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THE IMPACT OF INTELLIGENCE NETWORKS
ON MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGIES AT THE
END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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To my family and those who believed in me.

*Avere provato a tracciare un futuro diverso, essermi librato in volo anche solo per un momento, è ciò
che adesso mi dà la forza di affrontare quello che mi aspetta.*

– Wu Ming, *Altai*

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Introduction

Sultans, Spies and Strategies: Intelligence and Diplomatic Relations in the Mediterranean (1570-1600)

Intelligence has one moral law – it is justified by results.

– John le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*

Intelligence and strategy have always been closely intertwined. Intelligence has always been essential for developing effective strategies in both international politics and domestic affairs. Conversely, strategies were often subject to change when new intelligence compelled policymakers to adjust previously established plans. This mutual relationship is the *fil rouge* that underpins the analysis contained in this work, which relies on recent approaches developed in historical and political sciences. The context in which this dissertation takes place is the complex relationship between the Venetian Republic and the Spanish Monarchy on one side and the Ottoman Empire on the other, focusing on the Mediterranean scenario in the last three decades of the sixteenth century (ca. 1570-1600). Focusing on Venice and Spain, two of the major Catholic powers of the period, provides a coherent framework for understanding how these states navigated their relations with the Ottomans. While Protestant powers like England and the Dutch Republic also played a crucial role in Mediterranean politics, their diplomatic relations with the Ottomans fall outside the scope of this study.¹

In his article ‘On Bazaars and Battlefields’, published in 2011, Eric Dursteler identifies two dominant paradigms that could be applied to Mediterranean studies: the ‘bifurcated Mediterranean’ and the ‘linked Mediterranean’. The first paradigm, the bifurcated Mediterranean, emphasises conflict and division, with the region depicted as a battleground between competing civilizations –

¹ There is plenty of information about the English embassy in Constantinople and their diplomatic efforts, such as Jerry Brotton, *This Orient Isle. Elizabethan England and the Islamic World* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Arthur Leon Horniker, ‘William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations’, *The Journal of Modern History* 14, no. 3 (1942): 289-316; H.G. Rawlinson, ‘The Embassy of William Harborne to Constantinople, 1583-8’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1922): 1-27. On the Dutch embassy and Dutch-Ottoman relations, a rich source is Alexander H. de Groot, *The Netherlands and Turkey: Four Hundred Years of Political, Economical, Social and Cultural Relations*. (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010).

Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottoman Empire. This view draws on earlier models such as Henri Pirenne's *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (1936), which argued that the degree of unity reached by the Mediterranean under the Roman Empire was shattered by the rise of Islam, leading to a clear-cut division between East and West.² This framework has remained influential, especially through political theories like Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations", which further entrenched the notion of a divided world based on religious and cultural incompatibility. Many scholars have already shown its analytical bankruptcy, such as Gearóid Ó Tuathail, the father of Critical Geopolitics Studies, who defined this model as 'remarkably simplistic and flawed', since in order to conceive civilisations one has to first admit that political entities are isolated and have no contact with each other – of course, this is not true, especially if one considers that the 'identity of states is a product of ongoing histories of struggle and mutual interaction, not isolationism'.³ Despite massive criticism, this paradigm is still alive and well, with many works still proposing the narrative of two incompatible civilisations, in which the notion of a 'holy war' waged against the infidels – either Christians or Muslims – is always present. Increasingly, the contraposition between the two is already made clear by the title: for instance, Paolo Preto's *Venezia e i Turchi*, despite being a very useful and rich source for this dissertation, still perpetuates a dichotomous view of the Mediterranean basin.⁴

Dursteler contrasts this with a second paradigm, the 'linked Mediterranean', which focuses on the region's interconnectedness. This approach, inspired by Fernand Braudel's seminal *La Méditerranée* (1949), emphasises the *longue durée* of the Mediterranean as a space of continuous interaction, transcending religious and cultural boundaries. Braudel argued that the sea itself was the protagonist of a total history in which it did not change any of its underlying characteristics – a conception which introduced the very notion of *longue durée*. Another essential volume which could be inserted within this paradigm and has become a classic in Mediterranean Studies is *The Corrupting Sea* by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell: published in 2000, this book is part of a two-volume work aimed at fostering Braudel's conception, even though the second volume has still to be published in late 2024. By introducing the concept of 'microecologies', the authors claim that

² Dursteler, 'On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts', *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011): 413-434, here 414.

³ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), 193.

⁴ Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi* (Rome: Viella, 2013).

specific geographical and natural areas are nevertheless connected to each other by the sea through the endless circulation of people, commodities and technologies – a historiographical conception that could be resumed under the expression of ‘diversity within unity’.⁵ However, Nabil Matar has forcefully critiqued this celebratory vision of Mediterranean unity, pointing out its Eurocentric underpinnings. In his work, Matar highlights how Braudel’s notion of Mediterranean connectivity reflected the geopolitical context of post-World War II Europe, when European powers controlled much of the Arab world around the Mediterranean. For Arab populations inhabiting the southern and eastern shores, the Mediterranean was not a space of unity or connectivity, but one dominated by European naval forces. Matar notes that for Arabs, the Mediterranean was often a barrier, not a bridge, as it was largely controlled by European powers and posed threats of piracy, slavery, and military invasion. Furthermore, Braudel’s failure to engage with Arabic and Ottoman sources – a gap Braudel himself acknowledged – limited his understanding of the region’s full complexity.⁶

While this dissertation builds upon the paradigm of a connected Mediterranean, it does not ignore the tensions, separations, and imbalances that also characterized this space. It seeks to balance these perspectives by showing how individuals and groups operated across confessional and political divides, negotiating the complexities of early modern Mediterranean diplomacy and intelligence. Instead of a Mediterranean composed of sharply isolated blocks, this dissertation aims to show the sea as a zone of frequent and often original interactions.⁷ By examining espionage and intelligence networks, this thesis highlights how the Mediterranean functioned as a “borderland”, in the sense suggested by Linda Darling, where political and religious allegiances were fluid, and identities constantly refashioned.⁸

This scenario of unclear borders propelling cultural interaction had been stressed by Eric Dursteler in his *Venetians in Constantinople*, according to which political and religious divisions were far from being rigid: this ‘confessional ambiguity’ could be grasped by ‘innumerable instances of religious migration across seemingly inviolable boundaries and suggests that frontiers of faith were

⁵ Dursteler, ‘On Bazaars and Battlefields’, 416. To have a better insight about the notion of microecologies, see Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000).

⁶ See Nabil Matar, Nabil, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Nabil Matar, *Mediterranean Captivity through Arab Eyes, 1517-1798* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

⁷ Dursteler, ‘On Bazaars and Battlefields’, 418.

⁸ Linda T. Darling, ‘The Mediterranean as a Borderland’, *Review of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 1 (2012): 54-63, here 54.

more porous than we have previously believed'.⁹ This fluidity in identity is reflected in the political and spiritual allegiances of the time, which were often temporary and opportunistic, driven by immediate concerns rather than strict adherence to one particular faith or polity. Nevertheless, this paradigm of fluctuating loyalties and identities aligns with a broader understanding of early modern identity, not as a fixed or essentialist concept, but as a 'dynamic process' – a continuous fashioning and refashioning of relations, as Dursteler suggests.¹⁰

In this sense, the murky world of espionage, by its very nature, demanded adaptability and the ability to navigate multiple political and religious spheres. This is evident in what Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić term 'cross-confessional diplomacy', a practice which goes beyond the simplistic dichotomy of 'East and West' or Christianity vs. Islam', and instead highlights the permeability and ambiguity of early modern diplomatic relations.¹¹ An astonishing example of an ever-changing identity and ability to cross confessional as well as political boundaries is given by Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi, undoubtedly one of the most intriguing characters appearing in this study. Born a Venetian subject by birth and trained as a physician in Padua, Ashkenazi eventually fled to the Ottoman Empire, where he could practice his Jewish faith freely. During the War of Cyprus, he found himself in a precarious position as the physician to both the Grand Vizier and the Venetian bailo. This dual allegiance allowed Ashkenazi to play a hazardous double game, raising the critical question of loyalty: Was he loyal to Venice, the Republic that had ordered the requisition of all Jewish merchants at the outbreak of the war? Or was his loyalty towards the Ottoman Empire, which offered him religious freedom and professional standing?

Ashkenazi's case is just one example of the fluidity of identity and loyalty in the early modern Mediterranean. Increasingly, the metropolis of Constantinople was an incredible commercial hub due to its strategic geographical location, and had a genuine cosmopolitan character, which had made it the perfect meeting ground for people with diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and political backgrounds; as the historian of the Ottoman Empire Emrah Safa Gürkan has pointed out:

⁹ Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople. Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁰ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 20-21.

¹¹ Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, 'Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 93-105, here 99.

It was this uniquely chaotic plurality that not only made this imperial city a centre of information, news, rumours, and ideas, but also produced such a rich variety of intermediaries of different confessional and professional stripes that enabled cross-confessional diplomacy.¹²

According to Emrah Safa Gürkan, whose work on Ottoman intelligence is extremely valuable for this dissertation, the sixteenth century has been the ‘first golden era of intelligence’.¹³ This statement holds particular relevance for the case of the Venetian Republic. During this period, Venice established one of the first centralised secret services, organised by a political body to collect vital intelligence that would help craft effective strategies and protect the state from potential threats. This formalized intelligence system laid the groundwork for what is now recognized as modern espionage.¹⁴ The intelligence historian Christopher Andrew, among the founders of the journal *Intelligence and National Security*, has given in his *The Secret World*, a documented global history of intelligence and espionage, an essential albeit complete definition of ‘intelligence’, whose core is obtaining ‘secretly information unavailable from open sources’.¹⁵ In the context of this dissertation, the focus would be on two types of intelligence approaches: Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT). HUMINT, as defined by historian Calder Walton, refers to ‘information from a human source, an agent, or a spy’.¹⁶ In his recollections as a secret agent for the Italian counterespionage service – formerly known as Servizio per le informazioni e la sicurezza militare (SISMI) – Marco Mancini has proposed an interesting element to enrich HUMINT, that of ‘offensive counterespionage’, which employs all the technologies available for espionage activities but whose primacy is indisputably given to the ‘human factor’.¹⁷ Complementing HUMINT is OSINT,

¹² Emrah Safa Gürkan, ‘Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560-1600’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 107-128, here 110.

¹³ Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Spies for the Sultan: Ottoman Intelligence in the Great Rivalry with Spain* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2024), 2.

¹⁴ Ioanna Iordanou, *Venice’s Secret Service: Organising Intelligence in the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Ioanna Iordanou, ‘The Secret Service of Renaissance Venice: Intelligence Organisation in the Sixteenth Century’, *Journal of Intelligence History* 21, no. 3 (2022): 251-267.

¹⁵ Christopher Andrew, *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 2.

¹⁶ Calder Walton, *Spies. The Epic Intelligence War Between East and West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2023), 28. The world of intelligence practices and agencies is full of acronyms which may sound confusing and redundant, but since many of them are widely employed today, it could be useful to provide the reader with some of the three-letter code words to better engage with the content of this dissertation and its relation to current times.

¹⁷ Marco Mancini, *Le regole del gioco* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2023), 13. Mancini writes: ‘Il metodo del controspionaggio offensivo è «intus legere», da cui «intelligenza» = intelligence: leggere tra le righe, negli spazi bianchi tra le righe. I satelliti e gli algoritmi, dato che tra le righe non c’è scritto niente, leggono ma non fanno intelligence. Bisogna esserci! Essere lì, uomini e donne tra gli uomini e le donne!’. In 2007, the Italian Secret Services faced a massive process of reorganisation

which involves collecting intelligence from open sources such as books, public records, and, in early modern times, manuscripts.

Intelligence practices such as HUMINT and OSINT have deep historical roots. For example, Imperial Rome relied on its *frumentarii*, who acted as both tax collectors and intelligence-gatherers.¹⁸ While the early modern period didn't invent espionage, it restructured it into more formal and sophisticated systems of intelligence-gathering during the Italian Renaissance, when flourishing Italian city-states started to establish permanent ambassadors in foreign capitals. Since ambassadors were required to represent their government, they were also expected to collect and gather useful intelligence to address foreign policy matters, making the recruitment of spies and agents alike from ambiguous people gravitating around one's embassy increasingly common – in short, early modern diplomacy and intelligence frequently overlapped.¹⁹ Nevertheless, focusing only on embassies and official structures would be too simple. In his article advocating for a 'New Diplomatic History', John Watkins argues that too much scholarly focus on a 'progressivist narrative culminating in the exchange of permanent resident ambassadors has contributed directly to the field's conceptual estrangement from other areas of medieval and early modern investigation'.²⁰ Henceforth, this dissertation will dedicate much space to these informal agents, whose presence around official diplomatic structures is largely documented. In early modern diplomacy, the boundary between formal and informal intelligence-gathering was often fluid. Around official diplomatic posts like the Venetian bailo's house in Constantinople, an array of ambiguous figures – dragomans, merchants,

after the Law no. 124 was published on 3 August 2007 and are organised as follows: the Dipartimento delle informazioni per la sicurezza (DIS) is the main body coordinating the two main intelligence agencies in Italy: the Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna (AISE) and the Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza interna (AISI). To read Law 124/2007, see the full text at: <https://www.normattiva.it/urires/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2007;124>.

¹⁸ Rose Mary Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome: Trust in the Gods but Verify* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 250. The *frumentarii*, this special army unit entrusted with duties of couriers, intelligence-gatherers but also of tax collectors, were also able to enforce arrests and even assassinations. As shown in William Sinnigen, 'The Roman Secret Service', *The Classical Journal* 57, no. 2 (1961): 65-72, they were the perfect unit to obtain valuable intelligence, for their role as suppliers for the army requested them to always keep in contact with the army, the bureaucracy and, increasingly, the local population, thus putting them in the perfect spot to observe and report on any rumour or sensible information that could alert the Roman highest spheres of government.¹⁸ Hence, HUMINT and OSINT were certainly practised by the Romans, even though they were likely not to use three-letters acronyms for their secret activities. Other sources on the Roman Secret Service are Rose Mary Sheldon, 'Tinker, Tailor, Caesar, Spy: Intelligence in Ancient Rome', *American Intelligence Journal* 7, no. 4 (1986): 3-5; Thomas W. Africa, 'Urban Violence in Ancient Rome', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2, no. 1 (1971): 3-21.

¹⁹ Andrew, *The Secret World*, 4.

²⁰ John Watkins, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008): 1-14, here 4.

and even renegades – operated as intelligence gatherers. This brings up the issue of whether espionage should be seen as a ‘legal’ or ‘extra-legal’ activity. Benedetta Tobagi’s analysis of Italian Secret Services in the ‘years of lead’ raises the question whether intelligence activities, often outside the legal framework, can still be considered legitimate if aligned with the political interests of the state. As Tobagi concludes:

La legittimità dei servizi d’informazione e sicurezza si fonda infatti sulle finalità da essi perseguite, quando esse coincidono con interessi fondamentali dello Stato, come la sicurezza nazionale, in nome dei quali è possibile prescindere dalla legalità dei mezzi.²¹

The foundational principle of the Republic of Venice was to preserve its acquired position in international trade, whereas for Spain it was to create a geopolitical scenario in which its security might not be at stake, closed as it was between France and Northern Africa, two areas in which the Ottomans were seen as potential and factual allies against the Habsburg Kingdom of Spain.

This character of intelligence practices, legitimate inasmuch they were executed according to the foundational principles of the polities they were devised and realised for, gives us the opportunity to introduce another essential concept – that of ‘grand strategy’, which inevitably needs a more thorough explanation for the sake of clarity throughout this dissertation.²² Intelligence-gathering during the early modern period was essential for implementing grand strategy. In her state of the art’s analysis about the concept of grand strategy, Nina Silove argues that grand strategy refers to a state’s long-term priorities, which are shaped by information gathered through intelligence channels.²³ In her analysis, Silove identifies three possible interpretations for grand strategy: first, a *deliberate, detailed plan devised by individuals*; second, an *organising principle consciously adopted by policymakers to guide their own decisions*; third, a *pattern in state behaviour*. To the purposes of this dissertation, the meaning that has been chosen and adopted throughout this work is the first one, which conceptualises grand strategy in terms of grand plans. Silove’s definition reads:

²¹ Benedetta Tobagi, *Segreti e lacune. Le stragi tra servizi segreti, magistratura e governo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2023), 12.

²² For a detailed intellectual history of the concept of grand strategy, see John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018).

²³ Nina Silove, ‘Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of “Grand Strategy”’, *Security Studies* 27, no. 1 (2018): 27-57, here 31.

Grand plans are the detailed product of the deliberate efforts of individuals to translate a state's interests into specific long-term goals, establish orders of priority between those goals, and consider all spheres of statecraft (military, diplomatic, and economic) in the process of identifying the means by which to achieve them. Given their level of detail, grand plans are likely to be – but are not necessarily – set down in written documents.²⁴

The notion of grand strategy as a grand plan has been widely used by historians and political scientists, such as Geoffrey Parker's *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, a clear example of how rulers had to revise their plans on the intelligence they received. Parker's aim was to demonstrate that the King of Spain had in mind a coherent grand design, especially considering his claim according to which 'the absence of a comprehensive masterplan among the papers of Philip and his ministers does not prove the absence of comprehensive ambitions'.²⁵ Hence, grand strategies had to constantly deal with the highly unpredictable nature of intelligence, which could severely alter one's grand plan: as the troubled negotiations reconstructed in the second chapter show, Philip II was forced to keep alive two conflicting projects due to the inability to foresee a possible outcome of an extremely perilous diplomatic negotiation.

Structure and Organisation of this Dissertation

In conclusion, intelligence and grand strategy are deeply intertwined, with each other shaping the other in various ways. This interconnectedness is demonstrated in the first chapter of this work, *Tinker Bairo Soldier Spy*, which examines the War of Cyprus (1570-1573) as a case study for understanding how intelligence operations influenced strategic decisions. The chapter begins with an explanation of the causes that led the Ottomans to wage war against the Venetians, particularly in relation with their geostrategic agenda in the Mediterranean led by the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. While Sokollu's overarching strategy did not initially target Venice – a crucial commercial partner – the chapter explores how shifting intelligence heavily shaped Ottoman decision-making. Giancarlo Casale's *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* provides a detailed foundation

²⁴ Silove, 'Beyond the Buzzword', 49.

²⁵ Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 2. Parker's book is rich with remarkable insights about Philip's imperial policy; however, since its focus is the policy adopted towards England and the Low Countries, its scope goes beyond the object of analysis of this dissertation.

for analysing Sokollu's agenda and the strategic imperatives that drove Ottoman expansion during this period.²⁶ This analysis is complemented by Noel Malcolm's *Agents of Empire*, which puts forward a very relevant analysis that resonates with Casale's arguments about the potential setbacks in relation to Sokollu's comprehensive strategy.²⁷

The chapter also provides a comprehensive examination of the Venetian secret service, focusing on its central figure: the bailo, the Venetian resident in Constantinople. The bailo's role as both a diplomat and an intelligence officer is explored in detail, highlighting how the Venetian Republic's intelligence operations were integral to its foreign policy. In order to successfully represent the Serenissima, the Venetians were particularly keen in intercepting sensitive information; thus, they were eager to control and devise an effective postal system, which gave them the upper hand in intercepting intelligence and, consequently, decrypting it.²⁸ In fact, the Venetians were particularly skilled in another type of intelligence area, that of Signals Intelligence (SIGINT): namely, the ability of intercepting and decrypting communications worthy of political evaluation. To this purpose, Christopher Andrew, in *The Secret World*, reports that during the Renaissance many 'specialised codebreaking agencies were founded which required cryptanalytic expertise unavailable in other branches of government'.²⁹ Thus, the first example of a well-functioning codebreaking agency is found in the very city of Venice; its head was a certain Giovanni Soro, whose expertise in decrypting information supposedly derived from *De Componendis Cifris* (1467), a brilliant treatise written by the Italian polymath Leon Battista Alberti which had paved the way for the hidden art of cryptanalysis.³⁰

By following to the latest analyses written by Ioanna Iordanou on Venetian espionage, especially related to the Council of Ten and its organisation, it can be stated that secrecy was paramount in the Venetian citizenship, considering that being a good citizen required active involvement in collecting intelligence and its disclosure to the authorities. Naturally, alongside its

²⁶ Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁷ Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁸ Eric R. Dursteler, 'Power and Information: The Venetian Postal System in the Early Modern Mediterranean', in Diogo Curto, Eric R. Dursteler, Julius Kirshner and Francesca Trivellato, eds., *From Florence to the Mediterranean: Studies in Honor of Anthony Molbo* (Florence: Olschki, 2009), 601-623.

²⁹ Andrew, *The Secret World*, 5.

³⁰ Andrew, *The Secret World*, 127.

inner sources, the Council of Ten relied on intelligence provided by the bailo, who made use of several and scattered individuals with no clear political belonging, who offered their services in order to enhance their social status.

In this dissertation, a distinction is drawn between passive intelligence-gatherers – who may inadvertently collect sensitive information – and active spies, who were recruited specifically to gather intelligence for state purposes. Whereas intelligence-gatherers might have been in some cases accidental and did not willingly intercept or collect specific intelligence, spies are conceived as active collectors and reporters of intelligence hired by their governments or by diplomats entrusted with recruiting people of non-official status gravitating around official diplomatic posts, such as the district of Galata.

Alongside merchants and dragomans – who, thanks to their profession, were involved in intelligence-gathering operations – a figure appearing regularly is that of the ‘Jewish power-broker’, to whom Emrah Safa Gürkan has dedicated a long discussion.³¹ A notable example of the complex and sometimes ambivalent role of Jewish figures in espionage is that of Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi. Ashkenazi’s loyalty to the Venetians contrasts sharply with the figure of Joseph Nasi, a figure who had quickly risen to the highest spheres of Ottoman policy-making. These Jewish power-brokers – such as Ashkenazi and Nasi – provide an opportunity to reconstruct the Mediterranean diaspora of the so-called New Christians – Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity. These individuals maintained extensive Mediterranean-wide connections, often engaging in espionage activities, a point highlighted in Francisco Bethencourt’s recent work *Strangers Within*.³²

In particular, the Mendes family represents an excellent example of this phenomenon. Following their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, the Mendes family, belonging to the Sephardi branch of Jews from Portugal, managed to preserve a vast network of contacts across the Mediterranean. It is important to highlight these differences, for Portuguese Jews had been forced to convert and managed to remain connected to a web of Mediterranean contacts – thus maintaining alive a sense of belonging to a community – whereas Spanish Jews increasingly lost their Jewish

³¹ Emrah Safa Gürkan, ‘Touting for Patrons, Brokering Power, and Trading Information: Trans-Imperial Jews in Sixteenth-Century Istanbul’, in Emilio Sola Castañó and Gennaro Varriale, eds., *Detrás de las apariencias. Información y espionaje (siglos XVI-XVII)* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2015), 127–51.

³² Francisco Bethencourt, *Strangers Within: The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Trading Elite* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024).

ascendancy, given the piecemeal conversion operations occurred in the Kingdom of Spain. Indeed, the Mendes family is the perfect historical example to show this ability to have a massive influence over the port-cities in which New Christians were present, as the case of Gracia Nasi shows. Doña Gracia's nephew, Joseph Nasi, is a crucial figure for this dissertation, since he had been able to penetrate the Sultan's highest spheres of government, becoming one of Sultan Selim II's closest advisors. Scholars such as Benjamin Arbel and José Alberto Tavim provide differing perspectives on Nasi's involvement in espionage, underscoring the complexity of his operations and the breadth of his influence. By reconstructing Nasi's network of spies and informants, it becomes clear that his reach extended throughout the Mediterranean, highlighting the intertwined nature of trade, diplomacy, and espionage during this period.

However, while the war was developing and the Holy League was being formed, the figure of Solomon Ashkenazi entered the scene and made a contribution that is difficult to neglect, as he proved fundamental in diplomatic negotiations. Being the official physician to both the bailo and the Grand Vizier, this character shuttled from one seat of power to the other in order to conclude a dignified agreement for his previous homeland. Ashkenazi's seemingly strange attitude can be explained by the willingness to advocate for the Jewish people in Venice: just after the outbreak of the War, the Venetian government had decided to expel every Jew living in Venice and to confiscate their possessions. Thanks to his brilliant service, Ashkenazi was in the end able to use this as leverage to convince the Senate to reverse this decision. By 1570, the decree of expulsion was abrogated, with the government recognizing the crucial role of Jewish merchants in maintaining Venice's dominant position in international trade.

Newly uncovered letters from the State Archive of Modena reveal an additional dimension to Ashkenazi's diplomatic activities, particularly his involvement in the complex political situation surrounding the Polish throne. Ashkenazi proposed Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, as a candidate for the throne, demonstrating his extensive political connections. In his efforts, Ashkenazi employed two agents: Emanuele in Venice and Isaac in Fano, who acted as intermediaries. These letters illustrate how Ashkenazi used his influence at the Ottoman court to lobby the Grand Vizier on behalf of Alfonso II.

By examining these letters, one discovers how wide Ashkenazi's connections were: in this case, the doctor activates two of his agents, a certain Emanuele in Venice and a certain Isaac in Fano, to

report to Alfonso that Ashkenazi might lobby the Grand Vizier to gather support for his election. In the end, unfortunately, Alfonso dismissed the doctor's offer and the latter's plan eventually failed.

The second chapter, *Margliani's People*, focuses on a mission led by Giovanni Margliani, a Milanese agent who worked for the Spanish Kingdom. This mission is used as a prism to elucidate the functioning of the Spanish Secret Service, whose establishment and first steps are analysed at the beginning of the chapter. This rudimental secret service, which then evolved into something more structured, was established by a Genoese nobleman named Giovanni Maria Renzo; alongside him, it is possible to find murky people coming from the viceroyalties of Naples and Sicily, the closest branches of Spanish power to Ottoman domains and crucial to the obtainment of sensitive intelligence.

After this description of the system, the lens will be put on Bartolomeo Bruti, a singular figure that not only sheds light on the Mediterranean scenario in the 1570s thanks to the connections made by his family, but to shed light on the ways by which religious and political allegiances were always crossed by people engaged in espionage operations – this is the very notion of 'cross-confessional diplomacy'. Born in the Albanian town of Ulcinj, captured by the Ottomans in 1571, Bartolomeo was first trained to become a dragoman in the bailo's house. Bartolomeo was allowed to put forward such a request by the fact that he was still a Venetian subject before the conquest of his hometown. In 1575, Bruti was then engaged in a prisoner exchange: other than the reconstruction of this event – based on the deliverance of prisoners captured by the Ottomans after the conquests of Tunis and La Goletta in 1574 – it is stressed that ransoming operations and intelligence practices were often intertwined. Since safe-conducts were easily released to agents employed in prisoner exchanges, these instruments provided the perfect cover for intelligence-gathering missions, as the case of Giovanni Barelli makes clear. However, at the end of this delicate prisoner exchange, Noel Malcolm claims that Bruti became ensconced in the Spanish Secret Service. The evidence supporting this statement is a letter by Bruti himself to the King of Spain, in which he openly offers his services to the other Catholic power. To further consolidate this claim, Bruti became acquainted with Aurelio di Santa Croce, a figure of Venetian origin working for the Spanish in Constantinople and head of a well-established spy network.

Then, after having provided the necessary context, the main topic of the chapter is presented, namely the mission led by Giovanni Margliani to strike a peace with Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-1595). The situation that had been creating in the Mediterranean prompted the highest Ottoman officials, especially the Grand Vizier, to swiftly act to preserve their security and their recently acquired standing of supremacy. Henceforth, intelligence coming to and from Constantinople seriously posed the necessity of a flexible strategy, which means that the grand plan previously devised by Philip II and his *Consejo de Estado* had to be frequently changed according to the latest intelligence obtained by their secret service. The negotiations were in fact the result of a misunderstanding which had been caused by an accident occurred in Constantinople, when a Spanish agent – Martin de Acuña – had pretended to be a Spanish ambassador testing the waters for peace with the Ottomans, after his cover had been compromised by Ottoman counterespionage. The negotiations were often characterised by misconceptions and obliged policymakers to frequently change their strategies.

Our Kind of Crusade, the third and final chapter, broadens the scope to examine the idea of ‘unholy alliances’ between Christian polities and Muslim forces during the late 16th century. The work of Alberico Gentili in *De Iure Belli* is used to provide the intellectual framework for examining the legitimacy of such alliances. Venice’s pragmatic efforts to ally with the Persian Shah during the War of Cyprus are explored as an example of Realpolitik. Was it possible and legitimate for Christian polities to ally with the infidels – namely, the Muslims? After a brief intellectual history of this concept, which mainly deals with Alberico Gentili’s *De iure belli* and his prohibition to ally with the infidels, the chapter presents a fascinating instance of pragmatism and *Realpolitik* shown by Venice: the attempt of allying with the Persian Shah during the War of Cyprus against the Ottomans, in this way exploiting the confessional cleavage within Islam and making the Shi’s fight against the Sunnis. To do so, the Venetians employed secret agents – the most famous one being Vincenzo Alessandri – and intelligence about the Safavids, which proved essential in having a deeper understanding of the Middle Eastern scenario. However, this project eventually failed due to the inner instability of Persia, and the situation ultimately resolved in a restoration of peaceful relations that did not have a military outcome.

This will also be a chance to discuss the relevance and poignancy of Venetian *relazioni* as a source of intelligence and as historical sources as well. By following the path traced by Filippo de

Vivo, these *relazioni* are useful to have a deeper insight into Venice's policymaking and its relation to sources given by diplomats alike.³³ Actually, these reports were vital and inestimable sources in a city in which the most requested commodity was information. Henceforth, trading intelligence was done also by diplomats and ambassadors in the many spaces provided by the city of Venice in which they could meet, the *brogli* and the *ridotti*. However, Noel Malcolm has argued that these reports often perpetuated an outdated image of the Ottoman Empire as despotic and corrupt.³⁴ Nonetheless, in many of these *ridotti* the Venetian aristocracy gathered and elaborated new foreign policy proposals. As shown by Paolo Preto, the younger members of the Venetian aristocracy were keener to wage war against the Habsburgs, seen as the more dangerous enemy in the geopolitical scenario after the Long Turkish War (1593-1606), which had seen the Ottoman Empire as the defeated party. One of the most active *ridotti* in Venice was the one organised by the Morosini brothers, and within this *ridotto* it is possible to count famous members, such as the future doges Leonardo Donà and Nicolò Contarini, who belonged to the 'new paradigm', which, heavily influenced by Machiavelli's reasoning, focused on the positive features given by the peculiar structure of the Ottoman Empire.

Another concept widely employed in this period and frequently adopted by intellectuals is that of 'crusade', which will be reconstructed along with its many diverse interpretations. Despite appearing as an out-of-date and useless concept, the crusade proved particularly compelling during these years to entice Christians against Muslims.³⁵ Notably, this notion was not universally embraced across Europe. In fact, Venice distanced itself from the idea, favoring instead a policy of neutrality and non-alignment in order not to trigger another devastating war and to preserve the somehow restored situation of privileged trading partners with the Ottomans, a tenet obviously shared and fostered by the 'Giovani'. The ambassador based in Rome and tasked with maintaining this delicate standing in foreign policy was Paolo Paruta, who was forced to deal with the strongly anti-Muslim

³³ Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Filippo de Vivo, 'Archival Intelligence: Diplomatic Correspondence, Information Overload, and Information Management in Italy, 1450–1650', in Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham, eds., *Archives and Information in the Early Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 53–85.

³⁴ Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 149.

³⁵ A useful book for understanding the historical development of the notion of crusade is Daniele Menozzi, "Crociata". *Storia di un'ideologia dalla Rivoluzione francese a Bergoglio* (Roma: Carocci, 2020).

Papacy.³⁶ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the staunchest advocate for a crusade was Pope Clement VIII (r. 1592-1605), whose determination openly embarrassed the Venetians, given that they were a Catholic power that openly refused to participate in these ventures. During Clement's Papacy and especially of his successor, Paul V (r. 1605-1621), it is possible to find two intellectuals who had written 'grand plans' to annihilate the Ottoman Empire. By reading their works, it becomes clear that the concept of crusade heavily influenced their formulations.

The first plan is an intelligence report compiled by Domenico Bisanti, a Dominican friar of Albanian origin whose report is called *Relatione dell'Imperio Turchesco*. After a long journey across the Ottoman Empire, during which he had spent a quite long time in the capital, Bisanti was keen to point out the major weaknesses of the 'universal enemy', with the ultimate purpose of total annihilation of the Ottomans. The curious thing about this plan, which lacks originality, is that Bisanti sent two versions of his report: one to the Viceroy of Naples and another to Cardinal Scipione Borghese, nephew of Pope Paul V. This means that Bisanti hoped for a collaboration between the Papacy and the Kingdom of Spain to destroy once and for all the Ottomans.

The second plan is a treatise signed by a certain Ottavio Pallavicino, about whom it has been almost impossible to find valuable information. This manuscript, which is preserved in the Fondo Borghese within the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano and is here entirely transcribed here for the first time – which might be helpful for future historians and analysts concerned with modern era grand strategies – concerns a grand geopolitical plan to destroy the Empire and build from scratch a Christian Republic which would serve as a bulwark against other waves of infidels.

After a distressing trip to the Ottoman Empire, Ottavio Pallavicino came up with the idea of creating a new sort of unity between the Christian polities, which would be necessary to destroy the Muslim enemy. In an extremely detailed geopolitical plan, articulated along seven lines of attack, Pallavicino guides the reader in a supposedly effective way to defeat the Sultan in a definitive way. After that, Pallavicino devises the establishment of a Republic governed by a Senate composed of senators in proportion to the relevance accorded to the Kingdoms that had participated in this enterprise. Naturally, this project never realised, despite Pallavicino's detailed guide on how to establish such a government for its proper functioning.

³⁶ On the historian and diplomat Paolo Paruta, a remarkable character who is impossible to describe with more details, see Gino Benzoni, 'Paruta, Paolo', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 81 (2014).

At the end of of this work three appendixes are included. The first contains documents from the Venetian archives concerning Solomon Ashkenazi. The second presents transcriptions of the unpublished letters found in the Modena State Archive. Finally, the third appendix offers the complete transcription of Ottavio Pallavicino's grand plan.



Figure 1. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Portrait of Marcantonio Barbaro*, oil on canvas, 1593. National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest.

1. Tinker Bailo Soldier Spy

Venetian Espionage: Diplomacy and Spies in the War of Cyprus

The more identities a man has, the more they express the person they conceal.

– John le Carré, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

1.1. The Looking Glass War: Geopolitics and Grand Strategy Leading to the War of Cyprus

On 25 March 1570, an ominous figure arrived in the Venetian lagoon. His name was Kubad, and his status was that of *çavuş*, which meant that he was the official messenger sent by Sultan Selim II directly to the Doge Pietro Loredan (r. 1567-1570).³⁷ Unlike an ambassador, Kubad's role was limited to conveying Selim's demands, as the Ottoman Empire had not yet developed a formal diplomatic network abroad, a structure that would only come into being under Sultan Selim III's reforms in the late 18th century.³⁸ Kubad presented to the Doge an ultimatum issued by Sultan Selim II, who demanded the handover of the whole island of Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire. If the Venetians accomplished this request, the inhabitants of the island would have their security and liberty of movement guaranteed, while the Venetians would obtain a very desirable renewal of formerly signed trade privileges. If they did not, war was the only solution left for the two empires: the Sultan was ready to capture the island by force.³⁹ It is not surprising that the Venetians were highly unpleasant with this news, but they were not unprepared for it. The bailo Marcantonio Barbaro had been informed about the Sultan's intentions through his secretary Alvise Buonrizzo, who was travelling with Kubad.⁴⁰ On their way to Venice – before stopping in Dubrovnik –, Buonrizzo had managed to send letters signed by Barbaro to Venice explaining in detail the purposes of the mission: 'A

³⁷ Giuseppe Gullino, 'Loredan, Pietro', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 65 (2005).

³⁸ Marc David Baer, *The Ottomans: Khans, Caesars and Caliphs* (London: Basic Books, 2021), 330.

³⁹ Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 100.

⁴⁰ On the figure of Marcantonio Barbaro, see Gaeta Franco, 'Barbaro, Marcantonio', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 6 (1964); Eric R. Dursteler, 'The Bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice's Early Modern Diplomatic Corps', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no. 2 (2001): 1-31; Silvio Palma, *Marcantonio Barbaro: L'uomo, il diplomatico, l'architetto* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1990); Alessandro Barbero, *Lepanto. La battaglia dei tre imperi* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2012).

Venezia si sapeva già da due settimane che il ciaus stava arrivando, e che veniva a chiedere la cessione di Cipro'.⁴¹ This crucial intelligence gave the Venetians time to prepare for the imminent threat, and by the time Kubad arrived, the Senate had already debated the situation. In a decisive vote, the Senate resolved to prepare for war, with 199 votes in favor out of 220. In its official response, Venice took a bold and defiant stance. The Doge's reply was carefully calculated to irritate the Sultan, omitting many of Selim's grand titles and adopting a tone of dignified resistance. Venice had made its choice, and rather than submit, it was ready to defend its claims to Cyprus through force.⁴²

This ultimatum presented a list of complaints concerning the illegal construction of castles in Dalmatia, which constituted a brazen violation of previously defined borders, but most importantly the alleged protection given by Venice to Christian corsairs who used Cyprus as a base to launch attacks on ships departed from Alexandria of Egypt on their way to Constantinople.⁴³ This situation echoed the same reason Sultan Suleiman I had employed to invade the island of Rhodes in 1522, which at the time was inhabited by the Knights Hospitallers of St John; after a bloody siege, Suleiman had allowed them to leave the island unharmed, eventually resettling in Malta.⁴⁴ In the end, as Noel Malcolm concludes, this was a 'rag-bag of complaints, hardly justifying an all-out war of conquest'.⁴⁵ Before telling the story of the war, it is fundamental to understand the true motivations behind the decision to invade Cyprus.

The Ottomans were primarily concerned with large-scale strategic considerations; The unsuccessful siege of Malta (1565) had provoked a radical change of mind in terms of strategy. Instead of attempting to seize key outposts scattered throughout the Mediterranean all at once, they aimed to secure territories gradually from east to west. Within this broader strategy. Within this strategy, Cyprus was a surviving Christian enclave that seriously threatened Ottoman security. Moreover, there were logistical concerns. The Ottoman fleet, reliant on galleys that required frequent

⁴¹ Barbero, *Lepanto*, 84.

⁴² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 101; Doge Pietro Loredan to Sultan Selim II, Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia [hereafter: ASVe], Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci [hereafter: CCD], Lettere da Costantinopoli, busta 4, item 16 (letter in Italian).

⁴³ Maria Pia Pedani 'Tra Economia e Geo-politica: la Visione Ottomana della Guerra di Cipro', *Annuario Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica* 5 (2003): 287-298, here 288.

⁴⁴ Baer, *The Ottomans*, 144. For a complete account of the siege, see Nicolas Vatin, 'La conquête de Rhodes', in Gilles Veinstein, ed., *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 mars 1990*, (Paris: La documentation française, 1992): 435-454; Simon Phillips, ed., *The 1522 Siege of Rhodes. Causes, Course and Consequences* (London: Routledge, 2024).

⁴⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 101.

resupply, faced limitations in sustaining long voyages. As the Ottomanist Maria Pia Pedani points out: ‘sottrarre Cipro agli infedeli significava precludere alle navi corsare punti di ancoraggio e di rifornimento, soprattutto di acqua potabile, non più tale dopo tre-quattro giorni’.⁴⁶ Economically, Cyprus was crucial due to its proximity to Egypt, the most important source of Ottoman revenue, which financed their military campaigns. Egypt had been conquered by Selim II’s grandfather, the eponymous Selim I, in 1517. This conquest had allowed the Ottomans to have an enormous supply of grain, symbolised by the maritime route Alexandria of Egypt–Constantinople which should privilege domestic supply over export.⁴⁷ Giancarlo Casale has demonstrated that Egypt was furthermore important for intelligence-gathering operations especially about the Indian Ocean: once incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, Cairo had become a second capital, which was the destination of all the dispatches; from Cairo, these intelligence reports and dispatches would be transmitted to the proper capital, Constantinople.⁴⁸

But religiously speaking, Sultans were in control of the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina, which bestowed them the title of “Protector of the Holy Land and Believers”. This elevated status also made them increasingly responsible for the security of *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca). Cyprus, however, posed a threat to this religious duty, as the island provided shelter on many Christian pirates who interfered in the grain traffic and preyed on pilgrim ships, often taking Muslim captives; Moreover, based on the assumption that the island had been occupied by Muslims – or at least paid tribute to them – some coeval Muslim scholars argued that ‘lands that had once formed part of the *dar al-Islam* should be recovered when possible’.⁴⁹

Likewise, Noel Malcolm states that the ‘foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire in this period was driven not by personal whims but by some large-scale geostrategic concerns’.⁵⁰ To enlarge Malcolm’s statement, the Ottomans were driven by the ambition to extend their influence south-eastwards into the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea: thus in 1568, to weaken their eastern enemy, the Shah of Persia, the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had commissioned to the governor of

⁴⁶ Pedani, ‘Tra Economia e Geo-politica’, 288.

⁴⁷ Pedani, ‘Tra Economia e Geo-politica’, 288.

⁴⁸ Giancarlo Casale, ‘An Ottoman Intelligence Report from the Mid Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean’, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 31 (2007): 181-188, here 186-187.

⁴⁹ Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 446.

⁵⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 101.

Egypt a feasibility study for a Suez canal to further improve anti-Portuguese efforts in India. This effort had also religious motives, for Sokollu thought that it was ‘intolerable’ that Muslim peoples should be forced to live continuously tormented by the Portuguese infidels; accordingly, the governor of Egypt:

shall gather all of the most qualified architects and engineers of that province and send them with assistants so that they may inspect the land between the Mediterranean and the port of Suez. Once they have determined with certainty if it is possible to build a canal across it, how long it would need to be, and how many ships could pass through it, you shall report back to us, so that necessary preparations can be made and digging can begin.⁵¹

Giancarlo Casale has stressed that Sokollu’s campaigns must be framed not merely as a means to territorial expansion, but thus access to resources and revenue through control of trade routes, in which the Ottoman Empire had become an active player and investor.⁵² Maria Pia Pedani emphasises the Ottomans’ awareness in the 16th century, noting that Sokollu was the first to conceive of a widened Mediterranean, ‘in cui le rotte marittime e carovaniere che univano oriente e occidente avevano una precisa funzione strategica e commerciale: aveva cioè coscienza che un’azione del Golfo Persico, o nell’Oceano Indiano, aveva ormai conseguenze nel Mediterraneo, e viceversa’.⁵³ So, in the following year he advocated the construction of a canal linking the Don and the Volga, centred around the city of Astrakhan. If successful, this campaign would have allowed the Ottomans to connect the Black Sea to the Caspian; attack both Russia and the Safavids from a crucial outpost and create a ‘security cordon’ between them; facilitate pilgrimages from Central Asian Muslims threatened by the latest advancements made by Ivan IV of Muscovy after having conquered the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, ‘creating long-term bonds of amity and possible allegiance’ with the Uzbeks, crucial anti-Persian Sunni allies in Central Asia.⁵⁴ This coincided with a decisive change in Ottoman foreign policy inaugurated by Sokollu in his first year as Grand Vizier (1565): that is, the collaboration between the Ottomans and Muslim populations living in the Indian Ocean context. With these two monumental projects Sokollu was trying to realise the imagined community of the

⁵¹ Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 135.

⁵² Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 140.

⁵³ Pedani, ‘Tra Economia e Geo-politica’, 292.

⁵⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 102.

‘umma ‘by creating a global transportation network, centred on the Ottoman Empire, that radiated out to the most distant corners of the Islamic world’.⁵⁵ However, neither of these campaigns succeeded in their purposes. It is not surprising that these previous failed campaigns made Cyprus ‘an obvious target’, since it was ‘a Christian possession isolated in the far corner of the eastern Mediterranean’.⁵⁶ Despite this quite appealing situation, conceiving of the Ottoman Empire as a power only concerned with territorial expansion would be misleading. As Casale suggests, Sokollu’s actions could be ultimately understood within the framework of ‘soft power’, a concept often applied to contemporary global affairs and originally coined by the international relations scholar Joseph S. Nye.⁵⁷ Sokollu’s successful imperial strategy was soft inasmuch it was ‘based not on territorial expansion, but instead on an infrastructure of trade, communication, and religious ideology’ which went beyond the traditional focus on coercive force and acquisition of colonies.⁵⁸

Strategically speaking, the Venetian establishment was reluctant to wage war against the Ottomans since they feared to lose their commercial privileges; in his *Venezia e i Turchi*, Paolo Preto has stressed that Realpolitik was fundamental for Venice as a ‘stato proteso verso l’Oriente e vitalmente interessato a salvaguardare ad ogni costo con i rapporti commerciali col mercato ottomano le ragioni stesse della propria esistenza’.⁵⁹ To this purpose, a logic of deterrence had been enunciated by bailo Marino Cavalli after he had returned to Venice in 1560, an essential foreign policy tenet which he defines as such:

bisogna procedure con gran destrezza e prudenza fra quelle due vie di fargli e non fargli la guerra.

Bisogna certissimamente non farla, ma non però perché credano che non si possa fare.⁶⁰

This uncertainty is further showed by the fact that some senators were ready to cede immediately the island, given the positive commercial trend that Venice was experiencing; some even went as far as to propose to sell the island, ‘trasformando quindi in un affare quello che si preannunciava come un

⁵⁵ Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 136.

⁵⁶ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 446.

⁵⁷ For a definition of soft power, see Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004); Joseph S. Nye, ‘Soft Power and American Foreign Policy’, *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2004): 255-270.

⁵⁸ Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 150.

⁵⁹ Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 21.

⁶⁰ Eugenio Albèri, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, serie III, vol. 1 (Florence: Clio, 1840), 286.

dispendioso conflitto'.⁶¹ Quite surprisingly, even the Ottomans hoped not to engage in a bloody war against the Venetians; Alessandro Barbero argues that by choosing Kubad as their official envoy, the Porte really hoped to convince the Venetians to surrender Cyprus without starting a war. Kubad was in fact an accustomed visitor: he had already travelled to Venice a few years earlier, where he had spent a delightful time in the Giudecca borough successfully resolving a commercial quarrel: this experience, other than shaping his willingness to keep peaceful relations with Venice, had given him a deep knowledge of the city and its establishment. However, Kubad was not travelling alone: along with him, there were the official secretary to bailo Marcantonio Barbaro, Alvise Buonrizzo, Barbaro's son Francesco and the dragoman Mateca Salvago, a road dragoman who had been entrusted with accompanying the bailo in his duties; moreover, Salvago's father, Genesino, was the owner of the building complex of the bailate.⁶²

However, there was a short-term factor that made the war effort against Venice a more attractive option for the Ottomans: Spain was already engaged in two complicated fronts. In the North, Philip II had to manage the bloody uprising of the Seven United Provinces; in the South – within Spain itself – the Moriscos posed a significant threat after their rebellion in 1568 in the Alpujarras region. Spain was certainly not in the best shape to wage war, but this did not automatically make it a potential target; Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, as Noel Malcolm underlines, 'was a good enough strategist to rule out any major invasion of a powerful state at the opposite end of the Mediterranean'.⁶³ Thus, since Spain could not be considered as a potential ally against the Ottomans, the Venetian-ruled island of Cyprus would prove a much more attractive target. To further increase the relevance of this strategic vision, at the time Venice was showing a policy of coldness towards Spain. This was due to many strategic reasons: first, the last experiment of an anti-Ottoman alliance with Spain had proved unsuccessful during the anti-Ottoman war of 1537-1540, in which the commander of the Spanish fleet, the Genoese Andrea Doria, had been blamed for the defeat at Preveza. Secondly, the Spanish Monarchy represented a problem through the Kingdom of Naples,

⁶¹ Pedani, 'Tra Economia e Geo-politica', 293.

⁶² Mateca Salvago's life-story is reconstructed by Stefan Hanß, *Narrating the Dragoman's Self in the Veneto-Ottoman Balkans, c. 1550-1650* (London: Routledge, 2023), 32-52. Mateca, however, is not the central character, since the book is mostly focused on the life of his son, Genesino. In the end, his close involvement in dealings with the Ottoman court provoked Venetian's fear that he might be a double agent selling valuable secrets to the Ottomans. The Council of Ten eventually ordered the recently-appointed bailo Marco Venier to have him killed on 14 October 1594 in his family house.

⁶³ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 104.

an uncomfortable player which posed a significant threat to Venetian territorial claims in the Balkans. What the Venetians feared the most, however, was that a binding alliance with Spain would divert their forces and navy to North Africa, where in 1560 Piyale Pasha and Turgut Reis had captured the strategically fundamental stronghold of Djerba, which in any case was totally irrelevant to Venice's schemes. Consequently, Spain had little to no interest in helping the Venetians to maintain their hold in Cyprus, since their attention was all taken by anti-corsair activities in North Africa and the Western Mediterranean.⁶⁴

Given these circumstances, it becomes important to examine who the key Venetian figures were in managing this delicate situation. One of the crucial players in this Mediterranean naval war was the Venetian bailo – Marcantonio Barbaro, a member of one of the wealthiest families in the Republic. His role in espionage and diplomacy proved critical to navigating the treacherous waters of this conflict. Who was he and why was such an important figure for Venetian espionage?

1.2. The Bailo House: A Hub of Diplomacy and Espionage

The Venetian bailo – coming from the Latin word *bailius*, which meant ‘courier’ – was the main representative and protector of Venetian interests in Constantinople, the capital city of the Ottoman Empire. Maria Pia Pedani argued that his office was very similar to the chief of a religious group in Muslim territory for he also had judicial power over his subordinates; thus, after the *Serrata* of the Great Council (1297), which basically established a hereditary ruling class, ‘i baili veneziani furono scelti tutti tra gli aristocratici, gli unici che avevano il potere di agire come giudici’.⁶⁵ According to the historian Eric Dursteler, the fundamental duties of every bailo were essentially two: the first task consisted in acting as Venice's chief consular representative in the Ottoman Empire. This entailed the endless and tiring work of promoting Venetian commercial interests in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the years following Lepanto, ‘against potential interlopers such as the English, the Dutch, and the Florentines’.⁶⁶ However, the most crucial function exercised by the bailo, and the

⁶⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 103-105.

⁶⁵ Maria Pia Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2010), 79.

⁶⁶ Dursteler, ‘The Bailo’, 4.

most meaningful for this dissertation, was the bailo's assignment to 'collect, process, and communicate to Venice information on the Ottoman Empire'.⁶⁷

It is self-evident that in a news-hungry world like the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, obtaining crucial information was vital for planning carefully every political move. This was crucial especially if one considers the political standing which the Serenissima had acquired. The Venetian ruling class had understood that Venice's status compared to other Mediterranean political entities was not the most favourable anymore, after the disastrous war against the Ottomans of 1537-1540.⁶⁸ Consequently, in Eric Dursteler analysis, this changed the balance of power and led Venice to 'pursue aggressively a policy of neutrality, a balancing act between the French, the Habsburgs, and most importantly, the Ottomans'.⁶⁹ The core of this careful and vigilant policy relied on the monopoly of all sources of information, the main commodity for Venetian espionage operations. In his work *Agents of Empire*, Noel Malcolm has put forward a useful distinction between the similar practices of intelligence-gathering and espionage: while he recognizes that much of the latter consists of the former, he states that to define a spy as the one who gather 'the sort of information that the host country would want to stop them from having, or transmitting, is not to put forward a very clear criterion'.⁷⁰ Filippo de Vivo has pointed out that the semantics of the term 'spy' was not straightforward: especially in the seventeenth century, the term 'spy' was a denigrating word referring to the enemy's informers, while the Venetians preferred to use the word *confidenti* to define their informers, since this term implied 'a more acceptable human relationship'.⁷¹ Henceforth, de Vivo does not totally dismiss the use of the word 'spy'. Despite underlining that the word spying 'suggests an alien element deviously penetrating into a community', de Vivo makes clear that this 'professionals of intelligence' were not external elements of the governing bodies; indeed, they were

⁶⁷ Dursteler, 'The Bailo', 3.

⁶⁸ On the 1537-1540 Ottoman-Venetian War, see Roger Crowley, *Empires of the Sea: The Final Battle for the Mediterranean 1521-1580* (London: Faber & Faber, 2008); Colin Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980): 211-282; Andrew C. Hess, 'The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire in the Age of the Oceanic Discoveries, 1453-1525', *The American Historical Review* 75, no. 7 (1970): 1897-1919; Palmira Brummett, 'The Ottoman Empire, Venice, and the Question of Enduring Rivalries', *Journal of Early Modern History* 3, no. 2 (1999): 171-193.

⁶⁹ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 4.

⁷⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 223.

⁷¹ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 74.

‘part of the political system, helping communication between different members of the political arena’.⁷²

For the purposes of this analysis, we will mainly focus on these professional of intelligence and information-gatherers, who could have stumbled on valuable information and informally advised diplomats for their own personal return; so, my thesis is that intelligence-gatherers might have been in some cases accidental and did not explicitly collected that information, whereas spies are considered as active collectors and reporters of intelligence hired by their governments or by those they wanted to defect for. In this context, and quite essentially related to their duties, the baili had at their disposal different sources and people who made up their informal spy network and gravitated around their household, which could be legitimately considered as the nexus of secret diplomacy and espionage operations in early modern Constantinople. The bailo’s house was located in the district of Galata, the former location of the Genoese colony which had become the international hub, where merchants and diplomats could meet each other and, obviously, trade vital intelligence.⁷³ But before exploring the underground world of the Ottoman capital city, it is worth explaining the organisation of the Venetian secret service.

1.2.1. On Your Serenity’s Secret Service: The Council of Ten and Secrecy in Venice

In Venice, the most important organ responsible for the Republic’s security was the Council of Ten (*Consiglio dei Dieci*); after having been established in 1310 under Doge Pietro Gradenigo, it eventually evolved into a more structured secret service, eventually encompassing diplomatic and intelligence operations. As the specialist on intelligence and leadership studies Ioanna Iordanou writes, the Council had its headquarters in the astonishing Palazzo Ducale – the symbol of Venetian power –, where they organised the earliest intelligence service by collaborating with the Senate, the Collegio and the State Attorneys (*Avogadori de Comun*).⁷⁴ Iordanou has also put forward a very interesting argument which is worth mentioning: as it will be made clearer below, the Council actively used secrecy as an instrument in the construction of Venetian citizenship and identity,

⁷² De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 74.

⁷³ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 23-25.

⁷⁴ Ioanna Iordanou, ‘The Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice: Intelligence Leadership in the Early Modern World’, in Paul Maddrell, Christopher Moran, Ioanna Iordanou, and Mark Stout, eds., *Spy Chiefs: Volume 2: Intelligence Leaders in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018): 43-66, here 46.

creating a boundary between those who know and those who do not know. Subsequently, the sense of belonging to the privileged class of ‘those who know’ will nurture the need of protecting this secrecy in order to keep the group together. ‘Secrecy’, as Iordanou closes her argument, was able to create ‘a dynamic and ongoing relationship between its agents and became both the condition and the consequence of the formation of group identity’.⁷⁵ This argument echoes a similar thesis formulated by Filippo de Vivo, whose groundbreaking work *Information and Communication in Venice* stresses that, other than forming a form of ‘group cohesiveness’, this manipulation and deliberate withdrawal of information was instrumental in fostering oligarchic rule over the Venetian population. De Vivo also argues that secrecy was so important because it compensated for the lack of divine legitimacy: henceforth, every decision had to appear as a result of a glaring consensus, and not as the result of political debate. A clear example of this is the election of the doge: the rigidly established rituals, coupled with an extremely complicated voting system, were designed to ‘shroud the actual politicking leading to the election and thus to turn a contested choice into a representative authority’.⁷⁶

The natural outcome was that ordinary Venetian citizens, namely those who did not belong to the anciently formed aristocracy and excluded from political participation, felt it was their civic duty to contribute to the Serenissima’s security and interests by providing intelligence which might be considered useful by the Council of Ten. To better manage counterintelligence – namely, all the information that could prevent hostile acts from enemy governments or agents – the Council of Ten established in 1539 a counterintelligence authority called *Inquisitori contro la propagazione del segreto*, made up of two Councillors of Ten and one ducal councillor. As stated above, the Venetian ruling class expected from their citizens an active involvement in the Serenissima’s affairs; consequently, if one citizen became aware of potential threats against the safety of the Republic, they were actively required to inform the authorities through formal denunciations. A means by which the citizens could send these denunciations was the invention of the ‘premodern version of surveillance cameras’, namely the *bocche di leone*, postboxes sculpted in the shape of lions with their mouth open, into whose orifices denizens were required to deposit denunciations on possible threat

⁷⁵ Iordanou, ‘Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice’, 56.

⁷⁶ De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 43.

for the government.⁷⁷ Naturally, given the strong attachment to their Republic's safety and the fact that authorities would reward valuable information, 'the city turned into what can be regarded as a "Big Brother" studio, where nothing escaped the ears and eyes of the numerous self-appointed spooks'.⁷⁸ However, to further explore the highly organised structure of the secret service, it is important to remember that the Council of Ten managed a multifaceted yet meticulously planned network of intelligence-gathering. In this hierarchy of communications channels, the most organised and well managed was composed of diplomats and ambassadors, whose main task was to 'investigate and corroborate the Ten's intelligence, furnishing them with a written report of the outcome of their investigation, which would enable them to make a calculated decision on the most appropriate action to pursue'.⁷⁹ In this first tier of intelligence hierarchy, the bailo was the Republic's point man. However, around him was a network of informal information-gatherers, commonly known as 'famiglia': it was often composed of ten servants allowed by the Senate and an indefinite number of people each bailo wanted.⁸⁰ Henceforth, given their importance, these categories deserve a proper analysis.

Merchants, willingly or not, were natural intelligence-gatherers. They were undoubtedly useful collectors of classified information, for their strength lied in their ability to travel without arousing too much suspicion on their murky affairs assigned by spymasters like the bailo. Progressively, traders who had become long-term residents of foreign cities could provide intriguing information, albeit it was often political gossip, 'which they would anyway acquire in the pursuit of their own business interests', since they had become ever more entrenched in other societies other than their own'.⁸¹ Moreover, in relation to Venetian merchants working within and outside the city of Venice, Ioanna Iordanou has talked about the 'commodification of intelligence', which meant that 'intelligence was turned into a trade of information for benefits', which in turn reinforced the bond of secrecy shown above. Iordanou writes:

⁷⁷ Christopher Andrew, *The Secret World*, 131.

⁷⁸ Iordanou, 'Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice', 48.

⁷⁹ Ioanna Iordanou, 'The Secret Service of Renaissance Venice', 258.

⁸⁰ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 32.

⁸¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 224.

Espionage became a transaction between followers and leaders whereby the former expected some kind of benefit in return for services rendered, while the latter advanced strategic objectives by obtaining information.⁸²

It was very easy for Venetian merchants to follow this protocol, for the Rialto market was the fundamental commercial hub where the most demanded commodity was not pepper or another luxury item – it was intelligence. For Venetians involved in the trade of any kind of commodity, news meant profit or loss; actually, they ‘could not see a clear-cut distinction between politics and commerce, as political affairs could affect one’s business and livelihood, and commercial pursuits could have diplomatic implications’.⁸³

1.2.2. Dragomans: Fluid Allegiances and a School for Loyal Servants

The fundamental distinction is that whereas for merchants obtaining intelligence was undeniably useful even for their business, it was not their first occupation; instead, this was true for the baili, whose essential purpose was to ‘winkle out the secrets of the host government, particularly where its own diplomacy was concerned’.⁸⁴ These duties were accomplished through a form of ‘personal diplomacy’ which was necessary to maintain ‘extensive networks of friendship and patronage through which they were able to establish relationships with influential Ottomans in positions to benefit and protect Venetian interests’.⁸⁵ Many of these networks were maintained by gifting delicacies such as pistachios, almonds, marzipan: among them, it appears that Sultanas were particularly eager to have Piacentine cheese, which they found delicious. This practice of enlarging food to build meaningful networks of espionage and informal agents has been labelled ‘culinary diplomacy’, which was an ‘integral, costly, time-consuming part of the development and maintenance of personal relationships’.⁸⁶ This often translated in their acquaintance to Ottoman dignitaries of Western origin who had previously converted to Islam, thanks to the purely Ottoman

⁸² Iordanou, ‘Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice’, 57.

⁸³ Ioanna Iordanou, ‘What News on the Rialto? The Trade of Information in Early Modern Venice’s Centralised Intelligence Organisation’, *Intelligence and National Security* 31, no. 3 (2016): 305-326, here 311.

⁸⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 224.

⁸⁵ Dursteler, ‘The Bailo’, 3.

⁸⁶ Eric R. Dursteler, ‘“A Continual Taven in My House”: Food and Diplomacy in Early Modern Constantinople’, in Machtelt Israels and Louisa A. Waldman, eds., *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013): 166-171, here 171.

institution of the *devshirme*: this system envisaged the recruitment of Christian children from peasantry families – especially in Ottoman Balkan territories – to be brought to the imperial capital, converted to Islam, trained in the Topkapı palace, and given positions based on how much they proved worthy. Even though this system had been created by Murad I to impede men of the same origins to form expressions of solidarity to their ethnic group rather than to the sultan, the *devshirme* did not prove as perfect as many European observers thought. In his synthesis of the Ottoman Empire, Marc David Baer points out that many recruits remembered their homelands, often by retaining their language, dress, and even by maintaining relations with their relatives. He provides the example of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, whose career will be discussed later, a Grand Vizier of Serbian origin who built the ‘famous bridge over the Drina River in Višegrad and restored the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć’.⁸⁷

Moreover, other than dignitaries such as viziers or palace servants, many converts to Islam of Italian, Austrian or Hungarian origin were employed by the bailo as dragomans, namely translators employed by the Venetians who helped negotiations and dealings with Ottoman diplomats. According to E. Natalie Rothman, who has extensively written about dragomans, they ‘articulated diplomatic knowledge, shaping many of the discourses about the Ottomans that eventually were inscribed in official Venetian diplomatic dispatches and reports from Istanbul’.⁸⁸ Since many of these dragomans were recruited through the *devshirme*, it was quite easy for European diplomats to exploit dragomans’ nostalgia feelings for their homeland or, in some cases, even develop a bond of personal friendship based on a shared culture and mentality, for instance. Bringing a dragoman on one’s side was far from being difficult: given the strong relevance given to the ‘gift culture’, which heavily characterised Ottoman court as well as society, ‘a payment to an Ottoman dragoman or secretary

⁸⁷ Baer, *The Ottomans*, 193. For further information about the *devshirme*, see Alexander Lopasic, ‘Islamisation of the Balkans with Special Reference to Bosnia’, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 2 (1994): 163-186. Konstantin Mihailović, *Memoirs of a Janissary*, trans. Benjamin Stolz, historical commentary and notes by Svat Soucek (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975) is a memoir written by a Serb janissary who had served in the Ottoman military from 1456 to 1463.

⁸⁸ E. Natalie Rothman, ‘Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4 (2009): 771-800, here 772. Dragomans have been recently studied in detail and have resurfaced as a privileged category of analysis for early modern identity. Useful sources for this latest approach are E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); E. Natalie Rothman, *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).

would hardly arouse suspicion'.⁸⁹ Several passages in Venetian *relazioni* tells us about the constant flow of people in the bailo's house longing for gifts who could secure their allegiance; as Lorenzo Bernardo reported to the Senate in 1592, after his return to Venice: first, he advises the Venetian establishment that the bailo should pay those who could supply valuable news or perform useful services:

La casa del bailo ordinariamente è frequentata da molti Turchi, li quali aspirano a donativi, e sono appunto come le api attorno il miele; e la prudenza del bailo bisogna, che da un canto non disperdi quelli che possono per più vie giovar alla cosa, o con portar nove o con qualche favore; ma dall'altro che faccia una trincea davanti alli altri, levando loro la speranza de' donativi, perché altrimenti la sua casa avria più avviamento di una bottega sopra il ponte di Rialto.⁹⁰

Thus, given to their privileged access to the most sensitive levels of diplomatic dealings and secret documents, dragomans could certainly gather and provide useful intelligence; nonetheless, it is no wonder that many baili were frequently concerned about them being 'moles', namely spies who were dealing behind the scenes with rival powers which could potentially damage Venetian interests; as Natalie Rothman argues: 'the Venetians disapproved of having their dragomans' immediate relatives employed by other powers for fear of espionage'.⁹¹ Naturally, the double players could be useful for Venetian spy networks, too, for the kinship networks forged by dragomans offered them precious spaces from which to grasp significant intelligence. Hürrem Bey, the chief dragoman to Sultan Murad III, who was born in Lucca and whose career would be discussed later, was secretly working for Spain while being also on the Venetian payroll; this allowed him to regularly supply the bailo Lorenzo Bernardo with vital information about Ottoman-Spanish relations.⁹²

⁸⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 225. Naturally, there were also other reasons which could lead one dragoman to defect for another party. Western diplomats knew very well that they could leverage on a potential residual attachment for their previous homelands (often Italy, Austria or Hungary) or, in most cases, develop bonds of personal acquaintance based on common language and shared culture. Thus, it was not unusual that within the same family one dragoman worked for an embassy, while a brother of his was engaged by another – even enemy – embassy.

⁹⁰ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 406-407.

⁹¹ Rothman, 'Interpreting Dragomans', 781.

⁹² Among the wide plethora of dragomans working in Constantinople, three macro-categories can be delineated. The first, that of 'grand dragoman', who was entrusted with official dealings with the Porte; the 'road dragoman', who accompanied the bailo during his everyday commissions and to and from Constantinople; and, finally, the 'little dragoman' or 'port dragoman' (in Italian *protogero*), mainly concerned with helping merchants in their ordinary business and frequently stationed at the port in Tophane. Naturally, there were other dragomans – especially 'giovani di lingua'

The doubt of having to deal daily with potentially unloyal informants prompted the Venetians in directly establishing a school in Constantinople, whose purpose was to train young Venetian subjects in Oriental languages to make them skilled and – without doubt – loyal dragomans. This school would have the objective of educating the so-called ‘giovani di lingua’, namely ‘aspiranti interpreti, studiosi di lingua araba e persiana e turca, assunti con regolare stipendio e istruiti a spese dello Stato in una scuola a cui lo stesso bailo sovrintede’.⁹³ The foundation of this school was enacted by the Venetian Senate on 21 February 1551, which deserves some explanation in its most important features. Francesca Lucchetta, a scholar who had worked on cross-cultural encounters with the Christian and Muslim world in the early modern period, argues that this decree had been inspired by the *relazione* pronounced by the bailo Alvise Renier on 7 January 1551. The bailo wholeheartedly endorsed that a pair of young men should be sent to Constantinople:

per che facendosi star de ditti giovani qualche tempo de qui, con dargli modo di poter star commodamente, apparenno il modo del proceder a parlar come fano questi per far la esposizione delli sensi nostri, chè tutto il magisterio consiste in questo trovar che la forma del dir in turco de questi corresponda, con la esposizione nostra; né vi accade troppo legger né scriver; et seriano come scontri a questi dragomani in supplir a quello mancasseno de dire.⁹⁴

Accordingly, the Senate’s decree reads that ‘per ballottatione del Collegio nostro siano eletti dui nodari de la Cancellaria nostra, overo dui altri cittadini nostri [...] i quali siano di etade di anni vinti, et da lì in su, i quali siano mandati a Costantinopoli in casa del Baylo nostro con obligatione d’imparare la lingua turca’.⁹⁵ The bailo was entrusted with the maintenance of these young men by giving them a regular salary of 50 ducats per year and, increasingly, by providing them a teacher who needed to be proficient in the languages they were going to study; this teacher was called *cozzà* by the Venetians, a mispronunciation of the Turkish word *boca*, which precisely means teacher.⁹⁶

– who were employed in more low-level translation tasks and were largely confined to the bailate. See Rothman, *The Dragoman Renaissance*, 46; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 36.

⁹³ Francesca Lucchetta, ‘La scuola dei “giovani di lingua” veneti nei secoli XVI e XVII’, *Quaderni di studi arabici* 7 (1989): 19-40, here 20.

⁹⁴ ASVe, Collegio (Secreti), Relazioni degli ambasciatori, Costantinopoli, busta 61, registro 2, c. 120r, bailo A. Renier, quoted in Lucchetta, ‘La scuola’, 19.

⁹⁵ ASVe, Senato, Mar, reg. 31, c. 93r, quoted in Lucchetta, ‘La scuola’, 37-38.

⁹⁶ Pedani, *Venezia porta d’Oriente*, 162.

1.2.3. Counterespionage and Open-Source Intelligence from the Mail

Nonetheless, these informal intelligence-gatherers were not the only useful sources in obtaining information regarding the Sublime Porte. As the historian of sixteenth-century espionage Emrah Safa Gürkan writes: ‘Sixteenth-century Istanbul was a diplomatic centre in the making, with major European states slowly setting up permanent diplomatic missions [...] and giving birth to a diplomatic community in Galata, the port city on the other side of the Golden Horn facing Istanbul’.⁹⁷ Thus, ambassadors were frequently exchanging information with each other, particularly related to their purposes. Naturally, in port-cities with a marked maritime vocation the most valuable commodity was just one – information. Since the Ottomans had retained the medieval practice of sending *ad hoc* envoys to European cities, they had inadvertently forced themselves to be bereft of the endless flow of intelligence provided by Venetians and other European ambassadors. Moreover, the prohibition of printing in the Ottoman Empire heavily limited the Ottomans’ ability to have access to the ‘explosion of open-source intelligence [OSINT] that the press made possible in Europe’.⁹⁸

Of course, the relevance of counterespionage operations was not unknown to the baili, who proved exceptional in intercepting other European diplomats’ dispatches; this was made easier by the fact that the only regular mail service between Constantinople and other European capitals was guaranteed by none-other than by Venetian postal couriers. In his analysis on the Venetian postal system, Eric Dursteler points out that the Venetians conceived ‘control over the information flow between Constantinople and European lands as a means to protect Venice’s political standing and, to a lesser degree, to protect its economic position’.⁹⁹ This resulted in the necessary dependence of Europeans – such as the English, the Dutch, and the French – on Venetian mail system. What is even more astonishing and rather unexpected is that even Ottoman correspondence was carried by Venetian couriers, who bundled Ottoman dispatches with letters of other European diplomats. Sometimes, a *çavuş* purposely entrusted by the Sultan could bring official communications to

⁹⁷ Emrah Safa Gürkan, ‘Laying Hands on Arcana Imperii: Venetian Baili as Spymasters in Sixteenth Century Istanbul’, in *Spy Chiefs: Volume 2*: 67-96, here 79.

⁹⁸ Andrew, *The Secret World*, 122.

⁹⁹ Eric R. Dursteler, ‘Power and Information’, 602.

European rulers, but this was an exceptional occurrence.¹⁰⁰ Gürkan has significantly defined this highly developed postal system as a ‘cabinet noir where letters were unsealed, checked for relevant information, and then resealed’.¹⁰¹ Probably due to their shrewdness in obtaining valuable intelligence, the Council of Ten were aware of the risks posed by the reverse process, namely when they were the ones sending instructions to their ambassadors. Since correspondence was meticulously planned – consisting in the transcription of many copies to be sent to all the stakeholders involved with the facts and events communicated in these letters – the Council of Ten took precautions: ‘To ensure that at least one copy would safely reach its intended recipient’, as Ioanna Iordanou writes, ‘duplicates were routinely sent via several routes’, such as the overland route to Germany and the sea-route for the *Stato da Mar*.¹⁰² However, there were other two intertwined risks inherent to this privileged position of regular access to classified information. The first consisted of obtaining ‘bad intelligence’: to avoid this annoying occurrence, the baili were required to filter out reliable intelligence from misinformation. Noel Malcolm rightly stresses the importance of receiving multiple accounts talking about the same things; even though they could be repetitive and eventually useless, it was always better to receive ‘overlapping accounts’ which could provide sensitive information.¹⁰³ Secondly, and more importantly, was to transmit only the most valuable intelligence to avoid the ‘information overload’, which threatened to severely interrupt decision-making processes in Venetian bodies of government. Consequently, it was not easy to separate rumours from worthy intelligence which in turn had to be useful for the government – ‘it was the baili’s *métier* to contextualise raw information within the larger framework of Ottoman strategy and factional politics’.¹⁰⁴ Even in this case, the Ottoman system lacked an essential element that put it behind the efficacy of the Venetian one: the prohibition of the printing press, which inevitably cut the Ottomans off from the never-ending flow of open-source intelligence coming through their capital. ‘Banning printing in Constantinople’, writes the intelligence historian Christopher Andrew, ‘was roughly equivalent to a decision by a twenty-first-century government to ban use of the internet’.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Dursteler, ‘Power and Information’, 603.

¹⁰¹ Gürkan, ‘Laying Hands’, 81.

¹⁰² Iordanou, ‘Secret Service of Renaissance Venice’, 260-261.

¹⁰³ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 223.

¹⁰⁴ Gürkan, ‘Laying Hands’, 85.

¹⁰⁵ Andrew, *The Secret World*, 123.

1.3. Scattered Sephardic Spies and their Spymasters in the Mediterranean

Another category of people, essential to the bailo's duties and which deserves a dedicated paragraph, were Jews with trading connections to the most important cities in Europe. These Jews had migrated to Ottoman lands during the sixteenth century following their forced departure from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. In the Ottoman Empire, the most selected destination for these scattered people was Salonica, as shown by Mark Mazower in his reconstruction of the city's multireligious history, for it was the most important European Ottoman port-city where Jews could maintain their trading networks alive.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, after the discovery that they could practise their religion in a relatively free manner, Jews also realised that they could make pilgrimage to the Holy Land or settle in Jerusalem, for the Sultan was now in control of it after Selim I's conquests in 1517. As Marc David Baer underlines, these elements raised Jews' messianic expectations, leading them to regard the Sultan as the only ruler capable of 'gathering the Jewish diaspora from across the Mediterranean, conquering Jerusalem, and enabling Jews to settle in the Holy Land'.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, it was extremely frequent that these formerly-converted Jews (i.e., New Christians) were able to exploit 'circum-Mediterranean trade connections to attain great political influence'.¹⁰⁸ Thanks also to the European-wide extension of their trading relations, two well-known figures such as Gracia and Joseph Nasi gained a huge amount of influence at the court of Selim II (r. 1566-1574). Their biographies are helpful to shed light on some of the Sephardi-centred espionage networks active in the late sixteenth-century.¹⁰⁹ The following paragraphs will be essential in order to show the relevance that these Jews and New Christians had acquired in a context of circulation of intelligence. Thanks to their highly prestigious and influential posts, these people had access to sensitive information which, in many cases, they would not be allowed to receive. Their ability to have far-reaching contacts is going to be

¹⁰⁶ For an insightful reconstruction of the city's history, particularly from the 1500s, see Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

¹⁰⁷ Baer, *The Ottomans*, 160.

¹⁰⁸ Gürkan, 'Mediating Boundaries', 116.

¹⁰⁹ The question of Sephardi Jews and, more generally, of Jewish networks in the early modern period is extremely complex and it would require too much time to be treated in detail in this dissertation: to have a more precise account, a recommended starting point is David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), which shows the diverse ways in which scattered Jewish communities and settlements communicated with each other and maintained alive a sense of belonging to their community.

demonstrated by the extensiveness of their connections, for some of their contacts held crucial posts in Venice and Constantinople but also, more unexpectedly, in Modena.

1.3.1. The Mendes/Nasi Family: A Mediterranean Intelligence Network

João Micas, born in Lisbon in 1524, – his name has frequently been transcribed in several manners such as Miquez, Miques, or even Miches – belonged to a well-established family of merchants with extensive trading connections across the Mediterranean.¹¹⁰ His family has been considered as an archetypical example of a New Christian family, made up of the ‘descendants of Jews forced to convert to Christianity in Iberia between 1391 and 1497’.¹¹¹ So, far from being a member of an economically irrelevant family, João’s father was Agostinho Henrique Micas, who had been appointed as Professor of Medicine at the University of Lisbon. In addition, João’s uncles were Diogo and Francisco Mendes Benveniste, who had converted to Christianity in 1497.¹¹² In his work *Strangers Within*, Francisco Bethencourt points out how the Mendes deliberately followed a strategy of ‘close marriages among tightly linked families related to the Benveniste family of Calahorra and Soria, which was where the family had originated from’.¹¹³ As part of the New Christian trading élite, this family had weaved Mediterranean-wide trading connections: for instance, Giovanni Battista Affaitati, a merchant from a wealthy Cremonese family, was highly involved in the spice (particularly pepper) trade in which the Mendes were active players, too. José Alberto Da Silva Tavim has pointed out that the ‘Materia Oriental’, namely, ‘la relación con las Indias de las especias, de las piedras preciosas y de otras riquezas’, was the foundation of their richness in Lisbon and Antwerp and, consequently, ‘el hecho primordial que puede explicar su excepcional integración, aceptación y ascenso en el Imperio Otomano’.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ There are plenty of studies about the Mendes family, which might be useful for the reader to have a better understanding and deeper background than that presented here; for instance, see Herman Prins Salomon and Aron di Leone Leoni, ‘Mendes, Benveniste, de Luna, Micas, Nasi: The State of the Art (1532-1558)’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 88, nos. 3-4 (1998): 135-211. Nevertheless, a quite fascinating approach which links together the Mendes family with other coeval families, highlighting the bonds between them, is to be found in Simon Sebag Montefiore, *The World: A Family History of the Humanity* (New York: Knopf, 2022), 496-513.

¹¹¹ Francisco Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 1.

¹¹² José Alberto Da Silva Tavim, ‘La “Materia Oriental” en el trayecto de dos personalidades judías del Imperio Otomano: João Micas / D. Yosef Nasi, Álvaro Mendes / D. Shelomó Ibn Ya‘ish’, *Hispania Judaica* 7 (2010): 211-232, here 212.

¹¹³ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 53.

¹¹⁴ Tavim, ‘La “Materia Oriental”’, 212.

However, the Mendes family's fortune was jeopardised in 1532, when Diogo was arrested on charges of heresy, facilitating the escape of New Christians to the Ottoman Empire, and attempting to monopolise the spice trade, excluding local merchants. He was released after significant pressure from both the English king Henry VIII and the Portuguese Dom João III in exchange for a warrant of 50,000 ducats.¹¹⁵ The fact that Mary of Hungary, the Regent of the Low Countries and Charles V's sister, ordered the seizure of all Diogo's assets, clearly proved that his family's fortune, 'procedente del comercio oriental, era blanco de las ambición de los poderes políticos que servía'.¹¹⁶ Moreover, Salomon and di Leone Leoni argue that by referring to the family as their original Jewish surname of Benveniste – since Mendes had been adopted after their conversion in 1497 – reveals a 'certain knowledge of the brothers' family background and of the situation of the New Christians in Portugal'.¹¹⁷

The Mendes family faced another severe setback in 1535, when Francisco died, leaving Beatriz de Luna and his daughter, Hannah. To make matters worse, the Portuguese king Dom João III obtained authorisation from the Holy Office for the establishment of the Inquisition on 18 November 1536. (This element will be explored in detail later when examining the life of Duarte de Paz). The family then relocated to Antwerp, at the time one of the crucial commercial outposts in Northern Europe, where the family was able to make their business thrive for a few years. There, João's brother, Bernardo, married Beatriz's sister, Brianda, and their daughter Beatriz – known as 'La Chica' to distinguish her from her aunt – was born in 1540. However, the situation in Antwerp started to become unbearable due to the ever more dangerous presence of the Spanish Inquisition – it is important to remember that Antwerp was still part of Charles V's dominions, and thus subject to the Inquisition's authority. To increase their own bad luck, Diogo died in 1543, entrusting the family wealth management to Beatriz.¹¹⁸ These events made it clear that Antwerp was no longer a safe place for the Mendes family. On 20 November 1543, Beatriz obtained from Pope Paul III a safe-conduct that would allow her family and their wealth to move to Rome or any place under Papal authority which exempted them from persecution of Judaism, including Ferrara.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Salomon and Leone Leoni, 'Mendes, Benveniste', 137-8.

¹¹⁶ Tavim, 'La "Materia Oriental"', 216.

¹¹⁷ Salomon and Leone Leoni, 'Mendes, Benveniste', 147.

¹¹⁸ Salomon and Leone Leoni, 'Mendes, Benveniste', 152.

¹¹⁹ Salomon and Leone Leoni, 'Mendes, Benveniste', 153.

Hence, they decided to flee for Venice, where the most ancient Jewish quarter in Europe had been established in 1516. It was known in Venetian as the ‘ghetto’, a Venetian word relating to the area of the *fonderia* where copper was thrown and melted (*gittata* and therefore *geto* in Venetian). Cristiana Facchini, who has studied in detail the ghetto in early modern times, argues that the ghetto of Venice had been established according to a logic of ‘spatial marginality’, which consists in placing quarters for foreigners in areas on the margins of the city and away from the centre, ‘where foreigners from various provenances [...] were gathered in separate quarters or islands’.¹²⁰

However, the unity within the family soon fractured in Venice due to a quarrel between the two sisters, who were now in charge of managing the huge wealth accumulated by the late Mendes brothers, Diogo and Francisco. Brianda was strongly against moving to the Ottoman Empire, while Beatriz, realising that even in Venice the anti-Jewish climate was becoming dangerous, pushed for the family to relocate. As a result, Brianda requested that part of the family fortune be given to her daughter, Beatriz ‘La Chica’. Under the protection of a safe-conduct granted by the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole II d’Este, Beatriz relocated to the religiously tolerant city of Ferrara, where she fully embraced Judaism and changed her name to Gracia. From Ferrara, Doña Gracia was able to use one of her contacts in the Sublime Porte to negotiate a safe transfer to Constantinople; in this case her broker was Moses Hamon, the chief physician to Sultan Suleyman I. At the same time, the Venetian government – eager not to lose the huge wealth accumulated by the Mendes family and to be employed in the urban economy – forced her to transfer 100,000 ducats to Beatriz ‘La Chica’.¹²¹ In June 1552, Gracia and her daughter Hannah left Venice for Constantinople, the enormous capital of the multireligious and multilingual Ottoman Empire, where Hannah changed her name to Reyna and Gracia would be free to return to Judaism and maintain ‘an interest in Italy as well as in the Mediterranean, informed by her determination to defend her co-religionists’.¹²²

¹²⁰ Cristiana Facchini, ‘The City, the Ghetto and two Books. Venice and Early Modernity’, *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 2 (2011): 11-44, here 14. To understand also the complicated relationship between the different Jewish communities in the Venetian Ghetto, such as the Ponentines and the Levantines, other useful sources are Riccardo Calimani, *Storia del ghetto di Venezia* (Milan: Mondadori, 2001); Dana Katz, *The Jewish Ghetto and the Visual Imagination of Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹²¹ Tavim, ‘La “Materia Oriental”’, 213.

¹²² Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 442. There is a huge wealth of research about this extraordinary woman and to summarise in detail her whole life would be outside the scope of this dissertation; henceforth, on Gracia’s history see Marianna D. Birnbaum, *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes* (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2003); Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, ‘Beatrice de Luna, vedova Mendes, alias donna Gracia Nasi: un’ebrea influente (1510-1569 ca.)’,

After having abandoned Antwerp, João Micas, Doña Gracia's nephew, had reached the remainder of his family in Venice; however, in 1552 he severely risked his fortune when he decided to kidnap Beatriz 'La Chica' and marry her in the Ravenna's Cathedral.¹²³ His motives were primarily financial, as he had learned that 'un patricio veneciano pretendía quedarse con la fortuna de su prima Beatriz en concepto de dote'.¹²⁴ However, this reckless act did not produce the desired outcome: João was forced to bring Beatriz back to Venice and he and his brother Bernardo were ordered to leave the city immediately. At the end of 1553, the two Micas brothers left from Ancona to Constantinople, where they were circumcised, openly converted to Judaism and changed their names: João became Joseph Nasi, and Bernardo became Samuel Nasi. In 1554, Joseph married his cousin Hannah, now known as Reyna, while Samuel returned to Ferrara to marry Beatriz 'La Chica' after Brianda's death in 1556. After bringing her to Constantinople, all the members of the family reunited and continued their strategy of consolidating power through close kinship ties, as noted by Francisco Bethencourt has also been underlined by José Alberto Tavim. Tavim specifically highlights how this family had been able to 'mantener su fabulosa fortuna gracias a los matrimonios endogámicos'.¹²⁵

Now known as Joseph Nasi, he has been identified by historians as the head of an espionage network that spanned from the Western Mediterranean all the way to Constantinople. Nasi skillfully used his massive capital to obtain lucrative trade agreements and gain influence among the Sultan's court: as David Abulafia points out, 'Wine made the fortune of Joseph Nasi', for he 'was granted a monopoly on the carriage of wine from Venetian Crete past Constantinople to Moldavia'.¹²⁶ José Alberto Tavim specifies that conversion to other religions could have been a hazardous choice, since they would have lost their intermediary role which heavily relied on the trust given to them by the Ottoman Empire's Jewish population. But rather than the control over a scattered and decentralised community, what made Nasi and his family so influential was the 'intermediary role they played between their place of origin, Europe, and their new place of settlement, the Ottoman Empire'.¹²⁷

in Ottavia Niccoli, ed., *Rinascimento al Femminile* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1991): 83-116; Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: Dona Gracia* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1947).

¹²³ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 71.

¹²⁴ Tavim, 'La "Materia Oriental"', 214.

¹²⁵ Tavim, 'La "Materia Oriental"', 214.

¹²⁶ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 444.

¹²⁷ José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim, 'Sephardic Intermediaries in the Ottoman Empire', *Oriente Moderno* 93, no. 2 (2013): 454-476, here 461.

Another significant factor that accelerated Nasi's ascent within the highest levels of Ottoman policy-making was the financial services he provided for Sultan Selim II. Nasi and his family – especially D. Gracia – were so influential at the Sultan's court that Suleyman I granted them the concession on the land of Tiberias, which was likely to be in the form of the *iltizâm*. This was a very peculiar institution of the Ottoman Empire that deserves more explanation.

One of the systems that allowed the rapid expansion of the Ottoman Empire was the so-called *timar* system, a non-hereditary land grant assigned by the Sultan (the first to employ this system had been Murad I), which 'granted to resident cavalymen landholders (*sipahi*), Christian and Muslim, the tax revenues from goods produced on the land by the peasants in exchange for having to muster and lead cavalry troops in imperial military campaigns and local policing'.¹²⁸ However, during the sixteenth century, mainly due to the growth of political influence enjoyed by vizier households, the military land-grant system that was crucial in financing the Ottoman cavalry saw a turn away towards the expansion of tax farming (*iltizâm*), which was previously limited to imperial enterprises such as mines. Marc David Baer-points out that this system was detrimental both to the central treasury and to the subjects of the sultan, for 'tax farmers – whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, and appointed by the administration in Istanbul – exploited the peasants to maximise their revenues, demanding a much greater yearly amount than obliged and pocketing the difference'.¹²⁹ The direct result of this system was that by carving out 'their own power centre in the province with these extra funds, the tax farmers raised armies of mercenaries that challenged central authority'.¹³⁰

One of this allocated areas according to the *timar* system was the area of Tiberias, which had a huge historical relevance to Jewish scattered all around the Mediterranean: after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus, and the Revolt of Simon Bar Kokhba, the city had become 'el centro de un importante movimiento religioso-cultural de los pocos judíos que pudieron escapar al gran desastre'.¹³¹ Joseph and Gracia obtained by Suleyman the concession on the Tiberias

¹²⁸ Baer, *The Ottomans*, 43.

¹²⁹ Baer, *The Ottomans*, 250.

¹³⁰ Baer, *The Ottomans*, 251. To further specify the peculiarity of these institutions, the historian of the Ottoman Empire Renée Worringer points out the difference between the *iltizâm*, which was meant for a limited time period, and the *malikâne*, 'which would chip away at the *sipahi* cavalry's *timar* holdings and give more political clout to provincial elites with connections to the *vezirs* and pashas in the capital who could affect the bidding on the *malikâne* lands'. For a deeper insight, see Renée Worringer, *A Short History of the Ottoman Empire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 359.

¹³¹ Alberto Arce, 'Espionaje y última aventura de José Nasi (1569-1574)', *Sefarad* 13, no. 2 (1953): 257-286, here 274.

land, ‘entonces enteramente arruinada, y su territorio, instalando en ella una colonia de emigrados judíos de Cori, Pésaro y otras ciudades italianas, a las que antes habían emigrado de España y Portugal’.¹³² The nearby located Sephardic Jews of Safed saw in the Nasi family’s financial might the possibility to develop a powerful industry that would have enriched the area; this should have been achieved by the plantation of mulberry trees producing silk and the import of Spanish wool, ‘in the hope of stimulating a woollen cloth industry in imitation of the expanding cloth industry of Venice’.¹³³ Despite high hopes, the project, which some Jewish thinkers saw as the foundation of a new Kingdom of Israel, eventually failed, dissolving ‘como una burbuja de espuma’.¹³⁴

Nasi’s growing influence at the Sultan’s court also led to his appointment as Duke of Naxos in 1566 by Selim II, along with the control over the Cyclades islands of Andros, Paros, Antipatros, Milos, Siros and Santorin, for which Nasi had to pay 600 ducats per year. The Sultan gave Nasi the duchy of the island after having exploited a local revolt against the Crispi family from Verona, who had been the patron of the island since the thirteenth century. The question on the relevance of this title attributed by the Sultan is still debated by scholars. In his article ‘Îles grecques? Îles ottomanes?’, Nicolas Vatin examines the true meaning of this concession in terms of Ottoman policy-making, concluding that Joseph Nasi was in fact the lord of the archipelago, but he lacked any concrete sovereignty on these islands.¹³⁵ Interestingly, Nasi entrusted as administrator of the island the New Christian Francesco Coronello, while he dedicated himself to a wealthy and lavish life in Constantinople.¹³⁶

In his book *Trading Nations*, Benjamin Arbel argues that Joseph Nasi’s influence in shaping the Sultanate’s foreign policy has been exaggerated and uses the reports written by the Venetian baili to assert that ‘the main foreign policy decisions resulted from the power struggle among the various Pashas, and could only be indirectly influenced by a courtier such as Don Joseph Nassi’.¹³⁷ If we

¹³² Arce, ‘Espionaje’, 275.

¹³³ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 444.

¹³⁴ Arce, ‘Espionaje’, 275.

¹³⁵ Nicolas Vatin, ‘Îles grecques? Îles ottomanes? L’insertion de l’Égée dans l’Empire ottoman à la fin du XVIe siècle’, in Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, eds., *Insularités ottomanes* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2004): 71-89, here 74-75.

¹³⁶ On Francesco Coronello’s administration of Naxos, see Benjamin Hendrickx and Thekla Sansaridou-Hendrickx, ‘Joseph Naci, his locotenente Francesco Coronello, and the State of the Duchy of the Archipelago (Naxos), 1566-1579’, *Southern African Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 27 (2017): 23–52.

¹³⁷ Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 57.

consider the *relazione* compiled by Marcantonio Barbaro, Arbel's argument seems valid, especially when considering rivalries between the viziers; for instance, Barbaro notes 'quanti disordini siano successi per gli odj che sono tra li pascià, e quante macchinazioni abbiano essi fatte per levarsi l'un l'altro i gradi, l'onore e la vita'.¹³⁸ However, Arbel also argues that there is no evidence to demonstrate that Nasi was involved in espionage activities or even headed an 'international organisation of espionage and sabotage'.¹³⁹ In explicit disagreement with this argument, José Alberto Tavim claims that 'there is plenty of evidence on D. Yosef's pivotal role as the top man of informal intelligence networks whose arms reached as far as India'.¹⁴⁰ Evidence about Nasi's great influence upon Selim II is found in the report written and declared in front of the Senate by Andrea Badoer, an extraordinary ambassador sent to aid Barbaro in the peace negotiations; Badoer paints a particularly negative portrait of Selim II, who is described as 'avaro, sordido, lussurioso, incontiente, ed infine precipitoso in ogni sua azione'; but what mostly stimulated Selim's desires was the wine provided by 'Michel [Micas] giudeo inventore di preziosi cibi, e di bevande delicatissime, il quale viene così ad avere grande autorità'. Badoer then goes on by saying that:

Ed è costui di grandissimo danno non solo alla serenità vostra, ma ancora a tutta la cristianità, perché essendo lui capo di tutta la nazione sua, ed avendo intelligenza in ogni loco, e per tutte le parti del mondo, fa sapere a sua maestà molte imperfezioni dei principi, che causano poi grandissime rivoluzioni negli stati.¹⁴¹

In this case, the word *intelligenza* clearly meant intelligence, which in the Venetian secret services' vocabulary indicated 'any kind of information of a political, economic, social, or cultural nature that was worthy of evaluation and potential action by the government'.¹⁴² Another insightful trace to better highlight Nasi's objectives can be found in Paolo Preto's *I Servizi Segreti di Venezia*. Here, Preto discloses the testimonies of Giulio Scudi and Giovanni Vancimuglio, which constitute further useful sources in reconstructing Nasi's activity. In May 1568, Giulio Scudi, a Venetian renegade who had converted and changed his name to Mustafa, had sent a letter to Venice, readily intercepted by

¹³⁸ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 331.

¹³⁹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 59.

¹⁴⁰ José Alberto Da Silva Tavim, 'Sephardic Intermediaries', 464.

¹⁴¹ Albèri, *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 361.

¹⁴² Iordanou, 'Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice', 49.

the bailo Jacopo Soranzo. In the letter, Scudi claimed he had heard by a pasha that Micas had offered himself to spy on Venetian fortifications in Cyprus.¹⁴³ Conversely, Giovanni Vancimuglio's history proves more clearly how religious boundaries could be broken on behalf of personal interest. Originally from Vicenza, Vancimuglio had initially worked for the Pope as his official spy; then, he had been captured by the Ottomans who wanted to hang him. At this critical moment, Nasi intervened and saved him, realising that such a man could be extremely convenient for his purposes. So, Nasi asked him to go to Poland to gather some useful information, but Vancimuglio changed his mind and aligned himself with Venice. Naturally, he provided some very interesting intelligence to Alvise Buonrizzo, bailo Barbaro's secretary. Afterwards, he made his way back to Poland in September 1569, where he provides the Venetian ambassador intelligence 'sui contatti tra ebrei polacchi e loro correligionari a Costantinopoli via Leopoli, Cracovia, Venezia, ma il 6 ottobre l'imperatore lo denuncia senz'altro come spia di Miches'.¹⁴⁴

Considering his reputation and the wealth of evidence showing his position of spymaster whose interests were potentially detrimental to European powers, it is remarkable to discover that Joseph Nasi had been an informant for the Portuguese throne before his conversion. José Alberto Tavim claims that he had had a 'career as informant of the Portuguese until his settlement in the Ottoman Empire in 1553, with information sent on the movements about the Ottoman fleet in the Indian Ocean'.¹⁴⁵ It is crucial to remember that, in the mid-sixteenth century, the city of Rome played a central role in the Portuguese intelligence system. In 1553, a very intriguing letter had arrived on the desk of Dom Afonso de Lencastre, the Portuguese ambassador residing in Rome: this letter had been written by João Micas, who offered his services to D. João III to gather as much information as possible on Indian developments and affairs which he would then forward to Rome. Moreover, in an appendix to this letter, Lencastre informed his king that João Micas was expected to travel to Aleppo with a specifically designed code to communicate matters related to India.¹⁴⁶

Another memorandum written by Lencastre argued that Micas would travel to the Ottoman Empire, where he would ascertain whether an Ottoman Armada would be deployed to the Indian

¹⁴³ Paolo Preto, *I Servizi Segreti di Venezia* (Milano: il Saggiatore, 1999), 101.

¹⁴⁴ Preto, *I Servizi Segreti*, 102.

¹⁴⁵ Tavim, 'Sephardic Intermediaries', 459.

¹⁴⁶ José Alberto Da Silva Tavim, 'Jews in the Diaspora with Sepharad in the Mirror: Ruptures, Relations, and Forms of Identity. A Theme Examined Through Three Cases', *Jewish History* 25, no. 2 (2011): 175-205, here 179.

Ocean and how many galleys would make it up. However, as we have seen, Micas did not return from Constantinople, but instead remained there and transferred all his assets to the Ottomans. Portuguese aristocrats involved in international espionage, like Afonso de Lencastre and his successor in Rome, Lourenço Pires de Távora, were aware of the risks regarding spies and moles. Nevertheless, in their mind, intelligence-gathering and espionage were imperative activities to safeguard the interests of the Portuguese Crown and, subsequently, of the Empire; accordingly, José Alberto Tavim underlines that they ‘conheciam também todo o jogo da espionagem, da contra-espionagem e dos espiões duplos, fazendo eles próprios uso das vicissitudes desta trama para construir o seu edifício informativo’.¹⁴⁷ It is therefore not surprising that Micas employed the same means that he had adopted to safeguard his interests once he had changed his name and become a spymaster with a Mediterranean-wide network of informers and spies. In the East, he inherited the information flows that had been established by Moses Hamon, a relative of Nasi and the Jewish chief physician to Suleyman; according to the testimony offered by Tomé Pegado de Paz – whose character will be discussed later – many New Christians settled in the *Estado da Índia* frequently petitioned Nasi to ask the Sultan to form a navy to intervene in the Indian Subcontinent.¹⁴⁸ The relevance of Jewish and New Christian men in the higher spheres of Ottoman government should lead us to think that they ‘cumplieron en la gestión informativa del Imperio turco, una labor similar a la de los embajadores cristianos – como los embajadores en Roma – que administraban redes informativas, una actividad considerada de valor supremo y esencial para decidir ciertas iniciativas diplomáticas o bélicas’.¹⁴⁹

1.3.2. Duarte de Paz and Tomé Pegado de Paz: Agents of Themselves

At this point, it is essential to shift our focus to two key figures who played a pivotal role in Sephardic involvement in international espionage: Duarte de Paz and his son Tomé Pegado de Paz. Their lives provide other examples of the exceptional characteristics of the New Christian elite. Duarte was born in Porto from Master João da Paz, a tax collector responsible for the customs of Porto, whose trading

¹⁴⁷ José Alberto Da Silva Tavim, ‘O “Aviso” Anónimo sobre João Micas na Coleção de S. Vicente’, *Anais de História de Além-Mar* 5 (2004): 253-282, here 261.

¹⁴⁸ Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo [hereafter: ANTT], *Inquisição de Lisboa*, processo 10906, fol. 7. The full transcription of this extremely rich document can be found in Carlos Manuel Baptista Valentim, ‘Tomé Pegado de Paz. Espião e Servidor do Duque de Naxos’, *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas* 4 (2004): 283-341 or can be directly consulted from the digitalised version <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/viewer?id=2311085>.

¹⁴⁹ Tavim, ‘La “Materia Oriental”’, 219.

networks reached as far as Flanders. In addition to managing these networks, João skillfully cultivated connections with both Old and New Christian merchant families and meaningful relations with the Portuguese nobility, including the Duke of Bragança as well as the Mesquita, Noronha, Brandão and Leite families.¹⁵⁰ Duarte, João's eldest son of seven children, had been made knight and had received the habit of the military order of Christ in exchange for his bravery in the conquest of Azemour, in Morocco, in 1513.¹⁵¹ Then, in the 1530s, Duarte's presence is acknowledged in Rome as the New Christian agent entrusted to block D. João III's negotiations for the establishment of the Inquisition.¹⁵² The fact that Duarte had been appointed as the representative of the New Christian community in Rome is for Carlos Manuel Valentim, who has dedicated several works on the Paz family, 'prova inabalável que a sua família se encontrava inserida nas redes de comércio internacional, dominadas por uma elite financeira sefardita que se disseminara por vários pontos da nova economia-mundo, controlando os mercados que as navegações oceânicas entretanto tinham aberto'.¹⁵³ It is interesting to discover that the principal financier of Duarte's enterprise was Diogo Mendes, none other than Beatriz de Luna (D. Gracia Nasi)'s brother-in-law. Mendes heavily financed him to defend the cause of Portuguese New Christians before the Pope.¹⁵⁴ The Mendes family had understood that Rome was a city strategically crucial in the network of 'pontos estratégicos de grande fluxo de capitais, moeda e matérias-primas diversificadas, assumindo os laços de parentesco, nestas circunstâncias, um papel fulcral'.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, if they wanted to preserve their dignity as New Christians and avoid fierce persecution, funding an agent to represent their interests became a necessary decision.

Nevertheless, in 1535 Duarte's fortune deteriorated rapidly. First, his efforts eventually proved to be unsuccessful, since the Portuguese Inquisition was eventually established on 23 May 1536 by the papal bulla *Cum ad nihil magis*. Second, Duarte's relationship with the papal nuncio in Lisbon,

¹⁵⁰ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 52-53.

¹⁵¹ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 53.

¹⁵² Paulo Drumond Braga, 'Giovanni III, re di Portogallo', in Adriano Prosperi, Vincenzo Lavenia and John Tedeschi, eds., *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, vol. 2 (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 700-701.

¹⁵³ Carlos Manuel Baptista Valentim, 'Duarte de Paz: um Líder da Comunidade Sefardita Portuguesa em meados do Século XVI. Novos Elementos Biográficos', in Maria de Fátima Reis, ed., *Rumo e Escrita da História. Estudos em Homenagem a A.A. Marques de Almeida* (Lisbon: Colibri, 2006), 175-190, here 183.

¹⁵⁴ Valentim, 'Duarte de Paz', 183.

¹⁵⁵ Carlos Manuel Baptista Valentim, 'Tomé Pegado de Paz. Espião e Servidor do Duque de Naxos', *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas* 4 (2004): 283-341, here 285.

Marco della Rovere, collapsed after he failed to deliver the promised sum of 20,000 ducats on behalf of the New Christian community. These two pivotal setbacks irreparably weakened Duarte's standing. His influence had diminished so much that, later in 1536, he became the victim of an assassination attempt and had to be treated by Pope Paul III's physicians in Castel Sant'Angelo. Some reports even suggested that agents of King João III were responsible for the attack. According to Francisco Bethencourt, the fact that the Paz family survived the quarrel that had arisen between Duarte and João shows the strength of their marital strategy. Unlike the Mendes family, the Paz's family's strategy consisted in a 'policy of intermarrying and maintaining steady relations with the nobility and the traditional local elites'.¹⁵⁶

Following this dramatic incident in Rome, Duarte managed to secure from the Regent of the Low Countries, Queen Mary of Hungary, a safe-conduct to Antwerp, where his trade had been sequestrated, valued at 20,000 ducados.¹⁵⁷ The journey took him through Ferrara and Venice, but his course eventually shifted toward the Ottoman Empire, where he fully embraced Judaism, taking the name David Bueno, as was common among New Christians who had reclaimed their ancestral faith upon leaving Christian territories. But what is staggering is that, even after this religious transformation, Duarte continued to offer his services to the Portuguese crown. He provided intelligence about Jewish and New Christian people involved in Ottoman policy-making, particularly in relation to the delicate area of the Indian Ocean. As Carlos Valentim writes: '[Duarte de Paz] Envía epístolas sucessivas a D. João III, oferecendo préstimos e denunciando cristãos-novos que, vindos de Portugal, viviam ou comerciavam no Império Otomano'.¹⁵⁸ Duarte died in 1552, the same year in which D. Gracia and Reyna were leaving Venice for Constantinople. According to the testimony from his son, Tomé Pegado, Duarte never returned to Portugal and, in his final years, converted to Islam. Tomé's deposition reads:

e que o dito seu pai estaua feito turquo ho quall lhe dysera a que ho mandara chamar pera por elle auisar a ell Rey de Portugall de como certos cristãos-nouos que estauam na Imdia.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 53.

¹⁵⁷ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 83.

¹⁵⁸ Valentim, 'Duarte de Paz', 185.

¹⁵⁹ ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 10906, fol. 7r.

Francisco Bethencourt rightly states that the rapid downfall of Duarte's fortune is a clear display of all the contradictions he had been experiencing, since he 'played a double game between his ethnicity and the king: he denounced New Christians who had become Jews or had fled to the Ottoman Empire, and he suggested the king use a cipher for their correspondence'.¹⁶⁰ In fact, Duarte's offer to serve as a spy was part of a desperate attempt to secure permission to return to Portugal, but he died without ever succeeding in that goal. 'That he decided to become a Jew and eventually a Muslim reveals', as Bethencourt argues, 'neither a well-laid plan nor strong convictions, but rather the succession of reduced options that took him first away from Rome and then to the Ottoman Empire'.¹⁶¹ But why do we know so much about Duarte's life? The answer is found in the testimony that his son Tomé Pegado was forced to give to the Portuguese Inquisition in 1578, which has already been quoted in this dissertation.¹⁶² It is from this deposition that we are able to reconstruct many parts of Duarte's complex and contradictory life, a source which is extremely helpful in highlighting the crucial moments of Tomé's life.

The exact year of Tomé Pegado de Paz's birth remains uncertain, but what is known is that he arrived in Constantinople in 1552, just nine months before his father Duarte's death. Duarte had charged his son to inform the Portuguese government on Selim II's and Nasi's true intentions about India as well as those of the New Christians living in the Indian Subcontinent. However, almost immediately upon his arrival, Tomé became embroiled in Joseph Nasi's intelligence network after undergoing a forced circumcision, which Nasi thought was 'razão suficiente para o impedir de voltar a Portugal, como tentava demonstrar'.¹⁶³ Yet, Nasi's assumption about Tomé's loyalty would soon prove to be misguided. Much like his father, Tomé exhibited the traits of a double agent, ready to take advantage of the most fruitful situations to serve his purposes. A certain Francisco Sanches, whose testimony is coeval to that of Tomé Pegado and found in the same manuscript of the process against Tomé, said that:

¹⁶⁰ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 83.

¹⁶¹ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 83.

¹⁶² ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo 10906. See note 149.

¹⁶³ Valentim, 'Tomé Pegado de Paz', 303.

Elle [Tomé Pegado de Paz] o agasalhou beam per ser portugues dyzendo-lhe que se algua ora fos[s]e a Constantinopla perguntas[s]e pela gram judia que em sua casa ho acharya e que elle ho resgatarya e depois de seruir algum tempo ho mandaria a Portugaall como fazya a outros.¹⁶⁴

This is remarkable evidence of how Nasi's intelligence network functioned: 'Uma rede de contactos, de comércio, de informações, uma rede financeira [...] que ligava famílias como os Paz do Porto e os Nasi do Império Otomano, que transportava notícias sofregamente desejadas pelos poderes que se digladiavam em várias zonas do Globo, como era o caso de turcos e portugueses'.¹⁶⁵ Notwithstanding, the already suspicious relation between the Duke of Naxos and Tomé quickly broke down: after a disastrous shipwreck, in which 150,000 écus owed by the French King to Nasi disappeared with the ship, Tomé – who had been tasked to collect the money – was detained in Aleppo accused of owing more than 1,400 cruzados to the Duke of Naxos. His release was agreed in exchange for conversion to Islam, after which Tomé decided to travel to Portugal with the purpose of claiming his family wealth in Porto.¹⁶⁶ On his way back, Tomé obtained absolution from the archbishop of Dubrovnik but was rapidly put in jail by the Viceroy of Naples, who detained him following allegations of spying of behalf of Joseph Nasi from several Christians who had been slaves working for the Ottomans and presumably recognised Tomé. Afterwards, this puzzling character resurfaced in Florence, where he is accused of espionage and sent back to Lisbon, where he would be interrogated by a secular judge and sent to the Inquisition. Liberated in 1579, Tomé's testimony – today preserved in the Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo in Lisbon – is a fundamental source that allows us not only to reconstruct his life, but also the widespread information networks built up by powerful actors in Mediterranean policy-making. In doing so, and helping us to recreate these webs of spies, Tomé, willingly or not, denounced potentially dangerous New Christians and Jews living in Ottoman domains. One of the first targets of his allegations was Moses Hamon, who – as mentioned earlier – had been accused of persuading Suleyman to conquer the *Estado da Índia*, where locally settled New Christians would have facilitated the enterprise. This claim leads Bethencourt to suggest that Tomé had likely inherited some of the intelligence his father had gathered in the 1550s.¹⁶⁷ Another conspirator

¹⁶⁴ ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 10906, fol. 21v.

¹⁶⁵ Valentim, 'Tomé Pegado de Paz', 304.

¹⁶⁶ Tavim, 'Tomé Pegado de Paz', 309.

¹⁶⁷ Bethencourt, *Strangers Within*, 121.

denounced by Tomé was Jácome de Olivares, a New Christian living in Cochin who had been arrested by the local authorities in 1557 and brought to Lisbon in 1561. According to Tomé's testimony, Olivares had secretly informed the Ottoman government by giving them crucial intelligence for the conquest of India.¹⁶⁸

Another spy denounced by Tomé was Mathias Biscudo, a New Christian living in Aleppo and allegedly a spy for João III. According to Frederic C. Lane, a specialist of Venetian economic history, Syria had witnessed a revival in the spice trade in the mid-sixteenth century. This resurgence is evidenced by the transfer of the Venetian consulate from Damascus to Aleppo, which was closer to the routes leading to Baghdad and Basra.¹⁶⁹ The bailo Daniele Barbarigo, who had returned to Venice in 1564, has left a *relazione* which is extraordinarily rich of information regarding the spice trade and relevance of Middle Eastern outposts; speaking about Hormuz, Barbarigo says:

È luogo di gran traffico per l'Indie, di dove vengono condotte spezie d'ogni sorte per Portoghesi, quali le vanno a torre all'isole Molucche, che altri che loro non possono navigare per esse isole, e le conducono per l'India in Caul, che è sotto il regno dell'Assamaluco, e di li a Ormus, dove non avendo il traffico con Bassora non potriano aver questo beneficio, ma sariano astretti venderle nell'India.¹⁷⁰

After the end of Afonso de Lencastre's mandate as ambassador in Rome, Lourenço Pires de Távora was appointed as his successor, whose purpose was to decisively improve the Portuguese information network in the Levant. Pires made use of the services offered by two Jews, the uncle Isaac and the nephew Mathias Biscudo: the first resided in Aleppo, the second in Cairo. In the intelligence supply chain devised by the Portuguese, the letters written by the Biscudos were sent to the capital of information networks, Venice, whence the Portuguese ambassador sent them to Rome, from whence Pires ensured they reached Lisbon.¹⁷¹ However, Joseph Nasi's well-devised counterespionage system proved able in intercepting vital intelligence: Mathias Biscudo had reached Constantinople a

¹⁶⁸ ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 10906, fol. 11r. On the figure of Jácome de Olivares, whose life cannot be treated in detail here, see José Alberto Rodrigues Da Silva Tavim, 'From Setúbal to the Sublime Porte: The Wanderings of Jácome de Olivares, New Christian and Merchant of Cochin (1540-1571)', in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ed., *Sinners and Saints. The Successors of Vasco da Gama* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998): 94-134.

¹⁶⁹ Frederic C. Lane, 'The Mediterranean Spice Trade. Further Evidence of its Revival in the Sixteenth Century', *The American Historical Review* 45, no. 3 (1940): 581-90, here 584.

¹⁷⁰ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 2 (Florence: Clio, 1844), 6.

¹⁷¹ Lane, 'Mediterranean Spice Trade', 584.

few months after Tomé's arrival dressed as a Muslim, 'con el objecto de recabar información sobre las embarcaciones que el sultán pretendía enviar el Índico'.¹⁷² Nasi became aware of this plot thanks to sensitive intelligence that reached him in Venice, revealing that Biscudo was on the Portuguese payroll. Armed with this knowledge, Nasi ordered Tomé to intercept him as quickly as possible. The two men met in Aleppo, but Tomé failed in his task: Mathias was then advised by Tomé to reach Alexandria and Cairo, allowing his escape. It was at this point, as hinted earlier, that Joseph Nasi ordered the imprisonment of Tomé in Skopje.

As it is possible to read from the transcription of the process, Tomé also denounced a certain António de Fonseca, an extremely wealthy New Christian living in Rome, making him another spot in the Nasi Mediterranean network. According to Tomé, Fonseca had alerted the Duke of Naxos about the Holy League's military preparations ahead of the Battle of Lepanto, although his warning arrived too late. The transcription reads:

Antonio de Fonseca christaom-novo residente em Corte de Roma mandaua cartas ao Micas a Constantinopla, pellas quaes lhe escreuia muitos auisos do que [se] passaua na Christandade contra o Turco pera que o ditto Micas as dissesse ao dito Turco e he lembrado que se dizia em Constantinopla entre judeus de dentro de casa do Micas, como o ditto Antonio de Fonseca auisara que nom emuistissem os turcos com a armada de dom João d'Austria, por ir muito bem apercebida'.¹⁷³

Another informer, João Ribeiro, who was stationed in Venice, was accused by Tomé of providing intelligence to Nasi. According to the report of the process, it was actually João Ribeiro's father who had alerted Nasi about Biscudo's disguise and exposed his operation:

E a este tempo viera Mateus Bicudo do Cairo em traiois de mouro saber destas gallees, e vimdo a Constantinopla ho dicto Joaom Micas por lhe parecer que era hispia semdo avisado per cartas do filho dygo per cartas do pai de João Rybeiro que estaom em Veneza, ordenara de ho mandar premder per elle reo Tome Pegado, ho quall ho fora emcomtrar [a] caminho de Jerusalem em Halepo.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Tavim, 'La "Materia Oriental"', 221.

¹⁷³ ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 10906, fol. 70r.

¹⁷⁴ ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 10906, fol. 8r.

After his testimony, very little is known about Tomé's destiny. Notwithstanding, in the 1570s, namely the period in which Tomé was most active, there was another Jewish man who embarked on a remarkable enterprise. He was not of Sephardic origin; rather, his family origin was German, as indicated by his surname.

1.4. A Most Wanted Jewish Physician: Doctor Solomon Ashkenazi

Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi has been the subject of extensive study by various historians, among whom Benjamin Arbel has produced the most comprehensive reconstruction of his life. Ashkenazi was presumably born around 1520 in Udine – this made him a Venetian subject. It is also plausible that he had studied at the University of Padua and graduated in Medicine. Francesca Lucchetta sustains that since Jewish people, thanks to their religious practises, were versed in interventions on the human body (such as circumcision), being a physician was essentially the only ‘professione liberale concessa agli Ebrei nel mondo cristiano, nella quale essi divennero esperti rinomati, ottenendo prestigio e ricchezza’.¹⁷⁵ This expertise allowed Ashkenazi to work first at the court of the Polish king Sigismund August II in Krakow. Later, he became the official physician of the baili in Constantinople, including Vittore Bragadin, Jacopo Soranzo, and Marcantonio Barbaro.¹⁷⁶ The first mention of Ashkenazi is found in a letter written by Barbaro on 21 December 1569, in which the bailo elucidated Ashkenazi's clear involvement in international trade and his dealings with Joseph Nasi:

Ha praticato, et pratica di continuo in casa delli baili di vostra serenità un Rabbi Salomon medico da Udine. Persona a mio giudizio discreta, et da bene, et che fa professione di amico delli Baili; il qual, havendo diversi traffici di mercantia in Candia per la maggior parte della sua facultà, per assicurarsi di questi motivi che cercano per le cose di Cipro, essendo anche assai intrinseco di Giovanni Miches [João Micas], ha più volte tentato di sottrar' per suo interesse da esso Giovanni Miches, sel poteva sicuramente mandar, stanti detti motti, il suo cavedal in Candia.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Francesca Lucchetta, ‘Il medico del bailaggio di Costantinopoli: fra terapie e politica (secc. XV-XVI)’, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 15 (1997): 5-50, here 5.

¹⁷⁶ Benjamin Arbel, ‘Salomone Ashkenazi: mercante e armatore’, in Giacomo Todeschini and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, eds., *Il mondo ebraico: gli ebrei tra Italia nord-orientale e impero asburgico dal medioevo all'età contemporanea* (Pordenone: Studio Tesi, 1991), 111-128, here 111.

¹⁷⁷ Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana [hereafter: BNM], Ms. It. VII 390-391 (8872-73), I, fol. 256r-v.

This letter is particularly important because it gives us a crucial element to further shed light on the Constantinople spy-game: Ashkenazi was in direct conflict with the spymaster Joseph Nasi, and one of his closest allies, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, was the arch-enemy of Joseph Nasi, the Duke of Naxos. In the same letter, Barbaro says that Ashkenazi had approached Nasi to ascertain whether military preparations were being done against Venice; the bailo writes that Nasi suspected that Ashkenazi was acting on his behalf:

Dal qual li è stato sempre largamente risposto che quella Armata non è contra Vostra Serenità; et con tutto che conoscendo ogni hora più tali romori, detto Rabbi Salamon habbia di novo reiterati questi officij. Però sempre esso Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi] lo ha assicurato che non serà altro, et che non n'ozzi di mandar le cose sue in Candia, o dove uno vuole: perché lui ancora manda in Candia 3 cecchini [zecchini] per comprar tanti vini per suo conto. Il qual Giovanni Miches sapendo chel predetto medico è amico qua di casa, imaginandosi fosse che quei suoi tentativi fussero fatti a mia instantia, li disse chel mi assicurasse per parte sua che quell'anno non serà cosa alcuna ma che però l'non mi assicurava per l'avenir, non sapendo quello che dovesse esser.¹⁷⁸

1.4.1. Before Nicosia and Lepanto: The War of Cyprus and its Developments

This rivalry between the Grand Vizier and the Duke had become evident during the tense months before Kubad was sent to Venice with the Sultan's ultimatum. On one side, there were Lala Mustafa Pasha and the Piyale Pasha, who composed the belligerent faction against Venice; on the other side, advocating a more diplomatic and reasonable approach to the Serenissima, there was Sokollu. A careful reading of the *relazione* by Costantino Garzoni – who had accompanied Barbaro's successor, Antonio Tiepolo – reveals that Mehmed had even offered some gifts to Lala Mustafa to dissuade him from urging Selim to wage war:

[Sokollu] Mehemet primo visir visitò allora [Lala] Mustafà, presentandogli dodici bellissimi cavalli ed altri ricchissimi presenti, scusandosi dell'ufficio fatto contro di lui, procurando d'allora in poi di tener celato quell'odio, che per innanzi aveva fatto palese ad ognuno, il qual è forse ora

¹⁷⁸ BNM, I, fol. 256v.

nel maggior colmo per il successo dell'impresa di Cipro; la quale gli ha dato molto credito presso al Gran Signore.¹⁷⁹

Despite Sokollu's efforts, war eventually broke out. In July 1570 the Ottoman forces invaded Cyprus and their first target was the inland city of Nicosia. After a few months of siege, the city capitulated, leaving its population vulnerable to the brutality of Ottoman soldiers. The Venetians ultimately sent a small fleet of fewer than 200 ships to Cyprus in mid-September, arriving just in time only to hear the terrible news about Nicosia's fall.¹⁸⁰ But the crucial development for the war occurred in Famagusta, which at the time was undoubtedly the most important trading station for the Venetians on the island – the Ottomans set siege to the city just after the capture of Nicosia. After a stalemate during the winter of 1571, when the Ottoman war fleet was forced to withdraw from the waters surrounding the port-city, Sokollu thought this might be a good moment to stop the war he had advocated against. However, a complete restoration of the *status quo ante* was not feasible, as neither the Sultan nor his viziers would ever allow Cyprus to return to Venetian control as if nothing had happened. Nevertheless, as David Abulafia argues in his reconstruction of the war, the Venetians were not inclined to peace, since they had 'succeeded in capturing Durazzo, which they had lost at the start of the century, and which was strategically as valuable to them as Cyprus was to the Turks'.¹⁸¹

Meanwhile, in Venice the climate had become ever more anti-Semitic due to allegations of a possible involvement of Joseph Nasi in triggering the war. This was a hardly ever new element: the anti-Jewish attitude was so prevalent in Venetian society that some even considered Hebrew as a secret code employed by an elusive anti-Venetian network.¹⁸² At the beginning of March 1570, when Kubad was travelling to Venice, some letters written by Jewish merchants had been found floating in the city's canals and immediately brought to the Council of Ten. The document which tells us about this translations attempt reads: 'traduttione di lettere de hebrei trovati in aqua, per liquali si vede che sono in timore per questa guerra et dicono che li soi si ritirino da Patras in Lepanto per maggior sicurtà, 7 martii 1570'.¹⁸³ Moreover, at the beginning of March the Senate had deliberated

¹⁷⁹ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 410.

¹⁸⁰ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 447.

¹⁸¹ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 448.

¹⁸² Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 63.

¹⁸³ ASVe, CCD, Lettere da Costantinopoli, busta 5, n. 66, quoted in Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 64.

the confiscation of all property belonging to Levantine Jews and Muslim Ottomans living in Venice; this decree was meant to be applied all over Venetian dominions in the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁴ In the following decades, a Venetian man working at the court of the Pope, Lazzaro Soranzo, would reinforce and revive the hideous idea that Jewish merchants were quintessential enemies of the Christians and were the first to inform the sultan about international developments, especially during the War of Cyprus. His treatise *L'Ottomanno*, published in 1598 (much to the irritation of the Venetian government), harshly criticised Nasi's alleged role in instigating the conflict – a literary topos that would prove influential in later centuries:

Oltreche gli Hebrei, sagacissimi indagatori e capitalissimi nemici de' Christiani, e che sono sparsi in molto numero per tutto il paese Turchesco, principalmente per occasione de' traffichi, che vanno continuamente facendo per gli Emporij Ottomanni, e per le Gabelle, le quali quasi tutte sono in mano loro in quello stato, pensano co'l servir a Turchi di esploratori delle cose nostre, non solamente di assicurar le lor facultà, le proprie persone, & i figliuoli; ma di acquistar anco utili di momento, gratificandoli in cotal modo i grandi di quell'Impero. L'ultima guerra c'hebbro i Venetiani co'l Turco [i.e., the War of Cyprus], fu cagionata in gran parte da Giovanni Miches hebreo, disgustato da essi, per non haver potuto trafugar le mercantie, ch'egli havea sotto mentito nome fatto condur in Venetia.¹⁸⁵

Nonetheless, Soranzo acknowledged that many Christian rulers made great use of Jewish spies in Constantinople for their own interests, as allowed by the lawless world of espionage.

Quanto poi a Principi Christiani; sono notissime le spese, che fanno, non solamente per saper l'uno i consigli dell'altro, e benespesso con vergogna, e danno di quelli, che servono loro in tal attione; Ma principalmente per saper'i consigli del Turco commune nemico. Perciò que' Principi, che maggiormente sono interessati con esso tengono fin dentro a Costantinopoli molte spie pagate, stipendiando etiamdio Hebrei, e Turchi de' più confidenti, & intimi de' primieri

¹⁸⁴ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 65.

¹⁸⁵ Lazzaro Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno* (Ferrara: Per Vittorio Baldini, Stampatore Camerale, 1598), 66. On the history of this controversial treatise, see Vincenzo Lavenia, 'I libri, le armi e le missioni: conversione e guerra antiottomana in un testo di Lazzaro Soranzo', in *Missioni, saperi e adattamento tra Europa e imperi non cristiani* (Macerata: Eum, 2015), 165-202.

Bassà, & ad altri donando largamente quando vien loro comunicata alcuna cosa di momento.¹⁸⁶

Following these harsh measures, the Jewish community in Constantinople frequently lobbied the bailo to induce a change of mind in the Venetian élite in order to liberate all the Ottoman subjects – Jews and Muslims alike – detained in Venice. In December 1570, Barbaro was given a petition asking once again the liberation of the Sultan’s subjects; this petition was brought by a *çavuş* sent by Sokollu himself, who had received it from a Jew who had escaped Venice and described in detail the hardships that his people had to endure.¹⁸⁷ In this manner, Barbaro was forced to agree to negotiate a mutual exchange of detained merchants. Sokollu had suggested that Barbaro should send his chief dragoman, Mateca Salvago – who had accompanied Kubad to Venice in March 1570 – to travel to Venice to explore the feasibility of such an agreement: Sokollu knew that the dragoman was an Ottoman subject, which in his mind made him a reliable asset. Mateca then arrived in Istria on 21 February 1571 to negotiate the exchange, but there was a problem: being a simple messenger, Mateca did not have the authority to negotiate. The Senate then decided to send as their envoy to Constantinople a non-patrician private citizen with commercial interests in the capital, Giacomo Ragazzoni.¹⁸⁸ However, here is where secret diplomacy showed its full potential: Mateca was not only sent to Venice to communicate the intentions of Barbaro; he brought to the Council of Ten a secret message forwarded by the Sokollu in which the latter openly proposed peace negotiations. This proposal resonates with the forced withdrawal of the Ottoman fleet in Famagusta, as mentioned above, that probably made Sokollu seriously consider the idea of striking a peace agreement. The Council then manifested their intentions in a letter to Barbaro voted on 2 March 1571, just the day before the Senate deliberated the exchange of prisoners notified by Mateca Salvago; Ragazzoni brought to the bailo the instructions given by the Council, authorising Barbaro to negotiate and use Ragazzoni’s services.¹⁸⁹ Arbel claims that there is no doubt to think that this prisoner exchange took place during the summer of 1571, even though the sources at this point are very scant; but to continue the story

¹⁸⁶ Soranzo, *L’Ottomanno*, 66.

¹⁸⁷ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 71.

¹⁸⁸ Ragazzoni’s biography is complex and cannot be treated in detail here. A fruitful starting point is Giampiero Brunelli, ‘Ragazzoni, Giacomo’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 86 (2016).

¹⁸⁹ ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Secreti, reg. 9, fols. 141-143v, 2 March 1571, quoted in Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 72.

of the war, it is now important to shed light on the latest international developments, which had made the situation on a wider scale more compelling for the Venetians.

The Catholics of Spain, Venice, and Pope Pius V had been able to put aside their disagreements to form a Holy League, which had gained Philip II's involvement by assuring him that his objectives in North Africa should be the objectives of the League's action. Philip's role in this League was further strengthened by the fact that the bastard son of Charles V and his step-brother, Don John of Austria, was appointed as the commander of the fleet. In the meantime, the Ottomans had sent their fleet up to the Adriatic after having raided Crete in June. In July 1571 they captured Ulcinj, a coastal town with a commercial vocation just to the north of the modern-day border between Montenegro and Albania. On a strategic point of view, this advance in the Adriatic made great sense: first, the Ottomans wanted to intercept any fleet that could be sent to help the Christian League; second, 'to strike a psychological blow by wreaking havoc on Venetian territory' by capturing men to be employed as galley-slaves and by seizing resources or any other asset that would strengthen their war effort.¹⁹⁰ Abulafia's idea on this strategy discloses a point of agreement with Malcolm, since the former writes that 'the aim was to scare rather than smash Venice – to convince the Venetians that their empire was fragile and that resistance to Ottoman power was futile'.¹⁹¹ Surely, the most shocking psychological blow for the Venetians was the news about the fall of Famagusta in August 1571. After months of heavy bombardments and fierce resistance, the captain of the city Marcantonio Bragadin was forced to surrender; when Lala Mustafa Pasha, the Ottoman vizier who had been conducting the siege, learned that fifty Muslim prisoners had been executed by the Venetians, he ordered the gruesome and cruel execution of Bragadin and his men. Bragadin's execution, on 17 August 1571, had been needlessly violent: the Venetian captain was 'flayed alive and his stuffed skin was borne triumphantly around Cyprus, and then dispatched to Constantinople'.¹⁹² Naturally, such a horrible execution shocked the whole Venetian embassy. But another figure who was heavily enraged with Lala Mustafa was none-other than Sokollu, who in turn assured Barbaro that Selim II in person had scolded Lala for his excessive impulse for revenge.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 141-145.

¹⁹¹ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 448.

¹⁹² Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 449. Bragadin's final sacrifice is narrated in Angelo Ventura, 'Bragadin, Marcantonio', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 13 (1971); Barbero, *Lepanto*, 463-468.

¹⁹³ Barbero, *Lepanto*, 469.

Costantino Garzoni, writing after Barbaro's tenure had ended, provided a quite remarkable description of Mustafa's regret for what he had done:

[Lala Mustafa] Si duole della esecuzione che fece contro li resi di Famagosta, e si scusa accusando per troppo superbo il misero Bragadino, la morte del quale spiacque universalmente a tutta la corte di Costantinopoli.¹⁹⁴

1.4.2. Enter Ashkenazi: Lobbying the Bailo on Behalf of the Venetian Jews

The ironic element to register was that during this time, where domestic policy in Venice was very close to anti-Jewish panic, the most faithful ally to Venice was none-other than the Jew Solomon Ashkenazi. The Council of Ten had deliberated on 27 September 1571 to replace Abraham Abesantio, the former physician whose references were far from flattering, with Ashkenazi. Doge Alvise Mocenigo wrote to Barbaro to inform him firsthand of this latest decision, stressing the importance of keeping Ashkenazi faithful to Venetian interests:

il medico Rabi Salamon Ascanazzi, ne par, secondo l'aricordo Vostro, di riconoscerlo, però vi dicemo col Consiglio nostro di X et zonta che, over al presente o quando Vi parerà più opportuno, debbiare assgnarli il salario solito darsi al medico della natione, levandolo a quello che l'ha [Abesantio], poi che di esso non è alcuno che se ne serva, secondo che Voi ne avete significato, et di più li darete al presente in dono cecchini [zecchini] trecento, accompagnandoli con quelle parole che Vi pareranno a proposito per tenerlo ben edificato et pronto alli servitii nostri, quali danari li darete in una o più volte, secondo che Vi parerà.¹⁹⁵

Curiously enough, Ashkenazi was also the physician working at the Ottoman court. Arbel notes that, although his position was undoubtedly privileged, he did not exercise any official function; therefore, he did not receive any regular income or salary, other than those of irregular and voluntary nature.¹⁹⁶ The fact that a physician did not receive a regular salary was not perceived as a particular issue. As noted by Barbaro and by other baili, the 'gift culture' was a pervasive feature of the Ottoman court;

¹⁹⁴ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 410-411.

¹⁹⁵ ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Secreti, reg. 9, c. 177v, quoted in Lucchetta, 'Il medico', 14.

¹⁹⁶ Arbel, 'Salomone Ashkenazi', 112.

hence, if the Venetian bailo had been caught giving some gifts to a physician, this information would have scarcely shocked anyone accustomed to the expensive lifestyle at the Sultan's court:

Io non entrerò qui a ragionar qual sia al presente la oziosa e viziosa vita de' Turchi, perché troppo avrei che dire; bastimi far sapere alle vostre signorie eccellentissime, che così come essi già altro non desideravano che il maneggio dell'armi e la guerra, così ora vedonsi li principali e tutti gli altri ancora aborrrirla grandemente; ed io ne posso esser buon testimonio, perché al tempo mio ho conosciuto chiaramente che molti per non andarvi; e specialmente a quella di Cipro, ed altre fazioni fatte contro la serenità vostra, facevano grandi officj e grossi donativi, sì per fuggir la spesa ed il pericolo, come per poter godere le delizie delle loro ricchezze, sperando anco più con la presenza loro alla Porta, adulando il Gran-Signore, conseguir maggiori utilità e favori, che con il merito delle armi.¹⁹⁷

Arbel claims that Barbaro must have introduced Ashkenazi to the Grand Dragoman Ali Bey, who in turn introduced him to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who had noticed 'the personal qualities of the Jewish physician and took him under his protection'.¹⁹⁸ This acquaintance with both the highest representatives of two polities waging war against each other, allowed Ashkenazi to obtain the position of intermediary: actually, as Gürkan has pointed out, being a physician was the 'perfect profession for an information trader'. In this way, Ashkenazi was able to gather valuable information from Barbaro and transmit it to Sokollu, since the latter 'preferred to stay in touch with the Venetian diplomat in order to bring an end to a war that he had not wanted to declare in the first place'.¹⁹⁹ In Abulafia's view, the disgusting act of skinning Bragadin alive was a clear message that Lala Mustafa had wanted to send both to the Venetians and to Sokollu, who from the first moment worked to hinder the war effort and in which Ashkenazi proved to be his perfect right-hand man.²⁰⁰

Just after Ashkenazi's official appointment as the physician of the bailo, on 7 October 1571 one of the most famous and celebrated battles in Western historiography took place. This dissertation is not focused on the military details, which have been admirably analysed in other works; nevertheless, it is worthy at least to provide a strategic evaluation of this battle and its real

¹⁹⁷ Albèri, *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 310.

¹⁹⁸ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 79.

¹⁹⁹ Gürkan, 'Laying Hands', 71.

²⁰⁰ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 449.

consequences. First and foremost, this is a clear example of how much intelligence was a vital commodity for properly devising policies and war tactics, as already stressed above. Moreover, disrupting the enemy's chain of communication was also essential: Noel Malcolm underlines that when the Christian fleet reached the island of Cephalonia on 4 October 1571, the news from Famagusta's fall and Bragadin's ferocious execution in August reached the island for the first time. 'While in one sense the news from Cyprus eliminated the main *raison d'être* of the expedition', as Malcolm writes, 'its immediate effect was to strengthen the resolve of the allied soldiers – especially the Venetians, who were eager for revenge'.²⁰¹ They would have their chance three days later, when the two fleets encountered each other at Lepanto. According to the military historian Alessandro Barbero, other than the devastating supremacy of the six Venetian galleasses, the factors that enabled the Holy League's victory were two: the greater number of fighting men and their efficient armour, which protected them from Ottoman archers.²⁰² A lot has been written on this battle: David Abulafia rightly shows that, on a strategic point of view, the result of the battle – even though it was an undisputed victory for the Christian fleet – translated itself into a geopolitical stalemate in the Mediterranean; in his view, the 'political map of the Mediterranean had been drawn in the years and weeks leading up to 7 October 1571'.²⁰³ In his book *Agents of Empire*, Noel Malcolm proposes a counterfactual vision of what might have happened, if the Ottomans had succeeded, which is worth mentioning for its strategic relevance. Braudel's argument, according to which Lepanto showed that the Ottoman appearance of invincibility had been broken, does not convince Malcolm, for the unsuccessful siege of Malta in 1565 had already demonstrated that the Ottoman forces were not invincible. During his diplomatic activity, Giacomo Ragazzoni had obtained from Sokollu valuable intelligence saying that Selim II was planning an invasion of Crete and Corfu, the linchpins of Venice's maritime system which would have allowed an invasion of Southern Italy across the Straits of Otranto. What scared the rulers of Italy the most – especially the Spanish based in the Viceroyalty of Naples – was the possibility that an Ottoman invasion might be welcomed and favoured by their subjects; Malcolm also stresses that this intolerance towards the Spanish monarchy would become manifest in the 1590s, when the philosopher and Dominican friar Tommaso Campanella organised

²⁰¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 160.

²⁰² Barbero, *Lepanto*, 568-581.

²⁰³ Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 451.

a pro-Ottoman conspiracy.²⁰⁴ From Southern Italy, the Ottomans would have the open road to a full-scale invasion, with the weakened Venetian fleet keen to defend its Adriatic outposts and the depleted Spanish-Papal fleet which would be totally incapable of arresting the Ottoman advance.

But when the battle was unfolding in all its violence and Ottoman-Venetian relations were openly hostile, Ashkenazi's courage and recklessness were proved by the fact that he dared to expose himself to serious danger by helping Venetian merchants sail away from Constantinople in his own vessels.²⁰⁵ Increasingly, Ashkenazi smuggled Barbaro's letters out of his residence in his shoes, and later sent them to Crete from which they would be brought to Venice on vessels he had chartered for this exact purpose.²⁰⁶ Naturally, there was someone who wanted to stop this flow of information from coming to Venice, and that someone was Joseph Nasi. Actually, the Duke of Naxos proved quite lucky since one of Ashkenazi's agents died on the very island of Naxos; from there, the secret correspondence was brought by Nasi's officials to their master, who immediately communicated the leakage of information orchestrated by Ashkenazi. The physician was arrested but Sokollu intervened just in time to save him; Ashkenazi, other than being a loyal agent, was also extremely useful for his close contacts with the bailo.²⁰⁷

However, the balance of the war was tilted towards the Ottoman side: in fact, the Ottomans gave an astonishing example of military and logistical organisation by reconstructing almost completely the Ottoman fleet after Lepanto. It was in this period that European political personalities employed their vast networks of spies to gather intelligence to devise the next move. However, there was a major disagreement in strategic priorities between Spain and Venice, for Philip II still considered at the top of his interests the North-African front, rather than the 'Levantine' one. On 1 January 1572 the Venetian ambassador to Spain, Leonardo Donà, gave Philip a memorandum which highly invited the King to attack the Balkans, the European flank of the Ottoman Empire, and not the African periphery: according to him, an active involvement in North Africa would shatter the hopes of the Greek and Albanian peoples. Donà writes:

²⁰⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 174.

²⁰⁵ ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Comuni, filza 121, 14 July 1574, quoted in Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 79.

²⁰⁶ ASVe, CCD, Lettere da Costantinopoli, busta 3, no. 256, 31 January 1571, quoted in Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 83.

²⁰⁷ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 79

vanamente s'espetteriano li movimenti et le sollevationi de popoli greci et albanesi et de altri christiani quando, in luoco di essere assicurati con le forze della lega, vedessero li nostri capitani impiegati in Barberia.²⁰⁸

Nevertheless, the Spanish diplomats in Rome ultimately convinced Philip of the importance of the Levantine campaign, especially if one considers the relevance of his contribution in the creation of a second fleet. However, the situation at the beginning of 1573 clearly showed how much the Venetians were doomed in their chances of winning the war: most allied naval campaigns demonstrated themselves to be totally inefficient and, after more than a year of solid grip on Cyprus, the Venetians understood that the island was irretrievably lost. Within Venice, the patrician merchant families had started to experience huge losses due to the suspension of Levantine trade, a long-standing source of income for them; thus, it is not surprising to discover that by November 1572 the Venetian élite was showing a genuine willingness to come to a settlement, since they recognised that the only chance of winning war was by waging a land campaign, which the already meagre forces of the League would have been unable to sustain.²⁰⁹ This willingness is further demonstrated by the fact that, in early July 1572, the Venetians had sent to the King of France, Charles IX, a certain Zuan Michiel to ask for the French Ambassador in Constantinople – François Noailles, Bishop of Dax – to negotiate a peace agreement with favourable terms for Venice.²¹⁰ Strategically speaking, this desperate request was extremely tempting for the French: by arranging a separate peace agreement, the French would have almost certainly broken up the Holy League, thus making Spain a more isolated and attractive target for future Ottoman campaigns. However, the Bishop of Dax did not prove essential in drafting the peace treaty, since on 2 November 1572 he was in Dubrovnik and was heading to France after the latest news about the Night of Saint Bartholomew.²¹¹ The fundamental broker in drafting of the peace treaty was none-other than

²⁰⁸ Leonardo Donà to Philip II, Madrid, 1 January 1572 (letter in Italian), quoted in Mario Brunetti and Eligio Vitale, eds., *La corrispondenza da Madrid dell'ambasciatore Leonardo Donà (1570-1573)*, vol. 2 (Venice: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1963), 767-768, quoted in Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 181.

²⁰⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 186.

²¹⁰ Alberto Tenenti, 'La Francia, Venezia e la Sacra Lega', in Gino Benzoni, ed., *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda metà del '500 alla luce di Lepanto* (Florence: Olschki, 1974): 393-408, here 404.

²¹¹ Tenenti, 'La Francia, Venezia e la Sacra Lega', 404.

Ashkenazi, who along with the Grand Dragoman Ali Bey; his efforts in negotiating the final agreement, signed officially on 7 March 1573, led Barbaro to genuinely praise the physician's role:

Quanto si sia Rabbi Salamon affaticato in questa trattatione, et a quali cimenti et pericoli egli habbia convenuto star saldo io non mi presumo veramente de dirlo: perché non so come l'habbia tanta distrizza et giudizio, o come nol sia uscito dal buon sentimento; perché questa pratica si è tratta così gagliardamente da tutte le parti, che dicendolo mi persuado che difficilmente sarà veduto. Io mi rendo sicuramente che la Serenità Vostra secondo la solita cortesia sua non si dimenticherà delli continui et segnalati servitij che sempr'egli ha fatti in tutta questa guerra con tanti danni et pericoli suoi, et quanto per questa conclusione con valor amor et prudentia l'si sia affaticato.²¹²

Barbaro's reference to the sufferings that Ashkenazi had to endure regarded the death in a shipwreck of the latter's brother, about whom we do not know the name. In a letter dated 7 February 1571, Barbaro expressed great displeasure for this tragic loss, especially when considering the risks undergone by Ashkenazi to serve Venice. Barbaro writes:

Et parmi poter dir a Vostra Serenità che di già esso Rabbi Salamon per li disturbi che per il servizio di lei [Venice] ha per innanzi havuti non possi haver spesa gran parte di questi denari, oltre molti pericoli nei quali egli è incorso, et danni che ha avuta nella sua facultà in Candia; per aggiunta dei quali s'intende, che quello navilio che lui ultimamente espedì per Candia con vittuarie, et altre cose insieme con suo fratello si sia rotto, et il fratello morto.²¹³

Obviously, Ashkenazi's efforts were directed at limiting the damage that a surely humiliating peace agreement would have given to Venice: other than an annual payment of 300,000 ducats, it was clear that the Ottomans would retain the Albanian coastal towns conquered, such as Ulcinj, Bar and Sopot, which had been conquered by Sebastiano Venier in 1570.²¹⁴ Even though the peace-negotiating activities had only been authorised by the Council of Ten with the precise purpose of keeping it secret – given that many Senators were still strongly advocating war efforts – when Francesco Barbaro, Marcantonio's son, arrived in Venice on 3 April 1573 bringing the sketch of the

²¹² BNM, II, fol. 413r.

²¹³ BNM, II, fols. 247v-248r.

²¹⁴ BNM, II, fol. 415r.

agreement, the terms quickly became of public domain.²¹⁵ On 7 May 1573, Barbaro once again recollected the huge relevance played by Ashkenazi in drafting this exhausting peace agreement:

Tante volte io ho scritto degli amorevolissimi et importantissimi officij che ha continuamente fatti il Dottor Rabbi Salamon, che se io non voglio con ingratitude diffradar le sue operationj, sono sforzato di liberamente dir che io ho conosciuto in lui non manco buono et pronto animo nelle cose di quella Eccellentissima Repubblica che il mio medesimo sì come anco la Serenità Vostra havervi potuto conoscer da tante mani le lettere mie, ma molto meglio dalle operationi di esso dottore: per le quali ella si mosse già a scriver in Candia caldamente in favor delle cose sue; et io non ho mai lasciato passar occasione di scriver a quei Clarissimi Rettori in conformità, prigandole ad haver per raccomandate le cose di predetto Rabbi Salamon si come suddito ch'egli è di quel Serenissimo Dominio, et come meritatissimo suo servitore.²¹⁶

Nonetheless, there is a question that still endures which deserves a proper answer: why was Ashkenazi so keen to help the Republic which had confiscated all the properties of his co-religionists? First, as Arbel rightly points out, the chief reasons that had led Ashkenazi on this dangerous path were certainly not exclusively economic. Of course, as the bailo's official physician, it has already been said that he occasionally received several hundreds of ducats for his services, but they 'seem disproportionate to the dangers to which he had exposed himself, the expenses which he incurred by his activities, or the personal tragedies which he had to suffer'.²¹⁷ In the end, Benjamin Arbel adamantly concludes his analysis by stating that Ashkenazi felt a 'sincere attachment to his native country, where he had passed his childhood and youth, was trained as a physician, and where several of his relatives were still living'.²¹⁸

This thesis is reinforced by thorough evidence of Ashkenazi's fundamental role in the abrogation of the decree expulsion previously issued by the Senate in 1570. On 29 June 1573, the two Avogadori de Comun – a role like today's State Attorney – asked the Senate to abrogate the decree on the basis that it was incompatible with Venetian law. This was a covert reason for the real issue noticed by the Avogadori: the expulsion of Levantine Jews had not only caused problems for

²¹⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 188.

²¹⁶ BNM, II, fol. 439r.

²¹⁷ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 81.

²¹⁸ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 82.

Venice's foreign trade – it had also created a vacuum around the credit for the poor. Benjamin Arbel argues that, according to a decision taken by the Council of Ten in 1524, any new establishment of a *Monte di Pietà* should have the approval of the Council itself. However, since the Jewish pawnbrokers had been expelled by Venice, their vacuum was going to be filled by the Christian institution of *Monte di Pietà*.²¹⁹ The only one posing serious pressure on the Senate seemed to be Ashkenazi, who attempted twice to change the Senate's mind about his people. The first attempt saw the participation of Francesco Barbaro, son of Marcantonio, who had brought on 3 April to Venice not only the aforementioned peace agreement, but also the personal petition of Ashkenazi. Unfortunately, his efforts proved vain, for Francesco Barbaro returned on 3 May 1573 with no significant advancements.²²⁰ Nevertheless, Ashkenazi did not give up and asked the bailo himself to include a petition in his latest report to Venice. On 7 May 1573, Barbaro wrote to Venice that:

[Solomon Ashkenazi] con lunghissima esposizione mi ha esposto che tutta la natione hebrea si sente obbligatissima alla Eccellentissima Repubblica perché veramente in niuna parte del mondo ella è stata ben trattata che là; soggiungendo che se ben nella lor natione non può esser che non vi siano degli huomini cativi et tristi, et che tal volta per gl'insieme loro faciano delle cose che non stanno bene: perché da hebrei non sono avvenuti tradimenti, né si sono mai intromessi in cose simili, et che per altra occasione di minor importanza qualche tristo ha mal operato, la Giustizia vuole l' sia castigato: ma che per questo il tristo di molti altri innocenti non merita pena; et qui moltiplicando in assai parole, mi aggiunge apresso infinite supplicationi acciò che la Serenità Vostra sia contenta di non scacciar la natione hebrea da quella inclita città, ma castigando li tristi et usando gratia coi buoni, la sia contenta si come tanto tempo l'ha già fatto per metter che possano viver apresso di lei, poichè gli anco disegna di venir a questa per gli anni che gli restano in quella patria dove è nato suddito: dicendomi che se ben l conosce che à lui persona particolar' non si conviene dimandar et che però non l'havea potuto far resistenza all' obbligo della sua natione più persuaso della benignità di Vostra Serenità, che da altra cosa che lo potesse o volesse mover.²²¹

²¹⁹ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 87.

²²⁰ BNM, II, fol. 434v.

²²¹ BNM, II, fol. 439v.

Nevertheless, what made Jewish merchants essential for the Republic was not credit for the poor, but their relevance for a revival of Venetian international trade, which had been greatly affected by the war, thanks to their Mediterranean-wide connections – this mindset reverberated in the final abrogation of the decree of expulsion. Having proved his diplomatic abilities on this occasion, Ashkenazi eventually became a close advisor to Selim II and the baili were extremely satisfied by the possibility of maintaining contacts with a character that had concretely helped their Republic. In 1576, Antonio Tiepolo, Barbaro's successor as bailo, wrote in his *relazione* that:

Non v'è ora altra persona, che Salamon ebreo, già ben conosciuto dalla serenità vostra e dalle eccellentissime signorie vostre, e come fu utilissimo tutto il tempo del mio bailaggio, utilissimo il credo pur tuttavia nel tempo avvenire, perché ha, sempre che vuole, l'orecchie del pascià, il quale di lui confidando l'accetta per mezzano nelle cose più segrete del bailo; la qual cosa importa per bene e presto finire quella sorte di negozj, che, non impossibili di loro natura, si potriano rendere nondimeno difficili per la speranza o di donativo o di maggior donativo. Il clarissimo bailo, presente mio successore, di quella prudenza e di quella destrezza ben conosciuta già tanto tempo in tanti servizj prestati utilissimamente alla serenità vostra, come si può stare certissimi, che sia per superare tante difficoltà rendendo i dragomanni e gli altri ministri utili al loro officio, così saprà ottimamente valersi di questa persona, mantenendola amica non solo perché non abbia ad operar male difficultando i negozj, ma si ancora per riceverne beneficii di qualche importanza, importando grandemente l'ingegno vivissimo di quell'uomo, aiutato dalla pratica che tiene del modo del negoziare della serenità vostra, e ben sapendo egli quanto a lei sia cara la pace.²²²

When Ashkenazi reached Venice in 1574 as the Porte official envoy to discuss issues arising along the Dalmatia border, the Jewish community welcomed him enthusiastically, with a special prayer composed in his honour. In fact, Levantine merchants had immediately returned to Venice as soon as the war was concluded to regain their properties, which had been confiscated or lost in the three years of war.²²³

²²² Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 2, 188-189.

²²³ Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 93.

1.4.3. *Traces from Modena: Ashkenazi and the Venture for the Polish Throne*

In his fresh diplomatic allure, Ashkenazi soon became involved in another politically sensitive event, the election of the Polish king, which will be treated to further explain Ashkenazi's diplomatic status thanks to some letters today preserved in the Modena State Archive. These documents shed light on Ashkenazi's connections with Alfonso II of Este, the Duke of Ferrara (r. 1559-1597) and son of Ercole II, who had welcomed Gracia Nasi in Ferrara when she was still Beatriz de Luna.²²⁴

Alberto Palladini has shown that Alfonso d'Este had manifested his intention to be a possible candidate for the Polish throne, having gathered the support of influential Polish noblemen.²²⁵ The issue had arisen on 18 June 1574, when Henri of Valois had fled Krakow to return to France due to the death of his brother, the late King Charles IX. Since its former candidate had abandoned the throne of the Kingdom, the *Sejm* (the assembly of electors in charge of electing a new king) needed another candidate. In this context, Alfonso's connection went as far as to Ashkenazi, who at the time was also much requested by Sokollu thanks to his experience in Polish affairs – it is important to remember that he had been the physician of Sigismund August II.

Once returned to Constantinople in late 1574, Ashkenazi immediately sought contact with some of his contacts in Italy: one was a certain Isaac from Fano, while the other was Emanuele, a supposed Jewish banker living in the Venetian ghetto, where he had presumably established himself after Ashkenazi's intercession with the Venetian government. According to Cecil Roth, Ashkenazi offered his services, particularly to exploit his acquaintance with the powerful Sokollu, to gather more support for Alfonso. Nevertheless, Alfonso seemed not to be enthusiast of Sokollu's support, since he 'considerava superfluo l'appoggio dell'infedele o, addirittura, inopportuno'.²²⁶ However, two letters dated 1 December 1574 tell a different story. Written by Alfonso – allegedly under some suggestions provided by Ashkenazi – to both the Grand Vizier and the Sultan, the letters make

²²⁴ On Alfonso II of Este, whose life cannot be resumed here, see Romolo Quazza, 'Alfonso II d'Este, duca di Ferrara', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 2 (1960).

²²⁵ Alberto Palladini, 'Un regno per un duca. L'autorappresentazione di Alfonso II in occasione della candidatura al trono polacco', *Storie e linguaggi* 10, no. 2 (2024) (paper in publication).

²²⁶ Cecil Roth, 'Il dottor Salomone Aschanasi e l'elezione al trono di Polonia, 1574-5', *Ce fastu?* 36, nos. 1-6 (1960): 136-148, here 140.

leverage on a supposed relativity between the House of Este and the House of Osman – which has been impossible to individuate – and say:

Ve prego me fatte favorevole de una lettera et homo per li Signori Electori del Regno de Pollonia de esser io electo per Re, esser conveniente la electione per la persona mia essendo io parente de Vostra Altezza per causa da una donna de casa mia qual fu moglie de huno delli Imperatori vostri antecessori. Il qual la bona memoria del gloriosissimo Sultan Suliman vostro padre [c. 5r] mandò a mio padre huno sauz con alcune gentilezze per vesitar la bona memoria che mio padre et riconosca la nostra parentela – et ancora medesimamente io hera parente de la bona memoria del Re de Pollonia morto – adunque he ragione che Sua Altezza me favorescha che la electione sia fatta in la mia persona, promettendoli esserle como huno figliolo suo el qual ancora serà grandezza sua aver favoritto uno che he parente de sua Altezza dove finché viverò io lo riconosco como he il dover.²²⁷

Here is when Sokollu advises his agents to exert some pressure on the Duke of Ferrara: in a letter dated 1 December 1574, Ashkenazi writes to Isaac that he was sending his nephew with a *çavuş* to Ferrara via Dubrovnik to properly discuss the election for which he had ‘espeso escudj cinquecento per far questa expeditione et facendo acompagnar il mio nepotte da hum sauz [*çavuş*] con li soj seruitorj fina a Ragusa’.²²⁸ Ashkenazi obviously remembered the gift culture present in Constantinople, for he recommended to give 50,000 ducats to the Sultan, 12,000 or 15,000 for the viziers and 10,000 for himself, as a payment for his services and to be more convincing to the eyes of the Divan.

Unfortunately, Alfonso did not collect Ashkenazi’s effort and the doctor explained to Isaac his frustration for such a blatant mockery: ‘tanto per il danaro ma me despiace esser burlatto’.²²⁹ Ashkenazi expressed his final remarks on the situation on a letter sent to the Duke on 2 May 1575, where he stressed that he did his utmost ‘con grandissima fatiga’ and then in two or three days the despatches about the Polish election would be sent:

²²⁷ Minute to Selim II, Constantinople, 1 December 1574, Archivio di Stato di Modena [hereafter: ASMo], Archivio Segreto Estense [hereafter: ASE], Cancelleria, Carteggio Ambasciatori, Levante, busta unica, fol. 7r. (letter in Italian).

²²⁸ Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi to Isaac of Fano, Constantinople, 1 December 1574, ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fol. 7r. (letter in Italian).

²²⁹ Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi to Isaac of Fano, Constantinople, 12 April 1575, ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fol. 9r (letter in Italian).

questo tenendo deseio di servir a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ho fatta quello che he estato possibile con grandissima fatica et fra due o tre giorni se despediranno le lettere per Pollonia che adesso se estand'escrivendo, et con il primo altro despaxo mandarò a Vostra Signoria Massima la sustancia di quello che se escriverà ho speranza che il tutto averà buon fine ma pur per più seguranza mandava Vostra Signoria Massima li letteri necessarie come per avante lio detto el auisatto et con questo resto pregando nostro Signor Dio che la innalzi a quello supremo et altissimo colmo di felicità come Vostra Signoria Illustrissima se desea.²³⁰

After this failed attempt to refashion the European geopolitical scenario – Stephen Bathory was eventually elected as King of Poland – Ashkenazi did not end his life in honors. In April 1581, a few years after these negotiations, the new bailo Paolo Contarini wrote to the Doge that Ashkenazi's situation had become heavily depressing due to a tragedy that had occurred a few months earlier: with Rabbi Solomon, as Contarini writes, 'farò l'officio che mi è commesso da Vostra Serenità quanto prima uscirà di casa, stando egli hora ritirato per la morte di un suo figliuolo di peste'.²³¹ Ashkenazi greatly suffered because of his reckless investments that threatened to leave his children in a disastrous financial situation, so much that he even asked to bailo Giovan Francesco Morosini to plead the Senate to make them 'sensali' in Rialto – a sort of broker in trading affairs. It was Morosini himself who told the Senate of the physician's departure:

Morì finalmente quell'infelice di Rabbi Salamon havendo lasciato li suoi figlioli poveri con molti debiti; con tutto ciò hoggi mi viene affinnato che, essendo andata la sua moglie dalla sultana, che fu di Mehemet bassà, ha con il suo mezo ottenuto da questo Serenissimo che delli 4 mila aspri che egli haveva ogni anno per il servitio fatto nella conclusione della pace con Vostra Serenità, assignati sopra il comerchio, che ne sian lasciati a lei et alli suoi figlioli 20 mila in vita loro.²³²

Nevertheless, the physician's family was able to recreate a form of dignity: Ashkenazi's wife learned the medical art and was eventually able to cure Sultan Ahmed I in 1604, while one of his sons,

²³⁰ Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi to Alfonso II d'Este, Constantinople, 2 May 1575, ASM_o, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fol. 11r (letter in Italian).

²³¹ Paolo Contarini to Nicolò da Ponte, Constantinople, 2 April 1581, Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, filza 15, c. 28r, disp. n. 6 (letter in Italian), quoted in Lucchetta, 'Il medico', 15.

²³² Giovan Francesco Morosini to the Senate, Constantinople, 10 January 1584, ASV_e, Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, filza 18, c. 365r-v, disp. n. 34 (letter in Italian), quoted in Lucchetta, 'Il medico', 16.

Nathan, became a physician as well. When he travelled to Venice in 1605 for trading purposes, he introduced himself as the son of the Grand-Signor's physician.²³³



Figure 2. Paolo Veronese, *Allegoria della battaglia di Lepanto*, oil on canvas, 1571. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

²³³ Lucchetta, 'Il medico', 16.

2. Margliani's People

Spanish Intelligence and Networks in the Mediterranean. The Role of Giovanni Margliani and His Agents

Lied by omission, as they all do, agents the world over. You teach them to cheat, to cover their tracks, and they cheat you as well.

– John le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*

2.1. A Legacy of Spies, or the Establishment of the Spanish Secret Service

In managing the enormous Spanish Habsburg Empire, a conglomerate of heterogeneous territories which presented huge differences between each other, Philip II of Spain (r. 1556-1598) understood that controlling the flow of information – through which obtaining intelligence about international developments – was essential. This awareness had become extremely urgent after the disastrous defeat at Djerba (1560), where the Spanish fleet had been obliterated by the Ottoman fleet led by Kiliç Ali. Returning to Venice in the same year, the former bailo Marino Cavalli in his *relazione* denounced the imprudence of the King. According to him, had Philip possessed more thorough intelligence, he would have avoided to launch this perilous campaign, which had proved detrimental for both his reputation and of the whole Christianity:

E non posso credere che il serenissimo re di Spagna, se avesse avuta vera informazione delle cose turchesche, ovvero avesse creduto a chi glie ne poteva dar buona notizia, avesse cominciato l'anno passato, e finito il presente, un così inescusabile errore, come ha fatto, con grandissimo detrimento suo ed indegnità della Cristianità tutta.²³⁴

This was made even more difficult by the non-existence of official diplomatic relationships between Spain and the Ottoman Empire. Increasingly, the Catholic King was compelled to reorganise from scratch an effective intelligence system and give it a proper governance – in fact, there were

²³⁴ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. I, 273.

undoubtedly spies active throughout the Mediterranean and based in the capitals, although the very city of Constantinople lacked a stable network of secret agents working for the Habsburgs.²³⁵

The newly-formed Spanish intelligence system was structured following a hierarchical logic, which reflected itself in a pyramidal structure, which obviously saw at its apex the King, who had the final word about every crucial decision debated within his Council of State (*Consejo de Estado*). Just below the King was the Secretary of State – in this work the most prominent one is Antonio Pérez – who was entrusted with informing the local authorities of the previously approved resolutions which they had to strictly follow. Their relevance in this highly branched system was utmost, for they were the head of intelligence networks in the making and responsible for paying those who offered their services to them. Gennaro Varriale, who has extensively studied the Spanish Secret Service, underlines that Viceroy, diplomats and local governors ‘coordinavano l’attività delle spie attraverso le amministrazioni locali che organizzavano i pagamenti dei confidenti, oltre a finanziare le operazioni segrete in territorio nemico’.²³⁶ The organisation of this system in the Italian dominions of the Spanish Crown had obviously to be carefully planned, given that Italy – due to its geographical position – was extremely close to Ottoman domains in the Balkans. To fruitfully obtain intelligence about the Ottomans, the Spanish espionage system based in Italy was modelled upon a triangular structure centred around the embassies in Venice, Rome and the courts of Naples and Sicily.²³⁷ Moreover, as already discussed in the first chapter, another essential factor was the long-established presence in Ottoman cities of Italian merchants, who had started in the previous century to provide information to their fellow citizens in Florence, Genoa and Venice, mainly. This meant that they had an outstanding linguistic know-how and mastery of the territory, which were obviously essential requirements for their work, but also necessary skills for effectively acquiring fruitful intelligence.

But between these three pillars of Spanish espionage in Italy, the Kingdom of Naples surely played a central role, especially in relation to the region of Apulia. In the 1530s, the governor of Otranto and Bari had wisely understood the importance of this region and established one of the first

²³⁵ Gennaro Varriale, ‘El Espionaje Hispánico después de Lepanto: el Proyecto de Fray Diego de Mallorca’, *Studia Historica. Historia Moderna* 36 (2014): 147-74, here 150.

²³⁶ Varriale, ‘Lo spionaggio sulla frontiera mediterranea nel XVI secolo: la Sicilia contro il Sultano’, *Mediterranea. Ricerche Storiche* 38 (2016): 477-516, here 480.

²³⁷ To have a detailed account of the Spanish ambassadors-cum-spymasters based in Italy and concerned with intelligence within the Italian city-states, see Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

articulated intelligence networks in Ottoman territories. Alfonso Granai Castriota, the Marquis of Atripalda – as he was called, and whose surname declared his connection to the Albanian hero Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg – had started a thorough reconstruction of the secret services into a duplex formula which then became the basis for Spanish espionage.

The first part entailed sending a spy to be installed in enemy territory in order to establish contacts with men willing to conspire against the Sublime Porte; the second, instead, and the one most fruitful for archival reconstruction, is about transmitting intelligence through the *aviso*, a despatch written by agents living in territories outside His Majesty's jurisdiction.²³⁸ In most cases, it was very easy for wealthy men to be fully integrated into a society in which they had been sent – or moved voluntarily – either for trading or spying purposes (even though these two dimensions, as demonstrated by Venetian merchants, were often intertwined). Between these prominent families it is noteworthy the case of the Prototico family. A certain Baldassare Prototico had settled in Zante with his son Annibale and his nephew, Giovanni Mariotti, was stationed in Corfu; it was not a casual choice, for this island enjoyed a huge relevance in the whole Venetian postal system, as seen above. This family of intelligence-gatherers also proved enormously helpful in sending regular information to the Spanish authorities during the War of Cyprus, thanks also to their contacts in Constantinople who were able to reach the highest levels of Ottoman policy-making.²³⁹

But in facing the Ottoman Empire, there were other spymasters who gradually established an intelligence network which proved essential for the development of the mission that will be analysed in this chapter. The first character that needs to be taken into account is Giovanni Maria Renzo, a nobleman coming from San Remo, who in 1561 had arrived in Madrid with an extremely intriguing proposal for the Crown. Renzo was bringing with him letters written by renegades and slaves – likely to be prisoners of war – who offered their services to the Spanish King. This proposal was even more attractive since some of them worked in the Ottoman Arsenal, which meant that they were volunteering for sabotage operations aimed at jeopardising Ottoman naval capacity.²⁴⁰ It was almost

²³⁸ Gennaro Varriale, 'Líricas Secretas: los espías y el Gran Turco (siglo XVI)', *Hispania* 76, no. 252 (2016): 37-56, here 54.

²³⁹ Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'Between Connectivity and Isolation: Insularity and Information Flow in Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean', in Gerassimos D. Pagratis, ed., *War, State and Society in the Ionian Sea (Late 14th – Early 19th Century)* (Athens: Hérodotos Editions, 2018), 27-58, here 31-33.

²⁴⁰ Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-Betweens and the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry', Georgetown University PhD dissertation (2012), 267.

impossible that a King like Philip II, who championed the Christian cause against the Ottomans, would reject such a tempting proposal. Hence, Renzo was assigned to Constantinople with 4,000 ducats to organise an elementary network of spies to be refined over the years. This network presents many names in the sources – *la compagnia* (the company), *los renegados* (the renegades), *los ocultos* (the hidden ones) and *gli amici* (friends).²⁴¹ On 20 January 1562, Philip II described this project to the Viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Alcalá (r. 1559-1571); from his words it is possible to have a glimpse of how excited Philip was:

Por relación y aviso de otros que Constantinopla han venido, y señaladamente el Capitán Rodrigo Çapata en la relación que nos embiastes deze que un genovés llamado Adán Franquis es persona muy intelligente y sufficiente. Por lo qual se offresciendose al dicho Juan Maria Renzo de volver a Constantinopla y atender a conservarlas tales personas en nuestra devoción.²⁴²

On 24 January 1562, Philip sent dispatches to his ambassador in Genoa, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, to Cosimo de' Medici and for the admiral García de Toledo. They were not chosen randomly, but because they resided on the crucial stages through which Renzo must have passed before reaching Constantinople; thus, the King kindly asked them to assist Renzo 'para que tanto mejor, y con mas seguridad, secreto y dissimulacion pueda passar a aquellas partes'.²⁴³

Once arrived in Constantinople, one of the first agents recruited by Renzo was a Neapolitan man named Giovanni Agostino Gilli, who had become acquainted with Renzo in Chios while he was headed to Constantinople. On this island the Spanish spymaster was Niccolò Giustiniani, who had ordered Gilli to accompany Renzo to the capital and assist him in shaping the raw version of the intelligence network. Giustiniani had first made contacts with Juan de la Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli and the Viceroy of Sicily after the disastrous battle of Djerba; this acquaintance had transformed 'la isla en un centro privilegiado para las redes de espionaje hispánico'.²⁴⁴ It was the same Gilli who in November 1562 sent to Philip some instructions which he deemed useful for improving the

²⁴¹ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 268.

²⁴² Philip II to the Duke of Alcalá, Madrid, 20 January 1562, Archivo General de Simancas [hereafter: AGS], Estado, legajo 1052, fol. 89r (letter in Spanish), quoted in Varriale, 'El Espionaje', 152.

²⁴³ Philip II to Cosimo I de Medici, García de Toledo and Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, Madrid, 24 January 1562, AGS, Estado, leg. 1052, fol. 91r (letter in Spanish), quoted in Varriale, 'Lo spionaggio', 480.

²⁴⁴ Álvaro Casillas Pérez, 'Informar desde la frontera. La conjura de los renegados entre la república de Génova, la Monarquía hispánica y el Imperio otomano (1562-1571)', *Revista electrónica de Historia Moderna* 11, no. 43 (2021): 44-60, here 49.

efficiency of the newly-established Spanish Secret Service. According to him, the crucial step forward consisted in the employment of secret codes and aliases which only the other men involved in the espionage environment would know about.²⁴⁵ Gilli was allowed to write to the King personally given that he had immediately demonstrated himself as one of Renzo's most reliable henchmen: specifically, he was the agent entrusted with arranging the necessary tools for transmitting correspondence. He was immediately appointed as the Secretary of the network which he himself labelled 'la Conjura de los Renegados', whose aim were not only aimed at gathering intelligence, but also at devising proper sabotage operations:

Juan Maria Renzo qual (como a principal autor y tratador de los servicios de Vuestra Majestad que aquí se han tratado y han da exequir), informará del todo particularmente (como conberrá) tanto de la Conjura de estos Renegados en servicio de la Majestad Vuestra, quanto del cremar este tarazenal, si se determinare que es más servicio a cremarlo.²⁴⁶

In the same inner circle other names are Adam de Franchis, a Genoese merchant previously based in Chios who was in charge of translating Ottoman Turkish for Christian agents.²⁴⁷ Along with him, there were two Genoese renegades, one Murad Ağa – originally born Gregorio Bregante de Sturla and former eunuch of Sultan Suleyman I – and a certain agent named Simon Massa, to whom Gürkan attributes the status of the 'mastermind behind the sabotage plans of the Ottoman Arsenal'.²⁴⁸ A thorough analysis of all these figures will not be sufficiently delivered in this work and would probably distract the reader from the true objective of this dissertation. Thus, the only figure upon whom it is fruitful to insist is Aurelio di Santa Croce, a Venetian merchant – as the name suggests, probably due to his birth in the *sestiere* of Santa Croce – who had been living with his family in Constantinople since 1552. Talking of aliases, he rapidly collected Gilli's suggestion and employed the pseudonym of Battista Ferrero; nevertheless, in a letter written in November 1562 addressed to Philip II this shady character briefly summarised his biography and explained the reasons for his relocation in Constantinople:

²⁴⁵ Varriale, 'Lo spionaggio', 480.

²⁴⁶ Giovanni Agostino Gilli to Philip II, Constantinople, 11 November 1562, AGS, Estado, leg. 486, s.d. (letter in Spanish), quoted in Varriale, 'El Espionaje', 153.

²⁴⁷ Pérez, 'Informar desde la frontera', 50.

²⁴⁸ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 268.

Io sono nominato Aurelio Santa Croce naqui in Ittalia nel dominio dell'Illustrissimo Senato veneto ma avendo za quindici anni di continuo negociato, marchazia in questa città, Jo mi sono acazato za anni 10, et tengo bona amiccicia et mezzi a questa Eccelsa Porta di poter servir l'altezza vostra in qualsiasi negocio.²⁴⁹

Another spy chosen by Renzo was a certain Lorenzo Miniati, who was appointed as the resident agent in Dubrovnik, an essential focal point in intelligence-gathering operations. In his study on islands as crucial havens for spies and secret agents, Gürkan has described Dubrovnik as a 'perceived island' given that it retained peculiar political, economic, and cultural features that separated it from the surrounding world. Its ambiguous position is clearly noticeable by the fact that, despite being an Ottoman vassal, the city was keen to keep good relations with Catholic coreligionists in the Mediterranean: 'It was this insular character', as Gürkan concludes, 'that made it a perfect nodal point for information networks and an ideal venue for spies, information brokers, merchants, sailors and all types of go-betweens'.²⁵⁰ Thanks also to its strategic geographical position, Dubrovnik was the obliged entry step for diplomats and envoys sent by Western polities to the Ottoman Empire and headed for Constantinople. To get safely into the 'Well-Protected Domains', these envoys first needed a safe-conduct (*'amân*) issued in the form of an imperial diploma (*berât*), which bestowed them the status of *musta'min*, fundamental for having legal protection. However, obtaining these safe-conducts was not an easy matter, for they were only issued to subjects of rulers who had signed with the Sultan an *'ahd-name*, an official agreement between the Sultan and the rulers which has frequently taken the name of Capitulations.²⁵¹ Hence, after their arrival in Dubrovnik with a safe-conduct, those diplomats had to wait for an Ottoman *çavuş* sent there with the precise purpose of accompanying them to Constantinople.²⁵² However, Dubrovnik had to frequently endure a massive

²⁴⁹ Aurelio di Santa Croce to Philip II, Constantinople, 11 November 1562, AGS, Estado, leg. 486, s.d. (letter in Italian), quoted in Varriale, 'Lo spionaggio', 481.

²⁵⁰ Gürkan, 'Between Connectivity and Isolation', 37. To have a detailed historical narrative of Dubrovnik's history, which cannot be summarised here, see Robin Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History* (London: Saqi Books, 2003); Lovro Kunčević, 'Janus-Faced Sovereignty: The International Status of the Ragusan Republic in the Early Modern Period' in Gabor Kárman and Lovro Kunčević, eds., *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 91-121.

²⁵¹ Gürkan, 'The Efficacy Ottoman Counter-Intelligence in the 16th Century', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 65, no. 1 (2012): 1-38, here 5. See also Hans Theunissen, 'Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The *'Ahd-names*. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents', University of Utrecht PhD Dissertation (1991).

²⁵² Gürkan, 'Between Connectivity and Isolation', 37.

pressure imposed upon it by the Ottomans, who often asked the inhabitants and the governing bodies to stop helping enemy agents by providing them with information or giving them shelter. In this context, Miniati had to behave as the middleman between Constantinople and the viceroyalties in Naples and Sicily by dispatching letters with a specially assigned frigate to Barletta, from whence they were transmitted to Naples and Messina. However, when Miniati died in 1567 and was replaced by his nephew Dino Miniati and Donato Antonio Lubelo, these two were ordered by Ragusan authorities to leave the city in three days. Fearing a devastating jeopardy of the Spanish chain of intelligence communication, the Duke of Alcalá swiftly intervened by threatening to expel all Ragusan merchants based in the Kingdom of Naples, unless his agents were allowed to return to Dubrovnik. The conclusion of this quarrel was found in a compromise when the Ragusans suggested the sending of a new agent, whose identity should have been concealed from the Ragusan authorities, who tried to avoid all responsibilities before the Ottomans.²⁵³

Returning to Renzo, he made his way back to Spain in June 1563, where he talked about further payments to the spies to be done through the intercession of the Florentine ambassador. Gürkan underlines that the reputation gained by Renzo's intelligence apparatus must have been sensational, for the King blatantly ignored the negative references provided by Figueroa, the ambassador based in Genoa, who considered Renzo 'a swindler, a *barbullista*, an untrustworthy man who left the city [Genoa] because of its debts'.²⁵⁴ The flow of *avisos* coming from Constantinople was unstoppable: Gilli and other junior spies were frequently asking for Renzo's comeback in the capital, for they needed those funds for a covert operation aimed at sabotaging the Ottoman Arsenal. Gilli even suggested the appointment of a *veedor*, a resident supervisor in charge of ensuring a regular flow of money to guarantee the spies' loyalty to the Habsburgs. He also suggested that had Renzo been appointed as the *veedor*, he would undoubtedly support the King's decision, but he also wanted to remind him of the necessity in such delicate matters of men of 'mas confiança, mas prudencia y mas saber'.²⁵⁵ His Majesty must have listened to Gilli's advice, for Renzo stayed in Naples for almost two years waiting for new instructions. The situation unlocked itself in 1565, when Gilli suddenly

²⁵³ Gürkan, 'Efficacy Ottoman Counter-Intelligence', 24.

²⁵⁴ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 271.

²⁵⁵ Giovanni Agostino Gilli to Philip II, Constantinople, 16 March 1563, AGS, Estado, leg. 1392, fol. 74r (letter in Spanish), quoted in Gürkan, 'Espionage', 272.

died, bringing with him the plans of several sabotage operations. Renzo readily exploited the opportunity and returned to Constantinople with the necessary money to accomplish these missions; he was regarded as the apt man for the job, since even the authorities defined him as ‘il primo inventor, fundator et essecutore della congiura et congiurati’.²⁵⁶

On his way back, Renzo had been warned that the Ottomans had intercepted him thanks to their highly-functioning counterespionage system. Nevertheless, Renzo ignored the warning and travelled to Constantinople after having changed his name and dressed as the French ambassador, which allowed him to create a solid alibi in case of arrest and interrogation.²⁵⁷ Once arrived in Constantinople, he immediately distributed 500 *cédulas* among his agents according to their merit, especially Aurelio di Santa Croce, who had replaced Gilli as the key man in Constantinople.²⁵⁸ However, Renzo’s frequent travels back and forth in the following years did not sort the expected outcome, for he eventually found every year more difficult to travel to Constantinople to ascertain the situation. The Habsburg authorities started not to trust him anymore and had been forced to deal with a strategic headache about their domestic political situation.

In 1568, the Moriscos of the Alpujarras region – in southern Spain – had rebelled to the Spanish kingdom after a harsh pack of measures issued by Philip, which entailed the use of Castilian rather than Arabic and the obliged wearing of Castilian clothes instead of Moorish traditional clothing.²⁵⁹ Actually, the situation experienced by the Moriscos in Spain after the *Reconquista* deserves a bit of context, since it would be necessary for a better understanding of their uprising. When the Emirate of Granada had been finally conquered by Castile and Aragon (1492), the Moorish population accepted the absorption of the Christian faith through a slow and gradual evangelisation process devised by friar Hernando de Talavera. Unfortunately, this process of conversion was deemed as too slow by the Spanish Monarchs – Isabelle of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon – who in turn assigned the role to Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, whose intolerant and intransigent approach towards evangelisation resulted in the first Morisco rebellion in 1502.²⁶⁰ So,

²⁵⁶ AGS, Estado, leg. 1054, nos. 189-190, 7 September 1565, quoted in Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 273.

²⁵⁷ Gürkan, ‘Efficacy Ottoman Counter-Intelligence’, 6.

²⁵⁸ Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 275.

²⁵⁹ Andrew Hess, ‘The Moriscos: An Ottoman Fifth Column in Sixteenth-Century Spain’, *The American Historical Review* 74, no. 1 (1968): 1-25, here 5.

²⁶⁰ It is impossible to resume all the peculiarities and differences of these two evangelisation processes; thus, for a deeper analysis see Mercedes García-Arenal, ‘Granada as a New Jerusalem: The Conversion of a City’, in Giuseppe Marcocci,

when the Morisco rebellion erupted in 1568, the Spanish authorities quickly realised that there was a striking connection between the dominions of the al-Andalus and Northern Africa, especially after the Ottomans had won in the battles of Mostaganem (1558) and Djerba (1560). The Ottomans were seen by the Moriscos as the quintessential anti-Christian force in a frontier which had undoubtedly helped Spain for defensive reason; the Ibero-African frontier was not an impenetrable boundary, but as Andrew Hess stressed, it was a rather ‘fluid area including Islamic communities in southeastern Spain and Spanish forts on the coasts of Maghrib’.²⁶¹ It is due to this security concern that gathering sensitive information about the Ottoman foreign policy agenda in North-Africa became essential.

Meanwhile in Constantinople, the spymaster in charge, Aurelio di Santa Croce, hustled to recruit new agents: among them there were the Imperial dragoman (*divan-ı hümayun tercümanı*) Hürrem Bey, originally from Lucca, and Matteo Del Faro, the dragoman working for the Austrian embassy who would soon enter Aurelio’s inner circle.²⁶² In the years during the War of Cyprus, however, Renzo’s credibility decreased and his figure started to be considered untrustworthy. After the battle of Lepanto, Renzo gave his record of the battle in which he attributed the responsibility of the Christian victory to his men, who had allegedly infiltrated on enemy ships and had rendered the Ottomans less reactive during the battle. This clearly embittered the Admiral Luis de Requensens, who immediately wrote to Philip II to debunk Renzo’s version:

[Renzo] dize que se halló en la batalla aunque no le vi en ella ni sus renegados hizieron en esta ocasión lo que él en su nombre prometía.²⁶³

Paradoxically, the victory of the Holy League in Lepanto complicated things for the Spanish agents, since the Ottomans made their counterespionage system more far-reaching and effective in intercepting valuable intelligence. It was not a huge novelty: in 1567 Renzo had chosen to carry some letters himself, since he was utterly convinced that the Venetians couriers who brought letters from Constantinople to Dubrovnik were unreliable; naturally this posed great risks upon Renzo, for the

Wietse de Boer, Aliocha Maldavsky, and Ilaria Pavan, eds., *Space and Conversion in Global Perspective* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2015), 15-43.

²⁶¹ Hess, ‘The Moriscos’, 7.

²⁶² Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 282. On Matteo Del Faro, see Aneliya Stoyanova, ‘The Dragomans of the Habsburg Embassy in Constantinople in the Second Half of the 16th Century: The Story of Matthias Del Faro’, *History Studies* 18 (2017): 95-108.

²⁶³ Luis de Requensens to Philip II, Messina, 9 November 1571, AGS, Estado, leg. 1140, fol. 98r (letter in Spanish), quoted in Varriale, ‘El Espionaje’, 155; see also Pérez, ‘Informar desde la frontera’, 57.

Ottomans had been searching for him everywhere. To avoid being intercepted, these spies had also devised ingenious methods to prevent cryptanalysis by devising a *nomenclator*, which made a code impossible to be broken by mixing codes and ciphers. Giovanni Agostino Gilli had also recommended the use of an invisible ink consisting of lemon juice, which could be seen only by tormenting the letter with fire.²⁶⁴ Once started as an enemy cell appointed to elaborate a sabotage mission, this group of mysterious and resourceful characters gradually transformed into an all-purpose intelligence network, in which skilled personalities could exploit their assets for personal reasons. In the following years, the international and Mediterranean situation changed deeply, thus affecting the Spanish by compelling them to thoroughly reconsider their strategic priorities and devise a consequential agenda. To better explained the setbacks that made the Spanish change their mind, it is proper to introduce the figure of Bartolomeo Bruti, whose life trajectory elucidates not only the geopolitical upheavals that refashioned the Constantinople Network, but also his involvement in the Margliani mission, the focus of this chapter.

2.2. The Honourable Albanian: Bartolomeo Bruti's Remarkable Life

The first written information that has survived the centuries about Bartolomeo Bruti is a petition sent to the Venetian government in June 1573, in which Bruti asked to be admitted to the dragoman school in order to be trained as a 'giovane di lingua'. He added that he was fluent in Italian, Albanian and Slavic languages – he also claimed to have studied Latin and Greek in a school in Venice.²⁶⁵ The Senate was ready to accept his request, since it had arrived three months after the Venetian-Ottoman peace treaty, which had brought a resumption of peaceful trading relations. In their response, the Senate defined Bartolomeo as an apt man 'per la prontezza, et facilità d'ingegno, che dimostra[,] potrà in breve tempo farsi molto atto à servire la Signoria Nostra, quando possederà la Lingua, et idioma Turchesco'.²⁶⁶ Following this acceptance, Bartolomeo was then sent to Constantinople to be educated as a dragoman along with other Venetian young men – Bartolomeo was allegedly sixteen years of age at the time. Sources about Bartolomeo's first years in Constantinople are scant and do

²⁶⁴ Gürkan, 'Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence', 21.

²⁶⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 206.

²⁶⁶ Domenico Venturini, 'La famiglia albanese dei conti Bruti', *Atti e Memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria* 20 (1905): 346-419, here 376.

not allow a thorough reconstruction. The first certain occurrence in which Bartolomeo was involved was a prisoner exchange that took place in mid-1575, and whose background and unfolding are fundamental to shed light on the Mediterranean geopolitical situation.

2.2.1. The Struggle for Tunis and La Goletta between Spain and the Ottomans

After the Venetian-Ottoman agreement signed in March 1573, which had closed the Levantine front, Philip II's fleet was the only large Christian one left in the Mediterranean – this meant that it was free to actively pursue its Northern-African campaigns and conquer those strongholds that were utmost in Spanish strategic thinking. The highly skilled commander of the fleet – Don John of Austria, who had already shown his tactical acumen in Lepanto – did not waste any time and swiftly reorganised the fleet in Sicily in the months following the peace agreement. The objective of his campaign was the geographically strategic city of Tunis, which had been conquered by one of Uluç Ali's officers in 1569. When Don John arrived with his fleet on 8 October 1573, the city did not show any sign of resistance to the invader, given that the Ottoman *beylerbeyi* and many of the inhabitants had fled. A curious element to register is that the Spanish were still in control of La Goletta fortress – obtained by Philip's father, Charles V, in 1535 – which was just outside Tunis' walls. Although the orders given by the King entailed the destruction of the city, Don John had a different strategic advice – he chose instead to call a war council, which ultimately deliberated to fortify the city with a garrison of 8,000 men under the command of Gabrio Serbelloni, a Milanese nobleman with an established experience in artillery.²⁶⁷ However, John's masterful achievement would prove short-lived. Despite Serbelloni's undisputable expertise in devising all the necessary measures to make Tunis an impregnable stronghold, he was not provided the needed resources to achieve his goal – in addition, Philip's attention was totally dedicated to the situation in the Netherlands. Fernand Braudel has argued that Philip had essentially abandoned an ambitious Mediterranean policy, given that he was deprived of the financial resources in Antwerp and was forced to rely ever more on Genoese bankers. Considering this situation, keeping the Tunis front open translated into a severe waste of resources, which were already meagre after the bloody uprising in the Netherlands.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Fernand Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell'età di Filippo II*, trans. Carlo Pischetta (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 1215.

²⁶⁸ Braudel, *Mediterraneo*, 1216.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Mediterranean, Selim II had decided to embark once again in a bold campaign by pinpointing the recapture of Tunis as the top priority of his foreign policy agenda. As already highlighted by the quick recovery after Lepanto, the logistical apparatus of the Ottoman Empire was so well-functioning that when in July 1574 the fleet appeared off the coast of Tunis, ‘it consisted of between 250 and 300 ships, and carried more than 40,000 soldiers’.²⁶⁹ It was at this moment that Serbelloni knew how grim the situation was. The only option left was sending his nephew and lieutenant, Giovanni Margliani, to alarm Don John in Milan. After a high-speed journey, Margliani was able to have a small fleet sent to Tunis, but this proved inefficient against the Ottomans, who had already set siege to the city and were in clear numerical advantage. Ultimately, and unsurprisingly, the Ottomans succeeded in their siege and conquered the city on 13 September 1574: Gabrio Serbelloni was captured, his son Giovanpaolo was killed while Margliani survived, even though he had been shot in the face.²⁷⁰ This campaign was aimed at consolidating Ottoman power in Northern Africa, and a quite revealing document analysed by Andrew Hess sheds further light on Ottoman interests in the region – it is a communication sent by the *Divan* to the Andalusian communities during the first stages of the campaign. In this letter, the *Divan* legitimately emphasised the direct connection between the fate of Andalusia and Northern Africa; their declared aim was to establish an espionage network by which Moriscos and Ottomans could coordinate themselves to be more effective against the infidel Christians:

Therefore our man, whose name is not revealed, from the special servants of the Empire and who is knowledgeable of those regions, has been sent to you with a book that shows [our] friendship. When the above-mentioned man arrives [...], all of you shall consult together in good agreement and complete unity. [...] You shall communicate in detail with one another in order that the preparations of the enemies of evil repute shall be known, that [aid] will arrive for you by sea and land on the time that was appointed and assigned, and that they [the Algerians] will render every assistance.²⁷¹

Strategically speaking, the Eastern Mediterranean was now undisputed for the Ottomans since they had captured Cyprus. Yet, the Ottomans did not exploit this superiority to consolidate their

²⁶⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 190.

²⁷⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 191.

²⁷¹ Hess, ‘The Moriscos’, 18.

maritime supremacy; rather, they allowed their navy to be progressively dismantled, while the Spanish turned their attention northwards, especially towards the Netherlands. As a result, the Mediterranean underwent a condition of stasis, only occasionally interrupted by irregular raids by Christian and Muslim corsairs. Noel Malcolm explains this condition of stasis by highlighting logistical reasons, for the Ottomans must have organised a monumental fleet for a massive campaign on the other side of the Mediterranean, where the Spanish fleet would enjoy the constant supply of resources by its port-cities. Closer to the Ottomans was the alluring prize of Southern Italy, but an attack to that part of Italy would eventually trigger dangerous alliances and ‘bring Venice back into an anti-Ottoman military league, and such a league was the one thing that might defeat Ottoman forces’.²⁷² Notwithstanding, the Ottomans were eager to be informed about the latest developments, especially after the conquest of the two strategic fortresses. Andrew Hess argued that this intelligence network was meant to take advantage of the difficult situation for the Spanish Crown ongoing in the Netherlands. The same letter reads:

The Lutheran sect does not cease its war and combat with those who are subject to the Pope and his school. You shall secretly communicate with them, and when they set out upon war and combat with the Pope you also shall take care, jointly, to cause losses to the provinces and soldiers [of the Pope] from your side.²⁷³

This potential unholy Muslim-Lutheran alliance was even more reinforced by sending an agent to the Netherlands to effectively coordinate this intra-confessional alliance which would have broken the Christian front by fostering divisions between Catholics and Protestants:

Now since our unnamed servant from the slaves of the Lofty Threshold, who knows the military affairs and condition of that area and who is to be trusted, has appeared, he has been sent out to you in order to make known the affection and friendship and our compassion and solicitude that exist for you.²⁷⁴

However, this joint-plan of coordinated forces thanks to which squeeze Spain into a pincer never realised, especially after the Moriscos’ dispersal after 1570, which caused their disappearance from

²⁷² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 192.

²⁷³ Hess, ‘The Moriscos’, 19.

²⁷⁴ Hess, ‘The Moriscos’, 20.

the Mediterranean international scenario. This was the background on which the prisoner exchange mission that first involved Bartolomeo Bruti occurred, whose most valuable man to rescue was Gabrio Serbelloni.

Many Christian captives were frequently employed as slaves: actually, slavery was a ubiquitous phenomenon in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean. These slaves could usually be liberated in two ways. The first entailed manumission, which meant that the former master rewarded his slaves after years of dutiful and faithful service by liberating them, a quite common practice in the Ottoman world. The other one, and more dangerous method, was to escape trying to return to their homeland – this is where spies and agents entered the scene. A crucial testimony has been given by Stefan Gerlach, the assistant and clergyman of the Holy Roman Empire’s ambassador in Constantinople, David von Ungnad. According to Gerlach, Constantinople frequently hosted agents coming from Europe trying to establish contact with slaves in Galata to plan their escape.²⁷⁵ But there was a way in which slave-ransoming projects and espionage operations took a more intertwined form: given the universally recognised importance of such activities, many authorities released safe-conducts to agents employed in these tasks without too much questioning. The safe-conduct provided the perfect cover for an intelligence-gathering mission, for an agent equipped with that could penetrate into the heart of the enemy and build a network of people potentially useful for devising a bold plan of liberation; this practise was ‘less restrictive than diplomacy, and less time-consuming (or less hard to fake) than commerce’.²⁷⁶

2.2.2. Safe-Conducts, or How to Get Away with Slaves and Intelligence

A secret agent famous for his clever use of safe-conducts was Giovanni Barelli, a Corfiot Knight of Malta on the Spanish payroll and who had frequently travelled to Constantinople with safe-conducts to obtain intelligence regarding Ottoman military and geopolitical considerations.²⁷⁷ The first ruler to whom he had offered his services in 1569 was the Marquis of Pescara, Viceroy of Sicily: these operations ranged from torching the Ottoman Arsenal to poisoning the Sultan’s sons and to even killing or imprisoning Joseph Nasi, whose demise would have cut the head of his intelligence

²⁷⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 213.

²⁷⁶ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 214.

²⁷⁷ To know more about Giovanni Barelli’s fascinating life, see Gaspare De Caro, ‘Barelli, Giovanni’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 6 (1964).

network. However, Nasi's presence once again entered the scene to further complicate the situation: with the intercession of his middleman Agustín Manuel, the Viceroy of Sicily had received in December 1570 a letter in which Nasi openly admitted his willingness to return to Christianity. The Viceroy wrote to Philip that Nasi had sent a 'judío llamado Agustín Manuel con diez escudos de entretenimento al mes, el qual se hauía huydo de Turquía a Espana por tornarse christiano y traydo consigo dos christianos a libertad'.²⁷⁸ To strengthen his position, Nasi wrote himself to the King a memorandum in which he asked for a safe-conduct and not to be persecuted by the Inquisition had he returned to Spain:

Che s'alcun er[r]ore haves[e] vsato et ese[r]citato per alcun tempo la lege giudaica che sia perdonato, perche quel che la fatto e stato per forza; che hab[b]ia vn saluo conduto per lu[i] et per sutanta persone, tanto hebreo quanto turche, per le persone et per le faculta che con lui portera; che se seranno queste persone in ter[r]a del Papa o d'alcun principe che siano sogure tanto esse quanto le lor faculta et che nessuno li possa impedir per deliti fatti per il passato; che s'habbia vn saluo conduto de la santa inqui[sizi]one romana che non habbia che intendere con le dette persone et faculta; che come seranno in Esp[agn]a le dette persone nessuna giusticia ne la santa inquisiçione non li possa impedire per deliti passati se non che ne sia il xiudice supremo [S.M.]; che s'habbia vn saluo conduto di sua Maestà i per tutti li soi regni; che smontando in qual si voglia d'essi, tanto le persone quanto le lor faculta siano franche d'ogni angaria, gabelli et datij.²⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the idea of ransoming Christian men captured in the first phases of the war in Nicosia, Famagusta and Albanian towns had already taken shape in 1572. This was possible because Don Juan had gathered 42 valuable prisoners to exchange, among whom there were the teenage sons of Müezzinzade Ali Pasha, the *kapudan pasha* who had died in Lepanto, and Mehmed Bey, the *beylerbeyi* of Negroponte; they were eventually allowed to travel to Rome in spring 1572. Once arrived in Rome, the Ottoman captives quickly became a bone of contention between the Papacy and its allies: in March 1573, Giovanni Barelli was curiously allowed to take with him a few captives for ransoming projects but, in reality, he was tasked with negotiating with the Orthodox Patriarch in

²⁷⁸ The Marquis of Pescara to Philip II, Palermo, 24 December 1570, AGS, Estado, leg. 133, fol. 122r (letter in Spanish), transcribed in Arce, 'Espionaje', 278.

²⁷⁹ The Duke of Naxos to Philip II, Constantinople, 1571, AGS, Estado, leg. 1135, fol. 170r (letter in Italian), transcribed in Arce, 'Espionaje', 280-281.

Constantinople, Metrophanes III, with the aim of supplying intelligence about whether the Greek speaking population in the Peloponnese was considering a revolt.²⁸⁰ Barelli eventually arrived in Salonica, where he managed to ransom his charge for 1,000 ducats – unfortunately, he had arrived late, for the Venetian-Ottoman agreement had disrupted his plans.²⁸¹ In the end, Pope Gregory XIII had accepted by summer 1574 the idea of a general exchange of prisoners, for he considered them as powerful assets in bargaining situations. Moreover, the exchange acquired even more importance in the same year thanks to Spanish pressure, especially in relation to Gabrio Serbelloni and Giovanni Margliani, who were considered as high value captives. However, Philip was not totally satisfied, for he had to agree on an exchange of Ottoman captives captured by the Holy League – which meant that Spain was forced to comply – for Venetians who had been captured before its formation.²⁸²

2.2.3. Bruti Activated: The Prisoner Exchange in 1575

The deal was closed in early 1575 thanks to the negotiating efforts by bailo Antonio Tiepolo. But what was the role played by Bartolomeo Bruti in this matter? On 31 January Tiepolo reported that Bartolomeo had been chosen by Sultan Murad III to take his letters to Venice; moreover, Gabrio Serbelloni wanted to forward Tiepolo's letters to Rome, a factor so important that Serbelloni wrote to the Doge himself to ask for Bruti's permission.²⁸³ On 4 February 1575 Bartolomeo left Constantinople and by 19 February he was in Dubrovnik, where he became acquainted with Cesare della Marea, a Neapolitan criminal who had been exiled by his homeland after the homicide of his mother. Della Marea had been appointed by the new Viceroy of Naples, Cardinal Granvelle (r. 1571-1575), who had ordered him to go to Dubrovnik and become the new Spanish resident.²⁸⁴ In fact, other than reporting that Bartolomeo had come to arrange the exchange of Serbelloni for Mehmed Bey, Bruti also gave him sensitive intelligence he had collected in Constantinople.²⁸⁵ In late February 1575, Bartolomeo Bruti was in Venice and was swiftly sent by the Venetian authorities to Rome, where he arrived in early March to collect the Ottoman prisoners. He left the city on 12 March 1575

²⁸⁰ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 283-287.

²⁸¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 217.

²⁸² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 218.

²⁸³ Antonio Tiepolo to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1575, ASVe, Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, filza 7, fol. 524v (letter in Italian), quoted in Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 218.

²⁸⁴ Gürkan, 'Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence', 25.

²⁸⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 219.

with 34 prisoners, not the 40 originally intended. He advised the Doge that he would bring them to the Papal city of Fermo, from whence they would be ferried to Dubrovnik by the Venetians. During their stay in Fermo, Bartolomeo also became acquainted with Mehmed Bey, probably the most renowned prisoner of all, since he was the son of the former ruler of Algiers. The exchange was accomplished on 22 July 1575 in a ceremony presided over by the allegedly neutral Ragusan authorities, thus ending ‘one of the largest and most important formal exchanges of captives in recent Mediterranean history’.²⁸⁶

Margliani accompanied his uncle Gabrio Serbelloni to Naples and Bartolomeo eventually returned to the bailo’s house – the recently appointed Giovanni Correr – in January 1576, where Bartolomeo told the bailo that he had obtained permission to resume his studies as a ‘giovane di lingua’. At the end of the same month, some sources speak about a wedding – that of Matteo Del Faro, an Italian-speaking Greek-orthodox dragoman who had started working for the Imperial embassy in Constantinople in 1559 under the guidance of the resident Austrian-Habsburg ambassador Albert de Wijs. Del Faro married a woman who tied him to the world of secret diplomacy in Constantinople: she was one of the daughters of none-other than Aurelio di Santa Croce.²⁸⁷ Naturally, in this world where allegiance was ever-shifting to the highest bidder, Aurelio had already turned Matteo to work for the Spanish; in his conception, this marriage would have almost certainly reinforced Del Faro’s loyalty to the Spanish King. Noel Malcolm notes that from one source talking about this marriage – Stephan Gerlach’s account – there is a mention of a certain ‘Mr Bruli’: even though there was no one known as such during that period, many reasons lead us to think this was Bartolomeo. As it will be shown later, Bartolomeo was well acquainted with Aurelio in 1576 and by three years he would marry another one of his daughters.²⁸⁸

Meanwhile, in less than seven months Bartolomeo Bruti was allowed once again to leave the capital – his days as a trainee dragoman were over. Despite having been praised by the bailo for his alleged desire to serve the Serenissima, Bartolomeo had been secretly turned and employed by Venice’s staunchest rival – the Spanish, who had now another agent in their burgeoning secret

²⁸⁶ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 222.

²⁸⁷ Stoyanova, ‘The Story of Matthias Del Faro’, 101-106.

²⁸⁸ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 233.

service.²⁸⁹ But who had recruited Bruti? Who had been so successful in using attractive motivations to turn him on the Spanish side and eventually make him a Spanish agent?

The source talking about this defection – if it is to be said – in late 1574 is a memorandum that Bruti sent to Philip II. In his recollection, Bruti had been approached in the bailo's house – which once again proves to be a very relevant place for espionage operations – by a freshly ransomed captive who had almost lost his life in Tunis – none other than Giovanni Margliani, one of the first men who had been liberated by the bailo during the complicated prisoner exchange and negotiations for the final deal. Then, the Milanese started to pry about Bruti's desire of vengeance for the assassination of his father, Antonio, who had been killed during the defence of Ulcinj in 1571.²⁹⁰ Margliani had been very able to exploit Bruti's desire of 'vendicar in parte le offese che tutta la casa mia hanno ricevuto, da detta maledetta setta'. The best way to accomplish that was to pass under the service of the Catholic Champion, the fiercest rival of the 'Mohammedan sect' responsible for the death of his father:

Mi lassai facilmente vincere dalle raggionj dette da esso Gio: Marigliani, et così sotto bon colore, et per seruicio di VM procuramo, che fossi inuiato a Roma per sollicitar, con sua S.ta il cambio delli priggioni.²⁹¹

But to attribute Bartolomeo's involvement in the Spanish secret service only to Margliani's persuasive abilities would be too simplistic. According to Noel Malcolm, Bruti's decision to abandon the dragoman post – and thus to defect Venice – in September 1574, when both Serbelloni and Margliani were still protecting Tunis, was probably because he was keen to exploit the long-standing connections inherited by his father, including Sinan Pasha, a powerful vizier of Albanian origin to whom Bartolomeo was actually related. This does not imply that Bartolomeo started to work for the Ottomans, even though this acquaintance certainly allowed him to have access to Sokollu's residence – this web of quality contacts surely made him a potential candidate, thus obscuring his lack of experience and young age. So, the Spanish proved clever in recruiting a character with such wide-ranging amount of contacts, which made him the perfect courier and agent for the prisoner exchange mission thanks to his web of relations: 'trusted by the Venetians, liked and accepted by the Ottomans,

²⁸⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 207.

²⁹⁰ Antonio Bruti's desperate attempt to save his hometown is reconstructed in Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 142-145.

²⁹¹ AGS, Estado, leg. 488, no. 20, quoted in Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 219.

and – secretly – engaged by the Spaniards'.²⁹² But in Constantinople there were several and profound developments occurring which made the Spanish secret diplomatic apparatus concerned after many spies had gone to the capital and returned with some startling news.

2.3. The Spies Who Came in from Constantinople

2.3.1. Jaime de Losada, Antonio Avellán and a Treacherous Major-Domo

In May 1575, a Spanish agent named Jaime de Losada arrived in Constantinople. He surely belonged to the vast plethora of Spanish agents who were sent undercover to the Ottoman Empire – in this case by the Duke of Terranova, the Viceroy of Sicily – to obtain useful intelligence, as already shown by the case of Giovanni Barelli. Surely, Losada knew Constantinople very well: he had previously been a slave of the infamous Kiliç Ali, the *kapudan pasha* originally from Calabria. His mission was to approach his former master, with whom he had a bond of trust, to deal with the ransoming of some prisoners captured at La Goletta and Tunis who were still awaiting for their liberation.²⁹³ It is important to signal that in December 1574 Selim II had died and his son Murad III (r. 1574-1595) had been appointed as his successor: Fernand Braudel wrote that the new Sultan might be more willing to strike a peace, even though Ottoman politics would be still dominated by Sokollu until his death in 1579.²⁹⁴

However, there was a huge plot twist that nobody in the Spanish establishment had seen coming: Kiliç Ali introduced Losada to none-other than the Grand Vizier himself. On this occasion, Sokollu asked Losada about Spanish naval intentions in the Mediterranean; once ascertained Spanish geo-strategic considerations, Sokollu readily asked Losada whether there was a chance for an Ottoman-Spanish truce. This was certainly unexpected news, but a more detailed consideration of what the Ottoman situation was in the Mediterranean shows the deep coherence of this demand. Since Palmira Brummett properly defined the Ottoman fleet as an 'elephant challenging the power of the whales', it is consequential that Sokollu tried to find a solution to maintaining such a huge and

²⁹² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 221.

²⁹³ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 234.

²⁹⁴ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1234.

costly fleet, which was a massive drain for Ottoman finances.²⁹⁵ Moreover, given that Tunis and La Goletta were now in safe Ottoman hands, there was little that a fleet could do, for attacking Spain was inconceivable and totally nonsensical in strategic terms.²⁹⁶ Unfortunately for Sokollu, Jaime de Losada was not able to accomplish his mission: the Spanish agent died in Otranto on his way back; one of his servants eventually informed the Viceroy of this opportunity.²⁹⁷

However, another mysterious Spanish agent had a different plan in mind. Antonio Avellán had persuaded Philip II in trying to turn a certain Murad Ağa on the Spanish side: this man was still related to the highest Ottoman spheres, as he was the major-domo of Kiliç Ali. Avellán had been recruited by Renzo in 1568 and he had been a slave of the former kapudan pasha Piyale – in his years of captivity, he had become fluent in Ottoman Turkish.²⁹⁸ This is a clear indication of the Spanish network's ability, despite its long-standing difficulties, to infiltrate the household of a crucial personality involved in Ottoman policy-making. Avellán had first reached Constantinople in July 1573 alongside a certain Virgilio Polidoro. They had been sent to Constantinople during the negotiations for the prisoner exchange to release one of the sons of Ali Müezzinzade Pasha, the Ottoman admiral in Lepanto, although their real purpose was, rather unsurprisingly, to obtain crucial intelligence, entrusted with 'testing the waters' about Kiliç Ali's possible defection on the Christian side and about any propensity of the Ottomans to wage war against Spain.²⁹⁹ In fact, Avellán was not the first man sent to Constantinople with this delicate task. He had been preceded in December 1571 by a renegade named Paolo de Arcuri by Don John himself, who had assigned him the task of reminding Kiliç Ali of his Christian origin: should he return to his homeland, Philip II was more than welcoming to bestow upon him exceptional honours. However, the lack of surviving documentation does not permit a thorough reconstruction of whether he succeeded or not, even though Gürkan thinks that this 'silence of documentation suggests his mission failed to produce serious results'.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ Palmira Brummett, 'The Ottomans as a World Power: What We Don't Know About Ottoman Sea-Power', *Oriente Moderno* 81, no. 1 (2001): 1-21, here 2.

²⁹⁶ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 235.

²⁹⁷ Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'Dishonorable Ambassadors? Spies and Secret Diplomacy in Ottoman Istanbul', *Archivum Ottomanicum* 35 (2018): 47-61, here 53.

²⁹⁸ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 234.

²⁹⁹ Gürkan, 'My Money or Your Life: The Habsburg Hunt for Uluc Ali', *Studia Historica. Historia Moderna* 36 (2014): 121-145, here 137.

³⁰⁰ Gürkan, 'My Money or Your Life', 134.

2.3.2. Bold Proposals and Deliverance Designs: The Plan of Mehmed Bey

So, as the final member of a long chain of agents entrusted with Kiliç Ali's defection, after having persuaded Philip to back his conversion plan towards Murad Ağa, in late 1575 Avellán understood that he needed help from an experienced and qualified gamer of the Sublime Porte's secret diplomacy world – that was Aurelio di Santa Croce, who in turn recruited Bartolomeo Bruti for his mission. Now the link between the two becomes clear: since Aurelio had acquainted Bartolomeo at the wedding of his daughter and Del Faro, he thought of the Honourable Albanian as an apt man for this delicate task.³⁰¹ Bruti gladly accepted the proposal, even though he had another risky and intriguing plan in mind: without asking permission, Bruti redirected this invitation also to Mehmed Bey, the prominent prisoner who Bruti had known during the stay in Fermo, who proposed him an ambitious plan that nevertheless would arouse the curiosity of Spanish policy-makers. This character proposed to Philip II a bold plan which was centred around the capture of Algiers under the payment of 30,000 ducats. Since Mehmed knew in detail the weaknesses of the strategic North-African city, in case of deliverance he would accept Philip II's supremacy as a ruler and he would become governor of the city without converting to Islam. Increasingly, in case of failure Mehmed would be forced to find shelter in Philip's domains and allowed to continue practising his own religion.³⁰² This certainly would have interested Habsburg strategists, for this invitation clearly represented a first potential step towards an anti-Ottoman coalition in which Algiers could disrupt Muslim corsairs' activities in the Mediterranean.³⁰³ Mehmed had only posed one binding condition: Bartolomeo should personally bring his letter to Philip II and discuss with him the feasibility of such an ambitious plan. So, after having obtained permission by the bailo to leave on the alleged death of some of his relatives in Koper, where the Bruti family had settled, Bartolomeo boarded a Ragusan ship and sailed from Constantinople with Avellán in early August 1576.³⁰⁴ This diplomatic duo eventually reached the city of Naples in mid-October.

There, Bartolomeo reunited with Margliani, who introduced him to the Duke of Sesa, the commander of the Neapolitan fleet who had promised to put Bruti on a galley to Madrid as soon as

³⁰¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 236.

³⁰² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 241.

³⁰³ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 292.

³⁰⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 237.

possible, for he had heard about the interesting intelligence Bruti was carrying. It was not the only thing that Bartolomeo needed to discuss: he had also been entrusted by Aurelio to bring to new the Viceroy, Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marquis of Mondéjar (r. 1575-1579), in which the spymaster posed the problem of finding an alternative way for communication from Naples to Constantinople, since they always risked being intercepted by Ottoman counterespionage: he thought that the letters should be sent via Cattaro and Dubrovnik and Greek couriers to be changed with Slavs, for the Greek had found a secret route for smuggling fugitives from Constantinople; this in turn prompted the Grand Vizier to tighten control over the route, which had become impossible to travel.³⁰⁵

Moreover, in the same area an Albanian noble whose name was Duli, living in Bastia, on the coast of Epirus facing Corfu, had provided not only valuable information but also lodging which were fundamental for Habsburg spies to penetrate the Ottoman domains. This was not an uncommon element, given that many ‘Christian Ottoman subjects in inaccessible areas were in a perpetual state of rebellion against the Ottoman rule’.³⁰⁶ Thus, on Aurelio’s behalf, Bartolomeo proposed to change the route via Cattaro to Dubrovnik, and from there rely on Venetian couriers, whose significance has already been discussed, who in turn should deliver communication to secret agents whose identity would remain unknown to the courier; this project was sponsored by Aurelio himself:

Aurelio de Santa Cruz le dió [to Bruti] una carta para el Virrey de Nápoles para que se tratase con él algún nuevo camino para tener avisos, por estar cerrado el passo por las guardias que el primer Baxa [the Grand Vizier] avía puesto en ellos a causa de los esclavos que se huyan fue a darle carta al dicho Virrey y memoria de los caminos que podía aver.³⁰⁷

Naturally, this highly complex system required a paymaster and Bartolomeo exploited the opportunity to ask for a royal patent which would allow him to establish the whole network.³⁰⁸ The Viceroy was so intrigued by this plan that even forbade Bartolomeo to travel to Madrid, since the latter had also refused to tell him the reason for his travel.

³⁰⁵ Gürkan, ‘Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence’, 28.

³⁰⁶ Gürkan, ‘Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence’, 9.

³⁰⁷ Bruti’s Memorandum, 1577, AGS, Estado, leg. 488, s.d. (in Spanish), quoted in Varriale, ‘El Espionaje’, 159.

³⁰⁸ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 239.

2.3.3. *An Example of Habsburg Counterespionage: The Case of Markus Penckner*

In the meantime, a quite fascinating event had taken place within the twin Habsburg embassy, the Austrian one. To analyse its functioning in detail would take too much space – also, it has already been done in a thorough and detailed manner by Tobias Graf, whose reconstruction deserves very much praise.³⁰⁹ As already stressed by Gürkan, the lack of official diplomatic representation on behalf of Spain made intelligence-gathering for Philip II quite complicated, especially if one considers the geographical distance between Madrid and Constantinople and the Mediterranean sea, an hostile environment through which passing sensitive information was far from easy. Thus, the Austrian embassy played an essential role not only in sending valuable intelligence – it was also crucial in counterespionage operations by intercepting dangerous agents tasked by the Sublime Porte.³¹⁰

While Losada and Avellán were striving with turning Kiliç Ali's major-domo, in late March 1575 the Austrian ambassador David von Ungnad had sent a despatch to Vienna, warning Emperor Maximilian II (r. 1564-1576) about a spy sent to Madrid to spend a year there and obtain intelligence about every useful matter to be known. Ungnad was also able to transmit the name of this spy, a recently converted to Islam man known as Ahmed Bey, even though the ambassador used his Christian-born name – Markus Penckner.³¹¹ This Penckner had first sought contact with Gabrio Serbelloni, the VIP of the prisoner exchange described above, to obtain good credit among the Spanish court. However, David Ungnad had already warned Hans Khevenhüller, the Austrian-Habsburg ambassador based in Madrid, to keep a wary eye on every possible suspect agent sent by the Ottomans. Penckner was supposed to pass through Naples to obtain sensitive intelligence, since the importance of Naples for Spanish-Habsburg intelligence operations has already been stressed.

Unfortunately for him, the web of contacts activated by Ungnad proved so efficient that Penckner never reached the Adriatic; he returned to Constantinople on 23 April 1575. Eventually,

³⁰⁹ Tobias P. Graf, 'Knowing the "Hereditary Enemy": Austrian-Habsburg Intelligence on the Ottoman Empire in the Late Sixteenth Century', *Journal of Intelligence History* 21, no. 3 (2022): 268-288.

³¹⁰ On the establishment of the Austrian embassy and its first ambassadors in the 1550s, see Maria José Rodríguez-Salgado, 'Eating Bread Together: Habsburg Diplomacy and Intelligence-Gathering in Mid Sixteenth-Century Istanbul', in Castaño and Varriale, eds., *Detrás de las apariencias*, 73-100.

³¹¹ Tobias P. Graf, 'Stopping an Ottoman Spy in Late Sixteenth-Century Istanbul: David Ungnad, Markus Penckner, and Austrian-Habsburg Intelligence in the Ottoman Capital', in Sigrun Haude, Christian Schneider, Gerhild Scholz-Williams, eds., *Rethinking Europe. War and Peace in the Early Modern German Lands* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 173-193, here 174.

Penckner became a spy working for the Imperial Embassy, always updating the Austrian-Habsburg in Transylvanian affairs during the election to the throne of Poland, which has already been shown by Ashkenazi's efforts in electing Alfonso II d'Este. Ungnad's efficiency can be framed as an entrepreneurial initiative, for Ungnad's dispatches were 'undoubtedly connected to his attempts to solicit a pension from King Philip II of Spain and were intended to provide evidence of his value as an information supplier'.³¹² This event clearly shows how much active was the espionage world at the time of these initiatives; conceiving the Ottomans as a subject only capable of counterespionage operations would be too much simplistic, since this story has clearly showed their resourcefulness in devising proper espionage mission – even though in this case unsuccessful.

2.3.4. Martin de Acuña: Near Failures in Spanish Grand Strategy

But let us return to the story of our Spanish agents stationed in Naples on their way to Madrid. They were joined by another Spanish agent named Martin de Acuña, a Spanish knight from Valladolid who had been a slave of Kiliç Ali's major-domo, Murad Ağa, and had been liberated in mid-1575. After his release, this character had stayed in Constantinople six more weeks to ascertain the situation and in summer 1576 he had proposed to Philip II a sabotage plan aimed at severely damaging the Ottoman Arsenal.³¹³ Henceforth, he must have known Bruti very well, and when he stumbled upon him in Naples he told him about his sabotage plan; increasingly, he asked the Albanian to help him convince the Viceroy of the feasibility of his plan and accompany him to Constantinople. Acuña was in Naples on his way to Constantinople on behalf of a ransoming mission, which we have seen to be always a valuable reason for obtaining a safe-conduct and proved to be a perfect cover for secret operations. The Spanish knight had managed to embitter the Viceroy of Naples, the Marquis of Mondéjar, due to his request to be given 5,000 extra escudos for his mission; Mondéjar promptly labelled him as an unreliable conman.

To further complicate Acuña's plan, Bartolomeo possessed good knowledge of the situation in the capital; he outlined his opposition in a memorandum delivered to the Viceroy. First, it was

³¹² Graf, 'Stopping an Ottoman Spy', 189.

³¹³ A brief biography about this shady figure can be found in María José Rodríguez-Salgado, 'From the Ridiculous to the Sublime: The Origins of the Hispano-Ottoman "Peace" of the 1570s and 1580s', paper given at the workshop 'Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Mediators in the Early Modern Mediterranean World', Budapest, 24-27 May 2012.

already too late for departing; had they arrived on time in Constantinople, all the galleys would be on water – and not on land, as Acuña argued. Second, it was impossible to get close to the Arsenal, for it was constantly patrolled by small boats and it was prohibited to sail into the Golden Horn ‘after the second hour of the night’.³¹⁴ Increasingly, Maria José Rodríguez-Salgado has underlined that harming the Ottoman fleet was the last thing Bruti desired for his plans, since the ‘success of Mehmed Bey’s plot depended on seizing a substantial part of the fleet and taking it to Algiers’.³¹⁵ However, Bartolomeo did not succeed in convincing the Viceroy, who in turn required his assistance in Acuña’s mission; Bartolomeo’s continual refusal enraged Mondéjar, who ordered his detention and that all his lodgings were disclosed and examined. Only when he saw Mehmed Bey’s proposal, the Viceroy quickly changed his mind and allowed Bartolomeo to leave for Madrid and have a discussion with the King. Mehmed had also written to the King praising Bruti’s abilities in convincing him to defect on the Spanish side:

Molte volte con mia grandissima allegrezza ho sentito raggionar Bartholomeo Bruti homo mio molto fidatissimo della grandezza et generosità di Vostra Maestà in esser sempre prontissimo di abbrassar, et favorir tutti quelli, che a Sua Maestà ricorreno di aiuti giustissimi et discorrendo col sopradetto circa gli regni di Barberia, ho deliberato con la prima occasione di voler intrar nella gratia et amicitia di Vostra Maestà si come per sue persussioni son intrato et spero che da questo principio risulterà bon fine così alli miei posterì, come alli regni vicini a Vostra Maestà.³¹⁶

In the spring of 1577 Bruti finally reached Madrid, while Martin de Acuña had already undertaken his solitary journey to Constantinople, arriving on 24 February 1577, travelling with Avellán’s passport which the latter had obtained in his third visit to the capital.³¹⁷ Before dealing with the King himself, the necessary step for Bartolomeo was to have a discussion with Antonio Pérez, Philip II’s secretary and ‘de facto head of the Habsburg secret service’.³¹⁸ Fortunately for Bruti, Mehmed Bey’s proposal was carefully examined and warmly welcomed: at a purposely called meeting in Aranjuez

³¹⁴ Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 293.

³¹⁵ Rodríguez-Salgado, ‘From the Ridiculous to the Sublime’, 6.

³¹⁶ Mehmed Bey to Philip II, Constantinople, 21 July 1576, AGS, Estado, leg. 487, s.d. (letter in Italian), quoted in Varriale, ‘El Espionaje’, 170.

³¹⁷ Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 294. Rodríguez-Salgado argues that Acuña made use of the services offered by a Greek priest settled in Otranto named Pedro Lanza, who she claims to have been a ‘fixer’ for Philip II by arranging the journey of the Spanish agents to and from Ottoman territories.

³¹⁸ Gürkan, ‘My Money or Your Life’, 130.

on 10 May 1577, the Spanish *Consejo de Estado* approved the plan. Of course, there were some risks, but the Council understood that ‘such a coup, if successful, would transform the entire security situation of the western Mediterranean’.³¹⁹

However, when this latest foreign policy decision seemed confirmed, Martín de Acuña returned from Constantinople with an unexpected development that could seriously jeopardise Spanish plans. What Acuña brought forward was the conditions for a preliminary deal with Sokollu for a formal truce between Spain and the Ottoman Empire; Sokollu had also given Acuña a letter in which he openly asked Philip to send an ambassador to Constantinople to properly discuss the matter.³²⁰ As one could expect, this news produced massive concern in Spanish policy-making circles. How did Acuña, who had left Naples with a destructive sabotage plan, return with the condition of a preliminary truce, a result almost opposite to what he had in mind?

When Acuña arrived in Constantinople in late February 1577, he almost immediately established contact with Aurelio di Santa Croce, who had already made the necessary arrangements to torch the Arsenal. He was accompanied by three Albanian spies who had been warned by Aurelio not to leave Del Faro’s house, the Imperial dragoman who had married one of Aurelio’s daughters, for he feared that renegades as well as dragomans alike could recognise them. Of course, the three ignored the advice and were recognised by a certain Esteban; this man was a Greek working for Philip who had fled Naples and converted to Islam in Constantinople, and thus was able to identify the three of them as well as Acuña. One of them confessed the whole situation after having been tortured.³²¹ At this point, the spymaster’s creativity entered the scene, for Aurelio improvised a believable story to save Acuña.

Since Aurelio remembered Losada, who had passed away before achieving his task, he pretended that Acuña was the long-awaited Spanish ambassador sent to discuss the truce. He contacted the Grand Dragoman Hürrem Bey, who was already on the Habsburg payroll with 500 ducats each year since 1573, and through his intercession Acuña was believed to be the official envoy sent by Philip II.³²² To make this situation even more plausible to Ottoman policy-makers, Hürrem

³¹⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 241.

³²⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 241.

³²¹ Gürkan, ‘Dishonorable Ambassadors’, 53.

³²² Rodríguez-Salgado, ‘From the Ridiculous to the Sublime’, 8.

suggested Acuña bring a safe-conduct, which was essential to travel in security in the Empire and also to ‘ease the minds of the Ottomans who had just caught three Habsburg spies, one of whom confessed that they had come with their boss’.³²³ Given that Acuña lacked this necessary document, Aurelio resorted to his cunning in an astonishing way. He forged a letter of credence (*carta de credencia*) directed to Sokollu by Philip II, even though this letter had originally been meant for Joseph Nasi, who Philip wanted to thank in recognition for his services to the crown of Spain. Thanks to Hürrem Bey’s invaluable help, all was square for a proper meeting between an involuntary ambassador and the Grand Vizier. The amicable discussion that followed bore some fruits: the imprisoned Albanian was released, and Acuña was sent to Naples on Sokollu’s behalf to offer formal discussion for a potential truce in the Mediterranean.³²⁴

Acuña reached Naples in late April and was immediately sent to Madrid by the Viceroy, who in turn advised the capital of the envoy’s arrival. However, the whole city of Naples knew Acuña’s plans, for he publicly boasted about his involuntary diplomatic achievement. What further enraged Mondéjar was the news that Acuña had gambled and lost a substantial part of the 3,000 ducats provided for the mission with Neapolitan taxes.³²⁵ Returning to Madrid in May 1577 – along with Avellán – just after the decision made by the Council of State to support Mehmed Bey’s plan, the debate between Spanish policy-makers was frantic.

On one side, there were basically two advantages. First, if they accepted the negotiation for a truce, this would have stopped for a while investment on the fleet, just after Spain had declared another bankruptcy in 1575. Second, it would also force North African corsairs to stop raiding Christian fleets, for they would be obliged to respect the agreement signed by their overlords. The most pressing strategic downside regarded the island of Corfu, given that the Sultan might be able to conquer it unopposed. As already shown above, the mutual dependence in security of Corfu and Southern Italy was utmost in Venetian and Spanish strategic agenda, since from there – in case of a successful campaign of conquest – the Sultan could mount an all-out invasion of the Italian peninsula. Moreover, Pérez underlined the importance of including Venice and the Pope as well,

³²³ Gürkan, ‘Dishonorable Ambassadors’, 54.

³²⁴ Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 295.

³²⁵ Rodríguez-Salgado, ‘From the Ridiculous to the Sublime’, 9.

since excluding them could result in the withdrawal by the Pope of those ecclesiastical subsidies which allowed the Spanish economy to stay afloat.

With these strategic considerations in mind, Philip II authorised the negotiation for a truce for two or three years. Interestingly, the document brought forward by Acuña envisioned the possibility of a 'secret truce', since the translation of the letter presented a distinction between public and secret diplomacy – 'a choice', as Malcolm points out, 'that the original Turkish text simply did not contain'.³²⁶ The choice of the ambassador for such a mission was not an easy task: Acuña had been heavily criticised by the Marquis of Mondéjar for financial irregularities and thus excluded from the chief position; Martín Vázquez de Acuña would end his days in the Pinto prison, where he would be strangled to death in his own cell in 1586.³²⁷

In June 1577, the King eventually chose the Milanese Giovanni Margliani as the principal negotiator and leader of the mission and definitely discarded Acuña: many reports and complaints about his unreliability had already reached Madrid, especially those of the devastated relatives of those captives he was supposed to have liberated – let alone that Acuña had squandered the money collected for that purpose.³²⁸ Bruti had also a prominent role in this matter: as a secret envoy, not only was he expected to assist Margliani, but also to keep negotiating on separate lines with Mehmed Bey, whose plan had originally allowed Bruti to have a discussion with the King in the first place. The entire peace of the Mediterranean was at stake.³²⁹

2.4. Absolute Friends: Margliani and Bruti's Conflicting Goals

On their way to Naples via Genoa in early September 1577, Margliani and Bruti discovered Aurelio had arrived in Naples the previous month bearing a letter from the Grand Vizier. To keep the mission secret, Margliani had urged Bruti not to tell anything to Aurelio; of course, Bartolomeo did not respect Margliani's advice and immediately went for Aurelio, who was supposed to travel with one of Bruti's brothers, Benedetto. Severe tensions arose between the two, especially now that Margliani

³²⁶ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 243.

³²⁷ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1236.

³²⁸ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'From the Ridiculous to the Sublime', 10.

³²⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 243.

did not consider Bruti trustworthy anymore, for it is not clear whether Margliani was aware of Aurelio's role in the Spanish intelligence network.

2.4.1. Aurelio di Santa Croce, Master of Forgeries

Nonetheless, Margliani was forced to have a discussion with Aurelio, to whom he explained the true nature of their mission and to seek his advice. It was precisely at this moment that Margliani must have felt a thorough sense of anger, since Bruti had dined with Aurelio and had informed him of their mission, which in turn forced Margliani to have a meeting with him even though this could highly jeopardise the secrecy of the delegation, a factor which immensely mattered to Margliani.³³⁰ Thus, Aurelio revealed the story that had brought to the deal struck by Acuña.

Aurelio had also with him a copy of the letter written by Sokollu to Philip with a genuine translation which lacked the distinction between 'public' and 'secret diplomacy'.³³¹ This element would almost certainly jeopardise their mission, especially if one considers that this latest deal was founded upon the forgery of documents. After Acuña's reckless move and his departure from Constantinople, Sokollu – as an expert and skilled diplomat – was not totally convinced of his intentions, since he had not yet received a formal reply from Spain. Increasingly, and strategically speaking, Sokollu was worried that Spain would join King Sebastian I of Portugal in his absurd, but potentially devastating, campaign against Morocco, thanks to which the Spanish might have conquered Algiers.³³² Moreover, in mid-April, soon after Acuña's departure for Naples, Hürrem Bey had warned Aurelio about Sokollu's investigation on the three Albanians who were with the Spanish, one of whom had been arrested and tortured. The concrete risk was that the whole web of Spanish spies might be uncovered. It was at this point that Aurelio had another stroke of genius: he forged two letters who he had obtained from Philip, dismantled their seals and directed them to Hürrem Bey and Sokollu, in which the King allegedly expressed his willingness to pursue the negotiations and asked that a Christian with enough knowledge of Ottoman affairs to be sent to Madrid to better instruct the authorities. Sokollu believed in this fraud and sent as his go-between Aurelio, who had suggested his name in the letter and asked for the envoy to be given a safe-conduct.³³³

³³⁰ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 299.

³³¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 246.

³³² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 247.

³³³ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 298.

Here is the reason why Aurelio was in Naples. There, he did not waste any time and promptly contacted Mondéjar, hoping to be appointed as the official ambassador to negotiate the truce. However, his hopes would be soon shattered not only by discovering that Margliani and Bruti had been chosen as the main envoys, but also because Sokollu's latest letter clearly showed to Philip that Acuña's deal had been the *extrema ratio* after a forgery, which posed Aurelio under a huge shadow of doubt.³³⁴ Unable to achieve his goal, Aurelio sent a letter to Hürrem Bey informing him that Margliani was bringing with them not only an unsatisfying amount of money, but he was even intending to keep a large part of it for himself – in this way, Margliani was substantially depicted as a swindler. Had Hürrem persuaded the Grand Vizier to send a confidential message to the King via Bruti regarding the peace agreement, Philip II would have agreed to give more money, for he was in desperate need for a peace – a scheme which seems to have worked, for in January 1579 Sokollu would ask for an official ambassador to be sent.³³⁵

Strategically speaking, this must have been a difficult moment for Philip: on one side, he acknowledged that Sokollu was proposing a truce; on the other, one of his envoys was working to make an Ottoman dignitary defect to their side who would deliver them the most strategic port of Algiers. This indecisiveness, as stated by Gürkan, 'demonstrates not only the multi-layeredness and complexity of inter-imperial diplomacy, but also the faith (or lack thereof) Philip and his ministers put in Ottoman good intentions'.³³⁶ Maria Rodríguez-Salgado also reinforces this argument by noting that this project of peace totally rested on Sokollu's tenure: had the Grand Vizier died, he would have probably been succeeded by Kiliç Ali, a belligerent dignitary who would not hesitate to ruin all the diplomatic efforts made for peace. Thus, to be prepared and have a more solid ground, Philip II ordered Avellán to return to Constantinople to develop a network of potential defectors within the Ottoman fleet, 'thus laying the foundations for another attempt at destroying the Ottoman navy in port if neither of the other two initiatives bore fruit'.³³⁷

³³⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 248.

³³⁵ Gürkan, 'Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence', 34.

³³⁶ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 298.

³³⁷ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'From the Ridiculous to the Sublime', 12.

2.4.2. *Delicate Dealings and Never-Ending Negotiations*

In late October the diplomatic duo left Naples headed for the Balkans, landing in Vlorë on 8 November 1577; there, Margliani suddenly understood the wide-ranging web of connections that the Bruti family had weaved in Albanian coastal towns. This element, however, did not reassure Margliani, for he saw so many local connections as a liability, rather than an asset, for he worried that the secrecy of their mission would be unveiled. They finally arrived in Constantinople in mid-December, after Hürrem had been warned by the brother of the *sancakbeyi* of Vlorë of their arrival and had prepared all sorts of necessary requirements for an elementary lodging, which the duo found uncomfortable from the very outset.³³⁸ As expected, Hürrem was quite shocked to learn the terms according to which the two envoys had been sent, patently denying the subtle implications of the translation brought forward by Martín de Acuña. Braudel attributes these words to Hürrem Bey:

Se io fossi cristiano, mi farei il segno della croce davanti alle fandonie inventate da don Martín. Il pascià attende un ambasciatore: questo ha scritto a Sua Maestà, questo ha promesso don Martín qui, questo ha fatto annunziare don Martín da un uomo venuto qui. Il pascià si risentirà grandemente che si sia mutato parere; Dio voglia che non ne nasca qualche danno irrimediabile per le vostre persone.³³⁹

Nevertheless, although he was enraged for such a disrespectful behaviour, Sokollu offered an audience to the duo on 16 December.³⁴⁰ Another problem occurred when a young Venetian dragoman called Melchior Spinelli recognised Bartolomeo on a casual daylight stroll; they had been trained together in 1574-5. This element further compromised their secret diplomatic effort.³⁴¹ On 26 December the Imperial Ambassador, David Ungnad, wrote a report in which he summarised Margliani's efforts and a discussion he had with Sokollu about the Holy Roman Empire's involvement in the truce. All subsequent efforts made by Margliani to keep the mission secret seem to be unrealistically naive, for even the Venetian bailo Nicolò Barbarigo had received an anonymous

³³⁸ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 250.

³³⁹ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1237. The text is in Italian according to the translation by Carlo Pischetta; nonetheless, Braudel does not quote any source from which these words can be attributed to Hürrem Bey.

³⁴⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 250.

³⁴¹ ASVe, CCD, Lettere da Costantinopoli, busta 4, nos. 159, 228, quoted in Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 251.

intelligence report telling him about Margliani's mission in detail.³⁴² Braudel underlines that this willingness to make the mission appear as secret even made Margliani compel his men to dress as slaves; Margliani himself often disguised his face, for he wanted to pass unnoticed due to his wound after Tunis.³⁴³

Waiting for them in front of Sokollu's house, there were Hürrem and the infamous Solomon Ashkenazi, to whom Margliani had become acquainted in the bailo's house after his release from captivity. Nonetheless, the audience took place the following day due to Sokollu's too many incumbencies. The Grand Vizier was unsurprisingly furious and immediately made clear all his displeasure, offended by the surreptitious mission of negotiation; he was also disappointed by the lack of gifts, which were fundamental to ingratiate themselves with Ottoman dignitaries.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Sokollu was still keen to strike an agreement, for he started to carefully note the conditions upon which Spain would be willing to sign a truce. There were geopolitical as well as strategic reasons why this agreement mattered so much for Sokollu.

When in 1576 Shah Tahmasp of Persia had died, thus inaugurating a dynastic crisis, Sokollu's rivals had realised the opportunity to quickly enlarge their dominion before a powerful and potentially dangerous Shah might pose a threat to the Ottoman eastern flank. It is important to keep in mind that Persia was a crucial element in Eurasian dynamics, for the Ottomans' approach towards Persia could reflect itself in the Mediterranean power balance. If Sokollu's intentions were to create a new eastern settlement as a bulwark against Persia, this truce, which should have blocked any military threats coming from the Western side, was essential in this geopolitical plan. In reality, Sokollu was advocating against a military effort, for he knew that this campaign would quickly transform into a brutal war of attrition, in which material as well as human resources would be rapidly consumed en masse.³⁴⁵

On 7 February 1578, a provisional deal was finally reached, which basically consisted in a 'gentlemen's agreement' – translated: a mutual suspension of hostilities for a year – between Sokollu and Margliani, who was helped both by Hürrem and always present Ashkenazi, who had been invited

³⁴² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 254.

³⁴³ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1238.

³⁴⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 252.

³⁴⁵ Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 155.

by Sokollu on the pretext that he needed his medical advice, even though it is far from clear what a doctor should do in a diplomatic transaction.³⁴⁶ Sokollu promised that the Ottoman fleet would not be deployed and that this ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ would be extended towards France, the Emperor, Venice, the Polish king, the Pope, the Knights of Malta, Genoa, Lucca, Savoy, Florence, Mantua, Parma, Urbino and, finally, the Lord of Piombino.³⁴⁷ Thinking that Sokollu wanted to strike this agreement to be more focused on the Ottoman campaign on Persia would be improper. According to Giancarlo Casale, Sokollu was still strategically concerned about the Indian Ocean; this can be deduced by a report given by Margliani himself, who stressed how avoidant Sokollu had been when it came to talking about Portuguese possessions. Sokollu assured that he did not intend to attack the straits of Gibraltar to invade directly Portugal, but he could not be as much as reassuring about the Indian Ocean:

il detto signor Maometto Pascia rispuose et promise che non mandrianno l’armata del Gran Signore a danni del detto re di Portogallo per il mare bianco ne per la parte del estreto de Gibilterra, ma per la parte del mare rosso, che Iddio sa quello sarà.³⁴⁸

On 8 February Sokollu entrusted Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, Margliani’s faithful assistant, to bring the Grand Vizier’s letter to Philip in which he complained about secret diplomacy, considered as a disrespectful practice for the Sultan’s dignity. Margliani then sent a loyal assistant of his, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, to Madrid four days later.³⁴⁹ His mission was to make sure that a formal ambassador was sent to Constantinople, to deal properly with the Ottoman government, as the final clause of this provisional agreement explicitly asked, since it would have given the Ottomans the recognition they supposedly deserved as a superior power in the Mediterranean.³⁵⁰ Did Margliani actually accomplish his mission? Although Braudel defined the mission as a ‘magnificent success’, this was not really the case.

³⁴⁶ Gürkan, ‘Espionage’, 300. The expression ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ was first employed in Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1238.

³⁴⁷ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1239.

³⁴⁸ Quoted in Chantal de la Veronne, ‘Giovanni Margliani et la trêve de 1580 entre l’Espagne et la Turquie’, *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies* 3-4 (1991): 70-75, here 72-73, quoted in Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 240, note 14.

³⁴⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 253.

³⁵⁰ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1239.

2.4.3. *Tensions Arise: The Diplomatic Duo Breaks Off*

First, the tensions between Margliani and Bruti had reached an unsustainable level, furthermore, intensified by the freezing room they had to share at Hürrem's house.³⁵¹ Margliani at a certain point even convinced himself that Bruti had planned a conspiracy against him, in which Aurelio played a central role. Actually, Margliani was not the only one having doubts about Aurelio's true allegiance. Malcolm records his possible bond with the Venetians, even though he notices that this allegiance 'would not in itself have given Aurelio a reason to sabotage this project, so long as he knew that Venice would also be covered by the truce'.³⁵² Moreover, in the previous year Renzo had died and Aurelio's advice that a certain Diego de Squiva – a man who had been ransomed by Aurelio after having been Hasan Pasha's slave for 16 years – should replace him fell to deaf ears.³⁵³ This was another element that further shed light on Aurelio's increasing unreliability. Many Spanish authorities were utterly convinced that he was a mole working for other secret services, such as the Viceroy of Naples, Cardinal Granvela. Moreover, a Spanish friar named Diego de Mallorca was convinced that Aurelio was a spy.

This Franciscan friar had fought valiantly at La Goletta, where he had been heavily injured; he was then taken as a captive and brought to Constantinople, and he was redeemed in December 1574.³⁵⁴ On his way back to Naples, this friar had encountered Don Juan in summer 1575, and immediately Don Juan understood that the variety of the contacts established by the friar when he had worked a slave in a Turkish bath might prove useful, especially to reconstruct a credible alternative to the discredited Renzo network; so, the winner of Lepanto asked his half-brother Philip to receive the friar as soon as possible.³⁵⁵ Eventually he succeeded in establishing a new trustworthy network, which made his allegations towards Aurelio's unreliability absolutely believable, for the friar even accused Aurelio of being an Ottoman agent.³⁵⁶

Margliani had even intercepted Aurelio's letter to Hürrem Bey, which had the deliberate purpose of discrediting him as the apt man for the negotiations. Antonio Pérez was enraged with

³⁵¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 255.

³⁵² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 256.

³⁵³ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 302.

³⁵⁴ Varriale, 'El Espionaje', 162.

³⁵⁵ Varriale, 'El Espionaje', 164.

³⁵⁶ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 295.

Aurelio and made sure he was punished. The latter obtained a safe-conduct for Madrid, where he was imprisoned; however, his charge was not treachery or forgery, but it related to unpaid debts. Apparently, Aurelio had vouched for two merchants who had ransomed some Muslim slaves from the Marquis of Santa Croce, Álvaro de Bazan, for a total amount of 8,000 ducats. When these merchants failed to honour their obligations the Marquis had Aurelio incarcerated on his return to Spain.³⁵⁷ It is fair to assume that this was a pretext for incarcerating him after many allegations about his double (or triple) allegiance, for some even thought that he was also on the Ottoman payroll.³⁵⁸ Aurelio would never return to Constantinople; he was obliged to beg the King for his liberation:

Mi resta anchora a suplichar a Vostra Maestà che si digni considerare che io sono uscito de caxa mia sono hormai 3 anni. Et lassata tuti li li miei negocii con gran rovina detta caxa mia. Et misso la mia vita in tanti rissigi et piricollo.³⁵⁹

Even Bartolomeo became dissatisfied with Margliani's project. First, despite having such a primary role in the negotiations, he had been treated like a low-grade servant and his advice was often disregarded. Moreover, he had to abandon Mehmed Bey's plan, since he had discovered in Naples that Mondéjar had told Acuña about it and the Spanish diplomat readily divulged it without too much concern.³⁶⁰

2.5. A Spy Among Friends: The Great Betrayal of Bartolomeo Bruti

2.5.1. The Battle of the Three Kings Changes Mediterranean Geopolitics

During 1578, a serious attempt of undertaking a crusade was unfolding on the westernmost part of the Mediterranean. King Sebastian I of Portugal (r. 1557-1578), a young and reckless monarch, was obsessed by the idea of annihilating the infidels after a successful crusade: the closest power against whom undertaking such a bold enterprise was against Sultan Abd al-Malik, the Ottoman-installed client ruler of Morocco in the summer of 1578.³⁶¹ This was already in itself a foolish idea, since

³⁵⁷ Gürkan, 'Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence', 28 n. 67.

³⁵⁸ Varriale, 'Líricas Secretas', 58.

³⁵⁹ Aurelio di Santa Croce to Philip II, Madrid Prison, 18 November 1579, AGS, Estado, leg. 1080, fol. 62 (letter in Italian), quoted in Varriale, 'El Espionaje', 158.

³⁶⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 256.

³⁶¹ Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 152.

embarking on a perilous campaign in the stifling heat of Morocco in August was a potential suicide – Sebastian’s crusade was doomed to failure by its outset. ‘One of the sixteenth century’s most foolish and misguided monarchs’, as Jerry Brotton defines him, Sebastian had been lured into such an enterprise by the ousted Moroccan Sultan Abdallah Muhammad, who had found shelter in Portuguese-occupied Ceuta. In order to regain his throne, the former sultan made to Sebastian an offer impossible to reject: had he invaded Morocco, deposed the usurper al-Malik and restored the former sultan as legitimate ruler, Abdallah offered himself as a vassal ruler of the Portuguese Crown.³⁶² This meant that Morocco might have been another strategic possession for the Portuguese to compensate for those African fortresses they had been forced to abandon, for they had proved too costly in terms of economic and strategic efforts.³⁶³ As stressed above, Sebastian was deeply influenced by the idea of crusade against the infidel, which at the time was being formulated by several intellectuals and rulers (as it will be shown in the third chapter): the final goal of this compelling idea was the ultimate conversion of the infidel populations, which in many cases gave a legitimate justification for expansionist ambitions. In fact, as Miguel Ángel Bunes Ibarra and Enrique García Hernán write, the ‘existencia de un poder político unificado en el Islam, como es la Sublime Puerta, convierte la realización del ideario imaginario de todo buen monarca cristiano en una empresa condenada al fracaso y de la que hay que huir’.³⁶⁴

Fought on 4 August 1578, the brutal Battle of Alcazarquivir – or the Battle of Three Kings – saw the death of all three participants. Al-Malik, the current ruler defending his realm, was mortally ill before the beginning of the battle: some sources talk about a poisoning by a defector but, whatever the reason, al-Malik had only a few hours to live. Then, both Sebastian and Abdallah Muhammad died on the battlefield: Sebastian, seen for the last time charging the enemy army, ‘was probably unknown to his killers as the last undisputed king of the Portuguese House of Avis that had ruled the kingdom since 1385’.³⁶⁵ Other than legitimating and consolidating the power of the only surviving claimant to the throne of Morocco – Ahmad al-Mansur, the surviving brother of al-Malik – the battle opened one of the most dramatic succession crises in Modern European History, for

³⁶² Brotton, *This Orient Isle*, 80.

³⁶³ Miguel Ángel Bunes Ibarra and Enrique García Hernán, ‘La muerte de D. Sebastián de Portugal y el mundo mediterráneo de finales de siglo XVI’, *Hispania. Revista española de historia* 54, no. 187 (1994): 447-65, here 453.

³⁶⁴ Bunes Ibarra and García Hernán, ‘La muerte de D. Sebastian’, 453.

³⁶⁵ Brotton, *This Orient Isle*, 83.

Sebastian did not have direct heirs. His only successor was his uncle, the Cardinal Henry, the only living son of the renowned Manuel I: ‘ma il regno di questo vegliardo, infermo e tisico’, as Braudel defines him, ‘non poteva essere, e non fu, che un episodio’.³⁶⁶ There was another huge problem: Philip II, on his mother’s side, had ambitions on the Portuguese throne, given that by obtaining that throne he would get access to the Portuguese trans-Atlantic and Indian dominions. Moreover, another character who advanced dynastic pretences over the throne was Dom Antonio, the Prior of Crato, and son of Luis, one of Henry’s brothers.

In the meantime, in Constantinople, Bartolomeo Bruti and Del Faro went to see Sokollu to inform him about Margliani’s behaviour in late October. Sokollu was sceptical and asked why they had come at night. Bartolomeo disclosed that he wanted to avoid Solomon Ashkenazi, who was allegedly trying to sabotage the mission under a large gift promised by Margliani. Naturally, Sokollu did not believe him and dismissed him with anger. When the following day Sokollu asked Ashkenazi Bruti’s whereabouts, he received plenty of information which was not purely satisfying. To sum up until at this point, ‘Hürrem and Solomon had joined Margliani in a firm alliance against Margliani’s former colleague’.³⁶⁷

In October, while the situation started to take pace once again, Bruti married a certain Perot woman Maria de Plebe, the niece of Matteo Del Faro, making him ensconced in the dragoman clan active in Constantinople; this meant that he would successfully extricate himself from the bailo’s authority. Moreover, Malcolm argues that Bruti must have thought about climbing the Ottoman hierarchy thanks to his acquaintance with Koja Sinana Pasha, with whom Bartolomeo had inaugurated a long period of friendship.³⁶⁸

Sinan Pasha was a powerful vizier from north-eastern Albania, whose career had been incredibly valiant and full of successes, since he had been the conqueror of La Goletta and Tunis in 1574. Giancarlo Casale argues that Sinan was an absolute ‘master in the art of using his unique combination of professional experience and private wealth as a tool for self-promotion’.³⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Sinan’s relation with Sokollu had endured serious strains during the preparations for

³⁶⁶ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1266.

³⁶⁷ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 259.

³⁶⁸ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 263.

³⁶⁹ Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 156.

the Persian campaign. Lala Mustafa Pasha had been appointed as the commander of the northern front, corresponding to modern-day Azerbaijan, while Sinan had been appointed as the commander of the southern front, in Iraq. The rivalry between the two in 1578 became so stark that Sokollu was forced to bestow absolute power upon Lala Mustafa; this factor further strained the already tense relationship between Sokollu and Sinan.³⁷⁰ However, there seemed to be another factor that contributed to the definitive rupture between them: Metin Kunt has observed the emergence of a sort of ethnic-regional solidarity which bound people of the same origin and culture together in the varied Ottoman world, creating proper power bases centred around their personalities.³⁷¹ This translated into a huge network of men working around Sinan, thereby bestowing upon him more legitimation and authority over the Serbian-born Grand Vizier.

2.5.2. Sabotage Attempts and a Hardly Achieved Peace

In the same month Philip had finally sent the ambassador who Sokollu had long requested: the choice fell upon a certain Juan de Rocafull, a nobleman who had distinguished himself at Lepanto. This information only arrived in mid-January 1579, when these messages were finally delivered to Margliani by his freshly returned loyal assistant, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari.³⁷² Margliani then arranged a request to Sokollu to dispatch a *çavuş* named Ali to Dubrovnik, where Rocafull was awaited and from where he would have reached Constantinople. However, the *çavuş* returned in late March with no one: Rocafull was not found, and he was then defined as indisposed by a letter. Consequently, Margliani's position started to deteriorate, for the missed arrival of the long-awaited ambassador was starting to be interpreted as a decoy devised by the Spanish Crown for preparing for an attack in Algiers. In fact, Rocafull never arrived. Sokollu's secret service soon found out that he was alive and well in Naples.³⁷³

The only alternative for Margliani was starting to build his own intelligence network from diverse sources, among which the first one is Kiliç Ali's household, where he found several renegades

³⁷⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 267.

³⁷¹ Metin I. Kunt, 'Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 3 (1974): 233-239; see also Maria Pia Pedani, 'Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy', *Turcica* 32 (2000): 9-31.

³⁷² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 259.

³⁷³ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 308.

willing to participate in projects of sabotage and assassination of key personalities.³⁷⁴ In the meantime, Bruti's attempts to sabotage the mission continued: he told Margliani that the Grand Vizier was angry with him after Rocafull's mockery, which put him in grave danger – he should, according to Bruti, ask for a safe-conduct to leave the capital. When Margliani rejected the offer, Bruti informed Sokollu that Margliani was planning an escape, thus breaking the negotiations, and that Rocafull had not come for the Habsburgs were actually preparing the long-awaited expedition against Algiers. Naturally, Margliani was deeply appalled by this patent attempt to destroy his efforts when he was informed by Ashkenazi.³⁷⁵

In July 1579, a major crisis occurred when Hürrem Bey announced to Margliani that Sokollu intended to arrest Bartolomeo. Margliani went against this argument, for he was in charge of keeping alive his fellow companions working for the Spanish Crown; he even advanced the possibility of leaving the capital had Sokollu decided to execute Bartolomeo by impalement. Margliani, in reality, simply wanted to protect the whole operation: if Bartolomeo might convert to Islam to have his life safe, he would have been likely to give the Sultan valuable information about the ongoing secret negotiations with Sokollu; this would destroyed 'la pratica della intelligentia', thus exposing Hürrem and all the other supposedly loyal servants.³⁷⁶ But why was Sokollu so determined to have Bartolomeo arrested all at once?

One of Sokollu's staunchest clients was Petru Schiupol, the Voivode of Moldavia – a sort of autonomous Balkan principality belonging to the Ottoman Empire; Sokollu had discovered that Bartolomeo was involved in a conspiracy aimed at displacing him in favour of his rival Iancu Sasul. Bruti's role entailed the enlistment of none-other than Sinan Pasha by offering him a large payment and annual gifts; Bartolomeo, would receive in exchange 2,000 ducats for his involvement.³⁷⁷

Bartolomeo was soon put in jail on 19 July 1579 on charges of sending sensitive intelligence to Naples regarding Constantinople's inner politics but also details about the ongoing war in Persia. Margliani, as the duty commanded, strove to have him freed, assisted also in this case by Hürrem and Ashkenazi; in this circumstance, we happen to know one of Bartolomeo's brothers, Cristoforo, who

³⁷⁴ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 306-307.

³⁷⁵ Gürkan, 'Espionage', 309.

³⁷⁶ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 268.

³⁷⁷ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 269.

had recently been accepted as a ‘giovane di lingua’ in the bailate. However, Sinan was the man who actually achieved Bartolomeo’s liberation on 13 August; the only *conditio sine qua non* for his liberation was that Bruti should immediately abandon Ottoman territory. Sokollu feared that, once arrived in Dubrovnik, Bartolomeo might encounter Juan de Rocafull and return with him to Constantinople – given Bartolomeo’s recklessness, this was hardly surprising.

So, Sokollu made sure that the Ragusan authorities put Bartolomeo on a boat to Barletta just after his arrival. Unfortunately for him, when Bartolomeo arrived in Dubrovnik at the end of August, he met not only Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, but Antonio Echevarría, the official ambassador sent by Philip II who was on his way to Constantinople to bestow ambassadorial credentials to Margliani.³⁷⁸ Quite unsurprisingly, Bartolomeo decided to go with Echevarría and return to the capital, also writing a letter to Margliani announcing his comeback. However, on their way to the capital, they met in Novi Pazar (in modern-day Serbia) a courier bringing despatches from Margliani speaking about Sokollu’s determination to have Bartolomeo executed.

Hence, Bartolomeo was forced once again to return to Dubrovnik, where the authorities had finally received Sokollu’s instructions, and put on a boat to a Barletta. Bartolomeo’s luck did not exhaust there; the captain, due to contrary winds, had to make an emergency landing in Mljet, a Ragusan island north-west to Dubrovnik. From there, Bartolomeo escaped the crew tasked with escorting him to Barletta and fled to Korčula, a Venetian island, finally returning to freedom.³⁷⁹ In the end, after endless months of unfruitful waiting, Antonio Echevarría arrived in Constantinople on 4 October 1579. Margliani was finally entrusted with closing the negotiations himself; why did the King of Spain wait for such a long time before authorising his envoy? The Spanish Crown had been enduring a huge number of upheavals in the precedent year that needed serious consideration: the situation in the Low Countries had been going on for almost ten years, which made a truce on one of the most dangerous frontlines ever more appealing; increasingly, Pope Gregory XIII had unsurprisingly reacted in a hostile way once he learned that Spain was dealing with an infidel power. In the meantime, Philip had charged his powerful Secretary, Antonio Pérez, of judicial murder, which posed more stress on the already tense situation. Spain needed a clear action in foreign policy,

³⁷⁸ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1242.

³⁷⁹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 270-271.

but it was far from easy. Margliani, after eighteen months of intense labour, had returned to where he started, for all his efforts had eventually proved in vain.³⁸⁰

On 11 October 1579, when Bartolomeo was in the Albanian town of Lezhë (Alessio in Italian), a major event took place in Constantinople, which would massively refashion the Ottoman Empire's policies – Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had been assassinated by a dervish.³⁸¹ However, the man who succeeded him was not Sinan; the most senior vizier, Ahmed Pasha, was chosen. Ahmed was the commander of Bar and Ulcinj, where Bartolomeo's father had been killed. Despite being in a good relationship with Sokollu, he had not been involved in the secret negotiation, meaning that there was still a lot to do for Margliani, Solomon and Hürrem.

Very soon Hürrem and Solomon tried their luck, and what they had done terrified them: they had falsificated the original text of the truce by adding the Emperor, the Archduke of Austria and the King of France. Their panic was due to the likelihood of Bartolomeo denouncing everything, for he had presumably seen the original draft; increasingly, it is crucial to remember that Bartolomeo could expose the whole affair to the powerful Sinan Pasha.³⁸² Moreover, Bartolomeo had officially been set free by Ahmed, for he considered that an Ottoman subject – namely, from Ulcinj – could not be forced to go to Italy; it is possible that in this case Sinan's intercession proved essential for Bartolomeo's well-being. Meanwhile, Bruti's career completely transformed itself: in December 1579 Iancu Sasul, the voivod he had supported, was officially appointed by the Sultan; Bartolomeo had received the promised fee of 2,000 ducats.³⁸³

In March 1580, the truce negotiations finally reached a turning point by renewing the provisional armistice: Ahmed Pasha must have fastened the negotiations given the absurd bloodshed and waste of resources occurring on the eastern front, which was to continue for more than ten years. Margliani and Ahmed Pasha signed on 21 March a renewal of the previous gentlemen's agreement valid for another ten months (until January 1581), a necessary move to gain more time to properly devise the terms of a satisfying truce. To avoid misunderstandings and improper references to secret diplomacy, the Italian text was kept by Ahmed, while the Ottoman text was sent by Margliani to the

³⁸⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 260.

³⁸¹ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 272.

³⁸² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 274.

³⁸³ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 276.

Viceroy of Naples Juan de Zúñiga y Requeséns (r. 1579-1582), the successor to Mondéjar.³⁸⁴ The previous month, however, King Henry I of Portugal had died, paving the way for Philip's long-desired annexation – it was after this event that Philip II decided it was time to act.

Ahmed Pasha did not eventually complete the negotiations because of this death on 27 April 1580; he was succeeded by the elderly Lala Mustafa Pasha, already encountered in the first chapter in relation to the siege of Famagusta and the cruel execution of Marcantonio Bragadin. Bartolomeo would abandon the city at the end of May of that year knowing that Sinan was ever closer to be appointed as Grand Vizier. In August 1580, Sinan became the most powerful political personality in Constantinople, while 'Bartolomeo Bruti became the second most powerful man in Moldavia'.³⁸⁵

Meanwhile, in September 1580, after the undisputed victory obtained by the Duke of Alva against Dom Antonio, the prior of Crato, Philip had been proclaimed as Philip I, King of Portugal and Algarve. Dom Antonio, who had tried to gather support for his legit ascendancy to the throne and had proclaimed himself King in Santarém on 24 July 1580, was forced to abandon the country after the disastrous defeat inflicted by the Duke of Alva in late August.³⁸⁶ Antonio eventually found shelter in France. From now on, the two Crowns remained separate, but it is undeniable that Philip's newly-found energy derived from the recently-acquired Atlantic dominions of the Portuguese Crown.

Moreover, the acquired possession of the *Estado da Índia* meant that the Spanish could attack the Ottomans from west as well as from east.³⁸⁷ With these new fronts open, it was time to put an end to the negotiations. The conclusion of the peace talks happened in February 1581, when Giovanni Margliani was able to sign a three-year truce with the Ottoman Empire, in which even Venice and the Knights of Malta were included. Margliani was then allowed to leave for Naples; his loyal and skilled assistant, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, would be the key man for renovating the following truces in 1584 and 1587. The final temporary truce saw Ferrari assisted by a new Spanish envoy, none-other than Giovanni's son, Count Ruggero Margliani.³⁸⁸ In Braudel's reading, this truce had brutally removed war from the Mediterranean, pushing Spain towards Portugal and the Atlantic,

³⁸⁴ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1245.

³⁸⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 277.

³⁸⁶ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1271.

³⁸⁷ Casale, *Ottoman Age*, 153.

³⁸⁸ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 275.

while symmetrically pushing the Ottomans towards Persia, where they would engulf themselves in a war which would find its end in 1590.³⁸⁹

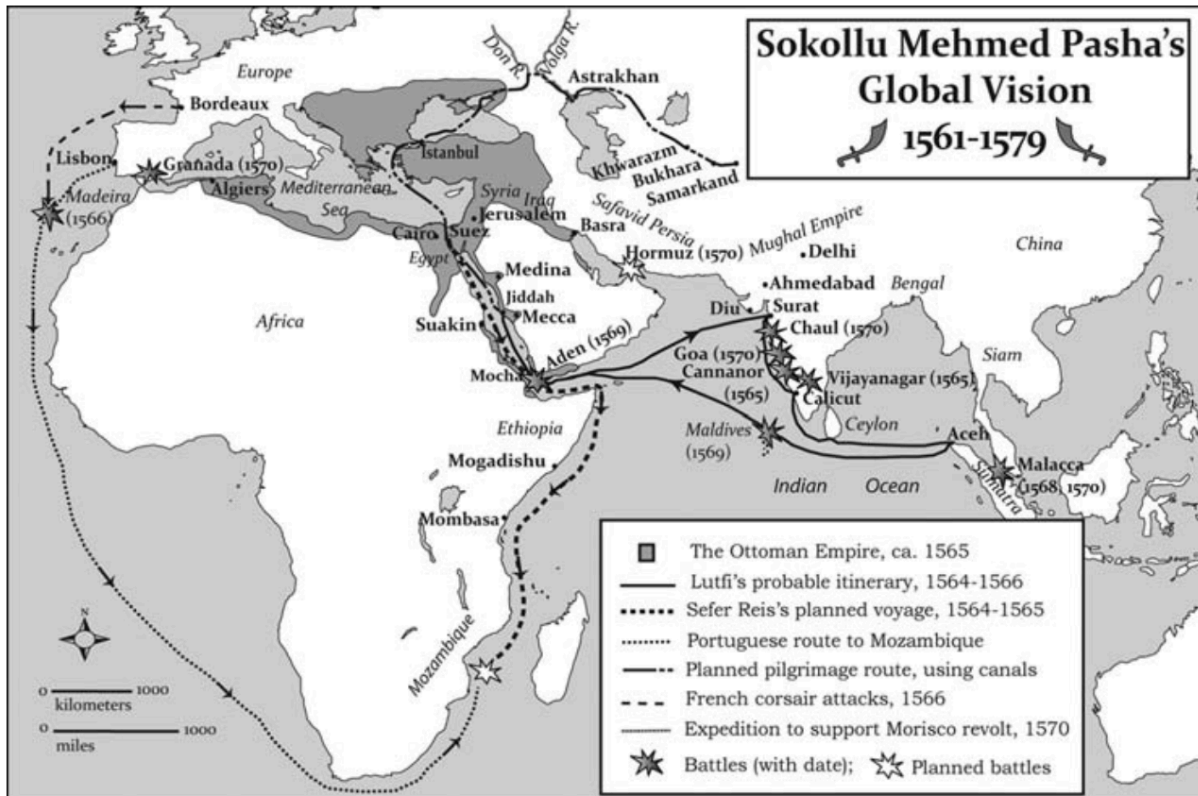


Figure 3. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's global vision, 1561-1579. Taken from Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 136.

³⁸⁹ Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo*, 1251.



Figure 4. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, c. 1570. Illustration from Johan Schrenck, *Augustissimorum imperatorum, serenissimorum regum* (Innsbruck: 1601).

3. Our Kind of Crusade

Pragmatism and Realpolitik in the Mediterranean

Are you reading something for *information*? That is one reason. Or are you reading it for *knowledge*?

Information is only the path, Mr Mundy. The goal is *knowledge*.

– John le Carré, *Absolute Friends*

3.1. Unholy Alliances: A Conceptual and Political Definition

Developed in the ninth century, the concept of unholy alliance deserves an introduction, albeit brief, to properly understand its relevance in strategic evaluations made during the sixteenth century, which will be the primary focus of this final chapter. Pope John VIII (r. 872-882) had been the first to formulate the concept of ‘impium foedus’, which substantially prohibited any type of alliance with Muslims or non-Christian powers and rulers. Increasingly, his definition had been strengthened by a quote from the Bible, specifically from a passage of the Corinthians (6:14):

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?

The contingent situation that had led John to such a violent prohibition of alliances with the infidels was the inconceivable alliance between the Saracens and the Italian cities of Naples, Salerno and Amalfi.³⁹⁰ Although this concept had proved quite compelling for centuries, in the sixteenth century it became clear that it was not as strong as John had hoped for. A decisive event that seriously threatened the stability and legitimacy of this Christian tenet was the striking of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, signed in 1536 by King François I of France and Sultan Suleyman I.³⁹¹ This alliance had naturally posed significant strategic headaches to the nearest European polities, most especially Spain which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, had to be always aware of every possible consequence in its foreign policy agenda. Had the Spanish attacked France, the Ottomans might have come to

³⁹⁰ Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 107.

³⁹¹ A detailed analysis of this agreement is provided in Michael Heath, ‘Unholy Alliance: Valois and Ottomans’, *Renaissance Studies* 3, no. 3 (1989): 303-15.

French rescue; had the Ottomans attacked them – for instance, by successfully arming the Moriscos of Andalusia – the French would have paved their way on launching a potentially devastating attack upon Spain. It was precisely in this context that the political reflection concerning unholy alliances sprouted and, among many scholars, the most prominent one who intervened by reinforcing the prohibition of allying with the infidels was Alberico Gentili, with the publication of his *De iure belli* in 1598.

At first glance, Gentili's description about the Ottoman Empire seems conducted without any theological concern: for instance, he had confidently affirmed that the Sultan was a legitimate ruler of his own country, although not a Christian. This can be deduced by a passage with clear Machiavellian influences: in *De legationibus* (1585) he had stated that religion was not a matter between men and men, but between men and God; increasingly, and coherently with his influences, Gentili had even concluded that 'wars should not be waged for the sake of religion'.³⁹² However, in *De iure belli* Gentili asserted a specular proposition, namely that one could always find a 'just cause of war against the Turks'.³⁹³ This is a quite striking statement that puts Gentili in a paradoxical position, given his appreciation for Machiavelli's pragmatic and realistic approach towards politics. Thereafter, a close reading reveals remarkable theological influences as well, which must have heavily shaped Gentili's conception, especially if one considers the passage in which Gentili expressed his views about the opportunity and the possibility of forming an alliance with the infidels.³⁹⁴

Gentili's answer is ambivalent. On one hand, he accepted various forms of cooperation: Noel Malcolm has underlined that from the thirteenth century this was not an extraordinary element, given that Christian powers could interact with non-Christian powers by the means of diplomacy and commerce, which were often intertwined, for instance, in trading inoffensive commodities to maintain peaceful relations and facilitate diplomatic efforts.³⁹⁵ To be even more cynical, Gentili glaringly suggested that some of these engagements should be allowed as long as they were unequal. However, on the other hand, Gentili totally rejected the prospect of a Christian power forming an

³⁹² 'Bella religionis causa mouenda non sunt', quoted in Noel Malcolm, 'Alberico Gentili and the Ottomans', in Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann, eds., *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 127-145, here 129.

³⁹³ Alberico Gentili, *De iure belli libri tres*, ed. Thomas Erskine Holland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877), I, 12, 54-55 ('Sic iusta semper causa belli aduersus Turcas').

³⁹⁴ Gentili, *De iure belli*, III, 19, 380 ('Si foedus contrahitur cum diuersae religionis hominibus').

³⁹⁵ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 107.

alliance with an infidel power against another infidel power – let alone the possibility to ally with infidels to fight against Christians.³⁹⁶ This adamant prohibition clashed with the theory of balance of power, which at the time was starting to be developed in Europe with Gentili as one of its main proponents.³⁹⁷ Quite ironically, many European powers – such as France, to Gentili’s maximum discontent – followed this doctrine and accordingly started to regard the Ottomans as the best means to counterbalance the might of the Habsburgs in its two branches, the Spanish one and the Austrian-German one.

Nonetheless, not everybody wholeheartedly endorsed Gentili’s statement about the impossibility of allying with the infidels. The two Italian jurists Oldrado da Ponte (active in the early fourteenth century) and Tiberio Deciani (active in the mid-sixteenth century) had both dared to defend the use of unholy alliances by Christian rulers even against other Christians. Noel Malcolm has explained that their main argument resided upon the idea that those types of alliances were legitimate because they responded to a basic need of self-preservation, which meant that a Christian ruler was not only allowed to ally with the infidels – he could even employ deceit in doing so.³⁹⁸

Nevertheless, to Gentili’s eyes even the most exceptional situation and even the most legitimate security concern could not justify such an alliance. Gentili even deemed the Ottomans as ‘unjust enemies’, considering them as incapable of observing the most basic principles of warfare, which made them unworthy of trust and fall below the minimum standard of ‘just enemy’; not only, this type of alliance would have brought against just enemies those who did not observe any right of war.³⁹⁹ So, as Malcolm concludes, ‘if they cannot be trusted, there is no point in making any sort of alliance with them’.⁴⁰⁰ Hence, on this particular matter, Gentili falls back to an essentially theological tradition: unholy alliances with infidels are ‘*always* wrong, and they are wrong *because they are infidels*’.⁴⁰¹ Given these premises, it is extremely interesting to get a deeper insight into the multifaceted strategic thinking regarding the possibility of ‘unholy alliances’ in polities

³⁹⁶ Malcolm, ‘Gentili and the Ottomans’, 139.

³⁹⁷ To this purpose, Gentili quoted the famous statement allegedly attributed to Lorenzo de’ Medici: ‘ut res Italarum principum paribus libratae ponderibus forent’, *De iure belli*, I. 14, 62.

³⁹⁸ Malcolm, ‘Gentili and the Ottomans’, 141-142.

³⁹⁹ Gentili, *De iure belli*, III. 19, 385 (‘Non potest contra fidelem hoc foedus cum infideli contrahi: quia contra iustos hostes, religionis, & consuetudinis, & bellicarum legum seruantes adducuntur aduersi religione, & expertes, & plurimum contemptores omnis moris, & omnis bellici iuris’).

⁴⁰⁰ Malcolm, ‘Gentili and the Ottomans’, 143.

⁴⁰¹ Malcolm, ‘Gentili and the Ottomans’, 144.

contemporary to Gentili. Even in this case our analysis will depart from Venice, which during the War of Cyprus had genuinely tried to strike an alliance with an infidel power by employing a secret agent.

3.1.1. Venice and the Safavids, or How to Exploit a Confessional Cleavage

Marino Cavalli, in his 1560 *relazione*, had reported to the Senate that among the three possible causes which might annihilate the Ottoman Empire, one was the alliance between a valiant Shah of Persia and united Christian princes:

La terza [causa] saria che un re di Persia valoroso, avendo pace con li Tartari suoi confinanti, volesse ricuperare, con l'aiuto dell'artiglieria de' Portoghesi, il suo, e che i cristiani uniti tutti con una contribuzione che avesse a durare cinque o sei anni, facessero quel che dovriano, e ciò saria sempre men di quello che potrebbero.⁴⁰²

This element had also been noticed by Marcantonio Barbaro in 1573. After having returned to Venice with a peace agreement signed, albeit not satisfying, in the final parts of his *relazione* the bailo was forced to reckon that 'good intelligence' – namely, a potentially fruitful agreement which might evolve into an alliance with the Shah was paramount in order to damage the Sultan's interests:

che freno alcuno non può maggiormente domare ogni insolente pensiero dei Turchi, quanto il conoscer essi che vi sia buona intelligenza tra li principi cristiani con il re di Persia.⁴⁰³

It was precisely the War of Cyprus which had offered the best circumstance to close an alliance with the Shah. A few months after Selim's ultimatum, on 27 October 1570, the recently-appointed doge Alvise I Mocenigo (r. 1570-1577) wrote an official letter destined to Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524-1576) with the declared purpose of opening another front to close the Sultan's forces in a pincer, thus putting the Sultan and the Divan in a difficult situation on which front should have the priority. While the Persian land army would engage with the Ottoman army, the Venetian forces – and, allegedly, those of its Christian allies – would seriously jeopardise Ottoman naval capacity. Mocenigo

⁴⁰² Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 281-282.

⁴⁰³ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 339.

tried to lure Tahmasp in such an enterprise in exchange for huge benefits, especially in terms of glory. To make his appeal more attractive, the doge used the stereotype of the ‘universal enemy’:

essendo noi in pace col sig. sultan Soliman passato imperatore di Costantinopoli, conservata per molti anni, morto lui il presente sig. sultan Selim suo figliuolo la confermò con solenissimo giuramento, ma da poi senza alcuna causa ne ha rotta la detta pace et mandato contro di noi la sua armata, quale è andata per far l’impresa del regno nostro de Cipro, et ha mandato anco le genti sue de terra in Dalmatia contro le nostre città. [...] Noi dunque la pregamo a muoversi con generoso animo contro di lui, et promettemo a Vostra Maestà in fede di vero principe, che noi con li altri cristiani dal canto nostro faremo ogni sforzo per batter in mare et in terra questo universale inimico di tutti.⁴⁰⁴

Three days later, the Council of Ten appointed Vincenzo Alessandri, the secretary of the Senate, to undertake a mission of secret diplomacy to bring a letter, which read:

Noi con le forze degli altri principi christiani, faremo dal canto nostro una gagliarda guerra, in modo che movendosi anco la Maestà Vostra si pò esser certi da ogni parte aver vittoria, et che sarà con perpetua gloria del potentissimo suo nome, con grandezza et ampliacione del suo impero, et la Signoria nostra insieme con tutta la cristianità resterà obligatissima alla Imperial Maestà Vostra, secondo che più ampiamente le narrerà il predetto fedelissimo secretario nostro [Vincenzo Alessandri], alle parole del qual la si degnerà prestar fede come farebbe a noi medesimi.⁴⁰⁵

The official report sent by Alessandri was written on 24 July 1572, almost two years later, and is a fruitful source for understanding the hazardous move by Venice, and especially the conditions that determined the failure of this secret diplomatic initiative. After having established contact with Ismail Mirza, the second son of Tahmasp and successor as Shah (r. 1576-1577), Alessandri eventually was unsuccessful in his proposal of enticing the Shah against the Ottomans, even though he used the previous conquests made by the ancestors of Selim II as leverage:

⁴⁰⁴ Alvise I Mocenigo to Tahmasp I, 27 October 1570, Venice (letter in Italian), transcribed in Berchet, *La Repubblica di Venezia e la Persia* (Turin: G.B. Paravia, 1865), 158-160 (Documento XXII).

⁴⁰⁵ The Council of Ten to Tahmasp I, 30 October 1570, Venice (letter in Italian), transcribed in Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 162-163 (Documento XXIV).

Solamente bastava che S. M. [Tahmasp] col potentissimo suo esercito si muovesse sia per riavere le città e castelli ingiustamente toltigli dalli passati signori ottomani [Sultans], sì per la molta inclinazione che tutto il popolo dal fiume Eufrate fino alli suoi confini gli portava, come a re giusto et loro antico naturale signore.⁴⁰⁶

However, Alessandri was not able to accomplish his mission since dealing at the Safavid court required a huge amount of time because of court inefficiencies – this meant that a rapid response, which was very much needed by the Venetians, would not arrive in time to stop the Ottomans. Alessandri writes that ‘bisognava aspettar uno o due anni per veder prima qualche buon progresso di questa guerra’.⁴⁰⁷

In his detailed analysis of the sources at the baili’s disposal about Safavid Persia, Ahmad Guliyev underlines the difficulties for the Venetians to obtain reliable intelligence about the Safavids. Certainly, one factor for this difficulty was the lack of an officially appointed ambassador in the Safavid capital, first in Qazvin and later in Isfahan.⁴⁰⁸ Barbaro had made during his tenure as bailo a remarkable mistake by incorrectly stating that Shah Tahmasp had died not once, but twice in less than a year. The first report in August 1572 declares that he had heard about the Shah’s death thanks to the Venetian consul based in Syria: ‘Dice quanto gli scriveva esso consule [della Siria] della morte del Soffi’.⁴⁰⁹ Then, on 19 February 1573, just a month before the peace agreement, Barbaro confirmed the death of the Shah.⁴¹⁰ Other than understanding the challenge of obtaining thorough information, these letters show how much the baili relied on Venetian consuls in Syria, for their ability to gather up-to-date news was facilitated by their geographical proximity to the Safavids.⁴¹¹ By reading Alessandri’s account of his secret diplomatic mission, it is possible to discover that Shah

⁴⁰⁶ Vincenzo Alessandri to the Council of Ten, Qazvin, 24 July 1572 (letter in Italian), transcribed in Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 33.

⁴⁰⁷ Alessandri to the Council of Ten, Qazvin, 24 July 1572 (letter in Italian), in Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 36.

⁴⁰⁸ Ahmad Guliyev, ‘Venice’s Knowledge of the *Qizilbash* – The Importance of the Role of the Venetian Baili in Intelligence-Gathering on the Safavids’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 75, no. 1 (2022): 79-97, here 88.

⁴⁰⁹ Barbaro to the Council of Ten, Constantinople, 10 August 1572, ASVe, Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, Rubriche, D1, c. 287v (letter in Italian).

⁴¹⁰ Barbaro to the Council of Ten, Constantinople, 19 February 1572 [more veneto], ASVe, Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, Rubriche, D1, c. 296r (letter in Italian).

⁴¹¹ Guliyev, ‘Venice’s Knowledge’, 90.

Tahmasp had not died; rather, due to an unspecified illness, he had not come out from his palace in ten years. In providing a physical description of the Shah, Alessandri writes:

È di statura mediocre, ben formato di corpo, di faccia alquanto scura, di gran labbri e barba, ma non molto canuto, di complessione piuttosto malinconica che altrimenti, conoscendosi ciò per molti segni, ma principalmente per non essere uscito del palazzo in dieci anni pur una volta, né a caccia, né ad altra sorte di piaceri, il che è di molto mala soddisfazione al popolo.⁴¹²

However, Vincenzo Alessandri's effort did not prove to be effective enough to persuade the Persians to wage war against the Ottomans. In his reconstruction of this secret diplomatic initiative, Guglielmo Berchet argued that this was due to several issues in domestic politics, which stymied the two polities to close an alliance against their 'common enemy'.⁴¹³ Nevertheless, the Venetian ambition to strike a deal with the Shah was far from being exhausted.

According to Guliyev's analysis, the Ottoman Empire was the 'political barometer' for the Eurasian context, in particular relating to Venetian-Safavids relations: if the Ottomans and the Safavids were experiencing a tense situation, the frequency with which the baili sent their reports increased. In fact, the War of Cyprus and the Ottoman-Persian War of 1578-1590 clearly showed that the Safavid Empire was a fundamental actor to be taken into account when it came to strategic considerations: by having two major Muslim powers fighting each other, pressure within Europe eased, which in turn allowed European powers to capitalise on the temporary weaknesses of the Ottomans; henceforth, if one of them had stricken an unholy alliance with the Safavids, this would have resulted in an intra-confessional struggle between Shi'is and Sunnis, thus exploiting the cleavage within Islam.⁴¹⁴ The right occasion presented itself during the Ottoman-Persian War (1579-1590), while Ahmed Pasha and Margliani were still striving for a truce. In 1580, a man named Mohamed had been sent as a secret agent by the new Shah Mohammad Khodabandeh (r. 1578-1587), who announced his willingness to accept the invitation previously made by Vincenzo Alessandri. This Mohamed said that Tahmasp was not confident enough to wage war due to his poor health conditions, but, since the new Shah had proved capable on the battlefield, he was a potential

⁴¹² Alessandri to the Council of Ten, 24 September 1572 (letter in Italian), in Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, (Documento XXVI), 170

⁴¹³ Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 38.

⁴¹⁴ Guliyev, 'Venice's Knowledge', 93.

candidate for a concrete alliance. Welcomed by Alessandri himself in Venice, Mohamed was briefed by the Council of Ten, which eventually declined Mohamed's offer in order not to break the 'unbearable' peace agreement with the Ottomans, a factor made even more unappealing by the instability shown by the Persian government.⁴¹⁵ Eventually, the Ottomans successfully ended their war, even though it would prove a pyrrhic victory. A close reading of bailo Lorenzo Bernardo's *relazione*, pronounced in 1592, provides rich information about the Safavids, especially after the final defeat in 1590. To this purpose, Bernardo underlines the pernicious penetration of the Sultan into former Persian territories:

In Persia, contra quel re li progressi in questo tempo sono stati grandissimi, perché sebbene li acquisti quasi tutti erano fatti in quel paese avanti il mio partire, non essendo ancor allora seguita questa tal qual pace, non si poteva ancora veramente dire che quel signore possedesse le miglia e trecento e più di paese per lunghezza acquistato in quest'ultima guerra persiana, sebben assai ristretto di larghezza; perché dove il suo confine prima era con Giorgiani Erzerum, e con Persiani la fortezza di Van, ora per l'acquisto fatto di Cars, Tiflis, ed altre fortezze de' Giorgiani, ha penetrato avanti più di miglia centocinquanta in quella provincia verso Tauris, e per l'acquisto di esso Tauris nell'Armenia e di molte altre città e castella, ha penetrato nel regno dei Persiani per più di altre centocinquanta miglia.⁴¹⁶

But when it came about religion, here's where Bernardo hit the mark of why the Persian were so vital for Venetian plans. Bernardo writes:

Li Persiani sono fra Turchi come li eretici fra di noi, perchè alcuni di quelli seguitano la dottrina di Alì, e altri la dottrina di Omar tutti e due discepoli di Maometto, ma contrarj di opinione.⁴¹⁷

In conclusion, Lorenzo Bernardo and a large part of Venetian establishment had hoped for an alliance with the largest Shi'i power – the 'heretics' of Muslim powers, according to Bernardo's definition – against the strongest Sunni power; hence, the template would have been that of an alliance designed to foster an intra-confessional struggle. Despite this original formulation, this project of unholy alliance had been severely condemned by Gentili. Nonetheless, Bernardo pointed

⁴¹⁵ Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 39.

⁴¹⁶ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 2, 328.

⁴¹⁷ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 2, 367.

out that, as much as Cavalli, the alliance between Christian powers and the Shah, although for a limited period, would lead the Ottomans to ruin:

La terza causa della rovina de' Turchi potria seguire se un re di Persia valoroso, avendo pace, come ora, con il Tartaro [the Crimean Tatars], volesse recuperare con l'aiuto e artiglieria e milizia Spagnuola il suo paese perduto, e che li Cristiani, se non tutti almeno la maggior parte, con una contribuzione che avesse e potesse durar cinque o sei anni li ajutassero, e dico cinque o sei anni, perché non bisogna pensare di soggiogar mai li Turchi né vincerli se non ammazzandoli come loro fecero delli Mamalucchi in Egitto; e questo non si potria fare così facilmente, né in poco tempo né in due o tre sole battaglie.⁴¹⁸

This anti-Ottoman sentiment had been circulating in Venice for quite some time: certainly, a major factor was the Unbearable Peace of 1573, with the ultimate loss of Cyprus; however, another certain responsible of this climate of hatred was a certain Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi. A trained physician from Rovigo, Minadoi had had the chance to see firsthand the Ottoman-Persian War when he accompanied the Venetian Ambassador to Syria Teodoro Balbi in 1578.⁴¹⁹ His major work, the *Historia della guerra fra Turchi, et Persiani*, had been reprinted in Venice in 1588 and gathered a massive success. In Minadoi's pages it is possible to find all the *topoi* that had contributed to fashion the image of the Ottomans characterised by their brazen cunning and untrustworthiness. According to Minadoi, everything was legitimate to conquer new lands, including breaking previously signed agreements:

Tanto empimente, & tanto barbaramente si gouerna questo Imperio, che quandonque si tratti di tentar alcuna impresa per accrescimento di quello, sia lecito violar la tregua, & romper la fede.

Minadoi even suggested that the Ottomans had declared war on the Persians since it was strategically easier to fight one divided empire instead of allied Christian powers which, despite all their frictions, could come to mutual aid:

Douesse riuscir più facile, & men pericolosa impresa, guerreggiare con Persiani, che con li Prencipi Christiani; sì perche le discordie nuouamente nate nel Regno di Persia, & la conditione

⁴¹⁸ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 2, 378.

⁴¹⁹ Giuseppe Gullino, 'Minadoi, Giovanni Tommaso', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 74 (2010).

del nuouo successore dell'Impero Soffiano [the Shah Mohammad Khodabanda], al gouerno, & alla guerra, prometteuano ogni fortunata vittoria; & sì anchora, perche il muouer la guerra alli Prencipi Christiani, non sarebbe farsi nemico quel solo Prencipe à cui tal guerra si muouesse [...] ma sarebbe un guerreggiare con tutti li Potentati Christiani insieme.⁴²⁰

The situation started to change, for Venice's sake, when Abbas I became Shah in 1587. Berchet states that besides restoring the empire's lost prestige, Abbas resumed an intense correspondence with the Republic.⁴²¹ This was due to a renewal of hostilities against the Ottomans in 1603, while the latter were engulfed in Europe by fighting the Habsburgs in the Long Turkish War (1593-1606); in this circumstance, Abbas proposed advantageous conditions for Venetian traders in Persian lands to doge Marino Grimani (r. 1595-1605), who gladly accepted to restart an intense albeit formal relationship with the Shah and the Republic.⁴²²

3.2. *The Unbearable Peace: The Aftermath of the War of Cyprus*

After having explored the feasibility of unholy alliances in Venetian strategic thinking during and just after the War of Cyprus, our attention will be devoted to understanding the complicated relationship between Venice and the Ottoman Empire after the 1573 peace, which resulted in a refashioning of its foreign policy agenda at the end of the sixteenth century. To accomplish such a complicated task, it is first fruitful to understand the Venetian attitude towards the Ottomans. We can affirm with a certain degree of confidence that this attitude had been heavily influenced by the Florentine thinker and politician Niccolò Machiavelli, particularly regarding his conception of slavery. In chapter IV of *Il Principe*, which contains a brief analysis about the nature of Ottoman rule at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Florentine Secretary stated that the compactness of the Ottoman Empire made it quite difficult to conquer, but easy to maintain; this was due to the fact every subject was a 'slave':

Tutta la monarchia del Turco è governata da uno signore: li altri sono sua servi. [...] perché, sendogli tutti stiavi e obligati, si possono con più difficultà corrompere e, quando bene si

⁴²⁰ Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, *Historia della guerra fra Turchi, et Persiani* (Venice: Andrea Muschio & Barezzo Barezzi, 1594), 20-21.

⁴²¹ Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 41.

⁴²² Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 47.

corrompessino, se ne può sperare poco utile, non potendo quelli tirarsi dreto e' populi per le ragioni assegnate.⁴²³

My argument is that this Machiavellian influence could be clearly discerned from other telling sources, the Venetian *relazioni*, which have been a useful source throughout this whole dissertation. Despite having been studied in detail by many scholars, the relevance of these sources is far from being exhausted, for they shed light on important features of Venetian strategic thinking in regard to the Ottoman Empire. It is by analysing them that we can understand the framework within which Venice started to reorganise its standing in the international scenario. Before reading their content, it is useful to describe in detail their function and for which purposes they were written.

3.2.1. *Relazioni as an Open-Source of Intelligence*

To be extremely concise, one can argue that *relazioni* were essentially end-of-mission reports intended to deliver useful intelligence to the Venetian authorities. Consequently, as Filippo de Vivo has stated, ‘that knowledge had to be locked away from the eyes of outsiders, not least because *relazioni* often supplied sensitive information concerning allies or enemies’.⁴²⁴ Moreover, as David Scott Gehring has argued, the *relazioni* were ‘didactic in nature and intended to represent a holistic and cohesive synthesis of the foreign land’s history, politics, religion, and geography’.⁴²⁵

Unfortunately for the authorities, these *relazioni* soon proved to be a quite desired piece of literature, and they were very soon published and largely widespread. In theory, the only diffusion these intelligence reports were supposed to have was of oral nature – their delivery had to be done before the Senate. Nevertheless, every ambassador was requested to deposit a written copy of his *relazione* in the Venetian archives: the Council of Ten had understood the relevance of these reports and had created in 1425 a special section in the *Cancellaria Secreta*.⁴²⁶ However, it was very easy for bystanders or listeners to take mental notes of what was being said in these meetings, and *relazioni* quickly became a successful literary genre. What strikes even more is that ambassadors themselves prepared short summaries of their speeches; although they were supposed to be kept secret, these

⁴²³ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), IV, 25-26.

⁴²⁴ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 57.

⁴²⁵ David Scott Gehring, ‘Intelligence Gathering, *Relazioni*, and the *Ars Apodemica*’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 33, no. 2 (2022): 211-232, here 214.

⁴²⁶ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 59.

reports were used by the ambassadors to gain ‘personal prestige or assert a factional line, it was important to reach peers in the wider political arena through leaking’.⁴²⁷ They could also be used for lobbying purposes in order to convince the authorities to pursue specific strategic agendas. It should not be a surprise that the War of Cyprus had made clear for the Venetians the necessity to assess the recently-changed Mediterranean context.

As seen above, Venice had tried not only to encourage uprisings by the Christian inhabitants of the Empire – it had even tried to convince the Shah of Persia to attack the Ottomans on their eastern flank. Such strategic plans or ‘strategic fantasies’, as Noel Malcolm labels them, had become a pregnant feature in Venetian geopolitical thinking and the failure to accomplish them ‘was also a reason for painting a more sombre picture of Ottoman conditions’.⁴²⁸ A clear sign of this increasing hatred for the Ottomans could be discerned by the already-mentioned and deeply discussed Barbaro’s *relazione*. The bailo’s tone is hardly surprising: it is crucial to keep in mind that he had been tasked with negotiating the Unbearable Peace which had ended the war: therefore, in this *relazione*, the portrait of the Sultan’s subjects that Barbaro offers is far from flattering.

Tutte le provincie del Signor-Turco sono talmente tiranneggiate, e così distrutti li paesi, e tenuti in tanta viltà e disperazione, che sarebbe pericolosissimo agli Ottomani imperatori valersi di loro: il che essendo ben conosciuto da loro non tengono però conto di alcuno di essi.⁴²⁹

Barbaro then continues his merciless analysis of the Ottoman government:

È aiutata e favorita ancora questa obbedienza dalla grandezza dei confini di quell’impero, nel quale non includendosi alcuna particolare giurisdizione, essendo la detta gente dal primo all’ultimo tutti schiavi, non possono quelli che commettono errori salvarsi così facilmente come nelli nostri paesi fanno li delinquenti; ed oltre la lontananza dei confini si rende ancor più difficile il fuggire, in quanto che li paesi confinanti sono di religione ed animo assai nemici ai Turchi, dai quali non aspettano li fuggitivi sicurtà alcuna.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 58.

⁴²⁸ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 224.

⁴²⁹ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 307.

⁴³⁰ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 1, 327-328.

Barbaro's *relazione* is one of the many examples that could be made to explain the relevance that these *relazioni* had in intelligence-gathering outside the political arena per se. As we have seen, many people outside the patrician ruling class had proved essential in espionage operations: Christopher Andrew has defined them as 'part-time or full-time agents without strong national or dynastic loyalties prepared to sell their information to the highest or most congenial bidders, whose identities might change over time'.⁴³¹ Henceforth, for these professionals of intelligence, who were excluded from the highest circles of Venetian policy-making, and who had built their social standing by offering sensitive information to their contacts, *relazioni* were a vital source.⁴³²

As already stated above, one of the central arguments of this dissertation is that even more than money, the most requested commodity in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean was information. Hence, one's status heavily depended on the amount of information they possessed and the access they had to sensitive intelligence. Consequently, owning a *relazione* was a clear indicator of one's social relevance – if they possessed such valuable information, this meant that they had inner insights which the normal people were prohibited to have.⁴³³ In fact, ambassadors were privileged channels for public knowledge: actually, they frequently exchanged information with one another in informal environments, such as private homes, churches, and squares.

Accordingly with the logic of spatial marginality mentioned in the first chapter about the Ghetto, the Venetian authorities had tried to limit the unofficial mingling between ambassadors, which could damage the city's jealously guarded secrecy. Since diplomacy and intelligence went hand in hand – and being undisputed masters in that – the Venetians initially perceived the establishment of foreign embassies in their homeland as hostile cells with the clear purpose of obtaining sensitive intelligence. Consequently, foreign embassies were not located in the city centre, as a 21st-century reader might expect; rather, they were confined to the northern *sestiere* of Cannaregio, not far from the Jewish Ghetto but quite far from San Marco, Venice's political centre.⁴³⁴ To give another instance of this spatial exclusion enacted by the Venetians, Cristiana Facchini has underlined that the English

⁴³¹ Andrew, *The Secret World*, 124.

⁴³² De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 62.

⁴³³ Gehring, 'Intelligence Gathering, *Relazioni*', 215.

⁴³⁴ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 75.

embassy was topographically near to the Jewish Ghetto, since 'Jews and Protestants had been perceived as outside the Catholic fold and therefore placed, in the city, as contiguous'.⁴³⁵

To borrow Malcolm's terminology employed in his *Useful Enemies*, the *relazioni* belonged to the 'old paradigm', namely the depiction of the Ottoman Empire as a 'malevolent and oppressive regime, inspired in part by an evil religion' with which an unholy alliance was totally inconceivable.⁴³⁶ Nonetheless, this ruthless criticism had not been matched by an aggressive foreign policy. According to Eric Dursteler, Venice had slipped into the second tier of European states and its predominant position that had held in the previous centuries was increasingly fading away.⁴³⁷ Indeed, the old families of the Venetian patriciate had agreed to adopt a policy of neutrality and non-alignment, known as the politics of the 'Old Men'.

Rather than an actual policy of collaboration, Venice adopted a flexible conduct towards the Ottomans in order not to break the Unbearable Peace signed in 1573, which had posed an end to 'ogni residua velleità veneziana di recuperare i territori del Levante e con essi un ruolo egemonico in tutto il Mediterraneo orientale'.⁴³⁸ It is precisely by noticing this gradual waning of its once crucial power that Venice had embarked in the creation of an efficient postal system, for controlling information was the only means left in order to build a recognisable political standing in the Mediterranean. The last painful defeat and the unbearable peace they had been forced to sign made the Venetians aware that engaging militarily with the Ottomans was not the most profitable solution; rather, 'they would have to rely primarily on a strong network of defensive fortifications, combined with soft-power, nonmilitary means to maintain and defend the city's remaining holdings in the eastern Mediterranean'.⁴³⁹ From then on, Venice refashioned its foreign policy strategy by elaborating an original mix of political realism and common sense, in a period when the calls to crusades, as explored below, were becoming ever more intense. As Paolo Preto wrote, Venice would never give to the conflict 'un carattere di guerra "totale" come spesso auspicano Pontefici, uomini politici e scrittori occidentali più o meno ingenui e disinteressati'.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ Facchini, 'The City, the Ghetto', 22.

⁴³⁶ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 149.

⁴³⁷ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 28.

⁴³⁸ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 36.

⁴³⁹ Dursteler, 'Power and Communication', 617.

⁴⁴⁰ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 21.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a new faction emerged within the Venetian patriciate, that of the ‘Young Men’, whose main exponents were the members of the old families lying in a state of decay and often met in extra-institutional spaces, whose importance for Venetian policy-making should not be underestimated. Since politics was frequently exercised outside formal gatherings and organs, the patricians understood that they were required, in order to be successful, to create a network of powerful colleagues with whom planning their business, possible alliances as well as devising fresh strategies.

There were substantially two informal spaces in which patricians gathered themselves and exchanged information with one another. According to de Vivo, these were invaluable assets which enabled ‘patricians to interact more freely than in the controlled framework of governing council’.⁴⁴¹ The first of these two environments was the *broglio*, a square outside the Ducal Palace where patricians would unite with their contacts in order to cultivate one’s political network. The second one, and the most interesting for understanding espionage networks, was the *ridotto*, an unspecified term meaning either an exclusive social occasion or the room in which a meeting was held. Given that these *ridotti* offered occasions by which to meet other diplomats, ambassadors were keen to attend them to cultivate their own network. Filippo de Vivo discusses about a seventeenth-century manuscript entitled *Ricordi per li ambasciatori* in which is made abundantly clear that sociability as the best way of ‘skilfully and tactfully discovering the affairs of the court, the news of the world, and the important business of other princes’.⁴⁴² Other than that, the *ridotti* had also a fundamental role ‘in cementing a culturally and politically cohesive opposition’.⁴⁴³

One of these opposition was precisely the one that gathered itself in the *ridotto* Morosini, organised by the brothers Paolo and Andrea. Among them we can count figures who would become central in the history of the Republic – Leonardo Donà, Paolo Sarpi, and Nicolò Contarini. They belonged to the ‘new paradigm’, namely a depiction of Ottoman government and society as ‘a well-ordered and stable system, in which significant aspects of civil life were better arranged than their equivalents in Western Christendom’.⁴⁴⁴ This new approach found its parallel in a huge shift within

⁴⁴¹ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 48.

⁴⁴² De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 72.

⁴⁴³ De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 48.

⁴⁴⁴ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 137.

Venetian politics. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the foreign policy strategy adopted by Venice had changed: now the number one enemy was Spain, and it is important to remember the event of the Interdetto, which had severely strained the relations between Venice and the Papacy.

3.2.2. Nicolò Contarini and the Party of the Young Men

The member of one of the oldest Venetian families, Nicolò Contarini, is a clear example of this latest strategic approach. Contarini openly advocated for a more aggressive foreign policy, which had to be overtly anti-Habsburg, since he reckoned them as the only power capable of choking Venice's imperial ambitions.⁴⁴⁵ Increasingly, Contarini's strategic thought frequently expressed appreciation for the Ottoman Empire and Islam in general, an element that fully inscribed Contarini within the 'new paradigm'; as Noel Malcolm states, 'Contarini's attitude was openly and unashamedly Machiavellian'.⁴⁴⁶ In the *Discorsi*, Machiavelli had proposed a quite original view of religion while discussing the benefits it gave to Roman society thanks to Numa Pompilius:

Il quale trovando un popolo ferocissimo, e volendolo ridurre alle obbedienze civili con le parti della pace, si volse alla religione come cosa al tutto necessaria a volere mantenere una civiltà, e la costituì in modo che per più secoli non fu mai tanto timore di Dio quanto in quella repubblica; il che facilitò qualunque impresa che il Senato o quelli grandi uomini disegnassero fare. [...] E vedesi, chi considera bene le istorie romane, quanto serviva la religione a comandare gli eserciti, ad animare la Plebe, a mantenere gli uomini buoni, a fare vergognare i rei. [...] conchiudo che la religione introdotta da Numa fu intra le prime cagioni della felicità di quella città, perché quella causò i buoni ordini, i buoni ordini fanno buona fortuna, e dalla buona fortuna nacquero i felici successi delle imprese.⁴⁴⁷

So, Machiavelli was not an anti-religious thinker at all; rather, he showed honest appreciation for the benefits given to Roman society by a pagan religion. Hence Islam, a religion devoted to action and worldly success, and not to humility and contemplation, could be regarded as a highly fruitful civil religion in producing 'good orders' and Ottoman successes.⁴⁴⁸ This highly cynical conception of

⁴⁴⁵ Gaetano Cozzi, 'Contarini, Nicolò', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 28 (1983).

⁴⁴⁶ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 291.

⁴⁴⁷ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), I. 11, 67-69.

⁴⁴⁸ Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, II. 2, 224. Machiavelli despised what he called 'current religion', since it 'ha glorificato più gli uomini umili e contemplativi che gli attivi'.

religion as *instrumentum imperii* had also been outlined by bailo Matteo Zane, who had returned in 1594 to Venice. In his *relazione*, Zane wrote that:

La religione ha sinora servito propriamente ai turchi per accrescere le forze ed aumentare l'impero: perché chi la ordinò fece sagacissimamente un misto di molte, scelte per tirarne diverse in una, come che la turca contenga in sé alcuna particola di tutte, e lor serve medesimamente a conservare in fede li sudditi proprj ed ingannare molte particolari persone idiote, come sono così gran numero di rinnegati, gente feroce e veramente incredula, e a mantenere in ufficio i soldati, facendoli abbandonare ogni comodità ed incontrare i pericoli sotto pretesto di destino.⁴⁴⁹

In the 1620s, Contarini was appointed as the official historian of the Republic and dedicated himself to the *Historie venete*; despite being an unpublished manuscript, the *Historie* provide illuminating information about how Contarini conceived of Islam and its legislators, namely those who posed the foundations of Islam and the temporal benefits for conceding religious freedom:

Li nuoui legislatori sopra tutti gli altri astutissimi per raccogliere da ogni luogo ogni sorte di persone, quanti più si potesse, innalzarono sopra di essa una machinazione la più artificiosa, che potesse esser costrutta, et è: che Dio, sebbene uolle, che la Legge insegnata da Maometto fosse la migliore, nondimeno hà caro di esser adorato con uarie religioni, né sdegnà alcuna, e perciò che niuna deue esser rifiutata, purchè riconosca il Rè Maomettano per superiore, e le sia pagato il Carazzo, cioè il censo capitale decretatole.⁴⁵⁰

However, it would be too risky to dare say that Venice tried to form an unholy alliance with the Sultan, even though Contarini and the 'Young Men' advocated an anti-Habsburg alliance in which the Ottomans could have been a central actor. Nonetheless, Paolo Preto has underlined that in the seventeenth century the Venetians were not particularly keen to highlight the parallel decline of the Ottoman Empire, since 'in fondo sottolineare la crescente debolezza del tradizionale antagonista rischia di rendere più evidente l'impotenza di Venezia a profittarne per ristabilire il predominio in

⁴⁴⁹ Albèri, ed., *Relazioni*, serie III, vol. 3 (Florence: Società Fiorentina, 1855), 404-405.

⁴⁵⁰ British Library, London, MS King's 151, Contarini, 'Historie venete', book 2, fols. 164v-165r, quoted in Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 285.

Levante'.⁴⁵¹ In 1630, Contarini was elected as doge of Venice at 77 years of age; unfortunately, he died the following year: we do not know whether or not he would have tried to form an unholy alliance with the Ottomans to strike a Christian power – a scenario which would have surely disgusted Gentili.

3.3. Crusades & Crusades: Enticing Sovereigns Against the Infidels

Before continuing with the analysis of grand strategies – the last relevant part of this work – an introduction to the concept of crusade is necessary, for it will be employed very frequently in this final part. The idea of crusade must not be relegated only to the Middle Ages. In the sixteenth century, many Popes were envisioning grand geopolitical plans – to employ Nina Silove's first definition of the term 'grand strategy' – which involved the final destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 'whether by internal revolts, warfare by Western rulers, geopolitical strategies involving other powers such as Muscovy (or even Persia), or any combination of the above'.⁴⁵² In order to be more convincing and appealing, these popes frequently made use of the word crusade, which Malcolm broadly defines as 'any religiously motivated and formally declared war by Christians against infidels'.⁴⁵³

Naturally, a conception of unholy alliances must have been horrifying to their eyes. It is crucial to remember that this prohibition did not have only theological reasons in itself: the Christian world of the mid-sixteenth century was facing enormous pressures both from within and without. The reference is mainly directed to the Reformation, which had severely divided Western Christendom. Facing a potentially detrimental outcome, Noel Malcolm's statement according to which the 'crusade itself was both an end in itself and a means to other ends, the common factor being the long-term strengthening of Catholic Christendom' seems rather convincing.⁴⁵⁴ Moreover, the unholy alliance closed by François I with Suleyman had provoked a serious geostrategic upheaval. Considering this abrupt detachment from Christian allies, the Popes understood that if one them

⁴⁵¹ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 43. The notion of 'decline' has been recently questioned by historians such as Marc David Baer and others, who prefer to talk about 'transformation' of the Ottoman Empire, rather than 'decline'. See Baer, *The Ottomans*, 257; Worringer, *A Short History of the Ottoman Empire*, 331.

⁴⁵² Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 59.

⁴⁵³ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 60.

⁴⁵⁴ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 60.

resolved the French-Imperial conflict, this would have not only settled the conflict at the heart of Christendom – it would have also created a broad anti-Ottoman alliance which would have included both Habsburgs and Valois.⁴⁵⁵

However, Venice had always avoided to be involved in such monumental projects; in her eyes, the Crusade to defend Western Christendom against the ‘universal Ottoman enemy’ always clashed with ‘la calcolata difesa, in termini di *Realpolitik*, dei propri interessi di stato proteso verso l’Oriente e vitalmente interessato a salvaguardare ad ogni costo con i rapporti commerciali col mercato ottomano le ragioni stesse della propria esistenza’.⁴⁵⁶ In rejecting these offers of participation in crusading efforts, Venice had to rely on its most competent ambassadors and diplomats, especially those residing in Rome. The one on whom we are going to focus is Paolo Paruta, ambassador to Rome from 1592 to 1595.

According to Paolo Preto, Paruta’s highly contradictory personality can be discerned by his explosive meetings with Clement VIII, who was trying to involve as many Christian polities as possible in a large coalition against the Ottomans, in what would be eventually called the Long Turkish War (1593-1606). Paruta was forced to defend the Unbearable Peace signed in 1573 in his *Historia della guerra di Cipro*: an image of realism is given by the realisation that ‘i Turchi costituiscono anche dopo Lepanto una potenza formidabile ed un baluardo pressoché inattaccabile contro cui vanamente si infrangerebbero le isolate forze veneziane’.⁴⁵⁷ Actually, the Venetians regarded themselves first as subjects of the Serenissima, and then Christians – exemplified by the expression ‘prima semo veneziani, poi cristiani’. Paruta had become the agent in Rome advocating this foreign policy tenet, since he was utterly convinced that the only way in order to have a relevant standing in the international scenario for Venice was an independent policy of neutrality ‘against the crusading stance advocated by the papacy and Spain’.⁴⁵⁸ So, this effort of not provoking the Sultan in order not to damage the Venetian trading interest – re-established after a huge amount of fatigue – found coherence in the banishment of a book published in 1598 in Ferrara by a Venetian citizen – *L’Ottomanno* by Lazzaro Soranzo.

⁴⁵⁵ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, 61.

⁴⁵⁶ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 21.

⁴⁵⁷ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 181.

⁴⁵⁸ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 12.

The controversy behind this book started right after its publication, when the Council of the Ten forbade Soranzo's treaty since he had discussed and spoken about things which were prohibited to reveal. Actually, besides revealing sensitive information about domestic politics (the proverbial *arcana imperii*), Soranzo had composed his treaty inspired by the renewed missionary impulse fostered by Pope Clement VIII, with the outspoken purpose of suggesting all the possible remedies against the Turks, in order to win and eradicate them.⁴⁵⁹ 'Modesta opera di propaganda anti-turca', as Preto labels it,⁴⁶⁰ *L'Ottomanno* starts by discussing the Ottoman army, which showed its frailty despite the victory in the last Ottoman-Persian War (1578-1590). Soranzo writes:

I Turchi sono fatti adesso così molli, & effeminati, spetialmente dopoiche le delitie de' Persi hanno cagionato in loro, quello a punto, che cagionò il lusso tra Greci, e trà Romani, che vogliono condur' alla guerra tante commodità di letto, e di cucina, e di vettovaglie.⁴⁶¹

Moreover, Soranzo claims that, before attacking Hungary and thus starting the Long War, the Ottomans had thought of waging war against the Italian peninsula, at the time divided into several principedoms, not to mention Venice, which Soranzo described as 'timid' and incapable of preparing for a war.⁴⁶² According to Vincenzo Lavenia, these were the pages that unleashed Serenissima's anger by pinpointing its weaknesses, which had led to the decision of not intervening and waiting for the war to end:

E che per conchiusione la Republica di Venetia dubitando di non prouocarli contra l'armi Ottomanne, sarebbe stata più tosto a vedere l'essito della guerra, che si fosse posta a certo ad almeno a dubbioso pericolo di perder se stessa.⁴⁶³

But in the third part of the treaty Soranzo hopes for a Venetian alliance with Spain – namely, a purely holy alliance – to win the enemy on the sea, thereby reigniting the flame of a Crusade against the infidels:

⁴⁵⁹ Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno*, Dedicà ai lettori ('tutti i ueri rimedij per vincerlo, e debellarlo').

⁴⁶⁰ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 178.

⁴⁶¹ Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno*, 21.

⁴⁶² Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno*, 55 ('Che quella Republica hauendo per fine la pace, par che sia timida, e che giamai per suo antico istituto, se non tratta a forza, s'apparecchia alla guerra').

⁴⁶³ Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno*, 65.

Mouendo dunque il Gran Turco la guerra alla Repubblica di Venetia [...] sarebbe necessario ... che tutti i Principi Christiani pensassero molto bene a mantenerla in stato, e senza, che le potesse esser fatto alcun notabile nocumento [...] Sopra tutti conuerrebbe, che ciò si facesse il Rè Catolico [Philip II of Spain], o collegandoli con essa, o soccorrendola altramente, sì perché è credibile, ch'il Turco non impiegarebbe le sue forze per abbassar solamente la Republica Venetiana, ma per hauer modo tanto più facile di tentar l'Italia, nella quale la Corona di Spagna possiede le più belle parti [...] senza dubbio il vero modo d'esterminal l'inimico, sarebbe di vincerlo in mare, e massime in questi tempi, ch'egli non ha armata di conto, mancando molto di galeotti, e d'huomini da commando, che sieno intelligenti, e valorosi in questa professione.⁴⁶⁴

In the end, the crushing defeat of the Ottoman Empire would have been caused, according to Soranzo, by internal fatal uprisings – based on internal divisions – caused by the circulation of ‘libri facili’ written in as many languages as those belonging to the Empire, in order to sow discord by spreading Christian principles.⁴⁶⁵ According to Lavenia, these books would have created discord in the Ottoman Empire in the same way that the Protestant writings had lacerated Latin Europe by pitting Christians against each other in Germany, France and Flanders.⁴⁶⁶ So, Paolo Preto concludes that the personal standing of Soranzo posed a problem considering the international tensions with Venice, at the time dedicated to ‘respingere con cautela e moderazione ma anche con decisa fermezza ogni sollecitazione del papa per una lega generale anti-turca la cui unica conseguenza sarebbe di lanciare i Turchi all’attacco dei possessi veneziani in Levante senza valide garanzie di un effettivo aiuto spagnolo’.⁴⁶⁷ Hence, in order to avoid someone to collect this invitation to crusade, the Council of Ten eventually deliberated ‘di bandirlo dallo stato e di far distruggere le copie del libro ancora in circolazione’.⁴⁶⁸

3.3.1. *Grand Designs in the Early Modern Period: A Brief Framework*

L'Ottomanno and other grand geopolitical plans can be considered as what the Renaissance historian Miriam Eliav-Feldon has termed ‘Grand Designs’, namely treaties that advocated for the possibility

⁴⁶⁴ Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno*, 89.

⁴⁶⁵ Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno*, 115.

⁴⁶⁶ Lavenia, ‘I libri, le armi e le missioni’, 182.

⁴⁶⁷ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 180.

⁴⁶⁸ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 180.

of a world without war. The sixteenth century saw a particular proliferation of these texts in Europe, especially because it was a century marked by unprecedented violence, civil wars resulting from the fragmentation of Western Christian unity, and conflicts with the Ottoman Empire. Eliav-Feldon also highlights that the spread of the printing press was a crucial factor in the production and circulation of these kinds of texts.⁴⁶⁹

Following a slightly different interpretative line, Andrew Mansfield argues that the intellectual reflection regarding peace plans, which gathered momentum in the first decades of the seventeenth century, was parallel to the developments in the field of international law; some of them offered an alternative based on the promotion of trade as vital for creating peace among political entities, like the case of the *New Cyneas* by Émeric Crucé.⁴⁷⁰ Many of the authors compiling the grand geopolitical schemes envisaged alliances which consisted in a broader collaboration between Christian powers against the Ottomans.⁴⁷¹ Eliav-Feldon points out that the possible outcomes were just two: either ‘re-unification or acceptance of diversity’ between Catholics and Protestants.⁴⁷² This was due to the belief held by many writers that Europeans needed to cease fighting among themselves.

However, these treaties did not always align with an anti-militarist stance. On the contrary, many of these works explicitly linked the idea of peace with extensive and costly war efforts. In this context, the case of Hugo Grotius is particularly noteworthy. His work in international law suggested that while aggressive relations between states could be restrained, they could not be entirely eradicated. Nonetheless, the common fear of the Ottomans served as a unifying force, driving European and Christian alliances. *L’Ottomanno* and other texts eventually became ended up in ‘folte legioni di visionari e utopici progettisti di colossali spedizioni in Oriente destinate nella fantasia a capovolgere a favore dei cristiani un equilibrio politico e militare ormai stabilito da decenni’.⁴⁷³ The proliferation of *Turcica*, a collection of works on various aspects of Ottoman society and governance

⁴⁶⁹ Eliav-Feldon, ‘Grand Designs. The Peace Plans of the Late Renaissance’, *Vivarium* 27, no. 1 (1989): 51-76, here 53.

⁴⁷⁰ On this scarcely known treatise and its innovative proposal, see Andrew Mansfield, ‘Émeric Crucé’s “Nouveau Cynée” (1623), Universal Peace and Free Trade’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History of Ideas* 2 (2013), 1-23; German A. de la Reza, ‘The 1623 Plan for Global Governance: The Obscure History of its Reception’, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 58 (2015): 146-160.

⁴⁷¹ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 259.

⁴⁷² Eliav-Feldon, ‘Grand Designs’, 58.

⁴⁷³ Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 179.

reflected this fear and fascination, underscoring the complex European response to the Ottoman presence.⁴⁷⁴

3.3.2. *Domenico Bisanti's* Relatione dell'Imperio Turchesco

Before diving into the analysis of one unpublished grand strategy chosen for this dissertation, it is useful to provide a broader framework. To accomplish this task, the first source to be discussed in detail is an intelligence report written by Domenico Bisanti in 1614, a Dominican friar from Kotor. Unfortunately, little is known about Bisanti's life prior to 1606, the year in which he reached Naples to reside in the Basilica di Santa Lucia, after many years of wandering across the Ottoman Empire. It was from Santa Lucia that he sent his *Relatione dell'Imperio Turchesco* in 1614 to Pedro Fernández de Castro y Andrade, Count of Lemos, the Viceroy of Naples (r. 1610-1616).⁴⁷⁵ The dedication reads:

Havendo dato intentione a Vostra Signoria illustrissima et eccellentissima, nella relatione fatta questi giorni adietro sopra il mio viaggio di Levante, di darle una distinta notitia di tutto lo Imperio et Stato ottomano, ho fatto la presente relatione, nella quale con brevità describo quanto possiede il Gran Turco in Asia, Africa et Europa; le entrate et spese di queste tre parti; tutta la militia terrestre et maritima; il governo turchesco; un breve raguaglio della sucessione delli imperatori ottomani; et la corte del Gran Turco. E sebene non sarà cosa degna della notitia di un tanto prencipe, confido che con la sua solita benignità riceverà quel tanto che con ogni affetto e fidelità ho saputo descrivere, offerendo con questa la mia prontissima volontà di sacrificare la vita propria ad ogni comando di Vostra Eccellenza, la quale il Signore conservi felicissima per molti anni.⁴⁷⁶

However, the *Relatione* was also sent to Scipione Borghese, the Cardinal-Protector of the Dominican Order from 1606 and the nephew of Camillo Borghese, Pope Paul V. This charge gave him a 'condizione di grande autorità sia sui superiori domenicani sia sui singoli membri dell'ordine, che ovviamente vedevano in lui una sorta di tribunale d'appello oltre che un prezioso strumento di

⁴⁷⁴ Eliav-Feldon, 'Grand Designs', 61.

⁴⁷⁵ Simona Negruzzo, *La «cristiana impresa». L'Europa di fronte all'Impero Ottomano all'alba del XVI secolo* (Milan: Cisalpino, 2019), 38.

⁴⁷⁶ Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca, Manuscritos 402 [hereafter: BUS, M 402], fol. 1v.

promozione nella carriera ecclesiastica'.⁴⁷⁷ Hence, it should not surprise the reason why Bisanti sent his *Relatione* both to the Viceroy of Naples and Scipione Borghese, for they were the representatives of these two polities, to whom he was also acquainted the most. Moreover, he considered Spain and the Papacy as the only powers capable of countering the Ottomans – one representing the secular power, the other embodying the temporal power. By sending two letters to them, Bisanti thought of being more convincing and likely hoped for a collaboration between the two. As such, Bisanti addresses Borghese by writing:

Illustrissimo et Reverendo Signore, considerando il fervente zelo et santa intentione di nostro signore papa Paulo quinto nell'essaltare la Santa Romana Chiesa, et estirpare gl'inimici di quella, essendo stato molti anni in Constantinopoli, et altre parti di Levante, ho voluto descrivere l'Impero, l'entrate, la militia, il governo, et lo stato presente del Gran Turco, il quale sapendo quanto sarà necessario et utile alla cognitione di Sua Santità e di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima ho voluto offerirlo et umilmente pregare Vostra Signoria Illustrissima di ricevere con la sua solita benignità questa mia picciola fatica con l'agio grande, il quale sempre ho havuto, di sacrificare questo mio sangue in servizio della Santa Romana Chiesa.⁴⁷⁸

As stated above, the long-term benefit to be gained from these enterprises was the reunification of Christianity as a whole; this pursuit of unity was fundamental in facing the Ottomans fruitfully, whose successes rested on two pillars: 'il rispetto di un'autorità assoluta [...] e la riprovazione dei vizi'.⁴⁷⁹ For Domenico Bisanti – and Soranzo as well – the anti-Ottoman Crusade was expressing a profound need for unity and cohesion in the face of Europe's manifest political divisions. The grim situation which the Ottoman Empire had started to witness in the Balkans during the Long Turkish War – which started in 1593, just three years after the conclusion of the Ottoman-Safavid War (1590) and which would end with Ottoman defeat in 1606 – made the likelihood of waging a Crusade ever more appealing:

Di questa parte il Turcho, avanti di quelle guerre, haveva gran beneficio ne' suoi paesi, in maniera tale che mai si ha sentita carestia alcuna. Hora, al contrario, perché in Constantinopoli più delle

⁴⁷⁷ Negruzzo, *La «cristiana impresa»*, 42.

⁴⁷⁸ Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Fondo Borghese [hereafter: AAV, FB], serie IV, 110, fol. 3r.

⁴⁷⁹ Negruzzo, «*La cristiana impresa*», 22.

volte si ha aspettato qualche pericoloso tumulto per mancamenti di vittovaglie, lo quale o sia causato dalla tempesta di mare, portandovisi al presente ogni cosa dalla parte di mare con le navi, che prima da infraterra si provedeva d'Ungaria, Transilvania, Valachia, Moldavia, Bulgaria et altri paesi, fioriti in queglii tempi, hoggidì dessolati per quelle ultime guerre et essausti d'ogni bene, ovvero che quelle provintie transmarine non puono dare quella sufficiente vittovaglia per una città piena di grande populo et altre provintie nominate, le quali ne hanno più bisogno [di] esser aiutate che da quelle portar fuori.⁴⁸⁰

Focusing on strictly martial matters, in the eight chapter of the *Relatione*, Bisanti stressed the military weakness of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617), in the hope that Philip III of Spain (r. 1598-1621) might exploit the chance to attack him. Alongside Philip, the Emperor Rudolph II (r. 1576-1612) would have attacked across Central Europe, while the Persian Shah dealt the final blow by closing the Ottomans in a pincer:

Affirmando di nuovo che mai il Turco [Sultan Ahmed I] è stato in tanto pericoloso stato quanto si trova al presente, e particolarmente per mare [...] il che chiaramente si è veduto questo presente anno, che al grande rumore di trecento gallere, che dicevano [di] voler mandar fuori, a malapena hanno mandato, con tutte le loro guardie, ottantacinque gallere fiachissime, il che si vede per la impresa che hanno fatto. E se le gallere di Sua Maestà [Philip III] questo anno facessero qualche impresa di vascelli o altra, io m'assicurarei che questo futuro anno l'armata turchesca sarrà peggio della presente, e sebene acrescesse il numero delle galere, saranno prossimamente armate, havendo benissimo veduto et considerato tutta la dispositione nel viaggio fatto per comandamento di Vostra Eccellenza, e se si facesse opera che in questo mentre Sua Maestà Cesarea [Rudolph II] la rompesse, infalibilmente il Persiano [Abbas I] la ataccaria dall'altra parte, e sarebbe occasione di annichilare afatto le forze di questa casa ottomana.⁴⁸¹

In the version sent to Scipione Borghese, which is essentially complementary to the *Relatione* sent to Lemos, Bisanti stressed once again the importance of a united European anti-Ottoman front, especially in a period when the Sultanate was experiencing political upheavals on the European side as well as on the Persian one. Ahmed I had accessed the throne in 1603, when his father Mehmed III had died; unlike the previous Sultans, as the historian Marc David Baer pointed out, 'he was young

⁴⁸⁰ BUS, M 402, fols. 3v-4r.

⁴⁸¹ BUS, M 402, fol. 57r-57v.

and lacked military or administrative experience'.⁴⁸² Bisanti did not miss the opportunity of stressing once again the meagre situation of the Ottoman Empire during Ahmed's sultanate, in which the Ottomans faced enormous changes that deeply refashioned the Empire's structure. By having a glance at the international situation, Bisanti caught the eventual weakness of Spain after the lengthy and bloody war in the Netherlands. Even in this passage, the disunity of Christian powers is once again a reason why Ahmed I can focus on the Eastern front, especially after the 'nuovo bisbiglio' between the Venetians and Paul V – a clear reference to the Interdetto (1606), which had seen a stark struggle between Paul V and Doge Leonardo Donà (r. 1606-1612).

Ma in Asia, con Persiano [Abbas I], sempre mai in questo mentre ha havuto il peggio et ha perso molte terre et luoghi di quei suoi antichi, oltre delle recuperate dal Persiano, già perdute nella guerra con Amurate [Murad III], avo del presente re [Ahmed I], et ricordando ch'ogni dì li ribelli ivi crescono in maggior numero et tanto appresso sono venuti, ha [de]terminato impiegare tutte le soi forze, perché vede dalli christiani questa volta non dover essere molestato havendo atinto la loro possanza in Ungheria, et in altri stati da per tutto sono impicciati [dal]le guerre civili. [...] La Spagna parimente, molto stracca dalla lunga guerra di Fiandra e molto odiata da gl'altri potentati, sì come sogliono fare li principi impotenti contro uno più potente di sé per paura et interesse di Stato; et il simile Italia, ch'è ancora questa divisa nelle fazioni e parzialità per questo nuovo bisbiglio tra li Venetiani e Nostro Signore [Paul V], molto bene resta sicuro [Ahmed I], perché sa che questi doi principi tireranno tutti quell'altri dalli quali il Turco potria temere con loro, et con questo modo in Asia potrà facilissimamente reprimere l'insolenze dei ribelli, et recuperando il perduto astringere il Persiano di cederli del paese quanto egli vorrà.⁴⁸³

From this passage, it becomes crystal-clear that Spain and the Papacy were considered as the necessary pillars of a policy of containment directed towards the Ottoman Empire: 'l'una in possesso di una diretta capacità di mobilitazione militare a difesa dei suoi interessi mediterranei, l'altro in grado di coinvolgere, legittimare e motivare altri Stati Cristiani contro i Turchi'.⁴⁸⁴ In the final pages of the *Relatione*, Bisanti proposed to besiege Constantinople by giving the historical example of Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481) in 1453, whose strategy of conquering the capital proved successful,

⁴⁸² Baer, *The Ottomans*, 246.

⁴⁸³ AAV, FB IV, 110, fols. 34v-35v.

⁴⁸⁴ Negruzzo, «*La cristiana impresa*», 207.

paving the way for conquering the rest of the former Byzantine Empire without too much bloodshed: ‘il quale [Mehmed II] pensò bene che di questo greco imperio [the Byzantine Empire] non si poteva lui impadronire se prima non prendesse la città regale [Constantinople], onde, subito che si impatronì di questa città, l’altro restante se gli rese senza sfodrare la spada’.⁴⁸⁵

Bisanti had also mentioned in his version to Borghese the necessity to form a ‘lega con tutti li principi christiani’ to accomplish the ‘honorata et pia impresa’.⁴⁸⁶ The ultimate purpose of this league would eventually be the recovery of the Holy City of Jerusalem, from 1517 in Ottoman hands:

dove la santa christiana fede hebbe principio et aumento della nostra salute per la nascita et passione di Christo, figliolo di Dio, in cui luoghi è molto desiderata questa santa resolutione et aspettata da un Re Cattolico, vero zelatore della fede di Giesù Cristo e defensore della Santa Romana Chiesa, la quale Iddio benedetto preservi per molti anni et ispiri a questa santissima, pia et christiana impresa.⁴⁸⁷

These notions of a Christian league – necessarily made up of all the Christian rulers to crush the Ottoman Empire – was declined into a more original design almost coeval to Bisanti’s – albeit the exact year is still uncertain. This text, like Bisanti’s, was intended for Pope Paul V and was authored by a mysterious figure within the Papal court.

3.3.3. Ottavio Pallavicino’s Vision: Anti-Ottoman Strategy and the Repubblica Christiana

Another example of this anti-Ottoman international effort came from a mysterious man named Ottavio Pallavicino and his proposal of a ‘Repubblica Christiana’, described in an unpublished text which can be found in the Vatican archives and admirably analysed for the first time in 1951 by Edith

⁴⁸⁵ BUS, M 402, fol. 67v. It is unclear whether Bisanti recognises the importance of the *millet* system, which allowed the People of the Book (Muslims, Christians and Jews alike) to profess in freedom their own religion under the payment of the famous *jizya* tax. These newly formed communities had been established in order to manage a multi-ethnic and multireligious empire – a choice that eventually proved extremely far-sighted and could be resumed under the expression ‘get the conquered to rule the conquered’. To have a deeper insight about this toleration policies in the Ottoman Empire – and Islamic cities in general – see Barrington Moore, Jr., ‘Ethnic and Religious Hostilities in Early Modern Port Cities’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 14, no. 4 (2001): 687-727, here 706.

⁴⁸⁶ AAV, FB IV, 110, fol. 40v.

⁴⁸⁷ BUS, M 402, fol. 67v.

Pásztor.⁴⁸⁸ The text is dedicated to Camillo Borghese, Pope Paul V. This element is crucial: as the successor of Clement VIII, Paul V continued his project of assembling a coalition of Christian powers against the Ottomans, in a renewed Crusader spirit. This dedication also helps to date the manuscript between 1605 and 1621, the years of Paul V's papacy.

Very little is known about Pallavicino. The manuscript reveals that after 'having spent more than twelve years in the Holy City of Rome',⁴⁸⁹ Pallavicino had undertaken a journey to the Holy Land. This twenty-eight-month long journey took him through territories dominated by the Ottomans, where he observed and documented the living conditions of the local inhabitants:

m'assali un pensiero, mosso anchora da buona curiosità di veder quei paesi e Regni tanto nominati, e celebri nelle Scritture oggi posseduti dall'Ottomano: et così per favore particolare de Dio in vint'otto mesi ho visto l'Egitto, tutta la Soria, Caramania, Anatolia, Tracia, l'Arcipelago e' finalmente la miglior parte della Gretia: particolarmente ho fisso gl'occhi nella confusione della povera città di Constantinopoli et veramente l'ho trovate provincie ciascheduna degna, d'essere desiderata da fedeli; non solo per acquisto di gran stato, ma per ricuperare sì belli, e degni tesori spirituali e temporali, che hora restano usurpati da così infedel gente; et anche per radrizzare quei poverelli che col semplice segno della Croce, sebene liberi da Circoncisione altro à pena ritengono ch'il solo nome dei Christiani.⁴⁹⁰

After this meaningful and thought-provoking experience in the Ottoman Empire, Pallavicino often dreamed about the Christian reconquest of strategically important strongholds and temples, which had once belonged to Christian rulers:

Spesso fra me alzando i occhi al cielo dicevo: piacesse all'eterna bontà, che i loro medesmi pronostici si verificassero, et potessi vedere a mei giorni il standardo della Santissima Croce piantato su quelle fortezze, su quei tempj; e sopra quelle Città, che altre volte furono de Christiani.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Edith Pásztor, 'La Repubblica Cristiana di Ottavio Pallavicino', *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali* 18 (1951): 67-84.

⁴⁸⁹ Vatican City, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Fondo Borghese, serie I, 262, fol. 5v ('dopo havere impiegato più de dodici anni in questa Alma Città di Roma'). The full text is transcribed entirely for the first time in Appendix C.

⁴⁹⁰ AAV, FB I, 262, fols. 5v-6r.

⁴⁹¹ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 6v.

It is precisely by considering these elements that Pallavicino comes up with a bold proposal to the Pope after having considered the unsuccessful outcomes of many Crusades. Pallavicino even declares the absolute novelty of his grand plan, for he adamantly claims that he had not heard from anyone of his acquaintance. Here is how Pallavicino recollects the moment in which his mind first came up with such a plan:

Mentre così ricorrevo a questi santi pensieri, et anche ne discorrevo co' i miei compagni, consideravo i sforzi passati, sebene inutili, e deboli fatti da Principi Christiani con tante leghe, cruciate, assalti, et altri modi tenuti per levarsi da una si fatta paura, che li soprastava di questo Tiranno, pareva che Iddio benedetto m'infondesse nella mente un pensiero, o considerazione, il quale a prima faccia non sappero discernere così subito se fusse a proposito per la Christianità, oppure senza fondamento, come hanno hauto li altri; sapevo nondimeno di non haverlo letto presso ad alcun authore, né inteso da alcuna persona, non mancai di conferirlo con qualch'amico di giuditio, et trovai che non s'allontanava dalla sicura strada di fare qualche profitto per servizio della Christianità.⁴⁹²

Pásztor argues that Pallavicino was concerned with 'universal peace', which he saw as the only condition capable of ensuring the 'development of the Christian spirit' even in those countries occupied by the Ottoman empire. However, Pallavicino believed that in order to realise this ideal, 'si doveva prima di tutto abbattere l'impero dei turchi che ostacolava nei paesi occupati lo sviluppo cristiano e con la sua continua espansione rappresentava una minaccia sempre più pericolosa anche per gli altri stati d'Europa'.⁴⁹³ To this purpose, Pallavicino advocated the formation of a Christian League made up of all the 'Christian princes':

sarebbe buona provigione (rimettendomi però sempre à miglior giuditio) che tutti i Principi Christiani invitati et essortati dalla Santità di Nostro Signore facessero una Dieta co' il mezzo de suoi Ambasciatori Comissarij [...] nella quale deliberassero di riunirsi à questa santa Impresa mettendosi inprima l'honor de Dio avant'all'occhi, et il servizio suo, senz'il qual oggetto non pensi mai Principe alcuno di caminar bene.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² AAV, FB I, 262, fols. 6v-7r.

⁴⁹³ Pásztor, 'La Repubblica Cristiana', 68.

⁴⁹⁴ AAV, FB I, 262, fols. 8v-9r.

Pallavicino sharply criticised Christian rulers, lamenting their blatant disunity and inability to collaborate effectively in the previous centuries. He pointed out that these rulers often found more delight in seeing the Sultan seize a portion of territory from their enemies than in witnessing a rival Christian prince take it, even when it had resulted in their own detriment. This disunity, he argued, significantly weakened the Christian front against the Ottomans and prevented the formation of a cohesive and powerful alliance.

Ma continuando il mio discorso aggiungo che è manifesta la disunione de Principi Christiani, et le varie pretensioni, congiunte con mire occulte a una vana consideratione di stato, per le quali vengono accecati, et immobili à una sì degna e' necessaria risolutione, ma vogliono più tosto lasciar ingrandire et ingrassare questo Tiranno [the Sultan], che hoggi li leva una piazza, domani un stato, li dà quest'anno una fuga, quell'altro una rotta; siché tollerano più volentieri che il commune nemico e distrugitor d'ogni bene s'usurpi di tanti Regni che non li gode un' altro simile à loro di fede e professione.⁴⁹⁵

Once the Ottomans were defeated and all occupied territories were reclaimed – a task hard enough on its own – this Christian League envisioned by Ottavio Pallavicino would establish a 'Christian Republic' in the newly liberated regions. This League would not only be responsible for expelling the Ottomans but also for creating a new political order. The newly formed Republic would be governed by a Senate, which would have its seat in the most important city of the Empire – Constantinople:

La Città principale nella quale doverà risiedere questo senato per Governare tutta la Repubblica sarà Constantinopoli luogo destinato dimandarsi subito dopo l'acquisto d'essa (siché Iddio ci conceda per sua infinita bontà) fra' tanto sarà quel luogo che meglio giudicarono a proposito alli confini dell'stato Ottomanno. Questo Senato doverà sedere ogni giorno (eccettuando le feste; salvo in casi di grandissima importanza) per tant'hore la mattina, et altre il dopo Pranzo, in una sala, à una tavola, o, sia tribunale rotondo d'alquanti gradi eminente, senza riguardo alcuno precedentia, grado, o preeminentia: ma ogn'uno mentre sarà in quell' stato di Senatore sia uguale all'altro; perciò sia di tant authorità quello dell' minimo Principe come quello dell' maggiore; et

⁴⁹⁵ AVV, FBI, 262, fol. 8r.

vaglia tanto il suo voto e balla quanto di quello che rappresentasse la persona del Papa, ovvero dell'Imperatore.⁴⁹⁶

The Senate, then, would have total possession of all the territories acquired after the destruction of the Ottoman Empire; accordingly, all the polities which had participated in the conquest would relinquish all their acquisitions to the Senate:

Il suddetto Senato et Repubblica così composta, debba essere messa in possesso di tutt'il stato, provincia, Città, fortezze e luoghi che s'acquisteranno dall'Imperio Ottomano immediatamente dopo l'acquisto fatto da qualsivoglia esercito della lega costituendo sino d'alhora nella Dieta Patrone esso Senato e' Repubblica che lo debba reggere, e' governare, come suo proprio, et che niun altro v'habbi interesse, ne se li possi ingerire, se non quanto verrà permesso dalle leggi et dal detto senato. Anzi che mentre durerà questa Repubblica ogni Principe si debba spogliare de tutte le pretenzioni, che havesse sopra qualsivoglia delli luoghi hoggidi posseduti, et occupati dall'Imperio Ottomano renontandoli à questa Repubblica et a questo Senato.⁴⁹⁷

But before describing in detail the functioning of this theoretical polity, Pallavicino's foremost concern was devising a grand strategy that would enable the ultimate destruction of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a new Republic from its ruins. So, how did Pallavicino conceive a plan to accomplish such a bold mission? Unsurprisingly, all the Christian polities were theoretically involved in this project, although Pallavicino was extremely suspicious of the Venetians. He believed that their loyalty could be secured only with the concerted efforts of both the Pope and the King of France. Pallavicino recognized that the Venetians were reluctant to sever their trading relations with the Sultan, as doing so would have been highly detrimental to their commercial interests. This economic pragmatism made Venice a potential weak link in the Christian League, and Pallavicino stressed the importance of diplomatic as well as political pressure to ensure their full commitment to the cause:

non già perché in loro vi sia freddezza di religione né invidia dell'accrescimento de Principi Christiani, né perché siano timidi, e' lontani da ogni motione di guerra, né per altri rispetti com'alcuni si vanno immaginando: ma perché essi cognoscono che non possono à manco di

⁴⁹⁶ AVV, FB I, 262, fol. 10r-10v.

⁴⁹⁷ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 9v.

stare in pace col Turco si per li traffici de loro stati, come perché non sono bastanti a rendere longamente essi soli a' quella potenza; né li mette anco entrare in questi balli, di guerre e' leghe contra l'Ottomanni: perché vi restano poi abbandonanti, e' sopra li stati loro si sfoga quella rabbia turchesca. Alli quali inconvenienti si potrebbe rimediare con larga mano se l'altri Principi della lega giuveranno di difenderli et aiutarli, non solo in questa guerra; ma in ogn'altra subito, che l'Ottomanno movesse l'arme contr'i suoi stati, facendo obbligare i mercanti de diversi paesi a favore di quella Repubblica et il Sommo Pontefice potrà usare della sua solita authorità e destrezza, valendosi anchora del mezzo dell'Re di Francia.⁴⁹⁸

This grand geopolitical strategy devised by Pallavicino was meticulously organised into seven trajectories, along which the Christian armies would simultaneously advance against the Ottomans. First, the combined forces of the Spaniards, the Pope, Genoa, Savoy, and Malta would embark from Sicily and proceed to conquer the Dardanelles. This initial assault aimed to secure a crucial maritime passage and establish a foothold for further incursions into Ottoman territory.

L'essercito dunque di Spagna imbarcandosi nella Calabria, overo à Messina, sopra la sua Armata, quella dell'Papa, di Genova, Savoia, e Malta s'incamminerà verso il stretto di Gallipoli per expugnare quei Dardanelli, nelché non vi sarà molta difficoltà; essendo facilissimi l'un et l'altro ad essere expugnati, come di ciò è manifesto, poi s'impadroniranno di Gallipoli, fermandosi ivi per aspettare gl'altri esserciti.⁴⁹⁹

Secondly, the French, Florentine and Venetian galleys would rejoin themselves in Ancona – from there, they would take the city of Salonica. The Greek port-city would then serve as a basis to launch a surprise attack to the Ottoman army, at that time would be engaged in Hungary. By coordinating these two significant offensives, Pallavicino's plan sought to divide and weaken the Ottoman forces, ensuring a greater chance of success for the Christian League.

Le Galere francese con le Fiorentine porteranno parte dell'essercito francese et anche con alcune mani al Zante, o, Cefalonia, e quivi aspettaranno l'armata Venetiana: un'altra parte anchora dell medesimo essercito francese passerà soprata Tartane e' Saettie à ligorna; di dove prenderanno il Camino separamente per Anchona; nel qual porto vi sarà già parte dell'Armata Venetiana; la

⁴⁹⁸ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 23r-23v.

⁴⁹⁹ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 28r.

quale prenderà insé li detti francesi et s'anderà à unirsi al Zante o Cefalonia con l'altre galere fiorentine, o, francese di dove s'invieranno per sbarcare a Salonich, et s'impadroniranno di quella Città, e' quivi aspetteranno aviso dall' Senato s' devono voltarsi verso Constantinopoli, ovvero alle spalle dell'essercito Turchesco, che fusse passato in Ongaria.⁵⁰⁰

Pallavicino was quite aware of the naval supremacy of the Venetians, since he stated that: 'Il Generale dell'essercito francese doverà comandare in terra tanto alli Venetiani, come alli francesi; però in mare il Generale de Venetiani haverà l'autorità sopra l'una e altra natione'.⁵⁰¹

Third, the combined forces of the Pope and the Italian sovereigns would traverse the Venetian Gulf, passing through Dubrovnik and advancing to reach Novi Pazar. This coordinated movement aimed to cut off Ottoman supply lines and establish a strong Christian presence in the heart of the Balkans, further destabilising Ottoman control in the region.

L'essercito del Papa con tutte le genti de Principi Italiani passeranno il golfo di Venetia con barche ordinarie, facendo poi la massa nel stato di Ragusa, et prenderanno il camino verso Constantinopoli per terra impadronendosi di quei luoghi che seli offeriranno incontro, che sono di puoco conto, non v'essendo alcuna difesa, ne tanto forti, ma si bene doveranno fare, et lasciare qualche fortezza à certi passi per sicurezza delle vetovaglie loro, et in tal modo penetreranno sino à Novibasar città grossa e però senza mura, e' senza fortezza, quivi et anche per camino osserveranno tutti li avisi, et ordini, che li manderà il senato . . . se si doverà dare le spalle; dell'essercito Turchesco, opure andare all'assedio di Constantinopoli. Il Generale di quest'Italiani, sotto il quale doverà militare tutta la natione Italiana per terra, doverà essere proposta dalla Santità di Nostro Signore.⁵⁰²

Fourth: 'L'essercito dell'Imperatore con quello dell'Arciduca, et altri Principi della Germania stringeranno Buda, et altre fortezze su' il passo (né potendo) così facilmente expugnarli lasceranno una parte dell'essercito; et l'altra s'incamminerà alla volta dell'essercito nemico, et di Constantinopoli'.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 28r-28v.

⁵⁰¹ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 28v.

⁵⁰² AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 29r-29v.

⁵⁰³ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 29v.

Fifth, the Poles would invade Timișoara and capture the strategically vital city of Belgrade. Pallavicino recognized Belgrade's importance, as had Suleiman I, who had conquered it in 1521.

Li Pollachi sene veniranno à Themisuar, et quivi combatteranno quella piazza, et passando il Danubio veniranno sopra Belgrado procurando di conquistarlo, o, almeno tenerlo assediato in maniera che non possi dare a numerosi esserciti danno, né alle vetovaglie.⁵⁰⁴

Sixth, the English would play a crucial role by departing from England in the winter to arrive in Alexandretta, Syria, by spring; their chief task was to block any potential assault coming from Syria as well as from Egypt:

L'Inglesi con suoi vasalli in grosso numero doveranno partire d'inverno per trovarsi a tempo nella primavera in Alessandretta di Soria; e quivi sbarcheranno il loro essercito impadronendosi del passo nel monte Ama chiamato Caro Capisi, cioè porta nera, per impedire le genti della Soria et dell'Egitto che di là tentassero passare per andare a Constantinopoli.⁵⁰⁵

Seventh, the Duke of Muscovy's army would descend through Moldavia to intercept the Crimean Tatars at Nicopolis, a strategically positioned city in Bulgaria. This manoeuvre aimed to prevent the Tatars from providing reinforcements to the Ottoman forces.:

Il Duccha di Moscovia farà calare il suo essercito nella Moldavia per resistere alli Tartari che volessero passare avvinandosi verso Nicopoli, dove si tratterà in quelle volte sino resti sconfitto l'essercito de Turchi e Tartari, et in quest'attione è molto necessario il suo aiuto.

Most crucially, Pallavicino posed aside the religious differences of the czar of Russia – or the Duke of Muscovy, as Pallavicino refers to him – in favor of his strategic advantages against both the Ottomans and the Crimean Tatars. Recognising the czar as the champion of Orthodox Christianity, Pallavicino emphasises the military and geopolitical benefits of including the Russian Duchy in the coalition. This pragmatic approach underscored the necessity of unity amongst Christian powers, regardless of denominational differences, to effectively counter the Ottoman threat:

⁵⁰⁴ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 29v.

⁵⁰⁵ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 30r.

Il qual Duccha, sebene ritiene costumi molto differenti dalli nostri; et essendo di rito Greco, pareria che non fusse di molto giovamento; contuttociò perché lui è capital nemico de Turchi e Tartari con quali egli confina: perciò si deve reputare un importantissimo aiuto; poichè tanto maggiori saranno l'armi che si moveranno contra nemici: in oltre servirà per trattenerlo acciò non dia molestia al Regno di Pollonia, et sarà finalmente un alletarlo a unirsi nel'gremio di Santa Chiesa.⁵⁰⁶

Increasingly, Pallavicino did not merely theorise a pragmatic truce among the various Christian denominations; he went further by proposing a strategic alliance with a Muslim sovereign – the Shah of Persia, albeit Shi'i rather than Sunni. Recognising the animosity between the Persian and Ottoman empires, Pallavicino acknowledged this hostility and had witnessed the rise of the Safavids under Shah Abbas I, who had become a significant threat to the Ottoman eastern flank. By proposing an alliance with the Persian Shah, Pallavicino sought to exploit this enmity to further weaken the Ottomans and strengthen the Christian coalition:

Per diverse ragioni anchora si potria dubitare se fusse bene invitare il Persiano, quale tiene particolarmente sete contro questo Tiranno; et non è dubio che li moveria dalla sua banda per interesse anchor proprio con molto vigore, e' prontezza: à benché bisognaria poi disputare con l'armi sopra le ragioni di quei stati ch'egli occupasse.⁵⁰⁷

Pallavicino nevertheless regarded the help of the Duke of Muscovy more useful than that of the Persian Shah: 'Et s'io devo dire il mio parere l'aiuto del Moscovita è più necessario che quello dell'Persiano rimettendomi sempre à miglior giuditio'.⁵⁰⁸ Pallavicino was adamantly confident that a huge plethora of scattered Christian lords and sovereigns would unite in the final expedition against the Ottomans:

non ho dubio alcuno che numero grandissimo de Duchi, Principi, Baroni, Marchesi, conti, Cavaglieri, et altri signori particolari [...] si leveranno con santo zelo, e generosa emulatione, per

⁵⁰⁶ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 30v.

⁵⁰⁷ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 31r.

⁵⁰⁸ AVV, FB I, 262, fol. 31r.

farsi compagni; non con stipendio né per forza di Principi maggiori; ma spontaneamente come venturieri di Cristo.⁵⁰⁹

Pallavicino goes so far as to describe even the final battle. The ultimate confrontation would take place around the walls of Constantinople. Following the siege, the Sultan would be left with only two options: to surrender or perish in battle.

La diligentia che doveranno usare li detti esserciti s'è di presentarsi tutt'in un tempo all'assedio di Constantinopoli (rotto che sia l'essercito dell nemico in campagna) nelché si doverà avertire di far marchiare inanti l'altri confederati, o, almeno quelli che saranno col'essercito più vicino, perché in tal modo l'assedio saria più forte et s'oviarà à qualche disgratia: poiché veramente la suddetta Città come metropoli di tutto quello imperio mantiene in se la maggior parte della potenza Ottomanna: ma anchora per essere di tanto populo inutili ripiena né havendo vetovaglia sufficiente; salvo per puoco tempo; anzi quasi giornale si può sperare col'aiuto divino (trovandosi massime tutto l'essercito fuori di quella) che con molta facilità sia per ritornare nelle mani de propugnatori di Gesù Christo: per ilché quell'imperio, restaria come corpo senza capo nelle sue fredde membra extinto, et Gran Turcho li converrà fuggire, senon vorrà esser preso in qualche fortezza dell'Anatolia ritrovandosene alcune dell'antique per il sito forte, quale si potrà assediare con facilità; poiché in quei improvvisi ritiramenti non si può fornire a sufficientia; pertanto [...] gli converrà rendersi, o, morire sotto l'armi de fedeli campioni.⁵¹⁰

Naturally, the huge presence of voluntary Christian knights and infantrymen posed the problem of how to reward their participation in the enterprise: 'perciò saria buona risoluzione che la Dieta et poi il senato suddetto delliberassero che questi venturieri possino havere per se, et per suoi discendenti maschi tanta comenda, o sia entrata in quel Imperio conquistato quanta sia la mettà della rendita, che al presente godono nella Cristianità'.

Riservandosi il Senato l'authorità di premiare anchora più quelle persone che manifestamente havessero fatto qualch'opera heroijca, e segnalata, et anche di ricognoscere è gratificare li figlioli, o, fratelli di quelli che perdessero la vita in questa expeditione.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ AVV, FB I, 262, fol. 32r-32v.

⁵¹⁰ AVV, FB I, 262, fol. 34r-34v.

⁵¹¹ AAV, FB I, 262, fols. 32v-33r.

Quite surprisingly, Pallavicino openly proposed a system very close to the *timar*, an Ottoman institution based on a land grant which allowed the holder to ‘keep the revenue on the goods produced on that land in exchange for the responsibility of raising a mounted military force to serve the sultan when called to battle’.⁵¹² Pallavicino shows knowledge of this institution by stressing that ‘il Gran Turco [...] ha tante comende, chiamate in quella lingua Timarri’.

Questi Comendatarii, come sudditi di quella Repubblica doveranno ricognoscerla come loro Patrona in quelli bene, feudi, o, Comende servendola alli suoi bisogni personalmente et con le genti che sono sotto tal comenda, ogni volta che li sarà comandato dal Senato di prendere l’armi contro l’inimici di quel stato, ne più, ne meno come fanno hoggidi i Timariotti [the timar-holders]; così giurando di ricevere l’investitura.⁵¹³

It is fair to state that this project manifestly suggested the colonization of the conquered territories: ‘in quei paesi v’anderanno ad habitare molti de nostri Christiani et così resteranno più popolati e coltivati; dov’hora vanno deserti. Inoltre saranno come tante collonie per tener in freno quelle genti infedele, e novamente soggiogate’.⁵¹⁴ Actually, Pallavicino never speaks about converting the conquered people openly – it is legitimate to think that these newly-subjugated people might have been forced to convert to Christianity, otherwise the institution of several colonies might have given the upper hand to Christians in effectively controlling them and stopping religious uprisings.

In the end, Pallavicino’s plan outlined two interdependent Christian communities in Europe: after having been created by the union of Christian princes, the newly formed *Repubblica Christiana* should work as a bulwark which would prevent ‘the formation of any new aggressive state in the East’.⁵¹⁵ As noted earlier in this chapter, although Alberico Gentili did not explicitly embrace a crusading mindset, he would have likely appreciated Pallavicino’s rejection of any ‘unholy alliances’. Nevertheless, Pallavicino clearly recognized the strategic importance of the Persian Shah, acknowledging a complex religious dilemma: justifying an alliance with a non-Christian power would have been an intricate challenge.

⁵¹² Baer, *The Ottomans*, 189.

⁵¹³ AAV, FB I, 262, fol. 33v.

⁵¹⁴ AVV, FB I, 262, fol. 34r.

⁵¹⁵ Pásztor, ‘La Repubblica Cristiana’, 83.

Of course, this plan presented some complexities that made it almost impossible to accomplish: first, as Eliav-Feldon notes, the absence of a mechanism which would allow the peaceful solution of potential controversies arising from the Christian princes; second, the complete negligence towards the inhabitants of the reconquered territories, who would be likely discontent with the new government, which wanted to keep them ‘separated from their co-nationals and co-religionists and try to convert them to Roman Catholicism, than under the relatively-tolerant Ottoman rule’ in which they would be regarded as *dhimmis* and allowed to profess their own religion under the payment of the *jizya* tax; third, it is fair to wonder whether the common purpose of annihilating the Ottomans would ‘continue to serve the same purpose of pacification as the need to fight a common enemy’.⁵¹⁶ Despite all the efforts made to devise this articulate plan, Pallavicino’s proposal remained unheard. However, as Edith Pásztor concludes, his ideas had a lasting impact, especially in terms of advocating for international cooperation. It’s worth noting that Pásztor published her article just six years after the founding of the United Nations, in a historical moment where the need for international peace and supranational political organizations had become undeniable in the aftermath of World War II.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁶ Eliav-Feldon, ‘Grand Designs’, 64.

⁵¹⁷ Pásztor, ‘La Repubblica Cristiana’, 84.

Conclusion

Doges, Diplomats and Designs

It's the oldest question of all, George. Who can spy on spies?

– John le Carré, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

This dissertation has explored the intricate relationship between intelligence and grand strategy, focusing on the late sixteenth century, a time when espionage and diplomacy shaped geopolitical realities. The first, which underpins the whole analysis here presented, is the intertwined nature of intelligence and grand strategy: the complicated context of international espionage during the War of Cyprus has proved that allegiances to one faction or the other were not indisputable – as it has been shown by the emblematic figure of Solomon Ashkenazi, who put himself under the service of the bailo and the doge to negotiate a just peace agreement for his former homeland, even though it eventually proved to be the losing faction of the war.

The case of Solomon Ashkenazi exemplifies the fluidity of allegiances in this period. Though initially serving Venetian interests, Ashkenazi skilfully navigated shifting political tides, advocating for peace despite Venice's ultimate defeat in the War of Cyprus. His involvement in Alfonso II of Este's bid for the Polish throne further underscores his role as a mediator who deftly exploited his Mediterranean-wide connections. His ability to propose the use of political influence over the Grand Vizier reflects the complex web of loyalties and strategies in which early modern espionage was deeply embedded.

The second chapter has deepened this intertwined bond of intelligence and strategy by providing another historical example about the Margliani mission. Even in this case, it has been important to trace the origins of another secret service, the Spanish one, to have a deeper understanding of the context upon which the mission told in this chapter unfolded. By summarising its establishment, it has been possible to sketch the context in which Margliani's People entered the scene. In the larger concern of geostrategy in the Western Mediterranean, the prisoner exchange of those captured at Tunis and La Goletta in 1575 provided Bartolomeo Bruti with the perfect occasion to get acquainted with the mysterious world of spies based in Constantinople. Recruited by the

Spanish, Bruti soon came into open conflict with the lead negotiator for Spain, Giovanni Margliani, for the latter was in charge of proposing a project completely different to that he had proposed to Philip. While Bruti sought to exploit a plan to undermine Ottoman influence in North Africa, Margliani preferred negotiating a truce, as the Ottomans were becoming increasingly concerned with the growing threat posed by Persia. This tension between conflicting strategies reveals the complex, fluid relationship between intelligence gathering and strategic decision-making.

The third chapter, although seemingly the most distinct, remains connected to the broader themes of the dissertation. By introducing the concept of unholy alliances, the chapter examined how certain powers shaped their foreign policies in pragmatic ways, often overlooking ideological or religious consistency. A key example of this was Venice's strategic attempt to align with Persia during the War of Cyprus, aiming to exploit religious divisions within Islam. However, another significant aspect was the Ottomans' pragmatic use of Christian Orthodox communities discontented with Venetian rule. In areas like Cyprus and Crete, where the Venetians had imposed strict control over the Greek Orthodox Church and favored the Latin Church, the Ottomans presented themselves as more tolerant rulers. By offering greater religious autonomy through the millet system, the Ottomans were able to foster divisions within Venetian-controlled territories, weakening Venetian influence. The Venetian leadership, focused on obtaining concrete advantages over the Ottoman enemy, was less concerned with religious doctrine and more concerned with strategic alliances. Secret agents and intelligence reports played a crucial role in providing the necessary information for these diplomatic maneuvers. The *relazioni*, long celebrated by historians and diplomats, also proved invaluable not only as intelligence sources but as a means of enhancing personal prestige through the possession of confidential reports.

In the same years, a radical shift was emerging within Venetian foreign policy, which consisted in a more sincere appreciation of those features that enabled the Ottoman Empire to be so powerful. Notwithstanding, many intellectuals and rulers were accepting Clement VIII's and Paul V's intransigent mindsets by adopting the compelling concept of crusade. Among them, two intellectuals have been chosen. The first is a Dominican friar, Domenico Bisanti, who wrote an intelligence report whose relevance for this work was to provide the conceptual framework that the second one adopted. In fact, the second one, the unpublished manuscript of the mysterious Ottavio

Pallavicino, not only provided a grand strategy influenced by intelligence similar to that of Bisanti; increasingly, he even outlined a precise geopolitical plan to annihilate the Ottomans.

Actually, Pallavicino's treatise can be included in an established tradition of studies concerning grand plans written by intellectuals in the early modern period. Many examples could be given, and there is still a huge amount of work to be done to explore this exciting literary production. Scholars like Miriam Eliav-Feldon have extensively studied this genre, noting how many of these grand strategies foreshadowed ideas that would only be realized centuries later.⁵¹⁸ Apart from Émeric Crucé's blueprint for an international peace organisation, which has been a massive – even though involuntary – inspiration for the Society of Nations first, and the United Nations then, a plan that deserves a mention for these complicated times is William Penn's plan for a European Parliament.⁵¹⁹ Published in 1693, the *Essay towards the present and future peace of Europe* sketches a general international organisation of sovereign states, a quite distant model from the world federation in the name of free trade described by Crucé. Now, the European Parliament is a concrete reality, but its tenure is not to be taken for granted. In this light, the relationship between intelligence and strategy is crucial not only for resolving conflicts but also for crafting long-term plans that support peace and stability. New strategies and new designs are needed to protect this political body, created with the purpose of fostering integration and benefits to the European members. New threats are also coming from autocracies and dictatorships with the outspoken purpose of chaos and fear. More than ever, intelligence and strategies need to be reinserted in a mutual relationship to foster this project of peace and protect its people from the outside dangers. By knowing those who want to spread chaos and violence, to undermine the European project of unity and cooperation, our security and democratic principles, it is necessary that these two aspects become of utmost importance for policymakers not in an offensive way, but to protect the achievements of the last decades. This is what intelligence and strategy are useful for.

⁵¹⁸ Another quite interesting article on a Protestant grand design, James I's Peace-Maker, see Franklin L. Baumer, 'England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom', *The American Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (1944): 26-48.

⁵¹⁹ Peter van den Dungen, 'Not Only Europe, Also America. William Penn: Governor of Pennsylvania and Friend of the Natives', *EuroStudium* 3w 49 (2018): 38-54.



Figure 5. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Philip II*, oil on board, 1565. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Appendix A: Letters from Constantinople

This appendix contains the complete – and previously unpublished – transcription of six letters written by bailo Marcantonio Barbaro and preserved today in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice. These letters offer valuable insights into the role of Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi (whose name can be found written as Rabbi Salamon Ashcanazi) during the War of Cyprus and his negotiations with the Republic of Venice to annul the decree of expulsion against the Jewish community, which had been issued by the Venetian Senate. Regarding transcription criteria, a semi-diplomatic approach was followed, with minimal interventions limited to modernising punctuation, diacritical marks, and minor adjustments to improve the readability of the documents.

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391 (=8872-73), fols. 256r-440v

Letters 1-2

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391 8872, fols. 256r-257v

Summary: These letters provide valuable insights into Solomon Ashkenazi's involvement in Mediterranean trade and his close relationship with Joseph Nasi. Written at the end of 1569, Marcantonio Barbaro, the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, begins alerting Venice to escalating rumors regarding Cyprus. In the first letter, Barbaro expresses his concerns over the growing rumors and ensures that Venice receives his reports promptly, even sending multiple copies via different channels for greater security. In the second letter, Barbaro reports that Joseph Nasi has informed Ashkenazi about Piyale Pasha's preparations for war, which further intensifies the uncertainty surrounding Cyprus. Barbaro remains cautious, balancing the intelligence gathered from Nasi's circle with the necessity to act prudently in the volatile political climate of the time.

Sender: Marcantonio Barbaro; **Recipient:** The Doge or Venetian Senate?; **Place of Origin:** Pera, Constantinople; **Date:** December 21, 1569.

[**fol. 256r**] Serenissimo Principe. Heri mattina per messo a posta per mia di Corfù scrissi a Vostra Serenità quello che mi occorreva, mandandole anco le replicate delle mie di 18 del presente, per tanto più assicurarmi che queste nove di tanta importanza le capitassero fermamente; et hora partendosi un mercante per annata, ho voluto mandarle le replicate di quelle di 18, et le replicate di quelle d' heri per poter star maggiormente coll'animo quieto, che l'una man, o l'altra le capiti sicuramente; al qual mercante ho fatta molta instantia che l'usi diligentia nel viaggio; né mi occorre dirle altro di più, se

non che tutta via si aggrandiscono le voci, et romori per le cose di Cipro, et che si dice chel Serenissimo Signore serà qua di ritorno fra 20 giorni.

Di Pera, 21 dicembre 1569.

Illustrissimi et Eccellentissimi Signori. Nelle occorrenze di presenti tempi credo che sia bene aprir le orecchie a tutte le cose, per cavarne poi quel che si può in beneficio pubblico, havendosi sempre matura considerazione alla qualità et natura delle persone che le propongono, et alli loro fini, et rispetti; Per il che sapendo quanto le Vostre Serenità Eccellentissime incìò siano oculatissime, le responderò sempre liberamente quello che perviene a mia notitia; lasciando che elle col sapientissimo loro giudicio le facciano sopra quelle considerationi che le pariranno convenienti. Ha praticato, et pratica di continuo in casa delli Baili di Vostra Serenità un Rabbi Salamon medico, da Udine.⁵²⁰ Persona a mio giudicio discreta, et da bene, et che fa professione di amico delli Baili; il qual havendo diversi traffichi di mercantia in Candia⁵²¹ per la maggior parte della sua facultà, per assicurarsi di questi mottivi che cercano [fol. 256v] per le cose di Cipro, essendo anco assai intrisenco di Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi],⁵²² ha più volte tentato di sottrar' per suo interesse da esso Gioan Miches, sel poteva sicuramente mandar, stanti detti motti, il suo cavedal⁵²³ in Candia: dal qual li è stato sempre largamente risposto che quella Armata⁵²⁴ non è contra Vostra Serenità; et con tutto che conoscendo ogni hora più tali romori, detto Rabbi Salamon habbia di novo reiterrati questi officij. Però sempre esso Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi] lo ha assicurato che non serà altro, et che non n' ozi di mandar le cose sue in Candia, o dove uno vuole: perché lui ancora manda in Candia 3 zecchini per comprar tanti vini per suo conto. Il qual Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi] sapendo chel predetto medico è amico qua di casa, imaginandosi fosse che quei suoi tentativi fussero fatti a mia instantia, li disse chel mi assicurasse per parte sua che quell'anno non serà cosa alcuna ma che però l' non mi assicurava per l'avenir', non sapendo quello che dovesse esser'; ma volendosi detto medico meglio assicurar per li

⁵²⁰ Solomon Nathan Ashkenazi is a fundamental figure presented in the first chapter of this dissertation. A Jewish physician highly involved in secret negotiations during the War of Cyprus, he proved an essential asset for bailo Marcantonio Barbaro. Other letters of his are included in Appendix B.

⁵²¹ Candia was the Venetian name for the island of Crete, which was a Venetian possession until 1669, when it was conquered by the Ottomans.

⁵²² Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi] is the Venetian mispronunciation of João Micas, Joseph Nasi's Portuguese-born name.

⁵²³ This word probably stays for 'capitale', which in Venetian dialect becomes 'cavedal'.

⁵²⁴ Ashkenazi was making sure that the preparing Armada was not directed against Venice: it is one of the first traces of his espionage work for Venice.

suoi interessi, conoscendo egli che il principal Dragomanno hebreo che serve predetto Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi] nelli suoi maggiori affari, non intendendo esso Miches la lingua Turca, per molto ben saper ogni trattattione perché altra che è suo confidentissimo passando per man sua tutti li negotij di detto Miches; son anco informate che il Serenissimo Signore quando un Principe parlando più volte seco; et che anco dappoi de sua [...] et all' ...pirio una volta han parlato con esso Dragomanno; Parve bene ad esso medico mostrando di voler intender qualche cosa per interesse del suo cavedale et tentar confidentemente predetto Dragomanno, come amico suo che a volerli di alcuna cosa; et negandogli di volerlo fare [fol. 257r] dicendo che è peccato rivellar le cose del suo Principe, passarono hor lor sopra di ciò haduse parole. Pur venendosi in proposito di Vostra Serenità, et non di esso Dragomanno ha poi molte altre cose che a lui darebbe l'animo col modo che ha colli principali di questa Porta di far grand'uffici in beneficio di quell'Eccellentissimo Dominio; et poi dire che si sapria che il Signore havea menato seco in questo viaggio, volendo intendir ditti tre bassà, et forse anco inserir che con dinari si potrebbero far officij tali, che disturbiribbono li mali pensieri che si havessero contra di lui; et poi soggiunse che seco li voleva dar ... ducati, lui mi farebbe veder dinari [...] di trattationi passati con il detto proprio in quelli propositi, et a due cose ancora: dalle quali venirvi in cognitione del tutto: allargandosi anco in molte altr'offerte; sopra il che il medico li rispose, che era difficil cosa a poter fare e s'io dessi credenza a quelle sue propositioni, perché le stimava vane, et senza fondamento; et poi mostrando di burlar li disse chel si consentirebbe ben di mille ducati; et poi continuò che volette che sborsasse mille ducati così leggermente senza sicurtà di doverne cavar frutto alcuno! Al che dopo molte parole rispose il Dragomanno, che se io li volessi sborsar in man di esso medico, egli se ne contentava che l' li tenisse fin che si verificasse quello chel mi dicesse: col che finì l' ditto loro ragionamento, et che heri sera il sopraddetto medico è stato a darmene conto; col quale così hora, come altre volte in tal proposito ho sempre dimostrato di non tenir conto di simil romori popolari che vanno intorno: dicendo che mi assicurava che la buona pace fra la Serenissima Venezia et questo Serenissimo Gran Signore [fol. 257v] si conserveria et per la promessa del commune giuramento, et anco perché così tornava bene alli una et all'altra parte, con molte altre cose simili, di quali in questi propositi mi soglio valere dimostrando anco che manco in questo tempo, che nel presente ho dubio di guerra per infinite ragioni; et quanto alle offerte del predetto Dragomanno così videndo, li andrà discorrendo li contrarij che haveriano quando anco si fusse in questi sospetti di guerra: dicendoli che con questi termini ne anco all' hora si potrebbe assicurar' di cosa alcuna sopra

le quali offerte si possono far diverse considerationi, massime essendo proposti da un hebreo dipendente da Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi], pur io ad ogni buon fine non ho voluto tacer le elle Serenità Vostre Eccellentissime; et se questo hebreo tornerà con tali ragionamenti, io cercherò di cavarne quello che potrò, et di predir cautamente, governandomi secondo le occasioni.

Il predetto medico mi ha ditto anco che mentre ragionava con Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi], il sopraddetto Dragomanno li portò certa risposta di Piali Bassà [Piyale Pasha];⁵²⁵ et disseli che in casa d'esso Piali, dalla qual egli all'hora veniva, havea veduto che si andava preparando diverse cose per l'andata sua in questo viaggio coll'Armata; et Giovanni Miches [Joseph Nasi] affermò ad esso medico, che Piali usciva coll'Armata, et che lui ancora era forzato andarvi: et questo è quanto mi occorre dire in tal proposito.

Da Pera, 21 di dicembre 1569

Letter 3

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391, II (=8873), fols. 27r-28r

Summary: In May 1570, Barbaro reports on his house arrest in Constantinople as tensions surrounding the War of Cyprus escalate. Although placed under strict supervision with guards, janissaries, and chaushes outside his home, he notes that he is treated with respect and assured that the measures are for his protection, not punitive. Unlike previous bailos who were imprisoned in the Tower of Galata during conflicts, Barbaro experiences a more diplomatic approach from the Ottoman leadership, despite unresolved issues with Cubat Chaush. Barbaro also highlights the precarious situation of Venetian merchants, who are warned to limit interaction with locals to avoid public hostility. Despite his restrictions, Barbaro remains committed to serving Venice and continuing his intelligence efforts as best as possible under the circumstances.

Sender: Marcantonio Barbaro; **Recipient:** The Doge or Venetian Senate; **Place of Origin:** Pera, Constantinople; **Date:** May 8, 1570.

[fol. 27r] Al Vostro Serenissimo Principe. Ho tenuto fin hoggi le presenti; et havendo comodità di mandarle per la strada di Corfù, con uno che parte hor hora, le aggiungo questo di più, che ha voluto il magnifico Bassà⁵²⁶, che Cubat chiaus di propria bocca riferisca al Signore; quando ha ditto a lui, si come heri sera il fece; che hoggi ha ditto esso Cubat di dover venir a me. Ma fino a quest'hora non è ancor comparso; et ciò essendo sollecitato a servar la lettera, non posso più tardar. Io ho speranza che

⁵²⁵ Piyale Pasha has been mentioned only once in this work, but he belonged to the belligerent faction that staunchly advocated war against the Venetians. He was the commander of the Ottoman fleet during the failed siege of Malta (1565) and at Lepanto.

⁵²⁶ Every time Barbaro addresses the 'magnifico Bassà', he refers to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.

non mi seranno qui fatte straniezze, procedendo veramente il magnifico Bassà meco con molta distrezza; et per quanto intendo sua magnificenza mi lascerà in casa mia, et manderà alli giudici di essi con chiaus: il che se così si va, io lo sarò a casa per assicurarmi con tal mezzo da molti stravecanti accidenti che potessero occorrer: però non mi posso per ancora assicurar di cosa alcuna: essendo questi molto attenti per la risposta così risoluta della Serenità Vostra, et anco per la attenzione di Mamut bei, et dei sudditi di questo Signore.

Circa la partita del magnifico [Lala] Mustaffà Bassà⁵²⁷, vien detto che s'intenterà qui fino al Baivano [Divan]: ma non so se questi novi accidenti faranno nutrir li loro disegni, si come è quasi universal opinione; et sia sicura la Serenità Vostra che hora più che mai sono pubblicamente biasimati li pronostici di questa impresa: udendosi parole troppo liberamente ditte in tal proposito; tenendosi per certo che li presenti Divani si sia per sentir qualche novità, et rissoluzione della quale non mancherò di dargliene conto, se mi serà concesso il poterlo fare. Hor hora mentre che tutta via scrivo le presenti mi è sopraggiunta alla casa gran moltitudine di gente con diversi chiaussi, et col chiaus bassà capo loro; il qual se ben in ogni loco che l sia [fol. 27v] dove egli va per qualche deliberatione, porta seco molto spavento: per certo che l sia stato mandato a me dal Signore: per honorevolezza; et mi ha fatto intendir con parole molto d[...]i, et humane, che io non duessi pigliar cosa alcuna perché il tutto si faceva a buon fine: dicendomi che l magnifico bassà d'ordine di Serenità Vostra mandava alla guardia di casa mia con chiaus et 6 giannizzeri, non volendo che alcuno di miei si partì; soggiungendo che al tempo dell'altra guerra il Bailo che si attrovava qui fu posto in Torre [of Galata]: ma che con me (ancor che Cubat chaus non fusse stato ricevuto dalla Serenissima Vostra in quel modo che si conveniva, ne meno lassato uscir di galea, ne parlar con alcuno) voleva il Signor che si procedesse con questi termini d[...]i et amorevoli. Io havendo viste molte buone ragioni ad esso chiaus bassà per che Cubat chiaus era stato tenuto da Vostra Serenità in galea; dissi poi che ero qui nelle mani del Signor, et che Serenità Vostra poteva disponer si come le piaceva, ma che senza altra guardia quando così fusse stato il voler di lei, havrò fatto in modo che niuno de mei sarebbe uscito di casa: ma che piacendole così il tutto stava bene; né io l'havea altrimenti a male; col che egli si partì, dando ordine al chiaus deputato per mia custodia che dovesse farmi buona compagnia.

⁵²⁷ Lala Mustafa Pasha was the commander of the Ottoman army during the siege of Famagusta and ordered the cruel execution of the Venetian governor Marcantonio Bragadin.

Alli nostri mercanti che si ritrovano qui non è stata data notezia alcuna ma ben li è stato fatto intendir che non debbino conversar troppo, acciò che dal populo non li sia fatto qualche dispiacer. Questo sequestro fatto dalla persona mia a me veramente non dispiace per altro, se non per che in questi principij non potrò così servir a Vostra Serenità come sarebbe il desiderio mio: dubitando che in caso che havessero qualche mano di mie lettere non mi mettessero in strettezza maggiori, et che poi non le potessi più servir: ma pur non mancherò con tutte quelle occasioni che io giudicherò buone, di far qualche nova a Vostra Serenità del stato mio [fol. 28r] et delle cose che qui alla giornata succediranno qui.

Di Pera, 8 di maggio 1570.

Letter 4

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391, II (=8873), fols. 247r-248r

Summary: In this letter from January 27, 1571, Marcantonio Barbaro expresses gratitude for Venice's support and warns that, despite recent losses, the Ottomans might retaliate by strengthening their defenses. Barbaro also updates the Senate on Rabbi Salomon Ashkenazi's situation. Ashkenazi has received financial support from Venice, including a salary and the position of physician to the Venetian nation, for his services to the Republic. However, Ashkenazi has faced significant personal losses, including the recent sinking of a ship bound for Candia that killed his brother and destroyed their cargo. Despite these difficulties, Ashkenazi continues to serve Venice and has been engaged in long discussions with the Basha in Adrianople, where he has observed a growing willingness for peace negotiations. However, the Basha is cautious about proceeding and has delayed Ashkenazi's return to Constantinople, wanting him to present matters to the Sultan first.

Sender: Marcantonio Barbaro; **Recipient:** The Doge or Venetian Senate; **Place of Origin:** Pera, Constantinople; **Date:** January 27, 1571.

[fol. 247r] Illustrissimi et Eccellentissimi Signori. Io ho con ogni debbita riverentia ricevute a 24 del presente le lettere replicate di Vostra Serenità Eccellentissima di 12 di Novembre, mandatemi per la strada di Corfù, non mi essendo per ancora capitate le prime; le quali certo non mi potevano dar maggior contento di quello che han fatto, poichè vedo con quanto affetto d'umanità, et benignità elle si sono mosse a scrivermi, sì perchè dalla bocca propria di Vostra Serenità io intendi l'immensa gratia che le ha concesso il Signor Dio con così felice, et opportuna vittoria; come anco per consolarmi con tanto humane et gratissime parole; Per il che dell'uno, et l'altro di questi così contesissimi officii gli ne rendo quelle maggiori gratie ch'io posso, et che dibbo: assicurando Vostra Serenità Eccellentissima che le prefate lettere non han causato in me ponto minor effetto di consolatione di

quello che ho conosciuto esser stata la intentione loro; onde serenamente ringratio la Divina [...]tà di tanto bene, et di tanta gratia dattici; et humilmente la suplico che per esaltatione della sua Santissima fede ci voglia anco nell'avvenire proteger col suo agiuto et favor: del quale se ben ne havemo sempre grandissimo bisogno, pur parmi ch'esso al presente sia maggiormente che mai sia stato, perciò che vedendosi sono costoro battuti a questo modo, si [fol. 247v] muovono arrabbiatamente non solo per la vendetta, ma anco per il danno che pur conoscono, esserli imminente: nel che fanno quel più che possono; però se li sarà dato tempo di rinforzarsi si deve creder che siano per diventar più insolenti che mai; perciò io ho con buon animo udito presto col favor del Santissimo Dio qualche nuovo, et felice progresso contra costoro; et di già la maggior parte di questi lo teme assi: ragionando pubblicamente per tutte le voci che di Christianità capitano qui, che ivi le provisioni si fanno gagliardissime solo per venir a dar in questa testa, et veramente che mi dispiace che tanto di divulghi questa opinione, potendo ella causar, che costoro si muovino a qualche consideratione, et provisione, et già si dice che siano state mandate alli castelli di questo stretto alquante somme di aspri per rassettar essi castelli, ma io di ciò non ne son affatto sicuro. – Il clarissimo Andrea Gradenigo mio cognato mi scrive di havermi mandate alcune lettere di Vostra Serenità anco replicate, in proposito della cortese deliberatione fatta da lei verso Rabbi Salamon Ascanazi si del donarli trecento cecchini [zecchini] come di haverli dato il luogo di medico della natione, le quali però ancora non mi sono capitate; Io le prometto Serenissimo Principe che questa gratia è per opinion mia così ben collocata in predetto dottore, quanto altra ch'ella habbia per il passato concessa; et parmi poter dir a Vostra Serenità che di già esso Rabbi Salamon per li disturbi che per servitio di lei ha per innanzi havuti no possi haver spesa gran parte di questi denari, oltre molti pericoli ne' quali egli è incorso, et danni che ha havuti nella facultà sua in Candia; per aggiunta de' quali s'intende, che quello navilio che lui ultimamente espedì per Candia con vittuarie, et altre cose [fol. 248r] insieme con suo fratello si sia rotto, et il fratello morto. – Hora esso dottor è ancora in Adrianopoli, et si aspetta qui la presente settimana; però quando egli sia tornato lo consolerò con questa munificentia di Vostra Serenità, con tutto che come io ho detto non habbia per ancora havute le lettere sue con l'ordine prigato: parendomi servitio pubblico a questi tempi che con tanta difficultà capitano le lettere, di non ristar di consolarlo, poiché son certo che di già ella così mi ha scritto. Da ditto Rabbi Salamon da poi ch'egli è in Adrianopoli io ho due volte ricevute lettere sue, scrivendomi di haver havuti lunghi ragionamenti col magnifico Bassà, il qual hora dimostra maggior volontà della pace che mai, ma che non sa come poterla

introdurre, convenendoli proceder con molto rispetto Signore, et soggiunge di più, che volendo egli ritornar in qua, il Bassà non lo ha lasciato partire, perché ne voleva far anz'a(?) sua Maestà; esso dottor si riposta a ragionar meco nel suo ritorno, perciò che il modo col quale l' mi scrive non comporta longhezza di parole: il che gli fa tanto maggiormente, quanto che anco dice, che l' Signor fatto che sia il Divano, che sarà tra 20 giorni se ritornerà in qua.

Di Pera, 27 di gennaio 1571

Rabbi Salomon che scrivo a Vostra Serenità Eccellentissima ch'io stava aspettando d'Adrianopoli, non è ancora venuto: pur non credo ch'egli possa star molto a comparire.

Di Pera, 7 di febbraio 1571

Letter 5

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391, II (=8873), fols. 411r-414v

Summary: In this letter from March 13, 1573, Marcantonio Barbaro informs the Venetian Senate of the successful peace negotiations with the Ottomans. He praises Marco Salomon Ashkenazi for his crucial contribution and urges the Senate to reward him. A key challenge was navigating the translations from Turkish to Venetian, as Barbaro did not speak Turkish and relied entirely on interpreters, especially Oumbei, the Ottoman dragoman. Barbaro faced difficulties ensuring that the final peace terms accurately reflected Venice's interests, as the Basha initially presented a Turkish version that significantly deviated from their agreements, including dishonorable terms. Barbaro carefully managed the process, ensuring two versions of the agreement were prepared: one in Turkish and one in Venetian, the latter personally signed by him to avoid misinterpretations. After extensive discussions, he secured favorable terms, particularly regarding Dalmatian boundaries and fortifications.. He has sent the Turkish original and a French translation to Venice via his son, Francesco, and requests further instructions on issues such as slavery and the release of Manus Bei.

Sender: Marcantonio Barbaro; **Recipient:** The Doge or Venetian Senate; **Place of Origin:** Pera, Constantinople; **Date:** March 13, 1573.

[fol. 411r] Io son tenuto per conscientia mia di far testimonianza alla Serenissima Vostra di quelli che con prudentia e smisurata affettione si sono adoprtati qui nel servitio suo con manifestissimo pericolo delle vite loro per essermi io continuamente valuto in molte cose sì come lei potrà intender più particolari da mio figlio; però le dirò, che dal magnifico nostro Marco Sanudo non si poteva desiderar niente di più di quello che ha fatto ardentemente in modo tale, ch'egli deve veramente esser stimato gentil'huomo digno d'ogni maneggio: oltre che in tutte le sue attioni l' si è portato qui m[...]re, che da ogni uno egli è molto stimato et amato: et qui par' che il sia come il podestà e Giudice di Pera fra tutte le nationi. – Di nostro Zerba Negro poi mio secondo son tenuto a darle che il Signor

Dio mi ispirò a ricercarlo alla Serenissima Vostra perché se ben mi persuado che molti altri soggetti honorati che la servono, le haverebb' ogn'uno fatto affettionatamente servito: per di questo ch'egli le ha così prontamente fatto, le dico che io non potevo desiderar in lui cosa alcuna di più: onde che ella lo deve tener nella memoria della sua buona gratia. –

Pasqual Dragomanno anco che la serve per tanti anni, si può dir certo ch'egli ogni giorno habbia posta la sua testa in pericolo per le occasioni che continuamente l'ha havuto [fol. 411v] di servirla in questi [...] agliosi tempi; lui veniva meco di là quando piacerà al Signor Dio per far riverenza alla Serenità Vostra; et per farsi conoscer per suo servitore: et so che lei lo abbraccerà secondo il solito della benignità sua. –

Io scrissi già alla Serenissima Vostra con la partita di qua del [Giacomo] Ragazzoni⁵²⁸ in raccomandatione del povero capellano di casa per quel suo garbuglio che gli intervene in servizio di lei, havendo egli spesso buona somma di danari per librarsi: che hora con questa occasione havendomi lui di novo fatto instantia ch'io voglia far questi officij non ho potuto mancar che non gli lo raccomandandi: videndomi certo che con la solita benignità sua lo farà quello che si riceva in caso tale.

Illustrissimi et Eccellentissimi Signori. Con il nome dell'omnipotente iddio mando alla Serenità Vostra la capitulatione della pace che io ho conclusa tra lei e questo Serenissimo Signore⁵²⁹; io prigo la sua Divina bontà che vogli accompagnarla talmente con la gratia sua che la sia di felicità e prosperità a quel Serenissimo Dominio. He nel formar essa capitulatione io ho atteso a due cose principali; l'una, che la sia formata con parole honorevoli e degne si come ho fatto; et l'altra, ch'ella comprenda soltanto quelli capi che la Serenità Vostra mi ha commesso: fuggendo l'occasione di intrar in trattatione degli altri, sopra i quali o poteva nascer qualche difficoltà, o almeno larghezza di tempo pregiudiciale alla intentione che già la mi ha scritto.

Et perché la intenda il modo che si è tenuto in far questa scrittura, la sa perché se ne sono formate due con le medesime conditioni: ma una è fatta nella solita forma delle capitulationi altre volte fatte qui; et l'altra come scrittura fatta da me per la conclusione delle cose trattate tra noi, con la mia sottoscrizione, et promissione, che così in ogni modo ha voluto il Bassà: si come la Serenità Vostra

⁵²⁸ Giacomo Ragazzoni was a Venetian patrician merchant with sensitive commercial interests in Constantinople. He was sent there to negotiate the exchange between Muslim and Jewish merchants detained in Venice and Venetian merchants detained in Constantinople in 1571. Barbaro had tasked one of his dragomans, Matheca Salvago, to inform the Council of Ten of this possibility; the Council, in turn, authorised Ragazzoni to embark on this mission.

⁵²⁹ The peace agreement had been signed a few days earlier, on 7 March 1573.

potrà apertamente veder dall'una et l'altra che qui alligate le mando in lingua Turchesca, alle quali io mi ho fatta far la interpretatione da Oumbei Dragoman grande di questo Signore con la sottoscrizione di sua propria mano, che medesimamente la vedrà; il qual Oumbei non ha dimostrato meno il suo valor in questa operatione, che la sua distrezza et amorevolezza. –

[fol. 412r] Voglio anco per informatione della Serenità Vostra dirle che la scrittura fatta in nome mio io ho solamente sottoscritta quella che è scritta nella nostra lingua et non la Turchesca; et ho tenuto qui le originali: et con quella maggior diligentia che si può le mando per Francesco mio figlio che con un chiaus se ne viene di lì vlaco(?); et mi è parso bene far che il chiaus non passi Ragusi per molti digni rispetti: ma chel s'intertenghi lì fino altro ordine dalla Serenità Vostra. Hora Serenissimo Principe si che datta molta sua prudentia sarà ben considerato quanto possa importar che anco a questi di qua sia immediatamente corrisposto con officio conveniente di lei, et che la qualità di tempi per infiniti rispetti ricerca che subito ne torni qui la risposta per assicurar l'animo loro: Nel che mi persuado che la non vi pareva perso il tempo in fondo, o sia per mio figlio o per il mastro di casa, il qual si possa per ciò mando (et per assicurarmi anco d'ogni sinistro che potesse occorrer a ditto mio figlio) o per qualche altro miglior mezzo che a lei paresse; Per li qual rispetti, et per altri anco ho fatto far li comandati et mandati al sanzacco⁵³⁰ di Cer[...] et altri ancora ne porti seco mio figlio, acciò che in ogni caso esso sanzacco debba far in diligenti tutte quelle espeditioni che gli saranno commesse dalla Serenità Vostra et chel faccia accompagnar sicuramente huomini, robba, dinari, et altre cose necessarie.

Mentre che io havevo scritto fin qui, et che niente altro s'aspettava, che d'ingrossar la capitulatione nel modo già stabilito tra noi con le minute affirmate, vennero a me Oumbei et il D[...], et mi portarono la espeditione del tutto solennemente; et in pubblica forma segnata: dicendomi loro ch'io dovessi far immediare l'expeditione, ma che prima la vedessi perché erano state alterate alcune cose; Però cominciandola a legger mi trovai ogni cosa mutata si quanto alle parole et all'ordine, come anco quanto alla sostanza et continentia di essi: perciò che quella non era capitulatione ma una lettera del Signor per Vostra Serenità, nella quale narrava con molte indigne parole aggrandendo sé, et abbassando lei, che io havevo offese le conditioni sotto annotate, et che lo havevo prigato et con ossequi supplicato in nome di quel **[fol. 412v]** Serenissimo Dominio per ottener la pace, et che lui la

⁵³⁰ The sanjaks were the administrative units within the Ottoman Empire.

concediva per gratia con esse conditioni quando però la Serenità Vostra così le approbasse prima; Ma oltra quell'ordine de ...aniamente mutato, mi era di più attenzione in tutti li capitoli, et massime in quello di confini di Dalmatia: per che era venuto in cognitione di questi quella parte che ne diveno ristituiti; et vi era anco aggiunto che la Serenità Vostra non potesse fabricare ne fortificar luoco alcuno; et in somma tutti li capitoli erano stati riformati in altro modo: Onde che havendo io veduto questo, mi alterai per quel modo che dovevo di così fatto proceder; et dopo molte parole mi ridussi a dirli in conclusione che io non volevo più parlar di pace, et escludendo ogni ragionamento li licentiai. Tornarono essi al Bassà, et intrarono in pratica di rimover qualche d'una di queste conditioni: sopra il che più volte seguivano diverse proposte et risposte tra noi, le quali convengo lasciar da parte per non allongar tanto le letteri mie; Pur cominciando il Bassà a dir alcune cose, ma non quelle di confini, non parevano cambiati et il detto accordandole: et in fine sua magnificenza mi mandò a dir che io andassi a lei; Però andato ch'io mi fui, fu discorso assai sopra tutti li detti propositi, trattando il Bassà veramente la cosa con distrezza, et si vedeva che l' si struggeva per queste difficoltà, escusandosi et esortandomi a volermi contentar di quello che per me l' poteva far': perché per la natura del Signore, et molti rispetti era impossibile far altro, essendo massima la capitulatione stata già solennemente espedita et segnata: promettendo sua magnificenza che nell'esecutione di essa capitulatione la fan... et de molte cose, et che hora il volerne parlar al Signor sarebbe un distruggere l'opera fatta. Io infine stri[...]pernace[...] che non volevo acconsentir a parole indegne, né che si dicesse quello che non era vero che havessi prigato; et che non volevo il capitolo il qual proibiva il fabricar et fortificationi; che voleva che questa fusse capitulatione et pure terminata; et che volevo che si levassero le cose impertinenti et che chiaramente si dicesse, che li confini fussero posti dove **[fol. 413r]** erano innanzi il romper la pace; che tanto operai dopo molte et poche repliche, che ridussi tutte queste cose a buona conclusione: ma con infinite difficoltà sono state terminate in modo tale, che parmi che la Serenità Vostra se ne possa non solo contentare; ma quando la considererà il modo che si sono altre volte trattate le cose a questa Porta, la conoscerà quanto si sia acquistato di riputatione: massime da poi che si è scoperto per causa di che Dio gli perdoni di quanto importanti siano li Territorij di Dalmatia che si erano perduti: solendo questi con molta difficoltà ristituir paese acquistato con la spada come già sanno le Serenità Vostre Eccellentissime; specialmente dicendo il Bassà haver aviso da questi sanzacchi che in questi Territorij vi sono molti castelli et fortezze guardate da loro soldati. Quanto poi alla somma di denari convenuta, la Serenità Vostra mi creda questo per certo, che non ho mai

potuto ritrovar modo alcuno di poterla minuire, né d'alterar il tempo per l'esempio della capitulatione passata, et perché dicono che quel Serenissimo Dominio ha molto oro et che non guarda a queste miserie. Nel modo io ho ottenuto tutto quello che la mi ha ordinato, con trattar le cose tanto digna et honoratamente, che forse difficil cosa sarebbe il chiederlo, et con somma riputatione di Vostra Serenità perché io ho temuto modo tale che senza ricercar cosa niuna da loro son stato presto ricercato; et così prigo il Signor Dio che questa conclusione sia con felicità di quella Eccellentissima Repubblica. –

Quanto si sia Rabbi Salamon affaticato in questa trattatione, et a qual cimenti et pericoli egli habbia convenuto star saldo io non mi prisumo veramente de dirlo: perché non so come l'habbia tanta distrezza et giudicio, o come nol sia uscito dal buon sentimento; perché questa pratica si è tratta così gagliardamente da tutte le parti, che dicendolo mi pirsuado che difficilmente sarà veduto. Io mi rendo sicuramente che la Serenità Vostra secondo la solita cortesia sua non si dimenticherà delli continui et segnalati servitij che sempr'egli ha fatti in tutta questa guerra con tanti danni et pericoli suoi, et quanto per questa conclusione con valor amor et prudentia l'si sia affaticato. He voglio ristar di dirle per intelligentia [fol. 413v] sua, che parmi di comprender ch'esso Rabbi Salamon disegni quando questo manderà huomo di là per corrisponder a quell'officio che quel Serenissimo Dominio farà per questa pace, ch'egli come unito a quello che veniva (qual certo per opinioni non sarà Oumbei) spiri di venir personalmente a far vicinanza alla Serenità Vostra.

Questo dico, perché quanto ciò forse si potrebbe all'hora compitamente usarli questa gratitudine che lei disegnasse di darli: et fui tanto col ritorno in qui di mio figlio farli usar in parte qualche dimostratione d'amore; Ma perché questo disegno di venir di li potrebbe non gli riuscir' per varij accidenti, lei però così le parirà darmi della sua volontà una commissione alternativa, la qual io potrei secondo l'occasione governarmj; et così medesime d'opinioni qual certo ha fatte tante et così amorevol fatiche in questo negotio, io son sforzato a dirle realmente che io non potevo desidrar cosa alcuna in più in lui. Rabbi Salamon il qual ha animo naturalmente grato et benigno, mi ha fatto instantia ch'io supplichi la Serenità Vostra ch'io voglia usare ogni cortese dimostratione alla natione hebrea: con dir che se già ne sono molti di mala natura, che pur ce ne sono anco di buoni, i quali per gli altri non devono patir et che si può punendo i tristi aprir la porta della gratia agli altri; egli ha fatto meco quest'officio con molto affetto, aggiogendomi con buona intentione che cosa tale non può apportar pregiudicio a quella Eccellentissima Repubblica massimamente.

Mandando mio figlio, et dovendo io solamente servir alla Serenità Vostre Eccellentissime questo negotio della pace, non mi è sovvenuto in qual real modo io havessi a scriver all'eccellentissimo Senato la occasione di questa sua venuta: però mi son risoluto a scriver solamente le presenti mie, lasciando ch'esse ne facciano quello che le parirà. Quanto alle cose di qua, costoro continuano le lor propositioni nel modo che qui per innanzi ho scritto: et io starò oculato sempre per intenderne quel più che potrò, dandone conto a Vostra Serenità; et cercherò in ogni mezzo di Rabbi Salamon di far diversi officij secondo che mi darò l'occasione di [fol. 414r] aiutar costoro, che per molti rispetti, et massime per stabilir tanto meglio la buona intentione loro della pace, che devono attenersi di mandar fuori armata per levar tutti li sospetti quanto più si può: i qual' officij farò con quella maggior efficacia che sarà possibile, che fino hora non mi è parso bene di promoverli per non li dar sospetto che la trattatione sia stata solamente per raffredarli. Per il negotio di Polonia che nasca(?) il delfin di Francia dimostra di haverne poca speranza, et di non esser venuto qui per altro che per la pace: con tutto questo so che gagliardamente lo sollecita, et che manderà presto huomo suo in là con un chiaus et con lettera di questo Signor. Nel resto poi altro non ho che dir alla Serenissima Vostra; ma perché hor hora mi diveno esser portate tutte le scritture espeditte, ho voluto anticipar il tempo a preparar le presenti mie per non tardar posto questa espedittion, parendomi che una loro possa importar assai.

Hoggi che siamo alli 13 del mese a hora 4 del giorno con il nome del spirito santo si parte Francesco mio figlio per venir a far riverenza alla Serenità Vostra poi che si sono espeditte tutte le cose, et superata ogni difficoltà che la buona ventura possa esser, et se ben di sopra ho ditto che tenervi di qua la capitulatione originale in Turchesco, et che gli ne mandai una copia autentica. Pur il Bassà ne ha fatte far due l'una e l'altra in un medesimo modo autentiche.⁵³¹ Però tenendone io qui una insieme con la sua traduttione fatta in franco, interpretata et autenticata da Oumbei, mando l'altra a Vostra Serenità con la medesima traduttione; et per intelligentia sua le dirò, che il Bassà ha voluto che la data sia del giorno che per la conclusione della pace ci abbocchassimo insieme, che fui alli 7 del presente; con tutto che vi siano state da poi d'accomodar molte difficoltà occorse. La Serenità Vostra possa anchor lei farne far di là le traduttioni per incontrarle meglio. Il magnifico Bassà ha anco voluto scriverle in particolar modo: né io ho potuto veder la traduttione di essa lettera, se non questa notte,

⁵³¹ Barbaro is supervising that a faithful translation of the peace agreement is sent to Venice. What is interesting to notice is that Barbaro also mentions the sending of the original Turkish Ottoman version.

perché vi haverei forse fatto [fol. 414v] accomodar molte cose; ma per non allungar più la espeditione per molti importanti rispetti, et anco perché in vero essendo state infinite le repliche che tra di noi sono passate sopra la capitulatione, non mi è parso darle più molestia, ma lasciandola in quel modo. Che altro mi resta a dir alle Serenità Vostre Eccellentissime, se non ch'io fremo con ardentissimo desiderio aspettando di haver quanto prima risposta delle presenti mie.

Nella miseria di schiavi io non ho mosso ragionamento alcuno per non intrar in qualche difficoltà: ma la Serenità Vostra sa ben che la capitulatione vecchia compresa et questa nuova non si possono tenir schiavi dall'una né dall'altra parte: per circa questo la sarà contenta darmi particolar commissione della volontà acciò che io sappia meglio governarmi. Qui mi è stata aperta la casa, perciò posto in libertà; et havendo il magnifico Bassà fatto meco offitio mezzo per la liberazione di Manus bei⁵³², mi persuado che la Serenità Vostra lo libererà, lasciandolo andare dove più gli piace.

Di Pera 13 Marzo 1573.

Letter 6

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391, II (=8873), fols. 414v-415v

Summary: In this letter from March 1573, the khadi of Constantinople officially confirms the peace agreement reached between Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Marcantonio Barbaro on March 7, 1573. Key points include Venice's annual payment of 300 ducats, the handover of the Sopoto fortress, adjustments to tribute for Zante, and compensation for lost merchant goods. The letter also cancels Venice's annual tribute for Cyprus and reaffirms earlier agreements. The khadi concludes with a solemn oath to uphold the peace, provided Venice continues to honor the terms.

Sender: The khadi of Constantinople; **Recipient:** The Doge or Venetian Senate; **Place of Origin:** Constantinople; **Date:** March 7, 1573.

[fol. 414v] Dopo lo agiuto di Dio, il mio comandamento è questo, che con la gratia del puro, et santo Iddio, et con l'argumentation del principe di santo Mahumed Mustaffà che il saluto di Dio sia sempre sopra di lui. Io che son [...] ditti [...], donato di corone alli Principi di questi tempi che sono sopra la terra Sultan Selim figlio di Sultan Suleiman Khan figlio di Sultan Selim Khan. Li amari fura grandi signori xpni, a cui vengono li potenti della generatione credente al Messia, compositioni delle cause di tutti li Nazareni il Doge et Signoria di qua che tutti i fini di loro affari siano ottimi. Il bisognosissimo intra li Signori delle generationi credenti al Messia che alla mia felice porta nel servitio

⁵³² It has been impossible to identify this character.

di là risiede Marcantonio Barbaro honorato et prigliato huomo loro, da parte di Signori da novo ha negoziato per conto della pace et accordo: et facendone notificatione per questo conto, et mandato alla mia eccelsa Porta **[fol. 415r]** scritta in bollata di sua mano propria; et essendo che la nostra felice Porta con lo aiuto di Dio scopertamente aperta così a quelli che desiderano la pace, come la guerra, seguendo la nostra Impas[...] et felice usanza l'abbiamo avvertita. Di ditti capitoli che il ditto Bailo ha scritto, il primo è questo.

Che li ditti Signori Venetiani secondo che nel tempo della buona memoria di Sultan Suleiman danno 300 ducati, nel medesimo modo, ordine et tempo come nelli capitoli vecchi e chiaro li daranno.

Et di più daranno il castello nominato Sopoto⁵³³ con l'artiglieria che vi era dentro quando fu preso, et li abitanti che sono dentro, quelli che vorranno restino: et quelli non vorranno, con le loro robbe beni et figli et parenti vadano dove che i loro piace senza che alcuno gli dia fastidio.

Et di più per l'isola del Zante davano denari 500, al presente crescendo mille ducati, secondo che li hanno pagati nel tempo passato alla mia eccelsa Porta millecinquecento ducati all'anno pagheranno.

Et di più la capitulatione datta dalla buona memoria di mio padre, che quando sentii sopra la felice et alla sedia fu ritornata, et da noi accettata: così quello che in ditta capitulatione è scritto; come le cose che sono nelli concessi comandamenti di novo confermo.

Et di più la Signoria di Venetia per conto dell'isola di Cipro li 8 ducati che di anno in anno pagavano alla mia eccelsa Porta, non li debbino più pagare.

Et di più nell'Albania, et nel paese della schiavonia li luoghi che al presente alcuni sono posseduti dalla nostra parte, et alcuni in mano della Signoria di Venetia, li confini et ville delle Terre che sono in mano di ambe le parti siano posseduti dall'uno et l'altro si come erano innanzi che si rompesse la pace. Et perché così sia dall'una et l'altra banda alli Governatori di detti paesi siano mandati comandamenti.

Et di più alli mercanti di ambe le parti che avanti che si rompesse la pace così altre cose attenenti a questa parte, come alli attenenti alla Signoria di Venetia siano liberati, et datogli le robbe mercantile et navilij loro; et se delli detti mercanti fusse **[fol. 415v]** stata venduta la mercantia ovvero smarrita, giustificandolo, delle vendute cose quando sono state vendute li siano dati li dinari: et delle smarrite, quello che è il loro priggio li sia dato.

⁵³³ The castle of Sopoto, conquered by Sebastiano Venier in 1570, is today in the Albanian municipality of Borsh. It was one of the main dominions conquered by the Venetians to be ceded back to the Ottomans in the peace agreement.

Pertanto in la lettera dattici dal Bailo da parte del Doge in Signoria di Venetia secondo tutti quelli capitoli ch'ella contiene accettando lo accordo, questa capitulatione impersonia ho data; et comando che fino a tanto che dalla parte di detti Signori li patti et promesse et pace saranno rispettate et osservate, et anco alla promessa non faranno nuovo movimento: per l'unità del purissimo, sommo e degno Dio, et per l'honoranza del più stimato nel Cielo et nella terra, et anche per il Dio felice nostro Profetta Muhamed Mustaffà, che il saluto di Dio sia sempre sopra di lui, prometto et giuro che io ancora dell'amicitia che è infra di noi delli patti et delle promesse ne rivolitione ne mutamento alcuno mostrato; et fino a tanto che a quelli che sono nemici alla nostra felice porta il Doge dei Signori di Venetia così per mare come per terran non daranno agiuto spalle ne in fatti ne in parole, di questa fatta amicitia et accordo et perché si prevedeva si come si continee nella imparto[...] capitulatione vecchia come nova; al segno eccelso ccrederanno. Data alli tuoi della Santa Humma Il Cadì, anno 980, che sono lì 7 Marzo 1573 in Costantinopoli.

Letter 7

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. VII, 390-391, II (=8873), fols. 437v-440v

Summary: In this letter dated May 7, 1573, Marcantonio Barbaro reports to the Venetian Senate on several diplomatic and security issues. A significant portion of the letter focuses on Rabbi Salomon's continued service to Venice during the war. Despite facing financial hardships and feeling that his assets in Venice have been unjustly treated, Salomon remains loyal. He has risked his life multiple times to provide provisions for Candia and continues to act in Venice's interest. Barbaro expresses his concern that Salomon's contributions are not being properly recognized and urges the Senate to correct this. Importantly, Rabbi Salomon also appeals for the protection of the Jewish community in Venice. He asks Barbaro to advocate on their behalf, arguing that while there may be some individuals of bad character, the entire community should not be punished for the actions of a few. He requests that the Senate show leniency and allow the Jewish community to remain in Venice, punishing only the wrongdoers while protecting the innocent. Salomon also mentions his desire to return to Venice, his homeland, for the remaining years of his life. Additionally, Salomon asks for the Senate's assistance in favoring Eleazar Caffo, a Jewish merchant who had provided valuable services to Venetian merchants during the war, as a favor requested by the Sultana. Barbaro notes that Salomon has sent a special envoy to manage this matter.

Sender: Marcantonio Barbaro; **Recipient:** The Doge or Venetian Senate; **Place of Origin:** Pera, Constantinople; **Date:** May 7, 1573.

[**fol. 437v**] Serenissimo Principe. Il Magnifico Bassà mi mandò heri sera a casa per Rabbi Salomon et un chiaus li comandanti espeditti come qui apresso dirò alla Serenità Vostra perchè io havevo dimandata licentia Serenità Vostra di potervi mandare con urgenza, ella mi fece intender che quel chiaus lo potrebbe, et acciò che [**fol. 438r**] il Magnifico Bassà e Bailo fussero più honorati et meglio

serviti per il viaggio e provvisti di quante scorte e d'ogni altra lor comodità et sicurtà, mi mando a dir che la voleva che il medesimo chiaus ritornasse qui con loro, et poi gli havea dato ordine che si debba aspettar lì in Ragusa: facendo per tant effetto comandamento amplissimo il qual mi ha stato duplicato, uno per il viaggio di Ragusa e l'altro per quello di Alessio: Per il che saranno in libertà le loro magnificenze clarissime di prender qual di ditte [...] che più le piacerà. Ho adunque espedito questo chiaus con le presenti mie inviandolo al Zaguri⁵³⁴ in Ragusa con detti questi ordini et avvertimenti che mi sono parsi necessarij. ...sopra comandanti me ne ha anco il magnifico Bassà mandati dagli altri in buona forma per la Valona, et alcuni luochi in Corfù in miseria di licentia tutti li corsari et leventi che si ritrovano in quelle parti: cometendo i tutti quelli sanzacchi che non gli debbino più dar ricapito, et che non possino più transitar in Corfù, et che stiano avvertiti di non danneggiar li luochi ne navalij o sudditi di Vostra Serenità, ma che siano tutti trattati come buoni amici, con comandi a quelli ministri che se alcuno fusse disobidiente che l' sia castigato e immediatamente diano aviso alla Porta delli contrafacenti. Questi comandanti mi è parso bene di mandar alli clarissimi Rettore et Provveditore di Cattaro (come più vicini e commodi ad eseguir questo servitio) acciò che da loro magnificenze clarissime siano fatti approntar, accompagnandoli con quelli officij che le pareranno convenienti. Ho anco havuti altri comandi in buona forma perché in ogni luoco si vicini bene, il che io non son mancato di dare aviso al clarissimo Provveditore Generale in Dalmatia⁵³⁵, et alli clarissimi Rettori di Cataro, acciò che poi loro magnificenze clarissime ne diano notitia et li debiti avvertimenti ad ogni uno; che di tutte le sopraddette cose ho medesimamente scritto allo clarissimo Ambassador et Bailo, acciò che [fol. 438v] loro magnificenze clarissime bene instruite et informate del tutto debbano ancor esser avvertir a cadauno quello che le giudicheranno a proposito. Li medesimi ordini mi ha il magnifico Bassà fatto intender haver dati in buona forma a questi parti di Levante, et alli capi da mar', acciò che ogniuno si astenga di danneggiar li luochi, navilij et sudditi di Vostra Serenità sì come mi promesso fu. Et perché volendo io mandar con sicurtà et pretezza le lettere a Vostra Serenità in Candia come la mi cassette, io havevo qualche difficoltà rispetto che fuori di questo stritto vi sono molti corsari che danneggiano intensamente et Turchi et Christiani come ho già scritto, ricercai per queste che ad esso magnifico Bassà passaggio

⁵³⁴ Realistically, this Zaguri is a Venetian consul based in Dubrovnik.

⁵³⁵ At the time, the Provveditor General di Dalmatia was a patrician man called Giacomo Foscarini, who had been appointed in 1572.

atto et sicuro; Per il che sua magnificenza havea tornata et si era fermata in questo per maggior sicurtà: che a posta andasse una buona galeotta fino in Candia: sopra la qualcosa havendo io havute molte considerationi delli varij accidenti et distinti che potevano occurrer, et havendone di parte d'essi fatto ben informar, ella accettò l'aricado(?) mio, et si contentò che la galeotta non passasse in Candia, ma che portasse le cose fino a Hixia [Ixia], et che di là poi essendovi poco camino per barca si potessero mandarle a quell'isola: Et perché il Governatore di Hixia si unisca al presente qui et è huomo da bene, egli se ne ritorna con quella galeotta fino a Hixia, et farà questo servitio come ricerca il bisogno: et à lui ho dato quell'ordine che si deve; ondi che spero che questa notte o dimani partirà senza fallo. Io non son mancato con lettere mie a questi Clarissimi Rettori di dovuti notitii di tutto quello che ho giudicato esser servitio di quel Serenissimo Dominio; che et questo proposito son tenuto di dir cosa buona proprio d'ogn'uno, quello che mi ha dato non poco ramarico in tutto il tempo di questa guerra, nella quale da che ella principiò può saper la Serenità Vostra **[fol. 439r]** quello che tante volte io ho scritto degli amorevolissimi et importantissimi officij che ha continuamente fatti il Dottor Rabbi Salamon, che se io non voglio con ingratitudine diffraudar le sue operationj, sono sforzato di liberamente dir che io ho conosciuto in lui non manco buono et pronto animo nelle cose di quella Eccellentissima Repubblica che il mio medesimo sì come anco la Serenità Vostra havervi potuto conoscer da tante mani le lettere mie, ma molto meglio dalle operationi di esso dottore: per le quali ella si mosse già a scriver in Candia caldamente in favor delle cose sue; et io non ho mai lasciato passar occasione di scriver a quei Clarissimi Rettori in conformità, prigandole ad haver per raccomandate le cose di predetto Rabbi Salamon sì come suddito ch'egli è di quel Serenissimo Dominio, et come meritatissimo suo servitore: et oltre di questo egli ha mandato in occasione di questa guerra 10 o 12 volte vasselli in Candia con vittuarie et con lettere mie a tempi mali, che era con certo pericolo della vita sua; con tutto ciò si è di continuo esso dottor doluto meco che le cose sue sono state trattate di là [in Venice] come s'egli fusse stato ribello: ne mai l' si ha potuto valersi di quel suo cavedale che si attrovava di là, né meno del tratto di quello che vi ha mandato; il che è stato con suo estrema iattura et danno, et a lui non parì di meritar tal cosa. Io mi persuado che ogni uno habbia fatto ragionevolmente il debito suo: ma il non haver io mai havuto di Candia niuno aviso ne notitia di cosa alcuna, ne manco risposta di tante letter mie, con la cognitione ch'io ho delle grandissime opere di Rabbi Salamon, et sentendo le quesite sue, non può far che non mi dolga: perché egli può ragionevolmente vidir ch'io gli sia mancato con molta ingratitudine, et che di niun momento siano

stati gli efficaci officij ch'io tante volte fatti. Per il che supplico con grande affetto la Serenità Vostra mosso così da quell'interno debito che per servitio di lei mi sento havere al detto Rabbi Salamon, che secondo la solita sua gratitudine [fol. 439v] la voglia cometter in Candia efficacemente, che le cose siano con giustizia favorite et trattate, come mi rendo securissimo che la non mancherà di farlo certamente.⁵³⁶ Oltre di questo mi occorre aggiongerle ch'esso Rabbi Salamon ha fatto officio affettiosissimo et ripieno d'ogni humil supplicatione, et tanto affetto di cuore ch'io non lo saprei esprimer: et con lunghissima esposizione mi ha esposto che tutte la natione hebrea si sente obbligatissima alla Eccellentissima Repubblica perché veramente in niuna parte del mondo ella è stata ben trattata che là; soggiungendo che se ben nella lor natione non può esser che non vi siano degli huomini cativi et tristi, et che tal volta per gl'insieme loro faciano delle cose che non stanno bene: perché da hebrei non sono avvenuti tradimenti, né si sono mai intromessi in cose simili, et che per altra occasione di minor importanza qualche tristo ha mal operato, la Giustizia vuole l'sia castigato: ma che per questo il tristo di molti altri innocenti non merita pena; et qui moltiplicando in assai parole, mi aggiunge apresso infinite supplicationi acciò che la Serenità Vostra sia contenta di non scacciar la nation hebrea da quella inclita città, ma castigando li tristi et usando gratia coi buoni, la sia contenta si come tanto tempo l'ha già fatto per metter che possano viver apresso di lei, poiché gli anco disegna di venir a questa per gli anni che gli restano in quella patria dove è nato suddito: dicendomi che se ben l conosce che à lui persona particolar' non si conviene dimandar et che però non l'havea potuto far resistenza all'obbligo della sua natione più persuaso della benignità di Vostra Serenità, che da altra cosa che lo potesse o volesse mover. Mi disse anco che hora per la pace fatta con tutti che robba che già la Sultana⁵³⁷ ricercò che fussero ristabilite a D. Eleazaro Caffo date per il che egli manda suo huomo a posta: pur ha voluto che si in questo servitio, come in ogni altro suo bisogno porse la Serenità Vostra [fol. 440r] rispetto di ditta Sultana la voglia favorirlo, sì come veramente merita per li buoni officij ch'esso Rabbi Eleazar ha usati verso molti nostri mercanti in occasione di questa guerra, si come le ho già scritto. –

Io scrissi a Vostra Serenità per le ultime mie et ben del presente tutto quello che fino all'hora le potevo dire circa la quantità et il tempo dell'uscir di quest'armata, et al presente poco di più le posso

⁵³⁶ It is likely that Ashkenazi asked bailo for some compensation for his losses during his service for Venice, such as his brother's death and the shipwreck of some of his vessels.

⁵³⁷ Nurbanu Sultan was Selim II's wife and mother of future Sultan Murad III.

aggiunger: salvo che se ben si medesime continuar le provisioni, et che si ragioni anco che debbino uscir tutte le galee che sono qui: non si creda però che per tal effetto comparisca gente da remo né da spada in quella quantità che si ricerca, con tutto che sia pur gionto questi giorni qualche galeotto: et tutta via scrivendo hora mi vien ditto che heri fu mandato ordine al Cadì di Constantinopoli che in ogni modo l' facesse provisioni di ciurme per 10 galee prendendo gli huomini per la città dove li paresse haverne; et da altro luoco intendo chel Bassà risolse con Vlazar(?) che dovessero uscire di qua solamente ... galee oltre le guardie et quelle che sono fuori, et per che molti credano dalle provisioni che si vedono et da altri circostanti, che per quest'anno non ne siano per uscir più che le sopraddette ... galee: nel che io non posso havere altro fondamento più di quello che scrivo a Vostra Serenità, che con le presenti galee dicono che vi saranno 5 maone si come già scrissi, che pur heri ne gionse qui una delle nuove fatte in mar maggiore, et le altre maone sono qui accorte et all'ordine. Continua anco la voce che Piali Bassà sia per uscir': et si certo che per mal effetto egli va pur facendo qualche provisione; ma quando quest'armata sia per levarsi di qui non si sente ragionarne con fondamento; ne per ancora è cominciata à gionger qui galea alcuna di mar maggiore. Per il che la commune opinione vuole che debba essere tradita questa uscita; vero è che se questi vorranno solamente far partir quel corpo di galee ch'io ho di sopra detto, crederei che potessero più pochi giorni stando. [fol. 440v] Ma tutte queste cose parrano come incerte, et parmi poter dir a Vostra Serenità da molte importanti considerationi ch'io ho posto innanzi al magnifico Bassà in questo proposito di non turbar la pace, et havendo anco costoro qualche pensiero sull'armata Cattolica, ciò li possa tenere in molta dubietà. Per ritornar qui questi giorni uno che qui fu espeditto dall'Ambassador dell'Impero, et partì dalla casa cesaria alli primi di Aprile; Per il che esso Ambassador ha nuova elettione del suo successor, il qual dovea partir per venirsene qui con pinsione: cosa che ha dato gran consolatione a questi. Et da Polonia giorni sono che non habbiamo nuova alcuna. Questi ultimi mani è stato eletto, et ha anco lasciata la mano al Signor uno per andar Beglerbei a Tunisi: cosa che è riputata di non poco smacco et pregiudicio vol[...], poi ch'egli si veniva d'essere assoluto patrone in vita sua. La notte di San Marco fu in queste parti una così gagliarda et insperata fortuna, che ruppe qui in Constantinopoli solamente da 50 caramussali, et perché si è ditto da Metelino(?) in qui ne sono rotti forse al numero di 300; il è stato di non poco danno, non essendo tal cosa seguita senza morir molti marinari.

Di Pera, 7 di maggio 1573.

Appendix B: Letters from Modena

This second appendix contains a full transcription of five letters preserved in the Modena State Archive, which provide details regarding Ashkenazi's involvement in the election of Alfonso II of Este to the Polish throne. Abbreviations in the original texts have been expanded and the original layout has been maintained wherever possible. The transcription begins at c. 2r and finishes at c. 12v.

Modena, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Segreto Estense, Levante: Busta Unica, Carteggi degli Ambasciatori, agenti corrispondenti estensi, fols. 2r-12v.

Letter 1

ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fols. 2r-3v

Summary: In this letter dated November 26, 1574, Salamon Nathan Ashkenazi writes from Constantinople to Emanoel de Fano, a Jewish banker in Venice. Ashkenazi mentions that he has sent one of his men ahead with a letter regarding a business matter.

Sender: Rabbi Salamon Nathan Ashkenazi; **Recipient:** Emanoel de Fano, Jewish banker in Venice; **Place of Origin:** Constantinople **Date:** November 26, 1574.

[fol. 2r] Magnifico signor mio

Io spero che innanci de questa sarà gionto un homo mio con bonna expeditione per quel negotio con letteri per quel amicho che io expedisce fra giorni 3 ovvero 4; e già saria partito ma era un pocho mal desposto – quell'amico non ha volsutto intender come che già ho detto saria fenitta. Con il homo mio sarà avisatto de tutto et fare che sia subito expeditto per il retorno che il tempo he breve non altro solum pregar il Signor Iddio ve conservi felice e tutta casa vostra.

Da Costantinopoli, 26 novembre 1574

al Vostro Signore prontissimo –

docttor Salamon Nathan Ashcanasi

[fol. 3v] Magnifico domino Emanoel de Fano hebreo bancher in [Ghe]tto suo carissimo quanto fratello

Venetia

Letter 2

ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fols. 4r-6v

Summary: Salomon Nathan Ashkenazi writes to Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, regarding the possibility of his election as King of Poland. Aware of the many rivals Alfonso would face, Ashkenazi urges the duke to engage his lobbying services at the Ottoman court without delay. He explains that he has already discussed the matter with the Basha and believes the negotiations are progressing, though they hinge on the Duke's prompt intervention. Ashkenazi requests that Alfonso send letters of recommendation to both the Grand Sultan Selim II and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, expressing his desire to gain their support for his candidacy. Ashkenazi also mentions the significant financial expenses incurred in this lobbying effort and requests additional funds to continue advancing the Duke's cause. The letter includes two memoranda—one addressed to Sultan Selim II and the other to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha—written under Ashkenazi's guidance, where Alfonso highlights his family's ties to the Ottoman dynasty through a distant relationship to Sultan Suleiman. The two memoranda are both dated December 1, 1574.

Sender: Rabbi Salomon Nathan Ashkenazi; Recipient: Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara; Place of Origin: Constantinople; Date: December 1, 1574.

[fol. 4r] Avendo io presentato la sua grattia all'Illustrissimo Signor Bassà⁵³⁸ accompagnato con molte parole secondo me fu comesso per Venetia al esser mio de li, et ragionato tutto quello era necessario dove con gratia del Signor Iddio espero aver fatto il negocio, solamente la causa he de sua Eccellentia per non voler darne huna lettera per il Serenissimo Gran Signore⁵³⁹ che già la cosa seria fenitta. Hora sua Eccellentia sarà contenta subito receputto quella [lettera] dell'Illustrissimo Signor Bassà et la presente mia, escriverà huna sua lettera al Serenissimo Gran Signore et all'Illustrissimo Signor Bassà conforme la sustancia che serà da basso la presente, poi subito mandar li vostri imbassatori in quel locho che Vostra Eccellentia bene sa, perché subito giunto qui la sua gratissima lettera farò far subito la expedicione. Sarà per aviso de sua Eccellentia como li Signori Pollachi hanno fatto intender qui a questa Eccelsa Porta se fina ali 15 del mese de magio el Re de Pollonia non serà retornato al suo regnio che lori faranno nuovo electione et ancora fu tentato per il fratello de sua Maestà Christianissima, ma il qual non voleno intender per nenguno modo, me fu datto ordine da

⁵³⁸ The 'Illustrissimo Signor Bassà' is a clear reference for the Grand Vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.

⁵³⁹ As much as in Barbaro's letters, every mention of the 'Grand Signor' is referred to the Sultan – in this case, Selim would rule for less than a month. He was succeeded on 22 December 1574 by his son, Murad III.

parte de sua Eccellentia de cinquantamila escudi – bisogna che siano ducatti d'oro cioè cechini [zecchini] – diece mille escudi per me, me contento quello vol sua Eccellentia ma li faço intender che bisogna altri dodeci ovvero quindicimila escudi per altri consiglieri necessari qualli ho fatta la promessa, non pottendo io far de manco. Il qual negocio molto legiermente lo comporta tal espesa. Prometto a sua Eccellentia fina al presente con la espesa che ho dato al presente lattor mio nepotte con il suo servitor et sauz con dua [fol. 4v] servitori per compagnarlo fina a Ragusa qual viene questo servizio, [h]o espeso più de escudi cinquecento, li quali remetto in el petto de sua Eccellentia se li piacerà darli al ditto portator de la presente per aver de espender per il viaggio suo ovvero la expeditione et lui me farà secondo il ordine dattoli – et bisogna che sia subito et presto perché il tempo he breve et le estrade sono cattive perché subito passato ditto tempo faranno electione et che Re de Suedia⁵⁴⁰ he in molta consideratione per questo non bisogna tardar. Subitto che io o inteso la cosa de sua Eccellentia io me ne eschaldai et fecie il effecto caldamente per tanto tanto quello a esser con l'ajutto [l'aiuto] del Signor Dio fattelo presso et averette receputta la lettera dell'Illustrissimo Signor Bassà la qual me dà credito apresso sua Eccellentia quanto le dirò, et qui de sotto dirò solum la sustancia de le lettere la qualle sua Eccellentia le farà adornar sì come contiene et le metterà in le sue borse de oro con tutta la diligençia che se possibile. Non altro, solo pregar al Signor Dio fenischa il negocio in bene et la conserva felicemente facendolj humelmente de riverençia offerendomi ali servicii de sua Eccellentia prontissimo de Constantinopoli primo di dicembre 1574. –

Humelmente al servizio de Vostra Eccellentia Prontissima

docttor Salomon Nathan Aschanassi

La sustancia de le lettere per il Gran Signore⁵⁴¹

Ve prego me siatte favorevolle de una lettera et homo per li Signori Electori del Regno de Pollonia de esser io electo per Re, esser conveniente la electione per la persona mia essendo io parente de Vostra Altezza per causa da una donna de casa mia qual fu moglie de huno delli Imperatori vostri antecessori. Il qual la bona memoria del gloriosissimo Sultan Suliman vostro padre [fol. 5r] mandò a mio padre

⁵⁴⁰ Ashkenazi refers to John III of Sweden (r. 1568-1592), belonging to the Vasa dynasty.

⁵⁴¹ This minute is allegedly what Alfonso had written to Selim II himself according to Ashkenazi's suggestions. He is making leverage on an alleged relativity.

huno sauz con alcune gentilezze per vesitar la bona memoria che mio padre et reconosser la nostra parentela. Et ancora medesimamente io hera parente de la bona memoria del Re de Pollonia morto. Adunque he ragione che Sua Altezza me favorescha che la electione sia fatta in la mia persona, promettendoli esserle como huno figliolo suo el qual ancora serà grandezza sua aver favorito uno che he parente de sua Altezza dove finché viverò io lo reconosserò como he il dover.

La sustancia de la lettera per l'Illustrissimo Signor Bassà⁵⁴²

Prego Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ne voglia a far favorir del Serenissimo Gran Signore ciò io sia eletto per Re de Pollonia, essendo io parente del Serenissimo Gran Signor per causa de huna donna de la casatta nostra et fu moglie de huno delli Imperatori antecessori del presente imperator Sultan Selim che il Signor Dio la conservi. Il qual ha bona memoria de Sultan Soliman mando un sauz con alcune gentilezze a visitar la bona memoria de mio padre a reconosca la parentela et ancora io era parente della bona memoria del Re de Pollonia – adunque he ragione che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima me favorescha prometendolj esser como figliolo, como più largo ve dirà il dottor Salamon in nome mio.

Docttor Salamon Nathan Aschanassi

[fol. 6v] All'Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signor Duca de Ferrara.

Letter 3

ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fols. 7r-8v

Summary: On December 1, 1574, the same day Ashkenazi wrote the two memoranda regarding Alfonso's election, he also sent a letter to Isaac de Fano, residing in Ferrara. In this letter, Ashkenazi explains the efforts made so far, mentioning the dispatch of his nephew to deliver letters to the Basha and Sultan. He urges Isaac to quickly prepare a substantial sum of ducats to pay the viziers for their services in securing Alfonso's election. Ashkenazi also notes that he has already incurred significant expenses and asks that Isaac provide further funds to cover the ongoing costs of the operation.

Sender: Rabbi Salomon Nathan Ashkenazi; **Recipient:** Isaac de Fano; **Place of Origin:** Constantinople; **Date:** December 1, 1574.

⁵⁴² This is, instead, the second minute supposedly directed to Sokollu according to Ashkenazi's suggestions.

[fol. 7r] Subitto junto qui io non fecie altra cosa solo atender al negocio vostro et bene se recordarà Vostra Signoria quanto o, estimolato per aver una lettera de sua Eccellentia per il Serenissimo Gran Signor che già la cosa serra fenitta ma per non aver datta è estata causa de despesa et travaglio. Io mando aposta el mio nepotte apresentar le lettere a sua Eccellentia dell'Illustrissimo Signor bassà in resposta de la sua⁵⁴³ et dando credenza ame dove io le do aviso et scrive dua lettere huna al Serenissimo Gran Signor et una all'Illustrissimo bassà conforme alla manutta et io ho fatta inclusa in la mia che [h]o scritta a sua Eccellentia dove Vostra Signoria farà expedir subito al detto mio nepotte, ancora o, datto aviso che li escudj cinquanta milla bisogna che siano ducatti piu come ve disse, li diece milla escudj per me me contento ma ho datto aviso che bisognesto prometter ad altrj qualj sono consiglieri altrj escudj dodeci, o uero quindici mille ve prometto che fina ora per conto de questo negocio o, espeso escudj cinquecento per far questa expeditione et facendo accompagnar il mio nepotte de hum sauz [çavuş] con li suoi servitori fina a Ragusa non se pottendo far de manco, quallj escudi cinquecento, o, remosso in el petto de sua Eccellentia adarlj al detto mio nepotte seco abia de esponder, et cossi ve recomando al detto mio nepotte et farlo expedir subito che importa esser presto, non altro per ora solo pregar al Signor Iddio la conserva felice con tutta casa sua et prontissimo: aj servicj suoj da Costantinopoli a primo di Dicembre 1574.

Ali Comandj de Vostra Signoria docttor Salamon

Natan

Aschanasi

[fol. 8v] Magnifico Domo ysaque [Ysaque] de Fano suo oss.mo

In Ferrara

Letter 4

ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fols. 9r-10v

Summary: In this letter dated April 12, 1575, Rabbi Salomon Nathan Ashkenazi expresses frustration to Ysaque de Fano regarding the mishandling of business related to securing Alfonso II d'Este's election to the Polish throne. Ashkenazi is disappointed that after spending over 500 escudi and sending his nephew on a mission, the expected results were not achieved.

⁵⁴³ It is interesting to notice Ashkenazi's confidence in having obtained the necessary support by Selim and Sokollu for Alfonso's election.

Sender: Rabbi Salomon Nathan Ashkenazi; **Recipient:** Isaac de Fano; **Place of Origin:** Constantinople; **Date:** April 12, 1575.

[fol. 9r] Ho ricevuto la sua con il mio servitor et son restatto molto maraveglatto perché io non son uso anegociar in questa maniera essendome estatto fatto tata instancia et auendome tanto fatigatto et mandato apostata il mio nepotte cosi con despesa de piu de 500 escudj pensando de aver fenitto il negocio come già ho fatto intender he la venutta del mio servitor veder le cose tanta mal ordinate né manco satisfar delle espese, non me curo tanto per il danaro ma me despiace esser burlatto perché me dicitte che ho mandato detto mio nepotte per altra cosa, il qual non he il uero si ben per segurta lo acompagnatto con alcune lettere per la Serenissima Signoria, de gratie dittene como me ho de fidar a negociar questo negocio con tanto gran principe: con tutto questo non mancano a far escriver, et quello se escriverà ne mandarò la copia ma non se manchj a escriver per il Serenissimo Gran Signore et all'Illustrissimo Signor bassà si come ho scritto con la venuta costì del detto mio nepotte si come ho scritto a sua Eccellentia per potter far un altro officio più caldo et ben sarà razon che mej nepotti siano satisfatti de la espesa dellj 500 escudj. Non altro solum me ofero pregando al Signor Iddio.

De Costantinopoli, 12 di aprile 1575 –

Al servizio de Vostra Signoria docttor Salomon Natan
Aschanasi

[fol. 10v] Al Molto Magnifico Dom.o Yasque de Fano suo oss.mo

In Ferrara

Letter 5

ASMo, ASE, Ambasciatori, Levante, fols. 11r-12v

Summary: On 2 May 1575, Ashkenazi writes to Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. He expresses frustration over the length of the whole affair, which has made Alfonso's election virtually impossible. Nevertheless, Ashkenazi still holds out hope for a positive resolution.

Sender: Salomon Nathan Ashkenazi; **Recipient:** Not explicitly named in this letter, but likely the Duke of Ferrara (Alfonso II d'Este); **Place of Origin:** Constantinople; **Date:** May 2, 1575.

[fol. 11r] Con il fante passato ho scritto a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima discendolli il dispiacer che pigliai con la venuta del mio servitor per esser venutto di là tanto mal desparatto dico senza la lettera che io desideravo per la qual causa il negocio si ha dilactatto, et con tutto questo tenendo deseio di

servir a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ho fatta quello che he estato possibile con grandissima fatiga et fra due o tre giorni se despediranno le lettere per Pollonia che adesso se estand'escrivendo, et con il primo altro despaxo mandarò a Vostra Signoria Massima la sustancia di quello che se escriverà ho speranza che il tutto averà buon fine ma pur per più seguranza mandava Vostra Signoria Massimali letteri necessarie come per avante lio detto el ausatto et con questo resto pregando nostro Signor Dio che la innalzi a quello supremo et altissimo colmo di felicità come Vostra Signoria Illustrissima se dese. Da Costantinopoli, 2 di maggio 1575.

Servitor de Vostra Signoria Illustrissima

Docttor Salamon Nathan Aschanasi

[fol. 12v] Copia di lettera del Medico Salamone scritta a Sua Altezza a 2 di maggio 1575 che se gli si rimisse mostrando che non fosse stata data a Sua Altezza.

Appendix C: Ottavio Pallavicino

This third appendix contains the first full transcription of the unpublished manuscript by Ottavio Pallavicino and preserved in the Vatican Archives. Diacritical marks used by the author have been maintained, including dashes (–) at the end of some periods. Capital letters have been introduced for proper nouns and toponyms where absent, while they have been preserved where already used by the author. Recurring abbreviations have been expanded (e.g., p.^a = prima).

Vatican City, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Fondo Borghese I, 262, fols. 3r-48v

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[fol. 3r] Propositione a Principi Christiani del modo di collegarsi contro il Turco servita da Ottavio Pallavicino doppo ch’haveva peregrinato in Constantinopoli, Egitto, Soria, Germania, Anatolia, per l’Arcipelago, e la Grecia.

[fol. 5r] S’io non conoscesse la Santità Vostra: molto inanimata all’accrescimento della Santa fede, e’ non mirasse con l’occhi proprij il grandissimo affetto, et l’ardentissimo zelo di vedere una volta questa benedetta navicella della Chiesa in un mar tranquillo sicura de scogli, et de venti rabiosi, girsene triunfando a salmeggiare e Cantare hinni e lodi all’Altissimo Iddio; non presumeria venire a proporli cose, benche degne di consideratione, quali potessero distorre la mente sua dall’altre operationi, nei quali ella fusse inclinata. Ma è chiarissimo l’immenso desiderio suo non ponto inferiore à quello de suoi predecessori, d’essaltare la Chiesa santa in ogni reggione, di sbattere e conculcare l’inimici d’essa, di recuperare, et reedificare quello che dalla neglgentia de passati Principi;

anzi dalla perfidia de già miscredenti Christiani è stato perso, è rovinato. Degni è Beatissimo Padre ch'è l'immenso Creatore, è conservatore dell'universo mirando la sua cara et amata sposa, che ogni giorno gli porge ardentissimi prieghi; acciò si degni liberarla da suoi nemici; inchinando, com'altre volte ha fatto, le sue pietosissime orecchie promette volerla consolare, et acciò resti meglio informata di quanto deve oprare spinge alcune p(...) [fol. 5v] come fece di Giosuè, et altri ad esplorare le forze de nemici, le qualità de paesi, et il modo, che si deve tenere per distruggere tutti l'impedimenti. À questo fine (propriamente giudicando) ha donato à me vigore e' gratia che nell' fiore della mia età (dopo havere impiegato più de dodeci anni in questa Alma Città di Roma)⁵⁴⁴ io potesse felicemente sodisfare al desiderio e voto che tenevo di visitare la terra Santa co Pretiosissimo Sepolchro del nostro Redemptore; dove fui honorato dal Reverendo P. Commissario del Santissimo segno della Croce, et conumerato fra i Cavaglieri di quell tempio: siché compito quel desiderio, che m'apportò all'animo infinito contento e giubilo, essendomi presentata occasione di buona Compagnia de alcuni mercanti e gentilhuomini Venetiani, che passavano da quelle bande nell'Egitto, et poi nella Grecia; m'assali un pensiero, mosso anchora da buona curiosità di veder quei paesi e Regni tanto nominati, e celebri nelle Scritture oggi posseduti dall'Ottomano: et così per favore particolare de Dio in vint'otto mesi ho visto l'Egitto, tutta la Soria, Caramania, Anatolia, Tracia, l'Arcipelago e' finalmente la miglior parte della Gretia: particolarmente ho fisso gl'occhi nella confusione della povera città di Constantinopoli [fol. 6r] et veramente l'ho trovate provincie ciascheduna degna, d'essere desiderata da fedeli; non solo per acquisto di gran stato, ma per ricuperare si belli, e degni thesori spirituali e temporali, che hora restano usurpati da così infedel gente; et anche per radrizzare quei poverelli che col semplice segno della Croce, sebene liberi da Circoncisione altro à pena ritengono ch'il solo nome de Christiani. Non m'estenderò (per non impedire la mente sua Santissima) indarli raguaglio particolare di quel stato, di quelle militie, fortezze, qualità de paesi; quali non sono di gran longa à quel segno che si trovano [...]: de Christiani; ne di tanto spavento, come cele immaginiamo; ma di qualche conto per la moltitudine, et unione, come più distintamente dirò in altro tempo ad ogni cenno di Vostra Beatitudine. – / –

⁵⁴⁴ This is the only information that Pallavicino gives about himself in the manuscript. Having worked in the Holy City of Rome, and since the text is dedicated to Paul V, it is fair to assume that Pallavicino had a certain mansion within the Papal Court. However, sources about this mysterious man are very scant and it has been almost impossible to trace either his ascendancy or his origin.

Mentre andavo vedendo quei gran paesi, consideravo quei diversi costumi e leggi, intendevo augurij da loro medesimi, quali come presaghi di quello che li potria avvenire dicono pubblicamente, che in questi anni sarà il fine della Tirannia Ottomana,⁵⁴⁵ et anche della setta loro, trovandolo per scritture antique, e' per comp[...] **[fol. 6v]** sene accertavo anchora più vedendo mancare in tutti quei paesi la giustitia, e pietà verso i populi, e crescere senza fine la tirannia, vitij, e sceleraggini; spesso fra me alzando i occhi al cielo dicevo: piacesse all'eterna bontà, che i loro medesmi pronostici si verificassero, et potessi vedere a mei giorni il standardo della Santissima Croce piantato su quelle fortezze, su quei tempj; e sopra quelle Città, che altre volte furono de Christiani. Mentre così ricorrevo a questi santi pensieri, et anche ne discorrevo co' i miei compagni, consideravo i sforzi passati, sebene inutili, e deboli fatti da Principi Christiani con tante leghe, cruciate, assalti, et altri modi tenuti per levarsi da una si fatta paura,⁵⁴⁶ che li soprastava di questo Tiranno, pareva che iddio benedetto m'infondesse nella mente un pensiero, o considerazione, il quale a prima faccia non sappero discernere così subito se fusse a proposito per la Christianità, oppure senza fondamento, come hanno hauto li altri; sapevo nondimeno di non haverlo letto presso ad alcun authore, né inteso da alcuna persona, non mancai di conferirlo con qualch'amico di giuditio, et trovai che non s'allontanava **[fol. 7r]** dalla sicura strada di fare qualche profitto per servitio della Christianità. Mosso dunque e spinto da questi discorsi, mi risolvo ponere a piedi di Vostra Santità l'infrascritte considerazioni; non perché mi presuma sufficiente a mettere la mia lingua sopra cose di tant'importanza à guisa di dar consiglio; ma più tosto per dimostrare un segno del desiderio, et zelo non mediocre per l'accrescimento della santa fede. Si degni dunque accettarle con quella solita benignità con la quale riguarda i suoi devoti figli. Et [...] Santità Vostra le giudicasse degne di qualche re(...)ne, come furono trovate quelle di Pietro Eremita, Gioani de Capistrano, et di Christoforo Colombo, [l'intuizioni de quali à prima faccia furono istimate ridicole anzi senz'alcun fondamento: ma di novo comparando et mostrando le ragioni con efficacia ottenero co' l'aiuto Celeste il loro desiderio]⁵⁴⁷ così quel tanto scorgerà esser di buono nel presente discorso, si deve ricognoscere alla mera volontà divina, quale ispirerà Vostra Beatitudine a

⁵⁴⁵ For a detailed analysis of the literary topos of the Ottoman tyrannic and despotic government, see Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 201-228 (Chapter 9 'Despotism I: The origins').

⁵⁴⁶ Pallavicino is making a clear reference to the Holy League created during the War of Cyprus, which surely achieved the glorious victory at Lepanto but was ultimately unable to capitalise its success over the Ottomans. Henceforth, the following proposal aims not only at creating a determined league, but one as large as possible to prevent its defeat.

⁵⁴⁷ These historical examples are given to strengthen Pallavicino's proposal, which, if compared to the previous ones, surely deserves at least an examination.

sperare quello [fol. 7v] si debba fare in suo santo servitio circa queste proposte. Principalmente so' esser noto a tutt' i Principi che la forza e potenza dell'Ottomani consiste nella porta di Constantinopoli; et no in Buda, ne in Belgrado, ne in Algero, o, in qualsivoglia altro luogo, perche sebene queste sono piazze forze nelli confini del suo stato [avertand' ogn'uno che nel mezzo de quei regni non viè fortezza d'alcun momento, ne presidio d'alcuna considerazione, ma solamente la militia compartita per il stato si da Cavallo, com' à piedi, et questa più bella in apparentia che ben'armata] contuttociò le suddette fortezze sono in tanta maniera ben proviste, in quanto li viene somministrato aiuto, e' vigore dalla suddetta porta; perciò prendendo queste senza fare acquisto ancho di quella, si può sempre dubitare di riprenderle di novo; come molt'essempij cene rendono praticchi: ma bene expugnando Constantinopoli, non viè ostaculo alcuno; che tutte le altre restavano à guisa de Ruscelli senza fonte privi d'aiuto e vigore.⁵⁴⁸

[fol. 8r] et voltandosi, i Principi Christiani in ogni banda eccetto in quella, non si deve aspettare altro, che inutile spesa lunghezza è dubiosità di Vittoria. –

Non m'estenderò in descrivere qual sia l'ordinanza della militia, la provigione dell' vivere, le fortezze, il sito, le muraglie e' Castello di Constantinopoli, perche a questo si ricercheria un discorso appartato, basta à dire [come chiaramente farò toccare con mani] che non viè quel spaventoso effetto come risona la fama di tanta fortezza. – Ma continuando il mio discorso aggiungo che è manifesta la disunione de Principi Christiani, et le varie pretensioni, congiunte con mire occulte a una vana consideratione di stato, per le quali vengono accecati, et immobili à una si degna e' necessaria resolutione, ma vogliono più tosto lasciar ingrandire et ingrassare questo Tiranno, che hoggi li leva una piazza, domani un stato, li dà quest'anno una fuga, quell'altro una rotta; siché tollerano più volentieri che il commune nemico e distrugitor d'ogni bene s'usurpi di tanti Regni che non li gode un' altro simile à loro di fede e [fol. 8v] professione.⁵⁴⁹ Per questi vani ogetti non si sono potuti mettere à essecutione tant'e' si belle imprese proposte, e seppure ne sono state principiate, non hanno

⁵⁴⁸ This is the fundamental strategic tenet in Pallavicino's plan: by conquering Constantinople, namely the centre of the Empire which provides every necessary supply to the other cities scattered across the Empire, Pallavicino is convinced that the provinces and surrounding dominions would fall without too much fighting.

⁵⁴⁹ Pallavicino is complaining about the disunity between Catholics and Protestants, which fosters the divide within Christendom and makes it appealing for Christian Princes to close alliances with Muslims against each other, rather than allying with Christians alike and fight together against 'the common enemy'.

potuto ottenere il debito fine; mercè che si lasciavano tirare da simili passioni, ne havevano la mira all'honor de Dio in accrescimento della fede. –

Per riunire adunque le forze de Principi Christiani mediante segnali con l'aiuto divino certamente si può permettere la destrutione di questa Casa fraticida [come presto a ciascheduno è manifestissimo] e per mantenerle unite contro l'impedimenti che si potessero muovere dall'invidia, interesse e' passione de concorrenti; che à guisa d'[...] Alexij et Emanuelli Greci machinariano alle spalle dell'essercito fedele sarebbe buona provigione [rimettendomi però sempre à miglior giuditio] che tutti i Principi Christiani invitati et essortati dalla Santità di Nostro Signore facessero una Dieta co' il mezzo de suoi Ambasciatori Comissarij [come già fu fatta al tempo di Papa Giulio II in Cambray per altra occasione] nella quale deliberassero di riunirsi à questa santa Impresa mettendosi inprima l'honor de Dio **[fol. 9r]** avant'all'occhi, et il servitio suo, senz'il qual oggetto non pensi mai Principe alcuno di caminar bene. –

Ma per oviare all'inconvenienti altre volte occorsi, in oltre per contribuire ciascheduno e' suministrare aiuto proportionate alle fatiche e' spese, et finalmente per godere ugual frutto della preda senza dissensione, o, contesa componessero e' costituissero un corpo di Republica Christiana nella quale tutt'i Principi della Lega habbino parte tanto nell'utile, come nel Governo de tanti caratteri Parti, overo Portioni in questo modo; cioè li Principi maggiori per due parti, o sia Caratteri; e d[...]ori per una com'in appresso s'esplicarà. –

Principi de doi caratteri:

Il Sommo Pontefice.

L'Imperatore.

Il Re di Francia.

Il Re di Spagna.

Il Re di Inghilterra.

Il Re di Pollonia.

La Republica Venetiana.

Principi d'un Carattere

L'Arciduchi d'Austria.

Il Ducca di Sassonia.

Il Ducca di Baviera.

La Republica di Genova.

Il Duccha di Savoia.

Il G. D. di Fiorenza.

La Religion di Malta.

Li Quattro Duchi d'Italia, cioè

Parma, Mantua, Modena, Urbino

Il duca di Moscovia.

[fol. 9v] Il suddetto Senato et Repubblica così composta, debba essere messa in possesso di tutt'il stato, provincia, Città, fortezze e luoghi che s'acquisteranno dall'Imperio Ottomano immediatamente dopo l'acquisto fatto da qualsivoglia esercito della lega costituendo sino d'alhora nella Dieta Patrone esso Senato e' Repubblica che lo debba reggere, e' governare, come suo proprio, et che niun altro v'habbi interesse, ne se li possi ingerire, se non quanto verrà permesso dalle leggi et dal detto senato. –

Anzi che mentre durerà questa Repubblica ogni Principe si debba spogliare de tutte le pretenzioni, che havesse sopra qualsivoglia delli luoghi hoggidì posseduti, et occupati dall'Imperio Ottomano renontandoli à questa Repubblica et a questo Senato **[fol. 10r]** quali renontie vaglino, et s'intendino durare in perpetuo à favore d'essa Repubblica; e caso che la presente Impresa non andasse inanti essa renontia sia per non fatta; ma resti ogn'uno nelle sue prime ragioni. La Città principale nella quale doverà risiedere questo senato per Governare tutta la Repubblica sarà Constantinopoli luogo destinato dimandarsi subito dopo l'acquisto d'essa [siché Iddio ci conceda per sua infinita bontà] fra' tanto sarà quel luogo che meglio giudicarono a proposito alli confini dell'stato Ottomano. –

Questo Senato doverà sedere ogni giorno [eccettuando le feste; salvo in casi di grandissima importanza] per tant'hore la mattina, et altre il dopo Pranzo, in una sala, à una tavola, o, sia tribunale rotondo d'alquanti gradi eminente, senza riguardo alcuno precedentia, grado, o preminentia: ma ogn'uno mentre sarà in quell' stato di Senatore sia uguale all'altro; perciò sia di tant'authorità quello dell' minimo Principe come quello dell' maggiore; et vaglia tanto il suo voto e balla quanto di quello che rappresentasse la persona **[fol. 10v]** dell'Papa, ovvero dell'Imperatore. –

E mentre saranno à quella tavola, come al suo tribunale debbino reggere, e governare tutto quell' Stato Regno, e Provincie che s'acquistaranno con l'arme de Principi della lega, et finalmente tutto l'Imperio hoggidì dall'Ottomanni, et anche quei luoghi che s'acquisteranno de ordine del predetto Senato; quando occoresse propagare della Repubblica, et ciò con tanta prudentia, affetto, e fedeltà; come se fusse de ciascheduno di loro. –

Non già li sia lecito per alcun tempo mai smembrare, ne alienare da quel'imperio, o, Repubblica, terra, ne luogo; benché minimo, per darlo in altrui giurisditione; ma il tutto si doverà conservare sotto il suo governo e cura, costituendo solo i ministri che rapresentino la publica persona in ogni luogo, et assignando i feudi a cui bisognerà com' in apresso. –

Possi et habbi authorità questo Senato di far governatori generali di Provincie e particolari di Città, luoghi e Castelli, Capitani d'esserciti d'armate, giudici, vicarij, [...] Civili e' Criminali, così in Constantinopoli come in altre **[fol. 11r]** città, et in somma tutti l'offitiali, ch'esso senato giudicà opportuni per quell' stato, anzi ne possino simili ministri entrare in niun de luoghi della Repubblica per governare se non vengono mandati dall' suddetto Senato sotto pena d'essere gastigati severamente sino alla morte. –

Avertendo soprattutto di non lasciarli continuare lungo tempo nelli carrichi; né di mandarli più volte in un medesimo luogo: dividendo più, che sia possibile le provincie, et riducendole a manco paese che si potrà; perché con il tempo quei luoghi s'anderanno rihabitando: né sia lecito ad alcuno impadronirsene: mettendo sopra tutto i Castellani delle fortezze di differente natione da quella dell' Governatore dell' luogo. –

Possi, et li sia lecito rimuovere in qualunque tempo che à loro parerà ogni' offitiale, castigarli [anchora bisognando] nella vita, e sustituirne dell'altri. –

Li suddetti offitiali, che bisognerano per le provincie, Città, fortezze, Capitani d'esserciti, giudicij et altri debbino essere proposti da ciascheduno senatore, compartendosi tra di loro tanti offitij maggiori **[fol. 11v]** e tanti minori per ogn'uno da proponere, et così proposti non riguardando di qual paese, o natione; ma che siano buoni Christiani; et che venghino stimati atti, è sufficienti al carrico per il quale son proposti, dando idonea sigurtà di rendere conto del offitio, et di stare à sindacato in Constantinopoli overo nel medesimo luogo, dove haveranno essercitato, come meglio parerà al senato; potranno passarli riferendosi quando non s'haverà altra informatione à quella che darà il proponente, concedendoli poi le sue patenti. Et se alcuno non passasse sotto li voti: perché così non paresse ad altri Senatori; doverà il medesimo senatore proponerne un altro in suo luogo, così seguendo fin tanto venghino provisti i luoghi. –

Riservando i Generali d'esserciti, et Armate, per li quali ogni senatore potrà nominare un sugetto idoneo, ponendoli poi tutti in tutti bollettini simili, delli quali a sorte sene caverà uno il quale resterà eletto in questa forma per un tempo prefisso, et fornito i colleghi di novo, et sempre che venghi l'occasione per sfuggire le garre e contese fra senatori. A questi generali si potrà aggiungere (oltre le debite instrutioni) doi consiglieri proposti ed eletti nel suddetto modo come il generale quale **[fol. 12r]** non possi delliberare ne eseguire cosa alcuna senza il parere d'uno di loro. –

Non si curino però d'impiegare Greci, o altri Levantini in offitij di molt'importanza: ma si tenghino bassi, per essere al presente mezz'infedeli, con quali son nati e vissuti et è notorio che sono nell'intrinseco capital nemici de Lattini, vuoti di realtà; et questo nel generale, senza preiuditio de buoni, de quali non vene mancano.⁵⁵⁰ –

Similmente habbia il predetto Senato suprema baylia di punire qualsivoglia delitto, che nella sua giurisdizione fusse comesso da qualsivoglia persona, etiam Principe e' Signore et possi dare authorità alli suoi offitiali di fare il medesimo; da quelli non s'habbi ricorso salvo al suddetto Senato.

Et li sia permesso punire e' gastigare non solo nella roba et honore; ma nella propria vita quei senatori, thesaureri e' secretarij che al suo sindacato saranno giudicati colpevoli di qualche atroce misfatto comesso nell suo offitio; senza però preiudicare alle raggioni del suo Principe che lo mandò: il quale solamente sia tenuto far buono alla Repubblica quella somma de danari che da quell ministro fosse stata defraudata. –

Scoprendosi anchora qualche congiura d'alcuno di questi **[fol. 12v]** senatori, thesaureri, o secretarij contro il stato della Repubblica ovvero contro la vitta d'alcuni de suoi colleghi; che subito sia remosso, incarcerato, processato, sentenziato, e' punito conforme alle leggi, concorrendovi però sempre in queste risoluzioni li quattro quinti de voti in compagnia delli conservatori di legge, altrimenti non si facci cosa alcuna. –

A questo senato s'habbi ricorso come à supremo Principe di tutte le gravezze fatte da ministri, giudici e giusdicenti, quali l'habbi a commettere ad altri giudici; overo ricognoscerli egli medesimo; procedere, o far gratia, come meglio li parerà. –

Insomma habbi suprema authorità (mentre starano à quella tavola uniti, o, almeno li doi terzi di loro in evento di controversia) di supremo Principe, e capo in quei paesi ne ricognoschino superiore alcuno, ne anche l'Imperatore, ne il Papa (eccetto nelli casi spettanti alla fede e religione). –

Questo Senato debba provvedere in tutte l'occorrenze della Repubblica come di mantenere presidi nelle fortezze (massime confinati a nemici) di fare esserciti et armate contra li disturbatori di quella Repubblica **[fol. 13r]** di mantenere ordinariamente qualche Galera contro i corsali, di ristorare

⁵⁵⁰ A clear prejudice towards Levantines, a word with multiple meanings: in my understanding, it refers to Eastern Orthodox Christians who still lived in the Ottoman Empire under the status of *dhimmi*, which allowed them freedom of religion in exchange for a tax and recognition of the primacy of Islam. For this compliance to Islamic law, Pallavicino considers these Levantines as unreliable and unworthy of important charges.

fortezze, e fabricarne delle nove (bisognando) similmente d'edificare tempij; e palazzi publici, ponti, vie, e altre cose necessarie, per tutto quel stato e qualsivoglia parte d'esso. –

Alle quali spese dopoché s'haverà sodisfatto, e sborsati che saranno i salarij de senatori, thesaureri, secretarij, et altri offitiali, e' stipendiati trovando in fine dell'anno avanzo d'entrate; (com'è da credere che trascenderanno la mettà) massime quando la Repubblica non haverà tanto guerre da impiegare danarij si farà dividere il remanente dell'erario in tante parti, è portioni, quanti senatori sarano e consignarle a ciascheduno, per portarle, o, mandarle alli suoi Principi come megli li commoderà. –

Et in questo repartimento alli Principi de doi Caratteri toccherà doppia parte; posciache sarà stato doppio l'aiuto, è sforzo che haveranno fatto nell'impresa: all'altri poi, una sola per esser stato molto minore la spesa et il travaglio.⁵⁵¹ –

Non si doverà fare questo repartimento quando la Repubblica havesse **[fol. 13v]** guerra urgente per le mani; acciò possi servirsi della prontezza dell'denaro, et mancando tal occasione doverà eseguire quanto sopra. –

In tal modo tutti li Principi Christiani della Santa lega invaderanno tutti quei paesi, per la sua rata parte, con strepito d'arme, senz'invidia, et senza suspetto che uno sene usurpi maggior portione dell'altro, anzi li governaranno, senza moversi della propria casa. –

Li predetti senatori doverano havere il debito salario; il quale doverà essere amplo, e comodo; acciò si possino mantenere honoramente, senza prendere presenti di sorte alcuna benché piccioli sotto pena di rigoroso sindacato. –

Et perché consiste tutto l'utile, et interesse nelle rendite e diritti della Repubblica quali si doverano essigere, e' custodire con molta dilligentia: pertanto i Principi de doi Caratteri haveranno questo honore et vantaggio di mandare ciascheduno de loro una persona accorta, fidata, et experta che debba servire per Thesaurero di tre in tre anni (nell'erario entreranno non solo le rendite publiche; ma la confiscationi, e pene) quali Thesaureri missi insieme in una sala appartata dal Senato, a una tavola rotonda **[fol. 14r]** senza riguardo de alcuna precedentia, doverano tener conto de tutte l'entrate, spese, et uscite della Repubblica con li suoi libri publici ben distinti, et rendere conto quando saranno dimandati dal Senato, come loro superiore e Principe; però non possino né debbino

⁵⁵¹ Coherent to the previous division between Princes of one character and Princes of two characters, Pallavicino states that their retribution should be given according to their involvement in the Crusade against the Ottomans: the more one Prince helped, the greater revenues he would receive.

consignare danari, o, robe ad alcun senatore senza espresso decreto del Senato: ma solamente impiegarli, et assignarli dov'esso Senato ordinarà; il tutto sotto gravissime pene.⁵⁵² –

Questi Thesaureri haveranno cura di far pagare tutt'i salarij dell'officiali della Repubblica, et altre persone stipendiate; in principio d'ogni anno doverano saldare il conto di tutto quello si sarà cavato; alla cui presentia doverano fare il repartimento consegnando le parti, o, portioni a ciaschedun senatore come s'è detto. –

Debbino tenere presso di sé le chiave dell'erario e Thesoro di quella Repubblica cioè una per ciascheduno; né si possino aprire le stantie d'esso senza l'intervento de tutti li Thesaureri, e suoi cancellieri facendosi ogni volta nota minutissima di tutto quello entra, et esce dalla fossa. –

I predetti Thesaureri possino mandare altri sotto Thesaureri **[fol. 14v]** Comissarij con piena authorità per riscuotere l'entrate delle provincie, e luoghi: ogni volta che li Presidenti d'esse fussero negligenti in mandarle (a quali si dovrà ordinariamente appoggiare tal cura per manco travaglio, e spesa; trasmettendo di luogo in luogo i danari con guardie, e dilligentia) si faranno poi rendere conto da essi, et consignare il danaro per riporlo nell'erario; per tanto doverano avertire che siano persone fidate, non curando di qual natione; basti che servino fedelmenti.⁵⁵³ –

Fornito il tempo de alcun Thesaurero debba consignare la Chiave al Senato, quale si farà ritenere presso qualche persona fidata sino alla venuta dell'successore. –

Inoltre essendo l'offitio dell'secretario, o Cancelliero uno delli maggiori, e più importanti che siano presso al' Principe: poiché non viè cosa, che a lui non sia palese, et se bene non concorre nell' voto, è nondimeno un'importante mano per suministrare, e tener celato i negotij: perciò sarebbe conveniente per stabilire il piede <?> anchora in questo offitio che li Principi de doi Caratteri (per inanimirli havendo maggior potentia **[fol. 15r]** a far gagliarde provigioni in quest'impresa) mancassero una persona che avesse a servire per secretario o Cancelliero della suddetta Repubblica e Senato, per il spatio di tre anni, i quali forniti, che saranno, overo partendosi per altra causa debbino

⁵⁵² Every Prince of Two Characters can send an envoy to be appointed as a treasurer, whose only duty would be to manage the finances of the newly-created Christian Republic under explicit order of the Senate, whose authority remains undisputed.

⁵⁵³ These treasurers can send their deputy commissioners into the provinces with the purpose of collecting taxes from the 'Presidents' of the provinces of the former Ottoman Empire.

lasciare le sue scritture nell'Archivio publico: essendo prima stato al sindacato; perciò doverano essere persone conveniente a tal' carrico.⁵⁵⁴ –

Quali secretarij si compartiranno li carrichi di quell' stato ugualmente in modo, che tutti sentino proportionato peso, con assistere sempre al Senato in piedi, facendo anchora che tra di loro à vicenda si commutino le cure de tant'in tanti mesi per degni rispetti. –

Possino havere un cometente numero de Giovani nelle loro secretarie per supplire à quei carrichi co' stipendio publico.

I predetti Thesaureri, e secretarij doverano havere il suo salario commodo, largo, e' proportionato al suo carrico (come parerà al Senato, overo alla Dieta) acciò non habbino alcun pretesto di prendere un minimo presente sotto pene d'infamia et altre: neanche si doverà molto bene aderire di non apprire questa porta, perché alla giornata crescerebbe l'ingordigia, e tirannia senza fine [fol. 15v] facendosi tutte le cose venali. –

Il salario de thesaureri sarà molto inferiore a quello de senatori, et quello de secretarij inferiore a quello de thesaureri.⁵⁵⁵ –

Li sudetti senatori, thesaureri, e secretarij doverano continuare nell' suo offitio, com' s'è detto per il spatio di anni tre per ciascheduno, quali finiti sebene non sarà venuto il successore debba spirare la loro authorità; stando prima al sindacato, et ricevuto il suo salario li doverano partire dalla Città nell' spatio d'otto giorni et continuare il suo viaggio sino che eschino del' stato.

Per la qualcosa doverà essere dilligente ogni Principe a mandare il successore in tempo; restando certo, che sebene il novo ministro tarderà a venire non mancheranno li altri colleghi d'offitiare, e tanto manco durerà il triennio d'esso; poiché correrà come se fusse stato presente: ma circa l'utilità dell'suo Principe riceverà quella medesima portione, che a lui spettarà: non già seguendo così circa il salario per il tempo che sarà stato absente. –

E perché non sarebbe cosa convenevole che si rimuovessero tutti [fol. 16r] li offitiali vecchi, et experti nell' regimento, subintrando in un medesimo tempo altri nuovi, et inexperti in quell' amplo

⁵⁵⁴ Here comes the Secretary, considered as a Chief Minister with the task of keeping the administrative machine working and to organise the works of the Assembly. Compared to contemporary politics, this figure is very similar to the 'Segretari Comunali' working in Italy: they are functionaries appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (in Italian, Ministero dell'Interno) who are in charge of supervising the correct legal functioning of the public body.

⁵⁵⁵ The discrepancy in retribution for every charge is quite striking: the senators, namely the members of the Assembly, are rewarded with the highest income; instead, those charged with the proper functioning of the Republic's finances and administrative incumbencies are lowly rewarded.

governo; pertanto si doveranno compartire in modo che ogn'anno sene rimova una terza parte d'essi senatori, thesaureri, e' secretarij; e così infine de ogni triennio sarebbero cambiati tutti. –

Ma per agiustarsi che ciò segua senza confusione, pertato la prima volta che i predetti senatori s'uniranno in quella Città, o, luogo che giudicà opportuno la Dieta doverano mettere in un sacchetto il nome de Ciaschedun Senatore in bollettini appartati però similissimi; et alla loro presentia sene caverà dodeci repartimenti o dodeci trimestri – cioè li nomi d' doi senatori, che dovranno fornire il suo tempo, in ciascheduno trimestre; e, così seguirà poi sempre l'ordine vicendevole; et non vacherà salvo l'ultimo trimestre; facendone di tutto nota publica et dandone aviso a' quei Principi, i senatori dei quali doveranno fornire il suo tempo rispettivamente, acciò possino co' opportunità provvedere de successori. –

Un simile repartimento si doverà fare per li thesaureri, et un' altro per li secretarij; però sarà de sei in sei mesi.⁵⁵⁶ –

[fol. 16v] Et sia permesso solo alli predetti che haveranno servito [...] del primo triennio (se così piacerà alli suoi Principi tornare al medesimo carrico passato quatr'anni; quali debbino poi fornire il novo triennio nell'offitio come [...]). –

Et in evento che alcun' senatore, thesaurero, o, Senatore, si levasse dal' suo carrico per morte, o, per altra causa debba il successore compire il triennio del suo successore in modo che tutti l'officiali fornischino il suo triennio à un'determinato tempo, per non causata fussione, o, alteratione variandosi le mutationi: sia lecito però à quell' successore havendo servito numero de mesi dicatedotto d'esser confermato dal suo Principe per fornire il novo triennio intiero come l'altro. –

Riservando li sudetti casi non possino altre persone, che per il tempo de tre' anni habbino servito nel' luogo de Senatori, thesaureri, o, secretarij per alcun tempo, né essere confirmati, né rimandati al medesimo carrico; ma si debbino immatinate partire dopo' il sindacato dal' dominio d'essa Repubblica né in quello ritornarvi perqualsivoglia negotio dentro il termine de quatr'anni: sotto penda de relegatione, o, altra come parerà al Senato. –

⁵⁵⁶ The triennial-rotation principle is thus applied: every year, one third of senators is changed; henceforth, every three years the Senate is completely renewed. This principle is applied by the American Constitution in the election of the Senators: every two years, one third of the US Senators is changed; henceforth, every six years the United States' Senate is completely renewed. The same is applied to treasurers and secretaries, even though their charges only last six months.

[fol. 17r] Li predetti Senatori, e thesaureri non possino durante il lor'offitio haver mai altro carico, ne debba il senato per alcun tempo ellegerli particolarmente à condotta d'esserciti, o, cura di fortezze, ma il tutto debbino provvedere per mezzo d'altri ministri fedeli. –

Si doverà però avertire che li sudetti Senatori siano persone mature, pratiche di Governo et intelligenti ma soprattutto habbino nome de buoni Christiani. –

Non possi alcun senatore, thesaurere, o, secretario sustituire altri nel' suo luogo; etiamdio per breve tempo siché mancando per impedimento, o, per malattia debbino l'altri colleghi offitiare; mentre però siano almeno li doi terzi d'essi uniti. È ben vero che le resolutioni si doverano passare co' li doi terzi de voti conumerando sempre quei che sono nella Città. –

Non doverano essere mandati al Governo di questa Repubblica Prelati, o, persone di Chiesa per fuggire l'occasioni di istar' su' le precedentie sotto simili pretesti, né tampoco doverano essere personaggi grandi come Duchi, Principi, o, signori de Vassalli, et altri simili che possono **[fol. 17v]** haver seguito di molte genti per levar le suspitioni all'altri colleghi; anzi non possino condurre per sua familia più d'un certo numero di persone né tenere in casa sicome sarà giudicato dal' Senato. –

Avertendo che li detti senatori, thesaureri e' secretarij sijno del medesimo stato dell Principe che li manda, quelli della Sedia Apostolica saranno Romani, overo dell'stato Cattolico; et laici, quelli dell'Imperatore saranno di Bohemia. –

Sia lecito all' senato (in compagnia però delli conservatori legge) di cognoscere sopra le qualità convenienti al nuovo senatore thesaurere, o, secretario; prima che sia messo all'posesso del suo carico; et ritrovando che non vi siano possino recusarlo, senò darà il debito rimedio; concoredovi però li quatro quinti de voti il tal recusatione dandone subito aviso al suo Principe, acciò preveda d'un' altro idoneo ministro. –

Haveranno li thesaureri senatori e' secretarij in Constantinopoli le sue cose particolari separatamente (oltr'il Pallazzo Senatorio) per habitare più vicino che sia possibile come meglio parerà all'Senato capace per tutta la loro familia **[fol. 18r]** quali saranno della Repubblica. –

L'ispiditioni e la loquella nella quale doveranno trattare sarà in lingua Lattina commune a tutte le suddette nazioni.⁵⁵⁷ –

⁵⁵⁷ Pallavicino envisions an official language to be used in this newly-established Republic: Latin, the official language of the Holy See and the language in which the Christian liturgy is celebrated.

Tutte le risoluzioni ordinarie si doveranno passare dall' Senato con li doi terzi delle balle favorevoli; quali saranno piccole, come nizzole, però di bambace, o, simile cosa che non facci rumore, et si porranno in un urna, o, sia pisside doppia: ma distinta de doi colori per il parere affirmativo e negativvo; quale sarà portata a' torno da uno de suoi Cancellieri, e' conforme a quello sarà passato s'annotarà et distenderà il decreto havendo l'istessa forza, e rigore come le fussero intervenute tutte le balle, e, tutti li voti.⁵⁵⁸ –

Et perché nell' proporre le cause in senato potrebbe nascere qualche contentione, o, passioncella; perciò si doverà alternativamente compartire fra' essi senatori il carrico di preponere cioè doi per settimana, o, come meglio li parerà: basta che si vadi variando in torno senza rispetto d'alcuna preeminencia. –

Havendo di sopra ordinato che tutti questi senatori quando **[fol. 18v]** si troveranno alla tavola rotonda, come suo tribunale costituischino un corpo di Repubblica Christiana e representino un Principe solo assoluto, senza tener voto d'alcuna precedentia, parendo che in tal mondo venghi provisto alli distrubi che potessero seguire: ma perché potrebbe nascere difficoltà in altri tempi cioè quando s'incontrassero, ovvero quando fussero nelle Chiese, o, altre simili occasioni, non sapendo chi di loro debba precedere; pertanto in tutte queste occorrenze doverà precedere quello che sarà stato più tempo nel suo offitio. Laonde chi prima arriverà nella Città di Constantinopoli, ancorché sia d'età più giovane, et rapresenti la persona di Principe inferiore: debba nondimeno nelli sopraddetti casi precedere a qualcun altro, che dopo lui entrasse nella suddetta Città; e così si doverà osservare di mano in mano con l'altri; tenendo nota pubblica del giorno nel quale saranno della sua entrata. –

Il sudetto ordine s'intenda haver luogo dopo la persona del Gran Cancelliero, il quale ogni mese si cambierà et fornito tornerà al suo luogo come prima, ma in quel mese **[fol. 19r]** prederà a tutti li Senatori. –

La prima volta che i suddetti senatori s'uniranno nella Città destinata per levare i disturbi si potrà mettere i nomi de tutti i Senatori in bollettini distinti; però tutt'uguali et bene involti; quali possi in un sacchetto si faranno extrahere per un' fanciullo a sorte alla presentia loro, et li primi, che usciranno

⁵⁵⁸ In this Senate, every decision or deliberation must pass with a two-third majority of votes. The vote is secret and very similar to the Venetian system of *ballottaggio*: two little balls of different colours are given to any senator, and the ball inserted in the ballot box reflects the vote of each senator.

doveranno precedere nelli suddetti casi; seguendo per l'ordine antecedente quando veniranno i successori.⁵⁵⁹ –

Il medesimo ordine si doverà osservare, co' li thesaureri, et secretarij.

Ciaschedun senatore, thesaurero, e' secretario doverà fornito il triennio del suo offitio deponere la toga dell' magistrato, e' come privata persona starà à sindacato delle sue attioni particolari (non delle publiche essendo concorso co' il corpo de senatori, o, thesaureri nelle delliberazioni) avanti al Senato, et alli Conservatori delle leggi per giorni quindici, dal quale assoluto è liberato che sarà con li doi terzi de voti; potrà tornare alla sua Patria con la portione dell' suo Principe come di sopra s'è ordinato. –

Il Senato doverà havuere la sua Guardia de cinque cento fanti svizzari, cinquecento Cavalli Albanesi, et cinquecento Cavalli Schiavoni, che continuamente risiederanno a Costantinopoli [**fol. 19v**] per sicurezza loro, della Città della Giustitia e del destretto. –

Tutt'i stipendij si doveranno sborsare ogni principio di mese, acciò essi salariati non habbino occasione di giocare e' consumare i danari, et manchino poi dell'suo debito. –

Doveranno anchora mantenere qualche militia volta a' similitudine delle legioni nelli confini contra Tartari, Persiani, Mori, et altri nemici particolarmente in Soria, et al Cayro, per reprimere le loro scorerie. –

Occorendo qualche guerra, differentia, o, rumore fra' Principi Christiani, non debba ne possi questo Senato, o, Repubblica intrametersi in cosa alcuna fra di loro; ne permettere che alcun d'essi guerreggianti levi soldato ne munitione da quel stato, in modo ne sotto pretesto veruno; ma se ne stij indifferente à vedere l'essito della guerra, senza ponto porgere aiuto da veruna banda. –

Eccetto s'alcuno de suddetti Principi, o, altri si movesse contro il stato, giurisdizione, o, libertà d'essa Repubblica, alhora mentre durerà simile disordine debba levarsi essa Repubblica con tutte le forze e' provigioni necessarie verso tal' disturbatore et in questa occorrenza non solo diffenderà il proprio paese: ma procurerà offendere lui nello stato, et esser- [**fol. 20r**] citi sin tanto che meglio raveduto e pacificato non deponghi l'armi, et di novo non giuri di mai più molestare essa Repubblica; il qual Principe nondimeno sia tenuto rifare alla Repubblica tutti i danni e' interessi patiti per simil guerra: perciò il senato farà ritenere la portione che spettarà a quello, dall' primo giorno della guerra, sino alla sodisfatione intiera delle spese fatte. –

⁵⁵⁹ Here Pallavicino describes the procedure according to which each Senator would be elected as Grand Chancellor (a sort of Prime Minister or President of the Assembly) and preside over the Assembly.

Il Senatore, ovvero senatori di quell' Principe guerreggiante, sebene risiederanno in Constantinopoli: il voto nondimeno loro doverà essere suspeso, sino che il suo Principe è Principe: non deponghi l'arme, et restituischi quei luoghi usurpati alla Repubblica, dopo il qual successo sijno habilitati al suo luogo come prima; et essi Senatori, et altri ministri di detto Principe non possino pretendere, salvo la terza parte del salario ordinario, mentre durerà la guerra. –

Nell' qual caso solo, sia lecito alla presente: Repubblica e Senato ricorrer'aiuto d'altri Principi Christiani della presente lega, quando cognoscesse che le sue forze non bastassero per reprimere la temerità dell'usurpatori. –

Haveranno un libro di legge universale per la Repubblica nell'quale [fol. 20v] non solo vi saranno posti li suddetti ordini, ma molti altri appartenenti alla conservatione della religione, mantenimento dell'stato, della giustizia et altre provigioni necessarie tanto pubbliche, quanto particolari, per la Città di Costantinopoli e per tutte le provincie; alle quali leggi sene possi aggiungere dell'altri, secondo le varietà de tempi, da osservarsi da loro medesmi senatori et offitiali; però in simili occasione vi debbino concorrere li quattro quinti de voti. –

Parimenti si stabilisca un libro di statuti Civili et uno per li Criminali. –

Fra' l'altri magistrati che doveranno essere stabiliti dal' senato per servitio della Giustitia sarà quello delli conservatori delle leggi; il quale doverà essere composto de cinque persone, dotte di molta prudentia e' bontà de vita, et delli Principali Cittadini di Constantinopoli (avertendo però che ogn'anno si cambij uno de' loro surogandone altri in luogo de quelli che forniranno il suo quinquennio) il cui offitio sarà principalmente ricordare che s'osservino le leggi e statuti al Senato et altri offitiali; e poi d'intervenire alli sindacamenti loro, dando il suo voto [fol. 21r] con quelli de Senatori: li doi terzi, de quali gionti insieme faccino i decreti e sententie a favore o contra l'offitiale. Quali conservatori non haverranno salario pubblico; ma per quell' tempo restino essenti de Gabelle et habbino altr'honori e privilegi. –

Questa lega, e questa Repubblica con le dette conventioni dovevano essere prima giurate da ciaschedun de suddetti legati comissarij a nome delli suoi Principi nella Dieta, e' poi confirmati da ciaschedun Principe nella sua Chiesa Metropolitana alla presentia delli Prelati e' populo, giurando di mantenerla e difenderla, con tutto il suo potere, tanto a' nome suo proprio, quanto delli suoi heredi, e' successori, qual giuramento servi anchora per il conquisto di Terra Santa immitando quei

campioni al tempo del pio Goffredo,⁵⁶⁰ acciò l'impresa sia accetta presso Sua Divina Maestà et il mondo anchora sappia che quello s'opra, si fa' per l'honor d' Dio; et per l'essaltatione della fede, et di tale confirmatione e' giuramento sene manderà fede autentica al senato suddetto per conservarla in perpetuo. –

Queste leggi anchora e statuti doveranno essere solennemente giurati dalli Senatori et altri ministri prima di accettare **[fol. 21v]** il loro offitio. –

Nella Dieta si doverà anchora riconformare, e' stabilire la pace publica et universale con giuramento fra' li Principi Christiani, promettendo di non innovare cosa veruna intorno all'armi, e' stati tra di loro, mentre doverà questa santa impresa acciò ciascheduno habbi l'animo riposato a' casa sua. –

Anzi si stabilirà di dare istatichi <?> e sigurtà de mercade l'un' all'altro de quei Principi, che lo ricercassero per maggior sicurezza de proprij stati; acciò nell' passare che faranno l'esserciti non habbino da dubitare di cosa veruna. –

Doveranno li Principi, particolarmente il Re' Cattolico tenere apperte le tratte dell'grano con giusto pretio per come nella Dieta si stabilirà. –

Questa Repubblica Christiana e per lei il Senato suddetto debba ricevere dall' Sommo Pontefice un standardo, un'arma, et un sigillo, per segno dell'suo buono, e' felice Principio il quale se così piacerà sarà una Croce Rossa in campo bianco con queste lettere attorno CHRISTIANA RESPUBLICA IN HOC SIGNO VICTRIX et in questa similitudine si faranno poi l'altri. –

[fol. 22r] Il sigillo doverà stare sempre appresso ad un senatore, però si doverà cambiare ogni mese (come s'è detto) per ordine in giro, et chiamarassi questo senatore per quell' tempo co' il nome di G. Cancelliero della Repubblica, quale avertirà che non si ponghi il sigillo, salvo dove sarà la ferma de doi Cancellieri, o, secretarij: nelle lettere poi da mandare a Principi, o personaggi grandi, et nelle patenti vi ponerà anchora la sua sottoscrizione avanti la ferma de doi Secretarij in tal' modo “N. Magnus Cancellarius” nell'altre tre ordinate batterà la sottoscrizione de doi secretarij et il sigillo. –

Non accaderà che questo Senato mandi ambasciatori, per risedere presso ad alcun Principe Christiano; ma il tutto potrà negoziare per via d'agenti e sfuggire le spese superflue et le precedentie per le quali cose sarà iscusato anchora ogn'uno di contramandarne presso al medesimo Senato. –

⁵⁶⁰ A clear reference to Godfrey of Bouillon, the most prominent participant to the First Crusade (1095-1099).

Si doverà far ordinare la zeccha della Repubblica et in quella si batterà moneta sua particolare con l'arma, et impresa propria come parerà al Senato. –

[fol. 22v] Il titolo che si doverà fare a' Senatori particolarmente doverà essere (così piacendo) Illustrissimi, et a' tutto il senato unito insieme Sacro Christiano Senato, Sacra Christiana Repubblica et Sacra Maestà Christiana. –

L'habito nell' quale doveranno andare li senatori in Publico doverà essere rosso di toga lunga sino a' piedi, con li suoi capelli del medesimo colore; nell'inverno sarà di velluto, l'estate di Damasco, nella forma de Senatori Veneziani, o, Genovesi, o, come meglio li parerà; basta che si stabilisca un habito nell' quale tutti loro et i successori debbino vestirsi, mentre staranno in quell' carico, senza alcuna variatione né differenza l'uno, dall'altro. –

Si doverà anche stabilire l'habito de thesaureri, et quello de secretarij; però l'uno molto differente dall'altro. –

La Sedia Apostolica doverà statuire i vescovati, Arcivescovati, e Patriarchati per quelle Città che a lei parerà convenire; avertendo solo che nell'ispiditioni delle Bolle si facci a quei Prelati tutte le gratie che si potrà risguardando alla lontananza **[fol. 23r]** de paesi, et alla loro povertà; i quali Prelati per la prima volta siano proposti et eletti da Sua Santità a quelle chiese, ma dopo la loro vacanza debbino essere proposti, e nominati dall' Senato a Sua Beatitudine con una lettera, nella quale vi siano doi sugetti meritevoli per quella chiesa vacante, de quali Sua Santità ne ellegerà il più idoneo. –

Nella quale nominatione si doverà servare un ordine prefisso, cioè, che ogni senatore habbi la notte de tanti Arcivescovari, et un'altra de tanti Vescovati separatamente; et secondo vacherà la sedia d'uno di quelli; esso Senatore habbi alcuni sugetti pronti, et idonei per quell' carico proponendoli prima all' Senato, il quale li passerà la precedente missiva per il Sommo Pontefice. –

Le sudette distributioni si faranno a' sorte acciò niun Senatore habbi causa di debiti d'havere più una che un'altra delle Chiese predette. –

Né m'è nascosto che fra tutt'i Principi Christiani non vi saranno forti, i più difficili da riunire, e i più renitenti in questa Santa Lega saranno li Venetiani: non già perché in loro vi sia freddezza di religione **[fol. 23v]** né invidia dell'accrescimento de Principi Christiani, ne perché siano timidi, e' lontani da ogni motione di guerra, né per altri rispetti com'alcuni si vanno immaginando: ma perché essi cognoscono che non possono à manco di stare in pace col Turco si per li traffici de loro stati, come perché non sono bastanti a rendere longamente essi soli a' quella potenza; né li mette anco entrare in

questi balli, di guerre e' leghe contra l'Ottomanni: perché vi restano poi abbandonanti, e' sopra li stati loro si sfoga quella rabbia turchesca.⁵⁶¹ Alli quali inconvenienti si potrebbe rimediare con larga mano s' l'altri Principi della lega giuveranno di difenderli et aiutarli, non solo in questa guerra; ma in ogn'altra subito, che l'Ottomanno movesse l'arme contr' i suoi stati, facendo obbligare i mercanti de diversi paesi a favore di quella Repubblica et il Sommo Pontefice potrà usare della sua solita authorità e destrezza, valendosi anchora del mezzo dell'Re di Francia. Ma dal'altro canto giudico che debbino essere anchora li detti signori molto pronti, come sempre, son stati in la difesa, et aumento della Christianità [fol. 24r] cognoscendo che hora si fa' da dovero; et che una tal Lega sarà stabile e' ferma: in altre havendo chiara cognitione dell'declinamento e fiachezza dell'Ottomanni, non attenderano à molte difficoltà in risolversi alla Santa vendetta contr'il commun nemico, approntandosi con il solito valore et anticha generosità. –

L'ultimo Carattere s'è diviso nelli quattro Duchì d'Italia, quali collegandosi insieme; manderanno aiuto proportionato all'suo carratere per la guerra, nel resto si divideranno l'utile per uguale portione, e faranno a vicenda in mandare una volta per uno il senatore, che rapresenti tutte le loro persone, et anche si ridurriano à doi [...].

Lasciando di più il luogo apperto al Duca di Lorena, et ad altri Principi liberi della Germania, se volessero entrare à contribuire ciascheduna per un Carattere. –

È caso che alcun de sudetti Principi della lega mancasse in modo che il suo stato pervenisse sotto l'imperio di un altro Principe della precedente lega et s'incorporasse con quello, facendosi de doi, o, più stati un solo: alhora non possi tal Principe (sebene haverà fatto il sudetto acquisto) pretendere di mandare a questa Repubblica senatore [fol. 24v] né offitiale in vece dell'Principe, il stato dell' quale s'haverà sottomesso, ma resti (per quest'effetto tanto) nella prima giurisdizione, come se non fusse seguita tal'incorporatione, et l'altri colleghi offitiaranno ancorché sijno diminuiti di numero: circa poi l'utile che doveva rispondere à quel Principe mancante si ritenirà nell'erario publico da dividersi, et impiegarsi conforme si distribuiranno tutte l'altre rendite della Repubblica.

Li senatori thesaureri, e' secretarij doveranno per questo principio essere stipendiati ciascheduno dall' suo Principe convenientemente, sin à tanto che il Senato sia messo in possesso di Constantinopoli. In

⁵⁶¹ The principle of *Realpolitik* and flexible conduct towards the Ottoman Empire, defended also by Paolo Paruta, the Venetian diplomat at the court of Clement VIII, had remained stuck also in Pallavicino's mind. Thanks to this foreign policy agenda, Pallavicino questions the loyalty of the Venetians in agreeing to participate in his league.

altre haveranno qualche danaro in commune per servire à pagare correri, tanto per mare, come per terra all'esserciti, doverà havere due galeotte, o fregatte ben rinforzate per dar aviso dove sia bisogno.

[fol. 25r] Stabilita, confermata e giurata che sarà questa Santa Lega nella Dieta suddetta, si doverà venire e provvedere e preparare l'esserciti, l'armate et altre cose necessarie. –

Quivi non sarà bisogno di molto sforzo: perché sebene è cosa difficilissima à un Principe Cristiano solo, anzi à doi; benché potenti, debellare questo Barbaro Usurpatore: sarà nondimeno altrettanto più facile, quando s'uniranno tutti questi Potentati insieme per assaltarlo da più bande et con replicati sforzi; in una de quali subito che lui ceda, et venghi rotto, o, messo in fuga il suo esercito; non è dubbio alcuno, che restaranno patroni della Campagna, et lo serviranno in qualche fortezza, dov'alla fine gli converrà, o, morire, o, rendersi; come di tutto questo ne passa ferma opinione frà le persone informate di quel stato. –

Molti e gravi authori sono stati di parere che si dovesse fare una lega de molti Principi Christiani, et d'ogni populo si dovesse poi fare una crociata, et un grosso essercito di 200 ovvero 250 milla persone sotto condotta di qualche Re ovvero altro personaggio simile, quale **[fol. 25v]** dovesse procurare la giornata contr'il Turcho, e combattere tentando la sua sorte: nondimeno mi perdonerete se non lauderò quest'opinione, essendovi vi infiniti impedimenti manifesti fra quali il primo sarà il gran scampiglio et disordine d'un tant'esercito così malamente disciplinato, di così diverse nationi, d'humori, costumi e militia tanto contrarij.⁵⁶² Di più sotto capitani che hanno mille pretensioni. Inoltre la spesa grande e difficoltà maggiore di provederli in una banda sola per le vetovaglie e cose necessarie. Aggiungo che si può sempre di qualche disturbo o scisma overo amutinamento, et anche di peste dalle quali cose ne nasceria poi la rovina per se stessi e la vittoria à nemici. –

Da sette bande dunque e con sett'esserciti mediocri, in un medesimo tempo saria expediente che si dovesse assaltare quell'imperio Ottomanno; non perché fia bisogno di tante battaglie, ma concendocelo la copia grande delle genti; et l'occasione delle nationi diverse: per il che egli anchora forti sarà necessitato partire il suo essercito in altrettanti parti; dal quale [...] **[fol. 26r]** che fiachezza rimanerà la sua ogn'uno lo può giudicare, poiché in quest'anni adietro non li è bastato mai

⁵⁶² Pallavicino questions the solidity of the Ottoman Army and its ability to effectively conduct military campaigns. Naturally, this is a prejudice that tries to badly hide a widespread fear between Europeans at the time: since there are several instances in which the Ottoman Army vividly demonstrated its strength.

l'animo (benché con tutte le forze unite) in Ongaria mostrare la faccia à pochissime squadre de Christiani, rispetto alli suoi molti esserciti. –

Non accaderà dunque che li suddetti Principi Cristiani facciano sforzi grandi in mandare numerosissimi esserciti, com'hanno fatto altre volte, quali hanno caggionato li disordini, confusioni e' carestie di sopra accennate: ma doveranno essere mediocri, però ben forniti d'ogni cosa, scelti, robusti, et animosi con le debite vetovaglie apresso di passo in passo. –

Né in questo si deve usare maggior diligenza, per rimediare a qualche sinistro caso di fortuna, che di tenere preparato da doi, o, tre parti qualch'altra Galera, e qualch'altro essercito con le sue provigioni per subintrare e' resarcire dove si fusse mancato. –

In oleré <?> si debba fare ogni diligenza, che fra l'Autunno, et l'inverno siano preparate tutte le militie d'ogni banda per entrare in Campagna nella primavera per tempo: **[fol. 26v]** accertando che se in ciò vi sarà la debita sollecitudine in un anno il gioco sarà vinto. Il primo paese che doverà essere assalito da nostri esserciti sarà l'Ongaria: poiché a quella volta s'inviaranno le squadre Turchesche second 'il solito, il che quando segue restano l'altre parti disarmate e sprovedute e perciò tanto più facili ad essere superate e prese (com'il tutto è manifesto a chi ha notizia di quelle provincie) laonde egli non si crederà mai d'essere assaltato salvo da una o due bande; siche resterà ingannato con sicurissima e forzosa strattagemma. Per questo sarà bene che l'esserciti d'Italia s'incaminino più tardi cioè di luglio, et Agosto. Havendo già dattogli primi assalti la Germania, Pollonia, e Moscovia sino dell'mese d'Aprile e' maggio. –

Preparate dunque le suddette mediocri forze, si doveranno mandare sotto buoni, experti, et generosi Capitaniij distintamente, et ogni natione separata, per sfugire le precedentie garre accennate; quali riceveranno l'instruzioni dall' Senato; che quest'effetto doverà risedere **[fol. 27r]** la prima volta per modo di provigione, nella Città di Ragusa, o, altro più comodo, opportuno, e' vicino luogo al paese Turchesco per ricevere e dare gli aiuti di questo si doverà fare, i quali doveranno essere da loro osservati puntualmente sotto pena d'essere gastigati, nell'honore, roba et anche nella propria vita. –

Daragli facultà libera di Combattere incontrandosi con nemici senza dar raguaglio à Principe alcuno, ne all'istesso Senato (a modo però non li mandasse espressamente aviso incontrario) doverà pertanto il Generale di quei esserciti prima consigliarsi con altri suoi experti consiglieri e' capitani; perché così fatte dimore potrebbero grandemente nuocere alli medesmi esserciti Christiani essendo l'inimico più pronto e' libero a prendere l'occasioni. –

Quali Capitaniij doveranno animosamente combattere li nemici col' debito valore e pratica militare: assalteranno anchora quelle fortezze e luoghi che se li offeriranno nel suo cammino, come meglio gli parerà, dando del tutto minuto conto al medesimo Senato; ma spero, che poche fortezze, e manco squadre de nemici **[fol. 27v]** gli farà resistentia, venend'assalito quel imperio da tante bandi. –

La preda, che acquistaranno i suddetti esserciti di robe e danari doverà essere dèi quei medesimi che ne faranno l'acquisto, però molto bene si dev'avertire che li esserciti non eschino di strada ordinaria di Costantinopoli per ingordigie di saccheggiare i luoghi; nelchè il Senato, e la Vigilante Corte di Roma doverà havere buona cura per darli i convenienti rimedij. –

Quando alcuna Città, o, Castello si renderà à patti (alli quali doveranno i nostri essere facilissimi postponendo ogni desiderio di roba) dopo le provigioni necessarie di spianarle, overo rifortificarle (come meglio gli parerà) levaranno da quelle, i soldati della militia Turchesca e' mandaransi le prigioni nella Christianità in luoghi più vicini all' suddetto essercito da ritenersi, o, per schiavi, o, per quello che giudicà a proposito il senato, il simile si doverà fare de quelli che in campagna venissero fatto prigioni, à questo modo si leverà le legne dall' luogo dell' nemico, et, i nostri salteranno di spargere tanto sangue, inoltre cotanti essemplij di Clementia si darà animo all'altri di rendersi co' maggior felicità. –

[fol. 28r] L'artiglierie doveransi lasciare in quelle fortezze che riteniranno custodie per servitio dell'senato. –

In tal modo si faranno animosi gl'esserciti et s'arrichiranno desiderando di caminar inanti, né haveranno pensiero di consumar il tempo in fortificar Città, o, Castelli, salvo li molto necessari per sicurezza de passi loro, et delle vetovaglie che seguiranno d'impreso; lasciand'il tutto poi à dispositione del Senato, e Repubblica; nella quale tutto il Christianesimo s'haverà parte. –

L'essercito dunque di Spagna imbarcandosi nella Calabria, overo à Messina, sopra la sua Armata, quella dell'Papa, di Genova Savoia, e Malta s'incamminerà verso il stretto di Gallipoli per expugnare quei Dardanelli, nelché non vi sarà molta difficoltà; essendo facilissimi l'un et l'altro ad essere expugnati, come di ciò è manifesto, poi s'impadroniranno di Gallipoli, fermandosi ivi per aspettare gl'altri esserciti. –

Le Galere francese con le Fiorentine porteranno parte dell'essercito francese et anche con alcune mani al Zante, o, Cefalonia, e quivi aspettaranno l'armata Venetiana: un'altra parte anchora dell medesimo essercito francese passerà soprata Tartane <?> **[fol. 28v]** e' Saettie à ligorna; di dove prenderanno il

Camino separamente per Anchona; nel qual porto vi sarà già parte dell'Armata Venetiana; la quale prenderà insé li detti francesi et s'anderà à unirsi al Zante o Cefalonia con l'altre galere fiorentine, o, francese di dove s'inviaranno per sbarcare a Salonich, et s'impadroniranno di quella Città, e' quivi aspetteranno aviso dall' Senato s' devono voltarsi verso Constantinopoli, ovvero alle spalle dell'essercito Turchesco, che fusse passato in Ongaria. –

Il Generale dell'essercito francese doverà comandare in terra tanto alli Venetiani, come alli francesi; però in mare il Generale de Venetiani haverà l'autorità sopra l'una e altra natione. –

Intendendo che l'armata nemica sia fuori si doverà unire la prima Cattholica con quella de Venetiani, e' francese procurando d'incontrare l'inimico, promperlo, ovvero metterlo in fuga et restare patroni al precedente: fare armata salvo di puochi battelli com'è manifesto; non havend'egli gente sufficiente e' pratica per essa; sebene non li mancano legni infiniti per la massima **[fol. 29r]** comodità; ma che gioverà li legni senza gli huomini, come di tutto si sa per manifesta certezza. –

Nell'assaltare l'armata Turchesca, doveranno tutti li Generali delle squadre consigliarsi, dinanzi all' Generale: di Santa Chiesa quale per quest'effetto solamente sarà un Cardinale Legato, et le resolutioni si doveranno eseguire di ogn'uno per la sua banda conforme all' 1591 <?>. –

Nell'restringere il campo nemico, et nel combattere Constantinopoli si doveranno osservare l'ordini del senato predetto, il quale distribuirà i luoghi co' buon ordine senz'alcuna passione: ma al sicuro della Città non aspettarà il primo assalto. –

L'essercito del Papa con tutte le genti de Principi Italiani passeranno il golfo di Venetia con barche ordinarie, facendo poi la massa nel stato di Ragusa, et prenderanno il camino verso Constantinopoli per terra impadronendosi di quei luoghi che seli offeriranno incontro, che sono di puoco conto, non v'essendo alcuna difesa, ne ponto forti, ma si bene dovranno fare, et lasciare qualche fortezza à certi passi per sicurezza delle vetovaglie loro, et in tal modo penetreranno sino à Novibasar città grossa e **[fol. 29v]** però senza mura, e' senza fortezza, quivi et anche per camino osserveranno tutti li avisi, et ordini, che li manderà il senato et particolarmente 22=22=22=2 <?> se si doverà dare le spalle; dell'essercito Turchesco, opure andare all'assedio di Constantinopoli. –

Il Generale di quest'italiani, sotto il quale doverà militare tutta la natione Italiana per terra, doverà essere proposta dalla Santità di Nostro Signore. –

L'essercito dell'Imperatore con quello dell'Arciduca, et altri Principi della Germania stringeranno Buda, et altre fortezze su' il passo (né potendo) così facilmente expugnarli lascieranno lì gran parte dell'essercito; et l'altra s'incamminerà alla volta dell'essercito nemico, et di Constantinopoli. –

Li Pollachi sene veniranno à Themisuar, et quivi combatteranno quella piazza, et passando il Danubio veniranno sopra Belgrado procurando di conquistarlo, o, almeno tenerlo assediato in maniera che non possi dare a numerosi esserciti danno, né alle vetovaglie. –

Et ritrovandosi nelle campagne d'Ongaria essercito numeroso de Turchi, doveranno osservarlo, dandone prima aviso all' **[fol. 30r]** Senato; e' poi all'altri esserciti della lega; acciò s'agiustino di rinserrarlo in qualche campagna per romperlo, e' fugarlo in maniera, che non si possi più rimettere: et non è dubio, che se li capitaniij osserveranno la vera disciplina in non lasciarsi tirare dal sfrenato dessorio di predare, o, da troppa volontà d'investire disordinatamente senz'aspettare l'altr'esserciti (come già altre volte hanno fatto) il proprio nemico li darà la vittoria in mano senza quasi sfodrar spada: poiché egli non tiene regola vera di combattere senon per scorrerie, e' trappole; né mostra mai faccia, dove vede essercito che li facci testa; come s'è visto in tutti questi anni. –

L'Inglesi con suoi vasalli in grosso numero doveranno partire d'inverno per trovarsi a tempo nella primavera in Alessandretta di Soria; e quivi sbarcheranno il loro essercito impadronendosi del passo nel monte Ama chiamato Caro Capisi, cioè porta nera, per impedire le genti della Soria et dell'Egitto che di là tentassero passare per andare a Costantinopoli qual golfo è capacissimo per ogni sorte **[fol. 30v]** d'armata, e detto passo facilissimo ad essere occupato poiché non v'è fortezza, né presidio alcuno. –

Il Duccha di Moscovia farà calare il suo esercito nella Moldavia per resistere alli Tartari che volessero passare avvinandosi verso Nicopoli, dove si tratterà in quelle volte sino resti sconfitto l'essercito de Turchi e Tartari, et in quest'attione è molto necessario il suo aiuto. – Il qual Gran Duccha, sebene ritiene costumi molto differenti dalli nostri; et essendo di rito Greco, pareria che non fusse di molto giovamento; contuttociò perché lui è capital nemico de Turchi e Tartari con quali egli confina: perciò si deve reputare un importantissimo aiuto; poiché tanto maggiori saranno l'armi che si moveranno contra nemici: in oltre servirà per trattenerlo acciò non dia molestia al Regno di Pollonia, et sarà finalmente un alletarlo a unirsi nel'gremio di Santa Chiesa. –

Et se non piacesse alli Principi della lega d'includere il sudetto Gran Duccha né farlo partecipe in quella Repubblica potranno assignarli il territorio di Tartari Cumani suoi **[fol. 31r]** capitali nemici,

promettendoli d'aiutarlo a sottometterlo dandone il dominio a lui, et riservarsi per la Repubblica la Taurica Chersoneso della Gazzaria, lasciando i Giorgiani, e' Circassij nelli termini che hoggi si trovano; però debbino ricognoscere la Repubblica ogn'anno di qualche tributo, et somministrarli gente, quando bisognerà. –

Per diverse ragioni anchora si potria dubitare se fusse bene invitare il Persiano, quale tiene particolarmente sete contro questo Tiranno; et non è dubio che li moveria dalla sua banda per interesse anchor proprio con molto vigore, e' prontezza: à benché bisogneria poi disputare con l'armi sopra le ragioni de quei stati ch'egli occupasse; il tempo nondimeno et l'occasione darà consiglio à tal impresa; basta che in questo Principio si debilitarebbe tanto più di forze l'Ottomanno, et perderassi d'animo, in modo tale che veniressino all'intento nostro con maggior facilità. Et s'io devo dire il mio parere l'aiuto del Moscovita è più necessario che quello dell'Persiano rimettendomi sempre à miglior giuditio. –

Dopo haver composto le precedenti considerazioni s'è havuto raguaglio **[fol. 31v]** qualmente il Re Persiano, non solo ha mosso guerra: ma dato una buona rotta all'essercito Turchesco; siché Iddio ci amonisse a fare dell'canto nostro il debito venendo noi di questo Re invitati non solo con parole; (come fece per mezzo dell'suo Ambasciatore) ma con fatti evidenti. –

Queste sono le strade, et il modo per il quale tutt'i Principi con molta commodità potranno mantenere la guerra in casa dell'nemico, et haveranno facilità à sumministrare aiuti di gente e' vetovaglie senz'alcun'intoppo alli suoi esserciti caminando per continue strade vicine e più facili alli suoi stati.

E perché sarebbe discorso troppo lungo, anzi più tosto troppo ardire il mio se volesse assignare le contributioni da farsi da tutt'i sudetti Principi, e quelle dividerle in sette parti exprimendo che somma di spesa si dovesse tassare, quante genti, quante galere si dovessero preparare; perciò cognoscendo che questa fatica, spetta all'istessi Commissarij, o, legati della Dieta, à quelli la rimetto quali essaminando bene le forze de predetti Principi; saperanno tassare e ripartire con bellissimo ordine **[fol. 32r]** assignando ad alcuno il carrico di maggior numero di Galere, ad altri gl'esserciti, ad altri la contributione di maggior somma de danari, e vetovaglie per sodisfare pienamente al debito loro; acciò le forze rieschino uguali dovendo riuscire la preda, et l'utile proportionato à tutti. –

Mà pure quando mi fuste comandato da più saldo e' maturo intelletto, che sopra di ciò esponesse il mio parere, diria come brevementi sarà notato da me nell'epilogo dell'utili de Principi. –

Nella qual'opera sebene bisognasse fare qualche tassa, overo impositione per haver danari, stimo che à tutt'il Christianesimo non doverà essere di noia né modestia; posciaché à una tanta impresa non bisogneria sovenimento <?> de danari, ma che à garra s'essibissero di porre la vita, e facultà per sterminio de Dio, et essaltatione della sua fede; ma spero che ne anche in questo bisognerà molto forzo concorendovi li venturieri. –

Sopra il qual punto, non ho dubio alcuno che numero grandissimo de Duchi, Principi, Baroni, Marchesi, conti, Cavaglieri, et altri signori particolari alla nova gratissima, et al suave [...]re di così signalata impresa, in un **[fol. 32v]** tanto e' sì raro conquisto si leveranno con santo zelo, e generosa emulatione, per farsi compagni; non con stipendio né per forza di Principi maggiori; ma spontaneamente come venturieri di Cristo: suo vero Capitanio, il numero de quali senon sarà uguale a quello de stipendiati, lo supererà almeno di valore e generosità d'animo, per essere composto da tali personaggi: pertanto doverà ogni natione de simili guerrieri, con li suoi servitori seguire l'essercito, i squadroni, et il Generale della sua propria lingua, e' Principe: fra quali potranno starsene sott'un insegna appartata, o, come meglio tornerà comoda à quel Generale per levare tutte l'occasioni de distrutione. –

Et sebene così fatti campioni si moveranno senz'alcuna speranza di premio mondano; ma solo con fiducia d'ottenerlo dall suo Generale Gesù Cristo: per il quale non metto dubio che faranno prove signalate; combatterà essendo honesto, ché trovandosi l'acquisto che si farà tanto grande, et opulento; essi anchora né godino; et per inanimire altri al medesimo effetto con speranza di qualche premio mondano: perciò saria buona resolutione che la Dieta et poi il senato suddetto delliberassero che questi **[fol. 33r]** venturieri possino havere per se, et per suoi discendenti maschi tanta comenda, o sia entrata in quel Imperio conquistato quanta sia la mettà della rendita, che al presente godono nella Cristianità [mentre però essi medesmi serviranno in tutt'il tempo di quest'impresa personalmente et con tant'huomini, quanto comporta il mantenere se, et loro con la metà della rendita suddetta assignando cento scuti per un huomo a cavallo, et cinquanta per un archibugiero a piede; però che siano persone robuste, et scielte] laonde doveranno per maggiori loro giustificatione levar publiche fedì dell'principio della sua militia, et anche confirmatione con altre della perseverantia presso à quali Capitanij haveranno servito. –

Riservandosi il senato l'authorità di premiare anchora più quelle persone che manifestamente havessero fatto qualch'opera heroijca, e segnalata, et anche di ricognoscere è gratificare li figlioli, o, fratelli di quelli che perdessero la vita in questa expeditione. –

Né si deve smarrire alcuno; per dubio che non vi siano tanti premij, e tante Comende; poiché meglio informati **[fol. 33v]** troveranno che hoggidì il Gran Turcho, oltre le rendite [...] sue proprie [che sono in torno à dieci milioni l'anno] ha tante comende, chiamate in quella lingua Timarri; che bastano a mantenere ducento milla persone assignando da 200 sino a 2000 [...] d'entrata per ogn'uno et si possono radoppiare con il congongimento delle ville et assignationi nelle Città più grosse. –

Questi Comendatarii, come sudditi di quella Repubblica doveranno riconognoscerla come loro Patrona in quelli bene, feudi, o, Comende servendola alli suoi bisogni personalmente et con le genti che sono sotto tal comenda, ogni volta che li sarà comandato dal Senato di prendere l'armi contro l'inimici di quel stato, ne più, ne meno come fanno hoggidì i Timariotti; così giurando nell' ricevere l'investitura. –

Sarà permesso vendere, o, domare le suddette comende; però con il consenso dell'Senato ad altri Christiani della medesima natione, et anche sia lecito mandare (bisognando) luogote <?> in detti beni per custodirli; et servire come la sua persona propria à quella Repubblica, et ciò mentre durerà l'investitura restando sempre il principale obligato come sopra; [...]ndo poi la descendentia di cui sarà stata l'investitura **[fol. 34r]** decada il feudo al Senato, al quale spettarà provvedere di nova investitura li più prossimi parenti maschi, o, altri del medesimo paese; nominando a tal presentatione quel'senatore della cui provincia sarà stato il deffonto. –

Quali comendatarij (se così piacerà) potranno essere honorati e creati Cavaglieri di Santo Sepolchro per dell'Gran Cancelliero, overo dall'Governatore di Gerusalemme, che in questo caso sarà luogotenente dell'suddetto Gran Cancellario; à essi Cavaglieri poi appartenirà principalmente la diffessa de luoghi Santi.

Et simili provigioni servirà anchora per altr'effetti, cioè che in quei paesi v'anderanno ad habitare molti de nostri Christiani et così resteranno più popolati e coltivati; dov'ora vanno deserti. Inoltre saranno come tante collonie per tener in freno quelle genti infedele, e novamente soggiogate. –

La dilligentia che doveranno usare li detti esserciti s'è di presentarsi tutt'in un tempo all'assedio di Constantinopoli (rotto che sia l'essercito dell nemico in campagna) nelché si doverà avvertire di far marchiare inanti l'altri confederati, o, almeno quelli che saranno col'essercito più vicino, perché in

tal modo l'assedio saria più forte et s'oviarà à qualche disgratia: poiché veramente **[fol. 34v]** la suddetta Città come metropoli di tutto quello imperio mantiene in se la maggior parte della potenza Ottomanna: ma anchora per essere di tanto populo inutili ripiena né havendo vetovaglia sufficiente; salvo per puoco tempo; anzi quasi giornale si può sperare col'aiuto divino (trovandosi massime tutto l'essercito fuori di quella) che con molta facilità sia per ritornare nelle mani de propugnatori di Gesù Christo: per ilché quell'imperio, restaria come corpo senza capo nelle sue fredde membra exstinto, et Gran Turcho li converrà fuggire, senon vorrà esser preso in qualche fortezza dell'Anatolia ritrovandosene alcune dell'antique per il sito forte, quale si potrà assediare con facilità; poiché in quei improvisi ritiramenti non si può fornire a sufficientia; pertanto à sua marcia veglia gli converrà rendersi, o, morire sotto l'armi de fedeli campioni. –

Io mi ricordo d'haver letto preisso d'alcuni scrittori; quali hanno proposto imprese contro l'Ottomanni, che ogni poco d'aiuto che havessero li Christiani sudditi del Turco d'arme e' Çapitanii, che loro medesmi farebbero la guerra all'istesso Tiranno adducendo l'esempio dell'Albania sotto **[fol. 35r]** il Capitan Scander Begh, ma per certo questi tali mi perdonino che non sono informati di quelle genti: perché sebene essi Christiani sudditi per forza pagano tributi e gravezze grandi; sono però tant'assuefatti all'giogo, che non lo sentono; anzi essendo nati, e vissuti in quella compagnia, che fuori della Circoncisione et il Turbante (quale non li è lecito portare), ritengono tutte le medesme usanze, si nel vivere come nel'vestire e trattare; che in un certo modo levand'all'uni, et all'altri li Turbanti non si discernono: laonde godono in quella schiavitudine, et in quella da loro non cognosciute afflitione; à quello s'aggiungie, che il Greco è natural nemico de Lattini; sicome l'antiche e moderne carte testimoniano, et ognidì si prova: per ilché non solo non si ribellaranno contro de Turchi; ma venendo in casa loro quest'esserciti, non li daranno alcun favore è più tosto sene fuggiranno alle selvi, e montagne per levarsi dalli sacchi. Inquanto all'esempio adotto d'Albanesi. Rispondo che quelli erano novellamente stati sottomessi; perciò procaravano <?> sottrarsi da quell'giogo; abenché quelle sollevationi l'habbino pagate poi con molto sangue e strage. –

In rimedio per amolire, e raddolcire i animi de simili **[fol. 35v]** Christiani ni pareria conveniente fra l'altri, che da pertutto dove arivassero questi esserciti si scrivesse, in certe bandiere nelle Chiese o tempij di quei luoghi in lingue a loro intelligibile queste o simile parolle Libertas, Pax, Iustitia, et spesso si facessero publicare con le trombe per ilché intenderebbero che s' l'apporta le suddette cose

de quali hoggi n'hanno tanta Carestia, e cosè prenderebbono maggior confidenza, et serviriano poi in qualch'opera, manuale, alli nostri esserciti. –

Dovendosi anchora considerare e' provvedere a' quei populi sottomessi che saranno: dico per essere la maggior parte di loro infedele, et i Christiani sono a' quell'segno che ho' accennato, ne dovendo, o, potendosi seminare la religione con il ferro, et archibugio; ma con essortationi prediche et buoni esempij: perciò potrà il Senato (così parendoli convenire) in tutto quel stato far publicare l'editto della libertà di Conscientia per qualche tempo determinato per inanimarli à riposarsi, et confidarsi di si benigno governo. Inoltre la maggior parte de religiosi che hoggidì soprabondano nella Christianità doveranno andarvi d'ordine de suoi superiori a **[fol. 36r]** predicare, cattechizzare, instruire, et aiutare la novella vigna dell signore. –

Né però quei che non sono Christiani sela devono passare dell'tutto essenti di gravezze; ma seli potrà imporre un'zecchino per testa com'essi Turchi all'presente fanno pagare, alli poveri Christiani; et questo s'intenda anchora sopra li Giudei de quali viè numero quasi infinito, et questo s'intenda oltre le Gabelle, et altri diritti da pagarsi dalle Città e' populi al suddetto Senato come suo Principe e per mantenimento dell' stato. –

L'esserciti della lega non si debbino licentiar per ritornare alli suoi paesi, ancorche il Turco sia rotto e' sconfitto: ma debbino lasciar prendere il fermo possesso al'Senato della Città di Constantinopoli, et di tutte le fortezze alli confini dell'stato: dopo il qual'successo possa il predetto Senato ritenere quella parte d'essercito che li parerà necessaria per combattere alli confini di Persiani, Mori, Tartari, et in qualch'altro luogo urgente fin'à tanto, che sia pacificato il dominio; né verisimilmente si possi dubitare di sollevamento alcuno, dandoli le paghe dall'erario Publico. –

Anzi si doverà mandare di subito doi Comissarij in Alexandria, **[fol. 36v]** o, Damiata, overo Rosetta dell'Egitto con la maggior parte dell'armata delle Galere, dove sbarcato l'essercito anderanno al Gran Cayro per stabilire il possesso di quell'ampla Città facendovi quelle fortezze necessarie; et lasciandosi buon presidio per essere numerosa de Mori, non habbino tempo da sollevarsi, e far capo particolare. Li Comissarij uno sarà Romano, et l'altro Bohemo, però experti Capitani; i quali stabilito il possesso vi lascieranno li Governatori per le Città, et per le fortezze conforme verrà ordinato dal Senato. –

Parimente il senato doverà mandare due persone fedele al Campo de Ciaschedun essercito, avanti che entrino nel' stato Ottomanno per rivedere le genti se li Principi han fatto il debito loro, che li fu imposto dalla Dieta et al quale si sono obligati; sebene doverà prima haver mandato il Generale di

Ciaschedun essercito, un solo de tutte la militia al istesso Senato; specificando quanti soldati siano venuti al Campo, quali siano i venturieri, quali i soldati à Cavallo, quali i Pedoni, e stipendiati. –

Quando sedia Apostolica uno dei Principali fundamenti **[fol. 37r]** anzi il primo moto de simili leghe; mediante il quale l'altri Principi s' riuniscono; et mancando quella facilmente le leghe disciolgono: per oviare dunque che accadeno la morte d'un Pontefice [che Iddio ci guardi e conservi longamente il presente] l'impresa non resti interrotta; sarà bene dichiarare (facendo in questo porre il consenso de tutt'i Cardinali con li loro giuramento) che tutt'i Carrichi da farsi per parte di quella si faranno tant'in vitta come dopo morte dell'Pontefice; giurando di più che qualunque di loro, succederà debba continuare la medesima lega, et impresa.

Con simile provigione sarà anche necessaria nella Sedia Imperiale acciò che vacando [il che Iddio non vogli per molt'anni] non habbi à mancare l'aiuto suddetto necessario, facendo che li deputati dell'Imperio, et le genti delli stati promettino il tutto; anzi ne diano la cura à certi ministri di riscuotere l'assignationi, di fare l'esserciti, di mandarli al'Campo all'suo Generale. –

A quest'impresa, a questa Santa Lega non metto dubio, che non si debba trovare ben disposti et inanimati tutti i Christiani, giachè si ritrovano in così segnalata pace et in **[fol. 37v]** tante gran ricchezze, quali non sono giamai state in alcun secolo passato. –

Poiché la fortissima e ferocissima Germania assuefatta dopo tante guerre a vedere l'esserciti disordinati de Turchi, non ritirerà il piede da così honorata lega; ma seguirà il corso delle sue vittorie. La Pollonia e Moscovia, a guisa de doi leoni che dopo esser stati opressi da longa febre si svegliano con acuta fame et s'aventano contro tutti quei che incontrano; con un tal' furore s'aventaranno contro Turchi, suoi mortali nemici facendone ogni stratio e macello. –

La Francia prontissima come tante volte è stata, particolarmente sotto le felicissime insegne di Gottifredo Buglione, accompagnato da tanti Principi Santissimi e Populi, sotto il religiosissimo loro Re S. Ludovico al acquisto di terra Santa; hora più che mai dessiderosa di Gloria et di recuperare quelli, et altri paesi tanto celebri gareggeranno a passare in qua per trovarsi pronti a questa bell'impresa. –

L'Inghilterra che con animo invitto s'expone sempre a' tutt'i rischi e pericoli, dando sempre a nemici infinita molestia; trovandosi piena di gente tanto eletta per la **[fol. 38r]** guerra e per le navigationi, haverà occasione di giubilare mentre s'impiegarà con le sue forze verso l'universal nemico de

Christiani, seguendo in ciò le pedate dell' Re Riccardo che si mosse con buona armata per il soccorso di terra Santa, sebene con quella prese poi l'isola di Cipro. –

La Spagna Cattholica che con Santa emulatione non vuol'essere pont'inferiore di valore e prontezza a' niuna Provincia, seguirà il solito stile di scacciare e rovinare l'Idolo di Baal per sacrificare al vero Iddio. –

L'Italia gloriosa per tanti triumphi et che a niuno vuol'esser seconda non si l'ascierà passare inanti alcuna natione.

Finalmente il Christianesimo tutto inanimato e spinto dalla bontà divina, e poi da così Santa e pia lega farrà a garra d'avanzarsi l'un, l'altro, in valore, in prontezze, in generosità, mossi anchora da utilità propria. –

Che più l'inimici istessi della nostra fede; et nemici anchora dell'Ottomanni alzeranno le loro Bandiere, et armi per invidia, per vendetta, o, per interesse proprio contra si mortal Tirano, talché tutt'il mondo ci promette una certissima vittoria destinataci dalla bontà Divina. –

[fol. 38v] Con questi mezzi tutti li Principi potranno giocare sul sicuro; poichè preso e' debellato quest'Imperio, ogn'uno haverà il debito frutto senza contesa, senza invidia, senza venir alle mani fra di loro: dovendo tanto godere l'Hispano, quest'il franco, et ugal portione haverà il Germano, sicome l'Italiano, et l'Inglese parteciperà con il Pollacco. –

Et s'alcuno persone havesse mal'animo d'occupare qualche cosa di quella Repubblica resti certo, che contro di quello s'armeranno subito tutt'altri Principij per interesse proprio fra li quali la Sedia Apostolica: sarebbe la prima con il braccio (...) et co' il seculare; sicome suole in simili capi per reprimere e' gastigare l'ingordi usurpatori della roba altrui; con questa strada si leveria tante disensionì, tante precedente, et ogetti per li quali vengono impedito tutte le nostre imprese, vendendo vincitori, i nostri nemici; et noi prede e' ludibrio manifesto a quelli. –

Né m'è nascosto che molte persone leggendo questi mei discorsi senz'arte, e, senz'industria composti [non però senza zelo, e' dessiderio dell'accrescimento della Fede Santa] scolaranno la testa, dicendo ch'io ho hauto puoco pensiero **[fol. 39r]** a entrare in quest'inventioni, altri giudicandole difficilissime à mettere un'essecutione; altri godendosi dell'suo nido non si cureranno far maggior acquisto; mà attenderanno alla caccia, giochi, e' simili spassi, lasciand'il pensiero del Turco à chi lo vuole; poichè essi ne sono lontani, altri dicendo che le forze dell'Turco sono diminuite, in modo tale, che non si deve haver paura di lui; anzi si deve aspettare che li Basha, e Principali di quel stato

venghino alle mani tra di loro; per subintrare con quell'occasione di guerra intestina, è civile a fare conquisto; et altri, altre difficoltà metteranno in campo. –

Alle quali obietioni risponderò brevemente, per non assediare i benevoli lettori, et ascoltatori. Et prima ringratio il signor Iddio che m'habbi fatto degno di pensare à essercitij utili per la Santa Chiesa, anchorché mi senta instrumento debolissimo; per la quale tant'è, così ellevati ingegni v'hanno fatto signalate fatiche, che non hanno hauto quel buon successo, che si desiderava; et non riuscendo anchora questa; non perciò issimo <?> d'haver perso il tempo [fol. 39v] a servire Sua Divina Maestà

Secondo, chi con la mente quieta considererà questi discorsi, troverà che dovendosi assalire questo formidabile usurpatore, non ti può per altra strada che questa, ovvero una simile, altrimenti da noi stessi se disturbaremo per le ragioni di sopra accennate, et con questa non riuscirà l'impresa tanto difficile e scomoda quanto co' le passate. Al terzo si ricordino quei tali; et se non lo sanno leghino l'Historie de nostri fratelli Greci, Armeni, Ongari, Schiavoni, Albanesi et altre molte nationi, quali mentre attendevano ad ogni sorte de spassi; parendoli che li Turchi fussero lontanissimi in breve tempo son stati ridotti sotto l'asprissimo giogo, privi di ricchezze, di nobiltà, di religione et finalmente dell'amata libertà; et ogn'anno questi ne corrono sotto l'istesso ceppo divers'altre; et Dio voglia che il male finischi qua. Al Quarto, che il Turcho sia così debbole come alcuni selo dipingono dicendo che non ha gente atta per combattere, né per fare armata, questi tali ne parlino con persone pratiche del Levante, et troveranno che non li mancano esserciti, ne li manca [fol. 40r] armata, quando si risolve; essendo patrone assoluto della facultà, delle persone de tanti stati e provincie, che sebene non sono così piene come l'Italia, e, la Francia; non sono però vuote d'infiniti huomini, assuefatti alle fatiche, et alli stenti (della qual sorte in queste nostre bande non venè però molta copia) et se li suoi proavi de così piccolo stato, et con si puoche forze sono pervenuti ad un Imperio tanto formidabile, quando v'hanno voluto attendere, che sarebbe se primo Gran Turco si levasse; et se non questo un altro, et forse il Persiano, o, il Re de' Tartari (se permettiamo che uno di loro s'usurpi quel'Imperio declinante) il quale stesse continuamente in campagna con tutte le sue forze, voltandosi hor qua, hor là, come fu già il suo costume? Qual stato saria sicuro? Poiché egli cinge hormai tutta la Christianità col suo dominio. Et sebene manca in buona parte della vera regole di combattere, cognosca però il suo molto vantaggio, che è di non tenere mai ottiosa la militia giaché resta piegata così in tempo di pace come [fol. 40v] di guerra; pertanto fornita un'impresa, o, disegno in una banda, ne ricomincia un'altra, in un'altra parte et non è meraviglia, che facci per lo più acquisti; poiché si move sempre con tutte le

sue forze, verso quelli stati; mà se havesse da combattere in due, o, tre bande (come nel suddetto modo) ne seguirebbe molto presto la sua tal rovina. Nel resto quanto sia vana l'aspettativa di veder divisione, o, scisma fra quei Principali, mediante la quale si potrebbe sperare d'haver introductione, e' parte in quel stato; l'esempio di qualche guerra à nostri tempi ci lo doveria pur haver dimostrato; poiché non chiameriano i Cattolici; ma il Persiano, o, il Tartaro quali sono della medesima setta; sebene in qualche cosa discrepanti; et se poi un novo Monarcha ci stesse bene alli fianchi; me lo dichino i nostri Politici. Siché prendiamo questa occasione che Iddio Benedetto ci manda, servimosi dell'tempo opportuno, vedendo noi manifestamente quel Imperio in declinatione, e' quasi in exterminio, quand'il Christianesimo [fol. 41r] si trova, più florido, che sia mai stato, et in una pace tanto signalata, è bramata. Aggiungendo che questo Gran Turco, non ha quell'obedientia militare, né in sé ritiene valore alcuno (essend'un'fanciullo) come havevano i suoi antichi, altrimenti, avvertiamo che non venghi un altro tempo che vorressimo, et non possiamo, a pena diffendersi. –

Non è l'intention mia di far qui essortatione alli Principi e' populo Christiano per una sì necessaria impresa; perché altre che ne sono state composte molt'altre dà Celeberrimi authori, nelle quali hanno messo avant'all'occhi infinite ragioni et argomenti efficacissimi, per ridurli à queste resolutioni, considero anchora, che non è alcuno di loro; quale intendendosi di stato, non cognosca manifestamente e non confessi che è più di necessità l'unione de Principi per debellare un tanto Tiranno; si per servire Dio et alla sua religione, come per mantenere e diffondere il suo populo, et anche per liberare tanti fedeli Christiani dalla schiavitudine; per li quali oblighi Sua Divina Maestà l'ha fatto capo e guida degl'altri: ma restano come sonachiosi [fol. 41v] mirandosi in faccia l'un l'altro aspettando che il vicino sia il primo a mettersi la corazza e sfodrare la spada; ma se dalla Santa di Nostro Signora saranno essortati a fare una volta da dovero non haveranno più scusa presso Iddio accettabile, né verso la propria conscientia, et avvertischino, che non l'intervenga come successe à Saul, il quale per non obedire alla volontà Divina in amazzare Amal[...] et le sue genti, nemici del populo d'Israel; fu' ridotto in quel stato che testifica la Sacra Scrittura. –

Né si persuadino, che li Turchi sentendo questa nova d'una così signalata lega atterriti per levarsi dalle spalle una tanta manifesta rovina permettessero di mai più molestare li pacti de Christiani, fussero per osservare in progresso di tempo tal fede, o, pace: perché aspetterebbero che li Christiani fussero i' discordia, et allora si moveriano a fare le sue vendette; et se bene tra di loro hanno qualch'ombra di fede et religione, non l'osservano però con li Christiani suoi capitali nemici: anzi tengono per opera

santissima il violarsi la fede **[fol. 42r]** l'ingannarli, et il ridurli è qualche trappola [...] sue perfidie usate verso de nostri in diversi tempi s'...] credendosi di trattare con quei Barbari, come siamo soliti conversare fra di noi alla Cavalleresca. Laonde risolvino di dar la gloria una volta a Dio, d'assicurarsi i suoi stati, di sbattere e conculcare il commun nemico, di consacrarsi una perpetua fama; non solo in questo modo, ma anchora nella celeste Patria. –

Avanti che concluda questo ragionamento non posso mancare d' dire qualche cosa sopra la preparatione et armi spirituali: poichè non si deve dubitare che il maggiore e più fort'aiuto ha da venire dal'omnipotente mano de Dio. Dirò dunque due parole per la militia, due per quei che restano a casa, et due altre per tutt'il Christianesimo dopo l'ottenuta Vittoria. –

Sarà dopo necessario che questi valorosi soldati di Christo ponendosi a così bell'impresa, s'armino facendo una general confessione; e' prendendo il Santo Sacramento – lasciando da parte tutte l'inimicitie, ambitioni, et **[fol. 42v]** altri cattivi pensieri, che ritengono occupata la mente che non corra ogni dì al suo Creatore, procurando poi di mantenersi il quel puro stato, facendo le sue orationi, non per consuetudine, o, apparentia exterior, ma con ardente zelo di servitio a Sua Divina Maestà, et d'essere da lui aiutato; et soprattutto astenersi da ogni sorte d' biastema dal gioco, et altro vitio, che dispiace tanto a Dio. Non tralascierò de dire [acciò ci servi per essemplio a guisa d'api, che facciano il dolce liquore da ogni fiore] che se li nostri nemici hanno qualche vittoria, procede in gran parte: perchè nell'andare alla guerra vinsero con maggior regola, che nella Città: poichè non si sente pure una biastema (causa principal de Castighi d'Dio) non si vede un gioco de carte, o, dadi (rovina d'esserciti) ma stanno a guisa di religiosi intenti sempre all'acquisto dell'stato, all'augmento della loro fede, et obedientia de suoi capitaniij (quali cose come venghino osservati nei nostri esserciti per'uno il sa) cinque volte al giorno ringratiano Iddio et l'adorano con tanta devotione publica che **[fol. 43r]** paiono religiosi; et s'alcuno ardisse biastemare Christo Nostro Signore, la Vergine Maria, o, li santi incontinente sarebbe preso, batuto, e forse lapidato da proprij compagni: cosa invero che da noi non vien creduta, et se li Christiani caminassero in questa maniera al conto riporteriano maggiori vittorie di quelle che ricevono. –

Il popolo, e' quei Cittadini che rimangono a casa mentr'i suoi parenti, et il suo sangue va a pattire dileggi nel'camino, et nel combattere; non doverà attendere à spese crapule, et al'otio, ma continuare in molte vigilie, orationi, et ellemosine (efficaci mezzi per placare la giustitia divina) e' particolarmente depositare un modo di far un unite, et universal preghiere; di meno per un quarto d'hora ogni dì

(quand'il sole si ritrova nel mezzo giorno) nella quale s'adori, et si ringratij Sua Divina Maestà, si dimandi perdono de suoi peccati, et si chiegga la sua Santa Gratia, e' vittoria contra nemici con una particular oratione, che tutt'i capi di casa sentendo il segno della Chiesa presente: et seguendo **[fol. 43v]** tutte l'altri inginocchiandosi con la sua famiglia recitaranno, et chi non saperà leggere dieci Patri nostri e' tant'Avemarie, nel'qual tempo tutte le chiese daranno continui botti di campane, segno di questa oratione, et chi sarà nelle strade vada nella Chiesa più prossima. –

Doveranno soprattutto li Rispettabilissimi Vescovi, e' Prelati [ne quali come in lucidissime lucerne rimira tutt'il popolo] non solo mandare buon numero de ministri, et operarij sufficienti per essortare inanimire li soldati all'osservanza dell'vivere Christiano, et all'obedientia verso Capitani ministrandoli a suoi tempi i Santissimi Sacramenti; ma eglino medesmi doveranno porre la mano a questa messe con le sue entrate, e' mostrare che quella professione che hanno sempre fatto, non è stata solamente in apparentia ma interna et de veri sposi di Santa Chiesa. Molti anchora di loro, cioè li più prosperosi, doveranno mettersi in viaggio accompagnando l'esserciti per l'acquisto di tanti luoghi benedetti per non essere punto inferiori a nostri nemici, li religiosi de quali vanno alla guerra **[fol. 44r]** per essortar altri, et anche per combattere bisognando, nelle quali opere immitaranno quei Prelati, et Papa, che nel concilio di Claramonte l'anno Millesimo nonagesimo quinto co' l'essortationi, e' prediche puotero tanto, che si mossero con esso loro infiniti popoli per l'acquisto di terra Santa Impresa assai più lontana, più difficile, e manco necessaria di questa; poiché non s'averà a combattere con un'inimico solo ma con discorsi, e potentissimi nell'armi, bisognando entrare nelle viscere de loro stati, con manifesto pericolo di non haver soccorso di gente, né di vetovaglie, anzi si facevano il passo, con l'armi per paesi a loro del tutto incogniti, il che non seguirà hora unendo a pena dalli confini de loro stati. –

Nel tempo di pace, acquistato che sia e debellato questo Impero Turco non si doverà attendere alle Crapole, alli vitij con briglia sciolta, non havendo più paura de simili nemici, anzi doveranno mantenersi, in quella devotione di mente e di corpo; prendendo tutt' i spassi leciti, et honesti: ricorrendo a suoi tempi al timore et alla riverentia de Dio; lasciando soprattutto i peccati enormi che tirano la vendetta de Sua Divina Maestà sopra **[fol. 44v]** di noi, imponendo più grave pene et eseguendole contro i transgressori; facendo anchora una riforma sopra del vivere et religione di questi paesi conquistati. Altrimenti saperà molto bene Iddio trovar altri flagelli; suscitare novi Tiranni per castigare non solo i cattivi; ma quei che non hanno dato vigore alla Giustitia. –

Ma se continueremo in quel'stato di religione e timore de Dio, non è dubio che la misericordia sua infinita, manderà un' altro secolo di Pace, come quello d'Ottaviano, et all'hora si farà unum Ovile, et unus Pastor, tanto bramato; il che ci conceda per sua immensa bontà.

Laus Deo optimo Maestro; ac Beatissimae V. Marie

Coelistique curia universa.

[**fol. 45r**] Tralasciando per hora l'epilogo dell'utili de Principi proveranno (per far qualche prova in pratica) la divisione, o, sia repartimento dell'armate, et delli sette esserciti da me sopra collocati, quale; sebene spetta alli Comisarij della Dieta; che saperanno bilanciare con molta prudentia e' giuditio, tutte le forze de Principi Christiani per tassare, il proportionato carrico à Ciascheduno; tuttavia poichè Sua Divina Maestà m'ha fatto porre la penna sopra simili discorsi; con l'aiuto medesimo l'accennerò brevemente quale sarà poi accresciuta, o, sminuita èsicome tutta la presente fatica starà alla medesima censura] da più maturi e' saggi intelletti. –

Dirò dunque che li sett'esserciti ordinati dalli 22 overo 23 Caratteri devono essere di conveniente numero per assaltare l'inimici. Dovendosi anchora procedere di qualche numero di Galere sopra l'ordinarie; [poichè si parla qui di quelle forze che s'hanno da preparare oltra li soliti presidij e' stipendij che ciaschedun'Principe mantiene per difesa delli suoi stati, fortezze, e' marine] [**fol.45v**] son'andato bilanciando et trovo che alli Principi de doi Carrateri si potrebbe assignare il carrico solamente de soldati numero 18mila per ogn'anno. –

Et sebene per questo assignamento alli Principi d'un Carrattere toccarebbe il carrico de soldati [...]. Nondimeno essendosi datto tant'honore alli suddetti Principi de doi Carratteri in mandare thesaureri di vantagio, e' secretarij per inanimirli a fare qualche cosa di più, come quelli che hanno maggior forze: pertanto a' questi Principi d'un Carrattere si potrà restringere il suo carrico solo a soldati n. 8. – In modo tale che tuta questa massa ascenderebbe al numero di n. 198mila fra uguali essendo di necessità che vi siano molti cavalli de obligo; perciò si doverà tassare, che li Principi de doi Carratteri mandino n. 16 mila Pedoni et n. 2mila Cavalli almeno; et li Principi d'un Carrattere mandi n. 7mila Pedoni, et mille Cavalli: non parlando de Polacchi, e' Moscoviti; quali so' che in cambio de pedoni si serviranno di maggior numero de Cavallaria; per la gran copia e' facilità che vi si trova presso quelle nationi. –

[fol. 46r] Inoltre dovendosi ordinare qualche Galera di vantaglio, sopra li stuoli che hoggidì servono si per ricevere in se l'esserciti più comodamente; come per essere in maggior numero à superare co' più faccilità l'armata nemica, et essendo li soldati di n. 198mila troppo copioso; per tanto si potrà ordinare che li Principi che hanno li stati alle marine, per qualche migliaia de Pedoni, vi ponghino, e' coramerino tante Galere; cioè due Galere, per ogni migliaia, di tutto punto armate e' fornite eccetto che de soldati. –

E così trovo che potranno mettere in campo, cioè –

Il Papa. Galere n. 10 Cavalli n. 2mila e' Pedoni n. 11mila. –

Il Re di Francia. Galere n. 12 Cavalli n. 2mila e' Pedoni n. 10mila. –

Il Re di Spagna. Galere n. 12 Cavalli n. 2mila e' Pedoni n. 10mila. –

Venetiani. Galere n. 12 Cavalli n. 2mila e' Pedoni n. 10mila. –

Genova. Galere n. 6 Cavalli n. 1mila e' Pedoni n. 9mila. –

Savoia. Galere n. 4 Cavalli n. 1mila e' Pedoni n. 5mila. –

Gran Duca. Galere n. 4 Cavalli n. 1mila e' Pedoni n. 5mila. –

Malta. Galere n. 6 Cavalli n. 1mila e' Pedoni n. 4mila. –

Li altri Duchi. Galere – Cavalli n. 1mila e' Pedoni n. 2mila. –

Summe Galere n. 66. Cavalli n. 13mila e' Pedoni n. 66mila.

[fol. 46v] Se ne habbiamo di questi Principi Gallere n. 66 Cavalli n. 13mila e' Pedoni n. 66mila da dividere in tre' esserciti, Quali Galere 66 congiongendole con l'altre che hoggidi si trovano alli servitij che sono almeno 113 d'ogni Principe fanno il numero de 179 da dividere in due squadre. –

Restano hora le forze Allamanne, Inglese, Pollache, et Moscovite da repartire. –

Il Re d'Inghilterra dovendo mandare per longo tratto di mare il suo essercito li farà bisogno de molti vascelli; et perciò doverà bastare che le sue genti assedino al n. de 10mila in tutto fra Pedoni e' Cavalli, quali non né potranno condurre molti così longo viaggio; ma bene ne potranno buscare nella Soria: perciò sarà buon consiglio, se porteranno qualche n. de Briglie et selle però non molto grande per li Cavalli che sono mediocri. –

La Pollonia essendo piena de nobiltà coraggiosa, et vicina al paese Turchesco, venirà quasi tutta a Cavallo perciò da lei non accade discorrere; basterà solo notificarli che preparino almeno 18mila soldati sufficienti **[fol. 47r]** sicome fanno i altri nelché haveranno grandissima larghezza e facilità. –

Nella Moscovia parimenti per abondare di tanta copia de Cavalli sene caleranno quei esserciti quasi tutti a Cavallo, et in maggior numero di quelli soldati che seli ricerca. –

Nella Germania havend'io posto solamente cinque carratteri, cioè doi per l'Imperatore, uno per l'Arciduchi d'Austria uno per il Duca d'Sassonia, et uno per il Duca d'Baviera [lasciando luogo a quei altri Principi che volessero contribuire per un carrattere] fatt'il calcolo trovo Cavalli in n. 8mila, et Pedoni n. 37mila e perché essi anchora hanno gran copia de Cavalli, et ritrovandosi, com'è da credere composto l'essercito de persone Principali che vorranno essere venturieri, non ho dubbio che ascenderanno a maggior numero de Cavalli de quello s'è ordinato, sebene quella natione vale tanto nelle sue ordinanze a' piedi: ma bisogna che non si scompiglino nelle battaglie, et nel sacheggiare com'altre volte è seguito. –

[fol. 47v] Il Repartimento poi delle squadre de Galere, et delli altri sarà facilissimo.

La Moscovia che calerà nella Moldavia sarà n. 10mila.

La Polonia che venirà a Themisuar sarà in n. 18mila.

L'Inghilterra, che passerà in Alessandretta n. 10mila.

La Germania unita insieme in Ongaria sarà n. 42mila.

L'essercito di Spagna haverà le Galere sue co' quelle del Papa, di Genova, Savoia, et Malta, che saranno di numero 38 oltre l'ordinarie et li soldati saranno n. 28mila da insinuarsi a Gallipoli. –

L'essercito di Francia e' Venetiani sarà composto dalle sue Galere co' quelle del Gran Ducha oltr'l'ordinarie saranno in n. 28 et le genti saranno in n. 24mila per essere in Salonich. –

L'essercito del Papa co' l'altri Principi cioè Fiorenza, et li questi Duchesi sarà di persone n. 27mila per entrare nella Dalmatia. –

E così haveremo due armate, e' sett'esserciti di numero medio (...) e' forti per la qualità de persone

[fol. 48r] oltre l'essercito dell'Persiano che farà dal canto suo il dovere.

Il Repartimento delli tre ultimi Squadroni

Spagna Galere n. 12 Cavalli n. 2mila Pedoni n. 10mila.

Papa Galere n. 10 – / – / – / – / – / –

Genova Galere n. 6 Cavalli n. 1mila Pedoni n. 4mila.

Savoia Galere n. 4 Cavalli n. 1mila Pedoni n. 5mila.

Malta Galere n. 6 Cavalli n. 1mila Pedoni n. 4mila.

Francia Galere n. 12 Cavalli n. 2mila Pedoni n. 10mila.

Venetia Galere n. 12 Cavalli n. 2mila Pedoni n. 10mila.

Fiorenza Galere n. 4 - / - / - / - / - /

Papa Galere n. - Cavalli n. 2mila Pedoni n. 11mila.

Fiorenza Galere n. - Cavalli n. 1mila Pedoni n. 5mila.

Li altri Duchi Galere n. - Cavalli n. 1mila Pedoni n. 7mila.

Queste sono le considerationi Beatissimo Presente: et li fondamenti, con li quali si può stabilire un'ordinata Repubblica; et **[fol. 48v]** riunire li Principi in una lega ferma e' faccile per il servizio di Dio et per il conquisto de' tanti paesi benedetti a confusione e' sbattimento de quei Turchi inimici dell'nome Christiano; siché non si dirà più. -

Non trovarsi modo per unire i Principi Christiani; et sebene la Santa Sedia potria mirare il presente discorsa come venuta da una lingua ignorate, e' balbuziente spero nondimeno che considererà anchora essercito proposto da persona, che si move solo per la gloria de Sua Divina Maestà, la quale ispirerà Vostra Beatitudine a operare tutto quello, dev'essere in suo santo servizio, et io con ogni humiltà e' devotione bacio li santi piedi pregandoli longa vita, e' prosperità, per il governo di Santa Chiesa. In Roma li [...] di [...]

De Vostra Beatitudine

Humilissimo, et, devotissimo figlio

Ottavio Pallavicino, Dottor,
e' Cavagliero.

List of Manuscripts

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Vatican City

Fondo Borghese I 262.

Fondo Borghese IV 110.

ANTT: Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon

Inquisição de Lisboa, processo 10906.

AGS: Archivo General de Simancas, Simancas

Estado, legajos 133, 486, 487, 488, 1052, 1054, 1080, 1135, 1140, 1392.

ASMo: Archivio di Stato, Modena

Archivio Segreto Estense, Cancelleria, Carteggio Ambasciatori, Levante, busta unica.

ASVe: Archivio di Stato, Venice

Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere da Costantinopoli, buste 3, 4, 5.

Collegio (Secreti), registro 2, Relazioni degli ambasciatori, Costantinopoli, busta 61.

Consiglio dei Dieci, Comuni, filza 121.

Consiglio dei Dieci, Secreti, registro 9.

Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, filze 7, 15, 18.

Senato, Mar, registro 31.

BNM: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice

Ms. It. VII 390 (=8872).

Ms. It. VII 391 (=8873).

BUS: Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca

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