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THE ‘IMPERIAL SIGNS’ (*NIŞAN-I HÜMAYUN*): FRAMING MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN

Abstract

The Ottoman Empire framed its relations with non-Muslim states through peace agreements known as capitulations. While their renewals also came with additional articles, in the early seventeenth century the Ottoman-Venetian peace agreements took a unique twist: the capitulations’ texts remained unchanged, with new articles being implemented through separate documents labelled as “imperial signs” (*nişan-ı hümayun*). In this paper, I will argue that two such documents, granted to Venice in 1604 and 1639, differ both in form and function from other *nişans* and that they played a crucial role in the peace-making process, along with the capitulations.

Keywords: capitulations, *‘ahdname*, diplomacy, Ottoman Empire, Venice.

The Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence which was officially followed in the Ottoman Empire divided the world into two parts: the Abode of Islam (*dar al-Islam*), comprising territories under Muslim rule, and the Abode of War (*dar al-harb*), which encompassed lands not yet conquered by Muslims. In theory, until the whole world would come under Muslim rule, the two Abodes would remain continually at war. There could be no permanent peace, just temporary ones or truces, concluded only if they benefited the Islamic polity more than waging war. In Ottoman practice, peace with a non-Muslim community or polity was concluded through the issuing of a capitulation (*‘ahdname-i hümayun*, literally “imperial covenant letters”). These documents were essentially a set of privileges granted by the sultan and sealed with a solemn oath (*yemin*). The articles, which sometimes contained bilateral stipulations,

first touched upon the actual peace terms, and afterwards turned to other vital aspects, notably commerce. Since capitulations were a personal contract between two rulers, they were supposed to be renewed upon the ascension of a new sultan.¹

Relations between the Ottoman Empire and Venice were regulated through such capitulations. The first known one was issued in 1403, and the last one in 1733, when the *'ahdname* granted by Sultan Mahmud I was pronounced perpetual, thus being enforced until the Serenissima's dissolution in 1797.² Frequent wars between the neighboring powers meant that capitulations were usually issued as an aftermath of military conflict, but the seven-decades-long peace between the War of Cyprus, ended in 1573, and the War of Candia/Crete, begun in 1645, produced *'ahdnames* only upon the enthronement of new sultans. Even in times of peace new articles were inserted in the capitulations to solve ongoing issues. This was true until 1604 when instead of bringing new additions, the *'ahdname* issued by Sultan Ahmed I simply reproduced the one that his father, Mehmed III, issued to Venice in 1595. Subsequent texts also followed this pattern, updating the names of current sultans, doges and ambassadors, with new additions being brought only in 1670, after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus. Therefore, instead of inserting new articles in the Venetian *'ahdnames* of the early seventeenth century, the Ottomans resorted to inserting new articles in a separate document: the "imperial sign" (*nişan-ı hümayun*).

There were two such *nişans* granted to Venice in the first half of the seventeenth century that amended the *'ahdnames* and became, alongside them, binding sources of law. Similarly, they were frequently renewed, but their articles were never inserted in the capitulations' text, instead they were reissued time and time again as separate documents until the "perpetual peace" of 1733. The first of these *nişans* was given in late 1604, just one month after Venice obtained the renewal of its capitulations from Sultan Ahmed I. It contained a series of articles ranging from piracy to taxation and pilgrimage and it was in force at least until the reign of Osman II. The second *nişan*, issued in 1639, had a very specific purpose: to combat the piratical activities of the Barbary states, which had by now become *de facto* independent from the Ottoman central authorities' control. This so-called "piracy-*nişan*" would be renewed alongside almost all future Venetian *'ahdnames* until the eighteenth century. Scholars have so far hinted at the function that these documents played in Ottoman-Venetian

diplomacy, but they have not endeavored further in determining their role as crucial instruments in the peace-making process.

In the early nineteenth century, Joseph von Hammer published a translation of the 1604 *nişan* and its 1615 renewal, both issued by Ahmed I. He identified the 1604 document as a “sultanic diploma with the function of a treaty (*ein sultanisches Diplom mit Vertragskraft*)”, and further commented upon its later 1615 renewal:

a commercial treaty in the form of a diploma, drafted in fourteen articles and sealed with the sultan’s seal (*einer Handels-Convention, in der Form eines mit dem Nahmenszuge des Sultans bekräftigten Diploms*), to supplement the incomplete clauses of the capitulations concluded after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus which needed renewing. The venetian *bailo* strived to incorporate in this treaty the same commercial privileges that were already awarded to the French, English and Dutch.³

Hammer’s interpretation was accepted a century later by Gabriel Noradoughian who labelled the same document as a “*berat* which renewed the commercial privileges”, although without giving any texts.⁴ Much later, in his seminal work on Ottoman-Venetian diplomatics, Hans Theunissen also undertook Hammer’s appreciation almost word by word, asserting that after the 1604 *’ahdname* “another *nişan* protecting Venetian trade in the Ottoman Empire was issued”, while in 1615 there was “a new *nişan* which further specified the status of the Venetians in the Ottoman Empire [...] since the French, English, and Dutch capitulations were more detailed and thus offered better protection and more privileges”.⁵ In his 2009 book on piracy in the Adriatic, İdris Bostan labelled the 1604 *nişan* as a “piracy capitulation (*korsan ahidnamesi*)”, without explaining his choice.⁶ As we shall see further on, the diplomatic components of the *nişan* differ significantly from those of an *’ahdname*, most notably in the absence of the sultan’s oath (*yemin*). Similarly, Joshua White also seems to consider only the piracy articles of the 1604 document, naming it, along with the *nişan* of 1639 as an “anti-piracy *nişan*”.⁷ White is however the only one who has tried to explain the function of *nişans* in relation to the capitulations, asserting that before 1595 they “recalibrated procedures between treaty issues; after 1595 they obviated the need to amend the treaty text itself.”⁸ I will comment further on that previous *nişans* – for simplicity’s sake, I will label them as “classic” – differed from the 1604 and 1639 “treaty” and “piracy” *nişans* not only in function but also in form.

Another issue that puzzled the above-mentioned scholars and others is the typology of the *nişans*, which are usually included in the *berat* (“diploma”) category of documents. I will turn to this question now.

The term used by the Ottomans to designate these documents, *nişan-ı hümayun* (also translated by the Venetians as *segno imperiale*), can be traced as the main source of confusion in ascribing a typology. The “sign” (*nişan*) is the sultan’s monogram or seal, more commonly known as the *tuğra*, which headed every document issued by the Ottoman imperial chancery and was the primary mark of authenticity.⁹ Thus, the term used to describe this type of documents is not a reference to the *tuğra*, but to a diplomatic formula which was written between it and the main text and which is known as the “*nişan formula*”, since it starts with the same word. This is the formula that appears in the 1604 document, beneath Ahmed I’s *tuğra*: *nişan-ı şerif-i ‘alişan-ı sami-mekan-ı sultanı ve tuğra-ı garra-ı ikbal-nüma cihan aray giti-sitan hakanı nefiz bi-l’avni’l-rebbani hükümü oldur ki*, which can be roughly translated as “This is the command of the noble, illustrious, lofty sultanic sign and of the illustrious, world-conquering, world-adorning, imperial *tuğra* (may it be effective through divine aid and munificent favor!)”.¹⁰ The Venetian official contemporary translations also reproduce this formula as follows: “*Il comandamento di questo nobile, sublime signoril et esquisito Imperial Segno, dimostratore di prosperità, Adornator, et acquistator del Mondo, che per gratia et favor divino corre, et è essequito*”. In more solemn documents, such as in this 1604 “treaty” *nişan*, the formula was written with a distinct color from the rest of the text, namely gold.

There are two other types of documents that may contain such a formula, hence the problems in properly describing and identifying a *nişan*: the *berat* (diploma) and the *ahdname* (capitulations). The “*nişan formula*” may be found more frequently in *berats*, documents through which sultans invested someone with a certain office or granted a *timar* to. The *ahdnames* that bear the “*nişan formula*” have been labelled by some scholars as *berat-type ahdnames*, to distinguish them from the ones lacking this formula and which instead contain elements specific of the *name* (“letter”) type of documents in their introductory lines.¹¹ Thus, paradoxically, the “*nişan formula*” is usually associated with *berats*, and not with *nişans* per-se.

Because of this, some scholars include *nişans* in the *berat* category or simply use the two terms indistinctively. Serap Mumcu, for example, in her otherwise excellent inventory of the *bailo*’s registers, labels as

nişan lots of different documents, including *berats* for Christian bishops or imperial commands to local officials.¹² Ottoman governors, Christian bishops or tributary princes all received *berats* upon their appointments. It is true that both types of documents were drafted around a series of privileges, in the form of articles,¹³ which were to be observed by a third party.¹⁴ But unlike *berats*, which specifically mention the names of their holders (*darende*), *nişans* were not personal documents and they did not invest an individual with a certain office. The recipients, in this case, the Venetian Doge and Senate, are not even mentioned, but the privileges are applied to all “Venetians” (*Venediklüler*), just like in an *ahdname*. While *nişans* and *berats* contain the same diplomatic parts, there are several notable differences.

Both types of documents are headed by the *invocatio/da'vet* of God's name in the form of “He” (*hü*, *hüve*) and its variations, followed by the *tuğra* and the *nişan* formula. The main texts of *berats* then begin with a *narratio/iblağ* which describe the events, procedures and sums of money required for the issuing of the document. The sultan's command (*dispositio/hüküm*), “I gave this imperial diploma and ordered that” (*işbu berat-ı hümayun verdüm ve buyurdum ki*), then introduces the privileges bestowed upon the *berat's* holder. In contrast, the 1604 *nişan* offers a very brief narration, simply stating that the current Venetian *bailo* has sent a petition (*'arz-ı hal gönderüb*), without mentioning any other contextual information. It then proceeds to list the privileges/articles which appear as quoted from the petition, by using the gerund *deyü* (“saying that”) at the end. Only now does the sultan give the command “I gave this imperial sign and ordered that from now on the aforementioned articles shall always be resolved according to this imperial sign” (*işbu nişan-ı hümayunı verdüm ve buyurdum ki ba'delyevm zikr olunan maddelerde daima işbu nişan-ı hümayun mucibince 'amel olunub*). The 1639 *nişan* and its renewals offer more details in the *narratio* – after all, they were issued following temporary suspensions of the capitulations – but then also lists the privileges/articles as being demanded by the *bailo* in a petition (though not quoting it). The sultan's command comes afterwards, this time being more detailed by reiterating some of the provisions, as one would expect to find in a typical *ferman*. It is noteworthy to mention that *ahdnames* also employ this order in their diplomatic parts and some even quote the articles from the ambassador's petition.¹⁵ All types of documents discussed here end with the classic *sanctio/te'kid* formula “Thus shall they know, and they

shall have confidence in the noble mark!" (*şöyle bileler 'alامت-i şerif i'timad kılalar*), followed by the date and place of issue.

A. The 1604 *nışan*

With the death of Sultan Mehmed III in December 1603, the *'ahdnames* granted by him, including the Venetian one of 1595, lost their validity and renewals were needed. Although the Serenissima had a *bailo*, a permanent diplomatic envoy stationed at the embassy in Pera, protocol demanded that an extraordinary ambassador must be sent to the Porte to congratulate the new Sultan, Ahmed I, and to formally request the renewal of the capitulations. Giovanni/Zuane Mocenigo was selected for this task and he set sail in September 1604 along with Ottaviano Bon, who was to replace Francesco Contarini in the *bailaggio*. The two arrived in Constantinople in October 1604 and the new *'ahdname* was obtained by ambassador Mocenigo in late November 1604. Unlike previous documents which added new articles, this time the *'ahdname* simply reproduced the previous one, updating only the names of the sultan, doge, and ambassador.¹⁶ Instead, new articles were issued through a separate *nışan-ı hümayun*, obtained by *bailo* Ottaviano Bon one month later, on 23 December 1604 – 1 January 1605/ *eva'il-i Şaban* 1013.

Even though the original *nışan* is preserved to this day in the *Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (ASV) it has never been studied and there are problems with its dating. First, because of a tear in the document where the date of issue was inscribed, archivists have read the Arabic numeral "twenty" (*'aşrin*) instead of "ten" (*'aşer*), thus dating the document in 1023 AH/1614. Nevertheless, Ottaviano Bon's name is clearly mentioned in the opening lines, and it is well known that he stayed in Constantinople between 1604-1609.¹⁷ There is also a contemporary Italian inscription on the back of document which mentions that it arrived along with Bon's letter from 28 February 1605 (1604 *more veneto*), which is also preserved along with its encompassing dispatch. The Senate itself acknowledged receiving the original *nışan* and its translation in its letter to Bon from 29 April 1605.¹⁸

Second, even present-day scholars have only studied the *nışan's* copy inscribed in the *bailo's* register, and not the original document issued by the Ottoman imperial chancery.¹⁹ Despite this copy's accuracy, it mentions the month of *Şevval* instead of *Şaban*, probably due to a scribal error, and therefore dating the document in March 1605. To make matters even more

confusing, both official translations of the *nişan*, the one that came along with the original document²⁰ and the one written down along with the copy in the *bailo's* register,²¹ give the Julian equivalent of the last days of January (“*ultimi di genaro*”) 1605 to the Hijri *eva'il-i Şaban/Şevval* 1013.

Nonetheless, the date written at the bottom of the original document, 23 December 1604 – 1 January 1605/ *eva'il-i Şaban* 1013 should be considered the correct one. It appears that Bon got hold of the *nişan* a few months later, though. He informed the Senate only on 14 February 1605 about obtaining the “*imperial segno*”²² and he sent the document to Venice, along with a translation, two weeks later, on 28 February.²³ Bon's dispatch containing the two documents reached Venice in late March or early April 1605.²⁴ Hence, there is no doubt that this *nişan* was issued in late December 1604/*eva'il-i Şaban* 1013, and not ten years later. Let's take a look now at its contents.

The *nişan's* articles, like those of contemporary Venetian ‘*ahdnames*, were not numbered. Blank spaces were left instead after each article, but one can easily lose track due to the scribal tendency to compress writing at the end of the line. Hammer, for example, identified thirteen articles in the 1604 document, but the 1604 *nişan's* two official Italian translations divide the text into fourteen numbered articles. I will use this division since it reflects the Venetians', and most likely also the Ottomans' understanding of the privileges granted. Here is a summary of the fourteen articles obtained by Venice through the 1604 *nişan*:

1. Venetian goods found upon pirates, Muslim or Christian alike (*müslüman levendatına ve ya-hud harbi nasara ta'ifesinin korsan*) shall be restored to their proper owners; there shall be no trading with pirates.
2. Pirates shall not be admitted in Ottoman sea fortresses (*leb-i deryada olan kal'alar*) such as Modon, Coron, Santa Maura, Preveza, and Tunis;²⁵ if possible, they shall be imprisoned; disobeying officials shall be punished exemplarily (*mucib 'ibret için muhkem haklarından geline*).
3. Slaves of Venetian origin shall be freed, excuses such as “we bought them with our own money” (*biz bunları akçemizle aldık*) or “they were enslaved in times of war” (*fesadda ve cenkde alınmışlardı*) shall not be accepted; those who became Muslim shall be freed on the spot (*müslüman olmuş ise azad olub*), those who remain unbelievers (*henüz küfri üzere ise*) shall be delivered to the *bailo* .
4. Disputes and crimes (*niza' ü husumet ve ya-hud kan da'vaları*) between the Venetians shall be judged by the *bailo* according to their law ('*adetlerince*).

5. After paying the usual custom tax (*gümrük*), Venetian ships trading in Istanbul, Galata, Silivri, Tekirdağ, Bandırma, Gallipoli and other places shall not be charged with the butcher's tax (*kassabiye*) nor any new or future taxes (*sair ahdas olunan ve min-ba'd ahdas olunacak bida'tlar*).
6. Customs officials and others (*gümrük emirleri ve gayrılar*) shall not demand gifts (*pişkeş*) in the form of cloths (*çuka*), sugar (*şeker*), glass (*şişeler*) or money (*akçeler*) from the Venetians boats and other small Cretan ships (*sair küçük Girid gemilerinden*) trading in Istanbul, Galata, Egypt, Tripoli, Cyprus, Izmir and other places; contrary imperial commands (*emr-i şerif*) shall be declared void and the capitulations shall always be observed (*daima 'ahdname-i hümayun mucibince 'amel oluna*).
7. Venetian runaways (*bir levend ve ya-hud adamlarından bir kimesne kaçub*) shall be handed over to the *bailo*.
8. Subjects of Venice or of any other Christians princes (*gayrı nasara hakimlerinin re'ayasından olsun*) may travel freely on Venetian ships.
9. Ottoman navy ships (*donanma gemilerime ve sair hassa kadırgalarım*) shall not demand gifts from the Venetian ships they encounter at sea.
10. No other taxes shall be imposed upon the casks of Muscat wine (*misket hamrları fiçilarından*) from Crete or from other Venetian islands, except those taxes established by the ancient law (*kanun-u kadim üzere*) and in an imperial command previously given by Sultan Mehmed [III].
11. Tribute (*harac*) shall not be taken from the dragomans of Venetian *bailos* and consuls; if one of them dies, the *bailo* will manage their effects (*ma'rifetile ve irslarına verile*), without interference from Ottoman fiscal officials (*beytülmalcı, kassam*).
12. Venetians shall not be blamed for the attacks of the Uskoks of Senj (*Seng nam kal'anın Uskok eşkiyası*), who are recognized as the King of Vienna's subjects (*Beç kralına tabi' olmağla*).
13. Subjects of Venice and of other Christian princes may come to visit Jerusalem; the monks residing at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (*Kumame nam kilisede mütemekkin olan ruhbanlara*) shall not be molested; they may repair (*ta'mir ü termim*) the ruined parts of the said church (*mezbur kilisenin harabe-i müşrif olan yerlerin*) according to their ancient form (*vaz'-i kadimsi üzere*), as it is allowed by the Sharia (*şer'-i şerif muktazasınca*).
14. Disputes with Venetian consuls in Egypt, Aleppo or elsewhere shall be transferred to the Porte (*Asitane-i Sa'adetime havale ola*); consuls and dragomans shall not be troubled for the debts of others (*aharın börci ve tuhmeti için kimesne rencide etmeye*).

As one can observe, piracy is one matter dealt within the articles, but there are lots of others covered, as well. It is not adequate to label this

document as “piracy *nişan*”, such as the later one from 1639, because it also deals with trade, inheritance, pilgrimage, tax exemptions and so on, features that one would expect to find in a typical ‘*ahdname*. In his 1609 *Relazione* to the Senate, Bon himself described the document as an “*aggiunto alla capitulatione*”,²⁶ thereby recognizing the role this document played alongside the capitulations.

Some of these articles further developed provisions found in earlier ‘*ahdnames*, while others were completely new. To give just a few examples: in the 1595 Venetian ‘*ahdname* there was already an article exempting merchants from paying “new taxes” (*ahdas olunan bida’tlar ref’ olunub*),²⁷ but article 5 of the 1604 *nişan* further develops it, precisely mentioning the *kassabiye* tax. Other Christian powers such as Poland, France and England also secured in this period clauses in their ‘*ahdnames* which exempted merchants from paying *kassabiye*.²⁸ On the other hand, the *nişan*’s article 13 regarding Jerusalem has no corresponding stipulation in previous Venetian capitulations, but it is an almost exact copy of the one found in France’s ‘*ahdname* issued just seven months earlier, in May 1604.²⁹ It seems rather curious, though, that other important issues for the Venetians such as settling the disputes over the limits of Zara or the possession of Lagosta/Lastovo, a small island in the Adriatic briefly taken from Ragusa, were not settled through this “imperial sign”. Despite this, there seems to be no doubt that the 1604 *nişan* had the purpose of updating the Venetian ‘*ahdnames* with new articles very much needed after commercial rivals such as France and England obtained increased privileges in the same year. While it may be true, as other scholars have assumed, that Venice tried to avoid paying ever-increasing sums of money by obtaining new articles through a separate document, and not by including them in the ‘*ahdname*, archival material also suggests another factor. It appears that the precarious situation at the Ottoman court in 1604 discouraged the Venetians from requesting new articles in their capitulations.

Ahmed I ascended the throne in most peculiar circumstances, with both state and dynasty facing previously unseen challenges. The reigns of his grandfather, Murad III, and father, Mehmed III, saw the beginning of two long wars with the Habsburgs and Safavids which put great pressure on the empire’s resources. This, in turn, led to the rise of social dissensions across the empire, culminating with the Celali rebellions in Anatolia and with the frequent riots of the military in Istanbul. Perhaps more troubling was that with the death of Mehmed III in December 1603 the Ottoman

dynasty came to the brink of extinction, as the two surviving princes were minors: Ahmed was 14 years old, and his brother, the future Sultan Mustafa I, was just 3-4 years old. The two brothers contracting smallpox in early 1604 made the situation even worse. Another novelty was the fact that Ahmed ascended the throne before he had the chance to learn the art of governing by being assigned to a province outside the imperial capital. He was the first sultan to come directly from the Topkapı Palace, without having a retinue of his own which could have been given government offices to. Instead, his mother, Handan, and the royal tutor, Mustafa Efendi, assumed the role of regents, clashing with the faction of Safiye Sultan, the former queen mother (*valide*) of Mehmed III. As Günhan Börekçi argues, this was, in fact, the beginning of a period of increased factionalism at the Ottoman court, with power being disputed between various rival groups.³⁰ As the Venetian diplomatic correspondence demonstrates, the Serenissima's governing body was aware of this situation and it instructed its representatives in Constantinople to act in accordance.

The instructions passed by the Senate to ambassador Zuane Mocenigo before the start of his mission specifically mention that:

because we cannot believe that in the present circumstances the Turks may try to bring any important novelties... the sole directive of your delegation is to congratulate [the Sultan] and to confirm the peace according to the previous terms, and any other matters will remain to be solved by Bon, our *bailo* at that Porte.³¹

Indeed, the instructions sent to Ottaviano Bon two days earlier, on August 10th, 1604, contain topics that would later be found in the *nišan*. After first being instructed to present his credentials to the sultan, to visit the principal Ottoman officials in the capital and to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian ambassadors, Bon was tasked with securing guarantees against pirate incursions in the Adriatic, to make sure that the belongings of deceased Venetians are not confiscated by Ottoman authorities, to release Venetian slaves, to protect the Franciscans in Jerusalem, and so on.³² It seems that the Serenissima tried to avoid negotiations for an updated *ahdname* with whatever faction was in power in Constantinople at a given moment, which may have proven too costly and instead, it left its most important issues to be handled by the new *bailo*. At his arrival in Istanbul, Bon found a powerful ally in *kaymmakam* Sarıççi Mustafa Pasha who facilitated the granting of the said articles.³³ It

seems that negotiations with Ottoman power networks had been already under way, since Bon thanked his predecessor, Francesco Contarini, for his role in obtaining the “imperial sign”.³⁴

The solution with the *nişan-ı hümayun* appeared rather natural. Such documents were already employed, as Joshua White remarked, to fix issues regarding the application of the ‘*ahdnames*’ clauses. There are several copies of “classic” *nişans* preserved to this day in the ASV, as well as two original ones, which permit a better comparison with the 1604 “treaty” *nişan*. First of all, on a visual level, the “classic” ones appear less sophisticated: there is a simple *tuğra*, drawn with a single stroke of the *kalem* with black ink, whilst in the “treaty” *nişan* the *tuğra* is richly decorated; the *nişan* formula in “classic” documents is written with the same black ink as the rest of the text, while in the “treaty” it is written with golden ink; and the *divani* style of calligraphy used in the “classic” *nişans* is not so elegant as the one found in the 1604 “treaty”. To sum up, from a graphic point of a view the “classic” *nişans* resemble typical *fermans*, while the “treaty” *nişan* looks just like a contemporary ‘*ahdname*’ (though considerably shorter in length). But more important, their contents and functions are different.

“Classic” *nişans* were meant to settle interpretable clauses or abuses of the ‘*ahdnames*’ provisions, unlike the “treaty” *nişans* of 1604 and 1639 which amended the ‘*ahdnames*’ with new articles. Let’s take for example the *nişan* issued by Sultan Murad III on 21-30 July 1592/ *evasıt-ı Şevval* 1000:³⁵ it starts by quoting a letter (*name*) sent by the Doge of Venice and other nobles (*Venedik doji ve sa’ir beyleri*) which detail the misfortunes of two Ottoman Armenian merchants who now demanded compensation from the *bailo* in Constantinople; after quoting an article from the ‘*ahdname*’ which absolves the *bailo* from others’ debts, the petitioners ask the sultan to give a command for this effect; the sultan then reiterates the ‘*ahdname*’s same article and commands that nobody should indict the *bailo* for the debts of others. Other “classic” *nişans* granted to Venice also respect this pattern. Thus, the narrative part of “classical” *nişans* is more detailed and precisely asks for imperial commands to settle a dispute which was in fact already covered by the ‘*ahdname*’, and the *dispositio* then restates them. In contrast, the 1604 “treaty” *nişan* omits the narration and simply lists articles demanded by the *bailo*, to which the sultan gives his consent. Hence, even the contents of the two types of document resemble the *ferman*-‘*ahdname*’ dichotomy observed at the visual level: a *ferman* typically presents a problem and the actions needed for its settlement,

which are then reiterated as a command, while an *'ahdname* skips the narrative part and records a series of articles to which the sultan solemnly swears to uphold. Right after its issuing, the 1604 *nišan* became a primary source of law for Ottoman-Venetian interactions, just like an *'ahdname*.

Article 13 of the *nišan* was quoted in a *ferman* sent to the judge (*kadi*) and governor (*sancakbeyi*) of Jerusalem on 20 March – 1 February 1605/*evail-i Şevval* 1013, commanding them to respect its provisions.³⁶ A later *ferman*, dated 26 October – 4 November 1612/*eva'il-i* Ramazan 1021, ordered Ottoman officials in Aleppo to act “according to the imperial covenant-letter and imperial sign” (*'ahdname-i hümayun ve nišan-ı hümayun muktezasınca*) and “not to hurt nor disturb the Venetians in any way contrary to the peace and amity and to my imperial covenant letter and imperial sign” (*bir vecihle Venediklüléri sulh ü salah ve 'ahdname-i hümayun ve nišan-ı şerifime mugayir rencide ü remide etdürmiyüb*).³⁷ Thus, the “imperial sign” acted as a fundamental instrument of peace between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, by supplementing the capitulations.

A problem still remained: the *'ahdname* was ultimately the highest reference in international relations and when ambassadors complained that some imperial commands contravened their articles, the Porte resorted to annul such commands and to decree that the *'ahdnames* should always be respected (even the Venetian 1604 *nišan* had such a provision in its article 6). According to *bailo* Almorò Nani's dispatch of 15 June 1615, it seems that his predecessor, Cristoforo Valier, was at some point (not long after the 1612 *ferman* mentioned above) requested by then grand-vizier Nasuh Pasha to produce evidence that the *nišan's* articles were also confirmed by the *'ahdname*. Since this wasn't the case - after all the *nišan* was issued after the *'ahdname* and Ahmed I was still reigning - the grand vizier declared the 1604 *nišan* void and annulled it. After the execution of Nasuh Paşa in 1614, Nani profited from the new grand-vizier's better disposition and obtained the *nišan's* reconfirmation.³⁸ There is no surviving Ottoman-Turkish text of this renewal and its' contents are known just from the translation that Almorò Nani sent in June 1615, which is almost identical to the previous official translations. There is one problem regarding the document's date of issue, since the Hijri and Julian dates appearing in the translation do not correspond. The translator offered the Hijri date as *evasit-ı* (“*mezo di*”) *Muharrem* 1024 which would be 9-18 February 1615 but converted it as the first days of May (“*primi di Maggio*”) 1615, which would be *evai'l-i Rebi'l-ahır* 1024. Considering that Almorò Nani wrote

about these events and sent the translation in his June 1615 dispatch, it would be safe to assume that the *nişan* was reconfirmed in May 1615 and there was a simple scribal error in translation or perhaps even in the Ottoman document. This 1615 *nişan* is also mentioned by A.H. de Groot, but he considers it an '*ahdname*', though he does not explain why Ahmed I would have issued two such documents to Venice during his reign.³⁹

A final development of this "imperial sign" first obtained by *bailo* Ottaviano Bon appears to have taken place in 1619. If the 1615 reconfirmation occurred because of its previous annulment, this time the changing of sultans determined the *nişan*'s reconfirmation, not during the first short reign of Ahmed I's brother and immediate successor, Mustafa I, but by Ahmed's young son, Osman II. Mustafa I did not issue any new '*ahdname*' during his first reign,⁴⁰ and so the *nişan* also wasn't renewed or reconfirmed. However, Osman II issued a new '*ahdname*' to Venice after his enthronement, and although Ottaviano Bon thought that the *nişan*'s articles would be later included in capitulations,⁴¹ this was not the case. The articles of the 1619 '*ahdname*' again remained unchanged,⁴² and it appears that the *nişan* was to be renewed as a separate document once more.

In his dispatch from 12 May 1619, *bailo* Almoro Nani wrote that after the departure of Francesco Contarini, who had now been sent as ambassador to congratulate the sultan and to obtain the new capitulations, he was to obtain the renewal of the "imperial sign".⁴³ I could not find any original or copy of this supposed 1619 renewal, nor any other mentions of it.⁴⁴ Hammer affirmed that Nani had obtained it, but the Italian source he quotes also speaks of a future action.⁴⁵ This is the last information available about the *nişan-ı hümayun* first obtained by Ottaviano Bon in late 1604, as not even *fermans* seem to be quoting it anymore as a legal source along with '*ahdnames*'. The document had thus a rather short lifespan, being enforced during most of Ahmed I's reign, with a hiatus of some two-three years between 1612-1615. It should be noted that "classic" *nişans* were issued even during this period: the "*carazo* affair", for example, was settled through such documents in 1617.⁴⁶ But the concept of a *nişan-ı hümayun* that would amend Ottoman '*ahdnames*' granted to Venice would again be implemented in the late 1630s and this time it would become a permanent feature of the peace-making process between the two neighboring powers.

B. The 1639 “piracy” *nišan*

Unlike the 1604 document, the events and motives that produced the 1639 “piracy” *nišan* are better known.⁴⁷ Even so, the existing archival material related to the so-called Valona incident has remained largely unused and a separate study would be better fitted. Here I will only make a short summary of those events and I will focus more on the *nišan* and its outcome.

In 1638, while on campaign to recapture Baghdad from the Safavids, Sultan Murad IV called upon his North-African vassals to protect the Archipelago from Maltese and Tuscan pirates. A fleet of 16 galleys was assembled from Algiers and Tunis and set sail under the command of Ali Picinino/Piçininoğlu, an Italian renegade, but before even reaching the Aegean, it diverted and plundered the Southern Adriatic, inflicting damages also upon Venetian holdings. The Serenissima’s patrol fleet, captained by Marino Capello, chased the North-Africans until they found refuge in the Ottoman port of Valona (today Vlorë, Albania). After more than one month of waiting outside the harbor, Capello decided to attack. On 6 August 1638, the Venetians stormed the port of Valona and captured the North-African vessels without much struggle since their crews were not on board. All captured galleys were later sunk except for the flagship, the *Cigala*, which was taken back as a prize to Venice. By his point, both parties had violated the *‘ahdname*: the Ottomans, by giving shelter to pirates who were known to have plundered Venetian possessions, and the Venetians by openly attacking an Ottoman port, capturing and destroying vessels of those that were, at least formally, Ottoman subjects.

Murad IV was at first outraged upon hearing the news from Valona, which he considered to be an attack behind his back, while waging war on the other end of his dominions, but was nonetheless willing to let the whole thing go if the Venetians returned the captured galleys. The *kaymakam* left in Constantinople to govern while the sultan and grand vizier were away, Tabaniyassı Mehmed Pasha, summoned the Venetian bailo, Alvise Contarini, for explanations, but since the ships had already been sunk, the *bailo* was put under house arrest in September 1638. In February 1639, after conquering Baghdad two months earlier, Murad IV announced that Venice’s *‘ahdname* was suspended and instructed the governor-general (*beylerbeyi*) of Bosnia to interrupt trade with the republic.⁴⁸ While things were looking rather grim for the Venetians and their diplomatic envoys in Europe were instructed to seek help for an upcoming war with the

Ottomans, the sultan returned to Constantinople in June 1639 and, to everyone's surprise, was willing to reset relations. The *bailo's* agency and connections with power networks in Constantinople again proved crucial to the outcome of the Valona affair and to the issuing of the *nişan*. As Contarini would later mention, Ebubekir Pasha, governor of Rhodes and deputy grand admiral, and Uzun Piyale Pasha, intendent of the imperial arsenal, contributed to the positive outcome.⁴⁹ After some negotiations, the *bailo* was released from his arrest in Galata, returned to the embassy in Pera, and also obtained a *nişan-ı hümayun* which not only reopened trade and reinforced the *'ahdname*, but it also amended it with further articles regarding piracy.

Up until now, the only information about the contents of this "piracy" *nişan* was available through the English summary offered by Paul Rycaut a few decades after these events.⁵⁰ No original document nor Ottoman-Turkish copy are known so far, though the official translation sent by Contarini to Venice is preserved in his dispatch from 30 August 1639 and has so far remained unpublished.⁵¹ Ottoman-Turkish copies of the 1639 *nişan's* later renewals are preserved in the *Mühimme Defterleri* and were also published in a nineteenth-century collection of treaties (*Mu'ahedat mecmu'asi*). Rycaut's summary wasn't precisely dated since it only mentions "*Rebiul*" as the month, but now we know that the "piracy" *nişan* was issued on 2-11 August 1639/ *evail-i Rebi'l-ahır* 1049 (this time, the Julian and Hijri dates inscribed on the document correspond perfectly). I will offer here a summary of the Italian translation composed by dragoman Salvago, who handled most of Contarini's affairs while under house arrest, thus having a crucial role in settling the Valona affair. Unlike the previous 1604 *nişan* this translation does not number the articles and I chose to preserve this feature, while at the same time respecting the manuscript's paragraphs:

The Noble, excelled and royal sign thus orders and commands:

Alvise Contarini, current Venetian *bailo* at my Royal Court, made this exposition: While I was on campaign to recapture the Well-Guarded Baghdad, the Algerians and Tunisians whom I called upon to guard the White Sea have entered the Gulf of Venice and then fled to the fortress of Valona. Although they were not given assistance there, the Venetians gave them a treatment befitting the old enmity between them.

Since the old friendship with my Porte of Felicity has been reestablished with the return of the galley Cigala, this affair and any other related subjects shall be completely put to silence and nobody may have any other claims.

Because commerce with the Venetians has been previously prohibited, I now renew the previous Imperial Capitulations so that merchants and ships from both sides may again come and go to the ports and countries of my Well-Protected Domains for trade and no one shall prevent nor molest them.

And so that the Corsairs may in no way inflict damages upon the Venetians, their captains shall leave guarantees when coming to fortresses in the White Sea, as it is stated in the current Capitulations; and if the Corsairs would come to whatever fortress with ships and people taken from the Venetians, the Castellans shall in no way allow them in nor give them protection; and when Corsairs shall come to whatever fortress with prizes taken from the Venetians or with slaves of their subjects, those who haven't become Muslims shall be set free, and the prizes shall be returned to their proper owners; and if Corsairs plan to make actions contrary to the Imperial Capitulations, they shall be detained and their names sent to my Just Porte, so that my previous Commandment shall be executed; and if Ministers and Castellans show negligence in executing my noble Commandment no excuses shall be accepted and they will not only be dismissed but also severely punished, as example to others; and the Ministers and Castellans who are not diligent shall not blame the Venetians if the Corsairs will pay the price; and if the Venetians encounter galleys and *bertones* from the Maghreb on the high seas and fight one another, no charges shall be pressed, regardless of whom inflicts damages.

Thus seeking my noble Commandment and a firm continuation of peace, the current *bailo* has promised that the new *bailo*, who will replace him at the end of March this year (1049), will deliver the sum of five hundred thousand *taleri*, that is two hundred fifty thousand *cecchini*, as a gift to fortify the peace. And so that no actions shall be taken against the Imperial Capitulations, I gave this illustrious Sign and commanded that the merchants and subjects of both sides may come and go from my Well-Protected Domains to Venice and to the lands and islands under its submission, and may conduct trade and commerce as before, without being hurt or molested, whenever they come by land or by sea in my Well-Protected Domains, and also when they leave, as all of my government shall watch over the merchants' security and profits. With regards to the damages inflicted upon the Venetians by the Tunisian and Algerian Corsairs which roam the sea, the Ministers shall act as mentioned above, without any of my slaves acting contrary to the peace and promise. Thus shall they comply and they shall continually carry out the execution of this, my Noble Sign.

Given in the Royal city of Constantinople in the first [days] of *Rebi'l-ahir* 1049, which is the first third of August 1639.

Even though an Ottoman-Turkish text is missing, this Italian translation seems rather faithful, as any student of Ottoman diplomatics will recognize not only the structure of the text but also its terminology. Moreover, the available Ottoman-Turkish texts of later renewals match Salvago's translation, except of course for the introductory narration which differs in each document. This is also a distinctive element from the previous 1604 *nişan* which was issued in peaceful conditions: the 1639 document had to depict the events leading to its appearance.

As in the 1604 *nişan*, some articles included in the 1639 "imperial sign" were reiterations of similar ones already included in 'ahdnames, while others were completely new. For instance, while previous capitulations specified that Ottoman ship captains who sail outside the grand admiral's command should leave guarantees (*mühkem kefiller*) so that they will not attack Venetian ships or possessions,⁵² the *nişan* specifically imposed this practice to North African corsairs. On the other hand, the Venetians were now allowed to deliver their own justice by attacking the corsairs on open seas, whilst previous 'ahdnames only mentioned that if there was a clash and the Venetians were victorious, they should send the surviving corsairs "safe and sound" (*sağ ve salim*) to Istanbul, were they would have been punished by Ottoman authorities.⁵³ However, there was no specific permission for the Venetians to "enter violently into the Port" where corsairs have taken refuge, as Rycaut's rendition states,⁵⁴ just that the Ottoman officials who are in cahoots with the said corsairs shall in no way indict the Venetians.⁵⁵ As Joshua White observed, the 1639 *nişan* marked "a further step in the diplomatic distancing between Istanbul and the North African port cities", by specifically mentioning them in otherwise already implemented articles, and by allowing the Venetians to retaliate without interference from the Porte.⁵⁶ For the resumption of trade and the issuing of this *nişan*, the Venetians promised to pay a considerable sum of money: 500 thousand *taleri* (silver coin) or the equivalent of 250 thousand *zecchini* (gold coin),⁵⁷ which was indeed delivered in November 1640 by the new *bailo*, Girolamo Trevisan. But in the meantime, Sultan Murad IV died and was succeeded by his brother, Ibrahim, which meant that renewals were due.

Some nine months after his succession, Sultan Ibrahim I issued a new *nişan*, dated 6-15 November 1640/*evahir-ı Receb* 1050, through which he acknowledged the payment of 250 thousand *zecchini* by the Venetians and his confirmation of Murad IV's 1639 *nişan*.⁵⁸ It did not, however, reiterate its articles, and so this document does not have the form and

purpose of the 1604 and 1639 documents discussed in this paper and should be considered a simple confirmation. Unlike the 1604 “imperial sign”, though, this time the 1639 “piracy” *nişan* would be mentioned in subsequent capitulations. The ‘*ahdname*’ obtained by ambassador Pietro Foscarini from Sultan Ibrahim I on 24 January – 2 February 1641/ *evahir-ı Şevval* 1051 was the first since 1595 to add a new clause. It was introduced rather odd, at the very end of the document, after the sultan’s oath and before the *sanctio-corroboratio*, thus being separated from preceding articles. Without incorporating the *nişan*’s articles in the ‘*ahdname*’s text itself, Ibrahim stated that “the imperial sign given for the pirate issue (*korsan taifesi hususiçün verilen nişan-ı hümayun*) in the time of my late brother, Sultan Murad Han, shall also be renewed (*dahi tecdid olunub*) in my blissful reign”.⁵⁹ One can only presume that by mentioning the 1639 “piracy” *nişan* in subsequent ‘*ahdnames*, Venice wanted to make sure its clauses would be respected as any other articles of the capitulations, but it is not yet clear why it continued to be issued as a separate document up until 1734 and not have the clauses directly included in the capitulations. Although some sources suggest that Ibrahim also issued a separate “piracy” *nişan*, I was not able to find such a document. The practice of reissuing this “imperial sign” as a separate document alongside the ‘*ahdnames* will nonetheless become a standard feature of the Ottoman-Venetian peace-making process after the War of Candia (1645-1669).

At the end of the ‘*ahdname*’ obtained by ambassador Alvise Molin from Sultan Mehmed IV on 12-21 May 1670/*evahir-ı Zi’l-hicce* 1080 there was also a mention of the “piracy” *nişans* issued by Murad IV and Ibrahim I.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the same Molin obtained a separate *nişan* a few months later, on 6-15 September 1670 /*evahir-ı Rebi’l-ahır* 1081.⁶¹ This is so far the earliest known Ottoman-Turkish text of any “piracy” *nişan*, and by comparing its provisions with Salvago’s translation from 1639 one can see that the articles are identical. In fact, the only differences lie in the opening *narratio*, which are adapted to each individual situation. While all pre-1670 *nişans* had been obtained by the resident *bailos*, after the Ottoman conquest of Crete they would be handled by the ambassadors, since their renewals would be dictated by the need to conclude peace after an armed conflict.

Later reissues of the “piracy” *nişan* will closely follow those of the ‘*ahdnames*’ settling Ottoman-Venetian wars at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, as shown in the following table:

Sultan	' <i>Ahdname</i>	Piracy <i>nişan</i>
Mehmed IV	12-21 May 1670	6-15 September 1670
Mustafa II	9-18 April 1701	13-22 October 1701
Ahmed III	13-22 June 1706	-
Ahmed III	29 July – 7 August 1718	24 December 1718 – 2 January 1719
Mahmud I	19-28 November 1733	4-13 July 1734

In October 1701 Mustafa reissued the *nişan*⁶² after the '*ahdname* of April the same year, which ratified the Ottoman-Venetian Treaty of Karlowitz (1699). In late December 1718 – early January 1719, the *nişan* was reissued by Ahmed III, after he earlier ratified the Treaty of Passarowitz with Venice, through an '*ahdname* dated August 1718. And finally, after the '*ahdname* of 1733, which inaugurated a perpetual peace between the Ottomans and Venetians, Mahmud I issued the last document of the "piracy" *nişan* series, in July 1734.⁶³ Ottoman-Turkish copies are available for all these documents, except for the 1718 *nişan* which is known only from the mention in its 1734 counterpart. Apart from the opening narrations and final dispositions, these texts reproduce the 1670 "imperial sign" word by word, quoting the articles of the previous document and giving its date. I was not able to find any *nişan* issued along with the '*ahdname* of 1706, the only one since 1641 issued upon a sultan's succession, and not because of a war's conclusion.

The 1639 "piracy" *nişan*, like the previous 1604 "treaty" *nişan*, immediately became a binding source of law alongside the capitulations, as can be seen in a February 1640 imperial command sent to officials in Morea.⁶⁴ The same was also true for later renewals: on 19-28 January 1703/ *eva'il-i Ramazan* 1114 the *kapudanpaşa* was informed about the anti-piracy provisions written "in my imperial covenant-letter and in my imperial sign given for the pirate issue ('*ahdname-i hümayun ve korsanlar hususiçün verilen nişan-ı şerifimde*)" and he was ordered to act "according to my imperial covenant-letter and to my noble sign" (*buyurdum ki [...] 'ahdname-i hümayun ve nişan-ı şerifim mucibince 'amel edüb*).⁶⁵ Examples

such as these can be found throughout the eighteenth century, with the “piracy” *nişan* mentioned side by side with the capitulations.⁶⁶

“Imperial signs” were granted by the Ottomans also to other European powers, though they never became so intrinsic to the peace-making process as in the Venetian case. Moreover, in some instances, the *nişans* were eventually incorporated in the texts of *‘ahdnames*. For example, among the new articles added to the English capitulations of 1675, one had previously formed “the contents of an illustrious sign granted (*ihsan eyledikleri nişan-ı ‘alışanın mazmununa*) in the year 1053, in the time of Sultan Ibrahim Han”. This article specified the precise taxes English merchants should pay in Ottoman ports for diverse goods, mainly fabrics, and if the Treasury (*maliye*) would have given other orders, they would have been ignored and “it would always be proceeded according to the contents of the imperial sign and of the covenant-letter” (*da’ima mazmun-u nişan-ı hümayun ve ‘ahdname ile ‘amel oluna*).⁶⁷ It should be noted that this *nişan*, dated in 1643-1644, was not included in the first subsequent English *‘ahdname* of 1662, but rather in the next one, in 1675 (which would also be the final English *‘ahdname*). There is certainly more to be studied about the function of these documents, but at least for the Venetian case, the picture is rather clear, with the “imperial signs” being essential documents through which the Ottomans framed their relations with the neighboring *Serenissima*.

NOTES

- 1 In 1630 the request of a Polish envoy to renew the *'ahdname* of 1623 was denied, since both rulers were still alive and reigning. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century). An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents*, Brill, Leiden, 2000, pp. 54-5, 136.
- 2 *Mu'ahedat Mecmu'ası*, vol. 2, Hakikat Matba'ası, Istanbul, 1878, p. 214; Maria-Pia Pedani, *La dimora della pace. Considerazioni sulle capitolazioni tra i paesi islamici e l'Europa*, Cafoscarina, Venice, 1996, p. 37-8.
- 3 Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, vol. 4, C.A. Hartleben Verlage, Pesta, 1829, p. 482.
- 4 Gabriel Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, vol. 1, Librairie Cotillon, Paris, 1897, p. 39, 41.
- 5 Hans Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The *'ahd-names*. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents", in *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies Utrecht*, 1/2 (1998), p. 180.
- 6 İdris Bostan, *Adriyatik'te Korsanlık. Osmanlılar, Uskoklar, Venedikliler. 1575-1620*, Timaş Yayınları, Istanbul, 2009, p. 99.
- 7 Joshua White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2017, p. 137.
- 8 *Ibidem*, p. 133.
- 9 Hammer thus explained the terminology for a supposed 1619 renewal of the 1604 *nışan*. J. von Hammer, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 504.
- 10 D. Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- 11 All known capitulations granted to Venice, France and England are *berat* types, but not those of Poland (except the 1672 and 1678 ones), the Holy Roman Empire or the Dutch Republic. For a summary over the *'ahdanmes'* *berat*-typology debate see M. Pedani, *op. cit.*, p. 26-9.
- 12 Serap Mumcu, *Venedik Baylosu'nun Defterleri/ The Venetian Baylo's Registers (1589-1684)*, Ca'Foscari – Digital Publishing, Venice, 2014, *passim*.
- 13 The editors of a recent edition of Orthodox patriarchal *berats* chose to number the articles. Hasan Çolak, Elif Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church as an Ottoman Institution. A Study of Early Modern Patriarchal Berats*, The ISIS Press, Istanbul, 2019.
- 14 Halil İnalçık, "Ottoman Galata", in *Essays in Ottoman History*, Eren Yayıncılık, Istanbul, 1998, p. 279
- 15 See, for example the English 1675 *'ahdname* in *Mu'ahedat*, vol. 1, p. 240-62; contemporary translation in *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace Between the Majesty of the King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, etc. and The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire*, Printed for F.S., London, 1679.

- 16 Archivio di stato di Venezia, Miscellanea documenti turchi, d. 1145.
- 17 Eric Dursteler, "The Bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice's Early Modern Diplomatic Corps", in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, vol. 16, nr. 2, Dec. 2001, p. 30.
- 18 ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, f. 11.
- 19 Ī. Bostan, *op. cit.*, p. 185-8.
- 20 ASV, MDT, d. 1194;
- 21 ASV, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Carte turche, b. 250, d. 331, f. 25v-24v.
- 22 ASV, Senato, Dispacci, Costantinopoli, f. 60, p. 316r.
- 23 ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 60, p. 347r.
- 24 ASV, S.Delib.C., f. 11. (29 April 1605, to the *bailo* in Constantinople).
- 25 Both the original document and the BAC copy contain here the word *Tuna* (طونه), meaning the Danube. But listing the river Danube amongst several ports in Greece where Muslim corsairs found refuge doesn't make much sense. All Italian texts translated this *Tuna* as "*Tunesi*", that is Tunis.
- 26 Ottaviano Bon, "Relazione", in M. Pedani (ed.), *Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al senato*, vol. 14: *Constantinopoli, Relazioni inedite (1512-1789)*, Bottega d'Erasmus, Padua, 1996, p. 511.
- 27 See articles 37 and 38 from the bilingual edition of the 1595 '*ahdname* by François Alphonse Belin, "Relations diplomatiques de la République de Venise avec la Turquie (fragment)", in *Journal Asiatique*, 7, tome 8, Nov.-Dec. 1876, p. 381-424.
- 28 *Articles du traicte fait en l'annee mil six cens quatre, entre Henri I le Grand Roy de France, & de Navarre, et Sultan Amat Empereur des Turcs*, Imprimerie des Langues Orientales, Paris, 1615 (France 1604, article 13); D. Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 323 (Poland 1598); A. Feridun Bey, Ahmed Feridun Bey, *Mecmu'a-ı Münşe'atu's-selatin*, vol. 2, Daru't-tıbbatu'l-'amire, Istanbul, 1849, p. 382 (England 1601).
- 29 The Venetian *nişan* added the extra permission to repair the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is not found in the French 1604 '*ahdname*.
- 30 Günhan Börekçi, *Factions and Favourites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) and His Immediate Predecessors*, unpublished PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 2010.
- 31 ASV, S.Delib.C., f. 10 (instructions from 12 August 1604).
- 32 *Ibidem* (instructions from 10 August 1604).
- 33 O. Bon, *loc. cit.*, p. 511. As Mustafa Pasha would be executed in January 1605, the *nişan* was issued just at the right time.
- 34 ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 60, p. 373r.
- 35 ASV, Lettere e scritture turchesche, VII:13.
- 36 ASV, BAC, CT, b. 250, d. 330, p. 19b.
- 37 *Ibidem*, d. 332, p. 35a.
- 38 ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 79, p. 243v-245v.

- 39 Alexander H. de Groot, "The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries", in *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2003, p. 593.
- 40 In fact, the only 'ahdname issued by Mustafa I was during his second reign, to Poland, on 12-21 February 1623/eva'il-i Rebi'l-ahir 1032.
- 41 O. Bon, *loc. cit.*, p. 511.
- 42 ASV, MDT, d. 1236.
- 43 "dopo la partita dell'eccelsimo Signor Ambassador Contarini io dovessi procurare la rinovatione del Segno Imperiale". ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 87, p. 191v.
- 44 Due to conservation issues I was not able to consult f. 88 of ASV, S.Disp.C., which groups dispatches from 1 September 1619 – 27 February 1620 and may contain further information about Nani's attempt at renewing the "imperial sign".
- 45 J. von Hammer, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 504, n. i: "Doppo la partenza del ambascadore il Bailo rinovava il Segno Imperiale".
- 46 Tijana Krstić, "Contesting Subjecthood and Sovereignty in Ottoman Galata in the Age of Confessionalization: The Carazo Affair, 1613-1617", in *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 93, 2013, pp. 422-453.
- 47 J. White, *op. cit.*, p. 161-4.
- 48 ASV, MDT, d. 1456.
- 49 Alvise Contarini, "Relazione", in N. Barozzi, G. Berchet (eds.), *Le Relazioni degli stati europei lette al Senato dagli ambasciatori veneziani nel secolo decimosettimo*, part I, Prem. Stabil. Tip. di P. Naratovich Edit., Venice, 1871, p. 358-60.
- 50 Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire from the Year 1623 to the Year 1677*, Printed by J.M. for John Starkey, London, 1680, p. 86-7; it would be later included in Rycaut's continuation of Richard Knolles, *The Turkish History from the Original of that Nation, to the Growth of the Ottoman Empire*, with a *Continuation* by Sir Paul Rycaut, the Sixth Edition, vol. 2, Printed for Tho. Basset, London, 1687, p. 46-7.
- 51 ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 120, p. 424r-429r.
- 52 See art. XV from the 1625 'ahdname in M. Pedani, *La Dimora*, p. 71, 78;
- 53 See art. V from the 1625 'ahdname in M. Pedani, *op. cit.*, p. 69, 77.
- 54 P. Rycaut, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
- 55 That peace should be persevered in ports was also noted by J. White, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
- 56 *Ibidem*, p. 164.
- 57 The same sums are given by Rycaut, however Hammer supposed that the actual sum in silver coin should have been 5 million. However, the silver coin in question was not the Ottoman akçe, as Hammer suggested, but the Spanish dollar, or piece of eight. For calculations, see the table in Şevket

- Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, p. 144.
- 58 ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 121, p. 521r-522v.
- 59 ASV, MDT, d. 1470.
- 60 *Mu'ahedat*, vol. 2, p. 156; ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 154, p.175r-185r.
- 61 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Düvel-i Ecnebiye, 16/4, p. 1-2 (1670); *Mu'ahedat*, vol. 2, p. 156-8; ASV, S.Disp.C., f. 143, p. 403r-404v.
- 62 *Mu'ahedat*, vol. 2, p. 196-8.
- 63 *Ibidem*, p. 214-6.
- 64 ASV, BAC, CT, b. 253, d. 338, p. 54a.
- 65 ASV, BAC, CT, b. 253, d. 345, p. 2b.
- 66 Brahim Bouazi, *XVII ve XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Garb Ocaklarının Avrupa Ülkeleri İle Siyasi ve Ticari İlişkileri*, unpublished MA Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2002, *passim*.
- 67 *Mu'ahedat*, vol. 1, p. 259; *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, p. 39-40.