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The Turkish Letters Of Ogier Ghiselin De Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador At Constantinople, 1554-1562: Translated From The Latin Of The Elzevir Edition Of 1663





Synopsis

A native of western Flanders, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq served in several posts as diplomatic representative for the Habsburg ruler Ferdinand I (King of Bohemia and Hungary, 1526--64, and Holy Roman Emperor, 1556--64). Busbecq's most famous mission was undoubtedly to the Ottoman Empire at the zenith of its power and glory during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. In four letters to his friend Nicholas Michault -- who had been Busbecq's fellow student in Italy and afterwards was imperial ambassador to the Portuguese court -- he details impressions on everything he saw and experienced in Turkey, including landscapes, plants, animals, Islam, ethnic groups, architecture, slavery, military matters, court practices, clothing, gender and domestic relations, and the Sultan himself. Suleiman (spelled Soleiman in the translation) the Magnificent is perhaps the most distinguished figure in Turkish history, and his reign saw the greatest extension of Turkish power. His devotion to his own religion and his tolerance of other faiths, his munificence and generosity, won him the fidelity of his subjects and the respect of his enemies. Busbecq was given the assignment of using diplomacy to check the raids of the Turks into Hungary, and he proved very effective with his quick sympathy, appreciation of the Turkish character, and untiring patience. He returned from Constantinople in the autumn of 1562 with an established reputation as a diplomatist. Busbecq's Turkish Letters is a treasure of early travel literature, reflecting Busbecq's rich literary talent, classical education, love for collecting antiquities, and remarkable power of observation. Delightfully entertaining reading, it also offers invaluable lessons on understanding and bridging cultural divides.

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Customer Reviews

Edward Seymour Forster (1879--1950) was a lecturer in classics at the University of Sheffield from 1905 to 1945. He translated a number of Aristotle's works as well as other ancient texts for publication in the Loeb Classical Library series. He also wrote several books, including A Short History of Modern Greece. His translation of The Turkish Letters first appeared in 1927. Karl A. Roider is a professor of history at Louisiana State University and the author of four books, including Austria's Eastern Question, 1700--1790.

Essential reading for the period--the eyewitness account of the Hapsburg Ambassador to Suleiman's court. Unfortunately, as usual and the publisher don't tell you what you're getting, which is close to fraud. This is the abridged edition. Get the Slatkine reprint from about 1870 for the full text.

A must read for all those who have an interest in the history of the Ottoman Empire and the role of a senior diplomat. Fresh, and revealing insights from a firsthand participant at the court of Suleymanie.

Very interesting and enlightening. I had a lively discussion about it for my class on the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals.

Very well written translation of historical recollections from an eyewitness to certain historic events.

This is an amazing read from an amazing era. One would venture into a world 180 degrees different than ours nowadays. Loved it

haven't finished

Incredible book. I would call this one of the greatest travel journals of all time. Ottoman Empire was a source of non-ending curiosity for the European Empires in 16th century, and Busbecq masterfully manages to put his experiences into words. What makes this book more special than any other travel journals of the time is that it is written by someone from an entirely different culture (also worth mentioning, Austria and Ottoman Empire were at war back then). Busbecq's views and attitude towards the Ottoman Empire also changes in time, while earlier letters are full of surprises for

Busbecq, as he travels and spends time in the Empire, he grows fond of it and even shows examples of admiration. Highly recommended for anyone who is interested in history.

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