AN UNDATED FRAGMENT OF A BERAT CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF A MÜTEFERRIKA

The Ottoman berat preserved, as Additional MS 28565, in Cambridge University Library, poses an enigma — no date. Even its accession to the Library was not recorded, but it may have formed part, with some other Ottoman documents, of the Burckhardt Bequest of 1819. The document is in an imperfect state; the tuğra together with probably the first line of text, containing the nişan-i şerif expositio, seem to have been cut off, as has the end of the document, comprising the text of the conclusion of the comminatio, the sanctio, the corroboratio, the date and place of issue. We are left with a piece of paper measuring 82x36 cm., backed with canvas, with seven lines of text on one side, written throughout in a splendid divani celisi, such as one sees used sometimes only for the expositio of original documents. Black and red inks are used, alternately, for blocks of text of varying sizes, and four circlets of gold paint were placed at regular intervals over every line of writing, each of which is at least 3 cm. high and rises sharply on the left-hand side. The writing is extremely beautiful, like fine lace, very difficult to read, but we have to bear in mind that this calligraphic masterpiece is issued in favour of an expert, a Divan official. A comparable document, but not so beautiful, is the berat of A. H. 1028/A. D. 1619 given as facsimile 18 in Guboglu, Paleografia.

Our fragment comprises the narratio (begins: Bundan akdem), the dispositio and part of the comminatio, hence its date and the Sultan’s name in the tuğra are lost. However, a clue towards its dating is given in line 4, as follows: ‘... ikiyüz nefer müteferrika ve ikiyüz nefer çavuş ve elli divan-i alışanım kâtibi ve (blank) nefer defter-i hakanı kâtibi ve (blank) nefer şagirdi gedikli olup…’. We find in the Kanunname drawn up by Tevkii Abdurrahman (Millî Tetebbular Mecmuası, II, 543) this the penultimate law, the Kanun-i Gedikliyan: 'Gedikli müteferrika ikiyüz neferdir. Gedikli çavuş ikiyüz
neferdir. Gedikli divan kâtiibi altmış neferdir, şagirdi on sekiz neferdir. Gedikli defter-i hakani kâtiibi on altı neferdir, şagirdi yirmi altı neferdir.

Bu mezâkurlardan ve züema ve erbab-i timardan ve solaktan ve peykten bir ferd defterli olmak kanun değildir. Amma bütün sipahilerden ve ulûfe müteferrika ve ulûfe cavuş defterli olagelmistir.’ The Kanun-name was compiled in A. H. 1087, st the command of the Grand Vizier Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa, that is between his appointment to office on 28 Şaban 1087/5 November 1676 and the end of the year, 5 March 1866. Mehmed IV (1648—1687) was Sultan. It is likely that our berat was issued soon after and consequent upon the promulgation of the Kanun.

I offer here a transcription of the fragment, with thanks to Profesor Filipović and Dr Abrahamowicz for their kind help, together with a tentative translation. A summary of the contents follows:

The Sultan (Мehmed IV) has been informed about the decline in numbers of his soldiers on campaign and in the garrisons, due to the absenteeism of members of the Court and Divan service, namely Müteferrikas, Çavuşes, Scribes and Apprentices (şagırd). A roll-call (yoklama) of zeamets and timars had been ordered and a limit had been set on the holdings of such people who later, after having been appointed, failed to answer the call to join their posts during a naval expedition.

The Sultan declares that, like his noble ancestors who devoted themselves to the Gaza and Cihad and were concerned with strengthening the frontiers and equipping the armies, he also is occupied with the important matter of setting in order (tanzim) the armed forces. Thus, a ferman, bearing the Sultan’s own handwriting (hatt-i hümayun), has been issued, commanding that a certain number of such people, that is 200 Müteferrikas, 200 Çavuşes, 50 Scribes of the Divan with their Apprentices and an unspecified number of Scribes from the Imperial Tax-office (Defter-i Hakani) and their Apprentices, who have given good service to the Empire, shall be rewarded with a privilege (gedikli), on condition that they all go on campaign in their divisions when called and have their holdings recorded in the account-books (gedikli defterleri) in the Inner Imperial Treasury (İÇ Hazine-i Âmire). When one of their number dies or his holding becomes vacant (mahlu!) care must be taken to maintain the status quo by informing the Sultan and, as long as he has not issued an order commanding otherwise, by seeing that the holdings are not transferred, and by never allowing anything contrary to this to be done.

Following that ferman this berat is given. Since one of the Müteferrikas of the Imperial Court, Yusuf, has died, his zeamet of 20,000 akses, derived from the village of Qazan Binari in the district (nahiye) of Şumni in the sancak of Niğbolu, has become vacant. This zeamet is now granted to the holder of the berat Mehmed,
who is at the same time promoted to the rank of Müteferrika with a living (dirlik) of 40,000 akçes derived from the state revenue (miri), of which 25,000 akçes have been given and the additional 15,000 will be paid out by the Imperial Treasury on production of this berat and in accordance with the signed copy of the expenses-book (ruznameçê).

The Sultan commands finally that Müteferrika Mehêmed, even though he has been a long-serving Divan official and has been on campaign regularly with the Grand Vizier (? Kara Mustafa), since he has not been appointed to the retinue (Ko~untu) of the commander (serdar) or to a garrison and so has not reported for duty, his zeame and living shall not be given; otherwise, it shall be confirmed upon him, and nobody shall change the Sultan’s order.

Text of Cambridge University Library Add. MS 28555.

Tuğra and first line, with expositio, lacking.

(1) نانان شريف ۰۰۰۰

(2) بيدند اقدم زايم وبيمار يولче ميفران اندوانه، متحف وجاوتش وکاب وانکارد ايكون

(3) وبيمر حد تحقيين وميشك سروان سفاري افتكه هومي بير يبر طريفه حشته

(4) وجاوتش وکاب وانکارد اولوب طابور اندوانه، مختحله تغريف سفر هفانته، وسافره سدار

(5) نمخت شماركه فتنه بات اندوانه سع هلليونه الدا وين حشري پآشانه أنه ان أولوب

(6) ايدي اباي كرم (3) وإجادع نظام آنار الله عطالي برانيهنک جل اولت عني وسر ساعدت

(7) سييري غزا وجيمإده صروف اولوب سده دخير دين وبجيم جنود مجددين بو خاندان دولك

(8) كين ساليانه نتقيق كين اولوب بسدايری انتيلم احوال قوسینة الرم لازم إنتلها به مسبب عرشي

(9) وناخوس سطالشدن اسطله طابتة، محيطه دن هون تقنياني دولت عملمه وزياده حديه؛ ميل اتحض

(10) إنيه اندوانه اكدر (4) ورببز الرايی ولتردن اكديس نغ حرفه وآكديس نغ خاپه وآل

(11) ديوان طليقانم كا تي (blank), نغ دفتر خايانه كا تي (blank), نغ شراكدي (blank), نغ دفتر خايانه كا تي (blank).
English translation:

(line 2) When previously the roll-call of *zamets* and *timars* was commanded, it having been communicated to the glory of my royal Presence and suggested to my imperial Hearing how, even though limits had been determined, one by one, for *Müteferrikas* and *Çavuses* and Scribes and Apprentices, afterwards, expeditions by sea being necessary, each one of them, each in his own way had become *Müteferrika* or *Çavus* or Scribe or Apprentice and received the order, and how, by not going to their posts, they have caused the decline in numbers of my troops, which are distinguished by God’s help to victory, on my imperial campaign and in the garrisons;

(lines 2–5) well then, the best moments of the sublime days and the joy of the elevated hours of my noble fathers and illustrious grandfathers — may God (exalted be He) enlighten their proofs! — having been spent in expeditions against the infidel and the Holy War, and the reinforcing of the frontiers of the Faith and equipping of the armies of the Monotheists being the sealinscription for this firm-fortuned dynasty of Sultans, and because the setting in order of the conditions of the armies is one of the most necessary of the essential duties and the most serious of the important matters of the honour and reputation of my own sultanate also, my illustrious order with
my imperial Handwriting, associated with happiness, has been issued in respect of whatsoever person from the aforesaid group who shall have shown inclination to a considerable extent towards my exalted Empire becoming the holder of a privilege, from among that category of meritorious and estimable people two hundred Müteferrikas and two hundred Çavuşes and fifty Scribes of my illustrious Divan and their [space for number left blank] Apprentices and [blank] Scribes of my imperial Tax-office and their [blank] Apprentices, and whatever number, over and above, of Müteferrikas and Çavuşes and Scribes and Apprentices and those without rank going on campaign, all of them, with the army of their sanjaks and their alaybeğis, under their standards, and one copy, headed with my resplendent, world-adorning Tuğra, of the account-books of the privilege-holders of the aforesaid group, which has been designated, having been preserved in my Inner Imperial Treasury, when from among them one person dies or else his holding becomes vacant, as long as notification has been made to my imperial Stirrup and my imperial Handwriting, associated with happiness, has not been given, in respect of privileges not being given to any person, and transfer not being made from one to another of them, and this system being preserved in an uninterrupted way, and precaution being taken about the granting of permission contrary to it.

(lines 5–7) In consequence of that, because one of the Müteferrikas of my sublime Court, Müteferrika Yusuf, who was in possession of the zeamet of twenty thousand akçes from the village named Qazan Bınar in the district of Şumni in the sancak of Niğbolu, has died and his zeamet has become vacant, the aforesaid zeamet has been conferred upon Mehemmed, the example of the glorious and noble ones — may his glory be increased! —, the bearer of the high-ranking imperial Diploma and the carrier of the eloquent, joy-auguring royal Order, and the privilege connected with the office of Müteferrika also being appropriate to and merited by the aforementioned Mehemmed — may his glory be increased! —, because the privilege connected with the office of Müteferrika moreover is conferred and the twenty-five thousand akçes of the forty thousand akçes which is its state revenue have been bestowed, I have given this happiness-working and joy-producing Berat for my imperial Treasury to hand over the extra fifteen thousand akçes in accordance with the signed copy of the account-book which is being given, and I have commanded as follows:

(lines 7, 8) This my noble Sign which declares, 'The aforementioned Müteferrika Mehemmed — may his glory be increased! — has been continually in the service of my high-ranking Divan, for his part, as has been described, and for the Eastern and Western campaigns he has ridden out with the highly-renowned Grand Vizier on the cam-
campaigns which have taken place, and he has not been appointed to
the commanders for the retinues and garrisons, but because he has
not come to the retinue and garrison let his zeamet and living not
be given, but if it is being given let it be confirmed and established
again upon the aforementioned and, without need, let no harm be done
(to him) by anybody', shall be held in respect for ever, and let nobody
at all change or alter (it). Whosoever changes... [end of MS].

S  u  m  m a r y

AN UNDATED FRAGMENT OF A BERAT CONCERNING
THE APPOINTMENT OF A MÜTEFERRIKA

Among the Ottoman documents — about 35 in all — which I
have been describing recently for inclusion in a brief handlist of
the Turkish manuscripts in Cambridge University Library, one, Ad-
dition MS 285⁶⁵ seemed to be of particular interest. It consists
of only seven lines of a berat, with the tuğra and first line and the
end, including the date, broken or cut off. As it is so enigmatic
I wanted to bring it to the notice of the Ottomanists gathered at
the Third Symposium of C.E.P.O. at Sarajevo, to enlist their aid
concerning its identification.

The Sultan declares his interest in reforming the Ottoman military
forces, especially now that a roll-call has revealed widespread absenteeism
on campaign and from the garrisons by the class of Müteferrikas,
Çavuşes, Scribes and Apprentices. Thus he has issued a fermn, rewarding
a specified number of members of that class, who have been dutiful,
with privileges, dependent upon their attendance for military service,
and regulating the conditions of privilege-holding. Under these terms
he gives this berat, conferring upon a certain Mehemmed the zeamet
of 20,000 akçes deriving from the village of Qazan Bihan in the
district of Şumni in the sancak of Nigbolu, which used to belong to
the late Müteferrika Yusuf, together with the office of Müteferrika
with a living of 40,000 akçes. The newly-appointed Müteferrika's privi-
leges and duties are then laid down. The date is probably 1677, or
soon after.
Rezime

ODLOMAK IZ BERATA O NAIMENOVANJU MÜTEFERRIKA


Sultan izražava svoj interes za reformaciju turske vojne sile, naročito sada kada je objelodanjena yoklama (prozivka) i kad je odsustvovanje u ratu i iz garnizona od strane müteferrika, çavuš-a, pisara i šegrta uzelo maha. Zato je izdao ferman kojim nagrađuje određen broj članova te klase, koji su mu bili odani, povlasticama zavisno od njihove spremnosti za vojnu službu i pruža im povoljne uslove za imanja koja su dobili zahvaljujući povlaštenom položaju. Po ovim odredbama on donosi ovaj berat, prenoseći na izvjesnog Mehmeda zemet od 20.000 akçî koje dobija od sela Qazan Binari u oblasti Šumni u sandžaku Nigbolu koji je pripadao prijašnjem müteferriki Yusuf-u zajedno sa službom müteferrika i dohotkom od 40,000 akçî. Zatim su nabrojane ostale nove povlastice i dužnosti müteferrika. Rukopis potiče vjerovatno iz 1677. godine ili nešto kasnije.