

After the *Serenissima* and the *Grand Turk* Made Love:
The Boundary Commissions of 1480 and 1482¹

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Because in the 15th century, Ottoman-Venetian transactions were generally recorded in Greek, it is enjoyable to use the Greek term *ἐκάνει ἀγάπην*, “make love,” for what is expressed in Venetian “*fatto paxe*,” and in Turkish “*musalaha*.” This is how a number of Greek chronicles record the event,² and how it is expressed in the January 1478 *ahd-name* or “*capitoli de la pace*” between the *Serenissima* and the *Grand Turk*, which ended an exhausting sixteen-year war.³

The *ahd-name* was issued on 29 January.⁴ Venice had the information by 22 February.⁵ On 25 February, the Signoria sent letters to *provveditori* of the *stato mar* and the fleet directing them to begin transferring territories “*per nos acuisita et occupata*” and to do everything to ensure that they could “*tranquillus vivere et vicinare satagite cum officialibus et subditus eiusdem dominium*.”⁶ This was not so easy, despite the *ahd-name*.

Further, the most illustrious Signoria of Venice will hand over to my Lordship the present fortresses and lands which were taken in the war from my Lordship, that is, in the parts of the Morea, . . . Further, my Lordship is obligated to hand over to them the captured territories, that is, as far as the former borders of their fortresses which neighbor with the lands of my Lordship on all sides.

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²The *ahd-name* has *πρωτέρων ἀγάπην* and *τὴν λεγόμενὴν ἀγάπην*. The modern Greek term is *καὶ εἰρήμη*—make peace. See also *Die byzantinische Kleinchroniken*. CFHB 12. Peter Schreiner, ed. (Vienna, 1975-79) III, 294, 503, 514, 521.

³Dates here will be given *more Veneto*: the Venetian year began on 1 March, so this would be 15 January 1479 in contemporary terms. Under the Ottoman system, *ahd-names* were issued by the Sultan as unilateral documents, whatever the extent of the preceding negotiations or degree of harmony between the parties. It was not a treaty and was signed by no one.

⁴This *ahd-name*, ASV Documenti Turchi b1/2, has never been properly published and studied, perhaps because of its unique combination of orthography and spelling. I am publishing a diplomatic edition. The translations used here are mine. An earlier transcription, the medieval Greek provided with classical endings, is found in Franz Miklosich, and Joseph Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana*, (Vienna, 1865) III, 295-298. Miklosich and Müller took their transcription from the *Libri Commemorativi* R 16 (the Signoria's formal record of treaties and agreements: its Greek is written in the lovely chancery script used for book printing and the chancery secretaries generally improved grammar and spelling of the documents they copied) not from the actual document. As can be seen in the illustration, the script of the *ahd-name* bears little resemblance to 15th-century Greek script: rather it appears to have been written by someone accustomed to writing Arabic, although clearly one who could write Greek rapidly. The orthography makes for difficult reading at first, with double consonants written as single, and the use of β for υ, μπ for a Turkish hearing of B instead of P, αι for ε, ω for ο, and η for almost everything else, e.g.

Θάλασσο, σύμαχου, ἦναι, παλην, δαλ (for δὲ), πιστέβω, μηστην. Julian Raby says the *ahd-name* is “in a vulgar Greek, full of linguistic and diplomatic inaccuracies. Errors in grammar, syntax, and orthography . . . suggest that the documents could not have been drafted by a native Greek speaker.” He later suggests that Mehmed's scriptorium was staffed by “renegades and racial hybrids.” J. Raby, “Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium,” in *DOP* 37 (1983) 27, 28.

⁵ASV Senato Mar R 11, f 13.

⁶ASV Deliberazioni Secreta, Senato R 28, f 150.

Although war had been declared in July 1463, it had further been agreed in correspondence between Doge Giovanni Mocenigo and Mehmed that the borders were generally to be those that existed in the Morea in 1460 when Mehmed took the Morea from the Despots.⁷ But the *ahd-name* was a statement of principle rather than an itemized list, and borders were uncertain: in much of Albania and parts of the Morea, precise boundaries had never been essential, or even possible, and Mehmed's cadaster of Ottoman territories in the Morea included some Venetian claims in the Argolid, and in the south near Monemvasia and Koronē.

The borders were finally determined by a series of boundary commissions – two under Mehmed, and then after Bayezid became sultan a third commission was necessary to confirm and complete the previous settlement.⁸ The source for the workings of these commissions is a series of *dispacci*, reports, by Bartolomeo Minio, Venetian *provveditor* of Nauplion between 1479 and 1483.⁹

In January 1479/80, six weeks after he arrived at his post, Minio reported a raid by the *flamburar eunucho*—*sancak-beyi*—of the Morea, Suleiman,¹⁰ at Thermissi and Castri on the south coast of the Argolid, and added that the *turciman* for the boundary commission had been waiting there for a month.¹¹ In February, the Emin who was to settle the boundaries arrived. After some dispute about procedure, Minio rode with an escort of five hundred horsemen and residents of Nauplion to Paleocastro¹² to meet

⁷All known Greek correspondence from Mehmed II to Doge Giovanni Mocenigo has been published. Six letters are in Miklosich & Müller, III, 293-309. Alessio Bombaci, "Nuovi firmani greci di Maometto II," *BZ* 47 (1954) 298-319, contains another 13 with Italian translations. No letters from the Doge to Mehmed seem to have survived.

⁸Although the fact of these Ottoman boundary commissions has long been known, I believe I was the first to write about them in: Diana Gilliland Wright, *Bartolomeo Minio: Venetian Administration in 15th Century Nauplion*. PhD Dissertation. The Catholic University of America (Washington, D C, 1999) Chapter 3, passim. Published as: Wright, *Bartolomeo Minio: Venetian Administration in 15th Century Nauplion*. Monograph in *EJOS* III (2000) #5, found at <http://www.let.nl/oosters/EJOS/EJOS-1.html>.

⁹The documents, BMCV Codici Cicogna: Ms 2653, were available in print 130 years ago as "Dispacci al senato e ad altri di Bartolomeo Minio, provveditor e capetanio à Napoli di Romania 1479-1483," in Constantine Sathas, *Μνημεία Ἑλληνικῆς Ἱστορίας: Documents inédites relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge* (Paris, 1180-1890) VI, 117-123. I am publishing a new transcription of the *dispacci* with an English translation and commentary, in cooperation with Professor John Melville Jones of the University of Western Australia as *The Greek Correspondence of Bartolomeo Minio, Vol. 1: Dispacci from Nauplion, 1479-1483*. The citations in this paper from Minio and Zuam Dario are drawn from that manuscript and are identified as "Letter." The numbering is mine.

¹⁰Letter IV for 20 January 1479. The *flamburar eunucho*, Suleiman Bey, was a Bosnian awarded the *sancak* of the Morea for his services in the 1463-78 war, then apparently made *beyler-beyi* of Roumeli. Later sent to the assault on Apulia, he was captured, then released to aid in the peace settlement.

¹¹*Turciman* = translator, *turcuman*, is a minor puzzle: Minio later reports that an aide for Suleiman served as *turciman*.

¹²Paleocastro = the Mycenaean fortress of Tiryns, 2 ½ miles north of Nauplion. At the time there seems to have been a small village and Byzantine church inside the walls.

Suleiman, the Emin, Halil Bey,¹³ and their entourage. It was not a successful meeting, as Minio reported, “stagando longamente in disputation.” The Argolid territories of Iria and Candia, and the monastery of San Theodosio, a “miracoloso santo,”¹⁴ had been incorrectly included in the cadaster: Halil and Suleiman did not have the authority to decide otherwise. In Minio’s view, Suleiman was inflexible and wanted to keep the lands for his own profits. Minio, equally inflexible, insisted that his *testimonii antique*¹⁵ and documents with pendant seals of gilded silver¹⁶ were more than adequate proof of Venetian ownership. At the same time, Minio incorrectly claimed possession of four *castri*, although the ownership of two—Damala and Fanari—had been transferred to Venetian administration for safety before 1460.¹⁷

However, the first problem was to divide the flat, thin, thirsty soil between Nauplion and Argos eight miles inland. Until 1462 when Argos was taken by the Turks, before war was declared, Argos and Nauplion had been governed as the two *terre* of the *stato mar*. In the years after Argos was taken, residents of both apparently farmed their family plots according to tradition rather than politics. A further issue complicating any boundary between the cities was the Albanians. Because of the loss of population to a Turkish raid in the 1390s, Albanians had been encouraged by various Venetian officials for the past 76 years to settle on vacant lands so as to produce taxes, grain, wool and cheese for the Venetian enterprise.¹⁸ Suleiman wanted to exclude the Albanians when determining population and his translator told Minio that if the Albanians were evicted, there would be no problems between them.

¹³Letter VI for 10 February 1479/80 and Sathas VI, 127. Halil Bey is identified in ASV Documenti Turchi b 1/9 A & B for September 1479; published in Bombaci, #1. Mehmed writes: “To this we reply we are disposed thus, that it is right that you have again the borders which you had before the war, and for this purpose My Excellence is sending the good, capable and trusted gentleman, Halil Bey, Emin, for the territories of the Morea. We have directed him to see and examine first the boundaries of Argos and Nauplion. If the first boundaries are in good order, he will accept and confirm them. If he sees otherwise, he will hear the reasons of the place with justice. He will make a clean boundary for those places . . . He will confirm the boundaries where they were before the war, according to the original state.”

¹⁴Candia and Iria controlled the land access to Kastri and Thermissi. Candia stands on the cliff road south of Nauplion, on the way to the triangular plain of Iria, essential to Nauplion because it was the main area in which the *stratioti* could farm and find adequate pasturage for their horses. “San Theodosio” is the $\mu\omicron\nu\eta$ of Agios Theodosios near Panariti, east of Argos, still known for its healing spring.

¹⁵*Testimonii antique* = senior witnesses of high social standing who could testify to traditional usage.

¹⁶Minio’s access to written documents and historical records for Nauplion is striking. The document referred to here is the 1394 treaty between Venice and the Despot of the Morea: Letter VI for 10 February 1479 & Sathas VI, 124. Also, Schreiner III, 233.

¹⁷Damala and Fanari, formerly held by a Joannes Spagnoli, a Catalan descendant, in fief from Athens, were put under the protection of the Venetian administration of Negroponte during the upheavals of the 1450s. They had never been held by Venice during the despotate and were not mentioned in the 1394 treaty. Sathas I, 230 for 12 November 1456. See also, “Événements historiques en Grèce (1479-1497) de Stefano Magno” in Sathas VI, 214. Magno clearly had access to original documents, as his citations from Minio indicate, but he also says (219), “Rimaxe etiam el castel di Damala inel tegnir di Napoli, el qual. Bort.o Minio non volese render.” Damala is not further mentioned, either in Minio or in the letters from Mehmed. Possession of Negroponte and its possessions is never mentioned in the *ahd-name* or in the Mehmet correspondence, presumably because Negroponte was vengeance for the Venetian sack of Aenos.

¹⁸Freddy Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du sénat de Venise, III (1431-1463)* (Paris, 1961) #2865, #2987. A. Ducellier, “Fuir au plus près le mirage de la Grèce et des côtes,” in *Les Chemins de l’Exil: bouleversements de l’est européen et migrations vers l’ouest à la fin du Moyen Âge*, ed. A. Ducellier et al. (Paris, 1992) 106-107. A. Ducellier, “Albanais dans les Balkans et en Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge,” in *Le Migrazioni in Europa Secc. XIII-XVIII*, ed. S. Cavaciocchi (Prato, Italy, 1993) 244 & passim. The Albanian population was disproportionately male.

Another complication was that, because the Ottoman delegates had been instructed that any lands paying Ottoman taxes belonged to Mehmed, Albanians in encampments on Venetian-claimed or undetermined lands who paid taxes to both Venetians and the Turks for insurance, found themselves claimed as Ottoman subjects.¹⁹

Based on the evidence of the tax payments and his witnesses, the Emin put the Argos-Nauplion border at a bridge near Nauplion,²⁰ thus causing two-thirds of Nauplion's farm to disappear just after they had been plowed and planted with the new grain crop. Minio was concerned over the loss of so much of the *terra's* food, and its main source for wood and straw, and particularly, the potential for violence from the outraged Naupliots and *stratioti*. Suleiman said that any Naupliots crossing the line would be cut to pieces ("li tagliara a pezi") and forbade his subjects in the surrounding areas to sell or transport grain and food to Nauplion territory, by land or sea. Minio said the city was besieged worse than it had been during the war.²¹

Nothing was resolved, although Suleiman and Halil gave Minio two months for further instructions from the Signoria, and for the *bailo* at Constantinople to make a demarche to the Sultan. Halil went on to Monemvasia and Methonē.²² He apparently reported to Mehmed, because in March, Mehmed wrote the *provveditori* of Nauplion and Monemvasia asking for the return of three *castri*, but without conviction, for the letter said that if they were not returned, they might instead be torn down.²³

You yourself know how we sent My Lordship's Emin for the purpose of the just division of the lands between Argos and Nauplion as you desire, for the quiet of both places. Thus the aforesaid Emin . . . did justly determine the division between these places . . . Now the *castri* called Thermissi, Vatika, and Amberto-Castro²⁴ were first in the power of My Lordship, and at the time of the war were taken from us . . . and were never returned to My Lordship . . . Nevertheless, it must therefore be, just as is contained in the chapters of

¹⁹Both the Ottomans and the Venetians collected a tax of 10% on farm produce, which meant these Albanians were paying out 20%.

²⁰There was, well into the 19th century, a marshy lake at the base of the hill of Profitias Elias on the Nauplion side of Tiryns from which a rivulet ran to the gulf.

²¹Letter VI for 10 February 1479 & Sathas VI, 126.

²²Letter XII for 1 April 1480 & Sathas VI, 129.

²³The original letter to Minio, which he forwarded to Venice with a translation, is preserved as ASV Atti diplomatici e privati, b45/1342. 17 March 1480 "1480.die.17.martii ad rettores di Nauplij quod li petit ut nonnulla opida diruantur." Contemporary Italian translation, possibly that provided by Minio, ASV Documenti Turchi b1/13. Text published in Miklosich & Müller, III, 301-302 where it is misidentified as a Viennese holding. For text, English translation, and (possibly Minio's) Italian translation, see <http://www2.let.uu.nl/Solis/anpt/ejos/pdf2/W09.PDF> File #10 pages 196-199.

²⁴Thermissi and Amberto-Castro, or Kastri (Homeric and contemporary Hermione) are on the Argolid coast. Vatika is near Monemvasia.

our peace accord, that the aforesaid *castri* be returned to My Lordship, and if they are not returned, they must be torn down and completely destroyed.²⁵

Retention of Thermissi and Kastri was essential. Venice received revenues of 12,000 hyperpers (2400 ducats) a year from the salt production alone.²⁶

The matter was suspended until the August arrival of Zuam Dario and Sinan Bey.²⁷ Minio immediately liked Sinan and found him sympathetic. Sinan sent for Suleiman and the cadis of Karitena,²⁸ Kalavrita, and Argos. After several days of dispute as to the division of the countryside and possession of Kiveri,²⁹ Sinan “cum grandissima fatica et difficulta” agreed to hear Minio’s *testimonii antique* who all took an oath on the Gospels. The Orthodox Bishop was the first witness. Minio’s *cancellier* wrote down a record of the testimony in Greek, and Sinan’s *scrivan* wrote down a record for their side in Greek: the two compared their notes and made them match, word for word. In addition, both sides drew maps of the territory, noting the wells, hills, farms and valleys—whatever might be useful for identification.³⁰

Minio offered two proposals for determining the boundary: (1) the parties might return to the pre-war boundaries for which he was able and eager to provide evidence; or (2) the parties might divide the area between Nauplion and Argos to reflect their populations. The *terra* of Nauplion claimed a population of 20,000, while Argos had about 200 families.³¹ Again, the issue of counting the Albanians

²⁵As far as pulling down fortifications is concerned, Bayezid later ordered a number of castles in Ottoman territory pulled down, including that of Argos which stands today because Minio protested. Letter XC for 1 February 1482 & Sathas VI, 208. Letter XCI for 25 March 1483 & Sathas VI, 211.

²⁶In 1456 this amounted to 900 Kg. Of salt. See Wright, *Bartolomeo Minio, EJOS*, File #4 (Ch. 1) 31-32. In 1451 a petition from the citizens of Nauplion said, “in el castello de Termissi, se trova le più notabile saline che isa in tuto Levante, de la qual se poria cavar un poso d’oro.” Jean-Claude Hocquet, *Le sel et la fortune de Venise* (Lille, 1979) 1, 79, 163.

²⁷Letter XXII for 14 August 1480 & Sathas VI, 141. They left Constantinople on 3 August and arrived at Nauplion on the 12th. Zuam Dario carried out the final negotiations for the *ahd-name* on behalf of Venice and is mentioned in it as “Giovanni Dario, Secretary to the Dieci”—Κυρ Γω τον δαρτω σαικρεταρη. A humanist, Dario spoke Greek and appears to have had some knowledge of Turkish. He had known Constantinople since 1449, when he served as Greek interpreter for the Venetian ambassador to Constantine XI and Murad II. There is no substantive evidence for the belief that he was an observer in Mehmed’s camp at the siege of Constantinople in 1453, but he met Mehmed several times between 1456 and 1460 when he accompanied the Venetian ambassador, Bartolomeo Marcello, and in 1471 after the Venetian loss of Negroponte. The definitive study is Maria Francesca Tiepolo, “Greci nella Cancelleria veneziana: Giovanni Dario,” in *I Greci à Venezia: Atti del convegno internazionale di studio, Venezia 5-7 Novembre 1998*, ed. M. F. Tiepolo & E. Tonelli (Venice, 2002) 257-314.

²⁸The cadi of Karitena was an Ismail, of singular assistance to Minio in settling the Kladas revolt. Wright, *Bartolomeo Minio, EJOS*, File #7, 155.

²⁹Kiveri, identified as a place with mills, is not the modern Kiveri on the NW corner of the Bay of Argos, but the contemporary Myloi (“mills”) which produces the best bread in Greece. There is a low hill with a 14th C tower, and a higher hill with disappointing castle and classical remains. See Wright, “Late Fifteenth-Century Nauplion: Topography, Walls, and Boundaries” in *Thesaurismata* 30 (2000) n. 104.

³⁰Letter XXIII for 5 September 1480 & Sathas VI, 142, 144. Neither map has yet been identified. Minio’s *scrivan* recorded in Italian the Greek names as he understood them – La Thura for λάθρεια (“hidden”), Basso Gremio for κρημνός (“overhanging crag”) -- so his map might understandably be difficult to identify. Presumably there would be the same problem of identification with the Ottoman map.

³¹The *terra* of Nauplion included Nauplion, the area around the head of the bay, and the southwestern part of the Argolid peninsula as far as Thermissi. There was a (probably) disproportionate percentage of adult males because of the *stratiofi*. The 200 families of Argos accounted for just over 600 people. P. Topping suggests a multiplier of 3.047 for households. See Wright, *Bartolomeo Minio, EJOS* File #4, 27-28, 68-69. There are indications that Albanians might have been as much as 40-60% of the Nauplion population.

was disputed, though Sinan said he wanted to give a fair amount of territory and subsequently made a number of concessions where the Albanian encampments were concerned. Testimony from more witnesses on both sides supported the Venetian position, so it was finally agreed that they would all ride the boundary together, the witnesses showing where the line should be drawn.

Minio was just out of sickbed after a nearly fatal attack of malaria,³² Zuam Dario was overweight and had heart trouble, but they spent ten days on horseback, dawn to dusk in the August heat, riding the loose rock of the thorny hillsides and fields of the Argolid, starting from the White Tower in the marshes near Kiveri, going north to the hills, then across the plain to the first line of eastern hills, along their ridges to the small sickle-shaped bay and salt pans at Drepanon, ten miles south of Nauplion.³³ At Drepanon, the road to Kastri and Thermissi at the far end of the peninsula, turned inland up over steep hills and ravines pink with rhododendron before coming back down to Candia and the broad triangular plain of Iria. The *scrivan* and the *cancellier* took notes.

Candia, Iria,³⁴ and San Theodosio were still contested. Minio was outraged by two witnesses "of the vilest sort" who testified for the Turks' possession. Sinan accepted the Venetian testimony and witnesses, but he said his commission specified only the countryside and castles: it contained no mention of other places. He promised to recommend that Minio's position be accepted. The Venetians would in the mean time keep Kastri and Thermissi. Where Minio and the Nauplion territory was concerned, this created no actual problem or inconvenience because of Sinan's sympathy but, perhaps exhausted from illness, Minio was irritated and impatient. He had migraines.³⁵ The discussion was finally broken off and to ease the situation, Zuam Dario went over to Argos to stay with the Turkish delegation. As he said, "I am of a conciliatory nature and now at my age inclined to quiet."³⁶

³²Letter XX for 5 August 1480 & Sathas VI, 141.

³³For a discussion of the identification points of the boundary line in the 1480 and 1482 negotiations, see Wright, "Late Fifteenth-Century Nauplion," *Thesaurismata* 30 (2000) 183-187, and "Corrigenda" (forthcoming in *Thesaurismata*).

³⁴Loss of the Candia-Iria area would effectively force out most of 1000 *stratioti*—Nauplion's main defense—who would have no place to pasture their horses or to farm. *Stratioti*, mostly Albanian though there was substantial Greek intermarriage, were for the most part paid in land allotments, following the Byzantine practice, rather than in cash, and were employed because they possessed horses. Also, Venice could collect taxes on their produce and sales of produce. Sinan had to have been aware—as was made evident in the Kladas revolt a few weeks later—that even a small number of disaffected *stratioti* could wreak substantial havoc in the Morea.

³⁵Letter XCI for 25 March 1483 & Sathas VI, 210.

³⁶Giovanni Dario, *Dispacci*, 21^a: "Io che son de natura quieta et de etade ormai in clinata a la quiete."

The next day Zuam Dario sent over a revised proposal from Sinan, giving them San Theodosio, and an open road between Drepanon and Kastri-Thermissi. Minio held a meeting with citizens of Nauplion: they sent back a counter-proposal for Iria. Zuam Dario and Sinan were evidently ready for the discussion to end, for they wrote back that six representatives from each side should go back down to look at Iria. The representatives went and looked. Minio offered more witnesses. Sinan refused, saying Nauplion might have control of Candia and Iria until Mehmed could make a decision. This done, the *cancellier* and the *scrivan* wrote out two more documents in Greek. Sinan, Suleiman and the *cadis* signed the copy made by their *scrivan* and gave it to Minio: Minio signed the copy made by his *cancellier* and gave it to Sinan. He wrote the Signoria in great praise of Sinan, and said:

Sinan Bey has been a good friend and supporter of Your Lordship, and has shown this very effectively. As I wrote to Your Lordship, I intended to make some presents to him, but I conferred with Sier Zuam Dario, and considering that the pasha and the *cadis* have put him under observation, and thinking that he might be discovered and ruined, I refrained. In truth, on the days that he spent here, I honoured and cared for him as much as was possible considering the condition of the place.³⁷

Zuam Dario and Sinan left Nauplion in early September and went to Monemvasia. They were in Koronē by the 10th, Methonē by the 21st, and then continued up the Adriatic to the Albanian and Dalmatian coasts, dealing with similar issues at each stop.³⁸ At Kotor, Zuam Dario wrote a summary for the Signoria:

And first, to the affairs of Nauplion . . . I inform your Magnificence that after the division of the country around Argos and Nauplion had been made, we insisted by means of many witnesses on our possession of Kiveri, Kastri and Thermissi, with their salt pans and the rest of their territory, and of the country belonging to Iria, . . . It is true that he said that he had some contrary testimony relating to the country around Iria. But nevertheless he decided that because it was in the middle of what we held, he would arrange for the Sultan to set aside the statement of those greedy persons who had testified to the contrary.³⁹

³⁷Letter XXIII for 5 September 1480 & Sathas VI, 146. In other *dispacci*, Minio comments on the general poverty and unattractiveness of Nauplion.

³⁸Stefano Magno, Sathas VI, 219-220. The boundary at Methonē and Koronē was not perfect: subjects of both rules legally held land on the other side of the line. When Francesco Bragadin was sent to Methonē as *provveditor* in 1485, his commission directed him to try to identify such lands that could be exchanged in an effort to rationalize the boundary. Sathas I, 285. Beyond the limited material in Sathas and the letter from Zuam Dario cited above, there is very little material for the territorial issues at Monemvasia, Methonē and Koronē other than what is contained in Mehmed's letters in Miklosich & Müller III. Also ASV Senato

³⁹ASV Deliberazioni Secreta, Senato R. 29, f 151r-v for 10 January 1481.

Dario added: “como Sier Manoli truciman, de tute cosse informatissimo, die haver referito a vostra M.tia.”⁴⁰

Mehmed had to approve the final agreements, and his letter to the Doge, twenty-eight months after the *ahd-name* contains the line ἡ δὲ βασιλεία μου ἀπεδέξατο πάντα καὶ ἐπεκύρωσε. In the margin of the chancery copy someone wrote a translation: “Lo Imperio mio ha accepta ogni cossa et confirma.”⁴¹ In fact, the matter of Iria and Candia was yet to be settled, but all parties accepted the status quo in which Nauplion effectively had control. Mehmed settled the issue of Kiveri, Thermissi and Kastri by the determination that, although they had been given as timars to his subjects, he was giving them to Venice for the sake of the peace, διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην. Then Mehmed died three days later, which meant all details had to be re-negotiated under Bayezid.

A letter from Bayezid of 16 September 1481 stated his understanding of peace with Venice, repeating for the most part the terms of Mehmed’s *ahd-name* although he reduced the tribute was to pay.⁴² In January Bayezid sent two letters outlining the territorial questions. In February Minio wrote that he was expecting a new Emin:

. . . to define the boundaries . . . Because such definition of the boundaries and *castelli* has already been sent and defined by the emin, Sinan Bey, sent by the late sultan with Sier Zuam Dario, and no disagreements remained, except over the place of Iria and Candia, which remained in discussion, I ask Your Excellency to be pleased to give me specific information and notice about this.

But there is also a suggestion that formal boundaries had increased his difficulties:

Further, because this place is rather close to and conjoined with the Turkish boundaries, where there are many *stratioti* and other people, so that we are daily in disagreement with the Turks . . . please send me these provisions, so that in every situation and disagreement they will know how to behave and to live peacefully with our neighbours.⁴³

⁴⁰ Manoli, the translator, presumably told the Signoria the details Dario thought unwise to put into writing, and possibly comments about Minio. A provocative note in Sanudo 4.434-5 in 1502 about a report from Marco Bembo, Doge of Crete under whom Minio served as *capetanio* and *vice-doge* said: “vene sier Marcho Bembo, venuta ducha di Candia . . . voleva dir dil capetanio, ma si retene, dicendo a loco e tempo diria.”

⁴¹ ASV Atti diplomatici e private, b 45/1324 f. 16v. Miklosich & Müller III, 306 for 31? April 1481. Also Bombaci XII for 30 April 1481 for a very similar letter: ἡ δὲ βασιλεία μου ἀπεδέξατο καὶ ἐπεκύρωσεν αὐτά.

⁴² Bayezid’s correspondence on the 1482 peace and the 12 January 1481/2 *ahd-name* are in Miklosich & Müller, III, 309-317. The Turkish text of the *ahd-name* was recently published in Theunissen, 370ff. at <http://www2.let.uu.nl/Solis/anpt/ejos/EJOS-1.0.html>. Also, Stefano Magno, Sathas VI, 233.

⁴³ Letter LXXIV for 15 February 1481 & Sathas VI, 192. “The provisions” refers to the terms of the new peace with Bayezid.

On 15 March Minio was able to meet with the new Emin who, in addition to settling the remaining boundary questions at Nauplion and Methonē, was to make a cadaster of the Morea for Bayezid.⁴⁴ Minio explained everything, assuring him that any problems were:

. . . because of the evil and iniquitous will of Suliman Bey, the former eunuch flamburar, who bore great hate towards this *terra* . . . The Emin responded that this was a small area of disagreement, and that he was disposed to consent to the demand and give us what was due to us, and more than was due, and to make sure that we remained content and satisfied, because he had an order and command to this effect from his sultan . . .

The Emin was to go to Methonē first, then return to Nauplion to determine the boundaries. Minio liked this Emin and considered him kindly. So he was not prepared when, a month later on 12 April, the Emin returned with the leading Turks of the Morea and said there was no reason to return Candia and Iria.⁴⁵ Minio was convinced the Emin had been influenced by people who wanted the land as a *timar* and insisted that Bayezid had sent him for the specific purpose of restoring it to Nauplion. Once again, Minio offered documents and witnesses, and once again, witnesses—seven of them—were sworn in. Then the seven witnesses were sent out with assorted *subassi*, the *sancak-beyi's* clerk, Minio's *cancellier* and four citizens of Nauplion. It was April, the Argolid was full of poppies, and the weather was cool. They began, as they had with Zuam Dario and Sinan, at the White Tower in the marshes of yellow iris, and concluded by assigning Iria and Candia to Nauplion.

A written record was made by two hands, one by his *scrivan*, the other by our *cancellier*, describing in detail from place to place the landmarks, the farms, the hills and the valleys, there being present for this description the *gisdar* of Argos and other *subassi* on their side, and four citizens of Nauplion with our *cancellier* on our side. After this document had been drawn up and seen and examined by the Emin, there was much argument concerning it, and the Emin agreed that he would determine and define that we should have the boundaries and places according to that description. And he had this formally written down, according to his decision and judicial determination, and he signed, and the *cadi* of Argos, naming the *subassi* who were present for these matters, and particularly the *voivode* of Corinth in place of the flamburar of the Morea.

⁴⁴Letter LXXIV for 18 March 1482 & Sathas VI, 193.

⁴⁵Letter LXXVIII for 24 April 1482 & Sathas VI, 195.

There were a few annoyances,⁴⁶ but Minio was satisfied. He wrote the Signoria that the territory actually had more land than it should, and that he had acquired another 20,000 *stremmata*.⁴⁷ Everyone—his population now seemed to be 25,000—was delighted.

Bayezid II issued his *ahd-name* on the peace on 12 January 1482, essentially restating Mehmed's *ahd-name* and confirming the boundaries.⁴⁸ The matter was settled for twenty years, until the next war. Minio was given much credit for the boundary settlement, by both Turks and Naupliots, and was warmly complimented by the Signoria.⁴⁹

Minio's *dispacci* make it clear that official relations between Venetian and Ottomans in the Morea were remarkably dependent at every level on the relationships between the officials involved, rather than being strictly directed from Venice or Constantinople as is often assumed. The *dispacci* show that while there was clear consistency in Venetian attitudes, Venetian administrators had considerable leeway for improvisation and decision-making, Ottoman administrators much less. Emissaries were given extremely detailed instructions even as to what they might consider: variations had to be authorized by the Porte. Still, despite the problems with the territorial boundaries, Ottoman rule and diplomacy, whether Mehmed or *sancak-beyis* or local officials, appear in the *dispacci* to have been more flexible, imaginative, and lenient than is conventionally assumed in discussions of Turks in Greece.

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⁴⁶“But before it was given into my hands, the *schivo* of the Sultan who came with the Emin kept it so that he could have his ‘stirrup cup’ to loosen him up since such things cannot be avoided, and he would not be satisfied with less than 30 ducats and 6 *braccie* of scarlet cloth for a robe, which I gave him, to have his support; and similarly, I expressly gave the *emini* 40 ducats and 6 *braccie* of scarlet; to the *voivode* of Corinth 10 ducats, to the *scrivano* who wrote the document and the description of the boundaries (who, to tell the truth, was most favourable to us), 10 ducats, to the servants of the Emin for their present 5 ducats and to the *turciman* 2 ducats, which makes a total of 97 ducats, not counting the cloth, sweetmeats and other expenses for food for this mounted escort and for the other one, and it was not possible to do less.” Letter LXXVIII for 24 April 1482 & Sathas VI, 196.

⁴⁷20,000 *stremmata* is nearly 5,000 acres. 1 *stremma* = .247097 acres.

⁴⁸Micklosich & Müller III, 313-317.

⁴⁹Sathas, V, 107, in petition of 1506: “Li confine separate a laltra pace unanimiter cum el Magnifico Miser Bartholomio Minio provededor alhora et Bassa de la Amorea ac Catini, Emini ordinati de la Porta.” Dario, *Dispacci*, #21^a. Letter LIV for 3 October 1481 & Sathas VI, 176.