

Amanda Danielle Giammanco

**(SELF) FASHIONING OF AN OTTOMAN CHRISTIAN PRINCE:
JACHIA IBN MEHMED IN CONFESSIONAL DIPLOMACY OF
THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY**

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Central European University

Budapest

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(United States of America)

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of the Master of Arts degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary
Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Amanda Danielle Giammanco**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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ABSTRACT

In the summer of 1631, while Franciscan friar Rafael Levaković was in Rome, he met and wrote the first biography of a venturesome man named Jachia who claimed to be the second son of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed III (1595-1603), and a direct descendent of the Byzantine Komnenos family of Trebizond. This thesis explores the story of Jachia's quest to claim his "birthright" of becoming the Ottoman ruler but as a Christian loyal to the pope who would free the faithful of "European Turkey" of their "yoke" and mend the schism between eastern and western Christianity. The thesis studies him, his affiliates and impressarios, and various Christian princes who pledged to help him against the backdrop of the seventeenth-century politics of confessional polarization and dreams of expelling the "Turk" out of Europe. While Jachia has remained a curious footnote within Ottoman and European diplomatic scholarship, his original biography and surviving documents about his life and quest illuminate the various self-fashioning and mythologizing tactics that he was engaged in or was subject to. In tracing the transformation of Jachia's identity through his participation in cross-confessional and trans-imperial diplomacy, this work attempts to distinguish Jachia's own agenda from the agenda of those who sought to mold him into a protagonist of their own religious or political programs.

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INTRODUCTION: **THE BOY WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN SULTAN?**

Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603) was the last Ottoman prince to be appointed as a provincial governor before his ascension to the throne. He was appointed to the province of Manisa in 1583, and as the heir apparent of Murad III (r. 1574–1595) Mehmed almost immediately sought to ensure a successor.¹ According to a later biography of his alleged son, Jachia Sultan, in this search, Mehmed discovered Elena, the exceptionally beautiful daughter of George Komnenos of Trebizond. Beguiled by her beauty and desperately in love with this Christian woman, as well as her reputable heritage, he kidnapped her at the age of nineteen to bring her into his harem. Mehmed coerced Elena to renounce her faith for Islam and her name for Sultana Lalparé. However, she allegedly secretly remained a Christian.²

In October of 1585, Elena supposedly gave birth, in a tent, to her son Jachia,³ and the anxiety for her child’s livelihood and salvation began.⁴ In the weeks following parturition, Mehmed entrusted the care of the newborn and his mother to a Bulgarian eunuch from Melnik. The death of Murad III was quick to follow, and when Mehmed was informed of his

¹ Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 46.

² Vittorio Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja della casa imperiale ottomana od altrimenti Alessandro Conte di Montenegro ed i suoi discendenti in Italia* (Trieste: G. Chiopris, 1889), 14.

³ Jachia ibn Mehmet has different spelling variations of his name, which include: “Yahya,” “Jahha,” “Jahia,” “Jahja” “Iachia,” “Jacaia,” and “Xahya.” I prefer to use the same spelling “Jachia,” which is the spelling that appeared in his first biography by Rafael Levaković. In his biography of Jachia, Vittorio Catualdi notes that he was given the Arabic name “Yahya,” and attributes it as deriving from the Greek-Semitic “Ἰωάννης” (Ioannes), and in Latin “Johannes,” meaning “*egli vive*” (he lives). However, this is not entirely correct. Yahya in Arabic is a reference to the Islamic prophet John the Baptist. Moreover, the Greek “Ioannes” is a “Yahwistic” name derived from Hebrew and appearing as יְהוֹחָנָן (Yehohanan) which means “God is gracious” or יְהוֹנָתָן (Yohana) meaning “Graced by God” See, “John,” in *A Dictionary of First Names*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 45, and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 15.

⁴ Rafael Levaković, *Vita de principe Sultan Jachia cattolico di Casa Ottomana nato nel 1585 dal Sultan Mehemet e dalla Christiana Elana di Giorgio Caldarano do Trapezzonda fatta Sultana col nome di Lalpare*, Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin, Ranuzzi MS. 12894, fol. 1v. Levaković refers to Jachia’s older brother Mahmud as Selim. There is some confusion in Catualdi’s biography regarding the exact day when Jachia was born. Levaković cites the day as the 26th of October. In his main text, Catualdi notes, “nacque il 23 ottobre 1585.” However, the sources he provides concur with Levaković. See Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 14, note “a” on 332, and “b” on 333. Additionally, there is some confusion of Jachia’s exact age in his later life in other sources. See: Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 24; note “b” on 345–6.

father's demise, he left for Constantinople entrusting his concubines to the care of their respective eunuchs. The same night that Mehmed ascended to sultanate, he strangled nineteen of his younger brothers.⁵

Upon hearing the news of this sizable elimination of possible challenges to Mehmed's sovereignty, Elena's fears for her son had reached their zenith. Aside from Jachia contracting smallpox, she was now painfully aware that as an Ottoman prince, he would potentially be subject to fratricide. Furthermore, Jachia would have to live as a Muslim and thus potentially die a "heretic." She consulted with her parents and her eunuch, who felt that escaping would be easy and persuaded Elena to let him join them. They began devising a plan to get away and waited for the opportune moment.⁶

A few weeks after his accession, Mehmed sent for his sons and concubines to be relocated to Istanbul. When it came time to leave Manisa, Jachia fell gravely ill and his mother was also afflicted.⁷ This was the occasion that allowed for Elena and her eunuch to enact their scheme. Allegedly, while pretending to ready themselves for the departure, Elena's eunuch strangled Jachia's brother who had a likeness to him. Then, the eunuch took the body and placed it in Jachia's bed, soon sending word that Jachia had died and his body was to be taken to the capital to have the burial of a prince. Elena took care in making sure

⁵ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 1v. Levaković states that Mehmed executed twenty-one brothers. He actually executed his nineteen brothers. See Halil Inalick, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 60.

⁶ Edward Grimston, "Here followeth a continuation of this Historie, with all occurrences which have happened during the reigns to Achmat, Mustapha to the end of the present yeare 1620," in *The Generall Historie of the Turkes from the beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie, together with the lives and conquests of the Othoman kings and emperours unto the yeare 1621*, vol. 2, ed. 6 by Richard Knolles (London: Golden Lyon in St. Paul's Church-yard 1677), 926: "And this Princess desired much to find a favourable occasion, whereby she might be freed from the damnable Errors of Mahomet's Law, and return to the wholesome way of the Christian Faith, and retire her Son Jachaia far from the power of those bloody Laws[.]" Also, Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 17.

⁷ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 1v.

she was visibly distraught to ensure his death would be believed.⁸ After the funeral, Mehmed instructed Sultana Lalparé to be escorted to Istanbul once she regained her health.⁹

Elena, the eunuch, and Jachia would never make it to Istanbul. They commissioned a boat on the island of Lemnos with the help of Elena's mother and the riches they had stowed away from the sultans. Concealing Jachia, the eunuch, Elena, her father, and some slaves left Manisa under the pretext of taking Elena to the thermal baths, which were not far from their boat. Unbeknownst to the slaves, they secretly boarded their vessel and headed in the direction of Morea, now the Peloponnese peninsula, and landed in Kalamata after four days. They disguised themselves, and traveled mostly through Greek and Albanian provinces. Arriving in Thessaloniki, George, pretending only to speak Greek, approached the archbishop, Cosimo, to shelter his daughter and grandson for a period of time. After some persuasion, the archbishop ensured that Elena would be placed in St. Theodora nunnery. Since she could not leave the nunnery, her eunuch escorted Jachia to Macedonia to an Orthodox monastery called St. Anastasia. Since Jachia was not baptized, they called him Constantino before he received his baptismal name. The archbishop sent them to his friend, Nilo, who was an abbot and great scholar, asking Nilo to take Jachia to the secluded mountains away from the Turks. At about the age of seven Jachia was baptized, which would have made him an apostate in the eyes of the Ottomans. Since his baptism took place on the day of St. Simon, he took Simon as his baptismal name.¹⁰ While Jachia's family and those involved in his escape took great care in concealing his alleged identity, supposedly the body presumed to be Jachia, received the

⁸ Grimston, "Here followeth," 926: "[A]nd by her contrained tears subtilly disguised her design."

⁹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 1–2v. There seems to be some dispute on this account as Catualdi suppresses Levaković's account and cites alternative contemporary secondary literature see, Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 339 n. "c".

¹⁰ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 2v.

burial of an Ottoman prince. However, when it was discovered that Sultana Lalpare escaped, some inhabitants of Manisa reportedly believed that she took her son with her.¹¹

Meanwhile in Istanbul, Mehmed was back in Topkapı Palace by 1597, a year after his military campaign into Europe. According to traditional Ottoman historiography, Mehmed had three other sons, Mahmud (d. 1603), Ahmed I (1590–1617), and Mustafa I (1591–1639). None of the Ottoman chronicles mention a Prince Yahya. A possible explanation for this is that Jachia’s short life was inconsequential for Ottoman record keeping and after his death, the story faded away as if it had never happened.

PRIMARY SOURCES ON JACHIA SULTAN

The truth and fantasy in Jachia’s fanciful life story are hard to distinguish. What seems to be undeniable is that there was a man who claimed that he was an Ottoman prince named Jachia. He had spent the majority of his early life in the St. Anastasia monastery in Macedonia and, by all accounts, was a convert to Orthodox Christianity. Throughout Jachia’s entire life, his mother, Elena a nun in Thessaloniki, proclaimed her son to be of royal Byzantine and imperial Ottoman lineage, instilling the story previously recounted in the mind of her son and the minds of those around them.¹² Jachia believed he was undeniably the second son of Mehmed III and dedicated his entire life to attempts to “regain” his birthright. Ultimately, he did not succeed. However, it is important to note that Jachia’s political allies often went to great lengths to prove and protect his identity for various reasons. Moreover, his contemporaries, including his original biographer, believed his hereditary claims to be true.

¹¹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 2v.

¹² Catualdi cites that Jachia was born on October 26th, 1585. However, he argues it is impossible for Jachia to have been born in this year due to various inconsistencies in his story. See: Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, n. “b” 344–5 and n. “c” 349.

Jachia's Original Biography

The well-known “Illyrian” theologian and Franciscan friar named Rafael Levaković (ca.1590–1650), who was a friend and secretary of Jachia’s, wrote his first full biography, which was produced in three versions, all of which remain unpublished manuscripts.¹³ Levaković’s publications were generally written in Glagolitic or in Latin but Jachia’s biography was written in Italian. It is important to note that, Levaković frequently utilizes the term “*il turco*,” which in an early modern context “could mean simultaneously an Ottoman subject, an ethnic Turk, a Muslim or any combination of these.”¹⁴ However, it is clear from the narrative that either Levaković or Jachia were well acquainted with the specific procedures, titles, and persons within the Ottoman bureaucracy and diplomatic networks.

Levaković’s manuscript is structured into about one hundred and fifteen sections, which are separated by specific events or people from Jachia’s life. Eventually, they become separated by the different attempts or negotiations to enact his *impresa* (undertaking or enterprise) to seize the Ottoman throne. The factual quality of the manuscript is highly questionable. There are several inconsistencies, geographical errors, and simply very tall tales, which are used to bolster Jachia’s image. Nonetheless, Levaković seems to have woven accurate and true circumstances into tactful embellishments.¹⁵ Moreover, the manuscript that

¹³ The first version was finished in 1630, the second around 1640, and the third was completed in 1646. Reportedly, Rafael Levaković gave Jachia the second manuscript, which is the same copy used in this thesis, as the last date entered is between 1636–37. See, Stjepan Antoljak, “Sultan Jahja' u Makedoniji,” *Godišen Zbornik na Filozofskiot Fakultet na Universitetot vo Skopje* 13 (1960-1961): 109–66, I thank my advisor, Tijana Krstić, for reading this article and sharing this information with me. There is also a reprint of the same version of the manuscript in Injac Zamputi, ed. *Dokumente të shkeujve XVI–XVII për historinë e Shqipërisë*, vol. 4 (Tirana, 1990). In this thesis I use a digitized copy of MS, 12894 from the Ransom Center in the Ranuzzi Family Collection of the University of Texas, Austin.

¹⁴ Natalie E. Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 94.

¹⁵ Both Hassek and Cristian Luca have been able to verify several details within Levaković’s account, especially concerning Christian princes or notable figures that Jachia worked with or knew. However, many details such as the number of supporters Jachia had in Ottoman occupied territories, some of his captures, his collaboration with the Persian king, how many weapons he had, and some of his time with the Tartars in the Caucasus is either partially verified or proved to be completely impossible. See, Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 31–40, and Christian Luca, “Un Presunto discendente dei Sultani Ottomani ‘emigrato itinerante’ alle corti principesche dell’Europa

is used in this thesis is not finished and abruptly ends around 1636/7. The last page indicates it was stored in a Venetian library in 1643. In this thesis, I attempt to try to balance the events Levaković recorded with other contemporary sources on Jachia's life, as well as a nineteenth-century biography.

Jachia in The Generall Historie

A short contemporary account of Jahcia appears in *The Generall Historie of the Turks*, originally written by Richard Knolles (1603) and then continued by several others, in the version published in 1621, in the section authored by Edward Grimeston (d. 1640) and entitled, "Here followeth a continuation of this Historie, with all instances which have happened during the reigns to Achmat, Mustapha to the end of the present yeare 1620."¹⁶ Grimeston was a sergeant-at-arms and a prominent translator.¹⁷ He evidently met Jachia in France and in Paris when he was, "under the Protection of the Duke of Nevers,"¹⁸ and spent six months with him around 1614/5. The only record of this meeting is in Grimeston's account, and he offers little detail to the circumstances of their meeting. The account is relatively consistent with Levaković's biography except for a few differing details such as dates, some titles, and places. While the differences are minor, this account is useful in comparison. Additionally, he makes observations on Jachia's person, and notes that it is difficult to discern whether or not Jachia is an imposter.¹⁹

seicentesca: Jahja ovvero Alessandro Conte di Montenegro," *Nobiltà.Rivista di araldica, genealogia, ordini cavallereschi* 11 (2004): 97–108.

¹⁶ See, Grimston, "Here followeth," 926–7.

¹⁷ F. S. Boas, "Edward Grimeston, Translator and Sergeant-at-Arms," in *Modern Philology*, 4 (1906), 4

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 927.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Oscarre De Hassek's Biography of Jachia

The 1889 biography by Oscarre de Hassek (a.k.a. Vittorio Catualdi)²⁰ is heavily influenced by Leopold von Ranke's empirical methodology, and focuses on Jachia's human agency in relation to the trends of *la questione orientale*.²¹ In his preface, Hassek suggests that the importance of Jachia was his role in Christian resistance to the Ottoman "yoke" during what he calls the Empire's incipient decline. He does not overtly name Jachia as a national liberator for Eastern Europe but he does maintain that Jachia was an emancipator for Christians oppressed by Turkish power. Moreover, Hassek thoroughly refutes von Hammer's claim that Jachia's religious motivations were neither true nor sincere. He also critiques von Hammer's use and authentication of sources.²² However, Hassek does agree with von Hammer and calls the true identity of Jachia into question by frequently referring to him as a claimant or pretender to the throne (*pretendente*) and a profiteering adventurer—not a sultan.

While the entire work is exactly six hundred and fifty nine pages long, the main text is only three hundred and four pages in length. Hassek provides incredibly detailed endnotes where he quotes his sources verbatim. After the index, he includes a section for reprinted documents from the public archives of Udine, Florence, Lucca, Venice, Malta, and Simancas, as well as an article from 1788 that was originally published in the *Novelle Letterarie* periodical.²³ Hassek does mention that some sources were from private collections and are almost entirely reproduced in the endnotes. Just before his reference section, there is a brief overview of Jachia's marriage, two portraits of his children, and his last will. Interestingly,

²⁰ In this thesis I use the name "Vittorio Catualdi" specifically to reference the biography he wrote. I use his real name when referring to his methodology and argumentation, as well as his relation to Jachia.

²¹ "Catualdi," in *Dictionnaire international des écrivains du jour*, vol. 3, ed. Angelo de Gubernatis (Florence, L. Niccolai, 1888—1891), 554. Vittorio Catualdi's *Sultan Jahja della casa imperiale ottomana od altrimenti Alessandro Conte di Montenegro ed i suoi discendenti in Italia* is the full-length modern version of Jachia's biography. Until recently, it was extremely rare, but now it is digitized and available through Google Books at <http://books.google.com/books?id=NvZFAAAAYAAJ>.

²² Hassek cites the translated history of Joseph von Hammer, *Storia dell'impero Osmano*, trans. Giuseppe Antonelli, 1st ed. (Venice, 1830). See in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 299–305 and 327.

²³ For archival sources see Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 505–643.

Hassek also provides a genealogical table that suggests that he himself was a distant relative of Jachia, which better contextualizes his motives for compiling this work.²⁴ Hassek claims that one of his main incentives to take on this detailed study was to bring forward the original, and very rare, biography of Jachia, written near the end of his life. Hassek is highly critical of Levaković's style, stating that it is obvious that Italian was not his native tongue, rendering the manuscript almost unreadable. Hassek's observation is correct inasmuch that several sections of the manuscript begin with rudimentary structures in Italian, and then jump to what seems to be a mixture of Latin and Italian, but this is not a unique feature for this time period. Therefore, he aimed to reproduce the text almost in its entirety in his footnotes, although he often changes the order of Levaković's passages, thus affecting one's understanding of the chronology of Jachia's story.

Archival Sources

There are eleven documents pertaining to Jachia that are located in the ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Archivio di Stato, Firenze. Ten of these documents are letters, two of which are written by Jachia himself. They mostly contain requests for supplies or information on the shipment of supplies. There are two letters, one from 1612 and one from 1613, which are appeals from Florence to Madrid to collaborate with Jachia. The latest letter in the collection is dated July 2, 1625. The eleventh document is dated approximately from 1610/11 and is the original report meant to verify Jachia's claims to his birthright.²⁵ It is important to note that

²⁴ This table also explains the first few pages of the source, which traced the genealogy of Countess Elisa of Belgrade's, also a relative of Hassek, who was affiliated with Napoleon. The section in reference to Elisa of Belgrade does not have page numbers and appears before his preface. The genealogical table also does not have a page number either but can be found after page 310.

²⁵ The documents referenced are all located in ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Archivio di Stato, Firenze. Place name lost, 1610 4275v., 571 fol., (This is stored as place name lost, but it attributed to Giorgio Moschetti. It is the full report on Jachai and it can also be found in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 517–33.), Giorgio Moschetti to Christine de Lorraine-de' Medici, 1611, 4274/5v., 383 fol., Lorenzo di Francesco Usimbardi to Cosimo II de' Medici, April 6 1611 4275 fol., 569v., Cosimo II de' Medici to Orso d'Elci, Pannocchieschi, September 10, 1612, 4943v., 412 fol., Francesco di Belisario di Vinta to Orso d'Elci Pannocchieschi, May 13, 1613, 4943v., 412 fol., Alessandro Pastrovicchio (Sultan Jachia) to Christine de Lorraine-de' Medici, February 17, 1614, 6006v., 625 fol., Andrea Cioli Giovanni di Battista to Baldelli Bartolini Giovanni Battista, May 28, 1614, 1700v.,

while these documents greatly informed my research, I do not specifically cite them in this thesis. However, I do directly cite five letters from the documents published by Hassek who compiled the most important archival sources from Western Christian states pertaining to Jachia's life.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

While Jachia is typically not mentioned at all in Ottoman history books, he appears in some accounts of European history, but always just as a curious side note rather than the main subject of research. This is despite the fact that he traveled across Ottoman and European territories for over thirty years, from the Dutch republic to Anatolia, that he appears with the same quest and story in a multitude of records, and that his acquaintances ranged from unknown Montenegrin insurgents to the Pope and Holy Roman Emperor.

There are a few notable scholars who have written on Jachia in English. Dorothy M. Vaughan published the most detailed account of Jachia's life in 1954.²⁶ Vaughan discussed Jachia within the context of a chapter on "Balkan rebellions" and the rebels' collaboration with sovereigns in Western Europe. Although Vaughan does not engage in a detailed analysis of Jachia's activities, she provides an extensive footnote summarizing Hassek's biography. She mentions that there are multiple versions of his biography, possibly in Rome or Vienna, where Oscarre de Hassek does not use his pen name (Catualdi). Nonetheless, it is clear that the version she is referencing is the published version also used in this thesis. Additionally, Vaughan does provide a compilation of prominent works and primary sources regarding

N/A fol., Giovanni di Alberto Altoviti to Curzio di Lorenzo da Picchena, November 19 1614, 3140v., 276 fol., Alessandro Pastrovicchio (Sultan Jachia) to Christine de Lorraine-de' Medici, December 20, 1617, 4275v., 474 fol., Lorenzo da Curzio di Picchena to Raffaello de' Medici, April 25, 1622, 4954v., N/A fol., San Giovanni di Fra Giuseppe to Maria Madgalena von Habsburg-de' Medici, July 2, 1625, 4275v, 484 fol.

²⁶ Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances 1350–1700* (Liverpool: University Press, Liverpool, 1954), 219–36.

Jachia, and clarifies that the proper transliteration of Jachia is *Yahya*.²⁷ In his dissertation, A. H. De Groot introduces Jachia through the endeavors of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, and like Vaughan places him within the context of anti-Turkish schemes supported by the Dutch Republic roughly between 1615–18.²⁸

More recently, Noel Malcolm, in his history of Kosovo, devoted a lengthy section to Jachia's activities in the region.²⁹ Malcolm sees Jachia as a participant in a religiously-based resistance in Montenegro and Albania, and within the wider context of resistances in a turbulent period in Ottoman frontier territories. This aspect of Jachia's activities is also discussed in detail by Stjepan Antoljak, who in an article from 1961 also did the most detailed research on the existing manuscripts of Levaković's biography and carefully juxtaposed them to a variety of archival sources and secondary literature on confessional dynamics in Southeast Europe under the Ottomans, especially in the Orthodox Serbian Patriarchate of Peć.³⁰ Unfortunately, because it is written in Serbo-Croatian, this article has been inaccessible to most Western researchers (except for Malcolm). In addition to Serbian and Croatian, there are also studies in Italian pertaining to Jachia, most notably by Romanian scholar Cristian Luca who has focused on Jachia's early life.³¹

Currently, Jachia Sultan is the subject of research by Mark Rosen who is examining the validity of Jachia's claim and maintains that there is currently no evidence to prove or disprove his proclaimed genealogy. In his forthcoming article, "Son of the Sultan?: Jachia Bin Mehmet and the Medici Court," Rosen explores Jachia's relation with the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, focusing on a report the Medici dukes arranged to validate Jachia's claims.³² To my

²⁷ I prefer to use the spelling Jachia, as this is how he signed his name.

²⁸ A. H. De Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations 1610–1630*. (PhD diss., Institute of History and Archeology Netherlands, Istanbul/Leiden, 1978), 185–89.

²⁹ Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 116–38.

³⁰ Antoljak, "Sultan, 109–66.

³¹ Luca, "Un presunto discendente dei Sultani Ottomani," 331–44.

³² Mark Rosen, "Son of the Sultan?," I extend my thanks to professor Rosen at the University of Texas at Dallas

knowledge, Jachia, and his original biography, have not been fully addressed within the context of the Catholic confessionalization efforts in Rumelia.

CONFESSIONALIZATION AND THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

In order to understand Levaković's agenda in writing Jachia's biography, one needs to understand religious dynamics in the so-called Triplex Confinium, or the three-way borderland among the three empires, Venetian, Habsburg and Ottoman, in Southeast Europe.³³ In particular, the important concepts within this context are those of "confession-building" and "confessionalization."

The development of the "confessionalization thesis" in the 1970s by two German scholars, Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, focused on examining the interconnected and codependent roles of the church and the state, as well as how their interaction contributed to the development of the modern state beginning in the early modern period.³⁴ The thesis developed from the argumentation against Ernst Walter Zeeden's process of "confession-building" (*Konfessionsbildung*). Formulated in the 1950s, it was applied to the second half of the sixteenth century to describe the process of building more modern and well-defined confessional churches. Schilling argued that while this concept allowed for historical comparative approaches, its ecumenical approach emphasized the confession-building process within the church and ignored society as a whole. To be more precise, the development of this theory held epistemological assumptions, which molded research to amplify religious and

for sharing his paper with me. This paper is part of a forthcoming book on Jachia's identity as explored through the Medici Archives.

³³ For historical background see Drago Roksandić, ed., *Microhistory of the Triplex Confinium. Papers presented at International Project Conference Papers, Budapest, March 21-22, 1997* (Budapest: CEU Institute on Southeastern Europe, 1998).

³⁴ Ute Lotz-Heumann, "The Concept of 'Confessionalization': A Historiographical Paradigm in Dispute," *Memoria y Civilización* 4(2001), 94.

ecclesiastical spheres while quieting the secular social, intellectual, and political consequences and developments.³⁵

Instead, Schilling argued for the term “confessionalization,” defining the process through Protestantism but claiming it to have transpired in Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist areas alike. He stated that religious reform gave Protestant states a distinct identity, and that they were able to use confessional texts to extend their authority, and educate their subjects with catechisms. States as well as churches also implemented requirements for their subjects or followers that commanded loyalty and disciplined those who deviated.³⁶ Reinhart applied the same top-down model to Catholicism in an attempt to counter anti-modern implications of the term “Counter-Reformation.”³⁷ This was partially influenced by Gerhard Oestreich’s argument regarding church discipline. As an alternative to absolutism, Oestreich introduced social disciplining (*Sozialdisziplinierung*) as a systematic effort of the state to control the behavior of its subjects so that they were, “obedient, pious, and diligent.” However, Schilling noted that confessionalization occurred within the conflict between confessional and state-building.³⁸

This confessionalization thesis was founded on Western European historiographical traditions in order to explore confessional divisions within the entire social and political stratosphere in the early modern period. However, this model can be, and has been, adapted to other traditions and regions. In this thesis I am particularly interested in the Catholic

³⁵ Heinz Schilling, “Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm,” *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 31–5; and Hartmut Lehmann, “Lutheranism in the Seventeenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia, vol. 6 of *Reform and Expansion 1500–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 23–25.

³⁶ Lehmann, “Lutheranism in the Seventeenth Century,” 58–70.

³⁷ Lotz-Heumann, “The Concept of ‘Confessionalization,’” 97–8.

³⁸ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1990): 2 quoted in Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Imposing Church and Social Discipline,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 6 of *Reform and Expansion 1500–1600*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 244, and Lotz-Heumann, “The Concept of ‘Confessionalization,’” 96–7.

confessionalization efforts in Ottoman Rumeli in the aftermath of the Council of Trent (1545-63)—and responses to it by the local Catholic and Orthodox Christians—to understand the interplay of self-fashioning and diplomacy that shaped Jachia’s life, career choices, and informed his promoters.

JACHIA SULTAN AND CONFESSIONAL DIPLOMACY

The success of the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 brought elated sighs of relief to the members of the Holy League and the Knights of Malta. The Ottoman Empire was revealed to have a weakness that quelled their fears of an invincible and ever expanding force and indicated hope for all of Western Christendom. While in actuality this success was not what it seemed, the symbolism of an Ottoman defeat aided in fostering renewed ideals of Christian insurrections against the heretical *religione de’ Turchi*, and ignited idealistic expectations of the Christian populations in Ottoman controlled Rumeli.³⁹ G. E. Rothenberg noted that, “Papal officials estimated that there were 40,000 able-bodied Christians in Dalmatia, and 100,000 more in Bosnia and Hercegovina.”⁴⁰ Franciscan missionary efforts in Ottoman territories attempted to gain converts and promote religious reforms that would aid in local liberation and state-building ventures. The attempt to identify and count Christian enclaves went hand in hand with Franciscans’ (but also Jesuits’) efforts to implement the decisions of the Council of Trent and strengthen the local population’s adherence to reformed Catholicism and/or bring about the conversion of Ottoman Muslims and Orthodox Christians to Catholicism. The political subtext of these efforts was the goal of reuniting Eastern Rome

³⁹ Andrew C. Hess, “The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History,” *Past and Present*, 57 (1972), 53–73.

⁴⁰ G. E. Rothenberg, “Christian Insurrections in Turkish Dalmatia 1580–96,” *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 95 (1961), 137.

with Western Rome—effectively repairing the longstanding schism between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity.⁴¹

Murmurs of a general insurrection against the Ottomans were certainly not an unheard of notion. By the late sixteenth century Western observers already began to fixate on the idea that the Ottoman Empire’s military prowess began to decline due to a thinly stretched Janissary corps fighting on multiple fronts and a growing reliance on mercenaries. Moreover, there were problems of debased silver coinage and often corrupt or greedy pashas, as well as a changing feudal system with high taxation on the non-Muslim (*dhimmi*) population. There was a large number of converts at this time due to rising poll tax (*cizye*) on the *dhimmi*, especially on the Roman Catholic population due to Orthodoxy’s more favorable position in Ottoman bureaucracy.⁴² It was viewed as more practical for the male(s) of the house to convert to Islam. In this way, they could avoid rising taxation, while at the same maintain Christian ties through their wives or daughters. Those populations dissatisfied with worsening economic and social standing began to look towards a western audience; namely the Austrian Habsburgs, especially their vassal ducal monarchies affiliated with the Holy League.⁴³

While the Holy League may have won the Battle of Lepanto, they lost Cyprus, which would later prove to be strategically beneficial for the Ottomans in controlling the Levant.⁴⁴ Bar, Montenegro, and Ulcinj, Albania fell entirely into Ottoman control in the same year, prompting both the Catholic and Orthodox leaders to appeal to any sympathetic Catholic

⁴¹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 127–38, and Zrinka Blažević, “Indetermi-Nation: Narrative Identity and Symbolic Politics in Early Modern Illyrism,” in *Whose Love of Which Country?: Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe* ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky (Brill: Leiden, 2010), and 201–7 and 214–20.

⁴² See, István György Tóth, “Between Islam and Catholicism: Bosnian Franciscan Missionaries in Turkish Hungary, 1584–1716,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, 3 (2003): 409–33 and Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 127.

⁴³ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 116–33, Rothenberg, “Christian Insurrections,” 136–38, and Ulrich Helfenstein, “Caspar Scioppius als Gesandter “Sultan” Jahjas in der Eidgenossenschaft, (1634/35),” Vol. 42 Ed. 2 in *Mitteilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich* (Zürich: Druck Leemann AG, 1963), 5, 6, I would like to extend my thanks to Martin Kopf at the University of Graz for making this source accessible to me.

⁴⁴ Hess, “The Battle of Lepanto,” 61–3.

authority for assistance.⁴⁵ At this time, Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605) was steadfast in his condemnation of the Ottomans and propagating another crusade. He organized envoys, papal armies, and monetary subsidies to be sent to Italy, Spain, Poland, Austria, and specific Voivodes in Moldavia and Wallachia.⁴⁶ Moreover, most Roman Catholic princes were generally in favor of another crusade but were not in a position to throw large stones from their already war-torn glass houses. Instead of fully pledging their assistance, they often settled on occasionally sending arms, finances, and missionaries in place of their own military forces. In addition, they frequently took on individuals as protégés who represented, or claimed to represent, Christian regions occupied by the Ottomans. As we will see, protégés were often worth more to their patrons in fighting rival princes than in opposition to the Ottoman Empire.

Intermediaries in Cross-Confessional Diplomacy

In the study of the Mediterranean there has been a growing interest in spies, renegades, dragomans, and “go-betweens.” These individuals have generally been accepted as brokers or mediators between Muslim and Christian polities existing on the fringes of society (or in the borderlands) and interacting in what Mary Louise Pratt termed “contact zones.”⁴⁷ However, this view of the intermediaries as marginal or foreign cannot account for social actors who moved across physical, cultural, and religious boundaries while being completely integrated into their principal societies as well as playing prominent governmental roles.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in understanding and tracing political, religious, and cultural intermediaries, there is a tendency to view them as mediating between the starkly dichotomized “Islam” (“East”) and

⁴⁵ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 120–1.

⁴⁶ James P. Krokav, “New Means to an Old End: Early Modern Maps in the Service of an Anti-Ottoman Crusade,” *Imago Mundi* 60 (2008), 25.

⁴⁷ On “contact zones” see, Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.

⁴⁸ Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, “Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” in the *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015), 96–8.

Christendom (“West”). However, such an understanding ignores the continuity across confessional divides as well as shared histories.⁴⁹ Moreover, the interplay of linguistics and representation, in both the early modern period itself and European Orientalism has created another layer that accentuates difference rather than sameness.

In her discussion of cultural brokers between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, Natalie Rothman puts forward the term “trans-imperial subject” to address the physical mobility and ambiguous nature of the sociolegal status and subjecthood of the merchants, slaves, dragomans, renegades, pretenders, and intelligencers. Rothman defines her term by considering each of its units. She explains that “trans-” refers to the physical or social mobility of a subject. It also indicates a subject’s network of family or patronage that crosses imperial domains. “Imperial” not only refers to the domain claims of early modern sovereigns, but also to the creation and maintenance of their distinct authority. In this component, the importance of subjecthood and loyalty to an empire increasingly became connected with one’s confession in the early modern period. Lastly, Rothman chooses to use “subject” and defines it as the, “entwining of confessional and juridical affiliation in modern construction of subjecthood,” in contrast to an individual engaging in self-fashioning.⁵⁰ Concomitantly, these individuals not only participated in (un-)intentional cultural exchange, but also in the definition of the very categories of “East” and “West” while participating in diplomatic and state-building networks during the Age of Confessionalization.

Jachia was certainly able to physically cross imperial borders and shift in and out of linguistic and cultural realms while simultaneously acting as an arbitrator between numerous “contact zones.” Due to his own aspirations of obtaining his maternal and parental domains, Jachia participated in different diplomatic channels, seeking out specific social actors, princes,

⁴⁹ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 6, and Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 7, 8, and 167–70.

⁵⁰ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 12.

and empires he felt would support his own endeavors. He often moved across political boundaries incognito, or under a different name, performing various intermediary roles in the process, particularly between various rebel leaders in Albania and Montenegro on the one hand and various European princes, on the other. However, at the same time, he sought to create and anchor his identity in religio-political claims that were supported by his birthright and did not claim subjecthood to a domain. Rather, he claimed the status of an Ottoman imperial ruler who pledged his allegiance to the pope. Therefore, Jachia seems to have been both a “trans-imperial subject” and an aspiring ruler with a trans-confessional agenda.

Jachia’s Debut in the Theater of Cross-Confessional Diplomacy

Jachia’s first steps onto the European diplomatic stage followed his unsuccessful attempts to mobilize the internal rebellions amongst Ottoman Muslim subjects and administrators to his benefit. Before recounting Jachia’s engagement with European rulers, it is important to understand that in the very beginning of his political career he entertained the hopes of winning the throne from within the Ottoman political structures, striving to rally Muslim followers discontent with his supposed brother’s rule.

According to the biography by Rafael Levaković, after being baptized as Simon by the abbot named Nilo Jachia received rigorous religious instruction and an education in letters. He remained in the abbot’s care in the monastery for about seven years.⁵¹ As a restless Turkish and Greek speaking youth, Jachia left with his mother’s eunuch named Mehmed. They passed through the mountains of Stara Planina, where the eunuch began to familiarize Jachia with Islam, and taught him Bulgarian as well as some Arabic. In the early weeks of 1604, they made their way into Skopje. While there, Jachia discovered that his father had died and Ahmed had claimed Jachia’s supposed birthright. He felt the only way to avenge

⁵¹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 3v. In Grimston’s account he reports Jachia stayed for eight years. See: Grimston, “Here followeth,” 926.

himself was through force. Jachia and the eunuch traveled through Gallipoli towards Anatolia, following the rumors of a mass insurrection against the Sultan. While passing through Ottoman frontier territories, the pair encountered not just one rebellion, but province after province had been turned upside down by numerous insurgent rebels.⁵² Eunuch Mehmed, a loyal servant and friend to Jachia, surmised that the powerful rebel Kara Yazıcı⁵³ could be attracted to Jachia's cause for the purpose of a common campaign against the Ottoman Sultan.⁵⁴ In general, the empire was in a state of unrest, and plots against the sultan were not only plausible but were thought to be possible.

Prior to the death of Mehmed III, Jachia's alleged older brother, Mahmud, had conspired with his mother to overtake the throne. Mehmed discovered the plan and immediately had them executed. He died shortly after in December 1603, leaving Ahmed I as the surviving heir.⁵⁵ The new sultan broke custom and did not eliminate his younger brother Mustafa. Ahmed also sidestepped a customary enthroning ceremony and immediately took his seat as sultan. Unlike his forbears, Ahmed was young and inexperienced in governing, and his reign commenced with several fronts in heated conflicts, which required the skills he lacked. Additionally, he was almost immediately involved in quelling the Celali Rebellion, which were likely some of the rebels that Jachia had encountered. To the Ottomans these groups were "bandits" (*eşkiya*), "criminals" (*ehl-i fesad*), *sohtas*, and possibly *sekban*. By 1603, such rebellious activity in Anatolia became impossible to manage, let alone live

⁵²Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 3v.

⁵³ On Karayazıcı see Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 167. It appears, however, that the famous Karayazıcı was killed already in 1602, which means that Levaković's narrative is either chronologically incorrect, or that the rebel that Jachia sought to ally himself with was another Celali leader with the common rebel sobriquet Kara.

⁵⁴ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 3v. Grimston, "Here followeth," 926: "But when he came to the City of Siopia he understood the News of the Death of the Emperour Mahomet te Third, his Father, and the rejoicing for the Advancement of Sultan Achmat to the Empire[...] The displeasure which he conceived for that he had not been bred up at Constantinople with the rest, to receive so right a Crown as that of the Turkish Empire, made him to waver in divers irresolutions: sometime he would go into Persia to the Sophy, to have Succours from him, and with him to make War against his Brother: sometimes he would serve for a support and countenance to the Rebels of Asia, and justifie their Party."

⁵⁵ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 231–32.

through, and soon famine struck causing more political unrest and disdain for their Ottoman rulers.⁵⁶

Allegedly, after some failed attempts at unifying these groups, Jachia and the eunuch agreed the best plan of action would be to participate in an internal political dispute. The eunuch left for Constantinople, as Jachia's representative, to seek the help of a fellow Bulgarian and discontented vizier, Derviş Pasha (*Deruispassà*).⁵⁷ Ahmed had been continually struggling to maintain power in the imperial court, which was now fractionalized and littered with favoritism. To Ahmed's dismay, his mother Handan had significant control over his viziers. One them was Derviş Pasha, who was popular amongst the Janissaries, and had previously raised suspicion after being sent to quell the Celai Rebellion. After his pardon from the incident, he returned to Istanbul to continue his duties as vizier.⁵⁸ Ostensibly, it is around this time that the eunuch arrived in Istanbul to meet with Derviş Pasha and gain his assistance in capturing Jachia's birthright.

Levaković writes that the eunuch returned to Konya bearing a letter of support from Derviş Pasha, who pressed Jachia to travel to Istanbul immediately. Supposedly, this letter even bore the signatures and approval of other administrators, such as the *miifti*. Overjoyed, Jachia disguised himself as a derviş and left for Istanbul, where he took residence at the Porte near Fener. Three days after his arrival, Jachia met with the *miifti*, who immediately and tearfully embraced the man he thought would soon be sultan. Derviş Pasha began to send letters to inform his allies within the empire of the new plan to overthrow Ahmed.⁵⁹ The undertaking seemed to be flawless. According to Levaković and Jachia, Derviş Pasha's letters

⁵⁶ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 243, and "Ahmed I" Günhan Börekçi, *Encyclopedia of The Ottoman Empire* ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 22–23. For more information on the Celali Rebellion see White, *The Climate of Rebellion*, 167–78.

⁵⁷ Grimston, "Here followeth," 926–7: "[C]oncludes with both of them, to send to Constantinople, to the Visier Dervis (who at that time was discontented with the Emperour Achmat) to sound his Disposition, and to see if he might gain him to kill Achmat, and to settle Jachia in the Imperial Throne."

⁵⁸ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 241–3 and "Ahmed I" Günhan Börekçi, 23.

⁵⁹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia* fol. 3v.

were intercepted and brought to Ahmed's attention. He summoned the unfaithful vizier and began to shout, "*Ancora vive questo cane?*" [This dog is still alive?]. He ordered the vizier's execution in order to thwart the plot against his reign.⁶⁰

Once the news reached the eunuch and Jachia, they immediately fled. While frustrated, Jachia had come to understand the political instability in Istanbul and he continued on his quest for the throne.⁶¹ Supposedly, he traveled to Poland, Walachia, and Moldova. During his travels, Jachia made many powerful acquaintances before returning to Greece to first tell his mother, then Cosimo the archbishop, and lastly Abbot Nilo, of his plans to overthrow his brother in Istanbul. Cosimo argued that once the *Prencipi Christiani* (Christian Princes) knew that such a *Prencipe* as Jachia had found the Christian faith, they would be willing to help him. Jachia was filled with a new impetus upon hearing that such a prince was to arrive only once in a thousand years. Jachia did not have proof these *Prencipi Christiani* would take their religious responsibilities seriously, as they did not care much about their confession, as long as their power over their States was secure. Cosimo and Nilo pledged their full support to Jachia's cause, and issued him a birth and baptismal certificate to verify his faith and identity, rendering him an Ottoman but a Christian prince.⁶² He was granted two German slaves, who he freed in exchange for their fealty to him. Disguised as Greek merchants, the three set out to retrieve eunuch Mehmed and then travel to Prague.⁶³

⁶⁰ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia.*, fol. 4v. In actuality, Ahmed executed the vizier in an attempt to assert power over his mother. For more information on Ahmed I and Derviş Pasha see Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 241–44.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 4v.

⁶² Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 41–2.

⁶³ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 4–5v.

CHAPTER 1: **JACHIA'S ROLE IN FLORENTINE STATE-BUILDING AND THE SELF-FASHIONING OF THE GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY**

When Jachia finally arrived in Prague on the 20th of June, 1608, he was about the age of 22.⁶⁴ He found residence with two Turkish interpreters for the court. One was originally from Anatolia and the other had been a *zaim* (a holder of a large fief called *zeamet*) in the Ottoman Empire. Allegedly, both of these men were familiar with Jachia's story. Over time, through the interpreters' observance of Jachia's mannerisms, and his fluency and use of the Turkish language, they discovered his identity and desires to wage a war with the Ottomans in Hungary. Once notified, officials from the Habsburg court in Prague allegedly accepted his claims to be true. However, they informed Jachia of a recent peace treaty between the Ottomans and Habsburgs—making any desires of taking action against the Ottomans, with the support of Rudolf's court, implausible for the time being.⁶⁵

Jachia spent just under a year in Prague where his circle of powerful acquaintances who supported his ambitions swelled to even include the duke of Saxony. It was not long before he was approached by the plenipotentiary in Prague, Giuliano de' Medici, to join forces with the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano (Order of Saint Stephen).⁶⁶ An offshoot of the Florentine navy, the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano were officially founded by Cosimo I de' Medici (r.1537–1569) in 1561. This subdivision was founded on two main premises. The first was an attempt to unify Tuscany's aristocrats under Cosimo I's vision of a Medici

⁶⁴ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 5v, and Mark Rosen, "Son of the Sultan?," 6.

⁶⁵ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 5v. For more information of the imperial court of Rudolf see, Szőnyi, György Endre. "Scientific and Magical Humanism at the Court of Rudolf II," in *Rudolf II and Prague. The Court and the City*, ed. Elizka Fučíková, James Bradburn et al. (Prague: Skira, 1997), 223–31.

⁶⁶ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia* fol. 5v.

monarchy. The second was to, “enhance [Cosimo’s] image as a dynastic territorial ruler.”⁶⁷ Functioning as a provision against the Barbary pirates, as well as a crusading legion to fight against the “infidels,” the St. Stefano’s underlying motivations were directly related to confessionalization efforts in Florence, as well as to Tuscany’s confessional diplomacy. In this chapter, I intend to show that due to Jachia’s active challenge to the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultan, he was an important asset for the grand duke of Tuscany’s diplomacy with Muslim polities. Additionally, the grand duke considered Jachia to be even more relevant in his efforts to expand Florence’s commercial ventures and autonomy vis-à-vis the Holy Roman Empire. Jachia departed from Prague for Florence in early 1609 accompanied by two vassals and carrying letters of endorsement.

THE GRAND DUKES OF TUSCANY’S DREAMS OF GRANDEUR FOR THE HUMBLE DUCAL MONARCHY

In 1587, Ferdinando I de’ Medici (r. 1587–1609), still retaining his position as Cardinal, assumed the title of grand duke of Tuscany. The language and ideals of Renaissance self-fashioning, which had been appropriated into manufacturing the state and image of the Medici dukes, was intrinsically connected to an independent Florence. By the time Ferdinando I ascended to power, this association was successfully ingrained. Samuel Berner noted that Ferdinando’s acquisition of the title grand duke converged with the emergence, in Florence, of a growing correlation between the ruler and the state, which rendered rhetoric designed to endow the ruler with ‘divine’ attributes.⁶⁸ This image of the grand duke was originally conceived with Cosimo I de’ Medici’s (1519–1574) reorganization

⁶⁷ Henk Th. Van Veen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and his Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97.

⁶⁸ Samuel Berner, “Florentine Society in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971), 204.

and state-building program.⁶⁹ Ferdinando began to vigorously exercise his newfound authority in an effort to establish legitimacy for the Medici ducal monarchy as independent from the Habsburg influence. He did this by pursuing diplomatic negotiations both inside and outside of Italy. Beginning with Milan and Venice, he reached agreements on long-standing border issues and claimed to fasten a tighter leash on the S. Stefano, since their activities usually resulted in acts of piracy against Ottoman and Venetian trade galleys.⁷⁰ Two years after his accession, Ferdinando forged an alliance with France through renouncing his title as Cardinal and marrying Cristina of Lorraine. He also married his niece to King Henry IV (r. 1589–1610) in 1599, and aided in Henry’s conversion to Catholicism in order to ensure their alliance would be ironclad and longstanding. The pursuit of a relationship with France, especially Ferdinando’s marriage, was a conscious choice designed to block Habsburg influence in Florentine politics. This move articulated his desires to assert Florentine ducal legitimacy and de-emphasize Florentine-Habsburgs relations. Ferdinando also turned his gaze further west, and in the interest of political and financial gain, he ceased the financial dependence between the Medici banking reserves and Spain. Ferdinando was successful in subduing Spanish and French hostilities, a feat that Cosimo I had pined for from the start of his rule.⁷¹

The grand duke of the late sixteenth century was generally well liked by his subjects, especially aristocrats who lived in urban Florence. Credited with successfully completing

⁶⁹ For information on state-building and the image of the Grand Duke of Tuscany see, Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence: The Construction of an Early Modern Jewish Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 15–133.

⁷⁰ Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries 1527–1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 101, and Berner, “Florentine Society,” 204–6, and Alessandro Olsaretti, “Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation in The Early Modern Mediterranean: Fakr al-Dīn II, The Sublime Porte and The Court of Tuscany,” (Master’s thesis., McGill University, Montreal, 2005), 60. Van Veen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici*, 97–8. For a brief description and testimony of *un cavalier* from the *Cavalieri di Santo Stefano* see, Peter M. Brown, “Lionardo Salviati and the Ordine di Santo Stefano,” in *Italica* 2 (1957), 69–71.

⁷¹ Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries 1527–1800*, 101, and Olsaretti, “Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation,” 61.

Cosimo's state-building goals of securing peace and territories, Ferdinando began to expand and strengthen Florence's diplomacy as well as commerce, allowing them to blossom.⁷² Florentine diplomacy became not only more far reaching, but also adopted a Machiavellian attitude to fostering independence and aimed for the unification of Italy. Ferdinando consolidated and strengthened diplomatic ties in select areas of Christendom, while also upholding an "anti-Ottoman" stance in his ambassadorial pursuits.⁷³ This is partially a result of his religious beliefs, as he had originally been destined for a pious life within the Church, and of the fact that Florence helped fend off the Ottoman Turks in the Battle of Lepanto.

Another explanation for this relatively hostile foreign policy towards the Ottomans was Florentine's trade history with the Porte.⁷⁴ In the mid to late 1500s, Florence attempted to reconcile and reestablish favorable, steady trade as well as their diplomatic presence in Constantinople. However, Florentine dukes consistently refused to contain the St. Stefano's piracy, especially since the contents of the ships they captured would later be sold or exported by the Medici grand dukes.⁷⁵ This was a major point of contention for Ottoman merchants, or anyone carrying Ottoman goods, as the St. Stefano's directive was deeply rooted in crusading fantasies and fostering another conflict with the infidel, which internally justified such targeting Ottoman-Venetian trade.⁷⁶ Ferdinando still desired to expand wool and silk trade east; however, due to Florence's unwillingness to negotiate their naval activity, this was not possible through the Porte. Therefore, the opportunity and Ferdinando's contemplation turned more toward land routes within Italy, as well as the Ottoman tributary principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, and parts of Ottoman Rumeli. He did encourage and

⁷² Berner, "Florentine Society," 204.

⁷³ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 44.

⁷⁴ Olsaretti, "Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation," 60.

⁷⁵ Molly Green, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 2010), 90–3.

⁷⁶ Olsaretti, "Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation," 57–63 and Cochrane, *Florence*, 173.

maintain the growth of Livorno through trade within the Levant and third parties who traded with the Porte.⁷⁷

By 1609, with Cosimo II's (r. 1609–1621) succession to grand dukedom, the Medici ambassadorial network, along with their extensive corpus of spies that both Ferdinando and Cosimo fostered, traversed merchant and ducal connections, which also allowed for the growth of patronage. Unlike the Medici of the Renaissance, the Medici grand dukes pursued and supported foreign protégés with appropriate religio-political interests and goals, which conformed to the ideals of the Catholic Reformation and often involved Tridentine methods of social disciplining.⁷⁸ The grand duke of Tuscany's far-reaching ambassadorial network intermingled with an even more extensive patronage network. It was at the convergence of these two networks where the Medici became aware of Jachia and he of them.

Il Sultano Jachia Ottomano

When Jachia reached Chiavenna, he learned that Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici had died in February that year. However, he continued on his journey and arrived in Florence to find that the Court was away in Pisa with the new Grand Duke, Cosimo II. Therefore, Jachia's arrival fell under the care of a Peter Cavallo an *auditore* (magistrate) who, allegedly, was more accustomed to dealing with bandits and criminals. Cavallo immediately began to question Jachia's intent and identity, insinuating that Jachia was one such malefactor. Affronted by Cavallo's accusations, Jachia immediately left Florence with the intention of

⁷⁷ Olsaretti, "Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation," 64, and Guillaume Calafat, "L'institution de la coexistence Les communautés et droits à Livourne (1590-1630)," in *Des religions dans la ville: ressorts et stratégies de coexistence dans l'Europe des XVIe-XVIIIe siècles.* ed. David Do Paço, Mathilde Monge, and Laurent Tatarenko (Rennes University Presses, 2010), 85–6. For more information on the demographics of merchants and life in Livorno see: Guillaume Calafat, "Être étranger dans un port franc. Droits, privileges et accès au travail à Livourne (1590-1715)," in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 84 (2012), 103–22.

⁷⁸ Berner, "Florentine Society," 232–33. For more information see, Wietse de Boer, "Social Discipline in Italy: Peregrinations of a Historical Paradigm," *Focal point: "Confessionalization and Social Discipline in France, Italy and Spain," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 94 (2003) 294–307, and Wolfgang Reinhard, "Confessionalizzazione forzata? Prolegomeni ad una teoria dell'età confessionale." *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 8 (1982): 13—37.

leaving Italy.⁷⁹ Upon hearing of Jachia's abrupt departure and aggrieved disposition, Cosimo sought to correct the regrettable incident. He sent a messenger, George Tromba who spoke Greek and Turkish well and assigned Don Rafael de' Medici to calm and reassure Jachia.⁸⁰ Jachia's "impatience of his Age and Desires"⁸¹ becomes apparent in a letter to the duke written on June 12th, 1609, expressing his doubts that he would receive a legitimate vessel with safe passage to Anatolia as he had been led to believe by Florentine agents. The letter was signed, *Il Sultano Jachia Ottomano*. A letter written the same day by his vassal provided more detail on Jachia's plan stating, "And since [Jachia] has not been able to carry out [his intentions] with the Christians, he relies on his other option: to use the Turks themselves."⁸² Cosimo responded guaranteeing he would receive a vessel and captain he could trust, and eventually Jachia conceded to returning.⁸³

Jachia was honorably greeted and provided with comfortable accommodation in Florence.⁸⁴ Promising Tuscany's support, Cosimo and the Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine (1565–1637), requested that Jachia wait until they to prepare their galleons to be dispatched to Syria and Lebanon. While he waited, the grand duke employed a Greek priest, George Moschetti, to investigate the validity of Jachia's baptismal and birth certificates.⁸⁵ Moschetti left Florence on August 3rd, 1609, and traveled to Thessaloniki and Manisa to find the archbishop Cosimo, the abbot Nilo, and Jachia's mother.⁸⁶ While Jachia's prospects in

⁷⁹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 5–6v, and Rosen, "Son of the Sultan?," 7.

⁸⁰ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 50.

⁸¹ Grimston, "Here followeth," 926.

⁸² Pater Lamormans to Rafael Medici, 12 June 1609, in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 513: "Con questi sono stati i due pensieri che egli aveva, di conseguire il suo intento, o per mezzo dei Christiani mercè del vero zelo che lui ha della fede di e accettato ogni ora che loro si scopirsi. Et poichè non l'ha potuto effettuare con i Christiani, esso si appiglia all'altro suo pensiero di servirsi del mezzo dell'istessi Turchi."

⁸³ The letters referenced can be found in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 505–6 and 513.

⁸⁴ Grimston, "Here followeth," 927: "He came then to Florence, where he was honourably entertained, and lodged, for the safty of his person, in the Fort of S. John, where he was supplied with all sorts of Commodities."

⁸⁵ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 50. Catualdi notes it spelled Giorgio Moschetti (Μοσχέτιο).

⁸⁶ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 6v.

Florence seemed promising, his requests were not fulfilled to his expectations, as he would soon be caught up in Florentine commercial ventures.

A few years before Jachia's arrival, Florence had already established an alliance with the Emir Fakhr al-Dīn II al-Ma'ani (1572–1635), who was a potentate in Mount Lebanon and belonged to a minority sect of the Druzes.⁸⁷ He was well connected with the Ottoman administration, as well as a relatively independent ruler who was working to expand his control on Lebanon's coast. Additionally, Fakhr al-Dīn was known to have alliance with the leader of a rebel group, Jānbulād. In 1607, the emir had agreed on a treaty, which included the pope, in mobilizing Christians in Mount Lebanon and guarantees of exile in Tuscany.⁸⁸ However, he did not seek an open rebellion until 1611, after the Grand Vizier, Murad Pasha had died and his successor clashed with the emir.⁸⁹

Cosimo had another agent involved, Michel Angelo Giovanni Corai (ca. 1588–1615), who arrived around the same time as Jachia. Corai, a Syrian born *dragoman*, was appointed as an official diplomat for Tuscany. He had previously been in the service of the Medici prior to Ferdinando's death and his use to Tuscany remained the same: he was instructed to open up trade routes and diplomatic channels in Syria.⁹⁰ While Moschetti was still away on his investigation, Cosimo and Corai were finalizing plans for an expedition to Syria and Lebanon.⁹¹ For Jachia, this venture was an opportunity to amass his own following.

⁸⁷ Nabil Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578–1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.), 81.

⁸⁸ William Harris, *Lebanon: A History 600–2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 98.

⁸⁹ Olsaretti, "Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation," 102–3.

⁹⁰ Federico M. Federici, "A Servant of Two Masters: The Translator Michel Angelo Corai as a Tuscan Diplomat (1599–1609)," in *Translators, Interpreters, and Cultural Negotiators: Mediating and Communicating Power from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era*, ed. by Federico M. Federici and Dario Tessicini (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2014), 81–96.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

Before departure, Jachia was escorted to Rome to pay his respects to Pope Paul V. After eight days in Rome, he returned to Florence on the first of September 1609.⁹² An agreement was reached between Corai and Tuscany's new ally, Shāh Abbas I, on the 19th of September, and soon Jachia was dispatched to Livorno to embark on one of four galleons headed for Lebanon and Syria. The Shah's and English envoy, Sir Robert Sherley, joined their fleet and later they merged with the French Beaulieu-Persac squadron.⁹³

In the spring of 1610, when the grand duke's fleet reached Tyre and Sidon, the commander, Beauregard and Jachia, met with Fakhr al-Dīn, who then offered an "impregnable fortress" in Lebanon, men, arms, and money to Jachia. Jachia had begged to remain with the emir. However, Beauregard feared Fakhr al-Dīn and Jachia's possible treachery against Tuscany. Additionally, Beauregard received information that the Turks knew of Jachia's presence. Therefore, it was not safe for him to leave the vessels.⁹⁴ Jachia did not set foot in Lebanon. He remained on the ship, unable to gather a following, and returned to Florence no closer to the throne than when he had left.

Jachia was indeed granted a ship and safe passage, yet, he could not utilize these resources for his original intent, nor was he granted the opportunity to organize an internal rebellion, as he had previously suggested. The venture was, in part, affiliated with the St. Stefano's piracy. However, the effort was directed more at reestablishing diplomatic ties with Fakhr al-Dīn for economic and political reasons. Over time, Tuscany's focus and resources were directed to Fakhr al-Dīn. In fact, in addition to his ties to the Ottomans and Tuscany, the

⁹² Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 68.

⁹³ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 67–9 and Levaković, *Vita De Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 7v. See: Federici, "A Servant of Two Masters," 96–8.

⁹⁴ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 71 and Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol 7v. Grimston, "Here followeth," 927: "[T]he Command of the Knight Beauregard, where he had Conference with Nassuf Bassa, at that time chief of the Rebels of Asia. He offers [Jachia] Men, Arms, and Money, if he would come to land and march towards Persia[...]But he who commanded the Florentine Gallions had no Commission to leave him in the hands of Nassuf." As it so happened, Beauregard was suspicious of the Emir and did not the galleons were much safer. Tuscany's correspondenced was intercepted by Damascus, and the fortress was attacked.

Emir was already in the process of establishing political and military relationships with the papacy, France, and Spain. When Fakhr al-Dīn fell out of favor with the Ottomans in 1613, he was forced to flee to Tuscany in November—bringing with him his entire family and about seventy other members from his court.⁹⁵ Jachia's involvement likely aided Tuscany's diplomacy with Fakhr al-Dīn, especially considering that the emir also found Jachia to be useful in his own insurgencies. Since Jachia did not have a strong following in Ottoman domains, or any powerful connection within the Ottoman administration, his value likely derived from his knowledge of Turkish, Greek and familiarity with Ottoman territories. It also seems that Jachia's potential worth resided in his persistent insistence of his birthright, which was still unverified.

Mi Creda, mi senta (Believe me, hear me): Investigation of Jachia's Claims

Before Moschetti's finished his report, there had been attempts to gather testimonies from Turkish slaves or other travelers. However, their trustworthiness was overshadowed by their status as foreign.⁹⁶ Around late 1611, Giorgio Moschetti returned to Florence after being captured by a Turkish slave ship on May 28th, 1610. During Moschetti's time in captivity, he encountered a number of gypsies from Istanbul singing ballads, for money, which retold parts of Jachia's life. He also discovered that some subjects of, or connected to, the Ottomans were hesitant to discuss Jachia, but did not deny that Jachia was the second son of Mehmed III. His final report provided two of these songs, which Moschetti had preserved and translated from Turkish or Greek into Italian.⁹⁷

Another Florentine agent, Gaspar Graziani (1575/80–1620), who assisted in negotiating Moschetti's freedom, became involved in the investigation into Jachia's identity

⁹⁵ Matar, *Europe*, 81 and 87.

⁹⁶ Rosen, "Son of the Sultan," 10–1.

⁹⁷ Rosen, "Son of the Sultan," 15–7, and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 39.

in the Ottoman court.⁹⁸ Graziani was a polyglot originally from Dalmatia. He was initially working for an English ambassador in Constantinople, then he moved to Italy and came under the employment first of the grand duke of Tuscany and then the viceroy of Naples. Once immersed in the ambassadorial networks, he eventually became a *dragoman* of the Porte and an intelligencer for Christian princes. He engaged in Ottoman negotiations with the Habsburgs regarding their border disputes, and frequently brokered the release or trading of slaves. Graziani soon became well connected within Ottoman bureaucracy, and would later be promoted to the duke of Paros and Naxos, as well as the prince of Moldavia (r.1619–1620). In the early seventeenth century, he was also involved in the anti-Ottoman conspiracy through his involvement in the *Militia Christiana*.⁹⁹

By early 1612, Moschetti had compiled a full report and account of his travels, which included testimony that validated Jachia's baptism and education.¹⁰⁰ When his report was given to the grand duke, the most compelling evidence that was presented were these ballads, which he had discovered while in captivity. One song was especially convincing since it recounted Jachia's affiliation and failed conspiracy with Derviş Pasha in 1606.¹⁰¹ This, in combination with the testimony of the archbishop Cosimo, the abbot Nilo, and even Jachia's mother added to the report's veracity of Jachia's claims. Moreover, Graziani corroborated that Mehmed III had a son who disappeared from Manisa with his mother shortly after he ascended to sultanate. It was generally believed that they had taken refuge in Persian territory. Graziani also reported a widespread rumor alleging that Jachia was in Ottoman territory around the time the vizier had returned and was executed. Due to Graziani's

⁹⁸ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 65–6 and Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 6v.

⁹⁹ Radu G. Păun, "Enemy Within: Networks of Influence and the Military Revolts Against the Ottoman Power (Moldavia and Wallachia, Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill NV, 2013), 217–22 and Cristian Luca, "Influssi occidentali sull'atteggiamento politico di alcuni principi dei Paesi Romeni nei secoli XVI e XVII," *Quaderni della Casa Romana di Venezia*, nr. 2, 2002, pp. 103-119.

¹⁰⁰ Full account can be found in: Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 517–33.

¹⁰¹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 64–6, and Rosen, "Son of the Sultan," 14–7.

reputation and intimate knowledge of the Ottoman bureaucracy, his testimony carried quite a bit of weight with the Medici court and also reinforced Jachia's *bona fides*.¹⁰²

Jachia's position in the court of Tuscany greatly improved with the release of this report. When he finally met Moschetti and Graziani in 1611 or 1612, they treated Jachia "like a prince,"¹⁰³ and flattering reports and letters began to be widely distributed, especially among Tuscany, Graz, and the viceroy in Naples. In fact, letters between Florence and Istanbul to Graziani concerning Jachia were intercepted by Spanish intelligence in Milan. With this information, the Spanish crown secretly appealed to Jachia by promising him that with their assistance he would be able to finally achieve his intensions against the Turk. Conte Luca Fabbroni, a servant of the Medici court and trusted friend of Jachia, urged him to avoid an imperious action and approach Cosimo with a request to go to Naples. Cosimo, after having received Moschetti's report, then wrote to Madrid promoting Jachia's *impresa*.¹⁰⁴ After a period of eight months, the Catholic King of Spain did make a formal request for Jachia to be transferred to Naples. In a correspondence (*dispaccio*) in 1613 between the Spanish king and the viceroy in Naples, Count Lemos, the king alerted him to the agreement and noted the importance and validity of Jachia, as well as Jachia's person being under the control of the grand duke of Florence. He noted that in accepting their agreement, the king had requested that Jachia be escorted to Naples to ensure his safety. However, Catualdi accurately points out that this was likely said because there was suspicion that Jachia would not remain under Spanish control and would flee.¹⁰⁵ It took some time before Jachia left Florence, and on his way the Spanish viceroy came to visit him in Averso and granted him the right and title of *Eccellenza* (Excellency), which entitled him to pursue the *impresa di Levante*, his enterprise in

¹⁰² Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 67.

¹⁰³ Rosen, "Son of the Sultan," 17.

¹⁰⁴ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 222.

¹⁰⁵ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 81.

the Levant with the goal of obtaining the Ottoman throne, which Jachia would pursue for the rest of his life.¹⁰⁶

Once in Naples, the viceroy honorably received Jachia. Under the direction of Philip III, the “Sultan” was provided residence, carriages, horses, and a stipend of one thousand *scudi* (crowns). Despite promising negotiations leading to a league of Christian princes to be involved in the *impresa di Levante*, Jachia remained idle for a few months waiting for the Spanish crown to act on their promises. In February 1614, Jachia anxiously requested prompt action, claiming that time was of the essence in contacting an elderly Ottoman official. However, his correspondence resulted in raising the suspicions of Count Lemos. The count noted that while Jachia was consistent in maintaining his right to the sultanate, his plan and its details were questionable. The viceroy disparaged on the seriousness of Jachia’s *impresa* and cast aspersions on Jachia’s faith. In turn, he also accused the Medici of falsifying Jachia’s identity in order to get rid of a useless and costly person. Ostensibly, other Italian states and even the pope cast an envious gaze towards Tuscany, which might explain why Naples attempted to discredit both Jachia and the Medici.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, as Fakhr al-Dīn had been in Italy since November of 1613, he was in the processes of accumulating the support of Christian princes for his own endeavors. At around the same time Jachia’s sincerity had been denigrated, Fakhr al-Dīn also appealed to Spain, which due to the Emir’s previously established position overshadowed Jachia’s enterprise.¹⁰⁸

Chapter Conclusion

Jachia’s relationship and affiliation with the Grand Ducal court would last until his death. Since Jachia was considered a less important political figure than the Emir Fakhr al-Dīn II al-Ma’ani, the *impresa* he attempted to accomplish was not considered as lucrative to

¹⁰⁶ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 84, and Grimston, “Here followeth,” 927.

¹⁰⁷ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 222 and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 84–8.

¹⁰⁸ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 222 and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 89–91.

Christian princes. Jachia's and Fakhr al-Dīn's value to the Medici court derived from their alleged or established relationship to the Ottoman Empire, as well as their efforts to depose the Turkish power in Anatolia and Rumeli. Jachia's affiliation with and activity in Florence illuminates the religio-political considerations of Tuscany in the early seventeenth century, its ways of pursuing state-building and establishing a more prominent role in the Holy Roman Empire.

Moreover, Jachia's participation with the Grand Duke encouraged crusading rhetoric and diplomacy among Christian princes, portraying him as a linchpin to free Christians or expel the Turk from Christian territories. However, this depiction referenced the State's manipulation of social-disciplinary tactics to enhance their own diplomatic positions, as well as their princely image to establish their legitimacy within and outside of their domain. Often these princes' inability or lack of interest to act on Jachia's *impresa di Levante* did not hinder their actions in professing their support on the basis of the perception of his righteous and honorable intentions. Likewise, the importance of Jachia's insistence on his birthright to the Ottoman throne and a Byzantine bloodline, reinforced his intentions and appealed to the idea of joining the old Rome and the new Rome under one rule and one confession, which Jachia incorporated in his own self-fashioning.¹⁰⁹ The efforts to substantiate or confound his allegations were directly connected to the image and legitimacy of those who averred or discredited Jachia. Consequently, this consideration of the veracity of *Il Sultano Ottomano's* identity was not clearly established within Western Christendom, allowing for his reputation and person to be at the mercy of indeterminate consideration, which did not reinforce the autonomy that Jachia fervently pursued.

¹⁰⁹ Anthony A. M. Bryer, "Greek Historians on the Turks: The Case of the First Byzantine-Ottoman Marriage," in *The Writing of the History in the Middle Ages*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 480–81, and Perice, *The Imperial Harem*, 29–31 and 70–1.

CHAPTER 2: **THE SULTAN *CHRISTI CAUSA EXUL* (EXILED FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST)**

In this chapter, I intend to show that Jachia utilized and worked within a milieu of “trans-imperial subjects.” However, in order to enhance his visibility, enact, and assert his claims to rulership, it was necessary for him to distance himself from an ambiguous identity in order to manifest indisputable legitimacy. When this captivating story is examined within the context of the Age of Confessionalization, it reveals an infinite transference between and constantly changing matrix of religio-political motivations, identities, and modes of operation. In analyzing how Jachia positioned himself, or how his respective patrons positioned him, their differing perceptions of each other’s roles emerge, informed by a delicate interplay between religious and political considerations. In order to maintain his visibility and mobility it was necessary for Jachia to engage in self-fashioning efforts in intellectual, political, and ecclesiastic circles. To accomplish this feat, he collaborated with a controversial humanist, theologian, and philologist, Kaspar Schoppe (1576–1649). Schoppe provided Jachia with the means of carrying on with his plans to take the Ottoman throne. Simultaneously, Schoppe also viewed their relationship as beneficial to his intellectual goals, and believed that Jachia’s purpose could be incorporated into his own particular humanist agenda.

JACHIA AS THE INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN “BALKAN” REBELS AND WESTERN PRINCES

After at least five years of unsuccessfully petitioning Tuscany, Spain, the Duke of Savoy, the Duke of Nevers, and even the Pope, Jachia left Western Europe for Greece in the later part of 1614. He was aware that the previous Orthodox Patriarch of Peć, Jovan, had

sought support from Western sovereigns.¹¹⁰ The new Patriarch, Paisije, “being a cowardly and naturally shy man, [he] was completely contrary to the gallant intellect of his predecessor John (Jovan),” and did not support Jachia’s ambitions.¹¹¹ However, Jachia met Jovan’s nephew, bishop Visarion (*Bessarione*), who “was very eloquent in Turkish, Greek, and Serbian (Seruiana)”¹¹² and was also in favor of a revolt against the Turk. After a few of their own insurgencies, Visarion and Jachia met an exceptionally famous bandit and voivode named Vergo in the Stara Planina mountains.¹¹³ Allegedly, Vergo was a lowborn in a village near Grevena to a Greek father and Albanian mother. He was also apparently illiterate but, “a good-hearted person.”¹¹⁴ Vergo was known to take the spoils and riches from the booty he gathered and bring it to a monastery on *Monte Santo* (*Hagion Oros* or Mount Athos) to be distributed amongst women and orphans.¹¹⁵

Both Vergo and the bishop Visarion had already established groups of Christian followers who were spread out in various places. If they needed recruits, they would often travel to certain remote areas and rally the local populations. Their choice of secluded and distant (from Istanbul) regions kept the Turks unaware of their actions.¹¹⁶ Allegedly, after a few campaigns, they gathered their forces in Thrace on a mountain that Levaković identifies as *Monte di Dio*.¹¹⁷ The next morning, the day of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, a monk of St. Basil celebrated the liturgy and Vergo’s Communion. Afterwards, Vergo and his voivodes took an oath of fealty to “Sultan” Jachia to obey him as their lord. As a sign of

¹¹⁰ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 122.

¹¹¹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 11v.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 122.

¹¹⁴ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 12v.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., fol. 13v. Catualdi notes that *Monte di Dio* is not in the mountain range that Levaković cites. See Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 395. However, according to Antoljak, *Monte di Dio* is probably another mountain somewhere in Thrace that no longer bears this name anymore.

respect, Vergo allotted two hundred of his army to guard Jachia.¹¹⁸ According to the closing celebratory feast of the ceremony, Vergo and Visarion besought Jachia, from this point on, to refer to himself as Alexander, asserting a direct reference to Alexander the Great, and only in rare circumstances to use his birth name. This was in order to secure the divine support for their insurgency efforts against the Turks.¹¹⁹

Allegedly, Jachia remained in the mountains with Vergo, Visarion, and other rebel leaders, soon learning that they would be able to organize fifty thousand loyal and brave men to fight for their cause. However, they did not have adequate weaponry to engage in an open battle with the Turks. Due to his previous experience, familiarity, and connections with the *Prencipi cristiani*, it was decided that Jachia would seek and negotiate the assistance of Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange in the Dutch Republic (1567–1625).¹²⁰

Jachia had left Vergo and Visarion to go to Venice and Mantua. Afterwards, he traveled to the Elector Palatine in Heidelberg, fell ill for three months in Antwerp, and then finally was able to meet with the prince in Holland to negotiate the purchase of weapons with Vergo's booty. However, negotiations failed due to lack of finances, regardless of his appeal to the Duke de Nevers in Paris and the archduke Ferdinand II (1578–1637) in Graz.¹²¹ By 1616, Jachia returned to Visarion and Vergo to explain the failed attempts in Holland. Vergo was now seventy-two and decided to retire to monastic life, leaving all his booty to Jachia.¹²² Allegedly, in March of 1617, Jachia had led a small army into Kosovo and plundered sixty thousand head of cattle before being attacked by a pasha of Sofia.¹²³ Meanwhile in Istanbul, Jachia's alleged brother Ahmed died in 1617, and since his eldest son Osman (1604–1622)

¹¹⁸ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 13v. Levaković dates this event in 1616, Catualdi corrects this date to 1614.

¹¹⁹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 13v.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 123. Full account can be found in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 103–15.

¹²² Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 17v, and Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 123.

¹²³ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 110.

was too young to ascend to the throne, the right was passed on to Ahmed's brother Mustafa.¹²⁴ He would not take concubines and since Mustafa was *non compos mentis*, his reign sparked further discontent in the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁵ Allegedly, once hearing the news of Ahmed's death, Jachia felt he could take advantage of this further fractionalized Ottoman administration.¹²⁶ He traveled to Krakow to persuade the Grand Chancellor of Poland. Jachia also met with the Khan of the Crimean Tartars and collaborated in their rebellion efforts. The closest he ever got to his *impresa* was a large-scale naval campaign of 130 ships in the Black Sea. He attacked Istanbul with the support of the Ukrainian and Russian Cossacks.¹²⁷ Noel Malcolm noted that it was first time since 1453, that the harbor-chain across the Golden Horn was used.¹²⁸

Francesco Antonio Bertucci and Christopher Tarnowskij

In 1614, Francesco Antonio Bertucci and Christopher Tarnowskij first appeared in records before the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Bertucci was a Dalmatian born Franciscan and known participant in rebellions against the Ottoman Empire since 1596. In Florence, Tarnowskij presented a series of maps depicting Ottoman fortresses in Rumelia and offered to lead a crusade. He introduced himself as a descendent of the King of Bosnia, and Bertucci was his witness to his bloodline, in an attempt to seem more credible. In actuality, Tarnowskij was a Knight of Malta and created the aforementioned maps. Furthermore, when the two traveled to Naples, in 1625, it was revealed that Tarnowskij was the nephew of Bertucci. While in Naples, the duo presented their maps and a series of documents from Bosnian and Albanian prelates to Philip IV of Spain (1605–1665). The additional documents allegedly authenticated them as official representatives of these regions. Philip allocated a monthly

¹²⁴ Inalick, *The Ottoman Empire*, 61.

¹²⁵ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem* 100, 249, and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 107.

¹²⁶ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 108.

¹²⁷ Groot, *The Ottoman Empire*, 189, and Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 124. Full account of these travels can be found in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 117–165.

¹²⁸ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 124.

subsidy to them in order to retain their intelligence information, as well as their allegiance while he attempted to investigate their past affiliations.¹²⁹

On February 18th, 1626, the Duke of Alba, then ruler of Naples, received a detailed correspondence from Spain regarding Bertucci and Tarnowskij. Nine months later, the Duke reported the maps had been inspected by the *Consejo Colateral* of Naples, and it was concluded the siege was too risky for the time being. However, the prospect of a gold mine, allegedly on the maps, struck his interest. It was also reported that Bertucci had recently died,¹³⁰ and in an effort to maintain relations with those discontents under Ottoman rule and to secure Tarnowskij's retainment in Naples, Spain allocated a small portion of the late Bertucci's endowment to his nephew.¹³¹

At the same time, Jachia had just taken a leave from the Grand Duke of Tuscany's court and traveled to Naples under the alias Alexander Conte di Montenegro.¹³² While there, Jachia was introduced to Christopher Tarnowskij and they began to collaborate. In order to broaden the range of prospective patrons, Tarnowskij suggested they turn towards Germany or the Austrian Habsburgs and submitted a proposal to the Imperial Diet of Regensburg, Germany in 1630. At the same time, the now financially destitute Kaspar Schoppe also attended the Diet, as he had previously met Bertucci. Schoppe was introduced to the Franciscan's proposal and had wished to merge it with his own political agenda. He remained interested in their *impresa di Levante* and maintained contact with Tarnowskij after Bertucci's

¹²⁹ Krokár, "New Means to an Old End," 10, 28–9, and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 170–1.

¹³⁰ There seems to be some dispute on when Bertucci died. Krokár believes he died in autumn of 1626, see, Krokár, "New Means to an Old End," 29. Catualdi maintains that Bertucci died shortly before November 20th, 1626. However, it is important to note that he cites a Fr. Mareš for this information. Moreover, it is one of the few sources that does not provide verbatim the passages for his citation. Helfenstein notes that Schoppe met Bertucci after November 27th 1626, see: footnote 1 in Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 14. While I am unsure of exactly when his death occurred, I believe that Schoppe did meet Bertucci, as Helfenstein and Catualdi note Schoppe was in contact with Tarnowski after Bertucci's death.

¹³¹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 171.

¹³² Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia* fol. 53v. In Catualdi's account, there is a missing footnote on page 172 concerning Jachia's arrival. It does not appear on 448 in the notation section. Levaković is also not clear on the exact date of Jachia's arrival.

death.¹³³ Here, Schoppe obtained and read Tarnowskij and Jachia's scheme after it had been submitted.¹³⁴

The Illustrious Kaspar Schoppe

Born to Calvinist-Lutheran parents in Neumarkt, Germany, Kaspar Schoppe studied in Aldorf and Ingolstadt. There, he excelled in ancient languages, with a keen interest in Latin. In his studies, he began to focus on mediation and conjugations in Latin and applied these syntactical rules to translating and editing theological, state, and law administration texts. At the age of sixteen he published his first work, which exemplified his skills and made him widely recognized.¹³⁵ In 1599 Schoppe converted to Roman Catholicism and eventually Latinized his name from the Italian "Scioppio" to "Scioppius."¹³⁶ By the time he was twenty-four, Schoppe had published eight works, which were considered of great merit and contributed to him earning a place in the *Republica Letterarum*. Schoppe was also a very active polemicist, especially concerning the purity and structure of Latin. He consistently edited classic Latin works, he even accused Cicero of language barbarity, and considered those who did not possess his same skills and sentiment to be lesser scholars, if scholars at all. Schoppe's persistent and aggressive accusations eventually earned him the title of the "Grammar hound" amongst his contemporaries.¹³⁷

In 1614, in Madrid, an English envoy beat Schoppe publicly as he had denounced and offended the King of England, James I (r. 1603–1625). After this incident, many of his enemies expressed feelings of *Schadenfreude*, and Schoppe was forced to retire to Milan, as

¹³³ Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 14–5.

¹³⁴ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 55 v, Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 171–5, and Krokhar, "New Means to an Old End," 29.

¹³⁵ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 174, 640, and Frank-Rutger Hausman, *Zwischen Autobiographie und Biographie: Jugend und Ausbildung des Fränkisch-Oberphälzer Philologen und Kontroverstheologen Kaspar Schoppe (1576–1649)*, (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neuman, 1995), 24–5. I would again like to thank Martin Kopf for making the later source cited here accessible to me.

¹³⁶ Schoppe was also known to go by the alias "Zips," See: Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 18.

¹³⁷ Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 10.

his paranoia and dreams of revenge increased.¹³⁸ Despite his inflammatory works, his command of Latin was such that many princes vied for him to work as their secretary. While employed in the court of the Archduke Ferdinand II of Graz, Schoppe earned the titles of the Count de Claravalle, Knight of St. Peter, and Imperial and Royal Spanish Councilor. However, these positions were not enough to quench his thirst for greatness, as he desired to work in the Roman Court but never had the opportunity.¹³⁹ While in Austria, Schoppe consistently published works attacking Protestants, while quarreling with the Jesuits and the Vatican. Apart from accusing the Jesuit order as heretical, Schoppe's religio-political impact included his considerable involvement in organizing the Catholic League, and his ability to personally influence several Christian powers including the Duke of Bavaria, Pope Paul V, Gregory XV, and Urban VIII. He had also been in the favor of Pope Clement VIII due to his zealous advocacy of a Universal Monarchy, as he insisted that the only thinkable solution for Christianity to find peace and eradicate all schisms was to unite the Eastern Rome with the Western one.¹⁴⁰ However, his counsel was only temporarily valued due to his controversial character and lack of focus within these networks.

Schoppe's contemporaries were well aware of his peculiar temperament. In his publications, he frequently pressured his friends and acquaintances to convert. After these publications, Schoppe would regularly fall into long spells of intense paranoia. In these cases, he would often use pseudonyms, making it difficult to identify all of his works. In addition to his writings, he took a keen interest in alchemy, compulsively collected facts, and then catalogued this information in a meticulously organized fashion.¹⁴¹ By the end of his life, Schoppe moved to Padua, and locked himself in his room continually studying various

¹³⁸ Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 11.

¹³⁹ Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 10, and Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 174.

¹⁴⁰ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 174–6, and Hausman, *Zwischen Autobiographie und Biographie*, 15–16, and 24–5.

¹⁴¹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 174–6.

subjects. He paid particular attention to John in the Book of Revelations.¹⁴² Jacob Christopher Iselin (1681–1737), a Swiss Orientalist and theologian,¹⁴³ described Schoppe as a minimalist and as having an incredible memory, stating that if the Bible had been lost he could have rewritten it.¹⁴⁴

IMPRESA DI LEVANTE

While Schoppe was in Regensburg, he met an old friend, Conte Georg Ludwig of Schwarzenberg (1586–1641), who took an interest in the *impresa* submitted by Jachia and Tarnowskij.¹⁴⁵ The scheme itself has been mostly attributed to Tarnowskij and Bertucci.¹⁴⁶ However, I argue that Jachia had more influence on this written scheme than previously discussed.

The scheme itself hinged on Bertucci's previous experience in attempting an insurrection that began in Albania and slowly spread out with the capture of specific fortress near the area, eventually encompassing Macedonia and Herzegovina. Jachia's contribution to tactical details seems to be the seizure and participation of Greece and Macedonia, as well as some of the estimation of participants.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, the plan notes that about thirty thousand of the insurgents in or near the Stara Planina mountain range were not armed, a detail Jachia was very familiar with.¹⁴⁸ The bid expanded on Bertucci's original plan to include surrounding areas, and referred to these domains as both Rumelia and *Turchia europea* (European Turkey). It argues this plan of attack will only succeed if the regions surrounding the

¹⁴² Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 10–2.

¹⁴³ "Iselin, Jacok Christoph," in *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie* ed. Herausgegeben von Walther Killy and Rudolf Vierhaus (K. G. Saur: München, 1999), 261. Iselin's account appears in the *Baslerischen, neu vermehrten Historischen und Geographischen allgemeinen Lexicons*.

¹⁴⁴ Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 11.

¹⁴⁵ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 177.

¹⁴⁶ Catualdi and Krokhar attribute the document to Tarnowskij and Bertucci. Vaughan indicates that Jachia's contribution was minimal.

¹⁴⁷ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 229.

¹⁴⁸ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 178–9.

fortresses are taken quietly in order not to disturb Venetian and Turkish troops nearby and prevent them from alerting Constantinople.¹⁴⁹

It is interesting to note that this plan was less focused on specific military tactics than on flattering descriptions of specific regions' landscape and resources. It placed little overt emphasis on religion, and focused more on identifying similarities of Rumeli with Western Europe or its usefulness. In a section describing Albania the authors wrote, "The inhabitants are then a warlike people and robust, which can be surmised not only from the history of Alexander the Great, who with those people subdued many kingdoms, but also from that of Skanderbegh, who [...] withstood many wars against Turkey."¹⁵⁰

In claiming a direct connection between the people of Albania and Alexander the Great, the proposal weaved Rumelian heritage and history into the fabric of a well-regarded conqueror in order to legitimize the scheme and emphasized centrality of Rumeli to any claims of a universal sovereignty. Upon first glance it is curious to note that Tarnowskij did not mention Jachia among these figures or a correlation with Alexander the Great. This is especially intriguing since a few years prior Jachia took the name *Alessandro il secondo Re di Macedonia* in a Transfiguration ceremony at a *Monte di Dio*, which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter.¹⁵¹ In any case, since they were collaborating, the mention of Alexander the Great likely also functioned as a direct reference to Jachia. In fact, this plan played directly into Jachia's self-fashioning and mythologizing efforts to assert himself as a legitimate ruler of Christendom.

¹⁴⁹ The entire proposal can be found in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 177–81.

¹⁵⁰ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 179: "L' Albania e un paese fertile, in posizione fortissima, in pianura, circondata dalle più aspre montagne. Il clima vi fe amabile e mite; vi prospera la vite e vi si fa dell'ottimo vino in grande quantita. Gli abitauti sono poi un popolo bellicoso e robusto, come rilevasi non solo dalla storia di Alessandro Magno, che con questo popolo sottomise tanti regni, ma anche da quella di Skanderbegh, che non dominava che sopra una piccola parte d'Albania e pure sostenne tante guerre contro la Turchia." Catualdi includes in quoted text to indicate unreadable or unclear parts of the original text. I have omitted them from the main text and footnotes.

¹⁵¹ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 13v.

By this time, Jachia had traveled throughout Europe and was well known amongst many princes, and because he remained in contact with the Medici, he was often considered to be under their diplomatic influence. During his travels he had accumulated many titles including: Alessendro Conte di Montenegro, Prince of Moldavia, Duke of Thessaly, Grand Master of Constantine for the Order of St. George, and the Duke of Drisht and Durrës.¹⁵² Most of the titles were self-proclaimed or given to Jachia by various sovereigns to enhance his image as royal and sovereign. For instance, Jachia's title as Grand Master of the Order of St. George is likely a reference to his mother's lineage of the Byzantine Komnenos family. This order was believed to have been founded by Constantine the Great in 312. The title itself had no real political weight or function and, "has given employment to countless forgers and title-seekers from the seventeenth century[.]"¹⁵³ This title also legitimized Jachia's claim that he was the rightful successor of Constantine the Great.

Concerning Jachia's title as Duke of Drisht, Catualdi indicates that Jachia was married to, "Anna Catterina, daughter of Duke Peter, Conte of Drisht from the house of George Castriotto [Kastrioti], better known under the name Skanderbegh,"¹⁵⁴ Skanderbergh, or George Kastrioti (Gjergj Kastrioti), was a popular legendary resistance figure from the fifteenth century. He converted to Christianity, fought against Ottoman expansion, and had also been mythically linked with Alexander the Great.¹⁵⁵ While the exact date of Jachia and Anna's marriage is unclear, I believe that they were either married or betrothed around the early 1630s since Jachia began to proclaim himself Duke of his wife's region around the same

¹⁵² Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 19.

¹⁵³ Donald M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor: The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 120.

¹⁵⁴ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 309.

¹⁵⁵ Julian Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 37(1983), 18–28, and Fatos Lubonja, "Between the Glory of a Virtual World and the Misery of a Real World," in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwander-Slevers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 92–4.

time. Moreover, they had two children, and the first, Maurice, was born in 1635.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, the mention of Skanderbergh is likely also a reference to Jachia.

The mention of these figures in their scheme was a *leitmotif* to spark the interest of contemporary readers. However, for Tarnowskij and Jachia their *impresa* was a means in which Jachia could reinvent and re-present himself to the *Principi cristiani* with a more fixed and authentic identity. *Il Sultano Ottomano* began to transform himself into the new conqueror and emperor of Constantinople, who Schoppe saw as his ideal employer and the Universal Monarch.

Sultanus Jachia Dei gratia legitimus Romanorum in Oriente Imperator

Shortly after Schoppe conceded to assisting the pair, Ludwig von Schwarzenberg, who was posted to the Habsburg-Ottoman military frontier as commander, approached Tarnowskij to assist in a Christian uprising oriented towards obtaining for the Austrian Habsburgs a share in trade, diplomacy, and the alleged gold he had identified in Albania. As time went on, Schwarzenberg encouraged Tarnowskij to dissolve his relations with Jachia due to his affiliation with the Duke of Tuscany.¹⁵⁷ Tarnowskij followed his advice and accepted the offer, as it was more lucrative than working with Jachia and remaining in his current position in Spain. Schwarzenberg not only undermined Jachia's bid for the Ottoman throne, but his decision to do so was an attempt to oust Italian influence, especially that of Florence.¹⁵⁸ Florence and the Habsburgs were in the midst of an on going political and mercantile struggle.¹⁵⁹ While the supposed sultan was not necessarily considered a controversial figure, his affiliations played into a larger political struggle between two Catholic polities vying for dominance of trade and patronage of Catholic missions in frontier territories.

¹⁵⁶ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 309.

¹⁵⁷ Krokhar, "New Means to an Old End," 29.

¹⁵⁸ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 230–1.

¹⁵⁹ Olsaretti, "Trade, Diplomacy and State Formation," 51.

In a strange twist of fate Schoppe did not accept the changed alliances or was unaware of the decision. He reportedly sent a series of inflammatory letters to Schwarzenberg, in one of which he rhapsodized over an alchemist recipe, which he had obtained to make gold. Others were considered to have highly sensitive material, which could have compromised the Habsburgs' frontier position.¹⁶⁰ There were also further instances of his bizarre behavior, which led to the downfall of his career with Ferdinand II and the end of his friendship with Schwarzenberg.¹⁶¹ However, in an attempt to regain credibility and keep his mounting money problems at bay, he continued his relationship with the self-proclaimed Sultan. Additionally, he felt that Jachia's bid would bring about his classical ideals of unifying Rome and Christendom under a Universal Monarchy.

By 1633, Schoppe was working as Jachia's secretary and legal representative. Since Jachia was already well known to most Habsburg noblemen through his frequent appeals, Schoppe attempted to initiate more relations with England, the Dutch Republic, and the Swiss Confederacy. However, the pair were not trusted within these polities and, again, Jachia's affiliations with Tuscany worked against him.¹⁶² Meanwhile, Schoppe also compiled a series of letters that showcased his esteemed and sought-after rhetorical skills in Latin. In one of Schoppe's letters he wrote on behalf of Jachia, stating that their appeal to various Christian Princes was an attempt to, "recover the Roman Empire of the Orient which is due to us according to divine and human right, and we could banish out of it and moreover destroy the impious sect of Muhammad,"¹⁶³ and in order to do so, "it seems fit to us to send to you as a legate the illustrious man who is faithful to us and our Empire, the beloved one Gaspar

¹⁶⁰ Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppius," 20–2.

¹⁶¹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 194–9.

¹⁶² Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 232.

¹⁶³ Jachia ibn Mehmed to Republic of Switzerland, Turino, 8 April, 1634, in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 566–7. The series of letters Catualdi collected can be found in: Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 563–70.

Scioppio Count of Claravalle[.]”¹⁶⁴ Schoppe traveled on several ambassadorial missions to promote the prospective Eastern Roman Emperor. The general reply praised the efforts of a pious and honorable “Sultan” for continuing a noble propagation of the Catholic faith. A response typical of other correspondence on the subject came from Genoa: they replied that while Jachia’s intensions were most noble, they would only be able to highly recommend his plans as, “due to very heavy war expense of so many years it is taken away from us and from the institutions of our ancestors, such a great and fitting opportunity of succoring to the alliance of such a great glory, as much as we would wish to[.]”¹⁶⁵

In each of these letters that Schoppe composed, he referred to Jachia as the *Sultanus Jachia Dei gratia legitimus Romanorum in Oriente Imperator, Christi causa exul*. It is clear this title is a joint effort between Jachia and Schoppe to attempted to transform Jachia from a knightly intermediary into a distinguished and omnipotent imperial authority, who would bring about and lead a crusade against the Ottomans, which would ultimately unite all of Christendom.¹⁶⁶

The Universities of Jachia’s Empire

Perhaps the only thing to come out of Schoppe’s efforts were numerous letters of support and a wave of renewed rhetoric in favor of a crusade. Additionally, for his contemporaries, Jachia’s image was successfully associated with that of a universal Christian Emperor.¹⁶⁷ However, at a close inspection, Jachia is present in name only. His past desires are only found in his title as being the legitimate heir to the Ottoman throne. Jachia’s conversion, his dedication to his faith and God, as well as his willingness to be a grand

¹⁶⁴ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 563–70.

¹⁶⁵ Secretary of the Duke of Genoa, Antonio Sambucetus to Kaspar Schoppe, Genoa 12 January, 1634, in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 564–5.

¹⁶⁶ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 566: “Sultan Jachia by the grace of God the legitimate emperor of the Eastern Romans exiled for the sake of Christ.”

¹⁶⁷ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 208–17 and, Tirantus, Honoratus, *Novella Letterarie*, 1 (1788), in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 638–9.

reformer eclipsed his alleged birthright, which became an extra advantage. Schoppe's rhetoric's brought religious reform and mass confessionalization of Rumelia to the forefront of Jachia's *impresa di Levante*.

Jachia originally envisioned Schoppe in a slightly different role. In his design to take and rule Constantinople, he planned to establish multiple universities in outlying territories in an effort to educate the periphery to help strengthen the center. Jachia wanted to entrust these future institutions to the notable and highly educated Kaspar Schoppe. Even after they ceased collaboration, Jachia instructed Rafael Levaković to outline, in his biography, certain allocations for Schoppe's role in Jachia's theoretical empire.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, Jachia's modern biography includes an article that contains a portion of a charter that Jachia and Schoppe wrote. Written in 1633, this charter lingered unrealized for three years before Schoppe and Jachia parted ways. The first section of the charter briefly refers to Jachia's overall ideological conception and composition of his empire. The document begins by stating that the empire should be benevolent in the interest of its entire population.¹⁶⁹ It outlines that the appointed bishops, who have had experience in a monastery for years, would require all *virtù* (virtue) predetermined by the Apostle Paul, and extensive knowledge of the bible.¹⁷⁰

The rest is dedicated to describing the different curricula and visions of the College of St. George, St. Basil, St. Benedict, and the University of Athens.¹⁷¹ They are envisioned as the pillars of society, as well as the institutions that will produce a population educated not only in knightly chivalry, but also in languages used in diplomacy, like Latin and Greek as well as Arabic. Moreover, the general curriculum was more focused on philosophy, theology, and mathematics. The "most dear and precious" of all of these institutions would be the

¹⁶⁸ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 61v–2v.

¹⁶⁹ Honoratus, *Novella*, 641.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 642.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 638–49.

University of Athens. It would be entrusted to the honorable Schoppe as its Director and Curator not only because his vision was aligned with Jachia's but also with the Catholic and Orthodox faith. Schoppe was also promised that he would govern over the principality of Athens and the borders of Attica.¹⁷² The key to Schoppe's own desires, and the eventual collapse of his and Jachia's partnership, was tucked away in the last section of this charter. Schoppe's main request was that Jachia's empire would extend special imperial protection to the Order of the Holy Father Benedict and return all of the monasteries that it had previously owned. In turn, Jachia's empire would work to fuse the State and the Church together through ecclesiastical education, as well as recognize papal supremacy by recapturing lost monasteries and territories and granting them special concessions.¹⁷³

The entire charter is the most concise document on the nature of Jachia's intentions for his empire; Schoppe's contribution seems to be a particular theological and rhetorical framing. It seems that Jachia envisioned taking the throne as a mythical and successful warrior, while his reign would be linked to a Constantinian Rome. Furthermore, Jachia himself was Orthodox and up to this point in his life there has been little discussion regarding differing dogmas or even overt mention of his Orthodoxy. In fact, Schoppe seems to be Jachia's first secretary who mentioned his confession as Orthodox. He tried to help Jachia articulate a claim to the Byzantine throne, building on his Byzantine lineage, while also referencing eschatological undertones and implications if Jachia were to succeed in his *impresa*.

However, as their collaboration continued into 1634, Schoppe increasingly began to insert his own persona and agenda into Jachia's *impresa*. Not only did Schoppe begin to turn their collaboration into a means to enhance his own beliefs and person, it seems he let his

¹⁷² Honoratus, *Novella*, 643.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 643.

temperament get the better of him. By 1635, aside from the Knights of Malta, Schoppe had either insulted or alienated all Jachia's potential diplomatic contacts.¹⁷⁴

Chapter Conclusion

It is evident that Jachia roamed in the vast diplomatic and intermediary networks that spanned Ottoman frontier territories, various polities, and individuals spearheading efforts for Catholic confessionalization in Rumeli, as well as crusading fantasies of chasing the “Turk” out of “European Turkey.” In general, Jachia was able to utilize the connections he made to move within these currents but was often pushed out by stronger conflicting ones. Despite the fact that he never actualized his schemes, he insisted on the basic premise that he was the rightful Sultan. Furthermore, the intensity and progressive development of his religious convictions and sympathies for the insurrectionists in Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia, Greece, and surrounding Catholic communities were by all accounts genuine. Likewise, he made frequent attempts to adjust his goals and discourses to the changing circumstances in his life, incorporating ever new allies' and acquaintances' agendas as well. It is quite clear that Schoppe and Jachia did not envision his reign over Constantinople in the same light, as Jachia did not continue to propagate himself as the Universal Monarch after their collaboration ended. However, they shared the aspiration of religious reform and mending the schisms in the Christian faith. Unfortunately, they did not mutually benefit from their collaboration, although, arguably, Jachia was put in a significantly better position than his counterpart.

¹⁷⁴ Helfenstein, “Caspar Scioppius,” 28–34.

CHAPTER 3: **RAFAEL LEVAKOVIĆ'S THREE LIVES OF JACHIA IBN MEHMED**

Jachia waited several months in Rome for Austria to reply to the *impresa* that he and Tarnowskij had submitted. Skeptical and expecting little commitment, Jachia longed to leave but was eventually persuaded by Tarnowskij and Giovanni Tonco, also known as Mrnavić (1578–1637 or 1639), to remain and accept the opportunity potentially offered by Austria.¹⁷⁵ According to Levaković's account, Mrnavić was experienced in spiritual and political matters, and was of the firm opinion that Jachia, possessing characteristics of a Sultan, was an indispensable person for the *impresa di Levante*.¹⁷⁶ In the same time frame Mrnavić fell seriously ill, and his friend, Rafael Levaković, took care of him until his recovery. Levaković interjects into his narrative, in first person singular, that he was in Rome under the direction of the Pope, to finalize the preparation of an Illyrian missal for use across the Adriatic and beyond.¹⁷⁷

During the time Jachia was in Rome, he was staying with Mrnavić who introduced him to Levaković. Upon meeting him, Levaković, with high regard, described Jachia as, “not only knowledgeable, but also inquisitive.”¹⁷⁸ The two developed a friendship and in listening to Jachia's life story Levaković began to realize and hurriedly record Jachia's commitment to his faith and to the liberation of the Christians from the tyranny of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷⁹ Levaković describes the circumstances of their meeting and specifies that the first copy he wrote he kept for himself as it was too “crude.” The second copy he wrote was to express, or

¹⁷⁵ Mrnavić was also known as Ivan Tomko, see: Francis J. Thomson, "The Legacy of SS Cyril and Methodius in the Counter-Reformation. The Council of Trent and the Question of Scripture and the Liturgy in the Vernacular, together with an Account of the Subsequent Consequences for the Slavo-Latin (Glagolitic) Rite and the Bible in Croatian Translation" in E. Konstantinou, ed., *Methodios und Kyrillos in ihrer europäischen Dimension* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 153.

¹⁷⁶ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 56–7v.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 57v.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 57–8v.

rather preserve, Jachia's sensibilities and character, and this version of the manuscript seems to reach to 1640. Concerning the information included in this version, Levaković stated that he was at a loss for words to describe his gratitude for the assistance that Conte Luca Fabbroni, Jachia's trusted friend, had in offering an abundance of details about Jachia's life—claiming that there were some events he could not reproduce in each copy.¹⁸⁰ He does not mention the third version of the biography, which covers the events from 1640 to 1646.¹⁸¹

RAFAEL LEVAKOVIĆ

Born in Jastrebarsko (close to Zagreb in modern Croatia) and educated in Rome, Levaković was well versed in Illyrian, Latin, and Italian. He had been the titular bishop of a Catholic church in Smederevo (Serbia) and the head of the eparchy in Zagreb. He translated liturgical books and catechisms into “Illyrian,” written in the ancient Galagolitic script and Cyrillic. Levaković emphasized the importance of maintaining linguistic purity as a way to unify the church and mend Christian schisms.¹⁸² Levaković was exceptionally active in confessionalization efforts in Ottoman Rumeli, especially through his participation and assistance in founding the *Propaganda fide* in 1622.¹⁸³ In accordance with the Council of Trent Pope Urban VIII appointed Levaković to correct and reform liturgy in Illyrian.¹⁸⁴ In 1626, Levaković went alone to Rome in order to work on the preparation of Illyrian missals in service of the *Propaganda fide*. He had been in collaboration with Mrnavić, who was another expert in Illyrian, had studied and lived in Rome since 1614, and was a Bosnian Barnabite

¹⁸⁰ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, 58v.

¹⁸¹ On three different versions of the manuscript and their copies see Antoljak, “Sultan Jahja,” 110-113. I would like to thank my supervisor, Tijana Krstić, for reading this source with me.

¹⁸² Simonetta Pelusi, “Il libro liturgico veneziano per serbi e Croati fra Quattro e Cinquecento,” in *Le civiltà del libro e la stampa a Venezia testi sacri ebraici, cristiani, islamici dal Quattrocento al Settecento*, ed. S. Pelusi (Padova: Poligrafo, 2000), 45.

¹⁸³ Ibid., and Blažević, “Indetermi-Nation,” 204.

¹⁸⁴ Some of Rafael Levaković's published works include: *Roman missal in Slavonic language* (Rome 1631), *De Illyrica lingua*, *Dilogus de antiquorum Illyricorum lingua*, *Historiola episcopatus ac dioecesis ecclesiae Zagrabiensis*, *De ecclesiae Zagrabiensis fundatione*, *De Spiritus Sancti processione*, *Ordo et Series cleri Dioecesis Zagrabiensis*.

from Sebenico.¹⁸⁵ In a meeting of the *Propaganda fide*, Levaković and Mrnavić stated that Lutherans held a great advantage since their religious texts were being printed in vernacular, and Illyrian missals or breviaries had not been printed for at least eighty years. Levaković and Mrnavić intended that the editions would be used in Ottoman Rumeli. They proposed that the missal be based on Pius V's revision and the breviary on Clement VIII. Moreover, they argued that the books should be printed in Glagolitic and Cyrillic, since the Orthodox Christians were also lacking in printed literature. In turn, the schismatics would utilize the Catholic texts and gradually come to the faith. However, it was agreed that they should also be printed in Latin for the clergy who could not read either scripts.¹⁸⁶ In a later gathering, Levaković proposed that both the Slavo-Greek and Slavo-Latin rite schismatics could be brought to the faith through the publication of breviaries and missals in Cyrillic as it was understood by a vast majority.

“Illyrianism” and Confessionalization

Protestant principles of reforming and translating Scripture and the Bible de-emphasized the importance of the Roman Catholic Church, while emphasizing the autonomy of the Word of God. In the sixteenth century, the use of modern vernaculars in liturgy and Scripture became a distinctive feature in the Protestant Reformation. The difficulties of translating the Word of God were central issue for the Council of Trent (1545–1563). In the sixteenth century, the Slavic and Dalmatian humanists traced the Slavonic and Glagolitic rite to St. Jerome and they believed that he had translated the Old Testament into Latin and

¹⁸⁵ Thomson "The Legacy," 153–56.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

authored the *scriptura hieronymitana*, the liturgical books in so-called Glagolitic letters. This was the basis for the legitimization of the Slavic language as a liturgical language.¹⁸⁷

In 1622 Pope Gregory XV founded *Propaganda fide* to orchestrate Catholic missions around the world. Rafael Levaković was one of the founders of the *Propaganda fide* who focused on Ottoman Rumeli where he aimed to increase the printing and distribution of missionary literature, with the Tridentine reform maxim, *extra ecclesiam non est salus*, in mind to Christianize non-Catholics.¹⁸⁸ While south Slavic and Venetian-Dalmatian peoples had already established a printing relationship with Venice by the late fifteenth century, the printing of Glagolitic missals heavily increased with Levaković's insistence that the purity of the language greatly impacted the purity of the Catholic faith.¹⁸⁹

In the midst of these undertakings, there was also an awareness and desire for a separate or liberated Catholic state. As Zrinka Blažević notes, "In South-eastern Europe these tendencies manifested themselves in the form of two key political issues: anti-Ottoman war and confessional unification."¹⁹⁰ To achieve this, the Slavic Catholic minority appealed to its most promising confessional allies, Austrian Habsburgs, Spain, and the Italian States. To further complicate matters, Orthodox Christians—most of whom were Ottoman subjects—also appealed to these sovereigns, promising unification if the Ottomans were expelled. Other ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups located in the territories between the Danube and Adriatic, wanting to reclaim what they believed as their historical kingdoms, were often engaged in internal disagreements. Blažević observes that out of these multifarious circumstances there emerged an early modern Illyrism.¹⁹¹ This ideologeme of identifying as

¹⁸⁷ Domagoj Madunić, "Strategies of Distinction in the Work of Vinko Pribojević," in *Whose Love of Which Country?: Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe* ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky (Brill: Leiden, 2010), 180–95.

¹⁸⁸ Blažević, "Indetermi-Nation," 204.

¹⁸⁹ Pelusi, "Il Libro Liturgico," 45–6.

¹⁹⁰ Blažević, "Indetermi-Nation," 204.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 204–5.

Illyrium was part of a Humanism- and Renaissance-influenced notion, which attempted to trace Slavic identity, between the Danube and Adriatic, back to a pre-classical era when central and western Rumelia was part of a proto-state called Illyria. In the early modern period, this prolix phenomenon grew to be an enormous and adaptable framework and under the influence of the Counter-Reformation. Numerous Humanist-Illyrians from different subcategories produced an outpouring of literature and contemporary humanist historiography, which was influenced by the Italian Renaissance.¹⁹² As a participant in this phenomenon, Levaković was focused on uniting Christians under one Catholic faith and leader, which he felt he could attempt to achieve with the appearance of a pious Christian sultan and writing his story.

Levaković was entrusted with the revision of the missals. They were completed in December of 1631 and he immediately began working on the breviary.¹⁹³ At the same time, he remained in contact with Jachia, and by 1635, Levaković was his secretary, diplomatic and legal representative, biographer, and close confidant. In 1647, with the influence of Jachia, the pope officially appointed Levaković as the archbishop of Ohrid. Unfortunately, he never had the opportunity to preside, nor did he finish Jachia's biography, as he died around 1649.

MYTHOLOGIZING THE SULTAN

As previously mentioned, prior scholarship has questioned the factual quality of Levaković's biography of Jachia. The outlandish events, inaccurate geographical references, and dates, have generally been dismissed or briefly rationalized as bolstering Jachia's legitimacy and efforts. However, these elements deserve more analysis. As Levaković himself admitted, the first version of his manuscript was rather crude and incomplete. The purpose of the second biography, reaching roughly to 1640, was to prove that Jachia was

¹⁹² Blažević, "Indetermi-Nation," 207–20, and Elizabeth Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain: A History of Montenegro* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 6.

¹⁹³ Thomson "The Legacy," 161–2.

indeed the second son of Mehmed, to showcase his sultanic qualities, and capture or preserve his character. While the third version (including the events up to 1646) was not used for this thesis, scholar Stjepan Antoljak indicated that this version seems to be more fantastical than the first two because it mentions Jachia performing Franciscan miracles such as talking to fish, and discussing an appearance of *lupi mannari* (werewolves and/or vampires) in a village visited by Jachia, which seems to strongly suggest not only a mythologizing agenda but also a hagiographical one.¹⁹⁴ However, upon close inspection of the second version of the manuscript, it seems that Levaković had already engaged in a similar tactic with Jachia's story.

It is important to keep in mind that, while the age of Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (1500–1558) and the Ottoman Sultan, Süleyman (r. 1520–1566)¹⁹⁵ had passed, European Millennialism was still ongoing in the seventeenth century.¹⁹⁶ The story of a runaway, “crypto-Christian” sultana kidnapping her Ottoman prince son, had already been an intriguing tale. With its built-in eschatological undertones, parallels to ancient myths or musings, and pseudo-biblical social actors, the story had certainly possessed qualities of a Millennialistic narrative. Even before his collaboration with Levaković, Jachia seems to have been minimally aware of this fact through his continual assertion that his intentions to drive out the Turks were motivated by his Christian faith and alleged birthright. Nevertheless, Levaković seems to have sporadically, throughout his biography, suggested Jachia to be a type of Millennial ruler or messianic figure through placing him in the context of sacred geography, temporality, and a sacred commonwealth. By sacred geography, I mean a religious space or landmark, which can either be a definite, actual location, or an intangible, literary reference to

¹⁹⁴ See Antoljak, “Sultan Jahja u Makedoniji,” 152-153.

¹⁹⁵ Cornell H. Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of The Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân,” *Soliman le magnifique et son temp*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159–77.

¹⁹⁶ For more information see: Rebecca Moore, “European Millennialism,” in the *Oxford Handbook of Millennialism* ed. by Catherine Wessinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 288–90.

such a space. By sacred commonwealth I mean attempts to establish a domain influenced by millennial motifs. Sacred time or temporality is an awareness of the importance of time in an anticipatory capacity.¹⁹⁷ Before Jachia left the archbishop, his mother and Nilo, Levaković makes his first reference to Jachia being the charismatic Millennial ruler for Christendom. Later in his narrative, Levaković again places Jachia within the millennial framework by drawing parallels between Jachia and Alexander the Great.

Measurements in Time and Numbers

The manuscript is mostly written in the historical past tense, or *passato remoto*, and is presented as providing factual information and reasoning to prove that Jachia was the second-born son of Mehmed III. Therefore, Levaković's focus is primarily on identifying social actors and circumstances. Throughout the entire biography, in every country or domain that Jachia travels to he is consistently recognized as the kidnapped Ottoman prince or his mannerism and Turkish dialect are identified by seemingly unimportant or unnamed characters as belonging to Ottoman royalty, which serves as a consistent proof of Jachia's birthright. In addition, Levaković seems to have gathered most of his factual information directly from Jachia, as the account closely matches Grimestone's description, his letters, and personal claims, especially concerning his youth and mother. As discussed in Chapter Three, Levaković described a scene where Jachia and his companions, Vergo and the bishop Visarion, made their base on a mountain referred to as *Monte di Dio*, which Levaković claims to be located in the mountains of Stara Planina and out of reach from the Turks. On top of *Monte di Dio*, Jachia and his affiliates celebrated the Transfiguration of Jesus, then swore oaths to Jachia, requesting that from this point forward, he refer to himself as *Alessandro il secondo Re di Macedonia*.¹⁹⁸ Before Jachia reached *Monte di Dio*, he allegedly waited in Peć

¹⁹⁷ I have slightly adapted these terms for the purpose of this thesis, see: Moore, "European Millennialism," 284–5.

¹⁹⁸ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 13–14v.

for three days before he joined forces with three hundred Këlmendi (*Clementi*) and nine hundred “Serbians” (*Serviani*).¹⁹⁹ These numbers should be taken as a topos of discursive authority for Levaković in providing impressive figures, as well as providing a body of evidence to Jachia’s legitimacy in showing his numerous supporters. Moreover, it is interesting to note that throughout the biography, Levaković provides details that showcase his and Jachia’s familiarity or exposure to Ottoman administration, which further speaks to Jachia’s legitimacy in his claims and capability as a sultan.

When Jachia and Visarion first arrived on *Monte di Dio*, time seems to move slowly in Levaković’s narrative and he recounts certain events almost hour by hour. For instance, while Jachia is resting, an unnamed archbishop, who was involved in minor insurgencies, went to Vergo. Levaković specifies that, after twenty-two hours, the group emerged, almost resembling Turkish viziers, to greet Jachia.²⁰⁰ Then Vergo met with Jachia for four hours in his lavish pavilion where Jachia addressed him as *Lala* (Turkish word for an elder) Vergo. While the time that Levaković accounts for does not reflect the reality of time outside of the narrative, it presents these events as significant enough to not only measure them but also structure his narrative along this sequence of events, thus imparting further importance to the Transfiguration and the oath. In this way, Jachia and his companions seem to exist in sacred temporality in anticipation for whatever events will unfold as the story progresses, as well as a suggestion that the time he is recounting cannot accurately be measured or accounted for.

The Ruler on God’s Mountain (Mounte di Dio)

In Jachia’s modern biography, Catualdi suggests that *Monte di Dio* might be a reference to *Monte Dion* (Mount Olympus) or a reference to Mount Athos, since there is not a mountain in the Stara Planina range by this name. While both can be considered a sacred

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., fol. 12v. Malcolm notes that Levaković’s use of *Serviani* is likely referring to peoples who live within the mountains of Montenegro, see: Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 123.

²⁰⁰ Levaković, *Vita de Principe Sultan Jachia*, fol. 12v.

geographical place, it seems Levaković is referencing neither.²⁰¹ Incidentally, the mountain where the Transfiguration of Jesus occurs in the New Testament is unnamed, making its significance symbolic and parallel to other mountains where prophets have spoken with God. Levaković's narrative explicitly evokes Jesus' transfiguration in his descriptions of the three main participants, Vergo, Visarion, and Jachia. It is significant to note that these three main participants set up three different *padiglioni* (tents or pavilions) for themselves. This is most likely an allusion to Peter's words after Elijah and Moses appear on the mountain. He suggested to make dwellings for Elijah the Prophet, Moses the lawgiver, and Jesus (Matthew 17.4). Additionally, as in the Gospels, Jachia's transfiguration is the first time that Jachia and his *impresa* are fully recognized by his followers in the biography and they take an oath of fealty to Jachia. Levaković places Jachia's metamorphosis or transfiguration in the framework of the Second Coming of Alexander the Great, the charismatic leader for the sacred commonwealth of the Christian community under the Ottoman yoke.²⁰² The significance of this event indicates the salvation of humanity through Jachia's work in liberating Christians. However, it is not purely biblical, nor does it adhere strictly to the timeline of Jesus' transfiguration. Nonetheless, this episode is clearly imitating the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, while also participating in a complex relationship between myth, millennial rhetoric, and Hellenistic undertones characteristic of early modern period.

Chapter Conclusion

In placing Jachia within a biblical and mythical context, Levaković not only glorified his legitimacy but alluded to a pivotal moment in the development of Jachia's persona, and its intrinsic connection to his faith and the *impresa*. The significance of the gathering on the peak of *Monte di Dio* suggests a meeting between human nature and divine will, which acts as

²⁰¹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 395.

²⁰² "Transfiguration" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV ed. G. H. Guyot (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 243.

a temporal and metaphorical bridge between God and a historical consciousness. Moreover, the transfiguration from Jachia into Alexander the Great indicates a prophetic wanting to reclaim ancient Christian territories that have been infested with “heretics.” As a response to the rising pressure of Islam, Levaković suggested that Jachia’s *impresa* is similar to the Son that is said to appear in the treatise of *Pseudo-Methodius*.²⁰³ Jachia’s mythologized persona played on apocalyptic notions of The Last Days and simultaneously heightened his prestige and legitimacy within Levaković’s narrative.

Unfortunately for Jachia and his supporters, their attempts to organize an insurrection were wholly unsuccessful, leaving Jachia with another superfluous noble title. Furthermore, after Jachia’s transfiguration, he did not consistently refer to himself as Alexander, and Levaković continued to refer to him as the Sultan or his birth name within the biography. In fact, by the end of Jachia’s life he reverted back to signing his name as *Il Sultano Ottomano* or shortened variations of this signature. In 1649, Jachia died in Kotor, calling himself by his birth name while simultaneously using the name “Alexander Varna,” possibly to cover his true identity when dealing with the Ottoman authorities.

²⁰³ Yoko Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks: Islam and Apocalypticism in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Journal of Turkish Studies* 17 (1993), 125.

CONCLUSION: **FASHIONING JACHIA, A CHRISTIAN SULTAN**

At about the age of sixty-one, in 1646, Jachia found employment with Venice. He was issued a passport under the name Alexander Varna and granted the title *Colonello* in 1647. Around this same time, Jachia began to sign his name *Alessandro colonello Varna*, and was referred to as *Serenissimo Sultano* in correspondence traveling in and out of Venice.²⁰⁴ Seventy years of peace between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire ended in 1645. The Ottomans took Crete and by 1648, and, with the exception of Candia, the island was entirely under Ottoman control.²⁰⁵ The strongholds Venice maintained were mostly due to the rebellion of Christian subjects, some of which were allegedly organized by Levaković, who at this point was the named archbishop of Orhid but never stepped foot into his archbishopric, spending his last days between Zadar (Zara) and Kotor (Cattaro) and dying in 1649.²⁰⁶ The Venetian attempts to initiate a large-scale rebellion among “Albanian” Christians in 1649 failed. Allegedly, sailing with the Venetian fleet, Jachia took an active part in the attack and capture of Risan (in today’s Montenegro). In the same year, he then fell ill in on the coast of Montenegro and died in Kotor.²⁰⁷

Jachia and Anna Caterina had two children, Maurice (b. 1635) and Elena (b. 1638). In 1649, Maurice was fourteen and his sister was eight. Apparently, with both parents deceased they became the wards of Jachia’s trusted friend, Count Luca Fabbroni.²⁰⁸ Jachia’s last will

²⁰⁴ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 535–59. The change in name occurs on pg. 553.

²⁰⁵ Domagoj Madunić, “Frontier Elites of the Ottoman Empire During the War for Crete (1645–1669): The Case of Ali-Pasha Čengić,” in *Europe and the ‘Ottoman World’: Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kárman and Radu G Păun (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2013), 50.

²⁰⁶ Serenissimo Sultano (Jachia) to Dr. Pierucci di Zara, September 15, 1648 in Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 557–58 and Madunić, “Frontier Elites,” 50.

²⁰⁷ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 236, and Madunić, “Frontier Elites,” 51–2. Madunić states, “Rumours of the young sultan personally leading the army to Dalmatia fortunately proved false,” see, Madunić, “Frontier Elites,” 52.

²⁰⁸ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 309. The death of Anna Caterina is unclear. The only record I could locate of Jachia’s wife is in his last will and testament and some correspondences to and from Maurice, which are reprinted in, Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 595–616.

and testament was delivered to Maurice, in Turin, on February 16th, 1651. It was apparently written in 1638, with several witnesses, including the duke of Savoy. In his will, Jachia addresses himself as *Sultano Jahja Ottomano, Alessandro conte di Montenegro*, and, *figlio e legittimo successore dell'invittissimo ed augustissimo Maometto III, imperatore di Contantinopoli*.²⁰⁹ These titles defined and created the person known as Jachia. In addition, they did not represent reality, for Jachia, these titles altered his cultural and social reality in an attempt to mimic legitimacy and authority.

As *Il Sultano Ottomano*, Jachia's appeal and political worth to Christian princes, especially Florence and Spain, lay in his alleged birthright in combination with his confession. Cosimo II, as well as other sovereigns, were aware that Jachia's claims implied a possible subversion of, or breach in, Ottoman imperial authority through the escape and conversion of a "renegade prince." Strategically, this likely made his mere existence and limited participation in diplomacy with those rebelling against the Ottomans relevant, since his assertion was likely considered an advantage for the grand dukes of Tuscany. What was likely even more useful or relevant was how other Christian sovereigns perceived Jachia's legitimacy. It seems that if his birthright could be validated, this in turn would enhance the image of Duke Cosimo II and Florence and assert their ducal monarchy as powerful and sovereign. Both Jachia and the Emir Fakhr al-Dīn II al-Ma'ani were viewed by Tuscany as vehicles for their state-building and mercantile expansion. The grand duke saw more potential and legitimacy in favoring his alliance with Fakhr al-Dīn, which left Jachia to find another sponsor. Depending on the princes and their political or diplomatic desires, Jachia's goals were considered either an asset or a liability, as in the case of Prague. For Spain in 1612/3, Jachia was perceived as an asset to infiltrate ambassadorial and trade networks in the Levant, as well as undermine their Florentine rivals. These princes likely did not intend to

²⁰⁹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 311.

overthrow the Ottomans in Istanbul but certainly held a desire to liberate Christian enclaves subject to the Ottoman rule. In addition, since Jachia's role was to intercede in Islamic and Christian "contact zones" as a diplomatic intermediary, the authenticity of *Sultano Ottomano* was in question and as his role was that of a "go-between" or "trans-imperial subject," making his persona receptive to alterations.

In order to maintain his visibility and mobility it was necessary for him to engage in self-fashioning efforts in intellectual, political, and ecclesiastic circles. Moreover, it was imperative for Jachia to assert himself as an imperial authority to avoid his person being confused with a malleable social actor. In this endeavor he had numerous impresarios or promoters, the most important of which were Schoppe and Levaković, each with their own agendas. The title, *figlio e legittimo successore dell'invittissimo ed augustissimo Maometto III, imperatore di Contantinopoli* seems to be an Italianized version of the Latin title Schoppe used during their collaboration. In order to spark the interest of Christian princes, Schoppe's contribution to Jachia's image emphasized themes surrounding the Universal Monarch of Christendom. While this approach appealed to existing crusading ideals, it also stressed the interdependence of the emperor and Christianity. Therefore, Schoppe's ideal of Jachia's rule would imply that the Church would have the ultimate authority. Needless to say, this idea did not appeal to most sovereigns in the seventeenth century, nor did Jachia seem fond of it, since he himself seems to suppress this detail in his own self-fashioning during and after his affiliation with Schoppe. Moreover, Jachia envisioned Schoppe's role in his *impresa* as his secretary and executor. In his theoretical empire, Jachia felt Schoppe would be an ideal choice to direct his University of Athens, which would produce well educated Christian and chivalrous men within Jachia's benevolent and imagined empire. Furthermore, while Jachia seems to have drawn on his Byzantine lineage, he also propagated his Ottoman imperial authority. In a letter of credence to Switzerland Jachia and Schoppe sent, Jachia signed his

name in Latin characters, spelling out *Alessandro* but imitating an Ottoman *tughra* that gestured towards his claims to the Ottoman Empire.²¹⁰

The title of *Alessandro conte di Montenegro* was granted to Jachia around 1626 by the Duke Albrecht von Wallenstein of Friedland.²¹¹ While the last part of the title seems to elevate Jachia to a nobility, the name Alexander corresponds with his transfiguration and oath with Vergo and the bishop Visarion. In drawing parallels between himself and Alexander the Great Jachia attempted to mythologize his image playing to the humanist and imperial sensibilities in the seventeenth century. Through Jachia's marriage and title as Duke of Drisht he also self-fashioned his image in the mold of Skanderbergh, the popular hero in both Rumeli and Western Europe. By associating himself with well-known myths of heroic figures, he not only clarified the intentions of his *impresa* but also suggested a return to a classical reign (as in the myth of the Last Emperor) in conjunction with spiritual renewal.

It is difficult to entirely separate Jachia's self-fashioning from the influences his image acquired from those with whom he was affiliated or who contributed to his image making. This is especially the case concerning the significance of the name Alexander. As discussed in Chapter Three, Levaković identified Jachia as a millennial or messianic figure within the political and cultural frameworks in the seventeenth century. While this story seems to originate from Jachia, the theological symbolism and images are likely added by Levaković as he was a Franciscan and would possess this knowledge. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that the entirety of Jachia's story could easily be interpreted and placed within a prophetic religious context. Nonetheless, considering all three of Levaković's manuscripts, it suggests that he intended to further propagate a mythologized, as well as almost saintly image and

²¹⁰ The features of this signature do not contain all of the visual elements of an official *tughra*. However, these elements are similar to the *tughra* and other imitations of the *tughra*. Catualdi suggest that it is a Greek ecclesiastical signature. For more information and analysis see, Helfenstein, "Caspar Scioppus," 41–69.

²¹¹ Catualdi, *Sultan Jahja*, 171.

legacy of Jachia. Profiteering adventurers and *pretendenti* were common in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries. However, those as dedicated and persistent as Jachia were few and far between. What is even more scarce are multiple detailed biographical accounts, each one more fantastical than the previous one.

Towards the end of Jachia's career, Christian princes did not openly dispute his claims but respectfully declined to engage in his *impresa*, while simultaneously commending and encouraging his religious motivations. Oscar Wilde wrote, "as for believing things, I can believe anything provided that it is quite incredible."²¹² For Jachia, his self-fashioning efforts aided in constructing the world he moved and lived in through the amalgamation of collective or societal desires, ideals, and modes of legitimation in the early seventeenth century. In doing so, his persona was believable because it was incredible or because not believing it could insinuate denying accepted Christian rhetoric and dogma, as well as cultural motifs or norms. This is not to say that all of his contemporaries found him to be entirely believable; rather, the ways in which they chose to dispute his claims or deny him support were tactfully articulated.

²¹² Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. (1891).

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