

FRENCH-OTTOMAN RELATIONS IN  
THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD AND  
THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY  
MSS TURKISH 45 & 46<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION

**T**he collection of the John Rylands University Library at Manchester contains two manuscripts, MSS Turkish 45 and 46, which document aspects of French-Ottoman relations from the late 16th to the early 18th centuries. I have briefly described them in my forthcoming Catalogue of the collection but they deserve closer study<sup>2</sup>. Both manuscripts are personal collections of materials, legal certificates (*hüccets*)<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> It is a pleasure to record here my gratitude to the John Rylands Research Institute and the British Academy without whose financial support this research project could not have been undertaken; I am also grateful to Dr. A.H. de Groot of Leiden University who was so kind as to read my manuscript and suggested some improvements.

<sup>2</sup> This is particularly urgent for MS Turkish 46, whose paper is of low quality; some of the initial pages have already been totally pulverized and most quires contain very brittle and partly torn paper.

<sup>3</sup> See for this type of document, Uriel HEYD, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, Oxford, 1973, p. 255; Maurits H. VAN DEN BOOGERT, "Tussen consul en *qâdî*: de juridische positie van dragomans in theorie en praktijk", *Sharqiyât* 9/1, 1997, p. 35-53, esp. p. 43, 46. Collections of *hüccets* seem to be, contrary to, e.g., collections of *fatvâs* [*fatwâs*], rarely found in manuscript libraries, although there are indications that they were already a collector's item in the 17th century, cf. Charles C. SCHEFER (ed.), *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople (1672-1673)* II, Paris, 1881, p. 58; Galland noted on 19 April 1673 that he bought "soixante-huit *oudjets* pour une islote [*zolota*, *piastre*]" from Mehmed Efendi.

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letters<sup>4</sup>, other copies of which might exist in the original or translated form in French and/or Turkish libraries or archives, but it is unlikely that one would encounter them elsewhere in the form in which they occur in the Rylands collection<sup>5</sup>. Both manuscripts once belonged to a dragoman called Pérille, probably Jean-Baptiste Pérille (1732-1805/1806), who served in Tripoli (Syria), Acre, Sidon, Morocco and finally, in 1795, became lecturer in Turkish at the *Collège de France*. In 1804 he suffered from a stroke<sup>6</sup>. He might even have been the copyist of, at least a part of, the manuscripts. Much more likely, though, is that the manuscripts were copied out by embassy clerks, some of whom were Muslims (see also below). The letters of MS Turkish 46 were possibly collected by a family of dragomans of the French Embassy at Pera (Beyoğlu), the Fornettis<sup>7</sup>, the

<sup>4</sup> The letter was a very popular genre in Ottoman literature and collections of letters, both anonymous and written by well-known literary figures, are well represented in the Turkish collections of most manuscript libraries. The genre has hardly been studied, either from a historical or literary point of view; editions of complete collections are non-existent, cf. H.R. ROEMER, "Inshâ", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition, 'EI<sup>2</sup>'); Christine WOODHEAD, "Ottoman İnşa and the Art of Letter-writing. Influences upon the Career of the Nişancı and Prose Stylist Okçuzade (d. 1630)", *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* VII-VIII, p. 143-159.

<sup>5</sup> Although the correspondence of the French ambassadors whose letters are found in translated form in MS Turkish 46 have survived in collections, libraries and archives in many towns in France and have been partly printed in separate articles and studies, I found only one reference to letters in Turkish; those received by the ambassador De Bonnac (more about him below) which seem to have been donated to the *Bibliothèque du Roi* in 1735, cf. Charles C. SCHEFER, *Mémoire historique sur l'ambassade de France à Constantinople par le marquis de Bonnac publié avec un précis de ses négociations à la Porte Ottomane*, Paris, 1894, p. LXXVII; they are not listed, to my knowledge, in Blochet's catalogue.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to Marie and Antoine Gautier who were so kind as to provide me with details of his biography. The British Library owns a manuscript, Add. 18,810, translated letters by French consuls of Sidon, which was copied by the same dragoman in 1172-1173 (1758-1760), cf. Charles RIEU, *Catalogue of the Turkish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, 1888, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> The Fornettis — the name is also spelt Fornetty — were a "dynasty of dragomans" in the Ottoman Empire, who served the French Embassy in Istanbul from the 16th century onwards; they were Catholic Christians, originally of Chios, cf. C. SCHEFER (ed.), *Journal d'Antoine Galland I*, Paris, 1881, p. XI; Alexander H. DE GROOT, "The Dragomans of the Embassies in Istanbul, 1785-1834", in Geert Jan VAN GELDER & Ed DE MOOR (eds), *Eastward Bound; Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, Amsterdam, 1994, p. 139. Fornettis were still found as French consuls in several places in the early 19th century, cf. B.G. SPIRIDONAKIS, *Empire Ottoman. Inventaire des mémoires et documents aux Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de France*, Thessaloniki, 1973, p. 493. Particulars on this family in the 17th century are found in some *hüccets* of MS Turkish 45, particularly in No. 6 (cf. also below). The first dragoman active in the 1670s was Battista (Baptiste) Fornetti, or Jean Battista (Baptiste) Fornetti (1618? — 1694, cf. No. 24). His father was called Thomas and his grand-father Domenico (Dominique) — both were dead by 1642 when the certificate (No. 6) was issued. Battista had two brothers, Franco and Paulo as well as two sisters, Catharine and Sobrane. He lived in or near

name of one of whom, Jean-Baptiste, occurs here and there in the text; he was also the author and recipient of some of the letters. He, moreover, was the great-grand-father of Pérille's wife, Catherine Jacqueline Dumesnil<sup>8</sup>. This makes it likely that both Rylands manuscripts were a family heirloom inherited by Pérille through his wife. These manuscripts as well as a few others in Pérille's possession came into the Rylands collection through the Iranist and book collector Nathaniel Bland. In the following article I will give a detailed description of the content of both manuscripts and try to fit them into the broader picture of the historical context.

FRENCH-OTTOMAN RELATIONS IN  
THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

*Origins: trade and competition*

Two fields of activity have connected France with the Ottoman Empire for centuries: trade and politics<sup>9</sup>. Before the existence of the Ottoman Empire, entrepreneurs from the French Mediterranean coast, particularly from its major port, Marseille, already traded with the Byzantine Empire. This Levantine trade<sup>10</sup> continued during the later Middle Ages. After a difficult period in the 15th century, when French merchants suffered from the competition of Italians, particularly the Genoese and Venetians, it began to flourish again in the next, 16th century. This heightened commercial activity was accompanied by a political rapprochement. The Levantine trade could not be undertaken to any profit if individual merchants or groups of merchants were not granted the freedom of movement as well as of the trade and transport of goods in the lands under the authority of the Sultan. For this permission by the ruler was necessary. A first treaty, or "capitulation" (named after the articles of such a treaty; the Ottoman term was *'ahdnâme*), was negotiated by the French Ambassador de Forest in 1535 or 1536. (Until recently, it was doubted — no copy of the text had been found — whether such a treaty had ever been agreed upon,

the Embassy with a sister Mandalina and his widowed mother Despina. See also Antoine GAUTIER & Marie DE TESTA, "Quelques dynasties de drogmans", *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 105, 1991, p. 39-102, particularly p. 69-80.

<sup>8</sup> I am, again, indebted for this information to Antoine and Marie Gautier.

<sup>9</sup> Various aspects of this connection are discussed in Hâmit BATU and Jean-Louis BACQUÉ-GRAMMONT (eds), *L'Empire Ottoman, la République de Turquie et la France*, Paris/Istanbul, 1986; see also F. HITZEL (ed.), *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, Paris, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> For the following, see Paul P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1897; by the same, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1911; Robert R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1969; Halil İNALCIK, "İmtiyâzât" ("II.- The Ottoman Empire"), in EI<sup>2</sup>; Halil İNALCIK & Donald QUATAERT (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*, Cambridge, 1994, p. 521-522.

but in the early 1990s Joseph Matuz found documentation in Jerusalem related to the *'ahdnāme* which proved that the capitulation must have been granted by Sultan Süleyman<sup>11</sup>). New and extended capitulations were successfully negotiated in 1569, 1581, 1597 and 1604. These included a clause, profitable to France, that forced other nations trading in the Empire, except the Venetians and later the English and others, to do so under the French flag. The capitulations brought, apart from protection for merchants, also more regular diplomatic contacts. The first envoy ever sent by the two nations was perhaps Hüseyin Beg who vainly tried to be received in audience by King Louis XI in 1483 when Cem, brother and rival of Sultan Bayezid II, had found refuge, albeit as prisoner, in France<sup>12</sup>. But he remained an exceptional figure; permanent Ottoman ambassadors were only sent to Paris from the late 18th century onwards. French ambassadors, on the other hand, already came to reside in Istanbul for longer periods in the 16th century. The treaty of 1604, moreover, granted the French the important rights of free trade in silver coins and the French protection of the Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and of the “monks” dwelling there. (This was the basis for later French claims to protect all Catholics and Catholic missionaries in the Ottoman Empire.) The 16th century, with the ambassadors en consuls, witnessed the first permanent settlement of French traders in the Empire, firstly in Istanbul around 1550, but later also in Alexandria, Beirut, Tripoli (in Syria) and Chios. The first French consul was appointed in Tripoli in 1548. In 1619, there were already 28 such officials appointed by the French in the whole Mediterranean area.

By the end of the 16th century, the once dominant Venetian trade was eclipsed by French commercial activities focused on the port of Marseille. (Ottomans played only a minor role in the international sea-borne trade.) The French brought finished products such as textiles and paper, but particularly cash, to the Ottoman Empire, and they returned with South and South-East Asian goods such as spices, silk and leather as well as Anatolian agricultural products such as woollens, cotton, leather, carpets, ashes (for the soap and glass industry of Marseille) and drugs. The booming of the French Levantine trade, however, was severely halted during the first half of the next, 17th century. This stagnation and decline was due to a number of factors. Among these were the continuous internal political troubles which ruined the French textile manufactory, inefficient organisation of the Mediterranean trade, the growing competition by England and the Netherlands in the Mediterranean, and ambiguous

<sup>11</sup> Joseph MATUZ, “À propos de la validité des capitulations de 1536 entre l’Empire Ottoman et la France”, *Turcica* XXIV, 1992, p. 183-191.

<sup>12</sup> See Nicolas VATIN, “Une tentative manquée d’ouverture diplomatique : la lettre de créance d’un envoyé de Bayazet II auprès de Louis XI (1483)”, in H. BATU & J.-L. BACQUÉ-GRAMMONT (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 1-13; Halil İNALCIK, “Djem”, in *El*<sup>2</sup>.

politics<sup>13</sup>. The growing presence of English and Dutch shipping in the Mediterranean was accompanied by the naval expansion of these nations and their dominance of trade in the Indian Ocean, which diminished the importance of, particularly, the spice trade through Egypt and Syria. The English and Dutch presence exacerbated another serious problem from which above all France suffered, that of privateering. Corsairs active on the North African coast, in the Aegean Archipelago and other remote coastal areas of the Ottoman Empire were now and then, depending on the political situation, joined by English and Dutch colleagues.

The English and Dutch moreover were able to obtain their own capitulations from the Sultan in, respectively, 1580 and 1612, which was a serious threat to the almost complete monopoly of the flag enjoyed by the French up to that time. This trend was reinforced when, in the same period, both nations were able to have the export duty decreased from 5 % to 3 % *ad valorem* whereas the French saw themselves forced to pay the old 5 % during the following decades. England and Holland also were able to organise their trade better than the French by setting up commercial organisations which united and represented the individual traders and also provided the political apparatus in the area to levy funds and protect the traders. French ambassadors, by contrast, were appointed and paid (an insufficient salary) by the government in Paris and the Marseille Chamber of Commerce. They were independent from the merchants' community and were even entitled to impose their own levies on it, irrespective of their usefulness to it. The Marseille municipality appointed the consuls, or rather had the posts farmed out to incumbents who more often than not were absent from their posts. The Levant companies<sup>14</sup> organised at a later period by the French government were not of much help, being bureaucratic organisations that competed with the French merchants in the area rather than supported their activities. The English and Dutch were also better in protecting their trade against privateers by using heavier and better armed ships as well as military convoys. Ambiguous politics, finally, made things even worse for the French. France considered herself the champion of the Catholic cause in Europe and the world at large and officials in high circles kept harbouring ideas of chasing "the Turk" from the Middle East. On the other hand, she also wished to be recognised as the primary ally of the Sultan against the Habsburgs in Central and South-East Europe. She often tried to be both at the same time. This inevitably led to troubles, not in the least for the French residents of the Ottoman Empire who were in revenge subjected to an increased burden of penalties exacted by local Pashas (*avanas*), particularly during the middle decades of the 17th century.

<sup>13</sup> On this last subject, see Jean BÉRENGER, "La politique ottomane de la France dans les années 1680", *Acta Historica Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33, 1987, p. 193-201.

<sup>14</sup> These were the *Compagnie du Levant* (1670-84) and the *Compagnie de la Méditerranée* (1685-94).

*The crisis of the late 17th century and the embassy of the Marquis de Nointel*

Relations with the Ottoman Empire had by then reached an all-time low. During the years 1660 to 1665, political relations with the Porte were more or less suspended and trade had shrunken to a mere 10 % of what it had been fifty years previously. The French Ambassador Jean de la Haye was even imprisoned in the “Seven Towers” (Yedikule) in 1659 after a cargo loaded on French ships in Egypt which had been destined for the Palace in Istanbul had been lost — it ended up in Italy — and the French had refused to pay the damage. But from the 1660s, after Louis XIV had begun to rule in person and his minister Colbert had initiated an more active economic policy, things began to look brighter. The minister and his successors worked hard to have the French Levant trade better organised and the diplomatic apparatus in the Levant reformed. Consuls were forbidden to trade with or borrow money from the merchants without their consent; the farming-out of posts was abolished and the function of dragoman professionalised by creating a school for French interpreters in Istanbul in 1669. (Formerly, dragomans had always been local, mostly Greek Ottoman subjects.) What was even more needed for improving things was the revival and improvement of the capitulations. French merchants still had to pay the 5 % export duty whereas even Genoa had been granted (in 1666) a reduction to the customary 3 %<sup>15</sup>. This was realized by a new ambassador sent in 1670 to the Porte, Charles-Marie-Francois Olier, marquis d’Angervillers et de Nointel (c.1635-1685), one of the more colourful personalities encountered in the diplomatic service of this period<sup>16</sup>. Previous envoys had been unsuccessful in restoring amicable relations and had particularly been hindered by the presence of French troops in the Austrian and Venetian armies which fought the Ottomans in Hungary and Crete in, respectively, 1663-4 and 1645-1669.

De Nointel, son of a councillor of the *Parlement de Paris* and a former councillor himself, a bachelor, and an avid collector and patron of the arts, arrived in Istanbul on 10 November 1670 accompanied by a rather large fleet of four battleships<sup>17</sup>. He had been instructed for his negotiations with the Porte to try — I mention the most important points

<sup>15</sup> Cf. R. R. MANTRAN, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

<sup>16</sup> Succinct data on the French ambassadors at the Porte are found in Jean-Louis BACQUÉ-GRAMMONT, Sinan KUNERALP and Frédéric HITZEL, *Représentants permanents de la France en Turquie (1536-1991) et de la Turquie en France (1797-1991)*, Istanbul/Paris, 1991. De Nointel was characterised by Abbott as “...extravagant, eccentric, magnificent, and altogether picturesque”, G.F. ABBOTT, *Under the Turk in Constantinople. A Record of Sir John Finch’s Embassy*, London, 1920, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> For his embassy, see in particular, Albert A. VANDAL, *Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)*, Paris, 1900; for the cultural aspect, see Heidrun WURM, *Der osmanische Historiker Hüseyin b. Ğa’fer, genannt Hezârfenn, und die Istanbuler Gesellschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Freiburg, 1971, p. 122 ff.

— to have the French protection of the Latin (Catholic) clergy and the Holy Places of Jerusalem (lost to the Greek Orthodox in 1638) restored; to obtain a reduction of export duties to 3 %; to have Genoa excluded as a capitulatory power of its own; and most ambitious of all, to bring the export duties levied in Egypt down from 20 % to the same 3 % and have the Red Sea opened up to French trade<sup>18</sup>. He was expressly forbidden to impose levies on French merchants in the Levant unless they agreed.

Not long after his arrival, De Nointel travelled to Edirne where the Sultan, Mehmed IV (ruled 1648-1687), an avid hunter, held his court. A first audience with the Grand Vizier, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, a scion of the Köprülü dynasty which produced a number of forceful and effective viziers, remained inconclusive. Ahmed Paşa could not hide his contempt for the French envoy and when the question of the Red Sea trade was brought up, he seems to have said: “How is it that a great Prince [Louis XIV] can be so much interested in vile merchants?”<sup>19</sup> Later discussions with the highest religious authority, the shaykh al-Islam (*şeyhülislam*), and the Grand Vizier’s deputy in Istanbul, *kaimmakam*, were not helpful. Another icy audience with Ahmed Paşa, some months later, did not promise much more than a revival of the old capitulations. During a third audience in April 1672, De Nointel threatened to return to France if no progress were made and presented a draft treaty containing no less than sixty articles, among these the demand, totally unacceptable to the Porte, that France be recognised as the sole protector of all Christians in the Ottoman Empire. This was immediately refused. Nothing happened while, it was made clear to the Ambassador, preparations for the Polish campaign to be launched in June had the full attention of the court. Discussions with the Reis Efendi (*reisülküttâb*, equal to foreign minister), meanwhile, seemed more promising. But these only resulted in an ambiguously-worded draft which on closer inspection did not contain anything new. De Nointel, infuriated, demanded another audience with the Grand Vizier. This was refused. He again threatened with departure, but this was also refused. Only after a year, in May 1673, were new negotiations started in Edirne. De Nointel, at the end of his tether, soon accepted a settlement in which at least the French protection of the Catholic clergy in the Empire and Jerusalem as well as a reduction of the export duty to 3 % were adopted. The impressive military performance of France in the Netherlands might have contributed to a more conciliatory attitude of the Porte. The new capitulation laid a solid base for improved relations and a gradual recovery of the French Levantine trade.

In September 1673, De Nointel, in the company of, among others, a Flemish painter (Rombout Faidherbe, later replaced by Jean Carrey) and his librarian-cum-secretary for religious affairs, Antoine de Galland

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Pierre DUPARC, *Recueil des instructions aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France XXIX*, Paris, 1969, p. 49-83.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 60, quoting the travelwriter Chardin.

(famous for his pioneering translation of the Arabian Nights stories), left for a journey which was to last for one year and a half. It was undertaken as much for pleasure as for any supposed diplomatic purpose, such as the personal announcement of the new capitulation to the Levantine communities. It led him and his company to the Aegean islands, Cyprus, Tripoli, Sidon, Acre, Jaffa, Jerusalem and this was farther than his permit (*ferman*) allowed him. (It mentioned Izmir as the goal of his journey.) If anything, the journey led to trouble and diplomatic embarrassment. De Nointel's presence in Jerusalem, for one thing, was felt as offensive by the Orthodox clergy and ignited a confrontation between them and the Latin "monks" during the Easter festivities. The case was eventually brought before the highest court in the Empire, the *Divan* (Imperial Council) at Istanbul, and France again lost its role as protector of the Holy Places (until 1690). Only with much difficulty and after the Grand Vizier had forbidden such undertaking, could De Nointel be dissuaded from travelling to Egypt where the French community had been suffering from a series of *avarias*. De Nointel slowly returned to Istanbul by way of Athens, Chios (where he narrowly escaped from an attack by Tripolitan corsairs) and Izmir. He returned to the Pera Embassy with a large collection of paintings, sketches, classical inscriptions, marbles, coins and clothes.

De Nointel spent his final years in Istanbul indulging in pleasurable activities and acting as a little Sun King in another small Versailles. He had the embassy rebuilt and refurbished, partly turned into a museum and painting studio, while adding a hall of mirrors and a theatre. Large crowds were entertained with dinner parties, theatrical performances and outdoor shows. This was more than his annual salary of 24,000 livres could pay for. In order to escape from bankruptcy, he imposed a levy of 18,000 piastres on the French Izmir community. Complaints were lodged with the King. De Nointel's disgrace became complete when he angrily left an audience with the new Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Paşa in 1677 as it became clear that the functionary, characterised by contemporary observers as an alcoholic xenophobe, would not allow the ambassador to share his dais (sofa) with him and sit down on the traditional *tabouret*<sup>20</sup>. The King froze all communications with his ambassador, now under the constant threat of his creditors, and when he was allowed to return to France in 1679, he was refused an audience. De Nointel's large collection was auctioned off and he died in great poverty five years later. The only lasting result of his mission was perhaps the acquisition for 25 piastres of a splendidly illustrated Uygur manuscript of the *Mi'rāc-nāme* (Book of Muhammad's Ascension) bought on commission of Colbert and which is now one of the treasures of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* collection<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> See also for the so-called "Sofa affair", G. F. ABBOTT, *Under the Turk*, p. 198-199.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. A. A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 75; E. BLOCHET, *Catalogue des manuscrits turcs I*, Paris, 1932, p. 254-255.



*The embassy of the Marquis de Bonnac and the 18th century*

The clumsy behaviour of De Nointel damaged French-Ottoman relations and this continued to be felt during the early 1680s. A last serious crisis occurred in 1681, when the French fleet under Admiral Duquesne bombarded the island of Chios where a group of Tripolitan privateers had found refuge. The offense cost the French community 400,000 livres in *avarias*. Relations improved in the following years when the Ottoman army failed to capture Vienna (in 1684). The resulting internal crisis of the Empire and the increasingly precarious position of Louis XIV in Europe, softened hostilities. Although the French Ambassador, Count de Guilleragues (1679-1685) was only received for his first audience in Edirne after five years, he was allowed to sit on the dais with the Grand Vizier. In the same year, the French were granted the requested export levy of 3 % in Egypt and were allowed to participate in the Egypt-to-Istanbul transport of grain, rice and coffee, thus replacing the Venetians as the major foreign trading nation in that province. The Ottomans were above all motivated by reasons of safety; the French flag was supposed to protect their goods from robbery by Christian corsairs. For the same reason, Ottoman pilgrims on their way to the Holy Cities of the Hijaz increasingly made use of French ships for the journey to Egypt<sup>22</sup>.

The missions of the following French ambassadors were rather uneventful. Guilleragues, who died of a stroke in Istanbul in November 1685, was succeeded by Pierre de Girardin (1686-1689); the Marquis de Châteauneuf (1689-1700); and the Comte de Ferriol (1699-1711). The latter was never received in audience by the Sultan after he had breached protocol by refusing to part from his sword during audiences with Ottoman officials. He returned to Paris in 1711, stark mad and in the company of a female Circassian slave. Finally, we find in our sources the names of de Marquis and Comte des Alleurs (1710-1716), the Marquis de Bonnac (1716-1724) and the Marquis de Villeneuve (1727-1730).

Jean-Louis d'Usson, marquis de Bonnac (1672-1738) plays an important role in our letters, so I shall pay a little more attention to his embassy<sup>23</sup>. Before he was, much against his will, appointed in Istanbul, he had already, as only a few other ambassadors mentioned here, a diplomatic career behind him and had acquired experience on posts in Denmark, Holland, Brunswick, Sweden, Poland and Spain. He arrived in Pera in October 1716. At that time, the Ottoman Empire had been at war with Austria and Venice for two years and was losing spectacularly. The Grand Vizier Ali Paşa had perished in the Battle of Peterwardein (Varadin) in the same year. During the next year, 1717, the important

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Michel M. FONTENAY, "L'Empire Ottoman et le risque corsaire au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* XXXII, 1985, p. 185-208.

<sup>23</sup> See for his embassy to the Porte, the Introduction to C. C. SCHEFER, *Mémoire historique*.

fortresses of Temeşvar (Timișoara) and Belgrade were to fall to the Austrian commander Prince Eugen of Savoy. In July 1718, the Porte had to agree to the humiliating Peace of Passarowitz which was negotiated with the help of the British and Dutch ambassadors. The treaty opened the way for Austria to become a full capitulatory power in the Ottoman Empire.

The new ambassador was instructed, apart from defending the Catholic faith in the Empire and stimulating French trade, to obtain permission for the Latin clergy, refused to his predecessors Ferriol and Des Alleurs, to reconstruct the cupola (“rotunda”) of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem which was on the point of collapse<sup>24</sup>. The church was used by Christians of all denominations but the Greek Orthodox in particular tried to jealously prevent the slightest move which might lead to an increased authority of Latins over the premises. Supported by the (Greek) court dragomans Panayotis<sup>25</sup> and Mavrocordato as well as the local Muslim scholars (*ulema*), they had even been able to prevent the execution of orders from the Porte to participate in the rebuilding of the church issued in 1689 and 1697.

The traveller Henry Maundrell, a chaplain of the English Levant Compagny who visited the town in 1697, described the rivalry between the Christians. Strife was particularly focused on “the command and appropriation of the Holy Sepulchre, a privilege contested with so much unchristian fury and animosity, especially between the Greeks and the Latins, that, in disputing which party should go in to celebrate mass, they have sometimes proceeded to blows and wounds even at the very door of the Sepulchre, mingling their blood with their sacrifices, an evidence of which fury the father guardian showed us in a great scar upon his arm, which he told us was the mark of a wound given him by a sturdy Greek priest in one of these unholy wars”<sup>26</sup>. There was also a strong aversion of the Latin (French, Italian and Spanish) clergy (with the exception possibly of the Franciscans) against French supervision. A further complicating factor was the intricate joint Greek-Latin ownership, or, according to Islamic law, lease, of the Holy Sites. (The stone walls supporting the rotunda, for instance, were in the hands of the Orthodox.) Symptomatic of the tenuous French claims of protection over Jerusalem was the fact that consuls appointed to that town by the ambassador — their presence was fiercely opposed by Spain — were invariably driven from the town after a very brief period. This happened in 1623, 1700 and 1715. The situation became even more difficult with the

<sup>24</sup> Cf. George JEFFEREY, *A Brief Description of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, and Other Christian Churches in the Holy City*, Cambridge, 1919. The Church was originally founded in the fourth century, cf. p. 4-5. The last major restoration took place in 1810, after the church had been destroyed by fire in 1808, *ibidem*, p. 84-85.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for a succinct biography, C. C. SCHEFER (ed.), *Journal d'Antoine Galland*, p. 18, n. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in G. JEFFEREY, *Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, p. 37-38.

Peace of Passarowitz when Austria began to claim the privilege of supervising the church repairs as well as the protection of the Latin clergy.

In January 1717, De Bonnac was received in audience by the Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa, his *kaimmakam* Köprülü Ali Paşa and the Shaykh al-Islam. De Bonnac, among other things, urged the Porte to conclude a separate peace with Venice in order to be better able to conduct the war against Austria, the promotion of war against the Habsburgs being a major goal of the ambassador's policy. This was not without sense; during the following campaign season the Venetians were to attack the Ottoman army from the rear in Dalmatia. He also asked permission for the restoration works in Jerusalem. During his audience with the Sultan, Ahmed III (ruled 1703-30), he presented a detailed plan for this undertaking, which included alterations and repair to the adjoining chapel, kitchen and clock tower owned by the Orthodox. In December 1718, the Sultan issued a *ferman* which granted De Bonnac's requests. Austria's claims were rejected. The Porte went so far as to dismiss the local governor who opposed the French plan. It also appointed a board of inspectors headed by the former Finance Director (*defterdar*) Mustafa Efendi which was to supervise the building work. The price to be paid for these concessions was the liberation of 500 Muslim prisoners held by the French. The smaller number of 150 were eventually released in March 1719.

A final hitch occurred on 31 May 1719, when, even before the building work had seriously begun, a rebellion broke out in Jerusalem. The Convent of the Holy Land was attacked and the house of a dragoman pillaged. The rebellion was quickly suppressed by the governor of Damascus who already after two hours appeared in the town with an army. The local Mufti and the Chief of Sharifs (descendants of the Prophet, *nakibüleşraf*) narrowly escaped execution — a number of other prisoners however did not. A force of 300 soldiers was left behind to maintain order. After the complicated ownership details had been unravelled and laid down in a *hüccet* sanctioned by the Porte, the ruined cupola was demolished (on 21 June)<sup>27</sup>. Eleven months later the renovation was completed. De Bonnac, proud of this success, suggested that the Porte send an Ottoman envoy to Paris to announce the happy result. The Porte agreed, and in 1721 Yiğirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, a high Ottoman official and former deputy to the peace negotiations at Passarowitz, visited France<sup>28</sup>. His experiences were laid down in a report which became quite popular — the John Rylands Library alone owns three copies — and was already translated into French in 1757. De Bonnac's second major success was his mediation between the Porte and

<sup>27</sup> Cf. C. SCHEFER, *Mémoire historique*, p. XLII; our letters suggest that the survey work continued after the reconstruction had been completed, cf. below.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Représentants permanents*, p. 113 ff.

Russia in 1723 whereby the Caucasus, in the wake of the Persian war, was divided between these powers into two spheres of influence.

The last ambassador mentioned in our letters is the Marquis de Vileneuve to whom was sent a formal letter, found in our MS Turkish 46, announcing the accession to the throne of Mahmud I in 1730. The years of his embassy marked a culmination in good relations between Paris and Istanbul which found expression in the extended capitulation of 1740. They also witnessed the further recovery of the French Levant trade after the depressed years of the War for the Spanish Succession. By the middle of the century, its volume and value were virtually unchallenged by Britain, Holland and lesser trading nations and remained so for the rest of the century. By that time, however, the Levant trade as a whole played a less important role in the global economy. It also played a far less important role in the French economy; whereas in 1600 it roughly contributed 0.50 % to its value, this percentage had declined to 0.05 by 1789.

#### *Frenchmen in the Ottoman Empire*

By then the French had for two centuries been leading foreign settlers in the Levant. The French communities, after the eclipse of the Italian ones from the 16th century onwards, were both the most populous as well as the most widely distributed in the Mediterranean area<sup>29</sup>.

The most important commercial centre in the early days was Aleppo which was an important link in the trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. The town was big for 17th-century standards, comprising between an estimated 200,000 and 300,000 inhabitants. The number of French merchants, who were living in commercial centres, *khans*, was about forty in 1630, which number declined to sixteen in 1693. During the 17th century, the town was the fourth important trading centre of the French in the Levant. The other major foreign community was that of the English, followed at a great distance by the Dutch and the Venetians. Aleppo's prosperity and population gradually declined during the 18th century because of changed caravan routes and a further decline of the overland trade with the east. Alexandrette (İskenderun) was Aleppo's Mediterranean port, but because of its unhealthy position and its vulnerability to privateering raids, only a few French merchants settled there. Even less attractive was Tripoli (in Syria), somewhat further removed from Aleppo but also functioning as a port for it. There were a few French merchants in the town towards the end of the 17th century. Sidon, which served as a port for the manufacturing centre Damascus, was more important for French traders, and became even more important than Aleppo. In 1670, fourteen French commercial

<sup>29</sup> For the following, see P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce*, p. 371 ff. (xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle); and p. 509 ff. (xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle).

houses were found there, which number increased to eighteen in 1713. The port declined in the 18th century and was overtaken by Acre which became the capital of a virtually independent Palestine. Cotton textiles, produced in Damascus, silk as well as Egyptian coffee and rice were exchanged for cash, particularly French and Spanish silver coins. Small French settlements in the nearby towns of Beirut, Acre and Ramla were found towards the end of the 17th century. Of these, Acre was the more important one; by 1700 there were about eighteen French merchants busy in the export trade in cotton and ashes. Both Beirut and Acre however suffered from raids by corsairs. The same was true for Jaffa, of some importance during the Pilgrim season (Easter), which, like Acre, consisted mostly of ruins; in 1689 there were only two French settlers.

The island of Cyprus was of some importance for the export of cotton and silk, but it was also dangerous because of corsairs who did not hesitate to plunder the countryside as a matter of routine. Larnaca had twelve French merchants in 1700; this number declined to between two and three at the end of the 18th century. The French consul served also the few other foreign settlers. The small port of Antalya on the opposite shore of the Mediterranean also had a small but highly divided French community since the early 17th century; it initially fell under the jurisdiction of the consul of Cyprus. Trade was slack and the local consulate was abolished between 1691 and 1715. French trade was also conducted with the islands of Mytilene (Midilli, Lesbos) and Rhodes, where it could hardly be separated from privateering in which French corsairs participated under the Maltese flag<sup>30</sup>. This type of semi-illicit activity decreased after the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699, when more peaceful conditions prevailed in the eastern part of the Mediterranean and Frenchmen began to settle on Lesbos and also in Crete; the town of Canea (Chanya) already included about fifteen French merchants in 1700. Important products were grain and olive oil. The French presence on the Greek islands generally remained very small also because they suffered the competition of local entrepreneurs.

Among the more important Levantine commercial centres was Egypt, the richest province of the Empire and major supplier of consumer goods to the Ottoman capital. Apart from local grain and rice, it was a source for Indian, Arabian and Ethiopian goods, particularly coffee from Mocca, transported through the Red Sea. In Cairo, like Aleppo a big town of some 300,000 inhabitants, small communities of Venetian and French merchants were found. From 1625, there was also a French consulate. Safety was precarious and protection had to be bought from the local Janissary regiment. French trade was stimulated by the concessions negotiated with the Porte by Guilleragues in 1684. In 1638 there were 22 French merchants living in the city; by 1702, their number had increased to fifty. The level of trade with France remained more or less

<sup>30</sup> See M. FONTENAY, "Risque corsaire", *op. cit.*

equal during the 18th century, although the French community declined in numbers. In 1774 there were seventeen French merchants. The city had its own port in Bulaq on the Nile from whence the seaport of Alexandria could be reached by ship. This latter town, not more than a village in the 16th century, saw a remarkable growth in the 17th. It had a small French community of, mostly, agents who operated on behalf of the Cairo merchants and lived in a *khan* (*funduq*), financially supported by the Sultan. The participation in the Istanbul trade was a boost to commercial activity and the local French community grew to a level comparable to that in Izmir. Between 1685 and 1719, 166 Frenchmen migrated to the town. By 1730, there were eighteen French trading houses. The coastal ports of Rosetta and Damietta also profited and a few French merchants settled there. Products exported to France were cotton, leather, saffron, rice and, from 1686, when this was permitted by the Porte, coffee. The years between 1685 and 1700 were particularly prosperous ones for the French; but during the next century they suffered from an increased British competition.

Izmir, with Alexandria and Sidon, and from about 1700 Istanbul, belonged to the most important centres of the French Levantine trade, and from the middle of the 17th century onward, the utmost important one. Despite the drawback of recurring earthquakes, the plague and fires, the town comprised a relatively large French community. It consisted in 1702 of 30 persons while the Dutch, also well represented, were not more than twenty. By 1766, there were 23 French merchant houses and a total French population of 153. The population of the town as a whole increased from about 60,000 in 1675 to an estimated 100,000 in 1715. The French exported Persian and Anatolian products from it, particularly woollens, cotton and silk. "Infidel Izmir", as the town was known among Muslims, offered, with Galata, the best opportunities for an unencumbered western lifestyle which included visits to taverns and theatres. Both places had relatively large foreign and indigenous Christian communities, not only of merchants but also of artisans, shopkeepers and free professionals such as surgeons and apothecaries. Small French communities also existed in nearby Scalanova (Kuşadası) and Chios (Sakız), but these places were not tolerated by the Porte as "scales" (*iskele*, ports in which foreigners were allowed to trade). There was also a small French community in Ankara which maintained a precarious existence against the local Armenians who dominated the important mohair trade.

Istanbul, one of the largest cities of pre-modern Europe, was the centre of Ottoman trade and one of the biggest markets for consumer goods in the world, to which supplies were carried from the Black Sea area (virtually closed to foreigners until well into the 18th century), the Mediterranean, Anatolia and the Balkans. Import was more important than export, and therefore of less interest for the foreign Levant traders who mostly exported goods against cash. The French did import some

brands of luxury goods such as silk and gold- and silver-brocade manufactured in Lyon. The foreign merchant communities were smaller than those of Izmir or Cairo. Most foreigners lived in Galata<sup>31</sup> situated opposite the old town of Istanbul across the Golden Horn. In the residential section of Pera most European embassies were found. The most populous foreign community was that of the English; it comprised about 25 trading houses in 1640. (The number however sharply declined in the following century and a half.) In 1684 there were four French trading houses. The number of French residents however equalled that of Izmir, and largely consisted of artisans, shopkeepers, free professionals, clergy and embassy personnel. A large separate group was formed by the clockmakers (“*horlogers-graveurs*”), most of them Swiss from Geneva.<sup>32</sup>

In the neighbouring towns of Edirne, Salonica and Cavala, a few French merchants settled. Of these towns, only Salonica witnessed a notable growth in the 18th century. The Morea peninsula (Peloponnese), ravaged during the Cretan wars, acquired some importance during the 18th century. Patras, its busiest port, had a French consul from 1717; Nauplion from 1697. Durazzo (Durrës) was the only port in the Adriatic, dominated by the Venetians, which was (irregularly) visited by French ships. It also had a French consul.

So far my survey of the historical background. Before returning to the details of our subject, I will give a succinct description of the contents of our two manuscripts.

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#### MS TURKISH 45

The John Rylands Library manuscript Turkish 45, as mentioned above, contains a collection of copies of legal certificates (*hüccets*). These were documents produced upon request and for a fee by a judge (*kadi*) upon the fulfillment of the necessary formalities, and served as legal proof for judicial verdicts, statements, contracts, transactions and the like in which, mostly, Ottomans, subjects of the Sultan, were involved.

The manuscript contains 69 such certificates; one of these occurs twice, another three times. The subjects are, roughly: debts (23 cases); purchases and other commercial transactions (nine cases); the fulfillment of wine quotas (six cases); levying of custom duties (five cases); inheritances (five cases); labour contracts (five cases); the release of slaves (five cases); the lease of houses (four cases); theft (four cases); violent confrontations in public spaces (two cases); the appointment of agents (two cases); a permission for building; the imposition of a fine

<sup>31</sup> See for this subject also R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 73-79.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 556, n. 3; O. KURZ, *European Clocks and Watches in the Near East*, London/Leiden, 1975, p. 54-60.

(*avania*) on “monks”; a case of privateering; the confiscation of a church; the appointment of a consul; an attestation of the alloy of coins; a dowry; a case of manslaughter; and the loss of a ship’s cargo.

The oldest certificate dates from 1589, the most recent one from 1681. Apart from four undated, or defectively dated ones, we find the following distribution in time :

1589-1599: 2  
 1600-1624: 2  
 1625-1649: 5  
 1650-1674: 42  
 1675-1681: 14

Places of issue were : Galata (36); Istanbul (10); Izmir (5); Aleppo (4); Cyprus (4); Eyüb (2); Üsküdar (2); Sidon (1); Ağrıboz (Chalkis) (1); Beğpazarı (1); Değirmen (Değirmenlik Adası, Milos) (1). Three cases bear no place-name. The texts have not been arranged in any order of time, place or subject.

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MS TURKISH 46

The John Rylands Library manuscript Turkish 46 is a collection of letters. Apart from the opening and concluding standard phrases which must have served as models for embassy and consular dragomans or clerks, we find the copies of exactly 250 letters. Most of these are no longer than a page. A few of them are illegible and/or incomplete. Although the full letters might have served as samples for diplomatic personnel, they also were genuine, that is, their contents are of a concrete, historical character. They were copies of letters received and sent by, or if not sent, at least written with the intention of despatch, in the French Embassy in Pera or in French provincial consulates<sup>33</sup>. Only a few letters, twelve in number, are dated. Some series of letters are, as far as can be gathered from the content, arranged in chronological order, but there is no general temporal or topical ordering. Many letters, particularly in the first section, lack almost all indications of senders, apart from, often, the word “ambassador of France”, and addressees. Most of these letters also lack, in accordance with Ottoman usage practised in letter-books, their opening phrases which might have contained the name or function, or both, of the addressees. Why these letters were gathered in this form is impossible to say.

<sup>33</sup> The letters sent to Grand Viziers consisted of originals in Italian accompanied by Turkish translations; these were wrapped in a “*petit sac de brocard à la mode du pays*”, cf. C. SCHEFER (ed), *Journal d'Antoine Galland* I, p. 67. Letters to the ambassador were wrapped in a “*sac de satin long et étroit, cacheté à leur manière de cire rouge et d'un morceau de papier sur laquelle l'adresse estoit écrite...*”, *ibid.*, p. 83.



The manuscript has some distinctive sections. The first, pp. 1-136<sup>34</sup> (letters 1-77), contains texts written in a clear, voweled *naskhī* script. The second section, pp. 137-223 (letters 78-134), contains texts in a relatively bold and readable *divānī* script and might well have been written by another person (dragoman or clerk). A third part (pp. 223-43) are again in voweled *naskhī* (letters 135-53). Finally there is a section (from p. 243) containing letters (154-250) in a smaller and spidery, often almost illegible, *divānī*, perhaps written by yet another dragoman or clerk. Most of these letters are headed by slanting captions with indications of sender and addressee, and are also sometimes followed by the calligraphed signatures of the senders in the usual Ottoman chancery style.

Most letters originated in the French embassy in Pera; 153 were sent by French ambassadors — the majority by far — by consuls or dragomans. One letter, the first, must have been sent by a dragoman, Fornetti or Fontaine<sup>35</sup>, or a secretary to the King or another high official and written in Turkish, perhaps in order to keep the content unintelligible to prying French eyes. One letter (No. 67) was written by a French captain. Another 139 letters were sent by Ottoman functionaries; another nine do not contain any indication of sender or addressee. Of the 139 letters sent by Ottomans, most, 125, were written to French officials; another fourteen were exchanged between Ottoman functionaries.

Of the first category, letters sent by Frenchmen, we find the following specification of function and names: the Marquis de Bonnac (49 letters); the dragoman Fornetti (12); the Marquis de Nointel (8); the Marquis des Alleurs (3); French consuls (2); the Marquis de Ferriol (1); the dragoman Fontaine (1). Addressees were, as far as is indicated, Grand Viziers (33); governors of provinces (13); representatives (*kaimmakam* or *kethüda*) of Grand Viziers (14); Reis Efendis (2); a fleet commander (*kapudan paşa*) (1); a shaykh al-Islam (1); and others (23).

Letters sent by Ottomans to Frenchmen, our second category, originated from Grand Viziers (25 letters); their representatives (23); provincial governors (13); a Reis Efendi (1); a shaykh al-Islam (1); Saadet Giray, *khan* of the Crimea<sup>36</sup>; and others (9). These letters were sent to 26 unspecified French ambassadors; the Marquis de Bonnac (26); to French consuls (6); the Marquis de Nointel (4); King Louis XV (1); Cardinal de Fleury (1); Ambassador de Villeneuve (1); and the dragoman Fornetti (1).

<sup>34</sup> Pagination in Arabic figures starts with the first full letter on fol. 6a, but stops on p. 13; in order to give an idea of where to find the letters, I have given them numbers.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. C. SCHEFER (ed.), *Journal d'Antoine de Galland*, p. xi; he was of Greek origin.

<sup>36</sup> Saadet Giray II (ruled 1103/1691-2, and deposed in the same year; he died in 1108 (1696-7) in Rhodes, or, more likely, Saadet Giray III (1129/1716-7-1137/1724-5), cf. E. von ZAMBAUR, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam*, Hanover, 1927, p. 247.

The few dates occurring in or at the end of letters cover a time span between 1671 and 1730. On the basis of content, a few letters can be dated a few years, perhaps even some decades earlier (cf. below). Most letters date from the 1670s and the late 1710s when, respectively, De Nointel and De Bonnac were ambassador.

The two major topics discussed in the letters are, firstly, the French protection, or rather, claim on the protection, of the "Latin clergy" (Catholic priests, monks, missionaries and the like, invariably indicated as "monks" in the Turkish texts) of Jerusalem and the reconstruction of the cupola of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was realized in 1719 (63 letters). Secondly, we find discussion of a great number of conflicts between the French Embassy and the Porte about damage claims caused by privateering in the Mediterranean, including the Adriatic Sea. Such cases often led to the confiscation of French ships, the imprisonment of French captains and sailors and the imposition of *avantias* on the French community if Ottoman interests were found to have been damaged (47 letters).

Less prominently figure, thirdly, topics related to the French Embassy, its personnel and the maintenance of amicable relations with the Porte. Subjects here are the appointment or dismissal of French dragomans and consuls in the Ottoman Empire (22 letters); the arrangement of arrivals, audiences and departures of ambassadors (20 letters); the request of favours for Ottoman functionaries (seven letters); gifts to Ottoman functionaries (7 letters); the problem of De Nointel's illicit travels to Palestine and in the Greek Archipelago (3 letters); and the arrangement of postal deliveries (4 letters). An important topic was trade and the protection of French merchants in the Levant. We find discussion of the levying of custom duties and complaints about extortion by local officials (16 letters); the import and export of goods and cash (10 letters); the protection of French nationals and protégés (10 letters); slavery and imprisonment of Frenchmen and protégés (9 letters); financial transactions (8 letters); requests for travel permits (7 letters); complaints about public safety and crimes committed against Frenchmen (4 letters); problems concerning the lease of houses (4 letters); conflicts within the French community (1 letter); the conversion of French nationals to Islam (one letter). A last major topic concerns politics in a stricter sense. Nine letters are related to De Nointel's task of the revival and improvement of the French capitulations. Other subjects are the Ottoman recognition of the imperial status of the French kings (4 letters); the granting of capitulations to England and Genoa (4 letters); and the threatened involvement of France in the war between the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and Austria and Venice on the other as well as the possible mediation of the French ambassador in peace negotiations (in 1717) (9 letters). In three letters the French ambassador informs the Porte about European developments. Another three letters sent by the Porte to Ambassador de Villeneuve, the King and Cardinal de Fleury,

inform them about the accession to the throne of Sultan Mahmud I (in 1730). About nine letters do not contain much information and were meant to emphasize good relations. Three letters were internal Ottoman communications on financial policy and the dismissal of custom officials. Two letters are of a private nature, concerning the gift of a dictionary and the visit of a medical doctor. Finally, there is a letter on problems encountered by Armenian merchants in Paris.

#### THE CONTENTS OF MSS TURKISH 45 & 46 IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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The legal certificates and letters plunge us directly into historical realities, directly that is, after one has been able to decipher the script, often difficult to read, and has been able to interpret the extremely formal style of the texts, in the case of MS Turkish 45 that of the dry and highly compressed enumeration of facts and in the case of our second manuscript, MS Turkish 46, that of the artificial formalities of long-winded *Kunstprosa*. What, then, are these historical realities communicated to the reader?

##### (a) Roman Catholics and the Holy Sites of Jerusalem

###### *The restoration works of 1719*

The major topic encountered in our manuscripts is that of France and her claim to protecting Ottoman Christianity, in particular the Latin (Catholic) clergy and the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. MS Turkish 45 contains two cases related to this subject; MS Turkish 46 has 63 letters on this topic. Most of these date from De Bonnac's embassy and concern the reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1719.

Already before that time, French ambassadors had been involved in the issue of religious protection. We find a number of letters which discuss the hostility of the rival churches in Jerusalem, particularly of the Greek Orthodox, but also of the Armenians<sup>37</sup>. In a typical letter of this category (No. 70), directed by a French ambassador to a Grand Vizier, we read that although a letter had been sent which requested the protection of "the leaders of the Frankish [European] monks" (*Ifrenc rubanlaruñ reisürruhbanları*) in Jerusalem, they had become victim of "the injurious hostilities of the Greeks and the seditious baseness of the Armenians". The ambassador was sure that if the Grand Vizier intervened, "the poisonous trouble would turn into sweetest and most pleasant ['milky'] comfort". Another ambassador thanked the governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Jerusalem for protecting the Catholic "monks" (No. 78).

<sup>37</sup> Letters Nos. 35, 45, 47, 69 and 71, all sent by a French ambassador but undated.

The protection of the Catholic clergy was an important topic in the negotiations for the renewal of the capitulations in the early 1670s. In a letter to, probably, the Grand Vizier (No. 88), De Nointel emphasized the point that the “Frankish monks” had been in possession of the Holy Sites “inside and outside Jerusalem” for 400 years without interruption and that their rights had been laid down in a treaty with the French “Emperor”. The latter had sent his first secretary *Sieur de la Croix*<sup>38</sup> to remind him of that. May God forbid that the Vizier would give in to the insidious proposal of the Greeks to oust the Latin clergy, subject them to the authority of the Orthodox Church, have them pay taxes and thus compromise the relevant articles of the capitulations. If this would not convince him, De Nointel was ready to show the Vizier old title deeds (*temessük*) from the French “Imperial” Archives which would prove these rights. The same argument was presented in another of his letters to again, probably, the Grand Vizier (No. 92).

In a third letter (No. 95), probably sent to a Grand Vizier, a French ambassador complained that, as he had heard from his dragoman in Jerusalem, provisions and oil lamps (*kandiller*) sent to the pilgrim’s hospices (*ziyâretgâh*) on the occasion of the accession to the throne of the French “Emperor”<sup>39</sup> had been removed and confiscated by “a Greek priest [*papas*] who is the Greek Patriarch,” thereby ignoring the capitulation, which was the basis for the friendship “between the two most powerful states [*saltanat*] on earth”. Complaints against Greek intrigues are also vented in another undated letter (No. 73) by Fornetti to the Porte. In it, the dragoman, firstly, protests against the opposition of a certain Seyyid Abdurrahim, contrary to the capitulations, against the repair of the Convent and Church of St. John at Ayn Karim (outside Jerusalem<sup>40</sup>); secondly against a new ceremony initiated by the Armenians at the Holy Sepulchre on the authority of a false order (*emr*) supposed to have been issued by the Sultan; and thirdly, against the machinations of the Greeks who were intent upon “entering and attacking the places, both inside and outside Jerusalem, which have been in the hands of our Frankish monks since time immemorial”.

Requests for permission to restore the rotunda had been, as we have seen, refused to Ferriol and Des Alleurs<sup>41</sup>. De Bonnac sent petitions for

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Paul SEBAG, “Sur deux orientalistes français du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle : F. Pétis de la Croix et le *Sieur de la Croix*”, *Revue de l’Occident et de la Méditerranée* I, 1978, p. 89-117; de la Croix’s mission to Edirne took place in February-March 1675, cf. p. 103; the restitution of the Holy Sites was one of the major topics to be discussed.

<sup>39</sup> This was probably Louis XV who came to the throne in 1715; Des Alleurs was ambassador at that time.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 299.

<sup>41</sup> A request by the latter for that purpose occurs in letter No. 91.

that purpose to the Grand Vizier<sup>42</sup> and the Vizier's representative (*kethüda*)<sup>43</sup>. In a letter to the Grand Vizier (No. 97) he wrote that he had heard that the Greek Patriarch had sent a petition to him, the Vizier, upon which a new Pasha had been appointed in Jerusalem. De Bonnac requested that the French "Emperor" be fully informed about this. He also expressed his hope that repair of the Church be realized during the following spring. In another long letter (No. 103), De Bonnac stated his case in detail. He emphasized the fact that it was the personal wish of the "Emperor" that the rotunda be restored. He, the ambassador, knew that the Orthodox community tried to use their influence with His Excellency to hinder the work, pretending that the repairs were a ruse to increase French control over the Holy Sites. This was certainly not the case. The cupola was in ruins. If nothing were done, it would crash down upon the Sepulchre below and destroy it completely. For the repair works no French workers were needed, but Ottoman subjects [*reaya*] would be employed. Workers, supervisors and engineers would be attracted by the offer of good salaries. Rumours that for the transport of the necessary stones, timber and lead 10,000 camels would be needed for the two-day transport between Jaffa and Jerusalem or that the local Arabs (Bedouins) would rise in a massive revolt were fables spread by malevolent intriguers. Do not trust them! The late Grand Vizier Köprülüzade [Kara] Mustafa Paşa and Sultan Murad had found Greek claims against the ancient rights of no merit and had confirmed those of the Frankish monks.

Grand Vizier (until 1718) Mehmed Paşa for the time being refused to co-operate and informed De Bonnac from Edirne (in letter No. 105, identical with No. 218) that "it is impossible to give permission for the restoration of the *Qumâma*". The request had to be studied first by "reliable persons, both from the ranks of the great scholars [*ulema*] and those of the elite and common people". Because the district [*sancak*] of Jerusalem was situated in the province [*eyalet*] of Damascus, the governor [*vali*] of Damascus therefore also had to study the case. Decisions had in any case to be postponed because of the approaching campaign season. Eventually "permission would not be refused to the French Emperor" and the Austrian claims in the matter would certainly not be honoured. The Vizier's deputy in Istanbul (*kaimmakam*), Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa, showed more sympathy, although he confirmed what Mehmed Paşa had written (letter No. 232). He wrote to the Ambassador that he had to wait for further instructions from military headquarters

<sup>42</sup> Cf. No. 97 ("we sent a note [*tezkiye*]... on the rebuilding and restoration of the big cupola of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre [*Qumâma*] and all other places in need of that...") and No. 189; cf. C. SCHEFER, *Mémoire historique*, contains a similar petition (in French) to the Grand Vizier, p. 169-70.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. No. 121 ("we sent a petition to the Grand Vizier... for an order [*emr-i şerif*] regarding Jerusalem... Please, let it be [considered] with favour and benevolence.") and No. 188.

[*ordu*] and the Sultan<sup>44</sup>, but he reassured him that a request from an old friend like the French Emperor would not be refused although consent of the *ulema* and ministers [*viükela*] of the Porte was essential. “God willing, this will be soon realized... so let there not be any turbidity on the mirror of your mind.”

After Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa had been appointed Grand Vizier (in 1718), De Bonnac did not have to wait long for the issuing of the necessary orders (*ferman* and *hatt-i hümayun*, litt. “Imperial Rescript”)<sup>45</sup>. De Bonnac, in turn, sent the Vizier a title deed (*temessük*) acknowledging the release of 150 Muslim prisoners. Thereupon, the Vizier promised to deliver the promised papers (letter No. 99). Probably not long afterwards — the letters are all without date — De Bonnac was requested to send his dragoman to the Porte in order to be presented with a copy [*surat*] of the Rescript, to be sent to France in translation (cf. letter No. 110). Fornetti duly went to the Porte. Although the draft was said to be ready, he had to wait for “three to four days”. He was repeatedly told that the Finance Director [*defterdar efendi*] had gone away and that he could not be received. De Bonnac complained to the Reis Efendi, “this gives rise to bad ideas in the dragoman and causes us a headache”. He urged a quick delivery of the copy (letter No. 100). The delay was probably caused by the dissatisfaction felt by the Porte about compensation. Although the Grand Vizier had required the release of 500 Muslim prisoners, the Ambassador had initially declared to the Reis Efendi that he could not set free more than a hundred (cf. letter No. 101). In another letter (No. 111), De Bonnac thanked the Grand Vizier in rather exaggerated terms for the Rescript that had reached him through his dragoman. “Even if every hair of my body had a tongue, I would not be able to express my gratitude.” The ambassador also promised to do his utmost to fulfill his obligations and again asked permission for the repair of the Convent and Church of St. John.

In a following letter (No. 120), De Bonnac informed the Grand Vizier that a galleon [*kalyon*]<sup>46</sup> was ready for departure to Jerusalem. The next day, superintendants [*nazırlar*] would see to the loading of the ship. Permission was asked to sail in a couple of days. In order to prevent possible troubles, he also requested the Vizier to have the local *kadı* announce the contents of the Imperial Order to the population of Jerusalem before the work was begun and take care that the local mufti, *nakibüleşraf*, shayks and other dignitaries were present so that the “poor Frankish monks” would not be tortured with demands for money.

<sup>44</sup> “*rikab-i hümayun*” (litt. “Imperial Stirrup”).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. letters Nos. 213, 228 and 229; the French version of the order is found in C. SCHEFER, *Mémoire historique*, p. 170-173.

<sup>46</sup> See for this and other types of ship, Svat SOUCEK, “Certain Types of Ships in Ottoman-Turkish Terminology”, *Turcica* VII, 1975, p. 233-249.

Meanwhile, various local representatives of the central government were instructed to co-operate. Our manuscript contains copies of letters by the Shaykh al-Islam Abdullah Efendi to the local mufti, Seyyid Mehmed (No. 114); by the agha of the Janissaries, Ahmed Ağa, to the local commander (No. 116, dated 13 March 1719); and by the Master of the Ordinance (*topçubaşı ağa*) to his proxy (*vekil*), “Kırkbeşinci” Mehmed Ağa, in Jerusalem (No. 117, bearing the same date). The letters informed their addressees that incidental damage caused to walls and houses by the transport of timber [*keraste*]<sup>47</sup>, would be compensated by the Latin “monks”. Inhabitants of the town, including shaykhs and sharifs, were forbidden to demand gifts in the form of money from the “monks” after work had started. Janissaries and others were expressly forbidden to intervene or attack the works. “If during the restoration a worker falls by chance and is wounded or killed, nothing is to be demanded from the Frankish monks in the way of blood-indemnity”; it would be contrary to a *fetva* on the matter. Abdullah Efendi also instructed the *kadı* (in letter No. 115) that he should not stop transports of materials; this would be against the law [*şer ü kanun*].

Shaykh Ahmed of Aleppo (“Halebli”) was considered to be a special risk factor. He reportedly had great influence with the Arabs (Bedouins) and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. De Bonnac therefore asked the *kethüda* to “threaten and intimidate him” so that he would not hinder the transport of materials from the scale of Jaffa (letter No. 122). De Bonnac also wrote to the governor of Damascus, el-Hacc Osman Paşa (in No. 125)<sup>48</sup>, and the *kadı* of Jerusalem (in No. 196) and asked for their protection of the “monks”. In turn, the Governor (*muhafız*) of Jerusalem, el-Hacc İbrahim Paşa, informed the ambassador that he would fully co-operate with the instructions of the Imperial Rescript and see to the ordered restoration of the rotunda (letter No. 167).

Despite these promising signs, as we have seen, things did not work out as smoothly as might have been expected. De Bonnac informed the Grand Vizier (in letter No. 127), probably in June 1719, that he had received bad news from Fornetti. “We were most surprised that one dared to move against the exalted Imperial Rescript although it is clear that during the happy period [of the Sultan’s reign] the actions of these depraved persons will not halt the particulars ordered by the *ferman*...” He informed the Vizier that he had previously warned the Pasha of Damascus to see to “the requisites of his banner [*bayrak*] in guarding and protecting as he had been ordered” and that he had heard that İbrahim Paşa, the *mutasarrıf* of the *sancak* [district, litt. banner] had

<sup>47</sup> It could also mean “building materials”, but this meaning is less likely here because the Imperial Rescript forbade that “...on y ajoute la moindre chose de plus qu’il y avoit, ni qu’on transporte une pierre à un autre lieu...”, C. SCHEFFER, *Mémoire historique*, p. 172-173.

<sup>48</sup> Earlier, De Bonnac had congratulated the official with his appointment, cf. letter No. 102.

really paid all his attention to it. De Bonnac recommended that the Vizier add the *sancaks* of Nablus and Ramla to the latter's jurisdiction so that the completion of the rotunda would be ensured. He also advised him to relieve the same, İbrahim Paşa, from his cavalry [*cerde*] duties so that he could supervise the policing of the population who were for the greater part inclined to mischief. The mufti of Jerusalem informed the ambassador in some detail (in letter No. 168) about the events of May 1719. The building work had started, he informed De Bonnac, and the populace showed every sign of loyal co-operation. "But then, on the orders of God the Almighty, some Muslims from the Maghrib who live outside town began to conspire and aimed at the house of the dragoman Mansur which they plundered..." The looting and killing undertaken by some, made others flee. The molla, Mustafa Efendi, and the chief janitor (*kapucıbaşı*)<sup>49</sup> became frightened and warned the *muhafız* of Damascus, Osman Paşa. The latter moved to Jerusalem and restored order. The *kadi*, Mustafa Efendi, saw his chance and blackened his [the correspondent's] reputation, accusing him of acting on "your [the Ambassador's] advice", being a partisan of the French and of having opposed him in the past. "This precipitated me into a whirlpool [of calamity] with the Exalted Vizier and I had to endure foul abuse [from him] even to the point of being threatened with execution. Thus being on your side caused me a great deal of trouble. But he [the *vali*] must have been ignorant of what happened." He begged the ambassador to intervene on his behalf with the Sultan and Grand Vizier and procure him a good government posting<sup>50</sup>. If he succeeded, "God willing, we will do our best and pay full attention to the building work and the Sepulchre. Send me a quick answer so that my pain be relieved..." Whatever came of this<sup>51</sup>, which is not explained in any letter, the Mufti was saved from execution.

The *kadi*, Mustafa Efendi, was dismissed and replaced by a certain Ahmed Efendi of Kütahya ("Kutahi") who was also appointed as supervisor of the repair works<sup>52</sup>. After the crisis, De Bonnac sent letters of thanks to the local officials who had supported the restoration: Osman Paşa (No. 176); the former *defterdar* Mustafa Efendi (Nos. 172 and 173); and the governor, İbrahim Paşa (No. 181).

<sup>49</sup> He had probably conveyed the *ferman* and Rescript to Jerusalem; he was also responsible for the safe delivery in Istanbul of the document on the property survey [*keşf ü hüccet*] accompanying the repair work, cf. letter No. 81.

<sup>50</sup> "muradımız üzere kapuları sipariş eyleyeler..."

<sup>51</sup> There are three other letters from De Bonnac to the mufti (Nos. 124, 180 and 190); they are all undated. In the first, De Bonnac promised the mufti to approach the Grand Vizier on his behalf; in the second and third, he asked for his support for the repair work and the protection of the Latin clergy.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. letter No. 170, Ahmed Efendi to De Bonnac.



*De Bonnac and the careers of Ottoman officials*

As seen above, the French policy in Jerusalem could only be realized at a price. Apart from the release of the 150 prisoners, the French Embassy also — we have already seen examples above — was asked to support the careers of some influential Ottoman officials, if necessary with money. The letters in manuscript Turkish 46 particularly are concerned with the careers of the governor and the *kadı* of Jerusalem. The French ambassador was not, in principle, disinclined to co-operate and this co-operation represents an aspect of policy (which could be interpreted as co-operating with corruption) which has been overlooked in the existent literature. This rather amazing involvement in the internal affairs of the Empire would have been unthinkable in the pre-Karlowitz period.

Firstly, there was the requested extension of el-Hacc İbrahim's jurisdiction, mentioned above. Two further letters also mention the payment of a large sum by the Latin clergy to İbrahim Paşa's agent in İstanbul, the *kapu kethüdası* Mehmed Beg. An amount of five *kise akçe*<sup>53</sup> seems to have been agreed upon, but when this sum was increased to nine *kise*, De Bonnac made it clear that he, İbrahim Paşa, was risking his support from the Grand Vizier (letter No. 199). In another letter (No. 235), the Pasha explained to De Bonnac that the nine *kise* had been agreed upon after talks with the Ambassador's agent [*vekil*] and the "monks". His jurisdiction could only be extended to Gaza, Ramla and Nablus if De Bonnac offered presents of sufficient value to the Porte. He had already sent a letter with the required bill of exchange to his agent but had not heard from De Bonnac since. He therefore sent another letter together with those from the "monks" with his footman [*çokadar*]. He would, of course, do all he could to realize the repairs of the Church. De Bonnac answered him (No. 236) that the nine *kise* had been given to the agent. The latter had approached the Grand Vizier, who had told him, however, that other people had been appointed to the required districts [*sancaks*], but that he promised to see to it that he would obtain another prestigious posting.<sup>54</sup> "We will not forget to protect you." We do not know what happened next.

De Bonnac also became involved in the career of the *kadı* of Jerusalem, Ahmed Efendi. The latter sent a number of petitions to his master, the Shaykh al-Islam, but received no answer. The ambassador, grateful for his, Ahmed Efendi's, support in Jerusalem, sent his dragoman to the Shaykh al-Islam's office with the *kadı*'s latest letter (*ubudiyet-name*, "letter of submission") and an additional 560 *zolota*<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Five "purses of aspers", meant is probably "purses of piastres [*kuruş*]" which also occurs in these letters; a "purse of piastres" contained 500 piastres. A piastre was equal to 70 to 80 aspers.

<sup>54</sup> The term "*tevliyet-i azime*" is used in the letter.

<sup>55</sup> This was a Polish silver coin which was currently used as a piastre in the Ottoman Empire; it was worth less than 80 aspers.

These were refused, however, but De Bonnac promised to do his best to have the letter and the money accepted at a later date and inform him about the outcome (letter No. 193). A copy of the letter is preserved in our manuscript. It is a highly literary (containing quotations in Arabic and Turkish verse as is usual in the most sophisticated *Kunstprosa*) as well as long but also rather repetitious piece of writing (No. 197). In it, Ahmed Efendi informed his master that he had received a letter, signed by the Chief Military Judge [*kaziasker*] of Anatolia, Ömer Efendi, which announced his transfer to the post [*kaza*] of Damascus, on 15 *Sevval* (20 August 1719). Although he had sent letters with Osman Paşa, he had not received any answer, either from his family, his friends or from him, his master. The transfer meant a reversal of his career<sup>56</sup>. Why had it come about? Was the Efendi turning his back on him? Had he committed a crime? “I do not know what misfortune has stricken me!” Not knowing why he had become a victim of the Sultan’s ‘fire of wrath’, he had sent letters to his master, the Grand Vizier and the *kethüda Beg* through the French Ambassador. Or was it that he had made mistakes in the land survey [*keşf ü tahrir*] of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the surrounding area which had been one of his tasks? He had embarked upon his duty “but ‘haste is a thing of the Devil’ and before the data [had been gathered], alas, effrontery was risked and this exalted service to you, a store for the hereafter became worthless by giving in to unchecked covetousness which induced us to stir the dust under your feet with our desire for another term [of office].” He again begged for mercy. Arabia would be fatal to his mind [*mahşer-i dimag*] and drive him mad. The Efendi surely had heard of his heroic struggle [*pehlivanlık*] on account of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He was convinced that the survey, particularly of the “big church”, had been as complete as it could have been and that the relevant sites had all been covered in *hüccets*. Therefore, he again was so bold as to beg for forgiveness and present his master with a bill of exchange worth 500 *zolota*. (An additional 30 *zolota* were presented to Cebir Ali Efendi and another 30 to the *kethüda* Ahmed Efendi.) The letter ends with the hemistich “to be drawn to the burning lamp one needs a moth”, comparing himself to the desperate lover yearning for the light of his beloved (the Shaykh al-Islam), and, by extension, to a creature whose adoration is needed by God.

De Bonnac went to some trouble to obtain information from the Grand Vizier about Ahmed Efendi’s transfer (letters Nos. 198 and 199) and about who was henceforward responsible for the certificates resulting from the survey work [*keşf ü hüccet*]. De Bonnac even discussed Ahmed Efendi’s career with the Grand Vizier and the Shaykh al-Islam (cf. letter No. 234 sent to Ahmed Efendi). When he suggested that the *kadı* be posted to Bursa or back to Jerusalem, he was referred to Osman

<sup>56</sup> Why this should have been so, is not clear to me; perhaps he feared the proximity of Osman Paşa; *kadis* normally changed posts every year.

Paşa. The latter, however, made it clear that he was unable to do anything unless a bill of exchange to a sufficient amount be handed to him. De Bonnac declared himself ready to act as a go-between in this matter.

Finally, there are two letters in our manuscript which were exchanged between Ahmed Efendi and Fornetti. In the first (No. 237), the *kadı* informed the dragoman that the repair work on the rotunda had been completed and that the cupola had been covered with lead. The courtyard (*saha*) awaited further work<sup>57</sup>, but the whole job would be completed by mid-Safer (probably mid-December 1720). Shortly *ağas* would be sent with *hüccets* related to the repair work. He had worked with heart and soul in the ambassador's interest and expected something in return, such as a *kadı*'s post, at least comparable with that of Jerusalem, for instance in Aleppo. He urged him to ask the ambassador to approach the Sultan with a request. If that would not yield any result, he would also be content with cash "in order to regain what had been lost". For this purpose he had sent a blank bill of exchange to Istanbul with Osman Paşa, to be filled in with a sufficient amount and returned<sup>58</sup> (letter No. 237). Fornetti replied that he could not do anything for him in this matter<sup>59</sup>, nor did he have any money to spend. He was ready, though, to help him cash bills of exchange in Istanbul if he wished (letter No. 238).

### *The Maronite Church*

Manuscript Turkish 45, as we have seen, contains two *hüccets* obtained upon infringements of rights of the Catholic (Maronite) Church in the Empire. In one case, at least, it was preceded by a direct intervention by the French ambassador.

The first certificate on this matter (No. 11) was issued by the *kadı* of Lefkoşe (Nicosia, Cyprus) to a "monk" called "Baba Butro son of Lufar" in mid-May 1637 which confirmed the ancient right of the Maronite (also elsewhere in the same document called Syriac) community to use the Church of St. Mary in the village of Değirmen. During the court session it appeared that the Greek Archbishop Hristodili had three years previously been able to obtain a letter patent (*berat*) which gave him authority over all churches and convents in the island. A certain Baba Yorgi, also present at the session, had been appointed priest (*papaz*) in the aforementioned church. The Maronites, however, were able to show a *ferman*, issued on the request of the (unspecified) French

<sup>57</sup> De Bonnac had asked the Grand Vizier to permit "a slight raising of the garden wall of the *Qumāma*"; the latter had answered that an order for an inquiry (*keşf*) in the matter was first needed, upon which the Ambassador complained that nothing further had happened (letter No. 244).

<sup>58</sup> "bu husus için bir mikdar akçe iktiza eder ise el-Hacc Osman ile bir beyaz gönderilmiştir. Derunına tahrir olunub bu tarafa polîçe ile iade [?] edesiz..."

<sup>59</sup> "tavsiye buyrılan paye hususı gerçe bu dailerinin elinden gelür iş olmayub..."

ambassador, which annulled the Greek authority over the church; it also stated that the Greeks had obtained their *berat* unlawfully by paying a bribe. The governor of the island, Ahmed Paşa, was instructed to see to it that the *hüccet* would be implemented.

The second certificate (No. 5)<sup>60</sup> was issued by the *kadı* of Aleppo on 22 June 1677 to a group of Maronites, twenty of whom are mentioned by name in the document, who complained that they were forced by the local authorities to pay a fine on the pretext of having made alterations to their church (a window was turned into a door) and done repairs to the adjacent almshouse which were situated near the Bab an-Nasr ('Victory Gate'). They were absolved from paying the fine after a commission had inspected the buildings and found no substantial changes. This was confirmed by a *fetva* (of 1676).

In this case, there apparently was no direct French involvement. But there certainly were strong links between the local French merchants and the Maronite community. The French had themselves interred in the Maronite churchyard, sent their children to the local convent school and French missionaries were received in Maronite houses. The almshouse might well have given shelter to French "monks". As well, the Marquis de Nointel had, two years previously, stayed for a week in Aleppo and had shown a great interest in the local Maronites, visiting their patriarchs and their churches<sup>61</sup>.

#### (b) Privateering and slavery

As we have seen above, French shipping in the Mediterranean greatly suffered from the activities of corsairs, particularly from Muslims and their allies who had their main basis in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, North Africa. An important task of the French Embassy was to exert its influence to limit the damage as far as possible. Ottoman shipping did not suffer less, probably rather more, from the "Christian" corsairs operating mostly under the Maltese, Tuscan and other, sometimes even French, flags. Particularly vulnerable was the route between Alexandria and Istanbul where once or twice a year richly loaded convoys appeared. Hardest hit were the waters along the coasts of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and south-western Anatolia<sup>62</sup>. The most profitable booty was men, who were turned into slaves to be recovered by ransom. An average 200 to 250 Muslims were captured every year<sup>63</sup>. Consequently, the Ottomans, in order to limit the damage, increasingly turned to French

<sup>60</sup> For the following, see Elizabeth COOPER, "A Preliminary Study of Documents in Folios 1-5 of Rylands Turkish MS No. 45", typescript thesis, Manchester University, 1981, p. 54 ff.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 157.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. M. FONTENAY, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. M. FONTENAY, *op. cit.*, p. 194-195.

shipping for the transport of men and goods between their ports in the Levant. By doing so, however, these transports became vulnerable to Muslim corsairs. The Porte insisted on recovering losses by making the Embassy pay for them, particularly during periods prior to the renewal of the capitulations. The French ambassadors protested against the, in their eyes, unlawful procedure, but, for the time being, vainly. On one occasion, as we have seen above, a French ambassador was sent to prison after a cargo had been captured. One legal certificate of MS Turkish 45 (No. 57, dated December-January 1660-1) probably was related to this case. The document established an *avania* of 31,460 *kuruş* imposed on the Izmir community as a “price of the provisions for the Imperial Kitchen [*matbah-i amire*]” probably lost to corsairs. The consul, Henri Dupont (?), promises to pay the money to the courier of the Porte, Ahmed Çavuş, who brought the *ferman* on the case.

A number of other cases are documented in our manuscripts. These demonstrate that divisions between “Christian” and “Muslim” privateers, and between legal and illegal trade were not always clear-cut. Maltese corsairs sometimes even attacked ships sailing under the French flag.

### *Corsairs*

(i) During an unspecified period of war in which the Ottoman Empire was involved, probably against Poland (from 1672) or, earlier, against Crete<sup>64</sup> (until 1670), but before or in 1673 (the as yet unrenewed capitulations are mentioned), a number of French ships on their way from Izmir and loaded by the Porte, probably with soldiers and provisions destined for Crete<sup>65</sup>, were captured near the fortress of Golos (modern Bólos, Greece). The case is discussed in letters Nos. 3, 5 and 66 sent by a French ambassador to unspecified Ottoman officials. The Porte insisted on compensation for the damage as well as the repayment of the freight charge (*navlun*). The Embassy at first refused, but was made to comply when the Porte for months refused permission for a number of French ships to leave the harbour of Istanbul.<sup>66</sup> The ambassador, proba-

<sup>64</sup> The Ottomans forced England, France and Holland “to lend ships” for the war effort, cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 233.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. letter No. 10. The renewal of the French capitulations seems to have depended on these services, cf. letter No. 141.

<sup>66</sup> See letters Nos. 3, 4 (the ambassador complained that the forced idleness cost the captains 30 to 40 *kuruş* per day), 6 (the ambassador sent two captains and his dragoman to the Porte to plead their case), 8, 15 (two to three ships had been waiting for nine months while their cargo was rotting away) and 21. Letter No. 67 might also be related to this affair; in it, a captain complains that he had waited for four months for permission to provision his crew of 1500 men, whose daily ration had been reduced to biscuits [*peksimat*]. The great number of men might indicate that the case concerned a whole squadron, possibly the four navy galleons which brought De Nointel to Istanbul in 1670.

bly De Nointel, also demanded the release of a certain Mr. Hardy (or Hardi) who had been captured in Crete and had been languishing in the Yedikule prison for eighteen years. In the end, the Embassy gave in to Ottoman demands.

(II) In about the same period, the late 1660s or early 1670s (the ambassador was still negotiating the renewal of the capitulations), two French ships fell victim to corsairs under the command of a certain Hasan Reis (also called Korsan Hasan or Baba Hasan)<sup>67</sup>. The captain was killed and the crew were sold as slaves in Rhodes. Another ship — the case is mentioned in the same group of letters, Nos. 20, 21, 28 and 30 — which had first been supplying Crete with Ottoman troops and provisions, was later engaged by Ömer Paşa, the governor of Egypt, for a transport destined to Istanbul. The ship was captured by Maltese corsairs<sup>68</sup> after it had left Alexandria. The greater part of the cargo, including four (out of a total of twelve) eunuchs<sup>69</sup> as well as the ship's clerk were brought to Egypt. The captain was killed. The clerk was put in jail. The Ambassador, supporting his case with *hüccets* containing cargo manifests and probably providing a guarantee against damage claims (cf. also below), demanded compensation of the losses as well as the release of the clerk. The Porte, however, accused the French of having been involved in privateering. On these grounds, De Nointel eventually was obliged to pay an *avania* of 40,000 *kuruş*. Vainly, De Nointel demanded the punishment of Hasan Reis, who had also dared to rob guns and rifles from a French ship anchored off the Izmir harbour fortress. He also expressed his fear for the French “Emperor”'s displeasure if the corsair leader were not punished; his own dismissal might be the result (letter No. 30). One *hüccet* in MS Turkish 45 is probably related to the second case (No. 30, dated 26 January 1667). According to this document the French ambassador, Denis de la Haye (in office 1665-1669), stated in the *Divan*, where the *kethüda* of the Grand Vizier, the superintendent of the Palace Kitchen, Mustafa Ağa, and an agent of Ömer Paşa were present, that a French ship with Captain Petro had lost part of its cargo, according to the bill of lading, sent by Ömer Paşa and consisting of rice, paper, cinnamon, sugar, coffee as well as twelve eunuchs, destined for Mustafa Ağa, in the “war zone” [*daru l-harb*].

(III) While these matters remained unsolved, Hasan Reis captured another French ship which had been loaded in Alexandretta (İskenderun)

<sup>67</sup> He might have been identical with a *dey* of Algiers, cf. John B. WOLF, *The Barbary Coast. Algeria under the Turks 1500 to 1830*, New York/London, 1979, p. 240, *passim*.

<sup>68</sup> Normally, the French co-operated with the Maltese corsairs, cf. letter No. 158 in which the Commander Mustafa Paşa of Cyprus requested the French consul to intervene with Maltese corsairs waiting at the entrance of Tuzla (Larnaca) harbour.

<sup>69</sup> A similar, or perhaps the same, case is mentioned in A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 19; it took place in the late 1660s. In our case the Ambassador was forced to pay, among other things, 3600 *kuruş* for the missing eunuchs, cf. letter No. 22.

and was on its way to France (letter No. 74). The Ambassador, De Nointel, again demanded the privateer's punishment and resolutely denied that the ship had been involved in a privateering raid. He also, on instructions of the King, demanded the dismissal of the Pasha of Egypt and the "Jewish Amins [custom officials]" of Cairo and Alexandria who had built and outfitted Hasan Reis's ship. There were more complaints against the governor who was a nuisance to the French merchants in the country. He had confiscated 930 *kuruş* in consular rights [*baylac hakkı*] levied from three French ships; he had paid only 12,400 *para*<sup>70</sup> for a delivery of French cloth where 40,775 had been due; he had robbed the guns from a ship under French protection; he had confiscated 7300 *kuruş* which had been entrusted for safekeeping to the Alexandria customs office (as a result the captain could only take half a cargo); and he had demanded another 40,000 *kuruş* from the safe-deposit box in the same office. Trade, consequently, had come to a standstill and the Ambassador threatened the withdrawal of the French consul and merchants from the province (letter No. 87). [Kara] Mustafa Paşa (*kaimmakam* of the Stirrup from December-January 1673-4 and Grand Vizier from November 1676)<sup>71</sup> replied (in letter No. 136) that the Sultan dismissed and appointed his deputies [*vükela*] and viziers as he saw fit and did not let himself be guided by anyone<sup>72</sup>. It was unsuitable that he, the Ambassador, wrote something about which he had nothing to say and it was a breach of good manners to even bring such matters up. If foreigners who were under the protection of the Sultan [*müsteminler*] were confronted by hostility and were attacked, the culprits were invariably punished by law. The allegation that the *Divan* of Egypt had built and equipped a privateer whose crew moreover consisted of Muslim slaves and infidel pirates was no more than an insubstantial rumour.

(iv) Not long after the first appearance of Hasan Reis (cf. letter No. 30), a French ship loaded with soap in Sidon by the local governor Halil Paşa and destined for Istanbul (probably the Palace)<sup>73</sup>, was captured in the harbour of İstanköy (Kos) in full daylight by corsairs arriving on seven to eight ships (letters Nos. 10 and 30). The Porte demanded, again, full compensation (letter No. 51). The ambassador protested. The French "Emperor" had explicitly forbidden that French nationals become involved in piracy. Before the departure from Sidon, the consul had obtained a *hüccet*, copies of which had been sent to France and the Porte and which protected the owners against damage claims in the case of piracy. The ambassador however declared himself ready to pay for the lost cargo but would not restitute the full freight charge. He had sent a

<sup>70</sup> A silver coin worth three to four aspers, cf R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 144-5; it was probably introduced in the mid-17th century, cf. *ibidem*, p. 246.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Mehmed SÜREYYA, *Sicill-i osmani* (SO) IV (Istanbul, 1315), p. 402.

<sup>72</sup> "kimsenüñ sözile azl u nasb olunmaz".

<sup>73</sup> The text has the term "*miri sabun*", "government soap".

courier to Sidon in order to obtain a copy of the document. Nothing more was heard from the courier, so that the Ambassador had also sent his first dragoman and the dragoman of the Sidon consulate (letters Nos. 16 and 17). The affair seems to have dragged on for years, perhaps also because of De Nointel's absence from the capital, but eventually he received an answer from [Kara] Mustafa Paşa. Referring to the previous correspondence on the matter, he concluded that the ambassador had written insincerely to the *kaimmakam*, insisting that "paying for the soap made no sense. It is clear", he informed De Nointel, "that you harbour heedless ideas on this point and that by not paying for what belongs to the Sultan, you prefer your integrity [*ırz*] above money". Not paying for the "government soap", however, would provoke the issuing of a *ferman* which "would land you into bloody chains or prison". "You really should know that evasion and obstinacy are useless." The ambassador was urged to pay so that his 'integrity' would not be harmed (letter No. 139). In a second letter (No. 142), Mustafa Paşa explained that there were *bailos* [*balyozlar*] and consuls throughout the Empire for the purpose of guaranteeing the safety of transports of goods belonging to either the state or to individual Muslims. The relevant *ferman* (order) contained a clause on full indemnification. Therefore, the soap should either be delivered or paid for. Why should he jeopardise the bilateral friendship and his personal integrity? "Look here, you know which alternative to choose, don't you?"<sup>74</sup> As in most cases described so far, the result is unknown. De Nointel may well have given in to the threats.

(v) The activities of Tripolitan corsairs are documented in another letter (No. 68). On their way between Tripoli (North Africa) and Istanbul at an unrevealed date, two French ships docked in the harbour of İzmir, where they unloaded a cargo and took on a new one. After having paid the necessary custom duties, and sailing to Sakız (Chios), they were attacked by two corsair ships. The Ambassador claimed compensation from the Porte for the loss of the crew, cash and goods and also sent a *hüccet* supporting the claims. He also demanded the release of a number of sailors who had escaped by rowing towards the island but had been imprisoned there. We do not know how the Porte reacted. As we have seen above, the French navy bombarded the island in 1681.

In two cases, Venice and France seem to have cooperated in robbing Muslim traders of their wares.

(vi) In one letter (No. 134), a certain el-Hacc Yusuf, *kethüda* of the Governor of Jerusalem, describes how he sailed on a French ship (*şitiye*<sup>75</sup>) from Tripoli (North Africa). The ship came across a Venetian squadron (*Venedik donanması*) near Cape Manya (Mani, in the Pelopon-

<sup>74</sup> "göresin her hangisin ihtiyar ederseñiz bilürsüz..."

<sup>75</sup> A twin-masted sailing vessel, cf. İsmail Hakkı Uzünçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı*, 2nd impr., Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1984, p. 467-468.



nese peninsula) and was captured. El-Hacc Yusuf was robbed of his goods, worth 1500 *kuruş*. When he arrived in Izmir after fifteen days, he was assured by the French consul that the goods would be restituted, and this was confirmed in writing by the Ambassador. If that did not occur, he would be paid for his losses within 60 days. Nothing happened, however, and the man again petitioned the (unspecified) Ambassador to help him.

(vii) In another undated letter (No. 150), sent probably to a French ambassador by a certain Ahmed Paşa, compensation was asked for goods transported from Dirac (Durazzo, Durrës) on a Venetian ship which was captured by a privateer sailing under the French flag. The duped merchants lodged a complaint with the *Divan* in Istanbul. The Venetian captain and the French consul of Dirac were summoned by *ferman* to appear before it. According to the merchants, the captain had cooperated in the robbery. The consul should be held responsible [*kefil*] for the damage because Venice and France were allies. The Venetian ambassador (*bailo*) was informed of the case.

(viii) In one *hüccet* of MS Turkish 45 (No. 10), issued by the *kadı* of Izmir on 8 September 1599 (?)<sup>76</sup>, a French captain was accused of having captured a ship transporting iron ware for eleven Muslim merchants, the bearers of the certificate. The ship, a *şayka*, had left the port of Salonica under a *zimmi* (non-Muslim Ottoman) captain called Pose (or Posa) Reis. It had been loaded with “iron, sheet iron and horse nails (*at muhi*)” but was captured off Midilli (Mytilene, Lesbos). The captain denied that he had had anything to do with the case and said that he had bought the iron ware in Malta. During the session, another three Muslim witnesses were heard but their confusing stories did not clarify matters and were simply reproduced in the certificate<sup>77</sup>.

(ix) In an undated letter (No. 29), an unspecified French ambassador complained about the plundering of a French ship by a *müsellim* (administrator) of Rhodes. The ship had been freighted by the district commander (*alaybeği*) of Antalya for the provisioning of Crete; he had paid 1500 *kuruş*. Upon arrival in Rhodes, the *müsellim*, a son of the deceased Ali Paşa, confiscated the cargo and the ship was robbed of two of its bronze and another two of its iron guns. The Ambassador demanded full compensation.

(x) For unknown reasons and at an unknown date, the Mediterranean commander (*Ak deniz serdarı*) Mehmed Paşa confiscated a French ship (*şitiye*) at Değirmenlik (Milos). The French Ambassador demanded

<sup>76</sup> If the year is 1008; the text reads “*sene elf sene seman*” which must be a mistake.

<sup>77</sup> A certain Ahmed b. Mehmed, a former commander (*serdar*) of Cavala and owner of a *şitiye* — he had been enslaved for a while by a foreigner (*harbi kâfir*) but had been redeemed — declared that he had bought the iron ware from Pose Reis at İstendil (Tenos); a certain Hasan Başe had seen that the *şitiye* had been involved in capturing Pose Reis’s *şayka* at Mytilene; and a certain Arslan Reis, a *zimmi*, accused the captain of the *şitiye* of having gunned and sunken Pose Reis’s ship in Salonica harbour.

compensation for the cargo (letter by Süleyman Ağa, *kethüda* of the Grand Vizier, to, probably, the Grand Vizier, No. 153).

(XI) During Des Alleurs's embassy (1710-1716), a Greek ship owner tried to get compensation from the French community for ships which had been captured by corsairs under the flag of Tuscany; the claim was rejected by the Porte (letter No. 91, in which the Ambassador thanked, probably, a Grand Vizier for his support).

A number of other incidents are documented for the period of De Bonnac's embassy. The times had changed, clearly, the Köprülü Viziers had disappeared and the influence of the French ambassador had increased.

(XII) In one letter to a *kapudan paşa* (No. 108), De Bonnac complained about the actions of a certain Hüseyin Reis of Izmir, a corsair leader (*başbuğ*) who had four caravels (*karavela*) under his command. On one occasion, he had come with ten freebooters (*levend*) to the French Consul's house in Alexandretta (İskenderun). The Consul and his people were lying sick in their beds and thanks to the intervention of a certain Mehmed Reis, they were not dragged outside and a disaster was prevented. Afterwards, "they went to the customs office... and grabbed the consul's dragoman who was busy loading goods on ships, and brought him to the customs office. Purely to harrass him, they beat him 150 times with a stick on his foot soles on the pretext that he had smoked<sup>78</sup>, leaving him behind, wounded and crippled". Thereupon, they departed for Tripoli (North Africa), where they robbed two French merchants of their goods and provisions and almost killed them. Back at sea, they came across a French *tartane* (*tartana*)<sup>79</sup>, boarded it and had a look at the *patente* (muster-roll). They found that there were four sailors too many on board. When they threatened the captain to take four of the sailors with them, he paid 40 *kuruş* to buy their freedom. De Bonnac demanded the restitution of the 40 *kuruş* and the punishment of the pirates. In another letter from De Bonnac to the Grand Vizier (No. 166), he demanded the dismissal of Ahmed Çavuş, commander of the Tripolitan Janissaries and chief of the corsairs (*eşkiya*). He also demanded the restitution of goods captured from French merchants; an order (*emr-i şerif*) to this effect had been without result. Whatever happened (which we do not know), France declared war on Tripoli in 1728 and bombarded the town<sup>80</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> On the spread and prohibition of tobacco smoking in the 17th century, see Suraiya FAROQHI, *Kultur und Alltag im Osmanischen Reich. Vom Mittelalter bis zum Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1995, p. 242-243.

<sup>79</sup> One of the three main types of ships used by the *Provençaux* for trade with the Levant; being light and quick, they were often used for the dispatch of letters, cf. P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, p. 475 ff.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, p. 359.

(XIII) A few letters were exchanged between De Bonnac and Ottoman officials on privateers who used the Adriatic port of Ölgün (Dulcigno, Ulcinj) as their base<sup>81</sup>. French ships had been plundered. Complaints had resulted in a *ferman* whereby İbrahim Paşa, Governor of Alexandria, was instructed to accompany the agent of the Porte (*mübaşir*), Osman Ağa, to Ölgün. The Pasha, apparently, had some pirates (*eşkiya*) arrested but had been attacked by their cronies and forced to let them go. The Pasha did not give up easily<sup>82</sup> however, but while he was busy enforcing the law, he received orders to go to Niş. De Bonnac asked the Grand Vizier to postpone the Pasha's mission until after the job had been completed (letter No. 216). From another letter from De Bonnac to the Grand Vizier (No. 175)<sup>83</sup>, it appears that the *mutasarrıf* of Alexandria, Arslan Paşa, was sent to the privateering nest to complete the task, which would be done in a week. De Bonnac also sent a letter to this official (No. 200), thanking him for his exertions. By that time, a number of pirates had been incarcerated in the Boğazkesen fortress (Rumeli Hisarı) on the Bosphorus near Istanbul. Part of the money and goods was recovered (letter by De Bonnac to the Pasha of Alexandria, no. 191) and a certain İbrahim Ağa, a district governor (*mir*) of Rumelia, was sent on a mission to retrieve more.

### *Prisoners*

As we have seen, even more than goods and ships, men were a coveted booty sought by corsairs of whatever origin. A number of cases, concerned with the release of the victims, are documented in our manuscripts.

(i) Certificate No. 41 (in MS Turkish 45) issued at Galata on 30 December 1673 informs us about the capture and subsequent release and disappearance of a certain Hasan, son of Zülfikar b. Abdullah of Galata. When he was on his way to Egypt on a ship with a captain called Karmanoğlu, he had been captured by Maltese corsairs. The French merchant "Grasko son of Jean", undoubtedly a scion of the Greasque lineage, one of the four outstanding French merchant families of Galata<sup>84</sup>, had undertaken to organise his liberation and had paid 300 Sevillian *riyal kuruş*<sup>85</sup>. The prisoner had been released and Greasque showed the *kadı* a *hüccet* signed by a Maltese judge (or notary) proving that fact. The man had not turned up and might well have again fallen into the hands of pirates.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 527, 529.

<sup>82</sup> "ayak basub..."

<sup>83</sup> See also letters Nos. 194, 239 and 240.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 556, n. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Sevillian reals were used as piastres in the Ottoman Empire; they were worth 110 aspers in 1672, cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, table between p. 244 and p. 245.

(ii) Certificate No. 64 which bears no place name but the date of August-September 1676, states that the French merchant Jean Battista (perhaps identical with Jean-Baptiste Fabre<sup>86</sup>) had received 400 *riyal kuruş* from a certain Dilaver for the release of his brother Abaza Hüseyin b. Abdullah, imprisoned at St. Jean, Malta.

(iii) Certificate No. 4 concerns a case of broken bail which involved a French prisoner held in the bagnio<sup>87</sup> in Istanbul<sup>88</sup>. It, or a similar case, caused another unpleasant exchange of letters between Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Paşa and the Ambassador De Nointel. The latter was eventually forced to allow the Embassy to be implicated as guarantor (*kefil*). On 19 November 1675, a court session was held in the Palace of Mustafa Paşa's *kaimmakam* İbrahim Paşa. The latter was present, as were the *kadı* Mehmed Efendi, Yusuf Efendi, the commissioner (*emin*) in charge of the Arsenal (where the prisoners were held) and a French captain called "Barban, son of Tulmiyu"<sup>89</sup>. After having heard two witnesses who were employees of the Arsenal and despite the captain's denial, the court came to the conclusion that the latter had stood surety for a certain "Mikli" who had subsequently escaped. Thereupon, the "consul" (*balyoz*) of Galata (?)<sup>90</sup> was appointed guarantor for the captain. This or a similar *hüccet* is mentioned in letter No. 152 (of MS Turkish 46), sent to the Ambassador from Edirne, probably by Mustafa Paşa. It stated that a guarantor, a French merchant, would not be released as long as a slave, absconded earlier, was not returned. Islamic law would be strictly applied in the case and further petitioning — De Nointel had written at least two letters on the subject — would be useless.

The tone, again, changed radically during De Bonnac's embassy.

(iv) De Bonnac wrote to the Grand Vizier's *kethüda* (letter No. 121) that he had heard that a man held as prisoner in Salonica was a Frenchman. If that were the case, the man, according to the capitulations, should be brought to Istanbul and inspected by both the Embassy dragoman and the Efendi (*kadi*) of Istanbul in the Muhzır Ağa's<sup>91</sup> prison. His nationality should be established in a legally satisfactory way with the help of witnesses. If the man indeed was a Frenchman, he should be immediately released.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 268; he was member of one of the four outstanding French trading houses in Galata, cf. *ibidem*, p. 556, n. 3.

<sup>87</sup> "Le Baigne ou le Prison où l'on renferme des Esclaves du Grand Seigneur... est un lieu de horreur, où l'on voit une multitude de malheureux dans les fers, surchargés de travaux, mal nourris, & extrêmement maltraités...", Jean-Baptiste LABAT (ed.), *Mémoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux IV*, Paris, 1735, p. 490.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. E. COOPER, "Preliminary Study", p. 45 ff.

<sup>89</sup> A Captain "Barban" is also mentioned in letter No. 13, which is a request for his release from prison; he had been arrested by a *kapudan ağa* at sea when he was sailing with a cargo of wine from Venice.

<sup>90</sup> A local functionary? According to P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, the nation at Galata never had a consul (p. 433).

(v) De Bonnac also sent three petitions (Nos. 107, 113 and 118) to a Grand Vizier, asking, at the request of their family, for the release of two Ottoman subjects (*reaya*), inhabitants of the island of Syra (Syros), who were being held by the *nazır* (superintendent) of Mytilene. Who these people were, why they had been imprisoned is not revealed, nor are there any further particulars mentioned.

(c) Trade and bureaucracy

Many letters in our manuscripts deal with shipping and trade and are concerned with relations, or rather, conflicts, between Ottoman officials on the one hand and French captains and traders on the other. As we have seen above, the Porte increasingly commissioned French ships for government transports of troops and provisions to Crete and for those of Egyptian goods, including slaves<sup>92</sup> and eunuchs, to Istanbul. French ships were also used to transport tax money and olive oil from Crete to Istanbul<sup>93</sup>. When Kuşçı Mustafa Paşa was appointed as governor (*beğlerbeği*) of Tunis, he was sent on a ship sailing under the French flag<sup>94</sup>. Ahmed, *kethüda* of the governor of Cyprus asked the local French consul to arrange for a cargo of cloth (*bezler*) to be sent on a French ship from Tuzla (Larnaca) to Rhodes or Istanbul (letter No. 160).

Only two letters deal with the export of goods to France. Upon a request by a French ambassador for permission to export grain, coffee and 3000 *kantar*<sup>95</sup> of olive oil, two orders (*emr-i şerif*) were issued for the olive oil, to be transported from Mytilene and Şanacık; for the other goods a petition had to be sent to the Imperial Stirrup<sup>96</sup>.

The most important import commodity perhaps was cash. Two letters dating from the last year of Denis de la Haye's embassy, concern the suppressed circulation of *timins* (*sümün*, litt. one-eighth), French silver coins of five sols replacing the Ottoman piastre<sup>97</sup>. In the first letter (No. 12), the ambassador complained about an *avania* of 48 *kise* in several types of *timin* imposed by the *vali* İshak Paşa of Sidon on the local French community. He had expressly allowed the circulation of the

<sup>91</sup> For this functionary, litt. "court usher", supervisor of the Grand Vizier's prison, see R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 152-153.

<sup>92</sup> A certain Kaplan Paşa informed the French consul (at Cairo probably) that he had sent "some small slaves" (*bir kaç esircik*) to his friends in Egypt, letter No. 161, dated 18 August 1717.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Mehmed Paşa, *muhafız* of Kandiye (Iraklion), to the French ambassador, letter No. 225.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Grand Vizier İbrahim Paşa to De Bonnac, letter No. 206.

<sup>95</sup> A *kantar* was equal to about 60 kg.

<sup>96</sup> Edib Mustafa Efendi to the French ambassador, letter no. 201; the *reisülkütab* Süleyman Efendi to the same, No. 202.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 245; they were worth one-eighth of a Spanish real or 15 to 17 aspers.

coins. At the root of the problem was the appearance of forged *timins* produced in Holland and Italy which were worth less than half the good French ones. De la Haye opposed the plan of also removing the French *timins* (of 11 aspers) and replacing them with “pure *akçes*”. In another letter (No. 65), De la Haye, however, supported the suppression of all imported *timins* and their replacement by good piastres as they had existed in the past. This indeed happened in 1670, but the measure was ineffective and *timins* kept circulating in the Empire<sup>98</sup>.

In 1677, two ships, probably French, arriving with European coins were detained in the Izmir harbour when the authorities suspected that their cargo consisted of forged gold (*altun*) and silver coins (Sevillian *kuruş*). A court session was held in the house of the French consul. It was attended by the *kadı* Seyyid Ahmed Efendi, the customs’ officer (*gümrük emini*) Osman Ağa and the Janissary commander Murad Çavuş. After inspection of the coins by three specialists, the chief smelter (*kalçı başı*) Abdi Çelebi, the Armenian jeweller (*kuyumcı*) Yasif son of Budros and the Jewish smelter Maziliya son of Isak, they declared that they had not found any forged coins whose circulation was forbidden by *ferman* (MS Turkish 45, certificate No. 20, issued on 12 June 1677). Besides cash, commercial transactions were increasingly financed by bills of exchange<sup>99</sup> (and had been since the Middle Ages). From a number of letters in our collection it is clear that Ottoman officials — we have already come across examples — used their European friends to arrange transactions in this way. The Governor of Sidon, Osman Paşa, thus sent a request to a French ambassador requesting that he provide him with bills of exchange in order to permit him to remit tax money (*mal-i miri*) to the Ottoman Exchequer (*hazine-yi amire*) (letter No. 119). For such transactions, a French consul had to stand surety, otherwise they could not be honoured (cf. letter No. 158). In one letter (No. 186), a French ambassador, probably De Bonnac, complained to the Grand Vizier’s *kethüda* about the retention by financiers (*sarraf*) of bills of exchange sent to French merchants in Istanbul for speculative purposes so that cash (*akçe*) was in extreme shortage in the Ottoman capital.

A considerable number of letters and legal certificates deal with conflicts between merchants and local authorities, particularly customs officers — we have already come across examples.

One of the clauses in the capitulation of 1673 stipulated an export duty of three percent instead of the previous five. But already before that time French merchants challenged the levy which was considered to be unfair compared to the lower rights paid by the English and Dutch. One *hüccet* in MS Turkish 45 (No. 59), issued in Izmir on 3 April 1653, confirmed the levy of five percent. The *gümrük emini*, the Armenian Barsona, opposed the French merchants, represented by the second dragoman Yanni, who said in their defense that besides the normal five

<sup>98</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 246.

percent, three percent was the usual tariff for goods belonging to the consul. This view was confirmed by a number of employees of the customs office. Two years later, the *gümriük emini* of Galata, Abdalbaki Ağa, accused the *zimmi* secretary of the French merchant “Kraska”, clearly another scion of the Greasque family, of trying to smuggle a sealed bag (*memhur bir torba*) through the customs. The secretary stated before the *kadı* that the bag had only contained letters. He confirmed this statement, there being no witnesses, with a (Christian) oath<sup>100</sup>. The *hüccet* was issued on 25 August 1654 on behalf of the secretary.

The capitulation of 1673 decreased the general export duty for French merchants to three percent. In an undated request by a French ambassador, the decrease was presented as a welcome stimulus for trade, particularly beneficent to Ottoman *reaya* and advantageous to the Ottoman Exchequer (letter No. 18). The French “Emperor”, first among Christian princes, should also become the most favoured ruler in the Ottoman realm. Not long after the official copy of the capitulation had been handed to De Nointel (on 5 June<sup>101</sup>), the first conflicts on the levying of the duties occurred. Confusion was created on the import duties, normally amounting to three percent *ad valorem*, which seem, at least temporarily, to have been suspended for the French. The tax collector (*muhassıl*) of Aleppo, Şaban Ağa, demanded an import duty of one percent in Alexandretta and a further two percent at Aleppo from French merchants. A group of them, accompanied by the consul “Düyün” (= probably “Düpun” = Dupont<sup>102</sup>), showed the local *kadı* a copy of a recent *ferman* dated June 1673 (probably a copy of the *ahdname* itself) in which the import of piastres was declared to be free. (This right, as seen above, had already been granted in 1604.) But the tax collector was able to show an even more recent *ferman* which confirmed the customary levy of three percent for all Franks (*İfrenç*). The French claims were rejected (certificate No. 2, dated 28 August 1673).<sup>103</sup>

There were more cases in Aleppo during these years. In January-February 1676, two “Frankish” merchants, supported by Consul Dupont, opposed the (new) tax collector, Fazlullah Ağa. They successfully showed an *emr-i şerif*, which was also read out in court, obtained on the request of the Ambassador de Nointel, and addressed to the local governor, *kadı* and ağa, in which it was stated that once a levy of three percent had been paid for goods transported on ships sailing under the French flag in Alexandretta or Aleppo (and the receipt, *eda tezkiresi*, could be

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Elena FRANGAKIS-SYRETT, *The Commerce of Izmir in the Eighteenth Century (1700-1820)*, Athens, 1992, p. 12, *passim*; surprisingly, none of the general histories mentioned above discuss this aspect of economic life.

<sup>100</sup> Namely, on the God “who revealed the Gospel, and upon Jesus, peace be upon Him...”

<sup>101</sup> A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 111.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, p. 150.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. E. COOPER, “Preliminary Study”, p. 27 ff.

produced) another levy on the same cargo must not be exacted in the same places (*hüccet* No. 7). About a year later, this was confirmed in another *hüccet* whereby both the tax collector Yusuf Ağa and the French nation agreed to adhere to the rules laid down in the *emr-i şerif* (No. 35, issued on 14 January 1677 — an authorised translation was made by the dragoman Isak son of Abraham).

There were also problems in Sidon during the same decade. In four letters (Nos. 83, 84, 86 and 90), De Nointel complained that the local governor forced the French to pay an *avania* of 300 to 500 *kuruş* per year if they did not buy birdlime (*ökse*). This was contrary to the clauses of the capitulation. Two French merchants had been imprisoned for eight days after they had refused to pay custom duties, although they had already paid before. The governor also imposed a tax of 800 *kuruş* on the local Maronite churches.

Problems with greedy local authorities recurred time and again. In a letter by a certain Ali to his brother, a pasha, he mentions a petition sent by the ambassador “Baron de Châteauneuf” to the Imperial Camp (*ordu-yi hümayun*), in which the Ambassador complained about the levying of a fine of 40 *kise akçe* upon French merchants by the customs farmer (*gümruk mültezimi*), a Jew called Yasif, after they had already paid the three percent. The *Divan* had issued an *emr-i şerif* ordering respect for the capitulation.

We find another complaint about a demand for the repeated payment of custom duties on the same cargo in a letter by De Bonnac to a Grand Vizier (No. 97). A tax collector of Cyprus demanded, apart from the customary three percent, an extra levy of 40 *altun*<sup>104</sup> (2.5 *kuruş* per *kantar*) on a cargo of exported rice. De Bonnac asked the Reis Efendi to restitute the money (letter No. 174).

#### (d) Ambassadors and politics

The departure, arrival and reception of French ambassadors was accompanied by an exchange of letters between the Embassy and the Porte. Our manuscript Turkish 46 contains a number of letters on this subject. Preponderantly formal in character, most of them are not very interesting. Thus Denis de la Haye announced the appointment of De Nointel (letters Nos. 61 and 62). There is also a letter asking permission for De la Haye to depart on the four navy galleons that had brought De Nointel and the Ottoman envoy Süleyman Ağa<sup>105</sup> to Istanbul (Nos. 64 and 148). Some other letters discuss De Nointel’s reception at Edirne (Nos. 65, 75, 137 — Ahmed Paşa gave him permission to come and rub his head in the dust of the Sultan’s feet – 145 and 146)<sup>106</sup>. A request for

<sup>104</sup> A gold ducat, worth about 300 to 400 aspers.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *Représentants permanents*, p. 111-2.

<sup>106</sup> Letters Nos. 23 and 24 also discuss permission to travel to Edirne and might refer to the same ambassador.



his departure is discussed in letters Nos. 58, 67 and 138<sup>107</sup>. In another letter (No. 89), dated, probably, 1711, Des Alleurs asked the Grand Vizier for a welcome reception. The reception of De Bonnac by the Grand Vizier and his presentation of Louis XV's credentials are discussed in letters Nos. 203, 204, 209, 210 and 221, all written by *kaimakam* İbrahim Paşa.

A more interesting subject is De Nointel's controversial journey of 1673-1675. In what is perhaps the most curious letter of our manuscript Turkish 46, an unknown sender, probably one of the Embassy dragomans or secretaries, to, probably, the King or another high French official who had ordered an investigation of the ambassador's doings, wrote<sup>108</sup> "we hope he arrived in Izmir." But "he already travelled farther than the exalted permit [allowed him to] and [our] scale [*iskele*] was steeped in grief and sorrow" because all business, particularly the diplomatic correspondence and the building work in the Embassy, had come to a halt. Despite letters written earlier while floods of tears were shed and "which we knew were useless... we were unable to prevent him from obeying his nature which the French call *curiosité*". The author asked for a "strong and impressive letter" which might make De Nointel think twice. He also asked permission to approach the Grand Vizier's *kethüda* and ask him to urge the ambassador's return with the help of a firm letter.

There are two letters sent by Ahmed Paşa on this matter. In both De Nointel is addressed in the offensive second person singular. In the first (No. 135), he is reminded of not being allowed to travel beyond Izmir. Nor was he permitted to visit or stay in places like Rhodes. A visit to Jerusalem was out of the question. It had never been allowed to any of his predecessors, nor indeed, had any absence from their post. The second letter (No. 140) was threatening. "Whereas you were given permission to go to Izmir only, you nevertheless toured and wandered about the [Aegean] islands... and you even, contrary to custom, visited Jerusalem where you behaved in an unsuitable and vicious way..." This was all in violation of the articles of the capitulation as well as the law (*adet ü kanun*). "If such untoward activities become known, they will not be tolerated. They will be communicated in writing to your lord [*Efendiñ*] and you will be punished." (The journey indeed contributed, as we have seen, to De Nointel's ruin and his fall from grace.)

Apart from the patronage of Catholicism in the Levant, there were a number of other important political questions which had the attention of the French ambassadors. First, there was the recognition of France as a major, indeed the most favoured capitulatory nation in the Empire. In order to keep up that status, France had to acquire a new capitulation. As

<sup>107</sup> Letter No. 27 contains a similar request for an unknown ambassador.

<sup>108</sup> In Turkish, and not in French, so that the letter "did not fall into the hands of a Frank and its secret be uncovered...", as is stated at the end of the letter.

we have seen, this cost De Nointel quite some trouble and three years of patience. Other important points were the reduction of Genoa to the position of client; she was to be forced back under the French flag. Second, there was the jealous defense of the formal status of the French king as “Emperor” (*padişah*) and foremost prince of Christianity.

References to the renewal of the capitulations are found in a number of letters in MS Turkish 46<sup>109</sup>. A few letters were written during the difficult negotiations of the early 1670s. In the first (No. 53, dated 10 August 1671), the dragoman Fontaine, who in fact conducted the negotiations with the Grand Vizier’s *kethüda* (‘Kâhya Bey’)<sup>110</sup>, informed the Porte that the ambassador, disgusted with the behaviour of Halil Paşa<sup>111</sup>, wanted to leave his post and sail back to France. It would be further informed by a “nobleman” (*beğzade*), Sieur “Darvius” who would bring an official letter. (This was Laurent d’Arvieux, orientalist and ambassador-*manqué*, commissioned with this special mission by the King<sup>112</sup>.) In April, De Nointel had returned from Edirne to the Embassy in Pera after fruitless audiences with the Grand Vizier, Ahmed Paşa, and the Sultan. The Grand Vizier had given De Nointel six months to either accept his proposal for a renewed but unchanged capitulation, or quit. The answer from the King was sent with d’Arvieux, who left Marseille only in October and arrived in Istanbul only in February (1672)<sup>113</sup>. The letter instructed the ambassador to leave but only after further attempts at negotiations had completely failed. The second letter (No. 144), is a short note by, probably, Ahmed Paşa, in which he, again using the second person singular, reminded the ambassador that the six-month period had passed without an answer. In another letter, written probably half a year later, De Nointel complained about the Court Dragoman Panayotis’s behaviour. The latter had informed him that further decisions on the capitulation were postponed because of the military campaign [against Poland] — De Nointel had seen Ahmed Paşa in April (1672), but neither his interview with him, nor that with the Reis Efendi (in May) resulted in a concrete document. When he finally received the ambiguous draft (*defter*), it appeared that a number of articles proposed to the Reis Efendi and to which the latter seemed to have agreed, had been left out of it so that the negotiations were back at square one. He warned his addressee that if the “Emperor” were to hear about this, he would be furious.<sup>114</sup> As we have seen, a final agreement had to wait for another year.

<sup>109</sup> Nos. 25, 30, 66, 86, 97 and 141.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 65.

<sup>111</sup> Who this official was is unclear to me; it might have been the aforementioned governor of Sidon; another Halil Paşa (‘Koca’) in function during this period was a governor of Özü, cf. SO II, p. 288.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 32.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. J.B. LABAT (ed.), *Mémoires* IV, p. 351.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. for this episode, A. VANDAL, *Voyages*, p. 90-8.

De Nointel had been instructed, as said above, to exclude the Genoans as an independent trading nation from the Empire<sup>115</sup>. In a letter (No. 74) written before 1673, De La Haye or De Nointel even threatened the Porte that the admission of Genoa as a capitulatory power might result in the despatch of a man-of-war by the King in order to bring him, the ambassador, back to France. The late Sultan Süleyman had (in 1536) preferred the “Emperor of France” above the Genoans and the reversal of this situation had caused inexpressible pain. Our manuscript contains two negative replies by [Kara] Mustafa Paşa. “You have written many foolish words about the ambassador of Genoa,” he wrote (in letter No. 136), again in the second person singular. These were unworthy and wrong. It was also unsuitable for the King (*kral* — the word “emperor” was avoided) to foster “coldness and hostility” between nations which were living in peace. Referring to his offensive behaviour during earlier audiences, the Pasha expressed his hope that De Nointel would come to his senses<sup>116</sup> and act honourably. Then, what were the relations between Genoa and France? They were allies, weren’t they? The Genoese moreover were only a bunch of poor people who had found shelter with the Sultan. The French King certainly would not approve of any moves which caused a breach of friendship between the two nations. In another letter (No. 147), Mustafa Paşa informed De Nointel that the Sultan’s Court was open to friend and foe and no-one would be prevented from taking refuge with the great Shahriyar.

The preference of Genoa grated on French sensibilities and particularly offended King Louis XIV’s intent on becoming the most powerful monarch in Europe. De Nointel, accordingly, was instructed to defend his rank at the Porte<sup>117</sup>. The title “king” (*kral*) would not do; only the term “Padishah” was acceptable.

When a Grand Vizier called the King “king” (*França kralı*) instead of “emperor” in a letter sent to an ambassador, the latter asked him to correct it to “*França padişahı*” on the basis of a time-honoured tradition whereby the title was used in the French capitulations<sup>118</sup>. In a letter by De Nointel to, probably, Grand Vizier Ahmed Paşa (No. 82), he urged him not to allow the English to use the title of “Emperor” when

<sup>115</sup> “*Les Génois ayant été admis depuis peu d’années dans le mesme commerce, Sa Majesté veut qu’il [Nointel] fasse toutes les instances possibles pour obtenir leur exclusion...*”, P. DUPARC, *Recueil*, p. 75.

<sup>116</sup> “*ümid olunur idi ki bu mertebelerden sonra aklınız başınıza cem edüb...*”

<sup>117</sup> “*Il n’est point besoin de faire souvenir ledit Sieur Ambassadeur du rang et de la préséance qui lui appartient sur tous les autres, ce qu’il doit être d’autant plus soigneux de conserver à la Porte du Grand Seigneur que sa Majesté y est reconnue le plus puissant et plus considérable prince de la Chrétienté*”, P. DUPARC, *Recueil*, p. 65.

<sup>118</sup> It was first used in the capitulation of 1604, cf. H. İNALCIK, “*İmtiyâzât*”, p. 1185 (English edition). Antoine de Galland noted on 20 March 1672, that on the address slip of a letter from the Grand Vizier to De Nointel the word *kral* had been corrected into *padişah*, C. SCHEFER (ed.), *Journal d’Antoine Galland I*, p. 83.

indicating their monarch in their renewed capitulation (of September 1675<sup>119</sup>). He also expressed his hope that the new agreement would not harm French interests in the Empire.

When the threat of the commercial competition by Holland and England was diminishing during the 18th century, the rising stars in the Levant of Austria and Russia began to be felt as a growing threat to the French position. It was probably De Bonnac who objected in a letter (No. 112) to a Grand Vizier that the latter had used the term “Caesar of Germany” (*Nimçe çasarı*) for the Habsburg Emperor. “There is no doubt that the Austrians [*nimçeliüler*] want you to accept the title of *Imperator Romanorum* [for their kings]...” and thus to have their claim confirmed as protectors of the Latin “monks”, pilgrims and Holy Sites of Jerusalem. This claim, however, was spurious. The lands, of which Jerusalem had been part, belonged, before the Islamic conquest, to the (Roman) Empire (*imperatorlık*) but all other lands were later called kingdoms. The term ‘emperor’ was a privilege of the French monarchs which implied the exclusive duty of protecting Catholicism in the Ottoman Empire.

Finally, there was European politics, particularly the French and Ottoman involvement in them. The French ambassadors made sure that the Porte remained informed about French successes in the wars fought by Louis XIV. It must have been De la Haye who described the progress of the French army in Flanders; the capture of Furnes (Veurne) is mentioned as well as the fortification of Dunquerque against a possible English attack. This obviously was a reference to the War of Devolution of 1667-1668; Furnes fell to the French on 12 June 1667<sup>120</sup>. The ambassador also predicted a sound victory against their mutual enemy, Austria (*Nimçe*), in the coming year (letter No. 76). De Ferriol informed the Porte, probably in 1705, about the campaign of the King of Sweden (Charles XII, 1682-1718) against Poland and Saxony as well as the deposition of the King, Augustus of Saxony. “The French Emperor”, he continued referring to the War of the Spanish Succession, “has prepared more than 100,000 troops” and expected a major battle. He was confident that “he would always crush his enemies” (letter No. 93). Des Alleurs included a lengthy report, probably in 1713, on the complex developments in Europe (letter No. 91). The Spanish King made peace with England, Holland, Portugal, Savoy, Prussia and other nations, and was ready to withdraw from Sicily. (This obviously referred to the Treaty of Utrecht, concluded on 1 April 1713.) The Austrian Emperor, however, even after twelve years of fighting, was not content with the proposals and ready to continue the war. In order to force Austria into submission, the French Emperor had sent a force of 180,000 men against

<sup>119</sup> Cf. H. İNALCIK, “İmtiyāzāt”, p. 1185 (English edition).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Ernest LAVISSE, *Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu’à la Révolution* VII (2), Paris, 1906, p. 291.

her, which had captured Landau and other fortresses on the Rhine and invaded Germany. (Landau fell to the French on 20 August 1713; peace was signed at Rastadt on 6 March 1714<sup>121</sup>.)

Des Alleurs, curiously, also informed the Grand Vizier (or perhaps the Sultan) about the joint preparations for war against Russia by the Ottomans under Abdi Paşa, “King Stanislaw”<sup>122</sup>, the King of Sweden (Charles XII, who then was in residence at Demirtaş near Edirne) and the Khan of the Crimea in Hotin (Khotzim). (This was in April 1713). In another letter (No. 94), he reported on the expected arrival of the Muscovite envoy in Edirne; he was of the opinion that the King of Sweden was to return to his country. (This probably referred to the preliminaries for the peace of June 1713 concluded between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.) The ambassador added that the French Emperor was involved in heavy fighting against the Austrians.

In December 1714, the Sultan declared war against Venice. Austria joined the Venetians in April 1716. As seen above, the war turned into a disaster for the Ottomans and in August 1717 Temeşvar and Belgrade fell to the Austrians. The loss of Belgrade was reported to De Bonnac by Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa (letter No. 208). In May 1716, Ferencz Rakoczi II, who had fled to Paris after the Austrian occupation of Hungary and Transylvania and hoping to regain his throne, offered his services to the Sultan after the Ottomans had occupied the Morea in the summer of 1715. This fact is mentioned in the same letter to De Bonnac. Nothing more was heard from the exiled prince and the Grand Vizier asked for information from France.

The disaster in the Balkans led to the dismissal of Mehmed Paşa (in August 1717), who was replaced by İbrahim Paşa. Already before that time, the “French Emperor” had expressed his wish for peace and İbrahim Paşa, at that time still *kaimmakam*, sounded out the ambassador as to whether France would be interested in playing a role in coming negotiations (letter No. 215). As seen previously, De Bonnac had been instructed to move the Porte towards a separate peace with Venice, and in fact had permission to act as plenipotentiary (*muraħhas*). The Pasha emphasized that the Sultan’s honour should not be put at risk. Mehmed Paşa (in letters Nos. 216 and 218) wrote the ambassador that he would appreciate De Bonnac’s personal services as a mediator; these would bring him ample rewards (*mükafat*). The ambassador sent a special courier to Paris to ask for further instructions (letter No. 222). The French move was soon overtaken by events in the Balkans where Venice failed to force a decision; although it was able to occupy Preveze, the Republic was defeated off Cape Matapan (on the Morea, July 1717). In Istanbul, the British and Dutch ambassadors were informed of the Porte’s wish to negotiate a peace agreement (letter No. 232). By that

<sup>121</sup> Cf. E. Lavissee, *Histoire VIII(1)*, Paris, 1908, p. 137.

<sup>122</sup> Stanislas Poniatowski, pretender to the Polish throne.

time, however, “Austria, vain and conceited, was far from ready to agree with the proposals of the Porte”, and İbrahim Paşa wanted to know what France’s position would be, whether she would work at a reconciliation between the Porte and Austria, or would force it to adopt Austria’s unsatisfactory proposals. He would also like to know her position vis-à-vis Venice and whether she would support a joint Austro-Venetian participation in the negotiations. The honour of the Porte was at stake and it required the handing back of Temeşvar and Belgrade. Meanwhile, the Porte had not heard from Venice and the Pasha thought that a separation of the allies would be difficult, clearly as difficult as “separating a fish from water”<sup>123</sup>, or the soul from a body. Later İbrahim Paşa informed De Bonnac (in letter No. 233) that negotiations had started between the Porte, the British and Dutch ambassadors, and the Austrian plenipotentiary Michael Kalmann. The new Grand Vizier reminded the ambassador of his earlier plans for a separate peace with Venice which would have forced Austria to her knees. Nothing more had been heard about it; he wondered whether De Bonnac were still interested in acting as plenipotentiary and urged him to respond quickly. We do not know whether, and if so, what De Bonnac replied, but France did not play a role in the preparations for the Peace of Passarowitz (of July 1718).

(e) Daily life in the Levantine scales

*Diplomatic personnel and the French nation*

A major topic in the letters of MS Turkish 46 is the welfare of Frenchmen and their protégés in the Levant, foremost their protection from the danger of rapacious Ottoman officials<sup>124</sup>. Two letters (Nos. 43 and 44) discuss the French guardianship of Royalist English merchants by the French ambassador; they declined the services of a certain “Cavalier Hayd” — meant is probably Sir Henry Hyde<sup>125</sup> — who was busy negotiating a new English capitulation<sup>126</sup>.

<sup>123</sup> “[Venedik] Nimçe’den mufarikatı baliğın sudan mufarikatı misali add eyledüğiz zahirdür...”

<sup>124</sup> The subject in general is encountered in letters sent to the Porte, Nos. 37, 77, 89, 93 (concerning Egypt), 102 (Syria), 130, 159 (Egypt); in No. 230, exceptionally dated 6 September 1718, Osman Paşa, *muhafız* of Sidon, promises protection of the local French merchants.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch Esq.* I, London, 1913, p. 146 & 318. Hyde — his name is also spelt as Hyde — was consul in the Morea (Peloponnese) and having bought a *voyvodalık* and *bacdarlık* from riches earned in the currant trade, he became an Ottoman tax collector; entrenching himself in his fiefdom he was able to fend off all attempts by his English employers to remove him from office; eventually, fatally falling out with the Levant Company over his Royalist sympathies during the Civil War, he was abducted from the Levant and shipped home; in February 1651 he was tried for treason by the judges of the Admiralty and executed in the City of London, cf. William

A pivotal role in the security of the French community was played, or rather was meant to be played, by the ambassador and the consuls appointed in the various “scales”. A number of letters in MS Turkish 46 as well as some *hüccets* of MS Turkish 45 deal with the appointment, affairs and dismissal of consuls, dragomans and other diplomatic personnel<sup>127</sup>. On some occasions conflicts arose between the Embassy and the Porte about these men. Ambassador De la Haye protested (in letter No. 2) to the Porte against the bad treatment suffered by the newly appointed consul at Cyprus, Petro Oleon (?), who was forced to pay the debts, 29 *kise kuruş*, of his predecessor, the English consul Salady (Savary<sup>128</sup>?). The sum was owed to the tax collector (*mütesellim*) Nimetullah Ağa and the collector of tax imposed on non-Muslims (*cizyedar*) el-Hacc Veys Ağa. Later he became the victim of further extortions and was forced to pay up to 50 *kuruş*. The ambassador protested that this was against the capitulations as well as the law, and demanded restitution. He also threatened to withdraw all French merchants from the island. Two *hüccets* issued by a local *kadı* established, on the grounds of the “new law” (*kanun-i cedid*), that the French consul must pay the 29 purses (No. 53, dated February-March 1669; No. 45, dated 9 March 1669). The outcome of the conflict is unknown.

In another case, the French ambassador, De la Haye or De Nointel, protested against the presence in Sidon of a pretender in the person of a Druze called Abū Nūfal who acted as second consul. His letter of appointment (*berat*) clearly was false (letter No. 32). The Porte seems to

Dalrymple, review article on Daniel GOFFMAN, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660*, University of Washington Press, *The Guardian*, 20.3.1999.

<sup>126</sup> To which episode this might refer, I do not know; it must have taken place during the period of Civil War (1642-1660), see previous note; only in 1675, as we have seen, the English capitulation was renewed; neither A.C. WOOD, *A History of the Levant Company*, Oxford, 1935, nor G. ABBOTT, *Under the Turk*, mention Hide.

<sup>127</sup> *Hüccet* No. 62 (January-February 1590) deals with the appointment of Marko son of Yani (Marc son of Jean) as representative (*vekil*) for matters of taxation (*miri masalih*) by the community of Ortaköy, Galata (at a time when there was no French ambassador); letters nos. 51, 79 and 80 (dealing with the appointment of a consul in Balyabadra (Patras) so as to avoid the further dependence on a Dutch colleague — a certain “Danbur” (Dambourg?) former First Dragoman at Sidon was appointed); no. 190 (appointment of a consul at Tripoli); *hüccet* No. 18 (replacement of the dragoman Dimitraki at Durrës by Cuvan Dukanis (?) son of Francesco, 20 August 1672); in letter No. 214, Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa demands the recall of dragoman Dimitraki, maybe the same person, a former agent of the *voyvoda* of Walachia, who was to be interrogated; No. 129 is a request by De Bonnac for the appointment of a Janissary of the 55th division as *yasakçı* (consular guard) at Midilli. In one letter (no. 156), Abdi, *muhafiz* of Egypt, thanks the consul Lemaire (?) for the good services of his dragoman De Mathon (?) on a journey to Tripoli (Syria).

<sup>128</sup> Jan Battista and Simon Savary are known as Dutch merchants in 1701, cf. K. HEERINGA, *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel II*, The Hague, 1917, p. 154.

have sent two orders (*emr-i şerif*) forbidding the man to exercise his adopted function (letters Nos. 46 and 48). In another letter, Fornetti demanded the return of a newly appointed consul of Antalya who had refused to see the ambassador in Pera and was implicated in a complex financial scandal (letter No. 39). Grand Vizier Mustafa Paşa complained, probably to De Nointel, about the illegal activities of a dragoman of Izmir called Deliyannis who had illegally appropriated a fief (*hass*) whereby the holder received the local market dues (*bac-i bazar*), fines and feudal dues raised on land labour (*resm-i tapu*) (letter No. 151). Osman Paşa, the *mutassarif* of Avlonya (Vlora), finally, asked De Bonnac (in letter No. 241), to stop tormenting the Jewish dragoman<sup>129</sup>, Shit son of Yasif, who had served as interpreter during the Morea campaign (of 1715). De Bonnac answered (letter No. 242) that the dragoman had been dismissed after he had left his post without permission.

Diplomatic personnel below the rank of consul were generally recruited among Ottoman subjects, mostly Christian *zimmis*. The French Embassy in Pera seems to have employed Muslim clerks as well. Two letters (Nos. 33 and 50) by a French ambassador concern the estrangement of the Embassy copybooks (*defterler*) which had been kept by a certain Sıdkı Efendi, now dead. They were subsequently handed to a certain Ahmed Efendi by the deceased's predecessor Molla Efendi who had left them in his house when he went to Kurkkilise as a *müsellim* (administrator). The ambassadeur asked for a prompt restitution of the books to Hasan Efendi, probably the new clerk, because they were still in use for international affairs<sup>130</sup> which were now being neglected.

An important task of the Embassy was to arrange travel permits for Frenchmen. Requests for these documents are the subject of a number of letters<sup>131</sup>. Correspondence with France normally took place by ship, but a few letters contain requests to Ottoman officials to assist the conveyance of letters by way of Austria<sup>132</sup>. Other formalities handled by the Embassy concerned the delivery of wine to the Embassy staff and some French houses in Galata. Wine was freely available in the Levant and cheap<sup>133</sup>, but for the import of European wine a special permit had to

<sup>129</sup> “*rencide vü remide eylemeyüb himaye vü nevaziş ile beynü l-akran mümtaz ü mesrur eyleyüb...*”

<sup>130</sup> “*saltanat beyninde vaki olan ümur...*”

<sup>131</sup> Nos. 34 (for arriving and departing sailors); 36 (for “monks” travelling between Istanbul and Jerusalem); 52 (for the arrival of a “nobleman”, possibly Laurent d’Arvieux, on a navy vessel to Istanbul); 56 (for two French travellers, (Jean) Chardin and Raisin on their way to Palestine and Georgia; this referred probably to their journey begun in 1671, cf. introduction to Chardin’s *Voyage de Paris à Ispahan*, Stéphane YERASIMOS (ed.), Paris, 1983; and 201 (the delivery of ten *fermans* for ten French ships).

<sup>132</sup> Letters No. 184 (a request by, probably, De Bonnac to the *muhafiz* of Niş, Abdullah Paşa, for the free passage of an Embassy *yasakçı*); No. 185 (the same request by the Grand Vizier); No. 187 (letter by Abdullah Paşa to De Bonnac, granting the request).

<sup>133</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 207-8.



obtained<sup>134</sup>. One letter (No. 201) mentions the issuing of nine such *fermans* to Fornetti by Edib Mustafa Efendi. A number of *hüccets* in MS Turkish 45 establish the annual delivery to the Embassy in the 1670s<sup>135</sup>. At the unloading of the wine in, probably Tophane, an intendant was present who was appointed by the chief police inspector (*bostancı başı*). In one letter (No. 104), De Bonnac asked the inspector to instruct the man not to demand more than the usual tip.

The protection of the French community in the Levant also required the continual oiling of relations between them and the Porte. This was done by the exchange of “letters of friendship”<sup>136</sup>, of gifts and the performing of small services. Thus, an unknown correspondent of Fornetti, probably a Grand Vizier, asked him to provide him with fur, but the dragoman excuses himself by replying that the article was extremely expensive in Moscow at the time, costing three times the normal price. Osman Paşa, the *muhafız* of Damascus, requested and later thanked Poullard<sup>137</sup>, consul at Sidon, for his assistance in having a broken watch or clock (*saat*) repaired (Nos. 85 and 154). A French consul in Egypt saw to it that the Ottoman governor was sent an elephant’s tooth (No. 96). A grand vizier, probably Fazıl Ahmed Paşa solicited the present of a clock from the French ambassador, probably De Nointel, for the occasion of Ramazan. He had received one in a previous year, but it had been no good (No. 149)<sup>138</sup>. In a letter dated 5 March 1718, the *kaimmakam* İbrahim Paşa thanked De Bonnac for (unspecified) gifts which he had received from him (No. 220). De Bonnac also asked permission from the Porte to have four horses sent to the “first *hetman* of Poland”, Sieniawski<sup>139</sup> (Nos. 177 and 178). As we have seen, De Bonnac made some efforts to promote the career of officials who were deemed useful supporters of French interests. In a case not yet mentioned, he asked the Grand Vizier to promote a *müderriş* (college professor), el-Hacc Fethullah Efendi, who had showed lavish hospitality to French travellers, merchants and a dragoman, to the post of *kadı* in Baghras (near Alexandria, No. 128).

<sup>134</sup> Cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 208.

<sup>135</sup> Nos. 29 (22 October 1672; 4400 *medre* (mitre, equal to 10-12 litres) received out of a permitted 7000); 32 (28 November 1677; 3000 received out of 7000); 44 (1 June 1675; 2000 received); 60 (9 June 1674; 1000 received); 65 (15 October 1672; 4400 received out of 7000); 66 (20 November 1678; 3500 received out of 7000).

<sup>136</sup> Examples are: Nos. 14, 31, 207, 217, 219, 231 and 244.

<sup>137</sup> The consul is mentioned in P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, p. 311, anno 1716.

<sup>138</sup> See on the presentation of clocks as diplomatic gifts, O. KURZ, *Clocks and Watches*, p. 60-2 (“One appeared in audience with a clock under one’s arm,” p. 60.)

<sup>139</sup> Adam Sieniawski (1666-1726), an important Polish grandee and *hetman* (military commander), cf. Norman DAVIES, *God’s Playground. A History of Poland I*, Oxford, 1981, p. 503.

*Frenchmen in trouble*

Despite all efforts to maintain good relations, the French community, as we have seen, were time and again confronted with antagonistic behaviour by local officials. In a case not yet discussed, a French ambassador, probably De la Haye, complained to the Porte that the *voyvoda* (mayor) of Galata demanded from French subjects and protégés that they pay the tax levied from non-Muslim Ottomans, *harac*, from which they were exempted by the capitulations (letter No. 34). De Nointel shortly upon his arrival in Istanbul complained about the same case (letter No. 108)<sup>140</sup>.

In the 1670s, as we have seen, the French community of Sidon and in Egypt went through difficult times under rapacious governors. During the embassy of Châteauneuf, serious problems again seem to have arisen (letter No. 163). According to the Egyptian finance director (*defterdar*) İbrahim Beg in a letter to the recently arrived De Ferriol (in 1700), the consul, Maillet<sup>141</sup>, had ignored good advice and tolerated that the French merchants donned white turbans reserved for the Muslims. This caused hostility among the local population. Churches threatened to be torn down, merchants were vilified and one of them was flogged (*ta'zir etdükde*) by the Janissary Agha. Later, some merchants visited the local barracks (*ocaks*) and tried to bribe the Janissaries when one of them, who owed the governor Mehmed Paşa twenty purses, wanted to avoid payment. Thanks to his, İbrahim Beg's, support of Maillet, the French had not been driven from Egypt. (The letter obviously was written by the *defterdar* to ingratiate himself with the new ambassador and it is difficult to establish to what extent he wrote the truth.)

During, probably, the embassy of De Bonnac, a grand vizier wrote to the Janissary Agha of Edirne that the French, English and Dutch ambassadors had complained of his hostile behaviour towards the Frankish merchants<sup>142</sup>. They were protected by capitulation and should not be forced to pay taxes more than once (letter No. 123). De Bonnac, in another letter (No. 106), wrote to a Grand Vizier that "yesterday, Wednesday, a dragoman and two French gentlemen [*beğzadeler*], made a trip in a rowboat [*kayık*] and moved to the other side [of the Bosphorus]. When they were passing between Fenerbahçe and Maltepe, all of a sudden six guards [*bostancıs*] approached them." Although all of them

<sup>140</sup> *Hüccet* No. 12 (of 11 November 1654), established the restitution of 1692 *esedi kuruş* by Yusuf Efendi, intendant (*emin*) of the Ottoman Exchequer, to a Frenchman called Laurent de Colmenon (Cormenin?) which the former had illegally taken from him, not accepting his status of *müstemin*.

<sup>141</sup> Consul in Egypt, 1692-1702, cf. P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, p. 267.

<sup>142</sup> Only one of them could have been a Frenchman, cf. P. MASSON, *Histoire du commerce (xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, p. 435: between 1685 and 1719, there was only one French merchant in Edirne.

were in possession of permits (*tezkires*) signed by the *bostancıbaşı*, and told them so, the guards refused to listen and beat them with sticks. Two of the gentlemen were injured on their heads, two others wounded at various other places and another had his arm broken, and “was left behind [balancing] on the brink of death”. They were also robbed of their rifles. De Bonnac demanded that justice be done.

Then as now, crime was a recurrent feature of daily life. A number of cases of murder, theft and violence, mostly taking place in Istanbul, are described in our manuscripts.

In 1656, a body was found near the slaughterhouse known as “Bloody Lambs” (*kanlı kuzular*) in the Kasımpaşa quarter to the west of Pera. A police officer (*hasseki*) and the *kadi*, Abdülkerim Efendi, went to the scene of the murder and established that the left side of the victim’s face had been struck by an axe and that his throat had been cut with a knife. A trace of blood led to the threshold of the French first dragoman’s, Jean Battista’s (Fornetti’s), house on the cross-roads in the Kalfatçıbaşı district (*hüccet* No. 24, dated 21 August 1656). This intriguing document has a sequel. Fornetti complained about the disreputable area of the “Bloody Lambs” in a letter (No. 7). People were regularly being killed there by brigands during the night. The *bostancıbaşı* sent night-watchmen (*ases*)<sup>143</sup> to the quarter but among them were a couple of scoundrels (*müfid*), registered in the judicial records (*sicillat*), who falsely contended that there were criminals among the dragomans. “We have seen blood”, they added. Thus, “they greatly insulted me, gave me a severe blow, injured my head, led me away and imprisoned me.” The *kaimmakam* held an inquiry and the guards’ false testimony “brought me and my family to the brink of ruin, as is known by all”. He begged his addressee, probably the Sultan, to exercise his influence with the Reis Efendi, and rehabilitate him and the ambassador.

Another French dragoman, a certain Nikola (Nicholas) son of George, probably identical with Fontaine<sup>144</sup>, and two of his *zimmi* companions were, on their way from Istanbul to Izmir, robbed at Timurkapu (Demirkapısı<sup>145</sup>). They lost a belt containing 100 “Frankish” ducats (*altun*), 100 *riyal kuruş*, four watches (*akreb saati*)<sup>146</sup> and a ring studded with a diamond. Then there was a wallet, belonging to the dragoman, with 85 Frankish ducats, two pairs of earrings as well as a pair of plain golden earrings. The second companion lost 35 *kuruş*, a precious ruby and 25 *esedi kuruş*<sup>147</sup> (*hüccet* No. 54, dated May-June 1662). Six years later, a Frenchman, De Fenouille (?) son of Louis, was accused in the

<sup>143</sup> A marginal note explains the term as “*Patrouille*”.

<sup>144</sup> The name “Fontaine son of George” occurs in *hüccet* No. 16; “Nicholas son of George” also occurs in *hüccet* No. 25.

<sup>145</sup> Possibly in Galata, cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 209.

<sup>146</sup> A watch (or a clock) with an hour hand only.

<sup>147</sup> Dutch lion dollars used as piastres, worth 70 to 75 aspers, cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, table between p. 244 and 245.

*kaimmakam's Divan* by a convert (*mühtedi*) Mehmed b. Abdullah of Gedikpaşa, Istanbul, of having stolen from his house 30 *esedi kuruş*, 100 drams of silver and six pocket watches (*koyun saati*), worth 240 *kuruş*. The Frenchman denied this under oath (*hüccet* No. 34, dated 18 March 1668). A Frenchman called Isaac son of Meniye (= probably Magy), together with a certain Mehmed Beg b. Abdullah, an agent of the *zimmi* Vasil, confessed to having robbed the latter, Vasil, of two hour clocks (*akrebli saat*), a silver lunar-and-day clock (*aylı günli saat*)<sup>148</sup>, a gold-plated watch, 80 *altun*, a pair of gold bracelets and a silver girdle. When Vasil ordered restitution, the partners in crime accused one another of being in the possession of the precious objects and money (*hüccet* No. 33, dated 8 February 1670). In yet another case involving clocks, a Frenchman, Petro son of Nicholas, probably a dragoman and son of Fontaine, was demanded to retribute two watches (*akreb saati*) which had been given to him for repair by a perfumer (*attar*) of Galata, Mani son of Yorgi. He was accused after having declared under oath that the clocks had been stolen from him. "I put them in my room in the French ambassador's palace for storage among my clothes and other belongings. One day at sunset, my room was [forced] open and my clothes and belongings as well as the watches were taken away..." (*hüccet* no. 18, dated 18 August 1679).

Two *hüccets* of MS Turkish 45 concern cases of public violence. In the first, the French dragoman, Yorgi son of Nicola (George son of Nicholas [Fontaine]) accused a Jew of Galata, Kemel son of Israel, of having deliberately and without any reason torn his collar in a place called "*lonca yeri*" ("Guild Place"). The Jew, in turn, accused the dragoman of the same (No. 43, dated 3 August 1669). An Embassy guard (*yasakçı*), Mehmed Baş b. Ahmed, accused six merchants of the Coral Market (*mercan carşısı*) of having attacked him at the Kurşunlu Han in Galata. One of them, Hüseyin Baş b. Mehmed, had also hit him with his fist and tried to strangle him. The incident was confirmed by two witnesses (No. 26, dated 27 May 1675).

Later incidents, taking place under De Bonnac's embassy, are documented in MS Turkish 46. In one letter (No. 109), De Bonnac complained to a Grand Vizier about the activities of a Greek brigand called Maryanos who, with the support of the *voivoda* of Galata, caused great distress to the Christians, especially the Frankish *müstemins*. While wearing a green fur cap (*kalpak*), which meant that he was in the service of the police and was on the beat day and night with thirty to forty tavern keepers (*meyhanecis*), "he raided many houses and perpetrated all kinds of lewdness and depravity (*fisk u fesad*) so that neither the worshippers of Allah nor our merchants can find peace..." De Bonnac demanded that the man be exiled.

<sup>148</sup> See for these types of clock, O. KURZ, *Clocks and Watches*, p. 56.

There were also complaints in other Ottoman cities. It was probably also De Bonnac who asked the governor of Tripoli (Syria) to assist in the recuperation of the money and goods stolen from the French consul (letter No. 179). In a letter by the *kaimmakam* İbrahim Paşa to a *kadı* of Aleppo, Osmanzade Ahmed Efendi, he urged that “it be forbidden to annoy the French consul, his followers and merchants”. He had heard about hostile acts against them. These should be stopped and trespassers be punished (letter No. 205).

### *Day-to-day affairs*

Quite a few letters and legal certificates concern the daily affairs and conflicts, private and commercial, of the French community as far as they touched — or collided with — the interests of local Ottomans. Private affairs (often not to be distinguished from more public ones) include the lease of property, marriage settlements, legacies and the release of household slaves.

The direct possession of property by foreigners was not possible before the middle of the 19th century. Houses, often including shops, stores, sheds, gardens and the like were normally leased, mostly from “pious foundations” (*vakfs*), for a fixed period of time. A number of *hüccets* in MS Turkish 45 are lease contracts issued on behalf of Frenchmen and French protégés<sup>149</sup>. In one case, a house situated in Pera next to the property of the French second dragoman, also present in court, was given as security for a loan of 660 *riyal kuruş* to another *zimmi* (No. 47, dated 26 July 1652). Another two certificates are contracts of the sale of houses. Thus, a certain Ayse Hatun, daughter of Mehmed Efendi of Üsküdar, sold a house and grounds near the Adliye Mosque in Galata to a Jew called Avram son of Jakov for 40,000 *akçe* (No. 71, dated 9 September 1662). A second certificate documents the sale of a house of three stories in Bereketzade, Galata, by a certain Hasan Çelebi b. Musli-hüddin to the French dragoman Curci (George) son of Fontaine for 2300 *esedi kuruş* (No. 70, dated 18 August 1673).

The embassy correspondence of MS Turkish 46 also comprises some letters about housing problems. A note on a scrap of paper between fols. 140 and 141, is a request by the consul of Acre to, probably, the local *kadı*, to allow a French merchant to continue his lease of a house where he had lived for twenty years but from which he was threatened with expulsion by the shaykh-owner. De Bonnac requested a *kethüda* (Kâya Bey) to permit the lease of a small *yalı* (seaside villa) near the fishing weir (*dalyan*) in the quarter of Şehid Ali Paşa to a sister of “one of our

<sup>149</sup> No. 13 (a shop with rooms and storage in Galata is leased to two *zimmi* brothers, Yanni and Constantin son of Nicola for 1700 *akçe*, 30 June 1607); No. 48 (a house in Tophane is leased to Mandalina, sister of Battista son of Thomas [Fornetti] for 1050 *akçe*, 15 July 1647); No. 58 (a house in Galata is leased to Nicole, daughter of Liforoz for 7500 *akçe*, 22 September 1619).

merchants” (No. 133). Two letters, probably also sent by De Bonnac (Nos. 182 and 183), are requests to the Porte to intervene on behalf of the French merchant David Magy. The latter had a contract (*temessük*) for a year’s lease (for 400 *kuruş*) on a house in Galata, owned by Ayşe Hanım, daughter of the late Grand Vizier Hüseyin Paşa, for 400 *kuruş*. He found that the house was occupied by an Englishman called Hanger (?). Discussions with the agent [*vekil*] of the house-owner, the French and English dragomans and the *çavuşbaşı* (chief halberdier) had been fruitless.

One certificate in MS Turkish 45 is a contract for a marriage settlement (*mehr-i müeccel*)<sup>150</sup> of 2000 silver aspers (*akçe*) of current value between an agent (*vekil*) of the mother of the bride, an “adult virgin (*bekr-i baliğ*)” called Sultana daughter of Panayot of Beşiktaş (Galata), and the agent (*vekil*) of the husband, Barda (?) son of Yako, both *zimmis*.

Problematical legacies are documented in five certificates in MS Turkish 45<sup>151</sup>. More interesting for the historian are perhaps two certificates in the same manuscript which document the presence in Istanbul of household slaves of European origin. In the first (No. 16, undated), the dragoman Fontaine (son of George) declared that he released a female slave (*cariye*) of Polish descent, Anna, daughter of Yuvan, “with wide-spaced eyebrows, blue eyes and unbelieving”, who had served him for three years. A certain Ahmed Paşa, of Mahmudpaşa (Istanbul), declared through an agent the release of a female slave of Frankish origin — her father appears to have converted to Islam — Ayşe, daughter of Abdullah. She had also “wide-spaced eyebrows” as well as grey eyes and was of medium height. He also gave her a pair of golden bracelets, a pair of emerald earrings, a silver girdle, a ruby ring, a hundred *esedi kuruş* and furniture for a room worth 500 *kuruş* (No. 17, dated 25 February 1652).

<sup>150</sup> = part of a dowry paid by the husband in case of a divorce or widowhood; cf. also Colin Imber, “Women, Marriage and Property, *Mahr* in the Behçetü ‘I-Fetāvā of Yenişehirli ‘Abdullah”, in *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, Istanbul, 1996, p. 263-88.

<sup>151</sup> No. 6 (claim of Battista son of Thomas (Fornetti), his mother Despina and sister Mandalina on a part of the legacy of their grandfather Domenico, a *zimmi* of Galata, for sums of, respectively, 1130, 243, and 567 (*kuruş* ?), dated 27 August 1642); No. 14 (settlement of a claim of 2500 *akçe* from the estate of a *zimmi*, Nicola son of Anton of Galata, by his brother Lorenzo, who had died in Walachia, dated 14 February 1589); No. 19 (statement by the widow of a *zimmi* merchant, Yuvan son of Tis (= Johan son of Thijs ?), in the presence of the French ambassador, François Savary de Brèves, that he had received 20,000 out of the arranged dowry (*mehr-i müeccel*) of 220,000 *akçe*; not “a kernel” of her late husband’s capital had remained, dated 24 April 1596); No. 37 (demand of the *defterdar* of Cyprus, Hüseyin Efendi, for the restitution of the estate of the merchant Kasir who turned out to be an Armenian *zimmi* from Anatolia and busy in the trade with Persia, and not a Frenchman, by the French consul Balthasar Soane (?) — it was granted — dated 19 September 1678); No. 72 (settlement whereby the widow Rubia of the deceased French merchant Gilles son of Rasko (= Grasko = Greasque) of Galata received 500 *esedi kuruş* from the deceased’s son, Matthieu, dated 18 March 1681).

*Traders and shopkeepers*

Apart from the lease of houses, MS Turkish 45 also documents other commercial transactions and the conflicts surrounding them. These give us a picture, albeit a highly fragmentary one, of the relations between French merchants and Levantine traders and shopkeepers.

Three certificates concern the conflicts in the purchase of clocks and jewellery. A *solak* (palace guard) Ramazan Beg b. Hasan sold a clock for 32 *riyal kuruş* and 50 *akçe* to the Frank “Silostra b. Guylam” (Sylvestre, son of William?). Only 20 *riyal kuruş* had been paid (No. 28, dated 13 November 1650). A Frenchman, Laramé, son of Henri, of Galata, claimed to have given an Armenian woman, Rahide, daughter of Narhad, a pair of silver knives in a case worth 1000 *akçe*. She denied this, but two witnesses confirmed the Frenchman’s version of events (No. 23, 19 July 1655). The clockmaker Mehmed Beg b. Abdullah received a clock (or watch) worth 20 *esedi kuruş* from a Frank called Isaac, son of Sen (?) (No. 52, dated 4 March 1670).

Two *hüccets* document transactions on a larger scale. In the first, seven Muslim tanners (*debbag*) of Ebu Eyüb (Istanbul), demanded payment from a Frank called “Kez b. Yuvan” (= Kees, son of Johan?) of 123,165 *akçe* for a delivery of 391 *kantar* of wool (*yapağı*). It appeared, however, that the wool had been sold through a Jew called Yahya, son of Yako(v) who had also been paid for it (No. 25, dated 8 July 1651). From the second, it appears that a group of five Muslim leather dealers (*köseleci*) of the Coral Market (*mercan çarşısı*, Istanbul) had been given an option on the purchase of 441 hides (*köseles*) for fifteen *timin* per hide from a certain Yahya Çelebi b. Receb, but that the latter had sold the lot to the French merchant Fabbri, son of Fabbri<sup>152</sup>, within the arranged period of fifteen days. The French merchant had agreed to pay a surplus of one *para* per hide (No. 9, dated 7 May 1675). In another certificate (Nos. 15, 46, 51 [identical copies], dated 23 February 1668), it was established that the Armenian Allahverdi b. Marat, despite his denial, had received 913.5 Sevillian reals from a French merchant of İzmir, Pierre Monis (?). Finally, a conflict arose about the payment of bread. Despite his protest to the contrary, it appeared that Battista son of Thomas (Fornetti) had actually paid the Armenian baker Hajuk, son of Bali (of Tophane), the sum of 800 *akçe* in the Embassy garden for bread delivered to the dragoman, his mother Despina and his sister Mandalina (23 May 1657)<sup>153</sup>.

An important category of *hüccets*, closely related to the previous one, involve debts. The oldest (No. 63, 22 November 1622), established a

<sup>152</sup> On the Fabre family of merchants, originating from Marseille, cf. R. MANTRAN, *Istanbul*, p. 556, n. 3.

<sup>153</sup> To complete this survey, one letter of MS Turkish 46 (No. 243), dating from De Bonnac’s embassy, refers to an (unspecified) conflict between a Jew of Jerusalem and a French merchant.

debt owed by the French merchant Greasque, son of Jean, to a Muslim, Yusuf Beg b. Zeynülabideyn. The latter had sold the former 391 *kan-tar* of wool for 123,165 *akçe*, but had received only 46,000 *akçe*. A claim of 37 *riyal kuruş* by three French passengers against a Frankish captain was not supported by the *kadı* (of an unmentioned town) after the captain had been interrogated under oath (No. 36, 31 May 1651). A servant of the Galata clockmaker “Silostri b. Silostri” (Sylvestre, son of Sylvestre?), a certain Sefer (?) Beg b. Abdullah, admitted to owing the latter 34 *riyal kuruş* after his labour contract had expired. Another certificate established that the deputy (*kethüda*) of the governor of Ağrıboz (Chalkis) still owed 513 *riyal kuruş* to Jean, son of Bernard, after a delivery of two pieces of scarlet and red cloth (*pastav*) (worth 510 *kuruş*) and 174 cubits (*zira*) of plush (worth 1255 *kuruş*) (No. 27, dated 4 June 1655). A debt owed by the son of the consul of Sidon, Vico Sohan (?), son of Vico, to a (Janissary) officer (*zabıt*) called Mehmed Ağa was settled with bills of exchange (No. 39, dated 24 December 1661). In a letter (No. 47) by a French consul to, possibly the governor of Sidon, the former urged the latter to pay a debt of 500 *esedi kuruş* owed to the local consul.

A debt of 9200 *esedi kuruş* owed by a Frenchman called “Kuzbe Sancak” (St. Jacques) to two Persian colleagues residing in Izmir was settled by the delivery of 2000 cubits (*zira*) of cloth (No. 3, dated 5 May 1670)<sup>154</sup>. The French merchant St. Jacques is also mentioned in two letters of MS Turkish 46. In one of these (No. 54), a French ambassador complained to the Porte that a cargo sent by him to Izmir was confiscated upon arrival after false accusations by his enemies. The ambassador demanded restitution because the French community was in great turmoil. The same complaint was lodged by De Nointel upon his arrival in Istanbul (in 1670; No. 63). Both letters may refer to the same conflict.

A debt of 680 *esedi kuruş* owed by a captain (*reis*) called Petro to a Jew of Istanbul, Ishak, son of Ismael, was settled with a bale of black cloth (*kumaş*) (No. 56, dated February-March 1667). A debt of 150 *riyal kuruş* owed by, possibly, the same Captain Petro to a *zimmi* of Değirmen (Milos) was settled with a gift of a rowboat (*kayık*) with trappings (*tetimmat*) (No. 55, December-January 1672-3). A French captain called Anton Vilaud (?) who transported Ottoman (*miri*) goods between France, Malta and Istanbul, lent an Ottoman broker, Mustafa Beg b. Abdullah, who travelled with him on his ship, a sum of 112,5 Sevillian reals (No. 61, undated).

Finally, MS Turkish 45 contains two other types of legal certificates, those of attorneyship and labour contracts. An English merchant appointed a Frenchman called Francisco Jean Bastobur (?) as administrator of his house and garden in Beğtepe, Beğpazarı. He was also authorised to sell the garden’s crop (No. 69, undated).

<sup>154</sup> Cf. E. COOPER, “Preliminary Study”, p. 36 ff.



The labour contracts all concern personnel of Galata artisans and shopkeepers. The clockmaker Sylvestre, son of Sylvestre (cf. above), engaged a local jeweller to work for him for one year and a half for 78 *riyal kuruş* (No. 49, 25 April 1658). Two years later, the same clockmaker summoned a certain Filippo, son of “İstefani” (Stéphane) to the local court for not honouring his contract and stopping work three months prior to the expiry of his four-year contract. The employee was condemned to pay 17 *riyal kuruş* (No. 8, 10 August 1652). Another clockmaker, probably a relation, Guiglielmo, son of Sylvestre, contracted a certain Bayram b. Abdullah for a year’s work for 100 *riyal kuruş*. If he should fall ill, he had to make up for lost time (No. 38, dated 30 April 1651). Another French clockmaker of Galata, “Baluda b. Gulbun” (?), contracted a young man, a minor from Kuzguncuk (Üsküdar), called Christodoli, son of Panayot, as an unpaid apprentice (No. 42, dated 2 December 1669).

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#### CONCLUSION

The letters and *hüccets* of our manuscripts, then, above all have the merit of bringing us into direct and often unexpected contact with a historical reality long gone. They also add details to well-known facts and, previously unperceived, nuances to a history which has been familiar to scholars from the days of the first pioneering archival studies undertaken in the 19th century. The common theme of all our texts is that of contact, foremost between Frenchmen (diplomats, merchants, shopkeepers and others) and Ottomans, from Grand Viziers down to brigands. Contact in rare cases led to a crossing of cultural and religious barriers.

Although Ottomans were only exceptionally engaged in international trade outside the borders of the Sultan’s lands, from the 16th century onwards there was an increasing number of, foremost, *zimmi* merchants who travelled beyond the more familiar grounds of the Balkans and Italy to north-western Europe. In one letter in MS Turkish 46 (No. 165), De Bonnac informed a Grand Vizier about a financial conflict between two Armenian merchants in Paris, Anton Jurji and Daniel Afil (?), normally residing in Leghorn. They had gone to the courts, even to the highest council (*büyük divan*), and Anton was condemned to pay Daniel 21,655 *kuruş*. The latter had, in order to evade imprisonment in Paris, decided to move to the Levant and continue litigation in the Ottoman Empire. (De Bonnac had been in contact with Anton’s local agent and seen the documents.)

An even more profound form of crossing cultural barriers was that of conversion. In about the same period, the Grand Vizier’s *kehüda* el-Hacc Mehmed Ağa informed the ambassador that the son of a French general and twenty of his followers had boarded a galleon to Malta. Instead of going there, they moved to Modon (Methóni, Peloponnesos) and adopted Islam (No. 226).

Some letters, finally, give us a rare glimpse of the private life of correspondents. Fornetti thanked a “Pater Efendi” for three volumes of his dictionary in which Arabic, Persian and Turkish words were explained in Italian<sup>155</sup>. He assured the scholar in rather exaggerated terms that he had “remained awake day and night” in order to study the book. “Since the creation of the heavenly spheres there has not been found such an amazing work; not only I myself, but the whole world stood astounded and was giddy (*hayran u sergerdan*)...” (No. 72). In another letter (No. 227), the Khan of the Crimea, Saadet Giray, informed the ambassador (probably De Bonnac), that he had sent his Jewish doctor (*hakimbaşı*) Yasif “to help him with his dreams”<sup>156</sup>.

A few letters, finally, concern Ottoman internal affairs — we already have come across examples. A curious instance of this exceptional category are the instructions given by, probably, Grand Vizier Ali Paşa, to his *kaimmakam* on how to conduct financial matters during his absence (No. 162). He urged him to see to the administration of the endowments for Mecca and Medina, especially beneficial for the poor, and to take care not to lease tax farms and trusts (*emanets*) to insolvent or bankrupt people and not to relinquish them for a period longer than three months. Special attention was to be paid to the tribute from Egypt for which it was crucial to maintain good relations with the governors of that province.

A more intimate letter was written by a *kethüda* of the governor of Egypt, Süleyman, who wrote to a certain İsmail Ağa (“my brother”) in Istanbul to receive well a relation of “our dervish”, Halil Efendi (No. 157). “God the Merciful willing, you will receive him in your house and look after his keep and you will not spare efforts to treat him kindly until the galleon arrives...” How this letter came into the hands of our letter collector probably will always remain a mystery.

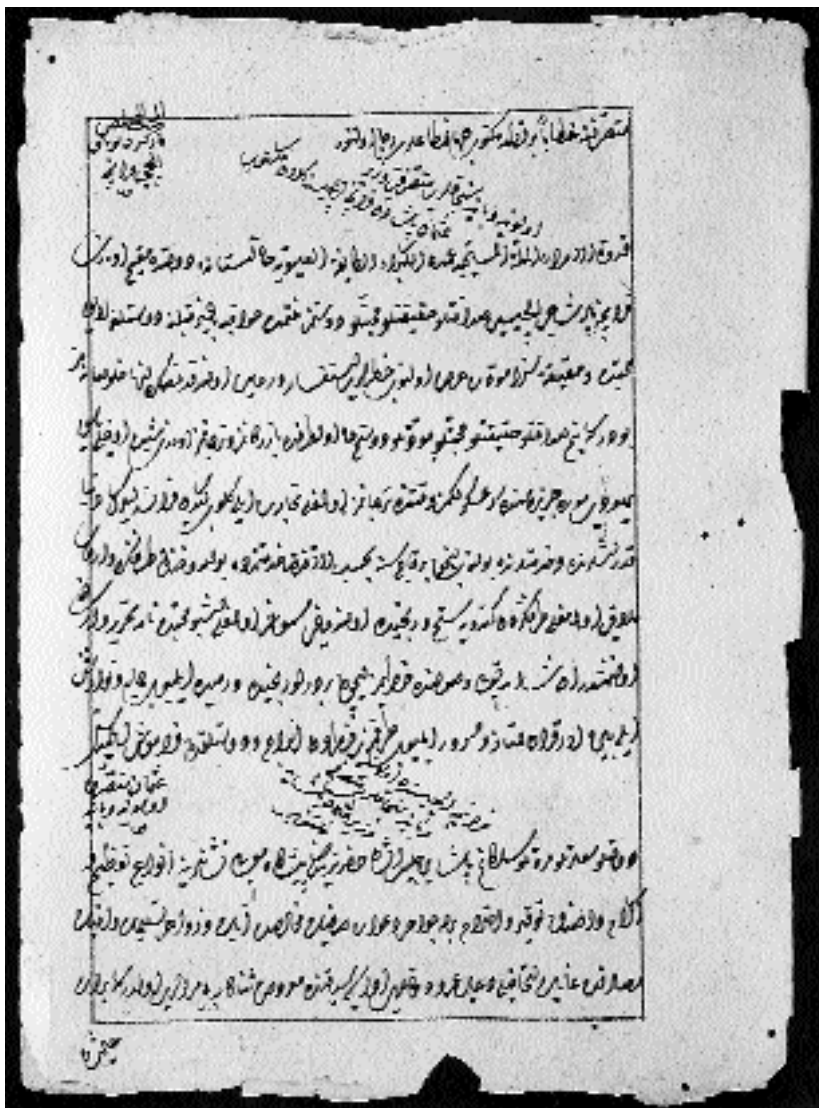
<sup>155</sup> This might have been the “Introductorium practicum in linguas Arabicam, Persicam, Turcicam” of the missionary Germanus de Silesia (1588-1670) which only existed in manuscript, cf. Johann FÜCK, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis an den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1955, p. 78; another, remoter, possibility is that he referred to the famous three-volume dictionary, *Thesaurus*, of Franz MENINSKI, printed in Vienna in 1680. Both works were written in Latin, however, so maybe a less well-known work is meant.

<sup>156</sup> “*düş hususlarına müsaade edüb...*”; *düş* might also mean “back”, or even “breast”.

عهد استانبول و كوك بك پاشا فرزند محلة سید ساكن محمد بن عبد الله نام  
 حیات الهی  
 مرشدی دیوان فایم مقام حضرت سلطان عظیم ده عقد اولیایه مجسم شرع عالمیه  
 فرانسیه ستان تارین باصفی الحنفی منیر ولد لوف نام ستان حضرت اوزر  
 و عوی و فرید کلام ایروپ بوند اولم مزبور وقتو محله مزبور ساكن اولدیغ  
 مغول کلوب مغول اچنگ اولان اوزر اسدی مغول شریک و یوزده هم کوشی  
 و عوی ایکبول قریب مغول قیمنلو الی عهد قیون ساعتی و بر ساعت طرفی  
 حقیق اخذ و قبض الیست مغول اولان اویب اعیان موجوده ایلی عیانی باک  
 سله و سینه بلکه ایسه مبلغ مزبور اوزر اسدی مغول شریک ایلیون در هم کوشک  
 مغول شریک و ذکر اولان ساعت اوله طرفت قیمت شریک لرینی باک ضامن اولوب  
 و بر یک اوزر مزبور وقتو بر نعی اولمق مطلوب بدید و بدکده غیر المسئول  
 و الا نکاس مدی مزبور دن مدعا سنی بیینه بدید طلب اولمق قدح اشیا بر بیینه  
 انهارا بحیثه ایله استخلافه ایتکین مدی مزبور کوشی و عوی مغول  
 اوزر اسدی مغول شریک و یوزده هم کوشی و الی عهد ساعت اوله بر ساعت  
 طرفی و عوی اوزر اخذ و قبض ایتیا یوب الی اعیان زدی مبلغ مزبور  
 ایلیون در هم کوشک اشیا فی ذکر اولان ساعت اوله طرفت قیمت  
 شریک لرینی مدی مزبور ضامن اولوب و بر یک اوزر مزبور لازم اولمق غیر مرقوم و ضمیمه  
 بیون تکلیف اولمق قدح اولدیغی علی وفق المسئول بیون بالقدح الی اولدیغی حلی  
 عیسی علیه السلام ایتکین موشیجه مدی مزبور بلکه بیینه و عوی اوزر معارضه دن  
 منع مراد موقوف بالطلب کتب فی الیوم الرابع من سنو المظفر لسنه ثمان و سبعین و الف

شماره ۱۰۰  
موتور

استخلافی  
موتور



بَعُون لِقَةِ تَعَالَى اسْتَأْنَدَ دَعَا خَالِنَا فَرَجِحَةَ الْجَيْشِ وَأَنَّ مِلَّةَ مَسِيحِيَّة  
 نَأْتِ عَرَبِيَّةً دُونَ سَمْرِ الْجِلْدِ حُضُورَ لِرَيْنَه  
 قَدِ اسْتَمْرَقَ بَيْتُ عَمِي خَلْفِي وَرَجِيحُ بَيْتِ عَمِي  
 مَعَهُ تَبِيْزُ مَعَالِي الْعَمَلِ الْفَعْلِي وَرَجِيحُ بَيْتِ عَمِي كَرِيْمِي

صدراعظم محبتلود و تنهن لويجي چابنير سلام ملاحتلجام و پيام مصارقت لرتسا اقله  
 انهار و ستانيز اولدرك بون ادم مغرب طر ايلدز نمانه زنگور انا فرنج شربت  
 اوستا كيا طر اقره واقع مانيد بر و ته قريه حله و نبرك و فاسانه مصارقت اولدرك  
 سوار اولدو قمر شتية اخذ و اون بش نور ضبط اولدرك نر نكر سكر شتور شتور  
 ايشياي اوجر صا لويو بدير بدير ازميه كلنو بدير كيم شنه فتودمكر نو نش و بديك  
 مراد لهد ايلدرك ازم برده اولدو ايشي قونسلوي عيني ايشيا كوتور و بوردون  
 و طر قنر كاھدر باروب نولهني دغي و بر درد كور نكر بو طر اقلد كترده زرد خر قون  
 و مقدر اوزر المش كو نوكين يا عيني ايشيا و يا حود بيسي كلك اوزر حوا و و شكار  
 بولنه دكين خيل و ماندر بر اتر شي قلم بو ايلدكل محبت نامه كير اولدند بو خصوصه  
 د و سابق اير و بر و قنوا اقلد بر نري تصديق ايمكر حاجت قون سور حصد اولد اعظم  
 ايلدرك در نزاج سيع مشور اولورن

الحيا بوسندا

Jan SCHMIDT, *French-Ottoman Relations in the Early Modern Period and the John Rylands Library Mss Turkish 45 & 46*

In the John Rylands University Library in Manchester two unique manuscripts are preserved which give detailed information on some aspects of French-Ottoman relations in the 17th and 18th centuries. The manuscripts, shelved as Turkish 45 and 46, contain collections of, respectively, correspondence (copies of Turkish originals or translations into that language) received at or sent from the French Embassy at Istanbul and legal certificates issued by *kadis* on behalf of Frenchmen or French protégés in the Ottoman Empire. Apart from a wide range of private affairs, the letters and certificates are concerned with, foremost, the protection of Roman Catholics and the Holy Sites at Jerusalem; privateering and slavery; trade and diplomacy. The present paper aims to offer a survey of the contents of the manuscripts and put the many-faceted data found in the texts in historical perspective.

Jan SCHMIDT, *Les relations franco-ottomanes au cours de la période moderne dans les manuscrits 45 et 46 à la bibliothèque John Rylands*

Dans la collection de la bibliothèque de l'université de Manchester, the John Rylands University Library, sont conservés deux manuscrits uniques qui donnent des informations détaillées sur quelques aspects des relations franco-ottomanes des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Ces manuscrits, numérotés Turkish 45 et 46, contiennent des collections de correspondance, copies de lettres ou traductions de lettres en turc, et des certificats légaux accordés par des *kadis*, aux Français ou aux protégés français résidant dans l'Empire ottoman. Mis à part des affaires privées, les lettres et les certificats concernent la protection des chrétiens catholiques et les sites sacrés de Jérusalem; la piraterie et l'esclavage; le commerce et la diplomatie. L'article vise à présenter les textes des manuscrits de la manière la plus précise possible et à situer les faits évoqués dans leur perspective historique.