

“A Vile, Infamous, Diabolical Treaty”

The Franco-Ottoman Alliance of Francis I and the
Eclipse of the Christendom Ideal

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Introduction

In June of 1544, the Turkish fleet arrived at the island of Lipari thirty kilometers north of Sicily. The Ottoman admiral Khair-Eddin Barbarossa threatened that he would lay waste to the island and enslave its population unless the Lipariotes rendered to him two hundred boys and two hundred girls along with a large sum of money. The Lipariotes refused, resolving that the entire populace of their city should either remain free or be enslaved. In response to the defiance of the people of Lipari, the Turks proceeded to attack the island. The Ottoman forces showered barrages of cannon shots during a several-day siege before they eventually took the island, enslaving its entire population¹.

Jérôme Maurand, a Provençal priest, witnessed the event. He lamented that “to see so many poor Christians and especially so many little boys and girls [enslaved] caused a very great pity.” Maurand observed the “tears, wailing, and cries of these poor Lipariotes, the father regarding his son and the mother her daughter [...] weeping while leaving their own city in order to be brought into slavery by those dogs who seemed like rapacious wolves amidst timid lambs.” Maurand did not stumble upon this scene by chance. He was the chaplain aboard one of several French ships accompanying the Ottoman fleet to Constantinople. The previous summer, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66) had placed his fleet at the disposal of his ally King Francis I of France (1515-47), who used the Turkish forces to attack the city of Nice, then part of the Duchy of Savoy. After wintering in the French port of Toulon, the Ottoman fleet, accompanied by a French contingent, ravaged the Italian dominions of their mutual enemy, Charles V, on the way to Constantinople. Maurand could not help but feel sympathy for his fellow Christians as

¹ Maurand estimates the population to have been 10,000. This number, however, is likely exaggerated.

they were attacked and enslaved by his Turkish companions. Yet, perhaps recognizing the political value of the alliance, Maurand explained that the people of Lipari were especially prone to unnatural and sinful acts and, therefore, God would sometimes “avenge his enemies with the help of his enemies.”²

Although the Ottomans may have been God’s enemy, they were the friend and ally of the Most Christian King—the same French king who had been zealously planning a crusade against the Turks less than twenty years before the Lipari episode. The Franco-Ottoman alliance defied the Christendom ideal, that is, the concept that there exists or should exist a commonwealth or republic of Christian princes and states united in peace with each other and resolved in opposition to the Infidel. Admittedly, the Christendom ideal was oftentimes a vague template and even an unattainable goal, especially with regard to peace and unity among Christians. Christian princes, states, and dynasties were frequently at war with each other and certainly did not always act as if they were part of a single political and religious community. Nonetheless, the Christendom ideal was the dominant political and religious ideology in Christian Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. While certain smaller Christian princes and states, in Spain and Italy for example, had occasionally maintained close relationships and even alliances with Muslims, the Franco-Ottoman alliance was a blatant and unprecedented challenge to the dominant norms of the time. The king of France was no petty potentate; instead he claimed to be the foremost defender of Christianity.

The Christendom ideal, which acquired a great urgency following the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, ceased to exist in practice by the time of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This treaty established the ultimate sovereignty of states regardless of religion following

² Jérôme Maurand, *Itinéraire de Jérôme Maurand d’Antibes à Constantinople*, edited by Léon Dorez (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901), 117-133.

the Thirty Years' War which had embroiled Europe in a series of destructive conflicts. The most obvious explanation for this transformation is generally found in the rise of Protestantism and the subsequent wars of religion of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Without a doubt, Protestantism and the Wars of Religion played a major role in the destruction of Christian unity and, by extension, the bases for the Christendom ideal. Nonetheless, the Franco-Ottoman alliance was significant because it preceded these later developments in undermining the foundations of the dominant political and religious ideology of the time.

In order to understand the historical importance of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, it is necessary to examine the first half of the sixteenth century without foreseeing later events, especially with regard to the rise of Protestantism. Of course, Protestantism began when Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517. In its earliest stages, it was little more than a German problem. During the first half of the sixteenth century, the greatest threat to Christendom lay not in a handful of German heretics, but rather in the armies and fleet of the Ottoman sultan which advanced in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean laying siege to Vienna in 1529 and frequently raiding the coasts of Spain and Italy. For these reasons, this thesis will not address Protestantism in depth.

The Franco-Ottoman alliance, which began as an act of desperation on the part of Francis I, eventually developed into a clear policy based on an alternative conception of state behavior which was at odds with the Christendom ideal. Although the French may have denied it, the alliance reflected many of the novel ideas which had recently been espoused by Niccolò Machiavelli. Ultimately, the French policy towards the Ottomans was an early manifestation of the attitude of Cardinal Richelieu in the seventeenth century who placed *raison d'état* (or state interest) above any broader religious considerations. Although intended to alter the balance of

power in Europe and the Mediterranean, the Franco-Ottoman alliance ended up forcing a re-evaluation of the Christendom ideal. While a wide variety of anti-Machiavellian and Christian political thinkers condemned the alliance in the second half of the sixteenth century, this proved to be the dying gasp of an ideology which the Franco-Ottoman alliance irrevocably wounded.

* * *

This thesis treats the intertwined history of two subjects: the Franco-Ottoman alliance during the reign of Francis I and the eclipse of the Christendom ideal during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The history of the Franco-Ottoman alliance falls largely within the realm of diplomatic and political history while the history of the Christendom ideal is a topic of intellectual and religious history. These distinctions, however, are not definitive. The *histoire événementielle* (i.e. episodic contingencies) of the Franco-Ottoman alliance can teach us much about the evolving mentalities of the period, while an examination of intellectual and religious debates serves to better illuminate the political history of the period.

The Franco-Ottoman Alliance

The Franco-Ottoman alliance established by Francis I is generally thought to have begun officially in February 1536 with a series of capitulations granted by the sultan to the French king. This alliance was the culmination of diplomatic exchanges which began when Francis I initially sought the aid of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1525 after the French king's defeat at Pavia. Two major works provide the basis for the diplomatic history of the Franco-Ottoman alliance during the reign of Francis I. The first is a work published in 1848 by the French historian Ernest Charrière and entitled *Les Négociations de la France dans le Levant*. The first volume of this work is devoted entirely to the policies of Francis I and is mostly a collection of various diplomatic documents, letters, and other pertinent accounts. Historians have in general

not relied on the commentary of Charrière himself in this work, and for good reason. Charrière rather anachronistically and absurdly refers to the alliance as “a relationship of *rapprochement* and civilization between the Christian and Muslim people.”³ He further states that “the French alliance was like a political guardianship, a sort of perpetual mediation destined to soften the violent resorts of the Turkish State in its internal affairs and to protect it from the excesses of its own system, by the care which France took to regulate and moderate the Ottoman’s external affairs.”⁴ These comments clearly betray a strong bias on the part of Charrière likely connected to the period of French colonial expansion in which he was writing. After all, Charrière concludes that his study is especially important since “by the possession of Algeria, France has become in a certain sense an oriental power.”⁵ While no recent historian has adopted Charrière’s characterization, his work remains significant because it is a useful collection of some of the most relevant primary sources related to the Franco-Ottoman alliance. Nonetheless, it is important to be aware that a compilation is not free from subjectivity since its contents are subject to the choices of the editor and compiler.

Another major work that is a reference point for nearly every discussion of the Franco-Ottoman alliance is J. Ursu’s *La Politique Orientale de François Ier* (1908). In this work, Ursu presents a narrative of diplomatic relations between Francis I and the Ottoman Empire. Ursu describes the details of the various diplomatic missions between France and the Ottomans while also explaining the political motivations of Francis I. This work is the only book-length study devoted entirely to the beginnings of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, and thus it provides a basis for many later works, especially those providing only a brief treatment of the subject.

³ Ernest Charrière, comp., *Négociations de la France dans le Levant* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1966), xvi (all translations are my own).

⁴ *Ibid.*, xx-xxi.

⁵ *Ibid.*, lxiv.

More recent studies of the Franco-Ottoman alliance have often taken a critical perspective toward the basic narrative proposed by Charrière and Ursu. Certain historians have sought to correct or supplement their characterizations of events by consulting Turkish sources. In particular, these re-evaluations have centered on the episode of 1543-44 when, at the request of France, the Ottoman fleet attacked Savoyard Nice and wintered in Toulon.⁶ Other historians have examined the economic aspects of the alliance. Many of these studies have focused on the terms of the capitulations of 1536. Such research has often regarded these earlier capitulations in the same light as commercial privileges negotiated by the French in the following centuries.⁷ Although it is important to examine the economic bases of the French relationship with the Ottomans, such economic histories tend to make the same mistake as Charrière in reading the roots of colonial economics into France's sixteenth-century policies.

Overall, there are very few books or articles that address the Franco-Ottoman alliance at length. In political histories of sixteenth-century Europe, the alliance is presented as just one of the many diplomatic maneuvers of the time period, perhaps because the alliance failed to have a noticeable strategic impact. The more in-depth works on the alliance have been carried out only by those studying in particular the history of France's relations with the Ottomans and the Eastern Mediterranean. I contend, however, that the Franco-Ottoman alliance must be considered a pivotal event in the history of the sixteenth century and the history of European Christian civilization in general. As we shall see, the most important result of the alliance was

⁶ Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Barbarossa and His Army Who Came to Succor All of Us: Ottoman and French Views of Their Joint Campaign of 1543-1544," *French Historical Studies* 30:3 (2007): 395-425; Jean Deny and Jane Laroche, "L'expédition en Provence de l'armée de mer du Sultan Suleyman sous le commandement de l'amiral Hayreddin Pacha, dit Barberousse (1543-1544)," *Turcica* 1 (1969): 161-211.

⁷ De Lamar Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16:4 (Winter, 1985), pp. 451-470; Gaston Zeller, "Une Légende qui a la Vie Dure: Les Capitulations de 1535," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 2 (1955): 127-32.

not to be found in its political, diplomatic, or economic consequences but rather in its role in shifting the ideological paradigm of the time.

The Christendom Ideal

The “Christendom ideal” is a term of my own creation. I use it to describe the religious and political concept which emphasized the existence of a unified Christian commonwealth and implied an obligation to make war on the enemies of Christ through crusades against (usually Muslim) non-Christians. According to this ideology, the most important duty of every Christian prince was to promote the peace and unity of Christendom. This desire for internal peace was intimately connected to constant calls for war against the Infidel.

There is a wealth of literature that concerns the development of concepts of state behavior and the transformation of the European state system, particularly during the late medieval and early modern periods. Historians generally agree that significant changes took place in the paradigm of Christian European state relations and concepts between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. One explanation for this transformation away from the Christendom ideal is that sovereignty claims became more entrenched among individual states and secular power devolved away from the pope.⁸ This explanation is incomplete. While the sixteenth century witnessed the rise of very powerful sovereigns, such as Charles V and Francis I, this did not necessarily lead to a rejection of the Christendom ideal. In fact, Charles V and others were strong supporters of this ideology while believing that the temporal role of the pope had its limits.

Another explanation for the demise of the Christendom ideal is that it was rendered irrelevant by the wars of religion which raged in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

⁸ Jean Picq, *Histoire et droit des États: La souveraineté dans le temps et l'espace européens* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2005), 164.

centuries. The rise of Protestantism undoubtedly played an important role in the eclipse of the ideal of a united Christendom by being the occasion for a series of bloody wars among Christians. Nonetheless, this explanation also has its faults. On the one hand, the Franco-Ottoman alliance represented a decisive break with the Christendom ideal before the outbreak of the major religious wars. On the other hand, many Protestants continued to see themselves as part of a united Christian commonwealth, demonstrating that Protestantism and the Christendom ideal were not mutually exclusive.

Yet another explanation for the decline of the paradigm of a united Christendom can be found in the rise of the ideas of Machiavelli.⁹ The ideas presented by Machiavelli were certainly incompatible with the dominant paradigm of a unified Christian community in which rulers were to place the interests of their religion above all else. Of course, Machiavelli claimed that he was merely describing how politics already was working. Although Machiavelli offered important insight into the self-interested motives of princes, his work was also prescriptive, implicitly recognizing that the norms of the Christendom ideal still held sway over many princes and states. Therefore, Machiavelli did not simply describe the reality of the politics of his time, but instead offered his own model which was at odds with the Christendom ideal which remained the widely accepted paradigm. Indeed, Machiavelli recognized the enduring dominance of religion and the Christendom ideal as a normative force by counseling that princes to at least give the appearance of being good and pious. Although the new ideas of Machiavelli were very influential, they alone were not enough to change the dominant modes of state behavior. It was first necessary for a prince or state to put Machiavelli explicitly into practice. Francis I served this purpose by establishing the Franco-Ottoman alliance.

⁹ Picq, 131-134.

My claim that France's alliance with the Turks was destructive to the unity of Christendom, is not entirely new. As early as 1955, the historian Garrett Mattingly suggested that the diplomacy of Francis I played a major role in the eclipse of the Christendom ideal. In a chapter entitled "French Diplomacy and the breaking-up of Christendom" in his work *Renaissance Diplomacy*, Mattingly considers the policies pursued by Francis I. He notes that "as the scales inclined towards the Habsburgs, the Valois were destined to contribute to the breaking-up of Christendom by relying more and more on alliances with heretics and with the Turk."¹⁰ Mattingly treats the alliance with the Turks as especially illustrative of the novel forms of diplomacy pursued by France with the French diplomats "sharpening their wits and blunting their consciences as they pried into the ever widening crack in the structure of medieval Christendom." Ultimately, Mattingly argues, "the policy which Francis I initiated was still, a century later, the policy of Richelieu and Mazarin."¹¹ However, Mattingly's suggestion was not by and large elaborated by other historians for several decades.

Recently, the French historian Géraud Poumarède has devoted much attention to the question of the decline of the Christendom ideal. In his 2004 work *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, Poumarède traces the transformation and ultimate decline of crusading politics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In many ways, my concept of the Christendom ideal parallels the "myths and realities of the fight against the Turks" which Poumarède explores. In general, Poumarède attributes the decline of the crusading paradigm to the weakening of papal power, the growing lack of interest in crusades among Christian rulers, and the rise of Protestantism and the consequent wars and divisions.¹² Through *Pour en finir avec la Croisade* and several articles, Poumarède provides a strong basis for understanding the prominence and

¹⁰ Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 175.

¹¹ Mattingly, 180.

¹² Géraud Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), 624.

subsequent decline of the Christendom ideal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With regard to the Franco-Ottoman alliance, Poumarède observes that “the *rapprochement* drafted between Francis I and the sultan Suleiman beginning in the 1520s incontestably marks a turning point.” For Poumarède this “turning point” was most important in that it created a “stable and durable union which favored the intensification of diplomatic and commercial links between France and the Ottoman Empire and the deployment of a French presence in the Eastern Mediterranean.” He also notes the alliance’s importance in that it led to “a fertile theoretical argument seeking to justify the alliance of Christian sovereigns with infidel peoples.”¹³ Poumarède’s article “Justifier l’injustifiable” (1997) in particular shows how the French sought to navigate through this period of ideological transformation in their defenses of the Franco-Ottoman alliance.

In some ways my thesis will mirror the themes and ideas presented by Poumarède. I will argue like Poumarède that the Franco-Ottoman alliance occurred during a period of great transformation in the politics and attitudes of Christian Europe away from the predominant crusading ideology or Christendom ideal. However, I will claim that the Franco-Ottoman alliance was a “turning point” in a more profound and far-reaching sense than that proposed by Poumarède. Whereas Poumarède contends that the alliance’s principal effect was to re-orient France towards the Eastern Mediterranean and give the occasion for discussion and debate on the legitimacy of alliances between Christians and Muslims, I argue that the Franco-Ottoman alliance itself was the pivotal event which forever transformed the ideological paradigm of Christian Europe. Poumarède traces the decline of the crusading ideology as a gradual process. However, while the decline was indeed gradual, it was the Franco-Ottoman alliance which marked the decisive break with the Christendom ideal and signaled its inevitable decline.

¹³ Ibid., 624.

The Primary Sources

The primary sources used in this thesis consist largely of published archival materials and sixteenth-century publications, including works of political theory, apologies and polemics.

With regard to archival material, the aforementioned *Négociations de la France dans le Levant* contains over six hundred pages of correspondence, treaties, and other documents. Most of these documents are in the original sixteenth-century French although the early documents are in Latin and others are French translations from the original Turkish. The compilation contains the correspondence of French diplomats as well as Venetians and other Italians and Europeans. I have also consulted two volumes of correspondences of the papal nuncios to France as well as a volume of documents related to English affairs in Italy.

With regard to published works, I have especially examined works of political thought of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. I have attempted to focus in particular on French, Spanish and Italian conceptions of the proper relationship between Christian and Muslim states and then to consider the Franco-Ottoman alliance in light of these attitudes. The sixteenth century saw the appearance of a rich variety of works dealing with politics and matters of state as well as their relation to religious questions. The works examined in this thesis include representatives of the Catholic Scholastic tradition, early sixteenth-century Renaissance humanism, the Counter-Reformation, the anti-Machiavellian reaction, and theorists of international law.

With regard to French commentaries and apologies related to the Franco-Ottoman alliance, *Gallica*, the internet service of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, provides scanned versions of many sixteenth-century works which treat the Franco-Ottoman alliance. In particular, Étienne Dolet's *Les Gestes de François de Valois* (1543) and François de Sagon's

Apologye en Défense pour le Roy (1544) offer contemporary justifications and defenses for the alliance with the Turks.

This thesis consists of five chapters. In the first chapter I provide an overview of the history of the Christendom ideal as well as the political history of Europe and the Mediterranean from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the aftermath of the Battle of Marignano in 1515, with special regard to the relation of these events to the Christendom ideal. In the second chapter, I treat the history of relations between Christian and Muslim states and the dominant consensus on this question at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The third chapter examines the struggle between Charles V and Francis I and the subsequent Franco-Ottoman alliance. This chapter not only presents the political history of the alliance, but also demonstrates the normative strength of the Christendom ideal as found in the diplomatic sources from the period. The fourth chapter presents some of the initial responses and justifications with regard to the Franco-Ottoman alliance. In the final chapter, I examine the intellectual reactions against and ultimate acceptance of the new paradigm proposed by the Franco-Ottoman alliance in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapter I. “A Single Commonwealth and a Single Body”
 Political Prelude and the Persistence of the Christendom Ideal
 (1453-1516)

As I have mentioned above, the Christendom ideal is to be understood principally as the concept that all Christian princes and states are part of a common Christian commonwealth or republic. It advocates a real or imagined internal unity among Christians contrasted with those who fall outside of Christendom, especially non-Christians. An important corollary to this view of Christendom is its insistence on constant and uncompromising efforts to resist and defeat the enemies of Christ, particularly through crusades against Muslim states.

The origins of the ideal of Christendom are ancient yet imprecise. The goal of a united Christian polity in the West can be traced to political entities beginning naturally with the Christian Roman Empire and continuing through the Carolingian and Ottonian Empires of the Middle Ages. By the twelfth century however, the idea of a politically united Christian empire became impractical even though proponents of a literal Christian republic remained. Dante’s *De Monarchia* for example, written at the beginning of the fourteenth century, proposed the re-establishment of a Christian empire in which the temporal power of the emperor would co-exist with the complementary spiritual power of the pope.

With the advent of the crusades, which began two centuries before Dante, Christian unity had become embodied not through a single empire but through the combined efforts of pious princes guided by the pope. This unity was especially linked to the declaration of perpetual conflict against Muslims and other non-Catholics in the crusades and the Spanish *Reconquista*. From the High Middle Ages onward, the Christendom ideal conceptualized an imaginary, yet relevant, Christian republic or commonwealth in which the interests of Christendom as a whole were more important than those of any single ruler or people.

In *On Civil Power* (1528), the sixteenth-century Spanish theologian Francisco de Vitoria articulated the ideal of Christendom in his discussion of whether Christians may elect a single monarch for all of Christendom:

Christendom is in some sense a single commonwealth and a single body, according to the Apostle's words: 'we, being many, are one body in Christ' (Rom. 12: 4-5). Therefore Christians have the power to preserve and guard themselves and to order the best method of defense against their enemies. If it became clear, therefore, that it was more expedient for Christendom and the commonwealth of the faithful to have a single prince for their defense against tyranny or defeat by the infidel, all Christians might elect a single universal monarch.¹⁴

Vitoria suggested that the political unity of Christians already existed as a result of their religious unity. Although in this way there was already a theoretical Christian commonwealth, Christians could have nonetheless desired to establish a common ruler in order to protect against certain threats, especially the Muslim Infidel.

Admittedly, there was always a disconnect between the Christendom ideal in theory and in practice. Yet during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, with the first, second, and third crusades, this ideal was in many ways realized. As the period of the crusades came to an end, however, following the fall of Acre in 1291, any hope of truly realizing a Christian commonwealth or republic was dissolved as Christian Europe entered a period of greater disunity. The fourteenth century and early fifteenth century were marked by many divisions. In Italy, the ongoing struggle between the Holy Roman Emperor and the papacy led to the development of independent, sovereign states with a taste for deft diplomacy divorced from the sentiment of Christian unity.¹⁵ Beyond Italy, the Great Western Schism (1378-1417) pitted Avignonese and Roman claimants to the papacy against each other while dividing the allegiances of the various princes and states of Western Christendom. In addition, the Hundred Years' War

¹⁴ Francisco de Vitoria, *Political Writings*, edited by A. Pagden and J. Lawrance (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 31.

¹⁵ Mattingly, 57.

(1337-1453) embroiled France and England as well as much of Europe in a series of long and destructive conflicts.

The development of Christian disunity may have resulted in part from the temporary decline of the threat of Islam. Although the crusader states had fallen, Latin Christianity was in a position of strength vis-à-vis Islam during much of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In Spain, most Muslim territories had been conquered by the middle of the thirteenth century, leaving only the small kingdom of Granada. Throughout the Mediterranean, Venice, Genoa, and Aragon dominated trade and maintained numerous insular possessions. In the Levant, the Muslim states were still recovering from the disastrous effects of the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century.

The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 had the major effect of reviving the Christendom ideal in Europe through the reassertion of the Muslim threat. The reactions to the fall of Constantinople were dramatic. The pitiable accounts of Eastern exiles and the exhortations of popes disseminated the news of the disaster throughout Latin Christendom.¹⁶ Pope Pius II (1458-64) was particularly active in his efforts to mobilize Christianity against the Turkish menace which he believed threatened to bring about the complete destruction of the Christian religion. In 1463 Pius declared that “the necessary war against the Turks is imminent and if we do not take up arms and do not meet the enemy, our religion is finished.”¹⁷ In an act of desperation, the same pope even drafted a letter to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II refuting the errors of Islam and promising the sultan that if he converted to Christianity the pope would

¹⁶ Géraud Poumarède, “L’Europe de la Renaissance et l’Empire ottoman de la chute de Constantinople à la bataille de Lépante, Aspects culturels et politiques,” *La Renaissance: Bulletin de la Société des historiens modernistes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), 51.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

recognize him as emperor.¹⁸ Pius II and his successors were successful in bringing the Turkish threat and the Christendom ideal to the forefront of Catholic Europe's consciousness. Indeed, by the late fifteenth century, most treaties concluded among Christian powers made reference to the need to combat the Turks either in the preamble or the articles of the agreement.¹⁹

The threat of the Ottomans to Western Europe was not an illusion. The conquest of Constantinople was only the culmination of a century of important victories and the beginning of another century of monumental expansion for the Turks. Before 1453, the Ottomans had already conquered most of Anatolia, Greece and the southern Balkans. After capturing Constantinople, Sultan Mehmet II the Conqueror (1451-81) continued his conquests by advancing into the northern Balkans and Wallachia and dislodging the Venetians from southern Greece. In what was a particularly alarming episode for Western Christendom, Mehmet II commenced an ill-fated incursion into Italy, briefly occupying the Apulian city of Otranto in 1480. A full-scale invasion of Italy was prevented only by the sultan's death in 1481.²⁰

The reign of Mehmet's successor Bayezid II (1481-1512) was marked by a struggle for succession with his brother Djem, who sought and received the support of the Knights of St. John and other Christian powers as well as the Mamlukes in Egypt and Syria. Although Bayezid was occupied largely with wars with his brother and the Mamlukes, he directed his efforts against the Venetians, defeating them in a war from 1499-1502. During the Italian Wars, which began in 1494, Bayezid also played a limited role in the diplomacy among the Italian states.²¹ Nonetheless, while Bayezid achieved some important military victories, his reign was dominated

¹⁸ Ibid., 67.

¹⁹ Ibid., 52.

²⁰ Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, 2002), 27-29.

²¹ Ibid., 30-31.

largely by internal power struggle and the consolidation of his father's conquests. The greatest period of Ottoman expansion took place under his successors.

The sultan Selim I (1512-1520) achieved the important defeat of the Mamluke Sultanate, resulting in the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1517. These victories made Selim the undisputed master of the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition, by gaining the submission of Mecca and Medina, the Ottoman sultans proclaimed a new Islamic caliphate.²² In 1520, Selim was succeeded by perhaps the greatest Ottoman conqueror, Suleiman the Magnificent or the Lawgiver (1520-1566). Making use of the tremendous wealth accumulated by his father and taking advantage of internal division among Christian rulers, Suleiman conquered Belgrade in 1521 and Rhodes (the base of the Knights of St. John) in 1522; seized Hungary in 1526; laid siege to Vienna in 1529; and conquered Baghdad in 1534. By conquering or threatening strongholds of Western Christendom such as Hungary, Austria, and Rhodes, Suleiman forced Catholic Europe to recognize the Ottoman threat, leading many to invoke the Christendom ideal with greater urgency.

As the Turks expanded on all fronts in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Catholic Europe was divided in a series of bitter conflicts for control of Italy (see Figure I). The Italian Wars began in 1494 when King Charles VIII of France invaded Italy. Charles put forward several justifications for the invasion, including a defense of the Duke of Milan, Ludovico Sforza, and a claim to the crown of Naples and Sicily. As an indication of the prominent crusading fervor of the time, Charles VIII also claimed that he planned to use his conquest of Naples as a base for a crusade against the Ottomans. Charles VIII successfully advanced into Naples which he occupied briefly until a league consisting of the pope, Venice,

²² Ibid., 34.

Figure I: Italy (1500-1559)²³



²³ O'Brien, Patrick K., ed. *Philip's Atlas of World History*. London: Philip's Publishing, 2001., 147

Naples, Milan and the Holy Roman Empire forced him to retreat in 1495. In 1499, Charles's successor, Louis XII, initiated another invasion of Italy sparking a second Italian War (1499-1504). Louis XII initially conquered northern Italy and agreed to divide the kingdom of Naples with Ferdinand II of Aragon. Ferdinand and Louis, however, began to quarrel over the division, eventually leading to the triumph of Ferdinand II as king of Naples and Sicily, limiting French dominance to parts of northern Italy.

In 1508 yet another war broke out known as the War of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516). The war was originally initiated by Pope Julius II who created a Holy League (ostensibly to fight against the Turks) with the design of limiting the power of Venice. This Holy League, however, was short-lived as the various European powers of France, Spain, Venice, the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, Milan, and England began to fight against each other in a series of complicated and shifting alliances. In 1515, the new young king of France, Francis I, achieved a major victory over the Swiss at Marignano which established French control over the duchy of Milan and dominance in northern Italy. In 1516, a peace between Francis I and Charles I of Spain (the future emperor Charles V) recognized French control of Milan and Spanish control of Naples.

Following the French victory at Marignano, Europe and the Mediterranean were divided in a delicate balance among various powerful states. France and the recently united kingdom of Spain divided control of Italy and were the most powerful states in Western Europe. The Ottoman Empire controlled most of the Balkans and dominated the Eastern Mediterranean where they were challenged only by the fragile power of Venice's mercantile empire. In the north, the German Holy Roman Empire was largely fragmented but held a considerable degree of power through the strength of the House of Austria. This balance of power may have lasted relatively

stable as long as no one ruler became too powerful. However, as shall be seen in Chapter III, the vast inheritance of Charles V and his election as Holy Roman Emperor inevitably led to another series of wars between the major powers of Europe and the Mediterranean (see Figure II).

Having given a brief overview of the political events leading up to the core chronological period of this thesis, it is fitting at this point to examine with greater specificity the question of Christian-Muslim relations. In the next chapter I will look briefly at the history of economic and political relations between Muslim and Christian states. I will then examine the attitudes of diverse thinkers of the early sixteenth century, paying especially close attention to their views on alliances with non-Christians in general and the Turks in particular.

Figure II: Europe and the Mediterranean in the Sixteenth Century²⁴



²⁴ Geoffrey Barraclough and Richard Avery, ed., *The Times History of the World* (London: Times Books, 1999), 187.

Chapter II. Commerce and Crusades

Relations between Christians and Muslims in Practice and Theory

The Limits of Muslim-Christian Relations

During the medieval and early modern periods, relations between Christians and Muslims were often very complex and nuanced. In the Mediterranean region in particular, economic and political interactions between Christians and Muslims were unavoidable. Close relations with Muslims were especially common for the Italian mercantile city-states, the Spanish kingdoms, and the crusader states. During the period of the crusades, the papacy began to enact laws intended to restrict commercial interactions with Muslims, especially as related to goods that could be used in war. In 1179, the Third Lateran Council established prohibitions on the sale of arms, iron, and wood for ship-building to Muslims. At the same time, Christians were prohibited from serving as commanders or pilots of Muslim ships, suggesting that this was an issue at the time. Violators of these prohibitions were subject to excommunication.²⁵ These restrictions, however, did not completely ban all trade with Muslims as peaceful goods were generally not restricted. In addition, mercantile states such as Venice often received papal dispensations to engage in otherwise illicit commercial endeavors with Muslims.²⁶ The strictest prohibitions on trade with Muslims occurred following the fall of Acre in 1291 and the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which alerted Christian Europe to the threat posed by Muslim states.²⁷

Beginning in the 1450s, the prohibition of certain kinds of commerce with Muslims was added to the annually promulgated bull *In Coena Domini* which condemned “all those who bring to the Saracens, Turks and other enemies of the Christian name horses, weapons, iron, wood, and

²⁵ Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, 311.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 312.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 312- 314.

other prohibited goods with which they attack Christians.”²⁸ It appears that in general, Christian states sought to abide by these restrictions at least into the sixteenth century. In Venice, there were many cases of merchants who confessed to illicit trade with infidels and sought papal pardon, demonstrating that while the bull was frequently violated, it was also enforced. The effectiveness of these prohibitions was greatly weakened when the Protestant countries no longer considered themselves subject to the bull. France also began to ignore the bull’s prohibitions beginning around the same time as the establishment of the Franco-Ottoman alliance.²⁹ By the end of the sixteenth century, the restrictions of *In Coena Domini* were rarely applied north of the Alps and the Pyrenees.³⁰

If Christians were forbidden from selling arms or other war materials to Muslims then, logically, military alliances with Muslims states would likewise have been off limits. Like the economic regulations, the implicit prohibition of alliances with Muslims was sometimes disregarded. There were instances of attempted alliances or cooperation with the Turks even following the fall of Constantinople. In the late fifteenth century, Pope Innocent VIII and the notorious Borgia pope Alexander VI established relations with the Ottoman pretender Djem. This, however, could be seen more as an attempt to undermine Ottoman stability than a true alliance. When King Charles VIII of France invaded Italy in 1494, it is said that Alexander VI considered seeking the aid of the Turks.³¹ During the same period, King Ferrante of Naples established relations with the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid; however these exchanges resulted in a peace between the two monarchs, not a true alliance.³² Although these examples demonstrate the

²⁸ Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, 314.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 322.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 318.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 308.

³² Giuseppe Galasso, ed., *Storia d’Italia, Volume XV: Il Mezzogiorno angioino e aragonese (1260-1494)* (Torino: Utet, 2005), 722-724.

complex nature of Muslim-Christian relations, none of them was a true precedent for the rupture in the Christendom ideal caused by the Franco-Ottoman alliance. Even the popes recognized the disadvantage of being in a state of perpetual war with the Infidel and they acknowledged the permissibility of temporary truces with Turks. Yet, seeking peace with the Turks and even calling for their aid out of desperation was very different from establishing an offensive alliance in order to fight other Christians. Before examining the history of the Franco-Ottoman alliance itself, it is first helpful to look at how the question of relations between Muslims and Christians, and particularly alliances, was regarded by the prominent thinkers of the early sixteenth century.

Treatment of the Issue in Contemporary Works

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, major works on politics did not address at length the issue of whether Christian princes and states could form alliances with the Turks. Most treatises dealt mainly with the question of relations among Christian princes and states and there seems to have been an assumption that alliances with Muslims, especially the Turks, were out of bounds. The emergence of works on politics at the beginning of the sixteenth century is largely due to the French invasion of Italy in 1494, which produced a generation of thinkers who sought to come to terms with the new system of state relations and warfare that had commenced with the outbreak of the Italian Wars. This generation included, among others, Niccolò Machiavelli, Baldesar Castiglione, Thomas More, Guillaume Budé, and Claude de Seyssel.³³ Though these thinkers sought to address the new order that developed in the aftermath of the Italian Wars, when it came to the question of the Ottoman threat and Christian relations with the Infidel, most of them maintained the basic assumptions of the Christendom ideal.

³³ Donald R. Kelley, "Introduction," *The Monarchy of France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2.

In 1515, Claude de Seyssel (c.1450-1520), a Savoyard bishop and legal scholar in the service of the king of France, composed a major work on politics entitled *On the Monarchy of France*. Although Seyssel put a premium on practice over theory and advocated novel forms of statecraft, he was nonetheless traditional in his approach, especially in retaining an emphasis on the importance of Christian piety.³⁴ Seyssel's work was rather influential in France and throughout Europe during the mid-sixteenth century and had some influence on the Protestant movement.³⁵ While Seyssel may have offered new ideas in other areas, his opinion on the question of alliances with the Turks was in line with the Christendom ideal. Indeed, he presented war with the Infidel as a corollary of peace among Christians: "I will lay it down as a maxim that if they can hope for a sound, true, and complete peace all good princes and others ruling a state or lordship ought to love and seek peace with all neighbors and foreigners except those who, like the infidels, are enemies by nature or diversity of law."³⁶ At the end of his work, which was dedicated to the young, crusading French king Francis I, Seyssel included an exhortation for a new crusade, wishing that God

will daily more fully aid him [Francis I] in all his deeds and affairs, so that by his means the recovery of the Holy Land and the empires, realms, countries, and provinces held by the Infidel may be brought about, to the honor of God, of our faith and Christian religion, and to the salvation of his soul and the perpetual glory of his name and the French nation.³⁷

Thus, even though Seyssel was conscious of writing in light of a new political order in Europe, he nonetheless adhered to the Christendom ideal with regard to the threat of the Ottomans.

The Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466-1536) took a very pacifistic stance towards war in general. In *Complaint of Peace* (1517), Erasmus issued a stinging condemnation

³⁴ Ibid., 17.

³⁵ Ibid., 21.

³⁶ Claude de Seyssel, *The Monarchy of France*, Edited by Donald R. Kelley, Translated by Michael Sherman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 130.

³⁷ Ibid., 161-2.

of all kinds of war, arguing for a conception of Christianity which severely limited the justifiability of armed conflict. In a characteristically animated passage, Erasmus drew a parallel between the actions of Christians and the supposed inhumanity of the Turks:

Our warriors bluster against the Turks as miscreant enemies of Christ, as if, in their ordinary conduct, they were Christians themselves—or as if any spectacle could be more agreeable to the Turks than the sight of Christians engaged in mutual murder. They cry out that the Turks offer sacrifices to demons, but the best sacrifice a demon ever receives is when one Christian immolates another.³⁸

Nonetheless, in spite of his pacifism, Erasmus conceded somewhat sarcastically that “if war can’t be totally eliminated, war with the Turks would certainly be a lesser evil than internecine warfare between Christians. Since mutual charity does not bring Christians together, it’s just possible that a common object of hatred may do so. It wouldn’t be real reconciliation, but it might be a sort of compromise.”³⁹ Indeed in 1530, as the Turks threatened Germany, Erasmus once again concluded with reluctance that war could be waged against the Turks. Although Erasmus asserted that “not every war against the Turks is just and pious,” he considered it absurd to suggest (as Luther did at one point) that it would be wrong for Christians to resist the Turks, provided that war was a last resort.⁴⁰ While Erasmus’s reluctance to support war may suggest that he was a critic of the crusading mentality, his criticisms were nonetheless based on his continued adherence to the central tenet of the Christendom ideal: peace and unity among Christians.

While Erasmus and especially Seyssel remained generally supportive of the Christendom ideal, including its call for a crusade against the Infidel, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) responded to the Italian Wars by making a complete break with the dominant tradition.

³⁸ Desiderius Erasmus, “Complaint of Peace,” *The Praise of Folly and Other Writings*, Translated and Edited by Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1989), 105.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁴⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, “Excerpts from *Consultatio de bello Turcis inferendo*,” *Documents of the Later Crusades*, Edited and Translated by Norman Housley (London: MacMillan, 1996), 178-80.

Machiavelli did not address the question of relations with non-Christians explicitly. Machiavelli was more concerned with the means by which princes may increase and maintain their own power than with the collective peace and unity of Christendom. In Machiavelli's view, the only real sin a prince could commit was ineffectiveness. Because of this, no behavior was off-limits for a prince as long as the prince acted smartly. Therefore, Machiavelli was able to conclude: "in taking a state its conqueror should weigh all the harmful things he must do and do them all at once so as not to have to repeat them every day."⁴¹ Although the implications of Machiavelli's work extended far beyond the question of Muslim-Christian relations, Machiavelli's ideas certainly could have been used to defend an alliance between a Christian prince and the Turks. In fact, if such an alliance were profitable, Machiavelli would have undoubtedly encouraged it (acknowledging, perhaps, that it would be best to conceal the alliance). The novelty of Machiavelli's writing can be seen in his conclusion of the *Prince*. Like Seyssel and many other writers of the period, Machiavelli ended his work with an exhortation for war against the "barbarians." For Machiavelli, however, the barbarians were not the Turks, the threat of which did not seem to concern him. Rather he was referring to the Christian powers of France and Spain.⁴²

Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses* were first published in 1532 and the works quickly spread throughout Europe. When Pope Paul IV banned the works in 1559 there were already fifteen editions of the *Prince* and nineteen of the *Discourses* including a French translation which appeared after 1553.⁴³ It is therefore highly likely that Francis I and

⁴¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Portable Machiavelli*, Edited and Translated by Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa (New York: Penguin, 1997), 106 (*The Prince*, Chapter VIII).

⁴² Machiavelli, 162-166 (*The Prince*, Chapter XXVI).

⁴³ Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 14-17.

his court would have read Machiavelli in their original Italian versions or were at least aware of his controversial ideas.

Although Renaissance humanism, which characterized thinkers such as Machiavelli and Erasmus, was a major trend in the early sixteenth century, it is important not to forget the equal if not greater enduring influence of medieval Scholastic thought. Although St. Thomas Aquinas did not address at length the question of relations with non-Christians, this question arose in the sixteenth century not with regard to Islam but rather as a result of the Spanish conquest of the Americas. The discovery of a continent of non-Christian peoples forced theologians and philosophers to reconsider the proper relationship between Christians and infidels.

The Spanish Dominican philosopher and theologian Francisco de Vitoria (1492-1546) represented this group of thinkers. Vitoria wrote a great deal on natural law and was consulted by the Emperor Charles V, especially on the question of how to treat the indigenous peoples of the Americas. I have noted above that Vitoria wrote that it would be foreseeable that Christians could be united under a single leader especially in order to wage war against the Infidel, thus expressing quite clearly the Christendom ideal.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Vitoria espoused a rather nuanced approach towards the treatment of those who fell outside of Christendom. In his treatise *On the American Indians* (1539), Vitoria considered the various claims made by the Spanish in order to justify their right to conquer the lands of the indigenous Americans. Among the unjust claims he cited were an alleged right of the emperor or pope to universal empire, the initial rejection of Christianity by indigenous peoples, and the sins of the inhabitants of the Americas. However, Vitoria argued that the Spanish could rightly claim the conquered territories, in order to, for example, convert the peoples, protect the converts, and defend them against tyranny.⁴⁵ In

⁴⁴ Vitoria, 31.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 259-292.

another treatise, *On the Law of War* (1539), Vitoria argued that difference of religion alone is not a just cause for war.⁴⁶

The thought of Vitoria demonstrated that the moral and religious implications of the behavior of states were a matter of debate and consideration. Although Vitoria could certainly be considered an adherent to the general Christendom ideal, he also recognized that in natural law there are certain rights that apply to all human beings. Therefore, while he thought that it was often just for Christians to fight and subjugate non-Christians, these wars were nonetheless subject to many moral restrictions and conditions.

In conclusion, the political thought of the early sixteenth century was characterized by rather diverse thinkers from varying traditions. Most of these thinkers tended to adhere to the Christendom ideal. This adherence did not mean that their views were identical; indeed various thinkers subjected their belief in the basic concept of a united Christendom to many qualifications and elaborations.

Among these thinkers, Machiavelli truly stood alone. Indeed, Machiavelli considered the Christendom ideal a futile abstraction. As the Florentine famously remarked:

It seemed more suitable to me to search after the effectual truth of the matter rather than its imagined one. And many writers have imagined for themselves republics and principalities that have never been seen nor known to exist in reality; for there is such a gap between how one lives and how one ought to live that anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation: for a man who wishes to make a vocation of being good at all times will come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge or not to use it according to necessity.⁴⁷

An examination of the diplomatic history will show how this conflict between the ideal republic envisioned by the Christendom ideal and the worldly realities studied by Machiavelli manifested

⁴⁶ Vitoria, 302-3.

⁴⁷ Machiavelli, 127 (*The Prince*, XV).

itself in the Franco-Ottoman alliance. Ultimately, the French adopted a policy that seemed to abandon any reverence for imagined or ideal polities and instead reflected the thought of Machiavelli.

Chapter III. The King, the Emperor, and the Sultan Dynastic Rivalry and the Franco-Ottoman Alliance (1516-1547)

I praise God with all my heart to see the path prepared for what was always so wished for and desired—that is to see in Christendom universal peace and to make war and invade with a good and common accord the enemies of the Christian faith.”

-King Francis I to Pope Leo X, 1517⁴⁸

I cannot deny that I strongly desire to see the Turk very powerful and ready for war, not for his own sake, since he is an infidel and we are Christians, but rather to weaken the power of the emperor, and force him into grave expenditures, in order to succor all of the other governments against an enemy so great [the emperor].

-King Francis I to the Venetian ambassador, 1535⁴⁹

In this chapter, I will examine the diplomatic and political history of the Franco-Ottoman alliance and the dynastic struggles between Francis I and Charles V. The diplomatic sources are often as illuminating as the works of political theory in demonstrating the predominant ideologies and religious and philosophical notions of the time. Although it is impossible to determine with confidence from these sources what the various historical figures actually believed, the language they used and the arguments they employed often shed light upon the dominant norms and ideologies under which they were operating. The political events from 1516 to the death of Francis I in 1547 reveal the major transformations that led to and resulted from the Franco-Ottoman alliance.

The Beginnings of the Rivalry between Francis I and Charles V: 1516-1526

Following the War of the League of Cambrai, it seemed that peace had finally been achieved among the various Christian powers. Pope Leo X used this peace as an opportunity to urge the Christian princes to embark on a new crusade against the Turks. The Pope especially

⁴⁸ “Lettre de François Ier à Léon X,” in Charrière, 46 (see below).

⁴⁹ J. Ursu, *La Politique Orientale de Francois Ier (1515-1547)* (Paris: Honore Champion, 1908), 75.

sought to appeal to the youthful zeal and imperial aspirations of the new kings of France and Spain. In 1516, as the Ottomans began their triumphant campaign against the Mamlukes in Syria and Egypt, Pope Leo X issued a bull calling for a new crusade. Leo's exhortation was not novel since nearly every pope had made the same plea especially following the fall of Constantinople. This time however, the crusading spirit was enthusiastically received by Francis I who entered into communication with the pope with regard to the organization of the expedition.⁵⁰

In December of 1517, Francis wrote a letter to the pope expressing his opinion on the crusade. Francis argued, reflecting the Christendom ideal, that it was first vital to establish peace and unity among Christians. Francis highlighted the necessity to "execute the foundation of this holy and salutary enterprise, which is peace, a truce or universal fraternity among princes enforced by censures, penalties and other means which will ensure its firmness and security."⁵¹ He continued, expressing his desire for "universal peace, love, and union in Christendom so that the effusion of blood which has for so long taken its course to the great detriment and weakening of Christendom may cease and be turned against the enemies of our faith."⁵²

Unlike other failed attempts at crusades in the past, Leo X's crusade was rather close to becoming a reality as the details of the enterprise were established with a degree of specificity. The crusade was to be divided into three parties, because as Francis remarked either pessimistically or realistically, "it seems to me that it is neither useful nor profitable that all the Christian princes meet in the same place to attack the Turk. There may be disorder and discord [...] and instead of making war against the Turk they would make war against each other." Francis I was to be joined by a coalition of Scottish, Swiss, Lorrainais, Savoyard, Venetian, Florentine, Sienese and Luccan troops departing by sea from Adriatic ports and assaulting the

⁵⁰ Charrière, 10-11.

⁵¹ "Lettre de François Ier à Léon X," in Charrière, 42.

⁵² Ibid.

Turks by way of Greece. Francis promised to provide over 60,000 troops as well as artillery and hoped to be furnished with galleys from Venice, Genoa and Spanish Naples. A second coalition was to be led by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian (the crusade's commander-in-chief), along with the kings of Hungary, Poland, and various German princes attacking from East Central Europe. Finally, Spain, England, and Portugal were to attack from the Western Mediterranean where they would guard the sea and provide reinforcements. As for the division of the Ottoman territories, this was left to the discretion of the pope.⁵³

Having expressed his opinion regarding the particulars of the crusade, Francis I closed his letter with a pious invocation: "I praise God with all my heart to see the path prepared for what was always so wished for and desired—that is to see in Christendom universal peace and to make war and invade with a good and common accord the enemies of the Christian faith."⁵⁴ In a single sentence, the Most Christian King summed up the essence of the Christendom ideal, that is, unity among Christians and war against the Infidel. Francis I was certainly well acquainted with this concept and, at this time, it is not improbable that he actually believed in it.

The major crusade against the Ottomans never materialized. The plan collapsed following the death of Emperor Maximilian in 1519. Any hopes for a durable Christian unity were dashed by the ensuing contest for the imperial throne which was pursued by both Francis of France and Charles of Spain. The two kings embarked on major campaigns to gain the support of the various German electors through expensive gifts (or bribes) and promises. In addition, the two imperial aspirants also launched propaganda efforts designed to portray themselves as the

⁵³ Ibid., 44-45.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 46.

most credible defenders of Christendom. Ultimately, to the great dismay of Francis, Charles I of Spain won the imperial election, becoming Emperor Charles V.⁵⁵

Emperor Charles V was without a doubt the most powerful Christian ruler at the time and in many ways came to define the age in which he lived. An examination of the domains of Charles V demonstrates that in the early sixteenth century, Europe was by no means organized on the basis of nation-states. While at first glance, a map (see Figure II) may seem to reveal the development of England, France, and Spain as territorial nation-states, dynastic and familial ties remained the bases of political organization. Although there was in some ways a sense of national cultural identity through the development and more frequent use of vernacular languages, there was no rule or conception that these linguistic communities should correspond with the boundaries of a state, or that the language one spoke should determine one's political allegiance.

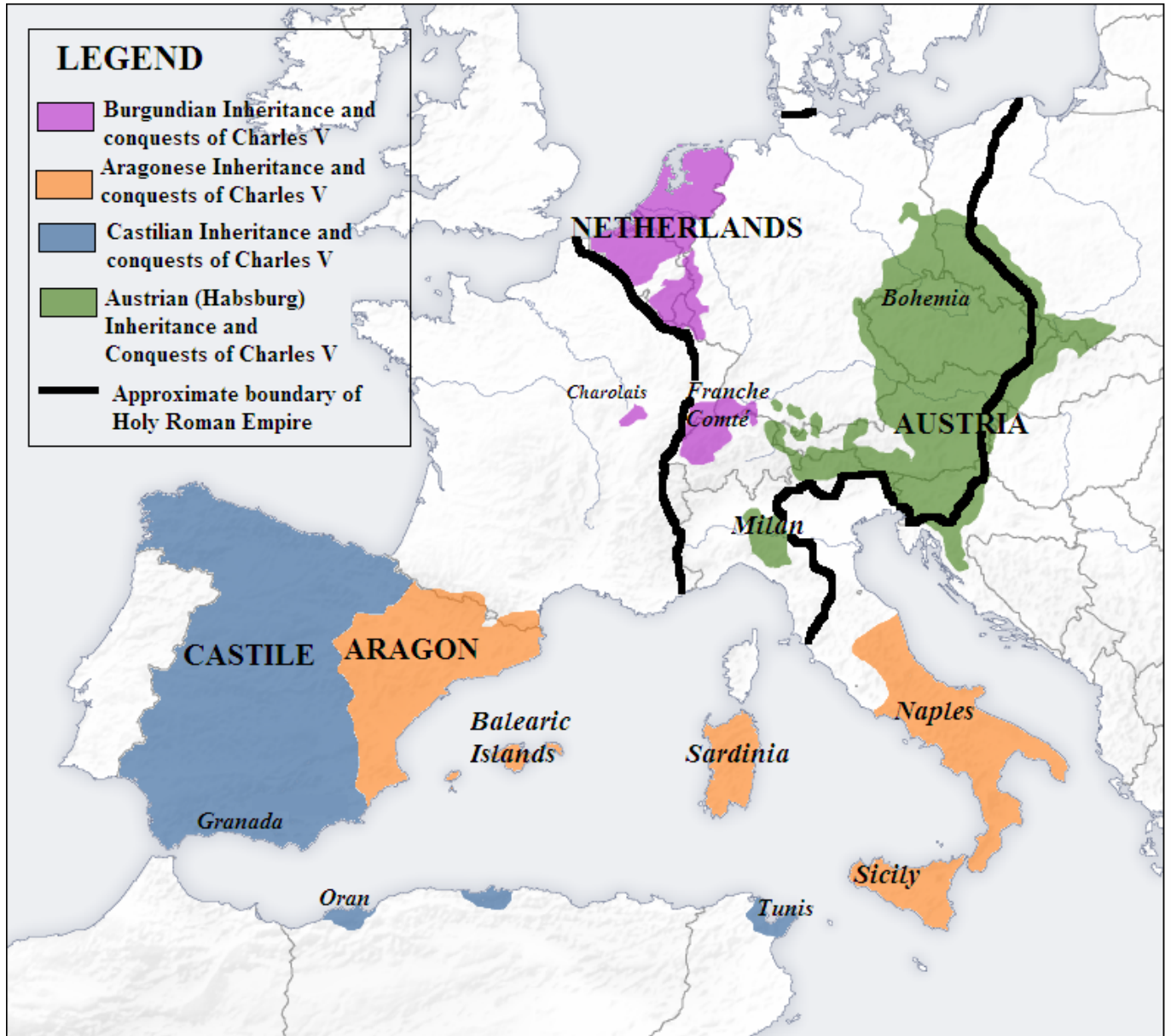
Charles V represented the rather cosmopolitan character of the period. Raised in the Low Countries, his first language was French, although he learned Dutch and Spanish early on and later learned German and Italian. The polyglot emperor is famously said to have declared: "I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse."⁵⁶ As for Charles's heritage, he had the fortune of being born to a windfall inheritance made possible by the dynastic politics of the time (see Figure III). In 1525, Charles had seventy-two official titles including various kingdoms, duchies, counties, and seignories as well as defunct and nominal titles.⁵⁷ As the heir to the dynasties of Castile, Aragon, Austria (Habsburg), and Burgundy,

⁵⁵ Harald Kleinschmidt, *Charles V: The World Emperor* (Phoenix Mill, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 70-73. Technically, the 1519 election only conferred the title King of the Romans and "Emperor-elect." Charles did not officially become emperor until he was crowned by Pope Clement VII in 1530, the last emperor to be thus crowned.

⁵⁶ *Columbia World of Quotations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). <http://www1.bartleby.com/66/95/32695.html>.

⁵⁷ Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V: 1500-1558* (London: Arnold, 2002), 25.

Figure III: Empire of Charles V⁵⁸



⁵⁸ Map by Anthony Piccirillo and *Wikimedia Commons*

Charles ruled over vast and diverse territories. The Castilian crown gave him control over most of Spain including Granada which had recently been conquered from the Moors in 1492 as well as various North African enclaves. From his Aragonese inheritance, Charles gained domain over eastern Iberia, southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and the Balearic islands. The Burgundian inheritance included the Low Countries and Franche Comté (all of which bordered on France), and as heir to the Habsburg dynasty he ruled over Austria and vast swaths of East Central Europe. Furthermore, as Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V gained suzerainty over all of Germany and much of northern Italy and the honor of precedence before all other Christian rulers. Thus, in 1519 Charles V was in a position of dominance and sought to extend his conquests. In the next two decades his vastest conquests would take place on the other side of the Atlantic with the Spanish victories over the Aztecs and the Incans. However, these faraway territories were not in the forefront of the emperor's mind. Instead he was preoccupied above all with the challenges he faced in the Old World, especially from France, the Ottoman Empire and rebellious German Protestant princes.

As Charles V ruled over a seemingly boundless empire, Francis I felt boxed in (see Figure IV). Although in 1519 his domains were greater than those of any of his predecessors—especially with the additions of Provence and Brittany by the end of the fifteenth century and the conquest of Milan during the beginning of his own reign—the king of France nonetheless felt threatened by Charles's aspirations to universal empire. The new additions to the kingdom of France and the claims in Italy directed Francis I's attention mostly to the Mediterranean region and much of the fighting between Francis I and Charles V took place between Provence and

Figure IV: France in the Sixteenth Century⁵⁹



⁵⁹ Geoffrey Barraclough and Richard Avery, ed., *The Times History of the World* (London: Times Books, 1999), 151.

Milan. The Mediterranean orientation of Francis I made the alliance with the Ottomans more appealing.

It did not take long for the tensions between Francis I and Charles V to erupt into war. In 1521, war broke out as the bitter Francis I and the vulnerable pope sought to deliver an early blow to the Emperor's ambitions. The war was a resounding victory for the emperor. In February 1525, imperial forces won a decisive victory at Pavia. Francis lost Milan and his dominance over northern Italy and, to make matters worse, he was captured and suffered the humiliation of being held in Spain as the emperor's prisoner.

An Ambivalent Alliance: 1526-1543

After the battle of Pavia, it seemed that no Christian power remained which was capable of challenging Charles's ambitions for universal empire. In a state of desperation, Francis, with the help of his mother, Louise of Savoy, who was acting as regent in France, turned to the Infidel. The Ottoman sultan Suleiman I greeted Francis's supplications and assured the French emissaries that he would be willing to assist in an attack on Habsburg territories. In order to solidify this newfound friendship, the sultan sent a friendly letter to Francis in which he acknowledged the king's unfortunate plight, and offered words of consolation: "It is not surprising that emperors be defeated and become prisoners. Therefore, take courage and do not become demoralized." Suleiman went on to hint at an offer of support: "with regard to everything else, you will be informed once you question your agent on the news of his affairs."⁶⁰

Francis spent several months of captivity in Spain before Charles released him in March 1526 under the condition that he agree to the Treaty of Madrid. This treaty established peace between the king and emperor and, to Francis's dismay ceded Burgundy, Milan and other

⁶⁰ "Lettre de Soliman II à François Ier," in Charrière, 116-118.

territories to Charles V.⁶¹ The text of the treaty also declared that “the principal intention of the lords the Emperor and the Most Christian King was and is, by means of this particular peace, to achieve universal peace and consequently the enterprises against the Turks and other infidels.”⁶² It is unclear what specific agreement had been reached between France and the Ottoman Empire, but shortly after Francis received the sultan’s letter in spring of 1526, the king reneged on the Treaty of Madrid, which he had never intended to observe in the first place. Once again Charles and Francis were at war. At the same time, the armies of Suleiman the Magnificent crushed the Hungarians at the Battle of Mohács. The correspondence that had taken place between Francis and the Turks soon became well known, and Charles V and others held Francis I responsible for the fall of Hungary to the Turks.⁶³

Perhaps recognizing the potential political and religious ramifications of his relations with the Ottoman, Francis now backed away from his initial courtship. For the next few years, France’s relations with the Sublime Porte were limited mostly to indirect relations conducted through the Venetians and the French and Ottoman-backed claimant to the Hungarian throne, Jan Zápolya.⁶⁴ Between 1526 and 1530, there seems to have been only two major correspondences between France and the Ottoman Empire. Interestingly, these correspondences regarded issues which ultimately would become the basis for Ottoman and French relations for the next few centuries: trade and the protection of Levantine Christians.

In 1528 Sultan Suleiman renewed trading privileges in Egypt which the French had established with the previous Mamluke rulers in 1505. According to the Ottoman decree, the French were permitted to retain their consul in Egypt with responsibility over French and Catalan

⁶¹ Kleinschmidt, 103-4.

⁶² Quoted in Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, 201.

⁶³ Ursu, 27-33.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

merchants.⁶⁵ In the same year, Suleiman responded to an apparent request from Francis regarding the restoration of Christian churches in Jerusalem. In the letter, the sultan acknowledged his friendship with the king of France but stated that unfortunately he could not meet the request: “The friendship and affection which exist between my glorious majesty and you renders your desires admirable to my person [...] but this affair is different from every other affair [...] it regards our religion.” The sultan went on to promise that every Christian church that had not presently been converted to a mosque would remain in the hands of the Christians, who would enjoy the sultan’s protection and be allowed to repair the doors and windows of their churches.⁶⁶ At this time, France’s relations with the Ottoman Empire were within the realm of acceptable behavior under an understanding of the Christendom ideal as long as they were limited to trading privileges and intervention on behalf of Christians. Nonetheless, to many Christians the “friendship and affection” between Suleiman and Francis was troublesome, especially as it evolved into a more concrete political and military alliance.

After 1530, Francis I seemed intent on establishing a concrete alliance with the Ottomans. Beginning in 1531, the French sent Antonio Rincón, a Spanish renegade and fierce enemy of Charles V, as ambassador to the Ottoman court. Rincón continually tried to convince the Ottomans to attack Habsburg southern Italy, thereby giving Francis I a pretext to conquer territories in northern Italy. Francis, through Rincón, also tried, unsuccessfully, to dissuade Suleiman from attacking German territories for fear of uniting both Protestants and Catholics behind the Emperor.⁶⁷

At the beginning of 1532, Francis addressed a letter to his ambassador in Rome, the Bishop of Auxerre, in which he expressed his position on the situation in Hungary. As happened

⁶⁵ “Confirmation par Soliman II,” in Charrière, 121-122.

⁶⁶ “Lettre de Soliman II à François Ier,” in Charrière, 129-131.

⁶⁷ Ursu, 69-72.

rather frequently, Christian Europe was hearing rumors of Turkish preparations in Constantinople and feared a new assault. Although Francis offered token vows to “promptly secure Christendom” he nonetheless placed the blame for the impending crisis on Charles V. After all, he suggested, the true quarrel was between the Emperor’s brother Ferdinand who claimed the title of king of Hungary in opposition to the Turkish and French ally Jan Zapólya. Francis also blamed the Turkish threat on the overly zealous excommunication of Jan which only had the effect of throwing him into the arms of the Turks, catalyzing the present conflict. Francis then responded to the pope’s request that he contribute financially to Charles’s enterprise against the Turks. Francis feigned insult, suggesting that he was offended that he was not asked for troops, pointing out that he had always been present “in person at wars” and that he would “give until my last drop of blood and have my part in the honor or shame that may come.” Francis went on to invoke, rather defensively, his pedigree of pious, crusading Christian kings who

For the defense of our faith taught me [...] to govern and lead for the preservation of the Church, as my predecessors never failed to do. As often as it was necessary, they employed not only their forces, but their own lives, to resist the enterprises of the Turks and infidels and restore the popes to their seats as well as in order to accomplish other good and holy enterprises of which the fruits are so great and the effects so praiseworthy that it is not surprising that they obtained and acquired the title “Most Christian” which I hold and which I hope to preserve in the same manner as my predecessors.⁶⁸

Francis promised that he would be willing to provide aid to Italy if the Turks decided to attack Christendom by that route. In addition he offered “to come in person accompanied by 50,000 foot soldiers and 3,000 men at arms with sufficient artillery and munitions and give my own life for such a great work.”⁶⁹

⁶⁸“Lettre de François Ier à l’évêque d’Auxerre,” in Charrière, 187.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Although Francis put on an air of piety with regard to the requests of the pope, he spoke rather sarcastically of Charles V. While Francis claimed that he would fight the Turks in a general assault on Christians, he refused to assist Charles in his “particular quarrels” with the sultan. Referring to his captivity after Pavia, Francis suggested that “it is very reasonable that those who received the money from my ransom and whom the affair in question touches more than any others, use the forces and money that they took from me” for their wars instead of asking “that I imperil my forces for their particular cause.”⁷⁰

Francis also responded to claims that seemed to implicate French dealings with the Turks. He addressed the rumor that the Turks were acting “with the support and intelligence of some Christian princes, and it appears to some that that is meant to implicate me.” Francis told his ambassador to reply to such claims (spread by imperial ambassadors) by “responding that they are lying through their teeth [*menty par la gorge*] for my predecessors and I have for so long in the past maintained the name [Most Christian King] which we hold in honor and reputation.”⁷¹ Francis suggested that the Turks were deriving their intelligence not from him but from Neapolitan renegades dissatisfied with the rule of the emperor. Francis closed the letter by repeating his offer to defend Italy and suggesting that if that was not desirable he would retire to France in order to protect the coasts of Languedoc and Provence “which are as much frontiers, given their situation, as the kingdom of Naples is for the Emperor.”⁷²

Although Francis’s letter to his ambassador in Rome was part of an internal correspondence not necessarily intended for widespread readership, it nonetheless reveals a coherent apology and propaganda effort on the part of Francis that, for the most part, falls within the paradigm of the Christendom ideal. Francis reiterated his crusading credentials and the

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 189.

⁷² Ibid., 189-90.

special relationship between the French line of kings and the defense of Christendom. Although he was unwilling to help the emperor directly, he portrayed himself as always ready to assist the pope especially in the fight against the infidel Turks. While it is true that Francis seemed to criticize the wars of Charles against the Turks as unnecessary, this in itself did not defy the Christendom ideal. Francis seems to have taken the practical view that, unlike Charles, he believed it was sometimes in the best interests of Christendom to temporarily be at peace with the Turks.

Although Francis constructed a somewhat convincing case for himself, his claims merit a more cynical interpretation given the diplomatic goals which Francis was pursuing at the time in Constantinople. As other correspondence and letters show, Francis was hoping and encouraging the Ottomans to invade Italy, thus giving him an opportunity to occupy the northern half of the peninsula. Furthermore, contrary to Francis's denial, it is actually quite likely that the Turks were receiving intelligence from France given the diplomatic interactions at the time. Finally, Francis claimed that he was as threatened by the Turks as Charles. This also should not be believed given the degree of cooperation and even friendship between France and the Ottomans at the time.

The next month, in March of 1532, reports from Italy indicated that the threat of a Turkish attack seemed more imminent. A letter from the French ambassador to Rome, the Bishop of Auxerre, to Anne de Montmorency⁷³, the Grand Master of France, reported that the pope was losing hope and was preparing to abandon Rome for Avignon, leaving Italy to fend for itself against the coming Turkish invasion. Auxerre also reported that the agents of the emperor were claiming that Francis's military preparations did not seem to be directed against the Turks but intended rather for the king's own interests. Furthermore, Venetian agents repeated the claim

⁷³ In spite of his first name, Montmorency was a male.

that the sultan was deriving intelligence from certain Christian princes, and suspicions abounded with regard to the purpose of France's embassy to Constantinople.⁷⁴

In April, Francis's ambassador Antonio Rincón passed from Venice to Ragusa in order to meet up with the Sultan in the Balkans. His purported reason was to attempt to mediate a peace between Zapólya and Ferdinand as well as to convince the Turks not to attack Christian territories.⁷⁵ Although Rincón had previously been plotting to instigate an Ottoman attack on Italy, it seems that Francis had decided that such an act would be imprudent at the time, especially as rumors once again began to spread of an alliance between Francis and the Turks.⁷⁶ During the summer of 1532, Italy and much of Christian Europe remained on edge, fearing a Turkish invasion. However, by August the threat had largely subsided due to the deft diplomacy of Antonio Rincón. Rincón met with the Sultan and pleaded that he refrain from attacks on Christians. The Sultan ultimately acquiesced to this request. French diplomatic correspondence described the encounter this way:

Only for the old friendship which he had with the house of France was he [the sultan] willing to retreat... amazed that the king would make such a request in favor of a man [Charles] who treated him so badly, and who is not at all Christian, since he sacked the head of the Christian religion which is Rome and seized, imprisoned, and ransomed the great vicar of his Christ and who during all these years plunders and punishes Christians under the guise of waging war against him [the sultan].⁷⁷

Based on this report, the French relationship with the Ottomans saved Christendom during the crisis of 1532. Indeed, the massive Turkish onslaught never occurred and instead Suleiman's campaign was limited to a siege on the Austrian city of Güns and some fighting in the Adriatic.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ "Lettre de l'évêque d'Auxerre au grand maître de France Montmorency," in Charrière, 197.

⁷⁵ "Lettre de M. de Baif à l'évêque d'Auxerre," in Charrière, 198.

⁷⁶ "Lettre de l'évêque d'Auxerre à François Ier," in Charrière, 202.

⁷⁷ "Lettre de M. de Baif à l'évêque d'Auxerre," in Charrière, 207. The sultan was undoubtedly referring to the events of May 1527 when the mercenary troops of Charles V mutinied and sacked the city of Rome (see Chapter IV below)

⁷⁸ "Avis reçus de Vienne, Nuremberg et Augsbourg," in Charrière, 226.

The events of 1532 point to the contradictions that existed between Francis's military and diplomatic interests and his need to abide by the Christendom ideal. At first, Francis encouraged Suleiman to attack the emperor, and the sultan undoubtedly assumed the king's continued enthusiasm for the project. Ultimately, however, it appears that Francis remained reluctant to break fully with the Christendom ideal. He pledged troops to the pope for the defense of Italy (even if this was a thinly veiled attempt to gain control of the peninsula) and asserted his willingness to defend Christendom against its enemies. When war was imminent, Francis had second thoughts and called for peace. As a result of this intervention, Francis could claim that it was through his diplomacy with the Ottomans that Christendom was saved. In this way, Francis's much derided and allegedly impious contacts with the Ottomans may have been the salvation of Christian Europe. After the summer of 1532, Francis was able to present himself as a devout, yet practical Christian ruler who recognized the potential usefulness of relations with the Infidel in contrast to the purportedly pious, self-serving policy of endless holy war pursued by Charles V.

In 1534, France's rivalry with Charles led the Most Christian King once again to intensify his relations with the Ottoman Empire. Francis sent a delegation to meet with the naval commander Khair-Eddin Barbarossa in Tunis—only one year before Charles triumphantly led a successful crusade to conquer the city. France sought peace and even assistance from Barbarossa, especially against the Genoese.⁷⁹ In February of 1534, Francis I gave instructions to Jean de La Forêt for his embassy to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. In the letter, Francis expressed rather clearly his interests; principal among these was his desire to realize his claims to Milan, the county of Asti, Genoa, Flanders, and Artois and to see Jan Zápolya as king of Hungary. The ambassador was directed to resist all attempts on the part of Charles “to come to a

⁷⁹ “Instruction pour la Mission de la Forêt auprès de Khaïr-Eddin,” in Charrière, 255-8.

universal peace” designed to serve the emperor’s interests. Instead, Francis hoped to create an anti-Spanish coalition meant to curb Charles’s aspirations to world monarchy. Francis instructed La Forêt to convince the Sultan to send Barbarossa and his navy to take Sicily and Sardinia after which Francis would install there as king the leader of the anti-imperial Neapolitans in exile. Francis explained why it was imperative that the sultan be convinced to attack the emperor in the Mediterranean:

If the sultan is deliberating over whether to make war against the king of Spain by way of Hungary or elsewhere, La Forest will remind him [the sultan] of the power of the Germans, on whose territories the king of Spain has very little obedience. Nonetheless, they [the Germans] will inevitably join with him in the defense of their country, in a fashion which would increase his courage. Yet, by attacking by way of Naples, Sicily, Sardinia or Spain this would cut to the quick [...] understanding likewise that the Germans will not be moved by the peril of Italy, as we know and have seen from experience.⁸⁰

By encouraging the Turks to attack Charles in the heart of his Mediterranean territories, Francis hoped to achieve “universal peace” on his own terms.

With the emperor’s instructions, La Forêt negotiated with Barbarossa in North Africa before finding the sultan on campaign against the Persians in Azerbaijan.⁸¹ Meanwhile, in the same year, Charles V led a successful invasion of Tunis, which had recently been captured by Barbarossa.⁸² In February 1536 La Forêt concluded a commercial deal with the Turks as well as a political and military alliance.⁸³

The agreement of 1536 is generally regarded as the official beginning of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, and is often referred to as the Capitulations of 1536. The treaty seems to have laid the foundation for future political, economic, and religious privileges for France in the Levant. It is possible that the less threatening articles of the treaty were made public in order to

⁸⁰ “Instruction de la Forêt pour son Ambassade à la Porte”, in Charrière 258-63.

⁸¹ Ursu, 91.

⁸² Ibid., 95.

⁸³ Ibid., 97.

cover up a secret alliance that was concluded at the time or may have been established earlier.⁸⁴ Indeed, the written treaty did not mention any terms that could be understood as an offensive or defensive military alliance. The text of the treaty established peace between France and the Ottoman Empire, granted trading rights to the French as well as civil, criminal, and religious protections while in Ottoman territory. In addition, it called for the mutual liberation of French and Turkish slaves, as well as peace and cooperation among ships. Furthermore, the treaty gave the French exclusive trade rights in the Ottoman Empire and allowed the pope, and the kings of England, and Scotland, to join in the treaty if they desired. This agreement was to be in force during the lives of Francis and Suleiman.⁸⁵ Although the authenticity of this treaty has been challenged,⁸⁶ more recent scholarship has confirmed its historicity.⁸⁷

The Franco-Ottoman alliance was soon tested as tensions grew once again between Francis and Charles in 1536 when, in January, Francis invaded the imperial ally of Savoy with the intention of ultimately taking Milan.⁸⁸ In April of that year, the emperor was in Rome in order to pay homage to the pope and give his support to the Church council which the pope urgently wanted to convene. The visit to Rome was part of Charles's triumphant tour of Italy following his victory in Tunis the previous summer. In St. Peter's Basilica, attired in his full imperial regalia, the emperor launched a lengthy attack on Francis, tracing the history of their enmity. According to Charles, he had originally desired to be friends with Francis, recognizing their familial ties. However, Francis seized Milan and the two leaders competed for the imperial election as if it were "the pursuit of a lady." Charles blamed their future quarrels on Francis's

⁸⁴ Ibid., 96-97.

⁸⁵ "Premier traité officiel de la France avec la Porte," in Charrière, 283-294.

⁸⁶ Zeller, 127-32.

⁸⁷ Jensen, 455.

⁸⁸ R. J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 77.

bitterness, which only increased after the Battle of Pavia and Francis's captivity. This jealousy led the French king to pursue war against Charles at all cost and to renege on the treaties of Madrid and Cambrai. Among the many accusations directed towards Francis were accusations that the French king refused to aid in the defense of Christendom against the Turks and intended to use the crisis as a pretext to take control of northern Italy. In general, Charles accused Francis of being neglectful of or even opposed to the most important issues facing Christendom "such as the council, the reduction of the Lutherans as well as the establishment of peace in Italy and the contribution of forces to help fight against the Turk." In the end, Charles insisted that he desired peace so much that if Francis truly wanted war it would be better that the two meet in a duel. The combat was to be of the sort "which in the past took place between Christian princes in order to avoid greater damage." The two rulers would meet on neutral territory, give hostages and agree on non-artillery weapons. If Francis were to win, he would gain Milan and if Charles were to be the victor, he would gain Burgundy. The winner would "be obliged to attend to the pope, the fight against the Turks and the good of Christendom." Charles gave Francis twenty days to respond to the challenge.⁸⁹

In May, Francis addressed his own letter to pope stating, "I would have very much desired [...] that it were possible to be present when the Emperor spoke to you publicly at long length with regard to the affair between us both, in order to respond to each article." Francis went on at length addressing in some detail Charles's many accusations. Once again Francis propped himself up as the defender of Christendom: "With regard to everything which regards the good of Christendom, no prince desires these things more than I, and the manner in which I govern my subjects testifies to this." As for the duel, Francis agreed that it would be preferable

⁸⁹ "Lettre collective de M. Dodieu de Vély et de l'évêque de Mâcon à Francois Ier," in Charrière, 295-309.

to war if the occasion should present itself. In the end of his letter Francis promised that he would devote all his efforts to achieve “peace and the universal good of Christendom”⁹⁰

The complaints which both Charles and Francis laid before the pope show that their rivalry was very personal in nature. In some ways, although Charles had won the imperial crown, the two princes were still competing over who would be the true defender of Christendom. The Christendom ideal figured prominently in the claims of both princes as they each expressed their desire to achieve universal peace among Christians and to support the Church. While Charles offered some rather sharp criticism of Francis on many issues, he did not explicitly suggest that Francis was allied with the Turks. While such rumors had been spreading for some time, Charles may have thought that such a claim was too far-fetched to bring up before the pope. As for Francis, he was willing to collaborate with the Turks but still not yet ready to break decisively and publicly with the Christendom ideal.

In spite of the expressed desire for peace on the part of the king and the emperor, war broke out once more as the emperor launched an ultimately unsuccessful invasion of Provence in July 1536.⁹¹ At the same time the Turks, ostensibly according to Francis’s plan, threatened Italy from the Adriatic. In the winter of 1536-7, Italy was once again deathly afraid of a seemingly imminent Turkish invasion. Pope Paul III used all means at his disposal in order to prepare for the impending catastrophe. He sought in vain to persuade the king and emperor to cease their dispute, arranged for the collection of more taxes and tithes, and issued indulgences so that the Christian princes may reach a peace in order to fight against the Turks. In December of 1536 the papal nuncio to France was alerted of “the all-powerful forces of the Infidel” which were threatening “Puglia and the Kingdom [of Naples] and consequently the ecclesiastical state where,

⁹⁰ Martin Du Bellay, Sieur de Langey, *Mémoires de Martin et Guillaume du Bellay*, edited by V.L. Bourrilly and F. Vindry, Four Volumes (Paris: Société de l’histoire de France, 1908-19), Vol. II: 402-412.

⁹¹ Knecht, 281.

if the apostolic see and its occupant cannot stay and reside, there is no doubt all Christendom will be thrown into confusion.” In order to confront this threat, the pope had determined that

the remedy and the salvation consist in the concord between the king and the emperor, and that it is necessary to achieve and procure this with all vigor. If this peace will not arrive as it should, then at least they might put aside their differences and fighting until they have aptly provided for this so great and obvious ruin and extermination which we see threatening the Christian commonwealth.⁹²

When assistance was not forthcoming, the pope, like his predecessor Clement VII in 1532, lost hope and made preparations to abandon Rome altogether.⁹³

The war between Francis and Charles in Provence and Piedmont as well as to the north in the Low Countries, reached a stalemate by the end of 1537. There were increasing calls for durable peace especially in light of the threat of Ottoman invasion which continued to hover over Christian Europe. In November of 1537, Pope Paul III successfully laid the foundations for a Holy League against the Turks consisting principally of the emperor and Venice, but without France.⁹⁴ In January of 1538, Francis and Charles agreed to a temporary truce,⁹⁵ yet the pope firmly desired for Francis to join the league against the Turks. The pope offered to meet with Francis in person in order to conclude an enduring peace.⁹⁶ In April, French agents remained very skeptical of any permanent peace with the emperor, claiming that it would be “to the disadvantage of the king,” and “will lead to the unhappiness of the Turk,” thereby leaving nothing to stop the designs of the emperor.⁹⁷

⁹² “Ricalcato a Carpi,” in J. Lestocquoy, comp., *Correspondance des Nonces en France: Carpi et Ferrerio, 1535-1540* (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1961), 214; Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, 214.

⁹³ “Lettres de l’évêque de Mâcon à M. de Montmorency,” in Charrière 323-4.

⁹⁴ “Lettre des évêques de Mâcon et de Lavour à François Ier,” in Charrière, 357-8. This Holy League, commanded by Andrea Doria, unsuccessfully engaged the Ottoman fleet of Barbarossa at Preveza in the autumn of 1538.

⁹⁵ Knecht, 289-90.

⁹⁶ “Lettres des évêques de Mâcon et de Lavour à François Ier,” in Charrière 363.

⁹⁷ “Lettres de l’évêque de Rodez au connétable de Montmorency,” in Charrière, 369.

Nonetheless, in May-June 1538, Pope Paul III, Francis I, and Charles V gathered in the Savoy city of Nice. Because the king and emperor refused to meet with each other (perhaps for fear of having to follow through with their pledge to duel) the pope and his cardinals shuttled back and forth between the two rulers. The pope's goal was to establish a lasting peace and gain France for the league against the Turks. Eventually, Charles and Francis agreed to a truce of ten years based on the status quo. The next month, with the pope back in Italy, the two rulers had a change of heart and met each other face to face in the Languedoc port of Aigues-Mortes. To the surprise of many, the king and emperor embraced each other as brothers and promised to cooperate for the defense of Christendom.⁹⁸ A large component of this commitment to Christendom was a resolution to join in a new crusade against the Ottomans, as had also been pledged at Nice⁹⁹

Rather understandably, the sultan Suleiman was not pleased with the newfound amity between his ally Francis and the emperor. In Constantinople, the French ambassador Antonio Rincón found himself in a rather precarious position as news of the newfound cordial relations between emperor and king reached the Bosphorus. In fact, Rincón feared for his life, and sent several letters to France asking for new instructions,¹⁰⁰ as he meanwhile distributed bribes throughout the Ottoman court in order to buy their patience.¹⁰¹ When Rincón finally received instructions from Francis I, they were noticeably without any clear guidance on how to present the king's rapprochement with Charles V to the sultan.¹⁰²

Suleiman himself was also rather confused, yet nonetheless relatively patient with Francis's sudden reversal. In May of 1539 the sultan sent a letter to his "brother" Francis in

⁹⁸ Knecht, 292.

⁹⁹ Ursu, 98-106; Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, 215-17.

¹⁰⁰ "Lettre de Rincón au connétable de Montmorency," in Charrière, 388-90.

¹⁰¹ "Comptes de l'Ambassade de Rincon en Turquie," in Charrière, 474.

¹⁰² "Lettre de François Ier à Rincon," in Charrière, 409.

response to requests he had received from the French, acting on behalf of the emperor, calling for a truce with the sultan. Suleiman was rather perplexed by these requests but promised Francis that he would seek to grant it out of “fraternal affection” under the condition that the emperor “restores and delivers into your hands all of the provinces, countries, places and faculties which he previously seized from you and currently holds and occupies; as soon as he does this ...I shall do as you wish.”¹⁰³ Recognizing the disadvantages of peace between king and emperor, Suleiman took it upon himself to be guardian of Francis’s interests and reminded his ally of the reasons why the alliance was to France’s advantage in the first place.

The tensions in the Franco-Ottoman alliance grew even more when, in January 1540, Francis received Charles V in Paris, welcoming him as a brother with great pomp and hospitality. Christendom was astonished and Suleiman once again felt betrayed fearing that Francis and Charles were organizing a joint front against him. More than ever Rincón feared for his life.¹⁰⁴ Fortunately for the Sultan (and Rincón, who eventually was able to depart safely from Constantinople), the partnership between Francis and Charles never came about and the lasting peace which was expected from the entente did not materialize. Charles insisted that Francis confirm the previous treaties of Madrid and Cambrai while Francis would not budge on his desire for Milan. The entente completely collapsed later in 1540 when Charles made his own son Philip (the future Philip II of Spain) Duke of Milan, thereby precluding any possibility that Milan would return to Francis.¹⁰⁵

As relations deteriorated once more, Francis turned again to the Turks. Constable Montmorency, who was the trusted advisor responsible for the short-lived alliance with Charles, fell out of favor. Francis began to look to the more Machiavellian designs of those such as

¹⁰³ “Lettre de Soliman à François Ier,” in Charrière, 408-9.

¹⁰⁴ Charrière, 421; “Lettre de Rincon au connétable de Montmorency,” in Charrière 425.

¹⁰⁵ Knecht, 394-5.

Antonio Rincón. In 1541, Francis sent Rincón along with Cesare Fregoso, an Italian in the service of France, on another mission to Constantinople once again to enlist the support of the Ottomans in a joint engagement against Charles V. While traveling on the Po River through the Duchy of Milan, Rincón and Fregoso were assassinated by imperial agents who seized and publicized their instructions, infuriating Francis. Francis quickly sent another embassy to Constantinople with the same instructions, this time headed by Captain Jean Polin.¹⁰⁶

Francis and Polin faced a rather difficult situation at the end of 1541. Francis learned that Charles's expedition to Algiers had failed, presenting a rather opportune moment to attack the vulnerable emperor who had just returned to Spain with his broken army.¹⁰⁷ Yet, Francis was reluctant to take advantage of this opportunity since the truce remained in effect and he had promised not to challenge the status quo at least until Charles had returned from his crusade in Algiers.¹⁰⁸ Besides, Francis was undoubtedly aware of the scandal that would ensue if he were to attack the emperor with the help of the Turks while the emperor was away fighting against the Infidel.

Nonetheless, Polin continued the negotiations in Constantinople, which were quite successful. In 1542, Polin was able to convince the sultan to launch "the grandest exercise by sea and by land which has ever been done at the same time." The sultan promised the French "one hundred galleys for the enterprise against Genoa or Puglia" in addition to a large sum of gold.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, word was spreading of the French plan to wage war against Charles with the help of the Turks. According to the Bishop of Montpellier, the French ambassador to Venice, Pope Paul III panicked, warning that a new war between Charles and Francis "would be

¹⁰⁶ Charrière, 490.

¹⁰⁷ "Rapport d'un Agent à François Ier sur l'expédition d'Alger," in Charrière, 522.

¹⁰⁸ "Lettre de l'évêque de Montpellier au capitaine Paulin," in Charrière, 530.

¹⁰⁹ "Lettre de l'évêque de Montpellier à François Ier," in Charrière, 531.

the total ruin of Christendom.” The pope tried to convince Francis to forego his vengeance for the assassination of Rincón “for the good of Christendom.”¹¹⁰ Montpellier warned Francis I that imperial agents were beginning to demand that the pope chastise the king for placing all of Christendom in peril. They also accused Francis of being “allied and confederated with the Turk” and demanded that, therefore, the pope must “proceed with censures and other means” in order to change the behavior of Francis and thus save Christendom.¹¹¹

The accusations against Francis were so frequent and convincing that the French agents developed a defense for the close relations with the Turks. This defense was largely still within the parameters of the Christendom ideal. A joint letter from the bishop of Montpellier and Polin argued that

the intelligence [with the Ottomans] can with time, turn to the profit of Christendom...being the cause of the liberation of the Holy Land, the restitution of relics and ornaments of the Church, the freedom of brothers who are part of the divine service and infinite other poor Christians who were slaves, a general truce for all of Christendom and several other good fruits which have resulted from this intelligence [with the Turks].

Besides, they argued, Francis “never prevented the emperor from his enterprises against the infidels,” even if it meant putting aside the French king’s own interests.¹¹² This defense of Franco-Ottoman relations was in many ways in line with earlier justifications for the alliance. The French could claim that they were seeking a more diplomatic and peaceful solution to problems posed by the Turks, in order to arrive at the same Christian goals. Francis could even suggest, with a hint of truth, that his peaceful engagement had reaped more benefits for Christendom than all of Charles’s holy wars.

¹¹⁰ “Lettre de l’évêque de Montpellier à François Ier,” in Charrière 536-7.

¹¹¹ “Lettre de l’évêque de Montpellier à François Ier,” in Charrière, 538.

¹¹² “Lettre Collective de l’évêque Montpellier et du capitaine Polin à François Ier,” in Charrière, 539.

This same defense was made by Francis himself in January of 1543 in a letter to the Diet of Nuremberg which seems to have been assembled in order to raise funds for the emperor's war against the Turks. In the letter, Francis addressed the question of his alliance with the Turks directly:

I have often heard it claimed that I have associated and made alliance with the Turk, but the facts show that it was only a truce or suspension of war which is not excluded to any Christian who desires it. My pact with the Turk gave great benefits to the emperor and it would have given him even more if he had been willing to take advantage of them.

Francis continued by portraying himself as the true defender of the Christendom ideal through his ardent desire for peace: "once, when I was equipped and ready for war [against the emperor] I deferred it until his return from the expedition to Tunis...you know with what furor and violence he [the emperor] then launched upon the kingdom of France, and there is no one who cannot recite the cruel and abominable enterprise which had been waged against me and my line." Nonetheless, Francis argued:

"I forgot it all [...] I received him [Charles] in my kingdom, so that he may travel through Gaul [France] on his way to Gand [Ghent, in the Low Countries] and by this means be happy in his affairs, yet for this inestimable frankness and sincerity I was met with a good trick [*on m'a joué ce bon tour*] when Cesare Fregoso, a knight of my order, and Antonio Rincón, my ambassador, who were in the Duchy of Milan, by their commission, were cruelly killed and robbed of the papers which they were carrying. In order to hide this cruelty and inhumanity, these evil murderers placed on these poor victims an accusation, and sowed it maliciously across the word, that they found letters on them in which I asked the Turk to come against the Christians."

Francis then directly attacked Charles:

The emperor, not content with the abominable death and murder of my people [Rincón and Fregoso], has once again contrived against me [...] that the Turkish army is every year drawn against the Christians at my request and it is to this end that I engage in war in Italy. He ceaselessly recommences the same old song, only in order to allow himself to turn his arms against the Turk. In addition, I would like that you consider that it is no one other than the emperor Charles who has brought the Turks against the Christians, who are enraged by the outrages

they have received, and as it is he who has maintained this great fire, who has already several times provoked such a powerful prince as much by ostentation and vain threats as by the forces which he has required. He has pushed you [German princes] who think nothing of this fight which he hopes to extend not by his own ruin but by yours [...]. For in the enterprise which the emperor wages, he hides under pious titles the particular interests which he has in such wars as well as his lust for glory and insatiable ambition.¹¹³

An examination of Francis's defense shows that he continued to attempt to justify his relationship with the Turks as something within the ordinary realm of behavior for a Christian prince. According to Francis, it was Charles who was truly acting outrageously by using the pretense of a crusade to advance his own ends. Nonetheless, Francis seemed to believe that alliances and collaboration with the Turks could not be justified in light of the accepted Christendom ideal. For this reason, he flatly denied the accurate claims of Charles V that Francis had an alliance with the sultan and had been urging the Turks to attack Christians. Francis knew that he had broken with the behavior befitting the Most Christian King. Realizing that he could not justify this behavior, he chose to lie about it.

Open Collaboration: The Joint Campaign of 1543-4 and its Aftermath

By the summer of 1543, it was no longer possible for Francis to conceal the true nature of his relations with the Ottomans. The diplomacy of Captain Polin in Constantinople had successfully procured the full assistance of the Ottoman fleet for whatever military endeavor Francis wished to pursue. In April of that year, the Ottoman fleet of 110 ships under the command of Barbarossa left Constantinople for France accompanied by the French ambassador.¹¹⁴ While on their way, the Turks pillaged the coasts of Sicily and Italy, although they dutifully abstained from attacking the territories of the pope, at the request of Francis I.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ "Lettre de François Ier à la Diète de Nuremberg," in Charrière, 558-61.

¹¹⁴ Knecht, 487.

¹¹⁵ Ursu, 142.

In July, the Turkish fleet arrived at Marseille where they were feted and received with honors by the commander of the French Mediterranean fleet and other dignitaries¹¹⁶.

A month later, the French put the Ottoman fleet to use against the nearby city of Nice. Francis laid claim to the city which was then a possession of the House of Savoy, an imperial ally. In August, a joint Franco-Ottoman force (of which the majority was composed of the sultan's fleet) began to assault Nice. The Turks along with the French took the city, but not its citadel. The conquest was only temporary, however, as the approaching winter and the threat of the Spanish fleet forced the Franco-Ottoman forces to depart the next month.¹¹⁷ After the assault on Nice, the true nature of Francis I's relations with the Turks was abundantly clear. Francis had called upon the forces of the infidel sultan, under the command of the infamous Barbarossa, and used them to fight fellow Christians. If this was not scandalous enough, the events that followed proved just as troublesome for the reputation of the Most Christian King.

In the aftermath of the attack on Nice, the French faced the enormous logistical problem of providing food and shelter to the Ottoman forces as they wintered in France awaiting their next assignment from Francis. The king solved this problem by ordering the evacuation of the port city of Toulon, placing it in the hands of Barbarossa and the Turkish fleet.¹¹⁸ For the next six months, the city of Toulon was converted into a Turkish city, including its own mosque and slave market. Nonetheless, contrary to certain claims propagated by France's enemies, accounts of the Ottoman fleet's presence in Provence note the remarkable order of the Ottoman sailors and soldiers who did not ravage the city or the countryside as many had feared.¹¹⁹ Although the

¹¹⁶ Deny, 181.

¹¹⁷ Du Bellay, IV:187-188; Knecht, 489.

¹¹⁸ "Extraits des Registres des Délibérations du conseil de la Ville de Toulon," in Charrière, 567.

¹¹⁹ Knecht, 489.

Ottoman fleet was well-behaved, tension eventually began to arise between the French and the Ottomans in the months that followed for other reasons.

According to Ursu's narrative, one of the roots of Ottoman frustration was Francis I's refusal to conduct war alongside Barbarossa in the "oriental" fashion, based on pillage and raids. Thus, Francis irritated Barbarossa because "this sovereign of a Western country, could not debase himself with such acts which would also raise the protest of the entire Christian world."¹²⁰ Another interpretation of events contrasts the patient and dutiful Ottomans with the incompetent, unorganized, and ungrateful French. According to this narrative, based on Turkish sources and French eyewitness accounts, the Ottoman fleet was willing to participate in any campaign which the French suggested as long as Francis provided adequate funds and troops.¹²¹

Given Francis's history of bad judgment on military matters, it seems likely that he was unable to provide proper resources or attention to the Ottoman fleet. The Turks were most likely frustrated with the French for their failure to live up to their side of the agreement rather than for any principled French refusal to participate in "oriental" warfare. As Francis was in the middle of fighting his former ally Henry VIII of England, he could no longer devote his entire attention to his usual region of interest, the Mediterranean. The Ottoman forces were impatient with their lack of instructions from Francis regarding new targets for attack. In addition, Barbarossa was suspicious that Francis was beginning to regret his use of the Ottoman fleet and was planning to make peace with Charles V once again. The Ottoman admiral also feared that Francis intended to keep the fleet in France for the summer without sufficient compensation. Barbarossa therefore

¹²⁰ Ursu, 148.

¹²¹ Isom-Verhaaren, 420.

decided to depart from France with his fleet in the spring of 1544, not before forcibly releasing the Muslim galley slaves of the French fleet.¹²²

A French contingent of five ships, led by Polin, accompanied the Ottoman fleet on its voyage to Constantinople. On the way, the Ottoman fleet ravaged the coasts of Italy taking a good deal of slaves and plunder. Polin gave instructions to Barbarossa on which territories he should plunder and which lands were off-limits.¹²³ As the introductory anecdote on the assault of Lipari suggests, it was rather unseemly for the Christian French contingent to be complicit in these raids at the expense of their co-religionists. The aforementioned account of the Provençal priest Jérôme Maurand shows the uneasy relationship between the Christianity of the French contingent and the support they were giving to the fleet of the Infidel. Maurand, who was rather shocked and disgusted by the treatment of Christians, managed to put up with these unpleasant events so that he might achieve his goal of reaching Constantinople in order to see the Hagia Sophia and other famous sites.¹²⁴ On one occasion Maurand piously offered mass aboard his ship for the feast of Corpus Christi as the Turks raided and took slaves from an Italian town, handing the citadel over to the custody of the French.¹²⁵ The episode at Lipari was only the most dramatic of several Ottoman raids which the French passively assisted. Although the French captain Polin offered token gestures by occasionally ransoming Christian slaves, he did not make any clear protest against the actions of the Ottoman fleet.¹²⁶

Upon reaching Sicily, the French contingent parted ways from the Ottomans only because they wished to reach Constantinople more quickly. As the French ships passed through the straits of Messina, they observed two very telling scenes on opposite sides of the straits. In

¹²² Ibid., 419-20.

¹²³ Ibid., 421.

¹²⁴ Maurand, xlvii.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 63-5.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 121.

Messina they watched as the city successfully raised enough money to ransom their fellow Christians from Lipari who had been recently enslaved. Perhaps the people of Messina recognized the plight of their brothers and sisters from Lipari and joined together in order to save them from the dreaded Turks out of Christian charity. As the French fleet continued further, they observed Reggio di Calabria on the other side of the strait. Reggio lay devastated from an attack by the Ottoman fleet the previous year as the Turkish ships made their way to France. It is possible that Polin, Maurand and the other Frenchman noticed some symbolism in their passage from Messina to Reggio. It is intriguing to wonder if as they sailed through the straits, they recognized that they had abandoned the ideals of Christian unity and fraternity which they witnessed in Messina. In contrast, they glimpsed the fruits of their alliance with the Ottomans in the ruins of Reggio as they sailed on to Constantinople.

By the end of 1544, Francis made peace with Charles one last time and did not collaborate with the Ottomans again on a comparable scale before his death in March 1547. The alliance which Francis had established, however, endured during the reigns of his successors, especially under Henry II (1547-1559). Franco-Ottoman cooperation manifested itself most notably in the Ottoman conquest of Libyan Tripoli (controlled by the Knights of Malta) in 1551 and the Ottoman assistance to the French in their ultimately unsuccessful campaign to conquer Genoese-controlled Corsica in 1553-55.¹²⁷ For the French, these later instances of cooperation further entrenched and normalized their alliance with the Ottomans, while for much of Christian Europe they confirmed France's repudiation of the Christendom ideal, which threatened to put all Christians in danger.

¹²⁷Guy Turbet-Delof, *L'Afrique Barbaresque dans la Littérature Française aux XVIe et XVIIe Siècles* (Paris: Libraire Droz, 1973), 161.

Chapter IV. “One can make Arrows of any kind of Wood.”
 Contemporary Reactions, Justifications, and the Abandonment of the
 Christendom Ideal

The Papal Response

As the diplomatic sources show, Charles V and the Spanish in particular used the Franco-Ottoman alliance as a means by which to attack Francis and present him as a prince unworthy of the favor of Christendom. As for the popes, their reaction was more measured as their position was much more precarious. Clement VII (1523-1534) attained the papacy with the support of Charles V. However, fearing Charles's power in Italy, Clement unwisely made an alliance with Francis. After the defeat of Francis at Pavia, Clement once again supported Francis in his renunciation of the Treaty of Madrid, which caused Charles to bring his armies back into Italy, leading to the sack of Rome by mutinous German Lutheran mercenaries in 1527. After this, Clement VII had no choice but to submit to the emperor whom he crowned in Bologna in 1530.¹²⁸ Clement remained rather weak for the rest of his papacy and was unable to counter the French relationship with the Turks which, he occasionally warned, threatened to place all of Christian Europe in peril.¹²⁹

Clement's successor, Pope Paul III (1534-49), was a much more active proponent of the Christendom ideal. In 1538 he forged an ultimately unsuccessful Holy League against the Ottomans and achieved a promising, yet short-lived, peace between Francis and Charles through the Truce of Nice. Unlike his predecessor, Paul maintained good relations with Francis while being careful not to displease the emperor. Although Paul devoted much effort to the promotion

¹²⁸ Gerard Noel, *The Renaissance Popes: Statesmen, Warriors and the Great Borgia Myth* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2006), 261-84.

¹²⁹ “Lettre de l'évêque d'Auxerre au grand maître de France Montmorency,” in Charrière, 197.

of peace among Christians and the propagation of a crusade against the Turks, he had to deal with many other pressing issues during his papacy. Above all, Paul wanted to convene an ecumenical council in order to discuss the matters brought into question by the Reformers.¹³⁰ In Germany, Paul III was concerned with the increasing violence and war between Protestants and Catholics. In England, Paul had to deal with the Act of Supremacy of 1534 which declared Henry VIII head of the English church.¹³¹ These pressing problems ultimately prevented Paul III from issuing any strong rebuke of France's relations with the Infidel. In 1537, the Venetian ambassador in Rome reported Pope Paul III's frustration with both Charles V and Francis I. The ambassador quoted the pope:

Never was Christendom in greater peril, or easier the remedy, were it not for the mischievous operations of two men, namely the Emperor and the most Christian King, who both hold a matter of very little importance in greater account than the Almighty and the whole world, obstinately persisting in a war against each other which must bring the entire Christian faith to ruin. We are in despair; if we speak to the Emperor about the Turk, he replies that we must declare ourselves against France and excommunicate King Francis, who has an understanding with the Turk. This is not the way to resist Sultan Solymán [*sic*], separating Christendom from France, who has so much power and authority, and military forces and money, which are needed for this undertaking, unless it be that the Emperor would fain effect our total overthrow, for he it was who has been the cause of our losing England as had he not promised to attack King Henry, Clement would not have published the sentence [of excommunication].¹³²

Indeed, while it may seem that, as the bastion of the Christendom ideal, the papacy should have clearly condemned France's actions, the popes could not afford to offend Francis I. With all the other pressing problems in Christian Europe, the popes did not want to risk alienating the Most Christian King.

¹³⁰ The first session of the Council of Trent convened in 1545.

¹³¹ Noel, 285-298.

¹³² "Bragadino to the Signory" in Rawdon Brown, ed, *Calendar of state papers and manuscripts, relating to English affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice and in other libraries of Northern Italy. Vol. 5, 1534 – 1554* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), 53.

French Responses and Justifications

In France, the Franco-Ottoman alliance coexisted rather paradoxically with popular crusading attitudes which prevailed in the kingdom just as much if not more than elsewhere in Christian Europe. It was widely believed that it would be the kings of France who would ultimately reclaim the Holy Land for Christianity. Indeed, while Francis courted the Turks, public opinion was strongly in support of the Christendom ideal with frequent calls for new crusades and celebrations of the victories of other Christian powers over the Turks.¹³³ This attitude was typified by a poem dedicated to Francis in 1515 at the beginning of his reign: “You will go into combat for the faith/ and Mohammad and his law you will destroy [...]/ because, for a long time it has been prophesized/ that a French king above all others prized/ will subjugate, according to the prophecy/ All the peoples of Africa and Asia.”¹³⁴ This poem reflected a similar call for a crusade at the end of Seyssel’s work *On the Monarchy of France* (1515) mentioned above.

After 1519, of course, the real possibility of a new crusade against the Turks had disappeared. Many lamented the lack of interest in a new crusade, as expressed in a 1537 French poem: “to wage war against the Turks and miscreants/ is no longer discussed even as they [the Turks] move against us.”¹³⁵ As the reality of the alliance became clear, apologies quickly began to spring up in order to convince French subjects and all of Christendom that the alliance was justified. As we have seen in the diplomatic sources above, the French justifications and defenses of their relations with the Ottomans developed over time. At first the French simply

¹³³ Clarence D. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought and Literature, 1520-1660* (Paris: Boivin & Compagnie, 1973, 356-7.

¹³⁴ Quoted in Rouillard, 598.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Rouillard, 598.

lied about the relationship. If the French ever acknowledged such an understanding (but never an alliance) with the Ottomans, they portrayed it as a means by which to protect the Christians of the Levant and intercede for peace on behalf of Christendom. These justifications, however, eventually were rendered inadequate, especially following the episodes of 1543-44. The French needed to employ more effective justifications, even if that meant embracing an entirely new paradigm of state behavior.¹³⁶

Two French apologies from the 1540s exhibited some of the justifications employed by the French in order to defend their relationship with the Turks. *Les Gestes de François de Valois* by Étienne Dolet, a French scholar with anti-Church leanings, was published in 1543. The tract was most likely motivated by Dolet's desire to gain the good graces of Francis I and it included a brief defense of the Franco-Ottoman alliance. At one point, Dolet responded to an apparently popular claim that, as a result of France's relations with the Ottomans, the French had become "half-Turks" and were completely dependant on the Turks for survival.¹³⁷ Dolet answered this criticism by asking if it was "forbidden for a prince to make alliance and seek intelligence of another, whatever creed or law he may be?" Dolet concluded that this was not forbidden. He then attacked the Spanish, who were presumably the authors of such anti-French attacks, by contending that a kingdom which was contaminated by the influence of *marranos* or Judaizers was in no position to criticize the French relationship with the Ottomans. Besides, Dolet argued, Charles V allied himself with the king of Tunis and did not lead his expedition to Africa in order to convert him. Finally, Dolet dismissed the magnitude of the Franco-Ottoman

¹³⁶ Much of this section relies on the Géraud Poumarède, "Justifier l'injustifiable: l'alliance turque au miroir de la chrétienté (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)," *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 111, (1997): 218-246.

¹³⁷ Estienne Dolet, *Les Gestes de François de Valois, Roi de France*, (Lyon: 1543). From *Gallica*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k714989.image.r=estienne+dolet.f2.langEN>, 85.

relationship by arguing that France was more powerful than Spain and had no need for the aid of the Turks.¹³⁸

In *Apologie en Défense pour le Roy*, published in 1544, François de Sagon, a French priest and poet, made a more pious attempt at defending the Franco-Ottoman alliance. Sagon wrote with the intention of addressing “the detractors, and to touch upon those who wrongly have desired to reproach the king ...for having wanted to make an alliance with the Turk” which he intended to address “by reason, and by a comparison...with the text of the Gospel.”¹³⁹ In the apology, Sagon drew a comparison between the Franco-Ottoman alliance and the parable of the Good Samaritan. According to Sagon, the man who was robbed and left on the side of the road represented Francis I, while the robbers were the ministers of Charles V who robbed Francis of his rightful claims in Italy. The priest who ignored the plight of the injured man represented the pope while the deacon who also passed by represented a cardinal. The Good Samaritan who offered help to the unfortunate victim, however, represented the Turk who came to the aid of France in its time of need.¹⁴⁰ Sagon contended that by mercifully coming to the aid of one in need, the Turks were, like the Good Samaritan, acting favorably towards God. He argued that France would be willing to receive “the bread from the true children of God whether they be Samaritan, dog or Turk.”¹⁴¹ Sagon, therefore, contended that France was not wrong to accept the aid of an infidel since after all “God has no enemies by nature, only those who sin against him.”¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Dolet, 86-87.

¹³⁹ François de Sagon, *Apologie en Défense pour le Roy*, (Paris: 1544), From *Gallica*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k71358s.r=sagon+apologie.langEN>, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Sagon, 5-6.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 26-29.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 28.

Sagon also made the interesting claim that although the Church in Rome was France's true spiritual mother; the origins of the kingdom went back even further to Troy. Since the Turks rule over Troy, it was only natural that France should seek their help.¹⁴³ Furthermore Sagon also claimed, echoing Dolet, that Charles V also collaborated with the Infidel through his relations with the king of Tunis and the Emperor of Persia.¹⁴⁴ Sagon finally concluded his defense by claiming very optimistically that Francis I's alliance with the Turks would lead them to "one day confess that there is only one God and our religion."¹⁴⁵

Although Dolet's claims were rather characteristic of the tit-for-tat of political propaganda and polemics, Sagon offered a more interesting and important insight into the attempted justifications of the French court at the time. Sagon's polemic demonstrates that there was a great reluctance to acknowledge that France's behavior fell outside the normal framework of Christian relations. The parable of the Good Samaritan provided a useful example of how non-Christians may be employed to carry out the will of God, since they might act righteously when Christians failed to do so. Nonetheless, Sagon's interpretation of the parable ignored the true reason why the Franco-Ottoman alliance was unacceptable. If France had merely been reaping the benefits of a friendly relationship with the Ottomans through trade or diplomatic exchanges, this would not have caused such a scandal. However, France was actively plotting with the Turks in order to make war against fellow Christians. Sagon's analogy to the parable was ultimately unsound. After the Good Samaritan showed mercy to the unfortunate man he did not proceed to attack and kill those from whom the injured man had received the injustice. While in general Sagon's apology recognized the existence of a common Christian commonwealth, it is also interesting that he made the claim that France had a spiritual mother

¹⁴³ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 34. Apparently Sagon believed the Turks to be polytheists.

not only in Rome but in Troy. Although this contention may appear to be merely a mythological flourish, it made an appeal to a source of authority that was divorced from Christianity, allowing the French monarchy to make claims to power without needing recourse to religion or the Church.

Although many French subjects, such as Sagon and Dolet, sought to justify the Franco-Ottoman alliance, disagreements existed in the French court with regard to the political and religious merits of such an alliance. These conflicting viewpoints were visible in the rivalry of Anne de Montmorency and Antonio Rincón. Rincón was a Spanish renegade and devoted enemy of Charles V. Due to his extraordinary diplomatic skills, he gained considerable influence on French foreign relations especially with regard to France's policy in the Orient. The policies which Rincón pursued seemed to embody the ideas of Machiavelli. Rincón was the chief architect of France's alliance with the Ottomans and was willing to use all means necessary, including bribes and deceit, in order to ensure the success of Francis I and the defeat of Charles V.

Anne de Montmorency contrasted rather sharply with the Machiavellian Rincón. Montmorency was the king's childhood friend, and served as Grand Master of France before being named Constable of France, both very high positions in the French court. Therefore Montmorency, unlike Rincón, was intimately acquainted with the king. Nonetheless, Rincón and Montmorency seemed to be in competition over France's policy with Charles V and the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, Montmorency was a proponent of the Christendom ideal. He was dedicated to a "Christian policy" which sought peace with the emperor and was hostile to any alliance with the Ottomans.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Ursu, 56.

It appears that Francis I was torn on which course to take. In 1532, Francis snubbed Montmorency by sending secret instructions to Rincón asking him to seek an alliance with the sultan.¹⁴⁷ Later, from 1538 to 1540, Francis began to favor Montmorency's plans for *rapprochement* with the emperor while leaving Rincón to fend for himself in Constantinople. Indeed, the Truce of Nice, the entente at Aigues-Mortes, and Charles's visit to Paris were all ideas proposed by Montmorency. However, when the peace with Charles failed to reap any benefits for Montmorency, the Constable and his policy ideas quickly fell out of favor with the king.¹⁴⁸ As J. Ursu puts it in *La Politique Orientale de François Ier*, "This was the end of Francis's duplicity. The king threw himself, more resolutely than ever, into the hands of Suleiman. The star of Rincón shined with brilliance, while that of Montmorency dimmed."¹⁴⁹ Indeed, after 1540, Francis had experimented with both men's ideas of foreign policy and ultimately decided to abandon the Christendom ideal in order to pursue the interests of his kingdom at any cost.

This new political attitude which Francis adopted after 1540 is visible in a very telling justification of the alliance by Blaise de Monluc, who fought in the wars of Francis I and eventually became Marshal of France. In his *Commentaires*, published in 1582, Monluc bluntly stated:

Against one's enemy one can make arrows of any kind of wood. As for me, if I would call all the spirits of Hell in order to break the head of my enemy, who wants to break my own head, I would do it with a good heart. God will pardon me!¹⁵⁰

Monluc's justification put the survival of the state above all other concerns. In order to pursue this goal, a prince could use whatever means necessary. Although Dolet and especially Sagon

¹⁴⁷ Ursu, 56.

¹⁴⁸ Knecht, 385-397.

¹⁴⁹ Ursu, 118.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Rouillard, 358.

tried to portray the alliance in other terms, the Franco-Ottoman alliance would eventually come to be seen as an exemplar of Machiavellian politics and a negation of the Christendom ideal.

Chapter V: Outrage and Acceptance
 The Consequences and Legacy of the Alliance:
 Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

The reactions to the Franco-Ottoman alliance in the political thought of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries must be understood within the context of the powerful anti-Machiavellian sentiment of the time. As mentioned above, Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses* were first published in 1532 and a French translation first appeared in 1553. In 1559 Pope Paul IV placed Machiavelli's works on the Index of Forbidden Books and his works ceased to be published in most Catholic countries with the important exception of France.¹⁵¹ From the start, Machiavelli's works were regarded as representing a pernicious and anti-Christian approach to politics. As a result, anti-Machiavellian works began to appear as early as the 1530s and 1540s. Catholic writers associated Machiavelli with the heresies of the Protestants, and Protestant writers also condemned Machiavelli, associating his work with decadent and corrupt Italian Catholicism. While the strongest anti-Machiavellian force came from Counter-Reformation Catholicism, Protestants were just as likely to join in the attack on the "atheist" Machiavelli whose works had become, according to the French Huguenot Innocent Gentillet, the "Koran of the courtiers."¹⁵²

Indeed it should not be surprising that Catholics and Protestants found a common cause in opposition to Machiavellian ideas of the state. Many Protestants, especially in France, continued to conceive of and desire a single united Christian commonwealth and believed that by focusing on the Turkish Infidel they could achieve Christian unity in spite of theological differences. This was the position of the French Huguenot captain François de la Noue in his

¹⁵¹ Bireley, 14-17.

¹⁵² Ibid.

work *Discours Militaires et Politiques* (1587). La Noue was not as hostile to Machiavelli as others, and he confessed: “I had the singular pleasure to read the *Discourses* and *the Prince* of Machiavelli because they treat of lofty and attractive matters with regard to political and military affairs.”¹⁵³ Nonetheless La Noue pointed out that when he looked at Machiavelli’s work with more scrutiny he “found beneath its attractive veil, many hidden errors, which guide those who follow them to dishonor and shame.” Therefore, La Noue recommended that his readers consult the anti-Machiavellian work of his fellow Huguenot Gentillet.

Criticism of Machiavelli, or of what was perceived to be Machiavellian, often went hand-in-hand with support for the Christendom ideal. This applied even to Protestants such as La Noue. In the *Discours*, La Noue presented a vigorous defense of the Christendom ideal with a chapter devoted entirely to the condemnation of alliances with the Infidel and another calling for a new crusade. La Noue’s discourse twenty-one was entitled “Alliances made by Christian princes with Mohammedans, capital enemies of the name of Christ, have always been disastrous and we must never closely ally with them.”¹⁵⁴ In this chapter, La Noue gave a history of alliances between Christians and Muslims. He claimed that the alliance which the last king of Jerusalem Guy de Lusignan made with Saladin against Raymond of Tripoli led to the ruin of the crusader states. La Noue focused in particular on Byzantine emperors who sought the aid of the Turks. He cited the example of the Byzantine emperor John Palaeologus who brought ruin to his domains by making an alliance with the Ottoman sultan Murad against certain Greek and Bulgar enemies. According to La Noue, an alliance with the Infidel, often motivated by desperate circumstances, always caused greater ruin, no matter how bad the initial circumstances. La Noue

¹⁵³ François de la Noue, *Discours Politiques et Militaires* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1967) 160; Edmond A. Beame, “The Use and Abuse of Machiavelli: The Sixteenth-Century French Adaptation.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43:1 (1982): 33-54.

¹⁵⁴ La Noue, 417.

claimed that such alliances were “as if one went into the woods and paid brigands to kill a friend or family member in one’s own house because of some dispute” or like “opening the window to the wolf and letting it into the sheepfold to devour the lambs.”¹⁵⁵

La Noue explicitly treated the example of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, focusing on the instances of cooperation during the reign of Francis I and Henry II. While he suggested that the alliances may have led France to some notable successes, such as the 1554 conquest of Bonifacio in Corsica, he concluded that those successes were far outweighed by the damage done to France:

I have been informed, by several old and well-informed Italian and Spanish captains, of what their nations have felt and said of these Turkish tempests. They recounted to me that the desolations of these barbarians were lamentable, as they burnt, sacked and even brought an astounding number of poor Christians into perpetual servitude and even worse the majority were forced to renounce the Christian law in order to embrace the false doctrine of Mohammad [...] And one cannot imagine how much these ills have moved the people in every country to write and vituperate against the French nation. [...] It is apparent that this confederation has been the occasion to diminish the glory and power of such a flourishing kingdom as France, for at the death of King Henry II the kingdom lost a part of its grandeur which it had forty years earlier.¹⁵⁶

La Noue continued with a blunt evaluation of the utility of the alliance:

If we made a comparison [...] between the utility of all of this Turkish aid and the diminution of the renown of the French in all the nations of Europe, we would have to confess that the shame has greatly surpassed the profit. For, what is it to have conquered two or three cities, at the price of being blamed by so many people for actions which are universally condemned? We witnessed that at the time of the peace which was made between the kings of France and Spain in 1559 [the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis] the vulgar people of Germany, Italy and Spain said that one of the principal causes for France’s bad outcome was because France made the alliance with the Turks and called upon them and favored them in order to do harm to Christians.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ La Noue, 426.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 428.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 429.

La Noue contended that even if one suggested, as many apologists for the alliance did, that the fault should not be placed on France but rather on those who forced France into the predicament (namely, Charles V and Spain), one would be right to reply that France could have made an alliance with a Christian prince and that France should have known from history that alliances with infidels for the purpose of fighting Christians were always both wrong and ineffective.¹⁵⁸

Although a Protestant, La Noue was a rather conventional defender of the Christendom ideal. It is therefore not surprising that in his next discourse he called for the unity of Christian princes in order to expel the Turks from Europe. La Noue offered a rather lengthy and detailed plan for his crusade which was to be summoned by the pope, whose authority or at least influence the Huguenot continued to recognize. According to La Noue:

All things considered, there is nothing more proper than to join the forces of all Christians together and fight those who want to destroy us; for if any war be necessary it is this one. We will not do it for a desire for glory, or ambition or vengeance of some light injury, but in order to preserve the souls of so many thousands of people from the mortal infection of the doctrine of Mohammad[...]¹⁵⁹

La Noue recognized that “there are disputes between us regarding religion” yet by fighting together in a new crusade all Christians will be “grafted to the same trunk which is Jesus Christ.” This way all Protestants and Catholics will “bear the same title, and the differences will be terminated with sweetness and truth.”¹⁶⁰ In La Noue’s estimation, the Franco-Ottoman alliance was much more of a threat to Christendom than the rift between Catholicism and Protestantism. La Noue’s desire for Christian unity is especially understandable given the context of the Wars of Religion (1562-1598) which were raging in France at the time. In fact, La Noue seemed to

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 441.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

argue that the often violent religious differences among Christians only increased the necessity of a return to the Christendom ideal.

In 1589, Giovanni Botero, an Italian priest and diplomat from Piedmont, published an important work of political philosophy entitled *On the Reason of State*. Botero endeavored to advocate a conception of politics in accord with Christian morality. In his dedication, Botero referred to the works of the “impious” Machiavelli who “bases his Reason of State on lack of conscience” and declared:

I was moved to indignation rather than amazement to find that this barbarous mode of government [advocated by Machiavelli] had won such acceptance that it was brazenly opposed to Divine Law, so that men even spoke of some things being permissible by Reason of State and others by conscience. This is both irrational and blasphemous, for he who would deprive conscience of its universal jurisdiction over all that concerns man in his public as well as in his private life shows thereby that he has no soul and no God.¹⁶¹

Botero sought to provide an understanding of politics that was not divorced from Christian religion and morality. By doing this, he hoped to heal the discord which reigned in the Church and Christendom.

Botero’s opposition to the ideas of Machiavelli was very clear in his treatment of religion. While Machiavelli evaluated religion merely as something to be used to the advantage or disadvantage of a prince, it formed the primary concern for Botero. According to Botero, the Christian prince must humbly place himself under the authority of God and he must not do anything “unless he is certain that it is in conformity with God’s law.” In connection with this, Botero further asserted that “a prince should never bring a matter before a Council of State without first submitting it to a spiritual Council containing doctors of theology and of canon law” claiming that the Romans and even the Turks deferred to religion before embarking on important

¹⁶¹ Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, Trans. P. J. Waley and D.P. Waley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), xiii-xiv.

matters of state.¹⁶²

Although the term “reason of state”—or *raison d'état*—would come to refer to the special prerogatives of a state to engage in morally questionable behavior for the protection of its interests, Botero’s view of reason of state was very different. For Botero, a proper understanding of reason of state subjected the actions of states and princes to God’s law. Because of this, Botero had strong criticism for the Franco-Ottoman alliance. He included this in his final chapter on “the purpose for which military force should be used.” This section included, as was quite common, a call for war against the Turks. Botero lamented: “I do not know by what justice the reason of State has shown itself more hostile to Christians than to Turks and other infidels. Machiavelli cries out impiously against the Church and yet utters not a word against the infidels; and the Christian rulers are intent upon each other’s downfall as though they had no other enemy in the world.”¹⁶³

Botero then explicitly addressed the alliance of Francis I and his son Henry II with the Ottomans. Like La Noue, Botero claimed that the Franco-Ottoman alliance ultimately hurt France more than it helped it, even if it was intended to strengthen France against Charles V. According to Botero “the results of these alliances with the Infidel against Christians can be seen in the death of Henry [II] himself at the marriage of his sister, in that of his son Henry III and the extinction of his house (the four brothers each dying without succession), and the ruin of his kingdom.” Botero claimed that this was God’s just punishment, stating:

I remember being told by people who had been prisoners of the Turks in the Black Tower on the Black Sea of the horrifying curses called down from heaven upon the royal House of France by the men who had been imprisoned on account of that House. God dissembles, but when least expected He draws the sword of His justice and avenges a thousand offences with one blow.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Botero, 64.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 222.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 223.

Botero concluded his treatment of the Franco-Ottoman alliance and his work *On the Reason of State* with a telling anecdote about the Machiavellian and seemingly amoral ambassador Antonio Rincón, who was largely responsible for Francis I's alliance with the Ottomans. On one occasion when Rincón was on his way to Constantinople, he met Andrea Doria (the Genoese admiral of Charles V) and boasted to him of his plans to make an alliance with the Turks. According to Botero, "Doria did not conceal his disgust at the idea of so impious a proposal, and urged him to consider the wrong he was doing, to God, to his country, to his natural sovereign, to the Church and to the name of King Francis." Rincón nonetheless ignored this counsel, insisting that the alliance made good strategic sense. According to Botero's account, when Rincón later desired to meet with the Chancellor of France, Cardinal du Prat, in order that he might confirm the alliance, the Cardinal refused to see him, declaring "How can this dog, this renegade enemy of the Church and of God, dare to appear among Christians [...] He has arranged a treaty between the King and the Turk, a vile, infamous, diabolical treaty." Botero ended his anecdote, and his work, by acknowledging that the alliance advocated by Rincón, the embodiment of Machiavellian ideas and defiance of the Christendom ideal, won out in the end. Nonetheless, Botero referred to Rincón's assassination in 1541, noting with satisfaction that he ultimately "paid the price of his good works."¹⁶⁵

The Seventeenth Century: Suárez and Grotius

In the early seventeenth century, some of the early scholars of international law, grounded in a Christian understanding of natural law, addressed the question of alliances with non-Christians. Among these thinkers were the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) and the Dutch Calvinist Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). Although neither Suárez nor Grotius

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 223-4.

addressed the Franco-Ottoman alliance explicitly, it must certainly have been on their minds when they treated the question of the legality and morality of alliances with the Infidel.

Suárez dealt with the question of alliances briefly in his treatment of just war in *A Work on Three Theological Virtues*. He concluded that it was not in itself a sin for a Christian prince to call upon a non-Christian for aid in time of war, or to give aid to an infidel. Suárez argued that such actions were “not opposed to any virtue, and since examples were supplied by the Scriptures in the case of David and the Machabees [*sic*].” In addition, Suárez pointed out that “it is permissible in war to employ the aid of wild animals; therefore why not the aid of unbelievers?” Nonetheless, while such an act was not inherently wrong, it could in many cases “militate against charity, because it involves public scandal, or some peril to believers or even lack of trust in divine aid”¹⁶⁶ Thus, while recognizing that there was technically no moral or legal principle which disqualified political association with a non-Christian power, Suárez suggested that it was probably best to adhere to the patterns of state behavior allowed by the Christendom ideal.

Grotius addressed the question of alliances with infidels in a brief aside in his work *On the Law of Prize and Booty* (1605). Grotius suggested that “alliances and treaties with infidels may in many cases be justly contracted for the purpose of defending one’s own rights [...] Such a course of action was adopted (so we are told) by Abraham, Isaac, David, Solomon, and the Maccabees.”¹⁶⁷ In his later work *On the Law of War and Peace* (1625) Grotius examined the question of alliances with infidels in more detail. According to the Dutchman, neither natural law nor divine law forbade such alliances *per se*, for such an alliance “is not a thing in itself evil,

¹⁶⁶ Francisco Suarez, *Selections from Three Works*, edited by James Brown Scott (London: Humphrey Milford, 1944), 853.

¹⁶⁷ Hugo Grotius, *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, edited by James Brown Scott (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1950), 15.

or always unlawful, but only in regard to circumstances.” Although such alliances were not contrary to natural or divine law, Grotius recognized that, in practice, they may in many cases be unjustified. He wrote that if an alliance “should very much augment the power of the infidels, it were better to abstain from it, unless upon absolute necessity.” Yet, even if the assistance of a non-Christian was deemed absolutely necessary, Grotius noted that “every right is not enough to justify us in the doing that which may, if not directly, yet indirectly, prejudice our religion. For we must first seek the Kingdom of God, that is, the propagation of the Gospel.”

While Grotius developed many new ideas of international law, he concluded his treatment of alliances with non-Christians with an invocation of the Christendom ideal that could very well have been written 150 years earlier:

since all Christians are members of one body, which are commanded to have a fellow-feeling of each other’s sufferings, as that command affects every single person, so should it every nation as they are a nation, and all kings as they are kings. Nor ought any one to serve Christ in his Person only, but also to the utmost of that Power he is entrusted with. But this neither Kings nor People can well do, whilst an enemy of the true religion invades the states of Christendom, unless they heartily assist and stand by one another; which cannot be done conveniently, without a general league and confederacy to that very purpose; and such a league has formerly been made, and the Roman Emperor was unanimously chosen Head of it; all Christians then are obliged to contribute either men or money, according to their ability, to this common cause; and how can they be excused who refuse it, I cannot see, unless they are hindered by an unavoidable war, or some such great calamity.¹⁶⁸

By accepting that alliances with non-Christians were legally, and potentially morally acceptable, both Suárez and Grotius took a more measured and sophisticated stance than others such as La Noue. Nevertheless, in practice they held the same position of upholding the Christendom ideal.

¹⁶⁸ Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, edited and with an Introduction by Richard Tuck, from the Edition by Jean Barbeyrac (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005). http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1947&chapter=121304&layout=html&Itemid=27, Book II, Chapter XV.

Even if alliances with the Infidel were not intrinsically wrong, there seems to have been an agreement that, in light of the threat of the Turks, there existed practically no legitimate reason for a Christian prince to form such a confederacy.

By the mid-seventeenth century it was thus widely accepted that alliances with non-Christians were not always permissible but must only be undertaken if they were absolutely necessary and did no harm to Christian faith. These conditions were even expressed in later French polemics and tracts in defense of alliances with infidels and heretics. These included the 1625 work *Le Catholique d'Etat* and a later tract entitled "Catholic Princes may make alliances and treat with infidels and heretics." found in a 1689 manual for French diplomats.¹⁶⁹ Both of these apologies defended the French alliance with the Turks using examples from Biblical and secular history. The latter tract acknowledged that at times alliances with the Infidel might be impermissible, but France's alliance of course did not fall into that category.

By the seventeenth century the acceptance of the legitimacy of alliances with non-Christians in principle, even if such permission was limited, eventually opened the door to unrestricted diplomacy between Christian and Muslims. The example of the Franco-Ottoman alliance clearly played a decisive role in this transformation. If the Most Christian King was permitted to resort to an alliance with a non-Christian then it certainly would not be forbidden for other Christian princes to do so. Meanwhile, major thinkers continued to argue that even if such alliances were in certain rare cases justifiable, they should be avoided. By the mid-seventeenth century, however, these warnings were falling on deaf ears. The alliance of Francis I with the

¹⁶⁹ Jérémie Férier, *Le Catholique d'Etat* (Paris: 1625), From *Gallica*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1004627.r=%22le+catholique+d%27estat%22.langE>;
Denys Godefroy, "Que les Princes Catholiques peuvent s'allier et faire des Traitez avec des Princes Infidelles et Hérétiques," *Mémoires et Instructions pour servir dans les Négociations et Affaires concernant la France* (Paris: 1689), From *Gallica*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k93794n.image.r=%22memoires+et+instructions+pour+servir%22.fl.langEN>, 26-38.

Ottoman Empire had forever changed the norms of state behavior among Christian princes leading to the eclipse of the Christendom ideal as a dominant and politically relevant ideology.

Conclusion

The transformation of Christian Europe away from the Christendom ideal was due in a large part to the alliance concluded between Francis I and Suleiman the Magnificent. The history of this alliance provides important insight into the strength and vulnerability of a dominant political and religious ideology. Without a doubt the Christendom ideal provided the norms which controlled all interactions and behavior of Christian states at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This was so even if, like all dominant ideologies, the Christendom ideal was not a perfect reality and it coexisted with many inconsistencies and contradictions.

France's alliance with the Ottomans was an important historical episode because it directly challenged the prevailing ideology of the era. In pursuing the alliance, Francis I gambled that either he would triumph over the predominant norms and thereby preserve his kingdom from the threat of Charles V, or his defiance might ultimately lead to the demise of his dynasty and realm. The risk paid off for Francis I. Although it is true that the alliance bore few fruits in an offensive sense, it certainly had an important impact in defending the interests of France, a criterion which is perhaps more difficult to quantify. In any case, the Franco-Ottoman alliance's true historical importance was not in its immediate strategic or political consequences, but rather in the fact that it played a major role in casting aside the dominant ideology of the time which I have called the Christendom ideal.

By analyzing the history of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, I have sought to demonstrate that the conflict with the Ottomans and not the rise of Protestantism was the most important cause of the disintegration of the old order. Protestants such as La Noue and Grotius did not believe that their religious beliefs required them to reject the idea of a unified Christian

civilization and the heritage of the Christian commonwealth and of the crusade. Admittedly, the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598) and the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) cemented the irreconcilable political differences between Catholics and Protestants. Yet, even at the time of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the rise of Protestantism itself was not the major reason for the momentous transformation that had occurred. The new order which Westphalia proclaimed was in many ways the work of France's Chief Minister Cardinal Richelieu who had built upon the policies begun a century earlier under Francis I with the Franco-Ottoman alliance—policies based on a rather Machiavellian political ideology in which the perceived interests of the state outweighed the duties of religion or religious affiliation.¹⁷⁰

Although the Franco-Ottoman alliance struck the fatal blow, the Christendom ideal did not die immediately. In fact the concept retained a degree of influence into the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, before the Franco-Ottoman alliance, the Christendom ideal was a powerful ideology with real effects on the political decisions of Christian states and princes, as proven by Francis I's own long reluctance to openly engage in the alliance with the Turks. After the pact between Francis and Suleiman, the Christendom ideal was reduced to a mere pious sentiment voiced by many but with few real political consequences.¹⁷¹

Of course, the rejection of the Christendom ideal by France and subsequently many other Christian states did not stop the papacy from trying to promote the ideal, encouraging unity among Christians and war against the Turks. During the negotiations at Westphalia papal legates desperately attempted to make peace among the Catholic powers (they refused to negotiate with

¹⁷⁰ The continued conflicts between varying concepts of political paradigms are explored in Étienne Thuau, *Raison d'État et Pensée Politique à l'Époque de Richelieu* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2002).

¹⁷¹ A possible objection to this contention might highlight the Holy League at Lepanto as an example of the Christendom ideal in full force after the Franco-Ottoman alliance. If anything, Lepanto was the exception which proves the rule. After the impressive 1571 victory, the Holy League quickly disintegrated and the military impact of the victory remained minimal. Also, France was largely absent from Mediterranean affairs at the time because of the French Wars of Religion.

the Protestants), reminding them of the necessity to make war against the Turks who were laying siege to the Venetian city of Candia in Crete. Yet, these papal diplomats were met with silence. One papal legate expressed his dismay: “as much as I exaggerate, there is no great sadness expressed at the movement of the Turk.” The same ambassador complained that “we hear the Turk spoken of as if he was a simple name, a creation of the spirit, a phantasmagoria, and as if he is not arming himself” and that the representatives of the various Christian states “do not think at all about the Turk, as if his invasion of Christendom is nothing but a fable.”¹⁷²

Ultimately, therefore, these efforts of the papacy to establish universal peace among Christians in the hope of fighting the Ottomans were rejected by the major Christian powers. By 1648, the papal insistence on the existence of a Christian commonwealth belonged to old rhetoric and even seemed mythical.¹⁷³ Of course, elements of the ideal continued to have some appeal to individual European powers at particular times. For the major states on the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, such as Spain, Venice, and Austria, the Turkish threat endured, and they were involved in conflicts with the Ottomans even if many of the other powerful Christian states could afford to regard such wars as things of the past. In addition, throughout Christian Europe petty princes from Italy, Germany, and Eastern Europe as well as French aristocrats occasionally took up the crusading mantle against the Turks well into the eighteenth century. While many of these figures undoubtedly were pursuing prestige and wealth, others were certainly compelled by true religious sentiment and belief in the Christendom ideal. These disparate episodes and examples, however, offered only a faint echo of what the ideal had been before the Franco-Ottoman alliance.

¹⁷²Quoted in Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*, 260-61.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 266.

In 1605, the Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes, himself a veteran of the 1571 crusade at Lepanto, published *Don Quixote*, a novel which described the exploits of a devoted Christian knight in a world which no longer saw the need for his services. Indeed, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the age of the crusades and the Christendom ideal was clearly passing away. There are many explanations for this transformation. In this thesis, I have tried to show that the Franco-Ottoman alliance negotiated during the reign of Francis I played a major role in this transformation, and indeed, was one of the most important causes of the downfall of the Christendom ideal. The alliance which Francis I established with the Ottoman Empire paved the way for the foundation of a new dominant ideology in Christian Europe, an ideology based on the supremacy of state and national interest which remains with us today.

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