

19. GRAND VIZIER KOCA SINAN PASHA AND THE OTTOMAN NON-MUSLIMS

NENAD FILIPOVIĆ

Herrn emer. o. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Markus Köhbach,

herzliche Grüße

On 27 April 1594 the Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha, who was then residing in Belgrade, a logistic centre during the Hungarian campaign,¹ ordered the relics of the Serbian national saint, Saint Sava (d. 1236),² to be burned publicly in the area of Old Vračar, in the very downtown of today's Belgrade, after he had them brought from the Herzegovinian monastery of Mileševo where they had been placed since the saint's demise.³ Many contemporary and near-contemporary Serbian and Western sources, from the Old Serbian colophons to the English author Knolles, mention this event, although mostly in a lapidary way.⁴ But it was believed on the basis of decades of fruitless search that no Ottoman source discussed it. In 1983, however, British Ottomanist Christine Woodhead published her doctoral dissertation dedicated to the chronicle of the Ottoman campaign in Hungary in 1593–1594 penned by the Ottoman chronicler Ta'likizade (c.1550–1599).⁵ As it turned out, the third chapter (out of eighteen in total) of Ta'likizade's chronicle describes the burning of the relics of Saint Sava, making it one of the few early sources for this event.⁶ Furthermore, it is

¹ On this campaign, see Jorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen*, vol. 3, pp. 291–319, (hereafter: Jorga, *GOR*); Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, III/1, pp. 71–76. For the list of the contemporary and near-contemporary French narrative sources, see Samardžić, ed., *Beograd i Srbija*, pp. 633–643.

² On him, see Ćirković ed., *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. 1, esp. pp. 297–314.

³ On the monastery, see Radojčić, *Mileševa*. On the region of Herzegovina which was a part of the kingdom of Bosnia and a province in the *eyalet* of Bosnia, see Dinić, 'Zemlje Hercega Svetoga Save', pp. 151–258.

⁴ A detailed analysis of all preserved sources about the event is offered in: Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā* (a monograph in print based on the author's 1991 M.A. thesis submitted to the Belgrade University).

⁵ Woodhead, *Ta'likī-zāde's Şehnāme-i Hümayūn* (hereafter: Woodhead).

⁶ Woodhead, pp. 185–196.

the most detailed account of the event discovered until now. Although it was written in the macaronic and complicated high Ottoman style (*faṣīḥ*)⁷ the work in its entirety, and this chapter in particular has first-rate evidentiary value. Additionally, unlike the majority of the later Ottoman chroniclers, Ta'likizade was not biased towards Sinan Pasha.⁸ We shall proceed with an analysis of this narrative, especially with respect to how Sinan Pasha's role is reflected in it.

This paper is also a case study which attempts to provide an indirect proposal on how to address questions of interplay between religion(s), politics, state(s), society, and personalities in the sixteenth-century Ottoman world, with a look also at the wider Mediterranean basin and Central Europe that lay beyond the Ottoman borders. The main character in this case study is a long-lived Ottoman high dignitary who was quite a remarkable person. Consequently, any generalization based on the deeds of a man so idiosyncratic, even according to the standards of his own age, should be taken *cum grano salis*. This exceptionalism, on the other hand, might be very telling not only for the study of such a person but equally for the study of a plethora of persons who behaved totally differently. In this paper we shall focus on how the Ottoman Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha treated Ottoman non-Muslims on two separate occasions. At this stage it is time to give a short overview of Sinan Pasha's *vita et gesta*.

KOCA SINAN PASHA (1520?–1596)⁹

This Ottoman statesman who served repeatedly as grand vizier towards the end of his life was born in historical northern Albania. His father was either a Catholic or a Muslim Albanian peasant. According to the old custom, Muslim Bosniaks and Muslim Albanians were taken into the janissary corps. On the other hand, there is strong evidence suggesting he had Catholic origins.¹⁰ One can safely assume that Sinan was

⁷ On this category, see Ateş, 'Seci', esp. coll. 310b–311a. Ta'likizade praised in the very same work the language of the Ottoman core lands (*lisân-i Rûm*) as the most comely, the most embellished, gem-studded and adorned, for it is an imperial language in the first place (*lisân-ı Rûm daḥı kelâmü'l-mülûk mülûkü'l-kelâm kavlince cemî'-i elsinenün ebhâ vü ezyeni muraşsa' u müzeyyeni olmağın*), Woodhead, p. 134. On this point see also Develi, *Osmanlı'nın Dili*, p. 68; Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own', pp. 7–25.

⁸ On this in detail, see Filipović, *Qoca Sinân Pâşâ*.

⁹ Two best biographies are Kaleshi, 'Veliki Vezir Kodža Sinan-paşa', pp. 104–144 and Turan, 'Sinan Paşa'. Among the most important sources are Öz, 'Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Yemen Fatihi', pp. 171–193, (hereafter: Öz = Arşivi); Sahillioğlu, *Koca Sina Paşa'nın*, (hereafter: Sahillioğlu = Telhisler). Also, see *Tarih-i Selânikî*, (hereafter: Selânikî = İpşirli); Câfer İyânî, *Tevâriḥ-i Cedîd* (hereafter: İyânî = Kirişcioğlu); *Topçular Kâtibi* (hereafter: Topçular = Yılmaz).

¹⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 263–265, 272 et passim. A Ragusan document of 1571, listing all the renegades in the Imperial Council, defined Sinan as *Albanese cattolico*. See Malcolm, *Agents*, pp. 265, 493 (n. 5). Besides, Malcolm's book is one of the rare publications where the

taken into the janissary corps according to that custom. His brother Ayas Pasha¹¹ was already a janissary brought up in the Seraglio. Thanks to that, Sinan's career advanced faster than was usual in the sixteenth century. In 1567 he was appointed governor of Egypt. This province was of enormous importance for the Ottoman Empire. Obtaining its governorship was a sure sign that such a person might eventually enter the Imperial Council. In the years 1568–1570 Sinan Pasha was a major player in the pacification of the rebellion in Yemen. Thereafter, the Ottoman chroniclers described him as 'the conqueror of Yemen' (*fātiḥ-i Yemen*).¹² In the beginning of May 1573, Sinan Pasha was appointed the seventh vizier of the Dome. In the year 1574 he successfully fought the Spaniards and assured by the end of August 1574 the Ottoman success in Tunisia. After a long conflict in the Imperial Council where he allied himself with Lala Mustafa Pasha¹³ against the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha,¹⁴ Sinan Pasha emerged as a victor, together with Lala Mustafa Pasha, in the initiative for an expedition against Persia. Soon after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579, Sinan Pasha removed Lala Mustafa Pasha as a competitor and became the chief commander of the Ottoman Persian expedition. At the end of August of 1580 Sinan Pasha became grand vizier for the first time. According to his hand-written report to the sultan, Sinan Pasha returned from Persia in July 1581 with war booty estimated at 150 000 ducats. Nonetheless, in 1582 he was deposed from office and exiled to Malkara on the European shore of the Sea of Marmara where he possessed a huge estate.

In 1588, during the famous *sipahi* rebellion, caused by their resistance to payment in debased coinage, Sinan Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier for the second time, on 14 April. In this second term, which lasted more than three years, Sinan Pasha accepted a Persian peace offer. The twelve-year conflict between the two Muslim gunpowder empires was brought to an end. He was also successful in stabilizing the Ottoman currency. Sinan Pasha lost his position on 2 August 1591. Moreover, his various endowments in Syria, Palestine, Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, historical Anatolia, and eastern Turkey, which he had established after he was appointed grand

person and historical impact of Sinan Pasha is treated in an unbiased way. The contemporary Western sources sometimes provide a more balanced picture of Sinan Pasha. Therefore, Von Hammer, based on the Ottoman sources gives a predominantly negative portrait of Sinan Pasha, while Jorga furnishes us with a more objective view. See, Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 170–171 et passim. A balanced view on this grand vizier is also provided in Graf, *Renegades*, based mostly on the Austrian Habsburg evidence.

¹¹ On him, see Baysun, 'Ayas Paşa'; Parry, 'Ayās Pasha'; Küttükoğlu, 'Ayas Paşa'. The question of whether Ayas Pasha was indeed a brother of our Sinan Pasha needs a reexamination. For the purposes of our paper we, tentatively, accepted the received wisdom.

¹² Turan, 'Sinan Paşa', col. 671a. For comparison see Nahrawālī, *Lightning over Yemen*.

¹³ On him, see the classic paper by Turan, 'Lala Mustafa Paşa', pp. 551–593.

¹⁴ On him, see Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 35–63, 131–179; Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa'; Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolović*; Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolovitch*, to be read together with an important review by Veinstein in *Turcica* 27 (1995), pp. 304–310; Afyoncu, 'Sokullu Mehmed Paşa'.

vizier, were confiscated for the state treasury and he was once again banished to his Malkara estate.

In 1593, after a series of crises and riots that brought a state of chaos to the capital, the imperial seal was awarded to him for the third time. On this occasion, Sinan Pasha turned towards Habsburg Austria and took charge of the war that entered history under the title of The Long War (1593–1606). Belgrade was the main logistic centre of this long war.¹⁵ Although he succeeded in conquering certain important fortresses, this campaign turned to be very protracted. This, naturally, caused a lot of financial pressure and many interest groups came into conflict. In February 1595 the old commander-in-chief was removed from office for a short time. After only five months, Sinan Pasha became grand vizier again, for the fourth time. He was backed by a very strong party composed of the four most important viziers in the Imperial Council as well as by both the chief jurist (sheikh ül-islam) Bostanzade (d. 1598)¹⁶ and the chief military judge (*qadiasker*) Baki Efendi (d. 1600),¹⁷ one of the greatest Ottoman poets ever. Thanks to Pasha's not very successful resolution of the conflict with the Wallachian Prince Michael (r. 1593–1601),¹⁸ as well as to the poor conduct of his favourite son Mehmed Pasha¹⁹ on the Habsburg front, at the end of 1595 Sinan Pasha was yet again removed. His successor from the clan of Sokollu died only nine days after his appointment and thus Sinan Pasha was brought, by the hand of destiny, to the grand vizierate for the fifth time. This was to be his last tenure in that position. The Ottoman chroniclers, who were generally hostile to him, describe these last years of his as the tenure of a senile and irresponsible angry old man. On the other hand, one of his greatest political allies in the last years was nobody less than Hoca Sa'deddin (d. 1599),²⁰ the powerful royal tutor, a great intellectual, and the head of one of the most influential Ottoman ulema clans. Sinan Pasha passed away on 3 April 1596. He left an estate consisting of 600 000 ducats, 20 boxes of emeralds, 61 measures of pearl, 600 mink coats, 29 loads of the gem-studded objects and various movables whose value was estimated in millions of silver coins.²¹ His too were manifold endowments all around the empire.

It is quite noteworthy that this person achieved so much on the military field and in the political arena and left behind an enormous wealth as well as numerous endowments all around the empire, but none of this saved him from having a bad reputation in both contemporary narrative sources and later historiography. Ottoman, Persian, European, Ottoman Christian, and Ottoman Jewish sources, predominantly the narrative ones, all agree that he was a corrupt, bad-tempered, severe person. Only very few contemporary narrative sources disagree. The reason for this

¹⁵ On this, see Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 365–382; Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare*.

¹⁶ On him, see İpşirli, 'Bostanzâde'.

¹⁷ On him, see İz, 'Bâkî'; Çavuşoğlu, 'Bâkî'.

¹⁸ On this Prince of Wallachia, see Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 289–290, 303–333.

¹⁹ On this person, see, e. g., Selânikî = İpşirli, Index s. v. Mehmed Paşa, Koca Sinan-zâde.

²⁰ On him, see Turan, 'Sa'd-ed-din'; Schwarz und Winkelhane, *Hoğa Sa'deddin*. On his origins, clan and his client network, see Sohrweide, 'Hoğa Sa'deddin und die Perser', pp. 170–179.

²¹ Selânikî = İpşirli, II, pp. 584–585.

remains an enigma and a detailed study of his character and deeds as well as the nature of his era is a desideratum required to answer the question of how much such an image was grounded in reality.

SINAN PASHA, THE BURNING OF THE RELICS, AND TA'LIKIZADE'S NARRATIVE

Ta'likizade's narrative is a very well-crafted text with a thesis. It differs from the conventional Ottoman popular annalistic texts. In such texts where there is no plan of discussion, main theses, arguments, or proofs, the main unit of understanding the events is purely calendrical. The events are noted down as they occur, with no attempt to construct a hermeneutical argument about why something happened or what the consequences of an event were. Ta'likizade, on the other hand, not only narrates the events; he comments on them, and he offers broad explanations. His work is historiography connected to religious polemics and a biographical panegyric with a clear purpose. It is made up of the following sub-chapters:

- a) Description of the monastery and its geographical setting.
- b) Description of the relics and relic chest/coffin, i. e. reliquary.
- c) The wealth of the monastery.
- d) The cult of Saint Sava among local Muslims.
- e) The letter concerning the relics and the rebellion.
- f) Seizure and burning of the relics.

We shall proceed with an analysis of his narrative, point by point.

a) Ta'likizade uses the terms *deyr* and *kilise* for the monastery. This overlaps with the usage in various official Ottoman sources concerning Mileševo in the period 1468–1614.²² Using *Volksetymologie* and its play with names of different origins as one of the favourite rhetorical stratagems of Ottoman historiography and literature,²³ Ta'likizade connects the name of the monastery (Mileševo) with the hero of the Serbian Kosovo myth, Miloš Obilić, who was believed to have been the assassin of Murad I. Ta'likizade calls him *Milūṣ Kōbīla*,²⁴ as he was known in the Ottoman narrative sources.²⁵ It is interesting that the chronicler combines the Kosovo version of the Ottoman narrative sources with the local tradition, testified to in the works of European travellers, which connected the monastery and the nearby fortress with the

²² Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 97–109. Also, see Bojanić, 'Dva Priloga', pp. 97–103; Spaho, 'Mileševo', pp. 363–374; Zirojević, *Crkve i Manastiri*, p. 133.

²³ This trait of Ottoman historical writing was recognized by both Paul Wittek and Victor Louis Ménége. See Ménége, *A Survey*. We are grateful to the late Prof. Ménége as well as to the late Prof. Inalcık who both helped us, back in 1987, in obtaining a copy of this still unpublished masterpiece; Filipović, 'Bosansko Krajište', pp. 167–206, esp. pp. 191–192.

²⁴ Woodhead, p. 185 and n. 6.

²⁵ Olesnicki, 'Turski Izvori', pp. 59–92, esp. 89–92. For more on Obilić, see Ćirković, 'Dopune', p. 456.

Kosovo events.²⁶ This is a clear proof of the extent to which the Ottoman literati were aware of the local non-Ottoman tradition and how they were able to rewrite such a tradition and re-edit it in accordance with their literary and other agendas.

According to Ta'likizade, the monastery was well built, domed, lavishly decorated. He is sincerely fascinated by it, for he compares the monastery with the Seraglio in Istanbul and Indian pagan shrines. The chronicler gives us an account of the frescoes on the walls of the monastery church which included scenes from both the Old and New Testaments. This is also surprisingly accurate. Studies of Byzantine and Serbian medieval art include Mileševo in every single history of Byzantine painting before 1453. They show special interest in the earliest layer of the frescoes dating from the first half of the thirteenth century.²⁷ Ta'likizade knows that the frescoes are full of graffiti and that some of them had been mutilated with stones. This is an equally accurate observation of one aspect of Balkan folk culture which involved using the powder scraped from frescoes as a supposedly miraculous remedy, especially for blindness.²⁸ For a long time it has been supposed that the popular culture of the lower strata of the Balkan non-Muslims was terra incognita for Ottoman Muslim intellectuals.²⁹ In parentheses one might say that the entire text is characterised by familiarity with both the high and the popular culture of the local Christians. Ta'likizade expresses his fascination with the monastery's beauty tempered by his despair that this emanation of God's beauty is defiled and polluted by infidels. The following verses illustrate his point:

Its interior is full of impure and dishonourable infidels,
It is paradise which is polluted by the gentiles.³⁰

Ta'likizade applies the Ottoman variety of Sufi neo-platonic aesthetics according to which the beauty of a person, animal, plant, edifice, object etc. is only a trope (*mecāz*)

²⁶ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 99–101. Also, see Samardžić ed., *Beograd i Srbija*, pp. 129, 372 (Philippe du Fresne-Canaye—1573); pp. 138–139, 381–382 (Jean Palerne Foresien—1582). On their visits to Mileševo see also Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, pp. 297–299, esp. p. 297 (the visit of du Fresne-Canaye on 26 January 1573); pp. 339–341, esp. p. 341 (the visit of Palerne Foresien on 18 August 1582).

²⁷ Radojčić, *Mileševa*.

²⁸ On this habit, see Slijepčević, 'Stare Zadužbine', p. 37. This essay, which rightly became famous in the ex-Yugoslav countries, was published for the first time in 1929 and was one of the first examples of scholarly revendication of the artistic qualities and cultural importance of post-Byzantine arts and crafts in the Christian Orthodox Commonwealth, in the period 1453–1690 especially.

²⁹ The anonymous reviewer of this essay observed how those who postulated this 'lack of knowledge' apparently never read Evliya Çelebi's travelogue. The present author is grateful to the reviewer for this remark which strengthens the main thesis of the paper.

³⁰ Woodhead, p. 187. 'İçi pür gebr-i pelid ü murdār/ Cennetiin levveset-he 'l-kiüffār.'

for the Truth of God's Beauty (*ḥaḳīqat*).³¹ The poet is puzzled why such beauty was given to Christians. For this is a beautiful house of God inhabited by impure and dishonourable untrustworthy monks. He quite accurately reports the presence of a number of monks living in the cells (*mābeyn*).³² According to the Ottoman sources and European travellers from ca. 1468–1626, between 40 to 80 monks inhabited Mileševo.³³ This was indeed a high number.

b) Ta'likizade describes the relics of Saint Sava as impure dried skeletons (*ḳadīd-i pelīd*), geomancer's skeletons (*ḳadīd-i kehene*), and old impure corpses (*mürde-yi pelīd-i köhene*), which are obviously worthless and undeserving of worship given that they belong to 'the Nazarenes',³⁴ who are devoid of confession and perfidious lawless sodomites who follow the ways of the unbelieving Christians robbed of their senses (*üslüb-ı meslüb-ı Tersā üzre Naşārā-yı bī-dīn ve ḥusārā-yı bed-āyīn*)³⁵. Sometimes he addresses the relics as a living person: merely as Saint Sava. For him the relics are clearly objects of pagan worship (*şirk*), without any basis in the true faith. No one should pay respect to them. Nonetheless, the writer has no doubts about the supernatural powers of the relics. According to him, the relics speak, prognosticate, and enter the politics of the day. They are agents of the powers of darkness, and protégés of the devil. As for the monks, he says that they are tricksters inspired by the devil. This dimension of solid conviction about the supernatural powers of the relics in the service of the devil is of the highest importance. We believe that not only Ta'likizade, but Sinan Pasha himself was strongly convinced of these supernatural abilities. The political benefit of the pacification of the monastery together with the rich booty taken from it would not exclude the dimension of the Pasha's strong conviction that he was fighting a justified war as a partisan of Light against the army of devilish Darkness.

³¹ On this, see Ahmed, *Islam*, pp. 38–46 and other places. The point is further elaborated and put in the context of Ottoman cultural history in Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*, especially the analysis of the well-known adage *al-majāz qanṭaratu l-ḥaḳīqa*. Also, see Heinrichs, 'On the Genesis', pp. 112–140; Mustafa Ali, *Ḥilyetü'r-ricāl*, pp. 272–274 (the editor's discussion of the term *ḥaḳīqat* in the Ottoman context).

³² Woodhead, p. 193.

³³ Filipović, *Qoca Sinan Pāşā*, pp. 107–108, 158–159. Also, see Spaho, 'Mileševo', pp. 367–369.

³⁴ One of the standard Ottoman terms for Christians, *Naşārā*, is here translated in a more literal way as 'the Nazarenes' to preserve the author's synonymical language game in juxtaposing this term with another word frequently used as a term for the Christians, *Tersā*. See 'tersā', *Redhouse*, col. 532b; and 'naşārā', *Redhouse*, col. 2084b. Redhouse renders the latter term as 'Nazarenes, Christians'. The term *naşārā* was used in Ottoman diplomatics to describe Christians (e. g. *mülūk-i naşārā*). It is mentioned frequently in the Quran and as such it must have been familiar to all strata of Ottoman Muslims. For the terms *naşārā* and *naşrānī* in the Quran, see Q II: 62, 111, 113, 120, 135, 140; III: 67; V: 14, 18, 51, 69, 82; IX: 30; XXII: 17.

³⁵ Woodhead, pp. 185, 187–188, 191–192. The last quoted syntagm *üslüb-ı meslüb-ı Tersā üzre Naşārā-yı bī-dīn u ḥusārā-yı bed-āyīn* is indeed a masterpiece of rhetorical invective. For the term *ḥusārā* with the meaning of homosexual and used as a form of abuse in the Punjabi language, see www.urbandictionary.com/Khusara, accessed on 1 September 2018. The term clearly originated in premodern Turco-Persianate courtly and/or urban setting(s).

Further, Ta'likizade describes the relic chest, namely the relic coffin (*tābūt*),³⁶ and he says that it was made of 18 *vuḳīyye* of silver, namely more than 23 kg³⁷ of silver (*on sekiz vuḳīyye sīm-i hāmla endūde*). The relics were perfumed with expensive perfumes (*revā'ihle ālūde*).³⁸ The other sources confirm the existence of such a coffin which was a masterpiece of the thirteenth-century Byzantine style silver-smithing. The gilt pure silver plates were enamelled (Slav. *hineu[s]i* < Gr. *χόμενσις*, *χέμενσις*) as well as gem-studded and put as an outside cover of the wooden coffin.³⁹ The chronicler knows that an episcopal staff made of rock crystal was placed in the coffin next to the saint's head (*başı uçında kabzası billūr bir 'aṣā*).⁴⁰ The English traveller, Fox, who visited Mileševo in 1589, noted the miraculous abilities of the staff, writing that his travelling companions, three Ragusan Catholic merchants, rubbed their eyes with the apple head of the staff for they believed it was very good for their eyes.⁴¹ Once again we encounter the widely accepted belief in the miraculous abilities of the relics and other objects from the coffin, this time viewed positively. Also, the chronicler observed that a hand with gem-studded and embellished bracelets and with a lot of rings with gems on its fingers was stored separately, outside of the coffin and/or the chest (*parmaklarında cevheri nice engiştirer ve muraşsa' sīvārlarla bir elin tabutdan birün kılınışlar*).⁴²

c) Ta'likizade claims that Mileševo Monastery was very rich at the time these events took place. The source of this wealth were the enormous contributions in

³⁶ It is interesting that the Venetian bailo to Constantinople, Paolo Contarini, in 1580 used the term *arca*, which corresponds to the Ottoman *tābūt* to describe the relic coffin and/or chest of the Mileševo Monastery (*l'arca di santo Saba, ch'è tutta guernita di fuori d'argento a figure dorate*). See *Diario del Viaggio di Contarini*, p. 19. He visited Mileševo on 21 May 1580. See Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, p. 335.

³⁷ 1 standardized *vuḳīyye~oḳka* = 400 *dirhem*, i. e. 1.2828 kg. See Škaljić, *Turcizmi*, s. v. 'oka'; Hinz, *İslām'da Ölçü*, p. 30. See also İnalçık, 'Introduction', pp. 318–320 who warns that the earlier Ottoman *vuḳīyye~oḳka* weighed 1228.835 g or 389 *dirhem* of different standardization. H. Sahillioğlu has shown that the official *dirhem* in Ottoman use by the end of the seventeenth century was actually the *dirhem-i Tebrizî* of 3.072 g, while after the seventeenth century the official *dirhem* became the *dirhem-i Rūmî* which weighed 3.207 g. This would render the following ratio: 1 standardized pre-seventeenth century *vuḳīyye~oḳka* = 400 *dirhem*, i. e. 1.2288 kg. Also, see Herzig, 'A Note'; Agoston, *Guns*, pp. 243, 245.

³⁸ Woodhead, p. 187.

³⁹ Miljković, *Žitija*, p. 197 and n. 695. Also, see Popović, 'Mošti Svetog Save', p. 82.

⁴⁰ Woodhead, p. 187. On this staff, see Radojković, *Srpsko Zlatarstvo*, pp. 76–77; Petković, *Manastir Svete Trojice*, p. 45 and pict. 60; Miljković, *Žitija*, pp. 83–84 and n. 215; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 114–115.

⁴¹ Kostić, *Kulturne veze*, p. 332; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, p. 115. Fox who was in the entourage of a certain Henry Cavendish, a private traveler to Constantinople, visited the Mileševo Monastery on 26 May 1589. See Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, p. 398. For Fox's travelogue, see Fox, 'Mr. Harrie Cavendish', XVII; Ault, 'Review', pp. 82–83.

⁴² Woodhead, p. 187; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 113–114. This testimony resolves a long-standing problem from the history of the relics of St. Sava. For comparison see Popović, 'Mošti Svetog Save', pp. 93–95. Also, see Popović, 'The Siena Relic'.

money and precious votive offerings given to both the monastery and the relics by the local population, as well as worshippers from distant areas. Ta'likizade places these distant donors in the Orthodox Commonwealth and in Christian, mostly Catholic Europe together with Transylvania. The other distant donors were, according to him, from China, India and pagan Central Asia.⁴³ This rhetorical exaggeration served to illustrate the enormous wealth of the monastery, according to the standards of the era. The chronicler noted that the monks handled this money as their private property all their lives, which corresponds with what we know about the late Byzantine and post-Byzantine monasticism characterized by the predominance of the phenomenon termed *idiorrhymia*. He also described how the monks used to divide the gifts given to the monastery among themselves.⁴⁴

Despite all exaggeration, this narrative testifies that the Ottomans were quite familiar with the daily life inside the Balkan Orthodox monasteries. The numerous preserved Ottoman documents testify to a never-ending line of court cases between the state treasury and the monasteries involving the inheritance of the monks. The state treasury claimed that the possessions and objects owned by the monks were private property and that they belonged to the state since the monks died without issue. On the other hand, the monasteries argued, and this was clearly a more accurate and justified version of events, that these possessions and objects belonged to the monastery and that they had been given to the monks for their use only.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the better study of how the monks under the *idiorrhymic* vows understood their property rights as well as how the Orthodox Church(es') authorities perceived this issue is a pressing research desideratum. Any generalization might be proven to have been too hasty.

The chronicler is aware of the customary tax known by the Slavonic term *poklon* (gift).⁴⁶ This was an investiture gift which the monastery was obliged to give to every

⁴³ Woodhead, p. 188. For the donors from the Orthodox Commonwealth (Wallachia, Moldavia, Muscovy), see Radojčić, *Mileševa*, pp. 45, 49–54. On Moldavia and the impoverished scions of the lords of Herzegovina Hranići-Kosače-Hercegovići, see Jireček, *Spomenici Srpski*, p. 90. Mileševo was located in the Kosača patrimony. Also, see Atanasovski, *Pad Hercegovine*, pp. 163–165, on the pitiable living conditions of this branch of the magnate family Kosača in Moldavia and Transylvania ca 1550–ca 1605.

⁴⁴ Woodhead, pp. 188, 193. On *idiorrhymia* in the Ottoman-era Serbian monasticism, see Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 88–89, 106–107.

⁴⁵ Boškov, 'Jedan Ferman'; Fotić, *Sveta Gora*.

⁴⁶ Tričković, 'Poklon'. Also, see Bojanić, *Turski Zakoni*, pp. 30 (№ 19 § VI), 161 s. v. *poklon*. For the gifting practices among the Ottomans before 1800, see Reindl-Kiel, 'Der Duft der Macht', and many of her other papers pertaining to the subject. The Ottoman provincial diplomatic gift-giving as well as the internal Ottoman gift-giving among the non-palatial Ottomans are barely studied subjects, on the other hand. The ex-Yugoslav historiographies since 1860s, nonetheless, observed the phenomenon of Ottoman provincial diplomatic gift-giving, mostly on the basis of evidence from the archives of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and Zadar (Zara); their findings are barely known to the majority of the scholars in the fields of Ottoman, early

single newly appointed Ottoman governor of Herzegovina. Certainly, the gift was not limited to the Mileševo Monastery only. The amount of that gift, according to Ta'likizade, was 70–80 000 akçes (*her gelen beg kiliseden yetmiş seksen bir akçe tenāvül eyleyüb*).⁴⁷ This is an exaggerated amount, though the custom existed as such. The real value of the monastery gift to the governor was ca. 700 akçes. A cash gift was the customary symbolic tribute of the subject to the governor as a representative of the ruler. In return, the monastery was given sultanic orders (firman) endorsing the protection of the monastery as well as tax privileges followed by various documents issued by provincial governors, judges, and local authorities. Ta'likizade writes that these privileges were granted to the monastery, to the relics, and to the monks. This report is corroborated by contemporary European travellers (1533, 1550, 1559, 1573, 1582, 1626).⁴⁸ A local oral tradition, still extant at the beginning of the twentieth century, claimed that the monks had a wooden aqueduct made which brought milk to the monastery from a village in the vicinity.⁴⁹

Ragusan archival sources describe the wealth of the monastery and the presence of the monks at the international market in Ragusa. From 1573 to 1586 the monks used to sell 4700 heads of sheep and smaller quantities of other cattle which brought them an income of 2000 ducats. Between the years 1580 and 1583 around 5000 heads of sheep were sold. In 1588, on one single occasion 150 heads of sheep were brought to Ragusa. Certainly, these were not all heads of sheep or cattle sold in Ragusa by the Mileševans. The records in the series *Dona Turcarum* are incomplete but highly illustrative.⁵⁰ We should bear in mind that, as a result of their privileges, the Mileševans used to pay to the state treasury a lump sum tax of 500 akçes (*hükmi hümayün mücebince yılda beşyüz akçe makṭū' ḥarāc virürler imiş*) or something more than four ducats, according to the exchange rate in the 1580s.⁵¹ The huge net income of the monastery is more than obvious.

modern Mediterranean and Central-European studies. For instance, see Božić, 'Ajaz', pp. 75–76, where it is shown that this Ottoman governor of Herzegovina and more prominent people from his entourage during the late 1470s and early 1480s used to receive from the Ragusan government gifts such as cash in gold and silver pieces, silver goblets and cups, fine silk and woollen cloths, sugar, candied fruits, dessert vine like *malvasia*, etc. The Ottomans always reciprocated, mostly in livestock (oxen, bulls, cows, rams, sheep, goats, horses), but also with silver goblets and cups. Especially valuable were the gifts Ayas Bey used to send to the Ragusan government. Also, see Miović, 'Beylerbey of Bosnia'.

⁴⁷ Woodhead, p. 192.

⁴⁸ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*; Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, pp. 180–181, 207, 211, 221, 243, 297, 341.

⁴⁹ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 115–125.

⁵⁰ Dubrovnik, DAD, *Dona Turcarum*, vol. I-II (entries discussing *il caloieri di Santo Saba*). Also, see Grujić, 'Manastir Mileševo i Dubrovnik'.

⁵¹ Spaho, 'Mileševo', p. 370; Zirojević, *Crkve i Manastiri*, p. 133, s. v. MILEŠEVA; *Popis za Hercegovinu iz 1585*, II, pp. 537–538 with an inaccurate and periphrastic translation which is far inferior to that offered by Spaho; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 119–120. Compare to Ankara, *Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Kuyûd-ı Kadîme* (= TKGM, KuK), TTD, № 483, *Defter-i mufaşşal-i livā'-i Hersek*, fol. 250b.

d) Ta'likizade claimed that the Muslims of Herzegovina, where the Mileševo Monastery is located, worshipped and/or respected the relics of Saint Sava. He strongly reprimands them for that habit. In a dystich he gravely accuses the local Muslims of having converted to Islam to avoid the poll-tax, and of actually being frauds and infidels.

He writes:

By uttering 'I am a Muslim' they should not pay a poll-tax

Whereas amongst them there is a plethora of white-headed infidel marauders.⁵²

He further maintains that the local Muslims have never abandoned Christian customs and beliefs, while they neglect Muslim religious duties, especially fasting. Their human nature has become corrupt.

These are standard phrases from the Ottoman heresiographical and legal literature with a touch of poetic license. Nonetheless, we propose that his claims were not mere empty formulas and topoi. Elsewhere in the text Ta'likizade writes that monks, thanks to their wealth, give a lot of money to the local Muslims. He says:

In accordance with their useless and donkey-like natures [the local Muslims] are

brought into non-existence thanks to the alms and charities from the monastery... and because these monks who are the foes of the eloquent⁵³ faith are in the habit of giving to the local Muslims the alms, charities, and votives which reached them [i.e., the monks] from distant realms. ...this causes the ripening of the fondness for hypocrisy at their [i.e., the local Muslims'] palates devoid of any sense of taste... by damaging the edifice of their own [i.e. the local Muslims'] creed they enlisted themselves amongst the welcoming helpers of the Nazarenes and the auxiliaries of the sodomite infidels.⁵⁴

This was how the monks tied the local Muslims to the Christian faith. Ta'likizade was here not only talking about this particular monastery's wealth, but probably also about the money-lending activities of monasteries in general. In the sixteenth century the main creditors in the Ottoman Empire were Muslim endowments.⁵⁵ However, in the area where Mileševo was located there were no great or wealthy Muslim

⁵² Woodhead, p. 188. '*Müslmân-em diyü virmez harâcı / Nice ak başlı kâfir var qaracı*'.

⁵³ For the precedent for such a translation of the term *mübîn*, see Wittek, '*Fath Mubîn*—“An Eloquent Victory”'. Wittek's more than felicitous rendering of this term does justice to the Ottoman intellectual, cultural, and religious tradition(s). It also underlines the place of the Quran as an intertextual focus which influenced so many facets of life of Muslim Ottomans, and not merely their written production.

⁵⁴ Woodhead, pp. 188–189. '*şadâkât-ı kiliseden intifâ' eyleyen bi-menfa'at-u-har-ṭabî'atlara göre göre...ol rehâbîn ki, a'âdi-yı dîn-i mübindür meşâfât-i dürdan gelen şadâkât-u-niüzürî orada olan Müslmânlara virmekle anlarıñ dañi kâm-ı bi-mezâklarına lezzet-i nifâk irişüb...bünyân-ı imân-larına hâlet virüb enşâr-ı Naşârâ ve a'vân-ı kefere-i hüsârâdan olmış olurlar.*'

⁵⁵ Sućeska, 'Vakufski Krediti'. The evidentiary basis of this seminal study was the kadı court records of Sarajevo from 1540–41, 1556–58, 1564–66. Equally seminal is Mandaville, 'Usurious Piety'.

endowments. The first substantial Muslim endowment in the area came into being only in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.⁵⁶ Therefore, it is safe to propose that the monastery was the main moneylender in the area.

Ta'likizade's claim about the spread of the cult of Saint Sava among the Muslims of Mileševo and Herzegovina is corroborated by many external sources.⁵⁷ Ramberti in 1534 was puzzled by the fact that 'Turks and Jews' were better alms-givers to the monastery than Christians. Jean Chesneau in 1547 observed how 'Turks respect the corpse of Saint Sava and give it votive offerings and alms'.⁵⁸ In 1547–1548 Jacques Gassot made virtually the same observation.⁵⁹ In the summer of 1550, the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, Ser Catharin Zen, stopped at Mileševo. His remarks can be condensed as follows: the lion's share of votive offerings and alms, as well as gifts to the monastery, were made by Turks; the Turks tremendously respect Saint Sava; and, last but not least, they are afraid of him.⁶⁰ In 1574, Parisian globetrotter Pierre

⁵⁶On this see the endowment deed of the latter ill-fated grand vizier Süleyman Pasha, a Muslim native of Mileševo, who, in 1677 as a high dignitary of the Sublime Porte (*mîr-âhûr-ı evvel*), bequested huge endowments both in immovables and in ready cash for the utterly run-down network of Islamic institutions in Mileševo, Prijepolje and Mileševac (Hisarcık), a petty fortress near the above-mentioned monastery (*Milôşöva qal'esi sükkânundan iken İstanbulda tevaṭṭın idüb*). The endowment deed was composed on 24 Şa'bân 1088 AH/ Friday, 22 October 1677 CE. See, Ankara, Vakıflar Arşivi, Kuyûd-u Kadîme, *Defter*, № 744, p. 155 (sıra 39). On this person, see Samardžić, 'Sulejman-paša'; Özcan, 'Süleyman Paşa'; Tričković, *Beogradski Pašaluk*, pp. 19–27, 47–50, 54–55, 162, 472.

⁵⁷ On the visits of Ramberti, Chesneau, Gassot, Zen, and Lescalopier, see Filipović, *Qoca Sinân Pâşâ*, pp. 118, 127–128. The chronologies of their visits to the Mileševo monastery can be reconstructed as follows: 18 February 1534 (Ramberti), after 13 March 1547 and before 15 May 1547 (Chesneau), after 17 December 1547 and before 23 January 1548 (Gassot), after 31 May 1550 and before 1 August 1550 (Zen), 21–23 March 1573 (Lescalopier). See Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, pp. 181, 207, 211, 221–222, 308.

⁵⁸ His note reads as follows: 'Passames près d'un monastere appellé Santa Sava où il y a plusieurs moines que vivent à la grecque, et s'appellent caloyeri **et monstrent le corps de Santa Sava aux passants. Les Turcs l'ont en reverence et y font des aumosnes**' [emphasis N. F.]. See Schefer ed., *Le voyage de Monsieur d'Aramon*, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁹ He wrote: '& passames vn Monastere de santa Saua, ou y a plusieurs Religieux qui viuent a la Grecque, **& monstrent le corps de santa Saua aux passants, qui este encore entier & beau, & les Turqs mesmes l'ont en grand reuerence, & y font plusieurs aulmosnes**' [emphasis N. F.]. See *Le Discours du Voyage de Venise de Constantinople*, fols 6b–7a.

⁶⁰ The entire passage reads as following: 'Di dove partiti cavalcando arrivamo ad un casal detto Prepuli [sc. Prijepolje. N. F.], et de li cavalcamo per una valle, **arrivamo ad un monasterio de colloieri serviani, nel qua vi è una chiesa di S. Sava, che dicono esser il corpo, tamen non vidi salvo le mani.** La chiesa fornita a la greca, et molti paramenti d'oro et d'argento, et li dentro sono 50 colloieri col suo generale, il qual dice haver 20 monasteri in quella provincia sotto il suo governo. **Vivono de elemosine la maggior parte de Turchi; è molto riverito il santo e temuto, come se ne dira.** Le sue habitationi sono di tavole a la turchesca; la chiesa, come si è detto, e di muro in cubba; paganno al gran signor de carazo duc. 1000 l'anno. Ditti calloieri fatti li suoi ufficii vano ala campagna a lavorar, raccogliendo pan et vin per loro bisogno' [emphasis N. F.]. Matković, 'Dva Talijanska Putopisa', p. 207.

Lescalopier left three important notes upon observation of the monastery and its life. First, he saw that some 'Jews and Turks' were kissing the hand-bone of Saint Sava with the same devotion as Christians. Second, 'Jews and Turks' gave more gifts to the relics than Christians. This observation is a leitmotif in travelogues during the sixteenth century. Third, an Ottoman junior officer (*çauş*) from his escort told Lescalopier how a certain Turk came to collect monastery taxes for the state, behaved oppressively toward the monks, and immediately fell dead at the monastery gates.⁶¹ This officer from his escort must have been a local janissary because this was the practice at that time: namely, state-sponsored travellers were escorted by the local state officials from one official site on the caravan route to another, where they were replaced by a local of that area.⁶² As is well known, Mileševo was situated near the famous Ragusan caravan route from Ragusa to Constantinople.⁶³ As late as 1630, a Dalmatian Counter-Reformation scholar Ivan Tomko Mrnavić noted that the Turks observed the saint's day and the glorious memory of Saint Sava.⁶⁴ In 1642 the Serbian patriarch Pajsije I, in his life of the Serbian Emperor Uroš (d.1371) added an excursus explaining the event of the burning of the relics. A certain provincial governor, inspired by the devil, maligned the Serbs to Sinan Pasha, stating that 'Turks' believe in Saint Sava and get baptized, and these claims caused Sinan Pasha to order the burning of the relics.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Lescalopier's note reads as follows: 'De là nous vismes le monastère de St Sava, convent de moyens serviens caloires, vestus de noir, parlant esclavon et vivants selon l'Eglise grecque: ilz nous feirent baiser ung grand os du bras de St Sava duquel ilz disoient avoir le corps, nous veismes de Juifz et Turcs baiser cet os avec autant de révérence que les chrestiens et leur font plus d'aumosnes: ces moyens payent certain tribut au Grand Seigneur. Notre chaous dict qu'un Turc, allant ung jour demander ce tribut, pour avoir usé de quelque violence aux moyens tumba mort à la porte du monastère'. See Cléray, 'Le voyage de Pierre Lescalopier', pp. 29–30. Also, see Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija*, p. 378.

⁶² Compare a telling piece of evidence in the writings of the Croat Jesuit Bartol Kašić from his missionary travel in the Ottoman Herzegovina which took place in the fall of 1612. Kašić wrote: 'cum D. Simone Matkovich et quatuordecim Ragusinis mercatoribus, qui pro tutela in itinere secum elegerant **armatum Janisarum** inter Turcas insignem ac nobilem...circa meridiem sumpto levissimo cibo ac poturus Gazko dictum **ad domum Janicari** prope solis occasum praeparatam hospitibus vacuumque indigenis Turcis devenerunt, in qua unusquisque suis rebus compositis sub tecto bene cenati quieverunt. Cena autem (ex proxima domo, in qua erat ipsius domini tota familia cum domina cadunna uxore) honorifice, opipare optimeque cibus coctis conditisque **ab ipsa cadunna**, delata est a servis ad hospitum domicilium cum amplis patinis. **Praeibat Turcico habitu filius domini indutus, ingenuus adolescens nomine Mehmetus**, servos, ipse oblaturus hospitibus nomine patris matrisque lautum ciborium apparatus absque ulla vini amphora; noverat enim hospites habere apud se vini Ragusio delati copiam non parvam pro omnibus in diurno itinere' [emphasis N. F.]. See Horvat, ed., *Autobiografija Isusovca Bartola Kašića*, pp. 164–65. For more on Kašić and Matković, see Radonić, *Kurija*, pp. 14–18, 29, 32, 66, 86–90, 95–97, 141, 282.

⁶³ Dinić, 'Karavanska Trgovina', pp.119–146, esp. at pp.121–122, 125–126, 137.

⁶⁴ Čajkanović, 'Život Svetoga Save', p. 137.

⁶⁵ [Ruvarc, ed.], 'Žitie Cara Uroša', pp. 231–232; Pajsije I, 'Život Cara Uroša', p. 404.

It seems necessary here to enquire about the character of local religion, especially religion as practised by the common people in the early modern era in localities like Herzegovina. For a long time, this kind of religiosity was understood in line with Hasluck's great work, which insisted on categories like popular religion and syncretism. This paradigm was criticised, and rightly so, by Tijana Krstić who pleaded for a more historicised analysis of popular religion.⁶⁶ Hasluck himself as a classical scholar inherited the category of syncretism from the great historians of Antiquity like Mommsen, Meyer, and Geffcken. Their powerful work influenced the history of religion in almost every sub-field of historiography.⁶⁷ The intellectual basis of their analyses was the Humean critique of popular religion and this philosopher's thesis that polytheism is the natural option for Man. As is well known, this paradigm was criticised by Peter Brown in his work on the rise of the cult of saints in Latin Christendom.⁶⁸ Brown's paradigm heavily influenced a short, though inspiring book by Karamustafa on antinomian Sufism between 1250 and 1500.⁶⁹ As such, Brown, read and adapted by Karamustafa, became representative of a new orthodoxy in Islamic and Ottoman studies. We firmly believe that Brown and Karamustafa have thrown the baby out with the bathwater in their critique of the syncretic paradigm. The overwhelming evidence, from the early modern period especially, as well as anthropological evidence in the twentieth century, suggest that one should seek a middle ground between historicists like Karamustafa and pro-syncretistic essentialists like Kissling.⁷⁰ Suffice to mention Ginzburg's work on witchcraft which discussed common Indo-European origins and the long history of the cult of witchcraft among the various peoples and societies of Europe from Estonia to Sicily and from the fifth to the nineteenth centuries at least;⁷¹ or Katičić's reconstruction of a common pre-Slavonic paganism that survived in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Croatian pious folk poetry, even if this was nominally Catholic, as well as the latter's studies which demonstrated the philological soundness of the *interpretatio christiana* understanding of the pre-Christian layers of the common Slavonic mythology as preserved in

⁶⁶ Krstić, 'The Ambiguous Politics'.

⁶⁷ The best introduction into this great school of thought in the historiography is provided in Geffcken, *The Last Days*. This English translation is preferable to the German original because of its masterful bibliographic rewriting and updating by as great scholar as the late MacCormack.

⁶⁸ Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, esp. pp. 12–22.

⁶⁹ Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*.

⁷⁰ Kissling, *Dissertationes*, I–III. For very telling studies of the religious ambiguities among the Bosnian commoners, mostly in the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, which build on Hasluck and Kissling paradigms, see Hadžijahić, 'O Jednom Vrelu'; Hadžijahić, 'Sinkretistički Elementi'. Also, see Popovska-Korobar and Gorgiev, 'Icons with Ottoman Inscriptions'. The paper deals with the cultic graffiti incised during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onto the Byzantine icons in Macedonia by the local Turkish-speaking Bektaşī-leaning Muslims. For new methodological vistas how to study the meeting of Islam with the local gnostic and other religious tradition and/or practices, see Crone, *The Nativist Prophets*.

⁷¹ Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*. Ginzburg owes a lot to the seminal work of the Swiss classical scholar and folklorist Karl Meuli. See Meuli, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I–II.

Christian saint cults among the Slavs.⁷² In that context we could argue that the cult of Saint Sava among the Muslims of Herzegovina during the sixteenth century was not only a result of the recentness of their Islamization, but also an example of the 'longue durée' of syncretism⁷³ among the Dinarian transhumant pastoralists. The evidence of other survivals from Antiquity onwards among such pastoralists is abundant.⁷⁴

e) Since the 1850s, based on Austrian Habsburg, papal, Venetian, Ragusan, Savoiard, and Mantuan records, as well as those from Spanish Habsburg lands, and both Spain proper and Spanish-held areas of today's Italy, it is known that from the late 1580s onward the secret agents of the two Habsburg branches, the Pope, the Duke of Savoy, and the Marquess of Mantua, were visiting every single corner of the west Balkans and to a lesser degree some Greek areas, propagating anti-Ottoman rebellions.⁷⁵ These rebellions would be included in support for the 'liberation of Constantinople'. All these designs were characterised by a mixture of Realpolitik, dynastic claims,⁷⁶ religious zeal on a new Counter-Reformation pattern, sheer adventurism, etc. The envoys contacted many of the high dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church including patriarch Jovan Kantul (1592–1614) and some important bishops.⁷⁷ In a letter dated 24 April 1596 and composed in Trebinje, in Herzegovina, one of such agents, Franciscan Dominik Andrijašević informs his employer, Emperor Rudolf in Prague, of an assured pledge of allegiance to Rudolf from Vissarion, Serbian Orthodox bishop of Herzegovina, as well as from the tribal chiefs from Trebinje, Mostači, Banjani, Nikšići and Ljubomir in Herzegovina, on the condition that Rudolf liberate them from the Ottomans. Such pledges may have already been made since 1591.⁷⁸

Ta'likizade clearly was aware of such habits of correspondence on the part of the dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church for he mentioned that the letter written jointly by the Serbian patriarch and the saint's relics contained an offer to the rulers of the Franks for rebellion as an act of treason toward the Ottoman ruler. In his account of the letter and in his version of the letter he addresses the Serbian patriarch as 'patriarch on the wrong path' (*batrik-i bed-tarik*). The letter is described as 'a letter full of tricks and deceit' (*mektüb-i pür-mekr-ü-âl*), 'unsuccessful text'

⁷² Katičić, 'Nachlese zum urslawischen Mythos'; Katičić, *Die Hauswirtin am Tor*; Katičić, 'Natko Nodilo', methodologically a pathbreaking contribution; Katičić, 'Zeleni Lug'. See also Marković, 'Kult Svetog Vida (Vita)', esp. pp. 40 and n. 33, 47–49.

⁷³ On this, see Zirojević, *Islamizacija*.

⁷⁴ Kulišić, *Stara Slovenska Religija*.

⁷⁵ Fiedler, 'Versuche der Türkisch-Südslavischen'; Fermendžin, 'Prilozi k poznavanju'; Vinaver, 'Toma Peleš'; Vinaver, 'Dominik Andrijašević'; Bartl, *Der Westbalkan*; Malcolm, *Agents*.

⁷⁶ Both the house of Savoy and the house of Mantua claimed inheritance rights to the Byzantine throne for they were related to the Palaiologan dynasty. See Popović, *Istočno Pitanje*, pp. 62–67.

⁷⁷ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 139–141. On Jovan Kantul, see Ruvarac, *O Pečkim Patrijarsima*, pp. 17–59; Tomić, *Pečki Patrijarh Jovan*; Ćorović, 'Jovan'.

⁷⁸ Ruvarac, *O Pečkim Patrijarsima*, pp. 50–51.

(*maẓmūn-i nā-meymūn*), and, a ‘cursed book’ (*la‘net-nāme*). The addressee of the letter is named ‘non-prosperous king’ (*ḳrāl-i bī-iḳbāl*), one from the lineage of the inimical rulers, master of Franks and Latins.⁷⁹ We think that this description relates to the Roman-German emperor Rudolf II. The Ottomans used the denigrating phrase ‘the king of Vienna’, when addressing the Roman-German emperor, from their earliest contacts with the Habsburgs until 1606 and the Treaty of Zsitvatorok. Lesser rulers were merely beys and *tekfurs* for the Ottomans, and they would never ascribe the title of king to a European duke.⁸⁰

The letter as rendered by Ta‘likizade is a stunning example of Ottoman ironic parody. It is a satire in that the author pretends that it is a real letter but its content is exaggerated to the point of dadaistic absurdity. This dadaistic absurdity is an indirect tool to triumph over a foe who is ridiculed while his intentions and deeds are taken seriously. The letter is written according to the olden rules governing Ottomans addressing Western rulers, though the meanings and terms used are very expressive and grave invectives. One such passage reads as follows:

The Majesty who departs and returns in ritual uncleanness, being disgustingly brute and utterly vexatious a person, the one who is the abode of tarnished appearance, the one who is diseased and calamitous in a properly deserved degree, the one being related to and/or descended from excrements as well as bound to the *membra virile* in the sodomite manner, the rage-acquiring one, the king who is a pander to his own wife, the one who is especially selected for the devilish errors, the one who shall burn in the Hellfire together with the Franks and Latins—let Allah shorten his [the King’s] days and let Him nourish the hounds with the parts of his [the King’s] body.⁸¹

Instead of the formulas for long and prosperous life or, in the case of addressing Christians, expressing a wish that the addressee will one day accept the right path (namely, Islam), in the letter as rendered by Ta‘likizade the patriarch supposedly prays that his correspondent burn in hell together with all Franks and Latins; that Allah shortens the petty king’s days and that He feeds dogs with the correspondent’s

⁷⁹ Woodhead, p. 189.

⁸⁰ For this see a brilliant short study by Köhbach, ‘*Çasar oder Imperator?*’. For the Ottoman text of the Treaty of Zsitva-Torok and its German translation, see *Türkische Schriften*, pp. 3–7, № 1 (Ott. orig.), pp. 207–213, № 1 (Germ. transl.). Pay attention to this stipulation: *ikinci mādde budur-ki bizüm se‘ādetli pādīşāhumuz ḥazretleriniñ cānib-i şerīflerinden yazılan nāme-’i hümāyūnda Rōmā-yi çāsār diyü yazılıb ḳrāl nāmı ile yazılmiya*. Op. cit., p. 4. On this peace treaty also, see Bayerle, ‘The Compromise’.

⁸¹ Woodhead, pp. 189–190. *cenāb-ı cenābet-iyāb, niḳbet-me’āb, naşab-nışāb, faẓalāt-intisāb, ḥısm-iktisāb, Ḳrāl-ı ḳarnal, el-muḥtaşş bi-ğavāyeti ’ş-şeyāṭin, el-ḥarīḳ bi-’n-nāri ’l-cehīm ma’a ’l-Firenc ve-l-Laṭın-ḳaşşare-llāhü eyyāme-hü ve-rezāḳa bi ’l-kilābi ecsāme-hü*. For the formulary, compare Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin*, pp. 106–108. Also, see Schaendlinger and Römer, eds., *Die Schreiben Süleymāns*, I-II. Every single syntagm in this longer quote represents a masterful use of the *double entendre*. Sometimes the layers of meaning are triple, even quadruple. In translation we tried to do justice to that without being periphrastic. Frequently, Ta‘likizade forsakes grammar for the sake of rhyme, i.e. style.

corpse. It is not to be believed that the Ottoman reader would assume such formulas were actually used. They are clearly satirical spoof and scoop texts. Such a use of satire is evidenced in Islamic letters from the early Sunni-Shi'a conflicts where both sides were in the habit of parodying each other.⁸² Another example of dadaistic travesty is a statement in which the Serbian patriarch describes the realms of his spiritual authority as a 'well and source for swine' (*menba'u l-ḥanāzīr*).⁸³ The paragon of creatures that are impure and polluted in the Islamic *Weltanschauung* is used here as a trope to mock the Christian rebellious leaders. Generally, Ta'likizade's satire heavily relies on tropes addressing both supposed literal and ritual uncleanness of non-Muslims, on the tropes of the supposed sexual perversities of the same population judged according to the standards of his age, and similes comparing that population with animals.

At the end of the letter as rendered by Ta'likizade, a rhetorical turn occurs. The discourse goes from dadaistic to clear cut reporting: 'and this was intended by the letter: that is to say, from the mouth of Saint Sava it was said to the king: "now the opportunity is yours. The Turk became weak. As soon as you come here you shall take over the whole of Rumelia".'⁸⁴ This straightforward passage indicates that the Ottomans were either in possession of the conspiratorial letter or they were informed about its existence and content. A small detail deserves special attention, though. In this passage, the actor is not the patriarch, but the saint himself (*İsveti Sāva ağzından*). Ta'likizade did not use one of his derogatory terms for the relics on this occasion. Now, the saint himself appears in the letter in an active role. This reflects Ta'likizade's belief in the supernatural power of relics. The saint's name, St. Sava, is here a metonymy for the holy relics. At the end of the letter, the chronicler reports that the carrier of the secret letter made a mistake, and the letter was taken from him. In other words, one of Sinan Pasha's spies stole the letter from the secret agent. These statements are highly trustworthy.

f) This report about the removal and incineration of the relics of the Serbian national saint, St. Sava, in Ta'likizade's chronicle is a unique source. It offers so much new data that it cannot be compared with any other previously known source about the event. As soon as the letter was taken from the patriarch's agent, the Ottoman spy hastened to the grand vizier to deliver it to him. We know from many sources that Sinan Pasha was then in the winter camp in Belgrade.⁸⁵ Upon reading the letter, Ahmed Pasha, who was at that time the governor of Herzegovina⁸⁶ got a special order

⁸² Crone, 'Mawālī', pp. 167–168.

⁸³ Woodhead, p. 190.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 191. *Fe-hiive 'l-murād: ya'nī İsveti Sāva ağzından Kırala 'Fırşat seniñdür. Türk zebün olmışdur. Geldiğin gibi 'umüm Rūmilini alursun' dimişler.*

⁸⁵ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 145–146, 191–192. Compare to Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 366–367, 371–373, 474–475. His evidence is Dubrovnik, DAD, *Lettere e Commissioni di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols. 168–169, 221–225, 228; Dubrovnik, DAD, *Prepiska*, XVI, fol. 45.

⁸⁶ This person officiated as a governor of Herzegovina in the period around August 1593–April 1594. On him, see Skarić, 'Podaci za Historiju', p. 196 (published for the first time in 1931); Popović, 'Spisak Hercegovackih', p. 98.

from Sinan Pasha. The shrewd Ragusans described Ahmed Pasha merely as a cat's paw of Sinan Pasha,⁸⁷ while Ahmed Pasha's Ottoman nickname preserved in its Slavonic rendition (Oćuz < Öküüz) suggests that he was perceived as a dull, heavy, stupid person.⁸⁸ Sinan Pasha had Ahmed Pasha immediately go to the monastery and bring the coffin and the relics to the winter camp in Belgrade. Further, the chronicler claims that the Belgrade infidels became aware of this order and informed the monks and local Christians about it. This is not so unacceptable a claim as one can think *prima facie*.⁸⁹

Again, the narrative about the relics as endowed with speech and supernatural powers enters the account. The relics prophesy that the Grand Turk shall order the Ottomans to abduct them. The relics prognosticate that they can be neither abducted nor transported to Belgrade (*İşte İsveti Sava buyurdi ki 'Büyük Türk beni almağa hüküm göndermişdür. Beni alub gıdün, şanurlar, alub gidemezler. Emmā ben eyle görinürüm'*).⁹⁰ This supernatural power of the relics is once again ascribed to the devil. In further passages Ta'likizade actually mentions the various rebellions taking place in the Balkans between 1594 and 1596, for many of which we can show that the seizure of the relics played a large part in the ideological motivation of the rebels.⁹¹ He doubtless exaggerated the number of rebels but his account indicates the extent of the spread of rebellion. On the other hand, his claim that Ahmed Pasha left Belgrade for Mileševo with 400 warriors is totally acceptable. During the sixteenth century, the entourage of the provincial governor varied in most cases from 400 to 800 mounted warriors.⁹² This illustrates how such sources interweave factual information with rhetorical explanation, in such a way that they cannot be judged as fictitious merely on account of their use of rhetorical devices. Many decades ago, Peter Gay proposed

⁸⁷ Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 366, 474 ('the cat's paw'). His evidence is DAD, *Lettere e Commissioni di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols 140, 157–161, 168–169; DAD, *Prepiska*, XVI, fol. 45.

⁸⁸ In 1651, in the Slavonic chronicle known as *The Vrhobreznica Annals*, the author, a Serbian monk (*inok*) Gavril, wrote that the abductor of the relics of St. Sava from Mileševo was a certain *Ahmet-beg Oćuz*. See, Stojanović, *Stari Rodoslovi*, p. 269. In *New Redhouse* (col. 907b) 'öküz' is defined as '1. ox. 2. dull, heavy, stupid (person)'.

⁸⁹ Woodhead, pp. 191–195.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 191. The usage *Büyük Türk* is as clever as stylistically successful. Namely it is an Ottoman contemporary calque of the Italian term *il Gran Turco* (together with its many renderings in other languages of the European Christendom) which was the main European technical term for the Ottoman ruler from fifteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries. This usage was clearly intended to bring touch of authenticity to the letter as rendered by Ta'likizade. The awareness of the term shows how an Ottoman intellectual who was neither a professional translator from Western languages nor a renegade might have been aware of the Christian 'Frankish' ways, usages, manners, and customs. On the term *il Gran Turco* evidenced in zillions of written sources, see www.treccani.it/vocabolario/turco1/, accessed on 10 February 2019.

⁹¹ İyânî = Kirişcioğlu, pp. 72–79. Also, see Tomić, *O Ustanku Srba*; Grafenauer et al. eds, *Historija Naroda*, II, pp. 502–504, 506–509; Ćirković, 'Ustanak Banatskih'.

⁹² Skarić, 'Popis Bosanskih Spahija'; Aličić, 'Popis Bosanske Vojske'; Korić, 'Pratnja Bosanskog Sandžak-bega'; Filipović, 'Draç'in Fethi', p. 402; Močanin, 'O Brojnom Stanju'.

that the kind of rhetoric like the one used by Ta'likizade is part and parcel of the historian's argument and not a superimposed addition.⁹³ That Ottoman historians believed in holy men, supernatural phenomena and evil spirits does not mean that they did not seek to establish what they understood as truth in their works.⁹⁴

The account of the seizure of the relics continues as follows. Ahmed Pasha of Herzegovina sent 20 soldiers (*nefer*), dressed in Christian costume, posing as pilgrims to the relics. They were to prepare the Pasha's entrance to the monastery. When Ahmed Pasha entered the monastery with his 400 men, the monks were in their cells busy with 'division of money gifts and votive offerings'. The Pasha sent 40 soldiers into the church to take the relics. When the monks heard that the Pasha had arrived at the monastery, they appeared before him to pay their respects to him as governor. The Pasha ceremonially responded. At this point cynicism and irony re-enter the account. The Pasha threw towards the monks a handful of high value ducats and silver pieces. While the monks were supposedly fighting each other to grab the coins, the Ottomans took the relics from the church.⁹⁵ In this part we can see that visits by Ottoman dignitaries to the monasteries were frequent events and that there was a certain decorum connected with such visits.

The motif of the monks' greed for coins and other valuables is a constant of the entire narrative. Though this account should not be taken as literally true, the motif indicates the extent to which the Ottomans were aware of the wealth of certain monasteries and how much they were distressed by the economic activities of the monks, especially in such situations of conflict as described in this chronicle. Nonetheless, they could not remedy what angered them, for to suppress or forbid monks to engage in economic activities would run counter to the Ottoman self-proclaimed political philosophy. In their 'self-fashioning', the Ottomans, namely, the ruler and his servants in the military-administrative branch (*ülû l-emr*),⁹⁶ insisted that their God-given role was to protect the subject masses impaired in their minds as they seemed to be (*el-'avâmm ke-l-hevâmm*),⁹⁷ and that such weak creatures of God needed constantly

⁹³ Gay, *Style*.

⁹⁴ Filipović, 'Drač'in Fethi', pp. 412–414. Cf. Baynes, 'The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople'.

⁹⁵ Woodhead, pp. 192–193.

⁹⁶ For the Quranic roots of the notion, see Quran IV: 59 (*an-Nisā'*, the Medinese). Also, see Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa', col. 605a, on the duty of the grand vizier as a figure of *ülû l-emr*, based on Feridun Bey's writing; Cook, *Commanding Right*, passim.

⁹⁷ This famous adage is omnipresent in all kinds of written sources in the Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman languages. It means: 'the masses are like bugs'. Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804), one of the Founding Fathers of the USA, is believed to have said: *The masses are asses*. The classical Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal Complex (Sh. Ahmed) in the period 1258–1850 were not as generous as Hamilton. The masses according to them were mere creeping creatures, not even asses. On the idea and its long journey from the medieval Islamic Middle East to Enlightenment Europe, see Crone, 'Post-Colonialism', pp. 25–26, 31–32; Crone, 'The Case of the Three Impostors'.

to be observed, protected and dealt with justly (*‘adālet*),⁹⁸ applying the Islamic variation on the Aristotelian ‘rule of the golden mean’ (*mizānu l-ḥakḳ*).⁹⁹ By achieving such social order the ruler and his servants bring society into a state of tranquillity of soul (*ḥuṣūr*; *āsūde ḥāl*).¹⁰⁰ One could argue that such statements were merely part and parcel of keeping up appearances in a real world of self-interest and Realpolitik. But keeping up appearances was a constituent element of enacting power in the pre-modern world; we would fare better if we reminded ourselves that the supposed dichotomy between insincere ‘self-fashioning’ and sincere self-interest and the demon of Realpolitik turns out to be a false dichotomy and false argument too.

When the monks became aware that the relics had been taken from the church, says the chronicle, more than 800 infidels took up arms to reclaim them.¹⁰¹ This number is exaggerated since the monks, monastery servants, and the peasants from the vicinity could have made a group of no more than 100 armed men. Ahmed Pasha and his entourage went to *Taşluca* (Pljevlja), seat of the governor of Herzegovina.¹⁰² The local tribal leaders, monks with a sultanī firman, and the local population in large numbers had an audience with Ahmed Pasha to negotiate the ransom of the relics. The local Muslims tricked the Christians and distracted them while Ahmed Pasha was leaving at great speed for Belgrade. This part of the story is quite significant. There is no reason to doubt its veracity. As such, it testifies to how the local bonds between the Christians and the Muslims of the same Slavonic origins could have been suspended in a case of open conflict between the Muslim authorities and the Christian population. The bonds forged from common origins and common local culture broke when the empire’s interest was at stake. Although the relics were the object of their veneration as well, the local Muslims neither dared nor wanted to counter the authority of the grand vizier who as the chief army commander (*ser-‘asker*) was an absolute vicegerent (*vekil-i muṭlak*) of the ruler.¹⁰³ Ahmed Pasha rode a whole day and night and came near Belgrade. A Christian came to Ahmed Pasha and bargaining about the coffin and relics began. The Christians offered 1000, 2000, 3000, 10 000, and in the end, 20 000 best coins. The amount is realistic and the whole situation bears the stamp of authenticity. He then delivered the coffin and relics to Sinan Pasha who ordered them to be publicly burned.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ See İnalçık, ‘State and Ideology’, pp. 70–85; Darling, *A History of Social Justice*; Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*, passim.

⁹⁹ Katib Chelebi, *The Balance*; Crone, *Medieval Islamic*, chap. III, subch. ‘The Greek Tradition and “Political Science”’, chap. IV, subchs. ‘Visions of Freedom’ and ‘Social Order’.

¹⁰⁰ A masterful study is Glassen, ‘*Huṣūr*’. A further detailed discussion with a plethora of new evidence and with an analysis from the viewpoint of the history of ideas is provided in Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*.

¹⁰¹ Woodhead, p. 192.

¹⁰² Cf. Popović, ‘Sedište Hercegovačkog Sandžaka’.

¹⁰³ For some invocation of the notion in the sources contemporary to the event we discuss, see Selânikî = İpşirli, II, p. 618. Also, see Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

¹⁰⁴ Woodhead, pp. 193–195.

However, the account of the bargaining, although quite realistic, misses two important points: the separated hand of the saint, described as so lavishly decorated, as well as the saint's archbishop's staff clearly seen by Ta'likizade, were not burnt. The hand survived until the end of the eighteenth century, while the archbishop's staff was for many centuries kept in the treasury of the monastery of Sveta Trojica near Pljevlja,¹⁰⁵ to be removed to the museum in the Mileševo monastery only a decade and half ago. The survival of a part of the relics testifies to the Realpolitik informed by the Islamo-Aristotelian rule of the golden mean. We would like to hypothesize that Sinan Pasha took the coffin and had it melted down to its more than 23 kg of pure silver and confiscated the precious and semi-precious stones adorning the coffin, but he did not deprive the Christians of the relics in totality. The preserved hand and the archbishop's staff were enough to enable the monastery's status as a site of relics of the highest value to continue.

After this close source analysis in which the veracity of the account has been repeatedly demonstrated, the view that Ta'likizade was merely an interested courtier and a propagandist misses the point.¹⁰⁶ Well-paid courtier Ta'likizade might have been, but he wrote what he had seen and what he had believed to have seen, and he wrote what he meant. He did it in a brilliant language using his sharp mind. This is not such a frequent case in the Ottoman written legacy.

EXPLICANDUM BY WAY OF COMPARISON

Various questions arise from our detailed analysis of the report in Ta'likizade's chronicle. For instance, was Sinan Pasha's act an exception which proves the rule, or was it an example of new trends in the interplay between religion and power in the Ottoman Empire approaching the end of the sixteenth century? Was this act part and parcel of Sinan Pasha's decades-long conflict with the clan of Sokollu? Could the burning of the relics be put in the context of the chiliastic expectations around 1000 AH (1591–1592)? Did Sinan Pasha's concern for the troublesome and exacting financing and logistics of the Hungarian campaign affect his decision to seize and incinerate the relics? Did the Serbian Orthodox Church and its Patriarch, thanks to their scheming with the Habsburgs and the Italian lesser rulers, forfeit their general protection contract (*zimma*)¹⁰⁷ with the Ottoman Empire? If the Ottomans indeed understood those actions as a forfeiting of *zimma*, were they of the opinion that such forfeiture applied to the entire Serbian Orthodox community in the Balkans? How much did the personal traits of as colourful a historical player as Sinan Pasha influence the sequence of events and their consequences? Further questions proliferate.

In order to understand what really happened in Mileševo in 1594, we should visit Salonica (Tr. Selanik) in 1589–1590. The Ottoman cosmographer Mehmed-i

¹⁰⁵ See *supra* nn. 39–42.

¹⁰⁶ Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs*, pp. 144–162. Also, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*. Cf. Karaman's well-argued review in: *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, XXXII, 2014, pp. 199–203, esp. p. 203.

¹⁰⁷ On *zimma*, on losing and on (re)entering it, see Cahen, '*Dhimma*'; Moačanin, 'Some Remarks'; Fotić, 'Institucija Amana'.

‘Aşık (Trapezunt, ca 1556–1557–?, probably after March 1605) wrote a highly valuable work on cosmography entitled *Menâzırı’l-‘Avalim* (*Views of the World*)¹⁰⁸ in which he left very telling notes about his frequent visits to the greatest Ottoman Balkan port city of Salonica in years 1585–1589, 1592–1595.¹⁰⁹ In one of his descriptions of these visits, Mehmed-i ‘Aşık reported about the then recent conversion of the famous Rotunda of Salonica,¹¹⁰ known by the Ottomans as ‘the pregnant church’ (*gebe kilise*), in the following words:

As a church owned by Christians it was known under the name ‘the pregnant church’. When it was still a Christian church this author as well as many of his friends among the people of Selanik, while we were walking beside it, used always to express the desire that it should become a mosque. Glory to Allah, soon our hope was brought to fulfilment by Allah. This mosque, upon the insistence and pleading of Sheikh Hortacı, who is a paragon among dervishes, was taken from the Christians by Sinan Pasha (Allah’s mercy be upon him), who passed away as grand vizier in Şa‘ban of the year 1004 [3 April 1596]. After the establishment of the *ambon*, *mih-rab*, and *mahfil*, inside the edifice and a well-built minaret on the east wall of the mosque, it became a house of worship for the Islamic people, the true believers; it also became a source of service in the belief of the most elevated among the prophets.¹¹¹

Mehmed-i ‘Aşık in a further text explains that he was in Salonica again in the middle of 1595 and that Sheikh Hortacı asked him to compose a chronogram for the building and its transformation into a mosque. The chronogram reads as follows:

In order to remove the traces of wrong belief from this high place // Sinan Pasha moved into action; and what he intended finally took place // In the conquest of this mosque Sheikh Hortacı busied himself a lot, his contribution was great // In the path of the True One this place, thanks to the input of the Only One, became a new believer // It was taken from the people of Jesus as soon as the Sultanic order came // The community of Muhammad turned into followers of the sheikh in the

¹⁰⁸ For the exemplary edition of this work prefaced by a long authoritative study of Mahmut Ak on the author and his opus as well as on the work in question itself, see Âşık Mehmed, *Menâzırı’l-Avâlim*, I–III (hereafter: *Menâzırı’l-Avâlim* = Ak).

¹⁰⁹ For this traveller’s meticulously reconstructed itinerary, see ‘Ek 1: Âşık Mehmed’in Seyahatleri’, *Menâzırı’l-Avâlim* = Ak, I, unpag.

¹¹⁰ ‘The Rotunda of Salonica’ was built by tetrarch Galerius in 306 C.E., probably as his prospective mausoleum. It is located 125 m northeast from the Arch of Galerius. Its diameter is 24.15 m, and its dome is 30 m high at the peak, while its walls are more than 6.3 m thick and for this reason it withstood earthquakes which were so frequent in this area. In 326 Emperor Constantine turned it into a Christian church. The high-quality mosaics in it date from the early Byzantine era. In the years 1589–1590 it was turned into a mosque, while after 1912 it was rededicated to St. George. See, Salah Nasrallah, ‘Empire and Apocalypse’, pp. 472–484. Also, see Kreutel, ‘Ein Kirchenraub in Selânîk’, p. 73, (hereafter: Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*); Ćurčić, ‘Christianization of Thessalonikē’.

¹¹¹ *Menâzırı’l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 986; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, p. 82.

conquest of this house of worship // When the Muslim prayer was performed in it 'Aşık made a chronogram of it // This ancient and rundown monastery, there is no doubt of it, became a house of worship for the people of Islam. In the year 998 [1589–1590].¹¹²

In his description of the church Mehmed-i 'Aşık added that Sheikh Hortacı knew that in a Christian wooden house situated in a place distant from the church-turned-mosque was hidden a huge piece of white marble. The sheikh wanted this piece of marble for the water-fountain in his mosque. Transporting such a huge piece of stone was a real problem. The distance was around one mile. The sheikh called to duty the craft apprentices in the city and the young people of the port and had them transport the huge marble piece on special wooden devices through the meandering streets of the city. In writer's own words:

In a corner of the house of a person who dwelled in one of the infidel buildings [there was a stone] fit to be turned into a fountain basin...it was ordered to the youngsters and journeymen belonging to the craftsmen of Salonica as well as to the boatmen and privateers from the ships in the port of Salonica to load [the stone] on a wooden device called qızaq in the vulgar Turkish¹¹³ parlance and to transport it from one among such narrow places to the mosque of Sinan Pasha...And the present compiler of the letters [i.e., Mehmed-i 'Aşık], that is to say my poor self, arrived to celebrate its [the stone's] removal¹¹⁴ and to behold it as a witness while the young fellows were busying themselves with the pulling out of this piece of marble from the depth of the earth.¹¹⁵

Further, Mehmed-i 'Aşık informs us that the highly learned Mevlana 'Abdurrahim Efendi el-Hamidi, while he was judge of Salonica for a second time, sent his official report (*i'lām*) to the Sublime Porte endorsing the petition (*'arz-ı hāl*) submitted by a subject concerning the matter of the turning of the church into a mosque. His report about this reads as follows:

When Mevlana 'Abdurrahim Efendi el-Hamidi became for the second time a qadi of the Allah-protected Salonica on the date which is the year nine hundred and

¹¹² *Menâzırı'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 987; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 82–83. *Dalâl âsârını mahv itmeğe bu cây-ı 'âlîden // Sinân Paşa 'azîmet itdi gâyet-i maksadı oldı // Bunun fethine sa'y ü himmet itdi Şeyh Hortâcî // Tarîk-i hakda 'avn-i Hâdî ile mühtedî oldı // Alındı emr-i sultânî ırince kavm-i 'İsâ'dan // Muhammed ümmeti fethinde Şeyh'e muktedî oldı // Kılındı çün nemâz içinde 'Âşık didi târîhin // Bu deyr-i köhne lâ-şek ehl-i İslâm ma'bedi oldı* [emphasis N. F.] *şene 998*.

¹¹³ For this rendering, cf. '...2. A country bumpkin, a boor...', Redhouse, col. 536a, s. v. *türk*. Also, see Göyünç, 'Die Begriffe "Türke"'.
¹¹⁴ Again an instance of double *entendre*. Cf. Redhouse, col. 570a, s. v. *teferruj*.

¹¹⁵ *Menâzırı'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, pp. 987–988; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 83–84.

'Ebniye-i kâfirîyyeden bir şahsun hânesiniün bir mevzı'nda havz-ı şâdurvân olmağa münasib...Selânik'ün erbâb-ı hırefinden şebbân ve ahdâsa ve Selânik limânında olan ashâb-ı süfîün ve merâkib levendlerine...Türkî dilde kızak didikleri ahşâb üzre tahmîl idüp ol emkine-i dayyıkadan Câmî'-i Sinân Paşaya nakl idüp...Râkımû'l-hurûf halk bu mermeri batn-i arzdan ihrâc iderken teferrüc ve müşâhadesine vardum.'

ninety eight [1589–1590] upon the report-cum-petition of the aforementioned one the conquest of the earlier discussed monastery [i.e., the church] was divinely facilitated to have taken place and it was ordained by Allah, and on top of that Sheikh Hortacı had proceeded with the aid of Allah—whose lauds we recite—to repair and restore it [the church] from the bottom of his heart, mind, and soul.¹¹⁶

In his exemplary source-critical (*Quellenkritik*) study Kreutel proves beyond any doubt that this report is almost totally authentic.¹¹⁷ What is interesting in this account is how the writer shows that such huge undertakings as the transformation of important Christian churches of an Ottoman city was never solely the result of an order coming from above, namely from the ruler or his absolute vicegerent, the grand vizier. Sheikh Hortacı filed the common petition of a subject, such a petition was endorsed by the chief judge of the city, and the grand vizier approved it and assured a favourable sultanic order. The church which became a mosque belonged to the endowment of Sinan Pasha and Sheikh Hortacı became both overseer of the endowment and the prayer-leader in the mosque. So, we observe the interaction between local needs and the needs of a highly positioned endower.¹¹⁸ These interests and needs might not have been an expression only of mundane interest and a drive to oppress and control. The language of the report hints at the tropes of holy war in regard to this takeover of the church.¹¹⁹

The turning of the church into mosque in Salonica happened on the very brink of the year 1000 AH/1591–1592, and this transformation of the church must be understood in the context of the millenarian and chiliastic expectations in the Ottoman and Islamic world. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Christian community of Salonica was in a continuous process of deterioration, both in numbers and in wealth. The Christian properties in the city were frequently bought, re-sold, and re-bought by Jews and Muslims.¹²⁰ The growing Muslim community voiced the need for more mosques. These needs went hand in hand with millenarian hysteria, which was in evidence throughout the empire among Muslims, from the lowest commoners to the ruler,¹²¹ as well as with the need of the grand vizier to secure his

¹¹⁶ *Menâzırü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 988; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 84–85. 'Mevlânâ 'Abdü'r-rahîm Efendi el-Hamîdî mahrûse-i Selânike def'a-i sâniide sene semân ve tis'în ve tis'a-mi'e târîhinde kâdî oldukda **mûmâ-ileyhûn** arzı ile deyr-i mezbûrun fethi müyesser ve mukadder olup bi-i'âneti'llâhi sübhânehû Şeyh Hortâcî dahi 'an-samîmi'l-bâl ta'mîr ve meremmâta mübâşeret eylemiş idi' (emphasis N. F.).

¹¹⁷ Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, p. 85.

¹¹⁸ Still the best study on the Ottoman turning of churches into mosques is Andrejević, 'Pretvaranje Crkava'.

¹¹⁹ *Menâzırü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, pp. 986–988; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 81–84.

¹²⁰ Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 202–205; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, pp. 328–332 et passim.

¹²¹ Selânikî = İpşirli, I, p. 222; II, pp. 703–04; Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 104 (№ 72), 126–127 (№ 87); 184–185 (№ 144), 207 (№ 161); [Sultan Murad III], *Kitabu l-menamat*. Cf. Felek, '(Re-)creating Image and Identity', who endorses two conflicting dates of the compilation of

unprecedented wealth through a network of endowments.¹²² The establishment of new endowments meant new appointments for local Muslims and stratified patron-client ties between the grand vizier and many people throughout the Empire. It is important to observe that the weakest community in Salonica, namely the Christians, were the losers in such events. Salonica was full of synagogues, but there is no evidence that any were ever turned into mosques. Moreover, the present author is unaware of any such event in Ottoman history. As a curiosity, we can add that Mehmed-i 'Aşık noted how the so-called Maltese Hospice was one of dwelling places of the Jews of Salonica and that it belonged to the endowment of the mosque of Sinan Pasha (*Hân-ı Malta mesâkin-i Yehûd olan hânlardandır ve Câmî-i Sinân Paşa ev-kâfındandır*).¹²³

The events in the Mileševo Monastery must be equally understood as ones in which millenarian hysteria played a certain role. But, to note such hysteria is not the same as explaining both the very same hysteria as well as the very same event which was to a certain degree caused by that hysteria. The other factor was the involvement of the highest echelons of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the monastery flock in secret designs with the great powers of Latin Christendom, a point that was elaborated above. Here one recalls the famous sentence Sigmund Freud is believed to have uttered once in his lectures: 'Even the paranoiacs have real enemies!'¹²⁴ Sinan Pasha's handwritten reports to the Sultan (*telhîş*) demonstrate his excellent knowledge of European politics, for instance the Franco-Spanish conflict in the 1580s and 1590s. He wrote:

the manuscript, at pp. 250 (1003 AH), 251–252 (1001 AH). Further on millenarism and chiliastic hysteria in the Ottoman Empire around 1000 AH, see Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, I/1, p. 179 who were the first to notice the phenomenon and marshalled the first-rate contemporary evidence; Faroqhi, 'Der Aufstand'; B. Kütükoğlu, 'Murad III', *İA*; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, pp. 72–73, 126–127; Filipović, *Qoca Sinân Pâşâ and the Burning*, pp. 173–174; Felek, '(Re-)creating Image and Identity', pp. 263–266; Felek, *Kitâbü'l-Menâmât*, pp. 27–31; Kafadar, 'Prelude to Ottoman', pp. 266–267, 274–276. For the earlier historical precedences for the phenomenon, see Ned. Filipović, *Princ Musa*; Flemming, 'Şâhib-kırân und Mahdi'; Fleischer, 'Lawgiver as Messiah'; Fleischer, 'Mahdi and Millennium'; Fleischer, 'Seer to the Sultan'; Fleischer, 'Shadows of Shadows'; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom'; Ocak, 'Kutb ve İsyân'.

¹²² On his endowments, see Öz=Arşivi; Kaleshi, 'Veliki Vezir Kodža Sinan-paşa'; Schwarz und Kurio, *Die Stiftungen*; Haase, 'Eine kleinere Waqf-Urkunde'; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 174–175, 281, 506, 508–509; 'Dossier: "Koca Sinan Pacha (ca 1520–1596)"', and esp., Meier, 'The Charities of a Grand Vizier'.

¹²³ *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 990.

¹²⁴ We owe the knowledge of the ascription of this famous sentence to Freud to our esteemed teacher, the late Norman Itzkowitz of Princeton University, himself a connoisseur of Freud's life and work. The sentence is frequently misattributed to Henry Kissinger.

To the land of France came complete disorder and riot while there is a probability that the cursed one whom people named Spain shall overcome and invade [France]. This humble servant of Yours is constantly getting informed about it.¹²⁵

It is safe to propose that Sinan Pasha was informed about the secret designs of the Serbian Orthodox Church and that his action was meant to punish and discipline the unruly first echelon of this church. The confiscation of a coffin/chest which weighed more than 23 kg in pure silver accompanied by many precious and semi-precious stones could be a welcome addition to the campaign treasury. Sinan Pasha was extremely well-versed in matters economic and there is plenty of evidence that he laboured to remove the Ottoman budget deficit and at the same time finance campaigns.¹²⁶ Logistically, it was very difficult to finance campaigns without having local sources of cash, bullion and supplies in kind.¹²⁷ Therefore, he insisted, for instance, around 15 November 1593, upon his return from the Hungarian campaign to the main winter camp in Belgrade, that the Ragusan envoys should render there unto him their Republic's yearly tribute in the amount of 12 500 ducats, and not carry it all the way to Istanbul.¹²⁸

Nonetheless, he either preserved a portion of the relics and most probably sold them back to the Christians so that they could preserve their cult-site which was also a source of income for the state treasury. Or he might not have taken the relics from Mileševo, save for the coffin/chest and the skeleton in it; though it is a less feasible scenario. Sinan Pasha had been in a decade-long conflict with the Sokollu clan too.¹²⁹ We must consider the possibility that his enmity towards this clan might have affected his behaviour. So much is safe to propose for lack of more explicit sources. For it is a well-known fact that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, before he was taken to the *devşirme* corps, was a novice monk under the name Bajo or Bajica in the Mileševo monastery.¹³⁰

This discussion would be incomplete without considering what kind of Muslim Sinan Pasha was. In the secondary literature a view predominates that the Ottoman military and administrative dignitaries were people unaware of complicated questions of Islamic religious thought and Ottoman culture. In this kind of thinking, such

¹²⁵ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 4 (No. 3): 'Fransa diyârına tamam ihtilâl gelmişdir ve İspanya didükleri mel'ûn müstevlî olmak ihtimâli vardır bu kulları haber almakdan hâlî değilim.' Comp. Fodor, 'Between Two'.

¹²⁶ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, passim. Also, see Faroqhi, 'Ein Günstling'; Fodor, 'An Anti-Semite'.

¹²⁷ See *supra* n. 15; Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare*.

¹²⁸ Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 371, 476. His evidence is: DAD, *Lettere di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols. 184'–187'. On the false pretence that the Ragusan merchants in Belgrade were unable to provide him the cloths he wanted to purchase, Sinan Pasha asked the Ragusan government to send him, together with the tribute, certain quantity of the luxury cloths. This certainly was nothing else than extortion of the protection money. See DAD, *Lettere di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols 198–198'.

¹²⁹ The two best overviews of this rivalry are provided in Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa', coll. 600a, 602a, 604a; Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolović*.

¹³⁰ On this, see Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa', col. 595b.

dignitaries knew the main tenets of the faith, but they were merely practical Muslims. Such a distorted picture is based to a high degree on the anti-dignitary bias in the works of great intellectuals like Mustafa 'Ali and Katib Çelebi.¹³¹ For great intellectuals anybody who is not a great intellectual is ignorant *ipso facto*. So Plato, so Aristotle, so Cicero, so Ibn Haldun, so Max Weber, so Foucault... Sinan Pasha was neither an intellectual nor a writer. But his handwritten informal reports to the Sultan are full of quotations from the Quran and hadiths accompanied by paraphrases of such texts;¹³² and quotes from Persian Sufis from Bayezid-i Bistami (d. 848 or 875)¹³³ ('After these two had been chosen, he shall make everything to be believed and even he shall possibly pass himself for Bayezid-i Bistami')¹³⁴ to Rumi (1207–1273).¹³⁵ The reference to Rumi is given via his celebrated work *Mathnavi-yi ma'navi*:

My prosperous ruler, there is a strangely marvellous story in the *Meşnevi*: a cursed one, in order to make mankind fall into grave errors, having changed his own faith in outward form, had endured an immense suffering and mortification of the flesh. At the end of the matter, after he made people fall into grave errors, having destroyed his own unclean body and/or being,¹³⁶ he became one in error who leads others astray. There is no doubt that this cursed one [i.e., the person reported about to the Sultan] is exactly of such a moral quality.¹³⁷

In his reports one encounters also Sufi-style adages in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish as well as popular Turkish proverbs.¹³⁸ In one instance, Sinan Pasha told the then resident Venetian bailo in Constantinople how 'the Empires are not to be governed by the advice of women' (Gli imperii non si governano con il consiglio delle donne).¹³⁹ One should not ascribe such views to the boorish manners and disposition of an Ottoman statesman who originated from the overly patriarchal Albanian

¹³¹ For teaching the Persian literary canon to the pages of the Palace, the future military-administrative dignitaries, see *Târih-i Na'îmâ*, I, pp. 55, 84.

¹³² Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 12–15 (№ 8) et passim. Also, see Filipović, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu', p. 161 (n. 39) with the analyses of Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 16 (№ 9), 27–28 (№ 18), 51–53 (№ 37), 97–99 (№ 67), 100–101 (№ 69), 103 (№ 71), 127–128 (№ 88), 133–134 (№ 92), 137–138 (№ 95), 138–139 (№ 96), 197–199 (№ 153).

¹³³ On this early Muslim mystic of Iran who highly influenced the Ottoman Islam *in toto*, see Böwering, 'Bestâmi, Bâyezid', with all relevant secondary literature.

¹³⁴ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 52–53 (№ 37). '*Bu ikisin ihtiyâr eyledükden sonra her nesne inandırub Bayezid-i Bestâmî geçinmek mümkün ancak.*'

¹³⁵ The literature on Rumi is a shoreless ocean, with a lot of titles of questionable value. Still the best introduction is Ritter, 'Celâleddin Rûmî'. On his impact on Ottoman Islam, see Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra*.

¹³⁶ Also a *double entendre*. Cf. Redhouse, coll. 2129a–b, s. v. *vujûd*.

¹³⁷ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 16 (№ 9). '*Devletlü pâdişâhım, Mesnevi'de bir 'aceb hikâye vardır; birmel'ûn halâyıkı dalâlete düşürmek için sûratâ tağyir-i din idüb nice eziyyet ve riyâzet çeküb li-âhiri'l-emr halkı dalâlete düşürdükden sonra kendü vücûd-ı habîsini dahi telef idüb dâl ve mudil olmuş, hiç şübhe yokdur ki bumel'ûn tâ ol hasletededir.*'

¹³⁸ See, the editor's introduction to Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. III–XXXIX, at pp. XII–XV.

¹³⁹ Jorga, *GOR*, III, p. 180 and n. 6.

peasantry-cum-pastoralists. For the Turco-Persianate written legacy in the advice books is full of such views from Nizam al-mulk and *Qabus-name* to the late Ottoman memoranda.¹⁴⁰

To go back to Sinan Pasha's reports, they were written in a colloquial style but informed by high and sublime Islamic thought. These reports reveal a complex and authentic person who was a convinced Muslim of the Ottoman school. His observation on the dialectic between the drive for wealth acquisition, on the one side, and the drive for the fight on God's path, on the other, presages the apt remark Patricia Crone made in the late 1980s–early 1990s about how 'since God told the Arabs to go and enrich themselves, the old question whether they fought for God or for booty is meaningless'.¹⁴¹

Wealth is an essential substance for the holy war. And especially the holy war against infidels is a blessed thing.¹⁴² If one is given to savour its taste, it cannot resemble anything else. It both brings expenditures and accrues advantages in this world. What a felicity in establishing of the eloquent faith in the Abode of Infidels. That is to say: they call wealth when Muhammadan laws get to be practised in such a way.¹⁴³

A lexicon entry-like short lecture on the lawfulness of Islamic poetry from the viewpoint of Maturidi theology and Hanafi law which was composed for the pasha by the Ottoman polymath Nev'î Efendi, has been preserved.¹⁴⁴ What is especially important in the case of that lecture it is that it provides a summary of a frequently debated

¹⁴⁰ See n. 135 on teaching the palace pages Persian language and Persianate courtly lore via Persian advice literature.

¹⁴¹ Crone, 'The Tribe', p. 471 (n. 113).

¹⁴² Here Sinan Pasha invokes the famous dichotomy 'the holy war against one's own erring soul' (*cihâdu n-nefs*) vs. 'the holy war against infidels' (*cihâd 'ale-l-küffâr*) frequently endorsed by the Ottoman Sufis who predominantly used to follow Ibn 'Arabi's views on the matter. It is clear that the idea was known to the grand vizier and that he presumed Murad III's familiarity with the idea. For an earlier attestation of the vernacularization of the idea, see Halil bin İsmâil, *Smavna Kadıoğlu*, edid. Gölpınarlı and Sungurbey, p. 147, vers. 2204–2205. For more on the idea, see Şibay, 'Cihâd', *İA*; Tyan, 'Djihâd', *Et*².

¹⁴³ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 5 (№ 3). '...mâl asıl cihâd içündür husûsan cihâd 'ale'l-küffâr bir mübârek nesnedür ki lezzeti zevkolunsa hiç nesneye benzemez hem harcı çıkar ve hem dünyânın menâfi'i hâsıl olur dâr-i keferede ikamet-i dîn-i mübîn ne sa'âdetdir. İşte mâl ana dirler ki böyle şerâyî-i Muhammedî icrâ oluna'.

¹⁴⁴ Kortantamer, 'Nev'î Efendi'nin', pp. 224–228. This text deserves a special scholarly analysis. A prolegomenon of that is provided in Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*, passim.

issue¹⁴⁵ in a vernacular rendition¹⁴⁶ from the viewpoint of the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the Ottomans. This is a classic example of the vernacularization of the high discourses of the scholarly arguments uttered, written, repeated, rewritten for centuries in the Arabic language and to a lesser extent in Persian as well. Sinan's Sufi tutor was the prominent Halveti sheikh Ma'ruf Efendi.¹⁴⁷ Sinan Pasha's Islam was typical sixteenth-century Ottoman elite Islam which was characterised by Hanafi jurisprudence, Maturidi theology, Islamic philosophy (*hikmet*) and high intellectual Sufism, which emerged as a mixture of Ibn Arabi's Sufism (*taṣāwuf u tefelsiif*) wedded to the Neoplatonic philosophies of Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi al-Maqtul.¹⁴⁸ This was an elite Islam. Its cosmology was always suspect to certain strata in the Islamic world, and the Kadizadeli movement in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century rose among people who were troubled by such a cosmology, and especially with the social implications of such a cosmology. It is easy to trace the ideas of the leading intellectuals of this philosophising Sufism, but it is very difficult to trace how such Sufism affected the mentalities and actions of the elites and the middle class who were not intellectuals and writers as such. Nonetheless, this influence can be traced through careful reading of manifold sources. We believe that the living out of such ideas was as important as putting them down in written form. The polemics about them between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries testify to their living importance.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, both Sinan Pasha's burning of the relics of St. Sava and his manifold turning of the churches into mosques during 1590s having started with the Rotunda of Salonica were also Islamic acts consciously undertaken as such.¹⁵⁰ That this action does not fit our preconceptions of what is Islamic and what is non-Islamic is not Sinan Pasha's problem.

¹⁴⁵ See, e. g., Jacobi, 'Dichtung und Lüge'; Bürgel, "Die beste Dichtung"; Yosefi, 'Muhammad's Attitude', with an exhaustive bibliography. In our view, Yosefi's paper shortchanges the Maturidi-Hanafi tradition on the subject. On the other hand, Ahmed and Filipovic's *Hellfire* stresses the pathbreaking character of Bürgel's book-like piece where it was not only the Neo-Persian Islamic poetry which was read with a prospective to the medieval Islamic Arab poetry, but *vice versa*; a perspective missing in the earlier scholarship, save for Hellmut Ritter's *œuvre*.

¹⁴⁶ On the vernacularization tides in the Balkans-to-Bengal complex in the period ca 1258–1850 influenced by and leaning to the high Islamic discourse(s) in Arabic and Persian languages, see Ahmed, *Islam*, pp. 334–343, 386–397.

¹⁴⁷ Kefeli Hüseyin, *Rāznāme*, pp. 136–137, 233–234.

¹⁴⁸ On this, see Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*. Also, see Meier, 'Ein wichtiger Handschriftenfund', p. 104; Rosenthal, 'Ibn 'Arabi between'.

¹⁴⁹ Terzioğlu, 'Sunna-minded Sufi', esp. pp. 255–259, 271–278; Filan, 'Religious Puritans'. Also, see Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis'; Cook, *Commanding Right*, pp. 323–330.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Ahmed, *Islam*, pp. 46–71, on iconic arts and wine-drinking as conscious Islamic acts according to the self-understanding of Islam in the Balkans-to-Bengal Turco-Persianate zone ca 1258–1850.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present author intended this paper to be devoid of any musings about methodological issues, including the question of confessionalization. We opted for the principle *res ipsa loquitur*—the things are told by themselves.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, the respected editors of this volume kindly asked for some written *apologia pro causa sua* on our part. Thus, in the following we reflect on the concept of confessionalization. We shall not repeat the narrative of the rise of the concept of confessionalization in the interpretation of early modern European history. Tijana Krstić did that in her introductory remarks to the conference with the update on the current state of the debate (ca to 2018)¹⁵² and with her take on the question how useful the concept might be for Ottoman studies. Derin Terzioğlu repeatedly discussed the applicability of the notion for the study of Ottoman religious history (ca 1400–1826). She opted for a careful use of the concept leaning towards notions of ‘Sunnitization’ and ‘process of confessionalization’ rather than that of ‘confessionalization with a capital C’ in the sense the scholars of early modern Europe use it.¹⁵³ Recently, Eleni Gara wholeheartedly embraced both the term and the notion behind it.¹⁵⁴ Graf’s carefully written monograph on elite converts in the Ottoman Empire ca 1580s–1620s—based on evidence from the somewhat underutilized archives of Vienna, Graz, and Innsbruck—fruitfully used the concept, in our opinion, but this should be connected with the fact that his monograph as much as it is a work on Ottoman history, is also a work on the history of the Holy Roman Empire, the Christian Central Europe and the politically Christian portion of the Mediterranean, namely, Italy and Spain with its Mediterranean domains.¹⁵⁵ As for our views, we should like to respectfully disagree with the above described proposals, sometimes totally, sometimes to a certain degree.

Let us first say something about what we find commendable in the concept both in general and as applied in the Ottoman history. The concept of confessionalization takes religion seriously. While this might not be such a revolutionary turn in the study of early modern Europe, it is indeed something new in Ottoman studies. For a long time in Ottoman studies Islam used to be understood merely as a tool of state politics if official, and as an expression of the political and social alterity if heterodox. For various reason the other religions present in the Ottoman Empire fared better with regards to their historical role. That is to say, Ottoman Islam tended for decades to be viewed in some vulgarized sociologistic way which is best described as a both conscious and unconscious comingling of vulgar Marxism with equally vulgar Durkheimism. Strangely, Weber did not make an impact on Ottoman studies save for the

¹⁵¹ Cf. Wansbrough, *Res Ipsa*.

¹⁵² Beside Krstić’s paper in this volume, see Forster, *Catholic Revival*; Forster et al., ‘Religious History’.

¹⁵³ Terzioğlu, ‘Ottoman Sunnitization’, esp. at pp. 304–305, 311–318, 320–324; Terzioğlu, ‘Where *’İlm-i Hāl*’, esp. at pp. 80–82, 102–104, 107–114.

¹⁵⁴ Gara, ‘Conceptualizing Interreligious’, pp. 84–88.

¹⁵⁵ Graf, *Renegades*, esp. at pp. 96–97, 210–215 et passim.

input of two highly valuable scholars, but their Weberism was far from vulgar as opposed to the plethora of Marxists and Durkheimists in Ottoman studies.¹⁵⁶

The evidence which enables one to study Ottoman Islam from the perspective of religious and intellectual history wedded with social, cultural, and political history is abundant in an exceptional amount, lacking in such a degree for any other pre-industrial Islamic society and/or polity. But there are few studies which try to connect all those traits of the Ottoman existence(s). In our view the best study of that type we actually do possess is alas Terzioğlu's unpublished doctoral thesis on Niyazi-i Misri.¹⁵⁷ Recently, the late Shahab Ahmed and the present author tried to wed the political, social, intellectual, religious and cultural history in a book in print which treats the questions of heresy, orthodoxy, freedom of speech, freethinking, varieties of space, varieties of the sayable, and the ways how ideas were actually lived out in the Ottoman Empire (ca 1400–1800).¹⁵⁸ Although it was relatively easy to amass abundant and indeed unprecedented evidence provided one knows where to look for the evidence, to interpret the accumulated pieces of evidence was highly difficult, on the other hand. For us, there was no help in the studies of early modern Europe or some other non-Islamic area. We had to come up with our own models having started with the questioning of the very notions of religion, orthodoxy, orthopraxy, cathecumenization before offering our interpretation of the Ottoman case. This led the late Shahab Ahmed to his now highly discussed reinterpretation of Islam in general and to his notion of the 'Balkans-to-Bengal' complex of the Turco-Persianate ways of expression of Islam in the period ca 1250–1800, or even 1850.¹⁵⁹ It is necessary to say, that our joint book, however, at certain important points is actually in disagreement with some of the claims Ahmed proposed in his own book. That is to say that his own book in no way should be taken as theoretical prolegomena to our joint book. But the most general morale of our joint manuscript is that the scholarship should take religion(s) in the Ottoman Empire seriously, which is in absolute agreement with the tenor of this volume. Also a part of that morale is our demonstration that the Ottoman subjects of various confessions used to think about their religion, and not merely 'to do' religion; religion(s) and the most abstruse creedal as well as metaphysical questions of it meant something even to a shepherd somewhere in the mountains, cobbler, or manumitted slave she-cook with a small shop in the bazaar of a bigger Balkan Ottoman town, to mention only three examples of people who were presumed to be disinterested in religious issues as such and the evidence we produced belied such supposedly apodictical claims.

As for confessionalization *sensu stricto*, this author agrees with the warning of Roni Weinstein expressed during the conference that led to this volume that in the European case the scholars of early modern era might have too hastily concluded that confessionalization was something which appeared only in the early modern times. He stressed the late antique and medieval precedents for many phenomena for which

¹⁵⁶ Ülgener, *İktisadî İnhitat*; İnalçık, 'The Poet and the Patron'.

¹⁵⁷ Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*.

¹⁵⁸ Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*.

¹⁵⁹ Ahmed, *What is Islam?*

the scholars claimed that they did not pop up on the historical scene before the early modern era (heresy trials, catechumenization texts, professions of faith etc.). In that vein, to strengthen Weinstein's argument, we can mention a case which has been known in the studies of medieval Bosnia since the 1860s–1870s. The head of the Bosnian Franciscan province during the 1370s, a certain Bartol of La Verna (Alverna) sent in 1372 to Pope Gregory XI (1370–1378) and to his office in Avignon a set of questions entitled *Dubia ecclesiastica* dealing with all sorts of issues of doctrine, practical life, and moral theology.¹⁶⁰ In the existing literature it is claimed that the form of *dubia*-texts was a post-Tridentine tool of confessionalization par excellence, which appeared thanks to what one might term the Jesuit moral theology revolution. Clearly this was not the case. One might ask: did the scholars of early modern European confessionalization close their eyes in front of medieval precedents in general? Another possible, and from our point of view, the biggest, danger embedded in the notion of confessionalization is that it, willy-nilly, might end up in statism proper, as it was observed by one historian of early modern Europe as early as 1997.¹⁶¹

Although the statism in Ottoman studies was powerfully and with justification criticized by Abou-El-Haj in the early 1990s,¹⁶² it reappeared as a set of varieties of neo-statism since the end of 2000s. We think in the first place of Barkey's attempt at the reinterpretation of the Ottoman polity from the point of view of comparative historical sociology.¹⁶³ Further, Tezcan's project of digging up the supposed seventeenth-century Ottoman commoner in the historically English insular political sense of the term as a coeval counterpart to the English commoner in the time span from the days of Charles I to the Glorious Revolution in 1688¹⁶⁴ in our view also ended up in a variety of neo-statism. One could give the benefit of doubt to Tezcan considering that he did not intend to end up in neo-statism, but this cannot change the outcome upon any judicious reading of his book. As far as religious history taken in a broad sense is concerned, in our opinion neo-statism seems to be triumphant there. In the first place we think of Guy Burak's notions of the supposed second formation of Islamic law and the equally supposed construction of Ottoman dynastic law, namely Ottoman Hanafism.¹⁶⁵ We concur with Snježana Buzov that Ottoman Hanafism is better seen as a law of a non-territorial guild, a constructed community of knowledge with a supposedly unbroken chain going back to early Islamic Transoxania and finally to Abu Hanifa. This Ottoman guild of law doctors used the state and the facilities the state offered and/or might have offered rather than the Ottoman state and dynasty supposedly using the Ottoman doctors of law.¹⁶⁶ The argument of Buzov was presaged by the Bosnian-born Ottoman scholar Hasan Kafi al-Akhisari (d. 1614–

¹⁶⁰ See, Zagreb, Arhiv HAZU, Ms. Lat. I.a 57, fols 76a–78b, Bartol of Alverna (La Verna), *Dubia ecclesiastica*. Also, see Šanjek, 'Crkvene i društvene', esp. pp. 78–93.

¹⁶¹ Schmidt, 'Sozialdisziplinierung?'.

¹⁶² Abou-El-Haj, *Formation*.

¹⁶³ Barkey, *Empire of Difference*.

¹⁶⁴ On this, see Murphey, 'Tezcan, *The Second*', pp. 482–483.

¹⁶⁵ Burak, *The Second Formation*. See especially the review by Aykan, 'Guy Burak'.

¹⁶⁶ Buzov, *The Lawgiver and his Lawmakers*, esp. at pp. 135–171, 190–195, 245–258.

1615) in his biographical treatise in the Arabic language entitled 'The String of Scholars to the Seal of Prophets' (*Nizamu l-ʿulama ila khatami l-anbiya*).¹⁶⁷

Statism is also observable in some attempts at interpreting the era of Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687) in the terms of the era of a Sultan-cum-Kadizadeli. For one scholar would have us believe that Mehmed IV was not merely a sympathizer of the Kadizadelis, in itself a questionable claim, but the most important actor of the movement.¹⁶⁸ The scholars insistent on the confessionalization paradigm(s) shall be bound to come up with ways of avoiding falling into the statist trap.

Taking religion seriously means also considering that there were always innumerable varieties of the religious experience in the widest possible sense of the term (doing religion; remembering religion; thinking religion; teaching religion; sensing religion etc.). Also, even in the predominantly and genuinely religious environments and eras there were always dissenters, people opposed to organized religion, but also indifferent ones,¹⁶⁹ impostors,¹⁷⁰ and atheists proper. In a joint book the late Shahab Ahmed and the present author are discussing in detail two cases: one is of a philosophically grounded dissenter who was executed in 1601 and who was a deist who accepted the existence of God but was opposed to organized religion as such following the celebrated tradition of Islamic philosophy proper; the second case was of an atheist *sensu stricto* who denied the very existence of God and paid in 1665–1666 with his head for his conviction but only after he entered into a public conflict of a secular character and was reported for his strange ideas by people who were socially, not religiously inimical to him. That is to say, one was able to be privately a religious and ideological 'weirdo' in the Ottoman Empire as long as he did not divulge his ideas in the public space.¹⁷¹

In conclusion, we should like to reiterate that we find the notion of Sunnitization in the period 1453–1826 more productive in the study of the Ottoman Empire. Also it is possible to trace something very similar to confessionalization proper in the Ottoman Empire in the period 1826–1924, but this issue is heavily understudied. If one really wants to stick with the word confessionalization then the syntagm 'process of confessionalization(s)' might be a better choice. In general terms, scholars of the Ottoman Empire should never forget that the Ottoman sources are like the Bible or Shakespeare. It is easy to find a dozen of Ottoman sources which can supposedly prove any claim, similar to the way any view can be backed by at least one quote

¹⁶⁷ al-Aqhisari, *Nizamu l-ʿulama*. On the author, see Šabanović, 'Hasan Kafi'.

¹⁶⁸ Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*; Baer, 'Death in the Hippodrome'.

¹⁶⁹ On Ottoman religious indifferentism see the pioneering remarks in Graf, *Renegades*, pp. 103–106. For the developments in early modern Europe and how to study the phenomenon, see Mulsow, 'Indifferentismusforschung'.

¹⁷⁰ The highly important theme of cynical impostorship, especially in the religious-cum-political movements in the pre-industrial environments is in the Ottoman case totally neglected although the notion of impostorship (*düzme*) is well documented in Ottoman sources of various types. On how to conceptualize impostorship in preindustrial societies, see Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*; Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*; Crone, *Pre-industrial Societies*.

¹⁷¹ Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*.

from the Bible or Shakespeare. Therefore, a strictly source-directed study is, in our view, the only research option if one does not want to be derogated quite soon by the publication of new sources or new data.

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