

Enlightened Declarations: Ottoman and Russian Proclamations in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774

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Abstract: This article analyses the Ottoman and Russian proclamations during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774 to understand their similarities and differences in discourse and their intended audiences, with a special focus on the elites of the Ottoman Empire. The article shows that Ottoman diplomacy practiced Enlightenment diplomacy in the same way as its rivals, using the language of enlightened absolutism to win the hearts and minds of the Polish nobility. However, the war made diplomacy and its accompanying discourses an internal affair, and the imperial elite rejected the idea of fighting for Polish liberties. This had a lasting impact on how Ottoman power was framed and understood by both the imperial elite and its subjects. This was the main difference between the Ottoman and Russian empires; the former had already created an elite consensus based on shared European cultural signifiers that depended on the European Enlightenment, while the latter never did.

Keywords: diplomacy, enlightened absolutism, Enlightenment, Ottoman-Russian War, Polish nobility

1. Introduction

The Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia in October 1768, beginning a war that lasted until 1774. The Ottoman elites, increasingly alarmed by Russia's encroachment on their northern borders, frightened by the possibility that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth might become a puppet of Empress Catherine II, and troubled by the loss of authority in their territories north of the Danube, decided to take their chances on the battlefields of Eastern Europe in the hope of dislodging the Russian military interference in Poland-Lithuania.¹

Shortly after the Ottoman declaration of war, the newly appointed Grand Vizier Yağlıkçızade Mehmed Emin Pasha sent a proclamation to the Polish-Lithuanian nobility. After reminding them of the forcible election of their king, Stanisław August Poniatowski, and the continued presence of Russian armies on Polish soil, the Grand Vizier invited the Polish nobility to help the Ottomans fight against the Russian invasion:

siz dahi memleket ve re'âyânızı ve 'ırz ve malınızı Rusyalu'nun birkaç seneden berü olan tasallutundan tahlîs ve ecnebî 'askerden te'mîn için dâmen-i gayreti der-miyân ve memleketinize su'-i kâsd fikr-i fâsîdinde olan Rusya 'askerinden memleketinizi tanzîf ve tathîr için [...]

(to cleanse and purify your land from Russian soldiers who intend to harm it; to protect it from foreign soldiers; and to save it and your people from Russians, who have been usurping your land, your subjects, your honor, and your property for the past few years.)²

With references to the security of their lives, honour, and property, Mehmed Emin Pasha used the language and promises of enlightened absolutism to win the hearts and minds of the Polish nobility.³ In speaking of 'enlightened absolutism', my intention is not to argue for or against the existence of a reformist project that used Enlightenment ideals to construct a benevolent monarchism or to consolidate the monarch's power.⁴ In this article, I use the term Enlightenment diplomacy to refer to the intersection between diplomacy and philosophical debates that was best captured by the correspondence of French *philosophes* with various monarchs, including Catherine II. In diplomacy, the use of concepts from the arsenal of Enlightenment thinkers did not require a deep understanding of the debates. More often than not these concepts were used tactically. Focusing on proclamations, I view 'enlightened absolutism' primarily as a discourse that emerged from broader Enlightenment debates. This discourse was also used by the Ottomans in their quest for influence over neighbouring territories in Europe. This should come as no surprise as Ottoman diplomacy had been engaged in a protracted struggle for influence in Poland against Russia for at least the previous two decades in order to gain the support of influential Polish noble families. At the heart of this diplomacy was the concept of liberty, which allowed claimants to form alliances, pursue local and imperial interests, and fend off rivals.⁵

Of course, the concept of liberty, as it was used in the Polish-Lithuanian context is not necessarily a result of Enlightenment debates. It has a long history of its own, going back to the Roman concept of *libertas*, with the basic meaning of not being a slave. In the Middle Ages, it came to mean the privileges of the nobility, setting the tone for the debate in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe between noble privileges and absolutist monarchy. It is important to remember that Enlightenment authors did not write in a vacuum. Their opinions derived from the context they were living in. When Voltaire described Sweden as 'le royaume de la terre le plus libre' ('the freest kingdom on earth'), he was referring to a political system that balanced different sociopolitical groups' interests and privileges.⁶ Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* recognized that the concept of liberties had so many different meanings and proposed a system of laws under monarchical governments to guarantee them.⁷ There was no contradiction in the minds of Enlightenment authors in proposing monarchist systems that respected liberties, that is, privileges of different social classes to be balanced and separately guaranteed. Indeed, both Voltaire and Rousseau wrote about the liberties of the Polish nobility, the former condemning them as intolerant of non-Catholics in support of Russian military intervention, the latter praising them as a romantic form of Roman civic unity.⁸ Our conception of liberty as freedom, equally possessed by every human being, is the result of the radicalization that came with the French Revolution. As Mona Ozouf has noted, before the Revolution, liberty was used primarily by the nobility as a weapon against the absolutist state. Its plural, *libertés*, referred to the various privileges granted by the state to different communities, religious orders, and universities.⁹ The Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774 erupted in the pre-revolutionary context.

This article examines some of the proclamations used by the Ottoman and Russian empires in the first year of the war in order to understand the similarities and differences in discourse and their intended audiences. The focus, however, is not on the populations to whom these proclamations were often addressed. I will focus on the elites, especially those of the Ottoman Empire. By focusing primarily on the Ottoman documentation, I aim to show how the war made diplomacy and its accompanying discourses an internal affair. While Russian proclamations continued to use a combination of Enlightenment and Christian rhetoric, the Ottoman elite stopped referring to liberties after 1769. I argue that

in the Russian case, Enlightenment rhetoric provided Catherine II with legitimacy among her nobility, while in the case of the Ottoman elite, the language of diplomacy failed to find a following. The argument that the Ottomans were fighting to defend the liberties of the Polish nobility was quickly dropped and replaced by an argument of legitimacy under Islamic law. The war and the discourses used during the war had a lasting impact on how Ottoman power was framed and understood by both the empire's elite and its subjects. An examination of the proclamations, their circulation and translation can help us better understand these dynamics.

2. Enlightenment and Ottoman Political Thought

In referring to the Grand Vizier's proclamation, I am not suggesting that the Ottoman Empire was a conscious participant in the Enlightenment's philosophical debates, or that the promise to protect 'life, honor and property' was a European product that the Ottomans simply copied or reproduced. Although the Ottomans shared some aspects of the European Enlightenment, it appears that these threads were never institutionalized.¹⁰

The Ottoman eighteenth century is generally discussed in terms of reform and change. The prevailing attitude is to show how the Ottoman elite, becoming increasingly aware of its loss of status vis-à-vis other European powers, incorporated modern ideas of change.¹¹ In her review of four key texts of Ottoman reform in the eighteenth century, Virginia Aksan had argued that 'Ottoman elites slowly evolved an ethos in the 18th century to accommodate the idea of change and the control of the outcome of war'.¹² Aksan's study of Ahmed Resmi Efendi (1700–1783) revealed a similar dynamic. In Aksan's words, Ahmed Resmi Efendi 'set the agenda and established the themes of a new generation of statesmen, calling for the transformation of Ottoman society, more specifically, of the Janissary corps, chief icon of Ottoman weakness'.¹³ More recently, Ethan Menchinger has produced an excellent biography of another late eighteenth-century Ottoman statesman, Ahmed Vasif Efendi, who, like his peers, 'had lived through unprecedented trials, crises that eroded their very worldview, and they altered the empire's intellectual landscape for good in the search for a remedy'.¹⁴

This article takes a different path, arguing that there is an overlap between debates in the wider European framework and the Ottoman Empire in the field of diplomacy. Rather than focusing on the ideas of particular Ottoman statesmen, I attempt to demonstrate a *modus operandi* among the Ottoman elite involved in diplomacy. By focusing on documents produced by the Ottoman diplomacy in the months before military disasters, I hope to demonstrate the prevailing attitudes among Ottoman elites in general. This has the added advantage of giving us a picture of how the Ottoman elite conducted diplomacy and argued in an inter-imperial scene before they became aware of the Empire's dreaded weakness in relation to its rivals.

A conceptual focus shows that Ottoman diplomacy practiced Enlightenment diplomacy in the same way as its rivals.¹⁵ Christian Windler has noted that 'while the relevance of the findings of conceptual history is undisputed in other contexts, they receive astonishingly little attention in the history of foreign relations and diplomacy'.¹⁶ Focusing on this gap provides an opportunity to relate new trends in Ottoman historiography to the so-called 'new diplomatic history' from a fresh perspective. Following Jan Hennings whose book avoids essentializing diplomatic cultures as specifically Russian or European,¹⁷ I argue that diplomacy in the broader European framework, of which the Ottoman Empire was an essential part, was made through the entangled use of concepts.¹⁸ A joint reading

of Russian and Ottoman proclamations during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774 reveals a common language.

There is, of course, an Ottoman side to the use of the concept of liberty in European diplomacy. The Ottoman term used to translate liberty, *serbestiyet*, emerged from its use as a financial-administrative concept. As Hüseyin Yılmaz has shown, the Ottoman administration used *serbest timar* to describe the free prebends that were granted various immunities. Ottoman observers of Europe in the eighteenth century compared similar arrangements they had seen in Europe with the example they were familiar with and described them with the same term.¹⁹ Thus, the Ottoman ambassador to France in 1720, Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, used *serbest şehir* (free city) to describe Toulouse and Bordeaux.²⁰ Ottoman diplomatic documentation seems to follow the radicalization that the French Revolution brought to the term. Only, in the Ottoman case, *serbestiyet* became tainted, a word that meant revolution against legitimate government and a desire to secede from the Empire.²¹ Hüseyin Yılmaz has shown how in the nineteenth century the Ottomans began to translate the concept of liberty with another word, *hürriyet*, distancing their understanding from the revolutionary use of the word and bringing the empire's rhetoric closer to those of other European monarchies with their arguments that civilization and liberty were essentially positive and related.

In 1768, these changes had not yet taken place. How did the Ottomans come to declare war on Russia? And what role did an entangled understanding of liberty play in the diplomacy that led to the declaration of war?

3. Fighting for Christian Poland

The Ottoman declaration of war in 1768 followed the turmoil in Poland-Lithuania after the election of Stanisław August Poniatowski as King in 1764, so it may be best to begin with a brief overview of the politics of this elective monarchy. King Augustus III of Poland died in October 1763 creating the possibility that Europe would be plunged into another war over the election of a new king in Poland, so soon after the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. However, European monarchs and diplomats were weary of conflict and their feelings were perhaps best summed up by Frederick II of Prussia: 'And now the King of Poland has died like a fool! I confess to you that I do not like these people who do everything at the wrong time.'²²

The reluctance of the Catholic French and Habsburg monarchs to openly support a candidate left Catherine II free to choose the new king.²³ Russia was already deeply involved in the factional politics of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, and they had found an allied faction, famously called the *Familia*, formed around the Czartoryski family. The main rivals of the Czartoryskis gathered around influential families such as the Krasińskis, Radziwills, and Potockis.²⁴ Although this faction was much more divided than *La Familia*, it tended to receive support from France and was in continuous contact with the Ottomans after 1750. French reluctance to directly support a rival candidate allowed Catherine II to use a military show of force to get an ex-lover, and a noble with strong family ties to the Czartoryskis, Stanisław August Poniatowski, elected as King of Poland.

Ottoman diplomacy did not dare to go to war over the election, although it protested Russian military involvement and delayed the recognition of the new king for more than a year.²⁵ Within Poland-Lithuania, Russian military intervention was quite unpopular, and there were fears that the new king would try to become an absolutist by curtailing the liberties of the nobility, especially the so-called *liberum veto*, the right of any member

of the nobility to block decisions in the Polish Diet.²⁶ Catherine II herself was not really interested in a centralized and stronger monarchy, but she also did not want to be dependent on the Catholic nobility. She began to aggressively push for the political rights of the 'dissidents', the Orthodox and Protestant nobles and clergy of the Commonwealth, who had been deprived of their political participation in the Commonwealth during the eighteenth century.²⁷ Richard Butterwick argued that 'the main purpose of this policy appears to have been to procure for Russia a dependent party in the Commonwealth'.²⁸ Catherine's insistence, increasingly after 1766, created a great deal of friction between her and the Catholic nobles.

In February 1768, a number of influential Catholic nobles gathered in Bar, a town near the Ottoman border, and declared a confederation against continued Russian interference in Polish affairs. In the words of the Bar Confederates, they came together to establish 'wolność i równość' ('freedom and equality').²⁹ For almost a year, the Ottoman capital watched the events unfold with interest, without directly interfering.³⁰ Especially after the appointment of Hacı Halil Pasha as governor of the province of Hotin in the summer of 1768, the Bar Confederates were hopeful of an Ottoman intervention.³¹ The imminent defeat of the Bar Confederates, their constant appeals to the Ottomans, and the massacre of the Muslim population of the town of Yalta by a Zaporizhian Cossack regiment in pursuit of the Confederates finally led the Ottomans to declare war on Russia in October.

The Ottoman declaration of war itself accuses Russia of breaking its peace treaty with the Ottomans by invading Ottoman territory. Diplomatic documents from various ambassadors in Istanbul show that the Russians were prepared to pay blood money, but the Ottoman insistence on the complete removal of Russian forces from Poland was not met.³² Moreover, the Ottoman declaration of war made two references to the violation of Polish liberties and declared that the Empire did not recognize Stanisław August Poniatowski as the legitimate king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Yağlıkçızade Mehmed Emin Pasha's proclamation, which was quoted at the start of this article, reiterates some of these points. The Grand Vizier reminds the Polish nobility how they had been warned by the Sultan and a former Grand Vizier 'bi'l-cümle cumhûr-ı Leh ittifâk ve ittihâd idüb beynlerinde birini kral intihâb eylemeleri' ('to unite and ally themselves in order to elect one of their own as king') and that 'ecânibden kral intihâb eyledikleri halde memleket-i Leh'e ecnebî asker duhûliyle cumhûr dostlarımızı perâkende ve perişan ve serbestiyet-i kadîmelerine mugâyir hareket belki şurût-ı serbestiyetin ref've ilkâsına müsâra'at idecekleri' ('if they elect a foreign king, foreign soldiers will enter the Polish land, our friends the nobles will be dispersed in a miserable condition and their ancient liberties will be transgressed or even abolished').³³ The Ottoman diplomacy seemed at ease with using the vocabulary of enlightened absolutism.

However, this raises questions. One is whether the Christian courts accepted the legitimacy of Ottoman claims or at least the legitimacy of the Ottomans making such claims. Contemporary accounts grudgingly accept the possibility. An anonymous British naval officer who fought in the Eastern Mediterranean as part of the Russian navy, for example, ridiculed the whole situation: 'A civil war commenced, under the plausible pretext of public good; and the Grand Signior was drawn in to defend the religion and freedom of these truly catholic Christians.'³⁴ The irony of the Grand Signior, a Muslim and the tyrant *par excellence* of Enlightenment thought, defending the religion and freedom of Catholic nobles was not lost on this commentator.

European courts were also prepared to accept the Ottoman claim to defend Polish Catholics but advised against it. The British ambassador, for example, presented the issue as a religious conflict in Poland and argued that Ottoman intervention was completely

unnecessary as per the Ottoman Turkish translation of his note: ‘The intention behind the entry of soldiers is the correction of sects between Muscovy, the King of Poland and his nobility, an intervention of the Sublime State in such sectarian matters is not expected.’³⁵ Britain, a protestant power, was more inclined to support Catherine II in her quest to recognize the religious liberties of the dissidents. The Ottomans did intervene, however, and according to a letter written by the Russian *chargé d'affaires* in Istanbul, Alexei Obreskov, shortly before his arrest, the dragoman of the imperial divan wanted to know whether his court would withdraw its guarantee and support for dissidents.³⁶ It seems that the significance of the dissident issue as a question of religious liberties was not lost on Ottoman diplomats either.

Still, the Ottoman claim was never accepted by their enemy. Athanasios Komnenos Ypsilantis, a Greek Orthodox Phanariot physician, who acted as a scribe/diplomat for the Ottomans at various times during the war, quotes a proclamation by Catherine II dated October 1768. This Russian circular to the courts of England, Denmark, and Austria described the Ottomans as ‘the enemies of peace among kingdoms’ and ‘the common enemy of the Christian name’.³⁷ This ‘balance’ between a Christian/Orthodox and Enlightenment rhetoric would dominate Russian proclamations. Another declaration to the Christian courts of Europe, which was translated into Ottoman Turkish, makes Catherine’s position quite clear: ‘The attacks of the Sublime State against the Christian states are one of its ancient doctrines.’³⁸ In this perspective, the Ottomans were outsiders to a European system that was based on Christianity, and the only role they played in European diplomacy was aggression. Catherine also claimed that the Ottomans had been promised the province of Podolia and wanted to make it a part of the Empire, giving it the same status as Moldavia and Wallachia. Despite her unfavourable depiction of Ottoman war aims, Catherine’s statement began with a long apology for Russian interference in Polish affairs and attempted to discredit the Ottomans’ claim to be the defenders of Polish Catholic liberties. In her account, Russia intervened in the Polish dissident question only to protect its co-religionists, as required by a treaty between the Commonwealth and Russia. The Bar Confederates were using Catholicism to fight their fellow nobles, and their movement had no support in Poland-Lithuania. Russian armies were invited by the Polish nobles themselves to protect them from the Confederates. Even in its total rejection, the Ottoman claim to be the defender of Polish liberties provoked sufficient reaction.

4. *Declaring to Whom?*

The primary audience for such declarations was other European courts. Both parties could use their proclamations to cement or prevent alliances. This also required them to comment on their enemy’s discourse. Britain, for example, had sought an alliance with Russia after the Seven Years’ War and before the outbreak of conflict between the Ottomans and the Russians.³⁹ King George III had his ambassador in Constantinople act as a mediator between the two empires to find a quick solution before military operations began in the spring of 1769. The Sublime Porte in its turn allowed the mediation although the negotiations eventually broke down.⁴⁰ On the one side, King George III himself was one of the recipients of the Ottoman declaration of war.⁴¹ On the other, Russia considered Britain to be one of its potential allies. Britain gave support to the Russian war effort during their naval campaigns. The Russian naval victory at Çeşme in 1770 was mostly possible with active British help in the form of sailors and repairs in British ports.⁴²

Similar things can be said of the Austrian court. One of the Ottoman Empire's first moves after the declaration of war was to ensure that Austria did not ally with Russia, as it had done in the war of 1736–39. The letter sent by the Grand Vizier to the Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Roman Empire repeated some of the points made in other Ottoman statements: 've şurût-ı serbestiyet-i kadîme-i Lehi bi'l-külliye ilgâ ve memleket-i Lehi pâzede ve ahâlî ve cumhûrdan kati vâfir bî-cürüm kimesneleri katl ve i'dâm ve gayr-i mesbûk mezheb nizâ'î ve bi-lâ müceb tevsi'-i unvân-ı imparatorluk dâ'iyyesi' ('[The Russians] have completely abolished the ancient liberties of Poland, have trampled the land of Poland under their feet, have murdered or executed innumerable innocent people and nobles, and have begun to claim the imperial rank without right').⁴³

The Ottomans were assured in a letter from Rudolph Joseph von Colloredo that the Holy Roman Empire would indeed remain neutral in the conflict.⁴⁴ Catherine II expressed her surprise at this neutrality in a letter to Frederick II:

J'avoue que la neutralité de la cour de Vienne me paraît étrange; les Turcs invoquent publiquement une nation voisine à détrôner son roi, et lui en offrent un autre, en renversant le principal fondement de la liberté de Polonais, dans les déclarations qu'ils ont faites. (I admit that the neutrality of the Viennese court seems strange to me; the Turks are publicly calling on a neighboring nation to depose its king and offer the throne to another, thus undermining the fundamental principle of Polish liberties in the declarations they have made).⁴⁵

Here, Catherine complains to the Prussian court about the behaviour of the Austrian court, while at the same time rejecting the Ottoman claim to protect Polish liberties and declaring them violators of those liberties. Such declarations, even when addressed personally to rulers, were public. They served to test the waters for potential alliances and were essential in determining which side a particular court might support.

The main difference between the Ottoman and Russian approaches was in the discourses at their disposal. Both parties used Enlightenment concepts, such as liberty, defence of the patria, resistance to foreign aggressors, protection of life, honour, and property. However, only Catherine II could appeal to Christianity when talking to other monarchs. This fundamental difference, even in a seemingly intra-religious conflict between Catholic nobles and a foreign Orthodox monarch, drew the line between what was European and what was not. The British appeal to the Ottomans not to interfere in a religious conflict between Christians can be seen in this light. This is not to say that the Ottomans did not benefit from the services of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople. There is mention of a letter to the Orthodox Cossacks of Ukraine during the war.⁴⁶ However, evidence is largely lacking for a concerted effort. Moreover, such tactics seem to have been used only vis-à-vis populations and local elites, rather than rivalling imperial powers.

This difference in the discourses that could have been employed by the two powers became visible as a direct result of the war. Diplomacy needed a common language, it was in fact made by that common language, but war forced diplomacy to draw lines and exploit markers of difference. Perhaps Voltaire's over-enthusiastic flirtation with Catherine II can be read in this light:

Je voudrais avoir du moins contribué à vous tuer quelques Turcs. On dit que pour un chrétien, c'est un œuvre fort agréable à Dieu. Cela ne va pas à mes maximes de tolérance; mais les hommes sont pétris de contradictions; et d'ailleurs votre Majesté me tourne la tête.

I would have liked to contribute at least to the killing of some Turks for you, for it is said that for a Christian it is a work very pleasing to God. This does not fit in with my maxims of tolerance; but men are kneaded with contradictions, and besides, your majesty turns my head.⁴⁷

Voltaire's contradictions were the contradictions of diplomacy and in both cases, they emerged at the time of conflict. This should not be seen as a moment when the Enlightenment could be paused for a while by one of its main pulpits, but the possibility of religious violence was woven in its fabric, in diplomacy and in other fields.

Another audience for war proclamations was the enemy itself. Early proclamations by the belligerents, even when addressed to the Polish nobility in general, could not help but try to undermine the enemy. For example, the commander of the Russian forces in Kyiv, Alexandar Mikhailovich Golitsyn, responded to Ottoman claims about the election of the Polish King from Kyiv in a proclamation of March 1769. He claimed that the free election of the King and the respect for Polish liberties were possible precisely thanks to what the Ottomans claimed was Russian interference. He went on to say that the treatment of dissidents in Poland had reached the point where they were not even allowed 'la libre jouissance de l'air' ('the free enjoyment of air'). The patriots of the Ottoman declaration became people who had declared war on their own patria, and Golitsyn invited the Polish to fight for their faith and to defend their country and their liberties by helping his armies.⁴⁸ The same promises and similar language had been used in the proclamation of Yağlıkçızade Mehmed Emin Pasha for a radically different purpose.

Golitsyn received his answer in the form of a declaration made in May by Ahmet Selim Pasha, commander of the Ottoman armies at Bender, who styled himself 'the commander of the innumerable and invincible armies of the Sublime Porte, destined to defend our neighbors and friends the Polish confederates of Bar against the Muscovites, violators of religion, of truth and of Polish liberty'. The Pasha announced his audience too:

I have had my present manifesto translated into the Polish language, so that it may be understood not only by the citizens of Poland and Lithuania, but also by the Muscovites themselves, who have been eating Polish bread for so long that they have had ample time to learn the Polish language.⁴⁹

The declaration is a discussion of how Russia was curtailing Polish liberties and violating Ottoman-Russian treaties, while the Ottomans were marching against Golitsyn to protect those liberties with the help of Polish patriots. Of course, Ahmet Selim Pasha had Polish allies in his camp who may have helped his scribes draft this declaration, but the need to speak the language of Enlightenment diplomacy and to use the Polish language itself as a weapon in the struggle demonstrates what I have been trying to say. Diplomacy, proclamations and discourses must use a similar language for radically different purposes, and Ahmet Selim Pasha's emphasis on Polish translation and communication with his enemy in Polish added a new dimension to the discourse. It seems that a few centuries before Marshall McLuhan wrote his popular book, the medium really became the message.⁵⁰ More importantly, it is clear that these two generals understood that their enemy was part of their audience and felt the need to speak to them in their proclamations.

It is difficult to determine the effect of the Ottoman declarations on the Polish nobility, partly because the Polish allies of the Bar Confederation were already at war with Russia

before the Ottomans got involved and did not need the Ottomans to incite them further. Some of the leaders of the Bar Confederation such as Joachim Potocki and Michał Hieronim Krasiński served with Ottoman armies.⁵¹ Polish allies of the Ottomans fought in the defence of Hotin when the castle was besieged.⁵² Plans were made for an Ottoman incursion into Poland with fifty to sixty thousand soldiers who would join with the remaining forces of the Confederation and would be supplied by the Polish nobility.⁵³ In the early days, Potocki and Krasinski hoped that

the entire people of Poland would ally and unite with the Confederates and would attack the Muscovite infidels who were plotting against both sides [the Ottoman Empire and the Commonwealth] in unison with the soldiers of the Khan [of Crimea] if His Highness the aforementioned Khan entered our country with the Tatar hordes.⁵⁴

In a few months, Ottoman leaders became weary of such promises. Especially the participation of many Poles in the siege of Hotin on the Russian side tested their patience and underlined the limits of both Polish promises and Ottoman propaganda. Yağlıkçızade Mehmed Emin Pasha described some of the nobles who came to the Ottoman camp as those who ‘devlet-i aliyyeden intifâ’ve celb-i mâl sevdâsında oldukları ve nihayetü’l-emr ne şimdi ve ne sonra bir işe yaramayacakları ve sâir madde şöyle dursun Leh içine bir kağıd gönderüb getürmeğe ve bir ağız cevabıyla adam göndermeğe kudretleri olmadığı’ (‘wanted to profit and gain wealth from the Sublime State and were incapable of even carrying a letter to Poland and bringing back an answer, let alone doing other things’).⁵⁵ His successor, Moldovancı Ali Pasha, took direct aim at Potocki and Krasinski: ‘iki seneden berü kendülerden da’vâları üzere bir hizmet eseri zuhûr eylemeyub derûn-ı Leh’de olan müttelik Lehlülerden devlet-i ‘aliyyeye bir mektûb dahi getürdemeyub bir nefer mu’temed Lehlü dahi celb idemeyub’ (‘No service has come out of them in the last two years, contrary to their claims, they have not been able to bring a trustworthy Pole or even a letter from the Confederates to the Sublime State’).⁵⁶ Despite Ottoman expectations, it was clear that the confederations in the Commonwealth against Russia had neither cooperation nor a clear leadership. Moreover, the Bar Confederates had no power over most of them.⁵⁷ In October 1769, at Biala, a general council was established to unite the confederate movement, but it failed to coordinate the various confederations.⁵⁸ The Russians were more successful than the Ottomans in ‘eating Polish bread’. This was undoubtedly due to the presence of Russian armies within the Commonwealth and the deeper penetration of Russian agents into Poland, which was based on a longer and more profound involvement in the Commonwealth during the eighteenth century. Apart from their success in Poland, Russian arguments occasionally found their way into the accounts of the Ottoman elite.

5. Was Podolia Promised to the Ottomans?

There is evidence that Russian propaganda was more successful overall. We cannot explain what happened in Poland as a function of discourse or proclamation, but we can use Ottoman examples to assess the audience and discourse of Russian proclamations. As mentioned above, Catherine II argued that the Ottomans were promised Podolia as a prize for helping the Bar Confederates.⁵⁹ Ottoman documents do not mention any negotiation on the issue. In fact, the letters of the Bar Confederates to the Sublime Porte show how careful they were to prevent the Ottoman incursion into Poland from

becoming a permanent affair. A letter of Joachim Potocki from June 1769 mentions that 'in order to prevent the fall of the castle of Kamanietz to Muscovites, it is necessary to keep it under the control of the Polish Confederates, who are the loyal friends of the Sublime State. However, in case of necessity, the necessary number of soldiers of Islam will be invited to defend the castle'.⁶⁰ An undated communication from the Polish confederates, delivered through the French ambassador, asks that 'a suitable number of soldiers of Islam should be sent to Polish soil with the aforementioned generals [Potocki and Krasinski] without the appointment of a vizier, and captains should be appointed over them who would follow the orders of the marshal of the Polish confederates'.⁶¹ The possible entry of an independent Ottoman army into Poland was not well received by the Confederates.

Only two Ottoman narratives mention how Podolia was promised to the Ottomans. Both come from Ottoman statesmen/diplomats who were not part of the Ottoman decision-making mechanism at the beginning of the war but became involved in Ottoman diplomacy during the war. The first source is Ahmed Vâsîf Efendi's *Mehâsinü'l-Âsâr ve Hakâikü'l-Ahbâr* (Charm and Truth of Relics and Annals), a history of the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth century. Ahmed Vâsîf was a provincial scholar who had not been to the capital before the War. He entered the ranks of the Ottoman scribes through his connection with a provincial governor who was called to serve in the Ottoman-Russian war. He was captured by the Russians and assigned to deliver letters by the Russian general Petr Rumiantsev.⁶² Therefore, he was not part of the ruling circles when the Ottoman declaration was made, and his understanding of how it came about was probably shaped by contact with both Ottoman and Russian perspectives. His account of the beginning of the war is openly critical:

Moskovlu'ya buğz eden tâyife sırran Devlet-i 'aliyye'ye bi'l-iştikâ ilticâ ve 'uzamâ-yı Lehlü'yân'dan olan Potoski Moskovlu'nun tesallutu ref' ve li-hâzihî ictimâ'eden askerini ib'âd ile 'alâkaları bi'l-küllîye inkıtâ'bulduđu hâlde Leh memleketinin ser-âmedi olan Podolya eyâleti bi-hazâfirihâ Devlet-i 'aliyye'ye bi't-tav've'r-rızâ terk olunacağını imâ etmekle o, 'asrın ricâli bu emr-i âzîmi sehl ü heyin farz edüp, kavlen ve fi'len Moskovlu'yu Leh'den ihrâc esbâbına teşebbüs [...]

The [Polish] party that resented the Muscovites, secretly sought asylum with the Exalted State. Potocki, who was one of the Polish magnates, hinted that if the Muscovite intervention in Poland was stopped, their soldiers in Poland expelled, and their ties with the country completely severed, the province of Podolia, the main province of Poland, would be completely handed over to the Sublime State. The statesmen of the time considered this great undertaking to be an easy matter and began to try to drive the Muscovites out of Poland.⁶³

Another source for this story is the history of Alexandros Komninos Ypsilantis.⁶⁴ Ypsilantis had been the private physician of a former Grand Vizier, Koca Ragıp Pasha, and had joined the Ottoman army as an agent of the Prince of Wallachia, Grigorios Ghikas. Ypsilantis believed in the prophecy of a blonde nation coming to save the Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire and was heartbroken at the end of the war, concluding that the prophecy had not come true because God had not absolved the Christians of their sins.⁶⁵ He was against the declaration of war in this sense, at least he blamed the conflict on Ottoman greed. He includes the translation of Catherine II's proclamation, which argues that the Ottoman declaration of war was a machination of those who believed the Polish promise to surrender Podolia and Ukraine to the Ottomans in case of victory.⁶⁶

Ahmed Resmi Efendi, who was much more involved in Ottoman diplomacy and decision-making around the time of the declaration of war is suspiciously silent about such an agreement, despite being the main voice of condemnation of the war itself. Resmi had been the Ottoman envoy to Vienna and Berlin before the war. He had been the *sadaret kethüdası*, the deputy of the Grand Vizier, on two different occasions during the war in 1769 and 1771. In this capacity, he was in the Ottoman army and had first-hand experience of the war itself. In 1774, he was one of the Ottoman diplomats who negotiated the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca.⁶⁷ After the war, he wrote *Hulâsatü'l-İtibar* (Synopsis of My Dignity) to give an account of the war from his own perspective and to defend his honour as a signatory of a humiliating treaty. Although he ridiculed the decision-makers and argued that they were greedy and unaware of the difficulties of war; although he condemned the Bar Confederates as swindlers who only wanted to enrich themselves by using Ottoman resources, Resmi did not mention the promise of Podolia at all.⁶⁸ The army chronicler, Sadullah Enverî, who is a more neutral voice in the discussion also makes no mention of the promise of Podolia.⁶⁹

Given this information, it is plausible that Russian propaganda reached the Ottoman elite, Muslim and Orthodox, and coloured at least some of the perceptions of how the war actually began. It was easier for a Phanariot to quote the translated version of Catherine II's declaration of war in full, while also including the Ottoman declaration of war which described Russian activities in Poland as 'κατὰ τὰ περιστατικά τῆς λεχικῆς ἐλευθερίας' ('contrary to the conditions of Polish liberty').⁷⁰ Ahmed Vasıf, a statesman who became part of Ottoman-Russian diplomacy during the war and who developed a critical approach to the declaration of war itself, also chose to include the promise of Podolia as a cause of war in his account. The fact that none of these narratives comes from an Ottoman source, diplomatic documentation, or participant account, points to the reach of Russian proclamations in the Ottoman Empire.

Overall, Catherine II was more successful than Mustafa III in convincing her own and her enemies' elites. Not being the aggressor, at least officially, helped. Nor did she need to persuade her elite of the use of Enlightenment rhetoric and Christianity in her proclamations. The Russian nobility's view of the Ottoman Empire was largely shaped by their desire to be seen as part of a European milieu and was therefore quite Orientalist.⁷¹ Unlike Catherine II, Mustafa III had to face many challenges. Even the declaration of war came after major changes in the government. The Grand Vizier, Muhsinzade Mehmed Pasha, and the Chief Mufti, Veliyüddin Efendi, had to be replaced because of their opposition to the war. Moreover, the claim to defend the liberties of the Polish Catholic nobility, or even the more neutral claim to defend the integrity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against Russian aggression, did not necessarily resonate with the Ottoman elite.

6. The Ottoman Elite and the Liberties of Polish Nobility

In the Ottoman Empire, diplomatic arguments became part of domestic consumption with the declaration of war. A communication sent by the *kadı* (judge) of Hotin, el-Hac Mustafa, to the Sublime Porte in June 1769 illustrates this. The *kadı* informed the capital that he had read the order sent to him regarding the defence and supply of the castle to the Muslim inhabitants of the city. The war was described, probably copying from the order he had received, as 'Lehlü cumhûrunun bilâd ve enfâsları Moskovlu keferelerinin şurûr ve ızrârlarından sâye-i padişâhide emn ve asâyiş ve istirahatleriçün zuhûr iden sefer-i nusret-me'ser' ('the campaign of [divine] help that was declared in

order to secure and safeguard and comfort the lands and lives of the Polish nobles [or the Polish Republic] from the evil and harms of the Muscovite infidels under the protection of the padishah').⁷²

The call to arms that were sent to the Ottoman provinces repeats a similar justification:

Moskov keferesi Leh memleketini temellük ve Lehlü'yü kendüye tab'iyyet itirmek üzere hudûd-ı İslâmiyyeye sû-i kâd fikr-i fâsîdinde olduğı âşikâr ve derûn-ı Leh'den 'askerini ihrâc eylemesi tenbîh ve te'kid olundukda adem-i kabûl ile ısrâr eylediğinden başka hudûd-ı İslâmiyye'de vâki'Yalta ve sâ'ir mahallere top ve tüfeng ve edevât-ı sâ'ire-i harbiyye ile gönderdiği 'askeri ehl-i İslâm üzerlerine hücum ve muhârebe ve mukâtele ile ehl-i İslâm'dan birkaç nefer kimesnelerin katl ve i'dâmlarına ictisâr eylediğine binâ'en

(It is obvious that the Muscovite infidels intend to violate the borders of Islam by claiming the Polish country and by forcing the Poles to submit to them. They have persistently rejected the demand to remove their soldiers from the interior of Poland. They have attacked the people of Islam in Yalta and other cities on the borders of Islam by sending soldiers armed with cannons and guns and other instruments of war, and they dared to murder some of the people of Islam by their attacks).⁷³

In such bureaucratic documents, the claim to be the defender of Polish liberties does not appear. However, Poland was almost always mentioned, and even when the justification was the attack on Yalta and the murder of Muslims, Ottoman officials leave no doubt that the war was to protect Poland. As the campaign season began in 1769, this focus raised many questions among the elite in Istanbul and beyond. Especially with the participation of Polish soldiers in the two failed Russian sieges of Hotin, the Ottoman perspective began to change. Already in May 1769, the army camp received a *fetva* (Islamic canonical decision) from the capital stating that the army should raid both Russian and Polish territories. The Grand Vizier and the higher officials of the army decided not to read it to the soldiers and changed the part about Poland as they considered it contrary to a previous order: 'ancak Lehlü lafzını ketm ile a'dâ-yı dîn-i mübîn ta'biri ve kanğı semtten ve tarîkden münâsib ise ol mahalde deyu ruhsat-ı kâmile i'tâsıyla mazmûn-ı fetâvâ-yı şerîfe derc olunarak ifâde-i merâm' ('the word Polish was removed and the expression "enemies of the manifest religion" together with "from whichever direction and road that is suitable" was added to the noble *fetvas*').⁷⁴

The Grand Vizier, Yağlıkçızade Mehmed Emin Pasha, had been a Chief Scribe who played a key role in the Ottoman-Russian-Prussian negotiations before the war. He was one of the most important figures in shaping the Ottoman policy of protecting Polish liberties which eventually led to the Ottoman declaration of war.⁷⁵ He was probably worried about how this sudden change would affect Ottoman legitimacy in the eyes of foreign courts.⁷⁶ He thought that he could also convince the Chief Mufti of the validity of his position.⁷⁷ However, we learn from one of the Grand Vizier's letters to the Sultan that the Ottoman monarch was pressing the issue: 'Lehi niçün urmadınız ve evvel yazdınız sonra nükûl eylediniz ve Karlofça musâlahası fesh ve lağv oldu' ('Why did you not attack Poland? You first wrote about it and then decided the opposite. The Treaty of Karlowitz is void').⁷⁸ The pressure from Istanbul increased and the Grand Vizier finally broke. In another letter, he described a meeting held in his tent where he claimed that 'devlet-i 'aliyye Lehlü'nün şurût-ı serbestiyetlerine nâzır olmadığı misillü himâyet ve sıyânetlerine dahi zâmin değildir [...] Ve Potoçkinin ve sair cumhûr-ı Lehden dostluk da'vâ idenlerin muzâheret ve i'ânetlerine ihtiyacı yokdur' ('the sublime state is neither the guardian of the conditions of the liberties of the Poles nor does it guarantee their protection [...] [The Sultan] does not need the help of Potocki or any of the other Polish nobles who claim

to be friends').⁷⁹ The chronicler of the army, Enveri Sadullah Efendi, records a similar conversation between the Grand Vizier and Potocki:

Dîn-i pâkimizde Leh keferesini himâyet ile Moskovlu'ya ve gayrıya sefer câiz değildir. Eğer istimân edüb ilticâ iderler ise gerek Moskovlu ve gerek Lehlü'dür, muktezâ-yı şerî'at-ı garrâ anlara emân i'tâ olunur. Ve illâ Karlovice musâlahasını lafzan iddi'â ile imrâr-ı vakt ve müsâmaha olunmaz ve Leh serbestiyetlerini ve nizâ'mını istimâ'kat'an Devlet-i aliyenin vazîfeleri değildir.

(Launching a campaign against the Muscovites or others to protect the Polish infidels is not permissible in our pure religion. If they surrender and ask for refuge, regardless of whether they are Muscovites or Poles, they will be given protection according to the *şerî'at* (Islamic Law). The appeals to the peace of Karlowitz are only to gain time and will not be listened to. It is not the duty of the Sublime State to care about Polish liberties and infighting).⁸⁰

Soon after, the Ottomans issued a declaration to the dragomans of foreign embassies in the army, announcing their intention to invade Poland and to consider the Polish subjects as enemies unless they submitted to the Ottoman armies.⁸¹ Thus, they had abandoned any claim to protect Polish liberties.⁸² The difference between the Ottoman and Russian capabilities was highlighted by this event. Both empires used Enlightenment concepts in their proclamations leading to the war. The exchange of proclamations continued for a while, using similar language. However, the sieges of Hotin, which put the Ottomans on the defensive, and the Polish participation in Russian ranks pointed to an emerging fault line for the Ottoman elite. When diplomacy and its concepts became part of domestic politics and the production of legitimacy, Enlightenment concepts were of little use to the Ottomans. They had to be replaced by Islamic references, especially when the empire was on the defensive. Mustafa III understood this. For Catherine II, who was a usurper, legitimacy was closely tied to a program of enlightened reform and her embrace of Peter I's legacy. The immense success of her armies in the war, combined with her careful construction of her rule as an enlightened monarchy, helped her strengthen her position.⁸³ She did not face Mustafa III's dilemma.

7. Conclusion

Baki Tezcan describes a transformation of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that based the Empire's legitimacy on the Muslims (mostly male) identity of the Ottoman elite:

it was the Muslims who finally graduated from constituting the *re'aya*, or the flock of rulers, and moved up to become citizens of sorts much before the autocratic political modernization of the Tanzimat era. The historical roots of the particular kind of 'Muslim nationalism' that evolved into modern Turkish nationalism in the early twentieth century are to be found in this eighteenth-century development.⁸⁴

The identification of the Empire with its Muslims occurred gradually and was not the result of a deliberate policy moving in a single direction. The increasing involvement of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople in Ottoman governance, for example, was one of the many 'contradictory' directions this development could have taken.⁸⁵ It was clear, however, that the Greek Orthodox participants in Ottoman governance were not seen as equal partners, either in discourse or in fact.

Inter-imperial conflicts, such as the Ottoman-Russian wars, underscored the limits of other possibilities and reinforced the overall Ottoman political direction: a Muslim empire based on the consent of its Muslim elite. While Peter I's reforms created an elite consensus in the Russian Empire based on shared European cultural signifiers that depended on the European Enlightenment, the Ottoman Empire took a different path in the eighteenth century.⁸⁶ The Empire's elite defined itself in terms of its Muslim identity and its service to Islam. Even the Sultan himself could not escape this identification. Thus, even when Ottoman diplomacy used contemporary concepts that were in vogue in European diplomacy and political debates, the Empire could not mobilize its resources based on them.

As the war moved beyond the Polish theatre and deeper into Ottoman territory, the differences in the two empires' approach to enlightened monarchist rhetoric became more pronounced. Alexei Orlov, who led a Russian naval squadron to the eastern Mediterranean and established a Russian protectorate there, made this even clearer. His declarations were addressed to Ottoman Muslims in besieged Tripolitsa, the administrative center of the Ottoman Morea, using the same enlightened discourse (here in Ottoman translation):

[E]ğer hânelerinizde ikâmet idesiz cümle emlâkiniz sizin olsun ve câmi'lerinizi incitmesünler ve kefare tarafından dîn ve tâ'atinize bir mâni yokdur ve devâm üzere evvel ne vechile geçindiniz ise yine ol vechile vaktinizi geçürsüz ehl-i İslâmдан kati vâfir Moskov memâlikinde bulunur anların ahvâline vâkıfsız ki anlar râhatdadır.

(If you remain in your homes, your property will be yours, your mosques will not be harmed, and there will be no interference by the unbelievers in your religion and worship. However you have lived, you may continue to spend your time in the same way. There are many Muslims in the Muscovite lands, and you know that they are at ease).⁸⁷

Religious tolerance with all its contradictions and despite the identification of the Russian Empire with Orthodoxy was becoming part of the Russian imperial rhetoric.⁸⁸ Orlov's declaration was as much in line with policy as it was pragmatic. On the Ottoman side, this translation of Orlov's declaration coincides with a broader concern: The worry that there were Muslims in the Empire who would listen to it. Although Tripolitsa did not surrender, Ottoman chroniclers were puzzled that Ottoman Muslims continued to live in Russian-controlled areas during the war and were quite surprised how 'a'dâ-yı dîn ile âmîziş ve ülfet ve düşmen-i dîn dahi ahz ü i'tâ ve ikâmet-i salât ve sâir şe'âir-i İslâmiyyelerin icrâya mûmâna'at eylemeyüb' ('they visited and befriended the enemies of religion, and the enemy of religion did not prevent the pillars of Islam such as daily prayers and almsgiving').⁸⁹

After 1769, the Ottoman elite experienced the enlightened absolutist rhetoric as a discourse that worked against them. As they began to lose the war, there was no point in making declarations to Polish confederates. As they abandoned the use of this discourse, they began to see it appear in their own territories, in the Morea, the Aegean islands, the Danubian principalities, the Crimea, and even parts of Ottoman Rumelia. The Russian proclamations, whatever their sincerity, also targeted the Muslims of the Empire. After the war, the Ottoman Muslim elite reflected with real concern on the use of such concepts, as they had also experienced the forced independence of Crimea through the prism of the same concept: *serbestiyet*. Ahmed Resmi Efendi blames the Crimean desires rather than Russian ascendancy: 'Uğursuz Tatar'ın da'vâ-yı serbestisi meydana çıkub' ('the accursed Tatar's desire for independence (*serbestî*) became apparent').⁹⁰ He puts words in Obreskof's mouth that link Russian rhetoric with

Muslim betrayal: 'Biz Tatar'a sizi başlı başınıza adam ideriz deyü söz virdik' ('we promised the Tatars that "we will make you individual on your own"').⁹¹ In this understanding, it is not only the Russian victory that leads to Crimean independence. It is the Crimean Tatars' desire for independence and their alliance with the enemy that forces the Ottomans to concede. Given that we are talking about an elite, just as in the Polish-Lithuanian case, it is hard not to see a parallel in the two understandings of the word *serbest/serbestiyet*. The Ottomans must have distanced themselves from the use of such concepts as a result of their traumatic defeat.

Ottoman and Russian proclamations during the War of 1768–1774 underscore how diplomacy, rather than ceasing, becomes part of intra-elite and intra-imperial politics with war. Although diplomacy was shaped by the use of shared concepts without the need to always refer back to internal dynamics, war mobilized internal actors both materially and intellectually. The Ottoman reluctance, and eventual refusal, to refer to Polish liberties demonstrates this. The war internalized diplomatic discourses opening them up to broader critique. Catherine II could build on the Russian nobility's growing identification with European intellectual trends and could show them the results of victory. Mustafa III, on the other hand, had to find other discourses to help mobilize his forces in the face of defeat and what was perceived as Polish betrayal. Thus, in the Ottoman Empire, the spread of the rhetoric of enlightened absolutism was limited by defeat.

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8. NOTES

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30. The report of the French ambassador in Warsaw tells the Ottomans about the infamous silent session of the Replin *sejm* for example: BOA, TSMA.e 702–8, 10 Zilkade 1181 (29 March 1768).

31. KA (*Kismet-i Askeriye Şeriye Sicilleri*) n. 316, f. 3r. The Ottoman report mentions that the letter in question was dated 13 August 1768.

32. From the report of the French ambassador in Constantinople: *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva*, 141 (1913), pp. 458–60; the Bar Confederates pleaded with the Sublime Porte not to accept blood money too: KA n. 316, 50r. For the British intervention for peace that ultimately failed, see Basil C. Gounaris, 'The Alexei Obrescoveff Case: The Levantine Backstage of British Mediation in the Russo-Turkish War (1768–74)', *The International History Review*, 38.4 (2016), 675–93.

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36. *Sbornik*, 37 (1883), 168.

37. Athanasios Komninus Ypsilantis, *Ta meta tin alosin (1453–1789)* (Constantinople: n.p., 1870), pp. 427–428. See also Sergey Mikhaylovich Solovyov, *Istoriya Rossii s drevneyshikh vremen* (St. Petersburg: Tovarishchestva 'Obshchestvennaia Pol'za', 1896), xxviii, 625–26.

38. KA n. 316, 30r. The original was dated 14 January (Gregorian calendar: 25 January) according to the Ottoman translation. The Ottomans seem to have received this declaration through the Swedish ambassador: KA n. 316, 48r.

39. H. M. Scott, 'Great Britain, Poland and the Russian Alliance, 1763–1767', *The Historical Journal*, 19.1 (March 1976), 53–74.

40. BOA, A.DVNSNMH.d (Mühimme Defteri) 8, p. 559, n. 411, 21 Şaban 1182 (31 December 1768) and p. 560, n. 412, 25 Şaban 1182 (4 January 1768); C.HR. 123/6147, 25 Şaban 1182 (4 January 1768).
41. Michael Talbot, 'A Legal and Diplomatic Justification of the Ottoman Declaration of War Against Russia, 1768: Legitimizing War Within the Ottoman Empire', *ShariaSource at Harvard Law School* <<https://portal.shariasource.com/documents/2924>> [accessed 15 December 2023].
42. M. S. Anderson, 'Great Britain and Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74', *The English Historical Review*, 69.270 (January 1954), 39–58.
43. BOA, AE.SMST.III 148–11656, 4 Receb 1182 (14 November 1768).
44. KA n. 316, 47v.
45. *Sbornik*, 20 (1877), 254.
46. Ypsilantis, *Ta meta tin alosin*, p. 572.
47. *Voltaire Catherine II, Correspondance 1763–1778*, ed. by Alexandre Stroev (Paris: Non Lieu, 2006), p. 132.
48. Leonard Chodźko, *Recueil des traités, conventions et actes diplomatiques concernant la Pologne: 1762–1862* (Paris: Imprimerie de Ch. Lahure et C., 1862), pp. 72–76. There is a shorter Ottoman translation at KA n. 316, 60v. Chodźko dates the declaration to March 14, 1769; the Ottoman Turkish translation is dated to 1 Safer 1183 (6 June 1769). As the Ottoman source is a compilation, I suspect this date is the date of entry into this particular compilation.
49. Chodźko, *Recueil*, pp. 76–85. Translated from French. I am not aware of an Ottoman Turkish or Polish version of this text.
50. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw–Hill, 1964).
51. For a letter promising the Ottomans their service: BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 55–1, p. 1, 3 Şaban 1182 (13 December 1768).
52. BOA, TSMA.e 517–16, 24 Rebiülevvel 1183 (28 July 1769); KA n. 316, 56v and 62v.
53. BOA, TSMA.e 516–55, 17 Safer 1183 (22 June 1769).
54. KA n. 316, 50r.
55. BOA, TSMA.e 516–42, 15 Muharrem 1183 (21 May 1769).
56. BOA, TSMA.e 686–11, 18 Cemaziyelahir 1183 (19 October 1769).
57. Kaplan, *The First Partition*, p. 111.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
59. Possible partitions of Poland had already been a hot topic in diplomacy even before the first partition of Poland in 1772. Ottomans were concerned that the new King would cede Polish Ukraine to Russia: BOA, A.DVN.DVE 169–3, 7 Rebiülahir 1179 (23 September 1765). Some Habsburg diplomats were open to discussing an Ottoman advantage in Poland in return for Austria getting Silesia and cutting the war short: Adolf Beer, *Die erste Theilung Polens Dokumente* (Vienna: C. Gerold, 1873), pp. 272–75.
60. KA n. 316, 61v, 13 Safer 1183 (18 June 1769).
61. TSMA.e 518–63, Undated (catalogue date: April 1770).
62. For a modern biography of Ahmed Vasif, see Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans*.
63. Ahmed Vasif Efendi, *Ahmed Vâsîf Efendi ve Mehâsinü'l-Âsâr ve Hakâikü'l-Ahbâr'ı*, ed. by Nevzat Sağlam (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020), p. 353.
64. For Ypsilantis and his importance for Ottoman historiography, see Elif Bayraktar Tellan, 'Bir Osmanlı Müverrihi: Athanasios Komnenos Hypsilantis', *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 35.2 (December 2018), 175–88.
65. Ypsilantis, *Ta meta tin alosin*, p. 534.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 431.

67. For a biography of Ahmed Resmi Efendi, see Aksan, *An Ottoman statesman*.
68. Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Hulâsatü'l-İ'tibâr* (İstanbul: Dersaadet Mühendishane Matbaası, 1286 [1869–1870]).
69. Enveri Sadullah Efendi, 'Vekâyi'nüvis'.
70. Ypsilantis, *Ta meta tin alosin*, pp. 424–25.
71. Victor Taki, *Tsar and Sultan: Russian Encounters With the Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), especially pp. 1–16. For Ottoman perceptions of Catherine II, see Ethan L. Menchinger, 'Contemporary Ottoman Views of Catherine the Great', *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 42.1 (2019), 84–100.
72. BOA, TSMA.e 877–68, 27 Muharrem 1183 (2 June 1769).
73. BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d 166, p. 70, n. 121, Evail Şevval 1182 (8 February 1769).
74. BOA, TSMA.e 516–39, 10 Muharrem 1183 (16 May 1769).
75. In one of his letters to the Sultan, the Grand Vizier asks to receive the note he had the Prussian ambassador Rexin and the Russian *chargé d'affaires* Obreskov sign: BOA, TSMA.e 516–41, 11 Muharrem 1183 (17 May 1769). He felt that he needed the note in negotiations with foreign representatives. The note itself is the minutes of a long discussion he had with the two representatives on the question of Polish liberties and Russian armies in Poland: C.HR 63–3104, 13 Safer 1178 (12 August 1764). The document is signed by both Rexin and Obreskov in Italian.
76. BOA, TSMA.e 883–37, 1 Safer 1183 (6 June 1769). When the Ottomans finally declared a parallel war on Poland, they felt the need to emphasize that their operations would be limited: BOA, TSMA.e 516–55, 17 Safer 1183 (22 June 1769).
77. BOA, TSMA.e 516–42, Undated.
78. BOA, TSMA.e 758–41, 1 Safer 1183 (6 June 1769).
79. KA n. 316, 24v, 9 Safer 1183 (14 June 1769).
80. Enveri Sadullah Efendi, 'Vekâyi'nüvis', p. 32.
81. BOA, TSMA.e 516–1, Undated.
82. Allies of the Bar Confederates continued to make reference to the Treaty of Karlowitz and asked for a stop to the raids which in their eyes made Polish subjects lean towards Russia: BOA, TSMA.e 517–16, 24 Rebiülevvel 1183 (28 July 1769).
83. Jan Kusber, *Katharina die Große: Legitimation durch Reform und Expansion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021); see also Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1981.
84. Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 237.
85. Paraskevas Konortas, *Οθωμανικές θεωρήσεις για το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο- Βεράτια για τους προκαθήμενους της Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας 17ος- αρχές 20ού αιώνα* [Ottoman Views on the Ecumenical Patriarchate: Berats for the Patriarchs of the Great Church, 17.-Beginning of the 20th Centuries] (Athens: Alexandria, 1998); Elif Bayraktar Tellan, 'The Patriarch and the Sultan: The Struggle for Authority and the Quest for Order in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bilkent University, 2011); Hasan Çolak, *The Orthodox Church in the Early Modern Middle East: Relations Between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2015); Yusuf Ziya Karabıçak, 'Local Patriots and Ecumenical Ottomans: The Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Ottoman Configuration of Power, 1768–1828' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, McGill University & EHES, 2021).
86. Iu. M. Lotman, 'Über die Semiosphäre', *Zeitschrift für Semiotik*, 12.4 (1990), 287–305.
87. BOA, TS.MA.e 758–33, 29 March 1770 (Gregorian: 9 April 1770).

88. Paul Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 39–44; 105–27; Gary Hamburg, 'Religious Toleration in Russian Thought, 1520–1825', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13.3 (2012), 539–49.
89. Enveri Sadullah Efendi, 'Vekâyi'nüvis', p. 158.
90. Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Hulâsatü'l-İ'tibâr*, p. 57.
91. *Ibid.*

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