

Gracious Sultan, Grateful Subjects: Spreading Ottoman Imperial “Ideology” throughout the Empire

In his analysis of the functioning of empires, Herfried Münkler argues that the stability and duration of imperial might depend on the appropriate use and balance of the four “sources of power”. These he identifies – following Michael Mann – as being control over military, economic, political and ideological resources. The emergence and expansion of empires is due to military and economic superiority. One of the crucial moments in the history of empires is the transition from the phase of expansion to the phase of consolidation. Stabilizing imperial might requires a shift from the predominant use of military and economic power to that of the two other resources, politics and ideology.¹ Not all empires, however, succeed in transcending this “Augustan threshold”² and become permanent. According to Münkler, it was due to the Ottomans failure to create and maintain this necessary balance of power, that their

1. Herfried Münkler: *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*. Reinbek 2007, 79-82. The concept of the four sources of power was developed by Michael Mann in his extensive work on the nature of power in human societies: Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Volume I: *A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*, Cambridge 1986, 22-28.

2. Münkler borrowed this term from Michael W. Doyle: *Empires*. Ithaca and London 1986, 92-97.

empire wasted away at the Augustan threshold, without ever crossing it, for several hundred years. Instead of creating the necessary equilibrium of the four sources of power, military strength remained the principal foundation of the Ottoman Empire. When this power began to fade, the Empire inevitably turned into the “sick man of the Bosphorus”.³

Münkler’s approach to empires in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular can be criticised in several respects. For example, valuable and meritorious as these models which describe the inner dynamics of empires may be, the broader – and coming to more recent periods of history – the global context in which these multi-dimensional entities existed cannot be ignored. The Romans, for instance, never had to face an opponent comparable to the “the West” like the Ottomans did, i.e. they never had to cope with the challenge of a neighbour that was not only technically highly advanced, but also offered a storehouse of powerful discursive strategies, well suited to present provoking alternatives to the traditional Ottoman views of the world and ideologies.

Another point to be questioned is Münkler’s evaluation of the Ottoman use of the different sources of power. Indeed, he totally fails to analyse the role of ideological power as a means to integrate the Empire.⁴ Overall, his analysis of deficiencies finally leaves him unable to offer an explanation for a phenomenon he briefly mentions at the end of his inquiry into Ottoman history, namely, that the Empire experienced a notable phase of stability during the 16th and 17th centuries.⁵ One may also add that even in the 18th century, when Ottoman military power shrank considerably in the provinces and local grandees and potent provincial governors administered their spheres of influence in a quite autonomous way, hardly anyone

3. Münkler, *Imperien* 121-123.

4. Münkler briefly notes that the only thing the Ottomans achieved through ideological power was, that some Muslims were loyal to them whereas it deepened the gap to Christian Europe. *Ibidem* 122.

5 *Ibidem* 123-124.

openly tried to break away from the well-guarded lands of the Ottoman Sultan. In his essay about the Arab provinces from the 16th to the 18th century, André Raymond points out the continuing allegiance of Ottoman subjects to their sultan and the great attractiveness even of a mere symbolic relationship with him. He rates moral and religious solidarity, manifested especially through the prestige of the Ottoman dynasty, among the forces of cohesion in the Ottoman Empire:

“L'appartenance à l'empire se marquait, dans les provinces les plus autonomes, par des manifestations de respect et par des signes de dépendance qui furent maintenus jusqu'à une époque où les liens avec la Porte étaient très distendus. L'usage quotidien de la monnaie, frappée au nom du sultan régnant, l'évocation du souverain, chaque vendredi, en chaire, rappelaient aux sujets cette dépendance et cette appartenance au grand ensemble musulman que constituait l'empire. Les gouvernants les plus autonomes ne s'en affranchirent pas aisément.”⁶

Obviously, the prestige of the Ottoman Sultan remained fairly unshaken even in times of crisis and military defeats. As Haim Gerber suggests, this ideological success may be attributed to the fact that although the Ottomans became weaker after the sixteenth century, they continued to be the bulwark of Islam and defended the Middle East against the ascending powers of Europe for several hundred years.⁷

Considering this, it seems plausible to argue that ideological power was one of the main sources of stability in the Ottoman Empire during the 17th and 18th centuries. In this article I will take a closer look at the Ottoman concept of authority which formed an essential part of the “program” of Ottoman ideology, and its distribution in the provinces of the Empire.

6. André Raymond: *Les provinces arabes (XVI^e siècle-XVIII^e siècle*, in: Robert Mantran (ed.), *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris 1989, 341-420, here 363.

7. Haim Gerber, *Islamic Law and Culture, 1600-1840*. Leiden 1999, 50.

The Basic Structure of Ottoman Social Relations

Münkler pointed to the difficulties that are likely to arise when the term “ideology” is applied to the aims and politics of empires. Ideology then tends to be identified with the strategies used by the ruling elite to deceive the masses about the true ambitions of imperial politics, which are ultimately nothing more than the mundane and material self-interest of the ruling class. Therefore, Münkler rather prefers to discard the term “ideology” and instead looks for what he calls the “imperial mission”. Far from being a mere means to promote the personal interests of rulers and elites, the imperial mission induces the imperial agents to commit themselves to a project that greatly exceeds individual aims and obliges its participants to subordinate their personal concerns to the common goal.⁸

Clearly, the imperial mission of the Ottoman Empire was first of all the spread and, if necessary, defence of Islam, and it was the claim of being its foremost promoter that offered the Ottoman Sultans a rich source of legitimation. The title of *ghazi* remained the unalterable *epitheton ornans* of sultanic names until the end of the Empire. Further, the rule of the sultan was regularly presented as a precondition to the rule of the *sharia* and Ebussuud even declared the Sultan to be the agent through whom God put into effect the *sharia* on this earth.⁹ But apart from the Islamic approach there were several more systems of meanings and values current in the Ottoman lands. The self-understanding of the Ottoman rulers, their concept of state and the logic that shaped their actions was to a great extent influenced by ancient Turkish traditions of state and Indo-Persian theories of rule and government. To the Indo-Persian branch the Ottoman owed the idea of the sovereign as shepherd and the subjects as his flock, *reaya*, entrusted by God to the ruler for protection and

8. Münkler, *Imperien* 133-4.

9. Colin Imber: *Ebu's-suud: The Islamic Legal Tradition*. Edinburgh 1997, 95.

care. In the same way, the Ottoman Sultans adorned themselves with titles like “shadow of God on earth” (*zillu'llahi fi'l-arz*) and “refuge of the world” (*alempenah*). No matter whether these metaphors originally belonged to an Islamic context or some other tradition, many of them conveyed an image of the ruler as caretaker and protector of his subjects. Giving care and protection were perceived as quasi “naturally” inherent qualities of sovereigns. This concept of royal morals stands in stark contrast to Max Weber’s perception of Ottoman sultanic power as despotic rule and arbitrary government. One might discard the claims expressed in the titles as mere rhetoric of cynical and power-conscious tyrants, but this evaluation is probably the result of traditional Western distrust of power, a sentiment which is alien to Islamic cultures.¹⁰ Pointing to the universally binding character of Islamic law, to which also rulers have to submit without being allowed to alter it, Lewis further argues that the Western idea of the omnipotent Oriental ruler, to whom all subjects are like his personal slaves, is wrong.¹¹

It seems, rather, that the qualities of caretaker and protector are a better clue to understanding the Ottoman view of their sultan and their imperial “ideology” than the distorted picture of the Oriental tyrant. As the above cited metaphors suggest, the relationship between ruler and subjects is clearly hierarchical: a strong leader protecting his “poor” flock (*fukara-yi reaya*). Yet the concept of a hierarchical world order is not “naturally” inherent in the religion of Islam. The Quran itself does not give a clear preference to hierarchies: although many verses can be found to legitimate hierarchies among human beings, other portions in turn can be quoted which justify equality among them.¹² Thus, what we have to look for is a worldview or rather mode of world-experience which was an essential factor in producing the variety of Islam and hierarchical state

10. Bernard Lewis: *Die politische Sprache des Islam*. Berlin 1991, 50-51.

11. *Ibidem* 59.

12. Cf. Louise Marlow: *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought*. Cambridge 1997, 2-4.

ideology the Ottoman chose for their empire and which, at least to a certain extent, determined which forms and images they preferred to shape their social and political life.

A modern Western person might feel that men are innately equal. But the modern Western conception of essentially equal individuals is of quite recent acquisition. Likewise the idea that these equal individuals are autonomous and free to create relationships at will through contract and consent has only been created in the course of modern history. My basic argument here will be that the Ottoman concept of what is the “natural” state of a human being was quite different from our modern view. An important part of their self-perception as humans was the, at least in their context, realistic experience that men are not equal and that they do exist in and through relationships which cannot be freely created. As in the often used body-metaphor for the state, the heart, i.e. the ruler, cannot live without the other organs and vice versa, and people of different ranks are in need of each other, if they want to survive. Cross-cultural psychology offers a model that describes the type of self-experience likely to be experience in hierarchical relations:

“A final model consists of an encompassing sense of self. We use the term encompassing to refer to a sense of the self being subsumed by the other or otherwise embedded in a relationship that extends beyond the self alone. We suggest that an encompassing sense of self arises in relationships where one person is obliged to, is responsible for, or views himself or herself as the caretaker of the other. Self-experience of this sort is likely to be well represented in hierarchical relationships [...] such hierarchical identifications occur within parent-child, superior-subordinate, and husband-wife (and even sibling) relationships. Note here that within such relationships neither person is passive. Both the superior and the subordinate have moral duties in relation to each other, even if those duties exhibit hierarchical asymmetry. Where a father, mother, superior, or brother may be responsible for protecting a child, subordinate, or sibling,

the latter individual plays a role in actively respecting, obeying, and appreciating the sacrifice and care provided by the other.”¹³

The idea of a reciprocal relationship between superiors and subordinates that was defined by moral obligations pervaded the whole of Ottoman society. The Ottoman households with the “nuclear family” of kin and servants or slaves and the “extended family” established through patron-client relationships can be cited as the “classical” example where this type of relationship applies. Let us now have a closer look at the obligations incumbent on both protectors and protected.

The Reciprocal Order I: Duties of the Protectors

Most Muslim jurists and theologians agree that the effective exercise of power to safeguard security and peace within his empire was the foremost duty of an Islamic ruler. According to the mainstream Hanafi theory of rulership a legal sovereign is defined as a person who seizes and effectively exercises power.¹⁴ Even the sultanate of a tyrannous usurper is valid as long as he maintains internal security and peace in his realm.¹⁵ According to the Sunni theologian Fakhr ad-Din Razi (d. 1209), the rule of an unrighteous ruler is preferable to that of a virtuous man if the interest of peace and security is concerned.¹⁶ This was thus a criterion with which the Ottoman sultans had also to comply. So when, for example, the sultan’s failure to guarantee this safety became ever more visible

13. Michael F. Mascolo, *Girishwar Misra*, Christopher Rapisardi: *Individual and Relational Conceptions of Self in India and the United States*, in: *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 104 (2004) 9-26, here: 24.

14. Imber, *Ebu’s-suud* 73.

15. Fritz Steppat: *Kalifat, Dār al-Islām und die Loyalität der Araber zum Osmanischen Reich bei hanafitischen Juristen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Actes du V^e Congrès International d’Arabisants et d’Islamisants*. Bruxelles 1971, 443-462, here 454.

16. A.K.S. Lambton: *Justice in Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship*, in: *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962) 91-119, here 95.

during the 19th century, some people started to question the legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty's claim to sultanic power.¹⁷

The mirror-for-princes literature usually regarded justice (*adalet* or *adl*) as the most important quality of a ruler. But the ideas about what justice exactly is vary. The Ottomans, as inheritors of different traditions of statesmanship, employed different concepts. The definition cited by Mustafa Ali in his "Counsel for Sultans" was well suited to the strictly hierarchical society of ranks and estates, which prevailed in the Ottoman Empire from the 16th to the 18th century: "Justice means putting things in the places where they belong",¹⁸ that is, justice according to this idea was a constant permanent will to attribute to each what pertains to them. But another variety of justice more often referred to in Ottoman books of statecraft and more central to the Ottoman sultan's self-conception was "the protection of the subjects against abuse from the representatives of authority and in particular against illegal taxation".¹⁹ A well-known genre through which the Sultan expressed his wish to see this sort of justice done to all his subjects were the "decrees of justice", *adaletnames*, admonishing governors and local authorities to treat the *reaya* justly and in accordance with the law, and threatening them with severe consequences in case of violations. The subjects in whose favour justice is exercised are often referred to as the "poor" *reaya* (*fukaraya reaya*). In this context poverty should not be understood as material distress, but rather as being defenceless and therefore dependent on the protection of the sovereign and his deputies. The Ottoman subjects for their part depicted themselves as "poor", for example in petitions addressed to the Sultan,²⁰ or also as "entrusted by God to

17. Steppat, *Kalifat* 462.

18. Andreas Tietze: *Mustafā' lī's Counsel for Sultans of 1581*. Part I. Wien 1979, 17, Ottoman text 89.

19. Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300-1600*. London 2002, 66.

20. Cf., for example, Gisela Procházka-Eisl and Claudia Römer: *Osmanische Beamtenschreiben und Privatbriefe der Zeit Süleymāns des Prächtigen aus dem Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv zu Wien*. Wien 2007, 48.

the ruler” (*vedi’atu’llah*),²¹ thereby acknowledging their willing and humble dependence on legitimate authority.²²

While it was the duty of the Ottoman dignitaries and sultan’s representatives to conform to both types of law, the *sharia* and the *kanun* enacted by the sultan, his position with regard to the latter form of law was different. As the “shadow of God on earth”, the sultan was also the creator of a temporal order²³ to the benefit of the flock of subjects entrusted to him by God, and the promulgation of *kanuns* was nothing else than justice put into practice.²⁴ Thus, while with regard to the contents, the sultanic *kanuns* often only reiterated

21. Boğaç A. Ergene: *On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600-1800)*, in: *Islamic Law and Society* 8 (2001) 52-87, here 68.

22. Following Bourdieu, this version of a reciprocal relationship has been interpreted by Ergene (*Ottoman Justice* 66-69) as a form of social domination in which symbolic violence, a gentle and hidden exploitation, prevails, because the direct application of violence is not sanctioned. Considered from this point of view, the demonstration of royal virtues is nothing more than just another mode of domination, a way of exercising power in a disguised sort of way. Master and subject alike are deceived about the true nature of their relationship. This interpretation can be seen as a further and more refined step in the reductionist understanding of ideology – and also religion, art and mentalities – criticized by Münkler. The approach ultimately stands on a materialist grounding: historians subscribing to it claim that regardless of what cultural artefacts ostensibly say, they are “really” about underlying social or economic interests. And again the question can be raised to what extent this interpretation is shaped by a very specific modern Western experience and view of the world.

23. Cf. for example, the words addressed to Sultan Mehmed III. in 1599 by an unhappy Kadi, who was prisoner of war in Malta: “Der Schatten Gottes bist du. Du, Erhabener, bist es, der in den Lauf der menschlichen Dinge Gesetzmäßigkeit bringt. Im Schutze deiner Gerechtigkeit leben die Weltbewohner ganz ruhig. Nicht unrichtig wäre, wenn ich sagte, unter deiner Herrschaft wurde die sultanische Ordnung (unabänderlicher) Ferman.“ Cited from: W. Schmucker: *Die Maltesischen Gefangenschaftserinnerungen eines türkischen Kadi von 1599*, in: *Archivum Ottomanicum* 2 (1970) 191-251, here: 214-5.

24. Cf. the wording in the preamble of the *kanunname* for Syria of 1519: “... by ascertaining what is canonically permissible (for these domains) to give (pay) in the form of *jizya*, ‘*ushr and kharaj* which are placed on them purely out of justice ...”, Rifaat Ali Abou-el-Haj: *Aspects of the Legitimation of Ottoman Rule as reflected in the Preambles to two Early Liva Kanunnameler*, in: *Turcica* 21-23 (1991) 371-383, here 376.

and ratified traditional customs which were already in use in pre-Ottoman times, the ultimate source of legitimacy of these laws was not tradition, but the grace of the sovereign. The quality of grace in turn depended on the virtue and moral perfection of the ruler as becomes clear from the preamble of the *kanunname* of Syria:

“Therefore it was both decreed and ordered to carry out what had been mentioned above, by him (the sultan) who commands, whose order is obeyable, and disagreement (with him) is impossible; He being none other than the Sultan, the Just, the Perfect, the Khaqan who is eminent (or *fadil*) and arbiter (or *fasil*) between the truth and the untruth [...] the one who wraps around the necks of the great giants chains of painful punishment, and the one merciful to towards the necks of the caesars who had surrendered, by virtue of the clemency which reposes in his perfect nature.”²⁵

That is, in the case of the sultan the dispersion of justice could not be identified with a fixed body of rules and its application – apart from the *sharia* –, but issued by moral authority, reflecting the grace of the ruler that was beyond all laws. Justice was a manifestation of true lordship and did not require the consistent application of rules. The prototype of this grace-guided justice was the ruler as a Solomonic sort of judge, who acted as arbiter and balancer for those who sought his council, redressed grievances submitted to him as petitions and used his moral authority to decide when to apply judgement or mercy.²⁶

25. *Ibidem* 376.

26. As Patricia Crone notes, the judicature praised in the Persian mirror-for-princes literature corresponds to the Solomonic sort of “Kadijustiz” described by Max Weber. (Patricia Crone: *Max Weber, das islamische Recht und die Entstehung des Kapitalismus*, in: Wolfgang Schluchter (ed.), *Max Webers Sicht des Islams. Interpretation und Kritik*. Frankfurt am Main 1987, 294-333, here: note 56.) However, as argued above, the “arbitrariness” of this judicature was not a deficiency, but the manifestation of grace. Yet not all rulers are perfect and Ottoman manuals of statecraft reflect the attempts of the counsellors to commit the sultan to acknowledge the binding character of certain principles, for example, the respect for tradition and the avoidance of innovations (*bid’a*). Cf. chapter II in *Tietze, Mustafa Ali’s Counsel*.

Closely connected to grace was another important quality of Ottoman persons of authority, namely munificence. On the one hand this amounted to charity. The alms tax (*zakat*) is a fundamental obligation for every Muslim. Besides, many Hadiths exhort the believers to practice voluntary charity in addition to this. As a highly institutionalized framework, pious endowments (*evkaf*) offered every Muslim individual the possibility to give apparent proof of his or her beneficence. With large-scale, multi-functional endowment-complexes the Ottoman elite fostered the economic and social development of provincial regions. Their great endowments inspired the common people to add their share of donations to these institutions.²⁷

On the other hand, the giving of gifts and lending support to someone in need was a means of establishing an authoritative relationship, to create a tie of loyalty and mutual obligation. Whereas charity was above all directed to the lower social strata, this second form of munificence was graded according to the hierarchy that structured Ottoman society. Thus, the closer a person was in rank to the donor – but only seen from the bottom-up – the greater the attention and the more splendid the gifts the person was likely to receive from his patron. Of course, it was first of all the sultan as the centre of the Ottoman state who was the most magnificent distributor of gifts and graces. His generosity manifested itself not only in the form of material allotments but also in the granting of rights and privileges.²⁸ The sultan was often depicted as a virtually inexhaustible source of bounties that cascaded down from his illustrious person onto his worthy followers making them beam with delight.²⁹

27. Cf., for example, Svetlana Ivanova: *Muslim Charity Foundations (Vakf) and Models of Religious Behavior of Ottoman Social Estates in Rumeli (late 15th to 19th Centuries)*, in: Marlene Kurz (ed.), *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, Bd. 5.2: *Islam am Balkan*, Innsbruck 2005, 44-68.

28. Dina Rizk Khoury, *Administrative Practice between Religious Law (Shari'a) and State Law (Kanun) on the Eastern Frontiers of the Ottoman Empire*, in: *Journal of Early Modern History* 5.4 (2001) 305-330, here 309; Imber, Ebu's-suud 78.

29. Cf. for example, Marlene Kurz, *Ein osmanischer Almanach für das Jahr 1239/1240 (1824/1825)*. Berlin 2007, 87.

A good example of how such a reciprocal relationship was established through care and gifts is found in the memoirs of Ali the seal-bearer (*mühürdar*), the son of a well-to-do prebendary from Temeshwar. Ali took part in the war of 1683-1699 and entered the service of the Ottoman dignitary Cafer Pasha who twice, from 1688 to 1690 and from 1696 to 1697, was commander of the fortress of Temeshwar. Before becoming commander, Cafer Pasha used to be hosted by Ali's father whenever he came to Temeshwar. When his father died, Ali was still young and the family's prebends (*timar ve zeametlerimiz*) deteriorated. But not long after the death of his father ; Cafer Pasha came back to Temeshwar as the fortress' commander (*muhafız*). When he learned about Ali's fate, he sent for him, bestowed gracious gifts on him (*en'am ve ihsan ile*), and during the siege of Temeshwar provisioned (*aksam-i zahair ile gördürüb*) him, his mother and his numerous maidservants. He later took Ali into his service and made him his seal-keeper.³⁰ Ali remained his loyal servant until the death of the Pasha in September 1697 and afterwards wrote his memoirs in praise of him.

Another example from these memoirs again shows the importance of kindness and generosity on the part of the person in authority also in order to secure the allegiance and loyalty of the lower strata of society. Kindness and generosity were expected to inspire gratefulness and a sense of deferential awe in the recipient: When during the campaign against Peterwardein in 1105 (1693/4) the Ottoman soldiers suffered from extremely bad weather conditions, nobody complained. Ali explains this attitude as follows:

“The other soldiers of Islam, too, endured the hardship with all the rain and mud and especially the wind and cold like during the days of Kasım. The reason and motive that they endured these

30. Ali Mühürdar: *Tarih-i Vak'aname-i Ca'fer Pasha*, Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára (Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Török F. 60, f.35r, margin notes. The greater part of these memoirs has been translated into German by Kreutel. (Richard Kreutel: *Der Löwe von Temeschwar. Erinnerungen an Ca'fer Pascha den Älteren, aufgezeichnet von seinem Siegelbewahrer 'Alī*. Graz/Wien/Köln 1981.)

troubles to such a degree [was that] the grand vizier Ali Pasha's kind manner and his generosity and beneficence towards the soldiers made all of them blush with shame (*sadr-i azam Ali Paşanın ruy-i dil ile askere olan saha ve keremi cümleyi şermsar eylemişdi*). [...] All the soldiers would have sacrificed the souls and heads for him."³¹

As should have become clear by now, a core concept pervading and shaping the Ottoman ideas about ideal leaders is the requirement of moral superiority. As Barbara Metcalf observes in the case of South Asian Islam, one of the most important sources of authority is the exemplification of moral qualities. This is evident not only for sultans, saints and religious leaders in formal positions, but also for teachers, master craftsmen and family heads.³² This linkage of authority with moral behaviour can also be found in Ottoman sources. According to the advice-for-kings literature, their moral qualities enable the rulers to treat their subjects in the just and gracious way that is expected of authorities when dealing with their subordinates. Through piety, equity and justice, and following the example of the virtuous kings of old and wise statesmanships, the sultans gain the love of their people. Likewise, the companion and advisor of the sultan should be well-educated, magnanimous and well-mannered and his conduct should be similar to the lives of the prophets.³³ Ottoman jurists, too, relied on the perfect virtue of their sovereign and regarded him as "the last rampart against the decline of moral standards".³⁴

Yet moral superiority does not only serve to win the trust and affection of subjects and inferiors, but also imposes on the leaders, teachers and fathers the task of moral guidance. As emphasized in many documents, the sultan sees himself as the leader who guides his

31. *Ibidem* f.100r.

32. Barbara D. Metcalf: *Introduction*, in: id. (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority. The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley 1984, 1-20, here 2,7,9.

33. Tietze: *Mustafa Ali's Counsel* I 41-2.

34. Gerber, *Islamic Law and Culture*, 55.

flock on the “straight path”, urging them to abide by the laws of God and the Sunna of the Prophet.³⁵ For Ebussuud “it is the Sultan who ‘makes manifest the Exalted Word of God’ and ‘expounds the signs of the luminous *sharia*’”.³⁶ It is, however, not only the sultan who is responsible for the moral state of his herd. According to the Ottoman scholar Kinalızade Ali Efendi (d. 1584), it is man’s natural disposition that places him midway between animals on one side and angels on the other. Therefore, every human being is in need of teachers and tutors and people who call him to and show him the right way (*mual-lim ve müeddib lazım ve dai ve hadi mühimmdir*) so that he may not go astray.³⁷ Within the framework of the household, it is the father who – as the head of this form of communal life – has to arrange the affairs of the members of the household and guide them through kindness and strictness, promise and menace, severity and mildness in order that everyone averts vices and strives for virtues.³⁸ However, it does not suffice that the wielders of authority exercise the function of teachers and tutors: they themselves have to be perfect personifications of the virtues appropriate to their standing. As such, they act as living examples for their subordinates. Once they fail in their moral duties society as a whole will deteriorate. A vivid description of such a situation in Ottoman history comes from the pen of Ali Fazlızade, an otherwise unknown Ottoman alim. Writing in the 1730s, that is, in the aftermath of the – according to Ali’s standards – totally reprobate Tulip Age, he exhorts his contemporaries to rigorous soul-searching and change for the better. Though he addresses his sermon to the whole population of Istanbul, the persons mainly responsible for the moral decay are the members of the elite:

35. Cf. for example, Marlene Kurz, *Das sicill aus Skopje. Kritische Edition und Kommentierung des einzigen vollständig erhaltenen Kadiamtsregisterbandes (sicill) aus Üsküb* (Skopje). Wiesbaden 2003, 232, 235.

36. Imber, Ebu’s-suud 95.

37. Kinalızade Ali Çelebi: *Ahlâk-i Alâî. Hazırlayan Mustafa Koç*. Istanbul 2007, 84.

38. *Ibidem* 328.

“And mostly the *ulema*, the righteous (*suleha*) and intelligent (*ukala*), the leaders (*iimera*) and the wielders of authority (*hiikkam*) commit blameworthy and shameful acts, depravities and abominations, and they perpetrate [these acts] in front of the common people and allow them to join in. Again and again, for example, they behave obnoxiously, showing support for every impropriety and amused approval for every evildoer. Because of this there is no *takva*, that is the avoidance of sin and the abstaining from obscenities, left in men, and the whole of the present people unanimously no longer show obedience to the commandments and conditions [of Islam], no longer guard themselves in the necessary way against that which is prohibited, no longer blush with shame before God, exalted is He, and no longer [experience] the inner fear [of God], that is, [these qualities] are not found among them, and from their hearts the awe has vanished and only remains on their tongues.”³⁹

The grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha is instigator and ultimately responsible for this disastrous decadence, being identified by the author with the *Daccal*, the great corrupter who, according to Muslim teaching, is expected to appear when the eschaton begins.⁴⁰

The Reciprocal Order II: Duties of the Protected

During the 1670s a scholar from the city of Basra in southern Iraq dedicated an epistle he had written about the art of ruling an empire to the newly appointed governor of the province. In his work he advised the rulers “to protect their subjects from harm, guide them to the true path and ensure their prosperity. In exchange, subjects owed rulers sanctioned taxes and the commitment not to rebel”.⁴¹ According to Hanafi legal theory, taxation is a core element in the binding contract between the ruler and his people: the latter owe the former

39. Ali Fazlizade: *Ayinet el-kulub ve mübeyyinet al-ahlak*, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Ms.or.quart.1432, 2r.

40. *Ibidem* 21r-v.

41. Khoury, *Administrative Practice* 308.

taxes in return for the protection and safety he ensures for them.⁴² Paying taxes is also the essential contribution of the *reaya* to the famous “circle of equity”, a concept of statecraft frequently referred to in Ottoman advice literature.⁴³

The second duty mentioned above – the commitment not to rebel, i.e. obedience – is conduct expected from the inferior partner in every reciprocal relationship. The duty of obedience is already laid down in the *Quran*: “O Believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those entrusted with authority (*amr*) from among you!”⁴⁴, and, in this example with special reference to rulers, ratified in a *Hadith* handed down by Bukhari and cited by the well-known 16th-century scholar Pir Mehmed Birgevi (d. 1573): “Whosoever obeys me (*bana muti ola*) truly obeys God, and whosoever rebels against me (*bana asi ola*) truly rebels against God, and also, whosoever obeys the sultan truly obeys me, and whosoever rebels against the sultan truly rebels against me.”⁴⁵ Reminiscent of Khariji political concepts the renowned Celveti Seyh Ismail Hakkı Bursevi (d. 1725) stated, that persons entrusted with authority (*ulu'l-amr*) have to be obeyed even if the person in question is an Abyssinian slave (*abd-i Habesi bile olsa*).⁴⁶ According to him, obedience (*taat*) is due to all “masters” (*sadat*), by which he also means father and mother and in general all those worthy of respect (*peder ve mader ve sair vacibü'l-ikram*). He puts special emphasis on the necessary submission of the wife to her husband: “If in a household the cock suffers maltreatment from the hen, this household will perish and there will remain no harmony.”⁴⁷

42. Imber, Ebu's-suud 71.

43. Cf., for example, Mustafa Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*. 6 Volumes. Istanbul 1864-1866, Volume I, 40-44.

44. *Quran* 4:59.

45. Pir Mehmed Birgevi, *Risale-i Mülukiye*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Manuscrits turcs, Supplément Turc 1133, f.1v-9r, here 1v. Instead of “sultan”, the term used in the Arabic original – also cited by Birgevi – *ist amīr*.

46. Ismail Hakkı Bursevi, *Serh-i suab el-iman*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Ms.or.oct.1994, f.51r.

47. *Ibidem* f.42v-43r.

The proper domestic order between spouses was also of great concern to the alim Ali Fazlizade, who so vehemently criticised the Ottoman dignitaries. The failure of the men to control and guide their wives is one of the main reasons for the decline of Ottoman fortunes.

Unattended by their husbands women leave their houses, roam the streets of Istanbul, talk freely to whomsoever they like and take to prostitution and lesbianism.⁴⁸ As a result, the order of the world is shaken.⁴⁹ As to the question of what kind of behaviour befits an inferior in case his or her master commits wrongs, contravenes the law or acts in any other blameworthy way, it has been widely discussed among Muslim scholars through the ages.⁵⁰ According to Bursevi, opposition to *sadat* who commit wrongs (*masiyet*) is not rebellion (*ısyân*). Also, one should not obey the orders of a ruler who performs canonically forbidden acts, even if this entails a danger for oneself.⁵¹

Usually, acknowledging the authority of a person within a reciprocal hierarchical relationship did not only mean to show single, disconnected acts of obedience, but amounted to a quality pervading the whole attitude of the subordinate towards his superior: What was expected of him was loyalty, a devoted and steadfast commitment to the person and service of the master and a sense of shame so as not to belie the master's expectations. Within the hierarchical relationship the bond of loyalty was accorded more importance than any other affiliations, even religious ones. In the context of Ottoman frontier society betraying the master by breaking the bond of loyalty could turn the traitor into an outlaw. Such, at least, is the view of Ali the seal-keeper. He relates in his memoirs that one day General Nehem,

48. Ali Fazlizade, *Ayine el-kulub*, f.179r-181r.

49. An interesting analysis of this idea can be found in Werner Schiffauer: *Patrona-Revolte und Fettmilch-Aufstand. Zur Anthropologie von zwei urbanen Revoluten*, in: idem, *Fremde in der Stadt. Zehn Essays über Kultur und Differenz*, Frankfurt am Main 1997, 11-34.

50. Cf. Michael Cook: *Forbidding Wrong in Islam. An Introduction*. Cambridge 2003, 21-22, 38-42, 74-82.

51. Bursevi, *Serh-i suab* f.43r-v.

the Hungarian commander of Peterwardein, complained to Cafer Pasha, at that time commander of Temeshwar, because the Pasha had prisoners executed by impalement. This, the Hungarian general stated, was against the law of the frontier. But Cafer answered:

“We know the law of the frontier (*serhadd kanunu*) very well. Hitherto we have never killed but one of the captured Austrians and Hungarians nor have we ordered the named punishment. The Austrians and Hungarians are our ancient foes, who gird [themselves] with swords and fight with us. But when we contract friendship, they, too, become our friends again. Those Serbs, however, although since so many years they have been nourished by our bread and benefaction (*nan ve ni'metimiz ile perverde*) and as our subjects (*reayamız*) have been under our protection and care (*himayet ve sıyanetimiz*) in every respect, [now] rebel against their own benefactors and without good cause abandon their [status as] *reaya* (*raiyetleri*) girding [themselves] with swords with absolute traitorous intention, and in these borderlands they spear and roast the retinue and families of their *agas* and overlords (*zaimleri*), for example their under-aged children in plain view of them, and the fathers and mothers in plain view of their children, and they dash them to the ground and kill them with all kinds of similar tortures and ordeals – that is the manner of the Serbs. [...] The Serbian infidels do not belong to the groups included in this law of the frontier.”⁵²

It comes as no surprise that, according to Ali's story, the *giaours* also highly value the quality of loyalty and act accordingly: After Ali has been taken captive by a Christian officer during the conquest of Lipowa, his captor, now commander of the said fortress, wants him to pay a ransom of 500 gold pieces. But before Ali is able to get the money, a Serb from Temeshwar arrives:

“A Serbian *giaour* by the name of Nikola, a furrier, who belonged to the infidels of Temeshwar and lived in the Christian suburb, and who had also been nourished by our bread and benefaction, came to

52. Ali Mühürdar, *Tarih-i Vak'aname* 13r-v.

Lipowa in order to escape from Temeshwar and become a haiduck, surely intending to buy me.”

Nikola offers the Christian another 500 gold pieces for Ali, which means that Ali would have to pay Nikola 1000 gold pieces to be set free. This bidding provokes the rage of the officer: “Yet the commander [said]: ‘Excellent! You were born and grew up in Temeshwar and lined [his clothes] with fur – that I understood well. [...] If you buy him now for 500 gold pieces, you’ll also make a profit of 500 gold pieces. [...] Even if he is [able to pay this sum] – money is a dear thing (*mal candandır*). Until he would accept [to pay], you would have to torture him with violence and pain and beating, despite the fact that for such a long time you have eaten his bread and also benefited from his and his father’s kindness. You traitorous, wicked prick! Whose friend will you fellows be, if you always betray those whose bread you eat?’” And the commander, bringing the furrier back on the right way of bread and salt (*nan ve nemek yoluna geliüb*), *i.e.* punishing the breach of loyalty, strikes him unconscious with a cane.⁵³

But the value of loyalty is not only appreciated by Muslim and Christian fighters of the frontiers. The importance of the “right of bread and salt” (*hakk-i nan ve nemek*) is also pointed out by such a courtly figure as Mustafa Ali.⁵⁴

Ali the seal-keeper and Mustafa Ali also agree that persons of authority should through their virtuous behaviour strive to win the affection and respect of the people.⁵⁵ Ideally, the subject’s love and devotion to their benefactor transformed into gratefulness and resulted in prayers for his health and welfare.⁵⁶ In official documents

53. *Ibidem* 14v-15v.

54. Tietze, *Mustafa Ali’s Council* I 20 and 32, Ottoman text 93 and 113.

55. *Cf.* above page 53.

56. *Cf.* the preamble of the *kanunname* for Syria: “And the prayers of praises (*ayat*) of his justice and goodness are ‘filled’ by the contemplation of the *salihin*, fill the *masahif* (*qur’ans*) of the mosques of the Haramayn al-Sharifayn, and the *khutba* calls from the *minbars* of the said two mosques, ever calling for his long life and the endurance of his rule”; Abou-el-Haj, *Legitimation of Ottoman Rule* 377.

local authorities were sometimes told to exhort the *reaya* to pray for the long life of the sultan and his state.⁵⁷ Birgevi, too, mentions that it is a duty of the subjects to pray for and praise (*dua ve sena*) the sultan, because God has made him his caliph on earth.⁵⁸ Bursevi also emphasises the duty of prayer and in the same time does not fail to underline the interdependence of master and servants: the sultan is like the heart of the body and the subjects are like its parts, and just as the righteousness and badness (*salah ve fesad*) of the parts depend on the functioning of the heart, so too, the good or evil state of the world (*hal-i alem eğer hayir ve eğer şerr*) depends on the sultan.⁵⁹ The concluding example for this duty comes from the “Book of Counsel for Vezirs and Governors” of the finance director (*defterdar*) Sarı Mehmed Pasha (d. 1716). He advises the grand vizier:

”The grand vezir and all mankind should pray for His Majesty the Pādishāh of Islām and not fail in blessing him. [...] Let everyone always and with sincere heart bless and praise the pādishāh of mankind and hold not to the contrary course, for God who is Great in Majesty has made him caliph. He is the shadow of God on the face of the earth. Prayer for him is the duty to everyone. [...] Let thy heart be filled with love for the glorious pādishāh; let his praise and eulogy be perpetually on thy tongue. With all thy being strive and persevere in his service.”⁶⁰

But as it could already be inferred from Ali’s frontier memoirs, people should not only love their masters, but also fear them. The historian Mustafa Naima (d. 1716) suggests that every statesman, who wants to prevent his state from falling into dissension and weakness, should inspire both affection and dread for the sultan in the hearts of the subjects. This would not only prevent them from rebelling, but even thwart the mere arising of rebellious thoughts in

57. Kurz, *Sicill* 192-3, 225-6.

58. Birgevi, *Risale* 1v.

59. Bursevi, *Serh-i suab* 47r-v.

60. Walter Livingston Wright: *Ottoman Statecraft. The Book of Counsel for Vezirs and Governors*. Westport 1935, 68.

their minds, for they will wholeheartedly obey and submit to the sultan and his ministers.⁶¹ Therefore it is possible to explain the severe and at first sight probably arbitrary punishments meted out by Cafer Pasha and the Christian officer not only as a logical consequence for a breach of loyalty, but also as a means to inspire fear and respect, which are necessary for the rule to be effective. Thus lordly anger is a common feature of Ottoman leadership. During the reign of Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640), for example, it was “imperial anger” which “necessitated the chastisement of those who, by smoking, committed the sin of disobedience to the imperial command”,⁶² and the neglect of provincial officials to correctly enforce the sultan’s orders provoked his royal panting with rage.⁶³

The Diffusion of the Imperial “Ideology”

When bit by bit the Ottomans constructed their state with the patrimonial household as core structure, they did not force totally alien concepts of social organisation on many of the people they integrated into their realm. While the majority was willing to accept reciprocal hierarchical relationships as the “natural” frame of coexistence, it was the task of the Ottoman elite to make people understand and trust that they – the Ottomans – were indeed well-suited to fill the roles of patrons and masters in such a relationship.

Official documents like *kanunnames*, *adaletnames* and sultanic orders were a means to spread and confirm the Ottoman vision of the sultan as a God chosen, just and merciful ruler in the provinces.

These writings abound with phrases and expressions bespeaking the gracious, but at the same time just and, if necessary, strict rule of the sultan. The *adaletnames*, for example confirm the wish of the ruler to see justice done to all his subjects and all kinds of

61. Naima: *Tarih*, Volume VI, appendix 53.

62. G.L. Lewis: *The Balance of Truth*. London 1957, 51.

63. Kurz, *Sicill* 578, 581.

oppression subdued.⁶⁴ The preambles of *kanunnames* praise “justice, which is bonded in the character of the Ottoman sultans, who are verily the shadows of God’s several mercies”.⁶⁵ *Firmans* of the sultan and *buyurıldis* of the provincial governors promise to protect the poor and the *reaya* against all sorts of evil and threaten all those who do not obey their commands with serious consequences.⁶⁶

Apart from these official documents moral and religious advice literature, mostly written by *ulema*, formed part of the reading matter in the capital and the provinces.⁶⁷ As the examples cited above from the *Şerh-i şuaab el-iman* of Ismail Hakkı Bursevi demonstrate, these treatises not only dealt with the ritual obligations of Muslims and the articles of faith, but often also advised their readers on questions like the proper behaviour towards elders, child-rearing,⁶⁸ eating and drinking manners, or the refinement of character. In this way they informed the common people about their appropriate place in society: fearing God and respecting and obeying elders and authorities.

The observations made so far mainly concern forms of written communication. Of course, *adaletnames* and *fermans* were usually read out to the provincial notables in the law-courts or publicly proclaimed. Also, everyone who was interested could get a certified copy of an *adaletname* or *kanunname* from the local kadi for a certain fee or sometimes even for free.⁶⁹ The proud owner of a piece

64. Cf. Halil İnalcık: *Adaletnameler*, in: *Belgeler* 2.3-4 (1965) 49-145.

65. Abou-el-Haj: *Legitimation of Ottoman Rule* 376.

66. Cf., for example, Kurz, *Sicill* 226-230, 232-236, 251-253, 264-265.

67. Cf., for example, the religious advice literature in Bosnian Turkish mentioned in Smail Balić: *Katalog der türkischen Handschriften der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*. Ankara 2006.

68. According to Gibb and Bowen, the social education of children in the Ottoman Empire was carried out at home, where, despite differences of rank and class, discipline and respect for elders were universally inculcated. H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen: *Islamic Society and the West. A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East*. Volume I, Part 2. London, Reprint 1963, 139.

69. Uriel Heyd: *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*. Ed. by V.L. Ménage. Oxford 1973, 150, note 4.

of advice literature could read and re-read it every day, if he or she so wished. But it is unlikely that in early modern Ottoman society, writing and reading were the most important form of communication. The fuss, for example, which the Ottoman authorities and critics of society made about sumptuary laws – Ali the *alim* identified their disregard as just another sign of the world's decline⁷⁰ – indicates the importance of signals and symbols as means of non-verbal communication. Differences in clothing, in equipage and retinue, the seat allocated to a person in public spaces – all these things were visible signs of rank and status which guaranteed the order of society. Nobody should transgress the “limits” (*hadd*, pl. *hudud*) of his or her proper social status and overstep the bounds of what was rightfully his or hers to do.⁷¹ According to Madeline Zilfi, in Ottoman Istanbul “even the mob possessed a ‘*hadd*’ of sorts”.⁷² Likewise, the insignia bestowed on Ottoman officials during their inauguration into a post such as furs, robes or horsetails were the unmistakable symbols of social rank and dignity. Ali the seal-bearer mentions an anecdote regarding this in his memoirs: When Sultan Mustafa II (1695-1703) wanted to make Cafer Pasha commander of the fortress of Temeshwar for a second time, he ordered the chamberlain to bring the fur, the symbol of honour belonging to the bestowal of this post. But Cafer Pasha vehemently refused to accept the office. Finally, Mustafa told him that he was the only person he could entrust with this job. “And again [the sultan] ordered the chamberlain: ‘The fur!’ They vested [the Pasha] with a robe of honour lined with sable fur, but while descending the stairs he dropped the robe and told the chamberlain: ‘I do not go into this fortress!’”⁷³

70. Ali Fazlizade, *Ayine el-kulub* f.130v-131r.

71. The concept of *hudud* conforms with the above cited definition of justice: “Justice means putting things in the places where they belong”; cf. page 55

72. Madeline Zilfi: *The Politics of Piety. The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)*. Minneapolis 1988, 219.

73. Ali Mühürdar, *Tarih-i Vak'aname* f.146r-v.

Hence the question is now: how was Ottoman imperial “ideology” communicated in non-verbal form? There were, of course, the great pious foundations already referred to previously which manifested the benevolence of Ottoman dignitaries and brought a flair of imperial culture to the provinces. But a much more vivid and dynamic example of the style and qualities of Ottoman leadership were the Ottoman dignitaries themselves and their interaction with the people. They were flagships of Ottoman sultanic power. If their comportment was flawless, it served both ends: it advertised the trustworthiness and legitimacy of the Ottoman sultan and at the same time strengthened the dignitaries’ own authority. Thus it is very likely that the dignitaries’ behaviour was closely watched by the populace. Cafer Pasha, as he is depicted in Ali’s memoirs – which were in any case composed by him to praise his glorious master – is an incarnation of all the desirable moral qualities of an Ottoman Pasha. Even the infidel enemy had to appreciate his noble character: “You [Ottomans] had no other vizier like him”.⁷⁴ So how, besides being a capable military leader, did Cafer Pasha manage to convey his message of care, protection and benevolence to the people while his fortress of Temeshwar had become an isolated island in the midst of a territory occupied by Hungarians and Austrians and while his subjects were close to starvation? A further quotation from Ali’s memoirs can give us an idea of his course of action.

One day a troop of the Pasha’s men wanted to leave the fortress in order to raid a Christian village. While the soldiers were waiting for the blessings of the Pasha, a group of starving women and children, hoping to find something to eat outside the fortress, came to join the troop. When the Pasha arrived with some other dignitaries, the women and children broke into lamentations about their bitter fate. Listening to their grievances “tears rolled down the cheeks of our noble Pasha, and when also Selim Dede and the other noble

74. *Ibidem* f.12r.

ulema present buried their faces in their handkerchiefs and began to cry, all the men, women and children standing around burst out into tears and wailing which is impossible to describe. Because of the wailing and weeping no time was left for the prayer. We entrusted the troop to God and depressed and heavy-hearted went back from that place to the fortress.”⁷⁵

Without ruling out the possibility that Cafer Pasha really felt sympathy for the suffering of the poor, it is, nevertheless, not the point, if the emotions he and the *ulema* showed in this situation were “true” or not. To understand this better, it is helpful to have a closer look at some of the above cited remarks Cafer Pasha made when defending his impalement of the Serbs. He said: “The Austrians and Hungarians are our ancient foes, who gird [themselves] with swords and fight with us. But when we contract friendship, they, too, become our friends again” (*Nemçe ve Macar kılıç kuşanub bizimle ceng eder düşmanımızdır ve dostluk etdüğümüzde dahi yine dostumuzdur*).⁷⁶ Here it becomes evident that the emotional state of enmity or friendship is not so much associated with merely internal processes in people’s minds, but rather depends on objective social relations, *i.e.* emotions are the subjective mirror of objective conditions.⁷⁷ And as such, they form an essential and self-evident component of communication. Put another way, specific emotions were appropriate to particular situations, like, for example, the sultanic anger was the adequate response to the “sin of disobedience”.⁷⁸ So Cafer Pasha’s and the *ulema*’s display of tears, no matter whether “artificial” or “true”, was the response which best corresponded to the situation. The dignitaries “produced” a staging of emotions ap-

75. *Ibidem* f.17r-v.

76. Cf. above 58.

77. Cf. David Warren Sabean: *Production of the Self during the Age of Confessionalism*, in: *Central European History* 29 (1996) 1-18, here 3-4.

78. Cf. Stephen White’s analysis of the political script of anger in European medieval society: Stephen D. White: *The Politics of Anger*, in: Barbara H. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger’s Past. The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca 1998, 127-152.

propriate to the objective conditions, and in this context these emotions had a demonstrative character like other signs and symbols in non-verbal communication: they assured the poor of the solidarity, sympathy and care of their patron.⁷⁹ Cafer Pasha showed himself as the good shepherd who cares for the well-being of his flock and laments its bitter fate.

A collective crying of the Pasha and the poor can be found in yet another situation: When the Austrians offered the besieged people of Temeshwar that in return for the surrender of the fortress, they would provide carts and boats and let them go wherever they wished to, Cafer Pasha refused to accept. Later, the notables of Temeshwar – in this context designated as the “poor” by Ali, *i.e.* the defenceless – convoked in a council by Cafer, approved of his decision:

“‘Sir! Your life is as dear to you as our life is to us. This fortress is actually not your true home. You do not have any landed property here. You are a most excellent commander and after [this post] you will go to a safe place, attain [another] office and enjoy pleasures and joys. Yet nevertheless, you abandon all this and sacrifice your own life for the sake of the religion of Islam. This land is our true home and our birthplace. We have landed property [here] and when we leave it and go away to another country, it is clear as daylight, that in strange lands under eaves and in the corners of caravansarays we will suffer from misery and pain. How could we accept to surrender? As long as there is some life left in [our] bodies, we will exert and sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the religion of Islam. We do not surrender. But it is for you to give orders.’ When [this] was said, our noble Pasha and all those present started to cry.”⁸⁰

On this occasion, the joint display of emotions brings about a feeling of solidarity and unification with regard to the common goal:

79. Cf. Gerd Althoff: *Empörung, Tränen, Zerknirschung. Emotionen in der öffentlichen Kommunikation des Mittelalters*, in: *idem, Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter. Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde*. Darmstadt 1997, 258-281.

80. Ali Mühürdar, *Tarih* f.34r.

the defence of Islam. The Pasha and his flock are bound together in a “community of sentiment”,⁸¹ which gives them a sense of shared identity. In this case, as well, the “true” feelings of persons do not matter, as Appadurai argues for the case of public praise: “Praise is *not* a matter of *direct* communication between the ‘inner’ states of the relevant persons, but involves the public negotiation of certain gestures and responses.”⁸²

The creation of such a community of sentiment is not only a good means to establish bonds of solidarity between master and subjects and within the subject community respectively, but also to educate people’s sentiment in accordance with the prevailing “ideology”. In Ottoman poetry, for example, the ruler is often referred to with semantic equivalents for “beloved”, and, according to Andrews, “if the poetic tradition is taken at face value, the relation of the subject to the state *cum* monarch is openly one of love or affection or, at least, of an intense emotional attachment closely resembling love”.⁸³ In this case, too, it would make no sense to search for the “true” feeling according to modern concepts. What matters, rather, is the fact that a convention was established which combined the subject’s relation to the ruler with a sense of attachment and devotion. By creating communities of sentiment around the praise of the sultan, this sense of attachment to him could be spread among the population throughout the Empire.

But also on a deeper level, the staging of emotions and the creation of communities of sentiment served to reinforce the acceptance of hierarchical relationships between caring protectors and obedient subordinates as quasi “natural”. Since it was the duty of

81. Arjun Appadurai: *Topographies of the Self: Praise and Emotion in Hindu India*, in: Catherine A. Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod (eds.), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, Cambridge 1990, Reprint 1993, 92-112, here 94.

82. *Ibidem* 93-94.

83. Walter G. Andrews: *Poetry’s Voice, Society’s Song. Ottoman Lyric Poetry*. Seattle and London 1985, 90-91. Annemarie Schimmel notes the same for Persian poetry (Annemarie Schimmel: *Stern und Blume. Die Bilderwelt der persischen Poesie*. Wiesbaden 1984, 10).

the subordinate to praise his master, memoirs like those of Ali the seal-bearer or Evliya Çelebi's "Book of Travels", which glorify the deeds and character of their respective patron, where probably no exception. Through the propagation, in oral or written form, of such life stories and characters sketches, the idealized vision of the protecting master was again and again inscribed in the minds of the people.

Concluding Remarks

On different levels of society, the Ottomans experienced and shaped their social life in form of reciprocal hierarchical relationships "concluded" between protectors and protected. Within these relationships it was the duty of the protectors to care for those entrusted to them, to guard them against all harm, and to guide them morally, especially by being exemplifications of moral qualities themselves. Their authority and recognition as masters depended on the accomplishment of these obligations. On the other hand, the protected had to be obedient, grateful and loyal towards their masters. If they failed in this, they could rightfully be punished. Ottoman imperial "ideology" promoted the concept of a just and gracious sultan supported by representatives endowed with the same qualities, which combined well with the role of protector in the reciprocal relationship. The metaphors of imperial rhetoric evoked a translocal imagination of an Empire unified by the protecting "shadow of God on earth", the sultan, and under the "wings of kindness and justice (*şefkat ve adalet*)" which provincial governors were exhorted to spread over the "poor population and the *reaya*".⁸⁴ The protector-concept also defines the limits of legitimate rulership. The Ottoman sultan's claim to power could be challenged on the grounds that he was unjust and tyrannical or that he failed to provide his subjects the safety and protection he

84. Kurz, *Sicill* 289, Ottoman text 287.

owed them in return for their taxes. The Ottomans themselves, for example, justified their conquest of Syria and Egypt from Muslim rulers, the Mamluks, by accusing them of tyranny and sin, *i.e.* the betrayal of the mandate they had received from God.⁸⁵ On the other hand, the Ottomans, too, time and again became targets of similar impeachments. The discontent of the population with their reigning sovereign could lead to his replacement, as happened several times in Ottoman history. Now and then some people were even so frustrated with the house of Osman that they pondered expelling the whole family from the Empire. The Khalveti Şeyh Niyazi-i Mısri (d. 1694), for example, intended to replace the Ottoman dynasty with the royal family of the Crimean Tatars, the Girays.⁸⁶

Yet despite any discontent with individual Ottoman sultans or with the whole dynasty, the fundamental principle underlying sultanic leadership was never questioned. Like the human body consists of different parts all of which have their appropriate place and function, so men are not equal, some being destined to rule and as rulers obliged to fulfil certain expectations, whereas the majority is meant to submit obediently to those few.

As a matter of course, also this concept had its limits, and, as it seems, not all subjects of the Ottomans conformed to it. The unruly Serbs, for example, had probably different ideas about the relationship of rulers and ruled. An even more drastic problem was posed to the Ottomans by the Druzes in the mountain hinterland of Sidon and Beirut. The Ottomans never really managed to control this region and its inhabitants. One reason for this failure was, according to Abu-Husayn, the nature of the sectarian and tribal cohesion among the Druzes, which was alien to the Ottomans, who “tried hard to break it up, but without much success. They did not understand the basic social structure of the Druzes and their leaders,

85. Abu-el-Haj, *Legitimation of Ottoman Rule* 379.

86. Derin Terzioğlu: *Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyāzī-i Mısrī (1618-1694)*, in: *Studia Islamica* 94 (2002) 139-165, here 155.

which led them to overestimate the power wielded by some Druze leaders and underestimate that of others".⁸⁷

Notwithstanding such difficulties on the local or regional scale, by and large the concept of leader-protector worked well in the Ottoman realms and gave support to the dynasty well into the 20th century.

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87. Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn: *Problems in the Ottoman Administration in Syria during the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Case of the Sanjak of Sidon-Beirut*, in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24.4 (1992) 665-675, here 667.