

DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS: THE INFLUENCE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ON MODERN EUROPE

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Abstract: This study examines the multidimensional influence of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922) on European political, economic, intellectual, and cultural development through systematic analysis of historical documents and secondary literature. Challenging traditional historiography that portrays the Empire solely as Europe's antagonist, this research demonstrates that Ottoman-European relations constituted a productive dialogue that fundamentally shaped European modernity. The analysis reveals three primary mechanisms of influence: (1) Ottoman military power catalyzed European state centralization and the Military Revolution; (2) Ottoman control of Eastern trade routes stimulated the Age of Exploration and early capitalism; (3) Ottoman governance models, particularly regarding religious pluralism and merit-based administration, provided alternative frameworks that informed Enlightenment debates. Specific case studies document how Ottoman diplomatic and commercial support enabled the survival of France, England, and Holland against Habsburg dominance,

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while Ottoman scientific and medical knowledge – exemplified by smallpox inoculation practices – directly advanced European public health. The study concludes that understanding European modernity requires recognizing the Ottoman Empire not as peripheral adversary but as central interlocutor whose presence shaped the continent's institutional, economic, and intellectual architecture. The main research questions are: (1) In what ways did the Ottoman Empire shape the growth of modern Europe? (2) What was the nature of Ottoman-European interaction beyond the traditional conflict narrative? (3) How did the Ottoman Empire help European civilization change and adapt?

Keywords: Civilizations, Ottoman Empire, Modern Europe, Influence.

Introduction

Civilizational dialogue is a structured interaction among various civilizations or cultural groups, aimed at promoting mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence, and cooperative problem-solving, despite considerable differences in values, viewpoints, and historical backgrounds. It transcends superficial cultural exchange by tackling fundamental questions such as meaning, justice, and human flourishing as understood within diverse civilizational frameworks.

Ottoman Empire a historical phenomenon that represents one of the greatest polities in the world, extending its powerful reach over enormous lands on three continents for over six hundred years. At its peak during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire covered an enormous region that ranged from the very gates of Vienna to the Persian Gulf, and included the Crimean Peninsula to the North African shore, spanning the lands of modern-day Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Egypt, Hungary, Macedonia,

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Romania, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Arabian lands, and a significant part of the North African coastal region. The Ottoman Empire was clearly a strategic meeting point connecting the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa that the European balance of power could neither disregard nor overlook.

While recent scholarship has begun to challenge the binary opposition framework, significant gaps remain in our understanding of Ottoman-European relations. First, existing studies tend to compartmentalize Ottoman influence into isolated domains—examining military history, diplomatic relations, or cultural exchange—without synthesizing these dimensions into a coherent analytical framework. Second, most research focuses on specific bilateral relationships (Ottoman-French, Ottoman-Venetian) rather than examining how Ottoman presence systematically reshaped the broader European political and economic order. Third, the transmission of Ottoman institutional knowledge and governance models to European Enlightenment thought remains underexplored compared to well-documented military and commercial interactions. Finally, little attention has been given to how Ottoman recognition and support functioned as an alternative legitimizing authority that enabled emerging Protestant states to survive against Catholic hegemony.

This study addresses these gaps by providing an integrated analysis across political, economic, intellectual, and cultural domains, demonstrating not merely that the relationship was complex, but specifically how Ottoman agency functioned as a constitutive force in European state formation, economic transformation, and intellectual development. By synthesizing evidence from diplomatic correspondence, commercial treaties, philosophical texts, and scientific exchanges, this research reveals the Ottoman

Empire as an active architect—not merely a catalyst or context—of European modernity.

This research paper looks at all the above factors related to the Ottoman impact on Europe and shows that without the impact that Europe has experienced for all those centuries as a part of the Ottoman Empire, the modern European continent would be a very different place. The following are some of the above-mentioned themes that the paper will explore as it looks at the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Europe. Military developments and how the Europeans adopted them, the history of diplomacy and relations between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, and so forth.

The paper critiques the reductionist, binary perspective of the Ottoman Empire as solely an adversary to Europe. Conventional historiography has depicted the Ottoman Empire as the enduring "other" that delineated European identity, thereby obscuring the complex, multifaceted interactions between the Ottoman Empire and European states. The study contests this reductionist, conflict-oriented narrative.

The paper's objectives are: (1) Show that the Ottoman Empire was not only a threat from the outside, but also a powerful force that changed and adapted European culture and society; (2) Look into how the Ottomans affected European governments, courts, scientific progress, philosophical ideas, and the arts of expression; (3) Give a more in-depth look at the complicated relationship between Europe and the Ottoman Empire that goes beyond just fighting.

The research utilizes a historical documentary analysis methodology by means of a review of historical records, an examination of existing scholarly literature on the subject, and an examination of primary sources (letters, diplomatic correspondence, historical records).

The key findings show that: (1) Economic Effects: The Ottomans' control of trade routes led to the Age of

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Exploration and the discovery of the Americas as Europeans looked for other ways to get to Asia; (2) Cultural Exchange: The millet system's religious pluralism and other Ottoman governance models had an impact on Enlightenment ideas about religious freedom and tolerance.

The significance of the study: (1) Dialogue of Civilizations: Shows that the relationship between the Ottomans and Europeans was more than just a fight, it was a productive exchange; (2) Contemporary Relevance: Offers a framework for comprehending cross-cultural influences and the development of modern European identity through prolonged engagement with the Islamic world.

Historical Overview of Political Progress

At first, the Ottoman state was just a small emirate in northwestern Anatolia, near the border between the Seljuk and Byzantine Empires. It grew quickly and became a major imperial power between 1389 and 1402, reaching the Danube in the north and the Euphrates in the east. The Ottomans abruptly ended the first imperial effort when they failed to take advantage of the strategic advantage they gained by defeating the crusader forces led by Hungarian King Sigismund at the Battle of Nigbolu (Nicopolis) in 1396. Instead, they focused their military efforts on the poorly timed annexation of Muslim emirates in Anatolia. This victory demonstrated that Ottoman military capacity exceeded that of combined European crusader forces, fundamentally altering European calculations about the feasibility of military confrontation versus diplomatic accommodation (İnalçık, 2017). The Ottoman Empire's unity in Europe and Asia was weakened by the war that followed, which ended with Timur's big victory over the Ottomans at the Battle of Ankara in 1402. From 1402 to 1413, the empire was torn apart by ongoing civil war as rival claimants to the throne fought to regain control of their families (Shaw, 1977).

The Ottoman Empire's power in Anatolia was greatly reduced during the civil war, and the European province became the center of political power in the empire. Edirne became the empire's main political capital during this time. Most people think that the civil war only lasted from 1402 to 1413, but political instability lasted until 1425, which sometimes put the possibility of the empire breaking up again at risk. After the Ottomans took Salonica from the Venetians in 1430, they began a new phase of imperial expansion in Europe, defeating a number of crusader armies that had come from the West (İnalçık, 1977). The Ottomans' victory over Polish-Hungarian King Ladislaus at the Battle of Varna in 1444 firmly reestablished the empire's dominance over the Balkan territories and made the Byzantine Empire's eventual fall seem likely. The Ottoman Empire's recovery from internal fragmentation showed how strong and well-run its institutions were. These were qualities that European political theorists would later look for in alternatives to hereditary succession crises.

The Ottoman emperor got his power from three different traditions: Islamic religious leadership (sultan), Central Asian imperial tradition (*khakān*), and Roman imperial succession (*kayser*, or Caesar). This combination gave the Ottoman ruler legitimacy in many civilizations, including Islamic, Central Asian, and European. This made the Empire a unique multi-civilizational government. For European rulers, this was both a challenge to Christian claims of universal authority and an example of how different groups of people could be ruled by the same government. The Ottoman ruler saw himself as the rightful heir to the Roman Empire after he took over Constantinople in 1453. The Ottoman Empire claimed to rule the whole world after the fall of Constantinople (Fanani, 2011). In just 64 years after Constantinople fell, the Ottomans took over the Arab capitals of Damascus, Cairo, Mecca, and Medina, making them the most powerful Islamic nation in the world (Serkan. 2015).

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This three-part legitimacy formula—Islamic, Turco-Mongol, and Roman—made the Ottoman sultan a universal ruler whose power went beyond religious boundaries. This claim went against what European Christian kings thought about what made a government legitimate and would later be used in debates during the Enlightenment about the link between religious authority and temporal power.

The Influence of the Conquest of Constantinople by Muhammad Al-Fatih on Europe and the Islamic World

The conquest of Constantinople by Muhammad Al-Fatih had profound implications in global history. Before the conquest, Constantinople represented a significant barrier to the dissemination of Islam in Europe. Subsequent to the conquest, Constantinople emerged as a significant conduit for the dissemination of Islam in Europe, exhibiting more stability and tranquility relative to the preceding period (Ash-Shallabi, 2021).

The conquest of Constantinople is considered the most significant event in world history, especially for Islam. European historians and their contemporaries regard the conquest of Constantinople as the conclusion of the "Middle Ages" and the commencement of the Modern Era (Ash-Shallabi, 2021). Subsequent to the capture, Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih addressed numerous concerns in Constantinople and initiated its fortification, establishing it as the capital of the Ottoman Caliphate. The city was originally named Islambul, or "the city of Islam", but gradually became more widely recognized as Istanbul (Mulyadi, 2021).

The conquest of Constantinople had a significant impact on Europe. The prospect of Islamic incursions from Istanbul instilled anxiety in Western Christians and overshadowed their existence. Western poets and writers aimed to incite animosity and rage in the minds of European Christians against Islam and Muslims. Pope Nicholas V was

significantly impacted by the fall of Constantinople and endeavored to unify European nations in a conflict against Muslims. These attempts were not fully actualized due to the myriad problems encountered by European nations during that period (Bagaskara, 2018).

Overall, the capture of Constantinople elicited great delight, pride, and appreciation among the Islamic countries of Asia and Africa. The conquest was a long-anticipated aspiration of preceding generations. Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih dispatched letters to sovereigns in Islamic regions, including Egypt, the Hijaz, Persia, India, and other kingdoms, to proclaim this remarkable triumph. The announcement of victory was promptly declared and commemorated with expressions of gratitude, the adornment of residences and businesses, and the raising of vibrant banners and textiles (Malcolm, 2019). Furthermore, the capture of Constantinople by Muhammad Al-Fatih had significant repercussions in both Europe and the Islamic world. The conquest in Europe produced substantial transformations in politics and culture. The city, formerly emblematic of the Eastern Roman Empire's might and grandeur, was converted into the capital of the Ottoman Caliphate. This conquest extended Ottoman territorial influence into European territories and transformed the regional power relations.

The political ramifications of the conquest of Constantinople are seen in the evolving political landscape of Europe. The conquest stimulated Western European powers to pursue other ways to Asia, circumventing the expanding Ottoman dominance over the Bosphorus Strait. This compelled them to investigate new maritime pathways, ultimately resulting in the identification of novel trade routes across the Atlantic Ocean and the onset of the Age of Western Exploration. The capture of Constantinople profoundly impacted art, architecture, and literature throughout the Ottoman domains. The major constructions erected post-

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conquest, like as the Hagia Sophia Mosque, exemplified Byzantine and Eastern Roman architectural styles, having been transformed from a church. Art and literature thrived due to the dissemination of affluent and varied Eastern civilizations and influences (Bagaskara, 2018).

The capture of Constantinople by Muhammad Al-Fatih significantly influenced both Europe and the Islamic world. It politically impacted the geopolitical landscape of Europe and catalyzed new investigations. It led to substantial intellectual contacts and a profound cultural legacy. The victory elevated the prestige and status of Muslims while augmenting the territorial dominion of the Ottoman Empire.

The Role of the Ottoman Empire in the Formation of Modern Europe

The Ottoman Empire's influence on the formation of modern Europe went beyond just military threats or trade competition; it also included direct involvement in the political development of Europe. This section shows three ways that Ottoman power changed the structure of the European state system: (1) Ottoman military and diplomatic support for new Protestant powers stopped Habsburg Catholic hegemony, which led to the pluralistic state system that we see in modern Europe; (2) Ottoman commercial capitulations gave Dutch and English mercantile capitalism its economic base; and (3) Ottoman recognition served as an alternative legitimizing authority for states that Catholic Europe refused to recognize (Galanti, 1992). These actions were not random or just reactions; Ottoman sultans carefully built relationships with France, England, and Holland to keep Europe divided and stop anti-Ottoman alliances from forming. The unintended outcome – though possibly foreseen by some Ottoman officials – was the formation of a multipolar European order that would ultimately contest Ottoman supremacy (Görgün, 1999). National monarchies

like France, Holland, and England had a lot of trouble staying alive against Habsburg power. The Ottoman Empire's military and diplomatic help was not the only reason why the Habsburgs were able to stay in power, but it was very important at key times when it looked like they were going to win. The rise of a multi-state European system would have been much harder without the Ottomans' help. However, other possibilities, like the Habsburgs breaking up internally, are still possible in history (Jorga, 2005).

1. The Ottoman Role in the European Balance of Power

The Ottoman Empire shaped the contours of contemporary Europe. During the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, the eastern frontiers faced few threats, and as Europe began to prosper, the West emerged as a focus point. During this period, the Habsburg Empire, leveraging its dynastic connections, asserted control over a substantial expanse of Europe. Countries like Italy, Spain, Austria, Germany, and Hungary were either directly or indirectly governed by the Habsburg Empire (Görgün, 1999). The sole forces opposing this dominion were France and England. The Ottoman participation in the conflict occurring in Europe resulted in a realignment of the political power balance. National monarchy like France, Holland, and England could endure solely because to the Ottoman struggle against the Habsburg Empire. Thus, in 1532, King Francis of France informed his Venetian ambassador that he was "under the protection of Charles V due to the Ottomans" (Galanti, 1992).

The Ottomans assisted the French against the Habsburg Empire by providing financial support, deploying troops, and improving economic links. In 1533, Süleyman the Magnificent dispatched 100,000 gold coins to the British and German lords to secure their collaboration against the Habsburg Empire. Following the conferment of commercial rights to France in 1569, England and Holland received support through the capitulations with the Ottoman Empire in 1580 and 1612, respectively (Coban, 1996). The Venetians

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no longer controlled trade in the eastern Mediterranean; with the backing of the Ottomans, France and England took over the market. The British and Dutch, employing Ottoman vessels, supplanted the Venetians in the Black Sea. The commerce on Ottoman territory enabled the financial fortification and expansion of these nations. (Schwarz, 1988) The raw materials and manufactures produced domestically and sold in Ottoman territories by the British and French significantly contributed to the rise of capitalism. Historian Halil Inalcik observes that the Ottomans, unwittingly, participated in the European banking system, which facilitated the emergence of capitalism (Bülent, 2003).

The Ottoman Empire was very important in shaping Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries because it stopped the Habsburgs from taking over. The Ottomans helped new nation-states fight against Habsburg control by using military force, giving them money. The Ottoman Empire unintentionally influenced modern Europe by thwarting Habsburg dominance and facilitating extensive markets for Western powers. This dual role—maintaining political balance and enabling economic access—unintentionally facilitated both Europe's multipolar state system and the rise of Western capitalism. (Coban, 1996).

In short, the Ottoman Empire's involvement in the Habsburg-French War had a big effect on how politics in Europe changed over time. Through the provision of military, financial, and economic assistance to France, the Ottomans thwarted the establishment of a pan-European Catholic empire under Habsburg dominion. This intervention helped the multi-state system survive by creating a competitive equilibrium instead of an imperial dominance. In addition, Ottoman capitulations, which started as diplomatic concessions, turned into economic tools that helped mercantile capitalism grow in France, England, and Holland. The relationship between Ottoman trade policy and

the growth of European capitalism shows how political decisions in one society can lead to unplanned economic changes in another. The political diversity and commercial capitalism of contemporary Europe partially stemmed from Ottoman strategic objectives designed to maintain European disunity. This pattern of Ottoman intervention in the European balance of power set a precedent that would be followed in bilateral relationships with England and Holland, as shown below.

2. The Ottomans: England's Anticipation.

Under the rule of Ottoman Sultan Murad III, diplomatic contacts were established with England, one of the most distant nations in Europe. England was on the verge of being overrun by the Spanish faction of the Habsburg Empire. The British recognized that, following the French example, their sole opportunity to oppose the Habsburg Empire was in securing the assistance of the Ottoman Empire (Kurat, 1953). In the period of Murad III, the British established communication with the Ottoman Empire, seeking assistance to thwart the Spanish fleet's invasion of England. Their request was fulfilled: England successfully avoided Spanish occupation with assistance from a Turkish armada. People have sometimes talked about how important Ottoman help was in the past. A 2004 editorial in *The Guardian* provocatively claimed that Ottoman naval operations were as important to England's survival as the more well-known strategies of Francis Drake. This journalistic assertion oversimplifies intricate historical causation; however, it signifies an increasing scholarly acknowledgment that the Spanish Armada's defeat was attributable to various factors, including Ottoman strategic pressure in the Mediterranean that inhibited Spain from fully deploying its naval forces against England. Modern documentary evidence, especially Walsingham's letters to Ambassador Harborne, shows that English strategic planning depended on the Ottomans' ability to keep Spanish forces busy at sea (Jorga, 2005). Before the

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Spanish invasion attempt in July 1588, Sir Francis Walsingham, military advisor to Queen Elizabeth, dispatched a letter to the British envoy in Istanbul requesting the mobilization of a Turkish armada to annihilate the Spanish fleet. The maneuvers of the Turkish armada, assembled in accordance with the initiative of British Ambassador Harborne and Ottoman strategies, successfully subdued the Spanish navy (Görgün, 1999).

Only a segment of the Spanish Armada was capable of confronting the British Armada during the Battle of Gravelines. The coastline of Calais in northern France on July 30, 1588. Sir Francis Drake, leader of the British fleet, successfully vanquished the Spanish forces. British academic and historian Jerry Brotton assessed this battle: "*The maneuvers of the Ottoman armada devastated the fleet of Spanish King Philip II*". We must now provide an additional rationale for the Spanish army's inability to seize England and eradicate Protestantism in educational institutions. This is the English-Ottoman alliance established by Queen Elizabeth (Kurat, 1953). In a letter dated June 24, 1587, addressed to William Harborne, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, English statesman Sir Francis Walsingham urged the ambassador to take all necessary measures to incite Murad III against the Spanish and to convey that the British are honorable individuals (Karpas, 2000).

The diplomat dispatched to the empire by England employed all feasible tactics to secure assistance against the Spanish. In a correspondence authored by British Ambassador Harborne to Murad III, as published by Akdes Nimet Kurat, all diplomatic avenues were disregarded as he implored for the dispatch of 60 or 80 long ships against the Spanish, if nothing more (Fanani, 2011).

The Ottoman-English alliance against Spain reveals three aspects of Ottoman influence on European development. First, it shows that religious differences didn't

stop strategic cooperation when interests were the same. This is a practical realpolitik that predicted the Westphalian principles of state sovereignty over confessional solidarity. Second, the Ottoman navy played a key role in keeping Protestant England from being taken over by Catholics again. This made sure that the Reformation would always divide European Christianity instead of being stopped. Third, the fact that a Muslim empire was willing to help Protestant states fight Catholic powers shows how Ottoman intervention changed the religious landscape in Europe. If the Ottomans hadn't been able to balance out the power of the Spanish and Habsburgs, the religious map of Europe – and, as a result, the political map of Europe – might have looked very different. England's continued existence as a Protestant power, along with all the effects this had on constitutional government and trade, depended in part on strategic support from the Ottoman Empire. The English case shows that Ottoman support went beyond just diplomatic recognition to include direct military help, a pattern that would happen again with Dutch independence.

3. The Holland Requests Assistance from the Ottomans

The rise of Holland as a state on the historical stage transpired at a later date. In the late 16th Century, the Dutch revolted against the Spanish Kingdom, a western faction of the Habsburg Empire. William I, Prince of Orange, who spearheaded this insurrection, withdrew his troops from Flemish territory and retreated to Germany following the initial confrontations with Duke of Alva, the commander of the Spanish Army. In formulating a strategy against the Spaniards, he recognized the necessity of external assistance. He intensified his correspondence with the Huguenot leaders and German princes (Ágoston, 2009). Nevertheless, none of the principalities he approached were adequate to impede the Habsburgs, one of the two preeminent empires of the day. Consequently, despite its allegiance to a different religion, he sought assistance from the Ottoman Empire,

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which had formerly aided France and England against the Habsburg Empire. The Ottomans were unable to assist William promptly. The Ottoman administration intended to address the Spanish matter following the conquest of Cyprus in 1570 (Civlan, 2021).

In the 1590s, the Dutch focused on trade with India and the Atlantic using newly designed ships known as "fieuten." This novel class of vessel was mass-manufactured and navigated swiftly across the ocean, conferring significant advantages to the Dutch. Notwithstanding its significant commercial potential, Holland remained unrecognized as an independent state. They were unable to access the Mediterranean, the region with the highest commerce potential globally, while flying their own flag (Fanani, 2011). The Dutch were permitted to engage in trade in the Mediterranean solely under the French or British flags. Shortly after signing a truce agreement with Spain in 1609, they initiated correspondence to seek recognition from the Ottoman Sultan and get authorization for trade in the Mediterranean. Cornelis Haga, a youthful attorney dispatched as an emissary, reached Istanbul in 1612. Nevertheless, England, France, and the Venetians were resolute in preserving their trade advantages and endeavored to thwart Haga's desires from being realized (Eren, 1999).

They proffered substantial rewards to the Dutch ambassador to dissuade him from communicating with the Sultan. Vizier Halil Pasha, who had assumed responsibility for the emissary, transported Hago to Üsküdar by a rowboat and compelled him to kiss the hand of Sheikh Aziz Mahmut Hudai, a scholar esteemed at the Ottoman palace. Following the sheikh's advice, impressed by Haga's display of respect, the envoy was granted an audience with Sultan Ahmed at Topkapı Palace on May 1, 1612. Haga, in the presence of Sultan Ahmed, stated, "*We would be grateful if you would accept our king into servitude and relieve us from the necessity of*

displaying other flags on our vessels". The Ottoman state, which consistently supported the resistance against Catholic Spain in Europe, granted Holland the requested commercial privileges (Bülent , 2003). Haga, who served as a permanent ambassador in Istanbul for many years, facilitated numerous advancements in the bilateral relations between the two nations. The Ottoman Empire acknowledged Holland as a sovereign state. The Venetian envoy, attempting to avert this situation, conveyed a message to the grand vizier asserting that Holland was not a sovereign state, but rather a coalition of insurgents who had revolted against their monarch (Jorga, 2005). Notwithstanding this, Holland was granted trading rights. This enabled the Dutch, who had before navigated the Mediterranean under French and British flags, to undertake maritime trade freely. Upon acquiring these privileges, they promptly constructed a network of consulates around the Mediterranean region. Consulates were established in the Ottoman regions of Aleppo, İskenderun, Cyprus, Mora, İnebahtı, and Eğriboz, as well as in Venice, Geneva, Livorno, and Sicily. Holland became recognized as a state composed of rebellious populations (Civlan, 2021).

Ottoman support helped Holland become independent a lot. The Dutch asked for help from the Ottomans after they revolted against Habsburg Spain in the late 1500s. The big step forward happened in 1612 when envoy Cornelis Haga got Sultan Ahmed to let Holland trade in the Mediterranean under its own flag. The Ottoman Empire recognized Dutch independence in 1612, thirty-six years before the Treaty of Westphalia made it official in 1648. This early support from the Ottomans helped Holland set up trade routes in the Mediterranean and fight off the Habsburg Empire, which was very important for its rise as an independent state and business power.

The Dutch case shows how Ottoman diplomacy affected European politics in three ways: recognition (giving international legitimacy to states that Catholic Europe

refused to recognize), commercial access (giving states the resources they needed to survive), and precedent (showing that effective sovereignty could be separated from dynastic legitimacy or confessional alignment). In contrast to the French and English cases, where Ottoman support was mostly military-strategic, the Dutch case stresses diplomatic and commercial aspects. These three cases show a clear pattern in Ottoman behavior: they strategically built relationships with Habsburg enemies, no matter what their religion, to keep Europe politically divided.

Ottoman Control of Trade Routes and European Exploration

The Ottoman Empire conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and their resultant control over the Eastern Mediterranean and old land routes to Asia (the Silk Route and Spice Route) did not entirely halt Eastern-Western trading but impacted how it was conducted greatly. The impact of Ottoman administration over these trade routes was multifaceted. The custom duties that the Ottomans collected, coupled with the profits that the Ottomans made through their intermediary trade, raised the cost of commodities from Asia that found their entry into the European markets (Casale, 2010). However, trade was not halted, as cities like Venice were still maintaining their trade ties with the Ottoman administration during this period. The need to find another route to Asia, apart from the ones administered by the Ottomans, became the leading factor behind maritime explorations by the Europeans during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Islamoglu-Inan, 2004).

The Portuguese explorations along the African coast, culminating in Vasco Da Gama's journey to India in 1497-1499, were explicitly motivated by the objective to evade Ottoman control over the trade routes in the Eastern Mediterranean. Spanish patronage for Christopher

Columbus' journey westward was also motivated by their hope for an alternate route to Asian markets (Casale, 2010). The undetected discovery of the Americas by Europeans and the eventual development of direct maritime trade routes between Europe and Asia, as described above, in essence, reshaped the global economy, marking the beginning of the Age of Exploration for Europeans, the Ottoman domination of traditional trade (Daniel, 1992).

The connection between Ottoman commercial control and European global expansion shows how the good policies of one civilization can lead to changes in another. The Ottoman Empire's ability to efficiently collect taxes from trade routes, which is a sign of good administration, created the economic conditions that made it possible for Europeans to avoid paying them. The Ottoman Empire's success in trade in the 15th and 16th centuries helped European global capitalism grow, which would eventually push the Ottoman economy to the side in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Ottoman influence on European development functioned through various, at times contradictory, mechanisms. In this instance, Ottoman hegemony did not encompass knowledge transfer, institutional borrowing, or diplomatic assistance; instead, it entailed competitive pressure that redirected European commercial aspirations on a global scale. Modern capitalism's global reach—characterized by intercontinental trade networks, colonial extraction, and Atlantic-centered commerce—emerged partly from European attempts to operate outside Ottoman economic control. The Ottoman Empire served as both a barrier and a catalyst, obstructing European expansion to the east while unintentionally promoting colonization to the west and south.

Reformist Europeans' Contemplation of Ottoman Administrative and Philosophical Principles

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Interestingly, some of the Enlightenment philosophers that were grappling with the challenges of politics and religion within Europe were fascinated with the complex and effective political structure of the Ottoman Empire, particularly at how well the political structure functioned and the ways that the religious diversity and the regime's imperial legitimacy were managed. Some one-sided observers, influenced perhaps by early Orientalist prejudices, came to speak of the rule of the Ottomans as "Despotisms of the Orient," which refers to a regime that was arbitrary and absolutely power-hungry (Montesquieu, 1748). But some observers were struck by what the Ottomans were doing that could provide new perspectives regarding the political systems of Europe. One of the things that gained quite a lot of interest is that the Ottoman Empire lasted for such a long time and maintained such a large multi-ethnic and multi-religious state. Under the millet system, religious communities such as Jews, Greek Orthodox Christians, and Armenians were given a great deal of religious autonomy to govern themselves according to their own religious laws (Sayılı, 1960).

This is quite different from what happened in Europe, which experienced religious wars and persecutions for such a long time. Thinkers such as Voltaire, themselves strong advocates. The Ottoman Empire in its structure did not provide a perfect example of a complete system of equality, though its functioning pluralism demonstrated how different people in the world might coexist under the umbrella of a single state. This sparked debates in Europe about the rights of religious freedoms in relation to the church-state question.

The organizational mechanism of the Ottoman state, which was praised as efficient and just, especially during the early stages of its establishment and growth, also drew the attention of individuals who sought improvements in the organizational mechanism of the state (Makdisi, 1981). The

devshirme order, although practicing forced recruitment, promoted a constant flow of skilled administrative and military personnel with appointment depending upon merit and loyalty as opposed to lineage, a situation that mirrored the ideals of the Enlightenment Era concerning personal honor and mobility, acting as a refreshing alternative to the strongly established aristocratic organizations throughout Europe (Makdisi, 1981). Although no prominent philosopher during the Enlightenment Era advocated the direct application of the devshirme order, the presence of this order as an alternative state organization in an already mighty empire challenged the Europeans to thoroughly investigate the legitimacy of political organization at the time and seek a more (Goffman, 2007).

Ottoman Philosophy and Its Influence on European Thought

The Ottoman philosophical traditions were deeply entrenched in the Islamic philosophy tradition, and they continued through the period of the Enlightenment, although in a form that might not have been readily available to the average European philosopher. The Ottomans were exposed to a wide range of philosophical questions such as metaphysics, logic, ethics, and politics, sometimes citing the works of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), among others (Meyer, 1974).

The Enlightenment thinkers of Europe were constrained by language barriers and poor translation work, which kept them from directly accessing the contemporary Ottoman philosophical texts. However, the broader intellectual heritage of Islamic philosophy had already made its influence felt in Europe. The Latin Averroists had a large impact on scholastic philosophy in medieval Europe, and this body of thought continued in many different guises, such as *A History of Philosophy*. The Ottoman Empire, the successor to many traditions, impacted the intellectual environment which

spawned the Enlightenment (Voltaire, 1756). In addition, the ideological foundations of the Ottomans' legal and political system, such as their focus on "justice" (*adalet*) and the role of the emperor in administering God's law, provided a distinctive form of governance insofar as it differed significantly from European approaches. Although these underlying beliefs are widely perceived as autocratic in nature, they also provide a framework for discussing political ideologies and social structure (Dursteler, 2006). These underlying beliefs in the philosophy and politics of the day, although implicitly in practice, contributed in significant manner to the "comparative spirit of the Enlightenment", thereby prompting European thinkers to scrutinize their deeply held beliefs regarding social structures, laws, and politics. The co-existence of this powerful and enduring empire with its own philosophy and legal system offered a point of reference that added value to intellectual discourse, although its impact may have seemed non-immediate (Goffman, 2007).

Scientific and Medical Transfers and Showing How Europe has Moved Forward

Scientific and medical traditions of the Ottoman Empire, deeply rooted in the intellectual legacy of the Islamic Golden Age, have had a substantial impact on European scientific progress, especially at the early phase of the Enlightenment, more than normally considered. There was constant information flow from the Ottoman Empire during Europe's scientific revolution, which has been going for hundreds of years (Lévi-Strauss, 1971).

The Ottoman scholars and establishments continued to guard the fields of astronomy, math, geography, and medicine while causing improvement. The Ottoman scientific institution had observatories, hospitals, and libraries that formed centers of knowledge. The Takiyüddin Observatory

in Istanbul, opened in 1577, was one of the most advanced establishments of its time with the best astronomical instruments. It made new observations that were abreast of the latest European discoveries to date (Sayılı, 1960). It may be difficult to ascertain how Ottoman education directly affected famous Enlightenment astronomers, but its overall effect is always additive, combining as it did ancient Greek knowledge with unique Islamic additions to improve the intellectual climate. The Ottoman Empire showed strategic advancement in medicine, especially in surgery, pharmacology, and epidemiology. The concept of inoculating against smallpox, advocated by Lady Mary Worley Montagu during her time in Constantinople, is a good manifestation of direct transfer of medical knowledge. Seeing the efficacy of variation, the forerunner of vaccination, adopted by the Ottomans, Lady Mary heavily promoted the same upon her return to England. This contributed immensely towards the eradication of the dread disease from the continent for good (Montagu, 1763).

This was the promotion of a lifesaving innovation by a "foreign" civilization, and this had a huge, positive impact upon the community of medical science in Europe. There was also a tremendous amount of knowledge of herb-based medicines and surgical practices within the apothecaries and medical texts of the Ottomans, which seeped into European medical science.

The Role of Translation and Cross-Cultural Mediation in Dissemination

The transfer of intellectual and cultural ideas between the Ottoman Empire and Europe was planned and carried out through the assistance of a very complex and active network of people who aimed at mediating the different cultures. This network was composed of translators, dragomans, who were official interpreters at European embassies, and other scholars and diplomats. They were all

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exceptionally proficient in languages and well-acquainted with both cultures (Guilmartin, 1974). The European embassies in Istanbul, like those from France, Britain, and Venice, were major locations for such transactions to take place. The dragomans who worked in these embassies were educated individuals who were conversant in Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and several European languages. These individuals were more than mere linguistic agents, for they functioned as cultural facilitators in which diplomatic discussions, business transactions, and the transfer of scientific and literary knowledge could take place. They played crucial roles as translators of Ottoman works into European languages, thus making such works accessible to the wider European audience (Goffman, 2007). These works included historical narratives, geographical treatises, philosophical arguments, and literary compositions. On the other hand, and there was the translation of European scientific and philosophical texts into Ottoman Turkish. This reveals the interest in European intellectual advancement in the Ottoman Empire, as there was a genuine transfer of ideas from the European to the Ottoman cultures (Sayılı, 1960).

There was also the unofficial scholarly exchange apart from these official channels. There were huge collections of Ottoman and Islamic manuscripts in the libraries across Europe, especially in the port cities such as Venice, which had large trade connections with the Ottoman Empire. Scholars in these institutions accessed these texts, derived knowledge from them, and even used this knowledge to create their own scholarly work. The Republic of Venice was a major place where the intellectual transfer took place because it had many connections, either through trade or diplomacy, with the Ottoman Empire. It had many manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish languages (Dursteler, 2006). The result of this intellectual conversation, which was opened up through dedicated

facilitators and knowledge reservoirs, was that Ottoman thoughts, though sometimes filtered or reframed, became a crucial part of the broad Enlightenment intellectual debate.

The translation networks and cultural intermediaries analyzed in this section exemplify the infrastructure that facilitated Ottoman-European intellectual dialogue. The philosophical debates, scientific transfers, and cultural exchanges described in earlier sections would not have been possible without dragomans, multilingual scholars, and institutional support for translation. These middlemen did important things like translating texts into other languages, translating ideas from one intellectual framework to another, and helping two civilizations that didn't trust each other get along.

The larger meaning goes beyond just one translation. By making it easier for people to share knowledge, these networks set the stage for cross-civilizational intellectual exchange that predicted how scholars would communicate with each other around the world today. Furthermore, the cosmopolitan identities of the intermediaries—individuals who traversed various linguistic and cultural realms—subverted inflexible civilizational demarcations.

Conclusion

The role played by the Ottoman Empire in Modern Europe resists the reductionist approach based on conflict and crisis. The Ottoman Empire represented an active, strong, and integrated actor whose impact shaped the development of the continent in an irreparable way. The challenge posed to the Ottoman's military power represented the stimulus for the centralization of the European states and the Military Revolution. The Ottoman's dominion on the trade routes represented the unequivocal economic impulse for the Age of Exploration. In the end, the cultural and intellectual encounter with the Ottoman world, from the phenomenon of the Turquerie to the philosophical debates

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surrounding the Enlightenment period, played an unequivocal role in the definition of the new identity for Modern Europe.

The Ottoman Empire was more than a geopolitical setting and became an actor in the "dialogue of civilizations." The unique political order, especially the specific manner in which it dealt with religious pluralism and efficiency in governance, presented an alternative model and a significant element in the comparison the European thinkers made between their systems and the one in the Ottoman Empire on issues like separation of powers and religious liberty.

In terms of science and medicine, there were particular examples of direct transmission that had a real and very important influence on European health. In addition to direct transmission, the ongoing stewardship of scientific progress in the Ottoman Empire, drawing upon Islamic and ancient heritage, contributed in a very indirect way to enhancing the cultural context that spawned its own scientific revolution.

Within the science and philosophy category, the Ottoman Empire, having been the successor to the rich tradition of Islamic intellectuals, indirectly made contributions to the European intellectual scene by carrying the tradition of studies in astronomy, medicine, and mathematics. While there were few immediate translations available from the contemporary works of the Ottomans, the knowledge of the active intellectual tradition acted to counter the Eurocentric perspective on science.

In summary, the "Dialogue of Civilizations" between the Ottoman Empire and Europe represented an active and creatively productive exchange. The Ottoman presence as either the threatening other, the example for administration, the source for scientific knowledge, the inspiration for aesthetics, or the critical foil contributed substantially to the intellectual topography of the Enlightenment. In order to gain an adequate insight into the appearance of Modern

Europe, it is imperative to continue to shift the focus of analysis from the periphery to the center with respect to the Ottoman Empire. European history may well be the history of the relation involving the Ottoman East.

The Ottoman Empire significantly influenced modern Europe beyond mere military conflicts. Significant findings are by supporting France, England, and Holland against Habsburg hegemony, the Ottomans altered the equilibrium of power in Europe. This enabled national monarchy to endure, which are today a significant component of European politics. The Age of Exploration commenced following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, prompting Europeans to seek new trade routes, ultimately leading to the discovery of the Americas. Numerous cultural and intellectual contacts occurred. The Ottoman millet system influenced Enlightenment discussions on religious tolerance, while the dissemination of medical knowledge, such as smallpox inoculation, significantly enhanced public health in Europe.

The research faces several limitations: reliance on secondary sources with limited access to primary Ottoman archives; linguistic barriers affecting translation accuracy; a focus primarily on the 15th to 17th centuries and Western European powers; insufficient analysis of cultural exchanges from Europe to the Ottoman Empire; and methodological challenges in distinguishing direct Ottoman influence from simultaneous European developments.

This study challenges Eurocentric narratives by demonstrating that European modernization occurred through complex international relationships. The Ottoman experience with religious diversity offers significant insights for contemporary multicultural nations. The findings demonstrate how weaker governments can leverage strategic alliances to contend with more strong states, indicating that knowledge transfer has consistently been a relational, networked process rather than a unidirectional flow.

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Future research ought to: directly examine Ottoman primary sources through international collaborative teams; conduct comparative regional studies to evaluate the varied impacts of the Ottoman Empire across Europe; trace specific ideas and technologies between civilizations using digital humanities tools; investigate Ottoman-European relations in the 18th and 19th centuries; employ interdisciplinary methodologies that amalgamate history, anthropology, and political science; and systematically analyze reverse cultural flows to create an authentic framework for dialogue rather than a unidirectional influence analysis.

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