



## The Grand Turk vs. Machiavelli: Understanding Turks in Early Modern Period from Botero's Perspective

*Büyük Türk, Machiavelli'ye Karşı: Erken Modern Dönemde Botero'nun Gözünden Türkleri Anlamak*

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Sorumlu yazar:  
Corresponding author:

**Mehmet Talha Kalkan** 

Uşak Üniversitesi  
mehmettalhakalkan@gmail.com

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#### Abstract

In his treatise named "Della Ragione di Stato", Giovanni Botero criticized the issue of reason of state, which was attributed to Niccolò Machiavelli. In general, this concept was based on the idea that religion did not have a binding force for the states, and it was associated with the thought that it was more ideal for an emperor to prefer what was advantageous for himself instead of following the eternal verities of God and Christianity. However, Giovanni Botero suggested the idea that the concept of reason of state did truly exist, but he also believed that the concept was merely based on the codes presented by God, and, accordingly, by Christianity contrary to what Machiavelli believed. Giovanni Botero tried to support his thoughts on the ideal nature of a Christian emperor in his treatise by exemplifying the issue based on Turks. Thus, Turks contributed Giovanni Botero's insights on the ideal Christian emperor with their qualifications on state government, taxes, army structure and military government. The depiction of the "Grand Turk" described the ideal Christian emperor and provided the ideality of this figuration. More importantly, "The Prince" was transformed into "The Christian Prince" by Giovanni Botero.

**Keywords:** Niccolò Machiavelli, Giovanni Botero, Grand Turk, Turks, Ottoman Empire.

#### Öz

XVI. yüzyılda Katolik Kilisesi tarafından ortaya konan Karşı-Reform hareketinin en önemli isimlerinden biri olan İtalyan Giovanni Botero, kaleme almış olduğu "Della Ragione di Stato" adlı eserinde Floransalı yazar Niccolò Machiavelli'ye atfedilen devlet çıkarı meselesini tartışmıştır. Genel olarak bu düşünce, Floransalı yazarın dinin, ahlaki kuralların ve ilahi hükümlerin devletler için bağlayıcı olmadığı fikrinden ileri gelmiş ve hükümdarın Hristiyanlığın ve Tanrı'nın ilahi kuralları yerine kendi adına faydalı olanı tercih etmesi gerektiği inancına bağlanmıştır. Öte yandan, İtalyan yazar Giovanni Botero da Niccolò Machiavelli'ye atfedilen devlet çıkarı düşüncesinin var olduğunu, fakat onun ileri sürdüğünün aksine bu fikrin yalnızca Hristiyanlıktan ve Tanrı'nın ortaya koymuş olduğu kanunlarından ileri geldiğini öne sürmüştür. Giovanni Botero, kaleme aldığı eserinde, çağdaşlarından farklı olarak ideal bir Hristiyan hükümdarın nasıl olması gerektiğine dair düşüncelerini Türkler üzerinden vermiş olduğu örnekler ve tarihi olaylarla desteklemeye çalışmıştır. Bu nedenle, Giovanni Botero'nun ideal Hristiyan hükümdar anlayışına Türkler; devlet yönetimi, vergi, ordu yapısı ve askerî yönetim konusundaki özellikleriyle katkı sağlamıştır. "Büyük Türk/Gran Turco" tasvirini, Botero'nun ideal Hristiyan hükümdarının sınırlarını çizmiş, onun idealize edilmesine yardımcı olmuştur. Daha da önemlisi, Niccolò Machiavelli'nin "Hükümdar"ı Giovanni Botero tarafından "Hristiyan Hükümdar"a dönüştürülmüş, bu dönüşümün ana noktalarından birini de Hristiyanların hangi alanlarda zayıf olduğunun farkında olan ve onları kullanmaktan çekinmeyen Türkler oluşturmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Niccolò Machiavelli, Giovanni Botero, Büyük Türk, Türk, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu.



## Introduction

Giovanni Botero, who tried to explain the attitude of the church and the Catholic world towards the Florentine thinker Niccolo Machiavelli through his work titled *Della Ragion di Stato*, which he wrote in 1589, talked about just war in a section he added to the edition of the said book published the following year and explained how a ruler should use his military power. Botero clearly stated that God gave all nature the power to defend itself, and based on this idea, he discussed the fact that animals are adorned with their own horns, teeth and claws, just as roses are covered with thorns, corn cobs are covered with hair and chestnuts are covered with shells.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, these characteristics given to all living things by God arise from a nature that manifests itself as a result of one attacking another and indicates that humans should not exhibit any excessive behaviour towards another.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, human beings are obliged to avoid actions that could lead to an attack against another person, and attack is considered just only to the extent that it results from defence.

Giovanni Botero defended the view that states could only expand by considering the public interest, and stated that this situation was due to the fact that the obligation to maintain civil peace and ensure religious unity, which he defined as the primary duty of the ruler, was in danger.<sup>3</sup> Botero said that this danger comes from heretics, whom he sees as internal enemies of the states, and infidels, whom he defines as external enemies, and emphasized that the main external enemies of Christians are the Turks, who do not hesitate to oppress them and pose a great threat with their military power.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, a Christian ruler has no choice but to fight the Turks, the greatest enemy of religion:

“The Turks are at our door, surrounding us, and are we looking for more just or honourable reasons to fight?... Could it be that some claim that the enemy is close but has fewer troops? The Romans generally feared the Carthaginians whom they had conquered and subjugated; well, could we be underestimating the Turks who captured dozens of our castles, cities, kingdoms and two empires? ...”<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, the Italian cleric Giovanni Botero stated that a war should be waged against the Turks, who had taken a number of castles, cities and kingdoms from Christians, and that the attack that a Christian ruler could launch against them was based on a legitimate reason.<sup>6</sup> According to Botero, who says that an attack by a Christian ruler can only be defensive-based, it is not possible to engage in a *fairer war* than the war against the Turks, because the Turks took advantage of the chaotic situation of the Christians and gained more territory than all the Catholic rulers in Europe and managed to rule in both Asia and Africa.<sup>7</sup> The Turks, who managed to be better armed than the Christian ruler at war even in peacetime, have become a great enemy for the entire Christian world with *their endless treasures, countless soldiers and endless supplies*:

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, (Roma: Vincenzo Pellagallo, 1590), Book X/ Chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>3</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>4</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>5</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>6</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>7</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

“Who rules Africa, who rules Asia, who has dominated more countries in Europe compared to the empires of the Catholic princes? Who, because of our conflict, has already expanded so much on land for three hundred years that he completely dominates the lands and has no rivals at sea? An enemy who manages to be better armed in times of peace than we are armed in times of war? An enemy with inexhaustible treasures, countless armies and endless supplies? Who fills the meadows with his cavalry on the day of war, and when the cities are besieged, piles up the land as high as the mountains and builds walls with his soldiers in the castles? Of course, after all, an enemy who has not lost anything important that he has achieved so far...”<sup>8</sup>

According to Giovanni Botero, the reason why the Christian world could not take a common action against the Turks was the Florentine thinker Niccolo Machiavelli and the idea of *Ragion di Stato* (Reason of State)<sup>9</sup> attributed to him. Due to this idea spread throughout Europe by the Florentine author and his followers, many rulers preferred to fight with their co-religionists instead of the Turks, and the fight against the church and its teachings gained momentum instead of the Turks, whom Niccolo Machiavelli never mentioned.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, the Turks, who took advantage of this power struggle between Christian rulers, came to Europe and the whole Christian world tasted the understanding called "politics":

“Frankly, I have no idea on what basis the interest of the state has shown itself to be the enemy of Christians rather than the Turks or other non-Christian nations. While Machiavelli makes a disrespectful fuss against the church, he does not say a word to non-Christians; the armies of Christian princes are so determined to destroy each other that they seem to have no enemies in the world other than each other. Emperors Komnenos, Alexios, Kalojan, and Manoel followed similar rules to prevent Western Christian princes from expanding into lands conquered by the Turks; with all their might they opposed Gottfried's campaign, Emperor Conrad, and all others who were against those barbarians. So, what happened as a result? The barbarians first drove our people out of Asia, and then called the Greeks to their feet. Here is the result of modern politics! ...”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>9</sup> The first person to use the relevant concept in Europe was the Florentine Francesco Guicciardini. Francesco Guicciardini, in his work *Dialogo e Discorsi del Reggimento di Firenze*, emphasized that political issues should be evaluated separately from religious issues. According to the Florentine author, political situations and moral issues conflicted at many points, and moral and religious rules limited the power of the ruler in terms of his ability to govern the state, endangering him, his throne, and his kingdom. For Francesco Guicciardini's views on the relevant subject, see: Francesco Guicciardini, *Dialogo e Discorsi del Reggimento di Firenze* (Bari: Laterza & Figli Tipografi Editori: Librai, 1932), 161-163. For further information about *Ragion di Stato*, see: Mauricio Viroli, “The Origin and the Meaning of the Reason of State,” *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, ed., Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans & Frank van Vree (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 67-75; Guido de Ruggiero, *Rinascimento, Riforma e Controriforma* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1930); Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994); Harro Höpfl, “Orthodoxy and Reason of State,” *History of Political Thought* 23/2 (2002): 211-237; Peter Burke, “Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason of State”, *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed., James Henderson Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 477-498; Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison D'Etat and its Place in Modern History* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Romain Descendre, “Ragion di Stato,” *Enciclopedia Machiavelliana* (V. II), ed. Gennaro Sasso & Monica Trecca (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2014); Michel Senellart, *Machiavellianism and Reason of State*, (Paris: PUF, 1989), Mehmet Talha Kalkan, “Erken Modern Dönemde Machiavelli, Yarar, Çıkar ve Devlet Muhafazası,” *Social Mentality and Researcher Thinkers Journal*, 6/37 (2020): 1866-1878.

<sup>10</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

<sup>11</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XII.

These views of Giovanni Botero, who declared that the entire Christian world was weakened against the Turks with the doctrine called *Politics*, and that, through the idea of *Ragion dello Stato*<sup>12</sup> put forward by Niccolo Machiavelli, Christian rulers began to pursue what would benefit them the most, disregarding the rules of the church and Christianity, were quickly adopted by many Catholic writers. Likewise, one of these names, the Spanish cleric Pedro de Ribadeneyra, said that the thoughts of Niccolo Machiavelli, as an *irreligious* man, were *dirty and poisonous*, and underlined that he advised the rulers to pursue what is most suitable for them, by inclining towards good or bad, moral or immoral paths.<sup>13</sup> According to Pedro de Ribadeneyra, since Machiavelli and his followers did not belong to any religion, they were deprived of common sense about what was right and what was wrong and often blended wrong with right.<sup>14</sup> Naturally, Pedro de Ribadeneyra also put forward a similar approach to Giovanni Botero, complaining that the rulers moved away from divine rules and forgot the idea of just war, and instead of Christianity and the church, they entered into struggles that could bring them the most benefit. In other words, for a Christian ruler, the basis of just war has become more about convenience and benefit rather than being based on Christianity and God's divine precepts. Ultimately, making friends with the Turks instead of fighting them brought the wrath of God on the Christians and caused the fire of hell to never go out on earth.<sup>15</sup> The anti-Machiavelli discourses put forward by Giovanni Botero found a response first in the Catholic world and then in all of Europe through his work *Della Ragion di Stato*, and many writers became aware of the Florentine writer through the book written by Giovanni Botero.<sup>16</sup> So much so that *Della Ragion di Stato*, written by Italian Giovanni Botero in 1589, became the best-selling book of its time and was among the most influential books throughout Europe.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Giovanni Botero's work 'Della Ragion di Stato' not only shared the ideas of Niccolo Machiavelli with the entire Christian world but also paved the way for the spread of the concept of '*Ragion dello Stato*.' This concept, attributed to Machiavelli, involves creating a deceptive, false, and devilish state, free from all moral and religious constraints. It allows for the selection of what is most useful for oneself and the possibility of establishing a unique religion, devoid of any moral or religious obligations."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Silvana Paula Vidal, "Giovanni Botero y Su Theorización de la Razón de Estado: Algunas Reflexiones Desde la Historia Conceptual," *Conceptos Históricos* 6/10 (2020): 14-45. The work called Anti-Machiavel, which was essentially written by the French writer Innocent Gentillet in 1576, helped the Florentine writer's thoughts to be associated with heresy and atheism. Regarding this work written by the French Protestant Innocent Gentillet, see: Edward Rathé, "Innocent Gentillet and the First "Anti-Machiavel"," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 27/1 (1965): 186-225.

<sup>13</sup> Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *Tratado de la Religion y Virtudes Que Debe Tener El Principe Christiano, Para Gobernar y Conservar Sus Estados, Contra Lo Que Nicolas Machiavelo y Los Politicos De Este Tiempo Enseñan* (Madrid: Pantaleon Aznar, 1788), I-V.

<sup>14</sup> Ribadeneyra, *Tratado*, IV.

<sup>15</sup> Ribadeneyra, *Tratado*, 153.

<sup>16</sup> Some of the individual works that deal with the concept of Ragion di Stato after Giovanni Botero are: Girolamo Frachetta, *L' Idea del Libro de' Governi di Stato et di Gverra*, (Venice: Zenaro, 1592); D'Appolinare de Calderini, *Discorsi sopra La Ragione di Stato del Signor Giovanni Botero* (Milan: Pietro Locarno, 1597); Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios, *Diez Lamentaciones Del Miserable Estado de los Ateístas de Nuestro Tiempo* (Brussels: Roger Velpio y Huberto Antonio, 1611); Fernando Alvia Castro, *Verdadera Razon de Estado: Discurso Politico* (Lisboa: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1616); Federico Boneventura, *Della Ragion di Stato et Della Prudenza Politica* (Urbino: Alessandro Corvini, 1623); Pedro Barbosa Homem, *Discursos de la Juridica y Verdadera Razón de Estado* (Coimbra: Nicolao Caruallo, 1626); Lodovico Settala, *Della Ragion di Stato* (Milan: Battista Bidelli, 1627).

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Botero, *Reason of State*, ed. Robert Bireley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), XV.

<sup>18</sup> Calderini, *Discorsi*, 61.

## 1. Giovanni Botero and Della Ragion di Stato

Florentine writer Niccolò Machiavelli, in his work *Il Principe*, which he wrote in 1513, broke his previous promise and said that the rulers who cunningly numbed people's memories achieved great things and even gained superiority over those who preached honesty, morality and virtuous behaviour throughout their lives.<sup>19</sup> The Florentine writer said that an ideal ruler should adopt a management approach that is both lawful and unlawful and power-oriented, and stated that it is imperative that both of them be known and implemented for the permanence of the ruler's throne and the state.<sup>20</sup> According to the Florentine author, who underlined that a significant portion of people did not keep their promises, the ruler did not need to keep his promises from time to time, and deceiving others came to the fore as an art.<sup>21</sup> In this context, instead of always having laudable virtues and human characteristics, the ruler acted as if he had such characteristics, which provided him with greater benefits:

"Therefore, it is not necessary for a ruler to have all the good qualities I have described; but he must appear to have them. I would also like to point out that it is dangerous to have these qualities and to always observe them; but it is very useful to appear to have them. A ruler should appear compassionate, loyal, kind, pious and honourable, but he should also be flexible enough to draw on opposite qualities when necessary."<sup>22</sup>

These ideas put forward by Niccolò Machiavelli were extremely alien to the dynamics and intellectual environment of his period. His advice that the ruler should stop behaving morally and religiously and adopt an immoral attitude in order to continue his sovereignty was not an acceptable discourse for many, and the image of the idealistic moral and religious ruler of the Middle Ages was in great danger. In other words, Niccolò Machiavelli's discourses had the effect of a sword blow in the Western world of thought, and the church and its authority, which saw itself as having the authority to represent all Christians, launched a deadly attack.<sup>23</sup> This fatal blow dealt by Niccolò Machiavelli against the church was tried to be eliminated with the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, which was prepared under the leadership of Pope Paul IV and put into effect in 1559. Through this list, the Catholic Church has determined the authors and their works that it considers to be against its authority; Niccolò Machiavelli was also included in this list.<sup>24</sup> By 1559, Niccolò Machiavelli had become an enemy of the church. So much so that the Spanish writer Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios showed Niccolò Machiavelli as the person who caused the most harm to the Christian world and Christianity, and described the *Machiavellians* who followed his path as *atheist politicians*.<sup>25</sup> According to the Spanish writer, Niccolò Machiavelli advised the rulers to be liars, deceivers, fake and hypocrites, said that they should display virtues they did not have, stated that it would be beneficial to support all kinds of hostility and disagreements and reach a point where they could benefit the ruler, and for this reason, he proposed to oppose and even belittle the religious elders

<sup>19</sup> Nicolas Maquiavelo, *El Principe*, ed. Helena Puigdomenech (Barcelona: Altaya, 1983), Chapter: XVIII.

<sup>20</sup> Maquiavelo, *El Principe*, Chapter: XVIII.

<sup>21</sup> Maquiavelo, *El Principe*, Chapter: XVIII.

<sup>22</sup> Maquiavelo, *El Principe*, Chapter: XVIII.

<sup>23</sup> Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, 49.

<sup>24</sup> *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Venice, 1564), 27.

<sup>25</sup> Dios, *Diez Lamentaciones*, Chapter: VII.



and the Pope.<sup>26</sup> These thoughts are the mistakes of Machiavelli and his followers and are a sign that they oppose God's divine laws and rule.<sup>27</sup> The idea of writing a work against Niccolo Machiavelli, who caused great disruption and disorder in the Christian world by admonishing to go against God's divine laws, is exactly the reason for writing Giovanni Botero's work called *Della Ragion di Stato* at this point. Therefore, it is appropriate to see Giovanni Botero's work in question as *a result of the Counter-Reformation movement*.

Giovanni Botero, born in 1544, went to the Jesuit school in Palermo at the age of 15 and started religious education there, and then moved to Rome and continued his education there. After completing his education in Rome, Giovanni Botero started teaching in Jesuit schools and moved to France. He left this order in 1580 and entered the service of Milan Archbishop Carlo Borromeo.<sup>28</sup> Giovanni Botero, who worked with Milan Archbishop Carlo Borromeo for two years, left his post there upon the death of the archbishop in 1584. Giovanni Botero, who then entered the service of the Duke of Savoy, Carlo Emanuele, went to Paris in accordance with the duke's request and met with the then King of France, Henry III.<sup>29</sup> Giovanni Botero, who closely experienced the political division and social problems caused by religious tensions in France, had the chance to get to know names including Niccolo Machiavelli by reading the works written by French writers.<sup>30</sup> As a matter of fact, in the introduction of his work titled *Della Ragion di Stato*, he stated that he had heard very much about Niccolo Machiavelli and the idea of *Ragion di Stato* attributed to him, which supported this situation.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Giovanni Botero, who found what he said irrational and irreligious, stated that a style of government that was against God's divine laws and adorned with barbarism was seen as quite valid and approved, and expressed his thoughts about their ideas and expressed the context in which his work came out.<sup>32</sup> Giovanni Botero, who returned to Italy after completing his duty in Paris, became the teacher of Federico, the cousin of Carlo Borromeo, the former Archbishop of Milan. As a result of Federico Borromeo becoming a Cardinal in a short time, Giovanni Botero, who went to Rome with him, started to establish relations with the high class of the Papacy and accelerated his studies by meeting with the last great thinkers of the Renaissance period. For this reason, the period he stayed in Rome was one of Giovanni Botero's most productive times, and the Italian thinker's work *Della Ragion di Stato* in 1589 emerged as a result of this process. Consisting of 10 parts, *Della Ragion di Stato* became Botero's masterpiece, and its French, Spanish and Latin editions were printed within a few years.<sup>33</sup> Giovanni Botero became the Machiavelli of the Catholic world by setting an example of a fair and honest management style with his work, and the church managed to create a work for an ideal Christian ruler and state to preserve itself.<sup>34</sup>

*Della Ragion di Stato*, consisting of 10 parts, was dedicated to Salzburg Archbishop Wolfgang Theodor and aimed to provide the ruler with the necessary information to establish an ideal state

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<sup>26</sup> Dios, *Diez Lamentaciones*, Chapter: VII.

<sup>27</sup> Dios, *Diez Lamentaciones*, Chapter: VII.

<sup>28</sup> Ferenc Hörcher, "The Renaissance of Political Realism in Early Modern Europe: Giovanni Botero and the Discourse of "Reason of State",  
*Krakowskie Studia z Historii Państwa i Prawa* 9/2 (2016): 191; Botero, *Reason of State*, XV- XVII.

<sup>29</sup> Hörcher, *The Renaissance of Political Realism*, 191; Botero, *Reason of State*, XVII.

<sup>30</sup> Hörcher, *The Renaissance of Political Realism*, 191; Botero, *Reason of State*, XVII.

<sup>31</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I.

<sup>32</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I.

<sup>33</sup> Botero, *Reason of State*, XV-XVI.

<sup>34</sup> Calderini, *Discorsi*, 1.

structure.<sup>35</sup> With this structure, it is possible to say that *Della Ragion di Stato* is an example of *specula principum* (Ruler's Mirror) literature, which consists of books explaining how rulers could govern the state during the Middle Ages and then the Renaissance periods.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, Giovanni Botero developed a discourse against the state structure put forward by Niccolo Machiavelli and talked about a ruler who lived in accordance with his religious and moral responsibilities. In this context, the main feature that distinguishes Giovanni Botero and his work *Della Ragion di Stato* from others is that he makes use of Machiavelli's discourses, which he finds irrational and irreligious, and gives a lot of space to Muslims, especially Turks.<sup>37</sup> The concept of *Ragion di Stato*, which had a negative meaning in the Catholic world until the end of the 16th century and was identified with Niccolo Machiavelli, began to gain a positive context with Botero's work. The *Ragion di Stato* idea of Niccolo Machiavelli, who was an irreligious and faithless man according to many, was a cloudy and poisonous water coming from a dirty source and slowly began to poison those who drank it. The only way suggested by the Florentine writer was to contaminate the good with evil and the just with injustice.<sup>38</sup> Botero, on the other hand, tried to present the knowledge of the tools that enable the ruler to establish, protect and expand his state with the idea of *Ragion di Stato*.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, this work, which aims to teach the rulers how to establish, protect and expand the state, comes from the nature of presenting the works done by the Turks as examples and expressing how an ideal Christian ruler should know the enemy more closely and act against them. This study aims to reveal the Turkish image in Giovanni Botero's work *Della Ragion di Stato* and to show how the Turkish understanding of state administration fits into the context in the eyes of the Italian writer.

## 2. “Turks” from Botero's Perspective

In the first part of his work, Giovanni Botero discussed the idea of *Ragion di Stato* attributed to Niccolo Machiavelli and tried to explain its context. According to Giovanni Botero, *Ragion di Stato* stemmed from a ruler's knowledge of the tools necessary to establish, maintain and expand his state, and essentially paved the way for the ruler to protect his throne and state.<sup>40</sup> In this context, Giovanni Botero, who started to create an ideal state structure, grouped states under certain headings and described them as "small-scale", "medium-scale" and "large-scale".<sup>41</sup> Essentially, this classification was related to how the states continued their existence rather than the size of the lands they dominated, and the Turkish Empire constituted one of the examples used by the Italian author at this point. According to Giovanni Botero, a state that has difficulty in protecting its own needs and needs the support of another state to maintain its existence is "small-scale", while a state that does not need any state to maintain its existence is "medium-scale" and a state that has the power to establish obvious superiority over its neighbours is a “large-scale” state. The Turkish Empire also

<sup>35</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I.

<sup>36</sup> For a similar view, see: Irene Verziagi, “Su una Recente Edizione della Ragion di Stato di Giovanni Botero,” *Lettere Italiane* 70/1 (2018): 183.

<sup>37</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I.

<sup>38</sup> Ribadeneyra, *Tratado.*, I.

<sup>39</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter I.

<sup>40</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter I.

<sup>41</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter II.

represented a "large-scale" state structure through the superiority it established over neighbouring states.<sup>42</sup>

After classifying the states under three headings, Giovanni Botero started to talk about the responsibilities of the ruler and emphasized that his most important and greatest job is to preserve what exists. The Italian writer said that expansion by acquiring land was entirely due to the opportunity arising from someone else's weakening or being in a bad situation, and that being able to protect what existed was *the fruit of a perfect virtue*.<sup>43</sup> In other words, a ruler who wanted to protect his lands, throne and state had to deal with both internal and external enemies, while a ruler who wanted to expand his territory had to pay attention only to external elements. Therefore, the ruler must keep in mind that he can conquer with power and protect only with wisdom, and take into consideration that God gives power to all, but wisdom to only a few.<sup>44</sup> At this point, Giovanni Botero, trying to answer the question of which states can survive longer than others, underlined that medium-scale states have the chance to survive longer than others.<sup>45</sup> In general, small states had a short lifespan because they were completely targeted by the big ones, and large-scale states faced the danger of rapid disintegration because they spread fear and suspicion to the states around them.<sup>46</sup> So much so that the fundamental superiority of large states compared to small states stems from *their reputation and their past deeds*.<sup>47</sup> Since the factors that give great powers superiority over others are entirely external issues, such structures have often been more prone to internal deterioration. As a matter of fact, this greatness of the states caused them to become rich, and over time, this wealth caused these states to fall into greed, arrogance, fear of loss and addiction to luxury.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the internal problems experienced by large-scale states have caused them to become fragile and to underestimate other states. Giovanni Botero, who predicted the future of "large-scale" states, including the Turkish Empire, stated that "medium-scale" states could survive for a long time, provided that they did not have enough wealth to lead them to disintegration and did not dominate so much land that they would not be envied by others.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Giovanni Botero, who tried to find an answer to the question of whether states with integrity in their lands or states that rule in disarray would last longer, stated that states with integrity in their lands would be safer and that integrity would bring power and might over time.<sup>50</sup> Giovanni Botero, who warned that states with integrity in their lands and ruling over a wide area would lead to a self-confidence resulting from them in addition to the power they would acquire over time, and that self-confidence would lead to negligence, contempt and loss of reputation, stated that courage would gradually decrease, and wealth would increase rapidly, causing the decline of virtues.<sup>51</sup> As a matter of fact, Roman virtue, corrupted by pleasure and wealth, caused the Romans and then the Byzantine Empire to become dependent on foreigners, and their state structures quickly collapsed.<sup>52</sup> This situation lay

<sup>42</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter II.

<sup>43</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter V.

<sup>44</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter V.

<sup>45</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VI.

<sup>46</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VI.

<sup>47</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VI.

<sup>48</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VI.

<sup>49</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VI.

<sup>50</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VII.

<sup>51</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VII.

<sup>52</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VII.



behind the fall of Constantinople, which was conquered by the Turks in 1453, as it could not resist them, and the internal weakness of the Byzantines caused the collapse of the empire.<sup>53</sup> For this reason, the main duty of the ruler is to ensure the peace and tranquility of his subjects, to keep them away from all kinds of troubles, and to engage in work that will earn him reputation and make him more popular. Love and respect enabled the ruler to gain superiority over others and for his subjects to obey him.<sup>54</sup> These two features are very important in preserving the existing thing, as in the example of people choosing the most loved and respected people among them as rulers, because these two features differentiated it from others and took it to a different point. This position of the ruler enabled the people to obey him, and the people always tended to follow leaders who were in a higher position than themselves, rather than those who were like them.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the ruler should attach importance to love, which is an average virtue, and reputation, which is gained through excellence and inspired by successes in political and military affairs, and should be careful to adopt a management style based on them.<sup>56</sup>

In the second part, Giovanni Botero, who tried to focus on how the ruler could increase his reputation, stated that his common sense and courage should be seen as a source of reputation. Underlining that all state structures were built on these two columns, the Italian author considered common sense as the ruler's eye and courage as his hand.<sup>57</sup> Without common sense, a ruler is like a blind man, without courage, a helpless person.<sup>58</sup> The first provided the ruler with prudence, the second with power, and more importantly, prudence enabled the ruler to rule, foresee difficulties, prepare and plan, and make judgments; courage also enabled him to overcome difficulties, implement plans and preparations, and remain faithful to his will.<sup>59</sup> In particular, common sense played an important role in the ruler's perfect state administration, and its perfection helped the emergence of all virtues. Essentially, common sense, which helps the ruler to acquire the ability to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, has been acquired through experience, and experience has been acquired through what the living has experienced and what the dead have experienced.<sup>60</sup> History, which enables those who lived in the past to convey their experiences, also plays an important role at this point, explaining the rise, decline and collapse of empires and revealing how the problems experienced by the rulers were solved.<sup>61</sup> In this context, history is the world's greatest theatre and has prepared the ground for the ruler to visualize everything in his mind. This is where the greatness of Mehmed II, who was called *the Great Turk* and constantly read works related to ancient times, came from, and the numerous campaigns he carried out enabled him to receive this title. *The Great Turk* Mehmed II conquered 2 Christian empires, 12 kingdoms and more than 200 cities.<sup>62</sup> The Great Turk, who had the courage of the rulers before him, supported this feature with common sense and succeeded in becoming a great ruler.<sup>63</sup> The enthusiasm and practicality that

<sup>53</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VII.

<sup>54</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VIII.

<sup>55</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter IX.

<sup>56</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book I / Chapter VIII.

<sup>57</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter I.

<sup>58</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter I.

<sup>59</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter I.

<sup>60</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter III.

<sup>61</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter III.

<sup>62</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VII.

<sup>63</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VII.

another Turkish ruler Selim I showed in his campaigns stemmed from his passion for history and the common sense that this passion gave him.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, Selim I took great pleasure in reading the lives and activities of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great and had them translated into Turkish.<sup>65</sup> Naturally, the Turkish rulers, who had a considerable amount of common sense as a result of the works they read, governed their states well and thus subjugated the Christians. Thanks to these achievements, the Turks avoided a long-term war with the neighbouring Christian communities and thus prevented them from becoming a warlike and combative society.<sup>66</sup> With this prudent management approach, the Turks did not engage in a long-term struggle with any Christian state, and instead chose to fight short-term and constantly changing enemies.<sup>67</sup> In fact, the Turks managed to quickly attack an enemy and get what they wanted from him without allowing him to recover, and they preferred to end the war quickly with agreements whose terms they determined. More importantly, the Turks constantly fighting against a different Christian state helped their soldiers gain experience, and thus, they were able to benefit from constantly experienced troops.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, since the Christian states were in a short-term war with the Turks, they had to fight with inexperienced soldiers who did not know how to fight.<sup>69</sup> Another method that helped the Turks gain superiority over the Christians was that they knew how to take advantage of opportunities. Essentially inspired by the combination of situations that facilitate an initiative, *the opportunity* directly affected the ruler's achievement of his goal. The Turkish ruler Murad I, who was as cunning as the cunning Macedonian King Philip II, who took advantage of the problems between the Greek city-states to establish his own sovereignty, managed to expand his empire in Europe by taking advantage of the problems among the Greek rulers.<sup>70</sup> For this reason, the Turks had the chance to support their intelligence and power by knowing how to take advantage of opportunities. At this point, Giovanni Botero tried to understand how the virtues such as prudence and courage, which he thought an ideal ruler should have, were preserved, and according to him, religion and moderation constituted the basis of the preservation process. In particular, religion was an essential condition for every ruler, as it was important for the protection and continuity of the state with the help and support of God. Whether Christian or not, the ruler had to ensure that sacred works were carried out and have values such as piety and fear of God.<sup>71</sup> The fact that non-Christian Romans carried out various activities to calm the anger of the Gods or to receive their blessings before campaigns and wars, and that Diotimos lists piety among the three main characters of the ruler with justice and the army, shows the importance of religion.<sup>72</sup> In addition, religious rules played an important role in gaining the support of the people, their support for the ruler, and preventing possible rebellions and uprisings. Turks, who spoke to the mufti and obtained a written permission from him before undertaking an important task or declaring war, protected their religion and as a result, they managed to preserve the virtues of both common sense and courage.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the Turks took the lead in

<sup>64</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter III.

<sup>65</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter III.

<sup>66</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VI.

<sup>67</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VI.

<sup>68</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VI.

<sup>69</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VI.

<sup>70</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter VI.

<sup>71</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter XV.

<sup>72</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter XV.

<sup>73</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter XV.

the examples given by Giovanni Botero against the rulers who violated God's laws and used the *Ragion di Stato* as a rival instrument against him, and they constituted one of the important points of the counter-discourse towards the understanding that the Bible should not be included in the assemblies where the rulers discuss their internal issues.<sup>74</sup>

Giovanni Botero, who focused on what virtues an ideal ruler should have in the previous part, tried to explain how rulers who do not have these virtues should act in the third part. The Italian writer strongly opposed rulers who did not have the virtues of common sense and courage to go to war with the army and declared that his presence posed a danger of causing problems in taking and implementing the right decisions.<sup>75</sup> It was this feature that made the Eastern Roman ruler Justinian stand out, and before leaving the capital Constantinople, he made good use of the prudent and brave people around him and managed to send the Vandals from Africa and the Goths from Italy. On the other hand, the ruler's possession of the aforementioned virtues brought about the necessity for him to go to war personally and helped him gain more prestige than those around him could bring.<sup>76</sup> Although wars provided an opportunity for rulers to increase their prestige, not every campaign or war was suitable for the ruler's participation. Campaigns and wars carried out for defence purposes or on lands belonging to someone else revealed situations in which the ruler could personally participate. It is essential that the ruler personally lead the army, especially in case of a possible attack on his own land, because it is obvious that protecting his own land and state will provide a greater benefit than anything else can bring. Otherwise, as in the case of the Frankish King Childeric, the ruler would face the risk of losing his throne and country as a result of an attack on his own lands.<sup>77</sup> By defending his own lands and country, the ruler in question not only preserved the earthly and temporary elements that belonged to him, but also protected and maintained the divine and spiritual ones.<sup>78</sup> In this way, the Kings of France showed that they were on God's side through the wars in which they participated individually and gained great love and prestige among the people.<sup>79</sup> In some cases, the ruler led campaigns to lands close to his own, and this helped those around him to act more contentedly. The success of the Catholic kings, who managed to take Granada and expel the Muslims from Iberia, was entirely due to their personal participation in military struggles close to their own lands.<sup>80</sup> Despite all these arguments, Giovanni Botero underlined that the ruler should not individually participate in wars that take place far from his own territory.<sup>81</sup> Clearly, the Italian writer stated that it was not right for the ruler to move away from the areas where he had authority and power. The Turks constituted the basic example used at this point, and the Italian writer Botero said that the Turkish rulers who did not participate in the naval campaigns followed a correct policy. As a matter of fact, among the Turkish rulers, only Suleiman I participated in a campaign to Rhodes Island. Except for the Siege of Rhodes, no Turkish rulers ever abandoned their lands through a sea campaign.<sup>82</sup> In fact, Giovanni Botero opposed Niccolo Machiavelli, who said that it was appropriate

<sup>74</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book II / Chapter XV.

<sup>75</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>76</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>77</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>78</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>79</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>80</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>81</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>82</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

for the ruler to move his personal residence to the lands he conquered, and stated that this was not the right approach. Underlining that the Turks could easily move their capital because they did not have their own, independent people, Giovanni Botero stated that this fact was the reason why Sultan Mehmed II moved the capital from Bursa to Constantinople.<sup>83</sup>

In the fourth chapter, where he tries to explain how rulers can generally stay away from possible uprisings and civil wars, Giovanni Botero gives a lot of space to the Turks and discusses the tradition of fratricide practiced by them. According to the Italian writer, the ambition and jealousy to rule the state caused serious damage to the existence of the states, and many kingdoms came to an end as a result of the rebellions and civil wars it caused.<sup>84</sup> In this context, Giovanni Botero stated that the Turks constitute an important example on the subject and stated that all the brothers of the ruler who ascended the throne were killed.<sup>85</sup> In fact, Murad III, who ruled the Turkish Empire during his time, had a similar understanding and even killed one of his father's concubines. Describing this management approach of the Turks as *cruelty*, Giovanni Botero emphasized that the Chinese and Ethiopians adopted a more humane approach compared to them.<sup>86</sup> The Chinese and Ethiopians imprisoned people who were related to the ruler in a large area and provided them with an environment where they could spend time, so that they had the chance to establish a family order for themselves.<sup>87</sup> Despite all this comfortable environment offered to the Chinese and Ethiopians, the imprisoned dynasty members did not refrain from rebelling or revolting and caused problems in various ways. Even among the Turks, who were more cruel than the Chinese and Ethiopians and killed members of the dynasty, the desire to rule the state could never be eliminated and presented a less secure environment for the ruler. Unlike the Chinese and Ethiopians, the members of the Turkish dynasty had to fight to their last breath against the ruler who wanted to kill them, and the need to survive emerged among them. Therefore, it can be said that the number of uprisings and civil wars among the Turks was much higher than in the kingdoms in other parts of the world.<sup>88</sup> Likewise, the struggles between Orhan and Musa, Musa and Mehmed, Bayezid and Cem Sultan, Prince Selim and his father Bayezid II, Selim I and Alimşah, Süleyman I and Prince Mustafa, Selim II and Prince Bayezid also supported this situation.<sup>89</sup> In fact, Selim I, who killed all his brothers, cousins and relatives after ascending to the throne, said that his actions should be excused because he stated that he would treat him in the same way if someone else from the Ottoman dynasty ascended to the throne.<sup>90</sup> In the last instance, in the Turks, the arming of the ruler led to the necessity of arming the brothers and other dynasty members, and this caused rebellions and civil wars. At this point, Giovanni Botero also predicted that the practice of fratricide would bring the end of the Turkish Empire and emphasized that since the Turkish rulers' ability to take as many wives as they wanted meant many dynasty members, the state could be divided into many parts and uprisings, civil wars and revolutions could occur that would facilitate enemy occupation.<sup>91</sup> The fact that a

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<sup>83</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book III / Chapter IV.

<sup>84</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>85</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>86</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>87</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>88</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>89</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>90</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>91</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

considerable amount of time has not passed since the establishment of the Ottoman Empire means that there haven't been uprisings, internal conflicts, and revolutions that would facilitate enemy occupation due to the division of the state into numerous parts. However, the occurrence of quite bloody and intense struggles among the Turks up to this time has highlighted the accuracy of this assumption.<sup>92</sup>

Giovanni Botero, who tried to explain how an ideal ruler should treat his subjects in the fifth part of his work, stated that a ruler who cannot gain the love and support of the people is no different from a rootless tree.<sup>93</sup> Just as a rootless tree is blown away by a small wind, the people tended to break away from their ruler in case of a possible problem or trouble and changed sides and followed the banner of the conqueror.<sup>94</sup> During the campaign of Turkish Emperor Selim I against the Mamluks, the people of Syria and Egypt, who were tired of the rule of the barbarians, gave him great support and opened their doors to the Turks.<sup>95</sup> Naturally, this situation enabled Selim I to defeat the Mamluks, and Selim I annexed both Syria and Egypt without encountering any resistance. Therefore, it is very important for an ideal ruler to gain the love of the people and increase his reputation among them. At this point, religion formed the main connection point between the ruler and the people; since religious leaders lead others, it is critical for the ruler to gain their support.<sup>96</sup> In addition to religious leaders, the ruler also had to value the enlightened and skilful people, because it can be said that a ruler who supports both religious leaders and enlightened and skilful people and attracts them to his side turns into a leader who is loved and respected by everyone.<sup>97</sup>

Apart from providing support to religious leaders, skilled people and intellectuals, another aspect that brought love and prestige to an ideal ruler was the education that helped turn the conquered subjects into natural subjects. Education not only revealed the ruler's religious leaders and intellectuals, but also opened the doors of a second life to people. The education system that the Turks built on Christian children supports exactly this idea. The Turks, who took the Christian children of Christian families living in the conquered places, turned the Christian children into the most talented and loyal soldiers of the ruler through the training they gave them.<sup>98</sup> These soldiers, called "Janissaries" and serving as the ruler's bodyguard, showed themselves in all areas where courage and loyalty required. The Turks, who educated Christian children and turned them into loyal Turkish soldiers, gained serious advantages at two points through the education they provided to them: First, Turkish rulers broke the power of Christian subjects who were dissatisfied with themselves, and secondly, they had the opportunity to increase their power with their children.<sup>99</sup> In addition, Giovanni Botero, who compared the Calvinists to the Turks, showed them as the group furthest from the Catholics among the heretics and stated that they were in an armed struggle like the Turks in order to defend their beliefs, which were completely laced with irreligion and evil.<sup>100</sup> The fact that they do not have any reasonable doctrines or forms of belief has affected their lack of

<sup>92</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IV / Chapter IV.

<sup>93</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>94</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>95</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>96</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>97</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>98</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>99</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter I.

<sup>100</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter III.



means of defence other than weapons. Therefore, an ideal ruler had to take care to choose the right method of combating them, and it became important to deter the Calvinists and other heretical groups who were in a possible rebellion and uprising, to break their power and to deprive them of any means that could provide a basis for their coming together. These thoughts were at the core of the prohibitions that the Turks imposed on the Christians living in their lands in order to weaken them.<sup>101</sup> The Turks deprived the Christians of the means by which they could increase their courage and tried to prevent them from becoming noble and remembering their own values.<sup>102</sup> The fact that the Turks forbade Christians from riding horses, which were considered an important indicator of nobility, and from wearing the white turban, which they believed could only be worn by nobles, prevented them from opposing the ruler.<sup>103</sup> In fact, the Turks subjected the Christians' children to them against the danger of them getting angry against their authority and taking up arms, and turned their suspicious and angry attitudes into loyalty.<sup>104</sup> Naturally, this situation paved the way for the Christians to weaken and the Turks to consolidate their power. In this way, the Turks destroyed the possibility of joint action and unification of the Christian subjects.<sup>105</sup> After the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the Christians in the coastal regions of Greece were sent to the inner regions and prevented from cooperating with the Latins, which is a result of this idea.<sup>106</sup>

### 3. “The Great Turk” on the Battlefield

Giovanni Botero started the sixth chapter, which explains how the ruler should protect his lands and kingdom from enemies, by talking about the importance of fortifications and castles. Giovanni Botero stated that every living thing on earth is protected by dozens of bones and cartilages around its heart and brain, and underlined that this situation should set an example for the ruler.<sup>107</sup> Based on this analogy, an ideal ruler should understand the importance of castles and take care to keep all kinds of military equipment, ammunition and the necessary number of soldiers there. The ruler, who must take precautions against any possible problems that may arise within his kingdom by means of the castles he has built, should take the example of the Turks, who have made it a tradition to build castle fortifications at strategic points, because the Turks managed to capture Tabriz from the Iranians thanks to this tradition they followed, despite the defeats they suffered. They secured the city with the castle they built around it.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to making it a tradition to build fortifications and castles at strategic points of the empire, another feature that makes the Turks different is their fief system.<sup>109</sup> According to the Italian author, who thought that the biggest problem of the Roman Empire was a coup as a result of a large number of soldiers coming together or a rebellion that endangered the future of the state, the Turks eliminated the possibility of a possible rebellion by soldiers coming together with the fief system they had implemented for a long time.<sup>110</sup> Stating that the fief owners lived a quiet life in the region

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<sup>101</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter IV.

<sup>102</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter IV.

<sup>103</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter IV.

<sup>104</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter VI.

<sup>105</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter VIII.

<sup>106</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book V / Chapter VIII.

<sup>107</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter II.

<sup>108</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter II.

<sup>109</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter V.

<sup>110</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter V.

given to them by the ruler through the farms they owned, Giovanni Botero claimed that they could not come together in any way except during war periods and therefore they could not realize their own power. Therefore, with the fief system they had, the Turks managed to protect Europe with 60 thousand soldiers and Asia with a smaller number of soldiers.<sup>111</sup> More importantly, with their castles in their own territory and a well-spread army, the Turks did not allow the enemy to enter their territory and fought all wars outside their own territory.<sup>112</sup> This method of the Turks not only kept the enemy away from their own lands, but also protected themselves from all kinds of external threats. The Turks did not allow the Christians to recover through sudden attacks and gained unlimited lands. Therefore, the way to defeat the Turks was to fight them on their own land or to bring the troops together by keeping important points and passes well, as in Malta.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, this was the reason why Suleiman I did not attack the Venetians. The Turkish ruler, knowing that the entire Christian world would declare war against him in the face of a possible Turkish attack, did not engage in any struggle against them.<sup>114</sup>

In the seventh chapter, Giovanni Botero presented various examples of how the ruler could expand the state. Botero basically mentioned that an ideal ruler should keep a certain amount of money in his treasury in order to maintain peace and declare war, and stated that collecting money from the public is one of the most difficult and dangerous things to do during war.<sup>115</sup> It is obvious that agriculture, trade and production will be negatively affected as a result of a possible declaration of war. In addition, the problems of people who were already experiencing difficulties due to the aggression and brutality of their own soldiers or enemy soldiers have increased, and these people have come under great financial pressure.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, an ideal ruler must keep a certain amount of money in his treasury in order to save himself from this difficult situation and protect his people from oppression.<sup>117</sup> In times of war, the ruler who had money in his treasury had nothing left to do but recruit soldiers, and this gave him an advantage. The superiority of the Turks, who won dozens of wars against the Christians, stemmed from their extraordinary speed during wartime.<sup>118</sup> Unlike the Christian rulers, the Turkish rulers spent the money they had during the war on the supply of weapons and soldiers, attacked the enemy immediately, and as a result, they won victory.<sup>119</sup> On the other hand, a ruler who did not have the necessary money during the war spent the time that the Turks spent on procuring weapons and soldiers by finding money. More importantly, in such cases, the ruler was often involved in high interest rates that ruined his kingdom, had to mortgage his income, and the current evil resulted in another evil.<sup>120</sup> Giovanni Botero also touched upon the issue of how Turkish rulers found the money needed for their treasuries in peacetime, and said that those

<sup>111</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter V.

<sup>112</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter VII.

<sup>113</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter VII.

<sup>114</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter IX. The Venetians, who established close relations with the Turks and made an agreement with them, occasionally provided assistance to the Turks and prevented them from attacking them. The Venetians, who sent expensive gifts to people close to *the Great Turk*, especially the vizier, mostly managed to reach a diplomatic compromise with the Turks. For the relevant issue, see: Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VI / Chapter XIV.

<sup>115</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter III.

<sup>116</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter III.

<sup>117</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter III.

<sup>118</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter III.

<sup>119</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter III.

<sup>120</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter III.

who earned money from the riches of the ruler should pay more taxes, and emphasized that the Turks, who collected 10 percent tax from foreign merchants and 5 percent tax from their own subjects, followed a correct policy.<sup>121</sup> Thus, the Turks taxed all products entering or leaving the country in a commercial sense and prevented the tax burden from falling entirely on the poor. Turks, who taxed foreigners who traded with them more, also took the necessary steps to ensure that their own subjects could pay more taxes. Naturally, this situation strengthened the hand of the ruler, who had only tax and tribute income, and paved the way for the Turks to use the wealth offered to them more efficiently, as in the example of Sultan Mehmed II, who aimed to give his subjects land, animals and seeds so that they could pay a good tax within a certain period of time.<sup>122</sup> This economic understanding of the Turks enabled them to have the necessary population to carry out great campaigns and conquests, and allowed them to be less affected by the epidemics and misfortunes that caused great difficulties to small states.<sup>123</sup> In particular, the Turks participated in the campaigns that gave them the chance to establish a great empire, with the great manpower they had, and this brought them more benefits than courage.<sup>124</sup> In fact, the Turks, who were aware of this advantage brought by the excess population, had no hesitation in opening their doors to the 124 thousand Jewish families that the Catholic Fernando, King of Spain, had expelled from their lands. Sultan Bayezid II, who settled approximately 800 thousand Jews who came to his lands in different parts of the empire, was surprised why the Catholic Fernando, King of Spain, made such a decision and chose to be deprived of the group of people who had the opportunity to expand and strengthen his country.<sup>125</sup> As a matter of fact, this situation not only strengthened the Turks, but also caused the Spanish to experience a decline in areas such as agriculture, handicrafts and trade.<sup>126</sup> The rulers after Sultan Bayezid II also took care to follow a similar policy. Sultan Selim I enabled thousands of craftsmen to come to Istanbul from Tabriz, which he conquered, and then from Cairo.<sup>127</sup> In this way, Sultan Selim I managed to enrich, develop and expand his city.

In the chapter following the seventh part, Italian writer Giovanni Botero made suggestions on how the ruler could revitalize his subjects and lands, and presented a road map consisting of agriculture, craftsmanship and child education. According to the Italian clergyman, the arrival of those who could work, produce, engage in commercial enterprises and transport goods from one place to another to a region ensured the revival, growth and enrichment of that region both in human and economic terms.<sup>128</sup> The policy of the Turks is very beneficial, as can be seen in the example of Sultan Selim I, who brought the craftsmen from the conquered places to the capital, leading to the gentrification of the city and its human revival. On the other hand, another step that the ruler had to take in order to increase the population of a region or city and make it qualified was to increase the number of people getting married. Since increasing the number of people getting married means increasing the population in the region or city and increasing the number of people in a healthy way,

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<sup>121</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter IV.

<sup>122</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter IV.

<sup>123</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter XI.

<sup>124</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter XI.

<sup>125</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter XI.

<sup>126</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VII / Chapter XI.

<sup>127</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter III.

<sup>128</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter III.

rulers have always had to encourage marriage.<sup>129</sup> Despite this idea, Giovanni Botero emphasized that marriage alone is not enough and that both mother and father should take care of their children's growth and constantly support them. Emphasizing that Christians marry a single woman, unlike the Turks who marry many women, and that Christians have a higher population than the Turks despite marriage with a single woman, Giovanni Botero stated that monogamous marriages bring comfort and make it suitable for parents to raise their children with more care.<sup>130</sup> Even though the Turks had many children from many women, it is obvious that the epidemics or extraordinary situations in Istanbul caused a continuous decline in the population.<sup>131</sup> The lack of sanitation and unfavorable living conditions, especially in cities, prevented children from growing up in a healthy way, and although the number of children was high in these regions, these situations affected the decrease in the number of those who reached adulthood. It is clear that Christians differ from Turks in terms of population and raise their children better.<sup>132</sup>

Giovanni Botero included a section called "About the Methods Used by the Turks" towards the end of the relevant section. In the relevant part, Botero shared his opinion that the Turks, unlike Christians, opened their doors to people of all views in exchange for their benefit in the war and tried to benefit from them. Stating that the Turks even established a Christian cavalry unit, Giovanni Botero underlined that this approach gave *the Great Turk* the chance to strengthen its existing resources and power.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, unlike the Turks, who do not hesitate to seek help even from Christians, in addition to the unity they have achieved within themselves, Christians have adopted the aim of destroying the unions they have established considering their own interests or gaining an advantage for themselves in the campaign they want to organize against them.<sup>134</sup> As a matter of fact, this situation came to light during the campaigns against the Turks during the reign of Pope Paul III and Pious V. The states that took part together, inspired by the Papacy, Venice and Spain, acted entirely in their own interests and the victories against the Turks did not bring any benefit. As a result of the Venetians wanting to fight against the Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Spanish in Africa, the parties adjusted their military forces according to the location of the campaign. Therefore, the success of Christians against the Turks depends on only two conditions: The first is that the states bordering the Turkish Empire declare war on the Turks at the same time, and the second is that all Christian rulers organize a joint campaign to gain God's consent.<sup>135</sup> One of these conditions was one of the only issues that could bring Christians superiority over the Turks.

In the ninth part, Giovanni Botero focused on the question of how an ideal ruler can increase his existing military resources. First, Giovanni Botero discussed the issue of whether an ideal ruler could use his own subjects as soldiers, and the Turks were among the points of contact of the Italian writer in order to offer a different perspective on this issue.<sup>136</sup> Botero said that the French and Poles only benefited from the nobles in case of war, and described the fact that the nobles only served as cavalry as a great handicap. Clearly, the presence of nobles in the form of cavalry units on the

<sup>129</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter IV.

<sup>130</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter IV.

<sup>131</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter IV.

<sup>132</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter IV.

<sup>133</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter XVIII.

<sup>134</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter XIV.

<sup>135</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book VIII / Chapter XIV.

<sup>136</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

battlefield caused the infantry units of these states to remain quite weak.<sup>137</sup> Stating that the Turks eliminated this weakness through the training given to their own subjects, the Italian author stated that in the regions conquered by them, people called *Azamogliani*,<sup>138</sup> who were mostly Christians, were selected and subjected to military training.<sup>139</sup> These people, who were called *Azamogliani* before military training and were mostly muscular and agile adolescent boys, were sent to different parts of the empire to learn Islam and turn into full-fledged Turks.<sup>140</sup> As a result, these military units that began to serve *the Great Turk* did not show any loyalty to anyone other than their rulers, from whom they received salaries. For this reason, in addition to their cavalry units, the Turks did not fall into the troubles that the French and Poles experienced, and had a strong army in terms of both infantry and cavalry. More importantly, having a strong army resulted in the Turks not being dependent on anyone and not benefiting from groups that made military service a profession. Therefore, the troops that a ruler uses in exchange for money are no different from groups that act for their own interests rather than bringing benefit to him. These troops, who rebelled because they could not receive payments on time or abandoned the ruler in difficult times, risked his independence. Byzantine Emperor Ioannis V, who hired 12 thousand Turkish soldiers and took them to his lands in order to increase his own power, and then met with Sultan Murad I and caused him to move to the Balkans, caused the state to become dependent on the Turks, and they gradually weakened the state.<sup>141</sup> The leader of the Turks, Mehmed II, took advantage of this situation and conquered Constantinople.<sup>142</sup> For this reason, an ideal ruler must give his subjects military training and use the troops formed from them as his main force.

The Turks, who founded the Janissaries inspired by Christians called *Acemoglu*, gave them a good education and made them brave and daring.<sup>143</sup> The Turks, who gave great freedom to the Janissaries to become even more daring and brave, allowed them to suffer all kinds of ill-treatment thanks to the freedom they had.<sup>144</sup> Naturally, the Janissaries, who learned all kinds of ill-treatment through experience and were not given any punishment, managed to become more daring and brave and used this freedom they gained ruthlessly against the enemy. For this reason, it is necessary to show resistance against the Janissaries in environments where they can display the ill-treatment they have learned, because this resistance against them gave the opportunity to break the courage of the Janissaries, which they had previously gained, who had previously done evil to weak people who did not show resistance.<sup>145</sup> Since power can clearly be seen only through the resistance shown against those who exercise power, the Janissaries, who have always treated the weak poorly until now, have not been able to realize their weakness. In other words, the Turks did not make the Janissaries brave and courageous with the training they gave, they only turned into arrogant and

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<sup>137</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

<sup>138</sup> In general, *Azamogliani* is a term that refers to persons captured by the Turks as prisoners of war, as well as children snatched from Christian subjects. Referred to as *Acemi Oğlanı* in Ottoman sources, these individuals joined the *Acemi Ocağı* and served the Ottoman state on the basis of their abilities.

<sup>139</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

<sup>140</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

<sup>141</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

<sup>142</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

<sup>143</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter II.

<sup>144</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter XIV.

<sup>145</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter XIV.



disrespectful soldiers.<sup>146</sup> The superiority of the Turks was not only due to the fact that they had more loyal and brave troops compared to the Christians, but they also acted knowingly the weaker points of the Christians in military terms and did not hesitate to use them.<sup>147</sup> So far, in all the wars they have waged against Christians, the Turks have preferred open areas where their cavalry units can fight most efficiently. The Christians, who acted with units consisting mostly of infantry, also acted in line with these preferences of the Turks and had to display all their weaknesses against the horsemen. In fact, these horsemen not only brought superiority to the Turks during the war, they plundered the supplies, blocked the roads, disrupted the order of the Christian soldiers and made them tired.<sup>148</sup> Naturally, the Turks also had great courage, thinking that they were superior to the Christians.

In the last part of his work, Giovanni Botero tried to explain how a ruler can lead his army. Accordingly, the main characteristic that a ruler or the commander appointed by a ruler who wants to lead his army must have is good fortune.<sup>149</sup> Good fortune, however, did not arise from the fate or luck of the ruler. History has clearly shown that good fortune is nothing but a blessing bestowed upon one who serves God. Therefore, it was not enough for the commander on the battlefield to fight in an epic manner; the ruler also had to comply with God's divine laws.<sup>150</sup> It is obvious that if the people support the ruler by doing good deeds, Christians will once again receive God's grace. Likewise, the Bad Christians, who did not pursue the right virtues and did not please God, could not avoid being severely defeated in their struggles with the Turks and other groups sent to them by God; because they are doomed to be defeated by God's divine judgment.<sup>151</sup> In addition to pleasing God and the good fortune it will provide, the first defining characteristic that a ruler must have is his courage.<sup>152</sup> Since courage is a virtue that spreads to all the people around one, it has been seen as the fundamental element of a ruler's success. Among the Christian rulers, the only person who can set an example to others with his courage is Skanderbeg, who managed to defeat the Turks many times and kill about 2 thousand Turks alone. As a brave Christian ruler, Skanderbeg did not put himself in danger, but only managed to give orders, manage and display a dignified stance.<sup>153</sup> After courage, alertness and quick thinking are other characteristics that a ruler or commander must have. As a harbinger of victory or defeat, alertness had an important place in increasing the courage of the soldiers and the commander who led them. The Turks, who established an overwhelming superiority against the Safavids, set an example for this situation. Lala Mustafa Pasha, who led the Turks who attacked the Safavids and advanced to their country with a large army, approached his soldiers who rebelled and did not want to advance further with him, with nice words and managed to calm them down.<sup>154</sup> The next morning, Lala Mustafa Pasha, who wanted to get the support of the calmed soldiers, got on his horse and said, "*May God curse those who eat the bread of the Great Sultan and do not come with me!*" and then all the rebels followed him one by one.<sup>155</sup> In addition to courage

<sup>146</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter XIV.

<sup>147</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter XX.

<sup>148</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book IX / Chapter XX.

<sup>149</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter III.

<sup>150</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter III.

<sup>151</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter III.

<sup>152</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter IV.

<sup>153</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter IV.

<sup>154</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter VIII.

<sup>155</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter VIII.

and alertness, other qualities that a ruler must have come from being able to keep his soldiers alive, addressing them correctly and being cautious. In these parts, Giovanni Botero used only examples from the ancient period and preferred to describe the structure of the army that the ruler would lead and to make comparisons between sea power and land power, infantry and cavalry. Arguing that all food and soldiers came from land, the Italian writer emphasized that sea power alone did not mean anything and that no kingdom could survive without land power.<sup>156</sup> On the other hand, it is obvious that kingdoms with a great land power can also establish a great naval power in a short time. Coming from a geography where there was no sea, having no maritime knowledge and no experience in this field, the Turks showed themselves as a great naval power after the collapse of the Roman Empire.<sup>157</sup> After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Vandals who crossed from Spain to Africa and plundered Sicily and Italy, the Arabs who besieged Constantinople after conquering Africa and Asia, and finally the Turks who established a huge naval power after becoming a great land power and maintained this power for more than a hundred years demonstrated the strength of the connection between sea power and land power. The Turks, who managed to travel in the Christian seas for more than a hundred years, derived this power entirely from land power, and their fleets provided them with a great area of manoeuvre and action.<sup>158</sup> Without naval power, problems arose for the ruler and his army in terms of comfort, rest and recovery, staying away from epidemics and carrying existing loads and equipment, and these situations arose during the campaigns in Hungary and Iran, where the Turks had to act using the land army.<sup>159</sup> For this reason, sea power has never had a decisive power, but it can be claimed that sea power facilitates voyages thanks to the convenience it provides at the point of transportation. On the other hand, Botero talked about the importance of a strong land army blended with naval power and discussed whether infantry or cavalry should be the main force in the land force.<sup>160</sup> Giovanni Botero, who defended the view that the ruler should focus on the infantry, made his evaluation between cavalry and infantry largely through the Turkish army.<sup>161</sup> Botero said that, contrary to popular belief, the main power of the Turks came from the cavalry, not the Janissaries, and attributed the fact that the Turks wanted to fight against Christians in the open field to this situation.<sup>162</sup> The Italian author stated that the Turks fought with Christians mostly in open and wide areas thanks to their superiority in terms of cavalry, and emphasized that the Janissary units serving as infantry in the Turkish army were established recently and that before their establishment, the Turks had captured places such as Bithynia, Edirne and the Bosphorus.<sup>163</sup> In fact, the Turks, who defeated the united Christian army twice during this period, were defeated only by Timur. After the Janissaries were established, Christian rulers continued to suffer heavy defeats and a number of leaders, including Polish King Vladislav, Hunyadi János and Skanderbeg, were crushed by the Turks.<sup>164</sup> According to Italian writer Giovanni Botero, the point that should not be forgotten is that a Christian ruler who has an infantry unit as strong as the Janissaries, numbering 15 thousand, should not be afraid of the Turks. No Christian infantry was ever inferior to their Turkish

<sup>156</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter X.

<sup>157</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter X.

<sup>158</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter X.

<sup>159</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter X.

<sup>160</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>161</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>162</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>163</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>164</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

counterparts.<sup>165</sup> The only difference between them was that the Turkish cavalry blocked the roads of the Christians, damaged their plans, disrupted and tired their reinforcements. This is what happened to the Christians in Nicopolis, Mohács and Varna. However, the Turks could not do anything with their own army against similar armies, and the Safavids, Muscovites and Hungarians demonstrated this. Although some infantry units were successful on the battlefield, they needed to be supported by a good cavalry unit, and the Turks did this very well. In order to defeat the Turks, it is essential to achieve an army structure similar to theirs; it is futile to make cavalry dominant in the military structure, as many Christian rulers did.<sup>166</sup> It is not possible to use cavalry in highlands, forests and valleys and defend cities and castles with them. The struggles between the Safavids and the Turks also support this situation. In the battles fought in the open field, the Safavids gained an overwhelming advantage over the Turks, but they could not capture any significant castle or city from the Turks.<sup>167</sup> The lack of infantry caused the Safavids to be seen as less successful than the Turks. For this reason, it is certain that infantry is the main element of military units, except in open and wide areas, and more importantly, it is of great importance to create a great unity of power by blending Janissaries with cavalry, as the Turks did.<sup>168</sup>

### Conclusion

In general, *Ragion di Stato* is considered one of the most important concepts of the early modern period and is attributed by many to the Florentine writer Niccolò Machiavelli. The attribution of this concept to the Florentine author stems primarily from his own expression of the art of *conseruare*. The art of *conseruare*, which a ruler must learn against all internal and external problems that threaten his throne and his empire, is the most important element that ensures both his survival and that of the empire. Contrary to common belief, learning this art of statecraft, which is crucial for governing a state, is relatively easy, for the basis of this art lies in the realisation that a ruler who wants to protect himself and his realm should not always be virtuous. In other words, the ruler should not rigidly adhere to moral, religious, or legal rules and should not pursue dogmatic ideas. Since the goal of always being virtuous and adhering to moral or religious teachings leaves no room for manoeuvre, the ruler must expect to encounter difficulties in solving potential problems. Therefore, an ideal ruler should be prepared to accept any kind of immoral treatment and behaviour if necessary, and he should also know how to take non-legal or non-religious paths. As a result of all these steps, the ruler, by protecting his throne and his kingdom, has chosen what is beneficial and good for the people. The problem that many attribute to Niccolò Machiavelli and which forms the core of the concept of the *Ragion di Stato* is precisely this. The fact that the ruler, instead of following God's divine commandments and religious rules, does, when necessary, what is advantageous and good for himself, his kingdom, and his people, has provoked criticism, especially from Catholic writers and in the Christian world and church. Undoubtedly, the reason for Giovanni Botero's remarks against the Florentine author in his work lies in this situation. The fact that Giovanni Botero calls his work *Ragion di Stato* also supports this idea. Ironically, the Turks came

<sup>165</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>166</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>167</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

<sup>168</sup> Botero, *Della Ragione di Stato*, Book X / Chapter XI.

to the aid of the Catholic writer and became one of the prominent elements of his anti-Machiavellian discourse.

Turks were one of the main issues that differentiated the work written by Giovanni Botero from his contemporaries, and *the Great Turk* and his actions were one of the sources used in response to the concept of *Ragion di Stato* attributed to Niccolo Machiavelli. Essentially, Giovanni Botero tried to emphasize the weaknesses and strengths of the Turks by comprehensively describing their political, social, economic and military characteristics, which he included extensively in his work. Issues such as taxation, military campaigns and campaign organization, and army structure came to the fore as the strengths of the Turks, and Italian writer Giovanni Botero made warnings and suggestions about adapting these to Christian states. More importantly, *the Great Turk*, whom Giovanni Botero tried to understand and introduce to the entire Catholic world, formed the basis of the discourses he developed against Niccolo Machiavelli. According to the Italian cleric Giovanni Botero, the only thing an ideal ruler should take into consideration was Christianity and God's divine rules, and all kinds of activities carried out on behalf of them shaped the *true and real* interests of the kingdoms. In contrast to Niccolo Machiavelli, who advocated rulers taking any steps necessary to preserve their thrones by suggesting that rulers should exhibit a demeanour opposite to the good qualities they possess in order to benefit themselves, Giovanni Botero, on the other hand, aimed at preserving the existence of the Christian world and the Church by waging war against the Turks within the framework of the just war concept provided by Christianity. In fact, Giovanni Botero, who considered the Turks as the enemy at the door, tried to ensure that the rulers whose sole purpose was to protect the Christian world and act in the interests of the church would fight against them. Therefore, Giovanni Botero discussed *the Great Turk* in detail, explained the magnitude of the danger, and united Christians against a common enemy. As a matter of fact, Giovanni Botero also accused Niccolo Machiavelli of remaining silent against the increasing Turkish threat and of turning the rulers who thought about their own throne and kingdom instead of Christianity against each other. Ironically, against Niccolo Machiavelli and his ideas, who were accused of pitting Christianity, the Christian world and Christian leaders against each other, Giovanni Botero and his Great Turkish thought emerged from an identity that united the Christian world.

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