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The Ottoman-Venetian Border (15th-18th Centuries)

Maria Pia Pedani

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Studi turchi e ottomani

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Maria Pia Pedani

translated by
Mariateresa Sala

Venezia
Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing
2017

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Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Dorsoduro 1686
30123 Venezia
http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/
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1a edizione marzo 2017
978-88-6969-138-6 [ebook]

http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/libri/978-88-6969-138-6/
DOI 10.14277/978-88-6969-138-6

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Abstract

The aim of this book is to study the development of frontier and border relations between Christian and Muslim countries at the end of the Middle Ages and in the Modern Age. Few essays have been written about the Ottoman border in the Modern Age: when and how it was created, how it developed and which documents were produced to establish it. Some documents that have been recently discovered show that a proper border already existed at the end of the fifteenth century, at least in some regions of the Empire. The first chapter deals with the words used both in Europe and in the Islamic world to express the idea of frontier, border, boundary and other related concepts. Then, the second chapter tackles the concept of frontier in general. A further field of study is represented by the relations that took place in a frontier region; about this subject, several examples are provided by the contacts between the subjects of the Republic of Venice and those of the Ottoman Empire. For many centuries, also the sea was considered to be only a frontier, crossed by ships of corsairs, pirates, *levend*s and regular fleets. In the third chapter, the author analyses how a land-border was usually established. The first Ottoman border with a Christian state seems to have been that with the Republic of Venice. The fourth chapter describes the society that lived in a border region. The fifth chapter deals with the Mediterranean. In general, Europeans and Muslims had different opinions about the possession of the sea: on the one hand, the former thought that it belonged to everyone and no sovereign could presume to rule over it; on the other, the latter thought it could belong to a prince. A border is not only a line established on the ground. It may also be everything that separates two different ways of thinking and living. In this logic, the elements used to identify 'the other' become more and more important. The sixth and the seventh chapters deal with the means used to recognise a foreigner and the people who crossed a border. Signs were put on things, but also human bodies might be signed for ever; the behaviour was also another important element that divided the subjects of a ruler from those of another; also the way of imagining 'the other' varied according to the centuries, above all as far as Christians and Muslims were concerned. The development of the means used to identify a group or a person are also of special interest. With the appearance of new documents of personal identification, the study of the passage from the concept of frontier to that of border may be considered to be complete. A slow development that, in the sphere of Christian-Muslim relations, had begun in the Middle Ages had finally reached long-lasting results. Nowadays, new technical devices allow us to create new borders; they are no longer linked to the idea of space, but to the image individuals offer of themselves as well as to the way of living and considering our and others' time.

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Preface

In 1996 I published a work about Christian-Muslim peace agreements between the Middle Ages and the Modern Era.[1] On writing it, I discovered how important it was to establish a borderline to maintain good relations between neighbouring states. Thus, I turned to this topic and focused on the Ottoman Empire. Few papers had been published about this subject till that moment. In 1969 Rifa'at Abou el-Haj described the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier;[2] from that time onwards, scholars went on repeating his words over and over again and the idea that Ottomans left the frontier to create their first real borderline only after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) became an unquestionable historical truth. As for me, I had at my disposal the huge amount of documents kept in the Venetian State Archives that gave a different version on the matter and also provided a vivid account of the life along the Ottoman-Venetian border zone. In 2000 I published my first paper dealing with the idea of frontier[3] and, in 2001, I wrote about sea borders and the so-called *Triplex Confinium*, i.e. the place where the Venetian, Ottoman and Habsburg empires met.[4]

In 2002 I organized the material I had gathered in the previous years and wrote this book. It was, however, written in Italian, as it had been suggested by some of my colleagues, but this fact prevented it from being widely known, since few scholars interested in the Ottoman Empire know this language. Then, I wrote other papers in Italian and English on the same topic.[5] In the meanwhile, other historians began to be interested in this subject[6] and some of them, who did not know my language, asked

1 Pedani, *La dimora della pace.*

2 Abou-El-Haj, *The Formal Closure of the Ottoman Frontier in Europe*, 467-475.

3 Pedani, *The Ottoman Venetian Frontier*, 171-177.

4 Pedani, *Spunti per una ricerca sui confini del mare. Gli Ottomani nel Mediterraneo*, 221-239; *Das* Triplex Confinium*. Diplomatische Probleme nach dem Karlowitz Frieden*, 115-120.

5 Pedani, *Cristiani e musulmani nel Mediterraneo*, 239-251; *Beyond the Frontier. The Ottoman-Venetian Border in the Adriatic Context from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, 45-60; *The Border from the Ottoman Point of View*, 195-214; *Ottoman Merchants in the Adriatic*, 155-172.

6 One of the first books with papers on this subject was *Constructing Border Societies on the Triplex Confinium,* ed. by Drago Roksandić and Nataša Štefanec in 2000.

me information about the Ottoman-Venetian border. Thus, I realized that it was time to publish an English translation of this text but I did not want to change it or to revise its bibliography: it would have meant to change it or even to write another book. I preferred to leave it as it was since I am sure that it still has a lot to say to historians interested not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in the Venetian Republic and, in general, in Muslim-Christian relations.

I want to thank here only Mariateresa Sala who translated this book so well and always kindly met all my requirements.

For the transliteration of Arabic words the following characters have been used:
a, ā, b, t, ṯ, ǧ, ḥ, ḫ, d, ḏ, r, z, s, š, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ẓ, ‘, ġ, f, q, k, l, m, n, h, u, ū, w, i, ī, y.

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1 The Words

Summary 1.1 Comparisons. – 1.2 Frontier. – 1.3 *Taġr*. – 1.4 *Limes*. – 1.5 *Munāṣafa*. – 1.6 *Dār al-ṣulḥ*. – 1.7 Border. – 1.8 *Ḥadd*, *sınır*, *hudud*. – 1.9 *Ġazw* and *gaza*. – 1.10 *Militärgrenze*.

1.1 Comparisons

At the beginning of his book on the creation of the Ottoman state, Cemal Kafadar states, by means of a nice image, that Osman was for the Ottomans what Romulus was for the Romans, namely the eponymous hero of a political community that succeeded in a foreign land.[1] Proceeding along the same path, however, some antithetical elements may be noticed: Romulus began his adventure as the sovereign and the priest who marked out the primeval furrow of the city of Rome carving the ground with his ploughshare; crossing it, and therefore negating that holy border, spelt death for his brother Remus. Romulus' power lay in that furrow, in that split between the sacred and the profane, in that partition of competencies: in that idea of border. On the contrary, the so-called 'classical' historiography about the Ottoman Empire stressed the fact that Osman was a *gazi*, son of a *gazi*, that is to say a warrior who fought along the farthest frontier of the *dār al-islām* to defend and spread the faith. This is the so-called 'ideology of the holy war', namely a thesis that was advocated by Paul Wittek in the 30s of the twentieth century and that was never challenged before his death.[2] On the one hand, there is the *rex*, who is invested with power by gods, marks out a straight line and creates not only a territory but also the *regula*, the law. On the other, there is the *gazi* who, fighting the *ǧihād*, moves the frontier further and further; the frontier is a vague and moving area where everything mingles and changes and it holds in itself the idea of a confrontation with a hostile element, while the law for which the *gazi* fights is the Islamic one that joins religion and state and divides the world into two opposing entities: the *dār al-islām*, whose future success is certain, and the *dār al-ḥarb*, namely the land of the infidels doomed to a defeat.[3]

1 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 1.

2 Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*.

3 Mélikoff, *Ghāzī*, 1068-1069; Johnstone, *Ghazw*, 1079-1080.

In the history of the first Ottomans, therefore, two well-defined ideologies would clash: on the one hand, there is the idea of border that was handed down by the Romans to the succeeding European states; on the other, there is the idea – which is of Islamic origin – of a frontier that is always expanding, to which only the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) put an end by the force of arms. If historiography could reckon only with theories, and not with facts, the question would be perfect and complete in itself. It remained as such for decades. Wittek himself did not delve into the subject of the Ottoman Empire's frontier, even though it was one of the bearers of his theory. Only in the last two decades, in the wake of the critical review of the 'ideology of the holy war' as the asset of the Ottoman advance, were specialised essays devoted to the idea of frontier/border between Christian and Muslin countries. Various aspects have been considered: not only political and military, but also religious, social and economic ones. At the same time, scholars also realised that, throughout the Middle Ages, the idea of border, which has been inherited from the Roman world, underwent changes due to the bursting of alien elements belonging to other cultures: those who are usually defined as barbarians brought different ways to consider and live one's own and other people's space into the Roman culture while, at the same time, the law men obeyed started to depend only on the group they belonged to and not on the country where they lived.

1.2 Frontier

Frontier and border are not synonyms, even though one often tends to employ them without perceiving their correct meaning. The frontier is a belt of territory that holds in itself the idea of 'front': the enemy who may advance or fall back is beyond it. The same applies to the French *frontière*, the Italian *frontiera* and the Spanish *frontera*. This term appeared in the Iberian peninsula for the first time: in Ramiro I of Aragon's first will, which was drawn up in the year 1097 of the Spanish era, equivalent to 1059 AD, we find the expression «ad castros de fronteras de mauros que sunt pro facere»; also in his second will of 1061 AD, we read «in castellos de fronteras de mauros qui sunt per fare et in castellos qui sunt in fronteras per facere»; at last, in a third act of the following year, the sovereign himself stated: «et tu quod cavallero et franco sedeas quomodo homine debet esse in frontera francho et caballero». With regard to the first use of the word 'frontier', it may be observed that, first of all, it appeared in a military environment linked to the state power; then, that it was used to refer not to a defence line but to a dynamic space turned towards the Muslim enemy and, finally, that the term was linked to a behaviour that was necessarily

far from set patterns and characteristic of a land of conquest and freedom.[4]

The idea of frontier as an entity that is essentially political and military was then mainly used in the French state ambit, since Valois' times to Richelieu's, and was later welcomed by European historiography in general. On the contrary, the American epic made the frontier a passage area that was open to any possibility and where the enemy was the hostile nature in place of the neighbour: it became a region inhabited by free and self-sufficient men. American historians were notably influenced by this concept, which was later passed on to overseas colleagues too. Moreover, it should be underlined that right in the US, in the 20s of the twentieth century, Frederick Jackson Turner was perhaps the first to regard the frontier as a valid historiographic subject and to dedicate a volume to it, even though this was focused on the history of his country and on the meaning the concept had had in that reality;[5] it was mainly by means of his work that the American idea of frontier spread to the extent that it influenced also people that studied completely different contexts: it was the case of Wittek as for the origin of the Ottoman Empire, or of Claudio Sanchez Albornoz as for the Christian advance in Spain.[6]

Originally, however, speaking of frontier meant, first of all, making reference to two opposing worlds, the Christian and the Muslim ones, which shared out the Iberian peninsula.

1.3 *ṯaġr*

According to Philip Sénac,[7] the idea of bounding the space does not seem to have been an important element in the ancient Arab-Muslim civilisation of Spain; for instance, in al-Andalus, the frontier was not a line but an area. Thus, in the Omayyad era, once the Ebro Valley had been conquered, it began to be identified as *al-Ṯaġr al-aʿlā*, the upper frontier (or marchland).

The word *ṯaġr* (plural *ṯuġūr*) was, therefore, used in this way by Arab writers. It comes from the root *ṯġr*, which holds an idea of opening, mouth and, thus, of frontier and teeth. It cannot be found in the Koran but in the pre-Muslim poetry; it appears also in some *ḥadīṯ*: Abū Dāwūd al-Siǧistānī (d. 275 AH/889 AD) uses it right with the meaning of frontier referring to

4 Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. 3, 421; Sénac, *Islam et Chrétienté*, 100-101; Sénac, *Ad castros de fronteras*, 205-221.

5 Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 1-38.

6 Bazzana, Guichard, Sénac, *La frontière*, 56-57; Power, *Introduction*, 1-12.

7 Sénac, *Islam et Chrétienté*, 106; *La frontière et les hommes*, 109-114.

the caliph 'Umar's era.[8] During the Ottoman advance in Asia Minor, this word was used to mean, par excellence, the regions of the north of Syria and Mesopotamia close to the Byzantine Empire. Within these confines, *ṯuġūr*, in the plural, evoked the line of strongholds that guarded the likely arrival of the *basileus*' armies, beyond which a proper no man's land extended, purposely depopulated by Heraclius (610-642) when he withdrew from Syria; the *basileus* had purposely ravaged the plain of Cilicia between the Anti-Taurus and the Taurus to defend Anatolia and Armenia, pushing away its garrisons and its inhabitants. This area was subject to recurrent attacks and was called *al-ḍawāḥī*, i.e. the outside place, the exterior, or else *ḍawāḥī al-Rūm*. On this side, a compact territory with a series of strongholds extended. These were known as *al-'awāṣim* (or the protectresses) since Hārūn al-Rašīd's times (786-809) and the warriors could take refuge there after their raids.[9]

In the singular, the word *ṯaġr* was also used for meaning the big harbours of the Syrian coastline – Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre and Acre – that safeguarded against enemy attacks coming from the sea.[10] With the meaning of commercial stronghold, it may be found in the Mamluks' times in Egypt: the Muslim *ṯuġūr* were the harbours 'protected [by God]', frequented by infidel consuls and merchants, mainly Venetians, but Florentines too. Two documents written in Arabic at the turn of the fifteenth century state: "in the previous kings' time, their consuls and merchants had frequented the Muslim *ṯuġūr* to sell and buy just like the Venetians' little state did".[11] In the documents of the time, Alexandria almost seems to be the *ṯaġr* par excellence, even though it shared that appellative with Damietta, Ashkelon, Tyre, Sidon and other seaboard towns, just like Crete, Cyprus, Sicily and other islands were called *al ṯuġūr al-ǧazariyya*.[12]

In the Far West, instead, as we saw, *ṯaġr* was widely used to mean the areas close to the realms of the north of al-Andalus and, more generally speaking, took on the meaning of 'marchland'. The most recent historiography believes that, in this region, the system of the recruiting centres (*ǧund*, plural *aǧnād*) that the Omayyad caliphs had constituted in Syria was

8 Cf. Manzano Moreno, *La Frontera de al-Andalus*, 31.

9 Canard, *al-'awāṣim*, 783-784; Keiko, *Migration and Islamisation*, 87-91.

10 Miquel, *La perception de la frontière*, 130-131; Bianquis, *Les frontières de la Syrie*, 140; Bonner, *The Naming of the Frontier*, 17-21.

11 «Ai tempi dei re predecessori, i loro consoli e i loro mercanti avessero frequentato i *tuġūr* musulmani per vendere e comprare al pari del piccolo stato dei veneziani» [translation of the Author of the text]. See Amari, *I diplomi arabi*, 184-209 (year 1496); see also 218-220 (year 1507).

12 For example, cf. al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ*, vol. 10, 357, 439, 446; vol. 11, 32, 405; Udovitch, *Islamic Treatise*, 37-38.

re-created, giving the name of *ṯuġūr* to those that were placed in frontier areas. Thus, the territory of Saragossa and the entire north-eastern region of al-Andalus were called 'the upper frontier' (*al-ṯaġr al-aʿlā*) or 'the remote frontier' (*al-ṯaġr al-aqṣā*), while the area near the central Cordillera was known as 'the middle frontier' (*al-ṯaġr al-awsaṭ*) or 'the near frontier' (*al-ṯaġr al-adnā*).[13]

The word *ṯaġr*, therefore, generally indicated an area of encounter or clash between Christians and Muslims: on the one side, there was the *dār al-islām*, of which it was a part; on the other, there was the *dār al-ḥarb*: to take it into account, observers must necessarily place themselves on the Muslim side. Once the frontier had been violated, the *ǧihād* (the legal war) became a duty for the Muslim sovereign. Among his tasks, as a matter of fact, there were the support to religion, the maintenance of a correct fiscal administration and the safeguard of the frontiers,[14] namely the *ṯuġūr al-muslimīn* that, at least theoretically, could never move back. It was not a constantly expanding frontier, however: for instance, right in the Iberian peninsula, after the Battle of Poitiers (732), in front of a Christian front that kept advancing, a Muslim one was founded, but this tended to switch, even though it was politically, socially and economically more definite.[15]

1.4 *Limes*

In the course of time, the Muslim frontier in the Iberian peninsula shrank more and more. Even though there are the due differences, a similar contraction occurred also in the case of another state entity whose expansion, almost theoretically, should have had no limits: the Roman Empire, an "imperium sine fine" as Virgil writes. The concept of *limes* came about right with regard to the Roman troops' advance.

In general, the *limes* is considered to be a fortified line placed in defence of the Empire; however, this word underwent several changes throughout the centuries. According to Benjamin Isaac, three phases may be identified in its evolution: a) in the first century AD, in a moment of expansion, it meant the military road built to penetrate into the enemy territory; b)

13 Manzano Moreno, *La Frontera de al-Andalus*, 44-69.

14 Laoust, *La pensée*, 56. According to al-Māwardī, the defence of the frontiers is the fifth of the caliph's ten personal obligations.

15 Cf. Manzano Moreno, *The Creation of a Medieval Frontier*, 38-40; the author recalls that, according to Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150AH/767AD), the transformation of the *dār al-Islām* into the *dār al-ḥarb* was possible in three circumstances at least: when non-Muslim laws were enforced, when the *dār al-ḥarb* was near and when Muslims' life and goods were not safe. The problem of the passage from an entity to the other came up again with colonialism (cf. Pedani, *La dimora della pace*, 54).

from the first to the third century, it was adopted to define a frontier region of the Empire, without referring to military structures; c) from the fourth century onwards, it was a frontier district with a connotation that was more administrative than military, while the *turres* and the *praetendurae* that studded it were, above all, an element of political control of the territory.[16] S.T. Parker, on the contrary, points out that, throughout the second century, a 'scientific frontier' was created. He uses the adjective 'scientific' because it was either marked by a series of forts linked by roads or made of an uninterrupted barrier such as, for example, the Hadrian's Wall.[17]

Since the Roman Empire extended up to the Persian borders, the concept of *limes* did not belong only to Europe, but also to the Near East. According to George Tate, the frontier between Byzantium and Persia in the north of Syria and Mesopotamia underwent a drastic change around the seventh century: between the fourth and the seventh century, it looked like a linear series of forts and fortified towns linked by roads; between the seventh and the eleventh century, when Muslims made their appearance and became more and more dangerous, the situation changed and the line became an area that, moreover, was placed no more according to the north-south axis, but in an east-west direction.[18]

1.5 *Munāṣafa*

Even though it is rarely used, another word deserves to be taken into account when we talk about frontiers, borders and territories divided between Christian and Muslim countries: it is the Arab word *munāṣafa* (fifty-fifty, co-ownership). The text of the armistice reached between the Mamluk sultan Baybars and the Hospitallers of al-Marqab on the 1st *ramaḍān* 669/13 April 1271, thoroughly debated by Urbain Vermeulen,[19] explains what this word means in detail: namely a territory that is placed under a joint sovereignty. More specifically, this agreement implied that buildings and produces, tilled lands and deserted areas, rights, duties, income taxes on the al-Marqab's suburbs and the neighbouring area pertained both to the sultan and the knights, and that the customs of the country could not be modified. Both states were responsible for the safety of those passing from the Muslim territory to the Christian one, and vice versa, and they both had also to jointly supply men for the escorts. With regard to the

16 Isaac, *The Meaning*, 125-147.

17 Parker, Roma*ns and Saracens*, 7-9.

18 Tate, *Frontière et peuplement*, 151-155.

19 Vermeulen, *Le traité*, 123-131; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 34-35.

criminal law, Muslims had to be judged according to the *šarīʿa*, but the proceeds of fines and penalties had to be confiscated and shared between the two parties. If the goods that had to be seized belonged to a Muslim merchant or a *ḏimmī* living in the sultan's lands, the latter would confiscate them; instead, if they were of a Christian who came from Christian areas, then they would be due to the knights. Also police' tasks had to be carried out jointly, since the Mamluk officers guarded the Muslims, while the Hospitallers' ones repressed the Christians' abuses; however, nobody could be imprisoned without the consent of both parties and the fugitives – Christians as well as Muslims – had to be sent back to their place of origin; in that case, even the Churches could not grant the right of asylum to a Muslim that sought refuge there. Finally, the inhabitants of al-Marqab and its suburbs could not come into contact with the inhabitants of the close citadel of al-'Ullayqa, neither could they allow anybody to enter the sultan's territories with malicious intent. Further clauses concerned the prohibition for the knights to restore crumbling buildings and fosses; even some jobs that had already been undertaken had to be interrupted.

The last two conditions concern the mobility of the population and of the knights themselves and the restoration of houses and fortifications; they clearly represent the Christians' waiver of a part of their sovereignty in the Muslim sovereign's favour: it was not an agreement with equal rights and duties. The political and military situation proves it: Le Crac des Chevaliers (Ḥiṣn al-Akrād) had been conquered a few days before; a few years later, in 1285, al-Marqab would suffer the same fate. It is interesting to note, however, the idea of *munāṣafa* that equated Christians and Muslims living in the same territory as for safety and coexistence, while the revenues were shared by the two states. Thus, even for a very short period, two ancient enemies created a state where Christians and Muslims lived together, each of whom kept their own law, while the police and escort services were jointly performed.

The agreement that was reached by Baybars and the Hospitallers of al-Marqab was not the only one that implied a kind of co-ownership between Franks and Muslims, even though it is probably the best known. Looking at the historians' papers, we find out that there were other agreements of this kind; for instance, the one signed by Baldwin I of Jerusalem in 1108-1109, which implied that a third of the revenues of the territory east of the Jordan Valley went to Damascus' authorities and two thirds to Franks and peasants.[20]

20 Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 8.

1.6 *Dār al-ṣulḥ*

Throughout the centuries, then, not only times of war between Christians and Muslims followed one another, but also times in which the agreements were kept. It is enough to quickly count the years of peace and war throughout the almost five centuries of relations between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire to realise that the years of peaceful or armed coexistence outnumbered the years of open war by far, even though Venetian historiography usually depicts 'the Turk' as the enemy par excellence. It cannot be always clear what sultans and viziers really thought of a state that agreed to pay thousands of ducats for the renewal of a peace agreement or to keep territories, such as Cyprus or Zakinthos, that were officially under Ottoman sovereignty. Their point of view varied according to the periods of greater or lesser Ottoman power. Some documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contain words that make us think about, for example, the use of the word *zâbit* (officer) with reference to the doge of Venice, or else of *haraç* (Arab *ḫarāǧ*) to mean the tax Venetians paid for Cyprus and Zakinthos, or the statement that the Republic was under the sultan's 'protection'. All these expressions shift towards the thesis that, sometimes, Ottomans regarded Venice as a somehow tributary state. Some other papers speak of the Republic's devotion (*ubudiyet*), submission and obedience (*itaat ve inkıyad*) and of a *akd-i maun* or *akd-i ahd* between the two states. All the letters written in such harsh and incisive a language belong to the second half of the sixteenth century or the first half of the seventeenth century and were addressed to the doge either by Ottoman princes or by the Porte's high-ranking officials. The sultan usually expressed himself in that way only when he wrote to his own subordinates and not when he directly addressed the Republic.[21]

By now, we cannot refrain from observing that, in the Muslim law, there is a concept that could fit this specific case, even though it is not welcomed by all legal schools and, in particular, by the Ḥanafi one, followed by the majority of Ottomans. It is the *dār al-ṣulḥ* or *dār al-'ahd*, namely a territory where the war condition is somehow suspended. It was recognised by the Šāfiʿī school, who specifically regarded it as a land of infidels whose inhabitants, in exchange for a kind of protectorate, paid a joint *ḫarāǧ* to the Muslim ruler. Once peacetime ended, however, the *dār al-ṣulḥ* fell

21 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, c. 105, no. 127 (1562, prince Selim to the doge); f. III, c. 118, no. 296 (1576, the Grand Vizier Mehmed pasha to the doge and the Seigniory); f. IV, c. 138, no. 433 (1589, Sinan pasha to the doge); NB f. IV, cc. 154-155, no. 443/A where the agreements with the 'king of Vienna' are called *ahd ve aman* and *ahd ve misak*; Pedani, *Documenti turchi*, no. 1163; Pedani, *La dimora della pace*, 38; cf. also Gökbilgin, *Le relazioni*, 289 (1548, Sokollu Mehmed pasha states that Venice is an allied Republic, like all the Ottoman countries); Lesure, *Notes et documents*, 131-132.

under one of the two previous categories again and became either *dār al-ḥarb* or *dār al-islām*. As often happens in the Muslim law, this theory originated from an episode of the Prophet's life and, precisely, from the agreement made by Muḥammad and the Christian population of Najran. Another striking example was the peace reached in 31/652 between the emir ʻAbd Allāh ibn Saʻd and the Nubians. The concept of *dār al-ṣulḥ* usually is not clearly defined and, according to David Santillana, the existence of a neutral land, neither *dār al-ḥarb* nor *dār al-islām*, is a legal institution unknown to the Muslim law.[22]

1.7 Border

The idea of border as a line or a furrow cut in the ground was part of the Roman world since its founding myth. The king-priest who founded Rome reproduced the cosmic order on earth; he had the task of *regere fines*. For Romans, the cardo and the decumanus were at the root of the orientation of every town and the cardo had the same direction of the celestial axis, whereas the decumanus went from east to west, following the course of the sun.[23] During the fifth century, however, the Western Roman Empire ended and the so-called barbarians introduced a different culture. Therefore, for instance, in the *De Bello Gallico*, Julius Caesar tells that Germanic peoples used to devastate the borderlands since they considered the *terra vacua* safer than the land where a different people lived (4.3, 6.10, 6.23). Thus, the word *marka* that comes from the word 'wood' of the old Gothic German language was then used to mean a district placed right close to the border.[24] In English, but not in Italian, there are two words for border that do not exactly coincide: one is the *border*, namely the state border, identifiable with a line; the other is the *boundary*, namely an ideal border, which includes neighbouring peoples who share the same culture, land and blood. Thus, in practice, *border* and *boundary* can or cannot coincide.

Luciano Lagazzi set up the idea of an external and agrarian border, derived from the Roman centuriation, against the idea of a circular, centralised border, coming from nomadic peoples. The Medieval parchments show that the borders of monastic or private estates often bounded a circular area, whose centre was represented by a building: in the first half of the seventh century, for instance, the monastery of Bobbio possessed

22 Santillana, *Istituzioni*, vol. 1, 90-91; İnalcık, *Dār al-ʻahd*, 116; MacDonald [Abel], *Dār al-Ṣulḥ*, 131; Pedani, *La dimora della pace*, 6-7; Vercellin, *Istituzioni*, 27-28.

23 Piccaluga, *Terminus*, 174; Benveniste, *Il vocabolario*, 295; Zanini, *Significati del confine*, 6-8.

24 Werkmüller, *Gli alberi come segno di confine*, 465.

four miles of the land around it. In that period, there were borders marked by heaps of stones or rivers or mountains as well as borders identified by more intangible elements such as the sound. In the *Chronicon Novalicense*, Charlemagne gratified the Longobard jester who had taken him to unknown lanes to avoid Desiderius' army and gave him all the land where the sound of his horn played from the top of the mountain could be heard. Still today, on the Belluno mountains, parishes' borders follow the trend of the valleys, marked only by the sound of the churches' bells.[25]

Besides the quadrangular typology there was also a territory structured in a circular way. It was the contribution of a nomadic economy made of hunting and harvesting. During a halt, men drove a stone, a pole or a pike into the ground to re-found the space and re-create the cosmic order: in this way, the surrounding area became habitable, safe and protected by god. Only another equally holy element, like river water, could interrupt this circle and create a different border, as the Danube waters did during the barbarian invasions. Turks and Mongols as well as Avars and Huns were among the nomadic peoples that used to create a holy space in this way.[26] The elements at our disposal allow us to make only vague hypothesis of old ties between different cultures.

While the idea of border changed in this way, territorial and juridical borders split asunder in the West. *Lege* roma*na vivens*, *lege langobardorum vivens*, *lege salica vivens*… These sentences abound in Medieval notarial deeds at least since the Carolingian era until the twelfth century: they are used for men obeying different laws but involved in the same legal transaction or living in the same area. All individuals made reference only to the law of their own ethnic group and not to that of the country where they were. This idea had a nomadic origin, belonged also to the European society for a long time, and was in force when Franks, Longobards and other peoples shared the same land.

1.8 *Ḥadd*, *sınır*, *hudud*

It has often – and rightly – been repeated that, since its foundation, the Muslim state was not bound up with territorial divisions, that Islam's impassable borders regard gender or relations with the neighbour and not those marked on the land and based on artificial conventions, and that they do not prevent the transfer of people and concepts from one area

25 Alessio, *Cronaca di Novalesa*, 154-155 (it should be noted that who suggests this system is not a Frank, but rather a Longobard); Lagazzi, *Segni sulla terra*, 32-36.

26 Eliade, *Immagini e simboli*, 38-54; Zanini, *Significati del confine*, 42-43; Goetz, *Concepts of Realm*, 78; Roux, *La religione dei turchi*, 288-291.

to another. The idea of a clear-cut separation of states, sanctioned by a border line, however, was not completely extraneous to the history of Muslim peoples, at least in practice. If, on the one hand, among the caliph's duties, there was the defence of the strongholds along the frontier, on the other, the historical circumstances sometimes led to settlements that could provide for a proper border: for example, the story goes that Abū 'Ubayda, one of the Prophet's companions, and some Christians of the north of Syria granted a truce of one year, and that a line of demarcation – symbolised by a column on which there was Heraclius' portrait († 641), the ruling Byzantine emperor – was placed between the territories of the Christians and those of the Muslims; later on, according to a legend, probably of Christian origin, an eye of the image was destroyed by mistake and, as a reparation, an eye of one of the caliph 'Umar's statues was equally disfigured.[27]

In Arabic, as well as in Ottoman, the word *ḥadd* (plural *ḥudūd*) is used to mean the border. It expresses the concept of an object that is sharp like a knife blade or, else, a mountain ridge. Arab geographers used this term to mean, in general, any limit and, especially, the *dār al-islām* one; *ḥadd* became also the technical term used to mean the sanction of certain acts that were forbidden or sanctioned with punishments in the Koran and considered to be crimes against religion. The Arabic word passed on to Ottoman (*hudud*) to mean, above all but not exclusively, the state border: *ehl-i hudud* were the inhabitants of the frontier areas, namely the guardians of the spirit of the war against the infidels. Instead, *had* was the limit and, especially, the individual limit that was bound up with the behaviour rules of an individual who was fully integrated into the Ottoman society. The *had* of a person was determined by factors such as the social or family environment, the class one belonged to, the rank one had achieved: within this sphere, everyone was rather free to act, and this was greatly important mainly for those who operated in the state apparatus: crossing that border and invading other people's space was considered to be coarse, uncivil and a complete lack of etiquette.[28]

Besides the word *hudud*, Ottomans used the word *sınır*, or *sınur* (from *súnoros*, 'neighbouring' in greek). Even though they are synonyms – and, thus, used in the same way –, the second term was mainly used to mean the limits within the Ottoman state, such as for example the borders of the *vakf*s, while *hudud* was preferably used for sea and water borders; *sınır* was used also in the second half of the fifteenth century to identify the imperial

27 Piacentini, *Il pensiero militare*, 26; Scarcia Amoretti, *Il mondo musulmano*, 40; Laoust, *La pensée*, 56; Manzano Moreno, *Christian-Muslim Frontier*, 88; Grabar, *Arte islamica*, 63, 100-101.

28 Miquel, *La perception de la frontière*, 130; Carra de Vaux, Schacht, *Ḥadd*, 21-22; Shaw, *L'impero ottomano*, 97-98.

documents establishing borders with foreign countries (called *sınırname*), but later *hududname* was preferred. The *sınırname beratı*, instead, were the imperial diplomas that defined the borders of a territory or an estate given to a governor or to an important man. At last, in some documents – according to my experience, mainly the seventeenth-eighteenth century ones –, the two terms were used together in the formula *hudud ve sınır*.[29]

1.9 *Ġazw* and *gaza*

According to Colin Heywood, Ottomans had clear ideas as to the difference between the border meant as line (*hudud/sınır*) and the frontier meant as area or marchland (*uc*). According to Wittek's well-known theory of the 'holy war', which will be later more widely referred to, this was the limit, the furthermost point, the end, beyond which the land of unbelief extended and whose inhabitants were the keepers of the spirit of the raid against the infidels (*gaza* in Turkish and *ġazw* in Arabic). Some historians, however, considered the fact that theory and facts do not always match of minor importance. As a matter of fact, the *uc* were the marchlands that existed only in the Balkan area, in the west of the Empire, and not towards the Muslim Persia. Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī, who wrote a dictionary of Turkish in Arabic in the eleventh century, regarded *uc*, namely the border of a country (*el*), as a translation of the word *ṯaġr*. Other historians, from Imber to Heywood himself, observed that the most ancient Ottoman chronicles employed the word *gazi* as a synonym of *alp* (hero) or *akıncı*, (the raider of the frontier), as Aḥmedī himself (about 1400) says in his *İskendernâme*.[30]

The Balkan marchlands were ruled by *ucbeyi*s (i.e. the lords of the frontier), and they were some of the very few Ottoman estates bequeathed to the owner's descendants and not given back to the sultan after his death.

29 Kreisler, *Osmanische Grenzbeschreibungen*, 165-172; Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 58; Pedani, *The Ottoman Venetian Frontier*, 171-177. A Greek document of 10 July [1480] (*Documenti turchi*, no. 17) was defined *sınırname* in the subsequent Venetian-Ottoman peace of 1482 of which the Ottoman original exists, cf. Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomatics*, 131, 362. As for the use of both terms together see, for example, ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 254, reg. 348, cc. 81-82, second ten days of *safer* 1132 (24 December 1719-2 January 1720); as for the use of *sınır* for the sea borders, cf. b. 253, reg. 346, non-numbered cc., first ten days of *rebiyülevvel* 1121 (11-20 May 1709) and b. 254, reg. 349, cc. 80-82, first *cemaziyülevvel* 1133 (28 February 1721). Two facsimiles of *sınırname beratı* are published in *Calligraphies ottomanes*, nos. 61, 64, pp. 166, 170-171. Cf. also Kovačevic, *Hududnama*, 365-436 and his monograph *Granice*.

30 Heywood, *The Frontier*, 233-235; Tryjarski, *Kultura*, 157-159, where the author's passages concerning the Uygur border *kumi talās*, which is probably the name of the town situated on the frontier, and the town of Qazvin, which Turks believe to be situated within their borders because it was founded by Afrāsijāb's daughter, are mentioned (my acknowledgements go to Elzbieta Swiecicka for the reference); Imber, *The Legend*, 73-74.

The *ucbeyi*s were the last descendants of Ottoman ancient nobility and belonged to the great households founded by the first sovereigns' companions (Malkoç, Mihail, Evrenos, Turahan). Their families were removed from the court during the fifteenth century when the *kapıkulu*, i.e. the Porte's slaves, seized the power and men uprooted from their homes and totally devoted to a lord to whom they owed everything reached the highest positions of the state.

Instead of paying taxes to their lords, Balkan peasants were enrolled in a special army corps, that of the *akıncı* (from *akın*, 'raid'), and they did not receive the pay but could keep the booty they took. They were irregular soldiers and they had not to conquer a hostile country permanently but only to scout or to divert the enemy's attention from the true objective of the regular army. These raiders of the frontier used bows and swords and often had more than one horse with them, so that they could quickly run away with their booty made of things and people; they fought in groups of ten, were led by an *onbaşı*, and did not use to camp in the same place for long: for instance, in the second half of the fifteenth century, their forays in Friuli lasted a minimum of four days (July 1478) and a maximum of ten days (November 1477), even though these quick raids went down in history as 'the Turkish invasions'. It has been proved that, at least in the sixteenth century, when these corps were becoming unfashionable, not only Muslims but also Christian peasants were enrolled as *akıncı*. By that time, the *gaza* spirit had little to do with men pushed to fight in the name of the Ottoman Empire by interest, profit or necessity.

The *akıncı*'s epic deeds ended at the beginning of the sixteenth century; other corps, such as the *gönüllü*s (volunteers) – that have been studied only recently –, took their place and borrowed their techniques. They too were soldiers coming from frontier areas, but their conscription was on a voluntary basis; they had to provide for their own equipment and the food; their highest ambition, supported by the Ottoman propaganda, was either to be rewarded with a *tımar* (estate) for their brave deeds or to join a regular corps.[31]

1.10 *Militärgrenze*

The presence of Ottomans in the heart of Eastern Europe, from the borders of Dalmatia to Podolia, created an area of political instability northwards and that situation influenced also the names given to some territories.

31 Fodor, *In Quest of the Golden Apple*, 278-279, where also the ambiguity of the Ottoman vocabulary as for the use of the words *gönüllü* (voluntary, brave), *garib yiğit* (strange, curious, foreign, homeless, poor), *gönüllü garib yiğit* and simply *yiğit* (young, hero, brave) and the groups of soldiers to whom these words were referred can be noticed.

Ukraine simply means 'marchland' and this word was used to point out that the land was the last strip of Poland/Lithuania (and later Muscovy), placed in front of the khanate of Crimea.[32]

The history of the Habsburg-Ottoman border along Croatia, Slavonia and Hungary was peculiar and complex. Since the sixteenth century, Christians equipped several areas with strongholds to protect themselves, but no agreement was made to mark a border line. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, instead, after the Treaty of Karlowitz and the creation of a real border line, the House of Habsburg organised the territories close to the Ottoman Empire into the so-called *Militärgrenze* (military border), entirely and directly controlled by Vienna and removed from the Croatian kingdom. Strongholds already existed in that area: from the Adriatic to the north of Transylvania and from Senj to Košice, however, the territory was organised in six regions, which were divided in captaincies (1. the Croatian border or Karlowitz generalship; 2. the Slav border; 3. the Hungarian border from the Drava to the Lake Balaton; 4. the Hungarian border from the Lake Balaton to the Danube; 5. the border of mining towns; 6. the upper Hungarian border); the system of strongholds was defended by German regiments. This was not the only characteristic and important element of the new territorial organisation; the lands were assigned mainly to south Slav peasants who took refuge there, found a house, and in return committed themselves to defend and protect their new land; thus, they became border men.[33]

The Ottoman territory ran on the other side of the *Militärgrenze*. It was studded with fortresses placed in defence of an empire. In the first years of the seventeenth century, the number of Ottoman strongholds reached the number of Habsburg fortresses and thus remained almost until the end of the century. As Rhoads Murphey observed, such strongly militarised an area had obviously a great geo-political importance for the Ottoman rulers; in comparison, the Ottoman-Safavid border, which was almost twice as long, was much less defended and more vulnerable.[34]

The Treaty of Karlowitz established a border line between the Ottomans and the House of Habsburg for the first time, and for this reason historians considered it as the moment when the Porte finally welcomed the

32 Power, *Introduction*, 6-9.

33 Pálffy, *The Origins*, 3-5, 60-63; Lazanin-Štefanec, *Habsburg Military Conscription*, 91-94. According to Dieter Werkmüller (*Recinzioni*, 650), the German word *grenze*, like the Russian *graníza*, comes from the word used in old Slavic to mean the oak; likewise, in the Middle Ages, the word *marka* was used to mean a wood; other (see Zanini, *Significati del confine*, 10) affirm that it originates from the habit of marking out the border with a cross – the Slavic *gran'* –, carving it on the trees. On the Croatian and Serbian words *kotar*, *meda*, *krajina*, cf. Roksandić, *Stojan Jankovic*, 240-241; Roksandić, *Ottomans*, 415-425.

34 Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, xviii; Ágoston, *The Ottoman-Habsburg Frontier*, 287-296.

European legal principle of the state border. By now, this historiographical idea has been challenged, but it is important to note that it was between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, when the concept of the linear border was widely known, that political, juridical and fiscal relations became more definite, ideological, religious and sanitary controls more common, and the military defence of a state easier not only in Europe but also in the sultans' Empire. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Peace of Westphalia marked the end of two universalisms, i.e. the Catholic and the imperial ones. Thus, European states could no longer settle their quarrels appealing to a superior authority. The equilibrium policy was the winning formula necessary to prevent a great power from getting the supreme hegemony. At the same time, the Ottoman Empire, which was coming out of the long period of crisis called the 'Sultanate of Women', partially recovered its strength. In the past ages, it had to face either a single Christian enemy or fragile alliances that were soon broken off but now it had to fight against a strong and close-knit alliance of sovereign states. For this reason, both in the European capitals and Istanbul, the art of diplomacy and negotiation played a more and more prominent role, together with the art of defining borders, which is one of its most important elements.[35]

35 Carassi, *Topografi e diplomatici*, 192-194.

2 The Frontier

Summary 2.1 The Frontier: Symbol and Myth. – 2.2 The Peace Agreements and the Frontier. – 2.3 The Society of the Frontier. – 2.4 The Sea as a Frontier. – 2.5 Sea People: Privateers, Pirates and Others. – 2.6 The Sea Frontier: the Case of the Venetian Piracy. – 2.7 The Ottoman Sea Frontier. – 2.8 The Sea Frontier: Final Remarks.

2.1 The Frontier: Symbol and Myth

The frontier is a belt of territory facing the enemy, that may expand or fall back, and where different laws and religions can find a way to live together more easily than elsewhere. It is a land of clash and heroism, but of pragmatism and coexistence too. In the history of Christian-Muslim relations, this frontier way of living was, perhaps, more important than what people usually believe: between Turks and Europeans there were not only the battle of Lepanto and the two sieges of Vienna, but also many years of peaceful or armed coexistence, over land and sea, from the Balkans to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Black Sea to the Indian Ocean. It may be argued that it is easier to remember the won or lost battles and the hate for the enemy than the silence of a truce. Public papers gathered in the archives support this partial view: they are produced when people clash and not when they live in peace.

Beside the land frontier there was a sea one too. It may be affirmed that the concept of frontier suits sea waters better than land: as a matter of fact, it is impossible to place boundary stones or *metae* there to distinguish what belongs to one or the other state; everything mingles and merges; the army corps continually advance or withdraw without finding a safe heaven there. It is usually thought that a shore or a rocky coast can be a border. During the most ancient times of Islam, harbours themselves – such as Alexandria, Damietta and Ashkelon – were called *ṯaġr* and were linked more to the concept of frontier than to the border one. Finally, sea people, namely those who knew and sailed it, were perhaps nearer to a society that lived in an area of uninterrupted war, or armed truce, rather than in an area of peaceful coexistence.

If we go over the history of the Near East, we may draw a parallel between the sea and other two similar elements: the steppe and the desert. It was difficult to mark the limits in all of them. Food and water usually had to be brought from afar by those who ventured there; only groups sur-

vived, such as the Turkish and Mongolian tribes that advanced westwards, or the caravans that crossed the deserts,or the ships and the convoys of ships (the Venetian *mude*) that sailed the Mediterranean Sea. The raid, the fight and the assault on the enemy or the weakest were characteristic of those who inhabited these places where nature looks hostile and only the sky – by night with the stars or by day with the sun – seems to be able to show the way. Desert and sea could appear as two similar realities: it is not by chance that Arabic employs the word *maǧrā*, which denotes the daily distance covered by a camel, to mean the distance covered by a ship in a day; the verb *rakiba*, namely 'riding', is employed to mean the act of sailing.

The desert and the sea, together with the forest, were considered to be places of tests and initiations, meditation, peregrinations, hallucinations and demonic snares also in the western imagination for a long time. As Jacques Le Goff showed in his classic essay, these realities were geographical and symbolic at the same time, namely places where believers could find their way to Heaven. The *Life of Antony*, written by the bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (about 360), focuses on the desert; shortly after, Saint Jerome moved to the desert of Qinnasrin in Syria, not far from Antioch. Many other eastern hermits lived in those extreme areas. Instead, Celtic and Nordic monks decided to wander from island to island; the sea was their desert, cold like the one described in the *Voyage of Saint Brendan* and studded with islands just like the desert is studded with oases.[1]

In the Middle Ages the sea, such as the desert, could appear to be an extreme place, where a hermit could more easily get closer to God. In the ninth-century Near East, another character-type, i.e. the warrior literate, thought that the stay in a frontier area was an élite devotional practice. As Houari Touati stated, in this period people widely accepted the idea that living or visiting a frontier facing an infidel enemy was a praiseworthy act. It was a new concept that was developed by the traditionalist thought in the preceding century and that, as a consequence, did not meet with the first Muslims' approval. According to this author, the chronological anteriority of the use of the word *ġazw* (raid) – compared to *ǧihād* – to mean the fight along the frontier, is one of the elements that allow to state that this ideology, unlike what many argued, was a belated fact. The myth of the frontier, together with the experiences linked to it, was ideologically parallel to the Islamic pilgrimage: advancing towards Mecca was a similar praiseworthy act that symbolised getting closer to God. The journey to the farthest lands of the *dār al-islām* was performed also by learned men and scholars in search of new masters – therefore, the wells of knowledge –, or

1 Le Goff, *Il meraviglioso e il quotidiano*, 27-44; Gast, *Un espace*, 165-172.

of legitimation. A scholar who had lived in those extreme areas, even for a short period and without fighting the infidels, gained a new charisma in front of ordinary people; thus, he could be considered to be a real martyr and witness of Islam. In that society, just like the utmost centres of Muslim religion, from Mecca to Medina and Jerusalem, the border too could appear to be holy; it was considered to be a source of spiritual energy. Those who approached it received strength and legitimation.[2]

This ideology was then drawn on in the most well-known myths of the origins of the Ottoman dynasty as well: Osman and his son Orhan, as *gazi* warriors, received their right to rule an empire by their fighting against the Byzantine infidels.

Since its arising as an independent discipline, more than a century ago, historiography regarding the Ottoman Empire had to face the concept of frontier and it became so important that Heywood stated that in this field it is necessary to espouse a historiographic point of view rather than a historical one.[3] Some scholars, inflamed by the nationalism of the Kemalist era, read only the evidence of a cultural and political old-Turkish inheritance in the most ancient Ottoman chronicles.[4] On the contrary, using the same sources, other scholars stressed the importance of the Islamised Byzantine element in the first Ottoman administration.[5] Wittek,[6] still recognising that not only did these two worlds and civilisations fight but also met, suggested the so-called 'ideology of the holy war': from this moment on, the state created by Osman and his first successors was considered to be a political entity fighting in the name of Allah and scholars began to look only for the influence of that ideology in every aspect of the life of this period. At the beginning, a few, such as Köprülü and Friederik Giese,[7] rose up against this thesis but it soon became indisputable. Only around the 80s did a considerable number of opponents rise up: Gyula Káldy-Nagy, followed by Heywood, challenged Wittek's thesis from a historical and methodological point of view; Rudi Paul Lindner regarded the first warriors as fighters in the name of the shamanism rather than in the name of Islam; Imber encouraged his colleagues to consider if Turkish sources were reliable or not; then, also other scholars such as Ronald C. Jenning,

2 Touati, *Islam et voyage*, 9-18, 96-121, 237-249.

3 Heywood, *The Frontier*, 228; cf. *Wittek and the Austrian Tradition*, 7-25; *Boundless Dreams*, 32-50.

4 Cf. Mehmet Fuat Köprülü's many works, for example *Alcune informazioni*, *passim* (Italian translation).

5 Cf. Gibbon's 1916 work, *The Foundation of the Ottoman State*.

6 Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*; *Deux chapitres de l'histoire de Turcs de Roum*, *passim*.

7 About Giese, see what Heywood states in *Boundless Dreams*, 46-48.

Aldo Gallotta and mainly Kafadar went on this way, severely criticising Wittek's thesis.[8]

Lately, the issue of the ties or the independence of the first Ottomans from the 'holy war', instead of draining away, gave rise to further research and closer examinations, probably linked to present-day events and the subsequent interest in everything that is Muslim.[9]

Ottomans found relevant material for their 'tales of the origins' in the epic of the frontier against the Byzantines: the first fixed date of their history is a battle won against the *basileus*, namely the Battle of Bapheus (27 July 1302). At the beginning, they were only one of the several Islamic states fighting against Christianity in a narrow strip of Anatolia, but they soon amplified their field of action and, in the following centuries, the word 'Turk' became a synonym of Muslim. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, their empire kept expanding and it had no longer to fight in a narrow piece of land; many frontiers made their appearance both eastward and westward, southward and northward, and their opponents were not only Christians or Europeans anymore, but also Shiite Persians, or Berbers living in the inland regions of the Maghreb.

2.2 The Peace Agreements and the Frontier

If we take into consideration the Ottoman *ahdname*s issued for the European states, we realise that, from a diplomatic point of view, this type of document may be divided into two sub-categories, even though their effects were often the same. The most ancient group derives from the armistice (*hudna*), whereas the other derives from a general safe-conduct (*amān ʿāmm*) granted by a Muslim leader to a group of people. The former implied not only the oath on the part of those who issued them, but also a similar document issued by the other state's sovereign, who in turn had to swear not to break the agreement: they were *instrumenta reciproca*. The latter, instead, were unilateral decrees issued by the sultan in the form of *nişan* or *berat* (imperial privilege), and did not need any ratification on the part of the opposite party. Over the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the latter was prevalent and also the *instrumenta reciproca* started to take some of the formal characteristics of the privileges. Western diplomatics, generally speaking, did not notice the slight difference existing between the two types of document, so much so that both were known by the name

8 Káldy-Nagy, *The Holy War*, 467-473; Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans*; Imber, *Paul Wittek*, 65-81; *The Ottoman Dynastic Myth*, 7-27; *The Legend*, 67-75. See Jennings, *Some Thoughts*, 151-161; Gallotta, *Mito Oguzo*, 41-59; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 1-59.

9 Cf. Linda T. Darling, *Contested Territory*, 133-163.

of *capitulations*, even though the nineteenth-century ones, which were imposed by European states and once and for all abolished only in the 20s of the twentieth century, originated from the Ottoman *berat* rather than from the armistices.[10]

If we take into consideration the states in which one or the other document was drawn up, however, we might make some remarks. First of all, the documents included in the category of the *hudna* were issued for states like the Habsburg Empire, Venice or Poland, whereas those who were classifiable as *berat* were given to the representatives of France, England and Holland since the end of the sixteenth century. Therefore, on the one hand, there were state entities with which the Porte not only had fought some wars, but which were also territorially neighbouring; on the other, instead, they were states that were geographically very far and with which the Ottoman Empire had come into contact mainly because of their commercial and sea activities.

In particular, three capitulations deserve a more thorough examination since they seemingly contradict what was stated before. The first document was granted by Selim I to the Republic of Venice in 1517, right after the conquest of Mamluk Egypt, namely a state that had been providing for ages protection documents to Venetian merchants that went there to trade: it is an *ahdname* that falls under the category of the general safe-conduct, i.e. a type of document that had never been granted before by an Ottoman ruler to Saint Mark's subjects. However, if we start from the assumption that Selim wanted to act as the heir of Egypt, as well as its conqueror, and that what was said for Ottomans applied to Ayyubid and Mamluk rulers of Egypt – namely that they had granted *hudna* to overseas sovereigns that were their neighbours and *amān ʿāmm* to the merchants of Italian towns –, then also the diplomatic characteristics of the 1517 *ahdname* seem to be easily understandable.

Another document may be more hardly intelligible. It is a question of the capitulations that were granted to France in 1536 and that, on the basis of the existing copies, probably were a proper treaty drawn up between two states that placed themselves on the same level. In this case, it may be observed that the original of the act cannot be found today and could not be found in 1569 either, when a new document was granted to King Charles IX in the form of a *berat*, but modelled on the clauses usually granted to Venetians. Historians have defended the validity of these capitulations for a long time, to the extent that the history of international law, forgetful of other agreements that are older of more than a century, has often regarded them as the first capitulations granted to a European state by the Porte. The most recent historiogra-

10 İnalcık, *Imtiyāzāt*, 1208-1219; Wansbrough, *Imtiyāzāt*, 1207-1208; Pedani, *La dimora*, 32-35; Papp, *Der ungarisch-türkische Friedensvertrag*, 67-68; Papp, *Christian Vassals*, 719-730.

phy prefers to believe it was just a draft wanted by the Grand Vizier İbrahim pasha, who was to be executed soon after, probably because he had become too powerful and intolerant of the sovereign authority. Kanûnî Süleyman – the sovereign who, more than anyone else, left traces of farsightedness, self-confidence and strength in the history of the Empire – ordered the execution: this sovereign, who had defeated the Habsburgs in Mohács, would hardly have demeaned himself by undersigning a document in which he appeared on the same level as Francis I, the 'king of the province of France', who had been defeated by the Habsburg armies in Pavia.[11]

As for the third document, namely the agreement of 1581 with Spain, it has been observed that it appears in the form of a *temessük* (receipt) that confirms what was established between the second vizier Siyavuş pasha and the Spanish ambassador Giovanni Marigliani, i.e. the keeping of the peace between the two countries, on earth and at sea, for three years. As Dariusz Kolodziejczyk showed for the following period, Ottoman practice could provide for an exchange of provisional receipts among official representatives of two states that had to be confirmed by means of an *ahdname*. The explanation of the diplomatic peculiarities of the Ottoman-French document of 1536 may be found in this observation. So far, the importance of the *temessük* in the drawing up of international agreements has not attracted the attention it deserves; instead, it is useful to understand the development of the peace agreements between Europe and the Ottoman Empire and to place well known international documents, such as the 'Peace of Zsitvatorok' or the 'Treaty of Karlowitz', in their real dimension; contrary to what has often been said, they do not represent a renewal of the diplomatic practice, but rather the enforcement of what had already been employed. The *temessük*s – that were very flexible and, if used with other European states, easily influenced by western terminology and diplomatics – played an important role on the occasion of the delimitations of borders, as will be shown later.

Now we can come to the statement with which we started this speech. Whether or not the other state shared a frontier with the Ottoman Empire influenced the kind of agreement the sultan made with the Christian ruler. A document that derived from the armistice was used for the inhabitants of the neighbouring areas, whereas a privilege or a general safe-conduct that might protect people and goods could be granted to those who lived in distant countries.

11 Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 1; Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 131-133; Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 47-49. See also Matuz, *Capitulations*, 182-192, who employs two documents in support of his thesis: the first makes reference to the Venetian capitulations and not to the French ones; the second follows the capitulations of 1569 as may be clearly read in the published facsimile text. A document of 1541, where a confirmation of the friendly settlement with the king of France is mentioned, is more intriguing on this point (*Documenti turchi*, no. 455; edited by Gökbilgin, *Venedik*, vol. 1, 153, no. 26).

2.3 The Society of the Frontier

Before taking into consideration the Ottoman frontier, we should go over the customary stereotypes of a society of the frontier. It is usually a male environment, where women are few and children do not exist; the living conditions are violent; killings and heinous crimes are committed in the name of religion (or profit or the necessity to appropriate someone else's space). Also heroic and savagely romantic characters, however, belong to this category of men: spurred by an ideal drive, they fight against the enemy – the hostile nature or a people different as for religion, culture and origin. Society and men are barbarian anyway, mainly if compared to the life led in the furthest and most central areas of the state. The other, i.e. the different, does not need comprehension and does not have to be understood, but must be only politically and, if possible, physically, wiped out. Similar ideas may be found not only in historiography, but also in the chronicles or contemporary literary works or works that came slightly after the narrated events, if the author wrote mainly to support a certain ideology or to create a founding myth that had to be politically used. Thus, we should pay more attention to the sources than we usually do, mainly if we use papers written for a wide public and not documents drawn up for practical or administrative reasons.

With regard to the first Ottomans, we have to settle for few available evidence, mostly chronicles, and try to understand their real dimension divesting them of the ideology to find only their true elements. The revisionism of Wittek's thesis has led also to study again the ancient chronicles, i.e. 'Aşıkpaşazâde's, the so-called anonymous ones and Uruc's, as well as to reconstruct the political ideology of the environment that produced them and to imagine what their sources, namely the *takvim*s (annals), the *menakıb-name*s (semi-legendary tales), the *gazavat-name*s (heroic deeds, mainly in frontier areas), which are missing today, could say.[12]

If for the first period of Ottoman history almost exclusively subsequent literary works exist, for the following one (since the capture of Constantinople onwards), the documents that allow to look at men's deeds from different angles increase in number. Therefore, it is easier to observe that not only opposing entities existed but contacts and encounters too, and that the good and the right were not the prerogative of a single part but everything mingled and crisscrossed.

An illuminating example of this frontier society may be the so-called

12 Cf. Woodhead, *Ta'rīkh*, 313; Taeschner, *'Ashıḳ-pasha-zāde*, 699; Ménage, *Ottoman Historiography*, 168-179; İnalcık, *Ottoman Historiography*, 152-167. For a historiographical survey carried out in this way, see Yerasimos, *La fondation de Constantinople*, 1-4, 247-249, which is essentially based on the Turkish legends created after the conquest of the town in 1453 for ideological reasons.

'blood brotherhood' (*pobratimstvo*), which was created with a proper rite and was present in the Balkan area since the seventeenth century at least. Similar customs strengthen the idea of a society where the ideal of the *ğihād* made room for different lifestyles. Also the great traveller Evliya *çelebi*, who was witness to a similar episode in 1660, gapingly talked about it. He told the story of a *gazi* who took part in a skirmish with the troops of the close Republic of Venice and was discovered while hiding a Christian. When it was time to kill the prisoners who had been captured, the Ottoman warrior prostrated himself before the pasha asking to have mercy on his enemy: «Mercy, Grand Vizier! I have sworn brotherhood with this captive on the battlefield; we have pledged each other our faiths. If you kill him, he will go to paradise with my faith and that will be an injury to me, wretch that I am; and if I die, the faith of this captive, with whom I have sworn brotherhood, will stay with me and we will both go to hell, so that again I am the loser».[13] The pasha was told that a Christian and a Muslim, by means of the ceremony of the blood brotherhood sealed by the formula «your faith is mine and my faith is also yours», committed themselves to save the other if this was taken captive, because otherwise the hell promised by their religion would wait for them. Even though he was astonished, the pasha decided to free them both. As Wendy Bracewell explains, the *pobratimstvo* was a form of false relationship spread among the Slavs of the south and still known and practised in the twentieth century; it was a way to create new ties and family obligations. It was often practised between people who belonged to similar groups, for example between two Orthodoxes, or two Catholics, or two women or two men (in which case, but only rarely, this relationship implied also a homosexual relation). In the case of two Catholics, this relationship might also be officiated in front of a priest and made more solemn with a mass, to the extent that Zadar's and Split's archiepiscopal synod banned such rites. Epic songs of frontier areas among Slavs, inhabitants of Veneto, imperials and Turks often tell of examples of blood brotherhood and heroisms linked to it. The *pobratimstvo*, thus, appears to be an important factor of coexistence in the Balkans and testifies that this world experienced not only splits between different faiths, cultures and empires, but could also find unifying elements and common interests. If on the one hand religion and politics were dividing elements in that society, on the other sharing common values such as heroism, honour and virility made peoples living along the Balkan frontier move closer.[14]

The society of the frontier, however, was not an idyllic environment; disorder, anarchy and brigandage marked that area, together with pil-

13 Official English translation made by Bracewell (see *Frontier Blood-Brotherhood*, 29-30).

14 Bracewell, *Frontier Blood-Brotherhood*, 29-45; see also İnalcık, *Foundation*, 59-62.

lages, famines and plagues, whereas people hardly appeased their hunger and resorted to any means to survive, as Vesna Miović-Perić states while describing the several heinous crimes that occurred outside the state of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) during the Morean War (1686-1699).[15]

2.4 The Sea as a Frontier

In 1377 the great Tunisian historian Ibn Khaldun wrote in his *Muqaddima* that, in the time of Byzantines, Franks and Goths, Muslims watched most of the Mediterranean Sea and no Christian board could float there.[16] That statement was taken up again in the twentieth century by the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, who also wrote: «With Islam a new world was established on those Mediterranean shores which had formerly known the syncretism of the Roman civilization. A complete break was made, which was to continue even to our own day. Henceforth two different and hostile civilizations existed on the shores of *Mare Nostrum*. And although in our own days the European has subjected the Asiatic, he has not assimilated him. The sea which had hitherto been the centre of Christianity became its frontier. The Mediterranean unity was shattered».[17] Pirenne's very much debated thesis focused on the idea that the barbarian invasions did not break the Mediterranean unity, which was broken once and for all by the coming of a different faith and a different culture, i.e. Islam; since then trades stopped definitely and, as a consequence, a recession occurred in the West, while Muslims became the absolute masters of the Mediterranean Sea in the ninth and tenth centuries, as Ibn Khaldun observed.

Many historians were prompted to reject that theory for various reasons: Dopsch, Lopez, Ehrenkreutz among others asserted that the recession of the Carolingian period had many causes, that Christianity and Islam were never two rigidly opposing worlds, and that trades did not stop so abruptly, even though – as Elihau Ashtor maintained trying to mediate – there was a severe crisis of the sea trade from the seventh to the ninth century. In his introduction to a recent reissue of Pirenne's famous work, Ovidio Capitani argues that the historiographical debate ended without losers or winners, even though that book is still somehow stimulating: the use of other disciplines, such as archaeology, allowed to detect the key role of the Arab and the Muslim in the Mediterranean trade, whose spreading was more the product than the cause of western economic crisis.[18]

15 Miović-Perić, *Brigandage on the Ragusan Frontier*, 41-54.

16 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, vol. 2, 41-42.

17 Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 152-153.

18 Pirenne, *Maometto e Carlomagno*, v-xxxiv.

Without entering into this debate again, we may still employ Pirenne's words as a spur to delve into the problem represented by the stormy relation that existed between Muslims and the sea, namely a subject that has been the main field of research for several historians in the last few years, e.g. from Bono to Bonaffini, from Picard to Khalilieh and Planhol among others.[19] Therefore, the new civilisation that overlooked the Mediterranean coasts regarded the sea as a new frontier along which they could advance, but many believed that it was an entity that was hostile in itself. One of the very first tales of Islam tells that the caliph 'Utmān (644-656) would have let Mu'āwiya go towards Cyprus only if the expedition would be completely safe and if his wife would go with him to prove it; then, Mu'āwiya sailed not only with his wife, but with his sister too, thus organising the first Muslim sea expedition.[20]

Arabs very rapidly moved from desert sands and camels to waves and ships: there were three expeditions against India in 636; Alexandria became Muslim in 645; the expedition against Cyprus was in 648-649. Therefore, the new conquerors immediately found themselves in front of two different ways of considering the sea and their position would be inherited by Ottomans. On the one side, there was the Mediterranean Sea where raids alternated with wars and pirates and privateers with sovereign states' warriors and armies; on the other side, there was the Indian Ocean, especially the Persian Gulf, whose waters were characterised by a thriving trade that was constantly hampered by a piracy that was endemic and lasted for more than a thousand years. Episodes of proper war were fewer than in the Mediterranean Sea. For instance, at the beginning of the European expansion in those seas, the Portugueses, given their technical superiority, got the better of the warship sent forth by the Mamluks. Only after the British intervention, the conquest of Aden in 1839 and the agreements of 1853, did the 'coast of the pirates' (as the southern area from Rams to Dubai was called) finally become the 'coast of the truce' (*ṣulḥ*).[21]

In his classic work on Philip II's times, Fernand Braudel considers piracy as a supplementary form of the great war by sea.[22] Examining the Mediterranean of the sixteenth century, he observes that, after the big conflicts made of fleets, expeditionary forces and great sieges that ended in 1574, this activity substituted much bigger conflicts. This probably happened

19 See, among the recent ones, these volumes: Bonaffini, *Un mare di paura*; Bono, *Il Mediterraneo*; Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*; Picard, *La mer et les musulmans*; Picard, *L'océan Atlantique*; de Planhol, *L'Islam et la mer*. As for the Indian Ocean, see also Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response*.

20 de Planhol, *L'Islam et la mer*, 25.

21 Kelly, *Ḳurṣān*, 511.

22 Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi*, 919-920.

at intervals in the previous centuries as well. There was an uninterrupted alternation of moments when state fleets acted and moments when mainly pirate ships acted during the historical development of Muslim navy. A quick *excursus* throughout the centuries,[23] however imprecise and superficial it may be, shows that both dynasties or sovereigns interested in sea operations and state entities completely committed to piracy existed. Most dynasties and Muslim reigns, however, despised and looked down on sea activities, considering them as unworthy of true warriors, even though the sea frontier was not very different from the land one as regards the lifestyle it allowed, the society it housed and the clashes that occurred there. The Muslim sea frontier obviously experienced the counterstroke of such behaviours; when the sovereigns committed themselves to the improvement of the fleet, or supported the pirate forays, it usually advanced; instead, when they took no interest, it tended to fall back.

23 It may be observed that, under the Umayyads, there were some clashes where the fleet was used: for example, in 716 Maslama, the caliph's uncle, employed both the fleet and the army in the siege of Byzantium, but he was driven back by Leo III the Isaurian and by the 'Greek fire'. After this clash, the first Mediterranean conflict between Muslims and Byzantines ended. With the Abbasid Empire, however, the caliphs turned their back on the sea and the sea expansion was carried on by smaller and more organic formations with more limited means and goals. Since the end of the eighth century, squads coming from the caliphate's fringe territories reft and traded. It was an activity that kept an economical considerable significance for ages; coast peoples usually lived by both fishing and piracy; they did not want to achieve great military feats or to take part in a destructive war, but to capture slaves and goods. The more and more urgent request of slaves on the part of the court of Córdoba, or a chaotic situations within Muslim Spain could push men to turn into pirates. Vikings' piratical expeditions of 844-976 against Spanish coasts caused a revitalisation of the harbours and of the military organisation of the Omayyad of al-Andalus. Also the Aghlabids' dynasty (800-909) stood out for an intense naval activity that culminated in the conquest of Sicily when also Naples, Gaeta and Amalfi sailed across the Mediterranean with their fleets; they earned considerable incomes thanks to the piracy undertaken along the Italian coasts as well. Also the Tulunids, who reigned in Egypt from 868 to 905, mustered a powerful army and a good fleet, followed by the Fatimids who inherited Sicily (909) and conquered Egypt (969). Saladin, who possessed a fleet of 80 ships in 1179 and defeated the Franks that had penetrated the Black Sea in 1183, dealt with the needs of the war to hinder the crusaders also at sea; the events of the third crusade caused the collapse of this navy in 1189-91. After the Ayyubids, also the Mamluks, who had taken power in mid-thirteenth century, did not care much about the sea: only the great Baybars seemed to be aware of the importance it might have, even though only low-level people engaged in the sea activity. Then, also Byzantines, urged by big economical issues, dismantled their fleet. Therefore, mainly Genoeses, Venetians or Catalans sailed across the seas of the East until the arrival of the Ottomans.

2.5 Sea People: Privateers, Pirates and Others

Wars and fights between Christians and Muslims took place not only along the land front but also along the sea one. The ideology of the *ǧihād* was not restricted to fights on foot or with horses; rather, it was often used in connection with those who opposed the Christians at sea both in the most ancient times and in the modern era. The atavistic fear of a hostile and unknown element for people used to the desert sands such as the Arabs was justified by a series of traditions that – however generically in favour of naval expeditions, the pilgrims' sailing towards Mecca, the use of sea resources and the expansion of the sea trade – mainly encouraged those who decided to fight against the infidels by sea and promised to these martyrs twice the recompense of those who died fighting on the mainland.[24] The Muslims who regarded the sea as their battlefield resorted to this *corpus*.

Sailors, pirates and privateers inhabited this liquid frontier, but these categories very often mingled, even though, at least theoretically, the difference between privateers and pirates was clear, at least within the European world: privateers had to attack only the enemy ships of the sovereign who gave them the licence to sail, whereas the pirates did not follow any law or legality.[25] If we take into consideration some Ottoman *ahdname*s, we find out that, in this regard, the Muslim point of view was slightly different: if on the one hand there were the pirates (*harami levend*) who were clearly recognisable as law-breaking fighters, on the other the privateers (*korsan* in Turkish) were solely those who acted in the name of a western sovereign; instead, the Barbaries were not given this appellative but were called *levend*s[26] of the Maghreb suggesting that their fighting against Christian warships did not fall within the activities accorded by a sovereign, but it was a due behaviour every Muslim must display. We can find the same distinction between the Ottoman word *levend* and the Arabic *qorṣān* in some Arabic peace agreements issued by the sultan of Morocco in the eighteenth century.[27] Beside *qorṣān*, the Arabic language employs *liṣṣ al-baḥr* (thief of the sea) to mean the pirate and *ġāzī al-baḥr* to mean the Muslim who fights against the infidel.

Even though the distinction among pirate, privateer and *levend* was clear, such strict a classification could not exist in practice: those who fought by sea in the name of a state (sometimes as soldiers by profession)

24 Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 160-176.

25 Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 9-15.

26 *Levend* means 'irregular Ottoman serviceman', from which *deniz levendleri* (*levend* of the sea) comes, namely the *levend* par excellence. As for the use of *levend* in the Ottoman fleet, see Bostan, *Osmanlı bahriye teşkilâtı*, 241-244.

27 Pedani, *La dimora della pace*, 43-44.

could act as an outlaw when the circumstances were favourable. Therefore, sovereigns often did not hesitate before taking pirates into their service in order to get military benefit they could not gain differently. Also Ottomans applied that logic mainly between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries when their navy was not on the same level as some European ones. For instance, in 1501 after the clash with Venice and in 1515 on the eve of the conquest of Egypt, the sultans Bayezid II and Selim I mustered the *levend*s' *fusta*s to fight against the Christian ships. If at first the measure proved to be effective, then it was clear that the central power had to keep a careful control to prevent the captains (*reis*) from breaking the law and denying any authority. Thus, after arousing such a devastating strength, the latter had to be fought. Kara Tumuş, who was one of the most famous captains who had already fought in the Venetian-Ottoman conflict, was taken prisoner in 1503. In 1506 the janissaries and *silahdar*s, embarked on galleys, defeated many pirates, whereas after 1517 it was necessary to fight against the pirate Kurtoğlu, who was to support the sultan's armies again in 1522.[28]

The fight of the Ottoman sailors against the Christians could fall within the *ğihād*, at least theoretically. Once the great season of the yearly Ottoman war campaigns ended in the second half of the sixteenth century, the *gazi* ideal, which the sultan did not want to set aside despite the changed political and military conditions, was devolved on the Barbary privateers. These seamen, at least nominally, were under his high sovereignty and continued his due fight against the infidels by means of their raids. Both the Porte and the Maghrebis often followed that ideology to argue points of view that were also opposing and based exclusively on economic and political reasons. Thus, peace could exist among the land armies while war could continue at sea, or vice versa. The sovereign of Morocco, Sīdī Muḥammad (1757-1790), displayed a similar behaviour and used to give the same importance to two factors that could seem antithetical at first sight: an inducement to the *ğihād* and the opening of his markets to Europe. For example, in 1774 he wrote to Charles III of Spain and suggested a distinction between the sea war and the land one and, shortly after, he announced to foreign consuls that his men, who were camped before Melilla, made war during the day, but smuggled during the night, while peace reigned at sea.[29]

28 Vatin, *L'ordre de Saint-Jean*, 126-129, 133-134.

29 Caillé, *Les accords*, 31, 65, 78-81.

2.6 The Sea Frontier: the Case of the Venetian Piracy

Going over the history of the Ottoman-Venetian sea frontier means, at least partially, writing another *histoire événementielle*. The fights between these two states were eleven and were characterised mainly by naval clashes, since the strength of the lagoon city lay in its fleet and it would be impossible to face the sultans' Empire solely by means of its land forces: the disparity would be unbridgeable. Besides the periods of sworn hostility when the sea turned into a theatre of clashes, the Mediterranean was a frontier area between Venice and the Porte during many periods of peace as well. The lack of general limits unanimously set brought about a situation of potential advances, clashes and skirmishes between the boats of the two parties. Thanks to their flags, ships represented small shreds of a state wandering in a water immensity that did not belong to anyone. There were state fleets busy with police tasks, merchant ships, boats, caiques, *fusta*s of pirates, ships of privateers, ships belonging to Maghrebis who were Ottoman subjects. When we talk about the sea frontier in peacetime, we have to consider privateering and piracy and their historical development. A diachronic analysis shows that these activities, apart from their outcomes, were not always consistent. The fields of action, the forces and the support they had from the states involved in that endemic conflict changed across time.

In addition to the great war, there were often episodes of piracy, both on the Venetian and the Ottoman side. The same Venetian seamen sometimes acted as pirates, conforming to what happened in the Mediterranean where a real difference among pirates, privateers and regular soldiers did not exist. An example of this behaviour was the one held by the *governatore delle galee dei condannati*, Gabriele Emo, when in 1584 he raided Mehmed bey of Djerba's ship and killed also the young bey's mother and wife and many maidservants. The Republic paid about 60.000/70.000 ducats to settle this affair: maintaining the whole Venetian military apparatus in the Levant cost only the double. Emo paid it with his life, but other Venetian officials, who behaved as pirates, took no consequences. This was the case of the Venetian *provveditore all'armata* (admiral) Nicolò Pesaro, who crashed into a Turkish ship with a squadron of five galleys on 3 August 1499 and killed the entire crew. This episode, however, fitted in a situation that was degenerating more and more. Perhaps it was a cause, perhaps a consequence; the fact is that the war began a few months later. The beginning and the cessation of the hostilities, before a proper declaration of war and after peace had been signed, were characterised by episodes of piracy on the part of Venetians as well. Because of a difficult communication, tense minds and a desire for booty, the captains did not let slip the opportunities that could occur, even if their actions were opposite to the agreements in force. For example, there is an episode we may recall: in

1479, after the cessation of the hostilities, the *sopracomito* Scipione Bon attacked two Turkish ships loaded with goods in the harbour of Thasos. The painter of the sultan Sinan, together with his cousin Panteley Arfara, was a profit-sharer; Venetians hastened to refund them in order to avoid retaliations in the court. At the beginning of 1504, after peace had been agreed but not yet sworn, Venetians sank a ship of the sanjakbeg of Vlorë and Albany, Mustafa, near Ragusa and drowned its crew.[30]

The episodes of Venetian piracy against Ottoman subjects are not many; they were fewer than those perpetrated by other European states such as Malta and the Order of Saint Stephen that, committed to that activity, got mixed up with privateering; moreover, the Venetian state retained a high control not only on its men, but also on the sources of information. In general, Venetians knew how to get wealth elsewhere, mainly thanks to trade, while the state protected them taking upon itself the right of revenge and retaliation on the strangers. Moreover, the peace with the Porte was considered to be important, when it existed, and they did not want to exacerbate the souls; besides, the agreements always provided a mutual exchange of prisoners. In this way, many Muslim slaves managed to come back home just crossing Saint Mark's lands.[31]

2.7 The Ottoman Sea Frontier

We have more information regarding Ottoman attacks to Venetian ships in peacetime than the other way round. Whether they were pirates, privateers or simple sailors is of little consequence; on the contrary, the outcomes of this activity and its diachronic development are important. To simplify things we will talk about 'Barbary privateers' as for the Muslim world (like traditional historiography has it) and of 'pirates' for those who, coming from Ottoman Albanian and Greek coasts, attacked the Christian ships they met in order to rob them.

In the very first years of the fifteenth century, Venetians sent ten galleys to fight the pirates who had attacked them near Constantinople but they were not Turks – probably Genoeses, Biscayans and Catalans. Soon afterwards, an Ottoman navy began to make its weight felt in the Mediterranean, even though in 1416 it clashed with the Venetian one near Gallipoli and lost.

When the war of 1463-1479 ended, Ottomans conquered Vlorë, namely the town placed right in front of Leuca in Apulia, and made

30 Fabris, *Un caso di pirateria* veneziana, 91-112; Zago, *Emo*, 628-631; Gullino, *Le frontiere navali*, 90; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 20a-d, 137, 147.

31 Bono, *Schiavi musulmani*, 32-34.

their appearance in the Adriatic. According to Venetians, there was an imaginary line that marked the ultimate border of their Gulf. After the peace, Venetians were completely ousted from the Aegean, where they kept the protectorate of the dukedom of Naxos. By then, the Muslim frontier between Venice and the Porte moved towards the Adriatic more and more.

Vlorë, together with other close harbours, was a nest of pirates for those who ventured out to those waters. When peace was signed in 1479, Mehmed II ordered Gedik Ahmed pasha to pay damages done by Vlorë's *fusta*s to the Venetians ships that sailed within the Gulf. He prohibited his privateers from entering the Gulf with offensive aims against Venice and threatened to punish them if they would disobey. The local population did not abandon that activity: in 1488 his successor, Bayezid II, confronted with the doge's complaints, guaranteed the damages would be refunded and the malefactors punished. In 1479, outside the Venetian state, small Turkish groups carried out attacks in Grottammare (Ascoli Piceno); in 1485 in Montemarciano, Marzocca and Mondolfo (between Fano and Ancona); in 1488 in Sinigallia and in 1506 in Apulia.[32]

Throughout the sixteenth century, the mouth of the Adriatic was a dangerous area for ships. In 1533 Venetians complained about acts of piracy committed by Ottoman subjects; in 1536 Hayreddin Barbarossa occupied Castro for about ten days spreading terror in the neighbouring areas. In 1553-1554 another privateer, Turgud *reis*, attacked Apulia's coasts twice and reduced the 6.000 inhabitants of Vieste to slavery; in 1560 the Turkish fleet reached the Abruzzi. Watch-towers were built on the Adriatic western coasts; they were used to alert peasants and villages about the arrival of enemy ships so that they could plan the defence and be ready to fight or at least take shelter in fortified small places. In 1563, the *levend*s that had captured 22 ships charged with olive oil in the Adriatic resold the booty to Vlorë, Durrës and Lezhë, and the following year the sultan protested because Süleyman *reis*'s, Parmaksız Mustafa's and Arab Hasan's galliots had been captured by Venetians; the Venetian *bailo* Daniele Barbarigo gave 25.000 gold ducats to the damaged as a compensation.[33]

Piracy and privateering were becoming more and more frequent, mainly after the end of the great Mediterranean war where the Ottoman Empire fought against Spain and other Christian powers. Senj's Christian and imperial pirates, i.e. Uskoks, joined the Muslims, while skirmishes between Venetian and Ottoman ships occurred more and more often in the

32 ASVe, *Comm*, reg. 16, no. 122, cc. 141-141v (=143-143v); *Documenti turchi*, nos. 4, 39; Nardelli, *Incursioni e minacce*, 42-43.

33 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 295, 305-306, 785-786; Nardelli, *Incursioni e minacce*, 43; Volpe, *Le torri di guardia*, 47-73; Cresti, *Le difese marittime*, 23-38.

Aegean. The Ottoman local authorities, pressed by the Porte (which was in turn pressed by the *bailo*'s complaints), intervened to call their subjects to order. For example, in 1586 Murad III ordered the sanjakbeg and the qadi of Vlorë to prevent Mehmed *reis* from shipping with his galliot to pillage Venetian lands. In 1590, instead, the sanjakbeg Karlı-eli was ordered to prevent Lefkada's armed caiques from going out. Thirty-nine former Muslim slaves, who had been freed from a privateer Christian ship by Venetians, joined these *levend*s. On 5 May 1594, the *rettore* (governor) of Šibenik, together with his three sons and other nobles, was attacked near Rogoznica by two Muslim frigates and three galleys, one of which had the insignia of a high-ranking officer, i.e. a lamp and a flag. The crew was killed, whereas the marshal and his relatives were taken prisoner.[34]

Papers relate what happened to the Venetian ships that anchored to take water but were looted, as in 1590 near the harbour of the Bojana river (close to Shkodër), and what happened to the inhabitants of Herceg Novi who got ready to attack Venetians and to the *reis*es of Vlorë's galleys and galliots that ventured as far as Crete.[35] Since 1593 onwards, the sultan's orders, which enjoined the authorities of Herxegovina, Shkodër, Herceg Novi and Neretva to prevent the building of boats fit for privateering and to burn the ships built by the subjects to go in for piracy, increased.[36] People from the Maghreb penetrated into the Gulf more and more frequently: for example, in 1591 Murad *reis* of Algiers reached Split, Perast, Kotor and Budva; in 1595 Kara Deli arrived with five *fusta*s and took two Venetian vessels.[37]

In the first half of the sixteenth century, only occasionally do we find the sultan preventing the inhabitants of the coast from helping the *levend*s[38] but, since the beginning of the seventeenth century, these pirates have either Maghrebi or Albanian nouns from Valoë or Durrës. For instance, in 1605 the sultan ordered to restrain the wrongdoings of İbrahim *ağa* of Durrës, Mustafa *ağa*, Ahmed *kahya*, Bali, Mustafa, Hasan *kahya*, who were joined by Zafer *reis* of Algiers, *Arabacı* Hüseyin, Hasan of Tunis, Mehmed

34 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, cc. 13ab; b. 252, reg. 343, cc. 87-89; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 947, 1057.

35 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, cc. 6ab (1589), 15ab (1590), 32ab.

36 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, cc. 16, 136; b. 252, reg. 343, cc. 14, 33, 55, 57, 65, 66, 68, 76; b. 250, reg. 331, c. 14, 22; b. 250, reg. 332, c. 28, 42, 47, 64-68; b. 251, reg. 334, cc. 44, 46, 57, 75, 99; *Provveditori alla camera dei confini*, reg. 243 bis, fasc. *Cattaro*, *passim* (from the end of the sixteenth century to 1634). The issue was resumed in the eighteenth century, cf. ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 253, reg. 347, *passim*; b. 254, reg. 348, cc. 14-15; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, c. 26; *Documenti turchi*, no. 1240.

37 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, c. 98; b. 252, reg. 343, c. 62; Villain-Gandossi, *La Méditerranée*, 26-27, 36 (fifth part).

38 *Documenti turchi*, no. 295 (1533).

reis and Ömer of Herceg Novi's sons. People from the Maghreb, Valoë, Durrës, Herceg Novi and Risan were united in their attempt to penetrate into the Gulf of Venice with close-knit squads; moreover, there were *fusta*s of *levend*s built in Methoni, Koroni, Monemvasia and, in general, in the Peloponnese and in Lefkada.[39] The new pirates who lived along the coast started to treat Muslims and Christians in the same way when it was time to attack and raid. Also eminent characters, such as in 1611 the former sanjakbeg of Karlı-eli (Mehmed bey) and the sanjakbeg of Dukagin (Mehmed bey) did not disdain to leave Durrës with their galliots, caiques or *fusta*s to plunder the Adriatic. Maghrebi *beylerbeyi*s too did the same, such as Kasım pasha of Tunis, who sent Bizerte's galleys as well as his own one into the Adriatic around 1624. There were several attacks between 1622 and 1627 when Maghrebi privateers had already organised a complicity network along the Ottoman coast; the orders given by Istanbul to the *beylerbeyi*s of Tunis or Algiers were more and more disregarded, to the extent that in 1626 the sultan turned to the *şeyhülislam* to have a *fetva* by means of which he could impose on them the obligation to return the Venetians who had been made prisoner, since Venice freed the Muslims that had fallen into its hands.[40]

Piracy continued all through the century, as the uninterrupted building or rebuilding of coast watch-towers bears witness. After the Cretan war (1645-1669), the piracy within the Adriatic resumed but it was not concealed by war reasons anymore. In 1670, the sultan ordered his local commanders to put an end to the attacks against Venetians on the part of the people from Ulcinj. The name of this place, which rarely appeared in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century documents that regarded the relations between Venice and the Porte, is cited more and more often from this moment on. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, after other wars, this place was on the same level as Vlorë and Durrës with regard to Ottoman piracy against Venetian ships; to restrain that activity, on the basis of the Treaty of Passarowitz of 1719, the inhabitants' galliots and other ships were confiscated and they were prohibited from building others.[41]

In the meantime, Maghrebi flags that were hoisted on the yards started to be desired also by other Ottoman subjects who wanted to practise pi-

39 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 331, cc. 58, 60 (first *cemaziyülahır* 1014/14-23 September. 1605), 79, 85-86; reg. 335, cc. 7, 11, 41; b. 251, reg. 335, c. 29, half *receb* 1034/19-28 April. 1625; *Confini*, reg. 243bis, fasc. *Cattaro*, *şevval* 1037/4 June-2 July 1628 (the sultan to the sanjakbeg of Herzegovina and qadi of Herceg Novi for Risan).

40 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 332, cc. 22, 23, 38, 47; b. 251, reg. 334, cc. 121b-122a, 130, 56; reg. 335, cc. 56, 81a-82; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, cc. 34-35, 52, 104-105, 109, 126; *Documenti turchi*, no. 1196; Bostan, *Garp*, 67-69.

41 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 253, reg. 247, nos. 13, 14; b. 254, reg. 348, cc. 14-15; Volpe, *Le torri di guardia*, 62-63.

racy without being recognised – as a 1720 imperial order bears witness: in this occasion, people from Ulcinj hid themselves under the flags of the Maghreb. Therefore, we may ask how many attacks that the inhabitants of the western Adriatic coast and also historiography considered to be Maghrebi were actually carried out by other Ottoman subjects. Another imperial order, issued in 1723, prohibited the inhabitants of Ulcinj not only from using those ensigns but also from leaving their harbours. The ties between Maghrebis and people from the Ottoman Adriatic coast did not loosen; for example, in 1726 a man from Ulcinj took refuge in the Maghreb with a Barbary tartan and the sultan gave orders to Tripoli and Tunis to have the *marcigliana* he had robbed returned. Then, in 1728-29 the inhabitants of the town were ordered not to help Barbary privateers. The Republic was in such a sharp contrast with the people of Ulcinj (also because of a dramatic episode that occurred in Venice) that it obtained a *name-i hümayun* from the Porte, which was later reasserted in May 1729 and in March 1731, and which prohibited their ships (the only ones among the merchant ships of the Adriatic East coast) from entering the lagoon for any reason. In any case, the inhabitants of Ulcinj' habit of erecting Barbary ensigns continued to enjoy great favour, to the extent that the sultan had to prohibit it several times at the end of the 40s.[42]

The use of a fake flag was more common than we might think and the frequency of *name-i hümayun*s prohibiting Ulcinj subjects from hoisting the Barbary flag is astonishing. This is indicative of a practice that was not bearable by the Ottoman authorities anymore. Every ship that used to sail across the Mediterranean and elsewhere hid, together with its own, also other states' ensigns for protection in case of suspect sightings or to hide and be able to attack from a favourable position. The same Venetian admiral Angelo Emo – who was famous for the bombarding of Tunis and La Goulette and to whom the Naval Museum of Venice dedicated an entire room – led a little squadron of three ships towards Gibraltar and sailed under the English flag's protection, i.e. a banner it hoisted and substituted with the Venetian one only when, after having met the Spanish xebecs, the reciprocal visits began.[43] Therefore, in 1712 Hasan *reis* brought the fact of having disregarded a flag he thought to be fake (since the employment of others' ensigns was very common at the time) in his defence for having attacked an English tartan led by Peter Davis near Souda.[44] Saint Mark's flag was well-known and respected within

42 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 253, reg. 247, *passim*; b. 254, reg. 348, cc. 221-223; b. 255, reg. 351, cc. 1-2, 6-7; b. 256, reg. 353, c. 11, 12-13, 44-45, 292-294, 312-313, 324-326; reg. 354, cc. 30-34; b. 358, reg. 359, *passim*; b. 359, reg. 361, cc. 47-48; b. 259, reg. 362, cc. 27-28.

43 ASVe, *Arsenale*, b. 546. My acknowledgements go to Guglielmo Zanelli for this report.

44 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 253, reg. 247, first *ramazan* 1124/2-11 October 1712.

the Mediterranean, to the extent that the convoy of ships that left Venice on 8 July 1797 (i.e. after the fall of the Republic) could foist the ancient banner in its defence.[45]

In the second half of the eighteenth century, besides piracy, there was also the outbreak of some conflicts between the Most Serene Republic of Venice and the Barbary regencies that were more and more independent from the Porte. In 1766 Giacomo Nani and his squadron forced the *beylerbeyi* of Tripoli to pay for damage caused to Venetians by his privateers. In 1784-1786 Angelo Emo ordered his ships to draw up in battle order against Tunis and La Goulette, even though the conflict faded into peace in 1792 after his death, which was probably caused by poison. Other two wars, however short, broke out between Venice and North-African countries. In June 1795 the sultan of Morocco declared war on the Republic since the money of the yearly payment it had to give him had not yet arrived The conflict ended at the end of October after the capture of only one Venetian ship and with the delivery of the due money. On 10 October 1796 the *dey* of Algiers declared war as an answer to the aggression experienced in İzmir by his *vekilharc*'s men on the part of a group of Venetian Slavonians; in this case, diplomatic contacts did not lead to any settlement of the conflict that ended, after the capture of some ships by Algiers, with the vanishing of the millenary Republic of Saint Mark from the international scene.[46]

Napoleon's armies, after the destruction of ancient state entities such as Venice or Malta, upset an equilibrium that had been slowly formed between Christianity and Islam throughout the centuries; after years of stagnation, the resumption of the Barbary privateering in the Mediterranean at the beginning of the nineteenth century was another indication of the fact that the political situation had changed.

2.8 The Sea Frontier: Final Remarks

Sea was a real frontier between Venice and the Porte both during declared wars and peacetime for centuries. Venice – together with its islands, harbours and, most of all, with his squadrons that sailed from Saint Mark basin every year – generated a barrier for the Ottoman armies right in the field where they were weaker, i.e. the sea one. It was an effective barrier and all Europe took advantage of it, even though it was fragile, destined to shatter here and there because of the Ottoman attack and then to regroup. As Braudel argues, «perhaps after all the Venetian line held because the

45 Zordan, *Il codice*, vol. 1, 52-54, 94.

46 Pedani, *Marocco*, 96.

Turks had already made breaches in it, doors and windows through which they could reach the West».[47]

When the great sea war left the Mediterranean for a wider space in the Atlantic, piracy and privateering in this inland sea were the proof of endless undeclared hostilities. At the same time, the government of Istanbul underwent a dramatic series of dynastic problems caused by repeated successions and infant or imbecile sultans, and it delegated (at least ideologically) the legal Muslim war against the infidels to its Maghrebi subjects. This was the period when the privateer activity was in the best: Algiers became gorgeous and rich thanks to the activity of its *reis*es' booties, the first between 1560 and 1570, the second between 1580 and 1620. In the first years of the seventeenth century, Barbary ships penetrated into the Adriatic more and more often, in conjunction with the outbreak of the Uskok phenomenon, i.e. the pirates of Senj who, supported by the imperials, incessantly attacked both Venetian and Muslim ships. At the same time, Maghrebi and Dalmatian-Albanian, and even Aegean, Ottoman subjects acted hand in glove and created squadrons that used to go plundering together. We might suggest that Barbaries taught great piracy (or privateering) to the coast inhabitants; the latter appropriated their flags and started to act along the Adriatic coasts by themselves, blaming their ancient lords for their own massacres and raids.

Istanbul's behaviour towards this uncontrolled situation was contradictory: on the one hand, they could not totally disavow the Barbaries' privateering in the name of the sultan; on the other, their unjust attacks risked causing reprisals and clashes in a time that was ill-suited for a declared war. As a *name-i hümayun* of the first part of the moon of *muharrem* 1034/14-23 October 1624 says to the *beylerbey*is, the beys, the Janissaries *ağa* and the chiefs of the Tunisian armies, after the attack of Perast by thirteen galliots,[48] «so far my subjects of those places accomplished heroic deeds and their swords are flashing, but now they must not upset the peace with my friends regarding them just like other Christian enemies… We have to distinguish between the friends and the enemies of the Porte». And Venetians, in peacetime, however Christian, were friends.

47 Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, 847.

48 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 251, reg. 334, cc. 122a-121b; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, cc. 109-110; Bono, *I corsari barbareschi*, 175.

3 Land Borders

Summary 3.1 How a Border is Built. – 3.2 The Creation of a Practice. – 3.3 Marking the Space. – 3.4 Border Fortresses. – 3.5 The Disputed Land. – 3.6 Rivers and Mountains. – 3.7 Measuring Space and Time. – 3.8 Meetings of Diplomats. – 3.9 The Triplex Confinium.

3.1 How a Border is Built

Bounding the ground by mutual consent, marking it, distinguishing what belongs and what does not belong to someone is not a sign of war, but of peace. The frontier vanishes and gives way to the border, i.e. a definite and settled line that, right because it separates in a clear-cut way, somehow draws territories, people, ideologies, religions and laws together, giving their living space to everybody. The border is a shared line, marked with one accord, recognised and recognisable by everybody. If there is no consent, then it is not a real border, but it is a wall, a barrier, an obstacle, a rampart. The border may follow the course of the mountains and the waters of a river, a road that has already been planned by men or it may run among identical fields, pass through an inextricable tangle of a wood or a forest, halve a desert and separate two oases, or run following an imaginary parallel, a meridian or a line marked with a ruler on a map. It may respect ethnic groups or religions, or cut houses and separate families and communities. This is the border and it depends on the way it is marked.

The decision to build a border implies that the preconditions for a peace already exist. This subject, however, is often vaguely broached when an agreement is endorsed. If the frontier is the first element to be violated when the hostilities outbreak, the border is the last element by means of which peace is ratified. Rather, negotiations continue in new meetings, namely other debates among people who are specifically charged with deciding a new line. It is not always easy to agree on a border if the aim is establishing a long-lasting peace: nature and communities should not be violated by irresponsible new divisions. The theory of natural borders that already exist and respect the territory was defined in the nineteenth century (the century of colonialism) even if at the same time the 'Westerns' marked straight lines on a map in order to create new states the Near East or Africa. If we observe an atlas, we soon realise which are the borders that respect geography and which are the borders that were arbitrarily

marked without observing the territory at close quarters and without going there and then decide.[1]

The creation of a border represented a further acknowledgment of the right of the other to exist as far as the relations between Christians and Muslims are concerned: if making peace sometimes employed a temporary cessation of the hostilities, marking a border by mutual consent meant corroborating an agreement that had to last for a very long period, without taking into consideration what theories and religions asserted.

The first information regarding the existence of an Ottoman border regards Rumelia's provinces in the second half of the fifteenth century. Before the relentless advance of Osman's successors in the eastern Mediterranean, Venice had to hold out to defend its islands, its harbour towns and coastal strips. The very nature of these properties – i.e. long and narrow areas, constricted between the sea waves and a more and more dangerous enemy – led Venetians to want a border. It was a vital need for the survival of the Venetian *Stato da Mar* (maritime provinces) but not for others. As a matter of fact, it was not equally perceived by Habsburgs who, from the heart of Europe, ruled a wide Empire and could afford the existence of an indefinite area to its ends. The conquest or the loss of some miles was not vitally important for this sovereign, as it was for Venice, for which loosing Morea, Dalmatia and the Albanian towns meant to loose all of its maritime provinces.

The first document that concerns agreements for the border between Venice and the Porte was signed in 1479, right after a peace agreement. On this occasion, the sultan sent the *emin* Halil bey in Morea and later in Nafpaktos, Himara, Sopot, Shkodër, Bar, Ulcinj, Budva and Kotor to establish the border. The instructions given by Mehmed II were communicated also to Venetians and were very precise with regard to the lands and the towns he had to get or give. The areas conquered by means of the sword by the sultan's victorious armies had to go to him, even though this implied rejecting a natural border such as the one represented by the waters of the Bojana River near Shkodër. Old borders, such as those who had marked Giovanni Cernovich's lands, were restored. Poljica and other places did not have to offer gifts to the sultan anymore.[2] In this first border *name-i hümayun* that was written in Greek as it was customary for the correspondence with European states, there are some of the principles that underpinned the drawing up of agreements regarding the borders: the official task given to a diplomatic representative of going there to debate; the existence of possible natural borders other than those of ancient states

1 As for the borders of the Middle East or of North Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Blake, Schofoeld, *Boundaries and State Territory*, *passim*.

2 *Documenti turchi*, no. 4; Bombaci, *Nuovi firmani greci*, 300-305.

that could be restored; finally, the problem represented by the territories conquered with the sword that nobody wanted to yield. In this case, the principle of '*alā ḥalihi* or *uti possidetis ita porro possideatis*, according to which each state had to keep what it possessed when the hostilities ended, was customarily applied. This concept seems to have remained in the agreements with the Porte until the eighteenth century, because it was used with the same procedures also in the Treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz. Also in the agreement reached after the war of Cyprus, Venice yielded the island together with Sopot castle, whereas the borders in Albany and Bosnia did not change.[3]

If the line established for Albany in 1479 satisfied Venetians, Morea one did not; therefore, two official representatives (a Venetian and an Ottoman) were sent there, so that the decision would not be unilateral but made by mutual consent. Sinan bey and the secretary Giovanni Dario, whose palace on the Gran Canal near the Salute is still known by his name, were chosen. They went to Greece and the Venetians superintendents of the most important border fortresses took part in their debates and decisions; other debates took place also in Istanbul between the ambassador Nicolò Cocco and the sultan himself. They reached an agreement that was slightly different from the order given by Mehmed II to Halil; as a matter of fact, Pastrovich and Zupa, which had belonged to Giovanni Cernovich's territories, went to Venice. Venetians were asked to destroy Galata castle (near Nafpaktos) – which was rebuilt after one year – and were prohibited from rebuilding the 'Tzivérin' one in Morea.[4] Only at the end of the negotiations did the sultan issue a *hududname* (or *sınırname*) and the decisions were confirmed.

It may be observed that the procedure for the institution of the borders was not yet well defined at that time. At the beginning, a single representative was sent there (the Ottoman one), and only later were two representatives designated. Moreover, the discussions continued also in Istanbul with the Venetian ambassador. Finally, the sultan one-sidedly acknowledged the border line by means of a sovereign act. His successor, Bayezid II, renewing the peace, endorsed those borders but, after the arising of some usurpations to his detriment in Morea, he asked for their restorations and confirmed them again.[5]

The *hududname*s were still rather common in the sixteenth century; then, between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, when a real practice for the institution of borders was created, they appeared as a remnant of the past, rejected by Ottomans and obstinately demanded by

3 *Documenti turchi*, no. 818.

4 *Documenti turchi*, no. 21.

5 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 35, 37/c.

Venetians. The index *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* mentions only the one issued by the Republic and paid at a high price after the Treaty of Karlowitz.[6]

The *hududname*s concerning international relations are not the only ones. There were other relating to the inner borders of the Empire, for example to administrative areas or properties given by the sultan to eminent characters.[7]

3.2 The Creation of a Practice

At the end of the fifteenth century, another war upset the relations between the Republic and the Porte. Towards its end, new contacts maintained by the Venetian envoy in Istanbul brought peace back. Once again, the issue of the borders was referred to some official representatives. The doge charged the secretary Alvise Sagundino with this task but then, after the latter had given the fortress of Lefkada with arms and munitions to Turks, he substituted him with another secretary, Zaccaria de' Freschi. Ottomans assigned the task to Ali, the sanjakbeg of the area (at least for Morea). Then, another *name-i hümayun* that acknowledged and confirmed what had been decided was issued.[8]

Similar imperial documents, i.e. the international *sınırname*s or the *hududname*s, appeared to have been rather common in this period, much more than in the following years. They were the natural conclusion of the peace agreements and the ensuing debates on the borders. The practice concerning the meeting of two official representatives in the places to be defined is witnessed not only for Venice but also, for example, for Poland: after the Ottoman conquests, around 1542, it was necessary to establish the border line of south Ukraine between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Yedisan: the diplomats were the sanjakbeg of Silistra (assisted by the qadis of Akkerman and Bender) and the Polish hetman Mikolaj Sieniawski; however, their debates came to nothing since they could not reach a satisfactory agreement and the border remained indefinite. There were other debates a little less than a hundred years later in 1633 for the institution of a line of demarcation with the Polish lands and other discussions followed in 1673, 1680 and 1703, after the Treaty of Karlowitz.[9]

6 *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*, 144.

7 Cf. *Calligraphies ottomanes*, 166, 170-171.

8 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 100, 108, 157.

9 Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 58; Veinstein, *L'occupation ottomane*, 137-146. For a further Frank-Ottoman delimitation happened at the end of the eighteenth century, see Prokosch, *Molla und Diplomat*, *passim*.

Disputes and debates concerning the borders took place in peacetime as well. In the 20s of the sixteenth century, for example, uninterrupted border violation by both parties brought about usurpations, or we might also say that a certain indefiniteness of the border line caused the likelihood of border violation and usurpations. By then, the sanjakbeg of Bosnia, Hüsrev, together with the qadi of Skradin and some representatives of the other state, was charged with restoring the borders between the Most Serene Republic of Venice and the Porte near Šibenik and Trogir. Venetians laid claim to seventy or eighty villages, even though they produced only 'Christian writings' in support of their statements, namely privileges the king of Hungary had granted to them. Local Turks, instead, argued that those lands had been conquered with the sword during the war but had remained deserted; then, they were turned into *mukataa*; men were sent there and registered as tax-payers (i.e. for *öşr*). In 1530 the *emin*s of the country recorded the inhabitants paying *haraç* and *cizye*s in a new register (*defter-i cedid*), together with the lands that had been given as *tımar*s to the *sipahi*s and the fortress guards (*hisar eri*) that had already received their *berat*s. In the end, these villages were acknowledged as belonging to the Republic, but the fact that they had been already assigned as *tımar* made their restitution more difficult. In the following period, in order to avoid such cases, just when problems concerning lands that had already been assigned were in sight, the *sipahi* was immediately sent away and rewarded with another benefit.[10] Putting system like this into practice in the Ottoman Empire was rather easy since the system of *tımar*s did not bind the recipient and his successors to a specific estate for ever, but the latter could be replaced with a wider or smaller one and, in case of the *sipahi*'s death, it came back to the state.

The most ancient Venetian documents, which are kept in Venice and certify the sultan's orders to carry out inquiries (*teftiş*es) with regard to borders, date back to this period; they contain also *arz*s of reply by the local authorities and abstracts of *sicil* with authentications of qadis that attest the rights upon the lands given back by Ottoman subjects. Only after having been informed did the sultan issue an order with which lands or villages had to be kept or given back.[11] The qadi's key role in the certification of new or re-established borders started in this period, fully developed in the second half of the century and was applied until the eighteenth century.

An order given by Murad III to the sanjakbegs of Bosnia and Klis and to the qadis of Klis and Sarajevo in 1575 explains how a border with the Republic was expected to be re-established after a dispute.[12] The recipients,

10 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, cc. 10, 28-29, 35; f. II, c. 10; f. VII, c. 49; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 261, 307.

11 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, cc. 30, 39; *Documenti turchi*, no. 638.

12 *Documenti turchi*, no. 829.

together with the *çavuş* Cafer, had to meet the diplomats appointed by Venice, mark the borders again and place the signals; then, the two parties had to exchange the acts of delimitation. The *hüccet* issued by the qadi had to be transcribed in the *sicil*s and a copy had to be sent to the Porte.

The practice of defining a border, which was to be applied in the Venetian-Ottoman relations also after the Treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz, was employed as follows. The sultan and the doge designated their own representatives and provided them with credentials that certified them as diplomats charged with marking the new line. The two representatives, together with their retinue that could be composed of hundreds of men in the most important missions, gathered where the works had to begin; they measured the land, placed signals and questioned the local population on the subject, checking the maps and tracing out new ones. At the end of these meetings, they exchanged the documents: Venetians provided the opposite party with an act undersigned by the clerk (*cancelliere*) of the mission with the diplomat's seal and the Republic's seal with Saint Mark's lion. Ottomans handed over the original of a *hüccet* undersigned by the qadi or the qadis that had followed the committee; a copy of this *hüccet*, once copied in the official register, was sent to the sultan together with an *arz* drafted by the diplomat charged with the delimitation and, if necessary, by the qadi too. The transaction was completed and confirmed without any further formalities. To be safer, however, the sultan could issue a *hududname* as a confirmation in which the content of the *hüccet* was quoted.[13]

Beside *hüccet*s, however, during the negotiations, other documents were issued by Ottomans: they were *temessük*s, i.e. certificates unilaterally undersigned by the sultan's representative and given to the opposite party. In the Ottoman-Venetian affairs, they were drafted mainly when there had been some objections or uncertainties. According to Kolodziejczyk,[14] these acts were an integral part of the practice used to establish the border between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. They were similar to peace documents, drafted in two languages, undersigned and sealed by a diplomat and exchanged. As for Ottomans, the delimitation document was copied in the official registers (*defter-i mufassal*s in the case of the new province of Podolia/Kamenice), but it did not originate a *hududname*. The *temessük*s were drafted after the issue of the *ahdname* (sometimes even after some years) and represented the conclusion of the peace talks.

13 Pedani, *The Ottoman Venetian Frontier*, 172.

14 Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 67.

3.3 Marking the Space

Once the areas where a border line had to run were spotted, the official representatives of both parties had to identify it on the ground so that from then on everybody could recognise where a state ended and another began.

Since the classical antiquity, men used to place signals on the ground to indicate a border. These elements possessed a sacred character; according to Numa Pompilius' law, those who dared to budge a boundary stone, i.e. a boundary mark, had to be sacrificed to gods. Such severe punishments were inflicted by other peoples too. In the Early Middle Ages, however, after the coming of peoples of Germanic origin, fences, hedges, ditches and, most of all, trees on which some marks had been impressed were preferred. This was perhaps the expression of a world that was attached more to nature, woods and forests than to human manufactures. The person to whom a plant, and all the other plants from that spot on, belonged seemed to be more important than talking about ownership. Only Franks resumed the Roman custom of the boundary stones.[15]

With regard to the Venetian-Ottoman borders, some information about the way to mark the territory may be found in the documents issued at the end of the delimitation and in the papers that were drafted during the endless discussions between the two representatives. First of all, pyramids of stones (which were called *masiere* in Venetian or *unche* in the Dalmatian dialect) were preferred: they were made of stones collected on the spot and gathered to form a heap that was placed where the border line ran. A cusp-shaped stone was usually placed on the top to make the construction more recognisable.[16] The construction of such a structure could be a hard work and explained the presence of several diggers and labourers in the retinue of the diplomats charged with establishing the border.

The long document concerning the so-called 'Nani border',[17] established in Dalmatia in 1671 by Battista Nani and Hüseyin pasha (the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia), also describes trees or big stones on which a cross had been carved. This was a very old system of marking the space used not only in Dalmatia but also in other European places; for example, in the Venetian-Imperial borders a cross carved on the stone with the Habsburg coat of arms on one side and Saint Mark's lion on the other was often used. The vertical limb pointed out where the border line ran.[18] Another way to mark the space was driving a boundary stone into the ground – many

15 Werkmüller, *Recinzioni*, 641-659.

16 Sartore, *Termini di confine*, 273-335.

17 *I Libri Commemoriali*, vol. 24, nos. 66-71.

18 Sartore, *Termini di confine*, 295.

examples of which still exist in the Dolomites or on the Venetian lagoon edge; not only coats of arms but also inscriptions, dates, numbers and letters of the alphabet were carved on these structures: sometimes there was the progressive number of the signals, sometimes the first letters of a nearby town's name. The boundary stones could easily be moved by those who wanted the border line to run in a different place. Kolodziejczyk states that along the Polish-Ottoman border a heap crowned by a cross was used by the Christian party and a stack of wood in the form of a turbaned head by the Muslim one.[19]

Uprooting and replanting a tree used to mark a border was harder, but nature itself could destroy it or somebody could fell it. Removing the engravings carved on a rocky wall was quite a different thing and, as a matter of fact, this system was employed to mark the Venetian-Ottoman border of Dalmatia-Albany as well. For example, in the winter of 1699, in the mountainous area near Herceg Novi and Risan, there was the meeting between the substitutes of the diplomats Giovanni Grimani and Osman *ağa*, who had preferred not to go in such an inaccessible area that was covered with ice. After their arrival on the spot, these men realised that snow and frost prevented from finding stones or ground to build the heaps and, thus, they decided to carve the side of the mountain. Up until that moment, the cross was the only sign that had been used in the Venetian-Ottoman borders, such as the Nani, the Šibenik (1546) and Zadar (1576) ones.[20] By then, however, the cross was not considered to be fit to indicate both states; thus, it was used only with reference to the Republic, whereas the crescent was reserved for the other state.[21] It was an old Turkish symbol and this was probably the first time Ottomans used it alone, and not together with other symbols, to mean the Ottoman Empire, as Europeans already did. Twenty years later, on the occasion of the new boundary line (the Grimani one), what had been decided was not modified and the cross and the crescent remained to show where the Republic of Venice and the Empire of the sultans met.

3.4 Border Fortresses

Fortresses and strongholds had great importance in the establishment of a border line. Keeping them was a deterrent and ensured greater safety to the inhabitants, both in peacetime and in case of a future war. Leaving them to the enemy meant granting him a place whence he could watch and

19 Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 62.

20 ASVe, *Confini*, b. 243bis, cc. 21-23; *Documenti turchi*, no. 863.

21 *I Libri Commemoriali*, vol. 30, no. 61; ASVe, *Grimani*, b. 8, no. 39 (13 February 1700).

attack their territory. Such a delicate subject could not be extemporised.

The first Venetian-Ottoman agreement after the fall of Constantinople shows that Venetians were still interested in their trades by sea and were little involved in probable attacks from the land. Their castles in Romania and Albany are mentioned only to state that they could not host enemies or traitors of the sultan. The entire Venetian state was included in the peace because this had been officially reached by the sultan and the *signoria*, its nobles, the subjects, the towns, the lands, the islands and the places that hoisted Saint Mark's flag.[22]

The following agreement (1479) reached after a long war (1463-1479) fought not only at sea but also in the open field to the point that the *akıncı*s went beyond the Tagliamento river. This document speaks of fortresses and borders more in detail. Peace was sworn by the sultan by land and sea with all the Venetian lands, castles, islands and places. Venice was obliged to return Shkodër, Lemnos, the «castelli e i luogi… in le parte de la Morea» (castles and places in Morea) conquered during the war, but it was given back «li ocupati destreti neli confini vechi de le terre loro, vicinando cum li luogi de la mia Signoria in ogni luogo» (the regions – placed within the ancient borders of Venetian lands – that the Ottomans had conquered near the sultan's lands).[23] As it was said before, the first known delimitation that was made by two official diplomats (a Venetian and an Ottoman) took place right after this peace.

When a fortress had to be surrendered to the former enemy, all the arms and munitions that were kept there were usually taken away and the fortress was emptied of soldiers and officers. Peace agreements usually provided for this, but this practice was not always observed: in 1503 Lefkada castle was handed over by Venetians to the sultan's representative with what it contained and seven prisoners; on the contrary, in 1540 the *subaşi* Yunus declared to receive the town of Monemvasia together with its stronghold but without armaments.[24]

An efficient running of the problem constituted by the fortresses placed along the border was important since, if they had remained in a disputed but empty area, the buildings would have represented an easy and handy shelter for criminals. In 1480, for example, the sultan threatened to send his men to destroy Thermis, Vatici and the castle of Aberto in Morea, which had not yet been given to him as it had been established and which had become a den for fugitives.[25]

22 ASVe, *Comm.*, reg. 14, cc. 136-137v (=143-145v).

23 ASVe, *Comm.*, reg. 16, cc. 136v-137 (=138v-139); in Greek cc. 142-142v (=144-144v).

24 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 106, 440, 435, 436.

25 *Documenti turchi*, no. 13.

If a party could not easily gain such fortresses during the peace talks, it often asked to destroy them. This happened in 1539 when the sultan destroyed the constructions that had been built by Venetians near Herceg Novi in Ottoman territory during the war. The demolished buildings often were not old but new and built during the hostilities. For example, in 1542 the sultan ordered to fell a fortress near Shkodër: already destroyed by mutual consent for safety reasons in the days of İskender bey Mihaloğlu, it was rebuilt by Venetians during the war (1537-1540). One of the reasons that justified the outbreak of the hostilities by Ottomans, stated in the ultimatum of the first part of the moon of *ramazan* of 977/7-16 February 1570, was that, according to the sultan, Venetians were rebuilding castles and villages beyond the borders. The year before, the Porte had complained about the fact that two new fortresses had been built along the borders of Klis and other thirty-four (already demolished on the basis of the peace agreement) had been gradually restored. This behaviour, however, was not only Venetian; also Ottomans, when they could, acted in the same way: in 1586 the sultan was forced to order the demolition of the new fortresses along the border of Bosnia, since Venetians found out suspect traffic of lime and wood.[26]

Fortresses and castles were built or restored not only during war, but also in peacetime, especially when this lasted for many years and the geo-politics of an area was changing. When we consider the relations between the Porte and the Most Serene Republic, we shall take into consideration the fact that there was not a permanent conflict, but there were long periods of truce, among which the most important one lasted from 1573 to 1645; another one lasted from 1718 until the end of the Republic in 1797 and was characterised by the drawing-up of the 1733 perpetual peace that did not need any further ratifications.[27] There are several examples of fortresses built during these long truces: in 1557 the sultan ordered to demolish a castle that troubled the neighbouring salt marshes in the district of Poljica near Klis, together with a fort that had been built nearby by the inhabitants of Split who menaced Ottomans' peaceful exploitation of the salt. In 1577, while the sanjakbeg of Klis, Mustafa, was building a fortress in the district of Kotor, Venetians and Uskoks were building another fortress in Podgorje round an old tower that had remained deserted for more than eighty years. They also tried to seize an old fort placed near Sedd-i Islam that was readily demolished by Ottomans. In 1601 and in 1622 Ottomans erected two fortresses in Novigrad and Split.[28]

To carry out such projects, however, it was necessary to have much building material and this could not be neglected by the inhabitants of

26 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 410, 488, 802, 808, 958.

27 Bellingeri, *Un frammento*, 247-280; Pedani, *La dimora della pace*, 40-41.

28 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, c. 42; f. III, c. 164; f. V, cc. 204-205; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, c. 108.

the neighbourhood. If the other party had been informed, its help could be asked for, but it was difficult to obtain it. In 1531 the sultan ordered Venetians to defend the workers that were building the fortress of Solin in the sanjak of Bosnia: it was placed in a desert and dangerous area, near the Venetian sea harbours, and was easily assailable by the enemies. In 1547, instead, the sultan asked Venetians to give him bricklayers (*bennā*), carpenters (*neğğār*), workers (*erġāt*) and supplies for the construction of the castle of Nadin in the sanjak of Klis.[29]

Nadin, together with Buchach, Rasten, Velin, Vrana, Sene and Degirmenler (i.e. Mills) were fortresses placed in the Bosnian borderland, towards Dalmatia, in an area that had been conquered by Ottomans during the war (1537-1540); these place names appear in the ensuing peace agreement. The possession of Nadin and the near Vrana was not questioned by Venetians, even though their name was remembered also in the following capitulations of 1567, 1575 and 1576. Degirmenler, instead, was recognised as Venetian despite the fact that, already in the 20s of the sixteenth century, this place was questioned since it was near Solin where there was no castle but only mills belonging to Šibenik's people. In 1523 the area was probably the vizier Ahmed's property (*mülk*): he proposed an agreement, which was confirmed by the sultan the same year, and Venetians recognised his rights in exchange for money. The other fortresses aroused much controversy. It was necessary to constitute a mixed committee to establish the owners of Buchach (a deserted tower in front of the castle of Klis), Sene (the ruins of a castle built to protect a salt marsh), Rasten (a house placed among the olive trees near Šibenik and the sea), and the tower of Velin, which stands near the castle of Strevice. This committee decided they were all Ottoman; the castle of Rasten, however, was then left to Venetians who, still in 1546, held a garrison in Velin too.[30]

As regards the fortresses right along the border, Karlowitz border agreement is of special interest. If we read the reports of the time, it is clear that the space around a fortress had to be given to the state that possessed the fortress; then, a series of niches and circular bulges was created in a straight line that usually could be travelled over in some hours. Therefore, not all the forts placed exactly along the border line were demolished, but some of them were given, by mutual consent, to one of the two states.

29 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, c. 25; f. II, c. 18; cf. Bonelli, *Il trattato*, 355.

30 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, cc. 22, 27, 70 (edited in Bonelli, *Il trattato*, 351-352); *Documenti turchi*, nos. 430, 528, 540, 543, 556, 562; Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomatics*, 617-639.

3.5 The Disputed Land

Sometimes, after the end of the fighting – in any case before the ratification of a peace or the creation of a border –, one of the two parties could suddenly seize a place, a village or a castle that was considered to be strategically relevant and, thus, attractive and important to go on discussing on favourable terms. Many examples of such a behaviour exist with reference to the Balkan borders. For instance, Habsburgs behaved in this way after the Treaty of Karlowitz, during the talks for the new Venetian-Ottoman-Imperial border: on 10 June 1699, about one thousand knights and five hundred infantrymen went under the walls of the fortress of Zuonigrad and asked to surrender it. After a refusal, they attacked it, whereas only three artillery fires could be shot from the walls; one hundred Habsburg soldiers got into the fortress through a breach and took possession of the building, which they would possess even after the border agreement.[31]

Such usurpations could take place also in peacetime. In 1531, for example, the *bailo* complained to the sultan about the unlawful occupation of places between Split and Omiš. Vice versa, in 1542 the sanjakbeg of Shkodër, Halil, and the qadi of Montenegro told that the people of Kotor had taken possession of many public lands of the 'salt marsh of the despot' and had put them to crop, thus damaging the picking of salt, while other lands had been seized near Starigrad and Pastrovich, Bar and Ulcinj. In this case, the sultan ordered to check the border by mutual consent once again and, if Venetians had gone on farming Ottoman lands, to ask them the due taxes. In 1564 the Porte was ordered to demolish three houses built on Venetian lands near Klis and to give them back what had been unduly occupied. In 1590 border violation near Pastrovich by Ottoman subjects was reported, whereas in 1591 Venetians were accused of having plundered, and then occupied with the Uskoks, thirty-four villages, i.e. 360 *baştine*s near Split, Šibenik and Trogir, whose inhabitants 'now pay *haraç*s to the infidels', and the castle of Vrhpolje that had become, according to the supplicants, a den of pirates. In the near Petrova, two Ottoman fortresses were built by Ottomans to protect their territory from usurpations. Both Ottoman and Venetian local authorities sometimes unduly changed the border line, just like the sanjakbeg of Klis, Ferhad, tried to do in 1559.[32]

Lands as well as their inhabitants could not be easily yielded to the neighbouring state. For example, in 1537, on the eve of a war, the sanjakbeg of Bosnia, Hüsrev, prepared a list of 150 people – among which there

31 ASVe, *PTM*, f. 701, no. 14. For the account of these events seen from the imperial point of view, see Holjevac, *The* "Triplex Confinium", 133-137.

32 ASVe, *LST*, f. IV, c. 159, f. V, cc. 10, 13, 14, 28, 10, 478, 479, 2; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 284, 490, 748, 788.

were also women and children – that had taken refuge in the Venetian land. Not all the inhabitants of a place were happy to live under a certain ruler and, if another state with different customs and faith lay near there, people could turn to the 'enemies' in the hope of a better destiny. Before the fall of their city, the Greeks of Constantinople often said that they liked better the turban of a Turk than the tiara of the pope of Rome. Other episodes are less known. For instance, around 1520-1523, the inhabitants of some villages of both Rhodes and Karpathos wrote to the sultan asking for help; the first complained about the oppression exerted by the Christians and asked to send the army to conquer the island.[33]

3.6 Rivers and Mountains

When a border was planned, it was important to make it visible. If it ran along a river, the same waters formed a silver dividing line. For many peoples, and also for Turks, before their conversion to Islam, water was a holy element; dirtying it, even just to wash, was a crime; the banks, most of all the nearest to the source, were an area close to god and, therefore, they were a place appointed to oaths, alliances and peace agreements. The very course of the waters was of special value: as a matter of fact, some sovereigns wanted their tombs to be dug right in the riverbed, after having diverted it as long as it was necessary. The same applies to high places, i.e. the mountain or hill tops, which were considered to be suitable for oaths, sovereign graves or else to mark the division of the space. Traces of this ancient belief may still be found in the agreements between Venice and the khans of Crimea: in 1342, for example, peace was sworn next to a river in a place called 'red bank'.[34]

Just like the rivers, mountain ranges often used to mark a border; also in this case, however, it was difficult, if not impossible and often useless, to leave marks to find the exact border dividing the two states. Sometimes, the marks were left at steep faces' feet and in the written agreements it was specified that they had to be interpreted as if they had been placed on the tops. This is what happened in 1778 to Venetians and Habsburgs near the Marmolada glacier; then, ignoring the written text, someone wanted to make reference to that old agreement to mark the border between Veneto and Trentino taking into consideration only the signs left on the mountain and not the maps of the time. Therefore, we may infer that studying old agreements is not only a display of culture, but it can have an effect on the present as well. From the point of view of the current geopolitics, the

33 ASVe, *CXM*, reg. 46, c. 22v; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 400, 1102.

34 *Diplomatarium*, vol. 1, no. 135.

border, or borders, that once divided the Venetian Dalmatia from the Ottoman Empire are likewise important: for many tracts the ancient maps were used to divide the present-day territory of Croatia from that of Bosnia.[35]

During the nineteenth century, seas and mountains were defined as 'natural borders'; as a matter of fact, it was believed that the very nature had divided men and cultures; physical barriers were thought to be a godsend, an element that always existed, just like peoples living on the two sides of a border were destined to stay separate. The line of the Pyrenees was considered as the best example of that concept for a long time, just like the Urals were believed to be the separating element between Asia and Europe, and the Mediterranean Sea was believed to be a belt between Christianity and Islam.

The border between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice was marked not only by the man's hand but, wherever possible, by nature. In 1720 the stream Tiskovac, which is a tributary of the Cetina near Strmica, for example, was recognised as the limit of a zone that could be crossed in five hours. Thus, if a 'dry border' (*suha meda*) existed between Habsburgs and Ottomans after 1699 in the area near the left bank of the Una River, this means that in other areas of the valley, where the limit really ran together with the river waters, the border was necessarily 'wet'. Still in 1542 Polishes and Ottomans contended about a common tract: the first argued that it had to run along the Kodyma, which was a right tributary of the Boh; the other maintained that it had to run along the Savran (or Savranka) placed more northward.[36]

3.7 Measuring Space and Time

We are used to the decimal measuring system that is world-wide spread. Therefore, it is not easy to understand the difficulties peoples once had to agree on the way to measure the space. During the discussions held to mark a border, the diplomats had to agree on the distance between a fortress and the border line or between a sign on the ground and the next one. These were important issues, since giving a certain quantity of land to a stronghold meant making it more or less dangerous, while giving a land to a state meant to reduce the other's territory.

The Venetian unit of length was the *piede veneto*, that is to say 0,347 m; five *piede*s were equivalent to a *passo veneto* (1,738 m), whereas six

35 *I libri Commemoriali*, vol. 33, no. 13 all. (register); cf. also the original text in ASVe, *Comm.*, reg. 33, c. 57; Mustać, *The Borders*, 63-71. With regard to the mountains in the previous 1750 border, see Zoccoletto, *Il congresso di Mauthen*, 140.

36 *Documenti turchi*, no. 1851; Roksandić, *Stojan Jankovic*, 240; Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 58-59.

*piede*s were equivalent to a *pertica grande* or *cavezzo* (2,086 m) and one thousand *passo*s were equivalent to the *miglio veneto* (1.738,674 m). As regards Ottomans, measures of length proper and 'of walk' existed. The basis of the first was the *arşın*, which may be translated with 'peak' or 'cubit', but it took on different values according to the person who used it. There was the *mi'mar arşını* used by architects for walls or building lands that was equivalent to 0,758 m and had a multiple, the *kulaç* (1,89 m) and some submultiples: the *kadem*, i.e. the foot (0,379 m); the *parmak*, i.e. the inch (0,03159 m); the *hat,* i.e. the line (0,0026 m); and the *notka*, i.e. the point (0,0002 m). Then, there was the *çuhaci arşını*, that is the draper's *arşın*, used for clothes, which was equivalent to 0,68 m and could be divided into *rub*s (0,085 m); for more valuable fabrics, they used the *enzade* that was slightly shorter (0,65 m). Among the geographical measures, there were the *mil* (mile) that was equivalent to 1,895 m, the *fersah* (5,685 m), the *berid* (22,740 m), conceptually equal to the distance between two post houses (*berid*), and the *merhale* (45,480), namely a day journey, whereas the *imili bahri* (sea mile) was equivalent to 1,667 m.[37]

There were several units of length and, thus, it was often difficult to entirely agree on a distance. Sometimes the measures used in different states had to be compared but also the space that could be travelled over in a certain period of time, usually on the basis of the hour, could be considered. After the invention of mechanical clocks, measuring time became easier, even though the length of day and night officially continued to vary according to the season and, as a consequence, according to the measure of the hours. In midsummer, the day, from dawn to dusk, was much longer than the night and, thus, the hours (always twelve) into which it was divided drew out in direct proportion, whereas night hours consequently drew in. On the contrary, in winter, the relation was reversed while day and night hours were of the same length only in the period of the equinoxes. That system clearly belonged to peoples who still lived in close contact with nature.

Once the two diplomats established to agree on a walk of a certain length, they had to choose whether it was a man's or an animal's walk and which kind of animal; the steps of a camel are different from those of a horse, a mule or a donkey, and these ones are different from those of a man.

The description of the decision of a short tract near the Triplex Confinium in 1699 is very useful to show how such a border was physically marked. On 20 June 1699 the Venetian, the Imperial, and the two Ottoman diplomats started their work debating on the kind of steps they had to employ, i.e. those of a man, a horse or a camel; they did some tests with their

37 Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 817; *Système des mesures*, 3-9; İnalcık, *Weights and Measures*, 987-994; *Introduction to Ottoman Metrology*, 311-348.

clocks and they soon realised that each of them differently measured the space covered in an hour. Reasoning on the basis of the linear measures appeared to be easier: for the time being, a Turkish ell corresponded to half a Venetian step minus a quarter, so that 1330 Turkish ells were equivalent to 598 geometrical Venetian steps. On August 30th, after having marked the point where the three states would meet, they started to debate on the space to be assigned to the strongholds and they decided to establish the equivalence between a ride of a quarter of an hour and the geometrical steps. They did some tests: in the presence of the two delegations, the cartographer Giust'Emilio Alberghetti started to ride and a Turk set out «with a ridiculous step» while the imperial diplomat, count Marsili, calculated the duration of a quarter of an hour with his clock «plus some minutes out of politeness»; in the meantime, his colleague Giovanni Grimani measured the ground with a pole sealed with the state seal and representing the official measure of a Venetian step. At the end of the test, a quarter of an hour was equivalent to 1.057 steps and this would be the measure used to establish the semicircular line that ran around the strongholds.[38]

3.8 Meetings of Diplomats

The papers of Giovanni Grimani and Alvise III Mocenigo – the Venetian diplomats charged with establishing the borders after the Treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz – provide some information on their life during the months spent side by side with the Ottoman delegations to establish the border line between Saint Mark's land and the sultan's one. Besides the diplomatic meetings and the land measurements, building boundary stones and distributing guard posts or farmed lands to the parties, there were also pleasant and relaxing moments with courtesy visits or the exchange of gifts and favours. Working together for many months, meeting almost every day and also quarrelling could make people know each other and sometimes even become friends.[39]

The Venetian gifts were: olive oil and cinnamon water (perhaps just arrived from Venice), oranges and lemons, fabrics, sugar loafs, jams, *grana* cheese (i.e. parmesan by then called *piacentino*), clocks, fish and even wine, which request really amazed Venetians. Ottomans gave enamel and locally made stirrups, boots, handkerchiefs or muskets (such as the ones given by the pasha of Herzegovina to Mocenigo), or fans, clothes, perfume

38 ASVe, *PTM*, f. 701, nos. 19, 38.

39 ASVe, *Grimani*, b. 8, no. 39 (Giovanni Grimani's diary); *Documenti turchi*, nos. 1651-1862; Pedani, *The Ottoman-Venetian Frontier*, 175. As for an Iberian case, see Szászdi León-Borja, *La demarcación*, 194-196, 199-201.

burners, tobacco and pipes, rose jam, sorbet glasses, combs, amber and aloe. Becoming friends also meant to invite the other to family events, such as the wedding of the diplomat Mehmed *efendi*. He invited his Venetian counterpart who did not go in person but sent a representative with a mirror and some jams for the married couple. Sometimes, this familiarity was used to obtain the treatments of a physician who had joined the other state's expedition and who was probably more experienced than their own, or the release of a slave, as did Mocenigo for a certain Pellegrini in return of some Ottoman slaves. On the contrary, at the beginning of their acquaintance, Osman *ağa* tried to obtain the release of some prisoners from Giovanni Grimani who, however, managed to give a vague answer about it. Having a physician available for any contingency was often very important since several accidents could happen: on 8 July 1699, for example, Grimani was hit by a horse's kick and stayed aching in his tent for a few days, while on August 15th people coming from the town of Zuonigrad, which Ottomans disputed with Venetians, attacked one of the two Ottoman camps, stole some horses and injured some men. Colds and fluxions too were on the agenda.[40]

The diplomats in charge with the borders – Venetians, Imperials or Ottomans – did not do their job on their own. Their retinue was often very large. For example, in 1699 Osman *ağa*, an old *ağa* of the sultan's *silihdar*s, carried 100 infantrymen, 100 knights, 180 slaves, 70 diggers and 100 members of the retinue destined to his person; among the latter there were a *kadı*, a *defterdar*, a *miralem*, an *alaybeyi*, five old experts from the village and an interpreter. Giovanni Grimani, instead, had a retinue of more than five hundred men, i.e. 100 knights, 100 infantrymen, 250 people that had to look after the horses and the luggage, and 100 members of the most closed retinue of which also a secretary, two or three interpreters (depending on the moment), a cartographer, six trumpeters and two physicians were part. According to rumours of the time, the imperial diplomat, count Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, reached the place of the meeting with four hundred people.[41]

40 ASVe, *PTM*, f. 701, nos. 8all., 11-12, 28; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 1662, 1669, 1723, 1725-1726, 1731, 1736-1737, 1739-1742, 1744, 1754-1757, 1762, 1766-1769, 1771, 1773, 1776-1777, 1780, 1784-1785, 1788, 1800, 1821, 1831, 1838-1839, 1853.

41 ASVe, *PTM*, f. 701, no. 12.

3.9 The Triplex Confinium

When we think about a border, we usually imagine a long line that divides two states. Sometimes, however, there are places where three states meet, if not four. If some problems may arise when only two state entities are interested in the delimitation of a border, the decision of a Triplex Confinium is even more difficult. The way the Venetian-Imperial-Ottoman border was established in 1699, and was later questioned, is a model. In the last few years, several historians have dealt with this issue. The break up of Yugoslavia, with the consequent birth of new state entities in need of historical references for a more correct identification, gave rise to a widespread interest (with different political implications) in the subject of borders and, especially, in the Triplex Confinium, i.e. the border where the Empire, Venice and the Porte met. In this recent historiographical production, it is interesting to observe that the documentary sources used by scholars, however concerning the same subject, are different and complementary. Some historians use only the documents kept in the State Archives of Zadar even if they present a point of view that is essentially Ragusean;[42] others tackle the problem from a purely cartographic point of view on the basis of the maps kept mainly in Zagreb;[43] others study the papers of the Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv of Graz and mainly recall the imperials' remarks,[44] just like those who focus on the count Luigi Ferdinando Marsili's Italian papers;[45] others analyse the Venetian sources and what the representatives of the Republic thought;[46] and, finally, other scholars use only Ottoman documents.[47]

As for the concept of the triplex confinium, its meaning may vary according to the perspective: it may be a point – more precisely, for the Venetian-Habsburg-Ottoman border of 1699, the peak of Debelo Brdo, or Veliko Brdo on the Medveda Glavica mountain –, but it may also be, in the broadest sense, a whole area that shares the same problems, for example the one that extends among Zadar, Senj, Knin and Bihac, i.e. the most important towns between the bordering states. As for the Eurasian area,

42 Tolomeo, *La repubblica di Ragusa*, 305-323.

43 Slukan, *Cartographic Sources*. Cf. also the catalogue of the exhibition on the Treaty of Karlowitz, *Like Mira*.

44 Holjevac, *The* "Triplex Confinium", 117-140.

45 Marsili, *Relazioni dei confini*; Nouzille, *Histoire de frontiers*, 98-105.

46 Pedani, *The Ottoman-Venetian Frontier*, 171-177.

47 Abou-El-Haj, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 498-512; *Ottoman Attitudes*, 131-137; *The Formal Closure*, 467-475.

there were, according to Alfred J. Rieber,[48] at least five other similar areas: Transylvania where Habsburgs, Hungarians and Ottomans met; the Pontic steppe next to the Polish-Russian-Ottoman border; the 'Caucasian knot' as a point of contact among Russia, the Porte and Persia; and finally, the Russian-Chinese-Mongolian border in the innermost Asia. The same author finds many similarities mainly between the first border, the Pontic steppe and the Caucasian part rather than with the other two areas, and draws a parallel between the Cossack and the Uskok societies. Peace agreements and diplomatic meetings were necessary to establish these borders; for example, in 1724 the Ottoman Empire and Russia agreed upon the place of the Caucasian triplex confinium: it was near the Caspian Sea, not far from Baku, but not on the mountain peak as in the Balkans but at the confluence of two rivers, the Kura and the Aras.[49] The situation remained very uncertain because of the Persian army that moved forwards and retired, and the Russian army that sometimes was called, such as in 1770, in defence of Christian peoples. Moreover, there were local rebellions, such as the one guided by Mansur Ušurma, i.e. Giovanni Battista Boetti, an Italian friar converted to Islam and founder of a new universalist and mystic creed, based more on the Koran than the Gospel.[50]

In the Balkans, i.e. the area where the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice met, local people, subject to one of these states, did not find, at least until the late eighteenth century, a blockade in the state border. Shepherds used to go downhill to reach the coast each year in autumn; in spring, instead, they followed the opposite path to go to the green summer pastures in the mountains. Here, i.e. an area that was always disputed, this transhumance influenced also the real border line among the states. To explain this we should start from August 1699 and the meeting between Giovanni Grimani, Osman *ağa*, İbrahim *efendi* and Luigi Ferdinando Marsili in Otton. The latter, after a five-hour discussion, suddenly «spiccata una corsa» (running), headed for three little hillocks that Osman *ağa* had just pointed out stating that they were the perfect place for the Triplex Confinium; then, «col geto de sassi e col sbaro della gente di Cesare s'alzò masiera gettando tutti un sasso» (stones were thrown and Habsburgs were shooting and the heap of stones was built because everybody threw stones), while the four diplomats hugged one another. The presence of a wide – Venetian, Ottoman and Habsburg – documentation allows to reconstruct also the most hidden manoeuvres that led to that run. A secret meeting had taken place the night before

48 Rieber, Triplex Confinium *in Comparative Context*, 17-18, 23-27.

49 ASVe, *SDC*, f. 177, cc. 550-553, with a drawing (a Venetian copy of an Ottoman original used for the definition of the border).

50 Sambonet, *Il profeta armato*, 76, 78, 154-175.

between Marsili and the representatives of the Porte who had decided to place the Triplex Confinium there; in this way the Empire would widen its territory at the expense of Venice, preserving (in addition to Zuonigrad, which had been unduly torn from Venice after the signing of the peace) also the territory as far as the fortress of Otton, whereas Ottomans would conquer the fertile plain of Plavno and Strmca.[51]

Caught off balance, Giovanni Grimani yielded to the psychological pressure of the moment but soon after, realising that he had been compelled, refused to undersign anything. A verbal decision was not enough if it was not confirmed by a written, signed and sealed text. After a few days, while the Venetian diplomat was not taking any decision stating he had to wait orders from Venice, there was a small clash between the diplomats' men and some Vlachs. According to Grimani, it was a skirmish done on purpose to make him decide and, thus, to close the meeting. As a matter of fact, they soon had to leave since the situation was tenser and tenser. Therefore, he left Popine and set off with Osman *ağa* to go on with the delimitation along the entire Dalmatia. The problem of where the Triplex Confinium had to stand remained unsolved. For Venetians, Debelo Brdo was unacceptable, which is why they did not ratify the agreement; on the contrary, for the Imperials and Ottomans, recognising it meant seizing a strategically important tract. In this way, since everybody kept their positions, the problems remained unsolved: Zuonigrad went to the Imperials, the town of Plavno to Ottomans and the fortress of Otton, together with its territory including the Debelo Drdo peak, to Venetians. That situation remained unchanged also after the Treaty of Passarowitz. In the meantime, since a delimitation was necessary for practical necessities, even though there was not a political border, they continued to use, until the end of the Republic of Venice (1797), the line that the local people called 'the shepherds' border' because it was used for the transfers of herds from the summer pastures to the winter ones and vice versa.[52]

51 ASVe, *Grimani*, b. 8, no. 39 (12 August 1699); *PTM*, f. 701, no. 34; Marsili, *Relazioni di confini*, 146, 149.

52 ASVe, *SDC*, reg. 35, cc. 144-145; Netto, *I confini*, 137-153.

4 Living along the Border

Summary 4.1 A Border Society. – 4.2 Trade. – 4.3 Border Violation and Violence. – 4.4 The Divided Land. – 4.5 Border Favours.

4.1 A Border Society

From a social and political point of view, a border area was different from any other. First of all, the political uncertainty was greater: not only war but also a renewal of peace agreements could lead to reallocate the lands to one or the other state. Peoples, especially if pushed by religious reasons, very often followed these changes and moved. Mercenary soldiers or companies were recruited more in those areas than anywhere else. Venice, for example, made good use of the Dalmatians' anti-Ottoman feelings, looked for alliances with local people and recruited many Serbians or Vlachs in its army. Ottomans found an element of strength in the *akıncı*s, mainly during their advance in the Balkans. Habsburgs created the *Militärgrenze*, namely an area where the male population was potentially formed by fighters.

In particular, according to various scholars, the structure of the Habsburg captaincies, inherited by the ancient Medieval states of Hungarians, Slovaks and Croatians, was imitated in the Ottoman captaincies, created in the Balkan conquered lands. The captaincy of Gradiška was created in 1537, the one of Krupa in 1565, the one of Bihac in 1592. In both states, they were military centres of local professional soldiers, both infantrymen and knights but in Ottoman Bosnia they were hereditary while in the Habsburg Empire they were not. Moreover, while in the latter they started to gradually decrease throughout the eighteenth century, the Ottoman ones stayed longer and still in 1829 they were thirty-nine in the *eyalet* of Bosnia.[1]

A mountainous area placed close to a more fertile coast appears to be a special environment. Then, if also a border line runs in this territory, this may influence not only the customs of those who live there, but also the natural environment. Mirela Slukan, thoroughly analysing the area of the Triplex Confinium, showed that in such a zone a society committed to

1 Roksandić, *Stojan Jankovic*, 242; Moačanin, *Some Observations*, 241-246.

sheep-breeding and transhumance kept its customs longer than elsewhere, and only partially and very slowly changed into an agricultural society; an uncertain possession of the land, together with the fear of possible devastating wars, did not encourage to put down roots in certain areas.[2] This happened only when the international situation was stable and the state helped agriculture, as Habsburg and Venetian local administrations did. For instance, the introduction of the potato, promoted in the *Militärgrenze* at the end of the eighteenth century, greatly helped to convert the semi-nomadic population into a resident one.

Habsburg and Ottoman lands had also a different distribution of the villages that were structured in two different ways. In the latter, the houses were assembled in small family units (*zadruga*, 'extended family'): for instance, the village of Klenovac was formed by nine houses gathered in six groups placed on the side of a mountain among pastures, forests and lands, but without a road in the true sense of the word that linked them together. When Ottoman countries started to go over to the Empire, also their structure started to change and the houses assembled mainly along the trade roads.

In the Dalmatian area the transhumance was influenced by geography as well; the climate of a dry coast (into possession of Venice) was suitable for a winter permanence of the herds, whereas the mountains, however Imperial and mainly Ottoman, were wetter and more suitable for summer pastures. Moreover, men used to gather wood in the mountains for the needs both of the coast and the inland. This intense exploitation done before the agreement on the Triplex Confinium in 1699 contributed towards the creation of nude and barren soils in the Venetian part and towards a significant reduction of the forests in the Ottoman Lika region.

At least until the late eighteenth century, the shepherds of both states did not find a real blockage in the state border. They went in the inland each year in spring and in autumn they headed to the coast. This happened also in the area of Otton, Plavno, Strmca, not far from Debelo Brdo, where the Triplex Confinium had been officially established and where, as we already saw, the presence of shepherds had a peculiar influence on the border line.

2 Slukan, *Cartographic Sources*, 72-75.

4.2 Trade

A border society usually shares two cultures and two ways of living, speaking, being. Even in Dalmatia, or in the Aegean zone, where Venetian and Ottoman, Christian and Muslim territories were neighbouring, people usually exchanged goods, did business together and, in general, talked. In the Modern Era and, even more so, in the previous period even a river or a mountain did not create an almost impenetrable 'rolling shutter' border, which is common today and due mainly to technical progress.

As Ottoman and Venetian sources testify, Christians and Muslims who lived in those area traded and attended the same fairs. For example, in 1527 the *provveditore* (governor) in Zakynthos sent some of his men to buy horses at the fairs held in the sanjak of Morea; in the same area, in 1537, some Venetian merchants were attacked and robbed of 500 or 600 Venetian ducats; in 1533 a Venetian merchant was attacked and killed by a gang of criminals of a close village while he was going to the famous and renowned market of Podgorica; in 1533 voivodes and *subaşi*s of Dulcinj tried to prevent the sultan's subjects, putting many obstacles in their way, from going to trade in Venetian Shkodër; in 1599 Fabrizio Salvaresa thought to create a port of call where the wood that Turks and Venetians used to chop in the deserted woods between Obrovac and Karin (that belonged to the imperial estates beyond the river Kerka in the sanjak of Klis) could be sold to Venetians. Documents obviously relate only of extraordinary events, thefts or murders; of course, it is difficult to find memories of exchanges that took place without quarrels. Sources make reference to merchants who took advantage of their status of foreigners to buy goods without paying them immediately and to take refuge in their motherland straight after, as happened in 1527 for some corn among Methoni, Chlomoutsi and the Venetian island of Zakynthos. If some objections arouse abroad, an Ottoman subject could sue a Venetian trader in the court of the place where he was; only if he was in the 'guarded Empire', could he call him to answer either locally or at the Porte. As for them, Venetian merchants were sometimes explicitly protected by *name-i hümayun*s addressed to the Ottoman local authorities and issued on the *bailo*'s request.[3]

The produces the Venetian state exchanged with the Ottoman Empire were not only those freighted by the *mude* after a long journey at sea as far as Istanbul or to the harbours of the Syrian shoreline: this was not the only way through which Ottoman produces arrived in Venice. Others (mainly stock) arrived right from the Balkans or from Morea (wheat, olive oil, raisins). In the second half of the sixteenth century, because of the

3 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, c. 126; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, c. 17; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 217-218, 231, 302-303, 392, 751, 753, 755. As for the reasons that pushed to create the harbour of Split, cf. Paci, *Spalato*, 45-70.

Uskoks pirates and the Barbary privateers that overran the Adriatic and the basin of the Mediterranean, overland journeys from Istanbul to the Adriatic coast were preferred. Diplomats, Ottoman merchants as well as goods that were brought by Venetians more and more frequently at the Ottoman fairs beyond Dalmatian borders followed the same land route, while the journey by sea was reduced to the crossing of the Adriatic from Dalmatia and Albany to Venice. We know of stock either shipped in this area or brought by land. When there was a famine in the Ottoman territories, however, also the exports suffered a slowdown, as in 1566 near Klis, when the exports of oxen and provisions were totally interrupted to meet the needs of local people. It is important to observe that the necessities of sailing boosted a coast trade too: a ship had only to fire a cannon shot to make the peasants of the close inland villages dash bringing commodities and animals to sell.[4]

When the goods left a territory, either Venetian or Ottoman, they had to pay a tax that was equal to a licence of export, as the sultan stated in 1569 in a *name-i hümayun* concerning a trade of arms: once paid the customs duty, one of his subjects was on the point of loading weapons in Venice when Venetian authorities stopped him since their export in Ottoman territory was forbidden by the Venetian law; as a consequence, long cases between the two states started. In the Empire, the duties were collected by the *emin*s that had usually purchased the contract, paying out a tax for the *berat* of appointment and a yearly sum to the imperial treasury; the title of privilege was usually valid for three years and then had to be renewed. These officers sometimes were Turk, often Jewish, but a few times they bore Christian names. The duty on the Turkish salt sold in the Venetian harbours, such as Split, Trogir, Šibenik, Zadar or Kotor, was collected by *emin*s who often, even if not always, asked and obtained to live in those places, or at least close by, so that they could check the trade. Others could settle in farther areas; for example, in 1531 the *emin* of Neretva and Makarska, who checked the trade with Split and Trogir, often went to these two towns with the aid of the Venetian authorities to collect duties and tolls. If an *emin* did not pay the contract to the sultan, he was sought by the law of his country, even though he was in another state; since this money belonged to the imperial treasury, it was possible to get legal redress even abroad, as Haydar, the sanjakbeg of Herzegovina, stated in 1561. The contractors sometimes were in a ruthless competition, lowering the percentage due to them to push the merchants to sell in a certain Venetian harbour; but if the sultan sold all the contracts of a zone to the same person, as happened in Šibenik, Split, Zadar and Trogir in 1591, then, the rates increased to Venetians' great disappointment. On

4 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, c. 175; BOA, *MD*, reg. 23, c. 47; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 722, 990. As for the trade of raisins, cf. Fusaro, *Uva passa*; Tucci, *L'alimentazione*, 601.

the basis of the capitulations, the tax on the salt or other goods was of 5% for Venetians: there is evidence of merchants who maintained they had been compelled to pay more, up to 12% and, in a resounding occasion, up to 150%. The subjects of the Most Serene Republic theoretically did not have to pay other taxes, even though sometimes they were compelled to sustain other taxations and were subsequently exempted after several protests they made to the sultan. For example, in Morea in 1526-1537 they had to pay the *ağırlık* and around 1599, in some Ottoman harbours, were compelled to pay the *kassab akçesi* on the stock like the local merchants. Such contrasts with the *emin*s went on also in the following century.[5]

In the Venetian harbours, however, it was possible to meet not only merchants subjects of the Most Serene Republic but also of the Ottoman Empire; they were often Jews, but there were also Muslims; in Dalmatia they were mainly of Balkan origin, i.e. of Bosnia, Herzegovina or Albany; in the Hellenic islands, instead, mainly inland Greeks arrived. It was both a local and an international trade and it induced people from Lefkada, Arta or Ioannina to reach Cephalonia or Corfu, or people from Morea or Aitoliko or Angelokastro to go to Cephalonia or Zakinthos. Surely, given the few miles of sea between Ottoman and Venetian lands, these people knew the places, the language, the merchants and how to meet the local requirements. Nevertheless, they went abroad, in a state with a different justice, other laws and other judges; thus, a peculiar institution was created to meet local needs and to protect Ottoman merchants: a Venetian was charged with defending Ottoman subjects as their consul. The first one was created in Corfu in 1598 at the Ottoman merchants' request; then, others were created in Cephalonia, Nafplio and Zakinthos, whereas in Split and Zakinthos there were also consuls for the Ottoman Jewish subjects. At the end of the eighteenth century, there was still one in Zakinthos that dealt not only with the merchants of the close Morea, but also with every Ottoman who arrived in those waters and needed his help.[6]

Besides regular exports, there was smuggling too: both in the harbours and along the borders, people arrived ready to challenge the harshness of the law not to pay duties and tolls, or to illegally export forbidden goods. The Empire forbade to export mainly gunpowder, lead, leather of tanned bullock, wheat, copper, cloth for sails, arms, wax, horses, pitch and tallow, as a list of 1589 says. Sometimes also Venetians were involved in those illegal trades, as some imperial orders of mid-seventeenth century show.

5 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, cc. 78, 280; f. V, cc. 212, 213; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, cc. 17 (Morea and Euboea), 41 (Split); *Documenti turchi*, nos. 223, 226, 241, 243, 253, 258, 280, 347, 384, 395, 526, 537, 557, 571, 572.

6 ASVe, *Mercanzia*, 1st s., b. 600, fasc. «T. Condulmer» (14 January 1793); 2nd s., b. 44; *SM*, f. 218 (12 July 1618); f. 430 (25 October 1650); f. 677 (30 October 1688); f. 752 (9 January 1700); f. 878 (3 May 1721).

Venice produced many arms that were exported both via land and sea in the sixteenth century, as the *bailo* Marino Cavalli stated in his report in 1560: he was sad to see Venetians killed by the weapons they themselves had made. The goods sent from Muslim harbours to Ancona were another problem: Venetians often wanted the payment of the toll since they considered the Adriatic as their Gulf.[7]

4.3 Border Violation and Violence

Life was not always peaceful in a border area, especially when the border divided a Christian state and a Muslim one. Here quarrels could easily take on a religious value. As the historians synthetically say, wars usually are made out of hunger or religion: in the first case, when there is no more hunger, there is no more reason to fight, but in the second case stopping the war is much more difficult because it is necessary to change people's ideas and feelings. When a Christian and a Muslim country were near, a runaway could easily take shelter in a state with different laws, where extradition was not automatic, but could be obtained only after a thick exchange of letters with local authorities. What had been established by those who ruled in the distant capitals was not always accurately applied. Finally, wars often left a legacy of hatred, desire for revenge and retaliation that only many years of peace could somehow soothe. Speaking in broad terms of a border society is not always easy: we should constantly bear in mind the political situation and the wars just ended; in this way, we could realise that violent episodes were much more widespread just after a war than in other periods, when people had got used to a quieter life.

Some of the oldest Ottoman documents kept in Venice deal with criminals and fugitives who, in the neighbourhood of Nafpaktos in the years following the Ottoman-Venetian war that ended in 1479, left the Ottoman lands for the Venetian ones and then went back to destroy and damage the country they had abandoned. Vice versa, in the same years, there were people who, however still living in the 'guarded Empire', went in the other country to commit crimes and robberies. Between 1479 and 1481, not all the border strongholds of Dalmatia, Albany and Greece had already been destroyed or handed over to one of the two states, as peace agreements had established; thus, they had become a likely den of drifters instead of being a defence for the inhabitants. The governors were interested in keeping both the territory and its inhabitants: without peasants the soil was not tilled and the land easily became a prey for those who lived beyond the border. At the same time, in this way a state could loose part of its territory.

7 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, cc. 5a-b; b. 252, reg. 343, c. 37; *LST*, f. II, c. 111; BOA, *MD*, reg. 90, cc. 43-44; *Documenti turchi*, no. 683; *Le relazioni*, vol. 3/1, 293; Faroqhi, *Die Osmanische Handelspolitik*, 207-222; Ágoston, *Merces prohibitae*, 177-192.

Therefore, in 1487 Bayezid II asked the doge to give back or immediately stop his Christian subjects running away towards Venetian lands.[8]

Besides those who ran away for political or religious reasons, there were those who took advantage of an uncertain situation to commit thefts and robberies more easily: their targets usually were wheat, horses, stock and fruit and vegetable produces. The sources recall several episodes, equally distributed in the Modern Age and along the entire Venetian-Ottoman border. For instance, in 1527 the authorities of Chlomoutsi and Kyparissia complained to the Venetian *provveditore* in Zakinthos about several thefts of horses committed by the inhabitants of the island. In the same year, a swindler who pretended to become a monk in Vlacherna, in Ottoman territory, created much more problems: he promised to give everything he had to the monastery, but then, once he gained the other monks' confidence, sold some monastic properties and took refuge in Zakinthos. The qadi and the notables of Chlomoutsi strongly protested to Venetian authorities. The quantity of information regarding thefts and cattle-stealing depends, besides their concentration in a given time and a given territory, on the importance of the damaged people: for instance in 1577, after Venetians had damaged some salt marshes in Bastia, Piero Francesco Malipiero, *governatore delle galee dei condannati*, wrote to the doge saying that the local *emin*s' estates had not been touched, otherwise, as usual, they would have already yelled.[9]

In a border area also water could be stolen. As a matter of fact, fresh water was of vital importance at the time as it is still today. Venetians knew very well the importance of rivers. There are few documents about the thefts of water, but we should not be amazed at the fact that some inhabitants of Vonizza in the Venetian *Stato da Mar* cut the banks of the river Berdas, which ran also in the Ottoman sanjak of Karlı Eli, diverting its waters so that they flew only in their territory. As a consequence, they made the Ottoman fields barren and the neighbours' mills ran aground. This happened not only in 1722 when an appeal to the Porte was necessary, but then almost twenty years later. Facts such as this one testify that fresh water was of great importance for the inhabitants of this zone.[10]

There was also the problem of nomadic peoples who could easily reach a state border during their wandering: for example, in 1528 several issues arose near Šibenik and Trogir because of nomadic groups of Vlachs who moved from land to land and destroyed olive groves, vineyards and fields, and seized the inhabitants to sell them as slaves. Other gangs of criminals pretended to be Turks in the land of the Most Serene Republic

8 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 10, 14, 35.

9 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 225, 227-230, 310, 373, 378, 387, 541.

10 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 254, reg. 350, cc. 295-297; b. 258, reg. 359, cc. 325-328.

and Venetians in the land of the Porte so that they could bewilder those who asked for justice. For instance, in 1523 Venetians said that some Turks had attacked their villages while a group of Hungarians had stolen 15.000 sheep belonging to the Grand Vizier; on the contrary, the latter, together with his brother who was sanjakbeg of Herzegovina at the time, accused Hungarians of attacking the villages of the Republic and Venetians of cattle-stealing.[11]

Detaining the soldiers at the guard posts in a long and forced inactivity was not always easy. The strongholds could not be dismantled, but at the same time the soldiers could create disorders. Sometimes they organised themselves into very big gangs and terrified the people. In 1523 and in 1530, for example, Süleyman I commanded the sanjakbegs of Bosnia and Herzegovina to check the *martolos*es, *azeb*s, *akıncı*s, *subaşi*s and *sipahi*s that terrified the Venetian territory; in 1532 there were other forays from Herzegovina; in 1533 some *hisar eri*s of Chlomoutsi stole in the Venetian Kotor and then shared out the loot with the *dizdar* of their fortress who protected them; later on, in Kotor, after getting drunk, they attacked the local superintendent of the fortress with their swords unsheathed. At the same time, the *hisar eri*s of Risan attacked men, lands, ships and fortresses preventing the trade via land and sea. In 1536 wrongdoers of Klis were supported and helped by the neighbouring Venetian castles, whereas from the Ottoman coast incursions were made in Kotor, which was attacked, together with Budva, by the soldiers of the Ottoman fortresses. Then, in 1545, after the war, Venetians damaged the area of Klis, as the sanjakbeg Mehmed complained to the doge: he maintained he had managed to put a curb on his subjects who, under his predecessor Veli, used to kidnap Venetian children; therefore, he wanted the Venetian authorities to do the same preventing their subjects from committing reprehensible actions.[12]

Sometimes, however, small local authorities themselves organised their bands and destroyed, stole and obstructed the trade. For instance, in 1534 the voivode of Montenegro, Hamza (subject to Skotor authorities) used to ravage vineyards and orchards in Budva, to the extent that the inhabitants were compelled to shut themselves up at the fortress. Then, he reached Kotor with his men, menaced the Venetian notables and blocked the approaches to the town. A few months before the war, in 1537, another voivode – he too subject to Skotor authorities – or the same one, but it is not possible to verify it, attacked with a band of thirty or forty knights and many infantrymen not only the villages but also the Venetian soldiers in their fortresses, killing some of them, seizing and putting the

11 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, cc. 1, 27 (translated in *Documenti turchi*, no. 198); f. II, c. 14; f. III, cc. 179, 184.

12 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, cc. 6, 8; f. II, c. 17; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 251, 285.

others into slavery. Right after the war, some Ottoman voivodes used to steal in Venetian vineyards and vegetable gardens in Zadar. Sometimes the sanjakbegs themselves protected their subordinates who did this or even made them carry out these actions. In 1545 the sanjakbeg of Bosnia, Ulama bey, backed Deli Mehmed when the latter started to repeatedly pillage forty-nine villages in the territory of Zadar that were disputed between Venetians and Ottomans: they hoped the inhabitants would declare themselves Ottoman subjects just to put an end to the assaults. Venetians apparently did not act in a different way and the following year Turks complained about robberies, border violation and forced transfers of the people from their territory to the Venetian one; at the same time, the *emin* Ferhad was busy with putting the subjects of Saint Mark into slavery in the same area. War had officially ended six years before, but the souls had clearly not subsided yet and the uncertainty of the border line helped to stir them up. The sanjakbeg of Klis was ordered to stay for some time in the fortresses of Karin, Nadin and Vrana to prevent border violation. We know of other gangs that, after twenty-five years, were active there: in 1581, with the connivance of the sanjakbeg of Lika and Kerka, Mehmed, a Turkish *kapudan*, advanced with flags flying from Karin with infantrymen, knights (*sancak açup*, as the document says) to attack the fortress of Novigrad near Zadar. The following year, two companies of knights were sent to pillage the villages of Gruziya and Dračevac in the countryside of Zadar. These gangs took 57 men prisoner, killed 12 men, raided 520 oxen, 1250 sheep and 20 horses, and if someone started to plough the fields again, they reappeared to break the ploughs. Many years after, in 1599 the *dizdar* of a fortress near Omiš attacked again the Venetian territory.[13]

A last remark concerns the outbreak of the hostilities. As soon as a conflict between Venice and the Porte arouse, also those who did not belong to the army could raid the estates just beyond the border. Nothing was safe anymore. In those days news spread by word of mouth and people could not immediately access to reliable sources for a confirmation or a denial; thus, even the rumour of such tragic an event could bring about episodes of retaliation. For example, in 1591 a big fleet was built by Ottomans and, to prevent people from thinking it was ready to fight Venetians, the sultan immediately sent an official denial to all his officers in control of border lands.[14]

13 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, c. 5; f. IV, cc. 78-79; f. V, c. 236; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 329, 394, 512, 553, 600-601, 891, 910-911, 918-919.

14 ASVe, *LST*, f. V, c. 34.

4.4 The Divided Land

Governors and local lordlings often sent bands of robbers to raid the lands of a neighbouring state not only to devastate the country but also to create a no man's land that acted as a buffer and to lay out the field for future silent usurpations. As we saw, borders were rearranged by officers sent by both sovereigns not only after a war – when the border line really needed to be re-established after new conquests – but also when an uncertain situation had been dragging on for years making the territory unstable and unsafe.

Men and lands were equally desirable: for example, in 1503 the sanjakbeg of Morea, Ali, did not care about the recent peace and burnt the harvests farmed in the Ottoman state by Venetian subjects who lived just beyond the border; the following year, he asked the *provveditore*s of Nauplia to forbid their subjects to cross the borders to farm the land. He thought that, in this way, they would have lost their means of support and most of them would have preferred to become Ottoman subjects. In 1528, instead, the *emin* of Pontikos sent one of his men to Zakinthos to collect the tithe from the inhabitants of the island that had lands in that area. In 1524 and 1525 the Venetian ambassador in Istanbul paid 150 ducats as a tithe to Ayas pasha for the vineyards placed in the *kaza* of Argos in Morea, near the Venetian Nauplia. In 1532 objections arose because Venetian peasants had to cross the border when they wanted to grind their corn, since their mills were in Bosnia. Four years before, Venetian people from Šibenik had been attacked, robbed and made prisoners by Ottoman subjects of Skradin while they were going to their mills placed in the neighbouring state. Sometimes, however, the Venetians who lived along the coast longed only for plentiful fodder or woods of the close inland: in 1756 there were incidents in the area of Zadar because Venetians went in Ottoman land to scythe the grass or to chop wood.[15]

The examples we find mainly concern Venetians who went to farm the fields placed in Ottoman territory; the opposite practice appears to have been less common, even though in 1481 Mehmed II wrote that his subjects were allowed to possess and use lands placed in Venetian territory. On the contrary, an imperial letter addressed to the sanjakbeg of Herzegovina in 1529 seems to hint at the fact that the Ottoman subjects of the Poljica area could not have fields in the Venetian land. As a matter of fact, when a territory that had belonged to the Porte was vacated, Ottoman authorities immediately ordered its inhabitants to leave it and go to another part of the 'guarded Empire': this happened in 1531 to the ends of Bosnia and then in 1558, near Šibenik, to some villages that had been recognised as

15 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, c. 1; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 158, 202, 235, 273-274, 286, 865.

Venetian. The following year, near Trogir, Vlachs, who lived in three of these villages, refused to leave them and consented to pay 1/5 or 1/6 of their fodders as land taxes and royalties to the authorities of Trogir and, in the due time, other royalties made of neuters, lambs, kids and wood. A century later, the inhabitants of one of these villages, Şuhodol, were still paying the tithe to the Venetian family Fasaneo from Hvar, owner of the lands they farmed, and, at the same time, the *haraç* to the Ottoman treasury. Around 1579, instead, near Parga, all the inhabitants of a village chose to leave it and to move to the Ottoman country to avoid paying a double taxation. In 1623 the sultan himself exempted the inhabitants of some Venetian villages near Kotor from the *haraç*, as it was customary in ancient times. What happened along the Venetian-Ottoman border was not different from what could happen elsewhere. For example, in Hungary the towns (*mezővárosok*s) of Nagykörös, Kecskemét and Cegléd obtained a certain administrative autonomy from the Hungarian feudal lords and then kept it under the new rule, but at the same time they agreed to pay the taxes to those who were entitled, no matter if they were Habsburg or Ottoman. The ups and downs of a border area could stir the inhabitants to submit to two masters just to live in peace: some Vlachs living near Trogir tried not to pay the taxes to Venetians anymore, arguing that the sanjakbeg of Klis had exempted them, but after a series of contestations they paid, partially on a voluntary basis and partially after legal proceedings. In 1591, instead, according to a letter of Hasan, the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia, 10.000 families of Ottoman subjects paid *haraç*s to Uskok and Venetian infidels. The Most Serene Republic appears to have been more liberal on this point, either for sense of freedom or because it was compelled by the circumstances: after all, it is easy to send away a few hundred people, but it is harder to make a wide surface of land or a heavily populated area deserted. For instance, before surrendering Nauplia in 1540, Venetians carried the armaments away, but they agreed to leave some inhabitants there; this is why Süleyman I ordered his officers not to pester those who had decided to stay and to exempt them from various taxes, to respect priests, friars and churches, and not to constrain anyone to become a Muslim by force. In the same years, the sultan ordered the sanjakbeg of Herzegovina and the qadis of Shkodër and Montenegro to demand the due duties to the Venetians who farmed the sultan's lands.[16]

An estate belonging to a subject of the neighbouring state could easily create conflictual relations. Quarrels broke out not only when a small farmer had his only field halved by a border line, but also when a rich

16 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, cc. 8, 60, 65; f. II, cc. 24-25; f. IV, cc. 29-38 (file concerning the Vlachs of the area of Trogir); f. V, c. 4; *SDC*, reg. 5, cc. 142v and ff.; BOA, *MM*, reg. 6004, c. 143; Fabris, *Il dottor Girolamo Fasaneo*, 116-117; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 21, 490, 740, 746, 749; Beyerle, *The Compromise at Zsitvatorok*, 27; Veinstein, *Les provinces balkaniques*, 292.

landowner possessed wide estates in a border zone; this was the most common situation and, in this case, peasants were often compelled to pay the tithes to the two sovereigns to live in peace. We know that, in order to solve problems of this kind in advance, in the fifteenth century the Republic of Venice and Habsburgs created two border lines; one of them officially separated the two states while the other marked the limits of the estates so that peasants and owners were not compelled to pay the taxes to both sovereigns.[17] This system was not applied between the Most Serene Republic and the Porte and, thus, innumerable quarrels arose.

Sometimes, however, in peculiar periods and in some territories, a sort of double sovereignty, at least theoretically, was in force: for example, the islands of Cyprus and Zakinthos were officially considered to be Ottoman by Ottomans and Venetian by Venetians, even if the Most Serene Republic agreed to give a yearly tribute to the sultan to keep them undisputedly.

Zakinthos, which already belonged to the Tocco family from Cephalonia, was conquered by Gedik Ahmed pasha in 1479; the following year it passed, together with Cephalonia, to Antonio Tocco again, but the latter had to give the two islands to Venetians in 1482 and 1483. In 1485 Venetians surrendered Cephalonia to Ottomans but kept Zakinthos in exchange for a yearly tribute of 500 ducats; the agreements of 1573 increased the contribution to 1.500 ducats, and this sum remained unchanged until the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 when the payments stopped.

As to Cyprus, instead, in 1427 king Janus of Cyprus accepted to pay a yearly tribute to Mamluks to be able to be freed and leave Cairo where he was a prisoner. When Cyprus became Venetian (1489), the Republic took upon itself the former dynasty's obligations and went on paying 8.000 ducats in silk clothes to Egypt every year. Venice granted also a yearly pension of other 8.000 ducats to the former queen of the island, Caterina Cornaro. In 1517 Selim I conquered the Mamluk reign and took possession of its revenues. Venetians entered into an agreement with the new ruler on 21 *şaban* 923/8 September 1517, and transferred the yearly tribute to the Ottoman treasury even if Selim I wanted ready money and not clothes. This payment lasted until the eve of the war, broken out in 1571, that led to the Ottoman conquest of the island.

The peace agreements say only that a certain sum had to be paid to the sultan for Zakinthos every year. On the contrary, the 1517 peace agreement, as well as the following ones, states that the tribute for Cyprus was a *haraç*, thus setting this tribute to an Islamic legal background.

17 Adami, *I magistrati ai confini*, vi.

4.5 Border Favours

Those who live along a border often consider the neighbour as an acquaintance and sometimes also a friend. Local authorities too used to exchange favours and gifts. It seems that sanjakbegs and qadis were more munificent towards the Venetian *capitano*s and *provveditore*s than the sultan himself. In the sixteenth century, a large quantity of Ottoman diplomats were sent to Venice but the sultan's gifts they brought were very few and worth little even though they had a great symbolic meaning. On the contrary, the sanjakbegs who ruled in Bosnia sent expensive objects to the doge: for example, in 1522 two horses, in 1587 some carpets and in 1591 a falconry embroidered glove, a bow with some arrows and another carpet; other two horses were sent in 1551 by the *beylerbeyi* of Buda. There were exchanges of gifts also among the *provveditore* of Zakinthos, the sanjakbeg of Morea and the qadis of Chlomoutsi and Kyparissia: in 1522 the first sent a falcon, namely an animal that Turks greatly held in esteem, and the sanjakbeg answered with rams and some head of cattle; other falcons were delivered to the qadi of Kyparissia in 1525. Another occasion of contact was represented by the visits that were periodically paid by Ottoman authorities in the border districts; when Venetian *provveditore*s knew their colleagues were arriving, they used to send them men and gifts and some sanjakbegs answered with letters of thanks for the *pişkeş*es (gifts given to a superior) that had been offered to them, as Mehmed, sanjakbeg of Shkodër in Albany, did.[18]

Border authorities exchanged not only gifts but also messengers. They often brought letters full of kind expressions, such as the one sent in 1592 by Hasan, *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia, to the *provveditore generale da Mar*, Almorò Tiepolo: the *beylerbeyi* stated his intention to abide by the agreements and assured to spare no efforts against the criminals that marred the peace; he also committed himself to preventing his subordinates from pestering the Venetian land and promised the respect of the ancient borders and the assistance by means of provisions and munitions. It seems that this Ottoman officer cared very much about the good relations with the Venetian authorities to the extent that he wrote to the count and the lords of Zadar praising their behaviour against Uskoks and asking them to let the merchants freely go to trade in Bosnia in the area of Banjaluka, where they would be treated well.[19]

Sometimes webs of relationships arouse in a border zone. Venetian nobles sent as *provveditore*s or officers usually were not involved in them,

18 Sanuto, *I diarii*, vol. 33, 440; ASVe, *EP*, reg. 7, cc. 153-154v; reg. 9, cc. 157-157v; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 210, 219-221, 248-249, 705; ASVe, *LST*, f. II, cc. 32-33, 101-102; f. III, c. 173.

19 ASVe, *LST*, f. V, cc. 111, 148.

since their families could not easily become related to someone who was outside the small group that ruled the Most Serene Republic. On the contrary, local inhabitants, who were subject to one or the other lord, could easily create new family ties. In 1527 the *emin* of Pontikos was connected by marriage with an inhabitant of Zakinthos. Blood relationships were made easier also thanks to the recruitment of the Ottoman ruling class by means of the *devşirme* (i.e. the levy of Christian boys) or the kidnapping of children. Not always those who were torn from their home as children forgot relatives and friends: Ahmed Hersekoğlu, i.e. Stjepan Vukčic-Kosače, the duke of Saint Sava's son, wanted to keep the memory of his origin in his patronymic (Hersek-oğlu, namely son of Herzegovina); similarly, Sokollu Mehmed pasha, as Gran Vizier, protected his relatives from Istanbul. There were certainly other ties, perhaps less famous, but they too did not fall completely into oblivion. In 1550 the *beylerbeyi* of Buda asked Venice some prebends, from which his uncle the abbot already benefited, for his cousin Don Antonio from Šibenik. In 1564 Mehmed, sanjakbeg of Klis, wrote to the doge asking him to look after the Venetian nobles who were collaterals of one of his relatives, a certain Stefano who, after having abandoned his house and his faith, had become a Turk and then sanjakbeg of Herzegovina. In 1574 Ali, sanjakbeg of Ohrid, entrusted one of his relatives, Vincenzo Diva, who had blood ties also with the powerful *odabaşı* of the sultan, to the doge. Also Uskok pirates sometimes had such relations with Turks, of which they were always known as bitter enemies: in 1590 the chief of Senj, Yuri, was related to Hüseyin, his uncle and voivode of Zemunik, who was a great friend of İbrahim bey, sanjakbeg of Lika; in 1599 the sanjakbeg of Kerka, Halil, sent one of his men to Senj to start more friendly contacts off and entrusted him with wheat and horses that were to be given to Uskok chiefs.[20]

20 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, cc. 32-33, 161; f. III, c. 44; f. V, c. 237; *Documenti turchi*, no. 222; *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, c. 14.

5 Sea Borders

Summary 5.1 The Gulf: an Inland Sea. – 5.2 A Barrier in the Sea. – 5.3 The Sea as a Territory. – 5.4 Mediterranean Geo-Politics. – 5.5 The Sea after Karlowitz and Passarowitz. – 5.6 The Importance of Fishing. – 5.7 The Imposition of a Limit.

5.1 The Gulf: an Inland Sea

In 1727 upon his return from Istanbul, the *bailo* Francesco Gritti delivered a speech to the Senate about the Ottoman Empire and its relations with the Republic.[1] His speech began with the following words:

> The unbroken and long land and sea border with its states, the trade with its harbours that was necessary there more than elsewhere, the frequent debates and the several atrocious wars are circumstances that lead the Most Serene Republic to have with it the closer relation for which it deserved merit and glory. (885)[2]

And he ended reminding:

> On humbly presenting Your Excellencies' sovereign and wise minds with these very honoured remarks whose aim is to prevent more frequent and more easily apt to arise disorders, I believe I did not avoid the necessary task to examine what is important for the Most Serene Republic when it deals with such a great imperium, for which the Divine Providence had it neighbouring for a long tract of land and sea. (947)[3]

1 *Relazioni inedite*, 885, 947.

2 The translation is made by the translator of this book. The original quotation reads: «Il continuo e lungo confine di terra e di mare con li suoi stati, il commercio con le di lei scale, più che altrove necessario, le dispute frequenti, le molte et attrocissime guerre, sono circostanze che portano la Serenissima Repubblica ad avere ad essa quella più vicina relazione per cui si è acquistata il merito e la gloria» (885).

3 The translation is made by the translator of this book. The original quotation reads: «Nell'umiliare alle sovrane sapientissime considerazioni dell'eccellenze vostre questi riveritissimi riflessi diretti a prevenire disordini più frequenti, e più facili a insorgere, credo non essermi distolto dall'assunto necessario di esaminare l'interesse della Serenissima Patria

The Republic of Venice, whose territory extended from north Italy to the Aegean, bordered the Ottoman Empire for a long tract of both land and sea in Eastern Mediterranean. Braudel argued that the Mediterranean is not a single expanse of water but the union of separate seas connected by more or less wide straits. This statement inevitably brings to mind a concept conveyed by a much earlier historian, Ibn Ḫaldūn, who in his *Muqaddima* states that the Mediterranean, which originates from the 'surrounding Sea' through the strait between Tangier and Taifa, splits northwards into two other entities: the Black Sea and the Gulf of Venice.[4]

Ibn Ḫaldūn, therefore, represents the thought of fourteenth-century Muslim scholars, for whom the 'Gulf of Venice' was a special entity, different from the 'liquid plain' from which it sprang, i.e. an inland sea that emerged from the north part of the Byzantine territory and extended from the Venetian land to Aquileia's territory. From the point of view of the geo-politics, this description already seemed old at his times, inherited by previous scholars – when Byzantines still ruled over Adriatic shores –, not supervised and adapted to a situation that had already considerably changed. Also for al-Idrīsī, who wrote in the twelfth century, a *ǧūn al-banādiqa* already existed. It should be observed that the first mention of 'Gulf of Venice' is neither Latin nor Italian, but Arabic: before 1000 AD, when a Venetian document still mentioned a *Mare Adriaces* (the Roman name that derives from the town of Adria), the traveller and geographer Ibn Ḥawqal already talked of a *ǧūn al-Banādiqīn* in his *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*.[5]

In the fourteenth century, when Ottomans established contact with Venice, this city asserted his supremacy over the 'Gulf', an entity that, initially confined within the area between the Po and Aquileia, had expanded as far as the axis Zadar-Ancona and then up to an imaginary line that linked Otranto to Vlorë and, finally to its maximum expanse, the landspit of Santa Maria di Leuca on the Italian coast to Corfu. It is important to observe that, however, in the very first years of the fifteenth century, the *capitano generale da Mar* Carlo Zeno defined also the waters of south Peloponnese as «chaxa nostra». The Porte did not question the Venetian right upon the Gulf except when the Most Serene Republic proved to be unfit to defend the Ottoman subjects who ventured there between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. On the contrary, a study carried out on the Ottoman-Venetian capitulations shows that already in 1419 the sultan wanted to

con sì grande Imperio, cui la divina Provvidenza l'ha voluta confinante per lungo tratto di terra e di mare» (947).

4 Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi*, vol. 1, 102; Ibn Ḫaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, 98-99.

5 Edrisi, *Libro di Re Ruggero*, 78-79 (Arabic text); *Documenti relativi alla storia di* Venezia, 58-60, no. 37 (944); Nallino, Venezia *in antichi scrittori arabi*, 111-120. Other ancient authors mentioned a *baḥr*, *ǧūn* or *ḫalīǧ-Banādiqa*.

establish over the Sea of Marmara the same kind of supremacy Venice imposed over the Adriatic. The control exerted by Ottomans over the Black Sea was even more effective after all its coasts had fallen under the power of the Porte.[6]

During the Middle Ages, other Italian states behaved like Venice: Genoa wanted to have a claim to the Ligurian Gulf; some Tuscan towns to the Tyrrhenian Sea and the papacy to Latium's coast waters. The towns and the states that opposed the supremacy exerted by Venice over the waters were European and not Muslim, on the basis of the Roman law and Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis* for which the sea is shared by everybody and it is equally usable. In ancient times, Rome had extended its dominion upon all its shores and had got to the point of forgetting the most remote agreements concluded with Carthage that provided for a division of the sea waters among different states.[7] From the thirteenth century onwards, welcoming the ancient Roman legislation in the *ius commune*, most European states welcomed the idea that the sea was a common good. Venice, however, on its part, always asserted its own laws, established in its *consilia* and written in its statutes, refusing to conform to the Roman law and what was taught in the universities, and safeguarding its supremacy over the Gulf.

Only little by little, new situations pushed a Europe fed on the Roman law to find new solutions. For example, in 1479 when Europeans were discovering and exploring the ocean, the Treaty of Alcáçovas between Castile and Portugal mentioned some «terminos» in it, whereas the following agreement, signed in Tordesillas in 1494, is called the treaty dealing with the «partición del Mar Oceano». Probably, as Ádám Szászdi Nagy writes, at the beginning it was just the creation of zones of influence that could be placed within the framework of the Roman law; but little by little they were converted into a territorial hemispheric empire, to the extent that the sovereigns Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile stated: «Mar Océano, que es Nuestro, que comienza por una raya o línea que Nos habemos fechos marcar […] por manera que todo lo que es allende de la dicha línea al Occidente es Nuestro e Nos pertenece».[8] These statements of principle, however, did not prevent the sovereigns of Spain from opposing, still in the seventeenth century, the Venetian supremacy over the Adriatic in the name of the Roman law and the freedom of the seas, but it was right in this century that some jurists postulated, also from a theoreti-

6 Tenenti, *Il senso del mare*, 48-50; Pedani, *Gulf of Venice*.

7 Vismara, *Il diritto del mare*, 439-474; Cessi, *La Repubblica di* Venezia, 45-70, 115-168, 208-217, 233-242; Camera, *La polemica*, 251-282; Sassi, *La politica navale*, 99-200; Stefani, *Carlo VI*, 148-224.

8 Szászdi Nagy, *La partición del Mar Océano*, 62.

cal point of view, a maritime jurisdiction over the waters a state managed to control, both preventing others from sailing there and collecting taxes.

5.2 A Barrier in the Sea

A recent book by Khalilieh shows – on the basis of trade documents, international agreements and legal disputes – how Muslims have distinguished among high sea, stretches of coast and inland waters since ancient times. If high sea was necessarily out of the caliph's sovereignty, a local authority could assert certain rights along the coast, whereas sea and lake waters fell straight within the state control. David Santillana states that, according to various Muslim scholars, the sea is *fay'*, i.e. a purchase made peacefully by the treasury.[9] The same customs concerning the funerals at sea, with the body made heavier by stones so that it was dragged down to the bottom (if they took place near an infidel country) or put into a coffin and left to the currents (when sailing was towards a Muslim territory), lead to think that the concepts of *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-Islām* applied to waters as well, or at least to a part of them.

The existence of waters belonging to a state does not appear to be foreign to the Islamic thought, just like the idea of a limit placed in the water, however difficult to conceptualise. As a matter of fact, three out of four verses of the Koran concerning the sea talk about a barrier placed by God between the fresh and brackish waters:[10]

9 Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 133-148; Santillana, *Istituzioni*, vol. 1, 318-319 («They are not for sale, because they cannot be appropriated by individuals and, therefore, they are bestowed to everyone… Water, a gratuitous gift from God, namely the free sea and the waters of big rivers… The running waters of rivers and coasts» [this quotation and the following ones were translated from Italian into English by the translator of this text]); 373-374 («But the judiciary has found a way of… Restricting such rule. Water is indeed common and cannot be saleable. But if someone collects some water in a jar or in an enclosure, the water thus collected becomes his or her property for the right of occupancy and, since it is in his or her care… It stops being common… By extension, the same reasoning applies to the waters that are within the limits of a bottom, even if it is running water»); 382-383 («Easements… With regard to the waters…»); 406 («Muslims have three things in common: water, fire and fodder»); 409-410 («What is cast ashore by the sea… If it does not bear any trace of human work, it is *res nullius*… When… It bears a trace of human work: if it belongs to an idolater or there is any doubt about it, it shall be considered to be a treasure…; if it belongs to a Muslim or a protégé… The rules of the lost properties shall be applied»); 413 («Lost properties…»); 421 («Shores abandoned by the sea… al-Qarāfī tells the doctrine of Saḥnūn, Aṣbaġ and Muṭarrif, who believe that, when the sea moves and leaves a tract of land uncovered, this becomes a common property – 'fay', namely a purchase made peacefully by the treasury – such as the sea already is…»).

10 *The Koran* [online], 117, 188-189, 215, 273. URL `http://www.streathammosque.org/uploads/quran/english-quran-yusuf-ali.pdf` (2017-01-23).

> It is He Who has left free the two bodies of flowing waters: One palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; yet has He made a barrier between them, a partition that is forbidden to be passed. [25.53]
>
> Or, Who had made the earth firm to live in; made rivers in its midst; set thereon mountains immovable; and made a separating bar between the two bodies of flowing water? [Can there be another] god besides Allah? Nay, most of them know not. [27.61]
>
> Nor are the two bodies of flowing water alike, – the one palatable, sweet, and pleasant to drink, and the other, salt and bitter. Yet from each [kind of water] do ye eat flesh fresh and tender, and ye extract ornaments to wear; and thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves, that ye may seek [thus] of the Bounty of Allah that ye may be grateful. [35.12]
>
> [He is] Lord of the two Easts and Lord of the two Wests: - Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? - He has let free the two bodies of flawing water, meeting together: - Between them is a Barrier which they do not transgress: - Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? - And His are the Ships sailing smoothly through the seas, lofty as mountains. [55.17-24]

From what has been expounded it seems that in the Muslim thought, and thus in the Ottoman one too, there was nothing to exclude the principle of considering the waters of inland seas that communicate with wider basins only through narrow mouths as state properties, such as the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara or the Adriatic. Thus, Mehmed II wanted the following words inscribed on the main gate of his new palace built in Istanbul:[11]

> By the grace of God and by His approval, the foundations of this auspicious castle were laid, and its parts were solidly joined together to strengthen peace and tranquility, by command of the Sultan of the two Continents and the Emperor of the two Seas, the shadow of God in this world and the next, the Favorite of God on the Two Horizons [i.e. East and West], the Monarch of the Terraqueous Orb, the Conquerer of the Castle of Constantinople, the Father of Conquest Sultan Mehmed Khan, son of Sultan Murad Khan, son of Sultan Mehmed Khan, may God make eternal his empire, and exalt his residence above the most lucid stars of the firmament, in the blessed month of Ramadan of the year 883 [November and December 1478]. (34-36)

11 Necipoğlu, *Architecture*, 34-36.

As a matter of fact, the two continents and the two seas could be seen from the acropolis of the Byzantine city, the new Istanbul: the plaque refers to the achievement of a universal dominion, the same one that Osman dreamt in the legend that was codified right in the Conqueror's time. In the *intitulatio* (*unvan*) of Kanûnî Süleyman's imperial documents we read: «sultan and *padişah* of the White Sea and the Black Sea, of Rumelia, Anatolia, Karaman…», to which his successors added the Red Sea; therefore, the seas were an essential element of the Ottoman sovereignty, at least since the conquest of the city that had been founded where the two seas meet.[12]

Neither was there a problem with having a limit in the Mediterranean waters. In 1403 and in 1411 princes Süleyman and Musa accepted some limits not to be passed by their warships, but by then Ottoman nautical inferiority was manifest, to the extent that still in 1466 Venetians thought that forty light galleys would be enough to contain the sultan's ships. After a few years, however, given the number of masts, the appearance of the new Ottoman fleet seemed to have transformed the sea into a wood: a close past when the Ottoman could only run away in front of the Venetian galleys was missed.[13] In 1480 the waters around Lefkada belonged half to Venice and half to the sultan. Another ancient example concerns the waters nearby the island of Rhodes that were overrun with pirates at the end of the fifteenth century. The truce agreed in 1481 between the Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson and the *subaşı* Peçin – and confirmed the following year – provided for sailing freedom for both military fleets in the area between Sette Capi[14] and Balat (Miletus), but still respecting coasts and waters. The letters of marque issued in those years by the knights often referred to customary limits (*limites et confinia*), within which Ottoman ships had to be respected. According to Nicolas Vatin, the two words are not redundant at all, since they indicate two distinct sea areas: the first was between Sette Capi and Balat, as in the 1481 agreement, or between Kastellorizo and Patmos, as it is seemingly recorded in subsequent papers, whereas the second was probably the channel of the Genoese island of Chios.[15] It should be observed that these limits were mostly respected by the Christian ships, which were much more numerous and well-equipped than the Ottoman ones, even after 1495 when the letters of marque were more and more frequent. That year, as a matter of fact, prince Cem (Bayezid II's

12 Tursun Bey, *Târîh-i Ebü'l-feth*, 66-67; Gokbilgin, *Osmanlı Paleografya*, 57-59; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı belgelerinin dili*, 148-149; Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 285 (*ve Ak Deniz ve Kara Deniz ve Derya-i Kulzumun*, 1591, Murad III).

13 Turan, *Türkiye-İtalya ilişkileri*, 356-370; Tenenti, *Il senso del mare*, 59.

14 It is the area between Ölüdeniz and Patara in the old Lydia; it was called 'Mount Crago' by Strabo and then 'Capo Serdene' or 'Sette Capi'.

15 Bombaci, *Il "Liber Graecus"*, 301, no. 10; Vatin, *L'ordre de Saint-Jean*, 115-129.

brother) died in Italy and the West lost a precious shield that for a decade had sheltered it from the advance of the troops of the sultan who was too interested in keeping on good terms with those who had his rival imprisoned. We have less information and documents about the Ottoman attacks, even though we can imagine that, thanks to the patrol done by the ships of the Order, the limits were mostly respected, even in the periods of greatest activity, for example in 1493-1495 when important commanders such as Kemal *reis*, uncle of the more famous geographer Piri *reis*, made a name for themselves, and then during the Venetian-Ottoman war of 1499-1502.

5.3 The Sea as a Territory

When we study the maritime law, we should take into consideration another important issue in addition to inland basins, namely the existence or the width of territorial waters, i.e. the area that trespasses on the high sea and within which the sovereignty of a state that rules the coast extends. In general, except for special cases, in a Europe fed on Roman law it took centuries to regard the sea adjoining the coast as a state territory and, thus, to supersede the previous idea that the sea is of everybody, object only of *imperium* and not of *dominium* on the part of coast political powers. It was not until Grozio that such a concept was theorised and it was not until the year 1621 that for the first time in peacetime the measure of a cannon shot was accepted and used to define the width of state waters.[16]

According to Muslim customs, instead, we may affirm that waters belonging to a state could exist at least near coast areas. The local authorities were in control of that area. It is not clear which was their width, even though around 1154 al-Idrīsī explicitly mentioned six miles as the distance within which an enemy advance was considered as such, because it was within the look of the sentry who guarded the Andalusian coast.[17] The starting point of view, however, always was that of the fighters living in border *ribāṭ*s (castles), which could be attacked by enemies from whom they had to be ready to defend themselves, and not the point of view of a peaceful state that expanded with its offshoots on the sea as well.

Some clauses of privileges granted by Muslim states to Christian ones during the Middle Ages hint at the existence of waters considered to be a Muslim state's appurtenance. Around 1200, for example, the Almohad commander of the army in Tunis gave an *amān* to the inhabitants of Pisa, specifying that the safe-conduct was valid wherever they were, in castles or on the shores, on land or on the sea of Africa. Similar expressions may

16 Benvenuti, *La frontiera marittima*, 16-24.

17 Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 138.

be found in another *amān* issued by the Hafsid caliph of Tunis for the prince of Pisa and Lucca in 1366; on the contrary, in 1397 his successor promised in the peace agreement that the Tunisian ships would not attack the Pisan ones if they met them, both on the open sea and in a harbour, as was reasserted in 1414 and 1421.[18]

5.4 Mediterranean Geo-Politics

After its early conquests, the Ottoman advance in the Mediterranean was not chaotic but followed its own logic, which was not always similar to the logic of land conquests. During the Empire's formative period, it was mainly the control of the straits that appeared to be vital.[19] In the meantime, Venetians ruled a wide sea area placed among Crete, Karpathos, Rhodes, Tenedos and Euboea, while a myriad of local seigniories (*beylik*) formed a protective barrier for the Christian states in the Aegean. In 1479, at the end of a long war, the Venetian ships were pushed away from the Aegean almost definitely, whereas the town of Vlorë, conquered by Ottomans, became like a sultan's watchful sentry placed outside the entrance of the Gulf.[20] Shortly after, with the Venetian defeat of 1503, the waterways towards the Western Mediterranean opened up for Ottomans.[21]

The siege of Rhodes in 1522 represents a further step in the Ottoman geo-political vision of the Mediterranean. In 1481 there were already settled limits for the sultan's and the Knights' privateers. After 1495 Christian attacks became more and more numerous. That year prince Cem died and, as was previously said, European states lost, together with their hostage, also a valid defence against Ottoman fancies of conquest. The letters of marque issued by the Order became more and more numerous and turned, for the most part in respect of the previously established limits, towards the ships that sailed the route between Alexandria and Istanbul. As long as Egypt was a Mamluk land, this could bother the sultan's interests but it was not as vital as it was after 1517: after having conquered that reign, Selim I could not allow repeated attacks on the route between his capital and the richest province of his Empire. Not only wheat, but also money and expensive gifts came from Egypt, and much more when the Empire extended to North Africa. Selim I himself, whose interests for the navy

18 Amari, *I diplomi arabi*, 30, no. VII, 117, no. XXXII, 131, no. XXXIV, 146, no. XXXV, 160, no. XXXVI. Some diplomas stress the existence of maritime countries placed along the coasts, cf. 88, no. XXIX (year 1313), 101, no. XXX (year 1353).

19 Fleet, *Early Turkish Naval Archives*, 138.

20 Gullino, *Le frontiere navali*, 51, 105.

21 Hess, *Ibero-African Frontier*, 58; İnalcık, *Essays in Ottoman History*, 415-445.

made the following conquests possible, stated that the Mediterranean was a sole gulf and that it would be worthy and right if it had not belonged to so many different kings and realms but to a single 'sublime state'. Therefore, it is not by chance that the siege of Rhodes was in 1522. Thus, at the beginning of his reign, Süleyman the Magnificent got rid of a 'den of pirates' and the route between Alexandria and Istanbul, which was more and more important for the capital's splendour, was made safer.[22]

If we look at a map of the Mediterranean where the Ottoman conquests are marked, we realise that in the first place the advance happened on the basis of the importance of the objectives, not of their distance from Istanbul; on the contrary, the latter principle was valid for the campaigns on land, as Rhoads Murphey showed. As a matter of fact, when we talk about sea spaces, we must renounce the categories that support terrestrial strategy and consider the kind of ships that is used, the time they resist at sea without landing and the distance between the places where it is possible to disembark and take in fresh water and food.[23]

After the conquests of the islands placed further north, the sixteenth-century advance seems to be more linked to the necessities of one own's and other's sailing than to an attempt to systematically conquer the entire East. On the other hand, this is the logic that underlay Venice's conquests throughout the centuries, as a state known mainly for its sea and mercantile vocation. In the first half of the sixteenth century, Hayreddin Barbarossa's lucky deeds suddenly brought wide North-African territories under the protection of the sultan who found himself acting on a Mediterranean scale in the struggles among empires and was no longer limited to the eastern territories. The advance came both from East and South. Some islands, however, were not immediately conquered. Cyprus, Crete, Tenedos, Kythira and Antikythera were not reached, whereas the sultan's ships went further West until the failed siege of Malta (1565). It was as if Ottomans had tried to take over the entire Mediterranean beginning with the lesser defended wide areas and encircling the larger islands; not by chance Imber forcefully asserted the predominance of the Ottoman thalassocracy in that sea from the Battle of Preveza (1538) to the Battle of Lepanto (1571):[24] once they seized those areas, Ottomans could proceed to the conquest of the key spots, first of all Malta, which ruled the strait between Sicily and the Maghrebi coast; then, they could turn back and more calmly conquer what had been left behind, according to a tactics that remembers the one employed in the terrestrial campaigns by the

22 Bostan, *Osmanlı bahriye teşkilâtı*, 4; Bellingeri, *Il Golfo*, 14 (*bir halic devlet-i âliyye hükminde*); Vatin, *L'ordre de Saint-Jean*, 117-129.

23 Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, xiv; Tucci, *L'alimentazione*, 601, 604, 614.

24 Imber, *The Navy*, 221-282.

early Ottomans and by more ancient peoples labelled 'the barbarians' by our history books: the less protected areas were attacked and the towns protected by high walls were ignored and destined to capitulate after the conquest of the whole surrounding territory. Another comparison may connect these two worlds, even though they are very different: the early Ottomans were few if compared to the wide territory they faced, just as the fleets that sail a sea are small in front of the immensity of a sea expanse.

It was perhaps the failed siege of Malta that pushed Ottomans to change their Mediterranean strategy rather than the death of the great Süleyman I (1566) and the accession to the throne of weak successors. Even though Tunis was definitely torn from the Spaniards, the new geo-strategy was not aimed at the clash of great empires in the Mediterranean waters any longer, but at the marginal war that was fought for many years and was made of privateering and quick retaliations, sudden clashes of ships or small convoys beyond the logic of the great naval forces. The Ottoman fleet relied more and more on North-African *reis*es' ships, whereas the galley, however partially modified on the basis of the new Atlantic techniques, remained the most popular ship in the Mediterranean.[25]

Right the uninterrupted use of this ship, which was very suited to sailing along the coast and across the Mediterranean, together with repeated piratical attacks in the important routes of the Empire, forced Ottomans to move in a different direction. The most important route was naturally that between Alexandria and Istanbul.[26] It was intended for domestic trade and, thus, it was little considered by the historians interested only in international politics. Until late mid-sixteenth century, the Ottoman fleet used to offer protection mainly to ships and convoys; then, it took a step forward and tried to protect the route in itself in a wider and more general view on the problem, as the conquest of Cyprus shows.

The ships that carried wheat and pilgrims between Egypt and Istanbul were continuously attacked; therefore, it was necessary to deprive the pirates of any possible anchorage and prevent them from getting their supplies of food and water in safe places. At the same time, the soldiers of the harbours along the coast were ordered to ensure that the goods reached their destination and were not landed elsewhere.[27] A galley – which was a world populated by hundreds of men shut up in a narrow space and which, according to a maritime saying, firstly was smelled and then spotted on the horizon – had to stop if possible every day, or every two days, for the supplies. The rowers, even though they changed off, had to rest and could

25 Bondioli, Burlet, Zysberg, *Oar Mechanics*, 172-205; Mangio, *Alcune considerazioni*, 117-118.

26 Panzac, *Commerce et navigation*, 195-216.

27 BOA, *MD*, reg. 72, c. 202.

not keep the same rhythm for long; only favourable winds allowed quicker courses and only in exceptional circumstances could they run the risk of staying at sea for some days because the supplies of food and water could run out while the wind died down.

The small islands scattered in the Mediterranean were strategic points for the galleys' supply; bringing the few landings of the east part of the basin that were still Christian under the sultan's rule meant depriving Christian pirates and privateers of anchorages and, therefore, definitely pushing them and their raids away from those waters. This explains the necessity of conquering Cyprus and, in the following century, also Crete, which was the last important strip of the *Dominio da Mar*.

5.5 The Sea after Karlowitz and Passarowitz

Encouraged by these premises, Ottomans had no difficulty in conceptualising the existence of territorial waters and limits established in the sea. As a matter of fact, according to recent studies, it does not seem that they approached the problem of their theoretical legality, but it appears that they relied only on concrete cases. Already in 1416, respecting specific areas subject to Venetians was considered to be an established tradition, as the sultan reasserted in an order addressed to the *kapudanpaşa* and issued in the second decade of *rebiyülahır* of 1023/21-30 May. At the same time, some limits started to be recognised in the Mediterranean. In 1697, for example, the European states, after several reprisals against the Christians in the Holy Land, agreed on the fact that their privateers would keep away from the area near the eastern coast for fifty miles; for the privateers of Malta the forbidden area was extended to the Adriatic and the portion of Mediterranean placed north of a line that linked the Strait of Gibraltar and Sicily. As to the Porte, instead, another great admiral, in the first decade of *rebiyülevvel* of 1121 (11-20 May 1709), ordered the *reis*es of his fleet and the *reis*es of Algiers to escort two travelling Venetian ships once they reached the limits (*hudud*s) of the Ottoman waters, even though it is not clear where these limits were.[28]

It was mainly after the Treaty of Karlowitz that there were discussions and agreements between Ottomans and Venetians with regard to sea waters. After fifteen years of conflict, the representatives of the doge and the sultan were talking about borders. It was not a question of bounding only tracts of territory (as it was at the end of the fifteenth century), however long, but they both desired to establish an uninterrupted border that

28 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 253, reg. 346, unnumbered cc. (year 1121/1709); b. 332, reg. 250, c. 91 (second decade of *rebiyülahır* 1203); Hess, *Ottoman North African Provinces*, 79.

clearly distinguished their belongings. During the long discussions that Osman *ağa* had with the representatives of the Republic between 1699 and 1701, also the subject of the waters was tackled. In the second decade of *rebiyülevvel* 1113/16-25 August 1701, for example, an *hüccet* drawn up by the qadi Ahmed and a *temessük* issued by Osman himself granted that the two diplomats had agreed so that – it being understood that there was a prohibition for frigates, caiques and feluccas of privateers and outlaws – the tract of sea between the mainland and Lefkada had to be considered as freely sailable; neither state could create impediments to the ships that crossed it. After a few days, the first *rebiyülahır* 1113/5 September 1701 Ahmed himself drew up a long document, undersigned by the Ottoman diplomat and the *beylerbeyi* of Euboea İsmail, in which it was certified that, by mutual consent, the gulf near Lepanto had to be used in common by Venetians and Ottomans.[29]

Even after the Treaty of Passarowitz, the limits of waters were still dealt with as a continuation of terrestrial borders and not as a problem in itself. This time, however, the two diplomats (Osman *efendi* and Antonio Loredan), arrived in the small gulf between Vonitsa and Preveza, and wondered if they could carry on delimiting the sea waters and how to consider the range of a cannon shot, that is to say the distance generally established as the limit for territorial waters, in such a narrow space. By then, however, they preferred to refer the question to their superiors, even though they had the qadi of Arta Mehmed draw up a report of their discussions.[30] This matter was certainly delicate: for example, from Preveza, which was in Venetian hands, towards the sea an Ottoman promontory was within the reach of a cannon shot; moreover, there were some fishponds that belonged to the Ottoman Empire during the war but were near the coast belonging to the Republic; finally, ships used to sail when the water was deep trying to avoid the shallows of the opposite coast. Therefore, it was not a simple question of territorial expansion but also of the fishing revenues, taxes and duties that could be levied.

This stalemate could not go on because the episodes of piracy by those who tried to profit from that uncertain situation were more and more frequent. Mainly the Tunisian ships benefited from this to the detriment of the Venetian ones; in the absence of a definite law to apply, the Porte had difficulty in repressing such behaviours. The only feasible solution, pending an agreement, was giving back to the Venetian subjects what they had lost allowing Tunisians to go back to their coasts. Finally, in the third decade of *rebiyülahır* 1132/1-10 March 1720, the sultan issued an order for the notables of Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers telling them of the existence

29 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 1615-1617.

30 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 1643, 1645.

of a border within which the Venetian ships could not be attacked since the agreements reached by the Porte and the Republic were in force. Taking for granted that the entire Adriatic was Venetian, that border ran at a distance of thirty miles from the coast from the latitude of Santa Maria di Leuca (the extreme Apulia), carrying on along the Greek coast, beyond Crete, Karpathos, Rhodes and Cyprus, and finally along the shores of Tripoli in Syria, Beirut and Saïda and up to Alexandria. Therefore, for trade reasons, the sea was bounded to ensure the right of way along that domestic route for which the Ottoman armies had fought to conquer Rhodes, Cyprus and Crete.[31]

The protest of the Maghrebi provinces was quick in coming. Imposing such limits meant depriving them of an important income, on which the welfare of their cities was based. At that time, piracy and privateering, as a matter of fact, fed the riches and the trades; it was not just a question of the booty that was gained or the slaves that were sold in the Maghrebi markets, but also of possible ransoms paid by the relatives that were in the motherland or of loads and ships that were bought and resold feeding both an inland and a foreign trade with Christianity. A border like the one established by the Porte would have not only allowed Venetian ships to reach undisturbed the big emporium of Alexandria, but would have also weakened the close ties that had been created in the name of shared sea raids between Maghrebis and the Ottoman subjects of Ulcinj. Mehmed bey of Algiers and the dey of Tripoli wrote by mutual consent to the *kapudan paşa* reporting the terrible situation in which such a limit would plunge the subjects faithful to the sultan and Islam, who fought the *ğihād* by sea and protected the imperial border, which was the bank of the winners and the shelter of Islam. Deprived of adequate resources, they would have certainly run away and become pirates; then, they would not have protected the Empire against the bellicose tribes of the country and the infidels anymore.[32]

5.6 The Importance of Fishing

In the eighteenth century, among the maritime activities, fishing was more and more important and was done both on the open sea and growing the

31 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 254, reg. 348, cc. 110-111, 183-186, 206-207 (letter of the *kapudan paşa* Süleyman); cf. also reg. 349, cc. 80-82 (s.d., passport issued by the *kapudan paşa* to Rocco Bon, with the instruction that he is not pestered within or outside the borders (*hudud*s) of the sea established by the Porte); c. 87 (s.d., translation in Ottoman of the *bailo*'s memorial for a Tunisian ship that had violated the sea borders); BOA, *MD*, reg. 129, cc. 207-208.

32 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 254, reg. 349, cc. 89-91 (Algiers), 100-102 (Tripoli), first decade of *rebiyülevvel* 1133 (30 January-8 February 1721); Pedani, *Spunti*, 221-239.

fishes in enclosed spaces. Sometimes the existence itself of fishponds along some coasts in the border areas posed problems to a peaceful coexistence between Venetians and Ottomans. For example, right after Passarowitz, there were repeated fights for the waters between Preveza and Vonitsa[33] for some years; in this case it was not only a question of stretches of water where they could fish, but also of duties paid by the ships that crossed them. At one point, shortly before the mid-century, the Porte granted some waters of this area as *malikâne* to a local *ağa*, Aziz, who, relying on that accordance, levied a tax on every *okka* (1280 grams) of catch of fish and demanded by brute force the payment of that undue tax also from the Venetian boats that fished with the trawl net. Venetians obviously turned to the Porte to stick up for their rights. There were other problems as to the fishponds of Buthrotum and Risan and then of the area of Corinth. Here in 1744 the Ottoman officers demanded half the catch from those who used these fishponds, without considering if they were Venetian or Ottoman. On the contrary, the agreements with Venice had always set a tax of 3% for the subjects of the Republic.[34]

The fishers' life was not peaceful there, also because of unforeseen events that were always in ambush for those who plied the sea. Sometimes they could be mistaken for pirates, who, mainly if they acted along the coasts at a short distance from their houses, often used simple barges – perhaps the same barges that were used to work when they did not buccaneer. Ships, galleys or galleons were used by those who had to sail for many miles before gaining their booty, such as the Maghrebis when they ventured as far as the Aegean or the Adriatic. Therefore, fishers could also be attacked by the pirates of the close coasts and be enslaved: in 1732 twenty-eight Venetians who sailed across the gulf of Corfu were made prisoners by a man of the coast who had invited them to eat and whom they had ingenuously trusted. In 1740, instead, another ship that was fishing near Thessaloniki was seized by some Muslims who thought they were dealing with pirates.[35]

Other disputes regarding fishery saw the Most Serene Republic opposed to the Republic of Ragusa, which was closely bound up with the Ottoman Empire in foreign policy since the fifteenth century. The first accident involved the island of Sušac. In the years 1590-1592, some men from the Ragusean island of Lastovo started to attack the Venetian fishers

33 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 254, reg. 348, cc. 192-196 (third decade of *cemaziyülevvel* 1132, 30 March-9 April 1720); cf. also b. 257, reg. 355, cc. 48-61 (1734-1735, several documents on the issue).

34 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 265, reg. 353, nameless, *şaban* 1140, 13 March-11 April 1728; b. 257, reg. 356, cc. 30-32; b. 258, reg. 359, c. 158 (1153, 1740-1741); reg. 360, cc. 38-38v (*i'lâm* of the qadi of Corinth, first decade of *receb* 1157, 10-19 August 1744).

35 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 256, reg. 354, c. 109; b. 258, reg. 359, cc. 212-213, 331-332.

of Vis and Palagruža, accusing them of fishing outside their state territory. It was a question of both waters and ownership of the island, which belonged to the people of Ragusa since 1324, when their city was still a Venetian possession though. The Republic reacted appealing to its right over the Gulf and reminding that its subjects fished *a fraìma* in those waters, which implied a cultivation of the fish in rigged areas that had to be prepared many months in advance; therefore, it was not a question of a new fishing area found out that year, but of fishponds used according to an ancient custom. Finally, they agreed on the freedom to fish for the subjects of both states but Ragusa, even though its rights over the island of Sušac were recognised, had to accept the Venetian sovereignty over the Gulf, which sovereignty did not allow the existence of coastal waters belonging to other states.[36]

After more than one hundred and fifty years later, in 1757, the agreement established for Sušac was validated again by Venetians and Raguseans. This happened even though the Republic had recognised the presence of other forces in the Adriatic, pushed by the emperor who had created a free port in Trieste and Rijeka in 1719 and by the pope who had done the same in Ancona in 1732. On 25 *ramazan* 1167/16 July 1757, two qadis, Mehmed *efendi* and Ali *efendi*, issued an *hüccet* that certified the new agreement on duties, fishing and coral. Ragusa recognised the Venetian jurisdiction on the Gulf and pledged to pay a silver *tepsi* (tray) that was worth 20 sequins every three years instead of the usual duties. As for Venice, it pledged not to attack Ragusean boats near the coast and to prevent its own subjects from chopping wood in the other state's territory and from disturbing the gathering of fish and coral.[37]

Ironically, then, if the first evidence that certifies the existence of a Venetian sea is of an Arabian author, the last document that recognises the supremacy of the Republic over its Gulf was issued by an Ottoman authority.

5.7 The Imposition of a Limit

The order issued in 1720 by the sultan Ahmed III was repeatedly mentioned in several following documents that explicitly refer to it as the 'establishment of a sea border' and, at the same time, bear witness to how the *levend*s of the Maghreb usually ignored it. It has often been argued that until 1770 and the naval disaster in the waters of Çeşme Ottomans

36 ASVe, *Provveditori alla camera dei confini*, b. 246, fasc. "Dalmazia", 1590-1592.

37 ASVe, *Provveditori da terra e da mar*, b. 595; no. 48 (29 July 1754, Francesco Grimani, *sindico* and *inquisitore* in Dalmatia).

took no interest in the fleet, preferring to reach an agreement with the European states and leaving the North-African provinces rather free, even though they did not encourage their independence. These two tendencies, however, could come into conflict: on the one hand, the sultan was interested in the respect of the capitulations he had granted, which capitulations provided for a trade sailing free from dangers in the eastern Mediterranean; on the other, Maghrebis considered privateering against Christian ships to be an essential source of income.

It was not surprising that there were tensions mainly with Algerians who were the most active in the eighteenth century. In 1716, for example, the dey stated that his men would obey the sultan's orders only if the latter had paid the slaves and ransomed the sailors held prisoners; in turn, the Porte reacted threatening to prevent Algerians from recruiting soldiers and sailors in Anatolia. Later, in 1723-24, the dey refused an agreement of non-aggression of the Dutch ships that were under Istanbul's protection; four years later, another imperial order concerning the Austrian ships was rejected. This time the threats were put into effect; with the support of the *fetva* of the *şeyhülislam*, the financial and military aids to Algerians were interrupted; the Algerian ships were not allowed to enter the Ottoman harbours of the East; the Anatolian recruitment was stopped and even the caravan that took the pilgrims to Mecca was halted. In this way, Algiers was forced to surrender and obey the Porte again.[38]

In the eighteenth century, therefore, the politics that had allowed Ottomans to keep their supremacy over the most exposed and peripheral areas of the Balkans was still applied to the North-African provinces. If on the one hand the sultan could leave his provinces free with regard to the inland politics, on the other he could not allow any freedom in international politics.

A more complicated European situation pushed Ottomans to take further measures. When in the first half of the eighteenth century England started to see the threat to the European equilibrium, to its own position in the Mediterranean and to the commercial supremacy of the new European set-up, a conflict inevitably broke out, despite the pacifist politics adopted by the minister Robert Walpole until then. The war was declared to Spain in the name of the principle of the freedom of the seas (1739), but a dynastic controversy for the Austrian succession extended the conflict also to Austria and France, which took opposite sides. Only the Treaty of Aachen (1748) brought accord back to Europe, even though it did not solve the commercial problems that had caused the war.

By then, the sultan lived at peace with both the king of France and the king of England and could not displease either of them and much less

38 Hess, *Ottoman North African Provinces*, 76-81.

damage his economic interests. He decided to consider the Mediterranean as a sea halved by an imaginary line that linked the coasts of Africa to the Peloponnese, which choice was communicated by his grand vizier to the European representatives in Istanbul. The merchant ships could have peacefully crossed that limit, but the warships, either English or French, would have been attacked and captured by the Ottoman fleet anyway and the same would have happened to the commercial ships that would start to levy war upon each other.[39] In the legislator's mind, the eastern Mediterranean waters were considered to be a new inland sea, totally belonging to the 'guarded Empire' that still undisputedly ruled over its oriental shores.

The powers that had been fighting in the Mediterranean waters for ages did not radically change the stakes and the war rules. Genoeses, Venetians, Catalans, then English, French, Dutch, and in the eighteenth century also Swedes and Americans sailed that sea mainly to trade; some of them devoted themselves also to another less conventional but richer kind of trade, i.e. privateering and piracy; the *levend*s of Morocco made that activity their main source of income, but also small communities, such as the knights of San Giovanni of Pisa or the knights of Malta, proved to be as much active in this field. For almost two centuries, from the end of the clash between empires that was completed with the Battle of Lepanto, until the second half of the eighteenth century, the Mediterranean was (in Braudel's words) outside the great history. The ships that sailed it looked only for goods or a booty – which are equivalent but with a rather different view – and this was the most ancient vocation of this inland sea that saw more than one state devote itself to piracy in its first period of expansion, then prefer more peaceful and lawful activities and toughly fight against the new arrivals who went in for piracy, just like Venice before and after the year 1000 and, in its own way, the Ottoman Empire. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, something changed. France introduced a more aggressive economic policy; the states started to visit North Africa more and more frequently, but it was the arrival of the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean that led the so-called maritime Ottoman border towards the West to collapse. The Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774 changed many things: the codification of the idea of the sultan-caliph as the holder of a religious ascendancy over the entire Muslim world dates back to these years. This was a new way of opposing the West by means of ideas rather than arms. This was the reaction to the contraction of the land frontiers, the reduction of the Ottoman territory north-east and the transition of Muslim peoples under Christian sovereigns. The coming of the Russians, instead, brought about a new technology and a much more aggressive war by sea, which was comparable to the one that had ended in the sixteenth

39 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 258, reg. 360, cc. 1-2; Pedani, *Spunti*, 221-239.

century; their fleet came from the Baltic after a long circumnavigation of the entire Europe going through the strait of Gibraltar.[40] Russians, however, the last to come in the Mediterranean, upset the customs that had settled throughout the ages: as a matter of fact, they came neither to trade nor to devote themselves to privateering or piracy, but to subvert its geopolitical set-up and, in short, to change its borders.

40 Gencer, *Bahriye'de Yapılan Islâhât Hareketleri*, 24-26. There is a formal protest, sent to the *bailo* in 1770, with which the Ottoman government complained because Venice had allowed the Russian fleet to go through inland channels as far as the Adriatic and the Levant; it was drawn up by an officer of the Porte who was evidently little conversant with geography. Cf. Lewis, *Europa barbara e infedele*, 150.

6 Beyond the Marks

Summary 6.1 Marks on Things. –6.2 Marks on People. – 6.3 Turks and Ottomans. – 6.4 Franks.

6.1 Marks on Things

How can a border be established among peoples or kingdoms that belong to wide plains with neither peaks of mountains nor silver lines of rivers? How can a spatial limit be defined there and how is it possible to avoid that everything become prey to the men of one or the other frontier? Some nomadic peoples, for whom the country was the road they covered day after day, rejected the furrow of the plough and chose to leave a mark on what belonged to them; the herds of stock were branded with the owners' symbol. Zanini defined it as a «portable border».[1] Areas such as the steppe seem to refuse the borders among states; the flat immensity of the land never changes and everything mingles and blends; the border of one's own living space has to be rebuilt and redefined every day. Fences cannot be built because other people will be there the next day; the only way to identify what belongs to one or the other is making it recognisable by means of clothes, marks, symbols known and recognisable by everyone.

The brand used to recognise the stock developed in its own way among peoples in the Near East. *Tamğa*, *tuğra* and *tabın* probably originated from this function. The word *tamğa* means brand,[2] mark and then, by extension, seal. It was originally affixed on stock or personal belongings and little by little it was used to mean specific tribes and, after the Mongolian invasion, appeared also in some documents, for example those of the Ak Koyunlu, the Golden Horde or Tatars of Crimea. *Tamğa* may also be imprinted on coins or in the ornamentation of carpets or else reproduced as a heraldic device on Mamluk coats of arms. As Mayer stated, some blazons of the time, otherwise unintelligible, may be explained by means of brands used in heraldry as well, even though their meaning continues to be very ob-

1 Zanini, *Significati del confine*, 47 (translation made by the translator of this text).

2 Leiser, *Tamgha*, 182-183. There are also examples closer to us: the *signum* (sign or seal) of the *Lex Wisigothorum* transformed also into the border mark, whereas in Sardinian *sinnu* means the brand for the animals and *sinnare* is the action of branding the stock; Mastrelli, *Riflessi*, 789-811.

scure because it is not possible to equate them to symbols that indicate a specific profession, contrary to other marks used in the same context. According to Maḥmūd al-Kāšġari, *tamğa* was synonymous with the Arabic *ṭābiʿ* (print, mark).[3] Ghizela Suliteanu showed that, among the Nogay Tatars, there are and there were specific geometric signs, called *tabın*, used to emphasise the belonging to a particular family and the descent from a common ancestor. They often represented a stylisation of the object to which the name of the line referred and were the symbol of both a warlike unity and a territorial prohibition.[4]

The origin of the *tuğra*s, i.e. the sovereign monograms used not only by Ottomans but also by other peoples such as Seljuqs, Ayyubids and Mamluks, has been thoroughly analysed. They have been equated to a falcon, namely a totem bird of some Turkish tribes or to a bow with some arrows; other scholars, in order to explain them, thought about the imprint of Murad I's hand (1359-1389) or associated its name to the word *tuğramak* (to cut) or to the *tuğ*s, i.e. the horsetails that were a symbol of sovereignty in the Ottoman world. The most followed hypothesis saw them as born from the brands used for the stock. Maḥmūd al-Kāšġari says that the animals and the slaves of the Oğuz sovereigns were branded with an element called in this way.[5]

6.2 Marks on People

Borders sometimes may be brought along, not only on what belongs to us but also on one's body, the clothes or an object put on. Many tales of slaves or prisoners on the run emphasise the clothes that distinguish a Christian from a Muslim, or the inhabitant of a village on this side of the

3 Bates, Darley Doran, *The Art*, 387, no. 526; Talbot Rice, *I selgiuchidi*, 181-183; Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 18-19; Maḥmūd al-Kāšġari, *Türk Şiveleri Lügatı*, vol. 1, 321.

4 Suliteanu, *Le «tabin»*, 93-113, especially 98 where we read (the following passage was translated from French by the translator of this text): «The *tabın* is a geometric mark that the Nogay assumed to mark their belonging to a same family and their descent from a common ancestor. In Tatar, it literally means 'bend down', but it indicates the 'holy respect' as well as the 'citizenship'. The following words are related to it: *tabı* (trace, frontier [with the nuance of respect of the frontier]); *tabınmaq* (pray), *tabıntaşi* (gravestone [with the nuance of respect of ancestral noble belonging]); it may be found in the saying: *Tabındın tamagası bolmagan qazaqqa ograr* ('he who does not have a *tabın* showing his descent is a pagan'). As it may be seen, the word *tabın* does not only mean 'mark', for which the Nogay use the term *tamğa*, but it also indicates a certain historic function of moral education and a form of social organisation». See Karataev, *The Seals*, 476-488.

5 Cahen, *La tuğrā seljukide*, 167-172; Wittek, *Notes*, 310-334, no. 18; 267-293, no. 20; Bayramoğlu, *Firmans enluminés*, 14-36; Babinger, *Die Grossherliche Tughra*, 3-16; Umur, *Osmanlı*, 11-24; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı belgelerinin dili*, 71-75.

barrier from the one who lives on the other side.[6] Changing one's clothes, wearing a turban or throwing it away meant taking on a different political and religious identity, mingling with the people of the village just crossed and, thus, being able to going unnoticed. In societies that did not know – or where it had just started to spread – an international document of personal identification such as the passport, clothes were an important identifying element, just like the language that could be correctly spoken, without accent, ignored or stammered.

Let us consider the Moors on the run from Spain in 1609. Forced to leave their lands and their houses, they poured not only into North-African Muslim lands, but also into other European states to reach the Ottoman Empire. Harbours such as Marseilles, Livorno or Venice were reached by this fleeing mass that very often, if it did not find ships on which to sail for a Muslim country, tried to cross the line that separated Christianity from Islam in the Balkans. In those years, an Ottoman envoy came to Venice to help them, bearing imperial letters that asked the doge to allow this mass of wretches, once they arrived as far as the eastern limits of his state, to freely change the western clothes used up until then as a cover and dress as a Muslim; the Venetian officials, as a matter of fact, thinking they were Christians, prevented them from crossing the border.[7]

Several reasons could push a man to wear a turban or western clothes. Some people left a country where they had had an experience of imprisonment or slavery; others, right for the job they did, voluntarily left their homeland to go to distant and different lands hoping to go back. They were above all merchants, but also people with official tasks and often interpreters. The lowest level of diplomatic envoys were usually allowed to disguise themselves; this does not mean their missions were not important, but that they often did not hold the official character that was necessary for an important legation made up of many people. They were messengers, secretaries or interpreters often sent in times of war or international tension in order to keep the contacts in an understated manner.

In the relations between Venice and the Porte, the most ancient traceable example seems to be that of three Muslims, Yusuf, Mehmed and Ağa, sent by Hamza, *dizdar* of Herceg Novi, with credentials and the written information, addressed to the Republic, that they would be dressing up as Christians during the journey. As for the Venetian interpreters that went to the Porte, instead, the imperial safe-conducts that are still kept date back mainly to the Cretan War: they are letters of the sultan to its subor-

6 Cf. for example Osmân Agha, *Prisonnier des infidèles*, 180.

7 *Documenti turchi*, no. 1190; Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 176-178; Temimi, *Le Gouvernement Ottoman*, 32-42; *Le passage de morisque*, 304-316; Mangio, *Echi italiani*, 555-568.

dinates who ruled countries and harbours along the route between Venice and Istanbul; those documents informed that the bearers were allowed to be armed and, in dangerous places, to wear a turban and dress up as Muslims. Passing for subjects of the sultan probably was not very difficult for those who, such as the Venetian interpreters, had a perfect command of spoken Turkish, besides the written language, and knew Ottoman customs and traditions because of their long stays in the Empire.[8]

It was not only the manner of dressing, but also the use of specific colours, that identified a Christian or a Muslim. The eastern clothes were usually coloured, as the renegades who went back to the Christian land often reminded, impressed by daring combinations such as white with red, black, or green. Also the Venetian aristocratic ladies were amazed at the showy clothes of the noblewomen who had had to leave the native Crete and go back to their ancestors' land. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, light blue and yellow characterised mainly Christian and Jewish headdresses; at the end of the sixteenth century, heavy caps – yellow for Jews, blue for Christians and striped for Armenians – were very common, even though for a short period of time. It was in 1693 that Englishmen, soon imitated by the other Europeans, started to wear their national outfit, since they were ordered to wear only black dresses, shoes (not clogs or slippers) and bells as well; but, by then, black was still a very fashionable colour in Europe among the upper classes, since dyeing clothes in that way was difficult and expensive and, thus, using them meant showing wealth. Up until then, foreigners in Istanbul had tried to blend into the resident population.

Besides clothes, Christians and Muslims differed in another mark. If baptism does not leave any trace on those who receive it, circumcision marks men's body forever and was different for Jews and Muslims, as surgeons summoned by the Inquisition observed. If changing clothes could have a symbolic value, when it was not imposed by a necessity of safety during the journey; if a Turkish haircut (which left only one lock on the shaved head) could be imitated by making one's hair grow for a few weeks, circumcision definitely marked the passage to Islam and was often loathed by those who experienced it in adulthood also because of the pain and the danger it entailed. Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar describe with a wealth of examples the various methods of the surgery, which could be done in secret or in public, without any other ceremonies or followed by celebrations. They observe, however, that specific circumstances could delay or

8 Bombaci, *Il "Liber Graecus"*, 298, no. 21; Preto, Venezia *e i Turchi*, 95-115; Lucchetta, *La scuola*, 19-40; *Lo Studio*, 479-498; *Un progetto*, 1-28; *Una scuola*, 21-61; *L'ultimo progetto*, 1-43. Cf. *Documenti turchi*, nos. 1485, 1497, 1499.

even spare it, mainly for those who converted in adulthood.[9] In any case, it was a rite of passage in which men symbolically crossed the ideal border that divided the Christian world from the Muslim one. The opposite passage was obviously marked by baptism, which was charged with a similar value but was not so traumatic from a physical point of view.

6.3 Turks and Ottomans

Circumcision, together with clothes, was for people what the *tamğa* or the heraldic device was for things, i.e. the element that allowed to identify a group, besides the geographic space where an individual, a herd of stock or an object was. When we talk about a Mediterranean environment, the first major distinction is based on religion. On the one side, there was Europe, where the word 'Turk' became synonymous with 'Muslim' in the Modern Era. Expressions such as 'I become a Turk', 'to dress as a Turk', 'to smoke as a Turk' or 'to swear as a Turk' became very common and indicative of a world with blurred and indefinite outlines, different and 'distant'. In the Middle Ages, Muslims were often denoted as 'Saracens' or even 'Hagarenes' – from Hagar, Abraham's slave from whom they descended. Then, other peoples converted to Islam when they went closer to the Mediterranean basin. Tartars, more correctly called Tatars, were associated with the pagan afterlife, the Tartar. Among them were the *kipçak*s (also called Cumans), who settled north of the Black Sea and were called 'Westerner Tatars' for this reason, whereas people from Persian Ilkhanate were 'Levantine Tatars'. For the Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages, 'Turks' were generically the inhabitants of the principalities of Menteshe and Aydın, to which other groups such as Ottomans were added. These peoples were often called 'Teucri' in Latin documents, i.e. with the name of ancient Trojans, in whose area they had settled. Then, Ottomans became 'the Turks' par excellence and 'the Turk' or 'Great Turk' was their leader, namely the sultan.[10]

The distinction between the words 'Turk' and 'Ottoman', however, is often unclear today. 'Turk' is an ethnic term referring to populations of Turkish origin, whereas 'Ottoman' meant not only those who belonged to an empire, but above all the ruling class of that state. Coming from various provinces, when they were not converted Europeans, the members of this group considered themselves as slaves of the sultan, forgetful of their origin and ethnic group, while among the subjects there were Turks, Arabs, Serbians, Croatians, Berbers, Kurds, Armenians etc.

9 Bartolomé Bennassar, Lucile Bennassar, *I cristiani di Allah*, 320-331.

10 Preto, Venezia *e i Turchi*, 13-22; Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy*, 1-45.

This distinction, however, was often unclear even at that time. Only those who unceasingly mixed with them, i.e. above all merchants, could have more precise ideas on the point. For example, in 1604 in Venice a decree issued by the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*[11] established that the negotiations concluded by Turks, up until then registered in the same book together with those of all the other subjects of the sultan, had to be listed separately. The understanding of the distinction between Ottoman subjects in general and people from different ethnic groups (i.e. Armenians, Greeks, Bosnians…) on the part of the Venetian bureaucracy was very clear in this case.

Also in the high-ranking Venetian politics there were those who knew the difference between 'Turk' and 'Ottoman'. A quick examination of twenty-eight reports by Venetian ambassadors or diplomats written between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century allows to make some remarks. They were edited some years ago using modern scientific parameters and not the rather superficial criteria that characterised some of the most famous nineteenth-century editions, in which language often appears to be Italianised and the most difficult sentences are replaced with dots. Moreover, these reports, unpublished up until then, were taken from the original manuscripts given to the *Collegio* of the Republic after the public reading in the Senate. As a matter of fact, the nineteenth-century editions were based on copies, or copies of copies, made by friends or people interested in the topic; this happened also because at that time the access to the State Archives was difficult for scholars, who had to be content with codices scattered in several Italian libraries.

Looking through this material, we may observe that in the oldest report, Andrea Foscolo's one of 1512, the word 'Ottoman' or *othomano*, as it was spelled at that time, is never mentioned but only the terms 'Turks', *turchesco*, the 'Turkish Lord' and 'Turkey' are employed. Also the few pages by Tommaso Contarini (1522), Tommaso Mocenigo (1530) and the long report by Alvise Renier (1550) produce the same result. Only Nicolò Michiel (1558) talked about the 'Ottoman house' and the 'Ottoman lords', referring only to the dynasty though. The following reports resumed the ancient usage and it was only with Giacomo Soranzo (1576 and 1584) that such terms were used again, but very seldom and with the same meaning. This applies also to Giovanni Correr (1578), Lorenzo Bernardo (1590), Girolamo Cappello (1600) and Ottaviano Bon (1609). More specifically, however, Alvise Bonrizzo (1570) used the word *mori* referring only to those coming from Granada, whereas Correr, Soranzo and Bernardo and their successors distinguished among Moors, Arabs and Turks: «If we talk about Aleppo and the neighbourhood, everybody knows that Moors do not want

11 Mentioned in Vercellin, *Mercanti turchi*, 70.

to hear the word 'Turks' and it is very well-known that Arabs, both from the Arabian desert and *Arabia Felix*, hate it and so do the Moors of Cairo and Alexandria»;[12] «Not only Christians are ill-treated and tyrannised by Turks; Arabs and Moors, who are of the same religion, are oppressed by the ruling Turks; therefore, they often would rather be subjected to the Spanish government than the Turkish one».[13]

In 1637 Angelo Alessandri, who not by chance was in the *bailo* Pietro Foscarini's employment, was the first to speak both of 'Turks' in general and of 'native Turks', 'Ottoman Empire' and 'Ottomans', showing that he knew the first word could be considered to be an ethnic term and that the state was not Turkish but Ottoman. The same remarks apply also to Tommaso Tarsia (1683), a Venetian interpreter who knew well the Turkish language and was with the army of Kara Mustafa under the walls of Vienna in 1683.

In general, it seems that there was a more correct understanding of the terms during the eighteenth century: Carlo Ruzzini (1706) used both 'Turks' and 'Ottomans' but distinguished the 'Barbary states' inhabitants' from them; Vignola (1724), another secretary, knew that 'Turk' was an ethnic term as well: «Pushed by curiosity, a great number of Greek, Armenian, Turkish women and men from every nation poured into the streets to see him»;[14] Francesco Gritti (1727) almost exclusively employed the term 'Ottoman', whereas Giovanni Donà (1746) completely forgot to use the word 'Turk' in its place. Finally, the last representatives of the Republic to the Porte employed again both terms.

Besides what people thought in the West, the Ottoman Empire continued to consider itself as a multi-ethnic empire, to the extent that only after the rise to power of the Young Turks was this concept, in the wake of the many nationalistic claims followed by territorial losses, laid aside. One of the items of the Committee of Union and Progress' programme supported the acknowledgement of the existence of a single people and a single nationality, the Ottoman one, in the Empire: as a consequence, Armenians, Greeks,

12 *Relazioni inedite*, 237, report by Giovanni Correr (1578). The translation is made by the translator of this text. The original reads: «Se parlamo d'Aleppo, et quei contorni, ogn'uno sa che i Mori non vogliono sentir Turchi, et è cosa notissima che gli Arabi, sì della Arabia deserta come felice, l'odiano estremamente, né miglior volontà si ritrova nei Mori del Cairo et d'Alexandria».

13 *Relazioni inedite*, 316-317, report by Lorenzo Bernardo (1590). The translation is made by the translator of this text. The original reads: «Né soli li Cristiani sono da Turchi maltrattati e tirannegiati, gli Arabi e i Mori, che pure sono della medesima loro religione, sono di maniera oppressi da Turchi che governano, che ben spesso hanno più tosto voluto sottoporsi al governo delli Spagnoli che de Turchi».

14 *Relazioni inedite*, 866, report by Girolamo Vignola (1724). The translation is made by the translator of this text. The original reads: «Concorravi a vederlo per le stradde la curiosità di un affollato numero di femine greche, armene, turche e di huomini pure d'ogni nazione».

Albanians, Arabs etc. had to consider themselves to be just Ottomans, like Basques and Bretons regarded themselves as French.

6.4 Franks

In the last few years, historiography has often underlined that the idea of crusade, as it is understood in the West, was totally extraneous to the Arab historians of that time who did not distinguish, among the crusaders of the first generation, the different national groups but indiscriminately labelled them for their religion or their place of origin. The others, i.e. the different ones who suddenly attacked Islam at the end of the eleventh century, were just a group of unbelievers, infidel barbarians, *ḥarbī*s, namely those who lived in the *dār al-ḥarb*. The same word *kāfir* basically became synonymous with Christian, the infidel par excellence. If historians wanted to employ a geographic term, they called them 'Franks' (*Farānǧ*s).[15]

Just as in the West there was a certain confusion as to the use of the terms Muslim, Arab, Ottoman and Turk for many centuries, in the Near East there was the same uncertainty in defining the Europeans, who were generally still defined as 'Franks' or 'belonging to the nation of the Messiah' during the Ottoman period. Especially the documents concerning international relations bear witness to a first necessary effort towards the identification of the groups belonging to different nations, even though within Christianity. If an agreement was entered into with a foreign country, it was necessary to be able to exactly recognise the subjects, even more so if the sovereign granted a general safe-conduct (*amān 'āmm*) to those who came from a specific reign or republic. Besides truces, therefore, agreed on with crusading states which were easily recognisable in the diversified eastern world of the Middle Ages, there were documents issued by Ayyubid and Mamluk sovereigns (when not by other North-African countries), aimed at protecting groups of western merchants above all. In this case, Venetians, Pisans, Genoeses, Florentines and Catalans were correctly identified as members of specific communities. Venetian subjects were usually called *al-banādiqiyyīn*, whereas *al-Bundaqiyya* – the only case of an Arabic place-name that was completely different from the sound (even though not in its etymology) of the original – was the city they came from.[16]

The same two trends of knowledge of the other proceeded side by side also with regard to the Ottoman world. A survey conducted on the *elkab*s (*inscriptiones*) of the imperial letters addressed to various sovereigns shows that a different title was reserved for each of them. Two concepts,

15 *Storici arabi*, v-xvi; Piacentini, *Le crociate*, part 1, 243; part 2, 282.

16 Nallino, Venezia, 111-120.

however, recur in the letters addressed to the king of Poland, the doge of Venice, the tsarina of all Russias, the king of England or of France, or the Habsburg emperor: all of them were 'distinguished' in the country (*millet*) of the Messiah and judges of the people (*tayfe*) of the Nazarene. If in the sixteenth century *millet* meant only a group organised on the basis of religion, the *tayfe* was the band, the troop, the group whose members had common characteristics: *tüccar tayfesi*, therefore, was the whole of foreign merchants. In general, in the *ahdname*s this word was much more used than *halk*, which theoretically indicated the folks, the nation, the people and also the crowd with greater precision. According to Viorel Panaite, the *ahdname*s allow to state that, between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, subjects of different countries could be distinguished with even greater precision.[17]

The word *millet* was employed to mean most of all a confessional community. Right after the capture of Constantinople, Mehmet II acknowledged the Greek patriarch as the leader of the community, but there was not a proper 'system of the *millet*s' still in the sixteenth century. At that time, the European consuls were considered to be the leaders of their colonies, but they were neither independent nor had territorial or protection rights; only with time, when they were regarded as substitutes of the ambassadors, did they start to enjoy diplomatic immunity. This explains how after the outbreak of the hostilities the *bailo* could often be imprisoned: he was an ambiguous character who combined the competencies of a consul with some functions typical of an ambassador. Finally, in the most ancient times, a foreign trade community in the Ottoman Empire, even though it was protected by capitulations, was often considered to be responsible *in solidum* of crimes of debts of one of its members.[18]

It was in the eighteenth century that the representatives of the communities became proper *milletbaşı*s, i.e. high state dignitaries bestowed with the honour of two horsetails; they had a very specific role within the Ottoman administration and a civil and military authority; moreover, they were free from external interferences in the religious field and possessed fiscal and judiciary competencies. The mid-nineteenth century reforms tried to establish a centralised state on the basis of the European model, reducing the *millet*s' authority and the dictatorial powers of patriarchs, rabbis and high officials by means of new constitutions and boards of governors; also those who did not join Islam were considered to be just like Muslims in front of the law. At that time, western powers supported the spreading of the nationalism among the *millet*s to be able to proceed

17 Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı belgelerinin dili*, 149-152; Panaite, *Ethnicity*, 201-212.

18 İnalcık, *The Ottoman State*, 190-192. As to the Venetian consuls in the Ottoman Empire, cf. Faroqhi, *The Venetian Presence*, 368-384.

to the dismemberment of the Empire with the aid of the various peoples who lived there.

It was mainly in the chronicles that the old word 'frenk' continued to be used to mean all the Europeans. It was sometimes employed as a patronymic by converts, mainly if they had become powerful or came from aristocratic families. Alvise Gritti, son of Andrea the doge, even though he was still a Christian, struck up important friendships with the highest officials and was known as 'Beyoğlu', i.e. 'son of the lord'. This patronymic, then, was used to mean one of Istanbul's neighbourhoods. 'Bey', as a matter of fact, was the title used to indicate Venetian nobles, but not only the doge as someone argues. Another example of this use is in Selānikī Mustafa *efendi* who, among other things, tells the adventures of 'Mehmed Frenkbeyoğlu', i.e. 'son of the Frank lord', who was *cebecibaşi* first and then leader of the troops of the *ulufeciyânı yesâr*s when they killed the *kira* Esperanza Malchi; he was a scion of another important Venetian family and, before the conversion, he was known as Marc'Antonio Querini.[19]

As time went by, however, the perception of the differences among the European states was clearer and clearer in the Ottoman world where people started to coin also puns formed by a national adjective followed by an abusive epithet and based on the use of alliteration too. There are *ingiliz dinsiz* (English without religion), *fransız cansız* (soulless French), *engürüs menhûs* (ill-fated Hungarian), *rus ma'kûs* (wicked Russian), *alman biaman* (ruthless German), and so on and so forth.[20]

19 Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarik-i Selânikî*, 738, 854.

20 Lewis, *Europa barbara e infedele*, 172.

7 In Search of an Identity

Summary 7.1 Ambassadors, Envoys and Diplomats. – 7.2 Merchants. – 7.3 Slaves on the Run. – 7.4 Other Means of Identification. – 7.5 The Health Front.

7.1 Ambassadors, Envoys and Diplomats

Besides those who fought along the border or had settled in a border area, there were also those who, pushed by various reasons, left a country for another: it was not easy to go in a foreign state at that time, but this did not keep militaries, ambassadors, scholars, physicians, spies and runaways from doing it.

First of all, the beginning of international relations required the exchange of messengers, envoys and ambassadors. Until a short time ago, scholars agreed that in the Middle Ages and the Modern Era the Muslim-Christian diplomatic exchange happened only in a single direction, i.e. from West to East, but recently it has been shown that this statement is not true and that, although less frequently, not only eastern Muslim sovereigns but also North-African rulers sent their envoys to European capitals. For example, the first Ottoman envoy reached Venice in 1384 and many others followed him, almost one every year throughout the sixteenth century. Others came from Tunis, Mamluk Egypt, Persia, the khanate of Crimea and finally, in the eighteenth century, also from Tripoli of the West. In the hall of the *Quattro Porte* in the Ducal Palace of Venice, a big painting bears witness to the arrival of the Safavid envoys at the beginning of the seventeenth century, whereas carpets and other gifts they brought are still kept, some in Saint Mark's Treasury and some in the Correr and Mocenigo Museums.[1]

An ambassador was usually followed by a large group of people who helped him to perform his mission and make it more sumptuous, in order to display also the importance of the sovereign they represented. There were secretaries, interpreters, servants, sometimes also cartographers or physicians; these were often joined by men of letters or scientists willing to discover new countries and by young men who would be ambassadors or

1 *Arazzi*, 62, 60-70, 72-74.

chancellors themselves one day and who took advantage of the opportunity to learn the job. As for Venice, the retinue of an Ottoman envoy was made up of twenty people in the sixteenth century but then decreased after the war of Cyprus when a retinue of ten people could count itself to be large. In other circumstances, however, these groups were stately, formed by hundreds of people, including a band to impress even more. For example, Kara Mehmed pasha went to Vienna in 1665 with a retinue of one hundred and fifty people.[2]

Such a train could not secretly cross the border and it was not required to do so either. Diplomats, on the contrary, enjoyed special protection and those who gave offense to them were accused of lese-majesty towards the sovereign who had sent them. Sometimes this was considered as a deliberate declaration of war, as it happened when in 1461 Vlad IV of Walacchia ordered to drive three nails into the turbans – and the heads – of the Ottoman sultan's envoys to kill them.[3]

The protection of an ambassador and his retinue was made by means of letters issued both by the ruler who sent him and by those who welcomed him. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman sultan wrote some official letters, which are still kept in Venice, to accredit either a diplomatic envoy or even a real ambassador. Already at that time, to make reference to this diplomats, these documents used the word *elçi* if they were written in Ottoman and *apokrysarion* if they were written in Greek.[4] Also Venetian ambassadors and *bailo*s had letters of the doge who accredited them as his representatives. A letter of this kind usually bore the name of the envoy, his role and, more generically, the reason of his mission. If the letter and the person did not match, it was readily found out, since there were swindlers who turned up as envoys just to have their expenses paid and then vanished with the money or the gifts given by the host government.

Upon his departure, the envoy carried one or more credentials issued by his sovereign or by other important officials – for example, by the grand vizier or another member of the *divan* if he came from the Ottoman Empire. Before leaving Istanbul, the Ottoman envoys sent to Venice customarily paid a visit to the *bailo* who gave them another letter that certified their role.[5] Besides these letters, however, a diplomat usually bore also other

2 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 54-55; Lewis, *Europa barbara e infedele*, 103.

3 Babinger, *Maometto*, 218.

4 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 8-9.

5 This habit was then extended to the other diplomatic venues in the Ottoman Empire and was made valid for all the subjects who went abroad; it was abolished and substituted by the passport only after the foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Vekālet-i Hariciye*) in 1836; cf. Zakia, *The Reforms of Sultan Mahmud II*, 424.

letters addressed to the commanders of the places he had to cross to reach his destination. If the credentials made reference only to the diplomat, the latter (a sort of safe-conduct of passport) had to protect his retinue too.

al-Qalqašandī's chancellery manual, written in the Mamluk period, contains examples of this kind of safe-conduct. It describes a decree of Turkish origin little used in Egypt, called *barliġ* (plural *barāliġ*), belonging to the category of the public correspondence (*mukātabāt 'āmma*), i.e. letters sent contemporarily to various addresses, and explains its use by means of an example: in 729 (1328-1329), upon his arrival in Egypt, the Ilkhanid envoy Timur Buġā showed a document to the sultan Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn and received a similar one in order to have free right of way in the countries he would cross on his way back. al-Qalqašandī explains that, when a foreign ambassador reached the Mamluk borders, the governor of that region had to write immediately to the sultan to inform him of his arrival.[6]

In case of two neighbouring countries, the journey was usually quite simple. The sultan's documents ordering sanjakbegs, qadis, *dizdar*s of fortresses and other officials of the places between Venice and Istanbul to protect a Venetian ambassador and his retinue are several: if the route was the maritime one, then the document was addressed only to those who lived on the coast; on the contrary, if the envoy followed the *Via Egnatia*, or another parallel itinerary across the Balkans, the order was addressed to the authorities along the route that joined the two capitals.[7]

In case of an exchange between ambassadors of countries that did not border each other or were not separated by the sea, other letters, which could offer a further official protection to the envoy, had to be addressed to the rulers of the countries the diplomat had to cross. The latter could offer a further official protection to the envoy. Several *name-i hümayun*s and letters of viziers that certified diplomatic contacts with France and other countries are kept in Venice. For example, already in 1483 İskender, on his way to Paris, passed through Venice; the same route was followed by Kasım and Martino (1487), Mahmud bey (1570), the *çeşnegir* Hasan *ağa* (1581), the *müteferrika* and dragoman Ali (1581),[8] Hasan *ağa* (1583), the *müteferrika* Mustafa *ağa* (1597) and, finally, a dragoman and a janissary in 1652. The *subaşi* Hüseyin and another anonymous envoy, instead, were accredited to the emperor in 1483 and in 1497 respectively; the *kapıcıbaşı*

6 al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ*, vol. 4, 58-59; vol. 7, 229-231.

7 Cf. for example *Documenti turchi*, nos. 417 (1539), 475 (1542); ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 332, c. 93 (1614 for the *bailo* Nani, the *çavuş* Huseyin and the dragoman Gianesino Salvago); reg. 334, c. 49 (1622 December-1632 January for the ambassador Simone Contarini); b. 251, reg. 335, c. 32 (1625 for Simone Contarini).

8 With the sultan's and Siyavuş' letters to the doge, cf. *Documenti turchi*, nos. 893, 896.

Mustafa *ağa*, passing through Venice in 1490, went to Rome, while Mustafa *dei Cordovani*[9] was heading towards Florence in 1574.

Obviously, an ambassador had better avoid the countries that were at war with his sovereign, even at the cost of undertaking long tours. The envoy who, heading towards Paris, was in Venice right when the sultan opened hostilities with the Republic for the island of Cyprus (1570) discovered it to his cost. If the official bearer of the declaration of war, the *çavuş* Kubad, could immediately go back to his homeland protected by the diplomatic immunity, this did not happen to Mahmud who had not been accredited to the doge but only had a request for transit: confined to his house in the Giudecca and then moved to the castle of San Felice in Verona, he stayed there for three years before he could set foot in his homeland again.[10] If this was the only case of an Ottoman ambassador imprisoned in time of war, the Venetian *bailo*s accredited to the Porte often had to suffer the same fate, mostly in older times; on this point we should go into what Ottomans really thought of the diplomatic role of such a character; accustomed to ambassadors who went in a foreign country only to settle one single affair, now they were facing a resident diplomat who was responsible for his fellow countrymen's trades, collected custom duties and had a jurisdiction over the subjects of his sovereign. According to the Ottoman point of view, he looked like the chief of a *millet* or the Ragusean ambassadors who, charged with bringing the tribute of their city, were detained almost as hostages until the next tribute arrived.

The diplomatic representative brought official letters also in his homeward journey. He carried with him the other sovereign's permission to go back and, as a matter of fact, he could not leave the country without that document.[11] In the eighteenth century, together with the imperial letter addressed to the *bailo* or the Venetian ambassador who were leaving Istanbul, another letter by the grand vizier was handed over. Then, the envoy who came back home was often accompanied by some militaries or interpreters of the other country at least as far as the border or some important towns from which he could continue his journey safe. In 1633, for example, Mehmed *ağa* was sent as far as Venice by the pasha of Buda

9 '*Dei Cordovani*' probably indicated a profession previously practised by the envoy. NB in Venice the 'cordovani' were skins tanned after the fashion of Córdoba.

10 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 163-164.

11 Many examples of Ottoman documents issued by Venetian ambassadors may be consulted in *Documenti turchi*, nos. 6, 27, 44, 1863, 1867, 1869, 1881-1883, 1887, 1889, 1895, 1897, 1899-1900, 1901, 1903, 1905, 1908, 1924, 1926, 1939, 1941, 1946, 1948, 1954, 1956, 1961, 1964, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986. In the eighteenth century, the credentials issued by the sultan were always accompanied by a similar letter issued in the name of the grand vizier.

to accompany the ambassador of the king of Sweden to the Porte.[12] It was mainly during this century that the military escorts increased, namely when the deterioration of the international situation, together with a minor control exerted by Ottomans in their provinces, made the journey more dangerous.

Not only ambassadors and eminent characters of the state élite were charged with missions abroad, but also less known people. Among these abounded interpreters, who could move at their ease in a foreign country speaking its language like natives. Among the Ottoman envoys who reached Venice between the end of the fifteenth century and the war of Cyprus were all those who held the position of *divan-i hümayun tercümanı* (dragoman of the imperial *divan*) and, more specifically, Ali bey bin Abdullah, Yunus bey bin Abderrahman, İbrahim bey (Joachim Strasz) and Mahmud. With regard to the Venetian interpreters, instead, they were sent mainly during periods of high international tension and, as a matter of fact, they were often allowed to wear Turkish clothes, white turbans and weapons by the sultan's safe-conduct.[13] The interpreters, however, carried out an important function also in their motherland, because they were the official intermediaries between the foreigners and their fellow citizens.

7.2 Merchants

When the systems of personal identification were not yet very sophisticated, being part of a group meant to travel safer and easily find shelter. In past ages, as a matter of fact, the entire group was considered to be responsible for its members' actions and was obliged to retaliate, if unfortunate events occurred and other protective measures had not been established by means of international agreements. Many documents testify how, throughout the Middle Ages, European merchants travelling in Muslim countries were summoned all together, as if they were *in solidum*, because of problems caused by one of them. As we saw, Ottomans themselves created the 'system of *millet*s' and, thus, took the idea of community to its extreme meaning: they believed that every *millet* was not a foreign community but a group different as for religion or origin, but still harmoniously included in the Empire. Their starting point was Islam, which theorises the existence of infidels, called *ḏimmī*s, living in peace under a Muslim ruler and only subject to particular obligations.

12 *Documenti turchi*, nos. 1436, 1439.

13 Cf. for example ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 331, c. 12 (1595 to the sanjakbegs and qadis of the Porte in Klis and vice versa, for Gianesino Salvago).

Many international agreements between Muslim and Christian countries were used to protect merchants and merchandises, mostly if they did not share common borders: in this case, as a matter of fact, to occupy the other's land with an army was very unlikely. For instance, the rulers of Egypt – from Ayyubids to Mamluks – chose the general safe-conduct (*amān ʿāmm*) to offer protection to the foreign merchants. In that case, a Venetian who went to Alexandria to trade did not need any other document since his own community vouched for him and his honesty. Living in the same fonduk, using the same hammam, the same church and the same bakery made all Venetians a close-knit group, under their consul. This happened also to Genoeses, Pisans and Catalans.

The influence of the Egyptian *amān ʿāmm*s was so strong that, when Selim I conquered Egypt, took over the point of view of the sovereigns he had defeated with regard to his authority over foreign communities. Even though he could not change, if not occasionally, the structure of the Ottoman *ahdname*s already used for some European countries, he tried to turn them into something different. His successors, from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, went on the same path and granted no more bilateral international agreements to France, England and Holland, but only *berat*s (in this case, a kind of 'trade licences').

If European merchants were protected by the capitulations (both *ahdname*s and *berat*s), and mostly by their own community, Ottoman merchants in Christian land had a different experience. First of all, they were people belonging to different ethnic groups, speaking several languages and believing in different religions, even though they were all subjects of the sultan. This meant that an Ottoman community abroad could not be close-knit but was necessarily tormented by quarrels and misunderstandings. Moreover, they usually stopped only for the time needed for the trade; it was inconceivable for a Muslim to move definitively or create a family in a Christian country unless he abandoned his religion; on the contrary, thanks to the concept of *ḏimmā*, the infidels could legally go to live in a Muslim empire without having to embrace Islam.

The first Ottoman merchants arrived in Venice in the fifteenth century. At the beginning, the sources about their presence in the city are scanty, but the two following centuries number many examples. We know the areas they went to and where they lived for the most part. We hear of letters of attorneys, agreements, sales and, most of all, quarrels; there are also the death certificates of those who died in Venice from 1631 until the end of the eighteenth century. The institution of the *Fondaco dei Turchi* in 1621 did not definitely solve the problem of their dwelling because some continued to gravitate around the parishes of San Martino and San Pietro of Castello, which especially attended by foreigners such as Greeks or Dalmatians. They were mostly people coming from Bosnia and Albany, but some of them came from Anatolia too, mainly from Bursa,

as Cemal Kafadar argues when he finds out the expansion of an Ottoman trade activity in Venice between the end of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century.[14]

Just like the sultan's ambassadors, the merchants used to travel overland as far as a town of the Adriatic coast and then crossed the sea on a Venetian or Ottoman ship. They could spend the compulsory quarantine either in a town of the *Stato da Mar*, or in the lazaretto of Venice. The quarantine was used to prevent epidemic diseases from entering the country. Venetians were not interested in their honesty as traders or their solvency but in the public health: as a matter of fact, they were not asked to present any document that certified their identity but only their health.[15]

The Ottoman merchants were protected not only by a reciprocal treatment granted by the capitulations, but also by the Venetian laws. They did not have a consul who helped them in Venice, as happened in other towns of the *Stato da Mar*: in some places, they used to chose a Venetian subject to hold this office; in the most ancient times, the 'consul for the Ottoman subjects' was officially acknowledged only by the Venetian state, which tried to turn him into one of its officials, but around mid-eighteenth century he was acknowledged by the sultan himself by means of a *berat* of appointment.[16]

Some Ottoman subjects arrived in Venice protected by imperial documents that accredited them, not as ambassadors, but as merchants. Sometimes they were on proper official missions, aimed not at the establishment of international relations but at the purchase of luxury goods for the court, often on the occasion of special holidays; these envoys are sometimes called 'court merchants' in the documents and they were received and hosted as the diplomats. In any case, the Porte considered the market of Rialto, as well as the *bailo*'s house in Istanbul, to be the place where they could stock with any object, such as silk or velvet cloths, glasses, telescopes and Arabic manuscripts as well.[17]

Also eminent characters of the Ottoman government sometimes sent their men to Venice to purchase; in that case, as a rule, they were accompanied by a letter of introduction in which their name and the reason for their voyage were specified: for example, in 1560 the *beylerbeyi* of Egypt, Ali pasha, wrote a letter for two Jews, whose name was Ḫayyīm for both; so did the sanjakbeg of Klis, Mehmed, for his *kâhya* Süleyman in 1561; and the *nazır* of the sanjak of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mehmed, in the

14 Lucchetta, *Turchi morti a* Venezia, 133-146; Kafadar, *A Death in Venice*, 198.

15 Moracchiello, *Lazzaretti*, 819-836; D'Alberton Vitale, *Tra sanità e commercio*, 253-288.

16 ASVe, *Mercanzia*, 2nd s., b. 44, fasc. 102, 3rd part, c. 51.

17 Cf. for example Turan, *Venedik*, doc. 4; *Documenti turchi*, nos. 991-992; Fabris, *Artisanat et culture*, 51-60.

name of the sanjakbeg Mustafa bey Malkovich (the second vizier's cousin), for his man Mustafa *çelebi* in 1563. Also Christian merchants sometimes could dress up as Turks in dangerous places; an evidence is an order for the qadis of Aydın and Saruhan and of Smyrna issued in Emanuele Negroponte's favour in 1608.[18]

Among the merchants mostly Jews managed to obtain *name-i hümayun*s in their favour addressed to the doge. In 1585 a similar document was granted to Giacobbe Castiel who, however, confident in a slender acquaintance with the Ottoman language, showed it about ten years later, as if it was a recommendation for his definitive settlement in the city. He was soon discovered by the state interpreters and had to make amends for what he had falsely stated. Another example of a sultan's safe-conduct issued in favour of a woman, Grazia, and her son dates back to 1569 and is addressed not to the doge but to the qadis on the road from Venice to Istanbul. More often, however, these Jews were not merchants but people on the run from Spain and Portugal, where the situation was more and more critical, and who had relatives or friends in Istanbul who could deliver *arz*s to the sultan and pay the attendant taxes to obtain the protection documents. This was the case of Ezibona and her daughters, related to Giovanni Miches' widow, who passed through Venice in 1580, and of Alvaro Mendez: in 1584 Murad III wrote a letter in his favour stating that the had been officially called in Istanbul and asking to accompany him from Venice to Ragusa.[19]

The Ottoman subjects in Venice, therefore, did not constitute a close-knit community; they did not live always in the same buildings and did not have an official representative but, all the same, their commercial opposite party obviously knew their identity and, above all, their solvency. This was certified not by the members of a community but by the Venetian brokers (*sanseri*). These were officials, acknowledged by the state, and not scratch people who acted breaking all the rules. The first information about the *sanseri de turchi* (brokers dealing with Turks), as those who were specialised in that kind of customers were called at that time, dates back to 15 December 1534; in front of unauthorised people who behaved incorrectly meddling in the Ottoman subjects' business, «sì mercanti come oratori et altri de la dita nation che vengono in questa città» (merchants as well as

18 ASVe, *LST*, f. II, c. 66, 82, 131; cf. also c. 64 (in 1554 Ali himself writes in favour of the Jewish merchant Samuele Cohen's commercial traveller); *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 331, c. 145.

19 ASVe, *LST*, f. I, c. 76, cf. also cc. 78, 80, 81, 83, 85, 87 (1585, letters written by various Ottoman authorities to various Christian and Muslim addresses in Mosé Sarfati's favour to protect his journey as far as Istanbul); *Documenti turchi*, nos. 931, 1064-1065, 1067. Wittek, *A Letter of Murad III*, 381-383 (transcription and translation of the 1580 document, published in an antiquarian catalogue of Istanbul; this originally was the c. 42 of the f. VIII of the series *LST*, kept in the ASVe; only the cover and some of the first pages are kept today; the rest has been evidently removed and sold in the antiquarian market more than fifty years ago).

diplomatic envoys and others of the above-mentioned nation who come to this city), it was established that sale contracts could be entered into only in the presence of Girolamo Civran, interpreter of Turkish and Greek and notary of the Ducal Palace's chancellery.[20]

Michele Membré took the place of Girolamo Civran, who died in 1550.[21] Within a few years, as a proof of the increase of the Ottoman presence in Venice that Kafadar had already imagined, the title of official broker dealing only with Ottoman merchants started to be entrusted to people who knew the language and who, in any case, had to pay a tax to Membré even though they did not employ him as interpreter. The first was probably a Venetian in 1561: Michele Summa di Santo, who had been enslaved, sold and resold and had embraced Islam. He went back to Venice and his former faith after nine years and a half and here he used what he had learnt during his slavery to survive. Others followed the same path, such as in the same year Simone the Armenian who had lived in Venice for twenty-eight years and then, in 1571, Filippo Emmanuel from Cyprus, already slave in Istanbul, who was made broker because he was Membré's nephew, even though he had not already lived in Venice for ten years, as it was established by the law.[22]

In Membré's times, thus, there were some *sanseri ordinari* (ordinary brokers) who, even though they did not know the Turkish language and had to avail themselves of an official interpreter, had specialised, although non-exclusively, in negotiations with Ottoman merchants. Besides them, there were those who, thanks to their linguistic skills and the events of their life, could exert the *sansaria*, but only for the Ottoman subjects. We may infer that to attest that a foreign merchant was reliable and trustworthy and a business transaction with him was not risky was the task of the official interpreter of the Republic, such as Civran or Membré, or of those who had obtained the right to exert «solo con turchi» (only with Turks). In a time when the document of personal identification did not exist, besides ready money and bills of exchange, only the following things were of value in order to trade without running any risk: acquaintances, friendships or the presence of countrymen and finally even rumours that in certain milieus got around from mouth to mouth.

20 ASVe, *CN*, reg. 22, cc. 153v-154. On the importance of interpreters in the economic transactions in the Ottoman Empire, cf. Çiçek, *Interpreters*, 1-15.

21 ASVe, *CN*, reg. 27, c. 86v; on this interpreter cf. Membré, *Relazione di Persia*, xi-lxx; *Mission*, vii-xxviii.

22 ASVe, *CN*, reg. 33, cc. 39, 62v; reg. 39, c. 17v; reg. 40, c. 166v; cf. also ff. 39 and 48. As for other brokers, cf. Vercellin, *Mercanti turchi a* Venezia, 243-276; Dal Borgo, *Neoconvertiti*, 163-165.

7.3 Slaves on the Run

Besides those who had made the frontier their house, there were also those who stayed there only for the time necessary to cross it. They were often people who had decided to leave their motherland and their faith or those who, on the contrary, wanted to go back to their house after a period of detention or slavery in a foreign land. Most European-Ottoman agreements state that the prisoners of war had to be given back after its end but they were very often detained as slaves by those who did not intend to lose a free labour. The situation was different along the Persian front: as a matter of fact, other Muslims, however Shiites, could not be enslaved by Ottomans. Some masters of prisoners of war even stated that they were only purchased and sold slaves or even other slaves' sons. The Venetian-Ottoman capitulations always established the reciprocal exchange of prisoners. This meant that in the Republic, during peacetime and at least officially, there could not be subjects of the Ottoman Empire reduced to slavery; moreover, the Republic ordered its officials to release and give back to the sultan also the Muslim prisoners that had been found on Christian privateers' or pirates' ships; likewise, the Porte had to give back Venetians taken prisoner during the war, even though it often refused to set free those who had been reduced to slavery in other circumstances.[23]

During the wars, instead, such as the Cretean or the Morean ones, the Venetian navy needed very huge crews – up to 150 rowers could stay in a trireme, besides soldiers, officials and sailors – and its galleys were equipped also with Muslim rowers. The slaves' condition was very bad; as a matter of fact, they frequently died and other had to take their place. In peacetime, instead, Muslim rowers on the galleys or Muslim slaves in the palaces were secretly employed; the captains of public and private galleys kept them hidden and did their best to avoid controls, or recorded these people among the dead onboard; thus, they had men doing an exhausting job cheap, in a period in which free rowers (the so-called *buonavoglia*) were decreasing in number.[24]

Both during and after the cessation of the hostilities, prisoners and slaves fled, if they could go back to their homeland. They were wretches, often moneyless and easy prey to impostors and frauds who, promising to ferry them across a river or to accompany them in dangerous areas, stole everything they had. The painful account of Osman *ağa* of Temesvar's[25] wanderings presents a clear image of how dangerous those journeys were,

23 Zug Tucci, Venezia *e i prigionieri*, 51; Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 90; Bono, *Schiavi musulmani*, 450-460.

24 Lo Basso, *Schiavi, forzati e buonevoglie*, 204.

25 *Documenti turchi*, no. 198; Osmân Agha de Temechvar, *Prisonnier des infedèles*, 145-201.

of how they could end in despair, and of how mean men could be towards their likes. The thirst for profit overrode any moral or religious consideration and only those who had a lot of money and as much slyness could hope to survive and succeed in their object. Venetians were not better than Turks on this point: Osman *ağa* met them twice during his journeys between the Balkans and Vienna and twice they were slave traders who bought men to supply the Most Serene Republic's galleys with rowers. This happened at the end of the seventeenth century when slavery was little talked about but still existed, also in Italy, as Salvatore Bono's recent book on Muslim slaves shows.

The quickest escape route from south Italy included the passage by sea to the Maghreb. In the Mediterranean there were some islands, such as Giannutri and even more so Lampedusa, that could give shelter to the runaways. For the latter, there was also a tacit agreement between Christians and Muslims to leave provisions and money in a cave, where there were both an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the *türbe* of a marabout, for those who needed them. According to legend, a hermit who lived on the island lighted a candle every night to point out the track and introduced himself as a Muslim to Muslims and as a Christian to Christians, so much so that still today in Sicily «il romito di Lampedusa» (the hermit of Lampedusa) means a person with a double faith.[26] Another escape route for a Muslim slave could be the territory of the Republic of Venice, which was the only Italian state that directly bordered the Ottoman Empire; moreover, the peace agreements with the Porte made Venetians respect and, if necessary, help the Muslim runaways of any status.

If we know little of Muslim slaves and if the accounts of their misadventures (such as Osman *ağa*'s) are rare, we have more information about Christians in flight, thanks to both the archives of the Inquisition, always ready to check those who might have abjured the faith,[27] and the accounts left by some of them, which soon became a widespread and highly regarded literary genre with *topoi* such as capture, slavery and regained freedom. One of the most famous examples is an episode of the *Don Quixote* whose author, Miguel de Cervantes, really was in Algiers as a slave of that stronghold's commander, the Venetian renegade *Venedikli* Hasan pasha. A model of this kind of literature is Andres Laguna's pseudo-biography, which is a summa of many other accounts on the subject and tells the story of a Spanish young man captured in 1552 off the island of Ponza and forced to row; after having pretended to be a physician, he managed to ran away passing along Mount Athos, the islands of the Greek archipelago and reaching Sicily.[28]

26 Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 15-18; Bono, *Schiavi musulmani*, 463, 468.

27 Bennassar, Bennassar, *I cristiani di Allah*; Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*.

28 Fabris, *Hasan*, 51-66; Laguna, *Avventure*.

In the western jurisprudence the escape of a slave was considered to be a theft, even if of oneself. On the contrary, Ottoman subjects very often accused their Christian former slaves, who had already reached Venice's lands, of having stolen their goods or money so to convene them before a court on the basis of the peace agreements. These complaints often caused endless cases between border authorities and sometimes they involved also the central authority. A firman of 1533, for example, addressed by the sultan to the sanjakbeg and the qadis of Morea, established that some Turkish subjects wrongly charged their Venetian former slaves, freed from a Barbary galliot by the *capitano generale da mar*.[29]

Slaves on the run usually did not have documents that could protect them during their journey. Sometimes, however, someone tried to offer them an official protection. This was the case of the Venetian representatives in Constantinople, but the attempt did not always go through. In 1574, for instance, the *bailo* Antonio Tiepolo let some of them run away on a Venetian ship, but they were arrested by Ottoman officials who found out they had letters with the *bailo*'s seal. Freed slaves, instead, received official documents by the imperial chancellery addressed to the Ottoman authorities certifying that they were going back to their homeland.[30]

Also women, however fewer than men since they had less occasions to be captured, were slaves of Christian or Ottoman holders and, if they could, they too tried to run away. In his dangerous but successful return home, Osman *ağa* brought also his friend Mehmed, two Muslim women and a three or four-year-old little girl. A document of 1559 speaks of a mother and her two daughters who had been captured in Hungary, had fled from Klis and were looking for shelter in the Venetian town of Trogir. That same year, Franceschina Zorzi Michiel – the Venetian mother of Gazanfer, the man who would become the most famous chief of the white eunuchs of the Topkapı at the end of the sixteenth century – was captured together with her four children on a ship that was crossing the Adriatic; she could not save her two sons, who were brought to the imperial palace in Istanbul, but only the two girls with whom she managed to go back to Venice after many wanderings.[31]

29 *Documenti turchi*, no. 291.

30 ASVe, *LST*, f. III, c. 40; *Bailo*, b. 251, reg. 334, c. 6 (1621, for seven freed Venetians already captured by Abaza Mahmud).

31 Osmân Agha de Temechvar, *Prisonnier des infedèles*, 143-144, 193; Pedani, Veneziani *a Costantinopoli*, 67-84; *Safiye's Household*, 9-32. *Documenti turchi*, no. 749.

7.4 Other Means of Identification

When we read biographies of people who went on a long journey from East to West or vice versa, we are struck by the fact that the foreign was looked at with distrust by the people of the countries he crossed and, even more so, by the inhabitants of the border areas. A traveller was not obliged to have a document written by a high authority and addressed to the officials of the countries along the way, even though it could certainly smooth out some difficulties. Those issued by the Porte usually specified only the name and the role of the person who bore them and sometimes his (or her) generic itinerary or other information such as, for example, if he was travelling in secret and if he was armed; instead, there were no physical descriptions that let identify the person for certain. As a rule, such documents were issued for those who travelled on behalf of one or the other state but, as we saw, sometimes also for private citizens who went in a foreign land to trade, for religious reasons or to reach their relatives or anything.[32]

Among those who provided a public service, there were also couriers and postmen, meaning with the first term those who were paid by the state and with the second one those who undertook that activity under private companies' orders or ordinary citizens. The postal service, considered to be a sovereign prerogative, was already widespread in the Muslim Egypt since 659/1260-1261, when the sultan Baybars organised it. In the most magnificent period of the Mamluk Empire, when state borders were almost impassable by those who were not authorised, the postal service officers were several and they had documents certifying their role. In his description of the *mukātābat*s, al-Qalqašandi includes in that category the passports *āwrāq al-ǧawāz* or *āwrāq al-ṭarīq* (singular *waraqah*) employed by the couriers to have the right of way and to certify their identity.[33] Besides paper, however, there were also other marks that allowed the officer to be easily recognisable from afar. They were identification marks made of silvery or golden leather, coin-like but as big as the palm of the hand, tied to the neck with a cord or a yellow silk foulard and kept under one's clothes, even though a big and very visible bow hung at the back. This mark was useful also to immediately swap horses at the post houses. Once gone back to Cairo, the couriers had to give back to the chancellery (*dīwān al-inšā'*)

32 ASVe, *LST*, f. IV, c. 106 (1591, the *kapıağası* Gazanfer for his mother who, travelling from Venice, had to join him in Istanbul), f. V, c. 131 (1593, Abdi *alaybeyi* sent to Venice by the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia for the interpreter Luca Stagner); *Bailo*, b. 259, reg. 361, cc. 126-127 (1747, for Antonio Becich who goes to Walachia); *Documenti turchi*, no. 401 (1537, issued for Giovanni Soranzo, relative of the Venetian ambassador who goes to Jerusalem from Istanbul).

33 al-Qalqašandi, *Ṣubḥ*, vol. 7, 231-233.

the leather mark that, being coined by the state mints, was conceptually linked to the sovereign right to mint money.[34]

The Ottoman post derived from the post that existed in the ancient Muslim and Mongolian states. Since Mehmed II's times, there were state messengers (*ulak*s or *tatar*s) whose task was to keep the contact between the Porte and the provincial authorities; the service, however, was employed also to gather information on the frontier areas. For their correspondence, the private citizens used either occasional carriers (*emanetçi*s) or people paid to do it (*sai*s). It was mainly a horse post; therefore, *menzilhane*s (post houses) and *han*s were used for the change of mounts, while escorts of janissaries ensured the safety.[35] As we saw, the name of some Ottoman units of measurement was conceptually linked to the postal service. When the *ulak*s were used to send official letters abroad, accreditation letters were written also for them specifying their role and the reason for their mission, according to the practice for diplomatic envoys.

For centuries, Venetian post to and from Istanbul used only couriers and messengers who went on foot; also in this case, there was a service provided by the state together with other webs of transmissions run by and for private citizens. People who engaged in that activity usually were either Slavonians or Ottoman subjects of Montenegro. On this point, an episode of 1590 that caused the *bailo*'s vehement complaints can be reminded; the *bailo*'s *arz* to the sultan brought about a *name-i hümayun* for the sanjakbeg of Shkodër obliging the qadis of his zone to overrule the order he had given to the men of Montenegro not to serve the Most Serene Republic. We know that, already around 1524-25, an imperial document was issued to offer protection to those who practised that profession, but in periods of international tension, when carrying letters to Venetians meant risking their life, the envoys had to move in secret and did not have letters certifying their profession, neither from the Venetian authorities nor from the Ottoman ones.[36]

Also other countries used their own postal services. For example, since 1514, Poland and the Ottoman Empire ensured reciprocity of treatment to 'ambassadors, merchants and messengers'; in this clause, taken up again in the following *ahdname*s, some Italian translations of the same period included couriers too; as for France, in 1542 the sultan asked the doge to let right of way to the official messengers to and from that country.[37]

34 al-Qalqašandi, *Ṣubḥ*, vol. 14, 366-372; Sauvaget, *La poste*, 20, 44-49.

35 Stein, *Ottoman Ambassador*, 219-312.

36 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 250, reg. 330, cc. 18a-b; De Zanche, *I vettori*, 19-43; *Tra Costantinopoli e* Venezia, 33-71; Fedele, *Un enigma di storia postale*, 5-17.

37 Cf. Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 217; *Documenti turchi*, no. 486.

Sometimes the imperial documents certifying people's role were also export licences for forbidden goods. They concern mostly horses, usually given as a gift to some ambassadors who returned home. It should be observed that also the passports for ships stated that they could enter the Ottoman harbours only if they had not shipped forbidden goods such as arms or horses.[38]

In the Mamluk Empire, the authorities could issue also a kind of safe-conduct to protect those who had not obeyed some orders and thus feared to be punished. In any case, theoretically, from an Islamic point of view, the 'safe-conducts for Muslims' (*amānāt li-ahl al-Islām*) were not needed since Muslims could travel safe within the *dār al-Islām*. More specifically, they were a kind of certification of amnesty, such as the *dafn*: its name meant 'to hide something', namely the sins, and it was a document already neglected at the beginning of the fifteenth century. In the Mamluk reign there were also the *tarhānīyāt*s, i.e. letters of freedom, given at the moment of the retirement with or without the pay, mostly to state officers, the so-called 'men of sword', such as the emirs, but sometimes also to some 'men of pen'. These letters allowed to settle or travel everywhere they wanted within the state borders.[39]

To end a discussion on the ancient means of identification we must cite a very effective one, however more macabre and drastic. It could be used only to make sure that somebody condemned in absentia, or a state enemy, had really been eliminated. This happened a few times in Venice too. Some bounty hunters, after having killed, sent to the *Consiglio dei Dieci* the head severed from the bust so that they could collect what they had been promised.[40] This practice was certainly more common in the Ottoman Empire: in the outer walls of the Topkapı, there are still some niches where the executed criminals' heads were placed and such macabre trophies were often sent in great numbers as a generous gift to the sultan by commanders and militaries.[41] Thus, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a Persian ruler's head – maybe of the famous Alâüddevvle according to some Venetian sources but not according to the Ottoman ones – was sent to the doge as a gift by the sultan.[42]

38 ASVe, *Bailo*, b. 251, reg. 335, c. 32 (1625, for Simone Contarini, with a horse of great value given by the sultan); b. 252, reg. 343, c. 37 (1593).

39 al-Qalqašandi, *Ṣubḥ*, vol. 13, 48-53, 352-355.

40 Fabris, *Il dottor Girolamo Fasaneo*, 105-118.

41 See, for example, ASVe, *LST*, f. IV, cc. 79-80 (undated, around 1583, Hasan *ağa*, it tells of an Ottoman attack near Zadar and of the sending to Istanbul of the heads of twelve killed people).

42 Sanuto, *I diarii*, vol. 22, col. 460, 462, 465; İdrîs-i Bidlîsî, *Silim şah-nâme*, 250.

At that time, it was rather difficult to effectively depict the appearance of a person in a piece of writing, except from the description of some distinguishing marks; to make sure about a man's identity it would have been necessary to have a portrait at least. The sultan Bayezid, for example, used this device despite his disapproval of images: he sent two pictures to the duke of Mantua, the first of which represented prince Cem and the other an envoy of the Mamluk sovereign who protected him; but in this case, the sultan was probably organising their murder in Italy.[43]

7.5 The Health Front

In 1348 a plague epidemic, i.e. a disease doomed to periodically reappear for more than three centuries, spread in all Europe. In 1377, Ragusa, which had just become independent from Venice, was the first city to create a sort of quarantine. Within a few years, it was imitated by many other countries. In 1423 also the *Comune Veneciarum* started to systematically prohibit the contacts with the areas at risk. The Venetian hospital for plague victims was turned into a quarantine station for the foreigners coming from infected countries and was used with this function until 1471 when another complex was built. The quarantine was compulsory both for merchants and merchandises, to the extent that already at the beginning of the sixteenth century people said that the *Lazzaretto Nuovo* served also as *dogana da mar* (sea customs) and, sometimes, as *dogana da terra* (land customs); it was right there that the first contacts between merchants, interpreters and brokers were established. The lazaretto, therefore, was also a meeting place where merchants, however unwillingly, stroke up a friendship, knew each other and got to know also some Venetians.[44]

The officials of the *Stato da Mar* had also the task to promptly inform the central government of any possible centre of infection so that they could immediately break off the ordinary contacts with those places, whereas special permits, the *fedi di santità*, were used by land and sea to check the place of origin of travellers and loads: countersigned at the various checkpoints, those documents had to be propounded upon their arrival in Venice.[45] In that case, therefore, the state was not interested in the individuals themselves or their role or profession, but wanted to know only the place they came from and if they were infection vehicles.

The lazaretto was used also in some Muslim countries, at least in the eighteenth century. There are proofs that by then there was a lazaretto in

43 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 111.

44 Preto, *Le grandi paure*, 177-192.

45 Palmer, *L'azione della Repubblica*, 103-110.

Tunis for the goods and people coming from the ships in which the disease had manifested itself. Other North-African countries were not as quick in taking the necessary precautionary steps for the infectious diseases. Some Moroccan harbours could use the very strict quarantines imposed in the Spanish harbours and, if the infection spread, officials did not allow ships coming from areas at risk without the Spanish *fede di santità*. When the danger diminished, however, they used to leave people and goods in the open air for some days, according to an ancient custom of their country. At that time, in general, in the Ottoman provinces mainly the foreign consuls tried to persuade indifferent pashas to take into consideration the health front but, already at the beginning of the following century, the Ottoman governors themselves started to worry about the spreading of the infection. They usually acted in this way prompted by the circumstances and soon abandoned the restrictive measures right after the first results and not when the plague had been eradicated; moreover, the various local administrations did not act jointly and, therefore, the measures were effective only to a limited extent. The methods to fight the epidemic, however, were those used in Europe and, when some brisk governors were imitated by their neighbours, the plague started to slowly shrink back also in the Empire, even though it did not completely disappear.[46]

Venice, the Oriental gateway of Europe, was more exposed to the contagion coming from East than other states. The border line that divided its territory and the Muslim one from Kotor onwards little by little turned into a *cordon sanitaire* that separated two areas where the virulence and the contagion of the epidemic had different values. Leaving the Christian territory behind often was experienced as an entrance in hell, not for religious reasons but for sanitary ones: people left behind a country where science and experience had found out tools useful to reduce, if not eradicate, the propagation of the miasma, and entered the reign of death. The observance of the *cordons sanitaires* became stricter and stricter: people could show preference neither for the noble nor for the rich; all men, animals and also goods were considered to be a possible carrier of infectious diseases. Also the mail could convey the plague and, therefore, letters were often smoked so that the fire could purify them, or 'perfumed' with olive oil and juniper berries, or else carried in tarred boxes, believing that these stratagems avoided its spreading. Although rather late, the Venetian rigour as for health was imitated by other countries bordering the Ottoman Empire and, thus, easily exposed to contagion. In 1770 the Austrian state used an existing structure to this end, the *Militärgrenze*, i.e. the strip of land that was from 15 to 20 kilometres wide and more than

46 Ciammaichella, *Il 'Giornale istorico'*, 21-23; Speziale, *Oltre la peste*, 207-212, 252-256; Arribas Palau, *Los hermanos Chiappe*, 813-869; Panzac, *La peste*, 452-454.

one thousand kilometres long, from the Adriatic to the limits of Bukovina and Moldavia. It reminded the Roman *limes* and had been created after the Treaty of Karlowitz. In that area, the military border and the sanitary one overlapped and jointly acted, whereas the fear of the military invasion yielded to the dread of epidemics.[47]

47 De Zanche, *Tra Costantinopoli e* Venezia, 104-109; Selmi, *Il Magistrato di Sanità*, 28-38; Panzac, *Politique sanitaire*, 87-108.

Conclusion

A topic such as the passage from the frontier to the border may be faced from many points of view: it may be oriented towards the past and the ancient world; it may involve the land, the sea and even the sky; it may unfold in thorough tales of *histoire événementielle*; it may confine itself to micro-history; finally, it may be considered within a wider discussion of economic or social relations or flow into geo-politics and current affairs, into the wars being fought today and the peace that is so difficult to be reached. It is a complex subject that may be dealt with only from a limited point of view in a single book to avoid the risk of losing oneself in too general discussions. The aim of these pages is to consider some basic elements regarding the relations developed between the Muslim and the Christian worlds from the end of the Middle Ages through the Modern Age.

There is already a huge body of works dealing with the Andalusian frontier and the continuous withdrawing, in the Iberian peninsula, of the limits placed to separate the Moorish and the Christian reigns. The same cannot be said of the frontiers between Muslim countries and Europe in the Modern Age. The Ottoman historiography of the last century was strongly influenced by the idea of frontier, but only with reference to the early history of an empire that, at its maximum expansion, dominated almost all the Islamic world. To consider Osman's and his first successors' advance as a *ğihād* or to find other reasons for it meant to side with a specific school of thought. Luckily the positions have softened and today it is possible to pick the positive elements from each of them without forgetting the pragmatism that always characterised the Ottoman behaviour. There are few pieces of writing about this Empire's frontier in the Modern Age and its following transformation into a border. Almost twenty-five years ago, Andrew C. Hess wrote a book on the contacts between the sultan's subjects and the king of Spain's ones in North Africa. Some essays by Rifa'at Ali Abou El-Haj about what happened at the time of the Treaty of Karlowitz date back to almost thirty years ago. Only the proceedings of a few more recent conferences show the development of a certain interest in this subject. In this field, however, books and papers often repeat preconceived ideas that it is still difficult to get rid of. The constant study of documents is the only way to provide solid bases for new hypotheses.

This volume starts from the terms used both in Europe and in the Arabic-Turkish world to label the concepts of frontier, border and other related elements, trying to define the precise shades of meaning that distinguished

them. Exactly understanding the different points of view is, as a matter of fact, the necessary starting point for every further discussion. The historiographical point of view of frontier is considered broadly exploring the debate that arouse in the twentieth century. The next step was taking into consideration the peace agreements between Muslim and European countries. It is notable how the closeness or distance between the two sides influenced the type of agreement they entered into: if the two countries shared a common land border, the document chosen by the Muslim side was usually a truce (*hudna*); on the contrary, if this was not the case, they fell back on a safe-conduct (*amān*).

The people and the societies that once existed along the land and sea frontier between Christianity and Islam provided further material for research. The relations between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire give clear and numerous examples of the contacts established in such areas throughout the centuries. A study of piracy and privateering in the Adriatic demonstrates close ties, which have remained unknown up until now, between the Maghrebi people and Albanian Ottoman subjects.

After having studied the frontier, the passage to the border was considered. Few books have dealt with this topic until now; the establishment of a border line, usually decided on the basis of bilateral agreements, represents the realisation of the peace and the material acknowledgment of the other country's right to exist as an independent entity. In the relations between Christianity and Islam the existence of a shared border marked the passage beyond a pure war logic and the acceptance of the peaceful coexistence of different entities; hence, the importance of clarity in the agreements concerning a border line. A thorough analysis of the documents regarding the relations between the Republic and the Empire let us overcome the theory according to which Ottomans had accepted the idea of a western border only after the Treaty of Karlowitz. Border agreements already existed in the second half of the fifteenth century, when the sultans' empire had already come into direct contact with countries that had a consistent military strength. Throughout the centuries, the practice used for such agreements changed: in the most ancient times, the sultan issued a document with an final ratification that could even modify what had been decided far from the capital. In the sixteenth century, instead, the local agreements decided by bilateral committees formed by diplomats and technicians were considered to be sufficient, whereas the sultan's decree concluding the works was regarded only as a relic of the past. What changed with the Treaty of Karlowitz were not Ottoman ideas on the possibility of a border with Christian countries but the extension of the border itself, which bounded also the area close to the Habsburg Empire.

The research on the practice used to establish a border raises questions about the types of society developed on one side or the other. If there were violence and misunderstandings, there were also attempts to reach an

agreement made, although in a spatially limited field, by people of different religions and countries. The division of the land was of special interest since the separation of fiscal and property interests did not always match the limits imposed by the states.

Also the sea was a frontier for many centuries. It is impossible to place boundary stones or markers on a liquid element to distinguish what belongs to a state or to the other. Yet, common conventions were chosen to place limits there. The European manner of viewing maritime possessions had its origin in the Roman law and did not coincide with Islamic thought. Europeans considered the sea as a common freely accessible good, while Ottomans held a different view that was more similar to that of land. In some cases, they considered it as the prince's property that could be defined by more conventional devices.

It was the latter point of view that was generally welcomed by the modern states, maybe unaware of a likely and far-off Muslim origin. A limit, thus, could be conventionally established also on the water: the first reference was the distance from the coast indicated by the range of a cannon shot; then, even wider spaces were split. Already in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman rulers faced the new developments in a practical manner once again by establishing, however unilaterally, a maritime border using a short distance from the coast first and then an imaginary line through the open sea.

Studying the Ottoman geo-politic point of view allows to notice the economic importance of the route that linked Istanbul and Alexandria. In ancient times, before the conquest of the Mamluk sultanate by Selim I, it was considered to be an international route, but then it became a route within the Empire. At the beginning, the sultans tried to defend first of all their own ships from the thread posted by pirates and privateers: as a matter of fact, the sultans attempted to conquer the entire Mediterranean basin by capturing mostly wide and weakly fortified areas and leaving the strongholds and the better fortified zones for a later wave of conquests. The failed siege of Malta revolutionised the sultans' geo-political point of view, pushing them to defend the Istanbul-Alexandria route and, thus, to destroy the dens of pirates that still existed in some islands of the eastern Mediterranean. The wars fought to conquer Cyprus and then Crete, which were the last shreds of the Venetian empire in the eastern seas, fall under the same reasoning.

A border is not only the mark dug into the ground. A border can be something else, such as what separates two ways of living and thinking; hence, the importance of the elements that allow to identify those who are different as to culture, origin, religion and who cross others' territory. Unlike the frontier, which is an area seen from a single standpoint and intended as a place where battles are fought and a force advances and the other withdraws, the border line is used to separate lands in a more

lasting and peaceful way. In general, it is not an impassable limit. Many categories of people could cross it. The means of identification become very important: in the most ancient times, they were aimed mostly at detecting the belonging to a specific group but then, with the passing of the Modern Age, they were intent on identifying people in themselves, as single individuals, different from those who came from the same area, shared the same profession or professed the same religion.

In this slow process, the spread of epidemics, which experienced a recrudescence, pushed European countries to control more and more strictly the origin of people, animals and things that came from areas exposed to a greater risk of contagion, such as the Muslim lands in general and the Ottoman ones in particular. Because of health reasons, the opposite journey was often considered as a sort of descent to hell. With the first documents of personal identification, the discourse can count itself to be finished. The slow development in the relations between Christianity and Islam that had started in the Middle Ages led to long-lasting results.

Only the birth of new technical tools allows to establish new borders today. They are no longer tied to space, but rather involve the image one holds of himself and of others and, most of all, the way of living and conceiving time.

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ASVe		Archivio di Stato di Venezia
	Arsenale	Provveditori e patroni all'Arsenale
	Bailo	Bailo in Constantinopoli
	CN	Collegio, Notatorio
	Comm.	Commemoriali
	Confini	Provveditori alla camera dei confini
	CXM	Consiglio di Dieci, Misti
	EP	Collegio, Esposizioni principi
	Grimani	Archivio privato Grimani ai Servi
	LST	Lettere e scritture turchesche
	Mercanzia	Cinque savi alla mercanzia
	PTM	Provveditori da Terra e da Mar
	SDC	Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli
	SM	Senato, Mar
BOA		İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
	MD	Mühimme Defteri

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The frontier is a zone that divides two states fighting against each other but, when the war finishes and peace arrives, the rulers of the two countries can agree to create a borderline to divide their lands. The aim of this book is to study the frontier and the border between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire from the 15th century, when Ottomans arrived in Greece and in the Balkans, to the 18th century, when the Most Serene Republic disappeared. It begins studying the words used to define these concepts and it proceeds with the idea of the frontier and the society of a frontier zone. Then, it describes how a borderline could be established between Venetian and Ottoman lands and how people lived in such a zone. The idea of the sea as both a frontier and a border zone is also investigated. It ends studying those who were accustomed to crossing the Ottoman-Venetian border and the marks used to recognise peoples and things belonging to each country.

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