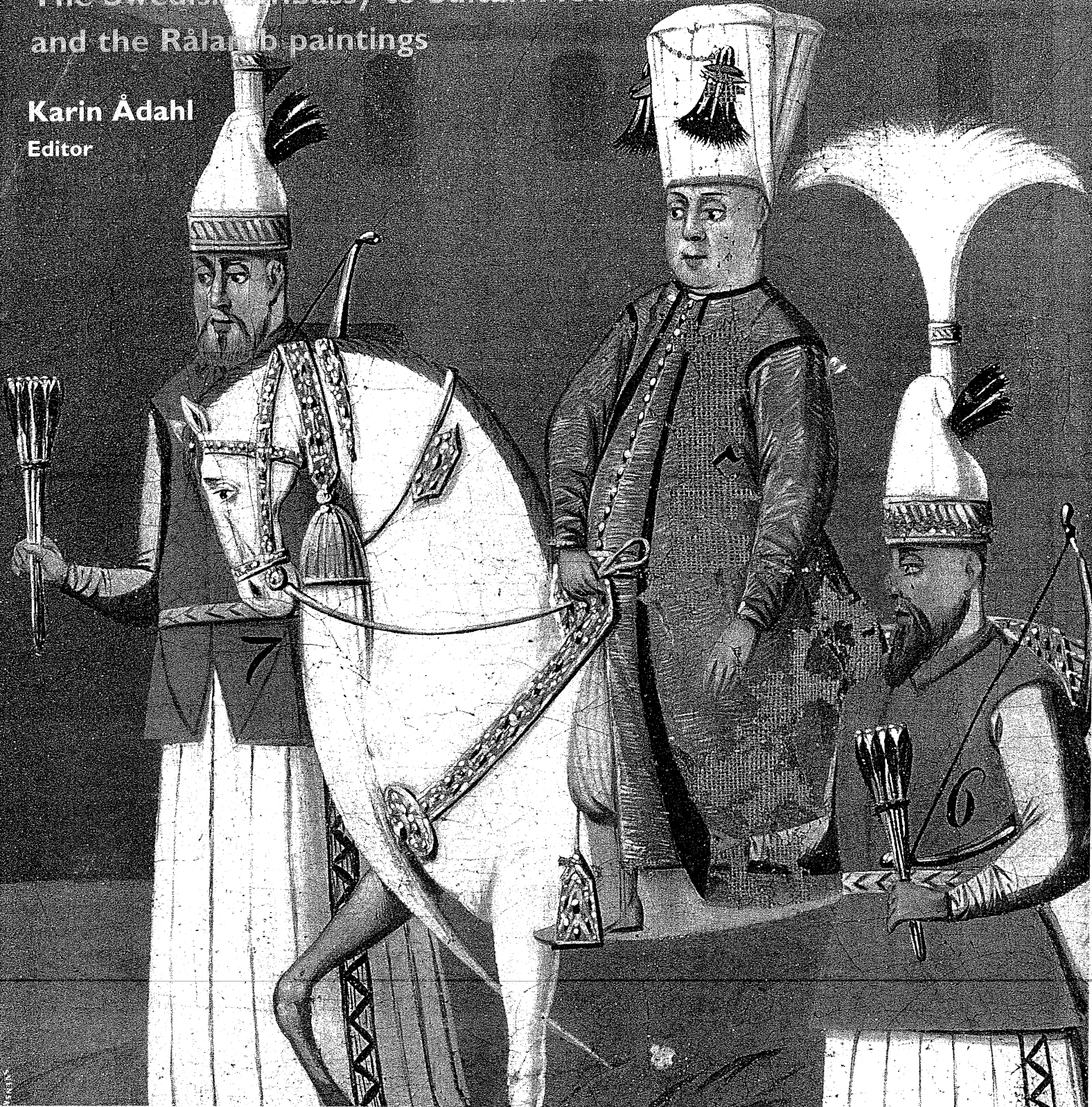


The Sultan's Procession

The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657–1658
and the Rålamb paintings

Karin Ådahl
Editor



The city that Rålamb visited

The political and cultural climate of Istanbul in the 1650s

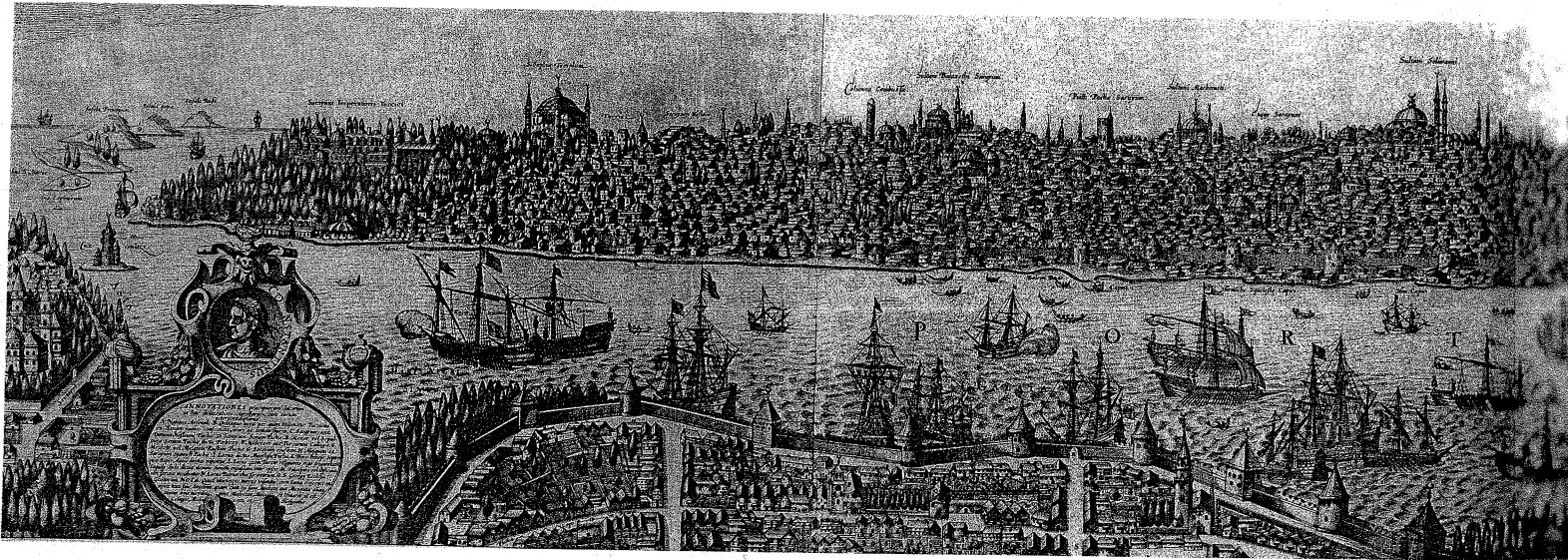
Cemal Kafadar

WHAT IS ARGUABLY the most important event during Claes Rålamb's sojourn in Istanbul (14 May 1657 – 21 January 1658) had nothing to do with diplomatic or political history and is not recorded in his diary: one of the towering figures of Ottoman intellectual history, Katip Çelebi, passed away on 24 September 1657.¹ We should not presume that this would be unknown or uninteresting to Rålamb, whose visit was occasioned, of course, by diplomatic-political concerns. There was only one degree of separation between the Ottoman intellectual and the Swedish envoy. One of the latter's European colleagues and contacts in Istanbul, namely Levinus Warner, the Dutch diplomat-scholar who evidently struck Rålamb as an oddball, seems to have known the Ottoman savant, some of whose precious manuscripts he bought and eventually took to Holland.²

It is more difficult to assess the degree to which Rålamb had the opportunity

¹ Katip Çelebi is not mentioned either in the full Swedish original of Rålamb's *Diarium under resa till Konstantinopel 1657-1658*, ed. Christian Callmer in *Historiska Handlingar* 37:3 (Stockholm, 1963), or in the shorter English edition: *A Relation of a Journey to Constantinople* (London, 1732). On the day of the Çelebi's death, Rålamb was, understandably, more interested in watching and recording the details of the parade on the occasion of the court's migration to Edirne – probably the source of inspiration behind the commission of a series of paintings depicting the sultan, his courtiers, dignitaries and various troops in a procession. For his departure from the Ottoman empire, Rålamb himself had to go to Edirne where he was given his official leave by the imperial court; he left Edirne on 28 February and "arrived on the borders of Christendom" on 18 April 1658.

² Rålamb thought Warner was "fitter for a professor, than for a publick minister," namely a diplomat (p.688). On Warner's oriental manuscripts, see G.W.J. Drewes, pp.1-31 in "The Legatum Warnerium of the Leiden Manuscript Library" in *Levinus Warner and His Legacy: Three Centuries Legatum Warnerium in the Leiden University Library* (Leiden, 1970). On companionship between Ottoman and European intellectuals in that period, see Heidrun Wurm's thoroughly original yet much neglected thesis: *Der osmanische Historiker Huseyn b. Ga'fer, genannt Hezarfenn, und die Istanbuler Gesellschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg im Breisgau), passim.



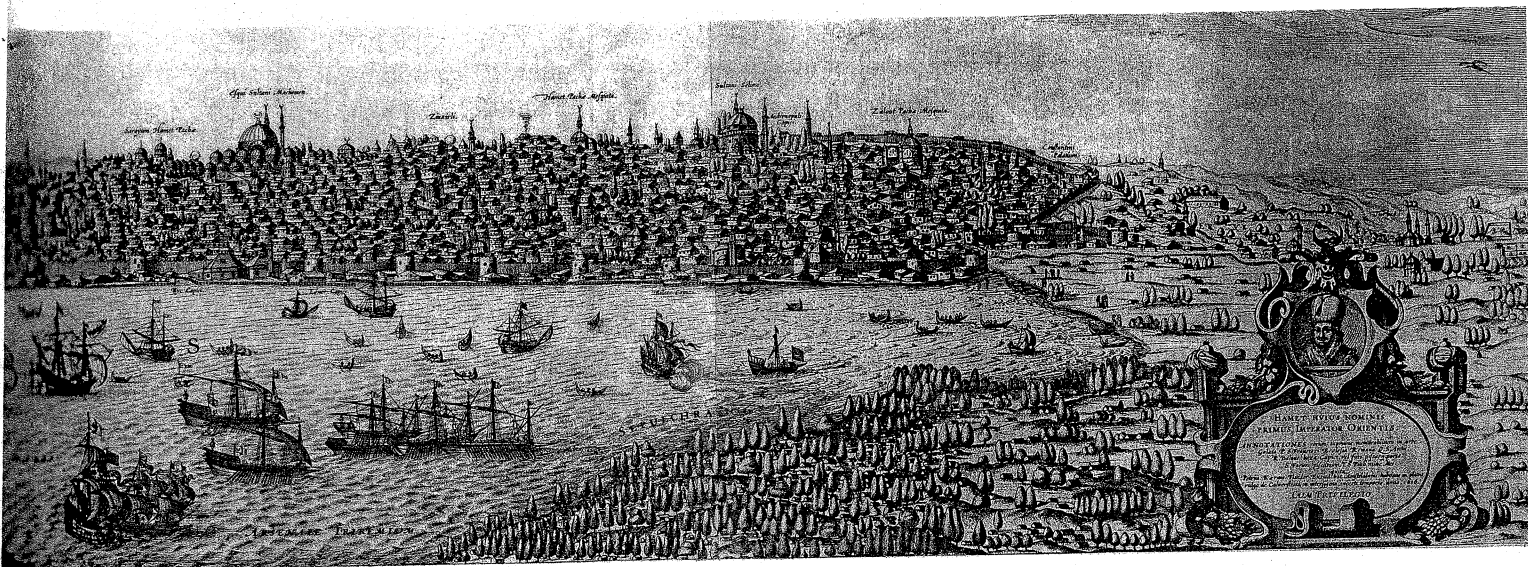
Panorama of Istanbul.

Pieter van der Keere,
Amsterdam 1616. From the
Library of Magnus Gabriel de
la Gardie (1622-86). National
Library, Stockholm.

to become acquainted with the vibrancy of Ottoman cultural life, but even that should not be dismissed as a possibility, at least insofar as the new currents carried an unmistakable interest in the rest of the world in general and in eastern Europe in particular. The seventeenth century, for long the most neglected period in Ottoman studies, is lately emerging as a new frontier that many scholars are eager to engage with. It is seen not so much as a time of stagnation, inward-looking conservatism and obscurantism between an era of magnificence and one of belated but vigorous modernization; rather, the post-Süleymanic era is now recognized for its transformative tug-of-war between experimentation and selective opposition to change or, even more appropriately, between competing political projects, often presented as reforms, that were nourished by these sensibilities in varying degrees and constituted different responses to structural changes in the Ottoman social order.

Some of his acquaintances, if not Râlab himself, were familiar with the intellectuals who applied their scholarship and imagination toward what amounted to a seachange of attitudes in Ottoman cultural history. Katip Çelebi was simply the most respected and influential character in that scene, through his groundbreaking forays into universal geography and history-writing, which included unprecedented efforts to take Europe's past and current affairs into account.³ Important changes were taking place in both areas of learning, ushering in a period of Ottoman encyclopaedism that continued for a century or so, until the two Ibrahims of the eighteenth century, Müteferrika (d.1745) and Erzurumlu (wrote his *Marifetname* in 1757, d.1780), who represent the central and provincial dynamics of this phenomenon, respectively. Its early practitioners, in mid- to late-seventeenth centu-

³ A brief biography of Katip Celebi and a comprehensive bibliography (with generous selections) of his works can be found in Orhan Saik Gokyay, *Katip Celebi: Hayati, Kisiligi ve Eserlerinden Secmeler* (Ankara, n.d. [1988]). For a more thorough biography and a detailed study of his major geographical work, see Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit: Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katip Celebis Gihannuma* (Berlin, 2003).



ry, were keen on socializing and exchanging ideas with various European residents of Istanbul, much before the so-called Tulip Period (1718-30) that was, for too long, considered to have initiated the lifting of some kind of presumed iron curtain between an essentialized “Ottoman culture” and a post-Renaissance “European mind.” Figures like Katip Çelebi were ready to take on the challenge of appropriating new information and offering fresh interpretations to deal with what they perceived to be the disorder of their age.

This reorientation and efflorescence in Ottoman cultural life took shape against a backdrop of breathtaking political turbulence which preceded Rålamb’s visit. In fact, the decade before his arrival was the most turbulent era even by the standards of that century of upheaval. If we were to utilize and modernize the anthropomorphic medical metaphors that were dear to Katip Celebi in his analysis of “Ottoman decline,” we might call it a mid-life crisis. At least with respect to Ottoman politics, Rålamb had obviously done his homework; his synopsis of that earlier decade of turbulence is well informed and would have enabled the reader (in Sweden and in Europe at that time) to understand the turmoil of the recent past within the context of Ottoman institutions, interest groups and decision making processes.

It is worth bringing two of Rålamb’s personal sources of information into relief here. Jacob Nagy de Harsany was a member of the Transylvanian delegation in Istanbul and accompanied the Swedish envoy in most of his encounters with Ottoman grandees, which is only natural given the alliance between the two Protestant kingdoms in their joint venture in Poland that constituted the core topic of Rålamb’s mission.⁴ His diary suggests that the two of them saw each other also socially. Now, the book that Harsany later penned on the Ottoman empire can easily be characterized as one of the most knowledgeable and perceptive works ever written on the subject in early

⁴ Rålamb, *Relation*, p.688: “Mr. Jacob Hartzanius prince Ragotsky’s secretary ... assisted me in translating my writings, and was my interpreter at the audiences.” There are many more references to Harsany in Rålamb’s diary than in the edited English text.



Sultan Mehmed IV.
From G. J. Grelot, *A Late
Voyage to Constantinople*,
London 1683.

modern Europe.⁵ It reflects not only the rigorous humanist education of its author but also the extraordinarily nuanced perspective that a Hungarian could have on the Ottoman world, partitioned and squeezed as his political space was between competing imperialisms, of which the Ottomans represented only one. In addition to the good fortune of having Harsany as a guide to Ottoman affairs, Rålamb also enjoyed the acquaintance of another remarkable character in Istanbul, Ali Ufki, nee Albert Bobowski, a Polish-born renegade who had been trained as a page in the Ottoman palace and later distinguished himself as a musician and a dragoon there.⁶

Thanks also to his own astute mind and reading, of course, Rålamb seems to have understood, much better than a novice he could have been, some of the intricacies of Ottoman politics. He knew well, for instance, that the upheavals were not limited to the capital city but also encompassed the provinces and that the two were deeply connected. Indeed, the transformations and crises that beset the Ottoman institutions since the late sixteenth century (cf. the gradual but unmistakable trend toward phasing out the classical mechanisms of fief distribution [*timar*] and Janissary recruitment [*devshirme*], for instance) culminated, towards the middle of the next century, in the most intricate negotiations and contentious settling of accounts among political parties that pursued their competing interests in access to power and resources. Even the abrupt downturn in Ottoman naval affairs circa 1655, highlighted by dramatic losses in the Aegean and the Venetian blockade of the Dardanelles, had a lot to do with the politics of redistribution: the Ottoman defense system in the Aegean had been weakened by the appropriation into the Treasury of sanjaks (sub-governors' fiefs) in Aydin and Saruhan, namely the provinces abutting the sea.⁷

⁵ Gyorgi Hazai, ed., *Das osmanisch-türkische im XVII. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen an den Transkriptionstexten von Jacob Nagy de Harsany* (Budapest, 1973).

⁶ On Ali 'Ufki, see Wurm, *Istanbuler Gesellschaft*, 14-15 and Şükrü Elçin, ed., *Ali Ufki: Hayati, Eserleri ve Mecmua-i Saz ü Söz* (Istanbul, 1976). A text written by him seems to be the source for the overlapping accounts given by Rålamb and Wallich (on him, see below) of Islam as a religion; see Bernt Brendemoen, "Some Remarks on Claes Brodersson Rålamb and his Contemporaries," in *Turcica et Orientalia: Studies in Honor of Gunnar Jarring* (Istanbul, 1988), 9-18.

⁷ *Ta'rih-i Na'ima*, VI:206-207. Cited in Mustafa Cezar et al., *Mufassal Osmanli Tarihi*, 6 vols. (Istanbul, 1960), IV:2044.

The residents of Istanbul were involved in no less than four spectacular revolts between 1648 and 1656. These were mostly led by different and rival factions among the military, but hardly any social class was immune to the outbreaks of organized disobedience and violence, as the roles of victim and perpetrator, of rebel and spectator, shifted on occasion. Moreover, the so-called military groups were by then, to some degree, articulated with the *esnaf* (members of artisanal guilds) and the *lumpen esnaf* of the city, as more and more "soldiers" took up trades in the marketplace while sundry urbanites, mostly "bachelors," enrolled in the ranks of the Janissaries and other corps. For a few days in March 1656, for instance, approximately a year before Rålamb's arrival, the city awoke to the ghastly sight of corpses hanging upside down from a gigantic plane tree in Atmeydanı, the main public square. Several grandees and courtiers were thus punished by soldiers who had revolted for having been paid in defective coins, a recurrent problem since the 1580s that was exacerbated in the mid-seventeenth century.

In the fall and winter of 1656, the rebellion-weary city also suffered from severe shortages and price hikes in victuals because of the Venetian blockade of the straits of the Dardanelles that constituted the main avenue for the importation of rice and other essential provisions from Egypt and the Mediterranean. The same year, social and political tensions resurfaced, as the supporters of the ultraconservative Kadizadeli movement regrouped in order to enforce – through vigilante action – their own severe version of the shari'a principle of "enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong." They were getting ready for their most ambitious engagement yet, in the early days of October 1656, when they started to mobilize their supporters to take to the streets with arms and sticks for such enforcement. Their main goal seems to have been to raze to the ground the Sufi lodges which they decried as the fountainhead of various pernicious "innovations." They were to quickly realize, however, as was the rest of the city, that the new grand vizier who assumed power a few days earlier was not going to back down in the face of such tumult.

Köprülü Mehmed Pasha had accepted the Grand Vezirate only after intense negotiations with "the palace," namely, above all, with Hadice Turhan Sultan (1627-82), who functioned like a queen-regent during the early reign of her son, Mehmed IV (r.1648-87), since he was seated on the throne when only seven years old. When they reached an agreement, as confirmed by the queen-mother's repetition of her oath of acceptance three times, the septuagenarian pasha was given unprecedented powers and guarantees of

tenure.⁸ The swift repression of the shari'a-minded vigilantes of October 1657 was merely a preface to his iron-handed regime that punished, exiled and executed thousands in the name of law and order during the next few years.

When Rålamb arrived in the Ottoman capital, Köprülü had been at the helm for no more than eight months, but it was already one of the most stable grand vezirates since 1648 (and he was to remain in power until his death and replacement by his son in 1661). The Swedish envoy recognized that the pasha was "rough and tyrannical," a "rigorous man," and "his cruelty awes those who might otherwise plot against his life," but he could also boast of a "readiness of wit" as well as "great experience by reason of his age." And at least in their own encounters, "he used [Rålamb] with great civility in his discourse."⁹

As for international affairs, the Ottomans knew well that a new order was emerging in Europe because of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) and that they had to make adjustments.¹⁰ Since 1644, they were involved in a prolonged war of their own, against Venice for the conquest of Crete. Ultimately, they were victorious but it took twenty-five years of nearly continuous warfare in the Aegean and the Mediterranean. The Ottoman state could hardly afford to keep its energies focused on that theater alone since things were rapidly changing in the northern frontiers as well. The rise of Russia was an obvious challenge that reasserted itself after the end of Muscovy's Time of Troubles in 1613 and implied a focus of concern and interest towards eastern Europe. A more immediate concern in the north during the first half of the seventeenth century was the threat to Ottoman control over the Black Sea by both the Zaporozhian ("Ukrainian") and the Don Cossacks, the latter being mostly under Russian protection. After 1648, however, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth collapsed into civil war, the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who were fighting against Poland, turned into potential protégés of the Ottomans and likely partners of the Crimean Tatars, who were themselves Ottoman vassals.¹¹

⁸ Na'ima, VI:213-214. Turhan Sultan could actually play such a role only after September 1651, namely after a rebellion that culminated in the execution of her rival and the child-sultan's grandmother, Kösem Sultan, who was among the dominant actors in Ottoman politics for much of the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

⁹ Rålamb, *Relation*, p.700; he made his observation of Köprülü as a "rigorous man" and of his "civility" upon their first encounter (pp.681-682).

¹⁰ Katip Çelebi's chronicle contains various reports on the war in Europe in the 1630s and 40s, including numerous references to Sweden's role and the text of a letter from Sweden to Transylvania. *Fezleke*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1870/71), II:234-237, 270-272, and passim.

¹¹ The intricacies of Polish-Ukrainian politics during the civil war are explicated in Frank Sysyn, *Between Poland and Ukraine: The Dilemma of Adam Kysil, 1600-1653* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985). For relations between the Ottoman empire and the Ukrainian Cossacks, as well as the larger political scene of the lands around the Black Sea in the first half of the seventeenth century, see the forthcoming book by Victor Ostapchuk.

Realignments of balances of power that were worked out during the long war in Europe and through the Treaty of Westphalen (1648) brought several contenders into the limelight. France was one of the biggest beneficiaries in not only Europe but also the Levant.¹² The quarter of a century that it took the Ottomans and the Venetians to sort out their claims over Crete (and over the control of communication in the eastern Mediterranean) displaced Venice as the best-informed and best-connected European actor in the affairs and mercantile networks of the Levant since the late Byzantine era. By then, France was ready to occupy that role.¹³

Yet another outcome of the Thirty Years War was Sweden's entry as a new player into European, and thus also Ottoman, political life. The opening line in the 1933 Greta Garbo vehicle, *Queen Christina*, may have contained some exaggeration: "In the year 1632, the armies of Sweden, under the banner of its hero, King Gustavus Adolphus, were in the midst of the great Thirty Years War that was to give the Norsemen the leadership of Europe." It was not, however, altogether without substance. For three quarters of a century after that point, Sweden's interests, as represented by her armies and diplomats, were among the dominant factors that shaped the international order, particularly in central, eastern, and northern Europe.

There had been a few earlier instances of contact between Sweden and the Ottoman empire, and Poland constituted the most significant topic of mutual interest from the outset. In 1587, Swedish king Johan III was looking for Ottoman support in his bid for the Polish throne when he wrote to Sultan Murad III. Unofficial visits to Istanbul by Bengt Bengtsson Oxenstierna in 1616-17 and Sten Svantesson Bielke in 1623 do not seem to have generated any contacts at the interstate level. It was inevitable that Swedish involvement in the Thirty Years War would call for alliance building, and in 1631 Gustaf Adolf sent his representative in Hungary to Istanbul to ask Murad IV for support, but the Ottomans were not ready to alienate the Habsburg emperor. Too little is known of two Swedish visits to the Ottoman capital during the reign of Queen Christina, but undoubtedly this traffic generated some new informa-

¹² For the emergence of France and Sweden as notable "military-political structures" in European affairs as a consequence of the Thirty Years War, see William H. McNeill, *In Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force and Society since A.D. 1000* (Chicago, 1982), 122-125.

¹³ In terms of commerce, a northern European "invasion" of the Mediterranean (by French, Dutch, and English merchants) started early in the seventeenth century. One should be wary, however, of projecting "a quick and decisive northern European takeover of Mediterranean commerce," as convincingly argued by Molly Greene, "Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century," *Past and Present* 174 (February 2002): 42-71. A similar analysis is needed of the changing patterns of trade along the North-South axis (from the Baltic region, through eastern Europe, to the Ottoman realm) in order to more fully assess the political shifts treated here.

tion about the Ottomans in Sweden. When he was told during the negotiations in Istanbul that "it would be wrong in the Porte, to adandon that old friendship [with Poland], for the new one" with Sweden, Rålamb quickly retorted "that the friendship offered by [Carl X Gustaf] was not new, but had begun in the time of king Gustavus Adolphus, was continued by queen Christina, with good offices done in favour of the Porte against the Roman emperor."¹⁴

From the Swedish point of view, the circumstances warranted a more serious diplomatic initiative after 1655, when Swedish armies invaded Poland and were soon allied with George II Rákóczi, the prince of Transylvania and an Ottoman vassal.¹⁵ Carl X Gustaf was interested in obtaining Ottoman approval of, if not support for, his venture so that different pieces of the eastern European puzzle that were under Ottoman control would not undermine his plans. He hoped that the Ottomans would give their blessings to Rákóczi's involvement and they would prevent any assistance to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that might be provided either by the Crimean Khanate or by the Ukrainian Cossacks, who were giving signals of looking for a place within the Ottoman orbit in the context of the civil war in Poland.

The Swedish king was so keen on coming to terms with the Ottomans on these matters that an exceptional measure was taken against the possibility of Rålamb not reaching his destination since he had to travel through hostile Habsburg territory: a second envoy was sent by another route, which implied that Rålamb faced the unusual circumstance of having to share his ambassadorial position with his colleague, Gotthard Welling, who was in Istanbul for much of the same duration.¹⁶ Rålamb must have been annoyed from the

¹⁴ Rålamb, *Relation*, p.685. The information on Swedish-Ottoman diplomatic exchanges and travels is from Walther Björkman, "Die schwedisch-türkischen Beziehungen bis 1800," in *Festschrift Georg Jacob*, ed. Th. Menzel (Leipzig, 1932), 9-23. Queen Christina's interest in the Ottoman empire continued (and changed its nature?) after her abdication in 1654 and conversion to Catholicism. Marsili's *Osservazioni intorno al Bosforo Tracio overo Canale di Constantinopoli* (Rome, 1681) was presented to "Alla Sacra Real Maesta di Cristina, Regina di Svezia." The count also records in his memoirs that "walking up and down... past big tables with open atlases, she asked [him] questions about Turkey, Hungary, and the navigation of the Greek islands ... and next day he learnt that the commission in her mind concerned a fantastic and impossible plan for naval warfare against the Turks." Cited in John Stoye, *Marsigli's Europe, 1680-1730: The Life and Times of Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, Soldier and Virtuoso* (New Haven and London, 1994), p.56.

¹⁵ Part of the relevant discussion that was held at Sweden's Council of the Realm in December 1654, on the eve of the invasion of Poland, is translated in Michael Roberts, ed., *Sweden as a Great Power: Government, Society, Foreign Policy* (London, 1968), 163-169.

¹⁶ Welling and his staff arrived in Istanbul on June 9. A few days earlier in Silivri, their last halting place before reaching the capital, they had run into the Ottoman armies moving in the other direction, to be deployed in the Aegean campaign. Welling's delegation included a German priest who wrote an account of their journeys and sojourn in Istanbul, providing additional information on Rålamb and Harsany, among others: C.J. Hildebrandt's *dreifache Gesandtschaftsreise nach Siebenbürgen, der Ukraine und Constantinopel (1656-1658)*, ed. F. Babinger (Stockholm, 1937).

outset since he thought he was about to obtain his leave to return to Sweden in late May, 1657, but was told that another Swedish envoy was on his way to Istanbul and the Ottoman administration would put the matter on hold until meeting the latter. Worse, the two of them do not seem to have had a good rapport.¹⁷

Their patience, of course, and possibly their nerves, were tested when it turned out that the Porte would keep both of them in Istanbul for several more months, while news from eastern Europe kept reshuffling the cards. Khmelnytskyi, the legendary hetman of the Ukrainian Cossacks, who had made overtures to the Ottomans, Russians and Swedes at different points during his struggle against Polish overlordship, died in August 1657. In the short run, this may have mattered little for Ottoman calculations in eastern Europe since, as Rålamb observed perceptively, "the Zaporovian Cossacks lay under ... suspicion at the Porte, who do not much rely on their pretended devotion, by reason of the good understanding they keep with the Russians."¹⁸ Within the same month, however, just as "affairs looked with the most favorable aspect" according to Rålamb, news reached Istanbul about the devastation of Rakoczy's forces in the hands of the Crimeans, which "put everything off the hinges again." The Swedish diplomat concluded plaintively that "so prince Ragotsky himself was the occasion of destroying all the work, which your majesty [practically speaking, Rålamb himself, of course] had been labouring at in his behalf at the Ottoman Porte."¹⁹ Rålamb does not even mention the following celebrations in the capital city, where the government was eager to make the best of good news and the populace ready to take every opportunity to turn festive after a decade of turmoil and hardship. A few days later, even more joyous news came from the Aegean about the reconquest of Bozcaada (Tenedos). The court would soon move to Edirne "in order to tackle the disorder in the affairs of the northern lands."²⁰

¹⁷ Hildebrandt, p. 135: "Es macheten die Herren Abgesandten Eine Cassa und assen dieselbe zusammen und dero Leute auch über einen tisch. Das ging eine Zeitlang an, wehrete aber nicht lang, da entstand Jalusie unter denen Hrn. Abgesandten ... Das Feur wurde immer grosser ... Endlich geschah gar ein Riss and quitierte H. Rålamb dass Logament ..."

¹⁸ Rålamb, *Relation*, p. 707. When the Ukrainian Cossacks, "known as 'brotherly Cossacks' [*karındaş kazağı*] for having been in league with the khan of Crimea for some time" sent an envoy to Istanbul in April 1657 to be accorded the status of Wallachia and Moldavia, their offer of obedience was met with skepticism and turned down. *Tarih-i Silahdar*, I:103.

¹⁹ Rålamb, *Relation*, p. 710. For news of Poland and Ukraine reaching Swedish diplomats

²⁰ Na'ima, VI:293. Rålamb seems to rely on some colorful but inaccurate tradition when he writes (*Relation*, p. 701) that Mehmed IV had turned 17 and was "by their law obliged to repair to Adrianople ... and to undertake some expedition, to entitle him to a third feather to be put into his turbant by the vizir."

From the Ottoman point of view, the Swedish scenario may have been simply unrealistic from the beginning. So long as it was not forced to relinquish control, the Porte would hardly consider allowing Transylvania such independence of action, let alone overlooking Sweden's promise to recognize Rákóczi "as king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania."²¹ Only a generation earlier, Gabor Bethlen, prince of Transylvania (1613-29) had been told by the Ottoman Şeyhülislam that "Transylvania is Sultan Suleiman's invention and is the property of the Mighty Sultan."²²

The Ottoman state had always been involved in European politics and diplomacy, and not simply in the inert sense that it held lands in that continent. Making and breaking alliances with the Genoese or the Venetians, fighting or negotiating with Savoyard or Burgundian knights, were part and parcel of Ottoman state building in the fourteenth century. By the late fifteenth century, the Ottoman sultan was served by men who skillfully negotiated the affair of Sultan Cem with different powers in Italy and France. During the reign of Süleyman (1520-1566), the well-known alliance had been forged with François I against the Habsburg emperor. Thereafter, various Protestant powers, such as the Dutch, looked to the Ottoman empire as a likely supporter, and a number of agents and envoys were sent back and forth.²³

They may have rejoiced that European Christendom was fractured through the rise of Protestantism, which generated a whole new set of potential allies, but the Ottomans would not necessarily dismiss the possibility of neutrality or friendship vis-à-vis Catholic powers. Much depended on expediency and Realpolitik, of course. Poland occupied a curious place in all this; the Ottomans were, at times, able to exert some power there and, to some degree, shaped Polish dynastic politics through vassals and alliances. Amicable relations were not unusual, either. In fact, while Rålamb was in the Ottoman capital, an embassy arrived from Poland with a staff that included a young Jan Sobieski, who would later rise to prominence as the general who "saved

²¹ According to a treaty between Carl X Gustav and George II Rákóczi, cited in Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow, Eng., 2000), p.178.

²² Cited (on p.131) in B.K. Kiraly and P. Pastor, "The Sublime Porte and Ferencz II Rakoczi's Hungary: An Episode in Islamic Christian Relations," in A. Ascher, T. Halasi-Kun, B. K. Kiraly, eds., *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern* (Brooklyn, NY, 1979), 129-148.

²³ Geoffrey Parker, "The Dutch Revolt and the Polarization of International Politics," in G. Parker and L. M. Smith., eds., *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1978), 57-82; see p.59, for instance: "The Dutch cause was offered active support, paradoxically enough, only by the Ottoman Turks." Referring to Sweden and Transylvania in the context of their alliance of 1656-57, Silahdar Mehmed Aga, the Ottoman historian, uses the phrase "*hem-millet*" ("of the same [denomi]nation"). *Silahdar Tarihi*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1928), I:104.

Europe" during the second Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683. A "Polish-Tatar league" was cemented in Istanbul, much to Sweden's dismay.

Even in its newly enlarged and complicated frame of the mid-seventeenth century, however, Europe could not encompass or exhaust Ottoman interests in international affairs. Only a few months before Rålamb, for instance, the Ottoman capital was visited by an ambassador from India who had been commissioned to explore the possibility of an Ottoman-Mughal alliance against the Safavids of Iran. Kaim Beg was the second Mughal envoy to ask for the sultan's audience since the Safavid reconquest of Kandahar in 1649.²⁴ At one and the same historical conjuncture, in other words, the Ottoman empire was being asked by two potential allies, one in Scandinavia and the other in South Asia, to stretch its muscle as far north/west as Poland and south/east as Kandahar. One can find in this circumstance a sign of Ottoman might perhaps but also of Ottoman limits.

[Around the mid-seventeenth century, as the universe of Ottoman diplomacy was expanding, cultural life in the empire was also being reshaped by actors trying to come to grips with the momentous expansion of trade, traffic and information that characterized the early modern era. This was a deeply contentious affair. Some of those actors would sooner shut down the doors on "innovations," that is, on the heady mixture of new or newly resurgent customs, ideas, and substances that they perceived to spell the fatal contamination of a righteous Islamic order. The shari'a-minded Kadizadeli movement surfaced in at least three waves during the course of the seventeenth century, and the second wave of the 1650s, in particular, was decidedly activist out there in public spaces. The censure of the Kadizadeli was not limited to matters of religion, strictly speaking, but ranged across to various social practices such as the consumption of coffee.] On that front, it is obvious that Rålamb could not have cared less. He apparently did not like that strange drink that was barely beginning to tickle the palates of Europeans who took to coffee more than a century later than did the people of the Ottoman realm.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid., I:41-42 (for Kaim Beg's arrival) and I:54 (for his departure in September 1656). Not surprisingly, an ambassador from Iran was in Istanbul later that year and departed in January 1657; *ibid.*, 63-64.

²⁵ In fact, beginning in the 1650s, coffeehouses were established in a few cities of Europe and would spread rapidly during the rest of the century. In 1657, Rålamb and Hildebrandt still considered it as part of crossing a cultural frontier when they were introduced to coffee after crossing the Danube, during their first experience of a reception by an Ottoman host, namely the pasha of Silistra. Hildebrandt was pleased to learn from a German renegade in the pasha's company that the sherbet that was also served was not bitter like coffee (p.112). Rålamb had to be shown how he "must drink it without burning [him]self" (p.617).

The objection of the Kadizadeli was not a matter of the palate, however, but rather went to the heart of the new urban life that characterized much of the world in the early modern era. Indulgence in coffee had led, from the 1550s onwards, to the invention of a "secular" social institution, the coffee-house, and also to new modes of sociability that characterized life in Ottoman cities. Certain forms of public entertainment, the shadow puppet theater (Karagöz) and performative storytelling (executed by the meddah) started to gain huge popularity and established their basic repertoires during the course of the seventeenth century. The new urban life was not limited to Istanbul, but that megapolis of nearly four hundred thousand souls set or blended many of the trends, as its inhabitants of different faiths seem to have taken with equal avidity to new vogues in dress or entertainment, whether these were created in their city or inspired by the examples of other fabled cities, such as Isfahan or Cairo. Istanbul, not surprisingly, also became a center where conservative reactions coalesced into a movement that had its own notions of maintaining the fabric of a society of believers. It might be tempting but this certainly is not the place to pursue the intriguing parallels of puritanical activism in different parts of the globe around that time: e.g., the Puritans in England and the New World, the Old Believers in Russia, the Akhbaris in Iran. Just as the residents of New Haven (Connecticut) faced the ruling that one should not cross the river or engage in sports on the day of the Sabbath, those of Istanbul were being admonished not to greet each other in any manner other than that known to have been practiced by Prophet Mohammed, for instance. As few as they may have been, the Kadizadeli followers among the Cossacks might constitute a good example of the crosscultural appeal of puritanical enthusiasm in the seventeenth century.²⁶

Katip Çelebi wrote one of his most thoughtful books about the controversies that raged between the Kadizadeli and their rivals among the Sufis. That small book still serves as the best introduction to the tensions that reverberated in Istanbul throughout the seventeenth century.²⁷ He was not willing to take either side in this debate, however. He found it pointless, or, worse, potentially tyrannical, to attempt to repress the customs of the common people, as newly spread or dubious as these customs may have been. What mattered to

1672: the one and only case he knows of a stoning to death of adult (ev?) / Muslim / Jew
 [short criminal law not regularly applied in matters of theft, adultery -]

the mid-17th cent → early modern class accident, slope public life → reaction but let as things over the basic elements of the list of non-wishes + list of women

²⁶ The most informative and entertaining, though hardly impartial, account of the Kadizadeli unrest in 1656, along with a censorious overview of the movement, is in Na'ima, VI:218-230; the Cossacks are mentioned on p.225.

²⁷ See the English translation with an introduction and notes by Geoffrey Lewis, *The Balance of Truth by Katip Çelebi* (London, 1957).

him was the urgency of the need to rise above disputatiousness and to understand, assimilate and digest the new sorts and fresh sources of knowledge that seemed, clearly to him, to beckon European domination over the world.

Just as relevant for our purposes is the heightened interest in Europe, its history and political geography, that characterized the new intellectual setting represented by Katip Çelebi and his associates. His ventures into "European studies" inspired, or simply preceded, several works on the history, geography and politics of that continent, as well as memoirs of experiences among Europeans, that need to be recognized as a meaningful corpus that came into existence before and during the Tulip Period.²⁸

One of the most significant developments for the future of southeastern and eastern Europe, and of Ottoman relations with the polities in that part of the world, was the rise of the Phanariots from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. These Greek Orthodox elites, based in the Fener district of Istanbul, served as imperial interpreters, diplomats and (in the eighteenth century) voivodas of Wallachia and Moldavia for the sultan. This phenomenon cannot be considered apart from the concomitant rise of a Greek mercantile bourgeoisie in the Balkans and must, to some degree, be related to the Ottomans' recognition of the rise of an Orthodox eastern Europe led by Russia.²⁹

Rålamb's diary suggests that he is not surprised to find that some of his Ottoman contacts were knowledgeable, even savvy, about the issues that he had come to negotiate. In his account, there is hardly any orientalizing condescension or romanticism that characterizes 19th century European writing, even if it is not beyond him to resort to cultural stereotypes and clichés like "those people are of an inconstant mind" or "this nation being very superstitious."³⁰ In terms of early modern conceptualizations of identity, it is

²⁸ A more conventional and much less positive assessment of what the Ottomans knew of Europe until the nineteenth century can be found in Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York and London, 1982). In the same vein, on Katip Celebi as "an index of [Ottoman] ignorance of Europe," see V. L. Menage, "Three Ottoman Treatises on Europe," *Iran and Islam*, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh, 1971), 421-433.

²⁹ There were several other Greeks who played perhaps smaller but interesting roles as intermediaries, dragomans, or secretaries in the service of different eastern and central European states. See, for instance, Daniel de Graecani, Atheniensis, whose career included being sent as envoy by Khmelnytsky to Carl X Gustaf: Babinger's endnote on p.220 in his edition of Hildebrandt's travelogue. Compare also Leonard Philaras, who is noted by the Swedish envoy in London 1655 as someone "who can talk very well on the affairs of the Turks, the Cossacks and Tartars, and the Muscovites" upon his delivery of a letter intended for the Swedish king; pp.143-144 in Michael Roberts, trans. and ed., *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court, 1655-1656: the missions of Peter Julius Coyet and Christer Bonde* (London, 1988). The documents included in this book present interesting points of comparison with respect to Swedish diplomatic efforts in Istanbul and elsewhere in Europe.

³⁰ Compare, for instance, to Knut Hamsun and H.C. Andersen, *Istanbul'da İki İskandinav Seyyah*, trans. B. Gursaler Syvertsen (Istanbul, 1993).

worth observing that he was also highly conscious of the geographical boundaries of "Christendom and Turkey," which he, like his contemporaries, drew around the central European edges of the Ottoman empire.³¹

The Ottoman decision not to tolerate the action of the Transylvanian king, Sweden's ally, disappointed Rålamb perhaps, but he must have noted in his later life, even from afar and even if he did not avidly follow the news from "Turkey," that the policies carefully designed by the successive regimes of the two Köprülüs, senior and junior, worked relatively well for the empire. For two and a half decades after Rålamb's departure, the Ottoman empire enjoyed its most successful phase of expansion, and its largest territorial reach, ever in eastern Europe.

One of the greatest achievements of Ottoman policy in that theater of action that Rålamb had come to negotiate [in central-eastern Europe] may well be the stability of Transylvania, as characterized by the unprecedented longevity of the reign of its new prince, Michael Apafiy (1662-90), who had been one of the students of Harsany. This is remarkable not necessarily because Apafiy was a more accomplished ruler than his predecessors but simply because of the stability that his rule implied from the Ottoman point of view.

The cadastral survey of Kamaniecz,³² conducted circa 1681 in recently-conquered southern Poland, is an exceedingly curious document for us, modern observers, who have the perspective of the balance of powers that emerged after the second siege of Vienna in 1683. We know only too well the circumstances whereby the Ottoman empire lost its foothold and position as player in eastern Europe, within years of that superbly executed survey. It reflects the same bureaucratic meticulousness and will to rule that characterized similar documents of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, when conquered regions were surveyed one after another, their resources subjected to an Ottoman redistributive calculus, and their legal codes drafted. The defter of Kamaniecz is simply the administrative counterpart to the ambitious eastern European initiative of the Ottomans that was managed by the Köprülü viziers during the third quarter of the seventeenth century. From its spectacular military dimensions to humdrum bureaucratic ones, the whole affair seemed a smashing success, almost a throwback to an earlier era of imperial glory and expansionism. Yet the circumstances changed dramatically towards the end of the century, in the wake of the disastrous retreat from

³¹ Note that this asymmetrical usage, common in the early modern era, juxtaposing a religious identification with a secular-political one, has been reversed in our own age with references to "Europe and Islam."

³² Superbly edited by Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *The Ottoman Survey Register of Podolia (ca.1681): Defter-i Mufassal-i Eyalet-i Kamanıçe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 2004).

Vienna in 1683 and the severe blow to the pax ottomana in the Balkans that followed. Ottoman-Swedish relations were to be rekindled during the early years of the eighteenth century, through the adventures of Carl XII.³³ By then, both the Ottomans and the Swedes knew a lot more about each other and about the world in between thanks to figures like Katip Çelebi, Jacob Nagy de Harsany and Claes Rålamb.

³³ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *İsveç Kralı XII. Karl'ın Türkiye'de Kalışı ve Bu Sıralarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1943).