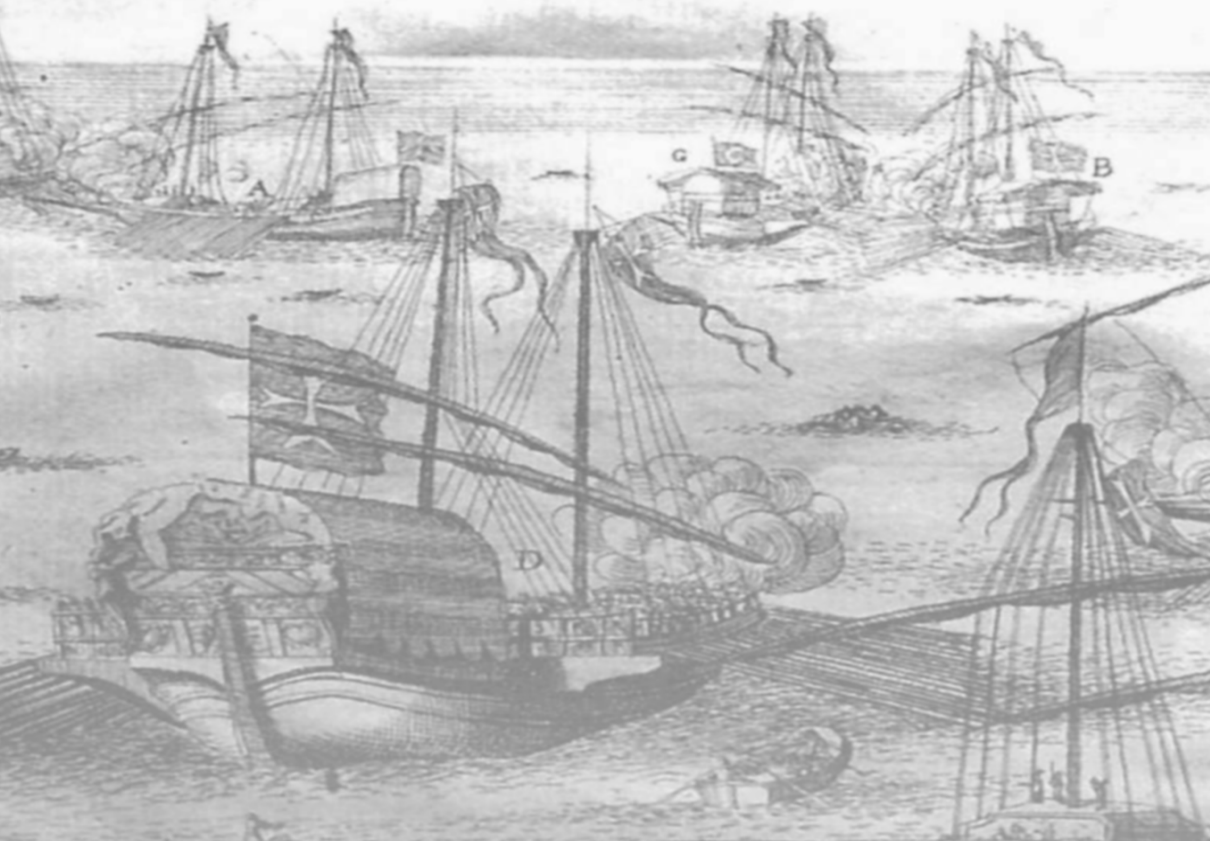


# SAGGI RICERCHE &





## THE “RELUCTANT” ADMIRAL: DAMAD HALİL PASHA AND THE OTTOMAN NAVY (1595-1598) \*

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**ABSTRACT:** *Halil Pasha, who held the position of the kapudan pasha of the Ottoman armada between 1595 and 1598, is perhaps one of the least known captains in the 16th century Mediterranean history. His career as the grand admiral has received very little attention from historians, and his name is almost never mentioned in the historiography of the sixteenth century Mediterranean. This is mostly due to the brevity of his office as grand admiral and the absence of any noteworthy achievement during his admiralty. However, the domestic circumstances and the international politics of the late sixteenth century in which Halil Pasha acted as grand admiral makes his career worthy of historical analysis. Halil Pasha was educated in the Ottoman palace and after having held the post of Agha of the Janissaries and several provincial governor-generalships, he became a vizier in the Ottoman imperial council. He was married to the daughter of Murad III and Safiye Sultan, thus, he became the son-in-law (damad) of the Ottoman dynasty, which paved the way for his appointment as grand admiral. This article aims to address the motives behind his appointment, the naval expeditions carried out during his admiralty, his patronage and network in the Ottoman political structure and his reputation in the Mediterranean and in the Ottoman government. I argue that his career in the Mediterranean was shaped by the interaction between Ottoman domestic politics and the specific requirements of Ottoman policy in the Mediterranean.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Halil Pasha, kapudan pasha, favouritism, Ottoman Armada, Ottoman dynasty.*

### IL “RILUTTANTE” AMMIRAGLIO: DAMAD HALİL PASHA E LA MARINA OTTOMANA (1595-1598)

**SOMMARIO:** *Halil Pasha, che fu kapudan pasha dell’armata ottomana tra il 1595 e il 1598, è forse uno degli ammiragli meno conosciuti nella storia mediterranea del XVI secolo. La sua carriera di grande ammiraglio ha ricevuto ben poca attenzione da parte degli storici, e il suo nome non è quasi mai citato nella storiografia del Mediterraneo cinquecentesco. Ciò è dovuto principalmente alla brevità del suo incarico di grande ammiraglio e all’assenza di notevoli successi durante il suo ammiragliato. Tuttavia, le circostanze interne e la politica internazionale della fine del XVI secolo in cui Halil Pasha operò come grande ammiraglio rendono la sua carriera degna di un’analisi storica. Halil Pasha fu educato nel palazzo ottomano e, dopo aver ottenuto la carica di Agha dei giannizzeri e diversi incarichi provinciali, divenne visir nel consiglio imperiale ottomano. Era sposato con la figlia di Murad III e Safiye Sultan, quindi divenne il genero (damad) della dinastia ottomana, che aprì la strada alla sua nomina a grande ammiraglio. Questo saggio si propone di affrontare i motivi alla base della sua nomina a kapudan pasha, le spedizioni navali effettuate durante il suo ammiragliato, il suo patrocinio e rete nella struttura politica ottomana e la sua reputazione nel Mediterraneo e nel governo ottomano. Ritengo che la sua carriera nel Mediterraneo sia stata condizionata dall’interazione tra la politica interna ottomana e le esigenze specifiche della politica ottomana nel Mediterraneo.*

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** *Halil Pasha, kapudan pasha, favoritismo, marina ottomana, dinastia ottomana.*

\* Abbreviations: Ags.E (Archivo General de Simancas, Estado); Asv, Sdc (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato Dispacci Costantinopoli); Boa (Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivleri), A.RSK.d (Bâb-ı Âsâfi Ruûs Kalemî Defterleri), A.NŞT.d (Bâb-ı Âsâfi Nişan ve Tahvil Kalemî Defterleri), EV.HMH.d (Evkaf Haremeyn Muhasebesi Defterleri; CSP Ven., vol. 9, (Horatio Brown [ed.], *Calendar of State Papers*, Venice, vol. IX, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, London, 1897). The title is inspired by Palmira Brummett’s *The Ottomans As a World Power: What We Don’t Know about Ottoman Sea Power*, «Oriente Moderno», 81 (2001), p. 3 and by Hiroyuki Agawa’s *The Reluctant Admiral: Yamamoto and the Imperial Navy*.

Halil Pasha (d. 1603), who held the post of *kapudan pasha* between 1595 and 1598, is perhaps one of the least-known grand admirals in the Ottoman Mediterranean history. Apart from a recent general analysis of his professional biography in the Ottoman Empire<sup>1</sup>, his career as the grand admiral of the Ottoman navy remains largely unstudied and neglected to this day. This is in fact not surprising given the fact that Halil Pasha lacked a distinguished and lengthy maritime career and the Ottoman naval power was far from its former level during his period of grand admiralty. Historiographical attention has rendered him so insignificant that Braudel, for instance, never mentions his name, although he provides a detailed account of Halil Pasha's one and only campaign in the Mediterranean in 1596<sup>2</sup>. Interestingly, collective biography books written on Ottoman *kapudan pashas* give imprecise information on Halil Pasha's appointment and dismissal by putting the main emphasis on the absence of any "noteworthy" achievements in his time<sup>3</sup>. Even recent studies on Ottoman admirals only mention him in relation to his replacement of and by a relatively more famous grand admiral, Cigalazade Sinan Pasha (Scipione Cicala)<sup>4</sup>. Despite the brevity of his office as grand admiral and the scarcity of his activities in the Mediterranean, Halil Pasha does not deserve to be relegated to oblivion in the historiography of the Ottoman Mediterranean. In fact, what makes his career as grand admiral worthy of historical analysis is its brevity and inactivity. The aim of this article is to provide a contextualized historical assessment of his short possession of the office of *kapudan pasha* in the broader framework of the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III, when certain structural changes were taking place in the configuration of power in terms of the reassertion of sultan's absolute authority and the increase in factionalism and favouritism among the Ottoman ruling elite. Besides the fact that Halil Pasha's rise in the Ottoman administration was linked to all these changes, I specifically argue that his career as the grand admiral

<sup>1</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Damad Halil Paşa (ö. 1603): 'Mutedil' Bir Osmanlı Paşasının Hayatı ve Kariyeri*, «Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi», 12:3 (2022), pp. 1638-1652.

<sup>2</sup> F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, University of California Press, London, 1995, vol. II, pp. 1230-1231.

<sup>3</sup> "Zamânında şâyeste-i tahrîr fütühât vücûd-pezir olmamışdır (In his time, there did not come into existence any conquest worthy of being recorded)". Ş. Mehmed Said, *Tuhfe-i Mustafâviyye fî Beyân-ı Kapûdânân-ı Devlet-i Aliyye*, ed. D. Adlığ, Efe Akademi, İstanbul, 2020, pp. 95-96; K. Mehmed Hafid Efendi, *Sefînetü'l-Vüzerâ*, ed. İ. Parmaksızoğlu, Şirketi Mürettibiye Basımevi, İstanbul, 1952, p. 24; M. İzzet Bey, *Harîta-i Kapûdânân-ı Deryâ*, ed. C. Sağlam, Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, İstanbul, 2021, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> C. Isom-Verhaaren, *The Sultan's Fleet: Seafarers of the Ottoman Empire*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2022, p. 150.

was the product of interaction between Ottoman domestic politics and specific requirements of Ottoman policy in the Mediterranean. In addition, I argue that the absence of “noteworthy” activities during his admiralty is not directly related to, in Braudelian terms, the disappearance of the Mediterranean from the historical scene, but to certain dynastic and patrimonial considerations that temporarily sedentarized the office of *kapudan pasha*, and to Halil Pasha’s reluctance to sail with the armada.

In order to have a further understanding of Halil Pasha and his relation with the Ottoman navy, I will first give a short overview of his career in the context of the characteristics of Ottoman politics in the late sixteenth century. Next, I will address the motives behind his appointment as grand admiral in its international and domestic context. Thirdly, I will deal with the naval expeditions carried out during his admiralty. In the fourth part, I will address the question of his patronage and network in the navy and the governing elite of the maritime provinces and districts. Lastly, I will provide an analysis of his reputation among his contemporaries, in the Ottoman Empire and abroad, and his rivalry with his nemesis Cigalazade Sinan Pasha.

### **The rise and demise of Damad Halil Pasha: An overview of his career**

Halil Pasha’s overall career encompasses most of Murad III’s reign (1574-1595) and the entire reign of Mehmed III (1595-1603). Besides being affected by every aspect of the economic, social, political and military problems of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Halil Pasha’s career was shaped in the context of the political configuration of power after the death of Sokullu Mehmed Pasha in 1579. During his long years of grand vizierate since the final years of Süleyman I and the entirety of the reign of Selim II, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha had monopolized the control of the Ottoman state and patronage networks for appointments in all over the Empire<sup>5</sup>. This had created a strong sense of crisis during the initial years of Sultan Murad III’s reign, against which the Ottoman court initiated a political-administrative program aimed at reinforcing royal power and centralizing the decision-making process in the hands of the sultan, his favourites

<sup>5</sup> G. Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I and His Immediate Predecessors*, unpublished PhD thesis, The Ohio State University, 2010, p. 61; U. Dakic, *The Sokollu Family Clan and The Politics of Vizierial Households in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, unpublished MA thesis, Central European University, 2012.

and his network<sup>6</sup>. As part of this centralist policy, Metin Kunt argues that there was a tendency to appoint individuals linked to the central government and close to the Palace as governor-generals or governors for provincial posts<sup>7</sup>. This tendency is further confirmed by Cornell Fleischer's assertion that identification with the Palace superseded any other factor in the promotion expectations of the Ottoman ruling class<sup>8</sup>. As Leslie Peirce has demonstrated in her study of early modern Ottoman *harem*, the consolidation of the power of the *Valide Sultan* (Queen Mother), the growing influence of the favourite concubine and other women of the dynasty and the palace officials, as well as the formation of factions around their figures were among the distinguishing features of the period<sup>9</sup>. Hence, Pal Fodor has argued that, as a result of the forms of government that Murad III imposed, the Palace or more specifically the Imperial *Harem* became the primary decision-making centre and weakened the Imperial Council by converting it into a sole executive body<sup>10</sup>. During his short reign, as noted by Baki Tezcan, Sultan Mehmed III continued with these "absolutist" policies of his father in alliance with his mother Safiye Sultan, the chief white eunuch Gazanfer Ağa, and their clients in the governing elite<sup>11</sup>.

Since its beginning, Halil Pasha's career seems to have progressed in line with this dynastic policy of strengthening the absolute authority of the sultan by creating his own bonds of loyalty and network<sup>12</sup>. Halil Pasha, as most of the Ottoman ruling elite, had made his entry into the service of the Ottoman dynasty through the children's levy, *devshirme*, at a time not specified, from among the Bosnian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. He entered the sultan's household as a page and served as *çuhadar* (master of clothes) and *silahdar* (sword-bearer) in Murad III's Privy Chamber (*Has Oda*) between 1580 and 1584. His connection with the closest circle of Murad III is revealed when he was appointed in 1584 as Agha of the Janissaries thanks to the recommendation of Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha (d.1589), the first official royal favourite and personal companion of Murad III, whom Halil Pasha must have known from his

<sup>6</sup> B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, pp. 55-57 and 97-100.

<sup>7</sup> M. Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> C. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1986.

<sup>9</sup> L.P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> P. Fodor, *Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizierial Telhis*, «Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae», 47:1/2 (1994), pp. 67-85.

<sup>11</sup> B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire* cit., pp. 103-104.

<sup>12</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Damad Halil Paşa* cit., p. 1638 and 1648.

years in the inner palace service<sup>13</sup>. After having served for four years, Halil Pasha was dismissed due to his incapacity to control a rebellion of the janissaries who were not satisfied with the monetary policy of the government. In 1588, he was elected as governor-general of Bosnia replacing Sokullu Ferhad Pasha<sup>14</sup>, a relative of the late grand vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and governor of Bosnia for more than 15 years, with a likely aim to impose sultan's centralist policies in this frontier province and eradicate Sokullu clan's remaining networks<sup>15</sup>. However, Halil Pasha barely saved his life by escaping hastily from the assault of the soldiers of the Bosnian frontier, who were disappointed with years of delay in the payment of their salaries. After the murder of his patron Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha in a military revolt against the new financial regulations in 1589, Halil Pasha remained for some time without any protector and did not receive any assignment until he was appointed as governor-general of the province of Karaman in 1591. The same year he was promoted to a more important province, Damascus, where he found the opportunity to demonstrate his worth as governor and received formal appreciation from sultan. In November 1592, he was appointed governor-general of Anatolia where he served only eight months until he was called to the capital in summer 1593 for further promotion. Halil Pasha was chosen among other candidates as the prospective husband of Fatma Sultan, daughter of Murad III and Safiye Sultan, which would enhance his prestige and authority as an imperial son-in-law (*damad*) and create a strong bond of loyalty with the whole dynastic family. Before the wedding ceremonies, he was immediately given the rank of vizier and placed in the Imperial Council, thus, receiving a career boost worthy of an Ottoman princess. His appointment to the post of *kapudan pasha* by Mehmed III, as will be analysed in detail, will come in line with these advancements in his career. During the rest of the reign of Mehmed III, he served as second vizier and deputy grand vizier, though disgraced two times due to his inability to suppress military revolts. He died in December 1603, as a dismissed and disgraced vizier-*damad*, shortly after the death of Mehmed III and the enthronement of Ahmed I<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Börekçi defines Halil Pasha as Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha's «one of own protégés from the privy chamber». G. Börekçi, *On the Power, Political Career and Patronage Networks of the Ottoman Royal Favourites (Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries)*, in M. Baramova, G. Boykov & I. Parvev (ed.), *Social Networking in South-Eastern Europe: 15th-19th Century*, LIT Verlag, Vienna, 2021, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> U. Dakic, *The Sokollu Family Clan* cit., pp. 58-59.

<sup>15</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Damad Halil Paşa* cit., p. 1642 and 1648.

<sup>16</sup> Ivi, pp. 1646-1648.

## Halil Pasha's appointment as grand admiral in its international and domestic context

During the last decade of the sixteenth century, the political and military context of the Mediterranean was conditioned by the simultaneous emergence of several international tensions with the potential to produce a renewed open conflict between the Spanish Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. The active intervention of Philip II in the French succession crisis since 1589 in favour of the Catholic League and against the Protestant candidate Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV) was interpreted by the Ottomans as a threat to their strategical interests in Europe and the Mediterranean<sup>17</sup>. Similarly, the end of the prolonged hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavids in 1590 was seen by the Spanish as an occurrence that could lead to a new Ottoman offensive in the Mediterranean, which was dormant for almost a decade<sup>18</sup>. Yet, the French and especially the English pressure on the Ottoman government to act as a counterweight against Philip II's intentions to consolidate his hegemonic power in Europe was leading the Ottomans to reconsider their Mediterranean policy<sup>19</sup>. This was further encouraged by the fact that the Ottoman-Spanish armistice agreements, which had been implemented with relative stability since the 1580s, had lost their validity in the 1590s<sup>20</sup>. Although the area of bellicose prominence became Central Europe with the breakout of the so-called "Long War of Hungary" in 1593, the Ottoman armada maintained an active Mediterranean policy being its objective for the most part the Italian domains of Philip II. The aspirations of Pope Clemente VIII, with explicit references to Pious V, to establish a Holy League among Christian powers by ensuring the participation of Venice and France, the former pursuing a policy of neutrality and the latter in alliance with the

<sup>17</sup> İ. Bostan, *Garp Ocaklarının Avrupa Ülkeleri ile Siyasi ve Ekonomik İlişkileri (1580-1624)*, «Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi», 4 (1994), pp. 59-86; F. Emecen, *16. Asır Sonlarında Batı Akdeniz'de Siyaset Sahnesi: Osmanlılar-Fransızlar-İspanyollar*, in *Kanunî'den Günümüze Türk Fransız-Münasebetleri*, Mostar Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012, pp. 75-93.

<sup>18</sup> P. Fodor, *Between Two Continental Wars: the Ottoman Naval Preparations in 1590-1592*, in P. Fodor (ed.), *In Quest of the Golden Apple, Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, The Isis Press, İstanbul, 2000, pp. 171-190.

<sup>19</sup> E. Türkçelik, *El Imperio Otomano y la política de alianzas: las relaciones franco-otomanas en el tránsito del siglo XVI al XVII*, «Hispania», 249 (2015), pp. 39-68.

<sup>20</sup> S. Skilliter, *The Hispano-Ottoman Armistice of 1581*, in C.E. Bosworth (ed.), *Iran and Islam: in memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1971, pp. 491-515; R. González Cuerva, *Mediterráneo en tregua: Las negociaciones de Ruggero Marliani con el Imperio Otomano (1590-1592)*, in M.R. García Hurtado (ed.), *El Mar en los Siglos Modernos*, Xunta de Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, 2009, vol. II, pp. 209-220.



sultan, were important factors that could produce serious consequences for the Ottomans in the Mediterranean<sup>21</sup>.

In this international context, the Mediterranean policy of the Ottoman Empire was entrusted to Cigalazade Sinan Pasha, born as Scipione Cicala to a Genoese aristocratic family based in Sicily, who was appointed to the position of admiral in 1591 after the death of Hasan the Venetian<sup>22</sup>. During this period, Cigalazade followed an aggressive policy in the Mediterranean threatening not only the Spanish coasts but also the Venetian domination of the Adriatic by constantly accusing the Venetians of helping the Austrian Habsburgs. During the expedition in 1594, Cigalazade’s attempt to enter the Adriatic with the Ottoman armada, a clear *casus belli* for Venice, brought the Doge to the edge of seeing viable an alliance with Spain and the Papacy to form a Holy League<sup>23</sup>. Although Cigalazade did not enter the Adriatic and instead realized a controversial attack to Reggio di Calabria in the Neapolitan coast, his anti-Venetian policy had caused a certain mistrust in Veneto-Ottoman relations and had drawn the reaction of the certain palace members, principally Safiye Sultan, and the Venetian convert Gazanfer Ağa, who did not want the relations with Venice to deteriorate<sup>24</sup>.

Halil Pasha’s appointment as grand admiral, which was already on the agenda since his marriage to Fatma Sultan, became more pronounced in this international context. As early as 1594, immediately after the wedding, Venetian ambassador Matteo Zane had written in his *relazione* that the sultan “will be asked and urged to bestow it [the admiralty] on [H]alil, his new son-in-law”<sup>25</sup>. Although these rumours were related to the policy of the Ottoman court to give important positions to the individuals associated with the dynasty, Halil Pasha was not immediately brought to the admiralty since the international and domestic circumstances were not yet ripe enough. Only after Cigalazade’s anti-Venetian policy reached an intolerable level among the

<sup>21</sup> C. Schneider, *Pope Clement VIII and Confessional Conflict: International Papal Politics and Diplomacy (1598-1605)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University, 2016; A. Borromeo, *Istruzioni generali e corrispondenza ordinaria dei nunzi: obiettivi prioritari e risultati concreti della politica spagnola di Clemente VIII*, in G. Lutz (ed.), *Das Papsttum, die Christenheit und die Staaten Europas. 1592-1605*, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1994, pp. 119-233.

<sup>22</sup> For Hasan the Venetian, see E.S. Gürkan, *His Bailo’s Kapudan: Conversion, Tangled Loyalties and Hasan Veneziano between Istanbul and Venice (1588-1591)*, «The Journal of Ottoman Studies», 48 (2016), pp. 277-319.

<sup>23</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Un noble italiano en la corte otomana: Cigalazade y el Mediterráneo (1591-1606)*, Albatros Ediciones, Valencia, 2019, pp. 59-72.

<sup>24</sup> Ivi, pp. 66-68.

<sup>25</sup> «Sarà Sua Maestà pregata e sollecitata a conferirla ad Alil bassà suo genero novello». *Relazione di Matteo Zane (1594)*, in E. Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, 3rd ser., vol. III, p. 427.

sultan's closest circle in late 1594 did Murad III begin to show certain discontent towards his gran admiral. The successive complaints about Cigalazade's attitude towards Venetian interests were combined with his unapproved ambition to take the Ottoman navy into the Adriatic and his alleged tolerance towards the local Christians in the Reggio di Calabria<sup>26</sup>. If one reads Selaniki's chronicle, a detailed account of the late sixteenth century Ottoman court, Cigalazade would still seem to have been in the grace of the sultan<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, the Venetian *dis-pacci* reveal the dynamics working against him that paved the way for Halil Pasha's involvement with the admiralty. According to the new bailo Marco Venier, Murad III, "becoming furious and suspicious" of the accusations against Cigalazade, had ordered Halil Pasha to investigate them and Gazanfer Ağa was reported to have said that Halil Pasha would conduct an inspection by taking over the admiralty<sup>28</sup>. Thus, in early January 1595, it was constantly being publicly expressed without doubt that Cigalazade would be dismissed and Halil Pasha would be appointed grand admiral<sup>29</sup>. Nevertheless, probably the sudden illness of the sultan prevented the officialization of such a delicate ministerial change at a time when the Hungarian War was still going on and the possibility of a retaliatory attack by the Spanish navy was still feared<sup>30</sup>.

Mehmed III's accession to the throne in late January 1595 after the death of his father provided Halil Pasha with new domestic political background favourable to his long-intended appointment to admiralty. Safiye Sultan, who already enjoyed great power especially during the last years of Murad III, now, as the mother of the new sultan, obtained much higher prestige and power with considerable influence over the decisions of her son, who had only recently arrived at Istanbul<sup>31</sup>. Just two days after his accession, Mehmed III appointed his brother-in-law

<sup>26</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 23 December 1594, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 376v. «ho inteso per cosa certa esser stato presentato al Re al chioscho un *arz* contra di lui nel qual tra le altre cose vien imputato che a Reggio non habbia voluto permettere che i soldati delle galee che si mostravano volentorosi et che potevano farlo sicuramente andassero a pigliar le genti».

<sup>27</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, ed. M. İpşirli, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Istanbul, 1989, vol. II, p. 418.

<sup>28</sup> «Che dalla bocca del proprio Capiaga havea saputo come il Capitaneato del mar sarebbe di Alil [Halil Pasha] con carico di *Teftis* che vuol dir sindacato contra il capitano». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 23 December 1594, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 371v; «il Re adiratosi et insospetitosi haveva dato l'*arz* in mano di Alil perche ne dovesse far inquisitione». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 23 December 1594, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 376v.

<sup>29</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 4 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 396r.

<sup>30</sup> «Had the death of the Sultan not taken place a week would not have passed before the dismissal of the Capudan Pasha [Cigalazade]». *Csp Ven*, vol. 9, n. 324, Marco Venier to the Senate, 21 January 1595.

<sup>31</sup> L.P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem* cit., p. 126.

Halil Pasha as grand admiral, which, along with other appointments, indicates a conscious policy to bestow ever more offices on the figures close to the dynasty<sup>32</sup>. In the appointment of Halil Pasha, admiral officially by 29<sup>th</sup> January 1595<sup>33</sup>, it was more than evident the patronage of Safiye Sultan, who should not have had any trouble in convincing the sultan to dismiss Cigalazade and instead promote a member of the family, his sister’s husband. Venetian sources make clear the great affection shown to Halil Pasha by Mehmed III and Safiye Sultan: when Halil Pasha presented a petition to the sultan to be given the revenues of the district of Galata, Mehmed III granted him these revenues for lifetime at the request of Safiye Sultan and Fatma Sultan<sup>34</sup>. A few months later, having received a petition that asked him to restore Cigalazade back to the admiralty, Mehmed III tore apart the petition and bestowed two robes of honour to Halil Pasha as a reconfirmation of his favour on him<sup>35</sup>.

Thus, in Halil Pasha’s career as *kapudan pasha*, dynastic politics and foreign policy interests converged, allowing us to analyse his admiralty from the perspective of domestic and international politics.

### Halil Pasha and the Ottoman armada

Although Halil Pasha’s appointment to the admiralty might seem incompatible with his previous professional background, it fits into the increasingly common Ottoman practice to choose a *kapudan pasha* from among the elite who were educated in the Palace instead of experienced sailors<sup>36</sup>. Nevertheless, besides the suspicions that he was the right person to have such a responsibility<sup>37</sup>, Halil Pasha himself

<sup>32</sup> In the first reunion with the Imperial Council, Sultan Mehmed III appointed his tutor Mehmed Pasha as vizier and gave him a seat in the *divan*. Shortly after, he promoted Ferhad Pasha, second vizier and ally of Safiye Sultan, to the grand vizierate. Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., pp. 437-438; F. Emecen, III. Mehmed, in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 2003, vol. 28, pp. 409-410.

<sup>33</sup> «Kapudanlık: vezir Halil Paşa hazretlerine girü vezâretle virülüb [admiralty is given to Halil Pasha back with vizierate]». BOA, A.NŞT.d 1141, 18 Cemâziyelevvel 1003 (29 January 1595), p. 62.

<sup>34</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 4 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 396r. The fact that Galata belonged to the official revenues of Halil Pasha can also be confirmed by the findings of an important study on Galata. K.İ. Bulunur, *Osmanlı Galatası (1453-1600)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2013, p. 223.

<sup>35</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 21 July 1595, Asv, Sdc, 41, n. 39.

<sup>36</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Meritocracy, Factionalism and Ottoman Grand Admirals in the context of Mediterranean Politics*, in R.G. Cuerva and A. Koller (ed.), *A Europe of Courts, A Europe of Factions. Political Groups at Early Modern Centres of Power (1550-1700)*, Brill, Leiden, 2017, pp. 88-108.

<sup>37</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 438.

was also worried that his little military experience, and even almost none in the sea, could produce disrespect for the position. A rare testimony of Halil Pasha's initial motivational talk to his staff in the arsenal indicates that he sought historical premises to legitimize his situation. Halil Pasha, recognizing that he accepted the post of admiral "despite having little practice and competence for that position", reminded the seamen in the arsenal of the career of Piyale Pasha (d. 1578), who had become admiral after having "left the palace at a younger age with no experience". In spite of his inexperience, Piyale Pasha had given "a very good account of himself and left behind a good name that everyone knew". Halil Pasha told the seamen that "he expected [to do] the same with their help and good advice"<sup>38</sup>. Halil Pasha's reference to the exemplariness of Piyale Pasha, a dynastic son-in-law like himself, shows that he wanted to be seen in relation to the figures that marked the Mediterranean politics despite their attachment to the palace.

Ironically, despite this pretentious but implicitly insecure commencement, Halil Pasha's admiralty was hampered by his condition of dynastic *damad* as well as his reluctance to set out with the armada. Since his appointment, the limits of Halil Pasha's relationship with the fleet were mainly drawn by his mother-in-law and wife. Such explanations referring to Safiye Sultan's and Fatma Sultan's interference appeared more frequently in the records. According to Venier, besides the fact that Halil Pasha was "not at all accustomed to sailing nor practical in maritime affairs", there was another factor that would mark his admiralty: "he has a wife, the sultan's sister, who will not voluntarily see him go away from her"<sup>39</sup>. Even some Spanish *avisos* were employing a dramatized tone: "the new Pasha [the admiral] being *hombre regalado*, his wife will not let him cross the Canal when it rains or it is windy, for fear that he will drown"<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, Leonardo Dona stated that he heard personally from Halil Pasha his reluctance to sail with the

<sup>38</sup> *De Constantinopla*, 20-21 February 1595, Ags.E, 1545, n. 81. «Que el nuevo general de la mar Halil Baxa havia hecho un largo razonamiento a todos los capitanes y comitres de las galeras en que despues de havelles dado cuenta de su eleccion, les dixo que no obstante la poca prattica y suficiencia que tiene para aquel cargo, lo havia aceptado, acordándose de Piali Baxa que con haver salido del serrallo para lo mismo, de menos edad, y sin ninguna experiencia, havia dado muy buena cuenta de si y dejado el nombre que todos sabian, que lo mismo esperaba él con su ayuda y buen consejo». English rendering of this passage is available in E. Türkçelik, *Meritocracy, Factionalism and Ottoman Grand Admirals* cit., pp. 103-104.

<sup>39</sup> «Non essendo egli punto assuefatto al navigare nè pratico delle cose maritimi ha la moglie, sorella del Re che no al volentieri lo vedrà andar discosto da lei». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 482v.

<sup>40</sup> «Que el nuevo baxa por ser hombre regalado, no le dexara su muger passar el Canal quando llovia, o, hazia viento, de temor que no se ahogasse». *De Constantinopla*, 16 March 1595, Ags.E, 1545, n. 84.

armada, “which neither he nor his wife likes”, and added that “if he [Halil Pasha] could replace a [person] dependent on him without losing his post [admiralty], he would gladly do so”<sup>41</sup>. Thus, there was a considerable gap between the first external impressions about Halil Pasha and his rhetoric identifying himself with such a great figure as Piyale Pasha.

Indeed, his reluctance would be proven by his limited participation in the expeditions of the Ottoman navy during his more than three years-long career as admiral. Although the sultan’s fleet continued its usual annual campaigns, Halil Pasha personally commanded only one of the three campaigns carried out during his admiralty. In the summer of 1595, the Ottoman navy was divided into two fleets; one for the Mediterranean and the other for the Black Sea, but Halil Pasha stayed in Istanbul and did not take any responsibility in any of these expeditions. While the fleet to the Black Sea was entrusted with 20 galleys to Şaban Pasha, governor-general of Algiers, the Mediterranean fleet was entrusted with 40 galleys to Arnavud Memi, governor-general of Tripoli [Trablusgarb]<sup>42</sup>. The documents in *mühimme defterleri*, registers of the Imperial Council, indicate that it was the sultan’s decision to appoint Arnavud Memi as the deputy (lieutenant) of Halil Pasha with respect to his “excellent command of the maritime frontiers and the circumstances in the sea”<sup>43</sup>. Although this decree indirectly points to Halil Pasha’s lack of competence and merit, in fact, it serves to disguise the unofficial reasons related to his condition as the dynasty’s *damad*. According to contemporary Spanish and Venetian reports, it was Safiye Sultan who did not want his son-in-law to leave Istanbul to ensure that he stayed with his wife in Istanbul. The fact that Halil Pasha’s and Fatma Sultan’s first child (thus, Safiye’s grandchild) was born in October 1595 indicates that Fatma Sultan’s pregnancy must have been known already before the naval campaign, which explains why Halil Pasha was officially excused from his obligations as grand admiral<sup>44</sup>. However, this situation created negligence in the defence of the Mediterranean producing an encouraging context for the Spanish captains, who were looking for an opportunity to retaliate against Cigalazade’s attack on Reggio di Calabria a year earlier. The galley

<sup>41</sup> «Crede egli quest’anno d’essere astretto ad uscire con l’armata, cosa che nè a lui nè alla moglie agrada, et quando potesse senza perdere il luogo substituire uno dipendente da sè, lo faria volontieri». *Relazione di Leonardo Dona (1595)*, in F. Seneca, *Il Doge Leonardo Donà: la sua vita e la sua preparazione politica prima del dogado*, Editrice Antenore, Padua, 1959, p. 293.

<sup>42</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., pp. 483 and 485.

<sup>43</sup> Ö. Bayramoğlu, *73 Numaralı Mühimme Defterinin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirmesi (277-433)*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Bitlis Eren Üniversitesi, 2018, p. 193.

<sup>44</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 12 October 1595, Asv, Sdc, 42, n. 14.

squadrons of Naples and Sicily, led by Don Pedro de Toledo and Don Pedro de Leyva, attacked in September 1595 to Patras, a major Ottoman port city in Greece<sup>45</sup>. Thus, the first year of Halil Pasha's admiralty brought a blow to the prestige of the sultan in the Mediterranean as well as to the Ottoman authority over its Greek subjects<sup>46</sup>.

The political and military conditions were somewhat different in 1596, when the international tensions peaked because of the simultaneous rise of conflicts in other parts of Europe that would affect Ottoman geopolitical interests in the Mediterranean. After the capture of the strategic fortress of Strigonia (Esztergom, in Hungary) by the Austrian Habsburgs in 1595, Mehmed III decided to personally lead the military campaign in Hungary with an aim to restore the sultanate's authority and prestige<sup>47</sup>. Since the outbreak of the Spanish-French War in 1595, Henry IV had been seeking Ottoman aid, and in 1596 asked the sultan to send a fleet to reduce the Spanish pressure on Marseille<sup>48</sup>. The capture of Clissa by the Uskoks in April 1596 also constituted a significant threat to the Ottoman authority in the Adriatic and the Balkans, exacerbated by the concerns that the Spanish Armada would attack Castelnuovo upon the request of the Papacy and the Emperor so as to divert the Ottoman pressure over Hungary<sup>49</sup>. In this context, it was pretty evident the necessity of the presence of a powerful navy to maintain the tension and the reputation of the sultan in the Mediterranean. For Halil Pasha, it would be impossible and inappropriate to stay in Istanbul at a time when the sultan himself went on an expedition. Thus, Halil Pasha set out with the fleet in June 1596 and arrived at Navarino (Pylos, Greece) at the end of September with almost ninety galleys<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Política de reputación y venganza en el Mediterráneo: el asalto español a Patras en 1595*, M.G. Rosaria Mele (ed.), *Mediterraneo e città. Discipline a confronto*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2019, pp. 115-123.

<sup>46</sup> Although the Spanish attacked the Muslim and Jewish houses in Patras, they did not give any damage to the Greek population. The letter of Don Pedro de Toledo to Philip II reads «en cuatro horas saqueamos las casas de los judios y turcos sin que las de los griegos recibiesen daño». Ags.E, 1158, Naples, 28 September 1595, n. 69.

<sup>47</sup> J. Schmidt, *The Egri Campaign of 1596: military history and the problem of sources*, in A. Tietze (ed.), *Habsburgisch-Osmanische Beziehungen*, VWGÖ, Vienna, 1985, pp. 125-44.

<sup>48</sup> N. Michalewicz, *Franco-Ottoman Diplomacy during the French Wars of Religion, 1559-1610*, unpublished PhD thesis, George Mason University, 2020, p. 276.

<sup>49</sup> E. Dursteler, *Habsburgs, Ottomans, and Venetians on the Frontiers of Dalmatia: The Capture of Clissa in 1596*, in S. Hanß and D. McEwan (ed.), *The Habsburg Mediterranean 1500-1800*, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna, 2021, pp. 61-77; E. Dursteler, *Straddling Empires: Revolt and Religion in Early Modern Dalmatia*, A. Fischer-Kattner and J. Ostwald (ed.), *The World of the Siege Representations of Early Modern Positional Warfare*, Brill, Leiden, 2019, pp. 129-155.

<sup>50</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 608; Count of Olivares to Philip II, Naples, 17 September 1596, Ags.E, 1094, n. 257.



Some sources mention Halil Pasha’s preoccupation when he was informed that the Spanish navy was gathered in Messina<sup>51</sup>. This situation must have discouraged him from launching an attack on the Italian coasts or from going to Marseille, even if it was a rhetorical promise. Halil Pasha, without advancing more, returned in the first days of November to Istanbul, thus realizing his first and last campaign as *kapudan pasha*<sup>52</sup>.

In 1597, the tension in the international politics and its reverberations in the Mediterranean had eased considerably. The sultan had won a decisive victory in Hungary, Henry IV had started to exert his authority over Marseille, and Clissa was retaken by the Ottomans<sup>53</sup>. Furthermore, the possibility of Philip II intervening in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic became impossible with the English attack on the port of Cadiz in July 1596, which diverted the Spanish maritime attention towards its own coasts<sup>54</sup>. In Istanbul, the reduction of the tension in the Mediterranean was reflected in the decreased volume of the maritime preparations in the arsenal. The Spanish *avisos* repeatedly reported that “no saldrá armada gruesa ni en forma”<sup>55</sup>. Thus, in the summer of 1597, the sultan sent a very small fleet composed of less than 30 galleys whose command was again entrusted to Arnavud Memi<sup>56</sup>. The testimony of the documents points at again Halil Pasha’s reluctance to sail, this time the justification being the small size of the navy: “Halil Baxa will not set out with them [the galleys] for not being a substantial armada”<sup>57</sup>. Although there is no documentary confirmation, Halil Pasha’s arbitrary exercise of his office could only be possible under the patrimonial protection of Safiye Sultan, whose authority in

<sup>51</sup> The Marques of Hierace to Philip II, Palermo, 18 August 1596, Ags.E, 1158, n. 98-99: «que la armada de Su Magestad se hallava en Mecina, lo cual ha puesto mucho terror y miedo a la dicha Armada». Braudel argues that it was the admiral of the Spanish navy, Gian Andrea Doria, who avoided encountering the Ottoman navy, but the same reservation is also valid for Halil Pasha. F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World* cit., p. 1230.

<sup>52</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., pp. 637-638.

<sup>53</sup> C. Desplat, «Henri IV et les Ottomans», in *Avènement d’Henri IV. Henri IV: le roi et la reconstruction du royaume*, Association Henri IV, Pau, 1990, pp. 395-422.

<sup>54</sup> E. Tenace, *A Strategy of Reaction: The Armadas of 1596 and 1597 and the Spanish Struggle for European Hegemony*, «The English Historical Review», 118/478 (2003), pp. 855-882.

<sup>55</sup> Íñigo de Mendoza to Philip II, Venice, 3 May 1597, Ags.E, 1676, n. 49.

<sup>56</sup> «Los ultimos avisos de Levante son de 10 de julio y a los 2 del mismo salió Memi Baxa con 30 galeras y quatro galeotas del Puerto de Constantinopla». Íñigo de Mendoza to Philip II, Venice, 9 August 1597, Ags.E, 1676, n. 61.

<sup>57</sup> «Que los baxeles que saldrán serán hasta veinte y cinco pero añaden que...no saldrá con ellos Helil Baxa por no ser armada de sustancia». Íñigo de Mendoza to Philip II, Venice, 24 May 1597, Ags.E, 1676, n. 51.

the administration had risen considerably after the victory of his son in Central Europe<sup>58</sup>.

It is clear that Halil Pasha's career as admiral has absolutely nothing to do with the image of Piyale Pasha, with whom he rhetorically identified, whose successful expeditions with the Ottoman armada had changed the history of the Mediterranean. However, it should be taken into account that Halil Pasha was promoted to admiralty to carry out a policy in the Mediterranean that was clearly defensive, never offensive, maintaining the political guidelines set at the beginning of Mehmed III's reign. Thus, Halil Pasha's unambitious and limited policy reversed the hazardous outcomes of Cigalazade's aggressive actions and became especially effective in preventing the escalation of tensions with Venice, whose neutrality was vital for Ottoman interests in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, in the long run, neither his defensive policy nor his practice of delegation of the *de facto* command of the armada was sustainable under the ever-changing international and domestic contexts. In March 1598, the Ottomans lost the important castle of Győr in Hungary, a defeat that had much repercussion in Istanbul as well the recent news of the imminent peace between the Spanish and French<sup>59</sup>. Under these conditions, Halil Pasha's adequacy for the the admiralty was seriously called into question by the new government formed in April 1598, which was decisive in breaking the influence that Safiye Sultan exerted on the decisions of the sultan<sup>60</sup>. The new grand vizier and new grand mufti convinced Mehmed III of the importance of sending a powerful navy and of electing a new admiral capable of maintaining the tension in the Mediterranean. On 18 April 1598, the sultan quickly dismissed Halil Pasha, his brother-in-law, and gave the post of grand admiralty back to Cigalazade Sinan Pasha<sup>61</sup>.

### **Between meritocracy and favouritism: Halil Pasha's patronage network**

Halil Pasha's three years long tenure in grand admiralty involved several changes in the offices related to the maritime organization of the Ottoman Empire. Despite his reluctance to sail with the Ottoman fleet, he was actively involved in the administration of the arsenal, in choosing his captains, and in the appointments of governors (*sancakbeyi*)

<sup>58</sup> L.P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem* cit., p. 126.

<sup>59</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Meritocracy, Factionalism and Ottoman Grand Admirals* cit., p. 101.

<sup>60</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Damad Halil Paşa* cit., p. 1646.

<sup>61</sup> «Kapudanlık: ma'a-vezâret ve eyâlet-i Cezâyir sâbıkan vezir-i a'zam olub Şam muhâfazası fermân olunan Cigalazâde vezir Sinan Paşa hazretlerine virilmek buyuruldu [the admiralty is ordered to be given to...Cigalazade Sinan Pasha with vizierate and the province of kapudan pasha]. BOA, A.RSK.d 1475, 12 Ramazan 1006 (18 April 1598), p. 8.



to the *sancaks* (districts) belonging to the province of *Cezâyir-i Bahr-i Sefîd*<sup>62</sup>. Halil Pasha’s dual function as grand admiral and vizier, as well as his status as the *damad* of the dynasty, conferred him important authority in securing appointments for the members of his own household and for his clients that would act in line with his policy. His network of clients and protégés can be traced to a certain extent in Venetian ambassadors’ *dispacci* and especially in Ottoman archival sources such as *ruûs defterleri* (registers of appointments), which provide some information about their professional background as well as the nature of their relationship with Halil Pasha.

Halil Pasha’s first appointments demonstrate his intentions to break the influence of the previous administration and secure for his own men the important positions that fell under his authority. According to bailo Venier, Halil Pasha, as soon as he took the office, appointed his *kapı kethüdası* (maggiordomo della sua porta) as the new *tersane ağası* (Agha of the Arsenal), thus, linking this important administrative post in the arsenal to one of his closest clients<sup>63</sup>. Since the sultan had granted Galata as part of Halil Pasha’s *kapudan pasha* domains, the administration of this district was directly subordinated to him<sup>64</sup>. Venier reported that Halil Pasha immediately replaced the *subaşı* (governor) of Galata, who was a renegade from Messina and a client of Cigalazade, with one of his own protégés, who was a renegade of Venetian origin<sup>65</sup>. In February, Halil Pasha made another change in the critical posts of the arsenal by appointing the *koyun emini*<sup>66</sup> İbrahim Çavuş as the new *Tersâne-i Âmire emini*<sup>67</sup> in place of Derviş Efendi, who had been occupying this position during Cigalazade’s admiralty<sup>68</sup>. Selaniki states that this change was realized by the intercession of the *enderûn*, which hints at the direct involvement of the Palace in Halil Pasha’s area of responsibility<sup>69</sup>. In April, the post of

<sup>62</sup> *Cezâyir-i Bahr-i Sefîd* was the name of the province that brought together various maritime districts and the Aegean islands under the administrative command of the *kapudan pasha*. İ. Bostan, *The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid*, in E. Zachariadou (ed.), *Kapudan Pasha, His Office and His Domain*, Crete University Press, Rethymnon, 2002, pp. 241-251.

<sup>63</sup> «Et Aga dell’Arsenale ha fatto il maggiordomo della sua porta che qui si chiama Capigilarchiaiası». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 483r.

<sup>64</sup> See the footnote 34.

<sup>65</sup> İvi. «egli [Halil Pasha] ha levato il carico di Subassi di Pera a un Messinese patrioto del Cigala [Cigalazade] et vi ha posto un venetiano nominato Saban».

<sup>66</sup> *Koyun emini* was the person in charge of the provision of sheeps for the palace and the state.

<sup>67</sup> High-level administrator in the Ottoman arsenal.

<sup>68</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 442.

<sup>69</sup> «Bâ-şefâ’at-ı şerife-i Enderûn». İvi.

*kethüdâlık-ı defter-i Cezâyir*, involving the financial matters of the *kapudan pasha* province, was granted to a certain Mehmed, who was a holder of a *zeamet*, as a result of Halil Pasha's petition to the sultan<sup>70</sup>. It can easily be observed that Halil Pasha lost no time in promoting his clientele in administrative and financial positions in cooperation with the Palace while ruling out the administration of Cigalazade, with certain implications for the recovery of relations with Venice.

In this sense, Halil Pasha seems to have found his most suitable ally in the person of Arnavud Memi, who was not on good terms with Cigalazade and was against his anti-Venetian policy. After several years as a North African corsair, Arnavud Memi was appointed in August 1591 as governor-general of Trablusgarb, which conferred him the title of Pasha, and was convinced to serve for sultan's fleet leaving aside the relative freedom of working on his own as a semi-independent corsair<sup>71</sup>. Although he participated in all maritime campaigns of Cigalazade and even became the *de facto* pilot of his fleet, Arnavud Memi's personal relationship with the grand admiral was tense since Cigalazade dismissed him from the governor-generalship of Trablusgarb<sup>72</sup>. On the other hand, Arnavud Memi, despite his corsair background, seems to have accommodated with his new status as sultan's captain and have become an important factor in restraining Cigalazade's anti-Venetian actions. According to bailo Matteo Zane, Arnavud Memi said him in a meeting that "while he was a corsair", he professed enmity against Venice, but "now that he was made one of sultan's captains", he would be respectful of the existing capitulations, "as long as the *kapudan pasha* would want to listen to him"<sup>73</sup>. During the rest of Cigalazade's admiralty, Arnavud Memi's resentment towards Cigalazade grew stronger for "having received many serious injuries from him" and for "having deprived him of *Bassa di Tripoli di Barbaria*"<sup>74</sup>. Thus, Arnavud Memi was fre-

<sup>70</sup> «Kethüdâlık-ı defter-i Cezâyir: vezîr kapudan paşa arzıyla züemadan Mehmed'e tevcih olundu [the kethüdâlık of the register of Cezâyir is given to Mehmed from *züema* by the petition of vizier *kapudan pasha*]. BOA, A.NŞT.d 1140, 28 Receb 1003 (8 April 1595), p. 77.

<sup>71</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 249.

<sup>72</sup> «È giunto qui di Tripoli di Barbaria Memi Bassa fatto *mansub*. Venetian ambassador uses the Ottoman term *ma'zûl* to describe his dismissal. Matteo Zane to the Senate, Constantinople, 13 June 1592, Asv, Sdc, 35, f. 335r.

<sup>73</sup> «Ha detto che mentre era corsaro... insidiava alle robe d'altri et li ministri di Vostra Serenita... ma hora che è fatto uno de i capitani del Re sarà osservatore da buona pace et mantener delli capitoli purché Capitano Bassa lo voglia ascoltare». Matteo Zane to the Senate, Constantinople, 20 June 1593, Asv, Sdc, 37, f. 316v.

<sup>74</sup> «Egli si dimostrò appasionatissimo contra il capitano per haver ricevuto da lui molte gravi ingiurie et sopra le altre quella gravissima di haverlo privato di Bassa di

quently approached by those who wanted Cigalazade’s removal from the admiralty due to his anti-Venetian actions in late 1594<sup>75</sup>. This background explains Arnavud Memi’s reappointment as governor-general of Trablusgarb in March 1595<sup>76</sup>, shortly after Halil Pasha’s promotion to the admiralty, and his privileged position as *de facto* commander of the navy between 1595 and 1598. During his admiralty, Halil Pasha maintained his protection over Arnavud Memi and even had him appointed to the governor-generalship of Trablusşam in September 1597 by making a personal petition to the sultan on behalf of him<sup>77</sup>.

The patterns of appointment to the maritime *sancaks* belonging to the province of *kapudan pasha* during Halil Pasha’s admiralty are mostly consistent with the general thesis propounded by Metin Kunt in terms of the frequent changes, shorter periods of tenure and regionalism of provincial offices in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries<sup>78</sup>. A scan of appointment registers between 1595 and 1598 reveals that there had been frequent incidences of dismissals and reappointments in several maritime *sancaks*. In April 1595, Halil Pasha changed the *sancakbeyis* of Rhodes, Mezistre (Mystras, Greece) and Mytilene, who had been appointed by the previous administration less than a year ago. These appointments were made with the method of *ber vech-i mübâdele*, which means that the governors of these *sancaks* exchanged their positions with each other<sup>79</sup>. Among these *sancaks*, the administration of Mezistre was subjected to the most frequent changes in Halil Pasha’s time. In May 1595, the *sancakbeyi* of Mezistre was transferred to the *sancak* of Eğriboz (Euboea, Greece), and Mezistre was given to the Ağa of the *azefs* of Rhodes. In January 1596, the *sancakbeyi* of Silistre (Silistra, Bulgaria), who was previously a

Tripoli di Barbaria». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 23 December 1594, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 371r.

<sup>75</sup> For example, the deputy grand vizier, Ferhad Pasha, in order to denigrate Cigalazade before the Sultan, asked Arnavud Memi to gather evidences to prove Cigalazade’s damages against the Venetians. Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 19 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 448r.

<sup>76</sup> «Mirmîrân-ı Trablusgarb: sâbikan Trablusgarb Beğlerbeğisi Memi Paşa’ya virilmek buyuruldu [the governor-generalship of Trablusgarb is given to Memi Pasha, who was previously governor-general of Trablusgarb]». BOA, A.NŞT.d 1140, 11 Receb 1003 (22 March 1595), p. 73.

<sup>77</sup> «Mirmîrân-ı Trablusşam: kapudan vezîr Halil Paşa hazretlerinin tezkiresi mücebince sâbikan Trablusşam Beğlerbeğisi olan Memi Paşa’ya tevcih olunmak buyuruldu [the governor-generalship of Trablusşam is given to Memi Pasha in accordance with the *tezkire* of vizier admiral Halil Pasha]». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, Safer 1006, September 1597, p. 256.

<sup>78</sup> M. Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants* cit., pp. 67-76.

<sup>79</sup> The governor of Rhodes was shifted to the *sancak* of Mezistre; the governor of Mezistre to the *sancak* of Mytilene, and the governor of Mytilene to the *sancak* of Rhodes. BOA, A.NŞT.d 1140, 28 Receb 1003 (8 April 1595), p. 77.

*çavuşbaşı* at *dergâh-ı âlî* (Sublime Porte), was appointed to the *sancak* of Mezistre but later Mezistre was given back to the son of its previous governor<sup>80</sup>. A few months later, in May 1596, Halil Pasha changed again the *sancakbeyi* of Mezistre by replacing him with one of the previous governors of Nakşa (Naxos)<sup>81</sup>. Nevertheless, there were also maritime *sancaks* with extraordinarily stable administration during Halil Pasha's admiralty. The most notable was the *sancak* of İnebahtı (Lepanto), opposite Patras. The registers show that Budak Beğ, who had previously held the *sancak* of Mezistre, was the *sancakbeyi* of İnebahtı in 1595 and joined Halil Pasha's naval expedition in 1596 with this status. Budak Beğ, thanks to his services in this expedition, was given in January 1597 an important increase in his income and was conceded in February 1597 the *sancak* of İnebahtı for life<sup>82</sup>.

Halil Pasha's personal intervention in the appointments through his own petitions is primarily observed in 1596 on the eve of the first and only campaign he participated in as admiral. Some of these appointments clearly aimed at strengthening the maritime defence in the Aegean. In April and June 1596, Halil Pasha petitioned the sultan to appoint two *hassa kapudanı* (captains in charge of galleys belonging to the sultan) as *sancakbeyi* to the important maritime districts of Kocaeli and Sakız (Chios, Greece). The *sancakbeyi* of Kocaeli, Mehmed Beğ, who probably ruled this district in the previous administration, was dismissed and replaced by a certain *hassa kapudanı* Ahmed, a veteran marine that owned a perfectly equipped galley. Another *hassa kapudanı* called Memi<sup>83</sup> was given the government of Sakız in place of Musa Beğ, who had governed this district several times in 1594<sup>84</sup>. The *sancak* of Selanik (Salonica, Greece) was given on April 19, 1596, upon the request of Halil Pasha, to a certain Mustafa Beğ, the ex-governor of the *sancak* of Biga, so that he protected the surroundings of Selanik with his galley<sup>85</sup>. Nevertheless, in less than a month, Halil Pasha appointed the same Mustafa Beğ back to the *sancak* of Biga, and

<sup>80</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 556.

<sup>81</sup> «Livâ-i Mezistre: kapudan Halil Paşa arzıyla sâbıkan Nakşa beği olan Ali Beğ'e buyuruldu [the district of Mezistre is conceded to Ali Beğ, previous beğ of Nakşa, with the petition of the admiral Halil Pasha]». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, Şevval 1004 (May 1596), p. 111.

<sup>82</sup> «Livâ-i İnebahtı...Budak Beğ'e girü kayd-ı hayatla buyuruldu [The district of Lepanto...is given to Budak Beğ back for lifetime]». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, 26 Cemâziyelâhir 1005 (14 February 1597), p. 202.

<sup>83</sup> It is uncertain whether this Memi was Arnavud Memi.

<sup>84</sup> BOA, A.NŞT.d 1140, 15 Şaban 1004 (9 April 1596), p. 140; BOA, A.NŞT.d 1140, 9 Şevval 1004 (6 June 1596), p. 150.

<sup>85</sup> «Vezîr Halil Paşa arzıyla Biga sancağından ma'zûl Mustafa Beğ kadırgasıyla Selanik etraflarını muhâfaza itmek üzere...». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, 20 Şaban 1004 (19 April 1596), p. 79.

assigned the *sancak* of Selanik to a certain Ahmed Beğ<sup>86</sup>. Such indecisiveness in the appointments seems to occur between distant regions as well. For instance, Halil Pasha dismissed in April 1596 the governor of Naxos, Ali Beğ, and appointed him to the important Eastern Mediterranean *sancak* of Dimyat (Damietta) in Egypt. However, one month later, Halil Pasha revoked this decision and maintained Ali Beğ in the Aegean as the governor of Mezistre<sup>87</sup>.

Halil Pasha also brought palace-related individuals to some maritime posts and was also influential in obtaining for his protégés significant positions in the Palace. When the governor of Naxos was appointed to Damietta, Naxos was given to a certain Hızır Çavuş, who belonged to the *çavuş* corps of the Sublime Porte (*dergâh-ı âli çavuşlarından*)<sup>88</sup>. In May 1596, Halil Pasha appointed a certain İbrahim Ağa as the new *tersane ağası*<sup>89</sup>, who was defined as a *müteferrika* in the Palace (*dergâh-ı âli müteferrikalarından*)<sup>90</sup>. In October 1597, the *tersane emini*, who had been appointed by the intervention of the *enderun* in 1595, was dismissed and replaced by a former *kapuçular kâtibi* (secretary of the palace guards), again probably by the intervention of the court<sup>91</sup>.

The registers also indicate that Halil Pasha wrote petitions to place some of his men in the *müteferrika* and *çavuş* corps of the Sublime Porte. In March 1596, Halil Pasha had his own *kapuçubaşı* Atâullah, who was simultaneously a *çavuş* of the Sublime Porte, elevated to the position of *müteferrika* in the Palace<sup>92</sup>. In June 1596, Halil Pasha requested from the sultan that his dismissed *tersane ağası*, defined as one of his oldest veterans, be included in the corps of *dergâh-ı âli müteferrikaları*, on the basis of his outstanding efforts in gathering provisions for sultan's fleet<sup>93</sup>. In March 1596, Halil Pasha requested for

<sup>86</sup> «Livâ-i Biga: vezîr kapudan Halil Paşa arzıyla forsa gemisi olan Selanik beği Mustafa Beğ'e virilmek buyuruldu». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, 13 Ramazan 1004 (11 May 1596), p. 96.

<sup>87</sup> «Livâ-i Dimyât: vezîr kapudan Halil Paşa arzıyla Nakşa beği Ali Beğ'e virilmek buyuruldu». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, gurre-i Ramazan 1004 (29 April 1596), p. 86; «livâ-i Mezistre: kapudan Halil Paşa arzıyla sâbikan Nakşa beği olan Ali Beğ'e buyuruldu». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, gurre-i Şevval 1004 (29 May 1596), p. 111.

<sup>88</sup> «Livâ-i Nakşa: dergâh-ı âli çavuşlarından Hızır Çavuş'a virilmek buyuruldu». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, gurre-i Ramazan 1004 (29 April 1596), p. 86.

<sup>89</sup> *Tersane Ağası* is an important administrator rank in the arsenal.

<sup>90</sup> «Ağalık-ı Tersâne-i Âmire dergâh-ı âli müteferrikalarından İbrahim Ağa'ya virilüb...». BOA, A.NŞT.d 1140, 11 Ramazan 1004 (9 May 1596), p. 145.

<sup>91</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 709.

<sup>92</sup> «Müteferrikalık-ı dergâh-ı âli: kapudan vezîr Halil Paşa tezkire gönderüb...kapuçubaşısı olan dergâh-ı âli çavuşlarından Atâullah'a virilmek ricâsın arz itmeğin kanun üzere virilsün deyu buyuruldu». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, Receb 1004 (March 1596), p. 61.

<sup>93</sup> «Vezîr kapudan Halil Paşa hazretleri mektüb gönderüb kendünün kadim emekdarlarından olub tersâne ağası olan (?) için yarar olub donanma-i hümayûn mühimmâtü tedâriğinde hayli hizmet etmişdür deyu dergâh-ı âli müteferrikalarına ilhâk olunmasını rica itmeğin». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, 12 Şevval 1004 (9 June 1596), p. 123.

Abdi, a zeamet-holder and one of his senior men, a post in *dergâh-ı âlî çavuşluğu* by sending a *tezkire* praising his worth<sup>94</sup>. In February 1597, he sent another *tezkire* on behalf of a certain zeamet-holder called Osman requesting his inclusion into the palace *çavuş* corps for his services in the Ottoman navy during the previous years' naval campaign<sup>95</sup>. Some records even indicate that Halil Pasha's close relatives were already enrolled in the *çavuş* corps. Halil Pasha's nephew Mustafa was a *dergâh-ı âlî çavuşu* and was promoted to an unspecified *sancak* in 1598. After this promotion, the vacant *çavuş* position was maintained within the family and was given to one of his relatives, Mehmed, who himself was already a zeamet-holder<sup>96</sup>.

These pieces of evidence demonstrate that Halil Pasha was an important part of the patronage network and clientage, which he used effectively during his time as grand admiral. Halil Pasha, as a *damad* with strong alliance with the dynasty, not only allowed the Palace to intervene in appointments in his own sphere of influence, but also placed his own *kapu halkı* and even his blood relatives in important positions of the Palace, with a certain tendency to nepotistic practices. An important aspect of his office is that the *sancakbeyi* appointments in the *kapudan pasha* province reflect the general characteristic instability of the provincial offices of the period. However, although the *sancakbeyi* appointments and dismissals were frequent and the duration of office grew shorter, the *sancakbeyis* were generally chosen among the governors of the same province, who were familiar with the particular problems of their region, thus, showing the importance given to experience and merit. In fact, long terms of office, like that of Budak Beğ, could also be seen, but these were exceptions effected especially in strategically important *sancaks* such as İnebahtı. In this sense, Arnavud Memi's instability in the provincial posts, but ironically, his stable position in the command of the navy, is actually illustrative of the tension between meritocracy and the prevailing political facts and trends of the period.

<sup>94</sup> «Kapudan Halil Paşa tezkire gönderüb kendü emekdar adamlarından olub züemadan olan Abdi için yararadır deyu dergâh-ı âlî çavuşluğu rica itmeğın». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, Receb 1004 (March 1596), p. 62.

<sup>95</sup> «Çavuşluk-ı dergâh-ı âlî: kapudan Halil Paşa tezkiresiyle züemadan Osman'a donanma-i hümayûnda hizmetde bulunmağın...». BOA, A.RSK.d 1474, Cemâziyelâhir 1005 (February 1597), p. 80.

<sup>96</sup> «Çavuşluk-ı dergâh-ı âlî: vezîr Halil Paşa'nın karındaşı oğlu olub dergâh-ı âlî çavuşlarından sancağa çıkan Mustafa Çavuş'un çavuşluğu akrabâsından zaim Mehmed'e virülsün deyu...». BOA, EV.HMH.d 39, Zilkade 1006 (July 1598), p. 13b.



## Halil Pasha’s international and domestic image and his rivalries

Several contemporary sources allow us to figure out Halil Pasha’s international and domestic image. Venetian ambassadors’ portrayal of Halil Pasha in their *relazioni* and *dispacci*, the Spanish ministers’ impressions about Halil Pasha’s use of the Ottoman navy and the attitude of the contemporary Ottoman historians towards Halil Pasha’s grand admiralty provide essential information about his personal, political and professional profile. In these sources, Halil Pasha’s character, his wealth, his relationship with the dynasty, his rivalry with other viziers, and his image as grand admiral stand out as the most salient topics.

Many contemporaries coincide with regarding Halil Pasha as a “calm” and “temperate” person. The Venetian ambassadors Venier and Cappello, who met Halil Pasha personally and witnessed the whole three years of his admiralty, defined his character with expressions such as “di natura quieta et pacifica” or “natura troppo piacevole”<sup>97</sup>. The Ottoman historian Mehmed b. Mehmed’s posthumous description of Halil Pasha as a “vizier of moderate manners without any harm or damage to anyone” demonstrates that he was perceived in similar terms in Ottoman elite culture<sup>98</sup>. Besides, Halil Pasha was frequently portrayed as a “poor” statesman (*egli è molto povero*)<sup>99</sup>, which might explain the fact that the dynasty intended to increase his prestige and image. Before the marriage, the sultan had transferred vizier Hızır Pasha, a member of the Imperial Council, from Istanbul to Bagdad and allocated his palace for Halil Pasha so that he used it as the groom’s house when he married Fatma Sultan<sup>100</sup>. In fact, in contemporary eyes, the support of the dynasty became the defining characteristic of Halil Pasha’s career. In Leonardo Dona’s words, “by virtue of this marriage, he is what he is” and “he keeps the admiralty of the sea in his person by virtue of the favours of the sultanas, his mother-in-law and wife”<sup>101</sup>. The support of the dynasty not only allowed Halil Pasha to perform his admiralty without navigation but also enabled him to cover up some of his failures. For example, Halil Pasha, on his return from his first and only expedition in 1596, had lost almost 15 galleys due to a

<sup>97</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 482v; Girolamo Cappello to the Senate, Constantinople, 1 May 1598, Asv, Sdc, 47, n. 14.

<sup>98</sup> A. Sağırılı, *Mehmed b. Mehmed Er-Rumî (Edirneli)’nin Nuhbetü’l-tevârih ve’l-ahbâr’i ile Târîh-i Âli Osmân’ının Metni ve Tahlilleri*, unpublished PhD thesis, Istanbul University, 2000, p. 65.

<sup>99</sup> «È povero e indebitato assai, ma nel grado che si ritrova anderà sempre avanzandosi». *Relazione di Matteo Zane (1594)* cit., p. 433; Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 483r.

<sup>100</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Damad Halil Paşa* cit., p. 1644.

<sup>101</sup> «In virtù di questo matrimonio, egli è quello che egli è» and «sostenta nella sua persona per forza delli favori delle Sultane suocera et moglie il capitaneato del mare». *Relazione di Leonardo Dona (1595)* cit., p. 293.

strong storm near Istanbul<sup>102</sup>. Despite this disaster, Safiye Sultan, who had “virtual executive power” in Istanbul during Mehmed III’s campaign in Hungary<sup>103</sup>, had given orders to organize a pompous welcoming for his son-in-law’s entry to the city with the sultan’s navy. The English merchant John Sanderson, who was in Istanbul at that time, after giving the details of Halil Pasha’s shipwreck, provides an account of his arrival at Istanbul: “His entrance...in the best pompe he could. The Great Sultana, his wife’s mother, caused the Bustangie Bassi to welcome him with five peces ordenance dischargdged frome the Seraglio”<sup>104</sup>. Nevertheless, as Cappello indicates, the loss of these galleys continued to be remembered years after as part of Halil Pasha’s negative image as admiral<sup>105</sup>.

The Ottoman court was a site of competition for power between viziers, and Halil Pasha was certainly not far from such rivalries. Halil Pasha’s first serious rival appears to be Hızır Pasha, who was a probable candidate in becoming son-in-law of Sultan Murad III. Hızır Pasha had become vizier in 1591 and was awarded a seat in the Imperial Council after his successful handling of the crisis between the Polish King and the sultan in favour of the Ottomans<sup>106</sup>. Since then, he was held in good esteem by Murad III, was favoured by Safiye Sultan, and was seen as a prospective husband of Fatma Sultan<sup>107</sup>. However, although Hızır Pasha had held expectations for quite a while to become sultan’s son-in-law, the dynasty preferred Halil Pasha in 1593. Interestingly, Matteo Zane stated that the reason why Halil Pasha prevailed in this rivalry was Hızır Pasha’s weak physical appearance<sup>108</sup>, which was further confirmed by Leonardo Dona’s comments: “he [Halil Pasha] is a man of good physical disposition, which in his marriage had him preferred to others of greater condition”<sup>109</sup>. Halil Pasha’s status as *damad* placed him in another rivalry, though a tacit one, with Ibrahim Pasha, who was also

<sup>102</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 637.

<sup>103</sup> L.P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem* cit., p. 240.

<sup>104</sup> J. Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602*, (ed.) W. Foster, Hakluyt Society, London, 1931, p. 162.

<sup>105</sup> Cappello implied that an important reason for the deficiencies in the Ottoman navy was the loss of 15 galleys shipwrecked during Halil Pasha’s admiralty. *Relazione di Girolamo Cappello (1600)*, in M.P. Pedani (ed.), *Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al senato, Vol. 14: Costantinopoli, Relazioni inedite (1512-1789)*, Bottega d’Erasmus, Padua, 1996, p. 430.

<sup>106</sup> E. Türkçelik, *Damad Halil Paşa* cit., p. 1643.

<sup>107</sup> «È tenuto dal Re in bon concetto e ha il favore della sultana che mariterebbe seco volentieri una delle due sue figliole». Matteo Zane to the Senate, Constantinople, 18 April 1592, *Asv, Sdc*, 35, f. 160r.

<sup>108</sup> «Ed è stato gran pezzo in concetto di divenir genero del re; ma perchè è di debole presenza, e la disposizione della persona appresso i turchi è parte molto riguardevole, ha prevalso Alil bassâ». *Relazione di Matteo Zane (1594)* cit., pp. 434-435.

<sup>109</sup> «È huomo di bella disposizione di corpo, che nel matrimonio suo lo fece antiporre ad altra persona di conditione maggiore». *Relazione di Leonardo Dona (1595)* cit., p. 293.



a son-in-law of Murad III and Safiye Sultan. Ibrahim was married in 1586 to Ayşe Sultan, Fatma Sultan's elder sister, and like Halil Pasha, he was appointed as grand admiral one year after his marriage<sup>110</sup>. Although Ibrahim Pasha served three times as grand vizier to Mehmed III, he could not win the affection of Safiye Sultan, who, according to Leonardo Dona, “does not seem to like him [Ibrahim Pasha] very much”<sup>111</sup>. Cappello further commented contrasting both viziers, that Halil Pasha was “greatly loved by the Queen [Safiye Sultan]”, whereas Ibrahim Pasha was “not esteemed by her mother-in-law”<sup>112</sup>.

Halil Pasha's greatest rival was, naturally, Cigalazade Sinan Pasha, from whom he took over the admiralty but to whom he had to give back three years after. The mutual antipathy and intense rivalry that existed between them was so elevated that their relation was resembled by the contemporaries to that of “a cat and a dog”<sup>113</sup>. Indeed, ever since his appointment, Halil Pasha had raised difficulties with Cigalazade on many occasions. In the takeover of the admiralty, Halil Pasha refused to take charge of the arsenal without the custody of the *defterdars* (treasurers of the sultan) in order not to be “blamed for having robbed something that could be missing”<sup>114</sup>. According to Halil Pasha, although the arsenal was well equipped when Cigalazade succeeded Hasan the Venetian, it was now in a rather neglected and deficient state “for which Cigalazade will have to account, perhaps to his great detriment”<sup>115</sup>. Such complaints resulted in a double disgrace for Cigalazade when the sultan dismissed him in late March from the vizierate and appointed him governor of the province of *Cezayir-i Garb* (Algiers), a clear act of downgrading and banishment from the court<sup>116</sup>. This was the greatest blow Halil Pasha could have inflicted on his rival because it also meant that Cigalazade would have been subjected to the obedience of Halil Pasha and to his arbitrary discretion to appoint him elsewhere<sup>117</sup>. In May 1595, the sultan allowed Cigalazade to enter Istanbul and restored his status as vizier of the

<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, the Ottoman chronicler Hasan Beyzade stated that Ibrahim Pasha was dismissed because his condition as *damad* prevented him from sailing with the armada. E. Türkçelik, *Meritocracy, Factionalism and Ottoman Grand Admirals* cit., p. 105.

<sup>111</sup> «Che per rispetto della figlia lo sostiene assai, se ben non pare che lo ami molto». *Relazione di Leonardo Dona (1595)* cit., p. 292.

<sup>112</sup> «Tiene questo la seconda sorella del re et è grandemente amato dalla regina» and «[Ibrahim] è manco stimato dalla suocera». *Relazione di Girolamo Cappello (1600)* cit., p. 405.

<sup>113</sup> «Et perciò stanno tra di essi come il cane et la gatta». *Relazione di Leonardo Dona (1595)* cit., p. 293.

<sup>114</sup> «Non ha voluto Alil ricever alcuna cosa nell'Arsenal... se...no sono stati presenti i Defterdari non volendo esser incolpato di haver robbato cosa che manchi». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 499r.

<sup>115</sup> «Di che doverà render conto il Cigalla forse con suo gran danno». Ivi.

<sup>116</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 462.

<sup>117</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 5 April 1595, Asv, Sdc, 41, n. 9.

Imperial Council, however, he placed him in a lower rank under Damad Halil Pasha. Although Selaniki relates that Cigalazade recognized Halil Pasha's superior rank with a submissive attitude<sup>118</sup>, contemporary reports indicate that he was very disappointed with the royal decision and left the council with great discontent<sup>119</sup>. Halil Pasha even exploited Cigalazade's disgrace, pushing him forward as a scapegoat when the Spanish pillaged Patras by arguing that the Spanish assault had been triggered by Cigalazade's previous attack on the Calabrian coast a year earlier<sup>120</sup>. Laying the blame on a disgraced Cigalazade was the easiest way to disguise the problems, which were in a way related to his reluctance to sail with the Armada.

Nevertheless, it proved inevitable that Halil Pasha's domestic image as grand admiral was evaluated either positively or negatively in comparison to Cigalazade's admiralty. Venier states that Halil Pasha's appointment was universally applauded by the maritime personnel in the arsenal, who had been oppressed and mistreated during Cigalazade's admiralty<sup>121</sup>. Cigalazade was born a "thief" and a "corsair" and had ambitions to enrich himself by plunder and booty whereas Halil Pasha would not have pursued such policy<sup>122</sup>. This was because Halil Pasha's household and entourage were composed of persons of good quality and were, therefore, much better than the "rapacious" and "shameless thieves" that surrounded Cigalazade<sup>123</sup>. Even so, there were different opinions that raised objections to the appointment of Halil Pasha on the grounds of his inadequacy for the position and the erroneousness of dismissing a famous admiral such as Cigalazade<sup>124</sup>. The historian Selaniki went further and even added an ethnic dimension to his criticism. While criticizing Cigalazade's unjust appointment to Algiers, Selaniki wrote the following words: "Albanians, Bosnians and others who were educated [in the sultan's palace] have turned out to be of poor quality", but "he [Cigalazade] stands out among his peers by his high virtues"<sup>125</sup>. This was not only an

<sup>118</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., pp. 477-478.

<sup>119</sup> G. Benzoni, *Scipione Cicala (Cigala-zade Yusuf Sinan)*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Rome, 1981, vol. XXV, pp. 320-340.

<sup>120</sup> Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 14 October 1595, Asv, Sdc, 42, n. 15.

<sup>121</sup> «Con universal applauso particolarmente delli huomini maritimi et i tiraneggiati et mal trattati... dal Cigalla». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 31 January 1595, Asv, Sdc, 40, f. 481r.

<sup>122</sup> «Il Cigala è nato ladro, et corsaro, et voleva andar a farsi rico di molta preda, ma il Capitano che è stato in luogo suo non procederà di questa maniera». Marco Venier to the Senate, Constantinople, 5 March 1595, Asv, Sdc, 41, n. 1.

<sup>123</sup> «His court is composed of excellent men, not rapacious like those shameless thieves who surrounded Cicala». *Csp Ven*, vol. 9, n. 324, Marco Venier to the Senate, 31 January 1595.

<sup>124</sup> Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 438.

<sup>125</sup> Ivi, pp. 462-463.

indirect praise to Cigalazade’s Italian origins but also an indirect criticism towards Halil Pasha through his Bosnian provenience.

In fact, Halil Pasha’s Mediterranean-wide image was also gradually becoming an object of comparison with Cigalazade’s career. The remarks of Íñigo de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in Venice, are illustrative as to how the Mediterranean powers perceived the difference between these two admirals. In 1597, Mendoza, after having informed Philip II that it was not known who would be the head of the Ottoman armada in the following summer, made the following commentary: “if [the Ottoman armada] sets off under the order of Cigala [Cigalazade], there will be much to fear and if Halil Baxa [Halil Pasha] sets out with [the armada], the danger will be much less”<sup>126</sup>. In another letter, Mendoza regarded Halil Pasha’s admiralty as a strong factor of certain relief: “They write *as a good news* that Halil Baxa is confirmed as the general of the navy, being as he is a man of no substance”<sup>127</sup>.

This international image did not take time to be reflected in Ottoman domestic politics when the political and military conditions started to change in 1598. The Ottoman government began to see Halil Pasha’s admiralty as a factor diffusing an image of weakness in the Mediterranean politics. Whereas the very name of Cigalazade, “*capitano valoroso*”, was “enough to terrify everyone”, Halil Pasha was “too pleasant in nature, nor he made himself fear”<sup>128</sup>.

In the end, Halil Pasha’s positive features, which were once idealized and instrumentalized, were regarded as the cause of debility and, in fact, undermined his admiralty.

## Conclusion

Halil Pasha’s overall career has received little attention, and even less attention his career as *kapudan pasha*. His admiralty was very brief, inconclusive, and left very little documentation. Yet, the existing historical material has proved that although his possession of the

<sup>126</sup> «No se sabe quien será cabeça desta Armada que si saliere a orden de Cigala abrá mucho que temer y si saliere con ella Halil Baxa será mucho menor el peligro». Íñigo de Mendoza to Philip II, Venice, 31 January 1597, Ags.E, 1676, n. 7.

<sup>127</sup> «Escriven por buena nueva que Halil Baxa está confirmado por general de la armada de mar siendo como es hombre de ninguna sustancia». Íñigo de Mendoza to Philip II, Venice, 8 February 1597, Ags.E, 1676, n. 8.

<sup>128</sup> «Parendo che il suo nome solo basti ad apportar terrore a tutti». Girolamo Cappello to the Senate, Constantinople, 21 April 1598, Asv, Sdc, 47, fol. 12; «il Re non per altro ha levato il carrico ad Halil che per esser di natura troppo piacevole, ne si faceva temere». Girolamo Cappello to the Senate, Constantinople, 1 May 1598, Asv, Sdc, 47, fol. 14; E. Türkçelik, *Meritocracy, Factionalism and Ottoman Grand Admirals* cit., p. 103.

office of *kapudan pasha* was short, it was intense and complex in terms of its domestic and international dynamics. Halil Pasha's career before admiralty was shaped by the transformation in Ottoman domestic politics, whereas his career as the admiral was determined by the convergence of both domestic and international politics. Although the appointment of Halil Pasha does seem to be the simple result of the power struggles that followed the enthronement of a new ruler, there also was a certain reflection, though not a clear program, behind this decision. In the face of an uncertain Mediterranean policy, Halil Pasha was perceived as a suitable and loyal dynastic element to serve as admiral whose ambitions could be kept in check and whose policy in the Mediterranean would be harmonious with the dynasty's interests<sup>129</sup>. Indeed, although Halil Pasha started rather ambitiously by setting for himself the example of Piyale Pasha, he ended up being one of the most "reluctant admirals" of the sixteenth century Ottoman Mediterranean. In his admiralty, the family relationship with the dynasty was more decisive than the politics in the Mediterranean. In this sense, Halil Pasha's sedentary practice of the admiralty seems to echo the transition of the sultanate from a mobile warrior *gazi* sultan to an increasingly sedentarized palace sultan. As a matter of fact, it is very symbolic that Halil Pasha broke this practice and sailed with the fleet when Mehmed III took up the *ghaza* in person in 1596<sup>130</sup>. Nevertheless, the complex and important tasks that Halil Pasha had to confront revealed his incompetence compared to his predecessor, Cigalazade. Ultimately, Halil Pasha's dismissal came as a reaction to the negative repercussion of his passive admiralty in Mediterranean politics. An interesting albeit unanswerable question would be how the Ottoman Mediterranean policy would have evolved if Halil Pasha had continued in the admiralty.

<sup>129</sup> For a similar case of dynastic appointment in the Spanish Monarchy, see L. Geervers, *Dynasty and State Building in the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy: The Career of Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy (1588-1624)*, «Journal of Early Modern History», 20:3 (2016), pp. 267-292.

<sup>130</sup> L.P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem* cit., pp. 168-177. The participation of Mehmed III was significant because since Süleyman I's death, neither Selim II nor Murad III had personally participated in any war, giving rise to interpretations such as the "sedentarization of the sultans".