1537,¹⁹⁴ and again in 1553.¹⁹⁵ Their extensive networks in Naples and agents in their employ contributed to the Ottoman secret service. One of Prince of Salerno's men, for instance, offered a plot to the Ottomans for capturing the city of Naples in cooperation with some of the locals who would open the doors. He also brought along two engineers, expert on castle's fortifications.¹⁹⁶ Even though, this alliance between the Ottomans, French and the *fuorusciti* lost pace after the 1540s and the 1550s, still, the local people continued considering the Ottomans and the French as potential liberators. In the last year of the century, the Habsburgs discovered in Calabria a conspiracy led by a number of Dominican Friars, one of whom was Tommaso Campanella, the famous author of the *City of the Sun*. It aimed to replace the Habsburg rule with a republic with the Ottoman help if necessary. Even though it is less clear whether the Ottomans were the organizer of the revolt or not, it is certain that the Ottoman Grand Admiral, Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha was actively communicating with these Calabrian dissidents.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 87.

¹⁹⁵ Manfroni, *Storia della marina italiana*, vol. III, 386.

¹⁹⁶ AGS, E 1121, fols. 105-6 and 111-2. (25 March 1552).

¹⁹⁷ In 1598, a year before the plot was discovered, a large Ottoman fleet visited the Sicilian waters and even anchored off Messina when the Ottoman Grand Admiral, a renegade, wanted to see his mother and siblings who lived in the city. One of the conspirators, Mauricio went aboard the galleys of Murad Re'is and negotiated with him the arrival of the Ottoman fleet; he even showed Campanella an Ottoman document.

6.5.2.3. Jewish communities

Constantinople hosted a number of prominent Jewish entrepreneurs in the 16th century such as the afore-mentioned Joseph Nasi, Salomon Ashkenazi, Alvaro Mendes and David Passi who lent their personal networks of trade, diplomacy and espionage to the Ottoman service. Thanks to this human capital, the Ottomans could easily communicate with Jewish communities dispersed along the Mediterranean ports. The close trade and familial relations between these communities with their fellow Jews in Thessalonica and Constantinople as well as the stark contrast between the intolerance and persecution these faced in Europe and the relatively tolerant environment in the Ottoman Empire where many persecuted Jews took refuge and reached influential positions, should have won the sympathies of these Jews for the Ottoman rule.¹⁹⁸

We had already mentioned to what extent the Jews in Venice were widely accused of cooperating with the Ottomans in the paranoid years of 1570-3. A report submitted to the *Inquisitori di Stato* by a Jewish informer Cain Saruch suggests that, as exaggerated as the Venetian fears may be, there was close correspondence between the

According to what the Venetian resident in Naples, Scaramelli related to his government, the agreement was that Cigala was to appear with the Ottoman Navy on September 7. The Ottoman fleet made a brief appearance, sending ships off the Calabrese shores, making signals with lights on September 13. However, conspirators were already discovered and arrested, so they had to return without result. Furthermore, when the Habsburgs discovered the conspiracy and started arresting the culprits, one of the conspirators, the Dominican Friar Dionisio Poncio de Nicastro, ran away to Constantinople. Does the fact that he was able to pass the frontier and reach the Ottoman capital demonstrate to us that the Ottomans were actively involved? Or was it already easy for the Calabrese to travel unmolested to Constantinople where he would find many compatriots working in the Ottoman Arsenal and living in a part of Constantinople named *Nuova Calabria*. Poncio's namesake, the famous Ottoman Grand Admiral Uluç Ali (d. 1587), among many other less important figures, was a Calabrian. Ten years ago, the assassin of Poncio's uncle, both the assassin and the victim being Dominican friars as well, had escaped justice and gone to Constantinople where he converted to Islam. One of the conspirators, Giulio Constestabile, a Calabrian from Stilo, upon seeing an "image" of Philip III on the wall, expressed his disappointment to Friar Tommaso Campanella that neither the "Turks", nor the French" came to "take this kingdom". He took out an "image" of the Sultan and told Campanella that several times he was ready to go to the Sultan to seek assistance. See. Emilio Sola, *La Conjura de Campanella* (Madrid: Turpin Editores, 2007), 37, 56 and Part 2, Chapter 5, Campanella's testimony and Chapter 7.

¹⁹⁸ For detailed information on the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, see. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVIII; Galanti, *Türkler ve Yahudiler*.

Jews of Constantinople and those of Venice. Saruch named five Jews that resided in Venice in 1585 that sent to and received information from Constantinople. As these were doing business with the Jews of Constantinople, all rich and successful businessmen (*di gran negotio*), they were exchanging information in order to govern their trade relations better.¹⁹⁹ However, the fact that this came to the attention of the *Inquisitori di Stato*, the Venetian magistrate responsible for preventing the diffusion of state secrets, suggests that the Venetians were keeping the Jewish community under close surveillance even years after the War of 1570-3.

Another Jewish community that contributed to the Ottoman secret service was that of the Kingdom of Naples. Two Ottoman spies, caught in Naples, confessed, for instance, the existence of a complex organization all over the kingdom acting under the order of the Ottoman Grand Admiral Barbarossa. The Habsburg commissioned Juan de Figueroa who started an investigation to prevent this leak of information which took him to Malfredonia facing the Adriatic and conveniently close to the Ottoman lands. There he detained several *Marranos* who confessed that they were sending information via their sons and brothers in Thessalonica. Realizing the danger of leaving a fifth column in such a strategic place located in the heart of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier, the Viceroy banned them from the city, accusing them of informing the Ottomans of Habsburg preparations. According to the Viceroy, they also went to the Ottoman and French side as agents and spies, when the French army had invaded the kingdom in 1528.²⁰⁰ Three years later, when the interesting figure of Astrume Elia, “the Jewish miracle-worker”, was arrested for espionage, he made similar confessions. His confessions provide the historian

¹⁹⁹ ASV, *IS*, 13 January 1585.

²⁰⁰ AGS, *E* 1017, fol. 39 (28 March 1533); Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 75.

with ample information on the career of a polyglot Jewish spy in between empires. Born in Naples, he traveled to several parts of the Mediterranean where he learned Castilian, French, Arabic, Turkish, Italian and Greek. He was Ibrahim Pasha's spy. However, following the Pasha's death which he erroneously believes to have happened while fighting the Safavids, he came back to Naples with letters of recommendation for the Jews who welcomed him. He then joined a secret network composed of spies on Ottoman payroll and among the ranks of which one could find several Jews.²⁰¹ Even though, in the end, his statements, filled with contradictions, were believed to be mere fabrications in order to hide his true mission, they still had a degree of validity, attesting to not only what Elia believed the extent of Ottoman network in Naples could be, but also what he thought would be credible to the Habsburg authorities. If he lied, he must have wanted to tell a credible lie. After a long process of investigation, torture and trial, the Viceroy, unable to discover the true nature and the extent of his mission, decided to let him go and then keep him under secret surveillance with the hope of discovering more. Much to his chagrin, however, Elia would take his secrets to the grave; he was found dead in the sea in June 1537. How he died remains a mystery.

Similarly, the Ottomans seemed to establish contacts with the Greeks that lived under the Venetian rule; but for the sake of brevity I do not enter into details.

6.5.3. Ottoman ambassadors and the problem of non-permanent diplomacy

The Ottomans refrained from following the example of their contemporaries in Europe and refused to establish permanent embassies abroad.

The reason was partly the Ottoman worldview, which put Constantinople at the center of the world, and the Sultan at the highest position in the hierarchy of world's

²⁰¹ AGS, E 1026, fols. 36 ff.; Moral, *Don Pedro de Toledo*, 80-2.

rulers. According to this, opening up diplomatic talks for a peace or establishing a permanent embassy in the court of another prince was unacceptable. It was other rulers who had had to keep a permanent agent in Constantinople. In a similar vein to Ottoman vassals or Governor-Generals did, these rulers should send their envoys to the Porte whose doors were open to anyone who came to ask, in humility, to be included among the friends of the Sultan (*âsitâne-i sa'âdet-ünnâmımız mesdûd olmayup inâyet-i hakk celle ve alâ ile dâimen mekşûf olup etrâf u cevânibde eğer dostluğa ve düşmanlığa kimesne geliip gitmesine men ü redd yokdur*).

Partly, however, this should still be linked to the underdevelopment of the Ottoman bureaucracy. While the European states developed rules of diplomacy and trained a corpus of diplomats, the Ottomans made the best of the day by, once again, delegating the responsibility of international diplomacy to their officials with or without some experience in diplomacy such as dragomans, chauses, *solaks*, *sipahis*, *subaşıs*, *müteferrikas*, *emins*,²⁰² and even to private persons with sufficient knowledge on European affairs, such as the afore-mentioned Salomon Ashkenazi and Gritti brothers. Add to that, the messages that were conveyed by countless Mediterranean go-betweens such as Gabriel Defrens and Hacı Murad.²⁰³ It was not so much that these figures lacked the necessary training and decorum (and they did!), but rather that these were not specifically trained to serve the interests of their state abroad along the lines more or less demarcated by the rules of diplomacy.

Whatever their shortcomings were, however, Ottoman diplomats were apt information gatherers, their curiosity having perhaps been provoked by their short tenure

²⁰² Walter Zele, “Aspetti delle Legazioni Ottomane nei *Diarii* di Marino Sanudo”, *Studi Veneziani* XVIII (1989): 252.

²⁰³ On Hacı Murad, see. Işıksel, “Hacı Murâd”.

and unfamiliarity with their destination. A close look to the activities of Ottoman ambassadors and envoys that arrived in Venice (by far the largest and the best documented corpus of examples) would illustrate the point. The Venetians were careful to limit the movements of Ottoman envoys who arrived in the Laguna with their retinue on some diplomatic mission. Their laws forbade government officials to have private conversations with foreign ambassadors concerning politics. They did not leave it to chance, however, and gave an escort to foreign ambassadors to keep an eye on them.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, they chose the residence allocated to the Ottoman ambassador carefully, in an effort to limit his observations and contact with potential informants.²⁰⁵ They moreover sought to get rid of the Ottoman envoys as soon as possible, evident from Sanudo's phrases of discomfort with Ottoman ambassadors who did not leave the Laguna rather quickly.²⁰⁶ The freedom of an Ottoman envoy depended upon the tone of the relations between two state. Some suffered several limitations during their stay, such as Ali Bey who was reduced to looking out of a window in a house arrest,²⁰⁷ while others traveled freely in the city such as Yunus Bey and the Ottoman ambassador in 1522, who not only dined with Venetian officials, but also received a present from a Venetian noble, the map of Istria and Dalmatia, an incident which caused a stir among the Venetian governing circles.²⁰⁸ During wartime, some Ottoman diplomats who wanted to come to

²⁰⁴ Zele, "Aspetti delle Legazioni Ottomane", 275.

²⁰⁵ For instance, in 1500, when the Ottomans sent a chaus to Venice for peace negotiations, the Council of Ten placed him in Ca' Dandolo next to *Palazzo Ducale*, instead of Giudecca, so that he could talk to nobody. Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 193. In 1522, the unnamed Ottoman ambassador was located by the *Collegio* in Ca' Ghisi at the center of the city to impede him from learning the extension of the city and the distance of the Terraferma. Sanudo, XXXIII, 447-450. Zele, "Aspetti delle Legazioni Ottomane", 267.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 267.

²⁰⁷ Sanudo, vol. V, col. 25. Also see. Segre and Cessi, *I Diarii di Girolamo Priuli*, vol. I, 286-7.

²⁰⁸ Sanudo, vol. XIX, col. 339; XXXIV, col. 100; 115-6, XXXIX, col. 118; LIII, col. 250; Zele, "Aspetti delle Legazioni Ottomane", 266.

Venice or pass through the city to go on another mission were denied entry to the city or passage to their final destination with the fear that these might have come for spying.²⁰⁹

The Ottoman ambassadors' efficiency in gathering information in such a short time in such a hostile environment gives one the impression that these were sent on a mission of as much espionage as diplomacy. Thus, Venetian fears seem to have been well grounded, especially when one looks at several instances quoted by Venetian sources where an Ottoman envoy showered the authorities with questions, acquired maps of strategic value and established suspicious contacts in spite of the Venetian efforts to prevent the contact between the locals and the foreign diplomats.²¹⁰ The Habsburg ambassador, Rodrigo Niño, had a couple of words to say regarding the efficiency of these precautions. When the Ottoman ambassador was dragging its feet not to leave Venice and wishing to spend the winter in the Lagoon, Niño concluded that he was not surprised that the Ottoman ambassador was so well informed of everything. In spite of living in the island of Giudecca under close surveillance, anybody who wanted to relate him some information could do so thanks to the intermediation of his several men who walked around freely in Venice.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Segre and Cessi, *I Diarii di Girolamo Priuli*, vol. I, 300; vol. II, 16, 21.

²¹⁰ In 1504, the Venetians suspected that the Ottoman *oratore* Mustafa was involved in the escape of three young men from a convent, even though they dropped the idea afterwards. Segre and Cessi, *I Diarii di Girolamo Priuli*, vol. II, 338; Sanudo, vol. V, col. 98. In 1517, Ali Bey wanted to go on top of the *campanile* of San Marco and asked several questions on the extension of the territory of the Republic, the means of defense, the distance between the centers of the Terraferma, the income in Laguna, the direction of Friuli and the countermeasures against a possible Ottoman attack. In 1518, the Venetians thought his successor, Yunus Bey, arrived for spying as well. In 1520, a certain Adamo was exiled because he had suspicious connections with the Ottoman envoy, the *mütefferika* Ahmed. Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 98-9. In 1566, they found some maps of Cyprus and Corsica in Ibrahim's house which was brought by a Granadine Moor who wanted to do Ibrahim a favor. In 1567, Kubad Chaus asked the Public Dragoman Michele Membré a series of questions regarding the income of Cyprus, land and naval forces of the Republic, its capacity to resist an attack, etc. Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 161 and 194. In 1600, the Habsburg ambassador to Venice suspected the arrival of an Ottoman chaus under the "color" of recovering the patrimony of a recently deceased Turk. He might simply be a spy. AGS, E K 1677, fol. 46 (3 July 1600).

²¹¹ AGS, E 1310, fol. 42 (24 September 1532).

6.5.4. Information Provider States: Ottoman Vassals and Allies

In spite of Ottoman ambassadors' efficiency in gathering information during their missions abroad, the Ottomans still could not be sure of a regular flow of information, informing them of events in Europe. They sought to use a couple of methods to overcome their disadvantage.

The first method, as mentioned above, was to rely on the information provided by the provincial administration, which could remedy the situation to a certain extent, especially in remote areas where the Ottomans had little direct control such as North Africa.

Second was the information sent by other states which could be categorized under two categories from a legalistic point of view, while in practice, the Ottomans saw no difference between the two. Firstly, for basic military reasons, the Ottomans established, promoted or at times allowed vassal states along their borders. Each of these vassal states was a political as well as a military convenience for the Ottomans, not only keeping the enemies at bay, but also, in some sort of a more autonomous administration, overtaking certain military and economic functions so dear to the Ottomans. In short, each of these vassal states (Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, Ragusa, Crimea, Caucasian principalities, Hidjaz) had their own responsibilities towards the state (Crimean cavalry participated in campaigns, while every year thousands of sheep arrived in Constantinople from the ports of Wallachia and Moldavia, etc.) as well as a sphere of influence. The Ottomans expected them to send information in tandem with their military responsibility of keeping the enemy at bay.²¹² The princes of Transylvania,²¹³ and Moldavia,²¹⁴ the

²¹² For orders sent to the prince of Transylvania, urging him to send spies to learn about enemy, see. BOA, *MD*, III, ff.; LX, no. 536 (H. 27 R 994/A.D. 17 April 1586); LXX, no. 247 (H. 15 Ra. 1001/A.D. 19

khans of Crimea,²¹⁵ the rulers of the Republic of Ragusa,²¹⁶ all dispatched spies against the enemy and sent information regarding their respective spheres of influence, not only to the center, but also to the nearby Ottoman Governor-General of whose interest the information might be worth.²¹⁷ Secondly, the Ottomans similarly expected their allies to provide them with information regarding the military and political developments around their territories.

Before proceeding to two most important information provider states, Venice and Ragusa, I would like to make one reservation. Even though the information that these states provided were instrumental to the Ottomans' understanding of European and Western Mediterranean politics, it should still not be forgotten that these sought to manipulate information in accordance with their own foreign policy priorities.²¹⁸ They remitted the information which could convince the Ottomans to make a decision that would serve their interests and held back those that could result in decisions that they

December 1592). For similar instructions to Moldavia, see. BOA, *MD*, III, nos. 93 and 350 (H. 22 Z 967/A.D. 13 September 1560), to Ragusa, see. *MD*, X, no. 383 (which mentions that it was the Ragusans' duty to send information, as an Ottoman vassal, in accordance with their "servitude" to the Ottomans, '*ubudiyetiniz muktezasınca*'); XII, no. 266 (H. 21 Za. 978/A.D. 16 April 1571). Also, see. Ágoston, "Information, Ideology and Limits", 89.

²¹³ BOA, *MD*, V, nos. 953, 1548 (H. 16 L 973/ A.D. 6 May 1566) and 1925. VI, no. 1134 (H. 13 L 972/A.D. 14 May 1565); VII, nos. 2540 and 2743; XXIII, no. 19; LXX, no. 296 (H. 28 S 1001/A.D. 3 December 1592). Also, *MD*, VII, no. 1008 and XXIII, no. 19, cited by Dávid, "Mühimme Defters", 199.

²¹⁴ BOA, *MD*, V, no. 747 (H. 9 C 983 / A.D. 1 October 1566); XIV, nos. 507 and 508 (H. 12 Ra. 978/ A.D. 14 August 1570).

²¹⁵ BOA, *MD*, XXX, nos. 610 and 611 (H. 28 Ra. 985/A.D. 15 June 1577).

²¹⁶ Most of the information that was recorded in MD registers are from the War of 1570-3, another proof the close relation between intelligence and war. BOA, *MD*, VII, nos. 503, 704, 705, 1261 and 2767; XII, nos. 266 (H. 21 Za. 978/A.D. 16 April 1571), 529 (H. 22 M 979/A.D. 15 June 1571) and 856 (29 Ra. 979/A.D. 20 August 1571); XIV, nos. 97 (H. 16 M 979/A.D. 9 June 1571), 307 (H. 14 S 978/A.D. 18 July 1570), 758 (H. 28 C 978/A.D. 27 November 1570), 854 (6 C 978/A.D. 5 November 1570) and 1644 (H. 21 L 978/A.D. 18 March 1571); XIX, nos. 128 (H. Gurre-yi Ş 980/A.D. 7 December 1572), 254, 656, 710 and 711; XXII, no. 208; XXIII, no. 175 (H. 6 B 981/A.D. 1 November 1573); XXXIX, no. 679 (H. 10 Ra. 988/A.D. 24 April 1580). LIII, no. 357 (H. 27 B 992/A.D. 4 August 1584); DAD, *Acta Turcorum*, A8 9a, A8 10, K 68, K 113, A7 29a and K 82. See. Biegman, "Ragusan Spying".

²¹⁷ See. BOA, *MD*, VI, no. 1134 (H. 13 L 972/A.D. 14 May 1565) according to which the Prince of Transylvania sent information not to Constantinople, but to the Governor-General of Temeşvar.

²¹⁸ Ágoston, "Információszerzés és kémkedés", 151.

deemed harmful. In short, the accuracy and the impartiality of the information that a given state provided the Ottomans with depended upon the relationship between Constantinople and the given state as well as the given state's position according to possible Ottoman foreign policy options. By providing the Ottomans with information, these vassals and allies thus gained the opportunity of being a part of the Ottoman decision-making process.

6.5.4.1. In between two Empires: The Republic of Ragusa

Among these vassal states, Ragusa by far and large played the most important role for the Ottoman secret service in the Mediterranean, justified by its strategic location as well its commercial and diplomatic networks all around the Mediterranean.²¹⁹ Stuck between two colossal empires, both of which were aware of their duplicity,²²⁰ the Ragusan authorities regularly sent information to the Ottomans as well, concerning the events in the Western Mediterranean,²²¹ Europe and even farther: news of the succession of a new pope,²²² events in France, *cose di Francia*, the departure of the Habsburg fleet from Naples for the Portuguese expedition,²²³ the Duke of Alba's victory against Dom Antonio,²²⁴ preparations of the Habsburg Great Armada...²²⁵ Their network of consuls throughout the Europe²²⁶ should have compensated for the side effects created by the Ottoman lack of permanent ambassadors abroad; once again the Sublime Porte seemed to

²¹⁹ For Ottoman-Ragusan relations in the 16th century, see. Biegman, *Turco-Ragusan Relationship* and Metin Ziya Köse, *Doğu Akdeniz'de Casuslar ve Tacirler: Osmanlı Devleti ve Ragusa İlişkileri, 1500-1600* (İstanbul: Giza Yayınları, 2009).

²²⁰ BOA, MD, XVI, no. 633 (H. 9 Ra. 979/A.D. 31 July 1571); AGS, E 1331, fols. 35 (10 April 1572) and 99 (2 September 1572).

²²¹ For instance, they sent an express courier informing the Ottomans of the fall of Mahdiyya to the Habsburgs in 1550, a crucial information which renewed the war between Suleyman and Charles V. Sola, *Los que van y vienen*, 82.

²²² DAD, *Lettere di Levante*, 11 February 1592.

²²³ DAD, *Lettere di Levante*, 24 November 1579, 20 January 1580.

²²⁴ AGS, E 1338, fol. 64 (28 October 1580).

²²⁵ Biegman, *Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, 129-130 and idem., "Ragusan Spying".

²²⁶ See figure 1 in Dedijer, "Ragusan Intelligence", 108.

have delegated its responsibilities. Using their dual position between the two empires, the Ragusan authorities moreover sent spies to Europe on Ottoman account.²²⁷ In the crucial period of the Siege of Malta, when Constantinople lost direct contact with its navy, these agents seemed to have proven their worth; a Habsburg spy located in Ragusa comments:

“here every ten days, arrive the news from Messina, particularly regarding what Signor Don Garcia [de Toledo], General of His Majesty, does...when he washes his face, soon its news arrive here and then leaves the city a Turk, carrying the news to Constantinople.”²²⁸

Furthermore, as there were Habsburg spies in Ragusa, there were Ottoman ones as well. In 1580, the rumour was that a Jewish spy in Ottoman employ was secretly assassinated by the Ragusans.²²⁹ Add to all these, the network that operated under the supervision of the Archbishop of Ragusa, Filippo Trivulzio (o. 1521-1543), who was sending information not only to France, but also, on the orders of the French king, to the Ottomans.²³⁰

6.5.4.2. The Most Serene Republic of Venice

In Ottoman eyes, an ally was no less responsible from sending information than a vassal, in accordance with the friendship and military alliance with the Porte. Venice²³¹ played a role similar to that of Ragusans, serving both empires. The Ottomans repeatedly asked information from Venice²³² and demonstrated a threatening attitude when the

²²⁷ AGS, *E* 1047, fol. 8 (22 March 1554) and *E* 1331, fol. 99 (2 September 1572) mention spies in Rome, Naples and Messina. According to Portillo, Ragusan frigates that claimed to bring news should immediately be sent back from Habsburg ports with a proper excuse so that they could not spy on the Habsburg navy. *E* 1332, fol. 185 (30 May 1572).

²²⁸ AGS, *E* 1054, fol. 173 (5 August 1565).

²²⁹ AGS, *E* 1541, fol. 199 (25 November 1599).

²³⁰ J. Tadić, *Španija I Dubrovnik*, (Belgrade: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, 1932), 60-2, quoted by Harris, *Dubrovnik*, 111; AGS, *E* 1028, fol. 23 (20 April 1538); *E* 1311, fols. 83-5 (19 March 1534).

²³¹ Even though Venice was not exactly an Ottoman ally, the Ottomans expected certain services from the Venetians as required by the friendship between two states, accentuated in many of the *fermans* extant among ASV's *DocTR*. As the recipient of an Ottoman '*ahdname*', the Venetians had to rely on Ottoman good will towards their merchant communities; they were also dependent upon the Ottoman grain.

²³² ASV, *DocTR*, b. 3, nos. 315 and 336; b. 4, no. 467. ; b. 5, no. 655

Venetians fell short of their expectations.²³³ The Venetians became increasingly more willing to provide the information after 1573 in exchange for the Ottoman permission to recruit soldiers and import grain from the Balkans. This willingness did not escape the attention of the Habsburgs who labeled the Venetians, *amancebada*, concubine, of the Ottomans.²³⁴ They even concealed information from them, such as in 1530, that the navy which was being prepared in Genoa was destined for Valona.²³⁵ They were not unjustified in their caution: between the turbulent years of 1533 and 1535, when both empires clashed over Tunis, for instance, The Council of Ten passed sensitive information to the Venetian bailo concerning the Habsburg Navy to be remitted to the Ottomans.²³⁶ They should have heeded to the request the Ottomans made to *oratore* Pietro Zen in 1533; they had reminded the experienced diplomat that the Venetians would sure know what the Habsburg navy was up to as they could even tell what fishes were doing at the bottom of the sea.²³⁷ Similarly, in 1611, when the Venetians were suspicious of a Habsburg attack on Serbia and Albania, they quickly sent two noblemen to Castelnuovo to inform the Ottomans.²³⁸ The Ottoman reliance on the Venetians was such that, not only Constantinople, but also local authorities demanded information²³⁹ and that the Ottomans asked for information even regarding their own fleet when it was operating out of reach in the Western Mediterranean.²⁴⁰

²³³ ASV, *DocTR*, b. 3, nos. 338, 340 and 343.

²³⁴ Preto, *Servizi Segreti*, 117.

²³⁵ AGS, *E* 1308, fol. 31 (11 April 1530).

²³⁶ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 4, cc. 11v (11 July 1533), 36r (26 October 1534) and 51r-51v (14 August 1535).

²³⁷ Sardella, *Nouvelles et Spéculations*, 15.

²³⁸ AGS, *E* 1335, fol. 220 (22 September 1611).

²³⁹ ASV, *DocTR*, b. 5, no. 705.

²⁴⁰ ASV, *DocTR*, b. 4, no. 507 (14-23 July 1543); BOA, *MD*, VI, no. 1424 (H. Evasit-ı Z 972/ A.D. 9-18 July 1565).

Ottomans' other allies in Europe in the 16th century, France and England, followed the example of the Venetians, to varying degrees. For the sake of brevity and in order to avoid repetition, I do not discuss those in detail.

6.5.5. Pressurizing European diplomats in Constantinople

It was only natural that the Ottomans, under these circumstances, saw European diplomats residing in Constantinople as legitimate sources of information.²⁴¹ It was very common for an Ottoman Grand Vizier to send for European ambassadors and ask questions regarding the political situation in Europe as well as geographical and strategic details of their potential targets. For instance, in 1521, the Ottoman pashas interviewed the Venetian *oratore* Marco Minio who had just arrived in Constantinople in order to congratulate Süleyman I's conquest of Rhodes and thus could provide them with detailed information regarding the latest political developments. Their questions give us a clue about what type of information interested the Ottomans and what they knew and what not:

“...asking me first of the power of the Pontiff and the way by which he found money, and I exaggerated his power, yet conveniently so that they could believe in what I was telling them; and so I told them in general that he could easily find a large quantity of money. Then they asked the number of soldiers, both infantry and cavalry, that the Emperor could put to the field, I invented big numbers (*li feci le cose molto grandi*), trying to confirm what I had told by declaring the kingdoms which that Caesar possessed, with the recent addition of Germany, thanks to his election as the Emperor...Similarly, they asked me about the Most Christian King and I exaggerated also his things (*le cose sue*) a great deal. Then they asked me how Your Sublimity's relations were with each king; I told them that you were in peace with both of the aforementioned Majesties. They told me: you are in fact more bound (*congiunti*) to France than to emperor. I responded them that it was true that Your Sublimity had particular relationship (*intelligenza*) with the Majesty of France, but that because of this you were not but in good peace with the aforementioned emperor. They moreover asked me of much information regarding Rome (*particolarità di Roma*), and

²⁴¹ Ágoston, “Information, Ideology and Limits”, 84; idem, “Birodalom és információ”, 45-48.

how many days it took between Constantinople and Rome, and which would be the easier route to go there, in such a way that one cannot come to another conclusion than that they were discussing to undertake an expedition against the Christianity... They asked me, if I believed that the Pontiff would give him [the king of Hungary] help; I told them yes. They asked me, moreover, what he [the king of Hungary] had to do with the Serenissimo Emperor, I declared kinship.”²⁴²

It seems like the Ottomans had previous knowledge on the subject and they were trying to compare and contrast the information they had; evident from their refusal to accept Minio's argument that Venice was on good terms with both Emperor Charles V and Francis I, just at the beginning of a Franco-Venetian alliance against the Habsburgs. What they were after, it appears, were up-to-date information concerning the recent changes in the political relations between European powers, but even more, strategic information that the Venetian orator could reveal such as how much military power that the Emperor and Francis I had, where the Pope found the money from and even simple questions regarding whereabouts of Rome.

The simplicity of the question might have one think that this interrogation could be an Ottoman manipulation, an effort of disinformation, in order to scare the Venetians or spread the word of an incoming Ottoman descend in Europe which was not to come for another 5 years. However, this seems unlikely, given that it would produce counter-results for the Ottoman foreign policy. The Ottomans generally abstained from making too much noise before an expedition against Europe in order not to unite their enemies. For instance, the Ottomans would write letters to the Protestants of the Holy Roman Empire, assuring them that their enemy

²⁴² Albèri, *Le Relazioni*, vol. IX, 75-77.

was the Emperor and not them. In the very same interrogation, Mustafa Pasha advised Minio that the Venetians should stay neutral in order to evade the Ottoman wrath. Furthermore, questions that seemed easy to answer to a modern mind may be a puzzle for one in the 16th century; there were several other examples where the Ottoman pashas asked such simple geographical and strategic information. In 1565, for instance, Sokollu asked the Ragusan ambassador similar questions: where was Puglia? How far was it from Castelnuovo? How well-fortified was it? How many thousand cavalry could there be?²⁴³ Six years later, he was to ask the Venetian bailo under house arrest, Marc'antonio Barbaro, whether the Pope had possessions near Puglia.²⁴⁴

The afore-mentioned quotation also demonstrates the failure of this type of method for gathering information. Minio manifestly manipulated every piece of information in order to achieve the objectives of the Venetian foreign policy at the time, i.e., to keep the Ottomans away from Europe. In another example, The Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, upon hearing that their ally, France, signed a peace treaty with the Habsburgs, called the Venetian bailo to ask him what news his government gave him regarding the recent developments in Europe. The bailo quickly told how the Pope was instrumental in assuring the cooperation between the two monarchs and that the King of England would follow the suit as well. Obviously, the information bailo provided infuriated Rüstem who was reported to be determinant not to send the Ottoman fleet to the French help anymore and thus created a stir in the Ottoman-French relations. The French reply was quick to come though: while on the one hand the French ambassador in

²⁴³ AGS, *E* 1054, fol. 205 (28 September 1565).

²⁴⁴ Lesure, "Notes et Documents", 144-145, fn. 47.

Constantinople was trying to assure the Ottomans that his King would never sign a peace with the Emperor, his colleague in Venice was complaining about the bailo's behaviour to the Venetian *Signoria*.²⁴⁵ This opportunity to manipulate information and thus indirectly affect the Ottoman decision-making should explain the unusual willingness of the Council of Ten to send information to its bailo to be passed to the Ottomans. Three years after the conclusion of the disastrous war with the Ottomans, they ordered the bailo to inform Sokollu that the revolt in Genoa was over after the intervention of Gregory III, Philip II and Maximilian II, the peace between Henry III and Huguenots was promulgated in the French armies as well as the city of Paris, from Flanders no news of a rising (*moto*) arrived after the death of Philip II's *comendador*, Don Luis de Requesens, the Habsburgs navy remained divided in different provinces, and Don Juan of Austria would go to Vigevano in Milan.²⁴⁶ Peace in Europe, no direct threat from the Habsburgs. In short, no need to send a navy to the Western Mediterranean.

To overcome the possibility of manipulation, the Ottomans either had to compare and contrast the information they received from different sources or find means to spy on these ambassadors so that they could get a hold onto the information they received from their governments to the fullest extent, i.e., connecting themselves with the source of information without the intermediation of the ambassador. It was easy for them to put pressure on the dragomans that worked in these embassies for these were Ottoman subjects; most of them were working for these embassies with the knowledge of the Ottomans anyways.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Ottomans could attract, by handsome financial remunerations, people from the ambassadors' chancellery and entourage, whose

²⁴⁵ AGS, *E* 1321, fol. 101.

²⁴⁶ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 99r-99v (6 June 1576).

²⁴⁷ Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits", 86.

defection would be of great benefit to the Ottoman secret service, thanks not only to the information these would bring, but also to the familiarity they had with European chancellery techniques. For instance, the Ottomans managed to cryptanalyze the letters of the Bailo Vettore Bragadin only with the help of one of the *giovani di lingua*, Colombina who was sent to Constantinople to study Ottoman, but later converted to Islam on Sokollu's insistence.²⁴⁸ Colombina would serve in the Ottoman chancellery for years, appearing frequently in correspondence between the bailo and the Council of Ten.²⁴⁹ A disgruntled employee could always be an east target. The Austrian ambassador Frederick von Kregwitz's steward converted to Islam in 1593, only to denounce the intelligence his master had with the wife of the Ottoman Sultan who betrayed state secrets to him and to personally appear with chauses at the ambassador's door to search his house and detain his papers that included confidential information.²⁵⁰ Similarly, the Ottomans, upon hearing the detention of the bailo Lippomano in his house by his own government, invited Lorenzo Bernardo whom the Council of Ten sent to Constantinople to secure Lippomano's removal from office and safe transfer to Venice. Acting surprised of receiving a new bailo without their authorization and trying to understand the real story, the Ottoman Grand Vizier insisted that, as was the custom with other baili, Lippomano should appear in front of him and obtain a license to leave before sailing for Venice. The shrewd Bernardo quickly realized the danger behind allowing Lippomano who had already betrayed many state secrets to Philip II, to talk to the Grand Vizier. He wisely

²⁴⁸ ASV, *CCX-LettAmb*, b. 3, fol. 55; Villain-Gandossi, *Les Dépêches Chiffrées*, 77; Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 42.

²⁴⁹ In 1578, he was even designated as the Ottoman envoy to the *Serenissima*, to great chagrin and protest of the Venetian authorities. ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 11, cc. 154v (24 March 1578), fil. 20, 24 March 1578.

²⁵⁰ Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas*, 109-117.

replied that it was not the custom that such a dismissed, *ma'zul*, person should appear before the Grand Vizier.²⁵¹

6.6. OTTOMAN TRANSMISSION OF NEWS

The methods by which the Ottoman central and provincial authorities communicated were different than those used by the Habsburgs. First, the Ottoman postal system²⁵² was operated by the state rather than leased to private entrepreneurs as was the case with the Habsburgs and described in Chapter Four. Second, the fact that the Ottoman Empire consisted of adjacent territories and lacked permanent ambassadors abroad meant that the correspondence between Ottoman officers did not run the risk which correspondence that reached Madrid from Milan, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Flanders, Burgundy, and presidios in North Africa ran, that of being intercepted by a third party. The sole exception to this should be the communication by sea, especially those between Constantinople and North Africa.

Until the 16th century, there was no organized postal system. A messenger that carried the *ulak hükmü*, an order proving that he was an imperial courier (*ulak*), had the right to take at will any horse from travelers on the road and the locals were responsible with his provisioning. In order get rid of the abuses on local population,²⁵³ however,

²⁵¹ Augusto Tormene, "Girolamo Lippomano", n.s., 4, t. 7 (1904), 83-4.

²⁵² See. Colin Heywood, "Some Turkish Archival Sources for the History of the Menzilhane Network in Rumeli during the Eighteenth Century", *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi, Beşeri Bilimler. Humanities* 4-5 (1976-1977): 39-54; idem, "The Ottoman Menzilhane and Ulak System in Rumeli in the Eighteenth Century," in *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi (1071-1920)*, ed. Osman Okyar and Halil İnalcık (Ankara: Meteksan, 1980), 179-186; idem, "The Via Egnatia in the Ottoman Period: The Menzilhanes of the Sol Kol in the Late 17th/Early 18th Century," in *Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymon: Crete University Press, 1996), 129-144. All three articles are reprinted in Colin Heywood, *Writing Ottoman History: Documents and Interpretations* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002); Also see. Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme: Menziller* (Ankara: PTT Genel Müdürlüğü, 2002).

²⁵³ See for a good example of a report lamenting the abuses of these *ulaks*, TSMA, E 3192. Even Selim I himself demonstrated remorse in front of such abuses, Lutfi Paşa, *Tevârih-i âl-i 'Osmân* (Istanbul 1341), 371-80. There were still abuses even after Lutfi's reforms. See. BOA, MD, XLIV, no. 233; XLIX, no. 499.

Suleyman's Grand Vizier, Lütü Pasha reformed the system. A number of post stations, called *menzils*, were established in varying distances according to geographical conditions, between 3 and 18 hours of horse-ride according to a document from the end of the 16th century.²⁵⁴ Generally, messages could quickly be remitted to the center, carried by *ulaks* that operated between two *menzils*. For matters that required urgency, there were also express couriers, *hususî emirle gelen ulak*²⁵⁵, who carried important or secret messages (*mühim ve müsta'cel husus*)²⁵⁶ directly from the sender to the recipient without trusting it to other *ulaks* who operated only between two *menzils*. When such an *ulak* arrived with an *in'am hükmü*, he could then take a horse from and rest in these *menzils*. In an effort to expedite the process, frontier *ulaks* did not have to carry an *in'am hükmü*, given the exceptional conditions of Ottoman frontiers.

The *menzils* had a number of permanent staff, such as *menzil emini*, *menzil kethüdası*, *ahur kethüdası*, etc. While these were responsible with the maintenance of the *menzil*, it was mainly the *kadı* who had the task to supervise the functioning of the system. This postal system was by no means open to public. The use of the horses in these *menzils* was exclusive to governmental correspondence; even the officers themselves were not allowed to use them for their private affairs.²⁵⁷ These *menzils* had a military function as well; they were used to provision the army during a campaign.

²⁵⁴ BOA, KK, nr. 2555, Yusuf Halaçoğlu "Klasik Dönemde Osmanlılarda Haberleşme ve Yol Sistemi." In *Çağımı Yakalayan Osmanlı! Osmanlı Devleti'nde Modern Haberleşme ve Ulaştırma Teknikleri*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu et al., (İstanbul: IRCICA, 1995), 14.

²⁵⁵ Halaçoğlu, *Menziller*, 4. Note that this term offered by Halaçoğlu was not uniformly used in the 16th century. Most of the MD registers use the term *ulak* for express couriers as well. BOA, MD, XIV, no. 442 (H. 23 S 978/A.D. 27 July 1570); XIX, no. 487 (H. 24 N 980/A.D. 19 February 1571); XLIV, no. 233.

²⁵⁶ BOA, MD, XIX, nos. 488 (H. 22 N 980/A.D. 26 January 1573) and 521 (H. 2 R 980/A.D. 11 August 1571).

²⁵⁷ BOA, MD, XXX, no. 62 (H. 25 M 985/A.D. 14 April 1577); XLIV, no. 233; LI, no. 63.

The money to support this system did not directly come from state coffers in the form of cash payment. Instead, the Ottomans financed those by creating a special tax called *menzilkeş*, within the system of the *avarız-ı divaniye* taxes, a number of financial or service responsibilities which the state first imposed as a temporary tax during extraordinary circumstances, but never revoked later. When this amount did not suffice, other revenues were created, depending on the situation, which are of little relevance to our subject.

The system was created in order ensure communication within the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Ottomans needed other means to communicate with European rulers, their agents outside the Empire and the navy when it was operating in the Western Mediterranean. Let us now concentrate on these other means.

The most effective postal system between the Ottoman Empire and Europe belonged to the Venetians; naturally the Ottomans, as well as other diplomats such as the French ambassador²⁵⁸ had to rely on the Venetians,²⁵⁹ even at the risk of their letters being secretly opened and read. When they could, they entrusted the resident ambassador of a foreign power who, accompanied by a *chaus* until the border, would proceed to his country with letters to his ruler. They also sent envoys that delivered special messages of importance in person, some of whom we mentioned before.

It is less clear how Ottomans communicated with their spies outside the empire where the Ottomans did not have a functioning postal system. Those who were sent on ad-hoc missions reported their findings upon their return to their employers, whether in the provinces or in the center. The communication between Constantinople and the

²⁵⁸ ASV, *CX-ParSec*, reg. 8, cc. 82v-83v (9 April 1567).

²⁵⁹ ASV, *DocTR*, b. 6, no. 805; b. 8, no. 1014.

resident spies were realized via the existing means of communication. Ottoman spies used mainly the Venetian postal system, using fake names and without revealing true intentions, such as Ludovico Veggia, writing from Rome to Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha²⁶⁰ or David Passi whose letters, as mentioned above, aroused the suspicion of the Council of Ten.

The Ottomans sent small ships, *kalyete*, mostly captained by a corsair, to communicate with their navy, especially when the latter was operating in the Western Mediterranean.²⁶¹ For instance, during the corsairs' siege of Oran (1556), it was another corsair, Uluç Ali, who arrived from Constantinople with the imperial order that 40 galleys should immediately return to the Levant.²⁶² If operating nearby, it sufficed to send a chaus, such as a certain Süleyman who was sent to (this time the Grand Admiral) Uluç Ali.²⁶³ When the communication via sea proved impossible, couriers were sent via land as well, until the nearest port.²⁶⁴ Sometimes, in order to assure that a message reached the navy, two couriers were sent, one from the land and one from the sea.²⁶⁵ This system was not fool-proof, however. The Ottomans seemed to have lost contact with their navy during the siege of Malta. It was the Venetians who received, encrypted and passed the orders sent by the Ottoman Sultan to the besieging Ottoman forces on the one hand and kept Constantinople informed of the conditions of the siege on the other.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 14, cc. 128v (22 November 1601).

²⁶¹ İdris Bostan, *Osmanlılar ve Deniz: Deniz Politikası, Teşkilat, Gemiler* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2007), 126.

²⁶² Aziz Samih İlter, *Şimali Afrika'da Türkler* (İstanbul: Vakıf Matbaası, 1936), vol. I, 133. Also see. BOA, MD, III, nos. 580, 581, 582, 583, 624 and 629.

²⁶³ BOA, MD, XIX, no. 508 (H. 21 N 980 / A.D. 21 January 1573).

²⁶⁴ BOA, MD, LXXIII, no. 987 (H. 11 L 1003/A.D. 10 July 1593).

²⁶⁵ BOA, MD, XIV, no. 442 (H. 23 S 978/A.D. 27 July 1570).

²⁶⁶ ASV, CX-ParSec, reg. 8, cc. 79r-80r (18 February 1566, m.v.); BOA, MD, VI, no. 1424 (H. Evasıt-ı Z 972/A.D. 9-18 July 1565).

6.7. THE EFFICIENCY OF OTTOMAN SECRET SERVICE

The Ottomans strove hard to remain up-to-date with political developments in Europe. The geographical extent of the Ottoman secret service is impressive at first glance, reaching not only nearby Rome, Naples, Sicily and Austria, but also farther France, Spain and even Flanders.²⁶⁷ Ottoman agents succeeded in overcoming enemy vigilance and traveled extensively in their dominions. Some of these agents were really experts in their profession, impressing the reader with their ability to cross cultural and geographical borders as well as to establish contacts with important political figures. The polyglot agent of Sokollu, a Transylvanian renegade named Marxeben Lener, for instance, spied in Germany on the one hand and defrauded the Emperor with false promises on the other in 1575. The next year, he was spotted by Habsburg counter intelligence and reported to have left Constantinople for his new targets. He would first go to Naples where he would pretend to re-convert to Christianity and stay in the Viceroy's house. From there he would pass to Rome, Venice and finally to Spain, to the Habsburg court.²⁶⁸ A more impressive example is that of Baron de la Fage, a French renegade, originally from Languedoc, who was an agent for the Queen of England as well as a spy in Ottoman employ. With the alibi of converting to Christianity (*reduzirse al gremio de la sancta madre*), he went to Italy where he not only spied for the Ottomans, but also established contacts with people of importance. He received "many favours" from the Grand Duke of Tuscany as well as Henry IV's ambassador in Florence.

²⁶⁷ AGS, E 1054, fol. 173 (5 August 1565); E 1072, fol. 232, E 1144, fol. 212; E 1327, fol. 7 (28 January 1570); E 1331, fol. 232 (10 September 1572); E 1332, fol. 198 (16 July 1573); E 1333, fols. 48 (21 June 1574) and 74; E 1894, fols. 6, 94 and 95 (20-21 October 1622). Add to those the afore-mentioned examples of the Ayalas and the team of Mida-Martinengo-Abbatis. Also see. Canosa and Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo: Aspetti della Guerra Secreta Turco-Spagnola in Mediterraneo nel Cinquecento* (Palermo: Sellerio Editore, 1991), ff.

²⁶⁸ AGS, E 1072, fol. 232.

Furthermore, he went to Rome where he had an audience with the Pope Innocent IX and several cardinals. He offered to win the Governor of Negroponte back to the Christianity and seize several galleys which the renegade Christians sailed. He then passed to Venice and contacted the Habsburg ambassador for money; yet the ambassador de Vera, otherwise very friendly and supportive to spies, quickly realized de la Fage's true nature and refused him help. Continuing his machinations, he tricked four Christian boys to accompany him to Levant, under the pretense of showing them the Ottoman Empire, nevertheless with the intention of either selling them into slavery or forcing them to convert to Islam. On his way back, he defrauded the captain of the ship he embarked for Cattaro and took his 450 escudos as well as other goods promising to buy horses for him. Upon his return, he revealed the identity of a number of leading Habsburg spies in Constantinople, including David Passi and Guglielmo de Saboya. Enjoying his successes, de la Fage was making fun of the Pope and Cardinal de Santa Severina by showing off with brevets and safe-conducts that he acquired from them. Unfortunately for the Ottomans, he died in the fall of 1592 in a plague epidemic.²⁶⁹

The Ottomans managed to diversify the channels of information and effectively compare and contrast the news that reached them even during the times of crisis, such as the turbulent years of 1570-3. In 1571, an Ottoman spy in pilgrim disguise was detained in Ragusa.²⁷⁰ A year later, a number of Ottoman spies appeared in Habsburg possessions. News of the Christian Armada was reaching Uluç Ali with letters from Sicily; an Ottoman agent returned from Spain and Flanders with the news of Habsburg military preparations, Philip II's fear of the Dutch and difficulties in financing his wars; a veteran

²⁶⁹ AGS, *E* K 1675, fols. 142, 167b (15 August 1592), 172 (5 September 1592) and 183 (24 October 1592); K 1677, fol. 5 (2 February 1602).

²⁷⁰ AGS, *E* 1329, fols. 57 (2 June 1571) and 59 (2 June 1571).

agent appeared in Ragusa carrying Sokollu's letters of safe-conduct to proceed to Rome under the pretense of ransoming slaves.²⁷¹ A year later, if what Portillo wrote was true, there were 30 spies in the Sultan's employ, operating in Naples and Sicily to follow the movements of the Christian Navy.²⁷² In addition to these spies, corsairs in the Adriatic under the leadership of the afore-mentioned Kara Hoca, provincial governors and Ragusan authorities were trying to keep Constantinople up-to-date regarding the military preparations and whereabouts of the enemy navy. When all these failed, there were always European diplomats in Constantinople who could share information, including even the Venetian bailo. Albeit under house arrest, he was still corresponding with Venice and thus could be pressurized to reveal information.²⁷³

It was not only military information that reached Constantinople. The Ottomans seemed to develop efficient channels of communication that furnished them with information regarding international politics as well. The Ottoman authorities were aware of the changing balances-of-power and thus the diplomatic possibilities open to them, evident from their counterarguments in front of foreign ambassadors, such as the one that Mustafa Pasha gave Marco Minio concerning Venice's position between Charles V and Francis I. The Ottoman envoy to Venice, the Dragoman Yunus Bey demonstrated a similar familiarity with European politics while discussing in 1532 with a middleman between him and the Habsburg ambassador, Rodrigo Niño to whom Yunus offered his intermediation in securing a truce between Charles V and Suleyman I. During the conversation, the middleman, Lorenzo Belojo argued that Charles V would under no circumstances send an ambassador to Constantinople and seek for a truce given the

²⁷¹ AGS, *E* 1332, fol. 232 (10 September 1572).

²⁷² AGS, *E* 1332, fol. 198 (16 July 1573).

²⁷³ Lesure, "Notes et Documents", 144-145, fn. 47.

grandeur and dignity he had among the Christians; Yunus Bey should better rely on the Venetian intermediation. Yunus answered that the Venetians would have little inclination to intervene for such a truce given that all the Christian princes wanted to see each other in war and necessity such as the Kings of France and England who were envying the Emperor; the French king was the reason why the Ottomans were in Hungary. The Emperor was in a fragile position and had better sign a truce given that from the far away Spain he could do little to prevent the powerful Ottoman army. When Lorenzo insisted that the Emperor was all-powerful, Yunus Bey went on with his comments on the political future of Christianity. The Emperor would not negotiate with the Pope the issue of a Council, all the Protestant would be his enemies, all the Catholics in Germany would be Lutherans and, with the fear of Ferdinand, all would turn to the Ottomans. Had they not already send many letters to the Ottoman Sultan?²⁷⁴ Evidently, the experienced dragoman was an expert of diplomatic negotiations in the Porte who had access to detailed information;²⁷⁵ he was present as a translator during the negotiations of the French diplomat Rincón with the Ottoman pashas, for instance. Still, his ideas should also reflect the perceptions and opinions of the Ottoman decision-makers, during the critical time of 1532, just after the Ottoman armies returned from a campaign of massive scale, *Alaman Seferi*, with the hope of rallying the Protestants around their flag and conquering Vienna.

We had already concluded in Chapter Two that the Ottomans made good use of secret diplomacy as a part of their military planning. Before undertaking an expedition,

²⁷⁴ AGS, E 1310, fol. 42 (24 December 1532).

²⁷⁵ Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, “À propos de Yûnus Beg, Baş Tercümân de Soliman le Magnifique”, in *Istanbul et ses langues orientales : Actes du colloque organisé par l'IFÉA et l'INALCO à l'occasion du bicentenaire de l'École des langues orientales, Istanbul, 29-31 mai 1995*, ed. Frédéric Hitzel (Paris : L'Harmatan, 1995), 23-39.

they not only gathered information, but also resorted to clandestine measures such as espionage and defection. Furthermore, in certain instances, the Ottoman secret service proved its efficiency by anticipating an incoming enemy attack and making necessary preparations. In 1572, they learned from a Venetian noble that the Venetians would attack Castelnuovo in four months. In this time, they managed to make necessary military preparations by piling up ammunition within the castle and entrusting five governors with a relieving mission.²⁷⁶ Similarly, the *dils* that corsairs brought in 1573 informed that the enemy's next target would be Tunis, a piece of information which was transmitted to Tunis immediately.²⁷⁷

Before concluding, however, we should differentiate between the information and knowledge. Even though the Ottomans received information regarding the recent political events in Europe and military preparations of their enemies, there was still room for improvement for the Ottoman elite's knowledge on the Christian world in general. Their interest did not extend much beyond pragmatic reasons and remained within the context of their own political aims. It is true that some Ottoman officers demonstrated a genuine interest in things European and seemed to have acquired enough knowledge; still this was by no means the norm among the Ottoman decision-makers.

In terms of Mediterranean geography, the existence of manuals such as *Kitab-ı Bahriye* as well as the incorporation of expert corsairs did not seem to educate some high-level Ottoman grandees whose training was based and careers depended on land warfare rather than naval. For instance, perhaps quite shockingly to a modern mind, the Ottoman Grand Admiral Sinan Pasha interrupted the Venetian bailo Bernardo Navagero

²⁷⁶ AGS, E 1331, fol. 221 (20 May 1572).

²⁷⁷ BOA, MD, XXII, nos. 416 (H. 14 R 981 / A.D. 12 August 1573) and 419.

when the latter mentioned Rome in their conversation: where was this Rome? Did the Venetians have merchants that informed them from this city? Navagero explained to him that it was the center (*patrona*) of the world, the seat of the Pope and one of the most important cities of Italy and perhaps the world.²⁷⁸ It could be argued that Sinan Pasha was a graduate of the Ottoman palace school, the *Enderun*, where he received a classical training based on land warfare and he only became the Ottoman Grand Admiral thanks to the nepotism of his brother, the Grand Vizier, Rüstem Pasha instead of his naval skills. Still, the fact that months before he took the Ottoman navy into a daring expedition in the Western Mediterranean, the Ottoman Grand Admiral did not know where Rome was remains perplexing. Furthermore, Rome was not just a Mediterranean city, but the center of the Christian world; his unawareness extends well beyond geography. Should we look for other explanations? For instance, given that the two were originally conversing on whether the bailo could confirm the widespread rumours regarding the unexpected Habsburg attack on Mahdiyya, it could also be argued that Sinan Pasha asked a trick question in order to learn about the sources of information the Venetians had in Rome. Still, it is hard to explain what he would do with such useless information regarding who informed (actually in this case, failed to inform) Navagero from Rome. Perhaps, if he himself had Venetian agents in the city, was he trying to realize whether they were in a double game? Even if this could be the case, this explanation is still not fully satisfactory. If he had Venetian agents in Rome, what was so striking, given the entrepreneurial nature of early modern espionage so many times accentuated in this dissertation, that these agents were also providing information regarding the developments in Western Europe to the Venetian government, their own? Given that these agents were Venetians, it should

²⁷⁸ ASV, *SAPC*, fil. 5, c. 19v (18 December 1550).

be the most expected thing in the world. As long as this information was not on the Ottoman Empire, this should not even be considered double spying. Moreover, even if Sinan could still consider his own agents' selling information to another employer as a transgression, he had very little to do about it; it should by now be apparent to the reader of this dissertation that the employers would not have too much leverage over their spies from such a distance. Finally, Sinan Pasha should have known better that the Venetians would have such information before the Ottomans anyways; if not, why did he ask bailo to confirm what his own network could not in the first place? Be that as it may, this was not the only example. Similarly, in 1567, when the Grand Vizier Sokollu, once a Grand Admiral himself, mentioned that the Ottoman navy would attack Puglia and Rome, the bailo felt obliged to remind him that Rome was not on the coast, but *fra terra* and thus could not be attacked by the navy.²⁷⁹

Still, these examples are too few to make a definitive conclusion especially at a time when there is a trend among the Ottomanists to argue that the Ottomans were knowledgeable in European geography.²⁸⁰ This is why I prefer to relate the evidence and leave the issue aside until I encounter enough evidence that would justify a general argument.

I still would like to offer two explanations for the contradiction between the aforementioned examples and the sporadic knowledge we have at hand such as several military maps and siege plans in the archives of the Topkapı Palace²⁸¹ which suggests

²⁷⁹ ASV, SDC, fil. 2, fol. 27 (28 June 1567).

²⁸⁰ Faroqi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, 194-200; Ágoston, "Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet".

²⁸¹ In these archives there are maps of Kiev (sometime in 1481-1512), Belgrade (1521?), Malta (1556), Szigetvár (1566), Vienna (1683), Van, Adakale (1738) and diagrams of the battles of Haçov/Mezőkeresztes (1596) and Prut (1711). Ágoston, "Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet", 64. Also see. Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Military, Administrative, and Scholarly Maps and Plans", in *The History of Cartography*,

that the early modern Ottomans were engaged in cartography. First of all, as Ágoston has suggested “awareness of geography worked differently in global and local contexts”,²⁸² the occasional ignorance of Ottoman pashas at the center might have been compensated by the diligent intelligence activity that frontier authorities undertook; these activities might as well have geographical considerations. For instance, the Governor-General of Buda, Üveys Pasha commissioned a surprisingly detailed and accurate Ottoman map of the Habsburg border fortresses around Kanizsa, outlying all the forts and castles, as well as major river crossings, and sent it to Constantinople. In the light of this evidence, Sokollu’s ignorance in thinking Rome was on the coast seemed even more suspicious as he had not only served as a Grand Admiral, but also the Governor-General of Rumelia and thus should know better.

Secondly, even when these examples are accepted to reflect a general lack of knowledge on behalf of the Ottoman grandees on European geography, one still needs to explain how the Ottomans managed to undertake successful military operations in faraway lands such as the Western Mediterranean. How could an Ottoman Grand Admiral, who did not know where Rome was, have successfully commanded the Ottoman navy in one of the most logistically challenging expeditions of Ottoman naval history in the Western Mediterranean in 1551?²⁸³ Sinan Pasha should have then relied on a number of well-experienced corsairs, especially Turgud Re’is who would take charge of next year’s expedition, even though without the title of the Grand Admiral. Such

II/1: Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies, eds. J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992): 209-227.

²⁸² Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet”, 65.

²⁸³ Ottoman naval operations in the 1550s were the most daring ones in terms of logistics. Due to the development in naval technology that decreased the galley’s operational radius, the Ottomans will not be able to undertake such large expeditions so far away from Constantinople in the following decades.

incidents once again prove us the importance of less visible figures in decision-making process which was by no means undertaken only by the major actors of Ottoman politics. Every high-level decision-maker should have people around them who were, to risk anachronism and use a modern word, briefing them before decisions were undertaken.

The occasional unawareness of certain Ottoman officials was not confined to the field of geography. The Ottomans were unable, for instance, to make a difference between the Lutherans and the Calvinists. Nor did they know how much a *doblone* was worth; the Grand Vizier had to send one of his men to Margliani to figure this out in order to be able to calculate how much Philip II distributed to his armies after the Portuguese expedition; he even asked for 10 *dobloni* to weigh.²⁸⁴

In the end, information seemed to have served mostly for immediate consumption during the decision-making process. It did not drastically increase the quality of the Ottoman elite's knowledge of European affairs in general which remained rather limited. They showed rather little inclination, nor had any material reason, to decorate themselves with such knowledge, clinging to their classical *Enderun* education. Their interest and thus the information they targeted was basically confined to the realm of military and international politics. What mattered was that, Lutheran or not, the Protestants were their allies against the Habsburgs. Moreover, as mentioned above, Constantinople was a center of information hosting many Europeans, some of whom converted to Islam and became part of the Ottoman military and administration. If an Ottoman pasha wanted to learn where Rome or how much a *doblone* was, he could always find somebody in his entourage to ask. In fact we could realize that he did not know it only because he did ask such questions.

²⁸⁴ AGS, E 1338, fol. 64 (28 October 1580).

6.8. CONCLUSION

The Ottomans may have maintained their decentralized approach and fallen behind in following, or chosen not to follow, certain developments that started to take place in Europe. The Ottoman State retained its patrimonial character with imperial households that undertook certain responsibilities which in the Habsburg and Venetian examples the state increasingly began to claim for itself. The Ottoman bureaucracy was not, like its Habsburg and Venetian counterparts, re-organized so as to specialize around many regional and functional political bodies. Nor did the Ottomans develop a centralized bureaucracy which insisted on overseeing every step of an operation in effect. They rather allowed the provincial authorities considerable autonomy and delegated the responsibilities of espionage to important political figures and private entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the Ottoman world of information was dominantly an oral one; the Ottomans had not yet developed a written political culture. They generally relied on oral communication, especially while carrying messages of importance. They did not write down the details of decision-making process in the Imperial Council on paper. There was no printing press which could diffuse information in a written form in the public sphere. Constantinople was no venue for pamphlet wars like Venice was in the beginning of the 17th century during the “Interdict” period.²⁸⁵ Sermons in the mosques, criers on the streets and gossips in the marketplace shaped the Ottoman public opinion.

In the end though, from the state’s perspective, none of these deeply affected the efficiency of the Ottoman secret service in gathering information. The Ottoman state managed to acquire information of strategic value such as a civil war in a European state, a revolt in an enemy province, religious dissidences in Europe, a treaty of peace, alliance

²⁸⁵ Vivo, *Information and Communication*.

or marriage between European monarchs, enemy's military preparations, whereabouts of the enemy navy, etc. As Ágoston has stated, in the 16th century, the Ottomans had the means to gather enough information in order to develop a meaningful strategy in their imperial rivalry with the Habsburg Empire. They succeeded in "possessing up-to-date information about [their] rivals..., a *sine qua non* of conducting a viable foreign policy that also attempted to counter Habsburg aspiration and claims to universal sovereignty."²⁸⁶

One should not take conclusions that the Ottomans failed to establish an efficient intelligence gathering system as these statements were mostly based on personal opinions and definitely not on a comprehensive study of sources. The nature of Ottoman documentation and the scarcity of written evidence as a result of the Ottoman insistence of resorting to oral communications make it harder for historians to provide ample evidence on the activities of Ottoman spies and the details of a network that worked for Constantinople. But this does not mean that these networks did not exist; one just has to dig deeper. This is exactly what I tried to do in this chapter. I mobilized every possible source that could shed light on Ottoman information gathering in the 16th-century Mediterranean in order to discredit predetermined conclusions such as "Certainly, the entire Ottoman intelligence service did not compare with the effective espionage network developed by Philip II of Spain."²⁸⁷ This sentence was penned by a non-specialist historian who did not hesitate to pass judgement on such an important issue without conducting any research. Unfortunately, one could see a plethora of similar unwarranted assumptions in Western literature about the Ottomans' awareness of the world around it.

²⁸⁶ Ágoston, "Information, Ideology and Limits", 78.

²⁸⁷ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVIII, 91.

What both empires failed in, in the end, was developing a profound awareness of each other's legal, political and economic systems as well as cultural, linguistic and religious particularities. The real reason for that was the lack of diplomatic relations between the two powers, a factor further aggravated by the physical distance. Venetian diplomats in Constantinople serve as a good example of how permanent diplomatic presence would enable central governments to train a corpus of diplomatic personnel with profound knowledge of an alien culture. The Venetian baili not only sent information of momentary nature, via *dispacci*, but also were required to leave tens-of-pages long reports that summarized their tenure in office in the form of *relazioni*.²⁸⁸ These *relazioni* gave an overall picture of the Ottoman state with its administrative structure, fiscal resources and factional rivalries as well as of Ottoman society with its beliefs and customs. These texts by no means remained accessible only to a restricted audience; but rather they found a large one throughout Europe and were printed again and again. They educated the Venetian elite of the structure of the Ottoman State in such a profound way that even prompted the Venetians to use Ottoman political system as a point of reference while producing texts that discussed their own system of government.²⁸⁹

Venice might be considered an exception since it enjoyed for centuries extensive commercial ties in the Eastern Mediterranean where they had several merchant communities. After all, Hans Kissling argued that it was exactly these ties that gave Venice an advantage in gathering information over his rivals. Even though this may be true to a certain extent for earlier centuries, the volume and importance of information

²⁸⁸ On *relazioni*, see. Donald E. Queller, "The Development of Ambassadorial Relazioni" in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. J. R. Hale (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 174-196.

²⁸⁹ Lucette Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

merchants sent seem to be dwindling throughout the 16th century, especially given the increasing quality of Venetian baili, the improvements in the transmission of news and in channels of communication as well as other developments in the Venetian bailate such as initiating a program for educating translators in the bailo's house.²⁹⁰ Increasingly after the mid-16th century, the Venetian authorities were mainly relying on the information that their baili sent on a regular basis. Obviously, as the executors of daily diplomacy in Constantinople, frequenting diplomatic circles, negotiating in the Imperial Divan, chatting with Ottoman grandees, the baili were in a unique position to observe their subject, the Ottoman Empire, in a more profound way than any other merchant or spy could.

This lack of profound awareness of the other's culture, religion, legal, political and economic systems created a number of disadvantages not only for the Ottomans, but also for the Habsburgs, at least in their relations with the Ottomans, given that they conducted these without the presence of a resident ambassador.

First of all, both empires failed to participate in court politics and exploit the rivalries between different factions for gathering information. The Venetian, French and Austrian ambassadors all entertained good relations with certain Ottoman officials who furnished them with information; a luxury which the Ottomans did not have in Naples, Messina or Madrid and Habsburgs in Constantinople. Furthermore, both the Ottomans and the Habsburgs missed the chance to exploit each other's weaknesses by fomenting dissidence or finding themselves potential allies that would serve their interest. Ottoman and Habsburg intelligence networks in each other's lands remained ineffective in this regard, compared to, for example, the efforts of the Habsburg ambassador in London,

²⁹⁰ See. Lucchetta, "giovani di lingua", 19-40.

Bernardo de Mendoza who tried to overthrow Elizabeth I by exploiting religious dissidence and factional rivalries. Most of the negotiations of defection failed as well, because there were no stable channels of communication and such projects had to be realized by intermediaries of little trustworthiness. Similarly, both empires' efforts of making use of a "fifth column" came to naught; this may not have been the case had there been a diplomatic figure who could establish extensive relations with these dissident communities and played a role comparable to that of the Habsburg ambassador in Paris during the French Wars of Religion. Furthermore, both empires failed to truly grasp the factional rivalries in each other's capitals. This failure prevented them from understanding which way the wind was blowing during crucial times. What did it mean for the Ottomans when Don Carlos died amidst rumours of being poisoned by his father, Antonio Perez was eliminated from Madrid politics or the Viceroy of Naples Cardinal Granvela was called from Naples to Madrid to succeed Pérez? What did İbrahim's assassination, Hürrem's demise or Rüstem's death mean for the Habsburgs? What did they make of these?

Furthermore, another side effect of the lack of permanent diplomacy between two empires was that it precluded for both empires the possibility of training a corpus of experts that would more effectively and with greater authority process the incoming information and help the formulation of meaningful policies. Imperial dragomans such as Yunus Bey and Hürrem Bey, otherwise of little political status and administrative rank, as well as courtiers such as Gritti, Nasi and Passi who knew Europe very well, played a crucial role in Ottomans' negotiations with European powers as well as in the formulation of their foreign policy. The Ottomans' reliance on these medium level

officers and power brokers in their foreign policy and diplomatic negotiations clearly proves the potential benefits a trained corpus of diplomats would bring to the Ottomans. Resident diplomats, their chancelleries and retinues would form a pool of trained experts who would be not only more loyal, but also, having served in foreign capitals for years and acquired the necessary know-how, better trained than these dragomans and courtiers. The Habsburgs as well recognized the trained diplomatic personnel's potential value in information processing, decision-making and strategy formulation; this is why Philip II chose one of them as successor to Antonio Pérez. In spite of the fact that he had no experience as a secretary, the former ambassador to Venice, Juan de Idiáquez, was unexpectedly appointed to the post of the secretary of state, whose responsibilities, among many other things, included the relations with foreign powers and the operations of Habsburg secret services.

Finally, the lack of detailed information on the enemy's decision-making institutions and processes should have hindered the effective formulation and implementation of a long-term strategy *to a certain extent*. For instance, the Venetians closely observed the Ottoman political system and tried to understand how the Ottoman Empire operated. They also learned, by their connections within the Ottoman administration, discussions that took place in the Divan and found means to influence the process by both diplomatic and extra-diplomatic means such as presents and bribery. Can we tell the same thing about the Ottomans? Were they aware of the complex nature of the Venetian government? If they were, could they regularly get a hold onto what they discussed in the Senate, what kind of decisions were taken in many different governing bodies of the Republic? If they could, then could they influence the decision-making

process? It is hard to answer all these questions affirmatively. On the other side of the spectrum, the Habsburgs were not more successful than the Ottomans in similar matters; excluding perhaps the brief period of 1578-81, when they had a permanent diplomat in the Ottoman capital.

A final issue to be addressed is that this lack of permanent diplomatic representation should then be a chronic problem for the Ottomans who, unlike the Habsburgs, did not appoint permanent ambassadors until the final years of the 18th century. While their European counterparts perfected their diplomatic systems, training more qualified diplomatic personnel, establishing new embassies, refining the rules of international diplomacy, the Ottomans failed to keep up with these developments and found themselves in a disadvantage that each day grew. One should not rely on only one factor though; this disadvantage was by no means decisive in the 16th century and what happened in the 17th and 18th centuries is out of the scope of this study. Furthermore, the disadvantage created by this lack of Ottoman embassies abroad should have been compensated to a certain extent by the unique position of Constantinople as a center of attraction for European military experts, religious and political exiles. After all, even though the Ottoman elite did not study the European law, culture and religion, they did not live in complete isolation either. The Ottomans always kept the door open to its useful novelties and innovations, demonstrating us their pragmatism of acquiring the essential, regardless of its origins.

This chapter diverges from Ágoston's preliminary findings on Ottoman information gathering. Firstly, apart from a short paragraph which repeats Paolo Preto's

and Ibarra's findings,²⁹¹ Ágoston does not give too much detail about the activities of particular Ottoman spies; he is more interested in where the Ottomans gathered information from, rather than how, focusing on a number of sources that provided the Ottomans with information regarding developments in Europe – foreign ambassadors in Constantinople, dragomans, vassal states and Jews. This dissertation, on the other hand, includes ample information on operational level in an effort to demonstrate the extent of the operations that Ottoman spies undertook.

Secondly, this chapter accentuates the personal nature of these intelligence networks and does not see information gathering mechanisms as necessary extensions of the Ottoman State. It proposes a different model: rather than developing a single secret service directly controlled by the central government, the Ottoman state relied on independent intelligence networks led by Pashas, courtiers and other power brokers who vied for power in the 16th-century Constantinople. Therefore, power struggles between imperial factions resulted in rivalries between different intelligence networks. Furthermore, leaders of these factions used the information that their networks provided for their own personal interests; their manipulation could go as far as misleading their own government in order to make sure that the Ottoman Empire adopted the policy that served their interest the most (disinformation) and even selling information to other foreign governments from whom they expected a material benefit. The same was true for other states, vassals or allies that provided the Ottomans with information or for European diplomats in Constantinople that the Ottomans convinced or pressurize to share what they knew. Thus, these states and their diplomats could manipulate information and become a part of the Ottoman decision-making process.

²⁹¹ Ágoston, "Information, Ideology and Limits", 91.

Thirdly, my model gives more emphasis on provincial information gathering than Ágoston did. It accentuates the fact that the special conditions of the frontier forced the Ottomans to allow greater freedom to its officers in the frontier regions, especially in military matters that required a prompt response, all along the lines of Ottoman pragmatism which Ágoston himself was an advocate of.²⁹² Gathering information was among the many duties of governors and governor-generals of the frontier provinces. Given that not much of a documentation that could shed light on the activities of Ottoman provincial officials survived, unfortunately, this part of the story will always remain little known.

²⁹² Ágoston, “A Flexible Empire”; idem, “From Frontier Principality to Empire”.

7. CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I tried to study early modern espionage in the 16th-century Mediterranean within the context of the imperial rivalry which dominated the sea, the one between the Ottomans and Habsburgs. I argued how the geographical scene, the time period and the political rivalry chosen for this study present a special case. I demonstrated how certain developments in the 16th century enhanced the quality as well as the scope of information on the one hand, and institutionalize and centralize secret services on the other. Furthermore, I tried to situate my arguments in the everlasting debate regarding “the clash of civilizations” which appeared *ante litteram* in the Mediterranean historiography, almost as early as the historiography itself. I discussed how works that aimed to accentuate the fluidity of civilizational boundaries between Europe and the Ottoman Empire mostly concentrated on the exceptionally profound relations between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. By focusing on similar boundaries between two great powers, archenemies that engaged in a global imperial confrontation, I tried to demonstrate how Mediterranean go-betweens could still overcome the additional difficulties of the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier and pass the civilizational boundaries between these two rivaling empires.

Furthermore, regarding the study of early modern secret diplomacy, my opinion is that the case of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry is a special one. Diplomatic relations and resident ambassadors are central to all of the works that engage in early modern espionage. However, excluding a brief period when there was an unofficial Habsburg envoy in the Ottoman capital and the occasional intermediation of the Austrian ambassadors notwithstanding, there were no open diplomatic channels between the two empires. This profoundly affected the operations of intelligence networks, given that in many other examples, it was the ambassador who led and operated these networks. Furthermore, money was transferred and information was

transmitted by using extant diplomatic channels. In the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier, one had to look for other solutions. More interestingly, however, spies stepped in ambassador's shoes while it was more common elsewhere to see the opposite; it was generally the ambassador-cum-spy, not vice-versa. On several occasions, our spies played key diplomatic roles, the most exceptional example being those who started, on their own initiative, direct truce negotiations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, an achievement which politicians of both sides could not accomplish for many years.

This dissertation also tries to make a meaningful contribution to the study of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry, the historiography of which consisted of several well-written yet uncoordinated articles, written in many languages and published in books and journals in different countries. I tried to give a rather different picture of this rivalry which was generally explained within the context of an irreconcilable conflict. I sought to demonstrate how the intermediation of these go-betweens would render possible the cooperation between imperial elites, be it in exchange of letters of courtesy or negotiating bribery, defection and treason. I also believe that a comparative study could instigate further debate on how the two empires, which differed so much in administrative and bureaucratic structures, organized their secret services. Finally, in my opinion, comparative works such as this dissertation could help incorporate the Ottoman History into early modern European history.

This dissertation deals with a number of historical issues and makes important contributions to the relevant literature. The first is the relationship between information and politics which I claimed to be multi-layered. I demonstrated in Chapter Two how different levels of decision-making required different types of information and how states consumed the incoming information in the formulation of strategy and policy, the making of military decisions and the conduct of diplomatic negotiations. My intention was to accentuate the importance of studying information when dealing with these matters in order to be able to

deconstruct the decision-making process and understand how decision-makers perceived the world around them and the options available to them. Most studies that focus on imperial strategies shy away from a rigorous study of primary sources that would shed light not only on the aspect of information, but also on that of factional politics. A close look on the divisions within a government and different policy agendas advocated by rival factions demonstrates the element of change in imperial strategies better. Furthermore, I argued in the same chapter that information played a crucial role in the quality of decisions taken and thus created an advantage for either party in the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry. States with better intelligence mechanisms benefitted from the intelligence edge by better allocating their resources and more efficiently reacting to threats and opportunities,

After describing the “state element” of secret diplomacy, I sought to delineate the “human element” by engaging in a sociological study of the spies operating in the 16th century Mediterranean. I concluded that even though it required certain special skills and familiarity with complex methods, early modern espionage was not a profession per se. Certain conditions created a favourable environment to attain these special skills which could not be taught. People that came from certain social and cultural backgrounds and dealt with specific professions were ideal candidates for early modern secret services. What united these go-betweens were their entrepreneurship and the ability to master the cultural codes of both empires as well as to cross civilizational borders with relative ease. One other key factor was the networks that they managed to establish. I tried to accentuate the importance of kinship relations not only in developing such networks, but also in attaining the necessary level of specialization. One other major argument I made was that these spies’ basic motivations were self-interest which induced them to devise innovative methods and plans in order to defraud central governments, hence several cases of contention between the two. I then accentuated the helplessness of central governments in the face of a restricted recruitment pool, a direct

result of the lack of means of training for agents on the one hand, and the complexity of the methods required in the conduct of secret diplomacy on the other. These information traders used their special skills and in-between/trans-imperial positions while negotiating with governments and tried to make the most of it by offering their services to more than one government. Thus, historians should better focus on “Mediterranean” or “Levantine” spies as a unit of historical analysis rather than spies of Philip II, Suleyman I, Sokollu, Granvela, etc.

Apart from this general sociological study, Chapter Five offers many insights with a more focused study on the Habsburg spies who operated in the Ottoman capital roughly between 1560 and 1600 and demonstrates the roles these information brokers played. In a very detailed and descriptive chapter, I tried to show that these agents, who were supposed to trade information between empires, proved their entrepreneurship by diversifying their activities. They not only participated in unofficial diplomacy and bridged the diplomatic gap between the two empires, but also participated in Ottoman factional politics. Perhaps the most interesting chapter of this dissertation, it deals with several power brokers who ran the day-to-day operations of the 16th-century Constantinople politics and thus renders agency to the long-neglected individual in the Ottoman political history.

New information that this chapter brought to light enhances our knowledge on the balance-of-power between different factions in the Ottoman capital and the effect of factional rivalries on the decisions taken. This chapter demonstrates 1) how personal/corporate interests prevailed over those of the state, 2) how personal intelligence networks rivaled each other within the parameters of factional rivalries, and 3) how even high-level officers manipulated information and disinformed their own government in order to serve the interests of their factions. In short, it is an open criticism of the studies that treat the Ottoman Empire as a monolithic state and overlook the internal divisions within the Ottoman government. This

criticism should be a significant contribution to the studies of Ottoman factional politics as well as the Ottoman business of rule.

Another important contribution that a focused study on the activities of these spies, power brokers and diplomats makes to the political history of the 16th century Ottoman Empire is the detailed picture of Constantinople as a center of information towards which ideas, news and rumours flowed. This availability of information created two contradictory situations. Firstly, the presence of several enemy spies in the chaotic plurality of Constantinople, the very center of the Empire, and the usualness of contacts between government officials, power-brokers, spies and men of all sorts rendered the control of information very difficult for the Ottomans. Constantinople was simply easier to penetrate than Madrid, Naples or Messina. Secondly, while the Ottomans suffered from this leak of information, however, they also benefitted from the exceptional status of their capital. It was thanks to its “center of information” status, they could easily gather information on political and military developments all around the world. Furthermore, the Ottomans’ lenience towards enemy spies makes one think that rather than eliminating them, they sought to mislead these spies, in order to get their message out and manipulate the information available to their adversary.

Finally, I engaged in a comparative study of the secret services of both empires. I tried to demonstrate how different administrative and bureaucratic structures resulted in different characteristics of each empire’s state service. While the Habsburgs were more determined in institutionalizing and centralizing their secret services, a generalization which loses some of its vigour when the issue was the Habsburg secret service in the Levant, the Ottomans did not follow a similar path. They instead relied on personal networks and bothered less with controlling the details of intelligence operations, providing the frontier authorities with more authority. Nor did they follow recent developments in cryptography and steganography; rather

they stick to the oral transmission. Still, in the end, these differences did not seem to have created a disadvantage for the Ottomans who rather relied on a different, yet still inherently coherent and ultimately efficient system of information gathering. In short, this chapter proves the unreliability of predetermined conclusions and unwarranted assumptions that prevailed in Western historiography. These conclusions and assumptions that defended that the Ottomans did not have an interest for the world around them and failed in developing efficient methods of information gathering are simply based on personal opinions, rather than rigorous scientific study of primary sources. The nature of Ottoman sources and the oral nature of Ottoman correspondence may have made it harder for historians to detect the activities of Ottoman espionage. But it does not mean that there were no such activities. Chapter Six tried to overcome this difficulty by mobilizing all available sources, European and Ottoman, in order to give the most complete picture of Ottoman secret service in the 16th century.

What affected the secret services of both empires negatively was in fact the lack of direct diplomatic channels and of a resident ambassador. This factor becomes quite obvious when one compares the Venetian and French efficiency in gathering information on things Ottoman with that of the Habsburgs or simply the operations of Habsburg intelligence networks in Paris, Rome, Venice or London with those of their network in Constantinople. Both empires failed in developing a profound awareness of each other's legal, political and economic systems as well as cultural, linguistic and religious particularities. They were interested in each others' military preparations, internal stability and diplomatic relations with other states. The unavailability of a trained corpus of diplomatic personnel, such as the one that existed in Venice, precluded the possibility of developing a profound interest in the enemy's culture, religion and language. Both empires' interest in each other simply remained political.

This in turn created a number of other disadvantages for other aspects of imperial secret services. The two empires could not train the diplomatic personnel who would better analyze the incoming information regarding each other's activities. The lack of diplomatic relations also meant that they could not participate in court politics, either to exploit the rivalries between different factions for gathering information, or to capitalize on each other's weaknesses by fomenting dissidence, negotiating defections or finding useful allies.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ağa (Ott.): A title for a civil or military leader such as the chief black eunuch or the commander in chief of the Janissaries.

‘Ahdname (Ott.): Even though it referred to all kinds of documents bestowing privileges, for the purposes of this dissertation, suffice it to know that it refers to a treaty between the Ottoman Sultan and a foreign ruler. From a legalistic point-of-view, these ‘*ahdnames* were unilateral declarations on behalf of a Muslim ruler, granting commercial privileges and safe conducts to the subjects of an infidel ruler.

Akçe (Ott.): The Ottoman silver coin which in most English literature is named as asper, originally the name of the Byzantine coin. One akçe is valued approximately 60 ducats in the 16th century.

Akıncı (Ott.): A raider in the frontier who fought for booty.

Alaybeyi (Ott.): Regiment commander.

Alcayde (Sp.): Deriving from the Arabic *al-qaid*, this term means an officer in charge of the administration of a royal town.

Alferez (Sp.): Company lieutenant.

‘Aman (Ott.): A safe conduct granted to an infidel.

‘Arz (Ott.): The act of informing the Sultan of a particular situation in a written or oral way.

‘Askeri (Ott.): Separate from the ‘*reaya*, this section of the Ottoman society that consisted of the members of the military, administrative and religious establishment, was immune from taxation.

Asiento (Sp.): A contract between an *asientista* (in most cases a banker) and the crown.

Aviso (Sp.) –Avviso (It.): The generic name that Spanish and Italian documents used for news that reached them.

Avlonya Azebleri Ağası (Ott.): A military office that was generally bestowed upon the leader of the corsairs that operated in Valona in the 16th century.

Ayat (Ar.): Literally meaning “the sign”, an *ayat* is the smallest unit of the Quran.

Ayuda de costa (Sp.): The one-time lump sum payment made to the newly recruited spies to cover their travel and other expenses,

Bailo (Ve.): A Venetian title that may refer to a couple of things. The one that is relevant to our purpose is the Venetian diplomatic representative in Constantinople. He is different than an “*ambasciatore*” and “*oratore*” who came with a specific task for a limited period of time. He was also the official head of the resident Venetian community in Constantinople whose litigations he settled as the supreme judge, interests he defended in the Ottoman court and other problems he solved to the greatest extent possible. His term of office was 3 years in the 16th century.

Bando, banditi (It.): Somebody who was exiled from a certain place for a certain period of time depending on the type and severity of the crime committed.

Baño (Sp.) – Bagno (It.): A generic name used for barracks where slaves slept, such as the ones in Algiers and Constantinople.

Berat (Ott.): An imperial diploma.

Beylerbeyi (Ott.): The governor-general of a province (*beylerbeyilik*)

Bodegón (Sp.): Tavern

Capitán General de las Galeras de España (Sp.): The Admiral of the Spanish fleet.

Capitana (It.): The galley that belonged to the Admiral of the Fleet.

Casus (Ott.): The Ottoman word for spy.

Carta di credenza (It.) – Carta de credencia (Sp.): A letter of credence.

Cavallero (Sp.): Literally meaning a cavalryman, it refers to a noble.

Cédula (Sp.): A document of debt, a bond or a bill of exchange.

Condottiere (It.): Literally meaning a “contractor”, a condottiere was a mercenary captain leading a company of soldiers whom the Italian city states hired.

Conjura (Sp.) – Congiura (It.): A plot.

Consiglio dei Dieci (It.) – The Council of Ten: One of the main governing bodies of Venice, the Council of Ten’s members was elected for one year by the Great Council. It enjoyed several responsibilities on many aspects of the Republic including its diplomacy, military and secret service.

Consejo (Sp.): A council where the monarch’s secretaries and advisors discussed state matters.

Consejo de Estado (Sp.): The most important of *consejos*, the Council of State discussed important issues regarding the Monarchy and the relations with foreign powers. It is the only council that the King directly presided.

Consulta (Sp.): A written recommendation compiled by a council, *consejo*, to be submitted to the King.

Contraseña (Sp.): Countersign

Correo Mayor (Sp.): Agents of the *Correo Mayor General* in important cities.

Correo Mayor General (Sp.): The person that operates the Habsburg postal system in exchange for a lucrative contract.

Corso (It.): Corsary, or simply Mediterranean privateering. Corsairs should be distinguished from pirates, as the former operated under the aegis of a central authority and followed a code of conduct, while the latter is a lawless bandit.

Chaus – Cavuş (Ott.): A military officer whose vast range of duties included carrying correspondence.

Cruzada (Sp.): First conceded to the Spanish kings by the papal authority in 1482, this was the right to sell bulls of indulgences to the entire population. It was one of the most important revenues for the crown.

Darü’l-Harb (Ott.): Literally meaning “the Abode of War”, in Islamic Law (Sharia). this term signified the lands that had never fallen under the Muslim rule. Given the perpetual state of war between Islam and Christianity, these lands were major objectives of the Holy War efforts.

Darü’l-İslam (Ott.): Literally meaning “the Abode of Islam”, in Islamic Law (Sharia), this term signified the lands that had at least once fallen under the Muslim rule. Once the people heard the Muslim call to prayer in these lands, it became an inalienable part of the Darü’l-İslam.

Dil (Ott.): A captive that was captured to extract information.

Dil almak (Ott.): An expression literally meaning “to take a tongue”, denoting bringing a captive to be interrogated.

Dispacci (It.): Regular dispatches of Venetian ambassadors. As opposed to *relazioni*, these inform the government of recent developments and include little comprehensive analysis.

Divan-ı Hümayun (Ott.): The Ottoman Imperial Council, consisting of the Sultan, the Grand Vizier, viziers (numbering between three to seven), two *Kazaskers*, two *Defterdars*,

Nișancı and other high-ranking Ottoman officials who appeared in discussions on a non-permanent basis, only when the issue under consideration required their participation.

Divan-ı Hümayun Tercümanı (Ott.): A translator in the employ of the Ottoman *Divan*. Generally chosen from among the renegades, these played key roles in the daily conduct of diplomacy in the Ottoman capital.

Dizdar (Ott.): An Ottoman castle commander.

Doblone (It.): A gold coin worth 2 escudos, weighing 6.77 grams.

Doge (Ve.): Elected for life by the *Maggior Consilio* after a confusing voting system, the Doge was the most senior official of the Republic of Venice.

Dragoman (It.), Tercüman (Ott.): A translator between the Ottoman authorities and European merchants and diplomats.

Ducato (Ve.) – Ducat: The Venetian gold coin that weighs 3.5 grams. This was the strongest and most stable currency in the Mediterranean after the fall of the Byzantine asper. It eventually became a monetary unit of account.

Emin (Ott.): A salaried Ottoman officer whose task was to supervise a certain department, function or revenue.

Encomienda (Sp.): An administrative district that belonged to a religious order.

Enderun (Ott): The Palace School situated in Topkapı Palace where select slaves of the Sultan's household received their education in order to become high ranking military and administrative officers.

Entretenimiento (Sp.): Permanent monthly salary which the Habsburg Treasury allocated to an *entretendido*.

Escudo (Sp.) – Scuto (It.) – Écu (Fr.): A gold coin widely in circulation in 16th century Europe. Spanish escudo was worth 350 *maravedí* and weighed 3.38 grams.

Esir (Ott.): A slave.

Espia Mayor – Superintendente de las inteligencias secretas (Sp.): This was an office that existed de facto starting from the final years of Philip II's reign. It was officially created in 1613 in order to synchronize the actions of different intelligence networks, solve the problems of coordination between these networks and the Habsburg authorities and better regulate financial matters, often reasons of conflict between the agents and authorities. It quickly lost its political relevance and became an honorific title after the middle of the 1620s.

Faris Ağası (Ott.): A cavalry commander.

Farsi turco (It.): Literally meaning “make one's self Turk”, this was the most commonly used term of the 16th century for conversion from Christianity to Islam.

Firenk (Ott.): The Ottoman term which was used for all the Westerners, even though it literally meant “Frank”. It could be seen as the Ottoman equivalent of *turco* in Latin languages which was mostly used for Muslims, rather than ethnic Turks.

Fondaco dei Turchi (It.) – Fontego dei Turchi (Ve.) : A *palazzo* on the Grand Canal that the Venetians reserved in the 17th century for “Turkish” (read Muslim and not only Ottoman) visitors of the city. It functioned as a warehouse, market and lodging.

Fondaco dei Tedeschi (It.) – Fontego dei Tedeschi (Ve.): A *palazzo* which the Venetians reserved for German (this term does not fully correspond to the modern “German”) merchants in the city.

Forzado (Sp.): A criminal that was sent to galleys in order to row as a punishment.

Fuorusciti (It.): The rebels that opposed the Habsburg rule in Naples.

Gastos secretos (Sp.): Literally meaning “secret expenditures”, this term denotes the money allocated from the provincial and ambassadorial budgets for secret missions such as bribes and espionage.

Gaza (Ott.): Even though traditional historiography explained this term as the Islamic Holy War against Christianity, historians recently challenged this description and accentuated

the fluidity and the inclusiveness of the concept of *gaza*. It may mean simply a raid, a holy war and most of the time a combination of the two.

Gazi (Ott.): Somebody who participated in a *gaza*.

Giovane di lingua (It.): An apprentice who was trained in the Venetian embassy to learn Ottoman.

Gönüllü Levend (Ott.): A corsair. He operated under the aegis of a central authority and obeyed certain conventional rules. Thus, he was different than a lawless pirate, which in Ottoman was named as *harami levend*.

Gönüllü Levend Re'isleri Kapudanı (Ott.): Literally meaning the Captain of the corsairs, this was a military title granted to the leader of the corsairs that operated from an Ottoman port.

Gracia (Sp.): A favour.

Gran Signore (It.) – Gran Señor (Sp.): A generic title which the European used to designate the Ottoman Sultan.

Hacienda (Sp.): The Treasury.

Hassa re'is (Ott.): The captain, *re'is*, of a galley in the Ottoman navy.

Harac (Ott.): The poll tax which the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Sultan had to pay.

Hükm (Ott.): An imperial order.

Infante (Sp.): Infantry

Inquisitori di Stato (It.): A magistrate consisted of three Venetian officials in charge of preventing the spread of state secrets. Permanently established in 1539 and decorated with highest authority, these “Inquisitors against the propagation of secrets”, as they were otherwise called, functioned attached to the Venetian Council of Ten. These should not be considered with Inquisitors of the Catholic Church.

Intitulatio (Lat.): The part of a letter that contained titles.

İstimalet (Ott.): Ottoman policy of tolerance and co-optation while dealing with non-Muslim populations of the conquered territories.

Janissary Agha (Ott.): The commander of the Janissary corps, elite infantry units.

Junta (Sp.): The meeting of a group of people to discuss a certain issue.

Kadı (Ott.): An Ottoman provincial judge.

Kahya (Ott.): A steward or a butler of a household. It can also refer to an officer.

Ka'id (Ott.): A military title which meant master, leader. For the purposes of this dissertation, a ka'id is an Ottoman governor in North Africa.

Kalemiyye (Ott.): A term used for the Ottoman bureaucracy.

Kalyete (Ott.): Galiot.

Kapu halkı (Ott.): Members of an extended household, *kapu*.

Kapudan-ı Derya (Ott.): The Ottoman Grand Admiral.

Kethüda (Ott.): Lieutenant.

Kılavuz (Ott.): A road guide.

Kira: The Sultana's lady-in-waiting.

Legajo (Sp.): Folder.

Littera di credito (Sp.): Letter of credit.

Maona (Ge.): Although a generic term denoting the association of investors, it was used in this dissertation to refer to the Genoese *Maona* that was ruling the island of Chios on behalf of the Genoese government, making use of its resources and paying an annual fee.

Marrano (Sp.): An Iberian Jew that was forced to convert to Christianity. Also called a new Christian, a Marrano would most likely practice Judaism secretly.

Maestro (It.): Master.

Maestro de posta (Sp.): A postmaster.

Mappamundi (Lat.): A generic name for European world maps.

Mare Nostrum (Lat.): Literally meaning “our sea”, this was one of many names of the Mediterranean.

Matematico (It.): An engineer.

Mayorduomo (Sp.): A steward or a butler.

Menzil (Ott.): Ottoman postal stations that were established in varying distances according to geographical conditions. These also had a military function and could be used in order to provision the army during a campaign.

Menzilkeş (Ott.): A special text that the Ottomans levied for the maintenance of postal stations or *menzils*.

Merced (Sp.): Gifts, fiefs, offices or titles that the monarch and the aristocrats distributed to their subjects.

Morisco (Sp.): Iberian Muslims that were forced to convert to Christianity in the 16th century.

Mudéjar (Sp.): Muslims who remained in the Iberian peninsula under Christian administration without converting to Christianity.

Müfti (Ott.): A religious scholar who could give a legal opinion. The Europeans also used that term to denote the Ottoman Şeyhü'l-İslam, the functionary at the head of the Ottoman religious scholars as the Müfti of Constantinople.

Müsadere (Ott.): The practice of confiscating the property of deceased and/or dismissed officials and other persons to the Ottoman Treasury.

Müteferrika (Ott.): Guards in the Ottoman palace, attached to the person of the Sultan. Their occupations were not restricted to the military and court; several officers with various tasks were inducted into the müteferrika corps, the idea being to provide them with a reliable source of income. Ottoman diplomats, dragomans and even Christians such as Christophe de Roggendorf could be found among their ranks.

Nomenclator (Lat.): A type of substitution cipher that combined codes and ciphers.

Oratore (It.): A diplomat on an ad-hoc mission.

Pagador (Sp.): Paymaster.

Palazzo Ducale (It.): The Doge's Palace. It is a palace adjoining the St. Mark's Basilica and the prisons. It houses government offices and the Doge's private quarters.

Pasha (Ott.): A military title granted to Ottoman Viziers and Governor-Generals in the 16th century.

Pişkeş (Ott.): A gift that an Ottoman official gave his superiors mostly in order to please him and secure for himself a more lucrative office.

Pliego (It.): An envelope or a folder in which the letters were sent.

Provveditore (Ve.): A title that could refer to a number of offices with different responsibilities. It was mainly used for Venetian governors.

Quenta (Sp.): An explanation or a justification.

Razzia (It.): It refers to the seasonal corsair attacks and pillages in the Mediterranean.

Re'aya (Ott.): The tax-paying section of the Ottoman population.

Reconquista (Sp.): A long period of Christian expansion in the Iberian Peninsula which started in the Middle Ages and ended in 1492 when the last Muslim ruler of the Peninsula surrendered to the Catholic Kings.

Relazione (It.): 1. Reports that the Venetian ambassadors had to read in the Senate after they completed their mission abroad. The ambassador, following a strict template, used to give a basic outline of a given state's ruler, court factions, dynasty, military, navy, Treasury, expenses and to make some basic but very interesting observations on its society and culture. These were also published and circulated extensively among the literati of the 16th century. 2. A general term used for reports, Relación (Sp.).

República de Zêna (Ge.): The Republic of Genoa.

Salyaneli eyalet (Ott.): This is a term that denotes Ottoman provinces which were not administrated directly and where the basic tenets of Ottoman land system such as the *timar* regime were not introduced. These provinces benefitted from financial autonomy and had separate treasuries. After the necessary expenditure was made, the remaining amount was transmitted to the central treasury every year.

Sandjak – Sancak (Ott.): The Ottoman district province headed by a *sancakbeyi*.

Sancakbeyi (Ott.): The governor of a district province (*sancak*).

Secretario de Cifra (Sp.): The secretary in charge of cryptography.

Secretario de Estado (Sp.): Secretary of the State was the most influential position in the nascent Habsburg bureaucracy. His responsibilities included, among many things, foreign policy and secret service. He provided the link between the monarch and the councils. He also made crucial decisions regarding the functioning of the councils, i.e., when to convene, which issues to lay down for discussion and which information to relate to the members of the council.

Señal (Sp.): Special signs, such as biting each other's nose or ear, which agents used in order to recognize each other.

Serdar (Ott.): Commander in chief of the Ottoman army.

Serenissima (It.): Literally meaning "the most serene", this term was used to denote the Republic of Venice whose official name was the *Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia*.

Signoria (It.): An abstract noun which referred to a governing body. In this dissertation, it was used to denote the supreme body of Venetian government that consisted of the Doge, his six advisors and the 3 leaders of the *Quarantia*.

Sipahi (Ott.): An Ottoman cavalryman.

Solak (Ott.): The name of a part of the sultan's bodyguard in the old Ottoman military organisation.

Stato di Mar (It.): With the *Dogado* and the *Terraferma*, this term constituted the third and the largest subdivision of the Venetian empire. It denotes the Republic of Venice's maritime possessions in the Adriatic Sea (Istria, Dalmatia) and the Eastern Mediterranean (Crete, Cyprus, possessions in Morea, some of the Aegean Islands and Constantinople proper in the 13th century).

Subaşı (Ott.): An Ottoman officer in charge of police functions in the Ottoman provinces. The term was also used to designate a certain military rank in the cavalry corps of the *Ulufeci*.

Sultana (It.): A word produced from the Turkish word "*Sultan*" with the feminine suffix *-a*, denoting a female member of the Ottoman dynasty.

Surah (Ar.): A division of the Quran that consisted of *ayats*. There are 114 *surahs* in the Quran.

Tekalif-i 'örfiyye ve 'avarız-ı divaniye (Ott.): Extraordinary taxes and duties that the Ottoman central government imposed on its subjects based on the Sultan Law (*'örf*) and directly collected from the population.

Telhis (Ott.): A document in which an important issue is summarized to be presented to the Sultan by the Grand Vizier or Şeyhü'l-İslam.

Terakki (Ott.): Promotion.

Tercio (Sp.): A unit in the Habsburg army that consisted of 12 companies and approximately 2500 men under the command of a *maestro de campo*.

Timar (Ott.): Literally meaning care or attention, this term denotes the non-hereditary prebends that the Ottoman Empire allocated to its cavalry troops, the *timarlı sipahi*.

Tımarlı Sipahi (Ott.): This term refers to Ottoman provincial cavalry troops that were supported by non-hereditary prebends, the *tımars*. These troops constituted the backbone of the Ottoman army in the Classical Age.

Tomar lengua (Sp.): An expression literally meaning “to take a tongue”, it means bringing a captive to be interrogated. Spanish equivalent of *dil almak*.

Tornes (Sp.): Tournois (Fr.): A currency that was used in Medieval and Early Modern France. It was mostly an accounting currency.

Turco de nación (Sp.): In the parlance of the 16th century, a “Turk by birth” may refer to a variety of things: a free-born Muslim, a Levantine or an ethnic Turk. Most of the time, though, it meant a free-born Muslim.

Turco de profesión (Sp.): In the parlance of the 16th century, a “Turk by profession” meant a renegade, somebody who changed his religion because of his profession.

Ulak (Ott.): An Ottoman courier.

Ulak hükmü (Ott.): An imperial diploma granted to the *ulaks* that authorized them the use of horses in the *menzils* and ensured the cooperation of local officials.

Ulufe (Ott.): Regular wage.

Vakıf (Ott.): A charitable trust instituted in accordance with the Islamic Law, Sharia. These provided funds for religious, educational and charitable institutions such as mosques, schools and hospitals.

Valido (Sp.): Favourites such as the Duke of Lerma and the Count-Duke of Olivares who played key roles in the Habsburg court and ruled the Empire with the authority bestowed upon them by the monarch. These figures gained prominence in the 17th century when the business of rule became more complex and therefore demanded more than the attention of a half-hearted monarch and yet there were no political institutions to fill the gap.

Veedor (Sp.): Inspector.

Ventaja (Sp.): A wage supplement.

Vezir (Ott.): The Sultan’s minister or a member of the Imperial Divan. Their numbers varied over time. The highest ranking *Vezir* is the *Sadr-ı ‘Azam* or *Vezir-i ‘Azam*.

Voce liberar bandito (Ve.): The privilege which the Venetian government granted in exchange of outstanding favours to the state. Somebody who received a *voce liberar bandito* could “liberate” an exile, bandito.

Vox populi (Lat.): Literally “voice of the people”. The opinion of the general public expressed by rumours on the streets, and in marketplaces, taverns, etc.

Yarar (Ott.): A common adjective in Ottoman used for soldiers, sailors and spies, meaning useful and competent.

Zafername (Ott.): Literally meaning “the letter of victory”, it was a letter sent to foreign rulers, announcing a recent victory that the Ottoman Sultan achieved.

Zecca (It.): The Venetian mint, both an office and a 16th century building by Jacopo Sansovino, hosting today the manuscript section of BNM in *Bacino di San Marco*.

Ziffra grande (Ve.): The main cipher that the Venetian provincial officials used in their correspondence with the central government.

Ziffra picciola (Ve.): The Venetian cipher that the provincial officers, such as *baili* and *rettori* used among themselves.

APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY OF MAIN PERSONAE

OUTSTANDING SPIES, SPYMASTERS, INFORMANTS AND BROKERS

Alvise Gritti: The illegitimate son of the Venetian doge, Alvise was an influential courtier in the 1520s and 1530s Constantinople. He was a close friend of Ibrahim Pasha and a favourite of the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I who did not hesitate to pay visits to Gritti's house in Pera. Gritti and his brothers operated an impressive intelligence network that provided both the Ottomans and the Venetians with crucial information.

Andrea Gritti: A successful grain merchant, Andrea Gritti was the key figure in the negotiations for the treaty that ended the Ottoman-Venetian War of 1499-1503. He also proved himself an able commander at the critical Battle of Agnadello in 1509, an outstanding achievement the reward of which was his election as the Venetian Doge in 1523. Andrea fathered illegitimate sons during his sojourn in Constantinople. Alvise and his brothers were key figures in Constantinople politics in 1520s and 1530s.

Antón Avellán : The Admiral of the allied Christian fleet, Don Juan sent Avellán and Virgilio Polidoro to Constantinople in 1572 in order to bring the ransomed Ottoman slaves. The two also tested the water for a five-year truce, and offered to include Spanish Habsburgs in the capitulations granted to the Austrian branch of the family, yet without success. The duo was in Constantinople once again in 1575, in order to negotiate the ransoming of the Christian slaves that had fallen captive when la Goleta fell. During their visit, they also recruited several informants in Constantinople, especially from Uluç Ali's household.

Antonio Rincón: A Spanish *comunero* and an intransigent enemy of Charles V, Rincón was a seasoned diplomat in French service. He came to Constantinople on various missions between 1530 and 1541 as a French diplomat. When he was assassinated by the Governor-General of Milan in 1541, a full scale international crisis erupted between the Habsburgs and the French.

Aurelio Santa Croce: A merchant born in the Venetian dominions, Aurelio was one of the lieutenants of the Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople from the very beginning in the 1560s until his voyage to Naples in 1577. He was the one who instigated the Ottoman-Habsburg truce with his own initiative and without authorization from the authorities, only to save his own skin. The Habsburgs decided to exclude him from the negotiations and he could not return to Constantinople. He was shortly imprisoned in Madrid because of an unsettled debt.

Balthasar Prototico: The head of the Prototico network that gathered information for the Habsburgs in the Ionian Islands.

Baron de la Fage: A French renegade, originally from Languedoc, was an agent for the Queen of England as well as a spy in Ottoman employ. With the alibi of converting to Christianity, he went to Italy where he not only spied for the Ottomans, but also established contacts with people of importance. He received "many favours" from the Grand Duke of Tuscany as well as Henry IV's ambassador in Florence. Furthermore, he went to Rome where he had an audience with the Pope Innocent IX and several cardinals. He offered to win the Governor of Negroponte back to the Christianity and to seize several galleys which the renegade Christians sailed. He then passed to Venice and contacted the Habsburg ambassador for money; yet the ambassador de Vera, otherwise very friendly and supportive to spies, quickly realized de la Fage's true nature and refused to help him. Continuing his machinations, he tricked four Christian boys to accompany him to Levant, under the pretense of showing them the Ottoman Empire, nevertheless with the intention of either selling them

into slavery or forcing them to convert to Islam. On his way back, he defrauded the captain of the ship he embarked for Cattaro and took his 450 escudos as well as other goods promising to buy horses for him. Upon his return, he revealed the identity of a number of leading Habsburg spies in Constantinople, including David Passi and Guglielmo de Saboya. Enjoying his successes, de la Fage was making fun of the Pope and Cardinal de Santa Severina by showing off with brevets and safe-conducts that he acquired from them. Unfortunately for the Ottomans, he died in the fall of 1592 in a plague epidemic.

Bartolomeo Brutti: A factotum Mediterranean go-between *par excellence*, Brutti was born in the Venetian dominions in Dalmatia and entered the state service as a *giovane di lingua*. After two short spells, he established himself as the ransom agent and negotiated the exchange of prisoners-of-war between the Ottomans and the Christians in the mid-1570s. He then established contact with the Habsburg secret service and offered them the defection of the former Governor-General of Algeria, Mehmed Pasha in exchange for 30.000 ducats with which the latter would secure his re-appointment as the Governor-General. In the meantime, the Habsburgs gave him the task to accompany and help the unofficial Habsburg envoy to Constantinople, Giovanni Margliani. The two quickly fell out, however, and Brutti did nothing but to sabotage Margliani's mission. Brutti was also a relative of Koca Sinan Pasha and thus an actor in Ottoman factional rivalries. He found himself in prison when he clashed with the omnipotent Grand Vizier Sokollu. The latter was indignant when he realized that Brutti was plotting on behalf of the Moldavian prince which the Ottoman sent in exile to Rhodes. The intervention of Sinan Pasha and Margliani saved him from prison, yet only with one condition. He was to leave for Naples immediately. When his ship crashed, however, he managed to run and return thanks to the death of Sokollu and consequent purging of his faction. He then moved to Moldavia with the new prince on whose account he was plotting a short time ago. There he played an important political role as the high dignitary. In 1582, he returned to Constantinople as the Moldavian envoy. In 1590, we see him as Sinan Pasha's envoy to Poland.

Carlo Cicala: Coming from the famous Genoese corsair family of "Cicala", he was a corsair that operated under the aegis of the Sicilian Viceroy. When his brother Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha, who had been captured by the Ottomans and forced into conversion a long time ago, reached the highest echelons of Ottoman military, he invited his brother to his side. Carlo went to the Ottoman Empire with the permission from the Habsburg authorities on the condition that he sent regular information and tried to ensure the defection of his brother. Carlo first settled in Chios where his brother came to see him on his way back to Constantinople with the Ottoman navy. He then went to Constantinople where there were rumours that he came to renew the Ottoman-Habsburg truce and that he was a Habsburg agent. Unable to have himself appointed as the Prince of either Wallachia or Moldavia and unwilling to convert to Islam, he returned to Sicily. He was there when he was appointed as the Duke of Naxos by the Ottomans. He left Sicily for Constantinople, accompanied by a spy he recruited for the Ottomans. Even though his influence should have decreased with the death of his brother in 1606, we still encounter him in Constantinople in 1630, trying to have his son appointed as the Prince of one of the Danubian Principalities.

Colombina: One of the *giovani di lingua* in the Venetian bailate. One day he attacked his classmate Matheco Salvega with a knife as a result of which the bailo had him arrested in his house. He managed to escape, however, and then converted to Islam. He helped the Ottomans decipher the Venetian letters. He served in the Ottoman chancellery for years, appearing frequently in correspondence between the bailo and the Council of Ten. In 1578, he was even designated as the Ottoman envoy to the Serenissima, to great chagrin and protest of the Venetian authorities.

David Passi : A Portuguese Marrano, Passi was a broker *par excellence*. Sending information from Ragusa to the Venetian government during the War of 1570-3, he then returned to the Laguna and opened a saloon, a perfect trade for an information broker. He then settled in Constantinople where he became the Ottoman Sultan's favourite. Apart from profiting from substantial financial concessions, he became an influential actor in Ottoman factional politics. He had spies all over the Europe that sent him information which he shared not only with the Ottomans, but also with other governments. He was also an agent of Dom Antonio, the pretender to the Portuguese throne on whose behalf he lobbied in Constantinople for an alliance between Dom Antonio, the French, the English and the Ottomans. In the meantime, he and his go-between de Saboya negotiated the ransom of important Spanish prisoners-of-war on behalf of their families. He also offered several clandestine operations against the Ottomans to the Habsburg authorities. In 1591, the Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha, his archrival, managed to convince the Sultan to send Passi to exile when it was discovered that Passi was trying to start an Ottoman-Polish War. Even though he returned from the exile shortly after, he never regained his influence. He disappears from documentation after 1594. Avram Galanti put forward a rather unproven hypothesis that Passi converted to Islam after that date, changed his name to Halil. According to him, Passi was no other than the influential vizier and the brother-in-law of Murad III, Halil Pasha.

Filippo Trivulzio (o. 1521-1543): The Milanese born pro-French archbishop of Ragusa. He was feeding the French and the Ottomans with information he acquired thanks to his intelligence network.

Francisco de Vera y Aragón: The spy-friendly Habsburg ambassador to Venice that argued that the Viceroy of Naples should pay spies' stipends regularly and advocated for a more aggressive policy of espionage in Constantinople.

Gabriel Defrens: A French renegade who travelled in Europe as an Ottoman spy for years and engaged in in diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire, England and the leader of the Dutch rebels, William of Orange.

Giovanni Margliani: A Milanese officer who not only fell captive to the Ottomans, but also left an eye when la Goleta fell in 1574. After having been ransomed, he returned to Constantinople as the unofficial Habsburg envoy to conclude the truce. After three years of hard work, he reorganized the Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople and signed the long-awaited truce of 1581. On his return, he was given the title of the *Conde de Intelvi y los Cuatro Valles* in 1583. He continued playing an important role as a political advisor regarding the Ottoman Empire and the overseer of the negotiations for the renewal of the 1581 truce.

Giovanni Maria Renzo: The Genoese from San Remo who set up the Habsburg intelligence network in Constantinople in the early 1560s. He traveled frequently between Madrid, Naples and Constantinople in order to ensure coordination between the network and the Habsburg authorities. He not only recruited several spies and informants in the Ottoman capital, but also devised clandestine operations such as torching the Ottoman Arsenal, ensuring the defection of the Ottoman galleys and sabotaging the Ottoman fleet during combat with the Habsburg one. During the War of 1570-3, he contacted the Venetian authorities as well with a clandestine operation in order to seize Ottoman Castelnuovo. He died in 1577.

Giovanni Stefano Ferrari : A seasoned courier-cum-diplomat who operated between Madrid, Naples and Constantinople for years. He was the one who negotiated the renewal of the 1581 truce in 1584.

Girolamo Lippomano: The Venetian diplomat who served both in Madrid and Constantinople. He was secretly providing state secrets to the Habsburgs. When the Venetian authorities realized this, they sent Bernardo Lorenzo to Constantinople to replace him and

send him back to Venice to be tried. Seeing Venice on the horizon, Lippomano jumped off the ship and was drowned.

Guglielmo de Saboya: A Portuguese Marrano, David Passi's right hand man who negotiated with the Habsburg authorities on his behalf. He died in an Ottoman prison in 1592.

Hürrem Bey: An Italian renegade from Luca, this dragoman (*Divan-i Hümayun Tercümanı*) on Habsburg payroll, was one of the main protagonists of the Ottoman-Habsburg truce negotiations.

Jerónimo Bucchia: A classmate of Cardinal Granvela with whom he studied Law in the University of Padua in 1537, Bucchia used his familial ties to establish an intelligence network on behalf of the Habsburgs in several cities of Dalmatia which he remotely coordinated from Turin and Naples.

Joseph Nasi: a rich Jewish banker, Nasi finally settled in Constantinople after many years in Europe. He became a close confidant of the Ottoman Sultan Selim II who created him the Duke of Naxos. An important figure in factional politics, he was the arch-rival of the Grand Vizier Sokollu and the instigator of the War of 1570-3. He employed several spies who sent him information from all parts of Europe and the Mediterranean. The great fire in the Venetian Arsenal in 1569 was largely attributed, unjustly, to these spies. He also had extensive commercial relations throughout the Mediterranean. He died in Constantinople in 1579.

Marc'antonio Barbaro: The Venetian bailo that had to endure the hardships of the Ottoman-Venetian War of 1570-3. In spite of his isolation under house arrest during the war years, this maltreated Venetian diplomat proved his prowess by resuming contact with the Venetian government, thanks to the complicity of Salomon Ashkenazi and the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. He sent several letters informing Venice of recent developments in Constantinople that would shed light on military preparations, balance-of-power between war and peace factions and consequently the prospects of a truce.

Marxeben Lener: The polyglot agent of Sokollu, he was a Transylvanian renegade. He spied for the Ottomans in Germany on the one hand and defrauded the Emperor with false promises on the other in 1575. The next year, he was spotted by Habsburg counter intelligence and reported to have left Constantinople for his new targets. He would first go to Naples where he would pretend to re-convert to Christianity and stay in the Viceroy's house. From there he would pass to Rome, Venice and finally to Spain, to the Habsburg court.

Nicolò Giustinian: The leader of the Habsburg intelligence network in Chios, operational in 1560s. He also ransomed Christian soldiers on behalf of Philip II.

Pietro Lanza: A Corfiote corsair who was employed by the Viceroy of Naples. His activities, spanning decades, created international tensions between the Habsburgs and the Venetians who had exiled Lanza from his natal Corfu at the first place. His raid created an international crisis between the Venetians and the Habsburgs in 1578 as a result of which Lanza was dismissed from his post as the captain of the royal frigates. Yet, he continued serving the Neapolitan viceroys until the first decade of the 17th century. He also devised a plan to assassinate the Ottoman Sultan in 1608.

Salomon Ashkenazi: A Jewish physician educated in Padua, he was exiled from the Papal territories. He first went to the Polish court and then to Constantinople where he became the Venetian bailo's physician. Introduced by the bailo to the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu, Ashkenazi became the Pasha's close-ally. He was the intermediary between Sokollu and the bailo during the War of 1570-3 when the latter was under house arrest. He also helped the Venetian bailo by smuggling his letters in his boots and then sending them by a ship to Crete. Caught and imprisoned twice by the Ottomans, in both instances, he was saved by his protector, Sokollu. Playing a decisive role in the Ottoman-Venetian negotiations for a peace, he came to Venice as an Ottoman envoy in 1574 in order to finalize the peace treaty. His

influence in the Lagoon was such that he convinced the Venetian authorities to revoke the impractical ban over the Jews in Venice. He also claimed to have been influential in the election of Henri de Valois as the Polish King. When the latter became the French King, Henri III, he asked for remunerations for his support in these elections. Henri simply refused. He was also a rich merchant and had extensive trade relations in the Eastern Mediterranean. He died around 1602.

Sinan (Juan Briones) and Haydar the English (Robert Drever): Two renegades from the household of Uluç Ali. They regularly sent information to the Habsburgs regarding Ottoman navy and military preparations.

The Marquis of Bedmar: The Habsburg ambassador in Venice who managed to establish a wide network of spies and informants who provided him, in spite of the Venetian *Inquisitori di Stato*'s vigilant eyes, with crucial information during his tenure (1606-1618). At a time when the relations between the Venetians and the Habsburgs worsened substantially, Bedmar and the Duke of Osuna, the viceroy of Naples, devised a plan together according to which the Habsburg agents would set the Arsenal and the Mint, *zecca* in fire, deflect the Dutch soldiers in the city and attack the *Palazzo Ducale* with the Spanish fleet that would arrive from Naples in order to sack and submit the city to Philip III. When the Venetians discovered the plan, a great scandal followed, forcing Bedmar to leave Venice.

Yunus Bey: An influential Ottoman dragoman and diplomat who visited Venice six times.

Zaccaria Delphino: The Bishop of Lesina and the papal nuncio to Vienna who set up a spy network in Constantinople that provided the Emperor Ferdinand I with information.

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