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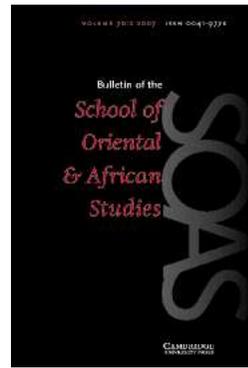
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Looking at the French Revolution through Ottoman eyes: Ebubekir Ratib Efendi's observations

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Abstract

Received wisdom has always held that the Ottomans took little interest in events beyond their borders except when they were likely to affect them. Previous scholars have suggested that it was only when French revolutionary forces occupied the Eastern Mediterranean that the Ottomans took an interest in and then condemned the revolution. From the despatches and reports of Ebubekir Ratib Efendi, ambassador to Vienna, we discover that at least one Ottoman diplomat was sending detailed accounts of events in Paris and the reactions of governments throughout Europe. Ratib Efendi's diplomatic activities would suggest that reforms were already taking place in 1793, at least in the field of gathering intelligence. This signals a fundamental change in the psyche of the Ottoman political order.

In *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, Bernard Lewis gives an account of a conversation between the Austrian chief dragoman and the *Re'isül-kûttab* Rashid Efendi, who was at that time responsible for conducting Ottoman foreign policy. The dragoman was complaining that the local Jacobins had taken to wearing revolutionary cockades on their hats, which was an affront to all other Europeans. Rashid Efendi's reply is worth quoting in full:

My friend, we have told you several times that the Ottoman Empire is a Muslim state. No one among us pays any attention to these badges of theirs. We recognize the merchants of friendly states as guests. They wear what headgear they wish on their heads and attach what badges they please. And if they put baskets of grapes on their heads, it is not the business of the Sublime Porte to ask them why they do so. You are troubling yourself for nothing.¹

Lewis is not only recounting a humorous incident but is also making the very important point that the Ottomans were not concerned with the actions of the Parisian mob so long as they did not affect Ottoman interests.² With the treaty of Campo Formio in October of 1797 the Ionian

1 Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (London: Norton, 1982), 52.

2 The words of Rashid Efendi reflect the pragmatic aspect of Ottoman diplomacy. In his "Treatise on the Morea Question" he identifies the French threat to the Morea, Crete and Egypt. It is also significant that Rashid Efendi submitted his treatise to

Islands were ceded to France and the threat that the contagion of revolutionary fervour among the Greek citizens of France would spread to Ottoman subjects in the Morea began to concern the Porte. Concern turned to enmity when reports of a French fleet being prepared for an invasion of Egypt reached Istanbul. With the invasion of Egypt on 1 July 1798, the Ottoman Empire was at war with France. The idea that the Ottomans were indifferent to events in Paris until they affected the Ottoman Empire has dominated our view of this period.³ Recent scholarship, however, has shown that the Ottomans were taking a much keener interest than had previously been suspected, and that even before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War on 20 April 1792 there was at least one Ottoman bureaucrat sending reports of events in Paris to Istanbul. This was Ebubekir Ratib Efendi, ambassador to Vienna, who was later to become *Re'isül-kâttab* himself. This article will attempt to shed a little more light on the life and contribution of this Ottoman bureaucrat; more importantly, it will examine in some detail how the author of the reports struggled to explain ideas in a language and within a culture which was ill-equipped to express concepts which were quintessentially Western European and above all modern.

Until relatively recently Ebubekir Ratib Efendi, one of the most eminent of Ottoman statesmen, has remained an elusive figure appearing in passing in works on Ottoman history: in articles,⁴ in MA and PhD

the Sultan before the French invasion of Egypt, which would indicate that Ottoman diplomats were aware of French ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean. However, they seemed to have underestimated the diplomatic skills of Count Talleyrand, who managed to assure Es-Seyyid Ali Efendi, the permanent Ottoman ambassador to Paris, that there was nothing to fear from the French while Napoleon was at the same time secretly preparing a fleet for the invasion of Egypt. For the treatise of Rashid Efendi see *Sultan Selim-i Salis Devrine Aid Muhaberat-ı Siyasiyye* (Istanbul University Library: Turkish Manuscripts 886), 1 *passim*.

- 3 Stanford J. Shaw agrees with Lewis on the fact that the threat from revolutionary France was not taken seriously in Istanbul. Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 265–6.
- 4 On Ratib Efendi see: Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları, Nizam-ı Cedit* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1946); Idem, “Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Nizam-ı Cedit İslahatında Rolü” in *Proceedings of the Fifth Congress of the Turkish Historical Society* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1960), 347–55; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Tosyalı Ebubekir Ratib Efendi”, *Bellekten* 39, 1975: 49–76; Hüner Tuncer, “Osmanlı Elçisi Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Viyana Mektupları”, *Bellekten* 43, 1979: 73–105; Joshua M. Stein, “An eighteenth century Ottoman ambassador observes the West: Ebubekir Ratib Efendi reports on the Habsburg system of roads and posts”, *Archivum Ottomanicum* 10, 1985: 219–312 and “Habsburg financial institutions presented as a model for the Ottoman Empire in the Sefaretname of Ebubekir Ratib Efendi”, in Andreas Tietze (ed.), *Habsburgisch-Osmanische Beziehungen* (Vienna, 1985), 233–41; Cahit Bilim, “Ebubekir Ratib Efendi, Nemçe Sefaretnamesi”, *Bellekten* 54, 1990: 261–93; Carter V. Findley, “Ebubekir Ratib's Vienna Embassy narrative: discovering Austria or propagandizing for reform in Istanbul”, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 85, 1995: 41–80.

theses⁵ and in modern encyclopaedias.⁶ The brevity of his term of office as *re'isül-kûttab*⁷ may have accounted for his relative obscurity but the sheer volume of his writings has now begun to attract the attention of scholars both within and outside Turkey.⁸ Early articles noted his role in drawing up the famous correspondence between Prince Selim and King Louis XVI of France, but more recent articles have begun to look at his *Treatise (Layiha)* and other writings, and in doing so have demonstrated that he was one of the major forces behind Ottoman reforms in the last decade of the eighteenth century.⁹ Indeed, his Vienna *Travelogue (Sefaretname)* has now been published in transcription.¹⁰

Ebubekir Ratib Efendi's progress as an Ottoman bureaucrat followed the typical career path of the period. He was born in Kastamonu in about 1750.¹¹

- 5 V. Sema Arıkan, "Nizam-ı Cedit in 'Kaynaklarından Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Büyük Layiha'sı'" (unpublished PhD dissertation, Istanbul University, 1996); Fatih Bayram, "Ebubekir Ratib Efendi as an envoy of knowledge between the East and the West" (unpublished MA dissertation, Bilkent University, 2000); Fatih Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde Bir Osmanlı Bürokrati: Ebubekir Ratib Efendi" (unpublished MA dissertation, Hacettepe University, 2002).
- 6 Sema Arıkan, "Ebubekir Ratib Efendi", *Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. X (Istanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), 277–8.
- 7 According to the *rûznâme* (diary) of Ahmed Efendi, Ratib Efendi was appointed *reisülkûttab* on 17 May 1795 (27 Şevval 1209). İsmail H. Danişmend, without citing any source, gives the date of his promotion as the 25 May 1795 (6 Zilkade 1209). However, the most reliable date for Ratib Efendi's promotion comes from the register books (*tevcihat defterleri*) for the Ottoman *katibs* in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministerial Archive hereafter BOA) and has been given by Erhan Afyoncu, which is 14 June 1795 (26 Zilkade 1209). The date of his dismissal was 19 August 1796 (14 Safer 1211). V. Sema Arıkan, *III. Selim'in Sırkatibi Ahmed Efendi Tarafından Tutulan Ruzname* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1993), 193; İsmail H. Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. IV (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınları, 1961), 642 and Erhan Afyoncu, "Osmanlı Müelliflerine Dair Tevcihat Kayıtları I", *Belgeler* 20, 1999: 127. For his date of dismissal see, Afyoncu, "Osmanlı Müelliflerine Dair", 127 and Vasif Efendi, *Tarih-i Vasif* (Istanbul University Library: Turkish Manuscripts, 6012), fol. 47a–49b.
- 8 Vasif Efendi, *Tarih-i Vasif*; Süleyman Faik, *Sefmetü'r-Rüesa* (Istanbul, 1269), 127–40; Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. VII (Istanbul: Matbâ-i Âmire, 1309), 46–9; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, vol. II (Istanbul, 1308), 346; Fatin Efendi, *Tezkire-i Hatimetü'l-eş'ar* (Istanbul, 1324), 100–03; Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf Unsere Zeit*, vol. IV (Pesth, 1838), 418–9.
- 9 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Selim III'ün Veliâht İken Fransa Kralı Lui XVI ile Muhabereleleri", *Belleten* 2, 1938: 191–246.
- 10 Abdullah Uçman, *Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Nemçe Sefaretnamesi* (Istanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 1999).
- 11 For the early life of Ebubekir Ratib Efendi and his travels to Crimea with his father, see Vasif Efendi, *Tarih-i Vasif*, fols 47b–48a and Arıkan, "Nizam-ı Cedit'in Kaynaklarından", V. Although Karal, without citing any source, gives Ratib Efendi's year of birth as 1747, Vasif Efendi, one of the most important contemporary historians, shows his year of birth as 1750. Vasif Efendi, *Tarih-i Vasif*, fol. 47b; compare with Karal, *Selim III. 'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları*, 168–9; see also Stein, "An eighteenth century Ottoman ambassador", 221.

His father, a member of the *ulema*,¹² liked to travel and took Ratib with him on a visit to the Crimea.¹³ It was there that Ratib's father, or perhaps the young Ratib himself, seems to have made an impression on the ruler, Aslan Giray Khan, who wrote a letter of recommendation for Ratib Efendi. Furnished with this letter, Ratib was able to obtain an apprenticeship in the *Amedi* Office.¹⁴ The *Amedi* office in the mid-eighteenth century came under the jurisdiction of the *re'isül-kûttab*s and was the office which dealt with diplomacy. It was, in the words of Stanford Shaw, the "closest thing the Ottomans had to a foreign office".¹⁵ Working in this office would have brought the young Ratib into contact not only with foreign correspondence but also with the translators of this correspondence and perhaps even with foreign ambassadors. It was this early education in diplomacy that prepared Ratib for his future role not just as an envoy but as the *Re'is Efendi*, i.e. the *re'isül-kûttab*.¹⁶ He then moved to the *Tahvil* office,¹⁷ only to rejoin, in 1769, the *Amedi* office

- 12 Even though children generally followed their fathers' occupations in the Ottoman Empire, Ratib Efendi, exceptionally, chose a different career path; this was probably his father's decision. Çilingir Ali Efendi might have known that his son could reach the upper echelons of the Ottoman State more easily if he entered the *kalemiyye*, because at that time all high posts in *ilmiyye* were occupied by the children of great *mollas*. Madeline C. Zilfi, "Elite circulation in the Ottoman empire: great Mollas of the eighteenth century", *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26, 1983: 318–64.
- 13 This journey must have taken place between Ratib Efendi's birth (1750/1170) and 1757, because according to a document in the Topkapı Palace Archive (hereafter TSMA), he was in Istanbul when he was seven years old. TSMA (E. 11388).
- 14 It should be noted that in the Ottoman bureaucracy, *katips* could not generally start their career in the *Amedi* office, which in the eighteenth century had gained great importance. However, possessing a letter of recommendation from the Khan of the Crimea seems to have enabled Ratib Efendi to begin his career in one of the most prominent offices in the Sublime Porte. Recep Ahıskalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Reisülküttablık (XVIII. Yüzyıl)* (Istanbul: Tatav Yayınları, 2001), 142.
- 15 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 119.
- 16 For the *Amedi* office and its functions in the Sublime Porte, see Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Amedci", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. I (Istanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1997), 396–7; idem, "Ameddji", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1954), 433; Ahıskalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında*, 136–52; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1988), 55–8; Halil İncelik, "Reisülküttab", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. IX (Istanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1997), 675; Carter V. Findley, "The legacy of tradition to reform: origins of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, 1970: 338 and idem, *Bureaucratic Reform in The Ottoman Empire, The Sublime Porte* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 78–9.
- 17 Appointing provincial governors and military fief-holders was the main concern of the *Tahvil* office. The reason for Ratib Efendi's appointment must have been related to the traditions of the Sublime Porte. To educate all apprentices in the various working fields in the Sublime Porte, they were assigned to different offices. On this tradition see James Dallaway, *Constantinople Ancient and Modern* (London, 1797), 39 and for the *Tahvil* office see also: Ahıskalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında*, 118–36; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Merkez ve Bahriye*, 43–5; Findley, "The legacy of tradition", 337; H. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and The West*, vol. I, Part I (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 121–2; Joseph von Hammer, *Des osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung*, vol. II (Vienna: Georg Dims Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1815), 113–14.

under the patronage of the influential Halil Hamid Efendi who was *Amedî Efendi*,¹⁸ i.e. head of the *Amedî* office. Ten years later, in 1779, he was promoted to the post of *Amedî Efendi* and became a member of the *Khadjegane-ı Diwan-ı Humayun*,¹⁹ the highest level in the bureaucracy. He was to remain *Amedî Efendi* for the next ten years. It was during this period that his patron, Halil Hamid Efendi, became Grand Vizier and it was probable that it was on the recommendation of Halil Hamid and Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi,²⁰ who was close to Prince Selim, that he was appointed to the position of tutor to Prince Selim. He was to teach the prince, among other things, to write in *ta'lik* script, in which Ratib Efendi was an accomplished master.²¹

While acting as the prince's tutor he was instrumental in drawing up a series of letters to Louis XVI of France from Prince Selim.²² His collusion with the Prince in this unauthorized correspondence may have been the reason for his being banished from Istanbul because, with the outbreak of war with Russia and Austria in 1788, we see Ratib Efendi assigned to the army as *Silahdar Katibi*.²³ This posting would however have given him an ample opportunity to observe the shortcomings of the Ottoman army. When Sultan Abdulhamid I died in the following year Prince Selim ascended the throne as Selim III and immediately recalled Ratib Efendi to

- 18 For the connection between Halil Hamid Pasha and Ratib Efendi, see Christoph Neumann, "Themen und Verfahrensweisen in der osmanischen Aussenpolitik gegen Ende des 18 Jahrhunderts", (unpublished MA dissertation, Ludwig Maximilians Universität München, 1986), 131–6 (thanks to Prof. Dr. Christoph Neumann for allowing me access to this work); idem, "Decision making without decision makers: Ottoman foreign policies circa 1780", in C. Farah (ed.), *Decision Making and Change in The Ottoman Empire* (Kirkville: The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1993), 29–38 and Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 31–4.
- 19 For *Khadjegane-ı Diwan-ı Humayun* and its meaning in the context of the Ottoman promotion system see Cengiz Orhonlu, "Khadjegane-ı Diwan-ı Humayun", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. IV (Leiden: Brill, 1954), 908–09; Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. I (Paris, 1788–1824), 350–52; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Merkez ve Bahriye*, 68–9; Findley, "The legacy of tradition to reform", 346 and idem, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 100.
- 20 For Ratib Efendi's connection with Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi who was assigned as *vakanüvis* (official historiographer) on 13 October 1787, see Süleyman Faik, *Sefinetü'r-Rüesa*, 139 and Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. IV, 195. Ratib Efendi's relationship with Edib Efendi seems to have started with Ratib Efendi's promotion as *Amedci*. Besides other duties, the *Amedî* Efendis, were also required to help historiographers, providing them documents from the Sublime Port while they were writing official histories. Ahiskalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında*, 52–3.
- 21 *Ta'lik*, the most important Persian influence on Ottoman calligraphy, was reserved for writing verse in the Ottoman Empire. Ratib Efendi's promotion and his life, as an "Ottoman" and a poet, would suggest that he had familiarity with writing verse. For *ta'lik* script see, Christine Woodhead, "From scribe to litterateur: a career of a XVI century Ottoman Katib", *Bulletin of The British Society for Middle East Studies* 9, 1982: 60. For the poems of Ratib Efendi, see: Fatim Efendi, *Tezkire-i Hatimetü'l-eş'ar*, 100–101; Uzunçarşılı, "Tosyalı Ebubekir Ratib Efendi", 71; Hüner Tuncer, "Osmanlı Elçisi Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Ozan Yönü", *Bellesten* 47, 1983: 584–85 and Uçman, *Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Nemçe Sefaretnamesi*, 34,49,50,72,74,80,81,93.
- 22 Uzunçarşılı, "Selim III. Veliiaht İken".
- 23 Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 47.

Istanbul.²⁴ Ratib Efendi was promoted to the post of *Tezkire-i Evvel*, a position which was likely to lead to the post of *Re'isül-kûttab*.²⁵ A further and now rapid promotion was offered to him. He was to become *Rikâb Re'isül-kûttabı*, which was the deputy to the *Re'isül-kûttab*. However, since Ratib Efendi seems to have taken a keen interest in astrology,²⁶ and noting that the day on which his promotion was to be formalized by the presentation of a pelisse of office (*hil'at*) from the hands of the Grand Vizier was one on which the moon was to be in the sign of Scorpio, he requested that his promotion be postponed to a more auspicious day.²⁷ This so infuriated the Sultan that he had Ratib Efendi exiled to the island of Tenedos where he remained for more than a year.²⁸ In 1791 Selim III decided to pardon Ratib Efendi and appointed him Secretary of the Janissary Corps (*Yeniçeri Katibi*) where he remained until the end of the war in 1791.²⁹ On the cessation of hostilities and the signing of the peace treaty at Sistova, Ratib Efendi was appointed Ottoman Envoy (*Orta Elçi*) to Vienna,³⁰ with a mandate to describe in some detail everything he

- 24 With Selim III's accession, new assignments were made, so that the upper echelons of Ottoman bureaucracy changed dramatically. Selim III probably attempted to establish a cadre of senior bureaucrats who would be instrumental in the implementation of the future reforms. All of the newly promoted personnel, including the Grand Vizier, had in some way been close to the Sultan. Ratib Efendi was a member of this cadre. Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 38; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. IV, 265; Fahri Derin, "Yayla İmamı Risalesi", *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 3, 1972: 215–7. For the transfer of Ratib Efendi to Istanbul, see *I. Abdülhamid'in Saltanat Devrinde 9 Zilkade 1187, 18 Rebiülahir 1205 Seneleri Arasında Vuku Bulan Azil Nasb ve Diğer Hadiseler* (Turkish Historical Society Library: Y/1001), fol. 23 and BOA, Kamil Kepeci Collection, no: 3, fol. 210.
- 25 According to archival sources, Ratib Efendi was promoted to *Tezkire-i Evvel* on 30 April 1789 (4 Şaban 1203). However, the document in the Turkish Historical Society Library gives 29 April 1789 as the date of assignment of his appointment. Afyoncu, "Osmanlı Müelliflerine Dair", 127; compare with *I. Abdülhamid'in Saltanat Devrinde*, fol. 23. *Katıps* holding the post of *Tezkire-i Evvel* were not only personal secretary to the Grand Vizier, but had the duty of accepting the petitions which were written to Sublime Porte, arranging them and reading them in the *Diwan-ı Humayun* (Imperial Council). If the post of *Tezkire-i Evvel* was vacant, it was the *reisülküttab*s who were responsible for these duties. It may be that Selim III, with this promotion, may have been trying to groom Ratib Efendi for the post of *Reisülküttab*. For the post of *Tezkire-i Evvel* see Midhat Sertoğlu, *Osmanlı Tarih Lugatı* (Istanbul: Enderun Yayınları, 1986), 337; Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. III (Istanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1993), 491 and Hammer, *Des osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung*, 128–9.
- 26 In eighteenth-century Istanbul, we are informed, astronomy and astrology were "sciences" in which all people were interested. James Dallaway, *Constantinople Ancient and Modern*, 390–91; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. VI, 195–6.
- 27 Vasif Efendi, *Tarih-i Vasif*, fol. 48b and d'Ohsson, *Tableau General*, vol. VII, 11–13.
- 28 Ratib Efendi's keen interest in astronomy may well have been a pretext for having him exiled, since his predecessor, Rashid Efendi, had connections with the Palace and also had a vested interest in having Ratib Efendi out of the way. Süleyman Faik, *Sefinetü'r-Rüesa*, 139; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. VI, 196–7 and Vasif Efendi, *Tarih-i Vasif*, fol. 49a.
- 29 For Ratib Efendi's letters to Istanbul requesting reinstatement, see Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 41–2.
- 30 For Ratib Efendi's appointment as *Orta Elçi* to Vienna see BOA *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (Imperial Decrees) Collection (hereafter HAT) 9553 and 9733.

observed not only in Vienna, but also to report events as they were unfolding in Europe.

When Ratib Efendi entered Vienna on 12 February 1792,³¹ he could not have done so at a more crucial time. Not only was Paris in turmoil but also the pattern of alliances and rivalries was beginning to change throughout Europe. Austria and Prussia, traditional enemies, had the summer before acted together and issued the Declaration of Pillnitz on 25 August 1791, in which they warned France that they would react unfavourably should any harm come to the French king or queen, who was the Austrian emperor's sister.³² Another consideration was that the French Jacobins were intent on exporting their revolution beyond the borders of France, with terrifying implications for monarchs throughout Europe. Some two months after Ratib Efendi's arrival in Vienna the threat of war was to become a reality when the French National Assembly declared war on Austria on 20 April 1792. Ratib Efendi was therefore able to observe, through his informants, the early conduct of the war and the near collapse of France. The sudden death of Emperor Leopold II on 1 March also occurred when Ratib Efendi was in Vienna.

In Austria, besides embarking on a programme of visiting military establishments, hospitals, academies and other institutions, all of which were described in great detail in his travelogue and treatise, Ratib Efendi also had the newspapers translated for him and generally tried to keep up with current events in Europe.³³ Of course it was the French Revolution and the war with France that constituted the most notable events of the period³⁴ in which Ratib Efendi found himself in Vienna. Vienna at that time

31 Uçman, *Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Nemçe Sefaretnamesi*, 84 and Ebubekir Ratib Efendi, *Viyana Sefaretnamesi* (Travelogue), Topkapı Palace Library (hereafter TSMK), Emanet Hazinesi (hereafter EH) 1438, fol. 206b–207a.

32 J. M. Thompson, *The French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943), 250.

33 Ottoman interest in European newspapers seems to have started at the time of Abdülhamid I, who read translations of newspapers on a regular basis. As a result of his curiosity a translation office was established in the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Asafi*) some time in his reign. It is worth noting that other Ottoman envoys of Ratib Efendi's time also had newspapers translated and sent to the Sublime Porte. See Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid* (Istanbul: Tatav Yayınları, 2001), 200; Kemal Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1985), 125; Aziz Berker, "Mora İhtilali Tarihçesi veya Penah Efendi Mecmuası", *Tarih Vesikaları* 2, 1942: 232; Aksan, "Ottoman sources of information on Europe in the eighteenth century", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 11, 1988: 11–12 and Karakaya, "Mustafa Rasih Efendi'nin 1793 Tarihli Rusya Sefaretnamesi" (unpublished MA dissertation, Istanbul University, 1996), 118.

34 The view that central European states were badly informed about events in Paris does not apply to Vienna. Just after the Revolutionary Wars began, the *Wiener Zeitung* started publishing special editions on the French Revolution (*Besondere Beilage zur Wiener Zeitung*), under strict state control, to inform its readers of the facts of the war. As we shall see, the reports of Ratib Efendi concerning the Revolutionary Wars depend, to a large extent, on the information obtained from the Viennese newspapers. Alex Balisah, "The *Wiener Zeitung* reports on the French Revolution", in Kinley Brauer and Willam E. Wright (eds), *Austria in the Age of*

was teeming with French émigrés and there was no lack of informants on the latest state-of-affairs in Paris and Europe in general. He thus had ample opportunity “...to hold discussions with the aristocrats and officers in Vienna who had supported the monarchy and had fled from the [Jacobin] bandits...”.³⁵

On the completion of his embassy, Ratib Efendi left Vienna on 12 July 1792 and returned to Istanbul. In his 150 days in Vienna he amassed an enormous amount of information which he put into his *Layiha*, a weighty tome running to 245 folios written on both sides. I refer to this work as his *Treatise*. He wrote a further, much smaller, work, of 29 folios, which he called the *Sefaretname*; I shall refer to this as his ambassadorial *Travelogue*. This is essentially the record of his journey to and from Vienna, but it also includes some detailed accounts of what he observed in Vienna, accounts which could well have been included in his *Treatise*. In addition to these two reports he wrote a number of despatches of varying length in which he discusses current events as they were unfolding in both Vienna and other countries in Europe.

In these despatches, it is the revolution in France which takes prominence. The French Revolution, which he describes as the “rising of the rabble” [*erâzil ü esâfil*], had its roots in the bankruptcy of the French state. For the past century, Ratib Efendi explains, the kings of France had been unable to balance their budgets, so they increased the tax burden on commoners and the peasantry. Although many of the insurgents against the French state had “tasted liberty” [*serbestiyetten lezzet alarak*] and were demanding freedom, the basic cause of the spread of the Revolution was the lack of security of person and property. The aristocracy [*nobile*] observed this state of affairs but did nothing, and when the king asked them for “money, cannon, muskets and the materials of war” [*akçe, tob, tüfenk ve edevat u mühimmat-ı cenk*] they procrastinated and refused to supply them. This was why king Louis XVI was hated and abused by people and was presently being held a prisoner. Thus did the Jacobin bandits [*Franca eşkiyası Yakobenler*] loathe the aristocrats and abuse the king and princes.³⁶

French Revolution, 1789–1815 (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 185–92. See also issues of the *Wiener Zeitung* published in 1792.

35 “...krallık taraftarı ve eşkiyadan firari Beç’de mevcut olan beyzade ve ofiçyaller ile ülfet olummak...” TSMA 6700/3.

36 Ratib Efendi’s analysis of the causes of the French Revolution reflects the reality that the main underlying cause was the long-term indebtedness of the French crown, inherited from Louis XIV’s profligate wars and the fact that the tax burden fell on those who could least afford to pay. His interpretation shows that Ratib Efendi well understood the connection between war and state incomes, which is the cornerstone of both the “circle of justice” (*Da’ire-i Adliyya*) and Ottoman bureaucratic mentality. Michael Kwass, “A kingdom of taxpayers: state formation, privilege, and political culture in eighteenth century France”, *Journal of Modern History* 70, 1998: 295–339; Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution, From Its Origins to 1793* (trans. Elizabeth Moss Evanson) (London: Routledge, 2004), 93–5; and Charles Tilly, “War making and state making as organised crime”, in P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back in* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1985, 169–91, cf. TSMA E.6700/3; E.8530 and Yeşil, “III. Selim Döneminde”, 150–2.

Ratib Efendi noted that although the people hated the king, the aristocracy and the clergy [*papazlar*] supported him.³⁷ However, Ratib Efendi warned the sultan not to view France as being in a terminal state of collapse, reminding him that, unlike the Habsburg Empire, France was united in a single religion, in a single nation, enjoying a common language.³⁸ This he sees as an enormous advantage and he made the prescient observation that, extraordinarily, the contending parties in France would unite against a common enemy. Ratib Efendi gives an example of the dynamic nature of French politics:

There appeared cataclysmic developments as one thousand two hundred of the king's own personal palace guards made common cause with most of the thousand national guards who had been recruited by the National Assembly, and when they heard of France's defeats on the borders they all showed obedience to the king and declared that they would do whatever he ordered.³⁹

Despite the humiliating defeats France had suffered, Ratib Efendi warned that France was not to be dismissed as a power. In the early stages of the history of the Revolution he could not imagine how long it would last, but he predicted that after the Revolution, if the country were to be ruled by a monarch, it would regain its former power and its glory, and would indeed take the war to the Austrians. If, however, the Jacobins were to gain dominance and France became a republic, they would export their revolutionary ideology and, in their attempt to free all European states, in a very short time war would descend all over Europe. As a result "whichever of the two parties [monarchists and Jacobins] triumphs war will be inevitable".⁴⁰

In Europe, at the time of his writing, Ratib Efendi had noticed that these two groups were waging a propaganda war. French émigrés were warning European governments of the dangers of the revolution spreading, and they attempted to mobilize military forces against France, while the Jacobins, for their part, were appealing to the oppressed to fight for their freedom.⁴¹

37 TSMA E. 8530.

38 "...bir mezheb ve bir millet ve bir lisan olmalarıyla..." This phrase is similar to the old saying used at the time of Louis XIV: "un roi, un foi, un loi".

39 "...Paris'de kralın nefsini muhafazaya mahsus bin iki yüz nefer gard dö kur [Garde de Cour] [ve] Asamliya Nasonel [Assemblée Nationale] tarafından toplanmış bin gard Nasonelin [Garde Nationale] ekseri ittifak ederek, Fransa'nın sınırdaki hezimetini duyup hepsi krala itaat ve ubudiyet edüp her neyi kral emrederse infaz ideceklerini beyan suretinde..." BOA HAT 14065.

40 TSMA E.6700/3 and BOA HAT 52521.

41 Even though, in Bernard's words, Jacobin propaganda was no more than a "comic-opera", its effect on the Austrian state was obvious. Minister of police, Johann Anton Pergen and his assistant Franz Joseph Saurau, whose duties were "to discover all persons who are or might be dangerous to the state and to protect the person and family of Your Majesty, and to discover all hostile designs against them", seem to have been convinced that the Jacobins constituted a real threat to the security of the state, and they used them as an excuse to conduct a witch-hunt

He offered a translation of part of the Jacobin argument in a despatch to Istanbul:

we can not free the common man [*ibâ'dullah*] from this slavery until we [the Jacobins] in the National Assembly put an end to the comedy of the monarchy. If each person has his own honour and respect, why do kings oppress and dominate them? Are they not human beings like us? It is we that made them kings. Oh people, oh brothers! Our struggle and our quarrel are with the kings and the ministers, and the bullets and guns and cannons that we fire will be at their palaces. Why do these tyrants oppress us so. Are they not men like yourselves? And with these words they [the Jacobins] spread all types of dissension and stir up and agitate the people...⁴²

Writing in another undated despatch, probably written before war between France and Austria broke out, Ratib Efendi points to the importance of this type of Jacobin propaganda. He noted that the Austrians, Prussians

for Jacobins and their sympathizers. Thus “if the revolution was born in Paris, the seat of anti-revolution was in Vienna”. Jacobins first appeared in the University of Vienna as a case of individual radicalism in November 1789. In 1790, the Viennese police uncovered a club whose members were generally household servants of French nationality, including some in the employ of Prince Kaunitz. Jacobins found many more supporters among Hungarians, who received financial aid from Prussia against Vienna, than among other constituencies, probably as a result of the centralizing reforms of Joseph II. For Jacobin propaganda and their trials in Austria see Ernst Wangermann, *From Joseph II to Jacobin Trials* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 137–70; Paul Bernard, *Jesuits and Jacobins, Enlightenment and Enlightened Despotism in Austria* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 155–68; idem, *From Enlightenment to Police State: The Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); W. C. Langsam, “Emperor Francis II and the Austrian ‘Jacobins’ 1792–1796”, *American Historical Review* 1, 1945: 471–90; and Brion, *Daily Life in the Vienna of Mozart and Schubert* (trans. J. Stewart) (London: Leagrave Press, 1961), 134.

- 42 “...*Nasonel Asamliya'da* [Assemblée Nationale] *biz bu krallık komedyesini bitürmeyince bu ibadullahı esirlikten halas idemeyüz. Bir adam kendü ırz ve edebiyile mukayyet olduğu halde krallar anlara ne için zulm itsün hükm itsün anlar dahi bizim gibi adam değil midir? Anları padişah biz ideriz. Ey ibâdullah ve ey karındaşlar! Bizim cengimiz ve davamız krallar ve ministeriler ile dir ve atacağımız kurşun ve top ve tüfenk ve cenk onların konaklarımadır. Bu zalimlerin bize tasallutları nedir? Onlar dahi sizin gibi adam değil midir?... Deyu dürlü dürlü fesadlar neşr ve işaa ile halkı tahrik ve ifsad ve teşvik iderler...* BOA HAT 52516/B. Besides this kind of leaflet, according to Ratib Efendi, Jacobins propagated the Revolution with “the declaration which they call the rights of men”. Ratib Efendi’s comments on the Jacobins and their propaganda in the last sentence of the quotation reflect his own point of view on the French Revolution. As a bureaucrat of an absolutist state Ratib Efendi, apparently, did not approve of revolutionary government. The method used by Ratib Efendi’s interpreters in the translation of the Jacobin leaflet should be explained: they generally chose words (like *ibâdullah* or *padişah*) which were well understood in Ottoman political circles. This method must have been adopted deliberately, otherwise the reader in Istanbul would not have fully comprehended the content. However, where there were no equivalents such as *Assemblée Nationale* or *comédie* in Ottoman language he uses the original European words.

and the Spanish⁴³ in particular were worried about the prospect of the expansion of these ideas across their borders and their effect on their own subjects. One of the main underlying reasons for Austria not declaring war was that it feared the outcome of this propaganda, i.e. the possibility of mass desertions of their troops to the French side.⁴⁴

Ratib Efendi is at great pains to describe how the general staff of the Austrian army had issued regulations that their officers and men were forbidden to read works by Voltaire and Rousseau, which he describes as "...history and other types of books which are full of blasphemies, heresy, artifice, and mischief..."⁴⁵ Having reported this regulation in great detail, in the *Treatise* he criticized the Austrian commanders for their fear of this propaganda by asking rhetorically: "...when it comes to war, does the wise man abandon these kinds of important undertakings because of fear of such ideas..."⁴⁶ Ratib Efendi's comment seems to indicate that he either underestimated the ideological dimension of the French Revolution or was unable to understand it fully.

In Ratib Efendi's opinion the primary causes of the outbreak of war were Jacobin propaganda⁴⁷ and the fear of foreign monarchs for their own

43 Ratib Efendi informed his government not only about the condition of the Habsburg Empire and Prussia but also about the attitudes of what he terms the "weak" European states toward the French Revolution. For instance, according to one of his despatches the Two Sicilies, like Prussia and Spain, were also to provide financial aid to the Comte d'Artois to establish a new army to fight the revolutionaries. The sum of this financial aid was to be more than two thousand purses. However, Ratib Efendi's concluding comment on the "weak" states in European politics is noteworthy in that "because they are poor, in debt and feeble, they are to be used by powerful states when the needs arise". BOA HAT 14065 and HAT 52521; TSMA E.6700/3.

44 BOA HAT 52521.

45 Arıkan, "Nizam-ı Cedit'in Kaynaklarından", 118 and Ratib Efendi, *Viyana Sefaretnamesi* (Treatise), (Istanbul University Library: Turkish Manuscripts 5825), fol. 67a–b. In describing Rousseau and Voltaire's books, Ratib Efendi uses the words blasphemies (*küfriyyat*) and heresy (*ilhad*), which indicates that he considered the French Revolution not only from a diplomatic but also from the religious perspective. It should also be said that these words were later used by Âtîf Efendi in his celebrated treatise on the French Revolution and Cevdet Pasha in his monumental history when he deals with the Revolution. However, in the Habsburg Army, these kinds of prohibitions were started with the promulgation which set up the Commission for Education and Censorship (*Studien- und Zensurshofkommission*) in 1764. *The Treatise of Your Humble Servant Âtîf Efendi*, BOA HAT 16130; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. VIII, 196 *passim*. H. M. Scott, "Reform in the Habsburg monarchy, 1740–1790", in *Enlightened Absolutism, Reform and Reformers in Later Eighteenth Century Europe*, (ed.) H. M. Scott, (Oxford: Macmillan Press, 1990), 164.

46 BOA HAT 52516/B.

47 Austrian officials were particularly suspicious of the French population who had immigrated to the Habsburg dominions as a result of the population policies of Joseph II, by means of which the Emperor tried to increase the productivity of the *Reich* and *Land*. Many of these people, however, still had contacts with France, and they seemed to be receptive to revolutionary propaganda. These fears were exacerbated by reports from Austrian agents, the first of which reached Vienna in June 1790, authorized by Count Metternich. According to this report from

positions, and their natural desire to preserve the security and good order in their own domains. When Leopold II died suddenly on 1 March, Ratib Efendi's⁴⁸ intelligence network received information that his death was not due to natural causes but he had been poisoned by a French woman at the behest of the French republicans.⁴⁹ The Palace suppressed this aspect of the emperor's death because it had no proof of Jacobin involvement and did not want to stir up popular emotions.⁵⁰ Ratib Efendi does not confine himself to events in Austria, he also reports on what was happening in the other courts of Europe such as Russia⁵¹ and Prussia,⁵² and seems to have been particularly well informed about the assassination of Gustavus II Adolphus, the Swedish king, an event which he relates in detail. One may presume that Mouradgea d'Ohsson's position as former dragoman at the Swedish Embassy was instrumental in providing him with the detail.

Koblenz, the French émigré headquarters, a *club de propagande* had been established whose goal was to sow the seeds of Revolution all over Europe. Wangermann, *From Joseph II to Jacobin Trials*, 59–62 and Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, 175–7.

- 48 On the death of Emperor Leopold, Ratib Efendi immediately wrote a letter of condolence to the Austrian translator and enquired if there was to be a ceremony which it would be appropriate for him to attend. This note was to be translated and presented to ministers and even to be published in Viennese newspapers. Uçman, *Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Nemçe Sefaretnamesi*, 90–1; Ratib Efendi, TSMK, EH 1438, fol. 214a.
- 49 According to information from Viennese and Parisian newspapers, just before the death of the Emperor the Parisian mob [*erazil*] set fire to a picture of Leopold II and jeered the (Austrian) Queen of France when she entered Versailles. After the death of Leopold II, there were mass celebrations in Paris, and almost all French newspapers published diatribes against the Habsburg Empire, the aim of which was to stir up the population of France against Austria (BOA 52521 and TSMA E.8530).
- 50 Ratib Efendi reported to Istanbul that, just before death of Leopold II, three letters in which Jacobins threatened the Emperor were left in various places in Vienna. For details of Ratib Efendi on the Emperor's health and his death, see TSMA E.8530 and E.5320; BOA HAT 52521 and 52516/B; Uçman, *Ebubekir Ratib Efendi'nin Nemçe Sefaretnamesi*, 90–1; Ratib Efendi, TSMK, EH 1438, fol. 214a. Ratib Efendi's report reached Istanbul on 29 April 1792/2 Ramazan 1206. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "III Sultan Selim Zamanında Yazılmış Dış Ruznamesinden 1206/1791 ve 1207/1792 Senelerine Ait Vekayi", *Belleten* 37, 1973: 637.
- 51 According to Ratib Efendi's despatch, Catherine the Great also felt threatened and had officials exiled as a precaution, because of rumours of revolution. Rasih Efendi's reports also confirmed the information sent by Ratib Efendi. Indeed, Catherine II declared a large number of French merchants in Russia *persona non grata* and ordered them to leave. For Ratib Efendi's despatch see BOA HAT 14065; for the information sent by Rasih Efendi see Karakaya, "Mustafa Rasih Efendi'nin", 167–8 and 170, cf. Isabel de Madariaga, *Catherine The Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 189–203 and John T. Alexander, *Catherine The Great, Life and Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 276–82.
- 52 Another European king to be threatened was Friedrich Wilhelm II. He received thirteen letters in which he was warned "my king, you should not travel freely and always be on your guard against assassination attempts", BOA HAT 52516/B and HAT 52521; for Prussian Jacobinism see Karl Wegert, "Patrimonial rule, popular self-interest, and Jacobinism in Germany, 1763–1800", *Journal of Modern History* 53, 1981: 440–67.

However, Ratib Efendi's wide intelligence network also included the despatches sent by the Austrian ambassador in Sweden.⁵³

Ratib Efendi, realizing the significance of the changing patterns of hostility and alliances for the Ottoman Empire, draws the attention of the Sultan to the fact that Austria and Prussia, traditional enemies, were now making common cause in the face of the threat posed by the French Revolution. The Declaration of Pillnitz,⁵⁴ which had been issued some six months before his arrival in Vienna, was proof of this common cause. The Declaration itself was a warning to the revolutionaries not to undermine further the position of Louis XVI.⁵⁵ But there was another treaty by which Austria and Prussia agreed to co-operate over Poland.⁵⁶ In fact, Ratib Efendi's informants had suggested a far more radical dividing up of the parts of central and western Europe than the secret articles to the treaty between Austria and Prussia would have suggested: the Europeans, he writes, see no point in expending money and troops without a financial or territorial gain. Austria and Prussia would therefore divide various European territories between them:

- 53 Ratib Efendi's despatch, relying not only on d'Ohsson but also on the report of the Austrian envoy to Sweden, gave all the details of the assassination of Gustavus II Adolphus, including even the description of a masquerade (in Turkish text *rode*, probably from French *redoute*) in the Stockholm opera-house where he was shot in the back on 16 March 1792 as a result of a widespread aristocratic conspiracy. He also describes the interrogation of the assassin and the king's critical health condition. BOA 52521; TSMA E. 8530, E.1423/1–2, Uzunçarşılı, "III Sultan Selim Zamanında", 637 and Munro Price, "Louis XVI and Gustavus III: secret diplomacy and counter-revolution, 1791–1792", *The Historical Journal* 42, 1999: 435–66.
- 54 According to Ratib Efendi's report the declaration of Pillnitz consisted of three articles, the first of which states that, because of the new regime in France, cadastral surveys and the law and taxes of Alsace and Lorraine had changed, therefore they must be returned to their former positions, and "unions [unyon] and counties [konta]" which had been taken from the Pope must be returned to the Pope; the second was about the liberation of the king of France. The last, but most important article, according to Ratib Efendi, argued that France was adopting a policy of power concentration, which was a threat to the interests [in the Turkish text *interes*] of all European states. BOA HAT 14065. For the declaration of Pillnitz also see Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, 205–7.
- 55 One of the main reasons for the allies not daring to declare war on France, according to Ratib Efendi, was that Louis XVI's life was under threat from the Revolutionary government (BOA HAT 52516/B and HAT 52521).
- 56 Indeed, the pro-war party in Austria succeeded in presenting a war against France as a profitable venture to the new emperor, Franz II, by linking the idea of intervention on behalf of the French Royal family with that of territorial compensation. According to the new *defensive* alliance between Austria and Prussia, signed on 7 February 1792, Austria allowed Prussia's participation in the new partition of Poland and as compensation Austria was to be allowed to exchange the Netherlands for Bavaria and to gain some unspecified additional territories. However, it is worth noting that Ratib Efendi reports in one of his despatches that Leopold II had entertained ambitions of having one of his sons elected King of Poland. It was for this reason that the Austrian government insisted, in the treaty against France, on adding an article which stated that anyone from the "Prussian dynasty" was ineligible to be elected King of Poland. Wangemann, *From Joseph II to Jacobin Trials*, 113; BOA HAT 14065 and 52521 and TSMA E.8530.

French Flanders and Picardy, the Low Countries [would go] to the Prussian king. Lorraine with Luxembourg, now regarded as an independent principality, will become an autonomous region ruled by one of the Austrian king's brothers. The province of Alsace would be annexed to the Empire ... and ... Bavaria would be given to the Austrians.⁵⁷

Ratib Efendi noted that Austria would have to raise the level of taxation in order to finance a war. He also noted that in the first year of the recent war with the Ottomans (1788), the Austrians had had to raise taxes by half again, in the second year taxation had doubled and in the third year it had trebled.⁵⁸ What surprised Ratib Efendi was the fact that, apart from army

57 "...Fransız Flandrası [Flanders], Bikardi eyaletleri [Picardy], Peyazi Pazi eyaleti [The Netherlands from the Italian *Paesi Bassi*] Prusya kralı tarafına ve Lorene [Lorraine] Lüksemburg [Luxembourg] ile bir müstakil hükümet itibar olunub şimdi prençlik badehu herseklik [the Elector] olmak üzere Nemçe kralının biraderlerinden birine ve Alzas [Alsace] eyaleti imperyo memalikine [The Habsburg Empire] ilhak olunacağı" ve "Bavyera [Bavaria] dahi Nemçeliye verileceği..." BOA HAT 14065.

58 The cost of war with the Ottoman Empire had indeed been heavy. Peasants living in provinces behind the battlefield suffered from having to meet the needs of the army and from the imposition of extraordinary labour services. In the cities, the rapid rise in prices aggravated the livelihood of the burghers and badly-paid officials in particular. In order to finance the war, Joseph II abolished governmental regulations in internal trade and simultaneously reduced imports. These measures led to the disappearance of imported fish, which was the poor man's diet, from the market and a rise in the price of bread and meat. Another factor was the tendency of bankers to lend money to the state rather than invest in industrial and commercial enterprises, which resulted in inflation and an increase in state debts. One of Ratib Efendi's reports confirms this situation: the debt of the Austrian state was approximately 800,000 purses, and each year the state issued bills of exchange, "bank papers" (*Bankozettelbanka kağıdı*), to the value of some forty-eight purses. The disastrous war with the Ottoman Empire, seen as the outcome of Joseph II's ambitions for conquest, was not the only factor leading to the imposition of extraordinary taxes and supplies. The audacious reforms of Joseph II also shifted the financial needs of the state and, accordingly, created discontent among all classes. State demands on capital, which increased tax burdens, reverberated on one of Joseph II's decrees (1786) in which he stipulated the transfer of all capital assets in private foundations to the state. The dissolution of "brotherhoods" (*Bruderschaften*), originally associations of a religious character where subjects had invested their savings, was a serious danger to the stability of the monarchy. While sharp economic depression spread over Habsburg provinces, additional natural disasters such as the flood catastrophe in the Tyrol in 1789 exacerbated the situation for all taxpayers. Apart from economic depression, the new conscription system adopted by Joseph II fed the anti-war sentiments of his subjects. Since the Seven Years War, which ended with the loss of Silesia, the "philosophers" had propagated anti-militaristic sentiments in the Habsburg Empire as in all European countries through a well-established network of publishers. However, with the new system of recruitment, all non-privileged subjects had to live with the prospect of spending long periods of their lives in the army. As a result of these economic and social circumstances, "all police reports of the years 1788 and 1789 agreed as to the increasing unpopularity of the war and growing desire for peace". See Wangermann, *From Joseph II to Jacobin Trials*, 26–30; Brion, *Daily Life in the Vienna of Mozart and Schubert*, 9–10; TSMA 6700/3; Stein, "Habsburg financial institutions presented", 236–7; Arıkan, "Nizam-ı Cedit'in Kaynaklarından", 436–8 and Ratib Efendi, *Viyana Sefaretnamesi (Treatise)*, fol. 263a–264a. For *Bankozettel*, which was a state instrument for

officers, everyone paid taxes from “[Prince] Kaunitz to the lowest rank of state servant”. Ratib Efendi’s amazement comes from the fact that he was used to the Ottoman system, where state servants did not have to pay taxes. He explained that this was why no-one in the Habsburg Empire, again apart from army officers, was happy to see Austria go to war with France.⁵⁹ In order to counteract revolutionary propaganda Emperor Franz II declared that no taxes would be raised for the war. The emperor was quick to assure his people that he and his brother would pay the entire cost of the war from their own funds for up to two years.⁶⁰

Before France declared war on Austria, Ratib Efendi reported on the alliance between Austria and Prussia and was sceptical about the good faith of the Prussians towards their allies.⁶¹ He could not accept that the treaty between these traditional enemies was genuine. In his opinion the Austrians were highly suspicious of the Prussians, whom they believed were intent on taking them into the war and then deserting them and joining the French. To many it was illogical for the Prussians to fight the French because they realized that the new revolutionary regime [*nizam-ı djedid*] would collapse of its own accord.⁶² Austrian officers, Ratib Efendi noted, were aware of their weakness and “no matter how much they may storm and bluster they are in no position to utter a squeak”.⁶³ Ratib Efendi noted the dilemma which faced the Austrians. On the one hand, if they did go to war, there could be mass desertions to the enemy as a result of Jacobin propaganda, and on the other, if the emperor did not go to war he would be considered a weak monarch and the propaganda would continue until the emperor’s own subjects rose in imitation of the French revolutionaries.

The French émigrés, for their part, were very keen to have the Ottomans on the side of the French king, and Ratib Efendi reported that they were aware of the fact that when they had encouraged the Ottomans to go to war with Russia some twenty years previously (1768) they had failed to give the Ottomans any material support. This was still a cause of acute

financing not only the Turkish but also the Revolutionary wars, see Adolf Beer, *Finanzen Oesterreichs im XIX. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Verlag des wissenschaftlichen Antiquariats, 1973), 3–7.

59 TSMA E.6700/3.

60 Even though Franz II declared that he would defray the expenses of war from his privy purse, almost all his subjects knew that he would not be able to keep his word. Wangemann, *From Joseph II to Jacobin Trials*, 66 and 120 and TSMA E.6700/3; E.8530 and BOA HAT 52521.

61 According to one of Ratib Efendi’s despatches, Austrian high ranking officials thought of Prussia as the arch enemy and as much more dangerous than France. He added that “the Prussians always think of how Austria would lose and waste its soldiers and money” and noted that this was also the reason why the behaviour of Habsburg officials towards himself was so polite; they were afraid of inciting the Ottoman Empire into making an alliance with Prussia against Austria. In another report, he informed Istanbul that the revolutionary government was aware of the discord between the allies and that the National Assembly was using this fact to its advantage (BOA HAT 14065; HAT 14138 and HAT 52521; TSMA E. 8530 and E. 6700/3).

62 BOA HAT 52521.

63 “...*Nemçelünün* [her ne kadar], *eserler ve savururlar ise dahi vık diyecek halleri yoktur...*” BOA HAT 52516/B and HAT 52521.

embarrassment for the French nation. The émigrés informed Ratib Efendi that if the Ottomans were now to come to the help of the French king, the émigrés were in a position to express their gratitude.⁶⁴

There is no evidence to suggest that Ratib Efendi may have had discussions with the ambassador of the French revolutionary government, but he was nevertheless able to report to the Porte that he had heard that the revolutionaries were also wooing the Porte and that their main need was for money.⁶⁵ They had also indicated that it would be useful for the French if North African [*Garb Odjahlari*] ships raided some ports of countries hostile to France so that a rumour would circulate to the effect that “the Ottoman admiral will come to such and such a port with ships”. Such a gesture would demonstrate to all of Europe that the Ottomans were on the side of the revolutionary government.⁶⁶

When it came to the timing of the commencement of hostilities Ratib Efendi noted that the Prussians and Austrians were reluctant to enter the war, firstly because they did not trust each other, and secondly because they did not want to provoke the revolutionaries to execute the king and the queen. On the other hand, they were equally reluctant to give the French government breathing space in which they could better organize themselves for the approaching hostilities.

War finally broke out with France declaring war on Austria on 20 April 1792 in the National Assembly. Ratib Efendi faithfully reported events to Istanbul, providing the translation of the full text of the declaration.⁶⁷ He

64 BOA HAT 52521 and Virginia Aksan, “Breaking the spell of the Baron de Tott: reframing the question of military reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1760–1830”, *The International History Review* 24, 2002: 259.

65 The *levée en masse* may have turned the tide of war in favour of the French but it exacerbated an already difficult financial situation, with the needs of the huge newly established army. It is for this reason that the French wanted not military but financial aid from the Ottomans. See Philip Lawrence, *Modernity and War, The Creed of Absolute Violence* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 18.

66 BOA HAT 52521.

67 The text of the declaration of war against Austria by France as given by Ratib Efendi reads thus: “...*França milleti nizam-ı cedide mübaşeret itdikde bir kala ve memleket ve arazi ve eyalet zabt-ı teshiri niyeti ile muharebeye şuru itmeyeceklerini, meşv itdikleri yeminlerine vefa idüp ancak Macar ve Çeh kralı [Franz II] sonraki takririnde düvel-i saire ile França aleyhine iddiği ittifaktan feragat ve yevmen fe yevmen asker tertib ve hududa teshir ve tedarikat-ı harbiyyeye meşguliyetten terk-i niyet itmeyüb ve Alsaz [Alsace] eyaletinde olan prenclerin davasını tesahübe ibtidar ve firari Fransızları [émigrés] mücade suretini izhar ile França milletinin hükümetine taaruz ve reayasını ifsada say itmekle, netice tavr-ı hareketlerinden tasfiye-i mabeyne bir ümid kalmadığını mütalaa ile insilab-ı emniyetlerine binaen, ancak serbestiyetlerini muhafaza mülahazası ile ellerine kılıç aldıklarını ve bu cenk bir serbest millete bir kralın na-hak yere taaruzundan siyanete mebni olmağla kendü karındaşlarından add ettikleri reyanın emlak ve emval ve erzak ve eşyasına bir dürlü zarar ve bir dürlü hasaret olunmamasını ihtimam ideceklerini ve fakat bu cenk ile meramları gaddar ve zulmeden kralların başına kasd idüğünü ve kendü serbestiyeti muhafazası için buyruklarına dahil olanları şimdiden kabul idüb medar-ı maaşlarına kefil ve kafi ve mal ve canlarına hami olacaklarını Nasonel Asamliya [Assemblée Nationale] beyan ve*

also followed the events of the early hostilities.⁶⁸ He noted that in the first encounters several French armies were completely destroyed.⁶⁹ Ratib Efendi also predicted that the war would not be over in a short time [*tiz ve az vakitte*] and would spread throughout Europe.⁷⁰ This raises the question of how Ratib Efendi was able to predict the future progress of the war. Did his informants believe that the French would recover? Certainly all evidence from the fronts would have suggested that the French revolutionary armies were a spent force incapable of defending any of their territory. Was it wishful thinking on the part of an Ottoman official who desperately had to believe that the French could not be easily defeated, allowing the Austrians and Russians to concentrate their forces against the Ottomans? Whatever the outcome of the war between the anti-revolutionary alliance and France, he repeatedly warns Istanbul to embark on immediate and radical reform. The longer the war continued, the longer a breathing space could be secured for the Ottoman government to implement reforms.⁷¹

Ratib Efendi had previously described revolutionary ideas as a contagion, which would spread throughout Europe: "...If God wills, He the Almighty will afflict them with every calamity and evil and it is quite clear that soon the Austrian and Russian states will be in disarray as a result of this revolution in Europe..."⁷²

Macar ve Ceh kralı üzerine muharebeyi ilan ider..." BOA HAT 14065. For the declaration of the war by France against Austria and not the Empire, see Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, 218–20.

68 One can find all the details, from the exact number of soldiers sent to the battlefield to the description of the initial conflicts, of the early phase of the revolutionary wars in Ratib Efendi's despatches. For instance, while Austria initially sent an army of 17,000 men to the borders on 14 April 1792 [21 Şaban 1206] and prepared another consisting of 23,000, Prussia sent 15,000 men to Alsace and the King of Prussia also ordered that another army of 20,000 be mobilized. For preparations for war by other European states see BOA HAT 14065; HAT 52516/B and HAT 52521 and TSMA E.8530.

69 [*üç dört kez külliyyetlü bozulmuş*] BOA HAT 14065. He informed Istanbul that the French army had been decisively defeated and that some 200 French soldiers deserted to Austria at Tournai [*Turna*] on 29 April 1792, and in Brussels "a perfect regiment of the French Army" also changed sides. Ratib Efendi seems to have derived this kind of information not only from Austrian officials but also from the daily newspapers. According to him, the reason for this kind of secret information being publicized was that the Austrian government wanted "to encourage their soldiers and to provoke their subjects" against France. For reflections on Revolutionary wars in the Ottoman Empire also see Uzunçarşılı, "III Sultan Selim Zamanında Yazılmış", 650–1.

70 BOA HAT 14065.

71 [*temam iş görecek ve bam teline basacak zamanlardır*] Ratib Efendi repeated this phrase a number of times in his despatches, by means of which he seems to have been advocating reform in Istanbul. For Ratib Efendi's advocacy of reform in Istanbul see Findley, "Ebubekir Ratib's Vienna Embassy" and Yeşil, "III Selim Döneminde", 158 *passim*.

72 "...İnşallah u Teala cenab-ı mustakim u kahhar kendileri envai nekebat u idbara duçar idüb yakında Nemçe ve Moskov devletleri tarumar olacağı Avrupa'nın bu ihtilalinden aklen nümudardır..." TSMA (E.6700/3). It should be said that Ratib Efendi's comment on the French Revolution is very similar to Ahmed Efendi, Selim III's confidential secretary. See Arıkan, *III Selim'in Sır Katibi*, 60 and Bernard Lewis, "Impact of French Revolution on Ottoman Empire", *Journal of World History* 1, 1953: 119–20.

Whatever Ratib Efendi believed would happen, his worst fear was that France would be destroyed and the Austrians and Russians would have a free hand to pursue territorial expansion at the expense of the Ottomans.

Once again addressing himself to the economic implications of the revolution for the Ottoman Empire, Ratib Efendi makes an interesting statement. He optimistically expresses the hope that the revolution would spread and cause European merchants and industrialists [*kârhane sahibleri*] to move to the Ottoman Empire to create wealth which could be taxed. These taxes would of course be used to fund the Ottoman Empire's *Nizam-ı Djedid*.⁷³ All of the merchants Ratib Efendi met in Vienna were not happy with the war and some of them told him "we are willing to come to Istanbul and be your guests". The connections Ratib Efendi established between "security", "trade", "taxes", and "military reforms" are important in that they precede, by some fifty years, the ideas of the *Tanzimat* by means of which the Sultan bestowed security of life, property, and honour on all Ottoman subjects. Some forty years after Ratib Efendi, another Ottoman envoy to Vienna, Sadık Rifat Pasha would voice the same ideas in his quest to make Ottoman subjects more productive and more like people he had observed in Austria. This very concept observed by the two Ottoman envoys consists of the fundamental principles of the "circle of justice" [*Da'ire-i Adliyya*], with which all Ottoman high-ranking officials must have been well acquainted because not only did it legitimize Ottoman rule but it was also the cornerstone of the whole system. However, it should be noted that the concept was not derived solely from traditional Ottoman or Islamic political thought but was to be found in the works of European philosophers and scholars, i.e. cameralists whom Ratib Efendi had met in Vienna.⁷⁴ His knowledge of Ottoman political theory would have allowed him to recognize similar concepts as they were expressed in Europe. There, security, as a result of the centralization of coercion, allowed the development of more profitable agriculture, trade and industry which increased the state's income. In this process, states such as England and France, which adopted a moderate taxation policy, and which were able to keep coercion and capital in balance, instead of arbitrarily confiscating personal wealth, became places which attracted merchants. But it is worth noting that there is a paradox which can also be observed in the "circle of justice". Creation of internal and external security, which, in turn, increased productivity, trade and taxation, depended heavily on the

73 TSMA E. 6700/3.

74 David Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination, The German Science of State in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 11–45; Hubert C. Johnson, "The concept of bureaucracy in cameralism", *Political Science Quarterly* 79, 1964: 378–402; Keith Tribe, "Cameralism and the science of government", *Journal of Modern History* 56, 1984: 263–84; idem, *Governing Economy: The Reformation of German Economic Discourse, 1750–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and idem, *Strategies of Economic Order, German Economic Discourse 1750–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

creation of victorious armies, which required a well-established financial infrastructure.⁷⁵

Despite his apparent enthusiasm for reporting events in Europe and the Viennese institutions which he visited, Ratib Efendi did not enjoy his residence in Vienna. He pleaded with the Sultan to recall him as soon as possible, but the duration of his embassy was extended by the sudden death of Leopold II. He was also short of money and made repeated requests for more funds.⁷⁶ He described his residence in Vienna as unbearable and stated that his months of exile in Tenedos had been as paradise when compared to Vienna.⁷⁷

Throughout his writings, be it the *Treatise*, the *Travelogue* or the despatches, Ratib Efendi demonstrates the change that was taking place in the Ottoman mentality. He was aware that his poetic talent and mastery of the *elsine-i selase*, Ottoman, Arabic, and Persian was not going to impress his Austrian hosts and that his lack of Western languages was a serious obstacle to his mission. The very language he uses shows this change: he is

75 For this well-noted feedback-loop or “circle of development”, see Christopher Dandeker, *Surveillance, Power and Modernity, Bureaucracy and Discipline from 1700 to the Present Day* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), 66–92; William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 117 and 150–1; Charles Tilly, “War making and state making”, 170–2 and idem, *Coercion Capital and European States, AD: 990–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For the ideas of Ratib Efendi see Ratib Efendi, *Viyana Sefaretnamesi (Treatise)*, fol. 2b–3a and Arıkan, “Nizam-ı Cedit’in Kaynaklarından”, 2; for the ideas of Sadık Rifat Pasha as a source of inspiration of Tanzimat Fermanı see Sadık Rifat Pasha, *Müntehabat-ı Asar*, vol. II–III–IV (Istanbul, 1290–1291), *passim*; Carter V. Findley, “Osmanlı Siyasal Düşüncesinde Devlet ve Hukuk: İnsan Hakları mı Hukuk Devleti mi?”, in *Proceedings of the Twelfth Congress of the Turkish Historical Society* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1999), 1195–1202; idem, “Continuity, innovation, synthesis and the state”, in Kemal Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 44–5; Serif Mardin, “The influence of the French Revolution on the Ottoman Empire”, *International Social Science Journal* 41, 1989: 23 and Ercüment Kuran, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İnsan Hakları ve Sadık Rifat Pasha”, *Türkiye’nin Batılılaşması ve Milli Meseleler* (Ankara: Diyanet Yayınevi, 1997), 143–9; for the latest and most refined study on “circle of justice” see Boğaç Ergene, “On Ottoman justice: interpretations in conflict”, *Islamic Law and Society* 8, 2001: 52–87.

76 It was clear that Ratib Efendi did not have sufficient funds, having been given a mere thirty purses to conduct the Embassy in Austria. Having reached Vienna, he asked the sultan whether he could increase his funds by borrowing some 10,000 piasters from the Imperial Mint (*Darbhane*), but the Sultan’s answer was unyielding: “Is there any money in the Imperial Mint that can be lent? Since it is a loan he wants, he should borrow it from a banker...”. After the death of Leopold II, which caused his residency in Vienna to be extended, he ran out of money. However, it should be noted that he had taken some bills of exchange (*poliçe*) to Vienna. For Ratib Efendi’s economic problems see, BOA HAT 10018–10335–13347–56749 and Yeşil, “III. Selim Döneminde”, 52 and 154.

77 Ratib Efendi’s desire to return to Istanbul can be seen in his all despatches. However, until he could present the letter of Selim III to the new Emperor Franz II, he was forced to remain in Vienna. BOA HAT 52516 and for Selim III’s letter to Franz II in which Ratib Efendi was called to Istanbul see BOA Cevdet Hariciye Collection 7551.

the first Ottoman to use *millet* to describe “the nation”.⁷⁸ In the Ottoman political lexicon *vatan* was not the motherland but a place where people lived or were born. *Millet* referred not to a nation in the modern sense of the word but one of the communities, bound together by a common religion, which constituted the population of the Empire. The idea that a particular *vatan* should be populated exclusively by a particular *millet* was totally alien to the Ottoman view of the world. In his writings, while he described the population of the Habsburg Empire, he generally talked about different ethnic groups [*kavim* or *akvam*], be they Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian or Greek;⁷⁹ however, when dealing with France or Frenchmen he interestingly emphasized the concepts of the nation [*millet*] and the *patrie*/fatherland [*vatan*]. Ratib Efendi’s distinction in the way he refers to the Habsburg Empire and to France confirms that he has recognized the emergence of a new type of state in Europe, a powerful national state united in one language with a common set of beliefs and values. It is for this reason that he coined the term *millet* to refer to a single European people and *vatan* to refer to their homeland. Ratib Efendi is the first to express, in the Ottoman language, the concept of a single people living in a single homeland for which they were prepared to die. Raif Efendi, Seyyid Mustafa Efendi, and Esseyid Ali Efendi were later to adopt this coinage.⁸⁰ Another reason for this differentiation between two European countries, that were more or less the same in the eyes of Ratib Efendi, was that he generally preferred a literal translation when giving information about Europe where in the political context of the 1790s these two words were being used by and for Frenchmen. Another term for which he tried to find a Turkish equivalent was *liberté*, for which he was to use the bastardization *serbestiyet*, which had just come into Turkish⁸¹ and the meaning of which, by his own admission, was not very certain:

78 TSMA E.6700/3.

79 For the national consciousness in eighteenth-century Austria see Grete Klingenstein, “The meanings of ‘Austria’ and ‘Austrian’ in the eighteenth century”, in R. Oresko, G. Gibbs and H. M. Scott (eds), *Royal and Publican Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 423–78.

80 Ercüment Kuran, “The impact of nationalism on the Turkish elite in the nineteenth century”, in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds), *Beginnings of Modernization in The Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1968, 109–10; Kemal Beydilli, “Küçük Kaynarca’dan Tanzimat’a İslahat Düşünceleri”, *İlmi Araştırmalar* 8, 1999: 35 and idem, “İlk Mühendislerimizden Seyid Mustafa ve Nizam-ı Cedide Dair Risalesi”, *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 13, 1987: 413–4 and Lewis, “Impact of French Revolution”, 107–08 and idem, *Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 43 *passim*.

81 Even though the Persian word *serbest*, the meaning of which is “exempt, untrammelled, unrestricted”, had been used in Ottoman documents to mean lack of normal limitations and restrictions, it had not carried any political connotations. However, the dragoman translating the Russo-Ottoman Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca into Turkish employed the word giving it a new meaning, political freedom. In fact, there was another word for freedom in the language of Islamic law which was “*hür*”, but the term denoted free as opposed to slave, which was contrary to its European counterpart. This dissimilarity between the Ottomans and Europeans in the concepts of slavery and social classes must have been the reason for Ratib Efendi’s confusion. Before the dragoman so aptly used *serbest* for political freedom,

They [Austrians] say “we are free” but I can not understand what it means. However as women are free with men even I sometimes make jokes with them and they laugh...⁸²

Indeed, Ratib Efendi could not understand *liberté* as one of the most important concepts of the French Revolution because of his background. He was, on the one hand, an envoy from a state where European feudalism was non-existent and where there were no similar social barriers; the concept of freedom had been used not for personal liberty but as an antonym for slavery, and therefore he had to coin an Ottoman equivalent for *liberté*.⁸³

The geographical terms he uses, i.e. the names of provinces, regions and countries, are often given in their original form, be it German, French or Italian, presumably in order that their exact identity, within a European rather than an Ottoman context, could be conveyed. This would suggest that Ratib Efendi would have had to explain his treatise in person, as many of the terms would have been meaningless to either the Grand Vizier or the Sultan: for example, *Asamliya Nasonel* for the French National Assembly, *soldat* for soldier, *kumandant*, *ufiçyal* (from Italian) for commander and officer, *preñç* for prince and *nobile* for the aristocracy. These words remained in their original language because they had a particular connotation. The *soldat* was a soldier who drilled every day, in contrast to the Ottoman *asker* who did not. The *Asamliya Nasonel* described a particular French institution, and God forbid that there should be any Ottoman equivalent. The *Komutan* was a professional officer who read and wrote treatises on military practice and theory, of which there was no equivalent in the Ottoman Empire. The *Nobile* is used to describe the aristocratic classes, a concept totally alien to the Ottomans.

an Ottoman envoy to France in 1720, Mehmed Efendi, described Toulouse and Bordeaux as free [*serbest*] cities. Another Ottoman ambassador to Berlin, when Ratib Efendi was on the way to Vienna, bastardized the term by adding an Arabic affix “*iyer*” and constructed the word as in Mehmed Efendi’s usage, in giving the information about the centralization policy of Joseph II who abolished the “ancient liberties” [*kadim serbestiyetler*] of the Hungarian Aristocracy. It should also be noted that Ratib Efendi used the term, as did his contemporary Rashid Efendi, with the meaning of the independence of a state. But after Azmi Efendi and Ratib Efendi, the concept with its new meaning, equivalent to *liberté*, took its place in the Ottoman political lexicon and was later on to be used by Moralı Esseyid Ali Efendi, an Ottoman ambassador to Paris in 1797, *reisülküttab* Rashid Efendi and *reisülküttab* Atif Efendi (1798–99). For a detailed study of this term, see Lewis, *Political Language*, 109–11. For different usages of the term see Mehmed Efendi, *Relation de l’Ambassade De Mohammed Effendi (Texte Turk)* (Paris, 1841), 15–6; Azmi Efendi, *Sefaretname-i Azmi* (Istanbul: Matbâ-i Ebuzyiyya, 1303), 15; BOA HAT 16130; Rashid Efendi, “Treatise on the Morea question”, 2–3 and Mardin, “The influence of the French Revolution”, 23.

82 “...serbestiz derler, velakin manasını fehmedemem. Lakin nisvan vücuhla serbest olmağla hatta bazen kendülere dahi latife ederdim, gülerlerdi...” Arıkan, “Nizam-ı Cedit’in Kaynaklarından”, 327 and Ratib Efendi, *Viyana Sefaretnamesi* (Treatise), fol. 200b.

83 Lewis, “The impact of French Revolution”, 107.

On his return to Istanbul Ratib Efendi served in a variety of posts, i.e. poll tax accountant (*Cizye Muhasebecisi*), grain administrator (*Zahire Nazırı*), until he reached the pinnacle of his career in May 1795, when he became *re'isül-kûttab*. As *Reis Efendi* he was responsible for negotiations with foreign ambassadors. In the course of his duties he negotiated an alliance with France.⁸⁴ Whether this was the reason for his dismissal on 20 August 1796 is not known as the *firman* written for his dismissal was couched in general terms.⁸⁵ He had fallen victim to factional rivalries within the Ottoman government. The fact that the treaty of alliance which he had negotiated was not ratified by Paris may have been used by Grand Admiral Küçük Hüseyin Pasha in collusion with the Grand Vizier İzzet Mehmet Pasha against him to determine his fate. This rivalry was the major cause of his being exiled for the second time in his life, this time to the island of Rhodes.⁸⁶

The course of the French Revolution, which Ratib Efendi had monitored in Vienna and no doubt followed in Istanbul, was to be the cause of Ratib Efendi's own undoing. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt on 1 July 1798 was used as an excuse to have Ratib Efendi executed in the following year.⁸⁷ Thus ended the life of a dedicated and loyal servant of the Sultan and the Sublime Ottoman State.

84 For a detailed description of negotiations between Ratib Efendi and the French ambassador in Istanbul, Raymond Verninac, see Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 197–215; for the records of these meetings see *II. Mahmud ve III. Selim Devrine Ait Avrupa Devletleri Sefirleriyle Yapılan Mükalemelerin Mazbatası: Bükreş Muahedesine Tekaddüm Eden Devirlerde Siyasi Meselelere Dair Yazılar* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Library Y/524) and Ignatz de Testa, *Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottomane*, vol. II (Paris, 1865), 208–45. For the text of this unratified treaty see BOA HAT 3635-A.

85 TSMA E.702/1 and Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 225–6.

86 According to sources which describe the whole story of Ratib Efendi's death, e.g. the reports of Robert Liston, the British ambassador in Istanbul, and other contemporary sources, it is certain that Ratib Efendi was a victim of factional rivalry in the Ottoman government. For a detailed description of Ratib Efendi's deposition see Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 222–39 and Public Record Office, Foreign Office Papers 78/16, 17 and 18.

87 Yeşil, "III. Selim Döneminde", 236–9.