

Enverizāde Sa‘dullāh Enverī Efendi’s
“Treatise on Austria” (*Risāle-i Avusturya*)

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“Treatise on Austria” (*Risāle-i Avusturya*)



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1. Introduction

1.1. Preface

It is now the case that the geographical texts translated into the beautiful, clear Turkish language are of a somewhat older date, and the manner of division, the number of borders, and the administration of all the countries of the earth as well as the countries of the empires on the European continent are not in uniform order. Due to the fact that [in these countries] influence and revenues have increased within a short period of time, borders have sometimes also shifted and they have changed and look different [from before].

Having written down—after close examination and investigation, with weaknesses and deficiencies—the extent and size, the geographical coordinates, the characteristics, the land and naval forces, the internal structure, the number of inhabitants, and the annual revenues of the lands presently under the dominion of the aforesaid empire in the form of a concise treatise, now, in the hope and with the desire that it will be embraced by a gaze from the overflowing glory of the shah and become a place where the auspicious eye of the padishah is made manifest, the submission of this [treatise] was ventured with perfect anxiety and infinite humility and submission to the Sublime Porte of heavenly rank.

With these words, the author of the Ottoman “Treatise on Austria,” which is presented here, justifies the writing of his work.

This treatise, which to my knowledge is completely unknown to date, was discovered by chance by my Turkish colleague and friend, Fatma Sabiha Kutlar of Hacettepe University, Ankara, in the catalog of the Egyptian National Library in Cairo.

The manuscript is housed in the Turkish Manuscripts Department under the shelf mark “Talat 7” and is listed in the catalog as *Risâle-i Avusturyâ*. The manuscript itself bears no title, but on fol. 2v, after an

extensive preface, it has the heading in red ink “Description of the Lands of the Austrian Empire and Summary of the Situation of the Land of Nemçe.”¹ The text was written by Enverizāde Sa’dullāh Enverī (d. 1848), a high-ranking Ottoman official who spent several months, perhaps a year, in Austria on a professional mission.

The manuscript comprises 25 leaves of 19 lines each and is written in the *rik‘a* ductus. The script is framed in gold; headings are written in red ink and sometimes framed with gilded lines. Occasionally, gold dust has been sprinkled on the still-wet ink to emphasize names. In a total of four places, individual lines are framed in gold.² The reason for this seems comprehensible to me in one case only, as the author praises Prince Clement of Metternich in this line.³ In the other cases, there does not appear to be a reason.

According to the catalog, the text is an autograph. In order to verify this assertion, I have carried out a detailed comparison of the handwriting with other texts that can be proven to have been written by Enverī Efendi. Such texts are available to us because Enverī Efendi was involved in the border negotiations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire in Erzurum as an Ottoman plenipotentiary for several years beginning in 1843 and in this capacity he was responsible for taking the minutes.⁴ The comparison shows quite clearly that these protocols and the *Risāle-i Avusturya* were written by the same hand, so we can be sure that the text was written by Enverī himself.

On fol. 25r, the last page, the date of writing is given as 27 Şafer [1]254, which corresponds to 22 May 1838. This means that this *Risāle* was completed just over a year before the proclamation of the extensive Tanzimat reforms—i.e., in the “hot phase” of preparation. Whether the

¹ *Risāle*, fol. 2v: *Der-beyān-i memālik-i devlet-i Avusturya ve icmāl-i aḥvāl-i vilāyet-i Nemçe*.

² This is indicated by footnotes in the transcription of the text.

³ *Risāle*, fol. 24v. Metternich (1773–1859) was Imperial Chancellor and foreign minister of the Austrian Empire at the time of Enverī. He played an important role in the reorganization of Europe at the Congress of Vienna.

⁴ These protocols are kept in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in Istanbul, BOA.I.MSM40/1081,10. I thank Bilgin Aydın for procuring these texts. For the Erzurum conferences and Enverī’s role, see the detailed dissertation by İbrahim Aykun (1995) and Enverī’s *Sefāretnâme* (Akdemir 2007).

work dedicated to Sultan Mahmud II was actually presented to the sultan—whether he ever held it in his hands or even read it—we do not know.

Nor do we know why the *Risāle* is now in the National Library in Cairo. Its provenance is unknown, as are the date and circumstances of its arrival there. At the time the *Risāle* was written, Muhammad Ali Pasha (Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa) was ruling in Egypt as Viceroy and, especially in the years before the Tanzimat reforms, many young Ottomans who were pro-reform harbored a certain sympathy for Muhammad Ali, as he had carried out numerous reforms in his dominions. And more than a few actually went to Egypt to enter his service. Şerif Mardin writes about “... a kind of ‘Go Southeast, Young Man’” spirit among Ottoman intellectuals.⁵ It is not known whether Enverī Efendi was ever professionally employed in Egypt, whether he had any other connections there, or whether he himself or Sultan Mahmud gave the work to someone who brought it to Egypt. In other words, when and how the *Risāle* found its way to Cairo can no longer be clarified.

The following chapters introduce the author Enverī Efendi and present a brief overview of the *Risāle* in terms of style, genre, and content. The core of this work, however, is the edition and translation of the text, which—I hope—has thus been made accessible for further research in an appropriate manner.

I would like to thank Prof. Kutlar sincerely for bringing this text to my attention. Heartfelt thanks also go to my *hoca*, colleague and friend Edith Ambros for her many valuable comments and suggestions.

And last but not least, I would like to thank Mrs. Iris Mostegel at the Austrian Embassy in Cairo for helping me to obtain permission to publish a facsimile of the text, by no means an easy task.

⁵ Cf. Mardin 1962: 191.

1.2. The Author Enverizāde Sa‘dullāh Enverī Efendi

1.2.1. *Biographical Notes*

In the introduction to his treatise, the author refers to himself by name “the lowly servant and unworthy slave of the glorious royal threshold, the inadequate Enverizāde Sa‘dullāh Enverī.”⁶ We do not know very much about Enverī Efendi’s life, only that he was one of the top officials at the Porte.

Though only a few lines in length, the entry in the *Sicill-i Osmanî*⁷ provides us with the most important information on his professional career. His date of birth is unknown, but if we draw cautious conclusions from his career history, we can assume that he was born around 1800 or perhaps a little earlier. His name suggests a direct family connection to the well-known court chronicler (*vaḳ‘ā-nüvis*) Sa‘dullāh Enverī (d. 1794).⁸ He explicitly calls himself “descendant of Enverī” (Enverizāde), which is probably no coincidence. However, there is no reference to a descendant of this name in Sa‘dullāh Enverī’s biography. Despite the uncertain date of Enverī Efendi’s birth, Sa‘dullāh Enverī’s date of death makes it extremely unlikely that Enverī Efendi was his son; it is more likely that he was his grandson.⁹ Another indication of a possible rela-

⁶ *Risāle*, fol. 2v. Ateş 2013: 90 provides his name in full: “Enverizade Esseyid Mehmet Enveri Saadullah Efendi.”

⁷ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 2: 483.

⁸ For Sa‘dullāh Enverī, cf. Aktepe in *TDVİA* s.v. Enverī and Sādullah and Karahan in *EI*² s.v. Enverī.

⁹ According to Çalışkan 2000: xv, Sa‘dullāh Enverī had three sons: Seyyid Yaḥyā, ‘Abdullāh Behcet, and ‘Alī Ruzā. Seyyid Yaḥyā died shortly after his father. ‘Abdullāh Behcet served in the *selam ağalığı* (office of the master of ceremonies), had a son named Mehmed ‘Āşım, and died in 1809. ‘Alī Ruzā Enverī belonged to the high chancery officials (*āmedi*) and he died in 1235/1819. However, Süreyya (*Sicill-i Osmanî* 1: 265) writes that this third son was named ‘Alī Enver Efendi. He was probably the father of Enverī Efendi.

At the last minute, just before this paper went to press, I came across the following note in the *Wiener Zeitschrift* of September 5, 1835: 858, written by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, which confirms my conjecture: “Der Bothschaftssecretär Fethi Ahmed Pascha’s ist Enweri Efendi, der Enkel des gleichnamigen Reichshistoriographen, welcher die Reichsgeschichte des russischen Kriegs bis zum Frieden von Kainardsche und die des letzten österreichischen Kriegs bis zum Frieden von Sistow geschrieben.”

tionship could be that, like both Saʿdullāh Enverī and his son ʿAli Rızā/ʿAli Enver, “our” Enverī Efendi was also employed at the *āmedi* office in the *h̄vācegān* grade.¹⁰ After all, it became increasingly common for sons of high officials at the Porte to follow in their fathers’ footsteps in the 19th century, especially from the Tanzimat period onward.¹¹

Enverī Efendi had evidently enjoyed a good education, as can be seen from the high prose style of his *Risāle* alone,¹² and he also wrote poetry.¹³ However, the *Risāle* does not contain lyrical insertions, but rather a quatrain in praise of Sultan Mahmud at the conclusion of the text. One can assume that Enverī Efendi spoke French due to his profession and he probably also knew English¹⁴—at least passively—but most likely not German. He began his career as an official in the imperial council (*dīvān-i hümayūn*) and was *divan* secretary under several viziers, most notably Selim Mehmed Paşa, under whom he held the position of scribe of the “registers of important affairs” (*mühimme-nüvis*). He assumed the role of second secretary (*küçük kalʿe tezkirecisi*) in 1830/1, making him a member of the class of the imperial chancery (*h̄vācegān*) senior scribes,¹⁵ and was assigned to the *āmedi*-secretaries two years later. From the end of 1837 he served in the foreign affairs department first as secretary¹⁶

¹⁰ These *āmedi/āmedci* were among the Porte’s most important officials. They were responsible for all written transactions from the head of the chancery (*reʿisü l-küttāb*). Cf. Gökbilgin, in *EI*² s.v. “Āmeddji” and Bayerle 1997: 7.

¹¹ Mardin 1962: 122.

¹² Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 2: 483, also notes that Enverī Efendi was known for his good prose style.

¹³ Cf. Arslan, “Enverî, Saʿdullāh Enverī Efendi” in *TEİS*: “[...] Enverî’nin az sayıda da olsa güzel şiirleri de bulunmaktadır.” On February 16, 1836, *Wiener Zeitschrift* discusses an article in the Ottoman official newspaper *Takvîm-i Vekâyî* containing chronograms of several Ottoman statesmen—“one duller and more prosaic than the other.” Enverī Efendi’s is the only one reproduced in German translation. The anonymous author of the newspaper article (presumably J. von Hammer-Purgstall) offers somewhat ambiguous praise for this chronogram, suggesting that it “really has the advantage over all the others of consisting of only one line.”

¹⁴ Aykun 1995: 135 mentions that, in a dispute with his Persian counterpart Mirza Taki over the Ottoman Empire’s ownership of certain regions, Enverī Efendi argued using an English book during the border negotiations in Erzurum. Enverī Efendi apparently also spoke excellent Persian and Arabic; cf. Akdemir 2007: 3.

¹⁵ Cf. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 2: 483. For the *h̄vācegān*, cf. Bayerle 1997: 72.

¹⁶ Akin 2018: 19.