Forward

Dear EMIGL readers,

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this chapter draft. The text is currently in a transitional stage between the version I presented over a year ago at my chapter defense meeting and the final version that I plan to submit for my dissertation defense in two months.

The text is, therefore, an actual work in progress, with many rough edges and in which much legwork (footnoting, polishing, editing, etc.) remains to be done. As I concluded this version of the text, I already started to think about some new paragraph I will need to add, and where to add them. I have inserted a short, underlined note where I plan to insert these new pieces of texts to give you a sense of the direction this chapter is going in.

For our discussion, I would much appreciate if you could focus your feedback on the following issues that I have been struggling with:

- What do I argue in this chapter?
- What parts of the argument work, and what parts are confusing?
- What evidence works towards my argument, and what evidence is superfluous?
- What kind of evidence do you think the text would require to be more explicit?
- What further contextualizing elements should I add to make the text clearer? (please bear in mind that in many cases these elements are provided in previous chapters in the dissertation, and I will try to cover those at our meeting).
- What directions should I take this chapter towards?

Looking forward to our discussion next Friday,

Thank you and

All the Best,

Ian
Ch 3: The Veneto-Ottoman Mobility System: Navigating Bureaucracies Across the Sixteenth Century Mediterranean.

Introduction.

On June 13, 1524, Piero Bragadin, the Venetian resident ambassador (bailo) in Istanbul, received a visit from Ali Bey Dragoman, a translator in Ottoman service, and several Ottoman naval officers, including an Ottoman captain (un capitano del Signor et quattro sopracomiti) with their retinues. The Ottomans were about to set out into the Mediterranean on board their ships, and they had received instructions from unnamed viziers to call upon the bailo and request Venetian travel patents that would identify them as friends of Venice while navigating. The bailo not only complied with the request but also spent a lavish sum on entertaining his guests with “candies and sweets” (zuccari et confetti). Several weeks later, Bragadin found himself in an almost specular position, as he approached the Ottoman Imperial Council (Divan-ı Hümyun) to request “an order from the Porte so that our couriers will not be molested while coming and going” (per un comandamento ottenuto alla Porta che li nostri corrieri nel andar e nel ritornar non siano molestati). As we shall see, this document was likely a courier or way order (ulak or yol hükmü), both document types which the Venetian diplomatic core knew well. Episodes such as these were part of a constant conversation between Ottomans and Venetians regarding mobility and identification that has left many traces.¹

¹ ASVe, Secreta, Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli, Vol. 1-4, f. 2r and 6v.
This chapter builds on the arguments developed in chapters I and II, where I explored the origins, forms, and uses of patents for travel and identification purposes in Venice, Malta, and Florence, and argued for the development of a Mediterranean travel patent system among Italianate polities in the sixteenth century. The task of the present chapter is expanding the scope of my inquiry to include the most prominent Eastern Mediterranean polity: The Ottoman Empire. For decades now Ottomanist and Mediterraneanist scholars have endeavored towards including the Ottoman Empire into studies of the Mediterranean, showing how the empire was a fully integrated part of Mediterranean trade, diplomacy, and culture.\(^2\) Here, I hope to contribute to these studies by providing the first comparison between Venetian travel patents and travel and identification papers used in the Ottoman Empire.

The Veneto-Ottoman relation during the sixteenth century provides an ideal case study through which to contribute to current historiographical debates about cross-cultural interaction in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, comparing instruments and institutions that stemmed from different legal and administrative traditions is a daunting task that can easily lead to overemphasizing either similarities or differences. While exploring the comparison, I have found it particularly useful to focus on the commensurability between Venetian and Ottoman documents related to mobility. I consider commensurability as the capacity of two cultural or, in this case, bureaucratic systems to understand each other through a diachronic process of

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interactions. In the Veneto-Ottoman case, a vital feature of this process, which my chapter highlights, was the legibility Mediterranean travel practices and papers. Following Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in this chapter I focus specifically on the “bridges between cultures” and suggest that travel papers, and not only individuals, could be agents of commensurability.³

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the historical dynamics between Venetians and Ottomans over the first early modern period and poses a puzzling question: why are there almost no patents issued to Ottoman subjects in the database of over 1000 Venetian travel patents I have explored in chapter II? I attempt to answer this question by presenting three contributing factors. First, the presence of the capitulations (ahdname), diplomatic and trade agreements between the two empires that provide general safe-conduct to Venetian subjects in Ottoman lands and vice-versa. Second, was the Venetian practice of organizing armed convoys (mude) to protect shipments from and to Ottoman lands, even within the Adriatic. Together, the convoys and the capitulation made the issuance of travel papers by central institutions superfluous in many cases. However, there is still abundant evidence that Venetians and Ottomans often carried each other’s travel papers, but that this aspect of mobility management took place within peripheral state institutions that my data-collecting has not covered because of limitations in the sources. After having established these elements, the chapter moves on in search of Ottoman patents. Here I initially examine what scholars have identified as Ottoman patents and emphasize the terminological ambiguity that exists concerning Ottoman travel papers both in the literature and in the sources. I then focus on one of the Ottoman travel papers most

like Venetian travel patents, the *ulak* and *yol hükmü*. Despite the formal similarities between these document archetypes, the Venetians did not equate these documents with patents. Indeed, when approaching Ottoman travel documents, they identified as patents from functional, rather than formal, similarities.

Ultimately, my discussion of mobility practices between Venice and Istanbul and the comparison between Venetian and Ottoman travel papers suggests that the two empires maintained interlocking mobility systems that were mutually legible and that allowed the empires to integrate in a limited but functional manner. Limited because, with some exceptions, the administrations of each state only recognized documents issued by their institutions and thus the majority of Venetian and Ottoman documents were concerned with internal circulation. Functional, because both Venetians and Ottomans understood the use of, and had access to each other’s travel papers through the mediation of their peripheral institutions, such as the *bailo*. This factor provided a solid foundation for everyday interactions grounded in the legibility of each other instruments and practices, to the point that we may argue for a Veneto-Ottoman mobility system.

1 – Historical Setting.

The sixteenth century was a period of intense exchange and competition between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. The two polities had begun their long history of interaction in the fourteenth century, particularly after the Ottoman conquest on Constantinople in 1453 when the Venetian were quick to replace their rivals, the Byzantine supported Genoese, and begin negotiations for trade agreements with the newly formed empire. These events started a period of long commercial and diplomatic collaboration between the two polities. However, we should not forget that this collaboration took place in the shadow of respective imperial ambitions. When
the Ottoman first encountered the Venetians on the sea, the Venetians were one of the Mediterranean’s dominant maritime powers and controlled an empire that spanned from mainland Italy too, eventually, Cyprus. By the sixteenth century, however, the relationship had reversed. The Ottomans had become invested in the Mediterranean and, after having absorbed the seafaring expertise of the emirate of Manteşe and of the of the Byzantine lands they conquered, by the 1470s were able to defeat the Venetian navy during the first Ottoman-Venetian war. What followed this first Venetian defeat would repeat itself several times throughout the long sixteenth-century: The conquering Ottomans would lay claim to a piece of the Venetian dominion, after which the two polities would sign a peace treaty that essentially reconfirmed the Venetian privileged commercial position vis-à-vis the Ottomans.4

Even so, Venice remained a formidable opponent on the sea well into the sixteenth century. During the fourth Ottoman-Venetian war of 1570-73, in which the Ottomans conquered Venetian held Cyprus but lost the famed battle of Lepanto, the Venetians could still field the second largest fleet of the Mediterranean, larger than that of the combined forces of the Habsburg Spanish crown, Genoa, the papacy, and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.5 However, scholars have often seen the Lepanto campaign as the swan song of Venetian power in the Mediterranean.6 Be that as it may, during the late sixteenth the Venetians experienced a declining of their privileged diplomatic position in regards to the Ottomans. This is not to say that Venice

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6 The first to argue for this idea was Tenenti, Alberto. Piracy and the Decline of Venice: 1580-1615 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
had held a monopoly in Ottoman Mediterranean diplomacy before this period. As early as the 1530s, for example, the Ottomans had brokered an anti-Habsburg alliance with the Kingdom of France. However, by the end of the century, particularly following the arrival of Northern Europeans in the Mediterranean, the Ottomans extended their diplomatic network to include the papal city of Ancona, France, the English, and even the Dutch. Regardless of the loss of centrality of Veneto-Ottoman relations to Mediterranean geopolitical interests, this short overview still showcases the intensity of their interactions, both peaceful and not, for most of the century.

Considering the complexity of Veneto-Ottoman relations during the period, which entailed the constant movement of diplomatic personnel, traders, and even simple travelers between the jurisdictions of the two polities, we might expect to find a large number of Venetian patents issued to Ottoman subjects. However, and quite surprisingly, Ottoman subjects carried only 3 of the 1065 travel papers I have collected in Venice. The Serenissima Signoria issued one of them in 1564, to unnamed carriers whom I can only assume were Ottoman subjects because their purpose of travel was to ransom Venetian subjects who were slaves of theirs (per recuperare alcuni loro schiavi sudditi nostril). Hasan Çavuş, a member of the Sultan’s core of messengers cum diplomats, carried the other two documents on his way back to Istanbul from Venice in 1576. The Collegio emitted these patents two days apart from each other, on July 10 and July 12. The first document told Venetian galley captains that “having been shown our [of the Collegio] present patent, you shall allow him [Hasan] onboard your galleys…and take him to Zadar…treating him well and paying for his trip, as usual” (essendovi mostrare le presenti nostre patenti dobbiate ricever sopra una galea….e condurlo a Zara…facendole buona compagnia et le

7 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, vol. 173, 23 July 1564.
spese secondo l'ordinario). The second document contained similar orders covering the next step of Hasan’s trip. With this second paper, the officer would take passage from Venetian held Zara (modern-day Zadar) to of Liesina (modern-day Hvar), one of the last Venetian outposts on the Dalmatian coast (the Adriatic coastal region today mostly divided between Slovenia and Croatia), where we may assume Hasan was able to cross over into Ottoman territory.

Though these three documents are undoubtedly interesting, the dearth of Venetian patents in the hands of Ottoman subjects, even ambassadors, is puzzling. Why the absence? Several reasons likely contribute to this situation, the chief of which being the presence of macro-level diplomatic agreements between Venice and the Ottoman Empire that addressed, among other things, mobility.

2 - The capitulations (ahdname).

Since 1454, the capitulations, or ahdname, Veneto-Ottoman relations. These documents were diplomatic and commercial agreements used by the Ottoman sultans to grant jurisdictional and commercial privileges to foreigners living or traveling in the Ottoman Empire. The etymology of the term capitulation is most likely tied to the Latin term capitulare, meaning “to come to an agreement,” but could also derive from the capiuta, or chapters, in which these documents were divided. The Ottoman term ahdname, which can be translated literally as “letter of agreement” or more simply as “treaty,” derives instead from the classical lexicon of Islamic diplomacy, and during the early modern period came to identify specifically the

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8 ASVe, Collegio, Lettere Comuni, vol. 54, 10 July 1576.
9 ASVe, Collegio, Lettere Secrete, missive, vol. 28, 12 July 1576.
10 While performing this function, the ahdname were often supplemented by imperial orders or other berats that clarified, added additional privileges, or even renewed the capitulations themselves. See particularly Boogert, Maurits H. *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beraths in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 25-26.
11 For the most recent discussion of the etymology of the term, see White, *Piracy and Law*, 113.
agreements between the Ottomans and foreign, mostly Christian, powers. In these cases, the 
subjects of the polity that brokered an ahdname with the Ottomans gained many privileges 
within the empire, most importantly that of becoming “licensed foreigners” (müstemin), 
individuals who were not subject to the Ottoman head-tax on non-Christians (haraç).\textsuperscript{12} 
Throughout the sixteenth century, the Ottoman sultans reconfirmed the Venetian ahdname many 
times (1503, 1521, 1540, 1573, 1597), and adjusted their structure and wording in response to the 
shifting balance of power between the two polities and to the increase of Mediterranean piracy.\textsuperscript{13} 
Starting in 1535, the Ottomans also brokered several other agreements with European powers, 
first with France (1535), then with the British (1579), and finally with the Dutch (1612).

 Much ink has been spilled on the analysis of the capitulations because of the central role 
they played in Ottoman diplomatic policy with European polities. A particularly vexing question 
in the scholarship is whether the capitulations were bilateral agreements or unilateral grants 
given by the Ottomans to foreigners.\textsuperscript{14} In this regard, Hans Theunissen has argued persuasively 
that throughout the sixteenth century the ahdname transitioned from being bilateral agreements 
that needed to be ratified by both parties, to unilateral grants of the Ottoman sultan. One of the 
critical features of this transformation was that the Ottoman chancellery progressively started to 
issue the ahdname as in the form of a nişans, a type of unilateral imperial decree that closely 
resembles the diplomas issued by medieval and early modern rulers in Europe.\textsuperscript{15} This process 
entailed a shift towards making the capitulations, at least formally, a unilateral. However, 

\textsuperscript{12} White, Piracy and Law, 107. 
\textsuperscript{13} Ibidem, 115-120. 
\textsuperscript{14} On this much vexed issue, see De Groot, Alexander H. “The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,” in Oriente Moderno, 22 (2003): 575–694. 
\textsuperscript{15} Theunissen, Ottoman-Venetian., 230-240. On this issue see also Pedani Fabris, La dimora della pace, 33.
was likely a legal fiction aimed at circumventing Islamic regulations about establishing truces with non-Muslims, as well as a rhetorical artifice that positioned the Ottoman sultan above other, allied, rulers. Indeed, the texts of the capitulations remained fiercely negotiated by both parties despite the formal shift.16

Scholars agree that, alongside many other positive and negative rights, one of the critical privileges granted by the ahdname was safe-conduct (aman).17 As in Europe, by the sixteenth century, the safe-conduct was a well-established diplomatic instrument of Islamic governance.18 Within the context of cross-cultural relations, safe-conducts allowed for guarded interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims by suspending the constant state of warfare that in theory existed between the people residing within Muslim-governed lands (dar-ul Islam) and the non-Muslims living outside of them. In principle, any Muslim could grant a simple aman, or individual safe-conduct, to any non-Muslim. This action amounted to a legally binding promise of protection and granted the carriers of aman safety of their persons and goods while they resided or traveled in Muslim lands, usually for up to either four months or one year. It was also possible to grant a general safe-conduct, called aman ‘amm in Arabic, which placed all members of a designated community under protection. In this case, the safe-conduct was issued in writing by the head of a Muslim community, usually an imam.19 Modern scholarship attributes the technical characteristics of the aman to the 1415 chancellery manual of the Mamluk scholar al-Qalqashandi. This text, studied by John Wansbrough, discusses the safe-conducts granted to non-

16 White, Piracy and Law, 138-139.
17 Boogert, Maurits H. The Capitulations, 32. Pedani, La dimora della pace, 15.
Muslims but also details the practices for granting *aman* to other Muslims, particularly to rebels or bandits.\(^{20}\) In other words, although famous for its role in managing Muslim interactions with non-believers, *aman* was technically a legal instrument that granted protection to people who were in a state of war, in practice or figuratively, with the issuing sovereign power. Thus, as was the case with European safe-conducts, Islamic *aman* granted negative rights to their carriers by suspending the state of war between them and the issuing institution.

Scholars have sometimes identified safe-conduct as a non-reciprocal component of the capitulations, meaning that it was intended to apply only to Venetians, or other licensed foreigners, in the Ottoman empire and not to Ottoman subjects in foreign jurisdictions.\(^{21}\) From a purely technical perspective, this observation is accurate, as the *aman* was a unilateral grant of protection. However, the Venetian capitulations contain many references to safe-passage that appear entirely reciprocal. The 1540 Ottoman-Venetian *ahdname* decreed that, when Ottoman and Venetian ships met upon the sea, they should behave with “friendship” (*dostluk*) and refrain from “doing harm or injury” (*zarar ve ziyan etmeyeler*) to one another.\(^{22}\) Though such clauses are common in all sixteenth-century capitulations, it is true that the word *aman* does not appear directly in the texts of the documents. However, references to *aman* – or *eman*, in Ottoman Turkish – are found frequently in imperial orders addressing infringements of the *ahdname*. For example, in August 1567 the *Divan* sent an order (*hükm*) to the Doge of Venice urging him to hunt down pirates who had captured a man named Uğurlı and several other Ottoman subjects

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22 Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian*, 455.
who had been on their way from Ancona to Istanbul. The order stated that the Doge should strive to have the travelers released “as required by the agreement and safe-conduct” (ahd ü emân mûcebince ıtlâk). This wording was typical of countless documents issued to enforce the ahdnames or to discuss how to punish their violators, whether Venetians or Ottomans.

Additionally, the Venetians took infringements of the capitulations seriously, and they did so for several reasons. First and foremost, there was the constant risk of compromising the peace agreements between Venice and Istanbul. Indeed, the pretexts for both the 1570-1573 Cyprus War, and the 1645-1669 Cretan was the Venetian incapability of dealing, and supposed conniving with, Christian pirates who preyed upon Ottoman shipping. Also, the Venetians had by the sixteenth century firmly established that the Adriatic Sea, which they referred to as the “Gulph of Venice” (Golfo di Venetia), was part of their jurisdiction. Therefore, Venice made a point of barring foreign armed vessels from the Adriatic, and in return promised to protect all friendly travelers and traders, including Ottoman subjects, who traveled within the area.

Venetian claims for sovereignty over the region laid heavily on this claim, a claim which became harder and harder to uphold in the latter part of the sixteenth century, when Muslim and Christian's piracy targeting Veneto-Ottoman trade routes in the region drastically increased.

23 The format of this document is interesting, as it technically expresses a direct order to the head of a foreign state. The strategy may be tied to diplomatic posturing of the Ottomans in this case, who thus attempted to consider the Venetians as a vassal state because of the tribute payed by them for the islands of Cyprus and Zakinthos. On this question see Pedani, La dimora della pace, 37.
26 Indeed, at almost every set of instructions send to the bailo form the Senate during the second half of the sixteenth century contain some directions on dealing with the repercussion of uskok piracy on Ottoman subject. See for example Senato, Deliberationi, Costantinopoli, 6, f. 20r.
These events and the ever limited reach of state enforcement in the early modern world placed Venetians and Ottomans in an uneasy state of constant tension that mostly weighed upon the weaker member of their partnership, Venice.

Therefore, upholding the capitulations, or making a show of trying to uphold them, was a vital concern for Venetian officers stationed in the Mediterranean and particularly in the Adriatic. To try and avoid the mismanagement of Ottoman subjects by Venetian officers, the Venetian Senate even decreed that all its officials stationed in the sea dominion, such as the Provisioner of the Fleet (Provveditore dell’Armata), the Captain of the Guard of Cyprus (Capitano della Guardia di Cipro), and the Captain of the Gulph (Capitano in Golpho), should carry copies of the capitulations to use as guidelines.\textsuperscript{28} This evidence, if nothing else, testifies that the capitulations extend a bi-lateral, general safe-conduct between Venice and the Ottomans. It also helps explain why the Ottoman ship captains we have encountered ad the start of this chapter visiting the court of bailo Bragadin in Istanbul had requested a “patent letter as to good friends” (littere patente come boni amici), and not a safe-conduct.\textsuperscript{29}

3 – Armed convoys and cross-cultural trade

(This section is still in the works. Its purpose is to explain that sixteenth-century Venetian and Ottoman trade often took place via state-sponsored armed convoys. This practice provided an alternative means of protecting travel that could be more effective than travel papers and that would in many cases render individual travel permits superfluous).

4 – Venetians Patents of Safe-Conduct and Inter-Imperial Rivalry

\textsuperscript{28} Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti, Registri, N. 73, ff. 34r, 58v, 117r-118r.
\textsuperscript{29} ASVe, Secreta, Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli, Vol. 1-4, f. 2r.
The presence of the capitulations and armed maritime convoys help explain the lack of safe-conducts issued by Venetians for Ottoman subjects and vice versa. However, there were several ways in which Venetian safe-conducts, particularly criminal and fiscal ones, could still play a role in Veneto-Ottoman relations. There are some examples of safe-conducts granted to Venetian exiles who had gained the favor of Ottoman authorities, as was the case in 1564 for Sebastiano Dolfin, a nobleman who had found the ear of Sultan Selim. The sultan himself had requested the concession on Dolfin’s behalf, and the Senate had obliged “to gratify him” (*in gratificatione vostra*).30 It was not only outcast Venetian nobles who might benefit from these types of requests. In 1584, the Senate also granted the Jews Abraham and David Chirico and their sons a “safe-conduct for their persons and things against debts older than five years” (*salvacondotto per le loro persone et robbe per conto di debiti di cinque anni in la*). The two men, who desired to settle in Venice, had petitioned the Senate by presenting recommendation letters drafted by Ibrahim Paşa, the Ottoman grand vizier.31 These practices were not limited to Veneto-Ottoman relations, and the Venetian archives contain many patents issued *in gratificatione* of various European princes, such as the king of France, the Duchess of Urbino, and cardinal of Trento.32 In all these cases, the concession of criminal or fiscal safe-conducts to favorites of foreign princes was part of an elaborate game of diplomatic courtesy and gift giving. However, it is also possible that the beneficiaries of these documents would remain in some ways indebted to their foreign patron and would endeavor toward promoting their interests once they returned home.

30 ASVe, Senato, Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, vol. 1, f. 136.
31 ASVe, Senato, Deliberationi, Costantinopoli, vol. 6, 168v.
32 ASVe, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere, vol 54, 28 March 1552, 12 June 1552, 20 October 1552.
Be that as it may, there was another way in which Venetian authorities used safe-conducts as a tool for inter-imperial competition against the Ottomans. It was by granting safe-conducts to Venetian bandits who had fled to Istanbul as a means of convincing them to return to Venetian jurisdiction. Venetian central authorities had issued these documents using the bailo as a proxy in Istanbul at least since the early sixteenth century. In 1582, the bailo received ducal permission to issue both “criminal” and “financial safe-conducts” (salvacondotti for bandi and debiti) directly. In the years following this initial concession, the council reconfirmed the bailo’s authority in matters of safe-conducts in 1582 and once again, with minor changes, when it appointed later ambassadors to the Porte in 1585 and 1591. The bailo’s correspondence with the Council of Ten gives lays out the reasons for this practice. In the 1580s, the bailo was deeply concerned Venetian bandits, particularly those from Crete, who lived in Istanbul would share their nautical skills and knowledge of Venetian fortifications with the enemy. The council echoed the bailo’s concerns and applauded his desire to grant a safe-conduct to a renegade called Francesco Turco. In discussing Francesco’s case, the bailo had argued that “even for lowly offenses, and others for debts, (bandits) come to Constantinople and become Turks, or even serve in their fleet.” The Council agreed with the bailo’s concern, but urged him to issue safe-conducts only to those bandits who “being there could cause the greatest damage to our interests.” Venetian subjects who had served in the arsenal were key targets of these policies.

33 I thank Tommaso Stefini for sharing this information. I hope to include the study of the bailo’s registers in future research. See For an example of this, see ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Deliberazioni, Secrete, Registri, Vol. 8, f. 112r.
34 ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Vol. 369, Ducale from January 1582. Special thanks to Umberto Signori for having shared and discussed this information with me.
35 ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Vol. 369, Ducal Letters from 30 March 1585, 28 October 1591, 13 August 1596.
36 ASVe, ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Vol. 369, f. 21.
37 ASVe, ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Vol. 369 f. 26.
Venice’s concern about renegades sharing critical skills and information with the Ottomans was such that in 1597 the bailo was authorized to give the bandit Sebastiano Querini a full safe-conduct plus travel expenses back to the dominion and a 50-ducat indemnity on top of this. In return, Querini needed to promise to leave Istanbul immediately and spend the rest of his life “in other places.” Bailo Cappello was encouraged to propose the same deal to other bandits. The patterns described above suggest that Venetian authorities who dealt with issuing safe-conduct for Venetians in the Ottoman empire with clear political goals in mind. They did so to reintegrate individuals with strategic knowledge or skills into the Venetian dominion and to deny critical assets to their Ottoman rivals.

5 – Center and Periphery in the Veneto-Ottoman mobility system.

The mention of the bailo’s office in Istanbul and of his capacity to issue safe-conducts highlights a crucial limitation of the database of travel papers I have discussed in chapter II. As mentioned, the documents collected there were all products of central state institutions. They were issued, in other words, by the loftiest among the institutions and magistracies such as the Collegio, Serenissima Signoria, and the Council of Ten. However, there is ample evidence scattered across the Venetian archives that peripheral institutions within the Venetian administration could also issue patents and other travel documents. A court case held in the Avogaria del Comun records briefly mentions that a patent issued by the provisioner of the fleet that had been submitted as evidence in a court case against a galley captain. Local Venetian governors could also issue patents, as stated by a letter to the rector of Padua informing him about a safe-conduct granted to captain Piero Tadini by the governor (rettore) of Brescia. Even

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38 ASVe, ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Vol. 369 f. 24.
39 ASVe, Avogaria del Comun, Vol. 2057, 5 January 1558.
the governors of small outposts emitted travel papers, though perhaps not patents. For example, records from the borderland Venetian town of Almissa, today Omis in Croatia, contain registers of licenses (*licentiae*) and receipts (*bollettini*) issued by its rector that regulated the export of foodstuff and horses from his jurisdiction. Though most of these documents were for travel within the Venetian dominion some covered trade relations with neighboring town Ottoman towns.\(^{41}\)

> There is evidence that the same was true in the Ottoman Empire (I need to finish compiling evidence for this paragraph. The point is that Ottoman peripheral institutions, such as the Sanjak, or governor of Bosnia, also emitted travel papers).

It should at this point come as no surprise that the *bailo* in Istanbul played a central role within the network of Venetian and Ottoman peripheral institutions. Indeed, his office was a crucial component of Veneto-Ottoman relations at many different levels. The *bailo* was regularly in contact with Ottoman authorities including the imperial admiral and the grand vizier; he also regularly petitioned the Ottoman Imperial Court for many matters Venetian. The *bailo* and his staff were also the head of the Venetian community (*natione*) in Istanbul and had legal jurisdiction over disputed between Venetian subjects. His chancellery routinely recorded contracts, solved disputes, and issued certificates (*fedi*).\(^{42}\)

One function of the *bailo*’s office that is particularly relevant for the present discussion was the issuance of travel papers of various sorts. As we have seen, some among these were safe-conducts, which are recorded in his registers of acts and survive from the mid-sixteenth

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\(^{41}\) DAUZ, Provveditore di Almissa, kutija 25, Provveditore Scipion Minio, folders 16 and 18.

\(^{42}\) On the bailo’s office, see Dursteler, *Venetians*, 23-33.
century. Unfortunately, other sections of the bailo’s records, which contain many other types of travel papers, are not as well preserved. Only one of these registers survives from the sixteenth century. It dates to the tenure of bailo Girolamo Cappello, between 1596 and 1599. The register contains 24 folia of recorded papers. These include taxpayers receipts (bollettini per carazzari), which were documents requested by Venetian subjects newly migrated to Istanbul (in the record, mostly Greek), and used to demonstrate that their status as licensed foreigners exempt from the tax levied in the Ottoman Empire on its non-Christian subjects, the carazzo or haraç. Beyond these bollettini, one of the most numerous types of documents in the register is health certificate. I have already discussed the importance of these documents for Mediterranean mobility, but it is important to note that the bailo had authority to issue them and that his office referred to them as health patents (patenti di sanità).

The bailo also issued travel documents that conform to the “passport” typology I have identified in chapter II. Some of these papers are patents granted to Venetian subjects, mostly Greek, to reward them for their services or to help protect their travels. Others, however, were an issue for Ottoman officials, such as a document given to Josuf Bey in June 1597. The document was issued free of charge (gratis) to aid Josuf during his travels across the Archipelago to render “services to the Signoria” (per servitii della Signoria). The bailo granted another travel patent to a janissary named Hasan, who traveled on a Maltese ship with a Greek

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43 The first of these registers is ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, Atti, Sentenze, Protocolli, vol 263.
44 ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, vol. 295, folder 439, Girolamo Cappello Bailo, Patenti - Fedi - Bollettini a Sudditi, 15 Gennaio 1596 - 5 Agosto 1599, ff. 1r, 6r.
45 ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, vol. 295, folder 439, Girolamo Cappello Bailo, Patenti - Fedi - Bollettini a Sudditi, 15 Gennaio 1596 - 5 Agosto 1599, ff. 8r/v, 12r/v, 21r/v.
46 ASVe, Bailo a Costantinopoli, vol. 295, folder 439, Girolamo Cappello Bailo, Patenti - Fedi - Bollettini a Sudditi, 15 Gennaio 1596 - 5 Agosto 1599, ff. 1r, 2r/v, 3r, 9v, 17v, 23v-24r.
servant and a Venetian translator towards Malta. The purpose of his voyage was to “ransom
slaves and recover belongings of [Ottoman] subjects plundered by corsairs” (*per liberare schiavi
et recuperare robe di sudditi [del Gran Singore] depredate da corsair*). Both these documents
are almost identical to the patents emitted by the central Venetian institutions during the same
period. Interestingly though, while in Venice the patents issued by central Venetian authorities
were predominantly for internal circulation, those issued by the *bailo* are usually dual or
external. Fittingly, another difference is that the terms used to convey the internal component of
these “consular” patents was “we request” (*ricercamo*), rather than the more forceful “we
command” used by central institutions.

There is evidence that the other members of the Venetian Mediterranean diplomatic core
besides the *bailo*, like consuls, could also issue patents and other travel papers. Unfortunately,
their records have left even fewer traces than those of the *bailo*. The sole references I was able to
find to consular patents come from administrative correspondence. For example, in 1563 the
Venetian Senate ordered the *bailo* to protest with Ottoman authorities about the depredations of a
corsair called Mustapha Reis. The event itself is of little interest; addressing piracy related issues
was a constant part of the *bailo*’s tenure. However, in this case Mustapha was reported to have
carried with him a Venetian travel document issued by the consul of Morea, in Greece. The
*bailo*’s orders were to insist that Mustapha was a “known pirate” (*pubblico corsaro*). He should
also argue that the “the patent given him by our minister in Lepanto cannot and should not
protect or justify him, because that minister could not have guaranteed for things he knew
nothing about and that took place in other places far away from where he was stationed” (*la

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patente fattagli da quel nostro ministro a Lepantho non puó ne deve salvarlo et giustificarlo, non potendo esso ministro far fede de quelle cose che egli non sa et che si operavano in altre parti lontane da quel luogo dove egli stantiava). 49 Other documents from the same year shed further light on consular travel papers issued to Ottoman captains. In June 1563, the Senate wrote to the provisioner of the fleet to congratulate him on his dealing with Carazali, another seaman who had been appointed “corsair captain” (capitano de leventi) by the Ottoman Sultan. The corsair had approached the provisioner “to show him the certificate given to him by our consul of Morea” (fargli conoscere la fede che gli ha fatto il consule nostro della Morea). After seeing the document, the provisioner had treated Carazali well but had written to the Senate to make sure his behavior was appropriate. The Senate had no intelligence about the appointment but confirmed that “it was possible” (potria esser) and concluded that “they wanted you [the provisioner] to treat him [Carazali] as a friend and as an officer of the mentioned Signor [the Sultan]” (volemo che l'habbiate a trattare come amico et capitanio del detto Signor) so long as he behaved properly. 50

6. In search of Ottoman Patents

Thus far, this chapter has worked towards establishing that Venetians and Ottomans made use of each other’s travel papers within the general framework for mobility provided by the capitulations and by armed convoys of ships. I have also made the case that much of these uses took place at the level of peripheral state institutions, the document output of which I have not been able to survey because of limitations in the sources. Having dispensed with these issues, I can now approach the central question of this chapter: how did Venetians and Ottomans

49 ASVe, Senato, Deliberazioni, Costantinopoli, Registri, Vol. 2, f. 93r.
50 ASVe, Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti, Registri, Vol. 73, f. 81r.
understand each other’s systems? What helped make the systems mutual legibility, beyond the practical knowledge possessed by ambassadors, translators, and other go-betweens? To answer these questions, we must first set out in search of Ottoman patents.

Patents were documents issued by a sovereign institution granting various types of privileges and the berat or nişan (the terms were essentially synonyms in the sixteenth century) is identified, sometimes explicitly, as its Ottoman counterpart.\(^{51}\) Berats were documents issued by the Imperial Council (divan-i hümayun), the Imperial Treasury (defterdarlık), or other high-ranking Ottoman institutions.\(^{52}\) As European patents, these documents bestowed many types of privileges on their carriers. Ottoman nişans are formally divided into sections called rükn that closely resembled the diplomatic structure of European patents. Indeed, these sections are commonly referred to in the literature by using many of the same Latin terminologies used discussed in chapter II. Notably, the intitulatio, narratio, and dispositio correspond quite closely between the two systems in terms of form and function.\(^{53}\)

I have already discussed one of the most famous types of nişan: as mentioned, the capitulations themselves belonged to this document typology in the sixteenth century. One of the most apparent differences between the Venetian patents described in previous chapters and the ahdnames is that the former is almost entirely individual documents, while the latter are general agreements covering all things or people referred to as “Venetian” (Venediklu).\(^{54}\) Only 3 out of

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\(^{51}\) In English-language scholarship, berats are often referred to as patents, particularly when discussing the documents issued to official translators associated with European consular networks in Istanbul. See Boogert, Maurits H., “Consular Jurisdiction in the Ottoman Legal System in the eighteenth century,” in Boogert, Maurits H. eds. The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context (Roma: Ist. per l'Oriente C.A. Nallino, 2004) 633.

\(^{52}\) Küütükoğlu, Mübahat S., “Berat”, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 24 February 2018 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27775 First published online: 2016

\(^{53}\) Theunissen, Hans. Ottoman-Venetian, 188-190.

\(^{54}\) See for example document Yıldırım, 7 Numaralı, 187, document n. 352; 282, document n. 554.
the 1064 Venetian patents examined had groups of people as carriers. In two of these cases, the documents’ beneficiaries were groups of people performing a specific action, rather than the subjects of a foreign ruler as was the case with the capitulations. However, in Venice, general grants of privileges given to entire ethnic groups (natione) existed as well. They are usually referred to as “charters” in academic scholarship. Charters were a common way to grant privileges to groups of individuals in Europe during the middle ages. In the sixteenth century, several Italian states used them to define the status of Jews within their dominions. The term most frequently used in Venice for these grants was condotte, though in other Italian areas they were referred to as salvacocondotti or even patenti. Regardless of the terminological difference, charters shared the idea of granting a group of immigrants, often non-Christian or non-Catholic, a specific set of positive rights and the critical negative right of safe-conduct. The similarities with the ahdname are striking, enough to allow us to consider the ahdname as a charter or general-patent for foreign non-Muslims.

*Nişans* and *berats* could also be given to individuals. (This section is incomplete. Here I will discuss individual berats given to both Ottoman and foreign subjects. For example, those given for various kinds of land grants, revenues, and to the heads of non-Christian communities in the empire.

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55 ASVe, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere, Vol 39, f. 174, 688. This is not to say, however, that all Venetian patents only covered one individual. Patents very often refer to the family, dependants, servants, or employes of the carrier as included in the protection granted by the document.


are not travel patents. They more closely resemble the documents I have called “privilege patents” in chapter I).  

The *Divan* itself drafted some of the loftiest individual *nişans* and granted them to high Ottoman officials and viziers. One example from 1560 one of these was given to Piyale Paşa, re-confirming his position as high admiral (*kaptan-i derya*) of the Ottoman fleet. Even the simplified version of this document, which appears in the *Divan*’s registers, is strikingly longer and more complex than any patents issued by the Venetian authorities. The rhetorical equivalent of the narratio and dispositio portions give adequate instruction to Piyale about the duties he was to perform while holding office. Among other things, he was to make sure that no Christians, not even the Ragusans, the Venetians, or the French, purchased Ottoman grain from Lebanon and the surrounding region. Some sections of the Ottoman document, though brief, make it clear that one of its purposes was to invest Piyale with imperial authority and ensure that said authority was recognized and respected. Just before the start of the dispositio, the document reads: “and I invest and provide for, the above mentioned [Piyale] with another order of my gloriously powerful sovereignty…moreover, I appoint and give this patent to him” (*ferman-i celilü’l-kadr-i husrevanemle husus-i mezburiçün techiz ü tekmil olnup…ta’yn edup eline bu nişan-ı…virdüm*). Piyale’s *nişan* thus resembles closely a Venetian patent for appointment similar to those discussed in chapter II, with the notable difference that it is not, technically, an open letter but instead a proclamation or command of the Sultan. In this sense, it conforms more closely to the “certificate” patent form I have identified in a minority of the documents previously

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59 I have found only 26 such patents in the Venetian archival series consulted for this study.
discussed.\textsuperscript{63} Regardless, though this discussion confirms many similarities between Venetian patents and Ottoman nişans as general document types, it also points to the fact that the Ottomans did not use these patent equivalents for travel purposes. What other options did they have at their disposal?

(Missing Section: here I will need to insert a general introduction on Ottoman travel documents before diving into the yol hukmü).

One of the most used forms of Ottoman travel papers were the imperial commands known as yol hüküms. These documents are well known by Ottomanists, although they have received relatively little scholarly attention in English.\textsuperscript{64} An informative exception is a recent article by Collin Heywood about the evolution and standardization of a subcategory of yol hüküms, the ulak hüküms or courier order. The ulak hüküms was a travel document carried by an imperial courier (ulak) that recommended the carrier to the Ottoman officials he would encounter along his journey and granted him access to fresh horses at post-stations.\textsuperscript{65} A crucial feature of these documents was that they granted their carriers privileged access to the network of waystations (menzilhane) developed by the Ottoman administration in the early modern period. Though these documents were originally intended for Ottoman officers, progressively many other individuals, both subjects and foreigners, gained access to them by petitioning Ottoman authorities.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{63} Theunissen, \textit{Ottoman-Venetian}, 186.
\textsuperscript{64} As is the case with European travel documents, short descriptions of Ottoman travel papers are common in literature discussing movement and trade. More systematic descriptions are rarer. For a recent example, see Robarts, Andrew. \textit{Migration and Disease in the Black Sea Region: Ottoman-Russian Relations in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries} (S.l.: Bloomsbury, 2016) 131-133. For a description of Ottoman travel documents in Italian, see Pedani, \textit{Dalla frontiera}, 110-112.
\textsuperscript{66} Heywood, \textit{The Evolution}, 276-277, 291-93.
All yol hükmüs typically started with a protocol stating a direct order to a specific set of officials, such as: “To all the judges who reside upon the road leading to the Beylerbey of Rumeli it is ordered that” (Rûmili beglerbegisine varınca yol üzre vâkı’ olan kadîlara hükm kı). The dispositio of these documents usually instruct, using various phrases, not to “hinder or harm” (dahl u ta’arruz) the carriers, who should be allowed to travel “safely and soundly” (emin ü salim) to their destination. Some yol hükmüs might express more specific commands and grants, such as the mentioned ulak hükmü that granted the right to access the state’s reserve of post-horses. In some cases, however, the documents also specified constraints. One document, for example, mentions that once the Christian travelers carrying the ulak hükmü had left Ottoman boundaries, “those riding should not have good horses, only pack animals” (Bindükleri yarar at olmayup bârgîrler ola).

As is evident from this description, Ottoman yol hükmüs were strikingly like Venetian internal travel patents. To fully establish the specularity of these two documents types, it is now essential to determine if the Ottoman documents contain the same distinction between safe-conducts and other travel papers that was so evident in the European sources. Most travelers who carried Ottoman yol hükmüs were surely not at war with the Ottoman sultan. In most cases, it was Ottoman officials or merchants who carried yol hükmüs, along with European diplomatic personnel who routinely traveled between Venice and Istanbul. We might thus conclude that the yol hükmü was not a form of safe-conduct. However, the complexities of the specifically

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68 Binark, İsmet. 3 Numaralı, 66, document n. 129.
69 Binark, İsmet. 3 Numaralı, 48, document n. 88.
70 Binark, İsmet. 3 Numaralı, 84, document n. 173.
71 See Pedani, Maria P. In nome del Gran Signore, 23.
Ottoman practice of granting travel-related privileges, along with the lack of specific definitions on the individual documents, makes any conclusion hard to maintain.

The frequent conflation between modern and historical terminologies adds challenge to resolving this issue. For example, in the catalog of Ottoman documents held in the Venetian archive, Maria Pia Pedani describes an Ottoman document from 1539 carried by a Venetian ambassador as a safe-conduct. Though the document only referred to itself generically as a “command” (hükümlü), considering that the Venetians and Ottomans were at war at that time, the description seems appropriate. However, Pedani also describes a similar document from 1542, granted to incoming Venetian ambassador Alvise Badoer, as a safe-conduct. By 1542, the Ottoman-Venetian capitulations of 1540 were in place, which should have made individual safe-conducts superfluous. However, Mehmed Tayyip Gökbilgin, who published a transcription of both documents, uses the term yol hükmüş only to describe the latter. Does the scholar’s choice hint to some inherent difference between the two papers? Pedani’s classification seems justified in the fact that the two documents are not structurally or linguistically different from each other. Both are hükms; both command Ottoman officials “not to hinder or harm” the Venetian delegations using the same formula: dahl u ta’arruz etdirmeyesin. The only major difference is that the 1542 document allows the Venetians “to purchase supplies and lodging according to need with their own money” (akçeler-ile yem ve yemek tedarik etdirmekde ve konak etdirmekde gereği gibi mu’avenet eyleyesiz), while the 1539 text does not mention this possibility. Are these document yol hükmüş, safe-conducts, or both?

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It is difficult to answer this question. As discussed earlier, the Ottomans had established technical guidelines about issuing individual or general *aman*, and they considered it to be a type of protection granted to enemies. However, most *yol hükmü* were not issued during war times and, even when they were, they did not show any specific formal characteristics. It may be that, despite theoretical framework, in practice, the Ottomans did not distinguish between what, for Venetians, were distinctly different types of documents. If this were the case, the *Divan* issued a *yol hükmü* that also functioned as a safe-conduct in 1539 because this was the most routinely used travel document at the time. However, it is also possible that the Ottomans purposefully chose to issue a *yol hükmü* in 1539 instead of an individual safe-conduct. Other Ottoman travel documents point towards this interpretation. For example, a so-called safe-conduct sent from Istanbul to the Italian city of Ancona in 1566 stated that the sultan’s court was always open to all those who traveled towards it, both in times of war or peace. The wording suggests the presence of a specific diplomatic stance intended to paint the Ottoman sultan as a powerful and just ruler, a ruler mindful of the rights of ambassadors regardless of when they traveled or of the documentation they carried. If this were the case, it would make sense for the Porte to issue *yol hükmü* for ambassadors instead of actual *aman*, even during times of war.

Be that as it may, it is well established that Venetian travelers, particularly men associated with the *bailo*’s diplomatic staff, made frequent use of Ottoman travel documents. Did

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74 The original Ottoman document together with its translation is part of a folder of papers dealing with the capture of the ship Maria Maddalena. The folder is conserved in ACAN-Antico regime, Sez. V, Proprietà e diritti comunali, pascoli, case e botteghe, navi predate, muline ed annessi delle poiole, n. 1.

they consider these documents to be patents? The Venetian archive is rife with references to *yol hükmü*. A letter from 1596 sent by the *Collegio* instructed the provisioner of Kotor, in Dalmatia, to make sure that the *bailo*’s couriers “should, when they go to Constantinople, bring with them all the way-orders at one time” (*doveriano, quando vadano a Costantinopoli, portare una volta tutti i comandamenti di strada*). The *Collegio* lamented that, because this was not standard practice, couriers often “traveled with old orders that were useless and could endanger the safety of the letters” (*andando con comandamenti vecchi, che non servono, et potranno mettere in pericolo le lettere*).76 Despite the similarities between Ottoman and Venetian travel documents, here the term used to identify these orders is not *patente*, but *comandamento di strada*, a literal translation of the term *yol hükmü*. Bailo Bragadin used the same translation in his expense sheet mentioned at the beginning of this chapter when he referred to Ottoman travel papers. In neither case did the Venetians translated the term *yol hükmü* using the word *cocchiumo*, which was a common sixteenth-century Italian transliteration of the word *hükm*.77 The Venetians thus appear to have made a terminological distinction between the Ottoman *yol hükmüs* issued for Venetian personnel and the travel patents issued by the *bailo* for Ottoman officials on their way to Venice. Possibly, they were just too familiar with Ottoman travel practices to make any terminological slippage?

As it would seem, the Venetians did not equate their patents with Ottoman *yol hükmüs*.

Did the Venetians consider any Ottoman travel papers as patents? Possible hints toward an answer to this question come from the archives of another Mediterranean polity that had frequent and fruitful contacts with the Ottomans: the Republic of Ragusa (modern-day Dubrovnik). In

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76 ASVe, Collegio, Lettere Secrete, missive, Vol. n. 37, 12 October 1596.
77 The term is, for example, was used by ambassadors of the town of Split who complained to the Senate about the use of *cocchiumi* by the Ottomans to encroach upon their lands. ASVe, Senato, Deliberazioni, Mar, Registri, vol. 36, f. 184r.
1560, a ship captain from Ragusa traveled to Valona, an Ottoman town in today’s Albania, to collect grain shipments purchased from the Ottomans. The Senate of Ragusa sent him detailed instructions stating, among other things, that: “we have also given you two patents, one for the Turkish fleet, and one for the Venetian, which you will use in case of need” (vi abbiamo ancora consegnato due patenti, l’una per l’armata turchesa, l’altra per l’armata venetiana, quelle quali ci avvalerete se ne sia bisogno). This patent was in addition to a “favorable command from the Porte” (cocchiumo della Porta favorevole). The command was most likely a yol hükmü of some sort, but what of the Ottoman “patent?”

Interestingly, the term patent appears in rare Venetian translations of Ottoman documents. As is the case with the Ragusan example, these Venetian texts also concern the purchase of grain (tereke). The movement of grain was a particularly complicated affair in the Ottoman empire, particularly after the 1517 conquest of Egypt, when the empire took control of one of the Mediterranean’s most prosperous grain-producing region. The Ottoman administration was keenly aware of the centrality of grain to provisioning its cities, chiefly Istanbul, and its armies. It, therefore, sought to limit exports towards foreign lands and to structure a complex provisioning system that lasted well into the eighteenth century. The sixteenth-century documents from the Venetian archive provider a glimpse of how this cross-cultural provisioning system at the height of Ottoman power in the Mediterranean. The bailo, acting as a representative of Venice, would first negotiate the grain sale with the Divan, from which he would receive a hükm that authorized the sale. A member of the bailo’s staff would then present this freshly issued imperial order to the office of the treasurer (defterdarlik),

78 DAUD, Lettere e Commissioni, Lettere di Levante, Fond. 8, Ser. 1, vol. 28, f. 24v, and 20r.
were the Venetians would receive a travel permit, or “patent,” associated with the purchase. Finally, the bailo’s office would forward this document to the ship captains and merchants responsible for collecting the grain from the Ottoman deposits on the Aegean and transporting it to Venice. Only with this travel permit in hand would the Venetians be safe from requisitions by the Ottoman fleet.\textsuperscript{80}

Unfortunately, the original Ottoman version of the document used to reconstruct the processes described above does not survive. However other texts issued in similar circumstances suggest that the word patent may have translated the Ottoman term \textit{mühürlü tezkere}, which means “sealed permit.”\textsuperscript{81} It is possible that this type of permit was the same kind of document handed to the Ragusan ship captain mentioned above and referred to by the Ragusans as a patent. To my knowledge, no \textit{mühürlü tezkere} issued by the defterdar’s office during the sixteenth century survive today. However, many \textit{hükm} survive which discuss the sale of grain to Venice and Dubrovnik, a fact which warrants further exploration.

7 – Trading grain across the Veneto-Ottoman mobility system.

Why did the Venetians think of Ottoman permits for grain exportation as patents? One potential answer comes from the functional similarities between the Ottoman \textit{mühürlü tezkere} and the Venetian travel patents. Indeed, the Venetians made frequent, from the second half of the sixteenth-century we may say constant, use of travel patents to manage the movement of grain. As in the Ottoman Empire, in Venice grain was not a freely traded commodity.\textsuperscript{82} Exporting grain from one region of the Venetian dominion and transporting it to another was regulated by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{80} ASVe, Documenti Turchi, document n. 674 and 677.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Aymard, Maurice. \textit{Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé, pendant la seconde moitié du XVIème siècle.} (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N, 1966), 19-22.
\end{itemize}
decrees of the Senate or the Council of Ten. Each producing region usually had a fixed export-quota of grain, while the rest of production should sustain local consumption. However, the bureaucratic instruments used for this trade, particularly documents, before the sixteenth-century are unclear.\textsuperscript{83}

It appears that as late as the 1530s, patents were used only to regulate exception shipments of grain. In 1539 the Venetian Heads of the Council of Ten issued 68 internal travel patents with the specific purpose of moving grain, wheat, or other cereals (frumenti) within Venetian jurisdictions. Venice was the specific destination in 39 cases, while the remaining 29 documents addressed grain shipments within the Venetian mainland.\textsuperscript{84} The patents covered shipments both between Venetian territories and from “foreign lands” (terre aliene), including Germany and the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{85} Only one of the carriers was a Venetian official, specifically a grain provisioner (provveditore sopra le biade).\textsuperscript{86}

These measures were in response to grain shortages that struck the Venetian mainland, and the capital city, in 1539. It is possible that this shortage resulted from the military conflict between Venice and the Ottoman Empire that had led to a Venetian defeat at Preveza in 1538, though some contemporary accounts attribute it to the demographic growth of Venice and the increment of sugar farming on Cyprus.\textsuperscript{87} Regardless, the Republic must have tasked the Capi with responding to the grain shortage; the council did so by issuing numerous travel patents.

\textsuperscript{84} ASVe, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere, Vol. 39, f. 470.
\textsuperscript{85} ASVe, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere, Vol. 39, f. 47, 506.
\textsuperscript{86} ASVe, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere, Vol. 39, f. 386.
\textsuperscript{87} See Chambers, David, Jennifer Fletcher, and Brian Pullan. Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 107-108. Cyprus was an important grain producer for the Republic, and the changes in its agricultural economy could have easily affected Venice.
These documents helped citizens and subjects move grain within the dominion and encouraged private individuals, both Venetian and foreign, to bring grain shipments to Venice. However, it is unclear at this point if individual carriers acted entirely of their own accord or if they fulfilled contracts granted by the Venetian state. Surely at least some of the patents were not intended to fulfill any specific contract, as shown by a document issued on June 30, which ordered Venetian officials to allow free passage to “all those who bring” (tutti quelli che portano) grain to Venice.88 Finally, though this flourish of patents from 1539 seems to have responded to an immediate crisis, by the 1560s the practice of using travel patents to regulate the movement of grain within Venetian jurisdiction was part of the routine operations of the office of the grain provisioners.89

Patents did not solely help license the exportation of grain in the Venetian dominion. They also sought to guarantee that grain shipments from abroad arrived safely in Venice. Governors of a Venetian city or island commonly commandeered passing grain shipments on their way to Venice from the Ottoman Empire or Germany, with the promise of future repayment. An example of this practice from November 19, 1554, when the Serenissima Signoria sent a letter to the captain of a light galley (biremi). The letter stated that Thomaso de Gabriel from Venice, a merchant, had petitioned to receive payment for a shipment of olive oil barrels. The galley captain had commandeered Thomaso’s goods for his crew’s use. Rather than chastising the captain for his actions, the Signoria simply asked him to report the amount of oil taken to reimburse Thomaso for his cargo.90 The unnamed galley captain’s actions were not...

89 Though these activities were coordinated by the grain provisioners, the records of patents issued by them are preserved in the notarial registers of the Collegio. The first volume in which they appear is ASVe, Collegio, Notatorio, Registri, vol. 30: 1552-1556.
90 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, Registri, Vol 1, f. 21v.
unusual. Sometimes the central Venetian authorities directly advised such takings. In 1564, the Council of Ten sent a letter to the general of the Venetian fleet ordering him to commandeer one out of three Ragusan grain ships traveling from Greece to Croatia in order to restock the dwindling supplies available to the Republic’s fleet along the Dalmatian coast. The letter also instructed the general to pay for the goods from the treasury of the town of Split, one of Venice’s central governmental nodes in the region.\footnote{ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Deliberazioni, Secrete, Registri, Vol 8, f. 25r} These examples and many others from the Venetian State Archives show that traveling with grain or other food-goods risked seizure by Venetian officials who needed to secure immediate provisions.\footnote{The practice is also clearly attested in Malta, as we learn from many commissions to Hospitaller galley captains. See AOM, Vol. 446, f. 196r.} From the merchants’ perspective, this practice could create significant delays in payments, notably when they petitioned the central government to receive what was due. Within the context of a potential grain shortage in 1539, the issuing of patents for grain traders thus had a dual purpose. The Venetian state tried to ensure a steady flow of grain to the center by reducing possible risks weighing on traders such as delayed payments. The state also tried to ensure that Venetian officials would no commandeer the goods en route and divert the supplies away from Venice. The traders, who expected to arrive safely to their desired destination and to receive timely payments, were interested in both purposes.

The documents produced by the *Serenissima Signoria* provide further evidence about patents used for provisioning. This series contains many travel patents dating back to 1571-1572 at the apex of the war of Cyprus.\footnote{The *Serenissima Signoria* letters are the smallest of the Venetian archival series studied in this essay. I was able therefore to consult all the 14 surviving sixteenth-century registers. However, it is still uncertain how representative this material is, and the use of percentages is a simple an alternative way of visualizing information.} This time, however, the issue was not restocking grain supplies in Venice and the mainland, but instead keeping the fleet and the Dalmatian garrisons...
well-furnished and prepared for battle. The Signoria issued the very first patent for this purpose on July 9, 1571, allowing the merchant Cesare Tomasini and his partners to ship grain to Dalmatia without passing through Venice for customs duties, as was usually mandatory. The following documents provided similar privileges, granting free passage for a variety of goods including wine, grain, and dried meat. It should be noted, however, that free passage did not mean that the goods were free from taxation. The patents often stated that the carrier should pay the regular amount of taxes owed to the state.

Fortunately, the Serenissima Signoria registers contain some of the few examples of petitions written to request travel patents that survive in the Venetian archive. Gasparo da Guarnico, for example, tied his desire for a travel patent to the 1571-1572 war efforts stating, “Your Excellency has granted patents to some merchants at the start of the war to bring food and refreshments to your fleet…without any impediment…” (essendo concesso da Vostra Signoria patenti ad alcuni mercadanti al principio della guerra per condurre vittuaglie e rinfrescamenti alla sua armata…senza alcun impedimento). Pier Francesco Veneziano was even more explicit in his wishes when he requested a travel patent “in order not to be detained during the trip by your [the Doge’s] officials either on land or sea.” (per non esser impedito per il viaggio dalla rappresentanti sui per mare et per terra). In yet another petition, Bartolo di Gasparo from Portogruaro spelled out the thoughts of a would-be grain-trader. He stated that:

“because we know it is of dire necessity to visit your fleet…with refreshments of bread, wine, salted meat, and other useful things…we have decided to gladly risk our lives and wares in the

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94 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, Vol. 174, 9 July 1571.
95 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, Vol. 174, 7 December 1571.
96 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, Vol. 174, 30 January 1572 (1571 according to the Venetian calendar count).
97 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, Vol. 174, 2 September 1571. The language of the petition is interesting in its own right and future research may help clarify its specificity and rhetorical functions. See Heerma, van V. L. Petitions in Social History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
service of Your Serenity…but in order not to be harassed by the men and knights of your officials, we supplicate Your Serenity to grant us an order with which we may pass freely…promising to pay the regular taxes where we might arrive”

The evidence suggests that Venice made frequent use of travel patents within its provisioning system for food supplies, mainly grain. These practices were both responses to exceptional circumstances, such as famine or war, and part of a regular provisioning system. In both these cases, Venetian practices were specular to those used in the Ottoman empire in the same period, which likely caused Venetian officers to identify Ottoman travel patents used in the grain trade as patents.

Conclusion

A comparison between the Venetian patent system and travel documents from the Ottoman Empire points to many similarities. Both polities, which were bound together by the ahdname’s general regulations about mobility and safe-conduct, issued individual patents or yol hükmüs to confer privileged travel conditions to groups of travelers, such as state officials, or to grant access to state-controlled resources like grain. Both Ottomans and Venetians structured these documents as internal commands and intended them for multiple viewings and processes of identification. Despite this similarity, the Venetians usually distinguished terminologically between their patents and Ottoman yol hükmüs. When Venetians described Ottoman documents as patents, they did so because of functional rather than formal similarities, as was the case with the mühürlü tezkere. The functional similarities between Ottoman and Venetian travel documents

98 ASVe, Serenissima Signoria, Lettere Sottoscritte, Mar, Vol. 175, 7 March 1572. “Et conoscendo esser chosa piú che necessaria visitare la armata sua…con rinfreschamenti di pane, vino, charne sallata e alter chose opportune…habbiamo deliberato in servitio della Serenità Vostra poner volentieri et la vitta et la roba nostra…ma per non esser strassiat da officiali et cavailerì di suoj rappresentanti, supplichiamo la Serenità Vostra a concedere un mandato con il quale noi possamo liberamente transitare…obbligandoci pero dove chapitera sempre di pagar tutti li dattii consueti.”
and practices helped create a significant degree of commensurability between the two administrations in matters of travel.

The Veneto-Ottoman mobility system was thus not built upon a fully integrated set of travel practices, nor on the free circulation of peoples, goods, nor on the mutual recognition of each other’s travel papers. Indeed, patents and yol hükmüs were both primarily intended for circulation within the jurisdiction of the issuing power, not for recognition outside of them. From this perspective, we find ourselves confronted by two specular and interlocking mobility systems that operated independently from each, but that was bound together by human go-betweens, such as the bailo, and by the legibility of their travel-related practices. However, I argue that it is precisely this legibility of papers and practices that allow us to speak of a Veneto-Ottoman system. Indeed, both administrations premised their mobility practices on the idea of creating travel networks for strategic goods and individuals to whom privileged travel conditions were granted. Both administrations used similar papers for similar purposes. Thus, despite the many technical differences, this mutual understanding helped promote routine exchanges between Venetian and Ottoman territories. One final question now arises. In chapter II, I have already established that the travel papers used in Venice were common to many other Italianate Mediterranean polities. How far, then, did the Veneto-Ottoman system extend? Was it indeed only Veneto-Ottoman, or Mediterranean? To find answers to this question we now turn to our final case study, the Order of St. John of Rhodes and Malta.