



Warrior, Poet and Artist

Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Naval Battles through the Eyes of Nigârî

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ABSTRACT Nigârî was a significant painter of miniatures in the sixteenth century, known primarily for his portraits of Sultan Selim II and Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha (Barbarossa), which brought influences from Western-style portraiture to the Ottoman tradition of miniature painting. Since he was a sociable and cheerful person, he was popular in many assemblies, and even became Prince Selim's (Later Sultan Selim II) boon companion. In addition, Nigârî was a long-serving captain in the Ottoman navy, fighting in many sea battles and proving his usefulness as a soldier. Moreover, Nigârî was a poet, and, while some of his shorter poetry can be seen written beneath his paintings, his major literary work is the heroic poem in praise of Grand Admiral Sinan Pasha, *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha* (Holy Wars of Sinan Pasha). In this book, Nigârî tells of the naval battles that occurred under Admiral Sinan Pasha which he witnessed personally. Among them were the expeditions to Messina and Malta, the conquest of Tripoli, and the defeat of the Crusader fleet under the command of Andrea Doria. A great deal of detail about these expeditions and battles is included in the work that is not found elsewhere. There are many subjects mentioned by the poet, including the places they stopped at on their voyage, the people they travelled with, the number of navy ships, and the admiral's consultations with the sailors. Furthermore, it includes elements of military and state traditions as well as social life. Therefore, Nigârî's work holds significant value for literature as well as maritime, social, and cultural history, and carries the potential to serve as a valuable supplementary source in these fields. This paper is organised into two sections, the first of which is an overview of Nigârî's life and major works. The second section discusses Nigârî's *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha*, notable for its portrayal of naval battles firsthand and its insight into the broader sociocultural intersections of military history.

KEYWORDS Ottoman naval history, Ghazavat, Nigari, Sinan Pasha, Andrea Doria, Dürer-i Derya.

Introduction

The Ottoman Empire entered the sixteenth century under Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512). [1] Towards the end of Bayezid II's reign, both the land army and the navy developed in strength. Power began to be exerted, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this period, *Tersane-i Âmire* (the Imperial Shipyard) was also expanded. Nevertheless, Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha's involvement in the Ottoman navy was undoubtedly the most significant event of this period. Barbaros, whose real name was Hızır, was known as Barba Rossa by foreigners due to his red-coloured beard. He was given the name Hayreddin by Sultan Selim I. Hayreddin Pasha was appointed the *Kapudan-i derya* (Grand Admiral) in 1534 by Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, after Andrea Doria seized Koron and Patras within Ottoman territory. With Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha commanding as the *Kapudan-i derya*, the Ottoman navy reached its peak. The Ottoman navy and the Crusader navy clashed in 1538 at the Battle of Preveza in the Ionian Sea off the northwestern coast of Greece. It was the Ottoman Empire that won this battle, demonstrating its power on land and at sea, proclaiming its dominance over the Mediterranean region.

After the death of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha in 1546, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha briefly assumed [2] the role of *Kapudan-i derya*. Upon the appointment of Sokullu Mehmed Pasha as Rumelia's *Beylerbeyi* (Governor-General), Sinan Pasha became Grand Admiral. Sinan Pasha, also known as Sinaneddin Yusuf Pasha, was educated in Enderun, the Ottoman Palace School, and was later appointed to the sanjak (an Ottoman administrative unit) in Herzegovina (Mehmed Süreyya 1996, 1515). He became *Kapudan-i derya* in the Ottoman navy in 957 AH/1550 AD. Though he held the title of Kapudan Pasha, many believe he was appointed to it as his brother was the Grand Vizier Rustem Pasha. Perhaps for this reason, both historical and contemporary sources tend to focus more on Turgut Reis (Captain Dragut) than Sinan Pasha.¹

The Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent sent Sinan Pasha on a campaign to the Western [3] Mediterranean. In *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha*,² Nigârî recounts his expeditions to Messina, Malta, and Tripoli, as well as his battle against Andrea Doria's Crusader fleet.

In 961 AH/1554 AD, Sinan Pasha died shortly after Nigârî's account was completed [4] (Uzunçarşılı 2019, 383).

1 For instance, Katip Çelebi (2008) allocates more space to Turgut Reis in his work. Similarly, Halil İnalçık (2016) when narrating the campaigns to the Western Mediterranean and the conquest of Tripoli during that period, focuses on Turgut Reis rather than Sinan Pasha. Additionally, İsmail Hami Danişmend (1971) asserts that Turgut Reis was the actual commander of the navy, while Sinan Pasha was nothing more than a shadow. For the rivalry and disagreement between Turgut Reis and Sinan Pasha, see Katip Çelebi (2008, 96), Emrah Safa Gürkan (2020, 475), and İdris Bostan (2012, 417).

2 Ghazavats are literary works that narrate wars and military campaigns, and the sixteenth century saw the composition of numerous such works. Notable examples include Fütuhî Hüseyin Çelebi's *Enîsü'l-guzât*, which details Sultan Suleyman's Hungarian campaign, Seyyid Muradî's *Gazavat-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, which chronicles the exploits of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, and Âsâfi Defterdar Koca Mehmed Paşa's *Şecaat-name*, which recounts Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa's campaigns in Crimea, Tbilisi, and Tabriz. Other important works are the anonymous *Gazavat-ı Sultan Süleyman*, detailing Sultan Suleyman's campaigns; *ez-Zühretü'n-neyyire*, which narrates the eight Christian assaults following the conquest of Algiers by Barbaros and Oruç Reis; Larendeli Vücûdî's *Gazavat-ı Mustafa Paşa*, depicting the campaigns of Lala Mustafa Pasha; and Talikizade Mehmed Subhî's *Murad-name*, describing the eastern campaigns of Ferhad and Osman Pashas. However, Nigârî's *ghazavat* stands out as a unique work of its time, focusing on a subject not covered by other works. For more information about the genre, see Erkan (1996).

Nigârî's Life and Works

Life

Nigârî, also known as Nakkaş Haydar or Haydar Reis, was an Ottoman artist, poet, and sailor [5] in the sixteenth century. According to *tazkirahs* (biographical accounts), his real name was Haydar and he was from Galata, Istanbul (Solmaz 2005, 554; Âşık Çelebi 2010, 893; Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi 1989, 1001; İsen 1994, 328; Beyani 2017, 213; Riyazi Muhammed Efendi 2017, 319; Mehmed Süreyya 1997, 1255; Hammer-Purgstall 1837, 349). His father was Satranc-baz Arab (the Arab Chess player) (Âşık Çelebi 2010, 893), and his grandfather Abdulkadir, who was from Egypt, was also known as Satranc-baz (Solmaz 2005, 554). Indeed, Sultan Mehmed II sent a person to bring his grandfather to Istanbul since he was an expert at chess. Appreciating his extensive skills in chess, the Sultan awarded him 1000 *akçe* (silver coins) (Solmaz 2005, 554).

According to Âşık Çelebi, Nigârî had a house in Galata, Istanbul, which served as a gathering place for poets (2010, 893). However, he did not live in Istanbul his entire life. He once performed *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca with Şemsi Pasha. In addition, he visited Kütahya to see Sultan Suleyman (Âşık Çelebi 2010, 894; Hammer-Purgstall 1837, 349). [6]

Nigârî was a member of high-ranking government officials' conversations (Âşık Çelebi 2010, 893; Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi 1989, 1002). Moreover, he was even one of Prince Selim's (later Sultan Selim II) boon companions (İsen 1994, 328; Şemseddin Sami 1899, 4599) who participated in his drinking sessions (Hammer-Purgstall 1837, 349; Beyani 2017, 213). The historical sources (İbrahim Peçevi 1867, 438–39; Cevri Çelebi 1874, 109; İsen 1994, 329) describe how he brought joy and mirth to Prince Selim's gatherings, making those present laugh. [7]

Moreover, Nigârî played a role in military affairs and participated in many naval expeditions. [8] He chronicles the battles he fought through poetry. *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha* describes several of Nigârî's Mediterranean expeditions, including those to Messina, Mahdia, Malta, and Tripoli. Additionally, he mentions his participation in numerous Mediterranean campaigns in the following verse (Egüz 2020a, 179) :³

Bi-ḥamdillāh yüz aḡartdum o yolda [9]
Ṭolaşdum Akdeñiz'i şaġ u şolda

All praise be to Allah that, performing duties with honour on that path I circum- [10]
vented the Mediterranean right and left.

Âşık Çelebi (2010, 894) indicates that Nigârî actively participated in numerous campaigns, [11] displayed military prowess in major battles, and conquered a number of fortresses. While the exact duration of Nigârî's service in the Ottoman navy is uncertain, it can be inferred from a verse in *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha* that he devoted at least thirty to forty years to his military exploits (Egüz 2020a, 177):

Otuz kırk yıl çalıřmışken bu çāker [12]
Revā midur baña on beş muḡarrer

Is it fair for a servant who has worked for 30 to 40 years to be given only 15 silver [13]
coins?

3 The poems presented in this article have been translated from Turkish to English by the writer of the article.

Although he spent most of his life fighting naval battles, Nigârî is primarily known for his talent in painting. He was one of the most prominent miniature painters of his time. The sources of his time emphasise his talent in portraying Sultan Selim II (Gelibolulu Âli 2012, 153). [14]

Nigârî died in Istanbul. However, sources differ regarding Nigârî's date of death. Several sources indicate that he passed away at the end of 980 AH (Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi 1989, 1002; Riyazi Muhammed Efendi 2017, 319; Kayabaşı 1997, 552), or around 980 AH (Şemseddin Sami 1899, 4599), yet another source suggests that he died in 984 AH (Mehmed Süreyya 1997, 1255). In some sources, the expression *hudûd-ı semânîn*, meaning 'at the end of the eightieth' is used for Nigârî's death, and this has led many researchers to believe that he died in his eightieth year. In some publications, it was claimed that Nigârî died at the age of eighty in 980 AH, leading to the assumption he was born in 900 AH. Nevertheless, *hudûd-ı semânîn* should correspond to the end of 980. Therefore, Nigârî's death date should be 980 AH/1573 AD. [15]

Works

Paintings

Nigârî's paintings can be found in the Topkapı Palace Museum (Album No. H. 2134). A notable feature of Nigârî's miniatures is that they were not prepared for any specific book. They are independent portraits later compiled into albums. His portraits of Sultan Suleyman I (Suleyman the Magnificent, see fig. 1), Sultan Selim II (see fig. 2), and Barbaros (see fig. 3) are particularly renowned. [16]

Oktay Aslanapa (2000, 695) suggests that Nigârî's paintings distinguish themselves from those of other Ottoman artists by the powerful facial expressions of the figures which approaches portraiture in this aspect. According to Esin Atıl (1987, 78), Nigârî differed from the artists in the Palace workshop, reshaping individuals visually and reflecting events more realistically, thus creating a new local tradition. [17]

However, Fredrik Robert Martin believes that Western engravings have influenced his work (1912, 93). Indeed, Nigârî copied two engraved portraits brought by Western leaders to Istanbul while on diplomatic visits. King Francis I of France is one of the copied portraits, thought to be a reproduction of Clouet's work. Charles V is the other, and is believed to be a copy of Cranach's portrait (Binney 1973, 32). Furthermore, there was an evident interaction between Turkish and European artists during that time. It is especially noteworthy that German Turkologist Hans Georg Majer (1995) emphasises the role of Paolo Giovio, a historian, bishop, and collector. In his house at Lake Como, Paolo Giovio displayed portraits of the Ottoman sultans. The originals of these portraits were purchased directly by Paolo Giovio from Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha. According to Majer, the originals of these works are likely to have been painted by Nigârî. [18]

Poetry

Nigârî's other talent was poetry, though it was overshadowed by his painting ability. This was partly due to the fact that he wrote poetry during the sixteenth century, a period when Ottoman literature was at its peak. During this time, great Ottoman poets such as Bâkî, Fuzûlî, and Hayâlî emerged, setting a high standard for poetic excellence. Nigârî's poems, while appreciated in his time, did not reach the same level of success as those of these prominent poets. He did not [19]



Figure 1 Sultan Suleyman I. Album, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, No: H.2134, f. 8.



Figure 2 Selim II shooting an arrow. Album, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, No: H.2134, f. 3.



Figure 3 Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha. Album, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, No: H.2134, f. 9.

produce enough poetry to compile a *Dîvân*, unlike his more famous contemporaries. Although the few poems we have from Nigârî are well-regarded and follow the tradition, they do not break new ground as his paintings do. Nevertheless, the inclusion of his poems in poetry collections and the praise from biographers of his era suggest that his literary works were appreciated by his contemporaries.

He often used the pseudonym “Nigârî” in his poems, which can also be found in the *tazkirahs* [20] (Solmaz 2005, 555; Âşık Çelebi 2010, 894; Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi 1989, 1002; Beyani 2017, 213; Riyazi Muhammed Efendi 2017, 319; Kayabaşı 1997, 552) and *majmuas* (poetry collections) (Kabili 2018). In these poems, Nigârî used a very clear language, focusing on the theme of love in particular. He also drew a portrait of Barbaros which was accompanied by two couplets. In this poem, Nigârî uses the pseudonym Nakkaş Haydar (Miniaturist Haydar) instead of the name Nigârî:

Pādişāhum [21]
Reʿisler çok veli Nakkaş Haydar
Olardan hem şeciʿîdür hem dilāver
Gezenler görmediler milk-i Rūsʿı
Nigârî şöyle yazdı Barbarosʿı

My sultan, there are many captains, but Nakkaş Haydar is both braver and bolder [22] than them. There is nothing like Nigârî’s depiction of Barbaros that was ever seen in the land of Russia by those who visited.

According to the *tazkirahs* (Âşık Çelebi 2010; Riyazî 2020, Solmaz 2005), Nigârî produced a [23] poetic work on naval battles. Âşık Çelebi reports that this work is about the naval expeditions under Sinan Pasha’s admiralty. However, except for Ahdî, none of the *tazkirah* writers mention the title of this book. Ahdî (Solmaz 2005, 554–55) claims Nigârî wrote a book that describes naval battles called *Dürer-i Derya* (Pearls in the Sea). This must be the same book as *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha*, which chronicles Sinan Pasha’s campaigns.⁴ However, Nigârî does not explicitly mention the title of the work, despite his comparison of the verses at the end of the book to pearls. To avoid confusion, I prefer to refer to the work as *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha* until new and complete copies are found.

This article will introduce Nigari’s *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha* and discuss its significance not [24] only as a literary product but also in terms of its sociocultural and historical importance.

Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha

Both historical and modern sources mention Nigârî’s *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha*. *Tazkirah* writers [25] state that with the support of his friends, Nigârî compiled some of the expeditions he joined into a book (Riyazi Muhammed Efendi 2017, 319), and some report that Nigârî wrote a separate book about the expeditions he went on with Sinan Pasha (Âşık Çelebi 2010, 894; Hammer-Purgstall 1837, 349). Modern sources also know Nigârî’s work. Scholars from Süheyl Ünver (1946) onward have reiterated the *tazkirahs*’ information.

It has been known for a long time through Rieu’s (1888) catalogue that Nigârî’s work is in [26]

4 When I first began working on this subject, I believed that *Dürer-i Derya* and *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha* were different works. This was because the title *Dürer-i Derya* was only mentioned by Ahdî, and while Ahdî stated that *Dürer-i Derya* described naval battles, he did not provide details about its content. This led me to the impression that it was a different work. However, I now believe that these works are most likely the same.

the British Library. Aside from Rieu, Babinger (1992) stated that this work is a 999-couplet poem narrating Sinan Pasha's naval heroism, especially the Tripoli conquest. He mentioned that the work begins with Turgut Reis's defeat by the Spanish fleet and the capture of Mahdia by the Spaniards, continues with Sinan Pasha's naval expeditions, and finally concludes with the triumphant admiral's return to Istanbul and the Sultan's palace.

Andreas Tietze (2010) provided information about Nigârî's life based on *tazkirahs* in his article. He stated that Nigârî did not use sailors' language as a stylistic device and unfairly described him as a poet who adhered to tradition without originality. He then presented verses where the poet complains about his situation, and also provided the poem in *murabba* form in the work. [27]

Âgâh Sırrı Levend (2000) also mentioned Nigârî in his work titled *Gazavât-nâmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey'in Gazavât-nâmesi* (Ghazavat-namehs and the Ghazavat-nameh of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey) but the information he provided was taken from Rieu's catalogue. Therefore, it did not contain a detailed examination. [28]

Egüz (2020a) transliterated the work into Latin letters and published it in Turkish with a literary analysis for the first time. Afterwards, Başkurt (2020) published it in Turkish. These works are also introduced in articles by both authors (Egüz 2020b; Başkurt 2021). [29]

About the Manuscript

Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha is a poetic book composed by Nigârî (1553) that describes naval battles during the rule of Grand Admiral Sinan Pasha. [30]

The only known copy of this work is registered as the property of the British Library under the classmark Add. 7921. This copy contains 48 folios in *naskh* script written in Ottoman Turkish, with each having 11 lines. The titles in the work, however, are in Persian. There are no miniature paintings in the copy, which is interesting. It measures 213 x 127 mm and was copied in 961 AH/1553 AD. Based on the copying date, it is apparent that the work was written immediately following the events being described. At that time, Sinan Pasha was still alive, Sultan Suleyman was on the throne, and Prince Selim (later Sultan Selim II) was still a prince. [31]

At the end of the work, Nigârî states that this book consists of 999 couplets, likening them to pearls gathered in the sea of poetry (Egüz 2020a, 180): [32]

*Bu bahr-ı nazm içinde derc olan dür
Tokuz yüz hem dahı toksan tokuzdur* [33]

There are 999 pearls collected in this sea of poetry. [34]

However, in the available copy, there are only 917 couplets. Therefore, the only known copy of the work lacks eighty two couplets, indicating an overall deficiency of 8 folios. These missing sections should be in the beginning parts of the *tawhid* (a poem on monotheistic belief) and the eulogy for Sinan Pasha. [35]

Form and Genre

Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha is written in the form of a *masnavi*. This poetic form, where each couplet rhymes within itself and is written in *aruz* metre, is commonly used to narrate long stories. The main text is written in the metre of *hazaj*, using the pattern mafâ'îlun mafâ'îlun fa'ûlun, while [36]

the meter of *ramal* is used in the included *murabba*, based on the pattern fā'īlātun fā'īlātun fā'īlātun fā'īlun.

The genre is called *ghazavat-nameh*, meaning narrative works that describe holy wars. [37] *Ghazavat-namehs* have been written about wars centred around a variety of individuals, however, *Nigârî's ghazavat-nameh* is the only known work that covers Sinan Pasha alone.

Storyline: History through Poetry

The manuscript begins with a *tawhid* that lacks a beginning, followed by eulogies for the Prophet Muhammad, praise for the four caliphs, accolades for the Prophet's grandsons Hasan and Husayn, eulogies for Sultan Suleyman, Prince Selim, Grand Vizier Rustem Pasha, and Viziers Ahmed Pasha, İbrahim Pasha, and Haydar Pasha. Afterwards, there is a eulogy for Sinan Pasha, the beginning of which is missing. [38]

The central narrative begins with Spain's fleet besieging the fortress of Mahdia, but Turgut Bey defeats them with a night raid. Then Arab caravans arrive in support of the Spanish army. This is how Nigârî describes it (Egüz 2020a, 116, 118): [39]

Nehengi Aḳdeñiz'üñ Mîr Durğud [40]
İrişdi nāgehān şan koyına ḳurd

Like a wolf catching up to a sheep, Dragut, the crocodile of the Mediterranean, swiftly arrived. [41]

'Arab'dur gerçi aşlı liki fer'î [42]
Ne dîn bilür ne imān u ne şer'î

Mu'āvin oldılar küffāra ol dem [43]
'Aceb mi yirleri olsa cehennem

Görüp bu ḫāli Durğud Beg o şaf-der [44]
Ferāğat eyleyüp dönderdi 'asker

Although they were originally Arab, neither religion nor faith nor Sharia are familiar to them. At that moment, they helped the infidel. It would not be surprising if their place were hell. Dragut, with a pure heart, saw the situation and decided to send back his soldiers. [45]

Turgut Bey returns to Istanbul and informs Sultan Suleyman I of the situation. The Sultan sends Sinan Pasha with troops to the Maghreb as a result. From the Sultan's mouth, here are the poet's words (Egüz 2020a, 119): [46]

Didi kim ğarba var ğayret seniñdür [47]
Sañadur himmetüm nuşret seniñdür

Seniñledür du'āsı ehl-i dîniñ [48]
Ḥarāb eyle diyārın ol la'iniñ

Söyündür āb-ı tığ-ıla o nārı [49]
K'ide düzaḫda ḳamısı ḳarārı

Ḳoma deyyār kimse yak diyārın [50]
Ḥasāret eyle cümle yıḳ ḫişārın

‘Ömer gibi gazā-yı ekber eyle [51]

‘Ali mānendi ‘azm-i Ḥayber eyle

İrüp āvāzesi tā Engüris’e [52]

Bıraksun velvele iklīm-i Rūs’a

Senüñdür hep bu işde rāy u tedbīr [53]

Bu ḥayr işi şakın kim itme te’hīr

Ḳuşan çün tīg iki yirden kuşağūñ [54]

İki gün itme bir menzil tırağūñ

He said: Go west, the effort is yours, my support is with you, victory is yours. [55]

Muslims pray for you. Destroy the cursed one’s land. Extinguish this fire with the water of the sword, so that they all may go to hell. Don’t leave anyone behind. Burn their countries and destroy their fortresses. Like Caliph Omar, embark on a great conquest. Like Ali, march to Khaybar. Make your voice heard in Hungary and in Russia. You are in charge of the strategy and plan in this matter. Do not delay this auspicious task. Fasten your belt on both sides like a sword. Do not stay in the same station for two days.

During the section describing the Sinan Pasha’s ship, Nigârî mentions that he painted the pictures himself on the lanterns (Egüz 2020a, 121): [56]

Meger keştî-i Paşa’ya bir üstād [57]

İki fānūs itmiş anda bünyād

İden ḥādiş aña naqş-ı nigārî [58]

Ḳadīmî bendesi ya’ni Nigārî

A master made two lanterns for Pasha’s ship. A long-time servant of the Pasha, Nigârî drew pictures on them. [59]

As the Ottoman navy prepares for a campaign, the Spanish ambassador in Istanbul sees the fleet and writes an immediate letter to his country (Egüz 2020a, 122–23): [60]

Sipanya’nuñ ki ilçisi karadan [61]

Gelüp irmişdi ol yüzi karadan

Naşārānuñ muḳaddem beglerinden [62]

Cehennem seglerinüñ yeglerinden

(...) [63]

Görüp tonanmayı oldu perişān [64]

Vücūdi oldu yaprak gibi lertzān

Görüp ḥavf itdi İslām’uñ çerisin [65]

Bu her bir geminiñ yeñiçerisin...

Ki ğarba eyledi irsāl-i nāme [66]

Ḳatup söz yirine zehri peyāma

The ambassador of Spain, who is disgraceful, came by land. He was one of the prominent lords of the Christians, among the finest of the hellhounds. Seeing the fleet, he became distressed, and his body trembled like a leaf. Fearing the Muslim soldiers and the janissaries on each ship, he sent a letter to the West, adding poison to the news instead of words. [67]

This news causes fear and concern in Spain (Egüz 2020a, 123–24): [68]

Siyāh rengen boyayup nāmesini [69]
Geyer İspanya mātem cāmesini

(...) [70]

Ṭolar bu ḥavf ġarb-ıla şimāle [71]
Ne İspanya irer çaḳ Portıkal'e

Painting his letter in black, he wears the black mourning clothing of Spain. Fear reigns across the west and north, not only Spain but Portugal as well. [72]

When Sinan Pasha arrives in Messina, the Ottoman army conquers the Agusta fortress. Afterwards, he embarks on an expedition to Malta, capturing Christians and freeing Muslim captives. Nigârî describes the battle as follows (Egüz 2020a, 128, 135): [73]

Çün ol kal'ayla top itdi şavaşı [74]
Yıḳıl git turma diyü vurdı taşı

The cannon engaged in a battle with the fortress, hurling stones and commanding it to collapse and not to resist. [75]

Meger kim toplar olmuş-ıdı aru [76]
Ḳovana dönmiş-ıdı burc u bārū

As if the cannons turned into bees, transforming the walls and towers of the fortress into their hive. [77]

Then the army surrounds Tripoli's fortress. Salih Bey, Turgut Bey and Kabil Bey also participate in this campaign. Sinan Pasha assigns Kabil Bey to command the troops. In the battle, Kabil Bey loses one hand to a cannonball fired by the enemy fleet, but is rewarded by being promoted to the rank of captain. [78]

After a five to six-day siege, the Ottoman army captures a spy outside the fortress who reveals that those inside regret engaging in war. Their expectation was that new soldiers would be sent from Spain to guard the fortress. After hearing this news, the Ottoman army resumes their attack, and conquering the fortress before raising the Turkish flag on the ramparts. [79]

After the conclusion of this string of Sinan Pasha's victories, he invites all the soldiers to festivities. A banquet of soup, pilaf, duck, and goose is prepared, and sherbet is distributed. Robes, promotions, and slaves are distributed as rewards. [80]

Sinan Pasha addresses the *beys* (military and administrative officer) and captains, stating that their goal has been achieved and inquiring about the next step. They suggest that the campaign has fulfilled its purpose, and further continuation may result in harm, so it is appropriate to [81]

return to Istanbul. Sinan Pasha agrees with this recommendation. As a result of this decision, the fleet sets sail for Istanbul the next morning.

Upon reaching the city and arriving in front of the Ottoman palace, cannons are fired, and the soldiers shout “Allah Allah!”. Afterwards, Sinan Pasha returns home, prepares his gifts, and presents himself to the Sultan. The Sultan compliments him, asks about his health, and dresses him in a robe. Sinan Pasha goes home and rests for a few days. [82]

There follows a new chapter in the story. The time for another campaign has come as spring arrives. The Sultan summons Sinan Pasha, dresses him in a golden robe, and approves a new expedition. The order is to go to the west and fight Spain. At an auspicious time, Pasha embarks on another expedition. [83]

In the meantime, Andrea Doria, the Crusader commander, has prepared an army for an attack on the Ottomans. However, his ship runs aground. The following is how Nigârî describes Andrea Doria (Egüz 2020a, 153): [84]

Ol Andirye Dori mel‘ûn (u) bî-dîn [85]
Ṭonanma düzdi İslâm’a tutup kîn

Andrea Doria, a really wicked and faithless man, formed a navy powered by his hatred for Islam. [86]

Sinan Pasha wants to eliminate him and sends Turgut Bey after him. Andrea Doria retreats under heavy cannon fire. Sinan Pasha then arrives with twelve ships. In Nigârî’s words (Egüz 2020a, 154), [87]

Gemilerden şu deñlü taldı deryā [88]
Ki yol bulmadı aķup gitmege mā

The sea became so filled with ships that there was no room for water to flow. [89]

According to the poet, the sea felt anger towards the enemy as well (Egüz 2020a, 163–64): [90]

Hevādan ŧanma emvāc itdi peydā [91]
Aña huŧm itdi (vü) kaŧ çatdı deryā

O bî-dîniñ görüp İslâm’a kînin [92]
Ĝazabdan yāhū çin itdi cebînin

Hevādan baĝladı ŧanma girihler [93]
Ḳutāl için deñiz geydi zirihler

O demde ceng için anuñla ‘ummān [94]
İdindi māhîden tiĝ-ıla kalkan

Do not assume that the sea’s waves are caused by the wind; the sea angrily frowned at the enemy, wrinkling its forehead with disdain for the infidel’s hatred towards Islam. It was not the wind that caused the ripples on the sea’s surface, but rather the sea had clad itself in armor, wielding a sword and a shield made of fish.⁵ [95]

Andrea Doria had numerous soldiers and thirty-nine ships. Seven of these ships were captured, two sank, and the rest disappeared. During the campaign, Kabil Bey, Cafer Reis, Kara Mustafa, and Turgut Bey’s servant Emir Hasan all showed their valor. This battle is also known as the Battle of Ponza (1552). [96]

Afterwards, they return to Istanbul, once again entering with cannon fire. The streets [97]

5 Shieldfish and swordfish are being referred to here.

are filled with people welcoming them. Sinan Pasha prepares gifts for the Sultan, including prisoners, valuable fabrics, and coins. Sultan Suleyman dresses Sinan Pasha in a robe and awards promotions to his soldiers. Sinan Pasha decides to rest for a while, and the main narrative comes to an end here.

At the end of the work, Nigârî speaks about his motivation for writing this book. In addition [98] to praising Sinan Pasha's victories, the poet also seeks Sinan Pasha's help because he believes that he is underpaid (Egüz 2020a, 177):

Yolunda pâdişāhuñ bunca yirde [99]

Çalışdum geh seferde geh hâzarda

Cihānı ser-te-ser seyrān itdüm [100]

Gehi Rūm'a gehi Efrenc'e gitdüm

(...) [101]

Otuz kırk yıl çalışmışken bu çāker [102]

Revā midur baña on beş muqarrer

All for the sake of the Sultan, I worked in many places, both during war and peace. [103] My travels took me across both Europe and Anatolia. Is it fair for a servant who has worked for thirty to forty years to be given only fifteen silver coins?

Afterwards, he prays for Sultan Suleyman (Egüz 2020a, 180):⁶ [104]

Murādum şanma bundan 'arz-ı 'irfān [105]

Ġaraż ibkâ-yı nām-ı Şeh Süleymān

İlāhî devletin pāyende eyle [106]

Sa'ādet mihridür tābende eyle

Haţālardan vücūdı hıttasını [107]

Anuñ hıfz eyle sen olup mu'ini

'Adūsın feth-ile meksūr eyle [108]

Belā zam eyleyüp maḫūr eyle

Vücūdı naḫlini pür bār eyle [109]

Budaḫlarını ber-ḫurdār eyle

Ola bāḫi o şāh-ı 'adl-āyın [110]

Emîn ola belādan diyen āmîn

Rather than displaying my wisdom, I intend to perpetuate the name of Sultan [111] Suleyman. O Allah, make his state enduring, and illuminate the sun of his happiness. Protect his body's land from errors by assisting him. Crush his enemies through

6 The eulogy for Sultan Suleyman I, according to Başkurt (2020), suggests the work was written to be presented to Sultan Suleyman I, but it was never presented due to Sinan Pasha's illness and Rustem Pasha's dismissal.

In fact, while Nigârî was writing, Rustem Pasha and Haydar Pasha hadn't yet been dismissed, and Kara Ahmed Pasha hadn't yet been executed. By the time Nigârî finished his work in 1553, all these events had taken place, Prince Mustafa had been killed, and Sinan Pasha had become ill. All of this may have prevented Nigârî from presenting his work to the Sultan Suleyman I or Sinan Pasha. In spite of this, he could have modified the work by changing the individuals he praised or omitting specific sections. Yet, he did not appear to want to make such changes.

conquests and defeat them with afflictions. Fill the tree of his body with fruits and bring joy to its branches. May the Sultan who brings justice remain eternal, and may everyone who says “Amen” be free of calamities.

In addition, there is a three-couplet poem at the end of the work. In these verses, the incident of Sinan Pasha’s ship sinking and being saved is mentioned, dated to 961 AH/1553 AD. After these couplets, the poet expresses his expectations of Sinan Pasha with a single couplet (Egüz 2020a, 181): [112]

Her gazā nazm itmenüñ bendeñ olupdur mähiri [113]
Lutf u himmet kapusın aç söyledigör şā’iri

This slave is a master at turning every *ghaza* into poetry. Open the door of grace and favour, let the poet tell. [114]

Historical Characters

The following characters appear in the work: [115]

Suleyman the Magnificent

Suleyman the Magnificent ruled the Ottoman Empire from 926 AH/1520 AD until his death in 974 AH/1566 AD. In Ottoman history, Sultan Suleyman’s reign is generally regarded as the period of the greatest justice (Demirtaş 2009). In his book, Nigârî also emphasises the fairness of his administration (Egüz 2020a, 108): [116]

Olalı pāsbān-ı ‘adli çübān [117]
İder kurd u koyun şahrāda seyrān

With the guardian of his justice now a shepherd, the wolf and the sheep can roam together peacefully in the wilderness. [118]

This work includes the panegyric dedicated to Suleyman the Magnificent, as well as Suleyman the Magnificent as a character. As an example, when Turgut Reis learns that the Spanish fleet has arrived and the Arabs are supporting them, he returns to Istanbul and informs Sultan Suleyman. Upon hearing this, the Sultan sends Sinan Pasha on a campaign to Maghreb. Pasha’s return from the expedition is greeted with respect by the Sultan, who awards him a robe. There is also a prayer for Sultan Suleyman at the end of the work. [119]

Prince Selim

He is the son of Sultan Suleyman. Nigârî was very close to him, attending his Manisa and Kütahya assemblies (İsen-Durmuş 2006, 156). [120]

When this work was written, Selim II was not known to be heir to the throne. This work was composed in 961 AH/1553 AD. This corresponds to the period when Prince Mustafa fell out of favour. Mehmed, Mahmud, Abdullah, and Murad were not alive during this period. When this work was copied, Cihangir, already a sickly prince, had died. This would result in either Bayezid or Selim being heir to the throne, and Nigârî prefers Selim (Egüz 2020a, 109): [121]

Egerçi çoğ-ıdı evlād-ı Ya'kūb [122]

Ḳamudan Yūsuf idi hūb u mergūb

Although Jacob had many children, Joseph was the most handsome and most favoured. [123]

Rustem Pasha

In 951 AH/1544 AD, Rustem Pasha served as Grand Vizier for the first time. In 960 AH/1553 AD, he was dismissed for accusations contained in denunciation letters and implicated in Prince Mustafa's death. He was reinstated as Grand Vizier in 962 AH/1555 AD, and died in 968 AH/1561 AD (Uzunçarşılı 2019). [124]

Ghazavat was composed during Rustem Pasha's first term as Grand Vizier. Due to his marriage to Mihrimah Sultan, Rustem Pasha is also the son-in-law of Suleyman the Magnificent. Although several historical sources accuse Rustem Pasha of bribery, oppression, avarice, and cutting certain payments to the poor to enrich the Treasury (Gökbilgin 1956), and it is known that Rustem Pasha was disliked by poets for not favoring them and cutting their payments, Nigârî states he was just (Egüz 2020a, 110): [125]

Ömer-mānend ider 'adli firāvān [126]

Nazīrin görmemişdür Āl-i 'Osmān

He dispenses justice abundantly like Caliph Omar; the Ottoman state has never seen anyone like him. [127]

Kara Ahmed Pasha

As of the writing of this work, he was the Second Vizier. When Rustem Pasha was dismissed from his first term as Grand Vizier in 960 AH/1553 AD, Kara Ahmed Pasha was appointed in his place. He was executed in 962 AH/1555 AD after allegations were made against him by Hurrem Sultan and Mihrimah Sultan, who wanted Rustem Pasha back in office (Uzunçarşılı 2019). [128]

Several historical sources (Emecen 2001, 358; Uzunçarşılı 2019, 551) portray Ahmed Pasha negatively perhaps as a result of his execution, while Nigârî depicts him positively, describing him as generous, humble, and just (Egüz 2020a, 111): [129]

Sehāvet 'āleminde 'ayn-ı Hātem [130]

Şecā'at milketi içinde Rüstem

Tevāzu'la işi dā'im rızādur [131]

Dil ü cāndan muhibb-i evliyādur

'Adālet eylese n'ola müdāmī [132]

'Ömer yiri-durur çün ki maqāmı

In the realm of generosity, he is like Hātem al-Ṭāī; in the land of courage, he is like Rustam. His attitude is always humble and content. He has a genuine love for the saints. Since he holds the position of Caliph Omar, it is no surprise that he is always just. [133]

Ibrahim Pasha

When Nigârî wrote the work, he was the Third Vizier. He rose to Second Vizier and Grand Vizier later. There are conflicting reports regarding his death. 958 AH/1551 AD or 970 AH/1563 AD are the two reports (Mehmed Süreyya 1996, 781). Since he was alive and serving as the Third Vizier when this work was written, the year 970 AH/1563AD seems more likely correct. [134]

According to Ottoman records (Mehmed Süreyya 1996, 782), he was a dignified and honourable person. Nigârî also speaks highly of him, praising his manners, calmness, and prudence (Egüz 2020a, 111): [135]

Hayâ vü hilmde rüchân anuñdur [136]
Maķâm-ı hazret-i ‘Osmân anuñdur

His moral character and gentleness make him stand out. He holds the position of Caliph Osman. [137]

Haydar Pasha

He was the Fourth Vizier at the time of writing this work, also known as Hadım Haydar Pasha. After the assassination of Prince Mustafa, he was removed from office along with Rustem Pasha (Hammer-Purgstall 1986, 46). According to the *Sicill-i Osmani* (Mehmed Süreyya 1996, 659), Haydar Pasha, a knowledgeable and generous person, died in 971 AH/1564 AD. Additionally, Nigârî praises him and compares him to Caliph Ali (Egüz 2020a, 112): [138]

N’ola dirsem aña iy dil velidür [139]
Çü sîretde şeh-i merdân ‘Alî’dür

Oh heart, calling him a saint is not surprising, since his nature and temperament are similar to Caliph Ali. [140]

Sinan Pasha

Sinan Pasha, also known as Sinaneddin Yusuf Pasha, is the brother of Grand Vizier Rustem Pasha. In the aftermath of the death of Grand Admiral Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha briefly served as Grand Admiral. Later, Sinan Pasha took the position. Many believed Sinan Pasha was appointed to this position because he was the brother of Grand Vizier Rustem Pasha. He died in 961 AH/1554 AD (Uzunçarşılı 2019). [141]

Sinan Pasha is mentioned in a Spanish manuscript dating back to 1557 (Villalon 2011). Although the author of the work is unknown, it is believed that it was based on the narrative of a Spanish captive in Istanbul. The manuscript is presented as a conversation between three people, including Pedro de Urdemalas. Pedro claimed to be a medical doctor when he was captured near Ponza by the Ottoman navy in 1552. Reciting information from medical books, he claimed to have treated Sinan Pasha’s illnesses. In Pedro’s account, Sinan Pasha was bedridden for seven months before he died. [142]

Nigârî dedicates his book to Sinan Pasha, emphasizing his generosity, justice, and values. Sinan Pasha appears as a central character in the book, and his praise is highlighted with the verse “Çün Sinân Paşa-yı gâzîdür bizüm serdârumuz” repeated at the end of each stanza to emphasise his importance, beginning with the couplets below (Egüz 2020a, 150): [143]

Berr ü bahrı tutdı gün gibi bu gün âşârumuz [144]

Katreyüz gerçi velî deryâ-durur miqdârumuz

Hızır'dur bize kulağuz 'avn-ı Hâk dümdârumuz [145]

Çün Sinân Paşa-yı gâzîdür bizüm serdârumuz

Our impact spread over land and sea like the sun. We may be just a drop, but our value is like a sea. Khidr is our guide, and Allah's help is our rear guard commander. It is because Gazi Sinan Pasha is our commander. [146]

When Turgut Reis informs Suleyman the Magnificent of the Spanish fleet's arrival and the Arabs' support, he summons Sinan Pasha and sends him on a campaign to the Maghreb. As Sinan Pasha set out on his campaigns, he conquers territories and displays many heroic deeds (Egüz 2020a, 122): [147]

Sa'âdet birle Paşa-yı gâzanfer [148]

Şikâr idüp yürür kişver-be-kişver

The lion-like Pasha marches proudly from country to country hunting. [149]

After Tripoli's conquest, he hosts a feast for the soldiers. Subsequently, he dresses some of them in robes and grants promotions to others. After returning from the Tripoli campaign, he presents gifts to the Sultan. [150]

According to the narrative, Sinan Pasha personally fights with a sword during the war against Andrea Doria. He arrives with twelve ships and defeats the enemy (Egüz 2020a, 163): [151]

On iki keştî birle yitdi Paşa [152]

'Adû-yı dîne gör ne itdi Paşa

Pasha caught up with twelve ships. See what he did to the religion's enemy. [153]

Upon his return to Istanbul, he presents captives, valuable fabrics, and European coins as gifts to the Sultan and he receives numerous honours and favours from the Sultan. [154]

The last part of Nigârî's work mentions that Sinan Pasha's ship sank at sea, just as Pedro mentioned it in his story (Villalon 2011, 286; Egüz 2020a, 180–81): [155]

İrüp nâ-geh kazâ-yı âsümânî [156]

Batup deryâ-y-ıla örtildi barça

Deñiz tutmuşdı şafrâsı bulandı [157]

Çıkınca çok yire sürtildi barça

İrüp ilhâm-ı Hâk Haydar Re'is'e [158]

Didi târihini kurtıldı barça

Suddenly, a disaster came from the sky; the ship sank, and the sea covered it. Due to seasickness the ship's stomach became upset, and it was dragged to many places until it surfaced. Captain Haydar (Nigârî), inspired by Allah, referred to the date of this event as "the ship was saved."⁷ [159]

After that, Sinan Pasha retires. Nigârî does not mention Sinan Pasha's illness. [160]

7 Here, the date on which the ship sank, 961 AH (1553 AD), is given in terms of the numerical value (abjad) represented by the expression "kurtıldı barça."

Turgut Reis (Dragut)

When this work was written, Turgut Reis was a naval commander. During his childhood, he engaged in archery and wrestling, before turning to maritime activities (Katip Çelebi 2008, 100). He mastered maritime skills under Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha and participated in many naval battles, such as the Battle of Preveza in 1540. Giannettino Doria, the nephew of Andrea Doria, captured him during a campaign to Corsica in 1540. Three years later, Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha went to Genoa and threatened to burn the city if Turgut Reis was not released. As a result of this threat, Turgut Reis was released (Bostan 2012, 417). According to Jameison (2012, 48), Barbaros paid 3.500 ducats for his release. [161]

As a consequence of his captivity in Genoa, Turgut Reis conducted raids on Liguria and Corsica, controlled by the Genoese (Jameison 2012, 48). Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha praised him and bestowed his spare ship on him (Katip Çelebi 2008, 100). In the following years, Turgut Reis expanded his ship fleet through various expeditions. As mentioned in this work, he conquered Mahdia, which became his *sanjak*. [162]

Sultan Suleyman promised to appoint him as a *beylerbeyi* (commander of commanders) if Tripoli was conquered. As stated in Nigârî's *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha*, Turgut Reis's fleet, together with Sinan Pasha's 120 galleys, launched a campaign to Tripoli, plundered Gozo, and captured Tripoli. However, due to the appointment of Hadım Murad Aga as *beylerbeyi* instead of himself after the conquest, Turgut Reis continued his movement towards the Maghreb. He was followed by the other captains (Bostan 2012, 417). When Sinan Pasha realised this, he sent intermediaries to reconcile with Turgut Reis, which led to Turgut Reis's agreement to return to Istanbul (Danişmend 1971, 278). In 958 AH/1551 AD, he was appointed *sanjakkbeyi* (administrative command) of Karlılı. When he conquered Selase Castle and took seven thousand prisoners, he was offered to be appointed *beylerbeyi* of Algiers as a reward, but he declined (Mehmed Süreyya 1996, 1639). [163]

Several sources (Danişmend 1971; Bostan 2012) indicate that Sultan Suleyman ignored on Turgut Reis's request for an administrative appointment when Rustem Pasha reported to the Sultan that Turgut Reis grew up in the countryside and did not want an administrative appointment. On the other hand, Katip Çelebi (2008, 96) states that, while the Tripoli province was promised to Turgut Bey, Sinan Pasha gave it to Hadım Murad Aga. Turgut Bey later took it from the Sultan himself. In 963 AH/1556 AD, Turgut Reis became the *beylerbeyi* of Tripoli when he requested the position of the Sultan during the Edirne campaign. Moreover, he was appointed as Algiers's *beylerbeyi* in 951 AH/1554 AD. He also played a role in Cerbe Island's conquest. A cannonball killed him during the siege of Malta in 972 AH/1565 AD (Mehmed Süreyya 1996, 1639). [164]

Turgut Reis did not become a Grand Admiral, but he was respected and obeyed by the people around him as if he did. Nigârî emphasises Turgut Reis's heroism in his work (Egüz 2020a, 117): [165]

Çıkar şimşek mişâli tiğ kından [166]
Şan ejder od saçuban çıkdı inden

İder ol şîr-i ner irdüğini hürd [167]
Koyunuñ kellesine girdi şan kurd

(...) [168]

O cengde Mîr Durgud şîr-şavlet [169]

Kimin kırdı kimi kıldı hezimet

The sword emerges from the scabbard like lightning, as if a dragon comes out of his lair breathing fire. That male lion, as if a wolf grabbed a sheep's head, annihilates what he catches into pieces. In that battle, Dragut, attacking like a lion, killed some and defeated others. [170]

Nigârî praises Turgut Reis again in the expedition against Andrea Doria's enemy fleet. He describes him as not only a fierce warrior but also generous (Egüz 2020a, 156): [171]

Sehâ vü cüdda mânend-i Hâtem [172]
Şecâ'at anda hatm olmuş çü Rüstem

He is like Hâtem al-Tâi in generosity, and his courage has reached its peak, like Rustam. [173]

Although sources (Katip Çelebi 2008, 96; Danişmend 1971, 296; Gürkan 2020, 475) indicate that the relationship between Sinan Pasha and Turgut Reis was not very good, Nigârî's work does not mention this claim. Sinan Pasha and Turgut Reis appear to be working harmoniously in this work. Sinan Pasha, for example, instructs Turgut Reis to go after Andrea Doria by saying (Egüz 2020a, 157): [174]

Didi Paşa-yı gâzî koma Durğud [175]
Yitiş kaçmasun ol mel'ûnı durğud

Ghazi Pasha said, "Dragut, don't let him go. Catch and stop that cursed person, don't let him escape." [176]

Moreover, no mention is made in this work of Turgut Reis not being appointed *beylerbeyi* after the conquest of Tripoli. According to the text, there was a consultation after the conquest of Tripoli, and the *beys* and captains decided to return to Istanbul, so they did (Egüz 2020a, 145–46): [177]

Pes andan feth idüp Paşa kelâmu [178]
Didi maşşūdumuz oldı tamâmî

Nedür tedbîr şimdenşoñra söyleñ [179]
Ne ise rây-i şâ'ib anı eyleñ

Şu kim lâynıkdur 'ırz-ı pâdişâha [180]
Muvâfık ola hem emr-i İläh'a

Didi begler re'isler bârekallâh [181]
Münâsib eylemekdür 'azm-i dergâh

Ġazâ evkâtı gıtdi bahır u berden [182]
Żarar lâzım gelür min ba'd seferden

Budur tedbîr-i şâ'ib kim hemân-dem [183]
Gidesiz pâdişâha şâd u hurrem

Çü herkes sözünü eyledi âhîr [184]
Didi ferdâ olalum pes müsâfir

Afterwards, Pasha said, “We have achieved our goal. Let us know your wise suggestions for what we should do next. Make sure your ideas are in line with a Sultan’s honor and Allah’s command.” The beys and captains said, “Bless us, O God. It is appropriate to return to Istanbul. The time for war on land and sea has passed. From now on, going on a campaign would be harmful. The right thing to do is to go to the Sultan joyfully.” When everyone finished speaking, the Pasha said, “Then let us set out tomorrow.” [185]

Andrea Doria

Andrea Doria, who lived between 1466 and 1560, is considered the greatest Italian sailor of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He joined the Papal Guard after becoming an orphan in 1484 and served as a sailor for both his city-state Genoa and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who conquered Genoa in 1522 (Bradford 2006, 400). Moreover, he led the Crusader fleet formed by Spain, the Papacy, Austria, Venice, Portugal, Genoa, and Malta at the Battle of Preveza in 1538. The Ottoman fleet led by Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha won this battle. [186]

At the Battle of Ponza in 1552, the Ottoman navy defeated the Spanish-Genoese navy commanded by Andrea Doria. As Nigârî describes the battle, Andrea Doria is described as malignant, vile, cold-faced, cold-spoken, stone-hearted (Egüz 2020a, 153): [187]

‘Aceb murdâr (u) mel‘ün-idi ol it [188]
Yüzini görse ger ürkerdi ‘ifrît

Şovuk şüretlü kalbi seng-i hārā [189]
Kelāmi buza beñzer yüzi kara

Olup küffār-ı bed-kîşe re‘is ol [190]
Çeker dîn ehline ceyş-i hasîs ol

Yavuz kaşd-ıla yatlu niyyet ile [191]
Hücüm itdi ulu cem‘iyyet ile

He was a highly malignant and vile person. Even the devil himself would fear to look upon his face. He was cold-faced, with a heart like marble, words like ice, and he was disgraceful. As a captain of the faithless enemy, he gathers troops against the Muslims. Having a malicious intent, he launched a large-scale attack. [192]

Nigârî states that Andrea Doria prepared a fleet against the Ottoman navy, but luck did not favour him, and he had to retreat from the intense artillery fire of the Ottoman navy. While he brought 39 ships to the battle, seven of them were captured by the Ottoman navy, two sank, and 30 went missing (Egüz 2020a, 166–67): [193]

Ki Andırye Țori mel‘ün u bî-dîn [194]
Gelicek ehl-i İslām’a tutup kîn

‘Adedsüzdi egerçi âdemîsi [195]
Velî otuz toköz idi gemisi

(...) [196]

Yedisi oldı fetḥ ikisi ğark-āb [197]
Otuzı daḥı nā-peydā vü nā-yāb

(...) [198]

‘Adū keştîleri hoş oldu yağma [199]
Yedisin halk ikisin yidi deryā

Spurred by his hatred of Islam, Andrea Doria, the accursed and faithless, came [200]
with countless men, but only 39 ships. Seven ships were conquered, two sank, and
thirty were lost. The enemy ships were thoroughly plundered; seven by the people
and two by the sea.

Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha

A famous Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy in the sixteenth century was Barbaros Hayreddin [201]
Pasha. In the West, he is also known as Barba Rossa. As a result of his efforts, the Ottoman
navy gained a great victory over the Crusader army at Preveza. When he served as Grand
Admiral, the Ottoman navy was at its peak. The only mention of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha in
this work is in connection with the conquest of Tripoli. According to Nigârî, despite Barbaros’s
fame, and the fear he instilled in the West, he could not capture Tripoli. It was Sinan Pasha
who was fortunate enough to conquer it (Egüz 2020a, 142):

Şu deñlü gâzi iken Barborosa [202]
Ki adı tolmuş-ıdı Rûm u Rûs’a

Diyâr-ı garba şalmuşken hirāsân [203]
Alurken her hişâr u hişni âsân

Niçe def’a gelüp bulmadı furşat [204]
Müyesser kılmadı bu fethi devlet

Sinân Paşa’ya olmuşdı müyesser [205]
Kažâ-yı Haq aña itmiş mukadder

While Barbarossa’s name spread to Anatolia and Russian land, and he was such [206]
a warrior, instilling fear in Western countries and easily capturing their castles,
despite many attempts -to capture Tripoli- he did not find the opportunity, and
this conquest was not granted to him. However, it was granted to Sinan Pasha; it
was his destiny as decided by God.

Salih Bey

As a sailor, he participated in many Ottoman naval campaigns. He embarked on expeditions [207]
with Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha. He also participated in the Battle of Preveza. In the year 964
AH/1557 AD, as the *beylerbeyi* of Algiers, he conquered the fortress of Becaye. Salih Bey died
at the end of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent’s reign (r. 1520–1566) (Mehmed Süreyya 1996,
1471).

In this work, Salih Bey appears during the Tripoli campaign. Nigârî describes his valour and [208]
generosity as follows (Egüz 2020a, 132):

Biri Şâlih Beg ol şâhib-sa‘âdet [209]
Tamâm anda şalâh-ıla şecâ‘at

Sehâda Hâtem-i Tayy harbde Rüstem [210]
Gezer bahrı sa‘âdetle müselleme

Salih Bey is one of them, a fortunate individual known for his goodness and courage. [211]
In generosity, he is like Ḥātem al-Ṭāī, and in war, he is like Rustam. He roams the sea prosperously.

Kabil Bey

He is a sailor who served in Sinan Pasha's navy. As Nigârî mentions, he commanded soldiers [212]
during the Tripoli expedition. As a result of being hit by a cannonball during the Tripoli war, he lost one of his hands (Egüz 2020a, 137):

İderken kāfir-ile d̄arb u ḥarbi [213]
Aña nā-geh t̄okundı t̄op d̄arbt

Ḳazāsı bu ḳadar irdi Ḥudā'nuñ [214]
Eli d̄üşdi ḡazāda ol c̄üvānuñ

Olur ceng içre desti ḡarḳa-i ḳan [215]
D̄üşüp bahra o pençe oldı mercān

A cannonball struck him suddenly while he was fighting with the infidel. What [216]
Allah destined happened, and the young man's hand was severed during the battle. During the battle, his blood-soaked hand fell into the sea, turning into coral.

The incident deeply saddened Sinan Pasha and he appointed him a captain (Egüz 2020a, 138): [217]

Elin aldı ḳapudan itdi Paşa [218]
Nigārî vaşfin itse n'ola inşā

Taking him by the hand, the Pasha appointed him a captain. If Nigârî describes his [219]
qualities, it would not be surprising.

Kabil Bey also participated in the battle against Andrea Doria's navy where he displayed valour. [220]
Nigârî says he attacked the enemy from all sides, fearlessly fighting without considering his own life (Egüz 2020a, 168–69).

Cafer Reis

He is a sailor among Turgut Reis's companions. Katip Çelebi (2008, 100) mentions Deli Cafer [221]
when discussing Turgut Reis's companions. Nigârî, on the other hand, refers to him as *Sinan Beg oğlu* (Sinan Bey's son) (Egüz 2020a, 169).

He is the one who captures Andrea Doria's ship, according to the work. As he battles, he [222]
boards the ship and conquers it (Egüz 2020a, 169):

Çalışdı çok sipāhu vü levendi [223]
Gemiyi fetḥ idüp girdi kendi

Şu deñlü kāfir-ile ḳıldı cengi [224]
Ki bahruñ cümle mercān oldı rengi

Şecā'atle 'Alī nāmıyla Ca'fer [225]
Bahādur hem şeci' vü hem dilāver

He fought with numerous soldiers, captured the ship, and entered inside. His constant fighting with the infidels caused the sea to turn coral-coloured. His courage is similar to Caliph Ali's, and his name is Cafer. Brave, valiant, and courageous, he is. [226]

Kara Mustafa

He was one of the navy captains. Katip Çelebi (2008, 98) states that he campaigned with Seydi Ali Reis in 1554. In Nigârî's words, he conquered a ship in Andrea Doria's fleet, and as a result was given a lantern and promoted to captain (Egüz 2020a, 170): [227]

Ḳara Muṣtafâ ol merd-i mükemmel [228]

Geminüñ birin ol fetḥ itdi evvel

İdüp alduğı keṣtiyi temâṣâ [229]

Fener virdi ḳapudan itdi Paṣa

Dilâverdür seḫîdür pür hünerdür [230]

Muḫibb-i evliyâdur gerçek erdür

Ṣu deñlü ḳadri var kim rûz-ı heycâ [231]

Yiter Andire Ṭori'ye o tenhâ

Kara Mustafa, that excellent man, first conquered one of the ships. Pasha, while watching the ship he conquered, gave him a lantern and made him a captain. He is brave, generous, skilled, loves saints, and is a true hero. On the day of battle, he is so mighty that he alone is enough against Andrea Doria. [232]

Hasan Reis

He is a sailor among Turgut Reis's companions. Hasan Reis is Turgut Bey's servant, according to Nigârî, who calls him the wolf of the Mediterranean (Egüz 2020a, 170). He boards one of Andrea Doria's ships and conquers it. On the captured ship, Muslim captives serve as rowers. Hasan Reis liberates them (Egüz 2020a, 171): [233]

Alındı keṣti ehli ṣâd oldı [234]

Esîr iken ḳamu âzâd oldı

İçinde her birinüñ ehl-i İslâm [235]

Kürek çekmekden olmuş ḳadleri lâm

Ayaḳlarında varken bend-i âhen [236]

Başın ḳurtardı çıḳdı pây-bendden

Çıḳup her bir gemiye sancaḳ-ı ṣâh [237]

Oḳundı âyet-i Naṣrun min-Allâh

The ship was captured, and everyone on board was happy. All of them were freed while they were captives. From rowing, the bodies of the Muslims on each ship were bent like the letter *Lam* (ل). Iron shackles bound their feet, yet they freed their heads. On each ship, the imperial flag was raised, and the verse of *Nasrun min-Allah*⁸ was recited. [238]

8 "Nasrun min Allahi, wa fathun qareeb" is a verse in the Quran, which means "help from Allah and a near victory" (As-Saff, 61: 13).

There are also unnamed people mentioned in the work, including bey of Messina, the Spanish ban, the Spanish ambassador, infidels, spies, Arabs, and the people of Istanbul. [239]

Places

This work mentions the following locations: [240]

Mahdia

As a peninsula along Tunisia's Mediterranean coast, Mahdia passed under the rule of numerous people, from the Fatimids to the Zirids and Almohads, drawing the attention of sea pirates (Kavas 2003, 387). [241]

The city became an independent emirate in 1540 after Turgut Reis invaded it. During a siege by Andrea Doria, the Crusaders seized the city (Kavas 2003, 387). As narrated in this work, when the Spaniards sent soldiers to Mahdia and captured it, the Ottoman navy set sail towards Mahdia (Egüz 2020a, 116): [242]

İrer Mehdiye'ye āhîr o küffâr [243]

Hidāyetden birisinde yoğ āsâr

Ꞑuşadup pes yemîn-ile yesârı [244]

Alurlar orta yire ol hişârı

İderler bir niçe gün ceng ü āşûb [245]

Tüfeng-ile yağar yağmur gibi top

Eventually, the infidels, who have not found the right path (Islam), reach Mahdia. They besiege its right and left, and the fortress remains in the middle. For days, they fight with rifles, and cannonballs fall like rain. [246]

During the Ottoman invasion of Tripoli in 1551, Mahdia was also captured by the Ottomans. [247]

Messina

Messina is a strategic location located in northeastern Sicily. Turgut Reis raided commercial ships and coastal towns in Sicily, capturing Pantelleria in 1540 (Ruggeri 2018, 1:228). [248]

In the narrative, Augusta Castle in Messina is mentioned as a well-built castle that was captured and destroyed by the Ottoman navy (Egüz 2020a, 126): [249]

Sa'âdetle gidiip menzil-be-menzil [250]

Mesine sâhiline şaldı maħmil

Orada var-ıdı bir huşn-ı ma'mûr [251]

Ağısta dimek-ile nâmu meşhûr

With prosperity, they reached Messina shores, station by station. There was a well-fortified castle known as Augusta. [252]

Bu fetħi eyleyüp Paşa çü Haydar [253]

O huşnu yakdı yıkdı hemçü Hayber

Like Caliph Ali, the Pasha accomplished this conquest and burned and destroyed that castle like Hayber. [254]

Malta

Malta, an island between Sicily and Africa, changed hands through history among Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Muslims, Normans, and Aragonese, becoming a refuge for the Knights of Saint John expelled from Rhodes (Bostan 2003, 539). From 1540 onwards, Turgut Reis conducted raids on Malta. Under the leadership of Sinan Pasha, in 1551, the Ottoman navy landed on Malta, capturing the outer parts of the city and Gozo Island. [255]

In the narrative, Malta's formidable fortress is emphasised, along with the Ottoman navy's eventual capture of the fortress (Egüz 2020a, 126, 130): [256]

İçinde kal'ası var hayli muhkem [257]
Nazîrin görmemişdür 'ayn-ı 'âlem

It has a very strong fortress within it, such that the world has not seen its equal. [258]

Şınup ol dem yüzün dönderdi küffâr [259]
Nice ceng itsün ejderhâ-ile mâr

Bu resme itdiler çün darb u harbi [260]
Alurlar kal'a-ı küffârı darbî

(...) [261]

Esîr olup niçe küffâr-ı bî-dâd [262]
Esîr-i ehl-i İslâm oldu âzâd

İderler hep hişârı nehb ü gâret [263]
Alurlar mâlını görüp ganîmet

The infidels were defeated and retreated. How can a dragon and a snake fight? By fighting and attacking in this way, they captured the infidels' fortress. Many cruel infidels became captives, and Muslim captives were set free. They plunder the fortress and take away their belongings as spoils. [264]

Tripoli

Tripoli passed through various rulers before the Spanish occupied it in 1510 and the Knights of Saint John settled there in 1523. For 42 years, the Spaniards controlled Tripoli (Kavas 2012, 288). [265]

The city of Tripoli was governed by two administrators, one Arab and one Christian (Egüz 2020a, 131): [266]

Qadîmî ehl-i İslâm'ıñ ocağı [267]
'Arab begleriniñ eski turağı

Alup küffâr anı itmişdi mesken [268]
Musahhar eyleyüp kırk elli yıldan

İki beg olmuş ol kal'aya nâzır [269]
'Arab biri anuñ birisi kâfir

'Arab kavminuñ ol ehl-i nifâkı [270]
Varup kâfirle itmiş ittifâkı

For centuries, it was the home of Muslims and the stopover for Arab *beys*. Infidels seized and occupied it for forty to fifty years. In the fortress, there were two *beys*, one Arab and one infidel. The instigator of discord from the Arab tribe went and allied with infidels. [271]

As narrated in Nigârî's account, in 1551, the Ottoman navy, led by Sinan Pasha, conquered Tripoli (Egüz 2020a, 141–42): [272]

Hişârî feth idüp ceş-i mücâhid [273]

Ġarîk-ı seyl-i tiğ oldı mu'ânid

Hişârî cümle vîrân eylediler [274]

İçin yağma vü talan eylediler

Zer ü sîm ol kadar pâ-mâl oldı [275]

Gemiler içi mâl-â-mâl oldı

İrüp 'avnu Hudâ-yı müste'ânûñ [276]

Esîr oldı kamu küffârî anuñ

Onuncı gün alındı rûz-ı cum'a [277]

Müyesser kıldı Hâk fethin bu cem'e

The mujahids conquered the fortress; their obstinate enemies drowned in floods of swords. They completely destroyed the fortress, plundering and looting its contents. There was so much silver and gold seized that the ships were overflowing. As a result of Allah's help, all the infidels became captives. On the tenth day, a Friday, Allah granted this community conquest. [278]

As is seen in the poem, the conquest is vividly described, highlighting not only the victory and spoils but also explicitly marking the day of triumph as a Friday, the tenth day. [279]

Istanbul

Istanbul was conquered by Sultan Mehmed II in 1453 and became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. [280]

Nigârî states that Turgut Reis visited Istanbul after returning from Mahdia to inform the Sultan of the events, and Sinan Pasha returned to Istanbul after his first campaign and the ships fired cannon shots in front of the Palace (Egüz 2020a, 146): [281]

Gelüp menzil-be-menzil şanasın mâh [282]

Boğazı geçdi kıldı 'azm-i dergâh

Sarây-ı 'âmire önünde çün kim [283]

Sa'âdetle irişdi Mîr-i muķim

Buyurdu top ata cümle gemiler [284]

Şadâ-yı Allâh Allâh ide 'asker

It arrived station by station like the moon, crossed the Bosphorus, and headed towards the Palace. Upon reaching the front of the Palace with prosperity, he ordered all the ships to fire cannons and the soldiers to shout "Allah Allah!" [285]

However, the narrative does not provide specific details about Istanbul. [286]

Conclusion

Several studies on Nigârî have been conducted in Turkish and in other languages. The majority of these studies, however, have focused on his role as a painter. As Nigârî's literary work was not published for a long time, his literary persona was overshadowed by his talent as a miniature painter. [287]

In *Ghazavat-i Sinan Pasha*, Nigârî vividly recounts Ottoman naval battles during Sinan Pasha's admiralty, providing crucial firsthand accounts of events between 1551 to 1553. The work is an important source not only for classical Turkish literature but also for Ottoman naval history, offering realistic portrayals and intricate details of these campaigns. [288]

The work also provides detailed accounts of the warring fleets. It describes, for example, Turgut Reis (Dragut) killing the enemy commander in Mahdia, Sultan Suleyman's orders to send the Ottoman fleet on an expedition, and the reaction of the Spanish ambassador, who, upon seeing the fleet, was filled with fear and quickly reported back to his country. The work notes that both the Spanish and Ottoman fleets were large in number, and describes the use of cannons, rifles, and arrows in battles. It also highlights that both men and women fought together in Malta. Additionally it mentions Andrea Doria's arrival with 39 ships, of which 7 were captured, 2 sank, and 30 disappeared. After the victory, Muslim prisoners were freed, Christians were taken captive, and loot was seized from both the captured castles and ships. [289]

There is no detailed information in the work about the changes made by Muslims in the captured Christian lands. However, it is stated that the Ottoman soldiers burned and destroyed the castles they captured and took plunder and booty. When discussing Tripoli, the poet mentions that non-Muslims were first invited to Islam, and when they refused, the Ottomans fired at the castle with cannons. While Sultan Suleyman's command to either collect *haraç* tax or expel the Christians is mentioned, there is no further information on taxes collected from Christians elsewhere in the work. [290]

However, it is important to remember that historical and literary sources can differ at times, and both may lack objectivity. For instance, historical records indicate a disagreement between Sinan Pasha and Turgut Reis, yet Nigârî, despite being an active participant in naval expeditions and serving as a captain, does not mention witnessing such a difference of opinion. Although it is unlikely that Nigârî was unaware of this disagreement, he may have chosen not to highlight it to maintain favour with Sinan Pasha or Sultan Suleyman I. Therefore, he might have avoided drawing attention to any conflicts that could harm Pasha's reputation. [291]

Sinan Pasha is clearly the central figure in the work, and Nigârî consistently emphasises Sinan Pasha's contribution to these victories. It is, therefore, not surprising that the poet does not focus extensively on Turgut Reis. However, Nigârî does not completely ignore Turgut Reis, as he emphasises his courage, heroism, and success in battle in many parts of the work. [292]

The influence of Islam is deeply embedded in the work. It begins with praise for the Prophet, the four caliphs, and the Prophet's grandsons Hasan and Hüseyin, following a monotheistic verse, and the main section describes wars fought for the sake of Islam. The poet highlights the religious fervors of the soldiers, depicting them shouting "Allah Allah" during attacks, references prayers, and comparing heroic soldiers to Caliph Ali. Quranic verses are also referenced throughout. [293]

Given that the poet was a Muslim soldier fighting for the Ottoman navy against Christians, it is not unusual to find negative remarks about Christians, with terms like "devil," "dog," "prone to bloodshed," and "highwayman" being used, alongside religiously charged phrases [294]

such as “without a trace of the true path of Islam,” “irreligious,” “enemy of the friends of Allah,” “misguided,” and “enemy of Muslims.” The statement that the dead enemy commander goes to hell also reflects this religious perception. In this context, it is understandable that Nigârî characterised Arabs supporting Christians against Turgut Reis in Mahdia as ignorant of religion and Sharia. Because it is a sacred conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims, the poet expects Muslims to support each other, and he is also dissatisfied with the administration of Tripoli by both an Arab and a Christian leader.

To conclude, it is nevertheless impossible to deny that epic poems are based on true events. [295] The author of this work was personally involved in the campaigns described in it, so he describes them in his own words, in a way that cannot be found in historical works. The narrative also exhibits realistic qualities, especially in battle descriptions. Although this work is not a historical source in its own right, it can be used as a supplementary source from a historical perspective.

Moreover, despite the lack of miniature paintings, the existing copy of the work can still [296] be used for art history studies, since Nigârî offers invaluable insights into his personal life. Therefore, interdisciplinary studies of him and his work across a broad range of academic fields will be crucial to discovering new insights in the future.

Acknowledgment

This article is part of the special issue “Entangled Histories and Cultures: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Premodern Mediterranean,” edited by Ahmed M. Sheir and Muhammad Imran Khan (Trinity College Dublin). It is conducted within the framework of the ERC-funded project “Arabic Poetry in the Cairo Genizah (APCG)” at Trinity College Dublin, in collaboration with Cambridge University. The APCG project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 851411).

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