

SEYYID MURADĪ'S PROSE BIOGRAPHY OF HIZIR IBN  
YAKUB, ALIAS HAYREDDIN BARBAROSSA

OTTOMAN FOLK NARRATIVE AS AN UNDER-EXPLOITED SOURCE  
FOR HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

RHOADS MURPHEY\*  
(Birmingham)

The importance of Seyyid Muradī's *Gazavatname* as a source of detailed information on the career and exploits of the celebrated Ottoman admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa has long been recognised. The present study makes use of a mid-seventeenth-century manuscript copy of the tale preserved in Vienna to focus on the early phases of Hayreddin's career before his rise to prominence as Sultan Süleyman I's key naval strategist after the mid-1530s. The study explores his role first as new participant and then gradually *primus inter pares* among the freelance Muslim corsairs who were drawn to the shores of North Africa in the early decades of the sixteenth century after the fall of Oran (Wahran) to the Spanish in 1509. The process by which these self-generated and essentially independent local forces of the frontier were transformed over time into agents of the expanding Ottoman empire forms one dimension of analysis in the study. Another key concern is showing the value of Muradī's text as a source for recapturing the ethos and motivations of the sea gazis in a pre-imperial era.

*Key words:* Ottoman naval expansion in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean (1515–1535), The Ottoman frontier in North Africa (1515–1535), North African corsairs, Hayreddin Barbarossa, folk narrative.

As a sub-genre within Ottoman historical literature, biographical accounts are a relative rarity. Since panegyric was considered most properly a subject for holy men or kings, celebrations of the efforts and accomplishments of lesser individuals – to the degree that they necessarily diverted attention from saints and Sultans – exposed would-be authors of such accounts to the suspicion of either heresy, treason or both.<sup>1</sup> An important exception to this general avoidance of laudatory accounts of the Sultan's servitors is Seyyid Muradī's *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa* whose recension was finalised in the months following Charles V's failed expedition to Algiers in late Oc-

\* Rhoads Murphey, Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, United Kingdom, e-mail: Murphey@hhs.bham.ac.uk

<sup>1</sup> For the general hagiographical bias in biographical literature of the Muslim world, see Pellat (1991).

tober/early November 1541.<sup>2</sup> Although the author's own association with the hero of his account dates only from 1534, by which time the then sexagenarian sea captain had long since left behind his humbler origins as the omnipresent Hızır and taken on the trappings, status, and burden of respectability associated with the office of *kapudan-i derya* (admiral of the fleet) and rank of Ottoman pasha, his account of the younger Hızır in his freebooting days is – both in terms of its language and content – clearly taken without much rhetorical embellishment direct from the mouths of informants who served Hızır before he joined active Ottoman service. Because the *Gazavat* remains so faithful to its oral sources, it provides a privileged glimpse into the attitudes and values that prevailed among the sea rovers and exiles from the Aegean who gravitated to the shores of North Africa in the early decades of the sixteenth century before the Ottomans had yet started to create, yet alone consolidate their empire in those parts. Even in 1541 when the account was finalised, Ottoman audiences in the core provinces would still have known virtually nothing by direct experience of the part of the Mediterranean in the western Maghrib where much of the tale unfolds. Thus Muradî's account opened up for them as for us the remote and still unfamiliar world of *Ifrikiya* and beyond. For our analysis of the earlier phases of his account up to circa 1532 we have chosen the Vienna manuscript of 128 folios which subdivides the text into 39 "sittings" or *meclis*, reminding us that the text was originally intended for reading aloud.<sup>3</sup>

It is noteworthy that even after Hayreddin's domestication as an Ottoman pasha circa 1533, he continued to be regarded with suspicion by some of his contemporaries who thought his loyalty to the Sultan's cause was tainted with more than a little self-promotion and material motivation. In his assessment of Hayreddin's premature attack on Tunis in 1534 which provoked a successful and strategically damaging response by Charles V in 1535, the historian Lutfi Pasha openly accuses the newly appointed *kapudan* of delusions of grandeur (*gurur*) and of nursing ambitions to claim recognition as emperor in his own right in Africa. Lutfi Pasha's text contains the following assessment of Barbarossa:

"Having perpetrated so much tyranny and slaughter among the Muslim population [of Tunis], he became puffed up to the bursting point with self-regard, prematurely priding himself with self-appointed status as 'Emperor of the Maghrib'. But God punished him for his unseemly vanity and brought him down from such imagined heights to an abasement [and real retreat] too profound to be explicable by human tongue."<sup>4</sup>

While the views expressed by Lutfi in this passage are no doubt tinged by personal jealousy and resentment engendered by his own inglorious and premature exit

<sup>2</sup> The argument for this dating is given by Gallotta (1981, p. 486).

<sup>3</sup> Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien. Ms. Historica Ottomanica No. 55 copied in 1078 A.H./1668 A.D. For other manuscripts, see Levend (1956, pp. 73–74) and Yurdaydın (1963).

<sup>4</sup> Lutfi Paşa, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, p. 356 (lines 9–13): *Hayreddin Paşa müslemlara bu kadar zülüm ve katl-i nefis etmişken 'Mağreb'de padişah oldum ' deyü gurur ile içi ve dışı top-dolu olmuşken, ol gururun [...] belası yoluna girip [...] yine zelil oldu ki dil'le şerh olamaz.*

from state service in 1541, the underlying sentiment rings true and it reminds us of the danger of projecting too much from our knowledge of Barbarossa's later subservience and loyalty to the Ottomans' cause onto our interpretation of his more free-wheeling and self-generated naval initiatives undertaken in the two decades that preceded his elevation to the captaincy (*kapudanate*) of the Ottoman imperial fleet. Muradî's account cannot be relied on to provide a chronologically precise or comprehensive account of the period 1515 to 1535 which saw the activation of a new front for Ottoman imperial expansion in North Africa, but it is an invaluable source for assessing the values, motivations, and levels of commitment exhibited by the first participants in this enterprise, key among them the ship captain Hızır *reis* himself. It was they, more than the Sultans and their policy makers, who determined the course of events in an era of dynastic instability which saw the collapse of one and the fatal weakening of the other of North Africa's two most long-established dynasties, the Mamluks in Cairo and the Hafsids in Tunis, accompanied by the Ottomans' tenuous and at first rather fragile attempts to build a consensus in support of their own succession to power in their stead. In the last decade of his life from the mid 1530s to his death in 1546 the former privateer who had begun his naval career as one among several organisers and promoters of small, often rather disjointed, fleet actions against the Spanish during their advance after 1510 towards Egypt from the west, acquired a semi-legendary stature both in Muslim and contemporary Western lore. According to preference, he was transformed either into conquering hero or bedeviling foe, invariably enveloped in an aura of invincibility and magisterial power that distorts our understanding of his humbler and rather more prosaic beginnings. The realism of Muradî's semi-biographical treatment gains the more in importance as it incorporates details from which the actual progression of Hızır/Hayreddin's career from merchantman to privateer and from privateer to corsair impresario and then gradually, though perhaps never definitively, into Ottoman official can be traced in full. These phases of Hayreddin's career are covered in the first twenty-three episodes ("sittings") of the Vienna manuscript covering the period up to 1531.

Muradî's account begins in *meclis* one (ff. 4a–15b) with an avowal of the fact that what prompted the arrival of the Barbarossa brothers, first Oruç in 1513 followed a year later by his brother Hayreddin, to the shores of North Africa was not their recruitment to the cause of fighting against the Spanish infidel, but the practical necessity of escaping the wrath of the newly-enthroned Ottoman Sultan Selim I who suspected them, not without just cause, of disloyalty owing to their earlier associations with Korkud, his brother and rival candidate for the succession.

Oruç's first approach for political asylum was to the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt (*Gazavat* II,15b),<sup>5</sup> but he was seemingly rebuffed since soon after we find him established as a protégé of the Hafsids Sultan Abu Abdallah Muhammad V in Tunis who afforded him harbour facilities in La Golletta (Hak al Vad) in accordance with their mutual agreement (*kavl*) that the Sultan would be entitled to the standard one-

<sup>5</sup> In this and all subsequent references to the text, Roman numerals indicate the chapter or *meclis* divisions according to the Vienna manuscript, while Arabic numerals refer to the folios of the same manuscript; see note 3 above.

fifth share of war spoils and proceeds from any privateering ventures (*Gazavat* II, 16b). Throughout the period of Selim I's naval buildup, used first to assist (1513–1515) and later to supplant (1516–1517) the faltering Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt, the Barbarossa brothers remained not just aloof from the undertakings of their former overlords, the Ottomans, but also increasingly physically remote. There is a perceptible shift in the focus of the Barbarossas' activities after the fall of Egypt and its swift transformation by the Ottomans into their principal base of operations for the sector in 1517 yet further to the west of Tunis against the Algerian frontier contested with Spain. There is no evidence to suggest that any kind of Ottoman amnesty was extended to either of the Barbarossa brothers during the lifetime of Oruç (died 1518) and it is significant that Hayreddin's appeal to Selim for military assistance in 1519 came not at a time of strength and self-confidence nor in the context of proposals for joint offensives against Spain, but reflect instead his own position of weakness and desperation. At the very time his delegation approached Istanbul, he was struggling against the odds to maintain his position in Algiers in the face of a citizen-led revolt rejecting his claim to succeed to his brother Oruç's position as the city's governor. By the time Selim's affirmative answer to Hayreddin's plea for help was brought back to Algiers in September of 1520, not only had the Sultan's reign almost reached its end brought about by Selim's death on the 21st of September 1520, but Hayreddin's attempted defense of the city had effectively run its course and the will of his supporters' to prolong their resistance to the rebels' demands effectively collapsed. It is significant that, still at this late juncture five years after Oruç's first establishment in Algiers in 1516, the founder's inscription over the portal of Hayreddin's mosque erected in May 1520 (Cemazi I, 926) makes no reference to Ottoman suzerainty or to Hayreddin's own subservience to or officially sanctioned position as governor for the then-ruling Ottoman Sultan. His terms of self-reference in the inscription are simply:

*Al Sultan al mücahid fi sebil Allah / The Sultan and [tireless] champion  
of God's cause.*<sup>6</sup>

Hayreddin's evacuation of the Algiers citadel in the closing months of 1520 was followed by an interregnum lasting a further nine years until May 1529 when the fall of the Spanish garrison of Peñon D'Algers facing the city allowed a definitive and secure reestablishment of his governorship. In the intervening period Hayreddin was, *force majeure*, required to fall back on his former position and pattern of reliance on the gains from privateering to rebuild his position and attract a widened circle of partisans and fellow supporters (*voldas*) capable of launching a credible counter-offensive.

Selected episodes in Muradî's narrative allow us to follow the ups and downs of Hayreddin's career in this period both leading up to and following his retreat from Algiers in 1520, while offering invaluable insights into the mix of private and personal motive with more communally-spirited instincts which animated the pioneers and precursors of empire in early sixteenth-century North Africa. Muradî's account

<sup>6</sup> See Uzunçarşılı (1949, II, p. 368, note 1) citing Colin (1901).

of a privateering cruise undertaken jointly by the Barbarossa brothers in the Spring of 1515 makes it inescapably clear that it was not the Ottomans, but the Hafsid co-beneficiaries and sponsors of the Rumî sea raiders in Tunis, who in this period were principally responsible, both for taking the initiative to organise sea raids and for distributing the rewards earned by each of the participants. In this early part of the text (*Gazavat*, the second *meclis*) the author has the Sultan of Tunis congratulating the victorious crew members at the successful conclusion of that season's activities with the following offer:

“Go to my arsenal and chose any one of the [bigger] ships docked there that pleases Hayreddin *reis*. I hereby grant it to him as my gift [in acknowledgement of his great services and in the expectation of even greater ones].”<sup>7</sup>

In the next section of his text Muradî makes no overt reference to any contribution by either of the Barbarossa brothers to Selim's preparations for the conquest of Egypt in 1516–1517, but focuses instead on their own self-generated efforts to rescue the stranded Muslims of southern Spain through launching small-scale sea raids against the Valencian and Catalan coastlines and leading of landing parties into the interior.

It is in this section that Muradî makes his most frank revelations about the sources of bravery and material motivations of the rank-and-file participants in these dangerous missions. Reflecting more the values of his informants than necessarily his own views Muradî makes it abundantly clear that for most, the main attraction – apart from the rescue of refugees who at the same time were clear prospects for recruitment as participants in future raids – was naturally war spoils (*ganimet*) and booty (*doyum*). The irregulars who participated in Hayreddin's early raids served under no compulsion, and their only reward apart from the satisfaction and mutual security deriving from loyal service with their comrades (*yoldaş*) was their share in the goods captured during the campaign. In one passage, a group of such volunteers voice their frustration at having being left shipbound while another group of their shipmates released on shore has been roaming the countryside gathering up loot. They express their dissatisfaction with this state of affairs to Hayreddin in the following terms:

“*Siz varıp onları doyum ve gani kıldınız. Biz bunda kaldık. İmdi, lutf edip bizi dahi önümüze düşüp, bir tarafa ilet. Ola kim Hakk teala bize de bir gaza-yi sevab vere, ve ganimet bulaviz. Sen bizim serdarımızsın, ve bizim devletimiz sensin.*”

“You have taken our comrades [in the first landing party] and filled them up with plunder, making all of them rich men. However, we remained here. Now do us the same favour and show us the way by leading us to another quarter. May it please God the Exalted that we too

<sup>7</sup> *Gazavat* II, f. 19b (line 13): *Tunus Sultanı öyle sipariş eykedi ki Tersane'de olan gemilerinden her kangısı ki Hayreddin beğene ona bağışladım.*

shall be vouchsafed meritorious victory and be granted [comparable] riches. You, [o Hayreddin,] are our commander and leader and our fortune rests with you.”<sup>8</sup>

The corsair equivalent of the three musketeers’ motto: ‘one for all and all for one’ is nowhere more clearly expressed than in this fragment of simulated dialogue exchanged between the commander (*serdar*) and his loyal followers and comrades at arms (*yoldaş*).

Muradî’s text makes it perfectly clear that the same bonds of loyalty and mutual support which bound the followers of Hayreddin to their commander operated within the fleets of his contemporaries and rivals for leadership among the corsair captains of North Africa. The separate and equal status of the several corsair captains who were Hayreddin’s contemporaries and rivals is also clearly brought out. As Hayreddin was the central heroic figure for Muradî’s informants, allusion in the text to the stinginess and unco-operativeness of the other corsair captains when invited by Hayreddin to lend their assistance for common ventures reflect both their perspective and the historical reality. The operative principle on the shores of North Africa in the two decades between 1510 and 1530 before Hayreddin’s recruitment into Ottoman imperial service as *kapudan* seems to have been each man for himself. More precisely, it was a question of the captains operating out of a series of ports and harbours along the coast of Tunisia and Algeria from Jerba and La Golletta to Jijeli and, after Hayreddin’s reestablishment there in 1529, Algiers vying with one another for success in a series of scattered attacks against vulnerable targets across a wide band of the northern shores of the Mediterranean stretching from Gibraltar to Sicily and points north in both the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic seas. Though all followed the same code of bravery and comradeship (*yoldaşlık*), unresolved disputes and a near continuous contest for leadership undermined all attempts to forge wider alliances based on common interest. Finding a means for working together for the achievement of a shared goal, even when it was the seemingly unproblematic one of defending the collective existence of the Muslim community in North Africa under active threat of Spanish imperialism, remained elusive.

The lack of unanimity and common purpose that characterised the Maghrib in the era of the Ottoman conquest of Egypt is clearly reflected in Muradî’s account. For example in the fourth *meclis* when describing the failure of Oruç and Hayreddin’s joint attack on Bejaya (Bougie) in 1516, the author (through his informants) focuses on the refusal of the Hafsid Sultan in Tunis to respond to their urgent requests for gunpowder at a critical phase of the siege. Through the Sultan’s stinginess (*buhl*) and jealousy (*hased*), the Barbarossas were denied the victory which their bravery had earned them.<sup>9</sup> This theme of intra-Muslim rivalry makes repeated appearances throughout the first two dozen sittings of the *Gazavat*. In the period following the Spanish capture of Oran (al-Wahran) in 1509, the first freelance corsairs to arrive

<sup>8</sup> *Gazavat* II, ff. 21b–22a.

<sup>9</sup> *Gazavat* IV, ff. 27a–27b: (...) *kaleyi yirmi gün dövülüp, ahar barut tükenip battal olıcak, Tunus Sultanına adam salıp, bir mikdar barut istediler. Ol dahi arada bu kadar hakk ve hukukları var iken, buhl edip ve hased edip vermedi. Eğer barud olaydı, tahkik fethi müyesser olurdu.*

in North Africa from the Aegean received little effective backing from any state. The main obstacle was distance. Even after the incorporation of Egypt within the Ottoman zone of influence – a development not of the post-1517 so much as the post-1525 period after the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha's reorganisation of the province – the further projection of Ottoman power remained problematic. The distance by sea from Alexandria to Algiers was 1600 miles and following the twisting contours of the North African coastline the distance was a thousand miles greater.<sup>10</sup> Ottoman strategic priorities in the southern Mediterranean during the 1520s and 30s remained focused on the Red Sea and points east of Suez, and even if it had been identified as an Ottoman policy priority, it is clear there was no local political consensus about the desirability of an extension of Ottoman rule west of Suez towards the Maghrib. Through the *Gazavat* we are able to identify and assess the interaction between the opposing centrifugal forces with which Hayreddin had to contend in his battle, more or less continuous over the decade and a half between 1515 and 1530 to achieve a hard-won and in some cases rather grudging consensus. The first stage of this effort was concentrated on the task of establishing his own personal control and leadership. Only once he had achieved an effective working relationship with his corsair co-equals was he in a position, after 1534, to offer effective help to his imperial overlords in Istanbul and assist them in achieving a co-ordinated Mediterranean policy.

In the eleventh sitting of the *Gazavat* Muradî evokes the self-divided state of Algiers at the close of Selim's reign through simulated speech attributed to Hayreddin in his impassioned plea for support to the assembled townsfolk of Algiers. This speech would have been delivered during the turmoil that followed the death of Oruç in 1518 sometime prior to his own expulsion and temporary retreat to a new base of operations at Jijeli. The citizens of Algiers are castigated for their disloyalty and ingratitude as repayment for his own dedication to the defense of the city against Spanish aggression in the following lines:

“Hayreddin reis<sup>11</sup> (...) söze ağaz edip eyitti kim:  
 ‘Ya ashabna, bu ettiğiniz iş ne asıl işdir? Biz size ne kemlik eyledik kim siz böyle bed-kârlık edersiz? Biz sizi bu kadar yoldaşlık edip sizi nice âda’dan kurtardık, ve nice iyilikler eyledik. Onların ivazı bumudur?’<sup>12</sup>

“Captain Hayreddin began his speech by saying:

‘Fellow citizens, what sort of business is this? Have we shown you any ill will that justifies such mistreatment? We have always

<sup>10</sup> The Mediterranean coastline of Egypt measures 570 miles, of modern Libya 1010, of Tunisia 660, and of Algeria from the Tunisian border as far west as Algiers 360 making a total of 2600 miles.

<sup>11</sup> It is significant that throughout the early part of his biography Muradî consistently refers to Hayreddin as *reis* (i.e., ship captain, privateer). The shift to *bey* (i.e., governor, commander of provincial land forces) comes only in the fourteenth sitting devoted to a description of Hayreddin's contest with Ibn Kadi for control over the provincial hinterlands of Algiers in the years after 1525. The first reference to Hayreddin using the title *bey* occurs in *Gazavat* XIV, f. 56b (line 10).

<sup>12</sup> *Gazavat* XI, f. 49a (lines 6–10).

treated you with comradeship and solidarity (*yoldaşlık*), not only rescuing you countless times from [the ill intentions of] your enemies, but besides that treating you to many acts of gratuitous kindness. Is this [i.e., the rebellion] any way to repay our kindness?’”

In the following sitting (*meclis* XII, ff. 50a–52b) which provides the denouement of the drama of the Algerian uprising, the author makes reference not only to the atmosphere of mutual mistrust and betrayal that existed between the Arab citizens of Algiers and the Rumî/Ottoman volunteers defending the garrison,<sup>13</sup> but also to the indifferent, even hostile, attitude of Hayreddin’s own fellow corsair captains based in nearby Tunisian harbours, especially Jerba. Beyond this, the author’s honest appraisal of the mixed motives and divided loyalties present among Hayreddin’s stalwarts themselves reveals that it was not just his inability to overcome the intractable internal dissension within Algiers, nor the unwillingness of the Tunis fleets to offer him any support that prompted Hayreddin to abandon the city in 1520, but disturbing signs of wavering commitment among his own troops. The language of the relevant passage speaks tellingly of the extreme factionalism of this period:

“*Meğer ol zamanda Tunis’de ve Jerbe’de kırkdan müteceviz gönüllü gemileri vardı. Daima onları davet edip,  
‘Bize bir yoldaşlık edin. Eğer taşra çıkmazsanız, bari deryadan bir erlik gösterin kim düşmanlarımız bir pare yatsınlar, havf üzere olsunlar’ deyü.*”

*Gördü ki muavenet etmezler. Onda olan yoldaşlar dahi üç bölük olup: bir bölüğü kendiye can ve dilden mütabaat ederlerdi, ve bir bölüğü dahi onda olan hakareti görüp ol memleketden yığrenip el çekmişler idi, ve bir bölüğü dahi vilayet halkıyla muhtelit olup onları koyup gitmek mümkün olmayıp bizzarure oturup, hakim olanlara mütabaat etmekten çareleri kalmayıp, mecalleri yok idi. Hayreddin reis gördü ki memleket halkının hali budur (...) tedbir eyledi kim Cezayiri bırakıp (...).”<sup>14</sup>*

“About that time [i.e., ca. 1520] there were anchored at Tunis and Jerba in excess of forty privateer ships. Hayreddin persistently invited their captains to lend him a hand, saying:

‘Give us a sign of your solidarity. If you can’t manage to land reinforcements, then at least make some show offshore, giving fright to our foes and encouraging them to moderate their attacks.’

Hayreddin reluctantly acknowledged that, despite such words of entreaty, no help would materialise from that quarter. As for his own partisans, he recognised that they too were split into three categories. The

<sup>13</sup> *Gazavat* XII, f. 50b (lines 5–6): *Vel-hasıl, iki yıl bu uslub üzere birbiriyle münafikâne zendgâne eylediler.*

<sup>14</sup> *Gazavat* XII, ff. 50b (lines 7–15) – 51a (lines 1–6).



first group was devoted to him heart and soul and prepared to serve his cause unreservedly. A second group, reacting to the contemptuous treatment they had received at the hands of the Algerians, began to feel an aversion for the country and moved off.

The third [and most numerous] group was composed of those who had married with the locals and settled down. This group, naturally unwilling to leave their families behind, were compelled by circumstance to offer their allegiance and co-operation to the dominant faction within the municipality. Aware of the dilemma in which [his people] and the common folk of the country found themselves Hayreddin resolved to order a tactical retreat from Algiers.”

The nine years which followed Hayreddin's withdrawal from Algiers and self-imposed exile in Jijeli are covered in some detail in the ten succeeding sittings of the *Gazavat*. It is a tale not of glory, but of tenacity in the face of adversity, and in his account Muradî avails himself of every opportunity for casting Hayreddin's opponents and rivals in an unfavourable light. He reserves his fiercest comments and criticisms for the Tunis- and Jerba-based captains who had failed Hayreddin in his hour of need, and either skips over or deliberately downplays the importance of their achievements. For example, in the fourteenth sitting, Muradî offers the following assessment of the corsair attacks aimed against the Dalmatian coastline in the early years of the new Sultan Süleyman's reign organised as part of his overall naval strategy leading up to the successful siege of Rhodes in 1522:

“*Tunus gemileri onyedî pare idi. Deryaya çıkmış, ve Venedik körfezine varıp, bir nesne başarmayıp, geldi.*”

“The Tunis fleet consisted at this time of seventeen ships. Although they set to sea [with great hopes] and got as far as the Gulf of Venice [i.e., the Adriatic] they returned to base having accomplished nothing.”<sup>15</sup>

Another shadowy figure who appears in both western and non-western accounts is Sinan reis. According to Muradî's account his contribution to the Ottoman naval success at Rhodes in 1522 was negligible and he was otherwise inactive until summoned to Hayreddin's side after his permanent return to Algiers in 1529. The *Gazavat* offers the following low key, not to say insulting, assessment of Sinan:

“*Sinan reis üç pare gemi ile Cerbeden çıkıp Rodosa varıp, Ondan dönüp Cerbeye gelmiş idi.*”

“Sinan reis set out from Jerba with three ships and reached Rhodes. From thence he returned [intact] to Jerbe.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Gazavat* XIV, f. 53a (line 9). The risk assessments offered in contemporary western sources such as the diary of Sanudo were rather less dismissive. Compare Setton (1984, Vol. 3, p. 201, note 11).

<sup>16</sup> *Gazavat* XIV, f. 53a (line 10).

Muradî's remarks are intended to leave the unmistakable impression that, without putting himself out inordinately or exposing himself or his ships to any real risk, Sinan gave token support to the Ottoman attack. Accounts of the campaign in contemporary Ottoman court chronicles make no specific reference to Sinan's participation, noting instead Süleyman's continued reliance in the early part of his reign on fleet escort services provided by Kurdoğlu Musliheddin who in the past had acted as his father's main liaison with the North African corsair fleets.<sup>17</sup> In western accounts Sinan, perhaps sometimes confused with Hayreddin himself, tends to occupy a rather more high profile position and rates several mentions as Sinan "the Jew" (*çifud*) of Smyrna.<sup>18</sup> What is interesting for us is not the definitive determination of which of the several captains active on the North African coast at that time deserves most credit for which acts of bravado and daring on the high seas, as the perceptions of their respective roles by Muradî and his informants.

The subordinating of Sinan reis to Hayreddin's authority occupies an important part of a later part of Muradî's narrative, especially in sitting twenty-one (ff. 72a–74b). In this part of the tale, Sinan is portrayed as a rather grasping and self-serving character who was finally persuaded to join forces with Hayreddin by the lure of material reward. In the aftermath of Andrea Doria's defection to Charles in 1528 the Muslims needed more than ever before to present a unified front both for defensive and offensive purposes. To emphasise his message about the importance of maintaining Muslim unity, instead of simulated dialogue this time Muradî has recourse to the simulated text of a letter purportedly addressed in 1530 by Hayreddin in Algiers to his reluctant ally Sinan in Jerba. In a previous chapter (the seventeenth sitting, ff. 62b–66a) Muradî has established the context in which Sinan's recruitment letter is to be understood by relating how another captain named Aydın reis, also formerly based in Tunis, had carried out successful raids on the Spanish coast in the spring and summer of 1529 and returned from the Balearics to Algiers laden with booty and nine captured enemy vessels in tow.<sup>19</sup> The letter refers to what must be understood as a real deficiency and weakness of military and naval provision in these years, namely the lack of reliable sources of manpower to crew vessels. According to the *Gazavat*, Hayreddin had been compelled to delay his counteroffensive against Doria who was approaching Cherchell with a fleet of forty ships<sup>20</sup> because of his own manpower deficiencies. Hayreddin's letter to Sinan addresses these issues in the following terms:

<sup>17</sup> See the *Celalzade*, Tabakat, fol. 72a: *Musliheddin reis (...) sefain-i zafer-karin-i İslamiyye'ye pişva olmuştu*. *Celalzade* makes no reference to the actual scale of this participation. Musliheddin's co-operation with the Ottoman fleet at the time of Selim's Egypt campaign is confirmed in the *Gazavat* (see *Gazavat* IV, f. 26a and V, ff. 30a–b), but once again the scale of this participation is not specified and thus difficult to gauge.

<sup>18</sup> See in particular Setton (1984, Vol. 3, p. 347, note 5).

<sup>19</sup> See the subsection of *Gazavat* XVII on folios 65a–66a.

<sup>20</sup> *Gazavat* XXI, f. 72b (line 6).

"Bir name yazıp gönderip, dedi kim:

'İşittim [ki] küffarın cemiyeti var imiş. Onda yalnız olmaktansa gelip bunda olsanız. Eğer deryaya gitmek dilersen, bizim gemilerimiz ile gideydiniz. Ve eğer dilerseniz, karadan adamlarınızı gönderip, siz huzur edesiz, ve adamlarınıza dahi ulufe tayin ola. Mücerred gemiye ihtiyaç olmayasız.'

Çünkü bu mektub vasıl olup meşhuru bildikte makul görüp, ehlin ve ayalın alıp, Cezayir'e geldi. Ve Hayreddin reis onlara azim riayetler eyleyip, mekulat ve meşrubatın görüp, her birine ulufe eyledi. İstediklerini vakit sefer edip, ve dilediklerince dururlardı."<sup>21</sup>

"Hayreddin sent Sinan a letter in which he stated:

'I have heard that the enemy [i.e., Andrea Doria] has assembled a large fleet. Instead of staying there isolated at Jerba, why not join us here at Algiers [like the others]? If you want to put to sea, do so together with our ships. If you prefer not to risk your ships, rest easy. Merely dispatch your sailors to us overland. We will be responsible for paying their wages and you need have no worries about your own ships.'

When this letter reached Sinan and he understood its contents, he found the proposals reasonable and he set out [immediately] for Algiers with his household, family, and dependents. Upon their arrival at Algiers Hayreddin greeted them with great respect and consideration, fêted and feasted them, providing each of them with wages from his own treasury. They were then free to participate in joint sea campaigns, but those who chose not to were also free to remain behind."<sup>22</sup>

Though Hayreddin's letter is clearly apocryphal, his skill in creating alliances is by no means a figment of Muradî's imagination. We have independent confirmation from reliable contemporary Western sources that it was precisely at this time in the summer of 1530 that the effects of the unification of the corsair fleets began to be perceived in the Western Mediterranean. A report from Rodrigo Niño, Charles' imperial ambassador to the Serenissima dated at Venice on the 28th of June 1530, included the following observation:

"Barbarossa, the Jew [i.e., Sinan] and another corsair [presumably Aydin reis] have united their forces and now have a fleet of forty galleys with which they intend attacking Andrea Doria."<sup>23</sup>

It is significant that at the end of that first season of joint campaigning in 1530, rather than returning to his own independent base at Jerba, the newly recruited Sinan, reported back instead to Hayreddin in Algiers. He then received his share of the joint spoils direct from the hands of Hayreddin who had by now become the

<sup>21</sup> *Gazavat XXI*, f. 73b: lines 1–8.

<sup>22</sup> *Gazavat XXI*, ff. 73a (bottom line) – 73b (lines 1–8).

<sup>23</sup> Cal. S. P. Spain 1529–1530, Doc. No. 365; see De Gayangos (1879, Vol. 4, p. 615).

universally recognised chief of the corsairs. The ostensibly simple and straightforward narrative that Muradî employs to relate this subordination of Sinan actually conveys important historical information. It allows us to propose a secure periodisation for the definitive establishment of Hayreddin's personal authority and leadership over the once eclectically organised and self-governing independent North African corsair fleets. It was only in 1530, after he had gained an unassailable reputation and personal stature, that Istanbul began to show sustained interest in his activities preparatory to his recruitment into active Ottoman service. Muradî's text indicates the arrival at this important stage of evolutionary development in a few simple but telling words:

*"[Reisler] gelip buluştular. Her birine nevaht edip, yine Sinan reise bir kardırğa verip, ve dört yüz altun ve sekiz kafir bağışladı. Yine acele ile sefere gönderdi. Varıp gemi alıp, yedi günde geldiler."*

"[At an intermediate stage of that season's cruise] the captains reported back to Algiers with their first captures. Hayreddin gratified the wishes of all assigning to Sinan reis a galley, eight Christian captives and 400 gold pieces. He then quickly dispatched them [for the next phase of the season's activities] and after seven days at sea they returned with [more] captured ships."<sup>24</sup>

Hayreddin's push at this time (ca. 1530–1531) to develop a greatly expanded, better-co-ordinated more unified naval force came in response to changing conditions in the western Mediterranean on the one hand, and a deterioration of the situation of the Muslim communities in Spain on the other. The latter developments are well documented in contemporary western sources. Before Süleyman's decision to prioritise naval rearmament in response to the Spanish/Hospitaller offensive against Modon (in September 1531) and the capture of Coron (in September 1532), spontaneous localised responses and Maghrebine initiatives led by Hayreddin bore the principal responsibility for reacting to adverse changes in the situation of the Moors (Muslims), Moriscos (crypto-Muslims), and Mudejars (officially recognised Muslim minorities) of Spain.<sup>25</sup> Despite the pronouncement of Charles V's Concordia in 1528 with its seeming offer of amnesty and limited toleration to religious non-conformists, the reality was that in the years which followed pressures on Muslims to either convert or emigrate steadily mounted. In practical terms, during Charles' prolonged absence from Spain between 1529 and 1533, the domestic affairs of the Spanish kingdom fell increasingly under the influence of the Church. So far as Maghrebine public opinion was concerned, a psychological watershed was reached during the Inquisition's heresy trials in Valencia in 1531 which resulted in the burning at the stake of 45 Muslims convicted as heretics.<sup>26</sup> A detailed account of the Hayreddin's role in

<sup>24</sup> *Gazavat XXI*, f. 74b (lines 4–6).

<sup>25</sup> For the *mudejars'* juridical position, see Chalmeta (1993).

<sup>26</sup> See Kamen (1965, p. 109) and Lea (1907, Vol. 3, p. 358).

organising convoys for the transport of Andalusian refugees to North Africa provides the culminating chapter to Muradī's coverage of the pre-Ottoman phase of the veteran sea rover's career (*Gazavat* XXIII, ff. 79a–81b). Muradī relates that in the summer of 1531, at the height of the crisis in Valencia, Hayreddin assembled a fleet of 36 galliots each of which made seven trips over the course of that summer. Calculating that each vessel was capable of carrying upwards of 250 passengers, he put the refugee total for that year at 70,000.<sup>27</sup> While Muradī's arithmetical precision can be questioned, the central importance of the Algiers-based fleets and Hayreddin's personal contribution to their organisation is indisputable. The roots of his transformation from sea roving corsair and privateer into Muslim popular hero and, soon afterwards, loyal official serving the Ottoman imperial cause can be seen in Muradī's dramatisation of this aspect of his activities. Yet it would be naïve to conclude that his transformation was ever final or complete. We see an example in late summer 1535 of Hayreddin's reversion to type as he orchestrated his punitive raid against the garrison town of Mahon on Minorca in retribution for Charles' successful, and strategically far more significant, offensive against Tunis.<sup>28</sup>

As a historical source, the folk narrative of Hayreddin's origins and rise to fame embedded in Muradī's narrative offer us a highly realistic account of actual conditions on the Barbary coast on the eve of empire. We gain an appreciation of the self-divided character of the Muslim polity in *Ifrikiya*, and the ways its destiny was driven by bitterly contested dynastic politics. It also gives us an insight into the character of naval warfare in the period before the development of large, centrally funded imperial navies, first by the Spanish after 1528 under the guidance and leadership of Andrea Doria, and later by the Ottomans after 1534 under their *kapudan* Hayreddin Barbarossa. In the first three decades of the century, the prevailing pattern of naval engagement was small, self-financing, self-generated localised fleet activity, organised not for the purpose of conquest or confrontation, but rather for coastal raiding against the enemy shore and coastal defense of the home shores. Large-scale naval battles between imperially-financed navies and multi-state armadas were uncommon, and not characteristic of the early sixteenth-century Mediterranean. The conquest of Rhodes in 1522 was essentially a repetition of the siege of Belgrade in the previous year, the main difference being that the siege units were disembarked from nearby Marmaris rather than arriving on foot. Muradī's *Gazavat* of 1541 should be seen as one of the few surviving relics of what was, by the time of its compilation, rapidly becoming a bygone era of early maritime exploration and experimentation in empire-building in an unsettled frontier area of the expanding Ottoman empire. It is only thanks to Muradī's still unedited account that we are able to attempt a realistic reconstruction of Mediterranean realities in the age before the development of titanic imperial navies in the second half of the sixteenth century.

<sup>27</sup> *Gazavat* XXIII, f. 81a (lines 1–3). Muradī refers to these refugees under the generic term *müdeccil*, an Ottomanised form of the Arabic *mudajjar*. See Redhouse (1890, p. 1786) and note 25 above.

<sup>28</sup> According to the *Gazavat* (XXIX, f. 101a) the harvest from this raid alone was 5,700 Spanish captives for the slave markets of Algiers.

## References

- Cal. S. P. Spain 1529–1530 = De Gayangos, P. [ed.] (1879), *Calender of Letters, Despatches and State Papers Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain in the Archives of Simancas and Elsewhere*. Vol. 4 (1529–1530). London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Celalzade, Tabakat = Kappert, P. [ed.] (1981): *Geschichte Sultan Suleyman Kanunis von 1520 bis 1557 oder Tabakat ül Memalik ve Derecat ül Mesalik*. Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Chalmeta, P. (1993): "Mudejar". In: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden, Brill, VI, pp. 286–289.
- Colin, G. (1901): *Corpus des inscriptions Arabes et Turques d'Algerie*. Paris.
- Gallotta, A. (1981): Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa. *Bellethen* Vol. 45, pp. 473–500.
- Kamen, H. (1965): *The Spanish Inquisition*. London, Longman.
- Lea, H. C. (1907): *A History of the Inquisition in Spain*. I–IV. New York 1906–1907 (Vol. III: 1907). Macmillan.
- Levend, A. S. (1956): *Gazavatnameler*. Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Lutfi Paşa, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* = Lutfi Paşa (1341 A.H./1925 A.D.) *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*. İstanbul, Matbaa-i Amire.
- Pellat, Ch. (1991): Manakib. In: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden. Brill, VI, pp. 349–357.
- Redhouse, J. W. (1890): *A Turkish and English Lexicon*. Constantinople. A. H. Boyajiyân.
- Setton, K. M. (1984): *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*. I–IV. Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society 1978–1984 (Vol. III: 1984).
- Seyyid Muradî, *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Ms. H.O. 55.
- Uzunçarşılı, İ. H. (1949): *Osmanlı Tarihi*. I–II. Ankara. Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Yurdaydın, H. (1963): Muradi ve Eserleri. *Bellethen* Vol. 27, pp. 453–466.

*Short Note on the Textual History of the Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*

The prose version of the *Gazavat* has been preserved in 15 manuscript versions of various lengths ranging between 128 and 321 folios. Two of these (Madrid: Escorial Lib. Ms. 1664, and İstanbul: University Lib. 2639) are available in versions prepared for publication by Aldo Gallotta and Mustafa Yıldız as follows:

A. Gallotta's facsimile edition of the Madrid manuscript in *Studi Magrebini* 13 (1981) and a summary transcription of the İstanbul university text by M. Yıldız presented in his Göttingen PhD dissertation of 1991 published as a photographic reprint by Verlag Shaker (Aachen, 1993).

For the present study we have opted to use the shortest version of 128 folios preserved at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna as Ms H O.55. This version has the particular advantage that, although it offers a considerably condensed account of the events omitting the numerous repetitions and recapitulations present in some of the other versions, it preserves a linguistic purity and faithfulness to the mode of expression employed by Muradî's informants in their oral presentations.