



## "With the sabre in one hand and the Koran in the other". Turkish seamen in the Baltic and the decline of Swedish-Ottoman relations in the 1790s

*Fredrik Thomasson*

### Introduction

Sweden enjoyed friendly relations with the Ottoman empire for most of the eighteenth century. However, when Sweden signed a peace treaty with Russia in August 1790 this severed its alliance with Constantinople. Russia, a mutual enemy, had served as the glue binding the Turco-Swedish friendship.<sup>1</sup>

This article discusses the change in relations after Sweden's breach of the treaty. It describes and contextualizes a little known episode following the Russo-Swedish war of 1788–90. During the war Sweden had captured a number of Turkish seamen that were fighting with the Russians in the Baltic. That European seamen and travellers were frequently seized in the Mediterranean by North African corsairs is well known. We know less about Ottoman subjects and their experiences of captivity in the hands of European powers. I will attempt to follow these sailors' destinies as far as is possible.

---

Fredrik Thomasson, b. 1965, Ph.D. in history at the European University Institute, Florence. He defended his thesis '*A Dangerous Man of the Enlightenment*'. J.D. Åkerblad and Egyptology and Orientalism in Times of Revolutions in 2009. He is presently preparing the thesis for publication as well as having started a new project on Atlantic history in the same period as this article treats.

The Swedish king arranged for the Turkish prisoners to be sent to Constantinople in order to appease Turkey. Sweden also offered naval assistance toward the Ottoman empire's reform of its navy. Both the transport of the Turkish sailors and the naval assistance proved difficult. I use these maritime episodes to illustrate Sweden's role in the Mediterranean and the waning of its relationship with Turkey.

### Turkish seamen in Stockholm

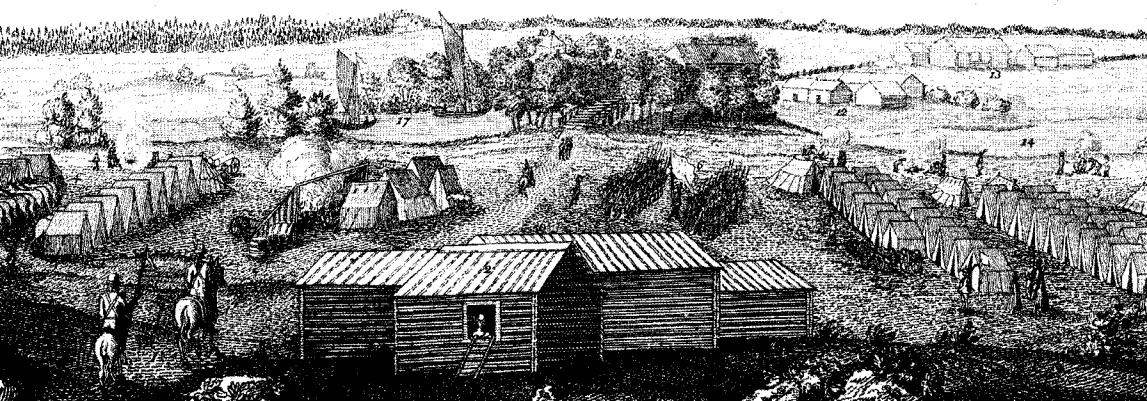
During the winter of 1790–91, Johan David Åkerblad (1763–1819) served as Turkish interpreter in the Division for Foreign Affairs (*Utrikesexpeditionen*), the Swedish equivalent of a foreign ministry. He answered a few questions that his protector Carl Christopher Gjörwell (1731–1811) had sent him. Gjörwell was one of the most important cultural figures in Stockholm of the second half of the eighteenth century. He was a prolific writer and his publishing ventures were extensive. He was an important promoter of foreign books and ideas, and twice suffered bankruptcy when ambitious publishing projects foundered. Gjörwell always needed news items for his newspapers.

Åkerblad described for him what had happened to some Turks captured during the war against Russia:

the fifty odd Turks that came here on the *Amphion* last autumn were in October [1790] embarked on a ship chartered by the King destined for Constantinople, but as it happened in great secrecy, I do not know why, I wish that my name should not be mentioned as the one that revealed it [...]<sup>2</sup>

Åkerblad was presumably the only Swedish Turkish speaker in Stockholm and as many of the prisoners were ordinary seamen and knew no other language he was probably involved in this act of 'great secrecy'. When the matter later became public Gjörwell wrote about these Turks in one of his periodic publications.<sup>3</sup>

Åkerblad had been posted to Constantinople in 1784 and had spent several years travelling in the Mediterranean. He only returned to Sweden the previous summer of 1789. Upon his return Åkerblad was ordered to join the war headquarters in Finland. Turkish-speaking prisoners had already been taken



*The army headquarters at Kymmene Gård during the war against Russia in 1789. The conditions were harsh and even the king lived in a tent after a fire had destroyed his lodgings.<sup>5</sup>*

and the Swedish command wanted to know what such captives could reveal about the state of things in both Russia and Turkey. Åkerblad received information from 'his Turks' about a new Ottoman envoy who had just arrived in Moscow and the impact of his arrival on Russian politics.<sup>4</sup>

During the summer and autumn of 1789 Åkerblad dealt both with Turkish correspondence and interpreted for and spoke with Turkish-speaking prisoners. An example is a Tartar captain, 'a good Muslim' as Åkerblad put it, who had been captured by the Swedish forces. Åkerblad had been instructed by the king to keep the Tartar captain company and report any information he might have.<sup>6</sup> We do not know what happened to this officer but as a Russian subject he was not sent with the Turks to Constantinople and likely headed back to Russia after the end of the war. The Turkish seamen captured by the Swedes were subjects of an allied power and thus not strictly speaking prisoners of war. Ottoman sailors were certainly not common in the Baltic, especially not as firstly sailors in the Russian navy and then secondly as freed prisoners in Swedish custody. In contrast to this situation, captured seamen of many nationalities and different creeds were common in the Mediterranean where slavery and forced service had a long history.

## The Barbary states and piracy

Recently a number of works have been published that discuss the fate of Europeans as slaves or prisoners in North Africa in particular. In light of this new research interest in Mediterranean issues the histories of both individual prisoners and the larger context of Mediterranean piracy and trade have been extensively considered. Many European prisoners published accounts of their hardships. Eighteenth-century travellers were well aware of the risks and many of them had read the accounts of former captives.

Among the recent publications are two books by the British historian Linda Colley.<sup>7</sup> Her second book is based on Elizabeth Marsh's account of captivity. Marsh, from a British naval family, was taken captive in 1756. In Swedish the most well-known narrative is the sea captain Marcus Berg's account of his and fellow crew members' often gruesome two years in Moroccan captivity in the 1750s.<sup>8</sup>

Western North Africa was commonly known in Europe as the *Barbary*. The cities of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli were nominally capitals of Ottoman provinces but were de facto governed like separate entities. Morocco never became part of the Ottoman empire but had constant contacts with it and recognised the sultan's religious authority. Corsairs from the Barbary states plied the Mediterranean and sometimes beyond, as evidenced by raids as far away as Britain and Iceland.<sup>9</sup> When capturing ships they also took their crews and passengers. They often tried to ransom 'valuable' individuals and sold the others as slaves.

Swedish ships were also frequently captured and the crews enslaved. Eventually Sweden made peace with the North African regencies in order to protect its shipping. Treaties were concluded with Algiers in 1729, Tunis in 1736, Tripoli in 1741, and with the kingdom of Morocco in 1763. During the eighteenth century public collections were made in Sweden to raise money to pay the ransoms and free enslaved Swedes. From 1755–60, just before the aforementioned peace with Morocco, the Swedish state paid 130,000 rixdollars in ransom money for Swedish prisoners.<sup>10</sup> But even after the treaties were finalized Sweden had to continue to organize convoys for the protection of Swedish shipping as well as regularly sending ships with the 'gifts' the local rulers requested to uphold the peace.<sup>11</sup> The Swedish Levant Trade Company instituted in 1738 never became profitable, and one of the main reasons was the high cost of organizing naval protection. As yet there are no comprehensive figures

for the Swedish case but calculations made in the 1790s indicated that around 15 percent of the net income of Danish Mediterranean commerce was spent on protecting Danish shipping.<sup>12</sup>

One of the main tasks of the 'Turkish translator' – Åkerblad's main role in the early 1790s – was to handle correspondence with the Barbary states. Stockholm also received several visits from Barbary representatives. The most famous of these are the embassies of the Tripolitan emissary Abd ar-Rahman in 1773 and 1779. The poet and songwriter Carl Michael Bellman celebrated the visit in 1773 with a song in his Fredman cycle: *Vid turkens audiens 1773*.

But while Swedish trade with the Levant was minor, other countries were more successful. The French ambassador at Constantinople, Count Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste Choiseul-Gouffier (serving 1784–91), complained about the difficulties in retaining the Turks as allies but still called the empire 'one of the rich colonies of France'.<sup>13</sup>

A posting to Constantinople could be profitable. Higher diplomatic personnel had opportunities to make money by using trade privileges assigned to them by the Sublime Porte. The Porte was the common name for the Ottoman administration and refers to one of the gates, the *Bab-ı Âli*, leading into the palace area in Constantinople. It is thus similar to the concept of 'court', another spatial description for the place of power.

## Mediterranean slavery

Mediterranean slavery is not as well-known as that of the Atlantic and reliable statistics are difficult to come by. The historian Robert C. Davis asserts that between 1530 and 1780 there were 'almost certainly a million ... European Christians enslaved by the Muslims of the Barbary Coast'.<sup>14</sup> Statements about the number of European captives occasionally stir up debate and Davis' estimate is controversial. However, everyone agrees that the numbers are not comparable to the Atlantic slave trade. Davis' number of one million compares to the similarly discussed but less controversial estimate of around 12 million slaves being transported to the Americas. This number does not include Africans that died as a consequence of the trade. In addition to the difference in numbers Mediterranean slavery did not have a comparable impact on the societies it involved.

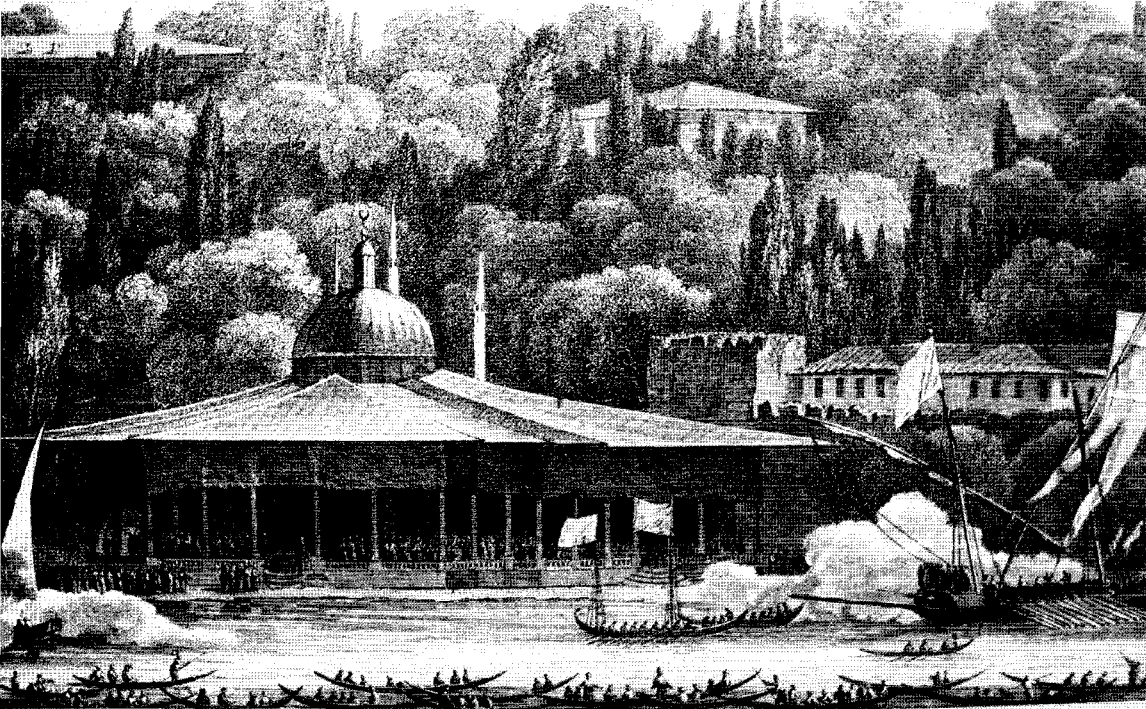
Slavery was nevertheless an important issue for relations between not only the nations around the Mediterranean but also other trading powers. It should not be forgotten that coastal populations were constantly threatened by raids, plunder and enslavement.<sup>15</sup>

But what we are partly dealing with in this article is a much less investigated phenomenon, the taking of Muslim prisoners and their treatment in Christian lands. As yet we know little about the experiences of Muslim captives. Except for prisoners of war, Muslims were seized and sold as slaves by both the Maltese Knights and the Tuscany-based Knights of Santo Stefano. The lack of printed sources in particular – very little was printed in the Islamic world until the nineteenth century – means that we have to rely on other types of material such as manuscript accounts, chronicles, protocols and government sources which document the presence of Ottoman or North African captives in Europe.

Slavery is in itself a multifaceted phenomenon as much recent research has underlined.<sup>16</sup> In the Mediterranean case there is a tendency, even in contemporary literature, to underline the religious dichotomy between Christianity and Islam. The book by Davis cited above is partly an example of this. Popular titles often take the accounts of consuls and mariners at face value without trying to understand the wider context of Mediterranean relations.<sup>17</sup> The debate is still often framed in the terms of 'Christian' and 'Muslim'. When discussing Mediterranean history it is not unusual to use these terms which might have little meaning in practice. Indeed, they often hide other important circumstances and may impede our understanding of the nuances of a system that was not always hostile.

The political economy of captivity and slavery went beyond religious borders. Enslavement was not restricted to peoples of other creeds but this is sometimes forgotten when discussing the Mediterranean. A reluctance to accept the fact that European countries actually made use of slave labour, despite its being in principle prohibited by law, may be another reason why the issue has been largely overlooked.<sup>18</sup>

While the sources for Ottoman and Muslim captives are poorer the issue is certainly worth investigating as the fate of the Turkish prisoners of war in Sweden attests. The eminent Ottoman historian Suraiya Faroqhi discusses reasons for the focus on European captives and proposes a variety of explanations, such as lack of sources and language barriers.<sup>19</sup> Prisoners of war are not



*The Kapitan Pasha saluting the sultan before leaving Constantinople for the campaign in Egypt in 1786.<sup>20</sup>*

usually studied as military history is traditionally not very keen on defeat and imprisonment. Faroqhi concludes that more instances will become known when archives are mined for specific information about Muslim captives.

### The Ottoman empire at war

Åkerblad had himself travelled extensively along the North African coast and was well aware of the dangers of both maritime and overland travel. He had also had ample possibilities to experience the centrifugal forces that were threatening the Ottoman empire. Åkerblad visited Egypt in 1787:

I had not chosen a happy time to visit Egypt. You are already familiar with the unrest that for so long has devastated it and how well the Turkish chief admiral has exploited the infighting between the Egyptian Beys to make them recognize the supremacy of the Porte at least for a time. I came to Egypt when the war was raging.<sup>21</sup>

Ottoman victory in Egypt was, as Åkerblad predicted, only temporary, and soon the Beys were back in power again. When the war between Russia and Turkey broke out in 1787 forces from Egypt were recalled to fight the Russians. Already in 1788 Åkerblad could witness the consequences of the war between Russia and Turkey. He had had difficulties in finding a ship when continuing his trip from Jaffa to Alexandria: 'I was forced to wait there 14 days before I could find a small boat to Damietta [Dumyat]. Russian cruisers have made these waters so dangerous that the Arabs do not dare to go out.'<sup>22</sup>

The war against Russia was not going well for the Ottomans. Shipping and trade were curtailed by the Russian naval presence. When Åkerblad finally arrived in Alexandria – after an adventurous journey that included a long ride disguised as an Arab – the chances that he would meet compatriots in Alexandria were slim. Swedish trade with Egypt was at a low point. According to an early nineteenth-century source only one Swedish ship visited Alexandria in the 1780s. In the 1770s about three ships visited Alexandria every year, but by the last decade of the century the number had shrunk to only one ship a year.<sup>23</sup>

When Åkerblad continued his slow journey back to Europe, he made sure that he travelled in company that offered protection. He left Alexandria in August 1788. Taking passage on a French ship and in the company of a Moroccan royal made the trip safer:

At the end of August I embarked on a French ship bound for Tunis, in the company of the son-in-law of the Moroccan Emperor, Åbd el Malek who was returning from Mecca. He started by showing me courtesy and ended by making me pay 160 piastres for the passage. Our trip lasted 50 days.<sup>24</sup>

## Preparing for war against Russia

Turkey and Sweden had been allies for a great part of the eighteenth century. For several years before war broke out between Russia and Turkey Sweden had tried to kindle the antagonism through the activities of its minister in Constantinople, Gerhard Johan Baltasar von Heidenstam (1747–1803). He was instructed to sow discontent in Russo-Turkish relations in November 1784 and again in May 1785.<sup>25</sup> It was widely predicted that a new Russo-Turkish war





*In addition to war and piracy another major defining factor influencing Mediterranean travel and shipping was the plague. The map shows the extent of the plague 1784–86, an epidemic that was among the most serious of the century. All travellers leaving the Ottoman empire had to pass through health checks and were often forced to stay in the so-called Lazarettos on the northern shores and the frontiers. When Åkerblad returned to Europe in 1789 he spent at least 40 days in quarantine in Marseille where he also lost great parts of his collection formed during his years in the East.<sup>26</sup>*

would soon break out and king Gustav III saw this as advantageous to Sweden. Such a war would alleviate Russian pressure in the north and divert Russian energies towards its southern expansion.

Russian pressure on Ottoman territories induced Turkey to declare war in August 1787. When news of this arrived in Stockholm the king immediately tried to encourage the Turkish war efforts. The king sought support from Prussia, France and Britain but these efforts came to nothing. Sweden

erroneously expected that Britain would oppose Russian expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean as a stronger Russia could threaten British interests further east.

The negotiations for a new alliance between Stockholm and Constantinople were still proceeding when Sweden declared to the Porte its intention to break with Russia on the basis of Sweden's alliance with Turkey from 1739. In return for supporting Turkey Sweden demanded subsidies throughout the war and for ten years following the end of the war. Sweden also demanded that Turkey would undertake no separate peace negotiations with Russia. Heidenstam eventually managed to negotiate a treaty but this was only signed in July 1789 when Sweden had already been at war with Russia for a year.

Sweden attacked Russia in the summer of 1788 and it was soon clear that the war could not be easily won. Discontent was widespread and 113 Swedish officers attempted mutiny in August. This war between Sweden and Russia was observed with great interest in Europe. Denmark saw that it might destabilise Sweden and so seized the opportunity to also declare war against Sweden.

'With the sabre in one hand and the Koran in the other'

On Åkerblad's arrival in Tunis in the fall of 1788 he received news from Sweden. The Swedish consul there, Carl Tulin, was on leave. He had left the North African coast as the plague was ravaging large parts of the Ottoman empire in the 1780s.<sup>27</sup> The information was detailed enough to enlighten Åkerblad on the dire Swedish conditions in the war against Russia:

How is it possible that some of our countrymen are so mean as not to want to follow the best of Kings? It was in Tunis that I was grieved to hear this instead of the news of victories that I expected.<sup>28</sup>

Åkerblad heard about the mutiny and the unsuccessful campaigns. Having witnessed the results of Russia's warfare in the Mediterranean he was justly worried about the possibility of a Swedish defeat in the Baltic. He proposed to Gjörwell that it was time to call for an expedition against the common enemy of Sweden and Turkey:

A word from King Gustaf and I will fly with the sabre in one hand and the Alcoran in the other to preach a crusade in – – – – against the barbarians that provoked discord in the North and who threatens to crush my best friends – – – the 'Turks'.<sup>29</sup>

During Åkerblad's years in Constantinople he had observed how especially France, Britain, Russia and the Austrian empire fought to gain influence at the Ottoman court. He had also seen how they tried to establish advantageous positions in what many foresaw as the impending break up of this 'weakened Empire' as the French ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier had expressed it in the introduction to his travelogue *Voyage pittoresque*..<sup>30</sup>

The support Åkerblad showed for his 'best friends the Turks' need not necessarily be reduced to window-dressing vis-à-vis the recipient of the letter, the royalist Gjörwell. Åkerblad's sympathy for the Turks was more than an expression of fear of the common enemy, Russia. He had exceptional knowledge of Turkish culture and learning and was used in Stockholm as an expert on the customs of the Ottoman empire. Åkerblad had equipped himself with exceptional knowledge of the Ottoman empire at the exact moment that Sweden began to lose interest in its ally. His experiences of the war in Egypt had also made clear to him the aspirations of many Ottoman provinces to break free from Constantinople. This was also noticeable in Tunis where the local Bey wanted to maintain relations that guaranteed freedom of movement.

The quotation is fascinating but should not be over-interpreted. Nonetheless, it is evident that Åkerblad had understood the perils which faced a small country such as Sweden in relation to greater neighbours. Russia had entered an expansionist phase and would continue to grow substantially during the following decades. The plight of the Ottoman empire was evident, torn apart by internal troubles and subject to attacks by foreign powers.

It is amusing to imagine the warrior scholar Åkerblad flying forward in the air with the Koran in one hand and the sabre in the other, preaching a common crusade against the barbarian Russians. Using the crusade as a reference was not as loaded with significance as it is today; an anecdote about Choiseul-Gouffier is illuminating in this respect. He was an avid collector of antiquities and was trying to get permission from the Kapitan Pasha to remove a Greek inscription in an area that was under the naval commander's jurisdiction. The Kapitan Pasha was the supreme commander of the Ottoman navy.

If we are to believe the son of the Dutch representative in Constantinople, Choiseul-Gouffier claimed that the inscription was connected to an ancestor of his who had participated in the crusades.<sup>32</sup> Sir Robert Ainslie, the British ambassador at the Porte 1776–93, maliciously informed the Kapitan Pasha that the inscription was much older than the era of the crusades; in fact, it is now dated to around 550 BCE. He also remarked that it would anyhow be difficult to find an ancestor of Choiseul-Gouffier who had taken part in the crusades. However, the climate of competition between European powers in Constantinople was such that any anecdote must be treated with circumspection.

#### Turkish sailors in the Russian navy

But how had those Turks captured by the Swedes in 1798–90 ended up in the Russian navy? One of the explanations was given by Åkerblad himself in answer to another of Gjörwell's questions. Gjörwell wanted to know more about the king's new page:



*An image of the legendary Kapitan Pasha Ghazi Hasan (1713–90) who Choiseul-Gouffier approached in his quest for Greek antiquities. Hasan Pasha was the supreme commander of the Turkish navy 1770–89. He was often depicted with the lion that he kept as a pet – to the terror of many of his visitors.<sup>31</sup>*

Mehemet, who has the honour to be page to His Majesty, is the son of an Iman of Scutari [Üsküdar] by the Bosphorus. His father had a minor position in the Turkish navy and the young Mehemet accompanied him and was taken by the Russians at Oczakow. The Prince of Nassau who was there then took him and showed him quite earnest proofs of his attachment. He experienced with this lord the campaigns of 88 and 89 and was finally taken by our forces at Svensksund.<sup>33</sup>

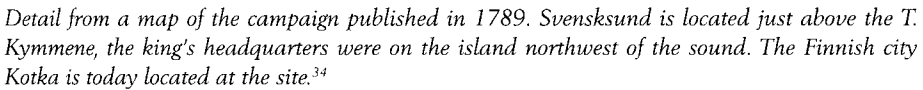
The Russian siege of Oczakow, on the northern shores of the Black Sea, during the Russo-Turkish war of 1787–92 was a violent affair, even for contemporary standards of warfare. Russia increasingly sought to conquer areas around the Black Sea.

Mehemet was taken into the service of the commander who would lead the Russian forces at the second battle of Svensksund, prince Charles of Nassau-Siegen. Mehemet's service under the Russian naval commander probably made him even more interesting in the king's and his court's eyes. One of the main prizes of the battle was the flagship of the Russian fleet and the boy's presence at the court would remind everyone of the Swedish victory at Svensksund.

Turkish sailors had also been captured by the Russians during the war with Turkey in the Black Sea. To prevent their escape they were moved to the Baltic. To force prisoners to serve in enemy forces was common practice undertaken by most warring parties.

Even though Åkerblad made plenty of use of his special language skills he was not happy with his posting to Finland. The war was suspended during the winter and Åkerblad returned to Stockholm.

No great campaigns were planned until the spring of 1790. Åkerblad did not want to go back to Finland and the war, but since naval activities were resuming his skills might be needed on the front. A royal secretary wrote to Stockholm in the spring of 1790: 'when the sea campaign starts one foresees that Turkish prisoners of war in the Russian navy must be dealt with, and then the Royal Secretary Åkerblad can probably not avoid being commanded here to Finland as Turkish interpreter'.<sup>35</sup> We do not know whether Åkerblad returned to Finland during the spring of 1790. The course of the war shifted several times during the spring and summer and Sweden had suffered major losses just a few days before the decisive battle at Svensksund 9 July.



29

## Prisoners and gifts

Åkerblad dealt with the Turkish prisoners when they arrived. They were sent to Stockholm on the *Amphion*, the king's schooner that had served as lodgings and staff ship during parts of the war (it is now partly preserved at the Maritime Museum in Stockholm).

The issue of these Turks' status is interesting. They were called prisoners of war in official correspondence in the sense that they had been Russian prisoners. Sweden had all through the Russian war sought Turkish support and subsidies. The treaty signed in 1789 prescribed that Turkey should pay large sums of money to support the Swedish war efforts against Russia and that no separate peace should be negotiated. Thus the treaty that had been agreed upon with great difficulties by the Swedish representatives in Constantinople and only finalised in the summer of 1789 was broken by the Swedes after only a year. In Stockholm it was of course known that this breach of the treaty would not be looked lightly upon in Constantinople.

Because Sweden and Turkey were allies any Turkish prisoners should in principle have been considered free men when taken by the Swedes. In reality it was not as simple as that. Military service was in many cases, of course, not a free choice. The Swedish authorities probably were unsure themselves how to deal with the Turks.

The prisoners were certainly interrogated but as the war was over they could not offer any valuable information to the Swedish army. The decision to send them back to Turkey must have been taken quickly considering the speed with which they were dispatched. It was probably not believed that the return of a few prisoners could mitigate the effects of the Swedish breach of loyalty against the Porte but in the meantime something had to be done with the Turks in Sweden.

Furthermore, the above mentioned peace agreements with the Barbary States required that frequent gifts were sent to the North African rulers and such a transport was already being organised in Stockholm. A ship named *Italiensk Fregatt* was being prepared to carry a wide range of goods to the ruler in Tunis. Gold and silver watches, snuffboxes studded with diamonds, jewellery, furs and pistols and other luxury goods were intended for the use of the court. The bulk of the freight consisted of mortars and cannons, ammunition, amongst those 800 grenades for the mortars,

100 barrels of pitch and tar, naval stores such as canvas for sails, ropes, timber for shipbuilding, 75 spires for masts et cetera. Masts were highly sought after as they were difficult to procure in the Mediterranean. Shipbuilding material and munitions were constantly high on the shopping lists of the Barbary States, and Sweden could thus equip them to successfully attack foreign ships.

The commander chosen for the task already had experience of sailing in the Mediterranean. Captain Carl Petter Blom (1762–1818) was also assigned the delicate task of returning the Turkish sailors to Constantinople.<sup>37</sup> Swedish diplomats were then to officially present the sailors as a ‘gift’ to the sultan.

All ships leaving for the Mediterranean needed a so-called *algeriskt sjöpass*, a document that showed that the ship was Swedish and that it was protected according to the Swedish agreements with the Barbary states. This was issued on 2 October and the ship left Stockholm shortly thereafter.<sup>38</sup>

### The Turks jumping ship

The period before the peace treaties with the Barbary states was of course especially dangerous for Swedish shipping in the Mediterranean but even after peace was established these waters were not risk-free. *Italiensk Fregatt's* journey confirms this as the trip proved eventful.

That the Turkish sailors were not a homogenous group already became apparent when the ship anchored at Elsinore. Not all of them wanted to go back to Turkey. Captain Blom could not stop one of them from going ashore and when he was called back to ship he refused:

the Aga remained in Elsinore, where he could not be induced to return to the ship. He probably feared the reception here [in Constantinople] as he had joined Russian service voluntarily and was taken *les armes à la main*, something that the other Turks, that did not like him particularly, did not neglect to inform us. I think he has returned to Russia.<sup>39</sup>

The title Aga was usually used for military commanders and some court officials. We do not have a name or rank for this man but he was probably an Ottoman officer who either had deserted to join the Russian forces or did not put up the usual resistance when he was forced into Russian service. His fellow Turks were apparently not happy about his behaviour. It was a clever move to



wait for the ship to leave Swedish jurisdiction before absconding, as it would be difficult for the Swedish crew to use violence or coercion in foreign territory. The captain was not happy about the Aga's departure but could do nothing about it. He certainly knew that if there was truth in what the other Turkish sailors said, that the Aga had been caught fighting voluntarily with the Russians, then he would risk severe punishment once back in Turkey. As in many much more recent wars, to return to the home country after having been a prisoner of war can indeed be dangerous. The Aga was the first of the Turks to take advantage of a call at port. Captain Blom knew that this could cause him trouble and equipped himself with a witnessed certificate to prove that he had not been able to convince the Aga to return onboard.

The next event we know of was when the ship approached Tunis. It was not only pirates from the Barbary states that attacked foreign ships. Venetian ships blocked the entry to Tunis and attempted to seize the ship. According to captain Blom's testimony he managed to negotiate his way out of this tricky situation and to anchor at Tunis with the ship unharmed.

The Swedish consul Tulin was back from his leave and did his best to assist Blom. In Tunis it would again be clear that the Turks were not prisoners. The Turks disembarked the ship and 39 of them decided to not return:

In Tunis 39 Turks chose to join Tunisian service among those Emir Ally and Emir Ibrahim [?] even if consul Tulin and Cap. Blom tried hard to prevent it. They even forced Cap. Blom to give them their bedding when they left the ship.<sup>40</sup>

Blom maintained that they had been persuaded to join Tunisian service – this might of course be true – but it is more likely that they took advantage of the possibility to jump ship at the first opportunity. Interestingly, two 'Emirs' are named who had probably in some manner served as officers and might, like the above-mentioned Aga, have had good reasons to avoid being returned to Turkey. Going back to Turkey may have resulted in their return to the war again.

The Turks do not seem to have regarded themselves as prisoners. In addition to losing the majority of the Turkish sailors, Blom was persuaded to sell the very ship transporting them to the Bey of Tunis. The ship was sold on 8 April 1791 and then fitted with additional cannons to prepare it as a Tunisian gift to the sultan in Constantinople. Contacts between the North African regencies and the central power in Constantinople were not always trouble-free, but the

Bey of Tunis had recently sent 100 seamen to Constantinople to support the Turkish war efforts against Russia.<sup>41</sup>

Blom was not happy about having to sell the ship but the relationship between Sweden and Tunis was such that it was quite difficult to decline the Bey's demands. The Barbary rulers were used to having their demands, often after hard bargaining, at least partly fulfilled. Obviously the Swedes calculated that it was worthwhile to satisfy the local rulers' wishes.

Blom hired a smaller French ship in Tunis and finally made his way to the Ottoman capital. When he arrived there on 11 May 1791 he and the remaining 13 Turks (one Hussein died during the last leg of the journey) had been travelling for more than seven months.

The Swedish diplomat who received Blom in Constantinople was not happy that the original ship had been sold. Despite this, on Blom's eventual return to Stockholm he was nevertheless awarded a medal for having been able to prevent the loss of the ship's cargo to the Venetians.

### Seamen in tatters

The situation in Constantinople was complicated. In addition to the usual infighting and rivalries in the diplomatic community, the unstable situation in Europe fostered even more distrust. The extent of the effects of the French Revolution was becoming increasingly clear in the Ottoman capital. Further to the international complications, Swedish diplomats reported to Stockholm how the city was pullulating with rumours about Sweden's treachery. Although the Turkish sailors had certainly been sent back as a measure of Sweden's goodwill towards Turkey, nevertheless the next few years would prove to be extremely difficult for the Swedish representatives there.

The legation secretary Carl Gustaf Adlerberg (1763–1814) immediately notified Stockholm about Blom's and the seamen's arrival. He informed the Porte and tried as best as he could to explain why the number of seamen was so low in comparison with the group that had left Stockholm and asked for a date when the seamen could be handed over.

Adlerberg had to deal with various practicalities. The seamen arrived with their clothes in tatters. The mission was always short of money and he and Blom resorted to selling some of the items which had been on the ship sold

to the Bey in Tunis and that Blom had been able to bring to Constantinople. Adlerberg arranged a public auction where everything, from water barrels to the ship's provisions, was sold to provide money to clothe the sailors decently. The remaining Turks were also allowed to retain their bedding, on the basis that it would be unjust to take it away from them considering that those who had jumped ship in Tunis had kept theirs. Both Blom and Adlerberg were worried about the reaction in Stockholm but they had to deal with the matter quickly, and Adlerberg justified his decisions: 'As the King so graciously already spent several 1,000 rixdollars, we are convinced that this small expenditure cannot be judged excessive as one could not with honour present them in their present state.' Adlerberg could also report that the Kapitan Pasha took an immediate interest in the seamen:

They have already related their experiences as witnesses of the victory at Svenskund, and all its details, to the Kapitan Pasha, who at a whim summoned some of them to deliver accounts of their experiences. Not many Turks will have undertaken such long journeys at sea and over land and these men will probably be celebrated for months in the coffee houses as they describe their adventures [...] <sup>42</sup>

The Turkish sailors were eventually 'delivered' to the sultan and Adlerberg was presented with an ermine fur coat. The freeing of prisoners of war was certainly appreciated by the Porte but, as everyone was aware, this 'present' cost the Swedes little and probably did not result in any change in the fractious relationship after the Swedish breach of loyalty.

A couple of months after the group's arrival in Constantinople Adlerberg wrote in his dispatch about an event that would have put fear in the sailors that had been Russian captives: 'The Kapitan Pasha has had the entire 18-man crew of a Kirlangitz (a small fast boat with two or three masts) hung, on the allegation that they were Russian spies.'<sup>43</sup>

### Diplomatic Peasant-pride

Once the Porte realised that it had been betrayed by Sweden the situation for the representative in Constantinople became problematic. He was recalled and Pehr Olof von Asp (1745–1808), a nobleman that had been close to

Gustav III, was appointed as Swedish envoy. He was an able and judicious civil servant but had criticised the king's increasingly autocratic tendencies. The appointment was perceived as a sort of exile by many observers. Åkerblad reluctantly accepted his return to Constantinople, as Asp needed a Swede who was familiar with the local politics and who spoke Turkish and Arabic. Åkerblad arrived shortly after Asp in the fall of 1791.

There was great variety in the Swedish representatives' views of the Turks. When Adlerberg wrote about the Turkish seamen being interviewed by the Kapitan Pasha and how they would talk at length about their experiences in the coffeehouses he expressed – albeit in a mild form – some of the most long-held stereotypes of the inhabitants of the Ottoman empire. The Turks were perceived as somehow lacking in curiosity and not prone to travel, and their government was seen as run by more or less capricious sultans, viziers and military commanders.

Asp did his best to get any available information on the situation in Turkey before his departure from Sweden. He asked the Swedish veteran diplomat Ulric Celsing, who with a few short breaks had lived in Constantinople from 1755 to 1779, to brief him.<sup>44</sup> Celsing underlined the importance of not engaging in close contact with other diplomats, in particular the French, in order to minimize the risk of becoming involved in intrigues that would damage Sweden's reputation at the Porte. He continued by stressing that when officials at the Porte sought advice from Swedish diplomats the memorials translated into Turkish and presented to the Porte should never be signed. This was a way of securing Swedish independence in relation to the factional struggles within the Ottoman government. Celsing also informed the incoming minister that the Turks often remarked on the unsettled nature of western statecraft, especially noting its extraordinary opportunism. The Turks meant that a nation that wanted to uphold a friendship with another nation should continuously show proofs of such friendship.

Sweden had just confirmed the Turks' prejudice by breaking the alliance and Asp knew that the situation was delicate. But instead of complaining about the relationship with the Porte he wrote about the rigid formalities within the European diplomatic community: 'The ceremony visits are an unpleasant business. Everyone agrees on this but never has the Diplomatic Peasant-pride yet managed to abolish them.'<sup>45</sup> He used a Swedish expression (*Bondhögfärd*) to mock excessive or misplaced pride and described the rituals with irony.

If Asp could be accused of using stereotypes when describing his foreign interlocutors it usually occurred in relation to his European colleagues rather than to the Turks.

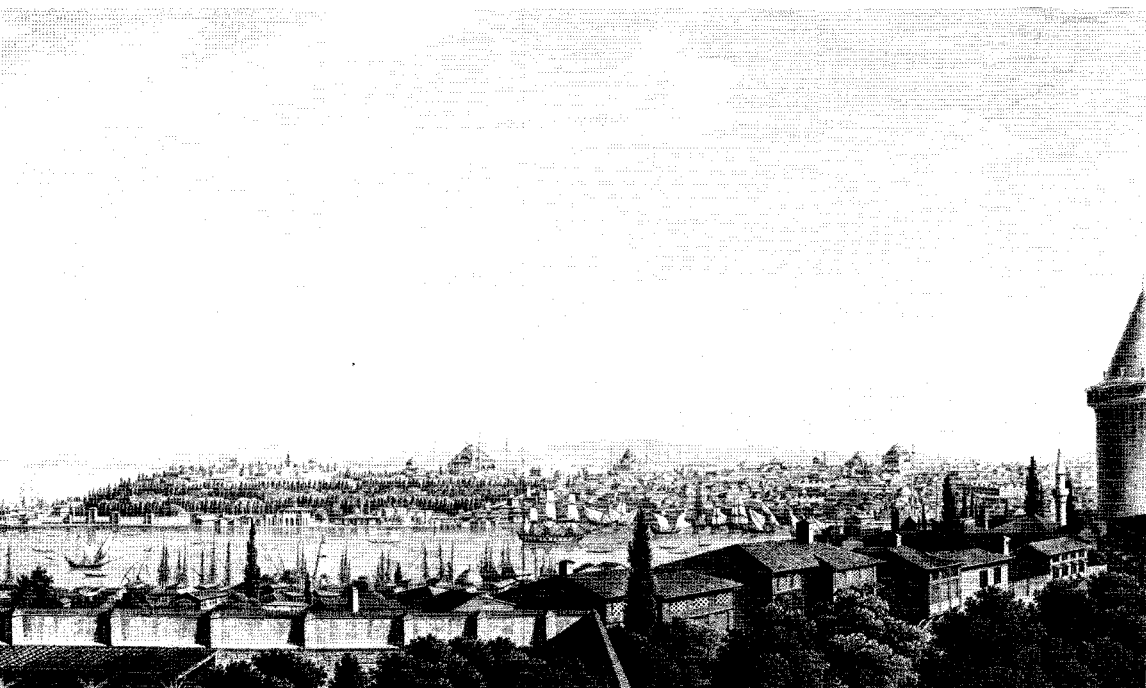
Indeed, when Asp attended his first audience at the Porte in December 1791, he was surprised by the reception he got from the sultan: 'I had been told that etiquette prescribes that the Sultan does not look at the person granted the audience. It was the other way around, he fixed my forehead so insistently that I could not with decency look around in the hall as I had wanted'.<sup>47</sup> The sultan observing Asp was Selim III (reign 1789–1807). Selim was instrumental in initiating reforms that led to major changes in the Ottoman state.<sup>48</sup> After describing his impressions, mostly in positive terms, Asp finished with a comparison between the different manners and rituals:

These are however among events that leave a memory that is not altogether insignificant, as it may serve as a ground for a serious comparison between human ways of living. These ceremonies are interesting for the mix of dignity, splendor, stillness, in addition to the maintenance of ancient and to us Christians so different customs while it is difficult to say with impartiality which is the most right and natural, if at all such a judgment can be applied to such customs.<sup>49</sup>

Asp was reasoning within the framework of ceremonies and their necessity for a state. His comparisons between European and Turkish customs did not usually favour the European rituals.

Asp never seemed to make the error of underestimating his counterpart. Other western diplomats had reached the same conclusions. The British ambassador Sir James Porter (in service 1747–62) wrote: 'There is no Christian power which can vie with the Porte for care and exactitude in the several offices, business is done with the greatest accuracy, in any important document, words are weighed, and that signification constantly selected, which may most conduce to their own advantage.'<sup>50</sup> Porter claimed that the Porte only delivered results when it was in its interest to do so, but in this it was obviously no different than any other nation.

Sweden had lost its privileged relationship with the Porte after breaking the treaty and had to tread carefully. Asp followed Celsing's advice and avoided the French. The new French 'agent' – republican France was not recognized by the Porte and could not be represented by an official ambassador – noted Asp's distant manners with surprise: 'The Swedish legation showed such reserve that



*Asp called Constantinople repugnant but admitted that its geographical situation and beauty surpassed everything he had seen. He wrote that the view from the window of the legation was an antidote to the displeasures of his posting. This view is from upper windows in the Palais de Suède, the Swedish mission's house.<sup>46</sup>*

it would have been suspicious if one did not know the representatives of this power as commendable men.<sup>51</sup>

### Naval co-operation

Many Ottoman officials knew that if the empire was to be able to defend its territories the navy would have to be strengthened and modernised. The battles with Russia during the preceding and present war made the need for reform obvious. Sweden had offered to assist the Turkish navy and sent in several reprises Swedish naval officers, engineers and shipbuilders to

Constantinople. Such a party left Sweden 1790, before the peace treaty with Russia. They arrived in Constantinople when Sweden's breach was known and were received with scorn by the Turkish authorities and were not allowed to do any work.

Sweden was not the only country to offer assistance to the Turks, as France and Britain were also competing to become the Ottoman navy's trusted partner. It was in everybody's interest to prevent the expansion of Russian sea power enabling it to move from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean. Sweden's offer was rejected and even though the French had been invited by Kapitan Pasha they found it difficult to achieve results.<sup>52</sup> The modernisation of the navy was recently described by Tuncay Zorlu from a Turkish viewpoint and it has been summarily treated in Swedish literature.<sup>53</sup> As with many other issues concerning Swedish-Turkish relations there is a great deal of Swedish archival material that remains uninvestigated.

Though the Porte initially rejected Sweden's offers, Turkish officials knew that foreign help was necessary to get the reforms started. The next couple of years Asp and Åkerblad became involved in sensitive negotiations trying to satisfy both the Swedish officers that had recurrent grievances about lack of payment and working conditions, as well as an Ottoman bureaucracy that had justified difficulties in trusting Swedish intentions. Eventually dry-docks and ships – both in Constantinople and on Rhodes – were built with Swedish assistance. There is presently a debate on whether to create a museum at the site of the Ottoman imperial arsenal in the centre of Istanbul, the site where the first dry-dock was built.

Further evidence that Asp followed Celsing's advice is found in a document drafted by Åkerblad. It is a memorial on how to accommodate Swedish officers in Ottoman service. In the text it is made explicit that the Swedish mission should not sign documents negotiating sensitive military matters.<sup>54</sup>

Diplomats tried to restore Sweden's standing in Constantinople but it was an uphill struggle. Stockholm's main objective was to try to extract subsidies from the Ottomans, a somewhat unrealistic goal considering Sweden's earlier behaviour. To this effect a new envoy was appointed. Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson (1740–1807) was an Ottoman subject and came from an Armenian catholic family. He had already worked at the Swedish mission.<sup>55</sup> d'Ohsson is most famous for his great book on the Ottoman empire's culture and history: *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman...*<sup>56</sup>

*Mouradgea d'Ohsson let himself be painted by the most fashionable court painter in Stockholm, Lorens Pasch the younger, probably during a visit in Stockholm in 1790. He is wearing the so-called 'svenska dräkten', the 'Swedish habit'. This was created on the initiative of Gustav III and was meant to become the standard official dress. It was not a success but the fact that Mouradgea let himself be painted in it says something about his aspirations. He is wearing the order of Vasa, instituted by the king in 1772.<sup>57</sup>*



d'Ohsson was extremely knowledgeable about Ottoman history and politics and continuously informed Stockholm about the political situation in Turkey.<sup>58</sup> He eventually managed to extract some money on behalf of the Swedish government. More importantly, in an international perspective, he also became an advisor to Selim III on both civil and military reform. However, the complicated situation in Constantinople was regarded with exasperation in Stockholm. Sweden had more pressing problems closer to home.

### Concluding remarks

We do not know what happened to the Turkish seamen after their return home. Swedish naval officers who arrived in 1795 to train the Ottoman navy certainly complained about lack of discipline and absenteeism: "The crew can only be kept for 8 days at a time ... during war the crews are made up of farm boys that have never seen the sea, and during peace only a fifth of the navy is manned. Sometimes crews demand their freedom at pistol- and knife-point."<sup>59</sup>

The military reforms initiated by Selim III would continue but with mixed results, and it was not until later during the nineteenth century that the great changes in the Ottoman empire would come. Studying the period from a Swedish perspective it is difficult to escape the notion that there was hardly anything Sweden, and for that matter the Ottoman empire, could have done to successfully hinder Russian expansion. Russia continued its push



southwards and fought several wars with the Ottoman empire during the nineteenth century. The Ottomans also gained new enemies in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The next major attack was the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 and by 1830 France had occupied Algeria.

The Swedish diplomatic personnel of the early 1790s did not return to Constantinople. Asp was posted to London and Åkerblad was recalled from Turkey in 1797. Åkerblad was only reemployed in the diplomatic service after the turn of the century, and served then for a few years in The Hague and Paris. His knowledge of the East was no longer of importance for the Swedish government. He left Sweden in 1801 for France and lived in Italy from 1805 until his death in 1819.

After its foray into European politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Sweden withdrew. The loss of Finland forced Sweden to come to terms with its reduced role, although the annexing of Norway in the end games of the Napoleonic wars did offer some consolation. For the rest of the nineteenth century Sweden remained little disturbed by the convulsions of continental Europe and the Mediterranean.<sup>60</sup> Contact with the Ottoman empire was reduced to the necessary. The failed Turco-Swedish relationship in many ways serves as an illustration of Sweden's waning power on the international scene and its final loss of interest in the Mediterranean.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I retain Constantinople for Istanbul as it was the name used in Europe at the time. I sometimes use Turkey for the Ottoman empire, which normally went by this name in Swedish documents.

<sup>2</sup> Åkerblad to Gjörwell, [Stockholm] 11 January [1791], KB [The National Library, Stockholm], Ep G 7:13, no. 4. All translations are mine.

<sup>3</sup> C. C. Gjörwell, *Svenska archivum innehållande handlingar uti Svea rikets historia*, Stockholm 1790–1793, vol. 1, p. 317.

<sup>4</sup> Åkerblad to Johan Albrekt (Albert) Ehrenström, Finland 10 September 1789, UUB [Uppsala University Library], X 241, Åkerblad.

<sup>5</sup> Detail from a map of the campaign of 1789. UUB, *Charta öfver 1789 års fälttog i Finland. af Roos*. Courtesy of UUB.

<sup>6</sup> Åkerblad to Ulric Gustaf Franc, Kymmenegård 21 August 1789, RA [The National Archives, Stockholm], Kabinettet, UD, Huvudarkivet, E 1 A, Inkomna skrivelser (Skr till Franc), vol 26.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Colley, *Captives. Britain, empire and the world, 1600–1850*, London 2002; idem, *The ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: a woman in world history*, London 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Marcus Berg, *Beskrifning öfver barbariska slafweriet uti kejsaredömet Fez och Marocco...*, Stockholm 1757, repr. 1961, 1993, in French 1974.

<sup>9</sup> Þorsteinn Helgason, 'Historical narrative as collective therapy: The case of the Turkish raid in Iceland', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 22, 4 (1997), pp. 275–89.

<sup>10</sup> Eskil Olán, *Sjörövarna på Medelhavet och Levantiska kompaniet: historien om Sveriges gamla handel med Orienten*, Stockholm 1921, p. 107 ff.

<sup>11</sup> For an account of the last such expedition see: 'Korvetten *Carlskronas* resa till Medelhavet 1844–45. Premiärlöjtnant Govert Indebetous dagboksanteckningar sammanställda av Otto von Ficandt', *Forum navale*, 65 (2009), pp. 7–61.

<sup>12</sup> Hans Chr. Bjerg, 'Denmark and the Barbary States, 1745–1845', in *The Arabian journey: Danish connections with the Islamic world over a thousand years*, eds., Kjeld von Folsach et al., Århus 1996, pp. 77–87, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier, 25 January 1788, quoted in Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1911, p. 279.

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Davis, *Christian slaves, Muslim masters: white slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800*, New York 2003, p. 23 ff; see also: Giles Milton, *White gold: the extraordinary story of Thomas Pellow and North Africa's one million European slaves*, London 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Useful and updated French and Italian surveys are: Daniel Panzac, *Les corsaires barbaresques: la fin d'une épopée, 1800–1820*, Paris 1999; Salvatore Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo: cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio*, Milan 1997.

<sup>16</sup> In Swedish see for example Dick Harrison's trilogy: *Slaveri: en världshistoria om ofrihet*, 3 vols., Stockholm 2006–8.

<sup>17</sup> Eskil Borg's book on Swedish relations with Tripoli is a good example: *Svenska konsuler och slavar i Barbareskkaparnas Tripoli: en studie i makt, girighet, våld och förtryck*, Lund 1987.

<sup>18</sup> Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi musulmani nell'Italia moderna: galeotti, vu' cumpra, domestici*, Naples 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the world around it*, London, New York, 2004, p. 119 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier, M.-G.-F.-A., *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce...*, vol. 1, 1782; vol. 2, 1809 and 1812; vol. 3, 1822, Paris; 1822, pl. 85.

<sup>21</sup> Åkerblad to Gjörwell, Constantinople 28 December 1787, KB, Ep G 7:17, no. 105.

<sup>22</sup> Åkerblad to Gjörwell, Marseille [1 March 1789], KB, Ep G 7:13, no. 5. The letter is undated, when Gjörwell published extracts from it he dated it 1 March.

<sup>23</sup> Gustaf Erik Lundstedt, *Anteckningar öfver Egyptens handel och dess näringars tillstånd; jemte reflexioner öfver nordiska handeln med Egypten. Åren 1822, 1823 och 1824*, Stockholm 1825, p. 99.

<sup>24</sup> Åkerblad to Gjörwell, Marseille [1 March 1789], KB, Ep G 7:13, no. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Olof Jägerskiöld, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia. II:2, 1721–1792*, Stockholm 1957, p. 301 ff.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel Panzac, *La peste dans l'empire ottoman 1700–1850*, Leuven 1985, p. 608.

<sup>27</sup> Johan Henrik Kreüger, *Sveriges förhållanden till barbaresk staterna i Afrika*, 2 vols., Stockholm 1856, vol. 1, p. 397; Johan Axel Almquist, *Kommerskollegium och Riksens Ständers Manufakturkontor samt konsulsstaten 1651–1910: administrativa och biografiska anteckningar*, Stockholm 1912–1915, pp. 388, 626.

<sup>28</sup> Åkerblad to Gjörwell, Marseille [1 March 1789], KB, Ep G 7:13, no. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier 1782, p. xiii. His introduction to the *Voyage Pittoresque...* was highly disparaging of the Ottomans. When he was appointed ambassador to Constantinople he re-wrote it and tried to have all copies changed. He was not entirely successful and rare copies still have the first unaltered introduction, e.g. one of the copies in KB, shelf mark: 182 E 40.

<sup>31</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier, 1822, pl. 96.

<sup>32</sup> Antoine Baudoin Gisbet de Dedem, *Un général hollandais sous le premier empire. Mémoires du général B:on de Dedem de Gelder 1774–1825*, Paris 1900, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> Åkerblad to Gjörwell, [Stockholm] 11 January [1791], KB, Ep G 7:13, no. 4.

<sup>34</sup> UUB, *Charta öfver 1789 års fälttog i Finland. af Roos*. Courtesy of UUB.

<sup>35</sup> Ehrenström to Franc, Borgå 20 April 1790, RA, Kabinettet, UD, Huvudarkivet, E 1 A: Inkomna skrivelser (Skr till Franc), vol 24.

<sup>36</sup> Andreas Bode, *Die Flottenpolitik Katharinas II und die Konflikte mit Schweden und der Türkei (1768–1792)*, Munich 1979, see esp. pp. 113 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Alfred E. Jansson, *Dalarö*, Stockholm 1966, p. 117 ff.

<sup>38</sup> RA, Kommerskollegium, Algeriska sjöpass 1790.

<sup>39</sup> Carl Gustaf Adlerberg to Franc, Constantinople, 15 May 1791, RA, Turcica 77.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> For the expedition's fate in Tunis see Kreüger 1856, vol. 1., p. 365 f.

<sup>42</sup> Adlerberg to Franc, Constantinople, 15 May 1791, RA, Turcica 77.

<sup>43</sup> Adlerberg to Franc, Constantinople, 8 July 1791, RA, Turcica 77.

<sup>44</sup> Ulric Celsing, Kl. Env:s Ulric v: Celsings svar å de af v: Asp honom skriftel. tillställda frågor rörde Swänska Beskickningen vid Porten, December 1790, UUB, F 616 b; *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 8, p. 228.

<sup>45</sup> Asp to Franc, Constantinople, 25 November 1791, RA, Turcica 78. See also Bengt O.H. Johansson, *Svenska Palatset i Konstantinopel: Sveriges kyrka och ministerhus i Konstantinopel under sjutton- och adertonhundratalet*, Stockholm 1968, pp. 42–4.

<sup>46</sup> A. I. Melling, *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore d'après les dessins de M. Melling*, Paris 1809–1819, pl. 9. Courtesy of UUB.

<sup>47</sup> Asp's dispatch, 24 December 1791, RA, Diplomatica, Turcica 78.

<sup>48</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *Between old and new: the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789–1807*, Cambridge, MA. 1971.

<sup>49</sup> Asp's dispatch, 24 December 1791, RA, Diplomatica, Turcica 78.

<sup>50</sup> George Larpent, *Turkey; Its History and Progress: from the Journals and Correspondence of Sir James Porter*, 2 vols., London 1854, vol. 1, p. 268.

<sup>51</sup> Descorches to the commissaire des Relations extérieures, 5 frimaire an III/25 November 1794, quoted in E. de Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople: la politique orientale de la Révolution française*, 2 vols., Paris 1927, vol. 2, pp. 76–7.

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Pinon, 'Un épisode de la réception des progrès techniques à Constantinople: l'échec de la mission Ferregeau, ingénieur des Ponts-et-Chaussées (1796–1799)', in *Varia Turcica*, XVI, 1990, Istanbul-Paris, pp. 71–83.

<sup>53</sup> Tuncay Zorlu, *Innovation and Empire in Turkey: Selim III and the Modernization of the Ottoman Navy*, London 2008, on Sweden esp. pp. 90–93; T.J. Arne, *Svenskarna och Österlandet*, Stockholm 1952, pp. 92–103; Daniel Panzac, *La marine ottomane: de l'apogée à la chute de l'Empire, 1572–1923*, Paris 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Asp (?), Åkerblad's handwriting, Observations le 19 Janv. 1793, UUB, F 812 b.

<sup>55</sup> For information on d'Ohsson's very particular career see various contributions in Sture Theolin, ed., *The torch of the empire: Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson and the Tableau général of the Ottoman empire in the eighteenth century*, Istanbul 2002; the article in *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon* mainly situates him in the Swedish context.

<sup>56</sup> d'Ohsson, Ignatius Mouradgea, *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman...*, 3 vols., Paris 1787–1824.

<sup>57</sup> Private collection. Photo courtesy Sture Theolin.

<sup>58</sup> The Romanian historian Veniamin Ciobanu has published a large amount of d'Ohsson's and other diplomats' correspondence from especially the 1790s. Veniamin Ciobanu et al., eds., *Europe and the Porte: New Documents on the Eastern Question*. So far 6 volumes have appeared 2001–2008, all published in Iași.

<sup>59</sup> Arne 1952, p. 99.

<sup>60</sup> Sweden sent a ship to Turkish waters in 1877–78 to protect Swedish shipping and support Swedish diplomacy during one of the Russo–Turkish wars of the nineteenth century. Per Insulander, *Uppdrag Gyllene hornet: svensk kanonbåt till Turkiet i orostid*, Stockholm 2009, Forum navales skriftserie 32.