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Olufs' *Odd Adventures or Marvellous Skirmishes in Turkey* (1747) and Diversity of the Ottoman World

Olufʼsun *Odd Adventures or Marvellous Skirmishes in Turkey* Eseri ve Osmanlı Dünyasının Çeşitliliği

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ABSTRACT
Edward Said's *Orientalism* opened up new horizons for the interpretation of Europe's view of the Orient. Said developed a new scholarship that examines the common view of the orientalist scholarship centering on European domination of the oriental world. This theory is popularized by critics such as Kim Hall, Emily Bartels, and Jack D'Amico, who generalize the European domination over the Orient even before European colonialism. Nabil Matar, on the other hand, presents a counterargument to the application of Said's theory to early modern writings, emphasizing the necessity of conducting a comprehensive examination of the intricacies and subtleties inherent in Ottoman-European relations. He argues that the emphasis on supposed European supremacy over the Orient during this period is deceptive. Therefore, it is imperative to use a new methodology to investigate and elucidate the dynamics of Euro-Ottoman relations in the early modern period. As a result, Matar adopts a micro-historical approach, focusing on the examination of archival sources. This technique allows for the incorporation of a wide range of perspectives from various European travelers who visited the Ottoman world. Consequently, he adopts a micro-historical approach by studying archival sources in which he includes diverse experiences of the different European travelers to the Ottoman world. The diversity Matar uses includes the thick description of the rich and polyphonic narratives written between the 16th and 18th centuries. Additionally, it is crucial to examine in which ways the Dano-Norwegian observations differed from the other European influential nations, as these have been under-represented. For this purpose, the analysis of Hark Olufs' *Odd Adventures or Marvellous Skirmishes* in Turkey (1747) has been conducted using Nabil Matar's methodology. This analysis aims to delve into Olufs' past and the underlying motivations that drove him to document and subsequently publish his captivity account. This article will argue for the significance of incorporating Nabil Matar as an alternative critic for elucidating the early Euro-Ottoman connections, instead of relying solely on Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

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Nabil Matar and Diversity of the Oriental World

When it comes to diversity, one important aspect to consider is the inclusion of individuals, from different and various social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Unlike what orientalists suggest, i.e.,

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a single category of "otherness" to identify the Eastern world, Nabil Matar focuses on the early modern period and explores the Eastern Mediterranean, European regions, and the diversity of the population thereof. For example, he draws a comparison between the Christian and Muslim societies during the 16th century, asserting that the Spanish, French, British, and Dutch governments implemented laws that prohibited the admission of non-Christians into their respective territories. Conversely, Ottoman and North African kings invited European traders, soldiers, and scholars to visit and settle down in the countries they ruled. The Netherlands and Britain implemented restrictive policies that permitted only a limited number of Jews to enter (2015, pp. 31-32). European nations were allowed to partake in commercial activities, acquire resources, and establish diplomatic ties with non-Christian regions, ultimately leading to the subsequent expansion of colonial and imperial influence across the globe. The Europeans acquired knowledge of Christians residing outside of Europe through these intercultural exchanges. However, the orientalists usually overlook the presence of non-Muslims as well as the diversity of the local population, including native Arabs, living among Muslims. It is crucial to acknowledge that in East Europe, there was a particular situation where the population of Euro-Christians surpassed that of Muslims. This was due to specific legal and religious protections granted to non-Muslims, known as "dhimmis." Moreover, the notable representation of Euro-Christians within the Muslim community can be ascribed to the liberties extended to Catholic and Orthodox Christian Arabic writers, who were permitted to travel to both Western and Eastern territories. This is evident in the works of Muhammad Amin ibn Fadlallah al-Muhubbi and Muhammad Khalil al-Muradi (2015, p. 32).

Considering such differences, Matar rediscovers archival sources that suggest diverse perspectives. His book *An Arab Ambassador in the Mediterranean World* (2015) is based on one of the rare records of a non-Christian Moroccan diplomat, namely Muhammad ibn Uthman al-Miknasi, who traveled and recorded his observations between 1779 and 1788. It provides valuable insights into his travel observations during that period. Al-Miknasi undertook a series of visits to many places, encompassing Spain, Malta, Turkey, and Arabia among others. In contrast to Edward Said's Euro-centric representation of the Other, al-Miknasi's depiction of the Christian world does not depend on fabrications.

Matar argues that while European travelers projected their fantasies onto their observations, Arab writers were mainly factual, since they were writing for authoritative figures responsible for conveying accurate information on diplomacy and trade (Matar, 2003, p. xxxi). In Arabic texts, the primary objective was to relay information about "the lands, customs, religion, and social organization the traveler had seen – and which another wanted to confirm" (2003, pp. xxxi-xxxii). Rather than focusing on personal reflections about the places they visited, the events they witnessed, or their interactions with Europeans, their writing aimed to be collective, where subjectivity was reduced and objective observations emphasized (2003, p. xxxii).

One of Matar's examples is Ahmad bin al-Mahdi al-Ghazzal, the Moroccan ambassador, who, in 1766, dedicated his travel account to the highest authorities:

> I was ordered by his highness [Mulay Mohammad bin Abdallah, reg. 1759-90] may the heavens elevate him, to write down during this auspicious journey all that I heard, saw, noted and learnt; and to tell about the cities and villages and describe all that I experienced during my travels and stay. (2003, p. xxxii)

While Arabic writers produced empirical accounts that intended to inform the government and support diplomatic relations, European travelers relied on "classical or biblical sources as their guides" (2003, p. xxxii). Unlike Europeans, who framed their observations within mythical and religious narratives, Arabs approached their experiences "with an open mind and a clean slate" (2003, p. xxxii). Matar underscores that since these approaches are fundamentally different—one

lacking a model for comparison while the other does—the theoretical framework for analyzing them should also differ. He asserts that Arab travel writers did not deliberately seek to distinguish themselves from Europeans; rather, they aimed to observe without epistemological bias and, in some cases, even "criticize their own religious society too" (2003, p. xxxiii).

Matar provides examples such as al-Tamjarouti, who condemned Turkish rule in Algiers, and Al-Miknasi, who denounced Turkish oppression, drawing parallels with Spanish ecclesiastical rule. Another example is Ali Agha, who praised the French emperor. Their accounts were considered more reliable due to their relatively unbiased observations compared to European travelers. Additionally, while Arab writers frequently expressed strong views on religion, often rebuking Christianity, their hostility stemmed from historical experiences—such as the expulsion of Muslims from Andalusia—rather than from ethnic or cultural prejudice (2003, p. xxxiii). For Arabs, Europe was seen as rich, complex, and dynamic.

Al-Miknasi, for instance, delivers first-hand observations based on empirical data though he sometimes distorts certain facts as a result of memory lapses (2015, p. 34). Al-Miknasi's misrepresentations were not motivated by a desire to justify conquest, as presented in Said's theory. Despite occasional disputes arising from theological differences with Euro-Christians or North African diplomats, al-Miknasi consistently used the term "muhabba" (love) to characterize his dialogues with them (2015, p. 35). Occasionally, al-Miknasi utilized derogatory terminology while discussing with Europeans, albeit exclusively in instances where he saw their conduct as antagonistic against the Muslim community. Therefore, his observations were driven by emotions rather than theology, ideology, or commerce (2015, pp. 35-36). Matar's argument suggests further possibilities for a non-essentialist view of the Muslim and Christian interaction during the early modern era. Thus, when Goffman suggests that the Ottomans should be given a voice to embrace diversity, Matar's *An Arab Ambassador* serves as an apt example. The book effectively distinguishes between various social, religious, and ethnic groups, avoiding their conflation. Through al-Miknasi's three accounts, Matar introduces non-Eurocentric perspectives and provides a local view of the problematic and cooperative sides of Euro-Ottoman encounters in the early modern era.

The narrative voice also plays a crucial role in shaping fabrication, credibility, and the overall genre of travel literature. Matar argues that travelogues changed in style, noting that "some were written in first person, others in the third, the choice suggesting differing authorial strategies and goals" (Vitkus, 2001, p. 34). Applying a single framework to all travel accounts ignores the diversity of authorship and writing techniques. Matar criticizes the scholarly tendency to make such generalizations and raises several key questions to highlight the limitations of this approach:

> But such formulizing ignores the differences in narrative voices, the uncertainty and multiplicity of authorship (is the author the captive himself or the editor/publisher?), and various modes of publication (did the captive oversee the publication of the account or was it left to a publisher who changed, added, or deleted as he saw fit?) […] Furthermore, captives frequently told and retold their tales. Which version of their oral narratives saw print: the early ones, which may have been close to truth, or the later ones, which inevitably became ideologically burdened? (Vitkus, 2001, p. 34)

These questions are particularly significant in the study of travel writing, as elements such as narrative perspective, editor/pastor influence(s), chronology, and historical accuracy should be analyzed to provide a more nuanced understanding. Moreover, Matar stresses the importance of distinguishing between travel accounts from the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and those produced after 1640. The earlier accounts were typically brief, as captives during this time had limited knowledge of Islam and Ottoman-North African culture. These narratives were mainly introspective, concentrating on the hardships of captivity whilst maintaining a strong allegiance to

national and religious identity. The accounts could differ, influenced by personal or public motives, depending on the political and religious context at the time of publication.[1]

Europe Through Arab Eyes (2009) is another work by Matar that makes a valuable contribution to the discourse on diversity by emphasizing the distinctiveness and disparities among various ethnicities. In this work, Matar dedicates considerable effort to delineate the various interactions that occurred between different regions, particularly after the Ottoman victory in 1453 (2009, p. 3). The book explores the interactions of many ethnic groups, including Arabs, Berbers, Turks, Ottomans, Eastern Christians, and European Christians, who came from numerous geographical regions (2009, p. 4). Matar characterizes these encounters as "venues of interaction" predominantly defined by diplomacy, trade, and political alliances, rather than conflicts (2009, p. 4). Despite the prevalence of warfare during this period, these groups managed to establish strategic and conciliatory relationships. Matar highlights the reciprocal nature of their interactions, where both parties benefited from meeting their own needs while advancing the interests of their allies. For instance, "Muslims recruited Christian mercenaries to fight in their wars, as Christian rulers earlier relied on Muslim physicians and military personnel to help them in times of need" (2009, p. 4). The Euro-Ottoman encounter, influenced by geopolitical ties and power dynamics, encompassed a range of perspectives that were diverse, intricate, and nuanced. This complexity challenges the conventional colonizer-colonized dichotomy, as commonly depicted by orientalist and essentialist authors (2009, p. 5).

Matar initiates the discourse by critically examining the overarching classification of the word "Arab," offering other viewpoints that go beyond superficial categorizations. He argues that the word "Arab" can embrace a range of identities originating from various backgrounds such as Eastern, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan. These identities represent a broad array of religious, racial, and ethnic origins found within the Maghreb and Mashriq regions (2009, p. 5). Moreover, Matar highlights the contrast between Muslim populations located in closer proximity to Europe, specifically the Western Mediterranean, and those residing in the Maghreb/Mashriq regions. While all Turks and Arabs belong to the monotheistic faith of Islam, national, religious, local, cultural, tribal, and geographical differences should be considered to understand the diversity of Dar-al Islam. These factors should be taken into account to have a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of Dar-al Islam. Matar argues that the presence of variety poses a challenge to prevailing narratives that prioritize the intricate dynamics and diverse viewpoints associated with traditional colonialism. The suggested diversity provides a nuanced understanding of the historical dynamics between various ethnic and religious groups of the European and Mediterranean world. However, archival documents present an extensive historical record of the Ottoman Empire, the Western Mediterranean, the Maghrib/Mashriq regions, and the New World. In *Turks, Moors and Englishmen* (1999), Matar sheds light on the tendency to portray a singular type of persona, often derived from the imaginations of Renaissance literary authors like Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Blount, among others (1999, pp. 6-7). The reliability of these sources comes into question when they lack specific nuances in dialogue, overlook aspects of character descriptions, and are disconnected from historical and real-world contexts. To provide an example, the categorization of sub-Saharan Africans alongside North African Muslims (referred to as "Moors") has often been inaccurately employed as a means to illustrate the concept of ethnic and national identity. Yet, it is imperative to differentiate between the two entities, taking into account their geographical and, more significantly, political contexts, to prevent any potential historical

[1] Upon returning to their homelands, captives-turned-writers would often use their narratives to express a Christian viewpoint while seeking reintegration (2001, p. 36). Sometimes, with the help of a community pastor or editor, these freed captives would reinforce the truth of the Christian God, hence stressing that despite their enslavement under Muslims, Christians would eventually triumph because of their steadfast faith (2001, p. 37).

misunderstandings (1999, pp. 7-8). For example, while the British interactions with sub-Saharan Africans were characterized by enslavement and dominance, their relationships with North African Muslims were marked by a sense of "anxious equality and grudging emulation" (1999, p. 8). Scholars' tendency to interchange ethnic groups has the potential to obscure the power dynamics and dynamics of subordination. While these groups may appear similar, such confusion can lead to an inaccurate representation of history, ultimately resulting in misinterpretation. Matar repetitively emphasizes this tendency, drawing attention to this particular oversight of contemporary research; the general attitude of post-colonial discourse is to overlook the diverse elements thus failing to embody the complex nature of the Ottoman-European relationship. Matar argues that British literary writers, driven by frustration and a sense of inadequacy in their inability to possess Muslim territories, frequently blurred distinct groupings. Consequently, they would interchange the terms "Indians" and "Muslims" to such an extent that, for certain writers, both terms became synonymous (1999, p. 17). This phenomenon of ideological control enabled British writers to force an Indian American identity upon Muslims. In this way, they gradually developed a broad and stereotypical representation of the "other" and represented an authoritative picture of their own regime. Nevertheless, Matar emphasizes that fiction should not supplant reality. Therefore, scholars should analyze canonical texts and archival sources within a historical and contextual framework for the sake of diversity.

Despite the oversimplification, English travel writers consciously utilized the term "barbary" to categorize various Mediterranean areas. British travelers and writers exclusively applied the term "barbary" to refer to "the Ottoman regencies of Libya (Tripolitania), Tunisia and Algeria, and the kingdom of Morocco" (2005, p. 3). The Barbary States should be viewed as distinct geopolitical entities (2005, p. 3). Morocco maintained its independence separate from Ottoman rule, whilst Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya fell under Ottoman influence, with Ottoman Deys and their troops governing these regions under designated military commanders. Notwithstanding these variations, they exhibited commonalities in ethnolinguistic qualities, practices of religion, geographic affiliations, and legal customs. In these geographical areas, a multitude of distinct groups coexisted, including "Moors," "Turks," "Arabs," "Moriscos," "Jews," "Armenians," and "European renegades" (2005, p. 3). Language usage varied as well, encompassing lingua franca, Arabic, Turkish, and Spanish. While the region may have seemed predominantly Muslim, discerning English travelers recognized differences between Islamic schools, such as the Ottoman Hanafi and the native Maghribi, particularly the Maliki school (2005, p. 3). The distinction between generalization and differentiation is evident in the local records. According to Matar, literary sources are more prone to fabricating images of Euro-Ottoman relations, often using terms interchangeably to foster a colonizing discourse with the aim of asserting ideological dominance over the Mediterranean basin (1999, pp. 13-15). However, firsthand sources documenting Euro-Ottoman relations found in travelogues, archival records, diplomatic and commercial documents, as well as slavery accounts, include and reflect minimal "racial, sexual, or moral stereotyping of the Muslims" (1999, p. 13). Lastly, Olufs' account deviates from the established macro-narrative found in canonical literature. His account challenges the prevailing Euro-Christian discourse, which typically characterizes the connection between the East and West in a simplistic binary framework of "us vs them." His text is a first-hand source that renders his experiences on observations pertaining to his captivity, the regents in Algiers and Tunisia, the North African climate and landscape, Moors and Turks, their eating habits, customs and traditions, Euro-Ottoman contacts, pilgrimage to Mecca and superstitious belief systems.

Hark Olufs' *Odd Adventures or Marvellous Skirmishes in Turkey* (1747)

European travelers to the Ottoman Empire were from many social and economic layers. For instance, ambassadors from the European courts, merchants, priests, and soldiers visited and

settled down in the Ottoman territories. There were also captives and slaves who either willingly or by force visited the Empire from different European countries. Nevertheless, the number of Scandinavian travelers visiting the Ottoman Empire was relatively lower compared to their British, French, and Italian counterparts. The Dano-Norwegian Hark Olufs from Amrum (1708-1754) is an example of a captive who spent twelve years in Algiers as a slave to serve the Dey at the time. He published his travelogue after his return to Denmark. In particular, the presence of the priest Otto Riese in the drafting of his travelogue is an important aspect of the narrative that demands additional examination. Some information in the text suggests that Priest Riese worked on the editing and annotation of Olufs' travelogue, raising questions regarding the credibility of his records. The narrative seems to have undergone editing by the priest to be consistent with the principles of the Christian faith. Upon analyzing Olufs' memoir, it becomes difficult to view the travel account as anything other than the priest's mission to promote the Christian message. Rheinheimer emphasizes that Olufs was intentionally distanced from his national self and forced into a new identity suitable to the missionary goals. In this process, the priest assisted him in developing and carrying out a Christian mission to reintegrate Olufs' new identity thus cleansing his sins (Rheinheimer, 2003, p. 224). The success of the reintegration process becomes apparent in Olufs' autobiography through its beginning and final stages, wherein he places significant emphasis on his unshakable Christian faith. Thus, there is a contradiction between lived experiences and the promoted Christian messages in Olufs' text, which also leads to diversity in the narrative. The distinction is visible when the priest's possible intervention and Olufs' personal observations are compared. There are two different attitudes and voices rendering two different perspectives; the former centers on bringing forward a Christian message, that is, never to give up on one's Christian faith, especially in times of adversity and hardship, while the latter is more focused on the lived experiences, presenting them from a humanistic standpoint with less emphasis on theological ideology.

Despite Olufs' missionary goals and his strong Christian viewpoint, his narrative is less prejudiced against the Ottoman world. His extensive interaction with Algerians and keen observation of the administration in North Africa after his presumed conversion to Islam could perhaps have fostered a sense of sympathy with the Ottoman world. It is important to consider the impact of his influential status and position within the Algerian regency which may have prompted him to write in a more positive way. While Olufs describes his long period of slavery to the Ottoman ruler (the Dey of Constantine) during which he established a close relationship, he also had doubts about Islam, which may have been added or changed by the editing priest. An example of Olufs' positive description of the Algerian Bey and their mutual affection is proven in the following description where the Bey asks Olufs whether he wishes to undertake a certain duty:

> My Lord, who loved me and therefore did not wish to burden me with such a difficult task, asked me if I wanted to do it. I replied: It is not a matter of what I want, but of what Efendi (that is, my gracious master) will command. (Olufs, 1747, p. 15)[2]

This scene challenges the commonly held negative aspect of Euro-Ottoman connections in postcolonial contexts by offering favorable depictions. As stated earlier, Matar highlights a variety of positive interactions that took place across divergent ethnic and religious populations. Instances of such events can also be seen in Olufs' narrative, particularly regarding his relationships with the Dey of Algiers. Readers are invited to witness a relationship built on compassion, loyalty, and friendship with reciprocal respect and admiration. Another example of this mutual affection can be read in the following excerpt where Olufs expresses his gratitude for serving the Bey that values

[2] Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Min patron, som elskede mig, og derfor ikke så gerne ville pålægge mig så vanskelig en forretning, spurgte mig, om jeg havde lyst dertil? Jeg svarede: her gælder ikke, hvad jeg har lyst til, men hvad Efendi (det er, min nådige herre) vil befale."

him: "…God granted me favor with my patron, so that he always held great kindness for me. He entrusted me with the position of great importance called Gasnedahl or Gasnadi" (1747, p. 9).[3] A last example of diversity is Olufs' decision to return to his home island following twelve years of serving the Bey. The mutual emotions expressed here are the most intense when compared to other scenes in the text which is why it is worth quoting it here at length:

> The next day, as I was preparing to depart, I went to my patron, kissed his hand, and said, "Efendi! I thank you for the bread and salt that I have received from your hands for almost 12 years. I seek your blessing and ask for forgiveness for any wrongs I may have committed." His response was, "I thank you, Captain, for your service, and if I have wronged you in any way, I hope you will also forgive me." At these last words, I burst into tears and embraced his knees. He lifted me up, and as tears streamed down his cheeks, the old man placed his hand on my head and said, "Go with God! Be careful of strong desires, women, and the Jews in Algiers, so they do not trick you out of your money". (1747, p. 27)[4]

Each of these instances proves crucial when advocating heterogeneity of the Muslim-Christian interactions as an alternative to a single approach while studying Euro-Ottoman relations. Additional instances can be discovered within the book, yet the ones mentioned above are particularly useful for portraying a positive view of the Euro-Ottoman interactions in the early modern period, as they demonstrate tolerance and friendly relations. Overall, the dynamic between the Dey and Olufs can be defined as useful and profitable for both parties. Olufs describes how he was put in charge of the tax administration ("Gasnadahl") and later promoted to the chief of the Dey's cavalry. The Dey bestowed upon him a considerable force of five hundred horses and an equal number of men to be led and commanded (Simonsen, 2019, p. 427). In the year 1732, after his victory in a military raid against Bu Aziz, Olufs was granted a higher position. This new rank entrusted him with the responsibility of guiding and directing the entire cavalry of the Dey, thus elevating him to the status of one of the highest officials (Rheinheimer, 2003, p. 211). According to Rheinheimer, Olufs also took responsibility for managing native troops in rural regions, having control over a considerable number of thirty-nine clans (2003, p. 211). In his travel account, Olufs himself acknowledges that owing to his prestigious position, renegades and slaves became jealous of him and started spreading false rumors, accusing him of being a "spy sent to gather intelligence on the enemy's facilities" (Olufs, 1747, p. 17).[5] Additionally, Olufs embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca, funded and accompanied by the Dey and his entourage, which led to further speculations about his possible conversion to Islam.

The impending demise of the aging Dey posed a threat to Olufs' hard-earned status. It was expected that the subsequent ruler would take over the possessions of people who had been under the authority of the preceding leader. Olufs believed that this new ruler would exhibit greed, subjecting the entourage to torture and eventual death (1747, p. 26). Another instance of diversity is evident within the context of this particular setting. Olufs distinguishes between two governors who have

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[3] Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "…gav Gud my yndest hos min patron, så at han bar altid stor godhed for mig. Han anbetroede mig det embede, som der er af megen vigtighed, kaldet Gasnedahl eller Gasnadi". A "Gasnadi" or "Gasnadahl" is a person working in the tax administration."

[4]Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Dagen derefter da jeg var rejsefærdig, gik jeg til min patron, kyssede hans hånd, sigende: Efendi! Jeg takker for det brød og den salt, jeg nu næsten 12 år annammede af deres hænder, udbeder mig deres velsignelse, og om forladelse for de ting, hvorudi jeg måtte have forseet mig. Hans svar var: Jeg takker dig, Kaptajn, for din tjeneste, og har jeg gjort mig imod, du ligeledes giver mig det til. Ved de sidste ord faldt jeg i gråd, og omfavnede hans knæ; men han rejste mig op, da den gamle herre, i det at tårerne kendtes på hans kinder, lagde sin hånd på mit hoved, sigende: far med Gud! Tag dig vel i agt for stærk drift, for kvindfolk og for jøderne i Algier, at de ikke lurer dig dine penge fra."

[5]Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Jeg var udsendt, for at udspejde fjendens anstalter."

the same racial, religious, and societal background. Whereas the former shows sympathy and compassion, the latter is malevolent and cunning, solely focusing on his own interests. For him, the activities of the preceding regent were driven by avarice, at the expense of others, all in pursuit of accumulating larger fortunes (1747, p. 26). Faced with this situation, Olufs sought a way out. When an opportunity for escape presented itself in the form of an offer from the Dey himself, he seized it. In the year 1735, the Dey signed an agreement to release Olufs from captivity on condition that he performed a final task, which was to spy and arrange an ambush on the enemy camp led by the Dey of Tunis. The attack was carried out with success, resulting in effective control over the Tunisian camp. As promised, the Dey granted Olufs his release following his twelve-year service. He also furnished him with the necessary assistance while helping him to use his funds for his return. Such interactions celebrate the friendly and diverse nature of Euro-Ottoman relations.

Matar's "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625" further highlights the context of diversity. Fernand Braudel (d. 1985) argues that captives who returned to their home countries often portrayed Islam in a polemic light due to the encouragement from European governments in their process of alienating the West from the allure of Islam. Nevertheless, Matar presents a more comprehensive view, offering accounts that were led by selfish goals (2001, p. 553). The personal interests of these individuals were driven by their ambition to find employment in their native lands after their return. As a result of the economic strain put on them by large sums of ransom money, the families of former captives often turned to asking for help from the English crown. An example is Edward Webbe (1590), who addressed the Queen of England, writing that had he wanted, he could have been employed in the countries he stayed in (Spain, Persia, Russia, Palestine among others) but chose to show his commitment by serving his own country instead (2001, p. 556). To establish a distinction, it is crucial to situate the ideological, polemical, or personal objectives that writers projected upon their narratives within the framework of diversity.

In the case of Olufs, his travelogue was aimed at reintegrating him into society, thereby ensuring his employment and well-being. While Riese's edition is evident throughout both the preface and the conclusion, traces of Olufs' original narrative can still be distinguished on closer inspection, particularly in his description of his friendship with the Ottoman Dey. Olufs' account addresses the ideological, theological, and social concerns of the Amrum community. His reintegration was intended to affirm his national and religious self, denouncing and disclaiming anything that belonged to the anti-Christian world. The autobiography is situated within a Christian framework and is meant to serve as a guide for the Christian community to gain knowledge regarding the challenges that a devout Christian must overcome to preserve his or her faith against the alien "other". It also serves as a message to Christians so that they can maintain steadfastness when confronted with the allure of Islam. The travelogue concludes with Olufs drawing a comparison between his own fate and that of Joseph while emphasizing the element of luck. Similarly, he compares his father's emotional state to that of Jacob, who, believing he would never see his son again, experienced a reunion (Olufs, 1747, p. 31). Lastly, Olufs expresses his gratitude to Christian God for protecting him through numerous dangers and temptations until his eventual release. A God, who showed "mercy on him so that he could safeguard himself against all evil. In return, he is gifted with tranquility, faith, and trust, away from the vanity, concerns, and strife of this world" (1747, p. 31).[6] This Christian narrative appeals to the prevalent expectations of Danish-Christian society of the mid-18th century.

[6]Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Abrahams, Isaks og Jacobs Gud, som har opholdt mig iblandt mange farligheder indtil denne dag, og gav mig sin nåde så at hans frygt må vogte mig for alt det onde, som han er imod, og tilbringe resten af mine dage i rolighed, tro og tillid til ham, adskilt fra denne forfængelige verdens tummel og uro."

Other examples related to superstition are also found in the text such as Olufs' statements about Muslims in Constantine who believed that when marabouts died, they would turn into an animal called "dyp" which resembles swine (1747, p. 25). Another superstition suggests that the spirit of a murdered person would return to earth to "hover and safeguard their treasure, ensuring that no one else but themselves could possess it" (1747, p. 20).[7] These particular statements, in addition to other allusions to Ottoman religion, could possibly be associated with the influence of Priest Riese. However, due to the convergence of both voices, distinguishing one from the other becomes challenging. Regardless of the author, it is important to consider the concept of diversity within these observations. Instead of relying on a postcolonial framework that promotes the notion of a superior West and an inferior East, it is essential to examine and explain alternatives. Additionally, it can be discussed whether to even categorize these statements to be "negative" as they express more odd and unusual observations about the Ottomans rather than denigrating a certain culture, its people, and religion (as those often found in literary postcolonial interpretations). If Olufs wanted to criticize the Muslim community, he would have done so without making distinctions between their various ethnic and characteristic qualities, languages, rituals, and traditions. He instead highlights the presence of diversity by examining the distinct traits common to Turks and Moors:

> The country is inhabited by Turks and Moors; the latter are called both white and black. Their language is distinct from that of the Turks, and they call it Arabic… In religion, the Moors are not very different from the Turks, except in some of their ceremonies… The Turks are more sincere than the Moors. (1747, pp. 6-7)[8]

Following this statement, Olufs admits that Turks, regrettably, possess a degree of honesty similar to that of Christians. While the contradictory voices challenge the common understanding of the Ottomans (as the foreign "other"), Olufs celebrates the diversity highlighting the natural similarities found among Muslims who are typically perceived to be different from Christians. Instead of classifying the less sympathetic views as a means for justifying colonization, the narrative provides alternative explanations for the depiction of Muslims. According to Rheinheimer, Olufs utilized his captivity narrative in a manner that served two distinct objectives. Firstly, it enabled his reintegration into society by solidifying his national and Christian identity. Secondly, it communicated a Christian message to the Amrum community, encouraging them to take on and embody their Christian faith. Feelings of awe and allure play an essential role here, as the Amrum clergy believed the Ottoman Mediterranean to be profoundly powerful. Seeing that Olufs returned in Ottoman attire, with substantial wealth and increased status, the Amrum community feared an attraction towards the Ottoman Mediterranean, which needed to be curbed to prevent Dano-Norwegian Christians from following Olufs' example. To reclaim Christianity and discourage Christians from abandoning their religious convictions for personal gain and social standing, his text served as a theological example advocating the Christian faith. The extent to which Olufs, with the assistance of Riese, effectively disguised his feelings of admiration for the Ottoman Empire is still dubious, as evidence of attraction and awe are merged in the text. This is discernible, for instance, when Olufs describes the Muslim practice, stating that "In their false religion, they [Muslims] are zealous, and hardly anyone can be found who deliberately acts against the things they

[7] Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Tyrkerne er i den overtro, at den sjæl, som er myrdet, ligesom svæver eller våger over skatten, så at ingen uden ejermanden kan få den."

[8] Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Landet beboes af Tyrkere og Moorer, de sidste kaldes både hvide og sorte. Deres sprog er adskilt fra Tyrkernes og de kalder det Arabisk… Udi religionen er Moorerne ikke meget adskilte fra tyrkerne, undtaget noget i deres ceremonier… Tyrkerne er oprigtigere end Mohrerne."

consider to be a duty of a Muslim" (1747, p. 7).[9] The Christian message is further emphasized in both the introductory and concluding sections, wherein the portrayal of superstitious beliefs and the disapproval of Islam serve to underline the affirmation of Christendom. Additionally, the depiction of the unusual and strange practices of the Ottomans further reinforces the point. This view promotes an alternative perspective in contrast to the post-colonial Orientalist framework. As Matar claims, many motivations, including envy, prompted some non-Muslim writers to create depictions of Muslims as a means of establishing intellectual hegemony to justify an idea of European superiority and Oriental inferiority.

Conclusion

It can be stated that there is a need for an alternative view of the Euro-Ottoman relations from the early modern era. Edward Said's postcolonial theory cannot be applied within this timeframe as the power relations, historical backdrop, and geopolitical structure were different from that of the post-18th century. The postcolonial framework proves inadequate when analyzing the complex and diverse relationships between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. This is especially conspicuous in the context of trade, business, and diplomatic relations. In response to this, Matar offers an alternative perspective on the study of Euro-Ottoman relations in the early modern period. He suggests breaking free of dichotomies while advocating for a nuanced and alternative view when studying the "venues of interaction". Furthermore, he highlights that Euro-Ottoman relations were reciprocal, not partial, rich in nature, and dynamic all depending on different locations, times, and the backgrounds of those involved. In this respect, he writes about diversity by referring to the different groups, the prevailing power relations, language, sources, and various descriptions that can be found in travel texts. This article has focused on Hark Olufs' *Odd Adventures and Marvellous Skirmishes in Turkey* (1747) as an example of diversity using the abovementioned arguments to enhance the notion of diversity. In conclusion, this paper offers an alternative perspective to Orientalism by providing a more comprehensive understanding of Euro-Ottoman relations, considering contextual factors and the timeframe in which Olufs' text was produced.

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[9] Translated from Dano-Norwegian: "Udi deres falske religion er de nidkære, og skal næppe nogen findes som forsætlig handler imod de ting, som de holder for at være en Mahometaners pligt."

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