

Chronicler and Diplomat: Raşid Mehmed Efendi, in a Period of the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire's Diplomatic Perception

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to identify the transformation in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy by focusing on the chronicler and diplomacy career of Raşid Mehmed Efendi, who was a chronicler and diplomat in the Ottoman Empire in the first quarter of the XVIIIth century. For the Ottoman Empire, which entered the XVIIIth century with the trauma of the Treaty of Karlowitz, this treaty was a milestone with transformative effects in many aspects. One of these was diplomacy. From this date onwards, the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy has transformed remarkably. The transformation in question was also reflected in the chronicle of the period's chronicler, Raşid Mehmed Efendi. In this context, the study is significant in terms of revealing how the Ottoman Empire pragmatically transformed the mission it attributed to diplomacy in the face of changing conditions through the chroniclership and diplomacy career of Raşid Mehmed Efendi. The research is based on primary sources such as, the chronicles of Raşid Mehmed Efendi and his successor Çelebizade İsmail Asım Efendi, as well as relevant literature and secondary sources. As a result, this study will demonstrate that how the Ottoman Empire pragmatically transformed its perception of diplomacy according to its military and political position, and this situation obviously reflected in the chronicle of the state's chronicler. **Keywords:** Ottoman Diplomacy, Raşid Mehmed Efendi, Chronicler, Diplomat

Osmanlı Devleti'nin Diploması Algısının Dönüştüğü Bir Dönemde Vakanüvis ve Diplomat: Raşid Mehmed Efendi

Araştırma Makalesi

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ÖZ

Bu makale XVIII. yüzyılın ilk çeyreğinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde vakanüvis ve diplomat olan Raşid Mehmed Efendi'nin vakanüvisliğine ve diplomatlığına odaklanarak Osmanlı Devleti'nin diploması algısındaki değişimi tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. XVIII. yüzyıla Karlofça Antlaşmasının travmasıyla giren Osmanlı Devleti için bu antlaşma pek çok açıdan dönüştürücü etkileri olan bir dönüm noktasıdır. Bunlardan biri de diploması alanıdır. Bu tarihten itibaren Osmanlı Devleti'nin diploması algısı ciddi manada değişime uğramıştır. Söz konusu değişim, dönemin vakanüvisi Raşid Mehmed Efendi'nin kroniğine de yansımıştır. Bu bağlamda çalışma, Raşid Mehmed Efendi'nin vakanüvisliği ve diplomatlığı üzerinden Osmanlı Devleti'nin değişen şartlar karşısında diplomasıye yüklediği misyonu pragmatik bir şekilde nasıl dönüştürdüğünün ortaya konulması bakımından önemlidir. Çalışmanın kaynaklarını Raşid Mehmed Efendi'nin ve halefi Çelebizade İsmail Asım Efendi'nin kroniği gibi birincil kaynaklar ve ilgili literatür oluşturmaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu çalışmada Osmanlı Devleti'nin askeri ve siyasi pozisyonuna göre diploması algısını pragmatik bir şekilde dönüştürdüğü ve bu durumun da devletin vakanüvisinin kroniğine net bir şekilde yansıdığı ortaya konacaktır. **Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı Diplomasısı, Raşid Mehmed Efendi, Vakanüvis, Diplomat

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Introduction

Known commonly for being chronicler, Raşid Mehmed Efendi (1670- 1735)¹ was also divan owner and an accomplished poet of his time, and a diplomat sent to Iran as an ambassador by the Ottoman Empire. Due to the characteristics of the Tulip Era in which he lived and his versatile personality, Raşid Mehmet Efendi's² life and works have been the subject of many studies in terms of his poetry, history and even diplomacy.³ So much so that even among the late Ottoman intellectuals, there were debates about whether Raşid was a historian or a poet.⁴ So, questions arise: What will this study say differently than all the studies on Raşid, and what contribution will it make to the field beyond simply compiling these studies? First of all, since the present article is not a biographical study, it does not attempt to give detailed information about Raşid's life, works, and career in the ulema profession. As mentioned above, we believe that there are sufficient studies on these subjects in the literature. Unlike previous studies this study merely tries to read transformation of Ottoman diplomacy mind through the chroniclership and diplomat of Raşid. For the trauma that the Ottoman Empire experienced with the Treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz was a watershed in transforming the perception of diplomacy. From this date onwards the mission that the Ottoman Empire attributed to diplomacy and, as a result, the practice of diplomacy began to undergo a significant transformation.

The study raises some questions, and it is the purpose of the present article to seek answers to these questions: What is meant by the transformation in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy? What are the main parameters taken into account when discussing the transformation of the Ottoman Empire's diplomatic mind? Are there any reflections of the change in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy in the chronicle of Raşid, as the chronicler of the period, based on these parameters? Did the change in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy have any impact on Raşid ambassadorial mission? First, a literature survey on the historical context of the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy was conducted. From the very beginning of the state, the emergence and evolution of Ottoman diplomacy must be examined to comprehend the basic motivations for the change in the perception of Ottoman diplomacy during the period in question. Second, an explanation of which parameters would be taken into account as discussing the transformation of the diplomatic mentality of the Ottoman Empire is presented. Third, the reflections of the change

¹ His father, Mustafa Efendi from Malatya, was a judge of Bursa. Therefore, he received a good education. After completing his madrasa education, he became a lieutenant to Şeyhülislam Ebûsaidzâde Feyzullah Efendi when he was 22 or 23 years old.

² Raşid Mehmed Efendi can sometimes be confused with Mehmed Raşid Efendi, one of the Reisülküttaps of the Selim III era. In order to avoid such confusion and since the name of his chronicle is Raşid History, only the name Raşid will be used instead of full name Raşid Mehmed Efendi in the rest of the study.

³ For intance: F. O. Köprülü, "Raşid Tarihi'nin Kaynaklarından Biri: Silâhdârın Nusretnâmesi," *Belleten* 11, no. 43 (1947); Cavid Baysun, "Müverrih Râşid Efendi'nin İran Elçiliğine Dair," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* IX, (1954); M. Münir Aktepe, "Vak'anüvis Râşid Mehmed Efendi'nin Eşref Şah Nezdindeki Elçiliği ve Buna Takaddüm Eden Siyasi Muhabereleler", *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, XII, (1955); Fatih Günay, "Râşid Mehmed Efendi", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (TDV Yayınları) 34: 463-465; Halit Biltekin, "Vak'a-nüvis Mehmed Râşid Efendi, Hayatı, Eserleri", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 3, no.11 (Spring 2010) 170.

⁴ Following the article written by Ahmed Refik about Raşid Mehmed Efendi in *Yeni Mecmua* Magazine, firstly Refik Halid wrote a critical article in *Peyam* Magazine. Later, Ali Kemal, the editor of *Peyam* Magazine, joined this debate and wrote a book titled "Raşid Historian or Poet?", criticizing Raşid Mehmed Efendi, but especially the Tulip Era in his person. Ahmed Refik, "Raşid", *Yeni Mecmua* 53, (1918); Ali Kemal, *Raşid Müverrih mi Şair mi?* Hazırlayan. Dr. Salih Özyurt, (Ankara: Fenomen Yayınları, 2022).

in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy are addressed in the chronicle of Raşid, as the chronicler of the period, based on these parameters. Finally, whether the change in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy had any reflection is addressed on Raşid's ambassadorial mission.

1. The Transformation of the Ottoman Diplomatic Perception

Contrary to popular wisdom, the change in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy did not mean that the Ottoman rulers became aware of the importance of diplomacy due to the state's loss of military and political power and began to use diplomacy effectively to prevent territorial losses. On the contrary, the change in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy meant updating the mission and practice of diplomacy. Since, from the very beginning of the state and even from the period of the principality, the Ottoman rulers were aware of the importance of diplomacy and used it effectively, along with military methods, to strengthen their positions and expand their borders. In doing so, they adopted very pragmatic manner of diplomacy, which they updated from time to time according to the circumstances, in consistency with their military and political power. That is to say, the Ottoman sultans of the founding period used diplomacy as a tool to increase and consolidate their military success. On the other hand, during the periods when the Ottoman Empire was at the zenith of its military and political influence, the Ottoman sultans viewed diplomacy as a demonstration area where their power and magnificence were displayed. However, they did not refrain from using diplomacy effectively and pragmatically for the benefit of the state. For instance, during the period when the Ottoman Empire was at the zenith of its military and political influence, Suleiman the Magnificent did not rely merely on his military and political power, but intervened in European politics, gave direction to prevent alliances that might form against the Ottoman Empire in Europe, and thus made effective use of diplomacy. Ottoman rulers adopted a unique own style of diplomacy during this period and imposed this on their Western antagonists. While the Ottoman Empire allowed the western states to be represented in its own capital through resident ambassadors, itself only sent temporary envoys to these states when it deemed necessary. So much so that while diplomacy in Europe was disrupted by wars of succession and religion, such as the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the Ottoman capital remained a vibrant diplomatic centre.⁵ In the proper sense of the word as we use it now, the Ottoman Empire, as an early modern empire, had turned its capital into a diplomatic laboratory for western states.⁶ It is an unquestionable fact that European states benefited greatly from these experiences while laying the foundations of modern diplomacy in Europe.⁷ Hence the Ottoman Empire, with a paradoxical approach, was a state that, on the one hand, contributed to the foundations of modern diplomacy, and on the other hand, was criticized for having a negative and negligent attitude towards diplomacy because it was late to adopt the practice of permanent diplomacy. However, while making this judgement, it should not be disregarded that the Ottoman Empire was an empire that claimed superiority and self-sufficiency. For in the grand days of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman rulers viewed conducting a unilateral diplomacy with the European states as an acknowledgement of their superiority,

⁵J.C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman diplomacy and the European state system", *Middle East Journal* 15 (1961), 141-152. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4323345>

⁶Mahmut Halef Cevrioglu, "Yeni Çağ Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Fevkalade (Ad Hoc) Misyonlar: XVII. Yüzyılda İsvç Elçileri Örneği", *History Studies* 14, no. 3 (Eylül 2022) 531.

⁷Oral Sander, *Anka'nın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü Osmanlı Diploması Tarihi Üzerine Bir Deneme*. (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2000) 88.

they were unwilling to reciprocate.⁸ However, the Ottoman rulers had need to revise the mission they had attributed to diplomacy during periods when the state experienced military and political weaknesses and the power graph was in decline. In this regard, in order to compensate for their military and political weaknesses during these periods, the Ottoman rulers adopted the style of diplomacy of the Western states instead of applying diplomacy according to their own rules. Therefore, the fact that the Ottoman Empire transformed its traditional perception and practice of diplomacy and adopted the diplomatic style of Western states should not be interpreted as the Ottoman rulers finally realizing the importance of diplomacy and starting to use it effectively.

In this respect The Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 constituted the watershed that necessitated a significant change in the Ottoman rulers' perception of diplomacy and the mission they attributed to diplomacy. Since the diplomatic style of a state that had always been victorious could not be the same as the diplomatic practice of a state that had suffered serious defeats against its antagonists. In other words, the diplomatic style and mentality needed to be reviewed, from the diplomatic language used towards its antagonists to the format of the agreements made with other states. Because this was a patronizing, imperious and unilateral style and mentality in which the language and format were conducted strictly on Ottoman terms. Indeed, until the Karlowitz, the Ottoman rulers did not recognize the principle of the equality of sovereignties, so they didn't accept negotiations and discussions on equal terms.⁹ Also, Ottoman plenipotentiaries did not participate in the multilateral conferences before the Karlowitz. Although the Treaty of Karlowitz stands out as a treaty in which the Ottoman Empire suffered large-scale territorial losses, the Karlowitz conference that preceded this treaty was, in fact, a multilateral, general European congress in which the Ottoman Empire participated for the first time. Thus, the Ottoman Empire was involved for the first time in the developing practice of multilateral diplomacy among Western European states. The Karlowitz conference, held to end the war between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, Poland, Austria, and Russia, also provided Ottoman plenipotentiaries with valuable experience in the practice of multilateral diplomacy.¹⁰ Moreover, Ottoman diplomats saw at this multilateral conference how a strong negotiating position was crucial in minimizing the State's losses on the battlefield. In fact, during the Karlowitz negotiations, the Ottoman plenipotentiaries revealed a performance that their interlocutors did not expect and contributed significantly to the change in the Ottoman rulers' perception of diplomacy.¹¹ On the other hand, this new style of diplomacy that the Ottoman Empire began to adopt also required knowing its antagonists and understanding the reasons underlying their superiority. Essentially, this was a necessity that transformed the Ottoman Empire's view of diplomacy and its expectations from it according to the conditions of the period. Ottoman rulers began to perceive diplomacy not only as a means of displaying their power and magnificent or as a means of compensating for their military and political weaknesses, but also as a means of getting to know Western states, which they had not been particularly curious about until then. In other words, diplomacy was also given the mission of observing the State's interlocutors. As a result of this new mission attributed to diplomacy, for the first time in Ottoman history, an ambassador, Yirmisekiz

⁸A. Nuri Yurdusev, "The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy", in *Ottoman Diplomacy Conventional or Unconventional?*, Editör A. Nuri Yurdusev, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 13.

⁹Ali İbrahim Savaş, *Osmanlı Diplomasisi*, (İstanbul: 3F Yayınları, 2007) 40.

¹⁰Hüner Tuncer, *Eski ve Yeni Diploması*, (Ankara: Ümit Yayınevi, 1995) 33.

¹¹Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, "Ottoman Diplomacy at Karlowitz", in *Ottoman Diplomacy Conventional or Unconventional?*, Editör A. Nuri Yurdusev, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 90.

Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, sent to Paris in 1720, was ordered to report on what he observed regarding the civilization in the country he visited.¹² However, Kara Mehmed Paşa, who was sent to Vienna in accordance with the article of the 1665 Vasvar Treaty signed with the Austria, which was to send ambassadors to each other to strengthen the friendship between the two states, was only notified to "take care of your service and refrain anything that would harm dignity of our sultanate." In fact, there is no such thing as observing or recording the differences in the embassy report that Kara Mehmed Paşa submitted upon his return.¹³ In this context, the real reason for dispatching Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi was quite different from the reasons for conveying ambassadors in classical Ottoman diplomacy. Since the Ottoman Sultans dispatched envoys only for the purposes of announcing or celebrating accessions to the throne, conveying ratified peace accords, delivering Sultans' letters, frontier demarcations, peace talks and discussion of ceasefires, reciprocating a foreign envoy, establishing or strengthening of friendly relations between two states.¹⁴ In his chronicle, Raşid expresses the reason for Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi's dispatching as follows: "his Excellency the honoured Grand Vizier pondered and considered that the Great Powers of Christians were not always free from communication and sending of messengers to each other, by this way, they are aware of each other's movements, intentions, and the reality of their power and gravity, and they don't refrain from being the recipients of information by means of the delivery of envoys to the Sublime Porte by all the rulers of Christians and with this in mind, decided to send an envoy to the French side".¹⁵ Raşid emphasizes that the real reason for the dispatching of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi was the same as the reasons why European States dispatch ambassadors to each other. That is, to acquire knowledge of wisdoms underlying their each other's power and superiority. Essentially, this was a sign that signified the new mission that the Ottoman Empire had attributed to diplomacy and the change in its perception of diplomacy. However, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi's official duty was to deliver the imperial decree to the French king, informing him that the Ottoman Sultan had given the French the privilege of repairing the Church of Kamame in Jerusalem. This cause was not a very common situation in classical Ottoman diplomacy. Since the French ambassador in Istanbul, Marki de Bonnac, had already received the decree granting this privilege to France and had reported the news to his king. The fact that the Ottoman Empire dispatched an additional ambassador for this purpose also surprised the French ambassador.¹⁶

On the other hand, the basis for assigning Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi as the ambassador are as specific to the period as the reason for his sending. Raşid expresses this case as follows: "Mehmed Efendi, known as Yirmisekiz Çelebi, who was the second plenipotentiary in the peace and harmony agreement concluded with Nemçe (Austria), was appointed as ambassador to the King of France for being experienced in Ottoman Empire's service, and

¹²Onur Kınlı, *Osmanlı'da Modernleşme ve Diplomasi*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2006) 117.

¹³Râşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Râşid ve Zeyli I*. Hazırlayanlar Abdülkadir Özcan-Ahmet Zeki İzgöer-Baki Çakır-Yunus Uğur, (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2013) 61.

¹⁴Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992) 14.

¹⁵Düvel-i Nasârâ dâimâ birbirleriyle mürâselât ve elçiler irsâlinde hâlî olmayub, bu tarîf ile birbirlerinin hareket ve niyyet ve hakikat-i hâl-i kuvvet ü miknetlerinden haberdâr ve ale'l-husûs bi'l-cümle mülûk-ı Nasârâ tarafından Devlet-i Aliyye'ye elçiler tevârüdüyle müstecib-i ahbâr olmakdan hâlî olduğun sadrazam-ı Nebahat-şiar hazretleri tefekkür ü tedebbür buyurup, bu mülâhaza-i nafia ile Frânçe tarafına bir elçi irsal etmek üzere karar verdiler. Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli*, II: 1186.

¹⁶M. Charles Schefer, *İstanbul'da Fransız Elçiliği Marki de Bonnac'ın Tarihi Hatırat ve Belgeleri*. Çeviren Ali Şevket Bizer, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2017) 28.

besides being a person familiar with the arrangement of the communications and the principles of public order in the aforementioned agreement."¹⁷ Raşid indicates that Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi was chosen as the ambassador because he had experience in the negotiation methods and tricks of the Western states, having served as the second delegate in the negotiations for the Treaty of Passarowitz signed with the Austria. Indeed, from this date onwards, the Ottoman Empire would be careful to choose the ambassadors it would dispatch to Western states from among those who had participated in such multilateral negotiations, had the opportunity to closely observe the representatives of these states, and were familiar with their procedures. This situation is another indication of the new mission that the Ottoman Empire attributed to diplomacy and the change in the diplomatic mentality.

Another case revealing that the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy has changed is that the embassy reports submitted by Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, dispatched to France, and Dürri Ahmed Efendi, dispatched to Iran, were included by Raşid, as the official chronicler of the state, in his chronicle. Since the Ottoman Statesmen, who attributed the mission of observing and knowing their antagonists to diplomacy, displayed the significance they gave to this issue by recording the embassy reports, which were the tangible outputs of this mission, in this way.¹⁸

2. Raşid Mehmed Efendi as a Chronicler

When Raşid assigned as a chronicler by Şehid Ali Paşa, the grand vizier of Ahmed III, in 1714, he was in a prominent position in his teaching career, which he had begun at a very young age. While he was the lecturer of the Hadım Hasan Paşa Madrasa, Naima was in the chronicler's position. It is said that the chronicler Naima commented that during the preparations of Grand Vizier Şehid Ali Paşa for the Mora campaign, the outcome of this campaign would be disaster. Şehid Ali Paşa, attaching great importance to this campaign, responded to Naima's comment by appointing the chronicler as the deputy of the Mora registry after the conquest of Mora.¹⁹ The Grand Vizier appointed Raşid to fill the vacant post of chronicler.²⁰ Raşid was given the task of writing Ottoman history starting from the accession to the throne of Sultan Ahmed III. For this reason, he commenced his chronicle from 1703. Raşid gained the appreciation of the Grand Vizier, Şehid Ali Paşa, with his wisdom and virtue. So much so that the Grand Vizier would take Raşid with him as a chronicler on the campaigns he participated in. Thus, Raşid had the opportunity to follow both the military maneuvers and the conversations between the commanders. Following the conquest of Mora, nearly fifty

¹⁷Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli*, II: 1186.

¹⁸Fatih Yeşil, "Pasarofça Antlaşması ve Osmanlı Diplomasisindeki Değişim", in *Harp ve Sulh 300. Yılında Pasarofça Antlaşması Sempozyum Bildirileri*, Editör Gültekin Yıldız (İstanbul: Milli Savunma Yayınları, 2019) 108.

¹⁹Although we cannot confirm from sources other than Ahmed Refik's article in *Yeni Mecmua* that Naima's career as the first Ottoman chronicler ended in this way, some historical events indicate that this situation is highly probable. For Naima begins his chronicle with a powerful praise of peace. He praises the architects of the Treaty of Karlowitz and his own protector, Grand Vizier Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha and Reisülküttap Rami Efendi. However, Grand Vizier Damad Şehid Ali Pasha had a mindset opposite to Naima's, with his war policy to recapture the territories lost in Karlowitz. Therefore, it is likely that the Grand Vizier reacted this way to Naima's anti-war comment. See Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Naima I*, Hazırlayan Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014) 11.

²⁰Although Raşid Mehmed Efendi gave the date of his appointment as chronicler as 1714, an archive document states that his appointment as chronicler was dated 18 February 1715. Özcan explains this difference in dates by saying that Raşid Mehmed Efendi began writing down the events in 1714 upon the verbal order of Grand Vizier Ali Paşa and was officially appointed later. Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli I*: XVI.

conquest documents (fetihname), sent to foreign rulers and domestic governors, were written by Raşid.²¹ In return for his service in the Mora campaign, Grand Vizier Şehid Ali Paşa wrote a letter to the Sultan appealing Raşid to be given a madrasa two ranks above. Raşid on the other hand, thought this too much for him and stated that the grant of a madrasa one rank above would be sufficient for him. Raşid, who wrote his history as a witness of the councils of statesmen, brought a different dimension to Ottoman historiography in this respect. Raşid, participating in the Varadin campaign as a chronicler, witnessed the disastrous and bloody scenes of this campaign, the most tragic of which was the martyrdom of his patron, Grand Vizier Ali Paşa, on the battlefield. However, Raşid also received the appreciate of Damat İbrahim Paşa, the rival of Şehid Ali Paşa. When Damat İbrahim Paşa became the Grand Vizier, he left Raşid in charge of the chronicler.²² However, the Grand Vizier deemed it appropriate to start Raşid's history from the date of 1660, which Naima left behind, rather than from the accession to the throne of Sultan Ahmed III. Because this part had not been written yet. Since Raşid was Naima's successor, it was appropriate for him to begin his chronicle from this date onwards and fill the gap. Thus, Raşid filled this gap by collecting documents and works related to the events between 1660 and 1703 with the help of Grand Vizier Damat İbrahim Paşa.²³ Raşid remained in charge of the chronicler from 1714, until his appointment as the Judge of Aleppo in 1723. During this period, he wrote the 62-year history of the Ottoman Empire between 1660 and 1722. Despite this, Raşid, in his short biography at the end of his history, expressed the importance of being a chronicler for himself, noting that in his eyes, being a chronicler was worth several times more than being a judge of Aleppo.²⁴

Since Raşid's wisdom and virtue were appreciated by the Grand Vizier Damat İbrahim Paşa, he was given the opportunity to be present at the reception of ambassadors and at almost all the gatherings attended by the Grand Vizier. Especially when Iranian ambassadors came, Raşid was asked to attend the gathering held, along with prominent poets of the period such as Vehbi, Nedim, and Dürri Efendi. He was one of the leading figures in such gatherings. Raşid's presence at such official meetings was the most significant factor that made his chronicle unique. Not only gave this situation Raşid the opportunity to witness many events first hand but also gave him the opportunity to record copies of the documents that emerged during these gatherings for his chronicle.²⁵ As mentioned in the previous part, the most significant parameter that indicates transformation of the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy in this period was the practice of negotiation and discussion under equal terms. With the Karlowitz and the Passarowitz peace conferences Ottoman diplomacy became particularly acquainted with the practice of multilateral diplomacy, in which not only the warring parties but also the representatives of the mediating states participated. Raşid also narrated the negotiations in detail in his chronicle. He even included literally the correspondence between the Ottoman Grand Vizier and the Austrian Prime Minister during these meetings.²⁶ This situation not only reveals that Ottoman diplomacy evolved from unilateral diplomacy to multilateral diplomacy, at least in terms of the practice of negotiation

²¹For the importance of the Morea Conquest written by Raşid Mehmed Efendi in Ottoman Diplomatic History see Hilal Çiftçi, "1715 Mora Fetihnâmesi Bağlamında Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Fetihnâmelerin Rolü ve Diplomatik Dili" *Genel Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 8 (July 2022): 589-604, <https://doi.org/10.53718/gttad.1118655>.

²²Ahmed Refik, "Raşid", 12.

²³Köprülü, "Raşid Tarihi'nin Kaynaklarından Biri", 474.

²⁴Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli II*, 1298.

²⁵Ahmed Refik, "Raşid", 13.

²⁶Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli I*, 26.

and discussion, but also it was considered important and adopted enough to be recorded in detail in the chronicle of the state's official chronicle. The Ottoman Empire, which in previous periods did not acknowledge any state as an equal interlocutor due to its strong political and military position and arranged its relations with foreign states, accordingly, now accepted reciprocity in a way. Since in diplomacy, negotiation and discussion on equal terms is one of the pillars of diplomatic reciprocity. Thus, although the Ottoman Empire did not adopt reciprocity-based diplomacy until the end of the XVIIIth century, it did embrace reciprocity to some extent by adopting the principle of negotiation and discussion on equal terms during this period.

Another feature that makes Raşid's chronicle unique in terms of Ottoman diplomatic history is that he provides detailed information about the embassy delegations sent to foreign states for the first time in Ottoman history. His predecessors were content with giving the departure and return dates of the embassy delegations in their chronicles. However, Raşid gave detailed information about the activities and meetings of the envoys in the countries they visited on duty. In fact, he included literally the envoys' embassy reports in his chronicle, a first in Ottoman historiography. While this situation, on the one hand, shows that Raşid brought a new dimension to Ottoman historiography, on the other hand, it is a tangible indication that the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy has changed. Since the real reason why Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi was dispatched to France was the desire of the Ottoman administrators to acquire knowledge about European politics and civilization.²⁷ This situation shows that the Ottoman Empire gave diplomacy the mission of exploring the world outside itself. In other words, it is exceedingly significant as it shows that an early modern empire, which until then had attributed to diplomacy the meaning of informing its opponents about its own power and magnificence, now began to attribute to diplomacy the mission of exploring the world outside itself. Therefore, Ottoman rulers began to view diplomacy not as a field of display but as an area that they could utilize in line with the interests of the state.²⁸

Raşid also included in his chronicle the embassy report of Dürri Ahmed Efendi, sent to Iran as an envoy. Dürri Ahmed Efendi's embassy report is particularly important in terms of Ottoman diplomatic history, as it is the first available embassy report regarded Iran.²⁹ The Chronicler explains in detail the reasons why the Ottoman Empire dispatched Dürri Ahmed Efendi as an envoy to Iran. From the information provided by Raşid, it is possible to detect traces of not only the Ottoman Empire's relations with Iran but also the change in its perception of diplomacy in general. The reason for dispatching the envoy was the article of the 1718 Passarowitz Trade Treaty signed with Austria regarding Iranian merchants doing trade with Austria. Raşid gives detailed information about the article in question: The reason for this article, included in the treaty at the demand of Austria, was that Iranian merchants who went to Austria for trade, used the route passing through Kazakh and Russian lands via Ejderhan, not through Ottoman lands. Since this route is unsafe, the flow of goods is insufficient and Iranian products needed in Austrian domain are very scarce and expensive. In order to prevent this situation, the Ottoman Empire was requested to allow Iranian merchants to pass through Ottoman domains via the Black Sea, the Danube or by land via Belgrade. The Ottoman Empire decided to dispatch an envoy to Iran to implement the article of the agreement signed with Austria. Raşid did not give any information as to why Dürri

²⁷İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi IV/I*. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1988) 150.

²⁸Kınlı, *Osmanlı'da Modernleşme ve Diplomasi*, 117.

²⁹Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, 60

Ahmed Efendi was chosen as the ambassador. However, according to the statement of Raşid, the ambassador, Dürri Ahmed Efendi, was verbally recommended and advised to try to comprehend the situation in Iran. In other words, just like Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, Dürri Ahmed Efendi was also given an off the record. task. Because Iran was invaded by Afghans from the north at that time, and information about the chaos in Iran's internal situation was coming from the border governors of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Ottoman rulers used this trade agreement as a pretext to ascertain about the situation in Iran.³⁰ Essentially, this process, which Raşid narrated in detail, constitutes a watershed in Ottoman Diplomacy. For the Ottoman Empire agreed to include an article in the trade agreement it signed with its arch-antagonist in the west, Austria, regarding its other arch-antagonist in the east, Iran, upon the insistence of former. Moreover, it dispatched an embassy delegation to Iran to make arrangements for the implementation of this article. Above all these, the envoy was given another mission off the record. Although for different purposes, Dürri Ahmed Efendi was given the same observation task as Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, who was dispatched to France. Indeed, Ambassador Dürri Ahmed Efendi skillfully observed Iran's political situation, administrative structure, military power, the Şah's palace, the Iranian people, settlements and communities. Dürri Ahmed Efendi made these observations so masterfully that he forecasted in his embassy report that the Safavid state was in decline and its collapse was imminent. The Russian ambassador Volynsky, who came to Iran at the same time as Dürri Ahmed Efendi, made almost the same observations as the Ottoman ambassador.³¹

In his chronicle, Raşid not only provides detailed information about the embassies dispatched by the Ottoman Empire but also provides detailed information about the ambassadors sent by foreign states to the Ottoman Empire. In this context, the most striking one is the information he gave about the activities of the envoy sent by Safavid Şah Hüseyin. Raşid narrates in detail in his chronicle the stay of Murtaza Kulu Han in Istanbul, who was dispatched by Şah Hüseyin in return for Dürri Ahmed Efendi, sent to Iran by the Ottoman Empire. The remarkable point here is not only Raşid's narration but also the Ottoman rulers' treatment of the Iranian ambassador. It is understood from Raşid's statements that a protocol out of usual diplomatic acceptance was applied to the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul. Generally, ambassadors arriving in the Ottoman capital would first be hosted at a banquet by the Grand Vizier and then brought before the Sultan to present their letters and gifts. A divan was also held special for the merely Iranian ambassadors at the Grand Vizier's mansion, with the participation of famous poets, musicians and calligraphers of the period. However, this time, Raşid describes in detail how the Iranian ambassador Murtaza Kulu Han was invited by the Grand Vizier to Kağıthane, one of the most popular places in Istanbul at that time. He also describes in detail how the Grand Vizier allowed the Iranian ambassador to tour the Beşiktaş Palace and other palace gardens. He narrates that Murtaza Kulu Han was invited to the shipyard by Kaptan Pasha (Admiral of the Fleet). During this visit, he describes the Iranian ambassador's astonishment at the cannons on the galleon. Raşid gives all the details, even the sarcastic answer given to one of the envoy's retinue's questions about how he would describe

³⁰Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli II*, 1165.

³¹Turgay Şafak, "Divan Sahibi Bir Osmanlı Elçisi: Dürri Ahmed Efendi Divanı ve Sefaretnamesi", in *Diplomasi ve Edebiyat Türk Diplomasinde Edebiyatın İzleri Sempozyum Bildiriler Kitabı* Editör Selim Karahasanoğlu (İstanbul: İstanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2024) 17.

this huge cannon in their own country.³² All these statements of Raşid give the impression that the Ottoman Empire still viewed diplomacy as a field of demonstration to display its power and magnificence in this incident. In fact, it gives the impression that the extraordinary protocol applied to the Iranian ambassador is similar to the protocol applied by the French government to Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi in Paris. For when the Ottoman Sultans viewed diplomacy as an area where their power and magnificence could be displayed, they generally did this by coinciding the payment of Kapıkulu Soldiers with the reception of foreign ambassadors. However, there was a different case here. Just as Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi was shown around the popular places of Paris, he was amazed by the things he saw for the first time. It gives the impression that a similar situation is being tried to make experienced to the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul. The parallelism between these two events is another indication of the transformation in the diplomatic mentality of the Ottoman Empire. Since this association shows that the Ottoman rulers not only gradually began to adopt the diplomatic attitudes of the West during this period but also exported these diplomatic attitudes to their eastern neighbours.³³ However, it seems difficult at this stage to say whether this situation is the result of a conscious choice. For this finding may also be specific to two consecutive cases. Or it may indeed stem from the pragmatism of the Ottoman diplomatic mentality, which we have been expressing from the beginning, updating itself according to the conditions. It is a fact that more comparative studies are needed to express this claim more strongly.

3. Raşid Mehmed Efendi as a Diplomat

Although Raşid's diplomatic career seems to stem from his official posting as an ambassador to Iran to Eşref Şah, he wasn't a person of outsider to diplomacy. Since during his eight-year tenure as a chronicler he was present at the reception ceremonies and assemblies organized for foreign ambassadors sent to the Ottoman Empire and was involved in diplomatic processes. On the other hand, as a chronicler who detailed the phases of the peace negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and its antagonists such as Austria and Russia in his chronicle, he was also familiar with the practice of negotiation and discussion between states. Besides, when he returned to Istanbul from his position as the judge of Aleppo, Raşid scribbled the letters to be sent to the ruler of Iran, Eşref Şah, and for this service he was rewarded with the Edirne rank. Therefore, Raşid was already involved in and familiar with Ottoman diplomatic practice in many ways. As a matter of fact, when Raşid completed his tenure as the judge of Aleppo and returned to Istanbul, a peace treaty was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Eşref Şah, who was ruling in Iran, ending the long-lasting conflicts. According to the treaty, ambassadors would be sent to each other to strengthen the friendship between them. Grand Vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa wanted the Ottoman ambassador to be wise, quick-witted, self-sufficient, honourable, and knowledgeable of the secrets of the state.³⁴ In the eyes of Grand Vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa, the most suitable candidate for this ambassadorial post was Raşid. Since he had these qualifications and served as a chronicler for many years, and was confidential to the high officials of the State due to his "presence and companionship."³⁵ In fact, not only Raşid's being a former chronicler and knowledge of state affairs, but also being a poet famous for writing wisdom poems, made him the most suitable

³²Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli II*, 1282.

³³Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European State System", 141-152.

³⁴"tîz-fehm hâzır cevâb ve istiğnâ ve âlî-cenâblıktan mâ-adâ ârif-i esrâr-ı Devlet ve vâkıf-ı etvâr-ı mezheb-ü millet"

³⁵"erkân-ı Devlet-i ebed müddete hem-dem ve enîs" dolayısıyla "erkân-ı Devlet'e mahrem"

candidate for the ambassadorship in question. Because the ambassador sent by the Ottoman Empire should not be humiliated not only in front of the state officials but also in front of the Iranian poets while fulfilling his duty in Isfahan before Eşref Şah.³⁶ According to Grand Vizier Damad Ibrahim Paşa, the power of the Ottoman army was sufficient to defeat the Iranian army; what really mattered was to prevail over Iran's army of writers and poets. For this reason, Grand Vizier Damad Ibrahim Paşa would greet the ambassadors coming from Iran not with statesmen but with poets, men of letters and calligraphers. The fact that Raşid was a preferred figure in the gatherings held for the ambassadors coming from Iran, was a significant factor in his being seen as the most suitable person to be sent as an ambassador to Eşref Şah.³⁷

On the other hand, while it was customary in Ottoman diplomacy for ambassadors sent to foreign states to be from the seyfiye (military) or kalemiye (civil service) class, Raşid was a member of the ilmiye class. In order to comply with this custom, Raşid's rank was converted to that of Rumelia Governor, and he was called Paşa throughout his term as ambassador.³⁸ With this rank transfer, Raşid passed from the ranks of the ulema to the profession of diplomats.³⁹ Raşid departed from Istanbul to Iran on September 18, 1728. He completed his ambassadorial duty by returning to Istanbul in July 1729.

There is no embassy report (sefaretnâme) in which Raşid describes his activities related to his ambassadorial duties during his stay in Iran. The absence of an embassy report written by Raşid during his embassy is the biggest deficiency regarding this embassy. It is quite interesting that Raşid, who had previously included the embassy reports of the ambassadors dispatched by the Ottoman Empire in his chronicle and was well aware of the importance the government gave to these embassy reports, did not write an embassy report regarding his own embassy. Poems and letters related to this embassy of Raşid were found in a magazine from Cavid Baysun's private library. Although it is possible to draw some inferences about the ambassador's journey from these letters, which are understood to have been written by Raşid from Baghdad and Iran, there is no information about his contacts in Isfahan and his main duties related to the embassy.⁴⁰ Interestingly, his successor, the chronicler Küçük Çelebi-zâde Asım Efendi, does not give detailed information about Raşid's embassy in his chronicle. Küçük Çelebi-zâde Asım Efendi only briefly explains why an ambassador was sent to Iran, why Raşid was chosen as the ambassador, and the ambassador's preparations for the journey.⁴¹ However, he notes that Raşid's mission at the Iranian embassy was deemed successful by the government, and he was rewarded with the rank of Judge of Istanbul.⁴² On the other hand, Eşref Şah added a mesnevi praising the Sultan in the letter he sent to Ahmed III with Raşid, which shows that the Iranian side was also pleased with the ambassadorial mission.⁴³ This situation can perhaps be explained by two possibilities: First of all, since Raşid's ambassadorial mission was deemed successful by the government, he must have submitted a secret report to

³⁶Baysun, *Müverrih Raşid Efendi'nin İran Elçiliğine Dair*, 145.

³⁷Ahmed Refik, *Raşid*, 13.

³⁸Küçük Celebî-zâde Âsim Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli III*, 1610.

³⁹Rank transformations were a method occasionally employed in Ottoman diplomacy. However, in such cases, once the ambassador's duty ended, the rank transformation was revoked, and he returned to his former profession.

⁴⁰Baysun, *Müverrih Raşid Efendi'nin İran Elçiliğine Dair*, 146.

⁴¹Küçük Celebî-zâde Âsim Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli III*, 1610.

⁴²Küçük Celebî-zâde Âsim Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli III*, 1624.

⁴³Ebru Onay, "XVIII. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Osmanlı-İran İlişkilerinde Şiirle Mufazala", in *Diplomasi ve Edebiyat Türk Diplomasisinde Edebiyatın İzleri Sempozyum Bildiriler Kitabı*, Editör Selim Karahasanoğlu (İstanbul: İstanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2024) 41.

Grand Vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa, who attached great importance to this embassy, even though he did not leave an embassy report regarding the ambassadorial mission. Another possibility is that Raşid's plan to write a general embassy report on his observations of the embassy, consisting of the above-mentioned letters, upon his return from the embassy could not be realized due to the Patrona Halil rebellion and exile that would soon take place.

Conclusion

It is important to make evaluations based on the evolutions at the watersheds rather than a holistic approach to evaluate whether the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy was positive or negative in order to reach more accurate conclusions. For the Ottoman Empire, which acted with the reflex of being a self-sufficient empire and had little interest in the world beyond itself, the Treaty of Karlowitz at the dawn of the XVIIIth century was a watershed in diplomacy, as in many other areas. As a result of this situation, Ottoman rulers had to transform the mission they attributed to diplomacy and their expectations from it in accordance with the conditions of the time.

This article seeks to contribute to a better understanding of transformation of Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy at the dawn of the XVIIIth century. In this study, the change in the Ottoman Empire's perception of diplomacy was attempted to be determined through the chronicle of the period's chronicler, Raşid. In this context, Raşid's detailed narration of the multilateral negotiation phases of the Treaties of Karlowitz, Passarowitz and Prut in his chronicle indicates that the State adopted and valued the practice of negotiation and discussion on equal terms in diplomacy. Negotiation and discussion on equal terms constitute one pillar of the principle of reciprocity in diplomacy. Although the principle of reciprocity was not yet fully realized in Ottoman diplomacy, its adoption of one pillar is important.

For the first time in Ottoman history, Raşid included in his chronicle the embassy reports of ambassadors sent to foreign states. These ambassadors were tasked with observing the countries they visited and reporting on them. This indicates that the Ottoman empire attributed diplomacy the mission of exploring the world outside itself. It is very remarkable. For until then Ottoman rulers had attributed to diplomacy the meaning of informing their opponents about their own power and magnificence, now began to attribute to diplomacy the mission of exploring the world outside them. Although Raşid was from the *ilmiye* class, he was sent to Iran as an ambassador with a rank transfer because he had witnessed the transformation of the Ottoman diplomatic mentality as a chronicler for many years and was aware of its importance. Therefore, Raşid's diplomacy is also an indicator of the transformation of the Ottoman diplomatic mentality.

In conclusion, this transformation in the perception of Ottoman diplomacy proves that the Ottoman Empire had a positive and pragmatic approach to diplomacy. Because a state with a negative or negligence attitude towards diplomacy cannot transform its diplomatic mindset so quickly and pragmatically in the face of changing conditions.

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