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HALİL ŞERİF PAŞA : THE INFLUENCE OF PARIS AND THE WEST ON AN OTTOMAN DIPLOMAT

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During the last century of the Ottoman Empire's existence, a small but important group of its subjects were influenced by western European ways of life and modes of thought. Some of them actually lived in England, France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, or Belgium, and occasionally in other countries, for varying periods of time. Among them were students, merchants, political exiles, and officials of the Sublime Porte, both military and civil. Naturally diplomats were prominent among those officials who lived abroad, especially after Sultan Mahmud II created in the 1830s a corps of resident Ottoman representatives that grew in size during the rest of the century. Halil Şerif Paşa, who served as Ottoman minister or ambassador in Athens, St. Petersburg, Vienna, and Paris, was one of the best known.

France was without question the western country that most influenced Turks and other Ottoman subjects. Even when they traveled or lived in countries other than France Ottomans most often spoke French, the international language of the nineteenth century. Their knowledge of French, or their desire to learn it, helped to pull Ottomans toward France. So also did Paris, a city that seemed to offer a congenial atmosphere and every aspect of western civilization. To many Ottomans, as also to people from other eastern European countries and Asian countries, Paris appeared hospitable and exciting at the same time, a kind of secular Mecca. Halil Şerif exemplifies these feelings. In this way he was typical, but he was also atypical, because he became more western and more Parisian than most Ottoman visitors, absorbing both good and bad influences.

Although Halil Şerif was well known in his day both to Europeans and to Ottomans, many details of his life are still obscure. There is no biography of him. The fullest sketch now in existence, which appeared in this journal in 1981¹, is incomplete in many respects. The main stages of Halil's life are, of course, clear. He was born in Egypt about 1822, served the Egyptian governors Abbas Paşa and Said Paşa in the early 1850s, and then transferred to the service of the Sublime Porte in 1856². His major post in the Ottoman service were minister to Greece 1856-60, minister to Russia 1861-65, undersecretary (Müşteşar) of the foreign ministry in Istanbul 1868-70, ambassador to Austria-Hungary 1870-72, minister of foreign affairs in Istanbul 1872-73, minister of justice 1876, and ambassador to France 1877. During this career Halil Bey became a paşa, in 1871 while he was serving in Vienna³.

Recently more information about Halil Şerif has come to light, including some of his correspondence and a major political memorandum. These documents, together with other information scattered in published sources, allow us to put together a better account of Halil Şerif's westernisms and of his love for Paris.

Halil Şerif's first acquaintance with France and with Paris came presumably when he was a student in the 1840s. Writing in 1956, Halil said of his earlier years: «Brought up in France, my studies have been directed particularly toward the political sciences»⁴. We know, however, nothing of his studies or of how long he lived in France. His French must already have been quite good, for about 1850 or 1851 he became the director of «the bureau of translation

1 Roderic H. Davison, «Halil Şerif Paşa, Ottoman Diplomat and Statesman», *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, II (1981), 203-221.

2 His birth year is not definite, but in 1872 Sultan Abdülaziz referred to him as a man of 50: Georges Douin, *Histoire du règne du Khédive Ismail*, vol. 2: *L'Apogée, 1867-1873* (Rome, 1934), p. 696.

3 *ibid.*, pp. 606-7. This confirms the date of promotion in Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicil-i Osmanî* (Istanbul, 1308-15), II, 309.

4 Başbakanlık Arşivi (hereafter BA), İrade, 1272, Hariciye, no. 6593, leaf 2, Khalil letter to Âli Paşa, 13 Mar. 1856.

and that of correspondence in the foreign affairs administration» in Cairo⁵.

In 1855-56 he was again in Paris, this time as commissioner of exhibits sent from Egypt to the Paris international exposition of 1855⁶. As that temporary job in Paris was coming to an end, in 1856, Halil Şerif wrote to Âli Paşa, the Ottoman grand vezir who at that moment was attending the Paris Congress, to offer his services to the Ottoman government. Halil did not want to go back to work in Egypt. His reason was that in Egypt he suffered frequent inflammations of the eyes --«ophthalmias» in his letter-- and had been told by the best Paris physicians that he would eventually go blind if he lived in Egypt⁷. It is true that he complained at various points in his life about eye trouble, and that even in Paris he usually wore bluetinted eyeglasses⁸. Halil did not say in his letter that he hoped for a post in the Ottoman embassy in Paris, although that may already have been his aim. Âli Paşa welcomed Halil's offer of services, and recommended him to the Porte and the Sultan. Soon, in September of that same year, Halil Şerif was appointed Ottoman minister to Athens, where he arrived some time later that fall⁹.

Halil Şerif probably did not find Athens to be another Paris. Soon after his arrival there, Âli Paşa questioned Halil jocularly about this, in a private letter. «And you, my dear Bey,» wrote Âli, 'how are you down there? What sort of a life do you lead? Do you find the antique city of Solon the same enjoyments as in present-

5 *ibid.*

6 BA, İrade, Hariciye, 1272, no. 6593, lef 1, Grand Vezir Âli Paşa (Paris) letter of 15 Receb 1272/22 Mar. 1856.

7 Halil letter to Âli, 13 Mar. 1856, *loc. cit.*

8 Frédéric Loliée, *Les Femmes du Second Empire: La fête impériale* (Paris, 1906?), p. 82; Halil (Paris) letter to Âli, private, 24 Mar. 1865, British Library (hereafter BL), Add. Mss. 46696, where Halil complains that his eyes are too bad to allow him to encode a despatch. Ophthalmia was common in Egypt; E.W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, Everyman Edition 1908), p. 583, classes ophthalmia with dysentery as a frequent disease and prescribes a speedy cure for it.

9 *Salname-i Nezaret-i Hariciye* (Kostantiniyye, 1302), p. 193, appointment of 5 Muharrem 1273/5 September 1856; BL, Add. Mss. 46696, fols. 97-98, Âli (Istanbul) letter to Halil (Athens), 15 Dec. 1856.

day Paris? The Greeks concede nothing to the Parisians in matters of wit and aimability, at least that's the pretension of the Greeks themselves. I cannot, however, believe that there could be on earth a more moving and more seductive song than the Marseillaise.»¹⁰ Unfortunately we do not have Halil Bey's reply to Âli's letter. If Âli Paşa, the older and more traditional figure, felt so strongly the allure of Paris and of France -- the siren call of the Marseillaise -- surely Halil Bey, the younger by some seven years and already more westernized than Âli, would have felt the call even more strongly. But Halil's term as minister in Athens lasted for about three years more¹¹. After Athens, in the fall of 1860, we find Halil living in Istanbul, depressed over not having a post, and threatening to become a recluse¹². Perhaps he was again hoping for a post in Paris.

Instead, Halil Şerif was assigned in September 1861 to be the Ottoman minister to Russia, in St. Petersburg¹³. Obviously Halil Bey went to that northern capital hoping soon to be transferred to Paris. About half a year later he sent a telegram to Âli Paşa, who was now again the grand vezir, asking for the ambassadorship in Paris. Âli replied that he could not promise Halil that embassy, even though at the moment it was vacant. But Âli added, «Sooner or later you will go to Paris, it's inevitable. In my opinion, it is better that you go there later, because you will then be less young and you will arouse, consequently, less envy among those who remain here to labor far from the charms with which you would be surrounded in that fairy capital.»¹⁴ Although Âli was trying to make light of Halil's disappointment, his adulatory and somewhat wistful reference to Paris shows that not only he and Halil but many other Ottoman officials would leap at a chance to go there.

10 *ibid.*

11 BL, Add. Mss. 46696, fols. 100-01, Âli (Kanlıca) to Halil, 22 Sept. 1860, says that Halil had been in Istanbul without a post for «a long time.»

12 *Salname-i Nezaret-i Hariciye*, p. 188 : 2 rebtiülevvel 1278/7 Sept. 1861. of his colleagues considered Halil to be «one of those destined to succeed us in the future.»

13 *Salname-i Nezaret-i Hariciye*, p. 188 : 2 rebtiülevvel 1278/7 Sept. 1861.

14 BL, Add. Mss. 46696, fols. 102-3, Âli (İstanbul) to Halil (St. Petersburg), private, 29 Apr. 1862.

Halil Bey remained as minister in St. Petersburg for more than three years, complaining occasionally about his eyes, about the burden of work in an understaffed legation, and about the climatic disadvantages of the post. But, he wrote, «As for my personal Concerns, I am resigned to the situation, all the while continuing to work like a Negro, and I shall never ask for anything for myself again.»¹⁵ Nevertheless, he did request a leave of absence, which Âli agreed to by telegram. As soon as Halil received the permission, on March 17, 1865, he left Russia for an extended trip.

Halil Bey's first stop, naturally, was in Paris¹⁶. But he did not enjoy Paris, for he learned that the Ottoman embassy there, once again vacant upon the departure of Mehmed Cemil Paşa, had been assigned not to him but to Safvet Paşa. «I am, however, not in good enough spirits to benefit from my short stay in Paris», he wrote to Âli Paşa from that city. «To the profound grief that has overwhelmed me for six weeks (perhaps owing to his father's death?) now is added the vexation of not having been named ambassador to Paris, a nomination that was my single hope. It would be useless to conceal from Your Highness that last year, when you had the kindness to talk to me about the embassy in Vienna, if I preferred to remain in Petersburg, risking the loss of my sight several times, working like a Negro and spending part of my fortune, it was with the hope of succeeding Cemil Paşa. At this moment the nomination of Safvet Paşa annihilates me, and I regret not having accepted the Vienna post and do not know what to do, because the climate of Petersburg is decidedly too harmful to my health.»¹⁷ Halil asked Âli for advice. Should he resign, or should he wait a bit? He intended to go to Egypt for business matters, Halil said, and then to visit Istanbul to settle property that his father had left him, and finally, in the summer, to take a cure of sulphur waters in Germany on account of his debilitated health¹⁸.

15 BL, Add. Mss. 46696, Halil (St. Petersburg) to Âli, private, 1 Feb. 1865.

16 BL, Add. Mss. 46696, fols. 114-18, Halil (Paris) to Âli (Istanbul), private, 24 Mar. 1865.

17 *ibid.*; Safvet was appointed on 19 March 1865/21 şevval 1281 : *Salname-i Nezaret-i Hariciye*, p. 180.

18 Halil to Âli, 24 Mar. 1865, loc. cit.

We do not have Âli Paşa's reply to Halil. Nor do we know whether Halil made his trip to Egypt, to Istanbul, and to Germany. It is clear, however, that he held no government position for a period of three years.

Instead, Halil Bey settled in Paris as a private citizen, probably later in 1865. He took an apartment in a fashionable district on the right bank, at the corner of the Rue Taitbout and the Boulevard des Italiens, in the Hotel Lauraguais, which had become the property of an English noblewoman and her son, Lord Seymour¹⁹. During his two or more years in Paris Halil Bey became more French than had any other prominent Turk, and in some ways more Parisian than the Parisians. He was known as one of the rich foreigners in Paris, and was grouped by French observers with a small number of Russian princes, English noblemen, and Indian nabobs who spent money lavishly²⁰. He frequented the Cercle de la rue Royale and other gambling clubs. According to Ali Suavi, one of the New Ottoman exiles in Paris at the time, Halil Bey lost 15,000,000 francs in all at the gaming tables; the French journalist Villemessant claims that he wagered 1,500,000 francs on one game in Paris²¹. He also indulged in gambling in Nice, at the Cercle Masséna. Dinners that he gave at his home were said to have included many figures of Parisian high society who patronized the gambling clubs²².

Halil was also generous. He gave presents, among them jewels, especially to the Parisian ladies whose company he enjoyed. He was known to have dropped a superb diamond ring into a finger-bowl when rinsing his hands after dinner, and to have said to the lady, who

19 Edmond et Jules Goncourt, *Journal: mémoires de la vie littéraire* (Monaco, 1956), vol. 8, p. 74, n. 1.

20 Loliée, *Les Femmes*, p. 81.

21 Mithat Cemal Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* (İstanbul, 1944-56), I, 330-31; H. de Villemessant, *Mémoires d'un journaliste*, 6ème serie, *Mes voyages et mes prisons* (Paris, 1878), pp. 98-104. Loliée, *Les Femmes*, p. 82 says that Halil brought 15, 000, 000 francs to Paris. Charles Mismar, *Souvenirs du monde musulman* (Paris, 1892), p. 148, says Halil «besprinkled the asphalt of the boulevards with a dozen millions in two or three years.»

22 Villemessant, *Mémoires*, loc. cit.

fished it out and handed it to him, «It is in hands too lovely to take it back.»²³ He was, it is said, grievously cheated by his stewards, fleeced by courtesans, and afflicted by parasites trying to enrich themselves. He was reputed to have a large staff and several secretaries²⁴. Some of the stories about him are undoubtedly exaggerations, or even total fiction, for his reputation in Paris was such as to encourage not only gossip but also fabrications by professional scandal-mongers. Some who liked him called Halil a «grand seigneur par excellence.» Those who did not, like the Russian chancellor Gorchakov, called him a «Turc du boulevard»²⁵.

Halil Şerif was also known in literary and artistic circles in Paris. Men of letters came to dinner at his house. Among his acquaintances were Hippolyte Villemessant, journalist for *Figaro*, Edmond de Goncourt, novelist and diarist, Charles-Augustin Sainte-Béuve, the formidable critic, and Léon Gambetta, the lawyer-journalist soon to be a leading politician. Halil was host at a soirée at his house for ladies of the court of Napoléon III, where opera singers and a popular chanteuse performed²⁶. Many of those who came to his Paris home did so to see Halil's collection of modern French painting, which was extensive: Delacroix, Ingres, Théodore Rousseau, Corot, Courbet, Chassériau, Decamps, Diaz, Fromentin, Gérôme, and Vernet, as well the earlier Boucher, Greuze, and Watteau. He is said also to have owned some examples of the Dutch and Flemish schools²⁷. Among the most famous works in Halil's collection was the «Turkish Bath» by Ingres; it now hangs in the Louvre²⁸.

23 Loliée, *Les Femmes*, p. 83. This was originally a remark of Emperor Charles V to a duchess, says Loliée.

24 *ibid.*, pp. 82, 84-5.

25 Villemessant, *Mémoires*, p. 96; Horace Rumbold, *Recollections of a Diplomatist* (London, 1902), II, 332.

26 Loliée, *Les Femmes*, p. 83.

27 Pierre Courthion, ed., *Courbet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis*, vol. 1 (Geneva, 1948), p. 192, giving an extract from Lucien Descaves, *Journal*; Georges Boudaille, *Gustave Courbet, Painter in Protest* (Greenwich, Conn., 1969), p. 89, n. 2; Gerstle Mack, *Gustave Courbet* (Westport, Conn., 1951), p. 213.

28 Goncourt, *Journal*, vol. 8, p. 73 calls it «Bain Antique», and says it is a bad picture by an idiot painter.

Halil Bey was best known for his half-dozen works by Gustave Courbet. Among them were three hunting scenes: «Hallali d'un chevreuil,» «Chevreuil chassé aux écoutes,» and «Renard dans la neige» as well as a nude, the «Jeune Baigneuse.»²⁹ More famous than any of these was a painting of two female nudes that Courbet did for Halil in 1866, usually called «The Sleepers,» or «Sleep». Sainte-Beuve had told Halil about another painting by Courbet of two nudes, «Venus and Psyche,» usually called «The Awakening» in its later version. The «Venus and Psyche» had been the talk of Paris when it was refused for exhibit in the Salon of 1864 as unsuitable. Sainte-Beuve gave Halil Courbet's address, on the left bank. Halil knew the right bank better, but he finally found Courbet's studio in the Rue Hautefeuille, saw the painting, liked it, and offered to buy it. He was told that it was already promised to another amateur, M. Lepel-Cointet. Halil later wrote: «I remember very well that when I visited M. Courbet's studio one day I noticed this picture (The Awakening) and expressed my desire to own it. M. Courbet replied that he could not sell it to me, for he had sold it just the day before to M. Lepel-Cointet. I persisted, authorizing him to offer M. Lepel-Cointet a profit of 1000 francs ... Two days later M. Courbet ... informed me that M. Lepel-Cointet would not give up the picture for less than 25,000 francs, which ... would give him a profit of 9000 francs. I ... emphatically refused ... preferring to order from M. Courbet a new picture»³⁰. Halil initially asked Courbet to make him a copy of «The Awakening». But Courbet said that instead he would paint for Halil «the sequel». That painting, «The Sleepers», must have been finished

29 Georges Riat, *Gustave Courbet, Peintre* (Paris, 1906), pp. 246, 259; Boudaille, *Courbet* p. 89. Boudaille calls the last-named picture «The Russian Bathing Girl», citing Courbet's own preface to a catalogue for his one-man exhibit of 1867.

30 Khalil letter to Gustave Chaudey, undated, in Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), Salle des Estampes, Courbet papers, Box 4, quoted in Mack, *Courbet*, pp. 212-13. Jack Lindsay, *Gustave Courbet: His Life and Art* (New York, 1973), cites the same letter, but calls the fonds the Castagnary papers. Jules Troubat, *Une amitié à la d'Arthez* (Paris, 1900), pp. 119-20, on Halil's meeting with Sainte-Beuve.

in the late summer or early fall of 1866³¹. Halil paid Courbet 20,000 francs for it, about \$4,000 at that time.

«The Sleepers» was a large canvas, 2 meters long and 1.34 meters high, depicting two young women, a blonde and a brunette, on a bed, sleeping, intertwined. The model for the blonde was an Irish girl who was the painter Whistler's mistress³². Originally entitled «Idleness and Sensuality», but later called simply «The Sleepers», or «Sleep», this painting probably made Halil better known than anything else he owned or did in Paris. Goncourt, who went to Halil's house to see it, thought the painting in bad taste and badly done³³. Others, including most present-day critics, admired both the conception and the execution -- «the sensuality of the subject, ... the beauty of the flesh tones»³⁴. Another nude by Courbet that Halil owned was somewhat pornographic, kept locked in a case which had a Courbet landscape on its outer panel. Halil Bey showed the picture to friends on occasion; the case was in his dressing room. Courbet himself said once to some admirers, after dinner in Halil's house, that Titian, Veronese, Raphael, and he himself had done nothing more beautiful³⁵.

Halil Şerif also came into the public eye in Paris in a law-suit brought by Courbet against Lepel-Cointet. The latter, after agreeing to buy «The Awakening», had refused to pay for it or to take delivery

31 Courbet wrote to his parents on 6 Aug. 1866 that he had to finish the painting for Halil Bey: Riat, *Courbet*, p. 241.

32 This painting is described and reproduced in many books. In addition to works on Courbet cited above, see Charles Léger, *Courbet* (Paris, 1929), pp. 118-19; *Gustave Courbet, 1819-1877* (Philadelphia Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1959-60), no. 59.

33 Goncourt, *Journal*, vol. 8, pp. 73-74, entry of 31 Dec. 1867.

34 Mack, *Courbet*, p. 214. See also Léger, *Courbet*, pp. 118-19.

35 Ludovic Halévy, *Trois diners avec Gambetta*, ed. Daniel Halévy (Paris, 1929), pp. 85-87; Charles Léger, *Courbet et son temps* (Paris, 1948), pp. 115-16. Maxime Du Camp, *Les convulsions de Paris* (Paris, 1881), II, 189-90, describes the painting and condemns it without, evidently, having seen it; Du Camp, a member of the French Academy, did not like Courbet. Edmond Goncourt, *Journal*, vol. 16, p. 97, entry of 29 June 1889, did see the painting and praises it. Quotations from Goncourt's *Journal* by authors of works on Courbet are apparently all from a bowdlerized version. Léger, *Courbet* (1929), p. 116, refutes Du Camp and describes the painting.

of it. Halil's letter, quoted above, was written to Courbet's lawyer to show that beyond a doubt Lepel-Cointet considered himself the owner of the «The Awakening», because he had himself offered to sell it to Halil. Halil's evidence helped Courbet win the court case in July 1867³⁶.

By the beginning of 1868 Bey's style of living in Paris had put him deeply in debt. It is frequently said that he was bankrupt. Some at least of his paintings had to be sold at public auction in January of that year. The «Halil-Bey sale», as it was known, brought good sums for a number of his canvases, including four by Courbet: «Baigneuse» 3,700 francs; «Chevreuil chassé» 1,800; «Hallali» 4,000, and «Renard» 3,400³⁷. «The Sleepers» and the other nude were sold separately. But the sale did not get Halil out of debt. He got an advance from the Khedive Ismail of Egypt of 5,000 Turkish pounds from the income of his properties in Egypt. He also borrowed, it appears, 60,000 sterling from Mustafa Fazıl Paşa, the Egyptian prince who was associated with the New Ottomans in exile in Paris. Halil pledged his real estate in İstanbul and some property in Syria against this loan³⁸. Probably Halil Şerif was never again out of debt. In 1873 a leading Ottoman statesman said that Halil was «riddled with debts», and other statesmen at the same time said that he owed 200,000 Turkish Liras³⁹.

Although Halil Şerif was both a playboy and a figure in literary and artistic society while he was in Paris, he was also still at heart an Ottoman diplomat and a westernizer. He had contact with the New Ottoman exiles who sought to reform the Ottoman government, as they gathered in Paris in 1867: Ali Suavi, Ziya, Namık Kemal, and their patron, Mustafa Fazıl Paşa⁴⁰. Halil presumably supplied the New Ottomans with some funds, although not so generously as

36 Mack, *Courbet*, pp. 212-13.

37 Riat, *Courbet*, p. 259; Léger, *Courbet* (1948), pp. 114-15, says that «Renard» brought 8,450 francs.

38 Douin, *Historie*, II, 314 and n. 1.

39 *ibid.*, pp. 707-8.

40 M. Kaya Bilgeçil, *Yakın Çağ Türk Kültür ve Edebiyatı üzerinde Araştırmalar*, I: *Yeni Osmanlılar* (Ankara, 1976), pp. 283-4, quoting *Le Monde*, 12 June 1867.

did Mustafa Fazıl. And in 1867 also, even before the leading New Ottomans arrived in Paris, Halil Bey wrote a memorandum on the situation of the Ottoman Empire that exhibited his western-oriented thinking.

The existence of Halil Şerif's memorandum of 1867 has been known to us for a century, but only through its mention, with a brief extract, in Edouard Engelhardt's work, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat*⁴¹. Presumably Halil Şerif wrote the memorandum in French. We do not have that text. But now that appears to be a translation of the complete text into Turkish has been discovered in the Başbakanlık Arşivi in Istanbul. Furthermore, a somewhat simplified and modernized version of the translation has been published by its discoverer, Cevdet Küçük, under the title «Şark Meselesi hakkında Önemli bir Vesika»⁴². The copy of the document in the archives does not, according to Cevdet Küçük, bear the name of its author; he says he was unable to determine who the author was⁴³. But the date on the archive document -- 12 February 1867 -- is the same as the date that Engelhardt gives for the memorandum by Halil Şerif. The document begins in exactly same way in both Engelhardt's and Cevdet Küçük's versions, by saying «The Eastern Question has been reopened, one must not conceal this from oneself». Furthermore the document in the archives, especially its concluding section (pp. 634-35 in the version in *Tarih Dergisi*), contains everything that Engelhardt quoted from the original memorandum by Halil Şerif.

41 (2 vols.; Paris, 1882-84), I, 230-31. Soubhy Noury, *Le Régime représentatif en Turquie* (Paris, 1914), pp. 62-63, quotes only part of what Engelhardt gives and misreads Engelhardt's reference to Halil's memorandum (mémoire) as «Memoirs». Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi VI: İslahat Fermanı Devri, 1856-1861* (Ankara, 1954), p. 27, quotes one sentence, apparently also from Engelhardt. Bernhard Stern, *Jungtürken und Verschwörer*, 2 nd ed. (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 120-21, seems also to rely on Engelhardt and to mistake some of Engelhardt's own words for words of Halil's memorandum. IU. A. Petrosian, *'Novye Osmany'i borba za konstitutsiiu 1876 g. v Turtsii* (Moscow, 1958), p. 43, quotes Halil from Stern's book. Thus, until now, every writer has relied on Engelhardt for knowledge of Halil's memorandum.

42 İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi *Tarih Dergisi* 32 (Mart 1979), 626-35, simplified from BA, Yıldız Esas Evrakı, Kısım 33, Evrak 33/29, Zarf 71, Karton 94.

43 Küçük, «Vesika», p. 626.

In fact, all of the extract given by Engelhard in French can be found virtually word for word in the modernized Turkish version published by Cevdet Küçük. It is probably safe to assume that he has found Halil Şerif's memorandum.

Most of this memorandum is devoted to the Eastern Question, which had again become acute owing to the rebellion in Crete that began in 1866. Halil Bey says: Russia has reopened the Eastern Question, by taking up again her old anti-Ottoman policy. Russia proposes splitting the Ottoman Empire into small Christian states. If that happens, these states will quarrel, they will be oppressive, there will be massacres of Muslims and of others. Russia will then announce that she is forced to intervene. If Britain, France and Austria then oppose Russia's expansion, and there is a European war, Russia will be able to take Istanbul. But the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire is an absolute necessity for the European balance of power and for European civilization.

After developing the foregoing argument, which occupies most of the memorandum, Halil Şerif comes to his western-oriented solution to the problem. The way to prevent all this future chaos, he says, is to strengthen the Ottoman state by introducing constitutional government. «A constitution will immediately establish the moral superiority of the Muslim state over Russia. A constitution, by eradicating political and social distinctions between Muslims and Christians, will put them both under the protection of the same restorative justice. The guaranty of the rights of each person will cause the sentiment of duty to be born in everyone. The resurrection of political and social life in Turkey will cause the love of work to spring up instantaneously, and with it, the general wealth»⁴⁴. Halil ends by warning that if Britain, France, and Austria support the rise of little Christian states from the grave of the Ottoman Empire, then the bloody events he has predicted could be prevented only by an unlikely miracle⁴⁵.

44 This is translated from Engelhardt I, 231. In Küçük, «Vesika», p. 635 the same text is given with slight variations, except that the word *hissiyat* (sentiment, feeling) is probably mistakenly used in the Turkish translation for *hayat* (life).

45 Küçük gives this conclusion; Engelhardt does not include it.

The idea that constitutional government not only would solve political problems, but would also be a magical spur to economic prosperity, was not an unusual one for this period⁴⁶. Some of the New Ottomans espoused it. At almost exactly the same time as Halil Şerif wrote his memorandum, Mustafa Fazıl Paşa published his famous *Letter Addressed to Sultan Abdülaziz*; this letter also proposed a constitution, as a solution to the Ottoman Empire's domestic economic, social, and political problems. A constitution, said Mustafa Fazıl, would bring liberty, restore individual initiative, aid in cultural development and improve the economy⁴⁷. The political system of France, England, and Belgium and the economic development of those same countries impressed a number of Ottomans. Their observation and analysis may have been superficial, but their admiration for various aspects of western European life was genuine.

This was the case with Halil Şerif. His admiration was perhaps more genuine because he had experienced life in Russia for three years, even though it was during the reforming period of Tsar Alexander II. Halil remained a constitutionalist for the rest of his life. The Sultan knew it. In 1873 Sultan Abdülaziz said to Halil, when the latter was foreign minister, «I have been advised to give up part of my power and get closer to the constitutional system. You yourself, they say, are not distant from such ideas». But, Abdülaziz continued, he did not approve of such ideas and found the Russian autocracy a better model making rapid progress⁴⁸. Halil, curiously, would even welcome western European pressure on the Sultan, in the absence of constitutional government, as a means of pushing along westernizing reform. He said, also when he was foreign minister, to the French ambassador that he earlier had felt the French pressure for reforms - French «tutelage», as he called it - had been exerted in a rather heavy manner; therefore he himself had shared in the gladness when France was defeated in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. He had had a sense «of deliverance, of secret joy».

46 Compare Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (Bloomington, 1964), p. 47 on «political freedom».

47 *Lettre adressée à Sa Majesté le Sultan par S. A. le Prince Mustapha-Fazıl-Pacha* (Paris, 1867).

48 Douin, *Histoire*, II, 707.

But, said Halil to the ambassador, he now recognized that French intervention had been useful and that European pressure on the Sultan was needed⁴⁹. When the political upheavals of 1876 occurred, Halil Şerif was among those high officials in İstanbul who worked for a constitutional regime. When Sultan Abdülaziz was deposed by the same group, on May 30, 1876, Halil Şerif had just been added to the ministry, without portfolio. It is not clear that he took an active part in the plotting for the deposition, but it is reported that his house in Fındıklı was one of the two places where the conspirators gathered on the night of the deposition. Halil certainly, therefore, knew what was happening⁵⁰.

When Halil Şerif returned from Paris to live in İstanbul in 1868, after his financial disasters, he was known for his European habits, which undoubtedly caused scandalous whispers in traditional quarters. The chief coffee-maker of the palace told the Valide Sultan that Halil Şerif had come as far as Büyükdere «with a hat on his head», a serious breach of custom for a Turk and a Muslim in the day of the universal fez⁵¹. The accusation may have been pure slander, for the Khedive Ismail was then paying palace personnel to blacken Halil's name. In fact, Halil Şerif had recently upbraided Charles Mismér, a Frenchman who worked in İstanbul as a secretary to the grand vezir Âli Paşa, precisely for wearing a hat instead of a fez. As one under contract to the Ottoman government, said Halil, Mismér should wear the fez⁵². Photographs of Halil show him wearing the fez⁵³. In this regard he was conservative. He may or may not have owned domestic slaves himself, but members of his immediate

49 *ibid.*, p. 684. It is difficult to know whether Halil was totally sincere in this expression of opinion, because at that moment he was seeking French support for himself against the intrigues of the Khedive Ismail.

50 Anonymous (Cherbuliez), «L'Angleterre et la Russie en Orient: Une page d'histoire contemporaine (1876-1877)», *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique* 10 (1896), 68, 81.

51 Douin, *Histoire*, II, 610. This was in September 1871, when Halil was temporarily in İstanbul while still holding the ambassadorship in Vienna.

52 Mismér, *Souvenirs*, pp. 148-49. Âli Paşa evidently accepted Mismér's hat-wearing.

53 Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, I, 329, 334; I. A. Gövsa, *Türk Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul, 1946), p. 165.

family also followed that non-westernized custom. The British ambassador in Istanbul reported one shipment of 14 negroes who were servants of Halil's mother and sister⁵⁴. But other aspects of Halil's conduct in Istanbul were quite non-Ottoman, particularly his association with European women and with women of the demi-monde. He was sometimes host at parties where women were present, and he was seen promenading on the Bosphorus quays with Europeans and with women⁵⁵.

Halil Şerif also handled his marriage, in Istanbul in 1872, in a rather cavalier and non-Ottoman fashion. He was foreign minister at the time, and about 50 years old. He announced his engagement at a dinner at the French embassy, saying he did it «to settle down» after sowing his wild oats. His bride was Nazlı Hanım, daughter of Mustafa Fazıl Paşa. Cynics said that Halil Şerif was marrying her to cancel the debt of 60,000 Sterling he owed his prospective father-in-law. When the engagement was celebrated at Mustafa Fazıl's house, Halil Paşa demanded to see his bride without a veil. Mustafa Fazıl trembled at this violation of accepted conduct, though the request was granted⁵⁶. Then the marriage in early December was celebrated with unusual festivity and European-style dinners, parties, and receptions. Turks were irritated that newspapers spoke of the interior of Halil Şerif's harem, of the bride's clothes and of her beauty, and of the receptions, exhibiting none of the usual Muslim reserve. Sultan Abdülaziz and his mother showed their displeasure by sending no presents to Halil Şerif's house at Fındıklı⁵⁷.

Halil Şerif presumably had a house at Büyükdere (or a yalı), as well as a konak in Fındıklı. The konak had in it a library with, evidently, a goodly collection of books in western languages, which

54 Douin, *Histoire*, III : *L'Empire Africain*, 2è partie (Rome, 1939), p. 44, citing Public Record Office (London), FO 84/1354, Elliot (Therapia) to Granville, 13 Aug. 1872.

55 Douin, *Histoire*, II, 578, 610.

56 *ibid.*, p. 682. The engagement was about 15 Oct. 1872; it was announced in *İbret* of 3 Teşrin-i evvel 1288 : Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, I, 323. Nazlı Hanım was herself an accomplished and somewhat westernized person, who spoke French, English, and played the piano : Rumbold, *Recollections*, II, 329-31.

57 Douin, *Histoire*, II, 687-88.

Halil placed at the disposition of Charles Mismar when Mismar was writing a book of his own on Islam and the Ottoman-Islamic world⁵⁸. This literary aspect of Halil Şerif's westernism was shared by a growing number of Ottoman elite, government officials prominent among them; they read western books, especially French publications, and exhibited an interest in western contributions to various fields of knowledge and in French literature.

When he lived in Istanbul, Halil Şerif held two of the highest posts in the Ottoman government: deputy to the foreign minister and grand vezir Âli Paşa, 1868-70, then foreign minister in 1872-73. But it is quite likely that Halil still wanted the ambassadorship in Paris. Only later was that desire achieved. Meanwhile in 1870, after he had been the deputy and before he was foreign minister, Halil was appointed ambassador to the Habsburg court in Vienna. His life there for two years resembled in some ways his Paris life. Halil moved in the world of French-speaking diplomats and cultured society in the Austrian capital. He gave brilliant dinner parties in his embassy adorned with European paintings and French marble statuary⁵⁹. It was said later that nothing in the house showed that the ambassador an Ottoman except for the gold star and crescent on the dinner menus⁶⁰. But his life was not quite so lavish as it had been in Paris. Halil was still in debt.

Finally, in July of 1875, after he had held no public office for over two years, Halil Şerif was appointed to be Ottoman ambassador in Paris. But a double irony surrounded the appointment. First, Halil was named to that post not because of his knowledge and abilities, but because he was a personal and a political opponent of the Khedive Ismail of Egypt. Sultan Abdülaziz at that moment wanted to spite Ismail by sending his enemy, Halil Şerif, to a post of major importance⁶¹. Second, Halil Şerif was not allowed to go Paris. The appoint-

58 Mismar, *Souvenirs*, p. 149. The book he was writing was *Soirées de Constantinople* (Paris, Brussels, Constantinople, 1870).

59 Villemessant, *Mémoires*, VI, 105-11; Villemessant visited the embassy, along with the opera composer Offenbach, and had dinner there.

60 Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, I, 331.

61 FO 78/2384; Elliot to Derby confidential, no. 404, 30 July 1875. Halil had been at odds with Ismail for some time. In 1870 Halil referred to Ismail as the «buffoon Pharaoh» («Pharaon Polichinelle»): BL, Add. Mss. 46696, fols.

ment was canceled within two weeks⁶². Sultan Abdülaziz, for various reasons, had changed his mind. This comedy of appointment to the city he loved and then cancellation must have been a tragedy for Halil Şerif.

After Sultan Abdülaziz was dead, Sultan Abdülhamid II appointed Halil Şerif once again to be ambassador to Paris. This time Halil Şerif actually went to his post, in March of 1877. But his life there must have been an anti-climax. He was ten years older than when he had lived in Paris earlier, he had been ill in the previous autumn and perhaps still was not very strong, and he remained there only six months⁶³. We do not have information on his life in Paris in 1877, although certainly he was still well known there. Halil's ambassadorship occurred during the Russian War of 1877, a very difficult time for the Ottoman Empire despite the heroic Turkish defense of Plevna. Nor do we know why Halil Paşa was replaced as ambassador in September. He died in Istanbul a little more than a year thereafter, in January 1879.

Halil Şerif remains an example of an able Ottoman diplomat who knew Europe well. His diplomatic skills were highly valued by other Ottoman statesmen who must have disapproved strongly of Halil's behavior at various times. The grand vezir Âli Paşa was an emphatic supporter of traditionalism in conduct. Yet one of Âli's last acts before his death was to persuade Sultan Abdülaziz in August 1871 to raise the unconventional Halil Şerif to the rank of Paşa.. Âli said that Halil Şerif was the only man capable of directing the foreign ministry one day⁶⁴. Another rather conservative grand vezir, Mütercim Mehmed Rüşdü Paşa, resisted Abdülaziz's order in 1873 to dismiss Halil from the post of foreign minister. Mehmed Rüşdü

123-24, Halil (Vienna) letter to Âli, 28 Dec. 1870. Ismail worked to get Halil dismissed from each important post he held in İstanbul: see especially Douin, *Histoire*, II, 667-709. Halil's father-in-law, Mustafa Fazıl, had been the heir to the governorship of Egypt until, by Ismail's machinations, he was eliminated from the line of succession.

62 İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar* (İstanbul, 1940-1953), p. 434, quoting a letter of 25 Temmuz 1291/5 Aug. 1875 from grand vezir Esad Paşa to foreign minister Safvet Paşa.

63 *Salname-i Nezaret-i Hariciye*, p. 181.

64 Douin, *Histoire*, II, 606-7.

said that Halil was the only man capable of filling that position⁶⁵. Foreign diplomats respected him. The Khedive Ismail and the Russian ambassador, Ignatyev, would never have opposed him so vigorously had they not recognized his ability.

Halil Şerif is remembered not only for his skills as a diplomat in dealing with the European powers, but as a proponent of a western-style constitutionalism for the Ottoman Empire. His was one of the influences that led to the constitution of 1876, which, although suspended by Sultan Abdülhamid, was revived by the revolution of 1908. Halil's memorandum of February 12, 1867, stated his westernizing position. Latern Edouard Engelhard wrote, with some exaggeration, with reference of that memorandum: «Halil Paşa was *Young Turkey*»⁶⁶.

At the same time, Halil Şerif Paşa is remembered as the Halil Bey who loved the life of Paris and made a flamboyant passage through the society of the French capital in the 1860s. Several decades later, Frédéric Loliée included Halil Bey as a major character in a chapter on «La Haute Vie» in his book on the women of Napoléon III's empire⁶⁷. Years later Alphonse Daudet could tell Edmond Goncourt some gossip about Halil Bey, certain that Halil would be well remembered: Daudet had read a scandalous letter once written by Halil to a French woman⁶⁸. Parisians remembered Halil as a westernized Ottoman, a Europeanized Turk. When Halil Şerif married Nazlı Hanim in 1872, the French journalist Villemessant wrote jokingly to him that he should produce Turkish-French offspring who would be like Halil himself⁶⁹.

Today, more than a century after his death, Halil Şerif is perhaps best remembered as the Ottoman diplomat who, living in Paris, commissioned «The Sleepers» from Courbet. In 1953 that painting, which had long been in private hands, was acquired by the Paris museum, the Petit Palais. Since then, «The Sleepers» has been exhibited frequently in the western world -- Lyon 1954, Paris 1955, Phi-

65 *ibid.*, p. 674.

66 Engelhardt, *La Turquie*, I, 233.

67 Loliée, *Les Femmes*, chapter 3.

68 Goncourt, *Journal*, vol. 18, p. 123, entry of 31 Jan. 1892.

69 Villemessant, *Mémoires*, VI, 116-17.

Philadelphia and Boston 1959-60, Paris 1968-69, Rome and Milan 1969-70, London 1978, and perhaps elsewhere. In each exhibition catalogue, in each description of the painting, Halil Bey is mentioned⁷⁰. In a way, it is a western tribute to Halil Şerif's taste in art. It seems almost as if Europeans and Americans are still, in memory, visiting Halil Bey in his apartments on the corner of the Rue Taitbout to admire his paintings.

⁷⁰ For example, Arts Council of Great Britain, *Gustave Courbet. At the Royal Academy of Arts, January 19-March 19, 1978* (London, 1978), no. 90.