

THE ROLE OF ALVISE GRITTI WITHIN THE OTTOMAN POLITICS IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE “HUNGARIAN QUESTION” (1526-1534)

A Master's Thesis

by

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September 2009

To my fellow-traveler

THE ROLE OF ALVISE GRITTI WITHIN THE OTTOMAN POLITICS IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE “HUNGARIAN QUESTION” (1526-1534)

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

by

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in

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ANKARA

September 2009

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF ALVISE GRITTI WITHIN THE OTTOMAN POLITICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE “HUNGARIAN QUESTION” (1526-1534)

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Alvise Gritti is one of the most interesting and vivid characters appeared in both Ottoman and European history of the sixteenth century. As an Istanbul-born Venetian, Gritti was the son of Andrea Gritti, the Doge of Venice elected in 1523, from a non-Muslim Ottoman woman. Since he was accepted as illegitimate according to the Venetian law, he was deprived from the right of participation into the Venetian politics. He found the opportunity of having a political carrier in Istanbul, his birth place, where he had come to engage in commerce; mediated between the Ottoman sultan and the European states; and undertook important tasks in the “Hungarian Question”, which was considered as one of the most important political problems of the period.

This thesis intends to peruse the life and the roles of Alvise Gritti within the Ottoman politics. In this context, besides the political conjuncture of the period, the family, the personality, and the extensive commercial and political networks of Alvise Gritti and the tasks that he undertook as part of the “Hungarian Question” mainly by light of the Venetian sources.

The thesis reaches the conclusion that Alvise Gritti is one of the “versatile personalities” of his time; he advanced through the present political system and deposed by the same system whenever he started to use it for his benefits. Thus, it was deduced that the examination of the life of Gritti and his political roles is important and necessary not only to reveal a figure rarely appeared in the Ottoman history but also to understand the general political structure and the diplomatic relations of the period more clearly.

Keywords: Alvise Gritti, Gritti Family, *Beyoğlu*, Suleyman I, Ibrahim Pasha, Charles V, Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, “Hungarian Question” János Szápolyai, Italian Wars, Balance of Power, Universal Sovereignty.

ÖZET

“MACARİSTAN MESELESİ” BAĞLAMINDA ALVİSE GRİTTİ’NİN OSMANLI SİYASETİ İÇERİSİNDEKİ ROLÜ (1526-1534)

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Alvise Gritti on altıncı yüzyıl Osmanlı ve Avrupa tarihinde görülen en ilgi çekici ve renkli karakterlerinden biridir. İstanbul doğumlu bir Venedikli olan Alvise Gritti, 1523 yılında Venedik Doçu seçilen Andrea Gritti’nin gayr-ı Müslim bir Osmanlı kadınından olma oğludur. Venedik yasalarına göre gayr-ı meşru çocuk kabul edilmesinden dolayı Venedik siyasetine katılma hakkından mahrum bırakılmıştır. Venedik’te bulamadığı siyasi kariyer fırsatını, ticaret yapmak için geldiği ve aynı zamanda doğum yeri olan İstanbul’da bulmuş; Osmanlı Sultanı ve diğer Avrupa Devletleri arasında arabuluculuk yapmış ve dönemin en önemli siyasi sorunlarından biri olarak değerlendirilen “Macaristan Meselesi”nde önemli görevler üstlenmiştir.

Bu tez çalışması Alvise Gritti'nin hayatı ve Osmanlı siyaseti içinde üstlendiği rolleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, dönemin genel siyasal yapısının yanı sıra çoğunlukla dönemin Venedik kaynaklarının ışığında, Alvise Gritti'nin aile yapısı, kişiliği ve İstanbul'da sahip olduğu geniş ticari ve siyasi bağlantıları tartışılmış ve Gritti'nin “Macaristan Meselesi” kapsamında üstlendiği görevler incelenmiştir.

Tez, Alvise Gritti'nin dönemin çok yönlü insan tipolojisinin güzel bir örneği olduğu, mevcut siyasal sistem sayesinde yükseldiği ve kazanımlarını kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda kullanmaya başlayınca da yine kendisini yükselten sistem tarafından alaşağı edildiği sonucuna varmıştır. Bu sebeple, Gritti'in yaşamının ve siyasi rollerinin incelenmesinin hem Osmanlı tarihinde eşine ender rastlanan bir figürün açığa çıkarılması hem de dönemin siyasal yapısının ve diplomatik ilişkilerinin daha iyi anlaşılması bakımından önemli ve gerekli olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alvise Gritti, Gritti Ailesi, *Beyoğlu*, I. Süleyman, İbrahim Paşa, V. Karl, Osmanlı-Habsburg rekabeti, “Macaristan Meselesi”, János Szápolyai, İtalya Savaşları, Güçler Dengesi, Evrensel Hâkimiyet.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZET	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II: THE POLITICAL CONJUNCTURE IN EUROPE AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1500-1550)	16
2.1 Political Chaos in Europe: The Italian Wars and the Rise of Habsburg Hegemony	17
2.2 Ottoman Intervention: Decisive Maneuvers in the European Politics	20
2.3 The Role of the Ottoman Empire on the Rise of the Balance of Power Policy in Europe	26
CHAPTER III: MEETING THE <i>BEYOĞLU</i>: THE FAMILY AND THE EARLY LIFE OF ALVISE GRITTI	31
3.1 The Gritti Family: A Brief History	33
3.2 Andrea Gritti: As a Mirror for the “Prince”	36
3.3 Alvise Gritti: “Bastard” in Venice, “Beyoğlu” in Istanbul	46

CHAPTER IV: THE ROLE OF THE <i>BEYOĞLU</i> WITHIN THE OTTOMAN	
POLITICS.....	59
4.1. Two Good Fellow-Travelers: Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti	61
4.2 The Introduction of Alvise Gritti to the Political Stage	69
4.3 Alvise Gritti at the Center of the Power Struggle: Enigmatic and Complex Relations.....	89
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115
APPENDIX.....	122

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Alvise Gritti¹ (1480-1534), an Istanbul born Venetian merchant, can be considered as one of the most fascinating personalities of the first half of the sixteenth century. He was the son of Andrea Gritti, who was elected as the *Doge*² of Venice in 1523, and his mother was non-Muslim Ottoman woman with whom the *Doge* lived in Istanbul during his office. Since his birth was not within Catholic marriage, Gritti was not only considered as an illegitimate child according to the Venetian law but also he was deprived of the right of participating into political life of the Venetian Republic which was offered to every Venetian patrician. Nevertheless, he found the opportunity of obtaining a political career in the Ottoman State which he could not acquire in Venice. While he was engaging in commerce in Istanbul, he also served as a mediator between the Ottoman sultan and the representatives of some European states. Moreover, he played decisive roles in the “Hungarian Question”, which was considered to be one of the most important political affairs of the period.

¹ Alvise was the Venetian use of the Italian name Luigi and Latin name Ludovico. In the ancient Venetian dialect the name was used in the form of Aluigi. The French use of the name is Aloisio. Besides these, the Ottomans pronounced and used the name in the documents as Lovizo or Lovize. For that reason some of the documents and studies concerning Alvise Gritti referred to him with various uses of his name. In this study the Venetian use of the name, Alvise is going to be used in reference to the Venetian origin of the studied character.

² Doge or Dose as in Venetian dialect, meaning duke, was the name given to the princes of Venice. The term also used for the princes of Genoa. For detailed information about the term, its etymology and use see “Doge” in Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano*, (Venezia: Premiata Tipografia di Giovanni Cecchini Editioni, 1856).

Alvise Gritti is a good example of the typology of “versatile personalities” of the Renaissance period. He controlled an extensive and effective international commercial network in Istanbul. He was introduced to the Ottoman politics especially through his intimate friendship with the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha. Furthermore, due to the great wealth that he acquired from the international commerce, he lived a fascinating life in Istanbul. His palace witnessed great festivals and entertainments; moreover, many intellectuals and artists were patronized by Alvise Gritti himself. The biographers of Gritti mention that even the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I attended some of the festivals organized in his palace and went there with Ibrahim Pasha to consult the state affairs with Gritti. As the *Doge* of Venice was perceived as an ordinary *bey*, prince, by the Ottomans, Gritti was called as *Beyoğlu*³, the son of the Prince, in Istanbul and the district of *Pera* where his palace was located was also called *Beyoğlu*, with reference to his epithet especially in the nineteenth century.⁴

There are a variety of sources to analyze Alvise Gritti, his fascinating life and political roles that he undertook within the Ottoman Empire and Hungary. Among the primary sources, it can be argued that the biographies of Alvise Gritti have the

³ Besides the meaning of prince, *bey* is also an appellation in Ottoman which means “sir”. In Ottoman orthography it spells as *beg oghl* and in most of the Ottoman documents this spelling were used. However in the present text, the modern Turkish form of spelling will be used.

⁴ *Pera* was one of the three important districts of Istanbul at that time, meaning literally “opposite side” in Greek. It took this name because of its opposite situation to the Golden Horn in which the Ottoman Palace was situated. *Pera* was the settling area of the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire and the foreigners, especially merchants and diplomats. Especially, after 1535 in which the right oh having permanent ambassador in the Ottoman capital given to French, this zone started to become the center of embassies. On the other hand, due to its being countryside, the residences of the wealth merchants was situated here. The second name of the district was *Beyoğlu* and it is argued that this name was derived from a son of a famous prince living there. For this prince, there had been two speculations, first Alexios Komnenos, the Byzantine Prince converting to Islam; lived in this district in the time of Mehmed II, the second is Alvise Gritti, the son of Venetian *doge* Andrea Gritti who had been called as *bey*, prince by the Ottomans. Since in some of the Ottoman documents, Alvise Gritti, himself, was called with his epithet rather than his name, the second proposition seems more accurate. For the name of *Beyoğlu* and its history see: “*Beyoğlu*”, *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı-Tarih Vakfı, 1994), 212-218, Halil İnalçık, “*Istanbul*”, *The Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), v. 4, 224-248.

most important role to understand and interpret of the character. The accounts of his chamberlain Francesco Della Valle, who entered the service of Gritti in 1531, are considered as the most important source about the Venetian.⁵ After providing preliminary information about the personality and the Istanbul life of Alvise Gritti, Della Valle thoroughly narrated his activities in Hungary after 1531. Not surprisingly, the author emphasized the tragic death of Gritti and attempted to display his grandeur to the Venetian audience.

Besides his own biography, the biography of Andrea Gritti, his father, gives the researchers preliminary information about Alvise Gritti. It is evident that Andrea Gritti was one of the prominent personalities to be examined thoroughly in order to understand Alvise Gritti and his life. A good first hand source about Andrea Gritti is his biography which was written by Niccolò Barbarigo and published in Venice in 1686.⁶ While giving detailed information about Andrea Gritti and his life, achievements and his actions in the Venetian politics, Barbarigo draw a general portrait of the father Gritti. Moreover by comparing and contrasting the father and the son Alvise, Barbarigo displayed the impact of Andrea Gritti on the personality and actions of his son.

⁵ Francesco della Valle, *Una breve narrazione della grandezza, virtù, valore et della infelice morte dell'Illustrissimo Signor Conte Alouise Gritti, del Serenissimo Signor Andrea Gritti, Principe di Venezia, Conte del gran Contado di Marmarus in Ongaria et General Capitano dell'esercito Regno, appresso Sulimano Imperator de Turchi, et alla Maesta del Re Giovanni Re d'Ongaria*, (Venice, c. 1525). This biography is conserved within the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana of Venice under the collocation of Itt. Cl. 6. Cod. 122 (6211). This biography was published with the edition of Iván Nagy: Francesco Della Valle, *Una breve narrazione della grandezza, virtù, valore et della infelice morte dell'Illustrissimo Signor Conte Alouise Gritti, del Serenissimo Signor Andrea Gritti, Principe di Venezia, Conte del gran Contado di Marmarus in Ongaria et General Capitano dell'esercito Regno, appresso Sulimano Imperator de Turchi, et alla Maesta del Re Giovanni Re d'Ongaria*, , *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, ed. by Iván Nagy v. 3 (Pest: 1857), 9-60. In the present study the citations are given according to the edition of Nagy rather than the original manuscript.

⁶ Niccolò Barbarigo, *Vita del Serenissimo Andrea Gritti Prencipe di Venetia*, (Venice, 1686). Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Itt. Cl. 7. Cod. 1590 (7976).

Another important source of information was the *relazioni*⁷, of the Venetian *baili*⁸. These reports were classified and published by Eugenio Albèri in three volumes between the years of 1850 and 1855.⁹ These reports comprise detailed information about the political, diplomatic and commercial affairs of the time from the eyes of the Venetian *baili* and drew a general picture of the Ottoman State and its administration. The *relazioni* which were based on the first hand observations are one of the most significant sources that can be utilized to enlighten the Ottoman history in general. The reports concerning the first half of the sixteenth century include important details about Alvise Gritti, Ibrahim Pasha and the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I and their reciprocal relations. Although the information given by them are usually exaggerated and misinterpreted, it is crucial to understand the mentality of both the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman State.

Furthermore, the unpublished documents conserved within the *Archivio Stato di Venezia*, Venetian State Archive, are decisively instrumental to analyze the relations of Alvise Gritti with Venice. The correspondences between Andrea Gritti, the Doge of Venice, and his son Alvise and the letters and dispatches of the Venetian representatives and *Consiglio dei Dieci*, the Council of Ten, offer qualified data to the researchers. The correspondences clearly reveal that all events that occurred in the Republic, in Italy and even in Europe was reported to Alvise Gritti and the Republic asked his opinions and advises when needed. Moreover, Alvise Gritti was perceived as a source of information about the Ottomans and used by the

⁷ *Relazione*, in plural *relazioni*, was the reports of the Venetian representatives charged in foreign states. Every representative should compose a *relazione* and present it before the Venetian Senate after having concluded his office.

⁸ *Bailo*, in plural *baili*, was the name of the Venetian ambassador of Istanbul. Besides his role of representation of the Venetian Republic, the *bailo* was the head of the Venetians living in Istanbul.

⁹ *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori al Senato*, ed. by, Eugenio Albèri, serie. 3, v. 1-3, (Florence, 1840-1855)

*Serenissima*¹⁰ as an unofficial representative mediating between itself and the Ottoman administration.

Besides the unpublished documents, the collection of Marino Sanuto named *I Diarii*¹¹ is an important source of information. Sanuto noted down everything that was said and done in councils and assemblies of the Venetian Republic; observed the documents conserved in the secret archives of the state and composed a huge collection of registers including the entire documents of the Venetian Republic concerning the domestic and foreign relations. Since the registers were composed in a form of a diary, the data were offered in a chronological order to the researchers. *I Diarii* are certainly important to utilize in order to understand the structure of the not only the Venetian Republic but also the other states being in relation with itself.

Apart from the Venetian documents the Ottoman materials are also utilized in the studies based on Alvise Gritti. Some of the Ottoman documents conserved in the *Archivio di Stato di Venezia* under the classification of *Documenti Turchi*, Turkish Documents, include brief information about Alvise Gritti, which is very instrumental to interpret his role within the Ottoman State.

Apart from the documents, the pamphlets and the informative books written on the subject of *cose dei Turchi*, the issues about the Turks, contain detailed information about Alvise Gritti and the Ottoman Empire. At this point it is important to mention two works of the contemporaries of Gritti: Benedetto Ramberti¹² and Luigi Bassano da Zara¹³. Their travel accounts based on their own observations about the Ottoman Empire, its administration, political and social life are very useful to

¹⁰ *Serenissima* was the epithet of the Venetian Republic. The Venetians called their Republic as the *Serenissima Republica*, the Most Serene Republic.

¹¹ Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii*, ed. by Rinaldo Fulin, (Bologna: Forni Editore, 1879-1903)

¹² Benedetto Ramberti, *Libri Tre Delle Cose de Turchi*, (Venice, 1539)

¹³ M. Luigi Bassano da Zara, *I Costumi et i Modi Particolari de la Vita de' Turchi*, Roma: 1545, republished by Franz Babinger, (Monaco di Baviera: Casa Editrice Max Hueber, 1963).

gather information about Gritti and the state in which he could find to have a political career. Moreover, these accounts present the readers the general perceptions of Europeans concerning the Ottoman Empire and the Ottomans in the sixteenth century.

As well as the primary sources, there are numerous secondary sources about Alvise Gritti, his life and role in the sixteenth century. It can be argued that the Istanbul-born Venetian merchant has been popular among the researchers since the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, the preliminary works about him were conducted in Europe, especially in his areas of action namely Austria and Hungary.

The first comprehensive and significant study about Alvise Gritti was conducted by the Austrian specialist Heinrich Kretschmayr in 1890. In his eminent work entitled *Ludovico Gritti: Eine Monographie*¹⁴, which has been used by his successors as a reference book, Kretschmayr presented a comprehensive monographic study with reference to his research that he made in the Italian, Austrian and Hungarian archives. After discussing the personal characteristics of Gritti and his family connections, Kretschmayr argued that the rise of the Venetian merchant to the one of the most important political roles in the Ottoman Empire was related to his clever and adroit personality, full of the personal talents of diplomacy. He also pointed out that the position within the Ottoman politics and exceeding authority in Hungary which he gained in a very short period of time allured him: He intended to succeed the Hungarian throne because of this ambition he got entangled with the enigmatic and complex political conflicts and was killed by the Hungarians because of his claims over the kingdom. Although the work of Kretschmayr was a masterpiece encouraging the further studies on Alvise Gritti, the author let off with

¹⁴ Heinrich Kretschmayr, *Ludovico Gritti: Eine Monographie*, (Vienna: 1896).

associating the rise, success and death of Alvise Gritti to his personal talents and actions. The main political structure of the period and its effects on the personage were mainly ignored. Nevertheless the *monographie* of Kretschmayr provides the reader a general portrait of the personality and presented most of the related documents including the correspondences of Alvise Gritti, mainly in Latin, which were brought to light by the archival research of the author in the appendix part of the book.

The insufficient sides of the study of Kretschmayr were intended to be dealt with almost a century after by the Hungarian historian Gábor Barta. His article written in 1971 was translated into Turkish and published by Vural Yıldırım with the title of *Gritti Ludovicus'un Macar Valiliği*, in 2008.¹⁵ In the article, by discussing the new information about the activities of Alvise Gritti in Hungary and the reactions of the Hungarian magnates against him, Barta pointed out the general socio-political structure of Hungary in the first half of the sixteenth-century. In this context, he established a correlation between the role of Gritti and the circumstances of the period. The statements of Barta was followed and developed by a Venetian historian Carla Coco in his article named *Alvise Gritti fra Veneti, Turchi e Ungheresi*,¹⁶ especially by the light of the correspondences between Andrea and Alvise Gritti.

The studies on Alvise Gritti and his activities in Hungary were developed by Aurel Decei. In his study, Decei tried to understand the role and the function of Alvise Gritti in both the Ottoman Empire and Hungary. As a result of his extensive research in the Ottoman archives, Decei formulated his argument according to the unpublished Ottoman documents. One of the main contributions of his research to

¹⁵ Gábor Barta, "Gritti Ludovicus'un Macar Valiliği (1531-1534)." *Bellekten*, v. 72, no: 263 (April 2008), 251-293.

¹⁶ Carla Coco, "Alvise Gritti fra Veneti, Turchi e Ungheresi", *Studi Miscellanei Uralici e Altaici*, ed by. Andrea Csillaghy, no: 20, (Venice: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 1984), 379-396.

the literature was the presentation of a report written by Alvise Gritti in 1533 and sent to the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I concerning his activities in Hungary. His research was translated into French, developed by other newly found Ottoman documents and published by Jean Louis Bacqué- Grammont and Christian Feneşan in 1992.¹⁷ This study based on an extensive research showed the influence of Alvise Gritti within the Ottoman Empire and in a sense verified the arguments of the former studies from the Ottoman perspective.

Another important work about Alvise Gritti and his role in Hungary, was the prominent book of Ferenc Szakály entitled *Ludovico Gritti in Hungary 1529-1534: A Historical Insight into the Beginnings of Turco-Habsburgian Rivalry*¹⁸, which discusses the Gritti phenomenon within the context of Hungary and its internal conjunctures. As an important component of the researched period, Szakály discussed the Ottoman intervention in Hungary and the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry of the sixteenth century which entirely changed the inner structure of the Hungarian Kingdom and caused the emergence of a political chaos. Moreover, Szakály argued that the Ottoman Empire intended to use its famous “gradual methods of conquest”¹⁹ also in Hungary and used Gritti as a mediator in order to implement the Ottoman structure into the Hungarian territories. According to Szakály, this policy failed in Hungary because the Hungarian structure was so different from the Balkan territories in which the policy was exercised successfully; and Alvise Gritti was disposed in this chaotic situation when he intended to push the limits of his power and authority.

¹⁷ Aurel Decei, “Aloisio Gritti au Service de Soliman Le Magnifique d’après des documents Turcs Inédits (1533-1534), *Anatolia Moderna-Yeni Anadolu*, ed. by Jean Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Christina Feneşan, v. 3 (1992), 1-103.

¹⁸ Ferenc Szakály, *Ludovico Gritti in Hungary 1529-1534: A Historical Insight into the Beginnings of Turco-Habsburgian Rivalry*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995).

¹⁹ The theory of “gradual methods of conquest” was presented to the literature of history by the prominent Turkish historian Halil İnalcık. In the following chapters this theory and its implementation in Hungary is going to be discussed thoroughly.

A new approach to Alvise Gritti was brought by the interesting and pioneer works of Robert Finlay. Finlay undersigned several articles on the Gritti family, Andrea Gritti and his role in the Venetian history and Alvise Gritti.²⁰ What differentiates Robert Finlay from the other scholars dealing with Alvise Gritti is the fact that, besides the discussions on the general political conjuncture of the period, Finlay established a cultural background which provides the reader to understand the general perception of the contemporary peoples and the cultural atmosphere of the contemporary states. At this point two articles of Finlay come into prominence: in *Al Servizio del Sultano: Venezia, i Turchi e il Mondo Cristiano, 1523-1538*, Finlay pointed out how Alvise Gritti was perceived within the Venetian Republic and the Republic's reactions to his activities by using mainly the Venetian documents. On the other hand, in his *Prophecy and Politics in Istanbul: Charles V, Sultan Suleyman, and the Habsburg Embassy of 1533-1534*, the author conducted a similar account from the Ottoman perspective, and stated the perception of Alvise Gritti among the Ottoman statesmen based on some prophecies rounding around the Venetian. Finlay's accounts became very significant in understanding thoroughly the role of Alvise Gritti both in the political and cultural environments of the period.

The most recent and comprehensive study about Alvise Gritti was conducted by the Italian historians Gizella Nemeth Papo and Adriano Papo. In their *chef d'œuvre* entitled *Ludovico Gritti: Un Principe Mercante del Rinascimento tra Venezia I Turchi e La Corona D'Ungheria*, the authors did not only analyze the

²⁰ The articles of Robert Finlay utilized in this thesis are "Al Servizio del Sultano: Venezia, i Turchi e il Mondo Cristiano, 1523-1538", "*Renovatio Urbis*": *Veneto nell'età di Andrea Gritti (1523-1538)*, ed. by Manfredo Tafuri (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 1984) 78-118; "Fabius Maximus in Venice: Doge Andrea Gritti, the War of Cambrai and the Rise of Habsburg Hegemony, 1509-1530." *Renaissance Quarterly*, v. 53, no: 4 (winter, 2000), 988-1031; "Politics and the Family in Renaissance Venice: The Election of Doge Andrea Gritti." *Studi Veneziani*, no: 2, (1978), 97-117; "Prophecy and Politics in Istanbul: Charles V, Sultan Suleyman, and the Habsburg Embassy of 1533-1534", *Journal of Early Modern History*, v.2, no: 1, (1998), 1-31.

entire collection of sources about Alvise Gritti and make a good resume; they also investigated the complex personality and networks of relationships of Alvise Gritti by concentrating on the Venetian, Ottoman and Hungarian points of view. Furthermore, they attempted to categorize the Venetian according to the contemporary political and intellectual perception of Renaissance. Besides the rich bibliography they used, the authors brought many undiscovered Venetian and Hungarian documents and manuscripts in the light. Concerning their statements it can be argued that they made one of the most important contributions to the research field based on Alvise Gritti and his relations with the Ottoman Empire as well as the other European powers.

Besides the mentioned works of the foreign researchers, although there is a very limited literature about him, Alvise Gritti is a subject of research for the Turkish scholars also. Mahmut Şakiroğlu²¹ and Zeki Sönmez²² introduced Alvise Gritti and the Gritti Family to the Turkish researchers and readers. Especially in his book *Türk-İtalyan Siyaset ve Sanat İlişkileri*, Zeki Sönmez gives brief information about Andrea and Alvise Gritti and argued that these personalities had important contributions in the formation of an “Ottoman Renaissance” by patronizing many intellectuals, poets, musicians and artists within the Ottoman capital.

At this point it would not be inaccurate to argue that Gülrû Necipoğlu undersigned the most important contribution of the studies about the Gritti phenomenon among the Turkish scholars. In her pioneering article entitled *Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of*

²¹ Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, “Gritti Ailesi”, in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, v. 3, (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı-Tarih Vakfı, 1994), 428-429.

²² Zeki Sönmez, *Türk-İtalyan Siyaset ve Sanat İlişkileri*, (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 2006).

Ottoman-Habsburg-Papal Rivalry,²³ Necipoğlu provided information about the *regalia* including the golden helmet resembling to Papal tiara presented to the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I by the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha. This helmet was the product of consortium of Venetian goldsmiths and merchants led by Alvise Gritti. The helmet was used in the representation of power of the Ottoman Sultan against the Habsburg Emperor Karl V in their rivalry of universal sovereignty. While discussing the symbolic meaning of the regalia and their use, Necipoğlu pointed out that with the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, Alvise Gritti played an important role in the formulation of the ideals of “World Empire” and “universal sovereignty” during the reign of Suleyman I.

Another important contribution came from Özlem Kumrular. Kumrular wrote a brief article named *Osmanlı Sarayında ve Avrupa Siyasi Sahnesinde Venedikli Bir Sınır Diplomatı: “Mir-İ Venedik Oğlu Alvise Gritti”*²⁴, about the Venetian by using mainly the Spanish documents of the period which are newly discovered. Although Kumrular did not discuss the role of Alvise Gritti in Hungary thoroughly and did not give sufficient information about his death, her article can be accepted as the first most comprehensive study conducted in Turkey.

As it was stated before, besides the preliminary study of Özlem Kumrular, a comprehensive study about Alvise Gritti has not been conducted up until today in the Turkish literature of history. The present study was incarnated on the purpose of the clarification the question of why and how Alvise Gritti who was an outsider of the Ottoman the state structure and preserved his Christian faith until his death, could

²³ Gülrû Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg-Papal Rivalry.” *The Art Bulletin*, v. 71, no: 3 (September, 1989), 401-427.

²⁴ Özlem Kumrular, “Osmanlı Sarayında ve Avrupa Siyasi Sahnesinde Venedikli Bir Sınır Diplomatı: “Mir-i Venedik Oğlu” Alvise Gritti.” *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no. 6, (Autumn 2007-Winter) 2008, 39-59.

have managed to enter the Ottoman politics and assumed high level political duties. Therefore, the life of Alvise Gritti and the roles that he had undertaken in the Ottoman politics within the context of the “Hungarian Question” is going to be examined thoroughly in the light of the primary sources and former studies to understand the circumstances lead him to appear as an important political actor of his time.

The methodology of the thesis was based on combining the information produced on Alvise Gritti from the end of nineteenth century to present, and creating a comprehensive narrative within the frame of the life of Alvise Gritti and his roles within the Ottoman politics. Concerning the aim and the scope of the present study, the use of the primary sources is limited with mainly the Venetian documents and first hand accounts. In the scope of the archival research, the present author brought four new documents about Alvise Gritti to light. The four letters of Alvise Gritti written in 1526, now conserved within the collection of *Dispacci degli Ambasciatori al Senato*, are used within this thesis. Since providing the full transcription and translation of these documents exceeds the limits and scope of the present study, parts of the letters were indented within the text with its English translation. The new information inferred from these letters changed the common consent on the date of the appearance of Alvise Gritti on the political stage of the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman policy over Hungary. On the other hand, to produce a most coherent and comprehensive analyze, the secondary sources based on the Hungarian, German, Spanish and French documents and literature are used as a tool of controlling the accuracy and relevance of the statements through comparative readings.

Moreover some Ottoman documents also reviewed to support the suggested ideas. The Ottoman *names*, letters, and *fermans*, imperial edicts, found in the

Archivio di Stato under the classification of *Documenti Turchi*, were utilized. Moreover, the chronicle of a contemporary Ottoman historian Peçevî İbrahim Efendi²⁵ was used to verify the political data given in the text.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, this thesis is divided into three chapters in which the personality and life story of Alvise Gritti is intended to be discussed in relation with the contemporary European and Ottoman political conjuncture of the early sixteenth century. The first chapter aims to provide the reader background information about the general political conjuncture of Europe as well as the Ottoman Empire, and introduce the main political events and concepts which are useful to figure out the general context of the period in which Alvise Gritti appeared as an important figure. As an important components of the sixteenth century political history, the Italian Wars and the Habsburg-Valois struggle in Europe is going to be explained briefly and the intervention of the Ottoman Empire to the European politics and the occurrence of the “Hungarian Question” will be discussed within the context of “balance of power” and “universal supremacy”.

After giving brief information about the general political conjuncture of Europe and the Ottoman Empire, the following chapters of the thesis focus on the life of Alvise Gritti and his roles within the Ottoman politics. The second chapter deals with the family background, the personality and the early life of Alvise Gritti by the lights of the contemporary Venetian literature based on him and his family and on the Ottoman Empire and some archival documents. Alvise Gritti did not rise in the Ottoman socio-political and commercial structures all of a sudden, he benefited from his family ties and the political and commercial networks which had been created by his father Andrea Gritti. Through these networks, he did not only carve out a great

²⁵ Peçevî İbrahim Efendi., *Târih-i Peçevî*, (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1980).

fortune; but also find the chance of meeting the Ottoman high-ranking officers. On the other hand, his growth within a prominent Venetian patrician family under a good education provided him good political, diplomatic and cultural skills and made him one of the good examples of “versatile personalities” Therefore, besides the brief biography of Alvise Gritti including his palace and life in Istanbul, his family and relations both with his father and the Venetian republic will be discussed in details to draw a general picture of life of and the personal characteristics of Alvise Gritti being a basis for understanding his rise within the political life of the Ottoman Empire.

The final chapter aims at examining the role of Alvise Gritti in the Ottoman politics by the light of the information gathered from the previous chapters and seeking an answer the principal question of the thesis by analyzing his activities concerning the “Hungarian Question”. In this chapter, as being the person who introduced Alvise Gritti into the Ottoman palace and politics, Ibrahim Pasha, the Grand Vizier of Suleyman I, and his relations with Alvise Gritti are going to be examined thoroughly. Furthermore, the emergence and the transformation of a succession crisis in Hungary after the death of the Hungarian King Lajos II into a tool used in the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry of the sixteenth century and an international question with which the other European potentates occasionally interfered. At this point, the participation of Alvise Gritti into the Hungarian affairs on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, his activities in Hungary and his transformation to a complex, enigmatic and intimidating political figure in both Ottoman and European history will be analyzed by the light of the archival documents. Moreover, some newly found Venetian documents, which changed the general consent on the year in which Alvise Gritti firstly appeared in the Ottoman politics and the Ottoman plans of

Hungary before the Battle of Mohács will be also analyzed and presented to the readers.

After discussing the life and the roles of Alvise Gritti within the Ottoman politics in details, this thesis intends to display the fact that although he was not a unique example in the Ottoman History, Alvise Gritti was one of the few non-Muslims having such a fascinating a political career in the Ottoman State. Alvise Gritti could get the chance of acting within the European politics of the Ottoman State having a considerably complicated structure in which even the Ottoman bureaucrats was not be able to take a part. In this context, besides the personal characteristics and effective political and commercial networks that he derived from his family, especially from his father Andrea Gritti, the general political conjuncture of the sixteenth century crated the figure of “Alvise Gritti” and he was used as a tool within the great political plans of the great powers of the time. As his rise, his fall of Alvise Gritti was also related to the system. When he became ineffective and even dangerous for the states since he had become an enigmatic and hypocrite personality, he was overthrown by the political powers which had been provided his rise. In this context, a detailed study about Alvise Gritti besides its importance to analyze and evaluate quite a rarely seen figure in the Ottoman History, offers the researchers the opportunity of drawing a general picture of the sixteenth century political history from both the Ottoman and European perspectives. At this point, besides presenting a comprehensive evaluation of the former studies, the author hopes to provide a basis for further research on this subject in the light of new information revealed in this thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL CONJUNCTURE IN EUROPE AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1500-1550)

Alvise Gritti (1480-1534) was one of the most interesting figures of the first half of the sixteenth century. His life started as the son of a Venetian merchant, and he died as the Governor of Hungary. He took several duties in the Ottoman Empire like the advisor of the Grand Vizier, the mediator of the Hungarian King János Szápolyai, the commander of the Ottoman corps in within the Ottoman expeditions in Hungary and the unofficial envoy between the Porte and some of the European states like Venice, Austria and Hungary. That inconceivable and particular rise of Alvise Gritti cannot be fully comprehended by analyzing only his biography; various factors played decisive roles in his career. Not surprisingly, one of the most important factors in his rise was the general political conjuncture of the first half of the sixteenth century, from both the European and that of the Ottoman perspectives. Alvise Gritti was a product of the sixteenth century in a sense and he could find the chance of showing his personal talents by using the complex political developments of that period. In his political career, even in his entire life, his great talent in analyzing the general situation and in using the current conditions and opportunities of his time brought him success. From this perspective, in order to understand Alvise Gritti and the

importance of his role both in the Ottoman and in European History, the general European and Ottoman political conjuncture of the early sixteenth century should be analyzed carefully.

2.1 Political Chaos in Europe: The Italian Wars and the Rise of Habsburg

Hegemony

The major event in the sixteenth-century European history is most probably the Italian Wars. Italian Wars were the series of conflicts that occurred between 1494 and 1559 among the European States for the hegemony of Italy and in a wider sense for the domination of Europe.²⁶ In this period the Italian peninsula was mainly divided into three parts. In the south there was the kingdom of Naples, at the center there was the Papal State, and in the north there were independent city-states such as Venice, Florence, Genoa and Milan. The lack of any political power uniting all these small political entities under one umbrella did not only result in the struggles of hegemony among the Italian states but it also motivated the great powers to interfere with their internal affairs. The Italian states did not hesitate to ask foreign powers for help against each other. The long lasting Italian Wars were the consequences of that demand for support: In order to prevent the Venetian expansion over its own territories the Duchy of Milan encouraged Charles VIII of France to invade the peninsula. Although the French forces were expelled from Italy by the allied forces

²⁶ For detailed information about the Italian Wars and their impacts on the European history see: Wallace K. Ferguson, Geoffrey Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, v. I, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 389-391; Luigi Salvatorelli, *A Concise History of Italy: From Prehistoric Times to Our Own Day*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 363-415; Eugene F. Jr. Rice, Anthony Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, (New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 1994), 135-139; Stephen J. Lee, *Avrupa Tarihinden Kesitler, 1494-1789*, (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2002), 63-69.

of Venice, the Papacy, the Kingdom of Naples, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire; that incident initiated a long period of war on the Italian territories in which the great powers of the time aspired to settle their accounts.

Among the Italian city-states, the most powerful one was the Republic of Venice, possessing the entire territory of North Eastern Italy, the Dalmatian Coast from Istria to Albania and Ionian Islands besides the lagoon city of Venice. The territories of the Republic were divided into three parts namely the lagoon city, the *terraferma* including the Venetian territories of Venice in the Italian Peninsula apart from the lagoon city, and the colonies. Because of the international sea trade, mostly with the Ottoman Empire and the oriental ports, the Republic prospered a lot and with its military forces composed of a great number of *condottieri*, mercenary soldiers, and its unrivaled naval force, it became one of the major political actors not only in Italian but also in international politics.²⁷ The increasing influence and territorial expansion of Venice was considered as a threat for other Italian States and the Papacy. To restrain the Republic, the foreign powers were called once again, this time by the Papacy, and the League of Cambrai, which was formed by the forces of the Papacy, France, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire decisively defeated the Venetian army in the Battle of Agnadello in 1509.²⁸ Venice lost its possessions of the *terraferma*, even Padua, and the allied forces started to threaten the shores of the Venetian lagoon. Thanks to its successful maneuvers, Venice could gradually recover its lost territories within the eight years. On the other hand, in order not to face the danger of invasion, the Republic abandoned its aggressive policy and focused on the defense of its possessions by avoiding battlefield clashes. Instead of

²⁷ Rice, Grafton, 133-135;

²⁸ John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice*, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 390-402; M. E. Mallerr, J. R. Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State: Venice c. 1400 to 1617*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 221-222.

direct interference with the armed struggles, Venice followed a passive but clever policy: the Republic generally used the diplomatic maneuvers; tried to benefit from the rivalries between the other states and sought to have strong alliances in order to stop the marching of any foreign power to its territories.²⁹ Thus, it managed to secure its independence until the end of the eighteenth century.

The conduct of the Italian Wars was changed in the first half of the sixteenth century. In 1515, Francis I acceded to the throne of France. His main purpose was to wear the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. However, four years later, German electoral princes elected Charles I of Spain as the Holy Roman Emperor. As he sat on the throne under the name of Charles V of Habsburg, he possessed a world empire which included Spain, Austria, the Netherlands and the present day Belgium, the Spanish colonies and Burgundy in France, as a result of his family connections.³⁰ This was a precarious fact for Francis I intending to wear also the imperial crown. Hence the French King was worried about the possible advance of Charles V who had already possessed a vast empire and could dream of uniting the whole continent under his domination. This was a threat not only for France itself, but also for the other independent states of Europe. In this context, Francis I decided to limit the

²⁹ For detailed information about the change of Venetian policy after Agnadello see: Finlay, "Fabius Maximus..". For the impacts of the Battle of Agnadello and League of Cambrai on the principles of the Venetian republicanism see: Edward Muir, "Was There Republicanism in the Renaissance Republics?: Venice after Agnadello", *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297-1797*, ed. by, John Martin and Dennis Romano, (Baltimore & London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 137-167.

³⁰ "His paternal grandfather was Emperor Maximilian I (ruled 1493-1519), who married the only daughter of the last duke of Burgundy, the heiress of the seventeen provinces of Netherlands and of Franche-Comté. His maternal grandparents were the Catholic kings, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile; their daughter, Juana, married Philip the Handsome, son of Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy. By 1500, [...] deaths in the Spanish royal family [...] had left Juana heiress of the Spanish kingdoms and made the match of political triumph for the Habsburgs. [...] At the death of his father in 1506, Charles became the duke of Burgundy: at the death of Ferdinand in 1516 [...] he became the king of Castile and Aragon, and of Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and the Spanish possessions in the New World. When Maximilian died in January, 1519, Charles inherited the Austrian territories of the Habsburg archdukes." Rice, Grafton, 125.

advance of Charles V and these two great powers of Europe clashed on the Italian Peninsula.

Francis I intended to control Charles V. Thus he invaded Lombardy in 1521. However after a war which lasted for four years, he could not resist the forces of Charles V. On February 24, 1525, the French armies were defeated in Pavia, and the French King was imprisoned and brought to Madrid by Charles V.³¹ There was a sole solution for the French King: to ask help from another power. In this aspect, he returned his face to the East, to the Ottoman Empire which was the other greatest power of the time. Consequently, also the Ottoman Empire got involved with the European power struggles and the problems of the state system in the continent. The Empire would not only use those circumstances for its own interest, but also to contribute to the modification and consolidation of European State System in the sixteenth century.

2.2 Ottoman Intervention: Decisive Maneuvers in the European Politics

At the beginnings of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was already a world empire, possessing a large amount of territories in three continents. With the continual and decisive conquests of Mehmed II, generally known as the Conqueror, the Ottoman State became a *de facto* empire, which consolidated its settlement in Anatolia and Rumelia. During his reign (1451-1481), the Empire was expanded to the natural frontier of the Danube line, and the Ottoman army started to threaten Central Europe. Although the siege of Belgrade failed in 1456 the Ottoman raiders

³¹ Ferguson, Bruun, 389-390.

terrorized the Venetian Friuli in the northeastern part of Italy between the years of 1468 and 1473.³² The last expedition of Mehmed II was so significant; the city of Otranto was stormed and conquered in 1480 under the command of the Grand Vizier Gedik Ahmed Pasha. The main purpose of the Ottoman Sultan was evident. He had already possessed Constantinople, the capital city of the Eastern Roman Empire, and from then the new target was Rome³³, and Italy, the historical territories of the ancient Roman Empire.³⁴ With the death of Mehmed II in the following year, the Ottoman troops abandoned the city and the dreams of the conquest of Italy were postponed. With the reign of Selim I (1512-1520), the expansion policy of the Empire changed: Selim I gave priority to the conquests in the East. During his time, the Eastern frontier was secured and the Middle Eastern and Arab lands, including Mecca and Medina, were taken under the Ottoman rule. Thus, a new era began in the Ottoman History: the Empire became an Islamic caliphate and the Ottoman sultans considered themselves as the protectors of the entire Muslim world.³⁵ Moreover, as a result of the conquests, the Empire started to control the richest centers of the transit trade and the state incomes vastly increased.³⁶ This political and economic power made the Empire one of the greatest powers of the time, playing a determining role

³² Ottoman raiders made numerous incursions in Friuli in the mentioned period. However, the most important attack was made in 1478 by Iskender Pasha, the *bey*, governor, of Bosnia. Approximately fifteen thousand soldiers plundered the region but after having seen the more numerous Venetian army, they returned to Bosnia. For further information about the incursions and their perception in the Italian political and cultural milieu, see: Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy: A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe: 1453-1683*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001), 54-59.

³³ Rome was perceived by the Ottomans as the *Kızıl Elma*, Red Apple. The legend of *Kızıl Elma* which was supposed to be a Byzantine legend was about the conquest of Rome. In the legend the red apple symbolizes the golden globe situated on the altar of the Church of Saint Peter in Rome and to acquire the apple brings about the universal supremacy. At this point the Ottomans also benefited from this legend in order to formulate and legitimize their policies based on Rome and Italy. However, the Europeans also used this legend in the formulating and legitimating the crusades against the Ottoman Empire by displaying the red apple as Istanbul.

³⁴ For detailed information about the reign of Mehmed II see: Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, (London: Phoenix, 2000), 23-32. For the objective of conquering the Roman territories see: Franz Babinger, *Fatih Sultan Mehmed ve Zamani*, (Istanbul: Oğlak Bilimsel Kitaplar, 2002), 416-417.

³⁵ İnalcık, *Classical Age*, 33-34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

in the political history of the sixteenth century, and that fact was more pronounced during the reign of Suleyman I (1520-1566).

The ascension of Suleyman I -the Magnificent for as the westerners, and the Lawgiver as the Ottomans referred him- to the throne in 1520 was another turning point for the Ottoman Empire. The conquests of his father Selim I had worried the Europeans a lot; they had been thinking, after having concluded the expeditions in the east, Selim would turn his face to Europe. Therefore, the Pope Leo X had been trying to organize a crusade and summoning the European sovereigns to fight against Turks. Both Charles V and Francis I had promised that they would go on a crusade against the Ottomans and used this cause in their struggle for the imperial crown.³⁷ However, by the unexpected death of Selim, Europe took a deep breath. Suleyman I was considered by the Europeans as a more passive sultan than his father in relation to his melancholic attitude. For them, with the death of Selim, “an aggressive lion left a meek lamb as successor;”³⁸ but in a short time, they realized that they lapsed. As soon as he succeeded to the throne, Suleyman I focused on the expansion in the west. The main purpose of the Sultan was marching towards Europe, and firstly he attempted to secure the stepping stones to control both the Mediterranean and Central Europe. In 1521, he conquered Belgrade, the city which his great-grandfather Mehmed II had failed to achieve, and in the following year the Island of Rhodes was captured. Suleyman I bided the time to march further in the continent and the opportunity occurred in 1525.

As it was stated above, after the defeat of Pavia, Francis I, the imprisoned King of France, asked for help to the Ottoman Sultan. Suleyman I did not hesitate to

³⁷ Halil İnalçık, “Avrupa Devletler Sistemi, Fransa ve Osmanlı: Avrupa’da “Geleneksel Dostumuz” Fransa Tarihine Ait Bir Olay”, *Doğu Batı*, no: 14, (February-March-April, 2001), 122-142, 122.

³⁸ “Et certamente pareva a tutti che un Leon arrabiato avesse lasciato un mansueto agnello per successore [...]”. M. Francesco Sansovino, *Gl’Annali overo Le Vite de’Principi et Signori della Casa Othomana*, (Venice: 1571), 207.

reply to the letter of the French King. In his well-known letter, while consoling the French King, Suleyman I underlined that the Ottoman armies were always ready for a war; this was the signal of an impending Ottoman expedition against the Habsburg forces.³⁹ Not surprisingly the Ottoman forces marched towards Hungary, the gate of Central Europe in the following year. The Kingdom of Hungary, which consisted of the present day Hungary, Transylvania, Slovakia, parts of Ukraine and some parts of Austria, was an important power in the East-Central European region from the tenth to the mid-sixteenth century.⁴⁰ It had also played a decisive role in organizing and leading struggles against the Ottoman advance in the Balkan Peninsula.⁴¹ However, because of the unavoidable expansion of the Ottoman State towards Central Europe, the Kingdom got caught between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. In this respect, possessing Hungary became significant for the Sultan not only in terms of meeting the Habsburg Emperor for revenge on behalf of the French King and limiting the increase of Habsburg influence in Europe but also creating a stepping stone for the future Ottoman conquests in Europe towards Austria.

On August 26, 1526, in the Battle of Mohács,⁴² the Hungarian forces were completely defeated and the Hungarian King Lajos II was killed. Buda was taken under the control of the Ottomans. Following the death of the Hungarian King, the

³⁹ “[...] İmđi padişâhlar sınımak ve habs olunmak ‘aceb değildir, gönlünüzü hoş tutup azürde-hatır olmayasız. Öyle olsa, imâ def’-i düşmân ve feth-i memalik için seferden hâlî olmayub biz dahi anların tarikine sâlik olup her zamanda memleketler ve sa’b ve hasîn kaleler feth eyleyüp gece gündüz atımız eğlerlenmiş ve kılıcımız kuşanılmıştır.” The letter of Suleyman I to Francis I was published and translated into modern Turkish by Halil İnalçık, see: İnalçık, “*Avrupa Devletler Sistemi...*”, 127-128.

⁴⁰ See: Illustration 6.

⁴¹ For brief information about the history of Hungarian Kingdom before the Ottoman invasion and its role in the crusades against the Ottomans see: Paul Coles, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 79-85; Geza David, “Macaristan”, DİA, v. 26, 289.

⁴² About the Battle of Mohács see: Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Suleiman The Magnificent 1520-1566*, (Cambridge & Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1944), 76-96; Géza Perjés, *Mohaç Meydan Muharebesi*, pres. by Şerif Baştav, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992); Özlem Kumrular, “Orta Avrupa’nın Kaderini Değiştiren Savaş: Mohaç Öncesi ve Sonrası ve Kastilya’da Yankısı”, *Belleten*, v. 71, no: 261 (August 2007), 537-574. For the course of war and military conditions of the both Otoman and Hungarian army see: Feridun M. Emecem, ““Büyük Türk”e Pannonia Düzlüklerini Açan Savaş Mohaç, 1526”, *Muhteşem Süleyman*, ed.by Özlem Kumrular, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007), 45-92.

overwhelming majority of the Estates, as opponents of the former king, elected the Voivode of Transylvania János Szápolyai as the new king on November 10. This election was also supported, *ipso facto* organized, by the Ottoman Empire. The real concern of Suleyman I was to create a vassal Hungary under the reign of a vassal king owing his authority to himself. In this aspect, it is not surprising to note that the Ottoman armies departed from the city of Buda right after the enthronement of Szápolyai. However, János Szápolyai was not the only nominee for the Hungarian throne. Almost a month after his election, on December 17, other Hungarian princes opposing the election of Szápolyai, declared Ferdinand I of Habsburg, the king of Bohemia and the archduke of Austria, the new Hungarian king by accentuating his family connections with the murdered king. Ferdinand was married to the sister of Lajos II. Moreover, Lajos II was the husband of Mary of Habsburg, the sister of Ferdinand and Charles V. Since Lajos II did not have a legitimate heir, Ferdinand could easily claim for the right of succession to the Hungarian throne.⁴³ This meant the opening of not only a new political rivalry in Hungary, but also an international power struggle which would deeply affect the political history of sixteenth century Europe.

On the European front, the year of 1526 marked the creation of the League of Cognac which was formed by the participation of France, the Papacy, Venice, Milan and Florence against the Emperor Charles V in order to expel him from Italy. However, the alliance could not achieve its purpose; Charles V seized Milan and the imperial troops sacked Rome in 1527. Two years later, the forces of Francis I were decisively defeated at Genoa and the French King was forced to sign the Treaty of Cambrai on August 5, 1529 which obliged him to abandon his claims in Italy on

⁴³ Merriman, 81.

behalf of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V.⁴⁴ Therefore, Charles V did not only defeat his main rival in the struggle for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire; but also gained predominance in European politics. From then on, the only power which was able to stop the Habsburg Emperor was as the Ottoman Empire. Not only France, but also the Republic of Venice secretly supported, and even provoked, the Ottoman Sultan to come to Europe and to face Charles V. The representatives of the states rushed between the palaces and supplied information.

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire was struggling with the problems in Hungary. After the return of the Ottoman troops, Ferdinand marched towards Buda with the support of the some Hungarian princes and defeated János Szápolyai in 1527 and he was declared as the King of Hungary. Thereupon, Szápolyai and his forces were obliged to retreat to Transylvania and by the envoys sent to Istanbul, Szápolyai asked help from the Sultan in order to regain his authority in Hungary. In 1529, Suleyman made his second expedition to Hungary, defeated the forces of Ferdinand in Buda and crowned Szápolyai as the King of Hungary. Szápolyai recognized the supremacy of the Ottoman Sultan and agreed to pay an annual tribute to the Empire.⁴⁵ Although Ferdinand secured the northern and western territories that he had possessed before, Hungary became mainly an Ottoman vassal. The Ottoman Sultan did not stop in Buda: he marched towards Vienna, the center of the Habsburg Austria and besieged the city. The city could not be conquered and Suleyman I had to withdraw his forces after twenty three days. However, the Sultan consolidated the hegemony of Szápolyai in Hungary.

The refusal of Ferdinand to abandon his claims over Hungary led to a further Ottoman campaign to Hungary in 1532; “[...] in the following year Ferdinand

⁴⁴ Salvatorelli, 381-382.

⁴⁵ İnalçık, Classical Age, 35-36.

retained the territory which still held in Hungary but recognized Szápolyai as ruler of the greater part of the kingdom.”⁴⁶ Following the death of Szápolyai, Ferdinand revived his claim to possess the whole kingdom. At that point, Suleyman I decided to take Hungarian territories under the direct control of the Empire. After long lasting struggles in 1541, the Hungarian territories which had been previously held by Szápolyai were annexed to the Ottoman Empire and the *beylerbeylik*, the province, of Buda was established. Consequently, the medieval Hungarian Kingdom was divided into three parts: the possessions of Ferdinand in the northern and western territories, the central part annexed to the Ottoman Empire and the Principality of Transylvania, vassal to the Ottoman Sultan. In 1547, Ferdinand abandoned his claims on Hungary but secured his previous possessions in return for an annual tribute of thirty thousand ducats. The final attempt of Ferdinand was to control Transylvania but the Ottoman forces repulsed him once again in 1557, the new *beylerbeylik* of Temesvar was established by the Ottomans in southern Transylvania, and the Ottoman dominance was consolidated on the Hungarian lands.⁴⁷

2.3 The Role of the Ottoman Empire on the Rise of the Balance of Power Policy in Europe

The participation of the Hungarian lands by the Ottoman Empire was important in terms of not only the expansion of the Empire in Eastern-Central Europe, but also the

⁴⁶ Coles, 86.

⁴⁷ For detailed information about the background and the conclusion of Hungarian expeditions of the Ottoman Empire see: İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, v. 2, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2006), 323-344; Rhoads Murphey, “Süleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary: Ottoman Manifest destiny or a Delayed Reaction to Charles V’s Universalist Vision”, *Journal of Early Modern History*, no: 5, (2001), 197-223.

Ottoman role of the consolidation of balance of power in Europe. As it was indicated above, by the second half of the fifteenth century, the monarchies stood out in the political stage of the continent. These monarchies were the sovereign states under the sovereign princes who monopolized all power and justice in their authority. In order to consolidate their authority the monarchs used three important tools: a centralized bureaucracy formed of the state officials controlled by the monarch, a permanent mercenary army and a centralized financial system based on direct taxation.⁴⁸ Besides the monarchs, there were also councils but their missions were not beyond to be instrumental in order to advise the monarchs; the last word in the state affairs was always belonged to the monarch himself. Therefore, in order to consolidate their authority and to convince both the nobility and the people living in their dominions, the monarchs used theoretical motives with elaborate propaganda by using the symbols and ceremonies. These theoretical claims were basically the religious and dynastic motives.⁴⁹

At this point, it is important to note that these states were not national states and did not have national aims. “The state was identified with the person of the monarch and with his dynasty.”⁵⁰ For that reason, the dynastic marriages were so instrumental in the domestic and international policies, as well as the expansion patterns of the European monarchies. Similarly, the officers also belonged to the person of the monarch. Since they did not have strong national ties, they could easily change their patrons according to their personal interest.⁵¹ This fact can be proven by the existence of several diplomats or military commanders serving for many sovereigns, sometimes rivals to each other, and changing easily their patrons.

⁴⁸ Rice, Grafton, 111-124.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 113, 136.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 136.

Concerning the information given above, it is possible to argue that the most important concern of these states was to defend their independent existence against any threatening political power. This brought about the emergence of the main principle of European states system: the “balance of power”. The “balance of power” doctrine intended to prevent the emergence of a great power as a threat for the existence of other weaker states. This prevention was generally realized by the political and military alliances of the weaker against the powerful. In this context, in the sixteenth century, the great power changing the balance in Europe was considered as the Habsburg Empire, and the European states tried to limit the Habsburg advance and secure the balance in the continent by either making alliances among each other against the Emperor, or asking help from the second greatest power in the East, the Ottoman Empire by postponing the religious rivalry. Even this fact, probed the priority of the European states: for the European monarchs their authority and the sake of their states became first than to fight against Islam in the sixteenth century.

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire replied the calls for help of the European sovereigns -as it was seen in the example of Francis I- most willingly because the Ottoman Sultan himself aimed to be the leading figure in the world politics and he also aspired to create a universal empire. In 1453 when he conquered Istanbul, Mehmed II claimed the title of *Kayser-i Rûm*, the Caesar of Rome. His conquest policy clearly points out the fact that the young Emperor intended to conquer Italy, the historical lands of the Roman Empire. Although the successors of Mehmed II did not use this title, they still continued to consider themselves universal emperors like Caesar. Thence, in his correspondences to Charles V, Suleyman I never used the title of Caesar, Emperor for the Habsburg Emperor and addressed to

Charles V as the King of Spain; because there could be one sole emperor in the world and the emperor of the time was the Ottoman sultan himself.⁵² At this instant, the inner conflicts of Europe were perceived by the Ottoman Empire as an opportunity not only for the expansion in Europe but also for consolidating its power and suppressing its rival for universal supremacy.

In this process, the Suleyman I took several initiatives from making alliance with France and patronizing the powerless princes of Europe to supporting the spread of Protestantism and providing economic privileges for the allies of the state in order to ensure that none of the European powers became so powerful to unify Europe under his flag. In 1537, the Ottoman admiral Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha defeated the armada of Charles V in Prevesa and secured the Eastern Mediterranean. Tripolitania, Tunisia and Algeria participated in the Empire as autonomous principalities, in order to limit the advance of Charles V in the Mediterranean Sea.⁵³ In 1541, the Franco-Ottoman alliance was renewed to wage a collective war against Charles V; Naples and Sicily were pillaged and Nice was captured in 1543.⁵⁴ In the following year, since Francis I concluded a peace with Charles V; the war could not be realized. However, the Ottoman Empire could stop the march of Charles V in Mediterranean and in Central Europe.

The direct intervention of the Ottoman Sultan played a determining role in the formation of European States System and the exercise of the “balance of power” policy in Europe. Furthermore, for the Ottoman Empire as well, this process brought about the territorial expansion, political supremacy and economic prosperity. For that

⁵² For detailed information about the perceptions of the universal empire and the accentuation on the concept of the “messiah” see: Cornell Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân” *Soliman le Magnifique et Son Temps*, ed. by G. Veinstein, (Paris: Éditions du Louvre, 1992), 159-177.

⁵³ For further information see: Uzunçarşılı, 374-388.

⁵⁴ For detailed information about the Franco-Ottoman alliance of 1541 and the role of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha in the organization of the war against Charles V see: İnalçık, “Avrupa Devletler Sistemi...”, 129-135.

reason, in the following centuries, the reign of Suleyman I was going to be defined as the “golden age” of the Ottoman Empire; and when the Empire started to lose its power, the Ottoman intellectuals was going to advise the Sultans to took necessary measures in order to return to that “golden age”.⁵⁵

Within the perspective of the information given above it would not be inaccurate to argue that, the complex political structure of the sixteenth century brought about the emergence of extraordinary diplomatic maneuvers and the adroit personalities who would be able to deal with them. At this point, Alvise Gritti, the main research subject of the present study appeared as one of these personalities acting within the complex political and diplomatic conjuncture of both the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Due to his talents in analyzing how to use complex conditions of the period, he could acquired a fascinating political career in the Ottoman Empire and Hungary; moreover he was perceived as a key figure in the international politics by the other powers of his time like the Republic of Venice and Habsburg Empire. However, it is also unfair to see the rise of Alvise Gritti as a natural result of the conditions of the era. The personality and character as well as his family’s background of Alvise Gritti had important contributions to him in terms of finding a way to rise and a place to stay. In this aspect it cam be argued that one of the significant components of his unprecedented rise was his family connections and interesting personal characteristics which made him different from the rest. The following chapter will concern the family of Alvise Gritti, his personality and his early life in the Ottoman Empire will be discussed in details.

⁵⁵ For brief information about the concept of “golden age” in the Ottoman History see: Cemal Kafadar, “The Myth of the Golden Age: Ottoman Historical Consciousness in the Post Süleymânic Era”, *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, ed. by, Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), 37–49.

CHAPTER III

MEETING THE *BEYOĞLU*: THE FAMILY AND THE EARLY LIFE OF ALVISE GRITTI

Alvise Gritti, the main character of this study, can not be considered only as an ordinary Venetian merchant engaged in the commercial activities within the Ottoman Empire; he was also a proficient actor who played a variety of roles on the stage of the sixteenth century. Özlem Kumrular portrays him as the most important “diplomat of frontier” of his time. According to Kumrular, “diplomats of frontier” were the political figures working for the great plans of the states in which they politically served, rather than their homelands by lifelong rushing in the danger zones between the palaces and frontiers, whose impacts were increased in the complex political agenda of the second decade of the century.⁵⁶ His competence on diplomacy can not be denied assuredly, but considering his charming personality, multiple interests, complex commercial, cultural, political and diplomatic networks and great ambition of self-ascension, it can be asserted that Alvise Gritti was just one of the “versatile” personalities in the Renaissance period.

In his famous book, *The Civilization of Renaissance in Italy*, while drawing the general portrait of the people of Renaissance, Jacob Burckhardt accentuates the

⁵⁶ Kumrular, 39-40.

general characteristics of this people as to their “versatile personalities”. Burckhardt mentions that in this period, there were numerous people having different occupations besides their main professions. The statesmen were generally the patrons of arts and humanists, the merchants and diplomats having the classical education of philosophy and literature and use these in the affairs of the daily life and contributed the outbreak and spread of the information. This versatility was fed by the desire of fame which created the birth of a splendid literature of biographies. These versatile people were also universal in a sense; they could live anywhere that they could satisfy their desires. This stereotype of individual was born in Italy according to Burckhardt; played the crucial role in the formation and spread of Renaissance.⁵⁷

These people were the characters of not only the cultural and intellectual, but also the political life of the Renaissance Europe. This fact can be proved considering the leading Early Modern European princes and statesmen who were the main supporter and even patrons of the humanists and had different occupations besides their political duties. In this context, it can be argued that Alvise Gritti was also one of these “versatile personalities” of the sixteenth century. Besides his commercial activities, he took important duties on diplomacy, was the patron of numerous artists and humanist, and by using his effective networks, he took part of the international politics of that time. Most interestingly, he could realize these not in his homeland, but in the Ottoman Empire where he could find the chance of promotion and in spite of his Venetian origin; he served as an Ottoman officer on behalf of the Ottoman benefits. He became not the sole but one of the few foreigners having decisive roles in the Ottoman international politics.

⁵⁷ For further information about the concept of this “versatile individual” and its examples in the Italian Renaissance see: Jacob Burckhardt, *La Civiltà del Rinascimento in Italia*, (Rome: Newton Compton Editori, 2008), 112-139.

Alvise Gritti did not suddenly appear in the Ottoman stage; besides his efforts and merits, he also benefited from his family background which provided him an effective network in the Ottoman Empire. This chapter aims to provide the reader brief information about the family, personality and early life of Alvise Gritti in Istanbul in order to draw to portray how Alvise Gritti became an important actor in the Ottoman Empire.

3.1 The Gritti Family: A Brief History

Gritti Family was one of the important Venetian noble families, whose ties had dated back to the twelfth century, Giovolamo Alessandro Capellari, who edited the genealogies of the Venetian patricians⁵⁸ in the second half of the eighteenth century, in his *Campidoglio Veneto*, mentions that the Gritti family was originated from Candia, in Crete and starts the family tree with the name of Giovanni Gritti who had been one of the three commanders during the conquest of Acre of Syria in 1104.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The term of patrician means noble. In Venice, the residents were classified basically into five groups namely, nobles, *cittadini*, or citizens, *popolani*, or common people and slaves. Nobility was related with the formation of the family and wealth. Generally, the noble families were the ancient families serving the city for generations. The administrative posts were opened to nobility. In addition to nobility, the class of *cittadini* could also have right to participate into the Venetian bureaucracy at a certain level. The class of *cittadini* were composed of two different groups; first *cittadini originarii*, men of ancient Venetian ancestry having the right of holding certain posts in the bureaucracy, and the latter *cittadini de intus*, or *de intus et extra*, foreigners, especially the merchants, resident in Venice and paying taxes in return for the protection provided by the Venetian law. Dennis Romano, *Patricians and Popolani: The Social Foundations of the Venetian State*, (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 27-32.

⁵⁹ Giovolamo Alessandro Capellari, *Campidoglio Veneto*, v. 2 (Venice, 1774), f. 188r. In the *Campidoglio Veneto*, the male members of the family are mentioned; there is not any information about the female members of the family. In the work the names of the family members were not given with their birth dates; whereas the dates when they were assigned with their first important duties on behalf of Venetian Republic were noted before each of their names. Here it will be also useful to give brief information about the city of Acre, Akka in Arabic. Acre is a port city in modern day Israel. In 1104, it was captured by King Baldwin I, in the context of the First Crusade by the help of Italian fleets. After the conquest, it was made the chief harbor city in the East Mediterranean. In 1517, it was captured by the Ottoman Empire and remained under its control until the end of First World War. For

The last leaf of the family tree is shown as Gasparo Gritti, elected to the *Dieci Savii*, magistrate court composed of ten aldermen, in 1716.⁶⁰ The coat of arms of the family was a two parted emblem; azure and silver and on the azure part, there is a silver cross.⁶¹ There is not any satisfactory information about the family after Gasparo Gritti; nor is it well-known whether the family had continued after the eighteenth century, or all the heirs had been died. On the other hand, by analyzing not only the *Campidoglio Veneto*, but also other sources about the Gritti family, it can be argued that most of the family members dealt with overseas commerce and had some important offices in the Venetian bureaucracy.⁶²

At this point, it is essential to note that the participation of the members of the Gritti family within the Venetian bureaucracy was not an extraordinary fact. Having a voice in the administration of Venice was an open right of every Venetian patrician. Venice had been a Republic since the first decades of the eighth century, and headed by an elected *doge*. The Republic of Venice did not have any written constitution; except from the *Promissione*, the ducal oath by which the *doge* accepted several restrictions on his authority, and some basic laws.⁶³ The administration was composed of several councils.⁶⁴ At the head of the all institutions, there was the *doge* and it was followed by the *Minor Consiglio*, Minor Council, which was composed of

detailed information about the city and the First Crusade see: Steven Runciman, *A History of Crusades*, v. 1, (London: Penguin Books, 1981).

⁶⁰ Capellari, f. 189v.

⁶¹ Ibid., f. 188r.

⁶² Ibid., ff. 188r-190r. For further information about the family also see: "Gritti" in *Enciclopedia Storico-Nobiliare Italiana: Famiglie Nobili e Titolate Viventi Riconosciute dal R. Governo D'Italia*, ed.by, Vittorio Spreti and Collaborators, v. 3, (Bologna: Forni Editore, 1969), 578-579. For brief information about the members of the Gritti family pursuing several activities in Istanbul see: Şakiroğlu, 428-429.

⁶³ Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 95.

⁶⁴ Since the discussions on the Venetian governmental structure and its transformations in the course of time exceeds the scope of this study, only the basic administrative structure is intended to be mentioned in the text. In order to have detailed information about the Venetian administration, the institution, the electoral processes and the transformation of the governmental bodies see: Ibid., 86-102, 250-274, 427-431; Ivone Cacciavillani, *La Serenissima: Una Repubblica Burocratica*, (Venice: Corbo e Fiore Editori, 2003).

six *consiglieri ducali*, ducal counsels, controlling the acts of the doge, the *Quarantia*, Council of Forty, the *Senato* or *Consiglio dei Pregadi*, Senate, and at the base there was the *Maggior Consiglio*⁶⁵, Great Council. The *doge*, the six ducal counsels and the tree heads of the Council of Forty composed the *Signoria*, the main governmental body of the Republic. This basic system remained until the eighteenth century; however, in the course of time, in case of necessity, other councils were incorporated into the Venetian administration; for instance in 1310, the *Consiglio dei Dieci*, Council of Ten, responsible from the security of the Republic was established.⁶⁶ The elections for the councils were renewed generally in each year; on the other hand the *doge* secured his position for lifetime. “Each committee or council was checked by some other committee or council so as to assure the rule of law, even in the cost of losing some executive efficiency. Thus, while insisting on a division of power among the different elements in the pyramid of councils, the Venetians made no effort to separate executive, legislative and judicial functions.”⁶⁷ The main governmental organ of the Republic was the *Maggior Consiglio* in which all the male Venetian patricians had the right of participation. “Following the practical education, a Venetian nobleman would launch his political career by entering the *Maggior Consiglio*, an important rite of passage which usually occurred at the age of twenty five. By this passage a young noble became eligible to hold public office and to

⁶⁵ In fact, at the base of the administration there had been the *Concio*, General Assembly in which the ordinary people had been represented. The *Concio* used to elect the doge and approve new laws. Therefore, Venetian government tied the monarchic, aristocratic and democratic principles within its institutions. Although the *Concio* was open also to the ordinary people, it was *de facto* controlled by powerful families; and finally it was abolished in 1423. Instead the *Maggior Consiglio* became the main institution of the government. With the abolishment of the *Concio*, in other words, the exclusion of the popular element from the administration the Republic gained an oligarchic structure. Lane, pp. 91, 252; Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e Burocrati a Venezia in Età Moderna: I Cittadini Organari (Sec. XVI-XVIII)*, (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2003). Oligarchy was strengthened especially in the times of crisis in Venice. Especially in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, Venetian oligarchs secured their position in the politics by using the principles of republicanism against the provincial elites aiming to step towards tyranny. For the discussion on the role of oligarchy and the meaning of republicanism in Venice in the early sixteenth century, see: Muir, 137-167.

⁶⁶ Lane, 116.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

participate in the political life of the Republic.’⁶⁸ In proportion to his success as well as his influence and networks, he could ascend the stairs until the office of *doge*.

In this aspect, as being parts of a noble family, the members of the Gritti family also had voices in the Venetian bureaucracy. Most of the members took important roles in the Councils; some of them stood for the seat of *doge*. However, it would be accurate to argue that the most influential character in the Gritti family was Andrea Gritti, the father of Alvise Gritti being the main character of this study, who would serve as the Doge of Venice from 1523 to 1538. His time was generally referred to as a “Golden Age” of Venice⁶⁹, in terms of political maneuvers, economical prosperity and socio-cultural development of the Venetian Republic.

3.2 Andrea Gritti: As a Mirror for the “Prince”

Andrea Gritti was born in Bardolino, near Verona, in 1455.⁷⁰ Because of the unexpected death of his father in his early childhood, he grew up under the control of his grandfather Tridano, another important figure in the Venetian bureaucracy. Tridano Gritti was also an important figure in the family. He served as the *podestà di Padova*, the chief magistrate of the municipality of a city or state subjected to Venetian Republic, as *capitano generale del mare*, the chief commander of sea, in the wars against the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. He also had the diplomatic missions in England, France and Spain.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Eric R. Dursteler, “The Bailo in Istanbul: Crisis and Career in Venice’s Early Modern Diplomatic Corps, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 16:2, 2001, 1-30, 11.

⁶⁹ Szakály, 13.

⁷⁰ Barbarigo, 1.

⁷¹ For detailed information about Tridano Gritti and his impact over Andrea Gritti see: Papo, Papo, 23.

By the efforts of his grandfather, he met with literature and philosophy; further studied in Padua⁷². As an educated young patrician, he accompanied his grandfather during his mission of embassy in England, France and Spain, and learnt the details of diplomacy by practice.⁷³ After having terminated all the studies about commerce, he took the road of Istanbul, not only to seek his chance in trade, but also to serve to the advantage of the *Serenissima*, as his ancestors had done.⁷⁴ In Istanbul, he not only learnt the rules of the trade in practice and became richer, but also could observe the Ottoman State, understand it and get the methods of satisfying his own needs together with those of his homeland.⁷⁵ In 1476, he returned back to Venice, got married with Benedetta Vendramin.⁷⁶ From her, he had three children, two daughters and a son, namely Vienna, Benedetta and Francesco. In a short time after having given birth to Francesco, his wife died and for Andrea Gritti, younger than twenty five years old, it was too early for participating to the political life of Venice;

⁷² University of Padua, the second oldest university in Italy, was founded in 1222 and in the fifteenth century was an important center of humanistic education. In the university, the education of Greek language had been started since 1463 and by destroying the scholastic thought, a course based on the text of Aristotle had been introduced even in 1497. The university provided to his students, the young Venetian patricians in general, a wide range of courses including the politics and civil sciences which were accepted as the heart of classical education. In this way, Venetians could access directly the classical thought. See: Lucette Valensi, *Venise e la Sublime Porte: La Naissance du Despote*, (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1987), 15-16. For further information about the role of the universities, courses offered, and organization styles in early modern Europe, see: Paul F. Grendler, "The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation", *Renaissance Quarterly*, v. 57, no: 1 (Spring 2004), 1-42.

⁷³ Barbarigo, 2; Andrea Da Mosto, *I Dogi di Venezia*, (Milan & Florence: Giunti, 2007), 236.

⁷⁴ "Poco dopo passando à gli studii delle cose maritime, non solo per private interesse mà per Publica utilità, ad imitazione dé suoi Maggiori portossi in Bisanzio, con oggetto dé poter in quel luogo approfittare à se stesso, e nell'istruzione e consiglio premunirsi." Barbarigo, p. 2.

⁷⁵ According to Lucette Valensi, young patricians advancing in Venetian bureaucracy and diplomacy were generally were risen under the humanist education of the time. The Academy of Venice and the University of Padua were the two important institutions providing them the courses about classical literature, philosophy and political ethics at that time. On the other hand, there were another two ways of education for young Venetians, namely, to accompany their family members during their missions in foreign states as ambassadors in order to improve their diplomatic skills, and to get the "trading experience", in other words, to learn the commerce in one of the Mediterranean seaports of Venice. From this perspective, Andrea Gritti can be considered as a good example of a Venetian Patrician living in an atmosphere of high culture and classical education by integrating all these current methods of personal development. See: Valensi, 16-18.

⁷⁶ Benedetta Vendramin was grandchild Andrea Vendramin, Doge of Venice from 1476 to 1478. For further information see: Barbarigo, 7.

so he decided to return to Istanbul.⁷⁷ This would be a turning point for his future career.

Andrea Gritti came to Istanbul as a merchant but he acted as an unofficial diplomat.⁷⁸ He prospered from the grain trade between the years of 1479 and 1502⁷⁹; became the leader of the Venetian community living in the Ottoman capital⁸⁰ by controlling the commercial affairs and supporting generously the merchants in terms of both finding the contacts and commissions, and offering them money and credits in order to increase the commercial properties.⁸¹ “Andrea Gritti managed to have a brilliant career on the Bosphorus, also thanks to the friendship of Grand Vizier Ahmed Pasha⁸², who provided him with important fiscal facilitations and introduced him to the court of Sultan Bayezid II.”⁸³ This enabled him to observe the Ottoman system and to enlighten the Venetian Republic about the economic, political and military developments within the Empire. Especially, during the Ottoman-Venetian war of 1499-1503, he reported the preparations and the intentions of the Empire to

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ In this period, not only the merchants, but also every Venetian people staying abroad were the natural spies of the *Serenissima*. Besides the diplomats, these people composed an important part of the information network between Venice and the other states. Burckhardt, 69-70. For further information about the spying network of Venice see: Paolo Preto, *I Servizi Segreti di Venezia*, (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2004). Similarly, in the Ottoman Empire, the merchants dealing with the international trade acted as agents or ambassadors. For detailed information about the role of merchants in the Ottoman Empire see: Halil İnalcık, “Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire”, *The Journal of Economic History*, v. 29, no: 1 (March 1969), 97-140, 102-103.

⁷⁹ Finlay, “Fabius Maximus...”, 993.

⁸⁰ Finlay, “Al Servizio...”, 79.

⁸¹ Papo, Papo, 27

⁸² Known as Gedik Ahmed Pasha. He was an Albanian renegade, appointed as the Grand Vizier by Mehmed II, the Conqueror. One of the most important achievements of Gedik Ahmed Pasha was the conquest of the fortress of Otranto, in southeastern Italy, in 1480. However, because of the death of Sultan Mehmed, he had to retreat from the city and supported Bayezid II in the succession struggle against his brother Cem. Although he played important roles in the succession of Bayezid, he could not be rescued from the suspicions of being supporter of Cem and he was choked to death by the new Sultan in 1482. Andrea Gritti, in his *relazione* read in the Senate in the year of 1503, describes Gedik Ahmed Pasha as an excellent officer, able to realize every duty and states that he was killed because of the jealousy of Sultan Bayezid for his being supported by the Janissaries. See: “Relazione di Andrea Gritti” in Albèri, s. 3, v. 3, (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1885), 1-43.

⁸³ “Andrea Gritti riuscì a fare una brillante carriera sul Bosforo anche grazie all’amicizia del gran visir Ahmed pascià, che gli aveva procurato importanti agevolazioni fiscali e lo aveva introdotto alle corti del sultano Bâyezîd II.”: Papo, Papo, pp. 26-27.

Venice and when his espionage activities became apparent, he was imprisoned by the Ottomans.⁸⁴ However, through his friendship with the Ottoman viziers and his positive impression over the Sultan, he was rescued from death and could return to his homeland in 1502.⁸⁵

On the way to Istanbul, he had been too young to take onto the political stage of Venice, but in 1502, when he returned to his homeland, he suddenly appeared in the play in which he would later act the principal part until his death. After having some titles in the government⁸⁶, in 1503, almost one year after his return, with the conclusion of the war between the Republic and the Ottoman Empire, he was appointed as, *oratore straordinario*⁸⁷, extraordinary ambassador to Istanbul in order to make peace negotiations. He was cut out for this important job as he was famous among the Ottoman bureaucrats, and had good diplomatic skills. Thanks to his maneuvers, he could secure some privileges on behalf of Venice, besides the articles of the peace. For example, the length of stay of the Venetian *baili* was increased from one to three years and the obligation of *harac* tax, poll-tax collected from non-Muslim population, staying in the Ottoman Empire, was annulled for the Venetian merchants staying three years in the Empire.⁸⁸ He returned to Venice in the same year and presented his *relazione* in the Senate on December 2, 1503.⁸⁹ Later, he was sent to Pope Julius II as ambassador; and in 1505 he was nominated as the *Capo del*

⁸⁴ Preto, p. 248. This might be perceived as the first important duty realized on behalf of the Republic, because Capellari in *Campidoglio* gives this date before his name. See: Capellari, f. 188v.

⁸⁵ Here it is important to note that in the Ottoman Empire, in the times of war, the foreigners possible to engage with the espionage activities were imprisoned, however, they were not generally executed unless they did not have harmful effects to the State. Andrea Gritti should also be imprisoned by the security reasons. Therefore, the rescue of Andrea Gritti from death thanks to his close relations with the Ottoman viziers may be an exaggerated account of the foreign eyewitnesses of the time.

⁸⁶ For detailed information about the first duties of Andrea Gritti see: Papo, Papo, 27.

⁸⁷ *Oratore straordinario* was the extraordinary ambassador sent to discuss a peace treaty, or to congratulate the accession of a new government, in the Ottoman context, the new Sultan, and with the conclusion of his mission he returned back to Venice. After his return, the *oratore straordinario*, should also present his *relazione* to the Senate like the *bailo*. Roberto Baschini, *Gli Ambasciatori Veneziani da Solimano il Magnifico*, (Venice: Edizioni del Leone, 1998), 9.

⁸⁸ Şakiroğlu, 428.

⁸⁹ See: Albèri, s. 3 v. 3, 1-43.

Consiglio dei Dieci, Head of the Council of Ten and *Podestà di Padova*, Governor of Padua. However, his sphere of responsibility was enlarged especially during the Italian Wars, starting to threaten the Republic. With the creation of the League of Cambrai, constituted between the Habsburg Empire, France, the Kingdom of Aragon, the Papacy, the Duchy of Savoy and Hungary against Venice in 1508, he was nominated as *Provveditore Generale*, the supreme governor with the responsibility of the inspection of the fortifications all along the line of frontier between Venice and the Habsburg Empire.⁹⁰

The creation of the League of Cambrai, and the following Battle of Agnadello in 1509, by which the Republic of Venice lost its possessions of *terraferma*, even Padua, started to threaten the shores of the Venetian lagoon. Concerning the lost territories of the Republic, the famous Italian humanist political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli points out that in Agnadello, “in only one day, Venetians lost what they had conquered in eight hundred years with many efforts.”⁹¹ In this dramatic situation, as a *Provveditor Generale*, Andrea Gritti was engaged with recovering the lost territory. On July 17, 1509, Padua was recovered and Gritti worked out for the defense of the city.⁹² His success brought him the title of *Procuratore di San Marco*, the second most important duty in the bureaucracy of the Republic responsible for the administration of the St. Mark Basilica. As the commander of the armies, he marched towards Brescia but he was imprisoned by the French army there in 1512 and was taken to Lyon. However, by his efforts for peace, he could return to Venice in the following year. In 1514, he nominated as the *Capitano del mare*, Head of

⁹⁰ Papo, Papo, 27.

⁹¹ “[...] in un sol giorno, i Veneziani persero quello che in ottocento anni, e con tanta fatica, avevano conquistato.” Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, (Milan: Pillole Bur, 2006), 135.

⁹² For the defense of the city, Gritti used the *condottieri*, mercenary soldiers and destructed all the churches and houses near to the city walls in order which might aid the besiegers. See: Finlay, “Fabius Maximus...”, 998.

Navy, being the most important military title at that time.⁹³ In 1517, with the collaboration of the French army, he recaptured Brescia and Verona; the recovery of the *terraferma*, gave him a good reputation as the “saver and restaurateur of the country”.⁹⁴ This good reputation offered Andrea Gritti the cap of *doge* in 1523 with the death of Antonio Grimani. He wore the cap until his death in 1538; he concluded the play, in which he entered as bit player, in the leading role, he shaped the Venetian politics and diplomacy as well as the cultural structure of the Republic.

The Italian Wars and especially the penetration of the enemy into the Venetian traditional territories of *terraferma*, shaped the perception of the domestic and international politics of Andrea Gritti. Even before elected as *doge*, as a *Provveditore Generale* and *Capo del Mare*, Andrea Gritti realized the importance of the defense of the existent possessions rather than offensive wars. Moreover, although the Venetian army was the most powerful army of the Italian peninsula at that time⁹⁵, it clearly appeared that Venice became vulnerable in front of the allied powers. In this aspect, Andrea Gritti “focused above all on the need for fortifying the *terraferma* cities and for avoiding battlefield clashes”⁹⁶ in order to dispose the peril of the occupation of the Venetian lagoon. Because of the this attitude of *doge* Gritti, Venice generally used the diplomatic maneuvers to benefit from the rivalries between the powers and to have strong alliances in order to stop the marching of any foreign power to its territories. Robert Finlay argues that by these politics Venice no longer played an aggressive role in the international politics and the Habsburg

⁹³ Papo, Papo, 28.

⁹⁴ The various military conflicts between 1509 and 1513 and Leagues against Venice are not discussed here in details concerning the aim and scope of this study. However, it can be argued that in these struggles the main aim of the Republic was to recover its traditional territories of *terraferma* and to limit the Habsburg and French power in the Northeastern Italy. For further information about the wars, the strategies of Venice and the role of Andrea Gritti see: Finlay, “Fabius Maximus...”, 998-1104.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 1015.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1004.

hegemony was solidified in Italy.⁹⁷ In fact, concerning the sack of Rome by the Habsburg Emperor Charles V in 1527 and his coronation in Bologna as the Holy Roman Emperor in 1530 marked the increase of the Habsburg influence in Italy. From that time onwards, Venice was stranded between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire and lost gradually its political, diplomatic and economical superiority.⁹⁸

On the other hand, Venice did not only secure its territorial integrity and independence, but also the socio-political and cultural atmosphere of the Republic was reanimated by the efforts of Andrea Gritti. He promoted a “wide-ranging agenda of cultural and intellectual renovation designed to elevate the prestige of the Republic, including introducing new musical, literary, and architectural styles”⁹⁹ Andrea Gritti, himself, was also a good example of a Renaissance patrician. He was fluent in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, English and Turkish languages.¹⁰⁰ “As a part of his program, he patronized a number of learned patricians with whom he shared a

⁹⁷ According to Finlay, Venice did not be in part of an alliance in order to stop the Habsburg marching, did not help other Italian states and did not even send auxiliary military forces. In this aspect, Finlay, by the light of the works of the contemporaries of Andrea Gritti, especially by using the Fabius Maximus analogy made by Niccolò Barbarigo describes the *doge*, the father of this policy, as Fabius Maximus in reference to Fabius Maximus who had fought against Hannibal in the Second Punic War in the 3rd C B.C and had focused to the defense of Rome rather than engaging into the offensive attacks. However, he also states that “in the 1520s, the Republic aspired to play the role of a great power –or at least that of an independent, balancing force between France and the Empire- but its refusal to commit its troops to battle significantly contributed to the rise of Habsburg hegemony in Italy” and this policy accelerated the decline of the Republic in terms of political influence. For detailed information about these argumentations see: *Ibid.*, 988-1031.

⁹⁸ The fact that the loss of influence of Venice on the international politics, and economy is not related only with the defense policy and the rise Ottoman and Habsburg powers. It should be taken into consideration that by the end of the 13th c, Europeans, especially the Spanish got involved into the geographical discoveries. By the 16th c, the Spanish and Portuguese fleets reached the commercial network of Venice and got superior in the eastern trade. On the other hand, the Ottoman conquests in the Balkan Peninsula, Mediterranean islands, eastern Africa broke the unity of colonies of the Republic. While being in decline in terms of trade which gave the Republic the new blood in terms of having influence in the political and diplomatic scene, to be encountered territorially by the two great powers of the time, claiming the world domination, triggered the decline of the Republic. For detailed information about the geographical discoveries and the economic expansion of Europe see: Rice, Grafton, 1-69. For the impact of the oceanic trade and the Spanish-Portuguese rise in the international commercial network see: Lane, 274-336. For the decline of Venice see: Norwich, 449-605.

⁹⁹ Finlay, “Fabius Maximus...”, 989.

¹⁰⁰ Barbarigo, 87.

love of classical antiquity.”¹⁰¹ The humanist Pietro Bembo was appointed in 1530 as official historian. Gritti was also close to Gasparo Contarini, writer of *De magistribus et republica Venetorum*, in which the concept of the “Venetian myth”, accentuating the Venice as an ideal political society in comparison to the ancient Roman tradition.¹⁰² In the network of Gritti other humanists such as architect Jacopo Sansovino and artist Titian, drawing his portrait, were served.¹⁰³ In addition, he was a fully authoritarian figure, generally presented in the political literature of the Renaissance period. “A dynamic, authoritarian individual, Gritti exercised the prestige and power of his office to the full. He refused to tolerate interference with his authority over the chancellery, and he ordered investigation of patricians who abused their office”.¹⁰⁴ His strong authority was not welcomed by the leading patricians of Venice, uneasy about the strength of the despotic power over the Venetian politics; they displayed their complaints and preoccupations as: “we are under a republic, not under a lord”.¹⁰⁵ In this aspect, when he died in 1538, there was not a great sorrow in Venice in spite of his contributions to the political and cultural structure of the Republic. “When he died on Christmas Eve in 1538, allegedly from eating too generous a helping of grilled eel and beans, celebration broke out on the

¹⁰¹ Finlay, “Fabius Maximus...”, 989.

¹⁰² Gasparo Contarini, was the ambassador of Venice to the court of Charles V. By his work the concept of “myth of Venice” reached a European audience. In the work, Contarini describes his city as an ideal commonwealth having free from conquest, monarchical rule and arbitrary justice and argues that Venice was superior than ancient Rome which had been plunged into further war and civil strife after the defeat of Hannibal and the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War because after the defeat of the War of Cambrai Venice could restore its losses and devoted itself to the peace and preservation. See: Ibid, 989-990. For detailed information about the work of Gasparo Contarini, the other leading figures in the political literature and the currents of the political thought in the mentioned period also see: Lester J. Libby Jr., “Venetian History and Political Thought after 1509”, *Studies in Renaissance*, v. 20, 1973, 7-45.

¹⁰³ Valensi, 19.

¹⁰⁴ Finlay, “Fabius Maximus...”, 989.

¹⁰⁵ “[...] semo sotto una repubblica e non sotto un signor [...]”, Sanuto v. 50, 149.

streets of Venice.”¹⁰⁶ The old *doge*, welcomed as a big hero after the recapture of Padua, was sent off as a kind of loveless despot at the age of 83.

Andrea Gritti had seven children. From his wife Benedetta, he had two daughters, Vienna and Benedetta, and a son, Francesco. Francesco died at an early age in 1506; the life stories of his daughters were mentioned neither in the biographies nor in the documents of the time. The sole information about Vienna and Benedetta is that both of them were married with the members of the patrician families of Venice.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, Andrea Gritti had four other sons, namely Pietro, Alvise, Lorenzo and Giorgio, from a Greek, or a Turkish concubine with whom he had lived during his stay in Istanbul.¹⁰⁸ Luigi Bassano, a contemporary traveler, clearly explains that Christian merchants living in the Ottoman State did not have the right to have concubines, neither Turkish, nor Christian. According to Bassano, the only way for a Christian for taking a spouse was to get married before the *kadi*, Ottoman judge.¹⁰⁹ At this point, it is necessary to keep in mind that the Italian, and almost all European, sources of the period use the word Turk to define not only for Turkish but also the whole Muslim identity living in the Ottoman Empire. For that reason, most

¹⁰⁶ Finlay, “Fabius Maximus”, p. 1026.

¹⁰⁷ For detailed information about the daughters of Andrea Gritti see: Papo, Papo, 25.

¹⁰⁸ The origin of the mother of these sons is controversial among not only the eyewitnesses of the period, but also the modern historians. Benedetto Ramberti, in his *Libri Tre* of 1539, points out that she of Gritti was a Turkish origin woman and this fact was generally confirmed. “[...]di una donna, come da molti viene affermato, Turca,[...]”. Ramberti, 35r. Carla Coco and Lucette Valensi also support this idea. See: Coco, 27. On the other hand, Niccolò Barbarigo states that she was a Greek concubine. Barbarigo, p. 91. Robert Finlay also points out her Greek origin. Finlay, “Al Servizio...”, 79.

¹⁰⁹ “[...]Ma non permettono giach’ un huomo Christiano pigli una Turcha ma s’un Christiano vorrà pigliare al modo, com’è il costume loro, una Christiana, gliel concedono. Il che molti Mercanti Christiani fanno perche non si permette tra Turchi che Cristiani tengano concubina, ne Turcha, ne Christiana, e per poterla tenere la fanno scriver’ al giudice per loro moglie, e pigliano, o Christiana, o libera, o schiava, con quella dote che si convengono tra di essi.” Bassano da Zara, 51. Moreover, here it is important to note that the Italian, generally European sources written by the authors from the Christian tradition had the intention of defining these spouses as concubines since the marriage before the Ottoman judges were not legal according to the Christian law. For that reason, the researcher should realize that the use of the word of “concubine” reflects the perception of Italians, or Europeans; not the status of these women in the Ottoman Empire.

probably Bassano meant the Muslim women in his statement while using the word Turk to define them. Moreover, it is a very well known fact that at that period, Muslim women living in the Islamic States could not marry to non-Muslim men even the vice versa was possible if the woman accepted to convert. Even the non-Muslim men converted to Islam they were not allowed to take a Muslim spouse. Taking into consideration these statements, it can be argued that although her ethnic origin was unclear, the mother of the sons of Andrea Gritti was his spouse and she was definitely a non-Muslim Ottoman subject.

As these children were known to be born outside the lines of the Catholic marriage; according to the Venetian law they were regarded as “illegitimate”.¹¹⁰ This means that they did not have the right of having positions in the Venetian bureaucracy and could not assert anything on the inheritance of their father.¹¹¹ Although their illegitimacy often crossed their paths, almost all children of Andrea Gritti could have important roles not only in Venice, but also in the international political, diplomatic and commercial arena of their time.¹¹² Especially, one of them, probably the favorite of his father, became one of the most charming characters of both Venetian and Ottoman history of the sixteenth century, this was Alvise.

¹¹⁰ The children of the patricians that were born from a lower class women; unless it was not dealt according to the custom and law were accepted as illegitimate. Zannini, 109.

¹¹¹ In 1484 Consiglio dei Dieci published a decree announcing that the *cittadini originari* of Venice who were illegitimate by birth in spite of their patrician origins were excluded from the bureaucratic carrier in the *cancelleria ducale*, ducal chancellery into which the non patrician citizens had the right to participate, as well as from the offices reserved for the patricians. Papo, Papo, 30.

¹¹² For brief information about the other sons of Andrea Gritti see: Ibid., 25-26.

3. 3 Alvise Gritti: “Bastard” in Venice, “Beyoğlu” in Istanbul

Alvise Gritti was one of the four illegitimate children of Andrea Gritti. He was born in 1480, in Istanbul when his father Andrea worked as merchant. As it was mentioned above, her mother was generally thought to be a concubine, with whom Andrea Gritti had lived during his stay in the Ottoman capital. According to the Venetian tradition, the *baili*, diplomats or merchants going abroad were not allowed to be accompanied with their wives. They could only take their male children to their destinations in order to introduce them to diplomacy or commercial works. For that reason, almost all Venetians coming to Istanbul had relations with Ottoman women, and sometimes they could have children from them. Since the Ottoman government did not prohibit this practice, Andrea Gritti also used to have spouses in Istanbul.¹¹³ In his book entitled *I Dogi di Venezia*, Andrea Da Mosto states that since he was “a grand admirer of the gentle sex and very sensual, even in his old ages he had always lovers”¹¹⁴. One of these women was the mother of Alvise Gritti. There is no satisfactory information about her; her name or her real origin was obscure in the biographies or the documents of the time. The only fact underlined in the documents is that she was one of the concubines of Andrea Gritti. The Venetian law did not accept the children born of these concubines, as the legitimate heirs of Venetian patricians as they were born outside of Catholic marriage. They did not have the right

¹¹³ Ferenc Szakály used the term of “concubine” in order to describe these women. However as it was mentioned before, the non-Muslims did not have the right of having concubines. For that reason they should be the legitimate spouses. In fact, Szakály also underlined this Ottoman practice: “The Turkish authorities did not mind such foreigners would keep a concubine, in fact they would considerably make it possible for the Christians staying in the Empire, to contract a sort of temporary marriage before the *kadi*, which legitimated the status of their male without imposing too much commitment upon the male partners in view of the future.”, Szakály, 14.

¹¹⁴ “Grande ammiratore del bel sesso e molto sensuale, anche nei tardi anni ebbe sempre delle amanti.”, Da Mosto, 243.

of participation within the Venetian bureaucracy; because they were not real patricians and they could not even claim any right over the titles or inherited rights from their family. However, Alvise Gritti grew up with his father in a real patrician network, like a real Venetian patrician. This shaped not only his personality and worldview, but also his further career.

Alvise Gritti spent his early life in Istanbul, his birth place, with his father. There is no clear information about his childhood and early life; however, it can be argued that he returned to Venice in 1502, at the age of twenty two with the conclusion of the office of his father.¹¹⁵ Like most of the young Venetian patricians of that time, he studied literature at the University of Padua.¹¹⁶ After four years, with the conclusion of his education in 1506, he returned to Istanbul to dedicate himself to commercial activities by walking the tracks of his father. Behind this choice, not only his desire for commerce, but also his illegitimacy in Venice played an important role. Since he would not have any chance of a bureaucratic career in Venice, he wanted to seek his fortune in his birth place, “the melting pot of peoples of three continents where illegitimate birth did not throw an obstacle in the way of success and self-assertion.”¹¹⁷ He controlled the family enterprise in the Ottoman capital. As it was stated before, his father, Andrea Gritti had a good reputation in the Ottoman capital, and had established an effective commercial network by establishing important connections with not only the foreign merchants, but also the Ottoman statesmen.

¹¹⁵ Papo, Papo, p. 29. On the other hand, Roger Bigelow Merriman, in his famous book about Suleyman I, points out that he returned to Venice in 1496. Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Suleiman the Magnificent 1520-1566*, (Cambridge & Massachusetts: Harvard University Pres, 1944), 101.

¹¹⁶ Ramberti, p. 35r. However Gizella Nemeth Papo and Adriano Papo mention that the name of Alvise Gritti did not exist in the student lists that had been graduated from the university from 1501 to 1550, edited and published by Martellozzo Forin between the years of 1960 and 1982. According to them, in these years, there were so many students enrolled to the university and concluded the courses, so there were volumes of the lists. However, due to the inconvenient conditions of preservation, the frequent use of illegible hand writing and short abbreviations, some names could be eluded from the eyes, or disappeared. See: Papo, Papo, 30-31.

¹¹⁷ Szakály, 14.

Alvise Gritti learnt the rules of commerce by using these; he soon created his own network in Istanbul. He carried on the trade of almost all commercial goods, including grain, oil, salt, salami, saffron, silk, saltpeter, tin; most importantly, he prospered from the sale of precious stones and wine, especially demanded by the Ottoman Palace.¹¹⁸

It seems that the most important turning point in the life of Alvise Gritti was the year of 1523, in which two elections were held in Venice and in the Ottoman Empire. On May 20, 1523, his father Andrea Gritti was elected as the *doge* of Venice, in spite of numerous oppositions of some prominent patricians.¹¹⁹ A few days later, the reigning Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I, the Magnificent, appointed one of his close servants to the Grand Vizierate by violating the rules of promotion within the government. This new Grand Vizier was the famous Ibrahim Pasha, who would be the most important figure not only in the life of Alvise Gritti, but also in the government of the Ottoman Empire, in the following thirteen years. As a result of the election of Andrea Gritti as *doge*, the prestige of Alvise Gritti within the Empire increased rapidly. He was not only a son of a wealthy merchant, or an able diplomat; from now on, he became also the son of the Prince of Venice, in other words *Beyoğlu* as he would be called in the Ottoman Empire. Besides his commercial and social network that he had established before, this situation opened him the way of having close relations with the Ottoman high ranking officers. Soon, he became intimate with the new Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha. Ibrahim Pasha would not only be a close friend to Alvise Gritti, he would also introduce him to the Ottoman politics in which would play important roles until his death.

¹¹⁸ Papo, Papo, 30.

¹¹⁹ Capellari, f. 188v.

Ibrahim Pasha and the role of Alvise Gritti in the Ottoman politics will be discussed in the following chapter in details, but here it can be useful to give brief information about Ibrahim Pasha who introduced him to the political stage of the Ottoman Empire, in order to clarify their early relations. Ibrahim Pasha was an Ottoman renegade born in 1494, in the city of Parga on the coast of Epirus, captured by the Ottomans as it had been a Venetian dominion. He was enslaved by the Ottoman pirates in his early childhood and sold to a wealthy widowed women living in Manisa who had carefully educated him according to the Islamic tradition. Later he was sold to Suleyman when he had been there as a prince governor, during the reign of his father Selim. He was one year older than Suleyman; they spent their youth together and became close. After the death of his father, Suleyman succeeded the Ottoman throne in 1520, and appointed his closest servant to the office of head falconer. In a very short time period, he promoted to the posts of master of the household and the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia, the territorial governor of Rumelia.¹²⁰ He participated in the conquest of Belgrade in 1521 and in 1522 played an important role in the expedition of Rhodes. In 1523, he was appointed as Grand Vizier, and until his death in 1536, he secured his position of being the second man in the Ottoman Empire.

The Venetian *bailo* Pietro Bragadin describes Ibrahim Pasha in his *relazione* in 1526 as “the heart and breath of the Sultan”¹²¹. He was a very intelligent man, familiar with Persian, Greek and Italian languages. He studied law and philosophy, knew well the Ottoman law, was curious about the conditions of the sovereigns of his time, read the lives of Alexander the Great and Hannibal, and the stories of the great

¹²⁰ Hester Donaldson Jenkins, *Ibrahim Pasha: Grand Vizir of Suleiman the Magnificent*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 18-20.

¹²¹ Alberì, Serie 3, v. 3, 103.

wars in history.¹²² Bragadin also underlines that Ibrahim was much loved by the Ottoman Sultan; the latter could not be without him and he used to sleep in the Palace together with the Sultan.¹²³ He was bound up in luxury; he wore many jeweled rings and dressed in a more lavish style than the Sultan did.¹²⁴ He desired to have every fancy goods, especially the jewelry. This interest made him closer to the most important expert of the commerce of jewelry and precious stones in Istanbul. That was Alvise Gritti.

It is not clear when Alvise Gritti and Ibrahim Pasha met and got closer; the documents do not reveal any relation before 1523. However, it can be thought that, as a Venetian merchant trading various goods in the Empire, Alvise Gritti could meet Ibrahim Pasha before. On the other hand, especially after the appointment of Ibrahim Pasha to the post of the Grand Vizierate their paths definitely crossed. Robert Finlay states that the Grand Vizier consumed exclusively the sweet wines and these were provided by Alvise Gritti.¹²⁵ Moreover, Sultan Suleyman was very interested in jewelry than the other Ottoman Sultans. “His childhood training as a gold-smith contributed not only to his unprecedented patronage of local goldsmiths and jewelers attached to the court workshops, but also to a lively jewel trade with Venice in which Alvise came to play an important role.”¹²⁶ For that reason, Ibrahim Pasha often bought expensive jewelry or high quality precious stones in order to present them to the Sultan, and the best address was Alvise Gritti. Ottoman documents clearly show that not only the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, but also other high ranking Ottoman state officers purchased luxurious goods, especially precious stones from *Beyoğlu*. A *temessük*, certificate of debt, given from the Vizier Ayas Pasha to the agent of Alvise

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Finlay, “Al servizio...”, p. 79.

¹²⁶ Necipoğlu, 405.

Gritti named Niccola, authenticates that in the year of 1532, some amounts of garnets costing thirty thousand Ottoman *akçe*, were bought from the commercial network of Alvise Gritti.¹²⁷ In these commercial traffics, Alvise Gritti got closer with the Ottoman officers, especially with the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha who later introduced him to the Sultan as a great connoisseur of jewels.¹²⁸ This was the first sign of his future career.

Alvise Gritti did not only sell the commercial goods in the Ottoman lands, he also provided some materials for his homeland in case of necessity. One of the important problems of Venice was the shortage of grain, especially during the times of constant wars. In this aspect, the *Serenissima* generally preferred to turn its face to its best commercial partner, the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, in the Ottoman Empire, the general perception of commerce was the import of the scarce materials, rather than the export of the surplus. The surplus, instead, should be stored for the states of demand. Especially, grain was discouraged to be sold because it was important in order not to catch out a food shortage. However, this fact could be moderated in practice. In case of an acute need, the Ottoman State sold grain to foreign states, Ottoman Empire, gave permission to carry out grain trade with foreign countries on condition that the needs of its own people were met. At this point, the intermediary actors, familiar with the conditions of the both side, became the catalyzing elements. During his stay in Istanbul, when grain shortage happened in Venice, Alvise Gritti also played an important role of intermediary between the dealers of grain, provided by the Ottoman state, and his homeland. Many documents preserved in the *Archivio Stato di Venezia* support this argument. By the light of the

¹²⁷ “[...] zikr olan la’ller beg oğlu âdemisi Nikola getürdigi la’lledir[...]”, ASV, Documenti Turchi, Busta XII, (Busta 1, Fasc. 23, Pezzi 12). This document was published by M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, see: M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Vesikalar Külliyyatında Kanunî Sultan Suleyman Devri Belgeleri”, *Belgeler*, Temmuz 1964, v.1 no 2, 200-201.

¹²⁸ Necipoğlu, 405.

archival documents, Gizella Nemeth Papo and Adriano Papo mention that in the grain shortage of 1527, Alvise Gritti sent a cargo of grain to Venice by mediating between the dealers.¹²⁹ However, the letters written by Alvise Gritti in 1526 to his father Andrea Gritti, occupying the seat of doge at that time, reveal that even two years before Alvise Gritti could realize the shipment of grain over Syria and Cyprus to Venice.¹³⁰ Interestingly, in the same letters, it is talked about the upcoming expedition to Hungary planned by the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha and a sale of lead to the Ottoman Empire. Alvise Gritti seems again controlling this procedure. In one of the letters dated on January 4, 1526, Alvise Gritti announces the great preparations of war in the Ottoman Empire for an expedition held from sea and land.¹³¹ The grain trade to Venice echoed also in the later Ottoman documents; here also Alvise Gritti seems act as an agent between the Republic and the Ottoman Empire, and provides grain to Venetian merchants by using his good reputation on the eyes of the sultan.¹³² Taking into consideration these data, it can be argued that the Ottoman Empire

¹²⁹ Niccolo Barbarigo mentions that Andrea Gritti had written to his son Alvise Gritti in Istanbul only two letters. One of them was sent in the times of a great hunger in Italy in order to demand grain from the Ottoman Empire in which he served. “Due sole lettere scrisse Andrea ad Alvise doppo che conguinse l’animo e l’attioni alle cose Turchi; l’una quando l’Italia da grand fame assalita, tratto seco, che procurasse col Re sa condotta de formenti da quelli Paesi alla nostra citta;...” Barbarigo, 93 Gizella Nemeth Papo and Adriano Papo fortify the argument by using the documents on the demand of grain of Venice from the Ottoman Empire by using the reports of Consiglio dei Dieci dated on September 19, 1527. ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, Segreti, Reg. 2, 24v-25r [25v-26r], 26r-26v [27r-27v], 26r-27v [27r-28v], in Papo, Papo, p. 31. However, Andrea Gritti wrote many times to Alvise. In *Archivio di Stato*, especially in the collection of *Ducali ed Atti Diplomatici*, the other letters, especially written in 1529, can be detected. Some of these letters will be used in the text in the following chapter.

¹³⁰ The letters of Alvise Gritti dated on December 4, 1525, January 4, 1526, February 4, 1526. ASV, Dispacci degli Ambasciatori al Senato, Costantinopoli, Filza 1-A.

¹³¹ “Non ni achade per questa dirli altro sollum che de qui se fa preparation grandissima de harmada si de mar come di terra[...].” Letter of Alvise Gritti, on January 4, 1526, *Ibid.*

¹³² The *ferman*, imperial order, sent to doge Andrea Gritti from Suleyman I in 1536 documents the grain demand of Venice from the Ottoman Empire, before the Ottoman expedition over Iraq, known as *Irakeyn Seferi*, in 1533-1536. As *ferman* states, Venetian *bailo* and envoy came to the Ottoman Palace and demanded grain by explaining the food shortage in Venice. On the other hand, the *doge* sent another letter to Alvise Gritti in this subject, and the latter also transmitted this acute need to Sultan. For that reason, Sultan consented on sending demanded grain from his personal revenue. The *firman* mentions that the payment of the grains was not effected on time, and when it was demanded from the Venetian envoy, he replied as “we bought the grain from the son of doge Lovizo who dead, and the payment is collected only in Venice”. ASV, Documenti Turchi, Busta 3, I 37.3 XII, in Gökbilgin, 149-150.

demanded lead from Venice for its future expeditions over Hungary in return for its trade off the grain that the *Serenissima* needed, and in this procedure Alvise Gritti played a crucial role as intermediary and financier by the help of Grand Vizier Ibrahim.¹³³

Due to this wide range commercial network, the prestige of Alvise Gritti within the Ottoman Empire increased. He became the most prominent merchant, and soon became the leader of the Venetians living in Istanbul, providing them important commercial privileges, and financing as banker them in case of necessity.¹³⁴ Furthermore he could accumulate a glaring wealth, allowing him to have an effulgent and expensive life. As it was mentioned above, he was educated within the lines of humanist education of the time. He knew both the Venetian and Ottoman tradition, he was so close both the Venetian and Ottoman administration. In other words, he constituted a good mixture of Venetian and Ottoman motives within his personality and life style. Francesco Della Valle, his chamberlain and biographer, who entered to his service in the year of 1531 and served until his death in 1534, describes Alvise Gritti in his narration as follows:

[...] era d'anni cinquanta dua in circa, di person assai grande, bruno di faccia, con naso Aquilino, e gioudile nell'aspetto; dottato di buonissime littere humane greche, et Lattine, era prontissimo et affabile nel parlare, padrone assoluto della Lingua Turcha, et della Grecha, [...] Il suo vestire era all' usanza Turchesca di setta, e d'oro; portava in testa una berretta di Gibellini, et vestiva pomposamente, mutandosi ogni giorno di vesti. Ne usava di portar più di sei, ouer otto volte un vestimento, ma quelli che si spogliava si donava a suoi servitori.

¹³³ Ferenc Szakály also proves this argument with the example of tin. He states that after 1523, with the election of his father as the doge of Venice and after having close relations with the new Ottoman Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, Alvise Gritti became one of the most important army contractors in the Ottoman Empire. He underlines that between September 1524 and February 1527, not least than a total of seventeen tons of tin were delivered in eight lots to the gun foundry of Istanbul by a person whose almost undecipherable name in the related documents could be read as Gritti. See: Szakály, 15.

¹³⁴ Papo, Papo, 30.

[...][he] was circa at the age of fifty two, a person tall enough, brown faced, with an Aquiline nose, young in appearance; studied the finest Greek and Latin humanist literature, was very clever and decent in speaking, absolute patron of the Turkish and Greek language, [...] His mode of dressing was in Turkish style of silk and gold brocade, wore on head a Gibellini headgear, and dressed in a big way, changed his clothes every day. [He] used to wear more than six or eight times one dress, but those he charged off, he gave them to his servants.¹³⁵

The accounts of Benedetto Ramberti, the author of the books *Libri Tre delle Cose de Turchi*, on Alvise Gritti have also similar characteristics with the statements of Francesco Della Valle:

Veste in tutto alla Turchesca, eccetto che non porta il tolupane in testa, ma porta uno cappelletto di Zebellini in forma di piramide, come sogliono portare gli Ungari. È di età di cinquantaquattro in circa, ma nella faccia et nella disposizione del corpo dimostra à pena aggionger à quaranta. È grande piu che di commune grandezza et e bene membruto, ha gli occhi grossi neri et vivi sì, che pareno di foco. Le ciglia che si congiungono insieme et longhe assai. Il naso acquilino poco, et che pare torto. La barba nera et il color del volto e della carne fosco. Ha la voce sonora, et giusta: la quale accompagnata da alcuni movimenti di occhi, et di mano, fa che quando ei ragiona, ogn'uno sta intentissimo ad ascoltarlo. Parla di tutte le cose sensatamente, et con somma eloquentia in Lingua Turca, Greca, Latina et Italiana, che tutte queste gli sono famigliari: ma rare volte sa trovar fine a suoi ragionamenti, tanto che viene accusato di troppo parlare.

[He] totally dresses in Turkish style, except that [he] does not wear the turban on head, but wears a *Gibellini* headgear of a pyramid form like the Hungarians used to wear. He was at the age of fifty four, circa, but from the face and the configuration of the body; [he] looks as just came to forty. [He] was taller than the common people, robust enough, has big dark and vivid eyes like resembling the fire. The eyelashes overlap each other and were long enough. The nose was aquiline a bit, and looks hooked. The beard [is] dark and the color of visage and skin was brown. He was a loud and effective voice that was

¹³⁵ Della Valle, 18-19.

accompanied by some eye and hand movements, when he talks, everyone was so curious to listen to him. He talks about every subject, reasonably, and with total eloquence in Turkish, Greek, Latin and Italian languages that he is familiar with. But rarely, he knows to find so many plausible explanations to his speeches that he is accused of having talked too much.¹³⁶

Alvise Gritti had a luxurious and lordly life in Istanbul; many people worked for his service. He had constituted a luxurious Italian style palace enclosed by elegant and charming gardens near *Pera*, which would later be named as *Beyoğlu* in reference to Alvise Gritti. Approximately, a thousand of people ate in his palace; more than five hundred among these were the slaves, bought by him.¹³⁷ The stables of the palace hosted more than a hundred of horses, a hundred and fifty camels and sixty mules.¹³⁸ Alvise Gritti, lived like a wealthy patrician, even like a prince of that time, and organized his palace order according to both Venetian and Ottoman tradition.

Vive con Turchi al modo turchesco, et con Christiani alla Christiana: ma pur la corte sua, quando specialmente sta in Costantinopoli, è governata all'usanza de Turchi. Ha gli Capigi, Checcaia, Protogero, Serraglio di putti et di donne con l'ordine medesimo che ha il Signore, ma in proportione minore.

He lives with Turks in Turkish mode and with Christians in Christian: but for his court, especially when it was in Istanbul, it was held by the way of Turks. He had the gatekeepers, eunuchs, guards, the palace of the girls and women with the same order that has the Sultan, but in a small proportion.¹³⁹

The palace of Alvise Gritti was also famous for the extraordinary abundance of its table. For example in 1524, it was held a feast in which three hundred guests,

¹³⁶ Ramberti, ff 36v-37r.

¹³⁷ Ramberti, f. 36v.

¹³⁸ Della Valle, 19.

¹³⁹ Ramberti, f. 36v.

including both Christians and Turks, were all served with silver plates. Both Christians and Turks attended his sumptuous feasts, such as the one in 1524 when a performance of the classical comedy *Psyche and Cupid* was followed by songs and dances by Perote women and Turkish entertainers. In this festival, a classical comedy of *Psyche and Cupid*, played by the actors patronized by Gritti himself and the dances of Perote women entertained the guests.¹⁴⁰ Alvise Gritti generally had the guests in his court; besides the Italian, generally the Venetian, merchants seeking his protection, the diplomats of not only the *Serenissima*, but also the other European states, came to his palace and had his advises. The *relazioni* of the Venetian ambassadors and envoys prove that the Venetian diplomats were in close relationship with Alvise Gritti. According to Francesco Della Valle, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha and even the Sultan Suleyman I often visited him in his palace as incognito.¹⁴¹ Although this information was also proved by the Habsburg ambassador to Istanbul, Cornelius Schepper¹⁴², it seems an exaggerated account. On the other hand, even at the level of rumor, this information figures the general perception of Alvise Gritti in the Ottoman Empire as an important figure very close to the Ottoman Palace itself.

Alvise Gritti, grown in the Renaissance atmosphere, following the trend of the time, patronized numerous humanist and artists in his palace, such as Francesco Della Valle, his chamberlain and biographer; Tranquillo de Andreis, known as Andronicus Tranquillus, his secretary and Agostino Museo, a Dalmatian origin humanist and the teacher of his son Antonio. “Pietro Arentino, a typical court poet

¹⁴⁰ Carlo Zen, being in Istanbul with the duty of the vicebailo in that year reports this feast to *Signoria* on February 14 1524 in his letter. For further information about the feast and observations of Carlo Zen see: Sanuto, v. 36, 117-122.; Szakály, 16; Finlay, “Al Servizio...”, 80; Necipoğlu, 404.

¹⁴¹ “[...] nelli spessissime volte Solimano et Abrain Bassa in habito piccato venivano diporto.” Della Valle, 19.

¹⁴² The observations of the Habsburg ambassador Cornelius Shepper was discussed in the article of Aurei Decei. For detailed information see: Decei, 13.

who was never at a loss for words to praise all the eminent personalities of the age, also seems to have been supported financially by Gritti. This poet of honeyed words applauded his benefactor's virtues in a poem of sixty-six lines, and in September 1534 he dedicated his Psalter-translations (*I sette psalmi di David*) to Gritti".¹⁴³ Moreover, Bartolo Fontio, a Franciscan friar who had been translated one of the work of Luther into Italian, took refuge with Gritti when he had to flee from Venice.¹⁴⁴ As it was stated above, his palace was generally the stage of festivals, in which the ancient plays and dance shows were performed. Alvise Gritti did not patronize only the learning men, or artists of his time, he was directly contributed to the production of knowledge. By using his observations in the Ottoman Empire, he aimed to explain the Ottoman system to foreigners, especially to his homeland. He was co-author of a pamphlet on the governmental structure of the Ottoman State with Dragoman Yunus Bey. This short pamphlet contained detailed information about the Ottoman sultan and the governmental structure; in other words the Ottoman system which was one of the most interesting subjects for Venetians, as well as for the rest of Europe.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Szakály, 17.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ The pamphlet, *Opera noua la quale dichiara tutto il governo del gran Turcho e tutto la Spesa che il gran Turcho ha sotto di lui cosi in pace come in Guerra e il numero de le Persone e nome, e governo de le sue Donne e Garzoni che lui tiene nel Serraglio serrati e de tutta la Entrata che lui lanno e nomina tutti li Signori de le sue province: E il nome de tutte le sue terre chelha sotto se: e la ordinanza del suo Campo quando va ala guerra como va in ordinanza tutte le persone a sorte per sorte e come vanna e che arme portano*, was printed in the original Italian. The short work talked about the structure of the Ottoman Empire in the time of Suleyman I, including a variety of details on the statesmen, Palace, servants of the Palace, the army, incomes and expenses of the Empire. It is not clear when Alvise Gritti and Dragoman Yunus Bey wrote this pamphlet, however it was reprinted in 1537 in Venice. It can be argued that this short work written by the two important figures living in the Empire, in other words two direct observers might be an interesting reference source for the other people writing on the same subject. The transliteration of the whole work was published by Albert Howe Lybyer. See: Albert Howe Lybyer, *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), 262-275.

Here it is important to note that the *cose dei Turchi*, the issues about the Turks, was one of the most important components in the early modern political literature of Europe. Especially, after the conquests of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan Peninsula and the Eastern European territories, European States and Papacy felt the danger of to be captured by the Ottomans, or as they called by Turks. In this context, Europe, lacking a political unity, while searching a unity against the Turks at

Concerning the information given above, it can be argued that Alvise Gritti was one of the examples of the “versatile” personalities of the Renaissance period who had the chance of advance in the Ottoman Empire. He was a merchant, a banker, the leader the Venetian merchants living and working in the Ottoman Empire, an unofficial diplomat of Venice, patron of humanists. He had a luxurious and effulgent life, like European princes of the time. In his career, the role of his family was indisputably fundamental: Alvise Gritti used a good reputation and a wide network in Istanbul which had been created by his ancestors. However, by his intelligence, ambitions and merits, he could create his own network soon and broke a new ground that his ancestors never did the same. He could not find the chance of a political career in Venice because of his illegitimate birth; but in the Ottoman Empire, he could. After 1526, he started to appear in the political stage of the Ottoman Empire thanks his close relationship with Sultan Suleyman I and mostly the Grand Vizier Ibrahim; he served as an Ottoman officer and played decisive roles in the international politics of the Empire until his death in 1534. In the following chapter, the political career of Alvise Gritti and his role in the international politics of the Ottoman Empire will be discussed.

least in military level, tried to understand the Ottoman system which was different for them in order to understand the success and rise of the Empire. Therefore, besides the *relazioni* of the Venetian *baili*, many books or pamphlets were written by Europeans, especially by merchants, travelers or diplomats having the chance of staying in the Empire. Due to its political, diplomatic and most importantly commercial relations with the Ottomans, Venice was the most important center of information about the Turks. The books on Turks, as well as on other subjects, were mostly produced here and spread to the rest of the continent; the Republic in other word was the printing office for Europe especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. For further information about Venice and its being the center of information see: Peter Burke, “Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication”, in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297-1797*, ed. by, John Martin and Dennis Romano, (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 389-419. For the literature on the Ottomans see: Soykut.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF THE *BEYOĞLU* WITHIN THE OTTOMAN POLITICS

Alvise Gritti was one of the few foreigners having the chance of a political career within the Ottoman political system. In fact, the Ottoman administration mainly consisted of the foreign origin people. However, these people strictly trained under the imperial education from their childhood and they lose their own personal identity; in other words, they Ottomanized. The source of this system was the method of *devşirme* based on the recruitment of non-Muslim male children from their families in their early teens, and their training first by the Muslim Turkish families and then within the *acemi oğlanlar ocağı*, school for the rookie boys. They also converted to Islam, and were raised according to the Islamic principles. After the preliminary training, while the ordinary *devşirmes* were taken into the Janissary corps in order to be trained as the private military forces of the Ottoman Sultan responsible for the security of the Sultan himself, the palace and the capital city, the most talented ones were sent to *Enderun* the palace school as *iç oğlanı*, pages, and they continued their training by serving the Ottoman Sultan with different duties in different rooms of the palace. During their training, they were subjected to continuous elimination and selection and after having concluded their education, they were sent to the Ottoman provinces as the high ranking state officers. At this point, it

is also important to note that, the education given to the *devşirmes*, both to janissaries and the pages were not only technical but also ideological; they internalized the Ottoman state mentality and the rules in bureaucracy, learnt to not to recognize any authority rather than the sultan himself. They did not have family ties, the only figure with whom they was bound up was the sultan himself and they should implicitly obey his will. The Ottomans called them *kuls*, the slaves of the sultan.¹⁴⁶ With the *kul* system, the Ottomans created its bureaucrats knowing well the state ideology, faithful to the state and sultan, and free from any other dynastic or ideological ties threatening their allegiance to the system. Especially with the reign of Mehmed II, the administration of the Ottoman Empire was totally composed of the *devşirme* origin officers; however by the seventeenth century the system faced with a gradual dissolution.¹⁴⁷

Alvise Gritti did not have such a *devşirme* origin; was not trained within the Ottoman system and he remained Christian¹⁴⁸ until his death. At this point it is useful to ask how and why such a figure entered to the political life of the Ottoman Empire as an important actor. As it was discussed in the second chapter in details, the political conjuncture of the early sixteenth century required such these extraordinary

¹⁴⁶ For detailed information about the *devşirme* tradition, *kul* system and the palace education see: Halil İnalçık, *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar*, v. 1, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), 205-217; Lybyer, 49-55, 90-120. About the “twin institutions”; *devşirme* and janissaries see: Speros Vryonis Jr., “Isidore Glabas and the Turkish Devshirme”, *Speculum*, v. 31, issue 3, (July 1956), 433-443. About the rooms in the palace and their functions in the education of pages see: Gülrû Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (Cambridge & Massachusetts & London: The MIT Press, 1991), 111-122. In this subject the Italian accounts are also interesting. The relazioni of the Venetian baili give information about the system. At this point, it is also important to mention Giovanni Antonio Menavino. Menavino was a Genovese, presented to Bayezid II by a corsair and served the sultan as a royal page until 1514. When he returned to Italy, after having concluded his service Menavino wrote an interesting book about the Ottomans and the Ottoman system. In his book the *devşirme* system and the palace are described in details from the one who experienced it personally: Giovanni Antonio Menavino, *Vita et Legge Turchesca*, in Francesco Sansovino, *Historia Universale dell’ Origine Guerre et Imperio de Turchi*, (Venice, 1654), 36v-38v.

¹⁴⁷ İnalçık, *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye...*, 214-216.

¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Kretschmayr argues that in order not to take opposition, Gritti showed himself as converted to Islam in the Ottoman Empire. Kretschmayr, 14.

political actors like Alvise Gritti, dealing with the complex affairs of the time, besides the existing bureaucrats of the contemporary states. In the Ottoman Empire also there was an acute need for active diplomats competent on various languages to act in the communication network. Besides the Ottoman bureaucrats, like Dragoman Yunus Bey, a non-Ottoman figure who could act as emissary and mediator on behalf of the sultan, and inform the administration about the general situation of the European states and potentates would be instrumental for the Ottoman Empire especially in this period when Europe faced with a political chaos and the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry was so acute. In this respect, Alvise Gritti appeared as one of the best candidates to be utilized by the Ottoman administration. As it was mentioned before, his personal talents, family ties and the influential and complex commercial network that he patronized assuredly played an important role in his stand out in the Ottoman capital and opened him a path to meet with the Ottoman high ranking officers. One of them, in fact the most important name of the Ottoman bureaucracy, would offer him a new life: the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha. Their stars would ascend simultaneously and like two fellow-travelers they would also come to the end of the way together.

4.1. Two Good Fellow-Travelers: Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti

Although it is not evident how and when Alvise Gritti entered the political stage of the Ottoman Empire, it can be stated that due to his close relationship with Ibrahim Pasha he was most probably introduced to the Ottoman politics soon after the rise of the Pasha to the office of Grand Vizierate in 1523. As it was indicated in the

preceding chapter, Alvise Gritti was first introduced to the Palace as a great connoisseur of jewels. Furthermore, after the appointment of the Pasha as the new Grand Vizier, he became an unofficial advisor to the Pasha and the Palace. This point supports the fact that Alvise Gritti and Ibrahim Pasha had met and become close friends before 1523 because the Pasha would have never chosen a person that he neither knew well; nor trusted for that kind of a vital task. From this perspective, it will be significant to clarify why Ibrahim Pasha trusted an Istanbul born Venetian merchant that much and introduced him to the Ottoman politics in which he *de facto* played the most important role.

At this instant, it is essential to note that the appointment of Ibrahim Pasha to the office of the Grand Vizierate was unexpected since it violated the traditional promotion rules of the Ottoman bureaucracy. The intimate relationship between Suleyman I and Ibrahim Pasha since their times of youth was discussed before. When Suleyman I came to the throne in 1520, he appointed Ibrahim, his faithful servant and close friend, as *Şahincibaşı*, Head Falconer. In a short time, Ibrahim became *Has Odabaşı*¹⁴⁹, Master of the Privy Chamber, and soon after he was appointed as the fourth vizier.¹⁵⁰ In 1523, following the discharge of Piri Mehmed Pasha with a pension, who was famous for his successful role in the conquest of Belgrade in 1521 and for his opposition to the expedition against Rhodes in 1522,

¹⁴⁹ To enter the *Has Oda*, was the most important position for a page because he met with the Ottoman sultan every day; he went wherever the sultan went and dealt with his personal affairs. After having concluded his service he could be appointed to the highest ranking offices. In order to serve in the Privy Chamber, the pages had to find favors in the eyes of the Sultan and their promotion was related to him. Colin Imber, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1300-1650*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006), 200. For detailed information about the responsibilities of *Has Odabaşı* see: İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilâtı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 340.

¹⁵⁰ For detailed information about the rise of Ibrahim Pasha in the Ottoman bureaucracy see: Jenkins, 18-42. Here, it should be also mentioned that until the reign of Suleyman I, despite the lack of any written rule, the Sultans used to have three viziers in their *Divan*. However, with the reign of Suleyman I the numbers of the viziers increased to four. Colin Imber points out that in order to appoint Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha to the membership of Divan as the title of vizier in 1540's. Imber, 208. It seems that the tradition was reformulated by Suleyman I; however, it is more probable that this change was realized in favor to Ibrahim rather than Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha.

Suleyman I appointed Ibrahim as the *Beylerbeyi*, Governor, of Rumelia, and consequently Grand Vizier.¹⁵¹ This appointment raised the disturbance among the Ottoman high-ranking officials. According to the Ottoman tradition, generally the second vizier was accepted as the nominee for the office of Grand Vizierate¹⁵²; however instead of Ahmed Pasha, the second vizier of Suleyman I, who was Ibrahim Pasha who took hold of *müher-i hümayun*¹⁵³, the imperial seal. From that time onwards he became the most important name in the Ottoman Empire after the sultan; he gained the right of supervision over all state units and a decisive role in the domestic and international state politics. One year later, he got married to the sister of the Sultan. Thus, besides their close friendship, Suleyman I and Ibrahim Pasha became also relatives. On the other hand, since he was promoted abruptly without having much experience in the state affairs; so, he needed an advisor. All other Ottoman officers severely reacted to his rapid promotion, and to the inconceivable favor of the sultan. Hence, it is presumable that, he turned his face to his close Venetian friend Alvise Gritti not as an advisor only for political, but also for economic and military affairs.

¹⁵¹ Peçevî İbrahim Efendi, *Târih-i Peçevî*, (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1980), 20, 79; Feridun Emecen, “İbrâhim Paşa, Makbul”, *DİA*, 333-335, 333; Merriman, 76.

¹⁵² İnalçık, *Classical Age*, 97. The violation of the promotion rules in the appointment of Ibrahim Pasha to the Grand Vizierate was also accentuated by the contemporary Ottoman chronicler Peçevî. By noting the appointment of Aysa Pasha to the Grand Vizierate after the death of Ibrahim Pasha, Peçevî not only mentions the tradition of the promotion to the Grand Vizierate but also criticizes the previous exercise between the lines: “Vezir-i â‘zam Ayâs Paşa İbrahim Paşa katlinde vezir-i sâni bulunmağla ba-hasb’ü’t-tarîk vezir-i â‘zam oldu.”, Peçevî, 20. Moreover, it should be also mentioned that since the reign of Suleyman I, despite the lack of any written rule, the Sultans used to have three viziers. However, with the reign of Suleyman I the numbers of the viziers increased to four. Colin Imber points out that the in order to appoint Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha to the membership of Divan as the title of vizier in 1540’s. Colin Imber, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1300-1650*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006), 208. It seems that the tradition was reformulated by Sulyeman I; however, it is more probable that this change was realized in favor to Ibrahim rather than Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha.

¹⁵³ In the Ottoman Empire, the sultan gave his imperial seal to the Grand Vizier after the latter’s appointment as a symbol of the right of absolute representation. The recall of the seal meant the dismissal of the Grand Vizier. For detailed information about the rights and duties of the Grand Vizier in the Ottoman Empire see: İnalçık, *Classical Age*, 96-97.

On the other hand, in relation to his purposes in international politics, securing the support of a Venetian was beneficial for the Grand Vizier. Ibrahim Pasha appeared to favor Venice and the Venetians living in the Ottoman Empire. His desire for luxurious goods had already opened the path of establishing good relations with the Venetian merchants who provided him a variety of goods from jewelry to wine. Moreover, the studies about the Grand Vizier clearly reveal the fact that Ibrahim Pasha adapted a pro-Venetian international policy during his office. This argument was proved also by some Venetian documents. Especially in some of the *relazioni* of the Venetian *baili*, Ibrahim Pasha was defined as the *amico della Signoria*, friend of the Venetian government.¹⁵⁴ This fact was generally explained by the origin of Ibrahim Pasha. As it was asserted before, Ibrahim Pasha was born in the city of Parga, which had been an old Venetian colony before the Ottoman conquest. The scholars underline that his affiliation as a former Venetian subject affected the political vision of the Pasha, thus he followed a moderate and peaceful policy towards the *Serenissima* during his office.¹⁵⁵ At this point, Alvise Gritti, the son of the *Doge* of Venice, was not considered only as an advisor, but also as an accredited mediator between the *Signoria* and the Pasha.

Since his prompt promotion received severe reactions from the Ottoman bureaucracy, Ibrahim Pasha had to act very cautiously to secure his position by paying attention to his connections. As he was inexperienced in the state affairs, he needed an advisor and an assistant. On the other hand, having collaboration with an Ottoman bureaucrat who also had the chance of having a promotion within the

¹⁵⁴ As an example of the usage of *amico della Signoria*, see: “Relazione di Pietro Bragadin, read in June 9, 1526”, Albèri, s.3, v.3, 103.

¹⁵⁵ Not only the modern scholars, but also the Venetian *baili* state that the favor of Ibrahim Pasha towards Christians was related to his origin. In 1523, orator Pietro Zen underlines this fact as following: “[...] amar molto la Signoria nostra per esser nassudo soto il so’ dominio.” Sanuto XXXV, 259.

government would have been a threat for the Pasha. That kind of a person could suddenly attract the attention of the Sultan and by using the inexperience of the Pasha, he could undermine him. Ibrahim Pasha could not take that risk. However, Alvise Gritti was a Christian and was outside the Ottoman bureaucracy. He himself also needed the favor of the Pasha to fulfill his commercial interests that were substantially important for the future of his life in the Ottoman capital. Besides, his personal qualifications were also appropriate for that task. He was very intelligent, adroit, energetic and diplomatic. He was coming from a noble family, thus he knew well the court etiquette. Before he had never served in the state administration, but he was trained as a patrician; the state affairs were familiar to him. Through his father, he was introduced to the features of international politics and he was competent in numerous languages. Since he was the *de facto* head of the Venetian colony in Istanbul, he had a wide network including not only the Venetian and other merchants, but also the Ottomans bureaucrats and the representatives of the foreign states. In this context, Alvise Gritti seemed to be the best alternative to be the advisor even the assistant of Ibrahim Pasha and the Pasha did not hesitate to turn his face to his close friend for his support when he needed his cooperation.

These arguments were also proven by some of the Venetian sources of the time. For example, in his *Libri Tre*, Benedetto Ramberti reflects the fact that Ibrahim Pasha preferred Alvise Gritti as his advisor, because of his inexperience in the state affairs. In addition, Ramberti underlines that Gritti was Christian; hence he could never be superior to the Grand Vizier.

...per la poca esperienza che havea delle cose del mondo sostenere, se elesse il detto signore Aloygio Gritti come per consigliere delle sue attioni, ilquale per essere Christiano non gli pareva compagno, ne temea che potesse farsi maggiore di se: et per esser nasciuto come egli era, che gli toleva ogni speranza di farsi in Venetia grande; molto si assicurava che gli fusse

fedele, aspettando ogni suo bene di li, dove era nato et accresciuto in qualche dignitate et non altrove.

...because of the little experience of the world affairs he had, he elected the aforementioned Aloygio Gritti as counselor for his actions, who neither appeared to him as a companion since he was Christian, nor did he fear the fact that he would overpower him. Since he was born the way he was, this prevented every possibility for him to have a career in Venice. He really cared that he was loyal to him. He expected and hoped every prospect and office from where he was born and raised and not from elsewhere.¹⁵⁶

Similarly, in 1534, the Venetian secretary, Daniello de Ludovisi, in his *relazione*, reports to the Senate the reason why Ibrahim Pasha had preferred Alvise Gritti as his advisor as follows:

La causa di questo favore si dice essere che Ibrahim uscito dal serraglio primo pascià e beilerbei di Grecia, senza esperienza e pratica del mondo e del governo degli stati e volendo non solamente servirsi de'Turchi ma levarli di mezzo, si è grandemente servito del detto Signor Luigi; il quale sebbene non aveva fatta per innanzi professione delle cose di stato, niente di meno aveva grandissima intelligenza delle cose, massime de'cristiani, ed era come è, di buon ingegno e di valore, e di animo molto grande ed elevato ed altissimo a maneggi grandi. Talmente che non vuol perder punto della grandezza ed autorità sua, e per natura e molto disposto a far servizio a chi lo ricerca.

The reason of this favor, it is said that Ibrahim, came out of the palace as the prime pasha and *beylerbeyi* of Greece, without experience and practice of the world, and government of the states, and wanting not to be served only by Turks, but to eliminate them, he was mainly served by aforementioned Signor Luigi Gritti; although he had not have before any profession about the state affairs, nothing less he had grand intelligence about the [other] matters, in maximum those of Christians, and [he] was of the good ingenious, and of values, and of the very high dignity and [he is] advanced and highest to handle with the big deals. Insomuch as that [he] does not want to lose the point of his dignity and authority, and by his nature, [he] is ready to serve to anyone seeking him.¹⁵⁷

In fact, the reason why Ibrahim Pasha preferred Alvise Gritti was not only his inexperience in state affairs and the genuine need of the Pasha as an advisor, who

¹⁵⁶ Ramberti, 35v-36r.

¹⁵⁷ Albèri, s.3, v.1, 30.

would never challenge his position, but also because Ibrahim Pasha also felt drawn to the *Beyoğlu* more than his other colleagues because they had very similar personal characteristics, and goals. It can be argued that, like Alvise Gritti, Ibrahim Pasha, himself was also a “versatile personality” of the time. Apart from his political career, he was also interested in arts and intellectual studies. He had a very appealing and luxurious life in Istanbul. One year after his appointment to the Grand Vizierate, a splendid palace¹⁵⁸ was built for him at the *Atmeydanı*, Hippodrome Square in Istanbul. His palace was not only his house, at the same time it was the meeting point of one of the most important intellectual networks. Ibrahim Pasha was “a generous patron of poetry, scholarship and the arts.”¹⁵⁹ Most of the prominent poets of the time gained the opportunity of presenting their works to him, especially in the sumptuous festivals held in his palace, and they were generously rewarded.¹⁶⁰ In fact, he was not so different from the European elites patronizing numerous humanists in the Renaissance era.

He did not only patronize the artists or scholars, but was also personally engaged in arts and intellectual studies: he played the violin excellently, wrote poetry, studied law and philosophy; and eagerly followed the domestic and international politics of the other states of his time. On account of his competence in Persian, Greek and Italian languages, he could directly communicate with the representatives of the other states and foreigners living in the Ottoman Empire. He

¹⁵⁸ Walter G. Andrews, Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2005), 238. For detailed information about the palace of Ibrahim Pasha see: Nurhan Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, (İstanbul: İ.Ü Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1972).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 239. Especially after his appointment to the Grand Vizierate, Ibrahim Pasha started to patronize numerous poets and created one of the most important networks of literature in his palace. For detailed information about the network of Ibrahim and the works of the poets that he patronized see: Esmâ Tezcan, *Pargalı İbrahim Paşa Çevresindeki Edebi Yaşam*, Bilkent University Institute of Economics and Social Sciences Department of Turkish Literature, June 2004. (Unpublished master thesis)

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 47- 48.

was interested in history; he read the biographies of Alexander the Great and Hannibal, and the stories of the heroes and great wars in history.¹⁶¹ These classical stories also influenced his political vision and future actions. Moreover, he did not have such a conservative tendency towards art as other statesmen had; he was curious about paintings and sculptures. After the victorious battle of Mohács, when he returned from Buda in 1526, he brought three sculptures of Apollo, Hercules and Diana as booty and he set them up in front of his palace.¹⁶² This was a staggering situation for a Muslim society. Therefore, in time, he was harshly criticized by the rest of the Ottoman bureaucrats and there occurred a storm of rumor about his piety labeled by the below *couplet* attributed to Figani, one of the famous poets of the sixteenth century, went from tongue to tongue:

*Dü İbrahim amed be deyr-i cihan;
Yeki put-şiken şüt, yeki put-nişan.*

In this world two Abrahams appeared;
One idols broke, the other idols reared.¹⁶³

Although this allegory, which shows clearly how Ibrahim Pasha was misperceived within the Ottoman social *milieu*, caused the murder of its poet; it gave an upper hand to his opponents claiming that he was not sincere in his conversion to Islam and preserved his Christian faith and even some polytheistic tendencies.¹⁶⁴ As a proof of this argument, it was often stated that Ibrahim did not forget his origin and family.¹⁶⁵ Her mother and his two brothers lived in his palace. He even provided the governorship of a *sancak* for his father.¹⁶⁶ The evident favor of Ibrahim Pasha towards Christians supported also the claims of his opponents. “The Venetians seem

¹⁶¹ Bragadin, 103.

¹⁶² Andrews, Kalpaklı, 240.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Jenkins, 19

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

to have regarded Ibrahim as favorable to them and needy Christians in the empire turned to him for help and sometimes were freed by him from captivity and death.”¹⁶⁷ In his time, Ibrahim Pasha was called as *Frenk Ibrahim*¹⁶⁸ pejoratively by the Ottoman political elites.

It is not possible to comment on the real faith of Ibrahim Pasha. In relation to his life and his political and cultural perspectives, it can be argued that he was closer to the western political and cultural thought than most of the other Ottoman bureaucrats and he made considerable efforts to incorporate some western ideals into the Ottoman political conjuncture. Therefore, Alvise Gritti probably became his best supporter. In a very short time, he introduced Gritti to the Ottoman politics. From that time onwards, they were not only close friends; but also two good fellow-travelers who would run concurrently both to success and to death.

4.2 The Introduction of Alvise Gritti to the Political Stage

The introduction of Alvise Gritti to the political stage coincided with the rise of the political crisis in Hungary which would last for almost thirty years. In the sixteenth century, Hungary was cut out for a person intending to have an illustrious political career since it was “the most troublous; but perhaps the most promising region”¹⁶⁹ of the sixteenth century. As it was mentioned before, due to its strategic importance, it was considered as a key point to march towards the Central Europe and a buffer zone for European states to stop the Ottoman expansion. But by 1527, Hungary started to

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 111.

¹⁶⁸ Among the Ottomans, the title of *Frenk* was used for Europeans. The contemporaries of Ibrahim Pasha were also aware of his sympathy towards Europe and European thoughts, and they severely criticized him.

¹⁶⁹ Kumrular, 41.

experience an internal political crisis that the other important powers of the time followed very carefully and interfered in according to their own interests in the international politics. This politically chaotic *milieu* made the Hungarian territories an open stage on which the great powers of the time settled their accounts with his rivals and the politically ambitious personalities got around to show their talents, acquire a good reputation in the current international politics and maximize their benefits by using this reputation as well as the opportunities created by the chaos itself. Alvise Gritti became also one of those personalities, perhaps the most flaming and fascinating one, through the favor of his dearest friend and patron, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha.

In the early-sixteenth century, Hungary became an international question. As it was discussed in details in the second chapter, the principle policy of the Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman I, in the sixteenth century was to expand its territories in Europe and to limit the advance of his major rival Charles V, the Habsburg Emperor, throughout the continent in order to prevent a possible political unification of Europe under the Habsburg flag. Therefore, he intended to control two important strategic points: Hungary and the Eastern Mediterranean. It is not surprising that in his first two years on the throne, Suleyman I conquered Belgrade and the island of Rhodes and when the French King Francis I imprisoned by Charles V and asked his help, he did not hesitate to reply to him by marching towards Hungary. By going an expedition towards the Hungarian lands, Suleyman I killed two birds with one stone: he both annexed the key point of the Central Europe to his domination and then by attacking a kingdom which had been attached itself to the Habsburg Empire through the dynastic marriages and contracts, he proved that the Ottoman Empire would be the major obstacle before the Habsburg advance.

On August 26, 1526, at the steps of Mohács, the Ottoman forces brought down all the Hungarian resistance, entered the city of Buda and murdered the Hungarian King Lajos II. On November 10, 1526, the Voivode of Transylvania Janos Szápolyai was elected as the King of Hungary by the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian estates, and this election was approved by the Suleyman I.¹⁷⁰ However, János Szápolyai was not the only nominee for the Hungarian throne. Almost a month after his election, on December 17, other Hungarian princes opposing the election of Szápolyai, declared Ferdinand I of Habsburg, the king of Bohemia and the archduke of Austria, the new Hungarian king. Ferdinand claimed to be the legitimate king through he was married to the sister of the murdered King Lajos II. Moreover, Lajos II was the husband of Mary of Habsburg, the sister of Ferdinand and Charles V. Since Lajos II did not have a legitimate heir, Ferdinand could easily claim for the right of succession to the Hungarian throne.¹⁷¹

In this context, after the return of the Ottoman army, Ferdinand I marched towards Buda with the support of the some Hungarian princes and defeated János Szapolyai and his supporters in Tokay on September 27, 1527. On November 3, he was crowned as the King of Hungary.¹⁷² Hereupon, Szápolyai and his forces were obliged to retreat to Transylvania. It was obvious that this disorder was going to disturb the Ottoman Sultan, who had conquered the city a year ago and recognized Szapolyai as the legitimate king. For that reason, Ferdinand I decided to send envoys to the Ottoman capital in order to defend his cause and demand his recognition as the new Hungarian king. At the same time, Szápolyai also realized the importance of

¹⁷⁰ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 127.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 327-328.

¹⁷² At this point, it would be interesting to note that in the course of the war, most of the supporters of Szápolyai changed sides, and thus Ferdinand easily marched towards Buda without trying to dispose any resistance. Ferenc Szákaly notes that, on his coronation, Ferdinand I was surrendered practically by the same group that had applauded Szápolyai in his ceremony hardly a year ago. Szakály, 42.

gaining the support of the Ottoman Sultan in order to prevail over his rival. By the suggestions of his father-in-law Sigismund, the King of Poland, he sent a Polish nobleman named Hieronymus Laski to Istanbul to offer his friendship to the Sultan and request his help.¹⁷³ From that time on, Suleyman I did not only act as an arbiter, his decisions determined the future of Hungary, as well as the future of the European state system.

Hieronymus Laski came to Istanbul in December 1527, visited the viziers according to the ceremonial use and presented himself to Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha on December 22.¹⁷⁴ “The Grand Vizier was astonished to hear that the King of Hungary, a country which they had crushed and ransacked, took the liberty to offer his friendship to the Magnificent Padishah without paying due homage and tribute in reciprocation [...]”.¹⁷⁵ Laski could not get satisfactory results from his first conversations and soon realized that he was in need of a mediator who knew the Ottoman bureaucracy well and who had good relations with the viziers holding the supremacy over the decisions of the Sultan. At that instant, he approached Alvise Gritti.¹⁷⁶ Not surprisingly, this idea of mediation was given to him by Ibrahim Pasha.

It is not clear whether Alvise Gritti got involved in the Hungarian affairs before, but when he entered the negotiations in 1527 he gave the impression of being much more prepared and informed about the political and diplomatic

¹⁷³ Hieronymus Laski was a good candidate for this important task because he had previous diplomatic experience at the Porte in the service of King Sigismund of Poland, and he knew well the bureaucratic structure of the Empire. Merriman, p. 100.

¹⁷⁴ During their meetings with Hieronymus Laski, the Ottoman viziers, in their meetings with Hieronymus Laski, unanimously declared him that the Hungarian territories were conquered by the Ottoman Sultan, and as a land taken by sword, all of the whole country belonged to the Ottoman Empire, not to Ferdinand or Szapolyai himself with a sarcastic tone. These conversations, in fact, are good examples of the characteristics of the Ottoman politics and diplomacy. For detailed information about the conversations occurred between the viziers and the Polish diplomat see: Hammer, pp. 104-108.

¹⁷⁵ Szakály, 44.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

developments.¹⁷⁷ This information is also proved by the documents conserved in *Archivio Stato di Venezia* (State Archive of Venice). In the collection of the *Dispacci degli Ambasciatori al Senato, Filza I-A* (Dispatches of the Ambassadors to the Senate File 1-A) there are four letters of Alvise Gritti written in 1526. These letters were probably not revealed before, concerning that they were not used in the previous studies about Gritti. By analyzing these four letters, one can infer that Alvise Gritti started to appear in the politics of the Ottoman Empire in the context of the Hungarian affairs even before the Battle of Mohács in 1526. The four letters mainly enlighten the Senate of Venice, about the war preparations in the Ottoman Empire, in the winter of 1526. The letters also contain information about the transportation of grain from the Empire to Venice in exchange for lead needed for the campaign. In this trade, it seems that Ibrahim Pasha used the *Beyoğlu* as mediator.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, according to the letters the task of Gritti was not limited only with the commercial mediation. In the letter dated on February 4, 1526, Alvise Gritti mentions that he was going to participate in the Ottoman campaign against Hungary and asks the opinion of the Venetian Senate especially his father Andrea Gritti about the subject as follows:

El mi resta dir a vostra serenità che se mettiamo in hordine per andar in campo et iudicho che per tutto el futuro mese se metteremo a chamino per andar in sochorso del re Zuane et io come per altre mie ho scritto a vostra serenità de hordine et comandamento del magnifico Base seguirò el campo [...] magnifico Ibraim Basse non mi sia per manchar de haver qualche bene perché zertto vostra serenità non lo pottria

¹⁷⁷ Szakaly, 44. Ibrahim Pasha introduced Alvise Gritti to the Polish diplomat as an advisor of the Ottoman Empire concerning the Hungarian affairs. Moreover, he alerted the diplomat that if the advises and mediations of the son of doge and the Republic of Venice had not convinced the Sultan, the Ottoman army would have gone to the second expedition in Hungary in the year of 1527 to conquer the entire kingdom. The Ibrahim also noted that for a third power it was easier to defeat its two enemies when there occurred a power struggle between them. For detailed information see: M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Kanunî Sultan Suleyman’ın Macaristan ve Avrupa Siyaseti’nin Sebep ve Âmilleri, Geçirdiği Safhalar”, *Kanunî Armağanı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2001), 5-39, 16-17.

¹⁷⁸ “[...] 3 in 4 mila piombi richiestolo dal magnifico Ibraim Bassa [...]”, Letter of Alvise Gritti to the Senate, on January 4, 1526, ASV, *Dispacci degli Ambasciatori al Senato, Filza I-A*.

creder quantta sia la gracia sua verso di me suo servittor. Io per le prezedenti mie ho scritto a vostra serenittà quello saria l'anemo mio et son ben zertto se vostra serenittà vorà metter del buono che potrò haver lo inttentto mio dexidero veder la risposta de ditta mia per potter fermar in chosa ben stabile [...]

It remains to me to tell your serenity that we are preparing us to go to the campaign and I say that altogether in the next month we will hit the road to go to the aid of the King Zuane [János Szápolyai] and I, like the other [letters] of mine, wrote to your serenity about the order and commandment of the magnificent Pasha [that I] will follow the campaign and [...] the Magnificent Ibrahim Pasha does not make me lack of having some good [things] because certainly you, your serenity, could not think how much grace of him is towards me, his servant. I, through my former [letters], wrote to your serenity this will be my opinion and I am so serious if your serenity will want to put well that I will be able to achieve my purpose. I desire to see your response of [the thing] that I explained to be able to fix the thing stable enough [...] ¹⁷⁹

The statements of Alvise Gritti prove that the *Beyoğlu* was in the known of the preparations of the Ottoman campaign against Hungary and announced this to Venice. Taking into consideration that he had been already acting as the advisor of Ibrahim Pasha in international politics, it can be stated that this is not a surprising fact. However, most importantly, Alvise Gritti with his sentences reveals that the Ottoman Empire had the idea of replacing the existent Hungarian King Lajos II with János Szapolyai even before the Battle of Mohács. As it was mentioned before Szapolyai at that time was the Voivode of Transylvania who was famous for his oppositions to the King.¹⁸⁰ After the murder of Lajos II he was elected as King by the

¹⁷⁹ Alvise Gritti to the Senate on February 4, 1526, ASV, Dispacci degli Ambasciatori al Senato, Filza 1-A. Here it is important to note once more that on the letters the year was mentioned as 1525. However, concerning the information given in the letters, it can be argued that they were dated according to *more veneto*, the Venetian calendar. In *more veneto*, the new year started on March 1 for that reason in order to find the exact dates, it should be added one year to the years noted on the documents concerning the months of January and February.

¹⁸⁰ For the candidacy for throne and oppositions of János Szápolyai to the King Lajos II before the Battle of Mohács see: Coles, 81-82.

estates. In this respect, the information given by Alvise Gritti proves that this election arguably organized by the Ottoman Empire.

Another important point revealed by the letter is that even in that year Alvise Gritti had the intention to have a political career in Hungary even in the mentioned year; perhaps this was a promise for him from the Grand Vizier who offered the *Beyoğlu* many opportunities due their affinity as Gritti underlines. In the same letter Alvise Gritti points out the possibility of his stay in Hungary after the war by talking about his son Antonio:

Anttonio mio fiol voria perseverase ale lettere lattine perché se converò restar in Ongarie penso farmelo venir arentte et la lingua vulgar non si usa ma ttutti exerzitta la lattina però, principe serenissimo, vi piazerà far che el suo prezepttor presto non manchi ttegnirlo auli studii che questo da poi a chorso la ochasion del andar in Ongarie mi è intratto in anemo.

Antonio, my son, wants persevere in Latin language because if I ought to stay in Hungary I think to make him near [to me] and the vulgar language is not used but everyone uses Latin however, the most serene prince, we desire that his tutor soon does not miss keeping him in the studies because anyhow, the occasion of going to Hungary was entered my mind.¹⁸¹

Concerning the information given above, it can be argued that Alvise Gritti was informed about the Hungarian campaign before; despite there is not any further information whether he was participated in the campaign and went to Hungary with the Ottoman army. The studies conducted about him show that his first appearance on the Ottoman political stage was one year after the Mohács. During the negotiations the *Beyoğlu* was presented to Hieronymus Laski by the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha as the councilor of the *Divan* in 1527.¹⁸² Laski soon gained the confidence of Gritti and by offering him some concessions, like an “annual pension

¹⁸¹ Szakály, 44.

¹⁸² Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor, v. 2/1... Academie Române, Bucharest, 1891, 44 cited in Szakály, 44.

of four thousand ducats and the income of a rich Hungarian bishopric”¹⁸³ and he guaranteed the mediation of the *Beyoğlu*, between himself and the Ottoman high ranking officers. Therefore, Alvise Gritti became a key figure who reported the demands of the Hungarian king to the Ottoman court while explaining the Ottoman views and conditions to the envoy of Szápolyai.¹⁸⁴ At first, the visiers did not give Laski a kind reception but through the diplomatic maneuvers of Gritti, everything took a new turn.¹⁸⁵

During the long lasting and complicated negotiations, Alvise Gritti played a crucial role. After some meetings with the viziers, as an outcome of his efforts, on January 27, 1528, Hieronymus Laski was presented to the Sultan and declared that he asked the Sultan’s recognition of his master Szápolyai as the legitimate king of Hungary and the Ottoman protection by expressing the loyalty and friendship of Szápolyai towards Suleyman I.¹⁸⁶ On February 3, the Sultan declared that he gave the crown of Hungary, which he had conquered by his sword, to János Szápolyai as a reward for his obedience and loyalty.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, the Sultan announced to the envoy that he was going to take an expedition in a short time against Ferdinand I to restore the authority of Szápolyai in Buda. In return, the Hungarian king would send an annual tribute to the Sultan and would give his military support to the Ottoman army in the future wars of the Empire in Europe. In other words, Hungary became a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸⁸

After the conclusion of the treaty, Hieronymus Laski sent a dispatch to his master. While explaining the conditions of the treaty, he underlined the contributions

¹⁸³ “[...] pensione annua di circa 4000 ducati e del reddito di un ricco vescovado Ungherese [...]” Finlay, “Al Servizio...”, 84.

¹⁸⁴ For further information about the conversations of Gritti with the Polish diplomat Laski see: Szakaly, 44-46.

¹⁸⁵ Gökbilgin, “Kanunî Sultan Suleyman’ın...”, 17.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 18, Papo, Papo, p. 73.

¹⁸⁷ Peçevi, 108-109.

¹⁸⁸ Coles, 8, Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 328-329.

of Alvise Gritti to the negotiations and added that “[...] his success was due to Gritti only, for without his assistance he would hardly have been able to achieve anything.”¹⁸⁹ Gábor Barta, who has focused on the mission of Alvise Gritti in Hungary in his studies, points out that Laski exaggerated the situation. According to Barta, the efforts of Gritti can not be disregarded undoubtedly can not be. In fact, without the intervention of Gritti the treaty could have had harder terms for Hungary.¹⁹⁰ However, as it was previously documented, the main concern of the Empire was to support Janos Szapolyai, even before the Battle of Mohács. Moreover, Suleyman I did not prefer the consolidation of Habsburg hegemony in such a strategic point that could threaten his expansion policies in future as well as his possessions in the Balkan Peninsula; a vassal Hungary which was going to be an Ottoman satellite and to act as a buffer zone was more beneficial for the Sultan.

This, in fact, is a good example to understand the Ottoman policy of conquest. In his widely known article entitled “Ottoman Methods of Conquest”, Halil İnalcık points out that the Ottoman Empire followed a “gradual method of conquest” particularly in the Balkan Peninsula and Eastern Europe since the foundation of the state. According to this method, there were two phases that were put systematically in practice. Firstly, the Ottoman sultans established a kind of political protection over the neighbor states and secondly, they took them under the direct control of the state by eliminating local dynasties and administrations. The political protection of the Ottoman Empire over the states was, in reality, the implementation of the vassalage system which was based on reciprocal duties. The vassal states had to recognize the Ottoman authority, pay yearly tributes and provide military support to the Sultan whenever it was required. In return, the Ottoman State guaranteed the territorial

¹⁸⁹ Szakály, 46.

¹⁹⁰ Barta, 252-253.

integrity of the vassal states and his protection over the lands against internal and external threats. These vassal states were utilized as buffer zones between the Ottoman main lands and the *Dâr'ü-l Harb*, and as a stepping stone for further expeditions of the State. Therefore, the State, without spending extra expenses, created political entities subject to itself, obtained tributes and secured an auxiliary military force to his army. Moreover, in the course of time, it eliminated the local elites and governments, and implemented its own administrative system when it became necessary.¹⁹¹

At this point, it should be signified that the role of Alvise Gritti was undeniably important in terms of achieving the agreement between Suleyman I and János Szapolyai. However, even if the arbitration of Gritti was not provided, the Ottoman Sultan would probably have chosen to compose a vassal state on Hungarian lands. The aim of Suleyman I was to march towards the Central Europe. Moreover, as a sultan claiming to create a universal empire, Suleyman I aimed to support the weak and small independent political entities in Europe in order to limit the expansion of the hegemony of Charles V, the Habsburg emperor having also shared the same desire with him. Charles V had already suppressed his major rival Francis I, the king of France in 1525. In 1527, the armies of Charles V sacked Rome, and seized the Duchy of Milan. In that way the Habsburg hegemony was *de facto* consolidated in Italy.¹⁹² Within this context, the establishment of the authority of his brother, Ferdinand in Hungary would give an upper hand to Charles V and change the balance of power in Europe to the disadvantage of the Ottoman Empire. Concerning these, it is clear that Suleyman I would support the weak Szapolyai,

¹⁹¹ Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954), 103-129.

¹⁹² Salvatorelli, 381-384, Finlay, "Fabius Maximus...", 991-992.

instead of taking side with Ferdinand I of Habsburg. In any case, the mediation of Alvise Gritti hastened the process; but did not change the consequence.

This mediation was not only beneficial to János Szápolyai, but also to Alvise Gritti. As a consequence the *Beyoğlu* obtained a brilliant commencement in his political career in the Ottoman Empire. After coming to terms with the Ottoman Sultan, Szápolyai nominated Alvise Gritti as *orator et rerum negotiorum procurator*, orator charged to represent the interests of Szápolyai before the *Divan*.¹⁹³ His task was to move between the Ottoman government and Szápolyai. In a short time, Alvise Gritti started to convey information about the developments in the Empire, including the possible expeditions and the conditions of the army. He had already acted as an advisor to the Grand Vizier and the Ottoman court; after 1528 he became the representative of Szápolyai. His illegitimate birth had prevented his entrance to the political life of Venice, but at that instant, he could find the opportunity of having a respectable political career at his birth place. Alvise Gritti would use this occasion in an ideal way and ascend the career stairs rapidly and eagerly, but mostly without control.

On the other hand, Venice was worried about the ventures of Alvise Gritti. The consolidation of the Habsburg dominance in Italy, and the seizure of the Duchy of Milan by Charles V indicated the approaching danger of Venice's occupation by the Habsburgs. Charles V had been urging his brother Ferdinand to attack the Republic since 1526.¹⁹⁴ In this context, while the *Serenissima* supported secretly every political act against the Habsburg advance; it tried to avoid the provocative acts and alliances at the same time in order to prevent a possible Habsburg-Venetian war that could result in the loss of the *terraferma*, even of the lagoon. Although

¹⁹³ Finlay, "Al Servizio...", p. 84; Szakaly, p. 47; Papo, Papo, p. 73.

¹⁹⁴ Finlay, "Fabius Maximus...", 1022-1023.

Venice had supported, and in a sense encouraged, the Battle of Mohács in 1526, the acts of the son of the *Doge* became more and more a matter of concern. In the eyes of the Habsburg Empire, János Szapolyai was perceived as a puppet king of the Ottoman State, in other words the greatest enemy of Christianity that coveted the hereditary Habsburg lands. In addition, Alvise Gritti was serving for the Empire which was his protector state. Since he was the son of Andrea Gritti, the acting *Doge* of Venice, his acts could constitute an effective pretext for the Habsburg Emperor who had been willing for the invasion of Venice. For that reason, while appraising the success of his son, Doge Andrea Gritti warned Alvise Gritti about signing the correspondences that he sent to János Szapolyai as “the most faithful servant of your Excellency” instead of using his full name¹⁹⁵ in order not to provoke the house of Habsburg against Venice.

On the other hand, besides its preoccupations about a Habsburg attack on its territories, Venice still had doubts about a possible Ottoman invasion of Italy. Since the times of Mehmed II, Italy had experienced the danger of being invaded by the Turks and the fear of a potential Turkish attack on the Peninsula was one of the important concerns of the Italian politics even in the sixteenth century.¹⁹⁶ Despite

¹⁹⁵ “Et se tu hai ad far intender alcuna cosa al Serenissimo Vayvoda over a’soi agenti fallo cumessi, ma convenendo pur scriver fa ne la sottoscriptione ‘el fidelissimo servitor de vostra Maestà, senza mettervi altramente il nome tuo.”, “Andrea Gritti to Alvise Gritti on March 18, 1528”, ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, Parti Secrete, Reg. 2, ff. 52v-53r

¹⁹⁶ A possible Turkish attack on Italy, or in general on Europe, was one of the most important concerns of the European politics from the late fourteenth to the late seventeenth century. As it was mentioned before, after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 and the Ottoman attacks on Venetian Friuli and Otranto, in Europe, Italy was considered as the new objective of the Ottomans. This was also supported with the ideological motives. The city of Istanbul had been the “New Rome” for the Eastern Romans. Turks had conquered the “New Rome” and from then on they were going to attack Rome and destroy totally the Christian faith. This idea secured its place in the political agenda of Europe until the defeat of the Ottoman armies in Vienna in 1683 by the allied European forces. Here it is important to note that, this fear was also used by several forces as a pretext according to legitimize their acts. To organize a crusade against the Turks became a political propaganda of the kings in their elections especially in their rivalries for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire as one can see in the example of the rivalry between Charles V and Francis I. Moreover, the Papacy also used this fear in order to conciliate the quarrels between the European potentates and most importantly to unite the fragmented political entities of Europe unless for a common threat. In this aspect, Turkish fear was used as an important

they were good commercial partners; Venice also had this fear, and it did not really trust the friendship of the Ottoman Sultan. Even after the Battle of Mohács, the Venetian envoy Marco Minio, who was sent to congratulate the victory of the Sultan, warned the *Serenissima* with the following words:

[...] il Signor voleva far tre imprese l'una di Rodi, l'altra di Ungheria, le quali ha fatte, la terza manca a far, la qual non può esser altro che Italia.

[...] the Signor wanted to make three conquests, one of Rhodes, the other of Hungary, which he realized, the third to be missing, which can not be other than Italy.¹⁹⁷

In this chaotic situation, Andrea Gritti was on the knife edge and as a *Doge*, his main task was to secure the territorial integrity of Venice. Hence he did not prefer that his son took active parts in the political conflicts between these two main powers of the time and incriminate the Republic.

In 1528, the main objective of the Ottoman expedition was revealed: Suleyman I would meet Janos Szapolyai in Buda, strengthen his authority in Hungary and by gaining his forces, he would march towards Austria to meet Ferdinand. On April 8, the orator and vice *bailo* Pietro Zen reported to the *Serenissima* that he had a confidential conversation with Ibrahim Pasha on February 12 and from him he learnt that the preparations for an expedition against Ferdinand had just started.¹⁹⁸ However, *Doge* Gritti could not take a deep breath because

instrument in the times of Reformation to unite Catholics and Protestants to fight against a common enemy. For detailed information about the subject see: Soykut, 18-111, Özlem Kumrular, *Avrupa'da Türk Düşmanlığının Kökeni, Türk Korkusu*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008), 121-134.

¹⁹⁷ Albèri, s.3, v. 3, p. 116.

¹⁹⁸ Letter of Pietro Zen to Consiglio dei Dieci, April 8, 1528, ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci Lettere Ambasciatori-Costantinopoli (1504-1550), Busta 1, f. 72r. On the other hand, the news about the Ottoman expedition was whispered to the Habsburg Emperor as well. Özlem Kumrular states that after having been informed about the Ottoman plans, Habsburg Emperor Charles V sent Juan de Balbi to the Shah of Iran as envoy with a letter in which he addressed to Shah as “our dearest brother and friend”, in order to gain his support and make an alliance with him against the Ottomans. In reference to this letter dated on February 15, 1529, Kumrular argues that the Habsburg Emperor was informed about a possible Ottoman attack over Habsburg dominations even in the winter of 1529. See: Kumrular, p. 45. Although, Kumrular points out that this letter was written to the Iranian Shah, Shah

concurrently, other news about his son were sent to the Ducal Palace: It was announced that Alvise Gritti was going to participate personally into the Ottoman campaign as the master of headquarters and if it was required, he was going to act as the head of some contingents.¹⁹⁹ This was too much for the *Doge*; he immediately sent a letter to his son in November 1528, in which he asked Alvise to return to Venice by providing him the annual revenue of a thousand ducats.²⁰⁰ Alvise did not listen to his father: he would neither return to Venice, nor give up intervening in the Ottoman and Hungarian politics. From that time onwards, he did not remain only as a tool utilized by the both sides, he was also going to take important roles as a real actor in this play in which the principal roles was changing in the twinkling of an eye.

On May 10, 1529, the forces of Suleyman I departed from Istanbul. In the expedition, Alvise Gritti was charged as the army contractor. “The Sultan had thirty thousand golds and just as many piasters paid to him in advance to procure foodstuff.”²⁰¹ In this important task, Gritti was also supported by his patron János Szapolyai. On August 8, Szapolyai ordered his subjects to provide the Ottoman army the necessary food substances via Alvise Gritti.²⁰² Ten days later, Szapolyai met with Suleyman I on the Mohács steps, which had a symbolic meaning for both of them.²⁰³ The Hungarian King again pledged his alliance to the Ottoman Sultan and they marched towards Buda castle. The castle was being defended by a minor Hungarian

Ismail, concerning the date of the letter, the addressee should be Shah Tahmasp, being in throne since 1524.

¹⁹⁹ Finlay, “Al Servizio...”, p. 85.

²⁰⁰ In his letter, Andrea Gritti states that the Venetian Republic was surrounded with the enemies full of detestation, and the acts of Alvise Gritti could damage the prestige of the Republic as well as himself. Gritti concludes the letter by underlining that he wants to see his son once again when he is alive. See: Letter of Andrea Gritti to Alvise Gritti, November 24, 1528, ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, Parti Secrete, Reg. 2, ff. 84r-v. For detailed information about the letter and the approach of Andrea Gritti to the acts of his son Alvise see: Finlay, “Al Servizio...”, pp. 84-85.

²⁰¹ Szakály, p. 50.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

and German force which could not resist the Ottoman bombardment and they surrendered within five days and Szapolyai was enthroned by Suleyman I as the King of Hungary.²⁰⁴ A few days later, Suleyman I marched towards Vienna with the support of the forces of Szapolyai.

In the meantime, there was a political wilderness in Europe. In 1526, against the emperor, the League of Cognac was created between France, the Papacy, Venice, Milan and Florence. However, this alliance could not become successful. In a short time, Charles V seized Milan and the imperial troops sacked Rome in 1527. Two years later, the forces of Francis I were decisively defeated at Genoa and the French King was forced to sign the Treaty of Cambrai on August 5, 1529 which obliged him to abandon his claims in Italy on behalf of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V. Therefore, Charles V did not only defeat his main rival in the struggle of the crown of the Holy Roman Empire; but also gained predominance in European politics. On the other hand, due to the advance of Charles V, Venice was stranded: the dominance of Charles V in Italy exposed Venice to the danger of losing its independence.²⁰⁵ From then on, the only savior of the Republic would be the supremacy of the Ottoman Empire against Charles V.

According to Heinrich Kretschmayr, after the Treaty of Cambrai, Venice provoked the Ottoman Sultan to attack Vienna and used the son of the Doge as an

²⁰⁴ The Ottoman chronicler Peçevî gives interesting accounts about the coronation of Szapolyai by the Ottoman Sultan. Peçevî points out that Szapolyai sent by his envoys the crown being the symbol of the Hungarian Kingdom since the times of Alexander the Great, in other words since three thousand years, to the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I because the Hungarian King was killed on the battlefield of Mohács by the Sultan. Peçevî notes that the crown was taken from the envoys, registered to the imperial treasury and given to Szapolyai back through the son of the *Doge* Alvise Gritti. Peçevî, 138-139. The style of Peçevî in the explanation of the events clearly shows the Ottoman perception. Ottoman Sultan considered that after the Battle of Mohács, Hungary became one of his dominions and by his will he appointed Szapolyai as the King. The presentation of the crown to the Sultan and its registration into the accounts of the imperial treasury were also significant examples of the Ottoman diplomacy and the general attitude towards the vassal states.

²⁰⁵ In the correspondences of Andrea Gritti sent to his son Alvise, the preoccupations of the Republic can clearly be observed: “

agent to convince the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha and Sultan Suleyman I.²⁰⁶ This argument was also proved by the correspondences circuited between the Doge Andrea Gritti and his son Alvise. In most of the correspondences of 1529, conserved within *Archivio Stato di Venezia* under the collection of *Ducali ed Atti Diplomatici, Busta 22*, (Ducal and Diplomatic Affairs, Folder 22), Andrea Gritti enlighten his son about the general political situation of Europe and the oncoming Habsburg threat; and he required Alvise to communicate these immediately to the Grand Vizier. Moreover, in case of an attack to the Habsburg dominions, Venice promised to help the Ottoman Sultan by his naval forces and ports. As it was also mentioned in the letters, the main concern of the Republic was to secure the peace with the Ottoman Sultan; the Republic was well aware that, at that time the sole power able to stop the Habsburg Emperor was the Ottoman Sultan and the future of the independence of the Republic depended on the Ottoman success over Habsburgs. It is not clear whether Alvise Gritti played an important role in the formulation of the idea of an expedition to Vienna against the Habsburg forces; however, by communicating the situation of Venice and the Republic's demands for help, it is possible that he precipitated the decision making process in the Ottoman Palace.

Nevertheless, the Ottoman army could not become successful in Vienna; the city was besieged for 23 days from September 23 to October 15 and despite the Ottoman Sultan had demanded the surrender of the city, the forces of Ferdinand I resisted.²⁰⁷ The Turkish attack revived the religious agitation and the concept of “unity against the Turks” changed the perception of war in Europe. In fact, the reason of the war was demonstrated by the Ottomans as to restore the authority of Janos Szápolyai, unfairly undercut by Ferdinand I of Habsburg and to limit the

²⁰⁶ Kretschmayr, 17.

²⁰⁷ For detailed information about the Siege of Vienna and the reasons of the failure see: Peçevî, 135-151, Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 329-330, Merriman, 104-108.

expansion of Habsburg Empire which must be appreciated by the other European states that were worried about their independences. However, especially by the efforts of the Papacy, the European public opinion was persuaded that this war was waged against the Christendom and should be stopped. That propaganda was so effective that even Martin Luther changed his mind about the war against the Turks and invited the German nobility to participate in the resistance against them.²⁰⁸ Moreover, besides this strong resistance, the compelling climatic conditions disintegrated the Ottoman army. The war season had already passed and neither animals nor soldiers could manage the cold weather. Therefore, Suleyman I was forced to abandon the siege and he withdrew his forces towards Buda on October 15, 1529.

After having saluted once more János Szapolyai in Buda as the King of Hungary, Suleyman I decided to leave a representative there both to assist the King and to control the situation on behalf of the Ottoman Empire and then to return to Istanbul with his forces. “The man who chose Suleyman, certainly in agreement with Ibrahim, as a real manager of Turkish control in Hungary, was Alvise Gritti, now mature, daring and diplomatically and politically powerful.”²⁰⁹ Alvise Gritti stayed in Buda there with a janissary garrison and he was also rewarded by the Sultan with two thousand golds for his services during the siege.²¹⁰ In fact, Gritti was the best alternative for the Ottoman Sultan for the task of representation because he had been

²⁰⁸ Luther, in his first orations, proposed that to wage war against Turks meant to oppose the Divine will because the Turks were sent by God in order to punish the Christians for the sins that they had committed in time. However, when the Turkish threat approached to the center of Austria, he changed his mind and invited the German nobility to fight against the Turks in order to secure the future of Christianity. For detailed information about the change of the ideas of Luther and their impacts on the political agenda of the time see: Soykut, pp. 63-34.

²⁰⁹ “L'uomo che Solimano scelse, certamente di concerto con Ibrahim, come vero gerente del controllo turco in Ungheria, fu Alvise Gritti, ormai maturo, spregiudicato e potente diplomatico e politico.” Coco, p. 385. Uzunçarşılı also points out that the Ottoman Sultan charged Gritti being the advisor of the Grand Vizier in order to control the situation of the Hungarian King Szápolyai in Hungary. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 331.

²¹⁰ Szakály, p. 52.

involved with the issues about Hungary since its initiation; he knew well the Ottoman point of view and was largely instrumental in the mediation between the King and the Sultan. Besides these, he had already been appointed as the *Consiliarius Regius*, Royal Concillor, *Summus Thesaurarius*, High Treasurer and Bishop of Eger by Szápolyai during the Siege of Vienna.²¹¹ These titles also overtly indicated Gritti's influence on the Hungarian politics and how he was favored by the King Szápolyai. Szápolyai had been chosen him instead of numerous Hungarian noblemen. In that choice, the personal skills of Gritti and his large network definitely played an important role. On the other hand, it can be argued that one of the main concerns of Szápolyai was to guarantee the support of the Ottoman Sultan by cooperating with someone accredited by the Sultan himself.

Not only the Hungarian King and the Ottoman Sultan, but also the Venetian *Doge* and the Republic of Venice were content with this new situation. As it was indicated before, Venice had been extremely concerned about the acts of Alvise Gritti at first. However, the Siege of Vienna changed the circumstances. Despite the fact that the Ottoman expedition was not totally successful, it stopped the Habsburg threat for a while and directed the imperial public opinion and the European as well, to war against Turk again from the invasion of Venice. Moreover, having an effective agent both in the Ottoman Empire and Hungary was beneficial for the *Serenissima*. Alvise Gritti could also guard the Venetian interests and direct the Ottoman and Hungarian politics on be half of the Republic. Alvise was simultaneously in the service of the Sultan and the Hungarian King for that time but he was also a Venetian by birth and initially had to secure the interests of the

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 53, Papo, Papo, 113.

Republic. On November 2, 1529, while consecrating the success of his son, Andrea Gritti underlined that fact:

[...] Praterea vi dicemo cum Senatu esse stato di molta satisfatione della Signoria nostra haver inteso l'elettione vostra, i Episcopo d'Agria e Thesorier generale del prefato serenissimo Re d'hungaria, si per la buona existimatione di voi, et amor che vi porta la Signoria nostra, si et perché mediante, l'auttorità, che havete col prefato serenissimo Re siamo certi, che non mancarete di continuar et accumular li buoni officii da voi fatti in ogni tempo per il stato nostro, il quale se vi dimonstrara et memore, et grato dell'oparationi vostre.

[...] Moreover, we say, with the Senate, that to hear your election as the Bishop of Eger and the General Treasurer of the aforementioned most serene King of Hungary was a great satisfaction for our Signory; concerning the good reputation of you the affection that our Signory have for you, and because through authority that you have with the aforementioned most serene King, we are certain that you will not fail in continuing and accumulating the good offices that have always been done for our State, which will demonstrate you the awareness and gratitude for your operations.²¹²

In fact, the direct involvement of Alvise Gritti in the Hungarian state affairs was more beneficial for the King Szápolyai than for Gritti himself. Firstly, Alvise Gritti distanced himself from the nobility which was formed by factious and traditional Hungarian princes and tried to limit their influence over politics in order to consolidate the authority of Szápolyai and to realize his own projects.²¹³ Moreover, his appointment as the High Treasurer could revive the Hungarian economy, which was on the verge of bankruptcy. Gritti was a genuinely competent economist and with the precautionary measures that he took, he became successful in rebalancing the Hungarian finance.²¹⁴ He supported the merchants of all nationalities

²¹² Andrea Gritti to Alvise Gritti, November 2, 1529, ASV, Miscellanea Ducali ed Atti Diplomatici, Butsa 22.

²¹³ Coco, pp. 387-388.

²¹⁴ The task of treasurer was not so much popular among the Hungarian aristocracy because in the complex fiscal organization of Hungarian State it was very problematic to collect revenues. On the

and exercised supervisory control on the Northern Hungarian cities abounding in mine. In particular, he took the deposits of the salt and precious metals in Transylvania under his control.²¹⁵

However, Gritti did not spend much time in Hungary. After having a short stay of almost six months, János Szápolyai asked him to return back to Istanbul. Most probably, the King thought that Gritti would be more useful in Istanbul than in Hungary concerning his success in mediation between the King and the Porte. On the other hand, for Gritti, to return back to the Ottoman capital was more beneficial. “He, whose power depended on the highly complex and unstable power relations at the Porte, could not afford to be left out –for a long time- of the ongoing intrigues which were bearing on his own position as well.”²¹⁶ Hence, he carried out the order of the kind without demur and after having appointed Tamás Nadasdy²¹⁷ as his representative to manage the revenues of the Bishopric of Eger and the salt deposits of Mármaros in Transylvania, took the road of Istanbul in January 1530. When he arrived at Istanbul, he became aware of the preparations of a new war against the Habsburg; but what he was not aware of was that he would play an important role to define the ideological motives behind that war and, most importantly that war would determine the fate of the *Beyoğlu* himself.

other hand, if the treasurer carried off the task he could also make large amounts of money by using the privileges and exemptions that he held. Szakaly, p. 53.

²¹⁵ While Gritti tried to control the rich deposits of mine in Transylvania, King Szápolyai also helped him by arresting two important names of the region, Pál Artándy and Baláz Artándy for their misuses in the region. These two names had farmed out the salt monopoly in the Mármaros area since 1523; and they could be an obstacle before the aims of Gritti. For that reason, despite there is no information whether he asked their arrestment, it is probable that Gritti affected the decision of Szápolyai. For detailed information about this issue see: Szakály, p.54; Barta, p. 254.

²¹⁶ Szakály, p. 54.

²¹⁷ In the Siege of Vienna, Tamás Nadasdy was the commander of the forces defending the Buda castle on behalf of the Austrian archduke Ferdinand. When Ottoman troops broke the resistance he took refuge to Gritti in order to save his life. As Gábor Barta mentions he was a good organizer and administrator and he soon captured the attention of Gritti with his talents. For that reason Gritti saw no harm in his appointment as his representative. However Tamas Nadasdy was going to be one of the major opponents of Gritti in a short time. For detailed information about Nadasdy and his relations with Alvise Gritti see: Barta, 254-255, 277-278; Szakály, 83-86.

4.3 Alvise Gritti at the Center of the Power Struggle: Enigmatic and Complex Relations

Although the Siege of Vienna in 1529 was not successful, it can be considered as an important turning point for both Ottoman and European politics. The Ottoman forces could not capture the city; however they could frighten Europe and albeit for a while could reduce the Habsburg pressure over the European states. Moreover this Habsburg-Ottoman war, in nature, became a supremacy struggle between Muslim and Christian worlds especially by the help of the imperial propaganda. The future existence of the independent sovereigns of Europe was related to the Ottoman success against the Emperor but at this instant, they could not directly support the Ottoman side in order not to be the supporters of the infidel aiming to destroy the Christian faith. In this context, the excommunication of Janos Szápolyai in December 1529 proved that the preoccupations of the sovereigns were not meaningless.

With the effects of the Siege of Vienna, the balance of power in the European politics was also changed. After the sack of Rome by the imperial armies in 1527 and the French defeat at Genoa on August 1529, Francis I was forced to abandon his claims on Italy and his dreams to be the Holy Roman Emperor by the Treaty of Cambrai.²¹⁸ Although France had to obey Charles V, it secretly supported the Ottoman expedition of Vienna and German Protestants against the Habsburg authority. Similarly, Venice was cornered by the Habsburgs; Charles V who had just defeated Francis I and strengthen his forces in Italy now started to threaten the Republic. Moreover, the commercial partnership and political passes of Venice with

²¹⁸ Finlay, "Al Servizio...", 88.

the Ottoman Empire was widely known in Europe; and the Venetians were blamed to call the infidel into the heart of Europe for its own interests. Although Venice did not directly support the Siege of Vienna, its contributions in the organization of war were evident. As it was discussed before, the success of the Ottoman Empire against the Habsburg Emperor was the sole solution for the Republic. However, the failure of the Siege forced to Venice also to come to an agreement with the Habsburg Empire and finally on December 22, 1529 the Republic entered the alliance of Cambrai.²¹⁹ After paralyzing all his rivals, on February 25, 1530, Charles V had been crowned as the Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope Clement VII in Bologna. From then on, the European States have no chance other than the Ottoman Sultan.

On the other, on the Ottoman front the main concern was to blanket the failure of the Siege of Vienna by accentuating the glaring power of the Empire and the grandeur of the Sultan in order not to loose prestige in the political arena. For that reason, the Siege was reflected to the other states as a successful. The Ottoman Sultan, just after his withdrawal from Vienna and even before returning to Istanbul, sent a *fethname*²²⁰, announcement of conquest, to Andrea Gritti, the Doge of Venice. In this *fethname* dated to November 13, 1529, the Sultan, after emphasizing the richness of the lands that he conquered and his own grandeur the Sultan, explained the *Doge* that he gifted the whole Hungary which he had taken by his sword to King Szapolyai. He also noted that he went to Vienna to settle the accounts with Ferdinand claiming to be the king of the country belonging to the Sultan himself. The Sultan added that he did not find Ferdinand in Vienna and after hearing that he had been escaped from the city; he decided to end the campaign. Suleyman I enjoyed letting

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *Fethname* was the general name of the letters sent to the other potentates when a new conquest realized. In these letters the expeditions and the conquests were described in details by underlining the power and the grandeur of the Ottoman sultan and the army. For details see: Uzunçarşılı, *Saray Teşkilâtı*, 288-289.

Andrea Gritti, the Doge of Venice, knew his great success. Despite the letter was addressed to the *Doge*, the real aim of the Sultan was to announce the success of the Siege to the European States. In this aspect, Venice, acting like a press office and leading the news transportation throughout Europe at that time, was used as a publicity board.²²¹

The circumcision feast of the four sons of Suleyman I, was another tool of the Sultan to blanket the failure and to display the power and grandeur of the Sultan to the other states. The feast started on June 1530 and lasted three weeks. “For the common people all sorts of amusements were provided; the soldiers, the dignitaries of law and theology, and the officials all their part in the ceremonies and the distribution of gifts.”²²² Together with the oriental princes and the European representatives, the Doge of Venice was also invited to this festival by a special envoy. Andrea Gritti did not participate in the festival; however, he sent two extraordinary envoys to congratulate the Sultan and offered him luxurious presents.²²³ Needless to mention, Alvise Gritti was also present in the ceremonies. The magnificent shows and the luxury of the feast demonstrating the power and wealth of the Sultan were also reflected to the European audience from the eyes of the Venetian delegation²²⁴: Suleyman I achieved his purpose.

While the public opinion was detained by these diplomatic maneuvers of Suleyman I, the policy of the Ottoman Empire was specified: Ferdinand I would be forced to abandon his claims over Hungary and to recognize the Ottoman supremacy

²²¹ This original copy of this *fethname* was written in Greek language and it was published by Joseph Müller. Joseph Müller, *Ein Griechisches Schreiben des Sultan Suleiman an Andreas Gritti über die Belagerung Wiens im Jahre 1529*, (Vienna, 1860).

²²² Merriman, pp.108-109.

²²³ The Venetian envoys presented the Sultan various luxurious presents such as the cloths of gold and silk for a value of seven thousand ducats. Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Grand Signore*, (Venice: Deputazione Editrice, 1994), pp. 142-143.

²²⁴ Apart from the *bailo* Francesco Bernardo, Andrea Gritti sent two orators for the feast, Pietro Zen and Tommaso Mocenigo. These diplomats discussed the general atmosphere of the feast in details, in their letters written to their relatives. For their accounts on the feast see Sanuto, v. 53, pp. 443-459.

and a new expedition would be organized against the Habsburg Emperor Charles V. It is evident that the Grand Vizier played the most important role in this decision.²²⁵ The new round of war between Charles V and Suleyman I would be a struggle for the “World Empire” and Hungary was going to be used once again as a pretext.

One of the key figures of the project was Alvise Gritti. Most probably by the persistent suggestions of the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, on October 11, 1530, Suleyman appointed Alvise Gritti as *Orator Turci*, Ottoman emissary, commissioned to organize the necessary food supplies for the planned campaign and to persuade Ferdinand I to abandon his claims over Hungary by explaining him the plans of the Ottoman attack.²²⁶ This was a great shock for Venice. As it was mentioned above the Republic was forced to sign the Treaty of Cambrai and at that time it was at peace with the Habsburg Emperor. However the son of the Doge was acting as an Ottoman agent and taking important roles in the preparations of the Ottoman wars against the Habsburg Emperor. The acts of Gritti could harm the Republic. However Gritti was serving in the Ottoman politics and his first duty was to fulfill the tasks given to him by the Grand Vizier and the Ottoman Sultan. For that reason he did not hesitate to reply to the Venetian orator Tommaso Mocenigo who alerted Gritti about the possible reaction of Charles V to his actions as follows:

“Come? Vui sè fiol del Serenissimo e andè? Che dirà l'imperator?” Lui li rispose: “Son servitor del Signor Turco.”

“What? You are the son of the Most Serene [Doge] and you go? What will the emperor say?” He [Gritti] replies to him: “I am the servant of the Turkish Signor.”²²⁷

²²⁵ Ibrahim Pasha followed an anti-Habsburg policy during his office and played an important role in the specification of the Ottoman policy towards Hungary and Central Europe. Gökbilgin, “Kanunî Sultan Suleyman’ın...”, 8.

²²⁶ Kretschmayr, 24; Barta, p. 256.

²²⁷ Sanuto, LIII, 360.

Following this response and indifference of Gritti to the worries of Venice, the Republic of Venice had forced to require its representative in Spain to announce the Emperor that despite he was the son of the *Doge*, Andrea Gritti did not have any relation with Alvise Gritti whose authority and cognitions were depended only to the Hungarian King Szapolyai.²²⁸

Although Gritti was charged to organize the necessary food supplies for the Ottoman campaign and to persuade the representatives of Ferdinand to abandon his claims on Hungary by the Ottoman Sultan, in his address to the Hungarian magnates after his appointment as *orator turci*, he mentioned that he was going to ascertain the actual situation of Hungary and to find out who were obedient to Szápolyai, the vassal of the Sultan, and who were not. Gritti also warned the Hungarian people that everyone should recognize the authority of the King, and obey to him because in the following summer the Ottoman Sultan intended to go a second expedition over Hungary and to punish severely those were disobedient to the Hungarian King.²²⁹ Therefore the resistance of the Hungarian princes to the authority of Szapolyai was intended to be broken by intimidating them with the Ottoman menace and Ferdinand was going to loose his support in Hungary and be forced to agree with the Ottoman Empire. Ferenc Szakály argues that by authorizing Gritti to interfere with the inner conflicts of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Ottoman Sultan tried to strengthen the internal position of his vassal through the mediation of the *Beyoğlu*.²³⁰ In other words Gritti was used as a tool to suppress the Hungarian opposition to the Ottoman policy of intervention by Suleyman I.

²²⁸ Ibid, 362.

²²⁹ Szakály, 55-56.

²³⁰ Ibid., 56.

To fulfill the first step of his task, in the fall of 1530, Gritti took the road of Poznán where the peace negotiations between Ferdinand and Szapolyai were going to be held. However, before having reached the city, he faced with a surprise: the forces of Ferdinand I under the command of General Wilhelm Roggendorf attack the territories which belonged to Szapolyai.²³¹ Gritti immediately changed the road and came to Buda. On October 31, 1530, Buda was besieged by the forces of Roggendorf. Szapolyai, Gritti and Hieronymus Laski got caught in the Castle. Beyoğlu was obliged to head the forces Szapolyai which were composed of Ottoman, Hungarian and Serbian soldiers. He personally commanded the soldiers and encouraged them by giving them extra money.²³² The efforts of Gritti and the responses of the forces of Kasım Pasha and Mehmed Bey, the *sancakbeyi*, governor, of Semendria, and the two hundred cavalries of Tamás Nádasdy turned out satisfactory; the siege failed after fifty days and Ruggendorf was forced to withdraw his forces after fifty days.²³³

Thus, the *Beyoğlu* proved that he was not only a great merchant and an adroit diplomat; but also a brave soldier and commander, never escaping from the war when needed. Soon after the siege, Szápolyai summoned a Diet in Buda. In the Diet, important economic measures were taken at the instance of Gritti: the exportation of the great castles was prohibited²³⁴ and the current money was fixed. From then on, besides the gold coinage of Ferdinand and the current money of Szápolyai; the currency of Gritti, with his coat-of-arms, was going to be in circulation. Moreover, as a reward for his services, he was appointed as the Comes of Mármaros²³⁵ and

²³¹ Barta, 256.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Szakály, 57.

²³⁴ At this point Barta mentions that this initiative of Gritti was a necessary measure because he was charged to provide food supplies for the Ottoman army. Barta, 257

²³⁵ Therefore, he could acquire the revenues of the salt-mines of the region. Szakály, 58.

governor of Hungary on December 26, 1530. He could also resign the revenues of Eger Bishopric to his son Antonio.²³⁶

The appointment of Gritti as the Governor of Hungary aroused a great indignation among the Hungarian magnates. In order to minimize the oppositions, Szápolyai had already selected the members of the Diet among the participants of the defense of Buda; the Hungarian magnates had not entirely been represented.²³⁷ However, the members also rejected the proposal; right after long negotiations and the promise that the sole task of Gritti was going to strengthen the position of the Hungarian King Szápolyai and to serve for the preservation of the freedom of the country, the members reluctantly voted for the appointment.²³⁸ The main argument of the opposition was that according to the Hungarian state tradition, the sole occasion for the appointment of a governor besides the king was that if the king was in childhood and not able to govern the Kingdom by himself. At this point, according to them, there was no need for a governor in Hungary.²³⁹ The opponents also worried that Gritti was going to be the third king besides the existent two. He was ambitious and at that instant he stand on the center of a wide network; by the help of foreign powers he could easily overthrow the Hungarian King and wear the crown himself.

However the Hungarian King did not have any other solution, in order not to use the support of Gritti, he should abandon some of his claims on be half of the Venetian. On the other hand, Gábor Barta argues that János Szápolyai was not forced to appoint Gritti besides himself; he really desired this because the economic and political situation in Hungary became worse than the previous years. The conflicts with Ferdinand could not be solved. The Hungarian King realized that the Ottoman

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Barta, 261.

²³⁹ For detailed information about the oppositions to the appointment of Gritti as the Governor of Hungary and the opponents see: Barta, 260.

Empire preferred a political chaos in Hungary rather than the peace in order to control the entire region and to use it as a buffer zone against Habsburgs. In this aspect, Szápolyai perceived Gritti as an instrument; besides himself Gritti would also be a responsible from the turmoil in Hungary.²⁴⁰

Shortly after his appointment he subscribed a declaration to Charles V and Sigismund I, two important European princes interested in the Hungarian affairs, in which he pointed out that if Ferdinand was not to abandon his claims over Hungary, the Sultan would march towards Europe.²⁴¹ In fact, this was the realization of the task given to him by the Sultan. However, there was a very interesting note in this declaration: while alerting the Emperor and the King of Poland Gritti mentioned that in spite of his services to the Ottoman Sultan, he did not converted to Islam and remained Christian and as a good Christian he was worried about the future of Christendom.²⁴² Although the Habsburgs were not persuaded, and the troops of Ferdinand were not withdrawn from the territories given to Szápolyai, on January 21, 1531, a new meeting of negotiation was held at Visegrád and an armistice of three months was accepted by the two sides. “It was on this occasion that the country’s division into two was first commonly accepted.”²⁴³

Alvise Gritti came to Istanbul in March 1531 as the Governor of Hungary and suddenly found himself at the center of the problems concerning the Central-European relations. At the same time Hieronymus Laski was also in the Ottoman capital. Due to the efforts of Gritti and Laski the armistice agreement was extended from three months to one year and signed by the representatives of two sides. After this, the Habsburgs understood that in spite of all disadvantages, Gritti was an

²⁴⁰ For the details about the interpretation of Barta see: Barta, 258-267.

²⁴¹ Szakály, 60.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Kretschmayr, 55; Barta, 269.

instrumental figure in the Ottoman Empire. “From his warnings they could hear the Sultan’s voice, and they came to understand that the way to changing the Sultan’s standpoint was through him.”²⁴⁴

However Gritti started to turn gradually into an enigmatic and adventurous individual in the eyes of both European powers directly interfered with the affairs of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Firstly, Venice was concerned about the acts of its son. Alvise acts as an emissary of the Sultan, but he at the same time tries to control the administration in Hungary that Ferdinand I of Habsburg claimed the right of succession. This could provoke the Habsburg Emperor since he was the son of doge. Moreover, now Gritti tried to include his two brothers, Lorenzo and Giorgio into the European diplomacy. Two of them performed the task of representation of Gritti in the European states by communicating the correspondences reciprocally and follow the situation in Istanbul and Venice. The majority of the Senate argued that the activities of Gritti was going to harm the Republic, even endangered its freedom by provoking the emperor in terms of attacking the Republic, his eternal desire, by using the activities of the son of doge as a good pretext. For the Senate perhaps it would be better if he had not to be born at all.²⁴⁵

The fears of the Hungarian magnates were justified: in a short time Gritti started to force the limits. First he tried to participate into the German Imperial Diet in order to enter personal contact with the Hapsburgs then in the following year he interfered in the struggle between Poland and Moldavia, he intended to mediate a peace treaty between the Polish King and the Moldavian Voivode Petru Rareș on commission by the Sultan.²⁴⁶ The pretext had been already created: since Rareș had attacked the Polish territories and he had been in war with the Poland King since

²⁴⁴ Szakály, 62, Barta, 279-280.

²⁴⁵ Szakály, 61.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 62-63.

1530. This was a good opportunity for Gritti; mediation was his area of specialization. On the other, the Hungarian and Polish magnates were worried about the attempts of the *Beyoğlu*. They thought that the hidden purpose might be to overthrow the Voivode and replace his place by himself or one of his proponents; his son Antonio, his dearest friend Laski or another one. The Hungarian King Szápolyai was also insecure about the situation. The supremacy of Gritti over Moldavia could shake his authority in Hungary; Szápolyai could not take such a risk. Therefore, he revealed immediately the plans of Gritti and the rumors about him to Petru Rareș; the *Beyoğlu* made himself another enemy.²⁴⁷

Because of the revelations of his secret plans by Szápolyai, Gritti postponed the time of his return to Hungary until 1532 when the German Expedition, known as *Alaman Seferi* in the Ottoman historiography started. Actually, the main purpose of the Ottoman Sultan was to meet with the Habsburg Emperor Charles V and his brother Archduke Ferdinand I in Vienna. The campaign was not only a military operation: the *raison d'être* of the campaign was the struggle for the supremacy in the world politics and the title of the “world emperor” rather than an attack to annex more territories. As it was mentioned before, Suleyman I considered himself as the sole person having the right to claim the title of emperor. This was, in fact, the reflection of the Ottoman perception of sovereignty, existed since the reign of Mehmed II. Mehmed II, known as the Conqueror, had conquered Istanbul, the capital city of the Eastern Roman Empire, and defined himself as *Kayser-i Rum*, the Caesar of Rome. With the conquest of Istanbul, the capital city of the Eastern Roman Empire, Mehmed II sat on the throne of Caesars and incorporated the Roman inheritance into the Ottoman State. The successors of Mehmed II did not use the

²⁴⁷ For detailed information about the case and two faced policies of Alvise Gritti concerning the Modavia, see *Ibid.*, 62-65.

same title for themselves; on the other hand they still continued to consider themselves universal emperors like Caesar. Moreover, with the participation of the Holy Lands and the north-African territories during the reign of Selim I, besides the Roman identity, the State assumed the tradition of the Islamic caliphate and the Ottoman sultans considered themselves as the protectors of the entire Muslim world.²⁴⁸ In this respect, Suleyman I who sat on the throne of a “world empire” ruling the territories dispersed on three continents did not endure any other candidate claiming to be the universal emperor. Besides the territorial expansion of Charles V clashing the expansion policy of the State, the ideological claims of Charles V was also a threatening factor for Suleyman I. Thus, the Ottoman Sultan decided to face with his rival again in his dominions.

The task of Alvise Gritti in the German Expedition was to supply the Ottoman army as he did in 1529. The Sultan was going to stop in Hungary and then together with the forces of the Hungarian King, he would march towards Vienna. For that reason, in the spring of 1532, Gritti hit the road of Hungary with five hundred horsemen and two hundred infantry. However, before his departure he undersigned another big deal: he played an important role in the formation of ideological background of the expedition by contributing to the creation of symbolic objects for the Sultan. In the same year, before the expedition, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha presented Suleyman I with a crown like golden helmet.²⁴⁹ “Besides a plumed aigrette with a crescent shaped mount, the golden helmet had four crowns with enormous twelve-carat pearls, a head band with pointed diamonds, and a neck guard with

²⁴⁸ Inalcık, *Classical Age*, 33-34.

²⁴⁹ For detailed information about the helmet offered to Suleyman I, the business enterprise realized by the Venetian merchants, the wide range network including the Ottoman bureaucrats, the reception of the *regalia* and symbolisms of the representation of power see: Necipoğlu, 401-407.

straps.”²⁵⁰ The helmet was produced by a consortium of Venetian goldsmiths and merchants patronized by Alvise Gritti. However, the interesting side of this enterprise is that the golden helmet bore a striking resemblance to a papal tiara.²⁵¹ Besides this helmet, many other *regalia* such as scepters, ceremonial canopies, horse furnishings and a throne were presented to the Sultan by the Grand Vizier to be displayed in the German Expedition. In his prominent article about this *regalia* and its role in the representation of power in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, Gülrû Necipoğlu argues that the creation of the objects in the mentioned period was not accidental: it was a very clever and carefully figured plan in order to show the magnificence of the Sultan, to the world, especially to the Habsburg Emperor Charles V and the Pope Clement VII by using their own tools of the representation of power in a struggle for the universal sovereignty especially after two years from the coronation of the Habsburg Emperor as the Holy Roman Emperor in Bologna.²⁵² Through the splendid regalia the Sultan would show on the battlefield that he was the sole emperor monopolizing the political and spiritual authority in his own personality. Necipoğlu also points out that in order to create such a clever and effective response it was essential to know well the meaning of these symbols in the European political culture because these were not the Ottoman means of sovereignty.²⁵³ At that point Alvise Gritti played the principle role. He did not only patronize the goldsmiths and merchants of the regalia, but most importantly he created the background of the idea with the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha.²⁵⁴

In the summer of 1532, when he was in Buda, Alvise Gritti engaged another venture: He organized an attack against Clissa “to recapture this Dalmatian castle,

²⁵⁰ Necipoğlu, 401.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 408.

²⁵² Ibid., 410-417.

²⁵³ Ibid, 418-419.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 410-415.

held at the time by Habsburgs, which had been donated to him by King János.”²⁵⁵ Clissa was a very strategic point because it lies less than a hundred and fifty miles from the Italian port Ancona on the coast of the Adriatic Sea, and at that instant the Beyoğlu intended to possess the city on his own account. This attempt created a great crisis: it irritated Charles V and Ferdinand I as well as Suleyman I. Venice scared again about the consequences of the attack, the Serenissima had just made peace with the Emperor and because of the uncontrolled actions of the son of the Doge, it could be sentences as the scapegoat and face with another Habsburg threat on his territories. The attack of Clissa could not be successful, after a few days, the forces of Gritti were withdrawn from the city.

The German Expedition of the Ottoman Sultan started in August. Instead of stopping in Buda, the Ottoman forces marched towards the north-western zones of Austria. The Castle of Güns, the key for Vienna was captured in three weeks and Suleyman I called his rival Charles V to the battlefield.²⁵⁶ At that time, Charles V was in the city of Lintz and he declared that he would resist with his all forces in case of an Ottoman attack to Vienna. At the same time under the command of Alvise Gritti and János Szápolyai, the Hungarian forces besieged the Castle of Esztergom by the order of the Sultan. The main logic behind this was dividing the Hapsburg forces in order to gather Vienna.²⁵⁷ At the end of October, despite the Ottoman forces were able to capture several towns and castles in Austria, Suleyman I decided to withdraw the army because the Ottoman war season passed again and the Sultan realized that the Ottoman army would resist the heavy artillery of Charles V if he besieged

²⁵⁵ Szakály, 66.

²⁵⁶ Gökbilgin, “Kanunî Sultan Suleyman’ın...”, . 22.

²⁵⁷ Kumrular, 59.

Vienna.²⁵⁸ After having heard the news, Gritti also gave up the siege of Esztergom in a hurry and returned to Buda in December 1532.²⁵⁹

The Ottoman Sultan could not be successful on the Austrian territories once again; Suleyman I from then on a war against Habsburg in Austria would not bring him a decisive result. Moreover, the Sultan had neglected the eastern frontiers for a long time and the new Safevid Shah Tahmasp started to threaten the eastern territories. On the eve of a new Persian expedition, the Sultan intended to close the Western front by solving the “Hungarian Question” On the other hand, in the German territories the Habsburg brothers Ferdinand and Charles V started to struggle with the Protestant rebellions. Therefore, they could not take the risk of a possible war with the Ottoman Sultan within this chaos. Ferdinand I send his envoys to Istanbul. The Hapsburg envoy Hieronymus Zara could convince the Grand Vizier and they agreed upon conditions of the peace in principle. According to the treaty, Ferdinand was going to secure his possessions in Hungary but would not interfere with the territories of Szápolyai; the frontier between their possessions would be drawn by the Ottoman will and Ferdinand would send an annual tribute of thirty thousand golds to Suleyman I. Therefore, the division of Hungary into two spheres of influence was accepted by the Habsburgs, and Ferdinand I became a vassal of the Ottoman Sultan.²⁶⁰

As an experienced negotiator, Alvise Gritti did not loose the chance of participation in the negotiations between the delegation of Ferdinand and Ibrahim Pasha. In April 1533, Gritti arrived in Istanbul, in a short period he controlled the negotiations ad declared to the Habsburg delegation that the Sultan did not have any intention to dethrone János Szápolyai and to pass part of Hungary to Ferdinand

²⁵⁸ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 334-335.

²⁵⁹ Szakaly, 70. For detailed information about the siego of Estergom see: Papo, Papo, 183-190.

²⁶⁰ Uzunçarşılı, 335-336.

without the knowledge of the Hungarian King. Therefore, he belied the promises of the Grand Vizier given without the consent of himself and of the knowledge of the Sultan as well. In the following weeks, Ibrahim Pasha declared that the *Beyoğlu*, as the most competent figure in the Hungarian affairs would lead the negotiations in accordance with his orders.²⁶¹ In the sessions the first act of Gritti was to protest the rumors that he was intending to seize the Hungarian throne by underlining the fact that if he had wanted such a thing, the Sultan would have appointed him as the *Beylerbeyi* but as a good Christian he abandoned his political ambitions only to secure the kingdom from a total Turkish invasion. Gritti very cleverly gave two messages; first he accentuated his power in the Porte but then he alerted the delegated that in case of the continuation of the chaos in Hungary, Suleyman I would take the kingdom under the direct control of state Hungary would become another *Beylerbeylik* of the Ottoman Empire.²⁶²

In the long lasting negotiations, Gritti became more enigmatic and double faced: with the diplomatic puns he bedevil the Habsburg and Hungarian delegates, gave them the promises which he did not have the authorization to realize. After having realized that Szápolyai was not going to possess the entire Hungarian territories, - he was also fully aware of the hostility of the Hungarian princes against him- he changed his side and in June 1533 he proposed the Habsburg delegates an inconceivable plan: the Habsburg forces in alliance with France and Venice would attack the Ottoman Empire. Gritti underlined the fact that the land army departed for Persia and the navy under the command of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha was in Africa; thus the Empire could not resist the attack.²⁶³ While proposing a crusade against the Ottoman Empire, Gritti tried to convince the Habsburg envoy Cornelius Schepper by

²⁶¹ Szakály, 78-79.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Finlay, "Prophecy and Politics...", 27.

a prophetic portent: he that in the sky of Istanbul, there had been seen two warriors speaking Latin and Turkish and the Latin one had shouted that the fortune that had been on the side of the Turks would soon move towards Christians.²⁶⁴ It is not evident whether Gritti really desired a crusade against the Ottoman Empire; however it can be argued that the *Beyoğlu* realized that he was losing his power and influence both in Hungary²⁶⁵ and the Ottoman Empire and in order to secure his position he tried to take support from the Habsburg side. On the other hand, he did not acquire a good reputation among the Habsburgs; his plan did not find acceptance and the rumors about his evil policies and two faced actions were verified once more.

The story of the sky warriors was not the only prophecy spreading in the Ottoman Empire. In the summer of 1533, the prophecies about the imminent destruction of the Ottoman Empire by the Christian power were spread from mouth to mouth and Alvise Gritti was at the center of one of these prophecies. The Habsburg envoy Shepper explain the current thought in the Ottoman Empire, which he heard from one of the agents of Gritti, as following:

[...] how the empire of the Turks will be destroyed by a bastard, who will be the son of some prince, of tall stature and swarthy in complexion, a bastard who will have great authority with the Turks, and who will have them execute some exploit by means of which they will be destroyed. They are persuaded, without doubt, that is the *Beyoğlu* that is Alvise Gritti, who is the son of the doge, swarthy in complexion, and such great prestige and authority with the Turks that he seems to dominate them.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 19.

²⁶⁵ In Hungary there occurred a great opposition to Gritti and to his actions. As it was mentioned in the text, in order to consolidate the authority of János Szapolyai and to maximize his economic benefits Gritti forced the Hungarian princes to obey the King and to buy the goods that Gritti and his agents sold. Some of the opponents were severely punished, even murdered. Moreover, the connections of Gritti between the Ottoman State and the Other European powers created the idea that Gritti was going to replace Hungarian throne and Hungary. This created a great detestation of Gritti in the Hungarian lands. For detailed information about the relations of Gritti with the Hungarian princes see: Szakály, 71-92, Barta, 268-280.

²⁶⁶ "Mission diplomatiques de Corneille Duplicus De Schepper (1533-1534)", ed. by, Baron de Saint-Genois and G. A Yssel de Schepper, *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale Des Sciences des lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 30 (1857), 153-154, in Ibid., 23.

In fact, Alvise Gritti had been already become a detested figure in the Ottoman political *milieu*. Especially with the commencement of the Persian Expedition and the departure of Ibrahim Pasha from Istanbul for the campaign in the fall of 1533 gave the opponents of Gritti an upper hand. Dragoman Yunus Bey had already turned back to him. Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, wanting an active Ottoman struggle with the Habsburg forces in the Mediterranean rather than the diplomatic negotiations to solve the long lasting problem, worried that Suleyman I was being poisoned by Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti according to their selfish and evil desires and ambitions. Most importantly, he had lost the confidence of Suleyman I during the negotiations with the Habsburg envoys. In May 1534 it was understood that Gritti had conducted secret negotiations with Charles V without the consent of Suleyman I and Ibrahim Pasha by presenting him as the mediator for a peace treaty between Charles V and Suleyman I. This fact was revealed by Cornelius Schepper, the Habsburg envoy to Istanbul. The sultan replied the envoy with anger: “I have never charged him with any task in this matter. He was only charged with the Hungarian affairs, and that is all.”²⁶⁷

For that reason, in the absence of his fellow passenger Ibrahim Pasha, Gritti was deprived from the support in the Ottoman Empire and even his life was in danger. On the other hand, he was also near the brink of bankruptcy: He was not able to collect back the credits that he had provided the King János Szapolyai and other Hungarian princes. Moreover, one his greatest enemies, the chief of treasury, Defterdar Mahmud Çelebi demanded him to pay his revenues in coin rather than in kind such as jewels, silk or spices due to the state’s need of cash for the Persian

²⁶⁷ Kretschmayr, 65-66; Szakály, 81-82.

campaign. Gritti was forced to sell his golden and silver plates in order to pay his debt.²⁶⁸ Moreover, he blocked Gritti to collect the annual tribute of Wallachia.²⁶⁹ After having nominated to mark out the frontiers of Hungary and to reconcile Ferdinand and Szápolyai on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan, he himself was also aware that this task could be the last office that he acquired from the Ottoman Sultan. On July 18, 1534, soon after the departure of Suleyman I to Persia, he hit the road of Buda: this would be his last curtain.

Alvise Gritti went through Transylvania on his way to Buda in order to settle a political dispute between the potentates. However, this chaos turned to him.²⁷⁰ The Transylvanian princes marched towards Gritti with their entire forces. Gritti and his companions which were composed of two thousand Janissaries took refuge the fortress of Medgyes. The fortress was besieged by forty thousand Hungarians. Neither Ferdinand, nor Szápolyai replies the shouts of Gritti for help. Moreover, the Ottoman forces situating in Hungary rejected to act without having an imperial order from the Sultan. After a siege of two months, Gritti fell into hands of his enemies. “He was beheaded, his heart was ripped out, his hands, fingers and feet were cut off and dispatched as souvenirs around Hungary.”²⁷¹

The death of Gritti did not cause a great anger in the Ottoman Empire. Following the tragedy János Szápolyai was questioned by the Ottoman Sultan and Suleyman I demanded indemnity because of the negligence of the Hungarian King. Moreover, in September 1535, he sent Yunus Bey to investigate the death of Gritti. János Szápolyai was generally accused from the case. However, within a short

²⁶⁸ Kretschmayr, 59-60, Szakály, 18, Decei, 25.

²⁶⁹ This tribute was named as eflak haracı akçesi. For further information about the tribute and the role of Gritti in its collection see: Decei, 24-28.

²⁷⁰ For detailed information about the last journey of Gritti and the conflict between the Transylvanian princes see *Ibid.*, 36-52.

²⁷¹ Finlay, “Prophecy and Politics...”, 30.

period, the tragedy of Gritti was forgotten. The meaning of accusing the Hungarian King would be coming into Suleyman I did not sacrifice his vassal for Alvise Gritti. Because of his uncontrolled activities he had already lost the confidence of the Ottoman Sultan, and most probably if he had reached Istanbul, his end would not have been different. After few than two years, the Ottoman Palace witnessed another murder: After having an ordinary diner with the Sultan Suleyman I, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha was stabbed and strangled on March 15, 1536. The legitimating of the murder was the claims of the Pasha to be the uncontrolled power; even a new Sultan replacing Suleyman I. Alvise Gritti and Ibrahim Pasha, two fellow-travelers, who had started to gain power simultaneously before a decade, also came to the end the way together: They were died in a similar way and a new era started in the Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

All the world is a stage,
And all the men and women merely Players.
They haue their *Exits* and their Entrances;
And one man in his time playes many parts...²⁷²

Alvise Gritti is as one of the few Christians having a political career in the Ottoman Empire and he played a variety of roles in the European politics of the Empire from 1526 to 1534. It would be inaccurate to argue that Alvise Gritti was the unique foreigner participated into the Ottoman political life; from his foundation, the Ottoman State benefited from the foreigners and placed them into the political life of the state in case of an acute need. These people generally served the state as dragomans or consultants. However, what makes Alvise Gritti as an important and interesting figure worth to analyze carefully is that although he was not trained in the *devşirme* system and secured his Christian identity and family connections, he reached such a high position within the Ottoman politics by acting a role of mediation between the Ottoman Empire and the European states.

Alvise Gritti appeared in the political stage of the Ottoman Empire in a period in which the Habsburg-Ottoman rivalry for the universal supremacy reached its peak.

²⁷² William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, (London: Nick Hern Books, 2003), 69.

As it was mentioned in details in the pervious chapters, although this rivalry seemed to be a power conflict of two greatest powers of the period, it was a political turmoil in which the other European States got involved. In fact these complicated circumstances of the period prepared the emergence and rise of Alvise Gritti. The Ottoman State needed an effective instrument that it would use in its international affairs as a consultant, a mediator, an agent and even a victim and it used this in the personality of Alvise Gritti. Alvise Gritti was also used by the other political agents of the time. Venice used his son as a good source of information and mediator between itself and the Ottoman administration. János Szápolyai utilized the Venetian as a mediator between himself and the Porte, a threatening factor in order to consolidate his authority in Hungary and a good economist to rebuild the royal finance. The Austrian archduke perceived Gritti as a good agent in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore while he was the “bastard son” of Doge and an ordinary wealthy merchant, Gritti became an international figure even an authority, with the name of *Beyoğlu*.

Apart from the political circumstances of his time, the personal talents of Alvise Gritti and the political and commercial networks that he controlled in Istanbul facilitated the rise of Alvise Gritti within the political *milieu* of the Ottoman Empire as well as in the international politics of the first half of the sixteenth century. Gritti was a well educated and adroit person and he was the son of the *Doge* of Venice which was one of the most important political actors of the period. These helped him in terms of having a good reputation. The role of Ibrahim Pasha, who answered the door of the Ottoman palace and political life to Gritti, could not be denied assuredly. After being the advisor of the Grand Vizier concerning relations with the European states, the star of Alvise Gritti ascended with a rattling rate and he became a key

figure in the Ottoman as well as the European politics of the period. He also gained the opportunity to lead a political career in Hungary and in short time of five years he undersigned several things to change the history of Hungary.

At this point, it can be argued that Alvise Gritti was one of the good examples of the “versatile personalities” of his time. As it was discussed thoroughly in the third chapter, according to the definition of Jacob Burckhardt, one of the most prominent historians of the Renaissance period in Europe, these people were the stereotypes of Renaissance who had different occupations besides their main professions. For example, the statesmen were generally the patrons of arts and humanists, the merchants and diplomats having the classical education of philosophy and literature and use these in the affairs of the daily life and contributed the outbreak and spread of the information. These “versatile” people were also universal in a sense; they could live anywhere that they could satisfy their desires. Most of the time, this versatility was fed by the desire of fame; thus the people usually engaged in complex and adventurous affairs that they did never realize their consequences before, and their acts brought about their deaths: The system in which they acted devoured them. In this context, the family structure and education based on the current Renaissance thought figured the personality of Alvise Gritti and besides his merchant identity, he developed a passion for fame and authority and different occupations to acquire them in respect of the tradition of his time. As it was mentioned before he undersigned a pamphlet about the Ottoman Empire, organized many festivals in which the classical plays were stages, patronized numerous artists and intellectuals. Moreover, used the politics and even wanted to be a part of it in order to realize his own desires.

Here it should be noted that this “versatility” was also seen in the personalities of the Renaissance princes and statesmen. These political figures

usually had different occupations besides the politics, for instance they were good poets or musicians, always patronized numerous artists and intellectuals, and used every way to have success and fame as suggested the famous political philosopher Machiavelli. In this context, the political figures usually appeared as despots to consolidate their authorities in their dominions by suppressing the opposition centers in bureaucracy, the local authorities and the unrest in provinces. Moreover, they engaged in complex international politics in order to maintain the “balance”, even to manipulate it for their own benefits. The implementation of the state politics over the subjects and the maneuvers in the international politics based on the secret alliances and two faced diplomacy, proved the validity of this fact in European states system and the Ottoman Empire. The personalities of Sultan Suleyman I and Ibrahim Pasha also fit the definition of the “versatile personalities”. Although it is not accurate to define Suleyman I as a “Renaissance Prince” since he always secured his claim to be an Islamic Sultan, these two Ottoman figures also exemplified the general perception of the period. Especially Ibrahim Pasha, with his all acts and initiatives and the tools that he used to legitimate them, reflected well the *zeitgeist*. This similarity in their personalities caused the Grand Vizier, Sultan and Gritti to become closer to each other. Ibrahim Pasha was promoted unorthodoxly to the highest office of the Ottoman Porte and Alvisse Gritti unorthodoxly intervened in the Ottoman politics as advisor due to his affinity to the Grand Vizier. These three “fellow travelers” did not only form the Ottoman politics, but also modified the European states system for almost a ten years period.

In this context, despite his invaluable consciousness of the political system of his time, the main failure of Alvisse Gritti was that he did not realize to limit himself and when to stop. By analyzing his activities it can be argued that he had not thought

of establishing an authority neither in Ottoman State nor in Hungary. Alvise Gritti was really a clever person able to analyze the general political structure; he was well aware that the Ottoman Empire was not going to place him on the Hungarian throne; this would be rejected also by the rest of the political authorities having several claims on Hungary and the “Hungarian Question”. His main purpose was to become famous and strong and use this power in developing his trade network. Even in his final departure to Hungary, he was followed by many merchants. He would establish a route of commerce between Venice, Buda and Istanbul; therefore he could control the entire European trade. In order to achieve this purpose, he realized that he should also have a political authority and tried to acquire this via the mediation between the states. He realized too late that he was being used and since his activities which he had followed until that time faced strong reactions, he had to conduct enigmatic actions. He tried to maintain chaos by following hypocritical policy. He tried to become closer with each country in the middle of power struggle and tried to impose a belief that this chaos could only be solved by him, but he failed. He played a variety of roles on the stage of world, as Shakespeare another “Renaissance man” referred in one of his plays; but the curtain was closed for him in 1534. From then on, the decors, costumes, leading actors would change as well as the text and director...

In 1534 when Alvise Gritti was murdered by the Hungarian princes, almost no body sorrowed in real sense. János Szapolyai and Ferdinand I disposed the third candidate for the Hungarian throne for which they were both competing with each other. The Hungarian magnates opposing to the domination of any foreign power in Hungary that could threaten their own authorities get rid of the “serpent” aiming to commercialize the Hungarian territories to the Ottoman Sultan and Austrian

Archduke in order to maximize his benefits and to replace himself on the Hungarian throne by eliminating all local powers. The Republic of Venice took a deep breath because it would not be suspected anymore by the Habsburg Emperor and the Ottoman Sultan because of the uncontrolled acts of the son of the *Doge*. The Ottoman statesmen applauded his murder because his life came to a bitter end before he destroyed the Ottoman State. The Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I, was himself also content from the situation. Gritti had abused the cognitions provided to him by the will of the Sultan himself; he had already started to serve his own personal interests rather than the Ottoman State and he became a threat before the implementation of the Ottoman plans in Hungary. In other words, he had been used as a tool for the great plans of the political powers of his time and when he was not instrumental to realize these plans anymore, he was abandoned by each of them. The same circumstance caused the death of his fellow-traveler Ibrahim Pasha. He was killed by the order of his old and close friend and patron Suleyman I because of his so-called assertion to have an authority beyond the Sultan whose signals were seen during the Persian Expedition. In short the desire of fame and authority caused the end of these two fellow-travelers: the system devoured its own children.

The archival materials, several documents and biographies in addition to the secondary material on Alvise Gritti help researchers and readers to understand the general portrait of Alvise Gritti and from the perspective the Ottoman-European relations in sixteenth century. However there are still there are unanswered questions about the life of Alvise Gritti, his political activities and the general political atmosphere of the period. The personal relation between Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I and Alvise Gritti is still an important area of research. Western sources claim that the Sultan often visited him in his palace to consult the state affairs and participated in

the festivals organized by Gritti. Despite it seems exaggerated and has not supported by the Ottoman sources, concerning the roles of Alvise Gritti that he undertook by the will and favor of the Sultan, this argument is worth to be analyzed. Moreover, the Venetian representatives perceived Alvise Gritti as the second most important person in the Ottoman bureaucracy after the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha but it is not clear either that Alvise Gritti had a part of the formulation of the Ottoman politics. Another area open to further research is whether Alvise Gritti took any part on domestic and foreign relations of the Ottoman State apart from the “Hungarian Question”. Last but not least the details about his death are not totally revealed. It is still obscure whether Suleyman I or the other Ottoman statesmen had a role in his death.

In conclusion, the further research based on the new documents and interpretations which will be conducted on Alvise Gritti, his life and activities will have invaluable contribution to the interpretation the Gritti phenomenon and the relations between the European states and the Ottoman Empire more accurately. At this point it is considered that the comprehensive research conducted in the Ottoman archives, which have a secondary place in most of the present works will reveal new information about the subject which will provide a strong basis to have a most comprehensive analysis.

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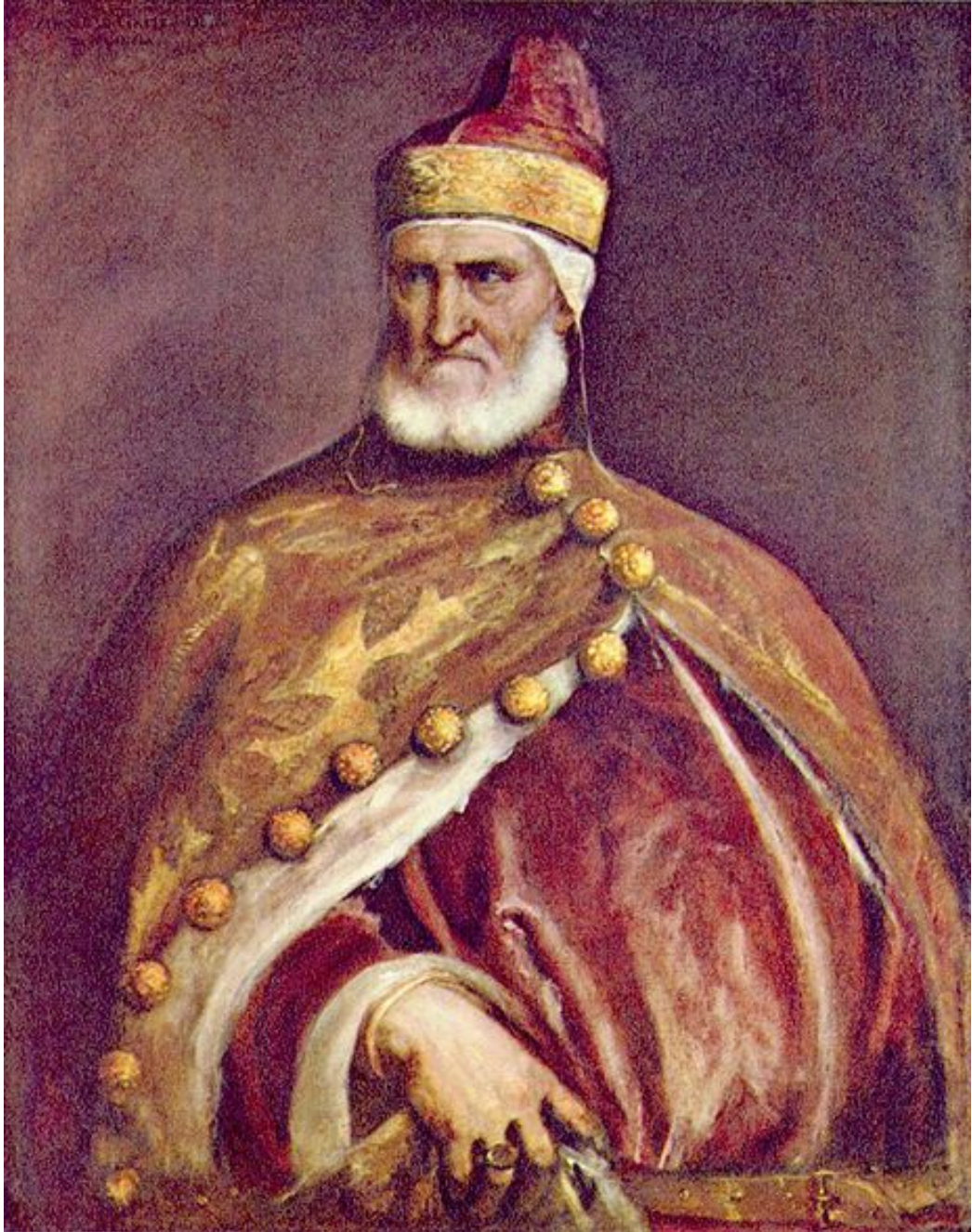
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APPENDIX



The portrait of Andrea Gritti by Titiano c. 1540

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Gritti, 15.09. 2009.



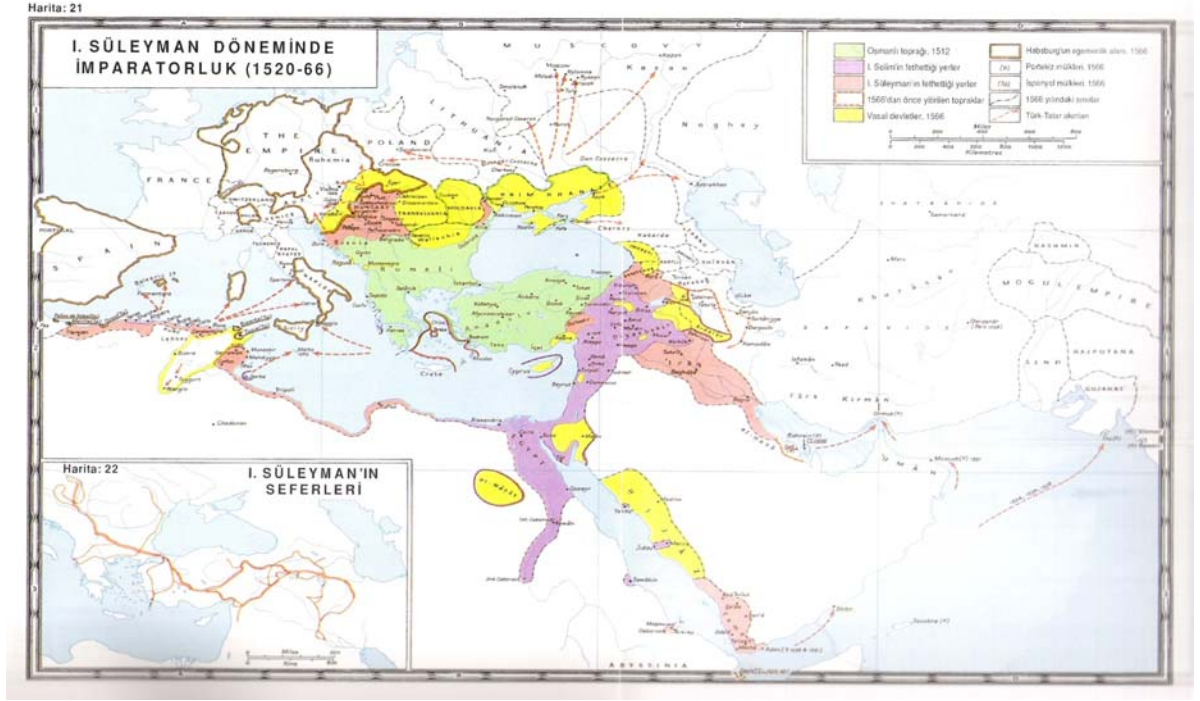
Alvise Gritti

1480-1534

Portrait of Alvise Gritti by Michael Beuther von Karlstradt 1582 cited in Gizella Nemeth Papo and Adriano Papo, *Ludovico Gritti: Un Principe Mercante del Rinascimento tra Venezia I Turchi e La Corona D'Ungheria*. (Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna, 2002), xxxii.



The Palace of the Gritti Family in Venice



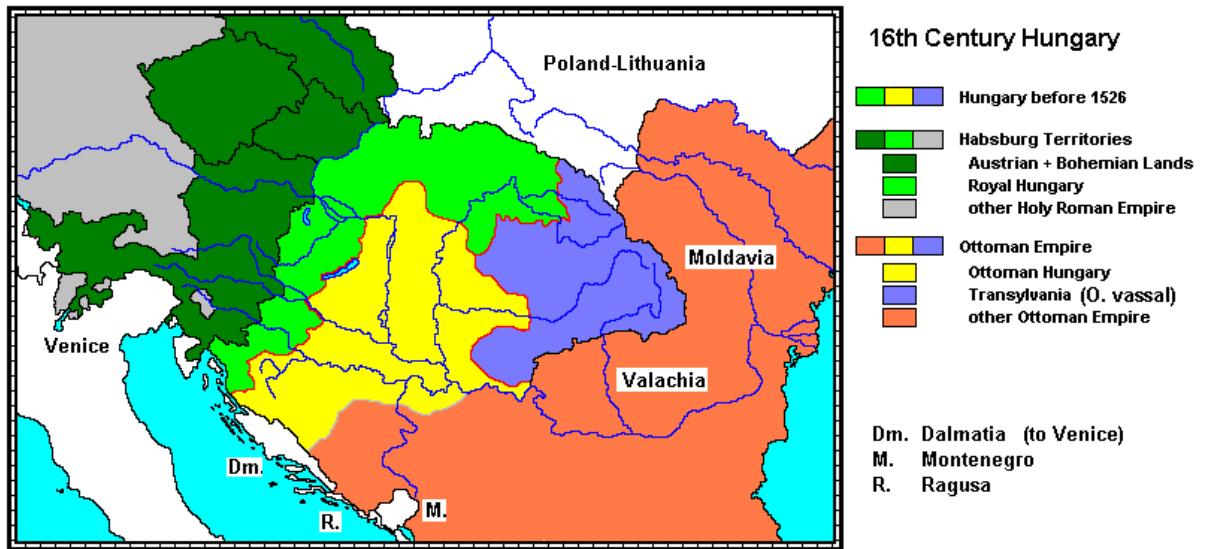
The Political Map of the Ottoman Empire in the time of Süleyman I

Donald Edgar Pitcher, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Tarihsel Coğrafyası*, (İstanbul: YKY, 1999).



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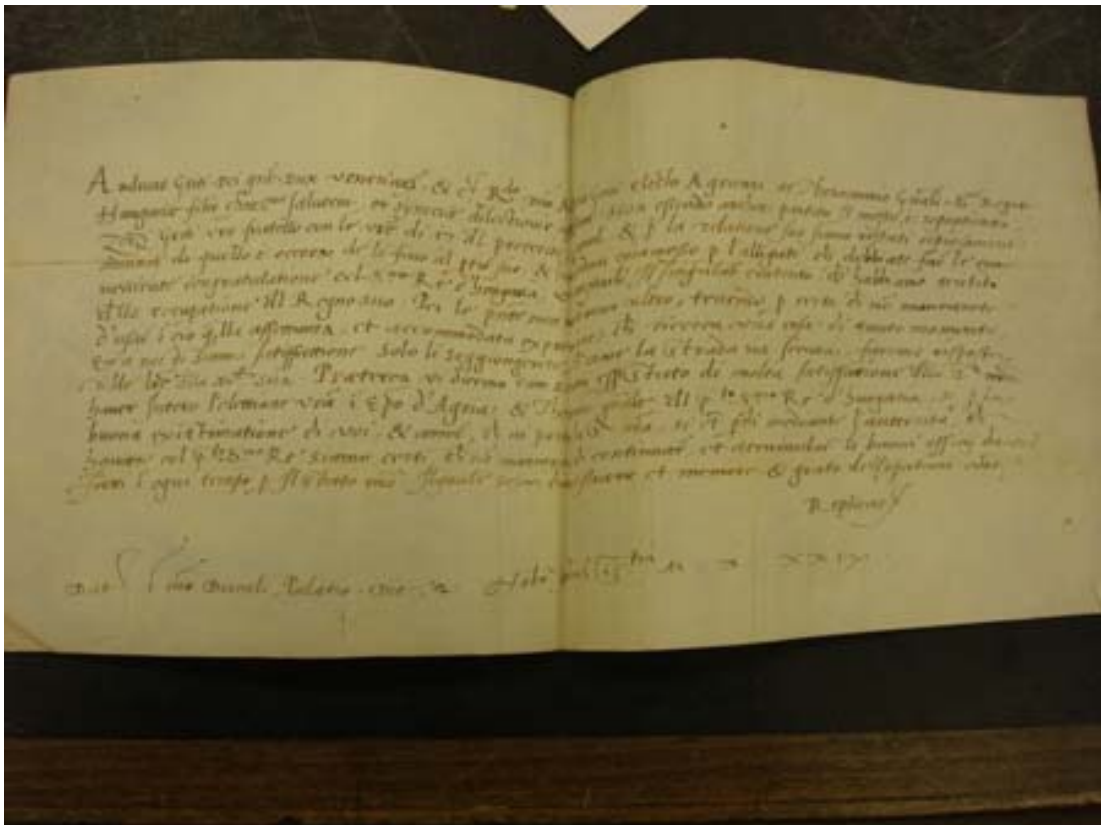
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Anonymus Portrait of Sultan Süleyman, c. 1535
New York Metropolitan Museum of Art



An Example of the Letters of Andrea Gritti to Alvise Gritti (dated November 2, 1529)

Archivio Stato di Venezia Miscellanea Ducali ed Atti Diplomatici Busta 22

