

İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ EDEBİYAT FAKÜLTESİ

GÜNEY-DOĞU AVRUPA
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I

REMARKS ON SOME WESTERN AND TURKISH SOURCES
DEALING WITH THE BARBAROSSA BROTHERS

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The manner in which the Turkish conquest of North Africa began is well known: initiated by the Barbarossa brothers in the early part of the XVIth century, it remained for some years their private enterprise. The allegiance of their own accord to the Ottoman sultan toward the end of the second decade of that century was the moment when the conquest began to take on a more official form.

As the conquest became official, it began to be better recorded in Ottoman chronicles and documents; it is the first years, those of the corsairs' private enterprise, which are veiled in doubt, a doubt caused by serious contradictions between Turkish and Christian reports.

One of the unsettled questions is the date of the first appearance of the Barbarossas in the waters off North Africa and in its harbors; another question is why they came; yet another is the origin itself of these corsairs. The purpose of this article is to draw some conclusions from comparing the Christian and Turkish sources¹.

1504 (or even 1500) is usually quoted in scholarly literature as the year of their arrival. Oruc and his brother Hayreddin would have acquired a base at Goletta in that year and launched their piratical raids in the

1 This article has been written chiefly as an assessment of western historiography on the subject. Turkish historiography (including the articles «Barbaros Hayreddin» and «Oruç» in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*) has mostly used the *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*, either directly or through Kâtip Çelebi's *Tuhfetul Kibar fi Esfarul Bihar*. The best work, Turkish or foreign, written on this subject is in my opinion Aziz Samih Ilter's *Şimali Afrika'da Türkler* (İstanbul, 1937). It seems to me that it has not been used to the full extent of its merit; and it is virtually unknown outside Turkey.

Central and Western Mediterranean. We read in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* the following account: «... He [= 'Arūdī], later decided (the exact reasons for this decision are not known) to operate off the coast of the Maghrib. It is fairly certain that from 1504 onwards, or soon afterwards, 'Arūdī and his brothers made their base at Goletta; they started in a small way with two ships, but soon took some remarkable prizes; as a result of these they increased... the numbers of their fleets, which comprised eight galliots in 1510...»². In Charles-André Julien's *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord* (Paris, 1966), we read a similar account: «On ne sait pas... pour quelle raison Aroudj quitta l'archipel, avec ses frères, et transporta son théâtre d'action en Méditerranée occidentale. De 1504 à 1510, il gagna grand prestige parmi les Musulmans, en courant sus aux bateaux chrétiens, surtout espagnols, et en passant des milliers de Morisques en Berbérie...» (English: It is not known why Aroudj left the archipelago [of the Egeean Sea] with his brothers, and moved the field of his activities to the western Mediterranean. From 1504 to 1510, he gained a great renown among the Muslims, hunting down Christian, especially Spanish, ships, and transporting thousands of Moriscoes to Barbary)³. And in Sir Godfrey Fisher's *The Barbary Legend* (Oxford, 1958) we read the following: «In the year of 1500 King Frederick of Naples turned to the sultan [of Turkey] for assistance. In the same year Sicilian forces were withdrawn from Jerba. The suggestion that at about the same date Aruj was installed there under the authority of the King of Tunis would fit in with the description of his age, which might then be twenty-six. He presumably came to Tunis with a ship or ships of Turkish origin... His capture of a Sicilian ship with 360 Spanish soldiers off Lipari at some vague date is said to have led to his official recognition as bey by the sultan. Lane-Poole places the action in 1505, the very year at which Zurita records the unexpected appearance of Turks in Sicilian waters and the (otherwise unmentioned) destruction of their total force.»⁴ A host of writers, ranging from such respected scholars as S. Lane-Poole⁵ to amateurs like E. Bradford⁶ follow the same line. If we try to determine the source of this infor-

2 El², vol. I, p. 678, article «'Arūdī» by J. Le Tourneau.

3 Vol. II, p. 254.

4 P. 46.

5 In his *Barbary Corsairs* (London, 1890), pp. 32-35.

6 In his *The Sultan's Admiral* (New York, 1968), pp. 24-25. This book has now been published in a Turkish translation under the title *Barbaros Hayrettin* (İstanbul, 1970).

mation, we discover that it is the *Epitome de los Reyes de Argel* (Concise History of the Kings of Algiers) by the Spanish monk Diego de Haëdo (fl. late XVIth - early XVIIth century). Fray Diego de Haëdo, who had spent several years in Sicily as an aide of his more important uncle and namesake, the archbishop of Palermo, wrote the *Topographia e Historia General de Argel* (The Topography and General History of Algiers) - the *Epitome* is the second of its five parts⁷ - after the return to his native north-western Spain. In the dedicatory chapter, the Benedictine monk explains how and on the basis of what information the book was written. He does not breathe a word about his uncle's or his own presence at Algiers, although he does take pains to defend the veracity of the *Topographia* by stressing that its source was his uncle's notes collected from the testimonies of former captives in North Africa⁸. According to Haëdo, a whole epic of exploits by the legendary brothers would have taken place from 1504 on in the Central and Western Mediterranean, until the siege of Bougie which would have taken place in 1512; a little later in the same year, while Oruç was recovering in Tunis, Hayreddin would have been attacked at Goletta by a Genoese fleet led by Andrea Doria and defeated, so that he had to flee from his brother's ire to Djerba⁹. These were at least the stories the archbishop of Palermo heard and recorded in Sicily two generations later, in the 1570's and 1580's, and wrote down in notes from which his nephew composed the *Topographia* back in his home abbey of Palencia. His book became the cornerstone of French and English historiography on the subject, chiefly through two channels: J. Morgan's *A Complete History of Algiers* (London, 1731) and the

7 *Topographia e historia general de Argel, repatida en cinco tratados* (The Topography and general history of Algiers, presented in five treatises), Valladolid, 1612. The whole work has been published in a modern edition by the Sociedad de Bibliófilos Espanoles, Madrid, 1927-29. 3 vols. (As vols. 3, 5-6 of its *Segunda Epoca*).

8 His «Carta Dedicatoria» in *Topografia*, I, pp. 10-11 (Madrid edition; the obsolete spelling *Topographia* is modernized in this edition). — One cannot help wondering if the commonly accepted belief that Haëdo had spent some time in Algiers should not be reexamined. This assumption seems to be based on Father Pierre Dan's *Les Illustres Captifs* (Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. no. 1919, Livre II, ch. XII), quoted by H. — D. de Grammont in his translation of the *Epitome* (*Revue Africaine*, vol. 24, 1880, p. 38, n. 2). Father Dan based his account on the hearsay that had reached him in the 1630's.

9 *Epitome*, pp. 220-221. — The punitive expedition of the Genoese led by Doria would thus have taken place in 1512. In that year, however, the republic

French translation by H.-D. de Grammont of the *Epitome* under the title «Histoire des Rois d'Alger» in *Revue Africaine*¹⁰.

Besides the *Epitome*, there is another early history of the Barbarossas written by a Christian: the *Choronica de los muy nombrados Omiche y Haradin Barbarrojas* by the Spanish priest Francisco Lopez de Gómara (1512-1557), better known for his histories of the conquest of Mexico¹¹. The *Choronica* was completed in 1545, thus still in Hayreddin's lifetime. Although it was not published till the XIXth century¹², Gómara's book became, through the intermediary of another work, the chief source on the subject of Spanish scholars¹³. Just as Haëdo, Gómara deserves being re-examined as a source. He does not seem to have visited North Africa (except perhaps in 1541 as the chaplain of Hernán Cortés, who was partici-

needed all the efforts of its newly appointed naval commander for expelling the French from their territory. Cf. E. Petit, *André Doria* (Paris, 1887), pp. 36-38. After his success, Doria was dismissed as a result of intrigue by the Adorni faction, and was re-appointed only in the following year (1513). He then clashed with Turkish corsairs off the western coast of Italy (a certain Godoli = Kurtoglu?). There may have been an attack by Doria on Goletta in 1514, after the first siege of Bougie by Oruç and Hayreddin; cf. Gomara's *Cronica* (discussed below), p. 362: «La Señoria... proveyo luego diez y siete galeras y dos galeones que fuesen en husca de Barbarroja. Fueron capitanes desta armada Gabriel Martino, arzobispo de Barri, que despues fué cardenal y obispo de Jaén, de donde era natural, y Andrea de Oria, los quales como estovieron despachados, salieron de Genova, y con buen navegacion que ovieron, llegaron en poco espacio a la Goleta, y en llegando la tomaron. Hallaron allí su galera que pocos días antes, como está dicho, fué tomada: hicieron el dano que pudieron, y cargaron lo que hallaron, y volvieron a Genova.» (The Signoria immediately provided seventeen galleys and two galleons which would set out in search of Barbarossa. The captains of this fleet were Gabriel Martino... and Andrea de Oria; they sailed out of Genoa and soon arrived at Coletta, which they took... They did the damage they could, loaded what they found, and returned to Genoa).

10 Vol. 24 (1880).

11 *Historia General de las Indias hasta el año de 1551* (Zaragoza, 1552-3, and a number of subsequent editions).

12 The first and only edition came out in vol. 6 of *Memorial Historico Espanol* (Madrid, 1853), pp. 327-439, under the title *Cronica de los Barbarrojas*.

13 The manuscript was used by Fray Prudencio de Sandoval (1560-1620) for his *Historia de la vida y Hechos del Emperador Carlos I*, and through this work it became the main source of Spanish historiography on the subject, including the *Armada Espanola desde la Union de los Reinos de Castilla y de Aragon* (Madrid, 1890-1905) by Cesareo Francesco Duro.

pating in Charles V's expedition against Algiers). Although earlier than Haëdo, Gómara still was writing about events which had taken place a generation earlier, and he wrote chiefly, like Haëdo, from hearsay. Unlike Haëdo, he does not indicate the date of the arrival of the Barbarossas to the western Mediterranean. He is specific, however, about the origin of the two brothers and about the reasons why Oruç came to North Africa. It is this account which I propose to examine later in this article.

Besides the widely used Haëdo's *Epitome* and less commonly noticed Gómara's *Choronica*, there exists no other known early history, on the Christian side, specifically devoted to the Barbarossas. It is worthwhile, however, to glance at those contemporary or nearly contemporary sources which bear on the events connected with their arrival or early activity. The principal among these are Andrés Bernáldez, Marino Sanuto, Marmol del Carvajal, and Gerónimo Zurita. All are XVIth century authors,

The Castillian Andrés Bernáldez (d. 1513?) covered in his *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*¹⁴ the period 1454-1513; the book is one of the prime sources for, among other things, the Spanish conquests along the coast of North Africa until the year 1513; yet there is not a word about the Barbarossas, strange if the Turkish corsairs had really come face to face with the Spanish and even had laid siege to Spanish-held Bougie in 1512.

The *Diarii* by the Venetian Marino Sanuto (1466-1535)¹⁵ cover the years 1496-1533. One could naturally expect that they would report the actions of the Barbarossas, just as they do those of their predecessor Kemal Reis¹⁶. They do so indeed, but only from the year 1515 on¹⁷.

Another Christian author who offers his version about the Barbarossas is Luys del Marmol y Carvajal, a native of Granada. The dates of his birth

14 Published as *Historia de los Reyes Catolicos D. Fernando y Dona Isabel* (Sevilla, 1870) and again as *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Catolicos* (Madrid, 1962).

15 Venice, 1879-1902. 58 vols.

16 For instance, Sanuto records the sailings of Kemal Reis to the Central and Western Mediterranean in the years 1501 (*Diarii*, IV, 71, 242) and 1505-6 (VI, pp. 218, 230, 277, 300).

17 *Diarii*, vol. 20, p. 309: «Dubita si di Barbarosa, era in colfo di Tunis con 15 fuste et do galie, non vegni a questi contorni. Idio restori i peridenti!» (People fear lest Barbarossa, who was in the Gulf of Tunis with 15 foists and two galleys, come this way. May God save those in danger!) (Report from Palermo received in Venice in June 1515).

and death are not known, but he participated, as a young man, in the expedition of Charles V against Tunis in 1535, and from then on stayed intermittently in North Africa until 1557. Partly on the basis of his experience, he wrote the *Descripción general de Affrica, sus guerras y vicisitudes, desde la fundación del mahometismo hasta el año 1571*, one of the basic sources for the history of XVIth century North Africa. The first two of its three volumes were published in Granada in 1573, the third in Malaga in 1599¹⁸. According to Marmol, Oruç and Hayreddin arrived in North Africa for the first time in the reign of Sultan Süleyman, an error explicable by the Spaniard's unfamiliarity with Ottoman affairs; Marmol unwittingly corrects himself when on the same page he states that it happened during the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic, thus at the latest in 1516¹⁹. The first specific date in Marmol's account is the siege of Bougie: 1514²⁰.

The Spanish historian Gerónimo Zurita y Castro (1512-1580) mentions in his *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*²¹ the Barbarossas for the first time for the year 1514²². Yet he was one of the most carefully documented historians of his time, for when he was charged by Philip II to write the history, he travelled to Italy and Sicily gathering documents, an activity which contributed to the celebrity of the newly established archives of Simancas.

The main support for dating the arrival of the Barbarossas several years later, however, are two Turkish sources: the *Kitab-i bahriye* by Piri Reis and the *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*, a semi-autobiography by the younger of the two brothers. Like Bernaldez, Sanuto, Marmol, Gómara, Zurita, or Haëdo, these sources have been known and used, but insufficiently or with the overlooking of certain basic facts reported in them.

18 References in this article are to the second volume of the first edition: *Primera Parte de la Descricion General de Affrica,... hasta el ano del Senor 1571...* por el Veedor Luys del Marmol Caravaial, andante en corte de su Magestad... Granada, 1573. — In French historiography, this work is better known through its French translation: *L'Afrique d Marmol*, de la traduction de Nicolas Perrot, sieur d'Abancourt... Paris, 1667. 3 vols.

19 Fol. 179b.

20 Fol. 180a.

21 There are a number of editions, beginning with that of 1562 and two more from the XVI th century, all in Zaragoza. A modern edition is currently being published (Zaragoza, Institucion Fernando el Catolico, 1967-).

22 Thus not for 1505, as G. Fisher by some oversight suggests in his *Barbary Legend* (p. 46). Cf. *Anales*, 1580 ed., fols. 398b-400b.

The *Kitab-i bahriye* is the earlier one: it was compiled in two versions, the first by 1521, the second in 1526²³. The author, Piri Reis, was an old hand in the Central and Western Mediterranean, where he had sailed with his uncle Kemal Reis intermittently from 1487 on²⁴ until shortly before Kemal's death, and then again with Hayreddin Barbarossa²⁵. The last year of Piri Reis's sailing to North Africa with his uncle was 1510²⁶. In his description of North Africa, Piri Reis frequently mentions political and military events, as for instance Spanish successes and failures in capturing various points on the coast, such as Algiers, Bougie, Djerba, or Tripoli²⁷, or the role of his uncle as a kind of adviser to the sultan of Tunis²⁸, or again the fact that Kemal Reis and his companions had been using the anchorage off Goletta for selling the booty they captured in raids in the western Mediterranean²⁹. Let us note that most of these events took place in the first decade

23 Only the second version has been published in its entirety: Piri Reis, *Kitabi Bahriye*, İstanbul, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1935. It is a facsimile edition of one of the manuscripts, and will be referred to in this article as *Facs. ed.*

24 Kemal Reis sailed to Spain with a mission of token help from Bayezit to the hard pressed Muslims. Cf. Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. 1, (1309), p. 129; H. von Burski, *Kemal Re'is; Beitrag zur Geschichte der türkischen Flotte* (Bonn, 1928), pp. 21-23.

25 At an unspecified date, but probably in 1515, Hayreddin sent present to Sultan Selim in İstanbul with a fleet of six galleys led by Piri Reis (*Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*, İstanbul, University library, ms. no. 2639, fols. 63a-69b).

26 In the chapter on Tripoli, Piri Reis tells how the citizens gave Kemal Reis a letter for the Ottoman sultan asking him for a governor; while Kemal was on the way to İstanbul, the Spanish came and took the city. *Facs. ed.*, p. 672. — The Spanish took Tripoli on July 25, 1510. Cf. Bernā dez, *Memorias*, ed. Madrid 1962, p. 564.

27 Algiers: Ist version, ms. Topkapı Sarayı, Bağdat 337, fol. 104a; *facs. ed.*, p. 634; Bougie: Bağdat 337, fol. 105a; *facs. ed.*, pp. 636-7; Djerba: Bağdat 337, fol. 115b; *facs. ed.*, pp. 663-4; Tripoli: Bağdat 337, fo. 118a; *facs. ed.*, p. 667.

In the case of Tripoli, there is an interesting variation between the two versions: for in the first version, Piri Reis writes that the citizens asked Kemal Reis to be their ruler, rather than from the outset demanding an Ottoman governor. Kemal Reis refused on the ground that it might be considered an act of disloyalty to the *padişah*.

28 For instance in reference to La Calle (*Facs. ed.*, p. 645) we read that Kemal Reis advised the sultan of Tunis to demolish the Genoese portification at that place, lest the Spanish, who were in the process of extending their rule over the coast, take it and use it against the Muslims.

29 *Facs. ed.*, p. 578.

of the XVIth century, thus in the years when Oruç and Hayreddin, if we accept the common notion, were doing the same thing in the same area. Yet Piri Reis never mentions their presence before 1510; he does, however, report their activity in the second and third decade of the century³⁰.

As for the *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*³¹, it at first sight does not specify any dates; indirectly, however, it clearly states that Oruç arrived at Djerba for the first time in the spring of 1513 and in the Gulf of Tunis later that year. Oruç, and in a sense Hayreddin too, sailed westward fleeing from possible persecution by the new sultan Selim; for Oruç had been a protégé of Korkut and saw the writing on the wall when in 1512 relations between his benefactor and the new sultan worsened; later that year, he left the

30 Bagdat 337, fol. 104a; *Facs. ed.*, p. 634.

31 Still unpublished in its Turkish original, which exists in two versions — one in prose and one in verse — in a number of manuscripts in Istanbul and abroad; see Ağah Sirri Levend, *Gazavât-nâmeler* (Ankara, 1956), pp. 70-74, and Aldo Gallotta, «Le Gazavât di Hayreddin Barbarossa», *Studi Magrebini*, III (Naples, Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1970), pp. 79-160.

An Arabic translation was made, according to GAL II, p. 606, as early as in 950/1543-4, thus still in Hayreddin's lifetime. Brockelmann, however, does not indicate how he arrived at such a date. The Arabic version — in fact a summary — of the Turkish original, which was published in 1934 by K. Nouredine (Khalil Nûr al-Dîn) in Algiers (*Kitâb ghazawat Arudj wa Khayr al-Dîn*) is based on a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Musée of Algiers (no. 942/1622); in its colophon, the copyist states that the translation was made by a *hoca* of Sîdî Muhammad b. Âli al-Kuloghlu al-Djazaîrî, a hanafite *mufti* of Algiers; this *mufti*, according to R. Basset (*Documents musulmans sur le siège d'Alger en 1541*, Paris, 1890, pp. 6-7), lived in the first half of the XVIIIth century. It is probable, though not certain, that this manuscript was used in 1788-90 by the French orientalist Venture de Taradis for his French paraphrase of the *Gazavat*, which in turn became widely known when it was published by Sander Rang and F. Denis (*Fondation de la Régence d'Alger; histoire des Barberousse. Chronique arabe [sic!] du XVIe siècle, publiée sur un manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Royale*, Paris, 1837). The «manuscript» in question is Venture's translation, but the reader would not know it from the title page — it is explained in the introduction.

The Arabic abridgement and its French paraphrase, however, are not the only translations; there is a Spanish one, made as early as in 1578 by Luis Alcamora, secretary of Philip II, with the help of an Ottoman slave; this translation, located in the Biblioteca Comunale, Palermo, has the title *La Vida y Historia de Hayreddin llamado Barbarossa, traduzida de lengua turquesca en espanol casteliano*. This Spanish translation was in turn translated into Italian

Aegean and wintered in Alexandria³²; in the spring of 1513, he sailed westward. Adopting the island of Djerba as a base, he sailed out in quest of Christian ships; he had success and came to Tunis where he gave presents to the sultan who welcomed the proposal that against the payment of one fifth of the booty, the Turkish corsair could use the ports of the country³³. In that same year, Oruç was joined by Hayreddin, also fleeing from Selim's men hunting down the partisans of Korkut³⁴.

Thus the first of the two principal Turkish sources, the *Kitab-i bahriye*, indirectly argues against the presence of the Barbarossas in the harbors of North Africa before 1510; and the semi-autobiographical *Gazavat* implicitly but firmly points to the year 1513 as that of their arrival.

The question of course is whether Hayreddin was telling the truth. He could, and undoubtedly did, occasionally or perhaps often, distort history so as to make his brother and especially himself appear in the most favorable light. Why would he, however, have tried to present Oruç and himself as partisans of Korkut? The *Gazavat* was written by the order of Süleyman and for him^{34a}. One could hardly visualize the interest Hayreddin would have drawn from appearing as a former partisan of Süleyman's father's rival Kor-

by E. Pelaez and published in the *Archivio Storico Siciliano* between 1880 and 1887, and as a monograph in Palermo in 1887, under the title *La Vita e la storia di Ariadeno Barbarossa*.

Aldo Gallotta, who presents in the above-mentioned article what seems to be an authoritative and definitive survey of the extant manuscripts of the *Gazavat*, states on p. 108 that the Spanish translation was made from a manuscript which is now in the Escorial, Madrid (ms. no. 1663; cf. H. Derenbourg and E. Lovi-Provençal, *Les Manuscrits-Arabes de l'Escorial*, vol. 3, Paris 1928, pp. 194-5). According to Gallotta, the Escorial manuscript is the best extant manuscript of the Turkish original (p. 134). If the Spanish — and Italian — translations are good — and Gallotta does not say anything to the contrary, except for an observation that the original translator tended to omit passages difficult because of Arabic expressions one cannot but regret that the epic of the Barbarossas has been known and used up till now chiefly through the abbreviated and inaccurate French paraphrase. It is of course the Turkish original whose critical edition is long overdue, but this gap should soon be bridged by Aldo Gallotta, according to the Italian scholar's own words (pp. 80-81).

32 Algiers ed., pp. 12-13; ms. 2639, fol. 27a b; ms. 1291, fol. 19a.

33 Algiers ed., p. 13; Ms. 2639, fol. 27a-b; Ms. 1291, fol. 19a.

34 Algiers ed., p. 14; Ms. 2639, fol. 32b; Ms. 1291, fol. 22a.

34a Ms. 2639, fol. 2b. This detail is not mentioned in the Arabic summary or in the rhymed version.



kut and a fugitive from the sultan. Chances thus are that at least in this instance, the *Gazavat* tells the truth, a truth which was probably still remembered by a number of veterans in the early 1540's.

The circumstances which forced the Barbarossas to flee to North Africa are of course more interesting than the date itself of the event. They reveal the motive for their departure from the east, and in the last analysis their personalities, as quite different from those depicted by the Christian authors.

The story offered by Gómara is the following. Oruç was a helmsman on a Turkish galley that belonged to a private owner in the vicinity of Istanbul. He organized a plot to kill the master and seize the ship; the plot succeeded, and Oruç became the owner of the galley. Fearing punishment, he sailed to Djerba and thence to the waters of the central Mediterranean, and eventually to Tunis³⁵.

According to Marmol, Oruç and Hayreddin were sent by sultan Süleyman to Koron and Modon with sold for the Turkish garrisons there; instead of delivering the money, they armed two ships and became corsairs, preying upon Christians and Muslims alike. They had success and proceeded to the coasts of Italy, «until then free from corsairs.» From there they sailed with their booty to Tunis in order to sell it in that port. Afterwards they began to operate in the western Mediterranean, their ranks swelling with Turkish and Moorish corsairs who flocked to Oruç as his fame was spreading³⁶.

Haëdo offers yet another version. When Oruç, brought up a Christian on his native Lesbos, reached the age of 20, a Turkish corsair galley visited the island. Oruç asked the sailors to take him along, vowing to renegade to Islam. He was accepted, circumcized, named Aruch, and soon distinguished himself to the point of becoming captain of a galliot himself. The galliot was armed at Istanbul, Oruç collected *Levend* troops, and persuaded his shipmates to follow him and try their luck in the west. He set out forthwith, stopping at Lesbos to take his younger brothers Hayreddin and Ishak along. They arrived at Goletta in the spring of 1504³⁷.

Thus according to Gomara, Oruç, came to Tunis as a murderer fleeing

35 *Cronica*, pp. 354-5.

36 *Primera parte de la Descripcion General de Affrica*, vol. 2, fols. 179b-180a.

37 *Epitome*, pp. 214-216.

from justice; according to Marmol, the two brothers left their homeland and sovereign as embezzlers and predators without any religious principle, Christian or Muslim; and according to Haëdo, they came as renegades out of greed, ready to compound their sins of apostasy with crimes against the Christians. In each case, these versions must correspond to the numerous tales that circulated among Europeans about the notorious scourge of Christendom. They obviously satisfied the naive and understandably prejudiced expectations of an average Christian of the time. Also, these writers and their informants and readers must have had difficulties understanding the somewhat involved political circumstances which forced the two brothers to leave their homeland and come to North Africa as political refugees, victims of blind fortune that had ruled against the member of the House of Osman who happened to be their protector.

The misunderstandings of Gómara, Marmol and Haëdo should also make us more circumspect when considering their statements about the origin itself of the Barbarossas. Gómara tells us that their father was born in Christian Albania, where he had been seized as a boy, brought to Istanbul, «made Turk» - i.e., converted to Islam, renamed Mahomedi, and put to service on the sea as a corsair for the benefit of the sultan. A grown man with an unspecified function at the court, Mahomedi committed a crime at Istanbul and had to flee: he escaped to Lesbos, where he married a Christian widow called Catalina (= Catherine), mother of two sons and one daughter. She bore him six children, two girls and four boys; the girls became Christian, the boys Muslim, «according to the custom of the Turks.» The boys were named Omiche, Jaca, Hardin, and Maucete, in order of seniority. Their father made them learn trades: Omiche was apprenticed by himself in coastal shipping; Jaca became carpenter, Hardin potter, and Maucete studied to become a [Muslim] priest. Omiche fretted in the poverty of the family, left them and went to Istanbul where he claimed the former post of his father who, he said, had died in the meantime. It was granted, and Omiche's maritime career was launched³⁸.

Here is what Marmol tells us. Oruç was a native of Cilicia, «even though some Turks say he was from the island of Metelin.» His father, Christian by birth but a convert to Islam, was a corsair for a number of years in the eastern Mediterranean, but it was in the west where he found

38 *Cronica*, pp. 350-352.

his bride: the mother of the Barbarossas was a native Spaniard from the Andalusian city of Marchena, where she had been captured by the corsair. Both brothers grew up to be excellent soldiers and had served Bayezit in his struggle with Selim, and later Süleyman³⁹.

Haëdo too is specific. The Barbarossas' father was Greek and Christian, by the name Jacob, and a potter by profession. The mother's name is not given. All the children were born Christian; there were three boys and two girls. Aruch was the eldest boy, his two brothers were Cheredin and Isaac⁴⁰. Thus all the three authors give versions which are as specific as they are mutually contradictory.

According to the *Gazavat*, on the other hand, the father was a former Janissary *sipahi* named Yakup Ağa, who had participated in Mehmet the Conqueror's conquest of Lesbos (1462) and subsequently stayed on the island. By default of Muslim women, the Turkish soldiers married the daughters of local Christians, as Yakup Ağa did. He had four sons: Ishak, Oruç, Hizir and Ilyas⁴¹. All but the eldest took to the sea and practised coastal trade. It was Oruç's mishap at the hands of the Knights of St. John, based on Rhodes, which triggered the series of events that ultimately led him to meet Korkut and receive the encouragement, moral and material, to embark on *gazi* forays against the Christians⁴². Furthermore, an interesting epigraphic document supplements the *Gazavat*: the inscription on a mosque built by Hayreddin in Algiers; dated Djumādā I 926/April 19-May 18, 1520, it reads: «Al-Sultān al-Mudjāhid fī sabīli 'l-Ilāhi rabbi 'l-ālamīn, Mavlānā Khayr al-Dīn ibn al-Amīr al-Shahīr al-Mudjāhid ibn Yūsuf Ya-ḫūb al-Turkī.»⁴³

It was natural for the Christian authors to miss or distort certain names. Gómara substitutes for the less patently Muslim name Yakup the unequivocal Mahomedī/Muhammed; Haëdo caught the rumors by the time the youngest brother, Ilyas, who had died by the hands of the Knights of St. John before the North African adventure began, was totally forgotten; likewise, both authors naturally tended to consider Oruç to be the eldest.

39 *Primera parte*, fol. 179a.

40 *Epitome*, pp. 213-214.

41 Algiers ed., p. 7; Ms. 2639, fol. 5a; Ms. 1291, fol. 3a.

42 Algiers ed., p. II; Ms. 2639, fols. 86 ff.; Ms. 1291, fols. 3b ff.

43 A. Devoulx, *Epigraphie indigène du Musée archéologique d'Alger* (Algiers, 1874), pp. 54-5.

Gómara's tale about Mahomedi's origin strikes one as an imperfect understanding of something resembling the routine career of a janissary. Haëdo may have been influenced by tales which aligned the case of the Barbarossas with that of the growing numbers of Christian renegades who in his time ranged among the most notorious corsairs of Algiers⁴⁴.

It would of course be wrong to dismiss the biographies by Gómara, Haëdo and others; their value, however, lies in reporting later events in Hayreddin's career, those which were better known in contemporary memory and, above all, more intelligible to a Christian of the westernmost Mediterranean peninsula. For the early period and especially the beginnings of the Barbarossas it is, I believe, a mistake to put them on a par with Hayreddin's autobiography. Gómara wrote a generation after the events from rumors he had heard mainly from his coreligionists, necessarily adversaries of the Turks. Haëdo wrote after yet another generation had passed. This removal from the scene in terms of time and civilization is compounded by that of attitude: the Spanish priest and monk were not likely to write, from partly misunderstood and biased rumors, and themselves hardly impartial judges, an objective account of Christendom's archenemies.

It is true that Haëdo, biased as he may have been in his characterization of the Barbarossas' origin and of the reasons for their departure from the east, had no reason for substituting one date for another. The explanation may lie in a confusion of the early activities of the Barbarossas with the final years of Kemal Reis and his Turkish corsairs in North Africa. Their personalities and piratical raids, virtually identical until the time when the Barbarossas established their military and political power in Algiers, may very well have merged in people's memories a generation later, when Gómara was writing; and the projection of the Barbarossas into the time and events of the first wave of Turkish corsairs may have been consummated toward the end of the century, when Haëdo was interviewing the released captives in Palermo. Kemal Reis had used Djerba, Goletta and other points on the coast just as Oruç and Hayreddin were to do several years later; he too sailed to the waters off western Italy, around the islands of

44 In Haedo's time it was indeed the renegades who were the beylerbeyis of Algiers. Lane-Poole enumerates the following: Ramazan the Sardinian (1574-77), Hasan the Venetian (1577-80 and 1582-83), Cafer the Hungarian (1580-82) and Memi the Albanian (1583-86) (*Barbary Corsairs*, p. 185).

Corsica and Sardinia, and along the French and Spanish coasts, returning with his booty to the gulf of Tunis, welcomed by the Hafsid sultan. We have seen what difficulties the Spanish authors had with Turkish names. No wonder they and their contemporaries combined, through the prism of time and ignorance, the two waves of Turkish corsairs into one.

There is, however, a remote chance that before fleeing from the Aegean in 1512 and 1513, Oruç and Hayreddin had actually at one moment or another been active as corsairs in the central Mediterranean under the aegis of Kemal Reis. At least a remark by the Italian cleric and historian Paolo Giovio (1483-1552) in the second volume of his *Historia* (Venice, 1553, pp. 507-8) is interesting: «...Non alienum erit ab instituto opere breviter recensere, quibus artibus Mithylenaei fratres, ab una tantum praedatoria bireme, ad regium fastigium irrepserint... Igitur padre graeco, atque eo Mahometis sacra secuto, in insula Lesbo geniti, quum inopiam domi ferre non possent, arrepta bireme spes suas omnes pari commisserunt, sese Camali archipirata in disciplinam tradentes. Sub hoc Camale Horucius, qui uti natu maior ad se ducis nomen trahebat, cum Hariadeno, multa praeda, multisque servis atque naviis adauctus, ac demum ascitis in societatem minoribus piratis praedabundus in Mauritaniam pervenit...» (It will be useful to mention how the two brothers from Lesbos managed to build, from one sole galley, a whole kingdom... Born in the island of Lesbos, they could not bear the poverty of their home and placed all their hopes on a galley they had seized; they entered into the service of the arch-pirate Kemal; under this Kemal, Horucius... arrived in Mauritania).—

I personally consider Giovio's account as yet another case of the psychologically natural association, in the eyes of the Christians, of the two famous names among Turkish corsairs. Nor is it without a certain logic: The example set by Kemal Reis must have been known to Oruç and Hayreddin; by the time the two brothers came there, Turkish corsairs were already familiar to Muhammad V, the Hafsid sultan of Tunis who knew what profit he could draw from their visits. Thus the Barbarossas at first followed the example, if not the actual leadership, of Kemal Reis.





