

## Early Ottoman-Dutch Political and Commercial Relations after 1612 Capitulations

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After the conclusion of Twelve years Truce in 1609, the United Provinces<sup>1</sup> was in need of international recognition and of new markets for its accelerating economic development. In early Seventeenth Century, the United Dutch East India Company (VOC) had already established a well working commercial system for spice trade in India. The monopoly of VOC in Indian spice trade with moderate price level almost completely destroyed the caravan route to Aleppo.

The Dutch Republic then should open new markets for the Dutch merchants to trade in the Levant. It was risky to sail especially in the Western Mediterranean in those days. Other than the North African corsairs, English and Spanish ships were creating great danger for the Dutch vessels. To sail as far as Anatolian, Egyptian and Syrian coasts, Dutch ships had to get safe conduct from the Ottoman Sultan. Venetian, French, and English merchants were trading in these coasts freely for a long time. From early Seventeenth Century onwards, Dutch merchants began to unload merchandise more intensively in the Levantine ports under either French or English flags.

After the Twelve Years Truce in 1609, the States General made attempts to establish official relations with the Sublime Porte. Initially letters were exchanged between the States General and the Grand Admiral Halil Paşa. Taking positive response from the Porte, the States General decided to send Cornelis Haga to Istanbul, with the title of orator. When Haga arrived in Istanbul in March 1612, he was faced with severe opposition of the Venetian, French, and English ambassadors. Particularly Venetian and French ambassadors resorted to diplomatic intrigues, and even bribery to prevent Haga from audience with the Sultan.

According to Ottoman diplomatic practice, reception of a foreign ambassador by the Sultan was realized with the highest protocol at the Topkapi Palace. This meant the official recognition of the Dutch Republic by the Ottoman government. The accord signed in 1609 was only a truce, and the United Provinces would be officially recognized at the international level with the Peace Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

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<sup>1</sup> The Seven Northern provinces of the Low Countries formed the Republic with the Union of Utrecht in 1579. The United Provinces was commonly called the Dutch Republic.

From his immediate arrival to the Ottoman capital, Halil Paşa provided assistance to Haga at all respects. Halil Paşa assigned his dragoman Paul Antonio Bon to the Dutch ambassador's service. Bon provided his contacts with Halil Paşa and the other senior authorities at the Porte. Despite his political and financial abuses later, Bon was very influential in the relations between Halil Paşa and Haga. Although intensive opposition was shown to Haga to prevent his audience with the Sultan, Halil Paşa neutralized all these efforts and achieved his reception by Sultan Ahmed I on May 1, 1612. Two months later, capitulations was granted by the Sultan to Dutch nation. Together with Venice, France, and England, now the Dutch Republic had comprehensive capitulations to trade in the Levant.

### Haga Remains in Istanbul

When he completed his mission successfully, Haga planned to return home soon.<sup>2</sup> But it would not be so easy. Initially, he was appointed as orator with a temporary mission of *ad hoc* nature. When he achieved capitulations for the merchants of the United Provinces, and provided release of Dutch slaves in the Ottoman dominions, a resident ambassador at the Porte would replace Haga. Observing the fierce opposition of other resident representatives in Istanbul against Haga, Halil Paşa convinced him to remain for a while. But this period was extended for years after another. During his long stay at the capital, Haga witnessed reign of four successive Sultans, and the great insurrection of Janissaries in 1622 against Sultan Osman II. He was to be allowed to depart only by Sultan Murad IV, on late May 1639, 27 years later.

Although all legal procedures were completed according to Ottoman practice, Halil Paşa was worried about the sustaining of the Dutch capitulations if Haga left. The residence of Haga in Istanbul would be the key factor for the continuance of the official relationship. This point was clearly emphasized in the letters of both the Deputy – Grand Vizier and Halil Paşa to the States General, and Prince Maurice.<sup>3</sup> Particularly, Halil Paşa was very worried about the intrigues of the French and Venetian ambassadors for the cancellation of the Dutch capitulations if Haga would have left.<sup>4</sup> The Grand Vizier was not in Istanbul, since he was at campaign against Iran. Everything

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<sup>2</sup> Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Supplement Turc 118, document 168, Haga's Petition to Deputy – Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa: "*Hemân devletlü başınız için nâmemizü rikâb-i hümayûrına 'arz buyurub kalil ve kesir ne ise getirdiğümüz pişkeşimizi kabûl edüb, nâmemizü yazub, 'ale't-ta'cîl kulanuzu gönderesüz inşallâhu te'âlâ*".

<sup>3</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 173: "*Ve cümle vîzerâ kardaşlarımız ve sâyir erkân-î devlet "hîdmet âdemîsi böyle olmak gerekdir" deyu her biri tahsîn ve pesend edüb evzâ' u etvârından her vechile rızâ ve şükran üzere olmağla Âsitâne-i sa'âdet de alikonulmuşdur*"; Algemeen Rijksarchief in Den Haag (ARA), Staten Generaal, 1.01.08/12593.11: "*azametlü pâdişâhımız müşârünileyh elçiden külli hazz buyurub bu Âsitâne-i sa'âdetde elçilik hîdmetinde kala deyu fermân-i âlişânları sâdir olmağın hâlâ müşârünileyh elçi bu cânibde hîdmet-i mezbûrede alikonulmuşdur*".

<sup>4</sup> ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08/12593.11: "*zirâ bu cânibde olan Fransa ve Venedik elçileri câyiz ki soñra bir tarikle ortalığa fitne birağub "bunlar dostluk etmez" deyu bir söz söylememek için bu muhibbiñüz dahî elçinün Âsitâne-i sa'âdetde kalmasını münâsib görüb ol cânibe gondermedük*".

regarding the Dutch capitulations was realized at his absence by the efforts of Halil Paşa, with the approval of the Deputy – Grand Vizier. The fate of Haga and the Dutch capitulations were dependent on the attitude of the Grand Vizier Nasuh Paşa. As will be explained below, when returned from Eastern campaign in September 1612, Nasuh Paşa did not welcome the Dutch capitulations.

Haga must be considered to be very lucky in achieving the grant of capitulations by the Sultan. No one, other than the Sultan had the permanent authority within the Ottoman government. The power balance among the viziers of the Divan might have shifted at any time. The favor of the Sultan over any of them could be ended, and consequently might even result with the execution of the statesman. In the shifting internal policies of the Porte, the ceaseless intrigues of the Seraglio, there was a danger that the patrons upon whom foreign agents relied for support might be suddenly removed.<sup>5</sup> Halil Paşa had inaugurated the official correspondence with the States General in 1610 when he was the Grand Admiral. Although he was dismissed from his post in 1611, Halil Paşa kept his seat at the imperial Divan as Vizier. Throughout the early contacts of Haga at the Porte, Halil Paşa sustained his duty. Furthermore, the Sultan appointed him to Grand Admiralty for the second time in 1613, and as Grand Vizier in 1616. The rising graphic of Halil Paşa, protector of Haga, was fortunate for him as well.

Since Haga was unable to convey the original text of the Dutch *'ahdnâme*, granted by Sultan Ahmed I, he had sent it with his assistant, Lambert Verhaer. Osman Bey, who was a sipâhi, and a man of Halil Paşa, would accompany Verhaer.<sup>6</sup> This Osman had been sent to accompany Haga during his journey throughout the Ottoman territories. He traveled as far as the Polish border to encounter Haga there, and accompany him till Istanbul. Imperial decrees were sent to all the *kadis* and the commanders of the castles (*Dizdars*) to assist Osman Aga.<sup>7</sup> Lambert Verhaer would carry the original text of the capitulations, its Dutch translation and the *Memoriael* of Haga from his arrival till granting of the capitulations. On 14 July 1612, both of them departed overland via Buda to the Netherlands.<sup>8</sup> Halil Paşa had written a letter to the Viceroy of Buda to request assistance on their way through Hungary.<sup>9</sup> When they reached the Netherlands, they sent a letter to Haga to inform him about their arrival and the recent developments about the military success of the Dutch navy.<sup>10</sup> When Haga received the letter, Halil Paşa was at Edime, and Haga soon conveyed a letter to inform Halil Paşa.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, vol VIII, p xxxvii.

<sup>6</sup> A. De Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic*. (Leiden/Istanbul: 1978), p 123.

<sup>7</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 105: "*Felemenk kralı tarafından Kornilyo Haga nâm elçi her kañğıñızuñ taht-i hükümetine vâsıl olursa emîn ve sâlim biribiriñize irsâl eylemeñüz emrim olmuşdur. ... Dergâh-i âli silahdarlarından Osman zide kadruhû vusul buldukda herbiriñiz onat vechile mukayyed olub*".

<sup>8</sup> A. De Groot, *ibid.*, p 123.

<sup>9</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 174.

<sup>10</sup> For the report of Lambert Verhaer to the States General, dated September 1612, see K. Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, vol. I, (Den Haag: 1910) p 259-261.

<sup>11</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 22: "*benim rıf'atlı sultânım bundan akdem bu cânibden irsâl olunan*

On its resolution dated 19 September 1612, the States General, upon reading the memorial of Haga, the letters of the Sultan, and of Halil Paşa, decided to reply these letters, and send presents to Istanbul.<sup>12</sup> Very precious presents were prepared to be sent for the Sultan, for the Viziers, and for other dignitaries at the Porte such as the Şeyhülislam, *Defterdar*, and etc.

The presents were loaded to a ship and sent to Istanbul. The ship would arrive early in 1613. Haga had mentioned in his letter, dated 1 Zilhicce 1021 / 23 January 1613 to Halil Paşa that the ship laden with presents was expected to reach Istanbul soon, and requested that no one should interfere with the goods.<sup>13</sup> Since all the goods exported or imported were subject to customs duties, Haga requested the exemption of these presents from duties by the customs custodian. In his letter to the States General, Halil Paşa confirmed the delivery of the presents and expressed his pleasure. He also reiterated his readiness to follow the Dutch affairs within the government.<sup>14</sup>

Then all the diplomatic procedures of the Porte were completed for the status of Haga. He was fully accredited ambassador of the United Provinces at the Porte. Nevertheless, his other colleagues in Istanbul were still reluctant to admit Haga into their cycle. They all thought that the Dutch capitulations would be abolished in one way or another, and he would be sent back to the Netherlands. For this reason, at the initial stage his colleagues did not accept Haga at equal rank. The existing residential ambassadors demonstrated negative attitude against Haga at many occasions.

On 5 September 1612, when the envoy Andreas Negron of the Hungarian king approached the city, all ambassadors in Istanbul would receive him 3 miles out of the city, together with the *çavuşbaşı* and 30 *çavuşs*.<sup>15</sup> The English ambassador Paul

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*Lamberto Verhaer nâm kethüdâlarımız geçen hafta mektublar irsâl eylemişdir ki Nederlanda memleketine sağ ü sâlim muvassıl olub ve Asitâne-i Saâdetde vâki' cemî' ahvâl ü umûrumuzu tafsîl üzere nakl etdikden sonra efendilerimiz Üştâdı Ceneralleri ve Konte Maverisyo'ya sa'âdetlü 'âlem-penâh hazretlerinin nâme-i hümayunlarını ve sultânunun ve sair erbâb-ı devletin mekâtib-i şeriflerin teslim edüb ve hâlâ Âsitâne-i sa'âdetde vâki' akîdet ve ittihâdımız ve ahd ü emân ki sultânım hazretlerinin vâsıtasıyla zuhûra gelüb ve bu sulh ü salâhi izhâr eylemek için vâki' olan sa'y u ikdâm-i sa'âdetinüz tafsîl üzere istihbâr olunmağla efendilerimiz müşarünileyhimâya ve ehibbâmıza mücib-i sürûr-i 'azîme ve a'dâya sebeb-i kahr ü inhizâm olmuşdur ki zibân ile ta'bîre gelmez".*

<sup>12</sup> Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 261: "19 September 1612. Is gelesen reecker memorie, overgegeven bij Lamberto Verhaer, bij den orateur Haga alhier gesonden, mette latest deperche van Constantinopolen, vermanende H.H.M. ten eynde de brieven van den Grooten Heere souden beantwoort ende de presenten besorcht ende gereetgemacht die in de voorschreven memorie staen gespecificceert voor den Grooten Heere ende de bassa etc".

<sup>13</sup> Supp Turc 118 (Appendix I), document 22: "Benim saâdetlü ve 'izzetlü sultânım, zikr olunan Nederlanda gemisinde tahmîl ve vârid olan bazı tuhâf ve hedâyâ ki efendilerime Üştâdı Ceneralleri hedâyâ için göndermişlerdir. Vâsıl olduklarında gerek emin Murad çavuşdan ve gayrısından bir ferde dahl ü ta'arruz olunmayub aynı ile bu bendelerine gönderilmek bâbında müekked emr-i şerif ricâsına himmet buyurula".

<sup>14</sup> ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08/12593.20: "Bu tarafa irsâl olunan tuhâf ve hedâyâñuz elçinüz yedinden gelüb vâsıl oldu. Müstedâm-i ömr olasız. Min ba'd dahî rûşen-i hidmetinüzde maktûrumuz masrûfdur".

<sup>15</sup> Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 281: "Op den vijfden ditto September is een heer Andreas

Bon later claimed that the total expenditure was not 9,000 ducats, but more. Then, he claimed an extra 7,000 ducats for the rest of the costs. He was able to prove the amount of the expenditures with bills, vouchers and witnesses. Haga had no chance but to pay the amount, totaling 16,000 ducats.

Those costly presents, and the fake bills of Antonio Bon, for unreal expenses put Haga into deep financial difficulty. Furthermore, Paulo Bon could get letters from certain statesmen and went to the Netherlands to demand money. Under these circumstances, Halil Paşa wrote a letter to the States General about the character and the doings of Bon, and warned them not to believe Bon if he was to request anything.<sup>18</sup>

The States General was informed about the situation and complained of Bon in their letter to Vizier Mehmed Paşa, dated 26 July 1614. Actually, the States General intended to write it directly to the Sultan, but then gave up the idea, not to raise the issue to an official dispute.<sup>19</sup> But it seems that both Halil Paşa and the States General were very disturbed by the behavior of Paulo Antonio Bon. Because, he knew all the secrets about Haga and Halil Paşa. Moreover, he informed all the diplomatic correspondence between the Dutch embassy and the Porte. It was an undesirable situation for both governments.

### **The Efforts to Release the Dutch Slaves**

As mentioned above, beside commercial privileges to the merchants, achievement of the capitulations would have liberated the Dutch slaves who were kept particularly in the North African provinces of Algeria and Tunis. The States General thought the liberation of the Dutch slaves would be very easy, and almost spontaneous. But it took a long time with continuous correspondence between the States General, the Porte and the viceroys of Algeria and Tunis. Haga also spent enormous efforts for the liberation of the Dutch subjects. Nevertheless, as reflected in the documents, it could not be achieved immediately. Initially, only a small minority of the Dutch slaves was released from the North African provinces.

After the audience of Haga with the Sultan and just before the granting of the Dutch capitulations, Halil Paşa sent a letter to the States General and Prince Maurice, confirming the establishment of the official relationship between the Porte and the United Provinces. In that letter, Halil Paşa had promised to do his best for the release of the Dutch slaves in Tunis and Algeria.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Original of the letter, ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08/12593.20; for another copy see Supp Turc 118, document 131: "*Mesâlihüñüze mukaddemâ karışan Venediklü Pavlo bon nâm habîs ve hilekâr, kendü zimmeteri üzere ... bu muhibbiñizü dahî utandırmışdır*".

<sup>19</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 211; also see document 204: "*tercümânı olan Pavlo Bon nâm şaki hevâsına tâbi' ve ba'zı eşirra ve eşkiyâ ile bundan akdem mezbûr elçimizden nice dürlü hile ve hud'a ile hıyânet ve ihânet eyleyüb hakkında gelinmek lâzım ve mühim iken müsâmaha eyleyüb mezkûr elçimize cefâ vü rencide eylemişlerdir. Hâlâ rikâb-i hümayuna irsâl olunan nâme-i meveddetimizde husûs-i merkûmu yazub andan çekdiğimiz elâyimden bir mikdârın 'arz ü i'lâm eylemek sadedinde iken "innallâhe me'assâbirîn" deyu ferâgat edüb Âsitâne-i sa'âdet'e olan 'arz ü meveddet ve ihlâsımız dîr ü dilden kemâl-i hakikat ve sadâkat üzere idüğünü belki Hak te'âlâ kalb-i şeriflerine i'lâm eyleye ki icrâ-yı hak eyleye*".

<sup>20</sup> ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08/12593.11: "*Cezâyir ve Tunus vesâyir Memâlik-i Mahrûse'de*

Correspondence with the viceroys of North African provinces, and the commanders of the Janissaries there proved any result. There was no other solution, but to send a special envoy to Tripoli, Tunis and Algeria to achieve the release of the Dutchmen personally.<sup>21</sup> Halil Paşa consented to this plan, and designated a learned man, *Müteferrika Ömer Aga*, and dragoman *Giocomo Belegno* to accompany him. Two of them would travel to North African provinces. Halil Paşa had written letters<sup>22</sup> to the viceroys and requested the delivery of the Dutch slaves to Ömer Aga. The Sultan also issued imperial decrees<sup>23</sup> to be conveyed by Ömer Aga.

Ömer Aga and the dragoman sailed first to Tunis from Istanbul on 29 August 1612.<sup>24</sup> Ambassador Haga had also written letters to the viceroys of Tunis and Algeria requesting the release of the Dutch slaves. A copy of the recently granted Dutch capitulations was given to Ömer Aga as well. In his letter to the viceroys of Tunis, Suleyman Paşa, the viceroy of Algeria and the commanders of the Janissaries there, Halil Paşa informed them of the residential status of Cornelis Haga as the Dutch ambassador, and his personal efforts on this matter.

He reminded the friendly attitude of the Netherlands towards the Porte and their release of numerous Muslim slaves when they captured Spanish galleys. Halil Paşa then requested the release of the Dutch slaves there, to reciprocate the gesture made by the Dutch. Halil Paşa concluded that in case the Dutch slaves were released, he would be saved from being embarrassed vis-à-vis the Dutch ambassador in Istanbul.<sup>25</sup>

The day before the departure of Ömer Aga for North Africa, Halil Paşa had also written a letter to the States General to inform them about the situation. In his letter, dated 1 Receb 1021 / 28 August 1612, Halil Paşa indicated that he was spending great efforts personally for the Dutch affairs at the Porte, and when Ömer Aga reached Tunis and Algeria, the Dutch slaves would be released.<sup>26</sup>

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*bulunan esirleriñüzün utlâkı husûsunda dahî kemâl mertebe sa'y-i ihtimâm olunub halâs eylemek mukarrerdir; ve şimden soñra gelüb giden gemileriñüze hiçbir kimesne dahl ü ta'arruz ve rencîde ve remide eylememek bâbında dahî kapudanlara, beğlere vesâir zâbitlere muhkem tenbîh ve te'kîd etdürülmek muhakkaktır".*

<sup>21</sup> A. De Groot, *ibid.*, p 125.

<sup>22</sup> Supp Turc 118. document 159.

<sup>23</sup> Supp Turc 118. documents 157, and 158.

<sup>24</sup> Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 280: "Op den 27 dito heb affgevaerdicht een Horrier Aga, sijnde muafaraca, dat is van de voorneempse in de swyte van den Heer Challil bassa, beneffens eenen Giacomo Belegno, trageman, die op den 29 dito, in den name Godts, soo met commandementen van G. S. als oock seer favorabile bryven van Challil bassa aen den bassas van Tunis, Argiers, Tripoli de Barbarica".

<sup>25</sup> Supp Turc 118. document 159: "Flandra tayifesinüñ mustakal elçileri hâlâ sâir krallar-ın elçileri gibi Galata'da hıdmet-i risâlet ile oturmuşdur. ... İmdî benim karındaşım, bu tâife Venedikli gibi değildir; ve ehl-i İslâm ile kadîmî muhibbi oldukları ve İspanya kadırgalarından binden mütecâviz Müselman esirlerin utlâ eyledikleri zâhiren mesmû'-i şerifiñüz olmuşdur; bunlar kâfirlik ile bu dentlü Müselman âzâd edüb, bize hod vâcib ve lâzımdır ki, gayret-i dîn-i İslâm için her kande ise istemedin âzâd etmekdir ki, bu bahâne ile tâife-i mezbûre dahî nice nice menâfi' ve evilikler müşâhede olunacaktır. ... Benüm karındaşım, bu tarafda her kimin tâife-i mezbûr-ların esirleri bulunmuş ise cümle utlâk etdirilmişdir. Bu bâbda olan ricâmuz dutulub tâife-i mezkûreniñ ol tarafda bulunan esirleri utlâk olunmasına dikkat buyurula ki, elçi yanında hicâbdan halâs oluruz".

Ömer Aga made contacts in Tunis and Algeria. From Tunis he could save about 18 Dutch, mostly the old and sick, and from Algeria almost no one.<sup>27</sup> From there, Ömer Aga passed to France first, and then to the Low Countries. In Antwerp, he was put into prison by the Spanish authorities, suspecting of an Ottoman-Dutch alliance. He could only be released with the interference of the States General and reached The Hague. Ömer Aga returned to Istanbul in June 1614, after two years of traveling.<sup>28</sup>

The first official attempt for the release of the Dutch slaves in North Africa remained unsuccessful. The Sultan had to confess that the attempts of Ömer Aga were unsuccessful. The Sultan added, in his imperial letter to the States General that imperial decrees would be sent to Algeria and Tunis to reiterate the release of the Dutch slaves, dated Evâil-i Rebülevvel 1024 / 31 March-9 April 1615.<sup>29</sup>

Haga wrote a petition to Halil Paşa to request the release of the Dutch subjects. This time Haga complained about the reluctance of the viceroy of Algeria blaming him of taking 10% for each slave and the goods captured by the corsairs.<sup>30</sup>

The hostile attitude of the Viceroy of Algeria was reflected in Haga's petition to the Deputy – Grand Vizier Ahmed Paşa as well. The Viceroy of Algeria even threatened the envoy of the States General that the Algerian corsairs would capture the Dutch ships but not enslave them. Haga requested imperial decrees to be sent to prevent Algerian corsairs from attacking the Dutch ships.<sup>31</sup>

Actually, the States General and Haga believed that the Grand Vizier Nasuh Paşa was reluctant to spend any effort on the release of the Dutch slaves. Because, in their opinion, the Dutch capitulations was granted at a time while he was away from Istanbul as commander-in-chief at the expedition to Iran.<sup>32</sup> The States General in their

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<sup>26</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 160; original copy at ARA, Staten Generaal 1.01.08 / 12593.12: "*Biz bu tarafta her hizmetinize mümkün olduğu mertebe sa'y ü ikdâm etmek üzereyiz. Pâdişâhımız esirlerinin her kande bulunursa âzâd olunması bâbında emr-i şerîf inâyet eyleyüb ve tarafızdan Tunus ve Cezâyir beğlerine mektûblar yazub âdemimiz Ömer Ağa ile göndermişizdir*".

<sup>27</sup> A. De Groot, *ibid.*, p 126.

<sup>28</sup> A. De Groot, *ibid.*, p 128.

<sup>29</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 32; Original copy at ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08 / 12593.25: "*Tunus ve Cezâyir 'de bulunan esirleri halâs etmek için evâmir-i şerîfe ile kapum kullarınızdan Ömer irsâl olunub Tunus ve Cezâyir 'de Netherlandalı 'dan yüzden ziyâde esir var iken ancak onsekiz nefes halâs olub mu'dâsı halas olmamışdır. Mukaddemâ inâyet olunan uhdnâme-i hümayun mucibince Tunus 'da ve Cezâyir 'de bâkî kalan esirler itlâk etdirülmek ricâ ve iltimas edüb ... istid'ânız üzere murâdâtınız hayr-i kabûlde vâkî' olmağla fermân-i kazâ-cereyânımız mucibince Tunus ve Cezâyir 'de olcın esirlerinizin halâsına evâmir-i şerîfe inâyet olunmuşdur*".

<sup>30</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 186: "*Ammâ Cezâyir Beğlerbeğisi varan evâmir-i şerîfeye itâat eylemeyüb gemilerimizi girifti ve âdemlerimizi esir eylemekden hâlî değillerdir, pâdişâhın düşmanlarına nice ederler ise Netherlandalulara dahî böyle ederler. Cezâyir korsanları getirdükleri esbâb ve âdemlerin her onunda bir esir aldığı ecilden korsanlığa icâzet verüü*".

<sup>31</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 195: "*Ammâ Cezâyir beğlerbeğisi pâdişâhın hatt-i hümayunlarına 'amel emeyüb dedi ki: 'benim murâdım budur ki, sizün gemilerinizi satar, düşman gemilerini nice alınursa sizün dahî eyle alırız, ammâ âdemlerinizin esir etmeyeliüm' deyu cevâb vermişdir*".

<sup>32</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 209: "*Sadrâzam Nasuh Paşa hazretleri, arz-i ihlâs ve sadâkatimiz*

letter made the same complaint to the Deputy – Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa, dated 26 July 1614.<sup>33</sup> During the process of diplomatic contacts of Haga after his arrival to Istanbul, Nasuh Paşa was away from the capital. He returned in September 1612, three months after the grant of Dutch capitulations.

Indeed, Nasuh Paşa had a very strong character, and he was appointed to the Grand Vizierate after he poisoned Kuyucu Murad Paşa. Since Nasuh Paşa had become a charismatic statesman, as commander-in-chief and the Grand Vizier he was not on good terms with anyone at the Porte when he returned from the campaign on Iran in September 1612. All the deliberations for granting the Dutch capitulations and the discussions had happened when Nasuh Paşa was absent. He was a vicious enemy of Şeyhülislam Hocazade Mehmed Efendi who consented to and favored granting the Dutch capitulations.<sup>34</sup> Nasuh Paşa was not happy with these developments, and as soon as he returned, he attempted to cancel the Dutch capitulations.<sup>35</sup> But his efforts were fruitless to nullify the status of Haga and the Dutch capitulations. The protection of Halil Paşa and the Deputy – Grand Vizier Hadım Mehmed Paşa secured the presence of the Dutch in the Ottoman Empire.

To settle the dispute of the Dutch slaves held in Algeria, Halil Paşa had organized a meeting in Istanbul with the participation of the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga, Viceroy of Algeria Süleyman Paşa, and the commanders of the Janissary corps in Algeria. In the session, both sides took oaths not to attack each other on the high seas, and to capture their ships, nor goods. The Algerian local commanders also promised to obey the imperial decrees issued by the Sultan. The Viceroy Süleyman Paşa and other commanders signed the declaration dated Evâsıt-i C. evvel 1026 / 17-26 May 1617.<sup>36</sup>

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*zamân-i şeriflerinde müyesser kılınmayub mübârek yed-i şerifleriñüzden erzânî kılınmak ile katında hoş olmayub iltifat ve nazar-i şeriflerinden dür olmuşuzdur”.*

<sup>33</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 211: “Velâkin hâlâ sadrazam devletlü ve sa’âdetlü Nasuh Paşa hazretleri zikr olunan akîdet ve ihlâs u meveddetimiz [anuñ] zaman-i şeriflerinde müyesser olunmamak ile katında hoş gelmeyüb ahdnâme-i hümayunda olan uhûd ve kuyüdları icrâ ve ri’âyet eylemeyüb Memâlik-i Mahrûse’de olan esirlerimizi halâs ve ıtlâklarına izn ü icâzet vermediklerinden gayrı Âsitâne-i sa’âdet’de olan bizim müstakıl ve doğru hayr-hâh elçimizi rencide olunub”.

<sup>34</sup> İsmail Hamî Danişmend, *İzâhlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol 3, p 261.

<sup>35</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 209: “Hâlâ sadrazam ‘izzetlü ve sa’âdetlü Nasuh Paşa hazretleri Asitâne-i sa’âdete ‘azîmet buyurdıklarında zikr olunan nâme-i hümayunu fesh etdirilmeği icrâ ve sıyânetinde sa’âdetlü sultanumuñ bezl-i hamiyetlerin sarf eyleyüb bazı ashab-i ağrazımızın fikr-i fâsidlerin zuhûra getirilmeyüb mahcûb ve mağbûn kalmışlardur”.

<sup>36</sup> Leiden University Library, OR 1228: “vezîr-i âşâf-nazîr ve müşîr-i müşteri-tedbîr sipahsalâr-i gâziyân-i kişver-gîr Halil Paşa hazretleriñ huzûr-i ‘izzetlerinde Üstâdı Ceneralleri câniblerinden olan elçi-i mezbûr Kornelyo Haga muvâcehesinde bi’l-fi’il Cezâyir beğlerbeğisi olan Süleyman Paşa ile Cezâyir cânibinden gelen Ocak ihtiyarları ve yayabaşları ve kul ağaları ile mâ’an gelüb şöyle takrîr eylediler ki, eyâlet-i mezbûrede olan eğer kul ağalarıdır ve yayabaşlar ve odabaşlar ve sâir neferât ve derya yüzünde gezen Cezâyirli tarafından ahd ü şart ederüz ki mümâileyhim Üstâdı Cenerallerinin deryâda gezen gemilerine ve içinde olan bâzırganlarına ve re’âyâlarına ve emti’â ve esbâblarına min ba’d Cezâyir’e beğlerbeği olanlardan ve deryâda gezen Cezâyirli tarafından bir vechile ta’addî ve tecâvüz ve zarar ve güzend erişdirilmeye”.



In that session, both sides had settled the process of peaceful relationship by the Ottoman and the Dutch ships when they come across on the high seas. Both sides would fire guns for salutation and the Dutch would present the certificate sealed and signed letter of Prince Maurice.<sup>37</sup> The meeting called by Halil Paşa could not settle the dispute however. Although ten years had passed since the grant of capitulations, the slaves in Algeria were not released. The Viceroy of Algeria sent a letter to the Porte, dated 1 Zilhicce 1031 / 7 October 1622, indicating that the Algerian corsairs and the Janissaries in Algeria were all obedient to the decrees of the Sultan. However, he went on, the friendly relationship should be based on reciprocal goodwill. Certain Dutch pirates had enslaved Algerian Muslims and sold them in Malta. Then the local commanders in Algeria claimed that unless the Muslim captives were not returned, the Dutch slaves in Algeria would not be released.<sup>38</sup>

No records could be coincided about the release of any such Dutch slaves in Algeria, Tunis and Tripoli. The perception of reciprocity resulted with the sustainment of Dutch slaves in North Africa for such a long time. The fate of Dutchmen seems to be obscure. Indeed, the case had a long history. There had always been privateering activities from both sides. Even at the registers of *Felemenk Defteri*<sup>39</sup>, dated 1091 / 1680, there are records about enslavement and captivity.<sup>40</sup>

### Halil Paşa and the Dutch Trade in the Levant

The main purpose of all these efforts to establish official diplomatic relationship was to provide and to constitute a peaceful environment for the Dutch merchants

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<sup>37</sup> Leiden University Library, OR 1228: "deryâda gezen gemileriñüz, anlarıñ gemilerine rast geldiklerinde, Neleranda bayrağın gördüklerinde beru taraftan boş tupun atub anlar ile işâretleşüb ha'dehü anlar dahî selam topun atub ve ri'âyeten telenketelerün indürüb selamlaşduktan soñra kendü cânibimizden sandal ile birkaç mu'temed âdem gönderüb mûmâileyhim Üstâdı Ceneralleriniñ berr ü bahırda hâkimleri olan kıdveti'l-ümerâi'l-milleti'l-Mesihîyye Konte Maverisyu'nun mühürlü mektubun, gemi reisteri ve zâbitleri gösterdikden soñra gemiñizde harbî kefere âdemleri ve metâ'ları vardur deyu min ba'd yoklanmayub ve gemilerinden ol bahâne ile esbâb ve akçadan bir nesne alınmayub bir vehile dahl ü tecâvüz olunmaya ve min ba'd eyâlet-i Cezâyir 'de Nelerandalu'nun âdemlerin ve esbâblarun ve gemilerin satdurmayub hiçbir vehile kimesneye rencide ve remide etdirilmeye".

<sup>38</sup> ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08 / 12578.16: "Merhûm Süleyman Paşa zamân-i şerifinde sene yirmi altı ba'de elftarikhinde İstanbul'da Dîvân-i âlîde vezîr-i a'zam huzûrunda mahrûse-i Cezâyir ağalarımızdan ve yayabaşlarımızdan Kapudan Paşa önünde kavli-karâr ve ahd-i emân olunmuşdur. Ol veh üzere Felemek tâifesinden bir ferd esîr gemisine komayub konsulunun eline teslim eyleyesiz deyu cevâb eylemişsiz. ... Lâkin bazı Felemenk haramzâdelerinden şimdiki halde bir nice neferimiz esîr edüb Malta cezîresinde bey' edüb kayd ü bend ile esîr ve hakîr olmağın asâkir-i mansûre tarafından dahî cevâb eyleyeler ki "zîkr olunan Müselman esirlerimiz Malta'dan gelmeyince, bundaki olan Felemenk esirleri varmasun" deyu emr olunmuşdur. ve bu ahd üzere dahî âdemiñüz ile kavli-karâr olunmuşdur".

<sup>39</sup> Felemenk Ahdnâme Defteri, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, *Düvel-i Ecnebiyye Defterleri*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> For the release of the Dutch slaves and the prohibit of enslavement of subjects, see Bülent Arı, *Conflicts Between the Dutch Merchants and the Ottoman Local Authorities According to the Felemenk Ahdnâme Defteri, Dated 1091/ 1680*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Bilkent University, 1996, p 51. Articles 2, 17; document 34, p 83; document 56, p 88.

throughout Ottoman dominions. Until the grant of Dutch capitulations, their merchants were under the protection of either French or English ambassadors at the Porte. They had to pay the consuleage fee, *cottimo*, to these ambassadors. Furthermore, in case of any conflict with local authorities or with the Ottoman subjects, Dutch merchants had to apply French or English embassy. It also seemed controversial that in early Seventeenth Century, the Dutch ships could sail as far as Indian Ocean, thousands of miles from the Low Countries, but had to fly foreign flags in the Levant. The Dutch were now very enthusiastic to sail the Levant under their own flag.

When the Dutch capitulations were granted, no obstruction remained for an increase in the volume of trade between the two countries. Within the same year, the Venetian ambassador in England, Antonio Foscarini reported in his dispatch, dated 21 December 1612 that the Dutch trade in the Levant was growing rapidly. He added that “only a few days ago 9 ships laden with silk, cotton, and other rich merchandise of great value have arrived, besides the 6 ships which came in little earlier with the good fortune of a quiet passage and large gains”.<sup>41</sup>

Halil Paşa was aware of the superiority of the Dutch shipping over all other nations, as ambassadors were. The United Provinces was in its “Golden Age”, and foundation of official representation at the Porte would immediately incline the volume of Dutch trade in the Levant. That is why they had spent extraordinary efforts to prevent the Dutch from trading under their own flag. On the eve of the granting of the Dutch capitulations, the Venetian ambassador in England had feared that as the Dutch began to trade in almost all parts of the Mediterranean, they would absorb all the traffic. They were content with very moderate gains, their ships were light and did not cost half of what English ships cost, and so they could offer freight at half price that of an English ship.<sup>42</sup>

Halil Paşa did his best personally, to promote the Dutch and facilitated their penetration into the Ottoman ports. It must be noticed that rather than the date of the capitulations<sup>43</sup>, the date of Haga’s audience<sup>44</sup> with the Sultan was considered as the inauguration of official relationship between the two countries. So, it was concluded by the Porte that from that date onwards, the consulate fee (to be paid by the Dutch merchants) belonged to the Dutch consul. The amount collected in the meantime by the French consuls should be returned to the Dutch consul. In this respect, dragoman Abraham was sent to Aleppo at the accompany of a *kapıcıbaşı* from the Seraglio with letters from *Şeyhülislam* and the *kapıcılar kethüdası*.<sup>45</sup>

In his correspondence, Haga apparently talked about the confidential and close cooperation of Halil Paşa. When Halil Paşa was in Edirne, in early 1613, Haga had

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<sup>41</sup> CSP, Venice, XII, p 463.

<sup>42</sup> CSP, Venice, XII, p 333-334.

<sup>43</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 72, Evâil-i C. evvel, 1021 / 30 June – 9 July 1612.

<sup>44</sup> J Rebiülevvel 1201 / 2 May 1612, the next day after audience.

<sup>45</sup> See Supp Turc 118, documents 89, 90, 95, 98, 99.

written a letter to him, confessed how much he missed the Paşa, and stated that he had no close friend other than Halil Paşa.<sup>46</sup>

Actually, as time passed, Haga was identified with Halil Paşa at the Porte. In the official correspondence as well, his sympathy for Haga was always apparent. For instance, in the imperial decree by Sultan Osman II to the kadı of Gallipoli, dated Evâsıt-i Şaban 1027 / 3-12 April 1618, (while Halil Paşa was Grand Vizier) the close friendship between the Dutch ambassador and Halil Paşa was emphasized and stated that he should be protected at all respects.<sup>47</sup>

In his letter to the States General, dated 1 Receb 1021 / 28 August 1612, Halil Paşa promised that he would do his best for the success of the Dutch affairs at the Porte.<sup>48</sup> Actually he did. For instance, when one of the Dutch merchants, Erico Flamenko, traveled to Aleppo for trade, Halil Paşa wrote a letter to the viceroy of Aleppo and requested all kinds of facilities should be provided to him. Halil Paşa particularly emphasized that the Dutch ambassador was a close friend and affiliate of him.<sup>49</sup>

His efforts were to establish an institutionalized Dutch commercial network all around the Ottoman ports in the Levant. To facilitate the commercial activities of the Dutch merchants in Cyprus, Vizier Halil Paşa had written to the kadı, *defterdar*, Aga of the Janissary corps, and the *mütesellim* (deputy governor)<sup>50</sup>.

When he was appointed Grand Admiral for the second time in 1613, he has reconfirmed his readiness to continue assisting Dutch affairs.<sup>51</sup> For instance, Halil Paşa requested the protection of the Dutch consul, and the merchants in Cyprus from the Viceroy of Aleppo, Davud Paşa, when he became Grand Vizier, in 1616.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 22: “Benim ‘izzetli sultânım rıf’at ile bu cânibden azîmet buyuraldan beru bir mertebe firkat çekerim ki Hazret-i Mevlâ bilir. Bu hayr-hâh bendeleri evvel hazret-i yâri teâlâ, sonra saadetli sultanumdan gayrı mu’in ve mesnedim yokdur. Bu diyârların bir garibi olub izdiyâd-i ömr-i devlet ve terakki-i ‘izz ü rıf’at ile ‘avdet-i şeriflerin an-karib Rabbü’l-‘izzet erzâni ve müyesser kılıvere deyü rûz ü şeb tazarru ve niyâz eylemekden hâli olmaduğumu iştiyâ-i şerif buyurulmaya”.

<sup>47</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 86: “Nederlanda elçisi kadimden sahib-i devlet hazretleriüñ dostu olub her vechile himâyet ve sıyânet olunması lâzım olmuşdur”.

<sup>48</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 160: “Biz bu tarafda her hidmetiñüze mümkün olduđu mertebe dâmen-der-miyân edüb sa’y ü ikdâm ve cidd ü ihtimam etmek üzereyüz. Hidmetiñüz canımıza mînetdür”.

<sup>49</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 152: “Felemenk beğlerinüñ dostluklarına bu muhibb-i Hâlis bi’l-bâlleri bâis olub bu hayr-hâhlıkda illet-i müstakle olmuşdur. Hâliyâ mezkûr Felemek elçisi ziyâde dostumuz ve çırağımız olub Haleb diyârına Eriko Flamenko nâm bâzirgan revâne olub ticâret murâd etmekle cenâbi şerifiñizle mâbeynimizde olan muhabbet ve kulluk ecliçün mektûb râğıb olmağın mezkûr Eriko bâzirganuñ üzerinden nazar-i şerifiñüz mebzûl ve bi-dirîğ buyurulub eğer gümrük husûsudur ve eğer sâir mesâlihdir; mu’âvenet ve müzâheret buyurulub ... bir ferde rencide ve remide etdirmeyüb”.

<sup>50</sup> Supp Turc 118, documents 177, 178, 179, and 180.

<sup>51</sup> ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08 / 12593.21: “Pâdişâhımız kapudanlık hidmetini gerü bu muhibbiñüze tefvie edüb eğer gemileriñüzün ve eğer bâzirganlarıñuzuñ himâyeti husûsudur; elimizde olub mümkün olanı kendimiz görüb her hidmetiñüze sa’y u ikdâm olunur”.

<sup>52</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 205: “Flamenk elçisi kendü çırağımız olub Asitâne-i sa’âdet-medârın hülsü üzere bendelerinden olmağla, cezire-i Kıbrıs’da olan konsolos ve tüccarları üzerinden hüsn-i nazarların dirîğ buyurulmayub vâki’ olan husûslarına mu’âvenet ve müzâheretiñüz içün işbu mektûb irsâl olunmuşdur”.

Halil Paşa also spent great efforts for Cornelis Pauw to be appointed as the Dutch consul at Aleppo. When Sultan Ahmed I received Haga, Cornelis Pauw was also present at the audience hall. Soon after the grant of capitulations, Halil Paşa wrote a letter to the States General and requested the appointment of Pauw to consulate at Aleppo. According to Halil Paşa, Cornelis Pauw had close affiliations among the Viziers at the Porte. Those affiliations would be very beneficial for the Dutch affairs at Aleppo in every respect. His insistence and promise of personal assistance was very influential in the appointment of Pauw as the Dutch consul at Aleppo.<sup>53</sup> Initially, the States General might have no idea of appointing Pauw to the Dutch consulate in Aleppo. It is greatly probable that by suggesting Pauw, Halil Paşa planned to secure appointment of a strong personality at Aleppo. Aleppo was an important center for Indian transit trade. However, as a result of monopoly of the United Dutch East India Company (VOC) over spice trade Aleppo lost its importance by 1630. Indian spice trade had then shifted to Atlantic route. In the Mediterranean, the major port of Levantine exports was Izmir (Smyrna).

The assistance of Halil Paşa would not only realize the establishment of official relationship, but also facilitate the penetration of the Dutch merchants into the Levant markets with stronger legal status.

## HALIL PAŞA AND DUTCH LEVANT TRADE

### Nasuh Paşa and the Dutch Capitulations

The most important legal threshold for free trade of the Dutch merchants in the Levant was the granting of capitulations. It was successfully overcome with the extraordinary efforts of Halil Paşa. The attempts of the Venetian *bailo* and the French ambassador had been eliminated. Their possible cooperation with the decisive makers and the influential authorities at the Porte was neutralized. Even after the granting of the Dutch capitulations, there was a danger of canceling it. It was legally possible, because the Dutch capitulations, by nature, was not a bilateral treaty, but rather a unilateral document, granted by the Sultan to other nations. Capitulations were issued in the form of *berat*, diploma that bind the Sultan only. Legally the Sultan had the right to cancel or suspend it whenever he wishes, or see any behavior contrary to the articles, stated in it. Furthermore, as all *berats*, the capitulations also lose its validity with

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<sup>53</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 172: "Rayiniyir Pavlo (Reiniersz Pauw) nâm beğni oğlu Kornele Pav (Cornelis Pauw) ulu beğzâdelerden olmağla 'hatırımuz için ziyâde ri'âyet eyleyesiz' deyu iltimas eylemişsiz. ... kendü oğlumuz gibi görüb me'mûlûñüzden ziyâde 'azim ri'âyet ve rağbet edüb hattâ elçinüz rikâb-i hümayuna yüz sürdükde, elçinüzün ardınca mümâileyh beğzâde yüz sürüb sair beğzâdelerden tercih ve takdîm olunmuşdur. Hâlâ Haleb vilâyetinde olan konsolosluk hizmetinde bunun gibi beğzâde olmak lâyıkdır. Haleb'de olan konsolosluğu mümâileyh beğzâdeye verüb gayrı kimesneye vermeyesiz. Ricâmızı kabûl eyleyesiz. Zirâ mümâileyh beğzâde bu cânibde vüzerâ-yı 'izâm ve a'yân-i devlet ile tamam mertebe dostluk ve aşinâlık hâsıl etmişdir. Size dahî bunun konsolos olması nâfi'dür".

the death of the Sultan. It has to be renewed, or the new Sultan should approve its validity.

The rivals of the Netherlands and of Haga were hopeful to convince the Sultan, in consultation with the Viziers, to break his oath. In this regard, those rivals needed the assistance of senior authorities at the Porte. Halil Paşa was aware of the imminent peril on the status of Haga and the Dutch capitulations. For this reason, although Haga was planning to return<sup>54</sup> soon after the attainment of the capitulations, Halil Paşa did not consent his immediate return.<sup>55</sup> If Haga returned soon, the Dutch capitulations would remain only on paper. There would be no senior Dutch representative to follow the rights granted by the Sultan. It might be very late until the States General appointed a new ambassador.

When the capitulations were granted, the only chance for the adversaries of Haga was the negative attitude of Grand Vizier Nasuh Paşa, who returned from the Persian campaign in September.<sup>56</sup> Nasuh Paşa was victorious and able to bring the Persian envoy accompanying him to the capital, on 20 September 1612.<sup>57</sup> With the other higher authorities in Istanbul, Haga paid a visit to Nasuh Paşa at his tent for welcome.<sup>58</sup> Haga met Nasuh Paşa at his tent for the first time. It was an official ceremony, and there was others in the meeting as well.

Nasuh Paşa held his first divan meeting in Istanbul as Grand Vizier on September 30, 1612 at the Seraglio.<sup>59</sup> He was absent at the time when Dutch capitulations was granted. Because of this, the States General believed, he was against the friendly relations with the Netherlands.<sup>60</sup> He was able to cancel the Dutch capitulations, but as

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<sup>54</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 168: "*Hemân devletlü başınız için nâmemizü rikâb-i hümayuna 'arz buyurub kalîl ve kesîr ne ise getirdiğümüz pişkeşimizi kabûl edüb, nâmemizü yazub, 'ale 't-ta 'cil kulumuzu gönderesüz inşallâhu te 'âlâ*".

<sup>55</sup> Appendix 6: "*hâlâ müşârünileyh elçi bu cânibde hudmet-i mezbûrede alikonulmuşdur, zirâ bu cânibde olan Fransa ve Venedik elçileri câyiz ki soñra bir tarikle ortalığa fitne birağub "bunlar dostluk etmez" deyu bir söz söylememek için bu muhibbiñüz dahî elçinün Âsitâne-i sa 'âdetde kalmasını münâsib görüb ol cânibe göndermedük*".

<sup>56</sup> Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 282: "*Op den 20 dito is den visyr Nassuff bassa 's morgens vrouch gearriveert tot Calcidonia, leggende over Constantinopoli, alwaer S.E. sijn meten geslagen heeft, sijnde denselvigen morgen jegens gereden van den chaimacham ende alle d'andre visyren, zijnde daernaer oock besocht van de n mufti, den emier bassi, cadileshiers ende alle andre grooten van Constantinopoli*".

<sup>57</sup> Nasuh Paşa brought the Iranian envoys Kadiasker Kadi Han, Muizz-i Isfahânî and Huseyn-i Yezdi, who were the kadis of Isfahan and Kezvin respectively. Together with him, the envoys brought silk, worth of 200 loads as tribute, İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi*, p 257.

<sup>58</sup> Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 282: "*Ick heb bij dese gelegenheit met avijs van den heer Challil bassa S.E. in sijne tenten oock besocht ende vervwellecompt, sonder enige particulierediscoursen te houden, overmits de menichte van 't volck, S.E. gestadelijck comende besoucken, S.E. begerende, dat met hem tot Constantinopoli met meerder commoditeyt van alles soude discoureren*".

<sup>59</sup> Heeringa, *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 282: "*Op den 30 dito heeft den visyr azem Nassuff bassa sijn eerste divaen ende raetdach gehouden*".

<sup>60</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 209: "*Hâlâ sadrazam 'izzetlü ve sa 'âdetlü Nasuh Paşa hazretleri Asitâne-i sa 'âdeti 'azîmet buyurduklarında zikr olunan nâme-i hümayunu fesh etdirilmeği icrâ ve styânêt-*

Grand Vizier, he made no attempt to further the commercial relations between the two countries. He was indifferent to the Dutch affairs in the Levant. It was Halil Paşa, who personally organized the infrastructure for the Dutch merchants in the Levant. At the initial stage, Aleppo, and Cyprus were the two most important locations for the Dutch commercial activities. Halil Paşa first tried to convince the Ottoman local authorities to protect the Dutch merchants. Because, not only Venetian, English and French ambassadors in Istanbul, but also their consuls raised difficulties for the Dutch merchants. They did not recognize the status of the Dutch consuls, and continued to collect consulee fees from Dutch merchants as well. In this respect, Dutch merchants were in need of official support of the Porte. As an influential Vizier of the imperial *Divan*, Halil Paşa provided that support. When he was appointed as Grand Admiral for the second time in 1613, he became more influential within the Ottoman government. For a long time, both Haga and Dutch merchants felt his support behind them.

#### Dutch Consuls in the Levant

The capitulations, in Ottoman practice, were legally superior to all local and regional regulations. In this sense, it must also have superiority over the imperial decrees and diplomas (*berats*) issued by the Sultan. At this point, certain conflicts have arisen between the local authorities and the merchants who trade within the Ottoman dominions. The Ottoman territories had been separated into various customs zones. Each custom zone had its own regulation with different tax rates and practices. The customs zones were maintained as fiscal units under the *mukata'a* system. The customs custodian, *gümrük emini*, designated sub-contactors for smaller units. The Istanbul customs zone consisted of ports and smaller landings (*iskele*) from Varna on the Black Sea coast to Kilidülbahr on Gallipoli peninsula. On the Anatolian side, the coast from Yoros on the Bosphorus to the province of Aydin was included in the Istanbul customs zone. In 1477, the Istanbul customs zone was extended to Antalya, and in 1482 to Sinop and Samsun.<sup>61</sup>

On the main caravan routes, inland customs zones were established. The caravans had to follow the officially assigned routes and paid customs duties in the customs centers en route. To prevent the abuses of local officials, the merchants would be handed a document called *edâ tezkiresi*, certifying that all the incumbent taxes were paid duly.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, when the Dutch merchants were granted to trade under one tariff system,

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*inde sa'âdetlü sultanımıñ bezl-i hamiyetlerün sarf'eyleyüb bazı ashab-i ağrâzımızın fikr-i fâsidlerin zuhûra getirilmeyüb mahcûb ve mağbûn kalmışlardır".*

<sup>61</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Customs Register of Caffa*, (Harvard Univ. Press, 1995) p 81.

<sup>62</sup> Halil İnalçık, *ibid.*, p 91; for caravan routes and duties on the Iranian silk trade, see Halil İnalçık, *Customs Register of Caffa*, (Harvard Univ. Press, 1995) pp 91-92; for examples on the conflicts about the local taxes, see B. Arı, *ibid.*, document 225, p 107.

which was 3%, local customs custodians, who farmed out the customs taxes, were not consented, because, it would affect their revenues. For instance, the farmer of the customs duties in Cyprus refused to bow the reduction, claiming that he himself had farmed the duty on the basis of 5%.<sup>63</sup> The customs duty could be reduced, in the end, only with the arbitration of the Defterdar, Paşa, and the other local notables in Cyprus.<sup>64</sup> The situation has caused almost a crisis within the Ottoman government. Halil Paşa has written letters to the kadi, defterdar, Aga of the Janissary corps, Deputy Viceroy (*mütesellim*) of Cyprus to emphasize the importance of the existence of the Dutch merchants in the Levant. They should be protected, and should not be oppressed, nor frightened in their activities.<sup>65</sup> The Viceroy of Cyprus has also written similar letters to the defterdar, Deputy – Viceroy, and Customs custodian in Cyprus.<sup>66</sup> Almost a shuttle correspondence was carried out to convince the custodian, *emin*, to reduce the customs duty to the rate of 3%, as indicated in the capitulations.

The Viceroy of Cyprus had written a letter to his deputy in Cyprus, indicating that the Dutch nation had recently established friendly relations, and thus all facilities should be provided to them, so that they could be attracted for commercial activity. Otherwise, if they escaped, it might also harm the treasury as well.<sup>67</sup> The Viceroy reminded that if the customs custodian (*gümrük emini*) resisted for 5%, some others would be appointed to his post.

### Conflicts on Customs Duties

Although it was clearly stated in the capitulations that when the Dutch merchants imported and exported goods in Aleppo, Alexandria and in other places as well, no more than 3% customs duty should be collected from them, there had been frequent violations of the relevant article of the capitulations.<sup>68</sup> The amount of the customs

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<sup>63</sup> Niels Steensgaard, "Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650", *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, vol XV, (1967), 13-55, p 18.

<sup>64</sup> Heeringa. *Levantschen Handel*, I, p 442 – 443: "In Cipro daer de saecke wat wichtiger is ende overmits de grootheit van de negotien van meerder importantie, heeft den emyn seer groote resistentie gedaen, willende nae de oude usantie vijff ten hondert nemen van onse natie, allegerende, dat daerop de tolln van den G.S. gepacht hadde, in tijde als d'onse, comende onder de bandiere van Vranckrijck, oock vijff ten hondert betaelden, ofte dat hem affslach soude geschieden, soovel als de resterende twee ten hondert jaerlicx soude importeren".

<sup>65</sup> Supp Turc 118, document s 177, 178, 179, 180, and 181.

<sup>66</sup> Supp Turc 118, document s 182, 183, and 184.

<sup>67</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 182: "Bunlar Dersa'adete yakında ita'at eylemişlerdir. İstimâlet verilürse, bâzırganları gelüb alış veriş ederler; miriye külli nef' olur. Rencide olunurlarsa el çekiüb gelmezler. Mezbûrun bâzırganları rencide etdirmeyüb tüccar tâyifesini himâyet üzere olasız. Mült ezim inâd edüb iltizâmımızda yüzde beş akçadır derse, anların yerlerine âdem tedarik olunur, bilmiş olub muceb-i mektûb ile âmil olasız".

<sup>68</sup> Dutch capitulations of 1021/1612, see Supp Turc 118, document 72, article 13: "ve müşârinileyhimin rızalarıyla tâcirleri vilâyelerinden getirdikleri ve alub götürdükleri meta'larından Haleb'de ve İskenderiye'de vesâyir yerlerde yüzde üç akça gümrük vereler, ziyâde vermeyeler ve meta'ları ziyâde bahâya tutulmaya".

duties was calculated on the basis of the estimated value of the commodity, *ad valorem*, by the *gümrük emîni*. There were frequent conflicts between the merchants and the custodian about the estimated values. The values of the commodities varied from one region to another, and thus were open to abuses.<sup>69</sup>

Merchants who combed western Anatolia in search of deals and discount, and who made purchases, viewed the insistence of Ottoman officials to estimate customs according to current prices in the port rather than purchase prices in the provinces. The capitulations stated only that the duty would be paid *ad valorem*, at the estimated value. They remained silent on the critical question of assessment, was this to be a percentage<sup>70</sup> of the purchase, or the current, or some fictitious price.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, the frictions between the merchants and the customs custodians were inevitable. The higher the value of estimation, naturally, the higher would be the revenue of the custodian. To provide true and just taxation of the commodities, exported and imported, and to eliminate the arbitrary estimation of the values, in time European nations imposed a tariff system, instead of a general ratio.<sup>72</sup>

The request of excessive customs duty continued for decades. Even after the renewal of the Dutch capitulations for the third time by Sultan Mehmed IV in 1091/1680, conflicts arose between local authorities and the Dutch merchants.<sup>73</sup> In one of this kind of conflicts, although the Dutch merchants were ready to pay 3 % for the goods they imported from Moldavia, the custodian Huseyin had requested twofold of the regular tax.<sup>74</sup>

The customs authorities were ambitious to collect duties from all good unloaded at the ports. Istanbul customs custodian Murad Çavuş even dared to request duty from the goods brought from the Netherlands to be presented to the Sultan and the other dignitaries at the Porte.<sup>75</sup> The Sultan had to warn the Grand Admiral and the Deputy

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<sup>69</sup> B. Arı *ibid.*, p 43.

<sup>70</sup> For the list of customs duty rate in different customs zones, see Halil İnalçık, *Customs Register of Caffa*, pp 95-96.

<sup>71</sup> Daniel Goffman, "The Capitulations and the Question of Authority in Levantine Trade 1600-1650", *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 10, (1986) p 156.

<sup>72</sup> Şerafettin Tuan in "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile İki Sicilya Ktallığı Arındaki Tarife", *Belgeler*, stated that the first tariff list appeared in Ottoman – French Commercial Treaty of 1740. However, in Felemek Ahdnâme Defteri, BOA, Ecnebi defterleri, 22/1, p 259-260, there exists a tariff list dated 1145 / 1732; for the tariff list, also see Bosscha Erdbrink, *Ottoman – Dutch Relations*, pp 292-301.

<sup>73</sup> For classification of these conflicts and examples of conflicts selected from the registers, see B. Arı, *ibid.*, Appendix.

<sup>74</sup> "İstanbul Kaymakamına ve Kadısına Hüküm ki, Niderlanda elçisi arz-i hâl gönderüb, Niderlanda tüccarı Boğdanda iştira edüb getirdükleri meta'dan 'ahdnâme-i hümayun mucebince yüzde üç akça gümrüklerin edâ etmeğe râzılar iken hâlâ gümrük emîni olan Hüseyin kanaat etmeyüb hilâf-i 'ahdnâme-i hümayun iki kat gümrük taleb edüb ta'addi eylediğün bildirüb", B. Arı, *ibid.*, document 1, p 68.

<sup>75</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 108: "Niderlanda tarafından gemi ile rikâb-i hümayununa pişkeş için irsâl olunan tuhaf ve esbâbdan gümrük emîni olan Murad Çavuş gümrük taleb eder deyu i 'Lâm eylemeğin, ol makûle tuhâf ve esbâb sahîh pişkeş ise gümrük emîni dahl eylemeye".



– Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa, and the Defterdar of Anatolia, with an imperial decree to prevent the intervention of the custodian.

### Dutch Consuls in the Levant

The next step after the grant of the capitulations was to establish a network of consuls in the important commercial centers. Within a few years the States General built up a network of resident representatives and consuls all around the Mediterranean – except for Spain and territories subject to Spain, in which official representatives of the United Provinces were barred.<sup>76</sup> Other than the resident ambassador (Cornelis Haga) in Istanbul, consulates were opened at Aleppo (1612, Cornelis Pauw),<sup>77</sup> Alexandria (1613 French Consul Gabriel Ferfoji?),<sup>78</sup> Cyprus (1612, Jacobus Milis),<sup>79</sup> Morea, Lepanto, Negroponte, Mezistre (1617, Dimitri Andrea),<sup>80</sup> Venice (6 November 1614, Gillis Ouwerx),<sup>81</sup> Genoa (1615, Nicolaes van Rhijn),<sup>82</sup> and Zante (5 December 1618, Leonaert Steffen Engelbronner),<sup>83</sup> Livorno (30 March 1612, Johan van Dael),<sup>84</sup> and in Sicily (12 July 1617, Simon Le Maire)<sup>85</sup>.

As could be easily grasped from the above list of the Dutch consulates all over the Mediterranean, the achieving of capitulations from the Ottoman Empire provided an immediate improvement of Dutch trade in the Mediterranean. Recognition of the United Provinces by the Ottoman Sultan proved the legitimacy of the Dutch state. Without penetration into Ottoman markets, Dutch trade in the Mediterranean would not reach to considerable volumes. Establishment of a network of consulates all around the Mediterranean, only after the grant of capitulations by the Ottoman Sultan, made Dutch commercial advance possible. Through this network, Dutch merchants could find representatives, who would protect their rights at the ports. Moreover, they could make greater profits through loading and unloading at the intermediary ports before the final destination.

During the first half of the Seventeenth Century Dutch exports to the Ottoman ports consisted of precious metals, mostly silver coins, luxury items, and colonial products from East and West Indies.<sup>86</sup> Some of the luxury goods were provided from Italian ports by Dutch ships, which unloaded there, and loaded again for Ottoman

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<sup>76</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 98.

<sup>77</sup> Supp Turc 118, documents 87, 88, 89, 90, 97, 98, 99, 118, 159, and 172.

<sup>78</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 115.

<sup>79</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 151.

<sup>80</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 166.

<sup>81</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 54.

<sup>82</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 54.

<sup>83</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 54.

<sup>84</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 54.

<sup>85</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 54.

<sup>86</sup> M. Bulut, "The Role of the Ottomans and Dutch in the Commercial Integration Between the Levant and Atlantic in the Seventeenth Century", *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 45.2. (Leiden: 2002) 197-230, p 215.

markets. The composition of Dutch commercial activity began to change towards mid – Seventeenth Century. Dutch ships now, were intensively loading raw materials from the Ottoman ports, in return for their manufactured goods.<sup>87</sup>

After the Twelve Years Truce with Spain in 1609, the Dutch Republic was in need of political accreditation within the international system. The grant of capitulations by the Sultan provided a high prestige to the United Provinces. The Dutch Republic, now, had a resident ambassador in Istanbul together with Venice, France and England. Other nations' representatives were obviously very jealous for the highest respect shown to Haga. The Dutch merchants got rid of the position of indebtedness and humiliation *vis-à-vis* the French and the English. They could be freely sail under their own flag, and protected by their own representative at the Porte. Furthermore, it would impose a psychological effect over the enemies of the Netherlands that the Dutch ships and the Dutch merchants were under the Ottoman protection.<sup>88</sup> This resulted with the immediate expansion of the Dutch network of consulates. The impact of the quickening Dutch penetration of the Levant from 1609 proved quite a shock to their Venetian, French, and English rivals.

The States General appointed the Dutch consuls and issued their commissions. The right to appoint consuls wherever the Dutch ambassador or the States General considered suitable, was provided by the Dutch capitulations.<sup>89</sup> They would also have the right to dismiss a consul and appoint another one. Local authorities would not able to intervene in the appointment of the consuls.

In the decisions of the States General, the consultation with the Levant merchants was influential. The system of the payment to the consuls was a weak point. The consuls in Aleppo, for instance, were entitled to the consulage,<sup>90</sup> but, from this sum, they were also expected to pay the ordinary expenses of the consulate for gifts, *avantias*, and etc. But the system did not work well in the Levant, where the consular costs tended to be higher and more unpredictable than in the European ports. Consequently, the rate of the consulage fee caused frictions between the merchants and the consul. The merchants complained about the greed of the Dutch consul at Aleppo, Cornelis Pauw, while Pauw stated that the factors were cheating him of declaring the commodities as under-valued.<sup>91</sup> The frictions can be observed in the petition<sup>92</sup> of the Levant merchants in Amsterdam to the States General in 1615:

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<sup>87</sup> M. Bulut, *ibid.*, p 215.

<sup>88</sup> ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08 / 12593.11: “*Min ba'd gemileriñüz ve bâzırganlarıñüz bî-bâk ve bî-pervâ gelüb gidüb ...*”.

<sup>89</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 72, pp 66-67, article 32, from original copy, which is available at ARA, Staten Generaal, 1.01.08 / 12593.15, and 16: “*ve İskenderiye ve Trablusşam ve Cezâyir ve Tunus ve Cezâyir-i Ğarb ve Mısır iskelelerine ve gayrılara ta'yîn etdikleri konsolosların tebdil edüb, yerlerine ol hidmetin 'uhdesinden gelür âdemler ta'yîn edüb gönderdikde, kimesne mâni' olmaya.*”

<sup>90</sup> *Konsolosluk hakkı*, in the Ottoman documents.

<sup>91</sup> Niels Steensgaard, “Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650”, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, vol XV, (1967), 13-55., p 32.

<sup>92</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, pp 466-468: “*De Gemeene Negotianten Op De Levant (Te Amsterdam) Aan De Staaten Generaal*: N. Steensgaard, *ibid.*, p 32.

✓ The Consul should be a scrupulous man, and must not carry on business on his own account,

✓ A *cottimo* on the Venetian model ought to be established in the nation,

✓ The consul should receive a fixed salary,

✓ Gifts must only be made with the nation's approval, and they should be paid from the *cottimo*, as is done by the Venetians.

✓ Other extraordinary expenses on the nation's behalf should be paid from the *cottimo* as well, including the frequent gifts now being neglected on account of the consul's economic situation,

✓ Should the *cottimo* not suffice in case of a large extraordinary expense, a *tansa* (special duty) as a large and as protracted as necessary should be imposed on the members of the nation, only of course with the nation's consent,

✓ The consul will be shown due respect.

The first Dutch consul in Aleppo, Cornelis Pauw obtained the permission to collect money, with the nation's consent to pay the extraordinary expenses, with his commission of 30 June 1614. The consul on behalf of the merchants, and of the nation residing there should greet the arrival of the newly appointed Ottoman officials through presentation of gifts. In February 1616, the States General resolved that the costs of such expenditures should be born jointly by the members of the nation.

Like the Levant merchants in Amsterdam, the Dutch ambassador at the Porte, Haga had on several occasions recommended that a fixed duty like the Venetian *cottimo* and *tansa*<sup>93</sup> be imposed towards the payment of extraordinary expenses.<sup>94</sup>

It appears that before 1627 the Dutch nation had a special treasury at its disposal under the administration of two members of the nation.<sup>95</sup> *Cottimo* was a 2 % duty on all imported goods, but at the end of 1620s this amount proved to be insufficient to settle the extraordinary expenses, and in 1632 the special treasury had a debt of 6 – 7,000 Piastres, borrowed at 18 % per annum.<sup>96</sup>

The extra costs had been paid by loans at high rates of interest, and accumulated debts proved impossible to settle later. Nevertheless, the account could be settled with a smooth solution. The debt of the treasury was taken over by the Directors of the Levant Trade in Amsterdam, and in return, they received the yield from an import duty of 2% on all Levantine goods exported to the Netherlands.<sup>97</sup>

At Aleppo, which remained the pre-eminent emporium of the Middle East throughout the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the change since 1609 was strikingly evident. In July 1611, the Venetian consul at Aleppo reported home that the Dutch had become much more formidable rivals that is since their truce with Spain and that in the last two

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<sup>93</sup> *Tansa* is the extraordinary duty for the extraordinary *avantias*.

<sup>94</sup> N. Steensgaard, *ibid.*, p 43.

<sup>95</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 546 and 563.

<sup>96</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 536; N. Steensgaard, *ibid.*, p 43.

<sup>97</sup> N. Steensgaard, *ibid.*, p 43.

years many houses of the Dutch merchants had suddenly sprung at Aleppo. The statistics also confirm the Venetian consul's report.<sup>98</sup>

Table 3. Volume of the Levant Trade.

	1604	1613
Venice	1,250,000	850,000
France	800,000	1,750,000
England	300,000	250,000
United Provinces	150,000	500,000

Source: J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p 99.

According to the figures in 1604, the volume of the Dutch trade was a little more than 1/10 of Venice, and half of the English. Soon after the Dutch capitulations, in 1613, the Dutch trade was more than half of the Venetians, and twice as much as the English.

Before the grant of capitulations, on the eve of the departure of Haga, the Levant merchants of Amsterdam had presented a report to the States General and they claimed that the Levant trade had latterly emerged as one of the most vital plied by the Dutch in any part of the globe. They also argued that their commerce with Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, Aleppo, and Alexandria, as compared with that of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) with the East Indies was in value and potentially more important for the future welfare of the Netherlands than the East India traffic.<sup>99</sup> The report assured the States General that the raw materials, such as silk, cotton, and mohair, which were indispensable to the manufacture of a wide range of luxury and middle quality textiles in the west are abundant and cheap in the Levant.<sup>100</sup>

In 1611, the volume of the Dutch Levant trade was around 4 million guilders annually, which is slightly more than the Dutch East India traffic in value.<sup>101</sup> It should

<sup>98</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 98.

<sup>99</sup> "Memorie Betreffende Den Levantschen Handel". Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 429-431: "*De vaert ende handel in Levantel is soo groot ende treffelijck, dat sij den Oostindische passeert, uutgeseyt dat d'Oostindische handel den coninck van Spaengien seer schadelijck is in de negotien van sijn coninckrijcken ende in sijn regieringe*"; J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 98.

<sup>100</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 430: "*sij coopen op voorcoop en maecken de prijsen van de catoenen; soo dit dan factors van eenige companien sijn, sullen sij de beste prijsen ende de beste waren aen haer meesters geven ende de slechte ende gesengde catoenen aen andere, 'twelck wel thien, twaelften hondert scheelt een meer: jae all deden sij anders niet dan dat sij haer meesters schepen affladen ende lieten andere liggen*"; J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 99.

<sup>101</sup> J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1998*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) p 99.

be noted that the Dutch East India Company had been established in 1602, and 9 years has passed since then. In 1611, the Dutch capitulations were not guaranteed yet. Furthermore, Dutch Indian trade was run by the company (VOC), which monopolized spice trade from east Indies, whereas there was not a Dutch Levant company yet. It would be established in 1625.

The Amsterdam merchants went on, in their report that should the Dutch succeeded in achieving and consolidating, a considerable trade mastery in the Mediterranean, comparable with what they had already achieved in the Baltic Russia, and the East Indies, then a glowing future for Holland's textile towns - Leiden and Haarlem - would be assured and the manufacturing towns of Frankfurt would be made dependent on the Dutch entrepot for their supplies.<sup>102</sup>

During the Golden Age of the Netherlands, Europe really became dependent on the supplies provided by the Dutch shipping mechanism. The Baltic trade was an immense source of revenue for the Netherlands. In 1600, 55% of the ships at Swedish and Russian ports carried the Dutch flag. While 15 years later it was 67%. Until 1650, for every ten Dutch ships to England, only one made opposite journey. It was practically a one-way traffic. The near monopoly of commercial transportation of the Dutch in Northern and Western Europe led to increasing international tension and in the end Cromwell promulgated the famous "Navigation Act" in 1651.<sup>103</sup> According to the Navigation Act, only English vessels could transport the goods to England. The wars of 1652, and of 1665 followed.

During their brief period of success from 1609 to 1621, the Dutch merchants did their best in the Levant in cotton trade. Annually 6,000 sacks of cotton (around 3 million lbs) were exported from Cyprus, of which English and Venetians were dominant before 1609. The Dutch quickly gained an ascendancy, ousting their rivals from the scene.<sup>104</sup> The same is true for trade in Egypt.

It seems that according to the documents, the Dutch merchants were trading with cash payment instead of paying the return cargo with the commodities they brought from the Netherlands. The customs custodian in Cyprus was unhappy with this trade, since he could not collect the customs duty from silver Lion dollars, *Esedî Gurus* in Ottoman documents, and *leeuwendaalders* in Dutch.<sup>105</sup> Dutch capitulations exempt-

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<sup>102</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 42: "Tot noch is de meeste handle geweest ofte het principaelste van dien in de caetoenen: den handle vrij sijnde, souden d'onse comen in de sijdehandel ende andere soorten van waren. ... Dat den handel van groot importantie is, ... die sijde handel hier in 't lant sijnde, sullen de manfacteuren seer vermeerden, jae men sal in corten tijt alle sijdewaren uut dese landente Vranckfoort ter merckt brengen, die men daer nu vandaen haelt, gelijck geschiet met de specerijen, door de vaert van Oostindien, die dese landen hebben".

<sup>103</sup> Paul Zumthor, *Daily Life in Rembrandt's Holland*, p 291.

<sup>104</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 99.

<sup>105</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 9: "Nederlanda tâyifesi Cezîre-i Kıbrıs 'a bir defâ meta' getirüb andan soñra getirmeyüb her sene ziyâde gurus getirürler ve metâ' alub giderler. Bu canibe getirdükleri ancak gurusdur; her yüzde üç gurus taleb olundukda ta'allül eyleyüb Asitâne-i sa'âdete 'arz olunmayınca vermezüz deyüb".

ed the precious metals from customs duty to eliminate scarcity of coins in the Ottoman markets. The mentality of the customs custodian is compatible with the Ottoman economic mind, which support “economy of plenty”, rather than “mercantile economy”. The Ottoman authorities promoted the imports to provide abundance in supplies with cheap prices, and at the same time enabled the flow of cash to the imperial treasury through customs duties. As a result of this economic approach the Indian goods flooded the Ottoman markets especially from early 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. According to the estimate of the Venetian bailo, the Sultan’s treasury alone earned an annual income of half a million gold pieces from the Indian trade.<sup>106</sup>

Toward the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the unusual growth of imports signaled the beginning of a crisis in Ottoman economy, which caused great concern among the Ottoman authorities.<sup>107</sup> The famous Ottoman historian Naima has emphasized the hazard of the flow of Ottoman cash to the other countries. He stated that it was not wise for the sovereigns to incline for glory to the luxurious goods, imported from abroad and went on indicating that the goods manufactured within the country must be preferred, so that money is not dispersed outside the Ottoman territories.<sup>108</sup> Naîmâ distinguished the commerce of the West Europeans with the merchants of Russia. He praised the bilateral transactions of Europeans, since they imported high volume of clothes, but also loaded wool, mohair, gallnuts, alum, and brought and unloaded Lion dollars to Izmir (Smyrna) and other Ottoman ports, while the Muscovite merchants imported luxurious furs, but never spent their money to the goods manufactured in the Ottoman territories.<sup>109</sup> Naîmâ complained about the flow of enormous cash for the goods imported from India. He indicated that although treasures were spent for these goods, the Indians bought nothing from the Ottoman lands. The customs duties collected from the imports were more hazardous to the treasury, rather than its benefits. In this manner, the world’s wealth was accumulated in India. The same is true for Yemen because of her coffee exports.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Halil İnalçık, “The Ottoman Cotton Market and India: the Role of Labor Cost in Market Competition”, *The Middle East and the Balkans Under the Ottoman Empire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1993) p 272.

<sup>107</sup> Halil İnalçık, *ibid.*, p 272.

<sup>108</sup> Tarih-i Naîmâ (*Ravzatü'l-Huseyn Fi Hülasâti Ahbari'l-Hâfikeyn*), vol IV, (İstanbul: 1281H), p 293: “âhar devletten hâsıl olan şeref ve ihtişâma müte’lîk eşyâya râğbet etmek pâdişahlara mâkul değildir ki anların râğbeti ile revaç bulub memleketin nüküd ve emvâli ol metâ’ sebebiyle âhar memlekete gitmeye. Ekseryâ kendi memleketinde hâsıl olan tuhaf emtiaya râğbet etmek lâzımdır ki mal hariç yere dağılmaya; sâiereden emtia getirüb fûruht edenler aldıkları meblağı bilad-i İslâmiyye mahsûlünden kendülere lâzım eşyâya verirlerse devr-i dâim akça yine memlekette kalmış olur”; İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol II, (Ankara: TTK) p 692; H. İnalçık, *ibid.*, p 273.

<sup>109</sup> Naîmâ, *ibid.*, p 293: “Efrenc tâifesi çok kumaş getirüb bilâd-i İslâmiyye’den yapığ ve tiftik ve mazı ve şap gibi şeyler alub sefîne ile memlû Esedî altunu İzmir ve Payas ve Sayda ve İskenderiye iskelelerinde boşaldub etrâf-i memâlike tevzi’ olunur. Ammâ Moskov diyârından gelen samur ve sâir envâ-i zi-kıymet kürklere verilen akçayı ol melâin memâlik-i İslâmiyye’nin metâ’ına sarfetmezler”.

<sup>110</sup> Naîmâ, *ibid.*, p 293-294: “Kezâlik Hind metâ’larına bu kadar hazîne, emvâl gider, Hindliler memâlik-i Osmâniyye’den birşey almazlar. Bunlardan gümrük alınmak fâidesi zımında olan zarar-

### Dutch Trade in Aleppo

The Dutch merchants achieved relatively less impressive progress in the Aleppo trade, where the main commercial item was Persian raw silk.<sup>111</sup> In early 17<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch were only recently beginning to challenge the trading powers of the Levant. For instance, until 1599, there was no direct contact between the Dutch entrepot and the commercial centers of the Levant. Cotton from Cyprus, mohair yarn from Ankara, Ionian currants, and Near Eastern raw silk reached Amsterdam in Dutch vessels in 1590s, but the ships were loaded at Venice and the goods were consigned by Venetian merchants.<sup>112</sup> In 1599 the English ambassador Henry Lello reported to Sir Robert Cecil his worries about the commercial activities of the Dutch in the Levant, but for the time being, he had seen no danger to prohibit them.<sup>113</sup>

The Dutch negligence of Aleppo can be explained with the lack of Dutch manufacturing for fine goods. The Dutch produced no fine or medium quality woolen cloth, the most demanded item in the Ottoman markets. The Venetians in the Levant held the trade of clothes, made from Spanish wool. With their cheaper woolen cloths, the English were trying to undermine the commercial position of the Venetians. The Dutch, on the other hand, possessed no textile product, which was sold in the Levant and were forced to affect their purchases at Aleppo and elsewhere with Spanish silver.<sup>114</sup> The lower quality of the Dutch clothes was indicated in the joint petition of the French and Venetian ambassadors to the Sultan, when they heard Haga came to achieve grant of the Dutch capitulations, in 1612.<sup>115</sup>

The Levant merchants of Amsterdam were aware of the fact that the silk trade in Aleppo was predominantly in the hands of the Venetians and the French.<sup>116</sup> The Dutch recognized that it would be very difficult to capture the mastery of the Levant trade from the Venetians and the French. France and Italy, with their more developed silk industries, had the advantage of a greater domestic demand for raw silk than the Dutch.

The Dutch world trade supremacy can be classified in two phases:

- ✓ Phase One: 150 – 1609
- ✓ Phase Two: 1609 – 1621

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*ma'neviye değmez. İradları çok, bilâd-i âhara adem-i ihtiyaçla masrafları yok menzilesinde olmağla dünyanın malt Hind'de ve kahvesi sebebiyle Yemen'de cem' olub mütemevvilleri Karun'a mu'adil olmuşlardır"; İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, ibid., p 692; H. İnalçık, ibid., p 272.*

<sup>111</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 99.

<sup>112</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 54.

<sup>113</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 169: "The Flemmings marchants doe beginne to trade into these countreyes, which will cleane subvert ours, although it be now but little worth, yet seing there in noe meanes to prohibit them."

<sup>114</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 55-56.

<sup>115</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 189: "Ve çuka getirdiklerinde küllî zarar olduğu dahi bâis budur ki Flandra'nın çukası eyü çuka değil. Selânik ve Edirne misli olub lâkin şafakı bir mîkdâr ziyâde olmağla herkes Frengî çukadır deyu anlara düşüb Selânik ve Edirne'nin re'âyâsı sebab-i ma'îşetleri ve kâr ü kisbleri munkati' olub tüccar-i harbîye sebab-i kuvvet-i salâbet ve pâdişahın re'âyâsınca bâis-i za'af ve inhizâm olduğu hod ma'lûm-i şerîfdir".

<sup>116</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 99.

The Twelve Years Truce was the turning point for Dutch hegemony in the world trade. From 1590 to 1609, the Dutch shipbuilding industry played the decisive role in Dutch supremacy. The *fluits* or flyboat, developed in the 1590s, built to suit the bulk trades of the relatively safe waters of the Northern Europe, could sacrifice speed, maneuverability and defense to maximum cargo and space and easy handling, and therefore cheaply operated by small crews. They were also cheap to build, because they were simple.<sup>117</sup> The industrial superiority of the Dutch in ship-building was confessed by the Venetian and French ambassadors in their joint petition to the Sultan in 1612.<sup>118</sup>

Combined with the militarily and strategical advantageous position of the United Provinces after 1590, the Dutch merchants began to invade the markets all over the world. When the Spanish army of Flanders under the command of Farnese marched into France to intervene in the Civil War in France, leaving only skeleton forces to face the Dutch troops, the Dutch launched first full scale offensive in 1591. In seven years, the United Provinces had not only secured and doubled its territories, but had emerged as a European great power in terms of its military and naval strength.<sup>119</sup>

During the first phase of development (from 1590 to 1609), the Dutch role in the rich trades of the Mediterranean had been greatly confined to supplying linen, *says*, and Russian luxury good of furs, caviar, and leather to Italy. In the Levant, however, the Dutch enterprise had been marginal and considerably less significant than that of the English. In this period, the Dutch lacked the textiles and spices needed for a wider role.<sup>120</sup> Because, for centuries, spices had been the major element in determining the balance of commercial power in the Mediterranean. In Northern Europe, the Dutch merchants who purchased from Lisbon, were dominant as early as 1590s. But, in the Mediterranean, it was still the Genoese, buying at Lisbon, and the Venetians, buying at Aleppo, dominated the markets.<sup>121</sup>

According to the list of the 85 Dutch ships, which came to Venice during the 16 months period from September 1615 to December 1616, and registered by the Dutch consul there, two of them carried cotton from Cyprus, another two from Istanbul carried wools and yarns, two from Tunisia with hides, wool, and amber, one from Algeria with raw silk.

In the second phase from 1609 to 1621, the Dutch merchants displaced the English, and the predominance of the Italians and French in the Mediterranean. In this period, the share of the English merchants in the Levant trade suddenly slumped under the impact of the Dutch. Because, the English could not compete with Dutch shipping,

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<sup>117</sup> Ralph Davis, *The Rise of Atlantic Economies*, (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press. 1984) p 181.

<sup>118</sup> Supp Turc 118, document 189: "*sanatları ise gemicilikdir. Fakirler iken mahall-i merkümü kereste yeri alub hezâr gemiler yapmağa ve sanatları olmağla nice gemiler peydâ edüb mürûr ve ubûr eyleyen tüccar tâifesinin emvâl-i erzakları ..... ve gâret etmeleri [ile] mün'im ve ashâb-i mâl olmuşlardır*".

<sup>119</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 40.

<sup>120</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 100.

<sup>121</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 56.



their cheap freight rates, their access to Spanish silver, their range of commodities offered, or their superiority in the distribution of pepper and spices. Nevertheless, the English eclipse would be brief and would end in 1621.<sup>122</sup>

During phase two, the Dutch had rapidly expanded their commerce with the entire Mediterranean world from the Straits to Aleppo. Lower shipping charges, access to Iberian fine goods and silver, and mastery of the spice trade had provided the Dutch to develop in the Mediterranean trade at the expense of the Venetians, French and English.<sup>123</sup>

### Directors of the Dutch Levant Trade

By 1620, the Dutch commercial activity in the Mediterranean achieved an overwhelming ascendancy. However, in 1621, the flourishing phase of Dutch activities in the end came to an abrupt end. The Dutch trade with Algeria collapsed. The loss of access to Iberian peninsula, the doubling of Dutch freight charges for voyages to Italy within a matter of months, and the Genoese policy of discouraging contact under the Spanish pressure depressed all sections of Dutch Mediterranean trade.<sup>124</sup>

In 1623, Haga reported to the States General that all the subsidiary branches of the Dutch Levant trade had declined, and Dutch commerce with Alexandria, Cairo, Smyrna, and Istanbul was under complete ruin. Furthermore, Dutch trade in Egypt and Palestine ceased.<sup>125</sup> If immediate measures were not taken, the decline in the volume of Dutch trade in the Levant would continue. It was also clear that rather than individual efforts, an organized and central attempt was necessary to revive the trade in the Levant.

Under these circumstances, the Amsterdam merchant elite appealed to the States of Holland in 1625 to request urgent assistance. In their petition, the merchants stated that because of the war with the king of Spain on the one hand, and the charters granted to East and West India Companies (V.O.C. and W.I.C.) on the other, trade with the Levant declined. "As a result of the decline of the naval traffic to Italy, the trade with the Ottoman ports also went down, except for a few locations", the merchants indicated.<sup>126</sup>

Taking into account the dispatch of Haga, and the appeal of the Amsterdam merchant elite, the States General set up the organization of the Dutch Levant trade, on 25

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<sup>122</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 101.

<sup>123</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 150.

<sup>124</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 150.

<sup>125</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 498: "waerdoor de traffijcquen van onse natie op Alexandria, Gran Cayro, Smirna, ende Constantinopolen t'eenemaal geruïneert zijn geworden, sulcx dat ick sinder twee jaeren herwaerts van alle deselvige plaetsen geene rechten en heb genoten. ... Wat nu aengaet de laster van de protectie van der landen ondersaten, ick moet alomme in Smirna, Scio, Patras ende verscheyden andere havens, soe van Morae als Archipelago de consuls, onderhouden ende de Nederlantsche schippers ende comysen, voor alle andere vreemde natien of vrachten vaerende, doen protecteren, sonder daervan een penninck tot subsidie van de onkosten te genieten".

June 1625, “*Directeuren van den Levantschen Handel ende de Navigatie op de Middellandsche Zee*” (Directors of the Levant Trade and of Navigation to the Mediterranean),<sup>127</sup> to reside in Amsterdam. The Directors of the Levant Trade would act not as a company with a monopoly, but as a board of control and advice.<sup>128</sup> The Directorate would act as the representative body of the Dutch commerce in the Mediterranean. Among its main tasks was correspondence with the States’ ambassador at the Porte and the Dutch consuls in various ports of the Levant and Barbary.

The Dutch Levant Directorate was not established as an organization of a commercial company as the English Levant Company or the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to impose a monopoly over trade in the Levant. The Directorate conducted no trade in the Levant on its own behalf. It functioned, rather, as a bridge between the government and the merchants to keep up the network of Dutch consulates in the Mediterranean. Its basic mission was to act as a political and administrative platform for the elite merchants who dominated the Dutch trade in the Mediterranean. The Directors had a considerable influence on Dutch foreign policy as well. For this purpose, they maintained an agent at the Porte.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, according to Niels Steensgaard, even though the Directorate appears from the correspondence that it fulfilled an important task as a coordinating link between the various parties, the Directorate always remained a loose organization.<sup>130</sup>

The commercial volume of the Dutch trade could not fluctuate upwards soon by this measure. Venetian merchants began to cover their losses in the Levant markets. The Thirty Years War and the change in the trade routes inland Europe played a decisive role at this shift. Before 1625, an important portion of the Levant goods imported to the Netherlands, especially cotton from Cyprus, and Egypt, had been re-exported up the Rhine to Frankfurt, Ulm, and other German textile towns. But, then, the flow of cotton to the German markets was shifted to its pre-1609 route, being shipped to Venice by naval vessels, and then re-exported to Germany via overland.<sup>131</sup> So, from 1625 onwards, the Venetians recovered their ground in Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia. Together with England, the Venetians shared the commercial supremacy in the Levant with the English from 1621 to mid 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>126</sup> Heeringa, *ibid.*, p 504-505: “*Verthoonen in aller ghedienstigheyd de cooplyuden, inwoonders der stede van Aemsteldamme, die de volghende requeste ondergeteekent hebben, hoe dat sij 't sederteenighe jaren herwaerts, eensdeels door de oorloghen, die dese landen met den coningh van Spagnien voeren, andersdeels door de vergunde octroyen aen de Oost - ende West - Indische compagniën, sich versterken ende ontbloom vinden van allen handelighen, commerciën ende trafiquen, uytghenomen op de plaetsen van 't vastelande ende eylanden, in de Middellandse zee ende in de Archipelago ligghende, van welcke dan noch, alsoo de handel op Italiën heel slecht valt, de traffeluxe ende voornaemste is de negotiatie op Aleppo in Soria*”.

<sup>127</sup> B. Ari, *ibid.*, p 18.

<sup>128</sup> Bosscha Erdbrink, *Ottoman-Dutch Relations*, p 10.

<sup>129</sup> A. De Groot, *ibid.*, p 235.

<sup>130</sup> N. Steensgaard, *ibid.*, p 48.

<sup>131</sup> J. Israel, *ibid.*, p 152.

The Ottoman commercial policy of open-door and free import for “economy of plenty” in its domestic markets resulted with drastic changes in the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Together with already existing Venetians, French, and English as the major commercial actors, the involvement of the Dutch in the Levant converted the nature of the Ottoman production from manufacture to supplier of raw materials to the Western merchants. There were already no export-oriented or organized international manufacturers in the Ottoman local markets. The Western fabrics, particularly woolen clothes in high volumes flooded the Ottoman markets. The Ottoman local producers became export-oriented raw materials suppliers, particularly silk (Iranian and domestic production), cotton, mohair yarn (from Ankara), and wool. The treasury was happy with the amount of customs duties flowing from European merchants’ commercial activities in its territories. The treasurer was only concerned with the amount of the cash collected for the treasury, rather than the balance of payments, nor foreign trade deficits. In those days, the Ottoman authorities did not perceive the economy in the mentality of mercantile considerations, but in the requirements of economy of plenty. The basic difference between the Ottomans and mercantilists was that in the West a nation’s economy was conceived globally like that of a corporation, with attention to the aggregate balance in favor of the country.<sup>132</sup>

For the payment of the raw materials, the foreign merchants needed cash. The more raw materials exported, the more precious metals penetrated into the Ottoman markets. Not only the Dutch, but also the English, the French, and the Venetian merchants transported Dutch Lion dollars (*leeuwendaalders*, in Dutch, and *Esedi Gurus* in the Ottoman documents) in huge amounts. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the circulation of Lion dollars in the Ottoman markets was so wide that the Ottoman authorities had to issue official decrees settle the parity of the Lion dollars vis-à-vis the Ottoman Piastres. The flow of precious metals also affected the depreciation of its currency in the Netherlands. Actually, the Dutch experienced monetary troubles endemic throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and before the reforms of the ‘80s and ‘90s, were unable to prevent the deterioration of their own currency. The precious metals, which flowed into Amsterdam so freely and briskly, flowed out again as freely and nearly as briskly.<sup>133</sup>

In the export of precious metals to the other countries, the Exchange Bank of Amsterdam was functional. Founded in 1609 as an exchange bank, and administered under the supervision of the city, until 1681, its activities were confined to exchange and deposit banking. At its foundation, the bank had been required to carry on its business in the best and heaviest coins at their legal values. Since much of the currency was of foreign origin and commonly of inferior weight or fineness, the bank money had become almost wholly a money of account. Certain of the old heavy coins, however, had achieved popularity in other lands and extensively exported by merchants for

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<sup>132</sup> Halil İnalçık, *An Economic and social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 49.

<sup>133</sup> Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1950) p 51.

use in trade. The Lion dollars of Holland was highly prized in the scales of the Levant.<sup>134</sup>

### Conclusion

The importance of Dutch Levant trade declined towards the end of the first quarter of the Seventeenth century. It was inevitable because of the shift of the major trade routes from Levant to the Atlantic. The monopoly of the Dutch East India Company over spice trade ruined the old spice route. From then onwards, the Levant became only a supplier of raw materials to the European markets. The importance of the Levant was not totally disappeared, but it was no more on the transit trade routes. The Levant was still an important and enormous market for the clothes, spices, and luxurious items, and a supplier of raw materials. The Ottoman army provided strategical war materials from Amsterdam and England. Gunpowder, lead, steel, tin was basically purchased from these two Northern countries.

The documents, which were evaluated in this article, provided us detailed information about the background of granting comprehensive capitulations. The previous French and English capitulations were only known by the dispatches of the Venetian bailos, while in this case, the development of the events, the negotiations, the grant of capitulations, and afterwards could be followed from Ottoman, Dutch, English and Venetian archival materials.

Thanks to the register book of Haga, which include all the official and personal correspondence of the Sultan, the States General, the Viziers, and even Şeyhülislam, we could obtain information in dept. When supported by the dispatches of Venetian bailos from all over the European capitals, and the archival documents from the Dutch capital, we are to get an overall opinion about the Dutch capitulations. Especially the letters of the Ottoman local authorities to the Porte are very important to observe the approaches of Ottoman officials vis-à-vis granting of capitulations under new conditions.

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<sup>134</sup> Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, p 49.

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