Portraying the Enemy

Two German Lutherans' Turkish Travelogues and the Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq

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Abstract

In the 1570s, Austria sent an embassy to the Ottoman capital of Constantinople in order to maintain contact during a fragile period of peace. This article examines the writings of two theologians, Stephan Gerlach and Salomon Schweigger, who were sent with this embassy and compares them to those of another traveler to the Ottoman Empire, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, in order to better understand the motivations and biases of these writers. This article also examines these writings within the broader contemporary literature on the Turks.

Article

In the 1570s, two German Lutherans, Stephan Gerlach and Salomon Schweigger, traveled to Constantinople as part of a diplomatic mission to the Sublime Porte on behalf of the Holy Roman Empire. Both recorded the events that took place during their journeys to Constantinople and during their time there. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, their predecessor who had conducted diplomacy in the same city in the 1550s, wrote about his experiences in Constantinople in letters that were later collected into a single text. All three men wrote about what they saw, did, and heard in the same city at similar points in time, and yet their characterization of Turkish society and culture differed, sometimes greatly, especially in the case of Busbecq as compared to Gerlach and Schweigger. These two religious zealots, who were educated in theology, displayed a more belligerent and altogether less forgiving attitude toward Turks, finding essentially no redeeming qualities in their culture or society. On the other hand, Busbecq, a classically educated and trained diplomat, while antagonistic toward the Turks, still found qualities of theirs worth praising and presents a more nuanced view toward them. Their backgrounds thus influence the texts that they passed on concerning their experiences.

The wider political and religious context of the 1570s establishes the importance of these diplomatic missions, as well as why it was possible that two Lutherans would be sent to the Ottoman Empire under the auspices of a diplomatic mission from the ostensibly Catholic Habsburg emperor at the time, Maximilian II. During the sixteenth century, the Habsburg and Ottoman empires were in conflict. Vienna had been besieged in 1529, and further conflict raged over Hungary, resulting in its partition. Peace was first negotiated in 1547

with a truce that required the Habsburgs to pay a yearly tribute of 30,000 gold pieces.[1] However, this truce proved to be only temporary, with the Ottomans again pushing into Hungary and seizing the town of Sziget. The resulting Treaty of Adrianople, signed in 1568, established an eight-year period of peace and was renewed until 1593.[2] Despite this negotiated peace, however, Turkish soldiers continued to raid the Hungarian countryside, taking livestock and people.[3] This unstable peace and the continued payments of tribute to the Sultan required a Habsburg presence in Constantinople in order to ensure that the Sultan could be contacted about irregularities in the execution of the peace agreement. In addition, both the Ottoman and Habsburg rulers desired peace on the Hungarian border due to other threats. In the case of the Habsburgs, they had to deal with the Reformation and Protestant unrest. The Ottoman Sultans had a powerful rival far from Hungary in the assurgent Persia of the Safavid dynasty.[4]

The Reformation, which dramatically divided German society, affected diplomacy by directing the attentions of the Emperor to domestic matters rather than allowing him to expend effort in foreign lands. Maximillian II was the first Emperor who reigned during the diplomatic mission to Constantinople, led by David Ungnad von Sonnegg. Maximillian was unique in that he did not zealously fight on behalf of the Pope and Catholicism, stating that he would be "neither a Papist nor a Lutheran."[5] He wished for a universal Christian Church that would embrace all people, Catholic or Lutheran, and sought agreement between the denominations in order to achieve this peacefully, in contrast to the militant approaches of his predecessors. He even established a limited freedom of worship for nobility in 1569, just five years prior to David Ungnad's mission to Constantinople.[6] In the 1560s and 1570s, Maximilian II's interference in Church affairs in Austria led to frayed relations with Rome that remained strained in some areas for decades.[7] A mission to Constantinople intended to create religious unity between Lutherans and the Greek Orthodox became possible due to the University of Tübingen's faculty desiring contact with the East for reasons of faith as well as general interest in the Greeks, and an Imperial climate which was more tolerant of the existence of Lutheran nobles. This brought Stephan Gerlach and Salomon Schweigger to Constantinople.

The peace with the Turks that was negotiated in 1547 also required its own diplomatic mission to Constantinople. In 1554, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq was sent to the Ottoman

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[1] Victor-Lucien Tapié, *The Rise and Fall of the Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 61. See also: James D. Tracy, "The Habsburg Monarchy in Conflict with the Ottoman Empire, 1527-1593: A Clash of Civilizations," *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 13.
[2] Tapié, *The Rise and Fall of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 62.
[3] Ibid., 63.
[4] Tracy, "The Habsburg Monarchy in Conflict with the Ottoman Empire, " 1.
[5] Bertrand Buchmann, *Österreich und das Osmanische Reich: Eine bilaterale Geschichte* (Vienna: WUV-Universitätsverlag, 1999), 112.
[6] Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 153.
[7] Joseph Patrouch, "The Investiture Controversy Revisited: Religious Reform, Emperor Maximilian II, and the Klosterrat," *Austrian History Yearbook* 25 (1994): 68.

Empire in order to ensure the terms of the peace were maintained.[8] Busbecq was born the illegitimate son of George Ghiselin II, Seigneur de Busbecq, in 1522 and legitimatized by Emperor Charles V in 1549.[9] His first journey to the Ottoman Empire, where he would return after his first brief mission and remain until 1562, came early in his diplomatic career: He had previously been sent to witness the wedding of Philip II of Spain and Mary of England.[10] During his mission to the Sublime Porte, Busbecq wrote letters to contacts in the Holy Roman Empire and kept notes detailing events and encounters that he would later use in publishing his *Letters* in 1589, three years before his death in 1592.[11] Busbecq was also interested in antiquities and botany, both of which he would indulge in during his time in the Ottoman Empire.[12]

This mission was led first by David Ungnad von Sonnegg, who was appointed as Imperial envoy to Constantinople in 1572.[13] Ungnad was a zealous Lutheran, and prior to his second mission to Constantinople in 1574, he asked for a chaplain from Tübingen to accompany him and his men. Jakob Andreae, chancellor of the university, chose Stephan Gerlach—at the time an impressive student—to accompany Ungnad. Stephan Gerlach was born in the Duchy of Württemberg, in the town of Knittlingen, in 1546.[14] Gerlach studied theology at the University of Tübingen, where he became a professor after his return from Constantinople. When Gerlach returned to Germany in 1578, Salomon Schweigger was chosen from the University of Tübingen to replace him and to continue his work.[15] Both Schweigger and Gerlach received their education in theology, and this was a primary reason for their being chosen to accompany the mission to Constantinople; their official title was *Gesandtschaftsprediger,* preachers of the diplomatic mission.[16]

Like Gerlach, Salomon Schweigger was born in Württemberg (both the towns of Sulz am Neckar and Haigerloch are mentioned in sources as birthplaces) in 1551 and also studied at the University of Tübingen, earning a degree in theology in 1573.[17] He then became ordained as a preacher in 1576 and accompanied Joachim Freiherr von Sinzendorf, who replaced fellow Austrian nobleman David Ungnad von Sonnegg as the leader of the diplomatic mission, to Constantinople in 1577/78. Beyond his stay in Constantinople, Schweigger traveled across the Ottoman Empire through Egypt and Jerusalem, returning to

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[8] Karl A. Roider, foreword to *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017), ix.
[9] Ibid., viii.
[10] Ibid., ix-x.
[11] Ibid., x.
[12] Ibid., xii.
[13] George Zachariades, *Tübingen und Konstantinopel: Martin Crusius und seine Verhandlungen mit der Griechisch-Orthodoxen Kirche Schriftenreihe der Deutsch-Griechische Gesellschaft* (Göttingen: Gerstung & Lehmann, 1941), 18.
[14] Julius Hartmann, "Gerlach, Stephan," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 9 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1879), 23.
[15] Zachariades, *Tübingen und Konstantinopel*, 40.
[16] Bernhard Ebneth, "Schweigger, Salomon," *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 24 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2010), 45-46; and Hartmann, "Gerlach, Stephan," 23.
[17] Ebneth, "Schweigger, Salomon," 45-46.

Germany in 1581. He published an account of his travels in 1608 and later translated the Koran in 1616 using an Italian translation from 1547, showing a continued interest in Islamic culture.[18]

Although both Stephan Gerlach and Salomon Schweigger are referred to as "chaplains" of the diplomatic missions, what they were tasked with was more akin to a diplomatic mission of their own. Jakob Andreae had a dream of uniting the Protestant and Orthodox churches, creating an allied front against Rome by coming to a theological consensus.[19] Martin Crusius, a professor at Tübingen who was fascinated with the Greeks, supported the idea wholeheartedly and wished to establish contact with the Patriarch in Constantinople, Jeremias II. Thus, Schweigger and Gerlach were tasked with being intermediaries to give letters from the faculty of Tübingen to the Patriarch in order to facilitate this dialogue.

Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq was not alone in writing on his time among the Turks, the first of his letters being published in 1581. Both Salomon Schweigger and Stephan Gerlach kept records of their travels and their stay in the Ottoman capital, and Schweigger even published his account in 1608 during his lifetime, while Gerlach's was published posthumously in 1674. All three accounts provide the authors' interpretations of Turkish culture and society. However, there is a marked contrast between the accounts of Schweigger and Gerlach and that of Busbecq. The former two writers often conform to the tropes present in the polemical writing of the time, showing biases against the Turks and Islam and showing little nuance in their portrayals of the Turks, instead giving the impression that they are barbaric and without any redeeming qualities. Busbecq, on the other hand, is willing to give the Turks credit for what he sees as being the positive characteristics of their Empire, even though he views it as an antagonist of Christian Europe.

An interesting aspect of the writing of Gerlach and Schweigger in particular is the language they use when referring to Turks. Both writers use the word "Turk" to mean "Muslim," only differentiating between Muslims of different ethnicities when discussing Arabs, in which case, words derivative of "Moor" are used. This was a linguistic practice dating back to the mid-fifteenth century in Europe and served to counterpose Christian Europe with the society of the Muslim Turk.[20] When an officer of the Imperial army converted to Islam, according to Schweigger, the "traitor … became a Turk."[21] Stephan Gerlach describes eight prisoners "becoming Turks" when they converted to Islam.[22] Such language would seem to suggest a civilizational divide between the Turks and the Europeans predicated upon religion, and converts crossed this divide, abandoning their "Europeanness" and adopting not just the religion of the Turk but the culture and identity of the Turk as well. For the

[18] Ibid.
[19] Zachariades, *Tübingen und Konstantinopel*, 18-19.
[20] Felix Konrad, "From the 'Turkish Menace' to Exoticism and Orientalism: Islam as Antithesis of Europe (1453–1914)?," *European History Online*, March 3, 2011, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/from-the-turkish-menace-to-orientalism.
[21] Salomon Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss Beschreibung auss Teutschland nach Constantinopel* (Nuremberg: Christoff Locher, 1639), 32.
[22] Stephan Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch* (Frankfurt am Main: Zunner, 1674), 226.

authors and their contemporaries, this dichotomy between "European" and "Turk" persisted in areas of Europe controlled by the Ottoman Empire including the Hungarian territory that had just been taken by the Ottomans three decades prior, illustrating that the importance of European identity lay not in geography but in culture and religion.

Considering the historical context of the mission to Constantinople, with the Ottoman Empire having made large incursions into Hungary and besieging Vienna, the seat of Habsburg and Imperial power, it is not surprising that all three writers saw the Turks as a threat. Following these invasions, a great number of writings portraying the Turk as a scourge of Europe and a horde that threatened to engulf the whole of Christendom were published, with atrocities supposedly committed by Ottoman forces spread by the printing press across the continent.[23] Broadsheets warned of Turkish brutality, such as feeding innocents to lions or blaming them for earthquakes, some even blaming Turkish brutality for the birth of deformed children in Hungary.[24] Lutheran discourse on the Turks created more fuel for the flames of anti-Turkish rhetoric. Martin Luther described the Turks as enemies of God and a divine punishment against sinful Christians.[25] Luther also described the defeat of the Turks in their 1529 siege of Vienna as a "work of God" that was a respite in what he believed to be an apocalyptic conflict pitting the Christians against the Muslim Turks.[26] The Turks were referred to as the "archenemy of the Christians" (*Erbfeinde der Christen*). Similar expressions are used by both Gerlach and Schweigger. Gerlach uses "*Erb-Feind*" (archenemy) to describe the Turks in a letter on the potential union between the Habsburg realms and Poland (as they were electing a new king, and Maximilian II was a favorite candidate in these elections).[27] Salomon Schweigger calls the Turks the "enemies of the name of Christ" (*Feind des Christlichen Namen*).[28] This identification of the Turks with Islam shows that both viewed the Turks as enemies of the Germans, not just politically but also religiously. The use of the word "*Erbfeind*" to identify the Turks had an extensive history. In her study of the figure of the Turk in the Holy Roman Empire and Germany, Zsuzsa Barbarics traces its history all the way back to the Turkish Seljuks, who invaded Persia and were the enemies of the First Crusade and considered a threat to Christendom.[29] Thus, the authors are not only using tropes of the literature on Turks of their own time, but also perpetuating Turkish tropes from centuries before the Ottoman Empire's rise.

Both authors also reflect Luther's conception of the Turk as a divine punishment being used against Christendom. Stephan Gerlach relates the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus and concludes it by saying that "when God wishes to punish a land or city, no fortifications shall

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[23] Konrad, "From the 'Turkish Menace' to Exoticism and Orientalism."
[24] Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526-1850* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 50-51.
[25] Konrad, "From the 'Turkish Menace' to Exoticism and Orientalism."
[26] Johannes Ehmann, *Luther, Türken, und Islam* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 312.
[27] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 182.
[28] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 303.
[29] Zsuzsa Barbarics, "'Türck ist mein Nahm in allen Landen…' Kunst, Propaganda und die Wandlung des Türkenbildes im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54 (2001): 260.

help."[30] Salomon Schweigger writes multiple times that God uses the Turks to punish the sins of Europeans, whether they be the inhabitants of Constantinople in 1453, the Germans, or other Europeans. Schweigger says that the destruction of a castle of Matthias Corvinus by the Turks was "earned by us with our sins."[31] Schweigger also writes that God is the *causa principalis* that fights against Christians in their battles against the Turks, thus explaining why the Turks seem to be an unconquerable foe for the Europeans.[32] This is therefore another area where the authors are in agreement with Luther's characterizations of the Turk. In addition, another connection to the broader German characterization of the Turks can be found: Zsuzsa Barbarics describes the apocalyptic narrative, constructed by Luther, as yet another significant aspect of this characterization and the genesis of the stereotypes of the Turk in the German psyche, which would go on to influence a variety of writings on the Ottoman Empire.[33] Barbarics specifically notes the influence of Luther's Turkish writings on religious polemic between Protestants and Catholics, but also mentions its role in "anti-Turkish traditions." This tradition is seemingly reflected in the writings of Gerlach and Schweigger, providing yet more evidence of their reliance on tropes in characterizing the people who they saw before their very eyes while in Constantinople.

For his part, Busbecq states that the Turks were "a scourge sent against us by the anger of Heaven."[34] However, this is the only reference to the Turks as a divine punishment in all of Busbecq's letters. He does not refer to defeats of Christians as being brought about by divine intervention and instead prefers to analyze Turkish military success from a more secular perspective, focusing on Turkish discipline, technology, tactics, and other factors. When Busbecq refers to the Turks as a scourge sent from Heaven, he is attempting to persuade his readers that hasty military action against the Turks is inadvisable. Were he following the same logic that Schweigger and Gerlach utilize in their writings, Busbecq might write that it is the moral failings of the Christians that led to Turkish success and would not need to find other reasons why fighting the Ottoman Empire impatiently would be a fool's errand. However, Busbecq supplements his rationale with the assertion that the Ottoman sultan is "at the head of an army equipped with the resources of many kingdoms"— a terrible foe who, along with his soldiers, is hardened by the experiences of prior successful wars.[35] Busbecq uses this description to claim that Emperor Ferdinand I is heroic and brave for refusing to retreat yet also refusing to fight the Turks, assessing the situation properly and knowing that he is outmatched at the moment. Therefore, Busbecq's description does include some reference to divine intervention, but only as a small portion of his overall argument on the impossibility of war in his time and in favor of recognizing the greatness of his ruler. The difference between Busbecq and Scheigger and Gerlach could perhaps be connected to the fact that the latter two were educated in theology and brought this religious background to their interpretation of history. Busbecq avoided this

[30] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 216.
[31] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 22.
[32] Ibid., 155.
[33] Barbarics, "'Türck ist mein Nahm,'" 300-301.
[34] Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans. Edward Forster (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 238.
[35] Ibid., 239.

type of interpretation, coming from a more secular background in his work as a diplomat and having a more secular education focused on the classics and ancient history.[36]

Schweigger and Gerlach also criticize the German armies in their journals. For example, Gerlach writes about the slowness of the Holy Roman Empire's bureaucracy as compared to that of the Ottoman Empire, stating that the Sultan can accomplish in one council meeting what the Germans require months and multiple sessions of the Reichstag to do.[37] Gerlach even suggests that God has blinded the Turks to this, otherwise they would be capable of simply going to Vienna and conquering it. This mention of divine intervention is interesting, as Gerlach had written that God helped the Turks, but in this case, God is apparently handicapping them, showing the extent to which Gerlach saw Him as guiding the course of war between the Germans and the Turks. Gerlach also suggests more "earthly" reasons for Turkish success, such as that the organization of the Turkish army is superior, with the soldiers content and the proper number of soldiers being raised without any problems.[38] This can be contrasted with what he writes in his diary about the Imperial soldiers on the Hungarian border being paid later. Gerlach states that they often struggle to receive their salary and actually have to bribe people in order to receive the money they deserve. He also describes how, at some stations along the border, the soldiers "go about like beggars," half naked.[39]

Schweigger corroborates the efficiency of the Turks in supplying and maintaining their armies in times of both peace and war. He writes that, when the Turks take to the field during war, they have precisely the amount of food, drink, and other provisions that they need, "which the German soldiers do not."[40] He goes on to write about the German bureaucracy, again agreeing with Gerlach's assessment: the Germans require a great amount of labor in getting their forces assembled. Not only this, but while the Reichstag deliberates and the nobles bicker, the enemy will have already taken its chance to attack Imperial lands. Schweigger writes that the quick manner in which the Divan operates, as compared to the laborious manner of the Reichstag's deliberations, is part of the reason for their victories.[41]

Both authors are therefore in agreement about the weakness of the Imperial war bureaucracy. Not only does God seem to favor the Turks in battle in order to punish the sinful Germans, but even before the battles take place, their efficient government has already given them an advantage. Busbecq presents a quite different view of Turkish war materiel. He writes that it is only during dire times, when the army cannot live off the land, that the Sultan allows his own resources to be used to feed the soldiers, and even then, only the Janissaries receive "just enough food to sustain life." Other soldiers must exercise

[36] Ibid., xxi.
[37] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 244.
[38] Ibid., 52.
[39] Ibid., 305.
[40] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 161.
[41] Ibid., 176.

extreme economy in managing what little they have in way of food for months at a time.[42] This paints a picture greatly different from that of Schweigger and Gerlach. Busbecq writes at the same time that the German soldiers, rather than not getting what they need, seem to not get what they want, being especially greedy and expecting luxury in their camps.[43]

Both Schweigger and Gerlach write further comments on Ottoman bureaucracy aside from its effectiveness in matters of war. Gerlach, for example, refers to the payment for offices in the Ottoman Empire multiple times, claiming that the Grand Vizier accepts payments of "thirty to forty thousand thalers" from those who wish to become a *pasha* or *beylerbey.*[44] He later states that this is such a pervasive practice that "one must buy all offices," even professorships.[45] Stephan Gerlach paints a picture of an Ottoman Empire where corruption is commonplace and where money is the defining factor in one's mobility. Salomon Schweigger, who often verges on the polemical in his writing on the Turks, and many times also exaggerates in his claims against them, takes a very different view of Ottoman bureaucracy. He writes that those occupying important offices are not there because of their noble birth, as was the case in so much of Europe, but rather because they earned a noble reputation based on their courageous deeds and industriousness.[46] He also does not make any claim of corruption with regards to the selection of candidates for offices. No matter which of the two authors is more accurate in their portrayal of Ottoman bureaucratic corruption, Schweigger interestingly uses the lack of Ottoman political dynasties to criticize European practices of claiming people to be "noble" and therefore worthy of important positions simply by virtue of their parentage. He cites Ovid in stating that it is not ancestry which makes someone great, but rather their character.

However, Schweigger makes sure to write that the value of nobility cannot be completely ignored, since nobility can be passed down and inherited by the children of the nobles. Where he directs his scorn is toward the awarding of military offices to those with no experience in war simply on account of their nobility.[47] In a sense, then, Salomon Schweigger is portraying the Ottoman Empire as a positive example in contrast to European society. It would seem that even the archenemy of Christendom can offer ideas for societal reforms. In this case, Salomon Schweigger is arguing not for the elimination of the nobility as a ruling class, but rather for allowing for greater meritocratic influence in military and perhaps other appointments. He can see value in the Ottoman system rather than dismissing it wholesale, while Stephan Gerlach writes it off as a hotbed of corruption, not addressing any merits which he may see in it.

In terms of the relation of Schweigger's praise of meritocracy in the Ottoman Empire to tropes and past writings on the Ottoman Empire, a connection can be found in the writings of Busbecq. He described the Ottoman system as meritocratic and used this to criticize the

[42] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 110-111.
[43] Ibid., 111.
[44] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 38.
[45] Ibid., 93-94.
[46] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 160.
[47] Ibid., 160-161.

practices of the nobility, just as Salomon Schweigger did in his book.[48] While it is technically possible that both authors observed the same practices in Ottoman society and compared them favorably to German hereditary privilege independently, it also does not seem altogether unlikely that Schweigger may have read about his predecessor's travels and been influenced by them. Schweigger would likely have read some works on Ottoman society prior to his stay in Constantinople, and travel literature, especially relating to the Orient, was quite popular at this time. This is speculation, but the fact of their both having made the same sort of observation seems to indicate a connection of some kind. The way in which Busbecq discusses meritocracy in the Ottoman Empire differs, however. He seems to have much more outright praise for the meritocratic system without necessarily tying it to chastisement of the Holy Roman Empire. He writes that meritocracy is the reason why the Turks "succeed in all that they attempt and are a dominating race and daily expand the bounds of their rule."[49] He does also write that the German system is predicated entirely on birth but purposely avoids further discussion of the subject.[50] Busbecq's appraisal of Ottoman meritocracy is therefore more laudatory than Schweigger's. Perhaps then this is another reflection of the backgrounds of the authors. Busbecq, as the illegitimate son of a nobleman, would have been predisposed toward approving of a form of government that cared less for the origins of one's birth; though he had been legitimatized by the Emperor in 1549, he had to earn this through talent rather than mere circumstances of birth.[51] Schweigger and Gerlach, meanwhile, do not seem to have experienced any such difficulties.

Another area where Salomon Schweigger concedes that the Germans might learn from the Turks is in public morality, specifically with regards to bathing. While it may sound odd, Schweigger believes that the Turkish bathing custom of being partially clothed in the bathhouses is morally superior to German bathing habits, since the Germans apparently are completely naked when they bathe.[52] Schweigger writes that the Christians could "learn discipline and respectability from these barbarians" in this context. Interestingly, he was not the only German in the Ottoman Empire to chastise his people along these lines. Johann Wild, a captive in Ottoman lands from Germany, wrote an account of his experiences there which appeared a few years after Schweigger published the stories of his travels. In this, he also wrote on Turkish baths and stated that the Germans should learn from the Turkish practice of wearing a towel around the waist.[53] That is not to say, however, that Schweigger goes without criticizing the Turks and other Europeans on this subject. His continued use of the word barbarian, even when praising a Turkish cultural practice, is in itself a way of maintaining the negative presentation of the Turk that had existed to this point in his account. Schweigger makes clear that, although the Turks may behave in a way that the Germans should aspire to, they are still a deplorable people who are below the Europeans

[48] Konrad, "From the 'Turkish Menace' to Exoticism and Orientalism."
[49] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 59.
[50] Ibid., 59-60.
[51] Ibid., viii.
[52] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 115.
[53] Gülbeyaz Kula, "Vom Wissen um die Leserschaft. Zur Bedeutung der Apodemik für die Reisebeschreibungen von Salomon Schweigger und Johann Wild am Beispiel des türkischen Bades (Hamam)," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 24 (2014): 17.

or, at the very least, the Germans. Schweigger also goes on to compare another aspect of German bathing to the practices of the Turks, namely that German men and women bathe together. He writes that it is a great wonder to the Greeks and Turks that Germans of the opposite sex can be next to each other naked without any infidelity occurring, and that the "*geilen Völker*" (lustful peoples)—such as Greeks, Italians, Spaniards, and Turks—would not be able to follow this example. He references Tacitus' description of German chastity, using this example to praise the Germans over South Europeans and Turks.[54] Thus, Schweigger still manages to portray the Turks negatively in talking about the bathhouses, in a way balancing out his negative portrayal of the Germans.

As mentioned, Johann Wild, the captive German in the Ottoman Empire, wrote on the bathhouses there as well, around the same time that Schweigger's account was being published. What is intriguing is not just that Wild and Schweigger make incredibly similar statements with regards to Turkish bathing customs, but also that they had a working relationship—Schweigger actually wrote the foreword to the first edition of Wild's account.[55] This shows that they were in dialogue and that they may perhaps have spoken of their experiences. If this is true, it may have influenced Wild's conclusions about the bathhouses, explaining the similarities between their descriptions and claims regarding Turkish bathing customs. This could perhaps, then, show evidence of a dialogue on a larger scale through the reading of travel literature which resulted in the proliferation of certain tropes and beliefs about the Orient and, more specifically, the Turks.

Unfortunately, Stephan Gerlach does not write about the bathhouses in Constantinople. He does acknowledge the existence of a bathhouse in Buda but writes nothing about the Turkish bathing practices, and therefore a comparison of his reaction to that of Schweigger's is impossible.[56] This is somewhat strange, as most travelers to the Ottoman Empire who reported on their travels seem to have mentioned the bathhouses there due to the novelty of the oriental bathhouse as compared to European baths.[57] However, Busbecq also does not write extensively on Turkish bathhouses, aside from saying that the wealthy have private baths while the lower classes tend to bathe publicly, as well as that cleanliness is morally important for the Turks.[58] Busbecq, in a sense, is portraying Turkish cleanliness positively, stating that these are not dirty barbarians, and he also does not mention any sort of criticism of the Germans in relation to this, nor does he couple it with moral criticism as Schweigger does, and so it could once again be said that Busbecq is more moderate in his portrayal of the Turks. The reason for this discrepancy could lie in the fact that Busbecq, in his writing, shows more evidence of having interacted with average Turks than Schweigger or Gerlach. It does not seem implausible that Busbecq, interacting with more Turks than the other writers, would have had a more personal and therefore nuanced understanding of Turkish societal norms. In contrast, Schweigger and Gerlach, relying on

[54] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 115.
[55] Kula, "Vom Wissen um die Leserschaft," 15.
[56] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 11.
[57] Kula, "Vom Wissen um die Leserschaft," 13.
[58] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 119.

hearsay or their biases, would lean more toward making negative assumptions, except where personal experience, such as in Schweigger's bathhouse visit, made it impossible.

It is worth noting an important implication in Salomon Schweigger's separation of the Turk and the German in terms of their chastity. Schweigger claims that the Turks are one of the unchaste peoples just as the Southern Europeans lack German chastity. While this may seem innocuous, it in fact follows in a tradition of casting the Turks as a race of sexual deviants. As printing spread throughout Europe and in the wake of the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the continent experienced an explosion of literature about "the Turk." These works often included writing upon Turkish sexuality and how it differed from the norms of Christian Europe.[59] Quite relevant to the previously cited passage from Schweigger is that, in some cases, the Turk could also be presented in a positive light in terms of his sexual morals in order to shame the Christian reader. While Schweigger represents the Turks as both promiscuous and, in some ways, more chaste than the Germans, this should not be taken as contradictory; Schweigger seems to be implying that, though the Turks are an unchaste people, even they have some habits which the Germans may take after if they are to be even better. As it is clear that Schweigger is censuring the Germans by comparing them negatively to Turkish custom, he may have been following in an existing line of literature in which this practice was common. A heritage could also be established in the writings of Luther, who had mentioned what he saw as the boundless illicit sexual practices of the Turks.[60] This would again imply that Schweigger, as a theologian, refers back to religious texts in his assessments of the Ottoman Empire, whereas Busbecq does not.

Gerlach and Schweigger also cite many Turkish sexual practices that they apparently had heard of and which draw attention to Turkish hedonism and moral deficiency. Returning to Gerlach, he mentions fairly early in his journal that the Turks, "to their shame," sexually abuse boys, and he says this practice is very common in the Ottoman Empire.[61] What is also interesting about this passage is that Gerlach writes that "honorable Turks" blame the Italians for bringing this into their lands. This once again drags the Italians into the moral failings of the Ottoman Empire, drawing a sort of continuity of moral deficiency between the Mediterranean realms. Gerlach refers to sexual relations with boys again later, stating that it is fully tolerated within the Empire, while adultery is punishable by death.[62] This, of course, shows the moral hypocrisy and deviancy of the Turks, as their justice and enforcement of morality is not consistent with divine law and morality as was familiar to European Christians. The idea of pedophilia being tolerated while adultery was so harshly punished seemed absurd most likely not just to Gerlach but to most of his readers as well. Gerlach also writes that boys in Constantinople wait outside the houses of noblemen, having "cleaned themselves up," in order to receive favorable attention from them,

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[59] Silke Falkner, "'Having It Off' with Fish, Camels, and Lads: Sodomitic Pleasures in German-Language Turcica," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13 (2004): 403-404.
[60] Ibid., 408.
[61] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 16.
[62] Ibid., 97.

implying a sort of child prostitution culture in the city among the elites.[63] Later, he writes that there are many boys in the city whose main profession consists of earning the attractions of older men, with some even accompanying men into war. This practice of child prostitution is said to extend to the Turkish prisons as well.[64]

Salomon Schweigger elaborates further upon this theme. In a section on Ottoman legal punishments, he lists punishments for crimes such as treason and stealing, and then states that the legal punishment for child abuse is to be thrown from a church tower. However, he also says that this rarely occurs, despite this legal requirement, because "fornication is completely in fashion."[65] Thus, the rampant pedophilia supposedly occurring in the Ottoman Empire is not simply ignored or unpunished but rather is socially encouraged or, at the very least, seen as something which society has no qualms with. In addition, this blindness toward these acts goes against the Turks' own laws, showing once again their arbitrary nature and lack of consistent morality. Schweigger also writes about homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire, comparing the Turks to the Sodomites and recalling the biblical commands of God that man should not lie with boys or men as with a woman and that men and women should not lie with animals in this manner. He writes as well that they have always been "tainted" by this "abominable, unnatural wantonness," again painting a picture of the Turk as a sexual deviant, unrestrained by divine law and morality. He concludes this passage by wishing for God's protection over the faithful in the Ottoman Empire against "these and similar abominations."[66] In presenting the reader with supposed widespread immorality in the Ottoman Empire, Schweigger hopes to inspire fear and despise of the Turk, against which God's protection is needed. The view of the Turk as an enemy of Christendom is aided by this presentation of Turkish sexual deviancy. It also, of course, continues the aforementioned tradition of identifying Turks with a sexuality different from that considered normal in Christian Europe.

If Turkish pedophilia and homosexuality were rampant in their Empire to the extent that both Schweigger and Gerlach felt it necessary to mention, in spite of neither directly observing homosexual or pedophilic actions, it is interesting that Busbecq never mentions Turkish sexual impropriety. In fact, he praises the chastity of their women and the restraint of men in their conduct toward women, citing the "high standard of morality" in the Ottoman Empire in these areas.[67] Since Busbecq is content to criticize the Turks in other areas and has no reason to hide the sorts of immoral acts that Schweigger and Gerlach stressed in their accounts, he must not have observed them. This would mean that he either missed something widespread occurring around him, since Gerlach implied a sort of omnipresence of pedophilia, or that Schweigger and Gerlach exaggerated the supposed immorality of Ottoman society. However, since Busbecq recounts stories of his interactions with average Turks, such as his encounters with a coppersmith who melted down antique

[63] Ibid., 313.
[64] Ibid., 347.
[65] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 173.
[66] Ibid., 81.
[67] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 117-118.

coins and the owner of hyenas in Constantinople, while the other writers do not, this could be another area where their lack of personal interaction colors their writing and results in further bias against the Turks and a perpetuation of polemic tropes.[68]

When Gerlach describes the aforementioned bath in Buda, he praises its architecture, calling it a "*schönes Bad*" (nice bathroom).[69] This draws attention to another aspect of representation of Ottoman society in both Schweigger's and Gerlach's writings: their views of Turkish buildings and the appropriation of local architecture. According to Gerlach, the Turks allow the most beautiful castles in Hungary to fall apart and they do not build or renovate anything.[70] They do not care for the aesthetics of these buildings and do not seem to see any value in them. The Turks also are said to have allowed the most beautiful buildings in the city to turn into "pigsties," destroying the artwork in them and vandalizing them in various ways, which Gerlach sees as demonstrating a sort of divine threat.[71] This could again be interpreted as showing the Turks to be barbarians who do not appreciate so-called civilized ways of life, such as aesthetic architecture. Where religion comes into the equation is perhaps less obvious, however. Nevertheless, Gerlach was not alone in seeing the attitude toward Hungarian fortifications as being particularly Turkish. Christian travelers in Ottoman Hungary viewed this the same way.[72] In Pest, Gerlach describes a "*Gewerbs-Stadt,*" his invented term for a merchants' district, which he describes as being enormous.[73] This seems to have made a positive impression. However, less impressive were the houses, which he describes as being "uncountable but gloomy."[74] He also writes in the same passage that there were stone buildings with latticed windows that were once beautiful, but which he claims the Turks have since desecrated so that nothing would look better than the city's mosques. This implies that the Turkish attitude toward architectural aesthetics subordinates the appearance of buildings that are not important to them, and perhaps it is for this reason that the old Hungarian fortresses and castles were desecrated. This also could add the religious element mentioned before, which Gerlach adds to the story of the desecration of artwork inside the Hungarian castles. If Gerlach believes that the Turks do not want Christian, or at least secular buildings, to outshine Turkish religious buildings, he may have seen this as a sort of suppression of Christian identity through architecture.

The representation of Turkish architecture given by Schweigger is much more critical. For example, he writes that the houses in Constantinople are made of simple materials cobbled together messily without the tact or knowledge that Germans and Italians supposedly have of proper architecture. Moreover, the Turks do not know how to move materials efficiently, carrying them by donkey rather than wagon, which Schweigger claims inflates the cost of

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[68] Ibid., 49.
[69] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 11.
[70] Ibid., 11.
[71] Ibid., 12.
[72] Ludá Klusáková, "Between Reality and Stereotype: Town Views of the Balkans," *Urban History* 28 (2001): 364.
[73] Ibid., 365.
[74] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 10.

housing. Schweigger also writes that even the houses of rich Turks cannot compare to homes in Germany, showcasing once again a lack of Turkish architectural sophistication in the eyes of the author.[75] Schweigger follows up this description of Turkish housing with a chapter on Turkish mosques and begins it with a note on the building of the mosques. He states that the Turks follow what he calls the age-old practice of "heathens and frauds," spending on the aesthetics of the place of worship in order to compensate for the falsehoods that they peddle within. Schweigger contrasts this in the introduction to the chapter with Turkish home-building, saying that the Turks are much more flamboyant in the building of their temples.[76]

Busbecq, again contrasting with these two authors, presents a more nuanced view on the subject of Turkish architecture. He corroborates Gerlach's claim that they have allowed fortresses in Hungary to crumble. However, he writes that the reason for Turkish neglect of the "splendid" buildings is not due to a lack of respect for civilized architecture or some sort of attempt to desecrate Christian places, but rather meager pay for Turks who have greater concerns than repairing old buildings, as well as their frugality, which means that they do not see it as necessary to have all the amenities that a maintained fortress would provide—they "care little if the rain comes through or the walls are cracked."[77] Busbecq sees the Turks as eschewing pride and vanity and actually blames the lack of fine dwellings in Hungary on the Hungarians' way of life rather than the Turks. He once again avoids exaggeration and gives a nuanced, as well as perhaps less biased, view of Turkish society, greatly contrasting with Schweigger and Gerlach.

The writing of those authors on the subject of Ottoman religious architecture shows a continued view that even the "positives" of Ottoman society can hide negative facts about it. The construction of beautiful mosques, for Gerlach, seems to be tied to an architectural suppression of non-Muslims and secular architecture. For Schweigger, the mosques being built in such a magnificent style in contrast to what he saw as dour domiciles in Constantinople shows the deceit of the Turk, who tries to lure people to Islam with aesthetics rather than religious substance. There is certainly not much credit given to the Turks, even when they do something that impresses the travelers. In everything they do, deceit, immorality, or an opportunity for admonishment of Germans is seen, rather than a complex or admirable society. This aspect of European writing on Turks is mentioned by Felix Konrad in his article on representations of Turks as the antithesis of Europeans after the fall of Constantinople.[78] In this way, then, even the writing that seems to break the mold by offering praise rather than criticism still conforms to an overarching European theme in writing on the Ottoman Empire that preceded Gerlach and Schweigger in criticizing the Turk. In addition, this is yet another area where the religious background of Schweigger and Gerlach affect their interpretation of aspects of Turkish society. Their cynicism regarding Islam seems to extend even to the architecture of mosques and does not allow them to appreciate the architecture without tying it to the religion of which it is a part.

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[75] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 105-106.
[76] Ibid., 107.
[77] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 10-11.
[78] Konrad, "From the 'Turkish Menace' to Exoticism and Orientalism."

A topic not yet covered but which Konrad also references in his article is that of Turkish cruelty, another stereotype of Turkish barbarism in sixteenth-century texts concerning the Ottoman Empire. Both Gerlach and Schweigger cover this extensively. Gerlach has a unique manner of recording Turkish atrocities and deceit. Since his book is chronological, it allows him to use the end of each year of his stay as a sort of recollection of that year's events. In 1573 and 1574, the ends of these years do not seem out of the ordinary. However, starting with 1575, Gerlach begins to include yearly summaries of Turkish "offenses against the peace" that occurred, such as people and cattle being taken away from a village and Turkish attacks on Imperial forces.[79] By separating these events into their own section and listing them extensively, Gerlach creates an image of persistent Turkish violations of the peace agreement between them and the Holy Roman Empire on the Hungarian border. There is no similar list of German offenses against the peace, or of any other party's actions. Thus, the Turks are painted as being deceitful and barbaric, devoid of honor despite the peace treaties and the tribute that they receive from the Emperor.

Salomon Schweigger has no such lists in his travel account, but does take many opportunities to describe what he sees as Turkish tyranny and cruelty. For example, in describing the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Schweigger tells of children being torn apart and slaughtered before their parents' eyes while churches were desecrated and turned into brothels.[80] He also attempts to analyze the etymology of the word "Turk" and states his belief that it means "destroyer," implying the destructive qualities of the Turkish nation. Schweigger elaborates further, stating that whatever the Ottoman sultan gets his hands upon, it is ravaged, spoiled, and destroyed. He says that they began this process in Asia and have extended it to the whole of Greece and Hungary, where many "marvelous cities" have wasted away.[81] The way Schweigger describes the Turks makes them seem more like a hoard of locusts than human beings, with them covering the territories of Asia and the Balkans and ravaging them almost by instinct rather than as a conscious process. This shows the Turks in an extremely cruel light. In doing so, Schweigger once again perpetuates a stereotype of the Turks, rather than analyzing them in an objective manner, propagating tropes of European literature.

Busbecq, on the other hand, provides an image of the Turk, which while critical of their methods and society, still allows for some praise. He does, in some places, refer to the Turks as barbarians, such as when talking about their rule in Constantinople.[82] However, when mentioning Turkish border raids in Habsburg territory, Busbecq does not refrain from mentioning that there were raids coming from the other side of the border too.[83] He also writes about the abuses of Turkish frontier garrisons, noting that in his role as ambassador, he had to complain to the Porte on this subject "twice or three times a year."[84]

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[79] Gerlach, *Des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 139-140.
[80] Schweigger, *Eine Newe Reiss*, 138.
[81] Ibid., 140.
[82] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 40.
[83] Ibid., 121.
[84] Ibid., 132.

This contrasts with Gerlach's great lists of supposed abuses of the peace each year by the Turks. With respect to Schweigger's portrayal of the Turks as a ravaging horde, Busbecq actually mentions a Turkish love for public works, such as finding ways to provide water throughout settlements, the complete opposite of his claims of Turks causing desolation and the spoiling of the places which they touch.[85]

Throughout their texts, Salomon Schweigger and Stephan Gerlach present views on the Turks and the Ottoman Empire that seem to stem from pre-existing literature on these subjects, such as polemical writing and prior travelogues and that perpetuate overwhelmingly negative stereotypes, generalizations, and biases against the Turks. Busbecq, in contrast, presents a nuanced view of Turkish society as having both flaws and positive aspects. The similarity of his text to those of Schweigger and Gerlach in terms of its origins, being the writings of a member of an imperial diplomatic mission to the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the sixteenth century, calls into question the reason for the later authors' caricatured portrayal of the Turks. Considering what sets Schweigger and Gerlach apart from Busbecq—their role in contacting the Greek Orthodox Church and establishing ties with the Patriarchate—it seems possible that their portrayals, reminiscent of polemical writing, were intended to rouse sympathy for the Greek Christians or, at the very least, were theologically motivated in order to combat the Ottoman Empire and encourage conflict at a time when the diplomatic situation had changed significantly from Busbecq's day. By the date of publication of their travelogues, the Long Turkish War had already occurred, which had resulted in a partial Habsburg victory and greater stability on the frontier. Perhaps at this time, there was higher morale in the Holy Roman Empire. Meanwhile, Busbecq had published his Turkish letters in 1581, when the unsteady peace was still intact. He may have seen little need for polemical writing, since he had praised in his letters the reluctance of the Emperor to fight the Turks as being prudent.[86] Thus, the writings of Schweigger and Gerlach, ostensibly travelogues meant to impart the authors' knowledge of the places that they had journeyed through, function as a rallying cry for Christianity against the Turkish scourge and employ tropes and generalizations common in the polemical literature of their time.

[85] Ibid., 46.
[86] Ibid., 240.