

What happened to Pouqueville's Frenchmen? Ottoman treatment of the French prisoners during the War of the Second Coalition (1798-1802)

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Abstract

This essay is about the Ottoman treatment of war prisoners at the end of the eighteenth century. It questions the common assumption of Ottoman fanaticism and ignorance of European military norms in the treatment of captives. Pouqueville's memoirs of captivity played a crucial role in the emergence of this view, but a comparison of his testimony and Ottoman documents shows that there is a discrepancy between the two accounts. While there were many differences in practice, the Ottomans shared a legalistic view of the treatment of war prisoners, based on the concept of reciprocity.

Keywords

Pouqueville; the French Expedition to Egypt; War of the Second Coalition; French prisoners; captivity; the Ionian Islands; General Rose; Ali Paşa of Janina; the Tersane dungeon; Tripolitsa.

The French Expedition to Egypt opened a new phase in Ottoman history in many ways. In the following war of the Second Coalition (1798-1802), the Ottomans formed an alliance with the traditional foe – Russia – against the traditional friend – France. This alliance ranged from fighting against the French in the Adriatic to imposing migration management regimes along the northern borders.¹ One of the aspects of the war was the presence of

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¹ On Russo-Ottoman cooperation in the Black Sea region consult in this volume Robarts, Andrew, "Imperial confrontation or regional cooperation: re-conceptualizing Ottoman-Russian relations in the Black Sea Region, 1768-1830s". For the details of the military operations see, Şakul, Kahraman, "Osmanlılar Fransız İhtilali'ne Karşı: Adriyatik ve İtalya Sularında Osmanlı Donanması", in "*Nizâm-ı Kadîm'den 'Nizâm-ı Cedîd'e III. Selim ve Dönemi*", ed. Seyfi Kenan (İstanbul: ISAM, 2010), pp. 255-313, and McKnight, J. L., "Admiral Ushakov and the Ionian Republic. The Genesis of Russia's First Balkan Satellite" (unpublished Ph.D dissertation,

numerous French prisoners in Istanbul. How to deal with so many ‘prisoners of war’ – to use a modern appellation - was a major problem for the Ottomans.

Contemporary western observers condemned the Ottoman treatment of French prisoners in this war with François Pouqueville (1770-1838) no doubt leaving the most vivid account on the subject.² Published in 1805, his captivity memoirs were very influential in the shaping of unfavourable views about the Ottomans. Pouqueville’s memoirs created a sort of ‘Midnight-Express-effect’, causing much sensation in Europe. With the exception of Baron François de Tott,³ he was the most acclaimed and acute ‘Islam analyst’ of the pre-CNN world (so to say) enjoying popularity for his strong feelings and views about his subject matter: the Ottomans. The authority of this polymath – the diplomat, the writer, the explorer, the physician and the historian – has remained largely unquestioned⁴ especially when he wrote on an obscure topic such as captivity in the Ottoman lands in late eighteenth century.⁵ This was all the more so since he was, *alas*, the captive himself.

Close analyses of the canonical views of certain renowned European intellectuals such as Paul Rycout and Baron de Tott have proved to be fruitful in understanding the mindset of the authors as well as the contemporary Ottomans.⁶ These studies have shown us that even after many centuries,

University of Wisconsin, 1965); for the diplomatic sphere consult Saul, Norman, *Russia and the Mediterranean 1797-1807* (The University of Chicago Press, 1970) and Şakul, Kahraman, “An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant” (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Georgetown University, 2009).

² Pouqueville, François Charles Hugues Laurent, *Travels through the Morea Albania and Several Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire, to Constantinople during the Years, 1799, 1800, and 1801. Comprising A Description of the Countries, of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, &c., &c.* (trans. from the French, London, 1806).

³ Tott, Baron François de, *Memoirs of the Baron de Tott on the Turks and the Tartars* (Amsterdam, 1785), [trans. from the French, Tott (Baron Ferenc de), *Memoires du Baron de Tott sur les Turcs et les Tartares*, Amsterdam, 1784].

⁴ Irritated by his accusations of British maltreatment of the French prisoners, the British Thornton was one of the rare contemporaries to question Pouqueville’s intentions by drawing attention to several logical contradictions in his memoirs. He, in turn, accused Pouqueville of perpetuating the enmity between the British and the French “by the basest calumnies” targeting the British, see Thornton, T., *The Present State of Turkey ...* 2 vols. (London, 1809), pp. xiii-xxiv.

⁵ One of the few sources we should note is the famous Bulgarian priest Sofroni’s account, see Akbayan, Nuri (ed.), *Vraçalı Sofroni, Osmanlı’da Bir Papaz. Günahkar Sofroni’nin Çileli Hayat Hikayesi, 1739-1813*, trans. Aziz Nazmi Şakir-Taş (İstanbul: Kitapevi, 2003); for a list of the captives held in the Imperial Dockyards in 1740 (*register du bagne de Constantinople*) see Marmara, Rinaldo, *İstanbul Deniz Zindanı 1740* (İstanbul: Denizler Kitabevi, 2005).

⁶ See for instance, Darling, Linda, “Ottoman politics through British eyes: Paul Rycout’s *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*”, *The Journal of World History*, 5 (1994), 71-97; Aksan,

anecdotal and misleading stories about the Ottomans from such eyewitness accounts still occupy a prominent place in popular works. Stereotypes based on these imaginative renderings of the Ottomans are unavoidable in the absence of studies, based on archival research.⁷ Nevertheless, no comparable study exists for Pouqueville. Neither does there exist a solid secondary literature in Ottoman studies such as to permit us to attempt a comprehensive analysis of the interplay of ‘Pouqueville the intellectual’ and ‘Pouqueville the captive’ in his memoirs. This may leave us with the unwarranted choice of mobilizing the ‘anti-Orientalism discourse’ as the most convenient unit of analysis.⁸ Nevertheless, this essay by no means has the aim of vilifying Pouqueville’s valuable account on such shaky grounds. It, rather, contends that one has to use European eyewitness accounts on the Ottomans with scepticism and only when corroborated by authentic evidence. Thus, this article follows the outmoded and painstaking methodology of the historian’s craft: (1) juxtaposing Pouqueville’s testimony with Ottoman documents that have hitherto been virtually unutilized; (2) highlighting the convergences and divergences of the alternative narratives; and (3) drawing a preliminary conclusion based on the emerging picture.

While Pouqueville’s condemnation of the Ottoman ill-treatment of French prisoners was not totally unfounded, part of his observations were related to Ali Paşa of Janina’s war on the Suliotés – the unruly inhabitants of the mountains lying along the Dalmatian coast. Russians’ exploitation of the popular theme of ‘oriental despotism’ in the contest with their Ottoman ally over the ‘ownership’ of the French troops captured in the Ionian Islands was also important in the creation of a despicable Ottoman image.

A review of the event and Pouqueville’s arguments are in order. After the French invasion of Egypt the Ottomans had to fight the French on two separate fronts, namely, Egypt and the Adriatic. The Ottomans and Russians decided to send a combined fleet to the Adriatic in order to expel the French from the Ionian Islands. The expedition ended with the occupation of

Virginia H., “Breaking the spell of Baron de Tott reframing the question of military reform in the Ottoman empire, 1760-1830”, *The International History Review*, 24/2 (2002), 253-77.

⁷ Aksan, “Breaking the spell of Baron de Tott”, pp. 113, 120; one may count Goodwin, Godfrey, *The Janissaries* (London: Saqi Books, 2006) and Goodwin, Jason, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: H. Holt, 1998) as typical examples of uncritical use of such memoirs.

⁸ For an illuminating discussion of the issue in the case of Russia, see *KRITIKA: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1/3 (summer 2000), 691-727; a useful review of the debate in the field of Middle East studies can be found in, Freitag, Ulrike, “The critique of orientalism”, in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 607-26.

Corfu in March 1799. The two allies agreed to share equally the booty and the prisoners. While the French garrison of Corfu was granted safe conduct, those garrisons in other Ionian islands and along the Dalmatian coast were made prisoners. By 1799, there were 1,209 French prisoners in the dungeons of Istanbul according to Ottoman documents.⁹

Pouqueville's observations on captivity were based on three separate events. These are (I) the forced march of the French garrison of Zante to Istanbul in chains; (II) the story of eleven French officers including the author who were captured by corsairs in a ship that had left Alexandria for France; and (III) the transfer of many French captives from Istanbul to several provincial fortresses. Pouqueville's arguments can be summed up in four points: (1) That the Russians should have refused to deliver the French prisoners to the barbarous Turks because both Russia and France were civilized nations whereas the Ottomans were not. (2) That the Ottomans did not make a distinction between a war prisoner and a criminal; they, rather, simply chained the French captives in pairs like brigands and forced them walk all the way to Istanbul on foot. (3) That the Ottomans ignored the military hierarchy by imprisoning the rank-and-file and their officers in the same cells. (4) That any favourable treatment of the French prisoners by the Ottoman authorities should be viewed as an isolated case, not so much a state policy as a noble act of a benevolent *paşa*. In short, Pouqueville argued that the fanatical Ottomans had an inveterate hatred for the French because of the Egyptian expedition and made the French prisoners the scapegoats for it.¹⁰

Actually the Russians shared with Pouqueville some concerns about Ottoman norms of conducting warfare and prisoner treatment. Such concerns were based on religious prejudices and the perceived Ottoman ignorance of the European norms of warfare. However, Napoleon's treatment of the Muslims in Egypt was quite the same. This included post-mortem decapitation on the battlefield and terrorizing the civilians by rolling out the severed heads from sacks before the assembled Cairenes.¹¹ Furthermore, in the

⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [henceforth, BOA] Bab-ı Asafi Amedi Kalemi Dosyaları [henceforth, A.AMD] 42/12 (6 Şevval 1213/13 March 1799). Kapudane Abdülkadir Bey, the commander of the Ottoman Adriatic fleet, gives the following figures concerning the number of French prisoners: 441 men in Zante, 197 men in Cephalonia, around 500 men in Santa Maura (1,138 + in total). The Zante garrison was sent to the governor of the Morea while others were sent to the commander of İnebahtı, see Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi [henceforth, TSMA], Evrak [henceforth, E] 6699/1 (24 Cemaziülahir 1213/2 December 1798).

¹⁰ Consult the appendix for the relevant excerpts from Pouqueville listed according to the numbers above.

¹¹ The French killed 3,000 Cairenes during the three days of the revolt in Cairo by extrajudicial executions, see Cole, Juan, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York & Basingstoke: Palgrave/McMillan, 2008), pp.197-200, 212-13, 218-19, 224.

Ottomans' point of view, the French invasion of Egypt was tantamount to brigandage due to the absence of a declaration of war. As this was an unprecedented act of violation of international law, the Ottomans claimed, they did not have to treat the French prisoners any better than brigands. As a matter of fact, the *kadı* of Malkara referred to the prisoners as “haydut” in his official report.¹² This attitude was by no means peculiar to the Ottomans. It was very common especially among British naval officers to label French captives as brigands during the Napoleonic wars.¹³

The Ottomans cancelled the French capitulations, put all Frenchmen under house arrest and confiscated their property at once. Although the monetary value of the confiscated French property remains to be studied, it no doubt reached substantial amounts.¹⁴ Political retaliation notwithstanding, economic factors may also have accounted for the shaping of this policy. The Sublime Porte needed to finance the war effort against France. Besides, the French Embassy at Istanbul owed 324,000 *guruş* to the Porte as of 16 July 1797 (equalling 1.5 per cent of the annual budget).¹⁵ The Porte, nevertheless, accepted to return all the French goods in the treaty with France in 1802,

¹² BOA, Cevdet Bahriye Kataloğu [henceforth, C.BH] 1932 (28 Recep 1213/5 January 1799) report of the *kadı* of Malkara. McKnight is the only author who represents the Ottoman point of view though in an incomplete fashion; for instance he does not mention the negative impact of French atrocities in Egypt on the Ottomans, see McKnight, “Admiral Ushakov”, pp. 81-2.

¹³ The polemic between Pouqueville and Thornton centred on the former's allegation that Commodore Troubridge – captain of *Culloden* - and Spencer Smith, the British ambassador to the Porte, physically harassed and verbally abused Abbé Beauchamp who fell captive to Troubridge while carrying Napoleon's peace proposals addressing the Porte to Istanbul. They called him “damned rascal” and cursed the French as bandits, see Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 157. Thornton refuted the charge by bringing in the testimonies of others present on the occasion; consult the pages cited in footnote 4. Nelson hated the French for, among other things, the atrocities they committed against their own people and others, see Padfield, P., *Nelson's War* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2000), p. 115; the celebrated Russian field-marshal Suvorov accused the French of vandalism and “outright thievery” after observing the desolation by the French in Italy, Duffy, C., *Russia's Military Way to the West* (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 214-15.

¹⁴ An Ottoman register that covers some of the imperial edicts sent out to provinces during 1798-1800 displays 314 orders most of which are about confiscation of the French property, see Turğut, V., “208 Numaralı Mühimme Defterinin Transkripsiyon ve Tahlili 1798-1800 (H 1213-1215)” (Sakarya Üniversitesi, unpublished MA thesis, 2006); Also see A.AMD 41/41 (27 Cemaziülahir 1213/6 December 1798) from Mustafa Paşa, the governor of the Morea, to the Porte.

¹⁵ A.AMD 39/10 (nd.; catalogue date: 21 Muharrem 1212/16 July 1797) draft memorandum.

which reveals that retaliation and confiscation were not instinctive but spiteful instruments of a calculated policy.¹⁶

A major contribution to the Russian doubts about the Ottoman ally was the maltreatment of the French soldiers by the irregular troops of Ali Paşa of Janina. After occupying the Dalmatian towns of Butrinto, Parga, Prevesa and Vonitsa, he treated the overwhelmed French garrison of Prevesa together with the Prevesans with cruelty, following the conventional Ottoman norms, for they had refused to submit peacefully to his authority before the final assault. In the final analysis though, the undisciplined and irregular nature of the ‘Albanian’ troops on the one hand and his personal revanchist attitude on the other hand seem to have been the principal factors in the maltreatment of the French troops and the civilians. On one occasion during the siege of Corfu, Russian soldiers saved fleeing French soldiers from slaughter at the hands of Ali Paşa’s mixed force of Muslim and Christian Albanians by inviting them into their own ranks. This was a sufficient excuse for the Russian Admiral Ushakov to show reluctance to share the French captives with the Ottomans in violation of the agreement.¹⁷

The Ottoman empire was a patchwork comprised of central authority and self-appointed provincial notables, of the army under central authority and the irregular troops or the ‘frontier raiders’ of the late eighteenth century. A close scrutiny of particular events shows that Ottoman patterns were not much different from European patterns so far as the Ottoman central authority, the Sublime Porte, is concerned. For instance, the Sublime Porte encouraged the Ottoman forces to offer safe conduct to the French garrison in Corfu to bring the siege to a successful conclusion. Therefore, after the surrender of the French garrison, the Ottomans undertook the transportation of 2,300 French soldiers from Corfu to Toulon and Ancona on ten merchant ships hired by the monies borrowed from Ionian merchants with a freight cost of 24,055 real (78,178.5 *guruş* 30 *para*).¹⁸

¹⁶ On Ottoman foreign loans, see Eldem, Ethem, “Dış Borç, Osmanlı Bankası ve Düyun-ı Umumiye”, in *Osmanlı Maliyesi: Kurumlar ve Bütçeler*, 2 vols., ed. Mehmet Genç and E. Özvar (İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2006), pp. 95-113.

¹⁷ McKnight, “Admiral Ushakov”, pp. 44, 124-5, 136.

¹⁸ The first party could not set out to their voyage to Toulon before 28 March, while the remaining troops were sent to Ancona, rather than France, only on 3 April, see BOA, Hatt-ı Hümayun Kataloğu [henceforth, HAT] 164/6843-A (5 Şevval 1213/12 March 1799) from Abdülkadir Bey to the Porte; HAT 164/6843 (11 Şevval 11213/18 March 1799) from Abdülkadir Bey to the Porte; HAT 157/6536-D (5 Zilkade 1213/10 April 1799) from Abdülkadir Bey to the Porte. A report on the prisoners gives the total number of the French soldiers in the siege of Corfu as 2,937. 1,674 of them were rank-and-file and minor officers, see TSMA, E.4004/1 (13 Zilkade 1213/19 April 1799).

Casualty rates during the march

One of the reasons for the condemnation of the Ottoman treatment of prisoners was the forced march of captives in chains to Istanbul. Those who did not survive the long march were decapitated post-mortem. This practice was certainly one of the points in which the Ottoman patterns of prisoner treatment diverged from the European pattern. However, neither the forced march nor the collection of heads has to imply the perpetration of arbitrary violence. The provincial *kadis* – the Ottoman judges with certain administrative responsibilities – were responsible for inspecting the march and keeping the Sublime Porte informed on a regular basis. Their reports give much needed information on relevant Ottoman regulations concerning the captives in addition to offering us a glimpse into the details of their forced marches. For instance, the Ottomans captured 195 French soldiers along with a woman in the island of Cephalonia. Ahmed Paşa, the commander of İnebahtı (Lepanto), sent these captives to Istanbul with his *başçubadar*, Bekir. Each Ottoman sub-province (*kaza*) provided *cebelu* soldiers to escort the group as it marched across the respective *kaza*. The march seems to have lasted roughly 1.5 months (mid-November - January) and followed the route of Gümülcine - Mekri - Ferecik (?) – İpsala – Keşan - Malkara - İncecik - Rodosçuk (Tekirdağ?) – Çorlu - Silivri, terminating in Istanbul as suggested by a series of *kadı* reports. This is comparable to Pouqueville's figure of 52 days cited for the forced march of the Zante garrison to Istanbul.¹⁹

Relying on the official reports, the journey must have been arduous and hazardous. They arrived in Silivri, the outskirts of Istanbul, with 31 casualties that corresponded to a casualty rate of roughly 20 per cent. This group entered Istanbul on 1 January 1799.²⁰ The report of the *kadı* of Gümülcine indicates that the march progressed smoothly, suffering no casualties until after leaving the town in early December. They left the town for Mekri the next day but then had to return because of bandits on the way. When the journey was resumed on the second day, one of them died of natural causes (“hulul-i eceliyle mürd”) and his severed head was sent along with an inspector (*mübaşir*) to Istanbul. 188 men and one woman entered the town of Keşan. Three more

¹⁹ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 138.

²⁰ “Ertesi yirmidördüncü salı günü Kasr-i Alayı teşrif ve Kefalonya ceziresinden çıkarılıb donanma tarafından İnebahtı'ya andan Asitane'ye gelan Fransız esirleri Babıaliyye geldiğini seyr ü temaşa buyurub Topkapu'ya avdet ve istirahat buyuruldu”, Arıkan, Sema (ed.), *III. Selim'in Sırkatibi Ahmed Efendi Tarafından Tutulan Ruzname* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), p. 295.

men died on the road to İncecik with casualty rates surmounting as the march progressed. The death of 19 more men in İncecik suggests a possible outbreak of epidemic in the group. By the time they halted at Çorlu, the group was reduced to 166 men and the woman with the accompanying 31 severed heads.²¹

Chopping off the corpses' heads is quite appalling for the modern observer just as much as it was for the contemporaries. One might collect the heads of the enemy corpses on the battlefield – the site of violence – in the hopes of material reward, as revealed in countless Ottoman narrative sources. However, in the present case, the motivation was not financial; it was, rather a bureaucratic nuisance to prove that the captive neither ran away nor suffered an unauthorized execution during the march. He, rather, died of “natural causes” if we are to ignore war-related factors such as epidemics, famine and fatigue. In this sense, sending the severed heads in sacks to Istanbul was a cruder version of the collection of identity discs or army tags for the purpose of identification of the corpse – i.e., the corpse of the “accursed” enemy in our case, and not that of the martyr. The procedure is quite different should the prisoner die in the Tersane Dungeon. A rare case from the year 1764 reveals that the corpse of a Spanish prisoner was examined in the presence of a group of witnesses including among others the Steward (emin) of the Tersane and the deputy kadı of Kasımpaşa. The examination established that he had died of natural causes which required the omission of his name from the registers.²²

While the casualty rates in this particular march described above is a bit high, this was not always the case. For instance, Kapudane Abdülkadir Bey mentioned the capture of 500 French prisoners in the island of Santa Maura. The official diary (*ruzname*) of Selim III cites the same figure for this group of captives when it records their arrival in Istanbul on 6 January 1799 – five days later than the group mentioned above.²³ Obviously, the equivocal language of the diary may have referred to the number of the soldiers taken prisoner in the

²¹ BOA, Cevdet Hariciye Kataloğu [henceforth, C.HRC] 4350 (2 Recep 1213/10 December 1798) *kadı* reports from Gümülcine and Keşan; C.BH 2459 (24 Recep 1213/1 January 1799) summary reports of ten *kadı*s serving in the towns lying along the route.

²² C.BH 2459 (24 Recep 1213/1 January 1799) summary of six *kadı* reports. Prisoners from Cephalonia were sent to Ahmed Paşa of İnebahtı aboard the frigate of Fazlı Kapudan and a Russian frigate, HAT 161/6798 (9 Cemaziülahir 1213/17 November 1798) from Abdülkadir to the Porte; it is not clear if this postmortem examination amounts to an autopsy. The name of the prisoner is “Civani, son of Anton”, see C.BH 6563 (7 Zilkade 1177/8 May 1764).

²³ A.AMD 42/12 (6 Şevval 1213/13 March 1799); “Kasr-ı alayı teşrif ve Aya Mavra ceziresinden ahz olunan beş yüz esir İnebahtı tarafından Babıali'ye kayd ü bend ile varid olmağla temaşa ve Topkapu'ya avdet buyuruldu”, Arıkan, *III. Selim'in Sırkatibi*, p. 295.

island rather than that of prisoners who reached Istanbul alive. On another occasion, the Ottoman Adriatic fleet and Ali Paşa of Janina dispatched 517 French prisoners to Istanbul under the custody of Mehmed Ağa, Ali Paşa's *silahdar*. They entered the town of Pravişte with only one casualty and continued their march to Istanbul the next day with a new escort provided by the town.²⁴ Eleven men died before arriving in Keşan in early January 1799 and two more perished on the way to İncecik.²⁵ By late January, 498 of them were present in Silivri (two of them being children) along with five severed heads.²⁶ The casualty rate seems to have been around four per cent in this relatively fortunate group of prisoners.

Ali Paşa's captives were in a very miserable situation in one sense if we are to believe Pouqueville. They were forced to cut off the heads of their compatriots who had perished in action and carry them in sacks all the way to Istanbul. According to Pouqueville, these sacks arrived in Istanbul on the same day as the French captives from the garrison of Zante.²⁷ However, Ali Paşa's report dated October 31, 1798 contradicted Pouqueville's narrative in that he claimed to charge two couriers (*tatar*) – i.e., not the French captives – with taking 298 heads in total to Istanbul.²⁸ It is interesting that this figure almost agrees with the number of the civilian Prevesans executed by Ali Paşa upon the fall of the town as cited in various contemporary travelogues.²⁹ The prisoners sent by Ali Paşa, on the other hand, arrived in Istanbul on 9 December 1798.³⁰

In summary, casualty rates for each group of prisoners during the forced march to Istanbul differed widely. One possible reason for casualties might be the exceptional severity of the winter in 1798-99 in the Balkans, which

²⁴ BOA, Cevdet Askeriye Kataloğu, [henceforth, C.AS] 21770 (9 Recep 1213/17 December 1798) the report of the *kadı* of Pravişte; Russian sources also mentioned that 500 French prisoners were shared equally. Depending on the testimony of Pouqueville, McKnight drew a very negative picture of their treatment by the Ottomans, McKnight, *Admiral Ushakov*, pp. 77-82.

²⁵ C.BH 1932 (28 Recep 1213/5 January 1799) report of the *kadı* of Malkara; C.HRC 243 (Ramazan 1213/ 6 February-7 March 1799) reports of *kadı*s of İncecik and Küçük Çekmece.

²⁶ C.BH 6589 (Şaban 1213/8 January -6 February 1799) the *kadı* report from Silivri. This report tells that Mehmed Ağa was the *mübaşir* of Ahmed Paşa, the governor of İnebahtı.

²⁷ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 138.

²⁸ A.AMD 41/31 (21 Cemaziülevvel 1213/31 October 1798) from Ali Paşa to the Porte.

²⁹ Among many see Hughes, T. S., *Travels in Greece and Albania...* (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830), vol. II, p. 158; Davenport, Richard, *The Life of Ali Pacha, of Janina, Vizier of Epirus, Surnamed Aslan, or the Lion* (London: Lupton Relfe, 1822), p. 130; Beauchamp, Alph. De, *The Life of Ali Pacha of Jannina...* (London: L. Relfe, 1823), pp. 95-100.

³⁰ "Depedelenli Ali Paşa'nın fetheylediği kalalardan çıkan usera-yı Françe Babıaliye der-zincir vürud eylemekle temaşa buyurulup Mabeyne avdet ve istirahat buyuruldu", Arıkan, *III. Selim'in Sırkatibi*, p. 293.

Pouqueville also observed in his stay in Tripoliçe (Tripolitsa).³¹ The singularity of events should warn us against drawing hasty conclusions by relying on illustrative sources such as Pouqueville's. Illustrative as it is, it conveys the revulsion felt at certain Ottoman practices such as the use of severed heads as identity cards. While it is outrageous by our standards, it was by no means a revengeful act of barbarity, as suggested by Pouqueville. It was, rather, a routine bureaucratic task in which the *kadı* supervised the post-mortem decapitation and entrusted the severed head to an inspector (*mübaşir*) or courier (*tatar*) who might or might not travel with the group of captives. This practice was meant to defuse any suspicion in Istanbul of laxity in safeguarding the captives during the march.

Preying on the French

Pouqueville had actually made a promising start from Alexandria. Accompanied by a group of ten French officers, he left Egypt on a Neapolitan merchant ship bound for France. Their voyage was cut short by the attack of a Tripolitan corsair, Oruç Reis from Dulcigno, off the Calabrian coast on November 25, 1798. Oruç Reis overwhelmed the merchant ship and captured the French officers. While transferring them to his own ship, Oruç was spotted by a Neapolitan warship. He fled at once with some of the prisoners aboard, deserting several of his men who were still aboard the merchant ship with a group of Frenchmen including Pouqueville. These corsairs, nevertheless, had the wind and the luck on their side and safely fled to the open sea.³² According to Pouqueville, Oruç's attack was plainly an act of brigandage since the *dey* of Tripoli was at peace with France. This assertion implied that their detention

³¹ He noted that the old people of the town had not remembered such harsh winter conditions in their life, see Pouqueville, *Travels Through the Morea*, p. 106.

³² The incident took place on November 26. The group included 11 individuals listed in the following: Pouqueville and Bessieres (members of the Commission of Sciences and Arts of Egypt), Colonel Poitvin (engineer), Colonel Charbonnel (artillery), the Commissary Fornier, Beauvais (commanding adjutant), Gérard (member of the Commission of Sciences and Arts of Egypt), Joie and Bouvier (officers of the Marines), Guérini (inquisitor of Malta), Mathieu (guide of the general in chief) (see Pouqueville, p. iv). Prior to the sudden appearance of the Neapolitan warship on the horizon, Oruç Reis had permitted Pouqueville, Fornier, Joie and an aide-de-camp of Bonaparte to return on board the *tartane* to change clothes in the custody of his own men (Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, pp. 8-9). Abdülkadir Bey described Oruç Reis as the brother of İzbandud Ali Kapudan, see HAT 79/3302 (29 Cemaziülahir 213/7 December 1798) from Kapudane Abdülkadir Bey to the Porte.

was illegal all the same.³³ However, the Sublime Porte had already sent out urgent orders in September 1798 to the *deys* of Tripoli and Algiers to inform them about the declaration of war on France and encouraged them to chase the French ships. Thus, no peace prevailed between the *dey* of Tripoli and France, regardless of Pouqueville's claims. Oruç surely knew the imperial orders, as suggested by an earlier incident. On October 2, almost two months before this daring incident, another group of French soldiers and merchants numbering 46 in total had left Alexandria for France. They were captured in the harbour of the island of Saknos (Sofnoz?) upon the timely arrival of the imperial order concerning the Ottoman declaration of war on France and ordering the detention of the French subjects in Ottoman realms.³⁴ Thus, preying on the French subjects in the Levant was the result of a deliberate, albeit inarticulate, official policy. This is further illustrated in the case of a certain Salih from Crete who engaged in corsair activity on the orders of the Sublime Porte. When he sold three Frenchmen he had previously captured off Cyprus as slaves, the Porte ordered the commander and *kadı* of Kandiye to find these prisoners and send them to the Tersane Dungeon (Imperial Naval Arsenal) under the custody of the inspector to be dispatched from Istanbul.³⁵

Pouqueville, further, implied that Oruç Reis 'shared' his prisoners with Kapudane Abdülkadir Bey and Ali Paşa of Janina as though they were his private slaves. However, it was the decision of Abdülkadir Bey to detain Gérard and Beauvais – the two highest ranking French officers - for interrogation.³⁶

³³ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 172.

³⁴ HAT 259/14917 (6 Cemaziülahir 1213/15 November 1798). They entered Istanbul on 14 November 1798: "Sofnoz ceziresinde ahz olunan Françe melaini Babialiyeye zincir-beste keşan-be-keşan gerütülüb ahz eyliyen çavuş ve refiklerine samur kürk ve neferatlarına kaput ilbas olunub piş-gah-ı Kasrdan imrar itdirilmekle temaşa buyurulup Mabeyne avdet ve istirahat buyuruldu" Arıkan III. *Selim'in Sırkatibi*, p. 291.

³⁵ C.BH 9586 (Ramazan 1214/25 February-26 March 1800) order to the commander and the *kadı* of Kandiye. For this case, also see Smiley, Will, "When Peace is Made, You Will Again Be Free": Islamic and Treaty Law, Black Sea Conflict, and the Emergence of "Prisoners of War" in the Ottoman Empire, 1739-1830" (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2012), p. 205.

³⁶ HAT 79/3302 (29 Cemaziülahir 1213/7 December 1798) from Kapudane Abdülkadir Bey to the Porte. He gives the number of the French captives as 11: "derun-ı sefnede onbir nefer Fransızlı mevcut olub bir neferi ikinci ceneral ve küsuru ofıcyal makuleleri olmakdan naşı...ve ceneral-i mesfur ve refiki bir nefer ofıcyal taraf-ı çakeranemde tevkif birle küsur Fransızları kapudan-ı mezbur Dersaadet'e götürceği ve ceneral-i mersum berren Der Aliyye'ye be'is ve isra olunacağı...". On December 7, Beauvais and Gérard were sent to İnebahtı via Balyebadre (Patras) on board the frigate *Ebu'l-Heves* in the custody of Ali Dayı of Tripoli (the *ağa* of the ship) and his *çavuş* İbrahim. They were accompanied by Mehmed Çavuş (Abdülkadir's *çavuş*) and a *tatar*.

Mahmud Raif Efendi, the diplomatic commissar in the Ottoman fleet, gives the details of this interrogation without mentioning the names of Beauvais and Gérard. Accordingly, Oruç Reis brought them on December 2 to the fleet, which then blockaded Corfu. In his interrogation, Beauvais gave a list of his comrades together with him on Oruç's ship³⁷ and confessed that he had faked illness in order to leave Egypt after losing his confidence in Napoleon. He argued that the expedition was doomed to fail because all the Egyptians hated the French invasion. The Arab tribes cut off the Cairo-Alexandria route, and ongoing guerrilla warfare took a daily toll of 70 soldiers.³⁸ After the interrogation, Abdülkadir Bey sent the two French generals to İnebahtı on board the frigate *Ebu'l-Heves*. The very fact that Oruç's men, Ali Dayı and İbrahim Çavuş, accompanied the prisoners in the voyage along with Abdülkadir's man Mehmed Çavuş and his messenger (*tatar*) proves that Oruç was not a free-lance bandit who sold his prize to the Ottomans, but was rather recognized as a patented corsair by the Ottomans, who arrested the Frenchmen and delivered them to higher Ottoman authorities in line with the imperial orders.³⁹

Mahmud Raif's report contradicts Pouqueville explicitly on the matter of Oruç's freedom of action. Oruç Reis was supposed to take all the prisoners except Beauvais and Gérard to Istanbul, as stated in the report.⁴⁰ But he delivered them to Ali Paşa in the end. According to Pouqueville, this was a further evidence of Oruç's free-lance activities. Nevertheless, it was wintertime and it took 20 days just to reach the Dalmatian coast from Corfu. Thus, Oruç's decision to leave them with Ali Paşa stemmed from the contrary winds and storms also witnessed by Pouqueville. They, then, continued their journey to Istanbul by land.⁴¹

As for Pouqueville and his comrades, the corsairs steered the Neapolitan merchant ship to Navarin (Navarino) and delivered the prisoners to local authorities. When they arrived in Tripoliçe, Mustafa Paşa, the governor of the Morea, interrogated them. It is very intriguing that Pouqueville does not mention this interrogation in his memoirs. The summary report of the interrogation, however, suggests that he had every reason to censor this episode in his account. Pouqueville and his friends proved to be very cooperative, providing valuable information on the condition of the French army and navy in Egypt.

³⁷ Consult Appendix II, for the list written and signed in Beauvais' hand HAT 176/7663.

³⁸ HAT 6752 (24 Cemaziülahir 1213/3 December 1798) from Mahmud Raif to the Porte.

³⁹ HAT 79/3302 (29 Cemaziülahir 1213/7 December 1798).

⁴⁰ HAT 6752 (24 Cemaziülahir 1213/3 December 1798) from Mahmud Raif to the Porte.

⁴¹ Pouqueville later met Gérard and Beauvais in Yedikule, Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, pp. 10-11, 103-7.

They contended that the Egyptian expedition was full of hardships and that the French officers were all looking forward to returning to France. They described Napoleon as a selfish individual. Granted full command by his superiors in France, he did not bother consulting with anyone in making decisions in Egypt. His conduct was usually met with disapproval by the rank-and-file, who hated him because of his arrogance and assertiveness.⁴²

Treatment of the ‘prisoners of war’

Pouqueville praised the virtue of the governor of the Morea and the commander of İnebahtı for the smooth organization of the prisoners’ journey to Istanbul on several occasions. The reader is left with the impression that the concern for the Frenchmen must have been a personal deed of benevolence, rather than a responsible behaviour of an attentive statesman. Nevertheless, Istanbul decided to keep the French captives in Istanbul and ordered the local authorities to rush them to the capital after taking the necessary measures for their safety. There is strong evidence that indicates that both Mustafa Paşa, the governor of the Morea, and Ahmed Paşa, the commander of İnebahtı, were simply complying with the imperial orders, as will be discussed below.

Pouqueville relates that the Ottoman authorities in Balyebadre (Patras) provided horses for Beauvais and Gérard in the journey to İnebahtı. Ahmed Paşa “behaved very kindly to them, gave them clothes and permitted them to go to the baths...he ordered them to be supplied with boots”⁴³ before setting out to a 22-day journey to Istanbul. Ahmed Paşa was not particularly trying to be kind to the Frenchmen but he was meeting Abdülkadir’s demand that “the general be delivered to Istanbul safely, conveniently, and rapidly.”⁴⁴

⁴² TSMA, E.6699/3 (3 Kanun-ı Evvel): “Mısır’dan 37 gün önce çıkmış bir kıta Alikorna sefinesinin beş nefer Fransalı ile Anavarin’e gelüb Fransızlar ihraç ve Trapoliçe’ye nakl ve istintak olunduklarında onbeş nefer Fransalı leylen İskenderiye’den çıkub İtalya sevahiline lede’l-vürud bir Trabluslu korsanına rast gelüb Fransızlar korsan sefinesine nakl olunur iken Sicilyateyn kralının bir kıta ceng sefinesi zuhur itmegle korsan gemisi kendü selameti için müfarekat idüb iş bu beş nefer Fransalı...ve Bonaparta maiyetinde olan sergerdelerin çoğu düşar oldukları enva-ı mesa’iye adem-i tahammüllerinden naşi Fransa canibine avdete hevahişkar olub Bonaparta ceneral hodbinliği muktezası üzere kimesne ile istişare itmeyerek heman kendü reyinde musır olmağla ve ruhsat-ı kamilesi hasebiyle ammenin reyine mugayir hareketden hali olmamağla cümlesi müteneffir olub...”

⁴³ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 108.

⁴⁴ HAT 79/3302 (29 Cemaziülahir 1213/7 December 1798) from Kapudane Abdülkadir Bey to the Porte: “...ol-tarafa lede’l-vusul ceneral-i mersumu emnen ve salimen serian ve acilen Der-alıyye’ye tisyar eylesmesi hususu İnebahtı muhafızı Paşa hazretlerine dahi ber-vech-i tafsil tahrir ve iş’ar olunmuş olmağla...”

We can observe the same misinterpretation in Pouqueville's account of the reception of the captured French garrison of Zante by Mustafa Paşa in Tripoliçe. According to Pouqueville, Mustafa Paşa was moved by the sad appearance of the captives and ordered them to be hosted in different quarters of his palace – officers were put in rooms and the rank-and-file slept along the clean corridors. He even allowed the prisoners to take walks in Tripoliçe by turns. Then he separated the women, children, and the sick from other captives and sent them to Istanbul by vessels he hired. He supplied the remainder with proper shoes and clothes before sending them to Istanbul overland, which took 52 days. And this he did out of compassion according to Pouqueville. The *paşa* even allowed French prisoners a daily subsistence of 15 *para*.⁴⁵ But, Mustafa Paşa was likely to have acted under the orders of the Porte, as suggested by the above example as well as the reference to the usual Ottoman practice of distributing daily allowances and boots to captives.

The Ottomans used to issue all prisoners with summer and winter uniforms. Among many examples of this Ottoman practice, one may cite the occasion when the Sublime Porte spent 960.5 *guruş* for the winter clothes for 39 prisoners sent on three ships from Corfu in 1800. The prisoners' winter costume was a red hat (*barata*), a black coarse woollen cloak (*aba*), a coarse felt jacket (*kebe-i Yanbolu*), linen shirt (*kirbas-ı ada*) and a pair of buckled shoes (*kopçalı*), each costume worth 25 *guruş*.⁴⁶ Figures from the following year show that winter clothes of the prisoners kept at the Tersane cost the Sublime Porte at least 46,741 *guruş*. Furthermore, the Porte allowed the Spanish embassy to distribute clothes and pocket money among the French prisoners on the mutual understanding that the Ottoman embassy that was kept in house arrest in Paris would be accorded the same treatment.

Most of the French prisoners were kept in the Tersane Dungeon. Although the Imperial Council had initially decided to imprison the French citizens in the French ambassador's residence, Selim revoked the decision, sending commoners to the Tersane Dungeon and prominent Frenchmen to Yedikule.⁴⁷ Besides the prisoners, many native and foreign engineers and workers, including French subjects, crowded the Tersane besides the prisoners. They were busy arming and equipping the Ottoman navy against the French in Egypt and the Adriatic. After the arrival of the French prisoners, the Porte had to

⁴⁵ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, pp. 40, 26.

⁴⁶ C.BH 3814 (10 Safer 1215/3 July 1800). This was the responsibility of *Tersane Emini*; the unpaid portion of the total sum was 46,741 *guruş*, see C.BH 10205 (22 Cemaziülahir 1216/ 30 October 1801); for the role of the Spanish embassy see, C.HRC 7835 (16 Cemaziülevvel 1213/26 October 1798).

⁴⁷ Smiley, "When Peace is Made", p. 204.

increase the monthly wheat ration of the Tersane from 2,000 to 3,000 *kile* (76,980 kg.) in order to feed the French prisoners.⁴⁸ However, the presence of so many Frenchmen, either as prisoners or employees, was a security risk. An incident that occurred during Ramazan of 1213 (February 6 – March 7, 1799) caused the Ottomans to grow suspicious about the French. An Ottoman three-decker caught fire in the Tersane. One of the non-Muslim carpenters was scapegoated for the accident and severely punished - probably hanged on the spot (“cezası tertib edildiği”). This suspicious accident convinced the Ottomans of the unreliability of the famous French ship-designer Brunne and his staff. The Porte also decided to send some French officers to fortresses in the provinces until the end of the war. Pouqueville was enraged by this decision because this sapped the French officers’ plot to escape.⁴⁹

Pouqueville’s account of this escape plan sounds unreal to the modern reader. According to the plan, 800 French prisoners were to storm the arms magazine near the Tersane and force their way to “Germany” either over land or in a merchant ship to be seized in the bay. The French officers hoped that Germans “though at war with France, would have done honour to their valour”.⁵⁰ While Pouqueville’s account of the plan sounds totally bombastic and unrealistic, the Ottomans may have gotten wind of such plans before deciding to disperse the officers to provincial towns. Pouqueville observed that the French officers became “altogether objects of fear to the Turks” and relevant Ottoman documents described them as seditious (*müfsid*).⁵¹

⁴⁸ C.BH 5090 (6 Cemaziülevvel 1214/6 October 1799) and C.BH 3408 (22 Şevval 1214/18 March 1800); a *kile* is equal to 25.66 kg. for wheat. Making large allowances in her calculation to be on the safe side, Balta concludes that 20 per cent loss in weight occurred in making wheat into flour and the bread weighed 30-40 per cent more than the given quantity of the flour, see Balta, Evangelia, “The bread in Greek lands”, *AÜDTCF Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 16/27 (1992-94), p. 216, especially footnote 73. Following her formula, the monthly bread production of the Tersane with the new wheat ration would rise to 80.059.2 kg. This amount was sufficient to feed more than 5,000 individuals a day with a daily allowance of 500 grams each. As mentioned previously, there were around 1,200 French prisoners in the Tersane. A.AMD 42/15 (8 Şevval 1213/15 March 1799) gives the number of the prisoners as 1,009 but A.AMD 42/12 (6 Şevval 1213/13 March 1799) cites the figure of 1,209. Pouqueville kept a separate list of the French prisoners and his figure agrees with that cited in the latter document, see Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 141. Relying on Ottoman documents, Smiley gives the number of French prisoners – civilians and soldiers alike - kept at the Tersane as 1,558 as of January 1799 and 1,182 as of December 1800, see Smiley, “When Peace is Made”, p. 204.

⁴⁹ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, pp. 141-2.

⁵¹ “But the scheme was frustrated, for the officers being altogether objects of fear to the Turks, were soon transported to the castles of the Black Sea, or dispersed in the towns of Asia Minor.”

Once locked up in provincial fortresses, each prisoner was allowed a daily subsistence of 5 *para*, which was to be met from the local resources such as *cizye* (head tax) and customs revenues. Later - until September 9, 1801 -, this was met from the special fund (*Françeli akçesi*) created by the confiscated cash from the French subjects. The distribution of 336 prisoners to the fortresses is shown in Table I.

Table I Distribution of the French prisoners to the provinces.

Fortress	No. of prisoners	Casualties known	Allowance (in <i>guruş</i>)
Bursa	22		
Kütahya ⁵²	20	1(as of 1 Oct 1799)	855.5 (5 Jun 1799-31 May 1800)
Amasya ⁵³	20		885 (5 Jun 1799-24 May 1800)
Tokat	20		
Varna	40		
Livadya	40		
?	20		
Edirne	23		
Dimetoka	20		
Ankara	21		
Konya ⁵⁴	20	3 (27 Oct 1799-18 Jan 1800)	752 (3 Apr 1800-23 March 1801)

(Continued)

See Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 142; A.AMD 42/15 (8 Şevval 1213/15 March 1799); A.AMD 42/12 (6 Şevval 1213/13 March 1799). The same document also describes the French as “a hideous and crafty nation.”

⁵² 295 *guruş* was spent from the *cizye* revenues for the allowance of 20 prisoners for 118 days between 1 Muharrem and 30 Rebiülahir 1214 (5 July-30 September 1799). As one of them died, 19 prisoners got 560.5 *guruş* for 236 days between 1 Cemaziyülevvel and 30 Zilhicce 1214 (1 October 1799-24 May 1800). All in all, 855.5 *guruş* was spent on their subsistence, C.HRC 7917 (7 Muharrem 1215/31 May 1800).

⁵³ The annual rations of 20 French prisoners in the fortress of Amasya cost 885 *guruş* for the given period under question and this sum was to be met by the local *cizye* collector, although he was then reimbursed by the Treasury, C.HRC 5282 (24 Zilhicce 1214/19 May 1800).

⁵⁴ For 17 prisoner, 752 *guruş* was spent between 8 Zilkade 1214 and 8 Zilkade 1215 (3 April 1800-23 March 1801). Three prisoners had already died among the original group of 20 prisoners, probably because of an epidemic as suggested by the dates (one of them died between 27 October 1799 and 18 January 1800; another died between 19 and 24 January 1800; the last one died between 25 January and 2 April 1800), see C.HRC 2146 (18 Zilhicce 1215/2 May 1801).

Table I (Cont.)

Fortress	No. of prisoners	Casualties known	Allowance (in <i>guruş</i>)
Kayseri ⁵⁵	20	1 (as of 29 March 1801)	389.5 (29 March 1801-20 Aug 1801)
Hanya	8		
Trabzon	9		
Samsun	9		
Amasra	9		
Sinop ⁵⁶	12	4 (as of 16 March 1801)	
?	3		
Total	336	9	18,850 (25 May 1800-9 Sept 1801)
Misivri ⁵⁷		20	1887.5 (7 Apr 1799-3 May 1801)
Karahisar-ı Sahib ⁵⁸		20	

Sources: the columns for destination and the number of the prisoners except the last two places rely on the information from C.HRC 1991 (10 Recep 1216/17 November 1801). It gives the total number of the prisoners to be sent to the provincial fortresses as 336 (also see Smiley, “When Peace is Made”, p. 204). This figure is 346 in A.AMD 42/12.

Another list records 112 French subjects with their names, occupations and the places of imprisonment. This was presumably made at an earlier date since it lists Ruffin, the French chargé d'affaires, as still kept in Yedikule. He was moved to the embassy with his retinue of four after Pouqueville's group came to Yedikule in the summer of 1799.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ For 19 prisoners, 389.5 *guruş* were spent from the *cizye* revenues in a period of 164 days (14 Zilkade 1215 - evahir-i Rebiülâhîr 1216/29 March 1801 - 20-30 August 1801), C.HRC 1872 (18 Şevval 1216/21 February 1802).

⁵⁶ There were four casualties by 16 March 1801, C.HRC 1991 (10 Recep 1216/17 November 1801).

⁵⁷ Misivri was not included in C.HRC 1991 and is not counted within the 336 prisoners. 1887.5 *guruş* were spent between 1 Zilkade 1213 and 19 Zilhicce 1215 (7 April 1799-3 May 1801). The local authorities asked the Porte to meet this expense from the customs revenues but it was declined, C.HRC 5422 (15 Rebiülevvel 1216/26 July 1801).

⁵⁸ Karahisar-ı Sahib was not included in C.HRC 1991 and is not counted within the 336 prisoners. The order concerning their transfer from Istanbul was dated 23 March 1799, C.ASK 41415 (19 Safer 1216/1 July 1801).

⁵⁹ A.AMD 42/33 (n.d).

Table II French prisoners in Istanbul as of summer 1799.

Fortress/destination	No of prisoners	Occupation
Yedikule	5	chargé d'affaires Ruffin and his retinue of 4
Anadolu and Rumeli fortresses in Istanbul	22	merchants
Amasra	6	consuls, dragomans, servants and a surgeon
Samsun	9	consuls, dragomans, servants and a surgeon
Sinop	10	soldiers (including Generals Metan and Loni Mankoni, servants and dragomans)
Giresun	7	consuls and their retinues
Tersane	62	artisans and craftsmen
Yedikule	6	individuals including Ruffin's son-in-law
the French embassy	?	the sick and the children

Transportation of French prisoners back to Istanbul

The Sublime Porte ran into many difficulties concerning the treatment of the prisoners in the provincial towns. Several incidents suggest that the boundaries between the *esir-i mirilharb esiri* and *gulam* are quite blurred at this time. Complaints about hidden captives in private hands were never absent.⁶⁰ A major difficulty was the unwelcome intervention of the local notables in certain towns. One of the notables of Amasra, for instance, demanded from the fortress commander to deliver Le-do, a 16-year-old French prisoner, to him. His threats of storming the fortress caused much panic among the fortress guards as well as the prisoners. The Danish chargé d'affaires Baron Hubsch, who represented the prisoners before the Sublime Porte, pointed out this was contrary to the law of nations, not to mention proper moral manners. He requested the Porte to transfer Le-do to the French palace in Istanbul. It is very telling that the notable is quoted as calling this prisoner “gulam.” This shows that the distinction between a war captive and a prisoner of war was not so clear in the minds of at least some Ottomans. The Porte ordered the local authorities to protect the prisoner from the notable and to investigate whether Le-do had converted to Islam, which the notable might use as a pretext to lay his hands on him.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Smiley, “When Peace is Made”, pp. 203-7.

⁶¹ C.HRC 2306 (Şevval 1214/6-16 March 1800) from Hubsch to the Porte and the imperial decree to Amasra. Hubsch says “...16 yaşında bir tazeye nazar-ı na-hemvar-endaz ile ‘şu gulamı bana virin’ deyu.....merkum ayanın bu güne hukuk-ı milele mugayir ve erkan-ı adaba muhalif

Article 8 of the Ottoman-French peace treaty (26 June 1802) stipulated the returning of the French prisoners of war who did not convert to Islam.⁶² Those captives who claimed to have converted to Islam were to be interrogated before the *kadı* in the presence of a French representative. It is worth mentioning that absence of a clause concerning compensation for French slaves was a new departure from the pattern set by the preceding Russo-Ottoman treaties. Even before the signing of the treaty, the Sublime Porte had released captives in central state custody, numbering roughly 900 men, women and children. There were only 35 captives left in the Tersane Dungeon by May 1802.⁶³ Most of these captives had to be transported back to Istanbul from provincial fortresses. During the peace negotiations carried out with General Menou, the Sublime Porte transferred some of the high-ranking French officers and civilian prisoners in and outside Istanbul to the French embassy through the mediation of Baron Hubsch.⁶⁴ Among this group were 33 prisoners kept in Sinop, Samsun and Giresun and they were all civilians: consular staff.⁶⁵

A commission under the presidency of Ruffin was set up in order to facilitate the process. Ruffin informed the Porte that 12 of the 20 prisoners in Tokat were actually seized by certain individuals. The Porte, thus, ordered the local authorities to send them along with an inspector (*mübaşir*) so that they could be interrogated by the *kadı* with a dragoman present in the session.⁶⁶ Almost a year later, the matter was still unresolved. Mehmed, a *çukadar* of the grand *vezir*, was then sent to investigate the matter. The investigation yielded interesting results. We learn from Mehmed's report that one of the prisoners had

tasallutu men eylemek için iktiza eden zabitanı emr..." On the common practice of conversion by the captives see Smiley, Will, "The meanings of conversion: treaty law, state knowledge, and religious identity among Russian captives in the eighteenth-century Ottoman empire", *The International History Review*, 34/3 (2012) (forthcoming).

⁶² "...hin-i muharebede ahz olunub Memalik-i Mahrusemde bulunan Françelü üserasının sebilleri bila-bedel tahliye olunması bu defa akdolunan musalaha ahitnamesinin sekizinci maddesinde musarrah olduğuna binaen..." HAT 1194/56910 retains the drafts proposed by Talleyrand and Galib Efendi as well as the original treaty. A detailed analysis of this document would be highly interesting in order to show the priorities of the two sides; Also see, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* [tab-ı cedid] (Istanbul, 1309) vol. VII, pp. 161-2.

⁶³ Smiley, "When Peace is Made", pp. 205-6.

⁶⁴ There was already some talk about the exchange of prisoners when the French army in Egypt was under General Menou but the British naval officers in the region were against peace with France at that time, HAT 3446-H (29 Zilkade 1215/13 April 1801).

⁶⁵ C.HRC 3333 (12 Safer 1216/24 June 1801). The breakdown of the group sums up to 32: 8 in Giresun, 9 in Samsun, 15 in Sinop. The prominent prisoners were *Jan Bons Andre* (commercial commissar in İzmir as well as many scribes, dragomans, language pupils, doctors, teachers and servants).

⁶⁶ C.HRC 5735 (Recep 1217/28 October-26 November 1802) order to the *voivode* of Tokat.

converted to Islam and married the year before the investigation as he professed to the *kadı*. A group of five prisoners were delivered to Mehmed. As for the remaining six prisoners, the situation proved to be complicated since separate investigations by Mehmed and Ruffin turned out that they had been seized by the strongmen of Tokat. Four months before the investigation, one of them, Fevtlioğlu Hacı Muhammed, had bartered a French prisoner (Manzen) in exchange for a donkey; the other, al-Haj Ali, had sold Jozef in Zile (in the vicinity of Tokat). Another prisoner was in the possession of Alemdar Abdurrahman during the time of investigation. Genç Mehmed Ağa, however, detained this man together with Jan, Asye and Jozef in his *harem* quarters by force in order to hide them from the inspector. Mehmed, the inspector, described these last four prisoners as remaining “with their ‘possessor’ Genç Mehmed Ağa.”⁶⁷

The Case of Rose and Lasalcette

The imprisonment of adjutant-general Rose by Ali Paşa of Janina is one of the famous stories utilized by Pouqueville to portray the perfidious nature of Ali Paşa. According to the conventional view, the *paşa* had double-dealings with the French and the Ottomans. When the French declined to give Santa Maura to him, he turned against them and sided with the Ottomans. Rose was the French representative at the court of Ali. The *paşa* liked him so much so that he had arranged his marriage with a Greek girl. However, this cynical *paşa* needed an opportunity to flatter the Porte and defuse all suspicions about his loyalty after he failed to cut a deal with the French. He staged the much-desired occasion by summoning Rose to his court. After giving him a warm reception as usual, he informed him about the Ottoman declaration of war on France and put him under arrest in the sneakiest way. Then, he sent him along with General Lasalcette to Istanbul, in irons.⁶⁸ When Rose arrived in Istanbul, however, he was interrogated and told quite a different story. His testimony clearly shows that he had known about the outbreak of the war with France prior to the last meeting with Ali Paşa. His family had been serving as consuls of France at Balyebadra for 80 years. Knowing Greek and living in the Morea, he had married a Greek girl in Janina with the permission of Ali Paşa seven months prior to his detention. The last time he met Ali Paşa was 12 days

⁶⁷ “...ve dört neferi sahibi olan Genc Mehmed ağa ile diyar-ı aharda olub...”, C.HRC 2188 (evahir-i Cemaziülevvel 1218/7-17 September 1803) order to Tokat.

⁶⁸ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, pp. 172-3.

before latter's attack on Prevesa. In the meeting, he continued, they had exchanged news and views about the French expedition to Egypt. Accordingly, when the Porte had decided to arrest French consuls and to confiscate French goods, the French administration in Prevesa retaliated by detaining some Ottoman ships in the harbour of Prevesa, including the one belonging to Ali Paşa. Rose concluded that this was the reason for his detention in Janina. It is worth mentioning that Rose uses very cordial language about Ali Paşa, while criticizing Napoleon and the French directors in harsh language, for violating peaceful relations with the Sublime Porte. Obviously, one should treat his cordiality with caution as his statements were filtered by his Ottoman interrogators and summarized in the official report. Both Rose and Lacalsette provided valuable information about the French military preparations in Corfu, which shows their inclination to cooperate with the Ottoman authorities against the French war effort in the Levant.⁶⁹

Conclusion

All the French prisoners were finally released and sent back to France by the autumn of 1802. Pouqueville left Istanbul in the company of a mixed group on 9 September 1802 aboard *St. Stephen*.⁷⁰ He left Istanbul with mixed feelings and conflicting memories about his period of captivity.

Our soldiers were in the end treated far better than the other prisoners...though barbarians, they [the Turks] knew how to respect misfortune. They not only separated them from the slaves, but they did not fatigue them by excessive labour...

⁶⁹ TSMA, E.6699/4 report of interrogation of Rose and Lacalsette: "...Roz Şabo'nun maiyetinde olub ecdadı 80 seneden beru bi't-tevarüs Balyebadre'de Fransa konsolosları olduklarından kendüsü dahi Mora'da ikameti hasebiyle Rum lisanını taallüm ve ahz olunmazdan 7 ay önce Ali Paşa'nın izni lahık olarak Yanya'da bir Rum kızı ile teehhül idüb Preveze vakiasından 12 gün önce bazı ahvali müzakere itmek suretiyle...Memalik-i Mahruse'de Fransa konsolosları tevkif ve tüccar emvali zabt olunduğu mesmu oldukda Preveze'de kain Ali Paşa'nın 1 kıta sefinesi ve bazı sefayin-i saire dahi Fransalu'dan zabt olunmağla bu sefayin mukabelesinde kendüsünün tevkifi lazım geldiği Paşanın silahdarı vesatatiyle ihbar birle derakap Yanya tarafına irsal eylediğini... Devlet-i Aliye ve Fransa devleti ve cumhuru beyninde kadimü'l-eyyamdan beru musafat-ı kamile derkar ve taraf-ı saltanat-ı seniyyeden icra-yı merasim-i mevalata daima riayet olunarak nakz-i ahdi icab ider bir güne halet zuhur itmediği celi ve aşikar iken Fransa müdirleri yüzünden böyle oldu. Fransa milleti yalnız bu müdirlerin define kıyam ile müttehim olduğunu lede'l-irad bu kazayayı teslim birle müdirlerini şütum-ı galize ile yad...ve anlara lanet okumağa ibtidar..."

⁷⁰ Two other ships carrying the prisoners left Istanbul respectively, on September 15 and October 1, 1802, see Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, pp. 169-70; C.HRC 667 (n.d.) must refer to one of the last two groups of prisoners. It states that a group of 65 men, 8 women, 10 children and 2 servants were sent to France by a Russian merchant vessel (*San Nikolo*).

The captains of Turkish ships instead of ill-treating them, often made them a compensation.⁷¹

Apparently, post-mortem decapitation of the French prisoners and the Ottoman disregard of military hierarchy in their treatment at certain times were shocking for Pouqueville. Furthermore, particular cases we have focused on suggest that categories of captivity and slavery had not yet separated from each other in the minds of many. Nevertheless, Ottoman official policy in the treatment of prisoners was based on the concept of reciprocity as suggested by recent studies on the subject.⁷² Obviously, we need more studies to highlight Ottoman treatment of war prisoners, bringing together the illustrative evidence from narrative sources and hardcore evidence from the documents. This has the potential of not only reaching a comprehensive understanding of the subject but also drawing general conclusions about wider issues of the evolution of Ottoman juridico-political culture in the early modern era.

⁷¹ Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, 139-140.

⁷² Consult in this volume Smiley, Will “Let *whose* people go? Liberation, legalism, sovereignty, and subjecthood in eighteenth-century Russo-Ottoman relations”.

APPENDIX I

Excerpts from François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea Albania and Several Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire, to Constantinople during the Years, 1799, 1800, and 1801. Comprising A Description of the Countries, of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, &c., &c.* (trans. From the French, London, 1806).

I; 1; 2

p. 39 = (on the French garrison of Zante): “[they] surrendered in the year 1798, to the combined Turkish and Russian armies. According to the terms which they obtained, they were to be sent to a place occupied by the French armies in Italy: but the Russian commander, who ought to have protected the people of a civilized nation against the Turks, oppressed them in their misfortune, and landed them at Castel-Tornese, to be conveyed to the dungeons of Constantinople. No pen can describe the rage of these men, on finding they were cast on the Turkish territory: they regretted that they had not suffered themselves to be buried under the ruins of Zante; and in short, they conceived the frantic thought of forcing their way through the Turkish territory into Germany: but they had no arms, nor the means of procuring any; they were therefore obliged to submit to the humiliating chains of Constantinople.”

p. 40 = (the garrison of Zante’s forced march to Tripoliçe): “On leaving Pyrgo, they were compelled to pass the river Alpheus, chained together like criminals: sometimes the water reached up to their shoulders and many were in consequence drowned.

p. 24 = (on the 2 ‘naked, meager and diseased’ French soldiers of the 6th demi-brigade): “they belonged to the garrison of Zante, who were on their way to Constantinople; but twelve of them were left sick at Tripolitza, of whom themselves alone had the misfortune to survive. They informed us of the way which the Pacha allowed for their subsistence; and of which our Greek, who was their intendant, had robbed them of two-thirds. As the same knavery had been displayed towards us (the Pacha having allowed us fifteen parats, equal to about thirteen sous daily, for our board), I resolved to question Constantine, and reprimand him on the subject.”

p. 138 = (the garrison of Zante): After a forced march of fifty-two days, the remains of the brave garrison of Zante entered Constantinople...The pacha of Albania [Tepedelenli Ali Paşa] had just sent to Constantinople, the heads of the Frenchmen who were found dead on the field of battle at Prevesa, and they were exposed at the gate of the seraglio as the monuments of a splendid victory...they made them file off before the heads of their late companions: but with such sights they were familiar; they had themselves been obliged to bring these horrible remains, and were treated by their guards as outcasts of the human race. They even obliged them to cut off the heads of their brothers in arms; and any one who might have refused to perform this revolting operation, would have been instantly butchered.

II

p. v = In short, I was reduced to slavery by a Tripoline corsair...

p. 3 = The corsair soon discharged a few shot at us; and continued to fire, as he advanced, while we were unable to make any resistance from a want of arms. The shouts of the enemy's cre, the noise of his cannon, and the clashing sabres, redoubled as he approached. We had hoisted our flag; and did nothing but make signals of peace, till the enemy ran foul of our vessel and boarded. The audacity of these banditti was at its height on perceiving there was not a single armed man on board, but each of us was in an abject and peaceable attitude. They instantly knocked us down, and beat several of us in most cruel manner.

p. 9 = As the Reis [the lieutenant of Oruç Reis] did not know that we were at war with the Ototman Porte, we gave him to understand, that since he could take us where he pleased, it would be more to his interest to land us at the isle of Zante than t Tripoli, as we could not now be at any great distance from the former. We added that on his arriva, he would be generously rewarded by the French commanders...

III

p. 103 = "They now began to provide us with lodging; and a few planks placed upon two tressels, with a miserable matrass, formed our temporary bed, on which we lay without undressing... [the kahya Sadık Aga] put us the next day in a room which was occupied by the domestics of the charge d'affaires, who had been turned out for our accommodation... [other French prisoners] mentioned to us several of our countrymen who had preceded us in the Seven Towers, and who, from an inveterate hatred towards the French had been sent by the government to the fortresses on the Black Sea. We thus learnt the names of several highly respectable persons who had been tyrannically sent to distant prisons by the fanatical Turks."

4

p. 40 = ... [When Mustafa Pasha, the governor of the Morea] saw the unfortunate Frenchmen chained together in pairs, he could scarcely restrain his indignation: he gave immediate orders that every respect should be paid to them, and they were all lodged in his palace; the women separately, the officers in rooms, and the soldiers in a clean and wholesome corridor. Provisions were regularly distributed amongst them, and they allowed a certain time to rest, before the proceeded on their extensive journey. One half of the soldiers had permission to walk daily about the town and its environs, under the command of their officers; and when they were at length obliged to set off for Constantinople, the pacha hired several vessels at Naupli in Romania, to convey the women, children, and convalescents. The pacha in short, did every thing to

ameliorate the situation of these Frenchmen; and before they set off, he ordered them to be supplied with good shoes.”

p. 108 = [Gerard and Beauvais are taken to Balyebadra by the pirates. The Ottoman authorities in Patras provided horses for their journey to Lepanto]: “Here they were presented to the pacha Achmet, who afterwards became pacha of the Morea: he behaved very kind to them, gave them clothes and permitted them to go to the baths. As it was December, he ordered them to be supplied with boots, that they might travel the more commodiously to Constantinople.”

p. 109 = [in Salona]: “M. Beauvais, who was quite overcome with fatigue was seized with a violent fever, the symptoms of which increased to such a degree, that the pirates came to the resolution of cutting off his head, if he did not get well enough to continue his journey on the following day. Happily, Ali Tchiauxou [Çavuş], though a barbarian, favoured his recovery, by covering him with his cloak.”

p. 110 = [In Larissa]: “[the Ottoman general] sent them to sleep in the khan, which is the ordinary residence of travellers, so that this time they were not treated like slaves; indeed they always observed that the great men in the empire acted towards them in a generous manner.”

3

p. 41 = (Upon reaching Istanbul): “the officers were disarmed, and all, without distinction, were sent into the bagné, or common prison; where, during three years, such of the victims as survived their misery, were confined in chains, and subjected to the most horrid treatment.”

p. 138 = (the garrison of Zante) On arriving at the Bagné, the officers were stripped of their arms, the prisoners were counted, and they were all shut up together. They were soon loaded with chains, the soldiers fettered in pairs, while the officers had an iron ring fixed on their leg as a mark of distinction.”

pp. 139-140 = “Our soldiers were in the end treated far better than the other prisoners. The Turks no longer confounded them together; and though barbarians, they knew how to respect misfortune they not only separated them from the slaves, but they did not fatigue them by excessive labour. Between six and seven in the morning, they called them over and sent them to work; they labored in the port, in rigging and equipping ships; and those who were too weak, remained in the court of the Bagné, where they were employed in beating junk into oakum. Towards noon they had a meal, and at four in the afternoon, their day was finished. The captains of the Turkish ships instead of ill-treating them, often made them a compensation. At six o'clock the guards again mustered the prisoners, who were afterwards shut up in their cells.”

p. 141 = “Such was the prison in which for nearly four years, Frenchmen of all classes were confined, who in 1799 amounted to 1200 in number, and a great part of whom

fell victims to disease: they were attacked by a pernicious fever which generally succeeds the plague, when the air has been deprived of its elasticity.”

On Rose’s detention

pp. 172-73 = “*Ali*, irritated, and wishing to dissipate all suspicions of his fidelity, began hostilities by an act of perfidy, in seizing, without any declaration of war, the Adjutant-General Rose, whom he had called to a rendezvous on the continent. This officer having been loaded with honours at his court, where he had been received with the greatest distinction, and prevailed on to marry a young Greek named Zoitsa, was far from suspecting such conduct on the part of *Ali*; but after the most amicable reception, he found himself loaded with irons, and sent to Janina, whence he was afterwards transferred to Constantinople.”

APPENDIX II

BOA, HATT-I HÜMAYUN 176/7663

Noms et qualities des françai pris à bord d'un batiment Livournais pas un des corsairs du Bey de Tripoli

Theodore Beauvais – Adjutant-general

Casimir Poitevin – chef de brigade de genie (colonel)

Alexandre Gérard – adjoint au genie

Charbonnel – chef de bataillon d'artellerie (lieutenant-colonel)

Bouvier – lieutenant de vaisseau

Bessieres – eleve d'un medecin de l'armée française

Marco Guérini – romain, interpret pour la langue arabe

Trois domestique français

Un matelot Livournais resté a bord du batiment et puis avec les français jus(te)només

General-i mersum gerek kendü rütbesini ve gerek yanında olanların paye ve ismlerini mübeyyin işbu defteri tarafımıza takdim itmeğle manzur-ı devletleri buyurulmak için irsal olundu.

The list does not include the names of Pouqueville, Fornier, Joie and Mathieu since they remained in the Neapolitan merchant ship.

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Noms et qualités des Français
pris à bord d'un bâtiment livornais
par un des corsaires Du Bey de
Tripoli

Theodore Beauvais	adjudant général
alex. géral	adjoit au géral
casimir poitevin	chef de brigade du géral
Charbonnel	(colonel)
	chef de bataillon d'artillerie
	(lieutenant colonel)
Douvier	lieutenant de vaisseau
Desvices	élève d'un médecin de
	l'armée française
Marco guéini	romain interprète pour
	la langue arabe

Trois domestiques français

un matelot livornais resté à bord du
bâtiment et pris avec les Français
susnommés

جزال رسوم گرن کندو رتبه سنی و گرن بانچه اولنگون با به واسطه بی بی
اسنو رفتی طرفه تقدیم اعظمه منظور دولتوق بیورطق ایچون ارسال اولنگون