

Was there Room in Rum for Corsairs?: Who Was an Ottoman in the Naval Forces of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries?

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Diyar-ı Rum'da Korsanlara da Yer Var mıydı?: 15. ve 16. Yüzyıl Donanma-yı Hümayunu'ndaki Denizcilerin "Osmanlılığı" Meselesi

Öz ■ Bu makale, değişik tarihlerde Osmanlı sultanlarına hizmet etmiş beş mühim denizcinin "Osmanlılığı", çağdaş ve bazıları otobiyografi niteliğinde olan anlatıların ışığında incelemektedir. Kemal Reis ve yeğeni Piri Reis, II. Bayezid'in hizmetine girmeden önce Akdeniz'de korsanlık yapmışlardı. Osmanlı hizmetinde sivriilen Piri Reis, 1547'de "Mısır Kapudanlığına" getirildi. Ancak Piri Reis'in Portekizliler'den Hürmüz kalesini alamaması ve akabindeki idamından sonra, Seydi Ali Reis Mısır Kapudanı olarak tayin edildi. Osmanlı korsan-denizcilerinin en başarılı olan Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa, I. Süleyman'ın saltanatı sırasında Akdeniz'deki Osmanlı donanmasına "kapudan" oldu. Turgud Reis, sahip olduğu yetenek ve deneyime rağmen, Barbaros Hayreddin Paşadan sonra kaptan-ı derya olmayı başaramadı. Buna sebep olan kişi aynı mevkiye kendi kardeşi Sinan Paşa'yı geçirmek isteyen Başvezir Rüstem Paşa'ydı. Bu denizcilerin dışarıdaki düşmanlar ve içerideki rakiplere karşı gösterdikleri çabalar onların Rum, yani Osmanlı sultanının meşru birer hizmetkarı olmak için verdikleri mücadeleyi gösterir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kimlik, Rum, Korsanlar, Kaptan-ı Derya

"A ruler will come from the land of Rum and will completely conquer all of the Maghrib. Then he will conquer Ceuta and make my dervish lodge flourish, and so many years will pass in justice."¹

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1 Diyar-ı Rum'dan bir padişah bütün Maghrib vilayetini tamam zapt ide. Andan sonra, işbu Septe'yi feth idüb benüm zâviyem ma'mûr ide. Dahî nice yıllar âdillik üzerine rûzigâr geçce. Piri Reis, *Kitab-ı Bahriye* (Istanbul: Historical Research Foundation, Istanbul Research Center, 4 volumes, 1988), 3:1298-99; Ayasofya 2612, fol. 309b.

Introduction

Piri Reis included this prophecy while describing lands by the Straits of Gibraltar, stating that the Arab inhabitants of North Africa claimed that a holy man, Ebu'l Abbas Septi (1146-1205), set up an inscription in the citadel of Ceuta in Morocco recording this prediction. The Portuguese conquered Ceuta in 1415 and retained control of the city until 1580 when Philip II of Spain claimed all Portuguese lands.² When Piri Reis presented his *Kitab-ı Bahriye* to Süleyman in 1526 he used the term *Diyar-ı Rum* to indicate the land possessed by the ruler he intended to praise; his audience in the 16th century understood that a ruler from “the land of Rum” signified the Ottoman sultan. In contrast, historians in the 20th and 21st centuries continue to debate the meaning of the term Rum.³ The geographic aspect of the term refers to the territories that the Ottomans conquered that had formerly been ruled by the Byzantines who continued Roman imperial traditions at Constantinople and its surrounding districts. The term also had a cultural meaning because it referred to the regional culture in those lands, which after the 11th century had large Turkish populations and eventually Turcophone rulers and authors. However, many seafarers from Rum, such as Piri Reis, spent significant periods of their careers in the ports and waters of North Africa where they helped expand Ottoman power.

This article argues that Ottoman seafarers during the 16th century articulated their sense of belonging, or their identity, through expressing their attachment to a particular place, a region known as Rum. They also stressed their loyalty to the Ottoman sultan, but usually they referred to him as the ruler of Rum; very rarely did they use the term Ottoman dynasty, *Al-i Osman*.⁴ It appears that their attachment was less to the dynasty and more to the territory that the dynasty ruled, for the connection between Turks and Rum predated the Ottomans. The cadet branch of the Seljuk dynasty was known as the Seljuks of Rum. After the Seljuk state fragmented and their shared rule with the Byzantines of the region was replaced by many small states led by Turkish *bey*s (princes), the connection between Turks and Rum continued. This Rum component of Ottoman identity remained salient for some individuals within the empire, including two Ottoman seafarers who are

2 Ceuta remains a Spanish autonomous city on the coast of Morocco to the present.

3 Salih Özbaran, “In Search of Another Identity: The ‘Rumi’ Perception in the Ottoman Realm,” *Eurasian Studies* 1 (2002): 115-27. Özbaran provides a summary of the debate in this article.

4 Seydi Ali Reis usually referred to Ottoman lands as *Diyar-ı Rum* but in one instance he used *Memalik-i Osmaniye* in the same passage indicating that they were equivalent, Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir’at al-mamalik* (Istanbul: İkdam Matbaası, 1895), 28.

remembered today because of their literary achievements, not naval ones. Piri Reis and Seydi Ali Reis, expressed attachment to Rum as their home. In conjunction with exploring the Rum component of their identity, I analyze the ethnic term Turk used by Piri Reis as well as Hayreddin Pasha, the most renowned Ottoman seafarer of Süleyman's reign. Writings by and about these men and their most prominent associates, reveal multiple aspects of their identity in relation to other powerful groups within Ottoman society.⁵ As seafarers competed for places among the evolving ruling Ottoman elite, palace educated administrators attempted to prevent their attaining positions at the center of power.

During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when Ottoman conquests expanded the boundaries of the empire to its greatest extent, myriads of diverse peoples came under the nominal jurisdiction of the sultan. Bayezid II (1481-1512) and his grandson, Süleyman (1520-1566) built a fleet that could rival any naval forces in the Mediterranean. Ottoman naval forces were most successful when commanded by admirals who possessed fighting skills honed through experience as privateers or corsairs, but such individuals who learned their craft at sea were resented and their positions challenged by the *devşirme* (levy of boys), recruited palace administrative and military elites who dominated Süleyman's reign. Although the composition of the ruling elite of the empire was not static and had continually evolved to meet the needs of the new Ottoman masters, the increasing prominence of the most successful Ottoman seafarers at court generated internal conflicts. Exploring how seafarers viewed their relations with the ruler and his court, how they developed a sense of loyalty to the dynasty, and how they articulated their perspective on inclusion and exclusion within Ottoman institutions allows us to understand one facet of what being Ottoman and loyalty to the ruler meant during this period.

While the land based Ottoman military forces evolved in conjunction with the empire from its beginnings, the establishment of an effective Ottoman navy did not occur until almost two hundred years after the rise of the Ottoman dynasty; thus institutionally it remained less integrated into the acculturation of the ruling elite. During the reign of Bayezid II, Ottoman naval power improved substantially chiefly through the recruitment of corsairs who were deemed outsiders by the administrative elite. Widely differing views were held on to what extent corsairs should be promoted in the naval hierarchy of official Ottoman forces. The post of *Kapudan Pasha* (admiral of Ottoman naval forces)⁶ in the Mediterranean was

5 These include *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Pasha, Kitab-ı Bahriye* by Piri Reis, *Mir'at al-ma-malik* by Seydi Ali Reis and *Tuhfetü'l-kibar fi esfari'l-bihar* by Kâtib Çelebi.

6 See footnote 21 concerning when the title *Kapudan Pasha* began to be used.

more often bestowed on palace favorites than on former corsairs. Thus naval leadership in the Ottoman Empire during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries presented a site of contestation between generally lower-ranking naval experts and court admirals with limited naval expertise. When the sultan, for reasons of naval policy, appointed a corsair as the supreme head of Ottoman naval forces, his *değişirme* recruited favorites criticized these admirals as outsiders. By examining this opposition between insiders and outsiders, focusing on forms of inclusion and exclusion, it is possible to find evidence of a concept of an “Ottoman identity”.

In the context of naval expansion, the other site of contestation that contributed to seafarers’ sense of self was between men attached to some degree to the Ottoman sultan and their counterparts who served the rulers of Portugal and especially those who served the rulers of Spain. In the lands and waters of both the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, the struggle for maritime supremacy produced encounters which led to the articulation of an “Ottoman identity”. Both the internal and external rivalries created conditions fostering the expression by individuals of their views of their own and others’ relationships to the rulers, the dynasty, and the lands of the Ottoman Empire.

Ethnic, religious, dynastic, and geographic terms all have their limitations when used as adjectives to describe the peoples who resided within the boundaries of the Ottoman polity. This is compounded when how those terms have been used in the recent past obscures rather than reveals their meaning during a previous period. Ottoman seafarers have been described in modern scholarship using a variety of ethnic or national terms, for example “Greek[s],” that seem to challenge an understanding of them as Ottoman. Applying an anachronistic ethnic or national identity to these individuals prevents understanding their sense of belonging to the empire. Also, while modern scholars find the term “Ottoman” useful, this word was rarely used by the individuals who wrote the sources examined in this article.

Some individuals were tightly bound to the ruler and expected sultanic favor to be demonstrated by their assignment to the highest offices. This sense of belonging or entitlement can be understood as an Ottoman political identity in this period. Individuals who were part of the *askeri* were in some sense Ottomans, but the “true” Ottomans were the sultan’s highest officials, who were mainly drawn from the *değişirme* and were educated in the palace.⁷ These favorites often received great rewards, but if they lost the sultan’s regard they lost their power and positions.

7 This was articulated long ago by Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 59–61. Itzkowitz explained that recruitment and education were essential aspects of attaining Ottoman status, which was cultural not merely dynastic.

Consequently, in this article I argue that the identification of naval leaders recruited from corsairs/privateers as “Ottoman” must be understood in the context of who was considered suitable to be included among the sultan’s highest ranking state servants. Achieving inclusion was difficult if an individual had not been educated in the palace and formed connections with other *devşirme* recruits and especially with the sultan himself.⁸ The most successful men with palace educations became the sultan’s favorites, and winning and holding his favor was essential to their long-term prosperity and often their very survival.

The favorites of Süleyman who monopolized state offices considered naval experts who had learned seafaring as corsairs to be outsiders even if they achieved the highest levels of leadership of the naval forces.⁹ Two highly talented corsairs whose inclusion as Ottomans was contested were Kemal Reis and his nephew, the cartographer Piri Reis. Thus I begin with biographical information about Kemal and Piri, before analyzing Piri’s writings for self-identification.¹⁰ Next I examine the writings of Piri’s successor as admiral of the Ottoman fleet in the Indian Ocean, Seydi Ali Reis, also known as Kâtib-i Rumi. I then analyze writings praising the exploits of Hayreddin Pasha, the most famous Ottoman admiral of the sixteenth century. Finally, I briefly consider Hayreddin’s successors as admiral, especially the incompetent but well connected Sinan, who obtained the post rather than Hayreddin’s associate, Turgud Reis. By assessing both the temporal and geographic context of the texts together with some analysis of their possible meaning, I demonstrate that self-identification and categorization by others varied according to their historical moment. The external factors that were crucial at the end of the fifteenth century were less important than internal factors at the end of the sixteenth.

8 Dror Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler: The Dissolution of Elite Collective Identity and the Formation of Official Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 11 (1996): 177-95. Ze’evi explained the phenomena that led to the creation of a *kul* group identity that viewed itself as an elite separated from the masses.

9 See Jonathan Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britainnia: Geography and Political Identities, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) for an analysis of similar issues in England.

10 For my analysis of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* by Piri Reis, I have relied on the edition published by the Historical Research Foundation. This edition has many advantages: it includes a facsimile of the Ayasofya 2612 manuscript of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* that I examined at the Süleymaniye Library. It also includes a transliteration of the Ottoman text, a modern Turkish “translation” as well as an English translation. The reader may compare all the versions of the text to analyze how the terms found in the manuscript have been rendered in the other versions.

Kemal Reis and Piri Reis

Kemal Reis, a corsair whose family originated from Karaman in Anatolia was one of the founders of Ottoman sea power during the reign of Bayezid II. Although Ottoman forces since the time of Bayezid I in 1390 had defeated the *beylik* (principality) of Karaman's lords repeatedly, it was not until 1474 that final resistance in Karaman was virtually eliminated and its lands and inhabitants became definitively part of the possessions of the Ottoman sultan. Therefore a young Kemal (c. 1450-1511) might have grown up with Karamanid sympathies and his eventual employment by an Ottoman ruler could not have been predicted at his birth. However, Kemal appears to have entered Ottoman service by 1470, since he sailed with the Ottoman fleet as a junior officer during the Negroponte campaign of Mehmed II in 1470.¹¹ Piri, who was born between 1465 and 1470, probably at Gallipoli, went to sea with his uncle in about 1481, and for the next fourteen years they sailed the Mediterranean as corsairs. Piri learned navigation from Kemal as they sailed throughout the Aegean and then to the western Mediterranean as far as the modern Algerian coast. In 1495 Bayezid II recruited both Kemal and Piri into his service as part of official Ottoman naval forces.¹²

Kemal Reis's significant contribution to Ottoman naval power included battling the Venetians in the Mediterranean and challenging the Iberian powers of Spain and Portugal's maritime expansion. His most crucial service occurred during the Ottoman war with Venice from 1499 through 1503. Kemal helped capture several ports in southern Greece: Lepanto in 1499, Coron and Modon in 1500, and Navarino in 1501. Kemal continued to sail to western Mediterranean waters to aid Muslims, who after the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492, faced persecution in Spain and conquest in North Africa.¹³ In 1507 Bayezid sent Kemal with materials to assist the Mamluks of Egypt in constructing a fleet to halt Portuguese expansion in the Indian Ocean. The uncle and his nephew divided their time between sailing the Mediterranean and shore based activities in Gallipoli, which was the chief Ottoman naval arsenal until 1518.¹⁴

11 Svat Soucek, *Piri Reis and Turkish Mapmaking after Columbus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), 37.

12 Piri Reis, *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, 1: 54-55. The family background of Kemal and Piri is disputed but the evidence in Piri's works points to origins in Karaman with the family migrating to Gallipoli. See Cevat Ülkekel, *Büyük Türk Denizcisi Kemal Reis* (İstanbul: Piri Reis Araştırma Merkezi, 2007); and Cevat Ülkekel and Ayşe Hande Can, *Piri Reis'in Yaşamı, Yapıtları ve Bahriyesinden Seçmeler* (İstanbul: Piri Reis Araştırma Merkezi, 2007).

13 See Andrew Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: a History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 36-42.

14 Marino Sanuto's *Diarii* is a rich source on Kemal Reis. He is the first "Turk" mentioned

Gallipoli attracted young men whose ambition was to pursue a career at sea. These possibilities included sailing with official Ottoman naval forces, engaging in maritime trade, or becoming a privateer. These activities were not mutually exclusive, and the most successful Ottoman seafarers engaged in multiple options. Privateers or corsairs or, as Piri identified himself and his uncle, sea *gazis*, were warriors for the faith who acquired wealth and fame as well as religious merit. Sea *gazis* had not originated with the Ottomans, but these *gazis* of the sixteenth century were carrying on a tradition begun in the fourteenth century in the Turkish principalities of Aydın and Menteşe.¹⁵

The Ottoman administrative elite viewed these freelance corsairs with both misgiving and disdain. Corsairs had more independence than most officials who were solely dependent on the sultan's favor and they viewed them as rivals. Faik Ağa criticized Bayezid's reliance on Kemal during the war with Venice and he called Kemal a robber and decried his independence.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Bayezid publicly rewarded the achievements of Kemal and Piri after the victory at Navarino in 1501; he invited them to a meeting of the imperial divan where Kemal kissed Bayezid's hand and received 3000 *akçes* (silver coins) and a sable robe of honor.¹⁷ Piri also noted that previously Bayezid had followed Kemal's advice regarding the most important goals for a sea campaign against the Venetians.¹⁸

As an advisor and as a successful naval commander Kemal won the sultan's favor, thereby arousing the jealousy of officials who desired to monopolize positions of power in the empire. Venetian authors record this rivalry. While Bayezid de-

in the *Diarii* and there are many reports about him in this source. Sanuto's first reports concern Bayezid's recruitment of Kemal Reis in 1496. He refers to him as "Camali turcho corsaro". Since Sanuto refers to Bayezid as "Signor turcho" it is not surprising that he refers to Kemal as a Turk. Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii* (Venice: F. Visentini, 1879-1903), 1: 10, 83, 136, 387, 441, 462-63, 1070-71. See also Peter Mario Luciano Sebastian, "Turkish Prosopography in the *Diarii* of Marino Sanuto 1496-1517/902-923," PhD dissertation, University of London, 1988; Ibn Iyas, *Journal d'un bourgeois du Caire*, trans. and ed. Gaston Wiet (Paris?: Librairie Armand Colin, [1955?]), 1:115. I thank Jane Hathaway for locating this reference; Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), 69, 114.

15 Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300-1415)* (Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia per tutti i paesi del mondo, 1983).

16 Sanuto, *I Diarii*, 2: 2152-53, report number 1128, August 1499, "solum Camalli governa..."

17 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 2:660.

18 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 2:709.

liberated over whether he should promote Kemal to the office of vizier, Bayezid's administrators endeavored to block this by any means, which may even have reached the point of plotting to kill Kemal. One Venetian report claimed that Admiral Iskender had caused Kemal's death by sending him to sail in an unsound ship, which sank in a storm in 1511.¹⁹ Thus Piri lost his uncle, mentor, and influence at court, for although Piri had commanded a ship during the Ottoman-Venetian war of 1499-1502, he had served as a subordinate of his uncle.²⁰ After 1511, Piri's activities on shore at Gallipoli were at least as important as those at sea. He continued to sail in western Mediterranean waters under the leadership of Hayreddin, later *Kapudan* (grand admiral) during the reign of Süleyman (1520-1566).²¹ In contrast to Hayreddin, Piri's fame in the twentieth century developed not because of his *gaza* activities at sea but because of his cartography. In 1513, Piri produced a map that included the Americas. Piri learned navigation from his uncle, but he produced maps by consulting Ottoman or Muslim sources together with maps being drawn in western Europe during this period of exploration. Piri explained that he created his map by combining information from approximately thirty maps including one made by Columbus. He obtained this map from a Spanish slave captured by Kemal who claimed to have sailed with Columbus to the Americas three times. The nature of the information that Piri included about Columbus on his own map indicates that Piri empathized with Columbus's desire to have his successful voyages suitably rewarded. Piri stated on the map that the Spanish rulers promised Columbus that if he discovered lands with riches, he would be made governor of them.²² Piri emphasized his own accomplishments by stating that his map was reliable and "worthy of recognition" and by mentioning it in his next masterpiece, a portolan, the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* or Book of Seafaring. Piri presented his map to Selim I (1512-20) at Cairo in the summer of 1517 after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt.²³ Apparently Piri had created his map at Gallipoli in

19 Sanuto, *Diarii*, VI: 519, 554; VII: 52.

20 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, I: 66-67.

21 Hayreddin commanded all the naval forces in the Ottoman Empire from 1534-1546. The most important among these from the perspective of Istanbul was the Mediterranean fleet. Later grand admirals were referred to as *Kapudan Pasha* but that title was not used by Hayreddin Pasha who was referred to in official correspondence from the sultan as the Governor of the Islands (of the Aegean, not Algiers) or *Cezayir beglerbegisi*. See Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: IB Tauris, 2011), 186. S. Ozbaran, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Kapudan Pasha."

22 Soucek, *Piri Reis*, 49-79.

23 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, I:42.

1513, then sailed to North Africa, because Hayreddin sent him to Selim from the western Mediterranean in 1515.²⁴ Subsequently he accompanied Ottoman naval forces to Cairo in 1517. Thus Piri continued to sail the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, participated in the most important naval conflicts of the period, while also studying maps and creating his own masterpieces. Piri presented his 1513 map to Selim as a means to achieve recognition. The sultan accepted the map and presumably brought it with him when he returned to Istanbul because it would be preserved in the library at Topkapı palace afterwards.

Although details concerning Piri's life are sketchy and personal anecdotes mainly record experiences with his uncle, the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* recounts that Piri was selected to act as pilot for the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha due to his skill as a navigator. Süleyman sent Ibrahim to Egypt in 1524 to organize its administration. Piri's record of his encounter with Ibrahim indicates how greatly he sought recognition of his accomplishments.

Whenever I fell into distress at sea, I always consulted a book. The [sailing] directions that I had written down in [this] book of mine amply demonstrated the excellence of my expertise. His excellency the great Pasha... thus grasped its gist, perfect knowledge [of the mariner's craft]; he knew there was accuracy, mastery in the art of navigation [contained in my book]. When his mind reached perception of it[s merits], he showed esteem for this slave of his as a result. He wished to bestow patronage upon this dust (i.e. me), so that I might be elevated, like the sun, by it. ... He said, 'You are a very able man, and there is much excellence in your character. The entire configuration of the sea has become known [to you]: none of its spots are hidden from you. I wish that you make all of it manifest, that you be remembered by it until doomsday. You should polish up this book well ... so that we may present it to the sovereign of the world.'²⁵

This meeting inspired Piri to revise his rough version of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, and he produced a more elegant work that he gave to the sultan in 1526. Piri's final cartographic achievement that has survived is a world map that was completed in 1528.

Piri Reis disappears from Ottoman records between the time he completed his second map in 1528 and the time when he was appointed *Mısır Kapudanı* (admiral of the fleet at Suez) that sailed the Indian Ocean in 1547. While Piri had an unrivaled knowledge of the Mediterranean as evidenced by his *Kitab-ı Bahriye*,

²⁴ Svat Soucek, "Tunisia in the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* by Piri Reis," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 5 (1973):129-131.

²⁵ Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 4: 1781-87; this translation is by Soucek, *Piri Reis*, 89.

he did not have extensive knowledge of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean so his cartographic knowledge alone does not explain why he received this appointment. In contrast to the position of admiral over the Mediterranean naval forces, the administrative elite did not view the Suez command as a prestigious position.²⁶

Piri's first assignment was to reconquer Aden, former Ottoman territory in Portuguese and then local Arab hands from 1538. By February 1549 this important port was again subject to the Ottoman sultan. Piri was rewarded with a *zeamet* (fief) worth 100,000 silver coins. In 1552 Piri sailed from Suez with a small fleet of 30 ships to attack Hormuz, another strategic port held by the Portuguese. This attack was unsuccessful and Piri sailed for Basra in the summer of 1553 and then returned to Suez, leaving most of the fleet at Basra. From Suez he proceeded to Cairo, where he soon received a death sentence from Istanbul. The governor of Egypt executed him in 1554.²⁷

Piri Reis' execution either for failure to achieve his objectives or, as the seventeenth-century naval historian Kâtib Çelebi hints, for some financial indiscretion, is chiefly understandable as the fate of an individual who lacked meaningful connections with the palace elite.²⁸ In contrast, Rüstem Pasha's brother, Sinan Pasha, failed to conquer Malta in 1551, but he retained the position of grand admiral and died of natural causes three years later. From the days when Piri sailed with his uncle Kemal, they were outsiders among the sultan's administrators who viewed them with suspicion and envy. While Ibrahim Pasha recognized the value of Piri's cartographic endeavors, Süleyman executed Ibrahim in 1536 and thus his support as a patron was eliminated. After the rise of Rüstem Pasha, grand vizier 1544-1553,

26 Soucek, *Piri Reis*, 102.

27 Soucek, *Piri Reis*, 102-103; Kâtib Celebi, *The Gift to the Great Ones on Naval Campaigns*, ed. İdris Bostan (Ankara: Prime Ministry Undersecretariat for Maritime Affairs, 2008), 93-94.

28 Kâtib Çelebi, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, trans. James Mitchell (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1831), 72. For a different view of Piri Reis' relations with Rüstem Pasha see Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 84-116. Casale believes that Rüstem Pasha was Piri Reis' patron based on a Portuguese intelligence report. Spies who were separated by a long distance from the events they were describing frequently reported hearsay, which could be very inaccurate. For an example of this see my "An Ottoman Report about Martin Luther and the Emperor: New Evidence of the Ottoman Interest in the Protestant Challenge to the Power of Charles V," *Turcica* 28 (1996): 299-318. Casale also claims that Hayreddin was Piri's patron, but evidence for this is lacking in comparison to evidence regarding Hayreddin's patronage of Turgud Reis who Hayreddin rescued from Genoese captivity in 1544, see Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies*, 239.

1555-61, and his brother Sinan, admiral 1548-54, relations with former corsair seafarers became increasingly strained.

Piri Reis' works are among the richest sources for analyzing an "Ottoman" sixteenth century view of both the Ottoman Empire and the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. During Piri's lifetime, 1470?-1554, the Ottoman Empire expanded greatly. New groups of Muslims and non-Muslims became subjects of the Ottoman sultans, most dramatically exemplified by the conquest of the Mamluk territories with their Arabic speaking inhabitants.

Piri Reis' works, especially the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, offer a snapshot of the status of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea in the 1520s.²⁹ Ottoman expansion had a significant political impact on these lands; so did Iberian expansion occurring at the western end of the Mediterranean Sea where Portuguese and Spanish monarchs extended their rule to new possessions. Piri himself witnessed the transition in these lands or heard it described by those personally affected. In the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, Piri offered information on the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea beyond that needed for navigation: the name or names of a place; who ruled it and how that had changed; and the religion and language of the inhabitants. He also narrated his own personal experiences, usually in the company of his uncle, Kemal Reis. His stories provide evidence of how he identified himself in relation to the fluctuations in power occurring in this period of transition in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean.

Such personal evidence for Piri's notion of self found in the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* is supplemented by that found on his two maps, large portions of which have been lost. Fortunately, on both maps the signature of Piri Reis is found on the surviving sections. The 1513 map's colophon states, "Composed by poor Pir, son of Haci Mehmed, known as the paternal nephew of Kemal Reis, may God pardon them both, in the city of Gallipoli, in the month of Muharram the sacred, year nine hundred and nineteen."³⁰ The statement on the 1528 map is similar: "Drawn by the lowly Piri Reis, son of el-Hacc Mehmed, known as the paternal nephew of the

29 We do not have an autograph copy of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, but the many manuscript copies from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth century did not update the information regarding the political status of the territories described in the 1520s.

30 Svat Soucek, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Piri Reis," Topkapı Palace Library, Revan 1633. Svat Soucek's other translation varies slightly: "The person who drew it is poor Piri, son of Haci Mehmed and paternal nephew of Kemal Reis – May God pardon them both! – in the city of Gallipoli, in the month of Muharrem the sacred of the year 919 (9 March-7 April 1513)." *Piri Reis*, 49.

late Reis Gazi Kemal, from the city of Gallipoli, in the year of 935.”³¹ The only significant difference for Piri’s identification of himself and his uncle is that on the second map he refers to Kemal as a “Gazi,” which he also did in the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*: “This weakest of God’s servants without power, the child of the brother of the late Gazi Kemal Reis, Piri Reis the son of the Hacı Muhammad.”³² In the poetic conclusion to the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, Piri gave his name again, “Captain of the Sea, Piri son of Muhammad.”³³ From these references, we learn little beyond his father’s name, that his father had performed the Hajj, and that he was nephew of the more famous Kemal Reis.³⁴

The anecdotes in the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* about his adventures with his uncle indicate the groups that Piri felt that he belonged to, as well as his views of their contributions to “Ottoman” society and power.³⁵ In the introduction, Piri praises Kemal and explains:

Together we visited the lands of the Franks and we crushed many enemies of the Faith.

One day a *firman* graciously sent by Sultan Bayezid Han came to us.

And it commanded, “Let Kemal Reis come before me and serve in maritime matters at my court.”

Good reader, in 900, the year of this order, we returned home.

And after that, by order of the sultan we set out on voyages and won many victories at sea.³⁶

Piri identified Kemal as a *gazi* explicitly in both the 1528 map and in the introduction of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*. However, here he emphasized that they were

31 Soucek, *Piri Reis*, p. 79.

32 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 1: 39.

33 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 4:1776.

34 Two Ottoman reference works provide some variations regarding Piri Reis’ name and possibly some additional information regarding the origins of the family. Bursalı Mehmed Tahir gives his name as Ahmed b. Ali al-Hacc Muhammed al-Karamani Larandavi in *Osmanlı müellifleri* (Istanbul: Meral Yayınevi, [1971]-1975), 3: 315, note 5. Mehmed Süreyya gives it in the form Piri Muhyiddin Reis in *Sicill-i Osmani*, 4 vols. (Westmead, Farnborough, Hants., England: Gregg International Publishers, 1971), 2: 44. See Fuad Ezgu, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Piri Reis.”

35 He refers to himself as “bu fakir”, a typical way for an individual to address the sultan revealing his humility before the ruler, Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 1: 43.

36 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 1: 53-55, translation by Robert Bragner. Compare Svat Soucek’s translation in *Piri Reis*, p. 40.

summoned from *gaza*/corsair activities in distant waters to serve the sultan in an official capacity as part of Ottoman naval forces, not merely as free lance corsairs. In addition to official recognition, they returned to the region that they considered their “home”, the lands and waters near the sultan’s court at Istanbul.

Another incident that deserves special attention is found only in the first version of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*. This description is significant because Piri identified Kemal and himself as *gazis*, Turks, and their homeland as Rum.

Once Kemal and I came to Bijayah [Bougie in Algeria], ... As we approached Bijayah, boats manned by inhabitants of the city came ten miles out towards us. They asked who we were and came right up to us and climbed on our ship. The late Kemal Reis asked them, ‘Why were you not wary of us? After all, no Turk has come here as yet.’ They answered, ‘Three days ago Sidi Muhammad Tuwati informed us that a *gazi* was coming from Rum and told us to go and meet him. When we saw you today, we went and told the Shaykh. ... No sooner had we said this than the Shaykh exclaimed, “Go forth, it is the *Gazi*!” So we have come to you.’ ... first of all we went with several of our companions to the Zaviye of Sidi Muhammad Tuwati. ... He placed his hand on Kemal Reis’s head, ... and said, ‘God willing, the Rum Padişah will bestow his favor on you.’ ... Out of love for this saint, we spent two winters at Bijayah, sailing out each summer on our raids.³⁷

This incident probably took place around 1490-92. Since Kemal and Piri made Bijayah their base of operations for over a year, they were not acting in an official capacity as part of the sultan’s naval forces but sailing as corsairs. This story indicates that Muslims in North Africa considered Turks to be *gazis* fighting against the Spanish threat to their cities. At this time, “Turks” in the western Mediterranean were still a novelty, as opposed to after 1513 when Oruç and his brother Hızır, later known as Hayreddin Pasha, took refuge in North Africa and subsequently made Algiers their base of operations. In 1533 Suleyman invited Hayreddin to return to the Eastern Mediterranean and lead Ottoman naval forces.

In 1521 Piri was describing an encounter with the indigenous population of North Africa that had probably occurred thirty years earlier. Describing himself as

37 Piri Reis, *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, Yeni Cami 790, Süleymaniye Library, folios 138b-139a; Soucek, *Piri Reis*, pp. 48-49. Soucek’s translation of this passage is from the first version of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* in the Topkapı Palace Library, MS. Bagdad 357. I have modified his excellent translation to reflect the terms used in the original manuscript, replacing “Turkey” with “Rum” and “Ottoman sovereign” with “Rum Padişah” reflecting the original terms.

a Turk reflected the novelty of Turkish speaking corsairs on the shores of western North Africa, where the local population previously had never met a Turk. But their recognition suggests that *gazis*/corsairs whose homeland was Rum or Anatolia were renowned as far away as the Algerian coast. Significantly, the ruler of Rum's favor was the ultimate reward for great deeds performed by corsairs. From his description of this interaction with the Muslims of Bougie, Piri indicated that in contrast to them he was a Turk from Rum, hoping to enter the service of the ruler of Rum.

Piri used the terms "Rum" and "Turk" frequently throughout the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*. Turk is most often found in the phrase "Türk taifesi" when Piri indicated the names Turkish seamen used for places. Rum appears most often in *Bahr-i Rum*, which Piri used more frequently than *Akdeniz* to refer to the Mediterranean Sea.³⁸ But Piri is not consistent in his use of Rum, and its meaning depends on the context. When Piri indicated that some names were of Rum or Greek - origin then Rum means the Greek language.³⁹ Sometimes Rum means Anatolia, and it also might mean the Ottoman Empire more generally, perhaps even islands off the Anatolian coast.⁴⁰ According to Piri, Hayreddin was from Rum, but his detailed description of Midilli (Lesbos), Hayreddin's birthplace, does not mention Hayreddin.⁴¹

Another example of Piri's use of the term "Rum" was in his description of Tripoli, which he claimed was one of the most beautiful fortresses in the Maghrib, until its conquest by Spain led to its ruin. Piri claimed that when he and Kemal halted at Tripoli while cruising the Mediterranean on the sultan's orders, the inhabitants asked Kemal to convey a petition to the sultan, asking for a governor [*sancak beyi*], but "While we were going to Rum, the infidel king of Spain sent a

38 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 1: 83. On this page he uses both terms.

39 For example, an island that Piri calls Sira was subject to Venice. He stated that Franks called it Suda, while the "Rum taifesi" called it Kapris, Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 2: 574-75. It is Siros one of the Cyclades southeast of Athens.

40 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 4: 1428-29. Cemal Kafadar provides a fascinating analysis of the evolution of the meaning of the terms Rum and Rumi over a long period in "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 7-25. I wish to thank Linda Darling for bringing this article to my attention. See p. 16 where Kafadar states that "educated urban Turcophone subjects" preferred to call themselves Osmanlı or Rumi. This volume of *Muqarnas* includes other articles on the topic of Rum, for example, see Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, "Entangled Discourses," 1-6, and Gülru Necipoğlu, "Creation of a National Genius: Sinan and the Historiography of 'Classical' Ottoman Architecture," 141-83

41 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 1: 290-309.

force of sixty ships against Tripoli and conquered the citadel.”⁴² Due to Spanish expansion to the North African coast, threatened cities sought Ottoman protection. In this context, the sultan’s domains were known as Rum, and the seamen from Rum who were active along the coast of North Africa were Turcophone. Thus, Turks are identified as distinct from other groups linguistically. Rum designates a geographic location, but along with the location, Rum designates the area where the culture of Turkish speakers flourished.

Piri claimed that he was a Turkish speaking corsair/sea *gazi* from Rum. In the 1520s when the conflict with Habsburg Spain grew more important due to the rivalry between Süleyman and Charles V, this external encounter in the Mediterranean encouraged identification as belonging to Rum and its ruler. However, internal encounters between Süleyman’s *kuls* and Turkish speaking corsairs threatened the seafarers’ sense of belonging. Increasingly Süleyman’s favorites claimed that only men who were the sultan’s *kul[s]*, that is, slaves who had received a palace education, could be accepted into the privileged status of the sultan’s official high ranking state servants. Some individuals might nearly succeed in attaining an insider status if they were properly educated, fortunate, and sufficiently obsequious in their dealings with the sultan and his favorites. Piri Reis’s successor as *Mısır Kapudanı* (admiral in the Indian Ocean), Seydi Ali Reis, possessed these qualifications.

Seydi Ali Reis, also known as Kâtib-i Rumi

Seydi Ali Reis, who was born about 1500 in Istanbul and died there in 1562/3, combined seafaring and composing works of poetry, as well as translating works from Persian and Arabic. The most notable events of his life occurred when in 1553 Süleyman commanded Seydi Ali Reis to retrieve the fifteen galleys that Piri Reis had abandoned at Basra. While fulfilling this command, due to a battle with the Portuguese and a severe storm at sea, Seydi Ali Reis was forced to land at Surat on the coast of India. There the Portuguese ambassador threatened that he would never leave India due to Portuguese naval power. Therefore Seydi Ali Reis journeyed overland to return to Ottoman territories, leaving in November 1554 and arriving in Baghdad February 1557.⁴³

In his book *Mir’at al-mamalik*, Seydi Ali Reis described many encounters with Muslims and non-Muslims during his journey. He continually praised Rum,

42 “Biz Rum’a gelürken mezkur Tarabulus’un üzerine asker ile İspanya kafiri altmış barça gönderüb mezkur kal’ayı aldılar.” Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 4: 1426-1429.

43 Svat Soucek, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Sidi Ali Re’is.”

often referred to as *Diyar-ı Rum*, showing his attachment to a geographic region, and expressed loyalty to its ruler, *Padişah-ı Rum*. Thus while recounting these external encounters he emphasized the feelings that impelled him to return to Ottoman lands, providing evidence of his self-identification. Turning to internal encounters, Seydi Ali Reis explained his qualifications for the position of admiral by describing his status in Ottoman society. He stated he was Seydi Ali son of Hüseyin, and that his pen name was *Kâtib-i Rumi*. Previously, he had fought at Rhodes, served under both Hayreddin Pasha and Sinan Pasha, sailed to North Africa, and had written books on navigation. Besides these personal qualifications, his father and grandfather had been in charge of the arsenal at Galata since the conquest of Istanbul.⁴⁴

By stating that he had served under both Hayreddin Pasha and Sinan Pasha, Seydi Ali Reis reveals an awareness of the various factions in Ottoman naval leadership. Since his father and grandfather had held leadership positions at the arsenal, he would have observed closely the rivalry between corsairs and *devşirme* officials for the position of admiral. Seydi Ali Reis was neither a corsair nor a *kul*, but he must have had many experiences interacting with men from each group, both during naval campaigns and in Istanbul at the arsenal. He, his father, and his grandfather were naval professionals. Although men from this category rarely were appointed grand admiral, nevertheless they were an essential if under recognized component of Ottoman naval forces.⁴⁵

When describing his adventures, Seydi Ali Reis constantly emphasized that his determination to return to the Ottoman Empire was tested to the utmost as he was forced to travel through India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran, and Iraq and endure being entangled in the endemic warfare in these lands. Most of his original companions remained in India rather than attempt the journey. Seydi Ali recorded that he was imprisoned, wounded, and robbed and that local rulers also often importuned him to remain in their lands and enter their service. He refused all such solicitations, as he was determined to return to *Diyar-ı Rum*. But his frequently expressed devotion to Rum and the sultan could reflect fear that his failure in the Indian Ocean might lead to his execution.⁴⁶

44 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 14. For an English translation see *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis*, trans. A. Vambéry (London: Luzac, 1899), 5.

45 In general we learn about naval professionals from financial documents such as Başbakanlık Archives, Maliyeden Müdevver Defters 175, 187, 199 rather than narrative sources.

46 Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London: IB Tauris, 2004), 183-85.

Seydi Ali usually mentioned rulers by name, such as the Mogul emperor, Humayun.⁴⁷ However, he only referred to the Ottoman sultan using titles of respect, such as the *saadetlu* [prosperous] *padişah* [emperor] often described as *hazretleri* [exalted] or as the ruler of Rum.⁴⁸ Seydi Ali Reis never used the term Turk in any context whatsoever, either when referring to inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire or in referring to any of the Turkic groups he encountered in India or in Central Asia. He used the terms Chagatay, Özbek, Kipchak, Turkistan and Turan but never Turk.⁴⁹ He referred to Arabs and other ethnic groups such as Kurds, Afghans, Circassians and Russians.⁵⁰ Seydi Ali Reis did designate various components of the Ottoman sultan's military forces, such as *misir kuls*, Arab oarsmen, and Janissaries whom he called *Rumi* troops. He used the term *Osmaniye* only once to refer to the lands of the empire, while he used the terms Rum or Rumi repeatedly.⁵¹ He deserved the nickname *Kâtib-i Rumi*, because of his frequently expressed loyalty to Rum and its ruler. However he wrote in various Turkish dialects; his poetic works, including those in Chagatay, were instrumental in obtaining his release more than once.

A few passages indicate the meaning of Rum in Seydi Ali Reis' writings. The Mogul ruler Humayun inquired if Rum or Hindustan was larger. Seydi Ali Reis responded by asking if by Rum, Humayun meant the province of Sivas or all the lands ruled by the *Padişah-i Rum*? He boasted, somewhat inaccurately, that these territories included Yemen, Mecca, Egypt, Aleppo, Istanbul, Kaffa, Buda [Hungary] and Bech [Vienna]. He compared the sultan's empire to that of Alexander, claiming it included territories in the seven climes.⁵² However, when the Shah of Iran questioned him regarding the income of Ottoman officials, "*vilayet-i Rum beylerbeys*," Seydi Ali Reis explained that the officials all belonged to the ruler of Rum and that the *beylerbeys* of Rumeli, Anatolia, Egypt, Budun, Diyarbekir, Baghdad, Yemen, and Algiers were each paid as much as another ruler would spend for his entire army. He also indicated that there were additional *beylerbeys*.⁵³ Seydi Ali Reis explained that the highest officials of the empire were *kuls* of the sultan, although other officials who were not *kuls*, such as himself, were loyal to the ruler.

47 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 40, 41 for example.

48 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 41, 43, 51 for example.

49 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 49 for Chagatay, 63 for Turan, 65 for Turkistan.

50 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 60 for Afghan.

51 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 28.

52 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 51-52.

53 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 90-91.

When Seydi Ali Reis finally reached Ottoman territory, he did not consider the cities of Baghdad, Diyarbekir, Mardin or Malatya as being in Rum. Only when he reached Sivas did he consider that he was in Rum, but Istanbul really was the true goal of his journey. Unfortunately, Süleyman was at Edirne, so Seydi Ali Reis traveled there to present his report in person. Süleyman and the viziers, including Rüstem Pasha, were very gracious to him after his return and Seydi Ali Reis enjoyed their favor in the following years.⁵⁴

Seydi Ali Reis's interests, combined with his self-identification contribute to a more precise assessment of where he belonged in Ottoman society. He was a Sufi devoted to visiting tombs and shrines.⁵⁵ In contrast to Piri, he emphasized Islamic scholarship rather than that of Europe as the basis of his scholarly works. Most of his literary works on mathematics, astronomy and navigation were translations from Arabic and Persian. However, he was familiar with Portuguese explorations, being more interested in the Indian Ocean than Piri Reis had been.⁵⁶

Seydi Ali Reis's pen name, *Kâtib-i Rumi*, distinguished him in the context of the Indian Ocean and the lands east of the Ottoman Empire. A variety of Turkic individuals inhabited these areas and to distinguish a Turkish speaking individual from the Ottoman Empire, Rumi was an appropriate term. We know nothing about his family before the conquest of Constantinople, so it is impossible to speculate about his ethnicity.⁵⁷ Seydi Ali Reis, as he presented himself in the *Mir'at al-mamalik*, reflected familiarity with Turkish culture, such as when he referred to Nasreddin Hoca's response to his questioners when he was trying to escape interrogation by the Kızılbaş in Iran.⁵⁸ There are no references to anything Christian or Greek that would indicate that Rumi reflected a Greek background. Seydi Ali's use of the terms Rum and Rumi is more consistent than that of Piri Reis, reflecting a change in usage from thirty years earlier and/or the Indian Ocean context as opposed to that of the Mediterranean.

Seydi Ali's pen name, *Kâtib-i Rumi*, also indicates the literary component of the terms Rum and Rumi. Cemal Kafadar states that biographical dictionaries of

54 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 97.

55 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 15.

56 Soucek, "Sidi."

57 The arsenal at Galata was under Genoese control before the conquest. Unfortunately we do not know his grandfather's name or we might be able to find more clues relating to the family background. See Metin Kunt's analysis of the importance of ethnicity in some instances for creating alliances among the elite. "Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *IJMES* 5 (1974):233-39.

58 Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'at*, 77.

literary types such as poets “spoke about the poets of the lands of Rum, not the Ottoman Empire, and distinguished them from the ‘Acem and Arab poets. Rum was a cultural space inhabited by a community that shared a literary language, Turkish.”⁵⁹ Seydi Ali boasted of his success as a poet in Turkish as well as in Chagatay. In Seydi Ali’s memoirs, Rum was a place defined culturally as well as in terms of physical geography.

Seydi Ali and Piri Reis are remembered today mainly for their writings rather than their relatively modest seafaring careers. Their renowned contemporary, famous in Europe and the Ottoman Empire for his victories in the Mediterranean, the corsair Hayreddin Pasha, became admiral of the Mediterranean fleet and thus supreme head of Ottoman naval forces. His abilities provoked fear in Christian Europe and envy among the Ottoman elite. European rulers offered to hire him, while some European authors claimed him as one of their own, but the Ottoman elite considered him an outsider. Süleyman relied on him, undeterred by his lack of *kul* status.⁶⁰

Hayreddin Pasha

Hayreddin Pasha, known to Europeans as Barbarossa, achieved such renown during his lifetime that he was the subject of wild speculation concerning his origins.⁶¹ The family background and early years of Hayreddin are obscured by tales concerning him that originated in the 16th century, and were sensationalized by Europeans in the 17th. Fortunately, more reliable information from Hayreddin and his early associates corrects these inaccuracies that misrepresent his background and early activities. Hayreddin’s father, Yakub, the son of a *sipahi* (cavalryman) from the Balkans in the vicinity of Vardar Yenice (present day Giannitsa in Greece) volunteered to participate in the conquest of Lesbos in 1462. Vardar Yenice had been the center of “*gazi*” expansion in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But Yakub must have found greater opportunities on Lesbos, because he remained on the island and married a local woman, the daughter of a Christian. Yakub and his wife had four sons, Ishak, Oruç, Hızır and İlyas, two of whom, Oruç and Hızır (Hayreddin) became famous seafarers.⁶² Oruç was

59 Kafadar, “Rome,” 15, 17.

60 Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies*, 72-74, 114-40, 186-89.

61 Christine Isom-Verhaaren, “Shifting Identities: Foreign State Servants in France and the Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 8 (2004): 109-34; Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies*, 72-74.

62 Hayreddin with the help of Muradi produced a *gazavat-name* which recorded his activities as a participant in *gaza*. This account exists in two versions. The first was completed

authorized to engage in privateering against Rhodes by Bayezid II's son Korkud. Unfortunately for Oruç, Korkud lost the succession battle with Selim I and in 1513 Oruç and Hızır fled to the vicinity of Tunis where they established a base. Oruç was killed in 1518 and thereafter Hızır worked alone to establish himself at Algiers.⁶³ In 1520 he began to be known by western Christians as Barbarossa, and by that year he had adopted the honorific Hayreddin as well.

The best source for understanding Hayreddin Pasha is Seyyid Muradi's *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*. Seyyid Muradi's association with Hayreddin from 1534, as well as his consultation with informants who had sailed with Hayreddin in his early days long before he became Süleyman's admiral, provided the material for the *Gazavat*. Rhoads Murphey claims that Muradi's account of the younger Hızır in his freebooting days is – both in terms of its language and content – clearly taken without much rhetorical embellishment direct from the mouths of informants who served Hızır before he joined active Ottoman service. Because the *Gazavat* remains so faithful to its oral sources, it provides a privileged glimpse into the attitudes and values that prevailed among the sea rovers and exiles from the Aegean who gravitated to the shores of North Africa in the early decades of the sixteenth century....⁶⁴

This view of corsair “attitudes and values” assists in an assessment of how these free-lance seafarers viewed their place in Ottoman society in relation to the *devşirme* recruited elite, as well as in their encounter with the naval forces of the king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Two Ottoman accounts of the naval expedition to France in 1543 that Hayreddin commanded, one the *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa* by Muradi and the other *Tarih-i Feth-i Şikloş, Estergon ve İstunibelgrad* by Matrakçı Nasuh, highlight different choices by these authors of which individuals among the Ottoman forces merited mention by name. Muradi named prominent corsair associates of Hayreddin since his

in about 1541 and exists in multiple manuscripts, including *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, Topkapı Revan 1291. The second was completed shortly after Hayreddin's death in 1546 and exists in a unique autograph manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale Supplement Turc 1186. Kâtib Çelebi summarized *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa* in his *Tuhfetü'l-kibar fi esfari'l-bihar*, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Library, Revan No. 1192, for example see folio 23a. This has been edited by İdris Bostan and published in facsimile with an English translation.

63 *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi 2639, f. 5a; Isom-Verhaaren, “Shifting Identities,” 109-34.

64 Rhoads Murphey, “Seyyid Muradi's prose biography of Hızır ibn Yakub, Alias Hayreddin Barbarossa: Ottoman Folk Narrative as an under-exploited Source for Historical Reconstruction,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54 (2001): 519-32.

sources were seafarers, whereas Matrakçı, who had attended the palace school and was a favorite of Süleyman, named the *sancak beys* who accompanied the expedition.⁶⁵

In addition to narratives recounting Hayreddin's exploits, one source reveals Hayreddin's self identification, an inscription found in the mosque he built in Algiers. In this inscription dating to April 1520, he stated he was: "al-sultan al-mudjahid mawlana Khayr Din ibn al-amir al-shahir al-mudjahid Abi Yusuf Ya'kub al-Turki."⁶⁶ By placing this inscription on the mosque, he proclaimed to the inhabitants of Algiers that he was a ruler, a fighter for Islam, and that his father was a "Turk". This inscription was dated one year before Piri produced the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*. Since both Piri and Hayreddin used the term Turk in the context of Ottoman seafarers' operations in the western Mediterranean, it is likely that Hayreddin's meaning of "Turk" resembled that of Piri Reis. The historical context of this inscription is suggestive, for in 1520 Hayreddin's control of Algiers was tenuous. A few months earlier in November 1519, Hayreddin had dispatched an embassy to Selim I requesting assistance. The sultan responded by providing 2000 Janissaries along with artillery that arrived in September 1520. After this assistance arrived, Hayreddin placed the name of the Ottoman sultan on coins that he minted and had the *khutba* read in the sultan's name. Yet before his official recognition by Selim as an Ottoman governor, Hayreddin proclaimed publicly that his father was a "Turk", in the context of the lands of the western Mediterranean.

Hayreddin probably referred to his father's ancestors when he claimed he was a Turk. As the son of a *sipahi* in the Balkans, his father might have been a descendent of either the earlier Turkish raiders who were centered on Vardar Yenice under Gazi Evrenos or of the local inhabitants who lived there. What is most likely for the later fifteenth century was that Yakub had ancestry from both groups and was a Turcophone Muslim. That Hayreddin emphasized on the mosque that he built in Algiers that his father was a "Turk" made sense in the context of the spread of Turkish speaking seafarers into the waters of the western Mediterranean that had begun under Kemal and Piri Reis. In light of the developing conflict in the western Mediterranean where seafarers from the eastern Ottoman lands were beginning to lead resistance to Habsburg expansion in North Africa, this aspect

65 *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplement Turc 1186, 10b, 18a, 22b, 33b, 37b; Nasuh Matrakçı, "Tarih-i Feth-i Şikloş, Estergon ve İstunibeigrad." Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, MS Hazine 1608, 13a-13b. This has been published as Sinan Çavuş, *Tarih-i Feth-i Şikloş, Estergon ye Istol[n]i-Belgrad or Süleyman-name*. (Istanbul: Historical Research Foundation, 1987); Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies*, 150-151.

66 Aldo Galotta, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Khayr al-Din (Khidir) Pasha."

of his identity would have merited emphasis. It echoes the concept of *gazi* that Piri stressed in his works.

In 1533 Süleyman summoned Hayreddin to Istanbul to become admiral after the Ottoman navy had suffered serious defeats at the hands of the Habsburg Charles V's admiral, the Genoese Andrea Doria. When Hayreddin reached the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire in late 1533, he anchored his ships at Galata, the main arsenal. Then he was received at the imperial divan with eighteen of his captains and allowed to kiss the sultan's hand. Hayreddin and his captains were given robes of honor and salaries from the sultan; in other words, they became official servants of the state. Hayreddin received the former admiral's residence in Istanbul, signifying that Hayreddin had been promoted from the governor of a remote Ottoman outpost engaged in privateering to the head of Ottoman naval forces, with responsibilities that included all aspects of naval leadership. For the next twelve years, until his death in 1546, Hayreddin led the Ottoman naval forces to victory after victory.⁶⁷

Süleyman's correspondence with Hayreddin during the campaign to assist France in 1543-44 indicates his absolute trust and reliance on this great admiral. Whereas the majority of Süleyman's most trusted officials had risen through the palace system where he had developed close ties to them, Hayreddin's background was exceptional. He did hail from a family that was part of the military forces of the empire, but at a non-elite status. Ties to the dynasty before he and Oruç left for North Africa were not those of a close personal nature. Nevertheless, once Hayreddin obeyed the sultan's summons and returned to the center of Ottoman power he proved his loyalty and capability to the sultan. Orders from Süleyman to Hayreddin repeat the sultan's assurance of his confidence in Hayreddin's abilities as an admiral and as an individual who had knowledge of distant lands and the conditions there. "You are my useful and trusted servant. I rely on your piety and sound judgment in all matters. In the past you attacked those areas in the course of holy war. You know everything about the infidels and their lands. Because I rely on you completely, I placed you in command over all aspects of the imperial fleet."⁶⁸ Süleyman's words in this imperial order express his inclusion of Hayreddin among his elite group of favorites, but the sultan's praise was questioned by envious men who had lost the sultan's favor. Former Grand Vizier Lutfi Pasha described Hayreddin's ambition which led to his defeat at Tunis in 1535 as follows: "he became puffed up to the bursting point with self-regard, prematurely

⁶⁷ One defeat he suffered was at Tunis in 1535 against the forces of Charles V.

⁶⁸ For the entire *hüküm* (order) sent in 1543 while Hayreddin was in France, see *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplement Turc 1186, 7b-11a; for an English translation see Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies*, 186-89.

priding himself with self-appointed status as ‘Emperor of the Maghrib’. But God punished him for his unseemly vanity....”⁶⁹ The men who were solely dependent on the sultan’s favor resented corsairs whose expertise allowed them considerable independence of action.

When Hayreddin died in 1546, the question of whom to appoint as his successor presented two main alternatives: either return to the previous pattern of appointing palace educated individuals without significant naval experience but who possessed the education and network connections that a palace education in Istanbul provided, or appoint one of Hayreddin’s associates from his days as a corsair in the provinces of North Africa who had proven naval ability. Twelve years of leadership by a former corsair admiral was not enough to break an established pattern of recruitment, and the man appointed to replace Hayreddin was Sokullu Mehmed, who had just emerged from palace training although with recognized merit. As admiral, Sokullu was in charge of administrative matters, while naval operations were assigned to Turgud Reis. After a few years Sokullu Mehmed was promoted to be *beylerbey* of Rumeli. His replacement as admiral was the ultimate insider, the brother-in-law of Süleyman’s only daughter Mihrimah.

Sinan the Insider versus Turgud the Outsider

In 1548, Sinan Pasha, who previously had been the *sancak bey* of Herzegovina, became grand admiral with the rank of *beylerbey* of the islands. Although Sokullu Mehmed, his predecessor, and Piyale Pasha, his successor as admiral, were at first only made governor of the *sancak* of Gallipoli, Sinan’s more rapid promotion was due to his powerful connections.⁷⁰ Sinan owed his elevation to admiral to the direct influence of Rüstem Pasha, who was married to Mihrimah, and to the indirect influence of her mother, Hurrem. His appointment not only advanced his career, it was vital to Mihrimah and Hurrem’s plans to prevent Mustafa, Süleyman’s eldest son by an earlier concubine, from inheriting the throne. That Sinan’s abilities were not the reason for his appointment is clear from both Ottoman and Venetian sources, for Mustafa Ali claimed that Sinan had been “viciously contentious, impetuous with words, dreadful, and tyrannical!” Bernardo Navagero described the situation in more detail in 1553.

69 Lutfi Pasha, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, (Istanbul: Matba’a-i Amire, 1341/1922-23), 356; translation by Rhodes Murphey, “Seyyid Muradi’s”, 520.

70 İdris Bostan, “The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid,” in *The Kapudan Pasha: His Office and His Domain* (Rethymnon: Crete University Press: 2002), 250.

The Grand Signore's present Captain of the Sea has little experience with maritime affairs, since he has not had any duty or practice related to the army: he is obeyed and esteemed more than any other captain on account of his brother. There is nothing he commands that is not carried out and he wants to be recognized by all as a leader. He has little courtesy and speaks with no reservation. He is irascible, or better said furious ... His brother, the Pasha, loves him extremely and favours him excessively, and cannot support any talk against him. He therefore does all that enters his head without any fear whatsoever, and everyone stays quiet even if greatly abused ... There is no securer way to prevent Mustafa's succession than to prohibit with the armada his passage [to the capital].⁷¹

Thus, the influence of Süleyman's grand vizier on the appointment of Sinan as admiral was not solely based on the desire of the administrative elite with palace educations to exclude outsiders from positions of power. In this case, imperial succession politics were an essential factor as well.⁷²

Kâtib Çelebi's history of the Ottoman navy, written in the seventeenth century, often depicts examples of conflicts between the *devşirme* elite insiders and the corsair outsiders. From the perspective of the mid-seventeenth century, internal rivalries remained important, but external encounters had faded in importance, as sea battles against Habsburg naval forces ended in 1571 at Lepanto. Kâtib Çelebi's account of the discussions that preceded Sinan's appointment depict Rüstem casting doubt on Turgud's loyalty because he had not received a palace education. Kâtib Çelebi claimed that Süleyman had considered appointing Turgud to be admiral, but Rüstem dissuaded him, saying that Turgud had received his training "outside," presumably outside palace circles, and therefore was suspect.⁷³ Although Turgud was originally from the Aegean coast of Anatolia, he had sailed with Hayreddin both in the Aegean and in the western Mediterranean. After Hayreddin's death Turgud's base of operations was at Djerba, Tunisia.⁷⁴ Turgud was unacceptable to Rüstem both because Turgud was not a *kul* and because Rüstem needed to ensure the succession of one of Mihrimah's brothers.

71 Bernardo Navagero in Alberi I, 70-71, 78-79. E. Alberi, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, Series 3, 3 vols., (Florence: Societa editrice fiorentina, 1840-55). Navagero remarked on relations between Sinan and Dragut (Turgud) in his report. This translation is from Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 418.

72 Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Süleyman and Mihrimah: The Favorite's Daughter," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 4 (2011): 64-85.

73 Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-kibar*, 57a

74 *Gazavat*, 42a; Soucek, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Torghud Re'is."

The seventeenth-century historian Peçevi recounted the event somewhat differently: Turgud was offered the position of admiral but refused for fear that Rüstem Pasha would harm him, since Rüstem wanted it for his brother Sinan.⁷⁵ Either way, Rüstem emerges as the factor preventing Turgud becoming grand admiral in 1548. For Rüstem, the conflict at sea with the naval forces of Charles V was of far less importance than the internal rivalry between Süleyman's sons for the succession.

Although Turgud was denied the position of admiral, he was expected to ensure that Sinan functioned successfully despite Sinan's lack of naval qualifications. This did not occur, due to Sinan's arrogance based on his ties to powerful members of the dynasty. When Sinan died in 1554 he was replaced by another palace educated official, Piyale Pasha. Süleyman informed Piyale that he must follow Turgud's advice and Piyale complied, resulting in a successful partnership that achieved several naval victories, such as a crushing defeat of the Spanish naval forces at Djerba in Tunisia in 1560. Ottoman naval power in the Mediterranean continued to be formidable during Turgud's lifetime.⁷⁶ But what might have seemed an ideal solution, a *devşirme* favorite as admiral with a lower-ranking naval expert as advisor to ensure that the inexperienced favorite did not make any disastrous mistakes, could go terribly wrong. This occurred at the battle of Lepanto in 1571 when the admiral refused to follow sound advice, which led to the destruction of the Ottoman fleet and the loss of perhaps 30,000 men.⁷⁷

Sinan did not excel as an admiral despite Turgud's assistance, but he was unquestionably an insider. After Admiral Sinan's death, Mihrimah commissioned Mimar Sinan to build a mosque for him at Beşiktaş, which was completed in 1555-56. This mosque was built near the tomb of Hayreddin Pasha, and its form reflected earlier Ottoman mosques built in the period of the "*gazis*." It was designed to allow huge numbers of men to perform prayers there prior to the departure of the fleet from Beşiktaş, where Hayreddin had become the "patron saint" of all subsequent admirals. It became the model for other mosques that Mimar Sinan built for grand admirals.⁷⁸ Thus through the proximity of Sinan's mosque to

75 İbrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1866-67), I: 347; Solakzade, *Tarih-i Solakzade* (Istanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1298), 540 has a similar account; Colin Imber, "The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980): 226.

76 Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-kibar*, 55b-64a.

77 Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-kibar*, 57a-58a.

78 Necipoğlu, *Age*, 416-21.

Hayreddin's tomb, the identities of Hayreddin and Sinan were fused into the ideal Ottoman admiral, a leader of *gazis* who sailed forth to victory in the name of the Ottoman sultan. Thus Hayreddin's inclusion as an Ottoman insider became more established after his death than during his tenure as admiral. In addition, Piri's identification of Ottoman seafarers as *gazis* was proclaimed through the design of the mosque.⁷⁹

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is valuable to contrast the experiences of Piri Reis and Hayreddin Pasha, two seafarers who contributed to the foundations of Ottoman naval power in the western waters of the Mediterranean. The contrast between Piri's fate and that of Hayreddin Pasha is stark. Hayreddin overcame all elite opposition and due to outstanding success as a naval leader in battle he came to be regarded as the model Ottoman seafarer; his tomb became the launching site for all future naval endeavors because later grand admirals visited it before sailing on expeditions.⁸⁰ Piri found a grave in Cairo, far from the location of his greatest triumphs as a cartographer at Gallipoli. While Hayreddin was venerated from the sixteenth century in the Ottoman Empire and Europe as a great admiral, Piri had to wait until the twentieth century to achieve posthumous recognition and widespread fame. Piri's renown did not come during the era of the Ottoman Empire, but later he was venerated by the leader of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk, as a man in whom Turks could take pride.⁸¹ While his Ottomaness was contested during his lifetime, his Turkishness was valued long after his death.

Anyone exploring the complexities of Ottoman identifying terms in the sixteenth century must be wary of translations which change specific terms into their supposed modern equivalent. The 1899 translation of the *Mir'at* almost always replaced Rum with Ottoman or Turkey, terms Seydi Ali Reis used rarely, or in the case of Turkey, never. But more recent translations continue this practice. I began this article with my translation of a quotation from Piri Reis. The 1988 edition of the *Kitab-ı Bahriye*. translates *Diyar-ı Rum* as Anadolu or Anatolia in the modern Turkish translation of this passage, but as Europe in the footnote to

79 This mosque, which has recently been renovated, is not considered one of Mimar Sinan's finer edifices. However, Mimar Sinan designed it to reinforce the connection between Ottoman naval expeditions and gaza.

80 Necipoğlu, *Age*, 416.

81 Soucek, *Piri Reis*, 105.

the English translation. Neither precisely reflects the original meaning of Rum as Piri understood it, a region with a distinct culture inhabited by Turkish speakers, who were also governed by a Turkish speaking ruler. Piri Reis included this prophecy because it glorified the ruler of Rum, in this case Süleyman, whose favor he desired greatly.⁸² Piri revised the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* to present to the sultan, and both he and Süleyman would have identified the ruler of the *Diyar-ı Rum* as the sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Süleyman ruled the *Diyar-ı Rum* and his seamen ruled the *Bahr-i Rum* as well.

The process of identification does not occur in a vacuum. Thus Ottoman naval professionals, including corsairs in state service, expressed themselves in reaction to the individuals they encountered. They differed from palace elites who refused to accept them as legitimate state officials within Ottoman society. In addition, Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean region and also to a lesser degree in the Indian Ocean led to violent interactions with the other great maritime expanding societies of the time, those of Iberia. But as seafarers who came from Rum they also found that they differed in language and culture from many of the Muslims that they encountered, including the Muslims they proposed to protect from Iberian expansion. Piri Reis and Hayreddin Pasha expressed their awareness of their difference from the Muslims of North Africa as well as from the Iberian enemy. But when they returned to Rum, they also realized that acceptance by the *devşirme kuls* was unlikely due to differences of education and connections. Hayreddin gained recognition by Süleyman, but Piri did not. Seydi Ali Reis inhabited a middle ground; although he was not a *kul*, he had received a similar education and resided in Istanbul. He could devote his energies to emulating the elite from the palace by sharing their culture.

Sultans desired to make use of the expertise of the corsairs, but they could not favor corsairs to the point of alienating their *kuls*, as they depended on them to administer the empire. As the external conflicts at sea diminished, the internal rivalries increased in intensity. At times of crisis, such as immediately after the disaster at Lepanto, there was a place in Rum for corsairs as leaders of the Ottoman fleet, but generally the Ottoman grand admiral gained his position through his palace connections, not through his seafaring expertise.

82 Piri Reis, *Kitab*, 3: 1298-99.

Was there Room in Rum for Corsairs?: Who Was an Ottoman in the Naval Forces of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries?

Abstract ■ This paper analyzes the “Ottomanness” of five prominent seafarers, mainly relying on contemporary narrative sources, some of which are autobiographical in nature. First, Kemal Reis and his nephew Piri Reis sailed the Mediterranean as corsairs before entering Ottoman service during the reign of Bayezid II. Piri Reis eventually became *Mısır Kapudanı* with responsibilities in the Indian Ocean in 1547. Seydi Ali Reis was appointed *Mısır Kapudanı* after Piri Reis’ failure to conquer Hormuz and subsequent execution. Hayreddin Pasha, the most successful Ottoman corsair seafarer, became *Kapudan* (grand admiral) of the Ottoman Mediterranean fleet during the reign of Süleyman. Finally, Turgud Reis failed to succeed Hayreddin as *Kapudan* (grand admiral) despite his expertise, because of the opposition of Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha who obtained the position for his own brother, Sinan Pasha. The seafarers’ experiences countering enemies without and rivals within, illustrate their battle to become acknowledged as legitimate servants of the ruler of Rum, the Ottoman sultan.

Keywords: Identity, Rum, Corsairs, Kapudan Pasha

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BOA Maliyeden Müdevver Defters 175, 187, 199.

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