

# OCCASIONAL PAPERS IN OTTOMAN BIOGRAPHIES

No. 2/2014

## A Young Turk from Lehistan: Tadeusz Gasztowtt aka Seyfeddin Bey (1881 – 1936) and his Activities During the Second Constitutional Period

Paulina Dominik

No. 2, November 2014

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.

*Occasional Papers in Ottoman Biographies* is published by OPUS, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg.



**ISSN:** 2194-9395

**Edited by:** Christoph Herzog, *University of Bamberg*

**Editorial Board:** Nilüfer Hatemi, *Yeditepe University*  
Raoul Motika, *Orient-Institut Istanbul*  
Oktay Özel, *Bilkent University*  
Akşin Somel, *Sabancı University*

*Occasional Papers in Ottoman Biographies* is a scholarly, open-access series publishing articles of varying length on biographical and prosopographical research on personalities whose lives were closely connected with the Ottoman cultural or political space.

**Weblink for this document:**

<http://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-bamberg/solrsearch/index/search/searchtype/series/id/>

**Weblink for *Occasional Papers in Ottoman Biographies*:** <http://www.ottomanbiographies.org>

**Mail:** Chair of Turkish Studies, Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg, An der Universität 11, 96047 Bamberg

**Email:** [editor@ottomanbiographies.org](mailto:editor@ottomanbiographies.org)

# A Young Turk from Lehistan: Tadeusz Gasztowtt aka Seyfeddin Bey (1881 - 1936) and his Activities During the Second Constitutional Period (1908 – 1918)

Paulina Dominik

*The interests of Poland and Turkey (...) have been tied together intimately for centuries and they should remain so at present and in the future.<sup>1</sup>*

**Abstract:** Following the final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1795) the Ottoman Empire became one of the key destinations for Polish political émigrés. They fled to Istanbul hoping for Ottoman support in their efforts to regain independence. Not only did they promote an independent Polish state, but also were many of them involved in the modernization enterprise of the Ottoman state. During the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918) Tadeusz Gasztowtt aka Seyfeddin Bey came to prominence as a supporter of the Committee of Union and Progress, journalist, diplomat and soldier. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of WWI he was one of the main organizers of the diplomatic rapprochement between independent Poland and the Ottoman Empire and later, the Republic of Turkey. Given Gasztowtt's service to a double national cause this paper puts forward a more inclusive category of a Polish Ottoman or an Ottoman Pole to define the overlapping allegiances of this individual.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Empire; Second Constitutional Period; Committee of Union and Progress; Polish independence; political émigrés; Tadeusz Gasztowtt/Seyfeddin Bey; overlapping allegiances

---

<sup>1</sup> Gasztowtt, Thadée, *La Pologne et l'Islam* (Paris: Imprimerie A.Reiff, 1907), preface.

## Introduction

The participation of the Polish political émigrés in the Ottoman public sphere represents an interesting yet frequently overlooked chapter of Polish and Ottoman history. In the aftermath of the final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1795) the Ottoman Empire became one of the chief destinations for the Polish political émigrés who hoped to secure Ottoman support in their efforts to regain national independence.<sup>2</sup> The November Uprising (1830-31) marked a turning point in the history of the Polish political emigration in general and of the Polish presence in the late Ottoman Empire in particular. Following this armed rebellion against Russia in the heartland of the partitioned Poland-Lithuania – the semi-autonomous Congress Kingdom<sup>3</sup> – the mass emigration of the political elites took place, which in Polish historiography is known as the Great Emigration (*Wielka Emigracja*). Most of the political émigrés were based in France and much of the political and ideological activities of the Polish intelligentsia in the 19th century took place outside of the lands of the partitioned Poland-Lithuania.<sup>4</sup>

The importance that the Ottoman Empire held for the Polish national activities of the nineteenth century was stressed by such emblematic events as the foundation of the Agency of the Polish Eastern Mission (*Agencja Główna Misji Wschodniej*) in Istanbul in 1841, the establishment in 1842 of the Polish village called Adampol/Polonezköy, (today part of the Beykoz district in Istanbul), as well as the organization of the Sultanic Cossacks' Division, commanded by Polish officers during the Crimean War (1853-56). The Polish presence in the Ottoman Empire, however, was not limited to activities aimed at the restoration of an independent Poland; rather, Polish émigrés also played an active role in various enterprises connected to the reforms of the Ottoman state. For decades hundreds of Polish political émigrés pursued occupations in the Ottoman army, administration, diplomacy, intelligence, press, road and telegraph construction, health services as well as industry and agriculture. Chief political figures of the Tanzimat, such as Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-

---

2 The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was partitioned three times by the neighbouring states: Russia, Prussia and Austria in the years 1772, 1793 and 1795 (Austria did not participate in the 1793 partition). Following the third partition in 1795 Poland disappeared from the map as a fully sovereign state until it regained independence in 1918.

3 The Congress Kingdom was a common name given to the Kingdom of Poland created in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna. It consisted of the Russian part of the Polish partition tied to the Russian Empire by a personal union. Although it officially enjoyed a considerable political autonomy, the Russian Emperors in practice disregarded restrictions on their power. Its autonomy was severely curtailed after the 1830-31 November Uprising and the 1863 January Uprising.

4 Davies, Norman, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, v.2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp.275-293.

58), Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha (1815-1871) and Keçecizade Fuad Pasha (1814-1868), supported activities of the Polish émigrés in various spheres. Meanwhile, Poles played an active role in the political opposition of the time, the Young Ottoman movement, both in the Ottoman Empire and France.

This study is first and foremost meant to be a contribution to the existing literature on the Polish political émigrés in the late Ottoman Empire. Most of the scholarly focus so far has been on émigrés' activities aimed at the Polish national independence between the November Uprising of 1830-31 and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78, which is considered the period of their greatest political activity. Subject of their participation in the late Ottoman social and political life has been addressed only superficially. Most of the authors have used exclusively one language sources in their discussion of the topic, either Polish or to a lesser extent Turkish, which resulted in a wholly incomplete picture of the Polish presence in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup>

This paper focuses on the activities of one Polish intellectual, Tadeusz Gasztowtt, known in the Ottoman Empire as Seyfeddin Bey (1881-1936), who came to prominence in the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918). His activities were exceptional as the intensity of organized activities of the Polish émigrés decreased after the Treaty of Berlin (1878), which concluded the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78, and during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r.1876-1909). However, the activities of Tadeusz Gasztowtt and several other individuals suggest that the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the coming to power of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası*, CUP) was a watershed event that attracted a number of Polish émigrés from France to come to the Ottoman Empire. It was a crucial period for both Poland and the Ottoman Empire. In the aftermath of World War I, Poland regained its independence after one hundred and twenty three years, and the Republic of Turkey emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. In the years preceding these changes, Gasztowtt was a prolific journalist. His writings were characterized by a

---

5 On this subject in Polish see: Lewak, Adam, *Dzieje emigracji polskiej w Turcji 1831-1878* (Warsaw: Gebethner & Wolff, 1935); Reychman, Jan, "Polacy w Turcji" in: *Problemy Polonii Zagraniczej*, vol.6/7 (Warsaw: PAN, 1971), pp.97-132; Dopierała, Kazimierz, *Emigracja Polska w Turcji w XIX i XX wieku* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Polonia, 1988); Łątka, Jerzy, *Odaliski, poturczeńcy i uchodźcy. Z dziejów Polaków w Turcji*, (Cracow: Universitas, 2001); Łątka, Jerzy, *Słownik Polaków w Imperium Osmańskim i w Republice Turcji* (Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2005). On this topic in Turkish see: Refik, Ahmet, "Mülteciler Mes'elesine Dâir Fuat Efendi'nin Çar Birinci Nikola ile Mülakatı" in *Türk Tarihi Encümeni Mecmuası* 14 (1341/1925), pp.361-386; Karal, Enver Ziya, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol.5 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1947), pp. 218-223; Saydam, Abdullah, "Osmanlıların Siyasî İlticâlara Bakışı yada 1849 Macar-Leh Mültecileri Meselesi" in: *Bellekten* vol.LXI issue 231 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997); Ortaylı, İlber, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Askeri Reformlar ve Polonyalı Subaylar" in: *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda iktisadi ve sosyal değişim* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2000), pp.185-191; Nazır, Bayram, *Osmanlı'ya sığınanlar. Macar ve Polonyalı mülteciler* (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2006).

great interest in Ottoman international affairs, and their hallmark was an advocacy of Polish-Ottoman friendship. The discussions that arose in the Ottoman, Polish and French press in reference to his publications and journalistic activities are indicative of his interest in and influence on his readership.

This study constitutes an attempt to look at this prolific journalist and ardent advocate of Polish-Ottoman friendship by expanding upon the paradigms often applied by both Polish and Turkish historiographies. Tadeusz Gasztowtt's presence in the Ottoman Empire differed from earlier exiles notably. He arrived in Istanbul from his own accord, prompted by his interest in the Muslim world in general and in the Ottoman Empire in particular. His works addressed both the Polish and Ottoman audiences. While his discourse did address the issue of Polish independence, it also included diverse topics such as the position of the Ottoman Empire in the international arena, the question of shared Polish and Ottoman interests, and his personal dissatisfaction with European policies towards both the partitioned Poland and the Ottoman Empire. Though he is best known for his involvement in the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and the Ottoman Empire and later, with the Republic of Turkey, his advocacy of Pan-Islamism as a viable alternative for the Ottoman Empire complicates his machinations when one considers the importance of the Roman Catholic Church as a bastion of 'Polishness' against alien occupation.<sup>6</sup> Given these incongruities, his persona has been the source of disagreements both among his own contemporaries, as well as historians. Polish works on the political émigrés in the late Ottoman Empire mention him only briefly and his activities in the Ottoman Empire before World War I have often been treated superficially as 'turcophilia'. Related to this were controversies concerning his supposed Lipka Tatar ethnic origin and his adherence to Islam. Moreover, past reliance on Polish sources at the detriment of the sources in French and Ottoman Turkish caused the omission of some significant biographical facts from his life. The multifaceted nature of Gasztowtt's intellectual and political activities makes his work of interest to Poles, Turks and Tatars. By exploring his engagement in the Ottoman Empire as being something beyond that of a "Polish Catholic" or "Muslim Turk", we are invited to reflect on these categories and their limitations. Consequently, this study is an attempt to answer the question

---

<sup>6</sup> *Polak-Katolik* (Catholic-Pole) is a concept, which emerged in the 17th century and was consolidated during the partition period (1795-1918). It is based on the idea that Polish culture and identity are inseparable from adherence to the Catholic Church. In the partition period it represented counterweight to Russian Christian Orthodoxy and German Protestantism. In the interwar period it was common to bring together Catholicism and nationalism. In the Polish People's Republic (1945-1989) it took on an anti-Communist character. See: Janion, Mariam *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna: fantazmaty literatury* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006), p.192.

whether Tadeusz Gasztowtt is to be regarded simply as an émigré, or if it is indeed justifiable to think of him as a Polish Ottoman or an Ottoman Pole.

## The Paris – Istanbul – Warsaw Triangle: Tadeusz Seyfeddin Gasztowtt's activities in the Ottoman Empire

Tadeusz Gasztowtt was born into a Polish political émigré family on 8 June 1881 in Paris. His grandfather, Maurycy Gasztowtt (1808-71), who participated in the November Uprising (1830-31), had to flee following the failure of the insurrection. He left for France, which was considered the primary destination for Polish political émigrés, and never returned to his homeland.<sup>7</sup> Tadeusz Gasztowtt's father, Waclaw Gasztowtt (1844-1920), was born in France and became involved with the Polish political and cultural life in Paris. He worked at the Polish National High School at Batignolles in Paris and was the editor in chief of the monthly magazine *Bulletin Polonais*. This journal, published in the years 1875-1922 by graduates of the Batignolles School, constituted an important source of information on Poland and its internal and external affairs, history and literature among the political émigrés.<sup>8</sup>

Tadeusz Gasztowtt graduated from the Collège Chaptal in Paris and began to study history at the University of Paris, from which he never graduated.<sup>9</sup> He also worked as a journalist for the *Bulletin Polonais* and his first articles on Poland and the Ottoman Empire stem from this period. His early writings put forward ideas that would be consistently reiterated in his later publications. They touched upon such key themes as Polish-Ottoman friendship based on the centuries long relations, Ottoman hospitality towards the Polish political émigrés in the 19th century, and the need for a Polish-Ottoman rapprochement warranted by their common political interests.<sup>10</sup>

Although Gasztowtt initially came to Istanbul in 1907 as a correspondent for the *Bulletin Polonais* and as a French teacher, he became actively engaged in the Ottoman public sphere in the aftermath of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. His stay in Istanbul resulted in two major works. The first was *La Pologne et l'Islam* ("Poland and

---

7 Wiktor, Zenon, "Maurycy Gasztowtt" in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 7 (PAU: Krakow, 1948-58), pp.303-304.

8 Lewak, Adam, "Waclaw Gasztowtt" in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol.7 (Kraków, PAU: 1948-58), pp.304-305.

9 AAN No 56/32/T. Letter from the Polish Embassy in Ankara to the Press Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [9 March 1932].

10 Gasztowtt, Thadée, "La presse arabe et l'opinion musulman sur la Pologne", *Bulletin Polonais*, no:214, 15.05.1906, pp.129-133; "Correspondence de Tunis", *Bulletin Polonais*, no:222, 15.01.1907, pp. 12-18.

*Islam*”, 1907),<sup>11</sup> which is a comprehensive work on the history of Polish-Ottoman relations with the main focus on the post-partition period. Relying on primary sources, the author tried to situate Polish-Ottoman relations within the broader context of the European politics of the era. He sought to demonstrate that both nations were united by a centuries-long friendship as well as through their common interests and enemies. *Bulletin Polonais* confirmed a welcome reception of Gasztowtt’s work in the press and announced that it would be translated into Polish, Turkish and Arabic.<sup>12</sup> It seems that it had a considerable echo in the francophone Muslim press of the time. Both *Bulletin de l’Afrique française* and the leading Pan-Islamic journal *Revue du monde musulman* (no:8) commented on the informative qualities of the book, which introduced a scarcely, if at all, known chapter of the history of Polish relations with the Muslim world.<sup>13</sup> Gasztowtt’s work was also a significant contribution to the development of Turkish studies in Poland, given that it is still used until today as a reference in monographs of Polish-Ottoman relations.<sup>14</sup> In a posthumous note on Gasztowtt in the periodical *Przegląd Islamski* (“*Islamic Review*”), a Tatar historian and political activist, Leon Najman-Mirza Kryczyński, expressed his gratitude to Gasztowtt and his *La Pologne et l’Islam* for exposing a broader public to the subject of Polish Tatars and their services to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>15</sup>

Another of Gasztowtt’s major works, *Turcya a Polska* (“*Turkey and Poland*”, 1913), was aimed at a Polish audience.<sup>16</sup> The work was inspired by the Tripolitanian War (1911-12) and the First Balkan War (1912), as a result of which the Ottoman Empire lost its last provinces and territories in Africa and Europe. The author resolved to provide the Polish public with what he regarded as accurate information on Ottoman policies in the Balkans and called for the strengthening of Polish-Ottoman cooperation.

During the Second Constitutional Period, Tadeusz Gasztowtt was a prolific journalist for Istanbul newspapers that sympathized with the CUP. In one of his letters the German Orientalist Martin Hartmann (1851-1918) remarked that ‘*among the Europeans who wanted to play some political role here [in Istanbul] and consequently, got involved with Turkish journalists active in politics, is a Pole, Thadée Gasztowyt.*’<sup>17</sup>

11 T.Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l’Islam* (Paris: Imprimerie A.Reiff, 1907).

12 Publication was never translated into any of these languages. See: “Variétés”, *Bulletin Polonais*, No: 229, 15.08.1907, p.233.

13 Ibid.

14 For example see: Dopierała, *Polska emigracja w Turcji*, pp.211,218,241,258,264,300.

15 Kryczyński, Leon, “Pamięci Tadeusza (Seyfeddina) Gasztowtta”, *Przegląd Islamski*, no 1/3, 1936, p.16.

16 Gasztowtt, Tadeusz, *Turcya a Polska* (Paris: Imprimerie A.Reiff, 1913).

17 Hartmann, Martin, *Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei. Der Islamische Orient*, vol.3 (Leipzig: Verlag Rudolf Haupt, 1910), p. 77.

Hartmann mentioned that Gasztowtt had signed his articles, as “Seyfeddin”.<sup>18</sup> In fact, Gasztowtt used to sign his articles interchangeably as “Seyfeddin T.Gasztowtt” or simply as “Seyfeddin”, which was also the name he went by in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>19</sup> His most prominent publication was a weekly bilingual newspaper *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples* (“*The People’s Tribune*”), which he published jointly with a member of the Egyptian Nationalist Party, Hüseyin Hasib Bey, from 29 April to 24 June 1910. The journal openly sympathized with the Ottoman regime of the time. The programme of the newspaper was to inform the Ottoman public on the oppressed Muslim nations living beyond the Ottoman borders, and to advise on the international affairs of the empire.<sup>20</sup> Gasztowtt’s writings on the historical Polish-Ottoman relations did not go unnoticed by the Ottoman government. An imperial decree dated 25 Muharrem 1339 (9 October 1920) awarded him the Education Order (*Ma’ârif Nişânı*), second class.<sup>21</sup>

Gasztowtt’s adherence to the Young Turk movement facilitated his active participation in the political life of the era. On his initiative the CUP organized in August 1909 celebrations in memory of the Polish chief Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798 – 1855), who died in Istanbul, and other Polish soldiers who had fought on the Ottoman side in the Crimean War. The celebration was broadly echoed in the press of the time both in the Ottoman Empire and in the lands of the partitioned Poland. It was an opportunity for the *Tanin* (“*Resonance*”) newspaper to stress the historical basis for the Ottoman-Polish cooperation and to commemorate the participation of thousands of Poles who had not only fought in the Crimean War, but had for decades rendered their services to the Ottoman Empire in various fields.<sup>22</sup> Polish journal, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (“*Illustrated Magazine*”), concluded that “*since the par-*

18 Ibid, p.77; See also: “Variété”, *Bulletin Polonais*, no:253, 15.08.1909, p.234.

19 The author of the article on the celebrations in memory of Adam Mickiewicz organized on 17 August 1909 calls him “*Seyfeddin Bey Gaştóf*”. See: “Adam Mickiewicz”, *Tanin*, 5 Ağustos 1325 , p.3.

20 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, “Gazetimizin programı”, *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 1, 16 Nisan 1326/29 Avril 1910.

21 BOA I.DUIT. 71/101: Imperial decree dated 25 Muharrem 1339 [9 October 1920]; The Education Order was introduced by the CUP in 1910. Aimed mainly at teachers and professors it allowed conferral on individuals outside the profession for “*extraordinary services rendered to education.*” See: Eldem, Edhem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p.385.

22 The original text says: “*Kırım muharebesinde Polonyalı mültecilerin ordularımızda pek büyük ve mühim mevki’ler işgâl ettiklerini herkes bilir. (...) Uzman tabib, asker, mühendis, eczacı olmak üzere müte’addid zevât ordularımızda hizmet ettiler; hâlâ hizmet-i hükümette bu adamlardan bir hayli zevâta veya oğullarına tesadüf edebiliriz. Polonyalıları Türklere rabt eden münasebat-i tarihiyeyi Kırım muharebesine iştirâk eyleyen zavât-ı fedakârane hizmetleriyle bir derece daha te’yid ve tevsik etmişlerdi.*” See: “Adam Mickiewicz”, *Tanin*, 5 Ağustos 1325 , p.3.

titions no one had seen a similar celebration for Poland.”<sup>23</sup> Shortly after, Gasztowtt organized another event that was an expression of gratitude for the Ottoman hospitality towards the political émigrés.<sup>24</sup> Even if these acts of sympathy might have been only symbolic, they still suggest that the partitions of Poland and subsequent engagement of the Polish political émigrés in the late Ottoman Empire did not go unnoticed among the Ottoman public. Moreover, given the diversified profile of their attendants and the echo that these events had in the contemporary press, Gasztowtt’s initiatives were an opportunity to draw the attention of the Ottoman public and others to the issue of Polish independence.

During his stay in the Ottoman Empire, Gasztowtt was continuously trying to gain the support of the Minister of War, Mahmud Şevket Pasha (1856-1913), to organize an Ottoman Foreign Legion. He saw this enterprise as a continuation of the nineteenth-century tradition of Polish legions in the Ottoman army and was convinced that it would attract a number of Polish volunteers.<sup>25</sup> For Gasztowtt, this initiative could potentially served several purposes: while he promoted the plan to Mahmud Şevket Pasha as a formation that would support the Ottoman army, he simultaneously presented it to the future Chief of State, General Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935), as a unit that could function as a reserve in the Polish independence struggle.<sup>26</sup> However, the project was never realized due to the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Pasha in 1913.<sup>27</sup>

Gasztowtt participated in Ottoman military activities and diplomacy during crucial political developments shortly before World War I. He joined the Ottoman army as a volunteer during the Tripolitanian War (1911-12).<sup>28</sup> In February 1914 he was appointed the Secretary of the newly established Ottoman Consulate General in the capital city of Macedonia, Salonika, which was the former political centre of the CUP

---

23 “Dzień Polski w Stambule”, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 4 września 1909, nr 36, pp.734-35.

24 “Nouvelle manifestation polonaise à Constantinople”, *Bulletin Polonais*, No:258, 15/01/1910.

25 The attempts to organize Polish legions in the Ottoman Empire date back to the first years after the partition of Poland. The first example was the 1797 legion organized by M.Denisko. Other noteworthy formations were: the 1849 Polish legion in Vidin, Mehmed Sadık Pasha’s Sultanic Cossacks’ Legion and W.Zamoyski’s Second Legion of the Sultanic Cossacks known as the Polish Division (*Dywizja Polska*) and the 1877 Polish legion. See: Łątka, *Odaliski, poturczyńcy*, pp.101-115.

26 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, “Herçe bad, abad” , *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 6, 26 Mayıs 1326/10 Juin 1910; “Turquie et Pologne”, *Bulletin Polonais*, No: 271, 02/15/1912, pp.48-49; AJP 701/1/32: Gasztowtt’s letter to Józef Piłsudski [14 April 1920].

27 AJP 701/1/32: Gasztowtt’s letter to Józef Piłsudski [14 April 1920].

28 “Variétés”, *Bulletin Polonais*, No:292, 15.11.1912, p.323; Gasztowtt, *Turcya a Polska*, p. 5.

and had been lost in the Balkan Wars.<sup>29</sup> The last two functions are perhaps most indicative of his engagement with the late Ottoman political realities.

During World War I Gasztowtt joined the Polish legion in France.<sup>30</sup> However, as soon as Poland regained independence in 1918, he returned to Istanbul. Given his experience and connections in the Ottoman Empire, he became one of the figureheads of Polish diplomacy in Turkey and during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-23) oversaw the Polish diplomatic rapprochement with the Ottoman government in Istanbul, and the Turkish nationalist government in Ankara respectively. On 17 November 1919 Tadeusz Gasztowtt was appointed as the First Class Secretary of the Polish Government's Delegation to the Sublime Porte.<sup>31</sup> He immediately introduced the Head of the Polish Delegation, Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz (1864-1924), to the heir apparent, Prince Abdülmecid (1868-1944), the last khedive of Egypt, Abbas Hilmi Pasha (1874-1944), and other notables in Istanbul.<sup>32</sup> Gasztowtt was also appointed to a mission that was pivotal from the perspective of Polish diplomatic relations with the future Republic of Turkey. Following the example of the French government, in the first months of 1921 General Piłsudski charged Jodko-Narkiewicz with establishing relations with Mustafa Kemal's government in Ankara.<sup>33</sup> Gasztowtt's report provides a very detailed account of his mission. After being transported to Ankara with the assistance of the secret National Defence Organization (*Müdafaa-i Milliye Teşkilatı*), he met with Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) (1881-1938) in early April 1921.<sup>34</sup> He returned to Istanbul with a note suggesting that the Polish Delegation “*send a permanent delegate to Ankara in order to establish lasting and friendly relations between the governments of Poland and Turkey.*”<sup>35</sup> Gasztowtt's mission was thus the first success of Polish diplomacy in establishing relations with the government in Ankara. On 29 December 1922 he was appointed the First Class Secretary of the Polish Govern-

---

29 “Polak sekretarzem ambasady tureckiej”, *Gazeta Lwowska*, Nr:46, Rok: 104, 27.02.1914, p.3; *Bulletin Polonais*, No: 309, 15/03/1914, p.93.

30 Reychman, Jan, “Tadeusz Gasztowtt” in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol.7 (Cracow, PAU: 1948-58), p.304.

31 HR.SYS. 2346/34: Letter from the Head of the Polish Delegation to the Sublime Porte W.Jodko-Narkiewicz to the Ottoman of Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Reşid Pasha [17 November 1919].

32 AJP 701/1/32: Tadeusz Gasztowtt's letter to Józef Piłsudski [14 April 1920]; See also: Chmielowska, Danuta, *Polsko-tureckie stosunki dyplomatyczne w okresie międzywojennym* (Warszawa: Dialog, 2006), p.137.

33 AAN. Poselstwo RP w Atenach, sygn.44, p.4: Jodko-Narkiewicz's report from 15.04.1921.

34 *Müdafaa-i Milliye Teşkilatı* was an intelligence organization which replaced in Istanbul the *Karakol* association after the latter was broken up by the Allied suppression in March 1920. It collaborated with the nationalists in Ankara. See: Shaw, Stanford, Shaw, Ezel, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, vol.2 (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), p.355.

35 AAN, MSZ, B.17676: Gasztowtt's report from his visit to Ankara in April-May 1921.

ment's Delegation in Turkey but was dismissed from this position shortly after, on 30 November 1923, "due to unknown reasons, and sent to Poland".<sup>36</sup>

After working in Warsaw as a correspondent of the magazine *L'Est Européen* ("The European East"), Tadeusz Gasztowtt returned to Turkey in 1928 as the press attaché of the Polish Government's Delegation (the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ankara since July 1930).<sup>37</sup> In his biographical note Reychman remarks that the scale of Gasztowtt's activities and his engagement with both Polish and Turkish political life after his return was not comparable to the activities during his youth.<sup>38</sup> Tadeusz Gasztowtt died on 23 January 1936 and was buried at the Feriköy Latin Catholic Cemetery in Istanbul.

## The Ottoman Pole – The Polish Ottoman: An intellectual at the crossroads between Poland and the Ottoman Empire

In their brief mention of Tadeusz Gasztowtt, Polish sources introduce him as a "turcophile" and assign him the role of a great advocate of Polish-Ottoman/Turkish friendship.<sup>39</sup> Drawing heavily from Gasztowtt's chief writings, the newspaper *Kürsi-i Milet/La Tribune des Peuple* published in Istanbul in 1910 and the book *Pologne et l'Islam* as well as the pamphlet *Turcya a Polska* published in Paris in 1907 and 1913 respectively, this section will explore what is hidden behind this rather general term. It investigates the main topics Tadeusz Gasztowtt addresses in his works and explores the challenges his attitudes represented. To what extent did Tadeusz Gasztowtt idealize the Ottoman Empire and its policies? Was his image of the Polish-Ottoman historical relations romanticized? Is it legitimate to speak of him as a Polish Ottoman or an Ottoman Pole?

Tadeusz Gasztowtt's attitudes disclosed in his writings are revealing of the political situation in the Ottoman Empire and the lands of partitioned Poland-Lithuania in the years preceding World War I. On the one hand, they feature the hopes for an international strengthening of the Ottoman Empire in the Second Constitutional Period; on the other, they defy the challenges that the CUP had to face in the interna-

---

36 For appointment see: HR.IM. 64/50: List of the staff of the Polish Delegation in Turkey [29 December 1922]; For dismissal see: AAN N0 56/32/T. AAN N0 56/32/T.:Letter from the Polish Embassy in Ankara to the Press Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [9 March 1932].

37 AAN N0 56/32/T. Letter from the Polish Embassy in Ankara to the Press Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [9 March 1932].

38 Reychman, *Polski Słownik*, p.304.

39 Reychman, *Polski Słownik*, p.304; Reychman, *Polacy w Turcji*, p.122; Dopierała, *Polska emigracja w Turcji*, p.271.

tional arena, as the Ottoman Empire continued to lose its territories in Europe and Northern Africa to the European Powers and emerging Balkan states.<sup>40</sup> In light of the emergence of newly independent Balkan states supported by Russia, Gasztowtt castigated the European inertia towards Polish independence. He deplored that Russian support for national movements in the Balkans coincided with the most extreme policies of Russification in the aftermath of the 1863 Uprising in Poland.<sup>41</sup> He also took the Ottoman side in the conflict over Macedonia. Sympathies with the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars were shared by representatives of the Polish intelligentsia grouped around General Józef Piłsudski and the Provisional Commission of the Confederated Independence Parties (*Komisja Tymczasowa Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych, KTSSN*).<sup>42</sup> As a response to the First Balkan War, in early 1913 two pro-Ottoman societies were established by Piłsudski: the Polish Society of Turkey's Friends (*Towarzystwo Polskie Przyjaciół Turcji*) in Cracow and the Polish-Turkish Artistic and Literary Society (*Société Polono-Turque d'Études d'Art et de Littérature*) in Paris. Gasztowtt was a member of both.<sup>43</sup> While the official aim of these societies was the establishment of mutual relations in the field of arts, their actual purpose was to further the Polish-Ottoman political collaboration against Russia.<sup>44</sup>

Gasztowtt's articles in *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples* are most revealing of his views on the Ottoman Empire in the early years of the Second Constitutional Period. He expressed in them sympathies with the CUP and regarded the 1908 Young Turk Revolution as a defining moment, which represented an opportunity for the Ottoman state to regain its position on the international stage. He called members of the Committee the "liberators of Turkey" and Istanbul in the aftermath of the 1908 Constitutional Revolution "a new capital of freedom".<sup>45</sup> Congratulating them in one of the introductory articles on their successful military reforms he expressed his hope that the new army would ensure peace and strengthen the empire.<sup>46</sup> Gasztowtt

---

40 Gasztowtt refers to events like annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria's declaration of independence in 1908; the Tripolitanian War of 1911-1912, the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the 1908-1913 question of Crete.

41 Gasztowtt, *Turcya a Polska*, p.10; Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l'Islam*, pp.303-304.

42 KTSSN was an alliance of Polish political parties from the Austria-Hungarian partition founded in November 1912. Its aim was to coordinate the pro-Polish independence activities and support Austria-Hungary in case of war. Further on the moods in the partitioned Poland on the eve of the Balkan Wars see: Albert, Andrzej, *Najnowsza historia Polski 1918-2000* (Warsaw: PWN, 2000), p.17; Chmielowska, *Stosunki polsko-tureckie*, pp.31-37.

43 Chmielowska, *Stosunki polsko-tureckie*, pp.33-35

44 *ibid.*

45 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, "Gazetimizin tarihi ve esbâb-ı neşri", *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 1, 16 Nisan 1326/29 Avril 1910.

46 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, "Ümidler boşa çıkmadı", *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 1,

saw the biggest threat to the success of the modernizing reforms in the policies of the Great Powers towards the Ottoman Empire. In his opinion, despite their declarations of friendship, Europeans did not want to see a strong Ottoman Empire.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, he dedicated considerable space in *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples* to describing the tactics that he thought the Europeans employed in order to divide and weaken the Ottoman Empire. As for the 19th century he highlighted that having embarked upon “*the crusade against Muslims*”, Europeans were inciting the Christian populations of the empire to revolt against their Muslim sovereigns by spreading the ideas of nationalism there.<sup>48</sup> He accused the Great Powers of trying to divide the Muslim populations of the empire through nationalist propaganda as well as the idea of erecting an “*Arab Caliphate*”, which could act as a counterweight to the Ottoman Caliphate.<sup>49</sup> Apart from the anti-Ottoman propaganda his main concerns were the influx of foreign capital and foreign education, both of which he regarded as vital dangers to Ottoman sovereignty.<sup>50</sup> Foreign capital would create financial dependency and therefore mean a loss of sovereignty. In Gasztowtt’s opinion, European instructors employed in the Ottoman schools were spreading propaganda supporting their own national interests. He feared that this could lead to excessive admiration for Europe and sentiments of contempt for Ottoman culture as well as a conviction of perpetual inferiority of the Ottomans vis-à-vis Europe. He warned that foreign instruction would incite the youth to transform their own country into “*a new France*” or “*a new England*” instead of striving towards “*a progressive Turkey*”.<sup>51</sup>

As a response to the Eurocentric world order Gasztowtt embarked on a pan-Islamic discourse and advocated an Islamic Union (*İttihat-i İslam*) under Ottoman leadership. He was convinced that other Muslim nations admired Ottoman Turkey and would provide a strong support in case any European Power tried to infringe on Ottoman sovereignty.<sup>52</sup> He even claimed that the Ottomans would be supported by the whole of Asia because of the commonality of interests against European imperialism and

---

16 Nisan 1326/29 Avril 1910.

47 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, “Avrupa’nın şark siyaseti”, *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 2, 30 Nisan 1326/13 Mai 1910.

48 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, “Avrupa’nın şark siyaseti (II)”, *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 3, 7 Mayıs 1326/20 Mai 1910.

49 Ibid.

50 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, “Avrupa’nın şark siyaseti (III)”, *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 4, 14 Mayıs 1326/27 Mai 1910.

51 Gasztowtt, Seyfeddin Tadeusz, “Tedrisat-i ecnebiyye”, *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 4, 14 Mayıs 1326/27 Mai 1910.

52 “Eğer Avrupa haddından fazla tehdid amiz bir vaz’iyet alacak olursa bütün Asya Osmanlılarla birlikte müdaf’aya hazırdır (...) 350 milyondan fazla Müslüman, hassiyat ve münaf’i müşterek pek çok akvam mahkume devlet ‘aleyheye mu’avenete hazırdır.” In: Gasztowtt, “Avrupa’nın şark siyaseti (III)”.

the growing moral and material power of the empire.<sup>53</sup> He compared the perceived lack of morality of European policies in their Muslim colonies with the treatment of the minorities by the Ottoman rulers, who in his view “*never persecuted their race, language and culture*”.<sup>54</sup> He claimed that Europe was afraid of the “*awakening Asia*”, the avant-garde of which were Islam and the Ottoman Turks.<sup>55</sup> Gasztowtt’s discourse was not an isolated case as the idea of transnational Muslim solidarity as a geopolitical concept can be traced back to the 1880s. The thesis of Islamic solidarity emerged after the Ottoman loss of territories in the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia in 1878 and was strengthened by the impact of the invasion of Tunisia by France in 1881 and of Egypt by Britain in 1882. The Japanese victory over the Russians in 1905, which was a turning point in the critique by Asian and African intellectuals of the Eurocentric world order, and the subsequent constitutional revolutions (in Iran in 1906, in the Ottoman Empire in 1908 and in China in 1911) established the consciousness of the era as the moment of the “*awakening of the East*”, roughly identified with the years 1905-14. In the Ottoman context one should mention the weekly magazine *Sırat-ı Müstakim* (“*The Straight Line*”) established in 1908 and edited by Mehmed Akif (Ersoy) and Eşref Edip (Fergan). The journal gathered Islamist modernists, during the first years of the Second Constitutional Period, who encouraged the solidarity of Muslims outside the empire as a means to provide it with additional strength.<sup>56</sup> Importantly, Gasztowtt’s publication was noticed by the Islamic press of the time and *Sırat-ı Müstakim* introduced it in one of its reviews, praising *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples* for introducing the Ottoman audience to the plight of their “*oppressed Muslim brothers*”.<sup>57</sup>

While condemnation of European imperialism figures prominently in all of Gasztowtt’s works, he did not critically address the issue of Ottoman imperialism. There are obvious pragmatic reasons for not criticizing the Ottoman Empire in *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*. However, the differentiation between the European rule in their colonies and Ottoman policies towards their non-Muslim population was a major concern in *Turcya a Polska*, which addressed a Polish audience. In the same paragraph where he described the Great Powers as “*insolent European colonizers*” and “*exploiters of Asians and Africans*”, he idealized the Ottoman rule over their non-Muslim subjects and praised Ottoman tolerance.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he claimed that Greeks,

---

53 Ibid.

54 Gasztowtt, “Avrupa’nın şark siyaseti (II)”.

55 Gasztowtt, “Avrupa’nın şark siyaseti (III)”.

56 Aydın, Cemil, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp.60-61, 77, 91-92; For *Sırat-ı Müstakim* see: Zürcher, Erik J, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p.131.

57 “Türk matbu’atı”, *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 5, 23 Mayıs 1326/5 Juin 1910.

58 Gasztowtt, *Turcya a Polska*, pp.6-7.

Serbs, Bulgarians and Armenians owed the emergence and formation of their respective national identities to Ottoman rule as well as the autonomy that their Churches enjoyed.<sup>59</sup> While presenting the Ottomans as great sovereigns, he argued that Christian populations had exploited the Muslim populations of the empire for centuries.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, he regarded the Ottoman “*excessive tolerance*” as their main mistake which had resulted in the loss of the Balkan territories. However, he justified it on the grounds that it was “*a noble mistake*”.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, whereas he deplored the cruelties inflicted on the Muslim populations of the Balkans during the 1877-78 Russo-Ottoman War, he excused the Ottomans from the massacres of the Armenian population of Anatolia and Istanbul of 1894-96 by attributing them to “*external provocations*”.<sup>62</sup> As for the First Balkan War (1912) he assessed it as an expansionist war of Balkan states against Muslims.<sup>63</sup> He juxtaposed what he regarded as the anti-Ottoman/anti-Muslim policies of the European Powers and Christian Balkan states with the political line of the Ottoman state. In his view, the aim of the Ottoman statesmen was to transform the Ottoman Empire into a modern state, where “*Muslim and Christian populations could live together in peace*”.<sup>64</sup> The events of the First Balkan War prompted a two-fold response by Gasztowtt. On the one hand; he expressed his discontent with the international inertia towards the cause of Polish independence; on the other hand, he presented himself as a supporter of the Ottoman side in the conflict.

Gasztowtt was convinced that the Polish cause and Ottoman cause were tied together. In *La Pologne et l’Islam* he stated that “*the common interests against the same enemies as well as the natural friendship has always existed between these two neighbours and should continue to be developed.*”<sup>65</sup> He summarized his claim in two main points. Firstly, thousands of Polish political émigrés had been welcomed in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Secondly, the Ottomans had never recognized the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>66</sup> *Turcya a Polska*, whose aim was to convince the Polish audience of the urgency to cooperate with the

---

59 Ibid, p.6.

60 Ibid, p.24.

61 Ibid, p.35

62 *ibid*, pp.19, 24-25; Zürcher states that as a result of the 1877-78 war 260.000 Muslims were killed or dies of starvation. Following the establishment of the nationalist organizations which aimed at the Armenian independence and attracting international attention through terrorist attacks in the late 1880s, the Ottoman government reacted by organizing the so-called *Hamidiye* troops. Their activities resulted in large scale Armenian massacres in the years 1894-96. See: Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp.80-81;83

63 *ibid*, pp.35-36

64 *Ibid*, p.36

65 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l’Islam*, p.340.

66 Gasztowtt, *Polska a Turcya*, p.10.

Ottoman Empire in order to regain independence, concludes with the following emphatic words: “*Only among Turks we found boundless hospitality, constant protest against partitions, religious tolerance as well as sincere brotherhood in the most tragic instances of our history.*”<sup>67</sup> In Gasztowtt’s view both nations were united by common interests and mutual enemies. Given their geopolitical location neither Ottoman Turkey nor Poland could enjoy full international security when the other one was not an independent state. In the light of the Balkan conflict both nations fell prey to the double standards of European diplomacy and became more vulnerable to their adversaries, the most important among whom was Russia.<sup>68</sup> For this reason, he regarded it as a key moment for Poles and Ottomans to unite in a common struggle.<sup>69</sup> In *Turcya a Polska* he picked up the Pan-Islamic discourse, which figured prominently in *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*. He suggested that Poles would likely find allies for their national cause among the Ottomans and other Muslims united around them.<sup>70</sup>

Gasztowtt’s key argument in favour of Polish-Ottoman cooperation was based on the cordiality of mutual relations in the past. To support this thesis he pointed out the Ottoman hospitality towards Polish political émigrés in the nineteenth century. Certainly, these sentiments were shared by other members of the Polish intelligentsia of the time. For instance, one of the bulletins of the earlier mentioned Provisional Commission of Confederated Independence Parties states that “*it is a Polish duty to follow developments in the Ottoman Empire and to remember the proofs of the Turkish friendship for Poland in the previous century.*”<sup>71</sup> However, Gasztowtt in *La Pologne et l’Islam* had a tendency to romanticize the nineteenth-century Polish-Ottoman relations and consequently, to overlook problems which characterized the Polish presence in the Ottoman Empire. His text suggests an active struggle of the Ottoman politicians for Polish independence in the post-partition period. It says: “*All European governments abandoned our cause [...] Only the Ottoman government fought loyally and invariably for the reestablishment of our national independence.*”<sup>72</sup> There is no doubt that the Ottoman Empire was an important centre for the Polish national activities. However, the Polish engagement in the late Ottoman public sphere was above all the initiative of the leaders of the Polish émigré organizations in Paris and London, among which the most active in the Ottoman Empire was Hôtel Lambert. In the 1830s its chief figures Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861) and General Władysław Zamoyski (1803-1868) discussed with the Ottoman diplo-

67 Ibid, p.51.

68 Ibid, p.16.

69 Ibid, pp.51-53.

70 Ibid, pp.37-43, 52.

71 Sokolnicki, Michał, *Polityka Piłsudskiego a Turcja*, “Niepodległość”, vol.6 ([Londyn] 1958), p.7.

72 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l’Islam*, p.138.

mats Mehmed Namık Pasha (1804-1892) and Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-1858) the creation of Polish colonies, as well as the assistance of the reforms in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>73</sup> The positive attitude of the Ottoman diplomats towards the idea of sending Polish officers to the Ottoman Empire was based on the assurance of their participation in the military reforms. Moreover, the Ottoman *fight* for Polish independence that Gasztowtt suggested is debatable. In the early 1830s the outcome of the Polish diplomatic mission to Istanbul, which aimed at the Ottoman support for the war against Russia, met with Ottoman passivity. The Polish deputy was merely assured that the Ottoman government would support the Polish cause only if France and England did so too.<sup>74</sup> It was only after the British and French intervention in the Egyptian-Ottoman War of 1841 thanks to which Russia was distanced from the Ottoman internal affairs, that the Polish political émigrés started coming to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>75</sup>

As a general rule the primary material quoted in *La Pologne et l'Islam* consists of memoirs, letters and passages from histories, which praised the Ottoman attitude towards Poland and Polish political émigrés. Gasztowtt did not juxtapose these views with less propitious ones, where such existed. An obvious consequence of this conscious selection of text was his idealization of the Ottoman Empire, in general, and of Polish-Ottoman relations, in particular. Although Gasztowtt dedicated over two-thirds of *La Pologne et l'Islam* to the Polish presence in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, he focused only on those activities of the political émigrés in the Ottoman Empire that concerned Polish independence. He presented them as a result of courtesy of the Ottoman statesmen and expression of solidarity with the stateless Polish émigrés. However, while Polish political émigrés established their agencies in Istanbul and organized Polish legions in the Ottoman army, they also participated in the military, administrative and infrastructural reforms of the Tanzimat Era. He does make important points, but it must be stressed that the benefits were mutual. While supporting the Polish émigrés, the Ottoman statesmen also profited from their presence.

Gasztowtt dedicated one of the chapters of *La Pologne et l'Islam* entirely to the cultural affinities between Poland and the Ottoman Empire which resulted from the shared borders and mutual relations between both states in the past. This was a sig-

---

73 Lewak, pp.27-28;36-37;53.

74 Lewak, *Dzieje emigracji*, pp.6-20; Dopierała, *Polska emigracja w Turcji*, pp.29-26.

75 Dopierała, *Polska emigracja w Turcji*, pp.67-68; As a result of the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty (1834) the Ottoman Empire received Russian military support in the conflict with Mehmed Ali of Egypt. The side-effect of the treaty was increase of Russian influences on the Sublime Porte. This made the plans of Polish-Ottoman cooperation discussed in Paris and London by the representatives of the Hôtel Lambert practically impossible to realize. For the Treaty see: Zürcher, *Turkey*, p.37.

nificant argument, which would later be developed by Polish turcologists like Zajęczkowski, Baranowski and Reychman. They used it to argue against the popular belief that Polish-Ottoman relations until the Treaty of Carlowitz of 1699 were based on a history of warfare and to debunk the myth of Poland as the bulwark of Christianity.<sup>76</sup> First of all, Gasztowtt stressed that Muslims had been present in Poland since the late fourteenth century. The light cavalry regiments of Tatars, who were invited to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by Prince Vytautas (c.1350-1430), had participated in every significant military campaign of Poland and Lithuania since the Battle of Grunwald (1410) against the Teutonic Knights.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the Tatar minority, together with Armenians and Crimean Karaims, played an important role for Polish-Ottoman (and Polish/Crimean and Polish/Safavid) relations. They were not only appointed as deputies and interpreters, who were sent to the Sublime Porte but were also intermediaries in bringing elements of the Oriental culture to the Commonwealth.<sup>78</sup> Gasztowtt gave examples of everyday objects that were absorbed by Polish culture, e.g. colourful carpets called *kilimki* (compare: Turkish *kilim*) and Turkish-style pipes.<sup>79</sup> As the most visible expression of Oriental influences on the Polish culture he spoke of Ottoman Turkish words that passed into Polish, e.g. *tytoń* (Tr. *tütün* - tobacco), *filizanka* (Tr. *fincan* - cup), *kałamarz* (Tr. *kalem* - pen), *arbuz* (Tr. *karpuz* - watermelon).<sup>80</sup> Gasztowtt stressed that the clothes and armour of the Polish nobility were fashioned after those of the Ottomans. He attributed this to the Polish fascination with the Muslim world.<sup>81</sup> However, the phenomenon is more complex, as the nobility's Oriental stylization of their appearance and lifestyles was an expression of Sarmatianism (*Sarmatyzm*). It cannot therefore be simply explained by their fascination for the Orient. By claiming they were descendants from the ancient Iranian tribe of Sarmatians, the Polish nobles tried to differentiate themselves from the Slav peasantry. Indicative of the phenomenon's complexity is the fact that the apogee of the appeal for the Oriental fashions among the nobles coincides with the period of the seventeenth-century Polish-Ottoman wars.<sup>82</sup> Although it is irrefutable

---

76 See: Baranowski, Bogdan, *Znajomość Wschodu w dawnej Polsce* (Łódź, 1950); Reychman, Jan, *Orient w kulturze polskiego oświecenia* (Wrocław, 1964); Zajęczkowski, Ananiasz, "Orientalistyka Polska a Bliski Wschód" in *Szkice z Dziejów Polskiej Orientalistyki* (ed. J.Reychman) (Warszawa: PWN, 1966), pp.7-54.

77 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l'Islam*, pp.320-336; See also: Sadykowicz, "L'Islam chez les Slaves: En Pologne" in *Kürsi-i Milel/La Tribune des Peuples*, No: 4, 14 Mayıs 1326/27 Mai 1910.

78 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l'Islam*, p.336; see also: Zajęczkowski, "Orientalistyka Polska a Bliski Wschód", p.7.

79 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l'Islam*, pp.336-339.

80 Gasztowtt, *Turcja a Polska*, pp.11-12.

81 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l'Islam*, pp.337-338.

82 On Sarmatianism and controversies related to it: Kieniewicz, Jan, "Orientalność Polska" in: *Sąsiedzi i inni* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1978), pp.76-93.

that shared borders and trade exchange resulted in the appropriation of some Oriental elements into Polish culture, Gasztowtt exaggerated in his attempt to draw cultural affinities. He compared Polish politeness and gestures used to show deference and exchange greetings with those used by Muslim inhabitants of the most remote corners of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>83</sup> His observation is interesting, but perhaps should be approached critically. Nevertheless, it is certainly indicative of Gasztowtt's fascination with the Muslim world. Even more importantly, it shows that he wished to view Polish history and culture beyond categories such as Poland as the bulwark of Christianity and Poles as saviours of Europe against Islam. Instead, he tried to point out that Poles were supported by Muslims in the crucial moments of their history. To demonstrate this he primarily spoke of the Polish political émigrés in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. Moreover, he pointed out that Muslim Tatars had treated the Polish cause as their own and that they had joined in the Polish ranks in the national insurrections of the post-partition period.<sup>84</sup> He did not regard being Polish and Muslim as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, he sought to show that elements of what he saw as Muslim culture penetrated even into the Polish everyday life and language.

As Tadeusz Gasztowtt's activities and writings demonstrate, he was simultaneously engaged with Poland and Ottoman Turkey. He regarded their interests as tied together and sought to justify this claim not only on political but also on historical and cultural grounds. One could argue that his allegiances to both the Polish and Ottoman cause could be explained by the political circumstances of the time. As discussed above, the idea of the Polish-Ottoman rapprochement in the years preceding World War I was not foreign to the pro-Polish independence circles. However, the ideas expressed in Gasztowtt's writings suggest that there was more to his political and intellectual engagement in the Ottoman Empire than the Polish independence cause. In his journalistic articles he commented on the empire's internal and external affairs and presented his own political vision of Ottoman Turkey. Convinced of the bright future of this country, he praised it and its people in his works that addressed both Poles and Ottomans.<sup>85</sup> His discourse is characterized by an interesting hybridity. He sought to reconcile in it his Polish and, most probably, Muslim identity; his advocacy of both the Polish independence cause and his political engagement in the Ottoman public sphere.<sup>86</sup> A recurrent idea in his discourse is the Polish independence achieved through the support of the nations united under the banner of Pan-Is-

---

83 Gasztowtt, *La Pologne et l'Islam*, p.337.

84 Ibid, p.325.

85 Gasztowtt, "Avrupa'nın şark siyaseti (III)"; Gasztowtt, *Turcya a Polska*, p.29.

86 Although we have no other confirmation of his adherence to Islam other than Hartmann's note, pro-Islamic character of his writings seems indicative.

lamism. What might now seem difficult to accept in a society where the image of Poland as the wall of Christianity is still alive and in the times when the stereotype of a Catholic Pole is widespread in Europe, seems to have been easily reconcilable for an intellectual who ardently argued in his works that Muslim Tatars were for centuries exemplary Polish patriots. Tadeusz Gasztowtt not only *liked Turks*, as Polish historians suggest, but went as far as identifying with them and actively engaging in the Ottoman public sphere. In the meantime he did not regard this as incompatible with his allegiance to the Polish independence cause. On the contrary, he dedicated a great part of his intellectual work to demonstrate that Poles and Ottomans had a common history, and shared cultural and political interests. His ardent advocacy of the Ottoman cause resulted in his idealization of the Ottoman rule both in the past and at the time of his writing. Even in his presentation of Polish-Ottoman relations, Gasztowtt romanticized the attitude of the Ottoman statesmen towards the Polish independence cause in order to support his conviction that the Ottomans had been the only allies of the Poles in the past and should remain so in the future. In this context the Polish Ottoman or the Ottoman Pole appears to be a category that accurately explains Tadeusz Gasztowtt's allegiances.

## Conclusion

This paper chose as its case study the figure of Tadeusz Gasztowtt aka Seyfeddin Bey, who was equally active in the Ottoman public sphere and engaged with the Polish independence cause. It sought to answer the question whether his political and intellectual engagement allows us to speak of him not simply as an *émigré* but rather as a Polish Ottoman or Ottoman Pole. Gasztowtt's activities were of a multifaceted nature. He was a diplomat and participated in military conflicts in the service of the Polish cause and the Ottoman state. His writings did not only strike a chord among Polish and Ottoman audiences, but were also commented on by the Arab press and had a moral significance for the Polish Tatars. His multifaceted heritage was therefore always likely to be appropriated by different national and religious circles. His intellectual work can be seen as a reflection of his life, during which his Polish and Muslim identities were by no means exclusive but rather overlapping. One of its most emphatic expressions was his determination to demonstrate that Ottoman hospitality towards Polish refugees went beyond political interests and Polish-Ottoman friendship had a solid historical and cultural foundation.

In view of serious political changes that took place in Poland and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, one can ask about the significance, or perhaps insignificance, of Gasztowtt's work. In his writings directed at both Polish and Ottoman audience he was

convinced that, in the case of a military conflict with European Powers, Ottoman Turkey would enjoy the general support of Muslims living beyond the Ottoman borders in the name of Pan-Islamic solidarity. In the years 1914-16, Ottoman political leaders stressed the Islamic character of the state so as to gain the loyalty of the Arabs and the support of Muslim inhabitants of the European colonies. However, this policy, the most explicit expression of which was the declaration of a Holy War (*cihad*) in 1914, eventually failed in both its aims.<sup>87</sup> Hallmarks of Gasztowtt's writings were his ardent advocacy of Polish-Ottoman friendship and his conviction of their common political interests. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm was not reflected by the behaviour of Turkish politicians after Poland regained independence. When one tries to assess the Polish-Turkish diplomatic relations in the interwar period, it is clear that Polish diplomats were much more active in their efforts to establish cordial political relations than the Ottoman, and later, the Turkish state. These attempts frequently met with difficulties as a result of political and economic rapprochement between Turkey and the Soviet Union in the first decade of the Republic.<sup>88</sup> Although Gasztowtt's political visions in respect to Ottoman Turkey and Polish-Turkish relations never came to fruition, some aspects of his intellectual activities influenced Polish Turcology. His *La Pologne et l'Islam* and *Turcya a Polska* are frequently quoted in the bibliographies of works on the Polish-Ottoman relations. Despite the imperfections of *La Pologne et l'Islam*, that have been pointed out, it was a pioneering work that attempted to view Polish-Ottoman relations beyond the history of warfare and stressed the influences that Oriental culture (or Muslim culture as Gasztowtt called it) exerted on the culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

This study sought to introduce Tadeusz Gasztowtt aka Seyfeddin Bey into the current historiography. He was active in the Ottoman public sphere in the period when Poland did not exist as an independent state. He belonged to a generation born in exile for whom Poland was above all a concept. Consequently, it is necessary to reinvestigate nationalist attempts at recuperating history and to keep an open mind as to the way individuals like Tadeusz Gasztowtt viewed their own 'national identity'. His activities and writings reveal his identification with the Ottoman political situation of the time, which he did not see as being incompatible with his allegiances to the Polish independence cause. As a way of contributing to this more general debate I suggested a more inclusive category of a Polish Ottoman or an Ottoman Pole, which seems to define more accurately the multifaceted nature of Tadeusz Gasztowtt's participation in the late Ottoman public sphere.

---

87 Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp. 130-131.

88 Chmielowska, *Stosunki polsko-tureckie*, pp.10-26;377-382.