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Christoph Herzog

Barbara Henning

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Derviş İbrahim Paşa: Views on a Late 19th-Century Ottoman Military Commander

Christoph Herzog

Barbara Henning

Derviş İbrahim Paşa was one of the most important military commanders of the 19th-century Ottoman Empire. He received international attention first for his role during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877/78, where he commanded the garrison of Batum, and then as head of Sultan Abdülhamid's 1881/82 mission to Egypt attempting to forestall the loss of the province. Although he has been treated in several encyclopedias and biographical compilations,¹ Derviş Paşa has not, to the best of our knowledge, been examined in a longer biographical essay.² This contribution aims to serve as a starting point for a better understanding of his biography. In what follows we establish the basic chronology of Derviş Paşa's career and review narratives regarding his personality and character. In the process, we establish the necessity of identifying and critically examining the use of clichés in contemporary European sources.

¹Cf. Orhan M. Bayrak, *İstanbul'da Gömülü Meşhur Adamları* (Istanbul: Türkiye Anıtlar Derneği, 1979); Osman Nuri Ergin, *İstanbul Şehreminleri* (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı, 1996); İbrahim Gövsa, *Türk Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi. Edebiyatta, Sanatta, İlimde, Harpte, Politikada ve Her Sahada Şöhret Kazanmış Olan Türklerin Hayatları, Eserleri* (Istanbul: Yedigün Neşriyatı, n.d), 103; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani yahud Tezkere-i Meşahir-i Osmaniyye*, 4 vols. (Istanbul: Matbaa-i amire, 1308-1311), 4:855 [henceforth SO] and M. C. Şihabettin Tekindağ, "Derviş Paşa," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1963), 3: 552. An abridged version of Tekindağ's article was also published in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*: "Dervish Pasha," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs, 2nd ed. (Leiden etc.: Brill, 1969), 3: 992.

²A colorful description of his personal character and several interesting anecdotes can be found in Ziya Şakır, *Yarım Asır Evvel Bizi İdare Edenler*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Muallim Fuat Gücüyener, Anadolu Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943), 1:187-204.

Chronology and Career

Derviş Paşa was born in 1811 or 1812³ in Lofça (today Lovech in northern Bulgaria)⁴ as the son of a local notable named Genç İbrahim Ağa. As a young man he came to Istanbul where he joined the Ottoman army. In 1252 (beg. 18 April 1836) he was accorded the rank of major (*binbaşı*). Even though he lacked formal military education, his quick-wittedness allowed him to advance rapidly through the ranks.⁴ He also enjoyed the protection of Ömer Lütfi Paşa, serving in his retinue in the 1852/53 campaign in Montenegro.⁵ Derviş Paşa's younger brother, Fehim Paşa, served as a *kaimmakam* and was accorded the rank of *mirimiran*,⁶ but seems to have died in 1267 already (beg. 6 November 1850) while *kaimmakam* of İzvornik (Zvornik, Bosnia).⁷

Around 1 May 1862 Derviş Paşa was appointed commander of the Ottoman division in Herzegovina⁸ and was accorded the rank of a field marshal (*müşir*).⁹ On the suggestion of Ömer Lütfi Paşa he was at the same time decorated with the *Nişan-i Osmani* of the second rank.¹⁰ In the following year he received the same order of the first rank.¹¹ In 1862 Derviş Paşa took part in the war against Montenegro. According to the vivid description of this campaign¹² by Josef Koetschet (1830-1898), Ömer Lütfi's private physician and later chief Ottoman physician and *mektubcu* in Sarajevo, the relationship between Derviş Paşa and Ömer Lütfi had by then become quite tense. Although Ömer Lütfi at one point remarked that Derviş deserved to be hanged,¹³ he nevertheless relied heavily on him during military operations in Montenegro, where Derviş commanded about 12,000 men.¹⁴ By the summer of 1862, the disagreement between the two commanders on strategic issues had reached such proportions that it required

³According to his obituary in *Malumat* 42 (13 Haziran 1312 / 14 Muharrem 1314), 932, he was 84 years of age when he died in June 1896. The year 1812 is also given by Şihabettin Tekindağ, in his article in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 3:552. According to *SO*, 4:855, Derviş was "close to ninety" (*doksana karib*) when he died. Other dates given for his birth are 1817 (Gövsa, Bayrak, Ergin) and 1819 (Service historique de l'armée de terre [SHAT]: 7N 1628, attachés militaires, Turquie 1882-1884, annexe au no. 32 [26 August 1884], Caffarel).

⁴*Malumat* 42: 932. See also *SO*, 4:855 where he is described as "fatîr".

⁵Caffarel, annexe au No. 32 (26 August 1884).

⁶Cf. *SO*, 4: 30f; Lütfi, Ahmed, *Tarih-i Lütfi*. 8 vols. (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, [1-4], Mahmud Bey [5-7], Sabah [8], 1290-1328), 9: 47.

⁷*Tarih-i Lütfi*, 9: 60. According to *SO*, 4:31, he died sometime after 1876. In the catalog of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi there is an irade (İ.DH 227/13619) dated 5 Ra 1267 concerning "İzvornik Kaymakamı Fehim Paşa'nın biraderi Şakir Bey'e kapıcıbaşılık rütbesi tevcihi." This would mean that yet another of Derviş Paşa's brothers served in the Ottoman bureaucracy.

⁸Cf. Emine Altunay Şam, "Derviş Paşa'nın Bosna-Hersek Vilayetin'de Yapılan Askeri Düzenlemeye İlişkin Babıâli'ye Sunduğu Layiha," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 150 (Haziran 2004), 49-60.

⁹Dr. K., *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben des Serdar Ekrem Ömer Pascha (Michael Lattas)* (Sarajevo: Spindler & Löschner, 1885), 183. According to *SO*, 4: 854 this would have been on 28 L 1278 (28 April 1862). *Tarih-i Lütfi*, 10:65 also cites the year 1278. Therefore the year [12]77 given in the obituary in *Malumat*, no. 42 must be erroneous.

¹⁰Cf. Caffarel for a list of the Ottoman and foreign decorations Derviş had received by 1884.

¹¹*Tarih-i Lütfi*, 10:65 a. 93.

¹²Dr. K., *Erinnerungen*, 183-235.

¹³*Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 187.

arbitration by the Porte. The matter was decided in favor of Ömer Lütfi Paşa.¹⁵ Ömer Lütfi had had the idea that the two armies under the command of Derviş Paşa and Abdülkerim Nadir Paşa should march separately and meet near Danilovgrad. Derviş Paşa managed the difficult task of making his way from Nikšić over the mountains into the Zeta valley in order to join the Ottoman forces coming from İşkodra (Shkodër) – a considerable military success. However, apparently based on information provided by Derviş Paşa – who, after more successful operations, proclaimed the fall of the Montenegrin capital Cetinje imminent – on 14 July 1862, Ömer Paşa sent a telegram to the Porte announcing the victory of the imperial soldiers. The Ottoman army, the telegram stated, would take a short rest before continuing on to Cetinje, which was thought to be only a four hours' march away.¹⁶ In fact, the difficulties of the terrain and the tenacity of the Montenegrin resistance had been grossly underestimated, and the march on Cetinje had to be canceled. This caused considerable disappointment in the Ottoman capital and further alienation between Ömer Lütfi and Derviş Paşa.¹⁷

On 4 August 1863 (1280 S 18) Derviş İbrahim Paşa replaced Hüseyin Hüsnü Paşa as *vali* in Yanya (Ioannina). In February 1864, he became commander of the 4th army in Erzincan.¹⁸ As holder of that position, in the summer of 1865, Derviş Paşa was sent to lead a military force together with Ahmed Cevdet to pacify the Çukurova region and the surrounding mountains of the Kozan district in Cilicia. The aims of the so-called “reforming force” (*Fırka-yi Islahiyye*) included bringing the area under direct government control, introducing conscription and effective taxation, breaking the power of the local ayan, and sedentarizing nomadic tribes.¹⁹ Derviş Paşa received an additional 10,000 Kuruş as payment for this assignment, Ahmed Cevdet an extra 30,000 Kuruş.²⁰ While Derviş Paşa was primarily responsible for the military side of the operation, Cevdet was to supervise the administrative reforms.²¹ Leaving their cholera-stricken troops behind, both men returned to Istanbul in November 1865 without having fully finished their tasks.²²

In January 1866, with the outbreak of disturbances in Mount Lebanon,²³ Derviş was sent to Syria to command the 5th army. In October of the following year we find him *vali* in Diyarbakır.

¹⁵Ibid., 199. That the two commanders were in conflict is also suggested by Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*. Ed. Cavid Baysun (Ankara: TTK, 1991) [tezkire no. 16], 129. Cevdet suggests that Ömer Paşa started to dislike Derviş Paşa because the latter had shown respect for the deposed commander of the 3rd army, Çerkes İsmail Paşa, whom Ömer Lütfi resented because he was an able military leader and a brave soldier: “İsmâil Paşa gayet şecî‘ ve bahâdır ve sahîhen bir ordu kumandasına muktedir bir zât olup Serdâr-ı ekrem öteden beri anı istirkab eylerdi. Hattâ Derviş Paşa kendi terbiyetkerdesi olduğu hâlde İsmâil Paşa ile hoş geçindiğine mebnî bir vakitten beri Derviş Paşa’yı dahi sevmez oldu.”

¹⁶Cevdet, *Tezâkir* [tezkire no. 19], 2: 252.

¹⁷Dr. K., *Erinnerungen*, 217-219 and Cevdet, *Tezâkir* [tezkire no. 19], 2: 253f.

¹⁸BOA: A.MKT.MHM 293/1 (1280 N 11); Sinan Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali (1839–1922)* (Istanbul: Isis, 1999), 16.

¹⁹On this operation cf. Akif Bilge Çelik, “Fırka-yi Islâhiye” Yüksek Lisans Tezi (Kahraman Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi, 2008).

²⁰Çelik, “Fırka-yi Islâhiye,” 89.

²¹Ibid., 91.

²²Ahmed Cevdet, *Ma‘rûzât*. Ed. Yusuf Halaçoğlu (Istanbul: Çağrı, 1980), 171-173.

²³The situation in Mount Lebanon is given as the reason for his transfer to Syria by Cevdet, *Ma‘rûzât*, 177, while in Cevdet, *Tezâkir* [tezkire no. 31], 3: 201, Cevdet writes that the disturbances there had only served as a pretext. In any case, Derviş was replaced by Kurt İsmail Paşa as commander of the *Fırka-yi Islahiyye*.

If we trust the anecdote of his protégé Aşçı Dede İbrahim, we can conclude that Derviş was not happy there: when Namık Paşa stopped in Diyarbakır on his way from Baghdad, where he had been vali, to Istanbul, where he was to serve as *serasker*, Namık promised to make Derviş commander of the 4th army upon reaching the capital.²⁴ Obviously the influential Namık Paşa kept his word, for in April 1868 Derviş took over the command of that army for the second time. It appears that when Namık Paşa was replaced by Hüseyin Avni Paşa as *serasker* in January 1869, however, Derviş fell with him. For three years he was vali in Aleppo until becoming commander of the 3rd army in January 1872. Interestingly, this was during Mahmud Nedim Paşa's first term in the grand vizierate (8 September 1871 – 30 July 1872). As is well known, Mahmud Nedim was at the head of the conservative group of statesmen supporting Abdülaziz and advocating a critical reassessment of the Tanzimat reforms. As will be argued in more detail below, it is likely that Derviş İbrahim Paşa was part of or at least close to this faction of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Derviş was deposed from the command of the 3rd army in June 1873. It may well be more than mere coincidence that this happened after Hüseyin Avni Paşa's reappointment as *serasker*, as the latter was a declared enemy of Derviş Paşa.²⁵

In February 1874, Derviş Paşa became *vali* of Bosna. It was during his term of office that the Bosnian insurrection of 1875 broke out. Late that same summer, he again became commander of the 3rd army, and was in addition appointed *vali* of Manastır.²⁶ During the second grand vizierate of Mahmud Nedim Paşa (26 August 1875 – 11 May 1876), Derviş was summoned to the capital, where he first became commander of the *hassa ordusu*, then *serasker*, then *bahriye nazırı* and finally *serasker* again. In May 1876 when Mütercim Mehmed Rüşdü was appointed Grand Vizier, Derviş Paşa was removed from the capital to take over both the command of the 3rd army and the *valilik* in Manastır.²⁷ It is clear that Derviş was not among the conspirators who carried out the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz on 30 May 1876. On the contrary, he seems to have belonged to the faction of pro-Abdülaziz pashas. There is some evidence that the conspirators feared he would thwart their plan – which is probably why he was appointed to Manastır a few days before the coup.²⁸

During the war of 1877/78 against Tsarist Russia, Derviş Paşa was dispatched to the Caucasian front where he served as commander of the Batum army. While Caffarel dismisses his defense of Batum against Russian troops as a complete failure, other sources are more favorable in their judgement, going so far as to proclaim him the only Ottoman general undefeated in that war.²⁹

²⁴Aşçı İbrahim Dede, *Çok Yönlü Bir Sufinin Gözüyle Son Dönem Osmanlı Hayatı. Aşçı Dede'nin Hatıraları*. Ed. Mustafa Koç & Eyyüp Tanrıverdi. 4 vols. (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2006), 1595: "Namık Paşa merhum Seraskerlikle Bağdat'tan İstanbul'a gider iken Diyarbakır'da Derviş Paşa hazretlerine söz vermiş ki İstanbul'a gittiğim anda sizi Dördüncü Orduya müşir ederim. Binaenaleyh öyle oldu."

²⁵The enmity between the two men is mentioned both in Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, 4 [tezkire no. 40], 147 and Aşçı Dede, *Hatıraları*, 526.

²⁶He was appointed on 23 August 1875 and remained in this office only one month and seven days; cf. Bernard Lory, *La ville balkanissime Bitola 1800-1918* (Istanbul: Isis, 2011), 820.

²⁷Appointed 8 June 1876; Lory, *La ville balkanissime*, 821.

²⁸Cf. Cevdet, *Ma'rûzât*, 229; Mahmud Celaleddin, *Mirat-i Hakikat*, 3 vols. (Istanbul: Matbaa-i osmaniyye, 1326-1327), 1: 106 and BOA: İ.DH 723/50426, dated 02 Ca 1293, corresponding to 26 May 1876.

²⁹EI², Tekindağ; William A.D. Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields. A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 215, referring to Tekindağ.

After 1878, Derviş İbrahim continued his military career as commander of the 4th army in Erzurum, and then returned to Istanbul where he served first as a member of the general staff and later as commander of the 1st army. In the early 1880s, he was entrusted with two sensitive diplomatic missions. The first, in 1880, led him to Albania, where he succeeded in the peaceful settlement of the border conflict between Montenegro and Albania. From 1880 to 1882 he was governor of Selanik before being sent to Egypt by the Sultan during the crisis of 1881/82. The mission aimed at inviting Urabi to Istanbul in order to forestall foreign intervention and keep the khedive under Ottoman control. Derviş Paşa arrived in Egypt on 7 June 1882. However, his conciliatory politics ultimately failed; Urabi proved uncompromising and the British finally decided on military intervention.³⁰ In the later days of the Hamidian regime, Derviş Paşa enjoyed the status of a *yaver-i ekrem* and senior advisor to the Sultan and bore the title of extraordinary commander of Rumelia (*Rumeli-yi şahane fevkalade kumandanı*). He died of tuberculosis on 10 Muharrem 1314 (21 June 1896)³¹ and was buried in the *türbe* of Sultan Mahmud II.

On the Characterization of Derviş Paşa by the French Military Attaché Ernest Caffarel

The archives of the French Service National de la Défense (SND) in Vincennes/Paris contain, among a variety of other documents, the regular reports sent by French military attachés to the Foreign Ministry in Paris. From 1884 to 1888, Ernest Caffarel held the post of the French military attaché to the Ottoman Empire.³² Based in Istanbul, he was to inform his superiors on the state of the Ottoman army, trace the movement of troops and keep an eye on the military reform efforts undertaken by the Ottoman government.

During his first year in office, Caffarel assembled biographical information on several of the more prominent Ottoman military figures of his day. He chose to report on Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, Derviş İbrahim Paşa, Edhem Paşa, Mehmed İzzet Paşa and Hüseyin Hüsnü Paşa. All these pashas were associated with the commission set up by Abdülhamid in 1879 to facilitate the reorganization and modernization of the Ottoman army. At the time of Caffarel's writing, this commission, presided over by Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, was in the process of evaluating the suggestions for military reform made by the German military mission under lieutenant general Otto Kähler (1830-1885).³³ Aware that the activities of the German military mission meant a potential loss of influence on the part of the French, Caffarel and his government had every reason to be interested in the men involved in the commission.

The five reports written by Caffarel and sent to Paris are today preserved in the archive of the

³⁰Cf. Selim Deringil, "The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis of 1881-82," *Middle Eastern Studies* 24.1 (Jan. 1988), 3-24.

³¹Aşçı İbrahim Dede, *Hatıraları*, 905. The year 1310 given in SO, 4: 854f is erroneous, while the day and month correspond to Aşçı Dede's.

³²Paul Dumont, "Les Provinces arabes de l'empire Ottoman sous le règne d'Abdulhamid II vues par les attachés militaires français," in *La vie économique des provinces arabes et leurs sources documentaires à l'époque ottomane* (Paris: CNRS, 1986), 177-202.

³³Jehuda L. Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1976).

SND;³⁴ each contains between 500 and 1700 words. In addition to chronological and factual information, Caffarel's reports occasionally include remarks on the financial circumstances and personal situations of the various pashas. He also assesses the public perception of the pashas in question. How did Caffarel obtain his information, and how reliable is it? Military attachés in the Ottoman Empire gathered information in a number of different ways, including scanning the local press and official government publications or traveling through the provinces. Above all, though, they relied on the intelligence provided by a network of personal contacts in government offices and in the military.³⁵ Sometimes the military attachés' sources of information appear to have been rather trivial: Caffarel adorned four of his five reports with portrait photographs sold publicly in Istanbul at the time.³⁶ As no portrait of Hüseyin Hüsnü Paşa was available in the markets, none was included. That these sources of information and the resulting military attachés' reports were by no means immune to being both ill-informed and biased is underlined in the memoirs of Baron von Giesl, himself a former Austrian military attaché in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century.³⁷ Yet despite many inaccuracies and errors, Caffarel's reports still contain some valuable information. One should, however, take the time to put some of his cliché-ridden generalizations to the test.

Caffarel describes Derviş İbrahim as a typical example of the traditional Turkish pasha – cruel, fanatic, treacherous and rapacious but at the same time respected and even loved by his soldiers. According to Caffarel, there was general agreement that he was an “old fox” (*vieux renard*). Much in the tone of Caffarel's characterization of Derviş Paşa is irritating for historians striving to overcome and to look past the biased and anti-Turkish imagery that dominates European accounts of the late Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, if we read the attributes “fanatic” and “rapacious” not as offensive insults but as codes describing political attitudes and social conduct, we find that these descriptions constitute judgmental interpretations of certain established facts.

The term “fanatic” was a denunciatory description used by many Europeans for Ottoman dignitaries who defended an ideology and political practice that opposed European intervention and the political participation of non-Muslim Ottomans, insisting on the supremacy of Muslims as the empire's ruling group (*millet-i hakime*). Far from existing on a purely personal level, these ideas possessed social and institutional bases. One of them was the Khalidiyya-Mujaddidiyya order, which was founded by Shaykh Khālid (1776-1827) and existed throughout the Ottoman Empire.³⁸ As a branch of the Naqshbandiyya, the order was known not only for its affinity to

³⁴Cf. SHAT, série 7N 1628, Attachés Militaires, Turquie, 1882-1884, annexes au N°31, 19.08.1884 for Ahmed Muhtar Paşa and Edhem Paşa; annexe au N°32, 26.08.1884 for Derviş İbrahim Paşa and annexes au N°44, 30.12.1884 for Mehmed İzzet Paşa and Hüseyin Hüsnü Paşa.

³⁵Dumont, “Les Provinces arabes”, 193.

³⁶The photographs were taken and sold by the court photographer Vasilaki Kargopoulo, who had his studio in Pera, Place du Tunnel no. 4. On Kargopoulo cf. Bahattin Öztuncay, *Vasilaki Kargopoulo: Photographer to His Majesty the Sultan* (Istanbul: Eren, 2000). The portrait of Derviş Paşa used by Caffarel can be found in *ibid.*, 160. A clipping of it is used in Gövsa, *Türk Meşhurları*, 93. The photo in *Malumat* 42 is not the same, probably showing the general at a later date.

³⁷Waldimir Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte im Nahen Orient. Aufzeichnungen des Generals der Kavallerie Baron Wladimir Giesl*. Ed. Generalmajor Ritter v. Steinitz (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1927), 17.

³⁸For its expansion in Anatolia s. Abdurrahman Memiş, *Hâlidî Bağdadî ve Anadolu'da Hâlidîcilik* (Istanbul: Kitabevi,

the orthodox brand of ulema Islam and for its pro-Ottoman stance, but also for its distinctly hostile attitude towards non-Muslims.³⁹ The *dhikr* of the Khalidiyya was not open to public, a novelty introduced by Shaykh Khālid.⁴⁰ The prayer the shaykh required at the end of the *dhikr* runs as follows:

“God protect our master the venerable and dignified Sultan, support him with the invisible armies and assist him in defending the land of Islam. Grant him capable offspring to ever follow him for many generations. Award his armies victory on the land and in the sea and lead aright his ministers, assistants and delegates. Make them the cause of the upbuilding of the country and the tranquility of the people. Revive through him and through them the exalted and noble sunna, and elevate through him and through them the Prophet’s radiant minaret of the shari‘a. Bring failure upon his enemies, since his enemy is the enemy of the Muslim religion. [Destroy the Jews, the Christians, the Zoroastrians (*majūs*) and the Persian Shi‘is (*rawāfiḍ al-a‘ājim*)]. Devastate the innovating heretics and the accursed Khawārij. Eradicate them one after the other and bring security and health to us and to your servants, the pilgrims, the warriors, those staying in their place and those traveling, those living in your land and your sea among the community of Muḥammad, God bless and save him and all his family and Companions. Praise be to God, the lord of the worlds.”⁴¹

We know from the comprehensive autobiography by the Ottoman official and dervish Aşçı İbrahim Dede that Derviş İbrahim Paşa was a close follower of the Khalidi shaykh Erzincanlı Fehmi Efendi.⁴² We may therefore assume that the political ideas of Derviş Paşa were in tune

2000).

³⁹Cf. Hamid Algar, “A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order,” in *Naqshbandis. Cheminements et situation actuelle d’un ordre mystique musulman*, ed. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul: Isis, 1985), 30; Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century,” *Die Welt des Islams* 22 (1982), 12-17 and Itzhak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity. Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2001), 45-55.

⁴⁰Called the “closing of the door” (ğalq or iğlāq al-bāb), cf. Weismann, *Taste of Modernity*, 40.

⁴¹Quoted here in the translation of Weismann, *Taste of Modernity*, 52. The sentence in square brackets was left out in a printed collection of letters from Khālid to his khalifas and adherents edited by As‘ad aş-Şāhib (ed.): *Buğyat al-wāğid fī maktūbāt mawlānā Ḥālīd* (Damascus 1334), but was found by Butrus Abu-Manneh in the original manuscript stored in the Süleymaniyye Library in Istanbul. Abu-Manneh identifies the original Arabic expression translated by Weismann as “destroy” as ahlik (2nd. pers. sg. imp. of stem IV of halaka), which he chooses to render as “annihilate.” Cf. Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya,” 15.

⁴²Marie Luise Bremer, *Die Memoiren des türkischen Derwischs Aşçı Dede İbrāhīm* (Walldorf-Hessen: Verlag für Orientkunde, 1959), 36f; Marie Luise van Ess-Bremer, “Fehmī, Sheykh,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs, 2nd ed. (Leiden etc.: Brill, 1964), 2: 878; Carter Vaughn Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom. A Social History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), 125, 283f. According to Aşçı Dede İbrahim, Fehmi Efendi was born in 1231 (beg. 3 December 1815) and died 30 M 1298 (2 January 1881) during his third pilgrimage to Mecca. He was a khalifa of Abdülvehhab Vehbi ül-Erzurumi ül-Erzincani (d. 1848), known as Terzi Baba, who was a khalifa of Mevlana Halid; cf. Aşçı İbrahim Dede, *Hatıraları*, 332f; Bremer, *Memoiren*, 237. The memoirs of Aşçı Dede İbrahim contain much detailed information about Fehmi Efendi, who is portrayed from the perspective of a dedicated follower. Fehmi Efendi’s son, Ahmed Fevzi Efendi (1861-1924), followed his father as postnişin, took part in the congresses of Erzurum and Sivas and became member of the TBMM for his hometown Erzincan. Cf. http://www.erzincan.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=826&Itemid=109, (accessed 7 November 2011).

with the anti-Christian and anti-European outlook of Shaykh Khālid. Josef Koetschet, the aforementioned physician of Ömer Lütfi Paşa, who met Derviş Paşa personally but obviously disliked him, spoke of him as a “known enemy of the Christians” (*bekannter Christenfeind*).⁴³

Ziya Şakir’s description of Derviş adds an interesting nuance to that picture. While stating that he tended toward gross superstitious beliefs (*kaba ve batıl itikatlara mütemayil*) and was outwardly a fanatic who performed his religious duties with the utmost punctiliousness (*hariçte taassup ve dindarlığın en koyu sofuluklarını gösteren Paşa*), Şakir adds that Derviş Paşa enjoyed looking at the monumental paintings hung in his splendidly decorated *konak*, which depicted battle scenes from the wars in which Derviş Paşa had fought.⁴⁴

Having explained what appeared to some contemporary observers as Derviş Paşa’s “fanaticism” and hostility towards Christians with reference to his ideological orientation and adherence to the Khalidiyya-Mujaddidiyya order, we will now show his alleged rapaciousness to be a depreciatory description of his social conduct in matters of property.⁴⁵

In his *Formation of the Modern State*, Rifaat Abou-El-Haj made the pointed statement that corruption in the modern nation-state should not be conflated with practices of appropriation prevalent in the pre-modern Ottoman Empire, where “those members of the ruling class who were in power appropriated whatever wealth they could, without any sense of corruption or greed, but rather out of a sense of entitlement. [...] The notion that these Ottoman practices are an indication of corruption stems from the modern assumption that the public interest is separate from the individual interest of the dominant members of the ruling class. [...] There is, however, a corollary that can best be described as *noblesse oblige*. Individual grandees committed their individual talents and private wealth (and/or that of their households) to public service.”⁴⁶

Given the process of modernization and the resulting “cultural bifurcation” (Niyazi Berkes) in the late Ottoman Empire, we can expect a continuum of individual social conduct spanning between the ideal types of the modern and the traditional.⁴⁷ Caffarel’s description of Derviş Paşa as rapacious and as a typical representative of the old-style Ottoman pasha can be understood in our terms as referring to traditional social behavior. It may be argued that this kind of traditional social conduct on the part of a member of the Ottoman ruling elite had come

⁴³*Aus Bosniens letzter Türkenzeit. Hinterlassene Aufzeichnungen von Med. Univ. Dr. Josef Koetschet*, ed. Georg Grassl (Vienna – Leipzig: A. Hartleben, 1905), 1.

⁴⁴Ziya Şakir, *Bizi İdare Edenler*, 1:189-190.

⁴⁵It should be emphasized that the characterizations “fanaticism” and “rapaciousness” were not necessarily coupled. Thus, the famous serasker Namık Paşa, termed a “fanatic” by almost all contemporary European observers, was usually not regarded as “rapacious.” Cf. Christoph Herzog, “Corruption and the Limits of the State in the Ottoman Province of Baghdad during the 19th Century,” *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (Spring 2003), 38.

⁴⁶Rifaat ‘Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State. The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 56f.

⁴⁷We are aware of but cannot discuss here a possible pitfall of our argumentation: much of what has been presented as traditional during the 19th century were in fact “invented traditions.” Additionally, in terms of ideology, much of what would appear to be “traditional” political thought might be in fact be the conscious outcome of a conservative reaction to the challenges of modernity.

in conflict not only with the political standards of certain European observers, but with the aspirations of the modernizing Ottoman state and its advocates.

The aforementioned Josef Koetschet claimed that Derviş Paşa's considerable wealth originated from the embezzlement of financial resources intended for the maintenance of the Ottoman military in Herzegovina, which, according to the physician, amounted in 1861 to approximately 14,000 men. While Koetschet insisted that the pasha was the chief culprit and main beneficiary of the embezzlement, he indicated that both the purveyors of the army (Pasko Svilokosi in Dubrovnik and Okulić & Cie. in Mostar) and the majors were involved in these sorts of activities as well.⁴⁸ Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, too, suggested in the first volume of his memoirs (unpublished in his lifetime) that Derviş Paşa used funds from the army for his personal enrichment.⁴⁹ Some support for this can be found in Ahmed Cevdet's notes, despite the fact that the great historian, who like Derviş Paşa originated from Lofça, mostly took the side of his fellow countryman. The trouble in Bosnia had started with a comparatively small insurrection in the Herzegovinian district of Nevesinje, which then spread and soon spiraled out of control.⁵⁰ Ahmed Cevdet claimed that the military commanders in Bosnia blamed Derviş İbrahim Paşa's extortions for the insurrection – an idea Caffarel cited based on hearsay, as well.⁵¹ According to Cevdet, Derviş Paşa telegraphed the Porte to ask for military assistance, but the Grand Vizier Hüseyin Avni Paşa, an enemy of Derviş, ignored his request. When Hüseyin Avni Paşa was deposed as grand vizier on 25 April 1875, his successor Esad Paşa rejected the advice of Gazi Osman Paşa (who had been commander of the Ottoman forces in Bosnia but was transferred to Anatolia after falling out with Derviş Paşa) to remove Derviş Paşa from his post as *vali* in order to calm down the insurgents.⁵² Framing the issue somewhat differently, Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa attributed Esad Paşa's hesitation to use force against the insurgents to his concern that the revolt might lead to another international crisis. On the other hand, he refers to "credible accounts" reporting that Derviş İbrahim Paşa had been at loggerheads with the Grand Vizier Esad Paşa and did not get on well with the *serasker* Ali Saib Paşa. Both men refused to send him the requested troops because, as they declared in the council of ministers, the *vali* only wanted the soldiers so that he could pocket the money.⁵³

According to Ziya Şakir, Derviş Paşa's "weaknesses were riches and fortune (*ikbal ve servet*)."

⁴⁸Dr. K., *Erinnerungen*, 154f.

⁴⁹Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, *Anılar. Sergüzeşt-i Hayatım'ın Cild-i Evveli* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1996), 92.

⁵⁰For details on the Bosnian-Herzegovinian revolt of 1875 by contemporary European observers cf. G. Muir Mackenzie and A. P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 5th ed. (London: Daldy, Isbister & Co, 1877), 1: 24-53, Arthur J. Evans, *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot During the Insurrection, August and September 1875 [...]*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1877); James Baker, *Turkey in Europe*, 2nd ed. (London - Paris - New York: Casell, Petter & Galpin, 1877), 219-223; Koetschet, *Aus Bosniens letzter Türkenzeit*. For an Ottoman account s. Celaleddin, *Mirat-i Hakikat*, 1: 43-52.

⁵¹"Il était gouverneur militaire de Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, lorsque éclata l'insurrection de 1875 à laquelle, dit on, ses exactions ne furent point étrangères."

⁵²Cf. Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, 4 [tezkire no. 40]: 147f and Cevdet, *Ma'rûzât*, 224. On the background of their conflict s. Koetschet, *Aus Bosniens letzter Türkenzeit*, 3f. According to Koetschet, Osman Paşa resented Derviş Paşa's dubious financial practices, which he reported to the relevant authorities. At the same time, he demanded he be transferred to another post, as he was unable to serve under Derviş Paşa.

⁵³Celaleddin, *Mirat-i Hakikat*, 1:44f.

The pasha, he wrote, showed remarkable skill and perseverance in obtaining these.⁵⁴ Caffarel portrayed Derviş İbrahim as an exceptionally rich man⁵⁵ who owned property in Bulgaria, Albania and Syria. Through the memoirs of his protégé Aşçı Dede İbrahim we know that Derviş Paşa's property in Syria consisted mainly of a *çiftlik* in the fertile Beqaa valley in today's Lebanon. From 1872 to 1875 Aşçı Dede İbrahim acted as its administrator, but with mixed success. For instance, he lost a court case against a local notable, Abdullah Nablusi, who claimed a considerable portion of the *çiftlik*'s land.⁵⁶ Derviş Paşa would later claim that the financial loss caused by his administrator amounted to several hundred thousand Kuruş.⁵⁷ According to Caffarel, another source of the pasha's wealth consisted of the bribes he received in exchange for procuring access to the palace for European traders seeking licenses and concessions. It has also been claimed that Derviş received a portion of the money his protégé Mehmed Faik Paşa himself extorted while *vali* of Manastır (1889 – 1895) in return for having lobbied the Sultan on behalf of Mehmed Faik, whose office had been threatened by the complaints of European consuls and the Christian inhabitants of the town.⁵⁸

In Istanbul, Derviş Paşa resided in Yüksek Kaldırım in an extraordinarily luxurious konak surrounded by a garden.⁵⁹ He also owned a summer residence in Ortaköy on the Bosphorus, which had previously been in the possession of the serasker Gürcü Ali Saib Paşa (d. 1891).⁶⁰ In addition, Derviş Paşa may have possessed houses in several of the provincial capitals where he was sent on duty. For instance, he is known to have bought a house in Damascus in the quarter of Sûq Şârûjâ.⁶¹

We do not know how much wealth Derviş Paşa invested in charitable affairs. However, Aşçı Dede's memoirs mention two instances in Erzincan in which Derviş Paşa disbursed significant sums of money for religious buildings. In 1864 he ordered the building of a dervish convent for the Khalidiyya order. According to Aşçı Dede, the total costs for the commission amounted to 73,000 Kuruş, of which Derviş Paşa paid 16,000 Kuruş and Shaykh Fehmi 20,000 Kuruş. The rest of the money seems to have been obtained through donations by Ottoman military officials, bureaucrats and local notables.⁶² The second instance of Derviş Paşa's public spending as narrated by Aşçı Dede resulted from a conflict between the pasha and his *pir* Fehmi Efendi. According to Aşçı Dede, in 1868 a dervish named Sıddık Hoca addressed the mounting tensions between Christians and Muslims in Erzincan in a sermon in the city's great mosque. Some Christians complained about this to the *mutasarrıf* Ali Paşa, who, without having investigated

⁵⁴Ziya Şakir, *Bizi İdare Edenler*, 1:188.

⁵⁵Süreyya in *SO*, 4: 855 also makes a point of characterizing Derviş İbrahim as a "rich and lucky man" (*zî servet ve sahib-i tecelli*).

⁵⁶Aşçı Dede, *Hatıraları*, 529, 537.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 904.

⁵⁸Lory, *La ville balkanissime*, 435 and 453.

⁵⁹Cf. Ziya Şakir, *Bizi İdare Edenler*, 1: 189-190.

⁶⁰Aşçı Dede, *Hatıraları*, 1031, 1287, 1292, 1455. "[...] merhum Serasker Ali Saib Paşa'nın sahilhanesi olup içindeki eşaysıyla beraber bâ-irâde-i seniyye Derviş Paşa hazretlerine ihsan olunmuş idi," *ibid.*, 798.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 538; on the quarter cf. 'Abd al-Razzaq Moaz: "The Urban Fabric of an Extramural Quarter in 19th-Century Damascus," in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation. Bilâd al-Shâm from the 18th to the 29th Century*, ed. Thomas Philipp & Birgit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 165-183.

⁶²Cf. Aşçı Dede, *Hatıraları*, 477-493.

the issue, notified Derviş Paşa. The latter had Siddık arrested, causing an outcry in the Sunni community of the town. When the news reached Shaykh Fehmi, he immediately rushed to Derviş – then commander of the 4th army – and reproached him. Although Derviş Paşa had Siddık Hoca released on the spot, Shaykh Fehmi remained unreconciled and retired to the great mosque for meditation. Derviş Paşa sent Aşçı Dede to mediate but with little success. In the end, Derviş Paşa vowed to build a mosque across from the barracks, but was deposed from his post in Erzincan before it was completed.⁶³ Yet Derviş Paşa’s social commitment must have gone beyond these two projects related by Aşçı Dede. The same source informs us that the pasha cleared his protégé’s debts of 10,000 Kuruş – though not, it seems, without expecting something in return.⁶⁴ In any case, if we trust the information given by Aşçı Dede, we have at least an indication that the balance of appropriation and donation formulated by Abou-El-Haj is applicable in the case of Derviş İbrahim Paşa, and that the pasha’s alleged “rapaciousness” expresses a one-sided and distorted but, if amended, basically correct observation of his social conduct concerning property.

However, it should be pointed out that while Caffarel’s classification of Derviş as the old-school Ottoman pasha has its merits, it also has its limits. Caffarel claimed that Derviş Paşa spoke no language other than Turkish. In making this assertion, however, the French military attaché may have fallen prey to his own preconception of a typical “traditional Turkish Pasha.”⁶⁵ If Derviş was of Pomak origin,⁶⁶ he probably would have known Bulgarian. It is also well possible that Derviş knew Arabic or even some Persian, as these languages were part of the traditional Ottoman curriculum. Derviş would certainly have had the opportunity to learn these languages in Lofça, as the city – according to Fatma Aliye – was amongst the Ottoman provincial towns where education facilities were particularly good. Aliye reports that Derviş İbrahim and Ahmed Midhat attended the same school in Lofça as her father Ahmed Cevdet. The school seems to have offered both primary and secondary education.⁶⁷ Finally, according to at least one account – by the Austrian military attaché Wladimir Giesl von Gieslingen – Derviş Paşa knew enough French to hold a conversation at an official reception.⁶⁸

At the time of Caffarel’s report, Derviş Paşa had only one wife. The couple had two sons, Ahmed and Halid, then in their twenties and at the beginning of promising military careers. According to Caffarel, Derviş İbrahim’s two other sons had died in the 1862 campaign in Montenegro. In 1889 Derviş Paşa’s son Halid Ali Paşa (1860-1948)⁶⁹ married Nazime Sultan (1866-1947), one of the daughters of Sultan Abdülaziz.⁷⁰ Halid Paşa seems to have been affiliated with

⁶³Ibid., 513f.

⁶⁴Ibid., 524f.

⁶⁵Cf. Olivier Bouquet, *Les pachas du sultan. Essai sur les agents supérieurs de l’État ottoman (1839-1909)* (Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2007), 19.

⁶⁶Cf. Lory, *La ville balkanissime*, 409.

⁶⁷Fatma Aliye, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve Zamanı* (Istanbul: Kanaat Matbaası, 1332), 9.

⁶⁸Wladimir Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, 116. It should be noted, however, that Giesl’s memoirs are often unreliable, and he may well have been mistaken in recollecting such a conversation.

⁶⁹On him cf. Kunalp, *Erkân*, 74.

⁷⁰Cf. M. Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, 4th ed. (Ankara: TTK, 2001), 164f and Cevdet Kırpık, *Haremın Son Yüzyıllı. Sultan ve Damatlar* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2012), 105, 166. In 1924, Halid Ali and Nazime were exiled with most of the other members of the dynasty; cf. their names (nos. 172 and 173) in the list given in

the Naqshbandiyya shaykh Erbili Muhammed Esad Efendi.⁷¹

In his discussion of the 1862 Montenegro campaign, Caffarel accuses Derviş Paşa of having shown extraordinary cruelty towards the local population, including brutally executing two hundred prisoners, burning down villages, cutting down fruit trees and destroying harvests. Indeed, most of this was common practice at the time. A systematic scorched earth policy was applied by the Ottoman troops during the Montenegrin war. In his telegram to the Porte, rendered in Cevdet's *Tezâkir*, Ömer Lütü Paşa informed the authorities in Istanbul that the armies of both Derviş and Abdi Paşa had destroyed and burned all the villages in Montenegro that were within their reach.⁷² This is confirmed by Koetschet, who noted that Ottoman troops had completely and systematically ruined the densely populated and fertile Bjelopavlići plain (the Zeta valley) in the way indicated by Caffarel. Koetschet adds that this was a "bloody war without prisoners" – presumably on both sides.

It would appear that Caffarel's information – received directly or via informants – was at the same time highly accurate and inaccurate. While his chronology of the pasha's career appears heavily flawed and grossly unreliable, his characterization of the man contains statements that can be substantiated by cross-referencing other sources as well as valuable information not found elsewhere.

On the Characterization of Derviş Paşa by Aşçı Dede İbrahim

As has been mentioned above, the memoirs of Aşçı Dede İbrahim constitute an invaluable source for the biography of Derviş Paşa. It should be noted, however, that they are no less problematic than the report of the French military attaché, albeit for different reasons.⁷³ Carter Findley, who has analyzed the patronage relationship (*intisab*) between Aşçı Dede and Derviş Paşa,⁷⁴ spoke of İbrahim's world – using Michael Gilsean's expression – as a "tangled magic garden."⁷⁵ While this is certainly the overall impression a modern reader will gain from Aşçı

Oğuz Aytepe, "Yeni Belgelerin Işığında Halifeliğin Kaldırılması ve Hanedan Üyelerin Yurtdışına Çıkarılmaları," *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Mayıs-Kasım 2002, 15-29, here 28. According to Ömer Faruk Yılmaz, "Babamın Katledişini Gördüm," *Yediküta Dergisi* 38 (Ekim 2011), 18-31, Nazime died in Juniyah near Beirut in 1947.

⁷¹Osmânzâde Hüseyin Vassâf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, ed. Mehmet Akkuş, Ali Yılmaz. 5 vols. (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2006), 2:348.

⁷²Cevdet, *Tezâkir* [tezkire no. 19], 2:252: "Derviş Paşa bir taraftan ve Abdi Paşa bir taraftan tek mil Karadağ köyleri yakılıp yıkılmıştır."

⁷³His memoirs have been analyzed by Bremer, *Memoiren* and Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 179-187. For more reflections on Aşçı Dede and his memoirs cf. the articles by Richard Wittmann, "Französische Hemden, österreichische Dampfschiffe und deutsche Lokomotiven: Fremde Dinge in der Selbstverortung des islamischen Mystikers Aşçı Dede İbrahim," in *Selbstzeugnis und Person. Transkulturelle Perspektiven*, ed. H. Medick, A. Schaser and C. Ulbrich (Cologne – Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2012) and id., "Fine feathers make fine birds': Aşçı Dede İbrahim and his 'chemise à la mode française,'" in *Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives*, ed. Richard Wittmann and Claudia Ulbrich (Würzburg: Ergon, 2012).

⁷⁴Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 282-290.

⁷⁵Ibid., 179 and id., "Social Dimensions of Dervish Life as Seen in the Memoirs of Aşçı Dede İbrahim Halil," in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, ed. Raymond Lifchez (Berkeley: Univ. of

Dede's memoirs, they also contain considerable local knowledge and details on daily life that have little or nothing to do with the mystical or magical dimensions of his thought. Though Aşçı Dede's narrative does not provide a biographical sketch or straightforward characterization of Derviş as such, his frequent mentions of the man offer a perspective on him that has rarely been recorded and that has completely escaped the attention of almost all European observers like Caffarel. Aşçı Dede declared explicitly and unequivocally that he did not intend to offer a biographical sketch of Derviş Paşa in his account of a conversation the two had shortly before the pasha's death. When Aşçı Dede asked whether he might take down some notes on the pasha's life,

“The deceased pasha answered: ‘My son, I have been involved in many activities, always to please God. What need is there to compile them and sell them to the people? What is done for God remains best hidden and kept for Him.’” Aşçı Dede comments, “That is so. This miserable sinner [speaking of himself (C.H.)] knows most of the things the deceased pasha has done for God. Again, it shall be kept hidden in the breast of Aşçı Dede [...].”⁷⁶

Faced with this declaration, there is little point in theorizing about Aşçı Dede's alleged failure in painting a coherent picture of his benefactor. There is no such coherent narrative, and not only was there no intention to deliver one, but there was a clear commitment to refrain from doing so out of respect for the request of the deceased. Nevertheless, we may still use Aşçı Dede's memoirs as a historical source for Derviş Paşa's life. In his memoirs, Aşçı Dede shows confidence that Derviş Paşa will enter paradise. He also maintains that in addition to tuberculosis, it was what he perceived as Armenian treason and mutiny that so weakened the pasha at the end of his life. Aşçı Dede validates these feelings of hatred when he compares the pasha to a chained lion, derided and taunted by rats until he becomes furious. “This,” he writes, “was the deceased pasha's state of mind. He was so infuriated by this *millet* that if he had been able to, he would have torn the Armenian *millet* by the root and removed them from this soil (*Ermeni milletinin kökü bu zeminden kaldırır idi*).”⁷⁷ He adds, quoting Fehmi Efendi, that the deceased pasha was not loved by many because he was a friend of the friends of Islam and an enemy of the enemy of this religion and that he was also “the greatest enemy of those who were religious hypocrites and desired to remove them from this earth (*münâfikîn zümresine adüvv-i ekber olup bunların vücutlarını dünyadan kaldırmak ister idi*).”⁷⁸ This rather militant strain of Derviş Paşa's belief is also reflected in the fact that, according to Aşçı Dede, Derviş Paşa named his eldest son Halid after Khālid ibn Walid, who was not only one of the Prophet's companions but also one of the most famous and successful of the early Islamic generals. Derviş Paşa had prayed for a son at Khālid's tomb, vowing that he would name him after the general.⁷⁹ On the advice of Shaykh Fehmi Efendi, Derviş's son Halid was educated at home rather than at school, allowing him to focus on religious instruction until he was about twenty years old.⁸⁰ Aşçı Dede

California Press, 1992), 175.

⁷⁶Aşçı Dede, *Hatıraları*, 915.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 914.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 915f.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 916.

sums up the successful career of Derviş Paşa in his account of a dream the latter once related to him. In his dream, Derviş was in the building of the Bab-i Ali together with Fuad Paşa and a girl, whom the dreamer surmised to be Fuad's daughter. Fuad Paşa demanded that she kiss the hem of Derviş's garments, which she did only after he had repeated the order several times. Aşçı Dede offered the interpretation that Derviş would once reach the supreme position now held by Fuad and adds – from the perspective of hindsight – that twenty years later Derviş in fact did achieve such a relationship with the Sultan, who never refuted his wishes or rejected his advice.⁸¹ It should be remarked, however, that in contrast to Fuad, Derviş Paşa was never entrusted with the position of Grand Vizier. Even if he had been, given the changes in the workings of the Ottoman political system under Abdülhamid, it would not have meant the same thing.

Appendix: Transcript of Ernest Caffarel's Report on Derviş Paşa

Ambassade de France près de la Porte Ottomane

Service de l'attaché militaire

annexe au rapport n° 32⁸²

Dervich pacha,

Muchir, aide de camp général de S.M. le Sultan, membre de la Commission d'Inspection et de réorganisation de l'armée.

Dervich pacha est né en 1819, à Loftcha en Bulgarie; il a aujourd'hui 65 ans.

Il entra en 1836, comme sous officier, (chaouch du palais) dans l'armée ottomane et, sans avoir jamais suivi les cours d'aucune école militaire, il obtint un avancement si rapide, que, en 1862, ayant à peine 26 ans de services et 43 ans d'âge, il était nommé Muchir (maréchal).

Presque au début de sa carrière, Dervich eut la bonne fortune d'être distingué par Omer pacha, qui fit de lui son aide de camp et le protégea très activement par la suite.

En 1852, il accompagne son général, dans une première campagne contre le Monténégro.

Déjà colonel et commandant d'un régiment d'infanterie, il reste inactif, à Eupatoria, pendant toute la guerre de Crimée.

En 1861, sous les ordres d'Omer pacha, il prend part à une nouvelle campagne contre les Monténégrins.

L'année suivante il est nommé férik et il reçoit le commandement d'un des trois corps d'armée, qui devaient envahir à la fois ce malheureux pays. Les deux autres corps avaient pour chefs Abdi pacha et Husseïn Avni pacha. Dervich se montra bien supérieur à ses deux collègues. Par

⁸¹Ibid., 905.

⁸²Service historique de l'armée de terre (SHAT): 7N 1628, attachés militaires, Turquie 1882-1884, annexe au No. 32 (26 August 1884), Caffarel.

une habile manœuvre il tourne les défilés de Duga, pénètre sous Ostrog, bat les Monténégrins à Golia et à Ara (?) Louka et les oblige à la retraite.

Pensant les réduire par la terreur, il fait empaler 200 prisonniers, il fait incendier les villages, brûler les moissons, et couper les arbres fruitiers; mais sa cruauté ne sert qu'à surexciter le patriotisme de ses adversaires.

Battu à son tour, deux fois de suite, il est obligé de se replier vers la Moratscha.

Bientôt après les Turcs, reprenant l'offensive, écrasèrent à Riéka la petite armée de Mirko, et menaçaient Tsettinje. On sait que l'intervention de l'Autriche mit fin à la guerre.

Dervich rapporta de cette campagne le grade de Muchir; il y perdit deux fils, qui restèrent sur le champ de bataille.

Nommé commandant du 5e corps en Syrie, il quitte Damas, au bout de 2 ans, pour aller réprimer un soulèvement, qui avait éclaté sur le plateau de Kozandagh, dans la province de Dersin (Anatolie).

Il commande ensuite successivement le 4e, le 2e et le 6e corps d'armée.

En 1872, il fut, pendant 6 mois, Ministre de la Guerre.

Il était gouverneur militaire de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, lorsque éclata l'insurrection de 1875 à laquelle, dit-on, ses exactions ne furent point étrangères. Il demandait à prendre des mesures de vigueur cruellement énergique, qui l'auraient peut-être étouffée, dès le principe. Le grand vézir Mahmud Neddin pacha (surnommé Mahmoudoff à cause de ses tendances Moscovites), ne voulut pas y consentir et le remplaça immédiatement par Moukhtar pacha.

Lors du dernier conflit Turco Russe, Dervich pacha était à la tête du 3e corps d'armée, à Monastir. On l'envoya commander l'aile gauche de l'armée, sur la frontière du Caucase.

Il ne se montra pas, cette fois, à la hauteur de sa réputation. Au lieu de tenir la campagne, ou de céder à Moukhtar pacha, qui supportait à lui seul tout l'effort des Russes, une partie de ses troupes, il s'enferma dans Batoum avec 45 bataillons, et passa toute la durée de la guerre à livrer, troupes d'investissement, des escarmouches insignifiantes, que ses rapports mensongers transformaient en autant de batailles rangées.

Après la campagne, il resta à Erzinghian, commandant du IVe corps d'armée; il revient ensuite à Constantinople, remplir les fonctions de chef d'Etat Major général du Ministre de la Guerre, et prendre, un peu plus tard, le commandement du 1er corps d'armée.

Dervich, ayant commandé les 6 premiers corps d'armée, connaît ainsi toutes les provinces de l'Empire, sauf le Yémen.

Autre les commandements que je viens d'indiquer, Dervich a eu à remplir de hautes missions politiques et militaires.

Pendant l'année 1880, il fut envoyé en Albanie, avec le titre de Serdar Ekrem (généralissime) de toutes les troupes ottomanes d'Europe, pour remettre Dulcigno aux Monténégrins et désarmer

les ligues Albanaises, que le gouvernement central avait organisées, lui même, contre l'Autriche et contre la Grèce.

Aussitôt après la remise de la ville, il partit pour l'Albanie du Nord, où Méhement Ali pacha venait d'être assassiné, battit les Arnaoutes, à Ipek et à Djakova, et pacifia la province.

Il réussit dans cette mission, sinon sans effusion de sang, tout au moins d'une manière complète.

Il fut moins heureux dans celle qu'il remplit, en Egypte, pendant le cours de l'année 1882. Parti avec l'intention hautement avouée de raffermir l'autorité ébranlée du vice-roi, de décider Arabi à se soumettre et peut-être aussi de rattacher l'Egypte à Constantinople; il revint brusquement sans avoir rien obtenu. Il avait pourtant noué des relations cordiales avec Arabi, aussi bien qu'avec le Khédivé, on a le droit d'attribuer son insuccès, à l'indécision de la Sublime Porte, et au manque d'instructions précises.

En qualité de membre de la Commission de réorganisation de l'armée, il a pris, l'année dernière, une part très active à l'élaboration des projets de réforme.

A l'inverse de Moukhtar pacha, dont la biographie sommaire était jointe au rapport n°29, Dervich appartient complètement à l'ancienne école ottomane. C'est le type du général vieux Turc, fanatique, rapace, fourbe et cruel, pour qui tous les moyens sont bons et qui n'a recours à la force des armes, qu'après avoir épuisé la ruse, le mensonge et la trahison.

Lors de sa mission en Albanie, il y avait à Scutari deux personnages qui le gênaient, un prince Mirdite (parfaitement insignifiant du reste) Bib Doda, et un Albanais très populaire, Hodo pacha. N'osant pas les faire arrêter dans la ville, où ils comptaient de nombreux partisans, il leur propose une promenade à cheval, sous prétexte d'inspecter les travaux d'une route, qu'il faisait ouvrir dans la direction de St. Jean de Medua et il les entraîne à quelque distance. Une tente était dressée sur le chantier, on y déjeune avec les apparences de la plus franche cordialité; mais après le café, Dervich annonce à ses deux convives qu'ils sont prisonniers et il les expédie, sous bonne escorte, séance tenante, à St. Jean de Medua, où un vapeur attendait pour les transporter à Constantinople.

Dervich est sans pitié pour ses adversaires, même vaincus; en revanche il sait rédiger très habilement ses bulletins de victoire et enfler à merveille les moindres succès.

Il s'entend aussi, mieux que pas un vieux Turc, à couronner sa tête d'une auréole de dévotion qui lui vaut toute la sympathie du souverain, en même temps qu'elle lui assure le respect et la confiance des troupes.

Il prend du reste un soin extrême de sa popularité. Les soldats ont partout, et en tout temps, libre accès auprès de lui; le beau parc qui environne son Konak à Stamboul est un lieu de promenade ouvert indistinctement à tous les militaires. En campagne, (après ses repas, bien entendu,) il appelle le soldat qui passe devant sa tente et il l'invite à partager, avec lui, un biscuit de mer et une tasse de café, en affectant de n'avoir que la nourriture de la troupe.

Il n'y a qu'une voix sur son compte: C'est un vieux renard. Dervich est dévoré d'une cupidité insatiable. Elevé à l'école d'Omar pacha qui pillait, pour son propre compte, les provinces conquises, il a exploité sans pudeur toutes les occasions de s'enrichir: Commandements militaires,

campagnes, missions politiques, tout a été pour lui matière à profit. Il a de nombreuses propriétés en Bulgarie, en Albanie, en Syrie; il possède à Stamboul (quartier Yuksek Caldérim, Ak. Séraï) un parc immense et un très beau Konak; où mille objets précieux rappellent au visiteur les malheureuses provinces, à travers lesquelles le propriétaire a promené sa ruineuse autorité.

Quoique très riche aujourd'hui, Dervich pacha ne dédaigne pas les petits bénéfiques. Les industriels qui désirent obtenir du Sultan, une concession ou une faveur quelconque, sont assurés d'avance de trouver en lui, un appui bienveillant, et toujours intéressé.

Lorsque après la signature du traité de Berlin, Dervich dû faire, aux Russes, la remise de Bataoum, les troupes, secrètement encouragés par le gouvernement, faisaient mine de s'opposer par la force à cette remise.

Pour pouvoir entrer dans la place sans effusion de sang et y trouver toutes choses en bon ordre, le Général Boris Mélikoff fit tenir à Dervich une somme de 50 000 roubles (200 000 F) et une fois l'opération terminée, à la satisfaction complète des Russes, le Czar lui envoya la plaque en brillants de l'ordre de St. Alexandre Nevsky – les pierreries valaient 5 000 roubles (20 000 F).⁸⁴

Si Dervich a tous les défauts des généraux vieux Turcs ses collègues, on doit reconnaître qu'il s'élève notablement au dessus d'eux par certains cotés de son caractère. Lucidité parfaite, extrême finesse, énergie soutenue, aptitude au commandement, expérience consommée des choses de la guerre, dévouement sans bornes aux intérêts de son pays et aux volontés du Sultan, voilà les qualités, auxquelles il doit la haute situation qu'il occupe. Elles lui assurent une très grande influence dans les conseils du souverain.

Quant à ses soldats, Dervich en obtient tout ce qu'il veut; il a réussi, chose invraisemblable, à les faire combattre, à Dulcigno, à Ipek et à Djakova contre leurs coréligionnaires Musulmans, pour la cause des Chrétiens du Monténégro.

Sa santé, qui est encore très robuste, fait prévoir pour lui une dizaine d'années d'activité.

Son train de maison est très luxueux. Il n'a qu'une femme et il lui reste deux fils. L'ainé, Ahmed, âgé de 28 ans, est colonel de cavalerie; le second, Haled, âgé de 20 ans, lieutenant à l'école des princes Impériaux à Yildiz, passe pour un des plus habiles et des plus brillants écuyers de la Turquie.

Dervich possède les décorations ci après:

ordres ottomans: Médaille du Nichan Imtyaz Grand croix de l'ordre de Médjidié - id. - de l'Osmanié

Plus un grand nombre de médailles commémoratives de campagne

ordres étrangers: 1870 Grand croix de l'ordre de la Couronne de fer 1872 – id. – de Léopold, Autriche 1879 – id. – de St. Alexandre Nevsky

Dervich pacha ne parle que le Turc.

Péra 26 août 1884,

E. Caffarel

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