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European Views on Ottomans: Beyond Religious and Military Polemics

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Abstract

This thesis examines the writings of European diplomats, travelers and merchants in the Ottoman Empire in order to demonstrate that the historiographical tradition of the Ottomans as enemy to all Europeans was not the only opinion expressed in the early modern sources. Instead, the thesis will show that while the polemical voices were an important part of early modern European thought, they were responses to specific events in the course of European and Ottoman history, and they were not the only views held by diplomats and travelers familiar with the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the source material spans a wide range of opinions and attitudes of the Ottoman Empire, the people inhabiting it and the religion of Islam. While the Empire was in many ways unique, the voices of Europeans familiar with it demonstrate that it was an important part of diplomatic and trade relationships with Europe, and if not fully part of the continent, and an integral aspect of European politics and diplomacy.

Fundamental to this thesis is the idea that eastern and central Europe follow a historical path quite distinct from the European nations of the Atlantic World. Rather than exploring and colonizing lands unfamiliar with Europeans, eastern Europeans faced a rival, often hostile, which maintained both a military advantage as well as a cultural and religious history that matched their own. As such, the population of eastern Europe was required to come to terms with historical circumstances that were quite distinct from those of western Europe, and those circumstances are reflected in the historical accounts left by those who interacted with the Ottoman Empire, as well as those who feared it.

This interaction left a distinct impression on the history of central and eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire as well.

Chapter I: Introduction

For over six hundred years, the Ottoman Turks were the enemy on the border of Europe, the heathen at the gates of Christendom, the scourge of God sent to punish the sinner and test the faith of the righteous. Myth and symbol, enemy and outsider, both heathen in religion and barbaric in nature, the Ottomans were characterized as the traditional enemy for the nations of Europe. Yet despite the prevalence of this type of rhetoric, the political reality forced the monarchs and sovereigns of Europe to deal with the 'heathen' in the same way they dealt with each other. Further, trade was the lifeblood of individuals and governments alike, and the lucrative trade with the Middle East and locales beyond it forced Europeans to deal with their nominal enemies as people, rather than as the symbols impressed upon them by pedagogues and preachers. The results of these interactions produced a history of contact that was far more complex than the simple rehashing of the idea of the Turks as the infidel enemy, and a historiographical trend which often accepted such polemics as the obvious and singular truth.

Upon consideration, the polemics seem to be only part of the picture, and while they are part of a long tradition stretching from early Christian historiography in the hands of scholars such as Paulus Orosius to twentieth century scholars of international relations like Edward Said, they captured only a small part of the interaction between Europeans and Ottomans. While current historians are widening the scope of acceptable sources and drawing more material from Ottoman records, many still rely overmuch on the polemical voices like Martin Luther, without considering where such polemics fit into

the wider narrative. Just as Edward Said's *Orientalism* theory assumes the preexistence of European superiority, it is often assumed that the polemics of men like Luther shaped the conflict between Europeans and Ottomans, rather than being shaped by it. Indeed this is one of the major areas where Said received criticism. Daniel Martin Varisco, in his critique *Reading Orientalism, Said and the Unsaid*, often felt trapped by Said's implicit assumptions. As Varisco puts it, "There is no way to be an Orientalist in anything but bad faith,"¹ and that outsiders studying the Middle East could in many ways, be assumed to be guilty of bias and bigotry.

Nonetheless, one of the most important historiographical theories to consider for a discussion of European and Ottoman relations remains Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Said's general argument is that the conceptual identity of the Orient was created by European powers as a method of domination, and this crafted identity was imposed on the Middle East in particular as a result of the historical domination of the Middle East by Europeans. While Said did focus primarily on the twentieth century, he also took some effort to examine the historical relationship between Europe and the Middle East as he saw it. He traced the origins of Orientalism to the twelfth century and assumed a relationship of European dominance as a constant throughout the entire course of nine centuries. "The other feature of Oriental-European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination."² However, an examination of the relations between the Middle East and Europe suggested something completely different

¹ Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism, Said and the Unsaid*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 97.

² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 40.

for most of that history; particularly an examination of the history of the Crusades and of the Ottoman Empire produced a very different picture. While the relationship between the two regions was largely hostile, Europeans could hardly be described as dominant: the Crusaders were unable to build upon initially victories and their armies and holdings were often overwhelmed by Muslim forces. Similarly, the history of the Ottoman Empire was, until the late seventeenth century, largely one of Turkish victory and conquest. The military historian Jeremy Black argued that by the mid seventeenth century, the problem of Ottoman power was the most pressing concern for Europeans. The Turks had made the most gains over the preceding three centuries, and although they had made no significant inroads in territorial acquisition, their earlier conquests had also not been reversed.³ Furthermore, according to Black, “for much of Europe, the crucial relationship was ...along the fault-line between Christendom and Islam” and that “Christian Europe was in awe of the Turks.”⁴ In an objective view, the power relationships did not truly began to shift in favor of Europe until the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699.⁵ Furthermore, clear domination of the Middle East was not easily visible until the latter half of the eighteenth century, when European economic concerns were running roughshod over the interests of the Turkish Porte.⁶

³ Jeremy Black, *European International Relations 1648-1815* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 63.

⁴ Black, 63.

⁵ The Treaty of Karlowitz was one of the defining moments in European-Ottoman relations. Under the terms of the treaty, the Hapsburgs gained control of Hungary and most of Transylvania, and other members of the Holy League made smaller territorial gains, while the Ottomans retained control of Belgrade. Most importantly, the treaty was a major loss of territory for the Ottoman Empire and was the beginning of a power shift that would gradually worsen for the Ottoman Empire over the course of the eighteenth century. See Ernest R. Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*. 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 638.

⁶ A term used by European diplomats for the Ottoman Foreign Ministry.

However, while Said's argument of dominance is historically flawed, he did tap into an accurate sense of European attitudes towards the Middle East and those who lived there. In this regard the attitudes of Europeans are quite consistent across historical periods. As an example, Said cited the views of Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, the United Kingdoms official 'representative' and governor in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century. A particular quote Said used to illustrate his argument was one of Cromer's: "I content myself with noting the fact that somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European."⁷ This quote echoes a summary given over three centuries earlier by Jean Dumont, who while born in France, was made Baron of Carlsroon⁸ by the Holy Roman Emperor, whose letters describing his travels in the Middle East were published in 1696. In them, he observed "the Turks are opposite to us in almost all respects."⁹ This reiteration of such a view of the Ottomans helps to illustrate the strength and consistency of centuries of anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

This consistency of attitude is a fundamental example of the continuing value of Said's thesis, despite its flaws and inconsistencies. The attitudes he was looking for were definitely present among Early Modern Europeans, but the cause he ascribed was fundamentally flawed. The question that needs to be examined in the wake of Said is whether there was simply a different motivation than what Said attributed to dominance,

⁷ Said, 39.

⁸ In the German lands, approximately one hundred miles south of the Prussian coast.

⁹ Jean Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant*, (London, Printed by T. H. for M. Gillyflower, in Westminster-Hall; T. Goodwin, at the Queen's-Head, and M. Wotton, at the Three Daggers in Fleetstreet; J. Walthoe, under the Cloisters in the Middle-Temple; and R. Parker, at the Unicorn under the Royal Exchange, 1696), 149.

or if the attitudes Said assigned to the Europeans are the only attitudes Europeans' expressed or if the reality is much more complicated. Even Dumont, despite the profound dislike and discontent he expressed towards the Turkish people, was forced to assign them some positive qualities: "For the Turks are very Religious observers of their Promises to their own Subjects; tho' they scruple not to violate Treaties concluded with Neighbouring Princes, especially Christians."¹⁰ Admissions such as this one provide a glimpse at the importance of ideas beyond the simple polemical view. Despite the rhetoric of opposition and conceptualization of Ottomans and Europeans as enemies, common ground and respect, however grudging, was a possibility that went beyond religious rhetoric and military opposition.

Another useful historiographical source comes from the field of travel writing, particularly the idea of 'contact zones' as utilized by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes*, a discussion of eighteenth century British Imperial travel literature. Pratt defines 'contact zones' as "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict."¹¹ While Pratt herself largely utilizes contact zones in terms of colonial frontiers, the concept is equally useful in dealing with European interactions with the Ottoman Empire, with the Balkan Peninsula, Hungary and Istanbul itself as the contact zone. Istanbul is a rather peculiar instance of a contact zone, as it is the capital of the Ottoman Empire, but the relatively high percentage

¹⁰ Dumont, 186.

¹¹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 7.

of Christians who lived in the city, coupled with the volume of trade and the large number of European accounts of visits to Istanbul all suggest a very high level of contact, which in turn provides a great deal of insight into the nature of European and Ottoman relations. The most significant deviation from Pratt's theory is that neither culture can be considered dominant in the early modern period. While the Ottomans had significant military successes after the conquest of Constantinople, by the sixteenth century the conflict between Ottomans and Europeans had largely settled into indecisive military engagements across a divided Hungary and in sporadic wars and engagements throughout the Mediterranean. The levels of coercion, inequality and conflict vary significantly, but contact between the two cultures remains consistent, and both communication and trade remained a fact of life, despite the conflict and rhetoric of intolerance and destruction.

By comparison, Stephen Greenblatt, in his work on European contact with the New World, *Marvelous Possessions*, argued that relationships with others were usually both expected and normalized by the social structures of the group: in this case, Europeans.¹² Greenblatt further argued that the assumptions and behaviors recorded in the sources by Europeans ultimately manifested a greater insight into their own behavior and how they coped with unfamiliar situations, usually by tightening their grip on familiar forms and rituals.¹³ This theory impacted directly on European-Ottoman relationships by providing a potential vehicle of explanation for the abundance of polemical literature against the Ottomans. That type of reactionary literature had roots in

¹² Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions, The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 53-4.

¹³ Greenblatt, 55.

the historiography of the early Christian church, and as such, would have been familiar to many of those educated men reacting to the Ottoman Empire. Significantly, the religious polemics of the sixteenth century will draw directly from that tradition in order to cast the Ottomans as infidel, outsider and threat.

It is the contradiction between rhetoric and communication that needs to be explained and examined, as the polemical rhetoric that is generally accepted as the norm among historians does not explain the the areas of non-violent coexistence and even cooperation among European Christians and Ottomans in the early modern period. By examining the accounts that stray from the polemical arguments, it is possible to come to some understanding of what else was going on between Christians and Muslims during what is widely perceived to be a time of conflict and war. Modern scholars have begun to recognize the problems associated with the traditional polemic view of Ottomans and Muslims. Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman, in the introduction to *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, acknowledge that many historical works on the Ottomans lack proper historical scholarship. Rather than deriving from an understanding of Ottoman civilization, too often such works examined the “Ottoman world only through the eyes of often rather ignorant and even hostile foreigners.”¹⁴ However, the point of this work is to examine the variety of those very sources, and determine if there is more to them than is commonly believed. While the understanding of Ottoman sources is vital, early modern Ottoman-European relations can not be grasped without understanding the variety of opinions and beliefs held by early modern Europeans.

¹⁴ Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman, *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8.

The works of Martin Luther, the *Türkenbüchlein*¹⁵ and others are a problem for Said's thesis, because while they do reflect a desire to dominate, they largely illustrate an intense fear of being dominated by the Ottomans. This fear is so intense that the only perceived solution by many religious authors is a direct intervention by God, as all the armies and defenses of men are described as wholly inadequate to the task of defending Europe.¹⁶ While this is not the only view espoused in Europe, particularly in the seventeenth century, it is a common view among both historical records and writings in the late medieval and early modern periods and among modern historians as well. In this regard, it is important to understand the basis for the polemical viewpoint and to have some idea of why it is the default assumption among scholars, even if it does not form the totality of early modern viewpoints on the Ottoman Turks. The intense fear of being dominated, destroyed, conquered or spiritually corrupted demonstrated exactly why this can be considered polemical literature. It was a violent, albeit written, reaction to an other that appears to threaten many aspects of European life and society, and each polemic fueled further reactions of the same type.

One twentieth century scholar who examined the prevalence of the polemical viewpoint was Franklin Baumer, who argued that even after the politics of European-Ottoman interaction became more complicated than simply the idea of the 'infidel at the

¹⁵ 'Books against the Turks', written tracts about the Turkish military threat that began appearing in German lands in the early sixteenth century. See John W. Bohnstedt, "The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 58 (1968), 1-58.

¹⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works Volume 54: Table Talk*, ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 419.

gate,' the language of animosity continued to be replicated in early modern documents.¹⁷ Baumer claimed that this tendency and the attitude of exclusion continued through the seventeenth century and did not wholly disappear from European politics until after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Yet it is clear from the primary sources that the polemical view was not the only view of the Ottomans in the seventeenth century, and that practical politics and personal interaction between Europeans and Turks was slowly eroding the boundaries formed by the polemical rhetoric. However, to understand the framework that produced those later views, it is important to examine the polemical views that preceded them and continued to exist alongside them, as they are a major part of both later scholarship and the religious and political rhetoric of the early modern period.

The attitudes of the Western elites were also shared, or at least disseminated to, the general population of Europe in this period. Broadsheets, newspapers and private correspondence all extolled the victorious defense of Europe and the 'cause of God.' In a letter to a fellow officer, one A. Whitebrook expressed his relief at the victory at Vienna: "the great deliverance it hath pleased God to give... from the Cruelties and Barbarities it groaned under by the Savage Violences of Turkish Infidels."¹⁸ The juxtaposition of God's mercy and the cruelties of the foe was the most common formula among the contemporary accounts. The only ambivalent records were those left by travel writers and merchants, who provided some praise for the Ottoman Turks while they mouthed the

¹⁷ Franklin Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom." *The American Historical Review* 50 (Oct, 1944), 28.

¹⁸ A. Whitebrook, *A True Copy of a Letter From an English Gentleman in the Emperour's Army, to an English Officer in Holland* (London: Printed by E. Maller, 1683).

formulas of distrust for the infidels.¹⁹ In many cases, the real opinion of the writers was difficult to discern, as economics, religious beliefs and personal prejudices produced a confusing welter of motivations. Nevertheless, they partook of the general attitudes of Christendom toward the Turks, but often placed economic needs over the theoretical need for defense against the Turks. However, neither those who denigrated the Ottomans nor those who urged trade suggested the possibility of converting the Ottomans to Christianity. Even the most tolerant of the travel writers saw an irrevocable barrier between Christian and Muslim, one that could only be overcome with conquest and death. Even Paul Rycaut, who in 1668, concluded his work with a discussion of the benefits of English trade with the Ottoman Empire, remarks on the cruel nature of “this great Oppressor of Christianity,” even while he was swayed by the financial advantages of peace and trade.²⁰

Many of the polemical views on the Ottomans largely fit one of two broad patterns. The first was a religious perspective, where the Muslims in general, and the Turks in particular²¹ are enemies of both Christians and God, a test of faith, or a punishment sent by God to punish the faithful for straying. As such, their destruction was often advocated, but ultimately left in the hands of God, until such time as the faithful proved themselves worthy of such mercy. The other major category of polemics is that of

¹⁹ The attitudes of the contemporary population would be ill-served if this term did not appear at least once, however it should be noted that it should only be taken as part of the historical attitude of Christians and Muslims toward each other in this period.

²⁰ Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 217-218.

²¹ Indeed, these terms are often used interchangeably in Europe in the early modern period. Arabic writers have noted with some irritation that ‘Turk’ was used for members of the Islamic faith far more often than Muslim was. Notably remarked on by Ahmad bin Qasim al Hajaril, “The Book of the Protector of Religion Against the Unbelievers,” in *In the Lands of the Christians*, ed. Nabil Matar (New York: Routledge, 2003), 9.

military men who had faced the Ottomans in battle, and wrote to rally the Christian nations, their monarchs and fellow soldiers against the Ottomans. While these accounts often focused on the military threat and offered tactical and strategic advice, there was usually a strong element of religious rhetoric, most likely to encourage the appeal and distribution of their manuscripts, and to tap into the religious divide between Christian and Muslim. The goals of these accounts was to spur military action against the Ottomans and end the perceived threat to Christendom. There were a great deal of existing polemical accounts, ranging from pamphlets, broadsheets and newspapers written by clergy and laity alike, as well as military polemics written by those who campaigned directly against the Ottomans or supported such campaigns. Others wrote to support military action, or decry the military efforts of the nobility as insufficient to the cause at hand. For purposes of this study, it was necessary to limit the primary sources to a manageable amount that showcased a variety of viewpoints.

While the fall of Constantinople in 1453 had generated a great deal of fear and dismay in Christendom, the nations of Europe were unwilling and unable to set aside their own differences in favor of dealing with the encroaching Ottomans. Indeed, Pope Nicholas V's call for a crusade to recover the city was ignored by the squabbling Italian city-states as well as in the courts of the Hapsburgs²² and Capetians.²³ Despite the lack of response by the kings and princes of Europe, fear and hatred of 'the infidel' continued to spread through the written works of military figures and the sermons and writings of

²² Also Habsburg. Hapsburg is currently slightly more common, but more importantly, it is also closer to the German pronunciation.

²³ Bohnstedt, 9.

religious figures like Martin Luther. These accounts had a lasting effect on the historiography, as even in the twentieth century, historians continued to base historical works on the ‘outrages’ and assumed negative qualities of the Ottomans. A good example of this is Victor Tapié, whose work, *The Rise and Fall of the Hapsburg Monarchy*, originally published as *Monarchie et peuples du Danube* in 1969, is heavily marked with negative associations against the Turks. “Cruelties,” “humiliation,” and other characterizations “endowed the Turk with the reputation of a fierce and implacable adversary to be resisted in a struggle to the death.”²⁴ While Europeans such as the Hapsburgs and the Hungarians were not completely lionized, the traditional polemical assumptions were clearly at work in the writings of Tapié.

In sharp contrast to the works of Tapié, Martin Luther, the *Türkenbüchlein* and other polemical works, the writings of those personally familiar with the Turks took a much more open minded and accepting view of what had traditionally been viewed as the enemy. Despite Said’s hypothesis that European domination of the Middle East reached back as far as the early fourteenth century,²⁵ many of the writings of the seventeenth century reflected a very different reality. Not only were the attempts at domination not present, but the accounts of those familiar with the Turks often expressed admiration, a desire for emulation in certain respects and a desire for peaceful contact and trade. While this type of writing was not the sole voice of Europeans in the seventeenth century, it was

²⁴ Victor- L Tapié, *The Rise and Fall of the Habsburg Monarchy*, trans. Stephen Hardman (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 22-23.

²⁵ Said, 49-50.

common enough that it must be considered part of the larger picture of European-Ottoman relations.

The majority of the works that broke from the polemical view and expressed admiration were the letters and reports of ambassadors and diplomatic staff. In particular the direct reports to superiors and sovereigns tended to express admiration and acceptance. In works intended for publication in the seventeenth century, the writers tended towards a combination of polemical and accepting viewpoints. This dichotomy reflects what seems to be a split between the political reality faced by seventeenth century rulers. First, that the Ottoman Empire was a significant imperial power in its own right, and it was necessary for European powers to treat it seriously, and also a sop to the internal politics of their own nations, where ‘the Turk’ is in many ways a symbol of a religious enemy intent on the destruction of the Christian way of life.²⁶

These conceptually mixed accounts, such as those Rycout and others, did reflect some aspects of Said’s thesis, as they often illustrated the desire for domination of the Ottomans, but unlike the polemical accounts, they stress worldly military intervention. However, they also often acknowledged the political realities of Europe and the Ottoman Empire and, usually regretfully, acknowledged that conquering the Ottoman empire was not feasible. Instead some, particularly Paul Rycout, acknowledged the need for Ottoman trade in order to support the efforts of individual European nations against each other.

These accounts often straddled a line between political reality and faith-based discourse, and produced a conclusion that often displeased the author on the basis of

²⁶ This view is supported by Franklin Baumer, “England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom.” *The American Historical Review* 50 (Oct, 1944), 26-48.

faith, but reflected the necessities of diplomacy, trade and military power. Most modern theories of the other were somewhat applicable to these types of accounts, though some positions, such as Said's assumption of European domination, were clearly not supported by the primary accounts. In *Imaging the World*, O.R. Dathorne certainly touched on the concept of otherness in terms of faith, as he emphasized the tendency of accounts to promote "the difference between the self-righteous 'us' and the pagan 'them.'"²⁷ Indeed, Dathorne stressed this idea, and suggested that the strangeness of others in travel accounts and myths was often connected a sense of evil.²⁸ This sense of the other as inherently, if sometimes subtly, evil was an example of a potential class of theory that could be used to justify the primacy of polemical accounts. Another scholar of travel writing and communities, Benedict Anderson touched on the importance of nationalism in his work, *Imagined Communities*. Anderson examined the roots of nationalism, and his thoughts on the relevance of fear and hatred of the other were indeed important to the study of the concept of the other.²⁹ While Anderson did tend toward the extreme and tied racism to exclusively to European domination, he also provided useful theoretical discourse by associating it with repression and domination.³⁰ This again tied into European fear of domination by the Ottomans, and indeed, all infidels or pagans in the

²⁷ O.R. Dathorne, *Imagining the World, Mythical Belief versus Reality in Global Encounters* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 8.

²⁸ Dathorne, 20.

²⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 141.

³⁰ Anderson, 150.

tradition of Christian historiography as well as the desire for some measure of security against such threats.

The letters of European merchants who did business in the Ottoman Empire, particularly the Levant, tended more toward a mixture of admiration and a polemical rhetoric, most likely largely due to a need for patrons or a lack of security in their position. Of course, the letters of merchants, especially those published for a wider audience in the seventeenth century, were more likely to be polemical in nature than not. However, many are a puzzling, contradictory mix of admiration and contempt, perhaps because of a need to insert polemical references to satisfy the intended audience. One of the significant problems with the historiography of the early modern period is that, like Said, historians often assumed a power imbalance that does not exist. European dominance over others is so engrained in nineteenth and twentieth century minds that only rarely were other circumstances even contemplated. The conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe, however, did not show any signs of European dominance. At times, particularly in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century after the fall of Constantinople and the conquest of the Balkans, the power imbalance leaned toward the Ottoman Empire rather than the Europeans. However, for most of the early modern period, the balance between Ottoman and Christian moved back and forth between them. Between the stalemate across the divided Hungary and intermittent and indecisive conflict in the Mediterranean, it was clear that neither side could maintain lasting victory or dominance over the other. While rhetoric on both sides claimed ascendancy, neither side was able to put such claims into practice.

In the following chapters this thesis will examine significant polemical accounts and alternatives to the polemical accounts. First it will trace the evolution of the polemical sources from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and tie them into the political landscape of the time. Additionally, it will trace some of the roots of the polemical tradition to some of their influences. Next, it will examine a selection of the non-polemical views and address some of the reasons why such material differs from the polemical viewpoint and the insight they offer into European-Ottoman relations. In addition to the European sources, several Muslims sources will be addressed, as they demonstrate significant parallels and commonalities with the European materials.

Chapter 2: European Polemical Views

The polemical arguments against the Ottomans were part of extensive tradition that dated back to some of the earliest works of the Christian church. The authors of the polemical writings often drew upon the traditions established by Church writers such as Paulus Orosius, who established the idea that non-Christians were instruments acting according to the will of God, either as warnings or punishments for the sins of Christians. In this vein, it was only through God's will that the pagans, and their contemporary counterparts, the Turks, could be stopped or destroyed. Luther himself frequently acknowledged that only God's direct intervention could save Christians from the Turks, and that it required Christians be faithful and free of sin.³¹ While Martin Luther and other religious authors, such as the clergy involved in the production of the *Türkenbüchlein*, were heirs to this tradition of pagan enmity, they were also heavily influenced by the military and political reality of their own times, which galvanized them and lent weight to the theoretical claims of the Christian historiographical tradition. While their calls for the destruction of the Turks were rooted in the traditions started by Orosius, their fervor was instigated by the common and very real fear of Turkish military successes on the borders of the Hapsburg Empire.

As such, the religious accounts were just as much a product of the military and political context of early modern Europe as they were of religious and historiographical tradition. Without the influence of military polemics and reports of Christian losses on the

³¹ Luther, 27-8, 419-20.

battlefield, the religious polemics would not have held as much purchase on the minds of early modern Europeans. The military success of the Ottoman Empire within the Christian sphere of influence galvanized the polemical accounts and instilled a greater level of fear among the populace, which made them much more receptive to polemical rhetoric. While first hand accounts from soldiers defeated on the battlefield were rare and often lost, some famous accounts have survived, and were supplemented by broadsheets, records of sermons, as well as letters and newspaper accounts that were translated and reprinted across Europe.

One of the earliest polemical accounts against the Ottomans was *Memoirs of a Janissary*, written by Konstantin Mihailovic, a Serbian soldier captured at the fall of Novo Brdo in July of 1455. The fall of Novo Brdo was part of a Turkish re-conquest of Serbia after Hungarian aid briefly allowed them to assert their independence, and was the focus of Ottoman campaigns both before and after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Turks were briefly defeated at Belgrade by the forces of John Hunyadi of Hungary, but successfully re-conquered Serbia in 1459.³² Mihailovic claimed to have been part of the Serbian contingent sent to aid in the siege of Constantinople in 1453.³³ He managed to escape the fall of the city and returned to Serbia, where he continued to serve in the Serbian army until his capture in July of 1455.

After his capture, Mihailovic also claimed to have conscripted as a janissary and been part of the Ottoman campaigns against Belgrade in 1456, in the campaign against

³² Ernest R. Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*. 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 474-5.

³³ Konstantin Mihailovic, *Memoirs of a Janissary*, trans. Benjamin Stolz. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1975), xxi.

Trebizond, against Wallachia and its ruler, Vlad Drakul, and in the Bosnian campaign of 1463. He was part of the garrison in the fortress of Zvečaj in Bosnia, which was subsequently captured by King Matthew Corvinus of Hungary. Following this battle, Mihailovic was able to return to Christian lands and publish the *Memoirs*.³⁴ In Mihailovic's writings we find one of the more extreme polemics against the Turks, despite his own service to them. The confrontation and antagonistic nature of the text was emphasized by his commitment to the destruction of the Turks and his advice to Christian rulers was to unite and wipe the Turks out entirely. For Mihailovic, domination of the Ottomans in the form of conquest was not sufficient. His personal experiences at the fall of Constantinople and the defeat of his own people as well as his own capture at Novo Brdo intensified the fear that informed his account. The severity of Mihailovic's polemic suggested that the destruction of those that had dominated him and his people was the only response he found appropriate.

Despite the title of the *Memoirs*, it is extremely unlikely Mihailovic was a janissary,³⁵ as he takes part in the Ottoman siege of Belgrade less than a year after his capture.³⁶ While captured soldiers were often forcibly conscripted into the janissaries during the establishment of the institution in the early thirteenth century, by the fourteenth and especially the fifteenth century, this practice had been discontinued. Instead, the janissaries were drawn solely from the *devshirme*, a tax on Christian families in Ottoman lands in the form of young boys approximately ten to twelve years of age,

³⁴ Mihailovic, xxi.

³⁵ Turkish: *yeniçeri*, or 'new force'

³⁶ Mihailovic, xxi.

who were taken from their families, educated in the Islamic faith for several years, used as palace servants, and only then trained as personal soldiers of the sultan. The entire process averaged eight to ten years, and the janissary corps was considered the elite core of the Ottoman army. The elite nature of the corps was perhaps what led Mihailovic to exaggerate his own role within it. Additionally, he could find some measure of comradeship with a group of military men who were at least born to and, at least initially, raised by Christian families.

In terms of the Ottoman military, the janissary corps was traditionally a solid, disciplined center in what was an otherwise undisciplined but highly effective army. Well drilled and well equipped with modern firearms equal to those employed by European nations, the janissaries were a respected and feared military force. Strategically, the janissaries formed the center of the Ottoman armies and provided a solid base which supported and protected the light cavalry units that formed the offensive wings of the Ottoman armies. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, the janissaries had become an established part of the Ottoman government, and their military edge had begun to decline in the self realization of their own political power. This decline was not always visible to European eyes, however, as accounts from sixteenth century travelers often praised their abilities and discipline. Indeed, in his *Turkish Letters*, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq was quite in awe of their discipline and bearing, and marveled at their kindness and manners. He described them as guarding “the Christians, Jews, and other helpless folk from the attacks of malefactors,”³⁷ and stated, “if I had not been told that

³⁷ Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forester (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 8.

they were Janissaries, I could well have believed they were a kind of Turkish monk or the members of some kind of sacred association; yet these were the famous Janissaries who carry such terror wherever they go.”³⁸ From his remarks, it was clear that Busbecq considered the janissaries to something more than a terrifying military force. As a diplomatic representative from the court of Ferdinand I, who at this time was King of Bohemia and Hungary, but not yet Holy Roman Empire, Busbecq admired not only their military prowess, but their diplomatic abilities, as well as their role, as he saw it, as guardians of the populace of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of religion.

Despite Mihailovic’s uncertain status in the Ottoman army, it is clear from the text that he was associated with the janissary corps in some undisclosed fashion, perhaps as a messenger or attached to a logistical corps, as he frequently referenced matters of food, pay and supplies in his account. In purely historical terms, the text is not entirely reliable, as the first portion consists of Mihailovic’s summary of Ottoman history, which is colored both by his hatred of the Ottomans and his poor understanding of the subject. The second portion, however, centers on the campaigns Mihailovic participated in from 1455 to 1463, and was a useful summary of Ottoman military actions he personally witnessed and included many first hand observations of Ottoman life and his own reactions to it.

What Mihailovic provided was one of the earliest polemics against the Ottomans, or as the title of first chapter refers to the them, “the ignoble heathens.”³⁹ While the first portion of the book relates customs, legends and histories that Mihailovic gleaned while

³⁸ Busbecq, 9.

³⁹ Mihailovic, 3.

living among them, the aim of the work is focused in the later chapters, namely, his first hand experience among the Ottoman armies and advice for Christian rulers on how to fight and potentially defeat them. Several of the later chapters dealt with the Ottoman organization and tactics in battle, and suggested strategies for defeating them.⁴⁰ “For it is far easier for one to defend himself against the Turks who is familiar with them than for one who does not know their customs.”⁴¹ His recommendations focused on how armies should be equipped to battle the Ottomans, insisting that commanders should leave behind any cumbersome equipment and weapons and instead focus on the light cavalry tactics practiced by the Tartars and the Turks themselves.⁴² Mihailovic’s focus on military matters was suggestive of his own background as a soldier, though modern scholars are uncertain of his social class and education.⁴³ His recommendations do, however mesh well with the goals of his work: he clearly saw the Ottomans as a military threat to be defeated, and offered his own personal experiences and recommendations as a means to that end.

This view of Mihailovic’s purpose was independently supported by the writings of many Renaissance humanists after the fall of Constantinople. In *Creating East and West*, Nancy Bisaha claimed that many humanists embraced the idea of the Turk as the “enemy of civilization” and “the new barbarian.”⁴⁴ These ideas were reinforced by lurid

⁴⁰ Mihailovic, 165-76

⁴¹ Mihailovic, 135.

⁴² Mihailovic 172-4.

⁴³ At least according to the translator of the *Memoirs*, Benjamin Stolz. Mihailovic, xx.

⁴⁴ Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West, Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 62.

tales of Ottoman blood-thirst and cruelty during the sacking of Constantinople, despite a lack of first hand accounts among the humanists.⁴⁵ Additionally, she argued that classical sources provided a further influence on the humanists, and they came to see the struggle against the Ottomans as political and cultural as well as religious.⁴⁶ While the latter idea had potentially little impact on the goals of Mihailovic, his own account could have easily influenced the writings of the humanists in the decades after the fall of Constantinople.

Memoirs of a Janissary remained a significant voice in the body of Western primary sources on the Ottoman Empire, as it helped to set the traditional tone of Christians against the heathen outsiders. Indeed, Mihailovic presented his text as a call to battle against the Ottoman Empire, appealing to Popes, Kings and God to fight the enemy. This final appeal of the text was the most significant, as Konstantin Mihailovic plainly set forth his views and goal: “Lord God Almighty, help faithful Christians against the ignoble heathens, to wipe them out. Amen.”⁴⁷ For Mihailovic, defending Christian lands was not enough; he felt that a defensive strategy would barely limit the damage caused by Turkish raids and campaigns, and that the only true solution was to crush the empire utterly, for “until you smash a snakes head it is always worse.”⁴⁸ He was quite concerned with the damage caused by Turkish campaigns, even unsuccessful ones. He claimed that “even if you defeat them sometime on a foray they will do just the same

⁴⁵ Bishaha, 63.

⁴⁶ Bishaha, 93.

⁴⁷ Mihailovic, 197.

⁴⁸ Mihailovic 193.

damage as before.”⁴⁹ To Mihailovic, the Ottomans were an enemy that would not stop, one that would keep coming year after year, and slowly erode the defenses of Europe.

Mihailovic was also greatly concerned not only with the death and physical damage, but also in the conversion of Christians to Islam, which he considered a great crime and an utter betrayal.⁵⁰ This viewpoint is not uncommon in polemical texts, and the Christian renegades are generally regarded as worse in most respects than the Ottomans themselves.⁵¹ In this sense, the polemical texts did address the idea of the Ottomans as a religious and moral threat, even when focused on the military threat of the Ottoman armies. As such, the Ottomans were considered a spiritual threat as well as a military one, and depending on the source, the possibility of spiritual corruption was even worse than the possibility of invasion and death at the hands of the infidel.

The religious polemics against the Ottomans developed out of this military and political situation, as the martial fervor of the men who fought them came back to the rest of Europe to influence those who lived in the shadow of Turkish military power. It was telling that anti-Ottoman works such as the *Türkenbüchlein* did not appear in the German lands until after Ottoman campaigns into Hungary in the 1520s, and particularly after the defeat at Mohacs in 1526 and the first siege of Vienna in 1529.⁵² This is reinforced significantly by repeated calls for crusades against the Ottomans following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which despite a tradition of moral outrage, produced no tangible

⁴⁹ Mihailovic, 193.

⁵⁰ Mihailovic, 189-91.

⁵¹ Supported by Rycout and Dumont among others. In some of the non-polemical texts, those familiar with and more positive about the Ottomans would in fact blame most of the crime within the empire on the renegades.

⁵² Bohnstedt, 3.

results or movement of armies.⁵³ This lack of reaction by kings and powerful states was particularly telling, as it suggests that despite the popular sway of religious tracts, other influences and concerns kept military action against the Ottomans from becoming a reality. However, despite the lack of military action, some of the nobility saw a use in the *Türkenbüchlein*. Elector John Frederick of Saxony directed Martin Luther to write the *Exhortation to Prayer Against the Turk* in 1541, as the Elector believed prayer was a potent weapon. Additionally, many clergymen urged their congregations to pray for military victory and make voluntary contributions to potential war efforts.⁵⁴ Despite this, German military campaigns remained entirely defensive, even in the face of what seems to be a deluge of *Türkenbüchlein* publications. The pamphleteers published a wide variety of pamphlets throughout the sixteenth century, and several, like the popular *Project for a Crusade Against the Turks* saw multiple printings, including five editions from 1518 to 1542 for this particular tract.

Some of the authors of the *Türkenbüchlein* were well aware that the princes and nobles were not conducting campaigns against the Ottoman enemy. In 1522, the unknown author of the a tract entitled, *Türcken biechlin*, complained that the nobility have become lazy and idle and were not fulfilling their duties as defenders of Christendom.⁵⁵ Similarly, other authors complained that all Christians were failing in their duties to God, and that the Turks were a just punishment against the sins of Christians. Martin Luther himself takes up this particular attitude, claiming that prayer is

⁵³ Bohnstedt, 9.

⁵⁴ Bohnstedt, 15.

⁵⁵ Bohnstedt, 26.

the only true defense against the Turks, and that “our wall and firearms and all the princes will probably leave the Turk untouched.”⁵⁶ While Luther’s comments here seem to be in opposition to the idea that the Turks must be destroyed, it must be remembered that he also placed the destruction of the Turks solely in the hands of God. As with some of the *Türkenbüchlein* authors, Luther’s comments must be evaluated in terms of the political context of his times. In many ways, given the lack of faith in the nobility expressed by his fellow authors of anti-Turkish texts, his comments can be seen as a condemnation of German princes as much as a reaction to the Ottomans themselves.

While the *Türkenbüchlein* tracts are largely a reaction to the military threat of the Turks, they also painted the Ottomans as non-actors, in a long standing tradition of Christian historiography. Paulus Orosius, author of *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, who lived from approximately A.D. 375 to 418, focused on the need to prove that the pre-Christian and non-Christian activity caused greater suffering than any disasters or calamities that took place during the Christian era. To Orosius, even the victories did greater harm than good, “surely bringing no gains but great miseries,” and the happiness of the Romans in victory does not outweigh the unhappiness of the peoples they conquered.”⁵⁷ Eusebius of Caesarea, who lived from 263-339, also spends a great deal of time emphasizing the idea of the will of God, describing Constantine as the only Emperor “to whom God gave convincing proofs of the religion he practiced by the

⁵⁶ Luther, 419.

⁵⁷ Paulus Orosius, *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, trans. Roy Deferrari (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 173.

benefits of every kind which were accorded him.”⁵⁸ This type of argument was an interesting counterpoint to the ideas of Orosius, as this argument establishes the idea that by withholding proofs from earlier emperors, it was God’s intention and design that they be pagan and, by extension, supports their cruelty and persecutions as well. Early Christian historians have several traits in common, in particularly the concept of God as the “author of all their blessings.”⁵⁹ This is paralleled by the British historian Bede, writing in the late seventh century, who revisited to the idea that the pagans, in this case the Saxons, Angles and Jutes, were attacking as part of God’s vengeance upon those that stray, and God ordains the acts of the pagans, even if they do not acknowledge him.⁶⁰

The importance of these early Christian historians is difficult to ignore, as many of their concepts and ideas appear repeatedly throughout Western historiography. Traces of Orosius’ conception of pagans as instruments of God continue throughout the scope of European history, as various groups of ‘infidels’ are sent against the Christian West as scourges and punishments for the collective sins of Christendom. For R.G. Collingwood, summarizing schools of historiography at the beginning of the twentieth century, describes medieval history as the *Gesta Dei*, the deeds of God.⁶¹ Collingwood described Eusebius as creating both a universal history as well as a Christian conception of man. To Collingwood, the early Christian historiographers were widening their perspective

⁵⁸ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 69.

⁵⁹ Indrikis Sterns, ed. *The Greater Medieval Historians, a Reader* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982), 8.

⁶⁰ Sterns, 100.

⁶¹ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 53.

beyond their particular ethnic groups, in contrast to the Greek and Roman historians who preceded them, but they were expanding their approach with a pan-ethnic Christian historiography. Furthermore, he described the early Christian historians' hostility to the pagans as a result of the vigor with which they were pursuing a new ideal.⁶²

To fully understand the context of the late seventeenth century, it is necessary to briefly examine the course of Ottoman history since AD 1400. Christian victories such as the one at Vienna in 1683 were rare occurrences, as Ottoman expansion was more often restricted by matters of logistics and supply, limited campaign seasons, internal squabbles over succession and threats from the Safavid Empire on their eastern border.⁶³ For the first few centuries of their existence, the Ottomans conquered and expanded, with major highlights in 1453 with the conquest of Constantinople, the defeat of the Mamluk Empire of Egypt in 1517, the Ottoman victory at Mohacs, Hungary in 1526. One major reversal of Ottoman victories was the naval battle of Lepanto off the Greek coast in 1571. It was of particular significance since it was the first effective alliance of Christian powers and resulted in an Ottoman defeat. Although the combined forces of the Papacy, Venice and Spain failed to capitalize on their victory, they temporarily destroyed the Ottoman fleet.⁶⁴ This Papal-sponsored alliance, the first Holy League against the Ottomans, was short-lived, and accomplished little beyond its immediate objective: the destruction of the Ottoman fleet. By the time the Ottomans and the League signed a peace treaty in 1574, the Holy League had achieved nothing more of note. Even this limited cooperation

⁶² Collingwood, 50-1.

⁶³ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 13-4, 20-1 and 33.

⁶⁴ Dupuy and Dupuy, 547. The Ottoman fleet was largely rebuilt by the following year.

between Western powers was unusual. More often, when encouraged to form an alliance or gather for crusade in the face of an Ottoman military threat, the Christian nations demurred, pleading their own interests.⁶⁵ Considering this traditional lack of cooperation, the Hapsburg-Polish alliance and the creation of a new Holy League which followed the siege of Vienna in 1683 was a noteworthy turning point in the political and military history of Europe and the Ottoman Empire. By combining their military forces, the Holy League was able to conquer lands, particularly in Hungary, long-held by the Ottoman Empire. Individually, few European states were a military match for the large armies drawn from the great expanse of territory and population controlled by the Ottomans, however, as an allied force, the League was able to defeat the Ottomans in the field and ultimately force a treaty that was favorable to some of their interests.

The Hapsburg-Polish alliance was a necessity in the face of continued Ottoman invasions of both Hapsburg Hungary and Polish lands in the 1660s and 1670s. Both the Hapsburgs and the Polish Kings were slowly forced to give ground and surrender territory in the face of repeated Ottoman campaigns over the course of two decades. For the Hapsburgs, the crisis was intensified with a revolt against Hapsburg rule in Hungary, and as support faded, the leaders of the revolt allied themselves with the Ottomans, and with their aid, seized control of Hungary by 1682. Hapsburg efforts were further constrained by war with France during this period. This distraction was ill-timed and it

⁶⁵ Both Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923*. (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 112-113 and Dupuy and Dupuy, 542 provide examples of this. In the former, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I refuses Pope Leo X's desire for a crusade following Ottoman seizure of the Holy Land, and in the latter case, the other Christian powers leave Hungarian army to face the Ottomans alone at the Battle of Mohacs.

was regarded with significant hostility by contemporary sources, who blamed the French for some of the events leading up to the siege of Vienna.

With Fier [sic] and Sword, they laid all waste:
No Quarter gave for Seven Year,
Then Brought the *Turk* to Burn the rest.⁶⁶

Even some Frenchmen were disgusted by the actions of the French against their fellow Christians. Dumont, a merchant traveling in Istanbul in the 1670s, claims that the Turks “usually treat Christians with intolerable Insolence, except the French, whom they call their Friends and Allies.”⁶⁷ He found that his Ottoman hosts were “extremely pleas’d with how much Ardour the French espous’d their Interests; and since that time have look’d more favourably upon our Countrymen than before. ’Tis true that they have been of late so much oblig’d to France.”⁶⁸ Despite his displeasure, and whatever the source of his distance from French policy, Dumont was well aware of the close nature of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, and he referred to a French diversion to draw Hapsburg forces away from the Ottoman’s Hungarian campaign. Even after a peace treaty in 1679, France still caused a great deal of difficulty for the Hapsburg Empire. During the Hapsburg attempt to raise money for troops and supplies to fight the Turks, the French ambassador caused many problems for Emperor Leopold, demanding concessions and payments, and

⁶⁶ Anonymous, *The Bloody Siege of Vienna, a Song* (London: Printed for J. Dean, Bookseller in Cranbarn-Street, in Leicester-Fields, near Newport-House, 1688). The song, reprinted five years after the Siege, prefaces the siege with commentary on both the English Civil War and the perfidious nature of the French. This particular passage is a reference to the French-Habsburg conflict preceding 1683 and the French alliance with Ottomans.

⁶⁷ Jean Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant*, (London, Printed by T. H. for M. Gillyflower, in Westminster-Hall; T. Goodwin, at the Queen's-Head, and M. Wotton, at the Three Daggers in Fleetstreet; J. Walthoe, under the Cloisters in the Middle-Temple; and R. Parker, at the Unicorn under the Royal Exchange, 1696), 175.

⁶⁸ Dumont, 178.

even threatened the Empire with a war on two fronts. This caused further unrest among the German Elector Princes, and further slowed the muster of troops.⁶⁹ These actions complicated the efforts of the Hapsburgs, even after the expiration of a formal French-Ottoman alliance. French aggression also complicated their military situation by dividing and diffusing the efforts of anti-Ottoman polemics. With the French as a credible threat and complicating both the polemical propaganda as well as exacerbating old national grudges as well as confessional conflict, a united effort against the Ottomans was made more difficult for the German princes and people.

On the thirteenth day of September, AD 1683, King John III Sobieski of Poland was ensconced in the captured tent of the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha of the Ottoman Empire, engaged in a spate of letter-writing.⁷⁰ The relief forces of the Polish King had defeated the Ottoman siege of Vienna the previous day, and the combined Polish and Hapsburg armies were reforming their order of battle, burying or burning the dead, and looting the Turkish camp.⁷¹ In the midst of this correspondence, the Polish King and other commanders laid the groundwork for the pursuit of the Ottoman army, led by Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha. King Sobieski was an experienced veteran of wars with the Turks, and was determined to drive them from Christian lands. In a speech

⁶⁹ John Stoye, *The Siege of Vienna* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 106-107.

⁷⁰ His own correspondence places the King of Poland within the Vizier's tent on September 13, the day after the Polish-Hapsburg victory outside Vienna. Presumably before occupying the tent himself, Sobieski had waited for the tent to be cleaned, and the bodies of the Vizier's pet ostriches and "his women" removed. The Ottoman Vizier had, according to Sobieski, ordered his pets and concubines slain prior to the Ottoman retreat. See King John III Sobieski to Marquis de Grana, September 13, 1683, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home> (Accessed March 27, 2009) and King John III Sobieski to his Queen, Translated from the Cologne Gazette October 19, 1683, Number 84, London, Printed for R. Baldwin, in the Old-Bailey, 1683, 1.

⁷¹ The Polish-Hapsburg armies only burned the enemy dead. "We made but one funeral pile for them all and burnt them." King John III Sobieski to his Queen, 1683, 2.

purportedly given to his army before the battle on September the twelfth, Sobieski described his people as “consider’d as the Bulwark of Christianity against the Arms of the Ottomans.” In this speech, he further described the need to defend the Hapsburg Empire and the “cause of God” who would “undoubtedly fight for us.”⁷² The preservation of the Hapsburg Empire would prevent further loss to Poland and the rest of Europe by blocking a potential invasion route, and their duty to God would be upheld. It was this marriage of practical defense and religious duty that characterized John Sobieski and many other nobles involved in the late seventeenth century campaigns against the Ottomans.⁷³ This sense of responsibility laid the foundation for the Holy League against the Ottomans. The combined forces of this League, created by the Papacy in March of 1684, originally included the Hapsburg Empire, Poland and Venice, and they were later joined by Russia.⁷⁴ Sobieski’s writings were also some of the most influential polemical accounts of the period. As a military leader and politician, he was aware of the value of

⁷² King John III Sobieski, *A Speech Delivered by the King of Poland to His Army Before the Battle, September 12th, 1683*. (London: Printed by N. Thompson at the Entrance into the Old Spring Garden near Charing-Cross, 1683)..

⁷³ Military historiography can be more than a little convoluted. A good, basic guide can be found in R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), which provides well organized summaries of major battles and campaigns, broken down by period, region and nation. John Stoye, *The Siege of Vienna* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966) provides a vital, comprehensive look at the 1683 siege, and provides a great deal of detail to the political context leading up to the siege, and the Polish-Hapsburg alliance. He also provides a great deal of information on John III Sobieski of Poland, as the central figure of the alliance. Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2007) provides the necessary context for the Ottoman Empire, particular the centuries of expansion prior to the siege of Vienna. More detail on the Ottoman military is provided by Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999). For the Hapsburg Empire, Samuel Pufendorf, *The Present State of Germany* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007) provides a detailed contemporary view of the late seventeenth century and Victor Tapié, *The Rise and Fall of the Habsburg Monarchy*, trans. Stephen Hardman. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) provides a more recent overview of the Empire since 1526.

⁷⁴ R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 638. This was the second Holy League against the Ottomans, and by far the more successful. The prior League only involved the Papacy, Spain and Venice, and only lasted long enough to defeat the Ottoman Navy off the coast of Greece at Lepanto.

moral and propaganda. As his letters were publicly reprinted across Europe, they provided motivation for soldiers and nobles against Sobieski's Ottoman enemies.

In Poland, John Sobieski proved his worth as a general in 1673 by raising an army and crushing a Turkish offensive. Shortly thereafter, he was elected King of Poland by the Polish Diet. From the beginning of his reign, Sobieski was forced to deal with domestic problems while he fought the Turks to a standstill.⁷⁵ In March of 1683, both the Hapsburg Emperor, Leopold I, and King Sobieski received word that the Ottomans staged a massive army outside Belgrade in preparation for a new campaign. Both rulers were uncertain about the target of the Ottoman campaign, and after a great deal of complex negotiation, they agreed to a defensive pact.⁷⁶

By July of 1683, the Ottoman army had smashed its way through Hungary and laid siege to Vienna. In both Poland and the Holy Roman Empire, the inefficient governmental system had slowed preparations, particularly in accessing necessary funds for the war effort.⁷⁷ Ultimately, however, Sobieski and his forces arrived before the fall of Vienna and they smashed into the Turkish camps like a thunderbolt, panicking and driving the Turkish forces off so suddenly that they had little time to take or destroy the vast multitude of their supplies. This included, among other war material, some 400,000 pounds each of lead and powder for guns, 20,000 hand grenades, and 262 operational artillery pieces and cannons out of 334.⁷⁸ The sudden rout, combined with the lack of

⁷⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy, 636-7 and 630.

⁷⁶ Stoye, 111-2.

⁷⁷ Stoye, 93-4 and 116-7

⁷⁸ John Peter, *A Relation or Diary of the Siege of Vienna* (London: Printed for William Nott in the Pall-Mall, and George Wells Bookseller in St. Paul's Church Yard, 1684), 107-9.

supplies, left retreat as the only option available to the Ottoman army. By December, the combined forces of Leopold I and John III Sobieski had driven the Turks out of Austria and reclaimed much of Northwestern Hungary.⁷⁹ In doing so, Sobieski and the armies of Leopold had proven that a united Christian force could effectively match the effectiveness of an Ottoman army approximately twice its size.⁸⁰ The polemical tone of Sobieski's letters and speeches were now firmly positive, raising hope of European domination of the Ottomans, rising above the potential for a crushing defeat at Vienna.

The victory at Vienna was so sudden and overwhelming that some among the victors could scarcely believe it, ascribing it solely to the power of God. One officer in the Imperial Army wrote that, considering the "advantageous situation and opportunities the Enemy had to prevent our Relief, as the shameful flight they soon betook themselves unto: 'Tis plain that nothing but God Almighty could have brought such Infatuation upon them."⁸¹ This was understandable given the magnitude of the Turkish army, numbered at approximately 150,000 men, while the relief force and garrison together only numbered approximately 75,000. The relief force had attacked the reserve units in the camp surrounding the earthworks and trenches outside the city. The battle turned decisively during the afternoon of the day long struggle when the Ottoman troops within the earthworks fled rather than reinforce or assist their embattled reserves.⁸² That the normally disciplined Ottoman army would flee so readily and easily could only be

⁷⁹ Dupuy and Dupuy, 638.

⁸⁰ Dupuy and Dupuy, 637.

⁸¹ Peter, 100.

⁸² Stoye, 263-4.

explained to many on the Christian side as an act of God. Even experienced commanders were surprised by this unlikely turn of events, as the King of Poland wrote: “God has blest us with so signal a victory as scarce the memory of man can equal.”⁸³ Sobieski was quite willing to gloat over the fallen foe as well, as he described the great “herd of Turkish Captives... My Ears charmed with so pleasing music, as the howling and dying groans of these miserable wretches.”⁸⁴ Sobieski’s letters were largely of this style, creating an image of a fierce protector of Christendom who relished the defeat of his infidel enemy. It could be supposed that this was an accurate reflection of his character given his history of conflict against the Ottomans in Poland, but it was also excellent material for a propaganda campaign. Given that many of his letters and speeches were transcribed and reprinted in newspapers across the continent and ultimately reprinted by private publishers in London within a few years of the siege of Vienna, it was clear that the message of Sobieski was spread throughout the Christian kingdoms of Europe.

According to Rhoads Murphey, a military historian whose *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* was an extensive survey of the composition, logistics and sustainability of the Ottoman military, Ottoman historians lay the blame for the defeat at Vienna squarely on the head of Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa. It was not simply a matter of failed leadership, but a matter of morale. The Christian sources make clear that the Vizier hoarded great wealth within in his tent, but according to Ottoman sources, he had neglected the customary practice of disbursing “confidence-building and morale-boosting favours and bonuses,” and this led directly to the “collective loss of the soldiers’ will to persevere

⁸³ King John III Sobieski to his Queen, October 19, 1683, 2.

⁸⁴ King John III Sobieski to his Queen, October 19, 1683, 2.

when the Ottoman army was perched on the threshold of unprecedented success.”⁸⁵

While money was a common motivation on both sides, the Christian commanders could not have imagined this particular practice to be the guiding hand of their inspired victory. After all, in their experience, sharing the spoils of war among the army usually encouraged desertion rather than loyalty, as a rich man was less likely to risk life and wealth in pursuit of more when he could preserve both by returning home.

The sudden and unexpected victory at Vienna provided an opportunity for the Christian nations, as they were able to launch an offensive campaign on the Turkish controlled areas of Hungary and into the Balkans. They were supported in this endeavor by the Pope, to whom Sobieski had sent the captured banner of the Turkish army as a trophy following the victory at Vienna with a special envoy. This envoy, the Abbot d’Henoff, declared to the Pope that Sobieski was “designed of God to be the Defender of the Christian Religion” and acknowledged Papal support through both “prayers” and “treasures.”⁸⁶ This was the groundwork for the Holy League against the Ottomans, inspired and guided by Pope Innocent XI. The alliance of necessity between the Polish and Hapsburg campaign was expanded to include the Venetians.⁸⁷ With additional resources and manpower, the Holy League bolstered its faltering advance into Turkish controlled areas of Hungary. Of particular importance was the re-conquest of Buda on September 2nd, 1686, as Tapié asserted, the importance to Europe at the time and the

⁸⁵ Murphey, 136-7.

⁸⁶ M. Dalerac, *Polish manuscripts, or, The secret history of the reign of John Sobieski the III* (London: Printed for H. Rhodes, at the Star, near Fleet-Bridge; T. Bennet, at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Yard; A. Bell, at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhil; T. Leigh and D. Midwinter, at the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1700), 368-9.

⁸⁷ Stoye, 282.

prestige the city was reinforced by the “inscription still visible on the walls of the ancient citadel, *Buda e servitute in libertatem restituta*.”⁸⁸ Russia joined the League in 1686, and further widened the coalition’s support and efforts. The proactive campaigns of the Holy League continued until the sixth of September 1688, with the conquest of Belgrade in Serbia, a fortress-city that had been a common mustering point for Ottoman armies.⁸⁹

The Holy League’s acceptance of Russia into their ranks was odd for two reasons. First, it was the first real acceptance of Russia as a European power, albeit a backwards and underdeveloped one. While it had been a trading partner for centuries, it had not been properly integrated into the community of nations. Secondly, while the Polish and Venetians were solidly Catholic, and the Hapsburg nominally so, the Orthodox Russian state was a departure for the Papal-backed Holy League. Once again, the practical needs of the military situation demanded a different approach, and the Orthodox was anything but the significant threat posed by Turkish Muslims. Furthermore, the Russians brought a great deal of grain and other supplies as well as light cavalry to match the Turkish armies. For Russia’s part, they hoped to gain access to the Black Sea and its trade routes, long dominated by the Ottomans and their subject peoples.⁹⁰

The 1690s were marked by several Ottoman counteroffensives, all but one of which ended disastrously for them. The 1690 re-conquest of Serbia succeeded in capturing Belgrade, but most of the campaigns in this period were either inconclusive, or like the Battles of Szalánkemen and Zenta, military disasters for the Ottomans. In 1699,

⁸⁸ Tapié, 145.

⁸⁹ Dupuy and Dupuy, 638.

⁹⁰ Dupuy and Dupuy, 634.

the Treaty of Karlowitz effectively ended Turkish ambitions in Hungary and brought relative peace to the region, and gave the Hapsburgs dominion over most of Hungary and Transylvania. Venice gained territory in Greece, Russia gained a small area of Ottoman territory around the Sea of Azov⁹¹, and Poland regained territory lost in their wars with the Ottomans in the 1670s. The treaty marked a significant decline in Ottoman power, though they managed to keep possession of Belgrade.⁹²

The battles of the seventeenth century were marked by a relative parity of weapons, but an adaptation to Turkish tactics. Previously, the light cavalry of the Turkish armies had proven a significant advantage in their wars against the European armies. With the addition of the Polish and Russian armies, as well as their auxiliary forces such as the Cossacks, the gap in tactical and strategic units lessened considerably. Furthermore, the great fields of the Ukraine, split between Russia and Poland, were an Ottoman objective, as the massive grain supply produced by the region was a key to supporting the massive number of horses required by the Ottoman method of war. With both nations at war with them, the Ottomans were forced to rely on Egypt to supply their forces, a supply line that stretched hundreds of miles to the European front.

While the campaigns of the Holy League marked a significant change in the balance of military power in the region, they fell far short of the goals set by their leaders. In a letter to Pope Innocent XI in 1684, King Sobieski declared he would conquer Belgrade and then “March on even to the Imperial City of the of the Turks and correct the

⁹¹ North of the Black Sea, though the Ottomans still had control over access to the Black Sea itself.

⁹² Dupuy and Dupuy, 638.

unbridled presumption of the Barbarians.”⁹³ While he did achieve his first objective, League forces never approached the Turkish capital. Domestic problems within Poland, which he also referred to in this letter, calling it “Civil Dissension,” occupied more of his time and pulled him away from the battlefield. In fact, the problems of internal revolt and political difficulties with the Polish National Diet were likely a symptom of his constant campaigning. Ultimately, Poland saw little gain for its efforts against the Turks, and only regained a small territory on its southern frontier, lost decades before. Sobieski did not even see this minor gain for all his efforts. Increasingly marginalized by a jealous Emperor Leopold and distracted by domestic problems, Sobieski died in 1696, three years before the Treaty of Karlowitz restored the lost Polish territory of Podolia.⁹⁴ Unfortunately for this great general, he did not die in battle, but apparently of an apoplectic fit brought on by his frustration with his ministers and the domestic political situation within Poland.⁹⁵

In 1699, the Treaty of Karlowitz created new ideas along the Ottoman frontier, primarily a sense of a permanent peace treaty, rather than the temporary cessation of hostilities that had distinguished past Ottoman treaties. The creation of joint border commissions accompanied this new sense of peace, and the treaty closed the borders and

⁹³ King John III Sobieski to Pope Innocent XI, *A Copy of a Letter of the Most Serene King of Poland to his Holiness* (London: Printed for R.H. and are to be sold by Randal Taylor near Stationers hall, 1685).

⁹⁴ Dupuy and Dupuy, 630.

⁹⁵ D. Jones, *A Compleat History of Europe, or, a View of the Affairs Thereof* (London: Printed by T. Mead, for John Nicholson, at the King's Arms; E. Harris, at the Harrow, in Little-Britain; and Andrew Bell, at the Cross-Keys, in Cornhill, 1699), 581.

clearly plotted a boundary between nations.⁹⁶ While this was not what many of the European leaders wanted, in the long run it served their interests better than the extermination of the Ottomans would have. Despite some internal resistance to the closure of the borders, the Ottoman Empire scrupulously adhered to the limits of the treaty, suppressing those elements of its population that raided across or otherwise violated the borders established by treaty.⁹⁷ As the eighteenth century progressed, the Ottomans would have cause to regret their strict adherence to their treaty obligations, as the European powers used the more favorable balance of military power and the obligation of these and later treaties against the Empire to their advantage. By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was economically a puppet state of European powers, as European companies and trading concerns dominated the financial and political policy of the Empire.

For the Christian powers, after nearly three centuries of continued conflict with the Ottoman Empire, the Treaty of Karlowitz had achieved one of their primary goals. They had soundly defeated and turned back the Ottoman Turks, and reclaimed formerly Christian lands. This was not a minor or temporary success on a small Mediterranean island or a makeshift truce marking a pause in hostilities while both sides dealt with matters elsewhere. The last twenty years of the seventeenth century were a departure from precedent. Victory for the European powers had often been a matter of holding out until the strains of logistics and the seasons brought the Ottoman campaign season to an

⁹⁶ Rifaat Abou-El-Haj, "The Formal of the Ottoman Frontier in Europe: 1699-1703," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89 (1969), 467.

⁹⁷ Abou-El-Haj, 471.

end. Now the Europeans had accomplished a significant conquest in the face of formerly overwhelming odds. The balance of power between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire had begun to shift, and voices such as Sobieski could now express triumph as well as fear. The territorial gains accomplished by the Treaty of Karlowitz were not simply temporary gains that would only last for as long as they could hold them. They were significant advantages, and thanks to the Ottoman acceptance and willingness to adhere to its treaties, it would require a formal act of war to regain those lands. Such an act would also subject the violator of the treaty to fines and penalties assessed by other nations. In short, the Ottoman acceptance of the treaty system marked the end of their status as a fully free and expansionist state and instead accepted a limited status of a pseudo-European state, with all of the obligations and few of the advantages. This particular aspect of the European victory was unlooked for, but it was a matter of profound consequence for the entire region.

In light of Sobieski's grand vow to march on the gates of Istanbul, the Treaty of Karlowitz can be seen as a failure of both intent and effort. In truth, the Ottoman Empire, though weakened by its losses during the campaigns of the Holy League, was still a strong and extensive state, and the Sultans still retained most of the authority they would lose over the century to come. A final defeat of the Ottoman Empire was not possible for the members of the Holy League, particularly since their internal conflicts and rivalries with other neighbors had grown as they focused their attention on the Ottomans. With Sobieski's death in 1696, the Polish nobility elected a new King in Poland, of Saxon extraction and he focused his attention on the Great Northern War against Sweden. The

French-Hapsburg rivalry was once again in full flower with the War of Spanish Succession, and the Venetians intently avoided the crossfire in the battlegrounds of Northern Italy. In Russia, Peter the Great set about to reform his nation and nearly dragged it down in wars with Sweden and Poland.⁹⁸ The practical considerations of politics trumped the grand religious ideals that were bound up in the Holy League.

However, while the League did not live up to the intent or ideals of some of its leaders, it did accomplish an unprecedented task. The primary gains of the alliance lay in the impressive series of defeats achieved against an enemy that had often seemed unbeatable. The Hapsburgs in particular gained a major advantage with the recovery of Hungary from Ottoman hands: the gateway to the Hapsburg heartlands and seat of power was now closed off by a well-fortified buffer state. Although the Ottomans would attack the European states again in the eighteenth century, it would never regain its former glory and slowly lost more European territory to increasingly unfavorable treaties.

While European polemical views of the Ottomans were the result of long standing trends in military and religious thought, they combined to form a lasting impression of a society with an entrenched polemical view of Ottomans and Muslims that has been part of the historiography of European-Ottoman relations to the twenty-first century. The problem created by this viewpoint has been that it was often considered to be the only viewpoint, or at least the only one worth considering. Combined with assumptions of European dominance and superiority and nineteenth century historiographical and philosophical thought that non-westerners lack history, it was easy for many historians to

⁹⁸ Dupuy and Dupuy, 676, 705 and 707.

come to the conclusion that European dominance was a given, and the polemical rhetoric was the only voice within the source material. This situation was exacerbated by the long standing Christian historiographical tradition that non-Christians had no ability to act on their own; they were instead simply tools in the hands of God. As both non-westerners and non-Christians, the default idea of an Ottoman Turk was immediately caught coming and going, despite the reality that such an individual may very well have been neither Muslim nor Turkish.

Even after the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk empire in the early sixteenth century, much of the interaction between the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires took place in Hungary and Ottoman-held lands in the Balkans. Given the necessity of trade across the borderlands of Hungary in times of relative peace, particularly of Hungarian beef cattle,⁹⁹ interactions involved regular trade between factors operating on behalf of merchants living in Ottoman and Hapsburg lands, and the movement of over 150,000 animals across the border zone in 1580s.¹⁰⁰ This volume of trade, coupled with the existence of first hand accounts that contradict the polemical view, provided the basis for alternatives to the polemical viewpoint.

⁹⁹ Pál Fodor, "Trade and Traders in Hungary in the Age of Ottoman Conquest: An Outline" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 60 (2007), 2.

¹⁰⁰ Fodor, 3.

Chapter 3: Alternatives to the Polemical Views

While the polemical writings formed a large branch of the traditional historiography of Ottoman-European relations, in recent years other sources have come to the attention of historians. While some, like Paul Rycaut and Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq were rather well-known in historical circles, the diverse array of travel writers, diplomats and other individuals remained largely unknown. This oversight has been largely unfortunate, as their writings contained a great deal of information and first hand observations about both the Ottoman Empire and the observers themselves. In many ways these sources were a break from the traditional polemical view and granted a great deal of potential insight into the interactions between European and Ottoman powers. They also show the Ottoman Empire as an important part of Europe and European politics as well as an entity in its own right.

Despite a long history of mutual antagonism, there was often a great deal of similarity between the writings of Christian and Muslim travelers in the seventeenth century. Individual writers on both sides of the religious divide would, in general, display their hostility and contempt for the other group, while at times acknowledging some scant virtue to be found despite the other group's religion. While both groups traveled for some of the same reasons, particularly trade and diplomatic affairs, the body of Islamic travel literature takes on an additional dimension, that of the religious scholar. It was not uncommon for religious scholars to come to Europe expressly to debate matters of religion with Christians, or at the very least, fold those debates into part of

their purpose in Europe. While educated Christian travelers would, at best, look at Islam as aberrant practice to be observed or denigrated for its negative effects on what others believed to be a salutary people, Muslim travelers saw Christianity as something to be challenged and engaged, often by scholarly debate, as well as a concept they could use to define themselves in opposition. At their root, Christian and Muslim travel accounts engaged many of the same biases, misunderstandings and complicated social connections, but Muslim accounts had a special form of religious travel accounts, which actively sought peaceful opposition and provided a unique insight into Muslim travelers in Christian lands.

The travel accounts of Christians and Muslims contained a great deal of common ground, most of which was reflected in their shared humanity and in particular their mutual animosity. The accounts provided a significant amount of insight into the similarities of culture, at least among travelers and diplomats, despite religious and social factors. What was striking about the accounts was that often the animosity was not always as strong as might be expected, and almost despite the intentions of some authors, positive descriptions of the other seemed to slip into the text. While these accounts had widely varying intended audiences, the real influence seems to have been the unconscious mind of the authors, as their hesitations and confusion over the complexities facing them were often evident in the text despite their own attitudes. Paul Rycout is one such example, since despite his personal dislike of the Turks, he was unable to separate

the political and economic needs of the British empire and urged the declaration of war that seemed to be his true desire.¹⁰¹

While many of the Muslim accounts did not contain the same naked hostility toward Christians that can be found in the Christian accounts, many of them, particularly al-Ghassani's and Evliya Çelebi's, reflected the hostility between the two groups and the reality of a history of warfare between them. On the other hand, the accounts of Qasim and Aisha expressed a great deal of interconnectedness and friendships that reach beyond the boundaries of country and religion, and shared a significant amount of interaction, trade and cooperation between individuals of different backgrounds. In the writings of Qasim in particular, the desire to confront and condemn the other seems to be subdued by a desire to teach and learn. While the hallmarks of assumed cultural superiority remain, the difference in approach was notable for its intentions if not its concrete results. Other authors were also confronted with a more complicated reality as well, often torn, as Rycout was, between his dislike of Muslims as a people and other needs and concerns whether they were political, social or economic. Even Evliya Çelebi, despite his often dismissive views of Christians, was accused by his contemporaries of being too soft on and too accepting of individual Christians.¹⁰² The reality of seventeenth century travel writing seemed have echoed to the complicated nature of a turbulent time, where no conflict or venture of cooperation was permanent or straightforward, but rather a morass of shifting needs and temporary accommodations with the other, one's society and one's self.

¹⁰¹ Rycout, 217-8.

¹⁰² Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality, the World of Evliya Çelebi* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 65.

The overlap of Christian and Muslim attitudes within sixteenth and seventeenth century sources was quite unlikely to be a coincidence. In general, however, these were educated men who travelled between the same spheres of influence: whether they were Christians entering Muslim-held lands or Muslims entering Christian-held lands, they travelled by much the same means and with a great deal of commonality of experience. It would be a greater stretch of the imagination if they were unable to find any common experiences, as both groups experienced the other as outsiders.

As parallels go, it was relatively easy to detect the similarities between Christian and Muslim travel writing. A natural criticism of the other seems to be embedded in the thought processes of both groups, and often reflected how different the other group is from the observer's customs and traditions. A particular case in point comes from the writings of Evliya Çelebi, a well-to-do man known for his extensive travels within the Ottoman Empire in the late seventeenth century, who carried out various tasks for his patron, Melek Ahmed Pasha. At one point in the accounts of his travels in the Balkans, he interjects his opinions on the Austrians and the Hungarians, pointing out that despite the catechism that "unbelievers are a single community,"¹⁰³ the Catholic Austrians and Protestant Hungarians had some significant differences. He made a great deal of the Hungarians' hospitality, skill as warriors and cleanliness, and remarked that their frontier warriors look just like Ottoman frontier warriors, and ultimately, "though both of them are unbelievers without faith, the Hungarians are more honorable and cleaner infidels."¹⁰⁴ This was somewhat surprising as the late 1650s and early 1660s were marked by a

¹⁰³ Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality, the World of Evliya Çelebi*, 66.

¹⁰⁴ Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality, the World of Evliya Çelebi*, 66-7.

significant war between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary, in which the Turks were ultimately defeated and repulsed. Perhaps it was a matter of admiration for a successful foe, but his words showed a surprising lack of bitterness towards a recent enemy.

Often, however, Evliya Çelebi was openly critical of Christians, blaming them for the banditry endemic in Albania, stressing the need to reinforced defenses against Christian nations, or, in one case, raze a castle so it could not be used against the Ottomans.¹⁰⁵ However, given the hostility between the Ottoman Empire and Christian nations in the 1660s and 1670s, when Evliya Çelebi was writing his account, his distrust of Christians could be considered quite natural. In 1670 he was recruiting men as soldiers and workmen to reinforce and rebuild the fortress of Zarnata in Greece. Comparatively, however, Evliya Çelebi's tone was almost reasonable for the time, as many voices on both sides of the Christian-Muslim conflict were significantly more agitated. From the Christian perspective, travel accounts and important public figures had called for the destruction of the enemy, or condemned them as unworthy in some fashion. In Europe, distinguished voices such as Martin Luther called out for the destruction of the Turks, dismissing them as unworthy infidels whom God would destroy.¹⁰⁶ In the Muslim world as well, authors often expressed disdain and contempt for their enemies. The great Muslim traveler, Ibn Battuta, casually dismissed Russian Christians as "an ugly and perfidious people."¹⁰⁷ Despite the religious and cultural

¹⁰⁵ Robert Dankoff and Robert Elsie, *Evliya Çelebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 97 and 15.

¹⁰⁶ Luther, 27-8.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Lee, ed. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta in the Near East, Asia and Africa 1325-1354* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc, 2004), 80.

differences of Europeans and Ottomans, a disdain for the other was a mindset often shared by both.

In 1686, the writings of John Chardin referenced the unrestrained enthusiasm of the Venetian ambassador for Turkish policy and education, to the point that the ambassador assured Chardin that he would send his own son to the Ottoman Court.¹⁰⁸ In 1699, this enthusiasm is matched by the letters of Abdallah bin Aisha. Aisha was a member of a Moroccan delegation to sent to negotiate a treaty with France, in order to arrange the exchange of Christian and Muslim prisoners.¹⁰⁹ Upon his return he described to his lord, Mulay Ismail, then ruler of Morocco, the natural goodness of the French people and encouraged trade and good relations between Morocco and France.¹¹⁰ Although his original negotiations failed, Aisha maintained several contacts in France, wrote to them often, and attempted to negotiate trade deals and even a marriage between his lord, Mulay Ismail, and the Princess de Conti, one of the daughters of King Louis XIV. In doing so, he promised that “she will retain her religion and the customs of her predecessors, and she will not experience anything unsatisfactory in all her affairs.”¹¹¹ While this was to some degree political flattery to encourage a diplomatic tie, Aisha was also conducting personal business with his factor in the same letter, encouraging national as well as personal trade, and trusting that agent with the delivery of diplomatic news as

¹⁰⁸ Chardin, 51.

¹⁰⁹ Abdallah bin Aisha, “Letters” in Matar, 197.

¹¹⁰ Abdallah bin Aisha, 203.

¹¹¹ Abdallah bin Aisha, 208.

well as gifts and trade goods, all of which signified a great deal of trust between two men divided by both national borders and religion.

Aisha's letters also reveal a number of intimate connections between himself and his hosts and colleagues in France, a connection that was further established between their respective families. In one letter, he expressed his love to Madame Le Camus, a woman of the French court, in a letter which was addressed "To reach the hand of the Madame de Signor Le Camus from your lover, and the one who yearns for your face and whose condition cannot be hidden."¹¹² In other letters to his factors and contacts, he expressed his sincere hope for good words about their families and assured them that their wives, sisters and daughters are much on the minds and lips of his own daughters. In doing so, he displayed a great deal of friendship and familial affection for his French contacts which stretch far beyond religious or cultural divisions.¹¹³

The truly unique aspect of Muslim travel writing is the willingness of traveling religious scholars to seek out and debate religion and theology with Christians. Although there was a distinct sense of self-assurance about the correctness of their faith, these individuals were primarily concerned in proving their arguments with logic and reason, and would make an effort to base their arguments on Christian sources in order to convince their opponents of the virtues of the Muslim faith. Ahmad bin Qasim was such a scholar, one who was quite familiar with the Christian faith as a forced convert in Andalusia before he fled to the safety of Morocco in 1595.

¹¹² Abdallah bin Aisha, 201-2.

¹¹³ Abdallah bin Aisha, 212-3.

Qasim was a negotiator sent to France and Holland in 1609, to negotiate on behalf of Muslims who had been robbed by Christian ship captains during the expulsion from Iberia.¹¹⁴ However, his account began with the statement that the “purpose of his writing was to present an account of his intellectual and theological encounters with the Christians of Europe.”¹¹⁵ As such, Qasim was writing primarily for a religious audience in the Arabic world, both to reassure travelers of the superiority of the Muslim faith and to provide a model for proper behavior in the lands of the unbelievers.

Qasim recounted his debates with French nobles and clergy, particularly over the issues of fasting, alcohol and proscribed foods, arguing that Christians do not follow the correct proscriptions that are present even in the Christian Gospels.¹¹⁶ His account focused primarily on his own successful logic, the Christians; grudging acceptance of some, but not all, of his points, particularly in the matter of alcohol consumption and their failure to refute his arguments. At times he strayed from the religious focus on his text, in particular his stay in Olonne which largely dealt with his relationship with a young French noblewoman and their mutual attraction toward each other. By his account, Qasim resisted the temptation he felt toward this unnamed woman, largely by attempting to educate her on, and remind himself of, virtuous behavior.

Qasim’s account was structured by each city he visited in his travels, and the debates he had there. Unsurprisingly, Qasim’s account displayed him in an intensively positive light, always patient and offering explanations for any questions relating to Islam

¹¹⁴ Ahmad bin Qasim, “The Protector of the Religion Against the Unbelievers,” in Matar, 6-8.

¹¹⁵ Ahmad bin Qasim, 6.

¹¹⁶ Ahmad bin Qasim, 9-11.

and always on the winning side of any religious debate. While he did not always convince his audience of the correctness of his position, usually because of their own stubbornness, he left his readers with a lingering sense of his spiritual authority and superiority, having triumphed over his disputational opponents using their own books and tools. Given that his work was intended for a Muslim audience, it is not at all surprising that it reflects the ideal of the superiority of Islam.

Mohammad bin abd al-Wahad al-Ghassani was another Moroccan diplomat sent by Mulay Ismal in the late seventeenth century. Like Qasim and Aisha, al-Ghassani was sent by his lord to negotiate with Christians, in this case primarily for Islamic books left behind in the expulsion from Spain, but also for Muslim captives, in exchange for Christian captives. Unlike Qasim, al-Ghassani focused on the country rather than the people, and his was the first Muslim account of Spain since the expulsion in 1609.¹¹⁷ While al-Ghassani was much more hostile to Christianity, as he was traveling in lands that he considered to rightly belong to his people, he remained respectful of Christianity and like Qasim, used the Bible rather than the Koran to refute Christians with whom he disputed.

Al-Ghassani's account is partly a history of Spain, particularly Andalus, and the geography and cities through which he traveled. He combined this with a sense of religious purpose, and the need to redeem captives for his lord.¹¹⁸ Upon his arrival in the Andalusian region, al-Ghassani was overwhelmed by its beauty, which he in part he

¹¹⁷ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, "The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive," in Matar, 114.

¹¹⁸ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 120-1.

ascribes to being, “of the descent of the Andalus and of the blood of the last king of Granada.”¹¹⁹ In his travels through Spain, he often stayed with descendants of *conversos*, Muslims who had been forced to adopt Christianity. He made a point of teaching them about Islam, and generally leaves hopeful that he had left enough of a positive impression upon them to guide them back to their “true faith.”¹²⁰

Al-Ghassani’s descriptions of the countryside were quite vivid, both in imagery and in clear directions from one location to another. As he approached the Spanish capital, his account shifted to include commentaries on monastic orders, and then the history of the House of Hapsburg, and finally the Inquisition. From his comments, al-Ghassani was convinced that the purpose of the Inquisition was primarily to convert or slay the surviving members of the Jewish population in Spain. While the focus of Qasim’s account was religion and spiritual matters, al-Ghassani was much more concerned with historical, geographic and political concerns. While he referenced debates with Christian figures, particularly with the monks of various monasteries along his route, his account was much more influenced by temporal matters than spiritual ones.¹²¹

Despite this emphasis, he did delve into what he considered to be the failings of the Christian faith, and remarked that “they have followed error in what they uphold of their false doctrine and flagrant error and deviance from the right path and the clear

¹¹⁹ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 125.

¹²⁰ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 132.

¹²¹ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 189-190.

argument.”¹²² He holds the popes personally responsible for these errors, and expresses some regret that among many of the common people, these errors can only be cured by the sword.¹²³ Oddly, however, the text does not relate the fate of the captives on whose behalf he was to negotiate, but instead ends with the description of several mosques that he hope will some day return to the hands of faithful Muslims.¹²⁴

In this context, Busbecq’s *Turkish Letters* raised some peculiar issues of interpretation. Despite his status as diplomat on behalf of Ferdinand I, King of Bohemia and Hungary and later Holy Roman Emperor, Busbecq’s letters and reports display an open sympathy and respect for the Ottomans and their ways Busbecq’s care and openness were of particular note since he was writing to fellow diplomat Nicholas Michault and he later prepared final drafts for publication in both Antwerp and Paris before his death.¹²⁵ His respect was particularly evident when it came to military matters, as he clearly admired the discipline, sobriety and patience of the Ottoman armies, comparing them rather despairingly to the poor quality of the Hapsburg armies, saying “One army must prevail and the other be destroyed... can we doubt what the result will be?”¹²⁶ Much of the text was concerned with the rebellion of Süleyman’s son Bayezid, and the latter’s involvement with the Safavids, in his attempt to wrest the throne from his father.

¹²² Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 177.

¹²³ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 177.

¹²⁴ Mohammad bin abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani, 189.

¹²⁵ According to the Foreword by Karl Roeder. Busbecq, ix.

¹²⁶ Busbecq, 111-2.

Busbecq repeatedly expressed fear that once that problem was solved, the Ottomans would be free to campaign against the German lands again.¹²⁷

Busbecq was also willing to put aside traditional Christian moral judgements. At one point, he commented in passing on the practice of slave raiding, and the profits the Ottoman raise by such a practice. Rather than condemning it outright, he merely noted “that the ancient Romans did not despise gains from this source” and that they do not practice slavery against fellow Muslims.¹²⁸ This lack of judgement or moral outrage was rather astonishing for the time, and was a distinct contrast from the tone of the *Türkenbüchlein* on the same topic. Those writings depicted the Turks as merciless towards slaves, as they treated slaves like livestock, and “leave no stone unturned in their effort to convert the slaves to the false and diabolical doctrines of Mahomet.”¹²⁹ Busbecq’s lack of concern was emphasized by his comments on slavery as an institution, which he glorified, and cited both the need to control weak-willed individuals and the need for labor to erect great public works in the spirit of the ancients.¹³⁰

The writings of men such as Paul Rycaut further illustrated this picture from the other direction, for despite his personal distaste for the Turks as a people and a grudging admission of their admirable qualities, he admitted to the necessity of English trade with the Ottoman Empire for the good of the nation.¹³¹ Rycaut was surprisingly aware of distinctions within Muslim society and his *Present State of the Ottoman Empire*,

¹²⁷ Busbecq, 160, 225-6.

¹²⁸ Busbecq, 102.

¹²⁹ Bohnstedt, 22.

¹³⁰ Busbecq, 101-2.

¹³¹ Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 217-8.

published in 1619, offers up his observations after five years as part of an embassy in Constantinople, summing up his experience and qualifications. In his epistles to his readers and his sponsor, he claims to draw much of his information from his own explorations and from Turkish records.¹³² Rycaut's opinion of the Ottoman Empire was a fairly negative one, as he claims the Turks themselves are almost utterly without merit, as they lack "faithfulness, virtue and moral honesty," yet states that, "one might admire the long continuance of this great and vast Empire."¹³³ This inherent contradiction is not unique in European accounts of Muslims, and was perhaps a product of a need to be perceived as a good Christian, and the easiest way to do so was to criticize Muslims. Additionally, this was likely an attempt to deal with the same fear of domination that informed the polemical sources, as well as an attempt by some Europeans to indirectly project power onto Ottomans.

Despite his opinions, Rycaut was aware of many of the subtleties and differences among the Ottomans themselves, most particularly in the matter of religion. Unlike many observers, Rycaut recognized a number of different sects and heresies among the Ottomans and carefully recorded the distinctions between them.¹³⁴ Unsurprisingly, however, Rycaut sees an inevitable conflict between Christians and Muslims, and takes great care to blame this conflict on Muslims, going into great detail about a covenant of toleration and cooperation with Christians adopted by Muslims in the early days of Islam,

¹³² Rycaut, Epistle Dedicatory and Epistle to the Reader.

¹³³ Rycaut, 2.

¹³⁴ Rycaut, 141-50.

which was abandoned once the Islamic faith was more secure.¹³⁵ This later assertion is contradicted by Evliya Çelebi, who is quite self-assured when asserting the rights of the Christian population, even when their customs offend him, indicating that he takes this level of tolerance for granted. In his travels in Albania he refers to the Christian population of Gjirokaster in Southern Albania, who “drink alcoholic beverages. Lovers go hand in hand with their pretty boys and embrace them and dance about in the manner of the Christians. This is quite shameful behavior, characteristic of the infidels; but it is their custom, so we cannot censure it.”¹³⁶ In this case Evliya Çelebi’s comments referred to the constraints imposed by Islamic law on the toleration of Christian and Jewish populations within Muslims.

Some writers are unable to keep positive traits out of largely negative accounts. One example of this is Guillaume-Joseph Grelot, a French traveler and merchant, who wrote his account of his travels to Constantinople as advice for others to follow. He recounts that upon returning to France, he offered his work to King of France in lieu of gifts of gold or silver, who was reportedly so delighted by the work that he ordered it published.¹³⁷ Grelot’s condemnation of the Ottomans is not simply limited to past actions or what he saw as a heritage of barbarity. He described them as limiting the possibilities of their subjects, particularly in the arts and sciences:

They are the sworn enemies of ingenuity, not having any thing among them, but what their own natural stupidity prompts them to, for the meer support of humane

¹³⁵ Rycaut, 98-103.

¹³⁶ Robert Dankoff and Robert Elsie, *Evliya Çelebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 85.

¹³⁷ Guillaume-Joseph Grelot, *A Late Voyage to Constantinople* (London, Printed by John Playford, and are to be sold by Henry Bonwicke at the Red-Lyon in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1683), preface.

life: So far are they from the ancient quaintness and ingenuity of the sedulous Egyptians, Arabians, and Greeks, whose Territories they now Lord over, tyrannizing over their posterity with so much cruelty, that they will not suffer them to improve those Arts or Sciences among themselves, which their Ancestors first found out, nor to make use of that knowledge which they have gain'd elsewhere.¹³⁸

Despite this venom, Grelot does manage to find some positive characteristics among the Ottoman Turks. For example, in Gallipoli, he finds a very admirable coexistence among a disparate population, as “most of the Sea-Towns of the Turkish Empire is peopl'd with Christians, Jews, and Turks, who have every one their Churches, Synagogues, and Mosques, and corresponding very amicably together.”¹³⁹ He also blamed most of the crime within the Ottoman Empire not on the Turks themselves, despite their destructive nature, but on Christian renegades who have renounced their faith and converted to Islam. “All the mischief which is done in Turkie is done by the Renegado's, and not by the Turks, who are naturally civil and tractable enough, especially where they meet with persons conformable to their fashions, and that carefully avoid giving scandal or offence.”¹⁴⁰ It was difficult to reconcile the different images of the Ottomans put forth by Grelot, especially since he interspersed the text with such remarks as “among the Turks, there are several who will sell their consciences at a cheap rate.”¹⁴¹ Such tendencies, coupled with a rule of tyranny and cruelty, stand in marked contrast to the amicable coexistence Grelot found in Gallipoli. Perhaps Grelot was attempting to

¹³⁸ Grelot, 242.

¹³⁹ Grelot, 27.

¹⁴⁰ Grelot, 176.

¹⁴¹ Grelot, 237.

balance his commentary to suit his audience or purpose, but it was interesting that he should focus on the peaceful coexistence between different faiths in Gallipoli. It is possible that he discerned some possibility of Christians influencing the Ottomans in some way, or a hope for coexistence that did not involve an Ottoman conquest of Europe.

A profoundly interesting commentary on Ottoman policy comes through Sir John Chardin second hand from the Venetian ambassador, Signor Quirini, who tells Chardin that “the Turkish Policy did very much surpass that of the Europeans: That it was not confin'd within Maxims and Rules; but consisted altogether in Sense and Judgment, as being grounded altogether upon Reason.” More importantly, the Chardin relayed that

He assur'd me, That if had a Son, he would send him to no other School then to the Ottoman Court; where he could not too highly admire the Vizier, who without speaking, writing, or so much as moving himself, Govern'd one of the most Potent Empires of the World, and had extended the Limits of it in several places.¹⁴²

While second hand, this account stands at odds with Chardin's own description of the Ottoman people, whom he described as unintelligent, “There are no People in the World that have been more frequently cheated, or that are more easily gull'd then the Turks; as being naturally very dull, and thick-skull'd, and apt to believe any fair Story.”¹⁴³ While this later view may have been Chardin's own opinion on the Ottomans from the standpoint of a successful merchant, the inclusion of a glowing description of the Ottoman court from a Venetian ambassador casts a different light on his account. By providing a positive view of the Ottomans by way of a second hand, and more importantly, foreign voice, it was possible that Chardin was catering to his intended

¹⁴² John Chardin, *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East-Indies* (London: Printed for Moses Pitt in Duke Street, Westminster, 1686), 51.

¹⁴³ Chardin, 9

audience while providing a more honest opinion in the background. As a French Protestant during the reign of Louis XIV, a strongly Catholic monarch, Chardin had to be cautious in his presentation of material, particularly as he dedicated the work to his sovereign and presented it to the King as a gift at court.¹⁴⁴

Lorenzo Bernardo, a Venetian ambassador, expressed admiration for the “religion, frugality and obedience” which made their conquests possible.¹⁴⁵ However, Bernardo’s 1592 report was an examination of the Ottoman Empire cast in terms of the decline of these traits in hopes of finding evidence of the decline of the Empire. Despite this, he fully illustrated his knowledge of Ottoman society and his admiration of the accomplishments that derived from the traits of religion, frugality and obedience. Considering the number of conflicts and rivalries between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, the level of respect and grudging admiration is quite surprising. The Ottomans were not cast as simple evil infidels to be overcome, but a major power that compared favorably to Greek, Roman and Persian Empires.¹⁴⁶

This last aspect is particularly important in regard to Ottoman history and historiography, as Bernardo would have been well aware of the Ottoman historians who claimed that with the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottoman sultans were the true heirs to the Roman Empire. This claim was reinforced by Süleyman, after he forced Emperor Charles V and Archduke Ferdinand to the treaty table in 1547. Ferdinand renounced his

¹⁴⁴ Chardin, The Epistle Dedicatory.

¹⁴⁵ Lorenzo Bernardo, “Its Decline May Now Be Under Way,” In *Pursuit of Power: Venetian Ambassador’s Reports on Spain, Turkey and France in the Age of Philip II, 1560-1600*. ed. James Davis (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 156.

¹⁴⁶ Bernardo, 165-166.

claim to the kingdom of Hungary and paid 30,000 ducats a year to the Ottoman Empire for his Hungarian holdings. As a result of this treaty, the symbolic language of the Ottoman court changed. Süleyman now referred to Charles the V as King of Spain, not Emperor, and used the title ‘Emperor of the Romans’ for himself.¹⁴⁷ For a Venetian ambassador to have reinforced such an idea, even indirectly, to his own government a half century later was a significant admission of the power and prestige of the Ottoman Empire.

In *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, Daniel Goffman reinforced the importance of Ottoman-Venetian diplomacy and claimed it was one of the foundations of international diplomacy in Europe. He went so far as to say that many of the “essential elements” of modern diplomatic systems are based on Italian experiences with the Ottoman Empire. Goffman listed “permanent missions, extra-territoriality, reciprocity and the gathering of intelligence” as a few of these essential elements.¹⁴⁸ He held that Italian diplomacy in the Ottoman court helped to “unmask (or at least to temper) myths about the impenetrable Orient and the ‘terrible Turk.’”¹⁴⁹ As such, diplomacy was a key to an understanding between Europeans and Ottomans, as well as a basis for diplomatic practice between European nations.

This was all possible, claimed Goffman, because of the structure of Ottoman society. The legal and traditional codes that allowed Christians and Jewish subjects to

¹⁴⁷ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 54.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Goffman. “Negotiating with the Renaissance State” In *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 70.

¹⁴⁹ Goffman, 70.

live within the Empire were easily stretched to grant rights to foreign visitors. However, a significant problematic aspect to Goffman's argument is that the diplomatic missions were not truly reciprocal. Both the structure of Ottoman governance, based around the *ahidnames*¹⁵⁰ and other political documents, and the reluctance of European powers to accept communities of Muslims inside their capitals contributed to the lack of permanent or long term Ottoman diplomatic missions or resident embassies.¹⁵¹ A fear of Muslim communities within European cities would have been viewed as an even greater problem than the views some European held of Jewish neighborhoods within the capitals. As outsiders, many Europeans would not have been able to trust such a community, particularly since it had the backing and support of a powerful empire.

One surprising source of positive views of the Ottomans comes from a man who the Turks held as a military prisoner and slave. The writings of M. Dalerac, the author of a set of manuscripts claiming to be the *Secret History of the Reign of John Sobieski the III*, provide an incredible first hand insight into the Ottoman Empire. Despite the grandiose title and some second hand history, the documents contained many observations of the author, who was a 'domestic' in service to the Queen of Poland. While the reasons behind why he traveled with the army of John Sobieski III were unclear, he may have been present to take letters between the royal couple. Dalerac was present for the lifting of the siege of Vienna, and he also recorded his travels and capture

¹⁵⁰ Goffman referred to these as "unilateral documents" issued by the Ottoman state. Goffman, 73. However, Suraiya Faroqhi more clearly defines them as as 'grants of privileges,' but acknowledged they are referred to in European sources as 'capitulations,' with distinct different meanings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries compared to the nineteenth and twentieth century usages. Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-30." In *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, ed. Huri Islamoglu-Inan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 328.

¹⁵¹ Goffman, 73.

during the subsequent campaign into Hungary and his year as a Turkish slave. His captivity, despite the hardships he endured, was the most valuable aspect of the work, as it provides a great deal of first hand impressions of life among the Ottomans, starting with his capture:

I found all my Comrades, that had been taken with me the Day before, with the Heads of those that had been kill'd, fix'd at the end of a Pole, and carry'd each by one of the Cavaliers. This was a dreadful Sight, and the only Instance of Cruelty to be observ'd in all the Turkish Customs; for they are a Nation endu'd with a great deal of Humanity, and Charity, having a Sweetness of Temper tho' unpolish'd, and a Bravery, without any thing of Fierceness.¹⁵²

Despite his trials as a slave, Dalerac managed to keep a fairly balanced view on the Ottomans, and rather surprisingly does not turn his manuscript into a polemic against the infidels. Instead he took a rational measure of his captors, commenting on widely diverging topics. On their social order, he related: “they make no Distinction or Subordination of Quality, Birth, or Profession. They are all Equal, excepting their Offices, which only make the Distinction: so that the Sons of a Bassa, and the Grooms of his Stables, when he is dead, are upon the same Level.”¹⁵³

While Dalerac had mixed impressions of Turkish moral qualities, he did try to relate those qualities and evaluate them. He was ambivalent about their character, and described them as “steady in Adversity, less proud in Prosperity, and more patient in Misery, and Slavery.”¹⁵⁴ He was more positive about the social order within the Empire:

¹⁵² M. Dalerac, *Polish manuscripts, or, The secret history of the reign of John Sobieski the III*, (London: Printed for H. Rhodes, at the Star, near Fleet-Bridge; T. Bennet, at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Yard; A. Bell, at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhil; T. Leigh and D. Midwinter, at the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1700), 159-62.

¹⁵³ Dalerac, 185.

¹⁵⁴ Dalerac, 186.

“here I add that Quarrels are very rare among them... every one lives in his own family, without concerning himself with what is done abroad.”¹⁵⁵ However he was less certain about their moral qualities, and contradicts himself on the subject, describing robberies as scarce, but the Turks themselves inclined to avarice:

Their Justice is severe, their Obedience blind, their Religion reverenc'd, and Robberies are scarce known among them, by the care that is taken to root up the very seeds of such a Practice: So that they lock up nothing, their Chambers, Coffers, and Chests do all lye open: And were it not for that sordid Avarice, to which all the Turks are inclin'd, and a propensity to a certain dreadfull piece of debauchery, to which they are more addicted than the Italians, and all other Nations of the World besides, were it not, I say, for these things, they would equal any other People in their Morals.¹⁵⁶

Dalerac's prejudices, while still apparent in these lines, did appear to be slipping away from the standard polemical viewpoint. Unlike many of his contemporaries, his personal interactions with the Turks appeared to raise his opinion of them, despite his capture and his captivity and enslavement. In particular, it contrasts sharply with the views of Sobieski, who Dalerac served at the beginning of the Vienna campaign. Where Sobieski saw an enemy to be fought and defeated in the name of God and Poland, Dalerac found some common ground and reasons to respect the Ottomans despite what he had suffered as a captive and slave.

The non-polemical sources consisted of a wide variety of voices with their own interests and agenda but it is significant that they, to some degree or other, manage to shift away from a commentary of fear, propaganda or domination. These sources contributed greatly to the critique of Said's theory of a history of European domination,

¹⁵⁵ Dalerac, 193.

¹⁵⁶ Dalerac, 193-4.

as many of the authors did not seek conflict between Europeans and Ottomans. Further, the common ground that can be found between Muslim sources and European sources erodes this aspect of *Orientalism* further. This common ground despite social and religious differences also contributed to the idea that the Ottoman Empire is a part of Europe to a significant degree, as trade, diplomacy and personal contact allowed members of both groups to move through the society of the other in a functional way, in spite of religious differences or which side of the theoretical divide between European and non-European they were most familiar with.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

There was a great variety of sources and voices in the European sources on Ottomans and the Ottoman Empire. The primary division was between sources that were a polemical reaction against the Ottomans, largely out of fear of domination or destruction, and sources that advocated some manner of relationship between European states and the Ottoman Empire. Both sides of this divide cause a problem for a fundamental assumption of Edward Said's *Orientalism* theory, that any relationship between Europeans and others in the Middle East is defined by European dominance. For the early modern period and the Ottoman Empire in particular, this was an incorrect assumption, as the balance of power was in fact much more even, and for much of the period, tilted in favor of the Ottomans.

The polemical views were informed by major military and political events and while they were imbedded deep within their own context, they displayed a great deal of common ground in their roots. The most fundamental commonality between the polemical sources was a strong fear of Ottoman domination of Europe and Christendom. While the conflict was in some ways a normal clash between empires and monarchies as the Europeans understood it, they also viewed it as a significant conflict between religions as well as the potential domination by a culturally foreign other. While fifteenth century polemics were informed largely by the fall of Constantinople, the sixteenth century polemics were in many ways the most complex, as they were also a reaction to the unsuccessful or lack of attempts to challenge the Ottomans. This was particularly true

in the German lands, were it was further complicated by the confessional divide between Catholic and Protestant as well as the conflicts with other European powers, particularly France, who went so far as to ally with the Ottomans at the expense of their mutual rival, the Hapsburgs. In the late seventeenth century, the polemics took a different turn, in the form of propaganda to support the war against the Ottomans in the wake of the King Sobieski's forces raising the siege at Vienna in 1683. These particular polemics were rapidly distributed and used to raise moral and support for an alliance of Christian powers against the Ottomans, a Holy League that in fact achieved unprecedented success by driving the Ottomans out of Hungary.

The non-polemical sources were a product of a wide variety of individuals, but were largely produced by merchants, travelers and diplomats. For the most part, these individuals found some value within the Ottoman Empire, be it a sense of order, an efficient and disciplined military, or a necessary trading partner in the face of political and economic reality. Many of these accounts were responses based on first-hand interaction with the Ottoman Empire and people, often over a period of several years. The fear of domination was not altogether absent from these accounts, but they were quite distinct from the polemical accounts and generally highly individualized.

For men such as Paul Rycaut, a British diplomat, the Ottoman Empire was a potential threat, but more important it was too important as a trading partner to be bogged down in religious conflicts. For the Hapsburg diplomat Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Empire was a potential threat to his nation, but culturally had a great deal to offer. Other ambassadors also found aspects of the Empire worthy or important despite a history of

conflict between Europeans and Ottomans. The merchants were often divided in their opinions between dislike and fear of the other and the need for trade or some other appealing quality of Ottoman society. The most important aspect of the non-polemic sources was their ability to interact with Ottoman society and pass through Ottoman territory without significant problems. The toleration for non-Muslims built into Ottoman law undoubtedly contributed to this, but in most cases these individuals were able to remain within the Ottoman Empire for significant periods of time or leave and return to the Empire without significant conflict.

Additionally, the importance of the non-polemical sources was reinforced by the common ground that could be found with the accounts of Muslim travelers in the same period. These accounts displayed reciprocal attitudes towards Europe and Europeans that many of the non-polemical sources displayed towards the Ottoman Empire and Ottomans in general. The commonalities in the accounts also demonstrated a great deal of evidence for the idea that while the Ottoman Empire was unique in many respects it was also tightly tied into the European network of trade and diplomacy, and further demonstrated that individuals on both sides of the cultural divide could operate effectively with the other culture.

The importance of the non-polemical sources should not be understated, as they provided additional insights into the relationship between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the alternative views of Europeans of the middle and upper classes. While the polemical sources should not be dismissed, the use of additional voices provided a greater integrity to the fabric of early modern history. The additional sources

added depth to the history of the period, one more complicated and more in keeping with the reality of the period, rather than a simplified overview of historical progress. This study was only a brief overview of the existent and diverse sources that survived from the early modern period. Further studies could provide even more insights to the complex web of relationships between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, and add illumination to the question of whether the Ottoman Empire was an entity wholly part of Europe, or a complex structure that straddled different worlds and world-views. The voices of early modern Europeans, however, were sufficient to establish that the Ottomans of the early modern period were not a community entirely apart from Europe. Their integration into the community of European states was not complete, but it was a fundamental part of European interaction and trade, and helped to shape the course of European history.

Further research could focus on specific areas of interest, especially different parts of Europe and their specific relationships with the Ottoman Empire. These regional studies can then be examined for insights into larger patterns, such as religious and trade relationships. One specific area of interest was the diplomatic and mercantile relationships of the Italian cities and the Ottoman Empire. While Daniel Goffman suggested that the Italian diplomatic missions had a direct effect on later diplomatic practice in Europe,¹⁵⁷ the records could also be used to examine the conflicts over Italian trading posts and colonies throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The complex interactions in Hungary are of special concern, partly because it formed the border zone between the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires, but also because of

¹⁵⁷ Goffman, 70.

the rich complexity of daily life in a region undergoing political flux, with multiple levels of government and autonomy. The morass of the political relationships must have had an effect on daily life in the nation, as Pál Fodor sketched in his brief discussion *Trade and Traders in Hungary in the Age of Ottoman Conquest: an Outline*. The interactions of merchants and travelers with the array of Hungarian nobles and their Hapsburg, Ottoman or independent Hungarian overlords was worthy of significant study. The period after the Treaty of Karlowitz was also worthy of study, and a great deal could be learned by building on Rifaat A. Abou-el-Haj's *Closure of the Ottoman Frontier*, and using the Hungarian archives to map any potential change in attitudes toward or interaction with the Ottoman Empire. The rich tapestry of confessional diversity in Hungary also requires examination, as does the relationship between the various ethnic groups and the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic faith.

The relationships and alliances between France and the Ottomans also require examination. While men like Dumont rejected French alliances with the Ottomans, the alliances often served the best interest of France against their Hapsburg rivals.¹⁵⁸ The conflict between political and religious interests was particularly apparent in French-Ottoman relations, more so than any other European state. The reaction from both the pulpit and the palace, as well as the reactions from other European states, would shed a great deal of light on the nature of this relationship.

¹⁵⁸ Dumont, 175-6.

The Hapsburg Empire was of course the main rival of the Ottoman Empire, and best personified by the rivalry between Süleyman and Charles V.¹⁵⁹ A great deal more can be learned by examining the diplomatic relationships between the Ottoman and Hapsburg states. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, while concerned with the possibility of a new campaign against the German lands and interests, seemed quite open to the possibilities of learning from the Ottomans in both military and social fields, and developing closer relations with the Sultan and his government.¹⁶⁰ While Paul Rycout provided a similar insight into the British relationship with the Ottoman Empire, a clearer picture of Hapsburg diplomatic efforts is necessary to understand the relationship between Hapsburg diplomacy and the large amount of polemical voices against the Ottomans in the sixteenth century.

Further work can also be done in the area of confessional interaction- how the Greek Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches interacted with the Muslim faith and vice versa, as well as how they interacted with each other in wake of the spread of an Islamic empire. Martin Luther at times described the Turks as a tool of the Papacy to be used to destroy the Protestant faith,¹⁶¹ but Ottoman historians such as Halil İnalcık have suggested a closer relationship between Ottomans and Protestants due to their rejection of idols and the Papacy.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ See Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman" in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Time*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1992).

¹⁶⁰ Busbecq, 101-2 and 106.

¹⁶¹ Luther, 27-8.

¹⁶² Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire, The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Paperback, 2000), 37.

Of course, it is of vital importance to do similar work with Ottoman sources. Ottoman views on Europeans are of particular importance, as are their own views on their self-identity: did the segments of the Ottoman population consider themselves to be part of Europe. Additionally, their views on their own religious and ethnic identity was of particular importance in such a vast and diverse state. Ottoman merchants and diplomats could provide significant insights into the treatment and relationships between Ottoman travelers and European communities.

This research also has significant applicability to other fields. It is possible to reexamine the simple assumptions of Western dominance and hostility between European and other. The field of travel writing is specifically applicable, how it relates to the work of Dathorne's *Imagining the World*, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, and Boies Penrose's *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance* as well as others. As a separate frontier from the Atlantic World, there is a great deal to be learned in the differences between Atlantic travelers and those that traveled in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe.

The polemical and non-polemical sources provided a great deal of insight into the complexity of early modern society. The non-polemical sources altered the classical historiographical story of inherent conflict between Europe and the Ottomans. The default assumption that all Europeans would be hostile to the traditional enemies of Christendom could be seen as false assumption. At the same time, however, the traditional story can not be rejected entirely, as there was a great deal of polemical material produced over the course of the early modern period.

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