

OTTOMAN INTERVENTION IN TRIPOLI (1835) AND THE QUESTION OF  
OTTOMAN IMPERIALISM IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

by  
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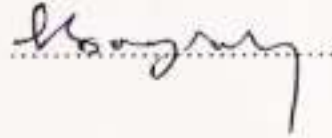
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OTTOMAN IMPERIALISM IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a study of the relationship between the Ottoman central administration and North African periphery, and more specifically, Tripoli in the first half of the 19th century. The region was ruled by a local dynasty of Anatolian origin, Karamanlıs, virtually independent from the Sublime Porte for more than a century. After the outbreak of the unremedied internal upheavals in the 1830s, Ottoman center took the initiative to eliminate the ruling dynasty, thus stabilizing the region in 1835. The stability of the region was a top priority because of the Ottomans' increased suspicion of further European encroachment after the French aggression in Algeria. Nonetheless, there were also other competitors preying on the Tripolitan territory, thus Ottoman action could be best understood as active participation in an inter-imperial competition. The process, however, shows us that the establishment of the central authority was the last resort. Before coming to that point, Ottomans worked hard to ensure a noise-free continuation of the Karamanlı Dynasty. The last part of the study attempts to make sense of Ottoman presence in the Tripoli after the intervention. It demonstrates that some elements of the so-called Ottoman orientalist attitude that came about in the late 19th century were taking root earlier. Nonetheless, it finds the use the terms such as colonialism and even orientalism problematic because the Ottoman imperial presence in Tripoli had never been officially defined as colonialism. Alternatively, the term "imperial repertoires of power" is utilized in accounting for the center-periphery relations in the period in question.

## ÖZET

### TRABLUSGARP'A OSMANLI MÜDAHELESİ VE 19. YY'DA OSMANLI EMPERYALİZMİ TARTIŞMASI

İBRAHİM KILIÇASLAN

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuzey Afrikada Osmanlılar, Trablusgarp, Karamanlı Hanedanı,  
Osmanlı Müdahalesi, Osmanlı Emperyalizmi

Bu çalışma 19. Yüzyıl'ın ilk yarısında Osmanlı merkezi yönetimi ile Garp Ocakları arasında cari olan merkez-çevre ilişkisini daha ziyade Trablusgarp Ocağı çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Trablusgarp Ocağı her ne kadar Osmanlı toprağı gibi gözüke de 18. Yüzyıl boyunca yerel bir hanedan olan Karamanlı ailesi tarafından merkezden neredeyse tamamen bağımsız bir şekilde yönetilmiştir. Ancak 1830'lu yılların başında bu hanedan bir yönetim krizinin içinde boğulmaya başlamış ve bölge şiddeti gittikçe artan bir iç karışıklık dönemine girmiştir. Osmanlı merkezi yönetimi öncelikle Karamanlı hanedanının devamını sağlayarak bölgeyi stabilize etmeye çalışmış, bunda başarısız olunca ise hanedanı 1835'in mayıs ayında yönetimden indirip merkezden vali göndererek bölgeyi olası bir dış işgale karşı güvence altına almıştır. Gerçekten de devletlerarası güvenlik endişeleri özellikle Cezayir'in işgali sonrasında artan Fransız etkinliği sebebiyle oldukça artmıştı. Diğer taraftan Fransızlar Kuzey Afrika'da genişleme arzusunda olan tek güç de değildi. Dolayısıyla 1830 ile 1835 yılları arasında Osmanlı bürokratları ve donanma ehlinin bölgedeki aktiviteleri devletlerarası bir güç mücadelesinde aktör olma çabası olarak okunmalıdır ki Trablusgarp özelinde bu mücadeleden galip çıkılmıştır. Çalışmanın son kısmında ise Osmanlı müdahalesinden sonra Trablusgarp'taki Osmanlı varlığı sorgulanmıştır. Literatürde 19. Yüzyılın sonlarında ortaya çıktığı savunulan Osmanlı oryantalist tavrının daha erken dönemde de emarelerinin var olduğu ortaya konulsa da bu tavrın kavramsallaştırılmasında oryantalizm ve kolonyalizm gibi kavramların kullanılması sorunlu görülmüştür. Çünkü Osmanlı Merkezi çeperlerindeki varlığını resmi olarak hiçbir zaman bu şekilde tanımlamamıştır. Bunun yerine daha esnek bir kavram olan “güç repertuarı” kavramı önerilmiştir.

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The environment Sabancı History Program provides for its students is unique and enriching thanks to the great scholars such as Halil Berktaş, Tülay Artan, Ferenc Csirkés, and Ayşe Ozil. World historical conceptualizations, the extreme necessity to pay attention to minute details, the intricacies of the Islamic history and Orientalist tradition, first-hand experience of the main texts of western historiographical tradition would have remained largely unknown to me unless I hadn't been lucky enough to attend their insightful courses. I also wish to extend my thanks to Akşin Somel who not only familiarized me with the language of 19th century Ottoman bureaucracy in archival documents but also thoroughly read my thesis and provided invaluable criticisms for the betterment of the text. Fatih Bayram also made vital criticism in this respect as the third member of the thesis defense jury.

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My academic journey has started at the Boğaziçi University where I had the privilege of getting educated by outstanding scholars. Apart from that, though, I acquainted five

friends of a lifetime, Ahmet Melik Aksoy, Arif Erbil, Hakan Cengiz, Kenan Arıkdoğan and Ömer Faruk İlgezdi who in every step of the way not only encouraged me to become a better student but also provided a constant opportunity of having lively intellectual discussions. It was also in Boğaziçi University that I met Zahit Atçıl for whose undying support, generosity in sharing his knowledge, intellectual encouragement and the moments of joy we experienced together I need to express extreme gratitude. If he would not be there for me and my friends in Boğaziçi, we wouldn't come to notice the immense spiritual satisfaction of being a mentor and teacher to younger generations that we see in his eyes when he talked to young people around him. On a similar line, I owe huge thanks to Davut Uğurlu and Abdülhamit Kırmızı for the initial push they have given to my decision to pursue a university degree in history.

Other than archival documents, I have written this thesis using sources I located in three distinguished libraries; namely, Sabancı Information Center, ISAM and Boğaziçi University Aptullah Kuran Library. Having the privilege of benefitting from these treasures of knowledge is something I hold very dear. The staff of all these libraries was welcoming and helped me in ways I would not finish enumerating. However, I especially would like to thank Bahadır Barut for his patience when I repeatedly returned the books that arrived through the inter-library loan system late on schedule. He saved my research.

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she has my eternal respect. Lastly, it goes without saying that all the mistakes, discrepancies and flaw that may be found in this study are mine and mine alone.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COA: Presidential Ottoman Archive

C. DH: *Muallim Cevdet* Collection, *Dâhiliye*

C.HR *Muallim Cevdet* Collection, *Hâriciye*

İ.MSM: *Mesâil-i Mühimme İrâdeleri* Collection

İÜ NEK: Istanbul University Rare Books Library

## 1.INTRODUCTION

Historiography of the 18th Century Ottoman Empire works with the conception that the period in question was distinctly marked by a gradually developing localization of political power and its subsequent hereditation in some of the localities across the Empire.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, this trend had reached its epitome at the turn of the nineteenth century, a tide only to be reversed by the centralizing policies of Ottoman center starting from the reign of Mahmud II (Zürcher 2004, 21). It must be stated that these observations are very well-grounded in the historical realities of the period. However, this generalization should not lead us to overlook the regional varieties in the alignments of power because a quick survey of the imperial domains demonstrates that power relations within the Ottoman Empire of the 18th Century were far more complicated, each region having a special arrangement in terms of political authority, be that realized through intentional policy-making or have risen circumstantially. Such awareness is crucial because it is against the background of these regional differences that a historian of the 19th Century Ottoman Empire could understand the process of centralization with its failures and successes.

Starting from an extremely weak position, Mahmud II and the central government in Istanbul started to regain control of the imperial domains after the war with the Russian Empire was concluded in 1812. It took nearly a decade to subdue the local notables across Anatolia and Rumelia except for the Kurdish Emirates in Eastern Anatolia. A variety of methods was used during the process. At times Mahmud II was granting titles to win over loyalty or giving large sums of money out of his benevolence, at others he played upon the rivalries between the notables (Zürcher 2004, 29-30). Thus far, the process was

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<sup>1</sup> For a classic example of this approach see (McGowan 1994); For a more recent critical perspective, see: Hathaway, 2004); Ali Yaycıoğlu has recently offered a revisionist reading of the late 18th and early 19th century in the context of the Age of Revolutions, see: (Yaycıoğlu 2016). For a shorter version of his interpretation, see: (Yaycıoğlu 2011)

relatively peaceful. Yet, exactly at this moment, regional differences in the alignments of power played into the unfolding of events. In places where centrifugal forces did not feel an obligation to put up with the demands of Istanbul, the central government was compelled to resort to the use of coercive power and violence to redefine center-periphery relations. For example, in Bosnia, the dissidents found a champion in the person of Hüseyin Kapudan, who acted as *de facto* ruler of the province for a year before Ottomans finally suppressed his rebellion in 1832 and put him under house arrest in Istanbul. However, he continued to communicate with Bosnian notables to play his part in stirring rebellion until he died in 1834. (Turhan 2014, 461, 467, 469-470). Even though Reşid Mehmed Pasha's extraordinary measures has broken the power of local families in Balkans Albania continued to be a center of opposition and 1840s witnessed the outbreak of several rebellions (Atabaş 2017, 3). At the other end of the Empire, Mamluks of Baghdad and Jalili family of Mosul remained resilient up until the 1831 and 1834, respectively.<sup>[2]</sup> Tuzcuoğulları also resisted in three phases before eventually being put down in 1834 (Aktepe 1953). At all these instances Ottomans used coercive methods and succeeded in crushing the local power base. However, it was not all that smooth in other regions. When Ali of Tepelene's rebellion was subdued, the power vacuum was filled by the Greeks seeking independence from the Sublime Porte.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Mehmet Ali of Egypt and his successors had practically managed to carve a state of their own in the prosperous province of Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of Ottoman provinces in North Africa and especially in Tripoli, it is rather imperative to ask how far was the political power centralized in the hands of the bureaucrats in Istanbul even before the process of decentralization had concurrently taken roots across the imperial domains in the 18th Century? Probably, not too far. Did Ottomans ever establish direct control over these territories and its inhabitants? The answer is a strict no. Even in the 16th century when Ottoman Empire was at the zenith of its power and prestige, the north African provinces and their infamous sailor/pirates were

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<sup>2</sup> Jalili family's gradual rise to political prominence and their eventual defeat to Ottoman centralization policy is best studied in (Khoury, 1997). For the downfall of Mamluks of Baghdad and subsequent integration of the province into central government's hold, see: (Ceylan 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Ali Pasha's rule in Balkans has been a relatively popular subject but most recently Katherine Flemming revisited the subject, see: (Flemming, 2014). In the Turkish language, there are also valuable studies focusing on his clash with centralization policies of Mahmud II, see for example: (Fezlioğlu 2017).

<sup>4</sup> For Egypt's rise to international prominence under Mehmet Ali Pasha, see: (Fahmy 1997). For one of the best analysis of his bitter rivalry with Mahmud II in 1831-1841, see: (Kutluoğlu 1998).

cooperating with the Ottoman center, without being formally incorporated by it.<sup>5</sup> Yet again, 17th and 18th centuries meant a radical change for these regions as well. In Tunisia, Muradi dynasty accumulated a vast amount of power, consequently securing a hereditary governorship after 1631. After a brief attempt to formally integrate the Tunisian Province into the Istanbul's hold on the part of Ahmed III, Huseynid family had settled as hereditary governors of Tunisia replacing Muradis (Abun-Nasr 1987, 172-173). Similarly, in 1711, Karamanlı Ahmed Bey, a member of the *Kuloğlu* class,<sup>6</sup> established his family as hereditary governors.<sup>7</sup> Each of these provinces had virtually become independent from Istanbul not only in terms of their domestic policy but also in dictating their own foreign policy priorities vis-à-vis European states and the United States of America. The localization and hereditation of political power went hand in hand in these regions before nearly anywhere else in the vast territories Ottoman rule extended. To look at the following anecdote would enlighten the extent of the disparity between the Ottoman capital and the provinces in North Africa.

In the 1860s, Mustafa Aşir Efendi was appointed as the judge of Tripoli by Ottoman authorities in Istanbul. It was a fortunate moment, indeed, because nobody involved would have guessed that it would lead to the chain of events which ended up with his son Mehmed Nehicüddin Efendi having translated and expanded upon a crucial book on the history of the province of Tripoli; "*Tarih-i Ibn Galbun Der Beyan-ı Trablusgarb.*" He managed to complete his work by 1864 and it was published by the print house *Ceride-i Havadis* later in the 1867 (Nehicüddin Efendi and Hasan Sâfi 2013, vi). Approximately thirty years after Ottoman armed intervention in 1835 and establishment of the agents of the central government in the Tripoli, Nehicüddin Efendi, the writer of a first-ever dedicated history book on its subject, remarks that "the true particulars of Tripoli are unknown to us. Even though it is possible to gather bits and pieces of information from

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<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the Ottoman Empire's flexible rule in North Africa is not always thoroughly appreciated. There is an inclination especially in Turkish academia to see the nature of Ottoman rule as effectively centralized even in these regions. In fact, the Ottoman Empire was operating in different levels of integration and forms of sovereignty in different regions. See for an excellent discussion on limits of Ottoman power in frontier regions: (Agoston 2003). In the case of Ottoman North Africa, Emrah Safa Gürkan developed the most advanced analysis concerning center-periphery relations, see: (Gürkan 2018).

<sup>6</sup> *Kuloğlu* is the name of the tax-exempt political elite in the North African provinces. They are a mixture of Janissaries coming from imperial heartlands with local women. At first, *Kuloğlu* class was not allowed to participate in politics of the region and was only expected to offer military service to the provincial administrator. However, as of the 18th century, their desire to take part in government bore fruit and they seized power concurrently all over the Maghreb.

<sup>7</sup> Karamanlı Ahmed's rise to political power and the subsequent power struggle in Tripoli leading to the recognition he got from Ahmed III in 1722 can be easily followed in (Dearden 1976, 27-41).

various histories, all historians sufficed with passing on ancient wisdom ..... such weak and little information can't be helpful in forming a definitive opinion.”<sup>8</sup> These are telling, indeed, in terms of understanding the Ottoman central government's political involvement with the region. What is more striking would arrive a couple of pages after these opening remarks when Nehicüddin Efendi criticizes the writer of the original text of being irrational in accounting for the initial Ottoman conquest of Tripoli in 1551. Followingly, he states that “as these events pertain to the history of Istanbul, it seems convenient to summarize the truth of the matter from our histories.”<sup>9</sup> Surprisingly, here we see a 19th century Ottoman *ulema* who clearly makes an us/them distinction between Tripolitania and Istanbul.

In accordance with his observation, during my research for the writing of this thesis, it came to my attention that almost none of the official court historians of the period in question gives detailed accounts of what was happening in the North African provinces of the Ottoman Empire except for the invasion of Algeria by the French.<sup>10</sup> Of course, it doesn't mean that the Ottoman central government was completely indifferent to these regions. Official communication was continuing between Istanbul and the pashas of Tripoli and there is a considerable amount of information in the *Mühimme* registers that would help us understand the relations between Tripoli and Ottoman Capital.<sup>11</sup> However, tracing intimately the local history of the region from these records is rather problematic. Consequently, even a basic search in the Ottoman archives reveals that the documents produced after the 1830s outnumber nearly all the preceding centuries and this is not without a reason: the establishment of Ottoman central control over the province in 1835.

A letter of reigning Yusuf Pasha arrived at the Sublime Porte in January 1833 (Taş 2016, 388).<sup>12</sup> It was containing some troubling news, especially in the light of recent French

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<sup>8</sup> Translation is mine. For the original Turkish see: (Nehicüddin Efendi & Hasan Safi, 5). “... Trablusgarp'ın tefasil-i hakikiyyesi bizce meçhul olup filvaki bazı tarihlerden malumat-ı cüziyye alınmakta ise de .... öyle ahbar-ı zaife ve kalileden kanaat-i kafiye hasıl olamayacağından ....”

<sup>9</sup> Translation is mine. For original Turkish see: (Nehicüddin Efendi & Hasan Safi, 19). “Mamafih şu keyfiyet İstanbul vekayii olduğundan bizim tarihlerden hakikat-i halin ihtisaren beyanı münasip görülmüştür.”

<sup>10</sup> Even in this occasion, Ottoman court historians focus on how the Ottoman center diplomatically reacted to the French invasion of Algeria and they do not dwell much on socio-economic or political issues of the Algerian province itself. An obvious example is Ahmet Lütfi Efendi. See especially (Ahmet Lütfi 1999, 519-526, 899-908).

<sup>11</sup> Abdullah Erdem Taş uses *Mühimme* registers dating back to the 18th century to understand the dynamics of Ottoman Center-Tripolitan periphery, see: (Taş 2016).

<sup>12</sup> For the original of the letter see Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (Hereafter COA), HAT.366.20242-D. 1248/1832-1833.

aggression on Ottoman soil in North Africa. Yusuf Pasha was reporting the recent developments in the Tripoli. His country was in serious disarray due to the actions of the rebellious alliance gathered around his grandson Mehmed. He included in his letter that he abdicated from his position in favor of his son, Ali, and requested from the Sublime Porte to recognize him as his successor. Mahmud II's immediate circle at the time decided to take their time before granting what Yusuf Pasha had wanted and sent Mehmed Şakir Efendi to Tripoli to investigate the situation. Eventually, in May 1835, Ottoman central government dispatched a naval force composed of twenty-two ships manned by seven thousand trained soldiers under the command of Mustafa Necip Pasha. They had easily succeeded in removing the Karamanlı dynasty from power and deported most of the family members to Istanbul. Necip Pasha and his successors were now tasked with building up a formal centralized Ottoman province (Ibrahim, 1982, 1). Accordingly, soldiers and bureaucrats needed to run this distant province were those who responsible for the piles of documents produced after 1835 and stored in the Ottoman Archives and Dar al-Mahfuzat al-Tarihiyye in today's Libya.

This thesis sets out to understand and problematize the dynamics of the Ottoman Intervention in Tripoli in 1835. Who were the actors behind this intervention? What kind of decision-making processes were carried out? What were Ottomans' principal motivations in intervening such a distant province with which only seaborne communication and travel were possible at the time? Were they just following an abstract notion of state-centralization or in pursuit of solving more practical concerns? Similarly, what kind of significance does this development bear in the context of world politics? I believe not only in the fact that the pursuit of these questions allows us to nuance our understanding of the 19th century Ottoman policy-making but it also gives us an opportunity to integrate the Ottoman Empire to the study of 19th century empires, a field in which Ottoman Empire was intentionally excluded for a long time as the 'Sick Man of Europe.'<sup>13</sup> In this respect, it also becomes crucial to question the validity of the arguments of some European observers of the time and subsequent scholars who have addressed the

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<sup>13</sup> The sick man of Europe is first termed by Tsar Nicholas in a conversation with the British ambassador to St. Petersburg Sir G.H. Seymour in 1853 to describe the alleged weakness of the Ottoman Empire. His description proved to be quite popular such that the subsequent scholarship largely adopted this as an analytical tool when trying to account for the Eastern Question. For Nicholas's conversation with the ambassador and a wonderful examination of the term's journey in Russian political culture see: (Taki, 2016, 129-167). For a critique of its historiographical burden see: (Khoury and Kennedy 2007, 233)



Ottoman intervention as an act of establishing an overseas colony.<sup>14</sup> Is such a claim sustainable in light of historical evidence or not?

These are the questions that I seek to address in this thesis. It goes without saying that some of them had already been asked and answered by previous scholars. For the moment, therefore, let me embark upon a review of the historiography of the region to demonstrate how far the lack of information Nehicüddin Efendi complains about had gradually been tackled within the following centuries by the international scholarly community and how does this thesis fit into the picture. In my analysis of the relevant literature, I will focus on the following: (1) the intellectual and socio-political context of the study itself (2) the kind of source material the study under scrutiny utilizes and its implications for its overall arguments; (3) and last but not least its examination and interpretation of the Ottoman intervention in 1835. Following the critical survey of the literature, I will provide an outline of the chapters where the contentions and arguments of the present thesis will be discussed.

The scholarly interest in Africa has not been well-developed in 19th Century Ottoman literati and 20th-century Turkish academia (Kavas 2013, 17-34, 28-29). Even though North Africa has been a subject of relatively wider interest, in the case of sub-Saharan Africa, the interest was far more limited. Unfortunately, Tripoli occupies much little space in this literature. Academic production of knowledge was, and to a large extent still is, at best sporadic. One may corroborate this just by looking at the number of manuscripts and published works written the 19th and early 20th century on the Tripoli at the catalogs of Turkish libraries.<sup>15</sup> After Nehicüddin Efendi published his expanded translation of Ibn Galbun's history in 1867, the interest in North Africa has faded away until the outbreak of Turco-Italian war in 1911 with the notable exceptions of Sadık Muayyed Azmzade's and Cami Baykurt's travel accounts.<sup>16</sup> Following Italian aggression, Mehmed Naci's

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<sup>14</sup> For the remarks of English Consul George Hanmer Warrington, see the quote Atabaş gives in (Atabaş 2017, 57) and for a French perspective in early 20th century see: (Marchand, 1908: 245-252).

<sup>15</sup> It doesn't exceed a dozen. See for a complete list: (Ahmet Kavas ed, 2013, 293-294).

<sup>16</sup> Cami Baykurt was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress when he was in imperial military school. Thanks to his oppositional views, his first official post was Fezzan, a place that is known for being an exile destination. Nevertheless, he developed a fondness for the region and became the MP of Fezzan in the Second Constitutional Period. He published his memoirs and travel accounts in 1908 (Cami Bey 1908). This Arabic script edition is later transcribed and republished. See: (Baykurt 2009). For detailed knowledge see: (Yılmaz 2018). Sadık Müeyyed's accounts of his official duties in Sahara were published in 1897 by Alem Matbaası (El-Müeyyed 1897). This travel account is also republished in Latin transcription see: (Bostan 2010).

*Trablusgarp Tarihi* appeared in the bookshelves in Cağaloğlu. Additionally, Avanzâde Mehmed Süleyman also started to publish his *Trablusgarp ve Devlet-i Aliyye-İtalya Vekâyi '-i Harbiyesi* as the Ottoman-Italian war was going on.<sup>17</sup> One may state that the Young Turks' era showed a more genuine interest in Ottoman Africa than the previous century.<sup>18</sup> However, as Italians successfully penetrated through the Ottoman defensive and turned the region into an Italian colony after the defeat of Ottoman-Sanusiya alliance, the charm surrounding the region slowly disappeared from the public sphere. On the other hand, the Ottoman state remained officially interested in the region and tried to help Sanusiya organize a front against the Italians during the Great War (Simon 1987, 229-232).

The foundation of the Turkish Republic in a drastically different ideological framework from that of the Ottoman Empire had some serious repercussions for the historiography of the 20th century. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, institutionally incorporated Turkish intellectuals and Turkish historians busied themselves with providing the new regime with an official vision of the Turkish national history. In an environment where the denial of Ottoman past was required to lay the ground for the new regime's legitimacy discourse, the former territories of the Empire were mostly left out from the scholarly attention of historians. Accordingly, the first attempt at accounting for the Ottoman rule in North Africa came outside of academia when Aziz Samih İlter published his important two volumes book respectively in 1936 and 1937.<sup>19</sup> It attempts to cover entire North Africa from sixteenth to twentieth centuries and in its vast coverage, the Tripoli was squeezed into the last seventy pages where İlter leans his back to Ibn Galbun, Hasan Safî and *Mühimme* registers (İlter 1937, 185-256).<sup>20</sup> He sticks to a descriptive approach in his chapter about the political history of Tripoli. Analytical reasoning and historical contextualization are rather weak. For example, it is hard to follow the dynamics of Ottoman decision-making and international situation of the time. Nonetheless, it must be stated that İlter's works have become a foundational reference work for future scholars. I

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<sup>17</sup> For information on the text and its publishing history see: (Küçükkefe 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Apart from these book size publications related to the province of Tripoli, numerous articles and small pamphlets were published during the Ottoman-Italian war in Tripoli. For a survey analysis of these publications see: (İlkbahar, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> The first volume was published one year before the second one by the same publishing house. See: (İlter 1936)

<sup>20</sup> See notes 1 and 2 in (İlter 1937, 219).

believe its value lies in the fact that he attempts to write a local history which does not only talk about the relations between the Ottoman center and Tripolitan periphery.

After İlder's work, the front has been silent for about three decades until Akdes Nimet Kurat wrote an article on American-North African Relations (Kurat 1964). Later, Ercüment Kuran and Abdurrahman Çaycı also approached North Africa from the perspective of diplomatic history, both using effectively Ottoman and French Archives. Kuran's work analyzed the Ottoman diplomatic reactions to the invasion of the province of Algeria in the context of the development of a modern ministry of foreign affairs. Therefore, it may as well be understood as a history of Ottoman modernization in the 19th century (Kuran 1957). For the purposes of this thesis, Çaycı's work on the Turkish-French competition in the Libyan Sahara occupies a special place. (Çaycı, 1995). He was probably the first historian who makes an attempt to situate the Ottoman Empire and its agents in the famous Scramble for Africa. He gives a special meaning to the Ottoman intervention in the Tripoli as it gave the Ottoman government in Istanbul a chance to declare the Libyan hinterland as its sphere of influence. He emphasizes that by making the Tripoli a formal part of the Empire, Ottomans have found an opportunity to safeguard the Muslims of Tripoli and Lake Chad basin from aggressive French and British colonial expansion. Of course, Çaycı's argument is only one side of the coin, but a shiny one indeed. In this context, one must note that Ottoman policy after the 1880s itself had some colonial aspects. In 2016, Çaycı's thread was followed by Mustafa Minawi in a book provokingly entitled as *Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and Hijaz*. In his thought-provoking conclusion, he urges historians of the nineteenth-century empires not to be blinded by the teleology of failure in recognizing the Ottoman Empire as an agent in the inter-imperial competition of the nineteenth century whose strategies of rule worth a comparative analysis (Minawi 2016, 142-143).

If there has been any surge in the field of African Studies in Turkey, it is after 2005. This was the date when the first congress on African Studies is organized. I take this as a turning point because the number of academics and academic publications related to Africa has significantly increased ever since this congress, not necessarily because of it. On the other hand, the very organizing of the Congress has a lot to do with the new political engagement the Republic of Turkey has gotten into with the African States who has a seat in the United Nations. Subsequently, the year 2005 was proclaimed as the African Year and ever since a lot of events were held in Turkey to promote African-

Turkish friendship. Nonetheless, it would be doing injustice to already existing academic circles interested in Ottoman presence in Africa if we solely give the credit for the stirred interest in African studies to the newly aroused political climate. One must cite the leading figures of these circles such as Ahmet Kavas and Zekeriya Kurşun. The number of publications has risen significantly thanks to scholarly associations established with the prerogatives of these scholars such as ORDAF and AFAM.<sup>21</sup> Even though these institutions are not directly funded by the Turkish government, it is still noteworthy that they appeared in a period when Turkey's foreign policy priorities have shifted towards an approach geared to strengthen the Turkish soft power across the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. Quite naturally perhaps, most of these studies are emphasizing the friendship and cooperation between the locals and Ottoman authorities along with Ottomans' role in postponing the intrusion of European imperialism into North and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>22</sup> Themselves being prolific historians on the subject, their efforts also paved the way of a new generation of historians who work on Ottoman Africa. Among them are Abdullah Erdem Taş and Muhammed Tandoğan.<sup>23</sup> Independently, Cemal Atabaş also produced an important Ph.D. thesis on the process of centralization in the province of Tripoli at Istanbul University (Atabaş 2017). They have one thing in common, a good command of Arabic and impeccable archival research, a combination that would result in a balanced understanding of center-periphery relations in the context of North African provinces.

The studies of Taş and Atabaş are of particular importance for our purposes here because each one of these authors has dealt with the history of Tripoli using primarily Ottoman documentation. Erdem Taş completed his study of Karamanlı Period in Tripoli in 2016. However, his title seems to humble the vast coverage of the thesis because the study includes a lengthy discussion of the political history of the Tripoli until the rise of Karamanlı dynasty and a very well researched discussion of the Ottoman intervention in 1835. When he contemplates on the challenges of writing a thesis on such a long time and the relative academic neglect, he rightly states that “the lack of general and descriptive studies makes it hard to carry out more analytical works.” However, he hopes that his

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<sup>21</sup> Ortadoğu ve Afrika Araştırmacıları Derneği (ORDAF) and Afrika Araştırmaları Merkezi (AFAM).

<sup>22</sup> For example, (Kavas, 2006) See for a similar stance: (Akyıldız and Kurşun 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Tandoğan published a book on the Tuareg tribes living in the Sahara and their relations with Sublime Porte. See: (Tandoğan, 2018).

study would serve as a starting point for future researchers who would take up the challenge and approach the history of the region from an analytical point of view. He also suggests the process of centralization following the Ottoman intervention as a possible venue of research for future scholars (Taş 2016, 434). His advice seems to be taken by Cemal Atabaş who has completed his Ph.D. thesis on this very subject. He is more analytical than Erdem Taş with regards to the larger meaning of Ottoman intervention in Tripoli which he examines as a spin-off from the centralizing policies of Sublime Porte (Atabaş 2017, 1-21). Even though both studies are really good examples in terms of the historians' attention to minute details and strict adherence to the primary sources, these are not in conversation with highly debated historiographical currents in the international scholarly community such as the comparative study of empires and post-colonial debates. For example, Erdem Taş detects that in the decision-making process, several reports from the Ottoman inspector in Tripoli, Mehmet Şakir Efendi, and a treaty written by Hassuna D'Ghies were taken into consideration. The latter included in the treaty a highly controversial word in its European rendering: the "civilization."<sup>24</sup> I believe that even the existence of a word with such baggage must be alarming because Hassune Efendi openly refers to the word's meaning in the European context. It brings us to the question of how far, Ottoman decision-makers appropriated a so-called 'civilizing mission' when they intervened in Tripoli? Unfortunately, no discussion ensues Taş's important finding. When Atabaş unveiled the correspondence of English Consul Hanmer George Warrington and see a clear reference to Ottoman intervention as an act of colonization that is doomed to fail because of the lack of resources, he also misses an opportunity to problematize the subject comparatively (Atabaş, 2017, 57). It may be the case that Warrington is an outsider to Ottoman mentality and decision-making and was importing concepts from his own political vocabulary, however, an elaboration of different strategies of power projection might be quite useful to think about empires comparatively, especially given the fact that a colonial discourse and self-presentation was eventually developed by Ottoman ruling elite in the late 19th century.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> It is extremely noteworthy that Hassune Efendi does not refer to what he means as "medeniyet" but specifically resorts to its European rendering as "sivilizasyon." For a discussion of the journey of "medeniyet" as a concept see: (Schäbler, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> The literature on Ottoman imperialism and Ottoman orientalism are constantly growing. Some examples are Selim (Deringil 2003); (Makdisi 2002); (Herzog and Motika, 2000); (Kühn 2007); For a critical survey of this literature see: (Türesay 2013) It is also available in English translation.

However, it must also be said that these two studies enrich our understanding of center-periphery relations as well as the process leading to Ottoman intervention with their reliance on Ottoman documentation while even the most advanced studies published in English did not have concrete answers for the Ottoman motivations to integrate this region formally into state-apparatus. While Seton Dearden, in his popular history of Karamanli Dynasty, refers to the “Turks’ fear from growing French influence in North Africa” as the primary reason, it was only a fraction of the whole picture (Dearden 1976, 311). Dearden’s work anticipated another important book on the history of Tripoli during the reign of Yusuf Pasha Karamanli, that of Kola Fölayan (Fölayan, 1979).

This study is by far the best analysis available pertaining to the last quarter of Karamanli rule in Tripoli. It examines the Yusuf Pasha’s efforts to make Tripoli a formidable power in the Barbary coast and the reasons behind the failure of this project. He argues that Yusuf Pasha intentionally raised his naval power to raise funds to finance the centralization policy he would embark upon after 1806. This project includes the subjugation of tribal contingents residing in Cyrenaica, Ghadames, and Fezzan. He was remarkably successful realizing his ambition to pacify these regions. However, Yusuf’s political ambitions did not stop at the traditional borders of his province and subsequently, he tried to form an empire that would include Bornu and Kanem to the south of Fezzan. However, such a venture was beyond the financial capabilities of his dynasty in the face of growing international pressure on piracy and gradually diminishing customs revenues due to the diversion of the trade routes traditionally flowing from sub-Saharan Africa, through Fezzan into the port of Tripoli (Fölayan 1979, xii).

Fölayan does not use Ottoman documentation, therefore, his explanation for the motivations behind Ottoman intervention relies on educated speculation of what Mehmed Şakir Efendi could have reported when he went back to Istanbul after his mission to inspect what was going on in Tripoli. Even though Fölayan relies only on a short summary of Şakir Efendi’s report, he speculated surprisingly well. For him, the inability of both parties in the civil war to overcome the other was the primary reason behind Ottoman action because Şakir Efendi must have reported the rumors that the Bey of Tunis or Mehmed Ali of Egypt would take advantage of the situation if the matter is not resolved soon enough. He adds that a possible French aggression was also rumored due to suspicious contours a French naval officer along the shores of the province. (Fölayan 1979, 161-163). A similar line of argument has also been offered by Ali İbrahim Abdullah

in his Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Utah in 1982.<sup>26</sup> Efforts of Warrington in persuading his government to intervene militarily in the civil war are further scrutinized by Jamil M. Abun-Nasr in his monumental work on the history of Maghrib in the Islamic period. (Abun-Nasr 1987, 204-205). He further argues that after 1835 Libya became an outpost from where Ottomans tried to salvage what they can from their diminishing influence in North African shores even though these prospects were seriously restrained by the opposition of tribal leaders such as Abdülcelil Seyfünnasr, Şeyh Guma of *Cebel-i Garbi* and the influence which European consuls had obtained before the Ottomans arrived Tripoli (Abun-Nasr 1987, 314).

Another attempt to account for the Ottoman presence in Tripoli and its hinterland was made by Ali Abdullatif Ahmida in a rather theoretical way. He opposes the arguments of the segmentary model developed by social anthropologists such as E. Evans Pritchard, and Ernest Gellner.<sup>27</sup> He argues that “segmentary model assumes the existence of a tribal society comprised of homogeneous tribal segments. In the absence of state control, the order was kept through mutually deterring tribal segments in any clan that threatened to disrupt the balance of power” whereas the social organization in North Africa was not only “an agglomeration of tribes or tribal states basically isolated from the larger social and economic structures of the region.” (Ahmida 1994, 3). He is also highly critical of Modernization theorists like Daniel Lerner who holds the idea that the modern Maghrib and the rest of the third world are composed of traditional societies whose modernization began under the European colonialism. (Ahmida 1994. 3-4). Accordingly, he goes on to propound that North African history has a dynamism of itself before the coming of Europeans because “powerful tribal and peasant alliances ruled Libya before the Ottomans and the construction of a modern urban-centered state began in alliance with the Ottomans.” That is, before European colonial rule. (Ahmida 1994, 5).

His approach to the Libyan social history is heavily informed by New British Marxism, exemplified most notably by Edward P. Thompson in his famous “The Making of the

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to remark that especially after the 1980s, American Universities has become important centers for intellectual production about Libyan History. Apart from the work of historians of Libyan origin coming to these universities as graduate students, others such as Michel Le Gall also participated in this new historiography rising in the United States. I couldn't help but notice a correlation between the forming of OPEC and the oil crises of the 1970s and a rise of interest in an oil-producing country's history. For notable examples, see: (Ahmida, 1990); (Barbar, 1980); (Elbhloul 1986); (Le Gall 1986).

<sup>27</sup> In this book, Pritchard has made the first attempt to understand the Sanusiyya movement (Evans-Pritchard 1954). For Ernest Gellner's views see: (Gellner and Micaud 1972)

English Working Class” where he emphasizes the agency of workers themselves rather than an automatic relation between the rise of the factories and formation of the working class. (Ahmida 1994, 3-9). Like Thompson, Ahmida also does not comply with rigid explanations of class formation argued by traditional Marxism of the 19th century. For Ahmida, this was especially fruitful because of the fluidity of tribal contingents in the 19th and 20th century Libya. Their coming together as a clearly discernible class was made possible by a constant and deliberate struggle against the Italian colonial policy even though they were intentionally excluded from capitalist agriculture. In a sense, they were engaging with the transformative power of modern capitalism by resisting it. They were able to resist both Ottomans and Italian colonialism because of their non-segmentary social connections across North Africa and Lake Chad Basin.

However, the way Ahmida conceptualizes the motivation behind the initial Ottoman intervention in Tripoli is rather ambiguous and seems to be far-fetched in terms of the development of capitalist relations and mentality in the Ottoman Empire. He puts forward that “capitalist transformation within the empire -toward the goal of asserting authority over the periphery- culminated in the brutal colonial conquest of Ottoman Libya in 1835.” (Ahmida 1994, 24). When a couple of pages later he goes on to explain what he means by internal capitalist transformation, his account focuses on the rise of the tax-farming, an application in which “the state sold state land to private owners to obtain quick cash for the treasury.” This, in turn, led to the emergence of a new tax-farming class. Accordingly, “by the end of the 18th century, capitalist tendencies became dominant in the ruling class.” (Ahmida 1994, 31). In this scheme, he seems to mistake the monetization of economy and taxation with the rise of capitalism per se. In fact, the development of capitalism implies much more than a change in the way people carry out their transactions and the form in which they pay their taxes. Even in strict Marxist terms, it requires a bourgeoisie class that owns the means of production and who is willing to set the fire of social change. However, in non-Western contexts, it is hard to locate such a class that is both willing and able.<sup>28</sup> In other words, structurally speaking, he favors a causality between the project of centralization and the rise of capitalist mentality. It seems

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<sup>28</sup> The rise of bourgeoisie and its social role in changing the traditional societal norms and political structure is a highly debated issue in Ottoman historiography. However, in any case, Ahmida’s approach is too hasty in accepting the idea that the Ottoman Empire was transformed into a properly capitalist worldview. See for an overview of this historiographical problem; (Göçek 1996, 12-20).



to me that in his analysis of the rise of capitalism in the Ottoman Empire and its subsequent implications for the Empire's people, he seems to be a vulgar Marxist rather than a new Marxist.<sup>29</sup> Why should, for example, the rise of capitalist mentality automatically mean an instinctive expansion of the center's control over the distant province of Tripoli? It seems to me that the one hundred fifty thousand *kuruş* that is entrusted to Necip Pasha to overthrow the ruling dynasty in Tripoli could have been invested in a much more promising capitalist venture (Taş 2016, 417).<sup>30</sup>

As for the material causes of the "brutal colonial conquest of Ottoman Libya in 1835," Ahmida points to the fear of losing Tripoli which serves as a gateway to Muslim Africa either to the French or to the British (Ahmida 1994, 31). However, he doesn't carry out a historical analysis related to this material cause; it rather pops up without a proper discussion. His wording referring to Ottoman intervention is also self-contradictory and anachronistic not only because he clearly distinguishes the colonial Italian occupation from the second period of direct Ottoman rule in his introduction but also because he fails to elaborate on what was resembling of colonialism about the Ottoman intervention in 1835.

Lisa Anderson has also produced a book in which she discusses the dynamics of state formation and social transformation in Tunisia and Libya from a comparative perspective. The way she poses the central question of her book is revealing: "How was it that one of these neighboring countries seemed to display many of the attributes of Western-inspired parliamentary democracy while the regime of the other explicitly and emphatically rejected them?" (Anderson 1987, 3). She puts forward the idea that a long tradition of local bureaucracy is the key to understand the divergence in the fates of two countries. This semi-independent garrison-states at the turn of the nineteenth century have entered the path of creating modern mechanisms of rule which meant for both "the replacement of kinship ties of tribes with those of wider and more flexible clientele networks of the peasantry." (Anderson 1987, 9). However, she adds that divergent experiences of two countries with the European colonialism created the eventual outcome she stated in her

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<sup>29</sup> Here I am alluding to the sparkling distinction Eric Hobsbawm makes. summarizes what he means by vulgar Marxism in seven points. However, his most important point in this context is that this type of Marxist historiography blindly adheres to the base and superstructure model which assumes a simple interdependency between economic base and political structure. In Ahmida's case, it is the transformative effect of the rise of capitalism on how Ottomans wanted to conceptualize their state. See: (Hobsbawm, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> For the final decision as to how much funds should be allocated to Necip Pasha see (COA.HAT.454.22441).

question because while “the French under the guise of protectorate retained, strengthened, and extended the bureaucratic administration of the local state, the Italians on the other hand “destroyed the local administration, to replace it with an exclusively Italian one, in which the local population was not permitted to participate.” (Anderson 1987, 9). In her mind, at the time of independence, this left Tunisia with two paths to choose from, democracy or dictatorship, whereas such a choice was out of the question in Libya. Even though her book has its strength in making sense of the post-independence political orders in Libya and Tunisia, she approaches her question from the perspective of a political scientist and her analysis leans back to a good understanding of the secondary literature of the time. As for why the Ottoman center acted in the way it did in 1835, she simply refers to Ottomans’ fear of European encroachment.

So far, I put an effort into critically approaching the existing literature. What follows is my general observation and a key to how I will try to approach the issue. The English language publications are not well informed about the trends in Ottoman historiography and confine their understanding of the Ottoman intervention only with the international pressure of the time and Ottoman’s alleged fear of losing Tripoli to a foreign power. In most of the cases, this general deduction is only based on outside sources such as consular reports, diplomatic correspondence and alike. It is, of course, a part of the general picture but real dynamics of Ottoman decision-making are obscure in these studies. How the real actors viewed the issue is not properly addressed. On the other hand, even though recently written theses in Turkish universities are extremely sensitive to how Ottomans carried out this delicate operation, they do not problematize the attitude of operational Ottoman agents. What were their backgrounds? How did they conceptualize what they were doing? In what words did they project the Ottoman center’s power in Tripoli? And perhaps most importantly, how does it compare to their contemporary rivals in North Africa. I believe that it is time to offer a balanced account of the issue which is informed by both internal dynamics within the empire and external pressures leading to the Ottoman intervention.

The present thesis tries to approach the issue more comprehensively, defining the actors, their discourse, and larger implications of their actions within domestic and foreign policies of the Ottoman Empire. I argue that Ottomans decided to intervene in Tripoli because, as it is nicely put by Şükrü Hanioglu, they see that “a loosely bound association of disparate, semi-independently ruled territories could not expect to survive” and “the attempt to establish a new balance between the center and the periphery was thus an

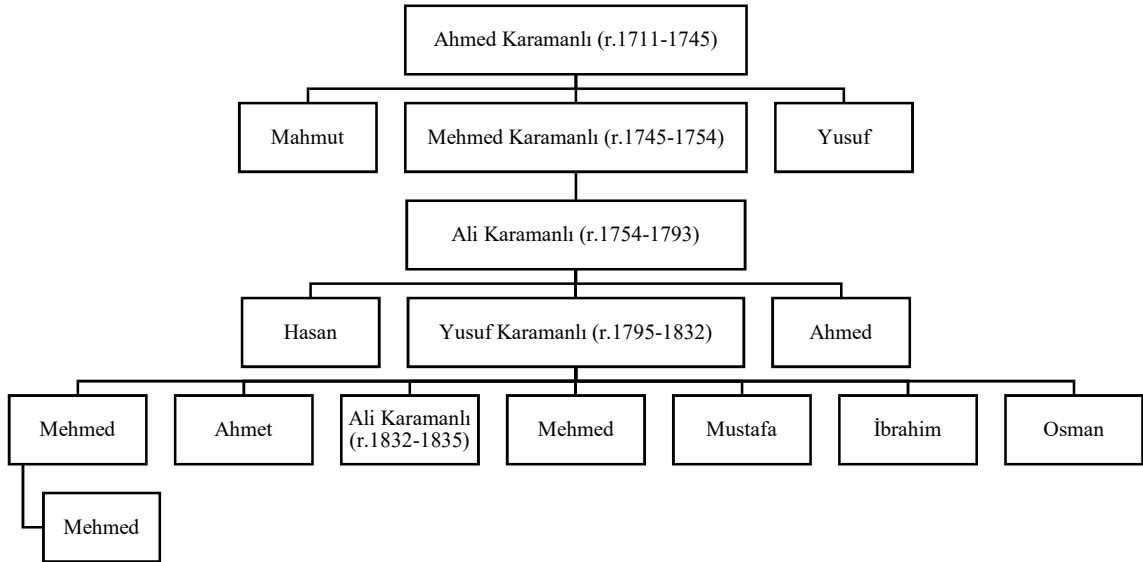
existential imperative” (Hanioglu, 2010, 40). In other words, centralization was a form of participating in the inter-imperial competition and it was in its essence a survival strategy. As I have already touched upon, regional variables are extremely important to understand the relative success of the Ottoman center’s expansion into the periphery. This is exactly what I seek to achieve in Chapter 1 which discusses the processes leading to the decline of Karamanlı power. I believe that the combination of the decline of Karamanlı power and timeliness of Ottoman action was the major factor behind eventual success. In Chapter 2, the process from the outbreak of dynastic struggle to Ottoman intervention is analyzed. Moreover, major contenders to Libyan territory are enumerated and their respective policies are examined. These include Mehmet Ali of Egypt, France, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire, and for a brief period, Huseynids of Tunisia. Fear plays into the picture exactly at this moment. Yet, I also delve into the major characters’ involvement in the decision-making process. Serasker Hüsrev Mehmet Pasha, Damat Halil Rıfat Pasha, and Kaptan-ı Derya Tahir Pasha were the masterminds of this intervention. I mentioned some works that conceptualize the Ottoman intervention as an act of colonial penetration into Libyan interior. However, my research shows that people directly involved with the decision-making process do not attach such meaning to their action. Nonetheless, it also does not mean that Ottoman intentions were devoid of imperial designs and pursuit of the economic prospects of the region. Accordingly, Chapter 3 carries out a retrospective discussion of Ottoman political mentality in 19th century with regards to what modern literature termed as Ottoman orientalism and colonialism to make sense of the Ottoman policies after the city of Tripoli is put under direct control. It is clear from the primary documents that Ottomans created a social otherness in viewing the unruly tribal chiefs that defied the Ottoman authority and rebelled against officials sent from Istanbul. In that sense, the findings of the study show that the emergence of such an attitude predates the conventionally known period. Nonetheless, I disagree with the use of the terms such as colonialism and orientalism in accounting for this behavior because I believe that its use takes it out of its proper historical context.

## 2. THE RISE AND DEMISE OF YUSUF PASHA KARAMANLI (1795-1832)

### 2.1 Yusuf Defying the Rules of Succession

The Karamanlı family is a local dynasty with Anatolian origins. Even though some sources date their settling in Tripoli back to initial conquest of the region by Turgut Reis in 1551, it is more likely that they have come to the region sometime after 1600 (Mantran 2001). Territorially speaking, Libya, as it is known today, is a by-product of the Karamanlı rule which united the hitherto unconnected regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. Karamanlı rule has started with the Ahmed Bey who took advantage of eventful years of the 1710s to establish himself as the sole power in the region. In the end, he was able to get the official recognition of Ottoman Sultan instituting him as the governor of the region in 1722. His descendants enjoyed a rule that is virtually independent of the imperial center and held on to their title as the governor of the Tripoli for four generations until 1835 when Ottomans finally removed the family from power. The founder of the dynasty, Karamanlı Ahmed (r.1711-1745) tried to establish primogeniture as the principle of succession. After his death, the fresh memory of his achievements provided his son Mehmed with a smooth accession to his father's position. The remainder of his reign passed in tranquility concerning power struggles within the family. However, the issue of succession appeared as a serious problem after him. When Ali Pasha, as the eldest son of Mehmed, claimed his father's position, his uncle Mustafa opposed him, showing apparent disapproval of Ahmed Pasha's preference for primogeniture. His first attempt at overthrowing his nephew was silenced by appointing Mustafa as the Bey and giving him the administration of Cyrenaica. It was understood soon that this could only be a temporary solution when rumors aroused in the Tripoli that other Karamanlı princes were plotting against Ali and intend to call Mustafa to lead another *coup d'état*.

Table 1: Karamanlı Succession and family tree



In response, Ali Pasha sent a force of three thousand soldiers to Cyrenaica on the pretext of suppressing tribal unrest whereas the covert mission was to arrest and assassinate Mustafa and his trusted men. Running from them, Mustafa managed to escape to Tunis, from where he continued to pose a serious threat to Ali Pasha's regime. Mustafa's challenge, being not decisively eliminated, set an example for future princes of Karamanlı family who are lusting for power (Fölayan 1979, 4-5). Yusuf was indeed one of them.

Yusuf was the third and youngest son of reigning governor of the Tripoli, Ali Pasha Karamanlı. Being as such, he was not entitled to ascend to the highest position in the province, that of his father's. However, this only encouraged him to take action as to secure what he believed rightfully his. On his way to the throne, there was Hasan Bey, the eldest brother, who consolidated his power in the late 1770s taking advantage of their father's incurable absenteeism from state business and his position as the commander-in-chief of the province's army. Even though Ahmed, the second brother, hadn't got as much support in the administrative elite of Tripoli as his elder brother, he was still in a better position compared to their little brother Yusuf in terms of being the heir apparent. Nevertheless, Yusuf did not wait for fortune to come and find him, he had built up his own luck.

In 1780s, Ali Pasha's grip over the regions of Fezzan and Cyrenaica which are formerly tied up to Tripoli by Ahmed Karamanli's successful campaigns was loosening as the internal revolts increased in frequency and intensity Hasan Bey was the one who actively tried to pacify these revolts, a policy which wins him a considerable popularity in the ruling elite. For inordinately ambitious Yusuf, this was unacceptable. Consequently, in 1788, Yusuf finally tried his chances twice to eliminate his brother during a campaign against the rebellious Evlad-ı Süleyman tribe.

Even though the attempts were evaded thanks to the vigilance of Hasan Bey's close men, Yusuf was determined to clear his way. In the following year, Yusuf tricked his mother to call Hasan Bey unarmed to her presence by claiming that he intends to reach a permanent reconciliation. Hopeful of ending the vicious cycle of animosity, Hasan Bey appeared unarmed in front of their mother despite his suspicions. A fatal underestimation of Yusuf's lust for power, indeed. On the spot, Yusuf murdered his own brother without hesitation. This meant that if Yusuf was ever to get hold of Tripoli's seat of government, he needed to come up with a solution to win over the supports of the general populace and government dignitaries.

Folayan's estimation is that some measures taken by Yusuf were successful in manipulating the populace so much so that about one and a half years' time, Yusuf gathered a force of six hundred armed men around him, especially in the *Menşiye* region, a quarter whose geographical position was overseeing the main supply routes of the Tripoli and its control was easing the monitoring of the movements of reinforcements and blockading of the supply routes of the city (Folayan 1979, 8-9).

After his hopes to achieve a smoother transition in the Tripolitan throne by orchestrating a palace coup came to naught when his brother turned his offer to cooperate, this left over-ambitious Yusuf with a single choice, that is, paving his way by way of brute force. A failed assassination attempt followed at his brother's life followed this conviction.

Being aware of the growing tensions between his sons, Ali Pasha ordered the arming of city-folk and called for reinforcements from Misurata Arabs. Resonance of this plea with the Arabs of Misurata led Yusuf to hasten up his plans to lay a siege to the city. Ultimately, Yusuf's fear of being outnumbered and outplayed against the recently renovated city defenses and refreshed manpower evolved into a civil war that will continue for two years, 1791-1793.

For about one and a half year, defensive forces in the city successfully repulsed Yusuf's attacks and briefly succeeded in pushing Yusuf's forces to the suburbs of the *Menşiyе*. However, the initial disadvantageous position of Yusuf revolved into a stalemate. The incessant flow of reinforcements thanks to the broad popular support enjoyed by his brother and superior firepower of the city defenses was gradually dismantling due to Ali Pasha's vague treatment of his rebel son -he even publicly propagated for not considering Yusuf as a rebel- and Yusuf's ability to paralyze the economic life of the city.

Furthermore, Yusuf was working hard to broaden his power base by bargaining with Berbers and Arabs of Tarhuna, Mesellate and Sahil regions. In the summer of 1793, numerical superiority was lying with Yusuf and the desperateness of the city defenses grew into fighting with stones. Under such circumstances, Ali Pasha made his move to refresh the defensive by calling for the assistance of Huseynids of Tunisia against his rebellious son. Refreshed as such, the defensive managed to halt the advancement of Yusuf's forces, creating one more deadlock, only to be crushed by an unexpected external party, Ali Bulgur (Fölayan 1979, 12-15).

Ali Bulgur was a convert in the service of the Dey of Algiers. He gradually rose to prominence in his court and eventually reached the highest position in the navy. After he was accused by those who are resented by his arrogant conduct in office, he fled to Istanbul where his brother was serving Küçük Hüseyin Pasha. In this capacity, he was sent to Tripoli when Ali Pasha's governorship was symbolically renewed. It was exactly at this time that he witnessed the decaying authority of Ali Pasha of Tripoli. Two brothers had decided to venture into overthrowing the Karamanlı dynasty from power. To this end, they persuaded some Tripolitan merchants to petition the Sultan with regards to their discontent with the ruling family. Allegedly, Ali Pasha was empowering Jewish merchants and was responsible for the death of his eldest son Hasan Bey. These prominent merchants were asking a naval squadron to be dispatched to take full control of the province by the Sultan. However, at the time, the Ottoman navy did not have the necessary means to carry out operations in Tripoli as well.

Some historians have argued that Ali Bulgur arrived in Tripoli in an official capacity, acting by the orders of Sultan Selim III. However, when presented with the petition of Tripolitan merchants and Ali Bulgur's plan, Selim simply dismissed these by saying "we don't attend to such low business." It was rather a political adventure of Ali's own at the

beginning as evidenced by the fact that he procured the eight ships and necessary crew to operate these ships with his private means. Contemporary witnesses, though, recount that upon boarding Tripolitan harbor, an official *ferman* declaring the dismissal of the Ali Pasha Karamanlı and recognition of Ali Bulgur as the Sultan's deputy was read aloud by a *çavuş* coming from Istanbul. In fact, Ali Bulgur was presenting a mere fabrication read by an impostor *çavuş*. Sublime Porte's recognition came only after Ali Bulgur seized power completely in March 1794. (Taş 2016, 252-256) This has provided Ali Bulgur's regime with a legal basis and the support of some tribes from the interior of the country. While Yusuf remained in the *Menşiyeye* to sustain the siege, his brother and father took refuge in Tunis.

Now, Yusuf, thus far an infamous rebel and murderer, was presented with a unique opportunity to portray himself as the liberator of the Tripoli from the yoke of a political adventurer who in part diminished the *de facto* independence of Tripoli from Istanbul. This was, however, no easy task because Ali Bulgur was firmly establishing himself within the city by persuading former Karamanlı officials to collaborate. Those who did not comply were forced to vacate their positions and were replaced by Ali Bulgur's mercenary.

Things were further complicated for Yusuf by Ali Bulgur's effective foreign policy. He ingeniously played on the fear of small European states and urged their consuls to consider Tripoli with equal international standing with the Algiers. This practically meant a wider range of subsidies to be given to Ali Bulgur's regime if these vulnerable states were willing to renew their treaties which would protect their commercial shipping operations from the harm that may possibly be done by Tripolitan corsairs. This translated into thirty-five barrels of gunpowder, skilled artisans to build up a vessel of sixteen guns and two hundred fifty tons of corn, a crucial supply to feed the mercenary garrison. When Sultan Selim's recognition instituting Ali Bulgur as the one who reigns in his name, the dispatch also brought a vessel of twenty-two guns as a gift (Taş 2016, 256). Meanwhile, he also enjoyed the arrival of a reinforcement of five hundred mercenary soldiers sent by his brother. In short, Bulgur's ranks were toughening.

In August 1794, now officially recognized Pasha of Tripoli defeated Yusuf's forces in the station in the *Menşiyeye*, making Yusuf abandon the siege and retreat from the region. Ali Bulgur was ever more powerful in the Tripoli thanks to the new political arrangement



he made with the Arab chiefs of the interior. Bulgur's success was mainly thanks to the help they provided in the form of warriors and supplies for the city. They probably reckoned that Ali Bulgur had come to stay after he got the affirmation of the Ottoman Sultan (Fölayan 1979, 19).

It may have been the end of Karamanlı dynasty if Ali Bulgur had acted with more caution against the Bey of Tunisia. I have already touched upon the fact that Bey of Tunis offered asylum to Karamanlı family after Bulgur's takeover. This time, Yusuf turned to ask military help against his now formidable enemy who succeeded in crushing his forces. The answer was affirmative. The prime motivation of the bey of Tunis in deciding to help Yusuf, however, was Ali Bulgur himself. After he had decisively beaten Yusuf, Ali Bulgur launched a campaign against the territorial interest of the Bey of Tunis. He ordered his forces to take possession of the island of Cerbe and continued to lay a siege to the city of Sfax. Greatly alarmed by such bold moves of the Ali Bulgur, Bey of Tunis took immediate action as to remove him. Escorted by the members of Karamanlı family, he commanded a combination of naval and land forces nearly amounting to forty thousand men to march against the occupational force in Cerbe. After easily securing victory there, this huge army sailed towards Tripoli where they retook the *Menşiyе* quarter in a matter of hours in 18th January 1795 (Fölayan 1979, 20).

Next morning, it appeared that Ali Bulgur had escaped from the Tripoli with two vessels, plundering what is left from Karamanlı family in the mansion of Ali Pasha. Tripoli was again about to go under the sway of Karamanlis, but city folk refused to open the gates, being fearful of a looting activity on the part of Tunisian troops. At this critical juncture, Yusuf assumed the leadership to persuade the general populace to raise an extraordinary tax to buy off the Tunisian troops and pay for their troubles. After an agreement was reached Tunisian troops left the Tripoli and Ahmed and Yusuf triumphantly re-entered the city. As their father was seriously ill and his abdication was formally recognized by Ottoman Sultan, Ahmed as the heir apparent assumed the throne. Nevertheless, his reign proved to be short-lived. Drawing on the popular support he gained during his struggle against the occupation of Ali Bulgur and his brother's feebleness in devising any policy that would put a halt to the disastrous situation of the country after four years of political instability and warfare, Yusuf had the doors of the city closed when his brother Ahmed went outside the city walls. Ahmed was left with no choice other than leaving (Abun-

Nasr 1987, 196). At last Yusuf's long-awaited political ambition became the new reality of Tripoli as he assumed the Tripoli's seat of power.

## **2.2 Tripoli under Yusuf Pasha**

Yusuf Pasha's seizure of power after a protracted period of political instability, marked by civil war and a struggle to regain power in Tripoli, was followed by a revival of the economy and political prowess of the Tripoli in the international arena. Yusuf Pasha's way to achieve this was a distinctly North African phenomenon. Namely, the creation of a strong navy that would pose a formidable threat to commercial shipping in the Mediterranean.

To increase the naval strength of Tripoli, the port was secured by the amendment fortifications of the city and stationing of canons. Then followed an increased investment in shipbuilding. The rapid growth of the navy caught the attention of Istanbul which had gifted two strong warships. The already impressive number of eleven ships in 1798 was doubled due to the outbreak of the American War in 1801, building the naval inventory up to twenty-four ships in 1805. (Fölayan 1979, 27).

Before the eighteenth century closed, Tripolitan naval forces successfully targeted the commercial shipping of several European states and the U.S.A and forced these countries to renew or get into treaty arrangements with Tripoli to secure safe passage in the Mediterranean. The policy of extortion was largely successful. While Spain and Venice quickly paid their dues, the insubordinations of the Swedes, the Dutch and the Danish were returned by attacking their shipping. The imminent danger made the first two have a change of heart and they readily abide by what Yusuf Pasha had asked to release their ships and prisoners. Denmark ordered his Mediterranean fleet under the command of Captain Bille to attack Tripoli to save those who are captured. Significantly, Bille's success in the confrontation fell short of taking back the captives until a new peace agreement was negotiated. Even more significant is that the naval victory did not lead to a decrease either in the yearly tribute or the lump sum that must be paid right after the conclusion of the agreement. Ragusans also fell victim to Yusuf Pasha's ambition and agreed to pay a yearly tribute despite the Sublime Porte's protection of this Republic and its active intervention on their behalf. After the use of naval force as an active tool of

diplomatic extortion, a sum of 322.000 Spanish piastres had been poured into Tripolitan treasure (Taş 2016, 266-269). This money was about to be used in the pacification of the regions of Fezzan and Cyrenaica.

The historical development of Tripolitan-American relations showed at the beginning an almost verisimilitude with those stated above. In 1796, Yusuf Pasha negotiated with American representative and parties signed a treaty of friendship. However, given the fact that the terms of the treaty were not favorable in the eyes of Yusuf Pasha, American attitude in honoring the mutually agreed terms was even more disappointing. As a result, things took an unexpected turn in 1801 when Yusuf Pasha declared a war that would continue for four years against the United States. To understand the reasons and outcomes of this clash, it is imperative to take a detour and investigate the North African-American relations in more detail before we delve into how Yusuf Pasha expanded his rule around the nucleus he created in Tripoli with the help of the refilled treasury.

### **2.2.1 North African-American relations and Yusuf Pasha's disillusionment with the Treaty of 1796**

The American Revolution had not only provided the American people with their independence but also deprived them of the British protection that they were enjoying in the Mediterranean waters. After the British recognition of American independence in September 1783, the American commercial shipping had inevitably become a legitimate target for the North African rulers. British efforts to put a halt to the American inflow into the Mediterranean ports and a consequent flourishing of trade between U.S and Mediterranean basin did not stop at abolishing their protection of the American shipping (Lambert 2005, 15-16). Not only did they allegedly delivered the routes of American ships to Algerians throughout the 1780s, but they also extended their diplomatic efforts in 1793 to conclude the ongoing war between the Portuguese and Algiers to secure safe passage for Algerian corsair navy which would hunt down American merchants even in the Atlantic. As naturally infuriating as it was for the American public and the Congress, they had not got a navy that would escort their merchant fleet, a fact which encouraged British activities (Kurat. 1964, 188-189).

The imminent danger of being hunted by corsair fleets turned into a reality in 1784 when Moroccans captured an American ship named *Betsey*. However, it was soon understood that this hostile act was to establish proper diplomatic channels. The Moroccan ruler was offended by the fact that no diplomatic mission was sent to his realm despite his recognition of the United States as an independent country (Allison 1995, 7-8). After John Adams had notified the Congress that it would be wise to negotiate with the Barbary Powers in 1783, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams had been authorized to carry out the negotiations. In the case of Morocco, the misunderstanding had been easily addressed and two parties concluded a peace treaty within a month (Lambert 2005, 58-59).

The ease with which Americans had come to terms with the Moroccans had created an illusion in the American diplomatic circles that the same would be possible with other powers in the North African coastline. However, the truth of the matter unfolded in a starkly contrasting manner. Problems for the Americans multiplied as the promise of the French King to act as a mediator between the Barbary Powers and the United States came to naught after the outbreak of the French Revolution. Now, the only solution to reach a rapprochement was to establish direct diplomatic contact with each of these powers. In the meantime, Tripolitan and Algerian pirates were consistently preying on American shipping.

The American diplomatic mission in Europe had for some time hoped that they would not be obliged to pay large sums of money for brokering peace agreements. They were soon to understand that their hopes were at best childish. In 1786, the American mission represented by John Lamb tried to approach the Dey of Algiers with the expectation to reach an agreement with regards to the release of the recently captured American citizens. The amount demanded by Dey was fourteenth times higher than Lamb was keen to pay on behalf of the United States (Allison 1995, 12). It goes without saying that under the circumstances first American attempt proved to be an utter failure.

Upon the arrival of a letter written by the American captive Richard O'Brien, in which he enumerated the conditions of a possible truce between U.S and Algiers, the American President George Washington asked the Congress to consider acting in accordance with the propositions of O'Brien. The news was also circulating that now the time is ripe to renegotiate with the Dey of Algiers. However, both O'Brien and the ultimate ruling of Congress was utterly optimistic. It was authorizing the payment of 40.000 dollars for

ransoming the prisoners, an additional 25.000 dollars of lumpsum and lastly a yearly tribute of equal amount (Kurat 1964, 187). Shortly after American commissioner David Humphreys departed from Lisbon, news reached that the peace between the Algerians and the Portuguese had been concluded. Given the incentive, the Dey of Algiers dispatched his navy which eventually captured eleven American ships in the Atlantic. The Dey also sent word that he would accept no American commissioner whatsoever. Now, the price of the peace was to be placed much higher, against the optimistic position of American Congress. Even though Humphreys continued his efforts to establish a connection with the Dey of Algiers, he soon realized that requesting the mediation of other parties was in vain. He had returned to Lisbon after the second unfortunate diplomatic failure (Kurat 1964, 188).

The recurring theme of diplomatic failures in the North African coast led to heated debates in the Congress. There occurred a strong opinion that the U.S. should build its own navy to fight back those who are acting against the interest of the American nation. In fact, this was an idea which Thomas Jefferson put forward repeatedly in every chance he gets ever since his days as the American representative at Paris. Now, him being the Secretary of the State and, given the American diplomacy stuck into, the Congress agreed to pay more than a million dollars to start constructing a strong navy (Lambert 2005, impasse 79-80).

In the meantime, Humphreys restarted his efforts to negotiate with the Dey of Algiers after he was authorized to spend 800.000 dollars to free American captives in Algeria. Upon the request of Humphreys, the Swedish consul in Algiers mediated the delivery of the news that Americans want to reach an agreement with Hasan Dey. It turned out shortly after that what Hasan Dey was asking 2.435.000 dollars. Even though this was beyond the imaginable for the Americans, the matter had to be resolved. Accordingly, Americans have demonstrated a strong will to sit on to negotiate. The eventual agreement brokered by American representative Joel Barlow included that Americans should pay a lump sum of 642.000 dollars and 216.000 dollars yearly tribute or shipbuilding material of the same value. It is said that with the added value of other presents to be given to Dey of Algiers, the total cost of the long-awaited peace was about one million dollars (Lambert 2005, 82). Americans also agreed to build and arm numerous ships in American dockyards to be delivered to Algiers. Joel Barlow proved himself to be a good negotiator. He convinced Hasan Dey to act as a mediator and guarantor of future agreements to be reached with

other Barbary Powers. After Humphreys on whose behalf Barlow was negotiating approved the treaty in Lisbon, it was sent to be ratified by the U.S. government, which did so on March 2, 1796 (Kurat 1964, 192).

The promise given by Hasan Dey to act as a mediator and guarantor of future treaties that Americans would possibly sign with remaining powers along the North African coast turned out to be a defining moment for Tripolitan-American relations which culminated into a full-fledged naval confrontation in 1801. On the one hand, it was far easier to approach Yusuf Pasha Karamanli who knew that the Hasan Dey's backing of the United States was binding for him. However, it was something he found disgracefully offensive.

Given that no treaty relationship between the two had yet to be established and Yusuf Pasha was rebuilding the Tripolitan navy, it was only a matter of time American shipping would be targeted. It was in August 1796 when American ships the *Betsey* and the *Sophia* were captured that the Americans felt the encroachment of the Tripolitan corsair fleet under the command of Scottish renegade Murad Reis, admiral of Yusuf Pasha. The *Betsey* was added to Tripolitan naval inventory as a warship while the latter was released because it carries the treaty money intended for Hasan Dey (Folayan 1979, 31).

The natural course of action for the United States was to seek an opportunity to negotiate. Former captive of Hasan Dey, Richard O'Brien was tasked with finding common ground with Yusuf Pasha. On the first round of talks, O'Brien's offer was only 40,000 dollars for the ransom and peace together. In the eyes of Yusuf Pasha, this was nothing, but an outrageous insult compared to 642,000 paid by the U.S. to Algiers. Furthermore, rumors of American willingness to pay 180,000 dollars to Tunis were circulating. Thus, he refused to come to terms with O'Brien under these accords. Hasan Dey's influence played into the picture in favor of American representative and later in the month Pasha had agreed to strike a peace deal in return for a "sum of 40,000 dollars, together with 'consular presents of 12,000 dollars cash and some naval stores – canvas, pitch, boards, etc.'" (Folayan 1979, 31). For the time being, peace was established but things were soon to change.

The last ruler to make peace with was Hammuda Bey of Tunis. He had a direct way of engaging with the Americans. The American commissioner in Algiers, Joel Barlow received a notification from a French merchant residing in Tunis, Joseph Étienne Famin which stated the desire of Hammuda Bey to get into peaceful relations. The letter also

asserted Bey's terms for peace and included that Bey requires an answer within six months. It translates as if his demands would not be met in due time, Bey would withdraw his orders that banned preying on American shipping, thereby setting free all the wrath of his corsair fleet. Americans were tempted by this offer in view of their thirteen years of efforts to secure safe passage in the Mediterranean waters. They complied with what Hammuda Bey demanded and paid 180.000 dollars in addition to the promise of the delivery of an American-built brig in 1797 (Lambert 2005, 92).

For the maintenance of the peace, Americans had appointed resident consuls in each of the North African capitals; Richard O'Brien as consul-general of Algiers with super-intendant power over the consuls of Tunis and Tripoli, and William Eaton as consul at Tunis. However, the appointment of James Leander Cathcart as the consul at Tripoli delayed until 1799. It must be said that it only made things worse for because especially Cathcart's was a bitter job given that Yusuf Pasha was obliged by Hasan Dey's pressure to sign a treaty that he did not want to (Kurat. 1964, 199).

It was upon the terms of this very peace treaty and absence of Cathcart that the tensions between the United States and Tripoli had escalated. Articles I and XII stipulated that if any disagreement regarding the interpretation of the treaty should arise between the signatories, the mutual friend Hasan Dey would be the arbitrator. For Tripolitans, the meaning of this was simple enough; arbitration of a mutual friend. On the other hand, the American position was markedly different. They interpreted these articles as manifestations of Tripoli's dependence upon the Algiers and Hasan Dey's position vis-à-vis Yusuf Pasha as one of a political overlord. In fact, this misconception was further attested by the structure of consular representation in Barbary; Richard O'Brien having the super-intendant duties. At least it was how he presented it to one of Yusuf Pasha's envoys to Algiers in 1797. For a man of Yusuf's ambition, this misunderstanding was unacceptable. He repeatedly demanded from Americans to treat him as an independent ruler and his state as a sovereign one. In return, Americans had failed to honor treaty obligations. There was no evidence whatsoever as to when the consular presents would arrive. Neither any word was heard from the appointment of a resident consul. Nor the promised warship had been delivered. When Yusuf Pasha formally requested a reply from O'Brien, his answer worked only to aggravate the situation. While Tunis and Algiers were getting the promised items in their treaties, Yusuf's share was a mere excuse stipulating the harsh winter in America as the reason why American promises were not still delivered

after almost two years since the treaty had been ratified (Folayan 1979, 32-35). Even after the American Consul James Catchard's arrival to Tripoli, the American attitude remained mostly unchanged despite their firsthand experience of Yusuf Pasha's protests.

Eventually, American attitude forced Yusuf Pasha to change his position. In the meantime, the Tripolitan navy organized a capture of an American ship in October 1800. Yusuf Pasha ordered its release and reprimanded the responsible parties only to show that he is still inclined to honor the agreement of 1796. At the same time, it was to remind Americans that Tripoli is a major naval power capable of reprehending the violations of the treaties it is a signatory of. After a full year had passed and no answer from the President had arrived in his court, Yusuf Pasha was left with one choice; that is to cut off diplomatic relations and declare war against the U.S. on May 14, 1801. He also added that as of now the terms of the treaty are obsolete and if Americans want to renew it, an amount of 250.000 dollars and a yearly tribute of 20.000 dollars were the prices of the peace (Kurat 1964, 199).

After deliberations with his cabinet and assuring the constitutionality of sending a naval squadron into the Mediterranean, newly inaugurated president Thomas Jefferson decided to retaliate with force. However, the main strategy of Jefferson was to "awe and talk." (Lambert 2005, 124) He thought that an effective naval blockade would teach Tripolitans a sound lesson not to mess with U.S. shipping anymore. His hopes however foundered on the shores of Tripoli. The American bombardments were highly ineffective, leaving minimal damage in the city at best. Likewise, the naval blockade of Tripolitan harbor was continuously breached by a Tripolitan fleet commanded by Murad Reis. Repeated incursions to capture American ships was crowned by the seizing of American warship the Philadelphia in 1803, which increased the number of enslaved Americans up to more than three hundred (Dearden 1976, 159).

The success of the Tripolitan navy and city walls in warding off the American attacks led Americans to come up with a brilliant plan. Even though it is not clear who first conceived the idea of stirring Ahmed Karamanlı to stage a *coup d'état*, the plan was perfected and executed by William Eaton who was serving as the American consul at Tunis at the time (Folayan 1979, 36). It was envisioned that in every possible scenario, Ahmed's challenge to Yusuf's regime would give a bargaining advantage to the Americans' interest. Thus, after tracking Ahmed into the deeps of Egypt, William Eaton convinced Ahmed



Karamanlı to a triumphant march through the Libyan desert in the company of unruly tribal warriors. They eventually managed to take Derna, a coastal town east of Tripoli (Dearden 1976, 189).

Hearing the victory of Ahmed, Yusuf Pasha finally agreed to finalize the armed-conflict and negotiate a new treaty of "Peace and Amity". It anticipated the evacuation of Derna and mutual exchange of war-prisoners on the condition that the U.S. would pay a ransom of 60.000 dollars. It has been publicized as a U.S. win by Thomas Jefferson and today, it is mostly taken as a moment bolstering national pride. Be that as it may, it is safe to argue that this was, in fact, a confrontation ending up with a draw because Yusuf Pasha had obtained the international recognition he so desperately sought after ever since he ascended to the throne. There was no mention of Algerine guarantee whatsoever in the treaty. Moreover, any last glimmer of hope on the part of his brother Ahmed to seize the Tripolitan seat of power had waned away. Last but not least, a handsome amount of ransom was secured for the release of American prisoners (Folayan 1972, 261-70).

### **2.2.2 Expansion of Yusuf's Patrimonial Rule**

The administrative structure was much more elaborate in Yusuf pasha's time in office compared to the system which existed under his predecessors even though it was still patrimonial in essence. Now, the divan transformed from being a mere military council into a more complex political structure which was presided over by Yusuf Pasha himself and attended by top-level state officials such as the Treasurer (*Hazinedar*), Admiral of the navy (*Reis al-Marine*), commander-in-chief of land forces (*Agha*), Yusuf's deputy (*Grand Kahya*), and mayor (*sheikh*) of Tripoli. The title Bey came to signify a generic meaning of governor and assumed by appointed officials of Yusuf Pasha in Cyrenaica and Fezzan.

Apart from the revenues, the government of Tripoli gained through piratical activities the treasury was also fed by Trans Saharan trade, especially in slaves. His control of the slave trade enabled him to strengthen his hold over the rulers of Fezzan by way of exerting heavy tributes. He also established a state monopoly on the exportation of agricultural goods and livestock. While personally overseeing the trade of some produce in others he granted the privilege to trade that particular product to some merchants in return for a

fixed annual payment (Abun-Nasr 1987, 199). Accumulation of financial resources in the hands of Yusuf Pasha allowed him to reorganize and expand the military force Tripoli can put into use against those who defied pasha's authority. The veterans of this army were already battle-hardened in the American war and served as the nucleus around which Yusuf could increase their strength.

Even before the war with America had come to an end, Yusuf Pasha's political problems started to surface. In the summer of 1803, Berbers of Gharian Mountains rejected to pay the annual tribute they customarily owe to Yusuf Pasha responded with a large military force, too great for Gharians to put up a fight against. At last, they not only find themselves in the position of paying a heavy indemnity but also lost their autonomy as Yusuf Pasha obliged them to permanently host a Tripolitan garrison in the region.

As soon as the peace with America had been concluded, Yusuf Pasha turned his attention to Derna. After his brother's departure, he aimed at strengthening his authority by reinforcing the military force whose cost of maintaining was burdened on the residents of the city short-lived support to Ahmed.

This was only a preamble to Yusuf Pasha's plan to systematically pacify the country. The first problem on his way was the tribe of Evlad-ı Süleyman who had rebelled against the pasha in 1807 due to their growing suspicion of Yusuf Pasha's centralizing policies. Their strategy was to cut off the link of Tripoli with Fezzan, thereby ensuring the obstruction of the flow trans-Saharan trade which cripples Yusuf pasha's commercial gains from the trade with regions like Sudan. The formidable force sent against them under the command of Mehmed Bey, first son of the Pasha, managed to defeat their adversary and fortunately for Tripolitan interests the leader of the Evlad-ı Süleyman tribe was killed during one of the military confrontations along with many of his men. In the absence of strong leadership, the rebellion died out. The remainder of the clan submitted to pasha's authority as their fellow tribesmen were taken as hostages against any future mischief.

Three years later in 1810, Yusuf started to proactively orchestrate his political program. This time he aimed to put the regions bordering Sudan, that are Ghadames and Fezzan, under the sway of his rule in hoping to fully exploit the economic prospects. These regions were incredibly important trade hubs connecting Tripoli with Timbuktu (today located in Mali), Hausaland (today corresponds to the area of northern Nigeria and the Republic of Niger), and Bornu (today located in Nigeria) which also housed wealthy financiers of

Sudanese trade. The expedition to Ghadames led by Yusuf Pasha's third son, Ali, did not face any resistance by the city folk. Thinking that a protracted defensive war would be bad for business, the city surrendered to Ali's terms. They were to pay an indemnity and accept the Pasha's imposition of a governor who would directly collect the future customs duties of the city.

In the case of Fezzan, Yusuf Pasha adopted a policy of gradual subjugation. Ruled by Kanem from 13th to 15th centuries, Fezzan came to be dominated by a Sharifian dynasty called Evlad-ı Muhammed in the 16th century. This family ruled over Fezzan independently without interruption until the founder of the Karamanlı house had succeeded in making Evlad-ı Muhammed a tributary of Tripoli in the first half of the 18th century. In the subsequent years when the descendants of the Ahmed Karamanlı grew weaker and fed up by indolent lives, Tripoli's authority over Fezzan attenuated gradually. When Yusuf Pasha ascended to the throne, Evlad-ı Muhammad had already fully recovered its political power and annual tributes due to Tripoli came to be unregularized.

At first, Yusuf Pasha made do with the status quo. Yusuf's growing military strength, however, allowed him to exert pressure for the regularization of due tributes. For this purpose, he appointed Muhammed al-Mukni as the collector in 1790s. Al-Mukni started to build a case against the Evlad-ı Muhammed, trying to prove that Fezzan can pay a significantly higher amount of tribute thanks to enormously rich resources of the region. He suggested that Yusuf Pasha should establish more direct control over the region by eliminating the reigning dynasty and put the region under someone who would act as Yusuf's delegate.

Al-Mukni's suggestions resonated well with Yusuf Pasha who himself was actively trying to better exploit commercially important parts of his realm. When all these coincided with the lately hostile position of the reigning Sultan Muntasir of the Fezzan, Yusuf decided that it is time to act. Not only Muntasir attempted to cut the direct trade between Bornu and Tripoli in 1807, but he also provided safe haven to rebellious Evlad-ı Süleyman tribesmen. Using these as a pretext to a successful military campaign, Yusuf Pasha instigated his agent as the new ruler of the Fezzan and allowed him to use the titles enjoyed by overthrown dynasty. In return, al-Mukni promised a yearly tribute three times more than Evlad-ı Muhammed did. However, Yusuf Pasha's control over the region was

now undisputed as it is evidenced by the fact that he removed al-Mukni from power when he deemed it necessary in 1820 (Fölayan 1979, 51-53).

In the meantime, trying to take advantage of Yusuf Pasha's concentration on the southern regions, various tribes in Benghazi, Gulf of Sirte and Derna refused to hold up their end of the tributary arrangements. Therefore, a strong military contingent was put together under the command of Mehmed Bey. This force quickly defeated the oppositional force in Derna and executed the leading figures of this insurrection. Then, Bey continued to Benghazi, tribes of which quickly fulfilled their obligations to pay tribute and reclaimed their loyalty to Yusuf Pasha. The suppression of Evlad-ı Ali Arabs in the Gulf of Sirte, however, proved much harder. Yet, Mehmed's forces outnumbered them and possessed superior firepower. When the insurgents were decisively defeated, Muhammed singled out the leaders and brutally executed them to make an example out of them by hanging their heads over the castle in Tripoli.

Muhammed taking pride with his decisive victory over the insurgents of eastern Cyrenaica grew ever more arrogant and power-hungry. Consequently, to detract his son from his proximity, Yusuf granted him the governorship of the Benghazi and Derna. This could only be an opportunity for Mehmed who used it wisely by mounting a rebellion with the support of Zuaza tribes in 1816. Against this threat, Yusuf Pasha charged his second son Ahmed with the task of eliminating his brother's rebellion. An unexpectedly formidable force was gathered with the support of Misurata Arabs and several other tribes. It was a triumphal march, indeed, as even before arriving at Derna, it scared off most of the Mehmed's supporters, leading Mehmed himself to retreat to Bombah, a small town close to the Egyptian frontier.

As for the people of Derna who rallied around Mehmed Bey, Ahmed Bey granted a tentative amnesty after they renounced Mehmed's cause. After his victory in Derna, Ahmed ordered each town in the Cyrenaica region to send a delegation to a ceremony in which Ahmed would celebrate his victory and give Arab leaders red cloaks in recognition of their contribution to Ahmed's victory over his brother. Even though some of the leaders grew suspicious of Ahmed's invitation, most of them welcomed Ahmed's offer. Nonetheless, they insisted that only forty-three of their leaders would be present at the celebrations. This, Ahmed agreed. Unalarmed by the fate expecting them in the official residence in Benghazi, leaders of Zuaza tribe showed up in the celebrations on September

5, 1817. After the welcoming coffee was served, Ahmed's guards relentlessly massacred all the present leaders. Those who could escape the residence were hunted down before they could exit the city and the hostages allegedly sent to Tripoli as political leverage was returned, only to be added to death toll (Fölayan, 1979, 53-57).

After campaign and campaign, the Yusuf's hold over the entire regions of Fezzan, Tripolitania, and Cyrenaica had grown to be firmly established and a proper provincial administration was put in place. As long as the Pasha's financial resources remained intact the situation also remained unaltered. However, it was not to survive long.

### **2.2.3 Beginnings of the End**

The ongoing Napoleonic wars had a delaying effect on the gradual demise of North African maritime power. No nation was singlehandedly able to put up an effective naval fight against the rulers of the region, combined with the fact that Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers join forces when they were facing an outside danger, it rendered the European efforts to suppress piratical raids in the Mediterranean ineffective. Nevertheless, from about 1810, the balance of power was tilted in favor of Europeans.

In the case of Yusuf Pasha, activities of British consul Warrington had a decisive effect. With the encouragement of British government, Warrington forced Yusuf Pasha to surrender his trade monopolies on agricultural goods and livestock to be shipped to Malta, which had lately become the naval base of British Empire in the Mediterranean to Maltese traders. Moreover, the income from piracy was also declining, again due to unsanctioned activities of British consuls. The British had traditionally acted as the protector of smaller nations in the Mediterranean waters. Taking on this honorable duty on its shoulders, the British had always been trying to force the Yusuf Pasha to reach settlements with countries under their diplomatic protection. Yet, the British consuls found another shortcut solution to both enrich themselves and to expand the safe passage that originally British shipping was enjoying. They started to issue British "Mediterranean passes" to the ships of other countries, thereby dwindling the chance of pirates to prey on the so-called legitimate targets (Abun-Nasr 1987, 199).

For the suppression of piracy, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 was another turning point. It was in this diplomatic meeting that European powers decided to act together in their

efforts to eliminate piracy.<sup>31</sup> In 1816, English Admiral Lord Exmouth sailed to the Mediterranean to put into effect the implications of the decisions taken in the Vienna, thereby obliging the North African rulers to announce proclamations banning piracy from their shores. At first, Yusuf Pasha only pretended to honor the promises he had given in the agreement signed between Lord Exmouth and himself. However, when a final resolution to effectively suppress the Mediterranean piracy was adopted in the Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, Yusuf Pasha had no chance against the joint British and French fleet but to abide by what Europeans were asking (Panzac, 2005, 289-292).<sup>32</sup> Yusuf Pasha had taken these threats so seriously that his inability to provide the Ottoman navy with properly equipped warships got Sublime Porte infuriated during the Greek rebellion (Taş 2016, 347-348).

Having been deprived of his main sources of income, Yusuf Pasha started to think about invading the Bornu region. Even though his plan failed at the end, it may also be understood as the transformation of centralization policies of Yusuf Pasha into a full-fledged imperial design. This region was from about 1808 ruled by a charismatic religious scholar and military leader, Al-Kanimi who successfully isolated the danger of jihadist forces of Uthman dan Fadio in Hausaland. The first diplomatic contact between Tripoli and Bornu came about when Al-Kanimi requested military help from Yusuf Pasha against the adjacent political rivals threatening the Bornu. Yusuf Pasha replied favorably and sent the Bey of Fezzan, al-Mukni to al-Kanimi's help. When al-Mukni after a successful campaign returned to Fezzan with a large booty which enabled him to present to Yusuf Pasha with more than a thousand slaves, Yusuf Pasha confirmed that his design would bring enormous economic profit to the Tripolitan treasury.

The problem was that Yusuf Pasha did not have financial means to provide the expedition with the necessary arms and the provisions. In 1820, He turned to the British government to raise a loan of 50.000 pounds. He suggested to Warrington who was acting as the liaison between Yusuf and his government that the expedition is intended to exploit the gold mines situated in Bornu. Warrington was aware of the fact that the region was not rich in terms of gold mines, and that Pasha was hiding his real ambition to take full control

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<sup>31</sup> For a decent diplomatic history of the Congress of Vienna see: (Chapman, 1998). A more recent and comprehensive book that has been recently published is (Vick 2014).

<sup>32</sup> See for the docile answer given by Yusuf Pasha to combined fleets of Admiral Jurien de la Graviere and Admiral Freemantle: (Taş 2016, 332).

of the slave trade behind this fabricated claim. He consequently ensured Yusuf Pasha would not get hold of the money he seeks as he deemed such a monopoly as a serious threat to British interest in the region. This only slowed down the imperial ambitions of Yusuf Pasha as while maintaining an *entente cordiale* with al-Kanemi by once again helping him win a victory over Baghirmi in 1821, he was still conspiring to raise the necessary financial means to occupy the territory under al-Kanemi's control.

In the meantime, impressed by the appearance sustained by Yusuf Pasha, Al-Kanemi sent three of his sons to reside in Murzuk, the administrative center of Fezzan under the auspice of al-Mukni. Yusuf Pasha once again thought that it was time to send another expedition when Warrington had asked him to provide safe conduct for a team of British explorers meant to discover Bornu. After agreeing to Warrington's request, Pasha had the company delayed about a year in order to assemble the force he needed to occupy Bornu. Travelers delay must have raised the suspicions of al-Kanemi as he militarily prepared his realm against a foreign invasion and requested his son's release by Yusuf Pasha. After one last attempt to secure the financial resources by applying for a loan from the British government to provision his invading army, Yusuf Pasha necessarily abandoned his plan to expand southwards due to the ongoing Greek rebellion, to fight against which Yusuf Pasha was asked by Sublime Porte to equip two vessels (Fölayan 1971 463-76).

Being uncomfortable with the ascendancy of consular nodes of power, Yusuf Pasha tried to reassert his power by taking two measures. Firstly, he revitalized his long-neglected navy by a round of fresh investment. For a time, smaller European powers restarted to pay the price of peace, however, in light of the recent naval growth of the French and the British, this venture was doomed to fail. Secondly, he appointed Hassuna D'Ghies<sup>33</sup> as his foreign minister, specifically giving him the task of curtailing the powers of British and French Consuls in Tripoli. D'Ghies's principal tactic was to balance Warrington with

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<sup>33</sup> Hassune D'Ghies was a member of an established Tripolitan merchant family. He was an utterly spectacular character for any historian. His father and brother also served in Yusuf Pasha's government. He was well acquainted with the European ways of diplomacy. Documents from the Ottoman archives suggests that Ottoman Ambassador at London, Nuri Efendi wanted him to be flattered by Sublime Porte so that he can continue benefitting from his precious knowledge (COA.HAT.1174.46429, 27 Zilkade 1250/27 March 1835). We also have evidence that he traveled with the company of Nuri Efendi's predecessor Namik Pasha to Manchester. See for reference to Hassune D'Ghies's presence with the Ottoman delegation's journey to Manchester and Liverpool; (*Londra Seyahatnamesi*, İÜ NEK-TY, fol. 56b). (My special thanks are due to İsa Uğurlu who kindly pointed to this joint journey from London to Manchester in one of our private conversations and shared with me the manuscript I cite here) In one of his journeys to England, he also came across with the influential philosopher Jeremy Bentham and provided him with the information he requested for the preparation of his "*Securities against Misrule, adapted to a Mahomedan State and prepared with particular reference to Tripoli in Barbary*", for detailed information see: (Hume 1980)

the French Consul Charles Rousseau. For some time, his plan proved to be effective. Nevertheless, as it is aptly put by Fölayan, these were “more like flickers of a dying fire” (Fölayan 1979, 108) rather than policies that can be systematically applied in view of the present economic conditions of the Tripoli, given that now, apart from the developments I already touched upon, Tripoli was struck by recurring famines throughout the 1820s. It was only a matter of time that Warrington would find a scheme to obstruct Yusuf Pasha’s renewed bid for power. Using a fabricated story to pressure the Pasha to dismiss the Hassuna D’Ghies on the charges of conspiring against Consul’s son-in-law, Warrington had Pasha issue a statement which publicly accuses the French consul and his minister for getting involved with the murder of Major Laing. Warrington’s victory was two-folded, having D’Ghies removed while at the same time striking a blow to the growing influence of Rousseau (Abun-Nasr 1987, 202). Added up to already existing undercurrents of political weakness, Pasha’s statement had given a push to the chain of events that would bring his rule to an end.

#### **2.2.4 Last Years of Yusuf Pasha**

Before going forward to elaborate on the development of this political breakdown, it is imperative to discuss the aggravation of the financial problems of the Tripolitan treasury, especially after 1829 because it appears as the utmost bone of contention between the Consuls of British and French governments and Yusuf Pasha. To supply the drained treasury with fresh inflow, Yusuf Pasha came up with the plan to invade Bornu, which, unfortunately for Pasha, failed. Moreover, the short-lived revival of piracy proved to be a futile effort to refill it. After these developments, Yusuf Pasha resorted to the good old method of debasing the Tripolitan currency. However, he took it to the extreme by doing these seven times within the scope of three years between 1829-1832. The inevitable outcome was an extremely volatile marketplace from which regular attendants started to shy away. The problem for the treasury was even more serious because it also deprived Yusuf of the exactions he used to take from the merchants. The Tripolitan government started to confiscate any property which claimants to it could not document their ownership. Yusuf’s legitimacy was taking serious damages from such outrageous measures.



In the meantime, he tried to address the shortage of money by dragging himself into over-indebtedness. He resorted to a surprisingly modern method of raising loans when he started to issue promissory papers which resembles today's state bonds. However, it also turned into a vicious cycle of reproducing his debts because every time the deadline of a set of papers came close, a new set of promissory papers were issued. The real problem arose when merchants of smaller nations such as Sweden or Denmark started to transfer their assets to British and French traders, knowing that their own consuls would not be able to exert the pressure to liquidate their assets. Consequently, nearly all these papers accumulated in the hands of the French and British subjects, allowing their Consuls to manipulate Yusuf Pasha as they see in alignment with their interests (Fölayan 1979, 129-134).

As a result, the resentment of French Consul Rousseau was to cost Yusuf Pasha dearly. In August 1830, French Admiral Rosamel with the naval squadron under his command had come aboard the Tripoli urging Yusuf Pasha to sign a treaty in which he obliged him to refrain from meddling with the French interest in occupied Algeria and to limit the size of the Tripolitan fleet. It was also added in the treaty that Rousseau had nothing to do with the murder of Major Laing. We see here that Yusuf Pasha was sacrificing his power by accepting a foreign imposition with regards to the size of his navy. An additional request coming from Rosamel was the liquidation of the assets of Pasha's French creditors. In return, Warrington decided to retaliate for the allegedly uneven treatment the British creditors had as their share. Coupled with the repudiation of the accusations put forth against Rousseau, Yusuf Pasha was about to feel Warrington's wrath right up to his bones (Abun-Nasr 1987, 202).

The already damaged authority of Yusuf Pasha had continued to decline in the countryside. In 1831, Evlad-ı Süleyman, sensing the feebleness of the pasha, put up a rebellion against centralized Tripolitan rule once again. Judging from Warrington's conduct some historians rightly speculated that Warrington actively promoted the leader of this tribe, Abdulcelil Seyfinnasr<sup>34</sup> to lead an armed resistance in order to prepare the country for a possible British invasion. Abdulcelil himself requested from Warrington that he should lobby in favor of his government's occupation of the Tripoli (Abun-Nasr

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<sup>34</sup> For a nearly contemporary account of Abdülcelil political career see: (Subtil 1844)

1987, 203).<sup>35</sup> In the meantime, Warrington was squeezing the pasha for the settlement of the debts of the British creditors because of the recent payments made to the French. After he refused Yusuf's offer to liquidate these accounts with intermittent installments, he threatened Pasha to summon the British naval forces. It was soon understood that Warrington was keen on living up to his promise when British warships came ashore to demand the payment of the debts on July 14, 1832. It was, in fact, the exact moment when Yusuf's political career was permanently sealed. To pay back his enormous debts, he sold everything in his possession, only to understand that they would not cover what he owes to British creditors. As a last resort, he summoned the notables of the city including those who are traditionally exempt from taxation and announced an emergency tax. Pretending to be compliant, the *Kuloğlu* stroke the banner of rebellion when they returned to their quarters, announcing Yusuf's grandson as their Pasha. After they formed an alternative government with some former members of Yusuf Pasha's regime, Warrington also permanently settled in *Menşiyeye*. His effort made sure that Abdülcelil's rebellion would be combined with that of Mehmed's.

Having spent last thirty-seven years of his life in power, Yusuf Pasha presided over one last *divan* meeting, after which it is decided that Yusuf's only chance was to abdicate in favor of his youngest son Ali and inform the Sublime Porte about the situation. The letter he sent to Istanbul started the process that ended up with the Ottoman intervention in 1835.

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<sup>35</sup> For a more substantiated opinion see: (Fölayan 1979, 120).

### 3. PRELUDE TO OTTOMAN INTERVENTION

#### 3.1. Milestones of Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman North Africa in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The relationship between the North African provinces and Ottoman center had traditionally been based on a mutual understanding given that it was not imposed by territorial conquest in the first place. Even though the Ottomans started to appoint governors from the center late sixteenth century onwards, they never ferociously seek ultimate integration of these provinces. This was due to a combination of factors. Even if we dismiss the problems of logistics created by the harsh winds of the winter and operational radius of galleys as structural barriers to an effective policy of centralization, the Ottomans would have been in a position to negotiate with different power groups such as Janissaries, local ulema and various tribal groups, alienation of which would be detrimental to Ottoman operations in the western Mediterranean in the 16th century. In the following centuries, though the Habsburg frontier in the Mediterranean ceased to exist, the corsairs' role as the most effective part of the Sultan's navy, motivated Ottomans to continue maintaining the *status quo*. As long as the treasury kept fed by the annual tribute they sent and the North Africans targeted successfully the Mediterranean operations of the European powers, thereby blocking the full commercial exposure of the Mediterranean to European traders, and occasionally participated in seasonal naval patrolling campaigns, Ottomans were satisfied with minimal political involvement with the local affairs (Gürkan 2010, 156).

When the decentralization of political authority became the salient feature of the Ottoman dominions in the 18th century, Ottoman center mostly abandoned the administrative practices such as acting as the supervisor of the military cooperation between three provinces, or assuming the role of a mediator between the three provinces in case of a

border dispute, or regularly sending investigative envoys to ensure the maintenance of justice (Gürkan 2010, 157-160). Each province produced a ruling elite that would address such issues amongst themselves and except for Algeria, governorship became hereditary. The most important is that each province started to dictate its own foreign policy priorities and struck deals with European powers independently from late 17th century onwards. On the other hand, they also continued to seek recognition from the Ottoman Sultan as it was probably the most effective tool of legitimacy while also meaning diplomatic protection of an Empire that could be accounted as a world power. In every renewal of governorship, Ottoman Sultan had sent gifts to these rulers which included most needed materials such as arms and ammunition; and occasionally fully-equipped warships. It is also important to highlight that the perception of these provinces as semi-independent regencies was not confined to Europeans, Ottomans themselves recognized this reality as well.

The turn of the 19th century reinforced the notion of independence from the Sublime Porte as a self-perception of North African rulers, especially in the case of Tripoli of Yusuf Pasha. He assumed the title of *emir'ul-muminin* in his official correspondence which is normally used by Ottoman Sultan himself as a manifestation of Ottomans' claim to Caliphate (Hanioglu 2010, 10). Moreover, in every chance he gets, Yusuf Pasha not only reiterated that he is an independent ruler but also occasionally acted against the overall Ottoman interest. For example, I have already cited the extortions committed against Ragusan shipping in Chapter 1. Normally, Ragusan merchants were the subjects of the Ottoman Sultan, and their nominal diplomatic status was no different than that of Tripolitans. Counting on this, Ragusan merchants appealed to Ottoman Sultan for him to stop Yusuf Pasha's illegal demands of tribute. When presented with the *ferman* issued by Ottoman Sultan, Yusuf Pasha claimed that "you reckon that this *ferman* matters, but anyone who pays forty *kuruş* can get one of these, in my eyes this is nothing but a piece of paper" (Quoted in Taş 2016, 425) More dramatic was Yusuf Pasha's policy during the Napoleon's Egyptian expedition. Infuriated by a long-standing ally's infringement of Ottoman territorial integrity, Sultan Selim III had sent orders to North African rulers to prey on French shipping as well as a ruling to blockade the Toulon port.<sup>36</sup> He also

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<sup>36</sup> The *hüküm* sent to Algiers (COA.C.HR.3.1796, 29 Ramazan 1214/24 February 1800). Sublime Porte requested from North African provinces to capture and arrest any personnel serving to the French State. Another request was the equipping of strong warships to fight against the infidels (COA.C.HR.54.2655). However, Algerians took it to the extreme and continued their hunt of French shipping even after a settlement was reached amongst Ottoman and French

requested the participation of Tripolitan naval forces in Ottoman campaign. Yusuf ostensibly abided by the ruling of Sultan, but in effect, he did not see any profit in damaging his own relationship with France. Accordingly, he delayed the departure of the Tripolitan navy on purpose as far as he can before permanently calling it off with the excuse of his own political problems, started to commercially gain by supplying French forces with foodstuff and lastly allowed Tripoli to act as a communicative liaison between Napoleon and Paris given that British exterminated the French naval force that would normally carry out the official communication of the Egyptian expedition (Taş 2016, 276-287).

While the aftermaths of the Congresses of Vienna and Aix-la-Chapelle represent continuity for the Ottoman position, it signifies a turning point for the North Africans. Sublime Porte's approach can be followed in a *hatt-ı hümayun* of Mahmud II which summarizes a diplomatic exchange of words between Sublime Porte and Austrian delegation right after the Congress of Vienna.<sup>37</sup> As it is well-known Sublime Porte did not send a delegation to Vienna in 1815 even though Prince Metternich made his effort convince Sultan Mahmud II to send a representative to discuss the integration of the Ottoman Empire into European States System as a barrier against Russian southward expansion. Ottoman pretension at the time was the full recognition of the territorial designations of Treaty of Bucharest which provisioned the Ottoman-Russian borders to return to pre-war conditions in the Caucasia and Balkans (Bitis, 2006, 30-31). On the other hand, Russians were deliberately delaying the evacuation of former Ottoman territories. Moreover, rumors were circulating that Russia would bring the Serbian Question to Congress. Therefore, Sublime Porte notified Prince Metternich that Ottoman Sultan would send a delegation only if Austria was to guarantee act as a mediator in the settlement of Russo-Ottoman Caucasian dispute in favor of Sublime Porte. Even though Metternich was utterly uncomfortable with the Russian advances at the expense of Ottomans, given European powers' delicate preoccupation with the partition of Poland

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States. It seemed that the outbreak of war was imminent as the French navy headed towards the Algiers from Toulon Port. Then Sublime Porte interfered and mediated a ceasefire and peace between Algerians and the French. Ottoman effort was successful, and the word was received that the French navy returned halfway (COA. HAT.242.13584, 23 Cemaziye'l-Evvel 1217/21 September 1802 & COA.HAT.175.7646). It is important to state that given the Algerian enthusiasm to act in accordance with the Ottoman interests, Yusuf Pasha' defiance stands even more interesting. Make no mistake, however, each party was acting on his own foreign policy priorities, feeding into their mostly independent status.

<sup>37</sup> See COA, HAT, 22537, 1231/1815-1816. This crucial document is transcribed and published by Erdem Taş as an appendix to his Ph.D. thesis. See Appendix 14 (Taş 2016, 493-498).

after Napoleon's evacuation, he had to refuse Ottoman's request for an Austrian mediation.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, he promised to bring the Ottoman interests on the table (Sedivý, 2013, 39-41). It turned out that he actually intended to live up to his promise when the final decision about the concerted efforts to suppress piracy was reached. Metternich asked Austrian delegation in Istanbul to inquire the official Ottoman stance regarding the Algerians' diplomatic status.

At the time, the British fleet under the command of Lord Exmouth was fighting the Algerians. Metternich was concerned about taking a wrong decision which would strain Ottoman-Austrian relations. His delegation was requiring the answer for Metternich to put forth the Ottoman claims in the next meeting intended to take place in London. It is understood that the crux of the matter was Sublime Porte's attitude if the scope of the European anti-piracy policy would be broadened in the upcoming meeting in London. Austrian delegation wanted to make sure whether Ottomans would maintain neutrality or allow Europeans to take necessary precautions to suppress piracy or take the matter in its own hands, thereby cutting European involvement altogether. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman camp was divided. The minority view was seeing English aggression against the Algerians as a violation of Ottoman territorial integrity not only because they are worthy of the caliph's backing as fellow Muslims but also because Algeria is historically an Ottoman territory. The dominant view, however, did not see English actions as a violation because in their view "that the regencies are independent in matters pertaining to concluding peace with and declaring war to European states except for Russian and Austrian states is known by everybody." Therefore, Ottoman involvement with the matter would be unprecedented. Well, these conversations were behind the doors and the answer given to Austrian was much more diplomatic: "what would you say if you were asked to a similar question about your own subjects who are also your co-religionists?" (Taş 2016, 496).

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<sup>38</sup> In this context, it is crucial to add that the issue of Barbary corsairs was brought forward by the Russians during the deliberations. They were keen to obtain a portion of the Barbary coast to have a military commercial base of operations. This was adding to Metternich's displeasure as he was determined to sustain "the status quo in the Near East against the threat of Russian expansion." (Vick 2014, 222-223). This point of view is also reflected in the Ottoman documentation. It is understood from Mahmud II's response to his officers that in case Europeans are only seeking to protect their interests in the Mediterranean, it is better to mediate between the regencies and them, however, if they want to totally eliminate the regencies and "if the Russians are really intended to secure some posts there, it would be hard to settle the matter." (*ancak merâmları bütün bütün ocakları kaldırmak ve Rusyalı ol tarafta bazı mahall zabt etmek ise o takdîrce ortasını bulmak müşkildir*) (Taş 2016, 493)

As for the meaning of these Congresses for the North African's positions, we can again follow their attitude in another *hatt-ı hümayun* of Mahmud II. Alarmed by the final decision taken at Aix-la-Chapelle which ruled that Europeans should apply for the Ottoman mediation with regards to the suppression of piracy and subsequent operations of the joint British-French fleet, rulers of the provinces of Algeria and Tunis sent letters to Sultan Mahmud II in which they requested the continuation of Sultan's diplomatic backing. These were in effect written to protest the position taken by Ottoman center after the deliberations in the *Meclis-i Vükela* about the Europeans' request for mediation because of the alleged infringements of valid international agreements by North African corsairs. It appears that after giving evasive answers to European diplomatic missions in Istanbul, Sublime Porte also advised the North African powers "to abstain from attacking the ships of these states and to pay attention to protect the frontiers of the Islamdom and to get along well with them" (COA.HAT.1267.49039, 1818). In return, these letters were positing that while each province was fully acting in accordance with the agreements they signed with them, Europeans were aiming at the complete annulment of these treaties, thereby taking down the entire customs revenue system operational in North African ports. Besides, Europeans were also trying to prevent North African ships of any kind to carry arms and ammunition. The clearly intended message is that the Sublime Porte and the Sultan should not be led astray by the allegations put forth by Europeans and continue to side with his loyal subjects. While the concerns of the Algerians and Tunisians demonstrate their desire to feel the support of Ottoman Sultan, Mahmud II's note on the matter is even more telling as to how he situates this part of his realm in his mind: "peoples of Algiers are of the kind that is tough and courageous, even all the Christian states join forces, it would not be in their power (to defeat them), may god's help be with them forever" (COA.HAT.1267.49039, 1818). Significantly, neither those who drafted the *hatt-ı hümayun* nor Mahmud II makes a reference to strengthening the North African provinces against the rising pressure of Europeans. In a way, it signals the decreasing degree of cooperation between the Ottoman center and North African periphery. While Algerians and Tunisians wanted to get closer, the Ottoman mentality seems to alienate them.

Likewise, in the case of Yusuf Pasha, the years after the Aix-la-Chapelle represented a dramatic change. Now, not only he abandoned the proud overtone in addressing the Ottoman Sultan and assumed a much humbler discourse, but also his navy became an

essential part of the Ottoman forces fighting the Greek rebels. Even in the most distressing financial situation, that is after 1825, he continued to supply Ottoman forces with ships and manpower (Taş 2016, 425).

The ongoing discussion demonstrates that the Ottoman center was, in fact, sustaining the very principle in place from the late 16th century onwards. From their perspective, the ruling elites in three of the provinces, as long as they continue to cooperate with the Ottoman war efforts, could sustain their independence from the Sublime Porte. It is also Ahmet Cevdet Pasha's impression that Mahmud II's overestimation of the military prowess of the North Africans was a wide-spread phenomenon amongst the Ottoman ruling elite. He also reports that the Ottoman attitude during the question of Barbary corsairs gave possible aggressors the pretext to deny Ottoman territorial claims in the North African provinces (Ahmed Cevdet Paşa 1301, 229-230) and it was exactly the case when French diplomats played the game of "farcical diplomacy of denial"<sup>39</sup> when French land forces embarked upon the conquest of Algeria.<sup>40</sup>

The real game-changer in the Ottoman point of view is the French annexation of Algeria. Ercüment Kuran's ageless study of the Ottoman Policy against the French aggression and the subsequent failure of the diplomacy has shown that Ottoman diplomats sustained the same rhetoric of Algeria being an Ottoman province in the international arena. It must also be added that this seemingly unexpected French success dragged Ottoman ruling elite into a nightmare of how to secure rest of the Ottoman North Africa from the French imperial aspirations. This fearful frenzy is best exemplified by a letter written by Kaptan-ı Derya Halil Rıfat Pasha to Mahmud II (COA.HAT.364.20161-D, 25 Safer 1247/5 August 1831). It is worth quoting at length to better demonstrate the mood of Ottoman decision-makers.

“In view of the French ships that we come across ever since we sailed to the Mediterranean with the glorious imperial navy, it is apparent that French is intent to annex Algeria and may God forbid (*ma'azallah-ı teala*) if it remains in their hands they would never be satisfied and find excuses to move on to Tunis and Tripoli to invade and to subjugate.....and given that it is possible for them to be

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<sup>39</sup> I borrow this term from Mustafa Minawi who used it in a similar context of inconsequential diplomatic efforts of Ottoman ambassadors to remind the French and the British that Tripolitan hinterland is Ottoman's sphere of influence according to Final Act of Berlin Congress. In the 1890s, they were also either evaded or lied to; see (Minawi 2016, 74-79).

<sup>40</sup> For a recent study of French colonization of Algeria see: (Sessions 2011).



victorious, Oh my lord, we have to never lay down on the issue of Algiers and do everything in our power either in the form of talking, writing or expressing (*ka'len ve kalemen ve ifadeten*) to have them evacuate.”

Nevertheless, the delineation of a thorough North African policy had to wait until Mehmed Ali's Syrian campaign was diplomatically worked through. Around the same time with the arrival of Halil Rifat Pasha's frenzied letter, the word reached the Sublime Porte that Egyptian forces are on their way to annex Syria which Mehmed Ali had asked as the prize of his participation in the suppression of Greek rebellion in Morean peninsula. In fact, the file in which Rifat Pasha's letter is stored in the Ottoman archives also contains two other documents referring to the naval preparations Mehmed Ali was making in the summer of 1831. In the first one, the intended purpose of these preparations is not known but the intelligence was alarming enough to keep a record of as Ottomans were suspicious of Pasha for some time (COA.HAT.20161-I). In the second document, however, Mehmed Ali Pasha's plan is out in the open: the ships were destined to sail to Acre to supply the Egyptian army from where the forces under Ibrahim's command would head to meet the army of Mehmed Pasha in Hums (COA.HAT.364.20161-D, 25 Safer 1247/5 August 1831). After defeating Mehmed Pasha, Ibrahim went on to confront Hüseyin Pasha at the battle of Bilan, which was a decisive victory on the part of Egyptian forces. Another victory followed on the plains of Konya in 1832 from where Ibrahim's forces proceeded to Kütahya (Fahmy 2002, 61-67). The consecutive defeats of the Ottoman field armies led Mahmud II to seek Russian help in containing the Mehmed Ali's hazardous advancement in the Anatolia. This, Russians agreed and started agglomerate large numbers of soldiers in Istanbul, Beykoz. Such a bold move on the part of Mahmud II was risking the growing influence of Russians in the Istanbul and stimulated the British and French to put pressure on Mehmed Ali to reach an agreement with Mahmud II (Kurat 2011, 60-61).

Even though it was an agreement that would please none of the parties, the Sublime Porte could now divert full attention to dealing with North African question. It must be stated that the letter I cited at length above doesn't outweigh either one of the so-called remaining provinces, however, when Mehmed Ali and Sultan finally concluded the tedious peace of Kütahya, Tripoli was torn apart by a succession struggle going on between Mehmed and Ali Karamanlı. The Tripolitan exposure to a possible outside invasion led Ottoman decision-makers to prioritize the problems of Karamanlı family. It

is also important to highlight that even though the stimulant for the Sublime Porte was as such, the final decision as to how to work out the process was not clearly delineated until late 1834. The matter complicated as Ottoman field agents were dragged more and more into the intrigues of Tripolitan and international politics, only then the final plan was devised to remove Karamanli family from power. In the last analysis, growing French influence was only a fraction of the Ottoman motivations, as claimants to the Tripolitan territory were not limited only to the French Monarchy.

## **3.2. Ottoman Decision Making at Work During the Tripolitan Civil War**

### **3.2.1 The Tripolitan Civil War (1832-1835)**

In the first chapter, I already enumerated the reasons why the rebellion against the Yusuf Pasha broke out. Politically paralyzed by his grandson's opposition, Yusuf Pasha was left with no choice but to abdicate from the throne. However, he could have delivered it to his rebellious grandson. After all, Yusuf Pasha himself was a rebel once. Moreover, the wide-spread support Mehmed gathered around his cause was closely resembling those who backed up Yusuf Pasha during his succession struggle between 1791-1793. Nevertheless, it did not turn out that way. It is, therefore, time to account for the persistence of civil war conditions in the Tripoli for about three years.

To understand why it has continued for three years despite various attempts of the Ottoman agents to mediate between the two parties, one must pay close attention to the political factions on the scene. It is imperative to highlight that this was a revolution from below. Instead of Mehmed having organized the entire attempt, he was announced Pasha by those who were extremely critical of his grandfather's rule. Consequently, the challenge to Yusuf Pasha's rule had risen on 26 July 1832. While the city was burst in worry and people were taking up arms to defend themselves, the leaders of the rebellion came together in a gathering organized in *Menşiye*. The social profile of those who showed up in the gathering reveals the nature of the opposition against Yusuf's rule. It was an alliance of propertied Turkish and Jewish merchants and political outcasts which is militarily supported by tax-exempt *Kuloğlu* class. While the former group was to risk great financial loss if Yusuf Pasha himself or his policies would continue, the latter group was characterized by their alienation from Yusuf Pasha due to the factitious political life

of Tripoli. The principal contention of these men such as Mehmed Beytülmal and Murad Reis was the growing power of D'Ghies family in Karamanlı court. Especially the former resented twice being superseded by members of this family when Yusuf Pasha appointed them as his foreign ministers, a position which he desperately wanted to occupy. What must have aggravated the opposition of the Mehmed Beytülmal to Ali Bey was probably his marriage relationship with the D'Ghies family.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, as a man of political and financial capital, he was determined to put all the economic power he had into good use against Ali's newly forming regime. Therefore, after Ali's unsanctioned accession to the throne of Tripoli, Beytülmal swiftly packed up and sailed to Malta from where he would supply much-needed arms, ammunition, and foodstuff for the Mehmed's rebellious camp stationed in *Menşiye* (Folayan 1979, 143).

The mismanagement of the country was pinned on Yusuf Pasha and leaders of the rebellious group had chosen not to trust Ali Bey who, they thought, will continue Yusuf Pasha's policies. Mehmed, on the other hand, was considered to be easily pliable due to his young age. Indeed, it was a good estimation. Before the crowd swore allegiance to Mehmed, the leaders of the opposition had Mehmed pledge to set the precedent to act under certain conditions, which Folayan argues, amounts to a Constitution. While Beytülmal became the chief minister, Murad Reis assumed the admiralty. Mehmed's alternative government took a wise step by recognizing Abdülcelil Seyfünnasır, the rebellious leader of Evlad-ı Süleyman who had taken control over Fezzan for about a year now, as the legitimate governor of the region (Folayan 1979, 144-145)

Inside the walls of the city, another camp was also forming. It is important to remember that when the rebellion of Mehmed broke out, Ali Bey had yet to assume his father's position. given his father's old age he decided to take the initiative to provide a smooth transition. He had the backing of most of the members of father's regime apart from those people I have touched upon above. Ali's former successes in suppressing Gharian risings in 1826 and 1831 was speaking loud as to indicate he would be the one to put an end to the ongoing upheaval. Nevertheless, it was not an easy decision to make while some members of the *divan* argued Yusuf's abdication would not only fuel up the existing rebellions but also encourage another one. After two weeks of deliberations, Ali finally rose up to the highest position in the Tripoli, only to be further challenged by his nephew.

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<sup>41</sup> Ali Bey's marriage alliance is revealed in the correspondence of Reşid Bey (later Pasha), Ottoman ambassador to Paris at the time, see (COA.HAT.46419. 1250).

It must also be added that most of the Karamanlı family was with him. His immediate brother, Ibrahim, came second in command and two of his lesser brothers assumed the control of military forces.

Now, the camps were ready to intensify their efforts to take full control over the Tripoli and the region stretching into the Sahara. Apart from the actual struggle on land and the sea, there were two principle and defining political challenges facing these alternative governments. Each party was in dire need to broaden their social basis as much as they required international recognition, especially that of Ottoman Sultan if either one of them was to subdue the other.

Ali Bey's party was much more agile in seeking foreign recognition. Right after he succeeded to the throne, he not only notified the resident consuls of the European states in Tripoli but also dispatched his agents across Europe to notify European states on their own soil. While Muhammad D'Ghies as his chief minister sailed to Malta to seek British recognition, his brother Hassuna was lobbying in London and Paris to win over Ottoman support.<sup>42</sup> It is also important to say that Yusuf was also writing letters all over to explain the legality of his abdication and legitimacy of Ali Bey's accession. Even though the situation was in favor of Ali Bey, resident consuls had been also divided amongst themselves. While consuls of Tuscany and America got aligned with Mehmed, the Dutch, Swede, Neapolitan, and Spanish representatives expressed their support for Ali Bey. Nevertheless, what mattered first and foremost was the respective positions of British and French governments. Officially sanctioned position of each government was to remain neutral as long as possible up until an official note of investiture favoring one of warring parties would arrive from the Sublime Porte (Folayan 1979, 145-148).

Things on the ground, however, was utterly different. In direct contrast with what their governments wanted them to do, the British Consul Warrington and the French Consul Schwebel worked ferociously to ensure their candidate arise triumphantly. According to Warrington, British interests as he saw them lied with Mehmed's accession to power. Accordingly, he moved the British embassy in Tripolitan city walls to *Menşiye* quarters where Mehmed's rebellion was based. Schwebel, on the contrary, sided with Ali Bey. The consuls' defiance of governmental orders was due to several reasons. First was the personal animosity grown out of the Warrington's ceaseless efforts to curb French

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<sup>42</sup> See for Namık Bey's report containing information on his interviews with Hassune D'Ghies: (COA.HAT.1173.46423)

influence in the Tripoli which sometimes amounted to outrageous insults to his opponents. Their rivalry was also deeply rooted in the long-standing colonial rivalry between their respective countries. It seemed obvious to Warrington that all the Schwebel's activities were intended to carve out another colony for his Metropolitan France. He accordingly wrote to British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies Frederick Goderich that "if Ali succeeds, this place will be more than a colony of France as the advantages would be derived without the odium of the expenses." Suspicions were, on the other hand, reciprocal. The two frigates British stationed off the coast to protect British subjects seemed evidence enough for Schwebel and French circles to think that these vessels are the advance party of an imminent British occupation of the country (Folayan, 1979, 149). At this point, it is important to remind that Ottoman diplomatic missions in London and Paris were carefully taking notes of such rumors and speculations.

Warrington had contributed to Mehmed's cause in several ways. Apart from his efforts to propagate Mehmed as the main medium through which the British government could extend its influence in the region, he also futilely tried to convince his superiors to intervene militarily to secure Mehmed's victory as he thought that the British ascendancy in Tripoli would translate as a colonial gateway to all North Africa, as taking over of the commerce of the interior and as a means to abolish slavery. More importantly, he assumed the role of an intermediary, connecting leadership of the Mehmed's rebellion to its Arab allies in the hinterland, thereby making sure of regular supplies of warriors. He also attended the material needs of the rebellious camp by procuring arms and ammunitions. These were, indeed, among the reasons that Şakir Efendi accused him of being the reason why the chaos does not cease.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Ali Bey had written quite several letters to British authorities asking the dismissal of Warrington.<sup>44</sup>

French Consul Schwebel, on the other hand, was not falling short of Warrington in his own efforts to advertise the rule of Ali Bey as the legitimate one. He got in touch with his connections across Europe to encourage them to publish articles condemning Mehmed's rebellion and Warrington's support. One of the biggest achievements of Schwebel's and

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<sup>43</sup> For Warrington's mentions in Şakir Efendi's reports, (COA.HAT.456.22487-A, 9 Receb 1250/11 November 1834).

<sup>44</sup> Ali Bey wrote a letter intended directly to the King of England. He, likewise, asked Ottoman ambassador to London Namık Bey to lobby for the dismissal of the Consul Warrington. For the former see (COA.HAT.788.36747 (22 Ramazan 1250/22 January 1835). For the latter see (COA.HAT.738.34986).

Ali Bey's cooperation was probably the winning over of *Cebel-i Garbi* Arabs, led by Şeyh Guma to their side. It was beyond doubt had important consequences in terms of military superiority, tilting the balance in favor of Ali Bey. After Arabs of *Cebel-i Garbi* and Evlad-ı Süleyman was included in the struggle, it expanded to sweep all the Tripolitan interior.

The military confrontations started as early as July of 1832. Vigorous attempts on the part of Mehmed at taking the city through a siege came to naught before the well-armed walls of the Tripoli. After six months of siege and multiple open field confrontation, Mehmed decided to increase his numerical strength by winning more Berber and Arab allies. When it came to February of 1833, Mehmed's forces were once more repulsed, suffering heavy losses. It would hard to estimate that it came much to their relief when Abdülcelil supplied the Mehmed a fresh round of reinforcements. However, the city walls were still unbreachable which is why the rebellious camp thought that it would be wise to use heavy armaments to breach the walls. As noted above Mehmed Beytülmal was tasked with procuring this equipment from Malta. Nevertheless, the very next confrontation had seen yet another defeat for the Mehmed's party and most of the heavy war equipment passed on to the hands of Ali Pasha. It is safe to say that the energetic and hopeful aura surrounding the Mehmed's party was slowly evaporating by the December of 1833 while Ali's party was becoming bolder and bolder (Folayan 1979, 155-157).

In April 1834, after pushing back the rebel forces, Ali took the offensive and started a heavy bombardment of the *Menşiye* that lasted about three months. It was a traumatic experience on the part of Mehmed's supporters such that they lost faith in their own military capacity to terminate the struggle in their favor. Turning desperately to the British Consul who reported to his government that they promised to become a "voluntary Colony of England" if his majesty would intervene militarily to put an end to Ali Bey's control of the city and remove him from the power (Folayan 1979, 157). The overseas intervention they so recklessly sought to secure, however, had come from another direction, in a way no one would have expected. Now, the so-called "Sick Man of Europe" was hesitantly rising from his bed to assert direct control over the entire Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan.

### 3.2.2 Claimants to Tripolitan Territory

In the years between 1829 and 1835, the race to seize the political control of the Tripolitan territory had attracted quite a number of competitors. Ottoman Sultan was by no means the only one who had wished to integrate this lively center of Saharan trade, though mismanaged for some time, into his imperial domains. Without getting into detail, I already enumerated the attendees of this fierce competition. It is, therefore, imperative to situate these in the picture. Only then, it would be clear enough that for the Ottomans the intervention of 1835 was a way of reasserting their imperial prowess in the context of international competition.

Looking from the Ottoman perspective, there were perceived and real threats. Especially the English threat was more perceived than real. The British government repeatedly reminded consul Warrington that Britain does not have a territorial interest in Tripoli when the consul delivered his first suggestion to invade the country. The British position did not change either when Mehmed's party requested a British intervention in favor of their cause. However, as will be discussed further below, Warrington was giving an extreme distrust to Mehmed Şakir Efendi, the Ottoman investigator sent twice by Sublime Porte specifically to estimate the best course of action in Tripoli. On the contrary, there were times when the threat was very much real. Mehmed Ali of Egypt in collaboration with the French plotted to annex all the North Africa including Tripoli just before he launched his Syrian campaign, a plot which is generally known as the Drovetti plan. Moreover, Huseyin Bey of Tunisia also started to think that extending his power by annexing Tripoli would be in his best interest. The Sublime Porte counterbalanced these first by diplomacy and then by resorting to military force.

When Bernardino Drovetti, a long-time servant to the French Monarchy as consul and consul-general in Egypt returned to Paris in retirement in mid-1829, he found an aura of international revisionism. The French foreign minister Polignac was just about to formulate his famous plan to either modify or completely nullify the post-1815 European territorial delineations. Given the outcome of Morean War, he was arguing that Ottoman Empire had come to the end of its place in the history and after its imminent fall, Russia and Austria would share its territories, allowing France to particularly seek Belgium territories up to the line of Meuse and Rhine as a compensation for the disturbance of balances of power. His plan was to be carried out by signing a secret agreement between

France and Russia which would be extended to Prussia, then Austria would have no chance but to get along and join the alliance. Indeed, a plan that would require a huge military force on the part of France. After having it approved by Charles X who was also eager to raise humiliated French nation on its foot in the international arena, the minister ordered the Russian ambassador to communicate with Tsar Alexander I. Carried off by the genius plan he made, Polignac was overlooking the fact that neither Prince Metternich nor Tsar had any interest in tipping the balance in the West or in the East. Having known it very well, the French ambassador in St. Petersburg did not take the chance to embarrass himself in front of Tsar Alexander (Šedivý 2013, 411).

Though never put into action, what is significant about the Polignac plan in the context of our discussion is its presupposition of the inevitability of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and interestingly, he was not alone in this. In a study entitled as “Aperçu de la situation politique de L’Egypte en 1828 et 1829”, Baron de Coehern, attaché of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, was summarizing how the French aspired to see the political map of Levant.<sup>45</sup> He announced that “the most real cause why the people and issues of Egypt are separated from the destiny of Turkish Empire is that the first has just started its future while the other had completed the phases of its existence.” He elaborated by stating that Mehmed Ali was the rising power who “started by making himself the sole master of Egypt, elevated by conquering, subdued the Nubia, choked the Wahhabi reform, reunited Arabia under his son-turned-pasha, established his regime in Cyprus and most recently in a part of Candia.” He continued to propound that “the current position of the Ottoman Empire exposes it to listen more to the cabinet of St. Petersburg and the naval forces of Great Britain” and if France does not want “to play a secondary role”, it must support “the third power that has arisen in the East and whose action is still hidden by an appearance of suzerainty” who would “offer resources to our policy” to form a “new empire.” His position was that by doing so France would “kill two birds with one stone: prevent the disadvantages resulting from the dissolution of Turkish Empire by rallying its pieces around a new empire which offer order and stability in the region” and “reassert the bygone influence France exercised in the Orient.” Even though the naivety of such a position was proved by the eventual outcome of the Mehmed Ali’s Syrian

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<sup>45</sup> This rather blunt memorandum is stored in French Archives with the catalog entry of *A.E.Memoirs et documents. Egypt 19*; and is quoted at length in (Sabryr 1930, 170-172). Translations from French to English are mine. Originals are to be found especially on page 170.



campaign, after which the so-called Turkish Empire continued to survive nearly a century and Russians significantly increased their influence in Istanbul, to which direction this new empire of Mehmed would grow into was not yet determined. This was exactly the moment when Drovetti came up with a brilliant plan to encourage Mehmed Ali to expand westwards, that is, into Tripoli, Tunis, and Algeria.

After the famous fly-whisk episode happened in April 1827 between Hüseyin Dey of Algeria and French Consul Pierre Deval, the French government sought redress with the Sublime Porte. Came out empty-handed, and arguably disgraced, they moved onto a naval blockade to Algerian ports, which was essentially inconsequential as well. In the eyes of Hüseyin Dey, it only worked to prove that France has no intention to escalate the level of violence. In the autumn of 1829, encouraged by unwieldy French policy, Hüseyin Dey made it clear that he would not yield to the French demands of reparation. The truth of the matter, however, was utterly different than it seemed to Hüseyin Dey. At the time, Polignac was not eager to send the precious French troops he hoped to use in redesigning the map of Europe (Šedivý 2013, 413). Therefore, when approached by Drovetti who in fact conducted preliminary talks on his own initiative with Mehmed Ali before his return, Polignac willingly agreed to follow the policy retired Consul of Egypt had suggested. In Drovetti's scheme, Mehmed Ali's army appeared not only as of the punisher of Algerian Dey but also as the conqueror of the Tripoli and Tunisia. If the plan was to succeed, he convinced Polignac that although France would not make any territorial gains, it will make an eternal ally of Mehmed Ali, thereby boosting its influence in the region. It was indeed a plan in accordance with the spirit of the time in Paris. Moreover, the avoidance from a possible English jealousy if the French would undertake a military campaign was a side gain of the plan, after all a stabile north African coastline ruled from Cairo would be to the advantage of every European country (Dodwell, 1931, 97). For the plan, France was ready to transfer a loan of 10 thousand francs along with the cooperation of the French navy.

French diplomats Mimaut and Huder who were tasked to approach Mehmed Ali of Egypt in an official capacity to negotiate the terms of an alliance arrive in Mehmed Ali's court on November 1829. Ostensibly favorable to French suggestions, Mehmed Ali Pasha expressed that he could mobilize forty thousand men for the campaign if the French government would be kind enough to raise for him a loan of twenty million francs and donate four battleships, each equipped with eighty cannons. In fact, Mehmed Ali was not

as enthusiastic as Drovetti originally supposed him to be, but he still did not want to miss the opportunity to boost his bond of friendship with France. Moreover, if French proposals would materialize, it would mean a chance to rebuild his fleet which comes close to complete annihilation. Therefore, though not abandoned for good, the project of occupying Syria and Baghdad was suspended for a while. However, the fact that Mehmed Ali's demands were well beyond what French diplomats were authorized to settle with appeared as a problem. In vain that they tried to convince Mehmed Ali to give up his requests to obtain four French men-of-war. The Pasha obliged them to communicate his counter-proposal. These requests found Polignac still hopeful to obtain Russian help to secure territorial gains in Rhine region. He decided to get along with Mehmed Ali's demands and opened the issue for deliberations with the members of his cabinet. One can only guess what he acted like when opposed by the cabinet who thought the transfer of ships carrying French flag as a disgrace to the French nation. Polignac only induced them to accept extensive help of the French navy, an assignment which would include protecting Alexandria as well as Egyptian transport vessels from a possible attack of Sultan's navy. Moreover, to persuade Mehmed Ali, the French offered to partition North Africa so as to share the financial burden of the campaign. Operations in Tunis and Tripoli would be on Mehmed Ali's account while French would attack Algiers.

The secrecy of these deliberations had been compromised from the start, not only because Drovetti was engaged in loose talk with British representatives in Cairo. Right after Egyptian mission hit the roads for the first round of talks, Polignac had written to Guillemont, the French ambassador in Istanbul, an order in which he requested the ambassador to obtain Sultan's permission sanctioning Mehmed Ali's occupation of the entire north African littoral. When Mehmed Ali heard this, he contemplated that this should be the last thing to do not only because the very effort to secure such a sanction is futile but also because Sultan Mahmud would seek the help of British navy to counteract his over empowerment (Dodwell, 1931, 9). In this estimation, he proved himself to be a man of foresight. The internationalization of the Drovetti plan had been received very badly by Ottoman Sultan and British diplomatic circles. In a rather sarcastic and ironical letter which pretends that the news could be nothing, but rumors taken out of context, the Sublime Porte urged Mehmed Ali to act in accordance with the Sultanic orders and God's providence as it would be "beyond comprehension to send soldiers against a Muslim land in alliance with one of the favored nations" especially given that Mehmed Ali is in "ripe

old age.” (Ahmet Lutfi 1999, v.2, 519-521). It seems that Sublime Porte found it hard to believe “a man who thinks methodically the pros and cons of a matter with extreme precision” by virtue of his “lucid mind and righteous disposition” would embark upon such an outrageous act “to deploy soldiers in alliance with the tribes of the area stretching from the frontiers of Egypt to Moroccan borders against the north African regencies” (Ahmet Lutfi 1999, v.2, 520). It seems to me that the writer of this dispatch was threatening Mehmed Ali by complimenting him. The frequent occurrence of the Sultanic authority and description of Mehmed Ali as a governor instituted by Sultan Mahmud II leads me to speculate that the overpass of France was perceived rightly as undermining Sultan’s suzerainty over Mehmed Ali and Sultan was extremely uncomfortable with such a thing. The dispatch also informed him that Tahir Pasha was sent to settle the matter without bloodshed (Ahmet Lutfi 1999, 521-526).

Even though the British also sent a diplomatic mission to push Mehmed Ali to abort the scheme planned with France, neither the Sultan’s intimidation nor the opposition of enraged British diplomats was the real cause why Mehmed Ali had chosen to give up the mission in the March of 1830. He had too much to risk against what he could expect to achieve by such a campaign. He also found French hesitancy extremely disturbing under the impression that they would not a good enough ally to elevate tensions with the British. If gains would be greater, he would have gone ahead (Dodwell, 1931, 104). The lack of Sultanic approval was very likely to create a legitimacy crisis which would be a source of weakness than strength for Mehmed Ali, far away from his actual power base in Egypt. Then, he turned his eyes from Tripoli, Tunis, and Algeria to his long-awaited prize, Syria.

Even though the Drovetti scheme was abandoned in 1830, the specter of it continued to haunt Ottoman decision-makers. The reason was not only the recent campaign of Mehmed Ali ending with Kütahya agreement. The Sublime Porte had good reasons to believe that Mehmed Ali might have revitalized a plan to annex Tripoli. Moreover, it was not just on the air, it was also in writing. I have already mentioned the treaty Hassune D’Ghies wrote to inform Reşid Bey and the Sublime Porte about the recent situation in the Tripoli. In its essence, it is a reform package intended to reorganize and strengthen the North African regencies. Important to highlight is that the text seems to play a rather decisive role in formulating Sublime Porte’s Tripolitan policy in 1834-1835. Now is the

exact context it should be further discussed with regards to how he tries to convince Sublime Porte to carry out reforms in North Africa.<sup>46</sup>

The proposals of Hassune Efendi are best to be understood as strategies concerned with the evacuation of the French and isolation of Mehmed Ali's westward ambitions. To achieve this, he has specific and detailed instructions. In the case of kicking the French back, the keystone of his proposal is the diplomatic, economic and military empowerment of the Ahmed Bey of Constantine. On the other hand, he posits that if Sublime Porte would like to get rid of Mehmed Ali once and for all, the Tripolitan civil war should be ended by appointing Ali Bey as the governor of Tripoli. He goes on to argue that the rebel Mehmed is a protégé of Mehmed Ali which means that if he succeeds to the governorship, the province would slip through the hands of Ottomans into Mehmed Ali's realm. When the situation in the Tripoli is amended, the potent warriors in the Benghazi who is sick of Mehmed Ali's transgressions could be assembled in a strong army to push him back (Taş 2016b, 100).

What is most significant in Hassune Efendi's succinct account, however, is the worst-case scenario if the Ottoman center would fail to resolve the North African question by taking the measures he proposed. As a result, he argues, Mehmed Ali's power and prowess which is diverted to Damascus only for a short time will enhance. When he has his enemies subdued there, he will turn his attention to North Africa. Most interestingly, he seems to believe that the French military activity against the Ahmed Bey of Constantine is only for laying the ground for Mehmed Ali's takeover. The French position is that if Mehmed Ali grows stronger in the region the British hopes to obstruct French interests in North Africa and the Mediterranean would become obsolete. Therefore, Mehmed Ali and French are going to proceed as following (Taş 2016b, 102).

As a precaution to any possible British maneuver, French will continue to transfer large numbers of soldiers to Algiers. In the meantime, Mehmed Ali will march into Tripoli to put it under the sway of his rule, taking advantage of the weakness of the Pasha of Tripoli. Next step will be the agglutination of Hüseyin Bey of Tunisia to Mehmed Ali's political orbit by making him a vassal. Hassune Efendi seems to believe that this would be an easy task even though Tunis has a powerful army and solid finances because of Hüseyin Bey's disproportionate fear of the French. A threatening letter addressed to Hüseyin Bey,

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<sup>46</sup> The document is published by Erdem Taş, see: (Taş 2016b)

therefore, would be enough to make him yield to the Egyptian political supremacy. Hassune Efendi estimates that a wave of political propaganda will follow the subjugation of Tunisia before Mehmed Ali proceeds to Constantine and Algiers in which Mehmed Ali would be portrayed as the savior of the Muslims of Algeria who suffered heavy losses against the French and saw “their mosques turned into churches of the infidels, barns, commercial warehouses and some other unthinkable of places.” The people follow the suit by submitting to his authority while Mehmed Ali wages an imaginary war against French forces which in effect are retreating to France in accordance with the agreement between the French government and Mehmed Ali. Hassune Efendi goes on to argue that Mehmed Ali will make good use of the abandoned and disordered resources of this fertile land to grow strong enough to challenge all the Franks (*cümle taife-i efrenc*) with the help of his naval alliance with the French government. It seems that Hassune Efendi thinks even the British could not put up a fight against such a formidable alliance (Taş 2016b, 103).

One could not help but notice the resounding similarity of Hassune Efendi’s estimations with the Drovetti plan even though there is no mention of the French diplomat in the document. Moreover, it would be safe to argue that the Ottoman intervention was genuinely motivated to curb the further increase of Mehmed Ali’s political influence in North Africa. Nevertheless, Mehmed Ali was only one of the political contenders to grow more powerful in North Africa.

Hüseyin Bey of Tunisia himself started to think about taking advantage of the Tripolitan upheaval to integrate the region into his realm from October 1833 (Temimi 1975, 72).<sup>47</sup> The mastermind of the Tunisian plan was Hüseyin Bey’s chief minister, Şakir al-Tabi. His scheme included overthrowing the Karamanlı dynasty to put Tripoli under the sway of Mustafa Bey who was Hüseyin Bey’s brother and heir apparent to Tunisian throne. Minister secretly hoped to do away with the heir apparent by sending him to Tripoli, thereby securing the succession for his own brother-in-law Prince Hamza, the eldest son of the reigning Hüseyin Bey. It was a golden opportunity when a call for aid came from the leaders of Mehmed’s rebellion in the Tripoli. Now, the Tunisian army could march into Tripoli and eliminate the two warring camps on this pretext. Nevertheless, Hüseyin Bey found it imperative to consult to the Sublime Porte and to obtain the official sanction

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<sup>47</sup> Hüseyin Bey revealed his intentions to French ambassador Deval. This article is originally written in Arabic. My special thanks are due to my mother Fazilet Kılıçaslan who kindly translated the article from Arabic to Turkish.

of the Sultan Mahmud II (Temimi 1975, 72-73). However, we have evidence that he also ostensibly responded to rebellious camp's call for aid by ordering his representative in Tripoli, Kasım b. Recep, to side with the rebels, probably to ensure the perpetuation of the upheaval until the Sublime Porte's answer arrives. In the meantime, the minister was tasked to assemble the army of occupation. Eventually, Sublime Porte refused the Tunisian plan, the reasons for which I will further discuss below. However, as Mehmed Şakir Efendi's reports reveal, Tunisian involvement continued to hangover like a question mark in the minds of Ottoman decision-makers who eventually decided to establish direct control over the region.

### **3.2.3 Ottoman Policy during the Tripolitan Civil War and Mehmed Şakir Efendi's Missions in Tripoli and Tunis.**

The Sublime Porte's priority during the Tripolitan civil war was to stabilize the region to cut off the possibility of a foreign occupation of the country. However, the way through which it would be carried out was an open question and remained as such until Necip Pasha's naval squadron landed the Ottoman forces it carried to the shores of Tripoli on the 25 May 1835.

After Yusuf Pasha's letter had arrived in Istanbul in January 1833, *Meclis-i Vükela* held a meeting to decide how to proceed with the appointment of Ali Bey as the legitimate governor of the Tripoli. The final act was to delay the fulfillment of the request as it would be a violation of the precedent to renew governorships in North Africa every three years. In fact, Sublime Porte wanted to take the measure of the situation given their on-going occupation with the North African problem. A wrong move would have cost dearly. Accordingly, it was decided to send a trusted man of Kapudan Pasha as an investigator (COA.HAT.366.20242). This was the moment Mehmed Şakir Efendi's troubles started. He was the chief-scribe (*sır katibi*) of the admiral of the time, Mehmed Tahir Pasha. Getting on a ship destined to Tunisia, he sailed to take off in Tripoli on the way. He set foot on Tripoli in late August 1833.

At the time of his arrival, Mehmed Şakir Efendi was most graciously welcomed by Ali Bey while the other contender was away in the interior to settle some local disputes among

his supporters. After Şakir Efendi demanded a complete ceasefire and called for a meeting in which two parties could present their cases to be heard by Sultan's representative, both parties followed suit. After the contending claims were heard, Şakir Efendi was inclined towards the Ali Bey not only because he was the eldest son of the Yusuf Pasha but also because his energetic arguments were much more orderly compared to that of his rival's representatives but also because, as I have already touched upon, the rebellious party was losing its commitment around the time Şakir Efendi arrived at Tripoli. They did not resemble a group extremely determined to win over its rival (Folayan 1979, 158). It seems that after assessing the situation Şakir Efendi departed from Tripoli in late September 1833 due to an order coming from Tahir Pasha, asking him to travel to Tunis.

When the Tunisian plan to annex the Tripoli and appointment of Mustafa Bey as the governor of that region reached the Sublime Porte, they approached it with due care because at first look the success of such a plan could not be taken for granted. On the other hand, if it would turn out to be a success story, the protracted civil war in Tripoli could have been terminated and a possible foreign invasion could be avoided. Nevertheless, the Sublime Porte evaded a formal promise to deliver what Tunisian Bey was asking. Mehmed Tahir Pasha, in his letter to Hüseyin Bey, enumerated Ottoman demands if for the argument's sake Sultan would authorize the Tunisian plans. Apparently, Tahir Pasha sustains, the Sublime Porte may consider such an arrangement under the condition that the Bey of Tunis could indeed bring stability to Tripoli. Hüseyin Bey is also asked to prove the Tunisian government's ability to repel a possible foreign intervention by sending the required number of soldiers, arms and ammunition as well as ships and naval equipment to Tripoli. Moreover, Tahir Pasha reminded the Bey that he must undertake the liability of the foreign debts of Karamanlı family if he wants his son to be recognized as the ruler of Tripoli. Tahir Pasha goes on to add that he is going to send his chief-scribe Mehmed Şakir Efendi to negotiate a final agreement. Upon departing Tripoli, therefore, Şakir Efendi's days in Tunis started.<sup>48</sup> It seems that the gravity of the situation compelled Sublime Porte to consider every single contingency plan.

After his journey from Tripoli to Tunis, Şakir Efendi was obliged to wait the return of Hüseyin Bey's chief minister, Şakir Sahib al-Tabi who was dealing with minor rebellions

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<sup>48</sup> Mehmet Tahir Pasha's letter is included in (Temimi 1975, 73). It is in Arabic translation and it is dated to 1 February 1834.

in the south of Tunisian territories for some time. When he finally made the acquaintance of the chief minister in October 1833, it was revealed in this meeting that the Sublime Porte was inclined to dictate harsh conditions if it was to authorize the unification of Tripoli and Tunis under Huseynid family. In the case that Hüseyin Bey's son, Mustafa, is instituted as the Pasha of Tripoli, Şakir Efendi conditioned a huge lumpsum payment of Tunisian currency as well as a yearly tribute to Ottoman Sultan. It goes without saying that Şakir Efendi restated the obligation of Mustafa to take over Karamanlı debts. In return, the Tunisian chief minister propounded that, under such financial terms, the Tunisian government can't bring stability to Tripoli by sending its troops and navy. The deliberations were stuck and Mehmed Şakir Efendi left the Tunis for Istanbul at the end of the same month (Temimi 1975, 74).

The unfruitful meetings with Tahir Pasha's representative did not discourage Tunisian Chief Minister to get in touch directly with the Tahir Pasha who he thinks has the power to convince the Sultan to obtain the necessary orders instituting Mustafa as the Pasha of Tripoli if the feasibility of Tunisian plan was to be clearly explained. They argued that given the internal financial problems of the Tunis, it would be hard to assume the foreign debts of the Yusuf Pasha as well as assembling an army and a navy powerful enough to pacify the upheaval in Tripoli. Nonetheless, Tunis would be willing to pay the half of the Karamanlı debts upfront and to restructure the remaining half by issuing new promissory papers. It seemed a fair deal to them because they would rebuild the war-torn Tripolitan city as well as bring stability to the entire region whose people are in a state of constant misery and poverty. Moreover, given the call of Mehmed's party, the transition from Karamanlı rule to Huseynid rule would be a bloodless one (Temimi 1975, 74).

Though it was indeed a good line of thought, in August 1834, Grand Vizier Rauf Pasha and Mehmed Tahir Pasha had written two separate letters rejecting the Tunisian plan because the distance between Tripoli and Tunis is too great to employ it with efficiency. On the other hand, they argued that the greatness of the prize Sublime Porte would be bestowing to his person requires a swift proceeding rather than extensive bargaining. Strictly speaking, these were more like excuses than real arguments. In fact, by the time Tunisian counterproposal arrived at Istanbul, the Ottomans were considering the ultimate plan to establish direct Ottoman rule in Tripoli. It would also be unwise to voluntarily carve out a new Mehmed Ali of Egypt out of Huseynids of Tunisia. Therefore, Rauf Pasha



added the Sublime Porte's request for military help in Mehmed Şakir Efendi's efforts to subdue the Mehmed's rebellion (Temimi 1975, 74-75).

For the time being, however, let us come back to the last months of the year 1833 and early 1834. Upon the arrival of the Mehmed Şakir Efendi, the Sublime Porte took its time to grant Ali Bey with the Sultanic order of investiture to watch the course of events and gather more intelligence. It is understood from the Ottoman ambassador to London, Namık Bey's reports that British diplomats started to ask pressuring questions about who would be the next ruler of Tripoli, a fact which led Sublime Porte to speed up the process (COA.HAT.454.22450). Again, Mehmed Şakir Efendi was seen fit for the duty. This time his task was to deliver the order of investiture recognizing Ali Bey as the Pasha of Tripoli and help him to appease the rebellious leaders around Mehmed. In other words, for the time being, the Ottoman official position was to stabilize the region by empowering Ali Bey Karamanlı.

On his second mission, Mehmed Şakir Efendi arrived at Tripoli on 18 September 1834. After the declaration of Sultan's recognition of Ali Bey as the legitimate governor of the Tripoli, stiff protests on the part of *Menşiyeye* rebellion ensued. They resisted the public inauguration of the Ali Pasha. The Sultan's representative gave the protestors six days to come to terms with Sultanic decision (Folayan 1979, 158). However, it was in vain to talk through the matter. Instead, he delayed his departure and worked to suppress the rebellion by using coercive methods for three months.

From the report where Mehmed Şakir Efendi summarizes his activities to undermine the rebellious party and the reports of British and French consuls, it is understood that he had opted for three strategies. First was the naval blockade of *Menşiyeye*. However, the blockade that he ordered was constantly sabotaged by the activities of the Warrington. Secondly, he made numerous efforts to rally the Arabs in the interior around the Ali Pasha to increase the numerical strength of the Tripolitan defensive against the rebels (COA.HAT.456.22487-A, 06 Receb 1250/8 November 1834). When he understood that these measures would not be sufficient to put an end to the civil war, he tried to broker peace between the two parties. After a series of meetings with both parties, he came up with the following proposals. Firstly, after the establishment of a final ceasefire, the city gates would remain open. Secondly, the fighting forces of the contending parties in the interior should leave their arms and withdraw. To appease the followers of Mehmed, he

said that if they agree to these terms, thereafter the order of investiture would be nullified. Until the final decision as to how to proceed will be re-discussed in Istanbul, they would remain equals and a joint council made up of ten members from each side will be assembled to act as a provisional government. However, neither the Ali Pasha nor Mehmed' rebellious party was content with the proposals. The situation again dragged into a painful stalemate before he finally set sails to Istanbul on 31 December 1834 (Folayan 1979, 160).

In accounting for his failure to resolve the situation, Mehmed Şakir enumerated the following. He pinned the Consul Warrington as the primary reason for the continued resistance of the Mehmed's party. He says that the Consul did not respond to his call for forty days and unceasingly acted to undermine the measures taken by him. Moreover, he is a great source of moral support and political advisor to Mehmed who is also clearly connected with Mehmed Ali of Egypt. It also seems clear to Sultan's representative that the English desires to further aggravate the situation to lay the ground of an impending occupation, using their naval base in Malta as the center of the operations (COA.HAT.456.22487-A, 9 Receb 1250/11 November 1834). He repeatedly calls for action to have the English government dismiss the Consul because of his hostile and inappropriate behavior.

Even though Ottoman effort to have him removed from the Tripoli had started earlier, Şakir Efendi's report moved the Sublime Porte to open a new line of correspondence with its diplomatic missions in Europe. Upon the kind request of Ali Pasha, Namık Bey worked hard to procure a congratulatory letter from the British crown intended for Ali Pasha (COA.HAT.738.34986-E). This came in handy to partly curb Warrington's acrimonious activities. After Sublime Porte's renewed request Namık Bey also approached to British Colonial Office to persuade them to recall Warrington. In a private conversation with Duke Wellington, Ottoman Ambassador, judging from his evasive tone, understood that the task he was given would not be an easy one (COA.HAT.831.37520-A, 30 Zilkade 1250/30 March 1835). Nevertheless, he continued to push for it, and eventually obtained an affirmative answer from the British authorities, only a few days left to the Ottoman intervention (COA.HAT. 46430-Ç, 05 Muharrem 1251/3 May 1835)

The Sublime Porte's support for Ali Pasha is not confined to Mehmed Şakir Efendi's activities on the ground and diplomatic efforts of Ottoman missions in Europe. In a letter

addressed to Kaptan-ı Derya Tahir Pasha, Ali Pasha requested a substantive material help from the Sublime Porte against the Mehmed Karamanlı, saying that ammunitions in the Tripoli were nearly exhausted. The decision was taken to provide Ali Pasha with a sizeable amount of gunpowder in view of his loyalty to Ottoman Sultan together with the fact that the rebellion keeps going. Moreover, Ali Pasha is also authorized to enroll fighters from western Anatolia (COA.HAT.1403.56719). In other words, Ali Pasha had the complete operational, moral, diplomatic and material support of the Ottoman center. Interestingly enough, the Sublime Porte was otherwise intended to sustain all these if some petitions from the supporters of Mehmed Karamanlı would not arrive just before new orders were issued to ensure people's support for Ali Karamanlı. Upon the arrival of these multiple complaint letters which served as a quick indication of the relentlessly non-conciliatory attitudes of the rebels, the Ottoman decision-makers thought that keeping Ali Pasha in power would only make things worse. Accordingly, a new meeting in which Serasker Hüsrev Paşa, Kaptan-ı Derya Tahir Pasha and Damad Halil Rıfat Pasha would be present was summoned in Istanbul (COA.HAT.1267.49043). Those who sent these petitions would have never guessed the historical significance of their action, that is setting the fire of Ottoman Intervention in Tripoli.

These attendants seem to be utterly frustrated by the fact that the rebels could not be appeased no matter what the Sublime Porte has done so far. After the petitions of the Tripolitans, they completely lost trust in Ali Pasha. Yet, they reckoned that Mehmed Karamanlı was no better than the former one. As in the case of Samos, the only feasible solution was to send a governor from Istanbul who can handle the situation. In their view, the governor must be accompanied by a naval squadron as a precaution against insurrection. In the meantime, it is imperative to continue the efforts to suppress the rebellion until the naval campaign season will arrive. For this reason, each party should be informed to carry out business as usual. As for the petitioners, the council decided to dispatch a mitigating message. For the time being, it is argued that the naval preparations should be carried out in complete secrecy of the real intention of the Sublime Porte to avoid the protests of the Europeans (COA.HAT.457.22542).

The council's foresight was proved when it was heard that the British navy is on its way to Istanbul to take the measure of the Ottoman intentions. Such news led to a new meeting in which two impending issues are discussed. The first concern was the answer to be given to those inquiring the intentions of the navy. It seems that the council was worried

about an interception of the British navy if the real intentions of the Sublime Porte would be revealed. The official mission statement is therefore set as an aid to Ali Pasha Karamanlı who had been unsuccessful to put an end to the protracted civil war which has devastating effects for the general populace. The following concern to picking the high-ranking personnel of the expedition had also been addressed under the shadow of the British navy. The council propounds that anyone above the rank of *Ferik* (lieutenant general) would raise the suspicions of foreign powers. After a period of uncertainty, Necip Paşa was appointed as the commander of the squadron and he is also given the secret mission statement. The Sublime Porte ordered him to swiftly sneak into the Tripolitan fortress to arrest Yusuf and Ali Karamanlı, then to proceed to disaggregate the rebellious group rallied around Mehmed Karamanlı (COA.HAT.455.22484).

Now, Ottoman intervention was slowly taking shape, however, it was still one meeting away from reaching perfection. The final plan anticipated an advance dispatch of official correspondence written by high-ranking officials of the Sublime Porte assuring Ali Pasha of the continuation of his rule. These would also inform Ali Pasha about the ostensible motivation of Sublime Porte to send Necip Pasha with a naval force. Nonetheless, it had been decided that Necip Pasha must act on the capacity of a deputy governor (*kaymakam*) because the masterminds of the plan hoped to lure rebellious Mehmed into the castle with the promise of appointing him as the new governor after Ottoman force arrests and dispatches Ali Karamanlı to Istanbul. Here is when the things get more interesting because it is also provisioned that against any possible obligatory diversion from the original plan, Necip Pasha was to be provided with contingency Sultan orders. The alternative scenarios included the ill-reception of the new governor sent from Istanbul. In that case, Ali Pasha must remain in Ottoman custody until Necip Pasha could trick Mehmed to come to the castle. Then send word to obtain orders for the renewal of the Ali Pasha Karamanlı. Otherwise, Necip Pasha was ordered to present himself as the deputy of Sultan who is sent to save the people from the oppression of the Karamanlı family (COA.HAT.457.22538 in Taş 2019, 505-509). In any case, the protracted civil war which made Tripoli vulnerable to occupation would be finally halted for good. In the eyes of the Sultan and his close circle in the Sublime Porte, the matter carried weight such that Necip Pasha is granted a budget increase of around thirty percent for his preparatory expenditures.

It should not come as a surprise that Mehmed Şakir Efendi was the Ottoman agent at the head of the advance party. The entire force of twenty-two ships departed from Adriatic on 28 March 1835. However, the warship carrying Mehmed Şakir Efendi took the lead to arrive at Tripoli exactly five days before the rest of the Necip Pasha's naval force. Given that North Africa and Europe was filled with curiosity and uncertainty about the rumors of Ottoman motivations to fit a naval squadron, such a move was extremely needed to avoid further disturbances in the Tripoli. Upon landing, Şakir Efendi presented Ali Pasha with the papers written by Grand Vizier Rauf Pasha, Serasker Hüsrev Pasha, Kaptan-ı Derya Tahir Pasha and commander-in-chief Necip Pasha, resting him assured that Ottoman Sultan had sent the much-rumored naval force to help him and his governorship is renewed. For now, everything was on the clock and Ali Pasha was pleased by the Ottoman generosity to help him overthrow his rival (Taş 2016, 418-419 and COA.HAT.1186.46759).

#### **3.2.4 Necip Pasha's Takeover**

The long wait had come to an end on 25 May 1835 when Ottoman Naval squadron appeared on Tripolitan shores. No one of Ali Pasha's intimate circle suspected that Necip Pasha would be the commander who will put an end to the dynasty of Karamanlı Pashas. Things were to turn out very differently.

The same day he arrived at Tripolitan coast, Necip Pasha dispatched an invitation to Ali Pasha who unsuspectingly returned to the call of his supposed savior to come aboard to his vessel. Necip Pasha was extremely careful not to raise any doubt whatsoever of Ali Pasha while he listed some of his demands. An immediate agreement on the disarmament of the general populace who fought as defenders of the city was reached. Then, Ottoman forces proceeded to disembark on Tripoli. In a matter of a couple of hours, all the citadel was taken over by Necip Pasha's soldiers who stationed heavy guns on the walls protecting the city. For the time being, however, Necip Pasha hiding Sublime Porte's real intentions behind his friendly face, excused Ali Pasha to retreat to his quarters, notifying him that he would set foot on Tripoli three days later. When the occasion came, the city was blossoming with all the preparations Ali Pasha ordered his protégés to carry out. Necip Pasha asked him again to come on board with his close circle to accompany his entry into the port. This time, Ali Pasha and his immediate circle of forty men were

detained in the ship. Necip Pasha proceeded into the city to declare the Sultanic orders notifying that he is sent to take control of the Tripoli in the name of Sultan Mahmud II, thereby cutting the succession line of Karamanlı family (Taş 2016, 418-420).

Next day, the Menşiyе rebellion dispersed quickly and residents of the quarter pledged loyalty to Necip Pasha whereas the leadership of the rebellion sought protection either with the British or in the interior of Tripoli. It was also on the same day that entire *Menşiyе* was disarmed. Foreign representatives were also notified that Sultan Mahmud II brought the region under his direct control in the 1 June 1835.

In the scope of one week, the entire problem of bringing stability into the Tripoli was resolved. It was a result of a thoroughly thought, timely plan. The Sublime Porte could not have risked another case of Algiers which would mean a definitive end for the Ottoman presence in North Africa. It seemed that from an abundance of claimants to the Tripolitan territory, Ottoman Center had risen triumphantly. Nonetheless, creation of a united Tripoli stretching from Tripolitania to Fezzan and into Cyrenaica like in the prime days of Yusuf Karamanlı proved to be a serious challenge which could not be surmounted permanently until 1858. Even after that, a completely centralized province did not come about thanks to the rise of Sanusiyya order. However, the early episode of the Ottoman direct rule itself which is quite frequently disturbed by outbreaks of tribal rebellions allows a historian to think about the imperial characteristics of Ottoman polity and the conflicting political mentalities of Ottoman agents.

#### 4. A CASE STUDY OF OTTOMAN IMPERIALISM IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

What is an empire? In a recent and most cherished book, Frederick Cooper and Jane Burbank posed the very same question. They conceptualized empires as “large political units, expansionist or with a memory of power extended over space, polities that maintain distinctions and hierarchy as they incorporate new people.” (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 8) As they aptly put it “the empire was a remarkably durable form of state.” How to approach different empires then, how to pinpoint varying historical experiences of their subjects? They suggest that rather than categorizing unfruitfully the empires as “modern”, “premodern”, or “ancient”, it is better to concentrate on the different repertoires of power which are defined as “ruling strategies that were imaginable and feasible in specific historical situations” (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 3). As they also clearly demonstrate there are some historiographical consequences of such chronologically freezing designations. Under their dictate, for example, in “the western moment of imperial domination”, which is conventionally understood as the “modern empire” as well, “the empires of China, Russia, the Ottomans, and the Habsburgs are formulated as “imperial has-beens” who are incapable of taking initiatives to counter economic and cultural challenges” and “playing crucial roles in the conflicts and connections that animated world politics even though they existed simultaneously” (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 9). In other words, they are excluded from the very history they have participated in.

I find the concept “repertoires of power” as a useful analytical tool because of its applicability to empires not only across time and space but also to simultaneously existing empires of different political strength, thereby making feasible a comparative history. Although it cannot claim to be exhaustive by any means, this chapter aims at exploring the strategies of rule Ottoman agents resorted to in pacifying the Tripoli which I believe gives a unique opportunity to critically approach to the growing literature of Ottoman colonialism/imperialism in the 19th century.

This body of literature purports the idea that Ottoman colonialism and its discursive counterpart Ottoman orientalism are products of the second half of the 19th century. Adhering to their archenemies, Ottoman ruling class then produced a political mentality that is markedly different from the way politics of difference is carried out in the earlier centuries. The members of Ottoman central bureaucracy who had seen in themselves the image of the civilized men developed a metropolitan arrogance through which they saw the peoples of the outlying, mainly Arab, provinces of the empire as the exact opposite of what they stood for and used it in legitimizing the top-down centralist reform programs Ottoman government had imagined, which in fact amounted to what the modern literature and contemporaries alike refer to as Ottoman civilizing mission (*vazife-i temdin*). It was therefore closely connected with the development of modern state structures in the Ottoman realm.

In the literature, the reign of Abdülhamit II appears as a crucial turning point with regards to the reinforcement of the idea of Ottoman colonialism. After all, it was in the Final Act of Berlin Conference in 1885 that for the first time, the word colony (*müstemleke*) was used to define the Ottoman Africa provinces, especially Tripoli. By using the internationally recognized terminology of imperialism, especially the principle of the hinterland, Ottomans were hoping to lay claim to the area stretching from the southern tip of Fezzan to Lake Chad region (Minawi 2016, 46-47). The increased circulation of the word must have encouraged the Abdulhamid II to commission the translation of a travelogue written by the infamous British traveler, Henry Morton Stanley. In the introduction, the translator, Mehmed İzzet feels the need to clarify what the colonialism means: “a civilized state sends its settlers out to lands where people still live in a state of nomadism and savagery, developing these areas, and causing them to become a market for its goods.” (Quoted in Deringil, 2003, 312).

It seems that the early 20th century saw only further entrenchment of it in the minds of Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats. Indeed, famous Turkish nationalist and writer, Ömer Seyfettin appears to have so much internalized the idea of Ottoman Turkish colonialism that after enlisting a sizeable body of French, British, Portuguese and Belgian colonial misconduct, he refers to Ottoman-Italian war in 1911 as a joint European effort to expel the Ottoman Turks from their colonies (*müstemlekat*) in Africa, that is Tripoli (Seyfeddin 2012, 234-237 and 251). In other words, he was perfectly fine with the Ottoman polity being a colonial empire, but at the same time disgusted by the type of



colonialism that is European. As a matter of fact, conceiving the Ottoman Empire as a colonial power extends beyond the literary allusions made by Ömer Seyfeddin in his rather short story. One of the most influential Ottoman statesmen of the 20th century, Cemal Paşa also conceptualized the territories which are situated outside of the Rumelia and Anatolia as Ottoman colonies. Rather interestingly, in his memoirs, he goes on to refer to Anatolia as his motherland while lamenting on the weak infrastructure that connects Syria and his motherland (Erdem 2016).

The examples in which Ottoman military or bureaucratic elite refers to its periphery as colonies can be multiplied and are abundantly available in the secondary literature. Moreover, even in cases where Ottoman elites do not directly use the word itself, they one way or another resort to the political vocabulary of cultural superiority I described above in legitimizing their provincial reforms. Therefore, it is beyond doubt that Ottoman colonialism and orientalism did exist on an ideological level. In this respect, the framework delineated by Ottoman colonialism literature has grown out to be a way of understanding center-periphery relations in the late Ottoman empire, by giving the Ottoman provincial reforms a markedly different meaning. As Makdisi puts it, (comparing with European desire to reshape and discipline non-European places) “so too can Ottoman modernization be thought of as an Ottoman desire to reshape and discipline *not-yet* Ottoman places and peoples” (Makdisi 2002a, 46). However, does all this really mean that the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century become a colonial empire? I believe not.

For one thing, the peripheral territories of Ottoman Empire had never been officially organized in colonial terms even though the word “colony” was used in international agreements and Ottomans were invited to meetings that are by definition exclusive to imperial powers such as Berlin (1884) and Brussels Conferences (1889). Moreover, all Ottoman citizens, regardless of their birthplace or ethnicity, could enjoy the very same rights and privileges, including parliamentary representation and being a public servant. (Erdem 2016).

Along the same lines, a rather sound criticism was recently put forward against the conceiving of the new relationship between the peripheral provinces of the empire and center as a type of colonialism by Özgür Türesay. After all, he argues, modern colonialism that is decorated with the themes of bringing civilization to wilderness was primarily a

European phenomenon that had started to take roots in the early 16th century and only after three centuries of historical development that it culminated in the great age of imperial expansion in the second half of the 19th century. To be able to talk about a modern colonialism, he sustains, one need to observe the coexistence of a racially defined social Darwinism attached to imperial expansion, i.e. the civilizing mission of the white man, a specific phase of capitalist development which squeezed the European economies so much that they needed to accommodate the surplus workforce and capital outside Europe, extensive missionary activity and lastly a group of stakeholders who would encourage their governments' colonial pursuits in extra-European territories. In the Ottoman example, similarities end with the Ottoman civilizing mission. Even in that, further qualification is needed as it was so much softer than European orientalist discourse with regards to the racist element. As he rightly points out, in the absence of underlying dynamics, it would be stretching too far to talk about an Ottoman colonial enterprise, relying on a couple of observations based on narrative sources (Türesay 2013, 143-145). Drawing inspiration from this criticism, I would say, perhaps, it is time to think about the social otherness created by the modernizing Ottoman center in a more indigenously developed way than associating it directly with the European conceptualizations. Perhaps, as I will discuss further below, it is even proper to ask how modern was the social otherness the people of the peripheries subjected to?

Why have I taken pains at delving into the literature on Ottoman orientalism? It is because some elements of the social otherness created by the members of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite later in the century was evident in the perceptions of the Ottoman agents operational in the Tripoli right after the intervention. By now, it must have been well-understood that I will refrain from calling their attitude a colonial one, however, the task of making sense of the Ottoman imperial presence in Tripoli still awaits. The fact that the Ottoman intervention in Tripoli is nearly contemporary with one of the most momentous points of French colonial history makes it even more compelling. As I discussed thoroughly in Chapter 2, it was even conducted in competition with France. Moreover, the European officials and the public perceived it no different than what France was doing in Algeria. In addressing this problem, I believe that the concept of "imperial repertoires of power" comes in really handy not only because of the opportunity it gives to refrain from discussing the problem with regards to a sort of imagined colonialism but also because it allows tracing the historicity of some aspects of imperial politics in Tripoli.

After all, it involved various strategies of rule ranging from resorting to extreme violence to the accommodation of intermediaries, and conversion of the local population in the most resilient region, *Cebel-i Garbi*, to Sunni Islam.

#### **4.1 What Have We Done, What Will We Do? *Meclis-i Şura* Meeting Regarding the Upcoming Policies in Tripoli.**

After Necip Pasha successfully established the Ottoman forces in Tripolitan citadel, his mission was complete, after all, he was only appointed as a deputy governor, not to draw any unwanted attention from the foreign powers to Ottoman intervention in May 1835 (COA.HAT.457.22538 in Taş 2019, 505-509). At first, Osman Pasha was thought to be appointed with the full authority of a governor, but his medical condition did not allow him to assume the assignment (Atabaş 2017, 63). In his stead, Mehmed Raif Pasha was sent to Tripoli to govern the newly acquired province. It seems that after making his assessment of the situation, he has written a couple of letters to the Sublime Porte, explaining the situation and making certain demands with regards to his plans. It was in the *Meclis-i Şura* meeting which discussed Mehmed Raif Pasha's demands that the Sublime Porte decided how to proceed with Tripoli. These letters and the outcome of the meeting provide insights as to how center-periphery relations played out in Tripoli as well as how the Ottoman center conceived of Necip Pasha's takeover.

The one thing the Sublime Porte understood from the short term of Necip Pasha and Mehmed Raif Pasha's dispatches was that the entire undertaking was about to put heavy pressure on the shoulders of central treasury, not only because of Yusuf Pasha's debts but also because the hardships the Ottoman state apparatus was to endure in Tripoli. As Raif Pasha narrates, Necip Pasha was approached by the local tribal chieftains who manifested that they are inclined towards pledging loyalty to Sultan. In return, however, they requested that Ottoman Pasha would please them with the generosity of Ottoman Sultan. This, as the political precedent goes, was granted by Necip Pasha. Nonetheless, it was beyond the limited financial means he held in his possession which obliged him to pay for these gifts from the money intended originally for the stipends of Ottoman soldiers. Raif Pasha recognized the inevitability of using gifts and bribes in making the tribes of the interior yield to Ottoman authority. Accordingly, he requested at least four thousand

money bags of *akçe* from Istanbul. From this point onwards, things get even more insightful. He thinks that if Tripoli would be relieved financially from the shoulders of Istanbul, such expenditures must be taken back from the communities these leaders presided over. Nonetheless, it can only be feasible if these leaders were to be escorted back to their quarters by a company of three or four hundred soldiers. Then these soldiers were to collect money from the locals in the presence of their leaders. It seems only then a sustainable cycle of financing government expenditure would become possible (COA.HAT.456.22505-D, 27 Cemaziye'l-Evvel 1251/20 September 1835). It seems to me that Mehmed Raif Pasha's plan of ensuring a steady flow of income is really illuminating in terms of the limits of Ottoman centralization, the State apparatus paradoxically had to accommodate intermediaries in an effort to establish a direct rule.<sup>49</sup>

It is understood from *hatt-ı hümayun* record of the *Meclis-i Şura* meeting that when presented with a summary of Mehmed Raif Pasha's requests, Sultan Mahmud II called for deliberation to decide the best course of action. *Meclis-i Şura* sought the opinion of Necip Pasha with the mediation of Serasker Hüsrev Paşa and a final decision in which the transfer of the requested cavalry force is authorized together with the provisions and stipends of the soldiers already stationed in Tripoli was reached because it is deemed necessary to "get proper hold of the region and the people"<sup>50</sup> The document goes on to reveal the motivation of the Ottoman decision-makers in taking up such a financial burden. It is worth quoting at length:

“...the final subjugation of the province by the shadow of your most powerful Majesty is regarded as a new conquest; and it has brought to the Sublime State of yours the glory and fame it required both in your realm and, especially in Europe; if it is necessary to make some expenditures at the start, it is hoped that those will not be in vain; that in the future its administrative and strategic value will be observed is attested by the God's grace ...<sup>51</sup>”

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<sup>49</sup> Even though I excluded them as they are not relevant in making sense of the Ottomans' imperial repertoire of power, it is necessary to state that Mehmed Raif Pasha's requests do not end with the financial and military reinforcements. In his letters, he also states that a couple of well-conditioned ships are urgently needed to run administrative duties. He also says that a kadı of the strong blend is needed to address the problem of people seeking foreign protection by changing nationality. It was a problem because most of these were either family or former members of Yusuf Pasha's government which Ottoman authorities thought makes them accountable for the debts of Karamanlı family. (COA.HAT.453.22420) and (COA.HAT.456.22505-A, 27 Cemâziye'l-Evvel 1251/20 September 1835)

<sup>50</sup> ..... havali ve ahalisinin layıkıyla ele alınması zımnında bin nefer süvari asker isali.... (COA.HAT.827.37459; first used in Atabaş 2017, 69-70)

<sup>51</sup> ...vakıa eyalet-i merkumenin bu def'a saye-i şevketvaye-i hazret-i şahanelerinde zabt-ı rabtı feth-i cedid ve sani hükmünde olarak mülk ü saltanat ve bahusus avrupaca taraf-ı devlet-i alilerine bir kat dahi mucib-i şan ve şöret olmuş olduğu derkar ve bidayet-i maslahatta eğer ki biraz mesarif vuku bulursa da inşallah-ı teala zayi olmayarak ilerde menafi' mülkiyye ve mevkiyyesi müşahede olunacağı eltaf-ı ilahi delaletiyle aşikâr olup.... (COA.HAT.827.37459)

Nonetheless, the rest of the document demonstrates such a bold statement was not easy to utter. The fact that the financial burden of penetrating further into the interior would be incredibly heavy had led these statesmen to even consider reinstating the Ali Karamanlı or handing over the province to Hüseyin Bey of Tunis who had long desired to unite it with Tripoli. However, as the document goes, there are two possible dangers if the Sublime Porte would withdraw so hastily; firstly, it is thought that it would bring “contempt and defect” on the Exalted State. Secondly, the Ottoman diplomats were communicating some rumors that ever since the French have invaded Algeria, the British intended to prey on Tripoli by playing into the closeness they have established with the people of the region. Therefore, the region would not pass on to who Ottoman center aspires to deliver. The gist of the meeting, it seems, was that Ottoman statesmen had perceived their intervention in the Tripoli as a matter of international prestige and took pride in it. The roadmap, therefore, was to stay and to consolidate Ottoman presence in Tripoli no matter what the financial consequences were. Mehmed Raif Pasha then was granted full support.

It seems to me that economic prospects of the Tripolitan port appeared promising to Ottoman decision-makers even though it was not as tempting as the international recognition that the intervention had provided for the Empire. The first reference in the documents is already cited in the form of “its administrative and strategic value.” What exactly was its administrative and strategic value? Well, as demonstrated by Erdem in his book on Ottoman slavery, Tripoli was an entrepot for the slave trade and its reconquest had a reinvigorating effect to slave trade across Empire which, along with other factors, ultimately amounted to “the recovery of Ottoman slave system” (Erdem 1996, 57). Even though there is no direct reference to the economic prospects of the slave trade running through Tripoli in the documents, it is worth reminding that when Necip Pasha was asked of his opinion regarding the ships Raif Pasha had requested from the Sublime Porte, he gave an affirmative answer citing the potential the ports along the Tripolitan coastline had in creating a substantive customs revenue for the central treasury if the coastline is properly inspected by the Ottoman ships (Atabaş 2017, 68-69). In the actual document, Necip Pasha takes note of revenues that could be generated by customs on alcoholic beverages and other products as well as port fees (*gümrük ve zecriye rüsumatı ve sair mahsulattan senevi on bin kese mikdarı menafi’ hasıl olacağına binaen*). Given the fact

that one of the most sizeable merchandise running through the Tripolitan ports was the black slaves (Dyer 1982, 78-79), it would be a safe speculation that Necip Pasha might also have thought of revenues that could be generated through imposing customs on the slave trade when he referred to a profit of ten thousand money bags (COA.HAT.827.37459-B). It must be stated that this is not the only reference with regards to the economic expectations that leads Ottoman agents to argue for the sustainment of Ottoman rule in Tripoli. It will reappear below.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, though, Mehmed Raif Pasha was soon to realize that his plan to impose taxation in return for giving out gifts is at best a dream. He saw that the negotiation ground was extremely slippery and to make these tribal chieftains live up to their political promise is harder than he could ever imagine.<sup>52</sup> In his words;

“...the Bedouins and tribes are not the kinds that understand negotiation and friendly manners; it is very well understood that these would be drawn under the hold of government only by brute force, pressure, and threats; as it is clear, they would not come to terms if the crushing force of your Majesty is not to be shown to these at least once; even those chieftains who seem to approach to pledge loyalty are not true to their word and God, inclined to corrupt; and it is beyond any doubt whatsoever that they tend to try extorting money with some schemes and political cunning from me as they did with the Necip Pasha...”

The policy of accommodation seems to be abandoned after the frustration of Mehmed Raif Pasha after his encounters with the tribal chieftains. A period of violent clashes between the forces of the central government and tribal warriors was about to ensue. With some intervals, these clashes continued until the rebellion of Şeyh Guma of *Cebel-i Garbi* was eliminated in 1858.

#### **4.2 Local Resistance and Ottoman Pashas Justifying their Use of Violence**

The relatively easy subjugation of the Tripolitan citadel and its close surroundings by Necip Pasha should not misguide a student of the history of Ottoman presence in Tripoli.

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<sup>52</sup> “...urbân ve kabâili te’lif ve güler yüz irâesiyle insâf eder ve taht-ı raiyyete girer makûleler olmayup bunlar darb-ı sedid ve tazyik ve tehdid ile kabûl-i raiyyet eyleyecekleri güzelle anlaşılarak âşikâr olduğu halde ne vecihle olur ise olsun kahr-ı satvet-i şâhâne bunlara bir kere irâe olunmadıkça emâna gelmeyecekleri ve gûyâ itaat sûretiyle gelmiş olan şeyhler dahî hudâ bilir hakikî olmayub meyl-i fesâda ve Necib Paşa hazretlerinden plan ve politika ile bir takım kuruluş aldıkları gibi şimdi bu çâkerlerinizden dahî akçe isticlâbına mâil oldukları şüpheden müberrâ olub...” Quoted in (Atabaş 2017, 76). See for the complete document; (COA.HAT.456.22505-E.3, 27 Cemaziye’l-Evvel 1251/20 September 1835).

Indeed, the military force Necip Pasha brought with him was not to pull the trigger even once. Nonetheless, the picture we see during the Ottoman penetration further into the country is starkly different than the initial phase of the Ottoman takeover. If Ottomans were to successfully unite Tripoli, they had to either come to terms with tribal chieftains or to militarily defeat them. Or at best used them in conjunction with each other. It seems that the Ottoman Pashas had used their choice in favor of the use of violence when they felt strong enough to face the tribal chieftains in the battlefield. The path they had chosen, however, was an expensive one. Given the distance between the Ottoman center and Tripoli, maintenance of regular troops was incredibly hard, and Ottoman governors were to constantly ask for reinforcements, foodstuff, and stipends for the soldiers in their retinue. The constant warfare between the agents of the central government and tribal chieftains was seriously constraining the possibility of local generation of the income that is needed to provision the central government facilities in Tripoli. It was, therefore, heavily dependent on Istanbul. For the complete pacification of the region, Ottoman forces had to reckon with leaders such as Osman el-Edgam of Misurata, Ahmed el-Meriz of Tarhuna, Abdülcelil of Fezzan and Şeyh Guma of *Cebel-i Garbi* (Atabaş 2017, 433). It is also important to note that Tahir Pasha and Ali Aşkar Pasha were particularly known for their brutality and relentlessness in dealing with the tribal insurgencies.

I do not intend to give a general survey of the violence born out of the clash between the Ottoman forces and tribal chieftains. What I will stress out is the way Ottoman governors justified their use of military force in Tripoli. Let us have a look of the report Mehmed Tahir Pasha had written in which he asked to be recalled to Istanbul in 1837. As would be recalled, Mehmed Tahir Pasha was one of the masterminds behind the Ottoman intervention. Afterward, he was sent to Tripoli as the commander-in-chief of Tripoli when Mehmed Raif Pasha was the governor of the province. He then replaced him as the governor of Tripoli. His task was to permanently stabilize the region. After dealing successfully with the insurgent forces in Misurata in August 1836, his forces suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Şeyh Guma in March 1837.<sup>53</sup>

After stating that he is tasked by Sublime Porte with ensuring the perfect loyalty (*rabıtai hüsnisi*) of the Tripolitan notables, he starts to talk about his impression of the people and why a military operation would not be feasible. He says that “the complete reordering

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<sup>53</sup> Atabaş provides a detailed chronology of Tripolitan political history after the intervention. I used it extensively in this chapter see: (Atabaş 2016, Appendix 1)

of Arab tribes of this province by bringing them into the hold of government is only possible via a protracted use of force and provisions which the Exalted State cannot afford amongst all the business it had to attend to.” Therefore “even though it would be delightful to carry out a new wave of conquest to subjugate the various clans and savage tribes” (*aşair-i muhtelif ve kabail-i vahşiyye*), given the financial situation, a policy of appeasement (*istimalet*) should be assumed. Before launching an offensive, he thinks, when the time is right, the clans and tribes must be treated with due care, and the existing force can be used to punish and educate (*tedip ve terbiyelerine*) them if seen necessary (COA.C.DH.107.5342, 25 Şevval 1252/2 February 1837)

A similar attitude is observable in the official correspondence of Mehmed Raif Pasha. After he lists a couple of reasons why he is not worthy of the Sultan Mahmud’s graciousness in appointing him as the governor of the Tripoli, he jumps into the question of the use of military force. One gets the impression that Mahmud II did encourage a more conciliatory policy, but Mehmed Raif seems to disagree. Addressing the Sultan, he claims:

“as it is also known to you, my Gracious, the province consists only of tribes and clans who are of the kind that is the worst of the bandits .... and in accordance with your esteemed request, it is clear that I will not fail to work to ensure their submission by showing benignity and presenting various gifts but if they dare to demonstrate a sign of animosity as necessitated by the way they are made, it would be necessary to deploy militias against them and as there are some mines located around their quarters, it may also be necessary to deploy soldiers....<sup>54</sup>”

According to Raif Pasha, then, the use of military force and violence against the tribal population in Tripoli is a precaution against their god-given quality of being inclined towards demonstrating animosity. However, he does not adhere to the usage of “savage” as in the case of Tahir Pasha. Instead, he uses a much more commonly used terminology at least from the 17th century *Celali* rebellions onwards, that is “*tagi*”, meaning bandit.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, there is also a major difference between the two. *Tagi* is also a legal category

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<sup>54</sup> .... malum-ı veliniamileri buyurulduğu veçhile eyalet-i merkume aşair ve kabailden ibaret olarak tagi makulesinden olduklarından bunların.... matlub-ı ali veçhiyle taht-ı rabıtaya idhallerine suret-i mülayimet ve enva’i taltifat ile sa’yda kusur olunmayacağı ber-bidar ise de ber-muktezay-ı halkıyyet izhar-ı habasete cüret ettikleri halde üzerlerine urban askeri sevk olunmak lazım geldiği ve bazı maden olan mahaller dahi ol makule aşair taraflarında bulunduğundan bunda dahi kezalik asker irsali icap ettiği halde... (COA.HAT.1110.44695)

<sup>55</sup> See for the commonly used terminology with regards to outlaws, social outcasts and outright rebels: (Sariyannis 2005)



that is mostly used synonymously with *sai b'il-fesad*. (Aykan 2019, 253) It was not a coincidence that for example, Şeyh Abdülcelil of Fezzan was called *menba'ul-fesad*, (Atabaş 2016, 171) and then assassinated by Ali Aşkar Pasha because the legitimate punishment of a person who is found guilty of being *tagi* or *sa'i b'il-fesad* is death (Aykan 2019, 255).

Not to forget, the document also contains the second and crucial reference to the economic expectations of the Ottoman agents operational in Tripoli, namely “the mines around their quarters.” Comparing to Necip Pasha’s reasoning which anticipates the violence-free Ottoman takeover of the Tripolitan customs regime, it appears as a justification for the use of violence against the local population. It is possible that, these mines were salt reserves, usufruct of which Karamanlı Pashas sold to Venetians throughout the second half of the 18th century (Dyer 1982, 179) or the copper, steel and the Sulphur reserves located around Gulf of Sirte, a location which houses Arab and Berber tribes (Atabaş 2017, 161). In either case, better exploitation of the natural resources of the country was certainly on the agenda of early Ottoman Pashas in Tripoli.

All in all, it can be argued that while the discourse of early Ottoman Pashas in Tripoli justifying the use of violence in the service of the consolidation of central authority is not unidimensional and unison, they seem to share a common ground with regards to their economic expectations from the region. The former ranged from a perceived cultural superiority, as implied by the use of savagery as a derogatory term, to a legalistic discourse criminalizing those who are perceived as a threat to public order. These also go to show that a social distance between the Ottoman agents and the locals was evident as early as the late 1830s. However, an even more striking case of acting on a discourse of superiority is evident in the Ottoman religious policy after the remainders of Şeyh Guma’s rebellion in *Cebel-i Garbi* was pacified by Ahmed Pasha in 1843.

### **4.3 Pacification of *Cebel-i Garbi* and Ottoman Missionaries**

When Necip Pasha had arrived in Tripoli, Şeyh Guma was amongst the first party of tribal chieftains who visited him. He was the leader of the Mehamid Tribe and paradoxically led the most enduring armed opposition against the Ottomans in Tripoli. From 1835 to 1842, he had a fluctuating relationship with the Ottoman authorities. Mehmed Emin Pasha

had him come to Tripoli to settle the disputes between Ottoman State and Mehamid Tribe. For some time, he had been given an official post. Nonetheless, he was arrested and sent to exile by the order of Mehmed Emin Pasha in December 1842. It was a major blow to his armed opposition, however, the Mehamid tribe continued to resist for about four months until Ahmed Pasha had inflicted a crushing defeat to the armed forces of a tribal alliance based in the *Cebel* region. Ahmed Pasha has written extensive reports on how he managed to defeat his opponents (COA.İ.MSM.72.2085, 28 Rabîu'l-Evvel 1259). I will not discuss the details of the military operation here, luckily, however, these reports are also rich in terms of how Ahmed Pasha and his other colleagues in Tripoli look down upon the people of *Cebel*;<sup>56</sup>

“The nature of the people of *Cebel* is not a matter that can be described and articulated; not only because for years and centuries they haven't known state control and each one of them has transformed into savages but also because, they follow a false path they call the fifth sect which is popularized, May God forbid, by the Wahhabis to the exclusion of the four great *mezhebs*...”

Here the culturally disdainful attitude of the Ahmed Pasha blends the religious affiliation of the people of *Cebel* with their so-called savagery. Nonetheless, he was determined to change the way they were and ordered them to follow one of the paths delineated by the great Imams of Sunni tradition.<sup>57</sup> However, as reflected from the documents relating to the issue of the conversion, the real bone of contention was the fact that these people were handling their dispute amongst themselves, which is strongly against the government's desire to shy away from legal pluralism. Ahmed Pasha had written to Governor Mehmed Emin Pasha to appoint deputy judges to oversee legal matters, muftis that would attend to local population's need for religious opinion, imams to oversee compulsory prayers. What is most striking, however, is that a group of people, specifically asked to be *Hanefis* who would “teach the basics of the religion of Islam, and to practice them the conditions

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<sup>56</sup> “Cebel takımının ahvâli ta'rîf ve beyân kabûl eder mevâddan olmayub ez-cümle bunlar bunca sinin ve a'sârdan berü zabt u rabt ne olduğunu görmemiş ve her biri vahşî sûretine girmiş olduğundan mâadâ hâric-i ez-mezâhib-i celîle-i erbaa neûzubillah Vehhâbî'nin iştihârı olan beşinci mezhep diyerek bir tarik-i bâtıleye zâhib olduklarından bu makûlelere bu cihetle i'timâd câiz olmayacağı...” (Quoted in Atabaş 2017, 176-177). In Atabaş the word “iştihar” is understandably misread as “iştihâd.” However, this reading does not correspond to an Ottoman dictionary entry whereas the “iştihâr” means “to popularize.”

<sup>57</sup> For a subaltern account of what Ahmed Pasha asked the local population see the letter they have written to the seat of government in Tripoli, see: (COA.İ.MSM.73.2091.4, 28 Rabîu'l-Ahir 1260/17 May 1844).

of esteemed *mezheb* of *ehl-i sünnet*” (COA. İ.MSM.72.2086.3, 25 Cemâziye'l-Evvel 1259/23 June 1843) is also sent to the *Cebel* region so that

“... those hordes of Bedouins who are associated with various bandits..... those ignoramuses who have not taken their share of the truths of religion and the nuances of Islam; a group of *mutezile* which is led astray by a false *mezheb*... have now taken the initiative to walk on the straight path.<sup>58</sup>”

They are now “honored by the glory of Islam”<sup>59</sup> and they started to attend the compulsory Friday and Eid prayers. It is understood from the documents that even though most of them had become Hanefites, some happened to choose to be Maliki. What is most interesting however, in every step of the way, through which the “Sunnitizing mission” is communicated with the Sublime Porte, those converted to *mezheb* of Imam Malik has been erased. In the documents addressed to Sultan by officials located in Istanbul, the only mention is the hanefization of the residents of the *Cebel*. While extremely ornamented designations were used to address the *mezheb* of Numan b. Sabit in all these documents, it was merely “*Maliki mezhebi*” which was used to address the latter. I don't mean to extrapolate any generalizations from here, but it would not be totally wrong to speculate about the relative high esteem the Hanefism enjoyed in the eyes of Ottomans.

After the military pacification, therefore, the region was incorporated into the legal framework of the empire. The Muftis were directly authorized to give legal opinions by the *Şeyhülislam* in Istanbul (COA.İ.MSM.72.2086-4). Along the way, a discourse of religious-cultural superiority is clearly discernible in the documents.

#### 4.4 Perception of Center-Periphery Dichotomy in Perspective

I am very well aware of the fact that the ongoing discussion is quite similar to the late 19th century perceptions of the Ottoman military-bureaucratic elite who self-admittedly assumed its “civilizing mission” in the outlying provinces and aimed at correcting the

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<sup>58</sup> .... Güruh-ı urban bunca sinin ve a'sardan beri me'luf-i enve-i bagi ve şakiden olduklarından başka ekserisi mezheb-i seniyye-i erba'adan hariç hamisi namıyla bir mezheb-i batıluya süluk ile hakaik-i diniyyeden ve dekaik-i islamiyyetten cahil ve bi-behre bir taife-i mutezile.... Min-küllü-vücut tarik-i müstakimi ihtiyar ve iltizam ve bir takımı mezheb-i celile-i hanefiyye ve birazı mezheb-i malikiye temessük ve itisam etmeleri... (COA.İ.MSM.73.2091.4, 28 Rabîu'l-Ahir 1260/17 May 1844)

<sup>59</sup> “Şeref-i islam ile müşerref olup” (COA.İ.MSM.72.2086-4)

believes of the local populations and elevating them to the rank of civilization (Deringil 2012, 242). The only missing component is the ideological classification of Tripoli within the ranks of African colonies, as with the case of Cemal Pasha. Yet, my objection is to the discussion of this behavior, namely the posture of socio-cultural superiority of Ottoman officials, as if it is unique to modernizing elites who got inspired by European colonialist discourses throughout the second half of 19th century. To better illustrate the point, let me turn to the writings of the famous intellectual of the 16th century, Mustafa Ali on Cairo and its inhabitants. In describing the black Arabs of Cairo, he writes:

“It is noteworthy that the multitude of black Arabs, like hordes of studhorse, are all naked, men and women. The women cover their pudenda with a piece of cloth plaited of rope, the size of a palm of the hand, or with certain leaves; the men cover themselves in the same way, hiding only the organ of reproduction and the testicles, but leaving everything else uncovered. Moreover, when they wander along like a herd of animals, naked from head to foot, they would pass by a fountain spring and would, like bears, fill their palms and cupped their hands with water and drink (Âli and Tietze 1975, 43 & for the original Ottoman Turkish, 117).”

Let alone a lens of social otherness, in modern standards, such a description of the people of any locality would directly be termed racist, lucky for him that he had lived and died in the 16th century. Things get even more interesting in the poem he added to his normally prosed text. It is as if he talks about civilizing through enslaving, expectedly without referring to a civilizing mission. According to Âli, the black Arabs of above qualities through the enslavement and castration processes suddenly find the opportunity of entering Ottoman Palace *harem* quarters, thereby enjoying true happiness and starting to wear golden robes. By making careers out of not being able to reproduce, he says, “those vile Arabs that in Egypt run around naked from head to toe/ Had now become men of high respect.” (Âli and Tietze 1975, 44 & for the original Ottoman Turkish, 118). Even though the rest of the poem reads as the familiar criticizing tone of Mustafa Âli of the promotion of the unworthy in Ottoman career paths, the way he puts his disgust of the eunuchs in the service of the Ottoman dynasty is remarkably illuminating in terms of how a member of 16th century Ottoman bureaucracy saw the peripheral peoples of the empire. How different it is from the perceptions of 19th century modernizing elites is an open-ended question.

In fact, the mental barrier Mustafa Âli has built lies between the people of the land of Rum and the people beyond, both in cultural and religious terms. In his monumental *Essence of History (Kûnh'ül-Ahbar)*, he goes on to describe them as following:

“Those varied peoples and different types of Rumis living in the glorious days of the Ottoman dynasty, who are not [generically] separate from those tribes of Turks and Tatars dealt with in the third Pillar, are a select community and pure, pleasing people who, just as they are distinguished in the origins of their state, are singled out for their piety (*diyanet*), cleanliness (*nazafet*), and faith (*akidet*).” (Quoted in Fleischer 1986, 256)

Where does the land of the Rum Âli refer to correspond geographically in the 16th century? As discussed brilliantly by Fleischer (Fleischer 1986, 256) and later by Kafadar (Kafadar 2007), Rum refers to the core territories, or heartlands to be true to Fleischer's terminology, of the Ottoman State from where the early Ottomans started their nearly unstoppable march in all directions. Perhaps, one should not be too hasty in asserting that a sense of motherland embedded in the Ottoman mentality is the product of modern sensibilities of the Ottoman ruling elite. Then perhaps, we should read Cemal Pasha's allusions to his motherland as a crystallization of a mental construct that is readily available in the Ottoman literary tradition. It is also important to emphasize that Âli's emphasis is on more humane qualities such as being pious, clean and faithful rather than the military prowess of the imperial army.

For a brief discussion of why this is important let me return to the *Description of Cairo* for the moment as Âli's misrepresentation of the people in and around Cairo extend beyond the black Arabs to include both the nomadic Bedouins and settled city-folk. As far as Mustafa Âli concerned, it is impossible to distinguish between the mischief-making (*bais'ül fesad*) or badly suspected (*bed-güman*) Bedouins and the good ones because they wear the very same costumes in the cities and behave humbly but when they get out of the limits of settled areas on their horsebacks, they both immediately “throw off their obedience and rebel as soon as they come across a victim” (Âli and Tietze 1975, 56). I believe that this reference is not much different from that of Mehmed Raif Pasha who thought that the Bedouins would “demonstrate a sign of animosity as necessitated by the way they are made” (COA.HAT.1110.44695). In the following lines, Âli develops his argument into an outright discourse of power projection. He cherishes the divided

loyalties and enmity driven nature of the Bedouins who constantly fight each other. He sustains, if not for their internal clashes necessitated by their true nature, Ottoman Sultan would not have been able to rule over these vast territories with such small garrisons situated in the region when Âli was in there. By making them as the way they are, Âli thinks, God bestowed upon the Sultan a great blessing (Âli and Tietze 1975, 57).

As will be demonstrated clearly by the following quote none could have escaped Âli's disdainful looking down upon the people of the seemingly distant Arab province. Âli describes the settled city-folk in Cairo:

“Since the people of Cairo and the opportunists that have come from the desert and settled here suffer from an excess of envy and rancor and duplicity and since people of asinine obstinacy tend toward mischief and intrigue, the population is agreed on (living in) disharmony as one never finds it in any other country.” (Âli and Tietze 1975, 48-49)

When compared with the piety (*diyanet*), cleanliness (*nazafet*), and faith (*akidet*) of the inhabitants of the land of Rum, the description of the innate qualities and inclinations of the people of the Cairo is a good example of the imagined separateness of the center and the periphery in the mind of Mustafa Âli. Even though he does not try to argue for a religious policy as in the case of the conversion of the inhabitants of *Cebel-i Garbi*, Âli could not abstain from criticizing the local *imams* as well as the *Sufi* Sheikhs of Egypt. As he relates “in our times the religious orders followed by the pious, the so-called sheiks of Egypt, are not in harmony with the approved ways of the Sheikhs of the Khalvetiye and Zeyniye orders and of the heads of Naqshbendiyye order of the land of Rum” (Âli and Tietze 1975, 47). It is remarkable that in every chance Âli gets, he could not resist the temptation of articulating the religious-cultural superiority of the people of the land of Rum.

In light of the present discussion in which I tried to trace back the intellectual precedent of the social otherness created by the Ottoman agents in Tripoli, I would like to raise the question of how modern was the cultural logic of 19th-century Ottoman reform? How much it has drawn inspiration from the colonizing logic of the European imperialism? Perhaps, one should stress the continuities more than the changes in the minds of the members of the Ottoman military-bureaucratic elites. All in all, this chapter argues that in no way disregarding the fruitful discussions born out of the Ottoman colonialism

literature, Ottoman ruling elite's perceptions of the peripheral provinces of their empire must be discussed in its own terms.

In the case of Tripoli, Ottomans certainly had concrete imperial designs motivated by the administrative and strategic value of the region and its economic prospects. Nonetheless, such a reality does not automatically mean that they had become a colonial power or developed a colonialist/orientalist discourse per se. I tend to see this as a continuation of Ottoman imperial practice and for the attitude of the Ottoman agents in their justification of the use of violence and Ottoman presence in Tripoli, I would say, it may be best conceptualized as the reproduction and perpetuation of a long-standing feeling of religious-cultural superiority in a slightly different terminology in the context of 19th century.

## 5.CONCLUSION

The early 19th century had witnessed a transformation of unknown scale in the Ottoman Empire ever before. The center-periphery relation was to be renegotiated, redefined even reinvented. The ever-greater security concerns pouring from each side of the imperial borders obliged Ottoman ruling elite to resort such dramatic measures in order to ensure the survival of the Ottoman state. However, it was never a linear process, it played out differently in every single case. Depending on the relative strength of the local powerholders and on the international balance of power, the possible strategies were constrained or released.

In Ottoman North Africa, central government's options had traditionally been limited due to a variety of reason ranging from maritime technology, geography to political impossibilities. However, as the European military domination of the Mediterranean had become the impending reality of the day in the early 19th century, the regencies in North Africa felt the need to come closer with the Sublime Porte, joining its war efforts and aligning international interests more closely. Nonetheless, the French aggression in the western Mediterranean urged the Ottoman decision-makers to reconsider their position in the region. With hastily made plans, they tried to make France evacuate the Algiers, efforts which came to naught at the end. However, once the bell started ringing, they had found themselves in an inter-imperial power competition in the region.

In the early 18th century, Tripoli started to be ruled by a local dynasty, Karamanlıs. They saw the best of the days and the worst of the days under the reign of Yusuf Karamanlı. In his early years, he established Tripoli as a maritime power to be reckoned with to ensure safe passage in the Mediterranean Sea. The income generated by the corsair activities had been channeled to finance to consolidate Karamanlı control in the interior. By the time it had come to 1817 the process was nearly complete in terms of pacifying the country.



However, overdependency on the financial fruits of the piratical raids in the Mediterranean, intrusion of Maltese traders into Tripolitan markets by the encouragement of British consuls in Tripoli shrank the Tripolitan treasury, dragging Yusuf Pasha into a vicious cycle of unpaid debts. Several outbreaks of rebellions in the interior blew further to his authority. At last, he lost the last bit of legitimacy when he asked a traditionally tax-exempt privileged military class to finance the liquidation of his debts to the French traders and the *Kuloğlu* stroke the banner of rebellion, rallying around his grandson Mehmed. Eventually, two rival parties emerged in Tripoli to fill the power vacuum created by Yusuf Pasha's mismanagement and resultant abdication in favor of his son Ali Bey. The struggle was to endure until the Ottoman naval squadron sent by the Sultan arrived in Tripoli on 25 May 1835. It was the moment which gave this thesis its title.

The received wisdom in which Tripoli is portrayed as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century until 1912 Treaty of Ouchy may mislead us to think Ottoman intervention as the natural course of action but the naval squadron was the last card Ottomans had chosen to put forward. All along, the Ottoman decision-makers' priority was to stabilize the region. To this end, Mehmed Şakir Efendi was sent to Tripoli to investigate the situation. The first course of action was to wait, probably, for the civil war to be sorted out by local contenders themselves. Prolongation of the conditions of civil war, though, had transformed Ottoman policy into a policy of full support behind Ali Bey in his fight against his nephew. Each party had its own local and international allies, which was resulting in an impasse in which either side would not surmount the other. On the other hand, the stalemate was rendering Tripolitan territory an easy target laying out in the open for potential claimants, which include France, the British and Hüseyinids of Tunisia and Mehmed Ali of Egypt. Being aware of the escalating vulnerability of the region, as reflected in the reports of Mehmed Şakir Efendi, Ottoman high command ordered a naval squadron to be fit for duty. However, even days before its departure, its real ambition was disguised behind the excuse of helping Ali Pasha to dismantle his rival's camp. An elaborate plan with a couple of contingency scenarios was laid out and Ottoman direct rule became the new reality of political life in Tripoli.

Ottomans' involvement in this inter-imperial competition had also its distinctive imperial aspects. For one thing, it was conceptualized as a new conquest by the highest council in the Empire. They decided to do more than to pacify the region for the benefit of the other

parties, seeking administrative, strategic and economic benefit for the Ottoman center itself. And ultimately, they had achieved what they aspired for.

I believe that the very attempt at taking over the Tripoli and the plan's eventual success goes against the paradigms in which the 19th century Ottoman Empire is portrayed as crumbling, disintegrating or diplomatically speaking as a passive object of the Eastern Question. In the 1820s and 1830s, a period when contemporary rivals of Ottoman Empire such as Russia and France see its destruction as imminent and impending, Ottoman center started to decisively re-expand southwards through eliminating powerful local dynastic structures around the empire, Karamanlı family being one of them. It doesn't matter if they singlehandedly orchestrated a southern policy or seized the opportunities when they presented themselves, they were able enough not to be captioned as the "Sick Man of Europe." Therefore, as far as political and diplomatic history concerned it is imperative to refrain from being blindfolded by what had happened at the end of the Great War. Such a point of view would give us the opportunity of thoroughly assessing the political choices, successes, and failures of the late Ottoman political elite.

I believe, therefore, that it is due here to take a detour to talk about those who involved with the planning and execution of the Ottoman intervention and with the formulation of a loosely defined North African policy which basically aims at containing French expansion. Most important among them, those who sit at the table when the decisions were being made and those who were operational in the field, were Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, Necip Pasha, Damad Halil Rifat Pasha, and Kaptan-ı Derya Tahir Pasha.

First, it must be stated that each had become affiliated with the imperial navy, three of them at its highest office. Unfortunately, the main executioner of the plan is the most obscure one. Mustafa Necip Pasha was a graduate of palace school and after a career in Ottoman military, details of which are unknown, he became a general in 1832 and tasked with the elimination of Karamanlı dynasty in 1835. After he served as the guardian of Varna, he died in the early years of Abdülmecid's reign (Çaycı 1995, 5). Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha is perhaps the most famous one. He was a Caucasian slave who had been also educated in the palace school and became a protégé of Silahtar Yahya and Süfyan Aghas. After his early years in the palace, he was attached to Küçük Hüseyin Pasha and when his master was appointed as the Kaptan-ı Derya of the imperial navy, Hüsrev followed him as his *kethüda*, commencing his career out of the palace (Çelik 2013, 6-9). Mehmed Tahir

Pasha, also known as Çengeloğlu, had started his career in the North African corsair fleets and rose up in the imperial navy. After avoiding the annihilation of his ship *Mecray-ı Zafer* and his crew in the battle of Navarino (COA.HAT.402.21123, n.d), his career blossomed, becoming a ferik, Kaptan-ı Derya and Governor of Tripoli, respectively in 1830, 1832 and 1837. After his second term as Kaptan-ı Derya between 1841 and 1843, he served as governor in several provinces and died in 1847 (Çaycı 1995, 6). Damad Halil Rıfat Pasha was also a Georgian slave. Interestingly enough, his master was Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha. He was first tasked with being his master's treasurer, become Kaptan-ı Derya in 1830, and royal groom in 1834. He succeeded his master as the *Serasker* in 1836, continued to hold prominent positions until he died in 1856 and buried next to his master, Hüsrev Pasha (Çelik 2013, 421).

Apart from being involved with the naval affairs of the Empire, these men have one other thing in common, that is, they are coming from traditional backgrounds. They were either slaves or free-born graduates of palace school who are deeply entrenched in factional politics. In the case of Tahir Pasha, he had entered the system through north Africa. Wouldn't it be logical to ask how different a cadre is this from let's say the 17th century? On the other hand, these so-called traditionally oriented people were smoothly orchestrating a political scheme that could even be considered as overseas expansion. Not only that, but they also started to lay the first bricks of Ottoman modernization in Tripoli. I believe that their success calls for a better evaluation of their legacy, by that I mean the legacy of their tradition to better understand the dynamics of the development of Ottoman modernity in the 19th century.

Looking from such a perspective, the social distancing, even disdain, clearly discernible from the official correspondence of these Ottoman agents is all the more interesting. After all, apart from Mustafa Ali's discussions of the people of the Cairo, Süleyman Penah Efendi as well in his *Esbab-ı Tebdir-i Nizam-i Ekâlim* had seen the "noble savages" in the persons of Albanians of Avlonya and Delvine in the late 18th century (Erdem 2017).<sup>60</sup> Therefore, perhaps it is possible to follow the tracks of a nuanced understanding of how the Ottoman center perceived and conceptualized its provinces and the people living in it with a better historicization. In our case, apart from the usual discourse of tribal "savage", it turned out to be deeply intertwined with concerns of the legal jurisdiction of Ottoman

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<sup>60</sup> See for the text of *Esbab-ı Tebdir-i Nizam-i Ekâlim*: (Süleyman Penah & Zararsız, 2017).

central government which is also blended with a belief in the religious superiority of the *mezheb-i Numan b. Sabit*.

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APPENDIX A:

MAP OF TRIPOLI



Source: (Dearden 1976)