

# CYPRUS IN OTTOMAN AND VENETIAN POLITICAL IMAGINATION, c. 1489-1582

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I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless otherwise noted.

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*For Tamara*

# Note on Transliteration and Translation

To transcribe Ottoman Turkish texts I use the Modern Turkish alphabet. For those unfamiliar with Turkish pronunciation, here is a short guide:

C, c	“j” as in “jelly”
Ç, ç	“ch” as in “cherry”
Ğ, ğ	a silent sound that typically elongates the previous vowel
I, ı	velar “i” as in “earn”
Ö, ö	same as the German “ö” or French “eu” as in “seul”
Ş, ş	“sh” as in “shore”
Ü, ü	same as the German “ü” or French “u” as in “lune”.

I use names of individuals and titles of foreign primary sources (books and manuscripts) the way they appear in the secondary sources or library catalogues. In the case of Ottoman Turkish texts this means the modified modern Turkish transcription, which often only indicates the *ayn* and the *hamza*. All translations in this dissertation are mine except where otherwise stated.

# Abbreviations

ASV:	Archivio di Stato di Venezia (Venice) [State Archives of Venice]
İSAM:	İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi (Istanbul) [Islamic Research Center]
İÜK:	İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi (Istanbul) [Istanbul University Library]
ÖNB:	Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna) [Austrian National Library]
SK:	Süleymaniye Camii Kütüphanesi (Istanbul) [Süleymaniye Mosque Library]
TSK:	Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi (Istanbul) [Topkapı Palace Library]
VGMA:	Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi (Ankara) [Archives of the General Directorate of Foundations]

# Introduction

In this dissertation I draw on a variety of Venetian and Ottoman visual, architectural, narrative and poetic sources to shed light on how groups and individuals in these two imperial polities imagined the political significance of conquering and possessing Cyprus. The period under scrutiny is between the island's Venetian annexation in 1489 and the aftermath of its Ottoman conquest in 1571. In investigating the ways in which different Venetian and Ottoman actors attached historical, mythological, political and eschatological connotations to Cyprus or exploited the already existing ones for their political ends, I pick apart various early modern discursive threads about the Venetian and Ottoman occupations of Cyprus, and then study how they were entangled within and across religious and political boundaries in the early modern Mediterranean and beyond. The result is the only cultural study—a “thick description”<sup>1</sup> of sorts—of how the two major sixteenth-century Mediterranean empires contested the island and what it meant for their respective imperial projects.

The Venetian annexation of Cyprus had a decisive influence on Venetian imperial identity and, consequently, state iconography. The Ottoman attack on Cyprus increased apocalyptic fears throughout the wider Mediterranean region and, after a devastating series of hard-won battles, resulted in one of the last Ottoman major territorial gains in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as the formation of a long-awaited Holy League in the West. In 1571 the League, as is well known, defeated the Ottoman navy at Lepanto, thereby inaugurating the Battle of Lepanto as a major theme of literary, artistic, and historical works produced across

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<sup>1</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30.

Europe. Yet, the Veneto-Ottoman contestation of Cyprus has so far received almost no attention from cultural historians.

Modern scholarship typically cites pragmatic reasons for the Ottoman attack on Cyprus in 1570: the newly inaugurated Sultan Selim II (r. 1566-74) needed a military success to prove himself, and the fact that the sea routes between the Ottoman capital and Syria and Egypt were repeatedly disrupted by pirates taking refuge in Venetian Cyprus, made this island a logical target. However, as this dissertation posits, already in the early modern period Cyprus became enveloped in a variety of symbolic discourses and narratives about the conquest by both Venetians and Ottomans that make this story much less straightforward. In what follows I single out four *topoi* that appear both in early modern and modern scholarly narratives of what taking and keeping Cyprus may have “meant” to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venetians and Ottomans. These four are: Queen Caterina Cornaro’s supposed gracious ceding of her kingdom to and her adoption by the Venetian state in 1489; the ambiguous *casus belli* of Sultan Selim II; the Selimiye mosque’s supposed ideological relationship to the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus; and a performance at Prince Mehmed’s circumcision festival in 1582 that allegedly re-enacted the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus.

Notwithstanding their frequent appearance in the literature, as this dissertation demonstrates, ideological claims embedded in these *topoi* prove unfounded upon closer inspection. I argue that these *topoi* could survive from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the modern day only because they have come down to us as parts of dominant western historical narratives. The Venetian state’s mythology was ultimately more powerful than the Cornaro family’s narrative about the state’s forceful seizing of the crown of Cyprus that rightfully belonged to Caterina Cornaro. The *topos* of the drunkard sultan’s craving for Cypriot wine and other fictitious causes of war discussed in early modern western sources were more relatable than the complex diplomatic machinations behind the attack and internal political debates

related to it that have to be reconstructed from Venetian and Ottoman archival sources. Similarly, western sources affirming a western misreading of the purpose of the oddly located (as in, not in the capital) and awe-inspiring Selimiye mosque in Edirne were inevitably better circulated than Ottoman sources revealing the original, eschatologically-inspired purposes of building that mosque. Western first- and second-hand accounts circulating throughout Europe about a mock battle at an Ottoman festival staged to exasperate the Venetian guests were plausible from a western point of view and more readily available to modern historians than those sources which could have disproved them. In this dissertation, I go behind the façade of these dominant historical narratives by untangling the discursive threads that they are made of and decoding their central themes through a dialogue of Venetian/Western and Ottoman sources. The intellectual adventure of debunking these *topoi* is documented below; however, I believe that a historical analysis reaches its goal when it has convincingly proven not only what did not happen but also what did, and observed the reasons for the tensions between the two by analyzing the political and cultural historical circumstances in which they should be understood.

Consequently, in Chapter 1, I unravel the cultural and political context of the Venetian state's forging a narrative about its annexation of Cyprus against the narrative of the Cornaro family; in Chapter 2, instead of perpetuating the rumors about Selim's striving for Cypriot wine and his advisor Joseph Nassi's aspirations for the Cypriot crown, I examine the diplomatic negotiations that preceded the War of Cyprus and the Ottoman *casus belli* that sought to justify the war to the enemy on the one hand, and to the Ottoman public on the other; I challenge western "misreadings" of the Selimiye mosque and offer a cultural historical context within the framework of a shared Christian-Muslim imperial as well as eschatological tradition lending rationale to both the construction of the mosque and the Ottoman attack on Cyprus in chapters 3 and 4; and in Chapter 5 I investigate the narrative and demonstrative purposes of the

performance in 1582 that has been interpreted by both contemporaries and modern historians as the re-enactment of the conquest of Cyprus.

The term “political imagination” featured in the title deserves clarification. It would have been tempting to use the term *propaganda* both in the title of and throughout this dissertation. Propaganda is a debated term in scholarship and has multifaceted meanings, which vary from discipline to discipline. According to its broadest definitions, propaganda is a “mechanism which controls the public mind” that is “manipulated by the special pleader who seeks to create public appearance for a particular idea or commodity,”<sup>2</sup> and part of the “negotiation process by which one interest group seeks to dominate the public conversation in order to secure power.”<sup>3</sup> The common denominator among these definitions is that propaganda is a one-way process whereby the thinking of many individuals is manipulated deliberately and simultaneously for the benefit of one or more individuals. Certainly, some of the topics examined here involve instances of mass persuasion. But much of this dissertation also tells stories of people assuming propagandistic messages which, in fact, did not exist—a phenomenon which falls outside the definition of propaganda. The term ideology would have been equally tempting to use in the title, as it is called upon several times in the dissertation. However, as ideology, in a critical-evaluative sense of the word, is the systematic distortion of the realities of the social world,<sup>4</sup> it is also hardly applicable to *misinterpretations* of politically charged messages. Although from an Adornian perspective it would be plausible to argue that

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Bernays and Mark Crispin Miller, *Propaganda* (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2005), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley B. Cunningham, *The Idea of Propaganda: A Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2012), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Porter and Phil Ramsey, “Ideology,” in *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*, ed. Mark Bevir (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2010), 683-84.

an ill-decoding of ideology must remain within the sphere of ideology itself,<sup>5</sup> the cases where such misinterpretations are examined involve individuals “misreading” messages coming from outside their own ideological spheres: Venetians and other westerners misinterpreting Ottoman political messages. Partly for the same reason I refrain from using the term “political imaginary,” which stands for a “set of meanings, symbols, values, narratives, and representations of the world through which people imagine their existence,”<sup>6</sup> since in this dissertation I do not attempt to study and analyze the entire cognitive universe of one or another political entity. Rather, as opposed to the “political imaginary,” I focus on “political imagination,” an active cognitive process whereby certain representations are presumed by an individual or group of individuals. I understand the relationship between the political “imaginary” and “imagination” in the sense of the Saussurean binary of *langue* and *parole* (or code and text), which is the abstraction of a set of codes on the one hand, and the practical and individual application of them on the other.

The linguistic parallel, of course, is not a coincidence. This dissertation, after all, is about communication. In this sense, Venetians and Ottomans encoded their political imagination about conquering and possessing Cyprus and transmitted the resultant messages to a domestic and/or foreign audience through various written or visual channels. On the receiving end, individuals decoded these messages. (I will elaborate on this model below.) This communication took place in a specific setting, namely (mostly) between the subjects of two of the major Mediterranean empires of their time that were in the process of coming to terms with and articulating their own imperial identities.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 684.

<sup>6</sup> Chiara Bottici, “The Imaginary,” in *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*, ed. Mark Bevir (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2010), 685.



While Cyprus's late twentieth-century history informed the historiography of the island for decades after the Cyprus conflict of the 1960s and 1970s, in the meantime a growing number of publications have also appeared about the earlier, Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman and British periods of Cyprus history. As this dissertation concerns itself principally with the time period that covers the Venetian era, the occupation and the very beginning of the Ottoman administration of Cyprus, in what follows I give a brief account of the publications that deal with the history of the island in this time frame. At the same time, however, as this dissertation is not about the local (i.e. economic, social, political, etc.) aspects of the history of Cyprus, I will also mention the most recent and noteworthy works in the history of imperial interactions between Venice and the Ottoman Empire that stand to represent the latest research trends in their respective fields.

The most concise works concerning the history of Cyprus include such classics as Louis de Mas Latrie's *Histoire de l'île de Chypre* (1847) and Sir George Francis Hill's four-volume *History of Cyprus* (1940-52), but in a wider geographical perspective the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century history of the island is thoroughly analyzed in parts of volume 2 and 4 of Kenneth Meyer Setton's monumental *The Papacy and the Levant* (1976).<sup>7</sup> Turning specifically to the fifteenth century, the more recent works of Benjamin Arbel and Nicholas Coureas must be mentioned as ones treating various—economic, ethnic, social, and urban as well as administrative historical—aspects of the Venetian rule in Cyprus. Most of Arbel's articles about the Venetian involvement in the history of Cyprus before and after the Ottoman occupation of the island have been re-published in the book entitled *Cyprus, the Franks and*

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<sup>7</sup> Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vols. 2, 4 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984).

*Venice...* (2000).<sup>8</sup> The volume entitled *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice* (2013) was, at the time of its publication, a much-needed book dedicated to the visual and literary representations of the last sovereign of Cyprus, Queen Caterina Cornaro.<sup>9</sup> The seventeen studies constituting the book examine the art historical and literary (including opera “literature”) significance of the figure of Caterina Cornaro in Venice and Europe from the Renaissance to Romanticism. Likewise, Holly Hurlburt’s essay entitled “Body of Empire: Caterina Corner in Venetian History and Iconography” (2009) is an important addition to our understanding of the gender-related aspects of the Venetian state’s and patriciate’s utilization of Caterina Cornaro both as a real-life and iconographical commodity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>10</sup> David Rosand’s *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (2001) is a concise study of early modern Venetian state iconography, and an insightful analysis about the iconographical cross-referencing among the various female personifications of the city-state in

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<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Arbel, “Urban Assemblies and Town Councils in Frankish and Venetian Cyprus”; idem, “Slave trade and Slave Labor in Frankish and Venetian Cyprus (1191-1571)”; idem, “The Reign of Caterina Corner (1473-1489) as a Family Affair”; idem, “A Royal Family in Republican Venice: The Cypriot Legacy of the *Corner della Regina*” all now in idem, *Cyprus, the Franks and Venice, 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000); see also idem, “Supplying Water to Famagusta: New Evidence from the Venetian Period,” in *Proceedings of the Third International Congress of Cypriot Studies* (Nicosia, 1996), vol. 2 (Nicosia: Society of Cypriot Studies, 2001); idem, *Venetian Letters (1354-1512) from the Archives of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and other Cypriot Collections* (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2007); Nicholas Coureas, “Trade between Cyprus and the Mamluk Lands in the Fifteenth Century with special reference to Nicosia and Famagusta,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 5, ed. U. Vermeulen and K. D’Hulster (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Candida Syndikus and Sabine Rogge, eds., *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice* (Münster: Waxmann, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Holly Hurlburt, “Body of Empire: Caterina Corner in Venetian History and Iconography,” *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4 (2009): 61-99.

the Venetian visual arts.<sup>11</sup> William James Bouwsma's *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (1968), Edward Muir's *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (1981) and Manfredo Tafuri's *Venice and the Renaissance* (1985) help analyze early modern Venetian state iconography in the context of the time's social values and political principles.<sup>12</sup> Monique O'Connell's publications, namely her book entitled *Men of Empire...* (2009) and two essays, "Individuals, Families, and the State in Early Modern Empires: the case of the Venetian Stato da Mar" (2013) and "Legitimizing Venetian Expansion: Patricians and Secretaries in the Fifteenth Century" (2015) offer useful explanations of Venice's dual—republican and imperial—state structure, and the ways the Venetian state managed to operate its diverse empire of widely scattered seaborne colonies for centuries.<sup>13</sup> These publications describe the political as well as art historical context in which the main arguments of Chapter 1 gain validity.

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<sup>11</sup> David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> William James Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984); Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); Manfredo Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> Monique O'Connell, *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); idem, "Individuals, Families, and the State in Early Modern Empires: the case of the Venetian Stato da Mar," *Zgodovinski Casopis* 67 (2013): 8-27; idem, "Legitimizing Venetian Expansion: Patricians and Secretaries in the Fifteenth Century," in *Venice and the Veneto during the renaissance: the Legacy of Benjamin Kohl*, ed. M. Knäpfton, J. E. Law and A. A. Smith (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2014), 71-85. For an overview of the debate concerning the duality of Venice's republican-imperial system see "Introduction" in Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England 1450–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-23.

The Ottoman occupation of Cyprus and the establishing of the new Ottoman administration thereon have received sporadic attention from modern historians. Nevertheless, the historiography of Ottoman Cyprus has lately been enriched by a few important publications which analyze the conquest and its aftermaths from pragmatic political, military, and socio-economic viewpoints.<sup>14</sup> These include Ahmet C. Gazioğlu's *The Turks in Cyprus...* (1990) and *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus...* (1992) by Ronald C. Jennings.<sup>15</sup> The most recent publication dedicated solely to the Ottoman conquest of and the early Ottoman administration in Cyprus is Vera Constantini's *Il Soltano e l'isola contesa* (2009),<sup>16</sup> which is thus far the only monograph about these topics based on Ottoman (as well as Venetian) primary sources. The volume entitled *Ottoman Cyprus: A Collection of Studies on History and Culture* (2009) is a

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<sup>14</sup> For an incomplete list of recent scholarship on the 1570-71 War of Cyprus see Svat Soucek, "Naval Aspects of the Ottoman Conquest of Rhodes, Cyprus, and Crete," *Studia Islamica* 98/99 (2004): 219-61; Maria Pia Pedani, "Some Remarks upon the Ottoman Geo-Political Vision of the Mediterranean in the Period of the Cyprus War (1570-1573)," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, ed. C. Imber, K. Kiyotaki, and R. Murphey (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005); İdris Bostan, "Kıbrıs Seferi Günlüğü ve Osmanlı Donanmasının Sefer Güzergâhı," in *Beylikten İmparatorluğa Osmanlı Denizciliği* [Ottoman Seafaring from Principality to Empire] (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006); Eftihios Gavriel, "The Expedition for the Conquest of Cyprus in the Work of Kâtib Çelebi" and Benjamin Arbel, "Cyprus on the Eve of the Ottoman Conquest," in *Ottoman Cyprus: A Collection of Studies on History and Culture*, ed. M. N. Michael, E. Gavriel and M. Kappler (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2009); parts of Güneş Işıksel, "La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: le cas du règne de Selîm II (1566-1574)" (PhD diss., L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2012) and Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Espionage in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Ronald C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571-1640* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Ahmet C. Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus: A Province of the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878)* (London: K. Rustem & Bro., 1990).

<sup>16</sup> Vera Constantini, *Il sultano e l'isola contesa: Cipro tra eredità veneziana e potere ottoman* (Turin: UTET, 2009).

collection of essays that sheds further light on the various historical (including political-, military-, administrative- and economic-historical) aspects of the island in the Ottoman period (1571-1878).<sup>17</sup>

The reign of Sultan Selim II has thus far also received relatively little scholarly attention. The only exception is the frequently analyzed battle of Lepanto (1571), which overshadows in the literature other important aspects of Selim's short reign. Regardless, Selim II's diplomacy and foreign policy have been studied recently by Güneş Işıksel (2012);<sup>18</sup> Emrah Safa Gürkan has treated Mediterranean intelligence networks during the reign of Selim II in his study of sixteenth-century Habsburg-Ottoman espionage (2012);<sup>19</sup> Emine Fetvacı's book entitled *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (2013)<sup>20</sup> and Gülru Necipoğlu's *the Age of Sinan* (2005)<sup>21</sup> provide crucial information on cultural politics of the second half of the sixteenth century, including Selim II's reign; and the aforementioned Vera Constantini (2009) has analyzed Selim II's naval and economic reasons for launching an attack on Cyprus.<sup>22</sup> A recent reconsideration of the meaning of Lepanto for the subsequent trajectory of the Ottoman Empire is found in Palmira Brummett's "The Lepanto Paradigm Revisited..."<sup>23</sup> These works

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<sup>17</sup> Michalis N. Michael, Eftihios Gavriel, and Matthias Kappler, eds., *Ottoman Cyprus: A Collection of Studies on History and Culture* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Işıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*.

<sup>19</sup> Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Mediterranean*.

<sup>20</sup> Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Constantini, *Il sultano e l'isola contesa*.

<sup>23</sup> Palmira J. Brummett, "The Lepanto Paradigm Revisited: Knowing the Ottomans in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

provide an insight into Selim's reign and serve as stepping stones toward a better understanding of his little-studied reign. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have benefited greatly from their insights.

Early modern inter-imperial interactions between Venetians and Ottomans have recently been examined by E. Natalie Rothman (2015), Eric Dursteler (2006, 2011) and Stephen Ortega (2014) in four important monographs about cross-boundary interactions of various sorts and trans-imperial agents.<sup>24</sup> In a much wider historical perspective, trans-imperial interactions in the realm of symbols of power and eschatological contestation, Gülru Necipoğlu's and Cornell Fleischer's works contextualize the Ottoman Empire and its involvement with other Mediterranean empires in the early modern era.<sup>25</sup> All of these works

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<sup>24</sup> E. Natalie Rothman, "Interpreting dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 771-800; idem, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); idem, *Renegade women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Stephen Ortega, *Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Ottoman-Venetian Encounters* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Cornell Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman," in *Soliman le magnifique et son temps*, ed. G. Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation française, 1992); idem, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries," in *Falnama: the Book of Omens*, ed. M. Farhad and S. Bağcı (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010 ); idem, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldunism' in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Letters," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18 (1983): 198-220; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *The Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 401-27; idem, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); idem, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2005); see also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Turning the stones over: Sixteenth-century millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges," *Indian Economic Social History Review* 40 (2003): 129-61.

have made an important imprint on how I approached the sources and key questions of inter-imperial communication in this dissertation.

The perplexing duality of Venice's political structure has been the subject of much scholarly debate, especially recently. The self-definition of both the Venetian state and its subjects as republican appears to stand in stark contradiction to the evidence of Venice being a seaborne empire. However, the republican and imperial systems coexisted well as long as the metropolitan remained separate from the colonial.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the tension was not so much between the two systems but, rather, between the colonizer-imperial face of Venice in its *stato da mar* and the image Venetians painted of their polity at home, whereby imperial associations needed to be restrained or avoided altogether. While political imagination about Cyprus in the Ottoman Empire seems to have been used to legitimize Sultan Selim II's rule, and later to augment the late-sixteenth-century styling of the House of Osman's messianic profile, imagining Cyprus for political ends was, in Venice, part of a debate about the very political identity of the republic and its elites. Therefore, in this dissertation I examine how representatives of the city-state, by imagining the political significance of annexing and possessing Cyprus, handled the problem of Venice's dual political identity through various commissioned artworks, and how the patrician victims of Venice's imperial expansion responded to it. I also investigate what the specifics of this communication imply about the ways early modern Mediterranean Empires operated.

The early modern "myth of Venice," or the idealized attributes of "Venetianness" and their expression in various art forms and literary genres, was incompatible with one of Venice's "equal" patrician families, the Cornaros, holding royal titles and practicing monarchical rights.

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<sup>26</sup> O'Connell, "Individuals, Families, and the State in Early Modern Empires"; idem, *Men of Empire*; idem, "Legitimizing Venetian Expansion"; Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean*.

By flouting the Venetian ideals of modesty and equality, the Cornaros and other patrician families, like the late fifteenth-century Barbarigo doges (Marco and Agostino) attempted to refute the myth (or follow a counter-myth) of Venice. They looked up to the resplendent lifestyles of their Roman and Florentine peers, displaying quasi-monarchical power. The ensuing contradictions between political identity and practice of power were addressed by the Venetian state, the doges, and the Cornaro family through allegorical imagery of their direct or symbolic association with Cyprus. The messages through which the representatives of the Venetian state and the city state's patrician families expressed these political imaginations were aimed predominantly at a domestic audience. Thus, even though these messages were inevitably picked up on by western interpreters (and critics) of Venice's prosperity and political as well as social stability, the senders and receivers of these messages shared a dominant Venetian meaning system (i.e. a coherent network of shared ideas, values, beliefs and causal knowledge—that is ruling ideas).<sup>27</sup>

The Ottomans' "imperial project" has also recently come into the focus of scholarship. In order for the Ottoman polity to become an empire, various social and political structural changes were implemented from the conquest of Constantinople (1453) onward. The most effective in (re-)formulating Ottoman sovereignty were Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-81) and Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520-66), but whether the Ottoman polity became an empire with an imperial identity during the reign of the former or the latter is still debated in scholarship. After the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II's imperial program adopted, besides Turkic and Persianate symbols of legitimacy, non-Muslim, particularly Roman and Byzantine, forms of political legitimacy and attempted to redefine the Ottoman polity against the ideals of the old

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<sup>27</sup> For cultural meaning systems see Roy G. D'Andrade, "Cultural meaning systems," in *Culture theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*, ed. R. A. Shweder and R. A. Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).



establishment. The *gazis* (frontier commanders and dervishes) opposed the idea of Constantinople's transformation into the new Ottoman capital, one whose polytheist idols and Christian monuments were now aimed to legitimize Mehmed as an emperor sultan.<sup>28</sup> The apocalyptic connotations of the conquest, widely shared in both Christendom and Islamdom, lent particular credence to these critical voices.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time, Christians and former Christians such as Balkan *devşirme* (child levy) recruits, voluntary converts and former Byzantine and Balkan commanders, favored the idea to turn the center of their old world into the capital city of the new empire. In spite of Mehmed's success in following through with his imperial objectives, the ideological opposition of the old, native Muslim "aristocracy" disallowed him to fully exploit the opportunity to style himself emperor in the image of pagan and "infidel" Roman and Byzantine rulers.<sup>30</sup>

This opportunity was addressed more directly by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, whose imperial program rested, to a large extent, on styling himself as the messianic Last (World) Emperor—a *topos* commonly recognizable in both Christianity and Islam. This sultanic image drew on the time's universalist ideals of sovereignty, the expectation of the overwhelming triumph of a single true religion and the apocalypse, the fears about which were accelerated by the approaching *Hijra* millennium (the Islamic tenth century commenced in

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<sup>28</sup> Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2009), 16-52.

<sup>29</sup> Kaya Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 317-54.

<sup>30</sup> Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 51-74.

1494-95 and ended in 1590-91).<sup>31</sup> Süleyman's pompous public image reflected on these expectations accordingly by showing up the sultan as the sole legitimate claimant to universal secular (imperial) power as well as the Last Emperor's spiritual (religious) authority.<sup>32</sup> The latter became a key element in the contest between Süleyman and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V for universal sovereignty.<sup>33</sup> I build on this research into Ottoman sultans' eschatological and imperial self-fashioning and argue that Selim II's reign can be studied in terms of a similar ideological program, no matter its short duration. Most of the chapters of this dissertation set out to shed light precisely on various facets of this ideological program for which the conquest of Cyprus served as a capstone.

In scholarship, the Ottoman "imperial project" has been approached from both an "outcome-focused" point of view, that is in relation to the large-scale mechanisms that informed the Ottoman polity's historical trajectory and its impact on "world history," and a "cultural" approach, which focuses, instead, on the human (cultural-, social-, micro-historical, etc.) aspects of empire.<sup>34</sup> However, in the recent surge of interest in empires, many Ottomanists have chosen to synthesize these two approaches,<sup>35</sup> and this dissertation is also a product of such a synthesis. I analyze the ways in which Ottoman individuals imagined Cyprus for their own political purposes, including Selim II, who followed in both Mehmed II's and Süleyman's

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<sup>31</sup> Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah".

<sup>32</sup> Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power".

<sup>33</sup> Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah," 160-61.

<sup>34</sup> Alan Mikhail and Christine Philliou, "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54 (2012): 721-45 esp. 725-30.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 728.

footsteps in legitimizing his power by fashioning himself through the construction of his sultanic mosque as the Emperor Justinian I (r. 527-65 CE) of his time as well as the messianic ruler whose association with Cyprus on the eve of the Apocalypse had been foretold by so many an oracle. However, at the same time, I also observe what communicating these imaginations tell the modern historian about the dynamics of late sixteenth-century Mediterranean empires. Just like with the previous, Venetian example, some messages containing Ottoman political imaginations about Cyprus were aimed at a domestic audience—although perhaps not exclusively. (Take for instance the architectural cross-referencing between the Selimiye mosque and the Hagia Sophia in Chapter 3.) Regardless, western visitors to the Ottoman Empire and sedentary authors alike interpreted these messages with confidence. As a result, the “authorial intent” of Sultan Selim II’s mosque in Edirne was ill-decoded on the western receiver’s end. These misreadings receive special significance in discussing inter-imperial communication.

Even though methodologically I rely heavily on culture studies, especially on the semiotic approaches, I refrain from applying the term culture in analyzing communication between Venetians and Ottomans. The reason for this is that, firstly, culture is so fluid and debated a term that analytically it hardly connotes anything than “differences, contrasts, and comparisons”<sup>36</sup> or “signification and communication,” and, at best “can be characterized as a huge system of connotative meanings that cohere into an associative ‘macro-code’.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 12.

<sup>37</sup> Marcel Danesi, “Messages, Signs, and Meanings,” in *Studies in Linguistic and Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 1, ed. Marcel Danesi (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2004), 13-14. For definitions of culture in the major disciplines see Roland Posner, “What is Culture? Toward a Semiotic Explication of Anthropological Concepts,”

Secondly, while “culture” might suit the social, ethnic, socio-linguistic (etc.) frameworks of the modern state, it simply does not seem to be applicable in the early modern imperial context, in the study of which multiethnicity, multilingualism, religious pluralism, trans-communality, trans-imperialism, and hybridity of various sorts presently rule the scene.

By borrowing from Stuart Hall’s “Encoding/Decoding” theory I argue that misinterpretations were possible because there was an asymmetry between the Venetian and Ottoman actors’ “meaning structures” which determined the possible “dominant,” “negotiated” and “oppositional” readings of messages. As opposed to his theoretical forerunners like Saussure and Jakobson, Stuart Hall’s model is not about interpersonal but mass communication, which emphasizes the importance of active interpretation. According to Hall, mass media encodes its messages through a number of codes (specific to technical infrastructure, the relations of production, and frameworks of knowledge, which together constitute the sender’s meaning structure) but for those who do not share the exact same codes, decodings are likely to be different from the encoder’s intended meaning. This model proposes three possible readings (“positions”) resulting from decoding: (1) a dominant or hegemonic reading is when the receiver fully shares the text’s code, and consequently reproduces the “preferred reading” (“hegemonic”) of the message; (2) a negotiated reading is when the receiver partly shares the code employed in the message’s production, but—deliberately or not—modifies the preferred reading, which will reflect their own position, interests and previous experiences; (3) and, finally, an oppositional reading is when the receiver interprets a

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in *The Nature of Culture: Proceedings of the International and Interdisciplinary Symposium, October 7-11, 1986*, Ruhr University Bochum, ed. Walter A. Koch (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1989).

message as its exact opposite.<sup>38</sup> Once the receiver has interpreted the message in their own way—within the limitations of their meaning structure—, they reproduce the message. It is this moment that the way or the extent to which the receiver understood the intended message shows itself.<sup>39</sup>

Although originally proposed as a model for television communication in 1973, Stuart Hall's theory is highly relevant for my analysis of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century intra- and inter-imperial communication. Firstly, all of the cases discussed in this dissertation involve imperial messages aimed at large audiences, that is to say instances of early modern mass communication, even where interpersonal communication intervened. (Take for instance the Ottomans' testing their tentative *casus belli* on the Venetian bailo Barbaro in Chapter 2.) Secondly, Hall's theory helps explain why some messages containing political imaginations were correctly decoded by the intended audiences while ill-decoded by others. Thirdly, by allowing the notion of "culture" to be bypassed, it helps avoid essentialist explanations such as blaming the different degrees of (un-)successful interpretation on "cultural differences," which would make little sense in analyzing communication in an early modern imperial setting.

Hall's theory opened the way for a semiotic approach to communication models such as the cultural semiotic model of Yuri Lotman. According to Lotman, the semiosphere, one of the key concepts of cultural semiotics, is a set of inter-related sign processes (semiosis) with social, linguistic, and even geographical delimitations, outside which "meaning" cannot exist. Consequently, decoding (i.e. translating) a message from outside (or even, in fact, from a different code *within* the semiosphere) will generate a message different from the original

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<sup>38</sup> Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, ed. M. G. Durham and D. M. Kellner (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 171-3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

one.<sup>40</sup> Thus, essentially, both Hall and Lotman argue that translation not only happens between two codes (“languages”) but also between the socially, geographically, ideologically (etc.) determined and confined mechanisms within which the “sender” created the message and the “receiver” interprets (“consumes”) it.

Recently, E. Natalie Rothman argued that the linguistic, religious, and political differences between Venice and the Ottoman Empire were continuously re-created, to a large extent by “trans-imperial subjects,” who played a vital role as boundary-makers between the two polities. One of the boundary making processes was “institutionalized” translation—both linguistic and socio-cultural. Regarding translation as boundary making, Rothman focuses on the dragomans as the specialized professional intermediaries of a slightly later period, whereas in two of the studies below (chapters 3 and 5), I show that toward the end of the sixteenth century, the differences between the individual Venetian and Ottoman spheres of meaning were perhaps not as clearly recognizable as they later (1630s onward) became.<sup>41</sup> Some western recipients of (assumed) Ottoman messages seem to have underestimated the limitations of interpretability. On the one hand, I argue that the partial overlapping of spheres of meaning between a Venetian (or another Western European, although Venetians were overall much better informed about Ottoman ways than other Europeans) and an Ottoman did not allow the former to decode correctly Ottoman politically infused “messages” where there was a lack of a social and intellectual common ground (i.e. imperfectly matching meaning structures) or a well-informed interpretation by a trans-imperial intermediary. On the other hand I hypothesize that confident (and false) interpretations of Ottoman messages as references to the Ottoman

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<sup>40</sup> Juri Lotman, “On the Semiosphere,” trans. Wilma Clark, *Sign Systems Studies* 33 no. 1 (2005): 205-29 esp. 208-15.

<sup>41</sup> Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 163ff.

conquest of Cyprus were perhaps possible due to the western actors' assumption that the meaning structures on the Ottoman sender's end were not so much different from theirs and thus direct decoding *was* possible. After all, the Ottoman Empire was integral to and resonant of the past and present politics and culture of its western partners or rivals. In turn, Venetian arts, learning, and material culture were influenced by the Ottoman Levant, while its political establishment was attentive to Ottoman politics. Consequently, the partial overlapping of semiospheres was not only responsible for ill-decodings, but it also made ill-decoded messages seem sensible, and not only in their own time. Some of the *topoi* discussed in this dissertation survived in scholarship as widely accepted facts even to our time.

Notwithstanding, the possibility of a partial overlapping of semiospheres also allowed some political imaginations or politically infused messages about Cyprus to cross the political boundary while retaining their intended meaning without difficulty. In exploiting Cyprus's eschatological connotations shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean region (the eschatological connotations of Cyprus had been well known to the peoples of the Mediterranean region since late antiquity), Sultan Selim II and his ideologues produced messages about the new sultan's reign as that of the last universal monarch before the Last Judgement. Because of the intertwined medieval apocalyptic traditions of the monotheistic religions, and their early modern (re-)interpretations, the clash between Christians and Muslims on the island of Cyprus was recognized in Venice, the Ottoman Empire and even in far-away Spain as one of the foretold harbingers of the Apocalypse (see Chapter 4). Unlike the aforementioned ill-decoded messages, some of which were not meant to be interpreted by foreigners, the Ottoman court's messages based on the island's inter-religious eschatological connotations were intended for, besides a diverse domestic audience, a foreign, predominantly Venetian, audience. Consequently, the Ottoman, eschatological contextualization of the 1571

conquest of Cyprus was readily picked up on by various individuals and communities across the Mediterranean region regardless of their religious or political affiliations.

In this dissertation I frequently refer to the Venetian state's manipulation of its public image or the Ottoman court's orchestration of its own cultural historical contexts. However, imagination is always an activity done by individual actors or groups of them. If this dissertation is about communication, it is also about the individuals, members of political factions and political bodies in Venice and the Ottoman Empire who partook in communication, as either senders or receivers of messages.

In Venice, all of the actors discussed in Chapter 1 were members of the patriciate and, naturally, possessors of the highest posts in the city-state's political system. Although the members of the Cornaro family imagined Cyprus in their political self-fashioning differently from the Barbarigo doges or the members of the Council of Ten, the ways they imagined Cyprus were not so different from each other after all. All of these actors expressed their interpretation of the inconsistencies of Venice's image as a republic as well as empire and imagined a direct or symbolic association between themselves and the island to propagate their own position in the duality of Venice's metropolitan and *stato da mar* establishment. In Chapter 2 and 5, the actors, who misinterpreted Ottoman visual messages imagined that the Ottoman court was sending them political messages across the boundary. They believed that with the building of the Selimiye mosque and a performance enacted at the 1582 circumcision festival the Ottomans were communicating to them their colonizer superiority. As discussed in Chapter 3 and 4, the recently inaugurated Sultan Selim II and his ideologues on the one hand, and the receivers of their messages all over the Mediterranean on the other, partook in a communication exchange about the eschatological importance of Cyprus. The foretold apocalyptic clash between Christians and Muslims on the island allowed for creating an image and interpretation of Selim II as the Last (World) Emperor. Furthermore, western interpreters of a performance



at Prince Mehmed's 1582 circumcision feast still believed that they were presented with the woeful sight of the War of Cyprus. These and all of the political imaginations discussed here tell the modern historian less about late fifteenth- to sixteenth-century Cyprus than about the ways early modern individuals in the Mediterranean region, especially in Venice and Istanbul, engaged with and read imperial mechanisms of power. For all the postulation of "cultural" boundaries between the Ottoman Empire and Venice that necessitated mediation, this thesis shows that there were many individuals and publics in both empires who believed that messages sent across imperial boundaries could be *directly* decoded and assumed a universally intelligible language of imperial power.

# Chapter 1: Venice, Venus and Caterina Cornaro

One of Albrecht Dürer's minor works, the 1516 *Pupila Augusta*, (fig. 1) depicts in the foreground three nudes lying under the shade-casting foliage of a seashore grove. Two of them are looking at a silver plate while the third one is waving her hand to another group of three women in the sea at a distance. The stillness of the foreground is offset by the dynamism of Venus approaching the shore on the back of a dolphin with two nymphs at her sides, in the background. Next to the lady with the plate is a basket with the inscription *Pupila Augusta*, while at the bottom of the picture one can see the artist's monogram—both letters in reverse. The inscription on the basket, in the absence of a title, serves as the drawing's name, which literally translates as “August Ward.” The overlapping letters A and D are the Nuremberg painter's habitual colophon, whose inversion suggests that the drawing was a preparatory study for a non-existent or now lost engraving.

In 1943, Erwin Panofsky published his monumental, two-volume work on Albrecht Dürer, in which he included his commentary on this little-studied drawing:

The Allegory Inscribed “Pupila Augusta”: [...] The content has not yet been satisfactorily explained. The writer [i.e. Panofsky] still feels that the allegory may refer to Caterina Cornaro, “adopted daughter” of the Republic of Venice and Queen of Cyprus, in the mythical realm of Venus. In this case the drawing would show the arrival of Venus (often eulogistically compared with Caterina) on the island of Cyprus, and the three women in the foreground would be the “virgins and widows” who, before a contemplated marriage, used to worship the “Venus Marina” on the shore and to explore the future by manic practices.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer* vol. 2 (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege and Oxford University Press, 1948), 97

Despite Panofsky's suggestion, Dürer's drawing likely has a more straight-forward intention. Instead of attempting to allude to the "adoption" of Caterina Cornaro by the Republic of Venice, which eventually caused the end of the sovereign Kingdom of Cyprus and the short-lived reign of its queen in 1489, Dürer in this drawing seems to present a study in the complexity of two of Venus' manifestations, drawing on contemporary visual traditions. While in the background he depicts Venus arriving in Cyprus, holding a sail overhead so as to be blown ashore by the Zephyrs, the foreground shows Venus already prepared by the Horae to be presented to the gods, hence the title "August Ward".<sup>43</sup> By the fifteenth century, the

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<sup>43</sup> Guy de Trevaurent in a short analysis in 1950 suggested that the group of "virgins and widows" in the foreground are the antique goddesses of the seasons and natural portions of time known as the Horae or Hours. De Trevaurent based this argument on the "Sixth Homeric Hymn" of Hesiod, dedicated to Venus, where, upon emerging from the sea "the moist breath of the western wind wafted her over the waves of the loud moaning sea in soft foam and there [i.e. on the seashore] the gold-filleted Hours welcomed her joyously." Hesiod, "VIth Homeric Hymn," in idem, *The Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homerica*, trans. H. G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 427. In antique Greco-Roman mythology the mission of the Horae was also to serve the gods, and to mediate between them and the world of the mortals. They guarded Mount Olympus, directed the clouds and harnessed the horses to the chariot of Dawn. Three in number, they were called Eunomia (Order), Dike (Justice) and Eirene (Peace). Hesiod, "Theogony," in idem, *The Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homerica*, 145. ll. 901ff. On this occasion, De Travarent claims, they are welcoming Venus to the shores of Cyprus and waiting to clothe her, adorn her with jewels, and present her to the gods. Hesiod, "VIth Homeric Hymn," in idem: *The Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homerica*, 427. The Horae frequently appeared in the visual arts in the Italian Renaissance, the best-known example being Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (1483). In Botticelli's painting (fig. 2) one of the Horae is awaiting Venus to attire her with a cloak while the Zephyrs are blowing the goddess ashore, toward her. On his first visit to Northern Italy in 1494 -95 Dürer is most likely to have copied a Ferrarese engraving also entitled *Pupila Augusta* (fig. 3), which became inspirational for the central element of his drawing of the same title. The engraving depicts Venus reclining beside the sea from which she sprang, gazing moodily at a basin full of water while pointing to the basin's rim, just like in Dürer's drawing.

numerous antique variants of Venus<sup>44</sup> had been reduced to a distinctly Neo-Platonist, double interpretation of the goddess, namely the “Celestial” and the “Vulgar” Venus.<sup>45</sup> Thus Dürer’s *Pupila Augusta* appears to be a customary Renaissance, Neo-platonic depiction of two Venuses, whereby the draped, earthly Venus represents the desire to procreate as opposed to the *Venere Celeste*, a purely idealised one.

Rather than seeing in Dürer’s drawing a study of Venus’s dual nature—a Renaissance tradition with which he was certainly familiar<sup>46</sup>—Panofsky in his analysis invokes another interpretative approach that, although it perhaps amounts to ill-decoding from the art historians’ point of view, is nevertheless historically justified. Namely, he associates Venus with Caterina Cornaro, the Venetian queen of Cyprus, who indeed served as a link between Cyprus and the *Serenità* in the visual arts of the Venetian Renaissance. As this chapter will show, more than a matter of artistic expression, the identification between the two female

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<sup>44</sup> For the earliest variants of Venus see Patricia Lee Rubin, “The Seductions of Antiquity,” in *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality*, ed. Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 29-30.

<sup>45</sup> “The elder one, having no mother, who is called the heavenly Aphrodite – she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger, who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione – her we call common; and the Love who is her fellow-worker is rightly named common, as the other love is called heavenly.” Richard Hunter, *Plato’s Symposium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44. Also: “...in sómma, Vénere ê di dúe ragióni: úna ê quélla intelligénzia, laquále nélla Ménte Angélica ponémmo: l’áltra ê la fórza del generáre, álla Anima del Mónodo attribuita.” Marsilio Ficino, *Sopra lo amore o ver’ convito di Platone* (Florence: Néri Dorteláta, 1544), 40. A translation of the latter is found in Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato’s Symposium*, trans. Sears R. Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), 53-54: “In conclusion, Venus in twofold. One is certainly that intelligence which we have located in the Angelic Mind. The other is the power of procreation attributed to the World Soul.”

<sup>46</sup> See, for instance, Panofsky’s analysis of Titian’s 1514 *Sacred and Profane Love* (fig. 4), where he terms this Neo-Platonic visual interpretation of Venus the “Twin Venuses’ in the Fician sense” in Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 152.

figures and their association with Cyprus was, in fact, a debate about the very political identity of Venice and its elites.

## 1.1 Historical Overview

Caterina Cornaro's first personal contact with the Kingdom of Cyprus took place when the island had been under the rule of the Frankish Lusignan family for almost two and a half centuries, since Guy of Lusignan, King of Jerusalem (r. 1186-92), purchased the island from England's King Richard I in 1192. The Lusignans, fleeing the Holy Land, which had been lost to Salah ad-Din Yusuf's (Saladin) forces, moved to Cyprus, and with them came their noble Latin vassals, thus establishing a court that would remain in charge of the last of the crusader kingdoms in the Levant until the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>47</sup> In order to understand how the Kingdom of Cyprus came under the influence of the Cornaro family, it is necessary to provide a short overview of the relevant developments during the Lusignan rule of the island.

The independence of the Kingdom of Cyprus came to be infringed three times under the rule of the Lusignans. All of these three instances were causally related to one another and resulted in the eventual Venetian annexation of the island. As a result of Venetian-Genoese contestation in the eastern Mediterranean, in 1374 Genoa occupied Famagusta and pressed for a ransom for the Cypriot nobles it held captive, and annual war reparation from the defeated kingdom.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, it forced all cargo calling on Cyprus to pass through the port of

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<sup>47</sup> Peter W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191-1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29.

<sup>48</sup> Peter W. Edbury, "Franks," in *Cyprus: Society and Culture 1191-1374*, ed. A. N. Konnari and C. D. Schabel (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85. The Genoese kept increasing the demanded payment until 1464. Frederic Chapin Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 199.

occupied Famagusta, which was meant to increase Genoese influence on the trade routes to Syria and Egypt, but resulted in non-Genoese long-distance trade bypassing Cyprus.<sup>49</sup> In turn, the war reparation and Cyprus's diminishing role as a trading *entrepôt* caused at first the Cypriot nobility and later the Lusignan court to resort to piracy or harboring pirates to raise money.<sup>50</sup> Cypriot, Rhodian and Catalan pirates systematically pillaged the Syrian and Egyptian coastline in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup>

In the second instance, Cyprus lost its suzerainty to Mamluk Egypt, which, in an effort to put an end to piracy operated from Cypriot ports, defeated the island's Frankish nobility in the Battle of Khirokitia (1426), where King Janus I was taken captive and carried off to Cairo.<sup>52</sup> The ensuing agreement between the sultan and Janus involved an annual tribute of 8,000 ducats to be paid in cash and goods to the Mamluks.<sup>53</sup> Janus was re-instated as King of Cyprus, and,

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<sup>49</sup> David Jacoby, "The Venetians in Byzantine and Lusignan Cyprus: Trade, Settlement, and Politics," *Η Γαληνοτατή Και η Ευγενεστατή: Η Βενετία στην Κύπρο και η Κύπρος στη Βενετία / La Serenissima and La Nobilissima: Venice in Cyprus and Cyprus in Venice*, ed. Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Foundation, 2009), 76.

<sup>50</sup> Johannes Pahlitzsch, "The Mamluks and Cyprus: Transcultural Relations between Muslim and Christian Rulers in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Fifteenth Century," in *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale*, ed. D. König, Y. Benhima, R. Abdellatif and E. Ruchaud (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 112.

<sup>51</sup> Nicholas Coureas, "Losing the War but Winning the Peace: Cyprus and Mamluk Egypt in the Fifteenth Century," *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras VII: Proceedings of the 16th, 17th and 18th International Colloquium Organized at Ghent University in May 2007, 2008 and 2009*, ed. U. Vermeulen, K. D'Hulster and J. Van Steenbergen (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2013), 351-63 esp. 351-53.

<sup>52</sup> Peter W. Edbury, *Kingdoms of the Crusaders: from Jerusalem to Cyprus* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 41-42.

<sup>53</sup> Sir George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 469-484; for more on the tribute see Nicholas Coureas, "The Tribute Paid to the Mamluk Sultanate, 1426-1517: The Perspective from Lusignan and Venetian Cyprus," *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras VII*:

although the tribute meant the acceptance of Cyprus' vassalage to Egypt and a pressure on the treasury until 1489 when Cyprus was annexed by Venice, its prompt payment guaranteed protection from Genoa, which still kept Famagusta occupied (the Genoese were eventually ousted in 1464), as well as from the rising Ottomans.<sup>54</sup> After the death of Janus's son, King Jean II de Lusignan (r. 1432-1458), the late king's daughter Charlotte and her husband Louis of Savoy, recognised by the barons as Jean's successors, were crowned in 1458. The late king's illegitimate son Jacques, archbishop of Nicosia fled Cyprus, in fear of a plot to kill him,<sup>55</sup> only to return with Mamluk army support to seize the throne from the newly inaugurated king and queen.<sup>56</sup> Jacques' return to Cyprus resulted in the civil war of 1460-64, which the Genoese entered on Louis and Charlotte's side.<sup>57</sup> In the meantime, the royal couple were seeking armed assistance abroad but received little support, most notably from the Knights Hospitaller, until they were beset by Jacques' allied Christian and Muslim forces in the castle of Kyrenia from

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*Proceedings of the 16th, 17th and 18th International Colloquium Organized at Ghent University in May 2007, 2008 and 2009*, ed. U. Vermeulen, K. D'Hulster and J. Van Steenberghe (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2013), 363-380 esp. 365. The tribute was re-negotiated in 1436, when it was agreed that the tribute could be paid in camlets instead of cash. Coureas, "Losing the War but Winning the Peace," 355.

<sup>54</sup> Coureas, "The Tribute Paid to the Mamluk Sultanate," 363.

<sup>55</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 576.

<sup>56</sup> For the diplomatic negotiations that took place between Charlotte's court and the Mamluk sultan Sayf ad-Din Inal as well as Jacques and the same sultan, see Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 555-56. For Sultan Inal's reasons to support James as king see Florio Bustron, "Chronique de l'Île de Chypre," *Collection des documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France: Mélanges historiques et choix de documents* vol. 5, ed. Mas Latrie (Paris, 1886), 392-94.

<sup>57</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 565-66.

where they eventually escaped to Rhodes and later to Rome.<sup>58</sup> Jacques was crowned as king in 1464 and received the disparaging cognomen “the Bastard” (*Bâtard*).

As King Jacques II (r. 1464-73), he was now in charge of a country whose economic state was dire not only due to the tribute to be paid to Egypt, but also to outbreaks of plague, malaria, locust infestation and changing trade routes, which laid an enormous burden on the island’s population and left the treasury with a scarcity of assets.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, Jacques’ initial diplomatic manoeuvrings were promising: he sent envoys to the Papacy and Florence to encourage trade between them and his kingdom,<sup>60</sup> established contact with the Akkoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan, who, in turn, secured the island’s safety from Persia and Karaman,<sup>61</sup> and paid frequent courtesy visits to the Mamluk court.<sup>62</sup> However, the Ottoman-Venetian War of 1463-79 and his kingdom’s debt to the Cornaros, one of Venice’s most influential families both in the *Serenità* and Cyprus, placed Jacques’ economically feeble kingdom in the midst of “international” politics and created an economic situation that allowed the king little leeway in governance.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 578-91.

<sup>59</sup> *Caterina Cornaro Queen of Cyprus*, ed. David Hunt and Iro Hunt (London: Trigraph, 1989), 73.

<sup>60</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 578.

<sup>61</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: The Phoenix Press, 2000), 28.

<sup>62</sup> It was also rumored that in Egypt James publicly embraced Islam, a reason for which Pope Pius III provided Charlotte refuge in Rome and supported her claim to the throne against James. Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 569; Hunt and Hunt, eds., *Caterina Cornaro Queen of Cyprus*, 57



The Cornaros (Corner) were powerful indeed:<sup>63</sup> they had given Venice a Doge (Marco Cornaro 1365-68), and their presence in the highest strata of the Venetian state administration as well as the ecclesiastic system by the fifteenth century was supplemented with opulent business enterprises. The first member of the family to be involved in the economy of Cyprus was the Cornaro doge's grandson, Giorgio Cornaro, whose sons, Marco and Andrea upon his death in 1439 inherited their father's business interests on the island and began to enlarge them to turn Cyprus into a family enterprise. Marco (1406-79) was one of King Jean II's main creditors in the 1430s, when he received large estates and a number of villages on the southern slopes of the Troodos Mountains as a pledge for a royal debt.<sup>64</sup> The kingdom's indebtedness to the Cornaros grew subsequently, which, by Caterina Cornaro's betrothal amounted to 25,000 ducats.<sup>65</sup> In the 1460s the king confiscated the properties of members of the old establishment<sup>66</sup> and distributed the land among his supporters, to which Marco's holdings fell victim too. Nevertheless, as early as 1464, Marco regained his lost possessions,<sup>67</sup> probably due to the intervention of Andrea, who, since the 1440s had resided on the island and become one of

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<sup>63</sup> Although the Cornaro family had several branches, in this dissertation I only discuss the branch which came to be known as Della Regina by their association with the last Queen of Cyprus.

<sup>64</sup> Benjamin Arbel, "A Royal Family in Republican Venice: The Cypriot Legacy of the *Corner della Regina*," *Studi Veneziani: A cura dell'Istituto di Storia della Società e dello Stato Veneziano e dell'Istituto "Venezia e l'Oriente" della Fondazione Giorgio Cini* vol. 15 (Pisa: Giardini, 1988): 131-52 esp. 134-35.

<sup>65</sup> In comparison, the kingdom's annual revenues in the 1460s and 1470s totalled 80,000 ducats. Benjamin Arbel, "A Fresh Look at the Venetian Protectorate of Cyprus (1474-89)," in *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice*, 220.

<sup>66</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 571, 579-80, 621-22, 678.

<sup>67</sup> Arbel, "A Royal Family in Republican Venice," 135.

Jacques' advisors.<sup>68</sup> However, the royal debt to the Lusignans, inherited by Jacques from the time of King Jean II, remained. Upon Andrea's advice Jacques signed an agreement with Marco to annul the royal debt, which included the king marrying Marco's daughter, Caterina Cornaro. As Caterina's dowry was fixed at 61,000 ducats, from which the 25,000 owed to the Cornaros could be deducted, the settlement solved the problem of the un-repaid debt.<sup>69</sup> But not only that: both private and state interests in Cyprus had wide implications on large sectors of the Venetian economy. The island was an important (but perhaps not indispensable) port of call for Venetian ships sailing between the republic and Egypt and Syria, and the Ottoman-Venetian war of 1463-79 necessitated Venice's securing its bases on the island to be able to continue operating trade in the Levant.<sup>70</sup> However, for Venice the kingdom's economic and fiscal resources were much more important. By the early fifteenth century Venetians dominated Cyprus's salt production, shipping and marketing; by the mid-fifteenth century most of the Cypriot sugar industry was in their hands, while most of the creditors of both industries were also Venetians. In turn, the Venetian state capitalized on salt originating from Cyprus by keeping salt trade in Venice a state monopoly, thus ensuring the city of a steady and reliable salt supply and sizeable revenue.<sup>71</sup> The Venetian state had not restrained from intervening into Cypriot politics to protect Venetian interests even before Jacques' accession to the throne. As from the 1460s Venice's policies concerning Cyprus were also influenced by Venice's rivalry

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<sup>68</sup> Arbel, "The Reign of Caterina Corner," 72.

<sup>69</sup> Arbel, "A Royal Family in Republican Venice," 135.

<sup>70</sup> Arbel, "A Fresh Look at the Venetian Protectorate of Cyprus (1474-89)," 214. The eventual annexation of the island by Venice partly served to secure the republic's maritime trade in the Levant. Chapin Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, 70ff.

<sup>71</sup> Jacoby, "The Venetians in Byzantine and Lusignan Cyprus," 82-84.

with the Ottomans, transforming the kingdom into a Venetian protectorate seems to have been prompted by Venice's efforts to ensure the defence of its overseas possessions and to establish a coalition against the Ottomans. The plan to settle a hundred Venetian patrician families in Cyprus envisaged by the Venetian Senate in 1477 indicated the aim of the republic to incorporate the island in its colonial network.<sup>72</sup> Thus direct involvement in the Cypriot royal house was not only in the interest of the Cornaro family, but it was desirable from the Venetian state's point of view too.

Caterina Cornaro's engagement took place by proxy in Venice in 1468.<sup>73</sup> In 1472 Caterina was sent to Cyprus and the royal marriage took place in the St. Nicholas cathedral of Famagusta. Venice took advantage of the marriage and adopted the new queen as "the daughter of Venice," stepping forth to declare itself as the heir of Caterina in case Jacques would not leave any offspring. Jacques died in July the following year, leaving the crown to his posthumous son, who was only to be born in August 1472. Thus Jacques III was crowned when he was only a few months old, but died at the age of one,<sup>74</sup> causing Caterina to rule Cyprus as the sole sovereign of the island. However, immediately after the king's death, Pietro Davila, the military commander of Cyprus, sent the Venetian *bailo*, Nicolò Pasqualigo, the standard of the kingdom, symbolically bequeathing the island to Venice.<sup>75</sup> Subsequently, the so-called Catalan plot, an attempt of Naples to seize the crown of Cyprus for Charlotte de Lusignan

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 84-85.

<sup>73</sup> Liana De Girolami Cheney, "Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus," in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 16.

<sup>74</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 663.

<sup>75</sup> O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, 36.

(Andrea Cornaro, the late king's advisor was murdered as part of the scheme),<sup>76</sup> was suppressed by the admiral of the Venetian navy, Pietro Mocenigo in 1473. In consequence, Venice established a permanent military presence in Cyprus' towns, ports and fortresses, which was paired with Venetian supervision of the island's administration from 1474 onward.<sup>77</sup> Cyprus, without the consent of the Lusignans (note that Jacques was a usurper to the throne), became a Venetian protectorate, and by the 1480s had been integrated into the Venetian administrative system. Thus in 1489, when the "international" situation was more favorable than during the troubled years of the war with the Ottoman Empire, Caterina was forced to abdicate and recalled to Venice, and the banner of St. Mark was hoisted in Cyprus.<sup>78</sup> The *Serenità* granted Caterina the town and territory of Asolo and an annual pension of 8,000 ducats,<sup>79</sup> which was made up from the fief of Asolo and revenues extracted from Cyprus.<sup>80</sup> Caterina Cornaro remained in Asolo at her nominal "court" for the rest of her life.

Although the Venetian state's influence on the Cypriot economy was apparent even during the reign of Jacques II, it was the years of the protectorate, during Jacques III's and Caterina's short reign, when the island also began to be integrated into the Venetian colonial system administratively. This caused an awkward and contradictory situation between the Cornaros and the *Serenità*. From the beginning of the new queen's residence in Cyprus, an ever-growing number of her relatives became associated with the Cypriot court. However, the republic in

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<sup>76</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 730.

<sup>77</sup> Arbel, "A Fresh Look at the Venetian Protectorate of Cyprus (1474-89)," 214.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Hunt and Hunt, eds., *Caterina Cornaro Queen of Cyprus* (London: Trigraph, 1989), 156.

<sup>80</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 745-50.

1474 sent two counsellors and other magistrates to Cyprus to protect Venice's interests against its own patricians. Shortly after their arrival in Cyprus, the counsellors were instructed to remove the queen's relatives from all public offices, which was in line with the Venetian principle of disallowing any one patrician family to gain excessive prominence over other families (*mediocritas*; see later in this chapter). However, the Cornaros did not give up on their newly acquired pre-eminences as a royal family: the Venetian counsellors repeatedly complained in their reports to the *Serenità* about their work being hindered by Caterina's relatives.<sup>81</sup> The Cornaros went even farther than this. In an attempt to become a royal dynasty, in the 1480s the family, especially the queen's father, Marco, who made every effort to *de facto* govern the kingdom, were demanding that Caterina remarry in Naples.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, after Caterina ceded the Cypriot crown to Doge Barbarigo in 1489 not only did she keep her title *Cypri, Hierosolymorum ac Armeniae Regina*, and the family its vast Cypriot estates, but Caterina's branch of the Cornarno family also began to call itself *della Regina*, and claimed royal treatment in its negotiations with the Venetian state.<sup>83</sup> Clearly, the Cornaros were doing their best to challenge Venice's claims to the monarchy.

## 1.2 *Mediocritas* Challenged: Venetian Familial and Personal Self-representation through Cyprus

At stake in this feud between the Venetian state and the Cornaros for the crown of Cyprus were some of the key principles of the fifteenth-century Venetian society. While the Cornaros' assumed prerogatives contradicted some social and political principles upon which

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<sup>81</sup> Arbel, "The Reign of Caterina Corner (1473-1489) as a Family Affair," 74-76.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>83</sup> Arbel, "A Royal Family in Republican Venice," 141-52.

Venice's statehood rested, the Venetian state's acquisition of a royal title was equally incompatible with Venice's state identity. Most importantly, Venice was a republic, whose main ethos lied in the *libertà* of the state and its intelligent, well-spoken and patriotic patricians ready to make sacrifices for the state as office-holders.<sup>84</sup> In Venetian political ideology Venice was the counterpoint of barbarism and the most excellent manifestation of *civiltà*, where magnificence (i.e. "dissolute living, vane clothing, an unbridled desire for purchasing, pride, and the grandiosity of one's house") was condemned,<sup>85</sup> and beauty, religiosity, liberty, peacefulness, and republicanism were hailed.<sup>86</sup> Self-promotion was considered undesirable and the ideal *modus vivendi* was *mediocritas*, in which all would be equal and uniform for the good of the republic. These principles, of course, were not entirely complied with in reality, but they nevertheless informed Venetian identity and were expressed in the visual arts, poetry, history, and humanist writing, thus constituting a distinguishable Venetian civic value system. These

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<sup>84</sup> See Marco Foscari's *relazione* upon his return from Florence at the end of his service as *bailo* in Marco Foscari, "Relazion fatta per Marco Foscari nell'eccellentissimo Consiglio di Pregadi della legazion de Fiorenza, con qualche cosa adiuncta da lui nel scrivere essa legazione," *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato* book 1 vol. 3, ed. Arnaldo Segarizzi (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1916), 3-6.

<sup>85</sup> "[...] cosa, che fin al dì d'hoggi si osserua; & fu statuito, [...] che la uoluttà si uolge ò nel dissolute uiuere, ò nella uanagloria del uestire, ò nello sfrenato disiderio dell'acquistare, ò nella superbia, & grandezza delle fabriche, [...], che fossero giudicauano, che sarebbe tolta uia l'auaritia, & la ingordigia delle ricchezze." (Because, until now it is observed and commonly held that... desire turns into dissolute living, vane clothing, an unbridled desire for purchasing pride, and the grandiosity of one's house... [which] have been judged as extremely avaricious and greedy of wealth.) Niccolò Zen, *Dell'Origine De' Barbari, Che Distrvssero Per Tvtto'l Mondo l'Imperio Di Roma Onde Hebbe Principio La Citta Di Venetia Libri Vndici* (Venice: Plinio Pietrasanta, 1557), 195.

<sup>86</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 21-22; John Martin and Denis Romano, "Reconsidering Venice," in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, ed. J. J. Martin and D. Romano (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

attributes of “Venetianness” and their expression in various art forms and literary genres have collectively come to be termed by latter-day scholars as the “myth of Venice.”<sup>87</sup>

While the myth of Venice was eclectic and full of internal discordances (some of which are discussed in this chapter), it was persuasive and has been transmitted unaltered through guidebooks and histories, but most effectually through chronicles, to which it owed its long-lasting consistency.<sup>88</sup> Although in 1291 the Venetian government ordered that an official record be kept of all its transactions, the principal initiative to keep account of past and current events came from individual citizens. The tradition of chronicle writing went back to at least the eleventh century (Giovanni Diacono, *Chronicon Venetum*, before 1018), and the number of texts swelled to an extent that just from the fourteenth century over a thousand codices of chronicles have survived to the present day. However, despite the multitude of chronicles written by ordinary Venetians (be they patricians, professionals or employees, in fact few families had no chronicle of their own) their similarities are more than their differences. Many of them are merely transcriptions or paraphrases, and copied and compiled from other chronicles without acknowledging their sources. Even Andrea Dandolo’s mid-fourteenth-century *Cronica estesa* and *Cronica breve*, which subsequent Venetian chroniclers looked on as models, were compiled from earlier chronicles, besides containing verbatim copies of statutes and state papers.<sup>89</sup> Even trained writers, on whom Venice’s humanist historiography

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<sup>87</sup> Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 140-50; Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 21.

<sup>88</sup> James Grubb, “When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography,” *Journal of Modern History*, 58 (1986), 43-44.

<sup>89</sup> Eric Cochrane, *History and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 62-63.

rested, relied heavily on them, and so it is little wonder that, for instance, Marcantonio Coccio (Sabellico) (1436-1506) could write his thirty-three volume *Rerum Venetarum ab Urbe Condita...* (1484-85) within the course of only fifteen months. Furthermore, humanists writing about Venetian history were either local patricians such as Francesco Contarini (1421-60), Bernardo Giustinian (1406-89), and Marino Sanudo (1466-1533) or foreigners subsidized by the city-state's patriciate. Thus the myth of Venice remained well-contained in Venetian historiography where the same themes were recycled over and over again by patriotic amateurs and subsidized trained intellectuals alike.<sup>90</sup>

But not all were content with the image Venetians were communicating to themselves and the rest of the world about their most serene polity, culture and civic as well as religious virtues. Refutation of the myth, an anti-myth,<sup>91</sup> which was largely the product of foreign propaganda especially after Venice had begun to expand its power in the early fifteenth century over the *terraferma*, or northeastern Italy, characterized Venice as tyrannical, oppressive, impious and harshly governed by a secretive oligarchy.<sup>92</sup> In the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the anti-myth was often furthered by foreign authors such as Niccolò Machiavelli<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 77-86.

<sup>91</sup> Gina Fasoli, "Nascita di un mito," in *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe* vol. 1 (Florence, 1958), 445-79.

<sup>92</sup> Martin and Romano, "Reconsidering Venice," 2-3; Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 49-50; Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power," 44; On the anti-myth, see Nicolai Rubinstein, "Italian Reactions to Terraferma Expansion in the Fifteenth Century," in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. John Rigby Hale (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), 197-217; Fasoli, "Nascita di un mito," 445-79.

<sup>93</sup> Elena Fasano Guarini, "Machiavelli and the Crisis of the Italian Republics," *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. G. Bock, Q. Skinner and M. Viroli, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 35-37.



and Jean Bodin<sup>94</sup> in a political philosophical context, where Venice's unique social and political structure was criticised for its inefficiency. However, there was, at the same time, another critical view of Venice, which saw the republic not as inefficient but perhaps too efficient inasmuch as its insatiable desire to dominate others was believed to have peaked in its aspiration for an empire in imitation of ancient Rome.<sup>95</sup> In the Most Serene Republic the tension between myth and reality was also felt as Venice's colonization of Italian and eastern Mediterranean territories obviously contradicted the city state's idealized peacefulness and republican values. Worst of all, in Venetian political thinking empire meant the Holy Roman Empire, an oppressor, against which Venice proudly defended its independence, and ancient Rome, whose militarism and lack of any sense of limits and boundaries were thought to have caused its eventual demise—neither of which was desirable to associate with Venice.

It is not surprising that Venetian patriots like Paolo Paruta felt it incumbent upon themselves to find justification for Venice's imperial expansion. The contradiction between the idealized republic and its imperial tendencies was resolved in obscure explications such as that Venice occupied foreign territories not for empire but for the necessity of trade and that the *Serenità* did not exploit its territories imperialistically as stepping stones to further conquests.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, Venetians who wished to reconcile the contradiction between the myth and their polity's practices outside the confines of the lagoon apologetically claimed that if Venice was

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<sup>94</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 50.

<sup>95</sup> Rubinstein, "Italian Reaction to Terraferma Expansion in the Fifteenth Century".

<sup>96</sup> Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 286-91.

an empire, it was an accidental and philanthropic one, which came into being because of mere circumstance.<sup>97</sup>

The myth and anti-myth of Venice not only thematized early modern political thinking about the republic but set the terms for modern historical debate too whereby historians have studied Venice's statehood either in view of the myth or its refutation.<sup>98</sup> In defending the principal assertions of the myth, for instance, Freddy Thiriet<sup>99</sup> has claimed that Venice did not intend to conquer Crete but was forced into it by Greek rebellions and competition with Genoa, and Roberto Cessi<sup>100</sup> has argued that Venice's expansion in Dalmatia and into Slavonia was inspired by a "high and noble ideal—tranquillity, neutrality and peace."<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, Michael E. Mallet and John R. Hale<sup>102</sup> have more recently emphasized the imperial and militaristic dimensions of Venetian statecraft, while only relatively recently has there been an occurrence of integrative studies of both metropolitan-republican and colonial-imperial Venice.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> O'Donnell, *Men of Empire*, 17ff.

<sup>98</sup> Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power"; Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 9.

<sup>99</sup> Freddy Thiriet, *La Romanie Vénitienne au Moyen Age: Le Développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien* (Paris: Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1959), 105-6.

<sup>100</sup> Roberto Cessi, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia* (Milan-Messina: G. Principato, 1944), 355–56.

<sup>101</sup> Trans. and quoted in O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, 17.

<sup>102</sup> M. E. Mallett and J. R. Hale, *The Military Organisation of a Renaissance State: Venice c. 1400 to 1617* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

<sup>103</sup> Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; Karl R. Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea: Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

The conflict over the Cypriot monarchy between the Cornaro family and the Venetian state was a manifestation of the tension between myth and reality, and the political application of the anti-myth within the Venetian structures of power. The inherent logic of the myth disallowed a Venetian patrician family to become royal.<sup>104</sup> However, not only were the Cornaros one of the wealthiest families in Venice holding some of the highest administrative positions, but they, unlike other patrician families, from 1473 onward held royal status as well.<sup>105</sup> Thus, the transfer of the Cypriot monarchy from the Cornaro family to the Venetian state saved the myth and the ethos of *mediocritas*—only to cause another contradiction on the state’s side. Now Caterina was only titular queen, but Venice became a “royal republic,” which was a political paradox in itself. Still, Venice’s practised but unproclaimed royal status was desirable inasmuch as it enabled the republic to act as a first-rate power in its foreign policy, where monarchs had precedence over other leaders.<sup>106</sup> And consequently, even though royalty

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<sup>104</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 635.

<sup>105</sup> Arbel, “A Royal Family in Republican Venice,” 133.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*; Gaetano Cozzi, *Venetia, una Repubblica di Principi?*, *Studii Veneziani* 11 (1986): 139-57. An early seventeenth-century letter from the English ambassador to the Collegio discusses the same problem in connection with the use of titles in diplomatic affairs. Here the ambassador claims that Venetian ambassadors have the same title as representatives of monarchies as it is a “royal republic:” “Venice: December 1622, 16-31: I come to offer the best wishes for the new year. I have two duties to perform here. An individual of high standing has recently come here to act as ambassador of the States [the Netherlands]. You have given him this title of Excellency. I do not deny his worth or the dignity of his masters. Nevertheless the French ambassador and I, the only ambassadors of crowned heads resident here consider that the ambassadors of a republic or other free state do not usually have this title, except the ambassadors of this republic, which enjoys it for two reasons, the antiquity of dominion and the possession of royal territories, so that I generally call it the crowned or royal republic. We do not believe that you intend to prejudice the royal ministers with this title, as it affects yourselves, and I have therefore come to hear what your Excellencies propose.” *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and Other Libraries of Northern Italy* vol. 17, ed. Allen B Hinds (London: Longman, 1911), 535.

was incompatible with the idealized image of Venice, the Venetian state seems to have purposefully pressed for acquiring such titles. Although the Venetian state faced the problem of one of its patrician families assuming a royal or princely status three times until the end of the sixteenth century, it resorted to resolving the disarray by adopting one of its female subjects only twice. One was the Cornaro family's royal title and Caterina's adoption by Venice. Chronologically the first was that of Tomasina Morosini, who married István, the brother of the Hungarian King Béla IV in 1263, but there seems to be no proof of her having been declared "daughter of Venice."<sup>107</sup> The last such instance was that of Bianca Cappello, who was also adopted by the republic around the year 1579,<sup>108</sup> when she married Duke Francesco de' Medici, who died eight years after his wedding without an heir. While Caterina Cornaro and Bianca Cappello married rulers in power, Tomasina Morosini's husband was a disowned prince, who lived in Venice in exile. (Against all odds, it was still his son, András who eventually inherited the throne of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1290.) Thus, it seems that Venice intervened to adopt one of the female members of its particiate only when there was a chance of inheriting the ducal or royal crown through her.

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<sup>107</sup> Although Benjamin Arbel claims that she was adopted by Venice, I have not found any other sources to support this claim. Arbel, "The Reign of Caterina Corner (1473-1489) as a Family Affair," 68.

<sup>108</sup> "Co[n]ciosia che have[n]do Fra[n]cesco de Medici Gran Duca di Toscana, et pote[n]tissimo Principe in Italia, tolto p[er] donna, Bianca figliuola di Bartolomeo Cappello nobilissimo Senatore, comparì a Venetia, per nome dell'una, et dell'altro Principe Mario Sforza, a dar notitia di questo fatto, a Padri. I quali sentendo lo Sforza, che espose l'ambasciata con affettuose parole, si commossero di maniera, che inteneriti nell'interno da una incredibile dolcezza che si sparse per entro a petti loro, versarono lacrime giu de gli occhi. Et indi a poco, ridotti in Senato, crearono Cavaliere Bartolomeo con Vittorio suo figliuolo. Et adottarono per figliuola della Republica, la detta Bianca Gran Duchessa, in quella maniera ch'essi fecero già Caterina Cornaro Regina di Cipri." Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (1581), ed. by Giustiniano Martinioni (Venice: Stefano Curti, 1663), 618-19.

Even though the annexation of Cyprus protected the Venetian ethos of equality against the divergence by acquiring the monarchy for the state instead of leaving it in the hands of the Cornaro family, in practice the age-old value system of Venice was in crisis.<sup>109</sup> Divergence from civic principles was apparent in the public self-representation of some of Venice's wealthiest families, against which the thirteenth-century sumptuary laws needed to be re-enforced in the early 1500s.<sup>110</sup> The Cornaro della Regina were among the families which deliberately broke the age-old customs, and in consequence considered themselves as culturally *avant-garde*, followers of a Florentine and Roman mentality that allowed (or even demanded) resplendent self-fashioning and a lavish public image.<sup>111</sup> This, I claim, was the anti-myth of Venice, namely that the republic's self-image as a society of equal, pious and just citizens was a lie unworthy to be followed, put into practise on home ground by some of Venice's richest patricians.

But amidst these social and political changes of the patriciate the position of the doge within the Venetian structures of power was no less problematic. In domestic political matters, legally, power in Venice emanated from the councils, not the doge. Thus, while on the one hand the doge was only a symbol of authority within the republican system, on the other hand he acted as an actual ruler,<sup>112</sup> especially in Venice's foreign affairs. Although the latter was an

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<sup>109</sup> For more on the dissolution of the Venetian values of *mediocritas*, see Patricia Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 26-37; Manfredo Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, 3-13.

<sup>110</sup> Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, 6; Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 5, 181-82.

<sup>111</sup> Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, 7-8.

<sup>112</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 262.

omnipresent threat to republicanism, Venice's identity that rested on claims such as that the city state had a special mandate from God and perpetual independence from both the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, depended greatly on the ability of the republic to assume the attributes of the doge without destroying the office altogether.<sup>113</sup> Consequently, the balance between the symbolic and practical power of the doge could be maintained as long as both the doge and the patriciate exercised their power with self-restraint. However, toward the end of the fifteenth century, contemporaneously with the Venetian annexation of Cyprus, not only were the traditionally respected virtues of "Venetianness" violated by some patrician families, but some of the doges also began to show a tendency toward self-aggrandizement.<sup>114</sup>

This temporary shift toward a ducal preponderance is perhaps best exemplified by the *Scala dei Giganti*. This marble staircase built in the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale in 1485 was commissioned by Doge Marco Barbarigo, but was finished only during the office of his brother and successor, Agostino (doge 1486-1501), in 1497.<sup>115</sup> (The giant marble statues of Mars and Neptune by Jacopo Sansovino, which gave the staircase its name, were added to the structure only in 1554 to redefine its symbolism and visually suppress the doge's figure.) The palace's new entrance, through which the doge would receive ambassadors and visiting dignitaries, emphasised the Barbarigo brothers' actual power on par with Europe's most powerful monarchs. The Barbarigo doges' divergence from Venetian political and social values manifested in the staircase's intended function at the centre of a re-defined coronation ceremony. In European monarchies the continuity of power rested on the religious-ideological

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 265.

<sup>115</sup> Norbert Huse and Wolfgang Wolters, *The Art of Renaissance Venice: Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, 1460-1590*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 140.

separation of the body natural and the body politic of the ruler, the latter of which, being immortal, guaranteed the transfer of political power from the funeral of a late king to the coronation of his successor.<sup>116</sup> Unlike this tradition, the Venetian doge's election and coronation were meant to demonstrate discontinuity: the non-dynastic nature of the doge's power was emphasized by his coronation, which, toward the sixteenth century, became purely secular and stressed the restrictive bonds of law rather than the mystical consecration of anointment.<sup>117</sup> However, at the end of the fifteenth century the magnification of ducal splendour turned against this tendency. As a worrisome gesture in the eyes of the Venetian patriciate, which saw even minimal signs of dynasty-building as the ultimate threat to the republic, in succeeding his brother as a doge, Agostino Barbarigo demanded that Venetians kneel before him and kiss his hand<sup>118</sup> as well as attend his coronation, which imitated the Northern European ceremonial tradition,<sup>119</sup> on top of this "truly royal staircase" (*scala veramente reale*).<sup>120</sup> (After the death of Agostino Barbarigo the institution of the Three Inquisitors on the Late Doge [*Tre inquisitori sul doge defunto*] was established, which had authorization to hold his heirs responsible for the abuse of his office. However, the inefficiency of the officials is shown in the subsequent doge, Loredano Loredan [doge 1501-21] also

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<sup>116</sup> Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>117</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 264, 282.

<sup>118</sup> Alison Williams Lewin, "Age Does Not Matter: Venetian Doges in Reality and Depiction," *Florence and Beyond: Culture, Society and Politics in Renaissance Italy: Essays in Honour of John M. Najemy*, ed. by D. S. Peterson and D. E. Bornstein (Toronto: CRRS Publications, 2008), 311-12.

<sup>119</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 281-82.

<sup>120</sup> Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*, 320.

misusing ducal power.)<sup>121</sup> Underneath the *Scala dei Giganti*, for improved ideological effect, a prison cell was established.<sup>122</sup>

Doge Agostino Barbarigo found justification for his accentuated ducal power in the annexation of Cyprus, which was executed under his dogeship. Shortly after Queen Caterina's abdication, he commissioned Pietro Lombardo's workshop to design and build four fireplaces (finished in 1492) for his apartment in the Palazzo Ducale. The fireplaces, just like the rooms which they adorned, were intended for public display, and thus its decorations depicting Venus in Cyprus suggest Barbarigo's pride in acquiring the kingdom for the republic.<sup>123</sup> Another subject of the decorations was Jupiter, who, in Venetian iconography symbolized Crete, and thus the carvings of Venus and Jupiter represented Venice's *stato da mar*, which, with the annexation of Cyprus reached its most extended size. Barbarigo's self-representation as the promoter of Venice's interests in the republic's colonial policy was reflected in a celebration of the doge in Marcantonio Coccio's (Sabellico) history of Venice in the 1480s. According to Sabellico, Barbarigo's management of the city resulted in a general feeling of security, and times happier than before as well as an abundant influx of goods from the colonies.<sup>124</sup> Such associations were duly depicted in the figurations of the Lombardo fireplaces, where a combination of palms, acanthus and cornucopia overflowing with fruit were associated with Venus, and through her, with Cyprus.

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<sup>121</sup> Williams Lewin, "Age Does Not Matter: Venetian Doges in Reality and Depiction," 312.

<sup>122</sup> John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: Laurence King, 2005), 334.

<sup>123</sup> Richard Cocke, "Doge Agostino Barbarigo and the Image of Cyprus," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 3 (2004): 421-26.

<sup>124</sup> Marcantonio Coccio Sabellico, *Historiae rerum venetarum, decad. III* book 8 (Venice: 1718), 875.



Agostino Barbarigo was not the first person in Venice to employ a visual program in which Cyprus's Venetian colonization played a central role in the commissioner's political image-making. Self-representation through Cyprus and Caterina Cornaro is also manifest in the case of Nicolò Tron (doge 1471-73), under whose office Caterina Cornaro was wedded to Jacques II and Cyprus's Venetian protectorate began. In 1476 Tron's son, Filippo commissioned a tomb for his late father from Antonio Rizzo in the Basilica di Santa Maria dei Frari. The fifteen-meter-high composition celebrated Tron's "most blessed leadership," during which time "the most flourishing state of the Venetians received Cyprus into its empire."<sup>125</sup> The same claim for familial glory of the Venetian acquisition of Cyprus is expressed in the visual representation of the dogeship of Pietro Mocenigo, who crushed the plot against Caterina in 1472 and died as a doge in 1476. His funerary monument, just like the Barbarigo fireplaces, was commissioned from and decorated by the Lombardo workshop, and when it was unveiled in 1581 it revealed Mocenigo's handing over the keys of Famagusta to the queen as one of the deceased's major political achievements (fig. 5).<sup>126</sup> Clearly, Mocenigo's family portrayed the late admiral and doge as a queen-maker, without whose military intervention Caterina Cornaro would never have become the sovereign of Cyprus, which Venice would not have been able to colonize subsequently.

Claiming personal glory through the colonization of Cyprus was hardly reconcilable with both *mediocritas* and, on a larger ideological scale, the image of Venice as a non-

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<sup>125</sup> Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 333-34.

<sup>126</sup> The tomb's inscription reads "Ille ego qui Phrigias vrbes, Asiaeque potentis / Oppida, qui Cilicum classem, Cyprumque recepi / Aequeora piratis, Scodram obsidione leuauit, / Patrum consensu populi Dux uoce creatus." in Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*, 583. For a full description of the monument and its depictions of Mocenigo's handing the keys of Famagusta to Caterina Cornaro see Hurlburt, "Body of Empire," 82-86.

beligerent republic. Perhaps to remain within the ideological framework of the myth, in the theme of the transfer of royal rights from Caterina Cornaro to Venice, represented not only in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century tomb decorations of Venetian doges but also in other forms of visual arts, the voluntariness and solemnity of the event and the generosity of the Queen of Cyprus were stressed.<sup>127</sup> Ideally, Venetian patrician families put the state's interests before theirs, and thus it is not surprising that Caterina Cornaro's abdication was interpreted by her contemporaries as what we read in Pietro Bembo's *Della historia vinitiana*:

What could be more appropriate to eventually make her name eternally glorious than her ceding a most noble kingdom to her country; & than in the memories of the annals to be written & noted: The city of Venice has been honoured & extended by the deed of one of its female citizens? In every country & region she will always be called & considered a Queen.<sup>128</sup>

As late as 1585, Caterina's abdication was still depicted in one of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio's (Palazzo Ducale) grisailles (fig. 6) with the same moral overtone: in Leonardo Corona's painting the Queen of Cyprus hands her crown to Doge Agostino Barbarigo in

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<sup>127</sup> Candida Syndikus, "L'immagine di Caterina Cornaro nell'Otto e Novecento," in *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice*, ed. C. Syndikus and S. Rogge (Münster: Waxmann, 2013), 41. A large number of sixteenth-century Venetian paintings depicting Caterina Cornaro's ceding her crown to Doge Agostino Barbarigo as a symbol of Venetian *amor patriae* are featured and discussed in Syndikus, "L'immagine di Caterina Cornaro nell'Otto e Novecento" and Monica Molteni, "Per l'iconografia cinquecentesca di Caterina Cornaro," in *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice*.

<sup>128</sup> "[...] qual fatto potrebbe alla perfine essere piu acconcio a fare eternal la Gloria del suo nome: che ella stessa un Regno nobilissimo alla sua patria donare? & che nelle memorie degli annali si noti & si scriua: la Città di Venegia essere stata honorata & cresciuta del Regno di Cipri per opera d'una sua cittadina? In ogni paese & contrada, sarà ella sempre detta & nominate Reina." Pietro Bembo, *Della historia vinitiana di M. Pietro Bembo card. volgarmente scritta. Libri XII* vol. 1 (Venice: Gualtero Scotto, 1552), fol. 8v.

obeisance, which, as we will see later, seems to have been an imagery central to Venice's late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century state identity.

The Cornaro family, however, had a different view on this generous, exalted and voluntary transfer of sovereignty. While the Venetian state was propagating its own euphemistic understanding of the republic's imperial tendencies, the Cornaros were exercising what later interpreters termed the anti-myth of Venice. Caterina's nephew, Francesco Cornaro (1476–1543) commissioned four grisaille friezes for the Ca' Corner in 1505. The paintings, whose execution was entrusted to Andrea Mantegna, but finished by Giovanni Bellini, were meant to depict the Cornaro family's ancient Roman ancestry, which was believed to go back to the conqueror of ancient Carthage, Scipio Africanus (236–183 BCE).<sup>129</sup> (Pietro Contarini, in his oration for the funeral of Marco Cornaro in 1479 gave voice to this claim of the Cornaro family).<sup>130</sup> One of the four paintings, the *Continence of Scipio*, (c. 1506) (fig. 7) depicts a scene from the aftermath of the conquest of Carthage, when Scipio graciously returned a female hostage to her Carthaginian family. The Latin inscription in the middle of the painting reads: “TVRPIVS IMPER(ARI) VENERE Q(VAM) ARMIS VINCI” (It is lowlier to be commanded by Venus than to be conquered by arms), which reflects the Cornaros' interpretation of Caterina's ceding her kingdom to Venice. Contrary to Venetian state ideology, with this painting the Cornaros claimed that the transfer of the monarchy from the queen to Venice did not happen voluntarily but by force. But the inscription, equally importantly, also eloquently

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<sup>129</sup> Jaymie Anderson, “Allegories and Mythologies,” in *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting*, ed. David Allen Brown (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 150, 156.

<sup>130</sup> Pietro Contarini, “Adorni Filii Patricii Veneti in Funere Marci Cornellii,” in *Orazioni, elogi e vite scritte da letterati veneti patrizi*, ed. Girolamo Ascanio Molin (Venice, 1795), 130.

suggests the Cornaros' wish to leave Venus and her undesirable sexual connotations out of the family mythology.

Such iconographic associations were tendentiously played down by the Cornaro family. This might be the reason why Andrea Palladio's design for Caterina's funerary monument in the church of San Salvador, which was meant to accentuate this association, was never built. The architect's design sketches (fig. 8) depict two allegorical effigies of the late queen in the form of the *Venere pudica* with her iconographic attribute, the veil. The figure is crowned, which is unusual for a figurative representation of Venus, but makes sense inasmuch as it was meant to express the iconographic amalgamation of Venus and Caterina Cornaro.<sup>131</sup> The tomb, whose execution was delayed until as late as the second half of the sixteenth century, was eventually commissioned from Bernardino Contino. The monument's central figurative panel depicts Caterina ceding her crown to Doge Agostino Barbarigo.<sup>132</sup>

The Cornaros' desire to suppress associations between Venus and Caterina Cornaro was sensible. Cyprus's name in the medieval and early modern Christian West was identical with sexual licence and prostitution.<sup>133</sup> In the mid-fourteenth century, Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola was at pains in his commentary on Dante's *Divine Comedy* to counterpoint Christian values

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<sup>131</sup> Martin Gaier, "Falconetto—Palladio—Contino. Tentativi di erigere un monumento alla regina nella Repubblica di Venezia," in *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice*, 97-98.

<sup>132</sup> Hurlburt, "Body of Empire," 75.

<sup>133</sup> The simplest illustration of this is the word "Cyprian" itself, which, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, was in use as a synonym of *licentious*, *lewd*, and *prostitute* in the English language well into the nineteenth century.

with the Cypriots' "meretricious, lewd and filthy habits".<sup>134</sup> Two centuries later, Lilio Vicentino, in his "manual of geography" described Cypriot women as

[...] very lustful, and so we read in Justin that Cypriot girls, before they marry, are wont to lend themselves to the unholy pleasures of foreigners who touch there in ships, so that our ancestors were not without reason in saying that the island was sacred to Venus.<sup>135</sup>

The speculated mythological origin of Cypriot licentiousness was based on the island's reputation for prostitution, to which the Paduan Benedetto Bordone's 1528 *Isolario* bears witness: "[...] Venus was called [...] Cypria, and the first woman who made a habit of selling

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<sup>134</sup> Benvenuto da Imola (1375-80), "Paradiso" 19:145-148: E creder. Hic ultimo aquila infamat regem cyprium, quem dicit vivere voluptuose tamquam bestiam. Unde dicit: E creder dee ciascun che già per arra di questo, idest, per signum huius vaticinii vel libri, vicosia e Famagosta, per quas dat intelligi regnum Cypri. Est enim Nicosia civitas in Cypro quae etc. Famagosta alia civitas maior et ditior, ad quam est communis concursus mercatorum; si lamenti e garra, idest, rixetur, per la lor bestia, idest, propter regem suum bestialiter viventem. Unde dicit: che, idest, qui rex, non si scosta dal fianco dell'altre, idest, non discordat, nec recedit a latere aliarum bestiarum, idest aliorum regum vitiosorum. Et vere non discohaeret, et non dissociatur a vivere bestiali aliorum, immo vincit et excedit cum sua gente Cypri omnes reges et gentes regnorum christianitatis in superfluitate luxuriae, gulae, mollitiei, et in omni genere voluptatum. Sed velle describere genera epularum, sumptuositatem, varietatem, et nimietatem, fastidiosum esset narrare, et taediosum scribere et perniciosum audire. Ideo viri sobrie et temperanter viventes debent avertere oculos a videndo, et aures ab audiendo mores meretricales lubricos et foetidos insulae illius, quam permittente Deo nunc januenses invaserunt, expugnaverunt et male mulctaverunt. Translation taken from Claude Delaval Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1908), 15.

<sup>135</sup> See excerpt in Lilio Vincentino, *Breve descrizione del mondo, di Zaccheria Lilio Vincentino, tradotta per M. Francesco Beldelli* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e Fratelli, 1552), fols. 28r-28v. Translation taken from Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 67.

her body for money was in this island.”<sup>136</sup> In fact, the town of Famagusta earned its reputation: since the late Middle Ages the town had been famous for its large number of courtesans.<sup>137</sup> As Ludolf von Suchen, a Westphalian priest, wrote on his way to the Holy Land in 1350 in his travelogue: “In this city dwell very many wealthy courtesans [...]”.<sup>138</sup>

Von Suchen, Da Imola, Vincentino and Bordone were not alone in associating Cyprus with sexual licence. In fact almost every medieval and early modern account on Cyprus will at least touch upon either the Cypriots’ lasciviousness or prostitution. For instance, the Venetian pilgrim Francesco Suriano in 1484 claimed that Cypriot “women are lewd. The country and climate of themselves incline to fleshly lust, and nearly every one lives in concubinage.”<sup>139</sup> More than a hundred years later, the pocketbook version of the Antwerp-based Abraham Ortelius’ first atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, provided a similar depiction of Cypriots among the most noteworthy features of the island:

The people generally do giue themselues to pleasures, sports and voluptuousnesse: the women are very wanton, and of light behauour. [...] [T]he

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<sup>136</sup> Benedetto Bordone, *Libro, nel qual si ragiona de tutte l’isole del mondo* (Venice: 1528), fol. LXVlr.

Translation taken from Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 62.

<sup>137</sup> Associating Cyprus with prostitution originated in the ancient Greek belief that Aphrodite was the patroness of courtesans. This tradition follows from the early Greeks’ familiarity with the temple courtesans, the incarnations of the goddess who dwelled in the religious centres of Aphrodite in Cyprus and elsewhere. Paul Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), 141-42.

<sup>138</sup> Ludolf von Suchen, *Reisebuch ins heilige Land in niederdeutscher Mundart* (Greifswald: Roche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1861), 30. Translation taken from Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 18-19.

<sup>139</sup> Francesco Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa e dell’Oriente* (Milan: Tipografia Editrice Artigianelli, 1900), 243. Translation taken from Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 49.

lasciuiousnesse of the nation [is] such, that vulgarly it was supposed to haue beene dedicated to *Venus* the Goddesse of loue.<sup>140</sup>

The latter is especially indicative of how well-spread the association of Cyprus with loose sexuality must have been. The *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, as the first modern atlas, was extremely popular and widely circulated in Latin, French and German translations besides Dutch throughout Europe, even before its full-scale edition in 1606.

Clearly, associating Cyprus with licentiousness and prostitution was due to the island's well-known connection to Aphrodite/Venus, who, in Greek and Roman mythology was believed to have been born out of the Mediterranean Sea on the shores of Cyprus. Thus, when the young Venetian lady, Caterina Cornaro became sovereign of the island-kingdom with such powerful connotations, identifying her as the earthly manifestation of the antique goddess of love was inescapable. However, while these associations were exploited in Venetian state iconography, in which classicizing allegories made the metaphorical link between Caterina Cornaro and Venus as well as the Venus-Cyprus metonymy inevitable, the Cornaros were keen to play down the goddess of love and her sexual connotations in their family mythology. While pressing for royal treatment by the state and challenging *mediocritas*, after Caterina's return to Venice, regardless of the family's stretching the boundaries of "patricianness," the ex-Queen of Cyprus needed to be reconciled within the framework of Venetian social value system.

Also made by the Bellini workshop like the aforementioned *Continence of Scipio*, but this time by Gentile, the "Miracle of the Cross at the San Lorenzo Bridge," (1500) (fig. 9) depicts a Caterina Cornaro attuned to Venetian civic principles. Executed in 1500 for the Scuola Grande di San Marco Evangelista, the painting was part of a series of nine paintings

<sup>140</sup> Abraham Ortelius, *The Theatre of the Whole World* (London: John Nopton, 1606), 90.

that were commissioned to commemorate the miracles that occurred in Venice sometime between 1370 and 1382, after the confraternity had been granted a relic of the cross of Christ by Philippe de Mézières (“Filippo Masceri”), Chancellor of the Kingdom of Cyprus.<sup>141</sup> According to Giorgio Vasari, one of the requests of the commissioners was that the paintings should include a depiction of the members of the confraternity, which included members of the Cornaro family. The painting features Caterina Cornaro wearing the same royal dress and crown that she wore when sitting for another of Gentile Bellini’s works (fig. 10),<sup>142</sup> but here she is depicted as only one of the crowd of unhighlighted onlookers, and thereby made compatible with Venice’s idealized equality. However, the royal dress, which Marino Sanudo identified as “a la zipriota,” and the crown she wears in both of Bellini’s paintings suggest that the Cornaro family exploited Caterina’s public appearances even in 1500 to stress her royal status and “Cypriotness.”<sup>143</sup> These symbols, however, were exploited and blended with Caterina’s associability with Venus, which the Cornaros purposefully omitted from her iconography, on a much larger scale by the Venetian state to serve the *Serenità*’s ideological purposes.

### 1.3 Cyprus, Venus and Caterina Cornaro in Venetian State Iconography

The paintings and stonework decorations discussed so far are indicative of personal and familial negotiations of power, a constant give-and-take of challenging and then complying with Venetian civic principles on the highest steps of the republic’s political ladder. But

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<sup>141</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* vol. 2, trans. Mrs. Jonathan Foster (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851), 158-59

<sup>142</sup> Monica Molteni, “Per l’iconografia cinquecentesca di Caterina Cornaro,” 25.

<sup>143</sup> Candida Syndikus, “Tra autenticità storica e invenzione romantica,” 34-35.



featuring iconographical references to Cyprus in the late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century visual arts was also a powerful tool to express the Venetian state's colonizer identity and resolve ideological contradictions deriving from it. For instance, Francesco Sansovino in his *Venetia, città nobilissima, et singolare* (1580) interprets the figurative reliefs of his father Jacopo's work the Loggetta del Campanile (fig. 11), and suggests that the figure of Venus on the right hand side of the façade represents Cyprus: "In another picture on the side [overlooking] the sea there is a sculpted Venus, representative of the Kingdom of Cyprus as she was the Goddess and Queen of that realm."<sup>144</sup> The Loggetta's reliefs, which were positioned to be seen from the sea, depicted three figures that represented what both visitors and home-coming Venetians were expected to associate with the Venetian state: Justice (Venice), Jupiter (Crete) and Venus (Cyprus)—in short, a righteous republic ruling justly over its colonies. This imagery seems to have saturated various state-commissioned works of art throughout the sixteenth century. For instance, the early sixteenth-century bronze flagstaff pedestals from Alessandro Leopardi's workshop on the square of St. Mark present the viewer with the same program as the Loggetta's reliefs,<sup>145</sup> and the female grisaille figures in the ceiling painting of the Sala de Consiglio dei

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<sup>144</sup> "Nell'altro quadro dalla parte di mare è scolpita Venere significatiua del Regno di Cipro, come quella che fu Dea & Regina di quell Regno Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*, 388. Cardinal Girolamo de Bardi picked up on Sansovino's interpretation in his *Delle cose notabili della città di Venetia*, where, in a dramatized conversation between a Venetiano and a Forestiero (foreigner), the Venetian explains the foreigner that "Venere Dea delle delitie nacque in Cipri, e ne fu Regina no finta, ma uera, sì perche gli scrittori di ciò dico no, e sì anco perche M. Gian Matteo Bembo, che fù in reggiméto in quell'Isola, ha trouato la sua sepoltura. Ella è figurata qui, come uoi uedete, distesa, cioè posta in riposo, e quel garzonetto che le uola di sopra e Cupido. Ora quefta Venere significa l'Isola di Cipri, e uoi sapete che questi Signori haueuano già in gouerno quel Regno." Girolamo Bardi, *Delle cose notabili della città di Venetia* (Venice: 1586), 39.

<sup>145</sup> "Si dice che rappresentano anco i tre Regni di Venetia, di Cipri, & Candia. Che gli vltimi fossero Regni è noto ad ogn'uno, ma che Venetia sia nominato Regno, lo habbiamo dimostrato ampiamente piu inanzi." (They say that they represent the three kingdoms of Venice, Cyprus and Candia. That the latter two are called kingdoms

Dieci (Hall of the Council of Ten) in the Palazzo Ducale (fig. 12) depict what later interpreters (e.g. Vasari, Ridolfi, and Boschini) identified as the four “realms” of Venice, one of which was Cyprus in the figure of Venus.<sup>146</sup>

The iconographic exploitation of Venus and Cyprus continued well into the sixteenth century. Some of the rooms of the Palazzo Ducale burnt down in 1574 and 1577, and thus in their renovation new paintings needed to be made. Besides the grisailles representing the “realms” of Venice, the ceiling’s narrative paintings reveal how this relationship between the republic and its colonies was imagined in sixteenth-century Venetian state mythology: in a solemn gesture—being blessed with or graciously offered crowns and coronets—Venice received the royal and ducal titles of foreign territories. The rooms of the Council of Ten were decorated with allegorical ceiling paintings by Paolo Veronese, Giovanni Battista Zelotti, and Giovanni Battista Ponchino representing scenes from Greco-Roman mythology. Veronese’s painting entitled “Juno Showering her Gifts on Venice” (c. 1555) (fig. 13) shows Juno blessing Venice with wealth, dominion, and peace.<sup>147</sup> I claim that in the iconographical program of the Palazzo Ducale’s paintings—both panel and ceiling—the coronets and crowns being bestowed on Venice stand not only for an abstraction of Venetian rule over territories outside the confines of the lagoon, of which the aforementioned artworks are an example too, but also for being allotted concrete princely, ducal and royal titles. The characteristically shaped ducal (cap-)crown, the *corno*, is the best distinguishable of the crowns featured in Veronese’s painting.

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is known to everyone, but we have demonstrated widely already that Venice was called a kingdom [as well].) Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*, 293.

<sup>146</sup> Juergen Schulz, *Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 98-99.

<sup>147</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 138.

However, it is known from foreign visitors' accounts that the Venetian state physically possessed at least two other crowns from the colonies as well:<sup>148</sup> in all likelihood, one of them was the Crown of Candia (Crete) (fig. 14),<sup>149</sup> and the other was the Crown of Cyprus. In turn, an abstracted version of these crowns and coronets, which were associated with Venus through the Queen of Cyprus and became an attribute of Venetia (the republic's female personification) in renaissance Venetian painting, seem to have served to solve the contradiction between Venice's republicanism and its royal rights. Although doges were inaugurated by coronation, the ducal insignia (*corno* or *beretta* and the skull-cap) were never meant to bestow their wearer with holy dignity.<sup>150</sup> However, the Venetian colonization of Cyprus in 1489 entailed acquiring through Caterina Cornaro the crown of the kingdom, which, unlike the crown of the doge, *did* represent consecrated royal status. Consequently, to resolve the paradox of a "royal republic," the crown symbolizing monarchical rule was transferred from its physical presence to the realm of artistic symbols and allegories, where female figures wore the crown instead of Caterina Cornaro or the doge.

After the Venetian annexation of Cyprus one of these female figures became an amalgamated representation of Venus and Caterina Cornaro, a kind of "Queen Venus," who, in Venetian state iconography, bestowed her royal rights upon Venetia. Although the crown is

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<sup>148</sup> "A Tour in France and Italy, Made by an English Gentleman, 1675," in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels Consisting of Authentic Writers in our own Tongue, which have not before been collected in English, or have only been abridged in other Collections* vol. 1, ed. Thomas Osborne (London, 1745), 449.

<sup>149</sup> Giuseppe Grisoni [?], "The ancient Crown of Candia [...] now kept in the treasury of Venice (1707-69)," item no. 1893.0411.10.16, Collection Online, British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=706894&partId=1&people=122706&peoA=122706-2-10&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=706894&partId=1&people=122706&peoA=122706-2-10&page=1) (last accessed April 11, 2016).

<sup>150</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 207-8, 282-83.

not one of the iconographic attributes of Venus, the “Queen Venus” nevertheless existed in Venetian arts and letters, and was based on the iconographic merging of Caterina Cornaro and the antique goddess of love. For instance, Caterina Cornaro’s contemporary, Giovanni d’Arezzo’s panegyric sonnets dedicated to the ex-Queen of Cyprus, entitled *Sonetti di Giovanni Aretino alla illustrissima e serenissima regina di Cypro Catherina Cornelia*, identify Queen Caterina with Venus.<sup>151</sup> Likewise, the sixteenth-century poet Marco Stecchini (1549-1606) and the seventeenth-century Gian Francesco Loredan explicitly identified Caterina Cornaro with the *Dea Ciprigna* and *Venere*,<sup>152</sup> and the Venetian humanist Pietro Bembo’s 1505 *Gli Asolani*<sup>153</sup> also suggested a semantic linkage between the goddess of love and the queen.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, the sixteenth-century Venetian painting entitled *Nascita di Caterina Cornaro* (fig. 15) by an anonymous artist depicts the birth-bed of Caterina attended by one of the Zephyrs, who were traditionally believed to have guided Venus to the shores of Cyprus.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Tobias Leuker, “La Venere di casa Cornelia. Giovanni d’Arezzo e le sue poesie per Caterina Cornaro,” in *Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice*, eds. Candida Syndikus and Sabine Rogge (Münster/New York: Waxmann, 2013), 161-86.

<sup>152</sup> Martin Gaier, “Falconetto—Palladio—Contin,” 98-99.

<sup>153</sup> Pietro Bembo, *Gli Asolani*, trans. Rudolf B. Gottfried (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954).

<sup>154</sup> The plot of Bembo’s work takes place at Caterina Cornaro’s court in Asolo, where the queen and young noblemen and noblewomen are celebrating the marriage of Caterina Cornaro’s favorite maid. Two love songs sung at lunch to the dame of the house spark off a conversation between three young men and three young women about the nature of love, which serves the author’s aim to contemplate the Neoplatonic concept of Venus and love. Here Caterina is the authority to decide over matters of love, and thus not surprisingly she is eventually addressed as *Venere* or Venus. Bembo, *Gli Asolani*, 152.

<sup>155</sup> Monica Molteni, “Per l’iconografia cinquecentesca di Caterina Cornaro,” 23.

In the visual program of the new paintings of the Palazzo Ducale Venus-Caterina Cornaro handed her crown—that is her royal rights—to Venice. In his analysis, Carlo Ridolfi in his *Le Maraviglie dell'Arte* (1646-48) discusses the narrative of one of the paintings of the Sala dell' Anticollegio (originally in the Atrio Quadrato) in the Palazzo Ducale, Jacopo Tintoretto's *Venus Officiating at the Marriage of Ariadne and Bacchus* (1576-77) (fig. 16). Here Ridolfi claims that the painting is:

...meant to denote Venice born nearby the seashore, abounding not only in every good of the earth by heavenly grace, but crowned with the crown of freedom by the divine hand [of Venus].<sup>156</sup>

Thus, Ariadne in this context is Venice, who receives the crown from Venus, which allows not only for Ridolfi's interpretation that the crown symbolizes freedom, but also the actual transfer of sovereignty from Venus-Caterina Cornaro to Venice. Although Venice was personified in a complex female figure whose transformation from the Queen of Heaven (the Virgin Mary) to the Queen of the Adriatic left her with the characteristic attributes of the former's regalia,<sup>157</sup> I claim that in Venetian state iconography Caterina Cornaro's handing her crown over to Venetia, a frequent motif in late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venetian visual arts, was also integral to Venice's personification as a queen. A figurative representation of Venice, Venetia (or the Queen of the Adriatic), absorbed the elements of the myth of Venice thus constituting a visual compound of all the values Venice was thought to be attributed with. Each visual element of Venetia drew on a tradition of its own and could be identified with individual female

<sup>156</sup> Carlo Ridolfi, *Le Maraviglie dell'Arte ovvero Le Vite degli Illustri Pittori Veneti e dello Stato* vol. 2 (Padua: Tipografia e Fonderia Cartallier, 1837), 217.

<sup>157</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 13-46.

figures, namely the Virgin Mary, Justice, and, to a lesser extent, the goddess Roma as well as with chronologically the latest, Venus.<sup>158</sup> The Virgin Mary represented Venice's Immaculate Conception and eternal reign,<sup>159</sup> Justice stood for Venetian righteousness and (divine) wisdom,<sup>160</sup> goddess Roma was a reference to world rulership,<sup>161</sup> and finally Venus, who was only absorbed in the figure of Venetia in the sixteenth century, represented the city state's dedication to holy love, and emphasized its heavenly origins and birth from the sea.<sup>162</sup>

The sixteenth-century female iconography of Venice including Justice, the Virgin Mary and Venus<sup>163</sup> originated in Venice's turning from the Byzantine iconographic tradition toward western ideals and the ensuing adoption of the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin (Mary) from the mendicant orders. By the fifteenth century the foundations of Venice's Renaissance image had been laid, which, in state iconography meant that the "original" visual association of Venice with the lion of St. Mark was now augmented with the Virgin Mary. Venice's Marian cult had been deeply embedded in Venetian identity, whose crowned figure came to personify an inviolate and transcendent Venice.<sup>164</sup> However, toward the end of the

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 119, 138.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 3; Judith Resnik and Dennis Edward Curtis, *Representing Justice: Invention, Controversy, and Rights in City-states and Democratic Courtrooms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 79-80.

<sup>164</sup> Edward Muir, "Images of Power: Art and Pageantry in Renaissance Venice," *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (1979), 23-25.

sixteenth century, the principles of politically motivated art in Venice changed again, as a result of which the crowned Virgin Mary was “neutralized.”<sup>165</sup> after the 1570s Venice began to be depicted as a crowned female figure without a direct allusion to the Virgin. This transformation is traceable in the Venetian ritual of the *sposalizio del mare*, or the doge’s marriage to the sea. The ceremonial “wedding” took place annually on Ascension Day and from the late sixteenth century onward, when Venice’s power at sea was challenged by both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, allegorized not only Venice’s universal rule as the Virgin goddess but also, very specifically, its claim to the entire Adriatic as the Queen of the Sea. The doge, in this union, became King of the Waters, but more importantly, the ritual served as a communal memory and re-enactment of a legend which claimed that Venice’s independence and extraordinary claims for dominion outside the lagoon had originated from the 1177 Peace of Venice. It was held that in 1177 Pope Alexander III bestowed papal rights and power onto the doge (Sebastiano Ziani) alongside Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa), and thus the legitimacy of the doge’s power and Venetian supremacy were indisputable once and for all.<sup>166</sup>

Within this iconographic environment Venus’ mythological birth from the sea allowed for associating the ancient goddess with Venice, which was celebrated by Venetians and foreigners alike for having been founded on water. This associative link was further strengthened by Venice’s speculated birthday, 25 March, 421 CE, on which date Venus was in the ascendant. While the connotations of the Goddess of Love seem hardly compatible with those of the Virgin Mary, the iconographic contradiction seems to have been resolved by

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<sup>165</sup> By that time some of the key elements of Venice’s Marian cult had become incomprehensible for the wider public, like, for instance, the Festival of the Marys. See Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 146-53.

<sup>166</sup> Ruth Schilling, “Asserting the Boundaries: Defining the City and Its Territory by Political Ritual,” in *The Politics of Urban Space*, ed. Ch. Emden, C. Keen and D. Midgley, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), 90-99. Schilling, Ruth. 2006, 87–106.

Venus' re-interpretation as the embodiment of Divine Love (often depicted as the "re-cycled" classical imagery of the *Venere pudica* or modest Venus)<sup>167</sup> as opposed to her original identification with venereal passion.<sup>168</sup> The allophonic name of the republic and the goddess clearly called for similar associations.<sup>169</sup> However, Venus, besides her speculated and desirable attributes, was contemporaneously manifested in a living person unlike Venice's other two effigies, Justitia and the Virgin Mary. In Venetian iconography Caterina Cornaro was Venus herself,<sup>170</sup> and the sixteenth-century appropriation of the goddess into the myth of Venice seems to have drawn on this conjuncture.

In painting, the transfer of Cypriot monarchy enjoyed dissemination in the sixteenth century such as in L'Aliense's *Queen of Cyprus Caterina Corner Cedes the Crown of Cyprus to the Republic of Venice* (c. 1580-90) (fig. 17), one of the panels of the Sala di Maggior Consiglio, which depicted scenes of Venetian heroism throughout history. A much more general interpretation of the transfer of rule over the colonies to Venice is seen in Tintoretto's ceiling painting in the same room entitled *The Voluntary Submission of the Provinces to Venetian Dominion* (1578-85) (fig. 18). Although the latter does not feature Venus or Caterina Cornaro, it testifies, just like the paintings depicting Caterina Cornaro's ceding her crown, that

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<sup>167</sup> Peggy Fogelman, Peter Fusco and Marietta Cambareri, eds., *Italian and Spanish Sculpture: Catalogue of the J. Paul Getty Museum Collection* (Los Angeles: The Getty Trust, 2002), 56.

<sup>168</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 117.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 118; For instance, "Aut Venus à Venetis sibi fecit amabile nomen / Aut Venti nomen & omen habent..." (Either Venus has made herself a lovely name from [the name of] the Venetians / or the Venetians have [taken their] name and token from Venus) in Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni, *Venetia trionfante et sempre libera* (Venice: Andrea Muschio, 1613), viii.

<sup>170</sup> Gaier, "Falconetto—Palladio—Contin," 97-98; Hurlburt, "Body of Empire," 88.



the transfer of sovereignty from the colonies to Venice was imagined by the *Serenità* as a voluntary and solemn event, a justification of Venice's accidental and philanthropic empire. The same imagery is presented in Paolo Veronese's painting in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio of the Palazzo Ducale, the famous *Apotheosis of Venice* (1585) (fig. 19). In this painting, on the ceiling above the doge's tribunal, Venetia, elevated to the heights of Olympus, rules majestically as she is being crowned by Victory.<sup>171</sup> Underneath her, the female figure holding a crown is in fact the same, fully dressed *Venere pudica* as the one we see in Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love," holding a crown in her hand. (Perhaps the other, half-naked female figure facing her is the *Venere volgare*.) Here I disagree with David Rosand, who has interpreted this figure as one who receives the crown from Venetia. Even if, as Rosand suggests, Venetia in this painting should be "read" as an equivalent of Juno, the distributor of wealth and realms, in the picture's internal logic Venetia's awarding royal titles before being crowned seems unlikely. In any case, Venice, as a republic, was never in the position to award sovereignty. In contrast, I propose that in Veronese's painting Venetia is being offered two crowns at the same time: one from the celestials (hence the title "apotheosis") and another one from the colonies by a royal *Venus pudica*-Caterina Cornaro figure. And here the Palazzo Ducale's iconographical imagery comes full circle: the sixteenth-century Venetia's crown, in the logic of Venice's state-commissioned visual program, did not come from the Virgin Mary anymore but, in a classicizing gesture, from the Olympians, and in reference to Venice's colonizer identity, from Venus-Caterina Cornaro.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 41.

<sup>172</sup> Hurlburt, "Body of Empire," 64.

## 1.4 Conclusion

The fact that this iconographic program was executed in the most representative building suited for the depiction of state ideology shortly after Cyprus had been lost to the Ottoman Empire in 1571 might raise several questions about the Venetian interpretation of that loss. For instance, one may wonder whether losing Cyprus, which was evidently the key symbol of Venice's colonizer identity, eroded that self-image and whether the post-conquest paintings of the Palazzo Ducale were made out of nostalgia felt for past glory. This I do not know. However, in the following chapters I discuss cases where Venetian (and other western) misinterpretations of Ottoman visual arts and architecture suggest that the former tended to see ideological or derisive messages about the loss of Cyprus even where there was no such ideological intention at all.

## Chapter 2: Toward the War of Cyprus: the Declaration of War from an Intra- and Inter-Imperial Polemical Perspective

Popular interpretations of the Ottomans' reason for the War of Cyprus include Selim's craving for a steady supply of strong Cypriot wine and Joseph Nassi's aspirations for the crown of Cyprus.<sup>173</sup> While the Ottoman and Venetian sources obviously refute these tales, the Ottomans' official reasons for war do not provide a clearer explanation of what purpose the war served from the Ottoman court's perspective. The sources reveal at least two contradicting *casus belli*, each pointing to seemingly relevant sources of conflict between the Porte and the *Serenità*. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, upon closer inspection, both of these causes for declaration of war prove to serve polemical, as opposed to pragmatic, purposes in the Ottoman court's communication with its own elite and the Venetian state.

### 2.1 Cyprus or Granada?—Ottoman and Venetian Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence in Prelude to the War

Rumors about the Ottomans' preparing a new fleet intended for deployment against Cyprus started to emerge in January 1569. The Venetian *bailo* (ambassador) Marcantonio Barbaro immediately called for a meeting with the Polish convert Grand Dragoman İbrahim Bey to resolve the rumors. According to an intelligence dispatch to the *Serenità*, in the meeting İbrahim Bey

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<sup>173</sup> For the former see, for instance: Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus*, 161; Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 87; etc. For the latter see later in this chapter.

appeared very surprised saying that he did not know from where these rumors about Cyprus had emerged and swore to me [i.e. Barbaro], with many words upon his faith and life, that he did not know of any such intention on the Porte's part, and that we should not worry. On the contrary, he was convinced that this armada would be for the rescue of the Moors of Granada.<sup>174</sup>

It was not. Selim's response to the request of the "residents of Andalusia" (*sükkân-ı Endülü's*) for armed assistance in their rebellion against Philip II's anti-Morisco policy (War of Las Alpujarras) was clear: according to the letter quoted in Mehmed bin Mehmed er-Rumi's *Nuhbetü't-Tevarih* (*The Selection of Histories*, pre-1640), the Porte would give a helping hand to the Muslims of the former Kingdom of Granada only after the occupation of Cyprus.<sup>175</sup>

Barbaro was aware that an Ottoman campaign against Cyprus was only a matter of time. (Although most probably unknown to him, Selim seems to have warmed up to the idea of conquering Cyprus already as a prince when in 1562 he sent spies to the island to collect information about the topography, fortifications and military capacities of Venice's colony.)<sup>176</sup>

<sup>174</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, 263r.

<sup>175</sup> "Ameden ilç-i sükkân-ı Endülü's be-Asitane-i sa'adet: [...] 'şimdiki halde leşger-i zafer-girdar Kıbrıs ceziresi keferesi ile gir ü dar üzredür, bi-fazlihi te'ala cezire-i mezbure feth ü teshir olunduktan sonra hadd-i imkanda olan mertebe ile sizin imdad ve mu'avenetinizde dahi bezl-i makdur olunur' deyu taraf-ı saltanatdan cevap virilüb, gelen ademleri ruberah itdiler." Mehmed bin Mehmed, "Nuhbetü't-Tevarih," in Abdurrahman Sağırlı, "Mehmed B. Mehmed Er-Rumi (Edirneli)'nin Nuhbetü't-Tevarih ve'l-Ahbar'ı ve Tarih-i Ali-i Osman'ı (Metinleri, Tahlilleri)" (PhD. diss., Istanbul University, 2000), 336. Find a more detailed treatise of the same in Mustafa Ali's *Kühü'l-Ahbar: Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali ve Kühü'l-Ahbar'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri* vol. 2, ed. Faris Çerçi (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversite Yayınları, 2000), 64-65.

<sup>176</sup> Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Osmanlı-Habsburg Rekâbeti Çerçevesinde Osmanlılar'ın XVI. Yüzyıl'daki Akdeniz Siyaseti" [The Ottomans' Sixteenth-century Mediterranean Politics in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry], in *Osmanlı Dönemi Akdeniz Dünyası* [The Mediterranean World during the Ottoman Times], ed. M. Yaşar Ertaş, H. Çoruh and M. Z. Köse (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2011), 12.

As early as November 23, 1566, in the year of Selim's ascent to the throne, the previous Venetian *bailo* Giacomo Soranzo already warned the *Serenissima* that the sultan was planning to attack Cyprus, and that information coming from the *kapudan-ı derya* (head admiral of the navy) suggested it could happen as soon as the following year.<sup>177</sup> In 1567 Joseph Nassi, the sultan's long-time confidant, advisor and, as we will see, perhaps ideologue, also informed Soranzo that the Porte was planning to attack Cyprus.<sup>178</sup> Accordingly, construction on the walls of Famagusta and the new fortification system of Nicosia began in June 1567 under the supervision of soldier-engineer and new governor of the Cyprus militia Giulio Savorgnan.<sup>179</sup> The new Venetian *bailo*, however, kept receiving conflicting information from the highest spheres of Ottoman politics. In his *relazione* at the end of his office in 1573, Barbaro stressed, somewhat apologetically, that he remembered having written to the *Serenità* about how determined the sultan was to attack Cyprus, but the Grand Vizier himself, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, had also told him that Selim wanted to deal with the issue of the Moriscos first, and that

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<sup>177</sup> "... Mi vien riferito che questo Signor sia per far l' impresa di Cipro... Molti di questi Rais, et anco dei più familiari del Capitano di Mare ragionano assai, che se l' anno venture uscirà armata, sarà per l' impresa di ditto Regno." (I've been told that the Sultan is to undertake the campaign against Cyprus... Many of these captains and those who know well the Captain of the Sea [i.e. Admiral of the Navy] that if the armada is launched next year, it will be for [the campaign against] the same country [i.e. Cyprus].) Cited in Pompeo Molmenti: *Sebastiano Veniero e la battaglia di Lepanto* (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1899), 34.

<sup>178</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 2, fol. 137r.

<sup>179</sup> Gilles Grivaud, "Une société en guerre: Chypre face à la conquête ottoman," in *La Serenissima e la Nobilissima. Venice in Cyprus and Cyprus in Venice*, ed. Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2009), 194-203.

Cyprus was a less important issue (*causa manco importante*).<sup>180</sup> The latter seemed sensible: in January 1569, the Grand Dragoman had confided with Barbaro that

during the time of the great Admiral Rüstem [grand vizier 1544-53 and 1555-1561] it came up that they should attempt a campaign against Cyprus, or, as it was put back then, to conquer the island with 150 gallies. However, Rüstem thought it over, and [in an effort] to change this proposal, he argued, that, besides other [difficulties], if conquering Cyprus required 150 galleys, at least as many [gallies] needed to be armed so that they protect the other territories of the *Signor* [Sultan Süleyman] against the Christians. Because of this, knowing that it would be a difficult enterprise and of little utility to break the peace with such good allies, this [plan] was never raised again.<sup>181</sup>

Barbaro assured the Grand Dragoman that he was not worried and had full confidence in what he had just told him.<sup>182</sup> Habsburg intelligence fell for Ottoman disinformation as well: as late as October 14, 1569 Habsburg agents reported that despite the rumors, the Ottoman navy's target would be La Goleta, Malta or Granada.<sup>183</sup> In fact, the construction of a 150-strong Ottoman fleet in preparation for the war had begun as early as August 1568 when the overseer of the Samokov mines (in the vicinity of Sofia) was requested to supply nails for the imperial dockyards in Beşiktaş.<sup>184</sup> Merely a year later the fleet was ready for sortie. On the first days of

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<sup>180</sup> Eugenio Albèri, *Documenti di storia ottomana del secolo, XVI* vol. 1 (Florence: Tipografia all'Insegna di Clio, 1842), 324.

<sup>181</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 264r-264v.

<sup>182</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fol. 264v.

<sup>183</sup> Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean*, 255.

<sup>184</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2005), 239.

September 1569 (*Rebiülevvel* 977 A.H.), Selim appointed Piyale Pasha to command the Imperial Navy as *kapudan-ı derya* in its expedition against Cyprus.<sup>185</sup>

War preparations were repeatedly delayed on both Venice's and the Ottomans' part mainly for financial reasons. The Ottoman Empire's dwindling resources resulting from Sultan Süleyman's Hungarian campaign prevented Selim from launching the long-planned Cyprus campaign for years,<sup>186</sup> while it was also necessary to deal with the insurrection in Yemen and extricate the empire from the Astrakhan campaign prior to the new offensive. On Venice's part, a year into Savorgnan's office the fortification system of Nicosia was still unfinished. The Senate replaced him on August 21, 1568 with Astore Baglione, who left for Cyprus in November of the same year. The delay was due to financial rather than professional reasons. No sooner had Joseph Nassi informed Soranzo that the sultan wished to attack Cyprus than Venice began to reclaim the loans it had lent out to France. Luis de Requesens, King Philip II of Habsburg's representative in Rome, reported that the Pope (Pius V) did not believe Venice would answer his request favorably for further assistance in supporting the French crown's struggle with the Huguenots as they themselves were in urgent need of money—for the defences of Cyprus.<sup>187</sup> The *Serenità* had already reclaimed from France at least 100,000 ducats in September 1567 and allegedly another 400,000 ducats in October for the fortifications of

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<sup>185</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, ed. Mehmed İpşirli (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1989), 77.

<sup>186</sup> Feridun Bey, "Nüzhet'ül-esrar-il-ahbar der sefer-i Sigetvar," in *Feridun Bey: Les plaisants secrets de la campagne de Szigetvar*, ed. Nicolas Vatin (Vienna-Münster: LIT Verlag, 2010), fols. 158r-59v.

<sup>187</sup> Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), 939.

Cyprus.<sup>188</sup> Venice was continuously pressing for repayment even until six months after the loss of Famagusta, but the money never arrived.<sup>189</sup> However, as 1568 was coming to an end and the Ottomans had been occupied with their campaign in Yemen (which would lapse into the occupation of Sana and Aden by May and July of the following year respectively), it was becoming obvious that the looming attack on Cyprus would not take place anytime soon. Therefore, in November 1568 the Senate decided to cut down on military expenses in Cyprus and refused to extend the expiring contracts of the mercenaries hired for a prospective defence of Nicosia, Kyrenia and Famagusta two years earlier.<sup>190</sup>

The financial impediments in Venice's attempts to fortify Cyprus before the Ottoman attack, if not caused, were at least manipulated by Joseph Nassi. Just as Venice was reclaiming its loans from France, Nassi began to press for the repayment of *his* loan owed by Charles IX, which had also been used up in Charles's war on the Huguenots.<sup>191</sup> When, in early 1569 the Ottoman authorities confiscated the cargo of ships flying the French flag in Alexandria in compensation for the unpaid bill, it was clear that the imbroglio, which led to the French ambassador resident in Constantinople, Guillaume de Grantrie (de Grandchamp), being recalled to France, was mastered by Nassi (...*Gioan Michez hauesse imborsato in lui il tratto*

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<sup>188</sup> However, Setton claims that the total amount owed to Venice could not have surpassed 200,000 ducats and therefore the Signoria's claim for 400,000 ducats from Catherine de' Medici must have been a misunderstanding on Requenses's part. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 939. Benjamin Arbel claims that the debt amounted to 150,000 ducats. Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 58.

<sup>189</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, vol.4, 939.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 937.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*



*delle sopraditti Naui et robbe non é dubbio...*).<sup>192</sup> And clearly, it resulted in the diminished chances of Venice to recollect its loan from the French crown in the foreseeable future. In lack of sufficient resources and due to Grand Vizier Sokollu's prospective Don-Volga project and expedition in Astrakhan, Venice continued cutting down on military spending in the *stato da mar*. When Barbaro reported convincingly on March 12, 1569 that the Ottoman navy would not sail out to the "*Mar Maggiore*" that year either<sup>193</sup> (naval campaigns would be focused on the Indian Ocean, and in September the Astrakhan campaign would be launched),<sup>194</sup> the *Signoria* continued reducing the number of its mercenaries even further in the *stato da mar*.<sup>195</sup> In consequence, Cyprus's defence lines became so poorly attended that an Ottoman squadron even managed to enter the fort of Famagusta unchecked later that month.<sup>196</sup>

In the meantime, diplomatic negotiations secured peace between the new sultan and his empire's major international partners and rivals. Treaties were signed with Venice, Poland and the Safavids in 1567, peace was signed with the Habsburgs in 1568, and negotiations with France resulted in the re-enforcement of the pre-existing treaty in 1569.<sup>197</sup> Further, by abandoning military operations in Astrakhan and the prospective Don-Volga canal, peace with Ivan IV was stabilized by 1570, and counter-insurgency operations in the Yemen were also

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<sup>192</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fol. 14v.

<sup>193</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 9r-9v.

<sup>194</sup> Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 133.

<sup>195</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 939.

<sup>196</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 5, fol. 41r.

<sup>197</sup> Compensation for the confiscation of the French cargo in Alexandria was negotiated, in result of which the Porte repaid Charles IX 5,000,000 ducats. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 939; see also ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 14v-15r.

terminated by July 1569. Negotiations with Venice began shortly after Selim's enthronement. In April 1567 Marino Cavalli, following talks with İbrahim Bey in Venice in January of the same year, arrived in Istanbul, and in July returned to Venice with the renewal of the peace of 1540 between the Porte and the *Serenità*.<sup>198</sup> The peace enforced the existing territorial dependencies of both Venice and the Ottoman Empire in Dalmatia and the Eastern Mediterranean, and guaranteed the neutrality of Venice in any military initiative against the Ottomans. The most important aspect of the *ahdname* in the context of the Ottomans' Cyprus campaign was its emphasis on the mutual condemnation of corsair activities, including those of the Uskoks of Dalmatia, and the extradition of Muslim corsairs to the Porte if captured by Venetian vessels.<sup>199</sup> Despite the agreement, piracy remained a source of continuous diplomatic conflict: only between September 1568 and September 1569 fifty *dispacci* to the *Serenità* report on cases of piracy causing trouble between Venice and the Porte.<sup>200</sup>

In the meantime, despite the delays, war preparations in the Ottoman Empire continued. Simultaneously with the appointment of Piyale Pasha, Lala Mustafa Pasha, the sixth vizier, was appointed as the chief of the army. He was to command the Governor of Anatolia İskender Pasha, the Governor of Karaman Hasan Pasha, the Governor of Sivas Behram Pasha, the

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<sup>198</sup> Willy Andreas, "Eine unbekannte venezianische Relazion über die Türkei 1567, Marino Cavalli: Relazione de la cose di Constantinopoli del 1567 (Hauck, Nr. 6)," in *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (Heidelberg, 1914), 8-13; Maria Pia Pedani, *I 'documenti turchi' dell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Inventario della miscellanea* (Rome: Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Ufficio Centrale per i Beni Archivistici, 1994), 198.

<sup>199</sup> 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," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 1 no. 2 (1998): 437-69 esp. 470-89.  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20041106030212/http://www2.let.uu.nl/Solis/anpt/ejos/EJOS-I.2.html>

<sup>200</sup> Işıkşel, "La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," 219.

Governor of Maraş Mustafa Pasha, the Governor of Aleppo Derviş Pasha, the Governor of Şehrizol Mazul Muzaffer Pasha, as well as the commanders of the provinces of Trikkala, Yanina, Morea, Elbasan and Prizrin with their troops and five thousand janissaries under the leadership of their colonel, Yahya. Lala Mustafa Pasha was also assigned the squadrons of armorers, artillerymen and a number of cavalry troops. Piyale Pasha, in turn, was to guard the land forces from the sea during operation.<sup>201</sup>

In spite of the confirmation of the treaty with Venice in 1568, the Ottomans' often referred-to *amicitia* was turning into a sensible *inimicitia*: from January 1569 onward Barbaro reported on a general atmosphere of enmity toward Venice on the Porte's part. Although piracy had always been a source of conflict and the Dalmatian and Albanian borderlands had seen minor incursions and tussles between Venetians and Ottomans, from 1569 onward the usual skirmishes tended to become more serious. Tension was growing in Istanbul as well. Already

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<sup>201</sup> Eftihios Gavriel, "The Expedition for the Conquest of Cyprus in the Work of Kâtib Çelebi," 32. A contemporary of the events and scribe of Lala Mustafa, Mustafa Ali, also gives the composition of the Ottoman army and navy deployed in the offensive: "İskender pasha, the beglerbeg of Anatolia, Kapudan Ali pasha, the beglerbeg of Algiers, Hasan pasha, the beglerbeg of Karaman, Behram pasha, the judge of Sivas in Rumelia, Mustafa pasha, the son of Cafer pasha, lord of Zül, Dervish pasha, the beglerbeg of Aleppo, and from the province of Şehr-i Zül the commanders and honourable beglerbegs of Tarhala, Ionia, Morea, Elbasan and Perzirin were different from them. From the sultan's servants the *kethüda* of Ionia with 5,000 janissaries, a squadron of artillery behind them, and a force of men, were sent to [join] the famous *spahis*. From the deputies of dignitaries the brave, sea-knowing, and honourably dressed vizier, Piyale pasha was sent to secure the seaside." *Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali ve Künhü'l-Ahbar'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri* vol. 2, ed. Faris Çerçi (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000), 67-68. Note that according to Mustafa Ali, the later *kapudan-ı derya* Uluç (Kılıç) Ali Pasha took part in the War of Cyprus from the outset, whereas according to Katib Çelebi, he did not. This difference in the sources might be caused by the fact that Kılıç Ali took part in the campaign not in the waters around Cyprus but sailing around Sicily to prevent re-inforcement from Spain reaching Cyprus during the offensive. (See Chapter 5.) For a detailed chronology of the allocation and organization of troops, equipment and rations, see *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (978-979 / 1570-72): Özet-Transkripsyon ve İndeks* vol. 1 (Ankara: T. C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1996), 43-59.

in January, after reporting on a meeting with the grand vizier, which was held to resolve the usual problem of captured ships, withheld cargo and captives, the *bailo*, incidentally added that he would not like to misinform the *Serenità* about the “rumors and suspicions” (*all’hora non mancherò di darne aviso a Vostra Serenità lo uoci, et sospetti...*) about a provisional military plan for an Ottoman offensive against Cyprus.<sup>202</sup> The *bailo* seems to have underestimated these rumors. The same month he wrote that while there was a general hearsay about a prospective attack, there were ones which contradicted them, and that self-appointed informants kept coming to him exaggerating about the suspicions (*agrandir il questo sospetto di Cipro*) in hope that their “services” would be rewarded.<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, Barbaro asked İbrahim Bey to arrange another meeting with the Grand Vizier as “in full honesty, I would not believe [...] that without any reason the Signor would break the peace, [mutual] trust and the oath he has given to Your Serenity...”<sup>204</sup> Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in an attempt to propose a non-belligerent solution tried to persuade Barbaro that Cyprus was simply too far from Venice, while, trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean would only become more secure if the island were handed over to the Sultan.<sup>205</sup> Barbaro also reported on being told about accusations at the Porte that Venice allowed the Muslim sites of veneration in Cyprus to function as churches and the sultan’s request to hand over Cyprus to the Porte, to which Barbaro responded that the island was not his, and therefore he could not negotiate for it.<sup>206</sup> On another instance, the sultan

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<sup>202</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 288r-288v.

<sup>203</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fol. 272r.

<sup>204</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 289r-289v.

<sup>205</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 292r-292v.

<sup>206</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 294r-294v.

objected to the Venetian presence within certain confines of the Dalmatian and Albanian borderlands, to which the doge and the Senate replied duly on June 11, 1569. The authors of the letter must have sensed what Barbaro was experiencing on location, namely that the new sultan was breaking the habit of his ancestors of maintaining good relations with the *Serenità*. In their reply the doge and the Senate gave voice to the fact that the disputed lands had been in Venetian possession “*per tanti et tanti anni*” which had been confirmed by Selim’s forefathers in various treaties (...*come anco appar per diverse capitulationi fatte con il serenissimi suoi predecessori...*).<sup>207</sup> As time passed, the strain grew further. From July 1569 onward Barbaro reported, with growing certainty, about an approaching attack, which he discerned from fragmentary pieces of information. A letter sent from the *Serenità* to the Captain of Famagusta and the *Provveditore Generale* of Cyprus claimed that the *bailo*, on July 11, had reported military movements on the mainland vicinity of Cyprus, which could be directed against Cyprus and Candia. Hesitantly advised that it was just as well possible that the Ottomans were not planning to attack Cyprus at all, the recipients of the letter were nevertheless ordered to remain cautious.<sup>208</sup> From July onward Venetian officials resident in Cyprus were repeatedly reminded of the importance of winning the loyalty of the locals. This was especially important in light of the information coming from Barbaro about the general affinity of the Greek serfs of Cyprus, who were “kept in servitude” (*tenuti in servitù*), toward the Ottomans in case of an invasion rather than the Venetians.<sup>209</sup> On December 21, 1569 Barbaro reported that the physician Solomon Ashkenazi, whose patients included Sokollu and Barbaro, had begun

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<sup>207</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 940.

<sup>208</sup> Vladimir Lamansky, *Secrets d’Etat de Venise*. (St. Petersburg: Academie Impériale des Sciences, 1884), 031.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 032-034.

enquiring from Nassi and perhaps even Barbaro about the safety of his investments in Venetian Crete given the unfolding conflict between the *Serenità* and the Porte.<sup>210</sup> Further, a series of orders dated December 1569 commanding Lala Mustafa Pasha to proceed to Cyprus suggest that the on-site groundwork for the Cyprus campaign was already happening while, Venetian and Habsburg intelligence were still in the dark about when a war would be fought and where.<sup>211</sup> Eventually, the strained diplomatic relations reached their pinnacle in early 1570 when Selim sent Venice his ultimatum: “We demand of you Cyprus, which you shall give us willingly or perforce; and do not irritate our horrible sword, for we shall wage most cruel war against you everywhere.”<sup>212</sup>

By the time the Ottoman envoy Kubad Çavuş (sergeant) left Istanbul on February 11 and arrived in Venice on March 25, 1570 with the ultimatum of the sultan, the members of the Senate were left with little doubt about what that letter might contain. A few days before Kubad’s arrival in Venice Barbaro received information from Lala Mustafa Pasha through one of his “boys” that the Porte hoped the *Serenità* would not jeopardize *amicitia* with the Ottomans for a “piece of rock” that is Cyprus (*per uno sasso, como dice esso Bassà, intendendo l’isola di Cipro...*).<sup>213</sup> On September 13, 1569 the Venetian Arsenal caught fire, in consequence of which not only did much of the republic’s gunpowder deposits explode—causing many in Venice to think Doomsday had arrived—but it also provided a reason for the pro-war faction in Istanbul to see in Venetian-held Cyprus an easier target than they had previously

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<sup>210</sup> See dispatch cited in Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 82.

<sup>211</sup> Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 55.

<sup>212</sup> Hill, *History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 888.

<sup>213</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 5, fols. 4r-4v.

anticipated.<sup>214</sup> Yet, in Venice “men could not believe their own fears, which they had found to prove false severall times before; so as being now accustomed to a long peace, they could not easily perswade themselves that their condition could be altered.”<sup>215</sup> Wishful thinking on the Senate’s part (and, clearly, delays in Ottoman war preparations as well as purposeful disinformation) resulted in delay in making substantial provisions for the navy in hope that the Ottomans would once more pick another target.<sup>216</sup> However, the *balio*’s reports show that at least since July 1569 it had been becoming more and more obvious that an attack would soon be inevitable and that it would target Cyprus. Moreover, according to a dispatch, an expedition had recently returned from Cyprus that upon the Sultan’s commission had been looking for marble for his new mosque, the Selimiye’s decoration.<sup>217</sup> As will be discussed later, Selim’s symbolic act of re-creating Roman imperial authority was to collect marble columns and slabs from ancient edifices in diverse parts of the empire, and consequently, the plan to use Cypriot marble as well for his mosque should have indicated to the Venetians the sultan’s imperial claim for the island.

The Senate now tried to make up hastily for the time they had lost previously. Garrisons were sent to Cyprus and in January 1570 the governors of the island were explicitly ordered to win the loyalty of the locals and keep a close eye on the agents of Joseph Nassi operating on

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<sup>214</sup> Paolo Paruta, “The Wars of Cyprus,” Book 1 Part 2, in *The History of Venice and the Wars of Cyprus*, trans. H. Monmouth (London: Abel Roper & Henry Herringman, 1658), 10-12.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 12; Although it is not impossible that it was this mission which Lala Mustafa Pasha was ordered to command in December of the previous year, it is unlikely that such a highly ranked courtier and military officer (by this time Lala Mustafa had been appointed the head of the land forces in the Cyprus campaign) would have been delegated such a task.

<sup>216</sup> Paruta, “The Wars of Cyprus,” 12-13.

<sup>217</sup> Işıkse, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 220.

the island,<sup>218</sup> while the island's feudatories were requested to yield arms and horses for the prospective defence. Commanders-in-chief were assigned to Cyprus's sea forts, while commissary generals were assigned to augment the defenses of Chania, Candia, Corfu and Zara.<sup>219</sup> Captains and galley governors were appointed under the Captain of the Fleet Girolamo Zane, an earlier *bailo* in Istanbul.<sup>220</sup> While the recruitment of troops throughout Italy and the re-allocation of vessels, manpower and war equipment across the *stato da mar* was taking place, the Senate appealed to Pope Pius V to advocate a joint effort by the Christian princes to defend Cyprus.<sup>221</sup> However, as has been mentioned before, by this time the Porte had secured peace with some of the major players, which caused long and unfruitful negotiations on the Pope and Venice's part, and, in turn, further delays in reacting effectively to the Ottoman menace. By the time Genoa, Parma, Savoy, Spain, Tuscany, and the Knights of St. John formed a Holy League with Venice in May 1571, Cyprus was already unrecoverable.<sup>222</sup>

Kubad's embassy to Venice was admittedly Sokollu's last effort to settle the unfolding conflict peacefully contrary to the will of the Mustafa Pasha-Piyale Pasha-Joseph Nassi alliance at the Porte, but in concord with Barbaro's intention to save time for the Senate in their war preparations.<sup>223</sup> Sokollu did not want war with Venice, and he was doing his best to avoid it

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<sup>218</sup> Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 63.

<sup>219</sup> Paruta, "The Wars of Cyprus," 13.

<sup>220</sup> Paruta, "The Wars of Cyprus," 13-14.

<sup>221</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 1015-16.

<sup>223</sup> The unbreakable alliance between Mehmed and Barbaro is well illustrated by the *bailo* ordering 300 oil lamps for the Grand Vizier from Venice while the tension between Venice and the Ottoman Empire was growing in June 1569. ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 104r-105v. Sokollu also helped Barbaro smuggle his letters from his house to be dispatched to Venice during the *bailo*'s confinement during



even at the cost of potentially being accused of disloyalty to the Sultan.<sup>224</sup> The 1569 military plan of the offensive may even have been leaked by him to Barbaro.<sup>225</sup>

Selim's letter to the Senate in March 1570 demanded the dismantling of Venetian fortresses built along the border in Dalmatia, from where, yet again, borderland skirmishes and Ottoman incursions were reported.<sup>226</sup> Also, the letter put forward the Sultan's ultimatum that Venice should either surrender Cyprus due to the Republic's breaking the treaty by harboring pirates in Cyprus or expect war.<sup>227</sup> The letter listed individual cases of piracy to support the accusation: in summer 1569 Christian privateers received food and water in Cyprus before destroying two Ottoman ships and killing their crew; Venetians refused to give the names of the privateers when the Ottoman authorities of Alexandria asked from them; in autumn 1569 another Ottoman ship was plundered between Alexandria and Rosetta in Egypt by privateers who had previously stopped in Cyprus; Venetians killed the *levends* they captured while, according to the existing *ahdname*, they were obliged to return them to the Ottoman authorities; the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul did not receive instructions regularly and, in this way, many affairs could not be resolved fast and efficiently enough; the father of a Christian Ottoman merchant was charged by the Venetians for trading in steel, a forbidden merchandise, and killed; and that the merchant Hacı Ali on his way to Cattaro (Kotor) to trade there was robbed

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the war of 1570-73. Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560-1600," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 107-28 esp. 118.

<sup>224</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 951.

<sup>225</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 288r-288v.

<sup>226</sup> Paruta, "The Wars of Cyprus," 25.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 25-26; Işıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 222-23.

by Uskoks and he was not indemnified, notwithstanding the duty of the Venetian authorities to vouchsafe the free conduct of cargoes in Venetian territory.<sup>228</sup> The *Serenità* found itself in a deadlock. The Senate had already pleaded for help with the Pope and Christian princes, which had up to this point yielded little more than promises. Thus, surrendering Cyprus would have been a loss of face Venice could not afford without any guaranty that, once the peace was broken, Selim's military ambitions would not continue at the expense of further Venetian territories. Anti-war senate members were suddenly outnumbered by those who were now convinced of the necessity of the war, and Doge Pietro Loredan's (doge 1567-1570) death in May was even said to have been due to poisoning for considering ceding Cyprus to the Ottomans (even though the Doge died at the respectable age of eighty-eight).<sup>229</sup> After some consideration, Kubad was dismissed with the message that Venice accepted the war.<sup>230</sup>

## 2.2 The Ottomans' Contradictory *Casus Belli*

While the sultan's *casus belli* to demand Cyprus from Venice was piracy and Venetian violations of the existing agreements, in Istanbul another, completely different, justification was in the making for domestic use. Although Selim accused Venice of contravening the *ahdname* of 1567, the sultan turned to *Şeyhülislam* (chief jurisprudent) Ebusuud for legal advice upon his prospective war campaign:

A land was previously in the realm of Islam. After a while, the abject infidels overran it, destroyed the colleges and mosques, and left them vacant. They filled the pulpits and the galleries with the tokens of infidelity and error, intending to

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<sup>228</sup> Pedani, "Some Remarks," 23.

<sup>229</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 3, 884

<sup>230</sup> Paruta, "The Wars of Cyprus," 26.

insult the religion of Islam with all kinds of vile deeds, and by spreading their ugly acts to all corners of the earth. [...] When peace was previously concluded with the other lands in the possession of the said infidels, the aforementioned land was included. An explanation is sought as to whether, in accordance with Pure shari'a, this is an impediment to the Sultan's determining to break the treaty.<sup>231</sup>

According to the petition, Selim sought to recover Muslim religious buildings neglected and abused by Christians with whom peace was secured by a treaty. This was a conceptual leap from what was being communicated to Venice and required the *Şeyhü'l-islam*'s assistance: if the treaty had been broken by the Venetians in the first place as the “original” *casus belli* suggested, attacking Venetian-held Cyprus would have been justified. Furthermore, as *gaza* was a duty of the sultan (as the anonymous *Hırzû'l-Müluk* [Mirror for Princes] written for Murad III advises: “...doing as many conquests as possible and inflicting fear in the hearts of the unbelievers are part of the important business of religion and state”),<sup>232</sup> a war to be waged on the “infidels” would not have required the jurisconsult's justification,<sup>233</sup> only his authorization, which was one of his customary duties.<sup>234</sup> The case of waging war on the “enemy” with which the Muslim ruler had a treaty was indeed doubtful.<sup>235</sup> If the war was not thought to be justified on the basis of the *ahdname* but on religious principles, launching the offensive would in fact be a violation of the existing treaty, but in this case by the Ottomans,

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<sup>231</sup> Cited in Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic legal tradition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 84-85; and Gavriel, “The Expedition for the Conquest of Cyprus in the Work of Kâtib Çelebi,” 28.

<sup>232</sup> Cited in Işıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 170.

<sup>233</sup> *ibid.* 230.

<sup>234</sup> Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East* Vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 85.

<sup>235</sup> Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic legal tradition*, 84.

which is explicitly stated at the end of the sultan's letter. What adds a touch of suspicion to what purpose this exchange was meant to serve is the *şeyhülislam*'s ruling (*fetva*):

There is no possibility that it could ever be an impediment. For the Sultan of the people of Islam (may God glorify his victories) to make peace with the infidels is legal only when there is a benefit to all Muslims. When there is no benefit, peace is never legal. When a benefit has been seen, and it is then observed to be more beneficial to break it, then to break it becomes absolutely obligatory and binding. His Excellency [Mohammed] the Apostle of God (may God bless him and give him peace) made a ten-year truce with the Meccan infidels in the sixth year of the Hegira. His Excellency Ali (may God enoble his face) wrote a document that was corroborated and confirmed. Then, in the following year, it was considered more beneficial to break it and, in the eighth year of the Hegira, [the Prophet] attacked [the Meccans], and conquered Mecca the Mighty.<sup>236</sup>

Ebusuud's ruling, instead of reflecting on the question whether it is justifiable to break a treaty in order to re-conquer a lost Muslim territory, suggests that the treaty may have been unbeneficial for Muslims in the first place. The jurist's reference to the Prophet and Mecca seem more to provide an overwhelming argument for Muslims in favor of any military campaign rather than a decision on a specific legal issue. Ebusuud's rulings, including this one, were in wide circulation and appear in a relatively large number of Ottoman manuscripts, whereby the frequently copied *fetvas* provided the Ottoman scribal elite with an insight into the "official" motives of political and social decisions made at the court.<sup>237</sup> Thus Selim's reformulation of his *casus belli* seems to be a statement about his image as a protector of Islam more than referring to an actual source of conflict between his empire and Venice. The exchange between the sultan and the chief jurist is also an inevitable attempt to pacify

<sup>236</sup> *ibid.* and Gavriel, "The Expedition for the Conquest of Cyprus in the Work of Kâtib Çelebi," 28.

<sup>237</sup> Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic legal tradition*, 58.

the “people [who] oppose the Cyprus campaign” as we learn from one of Barbaro’s *dispacci* dated March 26, 1570.<sup>238</sup>

In essence, deeming the *ahdname* with Venice illegitimate in religious terms was a domestically more resonant argument for breaking the treaty than the accusation that Venice had violated the agreements. Furthermore, the dating of the two *casus belli* reveals more about the Ottoman court’s attempts to find the most suitable reason to declare war on Venice: in mid-January 1569 Barbaro reported Venice having been accused of mistreating Muslim religious sites in Cyprus. According to the dispatch, the information coming from the *ulema* (*principali Dottori della legge...*) that Cypriot mosques had been converted into churches aggravated the sultan (*...agrauano assai l’anima del Sig[no]r...*), who demanded Cyprus to be ceded immediately.<sup>239</sup> Barbaro replied to the Grand Dragoman that Cyprus had never been a land of Islam, and they simply had no memory of anything that would refute this (*non ui essendo memoria in contrario*).<sup>240</sup> Clearly, Ebusuud’s *fetva* was cogitated prior to this meeting. Thus, the Ottomans’ *casus belli* based on the *Sharia* was tested on Barbaro, and apparently failed as the *bailo* refused to continue talks along the lines of Hanafi legal reasoning. Barbaro pointed out in one of his *dispacci* that in diplomatic terms, adding a religious angle to the debate made little sense. As it was not his “profession” to be familiar with Islamic religious law, all negotiations should rely on the discretion of both parties, as it is customary in all “*leggi & religioni*”.<sup>241</sup> However, these objections seem only excuses to avoid discussing the matter

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<sup>238</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 5, fols. 21r- 25v.

<sup>239</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 294r-294v.

<sup>240</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 294v

<sup>241</sup> “[...] Se ben io essendo X.no non faceua professione di saper li termini della sua religion, pero che sapeua, che in tutte le leggi & religioni il retto giudicio si faceua con usar la ragioni di tutte due le parti [...]” (As I am a

altogether. Like other representatives of (domestic or foreign) interests in the Ottoman capital, Barbaro was very well aware of the fact that *Sharia* law was a tool in the diplomatic maneuverings in Istanbul. The *şeyhülislam*'s intercession and legal opinion in support of one's interests were frequently called upon not only by the Porte and Ottoman subjects but by foreigners as well. In one of his recent studies, Joshua M. White has dubbed "*fetva* diplomacy" the early modern practise of Christian diplomats and their Ottoman Muslim interlocutors of seeking and deploying the *şeyhülislam*'s favorable legal opinions to secure their interests in all manner of affairs.<sup>242</sup>

The following day, on March 27, Barbaro reported that Ibraim Granatino, a Morisco emissary, had petitioned Ebusuud for a *fetva* in which the *şeyhülislam* ruled that the sultan was obliged to prioritize supporting the Moriscos in their armed struggle against Philip II's Spain over the Cyprus campaign. When Ebusuud issued the *fetva*, it was then submitted to the sultan with a formal request (*...esso Mufti ha presentato un Arz al S[igno]r con un fetfà*).<sup>243</sup> Both Barbaro and Granatino were aware of the fact that the latter's lobbying the *şeyhülislam* was beneficial for Venice too in its being menaced by the impending Ottoman campaign against Cyprus.<sup>244</sup> Consequently, it seems that, on the one hand, both the contradicting *fetvas* (one supporting the Cyprus campaign and another advising the sultan against it) and Barbaro's

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Christian who has not made his profession to know the principles of his (i.e. the Grand Dragoman's) religion, but one who knows that in every law and religion the right judgment is made with the use of the discretion of both parties.) ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fol. 291v.

<sup>242</sup> Joshua M. White, "Fetva Diplomacy: The Ottoman Şeyhülislam as Trans-Imperial Intermediary," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 199-221, esp. 201-2.

<sup>243</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 5, fols. 27v-28v.

<sup>244</sup> Tijana Krstić, "The Elusive Intermediaries: Moriscos in Ottoman and Western European Diplomatic Sources from Constantinople, 1560s-1630s," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 129-51, esp. 130.

objections against discussing the issue of Cyprus on religious grounds were only part of the usual diplomatic meanderings. On the other hand, it also seems that, despite Barbaro's being presented with a religious justification for the war, it was in fact aimed entirely at a domestic Muslim audience, and whether or not the Venetians would "accept" it, at least from the Porte's point of view, was peripheral.

However, regardless of the expectations, it was not only the Venetians who had reservations about Ebusuud's *fetva* justifying the campaign. Just how inefficient this justification may have been in the Ottoman Empire is seen in the works of two later Ottoman historians. The seventeenth-century İbrahim Peçevi's chronicle *Tarih-i Peçevi* and the *Tuhfetü'l-kibar fi esfari'l-bihar* (*A Gift to the Great Ones about Naval Campaigns*, 1656) by Katib Çelebi report on the War of Cyprus and reproduce the *fetva* with word for word accuracy. Even though both Peçevi and Çelebi had access to the *fetva*, they seem to have disregarded Selim and Ebusuud's reasons in favor of the war thus presented to the members of the court, as both historians focused on the issue of Christian piracy as the *casus belli*. According to Peçevi, Selim's argument for the war was that Muslim pilgrims and merchants could not pass to Egypt in safety from being looted by Christian pirates, whereas Katib Çelebi claims that it was specifically the plundering of Selim's personal cargo that sparked the conflict. That is, in both historians' opinion the principal reason for the Ottomans to attack Cyprus was piracy—the same as what the Porte communicated to the Venetians. Piri Efendi, the author of *Fethiyye-i Cezire-i Kıbrıs* (*The Conquest of the Island of Cyprus*; ca. 1571) and the first Ottoman chronicler of the invasion, also sees piracy as Selim's ultimate reason for the war:

calamity-causing and hedious satans [who were] protected by cursed Venice, on a number of ships [which were] secretly carrying robbers, were harassing merchants on their way to the land of Egypt and penitent pilgrims travelling by the sea through the waters of Egypt to the Holy Kaaba ([may] Allah bestow his grace upon it), and robbed them of their possessions and stole their

merchandises. Furthermore, many of them became captives in the prison of torture and sufferers of pain and hardship...<sup>245</sup>

Furthermore, no Ottoman chronicler mentions any Muslim religious buildings on the island that had ever needed to be recovered from the “infidels,” except for one instance. In the *Cihannuma* (*Cosmography*, 1648), Katib Çelebi reports on a *tekke* in the Larnaca region, where “one of the female disciples [of the Prophet]” was laid to eternal rest. However, the *tekke*’s name and full importance eluded the historian.<sup>246</sup> In fact, the *tekke* in question—known as the Hala Sultan *tekkesi*—that housed the shrine of the Prophet Mohammed’s aunt and wet-nurse, could have served as good enough reason to rescue Cyprus from Venetian rule. Yet, Katib Çelebi does not mention it in relation to the island’s Ottoman occupation. Even more emblematic is the fact that Ebusuud’s contemporaries Mustafa Selaniki (*Tarih-i Selaniki*) and Mustafa Ali (*Künhü’l-Ahbar*), writing several decades after the conquest, do not evoke this *fetva* at all, which is perhaps an indication that its ideological utility was very context- and time-specific, designed to justify the sultan’s preference for the Cyprus campaign over relieving Spain’s embattled Muslims (Moriscos)—the cause preferred by the wider public—in religious terms. After all, avoiding mentioning certain facts, let alone one’s own opinion on

<sup>245</sup> “[...] şeyatin-i na-hemvar-ı nekbet-şî’ar Venedik-i la’in canibine istizhar etmekile ba’zi gemilerin hufyeten harami-var gezdürüp diyar-ı Misra giden tüccarı ve Ka’be-i şerif, “Şerreffehe’l-lahü Te’ala bihi” ve derya yüzinden mahmil-i Misra ‘ubur eden huccac-ı mağrifet-medarı rencide edüp ekseriyya mallari garet ve meta’ları hasaret olunduğundan ma’ada niçeleri giriftar-ı mahbes-i mihnet ve allude-i derd ü hasret olmağın [...]” Piri Efendi, *Fethiyye-i Cezire-i Kıbrıs*, ed. Harid Fedai (Nicosia: K.K.T.C Milli Eğitim, Kültür, Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1997), 5.

<sup>246</sup> “...bir mukellef tekkiye[-i] ziyaret vardır, anda sahabiyyeden bir hatun olur.” Katib Çelebi, *Cihannuma*, SK. Pertevniyal no. 754, 613.



them, in order to prevent their patron's or the sultan's disfavor was a common practice among Ottoman chroniclers.<sup>247</sup>

Ten years after the fall of Cyprus, an illuminated manuscript called the *Şehname-i Selim Han* (The Book of Kings of [Sultan] Selim Khan, 1581) was finished in the workshop of the Court Historiographer (*Şehnameci*) Seyyid Lokman in Istanbul. (For more on Lokman see Chapter 5). The manuscript's production was commissioned by Selim II's successor, Murad III, to commemorate his sultan father's greatest deeds in text and images. In the manuscript's discussion of the Ottoman victory in Cyprus, two miniatures depict the execution of Famagusta's Captain Bragadino and his commanders. We learn that Bragadino had to suffer a most gruesome death by flaying and the reason for this severe punishment was fifty Muslim captives that the Ottomans allegedly found in the fort of Famagusta upon entering the walled city. The incarceration of Muslims by Venetians became the "official" reason of Bragadino's execution,<sup>248</sup> which emphasized the legitimacy of the war and made sure that the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who had objected to the war since its preparation, would not be able to renew the peace with the *Serenissima* anytime soon.<sup>249</sup>

No matter which *casus belli* applies, the war did not solve the problem of piracy associable with Cyprus. On the contrary, by 1600 piracy was so intense that the Dutch consul had to guarantee that the crew of Santa Cruz, a Dutch ship ready to disembark at Larnaca, were

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<sup>247</sup> Onur Yıldırım, "The Battle of Lepanto and Its Impact on Ottoman History and Historiography," *Mediterraneo in armi (secc. XV-XVIII) (Supplement of the Journal Mediterranean)* 2 (2007), 545.

<sup>248</sup> Emine Fetvacı, "Others and Other Geographies in the *Şehname-i Selim Han*," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/Journal of Ottoman Studies: Ottomans Travelling, Seeing, Writing, Drawing the World Essays in Honor of Thomas D. Goodrich* 40, eds. Gottfried Hagen and Baki Tezcan (Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2012), 95.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

not pirates but in fact merchants.<sup>250</sup> After 1571 it was the Ottomans who were accused of harboring pirates in Cyprus, regardless of the pirates' affiliations. As reported in an intelligence dispatch, in a *firman* to the *beglerbeg* of Cyprus Sultan Murad III wrote that “[f]oreign pirates are in the habit of taking their prizes under the shelter of Turkish forts,” and demanded the case to be investigated.<sup>251</sup>

After all, Mediterranean piracy could not be contained, let alone eliminated. Entire regions, cities and their vicinities depended on piracy economically, including Malta, Livorno, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. Furthermore, from the War of Cyprus through the seventeenth century an ever growing number of Muslims, Christians, Jews, and English, French, Dutch as well as Ottoman subjects profited immensely from either direct involvement in piracy or the associated black market trade. Thus pirates and their hinterlands were highly motivated: while

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<sup>250</sup> Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus*, 160.

<sup>251</sup> [August 13, 1603: Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli, Venetian Secretary in England, to the Doge and Senate] “Orders from the Grand Signor to the Beglierbey of Cyprus: Foreign pirates are in the habit of takeing their prizes under the shelter of Turkish forts. They make terms with the governors, and sell their booty at a low price. They make many presents, and are favoured and protected. The customs suffer accordingly. The Venetians have armed three ships to clear the seas. They fell in with the English privateer that capured the Balbiana, but she fled. They fell in with another, and took her into the salt pans of Cyprus. The Turkish officers praised and honoured the commander of the ship, but Pervis, the farmer of the salt pans, who is in constant communication with the pirates, secured the restitution of all the good on board the Englishman. You are to open an enquiry and to imprison Pervis and report to me.” *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northers Italy Venetian* vol. 10, ed. Horatio F. Brown (London: Norfolk Chronicle Company, 1900), 95; see also an account of an encounter with Turkish pirates: “The 24. of June wee came to Cyprus, and had sight in the way of the afrsaide sixe Gallies, that came from Alexandria, one whereof came onto us, and required a present for himselfe, and for two of the other Gallies, which wee for quittnesse sake gave them.” Richard Hakluyt, ed., “The Second Voyage of M. Laurence Aldersey to the Cities of Alexandria, and Cairo in Aegypt (1586),” in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages & Discoveries of the English Nation* vol. 3, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1927), 356.

most pirate ships cornered their victims in disguise, swapping the cross for the crescent and vice versa depending on the quarry's affiliations, and avoided confrontation with the Ottoman navy at all costs, Ottoman attempts to crack down on the operators of piracy and black market trade on the frontier were sabotaged by the locals.<sup>252</sup> While the pirates' ingenuity, the inadequacy of haphazard naval patrolling, financial limitations and the vastness of the affected area made piracy in the Mediterranean virtually unstoppable,<sup>253</sup> it nevertheless provided a perfect reason for a continuous exchange of complaints between the *Serenità* and the Porte. This was so even despite the fact that both Ottoman and Veneitan dignitaries knew that pirates, in fact, were indiscriminate with regard to the religion, ethnicity or the port of origin of their targets, and were motivated by nothing else than profit. Yet, in peace-time, corsair activities meant a disruption of trade and grain supply for both the Ottomans and the Venetians, and thus the retribution of corsairs was exacted whenever it was possible to prevent further complaints and accusations. However, at times of conflict, when retribution of piracy was suspended due to the use of pirates in the navy, Venice and the Ottomans accused each other of encouraging piracy against their respective competitor.<sup>254</sup>

### 2.3 Factional Politics and Diplomatic Meanderings

In an attempt to make sense of the campaign and resolve the contradiction between the Ottoman court's justifications prepared for foreign and domestic political purposes, historians

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<sup>252</sup> Joshua Michael White, "Catch and Release: Piracy, Slavery, and Law in the Early Modern Ottoman Mediterranean" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012), 11-16; Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 99.

<sup>253</sup> White, *Catch and Release*, 11-16.

<sup>254</sup> Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, 101-102.

often refer to Ottoman factional politics of the time. The Cyprus campaign was going to be a devastating one for Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, while a pro-war faction at the court had every reason to look forward to receiving respectable rewards for the execution of the initiative and a handsome share of the spoils of war. The grand vizier had invested much of his career in building a network of alliances and establishing Ottoman armed presence on three continents to secure an intercontinental sphere of influence for the Porte at a time when the empire had obviously exhausted its potential for expansion in its immediate vicinity. His master plan involved such ambitious enterprises as challenging the Portuguese dominance in Africa and South Asia, military expansion in maritime Asia,<sup>255</sup> and the digging of the Don-Volga canal.<sup>256</sup> In the meantime, Selim's retinue of his princely years, especially Joseph Nassi and Lala Mustafa Pasha, seem to have been fixated on Cyprus since the early 1560s after Selim had become heir-apparent by winning a victory over his rebellious brother *Şehzade* Bayezid and had him executed by Shah Tahmasp. Although the court faction made up of Piyale Pasha, Lala Mustafa Pasha and Joseph Nassi after Selim's accession to the throne would benefit from the War of Cyprus in terms of prestige and probably even in terms of hoped-for territories, Cyprus seems a petty substitute for Sokollu's global vision of an intercontinental "soft empire."<sup>257</sup> Breaking one of the empire's most important and oldest alliances (since the early fifteenth century) brokered, during Selim's reign, mostly by the give-and-take cooperation between the *bailo* Barbaro and Sokollu for the sake of an island that never yielded more than it required in

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<sup>255</sup> Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 119-31.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-37.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-50.

investment, and jeopardizing the empire in causing the formation of a Holy League seem an incomprehensible myopia on Selim and his favorites' part.

However, the fact that the groundwork for the War of Cyprus began immediately after the execution of Bayezid puts the offensive in a different, and perhaps a more comprehensible, perspective. After Selim became the only candidate for the throne of his father, it was time for the prince and his retinue to plan not only the practicalities of government (for instance through busy diplomacy), but also the sultanic image that would define Selim's reign after 1566. The Cyprus campaign and two construction projects in close association with it, the construction of the Selimiye and the renovation of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, were indeed begun to be executed immediately after Selim's enthronement, and eventually entered the list of Sultan Selim II's eight major deeds memorialized by the contemporary historians (*Sultân Selim Han hazretleri zemânlarındaki âsâr*).<sup>258</sup> Taking three consecutive places in the list, these "works" (*asar*) were planned (as opposed to, for instance, the Yemen and Tunis campaigns, which were triggered by unforeseeable events), and add up to a well-prepared master narrative, which seems to have been conceived by Selim and his entourage in his princely years and then enacted upon his becoming the sultan.

The most frequently mentioned alliance in the context of the Cyprus campaign is the court faction comprised of, among other, minor figures, Lala Mustafa Pasha, Piyale Pasha and Joseph Nassi. While the former two seem to have pressed for the campaign in hope of military ranks higher than their current ones (before the war Lala Mustafa was appointed to the dubious and heretofore non-existent position of the sixth vizier, and Piyale strived for regaining his previously lost position of *kapudan-ı derya*) as well as financial benefits, Joseph Nassi and Gazanfer Agha, another of Selim II's companions, could, hypothetically, be involved in the

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<sup>258</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 94-96.

ideological planning of the new imperial master narrative as well which included the Cyprus campaign.

To understand better the role of factions in the planning and execution of the Ottomans' Cyprus campaign, it is important to discuss, even if only briefly, the nature of early modern factional and diplomatic relations in the Ottoman Empire. Doing diplomacy in Istanbul required one to build and utilize temporary and more permanent alliances with others. Shared interests forged strategic bonds between people, and thus not only personal but factional political interests also shaped the mechanisms of promoting one's interests in the Ottoman capital. Personal and political interests disregarded political borders, and consequently so did factional alliances. This fact underlines the larger point of the dissertation that Ottoman and Venetian semiospheres did in fact partially overlap.

Marcantonio Barbaro was an ally of Sokollu Mehmed in trying to avoid and later to put an end to the War of Cyprus. Their cooperation was mediated by the Jewish-Venetian-born Ottoman subject Salomon Ashkenazi, who was the medical doctor of both the *bailo* and the grand vizier. He was the middleman negotiating with the *bailo* on behalf of Sokollu for a possible peace treaty as well as helping Barbaro to smuggle his letters from his house to be dispatched to Venice during the *bailo*'s confinement during the war of 1570-73. When Ashkenazi was caught with the *bailo*'s letters, it was the grand vizier himself who saved him from prison on two occasions. The cooperation among these three men is a good example of how factions could openly act in defiance of the formal state injunctions, confessional and political boundaries as long as this suited their corporate interests.<sup>259</sup> More precisely, this example indicates that in this world of self-promotion and interest-seeking, European

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<sup>259</sup> Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries," 118.

diplomats could take part in Ottoman factional politics and penetrate the Ottoman decision-making process with the help of the mediation and brokerage of go-betweens.<sup>260</sup>

Joseph Nassi, by contrast, was a power-broker on the pro-war faction's side. He had been in the service of the Porte since 1554 when Sultan Süleyman provided him refuge after he had fled the anti-Jewish policies of the Portuguese court and the Inquisition, and by the 1560s he ran several thriving business networks and a widespread web of espionage throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. As a Portuguese Marrano he was well embedded in European matters and his business activities had brought him in close contact with the highest spheres of European politics.<sup>261</sup> Prior to his arrival in Constantinople, Nassi, drawing on his family's involvement in banking, became a major lender to the French court, acquainted with Charles V of Habsburg and Mary of Hungary, and even became a knighted jousting partner of Prince Maximilian.<sup>262</sup> Thus it is little wonder that, once in Ottoman territory, Nassi became *Şehzade* Selim's advisor on foreign affairs during the latter's governorship in Kütahya.<sup>263</sup> Nassi was soon elevated to the rank of *müteferrika* in 1564 with a fixed income,<sup>264</sup> and was allotted the

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>261</sup> Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean*, 377-78.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid; Işıkse, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 165.

<sup>263</sup> Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: The Duke of Naxos* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), 16-18; Norman Rosenblatt, *Joseph Nasi: Court Favourite of Selim II* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1957), 31-32.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 33, n. 29; "[...] serenissimo sultan Selim, avendo esso don Giosef il grado di muteferica di sua altezza [...]" *Relazioni degli ambasciatori Veneti al Senato* ser. 3 vol. 2, ed. Eugenio Albèri (Florence: Tipografia all'insegna di Clio, 1844), 67.

principality of Naxos in the Archipelago in 1566 after joining the new sultan as his courtier in the capital.<sup>265</sup>

Most of all, however, Nassi was a businessman. His financial support of Prince Selim in the latter's rivalry with Prince Bayezid in the 1550s,<sup>266</sup> and his giving advice on foreign affairs as well as sharing intelligence information<sup>267</sup> with the sultan were an investment, which translated into, besides his titles, generous concessions.<sup>268</sup> He also benefitted from the protection of the Ottoman court in his often troubled business negotiations. For instance, he managed his debates with the French court about his un-repaid loans throughout the 1560s as a *müteferrika* of the Porte and relied on the Ottoman court's support in pressing for repayment.<sup>269</sup> The intervention of Ottoman diplomacy and, eventually, navy, on Nassi's behalf is especially telling in light of the fact that the loan Nassi demanded from Henry II (r. 1547-59) during Selim's princely years had never been delivered.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> İşıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 218.

<sup>266</sup> Rosenblatt, *Joseph Nasi*, 32.

<sup>267</sup> For a discussion of Nassi's spying for the Ottoman sultan see Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Touting for Patrons, Brokering Power and Trading Information: Trans-Imperial Jews in Sixteenth-Century Constantinople," in *Detrás de las apariencias. Información y espionaje (siglos XVI-XVII)*, eds. Emilio Sola Castaño and Gennaro Varriale (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2015), 132-36.

<sup>268</sup> His many concessions included the monopoly to import wine through the Bosphorus, commercial privileges in trading with Poland (Walter F. Weiker, *Ottomans, Turks, and the Jewish Polity: A History of the Jews of Turkey* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992], 76.) and developing the cities of Tiberias and Safed and surrounding lands in Galilee, a concession he had taken over from the famous Gracia Mendes. (However, the veracity of the concession about Tiberias remains uncertain.) Marianna D. Birnbaum, *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes* [Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003], 106.

<sup>269</sup> İşıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe*, 165.

<sup>270</sup> Claudia Römer, "A firman of Süleyman the Magnificent to the King of France preserved in an exercise book of the 'K. K. Akademie Orientalischer Sprachen' in Vienna, 1831," *Turcica* 31 (1999), 461-70.



Nassi's prosperity was partly due to his extraordinary talent in self-fashioning, which is manifested in his persuasive claim for debatable or non-existent titles. The most obvious one, with which he is still commonly associated, namely the "Duke" of Naxos, was non-existent and perhaps even incomprehensible within the Ottoman administrative system. At best, Nassi was the *sancakbeg* or the *mültezim* (tax farmer) of Naxos.<sup>271</sup> However, these titles, obviously, would have earned him little prestige in the West. His alleged ambitions for the throne of Cyprus also seem part of his image-making through titles which were non-existent in the Ottoman Empire, but nonetheless recognizable in Europe. Although he was one of the key figures at the Ottoman court to press for the War of Cyprus, and perhaps even the ideologue behind the imperial narrative in which that war played a significant role, the age-old *topos* that the War of Cyprus took place *only* because he had laid eyes on the island holds little credit. The rumors about Nassi commissioning for himself a crown and a banner bearing the inscription "Joseph Nasi, King of Cyprus"<sup>272</sup> or the tales about his plans to be crowned as King of Tiberias in Galilee<sup>273</sup> appear to have been orchestrated masterfully by Nassi for self-promotion in European circles. Ultimately, Nassi likely coveted the reputation of being a go-to man for those European diplomats and entrepreneurs of all kinds seeking to have their agenda heard by the sultan.

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<sup>271</sup> İşıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 218.

<sup>272</sup> David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 446.

<sup>273</sup> See agent Pontremol de la Norroy's (in Venetian sources: Petremol) letter to the French court on September 13, 1563 in Ernest Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant; ou correspondences, mémoires et actes diplomatiques des ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople, envoyés ou résidents à divers titres à Venise, Raguse, Malte et Jérusalem en Turquie, Perse, Géorgie, Crimée, Syrie, Égypte, etc. et dans les États de Tunis, d'Alger et de Maroc* vol. 2 (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1853), 735-37.

Another important member of the pro-war faction was Gazanfer Bey, a Venetian-born captive seized by the Ottoman forces in Albania in 1559.<sup>274</sup> He and his captive brother entered palace service and shortly became members of Selim's princely court in Kütahya, where Gazanfer met and befriended Lala Mustafa Pasha, Selim's mentor and one of the main propagators of the War of Cyprus since before Selim's accession to the throne. Gazanfer became one of Selim's dearest companions, and thus the new sultan requested him and his brother Cafer to turn *hadimağas* in order to be able to follow him even to his private quarters in the palace in 1566, which inevitably meant becoming eunuchs.<sup>275</sup> While Cafer became the head of the Privy Chamber (although Mustafa Ali writes that he did not survive the necessary procedure—a likely implication that Cafer's re-fashioning to an Ottoman eunuch-courtier did not work out as well as expected),<sup>276</sup> Gazanfer became the chief white eunuch and had an unprecedented career at the court. By the 1580s he had become one of the best-connected courtiers in Istanbul, and the empire's number one ideologue as the overseer and patron of illustrated manuscripts production.<sup>277</sup> While Gazanfer's career reached its pinnacle during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III, it is perhaps not far-fetched to suppose that mastering the ideological imagery of sultandom in the 1580s and onward was already one of his tasks during the reign of Selim. It is perhaps also valid to assume that apocalyptic *topoi*, one of the most powerful tools in his hand in manipulating Mehmed III's sultanic image, were already in use during the rule of his first patron. Gazanfer's involvement in tailoring the sultanic image of

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<sup>274</sup> Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 239-41.

<sup>275</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 72

<sup>276</sup> *ibid*; Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 239.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

later sultans drew on the ideological program that likely first started tailoring for Selim II in the 1560s and early 1570s. After all, as we will see, Selim's sultanic image came full circle after his early death, in the manuscripts whose production was managed by Gazanfer Agha in the subsequent three decades.

## 2.4 The War and its Aftermath

The relief and patrol fleet had already been stationed in Rhodes when the Ottoman navy, under Piyale Pasha's command, sailed out of Beşiktaş to Cyprus on April 26, 1570. After a detour to Crete, they joined the rest of the navy at Rhodes on June 5. The third fleet carrying Lala Mustafa Pasha's land forces left Istanbul on May 16. Piyale Pasha's navy stationed at Rhodes took for Finike to pick up troops to eventually reach Paphos on June 30. By July 1 Limassol was occupied.<sup>278</sup> The capital, Nicosia, was captured by the Ottoman forces on September 9, and, after a year-long and devastating battle, enduring Famagusta fell too on September 17, 1571.

The numbers deployed in the War of Cyprus are impressive. According to Angelo Calepio, an eyewitness to the siege of Famagusta, the Ottoman forces attacked Cyprus with a fleet of 348 vessels out of which 160 were galleys,<sup>279</sup> and about 125,000 men including reinforcements.<sup>280</sup> Another soldier and witness to the happenings, military captain Nestor Martinengo reports on similarly large numbers: "The 25. of the same moneth [April, 1571] they raised up mountes to plant their artilary vpon [...] 40. thousand of their Pioners

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<sup>278</sup> Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus*, 28-31.

<sup>279</sup> Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 126

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

continually labouring there the most part of all the night”<sup>281</sup> and that “[...] we killed & dispatched of them about 30. thousand at that season”.<sup>282</sup> Although Martinengo’s figures may be an exaggeration, the magnitude of the Ottoman forces is confirmed by Ottoman historiographers as well. According to Katib Çelebi’s *Tuhfetü’l-kibâr*, the fleet consisted of 360 vessels altogether.<sup>283</sup> Mustafa Ali reports that the Ottomans attacked the island with a 400-strong fleet.<sup>284</sup> Mustafa Selaniki, however, gives account of a more modest fleet numbering 124 vessels.<sup>285</sup> Although both Mustafa Ali and Selaniki were contemporaries of the events, Mustafa Ali’s account deserves more credit than that of Selaniki on the strength of the former being the scribe of Lala Mustafa Pasha, commander of the land forces during the campaign. Meanwhile the Papal, Spanish, and Venetian reinforcement fleet were stationed in Crete. Although they were not deployed at Cyprus, in 205 ships they numbered 17,000 troops.<sup>286</sup> For comparison, at Lepanto, there were 438 vessels altogether, out of which 230 were Ottoman, and the losses on both sides amounted to 59,000 men.<sup>287</sup>

Second to the Ottoman victory, probably the most well-known outcome of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus was the aforementioned naval battle of Lepanto in 1571, where the joined

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<sup>281</sup> Carle Nestor Martinengo, *The true Report of all the successe of Famagosta*, trans. William Malim (London, 1572), 13-14.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>283</sup> Eftihios Gavriel, “The Expedition for the Conquest of Cyprus in the Work of Kâtib Çelebi,” 32.

<sup>284</sup> Mustafa Ali’s *Künhü’l-Ahbar: Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali ve Künhü’l-Ahbar’ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri* vol. 2, 68.

<sup>285</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 77.

<sup>286</sup> Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus*, 47.

<sup>287</sup> Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 41-42.

Papal, Habsburg, and Venetian forces annihilated the Ottoman navy. Although the long-term debilitating effect of the defeat on the imperial fleet was overestimated in the west, the loss of the Ottoman navy was nothing short of a moral and military setback. Nevertheless, in the Ottoman Empire there were other consequences of the Cyprus campaign which were probably more decisive for the future of the Ottoman Empire than the defeat suffered at Lepanto. In Istanbul the expedition turned out to be calamitous for the political careers of the aforementioned Lala Mustafa Pasha and Piyale Pasha (Chief Commander of the Navy), who had been in favor of the war since its planning: Lala Mustafa was charged with negligence for having lost too many troops during the siege of Famagusta, and was removed from his position; Piyale Pasha's mishandling of military equipment, which is recited by both Selaniki and Katib Çelebi, resulted in his resignation; Müezzinzade Ali Pasha was killed at Lepanto; and Serdar Pertev Pasha, by fleeing from the site of the naval battle, put an end to his military career once and for all as well.<sup>288</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

For almost a decade, Selim II and his retinue were planning the War of Cyprus, which was opposed by the highest-ranking state official Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who tried relentlessly to prevent the war by way of diplomatic negotiations until shortly before the offensive. Furthermore, despite the pro-war faction's plans, the war was continuously delayed for financial reasons as well as unexpected military challenges elsewhere. In view of these uncertainties it is not surprising that Venetian and Habsburg intelligence had little success in figuring out the Porte's intentions until it was too late. In fact the sources suggest that until 1569, all parties, including the sultan and his retinue, were indecisive about when (if at all) the

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<sup>288</sup> Pedani, "Some Remarks," 31.

Ottomans would attack Cyprus. These and other obscurities are apparent in the diplomatic negotiations that the Venetian *bailo* Marcantonio Barbaro engaged in with different representatives of the Ottoman state. For instance, being misled by the Ottoman partner was always a possibility when Barbaro negotiated with Grand Dragoman İbrahim Bey, who obviously served the interests of the pro-war faction. In contrast, there was consistent and unchecked cooperation even during the war between Barbaro and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha for the sake of their common interests. The picture is further complicated by instances when information coming from Sokollu Mehmed seems to have reflected the vizier's belief in being able to prevent the war with Venice rather than a certainty that the sultan would not launch the offensive. Ultimately, Barbaro's reports suggest that diplomatic negotiations were taking place only seemingly between Venice and the Ottoman state. In fact, negotiations were conducted between either the members of the same *trans-imperial* political faction or between the members of two feuding ones. The existence of these trans-imperial factions underscores the practical use of overlapping Ottoman and Venetian semiospheres. A pre-existing social and intellectual common ground, as well as shared political interests that entailed participation in the same spheres of meaning on the part of faction members, was necessary for cooperation across the political boundary especially at times of conflict.

As will be discussed in the later chapters, the War of Cyprus was a key element of Selim II's imperial grand narrative, which raises questions about the actual significance of any official reason for the campaign. Diplomatic and political history can go only so far in attempting to reconstruct the mutual impact of conceptually as incompatible events as a war and what I will discuss in the next chapter—the building of a mosque. While we learn details about the *hows*, *whos* and *whens* of the events, some aspects remain unaccounted for. For instance, as we have seen, Selim's *casus belli* communicated to the Venetian Senate and Doge on the one hand and to the Ottoman elite on the other make little sense in the context of a war waged on an ally at

a time when the Porte's foreign political strategy was changing from expansive to defensive and treaty-oriented. By the 1570s Ottoman expansion had reached its natural frontiers not only in a geographical sense,<sup>289</sup> but also in terms of resources necessitated to protect its wider territories.<sup>290</sup> It is little surprise that Sokollu Mehmed spent the last years of his life negotiating and signing treaties, including even with the archenemy, Habsburg Spain.<sup>291</sup> (The Ottoman-Spanish treaty was eventually signed in 1580, a year after Sokollu's death.) Thus, it is still unclear why Selim, at a time of fiscal scarcity, engaged in a costly military campaign and the equally expensive, and arguably most ambitious architectural undertaking in Ottoman history, at the same time (Chapter 3). What accounts for the assumption that the War of Cyprus and the island's revenues served for covering the costs of the construction and the maintenance of the Selimiye complex? If there is no ground for this assumption, what has made historians cling to this argument so fastidiously for almost five centuries? Why did Selim consider the Hagia Sophia his sultanic mosque even during the construction of the Selimiye complex? And why, after such an abundance of studies on the sultanic image making of Mehmed II and Süleyman I, does one have the impression that scholars assume the enterprises during Selim II's reign can be analyzed without attempting to reconstruct this sultan's imperial "grand narrative" that could define and, consequently, assign a meaning to these actions? I claim that answering these questions is possible with the help of a cultural historical analysis toward the underlying "grand narrative" of Selim's reign, which provides the unaccounted for details of the events leading to and following the conquest of Cyprus.

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<sup>289</sup> Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 229.

<sup>290</sup> Rhoads Murphy, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (London: University College of London Press, 2001), 146.

<sup>291</sup> Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 139.

## Chapter 3: Selim II's Sultanic Image Making

Sultan Selim II (r. 1566-74) ascended the throne of the Ottoman Empire on 24 September, 1566, following the death of his illustrious father, Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66), at Szigetvár. At forty-two, by which age both his grandfather Selim I and his father had conquered vast masses of land, he could not boast any outstanding achievements.<sup>292</sup> During his principedom, Venetian ambassadors reported consistently that he was lustful,<sup>293</sup> and while his namesake grandfather earned the cognomen “the Stern,” he was simply referred to as “the Drunkard.” Even his accession ceremony turned out to be a failure: as a result of conflicting views on whether the legitimacy of an heir-apparent depended on his recognition by the janissaries,<sup>294</sup> Selim omitted the customary oath of allegiance ceremony, which would have granted him janissary support throughout his reign, and likewise violated other age-old protocols. Partly because of this, the janissaries returning from the late Süleyman's Hungarian campaign revolted and disturbed the accession ceremony by not letting the new sultan into the Topkapı

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<sup>292</sup> Except his victory over his rebellious brother in the Battle of Konya in 1559. However, defeating Prince Bayezid was possible only with the support of the sultan, Süleyman the Magnificent, and the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's partaking in the campaign on Selim's side. Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 146-48.

<sup>293</sup> Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 92.

<sup>294</sup> Metin Kunt, “A Prince Goes Forth (Perchance to Return),” in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz*, ed. Baki Tezcan and Karl K. Kabir (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 71.



Palace until he paid them their gratuity (*cülus*).<sup>295</sup> Ottoman historians of the late-sixteenth century would refer to his outstanding grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha as the “virtual sultan,”<sup>296</sup> in whose shadow Selim would become the Ottoman Empire’s first sedentary ruler never to leave Istanbul except for his hunting grounds at Edirne. Although this image of Selim II as an inept and inert prince lacking tact and diplomatic sense has recently been challenged (see Işıksel, 2012), the fact remains that in light of the disadvantages mentioned above he needed a sultanic image as overwhelming as possible.

Selim’s techniques of creating such a sultanic image point to the continuation of a type of sovereignty which rested on the sultan’s conquests and eschatologically inspired charisma. Even his father, Süleyman, who has been generally perceived as the perfect Ottoman ruler, in fact, began his rule in the shadow of Selim I with just as feeble a reputation as Selim II. Süleyman, who was condescendingly considered by westerners to be a “lamb that replaced an angry lion,”<sup>297</sup> earned his recognition by conquering Belgrade (1521) and Rhodes (1522), which Mehmed II and Selim I had previously failed to do respectively. At the same time, Süleyman and his court favorites built up an image of the new sultan which capitalized on the time’s eschatological fears and expectations, as well as on an inter-imperial demand for the appearance of a universal sovereign. This framed the practicalities of government and conquest

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<sup>295</sup> Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, “The Depiction of Ceremonies in Ottoman Miniatures,” *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World* 27 (2010), 269-70; Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 153; Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 119.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>297</sup> Ebru Turan, *The Sultan’s Favorite Ibrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman (1516-1526)* vol. 1 (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 26, 34.

in the widely comprehensible cultural context of apocalypticism and millenarianism both within and outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>298</sup>

Similarly, Selim II seems to have planned to lay the foundations of his rule by conquering Cyprus. His letters to Tsar Ivan IV and the Khan of Bukhara before and after the fall of Cyprus show that the new sultan found it especially important to stress that “...highly esteemed sultans have made great efforts and taken many initiatives without success” to take Cyprus.<sup>299</sup> This, of course, was not entirely true (no Ottoman sultan had waged war on Cyprus before him), but nevertheless showed Selim as the conqueror of an island that his predecessors had failed to subdue. As we will see, besides the pragmatic reasons that justified the attack, Selim’s conquest of Cyprus was not only promoted as a trophy which denied itself to earlier sultans, but it also opened the way for Selim and his retinue to construct an eschatologically inspired sultanic persona.

In this and the following chapter, I explore Selim II’s sultanic image-making through two of his major enterprises, the construction of the Selimiye mosque in Edirne (1568-74) and the occupation of Cyprus (1571), as well as his exploitation of the apocalyptic and millenarian fervour symptomatic of the imperial contestation between western polities and the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century. By studying symbolically charged imageries generated by each of these occasions for the production of imperial propaganda, I propose that the major deeds of Selim’s reign were not conceptually separate instances but that they were meant to constitute a sultanic narrative elevating Selim to the position of a messianic emperor living on the eve of the “Last Hour.”

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<sup>298</sup> Fleischer, “Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences”; Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah”; Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power”; for more details see Chapter 4.

<sup>299</sup> İşıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 226.

Until recently there has been little scholarly interest in Selim II's reign. The mere eight years of his sultanate appeared uneventful compared with his father's forty-six-year-long reign, which marks the pinnacle of what is commonly referred to as the Ottoman Empire's classical period. The only exception is the frequently researched and much overstated battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571.<sup>300</sup> In the literature, the cultural, diplomatic and military aspects of the Holy League's victory at Lepanto overshadow almost everything associable with Selim's short sovereignty. Although Selim II's diplomacy and foreign policy from his princely years to his death have been studied recently by Güneş Işıksel (2012);<sup>301</sup> Emrah Safa Gürkan has treated Mediterranean intelligence networks during the reign of Selim II in his study of sixteenth-century Habsburg-Ottoman espionage (2012);<sup>302</sup> and Vera Constantini (2009) has analyzed Selim II's reasons for launching an attack on Cyprus in the context of changing Mediterranean economies and players in the maritime trade, we still know very little about the political and cultural aspects of Selim II's rule. While various aspects of his sovereignty deserve exploring, in this and the next chapter I explore the making of Selim's sultanic image, which, I suggest, exploited the same apocalyptic and millenarian excitement of the wider Mediterranean region as in the case of his predecessors Mehmed II, Selim I and Süleyman I, and after him his heir to the throne, Murad III, as well as his grandson Mehmed III.

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<sup>300</sup> For a recent reconsideration of the meaning of Lepanto for the subsequent trajectory of the Ottoman Empire see Palmira Brummett, "The Lepanto Paradigm Revisited: Knowing the Ottomans in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 63-93.

<sup>301</sup> Işıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*.

<sup>302</sup> Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Mediterranean*.

Several studies to date have analyzed the cultural, political and psychosocial aspects of the intended or accidental eschatological associations of the reigns of these sultans before and after Selim II, but the consensus remains, as asserted by Özgen Felek in her study of Murad III's eschatological self-image,<sup>303</sup> that "Selim II [...] apparently did not take great interest in these apocalyptic anticipations or, if he did, did not bother to express an interest explicitly."<sup>304</sup> However, in what will be presented below, I claim that in Selim II's reign the sultan's image as the (last) messianic ruler can be traced in his choices made in connection with the construction of the Selimiye mosque in Edirne and the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus. Both the construction and the conquest generated eschatological associations because the Jewish, Christian and Muslim apocalyptic traditions since antiquity bestowed such meaning on the island of Cyprus and Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, which the Selimiye mosque was meant to paraphrase architectonically.

### 3.1 The Selimiye Mosque and the War of Cyprus

It is perhaps due to the lack of scholarly interest in Selim II's reign that studies on the Selimiye Mosque (built 1568-74) and the War of Cyprus (1570-71) keep repeating interpretations available in the late-sixteenth-century European sources and miss the larger cultural-historical context in which they constitute an eschatologically inspired imperial program. One of these misconceptions is a supposed but unfounded conceptual link between the Selimiye mosque and the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus. The *topos* found in European sources that Selim's sultanic mosque was built from the spoils of the War of Cyprus, and that

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<sup>303</sup> Özgen Felek, "Re-creating Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-fashioning" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2010), 169-206.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 180.

the revenues from Cyprus were assigned to its endowment has been in circulation for almost five centuries. Perhaps the most authoritative articulation of this *topos* is to be found in Paolo Paruta's *Storia della Guerra di Cipro* (1599), where the Venetian *provveditore della Camera* gives an account of a *divan* meeting in Edirne in November 1569.<sup>305</sup> It is this meeting where, according to Paruta, Piyale Mehmed Pasha, Head Admiral of the Navy, and Lala Mustafa Pasha, the sixth vizier, managed to win the sultan for the cause of an Ottoman offensive against Cyprus by putting forth their argument that

[...] as this war was of itself holy, so it might be made the more meritorious by applying the rich revenues of this new acquisition to the use of the magnificent Temple, which *Selino* caused to be built in *Adrenopolis*.<sup>306</sup>

Decades before the publishing of Paruta's book the assumption of a financial relationship between Selim's mosque and the War of Cyprus had already been a subject of memoirs and travel accounts by western visitors to Edirne. One of them, Salomon Schweigger, joined the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II's embassy of 1578 to Sultan Murad III as an embassy chaplain, taking over the position from Stephan Gerlach. On its way to the Ottoman capital, the delegation stopped at Edirne, the Ottoman Empire's largest city in Thrace. On 23 December they visited some of the city's major landmarks including Selim II's imperial mosque, the Selimiye. In his 1608 memoirs of the mission, Schweigger reports that

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<sup>305</sup> Paruta's long quotes are unlikely even though Venetian intelligence often acquired information on the proceedings of the *divan* meetings through bribery. Gürkan, "Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean," 428. The mere dating of the meeting already makes the veracity of this passage doubtful: the conversation cannot have taken place in November as by September Piyale Paşa had already been assigned to lead the navy in the campaign.

<sup>306</sup> Paruta, "The Wars of Cyprus," 10.

The *Stifft* or *Dschuma* [sic] that we saw is a beautiful building [that] Sultan Selim built after conquering the island of Cyprus. He has given the income of the same island to this building.<sup>307</sup>

On March 22, 1588 Reinhold Lubenau, an apothecary in the retinue of the Austrian Habsburg embassy to Istanbul arrived in Edirne. Before marvelling at length in his travelogue about the building's architectonic feats—the intriguingly smart structure of its four minarets, the dome, and the mosque's interior—, Lubenau<sup>308</sup> reports that

there are a lot of baths and mosques outside the city walls, of which two are particularly distinguishable. One of them is on a high mountain, which has been built by *Selimus Secundus*, the father of *Amurathi Tertii*. Everything that he acquired in Cyprus, which he conquered in 1570, he used [the way] that is customary to Turkish emperors and pashas, that is spending all revenues of the conquered city or land [on building] churches, baths, hospitals, *kervansarays* and houses for priests and the poor. [...] This building [i.e. the Selimiye Mosque] is admirable, large, and very beautiful, and the like that cannot be found in the whole of Turkey.<sup>309</sup>

Only three years later another visitor to Edirne, the young Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrovitz, who was entrusted by his relatives to an embassy of Rudolph II to Sultan Murad III in 1591 in

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<sup>307</sup> Salomon Schweigger, "Ein neue Reyssbeschreibung auss Teutschland nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem," repr. in *The Islamic World in Foreign Travel Accounts*, vol. 28, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University: 1995), 49.

<sup>308</sup> Although here I am using Lubenau's account to illustrate a wide-spread rumor, it needs to be pointed out that Lubenau's account is likely an ingenuine one. Emrah Safa Gürkan, "50 günde devr-i Bahr-ı Sefid: Königsbergli Lubenau'nun kadirgayla imtihanı," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 43 (2014): 277-300.

<sup>309</sup> Reinhold Lubenau, "Beschreibung der Reisen des Reinhold Lubenau," Part 2 (repr. of Königsberg, 1930 edition), in *The Islamic World in Foreign Travel Accounts*, 25, ed. Fuat Sezgin, (Frankfurt: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1995), 115.

order to “gain experience and see eastern countries,”<sup>310</sup> arrived in Edirne with his companions on November 16. The following day Wratislaw visited the Selimiye, and in the midst of praising its splendour, he wrote in his memoir that

Sultan Selim had this new church thus ornamentally built at the time when he wrested the kingdom of Cyprus from the Venetians. He assigned to it large revenues from the resources of that kingdom, which he transmitted every year to Adrianople.<sup>311</sup>

Clearly, one aspect of the mosque frequently reported on by westerners was that it was built from the war booty of and revenues extracted from Cyprus following the island’s Ottoman occupation. It is also suggested that the income generated from the empire’s new territory was assigned to the mosque for the complex’s maintenance. In other words, for the western spectator the mosque represented a direct reference to the occupation of Cyprus and, consequently, seemed to be charged with an imperial ideology which resonated with the military events of the recent past. The same assumed financial and conceptual linkage between the War of Cyprus and the Selimiye survives to our days. For instance, Gülru Necipoğlu, in her seminal work on Ottoman architecture, *The Age of Sinan* (2005), gives voice to this contention by pointing to “European and Ottoman writers [who] concur that the mosque was financed with the sultan’s legal share of the booty from Cyprus, revenues of which were assigned to its

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<sup>310</sup> Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz: What He Saw in the Turkish Metropolis, Constantinople; Experienced in His Captivity; And After His Happy Return to His Country, Committed to Writing in the Year of Our Lord 1599*, trans. Albert Henry Wratislaw (London: Bell & Daldy, 1862), 1.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

*waqf*.<sup>312</sup> However, in the corresponding note she only refers to the aforementioned Lubenau and Wratislaw,<sup>313</sup> leaving out the most decisive document for this argument, the Selimiye's *vakfiye*.

The epigraph of the mosque's deed of foundation (*vakfiye*) emphasises the same extraordinary features of the building that Schweigger, Lubenau, Wratislaw and Paruta were so enchanted by one, two and three decades later.<sup>314</sup> However, as one reads on, the suspicion arises that perhaps these unique architectonic and aesthetic features were not meant to celebrate Selim's 1570-71 victory or, at least, not the way it was suggested by westerners. In fact, the mosque's deed of foundation makes no mention of Cypriot estates being assigned to the complex. According to the *vakfiye*, the successor of Selim II, Murad III (r. 1574-95) confirms the holdings of the foundation, the details of which constitute the rest of the charter. To the witness of the document, the estates subjected to the foundation were all located in Thrace, primarily in the districts of Yenice, Vize, Lüleburgaz, Çorlu and Malkara. Furthermore, the

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<sup>312</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 240; for the same see Josef W. Meri, ed., *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia* vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2006), s.v. "Selimiye Mosque, Edirne," 717; Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire 1300—1923* (London: John Murrey Publishers, 2005), 83.

<sup>313</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 534, n. 286.

<sup>314</sup> "The Porte [*Darü'l-nasr*], which was filled with the sign of faith [*şair-i diniyye*] founded a prosperous complex in Edirne, in a great and honoured place, on a graceful site, on an empty field whose peer is seldom found under the dome of the sky. Its various qualities are unfathomable. [Even] its most apparent features, however, only show themselves to one out of ten [people]. This place contains a grand mosque, into which every beauty has been collected and which has no flaws. Nobody has ever seen anything like this or heard about its peer. With its dome's round shape and glittering it almost resembles the sky's Atlas. The robustness and glittering of its lead [panels] are also its glory. At night, under its dome the light beams of its ornate oil lamp chandeliers give more light than the stars on the sky. During daytime it resembles a big tree which sparkles in the glittering of its flowers' colours. In no country has anything like this been made by men." VGMA, Defter 2113, 67.



document leaves no space for speculations whether in one way or another revenues from Cyprus were re-allocated to the mosque's income. The *vakfiye* rules that

*vakf* income derived from the households [*müisakkafat*] of the mentioned villages and the collective of other buildings and all of the farmlands, all of the known hills, its valleys, mountains, its rocky places, its flat places, the rivers, its springs, wells, its fields, stones, trees, its woods, its grasslands, its pastures, its gardens, all those which have been mentioned and those which have not, those which have been written about and those which have not, together with other things, by the justice of the *Sharia* are *vakf*. On the other hand, public roads, *mescids*, cemeteries, and other things which are known exceptions from *Sheria vakfs* are exceptions from this *vakf* as well. From now on, their excellencies of the *vakf*, whose names and qualities were mentioned above, for handling and tax collecting the products of all these *vakfs*, made a law to protect the *vakf* from overspending by [imposing] obedience. [...] Nobody can break this law. [*Bu kanunu kimse bozamaz.*] <sup>315</sup>

Although the Selimiye's revenues did not come from the empire's new province, Cyprus, this would not necessarily render it impossible that the costs of its construction were covered from the spoils of the war. However, the sequence of events taking place during the construction does not support this assumption. The construction of a new, 150-strong fleet to be deployed at Cyprus began in August 1568,<sup>316</sup> while a regular payment for the Selimiye from the Topkapı Palace's "inner private treasury" (*iç hazine*) to the "outer public treasury" (*taşra hazine*), that is, to building supervisor Halil Çelebi, who was later replaced by ex-finance minister Hasan Çelebi, started on April 13, 1568.<sup>317</sup> Selim covered most of the expenses from his private budget, which accumulated from the tribute from Egypt and a regular stipend from the produce

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<sup>315</sup> VGMA, Defter 2113, 92.

<sup>316</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 239.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

of the imperial gardens.<sup>318</sup> However, the largest bulk of the costs, 21,930,000 *aspers*, was needed to be covered at a time of financial scarcity.<sup>319</sup> Although this sum would be paid as a total of smaller payments by the end of the construction in 1574, excluding the outer courtyard and commercial structures, whose construction was financed posthumously from the surplus of the endowment (thus contributing to a total of approx. 25,000,000 *aspers*),<sup>320</sup> the expenses of the following years required extra income that would allow for costly military preparations (1568-70) and operations (1570-71) as well as the building of the Selimiye (1568-74) simultaneously, not counting the costs of a campaign to subdue the insurgency in Yemen (1567-68) and a failed Don-Volga project and expedition to Astrakhan (1569), which also lay ahead. However, the treasury could not bear the financial extra demand posed by such costly projects simultaneously. As we learn from Feridun Bey (d. 1583), in a *divan* meeting in the autumn of 1566, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, the Grand Vizier, dissuaded the new sultan from continuing the war in Hungary and suggested peace with Maximilian II as Süleyman's recent campaign had diminished the empire's stock of gunpowder and, more importantly, the treasury was empty.<sup>321</sup>

Although the war in Hungary was abandoned, on 14 November, 1568, Selim issued a *firman* ordering the confiscation and re-selling of the church estates in the *Vilayet-i Rumeli*, the European part of the empire. The legal basis of the decree, according to *Sharia* law, was clear: Even though the lands of Rumeli were under state ownership, *zimmis* bequeathing land to their

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., Appendix 2.1, 562.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>321</sup> Feridun Bey, "Nüzhet'ül-esrar-il-ahbar der sefer-i Sigetvar," in *Feridun Bey: Les plaisants secrets de la campagne de Szigetvar*, ed. Nicolas Vatin (Vienna-Münster: LIT Verlag, 2010), fols. 158r-59v.

churches had become a general practice. The illegal assignment of “state lands” as well as “vineyards, mills, gardens, houses and shops on state land, as well as cattle and their entire property in full legal possession (*mülk*) to the church” was “by no means, valid.”<sup>322</sup> Therefore church *vakıfs* were ordered to be inventoried, confiscated, and returned to the churches or others who requested them in exchange for tithe of the produced grain as well as for *salariye* tax collected for the state. Church property was affected in the *sancaks* of Thessaloniki, Trikkala, Skopje, Kustendil (Kyustendil), Alaca Hisar (Kruševac), Herzegovina, Dukagin (Metohija/Dukagjini), Srem, and in the *eyalets* of Buda, Temesvár (Timișoara), and Csanád (Cenad).<sup>323</sup>

After the confiscation of church properties in November 1568, with sufficient funding at hand, the foundation ceremony of the Selimiye was held on April 12, 1569.<sup>324</sup> On April 30 Marcantonio Barbaro, the Venetian *bailo* resident in Constantinople (Pera), reported back to Venice in an intelligence dispatch that “his Majesty has sent [men] to diverse parts of the Levant in order to look for antique edifices, to make use of their columns and marble panels for the construction that he will make in Adrianople.”<sup>325</sup> However, in spite of the re-allocation of revenues from the confiscated estates in Rumeli to the Porte and the preparations, there were major hiccups in financing the construction on site. Shortages of wagons were reported from Edirne, and the city’s *kadi* complained “that this region is lately much consumed, [and] [...] by going there, his Majesty would destroy it completely with a big bankruptcy, and [would]

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<sup>322</sup> Aleksandar Fotić, “The Official Explanations for the Confiscation and the Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and their Estates at the Time of Selim II,” *Turcica* 26 (1994), 36.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>324</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 240.

<sup>325</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fol. 64v.

damage the whole Porte.”<sup>326</sup> This was not sheer exaggeration. Tax registers show that while the Porte terminated the 1565-66 fiscal year with a large surplus of 141,736,000 *aspers* and the 1566-67 fiscal year with that of an approximately 119,509,235 *aspers*, the sum of the 1567-68 fiscal year, which lacked any major military enterprises, was merely 7,502,493 *aspers*.<sup>327</sup> Dwindling resources would carry on until the last phase of the building project. Toward the end of the construction, Selim already had to refrain from attending the Selimiye’s inauguration ceremony in spite of looking forward so suspensefully to the finishing of the mosque. In response to a report on severe provision shortages from the *kadi* of Edirne, a sultanic decree issued on October 15, 1574 ordered that the inauguration ceremony should take place in Selim’s absence “so that supplications are made for the continuation of my reign, and the stability of my glory and sustenance.”<sup>328</sup>

Evidently, the Cyprus expedition cannot have yielded financial support for the construction works of Selim’s new mosque. On the contrary, by the time the construction officially began in 1569, war preparations had been in progress for at least eight months, which caused shortages of assets rather than a surplus of revenues. Even if one disregards reports from as late as 1574 on lacking financial means, the mere chronology of the events indicates that covering the costs of Selim’s building project from the spoils of the War of Cyprus would need to wait at least until the fall of Nicosia on September 9, 1570, where eventually, the

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> The shrinking surplus of the central budget should be seen in the context of the empire’s gradual financial downside. Between the late 1520s and the early 1580s the budget surplus shrank from 70,000,000 *aspers* per year to zero. İşıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 172.

<sup>328</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 244.

historian Mustafa Selaniki claims with apparent exaggeration, “the soldiers of Islam acquired so much booty [...] that any similar case is unheard of in history.”<sup>329</sup>

The construction of the Selimiye was the first and most ambitious project the new sultan undertook by 1569, and so it was likely that Selim would oversee the construction on location.<sup>330</sup> However, regardless of the project’s personal significance for the sultan, such a construction was not without conditions. In his 1581 book of advice dedicated to Murad III, the *Nüshatü’s-Selatin (Counsel for Sultans)*, Mustafa Ali declares that sultans should only finance charitable socio-religious monuments with the spoils of holy war, because the *Sharia* neither permitted the public treasury to be used for that purpose, nor did it allow the foundation of unnecessary mosques or *medreses*.<sup>331</sup>

The ninth requirement: As long as the glorious sultans, the Alexander-like kings, have not enriched themselves with the spoils of Holy War and have not become owners of lands through gains of campaigns of the Faith, it is not appropriate that they undertake to build soup kitchens for the poor and hospitals or to repair libraries and higher *medreses* or, in general, to construct establishments of charity, and it is seriously not right to spend or waste the means of the public treasury on unnecessary projects. For, the Divine Laws do not permit the building of charitable establishments with the means of the public treasury neither do they allow the foundation of mosques and *medreses* that are not needed.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> “Leşker-i İslam bu gazada bir vechile mal-i ganaim ve usaraya malik oldılar ki hiç bir tarihde görülmiş ve işidilmiş değildi.” *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 78.

<sup>330</sup> ASV, Senato Dispacci Constantinopoli, filza 4, fols. 64r-64v.

<sup>331</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 59.

<sup>332</sup> *Mustafa ‘Ali’s Counsel for Sultans of 1581: Edition, Translation, Notes* vol. 1, ed. Andreas Tietze (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979-82), 54.

Without military conquests, Ottoman rulers were not allowed to build a sultanic mosque, and when they did, something which had never occurred before Selim II, it was considered by the *ulema* unnecessary extravagance at the expense of the empire's treasury. This is why Selim's grandson on the throne, Mehmed III (r. 1595-1603) never built one,<sup>333</sup> and when the famous Sultan Ahmed mosque was built (1609-16) without the backing of new conquests, Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) was heavily criticised by the Ottoman intelligentsia and the religious elite.<sup>334</sup> Selim was likewise blamed for violating the custom,<sup>335</sup> which, essentially, seems to be the reason for the Selimiye having been built outside the imperial capital. It stands alone among sultanic mosques in this regard. (For comparison, unlike the Selimiye's *vakfiye*, that of the Süleymaniye mosque [built 1550-58] makes mention of its commissioner's victories on the battlefield, which was meant to legitimize the mosque's costly construction and its location in the imperial capital.)<sup>336</sup> Thus, while the War of Cyprus had been on the agenda since Selim's princely years,<sup>337</sup> when the time arrived for Selim to build his imperial mosque, the War of Cyprus was a necessity without which the construction would have been unjustified.

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<sup>333</sup> Günhan Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and his Immediate Predecessors" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2010), 251.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 251-52.

<sup>335</sup> Howard Crane, "The Ottoman Sultan's Mosques: Icons of Imperial Legitimacy," in *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order*, ed. I. A. Bierman, R. A. Abou-el-Haj and D. Preziosi (New Rochelle: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1991), 204.

<sup>336</sup> *Süleymaniye vakfiyesi*, ed. Kemal Edib Kürkçüoğlu (Ankara: Vakıflar Umum Müdürlüğü, 1962), 16-17.

<sup>337</sup> Gürkan, "Osmanlı-Habsburg Rekâbeti," 12.

### 3.2 The Selimiye Mosque and the Hagia Sophia

While the connection between the War of Cyprus and the Selimiye mosque, namely that the former provided the financial means for the latter, is a tradition brought to life by western visitors to Edirne in the late sixteenth century, a seventeenth-century Ottoman author nevertheless shared their viewpoint. The Ottoman navy sailed out of Beşiktaş toward Cyprus on April 26, 1570, a year after the foundation ceremony of the Selimiye.<sup>338</sup> Yet, the often-quoted Evliya Çelebi in his *Seyahatname* (*Book of Travels*, c. 1630) constructed the connection between the war and the mosque by presenting a reverse order of the events of 1568 to 1574. He argues that it was the Prophet Mohammed who ordered Selim to build the Selimiye *after* the occupation of the island. According to the *Seyahatname*, Selim one day saw a dream in Fenerbahçe, where the Prophet appeared to him and said:

Ah, Selim, you have made an agreement with God. You said that “If I become the conqueror of the island of Cyprus, from the *gaza* booty I will build a mosque.” The Creator granted you 170 castles in Cyprus’ width of 770 miles. Why do not you keep to your promise and spend the rest of your life on the way of goodness? Request the booty taken from the castle of Magosa [i.e. Famagusta] in mountainous Cyprus from the prudent and efficient vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha, and build a mosque in Edirne.<sup>339</sup>

As for what accounts for Evliya Çelebi’s inventing a course of events that obviously contradicts the fact that the construction of the mosque began before the campaign was launched, the traveller gives a clue to the reader whereby his reputable ancestry plays a key motivation. His

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<sup>338</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 77.

<sup>339</sup> *Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zilli: Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 305 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu – Dizini, 3. kitap*, ed. S. A. Kahraman and Y. Dağlı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 1999), 246.

father, Mehmed Zilli, who allegedly died at the age of 117, serves as a link in Evliya Çelebi's work between the War of Cyprus and the Selimiye mosque. From the *Seyahatname* we learn that Evliya's father fought in the War of Cyprus and sang the first *ezan* on the walls of Famagusta after the city's capture by the Ottomans. (Although Evliya's father is not named in the first Ottoman *gazaname* of the War of Cyprus, the same story is recorded there in detail.)<sup>340</sup> In return for his bravery, the sultan appointed Zilli to be the first muezzin of his new mosque, the Selimiye.<sup>341</sup> Evliya thus establishes a conceptual linkage between the war and the Selimiye through his own family history. However, besides the fact that the Ottoman traveller individually arrives at the conclusion reached by western commentators a few decades earlier, the real significance of this section of the *Book of Travels* is Selim's alleged encounter with the Prophet and this story's conspicuous resemblance to the Byzantine and Ottoman foundation myths about the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. This similitude is not a mere coincidence. Although Evliya Çelebi is known to have invented parts of the *Book of Travels*,<sup>342</sup> he seems to have been well aware of the original ideology which was meant to set up the Selimiye as a paraphrase and rival of the Hagia Sophia from the earliest stages of its planning.

To understand the semantic link between the Selimiye and the Hagia Sophia underlying this imperial objective, we need to go back more than another hundred years in time. After the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and its becoming the Ottoman capital, Ottoman authors expressed different attitudes toward the conquest and produced a body of literature regarding the city's past and monuments. One of the Byzantine sources most frequently used

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<sup>340</sup> Piri Efendi, *Fethiyye-i Cezire-i Kıbrıs*, ed. Harid Fedai (Nicosia: K.K.T.C Milli Eğitim, Kültür, Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1997), 77-80.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 248-49.

<sup>342</sup> Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 153.



by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman authors was the *Patria*, a collection of Greek texts on the history and monuments of Constantinople, which was translated, upon Mehmed II's (r. 1451-81) commission, into Persian and Ottoman soon after the fall of Constantinople.<sup>343</sup> The Ottoman translation of 1480 by dervish Şemsüddin Karamani entitled *Tevarih-i Bina-i Cami-i Şerif-i Ayasofya* (*The History of the Building of the Great Hagia Sophia*) was made to meet the commissioner's intention of downplaying the pagan and eschatological associations apparent in the foundation legends of Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia. Şemsüddin in his translation of the text omits references to the first two churches on the site of the Hagia Sophia built by Constantine and Theodosius (and the pagan myths associated with them), and focuses entirely on the founder of the current structure, Justinian I (r. 527-65 CE). The text claims that the emperor was ordered by none other than God to build the Hagia Sophia:

Justinian once saw a dream, in which he [God] told him: "If you want to be above all the Christian denominations of the world, build a church for the whole world to strengthen the faith of Jesus."<sup>344</sup>

According to the *Tevarih-i Bina-i Cami-i Şerif-i Ayasofya*, not only was the Hagia Sophia built upon divine order, but also the plan of the building was revealed to Justinian by one of the "angels of Jesus" in his dream.<sup>345</sup> Thus, in commissioning a selection of myths about the Hagia

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<sup>343</sup> Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 12.

<sup>344</sup> Quoted in Turkish in Stephanos Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri* [Legends of Constantinople and the Ayasofya] (Istanbul: İletişim, 1993), 123-24. The *Patria*, where "an angel of the Lord" shows Justinian the Hagia Sophia's outline in the emperor's dream, does not mention this divine order at all.

<sup>345</sup> Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 126. See the story's original in the *Patria* in *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, trans. Albrecht Berger (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 241.

Sophia, including this one, Mehmed II's programme was clear: By emphasizing the church's foundation upon divine order, the conversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque received an ideological meaning, which demonstrated that just as Islam had taken the place of Christianity in this imperial space, Mehmed took the position of Justinian as a new Roman emperor, who ruled with God's support.

Ottoman translations and paraphrases of the *Patria* commissioned by Mehmed II and their uncommissioned spin-offs became popular and inspired Ottoman authors to merge early legends of the Hagia Sophia's foundation with stories about the construction of the Selimiye. Evliya Çelebi claims that, just like the Hagia Sophia was built upon God's order and its plan revealed to Justinian by "Jesus' messenger," the Selimiye was built upon Mohammed's request and the mosque's plan was also marked out by the prophet:

In 972 [A.H.] he went with all of the soldiers of Islam to Edirne, and they made a place to station there for the winter. Then Selim II saw the Prophet of This and the Other World again in his reality: "Build the mosque on that Kavak square." The Holy Pride of Prophethood himself marked out the mosque's foundation and the place of the *qiblah*. There is no finer *mihrab* than that of the Selim Han mosque in the heart of the city of Edirne, and there is no straighter direction to Mecca (*kiblegah*) than that of the Eski *Camii*.<sup>346</sup>

Likewise, the eighteenth-century author Dayezade, in his *Edirne Sultan Selim Camii Risalesi* (*Treatise about Edirne's Sultan Selim Mosque*, 1751), claims that the Prophet Mohammed marked out the construction site of the Selimiye to the sultan in a dream, and that a rock equal in its dimensions to those of the mosque appeared when the digging of its foundations began. Dayezade, in his quest to compile and analyze all available information on the Selimiye mosque, claims to summarize the corresponding passage from the *Solakzade Tarihi*, a history

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<sup>346</sup> Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zilli: *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 246.

by Mehmed Hemdemi Solakzade Efendi (...*Solakzade isimle müsemma tarihinin kiraati esnasında...*),<sup>347</sup> a contemporary of Evliya Çelebi:

[...] the story-teller [i.e. Solakzade] alleges that [these words are written] in the late Mimar Sinan's *Mimarnâme* about the Sultan Selim mosque, which is in the city of Edirne: "[...] Let me build a larger dome than that of the Ayasofya to put an end to the rumors [spread by] the ill-willed and the infidels. Quite a few infidels say that 'the Ottoman state has endless power and might, yet, they are unable to build a larger dome than the dome of the Ayasofya. If they had been able to [build one], they would have done so already in one of the buildings commissioned by the previous sultans'. [...] About the same time as I told his Majesty Our Lord these words, the late Sultan Selim, to my surprise, received large assets from the booty of Cyprus, whose value was inexpressibly high. Then, because of these words religious enthusiasm and the salvation of Islam appeared in his Holiness the Padishah of the World, on 22 *Seferü'l-hayr* 976 [August 21, 1568], he ordered me gladly: "Sinan, build for me a grand mosque at the place of my wish, whose dome should be larger than the dome of Ayasofya."<sup>348</sup>

However, this multi-layered quote seems to have been fabricated by Dayezade himself. The *Mimarnâme*, which he refers to in this excerpt, is in fact one of Sinan's abridged autobiographies, the *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*,<sup>349</sup> which Solakzade—who in this instance serves as Dayezade's source—does paraphrase in his history, but with much less emotional charge than Dayezade.<sup>350</sup> Although Dayezade claims to reproduce the *topoi* of Sinan desiring western

<sup>347</sup> Dayezade Mustafa Efendi: *Edirne Sultan Selim Camii Risalesi*, ed. Oral Onur (Istanbul: Kuşak Ofset, 2002), 7.

<sup>348</sup> Dayezade Mustafa Efendi: *Edirne Sultan Selim Camii Risalesi*, 8. The same is quoted in Selen B. Morkoç, *A Study of Ottoman Narratives on Architecture: Text, Context and Hermeneutics* (Palo Alto, CA: Academica Press, 2010), 313-14.

<sup>349</sup> Sinan's autobiographies include three of minor influence entitled *Risaletü'l-Mimariye*, *Tuhfetü'l-Mimarin* and an anonymous text often referred to in the Turkish as *Adsız Risale*, and two, subsequently canonized ones, the *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye* and the *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyan* by Mustafa Sai Çelebi (died c. 1595).

<sup>350</sup> Mehmed Hemdemi Solakzade, *Solakzade Tarihi* (Istanbul: Maarif Nezaret Celilesi, 1927), 595.

recognition as architect and of the conquest of Cyprus providing the financial means for the Selimiye's construction on the basis of *Solakzade Tarihi*, Sinan's abridged autobiography contains neither of them. In fact the episode about Sinan's seeking western recognition in building a dome exceeding in size that of the Hagia Sophia in *Solakzade Tarihi* is based on another of Sinan's autobiographies, the *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyan*<sup>351</sup> (even though the author refers to the *Tezkiretü'l-Ebniye*;<sup>352</sup> the two are almost identical—hence the confusion).<sup>353</sup> However, this *tezkire*, just like the rest of Sinan's autobiographies, says nothing about the supposed connection between the Selimiye and the War of Cyprus. Although Dayezade does not list Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* among his sources,<sup>354</sup> he seems to have drawn on the traveller's work, which he combined with what he read in *Solakzade Tarihi*, thus causing the *topos* to come full circle: upon prophetic order the Selimiye was built from the spoils of the Cyprus war.

However, seeing (and, clearly, emphasizing) the parallelism between the Selimiye and the Hagia Sophia was not merely the product of some Ottoman authors' artistic intuition. It is evident from the Selimiye's architect's, the Imperial Chief Architect Sinan's autobiographies that the Selimiye was meant to rival the Hagia Sophia in response to an international

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<sup>351</sup> "[...] with the help of God [...] [I] showed my capabilities during the reign of Sultan Selim Khan, and made this exalted dome to exceed that one by six cubits in height and by four cubits (*zira'*) in circumference." H. Crane, E. Akin and G. Necipoğlu, eds., *Sinan's Autobiographies: Five Sixteenth-Century Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 130.

<sup>352</sup> "...ser mimaran olan Mimar Sinan Aga Tezkire Al-Ebniye ile müsemma olan risalelerinde böyle tahrir ve tastir eder ki Ayasofya kubbesi gibi yok." (Mimar Sinan Agha, who was the Chief Architect, writes in his treatise called the Book of Bulidings that there is nothing like the dome of the Ayasofya.) Solakzade, *Solakzade Tarihi*, 595.

<sup>353</sup> *Sinan's Autobiographies: Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*, 130.

<sup>354</sup> *Dayezade Mustafa Efendi: Edirne Sultan Selim Camii Risalesi*, 6-7.

competition voiced by the patronizing critique of European architects.<sup>355</sup> Sinan was preoccupied with his global reputation, as is reflected in the *Tezkiretü'l-Bünyan* (*A Record of Construction*, 1580s), which mentions that “those who passed for architects among the sinning unbelievers” upset him by claiming that the Hagia Sophia’s peerless dome could not possibly be equalled in size by Muslim architects: “were it possible to build one like it, they [the Muslims] would have done it.”<sup>356</sup> Thus the Selimiye is styled as Sinan’s professional victory over his doubting western competitors, whose condescension had “pained and endured in the heart of this humble servant.”<sup>357</sup> However, the rivalry between the Hagia Sophia and the Selimiye mosque complex is only one side of the coin. Sinan’s personal objectives, to which his autobiographies give voice, were matched by an ideology conceived at the Ottoman court: Selim’s goal was to draw parallels between the Hagia Sophia and the Selimiye not only in their extraordinary physical dimensions but also through the re-enactment of the Hagia Sophia’s foundation legends.

The *Patria* treats Justinian’s effort to collect pillars, slabs and revetments from the East and West, and explicitly names some of the places from where the Hagia Sophia’s building material came from,<sup>358</sup> besides the material which was “recycled” from local sites in

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<sup>355</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 102.

<sup>356</sup> *Sinan’s Autobiographies: Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*, 130.

<sup>357</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>358</sup> Gilbert Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire: Etudes sur le recueil des Patria*, (Vendôme: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), 197. “All those who had received his order sent materials from pagan temples and from old baths and houses, to the emperor Justinian by rafts, from all themes of the east and west, north and south, and from all islands” in *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, 233.

Constantinople.<sup>359</sup> One of the sources was the island of Aydıncık (Cyzicus), where, according to legend, Solomon's palace (Temaşalık), once built for the Queen of Sheba, used to stand.<sup>360</sup> Oruç Bey, in his history entitled *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman (The History of the House of Osman, post-1501)*, when discussing the founding of the Hagia Sophia by Justinian, also claims that some of the marbles used for the building of the Hagia Sophia came from Aydıncık.<sup>361</sup> As opposed to *spolia* collected from Solomon's palace, the principal source for freshly cut marbles to be used in the Hagia Sophia was the island of Procopius (Marmara). Even though most of the Procopian marbles had been stripped off the Hagia Sophia before the Ottoman conquest (many of which were re-used for the building of St. Mark's cathedral in Venice, and thus only one such slab remains of the Hagia Sophia's western façade),<sup>362</sup> the freshly cut marbles of the Selimiye also came from the same island.<sup>363</sup> However, Justinian did not only rely on his own empire's source of marble. According to legend, Justinian received *spolia* from every part of the world.<sup>364</sup> The Süleymaniye Mosque Library's manuscript *Evsaf-ı Bina-yı Ayasofya (The Qualities of the Building of the Hagia Sophia, n.d.)*, which belongs to the same literary tradition in Ottoman writing as the *Tevarih-i Bina-i Cami-i Şerif-i Ayasofya*, even quotes the imaginary letter of Justinian to the princes of the world:

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<sup>359</sup> Godfrey Goodwin, "The Reuse of Marble in the Eastern Mediterranean in Medieval Times," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1977), 17.

<sup>360</sup> *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, 233; Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire*, 197; for the same trope in the *Dürr-i Mekkun* and *Envarü'l-Aşikin* see Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 62.

<sup>361</sup> *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, ed. Necdet Öztürk (İstanbul: Çamlıca Basım, 2007), 103.

<sup>362</sup> Goodwin, "The Reuse of Marble in the Eastern Mediterranean in Medieval Times," 17-18.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>364</sup> Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 124.

Oh, princes of the seven climes, let it be known to you, that I, İstüyanuş [يٰانوش; i.e. Justinian] talk to you from Konstantiniyye: Upon the order of Jesus, I have to build a peculiar and sublime church. If you have any kind of marble materials in your *vilayets* [...] cut them from those sublime temples, and by any means that is convenient, send them to my *imaret*. They will be, all of them, a gift in the *imaret* [and] this will greatly strengthen our affectionate friendship.<sup>365</sup>

Later, the *Evsaf-ı Bina-yı Ayasofya* tells of entire buildings being dismantled and shipped to Constantinople from diverse parts of the world, from the Balkans to Hindustan.<sup>366</sup> So it is little surprise that *spolia* for the Selimiye's construction were also collected from various parts of the Mediterranean and special attention was given to pillars collected in Aydıncık. Evliya Çelebi claims that "on its [i.e. the Selimiye's] four sides there are twenty-six various pillars, most of which came from the place called Temaşalık,"<sup>367</sup> that is Solomon's palace,<sup>368</sup> where a sultanic decree in 1568 forbade collecting marbles during the Selimiye's construction.<sup>369</sup> At the same time, an expedition collected marble for the Selimiye's decoration from Cyprus upon the Sultan's commission which was an indication that even before the War of Cyprus the island was already considered a part of the Ottoman Empire by the mosque's commissioner.<sup>370</sup>

The re-enactment of Justinian's imperial act of collecting *spolia* from various parts of his empire, including Cyzicus/Aydıncık, and using them for the building of the Hagia Sophia

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<sup>365</sup> SK, Tercüman 486, 16.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>367</sup> Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zilli: *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 247.

<sup>368</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 178.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>370</sup> Işıksel, *La politique étrangère ottomane dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 220.

had been an important part of the Süleymaniye Mosque's construction less than two decades before the building of the Selimiye as well.<sup>371</sup> In fact, reusing marble of earlier edifices had been a common practice of legitimization since antiquity,<sup>372</sup> and has inevitably been a shared architectural tradition of the entire eastern Mediterranean region.<sup>373</sup> However, for Selim, this symbolic act was not simply to weigh his mosque's imperial legitimacy against the Hagia Sophia. Rather, the Selimiye Mosque was built to be the new Hagia Sophia. To make the semantic connection between the Selimiye and the Hagia Sophia even stronger, Selim ordered the renovation of the latter during the construction of his mosque in Edirne, and articulated the sultanic status of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Istanbul by increasing its minarets from two to four, thereby emphasising the iconographic link between the two architectonic masterpieces.<sup>374</sup>

But, above all, the main feat of the Selimiye was going to be its dome, unrivalled in size. As there had not been an attempt to build a dome larger than that of the Hagia Sophia before, Selim's endeavour to establish an obvious semantic parallel between his and Justinian's

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<sup>371</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 142.

<sup>372</sup> Arnold Esch, "On the Reuse of Antiquity: The Perspectives of the Archeologist and of the Historian," *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, ed. D. Kinney and R. Brilliant, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 13-32.

<sup>373</sup> See an account on the appreciation of antique materials used for adorning new edifices along with a list of examples from the eastern Mediterranean in the fifteenth-century in Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria Libri Decem Leonis Baptistae Alberti Florentini uiri clarissimi, & Architecti nobilissimi, quibus omnem Architectan di rationem dilucida breuitate complexus est* Book 6, Chapter 5 (Strassbourg: Jakob Cammerlander, 1541), 82. See translation in Leon Battista Alberti, *The Architecture of Leon Batista Alberti in Ten Books, Of Painting in Three Books, and Of Statuary in One Book ...*, trans. James Leoni (London: Edward Owen, 1755).

<sup>374</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 121; eadem, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia After Byzantium," in *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. Robert Mark and Ahmet S. Cakmak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 210.



imperial temple depended only on whether the dome could be built. Thus it is only obvious that Selim waited until it was certain that his mosque's dome would be feasible before he went on to adjusting the Hagia Sophia to the outlook of the Selimiye. The construction reached dome level in April 1573, and later the same year the sultan's order to begin the renovation of Justinian's temple was issued.<sup>375</sup> With the two domes almost of equal size as well as with four minarets at each of the buildings' four corners (in contrast, the only other mosque equipped with four minarets at the time, the Süleymaniye, had its minarets at the four corners of its courtyard), the Hagia Sophia and the Selimiye were subject to a semantic cross-fertilization in consequence of which they became, if not look-alikes, recognizable referents of each other.

This identification of one mosque with the other required confirmation in the two building's surroundings too. As the Selimiye stood freely on an open square (*Kavak meydanı*), the shops and houses attached to the Hagia Sophia's walls needed demolition. Two *fetvas* on the matter of the expropriation and compensation of the owners and hirers affected by the clearing of the Hagia Sophia's surroundings were issued,<sup>376</sup> and the buildings were removed.<sup>377</sup> Had the two medreses of the Hagia Sophia been built, as it was originally planned to be part of the monument's renovation, the architectonic resemblance between the Hagia Sophia and the Selimiye would have been even more emphatic.<sup>378</sup> Eventually, the two buildings' functions were switched. The chronicler Mustafa Selaniki writes in his *Tarih-i Selaniki* (1563-95) that

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<sup>375</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 96; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 112.

<sup>376</sup> SK, Residefendi 1086, 89.

<sup>377</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 112-13.

<sup>378</sup> Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument," 210.

Selim II was accompanied by viziers, grandees, and religious scholars during his inspection of Hagia Sophia in 1573 when the sultan personally

commissioned Koca Mimar Sinan Agha with his blessed words: Build strong buttresses in necessary places and clear the surroundings for the purpose of consolidation; it is my wish to renovate the noble Friday mosque as my own imperial monument.<sup>379</sup>

In fact, a year later Selim *was* buried at the Hagia Sophia, which, according to Ottoman custom, was the ultimate purpose of an imperial mosque.<sup>380</sup> The renovated monument thus became Selim's sultanic funeral mosque, while the Selimiye seems to have been stripped of its imperial functions. It is probably this loss of symbolic status that inspired the writer of Sinan's autobiographies Mustafa Sai Çelebi (died c. 1595) to re-interpret the significance of the Selimiye in Sinan's *oeuvre* as only second to the Süleymaniye, which is described as the "seal" of the architect's skills. Sai's two *tezkires* do pay homage to the Selimiye, unlike the *Tuhfetü'l-Mimarın*, which omits the Selimiye altogether. The *Tuhfetü'l-Mimarın* was dedicated to Sultan Murad III during whose reign, at the 1582 Imperial Circumcision Festival, it was a model of the Süleymaniye paraded on the Hippodrome as a symbol of the excellence of Ottoman craftsmanship. This may also point to the fact that after Selim II had been laid to eternal peace at the side of the Hagia Sophia (the *türbe* over his tomb was erected by his successor Sultan

<sup>379</sup> "[...] Koca Mimar Sinan Ağa'ya mübarek kelamıyla sıfariş buyurup 'İktiza eyledüğü yerlerine muhkem payendanlar yapup istihkam üzere etrafını tevsi eyleyü-vir ki muradım cami-i şerifi ihya idüp eser-i hass idinmektür.'" *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 96.

<sup>380</sup> Gülrü Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints on the Cityscape: The Collective Message of Imperial Funerary Mosque Complexes in Istanbul," in *Colloque Internationale: Cimetières et traditions funéraires dans le monde islamique*, ed. Jacques-Louis Bacqué-Gammont (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1996), 26-30.

Murad III),<sup>381</sup> the Selimiye was not considered a sultanic mosque anymore in spite of being an architectonic marvel. This is also suggested by the absence of a foundation inscription on the Selimiye, which makes it the only Ottoman sultanic mosque without one. The sculpted *muqarnas* gate of the Selimiye features three empty panels<sup>382</sup> suggesting that it is *not* Selim's imperial monument, or that it is not a sultanic mosque at all.

Although at first glance Selaniki's words, quoted above, about the sultan's wish to turn the Hagia Sophia into his imperial mosque while constructing the Selimiye may seem puzzling given that the building of the Selimiye had already cost Selim too much,<sup>383</sup> they in fact make sense in light of Selim's ambition to prove that he can build a mosque that equals and surpasses the Hagia Sophia and thus match and surpass both Justinian and Solomon as a temple and empire builder. Indeed it was a powerful symbolic act that was picked up on by western visitors to the empire as well: Genoese sources claim that the Hagia Sophia, during its renovation was renamed to "Selimiye Camii."<sup>384</sup> Ultimately, Selim triumphed not only over the two antique rulers. Justinian, according to the commonly known tale, upon entering the newly built Hagia Sophia exclaimed "Solomon, I have surpassed you!" And thus, by analogy, Selim surpassed another Solomon too, his father, Süleyman the Magnificent.

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid. 27.

<sup>382</sup> Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 252.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 233.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Late sixteenth-century western visitors to Edirne assumed a direct reference to the occupation of Cyprus in the recently built Selimiye mosque. While the financial dependence of the building's construction and maintenance on the revenues extracted from the island prove false, there *was*, in fact, an intended ideological connection between the mosque and the War of Cyprus. On the one hand, Selim and his ideologues seem to have pressed for references to the Last Judgement to be featured in the Selimiye's indoor wall inscriptions. (For a comparison, the Süleymaniye mosque's inscriptions do not make mention of the Apocalypse at all.) This, as will be discussed in the following chapter, was part of an ideology conceived at the Ottoman court to style Selim II as an emperor living at the End Time. On the other hand, the entire construction and the mosque's main architectonic features partook in a visual and ideological cross-referencing with the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Exceeding the latter's dome in size, an engineering marvel which had been previously unsurpassed, the Selimiye mosque made Selim II comparable to Emperor Justinian I, the Hagia Sophia's commissioner. Thus, Selim not only became associable with the highest achievement of Ottoman architecture the Selimiye; he was, in fact, by "re-enacting" the Hagia Sophia's foundation myths during the Selimiye's construction, also becoming the Justinian of his age fully entitled to claim the Hagia Sophia as his sultanic mosque.

Western interpreters of the "message" encoded into the Selimiye mosque assumed that it was an architectonic celebration of the Ottoman victory in Cyprus. This assumption made perfect sense: even though westerners did not share the code that was used in the ideological program of the mosque's interior and lacked the knowledge about the purposeful cross-referencing between the Selimiye and the Hagia Sophia, direct interpretation between their and the Ottoman semiosphere seemed possible. After all, the Selimiye was a "temple" whose construction would not have been legally acceptable without a victorious military campaign by

its commissioner. However, the real ideological significance of the Selimiye, contrary to foreign visitors' (ill-)decoding, was the mosque's intended function to act as signifier in two semiotic chains: in one of them it referred to the Hagia Sophia to legitimize its commissioner as emperor; and in the other it referred to the Last Judgement, which was also referred to by the War of Cyprus. Having discussed the first in the current chapter, the latter semiotic chain is the topic of investigation in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: The War of Cyprus and the Apocalypse

While the Selimiye has no foundational inscription, it has plenty of inscriptions on the interior, a puzzlingly large number of which contain references to the “Last Hour” (Last Judgement). While the Süleymaniye mosque’s inscriptions contain references to orthodox religious duties none of which touch upon eschatological themes, the Selimiye’s epigraphic program seems to be focused on the Last Judgement.<sup>385</sup> Borrowing from the Koran and the *hadith*, these inscriptions address the mosque’s commissioner and the congregation, which Necipoğlu attributes to the Ottoman populace’s penitence felt for the Ottoman navy’s defeat at Lepanto (1571) only a year prior to the inscriptions’ commission.<sup>386</sup> The most characteristic of this program are the *qibla* wall’s inscriptions, which quote eschatologically inspired Kuranic verses, such as “Our Lord! Give us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire” (2:201); “Those who say: Our Lord! Lo! we believe, So forgive our sins and guard us from the punishment of Fire” (3:16); “Thou art my Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous” (12:101); “Our Lord! it is Thou who gatherest mankind together to a Day of which there is no doubt. Lo! Allah faileth not to keep the tryst” (3:9); etc.<sup>387</sup> The eschatological ideological program apparent in the mosque’s interior inscriptions is supported

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<sup>385</sup> Morkoç, *A Study of Ottoman Narratives on Architecture*, 302.; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 254-55.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 252, 254.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 535, n. 345.

by the position and outlook of the muezzin's tribune, which, unusually for Sinan's *ouvre*, stands in the center underneath the dome. This novelty together with the octagonal domed baldachin that surrounds it is likened by Sinan's biographer to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, where God's throne was believed to descend at the Last Judgement.<sup>388</sup>

Unlike Necipoğlu, I see little likelihood of the Selimiye being the carrier of a pensive mood over the Ottoman defeat at Lepanto. Rather, I suggest that the Ottoman attack on Cyprus, the cross-referencing between the Selimiye and the Hagia Sophia as well as the eschatological references in the inscriptions of Selim's mosque constitute an imperial narrative program, which can be fully comprehended only when "read" against the backdrop of contemporary expectations of the Apocalypse.

### 3.1 The Medieval and Early Modern Apocalyptic "Backdrop"

The 1453 Ottoman conquest of Constantinople happened at a time when the fall of the city in Byzantine, Jewish and Islamic apocalyptic thinking had come to foreshadow the End Time/Last Judgement. Some elements of the Byzantine apocalyptic tradition associable with the fall of Constantinople dated to the city's earliest centuries, and associated its monuments with apocalyptic expectations,<sup>389</sup> while others were more recently developed locally or

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 246, 247. *Sinan's Autobiographies: Five Sixteenth-Century Texts*, 131, 132, 133.

<sup>389</sup> For Byzantine apocalyptic *topoi* associable with Constantinople see Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire*, 323-30; Walter K. Hanak, "Some Historiographical Observations on the Sources of Nestor-Iskander's *The Tale of Constantinople*," in *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 35-45; Albrecht Berger, "Das apokalyptische Konstantinopel. Topographisches in apokalyptischen Schriften der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit," in *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, ed. Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 135-55; András Kraft, "Constantinople in Byzantine Apocalyptic Thought," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 18 (2012): 25-36.

borrowed from Near Eastern apocalypses. One of the most formidable of the latter,<sup>390</sup> which would have a decisive and long-lasting effect on Christian views of Islam, was the *Apocalypse of (Saint) Methodius* (henceforth *Pseudo-Methodius*), whose Syriac original was falsely attributed in the Middle Ages to the fourth-century martyred Bishop of Patara in Lycia (d. 311 CE).<sup>391</sup> The *Pseudo-Methodius*, the “crown of Eastern Christian apocalyptic literature,”<sup>392</sup> was written during the Arab conquest of northern Mesopotamia in the seventh century by an anonymous author,<sup>393</sup> hence the pseudonymous title *Pseudo-Methodius*. The text presents a salvation history of mankind, whereby Muslims and a certain Last Emperor would play important roles at the times preceding the Last Judgement. Like most apocalypses, the *Pseudo-Methodius* was written at a time of crisis, and thus this anti-Muslim polemic not only called for Christian resistance against the invaders but also provided hope for its audience. The author envisioned a divinely ordained universal ruler who would defeat the “Ishmaelites” (i.e. Muslims and/or Arabs),<sup>394</sup> the enemies of Christ, and usher in “...great peace and quiet over the

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<sup>390</sup> Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 52.

<sup>391</sup> Yoko Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 17 (1993): *Essays Presented to Richard Nelson Frye on his Seventieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, ed. Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Tekin (Department of Near Eastern Studies & Civilisations, Harvard University): 125-45 esp. 126, 127; Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 70.

<sup>392</sup> McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> In the medieval apocalyptic Joachimist tradition Muslims also received an eschatological interpretation. Dating back to Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135-1202), Joachimism, this extremely powerful exegetic genre which would define western eschatological thinking until the nineteenth century, saw the “Old” and “New Testaments” and especially the “Book of Revelation” as sources from which detailed prognostications for the future could be made. Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 99-100. The Joachimite corpus prophesied the beginning of the third and last



earth,”<sup>395</sup> that is a Golden Age, before the release of the “nations which Alexander enclosed” (i.e. the peoples of Gog and Magog).<sup>396</sup> Despite its literary forerunners,<sup>397</sup> the Last Emperor *topos* received unprecedented recognition in western Christianity for the first time by way of

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era of human history to begin sometime between 1200 and 1260 (Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 102.), and the Last Emperor and an Angelic Pope to compete for the role of saviour of the Christian world in the Last Days. The Pseudo-Methodius and the Joachimist lines were quickly merged and enjoyed even wider circulation than separately. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Joachimist prophecies, including the two original texts, were edited and printed in various forms. Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks,” 127. For more on the Joachimist tradition see: E. Randolph Daniel, “Joachim of Fiore’s Apocalyptic Scenario,” *Last Things: Death & The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. W. Bynum and P. Freedman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 124-39; Martha Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse: A Brief History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 138.

<sup>395</sup> *The Apocalypse: Saint Methodius and an Alexandrian World Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Benjamin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 131.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>397</sup> Although the *Pseudo-Methodius* is the first existing record of the legend of the Last Emperor, the trope was the continuation of earlier traditions of Saviour monarchs and deified emperors of ancient Greece and Rome as well as Hellenistic Judaism. Preserved in the Sibylline Oracles, this body of literature (originally attributed to inspired prophetesses of Antiquity) was an eschatological genre consisting of Hellenistic Jewish and Christian oracles, which also drew on (even) earlier apocalyptic traditions of ancient Greek and Roman exalted rulers. In Christianity the same tendency materialized in the figure of the warrior-Christ as described in the Book of Revelation. (Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 30.) After the Roman Empire’s adoption of Christianity (380 CE), Christian Sibyllines began to see Constantine the Great (r. 306-337 CE) as a messianic king, and the eschatological significance of the Roman Emperor did not cease after Constantine’s death. This body of literature attributed to inspired prophetesses of Antiquity was in fact an eschatological genre consisting of Hellenistic Jewish and Christian oracles, which drew on even earlier apocalyptic traditions. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 15. The first Christian Sibylline was the so-called *Tiburtina* (fourth century CE), which prophesies the advent of a Greek emperor named Constans, who, putting an end to a period of suffering would unite the two halves of the Roman Empire, would establish an age of peace and abundance, and force all pagans to baptize before the rise of the Antichrist and the nations of Gog and Magog are unleashed. See the fourth-century Latin text re-produced in Ernst Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1898), 177-87. For the prophecy on Constans see *ibid.* 185-86.

the *Pseudo-Methodius*, which was translated into Greek—thus becoming available for the Byzantine clergy—and Latin early (early eighth century), and later printed and widely read in numerous European vernaculars.<sup>398</sup>

In the Muslim apocalyptic, a *topos* conspicuously similar to that of the Last Emperor features the Mahdi, a messianic figure, whose qualities and eschatological role are in correlation with those of his Christian counterpart. Elements of the *topoi* of the Last Emperor in the *Pseudo-Methodius* and the Mahdi in the *Qatada hadith* (c. 680-692)<sup>399</sup> show striking similarities, and seem to have been in dialogue with each other since as early as their near contemporaneous writing.<sup>400</sup> Another emblematic example of a Muslim-Christian exchange of medieval apocalyptic motifs is the *Kitab al-Fitan wa al-Malahim* (*Book of Trials and Battles*, ninth century), a compilation of medieval apocalypses, from the pen of the ninth-century *hadith* scholar, Nu'aym Ibn Hammad. As a Sufi thinker, Nu'aym handled the *hadith* freely, in an inter-

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<sup>398</sup> McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 72.

<sup>399</sup> A prophetic chapter in the ninth-century Abu Dawud al-Sijistani's canonical *hadith* collection, the *Kitab al-Sunan*, which originally came down to al-Sijistani's time, from, according to several *isnads*, Qatada b. Di'ama, a Basran traditionist who died ca. 735. Wilferd Madelung, "Abd Allāh B. Al-Zubayr and the Mahdi," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40 no. 4 (1981): 291-305 esp. 292. Madelung coined the name "*Qatada hadith*" on the basis of the Mahdi *topos*'s first source. However, the validity of Madelung's "common link method," which identifies the "original" Mahdi with 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, the rebel and self-appointed anti-caliph during the Second Islamic Civil War (680-92) has been questioned by David Cook. Harald Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey," *Arabica* 52 no. 2 (2005): 204-53 esp. 236-38; David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 2002), 154-55; David Cook, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions," in *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992): 23-47 esp. 32-33, 36-38.

<sup>400</sup> For a full elaboration on the similarities of the two tropes see András Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor and the Mahdi – On the Genesis of a Contentious Politico-religious *Topos*," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium Byzantium and the Arabic World: Encounter of Civilizations*, ed. Apostolos Kralides and Andreas Gkoutzioukostas (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2013), esp. 243.

confessional manner and in parallel with the biblical material about the Last Judgement.<sup>401</sup> Besides the biblical themes, Nu‘aym relates traditions that suggest the Sufi author’s familiarity with the Last Emperor *topos*, which he borrowed, most recognizably, from the *Apocalypse of Bahira*.<sup>402</sup> This ninth-century Christian apology, in turn, incorporated figures of the Muslim apocalyptic tradition, including the Mahdi, in its Christian eschatological narrative claiming that the Muslim messiah will receive only a transient role and will ultimately be overthrown by the “King of Rum” that is the Last Roman Emperor.<sup>403</sup>

Apart from the medieval cross-influencing of certain Christian and Muslim apocalyptic themes and *topoi*, Muslim eschatological predictions and prognostications continued assimilating similar tropes in the Ottoman era. The Muslim world’s anticipation of a messianic ruler, in the Ottoman religious-political discourse toward and during the Hijra tenth century was translated into a complex propaganda aimed at western Christian (most notably the Habsburgs) and Shiite (the Safavids), as well as the empire’s Sunni Muslim, Jewish and Christian audiences. The aim of wide comprehensibility, suitable for these multiple audiences, of the Ottoman sultan’s identification as a messianic figure living at the End Time resulted, by

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<sup>401</sup> Barbara Roggema, “The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Some Remarks on its Origin in the East and its traces in the West,” *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, Confrontations II*, ed. Krijna Nelly Ciggaar and Herman G. B. Teule (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2003), 120.

<sup>402</sup> One of the most obvious manifestations of a synthesizing effort between Muslim and Christian apocalyptic *topoi* is the ninth-century *Legend of Monk Bahira*, which features both the Mahdi and the Last Emperor, whereby the latter supersedes the earlier at the End Time: “To this Mahdi the tribes of the Ishmaelites will be subservient. With him will end the kingdom of the Arabs. [...] I saw then a wagon, decked out with all that is beautiful. I said to the angel, what is this? He answered, this is the king of Rum, who will rule over the whole earth until the end of [all] kingdoms.” Richard Gottheil, “A Christian Bahira Legend,” in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 17 (1903): 125-66 esp. 127; Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

<sup>403</sup> Kraft, “The Last Roman Emperor and the Mahdi,” 243.

necessity, in an often self-contradicting mixture of Judeo-Christian apocalyptic tropes (borrowed from the aforementioned *Pseudo Methodius* and the *Book of Daniel*), and Muslim traditions, often mystically infused, most recognizably by the eschatological visions of Ibn al-‘Arabi.<sup>404</sup> Thus, even some of the basic concepts were debatable, one of the most contradictory of which concerned the central figure of prophecies, the Mahdi himself. Various interpretations existed parallel with each other about who the Mahdi would be, whether he would be related to Mohammed, what his relationship with Jesus would be, and whether Jesus himself would be the Mahdi.<sup>405</sup>

In general, Ottoman apocalypticism borrowed greatly from the local or nearby Christian (Near Eastern and Byzantine) traditions,<sup>406</sup> and by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople Muslim apocalyptic cycles absorbed two tropes which showed timely relevance in the Ottoman cultural historical context.<sup>407</sup> One of them was the apocalyptic associations of Constantinople itself,<sup>408</sup> which were available to the Ottomans among Byzantine sources by way of the aforementioned *Patria*<sup>409</sup> as well as Muslim messianic cycles envisioning the ultimate Muslim

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<sup>404</sup> Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 80.

<sup>405</sup> For Muslim and specifically Ottoman interpretations of the Mahdi see Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 91-95.

<sup>406</sup> David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 2-9 esp. 2-3.

<sup>407</sup> Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time,” 318, 324-26.

<sup>408</sup> Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 59-66.

<sup>409</sup> Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire*, 323-30.

conquest of Constantinople by the Mahdi immediately before the Dajjal, the Muslim Antichrist, and other harbingers of the End Time taking the scene.<sup>410</sup>

The other trope of significance was the occurrence of the “Blond People” or the “Blond Race” (Ar. *Banu al-Asfar*, Ott. *Beni Asfer*, *Benü'l-Asfer*, *Asferoğulları*, etc.)—a central *topos* in the apocalypses attributed to the Prophet Daniel.<sup>411</sup> In the Byzantine synthesis of apocalyptic traditions the conquest of Constantinople would be followed by the occurrence of the Last (Roman) Emperor, who, with the help of the Blond People would wage a decisive defeat on the “Ishmaelites.” Eventually, the Blond People became widely a recognizable *topos* within the Ottoman tradition whereby in different historical periods they were identified with different peoples and polities of the Christian faith from the Byzantines to the Habsburgs.<sup>412</sup>

The two tropes combined raised a serious doubt about Constantinople’s role in the Ottomans’ empire-building project in the fifteenth century, but they also allowed for associating Mehmed and the sixteenth-century sultans with certain eschatological attributes. The *takvims* or prognostication “calendars” made for Mehmed II, translations of *apocalypica* (e.g. the “Book of Daniel” or *Kitab-i Danyal*) commissioned for the Conqueror’s scriptorium, and the widely disseminated apocalyptic prophecies written during the reign of Mehmed, (e.g. the works of the time’s authority on the science of *huruf* that is the esoteric practice of achieving knowledge about the cosmos and God, and ultimately, about the End Time, Abdurrahman

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<sup>410</sup> The encounter of the Mahdi with the Dajjal is featured only in messianic cycles while normally the Dajjal is rebuked not by the Mahdi but by Jesus. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 166-69 esp. 167.

<sup>411</sup> Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 203; Agostino Pertusi, *Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo. Significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in Oriente e Occidente* (Rome: Enrico Morini, 1988), 40-62.

<sup>412</sup> Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time,” 324-25.

Bistami c. [1380-1455],<sup>413</sup> especially his *Nazm al-suluk fi musamarat al-muluk* [*The Ordering of Conduct for the Accompaniment of Kings*, 1455]) suggest that both the sultan and the Ottoman elite were aware of the key Mediterranean apocalyptic traditions including the eschatological significance of Constantinople's Ottoman conquest.<sup>414</sup> Consequently, this familiarity with Constantinople's apocalyptic lore and the identification of the Blond People with Christian polities which would execute a successful counter-attack on the Ottomans after the latter's conquest of Constantinople seem to have been among the main reasons that prompted some to strongly oppose Mehmed II's decision to turn Constantinople into the imperial capital. Thus, with the help of careful selection and interpretation of *hadith* the apocalyptic role of both the city and the prophesied people needed to be obfuscated (even though the Prophet's sayings include references to Constantinople's apocalyptic significance).<sup>415</sup>

However, Ottoman authors uninvolved in Mehmed II's imperial project could afford to handle the apocalyptic literature available to them with more fidelity. Perhaps the most momentous of such authors working during Mehmed's reign was Ahmed Bican Yazıcıoğlu (died ca. 1466), whose cosmography entitled *Dürr-i Meknun* (*The Hidden Pearls*, post-1453) was written shortly after the Ottoman occupation of Constantinople,<sup>416</sup> and contains two

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<sup>413</sup> Cornell Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences," 234, 235.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 232-33.

<sup>415</sup> Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time," 326-28.

<sup>416</sup> Laban Kaptein, *Apocalypse and the Antichrist Dajjal in Islam* (Asch: private publication, 2011), 49; Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 61, 105, 203; Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time," 336.

chapters (Chapters 16 and 17) dedicated to the “signs of the [Last] Hour” (*eşrat-ı saat*).<sup>417</sup> Ahmed Bican was inevitably familiar with the Byzantine tradition (including translations of the *Pseudo-Methodius* and elements of the Daniel apocalyptic literature),<sup>418</sup> which he merged with Islamic apocalyptic prognostications<sup>419</sup> thus arriving at the conclusion in Chapter 16 (entitled *Esrar-ı cıfriyye ve havadis-i kevnıyye ve rümuş-ı cıfriyye beyanındadır*) that the end was not immediate<sup>420</sup> but the tribulations preceding the advent of the Last Hour would begin to take place in 1494-95 (900 A.H.),<sup>421</sup> and that the Last Hour itself may be scheduled for 1590-91 (1000 A.H.).<sup>422</sup> In narrating the times which would immediately precede the Apocalypse,

<sup>417</sup> Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, ed. Necdet Sakaoğlu (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 122-32.

<sup>418</sup> Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, 68-9, 104, 110-1; Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time,” 352.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., 337-38, 342-43.

<sup>420</sup> “Eydürler kim bu cihanın ömrü yetmiş bin yıldır. Altmış iki bin dokuzyüz altmış yıl olacak. Eydürler, yedi bin yıl daha adem hükmedecektir. İlm-i nücum iktizai üze kırk yıl da bu alem fani olacak, ıssız yatacakdı.” (They say that this world’s lifespan is 70,000 years. [There] will be 62,960 years, [after which] they say, man will rule [this world] for 7,000 more years. According to astrology [*ilm-i nücum iktizai üze*], in forty years’ time this world will be laid desolate and deserted.) Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 116.

<sup>421</sup> “[...] müslimler kafirleri makhur edeler, şad ve hürrem olalar. Kafir memleketini garet edeler. Andan sonra Efrenc ilinden mülk-i Rum’a hayli zarar yetişe. İmam Ali eyitdi: ‘Dokuz yüzden (dokuzyüz doksan dokuzundan) sonra canib-i şark harabeye yüz tuta. Beni Asfer hurucunun alametleri belirmeğe başlaya ve [or: başlayan] “mim” Kavim (Gazbin) şehrinde bir şahıs zuhur ede. Ehl-i bi’at ola. Anın hurucu (900 içinde ola) dokuz tarihinde ola.’” (The Muslims defeat the infidels, and [they] will be joyful and merry. They will loot the countries of the infidels. After this they will ravage from the country of the French to the land of Rum. Ali imam said: ‘after [the year] 999 the East will be reduced to ruins. The signs of the Blond People’s appearance will appear at the time of the occurrence of a man in the “M” people’s city. [He will be of the] people of the horseless people. He will appear in [the year] 900.’) Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 120.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid. and Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time,” 342.

Bican points to “some books” (*çıkar esrarının bazı kitaplar naklinden...*)<sup>423</sup> foretelling the Ottoman occupation of Constantinople and the rise of the Mahdi among the first signs of the approaching end, for which Bican derived most of his Muslim apocalyptic prognostications from the *hadith* and *cifr* that is esoteric literature. For example, Chapter 17 commences with the words attributed to the Prophet (*hadith*), which summarize the events leading up to the Last Judgement: “Run, the Apocalypse is coming! Ten different signs [of it] will appear. The first of them will be the appearance of the Blond People. Then his Holiness the Mahdi will appear.”<sup>424</sup> In the next paragraph Bican refers to the *hadith* again and names another of his sources on Islamic apocalyptic prophecies, whereby “his Holiness the Messenger [of God] said in accordance with the *ilm-i cifr* [i.e. esoteric science or numerology] that the appearance of his holiness the Mahdi is a sign”.<sup>425</sup> According to Bican, as the Muslims have settled in Constantinople, the Blond People (i.e. the Christians) will break the peace with the Muslims, collect their forces (...*kafir sulhu boza, cümle kafir ittifak edeler...*)<sup>426</sup> and re-conquer the city. This will be followed by another, but failed, Ottoman military attempt while the Dajjal would be destroying the warriors’ houses as the latter are besieging the city (...*Deccal çıktı, evlerinizi harabeye verdi... Bunlar İstanbul’u koyalar, gideler*),<sup>427</sup> and the ultimate Muslim conquest will

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<sup>423</sup> Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 122.

<sup>424</sup> “Kaçan, kıyamet gele, on türlü alamet zahir ola. Anın evveli Beni Asfer hurucu ola. Andan Mehdi hazretleri gele.” Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 122.

<sup>425</sup> “Mehdi hazretlerinin hurucunu ilm-i cifirde Resul hazretleri ‘alametdir’ dedi.” Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 122. As for the “Ten Signs” of the advent of the Apocalypse in Islam and the problem of whether the appearance of the Mahdi is one of them see: John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrebbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 108-10.

<sup>426</sup> Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 123.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 124.



only occur when the Mahdi defeats the Blond People and enters the city<sup>428</sup> (*Beni Asfer'i helak eyleye. İstanbul'u feth eyleye. Kafirleri kıralar*).<sup>429</sup> The *Dürr-i Meknun*, especially its two chapters engaged with the Last Hour and its portents, soon became an influential work in Ottoman apocalyptic literature, whereby toward the end of the sixteenth century these chapters had begun to live their own lives through adaptations and emulations and were copied separately from the original work.<sup>430</sup>

Besides the occurrences of the concept of the Mahdi originating from the *hadith*, another, mystic concept of a “Perfect Man” of the true religion defining the End Time reached Anatolian Muslims by way of the Andalusian Sufi master Muhyiddin Ibn al-‘Arabi (1165-1240),<sup>431</sup> who spent the second half of his life in Konya.<sup>432</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabi’s mysticism enjoyed dissemination in the Ottoman Empire through the teachings of Sufi masters of various orders and in the prestigious Orhaniye, the first Ottoman *medrese* established by *emir* Orhan in İznik, whose *müderres*, Davud-i Kayseri was a devout disciple and interpreter of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s works. Ibn al-‘Arabi proposed Jesus’ meta-religious proportions and role at the End Time,<sup>433</sup> and predicted that the Mahdi’s real enemies will be the jurists, and that the fall of Constantinople would come about without a spilling of blood. (Instead, Ibn al-‘Arabi predicted

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<sup>428</sup> Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time,” 344-45.

<sup>429</sup> Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı inciler*, 125.

<sup>430</sup> Kaptein, *Apocalypse and the Antichrist Dajjal in Islam*, 2-3.

<sup>431</sup> For Ibn al-‘Arabi’s prognostications about the Apocalypse see Jean-Pierre Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, trans. Malcolm B. DeBevoise (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 31-34.

<sup>432</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. Ralph Austin (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980), 15.

<sup>433</sup> Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 94.

the ultimate clash between the Blond People and the Mahdi on the plain of Aleppo [*Haleb ovası*].)<sup>434</sup>

A hundred and fifty years later, as the Hijra calendar drew close to and entered the tenth century (1494-95), texts predicting the imminence of the Apocalypse began to be circulated at the Ottoman court. It is this time when Ibn al-‘Arabi’s apocalyptic prognostications received pointed attention again. The Andalusian Sufi’s apocalyptic texts had a formidable effect on the *Miftah al-jafr al-jami* (*The key to the comprehensive prognostication*, 1454) of another mystic, Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami. Bistami’s work was a collection of apocalypses in circulation in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Egypt and Syria, including several prophetic works attributed to Ibn al-‘Arabi. According to Cornell Fleischer, the *Miftah al-jafr al-jami* served as the ideological basis on which Süleyman the Magnificent’s sultanic image as the Mahdi was built in the sixteenth century.<sup>435</sup> However, another source of Süleyman’s apocalyptic image was Ahmed Bican, who admittedly based the apocalyptic vision of the *Dürr-i Meknun* on the *hadith*, Muslim esoteric science and presumably on Christian apocalyptic cycles as well. Later, in the second version of another of his apocalyptic texts, the *Münteha* (*Epilogue*, 1453 and 1465), an annotated translation of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s *Fusus al-Hikam* (*The Bezels of Wisdom*), he turned to the Sufi master for his predictions for the Last Judgment. One of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s key concepts, the Perfect Man, the “Pillar of the Heavens and Earth,” was associated with the End Time, whereby “Just as the spirit governs the body and controls it through faculties, in the same way the Perfect Man governs the affairs of the world [...]”<sup>436</sup> and “The hour will not come as

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<sup>434</sup> Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, 33.

<sup>435</sup> Fleischer, “Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences,” 238-39.

<sup>436</sup> William C. Chittick, “Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Own Summary of the Fusûs: ‘The Imprint of the Bezels of the Wisdom’,” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 1 (1982): 30-93 esp. 4-5.

long as there is a Perfect Man in the world”.<sup>437</sup> And so, in parallel with this, in the *Münteha* Ahmed Bican portrays Mehmed as a perfect ruler, the leader and protector of Muslims against the Blond People, and urges him that, given the calamities ahead, his main objective should be to conquer Rome and all the lands of the Blond People, whose attack from the West before the Last Judgement is certain.<sup>438</sup>

Indeed, Ahmed Bican’s proposal and some of the major themes of the *Miftah al-jafr al-jami* were applicable to Mehmed but they are also familiar to us from the court-orchestrated millenarian *topoi* associated with the reign of subsequent sultans. Some of the themes recorded in the *Miftah al-jafr al-jami* could be interpreted as the deeds of Selim I, such as the final conquest of Egypt by a king from the North (Rum).<sup>439</sup> Others were propagated in association with Süleyman, such as the final conquest of Rome by the Mahdi; the ruination of the lands; and the establishment of the pre-apocalyptic universal rule of a single purified religion by the

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>438</sup> Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Mekkun/Saklı İnciler*, 349-50. As much as attempts to prevent key apocalyptic events from happening seems unusual, George of Trabzon set out to change the course of events of the Apocalypse by suggesting that Mehmed II should convert to Christianity. George of Trabzon, “On the Eternal Glory of the Autocrat,” ed. and trans. John Monfasani, in *Collectanea Trapezuntiana: texts, documents, and bibliographies of George of Trebizond* (Binghampton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance Society of America, 1984), 495; see also a paraphrased translation in John Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 133. Also see the apocalyptic role of Rome in the Muslim apocalyptic tradition whereby Constantinople’s conquest before the Last Hour is followed by the Muslim conquest of Rome. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 35, 58-9, 64-7. Nevertheless, it should be noted that apocalyptic narratives are generally inclined to bring about change in a society or in the trajectory of history. They are directed at the omnipotent God, who, in theory, could change the course of history, or at a pious audience, who is asked to change their moral conduct or at an imperial audience, which is asked to consider the emperor’s eschatological significance, etc.

<sup>439</sup> Fleischer, “Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences,” 238.

co-rulership of Jesus and the Mahdi, of the line of the Prophet.<sup>440</sup> In the meantime, some other themes seem to have constituted a common stock of *topoi* applicable to any of the sultans with messianic-apocalyptic affinities, such as the advent of the violent Blond People, whose goal is the conquest of Constantinople and the destruction of Islamic lands; as well as the return of Jesus and the destruction of the Dajjal.<sup>441</sup> I claim that a specific *topos* featured in the *Miftah al-jafr al-jami*, namely the “Battle of the Western Island” was, if not exclusive to, used as the cornerstone of Selim II’s sultanic image-making, to which I will return later in this chapter.

Millenarian and apocalyptic expectations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were central to inter-imperial competition in the wider Mediterranean region and beyond. The long apocalyptic traditions nurtured by the monotheistic religions foretelling the occurrence of a messianic ruler culminated as time drew closer to the Hijra millennium and as the age-old prophecies seemed to be coming to pass in the region’s current history. In the Ottoman Empire the existing Jewish, Christian and Muslim prophecies fell on fertile ground whereby the Islamic precedents, Chengizid and Abbasid ideals of universal rulership,<sup>442</sup> converged with the notions of the Last Emperor and the Mahdi. The ensuing Ottoman religious and political imagination exploiting the time’s eschatological fervour was a response to the self-appointed messianic persona of the Safavid rulers since Shah Ismail (which is an indicator of a common pool of apocalyptic *topoi* shared by the two sectarian—Shiite and Sunni—communities),<sup>443</sup> and to the

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<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 273-83.

<sup>443</sup> Subrahmanyam, “Turning the stones over,” 139-43.

Ottomans' western rivals, the Habsburgs, as well as a dynastic claim communicated to the Ottoman Empire's domestic Jewish, Christian and Muslim population.<sup>444</sup>

Although Ottoman sultans began to be styled in a messianic mould in the late fifteenth century, an explicit claim to the sultan's messianic status was first made in a concerted way for propaganda purposes during the reign of Sultan Selim I. The *takvims* or prognostication "calendars" foretelling events which seemed to fulfil apocalyptic prophecies suggest that Selim's public image rested on his imagined role as the Mahdi.<sup>445</sup> The expectations were duly reflected on after Selim's first major victory as sultan, in which he defeated the Ottomans' eastern rival, the also messianically inclined Shah Ismail. According to Lutfi Paşa's *Tevarih-i Al-i 'Osman* (*The Histories of the House of Osman*, c. 1550), Selim was addressed in congratulatory letters after the Battle of Çaldıran (1514) as the "Mahdi of the Last Age" and the "Alexander-like World Conqueror," whose coming at the end of the Islamic era had been foretold by prophecies (*melheme* or *mülhime*) dating from the time of the Prophet.<sup>446</sup> In consequence, Selim's epithets ranged from *zill Allah* (the Shadow of God) to *müceddid* (Renewer of the Faith), and after his even greater victories, the conquests of Syria and Egypt he was the first Ottoman sultan addressed as *sahib-kıran* (Master of the Conjunction) or World Emperor,<sup>447</sup> clearly not only out of epigraphic decorum (even though there have been critical voices against such emphasis on sultanic epithets).<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 80.

<sup>445</sup> Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences," 236.

<sup>446</sup> Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah," 163-64.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 162; Subrahmanyam, "Turning the stones over," 137-38.

<sup>448</sup> Rhoads Murphy, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800* (London: Continuum, 2008), 84-87.

As Selim I died in 1520 without having conquered the world or seen the Apocalypse, the eschatological program allowed for continuation. Lutfi Paşa claims that “Selim hewed a garden from a disorderly world; [and] it was left to his heir Sultan Süleyman to enjoy its fruits,”<sup>449</sup> which he undoubtedly did in a messianic public image between the 1520s and 1540s that surpassed his father’s similar endeavours.<sup>450</sup> Süleyman and his entourage, most notably his confidant Grand Vizier İbrahim Paşa and the latter’s close friend Alvise Gritti created a public image of the sultan being the Mahdi and *sahib-kıran*<sup>451</sup> (and of themselves playing important roles in bringing on the Last Hour),<sup>452</sup> which was to be taken seriously both politically and personally: while in the rivalry of Charles V and Süleyman both parties claimed universal monarchy, the latter also seems to have believed in his eschatological prominence. Symptomatic of the time’s competition between Charles and Süleyman are the three recensions of Ottoman history in verse entitled *Camiü’l-Meknünat* (*The Compendium of Hidden Things*, 1529-1543) by the *kadi* Mevlana İsa, who lived through at least half of Süleyman’s reign. In the recension of 1543 the *kadi* proposes a dramatic vision: the approach of the year 960 A.H. (1552-53) would see the terrestrial triumph of the true religion as the expected result of rivalry between Süleyman with Charles V for recognition as the *sahib-kıran*. The author somewhat

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<sup>449</sup> Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah,” 163.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 159- 77.

<sup>451</sup> Robert Finlay, “Prophecy and Politics in Istanbul: Charles V, Sultan Süleyman, and the Habsburg Embassy of 1533-1534,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 2 no. 1 (1998): 1-31.

<sup>452</sup> Finlay, “Prophecy and Politics in Istanbul,” 22-24.

hesitantly adds that Süleyman is either the Mahdi or his conquering forerunner.<sup>453</sup> Approaching sixty years of age and evidently falling short of living up to what his eschatologically inspired persona had promised, from the 1550s Süleyman took on a more commonly known image portraying him as the *alempenah* (Refuge of the World) and the promoter and protector of the perfect order in this world through issuance and codification of laws, hence his later cognomen *Kanuni* or Law giver.<sup>454</sup> Süleyman died in 1566, but the question whether Mevlana İsa's scenario about Süleyman's heir was capitalized on politically or otherwise by his son Selim II remains unasked. However, the aforementioned *Dürr-i Mekkun* from the pen of Ahmed Bican calls for an interpretation of Selim as the last, messianic emperor.

The advent of the Islamic millennium and the geopolitical environment in which the Ottoman Empire operated in the sixteenth century, especially its continuous conflicts with European polities which could be interpreted as the Blond People, allowed for late sixteenth-century Ottoman interpretations that saw Selim II's conquest of Cyprus in an episode of the *Dürr-i Mekkun* where a certain Selim would wage naval battles and conquer the "Western Island" (*Cezire-i Garb* or *Cezire-i Rum*).<sup>455</sup> In Chapter 16 Bican describes the naval battles fought between Muslims and Christians as time will draw near to the Last Hour:

The time is near when the Blond People appear. At first a caravan of military horses will come. But before they emerge, there will be three great battles. In the *Derya-yı Rum* [Roman Sea] there will be two battles and there will be another one in the *Derya-yı Yunan* [Greek Sea]. [...] After these waste will be laid on the lands of the West. A little bit later some *Cezire-i Rum* [Roman Island]

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<sup>453</sup> Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah," 165; Stephen P. Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calendar, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 165-67.

<sup>454</sup> Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah," 172-73.

<sup>455</sup> Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time," 353.

will be ruined. In these days Rome will be in woe and their great ones will immediately form an alliance: the End Time in science is called the Apocalypse [*kıyamet*].<sup>456</sup>

As *Rum*, in this context, was synonymous with the West or western Christianity, it took little intuition to interpret these lines as prophecies for the year 1571. However, Bican's emphasis on one of the three prophesied battles between Muslims and Christians taking place on an island made the reference to Selim II and his Cyprus campaign "unmissable." Bican claims that, according to the Prophet, a hoped-for emperor will come from Mount Kaf, who will be one of the House of Osman, and will wage war on the Western Island (*ceziretü'l-garb*). The allomorphic adjective *selim* (Ar. free from defect or danger) and the name Selim undoubtedly amplified the impetus of comparability: *Labüdde lirüculin min selimin Al-i Osman yemlikü ceziretü'l-garbi fi ahiri'z-zaman...*<sup>457</sup>

## 4.2 Cyprus in Mediterranean Apocalypticism

The *Dürr-i Meknun* does not stand alone in prophesying the eschatological significance of a Mediterranean island: apocalypticists in the Mediterranean region have shown special interest in islands and the notion of insularity. For example, in the *Tiburtina* Sybil, the Last Emperor was supposed to conquer the islands of the "infidels" before the Last Judgement.<sup>458</sup> Further,

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<sup>456</sup> Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican: *Dürr-i Meknun/Saklı İnciler*, 118-19.

<sup>457</sup> "It is necessary for the Prophet that the pure one [*selim*] [of the] House of Osman reins the Western Island in the End Times." (I wish to express my gratitude to Sona Grigoryan for her translation of this quote.); *ibid.* 119. The possibility that this passage was added to the manuscript during Selim II's reign *vaticina ex eventu* should also be considered.

<sup>458</sup> Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 64, 87; McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 171-72.



the ninth-century Old Slavonic apocryphal *Vision of the Prophet Daniel* envisions a clash between the “Ishmaelites” and a “rebel” of the “western lands” somewhere on an island, in consequence of which the “Ishmaelites” will conquer the farthest corners of that island, which, according to Paul J. Alexander, is a historical apocalyptic reference to the ninth-century Arab occupation of Sicily.<sup>459</sup> Also from the ninth century dates Nu’aym Ibn Hammad’s aforementioned *Kitab al-Fitan wa’l-Malahim* prophesying that Rome will be sacked by Muslims from an Egyptian island.<sup>460</sup> Another story dating from Mohammed’s lifetime claims that the Dajjal is chained on a western island until God releases him before the Last Hour.<sup>461</sup> And the list goes on. Although these prophecies have little in common, they are indicative of a literary practice of delegating eschatological significance to a—more often than not unidentified—Mediterranean island. One of the thematic subsets of the apocalyptic island motif are the prophecies about Cyprus and the island’s eschatological associations.<sup>462</sup>

References to Cyprus abound in the Jewish and Christian eschatological traditions and seem to go back to the Old Testament’s “Book of Daniel,” itself a composite of two distinct materials. Unlike the first half of the book, which deals with the life of the prophet, Chapters 7

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 301, nn. 11-12.

<sup>460</sup> Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 64.

<sup>461</sup> Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 117; Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, 22-23.

<sup>462</sup> For instance, Byzantine apocalyptic literature associated Cyprus with God’s punishment lurking the island in the form of natural disasters coming from the sea. Wolfram Brandes, “Das ‘Meer’ als Motiv in der byzantinischen apokalyptischen Literatur,” in *Griechenland und das Meer. Beiträge eines Symposiums in Frankfurt im Dezember 1996*, ed. Evangelos Chrysos and Dimitrios Letsios (Mannheim: Bibliopolis, 1999), esp. 127-28.

to 12 contain Daniel’s apocalyptic revelations.<sup>463</sup> Chapter 11:28-30 claims that at the end of days, in a row of battles between the “King of the North” and the “King of the South” the earlier will be attacked by ships from a certain Chittim, whose inhabitants are (perhaps) believers of the “true” religion’:

For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.<sup>464</sup>

The name Chittim in Hebrew stands for Cyprus, as we learn from the first-century Roman-Jewish historian Titus Flavius Josephus,<sup>465</sup> and Daniel’s prophecy on it seems to be a Jewish trope also featuring the much earlier “Book of Numbers” 24:24,<sup>466</sup> whereby the oracle Balaam prophesies “Alas! Who shall live when God does this? But ships shall come from the coasts of

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<sup>463</sup> DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, 203; Agostino Pertusi, *Fine di Bisanzio e Fine del Mondo*, 2.

<sup>464</sup> Quote taken from the *King James Bible*. For the sake of better understanding, I include my interpretive summary of Chapters 28 to 30: the king from the north will be against the Holy Covenant; at the time of God’s liking the king from the North will attack the king from the South again; however, this time the course of events will be different from the previous times because ships from Cyprus will attack him, of which the king from the North will be so afraid that he will retreat to his country and will be angry with the people who worship the true God.

<sup>465</sup> Flavius Josephus, “The Antiquities of the Jews,” Book 1, Chapter 6:1, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (London: Routledge, n.d.), 33.

<sup>466</sup> Balaam’s oracles are dated to the eighth to ninth century BCE (Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers* [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1993], 437-38.), while the Hebrew-Aramaic “Book of Daniel” (the so-called Masoretic text) only reached its present form by as late as c. 164 BCE (DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, 3).

Cyprus, and they shall afflict Asshur and afflict Eber, and so shall Amalek, until he perishes.”<sup>467</sup>

It is worth noting that the name “Chittim” and the *topos* about the “King of the North” being attacked from there were familiar to the Ottomans too. We learn from Katib Çelebi’s *Cihannuma* that Cyprus in Hebrew is “Çittim” or “Kittim,”<sup>468</sup> and the *Miftah al-jaf̣r al-jami*’s references to the final conquest of Egypt by a “king from the North” (i.e. Selim I) seem a residual imagery from this prophecy by way of Daniel’s revelations.<sup>469</sup>

The “Book of Daniel’s” explicit reference to Cyprus’s eschatological role has been inspirational to one of the most popular cycles of apocalyptic prognostications, the apocryphal Daniel literature well into the Early Modern period. The Daniel apocrypha (i.e. non-canonical texts genuinely attributed to the prophet) and pseudepigrapha (pseudonymous or anonymous pseudo-epigraphical texts) of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages revolved around the canonical “Book of Daniel,”<sup>470</sup> and re-cycled, with varying degrees of flexibility, its *topoi* and motifs.<sup>471</sup> Although parts of this literature often share in nothing but their attribution of authorship to the prophet Daniel, they form a large warehouse of cross-cultural tropes and motifs of apocalyptic and other esoteric genres successfully permeating religious boundaries

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<sup>467</sup> Quote taken from the *King James Bible*. The interpretations of this short oracle are several and it would be irrelevant for my argument to list them here. For a number of interpretations of Asshur, Eber and Amalek, see Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 510-11.

<sup>468</sup> “*Yahud lisanında ‘Çittim’ yahud ‘Kittim’...*” Katib Çelebi, *Cihannuma*, SK. Pertevniyal no. 754, 712.

<sup>469</sup> Fleischer, “Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences,” 238.

<sup>470</sup> DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, 5-6.

<sup>471</sup> There are two types of Daniel apocalypses: one is a commentary added to the “Book of Daniel” or an updated version of it. The other is an outgrowth of the “Book of Daniel” and a semi-independent literary composition. David Cook, “An Early Muslim Daniel Apocalypse,” *Arabica* 49 (2002): 55-96 esp. 56-57.

among Judaism, Christianity and Islam throughout the Middle Ages<sup>472</sup> and came down to us in a vast corpus in various languages ranging from Aramaic to Irish Gaelic.<sup>473</sup>

An oracular fragment, the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus*, is one of the apocryphal Daniel apocalypses which borrow directly from the canonical “Book of Daniel”. It is dated by Lorenzo DiTommaso to sometime at the end of the fourth century CE as one of the two earliest fragments of the apocryphal Daniel apocalyptic.<sup>474</sup> On this occasion it is the motif of the island of Cyprus itself which is transferred to an apocryphal text, whose copies can be found extant in at least nine manuscripts.<sup>475</sup>

The Marciana Library’s MS Gr. VII. 22 (henceforth *Chronographia*) is a manuscript composed (i.e. compiled from existing eschatological texts) and illustrated by the artist Georgias Klontzas (although the text’s authorship has also been associated with the Venetian humanist Francesco Barozzi)<sup>476</sup> on Venetian Crete in 1590-92 and bears witness to how Cyprus’s antique and medieval apocalyptic associations were revived by the island’s 1570-71 Ottoman occupation. The manuscript is a compilation of Byzantine apocalyptic traditions such as the ones attributed to Methodius, (Emperor) Leo (VI) the Wise, the church fathers and

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<sup>472</sup> Lorenzo DiTommaso, “The Armenian *Seventh Vision of Daniel* and the Historical Apocalyptic of Late Antiquity,” *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Kevork B. Bardakjian and Sergio La Porta (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 128.

<sup>473</sup> DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, 11.

<sup>474</sup> These are the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus* and the *Vision of Daniel on the Blond Race*. DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, 97-100.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-99.

<sup>476</sup> Angela Volan, “Last Judgements and Last Emperors: Illustrating Apocalyptic History in Late- and Post-Byzantine Art” vol. 1 (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2005), 260-68.

others.<sup>477</sup> The bewildering number of the 410 miniatures and illustrations featured in Klontzas's *Chronographia* are in correlation with the text telling the salvation history of mankind from the beginnings to the Apocalypse with the aid of oracular and apocalyptic-visionary texts and fragments. In what the *Chronographia* is unique to Byzantine conventions is that it not only lists Byzantine apocalyptic traditions but also tells salvation history *with* the help of recognizable texts and imagery, including, most importantly, the texts and illustrations copied from or associated with the *Oracles of Leo the Wise* (see later in this chapter) and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.<sup>478</sup>

In narrating the eschatological trajectory of mankind, the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus as a fulfilled oracle is told with the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus*. The dating of the oracle, in lack of a critical edition and comparison of its existing versions, is uncertain. Angela M. Volan's analysis sees it as "disguised as ancient but composed in direct response to recent Ottoman military advances,"<sup>479</sup> while, according to Hans Schmoldt, it may in fact be an existent Byzantine Daniel apocryphal dating from the second half of the fourth century.<sup>480</sup> Two of the nine existing copies of the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus* are almost identical with the one found in the *Chronographia* while the entirety of the two texts follow the same breakdown as Marc. Gr. VII. 22. (The similarities between the two illustrated manuscripts and the *Chronographia* are self-explanatory insofar as all three of them were made by Klontzas or

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid., 141-42.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 143-45.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>480</sup> DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, 97-99 esp. 99; Hans Schmoldt, "Die Schrift 'Vom jungen Daniel' und 'Daniels letzte Vision': Herausgabe und Interpretation zweier apokalyptischer Texte" (PhD thesis, University of Hamburg, 1972), 202-18.

it is also possible that the mastermind behind the *Chronographia* too was Francesco Barozzi.)<sup>481</sup> One is the Bodleian Library's Barocci 170, the other is the *Codex Brute*, which is currently in a private collection. Both of them are copies of the *Oracles of Leo the Wise* and were commissioned in the late 1570s by the Venetian humanist Francesco Barozzi to be presented as gifts to Giacomo Foscarini, the Venetian governor general of Crete. They are bilingual (Italian and Greek), and the fact that Barozzi, in his personal correspondence, expressed his wish to publish his works in Venice and for his friend Persio Crispo and Foscarini to promote his manuscript among the Venetian elite,<sup>482</sup> as well as his explicit objective to make accessible the *Oracles of Leo the Wise* to western audiences suggest that the prophecies contained in them, including the Daniel vision, were not confined to a Greek speaking cultural milieu.<sup>483</sup>

The *Oracles of Leo the Wise* were erroneously attributed to Byzantine Emperor Leo VI (r. 886-912) and produced in at least two distinguishable phases (Oracles 1-6 date from the early ninth century CE, Oracles 7-10 from c. 1204, and the rest cannot be dated with accuracy).<sup>484</sup> Although the sixteen oracular poems concern the future Byzantine emperors, the fate of the empire and especially that of Constantinople, they seem to have attracted little

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<sup>481</sup> Mary Simpson Williams, "After Lepanto: Visualizing Time, History, and Prophecy in the *Chronographia* of Georgios Klontzas" (MA thesis, University of Notre Dame, 2000), 29; Volan, "Last Judgements and Last Emperors" vol. 1, 260-68.

<sup>482</sup> Volan, "Last Judgements and Last Emperors" vol. 1, 261. n. 114.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-61, 194 and 194 n. 129.

<sup>484</sup> *The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo and the Tale of the True Emperor (Amstelodamensis Graecus VI E 8)*, ed. and trans. Walter Gerard Brokkaar (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2002), 25.

attention before 1453.<sup>485</sup> (Even though the late thirteenth-century Latin translation of the *Oracles*, which came to be known as the *Vaticina Pontificum*, was popular among the critics of the papacy and interpreted to hold prophecies about Pope Nicholas III [1277-80] or any pope in office at a time.)<sup>486</sup> However, a series of the oracles' incarnations date from the post-Byzantine period, especially from the sixteenth century, whose parts survive in several manuscripts and printed volumes.<sup>487</sup> In these sources the motifs and *topoi* of the *Oracles of Leo the Wise*, such as the Last Emperor or the fall and restoration of Constantinople, were revised and reinterpreted to bear reference to the Ottoman Empire's advance and approaching demise.<sup>488</sup>

The fragment of the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus* bewails Cyprus for its doomed future whereby “in a slaughter the island will fall” at the time when the Blond People “despoil the world”. Although it is not clear by whose hands Cyprus will meet its fate, it seems to deserve destruction for its “whorish licentiousness”. Although sexual misconduct is a widely recognizable apocalyptic motif, “whorish licentiousness,” in this particular case, could be a reference pointing to not earlier than the thirteenth century for the fragment's time of composition or its adoption of this particular motif.

Cyprus's association with female sexual licence was a concept fuelled by Famagusta's heyday under Lusignan rule as an Eastern Mediterranean trading hub (in)famous for

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<sup>485</sup> *The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo*, 24-25.

<sup>486</sup> Katelyn Mesler, “Imperial Prophecy and Papal Crisis: The Latin Reception of *The Prophecy of the True Emperor*,” *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 61 (2007): 371-415 esp. 376-77; *The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo and the Tale of the True Emperor*, 25.

<sup>487</sup> Theodora Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 23.

<sup>488</sup> Volan, “Last Judgements and Last Emperors” vol. 1, 19.

prostitution (see Chapter 1). Therefore the symbolism used at the beginning of the fragment, namely that the island bears the sign of Aphrodite is justified not only by antique mythology (Aphrodite was believed to have been born from the sea at the shores of Cyprus) but also by medieval imagery surviving in the early modern period. Analyzing the other “signs” of the island, “who has been assigned the sign of the Bull, of Aphrodite / of Hermes, together with the fourfold foursome of time / being rich in children” is more complicated, and I could offer only speculative remarks on them rather than solid interpretations, from which I will refrain here. However, the iconography of the bull is worth analyzing as it is a key to understanding the author’s intention in interpreting this oracular fragment with the War of Cyprus. The bull is prone to plenty of valid iconographic interpretations in an exegetical context ranging from the golden calf of “Exodus” to the figure of the Evangelist Luke to the Four Living Creatures of “Revelation,” and even in the context of Middle Eastern visual traditions such as the Lion-Bull Combat. Although, consequently, the figure of the bull hampers being assigned an undebatable meaning, it is possible to unravel some of its assigned symbolisms with the help of the iconographic program of other manuscripts where the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus* appears.

The oracle about the fall of Cyprus in the *Chronographia* is attributed to Leo the Wise, one of whose prophecies is demonstrated to have been fulfilled yet again. In another manuscript featuring the prophecy, the Bodleian Library’s Barocci 145, it is paired with Leo’s Oracle IV about a bull, who “[was] alone brought up from the glory of the palace / and [...] will enjoy the power for a short while”.<sup>489</sup> While the standard image associated with this oracle shows a sultanic head, a bull and two disembodied heads, in the Barocci 145 this imagery is augmented by a bull trampling on the outline of an island labelled “Cyprus” (fig. 20) Even though he is

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<sup>489</sup> *The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo and the Tale of the True Emperor*, 65.



not mentioned here explicitly, this is inevitably a reference to Selim II and his subduing Cyprus. (In the *Codex Brute* the same image is reproduced.) In contrast with the Barocci 145, the *Chronographia* does make mention of Selim: he is depicted riding a bull, another reference to Oracle IV, and we learn that the meaning of the two beheaded figures in the background is that Selim had two of his brothers assassinated to seize power as sultan (hence the reference to being brought up from the palace alone).<sup>490</sup>

Thus, be the bull the symbol of Selim II himself (derived from Oracle IV of *Oracles of Leo the Wise*), of Christian lands occupied by the Ottomans (as suggested by popular rumors in Istanbul in the 1530s)<sup>491</sup> or of some apocalyptic *topos* unknown to me, it is clear that the Daniel apocrypha's "sign of the Bull" by the late sixteenth century came to be a direct reference to Selim II and his War of Cyprus. Along with the several miniatures referential to the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus, the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of Cyprus* indicates the existence of Cyprus's apocalyptic associations in the sixteenth century, which borrowed greatly from Late Antique eschatological traditions and located the island's loss on a timescale of apocalyptic tribulations occurring contemporaneously with the time's events.

Daniel apocrypha about Cyprus continued to be produced after the Ottoman occupation of the island. While the sixteenth-century occurrences of the *Vision of Daniel on the Island of*

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<sup>490</sup> Volan, "Last Judgements and Last Emperors" vol. 1, 196.

<sup>491</sup> Cornelius Duplicius Schepper, Ferdinand I of Habsburg's ambassador to Istanbul, in the summer of 1533 wrote the following: "[...] near the sea, there is a certain block of marble on which is carved a remarkable likeness of a great lion, holding a bull by the horns; this rock is so heavy that a thousand men could not move it. Nevertheless, when the Grand Turk was conquering Hungary, this marble turned by itself, so that the lion, which had its face towards Asia, is now turned toward Europe. [...] Before the Turks took Istanbul, the statue was in the same position it is now, but as soon as they entered Constantinople it immediately turned: for which reason they claim that this prodigy will be fatal because the city must shortly be taken." Finlay, "Prophecy and Politics in Istanbul," 18.

*Cyprus*, discussed above, were perhaps reproduced from an existing Daniel prophecy and interpreted and illustrated to function as a *vaticina ex eventu* allowed for by the fact that the Ottomans *did* conquer Cyprus in 1571, the 1579 manuscript Moni Agiou Stefanou Meteoron 84, discovered recently by András Kraft,<sup>492</sup> goes beyond simply capitalizing on an oracle's interpretability as referential to a recent historical event. The text, like the *Chronographia*, lists Byzantine apocalyptic traditions, among which, on folio 150r an oracle "found in the city of Constantine, written on a marble stone" prophecies the War of Cyprus and its aftermath, the Battle of Lepanto:

And woe you, Cyprus when the Turk will decide to find (a way) to take you. At that time you will have no help. And after the Turk has taken Cyprus the Blond Races from the East and the West will get involved and they will smash them utterly.<sup>493</sup>

The manuscript's explicitness about Cyprus and the "Turks" indicate that even if this fragment of the Daniel apocalypse is a continuation of the tradition going back to the "Book of Daniel" (although this piece is not explicitly attributed to Daniel, fol. 152r introduces a Daniel prophecy on the Seven Hilled City), the author of the manuscript did not leave anything to imagination and made certain that the vocabulary typical of the Pseudo-Daniel literature (e.g. Ishmaelites, the sons of Hagar, etc.) would not allow for alternative interpretations. And this is crucial because it shows that Selim II's political deployment of apocalyptic imagery both rested on and stirred up already existing eschatological sentiments. In turn, late sixteenth-century apocalyptists treating Cyprus could not help interpreting traditional references to the island

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<sup>492</sup> I wish to express my special gratitude to András Kraft for sharing this source and its translation with me.

<sup>493</sup> Moni Agiou Stefanou Meteoron [Meteora St. Stephen's Monastery] MS. 84, f. 150r. (trans. by András Kraft)

only in the context of an assumed apocalyptic significance delegated to Selim and his War of Cyprus.

### 4.3 The War of Cyprus in Venetian Apocalyptic Oracles

Interpreting oracular fragments as references to recent events and explicating the War of Cyprus specifically in an eschatological context when apocalyptic excitement was a formidable part of the time's political discourse are perhaps self-evident cultural-historical phenomena of the late sixteenth-century eastern Mediterranean. One may wonder whether the same eschatological associations with the War of Cyprus were evoked by western, especially Venetian, authors during the time when the outcome of the events were yet unforeseeable. Before finding an answer to this question with the help of two Venetian prophetic pamphlets dated 1570 and a poem dated 1572, I will take a short detour to contextualise their existence in sixteenth-century western eschatological thinking.

From the 1450s onward the most common homiletic theme in the West was that Christians suffered the unchecked advance of the Ottomans because of their sinfulness, which conviction would continue in the sixteenth century.<sup>494</sup> The general feeling of worthlessness was augmented in Venice by a vigilant attitude toward the lost concept of equilibrium which had guaranteed Christian modesty and safeguarded the city state's social stability free of inner

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<sup>494</sup> Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 142; Mustapha Soykut, "The Ottoman Empire and Europe in Political History through Venetian and Papal Sources," in *Cultural encounters between East and West, 1453-1699*, ed. Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005), 176-8; Lucette Valensi, *The birth of the despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 15.

turmoil since its foundation (see Chapter 1).<sup>495</sup> Writing in 1539, Nicolò Zen, who would hold several offices as public servant throughout his life (including Minister of Waterways, Commissioner of Fortresses and reorganizer of the Arsenal), contrasted great powers, which began “without pomp, without concern for vain glory or needless expenses,” with the moral state of his time’s Venetians, who, Zen unmistakably alludes, “think only of idleness and pleasure, and then they come to value architects, songs, sounds, players, palaces, clothes, and having put arms aside.”<sup>496</sup> Zen’s words paraphrase what some Venetians saw as a moral decay, a divorce from the traditional self-restraint, which was thought to have once governed the lives of Venice’s citizens. Then, when the peace was broken between the *Serenità* and the Ottoman Empire and the future was expected to hold scarcity of all kinds and, most importantly, bloodshed even perhaps in the *terraferma*, it seemed that time had come for Venice to pay for its sins.

Francesco Sansovino’s<sup>497</sup> *Lettera, o vero discorso sopra le predittioni le quali pronosticano la nostra futura felicità per la guerra del Turco l'anno 1570* (henceforth *Lettera*) and the Venetian alchemist Giovanni Battista Nazari’s<sup>498</sup> *Discorso della future et sperata vittoria contra il Turco* (henceforth *Discorso*) of the same year give voice to exactly these fears and to an excitement about eschatological connotations the War of Cyprus invoked in the

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<sup>495</sup> Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, 1-13.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>497</sup> Francesco Sansovino (1521-86) was the son of sculptor and architect Jacopo Sansovino (see Chapter 1). Francesco was a man of letters and received humanist education in Bologna and Padua. His best-known work is *Venetia, città nobilissima et singolare...* (1581), which is quoted several times in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>498</sup> Not much is known about Giovanni Battista Nazari except that he was an alchemist living in Brescia and his *Della tramutatione metallica...* (1572) was one of the most influential manuals for alchemist of its time.

Venetian public. The *Lettera*, which undertakes to record, as its title promises, existing prophecies that could be interpreted as referential to the year 1570, begins with a strikingly dim conviction:

By the accidents that occur in [our] day[s], and which, with miraculous concordance unite everything together to the same end, it is seen that the Majesty of God wants a last king, [which] I do not call the *Signoria* (because it is not legitimate neither is it reasonable) but the tyranny of the House of Osman.<sup>499</sup>

Sansovino immediately explains what he means by this: “This infidel [...] is worth punishment from the Avenger God of unjust Princes when he moves without any foundation or reason to violate his infidel faith [by] breaking the treaties, on which, one can say, the ink has hardly dried”.<sup>500</sup> Thus, Selim II, who “has become twice infidel” (*divenuto doppiamente infedele*) in violating the law of Islam by breaking the recently signed treaties with Venice, will in fact be the “last king” inasmuch as it is him in whom the House of Osman will end. However, this did not give reason for nonchalant joy and happiness as the expiry of the Ottoman dynasty inherently carried apocalyptic associations. The “Book of Daniel’s” prophesied “four empires,” which would define the history of the world, received a new interpretation (among others, by the notable political philosopher Jean Bodin in the 1560s) from the beginning of the sixteenth century, namely that the last empire was the Ottoman Empire (e.g. Martin Luther saw in the “Turks” the fourth beast of Daniel 7)<sup>501</sup> or that four pagan empires would be followed by a

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<sup>499</sup> M. Francesco Sansovino, *Lettera o vero discorso sopra le predittioni fatte in diversi tempi da diverse persone le quail pronosticano la nostra futura felicità, per la guerra del Turco l’anno 1570* (Venice: 1570), fol. A2r.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., fol. A2r.

<sup>501</sup> Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks,” 135.

fifth, this time a universal one,<sup>502</sup> which might be the continuation of ancient Rome, and that this was evidently the Ottomans.<sup>503</sup> (The universal imperial claims of the Ottoman Empire, in Nazari's fears, are already present in the presumed epithetic title of Selim II, who "call[s] himself the Emperor of Emperors, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Lord of the Earthly Paradise and Jerusalem, Prince of Princes, [etc.]"<sup>504</sup> Thus the advent of the last monarch of the last earthly "kingdom" would clearly bring on Apocalypse. However, before the world sees the Ottoman Empire pass, Venice in the year 1570, "which is very calamitous by the scarcity not only of bread but also of every other thing that human life necessitates,"<sup>505</sup> will have to suffer even greater hardships. Who knows at what scale this war will be fought? The *Drago* [dragon], in Nazari's words, "threatens to devour Cyprus, Italy, and all the rest of Christendom."<sup>506</sup> Nazari's argument for why all this suffering has to take place under the reign of Selim II (*Perche tanto si sia ingrandito il Turco secondo*) is more explicitly referential to his "beloved patria" (*patria mia diletta*),<sup>507</sup> which, in the context of an assumed Christian moral decline has drawn the wrath of God upon itself:

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<sup>502</sup> Valensi, "The Making of a Political Paradigm," 180.

<sup>503</sup> "If there is anywhere in the world any majesty of empire and of true monarchy, it must radiate from the sultan. [...] It will be more appropriate, certainly, to interpret the prophecy of Daniel as applied to the sultan of the Turks." Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. Beatrice Reynolds (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), 291-93.

<sup>504</sup> Giovanni Battista Nazari, *Discorso della future et sperata vittoria contra il Turco* (Venice: Sigismondo Bordogna, 1570), fol. A2r.

<sup>505</sup> Sansovino, *Lettera o vero discorso*, fol. A2v.

<sup>506</sup> Nazari, *Discorso della future et sperata vittoria contra il Turco*, fol. A4v.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. A1v.

The iniquity has grown much among our predecessors, and pride was much too, and their pomposity, iniquity and impiousness, which altogether fuelled the wrath of the Great God to want (as is just) to punish the said sins by examining the iniquity of the fathers, and of the sons of three and four generations.<sup>508</sup>

According to Sansovino and Nazari, even though the War of Cyprus broke out at the time when the whole of Christendom had come to deserve divine punishment, in 1570 the tide could eventually turn in Christianity's favor, as has been prophesied by so many an oracle. Sansovino claims that there had been three oracles of the "Turks" all sharing the same view about their future: Mohammed (here labelled as a *Mago*) prophesied that his "law" (*legge*) would last for a thousand years (*predisse che la sua legge durerebbe mille anni*), which term was just reaching its timely end. The second prophecy pointed to the fifteenth sultan in whom the House of Osman would meet its demise, and that this sultan was Selim II (*Selim è il quintodecimo*). Such prognostications are symptomatic of the time's miscalculations in expecting any sultan to be the last in the row of Ottoman rulers. For instance, Heinrich Müller in his *Türkische Historien* (1563) also claims that all prophecies about the Ottomans show there would be no more than twelve emperors, and, according to his calculations, Süleyman was the eleventh.<sup>509</sup> Although the eleventh in the row of Ottoman sultans was Selim II, the number of rulers was often miscalculated,<sup>510</sup> and from the beginning of his reign Selim was thought to be the one in whom the Ottoman dynasty would meet its fate. This is well illustrated where Sansovino inserts that

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid., fol. A2r.

<sup>509</sup> Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks," 138.

<sup>510</sup> Paolo Giovio's portrait of the Ottoman Sultans, the *Commentario de le cose de' Turchi* (1531), shows as well that the number of rulers was often miscalculated in the West. Giovio does not count Osman as one of the sultans, while considers Mustafa Çelebi (1393-1422) as a ruler under the name *Calepino*, who, despite never being a sultan was often added to Ottoman genealogies in the West.

a “very famous” Armenian astrologer once told Sultan Süleyman that the empire would fall during his reign (*predetto a Solimano passato, ch’il suo Regno mancherebbe nella sua persona*), which the sultan objected by saying that it would take place during his successor’s reign (*Non in me ma nel mio successore*). Sansovino claims he had heard this story from a “trustworthy person” who had spent eight or ten years in Constantinople and was a good friend of Rüstem Pasha.<sup>511</sup> It is impossible to know who Sansovino’s source was, but given the word for word copies of the text in at least three different vernaculars in the 1570s, his clue is perhaps worth following up, even if speculatively. The “trustworthy person” Sansovino mentions could be Jean de la Vigne, who was not at all friends with Rüstem Pasha,<sup>512</sup> but nevertheless held frequent meetings with him during the ten years of his service as the Constantinopolitan ambassador of Henry II of Valois. De la Vigne was in correspondence with his friend and colleague the French ambassador resident in Venice, Dominique du Gabre. The “French connection” may be justified by the fact that one year later the French humanist Michel Jove reproduced the same conversation between the astrologer and the sultan in his *Vray Discours de la bataille des armes Christienne & Turquesque* (1571).<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>511</sup> Sansovino, *Lettera o vero discorso*, fol. A3v.

<sup>512</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 697.

<sup>513</sup> Here I quote the 1579 English translation: “And it might wel be applied which the Hebrewes or Iewes doe affirme of the Monarchie of Turkes, the which (say they) ought to take end at the fifteenth Lord the which is Selim, reigning at this present. A famous Astrologian of Armenica, saide unto Soliman, that the raigne of the house of the Ottoman should ende in his personne, to the which he answered: Not in me, but in my successour, of the which the Turkes are in great doubt, according to a prophesie which thay haue saying, Our Empire shall come, a kingdome shall take it, figured by a red apple.” Anon., *A Discourse of the bloody and cruell Battaille, of late loste by the great Turke Sultan Selim* (London: Three Cranes in the Vintree by Thomas Dawson, 1579), B4-C1.



The third prophecy is in fact one we find recorded in the *Prognoma sive praesagium Mehemetanorum* (1545) by Bartholomeus Georgijević, a former Ottoman slave, whose sixteenth-century best-seller *turcica* records the following (also copied verbatim in Sansovino's *Lettera*):

The prophecy of the infidels in Turkish language:

Its interpretation follows.

Our emperor shall come, and will capture the kingdom of the foreign prince, and capture the red apple, bring it into his possession. If the Christian sword shall not arise within seven years, he shall rule for twelve year. He shall build the houses, plant vines, fence the garden, bring up children and after twelve years (since he had taken the apple into his possession) the Christian's sword shall appear, who shall drive the Turks into flight.

It is to be noted that the prophecy is not to be read in the Koran, but in other books which have great authority and reverence. For they have all our prophets and many of theirs.<sup>514</sup>

In Sansovino's analysis, given the major historical facts about the Ottoman Empire, the prophecy suggests the year 1573 when the Ottoman Empire ceases to exist,<sup>515</sup> and the prognostications listed by Nazari point to various years from 1570 to 1583, though most of them to 1570. Georgijević's prophecy copied by Sansovino is clearly a borrowing from the *Pseudo-Methodius* (13:17-18), where it referred to Christians and described the universal peace that would precede the terror inflicted upon Christians before the End:

[...] and moreover the Lord speaks thus in the Gospel: "For as in the days of Noah there were men eating and drinking, marrying and giving marriage, so it will be at the last day. In that peace, therefore, men will sit upon the earth with joy and gladness, eating and drinking to themselves, marrying and giving

<sup>514</sup> Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks," 140.

<sup>515</sup> Sansovino, *Lettera o vero discorso*, fol. A3v.

marriage, jumping for joy and rejoicing, and constructing buildings, and there will be no fear or worry in their hearts.<sup>516</sup>

Although the genuineness of the Ottoman prophecy recorded by Georgijević is uncertain, and, consequently whether it was known in the Ottoman Empire at all is questionable, from either viewpoints the approaching end of the Ottoman dynasty, despite the “gran futura felicità”<sup>517</sup> and “universale pace”<sup>518</sup> expected by Nazari and Sansovino respectively seemed temporary, beyond which the inevitable Last Judgement would strike.

Zaccharia di Tommasi’s <sup>519</sup>*I Felici Pronostichi da verificarsi, contro a’ Infedeli a Favor della Chiesa Christiana* (1572)<sup>520</sup> (henceforth *Pronostichi*) takes the narrative of the War of Cyprus even further toward an obvious eschatological end. Tommasi dedicates one of his *canzoni* to the topic of the War of Cyprus (*Canzon sopra la Guera di Cipro*), which reasserts what Sansovino’s and Nazari’s texts suggested. Tommasi in his prognostication admits that Venice’s victory is uncertain: “Surely, I hope to sing of your victory / In a happy and light-hearted style / Now that this time you might not have one [victory].”<sup>521</sup> As the time of this piece’s composition is uncertain (this volume was printed in 1572, but Joseph von Hammer

<sup>516</sup> *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius: An Alexandrian World Chronicle*, ed. Benjamin Garstad (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 131.

<sup>517</sup> Sansovino, *Lettera o vero discorso*, fol. Bv.

<sup>518</sup> Nazari, *Discorso della future et sperata vittoria contra il Turco*, fol. D3v.

<sup>519</sup> Literally nothing is known about the poet except that he dedicated his “prognostications” to Doge Alvise Mocenigo (1570-77) and the Senate.

<sup>520</sup> Zaccharia di Tommasi, *I felici pronostichi, da verificarsi, contro a’ indefeli a favor della chiesa Christiana* (Venice: Nicolò Beuilacqua, 1572).

<sup>521</sup> Di Tommasi, *I felici pronostichi*, fol. F1r.

lists it in his *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches* with the publication date of 1571),<sup>522</sup> it is possible that Tommasi intended to write a *vaticina ex eventu* after 1571 or that the prognostication is a genuine one and was written during the war. In either case, the end of the poem is laden with strong eschatological expectations, whereby it is suggested that even if this particular battle is lost, Venice will eventually partake in the making of a universal empire, which will bring back, as is implied, Constantine's time (*Del verde Imperiale allor secondo / Di Constantine, le tempie t'ornerai*).<sup>523</sup> Tommasi envisions the "ferocious lion" of Venice reunited with the eagle (*E al feroce Leon nelle tue Insegne / Congionta si vedrà l' Aquila altera*),<sup>524</sup> and that all will join under the "green insignia" that is a reference to the "*verde Imperiale*" mentioned previously. The *Pronostichi*, clearly, exploits the double interpretability of this imagery: given the customary eagle figure featured in any empire's coat of arms, the imperial eagle could be referential to that of Constantine the Great, who is explicitly named only a few lines earlier, and thus a strong implication to reclaiming Constantinople. At the same time, it could be interpreted as a reference to Philip II's Habsburg Empire, which, as is well known, eventually did join forces with Venice in the Holy League (another indication of the text's possible *post eventu* composition). But the intended complexity of the imagery should be understood in its entirety. The poem closes with a prayer to God against the "unjust people, who do not believe in your spirit" and for "victory and integral peace"<sup>525</sup> for the Christians, and so it becomes obvious that in a subtle way what is alluded here is the ultimate re-conquest

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<sup>522</sup> Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches: Grossentheils aus bisher unbenützten Handschriften und Archiven* vol. 10 (C. A. Hartleben's Verlage: Pest, 1829), 129.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid. F1v.

of Constantinople from the Ottomans in a joint effort with the Habsburgs, that is the fulfilment of a commonly known apocalyptic prophecy.

#### 4.4 Post-War Apocalyptic Interpretations in the Ottoman Empire

While both in the Ottoman Empire and in the Christian West age-old traditions allowed for interpretations that pointed to Cyprus and Selim II's reign as being of apocalyptic importance, which Selim, as well as perhaps Gazanfer Agha and Joseph Nassi, began to exploit in building up the sultanic image of the newly inaugurated sultan, the image of Selim being the Mahdi or a messianic ruler living at the End Time came full circle only after his death. One of the clues to this retrospective interpretability of Selim's reign in an eschatological context is the late-sixteenth-century and early-seventeenth-century association of the Ottoman Empire's decline and eventual demise with the Apocalypse, which was believed not only in Christendom.<sup>526</sup>

While Ottoman millenarianism had become out-dated with the passing of the year 1000, the central image of the Ottoman dynasty as eschatological, ruling the world before the Apocalypse, did not cease with the passing of the Muslim millennium.<sup>527</sup> This, in turn, is reflected in both Murad III's and Mehmed III's self-image based on occult sciences and

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<sup>526</sup> In contrast with the imperial perspective, some of the most noteworthy Ottoman historians of the seventeenth century agreed that the empire was in decline. Mustafa Ali, Katib Çelebi and Mustafa Naima derived their "decline thesis" from earlier, North African, social philosophers such as Ibn Khaldun and Ibn al-'Arabi. Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldunism,'" 200-3; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 126-27, 134.

<sup>527</sup> Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences," 243; Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Indiana University Press, 2013), 246-49.

apocalyptic ideologies.<sup>528</sup> Although Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami's *Miftah al-jaf'r al-jami* (*Key to Esoteric Knowledge*, c. 1504-5) seems to have been used as the urtext for propagating the apocalyptic foundations of sultanic sovereignty (most notably during the first half of the reign of Süleyman), the *Miftah al-jaf'r al-jami*'s centrality in this, by the end of the sixteenth century dynastic ideology, continued in its translation, the *Tercüme-i Miftah-ı Cifrü'l-Cami's* (*Translation of the Key to Esoteric Knowledge*, c. 1600, henceforth *Tercüme-i Miftah*) textual and visual program.<sup>529</sup> The Ottoman translation of Bistami's *Miftah al-jaf'r al-jami* was commissioned by Mehmed III c. 1600, which, rather than relating a chronological history of the Ottoman dynasty that links them customarily to a series of historical prophets and caliphs, projects the dynasty's portrait onto an eschatological account of the End Time. Thus the original purpose of the *Miftah*'s writing was turned on its head: instead of being what it originally was, namely a compendium of prophecies foretelling mankind's eschatological future, the *Tercüme-i Miftah* presented key episodes from the End Time as if some of them had already happened. It includes images of particular phases of Bistami's text with scenes from recent dynastic history, where the figure of the Mahdi is no longer associated with a single sultan. In the commentaries of the images depicting the Mahdi he is repeatedly referred to as "*İmam Mehmed Mahdi*," which is an obvious allusion to a wished-for eschatological persona of Mehmed III.<sup>530</sup> However, while Mehmed seems to have reserved for himself the role of a

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid., 243; For an analysis of Murad III's self-image in light of his obsession about dreams and oracles, see Özgen Felek, "(Re-)Creating Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-fashioning," in *Dreams and Visions In Islamic Societies*, ed. Özgen Felek and Alexander Knysh (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2012), 249-72.

<sup>529</sup> Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences," 243.

<sup>530</sup> Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 246.

sultan in whom the history of the world culminates, the *Tercüme-i Miftah* bears witness to a new ideological program, in which all Ottoman sultans were shown to fulfil key events in the apocalyptic trajectory of mankind<sup>531</sup> and thus become Mahdi collectively. This includes the military events of the late sixteenth century taking place between Muslims and “non-believers” or the Tatars, which are shown as the widely known prognosticated events of the End Time.

During the reign of Murad III (r. 1574-95) an illustrated version of the *Miftah al-jafri al-jami* had already been commissioned. Although it was never finished, its cartoons on which the miniatures were meant to be painted include instructions for the artist, which suggests that the visual program to project the images of Ottoman sultans on apocalyptic scenes was originally conceived earlier, during the unfinished version’s planning.<sup>532</sup> Even though the *Tercüme-i Miftah* calls itself a translation, it is more of a long commentary on Bistami’s text, whereby the author explains the reader what they would find in the Arabic original. This is apparent in the narrative’s frequent references to the “*müellif*” (writer), and the illustration process, whereby phrases like “*nakş olunmuştur*” (i.e. has been painted) refer to which part of the narrative has been painted adjacent to the text. However, the *Miftah* exists in several copies, and on which copy the “translator” Şerif b. Seyyid Mehmed based his “translation” can be reconstructed only from the number of Ottoman sultans the text claims to have reigned until its writing. Thus, according to Bahattin Yaman, Şerif b. Seyyid Mehmed used a copy which was commissioned during the reign of Selim II.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>533</sup> Bahattin Yaman, “Osmanlı Resim Sanatında Kıyamet Alametleri: Tercüme-i Cifru’l-Cami ve Tasvirli Nüshaları” (PhD diss., Hacettepe University, 2002), 3.

In narrating and depicting *topoi* associated with the End Time, the *Tercüme-i Miftah* leaves little space for other interpretation than identifying them with notable persons and episodes from the reigns of the sixteenth-century Ottoman sultans. While the first half of the work does not seem to follow a linear chronological order, after the first reference to Selim I the reigns of Süleyman, Selim II and perhaps even Mehmed III's Eger campaign (1596)<sup>534</sup> are alluded to, in the order of their historical occurrence. For instance, the chapter about Selim I's victory at Çaldıran (1514) and Ridaniya (1517) (*Sultan Selim ve Sultan Selim'in Acem ve Mısır padişahlariyla cengi*)<sup>535</sup> is followed by a number of images and their commentaries about prophesied persons whose deeds were associable with the lands conquered by Selim I: the "Person, who will conquer Medina and the Land of Rum" (*Medine'yi ve Rum diyarini fethedecek kişi*)<sup>536</sup> and the "Soldiers of the Blond People" (*Asfaroğulları askerleri*)<sup>537</sup> together with a commentary and *hadith* respectively, depict and narrate the prophesied Battle of Aleppo Field (*Haleb ovası*) between Christians and Muslims. The next sultan in the row is Süleyman the Magnificent, who is depicted with his confidant and grand vizier İbrahim Pasha (*Sultan Süleyman merhum ile İbrahim Paşa*).<sup>538</sup> This chapter is followed by a prophecy about a man with the look of a shepherd, from whom "harm and woe" will come (*çoban suretli bir kimseden*

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<sup>534</sup> Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 249.

<sup>535</sup> İÜK, TY 6624, fols 132b-133a.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, fols 137b-138b.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, fols 139a-139b.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 159b.

*zarar ve bela isabet edecek*), which is contextualized by the title itself: “Turkmens Shown as Shepherds” (*Çoban suretindeki türkmenler*)<sup>539</sup>—probably a reference to the *kızılbaş*.

Finally we arrive at the chapter dedicated to the “War of the Island of Rum” that takes place before the Apocalypse between the Blond People and the soldiers of the Mahdi (*Bundan sonra zıkr olunan Cezire-i Rumiye cengidir*). However, the double interpretability of *Rumiye* should be noted here. *Rumiye* literally stands for Rome, whose conquest is in fact what follows in the next chapter (*...Rumiye feth olunduğu...*) (fig. 21).<sup>540</sup> Furthermore, *cezire* means both island and peninsula, so *Cezire-i Rumiye* may be interpreted as “Rome’s peninsula”—perhaps “Italian Peninsula”. However, just as *Rum* may stand for Rome, the West or western Christianity, and the Rumelian as well as Anatolian territories of the Ottoman Empire, *Cezire-i Rumiye* here allows for an interpretation as “Western island,” especially in light of the fact that in the aforementioned *Dürr-i Meknun* the same story was claimed to take place on the *Ceziretü’l-garb* or, literally, “Western island.” (The Topkapı Palace Library’s copy of the *Tercüme-i Miftah* the island is named as *Ceziretü’l-Rum*) (fig. 22).<sup>541</sup> After the fall of *Rum* or *Rumiyye* (fig. 23), the *Tercüme-i Miftah* claims, crusaders from eighty *sancaks* go to the island and (consequently?) wage war on the soldiers of Islam on “Aleppo Field” (fig. 24).<sup>542</sup> Given the chronology of sixteenth-century sultans featured in the *Tercüme-i Miftah* and the island motif, the war narrated and depicted on these pages could be an allusion to Cyprus and Selim’s conquest of it from Venice, despite the scene’s double interpretability. After all, the illustrated

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<sup>539</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 160a.

<sup>540</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 163a.

<sup>541</sup> TSK, Bağdat 373, fol. 386b.

<sup>542</sup> İÜK, TY 6624, fol. 162b.



volume's production was overseen by no other than the Chief White Eunuch Gazanfer Agha, who first entered Selim II's service during the latter's princely years and remained his faithful servant until the sultan's death.

#### 4.5 Morisco Voices

At the other end of the Mediterranean, in Spain, the Ottoman sultan's eschatological interpretability reached its peak during and immediately after Selim II's reign. The persecution of the Moriscos in post-1492 Spain culminated in the Second Morisco Revolt of Granada (War of Las Alpujarras, 1568) and the final expulsion of Spain's Muslims, in consequence of which by 1614 virtually all of them were forced to leave the peninsula (the expulsion of Moriscos from Granada took place in 1570, and a mass deportation from Spain lasted from 1609 to 1614).<sup>543</sup> It is this political environment combined with a general, Mediterranean-wide excitement about the true religion, the Habsburg-Ottoman inter-imperial rivalry, and the Ottoman sultan's reputation as the Mahdi in which Spain's struggling and fleeing Muslim communities (Moriscos eventually scattered across the Mediterranean and beyond) forged religious texts to receive retrospective recognition for the Arabic language and Morisco presence in Spain and spread prophecies about the End Time in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>544</sup>

Between the expulsion of Moriscos from Granada in 1570 and from Spain in 1609 various layers of the Iberian Arab community resorted to different techniques to retain their social status and secure their presence on the Iberian Peninsula. The expulsion of the Moriscos

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<sup>543</sup> Gerard A. Wiegers, "The Persistence of *Mudejar* islam? Alonso de Luna (Muhammad Abū 'l-Āsī), The Lead Books, and the *Gospel of Barnabas*," *Medieval Encounters* 12 no. 3 (2006), 500.

<sup>544</sup> Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 82.

from Granada in 1570 and their resettling in other parts of the kingdom did not result in the community's immediate disappearance from the province. On the contrary, by 1580 some 10,000 Moriscos had returned to their homeland.<sup>545</sup> However, even this resilient community was split on the matter of their legitimate existence in Spanish society,<sup>546</sup> which is reflected by their ways to escape extra taxation (*farda*) and persecution: an assimilated class of Moriscos, who had been supporting the Christian monarchs during the *reconquista*, and thus held *hidalgo* status, were motivated to prove that they had adopted Christianity voluntarily. Another group of Moriscos held "protected" status by way of noble Arab ancestors of al-Andalus,<sup>547</sup> thus proving one's noble Muslim origins also seemed a social and economic safeguard. In consequence of this, forgeries of genealogies flourished within the Morisco community, which existed in a wider cultural and political environment where counterfeiting histories for the whole kingdom, regions and cities, as well as genealogies for individuals to claim a glorious, pre-Roman Spanish past was already a common practice in the sixteenth-century.<sup>548</sup> Two of such Morisco forgeries are a parchment found in 1588 in the rubble after the demolishing of the Torre Turpiana, an ancient minaret in Granada, and the so-called Lead Books, volumes of 229 laced-together lead tablets discovered in the Sacromonte Mountain in Granada's vicinity in 1595.<sup>549</sup> Thus, these counterfeited texts are not unique as forgeries but the principal

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<sup>545</sup> García-Arenal, "En torno a los plomos del Sacromonte," 305.

<sup>546</sup> For more on the assimilation of Moriscos in Spanish society and wealthy Moriscos see L. P. Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 250-54.

<sup>547</sup> García-Arenal, "En torno a los plomos del Sacromonte," 306.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, 298-300.

<sup>549</sup> For a detailed account of the Lead Books see Mercedes García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdís of the Muslim West*, trans. Martin Beagles (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 319-24.

motivation of their writing, namely their being the last resort of the remaining Moriscos to salvage the remnants of their *collective* legitimacy as a part of Spanish society probably is.<sup>550</sup>

The Torre Turpiana's parchment contained texts in Spanish, Arabic, and Latin script, which were believed to have been written by a group of Christians in Granada in the first century.<sup>551</sup> It contained references to the evangelization of Spain, which was welcomed as a "proof" of the Christian diocese of Granada being the oldest in Spain, which until then had been thought to be the youngest of the Spanish Church's foundations.<sup>552</sup> The parchment's references to the martyred first-century bishop of Granada Saint Caecilius (San Cecilio) connect the text with the Lead Books discovered seven years later along with the assumed relic remains of local martyred Christians from the time of Emperor Nero (r. 54-68 CE), where the same bishop is also mentioned. The Lead Books, which contain acts of Jesus and the Apostles, prayers and prophecies, were claimed to have been written by Ibn al-Radi and Thesifon (or Tasfiyun), two brothers from Arabia who had been miraculously cured by Jesus. (Some claimed that Ibn al-Radi was in fact St. James and Thesifon was his disciple, and both of them were Arabs.)<sup>553</sup> One of the brothers was believed to have been Caecilius himself, who received his baptismal name when he confessed his faith to Jesus. Eventually the brothers accompanied Apostle James to Spain (Santiago, the later patron saint of Spain) and settled on the

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<sup>550</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 267.

<sup>551</sup> Wieggers, "The Persistence of *Mudejar* Islam?," 505.

<sup>552</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 272.

<sup>553</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 386.

Sacromonte, where they hid the books, which would only come to light again before the End Time.<sup>554</sup>

One of the Lead Books seems an apocalyptic contextualization of Selim II's building the Selmiye Mosque and conquering Cyprus, and a summary of what has been presented so far in this chapter. The lead book, as reconstructed in the sources, is designated as the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil* (*The Truth about the Gospel*), which is a catechism in the form of a conversation taking place between the Virgin Mary and Apostle Peter in a gathering of the disciples. Mary's answers to the eight questions posed by Peter are claimed to be key to understanding the truth about the Gospel. According to Mary, the true meaning of the "History" (perhaps a reference to the *Libro Mudo* or Mute Book, whose illegible Arabic script could not be decoded), will be deciphered only at the times preceding the Last Judgement by a person, upon whom the "Caliphate of Jesus will be entrusted [...]". He will emerge with a group of select people and explain "[...] the Truth in the Great Council which will take place on the island of *Sapar* in the eastern regions of the Venetians".<sup>555</sup> In the 1644 Latin translation of Bartholomeus á Pectorano, friar minor of Naples,<sup>556</sup> "*Sapar*" is Cyprus,<sup>557</sup> which is justified

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<sup>554</sup> Wiegers, "The Persistence of *Mudejar* islam?," 505-6.

<sup>555</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 390.

<sup>556</sup> Bartholomeus á Pectorano calls it the "foundation book of the faith:" *Hoc opus vetustissimum Libri Fundamentorum fidei ex Arabico idiomate characteribus ut vocant Salomonis conscriptum, quod pluribus centenis annis sub sacri Montis Granatensi terra delituit, in latinum idioma iuxta genuinum illius linguae sensum, Ego frater Bartholomeus á Pectorano Ordinis Minorum strictioris observantiae Provinciae Sancti Bernardini regni Neapolis, ad maiorem Dei gloriam ac Deiparae Virginis immaculatae honorem á superioribus maioribus ad hoc manus peragendum deputatus fideliter transtuli. Romae in conventu Sancti Isidori eiusdem instituti, Anno 1644.* British Museum MS Harley 3507, fol. 11v.

<sup>557</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 390.

by the island being in Venice's "eastern regions." Thus, the author of the prophecy perhaps expected a council to take place on the island of Cyprus, where all the differences between Islam and Christianity would finally be resolved, making all unite in the newly revealed Truth.

In the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil* Mary's narration continues with the Virgin claiming that the interpreter of the Truth has been "singled out to erect with the alms he has received the temple of those who believe in Allah and in the Last Day".<sup>558</sup> Furthermore, in heaven God will grant the one that provides his own money for this construction a "reward such as what was merited by the alms that built the temple (*masjid*) of the Prophet of Allah Solomon, the son of David".<sup>559</sup> And so in what follows, an irrefutable allusion to the Ottoman sultan is made:

He [Peter] said, "Tell me about the Conqueror who lives in the East and about the rewards he will receive, O Our Lady!" She said, "The Conqueror is one of the Kings of the Arabs, but he is not an Arab. He dwells in the Eastern lands of the Greeks, and is a great enemy of the non-Arab ('*ajam*)<sup>560</sup> peoples, and their communities and beliefs and differences in matters of religion. He will have the laudable intention of obeying Allah and of securing victory for His righteous religion. Allah has strengthened him with His victory and placed the victory of the Truth of the Gospel within his power. He has set the banner of the Religion in his hand, strengthened him with victory, and given him dominion, among all created things, over all peoples at that time. He has filled him with light and with obedience to Him in this matter. He will remain unaware of these words until the time when the contents of the Truth shall reach him where he is. Allah, exalted be He, who leads aright whomsoever he wills, has foreknowledge of this. In the realms of this king there is nothing contrary to his will, nothing contrary to his command. His reward with Allah is great, and he will be set in a high station in Paradise. Any believer who prays for his victory and who either assists him himself or spends money for that purpose, and who dies in that condition, will have all his sins forgiven by Allah, who will grant him in Heaven the reward of those who have died as martyrs for the faith. Whosoever desires

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

<sup>560</sup> Although '*ajam* (Ar.) or '*acem* (Ott.) holds several meanings referring to cultural and religious "others" depending on the word's context, it is often used for the Persians, which is a meaning L. P. Harvey assigns to this occurrence of the word.

the contrary will be cursed by Allah and His angels a thousand times a day, and will be driven out from His mercy, unless he repent truly.<sup>561</sup>

Mary prophesies that the “The only ones who are truly translators are the translators of the book which contains the Truth of the Gospel, and the commentators on the Truth of the Gospel after it has been expounded,” on which indentifying the earliest Morisco translators of the text as its counterfeiters hinges. According to the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil* these interpreters and commentators will “enter the land of *Sapar* [Cyprus], where Allah, out of His generosity, will increase them in power and knowledge of the languages of men.”<sup>562</sup>

Mary’s vision about the End Time, in an abbreviated manner would read like this: The *Truth about the Gospel* will resurface and will be translated sufficiently only before Judgement Day. It can be translated only by a prodigious man, who will attend the Great Council, which will be held in Cyprus, presumably between Christians and Muslims, and reveal the Truth to the attendants of the assembly. This man will attract followers, whose number will increase at that council, and will build a temple suitable for the believers of the newly disclosed true religion. Anyone who supports this construction from their own resources will receive the same reward in heaven as what Solomon received for building the First Temple. The Truth will reach the Conqueror, who probably will not be present at the Great Council, but nevertheless will adopt the Truth, in consequence of which he will be set at a high station in Paradise.

As there is still very little known about the Torre Turpiana parchment and the Lead Books (they were held in the Vatican until the year 2000 when they were returned to the

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<sup>561</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 391-92.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

archbishopric of Granada, where they remain undisclosed to scholars)<sup>563</sup> many questions which arise from them are still unanswered. For instance, was the content of the Lead Books, which subtly contained features making it acceptable from both a Christian and Muslim dogmatic standpoint, intended to propagate predominantly Christian, Muslim, or syncretic ideas of both? Inevitably, the Lead Books at first attracted pious Christians and later, even in the seventeenth century, Muslims too without either group considering the texts heretical.<sup>564</sup> However, eventually the texts were anathematized by the Church for being “tainted with Islamic heresies,”<sup>565</sup> which could be propounded in favor of the author’s endeavour to advance Christian-Muslim syncretism. If the forgeries were made to retrospectively claim legitimacy for the existence of Arabs and the Arabic language in Spain, what use did the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil*’s references to Cyprus and the Ottoman sultan serve in this objective? Did not the author of the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil* know that Cyprus was not a Venetian colony anymore? Or if they did, what was the reason of forging a prophecy, whose fulfilment, most notably the Apocalypse itself, should have already taken place? And the list of questions continues.

Hereby I can only venture to give hypothetical answers to some of these questions, since their further investigation goes beyond the confines of the present study. The prophecy suggests that the great Conqueror of the East, who would provide, through his obeisance to God’s commands, the conditions for the Truth to be disclosed and disseminated throughout his universal empire. The story about the Conqueror was an obvious reference to the Ottoman sultan and his self-image as the universal monarch, in itself an eschatological motif, to which

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<sup>563</sup> Wiegiers, “The Persistence of *Mudejar* islam?,” 508.

<sup>564</sup> Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, 269, 290.

<sup>565</sup> *ibid.*, 265.

a part of this chapter has been dedicated. The construction of a great church and the mentioning of Solomon's First Temple as well as the Great Council expected to be held in Cyprus allowed for associations with two of the major deeds of Sultan Selim II, namely his building the Selimiye mosque in Edirne and conquest of Cyprus. However, even if these associations are accidental and devoid of the author's intentions, the fact that Cyprus is referred to as a Venetian colony suggests the date of the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil*'s production to fall before the end of the Cyprus War in 1571, and thus, again, perhaps during the reign of Selim II. All of the suspected Morisco forgers of the text by the 1590s must have been aware of Cyprus' fall as the Granada Morisco community was between 1568 and 1570 in correspondence with Selim, who informed them about his intention to occupy Cyprus before intervening in the War of Las Alpujarras on the Moriscos' side (see earlier in this chapter).

Whatever the reason for producing the discussed forgeries, it seems likely that the Ottoman court's "official" imperial perspective of the War of Cyprus affected the way some Moriscos interpreted their own situation vis-à-vis the Ottoman campaign in Cyprus. Or one might even speculate that, if not all of the treatises of the Lead Books, at least some of them, including the *Kitab Haqiqat al-Injil*, were part of a propaganda conceived at the Ottoman court to lay within the Christian community of Granada the religious-ideological foundations of the planned Ottoman intervention to support the Moriscos in their struggle against their suppression and their culture's annihilation (L. P. Harvey calls this Morisco "entrysm").<sup>566</sup> As we learn from the sources, the War of Cyprus would have been followed by an armed mission

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<sup>566</sup> Ibid., 268-69.



to Spain,<sup>567</sup> which never took place due to the Holy League's devastating counterattack on the Ottoman navy in 1571.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The apocalyptic traditions of the monotheistic religions were intertwined to a degree that they, in fact, provided an intellectual common ground, a set of shared codes or an intersection of different semiospheres for Jews, Muslims and Christians in the Mediterranean and beyond. It appears that by attacking Cyprus in 1570, Selim sought to imbed his own reign into a narrative with existing eschatological tradition shared by the peoples of the wider Mediterranean region. He exploited western fears that the Ottoman Empire's offensive against Venetian-held Cyprus might in fact be the harbinger of the approaching Apocalypse. Cyprus's eschatological associations were further emphasized by Venetian authors during and immediately after the War of Cyprus. According to the Venetian sources, the imminent end, in an intricate way, seemed unavoidable even if the war were won by Venice. A coalition against Selim's empire, such as the one that eventually clashed with the Ottomans at Lepanto in 1571, and the possibility of their eventual reconquest of Constantinople were associated with oracles about the Blond People and Selim being the last Ottoman sultan. Both of these prophecies seemed to indicate that the Last Judgement would strike soon. The war influenced political imagination even as far away as Spain's persecuted Morisco community, where it generated a hope for the triumph of the True Religion that is Islam—yet another theme associable with the times preceding the Apocalypse. Ultimately, in an attempt toward securing his legitimacy and

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<sup>567</sup> In fact by way of Algeria the Moriscos did receive some, though not grand-scale, Ottoman support during the War of Las Alpujarras. See Andrew C. Hess, "The Moriscos: An Ottoman Fifth Column in Sixteenth-century Spain," *American Historical Review* 74 no. 1 (1968): 1-25 esp. 13-14.

creating an overwhelming sultanic image, by attacking Cyprus Selim claimed that not only was he an emperor as his re-enactment of the construction of the Hagia Sophia suggested (see Chapter 3), but that he was the prophesied *Last* Emperor, whose universal reign before the Apocalypse was inevitable.

## Chapter 5: A Re-enactment of the War of Cyprus?

With the power structures rapidly changing in the Mediterranean, the end of the sixteenth century saw a shift in European and Ottoman strategies in claiming power and territorial suzerainty. As we saw in Chapter 2, Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed's grand plans were aborted by his adversaries at Selim II's court—to give primacy to, for instance, the Ottomans' Cyprus campaign. However, the repositioning of Ottoman interests was inevitable after the 1570s in general: due to the growing lack of societal, technological, and financial means to continue full-scale Ottoman expansion, from the late 1570s onward the empire's greater wars on the western front and in the East with the Safavids were fought mainly for the maintenance of the empire's territorial *status quo*. In the meantime, as the technological center of costly modern warfare moved to northern Europe, politics exchanged arms for the negotiating table in the Levant, leaving the Mediterranean as a playground for minor-scale, “unofficial” armed conflicts fuelled by piracy. In the last decades of the sixteenth century and onward, for western polities and the Ottomans the way to go in the eastern Mediterranean was by means of diplomacy and direct trade as opposed to expensive and debilitating maritime warfare. (Ottoman *ahdnames* granted to the Italian city states in the late fifteenth century were followed by the Franco-Ottoman negotiations of 1535-36, and *ahdnames* ratified with the Dutch and the English at the beginning of the seventeenth century.) While Venice's maritime and commercial dominance over the region was waning due to the city-state's losing its Levantine colonies to the Ottomans and her economic focus contracting to the *terraferma*, lesser powers such as Tuscany, the Papal State, England, the Dutch, and the Knights of St. John of Malta came to fill the breach. I argue that the new era, which showed a decline in Ottoman and Venetian imperial

exclusionism in the Mediterranean, demanded revised ways of claiming power and territorial legitimacy. To illustrate this point, in this chapter I will explore the 1582 Ottoman *Sur-i Hümayun*, or imperial circumcision festival, where a performance aimed to demonstrate Ottoman mastery of modern weaponry was believed by the western audience to feature Cyprus. I also explore how, in a wider perspective, this performance came to being as a part of an early modern western festival tradition and what may account for the performance's ill-decoding by westerners.

### 5.1 A Performance at the *Sur-i Hümayun*

On June 9, 1582 Prince Mehmed mounted his grey stallion which was dressed up in festive manner in silver robes ornate with precious stones.<sup>568</sup> The fifteen-year-old *şehzade*, wearing a gold-embroidered red ceremonial *kaftan* stitched with gemstones and a princely turban of two black feathers on top, amidst his retinue rode out of the gate of the Eski Saray (Old Palace), where he had paid his mother a customary farewell visit. Holding a gold-plated mace in his hand and wearing on his side a jewelled sword and a *hançer*, Mehmed moved with the procession led by the carriers of the four *nahıls* (festival trees) which had been prepared in

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<sup>568</sup> The date of Prince Mehmed's entry to the Hippodrome has been wrongly identified by Joseph von Hammer, who claims that it took place on June 2 in Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches, grossentheils aus bisher unbenützten Handschriften und Archiven* vol. 4 (C. A. Hartleben's Verlage: Pest, 1829), 121. I have chosen to refer to the more reliable date given by İntizami in the Austrian National Library's MS ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70 entitled *Surname-i Hümayun*, 10v published in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift in Transkription mit Kommentar und Indices versehen*, ed. Gisela Procházka-Eisl (Istanbul: Isis Verlag, 1995), 81.

his celebration.<sup>569</sup> When he arrived at the Hippodrome, where foreign and Ottoman guests had been gathering for ten days, the dignitaries of the empire came forth on foot to greet him. He rode to the İbrahim Pasha Palace, kissed his sultan father's hand, and took his place next to him on the palace's balcony overseeing the square. This was the day when Prince Mehmed's circumcision festival, the greatest public festivity Istanbul ever saw during its Ottoman history, began.<sup>570</sup>

The festivities were organized to celebrate the rite of passage of Prince Mehmed (later Sultan Mehmed III), and lasted for fifty-two days, each day being occupied by processions, theatrical performances, fireworks, and mock battles. One of these events is almost exclusively referred to in modern-day scholarship as a re-enactment of the Ottoman siege of Cyprus and, even more specifically, that of the city of Famagusta. Fitting into the range of mock battles performed during the festivities, this performance is claimed to have been intended to demonstrate to the western, but particularly the Venetian spectators, Ottoman military superiority over Christendom. However, the differences in contemporary accounts of the event and present-day scholarship's unanimous interpretation of the performance is puzzling, and requires a dialogical revision on the basis of both western and Ottoman contemporary sources. One of the most oft-cited sources describing the performance which is in the focus of this chapter is Edward Grimeston's 1635 English translation of Michel Baudier's *turcica* the

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<sup>569</sup> *Nahıls* were Ottoman symbols of fertility, and inevitable attributes of circumcision festivals. See a discussion of *nahıls* in Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London: L. B. Tauris, 2000), 165.

<sup>570</sup> For the *şehzade's* entry see İntizami, *Surname-i Hümayun* (ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70), 10v-13r in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift*, 81-84; *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 133-35; Hammer, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, vol. 4, 121; Emine Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617" (PhD. diss., Harvard University, 2005), 215-16; Mehmet Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri* vol. 2 (Istanbul: Sarayburnu Kitaplığı, 2009), 15.

*Histoire générale du sérail et de la cour du grand Turc* (1626), in which the performance is described on as a ferocious battle in which

Occhiali Bassa great Admiral of the Sea, exceeded by his industrie, the Vezir's invention. Hee caused to come rowling into the place, a great Island, admirably well made of boords, and pastboord, which represented *Cypres*: Two powerfull Armies held it besieged, the one by Sea and the other by Land: There was artificially seene their descent into the Island, the siege of *Famagouste*, the sallies, skirmishes, batteries, counter-batteries, mines, counter-mines, breaches, assaults vpon assault, fire-workes, and whatsoeuer the furie of Warre could inuent.<sup>571</sup>

The Admiral of the Navy Uluç ("Occhiali") or Kılıç Ali Pasha's float, according to Baudier, was a model of the island of Cyprus, made of a wooden frame with pasteboard cast over it outside the Hippodrome. When the time of the admiral's performance had come, the model was rolled into the square to be besieged "by sea" and "by land". At the dramatic height of the performance, writes Baudier, "time, force, and the want of succours made them [the Cypriots] receiue the composition which they [the Ottomans] offered them,"<sup>572</sup> and the story takes a conspicuously programmatic turn when the Ottomans, in spite of the truce, make some of the defenders "slaues, and the rest they put to the Sword".<sup>573</sup> Curiously, eventual divine intervention, which can be presupposed on the basis of the account's moral overtone, does not take effect only within the dramatic confines of the performance, and not only on the Ottomans:

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<sup>571</sup> Michel Baudier, *The History of the Imperiall Estate of the Grand Seigneurs: Their Habitations, Liues, Titles, Qualitis, Exercises. Workes, Reuenews, Habit, Discent, Ceremonies, Magnificence, Judgements, Officers, Fauourites, Religion, Power, Gouvernment, and Tyranny*, trans. Edward Grimeston (London: William Stansby, 1635), 85-86.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid. p. 86.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid.

The wonder of this artificiall representation did much please the Sultan, reioyced the people, and reuiued in the Christians minds the grieffe of their losse: Heauen would haue it so to punish their great curiositie, for assisting with these infamous Mahometans, and to be spectators with them at the Pompes of their Superstition. But hee did not suffer their insolencie to be vnpunished; [...] The Canonadoes [...] flue many of these takers of the Island in the Picture vpon the place, & wounded a great number.<sup>574</sup>

Baudier's account of God's abrupt punishment on the Ottoman actors and spectators, as well as the Christian guests for their perfidy of merely watching the performance is, of course, idealistic enough to be read without reservations. However, the *Histoire générale du serial..*, which was probably one of the most popular works of its time about the Ottoman court, first in French and later in other vernaculars, is only a second-hand account of Prince Mehmed's circumcision festival. The book is based on travellers' memoirs, and the source for Baudier's account of the performance would have most likely been Jean Palerne's eye-witness account.

Jean Palerne, the secretary of Francis, Duke of Anjou, attended the circumcision festival during his pilgrimage from Paris to the Holy Land. In Palerne's *Peregrinations dv S. Iean Palerne* (1606) the Ottomans' intention to vex their western guests with the performance is as apparent as in Baudier's account. According to Palerne, the mock-battle staged by Kılıç Ali Pasha not only surpassed that of Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha, which took place immediately before the "siege," but it also

[...] renewed [...] an inexpressible grief in the Christians' soul for the memory of past misfortunes, because it represented ingenuously the taking of Cyprus,

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

and there was shown an island ingeniously built from plank[s] and painted board[s], [and it was] besieged by a great navy and infantry.<sup>575</sup>

Palerne's description of the performance is identical with Baudier's second-hand account even where it seems suspiciously moralizing. In the *Peregrinations* the mock-battle ends with the Ottomans enslaving and putting the Cypriots to the sword, followed by the sound of musical instruments playing triumphantly in celebration of the Ottomans' victory when one of the cannons kills and wounds many of the performers. Thus Baudier's episode of the divinely ordained accident, which allegedly "wounded a great number," was clearly not invented by Baudier. However, when the historian's moralizing overtone is set against both Palerne's and his own earlier assertion that the performance "reuiued in the Christians minds the grieve of their losse," it is indicative of a probably general conviction that the loss of Cyprus to the Ottomans, and its subsequent re-enactment at the festival, were not only an issue of Venetian defeat, but rather one of the whole of Christendom, which deserved God's punishment.

Another contemporary record of the performance is the Polish traveller Georgius (Jerzy) Lebeliski's *Descriptio Ludorum Variorumq[ue] & Spectaculorum...* (1582), which appeared in French translation in Heinrich Porsius's *Briefve histoire de la guerre de Perse...* as early as 1583. Lebeliski's work was soon published in English as well under the title *A True Description of the Magnificall Tryumphes and Pastimes Represented in Constantinople...*

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<sup>575</sup> "renouuellant toutesfoys vn indicible regret en l'ame des Chrestiens, pour la memorie des malheurs passes. Car il representa nayfument la prise de Cypre, & fit voir vne Isle ingenieusement faicte d'aix, & de carte peincte, assiegée d'une grosse armée nauale, & terrestre [...]" Jean Palerne, *Peregrinations dv S. Iean Palerne* (Lyon: Jean Pillehotte, 1606), 466.



(1584). According to Lebel'ski's Latin original, a float in the shape of Cyprus stood at the centre of the performance, and a fort on it, perhaps representing Famagusta, was theatrically besieged:

The fort was built from planks and stood on a papier mâché island, which was tugged around by six galleys and many galleons, and the name "Cyprus" was given to it. At first the fort was attacked by a war engine from these galleys, [but] later they began with great effort to perform the history of the capture of Cyprus. When all the Turks made battle cries, it was unbearable for the spectators.<sup>576</sup>

Yet another account of the event, although almost completely forgotten in scholarship, is the anonymous *Türkische Beschneidung...* (1582), which lends an even more curious turn to the story than that of Baudier: at the end of the day's row of mock-battles, the author claims, the Venetian emissaries take leave from the festival. Seeing their departure, Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha decides to give as a "special" present to the Venetians ten Christian slaves captured in the War of Cyprus, as an expression of his good intentions.<sup>577</sup> Although the factuality of this account is uncertain, it completes the picture by assuming a dialogue of Venetian and Ottoman sentiments, morals, and even political redress.

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<sup>576</sup> "Arcem si quidem vnam ex alseribus fabricatam, & in insula papyracea posita, cum sex galleris & multis biremibus, in illum circum adduxit, eius nomen Cypro dedit. Quam quidem arcem magna vi tormentorum bellicorum ex illis galleris primum oppugnauit, postea magno cum labore caepit, scilicet erat illa Historia captae cypri. Vbi audiuiesses tantos Turcarum in oppugnando clamores, quantos vix spectatores ferre poruerunt." Georgius Lebel'ski, *Descriptio Ludorum Variorumq[ue] Spectaculorum, Quae Sunt Constantinopoli Peracta In Celebritate Circumcisionis Filii Turcici Imperatoris [...]* (Toruń: Melchior Nering, 1582), 10.

<sup>577</sup> *Türkische Beschneidung: Warhaffte kurtze Beschreibung wie Amurath, der jetzt regierende Türkische Keiser, seinen Son Mahometen [...] zu Constantinopel beschneiden lassen [...] Dergleichen auch was für Botschafften allda erschienen, Neben vermeldung der Ritterspiel, so gantz ernstlich vnd abscheulich [...] gehalten worden. Sampt einer sonderen vermeldung etlicher Wunderwerck zu Constantinopel* (Nuremberg: Leonhard Heussler, 1582), B. ii.

On the strength of these sources, the performance seems to have been an exceptionally spectacular one with a large representation of the island of Cyprus and the fort of Famagusta put on display, galleys being rolled about on the Hippodrome, and the Ottoman artillery and troops attacking the island while howling so passionately that it “was unbearable for the spectators”.<sup>578</sup> Although the “siege” was an “inexpressible grief to the Christians’ soul,”<sup>579</sup> it was, according to Palerne, a “memory of *past* misfortunes”.<sup>580</sup> The grand vizier’s apologetic act of generosity in the anonymous account creates an air of redress, and reasserts Palerne’s earlier claim that after all the Venetian defeat in Cyprus was past—by the time of the festival there was peace in the eastern Mediterranean.

Besides its magnificence, the performance sticks out from the series of performances in that for both Palerne and Lebeliski the only identifiable battle scene was this one. This probably explains why Baudier did not pass the same moral judgement on the other performances where the “Christians” were just as well defeated as in the re-enactment of the siege of Famagusta, but in fictitious or unrecognized battles. By the sources being cited and translated into foreign vernaculars, the news of the performance must have reached a sizeable western audience relatively early on, but the performance only received distinguished attention from historians from the second half of the twentieth century onwards.

Although the *Sur-i Hümayun* has been examined from various perspectives in modern scholarship, this particular performance has been interpreted in a uniform manner. Robert Elliott Stout’s 1966 doctoral dissertation entitled *The Sur-i Hümayun of Murad III: A study of*

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<sup>578</sup> Lebeliski, *Descriptio Ludorum Variorum[que] Spectaculorum...*, 10.

<sup>579</sup> Palerne, *Peregrinations*, 466.

<sup>580</sup> Palerne, *Peregrinations*, 466. (My italicization)

*Ottoman Pageantry and Entertainment* is frequently cited even today as an exhaustive analysis of Prince Mehmed's circumcision festival. In the focus of the study of the festival is the history of the performing arts with references to Bakhtin's carnival theory. Nevertheless, the mock battle scene of Cyprus does not escape Stout's attention:

The most elaborate and lengthy of the mock battles at the sur-i humayun [...] did not simply represent an imaginary battle, but re-created an actual Ottoman victory which had taken place some eleven years earlier—the taking of the island of Cyprus. The mock battle was sponsored and planned by the same Ottoman leader who had actually overseen the capture of Cyprus in 1571, the Kaptan-paşa. For this spectacle, an enormous representation of the island was rolled into the hippodrome. [...] <sup>581</sup>

Derin Terzioğlu's study "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation" gives a survey and analysis of the events constituting the festivities, the battle scenes of which, according to Terzioğlu, "[...] simply conveyed the message in various ways that the Ottomans had the upper hand in past battles. This usually took the form of elaborate mock battles—the most notable of which re-created the conquest of Cyprus in 1570 [...]" <sup>582</sup> Furthermore, one of the most eminent scholars of Ottoman festival history, the late Metin And, in his monograph *40 gün, 40 gece* claims (obviously being inspired by Baudier) that

At the 1582 festival the Head Admiral Uluç Ali Pasha surpassed the vizier in mastery. On the square, a place which served as the stage, he had a big island built from cardboard, which looked like Cyprus. [...] Two powerful armies

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<sup>581</sup> Robert Elliott Stout, "The Sur-i Humayun of Murad III: A study of Ottoman Pageantry and Entertainment" (PhD. diss., Ohio State University, 1966), 229-30.

<sup>582</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation," *Muqarnas* 12 (1995), 86-87.

stormed the island, one of them by sea, the other by land, [...] and attacked Famagusta [...]<sup>583</sup>

In another book of his on Ottoman festivals entitled *Osmanlı Şenliklerinde Türk Sanatları*, And adds that not only was the re-enactment of the Ottoman siege of Famagusta featured at the 1582 festivities, but that the performance became customary at later festivals.<sup>584</sup> This assertion is confirmed in Özdemir Nutku's *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği*.<sup>585</sup> More recently, Suraiya Faroqhi, in her article entitled "Fireworks in Seventeenth-century Istanbul," has touched upon the topic of the mock-battle; she claims that although Palerne's account lacks references to fireworks deployed in the performance, such entertainment is likely to have accompanied the representation organized by Kılıç Ali, "with the subject being the recent conquest of Cyprus..."<sup>586</sup>

The cultural historical implications that Kılıç Ali's performance raises about Ottoman imperial ideology and techniques in claiming glory would demand and justify an in-depth research about the performance. For instance, it would be imperative to know how the Venetian *bailo* Jacopo Soranzo reported on the performance;<sup>587</sup> the anonymous account presumably

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<sup>583</sup> Metin And, *40 Gün, 40 Gece: Osmanlı Düğünlerin Şenlikleri, Geçit Alayları* (İstanbul: Creative Yayıncılık ve Tanıtım, 2000), 135.

<sup>584</sup> Metin And, *Osmanlı Şenliklerinde Türk Sanatları* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1982), 130-31.

<sup>585</sup> Özdemir Nutku, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1972), 137.

<sup>586</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Fireworks in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," in *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Arzu Öztürkmen and Evelyn Birge Vitz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 189.

<sup>587</sup> Jacopo Soranzo, "Relazione e diario del viaggio di Jacopo Soranzo, Ambasciatore della Repubblica di Venezia per il ritaglio di Mehemet figliuolo di Amurat Imperatore dei turchi," in *Relazioni degli ambasciatori Veneti al Senato* ser. 3 vol. 2, ed. Eugenio Albèri (Florence: Tipografia all'insegna di Clio, 1844), 232-36.

refers to him as the recipient of the grand vizier's gift of Christian slaves. For a well-informed analysis, it would be invaluable to read the mock-battle's description and interpretation in the longest and most detailed western source about the festivities, the eye-witness account of the German Nicolas Haunolth,<sup>588</sup> as well as the English court's correspondent,<sup>589</sup> and the Fuggers' source in Istanbul.<sup>590</sup> And most importantly, it would be imperative to examine how the Ottomans themselves reported on and interpreted the performance. As it turns out, in none of these sources are there any references to a performance featuring Cyprus or Famagusta at the *Sur-i Hümayun*; it is as if the performance never happened.

## 5.2 The Performance and Displaying Power

The 1582 Imperial Circumcision Festival, like previous and subsequent Ottoman festivities, was a highly politicized event. Also, like most Ottoman imperial festivities, the *Sur-i Hümayun* was accessible to the Ottoman public and attended by foreign visitors. From the festival's locus to seating orders to festival architecture and performances, every aspect of the events was charged with an imperial or self-image that the sultan and the empire's grandees

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<sup>588</sup> Nicolas von Haunolth, "Particular Verzechnuzs mit was Ceremonien Geprang unnd Pracht das Fest der Beschneidung desz jetzt redierenden Türckischen Keysers Sultan Murath ditz Namens dezs dritten u. Sohns Sultan Mehemet genannt wleches vom andern Junii bisz auff den 21. Julii desz 1582. Jahrs gewehret unnd continuiert hat zu Constantinopol celebriert und gehalten worden," in *Neuwe Chronica türckischer Nation*, ed. Johannes Leunclavius (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1590), 468-514.

<sup>589</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 16, May-December 1582*, ed. Arthur John Butler (London, 1909), British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol16> [last accessed 14 April 2016], 170-88.

<sup>590</sup> "Beschneidungfeierlichtkeiten in Constantinopel," in *Fugger-Zeitungen: Ungedruckte Briefe an das Haus Fugger aus den Jahren 1568-1605*, ed. Victor Klarwill (Vienna: Rikola Verlag, 1923), 61-69.

intended to communicate to the world. At the same time, the festivities were also an excellent opportunity for the Ottoman elite's self-advertisement to the Sultan.<sup>591</sup>

The locale of *Şehzade* Mehmed's circumcision feast inevitably set the scene for showcasing power and political aspirations. Drawing on Constantinople's antique legacy, Ottoman events of imperial importance, at least until the mid-seventeenth century were held on the Atmeydanı or Hippodrome, Roman/Byzantine Constantinople's horserace arena. However, the number of Ottoman festivals taking place in this symbolic locus is not as high as one might expect: besides symbolic events of lesser rank such as public executions, feasts referential to Ottoman lineage and legitimacy were held on the Hippodrome for a relatively short period of the city's Ottoman history.<sup>592</sup> According to Ebru Turan, the first public festivity took place on the Hippodrome only at the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, on the occasion of his favorite, İbrahim Pasha's wedding ceremony in 1524.<sup>593</sup> Certainly, İbrahim's palace was the first Ottoman building erected on the Hippodrome, which indicates the high esteem in

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<sup>591</sup> For a study on Ottoman guild processions see Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 168-74. For the similarities with western guild processions and their self-advertising function see Elizabeth McGarth, "Rubens's 'Arch of the Mint,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974): 191-217 esp. 200; Samuel Kinser, "Presentation and Representation: Carnival in Nuremberg, 1450-1550," *Representations* 13 (1986): 1-41.

<sup>592</sup> Between 1453 to the mid-seventeenth century when imperial festivals were relocated to Istanbul's other areas, there were only thirteen such occasions on the Hippodrome. Özdemir Nutku: "Festivities in Atmeydanı," in *Hippodrom / Atmeydanı: A stage for Istanbul's History* vol 2., ed. Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2010), 74.

<sup>593</sup> Ebru Turan, *The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman (1516-1526)* (PhD. diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 153. Others propose that festivities took place on the Hippodrom roughly during the period of the consolidation of the empire between 1453 and the 1560s. On the period of Ottoman imperial emergence and consolidation see Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in comparative perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 67-108.

which this symbolic imperial space was held in the Ottoman Empire's consolidation period and beyond.<sup>594</sup> The Hippodrome in the context of Ottoman imperial ideologies was meant to associate the House of Osman with their Roman/Byzantine imperial legacy. Such were Mehmed II's preservation of Constantine the Great's collection of *spolia* on the Hippodrome in view of legitimizing his self-image as an heir to the throne of Roman emperors<sup>595</sup> and the otherwise self-secluding Süleyman the Magnificent's pompous Friday processions through the same circus.<sup>596</sup> As much as the Ottoman sultans utilized the Hippodrome's imperial past, the circus had been intended to be a site of retrospective imperial legitimation since the age of Constantine the Great, whose ornamenting the Hippodrome with iconic stonework was aimed at recreating imperial Rome in his empire's new capital.<sup>597</sup>

Coming to contemporary Ottoman sources, the key work is the officially, imperially commissioned *Surname-i Hümayun*. The court's ("official") narrative of *Şehzade* Mehmed's circumcision festival was documented in İntizami of Foça's illustrated manuscript the *Surname-i Hümayun* (Imperial Festival Book, 1582).<sup>598</sup> The manuscript was commissioned by Sultan Murad III and its production was overseen by the chief black eunuch, Mehmed Agha,

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<sup>594</sup> Turan, *The Sultan's Favorite*, 153.

<sup>595</sup> Robert Ousterhout, "The East, the West, and the Appropriation of the Past in Early Ottoman Architecture," *Gesta* 43 no. 2 (2004): 165-76 esp. 173-4; Halil İnalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/24 (1969/70): 229-49 esp. 233-4.

<sup>596</sup> Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 30.

<sup>597</sup> Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 58-67.

<sup>598</sup> İntizami, *Surname-i Hümayun* (ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70) published in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift in Transkription mit Kommentar und Indices versehen*, ed. Gisela Procházka-Eisl (Isis Verlag: Istanbul, 1995).

and the eunuch of the imperial harem, Zeyrek Agha.<sup>599</sup> The manuscript was made at a time of changing power structures at the Ottoman court and in the Ottoman elite,<sup>600</sup> and İntizami's *Surname* bears witness to these transformations. The end of the empire's "classical age" brought with it the re-structuring of power networks: the Süleymanic era's de-personalized bureaucratic administration came to be challenged,<sup>601</sup> and eventually dismantled, by the members of the imperial family, their households and the members of the waning bureaucracy.<sup>602</sup> This re-shuffling of positions for the benefit of favorites and political factions, which began during the reign of Sultan Selim II, turned into a full-blown scramble for power during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III.<sup>603</sup> Thus İntizami's *Surname*, a record of an imperial act of legitimation and dynastic continuity, which carries the traces of its makers' political interests, seems not only the product of an episode of Ottoman history but also as one of the means of its making.

Illustrated manuscripts such as İntizami's *Surname* commissioned by the Porte since the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent originally served to convey a sultanic image, and broadly speaking, a dynastic mythology, to the members of the Ottoman court. However, the growing involvement of the members of the Ottoman elite in imperial politics led to a growing

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<sup>599</sup> Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 70.

<sup>600</sup> This was also the time when, according to Baki Tezcan, the slow transformation of the Ottoman Empire toward modernity began. Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>601</sup> For a discussion of the Süleymanic de-personalization of state bureaucracy see Cornell Fleischer, "Between the Lines: Realities of Scribal Life in the Sixteenth Century," in *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Isis Press: Istanbul, 1994), 54.

<sup>602</sup> Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 9.

<sup>603</sup> Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17)," 17.



number of courtiers striving to manipulate this mythology for their own benefit. This is how by the time of the *Surname*'s production, besides the sultanic image that illustrated manuscripts were meant to communicate to the cream of Ottoman society, manuscripts served as a means of self-fashioning of court members thus trying to demonstrate their existing power and publicize their or their faction's political aspirations.<sup>604</sup> In the case of the *Surname* this "image-maker" was the chief black eunuch Mehmed Agha (and, to a lesser extent, Zeyrek Agha), whose heretofore unprecedented central position in the Ottoman power network is demonstrated in the manuscript's narrative and visual program.<sup>605</sup> The two aghas did their best to have themselves represented in the manuscript by means of illustrations. Zeyrek Agha's strong ties to the quasi-ruler of the empire *valide* sultan Nurbanu, and Mehmed Agha's proximity to and great influence on the sultan suggest that the sultanic image propagated in the *Surname* was meant to validate the sultan's and his mother's ways of ruling and the maintenance of their favorites at court.<sup>606</sup> This, in turn, informed the selection of spectacles to make it to the manuscript and the way these spectacles were depicted.

By the third quarter of the sixteenth century Ottoman sultans had abandoned the public image of their predecessors. Murad III, like his father Selim II, never led an army on the battlefield during his sultanate, but chose to live in the sedentary seclusion of the Topkapı Palace letting members of his household manage his empire. Accordingly, the sultanic image propagated in the *Surname* had to reflect this new way of governance: the overseers of the manuscript's production made sure that Murad was portrayed as an iconic figure of utter

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<sup>604</sup> Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 9, 279.

<sup>605</sup> For Mehmed Agha's position in late-sixteenth century Ottoman court factions and his influence on manuscript productions see Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 268.

<sup>606</sup> Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 206-10

generosity and piety who ruled over a wealthy and stable empire.<sup>607</sup> Thus guild processions demonstrating the skills of Istanbul's various religious and ethnic groups, lavish meals, the forgiving of debts, the distribution of coins to the poor, the mass-circumcision of Shiite boys, and similar events were emphasized. In the logic of this imagery, the mock-battles presented at the festival were meant to celebrate not so much the sultan's (non-existent) personal triumphs in battle, but Ottoman military might in general, which opened the way for the grand vizier and the *kapudan* pasha to turn their performances to their own benefit. Thus it is little wonder that, according to the sources, Sinan and Kılıç Ali Pashas organized and financed these spectacles themselves.

One of the members of the imperial janissary troops, Kara Bali Bey, was assigned as master of ceremonies, and six months prior to the festivities *Nişancı* (chancellor) Hamza Bey was appointed to supervise the festival's budget.<sup>608</sup> Despite the festival's central finances, some of the events were financed and organized separately by Ottoman grandees such as Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha and *Kapudan* Kılıç Ali Pasha,<sup>609</sup> but people of lesser political standing were also given the opportunity to stage a spectacle. One such occasion was the staging of a spectacle by the sons of the late Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. Taking place only two and a half years after the murder of the grand vizier, and amidst rumors of the involvement of the sultan's household in the alleged assassination, the Sokollu clan's spectacle is likely to have been loaded with political connotations. According to İntizami, the "infidel" slaves of Sokollu's sons tugged a cart to the Hippodrome, with a heavily wounded man lying on it. The man, who was covered

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<sup>607</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>608</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 133.

<sup>609</sup> İntizami, *Surname-i Hümayun* (ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70), fol. 24r in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift*, 101.

in blood, had several “wounds of violent injuries”. While the onlookers claimed that “he is so wounded that he will not recover,” the man miraculously turned into four soldiers, who jumped up and started to walk about the square.<sup>610</sup> According to İntizami, it was a puzzling enough “miracle” for the audience to keep many of them awake and discuss the spectacle until dawn.<sup>611</sup>

Was this performance an allegory of the survival of the Sokollu lineage by the late grand vizier’s sons in spite of the late Sokollu’s enemies at the court? Or was this spectacle nothing more than a conjuring trick to entertain the audience? Whichever the case, the *Surname* does not provide an explanation for the Sokollu clan’s spectacle. Nevertheless, the performance bears witness to a range of events at the festival organized and pay-rolled by individuals other than the court through the supervision of Kara Ali Bey and Hamza Bey. These privately financed performances reflected their commissioners’ take on Ottoman politics, and their own political significance and aspirations in it. Their narratives are also indicative of diffuse political interests represented at the festival. More importantly, however, the omission or representation of a performance in the festival book indicates the relative position of these ideologically informed performances to the political ideology of the festival book’s makers: while tightrope dancers, jugglers, and fakirs deserved depiction among the *Surname*’s illustrations, the Sokollu clan’s performance apparently did not. After all, the late grand vizier’s

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<sup>610</sup> İntizami, *Surname-i Hümayun* (ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70), fols. 19v-20r in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift*, 95-96.

<sup>611</sup> İntizami, *Surname-i Hümayun* (ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70), fol. 20r in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift*, 95.

clan was opposed to the faction whose members now dominated Ottoman politics as well as manuscript production.<sup>612</sup>

Guild processions, spectacles, and performances at early modern festivals sought to entertain their audience on the one hand, but on the other hand they were also an excellent opportunity for self-advertisement.<sup>613</sup> Following the logic of Stout's argument that Kılıç Ali Pasha's performance meant to recall the pasha's overseeing the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus,<sup>614</sup> his staging of a mock-battle would make perfect sense, and the fact that there is no record of the re-enactment of the war in İntizami's text would presume a political reason necessitating this episode to be edited out of the manuscript. However, Kılıç Ali came to be associated with the court only in late 1571 at Lepanto, in which his participation earned him his cognomen and title.<sup>615</sup> Kılıç Ali, at this point the beglerbeg of Algiers, marched from Algiers to Tunis during the winter of 1569-70 to besiege La Goletta, and even when the Cyprus campaign had already begun, we see him involved in naval battles against the Knights of Malta off the Sicilian coast

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<sup>612</sup> For more on the Sokollu and anti-Sokollu factions see Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 71-75; Elif Özgen, "Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha and Factional Politics in the Court of Murad III" (MA thesis, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2010), 32-46.

<sup>613</sup> For a study on Ottoman guild processions see Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 168-74. For the similarities with western guild processions and their self-advertising function see McGarth, "Rubens's 'Arch of the Mint,'" 200; Kinser, "Presentation and Representation."

<sup>614</sup> Stout, "The Sur-i Humayun of Murad III," 229-30.

<sup>615</sup> For a list of military leaders participating in the Cyprus campaign see *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 78; *Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali ve Künhü'l-Ahbar'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri* vol. 2, ed. Faris Çerçi (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000), 67-68. For Kılıç Ali's (Uluç Ali) involvement in the Battle of Lepanto see *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 82.

in July 1570.<sup>616</sup> Kılıç Ali Pasha, just like other Ottoman corsair-dignitaries, did not take part in the Cyprus expedition,<sup>617</sup> but operated elsewhere to deter reinforcement from partaking in the war on Venice's side.<sup>618</sup> Thus it is little surprise that his appearance in the narrative of later chronicles occurs only at the episode of the naval battle fought by the Holy League and the Ottomans at Lepanto in October 1571. Although Kılıç Ali owed his appointment as *kapudan-ı derya* to his relative success of saving Ottoman and sacking Venetian ships amidst the near total annihilation of the Ottoman navy at Lepanto, his name was immortalized by his rebuilding the Ottoman navy only within the course of six months.<sup>619</sup> Consequently, it seems very unlikely that the pasha would have wished to boast with a military victory in which he never took part, or that he did this without reference to his personal success of reviving the navy and putting it to the test in only two years' time at Tunis, which was occupied by the Ottomans in 1574.

Furthermore, according to İntizami, the *kapudan* pasha's performance was preceded by another spectacle. This performance, which the western sources attribute to the Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha, entailed a mock-battle between two groups of actors: one acting out the Ottoman army, and another dressed in a recognizably Christian manner. As Sinan Pasha, the commissioner of this mock battle, had not yet taken part in a western campaign by 1582, his direct association with the battle scene seems unlikely, just like the association of Kılıç Ali Pasha's military achievements with the conquest of Cyprus.

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<sup>616</sup> Niccolò Capponi, *Victory of the West: The Great Christian-Muslim Clash at the Battle of Lepanto* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007), 134; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* vol. 4, 937.

<sup>617</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus* vol. 3, 893.

<sup>618</sup> Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus*, 24.

<sup>619</sup> *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 84-86.

So, what *did* Kılıç Ali's performance represent? As a contribution to the program of the festivities, Kılıç Ali had a model mountain built, the description of which in the *Surname-i Hümayun* is as follows:

The slaves of Kılıç Ali Pasha began to build a mountain. The inside of it was hollow filled with gunpowder, and the inside and outside of it were loaded with firework cartridges... This mountain's fruits and plants were its embellishment and treasure; and its foods were reached out for to be eaten. In some places its caves, which were made of stone, and its valleys, which served as a refuge for animals, and its pastures, to which sheep and lambs descended [to graze], its mountain pastures, which were grassy and had water, all kinds of wild animals and birds in flocks, and a multitude of vermin of the earth, which swarmed, and its gazelles, which walked into its woods to hide, and its insects and snakes, which found a hiding place in the cracks of its rocks, were all moving. In the meantime the mountain caught fire from the explosion of the aforementioned firework cartridges. At once the flames joined together, and the discussed mountain flew to the sky, to a salamander-like heaven. The earth and the sky were filled with the fearful sound [of the explosion]. The sober-minded ones, not losing their minds, stepped aside when the time [of the fireworks show] had come. Eventually the gathering and the day's performances came to an end, and everyone returned to their place of lodging and went to sleep.<sup>620</sup>

<sup>620</sup> "Kılıç Ali Paşanın esirleri bir dağ peyda edüp içi mücevvef barutla memlü ve fişekler ile derun u birunı dolu [...] nebatat u esmarı zib ü zinet vermiş mükemmel yemişleri yetişüb yenmege ermiş yer yer sengin mağaraları ve ca-be-ca hayvanat sığınacak dereleri ve koyun kuzı inlenecek otlakları ve otlu sulu yaylakları ve bi-cümle enva-i vühuş u tuyur güruh güruh ve kesret ile haşerat-i arz enbuh enbuh geşi eyler-iken ahuları eşcar arasında sığınmış ve mur u marı taş deliklerine yığınmış tamam hareketde iken seda-yı ateşin-i fişekden kuh-ı mezbur yangulanub ve 'ale l-fur rişte-i ateş bir birine ulanub zikr olınan taş ruy-i havaya perran ve semender-var feleke tayran olub yer ü gök seda-yı mühib ile toldı ve uslu olanlar 'akılları başda iken vakti ile kenarı buldı ba'dehu cem'iyet nihayete ve şetaret gayete gelüb her kişi makarrına varub aramgahına can atdı [...]" İntizami, *Surname-i Hümayun* (ÖNB Cod. H. O. 70), 24r in *Das Surname-i Hümayun: Die Wiener Handschrift in Transkription mit Kommentar und Indices versehen*, ed. Gisela Procházka-Eisl (Isis Verlag: Istanbul, 1995), 101-2.

In thus describing the event, İntizami gives an account of the *kapudan* pasha's performance, which took place on June 15 and entailed putting on display a model mountain populated with live or movable models of animals. The spectacle was filled with firework cartridges, which were fired at the end of the performance, and the float exploded.

The same spectacle is recorded in the account of one of the time's most noteworthy Ottoman historians, Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali. Mustafa Ali was a confidant and scribe to Lala Mustafa Pasha, who had died only one and a half years prior to the festival, the tutor of *Şehzade* Selim (later Selim II) and aspirant to the grand vizierate in contest with Sinan Pasha. Having lost his patron, from 1580 onward Mustafa Ali was trying to call the attention of Prince Mehmed to himself by producing and sending to the court eulogizing manuscripts for the *şehzade*. Mustafa Ali, as yet another attempt in his search for a new protector, wrote *Cami'ul-Buhur Der Mecalis-i Sur*, a poetic record of the *sur-i hümayun*, which he finished only by the end of 1583. Although in Aleppo at the time, due to his access to written records in the capital, Ali managed to provide a surprisingly accurate account of the festival.<sup>621</sup> In this, Kılıç Ali's spectacle is also described as a miraculous float in the shape of a mountain.

To the witness of Mustafa Ali's thirty-five *beyit* long passage, Kılıç Ali had a mountain of wooden frame built on the Hippodrome. There were artificial caves planted on the float for wild animals to find retreat in. The mountain was also populated by flocks of sheep, carnivorous animals (probably wolves), and birds, whose idealized habitat the float was meant to depict with the presence of brooks, pastures, and woods. Ali also mentions cannons and rifles brought to the scene, which were used for the subsequent fireworks that took place at the end of the performance. The cannons and the rifles were fired, and a dragon was put in the

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<sup>621</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 105-8.

scene as well, from whose mouth fire spat at the float, at which point the mountain caught fire.<sup>622</sup> The performance was spectacular enough to win the sultan's appreciation:

The heavy mountain was burning and issued sparks  
The mountain caught fire from that creature.

The Shah was not bored of the sight  
He was ecstatic about the beauty of the glowing fire.

That night it burned until dawn  
The sparks of the fire made the surface of the earth full of stars<sup>623</sup>

Impressive as it was, the mountain float seems to have been a puzzling “phenomenon” to account on even for such a well-accustomed writer and poet as Ali. One of the peculiarities of the depiction of the spectacle is Ali's manifest struggle to define the float. “If it is not a burning island, what is it?”<sup>624</sup> Ali asks, and indeed, he is lost for words: once the mountain is dubbed as “Mount Kaf,”<sup>625</sup> at another time as a “conjuring mountain.”<sup>626</sup> Mustafa Ali's perplexity over the matter is understandable: the mountain float seems confusingly out of context as a spectacle financed and staged by the Admiral of the Ottoman Navy. Such

<sup>622</sup> The title of this section tells the reader that “Bir Kuh-ı Büzürg Enva-ı Miş ü Gürk ile Zahir Olduğudur” (A large mountain is covered with numerous sheep and wolves). Mustafa Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur Der Mecalis-i Sur*, ed. Ali Öztekin (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1996), 205-8 esp. 205 l. 1635.

<sup>623</sup> “Yandı ol kuh-ı giran saçdı şerar / Şol tecelliden tutuşmuş kuh-var / Tab-ı didarına şahun toymadı / Ateş-i şevk-i cemale toymadı / Yandı yakıldı ana şeb ta-seher / Ruy-ı haki pür-nücum itdi şerer,” Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur Der Mecalis-i Sur*, 207 ll. 1659-74.

<sup>624</sup> “Çün yanar ada degildür ya nedür” *ibid.*, l. 1664.

<sup>625</sup> “Sur-ı şaha geldi guya kuh-ı Kaf” (It seems as if Mount Kaf has come to the shah's festival.), *ibid.*, 206 l. 1651.

<sup>626</sup> “Kim bu kuh-ı bu'l-aceb aya nedür” (I wonder what [literally: who] this conjuring mountain is.), *ibid.*, 207 l. 1663.



perplexity cannot be traced in Nev'i's minor-scale account of the festival, the *Suriyye kasidesi*,<sup>627</sup> where the float, in spite of the author's record of other spectacles such as mock-battles and fireworks, is completely ignored. Nor is it accounted for in Mustafa Ali's history *Kühü'l-Ahbar*,<sup>628</sup> in which the festival receives a relatively short entry in the list of "the deeds of Sultan Murad."

Although the *Cami'ul-Buhur* is not a first-hand account, Ali demonstrates in it an interest in and appreciation for the admiral's spectacle apparent in the corresponding section's length. Ali's appreciation of the admiral's performance, in contrast with that of Sinan Pasha, is likely to have been induced by his life-long enmity with Sinan Pasha, who had been the main political rival of his late patron, Lala Mustafa Pasha.<sup>629</sup> While Mustafa Ali's political loyalties and preferences informed his description of the mountain spectacle in favor of the Admiral, the original performance seems to have been politically motivated in contest with Sinan Pasha as well. As it is suggested by Palerne, there was some kind of rivalry between the two dignitaries in terms of the salience of their spectacles. According to Palerne, Sinan Pasha's performance was rather disappointing and the commissioner was jealous of the *kapudan*, for, as in Baudier's translation, Kılıç Ali "exceeded by his industrie, the Vezir's invention."<sup>630</sup> Ali might also suggest that other than Kılıç Ali's prestige in the context of rivalry with Sinan Pasha, the *kapudan*'s political aspirations could also depend on the success of his spectacle: Kılıç Ali's

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<sup>627</sup> Mehmet Arslan, *Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Surnameler (Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri)* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 1999), 85-91.

<sup>628</sup> *Kühü'l-Ahbar: Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali ve Kühü'l-Ahbar'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri* vol. 2.

<sup>629</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 51, 88-89, 135.

<sup>630</sup> Palerne, *Peregrinations* of S. Jean Palerne, 466.

fastidious work was motivated by the admiral trying to win the—unspecified—position of *mübaşir*.<sup>631</sup>

Whether the rivalry between the *kapudan* and the grand vizier was for a political position additional to their existing ones or simply for the Sultan's liking, it is certain that Kılıç Ali won the contest. The mountain spectacle earned the Sultan's appreciation. Thus the manipulative editing of the *Surname* by Mehmed and Zeyrek Aghas can be traced not in the performance not being reported on as the conquest of Cyprus (after all other sources independent from the supervisors of the manuscript's production describe the event synoptically), but in that the performance which *did* take place made it to the *Surname* (in which it even received an illustration—see fig. 25), while Sinan's mock battle was so obviously played down.

According to Emine Fetvacı, in the *Surname*, the eunuch supervisors of the manuscript's production wished to propagate the centrality of the sultan, the imperial family, and their proximity to them,<sup>632</sup> which explains why the viziers and the military class received so little attention in the volume's illustrations. As the last in a range of collaborative projects, Court Historiographer (*Şehnameci*) Seyyid Lokman and Chief Miniaturist (*Nakkaş*) Osman (their co-authored court manuscripts include the *Şehname-i Selim Han*, which was mentioned in Chapter 4) produced for the court the second volume of the *Şehinşahname* (The Book of the King of Kings) in 1592. The manuscript was commissioned by Murad III to immortalize the most memorable events taking place between 1581 and 1588. Out of the sixty-four illustrations

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<sup>631</sup> "Bir mübaşir kim Kılıç Paşa ola / Şah-ı dehre bir yarar dana ola" (If Kılıç Pasha was [made] a mübaşir / It would be useful and wise for the world's ruler [i.e. the sultan].)" Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur Der Mecalis-i Sur*, 207 ll. 1656-7.

<sup>632</sup> Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 216.

of this manuscript twenty-two were dedicated to the *Sur-i Hümayun*, which represent a different political stance from the *Surname*. Lokman's *Şehinşahname*, now lacking Mehmed Agha's supervision due to the eunuch's death two years prior to the manuscript's completion in 1592, served to disseminate an image of the Ottoman Empire as one being managed by the viziers instead of the Sultan and his household.<sup>633</sup> Kılıç Ali's mountain spectacle received its own illustration (fig. 26) alongside five pages of text in this volume too.<sup>634</sup> At the same time, even though İntizami's festival book was not meant to be focused on the military class, the omission of Sinan's performance from among the illustrations of the *Surname* is still surprising. Sinan Pasha enjoyed full support from Murad, under whose reign he served his second grand vizierate, and was removed only by Mehmed III in the latter's attempt to purge the court of his father's courtiers. In the meantime Murad kept Sinan in position despite the allegations about the grand vizier's corrupt leadership and ardent factionalism, while Kılıç Ali, during the reign of Murad, was more of a remnant of Selim II's reign.<sup>635</sup>

To better understand Kılıç Ali's float one has to turn to the western emissaries' records of the *sur-i hümayun*'s June 15. Nicolas von Haunolth, the representative of the Holy Roman Empire at the festival, gives the most detailed eyewitness account of the *sur-i hümayun* in his *Particular Verzeichnuss mit was Cerimonien Geprang und Pracht des Fest der Beschneidung*

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<sup>633</sup> Ibid., 226-7.

<sup>634</sup> For more on the *Şehinşahname*'s discussion of the festivities, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 183; Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582."

<sup>635</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 164. Also notice the power relations manifested in the seating arrangement at the *sur-i hümayun*, where Sinan Pasha was seated in the İbrahim Pasha Palace, where the sultan and the prince were accommodated, whereas Kılıç Ali had his own "viewing pavilion" built in front of the *Mehterhane*. Fetvacı Emine, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 216; *Selaniki Mustafa Efendi: Tarih-i Selaniki* vol. 1, 134.

*des jetzt regierenden Türkischen Keisers Sultan Murath.* In his meticulous, chronologically organized report, Haunolth describes the mountain slightly differently from both Intizami and Ali. Curiously, in the focus of his attention are not the animals and the vegetation of the float but the actors.

The Commander-in-chief of the armada led around a tall mountain made of fireworks. As it had been standing next to a wall on the square, it was rotten and decayed from the rain. It appeared to be tugged by two dragons, and below, at the holes of the mountain two people were guarding it with spears in their hands. And [there were] two balls at the peak of the mountain, one [of which] was set on fire and rolled down; it issued nice and long flames. Even higher, [there were] a boy in red attire and with a lute, and another little boy with a violin. And at the top, under the aforementioned ball, [there was] a naked man with a bow. Here and there nice green vegetation and bushes were seen, in which there were a living lamb and other animals. There was a rock, and there were two towers or a castle. In front [of the float] many wildmen were walking with clubs in their hands, who then tugged the mountain to the square to the “Sultanum” [sic]. He [the sultan] saluted them with a gunshot. Then eight people, four dressed in red, four in blue, jumped off the mountain and danced *mattazina* and *moresqua* beautifully. At night two galleys loaded with fireworks were pulled on long ropes to the square. [These] galleys fought against each other, they attacked and shot [at each other]. [...] After this the mountain was set on fire by the two fire-spitting dragons. But as has been said earlier, the mountain had been standing under shower and rain, it caught fire again and again, but was mostly plummeting fume, and this made them very unsatisfied, because everyone was expecting a rare, cheerful, and unique spectacle.<sup>636</sup>

<sup>636</sup> “Der General Obrister vber die Armata hat einen von Feuerwerck gemachten hohen Berg / so etliche Tag zuvor auffn Platz an einer Maur gestanden / vnnd derenthalben vom Regen sehr faul vnnd verderbt worden / hervmb führen lassen / welches geschienen / als wann ihne zween Drachen fortziehen / vnd vnten für dem Loch dess Bergs zween mit Spiesen / die den Berg verwachten / vnd zwo Kugeln wie auch oben an spitz dess Bergs / eine Kugel so im anzünden hernach vmb vnd vmb gangen / vnd schöne lange Flammen von sich geben / besser oben ein Knabe / in roht gekleydet / mit einem Seitenspiel / bey ihm ein ander klein Büblin mit einer Geigen /vnd am Gipffel oder Spitz vnter den obgemeldten Kugel nein nacketer Mann mit einem Bogen / hin vnd andere sort der Thier mehr / gesehen / vnd einem Felsen / zween Thürn oder Castell / vorher sind etliche wilde Mann mit Prügeln gangen / so bald aber dieser Berg etwas herfür auffn Platz vnd für den Sultanum kommen / hat er mit einem Schutz salutiert / darauff baldt ihr acht / vier in roht / vnd vier in blauw auff Frantzösisch gekleydet / mit Spiesen auss dem Berge gesprungen / schöne Mattazina vnd Moresqua getantzt. Auff den Abendt / hat man ein lang Seyl auffgezogen / vnd zwo von Feuwrwerck gemachte Galleeren / daran gehenckt / welche gegeneinander gefahren / geschossen vnd gestürmet. [...] Nach diesem hat man gedachten

The credibility of Haunolth's account on the sort of performance this passage illustrates is confirmed by a dispatch to the English court issued from Le Vigne de Pera on July 21. The anonymous text dispatched from the residence of the Venetian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire outside Pera re-assures what is suggested by Haunolth as well, that the mountain spectacle was in fact a float combined with fireworks:

[...] At night were many fireworks, among which a "mountain" was burnt, which the High Admiral (*capitano del mare*) had had made by the slaves. This was as high as a pike and more, and was brought uncovered into a corner of the square, and there covered up, and by degrees furnished with all the fireworks that went with it, which were in very great quantity; but they had not much success, compared with what was expected of them, because having been drawn into the middle of the square by slaves, who made believe it was drawn by two serpents, fire was put to it at the second hour of the night which set it all alight at once, and all the fireworks went off so furiously with no interval that they filled the square and the whole air with fire and it burnt up at once.<sup>637</sup>

Recognizably, this is the same float as the one depicted in Intizami's and Haunolth's accounts, and Mustafa Ali's second-hand record of the performance. On the strength of Haunolth's account, the artificial mountain served as a "stage prop" for an allegorical performance, which, at its height ended with a firework show.

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Berg / durch die zween Drachen so Feuwer darauff aussgespieben / angezündet / weil er aber / wie obgemeldt / lang im Regen vnnd Ongewitter gestanden / ist er alsbald vber vnnd vber brennendt worden / vnnd in einem huy verrauchet / darob menniglich vbel zu freiden gewesen / dieweil ein jeder seltzame vnnd lustige Sachen dem eusserlichen gewaltigen Ansehen nach zusehen verhofft hat." Haunolth, "Particular Verzechnuz," 486.

<sup>637</sup> Butler, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 16*, 178.

### 5.3 The Performance and Early Modern Artillery

The English artillerist Edward Webbe had a well-travelled and troubled life. Born about 1554 in London to a “Master Gunner” father, Webbe, before starting to practise his father’s profession, served on English cargo ships as the attendant of one “Captaine Jenkenson”. His first travels included a mission to Muscovy, the Baltic Sea, Bokhara, and Persia between 1566 and 1568. Webbe escaped the burning of Moscow by the Crimean Tartars in 1571 only to be enslaved by the raiders, but eventually ransomed from Kaffa in the Crimea. In 1572 Webbe embarked on another journey, this time as the master gunner of the *Henry*, a trading ship sailing from Livorno to Alexandria. En route to the Levant, Webbe’s fate changed for the worse again: the *Henry*’s crew were captured by Ottoman pirates, and he became a galley slave. According to Webbe’s memoir, in order to escape famine, the gunner offered his services to his new masters as an artillerist, and so he was sent to the Persian front in 1580 to serve Sinan Pasha’s army against the Safavids.<sup>638</sup> In his new position, during the the summer of 1582, Webbe was commissioned to work on a float of fireworks, which were to be deployed at Prince Mehmed’s circumcision festival. Of course, Webbe’s adventures did not come to an end here, and his later life is full of equally fascinating episodes, but it is his position as firework master on one of the floats of the *Sur-i Hümayun* which makes him a noteworthy figure in this chapter. Webbe recalls his involvement in the making of props for the festival as follows:

Whilst I was remaining prisoner in Turkey, and kept in such slauish manner as is Rehearsed the great Turke had his sonne circumcised, at which time there was great tryumphes and free liberty proclaimed for a hundred daies space, that any Nobleman, gentleman, traueller, Christian or other, might freely (without being molested) come and see the tryumphes there vsed, which were woonderful: I my selfe was there constrained to make a cunning peece of fire work framed in

<sup>638</sup> Edward Webbe, *Chief Master Gunner, His Trauailes: 1590*, ed. Edward Arber (London: Alex Murray & Son, 1868).

form like to ye Ark of Noy, beeing 24 yardes high, and eight yardes broad, wherein was placed 40 men drawn on 6 wheeles, yet no man seene, but seemed to goe alone, as though it were onely drawn by two Fiery Dragons, in which shew or Arke there was thirteene thousand seuerall peeces of fire worke.<sup>639</sup>

Although the ark described in *Edward Webbe, Chief Master Gunner, His Trauailes* is probably not one of the props used for Kılıç Ali's mountain spectacle, Webbe's employment in the making of it is indicative of the Ottomans' practice of hiring European artillerists for designing and executing firework projects. While Egyptians enjoyed high esteem in the profession, Christian and Jewish artillerists of European descent were considered as the experts of fireworks, and they often participated with their skills at Ottoman festivals.<sup>640</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century European mastery in the art of pyrotechnics had shown itself in such concise treatises on artillery as Vannoccio Biringuccio's *Pirotechnia* (Venice, 1540), Johannes Schmidlap's *Künstliche und rechtschäffende Feuerwerck...* (Nuremberg, 1561; a peculiarity of its kind for discussing only recreational fireworks),<sup>641</sup> Leonhardt Fronsperger's *Kriegs-Ordnung und Regiment...* (Frankfurt, 1557), and Casimir Simienowicz's *Artis Magnae Artilleriae pars prima* (*The Great Art of Artillery*, 1650), all of which were translated to several European vernaculars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While Biringuccio's treatise is entirely devoted to the technical aspects of making fireworks, Simienowicz's manual on artillery, with a chapter devoted to fireworks, stands out among other artillery manuals with

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<sup>639</sup> Ibid. 28-29.

<sup>640</sup> Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 178.

<sup>641</sup> *Spectaculum Europaeum: Theatre and Spectacle in Europe 1580-1750*, ed. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Pierre Béhar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 732.

its compendium-like section on the composition of various allegorical scenes with references to mostly antique examples.<sup>642</sup>

In *The Great Art of Artillery* Simienowicz discusses everything a pyrotechnic should know from measurements to flammable substances to rockets, fireballs, and petards. On the basis of Webbe's testimony and Simienowicz's manual, it is clear that in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both recreational fireworks and military pyrotechnics fell under the category of artillery: for the latter Simienowicz uses the term "serious or military fireworks" to differentiate the two branches of artillery from each other.<sup>643</sup> Thus, in building pyrotechnical devices, a firework master not only proved his skills in recreational fireworks, but also in the art of modern warfare. However, in discussing "Warlike Machines," Simienowicz also points out that it is the designing and building of "machines" or "Artificial Inventions or complicated Heaps of Artificial Fireworks" such as "Palaces, Triumphal Arches," "Castles, Towers, Columns, Pyramids, Obelisks, Colossuses, Medallions, several forms of Human Statues, and the Representations of several Animals, together with Fountains, Terrestrial and Aquatick Fire-Wheels,"<sup>644</sup> where the artillerist could truly demonstrate his expertise.<sup>645</sup> In the practise of artillery, men designing and executing firework performances for princely or royal commissioners, political boundaries played an insignificant role. While early modern princes would find themselves bombarded by the pyrotechnical devices of a skilled artillery man in

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<sup>642</sup> In English translation: Casimir Simienowicz, *The Great Art of Artillery*, trans. Shelvocke, George (London: J. Tonson, 1729).

<sup>643</sup> See for example the title of Book 2: "Part II. of this Book. Which Treats of Serious or Military Fireworks, Whether Fixed, or Projectile" in *ibid.*, 382.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.



battle, they readily hired the same specialist as firework master for the subsequent feast at their court.<sup>646</sup> And accordingly, Simienowicz gives a list of all sorts of “machines” suitable in terms of pyrotechnics for different kinds of public events along with the allegorical devices and dramatic scenes that may augment the occasion.

Illustrated with current or ancient uses of the device being introduced, the descriptions bear witness to an early modern set of rules regarding the “Times and Occasions for exhibiting of Artificial Fire-works.”<sup>647</sup> All celebrations copied earlier, predominantly antique, festivities, and seem to have accommodated certain types of allegorical scenes whose staging was left to the creativity of the pyrotechnic. For instance, Simienowicz suggests choreography for triumphs by citing the fifth-century Roman poet Claudius Claudianus’ *De Consultatu Stilichonis* (*The Consulship of Stilicho*). Claudianus’s panegyric poem praises the consul with all the spectacles that could be staged at his triumphal procession if only he wished to have one. Among the “Warlike German Spoils” and “vanquish’d Kings” put on display, Claudianus lists “The captive Rivers and each captive Hill, / In Model shewn, confess the Artist’s Skill.”<sup>648</sup> Simienowicz, drawing on the antique tradition of staging emblematic features of conquered landscapes, suggests a re-choreographed version of the performance, in which “The Rivers may be exhibited as presenting him [the conqueror] with several Sorts of Fish by way of Homage; and the Mountains may offer him their several Sorts of Ores in little Cars [...]”<sup>649</sup> Simienowicz also adds that “I need not suggest any thing farther to a fertile Invention; for such

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<sup>646</sup> Watanabe-O’Kelly and Béhar, eds, *Spectaculum Europaeum*, 710

<sup>647</sup> “Both Ancients and Moderns have allotted four general Times or Occasions for exhibiting Artificial Fire-Works.” Simienowicz, *The Great Art of Artillery*, 334ff.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

will need my Assistance no farther than barely giving a few Hints of this Nature,”<sup>650</sup> and advises artillerists to “[...] always have it in your power, to surprise them [the audience] with something altogether new, perfectly natural, and judiciously understood: And thus [...] you may expect the public Applause in Reward for your Elegance and Industry.”<sup>651</sup>

While fireworks were meant to entertain, at the same time, their adoption at early modern festivals also served a controlled way of displaying modern weaponry.<sup>652</sup> To this effect, the use of “inventions” or “machines” was compulsory, without which, Simienowicz suggests, a skilled “gunner” could not afford to stage a spectacle. In allusion to the broader conceptual military framework of fireworks, such “inventions” entailed the use of architectural constructions, which were often model castles, bastions, and towers. The combination of fireworks and architectural skills brought to life a new artistic form, whose practitioners were artillerists commissioned for festivities.<sup>653</sup> While, judging from his views on the theatricality of firework displays, for Simienowicz artillery was clearly an art in the modern sense of the word,<sup>654</sup> the significance of Simienowicz’s lines lies in that it was the firework master in charge of *every* aspect of the work necessitated by a successful firework show. he composed, executed, and stage mastered spectacles, and concluding from *The Great Art of Artillery*, created narratives, architectural constructions, as well as props with meticulous attention paid to the correct application of allegorical references. Although the scenes were based on customs and

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<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid., 373

<sup>652</sup> Martha D. Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 292; Watanabe-O’Kelly and Béhar, eds, *Spectaculum Europaeum*, 732.

<sup>653</sup> Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe*, 292.

<sup>654</sup> Simienowicz, *The Great Art of Artillery*, 373.

traditions designating certain scenes, performances, and spectacles to certain occasions, considerable freedom on the use and re-interpretation of these practises were left to the genius of the artillerist.<sup>655</sup> This freedom manifested itself in the development of architectural compositions from Roman triumphal architecture (i.e. arches, freestanding temples, and pavilions) to firework machines.<sup>656</sup> One such development seems to have been the mountain float, which, as we will see later, was also customized to individual occasions by the event's firework master.

Although Italian audiences preferred antique scenes, and in Northern Europe, due to the residual survival of the medieval tradition of chivalry, local historical as well as biblical figures and stories were more readily recognized, in general, early modern festivals came to mixing the one intellectual realm with the other. A good example is Habsburg Netherland's *inkomsten*,<sup>657</sup> a local tradition which was gradually permeated by Italian and French festival traditions. Thus the *Blijde inkomst* (a festival organized around the traditional inauguration entry of the prince and his confirmation of the rights of the burghers since 1356),<sup>658</sup> a local political event, became the showcase of "international" festival traditions. This, however, was not different in other parts of the continent. From London to Krakow and from Copenhagen to Florence the same mock-battles, firework displays, triumphal entries, guild processions, as well

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<sup>655</sup> Ibid., 344 ; Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe*, 292.

<sup>656</sup> Ibid., 292; Watanabe-O'Kelly and Béhar, eds., *Spectaculum Europaeum*, 292.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 706.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid, 706; For Philip II's *inkomst* see *Myth in History, History in Myth*, ed. Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhoff (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 61.

as allegorical performances constituted not only the program of the given festival, but also the syntax of a shared festival culture in general.<sup>659</sup>

In 1501, for instance, Prince Arthur and Catherine of Aragon's wedding in London's old St. Paul's Cathedral was followed by a masque in Westminster Hall, which marked a turning point in the history of English court festivals. The Frenchman Jacques Hault had been commissioned "to devise and prepare disguising and some *morisques* after the best manner."<sup>660</sup> With the work of Hault, continental pageantry and allegorical themes saturated English court festivities, whose popularity lasted throughout the Tudor era.<sup>661</sup> At this indoor festival, a castle on wheels was dragged about in the hall by four "beasts" acted by two men each. Then a ship was pulled into the hall inhabited by mariners and a lady "apparelled like unto the Princesse of Spain." There also appeared a float in the likeness of a mountain named the Mount of Love, the knights enclosed in which, named Hope and Desire stormed the castle in rebuke of the ladies in it who had previously rejected the gentlemen, and eventually the conflict was solved by the ladies and the knights, some in English, some in Spanish attire, dancing *la moresque*.<sup>662</sup> On another day of the festivities the mountain float was brought on to represent the riches of Spain. A mountain adorned with thick vegetation and another, barren, but laid with precious metals, appeared chained together thus representing the union of England and Spain.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> Watanabe-O'Kelly and Béhar, eds, *Spectaculum Europaeum*, 236-9.

<sup>660</sup> Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: A Historical Outline* vol.1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 113.

<sup>661</sup> Theodor Dumitrescu, *The Early Tudor Court and International Musical Relations* (Adershot: Ashgate, 2007), 23.

<sup>662</sup> Withington, *English Pageantry*, 166ff.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid., McGarth, "Rubens's 'Arch of the Mint,'" 209.

The mountain float was not only one of the most popular spectacles in the early modern period,<sup>664</sup> but it seems to have been one of the oldest festival props as well. The humanist Caspar Gevaerts, in his record of Rubens' "mint mountain" erected for the entry of Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand in Antwerp in 1634,<sup>665</sup> calls attention to the fact that such structures had been put on display since Pompey the Great (d. 48 BCE), who, upon returning from the Third Mithridatic War (73-63 BCE), exhibited his war booty by building a mountain of solid gold. Pliny the Elder recounts the construction as

[...] a square mountain of gold, with stags upon it, lions, and all kinds of fruit, and surrounded with a vine of gold; as also a musaeum, adorned with pearls, with an horologe upon the top of it.<sup>666</sup>

Mountain floats were often used as guild emblems, as in the case of Rubens' "mint mountain," but they proved to be even more useful in political allegories, where they stood as manifest references to real or imaginary locales.<sup>667</sup> As seen in the case of the wedding festivals of Prince Arthur and Catherine of Aragon, the mountain motif in the hands of politically motivated commissioners served as a powerful spectacle to convey political messages—from the chivalric scene of the Knights of the Mount of Love depicting the amorous conquest of the royal bride, to the allegorical union of England and Spain. While in some of its applications the mountain float served as a reason to only facilitate firework displays, such as Mount Etna with the

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

<sup>665</sup> Casparus Gevaertius, *Pompa Trivmphalis introitus Ferdinandi Austriaci Hispaniarvm Infantis &c. in Vrbem Antverpiam A S. P. Q.* (Antwerp, 1641), 154-59.

<sup>666</sup> Gevaerts references the quote wrongly; Pliny the Elder, Book 37, chapter 6

<sup>667</sup> McGarth, "Rubens's 'Arch of the Mint,'" 209

blacksmith god Vulcan seated on top of it, it also formed a mobile architectural structure associable with landscapes, on which were bestowed certain “meanings” be they factual or allegorical. However, judging whether a given spectacle was referential to an existent or ideal locale must have been just as often a demanding task for the contemporary onlookers as it is for the modern critic.<sup>668</sup>

It is probably reasonable to assume that elements of this tradition migrated freely not only within Christendom, but to the Ottoman Empire as well. As fireworks became an essential part of early modern festivals, the agents in this cultural transfer were artilleryists of European descent who would serve as firework masters regardless of the commissioner’s cultural background or political standing. Judging from western examples, at the 1582 *Sur-i Hümayun* Kılıç Ali Pasha is likely to have put on display an allegorical firework show to demonstrate Ottoman excellence in artillery that is modern warfare, both to the representatives of foreign polities and the empire’s domestic audiences.

Nicolas Haunolth’s description of Kılıç Ali Pasha’s mountain float is an account of a recognizably western festival performance. The violinist, the lute player, and the naked male figure holding a bow atop the mountain were most likely to have been Apollo “the Muse-leader” and two Muses of the “Choir of Apollo”—Erato and Terpsichore. If so, the mountain was a representation of Mount Parnassus, which was believed to be sacred to Apollo and the

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<sup>668</sup> A fine example of such a lack of interpretation of festival spectacles is apparent in the 1473 festival in honour of the wedding of Eleonora of Aragon, daughter of Ferrante, king of Naples, and Ercole d’Este, duke of Ferrara, which was arranged in the piazza of the Sancti Apostoli church in Rome. The highlight of the banquet was an artificial mountain on top of which sat Orpheus, surrounded by animals which had been cooked and stuffed back into their feathers and fur. When the banquet was over, in a wooden structure an allegorical performance was staged which consisted of a dance of Hercules and Deianera, Jason and Medea, and Theseus and Phaedra, and some nymphs on the side, followed by a performance of Bacchus and Ariadne as well. Meg Licht, “Elysium: A Prelude to Renaissance Theater,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 49 no. 1 (1996): 1-29 esp. 7-8.

Muses. The obligatory attributes of firework dramas, the dragons, and the typically German feature of civic festivals, the “wildmen,” the supposedly ill-interpreted slaves of Kılıç Ali, were also recognized by Haunolth. Although Haunolth did not give an interpretation of the allegory, he must have been familiar with the sight from the festivals of his native Germany. Kılıç Ali Pasha’s mountain spectacle probably owes its features to the staging of a random western firework drama to demonstrate the Ottomans’ competence in modern artillery. I propose that it was probably a firework master employed at an earlier festival in Florence and an Italian pantomime crew that contributed to the design and performance of the scene.

A festival equally spectacular as the *Sur-i Hümayun* was organized for the wedding of Francesco de’ Medici and Bianca Cappello in Florence in 1579. After the death of the duke’s legitimate wife Johanna of Austria, following a ten-year-long adulterous relationship the Duke Francesco and Bianca had their wedding ceremony in the Palazzo Vecchio, followed by numerous outdoor entertainments, the most spectacular of which being the displays presented in the courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti. The six-hour entertainment, which seems to have incorporated loosely interrelated allegorical performances, was meant to compensate for Bianca Cappello’s lacking of royal or ducal ancestry, her infamous past as a runaway child and disowned daughter of her Venetian family, a divorcee, and long-time mistress of the first man of Florence. In the opening scene the duke, the duke’s brother Don Pietro, and Mario Sforza acted out their departure from a representation of the city of Venice by coming forth on an ivory cart drawn by an elephant heavily equipped with fireworks. The three men appeared in the guise of Persian knights, and declared their aim to uphold the superiority of Bianca in beauty. This theatrical *entrée* served as a dramatic purpose for the jousts to follow, but allegorical performances such as the judging of Paris, who, in this occasion, gave the apple to

Bianca instead of Venus, and entries of the lavishly ornate cars of the Sun, Venus, Mars, Mount Etna, a ship, and a five-headed, fire-breathing dragon were also put on display.<sup>669</sup>

The artillerist at the Medici court's wedding celebration built a mountain float invested with an allegorical firework drama which is reminiscent of Kılıç Ali's performance at Prince Mehmed's circumcision festival. Only three years before the *Sur-i Hümayun*, Raffaello Gualterotti, the author of *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo don Francesco Medici gran dvca di Toscana*, the Medici court's "official" record of the festival, described a performance as the story of a young lady's quest to rescue her husband from his captivity by a sorceress. The performance featured Mount Parnassus and Apollo, a dragon from whom Apollo eventually stole the crown, the token that would set the captive free, and even large fire balls familiar from Haunolth's account rolled down the mountain.<sup>670</sup> Shortly after this, a performance featured another mountain float, which, in turn, is familiar from all the other descriptions of the mountain spectacle of the Ottoman festival:

[...] and within the fences so entered a mountain [built] from earth. This [mountain], not being able to move because of its weight, stopped and opened like this. Inside, in the middle of this mountain, a plain could be seen with beautiful woods, from which many wild beasts came forth and many [other] things of beautiful invention. However, as it was badly located in the court, it could not be seen, and neither could the fireworks and a hunting [scene be seen], which were to come and which were going to be its most beautiful features. It could not be seen, or very little could be seen of it at best.<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>669</sup> Raffaello Gualterotti, *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo don Francesco Medici gran dvca di Toscana, et della Sig. Bianca Cappello* (Giunti, 1579), 17-22

<sup>670</sup> Ibid. 21-22.

<sup>671</sup> "...entrò nello steccato vn monte di terra cosi. Il quale per la sua graueza non potendo muouersi si fermò, & apersesi in questa guisa. Videsi nel mezzo di questo monte vn piano con bellissime boscaglie d'intorno, delle quali vsciuano molte fiere', e molte cose di bella inuentione; ma per essersi male accomodato nel campo non



In Gualterotti's description of the Medici festivity, the allegorical performance staged on and around a mountain float, as well as the subsequent hunting scene and firework performance seem conspicuously similar to that of Kılıç Ali Pasha at the *Sur-i Hümayun*. When paired with the corresponding images (figs. 27a and 27b), Gualterotti's text reveals the same features as those of the Ottoman *kapudan*: the mountain was ornate with woods, wild animals, it featured an allegorical hunting scene, and "many things of beautiful invention," one of which being the obligatory dragon figure filled with firework cartridges. Speculatively, the firework master and the troupe employed at the Medici wedding may have been employed by Kılıç Ali Pasha to build and perform at the *Sur-i Hümayun* in 1582. It seems likely that other private commissioners employed western troupes too. A Greco-Roman mythological pantomime show performed a day prior to Kılıç Ali's firework spectacle, featured an Italian man, a boy as Cupid and a young lady, all of whom were acting while the Christian slaves of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's widow (Ismihan Sultan, Sultan Murad's sister) were playing musical instruments.<sup>672</sup> In the editorial process of the *Sur-i Hümayun*'s festival book Kılıç Ali's firework show was featured unlike this or so many other performances, including Sinan Pasha's mock battle. This was not due to direct political motives such as favoritism or factionalism that would have prevented one or the other spectacle from appearing in the *Surname*'s final manuscript. (This is not to say that such factors did not affect the editing process at all.) Rather, the court only wished to advertise the Ottomans' up-to-dateness in modern weaponry and mastery in artillery, while the performances

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si videro i fuochi lauorati, e le caccie, che vi si fecero, che furono tutte cose in se, e fuori di se bellissime." Ibid. 34.

<sup>672</sup> Haunolth, "Particular Verzeichnusz," 485.

that were perhaps entertaining but not adding to the Ottoman court's political imagination about its might were omitted. It is only ironic that this imagination was served with the help of foreigners, who demonstrated—if anybody's—their own mastery in artillery.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The western audience of Kılıç Ali Pasha's performance at the *Sur-i Hümayun* and western authors interpreting the performance from afar were undoubtedly familiar with the mountain spectacle from Central and Western Europe, where it was one of the most frequently used kinds of festival floats. However, the float and the antique mythological performance on it were perhaps too much out of context at an Ottoman festivity for these western interpreters to decode it correctly. What they saw *was* an ideological message, namely a demonstration of the Ottoman Empire's expertise in modern weaponry. However, rather than being read simply as such, and despite using visual language otherwise familiar to the western observers, the context of the performance made an otherwise comprehensible code indecipherable, or rather, ill-decipherable.

# Conclusion

Although historical analyses addressing early modern Venetian and Ottoman imperial ideologies are numerous, none of them has focused on the War of Cyprus thus far. While this dissertation hopefully fills that gap, I hope it also sheds light on a different aspect of inter-imperial communication. Recently, early modern cultural intermediaries operating between Venice and the Ottoman Empire have been in the focus of historical research. Go-betweens of all sorts who had an influence across the imperial boundaries exercised their leverage through personal contacts. Above all, their power lay in their ability to generate and partake in interpersonal communication on both sides of the divide. Intermediaries were parts of an inter-imperial network of envoys, treaties, institutions and personal contacts through which Venice and the Ottoman Empire projected their power to each other's territory and interest zones.

However, expressing imperial power also happened through channels of the time's mass communication (paintings, buildings, festival performances, books, illustrated manuscripts, etc.), which did not necessarily envision mediation. A selection of such instances of communication has been the focus of this dissertation. Those who fashioned Ottoman and Venetian political imagination interpreted the past and the future in accordance to how they fit a narrative about that empire's position in a continuum of eschatological or salvation-historical events. Such ideological messages were easily accessible across the political boundary even if they were produced for one's domestic audience and perhaps never reached the rival imperial center. In other words, the dominant or "preferred" (see Hall) meanings that were thus propagated were decoded by foreign and domestic audiences, who produced their own messages to express their position *vis-à-vis* the imaginations featured in the imperial messages. These imaginations did not remain operative only in the realm of symbols and allegories but

had serious political implications: they outlined an interpretation of the world, according to which decisions were made at the Ottoman court and in the Venetian Senate. Expressing one's own political imagination required an understanding of the "dominant" meanings produced in the imperial center. The ways a respective empire's political imaginations were decoded depended largely on the extent to which the receiver shared the codes in which the messages containing them were produced. This, in practice meant being familiar with, among others (such as the *a priori* linguistic code) the visual, iconographic, architectural, (etc.) codes that determined the first line of "meaning making" as well as what I called the ideological code; that is, understanding what one saw and then being able to decode what that meaning further implied. Decodings of the Ottoman Empire's messages differed from receiver to receiver, and in some cases resulted in an oppositional meaning to what was originally encoded. The fact that individuals interpreted messages from across the boundary directly and with confidence, without the help of an intermediary, suggest that for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century westerners direct interpretation of Ottoman messages seemed possible.

In addition to studying modes of communication, encoding and decoding of various political messages between different audiences, between and within the Ottoman Empire and Venice, this dissertation has also sought to trace the contours of Selim II's imperial agenda and analyze its key ideological elements, all of which revolve around the conquest of Cyprus as an event of eschatological proportions. In this sense, this dissertation is also a contribution to the rapidly growing field of Ottoman cultural studies that have significantly deepened our understanding of the continuously changing nature of the Ottoman imperial enterprise, especially in the aftermath of the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent. At the time Selim II ascended the Ottoman throne, he was forty-two years old, and had ample opportunities in the shadow of his formidable father to dream up an agenda for his reign and form a team of people who would help him realize it. It should, therefore, be no surprise that this agenda was as

meticulously planned as instances of its execution suggest, and that it was in direct dialogue with the agenda and image of Süleyman, as well as with the empires and populations around the Mediterranean.

## Appendix: Figures



Fig. 1: Albrecht Dürer, *Pupila Augusta*, c. 1496-8 (The Royal Collection of Queen Elizabeth II, London). Source: <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/912175/pupila-augusta> (accessed: April 29, 2016).



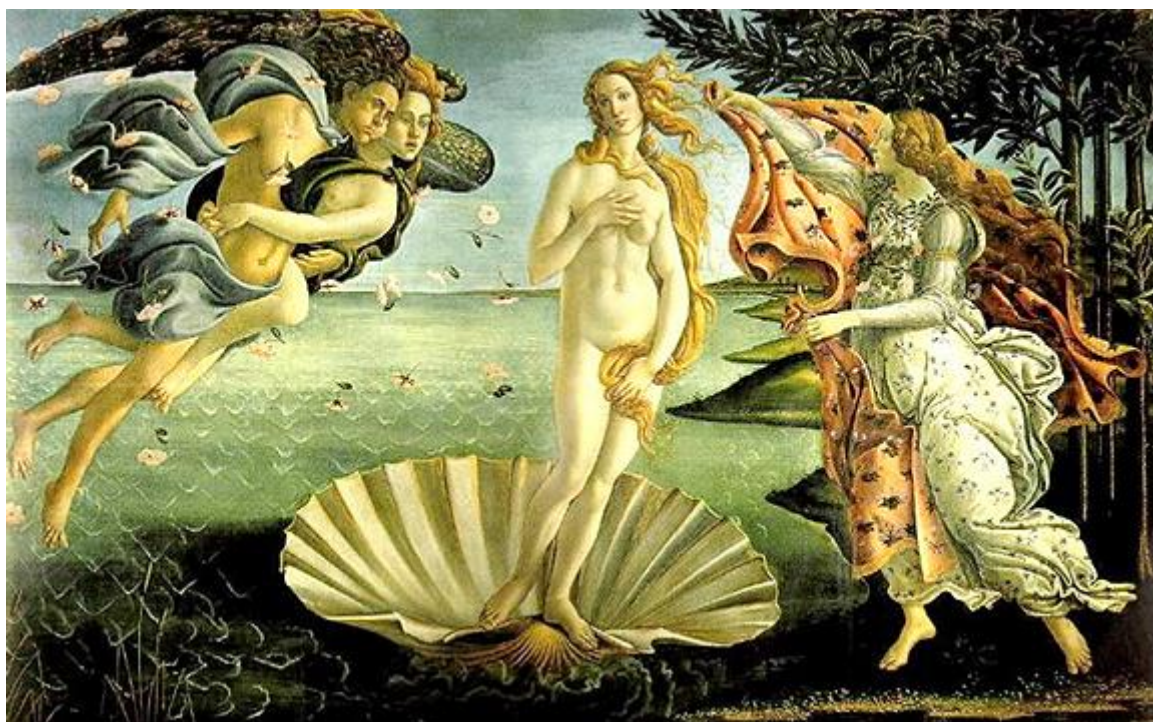


Fig. 2: Sandro Botticelli, *The birth of Venus*, c. 1485 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/b/botticel/5allegor/30birth.jpg> (accessed: April 29, 2016).



Fig. 3: Master of the *Sola-Busca Tarocchi* (?), *Pupila Augusta*, n.d. (whereabouts unknown). Source: Mark J. Zucker, "The Master of the 'Sola-Busca Tarocchi' and the Rediscovery of Some Ferrarese Engravings of the Fifteenth Century," *Artibus et Historiae* 18 no. 35 (1997): 181-194 esp. 187.





Fig. 4: Titian, *Sacred and Profane Love*, 1514 (Galleria Borghese, Rome). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/t/tiziano/08/05sacre0.jpg> (accessed: April 29, 2016).



Fig. 5: Lombardo workshop, The funerary monument of Doge Pietro Mocenigo (detail), c. 1480 (Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice). Source: Holly Hurlburt, "Body of Empire: Caterina Corner in Venetian History and Iconography," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4 (2009): 61-99 esp. 85.





Fig. 6: Leonardo Corona: *Caterina Cornaro Cedes the Crown of Cyprus to Doge Agostino Barbarigo*, c. 1585 (Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Palazzo Ducale, Venice). Source: Candida Syndikus and Sabine Rogge, eds., *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice* (Münster: Waxmann, 2013), 20.



Fig. 7: Giovanni Bellini, *Continence of Scipio* (detail), c. 1508 (National Gallery of Art, Washington DC). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/b/bellini/giovanni/1500-09/190cont1.jpg> (accessed: April 29, 2016).

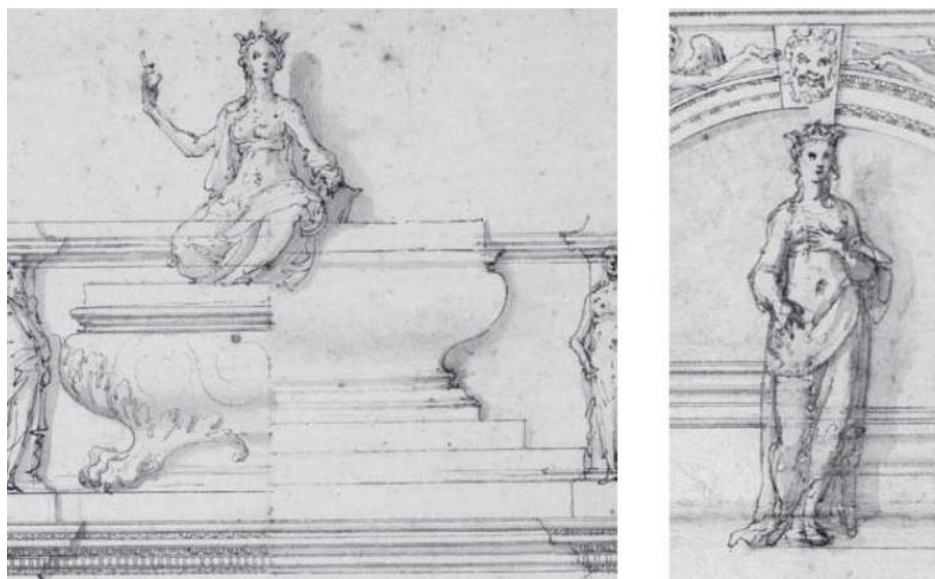


Fig. 8: Andrea Palladio, Design sketch of Caterina Cornaro's tentative funerary monument in the Church of S. Salvador (details), n.d. (Vicenza, Museo Civico). Source: Martin Gaier, "Königin in einer Republik. Projekte für ein Grabmonument der Caterina Corner in Venedig," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 46 no. 1 (2002): 197-234 esp. 210.



Fig. 9: Gentile Bellini, *The Miracle of the True Cross at the Bridge of S. Lorenzo* (detail and slightly modified), 1500 (Gallerie dell' Accademia, Venice). Source: [http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-ON3MXi141M8/VK2cKJ1vbGI/AAAAAAAAAHvc/oHAqz1Ah6\\_I/s1600/Detail-Miracolo\\_della\\_Croce\\_caduta\\_nel\\_canale\\_di\\_San\\_Lorenzo-CaterinaCornaro.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-ON3MXi141M8/VK2cKJ1vbGI/AAAAAAAAAHvc/oHAqz1Ah6_I/s1600/Detail-Miracolo_della_Croce_caduta_nel_canale_di_San_Lorenzo-CaterinaCornaro.jpg)





Fig. 10: Gentile Bellini, *Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus*, 1500 (Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/b/bellini/gentile/cornaro.jpg> (accessed: April 29, 2016).



Fig. 11: Jacopo Sansovino, Venus in a Bas-relief of the Loggetta del Campanile, c. 1537-49 (Venice). Source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/79/Venice\\_-\\_Sansovino's\\_Loggetta\\_01.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/79/Venice_-_Sansovino's_Loggetta_01.jpg) (accessed: April 29, 2016).





Fig. 12: Giovanni Battista Zelotti, Ceiling painting depicting a female personification of Cyprus (detail), c. 1553-56 (Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci, Palazzo Ducale, Venice). Source: <http://www.akg-images.co.uk/...> (accessed: April 29, 2016).



Fig. 13: Paolo Veronese, *Juno Showering her Gifts on Venice*, c. 1555 (Sala dell' Udienza del Consiglio dei Dieci, Venice). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/v/veronese/08/dieci/3dieci1.jpg> (accessed: April 29, 2016).





Fig. 14: The Crown of Candia, n.d. (Collection Online, British Museum, London). Source: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/...](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/...) (accessed: April 11, 2016).



Fig. 15: *Nascita di Caterina Cornaro*, fifteenth century (Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum). Source: Candida Syndikus and Sabine Rogge, eds., *Caterina Cornaro: Last Queen of Cyprus and Daughter of Venice* (Münster: Waxmann, 2013), 23.





Fig. 16: Jacopo Tintoretto, *Venus Officiating at the Marriage of Venus and Bacchus*, 1576-77 (Sala dell' Anticollegio, Palazzo Ducale, Venice). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/t/tintoret/4a/1antico1.jpg> (accessed: April. 29, 2016).



Fig 17: L'Aliense, *Queen of Cyprus Caterina Corner Cedes the Crown of Cyprus to the Republic of Venice* (c. 1580-90). Source: Holly Hurlburt, "Body of Empire: Caterina Corner in Venetian History and Iconography," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4 (2009): 61-99 esp. 65.





Fig. 18: Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Voluntary Submission of the Provinces to Venetian Dominion*, 1578-85 (Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Palazzo Ducale, Venice). Source: David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 43.





Fig. 19: Paolo Veronese, *The Apotheosis of Venice* (detail and slightly modified), 1585 (Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Palazzo Ducale, Venice). Source: <http://www.wga.hu/art/v/veronese/08/maggior/1maggior1.jpg> (accessed: April 29, 2016).



Fig. 20: Bodleian Library's Barocci 145, fol. 84v. Source: author's photo collection.



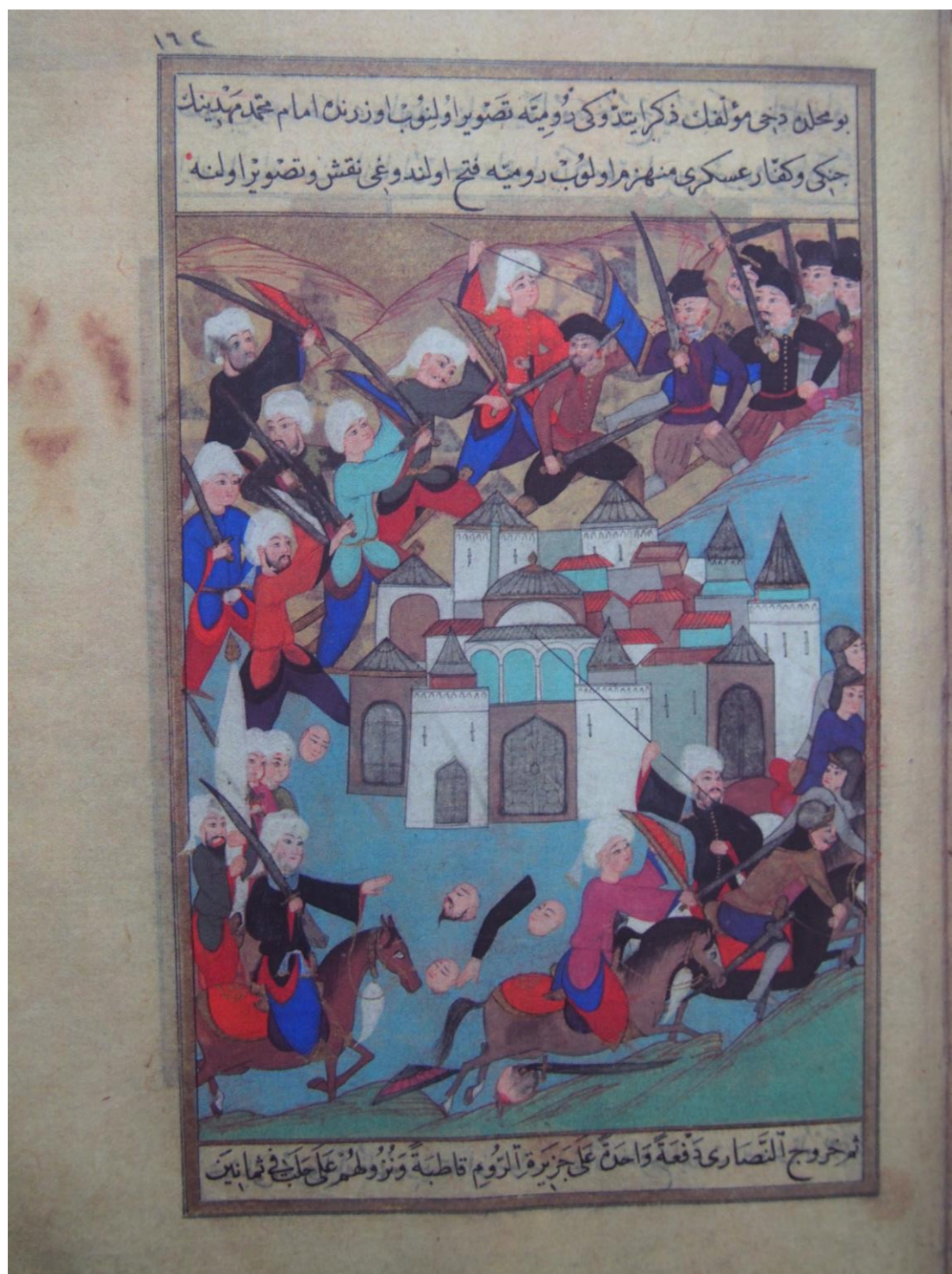


Fig. 21: *Tercüme-i Miftah-ı Cifrü'l-Cami's* (Translation of the Key to Esoteric Knowledge), c. 1600, İÜK, TY 6624, fol. 163a. Source: author's photo collection.



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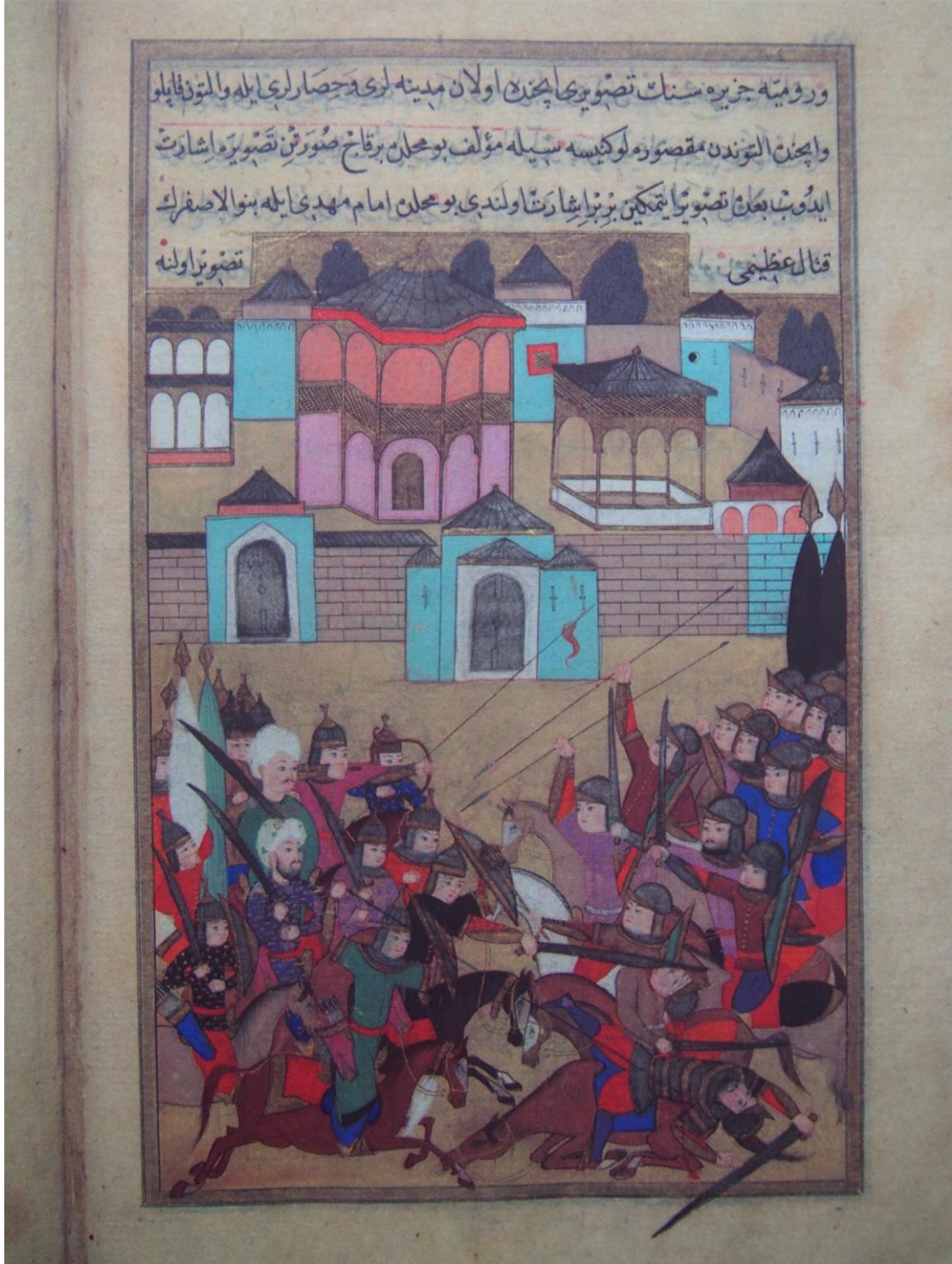


Fig. 23: *Tercüme-i Miftah-ı Cifrü'l-Cami's* (*Translation of the Key to Esoteric Knowledge*), c. 1600, İÜK, TY 6624, fol. 162b. Source: author's photo collection.





Fig. 24: *Tercüme-i Miftah-ı Cifrü'l-Cami's (Translation of the Key to Esoteric Knowledge)*, c. 1600, TSK, Bağdat 373, fol. 332a. Source: author's photo collection.



Fig. 25: Nakkaş Osman, miniature depicting the mountain spectacle in the *Surname-i Hümayun* (1582). Source: *1582 Surname-i Hümayun Düğün Kitabı* (İstanbul: Koç Bank, 1997), 46.



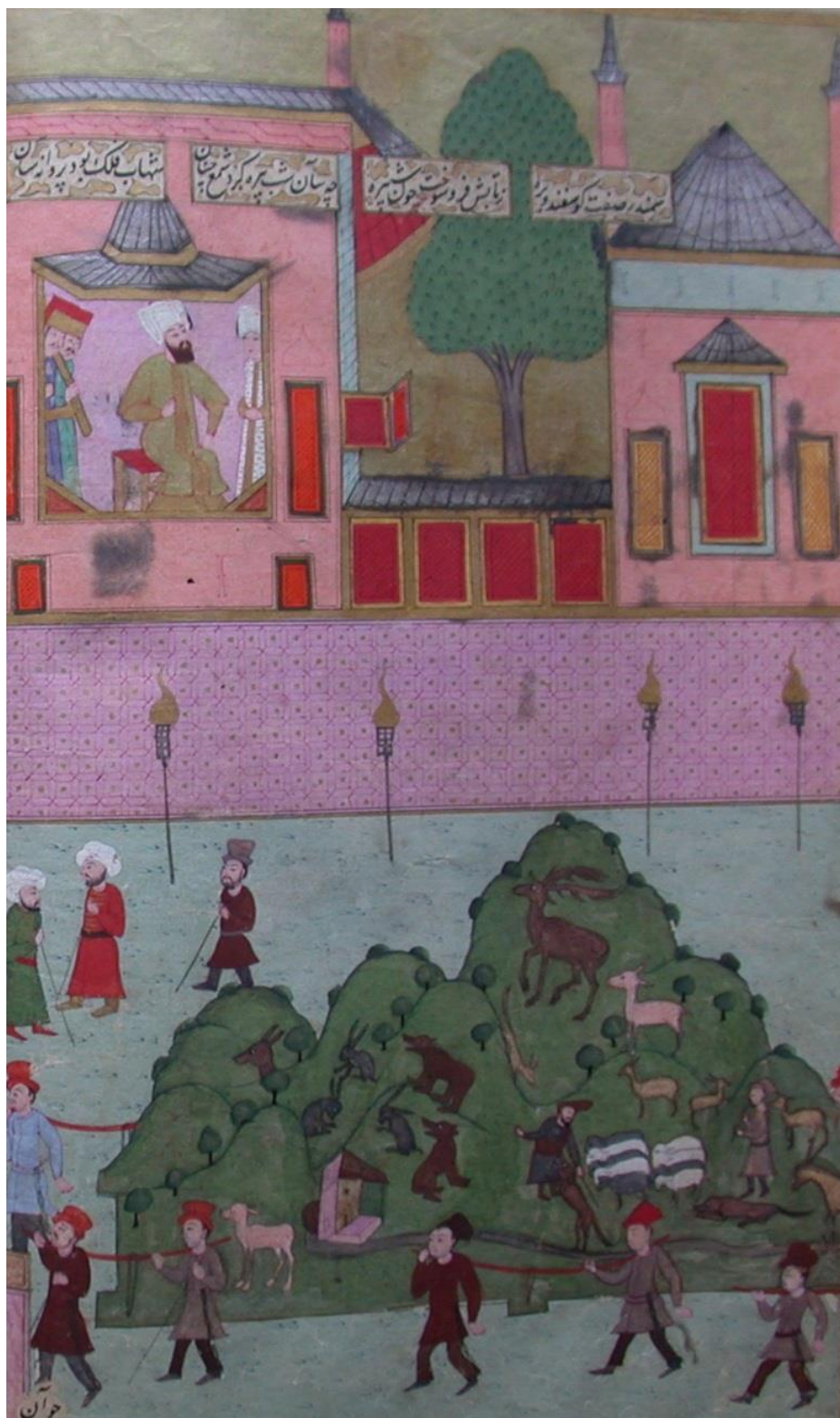


Fig. 26: Nakkaş Osman, miniature depicting the mountain spectacle in the *Şehinşahname* vol. 2, (1592) TSK Bağdat 200, Fol. 70v. Source: author's photo collection.



Fig. 27a: illustration depicting the mountain spectacle in Raffaello Gualterotti, the author of *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo don Francesco Medici gran dvca di Toscana* (1579), 34.





Fig. 27b: illustration depicting the mountain spectacle in Raffaello Gualterotti, the author of *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo don Francesco Medici gran dvca di Toscana*, (1579), 34.

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