

## Levent Kaya Ocakaçan

### CIGALAZADE YUSUF SINAN PASHA (C. 1545-1606)\*

**ABSTRACT:** *Scipione Cigala, alias Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan (c. 1545-1605), a Christian convert to Islam, was one of the most important high-level administrators of the Ottoman ruling élite. His name is still widely recognized in Çağaloğlu, one of the most popular tourist districts of Istanbul. He held the position of the kaptan-ı derya (chief admiral) and sadrazam (grand-vizier) during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, a complex period for the Ottoman ruling élite. In this period, the balance of power was unstable and it was nearly impossible to hold a position for more than a few years; in some circumstances, no more than a few months. The dynasty wanted to protect itself against the strengthened vizier households by shortening the tenure of their administrators. This was their solution to prevent high-level administrators from establishing new networks. In such a period of turmoil, Yusuf Sinan Pasha always found a way to stay in high levels of the administration by accommodating himself to the changing conditions; and he managed this even though Safiye Sultan, one of the most powerful women in the Ottoman Court, was hostile towards him. Under these circumstances, he held his position as a kaptan-ı derya between 1591-1595 and 1599-1604 and, during that time, he was one of the most powerful commanders in the Mediterranean; he regularly plundered Venetian coasts and galleys. His Christian origins have always been a matter of dispute. In this study, I will shed light on his life and career on the basis of new documents from the Venetian State Archives read in conjunction with the Ottoman chronicles.*

**KEYWORDS:** Kaptan-ı derya, Venice, Cigalazade, Grand-Vizier, Ottoman ruling élite.

#### SCIPIONE CIGALA (C. 1545-1606)

**SOMMARIO:** *Scipione Cigala, alias Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan (c. 1545-1606), un cristiano convertito all'Islam, fu uno dei più importanti alti funzionari dell'élite di governo ottomana. Il suo nome è ancora ricordato con il toponimo Çağaloğlu, uno dei distretti turistici più popolari di Istanbul. Ebbe la carica di kaptan-ı derya (grande ammiraglio) e sadrazam (gran visir) tra la fine del XVI e l'inizio del XVII secolo, un periodo di grande complessità per l'élite ottomana. Allora la situazione politica risultava instabile ed era quasi impossibile conservare la stessa carica per molti anni e, in alcuni casi, anche solo per pochi mesi. Così la dinastia cercava di proteggerci contro le potenti casate di gran visir diminuendo la lunghezza dei periodi di carica. Con questo mezzo si sperava di impedire la formazione di nuove cerchie di potere da parte dei funzionari amministrativi. In questo stesso periodo Yusuf Sinan Pasha seppe mantenersi al vertice dell'amministrazione riuscendo ad adattarsi facilmente alle nuove condizioni, anche se Safiye Sultan, una delle donne più potenti dell'impero, fece di tutto per osteggiarlo. Fu kaptan-ı derya tra il 1591 e il 1595 e poi ancora negli anni 1599-1604 e uno dei comandanti più temuti nel Mediterraneo, per gli attacchi continui alle coste e alle navi veneziane. Le sue origini cristiane sono ancora un tema dibattuto. In questo studio l'autore vuole gettare nuova luce sulla sua vita e le sue gesta sulla base di nuovi documenti reperiti nell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia, ponendoli in parallelo con quanto affermano le cronache ottomane.*

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** kaptan-ı derya, Venezia, Cigalazade, Gran visir, Impero Ottomano, élite di governo.

#### CIGALAZADE YUSUF SINAN PASHA (1545-1606)

**ÖZET:** *Scipione Cigala, Osmanlı kaynaklarındaki adıyla Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan devşirmelikten gelen, Osmanlı yönetici elitinin en önemli yüksek seviye yöneticilerinden biriydi. İsmi İstanbul'un en turistik semtlerinden Çağaloğlu'nda hala yaşamaktadır. Osmanlı yönetici eliti için karışık bir dönem olan geç 16. yy ve erken 17.yy boyunca Kaptan-ı Deryalık ve Sadrazamlık görevlerinde*

\* Abbreviations: Asve = Venetian State Archives; Sdac = *Senato, Dispacci Ambasciatori, Costantinopoli*.

bulunmuştur. Bu dönemde güç dengeleri durağan değildi ve bir görevde birkaç seneden hatta bazı durumlarda birkaç aydan fazla bulunabilmek neredeyse imkânsızdı. Hanedanlık, vezirlerin görev sürelerini kısaltarak kendini giderek güçlenen vezir hanelerine karşı korumak istiyordu. Bu hanedanın vezir hanelerinin yeni ilişkiler kurmasını önlemek için geliştirdiği bir çözüm yöntemiymi. Böyle karmaşık bir ortamda, Osmanlı Hanedanının en güçlü kadınlarından Safiye Sultan kendisine karşı olmasına rağmen; Yusuf Sinan Paşa değişen koşullara kolayca uyum sağlayarak her zaman yüksek yönetim kademelerinde yer almanın bir yolunu buldu. Tüm bu koşullar altında, 1591-1595 ve 1599-1604 yılları arasında Kaptan-ı Derya olarak görev yaptı ve bu süre içerisinde Akdeniz'deki en güçlü kumandanlardan biriydi, düzenli olarak Venedik kıyıları ve gemilerine saldırdı. Yusuf Sinan Paşa'nın Hıristiyan kökenleri daima bir tartışma konusu olmuştur. Bu çalışmamda Venedik Arşivleri'nde bulunan bazı yeni belgeleri ve Osmanlı kroniklerini kullanarak onun hayatına ve çalışmalarına ışık tutmayı amaçlıyorum.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: *Kaptan-ı derya, Venedik, Cigalazade, Sadrazam, Osmanlı Yönetici Eliti.*

## 1. Introduction

The last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century can be defined as a period of factionalism in the Ottoman Empire. Worldwide economic changes as well as multi-front and long military campaigns complicated the empire's traditional economic and governmental system. These changes began to occur at the end of Sultan Süleyman's reign but his charismatic authority overshadowed the differences and competing interests among his servants. It can be said that there was an agreement in the Ottoman ruling hierarchy for the governorship of the empire during his time but, after his death, problems started to emerge. The empire became more centralized during Süleyman's period. The authority of women started to increase with Hürrem Sultan's presence in the palace and, after the complete removal of the imperial harem from the old palace during Sultan Murat III's period, their political influence increased. As a result of being a centralized state, alliances within the Ottoman hierarchy became indispensable to keep positions of high rank. *Haseki sultans* (the most favored harem women) and *valide sultans* (queen mothers) were the main components of these factions due to their proximity to the imperial élite. Sultan Murat III and Sultan Mehmet III were the last *şehzades* (imperial princes) appointed to govern *sancaks* (district provinces) in order to practice and prepare themselves for the future as rulers of the state.

Before the period of Sultan Selim II, when many *şehzades* still governed in the provinces, the leaders of different groups could gain access to them. Şehzade Murad and Şehzade Mehmed, however, were the only members of the dynasty present in their Anatolian districts and one *şehzade* household was not enough to represent the different factions. After Sultan Murat III's enthronement (1574-1595), jockeying for power among the factions of the imperial ruling élite increased and Constantinople became the center of ever more complex power struggles. All groups had their representatives in the capital. The Ottoman dynasty

wanted to protect itself against the vizier households and this desire opened the gate to factional struggles within the state<sup>1</sup>.

The goal of this essay is to briefly highlight the career of one of the most intriguing figures of the early modern Mediterranean world, namely Scipione Cigala *alias* Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan, whose name is still widely recognized in Cağaloğlu (i.e. ‘Cigala-son’ or ‘of the Cigala family’), one of the most popular tourist districts of Istanbul, where he had a palace. He was one of the main figures involved in the factionalism of this period, *kaptan-ı derya* (chief admiral) and grand-vizier during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Basing my paper on both Venetian and Ottoman sources, my aim is to describe and to understand the events of his life from the perspectives of these two parties.

## 2. Yusuf Sinan’s family

Yusuf Sinan’s date of birth is a matter of scholarly dispute but, according to the Venetian diplomat Girolamo Cappello’s report, he was fifty-six years old in the year 1600 and, thus, he was probably born in the 1540s<sup>2</sup>. He belonged to a noble Genovese family. His father, Visconte Cigala, an eminent seaman, waged wars against Turkish privateers while his mother was a Muslim convert to Christianity who had been kidnapped by Visconte in Castelnuovo (Herceg Novi) in 1538<sup>3</sup>. Although there is scant information about Yusuf Sinan’s childhood, it is known that his life changed dramatically in autumn 1561, when a Tripolitan flotilla led by Dragut (Turgut) Reis took him and his father, Visconte, as prisoners<sup>4</sup>. Dragut immediately sent him to the sultan’s *serraglio* (*saray*),

<sup>1</sup> İ.M. Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1560*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1983; B. Tezcan, *Searching for Osman: A Reassessment of the Deposition of the Ottoman Sultan II (1618-1622)*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Princeton University, 2001; *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2011; G. Börekcü, *Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I and His Immediate Predecessors*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, The Ohio State University, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris (ed.), *Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, vol. XIV, *Costantinopoli. Relazioni inedite (1512-1789)*, Bottega d’Erasmus-Aldo Ausilio, Padova, 1996, pp. 344, 407-411. Bernardo, Tiepolo and Cappello each give different information about Cigala’s age. E. Alberi (ed.), *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, All’insegna di Clio, Firenze, 1844, s. III, vol. II, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Venice, Library of the Correr Museum, *Donà, dalla Rose*, 23; L. Donà, *Itinerario... Memorie... Relazione... Ambasciatori... Costantinopoli*, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> D. Montuoro, *I Cigala, una famiglia feudale tra Genova, Sicilia, Turchia e Calabria*, «Mediterranea - ricerche storiche», 16, (August 2009), pp. 277-301, in particular pp. 283-285.

imperial palace) as a gift<sup>5</sup>. According to Antoine de Pétremol, Charles IX's (1562-1574) ambassador in Constantinople, Cigala was quickly introduced into the inner chambers of the palace, the *enderun* (imperial school) where pageboys were trained. As an *içoğlan* (page) he had to change his habits, his name and faith, at least in appearance. Yusuf Sinan had two brothers: one of them was Philippo, a commander of the Spanish naval force; the youngest brother, Carlo, also served Spain<sup>6</sup>.

In the context of the harsh rivalry between the Ottomans and the Western Mediterranean powers led by Philip II, the events of Cigalazade's life were the subject of many *avvisi* (news) as well as much speculation. Some people saw a calculated change in Yusuf Sinan. For example the poet Giacomo Bosio, stated that Cigala converted to Islam because the sultan had promised to release his father in exchange: according to this author Visconte, who had been made prisoner together with the boy and had been put in prison in Constantinople, was soon poisoned by his jailers<sup>7</sup>, although this information is not supported by any evidence in Venetian sources. The events that took place during Yusuf Sinan's training in the imperial palace are not documented and are therefore open to speculation. We do know that after Süleyman the Magnificent's death in Szigetvár and Selim II's enthronement in September 1566, Yusuf Sinan gained the new sultan's confidence.

### 3. Yusuf Sinan's first assignments

Cigala, now known as Yusuf Sinan, became *çeşnigir* (imperial taster) in 1571<sup>8</sup>. His first important mission outside the palace took place in Spring 1574 when he was *kapıcıbaşı* (head of the porters - and not head of the janissaries as some European sources claim)<sup>9</sup>. He obtained this position in 1573 with a salary of 200 *akçe* (aspron), a larger sum than

<sup>5</sup> G. Bosio, *Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illust. Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, appresso Domenico Antonio Parrino, Napoli, 1694, III, p. 446, [https://books.google.ch/books?id=VetDAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=bosio&hl=en&sa=X&ic=VaCOVcf9DILbUeflg6AD&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=bosio&f=false](https://books.google.ch/books?id=VetDAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=bosio&hl=en&sa=X&ic=VaCOVcf9DILbUeflg6AD&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=bosio&f=false).

<sup>6</sup> For further information about Carlo Cigala see: S. Pappalardo, '*Ambizione politica, commercio e diplomazia alla fine del XVI secolo: Carlo Cicala*', in C. Zaccaria, D. Andreozzi, L. Panariti (eds), *Acque, terre e spazi dei Mercanti. Istituzioni, gerarchie, conflitti e pratiche dello scambio dall'età antica alla modernità*, Edizioni Quasar, Trieste, 2009, pp. 141-168; M.H. Şakiroğlu, *Cigalazâde Sinan Paşa*, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 1993, pp. 525-526 <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c07/c070375.pdf> (01/05/2014).

<sup>7</sup> G. Bosio, *Istoria*, p. 446.

<sup>8</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris (ed.), *Relazioni*, p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, *Muhimme Defteri*, XXIV, cc. 409, 474, 511-512, 552, 569-570, 633, 916.

that given to other officials of the same rank<sup>10</sup>. This fact indicates the relatively high opinion of him in the imperial palace, although he was still a young servant of the sultan. Yusuf Sinan was charged with the task of taking as prisoner the Moldavian prince Ioan Voda who had rebelled, made an alliance with Polish *starostes* (royal officials) and Cossack raiders, and aimed to attack the Kili Fortress on the Black Sea<sup>11</sup>. After a two-month campaign, Yusuf Sinan, along with eleven governors of Ottoman Rumeli, defeated the rebel *voyvoda* (voivode) in Cahul, near the Prut River, on June 10<sup>th</sup>. As Mihai Maxim had already demonstrated, he was present when the new *voyvoda* Petru received the imperial insignia in Iassy<sup>12</sup>.

In December 1574, Murad III ascended to the throne but, unlike many clients of the grand-vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Yusuf Sinan did not see his career ruined by this event. Even if still young, he was promoted head of the janissary corps. During the Persian wars (1578-1591), he became vizier and many of his enterprises are known thanks to Ottoman chronicles and above all to the *Memoirs* of his personal physician, Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi<sup>13</sup>. Before his long involvement in the Eastern frontier, Yusuf Sinan married the granddaughter of Rüstem Pasha and Mihrimah Sultan, Süleyman the Magnificent's cherished daughter, in October 1576. The *bailo* (Venetian consul and ambassador) Giovanni Correr states that a great wedding ceremony was organized and that Mihrimah Sultan gave a great amount of luxury items to the couple as a wedding gift, as well as 30,000 *zecchini* (Venetian gold coins)<sup>14</sup>. After his marriage, he started an important career in the unstable political atmosphere of the Ottoman administration.

The Ottoman dynasty wanted to protect itself against influential vizier households and, as a result, it tried to reorganize the system. Two of the most important strategies employed were shortening the tenure in office

<sup>10</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 6, l.10, p. 88.

<sup>11</sup> M. Berindei, *Le problème des « cosaques » dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. A propos de la révolte de Ioan Vodă, voivode de Moldavie*, « Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique », XIII/3 (1972), pp. 338-339.

<sup>12</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris, *Sultans and Voivodas in the 16th c. Gifts and Insignia*, « Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi », I/1 (2007), pp. 193-207; M. Maxim, *L'empire ottoman au Nord du Danube et l'autonomie des Principautés Roumaines au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Istanbul, Isis, 1999, pp. 185-214.

<sup>13</sup> Madrid, Library of Complutense University of Madrid, G.T. Minadoi, *Historia della guerra fra turchi, et persiani, descritta in quattro libri cominciando dall'anno 1577 [...] seguendo per tutto l'anno 1585*, Iacomo Tornerio e Bernardino Donangeli, Roma, 1587; Ş.N. Aykut (ed.), *Hasan Bey-zade Tarihi*, 3 vols, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 2004; M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, 2 vols, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1999<sup>2</sup>; C.F. Fraser (trans.), *Annals of the Turkish Empire from 1591 to 1659 of the Christian Era by Naima*, vol. I, Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1832; B.S. Baykal (ed.), *Peçevi Tarihi*, 2 vols, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1992<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 9, l.47, c. 236.

of high-level administrators and giving more authority to the *kapiağa* (chief of the white eunuchs) who also had the task of creating new alliances in order to weaken the most powerful vizier households. In the same period, however, the *kapiağa* lost part of his influence in favor of the *kızlarağası*<sup>15</sup> (chief of the black eunuchs). This last had daily contacts with the women of the imperial harem whose importance in the management of the state continued to increase<sup>16</sup>. The relations established between Yusuf Sinan and the *kapiağa* were a very clear example of the factional struggles that were taking place at court, as we will see. And even if he was widely disliked in the Ottoman administration<sup>17</sup>, he remained at the top due to his skill in accommodating himself to changing conditions. His wife died at the end of the year 1580<sup>18</sup>, and with her passing he lost his greatest support in the palace. After her death and before reaching Baghdad as the new governor of the city, Yusuf Sinan managed to marry his deceased wife's younger sister<sup>19</sup> and in this way he resumed his former influence in the imperial palace. Henceforth, according to the *bailo* Paolo Contarini, he regained his lost privileges.

During the Persian war, the *serdar-ı ekrem* (chief commander) Ferhad Pasha appointed Yusuf Sinan Pasha as the new governor of Yerevan<sup>20</sup> but soon a permanent hostility developed between them. In his new position, Yusuf Sinan successfully overcame several rebellions led by Turkish governors<sup>21</sup>. Then, on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1585, the grand Vizier Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha died and he was ready to be appointed new *sadrızam* (grand vizier), since the former one had recommended him for this office<sup>22</sup>, but, at the same time, rumors arose that he had killed Osman Pasha<sup>23</sup>. Perhaps for this reason the sultan firstly appointed Hadım Mesih Pasha and, after him in 1586, Ferhad Pasha instead of Yusuf Sinan<sup>24</sup>. This appointment strengthened the lifelong hostility and competition between the two high official<sup>25</sup>. In this period, Ferhad

<sup>15</sup> For further information about *kızlarağası* see; Y. Karakoç, *Palace Politics and the Rise of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Ottoman Empire*, Boğaziçi University, unpublished MA Thesis, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris, *Veneziani a Costantinopoli alla fine del XVI Secolo*, «Quaderni di Studi Arabi», 15 suppl. (1997), pp. 67-84, in particular p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> C.F. Fraser (trans.), *Annales*, p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 14, l.57, c. 329.

<sup>19</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 14, l.64, c. 389.

<sup>20</sup> I.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 3, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 1988, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 162.

<sup>22</sup> I.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, p. 75.

<sup>23</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 22, l.26, c. 293.

<sup>24</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>25</sup> For the rivalry between Yusuf Sinan and Ferhad see E. Türkçelik, *Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan. Pasha y el Mediterraneo entre 1591-1606*, unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2012, pp. 87-258.

Pasha's unsuccessful attempts to defeat the Persian enemy created a general sentiment of dissatisfaction with him. Cafer Pasha and Yusuf Sinan accused him of being a supporter of peace and tried to convince the imperial council of the truth of their accusation<sup>26</sup>. The hostility between them became universally known in 1594 when they quarreled in the *divan-ı hümayun* in the presence of other officials<sup>27</sup>. On describing an accident that had place in the same year Selaniki's chronicle gives an example of their harsh behavior: Yusuf Sinan went to Ferhad Pasha's palace and told him: «Ordinary soldiers cannot be used in the army and the soldiers' salaries have not been paid for more than one year. You are not interested in your work. The equipment of the army should not be like that. I have not received a rank that I haven't deserved. Even though you appoint me vizier in the victorious border-zone, you make me suffer too much»<sup>28</sup>. Their networks and their friends in the palace were involved in this hostility; for instance, it was known that Safiye Sultan and the *kapiağa*<sup>29</sup> Gazanfer Agha supported Ferhad Pasha, whereas Koca Sinan Pasha supported Yusuf Sinan. Safiye Sultan also supported Halil Pasha and İbrahim Pasha, who were among the most important pashas at that time, due to their marriages to Mehmet III's sisters. Because of these marriages<sup>30</sup>, they got the rank of grand vizier and *kaptan-ı derya*, and even though there was enmity between them, they both were hostile to Yusuf Sinan<sup>31</sup>.

Notwithstanding his personal feelings, Yusuf Sinan was acting according to diplomatic customs: he used to send luxury gifts to Murad III, Safiye Sultan and Gazanfer Agha<sup>32</sup>. In their letters foreign ambassadors stressed the fight that took place among the factions of the Ottoman ruling élite, since it meant that the leadership was not as strong as it was before. Moreover, even common people who were usually unaware of the affairs that took place behind the palace walls, realized this fact<sup>33</sup>. Yusuf Sinan

<sup>26</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 29, l.58, cc. 474-479.

<sup>27</sup> G. Benzoni, *Cigala, Scipione*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 25, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, 1981, p. 324 [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scipione-cicala\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scipione-cicala_(Dizionario-Biografico)).

<sup>28</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 358.

<sup>29</sup> Gazanfer Agha's position was different than the others, in Venetian Reports from time to time, he was seen as a supporter of Yusuf Sinan Pasha because of their Italian origins; however, Gazanfer was the most important ally of Safiye Sultan who was the most important enemy of Yusuf Sinan. Due to that Gazanfer's actions depended on the conditions towards Yusuf Sinan Pasha.

<sup>30</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 168; M.P. Pedani-Fabris (ed.), *Relazioni*, 1996, p. 402.

<sup>31</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris (ed.), *Relazioni*, pp. 400-406.

<sup>32</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 32, c. 64, September 15, 1590; M.P. Pedani-Fabris (ed.), *Relazioni*, p. 402.

<sup>33</sup> H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar of state papers and manuscripts to English affairs: existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of northern Italy*, vol. 9, Majesty's stationery office, London, 1897, p. 7, January 25, 1591.

was ready to change his mind if necessary; sometimes he changed his allies as it was common among the important political figures of the time for political reasons, despite the unwritten rules of Ottoman etiquette that discouraged such behavior. Moreover, he also looked for the English and French ambassadors' support<sup>34</sup>, even if, after a couple of years, his friendship with the English diplomat ended<sup>35</sup>. In 1591, Yusuf became *kaptan-ı derya*<sup>36</sup> and shortly after that year, according to Venetian sources, the whole palace élite's animosity toward Venice began to fade away; some such as Yusuf Sinan and Koca Sinan Pasha continued their enmity<sup>37</sup>, while Ferhad Pasha was clearly on the Venetian side<sup>38</sup>.

#### 4. The *kaptan-ı derya* Yusuf Sinan: between maritime campaigns and family ties

Venetian sources, for instance Venier, mentioned that arsenal soldiers accused Yusuf Sinan of being an agent of Spain since he had let his brother Carlo, who was a Christian and a spy of the King of Spain, stay in Constantinople<sup>39</sup>. Although this accusation was probably an exaggeration, it might be seen as a consequence of Yusuf Sinan's vengeful and frequent raids against Venetian coasts and ships. After leaving Constantinople on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1593<sup>40</sup>, he attacked Candia, Malta and Calabria. He raided also Sorrento, Capri and Naples in-between 1591-1593 by taking advantage of the Spanish navy's absence. Bartolomeo Camino, a citizen of Naples, wrote that Yusuf Sinan violently plundered the entire city. In September 1594, he asked the governor for the permission to visit his mother who lived in Messina and who was a Muslim convert to Christianity, as mentioned above, but it was declined. Consequently, Yusuf Sinan plundered Messina and the Italian coast, as Girolamo Rannusio, a Venetian citizen in Naples, tells us «He destroyed the churches and set fire on Messina»<sup>41</sup>.

During his office as a *kaptan-ı derya*, he frequently plundered Italian coasts, including Messina, and enslaved many Venetians. Thus, the

<sup>34</sup> H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar*, p. 63, March 20, 1593.

<sup>35</sup> H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar*, p. 414, June 17, 1600.

<sup>36</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 246; A. Fabris, *Hasan 'il Veneziano' tra Algeria e Costantinopoli*, «Quaderni di Studi Arabi», 15 suppl. (1997), pp. 59-61; M.P. Pedani, *Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy*, «Turcica», 32 (2000), pp. 9-32.

<sup>37</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 39, l.21, cc. 190-191.

<sup>38</sup> E. Alberi (ed.), *Relazioni*, p. 354.

<sup>39</sup> H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar*, p. 127, May 3, 1594.

<sup>40</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 37, l.33, c. 315.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in G. Benzoni, *Cigala, Scipione*, p. 327.

Republic complained about his actions and petitioned the sultan to keep him from harming its ships and subjects<sup>42</sup>.

Venetians imagined that Yusuf Sinan's Christian origins were the reason of his actions and his hostility towards them. Matteo Zane wrote that Yusuf Sinan Pasha had a great desire to come back to Christianity and felt nostalgia for his childhood days; therefore, he acted brutally towards Venice. Zane also states that at the basis of his harsh behavior toward Christians there was the fear of being accused of being a supporter of Venice. Additionally, Bernardo linked Yusuf Sinan's solemn appearance to his obligation to conceal his secret faith, which was Christianity<sup>43</sup>. Dragoman Borissi asserted that Yusuf Sinan spoke Italian with him while they were alone, whereas he preferred to speak Turkish while in public because he did not want to be seen close to Venetians<sup>44</sup>. Non-Ottoman sources usually made statements of this kind in reference to Ottoman Pashas of Christian origin<sup>45</sup>. On the contrary, Zane suspected him of being a Spanish agent because his mother and brothers were Spanish subjects, and he still had contacts with them. Spain tried to take advantage of these family ties; for instance, in 1593, Carlo Cigala was sent to Constantinople in order to delay Yusuf Sinan's next naval foray in the Mediterranean<sup>46</sup>. Carlo too was thinking of his own benefits: he intended to make an investment in Walachia or Moldavia with the help of his brother but this enterprise failed<sup>47</sup>. Before Carlo's arrival in the capital, letters from Spain claimed that the king's health was getting worse and that Spain wanted to ameliorate its relations with Italy and for this reason Yusuf Sinan's brother had been employed and sent to Constantinople<sup>48</sup>. If it would have been possible to push Yusuf Sinan to support a war against Venice, Spain could easily create an alliance with the pope, Venice, Savoy and other Italian princes<sup>49</sup>.

In 1598, Carlo, with the title of official ambassador of Spain, discussed peace conditions with his brother and, in 1600, Yusuf Sinan appointed him governor of Naxos. After his leave from Messina in order to obtain the governorship, Carlo stayed in Corfu for a while and he gave

<sup>42</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 50, cc. 174, 202, 204, 209, 241, 259; f. 53, c. 35.

<sup>43</sup> G. Benzoni, *Cigala, Scipione*, p. 325.

<sup>44</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 52, c. 281, January 2, 1600.

<sup>45</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris (ed.), *Relazioni*, pp. 409-410.

<sup>46</sup> S. Pappalardo, *Ambizione politica*, pp. 141-168.

<sup>47</sup> E. Alberi (ed.), *Relazioni*, pp. 431-432.

<sup>48</sup> E.S. Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean: Secret diplomacy, Mediterranean go-betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry*, Georgetown University, unpublished PhD Dissertation, 2012. He claims that Carlo was sent to Constantinople as a Habsburg agent and Habsburgs employed him. H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar*, p. 66, April 10, 1593.

<sup>49</sup> H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar*, p. 123, April 3, 1594.

his brother the maps of the Venetian castles of Corfu<sup>50</sup>. In the meantime, he worked for Spain and wrote letters about his brother's activities in the Mediterranean. Carlo's Christian faith was an issue, which was used against Yusuf Sinan in the same way of his converted mother, as we will see. Even in 1593, there were some people who sought a decision from the Mufti on this point, asking whether it was lawful or not to force the son of a Turkish woman, born in Castelnovo and carried as a slave into Christendom, to convert to Islam<sup>51</sup>. His enemies and soldiers had always used his Christian family relations as a trump against him. To avoid pressures of this kind Yusuf Sinan repeatedly asked his brother to become a Muslim<sup>52</sup>. Sultan Mehmet III too suggested that it would be better for him to convert to Islam in order to enter the imperial élite<sup>53</sup>. Even though this religious issue was seen as a huge problem, in reality, it helped the negotiations between the states; furthermore, it concealed greater benefits for the individuals who lived in between the borders.

### 5. Between the factions: the conquest of Eğri, Yusuf Sinan's appointment as *sadrazam* and his dismissal

In 1595 Ferhad Pasha and Safiye Sultan pushed Sultan Mehmet III to dismiss Yusuf Sinan from his position and to promote Halil Pasha to the office of *kaptan-ı derya*<sup>54</sup>. Although Yusuf Sinan disliked the new great admiral<sup>54</sup> he gave him financial support in order to maintain some stature in the palace and in that regard he was successful<sup>56</sup>. Ferhad Pasha's failure in some wars resulted in his execution and Yusuf Sinan started once again to gain importance within the Ottoman ruling hierarchy. At a certain point rumors arose that Koca Sinan Pasha and Yusuf Sinan Pasha had supported some rebels against Ferhad Pasha and because of this accusation, Koca Sinan was blinded and banished while Yusuf Sinan was exiled to Karahisar, quickly forgiven by the sultan and then sent in exile to Malkara<sup>57</sup>.

During the Habsburg war (1593- 1606) Yusuf Sinan's career changed dramatically many times. After his first assignments, he was accused of being responsible for the death of some soldiers due to his delayed support of the army, but this accusation did not prevent his appointment as

<sup>50</sup> S. Pappalardo, *Ambizione politica*, pp. 141-168.

<sup>51</sup> H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar*, p. 100, August 16, 1593.

<sup>52</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 776.

<sup>53</sup> E.S. Gürkan, *Espionage*, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 40, cc. 481-493, January 31, 1595.

<sup>55</sup> L. Donà, *Itinerario...*, c. 226.

<sup>56</sup> G. Benzoni, *Cigala, Scipione*, p. 328.

<sup>57</sup> Ş.N. Aykut (ed.), *Hasan Bey-zade Tarihi*, pp. 453-454.

*çarha serdari*<sup>58</sup> (chief of the selected cavalry soldiers who served as spearheads). On the contrary the contemporary eye-witness Hasan Beyzade claims that Yusuf Sinan reached the Tatar soldiers, while Habsburg forces were about to catch Sultan Mehmet III. Since the soldiers had ran away, civilian members of the army such as cooks and camel drivers protected the sultan and defeated the enemy. After this event, Yusuf Sinan visited the sultan, claimed for himself the merit of the victory and appointed himself grand vizier. He held the *divan* (council of state) meeting in his own pavilion and announced that he was the new *sadrizam*. Unaware of what had happened, the previous *sadrizam*, Damad İbrahim Pasha who still had the imperial seal in his hands, ordered the capture of the soldiers who had deserted. The day after the imperial tutor Hoca Saadeddin, who was one of Yusuf Sinan's most reliable supporters<sup>59</sup>, discussed the matter with the sultan. He had just been informed by Gazanfer Agha that the reason why the imperial seal has not been taken back was because Mehmed III did not agree<sup>60</sup>. Hoca Saadeddin used all his eloquence to convince the sultan to revise his opinion by telling him that it was already impossible to cancel the appointment because the soldiers would have started to gossip. In this way Yusuf Sinan kept the office of *sadrizam*.

After his appointment, Yusuf Sinan gathered the army in order to ascertain the number of those who had fled from the battlefield, at which point it was discovered that there had been deserters 30,000<sup>61</sup>. The new grand vizier ordered that their fiefdoms be taken back by the sultan, an act that deepened the turmoil among the soldiers who could no longer return to their hometowns in Anatolia. This decision was one of the main reasons for the *Celali* rebellions that wreaked havoc in the Anatolian countryside in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>62</sup>. Soldiers and civilians who had nothing to loose rebelled. Yusuf Sinan dealt brutally with the soldiers, executing many of them and forcing some important figures, such as Sohrab and Cahı, to wear skirts in front of the army. On his way back to Constantinople, in Harmanlu close to Edirne, he received a letter

<sup>58</sup> Ş.N. Aykut (ed.), *Hasan Bey-Zade Tarihi*, pp. 528-530. For further information about Çarhacı, see A. Özcan, *Çarhacı*, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 1993, pp. 229-230, <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c08/c080166.pdf> (01/05/2014).

<sup>59</sup> For Hoca Saadeddin see Ş. Turan, *Hoca Saadeddin Efendi*, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.18, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 1998, pp. 196-198, <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c18/c180101.pdf> (01/05/2014).

<sup>60</sup> B.S. Baykal (ed.), *Peçevi Tarihi*, p. 191.

<sup>61</sup> B.S. Baykal (ed.), *Peçevi Tarihi*, p. 192.

<sup>62</sup> For Celali rebellions, see M. Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası 'Celaliler İsyanı'*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009; W.J. Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion 1000-1020/1591-1611*, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Berlin, 1983 (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 83).

from Safiye Sultan, and learnt that he had been dismissed after forty-five days and that the imperial seal had been given back to Damad İbrahim Pasha. It is probable that Yusuf's dismissal was the result of both his actions and the influence of Safiye Sultan's faction<sup>63</sup>.

After his arrival in Constantinople, Yusuf Sinan's clients were all summoned to the capital and insulted. Fethi Giray Han, Serdar Mehmet, Hoca Saadeddin<sup>64</sup> and Lam Ali Çelebi too were dismissed. In particular the last one was considered responsible of having attributed the victory to Yusuf Sinan in his Eğri (Eger) *fetihname* (book of victory) that was at the basis of the later chronicles by Hasan Bey-zade and Naima<sup>65</sup>.

Yusuf Sinan's achievements during the Fifteen Years War (1593-1606) are described in the memoirs of Hasan Bey-zade, Damad İbrahim Pasha's *tezkireci* (secretary), and Peçevi, Ferhad Pasha's nephew. Both İbrahim and Ferhad were Safiye Sultan's clients, while Lam Ali Çelebi was Koca Sinan Pasha's protégé. All the other writers who described the war were influenced either by them or by Lam Ali Çelebi's *fetihname*<sup>66</sup>.

All these examples show how inner struggles among the members of Ottoman élite could affect the sultan's decisions. In 1598, Yusuf Sinan who was serving as governor of Syria, was appointed once again as *kapitan-ı derya*<sup>67</sup>. He sailed the Mediterranean with the goal of meeting his mother. He succeeded in seeing her the last time but not in persuading her and his brothers to change religion<sup>68</sup>. This caused him problems that the unsettled conditions of prevailing Ottoman politics made worse. For instance, when in 1598 his brother went to Constantinople in order to become governor of Naxos, the sultan agreed on condition that he convert to Islam and two years later, when the question had not yet been settled, his mother too was asked to become a Muslim as part of the conditions for him to retain the office<sup>69</sup>. Yusuf Sinan could not persuade his brother to convert and his rivals used that failure against him. On many occasions, as we already saw, Ottoman officers and *ulema* (doctors of the holy law) claimed that Yusuf Sinan had kept his ties with Christianity and he intentionally did not want his mother and brothers to convert to Islam because of his secret faith. For instance, in 1602, arsenal soldiers

<sup>63</sup> S.N. Aykut (ed.), *Hasan Bey-Zade Tarihi*, pp. 544-545; M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 649; L. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, pp. 225-226.

<sup>64</sup> B.S. Baykal (ed.), *Peçevi Tarihi*, p. 193.

<sup>65</sup> S.N. Aykut (ed.), *Hasan Bey-Zade Tarihi*, pp. 496-546; C.F. Fraser (trans.), *Annals*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>66</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris, *Ottoman Fetihnames. The Imperial letters announcing a Victory*, «Tarih incelemeleri dergisi», 13 (1998), pp. 181-192.

<sup>67</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 738.

<sup>68</sup> M. İpşirli (ed.), *Tarih-i Selânikî*, p. 776

<sup>69</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 51, l.36, c. 357.

rioted and claimed that Yusuf Sinan was an infidel and that his mother was a Christian, with the latter of course being true<sup>70</sup>. Gazanfer Agha who just one year before had been rescued from the janissaries's hands by Yusuf Sinan himself<sup>71</sup> successfully intervened in order to resolve this problem. Alliances easily and quickly changed in those days and, although Gazanfer and Yusuf Sinan belonged to two different groups, they helped each other if necessary. The reason why close relations between them intensified at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century might be seen in the uncertain atmosphere of the court: in the end, Gazanfer was executed in the Imperial Palace in front of the sultan during a rebellion and Yusuf Sinan mourned his new friend's sad fate<sup>72</sup>.

In this period harem women were getting more and more power in political and administrative affairs, a practice that Yusuf Sinan considered unacceptable interference and something he often complained about directly to the sultan<sup>73</sup>. He warned the ruler that if he wanted to keep his power he should not allow the women to get involved in politics. The rationale behind his position on this matter may be seen in the struggle that had taken place between him and Safiye Sultan and not in a misogynous attitude in general since he enjoyed the support of such powerful imperial women as Ayşe Humaşah, who helped him to become a *kapitan-ı derya* in 1591<sup>74</sup>. The real problem was not the interference of women in politics but the insecure political atmosphere of the court. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century nobody could survive and keep his place in the Ottoman élite if he had no friends and supporters and the threat of an uncertain future could easily push a person to change allies. Scholars have not yet completely realized how unsettled and fluid Ottoman factions were in this period. Many elements hint at this such as Gazanfer and Yusuf Sinan's mutual hatred and subsequent friendship, closer ties established between the persons collected by the *devşirme* (levy of children from rural Christian Ottoman districts) and their Christian relatives, new investments made by soldiers and civil servants - living in Constantinople but coming from the provinces - in their homeland, importance of marriages either with the sultans' daughters and sisters or with women well placed in the imperial harem. Strategies of this kind could save one's life and properties. Gazanfer himself tried to invest his money in Venice, even if in the end he gave up the project due to fear that he might be held accountable for questionable behavior of this kind<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 55, l.2, cc. 20-27.

<sup>71</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 53, c. 60.

<sup>72</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 56, l.32.

<sup>73</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, *Copia*, reg. 11, c. 234.

<sup>74</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 33, l.2, l.13.

<sup>75</sup> M.P. Pedani-Fabris, *Veneziani a Costantinopoli*, p. 75.

The sense of insecurity affected the comportment of the sultan's servants in other ways. For example, at the beginning of his career, Yusuf Sinan busied himself so as to remain in the capital and to get important offices; he also married a *sultana* just with this aim in mind. On the contrary, in his last years, he refused to be appointed grand vizier many times and in 1600 he was also imitated by other pashas who were leery of accepting such an important but dangerous office<sup>76</sup>.

## 6. Yusuf Sinan's last assignments

In 1603 Ahmet I ascended to the throne and problems arose once again on the eastern frontier. The sultan wanted to appoint Yusuf Sinan *serdar-ı ekrem* of the army for the Persian war (1603-1611) but Yusuf Sinan was unwilling to take the position, asserting that he was too old for such an important task and that he could not stay on horseback even for an hour<sup>77</sup>; therefore, he delayed his arrival in Constantinople with the armada hoping to convince the sultan to withdraw his proposal<sup>78</sup>. He did not succeed, however, and thus, with the same aim in mind, he tried to postpone his departure even though the new *sadrızam*, Yavuz Ali Pasha, wanted to dispatch him to the Eastern border in rid the capital of his awkward presence (he himself soon to depart for the warfront in Hungary where he had been appointed general commander). Yusuf Sinan's attempts failed, and on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1604, he visited the Sultan in the imperial palace. According to the tradition, Ahmed I gave him some precious gifts and Yusuf Sinan left Constantinople for East on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1604, as commander of the Ottoman army<sup>79</sup>.

In August of the same year, Yusuf Sinan arrived in Konya where he planned to stay for 80 days. News from the Eastern border, however, forced him to change his plans. Revan (Yerevan/Erivan) had been raided by Persians and he wanted to march as soon as possible towards Şirvan (Shirvan), where his son Mahmud was *beylerbeyi* (general governor). Rivalries between *sipahis* (cavalrymen) and janissaries obliged him to give up this idea too<sup>80</sup>. During the war he faced many challenges, such as difficulty in finding a secure place to pass the winter<sup>81</sup>, uprisings and disloyalty among his soldiers<sup>82</sup>, lack of money, unpaid wages, a sense

<sup>76</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 56, l.31.

<sup>77</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 58, l.29, cc. 398-402.

<sup>78</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 58, l.16, cc. 215-22; l.18, c. 239.

<sup>79</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 59, l.16, cc. 175-182.

<sup>80</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 59, c. 362, August 28, 1604.

<sup>81</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.30, cc. 312-315; l.32, cc. 328-329; f. 61, l.3, c. 17; f. 62, c. 160, November 6, 1605.

<sup>82</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.34, cc. 351-364.

of insecurity in Anatolia caused by the *Celali* rebellions<sup>83</sup> and, above all, his enemies' regular presence in the *divan*. Under these uncertain conditions he could not be confident about making plans. Nevertheless, he tried to manage a successful campaign by negotiating with everyone. At the beginning of the war he had refused alliances with some rebel leaders but, in the following period, he accepted their help because of his need of soldiers. He also decided to pay salaries to them and this became a huge problem within his army<sup>84</sup>. During the war he also offered money to Yusuf Pasha *beylerbeyi* of Aleppo in order to push him to leave his district and his position<sup>85</sup> and this offer created another problem in the *divan*.

He wrote to Constantinople over and over again but, under these conditions, it was almost impossible for him to win the war: supplies and help could not be sent from Constantinople<sup>86</sup>. During the Persian campaign the number of his men varied dramatically, almost month by month. His soldiers deserted because of unpaid wages, Yusuf Sinan's poor decisions and above all a very harsh winter. At the beginning of the campaign the Ottoman army was formed by 100.000 soldiers<sup>87</sup> but they decreased to 20.000<sup>88</sup> at the beginning of 1605 and to 15.000<sup>89</sup> in autumn of the same year. Yusuf Sinan had a talent for recruiting men if he needed them and when he lost the battle against the Persians on November 25, 1605<sup>90</sup>, he could rely on 47.000 fighters<sup>91</sup>. During the war he lost more than 30.000 soldiers and nine *beylerbeyi*. During the retreat to Diyarbakır, he beheaded Canbulodoğlu Hüseyin Pasha, *beylerbeyi* of Aleppo<sup>92</sup>, and tried to give that office to his *defterdar* (secretary of finance). After these events Hüseyin's brother, Ali Pasha, rebelled<sup>93</sup> and became the most famous *Celali* commander of the period.

Yusuf Sinan died on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1606<sup>94</sup> in Diyarbakır where his son Mahmud was *beylerbeyi*. We do not know exactly the nature of his disease but Hasan Bey-zade asserted that he died because of grief<sup>95</sup>. We have much more information about his estates and his possessions: they all were seized by the sultan and chronicles hint at his legendary wealth<sup>96</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.19, cc. 222-224; l.26, cc. 263-264; l.32, cc. 328-329.

<sup>84</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.30, cc. 312-315.

<sup>85</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.19, cc. 222-224.

<sup>86</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.14, cc. 188-189; f. 62, cc. 215-218, December 30, 1605.

<sup>87</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.19, c. 222.

<sup>88</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 60, l.34, cc. 351-364.

<sup>89</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 61, l.20, cc. 157-158.

<sup>90</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 62, l.21, c. 234.

<sup>91</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 62, c. 160, November 6, 1605.

<sup>92</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 62, l.21, cc. 234-235.

<sup>93</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 62, l.24, cc. 262-265.

<sup>94</sup> Asve, *Sdac*, f. 63, l.4, c. 33.

<sup>95</sup> S.N. Aykut (ed.), *Hasan Bey-Zade Tarihi*, p. 901.

<sup>96</sup> B.S. Baykal (ed.), *Peçevi Tarihi*, p. 296.

## 7. Conclusion

The exigencies that Yusuf Sinan experienced in his life are a clear indication of the challenges many faced in the reorganization of the Ottoman ruling class between the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The empire was then trying to adapt itself to changing economical and political conditions in an increasingly global context, new technologies of war at sea and the emergence of new powers in the Eastern Mediterranean, but to fulfill this task it had also to change its method of government. It became gradually more centralized and, consequently, factions emerged. The palace officers gained an extensive control over the dynasty and state wealth; their support was eagerly sought after by those who wanted to make a career in the empire and it became necessary to get positions of high rank. Gazanfer and Yusuf Sinan's relations were a clear example of this. They supported each other in order to secure their own futures. Yusuf Sinan had to soften his relations with members of other powerful factions at the court, to behave in a diplomatic way as well as to feed a huge household that had the task of supporting him. His continual raids against Venetian ships and coasts were the consequence of his need for an extraordinary amount of cash that he was obliged to give to flatter his enemies and to reward his friends. His relations with Safiye Sultan, Gazanfer Agha and others of high rank at court, as well as with foreign states such as England, France, Spain and Venice, have to be read within the changing political dynamics of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many times, during the Persian war, he was accused of misleading the army and behaving violently toward his soldiers and governors. He was held responsible for the emergence of the *Celali* rebellions in Anatolia after 1596 and was accused of having made them stronger with his violent acts and poor decisions during the Persian campaign in between 1604-1606. Yusuf Sinan was one of the most important high-ranking officials during the passage from a centralized administration and government to factions and shared rule and the events of his life clearly mirror the structural changes that the Ottoman ruling elite underwent during this uneasy and difficult period.