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Letter from the Editors

The Spring 2023 edition of the *Undergraduate Journal of History* is now available, and our team is thrilled to share it with readers. We take pride in offering a platform for undergraduate students to showcase their historical research and encourage open discussions, intellectual debates, and curiosity. Our gratitude goes to the six authors who contributed to this volume and to the faculty and graduate student peer reviewers who made it possible. This latest issue covers various periods and diverse topics to illuminate lesser-known stories and provide fresh historical perspectives. Our undergraduate editors extend a warm welcome to both new and returning readers.

We start this issue with Olivia Bauer's article on Queen Elizabeth I and an examination of her diplomatic relationships with the leaders of the Sa'adian Sultanate of Morocco, the Ottoman Empire, and Safavid Persia, which allowed her to establish trading companies and expand Britain's empire. While the history of English foreign policy towards the Islamic world has often been associated with exploitative enterprises and violent warfare, the author argues that Elizabeth I's relationships with Muslim rulers were founded on diplomatic and peaceful means and explored the politics, gender, and religious factors that contributed to this diplomatic success.

Adrian Hammer's article, "Manufacturing Murder," provides a nuanced examination of the evolution of mass murder methods from 1933 to 1945, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of what happened, why it happened, and who it happened to, all to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future. Hammer discussed the significance of memorializing the severity of such atrocity. "The linear teaching of the history of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust," Hammer writes, "fails to fully capture the extent of the crimes committed and the deranged mindset of those responsible."

Victoria Korotchenko's essay explores the role of children during the French Revolution and how they actively participated in the events of the time, including joining mobs, petitioning legislators, and fighting in wars. Korotchenko writes that, while most scholarship focuses on the perspectives of grown men and women who participated in the French Revolution, "the sweeping changes, violence, and warfare impacted those who had no choice but to grow up during this tumultuous decade." This essay highlights children's curiosity and active nature during this unstable time.

Alyssa Medin's article deciphering Sor Juana as a "proto-feminist figure" in history. Medin examines three questions related to Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz's work: whether her work was published without her consent, was submissive or subversive, and if it can be considered "proto-feminist theology." Medin categorizes Sor Juana's contributions to theology into three areas: a promotion of intellectual pursuits

for women theologians, an aesthetic theological claim, and a pneumatological argument for deepening personal relationships with God through the Spirit.

O’Gorman’s work focuses on the Christian religion and military upheavals in late medieval Europe. He argues that losing Christian positions in the Middle East after the Fall of Acre in 1290 led military orders to reevaluate their identities. Many returned to their non-militaristic origins or expanded their crusading ideals into new regions. By comparing the founding stories and rules of military orders with their actions after 1290, Gorman demonstrated how the rules of military orders, including the Teutonic and Hospitaller Orders, also emphasized their hospital care in addition to their military actions.

Susan Samardjian retrospects upon how the post-war Vietnamese regime under communism in 1975 faced setbacks that disrupted both the nation’s stability and that of neighboring countries concludes our issue. Samardjian argued these setbacks contributed to an already deteriorating economy and formed the communist leaders to reevaluate their attitude toward their neighbors. In response, the communist government implemented domestic and foreign policy reforms to encourage bilateral trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and eventually normalized relations with the US, which had imposed sanctions on Vietnam, leading to economic investment opportunities.

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**Conditions for Successful Relations:
Elizabeth I's Foreign Policy Towards Muslim Rulers**

*Olivia Bauer*¹

The history of English relations with Muslim states is dominated by scholarship on the British East India Company and exploitation. However, the foundation of this pernicious relationship is lesser known. This paper expands on the existing literature exploring Queen Elizabeth I's relationships with Muslim rulers by focusing on the contexts of Safavid Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Sa'adian Sultanate in Morocco by considering the motivations of their respective rulers. Elizabeth I famously chartered the British East India Company, defended England successfully against the Spanish, reinstated and fortified Protestantism in England, and created a strong foundation for England to become a global trading superpower. The companies she chartered also included the Levant Company in the Ottoman Empire, the Barbary Company in Morocco, and the Muscovy Company in Russia (which traveled through and traded with Persia to a limited extent), all of which offer a different view of Britain's economic relationship with the Islamic world. While the East India Company represented British domination, "the Levant Company never seriously considered confronting Ottoman rule."² In this initial economic relationship, British diplomats and merchants defied Ottoman authority. Additionally, the creation of the Barbary Company marked the beginning of an involved relationship between England and the Sa'adian Sultanate which produced crucial economic and political benefits for England.³ Elizabeth I's diplomatic relationships with Muslim rulers during her reign were vital to achieving these ends. Productive relations between Elizabeth I and Muslim rulers were possible due to the Spanish threat to England, Elizabeth's style of foreign policy and use of gender norms, and coinciding political interests.

To explain these relationships and the factors that facilitated them, this paper begins by explaining the religious context of sixteenth-century England. The following passage explores the tension between Spain and England and the requirements that this conflict created for Elizabeth I. The following section explains the characteristics of Elizabethan foreign policy and how these features facilitated and hindered close political and successful economic relationships with Muslim states. Once the context has been established, this paper will compare three cases of Elizabeth I's relations with Muslim rulers: Shah Tahmasp of Safavid Persia, Sultan Murad III of the Ottoman Empire, and Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur of the Sa'adian Sultanate in present-day Morocco. These cases represent three

¹ Olivia Bauer graduated from the University of Georgia in 2022 with degrees in History and International Affairs. Her historical interests lie at the cross-section of these two disciplines.

² James Mather, "The Turkey Merchants." *History Today*, 61, no 5 (2011): p. 28.

³ Mather, "The Turkey Merchants," p. 32.

diverging interests of different Muslim rulers at the time. Shah Tahmasp was the first Muslim ruler Elizabeth attempted to build relations with, and her initial failure illustrates important lessons she implemented going forward. The case of Sultan Murad III and his court presents a much more successful case in which Elizabeth could leverage their shared disdain for Catholicism to curry favor. She also capitalized on traditional gender norms, which stipulated that powerful women in the Ottoman court could only correspond with other women, giving Elizabeth another avenue of influence. Elizabeth's relationship with Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur demonstrates the culmination of her endeavors with non-Christian rulers. She exhibited considerable savviness, but al-Mansur's ambition and Elizabeth's caution prevented their relationship from reaching its potential.

Protestantism in England

In 1570, Pope Pius V ex-communicated Elizabeth I for heresy and the persecution of Catholics in England.⁴ In his papal bull published on February 25, 1570, Pius V wrote that “we... declare the aforesaid Elizabeth to be a heretic and favourer of heretics, and her adherents in the matters aforesaid to have incurred the sentence of ex-communication and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ.”⁵ This entailed limited commercial access to ports and cities in Catholic Europe, so Elizabeth began to feel domestic pressure to bypass Spanish and Venetian middlemen to trade directly with non-European states.⁶ Official association with the Ottomans was prohibited under Papal decree, but a relationship with the Ottoman Empire and other Muslim nations was now necessary.⁷ Before ex-communication, she had tried not to disrupt Catholic interests in the East. However, the constraints placed on English merchants and the success of initial ventures in Russia, Persia, and Morocco before 1570 pushed her to take a more anti-Catholic stance.⁸ Elizabeth launched expeditions that reached as far east as China. She became more successful than any other European monarch in widening her diplomatic network, expanding geopolitical influence, and developing commercial opportunities.⁹

Before Elizabeth's rule, English people on their remote island viewed Muslims through the lens of archaic stories and images of holy wars. However, Elizabeth could negotiate with Muslim rulers despite their religious differences partly because of commonalities between Protestantism and Islam.¹⁰ The primary similarity was mutual disdain for Catholics. Muslim leaders could use the division within

⁴ Jerry Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, (New York: Viking, 2016), p. 3.

⁵ Papal Encyclicals, “Regnans in Excelsis.”

⁶ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 3.

⁷ Matthew Dimmock, *Cultural Encounters*, (Cambridge: 2005), p. 43.

⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 61.

⁹ Carlos Bajetta, Guillaume Coatalen, and Jonathon Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 211.

¹⁰ The Crusades took place centuries before Elizabeth I's rule with European military expeditions that occurred in the 11th-13th centuries.

Christian Europe to their advantage and further weaken the continent. Elizabeth was able to utilize this to achieve commercial benefits and strengthen her kingdom's economic and military base. Regarding beliefs and practices, Anglican Protestantism was founded on equality and asceticism, with an aversion to Catholic iconography, opulence, and hierarchy. These ideas align with Islamic ideas about equality and iconography more closely than Catholic beliefs. The Quran outlines absolute equality among men, and at Islam's inception, Muslims removed idols from the Kaaba in Mecca, giving iconoclasm great symbolic value. Additionally, Elizabeth could depict Protestantism as strictly monotheistic, like Islam, in contrast to Catholicism and its many saints.¹¹ Elizabeth could appeal to these shared values in her diplomatic exchanges successfully.

Competition with Spain

At the same time, Spain had become massively wealthy from its incoming flow of silver from colonies in the Americas.¹² Spanish imperial power and wealth forced Elizabeth to search for commercial opportunities abroad to avoid being overpowered.¹³ Spanish dominance was especially threatening to England because of its geographical proximity and King Philip II's Catholic zeal.¹⁴ After Elizabeth refused the French Duke of Anjou's marriage proposal, tensions escalated between England and Catholic Europe and increased England's need for allies.¹⁵

English competition with Spain motivated Anglo-Ottoman relations.¹⁶ Spain's commercial success helped them "in their holy wars against the enemies of Roman Catholicism—be they Protestant or Muslim."¹⁷ Spain was part of the European league, engaging the Ottoman Empire in war from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. It provided other countries with some protection from the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.¹⁸ Still, the Mediterranean belonged to the Ottomans, who regularly ravaged trade routes and coasts in Western Mediterranean, so commercial success depended on trade deals with them.¹⁹ To keep pace with the vast wealth Spain had produced in the past six decades, as well as the colonial and commercial ventures of its other neighbors, England had to conduct exploration,

¹¹ Bernadette Andrea, *The Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World in Early Modern British Literature and Culture*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p. 45.

¹² Gerald Maclean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1588-1713*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 50.

¹³ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 50.

¹⁴ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. 189.

¹⁵ Nabil Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 no 1 (2008): p. 59.

¹⁶ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 77.

¹⁷ Susan Ronald, *Heretic Queen*, (London: Lume Books, 2011), p. 125.

¹⁸ Ronald, *The Heretic Queen*, p. 54.

¹⁹ David Quinn and A.N. Ryan, *England's Sea Empire*, (Oxford: Routledge, 1983), p. 92.

construct alliances, and create new commercial ties of its own, prompting relations with the Ottomans.²⁰ The Ottoman threat gave Philip II leverage in Rome as a justification for a crusade against Jews, Moors, Turks, and breakaway sects of Christianity, including the English church.²¹ Additionally, England exported war-related materials such as tin, lead, and strong cloth used for uniforms to the Ottoman Empire, inciting Catholic hostility.²²

The military threat of Spain also motivated Elizabeth to ally with Morocco. This alliance would be geographically important, as Morocco neighbored Spain to the south, but additionally, Moroccan military and economic prowess would benefit English defense. When Philip II annexed Portugal, the Portuguese Prince Don Antonio fled to England, and Elizabeth's need for a Moroccan alliance increased. Al-Fishtali, al-Mansur's court scribe, wrote, "she [Elizabeth I] rolled up her sleeves to help him [Don Antonio]. Nevertheless, she realized that she could only rebuild what had been destroyed, and repair what had been damaged, with the help of the Prince of the Faithful, al-Mansur, who extended his support from across the sea."²³ In England, Lord Burghley, one of the chief advisors to Elizabeth, voiced that an alliance with Morocco would "serve your Majesty."²⁴ Al-Mansur also needed an ally because he was threatened by Spain to the North, in addition to the Ottomans to the East. Murad III intimidated al-Mansur in the same way that Philip II intimidated Elizabeth.²⁵ Apprehension over Spain's growing military power spurred an English commercial and military alliance with Morocco and the Ottoman Empire.²⁶

Philip II was known as "the most Christian king," and his devout Catholicism drove him to oppose Protestant and Muslim expansion fiercely. However, his relations with non-Western rulers were much less successful than Elizabeth's. He sent peaceful diplomatic missions to China and Japan in the early 1580s, but his relations with Near Eastern Muslim kingdoms were limited to conflict.²⁷ Elizabeth's lack of Catholic devotion and mind for diplomacy gave her an advantage in the search for foreign alliances but also left England vulnerable to security threats from Spain.

Elizabeth's Foreign Policy

Elizabeth was more interested in diplomatic and commercial ties for fortification than territorial or ideological expansion throughout her reign. She was prudent with her military decisions, tending to act

²⁰ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson. *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence*, pp. 209-212.

²¹ Ronald, *Heretic Queen*, p. 56.

²² Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

²³ Abu Faris 'Abd al-Aziz al-Fishtali, *Manabil al-safa'*, (Rabat, 1972), p. 101.

²⁴ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes." p. 59.

²⁵ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 59.

²⁶ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 50.

²⁷ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson. *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence*, pp. 209-212.

more defensively than offensively. This was in contrast to leaders such as Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur, who had ambitions to expand his kingdom and colonize the new world. Elizabeth was only interested in defeating Spain in the European theater.²⁸ Unlike al-Mansur, she peacefully inherited her kingdom, never left her island during her reign, and did not aggressively pursue empire.²⁹

Despite lacking military fervor, she expanded the power and influence of her kingdom diplomatically and economically. England's relationship with Spain and Catholic states deteriorated during her rule. However, she initiated relations with the Tsar of Russia, the Sultan of Morocco, the Ottoman Sultan, the Shah of Persia, the Ming Emperor of China, and the Mughal Emperor. Her father, King Henry VIII, had stated that "this realm of England is an Empire." However, he intended to claim religious dominion over this land and authority, which superseded the Pope.³⁰ Elizabeth laid the groundwork for the era of British expansionism, although initially motivated by national defense.³¹ She became the first English monarch to pursue long-term diplomatic relationships with non-Christian rulers through strategic epistolary communications.³² She communicated intimately and personally in her letters to nearby European monarchs, such as James VI of Scotland and Henry IV of France: to appeal to the idea of European family ties, she referred to them as "brother," "sister," or "cousin."

Conversely, in her letters to Muslim rulers, she employed the rhetorical tradition of bestowing high titles upon recipients at the beginning of letters. She wrote on the finest parchment with the most valuable ink. These letters were decorated ornately and accompanied by special gifts to achieve the impression of grandeur and importance.³³ Such grandiosity was culturally significant in an Islamic court and necessary for demonstrating respect. The strategy was successful, as the titles bestowed upon Elizabeth in letters she received from al-Mansur and Murad III were similar to the titles they used in their correspondence with the Sultan of Mecca, showing their respect for her as a ruler.³⁴ Towards the end of their reigns, Elizabeth attempted to apply the same family labels used with European monarchs with al-Mansur as well, but these titles were never reciprocated. Elizabeth also flattered the recipients of her letters by delivering them through important messengers, such as high ambassadors.³⁵ These messengers could also convey particularly sensitive information, which expressed the relationship's value

²⁸ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 58.

²⁹ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes." p. 56.

³⁰ "Act in Restraint of Appeals, 1533 (24 Henry VII, c. 12) in Gerald Bray, *Documents of English Reformation*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 78-83; Bernadette Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 7.

³¹ Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 8.

³² Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. 211.

³³ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. 212.

³⁴ al-Fishtali, *Manahil al-safa'*, p. 187.

³⁵ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, pp. 212-213.

and the message's importance.³⁶ Her strategy of non-offensive foreign policy and acquired knowledge of Islamic cultural nuances contributed to the success of her relationships with Muslim rulers.

Interests and Personalities of Persian, Ottoman, and Moroccan Leaders

Elizabeth I could establish relations with Muslim rulers only if they had coinciding interests. Her specialized effort made her more successful than any other pre-modern English monarch at creating beneficial diplomatic relations with non-European rulers. However, not all of the attempts that she made were successful.

Safavid Persia

The success of initial trade ventures outside of Europe led Elizabeth to push further into Asia, sending envoys to Russia, Persia, and China.³⁷ The first English embassy to attempt to establish trade with Safavid Persia occurred in 1562 when explorer Anthony Jenkinson presented himself in Shah Tahmasp's court on behalf of the Muscovy Company.³⁸ The letter he presented to Shah Tahmasp was Elizabeth's first letter to a Muslim ruler, and her lack of understanding of the region showed.³⁹ She began, "Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England&c. To the right mighty and right victorious Prince, the great Sophy, Emperor of the Persians, Medes, Parthians, Hyrcanes, Carmanarians, Margians, of the people on this side, and beyond the river of Tigris, and of all men, and nations, between the Caspian sea, and the gulf of Persia, greeting."⁴⁰ The dominion she described is the Achaemenid Empire of Cyrus the Great, who ruled in the sixth century, conquered Babylon and freed the Jews— an important chapter in Christian history but irrelevant to the current Shah.⁴¹ Her letter also lacked the Islamic cultural norm of grandiosity, which she would learn was necessary to communicate with Muslim leaders effectively. In addition, she mentioned herself after she addressed the Shah, which was a cultural taboo with injurious effect because it implied that her power superseded his.⁴² Besides the fact that the letter was weak, Jenkinson also arrived at an inopportune time. The Persian and Ottoman empires had been at war on and off since the Safavid state emerged under Ismail in the early sixteenth century, but only four days before Jenkinson reached the Safavid capital of Qazvin, a Turkish ambassador had arrived to

³⁶ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. xxi.

³⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 33.

³⁸ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 64.

³⁹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 45.

⁴⁰ Edward Morgan and Charles Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen*, (London: 1886), pp. 112-113.

⁴¹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 45-46.

⁴² Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations: Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, (London: 1589), p. 362.

negotiate peace between the Shah and the Sultan.⁴³ Shah Tamasp did not want to do anything that could endanger the fledgling peace with the Ottomans.

In 1553 at only twenty-four years old, Jenkinson successfully encountered Sultan Suleiman I of the Ottoman Empire (also known as Suleiman the Magnificent), from whom he secured limited trading privileges. However, his eloquence was ineffective on Shah Tahmasp.⁴⁴ Tahmasp was offended by the letters being in Latin, Hebrew, and Italian— languages he did not understand— and he had never heard of England.⁴⁵ Elizabeth's request for free trade would have jeopardized the fragile peace with the Ottomans, so Tahmasp berated Jenkinson and cast him away, saying (according to Jenkinson's account) that "we have no need to have friendship with the unbelievers."⁴⁶ Tahmasp's advisers convinced him not to kill Jenkinson because it would be bad for trade if foreigners were afraid to come to the country. Tahmasp was indifferent enough about England to accede to their recommendation.⁴⁷

Because of the political and economic situation between the Persian and Ottoman empires, Tahmasp was not interested in trade with England or a diplomatic relationship with Elizabeth, so the religious differences between Christianity and Islam were suddenly perceived as insurmountable. Thanks to the recent political agreement between Suleiman the Magnificent and Tahmasp, the Sunni Ottomans and Shi'a Safavids overcame their religious divide to block English trade in Persia.⁴⁸ In this situation, being a Protestant was not an advantage because Persia was not in conflict with the Catholic world, and they had no interest in involving themselves in European politics. Religious strife between Elizabeth and Muslim rulers only occurred in the absence of mutual profit. Only four years later, after the death of Suleiman the Magnificent tempered the Ottoman Empire's threat to Safavid Persia, a merchant for the Muscovy Company named Arthur Edwards was welcomed in Shah Tahmasp's court and secured trading privileges for English merchants.⁴⁹

Ottoman Empire

England experienced a stroke of luck in 1553 under Queen Mary I when Anthony Jenkinson negotiated special trading privileges with Suleiman the Magnificent.⁵⁰ However, Suleiman died in 1566, and Ottoman Sultan Selim II succeeded him. However, his wife, Nurbanu Sultan and the Grand Vizier

⁴³ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 50.

⁴⁶ Anthony Jenkinson in Morgan and Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, pp. 147-148.

⁴⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 44.

⁴⁹ Morgan and Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, pp. 393-402.

⁵⁰ Matthew Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism: England, China, and the Rainbow Portrait*, (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2019), p. 155.

Sokollu Mehmed Pasha held much power over state affairs.⁵¹ Elizabeth I never attempted to communicate with Selim II because England had no leverage to create a commercial relationship with the Ottoman Empire, trade outside of Europe was not yet necessary for England, and the Ottoman ruler was more interested in conquest and defense than in diplomacy. Selim II was busy fighting Russian aggression to the North, expanding into the Arabian Peninsula, and fighting the Holy League of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire in the Mediterranean. The Ottomans were also still viewed as mortal enemies by most of Europe. Even after ex-communication, English Christians united with Catholic Europeans to celebrate the historic victory over the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the first European victory over the Ottomans in a century.⁵²

Three years later, in 1574, Selim II died and was succeeded by his and Nurbanu's son, Murad III. Murad III was insular and fickle, leaving the palace with unprecedented infrequency and never leaving Constantinople during his entire reign.⁵³ Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's head of intelligence and spymaster, decided in the wake of the ex-communication four years before recommending that "some apte man be sent with her Majesties letters unto the Turk to procure an ample safe conducte."⁵⁴ England needed trading partners, and they could not safely trade in the Mediterranean without permission from the Ottoman Sultan. Elizabeth decided that the time was right for the inception of strategic ties with the Ottoman Empire. After Shah Tahmasp, the ruler of Safavid Persia, died in 1574, the Ottoman Empire declared war on Persia, creating an opportunity to trade for English cloth and guns.⁵⁵ William Harborne was chosen to travel to the Ottoman court to request commercial privileges for England superior to other European nations in 1579.⁵⁶ He achieved this by delivering a petition to Sokollu Mehmed.⁵⁷ Protocol demanded that petitions be submitted to the sultan, so a petition being delivered to the Grand Vizier in private was an uncommon and inappropriate occurrence. After allegedly bribing the Grand Vizier with three robes of fine English cloth, William Harborne obtained the safe-conduct agreements, allowing English traders to conduct business with the Ottomans. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha directed the Chancellor to write a letter for Harborne to bring to Elizabeth.⁵⁸ According to a report from Imperial Ambassador von Sizendorff from the Holy Roman Empire, he told the

⁵¹ Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 91.

⁵² Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

⁵³ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

⁵⁴ "Memorandum on the Turkey trade, by Sir Francis Walsingham(?). 1578(?)." in Susan Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 29.

⁵⁵ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

⁵⁶ Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

Chancellor, “of course, write the letter, because they are Lutherans, and good people!”⁵⁹ This suggests that the petition and/or Harborne’s arguments regarding the shared ideals of Protestants and Muslims were effective. These shared ideals included religious values and their shared animosity for Catholic Europe. In the letter Elizabeth received in September 1579, Murad granted protections to English merchants and wrote, “Let not your love and friendship be lacking [and] may your agents and your merchants never cease from coming.”⁶⁰ In addition to Sokollu Mehmed breaking custom, the Imperial Interpreter Mustafa Beg sent a letter directly to Elizabeth asking for her friendship, a remarkably uncommon occurrence. He wrote that “Willhelmus Harhrounus” requested a trade license from him, and in his discussion with the sultan, he decided to

Encourage some kind of understanding and friendship between our Most Royal Majesty and your Sacred Royal Majesty [who] hold[s] the most Christian faith among all people.... I considered it to be beneficial for your Sacred Royal Majesty to be able to establish understanding with so great and so powerful an Emperor, with whom almost all princes and kings, of their own free will, wish to be closely allied.⁶¹

Fortunately for England, Murad and his court prioritized diplomatic relations in a way that their recent predecessor did not. Due to the war between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League, Murad sought to divide Christians along Protestant-Catholic lines further, prompting him to flatter her faith as “the most Christian.” In addition to requesting Elizabeth’s friendship, Murad had sent letters in 1574 to “the members of the Lutheran sect in Flanders and Spain,” commending them for banishing “idols and portraits and ‘bells’ from churches.”⁶² Murad also needed cloth and guns for the ongoing war effort to the east against Persia, which England could provide. Elizabeth responded within a month, taking advantage of the Ottoman desire to divide Europe by appealing to the similarities between Protestantism and Islam.⁶³ She introduced herself as “Elizabeth by the grace of the most mightie God, the onely Creatour of heaven and earth, of England, France and Ireland Queen, the most invincible and most mightie defender of the Christian faith against all kinde of idolatries, of all that live among the

⁵⁹ “Translation of part of the Imperial ambassador in Constantinople Joachim von Sizendorff’s report of 21 and 24 March 1579 to Rudolf II” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, pp. 62-64.

⁶⁰ “Translation of the Registry copy of Sultan Murād III’s command to Queen Elizabeth I, promising security by land and sea to all English agents and merchants trading in the Ottoman domains, and requesting her friendship in return. [Constantinople, 8 Muharram 987/7 March 1579],” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 48.

⁶¹ “Translation of the Imperial interpreter Mustafā Beg’s letter to Queen Elizabeth I. Constantinople, 15 March 1579,” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 59.

⁶² Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 37.

⁶³ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 46.

Christians, and falslie professe the name of Christ.”⁶⁴ Including France and Ireland in her domain was a stretch at best, but to achieve amicable and profitable relations, she needed to appear as grand as possible. She also emphasized her monotheistic faith and her disdain for idolatry to curry favor with Muslim readers. Elizabeth’s prohibition from trading with Catholic Europe, Murad’s war with Persia, and challenges from Spain and the Holy Roman Empire created conditions for an advantageous relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire, a stroke of luck for the small, remote, relatively resourceless isle. This exchange began a seventeen-year epistolary relationship between Murad and Elizabeth.⁶⁵

Furthermore, Elizabeth’s gender gave her an advantage over other European monarchs in her diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. The period of 1520-1640 is considered to be a distinct era in Ottoman history in which the sultan’s favorite members of the harem and his mother had significant influence over the Empire. However, cultural conventions prevented the sultanas from corresponding with male rulers.⁶⁶ Nurbanu, Sultan Murad III’s mother, and Safiye, Murad’s chief consort, continued to wield enormous influence on Murad’s decisions, in addition to the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed.⁶⁷ Eventually, Nurbanu had Sokollu Mehmed assassinated, and Safiye’s influence expanded as her son Mehmed III was the heir apparent, and Murad III grew closer to death.⁶⁸ Elizabeth wrote an ornate letter to Safiye and sent extravagant gifts of jewels, clothing, perfume, portraits, and plates, which Safiye replied to in late 1593.⁶⁹ She expressed her gratitude, writing,

While striving for that illustrious princess's and honoured lady's salvation and Her success in Her desires, I can repeatedly mention Her Highness's gentility and praise at the footdust of His Majesty, the fortunate and felicitous Padishah, the Lord of the fortunate conjunction and the sovereign who has Alexander's place, and I shall endeavour for Her aims.⁷⁰

After Murad died in 1595 and Mehmed’s ascension to the throne, Safiye’s power grew further as she became the *Valide Sultan*, the legal position held by the ruling sultan’s mother, which was created

⁶⁴ “Hakluyt’s translation of the letter, in Latin, from Queen Elizabeth I to Sultan Murād III. Greenwich, 25 October 1579,” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 89.

⁶⁶ Lisa Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves: Or, the Advantage of Being Excommunicated (And a Woman),” p. 217; *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): pp. 209–22.; Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 45.

⁶⁷ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*; Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 86-95.

⁶⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 95; Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves,” p. 219.

⁶⁹ Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves,” pp. 218-19; Andrea, *Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 45.

⁷⁰ Susan Skilliter, “4. Three Letters from the Ottoman “Sultana” Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I,” in *Oriental Studies III: Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 132-133.

during this period in Ottoman history.⁷¹ In this position, Safiye's duties included mediating the sultan's contacts with foreign diplomats, rendering her a crucial ally.⁷² Elizabeth wrote her another letter in 1599, which she sent along with an organ, a coach, and other valuable jewels.⁷³ Safiye responded with a more personal letter in November 1599:

God willing, action will be taken according to what you said. Be of good heart in this respect! We will not cease from admonishing our son, His Majesty the Padishah [Mehmed III], and from telling him: 'Do act according to the treaty!' [the first English capitulation of 1580] God willing, may you not suffer grief in this respect! May you, too, always be firm in friendship!

One factor that potentially contributed to Safiye's warmth towards Elizabeth was the Ottoman *kul* system. Muslims cannot be enslaved under Islamic law, so all enslaved women in the harem were non-Muslims. At the same time, Safiye's ethnicity is unconfirmed. She likely had an affiliation with Christian Europeans.⁷⁴ This could have influenced her outlook on Ottoman foreign affairs to be favorable toward the English. Elizabeth successfully obtained promises from Sultana Safiye to act as an intermediary between herself and the sultan, but the strategy was not entirely politically successful. In 1592, Mehmed wanted to go to war with Hungary, and Elizabeth wished for the sultan to seek a truce with Emperor Rudolph instead. Safiye tried to persuade the sultan to allow Elizabeth's ambassador Edward Barton to mediate between the sultan and the Emperor, but she was unsuccessful.⁷⁵ Additionally, William Harborne consistently requested naval support for England against Spain from Murad throughout the 1570s and 1580s to no avail.⁷⁶

Despite these political shortcomings, Murad III reportedly described Elizabeth I as a "clowd of moste happy raine," a "fountayne of moste nobleness and vertue" to whom "all nations" resort.⁷⁷ Elizabeth's relationship with the Ottoman Empire laid the foundation for England's future as the preeminent European trading nation in the East. The letters between the English Queen and Ottoman Sultana edified this connection.

The Sa'adian Sultanate of Morocco

⁷¹ Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 13.

⁷² Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 21; The *Valide Sultan* also worked to maintain the dynasty's public image and fortify political networks to exercise imperial authority. Safiye's stipend was the highest in the realm, providing her with vast financial power.

⁷³ Jardine, "Gloriana Rules the Waves," p. 222.

⁷⁴ Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Jardine, "Gloriana Rules the Waves," p. 219.

⁷⁶ Maclean and Matar. *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 54.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*.

The Sa'adian Sultanate ruled present-day Morocco from 1510 to 1659.⁷⁸ Sultan Abu Abdallah Muhammad II came to power in 1574 after his father's death, beginning a tumultuous period in Sa'adian history. English trade with Morocco began in 1551, but Elizabeth did not have a diplomatic relationship with the sultan until 1577. English spymaster Walsingham expressed his concern that the new Sa'adian Sultan would not be friendly to English commercial interests in his memorandum on Turkish trade in which he stated the following consideration: "procure the Turkes letters to the Kinge of Barbary... that the portes there may be Free for our merchants."⁷⁹ Abdallah Muhammad was indeed less interested in British trade and relations. He only wanted weapons from England, and he leveraged Moroccan saltpeter to try to attain these weapons.⁸⁰

In 1576, Abdallah Muhammad's uncle Abd al-Malik returned from his seventeen-year exile in the Ottoman Empire with an Ottoman army to retake the throne. Ottoman influence on his upbringing taught Abd al-Malik the importance of diplomacy, and he was eager to establish trade and create a military alliance with England.⁸¹ He requested that England supply cloth and weapons to Morocco in exchange for exclusive access to their saltpeter, and in 1577, Elizabeth sent a letter in response introducing herself, accepting a trade agreement without agreeing to supply al-Malik with weapons, and requesting the resolution of grievances with Jewish merchants who dealt with the English. Al-Malik accepted these terms by declaring upon hearing the letter read aloud that "he, with his country and all things therein, should be at your majesty's commandment."⁸² Morocco's power transitions weakened the state and necessitated seeking alliances against the threat of Spain, while Elizabeth's ex-communication and animosity with Spain made relations with Morocco attractive as well.

Sultan al-Malik's reign was short. After just two years, Ahmad al-Mansur took power in the wake of the Battle of Three Kings between his brother al-Malik who was allied with the Ottomans and his nephew Abdullah Muhammad who was supported by the Portuguese king Sebastian I.⁸³ All three of these kings died in battle. Al-Mansur was uninterested in England when he took the throne in 1578. He may have even had an unfavorable view because Sebastian I had been aided by a contingent of English and Irish soldiers.⁸⁴ However, Morocco's position between the Ottoman and Spanish superpowers trying to conquer his kingdom caused him to turn to countries such as France, Holland, and England for assistance. England was the most cooperative of all possible European allies because they were the most threatened by Spain. In 1580, al-Mansur sent Elizabeth a flattering letter, referring to her as the

⁷⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 56, 67.

⁷⁹ "Memorandum on the Turkey trade, by Sir Francis Walsingham(?). 1578(?)." in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 30.

⁸⁰ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 66-67.

⁸¹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 66-67.

⁸² Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 69-70.

⁸³ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 79.

⁸⁴ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," p. 57.

greatest of all those who follow the “religion of Christ” and “the majesty in the lands of Christ, the sultana Isabel [Elizabeth I], may God grant her all good and continue her good health.” Bestowing the high title of “sultana Isabel” was a custom that showed his respect for Elizabeth I. He wrote that there was “evident love” between himself and “sultana Isabel” and “as you are doing the best to facilitate our affairs there [in England], so will we do the same for you here.”⁸⁵ This letter began twenty-three years of correspondence in which al-Mansur wrote more letters to Elizabeth than any other European monarch.⁸⁶

The common interests of defense against Spain and the need for economic competitiveness generated an enduring but fickle relationship. The Earl of Leicester lobbied furiously to create a regulated company to impose a monopoly on Moroccan trade, and he succeeded in 1585 when the Barbary Company was created.⁸⁷ During the early stages of Anglo-Moroccan relations, al-Mansur was not impressed with Elizabeth because of what he perceived as her isolation and lack of aggression.⁸⁸ However, England’s victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 changed his impression of her and gave him the idea to use her to achieve his reclamation of the Iberian Peninsula.⁸⁹ In 1588, al-Mansur granted privileges to English merchants and sent an envoy, Marzuq Ra’is, to Elizabeth to convince her to consider a joint attack against Spain, but no agreement was reached.⁹⁰ After Spain annexed Portugal in 1580, Don Antonio fled to England and formed an Anglo-Portuguese alliance, which al-Mansur agreed to join after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Al-Mansur promised to send funds to contribute to the alliance in exchange for Don Antonio’s son, Don Christobal, as a hostage.⁹¹ Although he received the hostage, he did not send the funds, prompting Elizabeth to write, “If you would not grant us what we so reasonably ask from you, we will have to pay less attention to your friendship. We know for sure also that the Great Turk, who treats our subjects with great favor and humanity, will not appreciate your maltreatment of them in order to please the Spaniards.”⁹² The vacillatory nature of their relationship became evident at this time and persisted for the duration of their reigns.

In January 1591, after Elizabeth wrote to Murad III about the situation, the Ottoman Sultan wrote back, expressing his dislike for “the faithless Prince of Fez” and promised that he was “forwarding strongly worded despatches insisting on the return of the son of Don Antonio to Our most happy and

⁸⁵ Quoted in Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” from State Papers, Public Record Office, The National Archives, p. 58.

⁸⁶ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 74.

⁸⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 120.

⁸⁸ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 56.

⁸⁹ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 52.

⁹⁰ Khalid Ben-Srhir, *Britain and Morocco During the Embassy of John Drummond Hay*, (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 13; Caroline Stone, “Saudi Aramco World: An ‘Extremely Civile’ Diplomacy,” *Aramco World* (2012).

⁹¹ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 54.

⁹² Quoted in Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 64.

exalted Porte.”⁹³ Al-Mansur sent his reply to Elizabeth in June 1590, addressing her as “the firm-footed, of celestial light and knowledge, the great sultana *al-asila*, *al-mathila*, *al-athila*, *al-khatira* [true-blooded, exemplary, high-born, great], the famous, the possessor of England, sultana Isabel” and purporting that if she extended the agreed upon military aid to Don Antonio, he would send his promised envoy as soon as the “happy action” of conquering Sudan was concluded.⁹⁴ Elizabeth was reluctant to commit troops to North Africa and to become involved in any foreign wars, so both al-Mansur and Elizabeth felt cheated by each other. Despite these feelings and Elizabeth being forced to leverage her relationship with the mighty Ottomans to frighten al-Mansur, their correspondence continued due to the shared threat of Catholic Spain.

By the time Murad’s letter arrived in Morocco, al-Mansur had conquered the Songhai Empire of Sudan in modern-day Niger and acquired a yearly tribute of 100,000 gold pieces and 1,000 enslaved people to Marrakech. Elizabeth once again wrote to him to ask for aid against Spain. Although he patronizingly claimed to be paying attention to her interests, “both great and small,” he would not send support until she sent her promised military assistance to Don Antonio.⁹⁵ He wrote, “give the ayde, then send us wourde.” Later in 1591, he wrote to her again, comparing his conquest of Sudan to her defeat of the Spanish armada, asserting that both were mutually beneficial. His new wealth would allow the Sa’adian Sultanate “to re-take the region [Spain] from the hands of infidelity and to return the word of Islam to its youth and vigor.”⁹⁶ At this point, Anglo-Moroccan political relations were on the verge of collapse but persisted thanks to Spain.

A second Moroccan delegation was again sent to England in 1595 to discuss plans for an Anglo-Moroccan military operation against Spain.⁹⁷ Spain had invaded Ireland, and the envoy was meant to prepare Moroccan support for the English naval strike on Cadiz.⁹⁸ In 1596, Elizabeth’s 150 ships and 6,000 soldiers, along with ships and supplies from al-Mansur, were victorious in their attack on Cadiz.⁹⁹ The Sa’adian court scribe, al-Fishtali, attributed the success to al-Mansur’s diplomatic manipulation:

The one most daring in attacking his [Philip II] kingdoms and tightening the noose around him, was Isabella the sultana of the kingdoms of the lands of England. For Mulana the prince of the faithful [al-Mansur], had lured her with his support and had sharpened her will against him [Philip II]: he showed her his willingness to help confront him [Philip II] by supplying her with copper to use in cannons, and saltpeter for

⁹³ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 66.

⁹⁴ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” pp. 64-65.

⁹⁵ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 67.

⁹⁶ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 68.

⁹⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 193.

⁹⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 193.

⁹⁹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 193-194.

ammunition [gunpowder] which he permitted her to buy from his noble kingdoms. He also supplied her with metals, which were not found in her lands. With God helping him, he pitted her against the enemy of religion and, with God's help, and because of his [al-Mansur's] decisiveness, capable organization, and deep caution, he kept her focused on [Philip II], both on her own and with his help.¹⁰⁰

Al-Mansur sent another delegation in 1600 led by his advisor Muhammad al-Annuri to England. They discussed commercial relations but disagreed on jointly invading Spain.¹⁰¹ In 1601, he proposed an attack on Spanish holdings in the Americas to Elizabeth. He wrote,

And your high estate shall knowe that, in the inhabiting of those countries by us and yow, yow shall have a great benefite: first for that those countries of the East are adjoining to many Kinges Moores and infinite nations of our religion; and further, if your power and command shall be seene there with owre armie, all the Moores will joyne and confederate themselves—by the help of God—with us and yow.¹⁰²

Elizabeth rejected his proposition, and al-Mansur's ambitions for retaking Iberia with an Anglo-Moroccan alliance ended. The following year, he signed a military agreement with Spain against their joint rival, the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰³ Elizabeth's relationship with al-Mansur was never stable, but English merchants gained significant profits from Moroccan trade, and the English military gained assistance in keeping Spain at bay. Elizabeth and al-Mansur were in similar positions, with powerful enemies for neighbors and limited resources. However, their personalities and foreign policy objectives made it so that their alliance never realized its full potential.

Conclusion

Politically, English alliances with the Muslim world produced mixed results. English ambassadors in the Ottoman Empire were able to take the lead on disputes involving Christian communities under Ottoman control.¹⁰⁴ The English Ambassador Edward Barton became Ottoman Sultan Mehmed III's "favorite Englishman" when he died in 1597. He received a full funeral at the sultan's request. During his career, Barton restored Protestantism to Moldavia in 1588 and advocated for other English interests in court.¹⁰⁵ The most significant impact of Elizabeth's friendly relations with Muslim states was its foundation for the future English empire. Commercial elites commanding joint stock companies rather

¹⁰⁰ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," pp. 69-70.

¹⁰¹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 261.

¹⁰² Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," p. 73.

¹⁰³ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," p. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁵ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 94.

than monarchs continued future relations with Muslim states, leading to England's infamous global empire.¹⁰⁶

Relations between Elizabeth I and Muslim rulers contributed to England's national security and development. Elizabeth was initially unable to befriend or trade with Persia because of conflicting interests arising from a fragile peace between the Safavids and Ottomans and the Ottoman interest in acting as a middleman between the West and East. However, when Elizabeth attempted to establish relations with the Ottoman Empire after her ex-communication, she was successful because of Murad III's interest in partnering with Protestants in Europe and because of her gender, given the number of power women held in Ottoman court. These relations persisted under Mehmed III's reign because he shared his father's interests, and his mother, Safiye, continued to wield significant power. Anglo-Moroccan relations persisted because both states were relatively weak and needed allies against Spain and lucrative trade to become more robust and stable. Their connection suffered because of the conflicting foreign policy objectives of al-Mansur and Elizabeth. Overall, Elizabeth's diplomatic, defensive style of foreign policy facilitated good relations with Muslim states.

The road to profiteering and domination began with peaceful commercial relationships established by Elizabeth I. Elizabeth's foreign policy allowed merchant elites and their envoys to negotiate and work with Muslim states extensively. She was the first English monarch to welcome Muslim ambassadors into the royal palace and to seek long-term diplomatic relationships with non-Christian rulers. She was succeeded by King James I, who did not communicate directly with Muslim rulers but expanded trade into Persia and India. His efforts to establish commercial relations with the Mughals generally failed, and subsequent leaders neglected diplomatic relations with Muslim rulers.¹⁰⁷ With the foundation and precedent for trade established and the business of diplomacy in the hands of merchant elites, the path was laid for the profit-driven East India Company to put the Levant Company out of business, multiply exponentially, fund exploitation and colonization, and alter the trajectory of global history.

¹⁰⁶ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁷ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, pp. 78-79.