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'Empire without end': John Finch, Orientalism, and Early Modern Empire, 1674-1681

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Abstract

Between 1674 and 1681, John Finch (1626-1682) and Thomas Baines (1622-1681) produced a substantial body of writing on statecraft, religion, and the Ottoman Empire, while Finch was serving as the English ambassador to the Ottomans. This thesis, which represents the first substantial scholarly engagement with Finch's political thought, reconstructs both his understanding of the Ottoman Empire, and his theory of sovereignty. By synthesizing a skeptical epistemology, a robust defense of the royal supremacy over the Church of England, and his understanding of Ottoman history and politics, Finch developed a theory of sovereignty in which liberty and coercion were equally useful and legitimate tools of governance. By placing his manuscripts in relation to current historiography on early modern Orientalism and the emergence of imperial ideology, this thesis offers a new interpretation of the relationship between scholarship and empire in early modern England.

Keywords: Thomas Baines, ecclesiology, England, John Finch, Ottoman-Anglo relations, Ottoman Empire, political philosophy, sovereignty, toleration.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Roberta Nanson, who has set the bar for intellectual perseverance unattainably high.

Abbreviations and Conventions

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
<i>HMC Finch</i>	Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Allen George Finch (5 vols., 1913-2004)
EEBO	Early English Books Online
LRO	Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
SP	State Papers
TNA	The National Archives of the UK

Conventions

Orthography. For the sake of clarity and accuracy, I have expanded most ligatures, diagraphs, contractions, and abbreviations, while noting all such expansions. Thus, e.g.:

y ^e	[th]e
y ^t	[tha]t
w ^{ch}	w[hi]ch
governm _t	govern[en]t
Lod ^{ps} :	Lo[r]d[shi]ps

I have retained some original forms, including the contracted ‘ed’ (as in “declard”) and the ampersand (‘&’). The original interchangeable i/j, u/v, ww/vv, and long s/s have been regularized *per* current usage. In all other instances, I have retained the original grammar, orthography, and capitalization.

Citations. The majority of the manuscript sources consulted are foliated; some, however, were written as reports, or intended for publication, and therefore paginated by their authors. Foliated manuscripts are cited as recto and verso (e.g., ‘76^r-82^v’), while paginated manuscripts are cited by shelfmark, document number (where appropriate), and page number. For uncalendared manuscripts, I have either cited the box number and the

manuscript date, if available; or in some cases, the manuscript date and its citation in the *HMC Finch*.

*Dates.*¹ English ambassadors to the Ottoman empire typically used both the Julian and Gregorian calendars until September 1752, when the Gregorian calendar was universally adopted. According to the Julian calendar, the new year began on March 25. Thus, the manuscripts cited regularly give the date in both styles during the period between January 1st and March 24th, when the two calendars differed: e.g. February 4/14, 1674/5, indicating February 4, 1674 in the Julian year, and February 14, 1675 according to the Gregorian calendar. I have retained the original dates for all manuscript sources.

Although documents prepared by English embassies occasionally listed the date according to both the Islamic *hijrī* calendar (*hicrī* in Ottoman Turkish) and the CE calendar, that does not appear to have been the convention during Finch's tenure. Because this research does not encompass Ottoman archival documents, my practice has been to cite manuscript sources using only the CE calendar. However, when referring to events from Islamic history, or to individual Ottoman subjects, I have given the dates as CE/ *hijrī* (e.g., Mustafa II, r.1693-1703/981-1004). This has also been my practice when referring to events between 1672-1681, when Finch lived in the Ottoman empire.

As a rough guide, the following table gives equivalences between the CE and *hijrī* calendars, based on January 1 in the Gregorian calendar:²

1660 CE		1070 AH
1670		1080
1680		1090
1690		1101

¹ Conventions for dates and place names have been adapted from Michael Talbot's *British Ottoman Relations, 1660-1807* (Boydell, 2017), xi-xii.

² I have converted between CE and AH dates using the calculator provided by Islamic Philosophy Online, using exact dates when possible, and otherwise based on January 1 in the Gregorian calendar ("Conversion of Hijri A.H. (Islamic) and A.D. Christian (Gregorian) dates", <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/hijri.htm>).

Terminology. Seventeenth-century European texts typically refer to locations in the Ottoman empire using older Roman or Byzantine names. Ottoman place names are given according to modern usage; hence, Istanbul instead of Constantinople, İzmir instead of Smyrna, Edirne instead of Adrianople, etc. Except for Istanbul, I have also included the archaic form, to reflect both modern usage and the archival sources; e.g., ‘Edirne (Adrianople).’

When quoting directly from European manuscript sources, I have retained archaic or polemic names for places and individuals. Where possible, I have attempted to identify the place or individual in question, and have supplied the modern usage either in square brackets, or in a footnote.³

³ The modern usage for Arabic and Turkish terms has been given *per* the IJMES Transliteration System for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (<https://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/docs/TransChart.pdf>).

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Introduction

I began to reflect Particularly upon the Greeke & Latin Historians; and I observd' that under both those Empires The Generalls & Emperours carryd' along with them in their Warrs also Pens, (for few Emperours like Caesar were fitted to write their own Commentary's) that might deliver their *Gesta* and achievem[en]ts with an advantageous varnish.⁴

John Finch, 1675-81

Napoleon considered Egypt a likely project precisely because he knew it tactically, strategically, historically [...] His plans for Egypt therefore became the first in a long series of European encounters with the Orient in which the Orientalist's special expertise was put directly to functional colonial use [...].⁵

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1979

John Finch (1626-1682) enjoyed a career that combined high-powered patronage with the consistent disappointment of those patrons. Over the course of thirty-five years, he corresponded fitfully with a number of notable philosophers, especially the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Anne Conway (who was, in fact, his half-sister); frustrated the Royal Society's ambitions for collaboration with their Italian counterpart; likely spied in Italy for English foreign intelligence; briefly acted as a representative on the Council for Plantations; wrote a philosophical treatise that was misattributed to his nephew until 1968; and served without great distinction as England's ambassador to the Ottoman empire between 1672-1681/1082-1091, until his recall under embarrassing circumstances. It is little wonder that he has been almost entirely overlooked by historians of philosophy, scholarship, and politics.

Nevertheless, Finch's unpublished manuscripts offer an unexplored source of evidence regarding the relationship between Orientalism, comparative religious thought, and the nascence of English imperial ideology during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. During the seventeenth century, the English reading public had access to a rapidly growing corpus of literature about Muslim religious and political life; as Noel Malcolm has noted, "any literate person" during the late sixteenth or the seventeenth century "could gain access to a substantial body of information about the

⁴ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 391.

⁵ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 80.

conditions of life and government in the Ottoman world.”⁶ Anders Ingram’s recent exploitation of digital research methods helpfully confirms this insight: from a statistically representative sample of 12,284 printed texts digitized through Early English Books Online, over one quarter referenced the ‘Turks’, with immense spikes in the normalized frequency of those references during the 1600s and the 1680s.⁷ To date, however, historians have yet to place early modern Orientalists texts and authors in the context of “the history of England’s fledgling empire.”⁸ Through a close reading and analysis of John Finch’s unpublished manuscripts, I argue that he offers concrete evidence that at least some early modern Orientalists sought to understand and to replicate the success of the Ottoman empire: and that at least some early modern theorists of European imperialism looked to Istanbul as a model.

In many ways, Finch’s methods and scholarly preoccupations were quintessentially orientalist – he engaged in comparative scholarship, focused on a Muslim polity, in relation to European imperialism. In this introduction, I begin by asking whether Finch’s political philosophy can be understood as ‘orientalist,’ in the sense described by Edward Said. While Said’s articulation of orientalism has become a familiar framework for conceptualizing Anglo-Ottoman relations, I will ultimately argue that his thesis is inadequate for understanding the nature of Finch’s orientation to empire. I then outline the structure, argument, and methods employed by this thesis, before situating my research with respect to the current literature on comparative religious scholarship, Orientalism, and empire. By carefully reconstructing the current scholarly discourse, I illustrate a significant gap – to date, scholars have not appreciated the relationship between early modern Orientalism and the emergence of European imperialism. Finch’s political philosophy, I argue, synthesizes epistemic skepticism and Orientalism with an

⁶ Noel Malcolm, “Positive Views of Islam and of Ottoman Rule in the Sixteenth Century: The Case of Jean Bodin,” in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 197.

⁷ Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans: Turkish History in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 7–9.

⁸ William J Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment: Orientalism, Religion and Politics in England and Its Empire, 1648-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 9.

orientation to empire; as a result, his thought is a first step in addressing this scholarly oversight.

1.1 John Finch: An early modern orientalist?

Writing between 1675 and 1681, John Finch observed that in antiquity, both Greek and Roman “Generalls & Emperours carryd’ along with them in their Warrs also Pens,” in order to produce accurate and politically useful accounts of their conquests.⁹ For Finch, the genre of historical writing was both epistemologically slippery, and uniquely suited to the needs of ambitious politicians. In his view, history was written by the victor: unless divinely inspired, a historian was liable to “commit to Paper Notorious Untruths. For in all Matter of Controversy whether of [th]e Sword or the Pen the Prevayling Party decipher the vanquishd’ under all the disadvantageous misrepresentations, that may give credit to the Armes or Opinions of those who have depressd’ the adverse Party.”¹⁰ Elsewhere, he asserts that the early Christian Church and the Roman Empire were co-dependent upon one another, and assisted one another by upholding temporal and spiritual control of conquered populations. “For as under the Temporall Empire of Rome, everything was counted and call’d Barbarous that was not Subject to its Rule [...] So under the Spirituall Empire nothing was allow’d to be Christian, but what follow’d the Practise of Rome.”¹¹ According to Finch, the Roman Empire’s ability to define conquered peoples justified those very conquests. Defining non-Romans as simultaneously ‘Barbarous’ in their civil manners and customs, and “Schismaticks or Hereticks” with respect to the Roman Church, was a key component of the empire’s justification and legitimation of conquest.

The interdependence that Finch posited between ecclesiastical history, scholarship, and imperial self-interest is strikingly familiar to contemporary readers. Indeed, his description of the relationship between ‘Warrs’ and ‘Pens’ instantly recalls Edward Said’s argument that modern European scholars were deeply implicated in projects of colonial expansion. For Said, Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt with parallel armies of scholars and soldiers was archetypical of an orientalist colonial dynamic, wherein the

⁹ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 391.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 387-8.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 77.

expertise of European scholars was leveraged for the purposes of imperial conquest and colonial government. In Napoleon's case, historical, political, and anthropological scholars were "enlist[ed]" to ensure the success of his military invasion, by creating a paper Egypt which could be known "tactically, strategically, historically and – not to be under-estimated – textually".¹²

It might be tempting, therefore, to interpret John Finch's writing about Islam as a seventeenth-century prototype of the form of orientalism that Said described. If we were to advance such an interpretation, we might suggest that Finch wrote at a historical moment when English state actors were looking ahead to the formation of an English empire. We might further suggest that he wrote about Islam and the Ottoman empire as a contribution to a broader contemporary project of knowledge-production about Muslims; and more specifically, that his scholarship should be understood as orientalist, in that it sought to make the Ottoman polity both knowable and other, in order to facilitate and justify English imperial goals.

Ultimately, I will make almost exactly the opposite argument.¹³ In my view, while Finch's Orientalism was clearly oriented towards imperialism, he sought to learn from the Ottomans – not in order to dominate, subvert, or denigrate Muslims, but in order to understand and adapt the Ottoman imperial model for an English context.

1.2 'Orientalism' and contemporary Ottoman historiography
Throughout this thesis, I use the term 'orientalism' to signify two related but distinct concepts. Edward Said's critique of orientalism in Western scholarship remains a touchstone for any research in Anglo-Ottoman relations. When gesturing towards to his thesis, or more generally, to the matrix of imperiousness and fascination with the exoticised 'other' that characterized (and characterizes) so much of the cultural, political and scholarly contact between Muslims and European Christians during the eighteenth century onwards, I have referred to 'orientalism' or 'orientalists.'

¹² Said, *Orientalism*, 80–81.

¹³ Nabil Matar and Gerald MacLean have also argued that Said's critique of modern European empires does not adequately describe the relationship between early modern European writers and the Muslim polities; see my discussion below, in sections 2.2 and 4.2.

I also use the term in a second, less ideologically-freighted sense. The capitalized term ‘Orientalism’ is used to refer to Europeans who used ethnographic, historical, or philological methods to produce scholarship about the religions and cultures of North Africa, East Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.¹⁴ While these concepts and usages inevitably overlap, distinguishing between the two allows for a more precise discussion of the multivalent relationships between scholarship and politics, in the context of the history of empires and imperial ideology.

It is also important to clarify my relationship to the historiography of the Ottoman empire, and of the early modern Islamic kingdoms more generally. The relationship between contemporary Europeanists and Ottomanists can be fraught: as Kaya Şahin has noted, while Ottomanists have made serious attempts at outreach, the reciprocation on the part of Europeanists has been disappointing.¹⁵ Furthermore, when written by Europeanists, studies of early modern British-Ottoman (and more broadly, Christian-Islamic) relations run a serious risk of what Suraiya Faroqhi has described as “the Orientalist trap.”¹⁶ At best, they risk offering studies which are psychologically nuanced in their portrayal of European Christians, but which portray Muslims as a monolith; at worst, they can inadvertently re-iterate the binaries which Said critiqued as endemic to French and Anglophone scholarship.

Early modernists have adopted several strategies to address or to mitigate this conceptual pitfall. The contemporary scholarship on early modern British-Ottoman relations dates to Nabil Matar’s ground-breaking *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge, 1998). Matar’s archival work was innovative and well-executed; however, the field in general has tended to be strongly tilted towards literary and discourse studies.

¹⁴ Gerald MacLean has recently critiqued the impact of Said’s scholarship on later scholars’ ability to critically distinguish between these two sense of ‘orientalism’ “Perhaps the most regrettable effect of Said’s important study has been that many scholars coming of age in the long shadow of *Orientalism* have felt free to dismiss the important historical studies produced by skilled and knowledgeable Orientalists, many of whom do not reproduce the imperializing gestures discerned and described by Said, while even those who can be so accused often have a great deal to teach us today” (Gerald MacLean, *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007], 10).

¹⁵ Kaya Şahin, “The Ottoman Empire in the Long Sixteenth Century,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2017): 230.

¹⁶ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 15–16.

Much of the subsequent scholarship has sidestepped the ‘orientalist trap’ by focusing on questions of dramatic representation, particularly the depictions of ‘the Turk’ and of Muhammad in early modern theatre.¹⁷ Another strategy has been to put European and Ottoman sources in relation to one another, as in Molly Greene’s excellent scholarship on the “shared world” of the early modern Mediterranean.¹⁸ Finally, an increasingly common strategy has been to focus on individuals, families, or groups who inhabited a trans-imperial or trans-cultural subjectivity.¹⁹

This thesis adopts a slightly different approach to the ‘orientalist trap.’ In my analysis of Finch’s thought, I do not seek to understand how he represented Muslims, but rather to reconstruct what he ‘thought he knew’ about Islam, Islamic history, and the Ottoman Empire. This, I contend, is a minor but important adjustment, which allows us to apply the tools of intellectual historians, rather than relying solely upon the methods of discourse analysis. Finch, I argue, analyzed the Ottoman model for empire in relation to a set of ecclesiological questions, which in turn translated his analysis into a language which was comprehensible in the context of contemporary English politics. It exceeds my scholarly competencies to analyze Ottoman sources as well, or to evaluate whether Finch’s understanding of Ottoman history and politics was accurate. However, by analyzing the ecclesiological framework for that understanding, we can illuminate how his writing functioned in its own context.

1.3 Argument and structure

As I discuss in the literature review below, Said’s ground-breaking work on modern orientalism and imperialism remains a dominant paradigm for understanding the relationship between comparative religion, Islamic scholarship, and empire during the

¹⁷ Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*, 9; and see e.g., Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); MacLean, *Looking East*; Matthew Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture*, 2013; Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England*, 2016.

¹⁸ Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Molly Greene, *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005).

¹⁹ See e.g., E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); John-Paul A Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull*, 2014; Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World*, 2016.

nineteenth century. By contrast, early modernists have argued that his framework is inadequate for explaining the political significance of seventeenth-century scholarship. In the process, however, they have often simply denied the possibility of a connection between early modern Orientalism and European imperialism.

As a result, the existing historiography has foreclosed a third possibility: that early modern writers thought they might have something to learn *from* Muslims. Closing off this possibility reflects the extent to which the presumed domination of Muslims by Christian Europeans continues to structure contemporary thought: it is, in a sense, unthinkable that early moderns might have, however grudgingly, sought political insight through the study of the more powerful and vibrant Muslim kingdoms.

Our stubborn reluctance to identify links between early modern European Orientalism and imperialism is compounded by a conceptual inability to understand how these texts functioned in context. In the wake of J.G.A. Pocock's seminal work, and the broader impact of the Cambridge school of intellectual history, scholars have become increasingly sensitive to the diversity of languages and discourses through which early modern thinkers expressed political ideas. As Justin Champion notes, "we now have accounts of the plural languages of political thinking in the period – jurisprudential, common law, historical – but despite this pluralism of discourse the historiography had almost entirely ignored the religious context."²⁰

In my view, the relationship between Orientalism and empire in Finch's writing can be excavated by understanding the theological framework in which he worked. Finch's political philosophy responds to a set of legal and political questions in Christian ecclesiology: what is the correct legal status of Jews, Muslims, and Christian dissenters within England? And, what is the correct relationship between the English crown and the established Church? Both of these questions are ecclesiological in nature: they pertain to

²⁰ Justin Champion, "Some Forms of Religious Liberty: Political Thinking, Ecclesiology and Religious Freedom in Early Modern England," in *Religious Tolerance in the Atlantic World: Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Elaine Glaser, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 50.

the theology of the structure and governance of the church, and its relationship to the state, and more broadly, to what we might call questions of ‘church and state.’²¹

Without arguing that ecclesiological writing itself should be considered a unique ‘language of political thought,’ Finch’s use of an ecclesiological lens frames his understanding of the Ottoman Empire in a way that was politically meaningful in the context of contemporary English politics. As I ultimately argue, Finch synthesizes Ottoman history and politics, a skeptical epistemology, and a staunchly royalist ecclesiology into a coherent ‘blueprint’ for empire. The first chapter offers an overview and analysis of Finch’s biography, focusing briefly on his personal life, before turning to an account of his embassy and his relationship with Thomas Baines. Unfortunately, little is known about Baines outside of his relationship with Finch; however, his surviving papers have been archived with Finch’s, and are extremely useful for clarifying Finch’s thought. Throughout this chapter, I also critique the existing historiography on Finch, which is in many ways hopelessly outdated.

In the second chapter, I reconstruct and analyze Finch’s political thought, with an emphasis on his articulation of religious toleration. Finch developed two parallel justifications for the liberty of individual conscience. Drawing from his understanding of the early history of Islam, and the history of the early Christian church, Finch argued that religious toleration was a normative principle of imperial statecraft. At the same time, as an extension of his skepticism regarding the possibility of absolute knowledge, he characterized the liberty of conscience as a ‘Humane Right.’ However, Finch simultaneously privileged the unified, and unitary, sovereignty of the monarch. By

²¹ In the post-Reformation Reformed traditions, ecclesiological controversies and scholarship focused on a broad range of theological questions: defining the church, identifying the true visible church, the nature of church authority, the proper structure and authority of the ministry, and church government (see Ian Hazlett, “Church and Church/State Relations in the Post-Reformation Reformed Tradition,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600-1800*, ed. Ulrich Lehner, Richard Muller, and A.G. Roeber [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016]). In this thesis, I use the term “ecclesiology” to refer to a particular subset of these questions, relating to specifically to church government. In the early modern English context, the sharpest cleavages over church government were between episcopal apologists, who prominently included John Jewel and Richard Hooker, and presbyterians such as Andrew Melville, who advocated for a non-hierarchical ministry and decentralized church government. My understanding of early modern ecclesiology has been deeply shaped by the scholarship of Jacqueline Rose, in particular, who has argued that ecclesiological debate in early modern England was inextricable from political factionalism, and that political debate was often framed and informed by ecclesiological discourse.

precisely defining both the ‘liberty of conscience’ and the church itself, Finch ultimately synthesized a theory of imperial sovereignty in which liberty and coercion – toleration and oppression – were equally legitimate tools of governance.

Finally, the conclusion builds upon my analysis of Finch’s political thought, and places him in the context of imperial ideology. Finch’s manuscripts offer archival evidence that at least some early modern Orientalists were motivated by an orientation towards empire; concomitantly, at least some early modern theorists of empire looked to Muslim models at the nascence of English imperialism.

1.4 Sources and Methodology

In order to reconstruct Finch’s political philosophy, I have relied upon a number of manuscript sources written during his residence in Istanbul, between 1674 and 1681. Finch and Baines produced a substantial body of writing about statecraft and government; while it is impossible to know how much has been lost, the surviving materials include three important letters to Edward Conway, a companion letter to Anne Conway, and extensive sections from an unpublished philosophical treatise.²² The first manuscript is a report by Finch written to Edward Conway, dated February 4/14, 1674/5, and sent from ‘Pera of Constantinople’ (see Appendix C for a complete transcription).²³ In this substantial report, Finch offers an historical and sociological explanation for the tremendous success and stability of the Ottoman empire.²⁴ The second manuscript is a letter written by Finch to Anne Conway, dated February 8/18, 1674/5, and is an abbreviated version of the earlier letter to her husband.

Thomas Baines also corresponded with Edward Conway, and on two occasions, sent lengthy discourses on politics and statecraft. The first is roughly the same length as Finch’s 1674/5 report, and is dated June 20/30, 1676; the second is dated May 11/21, 1681, and is likely Baines’ last correspondence before his death later that year. As I discuss below, in section 2.3, the two men saw themselves as intellectually inextricable,

²² BL Add. MS 23215, ff. 76^r-82^r, 84^r-85^v; LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, June 20/30, 1676, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 29; LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, May 11/21, 1681, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 111; LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9.

²³ Pera, now Beyoğlu, is a neighborhood on the European side of Istanbul. During the early modern period, it was a centre of trade and diplomacy, which housed the embassies from Christian European kingdoms.

²⁴ The document itself fills 13 folio sheets, and is approximately 4600 words in length.

and both of these letters contribute substantially to my reading of Finch's intellectual project.

The last manuscript is an extraordinarily long philosophical treatise in Finch's hand, including 544 quarto pages, and an additional 38-page précis (see Appendix B for a table of contents). The treatise appears to be the final draft of a work which Finch may have intended for publication, and which was drafted between 1675 and his return to England in 1681.²⁵ I have also drawn upon Finch's uncalendared notes for this manuscript.²⁶

1.5 Religious scholarship and empire: Reviewing the literature

To date, modern and early modern historians have differed sharply in their approach to the relationship between comparative religion, Orientalism, and imperialism. Amongst modern historians who focus on the history of scholarship during the nineteenth century, it is almost axiomatic that Orientalists and comparative religious scholars were in lockstep with European empires and imperial ideology.

By contrast, while early modern historians have produced detailed studies of both Orientalism and comparative religion during their era – the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially – they have either denied or simply avoided discussing a relationship to the history of European empires. Because this thesis posits exactly such a relationship, the following literature review illustrates the existence of this gap in some detail.

1.5.1 Comparative religious scholarship and modern European empires

Within the last decade, a wealth of historical literature has investigated the relationships between scholarship and European imperialism, colonialism, and intellectual universalism. Indeed, it has become almost a commonplace that empiricism and imperialism are closely related in European intellectual history. In many cases, scholars have argued, new scholarly disciplines like demography, anthropology, and comparative religious studies did not simply play a role in justifying and facilitating overseas empires;

²⁵ Sarah Hutton, *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101.

²⁶ LRO Finch MS, Box 4987, Packet of loose papers, uncalendared.

rather, their emergence in the mid- to late-nineteenth century was at least partially a consequence of the knowledge-gathering requirements of European empires.²⁷

Within this broad river of scholarship, the stream which is most relevant to this project evaluates the disciplinary history of comparative religious studies and Islamic studies in the nineteenth-century European academy. Tomoko Masuzawa and David Chidester have written two of the most important historical monographs about the disciplinary history of comparative religion. Their scholarship suggests that comparative religious thought, which emerged in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, is deeply embedded in European imperialism – both intellectual imperialism, as Masuzawa discusses, and the administration of overseas empires, as Chidester argues.

The subtitle of Tomoko Masuzawa's 2005 *The Invention of World Religions – Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* – gestures towards her broad historical argument. Until the early nineteenth-century (and as late as 1860, in some isolated examples), European scholars worked within a conceptual paradigm that divided the “religions and nations” of the world into “four categories rather unequal in size, value, and stature. There were Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and the rest.”²⁸ The ‘rest,’ whether termed ‘heathens’ or ‘pagans,’ were those who were either

²⁷ This literature is remarkably rich, and a full summary is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, for key examples, see Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 2011), originally published in 1993, for one of the earliest examples. More recent scholarship has focused on the relationships between the nineteenth-century academy and European imperial projects, and the emergence of those very disciplines as technologies of empire. See Karl Ittmann, Dennis Cordell, and Gregory Maddox, *The Demographics of Empire: The Colonial Order and the Creation of Knowledge* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), and see Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science, and Empire Classifying Hinduism and Islam in British India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), esp. ch. 5, “Categories to Count On: Religion and Caste in the Census,” which outlines the roles of British imperial census-taking in reifying Indian religious identities. For the role played by scientific knowledge networks in the maintenance of the British empire, see Brett Bennett and Joseph Hodge, *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks of Science across the British Empire, 1800-1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). See Alice Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013) for the emergence of anthropology in relation in imperialism, and see Michelle Hamilton, *Collections and Objections: Aboriginal Material Culture in Southern Ontario*. (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014) for amateur anthropology and museology as an aspect of settler colonialism at the periphery of the British empire, in late-nineteenth century Canada. Finally, see James Louis Hevia, *The Imperial Security State: British Colonial Knowledge and Empire-Building in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) for the production of colonial archival knowledge by British military intelligence itself.

²⁸ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 47.

ignorant of or resistant to Christianity, “spiritual rustics, as yet untouched by the civilizing knowledge of Christianity.”²⁹ Jews and Muslims (or ‘Mohammedans,’ as early moderns patronizingly phrased it) “did possess religion, but obviously they did not have it quite right” – either they rejected Christ as the Messiah, “or worse, they chose to follow a false prophet.”³⁰

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, this once-hegemonic taxonomy had been utterly replaced by the discourse of ‘world religions,’ a consistent list of ten or a dozen designated “major religions, that is, those conspicuous-enough religions distinctly and properly identified as now existing in the world.”³¹ Linguistically, the early modern quadripartite division between Christians, Jews, Muslims, and ‘other’ was rapid and complete. In a chapter titled “The Birth Trauma of World Religions,” Masuzawa offers a masterful forensic reconstruction of the appearance of *Wereldgodsdiensten* and *Weltreligionen* in Dutch and German scholarly vocabulary in the 1870s; the translation of these new terms into the English ‘world religions,’ notably in Cornelius Tiele’s 1885 “Religions” entry in the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; and the remarkably swift naturalization of that translated term in Anglophone, especially American, scholarship.³²

Importantly, however, this rapid shift in academic vocabulary disguises and reiterates the ongoing subordination of non-Europeans and non-Christians to a Eurocentric worldview. During the late-nineteenth century, European Arabists like Abraham Keunen (1828-1891) and Otto Pflieger (1839-1908) helped to crystalize a “concept of Islam as the epitome of stifling rigidity, intolerance, and fanaticism.”³³ In Masuzawa’s view, the remarkable durability of this flagrantly counter-factual discourse represents the nineteenth-century fulfillment of an early modern political necessity. As she observes – and as we will note many more times by the end of this thesis – early modern European Christians had few reasons to consider themselves superior to the Muslim worlds of the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³² *Ibid.*, 109.

³³ *Ibid.*, 197.

Mediterranean, and very good reasons to feel insecure in their engagements with Islam.³⁴ Masuzawa suggests that “the conquest of Islam in this complicated sense, then was the utmost exigency for European modernity at the moment of its inception.”³⁵ In short, reifying ‘Islam’ within the discourse of ‘world religions’ both neutralizes early modern Christian Europe’s greatest threat, and replicates the prejudices of the early modern quadripartite paradigm within contemporary discourse.

Masuzawa’s scholarship is a cornerstone contribution to the history of comparative religion, and its implication in the broader nineteenth-century project of European universalism. Our focus narrows with David Chidester’s more recent *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago, 2014), which locates “the rise of an academic study of religion” in Great Britain “within the power relations of imperial ambitions, colonial situations, and indigenous innovations.”³⁶

Chidester’s study focuses on the complex matrix of “mediations – imperial, colonial, and indigenous” through which local scholars in South Africa, and scholars at the centre of the British empire, collaborated in the production of a corpus of knowledge about South African indigenous religions, particularly Zulu religion, between the 1870s and the 1920s.³⁷ His major contribution is to precisely describe the process of scholarly information flows between the imperial centre and the periphery. Chidester posits that the representation of South African religion was subject to a “triple mediation”: an indigenous mediation between missionary Christianity and ancestral traditions; a colonial mediation on the part of local experts between conditions in the South African colony and the demands of the imperial centre; and an imperial mediation which assimilated both the indigenous and colonial mediations to an imperial time frame, which encompassed both an imaginary “primitive” past and a “civilized” future.³⁸ Religious categories emerged out of complex reciprocal intellectual encounters between local and outside intellectuals.

³⁴ See Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-20 and *passim*.

³⁵ Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 186.

³⁶ David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), xi.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, 5–11.

They “were not simply discovered by outside observers,” but “emerged through complex interrelations, negotiations, and mediations between alien and indigenous intellectuals.”³⁹

For Chidester, the emergence of comparative religious studies and the late British Empire are inextricable from one another. On the one hand, he characterizes imperialism as the midwife of the new scholarly discipline. British scholars were self-conscious of their role in a scholarly arms race with imperial competitors in the Netherlands and Germany. In 1902, the imperial theorist Edwin Hartland (1848-1927) warned that Britain’s “much-vaunted [...] genius for government and colonization will not save us” if the empire did not more aggressively invest in religious and anthropological research.⁴⁰ Although the British government ultimately ignored calls to formally support a commission for the study of African religion, British scholarly networks picked up the slack; “by the beginning of the twentieth century, the British had assembled an extensive archive on savage beliefs, practices, and customs all over the world.”⁴¹

The crown jewel of this ‘empire of religion’ was the fifty-volume *The Sacred Books of the East*, published between 1879-1910. This monumental archive was edited by the philologist Max Müller, regarded as the progenitor of modern comparative religious studies. During February and March 1870, Müller delivered a series of lectures to the Royal Institution of Great Britain, which both Chidester and Masuzawa consider the birth moment of comparative religion.⁴² Müller strongly foregrounded the interests of the British empire at this formative moment, famously saying “let us take the old saying, *Divide et impera*, and translate it somewhat freely by ‘Classify and conquer.’”⁴³

In short, according to Chidester, imperial interests were inextricable from comparative religion, at its earliest moments. On the other hand, he views comparative religion as equally inextricable from the British Empire itself. Religious studies, he claims, was the quintessential imperial discipline. “More than any other imperial science,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 61–69; Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 209–56.

⁴³ Chidester, *Empire of Religion*, 62.

comparative religion dealt with the essential identities and differences entailed in the imperial encounter with the exotic East and savage Africa.”⁴⁴

While clearly indebted to Masuzawa’s earlier analysis, Chidester’s argument differs in two important ways. Whereas Masuzawa focuses on the irruption of comparative religion in the European and American centres of empire, Chidester examines the discipline’s relationship to empire as a reciprocal enterprise between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery. More importantly, their projects characterize the precise relationship between comparative religion and modern European imperialism quite differently. For Chidester, the nexus is the scholarly production of an archive of knowledge that closely served the interests of empire. Although much more historically nuanced than Said, the broad strokes of this argument are profoundly similar to the orientalism thesis. Masuzawa, by contrast, foregrounds nineteenth-century Islamic scholarship as the connective tissue between comparative religion and empire. As we have discussed, she views the congealing of an ossified, ahistorical, and intolerant representation of Islam as European scholars’ key contribution to modern empire. The Islamic polities in North African and the Ottoman empire, she argues, were *the* ideological and military threat to early modern Christian Europe. ‘Defanging’ and delegitimizing Islam was “the utmost exigency for European modernity at the moment of its inception,” an act of nineteenth-century intellectual violence that fulfilled a centuries-old imperial need and enabled subsequent European domination of the Muslim world.⁴⁵

1.5.2 Nineteenth-century Orientalism and European imperialism

Masuzawa and Chidester are key scholars for broadly understanding the relationships between nineteenth-century religious scholarship and European universalism and imperialism. Taken together, they suggest that comparative religion emerged in the mid-to late-nineteenth century academy, and that this new discipline played a key role in the intellectual underpinnings of modern European imperialism, through the creation of imperial archives, and the intellectual delegitimization of Islam. Within this framework, scholars have also written more narrowly about nineteenth-century Orientalist

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁵ Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 186; see also 199-201, 204-6.

scholarship, and its relationship to European imperialism. This literature is a vital contribution to the broader study of comparative religion and empire, especially considering that, by the 1920s, over half of the world's Muslim population lived within the jurisdiction of the British empire alone.⁴⁶ Unsurprisingly, then, scholars have investigated the role played by Islamic scholarship in not only the British, but also the German and French imperial contexts.

In *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge, 2009), Suzanne Marchand investigates the often-vexed relationships between practitioners of *Orientalistik* – philologists, scholars of modern languages, and comparative religious scholars – and German political actors between the 1820s and 1918. Chapter 8 is especially relevant to this project: titled “Orientalism in the Age of Imperialism,” it focuses on the period between 1884 and 1914, when modern Germany possessed an overseas empire in Africa, with some smaller possessions in southeast Asia.⁴⁷

During the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, German Orientalists were substantially more interested in the “ancient pagan cultures of India, China, Egypt, and Persia” than in their contemporary descendants.⁴⁸ The contemporary Islamic world, in particular, was largely ignored, being too ‘new’ for an academic culture oriented towards ancient philology and critical Biblical scholarship. Furthermore, German academics strongly disapproved of the missionaries and diplomats who attempted to contribute to Orientalist scholarship during the early nineteenth century, considering them insufficiently competent to do serious research.⁴⁹ Although these attitudes did begin to change as Bismarck’s unified Germany “joined the colonizing powers,” German academics remained consistently more interested in “antiquity and ‘pure’ languages,” to

⁴⁶ Francis Robinson, “The British Empire and the Muslim World,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Judith Brown and William Louis, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 399. See p. 400 for a very useful map juxtaposing the late British empire with the Muslim world. The list of Muslim-majority regions and present day countries encompassed by the British empire by the 1920s is frankly staggering; a partial list includes Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, most of the Arabian peninsula and West Asia, present-day India and Pakistan, and large portions of present-day Malaysia.

⁴⁷ Suzanne L Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 333–86.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.

the detriment of modern Arabic or Islamic study. The most important modern Arabist, Martin Hartmann, "raged" that "even when modern authors did touch on the modern history of the Islamic states, [...] they did not take the subject very seriously."⁵⁰

One of Marchand's central arguments is that, while German academics were at the cutting-edge of Orientalist scholarship between the 1870s and 1914, their research was an awkward fit with the demands of imperialism. At an institutional level, both the German state and academy were slow to invest in contemporary, politically 'relevant' Orientalist scholarship, to their mutual frustration. It was not until 1885 that the University of Berlin founded the Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen, which existed primarily to train young officials in the modern languages needed for trade, diplomacy, and colonial administration in Africa and southeast Asia.⁵¹ And although nineteenth-century German Orientalists were often very interested in, and sympathetic to colonialism – younger scholars, in particular, were "tempted by the siren song of 'relevance'" – their discipline was rarely very *useful* to German colonialists.⁵² German *Orientalistik* was rooted in biblical exegesis, the study of ancient civilizations, and ancient philology: "even if everyone had been on the same political page [...] it was hard to turn this ship around quickly and to root out older values and traditional scholarly pursuits for the sake of being 'useful.'"⁵³

Historiographically, this line of argument places Marchand in a productive tension with Said's critique of orientalism. Although German orientalists were not, in her view, central to an imperial project, they were undoubtedly politically aligned with colonial policy. Ultimately, they "were most useful in the implementation of 'indirect' colonialism, the practice of working with and through local customs, institutions, and officials rather than seeking wholesale and immediate Europeanization."⁵⁴ However, she

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 344.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 350.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 344.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 346. As Marchand notes, at a broader level, German academia was culturally resistant to any state-directed efforts to make it 'useful.' "There were pervasive problems in the introduction of colonial institutions into a German cultural world built around the Humboldtian ideals of *Bildung* and *Wissenschaft*. The mere idea of practical science clashed with the deep-seated conviction that the state should encourage learning for its own sake" (354).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

also argues that German Orientalists were far from univocally supportive of empire, and that their disciplinary commitments led them to be far less concerned with the modern questions of controlling local populations, than with “traditional, almost primeval *Christian* questions” that would be instantly recognizable to an early modern humanist.⁵⁵ For Marchand, “Said was engaging in a deliberate sort of deck-stacking [by] focusing exclusively on British and French literature and scholarship produced during the high imperial age.”⁵⁶ Their German Orientalist counterparts were much less straight-forwardly imperial.

In light of Marchand’s critique, it should perhaps be unsurprising that George Trumbull IV’s *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914* maps much more comfortably onto the Saidian thesis. Methodologically, Trumbull’s argument differs from the studies previously considered. Rather than focus on a particular scholarly *discipline*, he argues that the scholarly *genre* of ethnography emerged in direct response to the epistemological requirements of French imperialism. During the French Third Republic, ethnographic writing, “drawn from participant observation and research in vernacular languages,” particularly Arabic, “articulated with an eye towards the maintenance of power represented the fundamental means through which agents of French colonialism [...] came to terms with Algeria and with Algerian Islam.”⁵⁷

Trumbull’s archival research is impeccable, but it must be said that this is a familiar line of argument. The relationship he posits between Islamic scholarship, the colonial archive, and imperial power closely follows from the insights of Said and Foucault. This exposes him to Marchand’s sobering critique of cultural historians of imperialism, who often fall into a “presumptuous and rather condescending [...] conception [...] that all knowledge is power, especially since the prevailing way of understanding this formulation suggests that power is something sinister and oppressive.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, xix.

⁵⁷ George Trumbull IV, *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

⁵⁸ Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, xxv.

In my view, however, Trumbull avoids theoretical over-determination through his focus on the genre of ethnographic writing. This focus on an academic genre, rather than a discipline, leads Trumbull to posit a rather different relationship between individual scholars and colonialism than Marchand. Whereas German practitioners of *Orientalistik* guarded their academic turf against missionaries and diplomats, French ethnographers in Algeria were often colonial administrators themselves. For example, the most comprehensive ethnographic study of Algerian Sūfism, *Marabouts et Khouan: étude sur l'Islam en Algérie*, was written in 1884 by the chief of the Native Affairs service, Louis Rinn, who later became the colonial Conseiller d'état. In his own words, Rinn's intended audience was "all the French agents who, with whatever title, in Algeria or abroad, have the delicate and difficult mission of monitoring the religious or political machinations of Muslims."⁵⁹

As a means of knowledge production, ethnography ably met the French imperial need to "organize knowledge" – and by extension, colonized people – "into discrete, utilitarian facts."⁶⁰ In the process of policing religious difference, French ethnographers also superimposed cultural narratives onto their textual accounts of Algeria. One of the most striking examples is their profound unease with Sūfism, which the French viewed as politically subversive, and the resulting effort to govern Muslim religious practice through scholarship and administration. Trumbull argues that, since the French revolution in 1789, "French republicans had posited Catholic orders as a fundamental threat to secular government, and it required only the easiest of transpositions to extend the image to Sūfī orders, as well."⁶¹ By equating the Sūfī *ṭuruq* with Catholic religious orders, French ethnographers not only reframed the Islamic threat to imperial order through their own historical lens, but also stimulated French paranoia about the political implications of Sūfism.

Trumbull has also contributed a chapter to one of the most important recent volumes on European empires and Islam. Edited by David Motadel, *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford, 2014), the collection is an attempt to consolidate and re-direct the

⁵⁹ Trumbull IV, *An Empire of Facts*, 21.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

scholarship on nineteenth century empires and Islam. In an introductory review essay, Motadel suggests a new analytical framework for Orientalist scholarship and imperialism, with chapters subdivided by their foci on ‘Islam and Imperial Rule,’ ‘Islam and Anti-Colonial Resistance,’ and ‘Islam and Colonial Knowledge.’⁶²

Edward Said casts a long shadow over this last section, which includes papers on the relationships between scholarship and power in the German, French, British, and Japanese empires. As Motadel observes in his introduction, Foucauldian and Saidian ideas have influenced “much, though not all, historical scholarship on the connections between knowledge and colonial power.”⁶³

The chapters which follow evidence a variety of stances towards this disciplinary legacy. As in his earlier monograph, George Trumbull’s chapter on “French Colonial Knowledge of Maraboutism” is clearly indebted to postmodern analyses of power and knowledge, arguing that “the Algerian colonial bureaucracy institutionalized the production of knowledge about marabouts” for both scholarly and administrative purposes.⁶⁴ In chapters on Islamic scholarship in the German and Japanese empires, Rebekka Habermas and Cemil Aydin continue to complicate our view of the Saidian thesis.⁶⁵ Japanese scholarship, for instance, occupied a complex and ambivalent position relative to Orientalist thought; although Japanese scholars were deeply interested in pan-Islamic thought, and the possibility of finding common cause with Muslims resisting European empires, their writing was fundamentally indebted to a Eurocentric division between Orient and Occident.⁶⁶ By contrast, Faisal Devji’s contribution, “Islam and British Imperial Thought,” energetically confronts Said by arguing that “Orientalism operated in a thoroughly ambiguous and even contradictory way as far as modern or

⁶² David Motadel, “Introduction,” in *Islam and the European Empires*, ed. David Motadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–31, esp. 2–4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁶⁴ George Trumbull IV, “French Colonial Knowledge of Maraboutism,” in *Islam and the European Empires*, ed. David Motadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 270–71.

⁶⁵ Rebekka Habermas, “Debates on Islam in Imperial Germany,” in *Islam and the European Empires*, ed. David Motadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 231–54; Cemil Aydin, “Islam and the European Empires in Japanese Imperial Thought,” in *Islam and the European Empires*, ed. David Motadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 287–302.

⁶⁶ Aydin, “Islam and the European Empires in Japanese Imperial Thought,” 301–2.

colonial forms of domination are concerned.”⁶⁷ British imperial thinkers never offered “‘good’ and ‘bad’ versions of Orientalism,” he argues, and included a long-standing effort to legitimate Britain’s empire in terms of Islamic political norms.⁶⁸

Without claiming to be comprehensive, the preceding discussion is a firm foundation for three conclusions about the recent literature on scholarship and modern imperialism. First, comparative religion emerged as a modern academic discipline during the nineteenth century, and was profoundly implicated in European projects of intellectual universalism and political imperialism from the moment of its conception. Second, nineteenth-century Orientalist scholarship operated either as a subset or a close relative of comparative religious scholarship, and to various degrees, was invested in European imperialism. British Orientalists saw their field as a critical edge over competing European powers: French Orientalists took their cues directly from the epistemological and material needs of empire, and were often colonial administrators themselves: and while German Orientalists were often ambivalent towards colonial functionaries, and were not directly ‘useful’ to German colonization, they nevertheless contributed indirectly to the German Empire, and saw themselves in competition with their French, British, and Dutch scholarly peers. Finally, while Said’s orientalism thesis imperfectly accounts for the history of German scholarship, and is variously adapted or rejected by contemporary historians, it remains a remarkably durable hermeneutic for understanding the entanglements of nineteenth-century comparative religion, Orientalism, and modern European empires.

1.5.3 Comparative religion in early modernity

When we turn to the literature on seventeenth-century Orientalist scholarship, a very different picture emerges. Historians have written extensively, if sporadically, about both comparative religious thought and Orientalist scholarship during the early modern period. Unlike historians of nineteenth-century scholarship, however, early modern intellectual historians have not explicitly asked whether or how this scholarship relates to the history of empire during the seventeenth century. In the overview which follows, I first discuss

⁶⁷ Faisal Devji, “Islam and British Imperial Thought,” in *Islam and the European Empires*, ed. David Motadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 254.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 268; 259-61, and *passim*.

the scholarly literature on comparative religious thought and Orientalism during the seventeenth century, in order to illuminate this gap.

Over the last thirty-five years, two generations of early modern historians have argued that comparative religious thought has its origins in the seventeenth century, not the nineteenth. Clearly, this literature clashes with the scholarship we have previously reviewed: in fact, what I have not acknowledged until now is that the birthdate of comparative religion is a matter of significant scholarly controversy (by the genteel standards of intellectual history). As Peter Harrison put it in 1990, “most accounts of the history of comparative religion or of *Religionswissenschaft* have the ‘dispassionate’ study of the religions beginning in the nineteenth century [...] Yet for a number of reasons the science of religion had to begin earlier.”⁶⁹ Resolving this debate would substantially exceed the scope of this thesis; accordingly, I will confine myself to establishing that there is, in fact, a robust literature dealing with seventeenth-century comparative religion, and to outlining some of the broad features of that literature.⁷⁰

The first generation of this scholarship is firmly rooted in Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s classic study, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1st ed. Harper Collins, 1962). Although frequently cited as a canonical text, Smith arguably went much further than any subsequent scholar by claiming that the idea of ‘religion’ was unhelpful as an explanatory category, and should be replaced by a new framework of “personal faith” and “cumulative tradition.”⁷¹ According to Smith, “rather than addressing ourselves to the problem ‘What is the nature of religion?’, I suggest that an understanding of the

⁶⁹ Peter Harrison, “*Religion*” and the *Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

⁷⁰ In my view, this historiographic debate is likely intractable, at least until scholars can agree more precisely on what is meant by ‘comparative religious thought,’ and more fundamentally, how the history of comparative religion should adapt to our rapidly shifting understanding of the relationship between religion and the Enlightenment. Although the claim that ‘religion is back’ is by no means recent, a new generation of scholars has begun to energetically re-evaluate the supposed secularity of the European Enlightenment, and the profound role of religious intellectual tools, aims, and commitments in Enlightened thought. See Jonathan Sheehan, “Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of Secularization: A Review Essay,” *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 4 (2003): 1061–1080 for an excellent introduction to and consolidation of this literature. More recently, see Jonathan Sheehan, “Thomas Hobbes, DD: Theology, Orthodoxy, and History*,” *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 2 (2016): 249–274; William Bulman and Robert Ingram, *God in the Enlightenment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁷¹ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 156.

variegated and evolving religious situation of mankind can proceed, and indeed perhaps can proceed only, if that question in that form be set aside or dropped, as inapt.”⁷²

Although, according to Smith, the intellectual category of ‘the religions’ would not emerge in its modern form until the mid-nineteenth century, its roots lie in early modernity. Etymologically, the term ‘religion’ derives from the Latin *religio*, which for Lucretius and Cicero referred narrowly to the external, public rites offered to the gods.⁷³ Originally, the term did not encompass ‘faith’, inward belief, or a sense of the non-intellectual or irrational, all constituent components of the modern category of ‘religion.’⁷⁴ Even the early Christian Church, he argues, did not understand itself in terms of ‘religion.’ Rather, for the church fathers, the key intellectual category was that of “‘Church’ (Greek and Latin, *ecclesia*), for the structured – and dynamic – community that was injected into” the less formalized classical world.⁷⁵ In his treatment, Marsilio Ficino’s 1471 *De Christiana Religione* is a watershed in the evolution towards a recognizable concept of ‘religion,’ which includes the systematization of rituals and communities, and an emphasis on interior belief. From the seventeenth century onwards, “Europeans and especially the leaders of their thought [...] gave the name ‘religion’ to the system, first in general but increasingly to the system of ideas, in which men of faith were involved or with which men of potential faith were confronted.”⁷⁶

Early modernists did not immediately incorporate Smith’s broad insights into their studies; however, by 1990, both David Pailin and Peter Harrison had written important monographs which firmly asserted that comparative religious thought emerged from early modern intellectual culture. This was an historiographic innovation for their more specialized audiences. As Harrison mildly complains in *‘Religion’ and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1990), even Eric Sharpe’s seminal history of comparative religion devoted only three pages to early modern thinkers.⁷⁷ For Harrison,

⁷² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19–23.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; 45–47.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 24; 23–31.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷⁷ Harrison, “*Religion*” and the Religions in the English Enlightenment, 176 n.2. See Eric Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, (Duckworth, 1975; 2nd ed. 1987), 15–17.

comparative religious thought evolved as Protestant sacred histories – which used a comparative method to equate Catholicism with Jewish, Muslim, and ‘pagan’ heresies – gave way to natural history, which used organic metaphors adapted from the new natural sciences to investigate religious institutions as natural phenomena.⁷⁸

The architecture of Harrison’s argument is quite traditional; nevertheless, it was constructed in part using the tools of postmodern theory. He places the emergence of comparative religious thought in seventeenth-century England for a number of reasons: English writers enjoyed a broader religious freedom than most of their continental peers; the monarchs’ oscillation between Protestantism and Catholicism undermined the inevitability of a singular religious identity, and led to comparisons of the two; and English scholars practiced a particularly robust form of Biblical criticism, that served to historicize and localize their own religious truth claims.⁷⁹ However, early modern travel, and the ensuing efforts of European scholars to ‘understand’ the religions and histories of North American, African, and Asian peoples, was another key component in the emergence of comparative religious thought.⁸⁰ “As the religious rites and beliefs of other peoples were discovered [...] the possible scope for comparison continued to increase.”⁸¹ As Edward Said has pointed out with regard to ‘the Orient’, the discursive creation of exotic locations and peoples provided the modern West with a backdrop upon which to project images which served some domestic ideological function.⁸² Early modern scholars and polemicists, Harrison argues, defined ‘true religion’ through a comparative process of ‘othering’ directed at both “competing Christian factions” and at non-Christian peoples.⁸³

As Harrison himself notes, David Pailin’s *Attitudes to Other Religions: Comparative Religion in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester, 1984) was the only prior work to argue for an early modern birthdate for comparative religious

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2–4, 157–75.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2–4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 8–10, 105–12.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸² Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

⁸³ Harrison, “*Religion*” and *the Religions*, 9.

thought.⁸⁴ Unlike Harrison, Pailin does not directly cite Smith as a touchstone; however, the impact of *The Meaning and End of Religion* is discernible in his treatment of Islam. For Smith, the history of Islam represented a strong potential challenge to his broader argument that the ‘religions of the world’ emerged through European scholarly practices. “The Muslim world” is “definitely and explicitly conscious of something that it calls, and is persuaded that it ought to call, a religion,” and there is undeniable linguistic and historical evidence that Muslims have self-identified as a distinct community since the emergence of Islam in the seventh century CE.⁸⁵ Accordingly, Smith treats Islam as a “special case” – unlike Buddhists or Hindus (he argues), Muslims have always understood themselves as a distinct community, but that understanding, and especially its contemporary form, has emerged in part as a process of self-identification *in relation to* outsiders.⁸⁶ Similarly, Pailin argues that although early modern Christian accounts of other religious groups were unapologetically triumphalist, there were “two religions which could not be so cavalierly dismissed – Judaism and Islam.”⁸⁷ For seventeenth- and eighteenth-century apologists, the remarkable cultural and military vitality of the Muslim kingdoms meant that Islam presented an unavoidable ideological challenge. “Jacob Bryant, for example, describes Islam as the only possible competitor with Christianity while William Paley sees ‘the success of Mahometanism’ as ‘the only event’ in the history of humanity that bears comparison with the spread of Christianity.”⁸⁸ As a result, early modern accounts of Islam had the unusual responsibility of showing “that it [did] not pose a real threat to the rational establishment of the truth of Christianity.”⁸⁹

Following Pailin and Harrison, early modern scholars did not re-engage with the history of comparative religion until Guy Stroumsa’s *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Harvard, 2010). Stroumsa claims that “the modern science of religion was not born, as is usually thought, in the second half of the nineteenth century,” but rather “that the period between Renaissance and Romanticism is the crucial

⁸⁴ Harrison, “Religion” and the Religions in the English Enlightenment, 176 n.2.

⁸⁵ Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 82; 80-84.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 117–118 and *passim*, ch. 4, “The Special Case of Islam.”

⁸⁷ David A Pailin, *Attitudes to Other Religions: Comparative Religion in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 62.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

one in European intellectual history for the first emergence and early formation of the modern study of religion.”⁹⁰ The obvious similarity to Peter Harrison’s contention twenty years earlier speaks to the cicada-like cycle of scholarly interest in early modern comparative religion.

According to Stroumsa, the “epistemological foundations” for the comparative study of religion were laid by three revolutionary early modern events: the “Great Discoveries, initially of the Americas and then South and East Asia,” the impact of humanistic scholarly methods, especially antiquarianism and philology, and the early modern wars of religion.⁹¹ Like Harrison, Stroumsa argues that European contact with Asian and American cultures was a fundamental catalyst for a comparative epistemology. Unlike Harrison, however, for whom comparative religious thought was a polemical tool for confessional Christian writers, Stroumsa frames early modern comparative thought within a secularizing narrative. For Stroumsa, the experience of encountering unfamiliar religious cultures – whether through ‘rediscovered’ classical texts, travel narratives, or early ethnographic scholarship – necessitated new comparative modes of thought, and prompted scholars to set aside older theological lenses. Although occasionally imperfect, this new-found objectivity allowed early modern scholars to “overcome, at least to some extent, their personal attitudes and prejudices.”⁹²

This secularizing narrative is one that has been extensively critiqued by contemporary scholars; as noted above, a new generation of intellectual historians has fundamentally challenged the teleological assumption that early modern, Enlightened scholarship was defined by secularity.⁹³ As Jonathan Sheehan recently observed, “[t]o open theology up—to make it less orthodox in our scholarship—seems to me a key project of intellectual history at this particular juncture, when an older secular dispensation is crumbling and new intellectual formations are not yet on the horizon.”⁹⁴ Stroumsa goes further, however, by arguing that early modern comparative religion was

⁹⁰ Guy Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), viii.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 5; 5-11.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹³ See above, n.52.

⁹⁴ Sheehan, “Thomas Hobbes, DD,” 273.

not only non-theological, but that it was non-political as well: for Stroumsa, early modern scholarly interest in ‘other’ religions was not motivated by either politics or polemics, but by profound “intellectual curiosity” and “deep personal involvement with the subject of their inquiry.”⁹⁵

It should come as little surprise that the foil for this claim is Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Stroumsa argues that, while “the birth of orientalism in France and England, for instance, is certainly related to imperialist designs and attitudes,” this fails to account for the intense personal curiosity that leads a scholar to invest her career in a particular avenue of study.⁹⁶

The most important articulation of this argument occurs in relation to early modern Orientalism. The sixth chapter, titled “From *Mohammedis Imposturae* to the *Three Imposters*: The Study of Islam and the Enlightenment,” summarizes several of the literary and scholarly genres through which early modern Europeans engaged with Islamic history and thought. Usefully, Stroumsa points out that these engagements took three forms: travel literature by authors like Jean Chardin and Joseph Pitts,⁹⁷ the textual scholarship of Arabists like Edward Pococke,⁹⁸ and philosophical engagements with Islamic thought by Jean Bodin, Rousseau, and others.⁹⁹ On the surface, this chapter might strike us as a catalogue of authors, rather than a sustained interpretation of their writing. His underlying argument, however, is that these textual and scholarly engagements with Islam were motivated by intellectual curiosity, not politics or imperialism. “It was this intellectual curiosity, rather than the wish to lend support to imperialistic designs, characteristic of a later period, that sustained the remarkable achievements of the early orientalists.”¹⁰⁰ Conversely, scholarly attacks on Islam were the result of imperfect secularity, the inability or unwillingness to “completely shed prejudice and inherited perceptions of Muhammed and Islam.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Stroumsa, *A New Science*, 12.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11; see also 144, 165-7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 126-27.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 128-32.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 135-42.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 128-29.

1.5.4 Arabic and Orientalist scholarship in seventeenth-century England

In short, although early modernists have engaged (albeit fitfully) with the history of comparative religious thought, those scholars have not investigated the possibility that a seventeenth-century epistemology of comparative religion was related to European imperialism or universalism. Indeed, one of the central arguments of the most recent monograph on the subject, Stroumsa's *A New Science*, was to actively deny this possibility. When we turn to the literature on early modern Orientalist and Arabic scholarship, we find that this approach has been largely replicated.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, studies of early modern Arabic scholarship adopted a wide-angle perspective on the field. In *Studies in the History of the Near East* (Frank Cass, 1973), Peter Holt offered an important overview of Arabic scholarship in England during the seventeenth century. Arabic scholarship flourished in England prior to the Civil War under the patronage of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and pious lay people; professorships in Arabic were endowed at both Oxford (1636) and Cambridge (1632), and Oxford's Bodleian Library rapidly acquired one of the major European collections of Arabic manuscripts. According to Holt, the motivations behind this flurry of scholarship were religious. The study of Arabic, it was thought, would contribute to biblical scholarship by "throwing new light on Hebrew," a justification which was cited by every English chair in Arabic during the seventeenth century.¹⁰² Arabic was also seen as an important language of polemic, not only for evangelizing amongst Muslims, but also for œcumenical outreach to Coptic and Maronite Christians in Egypt and the Levant.¹⁰³

Although Holt takes a broad view of early modern Arabic scholarship, he focuses on Edward Pococke, who occupied the Laudian professorship in Arabic at Oxford from 1636 until his death in 1691. In fact, of the three chapters dedicated to early modern Arabists, the first is a biography of Pococke, the second focuses on the study of Islamic history as a background to Pococke's scholarship, and the short third chapter outlines the study of Arabic in England after Pococke. For Holt, Pococke's academic career both reflected and summarized the history of Arabic scholarship in seventeenth-century England. Following

¹⁰² P. M Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 29.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Arabic studies declined precipitously, a trend which he juxtaposes against the fact that Pococke “produced no further works of Arabic scholarship after 1663.”¹⁰⁴

Holt attributes this decline in professional Arabic scholarship to a number of factors. Despite the thriving commercial networks between England and the Muslim polities in North Africa and the Mediterranean – trade with the Ottomans represented fully one-quarter of English foreign trade by 1700¹⁰⁵ – Arabic never became a necessary commercial language for English merchants, who preferred to conduct their business through translators.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, the study of Arabic was motivated almost solely by religious and scholarly factors, which dissipated by the mid-century. Holt argues that Arabic became less relevant to Biblical scholarship in the post-restoration context, and that the “record of unrelieved failure” of English missionaries to the Muslim polities undermined the evangelical rationale for Arabic study.¹⁰⁷

This historical narrative – that Arabic studies flourished under Church patronage during the 1630s-1640s, reached their English zenith in the career of Edward Pococke, and sputtered disappointingly by the end of the century – has proved durable in subsequent scholarship. In *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Clarendon, 1996), G.J. Toomer also places Pococke at the apex of a parabola-like narrative of Arabic scholarship in seventeenth-century England. He does expand upon Holt’s narrative in several useful ways, however. Like Holt, Toomer argues that the study of Arabic flourished in England prior to the revolution in 1640; however, he also notes that the reasons for that intensification of interest remain somewhat unclear. It is not apparent, for instance, why Archbishop Laud invested so aggressively in Arabic scholarship during the 1630s; in the absence of a “relevant [...] pronouncement of his own,” Toomer is obliged to speculate that Laud might have been influenced by Peter Turner, the Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰⁵ Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, 30.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 20; 20-22.

¹⁰⁸ G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 106; 106-7.

Furthermore, whereas Holt argued that Arabic was irrelevant to English commerce, Toomer implies that Arabic scholarship was at least tangentially related to commercial interests. Famously, although he was largely ignored, Laud ordered the Levant Company in 1634 to contribute one Arabic manuscript to his growing collection with every returning ship.¹⁰⁹

Toomer also seeks to explain the “gradual and then rapid decline” of Arabic studies following the restoration.¹¹⁰ For the most part, he considers Holt’s explanation compelling, although he suggests that Holt may have assigned too much significance to the failure of English missionaries—after all, “whatever the lack of success of the missionary efforts by Englishmen [...] in Muslim countries, this had very little impact on their continuation.”¹¹¹ In fact, during the eighteenth century, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge continued to enthusiastically finance the translation of missionary texts into Arabic.¹¹² Like Holt and Stroumsa, however, he ultimately concludes that both the intensification and decline of Arabic studies were the consequence of individual scholarly interest. Although scholars like Pococke clearly saw themselves as contributors to a broader Christian project, “their primary motivation was intellectual rather than utilitarian.”¹¹³

More recent scholarship has taken a much narrower view than either Holt or Toomer, focusing on specific scholars or intellectual circles, rather than the full scope of Arabic scholarship during the seventeenth century. For instance, the papers submitted to an edited collection on *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* (Brill, 2005), focus on topics such as “Arabick Learning in the Correspondence of the Royal Society, 1660-1677,”¹¹⁴ or attempt to explain Archbishop Laud’s personal motivations for endowing the Oxford chair in Arabic in 1636.¹¹⁵ Despite the shift in foci, however, these more recent scholars

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 108–9.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 310; 309–10.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 310.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹¹⁴ M.B. Hall, “Arabick Learning in the Correspondence of the Royal Society, 1660-1677,” in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Maurits van den Boogert, and Bart Westerweel (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 147–57.

¹¹⁵ Mordechai Feingold, “Patrons and Professors: The Origins and Motives for the Endowment of University Chairs - In Particular the Laudian Professorship of Arabic,” in *The Republic of Letters and the*

persist in viewing early modern Arabic and Orientalist scholarship as non-political. M.B. Hall, for instance, details the early Royal Society's efforts to collect both scientific data and Arabic and Persian manuscripts in the Muslims polities. Henry Oldenburg, the "extremely conscientious" Secretary of the Royal Society from 1662-1677, actively solicited reams of medical, botanical, ethnographic, and textual information from members of the Society travelling in the Ottoman empire and North Africa. In 1672, for instance, the Society assigned John Finch a bulletin of "Some Inquiries for Turkey" following his appointment to the ambassadorship in Istanbul. Their scholarly wish-list focused on botanical questions, but also instructed Finch "To procure some curious copies of [th]e Vulgar Greek Testament & Liturgies: The Alcoran in Arabic finely writ, as it is sent to Mecha, & Whether some Gr.[eek] MSS, auncient & unknowne # among us, may not yet be found about those Learned Ruines."¹¹⁶ However, Hall argues, their interest in this knowledge was purely scholarly, and "unravelling" once English natural scientists lost interest in Arabic medical and astronomical sources.¹¹⁷

In the same collection, Mordechai Feingold assesses Archbishop Laud's motivations for patronizing Arabic scholarship. Ultimately, he offers an even more de-politicized explanation than either Hall, Holt, or Toomer. While Laud and other benefactors were clearly intrigued by scholarship for its own sake, Feingold argues that the commonality between early modern patrons of Orientalist scholarship "was their failure to produce a male heir. [...] No great psychological acumen is needed to realize that in their twilight years these men were opting for an alternative route to immortality."¹¹⁸

While Feingold's pseudo-Freudian reading is idiosyncratic, it is consonant with the broader literature we have surveyed in two important respects. First, as we have seen with Holt and his successors, scholars have remained wedded to a narrative in which Arabic and Orientalist scholarship declined rapidly following the restoration. However, this narrative is an uneasy fit with Anders Ingram's important realization that English publishing on 'the Turk,' and on Islam more broadly, intensified in the decades following

Levant, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Maurits van den Boogert, and Bart Westerweel (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 109–27.

¹¹⁶ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, p. 503/VIII.

¹¹⁷ Hall, "Arabick Learning in the Correspondence of the Royal Society, 1660-1677," 155–56.

¹¹⁸ Feingold, "Patrons and Professors," 110.

the restoration. In fact, as we mentioned earlier, references to ‘the Turk’ proliferated dramatically during the 1680s. During that decade, the normalised frequency of ‘the Turk’ in English print reached 185/million words; during the 1630s, the decade which Holt and others consider the high-water mark for English Arabists, the normalized frequency was fewer than 50/million words.¹¹⁹ In other words, the historiographic narrative of declining interest in Arabic and Islam only holds up if we narrowly focus on the publications of professional academics. Even Holt’s claim that “Pococke produced no further works of Arabic scholarship after 1663” is only true if we discount his later missionary work.¹²⁰ As Holt himself noted, Pococke translated both the Anglican catechism and the liturgy into Arabic later in his career, in 1671 and 1674, respectively.¹²¹

Second, Feingold’s Freudianism is simply a distortion of the broader historiographic tendency to de-politicise not only early modern Orientalism, but comparative religious scholarship as well. Consistently, in the writing of Harrison, Stroumsa, Holt, and Toomer, we find it argued that early modern scholars studied comparative religion, Arabic, and Islam for their own sake, motivated by either personal intellectual curiosity or religious commitments, but never by political interests.

This flies in the face of an ongoing ‘turn to empire’ amongst early modern historians. Indeed, although early modernists have found it incredibly productive to ‘think with empire,’ intellectual historians have tended to limit their engagements with imperialism strictly to early scientific thought. As David Armitage recently observed, in the “shorthand histories of political thought [...] the main links between empiricism and imperialism were generally found in the work of Francis Bacon and the seventeenth-century Royal Society.”¹²²

In short, the possible links between seventeenth-century Islamic scholarship and European imperialism and universalism have gone unexplored. In light of our previous

¹¹⁹ Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*, 8.

¹²⁰ Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, 21.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² David Armitage, “John Locke: Theorist of Empire?,” in *Empire and Modern Political Thought*, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 84. More recent histories have also taken natural science to be the focal point for imperialism and empiricism in early modernity; see e.g. Sarah Irving, *Natural Science and the Origins of the British Empire* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008).

examination of the literature on nineteenth-century intellectual history, this seems surprising, considering that it is impossible to write about Orientalism during the nineteenth century without reference to the political context of European imperialism and universalism. At a result, by positing a connection between Orientalism and imperialism in John Finch's manuscripts, this thesis is positioned precisely at a moment of silence in the contemporary literature.¹²³

¹²³ It is only in the last two years that a new generation of historians has begun to identify the entanglements of early modern Islamic scholarship with English politics. See Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*, and see also Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*; although I depart from his thinking in several regards, the connections he identifies between early modern Orientalism and the English state have been very valuable tools 'with which to think' about Finch's manuscripts.

Chapter 1: John Finch (1626-82): A biographical overview

Although some recent scholarship has begun to examine John Finch's contributions to natural philosophy, this literature has been framed in relation to the history of philosophy. Because Finch is virtually unknown to historians of political thought, this chapter offers a brief biographical sketch, in which I overview both his career, and his treatment by historians during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I begin by glossing Finch's biography prior to being appointed the English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, before turning to an account of his embassy. Subsequent historians, especially those writing in the early twentieth century, have been profoundly disparaging of his diplomatic career; in my view, it is important to understand his career in the broader context of jurisdictional disputes between the Levant Company, the English crown, and the Ottoman Porte. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of his relationship with Thomas Baines, and the implications of their relationship for my analysis of their manuscripts.

2.1 Finch's personal life

Finch was born in 1626, and was educated at Eton and Christ's College, Cambridge, where he graduated M.A. in 1649. While at Cambridge, he belonged to a circle of students surrounding Henry More, who introduced him to an older physician named Thomas Baines. Finch and Baines became lifelong partners, living together for thirty-six years, until Baines' death in 1681/1092 (see Appendix A for a schematic of Finch's network).¹²⁴ Between 1651 and 1671, they lived in Italy, where Finch held several diplomatic postings, and possibly performed some intelligence work on behalf of Henry Bennet, the earl of Arlington and Secretary of State for the Southern Department.

Because Finch's career unfolded in two distinct phases – he and Baines worked in Italy as medical doctors from 1651-1671, and in Turkey from 1674-1681/1085-1092, during his tenure as the Ottoman ambassador – subsequent scholars have not understood his career holistically, and have tended to treat him either as a natural philosopher or as a diplomat. Between 1917 and 1920, Archibald Malloch and G.F. Abbot published short

¹²⁴ Sarah Hutton, "Finch, Sir John," *ODNB*. See below, section 2.3, for more on Finch and Baines's relationship.

biographies which focused on his diplomatic career.¹²⁵ By contrast, more recent scholars have been primarily interested in his earlier career as a natural philosopher. Within the last fifteen years, historians of philosophy, particularly Sarah Hutton and Stefano Villani, have written about Finch in relation to his much more famous half-sister, the philosopher Anne Conway, and in the context of intellectual exchanges between Italy and England.¹²⁶

As Sarah Hutton has noted, during his time in Italy, Finch played a role as “a link between the scientific communities of England and Italy,”¹²⁷ in addition to his work as an anatomist, medical doctor, and lecturer at the Universities of Pisa and Florence.¹²⁸ In 1663, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, with which he corresponded throughout much of his professional life; he was also a member of its Italian equivalent, the Florentine Accademia del Cimento, in recognition of his work as an anatomist.¹²⁹ It seems unlikely, however, that he fulfilled that role to the great satisfaction of either his English or his Italian peers. In 1666-8, Henry Oldenburg, the secretary of the Royal Society, was forced to write to Finch three times, requesting that he present a copy of the *History of the Royal Society* to Prince Leopold; Finch eventually replied in 1668, and claimed (unconvincingly) that he had just received Oldenburg’s earlier letters.¹³⁰ As one scholar has argued, “rather than becoming the celebrated promoter of exchanges between the Cimento and the Royal Society, [Finch] was possibly an obstacle to communication.”¹³¹

¹²⁵ Archibald Malloch, *Finch and Baines: A Seventeenth Century Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917); M. B. Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople*. (London: Macmillan, 1920).

¹²⁶ See Hutton, *Anne Conway*; Sarah Hutton, “Henry More, John Finch, and The History of Skepticism,” in *Skepticism in Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Thought: New Interpretations*, ed. Jose Neto and Richard Popkin (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2004), 43–64; Villani, “Between Anatomy and Politics: John Finch and Italy, 1649-1671”; Sarah Hutton, “Sir John Finch (1626-1682), Doctor, Diplomat and Virtuoso,” in *L’umanesimo Scientifico Dal Rinascimento all’Illuminismo*, ed. Lorenzo Bianci and Gianni Paganini (Napoli: Liguori Editore, 2010), 159–72; Sarah Hutton, “Sir John Finch and Religious Toleration: An Unpublished Letter to Anne Conway on Her Conversion to Quakerism,” in *La Centralità Del Dubbio: Un Progetto Di Antonio Rotondo*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Studi E Testi per La Storia Della Tolleranza in Europa Nei Secoli XVI-XVIII (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2011), 287–304.

¹²⁷ Hutton, *Anne Conway*, 95.

¹²⁸ Villani, “Between Anatomy and Politics,” 155.

¹²⁹ Hutton, *Anne Conway*, p. 96.

¹³⁰ Villani, “Between Anatomy and Politics,” 163.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 165–66.

Although this thesis is concerned with Finch's writing during his ambassadorship to the Ottoman empire, there is a case to be made that neatly identifying and distinguishing between two phases of his career is not helpful. As William Bulman has noted, early modern travellers were often simultaneously scholars, missionaries, and spies¹³²; in Finch's case, the existence of several long reports on current affairs written in 1657, when Finch and Baines held university appointments at Padua, suggests that he may have been involved in intelligence-gathering and politics well before receiving a formal diplomatic appointment.¹³³

Although he and Baines remained in Italy until 1671, Finch sought an opportunity to return to England as early as 1668. Following the adjournment of Parliament in 1668, his brother-in-law, Edward Conway, spoke to Secretary of State Arlington on his behalf, and urged Arlington to consider Finch for a diplomatic appointment.¹³⁴ Conway was apparently confident that his intercession would be fruitful, assuring Finch that he would "have the advantage of coming into a court where there is not one man of ability."¹³⁵ On July 30, 1670, Finch was appointed to the newly-formed Council for Foreign Plantations, which was responsible for supervising the British colonies in North America.¹³⁶ Two years later, in November 1672, Finch was appointed to succeed Daniel Harvey as the English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire¹³⁷; he lived in Istanbul from 1674/1084 until 1681/1091, when he returned to England following Baines' death.¹³⁸

Unfortunately, Finch's personal papers have largely been lost. S.C. Lomas, who compiled many of Finch's extant papers for the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1922, suggested that many of his in-papers were destroyed in 1681, when he returned to

¹³² Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*, 41–47.

¹³³ See TNA SP 99/45, f. 103, Finch to Winchelsea, Apr. 9/19, 1657; TNA SP 99/45, f. 95, Finch to Winchelsea, May 21/31, 1657; TNA SP 99/45, f. 107, Finch to Winchelsea, Aug. 12/22, 1657.

¹³⁴ Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople.*, 4–5.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³⁶ Ralph Paul Bieber, "The British Plantation Councils of 1670-4," *The English Historical Review* 40 (1925): 95; 93.

¹³⁷ TNA SP 105/109, f. 226, Charles II to the Governor and merchants of the Levant Company, Nov. 2, 1672.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*; Hutton, "Finch, Sir John," *ODNB*; Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), *Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Allan George Finch, Esq., of Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland*, Vol. II, (London: HMSO, 1913-1965), p. vi.

England from Istanbul severely ill.¹³⁹ It seems likely that the second half of his correspondence with Edward Conway was lost at this point; consequently, while Conway obviously solicited Finch and Baines for reports on Islamic governance, his intentions for doing so are unclear. When Finch died in 1682, his papers and library were left to his nephew Daniel, second earl of Nottingham, who moved them to his new manor at Burley-on-the-Hill in 1700.¹⁴⁰ Between 1913 and 1965, the Historical Manuscripts Commission issued a four-volume survey of the manuscripts housed at Burley; vol. II, published in 1922, includes their survey of John Finch's remaining papers. The HMC reported that "[n]o Letter-book of his has been found at Burley, and the only letters approaching a consecutive series are those to his nephew Daniel, calendared from the originals, preserved by the recipient."¹⁴¹ Moreover, Finch's library was destroyed in a fire at Burley in 1908; fortunately, however, two extensive, albeit undated, catalogues have survived in his personal notebooks.¹⁴² Finally, as we have noted, Finch's treatise was never published, and it is unclear whether or not he would have attempted publication if he had not died suddenly.¹⁴³ Indeed, to add insult to injury, the authorship of the treatise was misattributed to Finch's much more prominent nephew, Daniel Finch, until 1968.¹⁴⁴ The papers which survive include his official correspondence as ambassador, archived in The National Archive, his correspondence with Edward and Anne Conway, archived in the British Library, and amongst the Finch papers in the Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.

2.2 Finch's ambassadorship to the Ottoman Empire, 1672-1681

The ambassadorship to the Ottoman Empire, which was simultaneously a dominant Eurasian imperial power and one of England's largest trading partners, was a prestigious and complex role. Finch's major diplomatic accomplishment was to successfully renegotiate the Capitulations in 1675/1086, the document establishing England's trade privileges with the Ottoman Empire. These privileges, first granted to William Harborne

¹³⁹ *HMC Finch*, vol II, p. vii.

¹⁴⁰ Malloch, *Finch and Baines* (Cambridge, 1917), p. 79.

¹⁴¹ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Allan George Finch*, Vol. II, p. vii.

¹⁴² LRO Finch MS, DG7 Box 4988, Finch catalogues.

¹⁴³ Scott Mandelbrote, personal electronic communication, 26 September 2016.

¹⁴⁴ The error was corrected by H. Horwitz, "The Work of Sir John Finch," *Notes and Queries* 15 (1968): 103-4.

in 1580/987, were re-negotiated in 1601/1009, 1607/1015, 1612/1020, 1618/1027, 1641/1050, 1647/1056, and 1662/1672; the version secured by Finch “was a cumulative text” that consolidated these earlier privileges, and was essentially unrevised until the abolition of the Ottoman Capitulations in 1924.¹⁴⁵

As the English ambassador, Finch simultaneously played a commercial role as the Levant Company’s representative in Istanbul. Under the terms of the trade monopoly granted to the Levant Company by James I in 1605, the Company was also responsible for diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire; practically, this involved maintaining and renegotiating the trade Capitulations, providing consular services to British residents and travelers in the Ottoman empire, and interceding in legal and commercial disputes on their behalf. This diplomatic relationship existed until 1825, when the “Levant Company was wound up and the consular service passed into the control of the Foreign Office.”¹⁴⁶

Especially in the context of the history of empire, it is important to stress that, during the period under consideration, European Christian kingdoms were firmly the ‘junior partner’ in their diplomatic relationships with the Ottoman Empire. This inequality was a defining feature of the legal relationship between the English and Ottoman crowns; both legally and rhetorically, the Capitulations which governed Anglo-Ottoman trade were unilaterally granted to the English. “They were still very much privileges granted by the benevolence of the Ottoman government, rather than terms demanded by the British,” and the freedoms of movement and religion that the British enjoyed in the Empire depended “entirely on Britain maintaining peaceful relations with the Ottomans.”¹⁴⁷ In fact, the Capitulations granted by the Ottomans were prefaced by an historical narrative,

¹⁴⁵ Michael Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017), 28–29. The Ottoman trade Capitulations were not a bilateral treaty, but rather established a diplomatic relationship between the two nations, and provided a legal framework by which British merchants could freely travel within the Ottoman empire, “ultimately to the benefit of the Ottoman treasury in customs and duties gained” (Talbot, 31). Accordingly, although the ultimate goals of the Capitulations were commercial, in legal terms they were a mechanism which rationalized the status of European merchants in the Ottoman empire in terms of Islamic law (see Talbot, 25-8). See also Edhem Eldem, “Capitulations and Western Trade,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 292-7, which provides an excellent overview of the trade capitulations in the context of Islamic jurisprudence.

¹⁴⁶ Lucia Patrizio Gunning, *The British Consular Service in the Aegean and the Collection of Antiquities for the British Museum* (London: Routledge, 2016), 10, 13–18.

¹⁴⁷ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807*, 28.

recounting Elizabeth I's overture during the 1580s: "In the past, the chief of the nobles of the queen of the said province [*vilāyet*] [of England] came to and arrived at our threshold of the workings of felicity [...] with her gentlemen and her ships with her tribute, and the gifts that she had sent were gladly accepted."¹⁴⁸

As the representative of a moderately wealthy kingdom, living in the imperial capital of one of the two hegemonic Eurasian empires, Finch would have possessed little of the imperious mindset that characterized European Christian relations with the Muslim kingdoms after the mid-eighteenth century. It is telling that, in the course of renegotiating the Capitulations between 1674-1675/1086-1087, one of his priorities was to revise the translation of Charles II's title from *kral* ('king') to *padişah* ('emperor').¹⁴⁹ The imbalance of commercial and military power shaped Anglo-Ottoman cultural relations as well. Gerald MacLean has characterized the cultural, military, and aesthetic relationship between the English and the Ottomans as one of 'imperial envy.'¹⁵⁰ For the early modern English, the Ottoman Empire was "the fabulously wealthy and magnificent court from which the sultan ruled over three continents with his great and powerful army."¹⁵¹ Although Christian polemicists saw the Ottomans as "the great enemy and scourge of Christendom," they were nevertheless forced to reckon with the indisputable fact of Ottoman imperial power. Only during the eighteenth century would European Christians feel confident "to draw, paint, poeticize and imagine the Muslims the way they liked;" during the seventeenth century, "Muslims had a power of self-representation which English authors knew they either had to confront or to engage."¹⁵²

Previous historians have been unsparing in their evaluation of Finch's success as an ambassador; one scholar, writing in the 1920s, concluded that Finch "was not born for diplomacy: certainly not for Turkish diplomacy. [...] That he failed at Constantinople cannot be disguised."¹⁵³ In my view, however, while Finch seems to have been

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁴⁹ Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople.*, 30–31.

¹⁵⁰ During the 1660s, for instance, Charles II briefly made an imperial fashion statement by imitating Ottoman court dress; Esmond S. de Beer, "King Charles II's Own Fashion: An Episode in Anglo-French Relations 1666-1670," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2 (1938): 105–15.

¹⁵¹ MacLean, *Looking East*, 21.

¹⁵² Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 11–12.

¹⁵³ Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople.*, 354.

underprepared for his ambassadorship,¹⁵⁴ his tenure was crippled by a series of bitter jurisdictional disputes provoked by the fractious Levant Company.

Between the 1660s-1680s, the Levant Company and the English crown engaged in a protracted jurisdictional “tussle for control of the embassy” in Istanbul.¹⁵⁵ Following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the Levant Company – which had flourished under Cromwell – was suspected of Presbyterian sympathies, and of potential “resistance to royal authority.”¹⁵⁶ Accordingly, Charles II made a concerted effort to reassert the monarch’s jurisdiction over the Company, particularly his prerogative to appoint the ambassador, and to ensure religious conformity amongst the Company’s merchants.

Finch’s family, which was “impeccably Tory and High Church,” was deeply involved in this effort to reassert monarchical control over the company.¹⁵⁷ During the interregnum, Heneage Finch (1628-1689), John Finch’s first cousin, had led an underground network of Royalist sympathizers in Kent; in 1660, he became Charles II’s first ambassador to the Ottoman empire.¹⁵⁸ Steven Pincus characterizes Heneage Finch as the central figure in an “Anglican crusade” intended to purge the Company of nonconformist or disloyal merchants.¹⁵⁹ As part of that political program, Finch strongly asserted the monarch’s sole right to appoint the ambassador in Istanbul. In 1668, he prepared a “Narrative [of the] Levant Companie’s Proceedings with the Crowne,” which railed against the Company’s “arrogancy [...] as if they were a Little Republiq[u]e [...] to pretend to one of [th]e Supream Praerogatives of yo[u]r Crowne, Viz. The Election of [th]e Ambassadors for Turkey.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ In 1676, Finch was obliged to write to Arlington, admitting that he had enjoyed little success in gathering relevant intelligence. “I must needs aver, That I have not yet bin able to give My selfe that Satisfaction you are pleas’d’ to desire of Me: And I doe not find it easy to arrive to a True Knowledge of Them.” See SP 97/19, f. 226, Finch to Arlington, May 31, 1676.

¹⁵⁵ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807*, 62.

¹⁵⁶ Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans: Turkish History in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 110; see also Steven Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1668*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 327-328.

¹⁵⁷ Steven Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 405.

¹⁵⁸ Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*, 110.

¹⁵⁹ Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 328.

¹⁶⁰ TNA SP 97/19, f. 266.

Heneage Finch was succeeded in 1669 by Sir Daniel Harvey, who was related to him by marriage; upon his death in 1672, Harvey was in turn replaced by John Finch.¹⁶¹ In this context, Finch's appointment was not simply a matter of individual patronage. His family had been closely associated with the position for over a decade; and especially through Heneage Finch's ambassadorship, had positioned itself as fierce advocates for religious conformity and the royal supremacy. Further, he was only appointed after Edward Conway assured the Secretary of State, lord Arlington, of his royalist convictions.¹⁶² In other words, Finch was explicitly intended to serve as 'the king's man' in Istanbul: this close association with religious conformity and the royal supremacy in England provides important context for his later writing on Islam, the Ottoman Empire, and sovereignty.

Finch's ambassadorship began to unravel in 1678/1088, when he was unwillingly thrust into a legal dispute between the Company and Ottoman authorities. As the English ambassador, one of Finch's responsibilities was to advocate for English subjects residing in the Ottoman empire, in both legal and commercial matters. In 1678/1088, a prominent English merchant in Istanbul named Samuel Pentlow died suddenly, before formally settling his will. Pentlow had married an Ottoman Greek Orthodox woman; ordinarily, as the widow of an English merchant, she would have fallen under English legal jurisdiction, and been subject to English estate law. However, because Pentlow had failed to confirm his wife's status with the Ottoman authorities before he died, she remained within Ottoman legal jurisdiction.¹⁶³ Under pressure from several of the English merchants associated with the Levant Company, Finch considered helping Pentlow's widow relocate to England, to the intense displeasure of the Ottoman authorities. In 1678/1088, he received a sharply-worded letter from the Ottoman Grand Vizier, *Çara Muştafâ Paşa*, warning him "That wee have understood, how you had thoughts of sending into England, contrary to [th]e Imperiall Capitulations, [th]e wife & child of a Subject, of

¹⁶¹ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807*, 62–63.

¹⁶² Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople.*, 5.

¹⁶³ Christine Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant: Trade and Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 169; see 168-171 for a detailed account of this sequence of events.

Our most valerous & Majesticall Emperor [...] Keepe a good correspondence, & for [th]e future act nothing in this manner contrary to [th]e establis[h]d accord.”¹⁶⁴

Finch subsequently decided to completely recuse himself from the situation – as we have discussed, the Levant Company’s ability to trade in the Ottoman Empire was entirely dependent on the English crown maintaining a healthy relationship with the Ottoman Porte. However, his decision outraged the English merchant community, and presented the Levant Company with a fresh opportunity to challenge the monarch’s jurisdiction over the embassy. Paul Rycaut, formerly the consul at Izmir, petitioned the king to replace Finch, “for, among things, not having done enough to protect Pentlow” and his widow.¹⁶⁵ In 1679, the Company unilaterally “determined to replace Finch with Baron Chandos;” although deeply displeased, Charles II confirmed the appointment in 1680.¹⁶⁶ While awaiting Chandos’ arrival, Finch was almost entirely sidelined by the Ottomans, and was forced to report to the Levant Company that “I had reason to conclude that His Excell[en]cy My Successour [...] was likely in all reason to effect more than I.”¹⁶⁷

2.3 John Finch and Thomas Baines

One of the most intriguing elements of Finch’s personal and professional lives is his nearly life-long relationship with Thomas Baines. As mentioned earlier, Finch and Baines were introduced at Cambridge in 1645 by their tutor, the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, when Finch was nineteen and Baines twenty-three. The two men lived together almost uninterrupted for the next thirty-six years, until Baines died on September 5, 1681.¹⁶⁸

Unfortunately, very little is known about Baines outside of his relationship with Finch. The *ODNB*, for instance, affords Baines a paragraph after the entry for Finch, and notes that after they met in 1645, “his biography coincides with that of Finch.”¹⁶⁹ Baines did leave some unpublished papers, which have been archived along with Finch’s in the

¹⁶⁴ TNA SP 105/109, f. 164, Kara Muşafâ Paşa to Finch, undated [1678/1088].

¹⁶⁵ Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant*, 170.

¹⁶⁶ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807*, 63.

¹⁶⁷ TNA SP 97/19, f. 278, Finch to Levant Company, May 9/19, 1681.

¹⁶⁸ Malloch, *Finch and Baines*, 72.

¹⁶⁹ Sarah Hutton, “Finch, Sir John,” *ODNB*, 2009.

Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, but it is likely that many of them were abandoned after his death, when Finch returned to England.

Their relationship presents a unique historiographic challenge. Although Finch's family apparently prospected for a wife, neither man ever married; as one scholar has observed, "[f]rom the vantage point of today, Finch and Baines certainly look like a gay couple."¹⁷⁰ It is impossible (and beside the point) to evaluate whether their relationship involved a sexual dimension; however, it is clear that the two men were deeply committed to one another. Following Baines' death, Finch wrote in his diary that the loss had "cutt off the thread of all my worldly happiness and application to business [...] which irreparable loss [...] reduced me to so much weaknesse that I was given over by my physician."¹⁷¹ Although outside the scope of this thesis, their relationship has recently attracted some attention amongst scholars of queer history.¹⁷² Throughout this thesis, I have referred to Finch and Baines as 'partners,' in order to convey the duration, intimacy, and evident love in their life-long relationship, without risking the historical anachronism of attempting to define them in terms of sexual identity.

It is evident that, in some sense, the two men were accepted as a couple by their peers. When Finch was dispatched to Florence in 1665, as the English minister to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, there are some indications that the posting was jointly held with Baines.¹⁷³ During Finch's embassy to the Ottomans, it was widely understood by both English and Ottoman merchants that Baines was an extremely close and influential confidant.¹⁷⁴ While he was living in Istanbul, an English merchant named Dudley North (1641-1691) observed that "John Finch (and, as must be understood, Sir Thomas Baines)" had been appointed ambassador. After Finch died on November 18, 1682, he

¹⁷⁰ Pollard, *The Quest for Classical Greece*, 27.

¹⁷¹ Malloch, *Finch and Baines*, 72.

¹⁷² See Bray, *The Friend*, esp. ch. 4, which offers an excellent account of their relationship, in the context of both contemporary queer theory and historiography, and of seventeenth-century patterns of same-gender friendship and love. An earlier generation of historiography, published during the 1910s and 1920s, crudely intimated that the two men were both homosexual and effeminate; see Malloch, *Finch and Baines*, and Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople*.

¹⁷³ Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant*, 178–79.

¹⁷⁴ George Frederick Abbot, *Under the Turk in Constantinople-A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy 1674-1681* (Blatter Press, 2008), 41; see also Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant*, who writes that "Finch is said to have consulted Baines in all things, so one man was as influential as the other was and both had to be convinced before any decision was made" (179).

was buried alongside Baines in a joint tomb in the collegiate chapel of Christ's College, Cambridge: the inscription on their headstone was written by Henry More, and reads (in part) "Duorum Amicissimorum, quibus Cor erat unum, anaq. Anima."¹⁷⁵

Especially in comparison to their married contemporaries, Finch and Baines's relationship strikes a modern researcher as surprisingly familiar: both personally and professionally, theirs seems to have been an equal partnership. There is some indication that upper-class English men who lived abroad, particularly in Italy, experienced a degree of freedom from the norms of sexuality and relationships that would have been imposed by their families in England.¹⁷⁶ The two men relocated to Italy in 1651, and over the course of the following thirty years, only lived in England for approximately three.¹⁷⁷ As a result, I do not think that the relative openness of their relationship, and its seeming social acceptability, can be separated from the trajectory of Finch's professional career.

Paradoxically, I would argue that their relationship could only be seen as an equal partnership by their contemporaries – and hence, by modern researchers – precisely because both were men. As noted above, there is evidence that both Finch and Baines were consulted during the day-to-day operations of the embassy in Istanbul, and as elite men, both moved freely in the rarified world of elite Ottoman sociability. By contrast, Katherine Trumbull, who accompanied her husband William during his embassy to the Ottomans between 1687-1691, was regularly present at social occasions, but was not involved in ambassadorial decision-making.¹⁷⁸

Because Finch and Baines lived with one another for their entire adult lives, there is, naturally, no extant correspondence between the two. Unfortunately, this makes it virtually impossible to determine how they influenced each other intellectually.¹⁷⁹ In fact, in his epitaph for Baines, Finch wrote that "our thoughts became so familiar to each other

¹⁷⁵ Malloch, *Finch and Baines*, 77. "Two friends, who were one in heart and soul" (translation mine).

¹⁷⁶ Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c.1690–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59–61.

¹⁷⁷ Hutton, "Finch, Sir John;" *HMC Finch*, vol. II, vi.

¹⁷⁸ John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 83.

¹⁷⁹ As one scholar put it in the early twentieth century, "Finch appeared in public as the leader of the two, but to what extent he was indebted to his helpmate and senior, Baines, we shall never know" (Malloch, *Finch and Baines*, 73).

that sometimes we forgot to whom they originally belonged.”¹⁸⁰ Although the two men were intellectually inseparable, there is no manuscript evidence that Finch’s papers – especially his treatise, and his report on the Ottoman Empire – were co-authored. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what has been lost of Baines’s papers. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the vast majority of the primary material I have consulted was written by Finch: I have worked with approximately 800 pages of Finch’s manuscripts, and approximately 30 pages written by Baines. Nevertheless, Baines wrote two letters to Edward Conway, in 1676 and 1681, that reflect upon and significantly clarify Finch’s intellectual project. It is to that project that we now turn.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

Chapter 2: Finch's Political philosophy: Liberty, coercion, and sovereignty

In his 1676 report for Edward Conway, Thomas Baines offered a striking metaphor for statecraft. After a flowery apology for his tardy reply (like Finch, Baines was apparently a terrible correspondent), he proceeds to argue that

Every ship ought to Lye with its' Just Levell and Proportion in the water; but in the first Fabrick and Disposition Some more some Lesse come short of the Exactnesse of the Structure, which is to be amended by placing of the Ballast, and the other Burthen it Carry's more in one Place, then in Another [...] My Lord, there is not any Kingdome or Common wealth whatsoever, but by reason of its fluctuating and unstable Condition may be compar'd' to a Ship; And no humour of People so equall and well temper'd' One to Another, but it requires a Great Art to place the Ballast and Burthen They carry so proportionably that the whole might Navigate the better; And this Ballast or Burthen is no other then the Laws' They Live Under.¹⁸¹

It is not surprising that Baines – a member of a diplomatic retinue from a maritime nation – would reach for a nautical metaphor for statecraft. If we fully unpack his analogy, however, a fundamental aspect of Finch and Baines' political philosophy comes into focus. For both men, stabilizing the ship of state was not only a matter of wise navigation, but of judicious regulation and intervention on the part of its commanding officers. To relax the 'Ballast and Burthens' placed upon its citizens would endanger the ship of state, allowing it to list too far in any one direction: to stabilize the entire vessel, to maintain its course in the choppy waters of post-Restoration politics, demanded that its subjects be exposed to a heavy burden of law and governance. Finch's political philosophy, in other words, was not a theory which liberated the individual from domination: it was a theory of governance which directly exposed individual subjects, religious minorities, and the Church itself to the unified and unitary authority of the state.

In short, this ominous analogy prefigures the fundamental ecclesiological questions which animated Finch's political philosophy: What is the correct relationship between the state and minority religious groups? And, what is the correct relationship between church

¹⁸¹ LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, June 20/30 1676, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 29, 5-6.

and state; or more precisely, between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities within a state?

Finch never explicitly asked these questions in his own writing. However, when they are utilized as an interpretive hermeneutic, his seemingly idiosyncratic (and occasionally bizarre) account of contemporary politics and the Ottoman empire comes into focus as a concrete philosophy of empire. In order to rapidly expand and consolidate an empire, Finch advocated for a policy of robust state intervention in the public and private lives of its subjects. To avoid civil unrest, he proposed a policy of state toleration for minority religious beliefs; importantly, however, the right to liberty of conscience applied to individual dissenters, not to minority religious groups. Indeed, for Finch, the correct relationship between civil and ecclesiastical authority was one of state domination: inspired by the Ottoman polity, he argued that civil peace could best be secured if the monarch wielded both civil and religious authority.

Finch was far from alone in arguing that the interests of the state demanded strong intervention into the public and private lives of its citizens. As Ethan Shagan has recently argued, early modern English writers who called for religious toleration never did so without asserting the state's concomitant right to regulate private morality and public behaviour. "Moderate toleration was a technique of government, not the withdrawal or absence of government."¹⁸² In this context, what distinguished Finch was not his call for robust governmentality, but rather, the sources he drew upon in constructing that argument, and the conclusions he drew as a result. Finch not only outlined a political philosophy that bordered on authoritarian: he did so by synthesizing evidence drawn from Ottoman history and politics. And by thoroughly incorporating his understanding of the Ottoman empire into his political philosophy, Finch ultimately offered a coherent 'blueprint' for empire inspired by an Islamic model. For Finch, the Ottoman model of moderate statecraft served a two-fold imperial interest: it enabled both conquest and the continued stability and efficiency of an empire.

¹⁸² Ethan Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 298.

As previously noted, while Finch has recently been noticed by historians of philosophy, his career as a diplomat and a political thinker has been largely overlooked. Accordingly, while this thesis cannot claim to have ‘rediscovered’ Finch, the present chapter is the first scholarly effort to seriously engage with his political writing. The first section investigates Finch’s articulation of religious toleration as both a pragmatic tool of statecraft, and an individual ‘Humane Right.’ Crucially, he defines the liberty of conscience in such a way that it applies only to individuals, with significant implications for both toleration and church government. In the second section, I excavate Finch’s ecclesiology – his theological and political understanding of the church, its scope and jurisdiction, and its relationship to the English state. Drawing on Ethan Shagan’s analysis of moderate toleration, I illustrate how Finch juxtaposes a vigorous defense of religious freedom, with an equally vigorous defense of the monarch’s near-total jurisdiction over the church. By analysing Finch’s use of Ottoman history, his epistemological skepticism, and his ecclesiology, he ultimately emerges as a political thinker for whom liberty and coercion were equal partners in a broader theory of sovereignty.

3.1 Finch’s toleration: Pragmatism and rights

For early modern Britons, the legal toleration extended to minority religious groups by the Ottoman Empire offered a striking contrast to their own society. As John Marshall notes in his recent, magisterial work on Locke and toleration, Islam was “central to tolerationist debates in England in the late seventeenth century,” in part because “the practice of Muslim toleration for Christianity was repeatedly rehearsed by many authors.”¹⁸³

As a diplomat living in the Ottoman empire, Finch personally experienced and benefited from the Ottoman policy of accommodating Christians. Indeed, the first and most important article of the trade Capitulations which Finch renewed in 1675/1086 reaffirmed the imperial guarantee that “the said [English] nation, and the English merchants [...] in all security may come and go into any part of our dominions in such sort, that neither any of the nation, their goods and faculties shall receive any hindrance

¹⁸³ John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and “Early Enlightenment” Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 393.

or molestation from any person whatsoever.”¹⁸⁴ However, in Finch’s mind, there had never been any doubt that the Ottoman policy of accommodating Jews and Christians was integral to their political and military successes. Writing to Edward Conway in 1663, he reported that Christian peasants in Hungary were actively supporting the Ottomans in their war against the Hapsburgs, in expectation of greater “freedome in the exercise of their Religion” under Muslim rule.¹⁸⁵

In his unpublished manuscripts, Finch explores the utility and legitimacy of religious toleration in detail. Historically, he argued, religious oppression undermines civil stability; conversely, toleration enables conquest and effective government. He also offered a robust defense of the individual’s right to liberty of conscience, on epistemic and theological grounds. In the following sections, I examine Finch’s articulation of toleration as both a pragmatic instrument of statecraft, and as a matter of ‘Humane Right’.

3.1.1 The lessons of history: Toleration, empire, and pragmatism

Finch’s *politique* philosophy of religious toleration is underwritten by a cyclical model of history. He was especially concerned with two fundamental historical patterns: the oscillation of power between religious and civil authorities, and the historical conditions which enabled civil unrest and regime change. For Finch, the operative variable for both patterns was the expansion and retraction of religious freedoms: accordingly, he argued, extending the liberty of conscience to religious dissenters was a technique of wise governance.

Finch’s understanding of ecclesiastical history posits a complex relationship between religion and the stability of civil government. On the one hand, government cannot exist without religion to secure the loyalty and obedience of the populace. In his manuscript treatise, Finch wrote that the Roman Empire became the “Seat of the greatest Universall Power that Ever was known either in Temporall or Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction” precisely because it subsumed the power of the Christian Church to the interests of the Empire.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807*, 30.

¹⁸⁵ TNA SP 29/82, f. 201^r, Finch to Conway, Oct. 14, 1663.

¹⁸⁶ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 75.

Rome enjoyed a “Universall Monarchy Over Mankind” by combining the “Prerogatives acquir’d by fears of Warr” with “ the Seat of the Head of the Ecclesiasticall Power, w[hi]ch gives Rules to the thoughts, & Consequently the Souls of Men.”¹⁸⁷ His is a darkly theocratic view of Roman *imperium*: the state enjoyed coercive power over its subjects not only through the exercise of penal laws, but through its control of “the very point w[hi]ch makes them Men, w[hi]ch is Reason & Religion.”¹⁸⁸ In the contemporary context, Finch argues, this civil right over ecclesiastical power has been devolved to the national churches. “Rome was the Rule of Civility to its Governm[en]t: being [th]e Seat of the Consuls, and afterwards the Emperours; as London is to England, and Paris is to France.”¹⁸⁹

Conversely, Finch was convinced that oppressing the individual liberty of conscience was fatal to the stability of a civil polity. In his 1676 letter to Edward Conway, Thomas Baines offered a pithy summary of this historical dynamic: “it Appears That Oppressions in Civil Government have allway’s usherd’ in Changes of Religion; Not Religion the Change of a well Temperd’ contented Government; For Government was the first Thing intended by God, And that Upon necessary Grounds; for no Religion can stand without Civill Governments; but Civill Government may be without any one particular Religion.”¹⁹⁰

Oppression, in other words, leads to civil unrest – and in extreme cases, Finch argued, to regime change. Indeed, Finch placed this historical argument at the forefront of his case for religious toleration. In his unpublished treatise, Finch offered a detailed gloss of early church history, which characterized the incredible expansion of the early Christian church as a direct response to Roman oppression. Importantly, however, he argued that the subsequent stability of the Christianized Roman Empire only lasted “So Long as Christians kept to this Doctrine of Christ, and the Governed rendred to the Government also all Obedience either Active or Passive.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁹⁰ LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, June 20/30, 1676, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 29; 11.

¹⁹¹ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 474.

The stability of the Christian Roman Empire was, therefore, dependent upon a symbiotic but unequal partnership between Church and Empire. As discussed earlier, Finch considered religion indispensable to Rome: it both legitimized the civil authorities, and offered them an invaluable instrument of coercion. However, this symbiosis required that the Church cede all civil jurisdiction to the Empire. For scriptural justification, Finch leaned heavily on the Gospel of Matthew and Paul's letter to the Romans, noting that "Our Saviour who was King of Kings payd not onely Himselfe [...] Tribute to Caesar of a very different Opinion from His Doctrine, but enjoynd' to all the rendring to Caesar what was Caesars: And St Paul Rom:13 enjoyns to all Christians absolute obedience, even for Conscience sake, to all Kings and Souvereign Authority's."¹⁹²

Provocatively, Finch argued that the historical conditions which enabled the rapid spread of Christianity repeated themselves during the seventh century CE/first century AH. Just as the early Church overthrew the pagan Roman cult in the face of civil oppression, the oppression of 'Arrians' by orthodox Trinitarians enabled Islam to flourish. After the bishop of Rome claimed universal jurisdiction over all spiritual matters, the church hierarchy erred fatally by attempting to "Lord it over the Consciences of their fellow Christians in the same height of Jurisdiction and Persecution th[a]t Heathen Rome Exercisd'."¹⁹³ In turn, both the Church and the Empire became vulnerable to precisely the same civil unrest and internal divisions which had been earlier been exploited by the Christians.

Importantly, however, Finch's model of ecclesiastical history and religious toleration was both cautionary and proscriptive. Persecuting the civil rights of religious dissenters, as in the case of the Christianized Roman Empire, leaves an empire vulnerable to rebellion and conquest. It was in precisely this context, Finch argues, that "Mahomet [began] to promulgate His Doctrine," which capitalized intelligently on Christian disunity by offering religious toleration to the persecuted Arrian minority in the Levant and North Africa.¹⁹⁴ Fatally weakened by its own policy of religious intolerance, "Christianity was it selfe pulld' down by the same method in Asia and Africa that it had pulld' down other

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 464-5.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 474.

¹⁹⁴ BL Add. MS 23215, f. 78^r; LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 483.

Religions; and Mahometanism quickly gave by introducing Liberty of Conscience to all that deny Polytheisme Polytheisme (for they are obliged to cut of all th[a]t acknowledge not one God) as great a Blow to Christianity, as that gave to Idolatrous Ethnicism before.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Although Finch rarely acknowledged his sources, his account of early Islamic history is clearly paraphrased from Henry Stubbe’s 1671 *The Originall and Progress of Mahometanism*, as noted by both Justin Champion and William Bulman (see Justin Champion, “Legislators, Imposters, and the Politic Origins of Religion: English Theories of ‘Imposture’ from Stubbe to Toland,” in *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought in Early-Eighteenth-Century Europe: Studies on the Traite Des Trois Imposteurs*, ed. Silvia Berti, Françoise Charles-Daubert, and Richard H Popkin [Dordrecht: Springer, 2011], 343, n.22; and Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*, 87, n. 66).

The *Originall* was radically sympathetic towards both Islam and Muhammad himself, defending him against Christian polemicists who had “transformed the wisest legislator that ever was into a simple cheat” (see Nabil Matar, *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam the Originall & Progress of Mahometanism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2014], 192-3). The work was circulated in manuscript form amongst radical English freethinkers during the 1680s, and was partially published by Charles Blount during the early 1690s; however, it was not published in full until 1913. Nabil Matar’s 2014 critical edition is the best and most recent version of the text, which exists in several archival fragments.

Stubbe’s manuscript was one of Finch’s most important sources, and provided him with an accurate and largely unprejudiced source for early Islamic history. Between 1656-1659, Stubbe served as the Deputy Keeper of the Bodleian Library, and enjoyed extraordinary access to the Bodleian’s collection of Arabic texts, recently translated into Latin by Edward Pococke and Erpenius. As Matar has noted, Stubbe thought it important “that the study of the beginnings of Islam should be conducted through sources written in the language of Islam and by writers belonging to the world of Islam” (Matar, *Henry Stubbe*, 18). Stubbe was especially reliant on historical texts written by four Christian Arabic scholars: Jibrā’īl al-Ṣuhyūnī (1577-1648/985-1050), Jirjis ibn al-’Amīd al-Makīn (c. 1205-73/c. 602-672), Sa’īd ibn al-Baṭrīq (877-940/263-328), and Abū al-Faraj (1226-86/623-85). These authors, writing as Christian Arabs in Muslim societies, deeply impressed Stubbe, who wrote that “It is certain that the Christians which lived under the Mahometans, as Elmacin & others, do mention Mahomet wth great respect as Mahomet of glorious memory” (quoted in Matar, *Henry Stubbe*, 18).

Unfortunately, there is no extant correspondence between Stubbe and Finch, and no evidence that they ever met. Nevertheless, Finch clearly accessed at least a partial draft of the *Originall*, likely via his correspondence with the Conways. During the late 1660s, Stubbe belonged to the social milieu surrounding Anne and Edward Conway at Ragley, and was consulted during Anne’s chronic illness. In fact, one scholar has speculated that Edward Conway himself may have personally commissioned Stubbe to write the *Originall*; see James Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 76-7.

In both his treatise and his 1674/5 report for Conway, he argues that the Christianized Roman Empire disintegrated for political reasons: by claiming persecutory rights over dissenters, he claimed that the ecclesiastical hierarchy fatally undermined the unity of Church and Empire, enabling the emergence of Islam. This is an overt adaptation of Stubbe’s 1671 *Originall*, who argued that the unity of the early Church was shattered by moral degeneration and theological in-fighting. Corrupted by the post-Chalcedon œcumenical councils, Christianity “degenerated into such a kind of paganism as wanted nothing but the ancient sacrifices and professed polytheism, and, even as to the latter, there wanted not some who did make three gods of the Trinity” (Matar, *Henry Stubbe*, 102). The resulting “ignorance [...and] debauchery” provided an ideal environment for the emergence of a leader who, if he “did but live a pious, strict life, with great mortifications and outward devotion, and were but an eloquent preacher, he might in any place of the Eastern Empire make a potent sect instantly” (Matar, *Henry Stubbe*, 101).

Finch's historical analysis of toleration and empire is, therefore, a case study in the virtue of peacefully accommodating religious dissenters. Promising religious liberty to persecuted Arrian Christians enabled the rapid expansion of the early Islamic kingdoms, but also consolidated their rule over ceded territories. In his view, it was thanks to the "Liberty of Conscience to all different Religions that acknowledge But one God" that the Ottomans "were assur'd' to keep the Conquests they had made; for nothing occasions such desperate Revolts and dangerous attempts as the oppressing [th]e Conscience; w[hi]ch being a Trade so universally practisd' amongst Christians; the Turks find it a most beneficiall one to them".¹⁹⁶

In Finch's context, the clear implication of this historical account is that religious intolerance on the part of the English state will, inevitably, undermine the stability of the civil government. By juxtaposing the early Church's self-imposed susceptibility to Islamic toleration with contemporary English politics, he strongly implied that the English state should consider religious toleration as a political strategy for avoiding a second Civil War.¹⁹⁷ Although Finch never made this connection explicit, Thomas Baines was less coy in his 1676 report for Conway: "the Great Opposition which is made in England against Catholicks, is not made by the greatest part of Men simply upon the Score of Religion, but Upon the Score of Civill Rights."¹⁹⁸ While it is impossible to tolerate the incursion of papal claims to ecclesiastical authority in England, the two men were unambiguous that, in the interests of avoiding civil unrest and war, it was necessary to avoid unnecessary burdens upon the liberty of conscience.

3.1.2 Toleration, skepticism, and 'Humane Right'

On historical grounds, then, Finch was convinced that civil oppressions levied on religious dissenters was a profound error of government. Religious intolerance fomented internal rebellion, allowed ecclesiastical authorities to usurp the coercive powers of the government, and exposed the state to external threats. It is also evident that he was

¹⁹⁶ BL Add. MS 23215, ff. 79^r-79^v.

¹⁹⁷ Finch was not the only one of his contemporaries to seek historical and anthropological parallels to the English Civil War in recent Islamic history. Lancelot Addison's *West Barbary* (Oxford, 1671), for instance, drew parallels between Muhammad and Oliver Cromwell, and between Moroccan Islam and Puritan Christianity; see Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*, 121-8, 150-54.

¹⁹⁸ LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, June 20/30, 1676, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 29; 18.

impressed by the political efficacy of the Ottoman model for toleration. For Finch, the ‘Liberty of Conscience’ that the Ottomans extended to monotheists was essential to both the rapid expansion and the ongoing durability of their empire. Although Finch seems to have elided the early history of Islam with the contemporary Ottoman Empire, he did have access to reasonably accurate sources on Islamic history in the form of Henry Stubbe’s manuscripts (see above, n.15). Finally, in the context of the reports that he and Baines wrote to Edward Conway, it is clear that both men saw toleration as a normative principle of good government: toleration could stave off a second Civil War, and contribute to a project of empire-building.

Finch also offered a robust philosophical case for the liberty of conscience as an individual right, on both epistemic and theological grounds. In fact, he articulated three arguments for a ‘Humane Right’ to the freedom of conscience, which I have described as the argument from epistemic skepticism, the argument from interiority, and the argument against coercion.¹⁹⁹ This last argument is particularly pointed: in opposition to the prevalent Augustinian view that religious coercion was both effective and justified, Finch denied that it was either.

Finch’s first philosophical argument for toleration is grounded in his epistemic skepticism. Although he firmly believed in the existence of incorporeal beings, including God, angels, and the human soul, he rejected the possibility of generating any reliable metaphysical knowledge. For Finch, all knowledge is derived through sense perception, or from subsequent reflection upon sensory information, “it being impossible to remember what is neither figur’d in the mind by some Corporeall Shape; For the Imagination cannot convey anything to the memory, but what has first Enterd’ into itself; and therefore Every Object perceivd’ or understood, must be reppresented by Corporeity be it never so subtile.”²⁰⁰ Sense perceptions are generated by the body’s sensory organs – the ear, the eye, etc. – which are in turn delivered to the “Internal

¹⁹⁹ Here, my thinking is indebted to Richard Vernon, *Locke on Toleration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xv–xvii, who distinguishes between the arguments from the mandate of the state, belief, and error in John Locke’s *A Letter concerning Toleration*.

²⁰⁰ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 17.

Perceiving Faculty” in the form of ‘signatures,’ which “function like the shapes that make up letters of [the] alphabet.”²⁰¹

On this epistemic basis, Finch distinguished between absolute and relative knowledge. Because God, by definition, is unaffected by the epistemic limitations imposed by imperfect and finite sensory organs, only God is capable of possessing “Absolute Knowledge of any Being.”²⁰² Humans, by contrast, are limited to “Relative knowledge,” not only of metaphysics and the natural world, but also of “Divine & Humane Truths being deliverd’ to Us by God Himselfe in Words, w[hi]ch can never Exhibit precisely the same Idea” between believers.²⁰³ Accordingly, Finch argued that it was “against Divine and Humane Right (since Man can understand Nothing but by Words) to impose a necessity of Believing any Truth Reveald’ by God, or deliverd’ by Man, exactly & Precisely according to the same Idea, without Latitude or Variation.”²⁰⁴

Finch’s epistemic skepticism also informs his argument from interiority. If humans can only achieve relative epistemic certainty, then it follows that the “Interpretation of Scripture” is subject to “the Judgm[en]t of every Private Man,” and “Neither the Doctrine of the Church, nor the Interpretation of Scripture can be Infallibly enjoynd.”²⁰⁵ As a result, enforcing religious belief is not only epistemically irrational, but an unacceptable usurpation of God’s authority. “God having reservd’ the Prerogative of *καρδιογνωσις*²⁰⁶ to Himselfe, & not having given any Men the Power of knowing the Hearts of others, He seems to give Men to understand, that what is in the Heart is out of their Jurisdiction and Authority.”²⁰⁷ Since only God is capable of knowing “when the Conscience or Inward

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18; Hutton, “Sir John Finch (1626-1682), Doctor, Diplomat and Virtuoso,” 163.

²⁰² LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 422.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 422-3.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 424.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 468.

²⁰⁶ *καρδιογνωσις* is a compound of *καρδία*, ‘heart,’ and *γνωσις*, ‘seeking to know, inquiry, investigation.’ Here, Finch uses the term to mean ‘knowledge/knowing of the heart.’ This term also appears in his 1674/5 report for Conway, in juxtaposition to “knowing of the thoughts” (BL Add. MS 23215, 80^v). My thanks to Andrew Rampton for his assistance with this translation.

²⁰⁷ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 469-70.

Man disobeys His Injunctions & Commands,” then only God has the right to “Impose Lawes to bind [...] the Conscience.”²⁰⁸

Finally, Finch supplies a thicket of arguments against the efficacy of enforcing belief. Belief, he argues, is purely internal, and cannot be coerced, “[f]or Outward Tyes upon Men, are like Prisons, Cords and Chains, w[hi]ch are Externall to their Bodyes, They keep them no Longer in hold when there are able to breake Them.”²⁰⁹ Furthermore, by definition, belief must be voluntary, for it is not the “Part of Religion to force Religion; w[hi]ch ought to be undertaken voluntarily, not by compulsion, since the very sacrifices are calld’ for from a Willing Mind.”²¹⁰ Finally, he argues that compelling belief has little effect besides turning a dissenter into a hypocrite, since “forcing a Man to an Outward Profession contrary to His Inward Perswasion, is but to Improve the Guilt of Him, who sayes He Believes what He does Not.”²¹¹

In the context of the late seventeenth century, it is important to note that Finch argued that coercion is neither effective nor justified for the promotion of religious belief. In his *Treatise Concerning the Correction of the Donatists*, Augustine offered a powerful theological rationale for religious persecution, arguing for the legitimacy of correcting unorthodox practices through force: “men should actually be compelled to the feast of everlasting salvation [...] He who is compelled is forced to go where he had no wish to go, but when he has come in, he partakes of the feast right willingly.”²¹² This formulation framed debates over religious toleration during the seventeenth century, and was repeatedly cited by authors who sought to justify persecution. In his very public duel with John Locke, for instance, Jonas Proast offered a qualified version of Augustine’s formula, arguing that “though no force can compel men to embrace (if by that you mean, to believe) the doctrine of others that differ from them, yet some force may induce those who would not otherwise to hear what may and ought to move them to embrace the

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 470.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 414.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 465.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 471.

²¹² Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, 293–94.

truth.”²¹³ Ultimately, Finch offers a remarkably robust articulation of toleration as a fundamental right. “Wee must confesse that God having created Man with freedome of will or *in manu Consily Sui* in the hand of His own Counsell, The Conscience of Men ought to be free, it being not in [th]e Power of man to take away or alter, that w[hi]ch was the gift of God to Man as part of His Nature. [...] Tis of Humane Right & Naturall Power, for every one to Worship what he beleives. Nor does the Religion of another, prejudice or profit any Man.”²¹⁴ This is a substantially more robust claim than simply asserting the inefficacy of coercion, a position which would leave half of the Augustinian formula unchallenged. By positing a ‘Humane Right’ to the individual liberty of conscience, Finch firmly denied both the legitimacy and the efficacy of coercion for promoting religious belief.

3.2 Toleration and ecclesiology: From liberty to coercion

Earlier, I suggested that Finch’s proposed toleration for the *individual* liberty of conscience would prove significant. Although he offers a remarkably robust defense of religious toleration, on historical, pragmatic, and philosophical grounds, we have not yet asked how he defined ‘liberty of conscience.’ When we investigate Finch’s presuppositions in greater detail, we find that his is a philosophy which prizes liberty and coercion in equal measure – to paraphrase Ethan Shagan, it is a ‘subtly violent’ philosophy, in which state power and circumscribed liberty are equal partners in a theory of sovereignty.²¹⁵

In this section, I draw upon Shagan’s interpretation of tolerationist authors in seventeenth-century England, in order to understand the relationship between liberty and coercion in Finch’s thought. During the seventeenth century, the language of ‘moderation’ was a key element of political discourse in early modern England. Traditionally, historians have taken early moderns at their word when they claim to be ‘moderate’: however, a host of new interpretive possibilities appear when we understand that, in early modern England, ‘moderation’ was both a “state of equipoise and the act of

²¹³ Jonas Proast, *A Third Letter concerning Toleration in Defence of the Argument of the Letter concerning Toleration, Briefly Considered and Answered* (1691), in Vernon, *Locke on Toleration*, 110.

²¹⁴ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 471.

²¹⁵ Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, 341.

restraint that produced it.”²¹⁶ “Moderation had a variety of meanings in early modern England, centred on ideas of restraint, limitation, governance, or control. Paradigmatically, this meant self-restraint [...] Yet moderation also meant external restraint, quintessentially the kind enforced by authority upon those unable to moderate themselves.”²¹⁷

For our purposes, Shagan’s analysis of religious toleration is particularly vital. During the seventeenth century, the defense of religious freedom was almost invariably articulated alongside an “assault on immorality.”²¹⁸ In *An Address to Protestants upon the Present Conjuncture* (1679), for instance, William Penn vigorously defended religious toleration, but simultaneously displaced moral behaviour from the jurisdiction of the church, to an interest of the state. “Those impieties that relate more particularly to the state to correct are drunkenness, whoredoms and fornications; excess in apparel and furniture and living; profuse gaming; and finally oaths, profaneness and blasphemy.”²¹⁹

This juxtaposition of liberty and moral restraint is not evidence that a given author failed to fully secularize or liberalize his thought, nor is it a “byproduct of tolerationist thought [or] a response to conservative criticism.” Rather, “[u]niversalising arguments for religious toleration became moderate and hence virtuous precisely because they bridled sin.”²²⁰ It is crucial to understanding Finch’s thought that “seventeenth century writers [...] never imagined a toleration that was not always already a concomitant restraint; their intellectual projects justified the state’s toleration of certain dubious beliefs and practices by arguing that such toleration more firmly established the state’s capacity to restrain other dubious beliefs and practices.”²²¹

As I will argue, both the ends and the means of Finch’s theory of sovereignty are ecclesiological. In order to eliminate theological differences between Christian denominations, he argues for a sort of theological minimalism – a ‘lowest common

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹⁷ Ethan Shagan, “Beyond Good and Evil: Thinking with Moderates in Early Modern England,” *The Journal of British Studies* 49 (2010): 496–97.

²¹⁸ Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, 299.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 308.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 300.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

denominator' version of the church, to which any reasonable Christian could assent. In so doing, he radically narrows the jurisdiction of the church, to such an extent that religious communities have no independent authority over their own members. Religious freedom is an individual right, not a communal right: an individual has the right to believe whatever she pleases, but not to join a dissenting church.

This minimalist ecclesiology enables him to simultaneously advocate for the liberty of conscience, on political, theological, and ecclesiological grounds, and for the intolerance of dissenting or non-conforming Christian denominations. As a result, a Christian monarch has total jurisdiction over every aspect of religion that is not strictly interior: he has the right not only to demand conformity to the Church of England, but also to assert his authority over the Church itself. Ultimately, for Finch, religious toleration and religious oppression become complementary aspects of an imperial ecclesiology.

3.2.1 Finch's ecclesiology

According to Finch, Christianity can be reduced to three components: "No Church can be deny'd to be a True Church, where the Faith of Christ is preachd', The Sacraments are rightly administred; and none of its Doctrines directly repugnant to the Word of God."²²² Ostensibly, this minimal version of Christianity is intended to secure the "peace of Conscience and Peace of the Church," by rendering the "divisions and animosity's w[hi]ch proceed from our Lusts Jam[es] 4:1" moot.²²³ At the same time, this is an extraordinarily narrow ecclesiological view. By "Reduc[ing] Things finally but to the Holy Scriptures; and oblig[ing] Christians to nothing more then what is contained there," Finch excludes religious practices from the definition of 'religion' in a single stroke.²²⁴ This ecclesiological minimalism has profound consequences for both the relationship between the established church and the state, and for the practical utility of the individual's right to liberty of conscience.

²²² LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 472.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 490-1.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 491.

Because Finch defines the church as an organization that preaches the Christian faith and administers the sacraments, the jurisdiction of the church is narrowly confined to matters of internal belief. As a result, an extraordinarily broad category of religious practices are extraneous to Christian worship, and outside the jurisdiction of the Church – including “the wearing of the Surplice, the use of the Cross in Baptisme, the Ring in Marriage and Sett forms of Prayer; or any Ceremony’s that are not absolutely in themselves sinfull.”²²⁵

Importantly, it was precisely these embodied religious practices that grounded Tudor and Stuart claims to royal supremacy over the Church, and which were most fiercely contested between conformists to and dissenters from the Church of England. The 1533 Act of Restraint in Appeals legally established the independence of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, and codified the English monarch’s jurisdiction over matters of Christian worship in England. As Walter Ullmann has argued, Henry VIII’s ideological and legal claims to sovereignty were adapted from the Roman imperial model, assuming “the sum-total of all the rights and functions which the late Roman emperor had, hence was *rex* who in his kingdom was *imperator*.”²²⁶ This is not to imply that the Tudors harboured any universalist ambitions, but rather that Henry VIII sought to “play in his own kingdom the role and function of the late Roman emperor which was abundantly documented in the easily available Roman law.”²²⁷ Accordingly, the Tudor claim to ecclesiastical authority indigenized the Roman formula for imperial power: that “*Ius publicum in sacris, in sacerdotibus et in magistratibus consistit*.”²²⁸ Imperial sovereignty, according to this conceptualization, did not involve an extraterritorial political claim, but rather a claim to undivided authority within the bounds of a given kingdom. In ecclesiastical matters, this bifurcated the legal authority over the Church of England into two categories. The monarch’s authority extended to both the governance of the church, and to the establishment of external, embodied practices of

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 473.

²²⁶ Walter Ullmann, “This Realm of England Is an Empire,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30 (1979): 198.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 179. “The public law consists in the objects of religious cults, in the administrators of sacred matters (or, jurisdiction over them), and the civil service” (translation mine).

worship – called *adiaphora*, or ‘things indifferent,’ which were considered extraneous to belief.²²⁹ This authority did not extend to sacerdotal, or priestly, functions: the Church was solely responsible for administering the sacraments, ordaining priests, and consecrating bishops.²³⁰

It is difficult to overstate the centrality of this legal formula to subsequent Tudor and Stuart claims to royal supremacy over the Church of England; and more broadly, to debates over the governance of the church and religious toleration for dissenters.²³¹ In 1559, the Henrician model of church governance was revived by the Act of Supremacy, which confirmed Elizabeth I’s right to wield the powers which had been granted to her father by the Acts of Appeals, Annates, and Submissions.²³² Following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the Restoration church settlement once again established the monarch’s jurisdiction over *adiaphora* and the governance of the church. In 1662, the Act of Uniformity “ordered, firstly, that all clergy swear their ‘unfeigned assent and consent’” to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, which had not been revised to address the concerns of puritans.²³³ Once again, the monarch’s jurisdiction over external religious practices became a flashpoint between religious conformists and dissenters. The “rites, gestures, ceremonies, and vestments which had annoyed puritans since the 1560s were

²²⁹ *Ibid.* See also Jacqueline Rose, “Royal Ecclesiastical Supremacy and the Restoration Church,” *Historical Research* 80 (2007): 324–345.

²³⁰ Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The Politics of the Royal Supremacy, 1660-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 50.

²³¹ Relatively little has been written about the royal supremacy or the theory of church governance in early modern England. The best and most recent publication is Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The Politics of the Royal Supremacy, 1660-1688*, 2013, 7; but see also John Marshall, “The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-Men 1660–1689: Stillingfleet, Tillotson and ‘Hobbism,’” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985): 407–27, and Jan Wojcik, “‘Behold the Fear of the Lord’: The Erastianism of Stillingfleet, Wolsey, and Tillotson,” in *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought in Early-Eighteenth-Century Europe: Studies on the Traite Des Trois Imposteurs*, ed. Silvia Berti, Françoise Charles-Daubert, and Richard H Popkin (Dordrecht; London: Springer, 2011), 357–74, for the influence of Erastian thought during the 1670s and 1680s, especially amongst the so-called ‘Latitudinarians.’ On the role of civil religion in early modern English scholarship, see Mark Goldie, “Civil Religion and the English Enlightenment,” in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism*, ed. Gordon Schochet (Washington: Folger Institute, 1993), 31–46, and also Mark Goldie, “Toleration and the Godly Prince in Restoration England,” in *Liberty, Authority, Formality: Political Ideas and Culture, 1600-1900.*, ed. John Morrow (Luton: Andrews, 2012), 45–65. Finally, Justin Champion has begun to investigate ecclesiology as a ‘language of political thought’ in early modern England; see “Some Forms of Religious Liberty: Political Thinking, Ecclesiology and Religious Freedom in Early Modern England” (2014).

²³² Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England*, 2013, 45–46.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

retained: kneeling to receive Communion, signing the cross in baptism, and wearing the surplice would thus remain Restoration complaints.”²³⁴ As Jacqueline Rose has noted, the Oath of Supremacy first legislated under Henry VIII in 1533 was not repealed until 1689.²³⁵

In this context, Finch’s decision to place ‘the use of the Cross in Baptisme, the Ring in Marriage and Sett forms of Prayer’ outside of the church’s jurisdiction is not simply an assortment of religious practices, but rather a direct intervention into an explosive debate surrounding worship, religious freedom, and church government. Behind Finch’s bland phrasing is a deliberate intention to eliminate the freedom of religious dissenters to translate their convictions into practice. Because these ‘things indifferent,’ or *adiaphora*, are excluded from the definition of ‘religion,’ there is no need to tolerate those who conscientiously object to them. Indeed, Finch explicitly affirms that there is no liberty of conscience in matters of religious practice. “Nothing therefore can be sufficiently cogent to a Christian to breake of the Communion with the Church He is born a Member of, and to become a Dissenter or Nonconformist (to avoid the odious names of Separatist & Schismatick) But that He apprehends Himselfe out of the State of Salvation under The Communion of such a Church.”²³⁶

This requirement is even stricter than it appears at first glance. Finch uses the term ‘apprehend’ in its strongest possible epistemological sense. It is not enough to simply object to a given doctrine of the Church on conscientious grounds: rather, “receding from, and forsaking a Church a Man is a Member of, requires two things.”²³⁷ A legitimate dissenter must not only provide “powerfull Arguments, of High Probability at Least,” for the sinfulness of a given doctrine: the doctrines of the church in question must *actually* be “Damnable.”²³⁸ Paradoxically, by positing a version of Christianity stripped down to three minimal propositions, Finch narrows the legitimate grounds for dissent so drastically that the right to liberty of conscience is virtually meaningless.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

²³⁶ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 472.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 475.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

Indeed, on the basis on his epistemic minimalism, Finch argued that Christians should default to religious conformity. As we have seen, Finch posited that human knowledge was relative, in that it was subject to the inherent limitations of sensory organs. Accordingly, there is little to adjudicate between the claims of the established church and religious dissenters, and “they th[a]t conform to the Governm[en]t may be as Conscientiously perswaded of [th]e Justnesse of what the Governm[en]t enjoyns, out of an Inward Principle, as well as Dissentors of the Contrary.”²³⁹ In the absence of any conclusive theological or epistemic evidence, he asserts that “the Conscience w[hi]ch is for preserving what is according to Law, is *caeteris paribus* [all other things being equall] most preferable, and in things indifferent alwayes so.”²⁴⁰

In fact, Finch goes so far as to make morality itself a creature of government. Because “all Men have equal Authority in pronouncing anything Good or Reasonable,” two conflicting “Edicts [...] were candidates of Equall Pretensions to Good.”²⁴¹ In order to preserve the unity of sovereignty within a state, Finch asserts that moral disagreements must be resolved by the government, which “steps in, and siding with one Party, make one opinion Good and the other Bad by Law.”²⁴²

In short, imposition in things indifferent does not abrogate the liberty of conscience, precisely because Finch has defined the Church so minimally. There is no legitimate dissent from a church which restricts itself to the requirements of scripture and the administration of the sacraments: and because those grounds explicitly exclude *adiaphora*, or ‘things indifferent,’ conscientious objections over religious practices are not protected by the liberty of conscience.²⁴³ In other words, Finch’s ecclesiology is one which simultaneously defends and delimits liberty. By simultaneously extending the liberty of conscience as a ‘Humane Right,’ and defining the appropriate scope of

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 425.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 473.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 417.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ This argument departs significantly from Sarah Hutton’s view of Finch; see “Sir John Finch and Religious Toleration” (Firenze, 2011), *passim* but esp. 292-4. For Hutton, Finch’s “doctrinal minimalism might be used to promote religious eirenicism” (292).

conscience so narrowly as to make legitimate dissent virtually impossible, he ultimately invests the monarch with extraordinarily broad ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

3.2.2 Toleration in practice: Jews, Muslims, and Christian non-conformists

This imperial ecclesiology is the driving force behind Finch's recommendations for religious toleration in practice: for Finch, the liberty of conscience, though a 'Humane Right,' was secondary to the sovereignty of the civil monarch. Judaism and Islam, the two other monotheistic religions which had 'orespread almost all [th]e whole world,' were not only to be tolerated, but might even be (admittedly imperfect) routes to salvation. By contrast, dissenting Christian denominations, with the possible exception of the Quakers, were intolerable threats to the sovereignty of the state. The unifying feature between these recommendations is an ecclesiological question: if, in Finch's estimation, a given religious community claims ecclesiastic authority that threatens the unitary, and unified, sovereignty of the state, then the 'Humane Right' to liberty of conscience must be abrogated.

Finch was far from immune to contemporary prejudices regarding Jews and Muslims. In his 1674/5 report for Conway, for instance, he asserts that "The fourth Great Point that tends to Enlargement of Empire is the Liberty of Every Mans having 4 Wives; and as many Concubines as He Can maintain."²⁴⁴ Indeed, in his estimation, the majority of Christian conversions to Islam could be explained by concupiscence – which, he observed with anticlerical relish, was a particular affliction of "Fryers & Ecclesiasticall Persons."²⁴⁵ Finch's interest in Muslim sexuality and gender relations is quintessentially orientalist, although unlike many of his peers, he saw Ottoman gender relations as a model worth replicating, rather than evidence of his own superior self-mastery.²⁴⁶ Both

²⁴⁴ BL Add. MS 23215, f. 79^v.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Cultural anxiety about the prevalence of Christian conversions to Islam was widespread in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; see Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14-20; and esp. ch.1, 'Conversion to Islam in English Writings,' 21-49. Although precise statistics are unavailable, it is likely that there were thousands of Christian converts during the period; in 1619, for instance, the author of *Relations of the Christianitie of Africa* noted that 857 Germans and 300 English had converted (Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 35). These 'renegades,' as contemporary authors described them, prompted massive cultural anxiety and theological embarrassment, especially considering the near-absence of recorded Muslim conversions to Christianity.

²⁴⁶ Finch devotes more than an entire sheet of his 1674/5 report for Conway to a description of women's clothing and social roles (BL Add. MS 23215, ff. 79^v-81^r). His language strongly reflects contemporary English discourse regarding Muslim sexuality; see e.g., Lancelot Addison, *The First State of Mahumedism*,

Finch and Baines also traffic in Jewish stereotyping, although they refer to Jews far less frequently than Muslims. In a letter dated May 25, 1674, for instance, Baines informed Conway of Finch's skillful negotiations with "[th]e faithlesse Greeke & false Jew."²⁴⁷

At the same time, both men appear to have personally interacted with Ottoman subjects on a basis of mutual respect. As the ambassador from an important trading partner, Finch belonged to and socialized with the Ottoman social elite: as John-Paul Ghobrial has noted, "the identities that mattered most in Istanbul were not always those prescribed by Ottoman law – *musta'min*/subject, Christian/Muslim – but rather the social distinctions that marked elites off from everyone else."²⁴⁸ In the course of his ambassadorial duties, Finch was an invited guest at high-level court functions.²⁴⁹ In 1676/1087, for instance, Finch traveled to Edirne (Adrianople) to attend the circumcision celebrations for the sultan's eldest son, later Mustafa II (r.1693-1703/981-1004). John Coke, the Levant Company's secretary in Istanbul, accompanied Finch, and published an account of the celebrations later that year. Coke was keen to inform the English reading public that they were well-served by Finch's diplomatic efforts, writing that "To our own private Affairs his Excellency my Lord Ambassador Sir *John Finch* had all

Being an Exact Account of Mahomed, the Author of the Turkish Religion, EEBO (London: Printed for Will Crook, 1687), esp. 135-6. While Finch replicated this discourse, however, he drew precisely the opposite conclusion to authors like Addison, for whom Ottoman sexuality and gender relations were proof of Christian superiority. Finch admired what he understood about the role of women in Ottoman society, and considered it one of their public policies that "tends to Enlargement of Empire" (BL Add. MS 23215, 79"). According to Finch, because "the whole Sexe is Left to their home devotions, and conversations one with another [...] it comes to passe that the Governm[en]t of this Empire is wholly Masculine; w[hi]ch it is in no part of Christendome" (*Ibid.*, 80"). This is an unusual and disturbing synthesis between orientalism and early modern discourse on gender relations; as Ethan Shagan has argued, early modern moderation was "routinely described as quintessentially masculine, and masculinity as quintessentially moderate" (Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, 63). In this context, Finch's interest in regulating women's appearance and presence in the public sphere is a logical extension of his broader project to extend the state's sovereignty over the embodied practices of everyday life; although this thesis focuses on religious practices, the same might be said of gender relations.

²⁴⁷ TNA SP 97/19, f. 206^r, Baines to Conway, May 25, 1674.

²⁴⁸ Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, 85; for more on elite sociability in the Ottoman empire, see ch. 3, 'European-Ottoman Sociability in Istanbul,' 65-87.

²⁴⁹ See 'Remarques in Turkey of [th]e Country: And at Audiences with foreign Ministers in these Parts,' LRO Finch MS, Box 4988. See also the diary of John Covel (1638-1722), the chaplain to the Levant Company during Finch's embassy, which records numerous audiences between Finch, Baines, and various members of the Ottoman political and religious elite. The most accessible version of Covel's diary is an abbreviated section published in 1893; see John Covel, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, ed. J. Theodore Bent, Hakluyt Society 87 (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1893).

satisfaction.”²⁵⁰ This example nicely illustrates the importance of Finch’s membership in the Ottoman social elite to his overall diplomatic project, both materially and rhetorically: publicly performing his social status facilitated his relationships with ranking Ottoman bureaucrats, and communicated his (and the Company’s) importance to the English public.

Finch clearly respected many of the Ottoman officials whom he encountered in the course of his mercantile and ambassadorial duties. In 1674/5, for instance, he informed his sister Anne that one “Chusain Aga’,” an official responsible for customs collections in Istanbul, was “the most Subtile manager of his charge that has been [th]e Memory of man; & I could wish our Merch[a]nts did not find it so.”²⁵¹ He was also impressed by the novelty of socializing without alcohol, and wrote that the “whole Discourse of the People is Grave, Sedate, and without Heat; their words are slow the People being thoughtful; attributing the haste and Heat of Speaking usd’ by most Christians to their being at the best not quite Sober.”²⁵² Finally, there is evidence that he and Baines were interested in religious dialogue with Muslims, and were open to genuinely learning from those encounters. John Covel’s diary records a theological disputation between Baines and Vānī Meḥmed Efendi (d. 1684/1094), an influential and charismatic Qāḏīzādeli preacher,²⁵³ during which the two spoke about Islamic thought, particularly the nature of the soul, the status of women, and religious toleration.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ John Coke, *A True Narrative of the Great Solemnity of the Circumcision of Mustapha Prince of Turkie, Eldest Son of Sultan Mahomet [...]; Being in Company with His Excellency the Lord Ambassador Sir John Finch.*, EEBO (London: printed by J[ames] C[ottrell] for William Crook, 1676), 6.

²⁵¹ BL Add. MS 23215, f. 84^v.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, f. 79.

²⁵³ Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, 48. Efendi was highly popular with Sultan Meḥmed IV and his household. He was one of several influential preachers associated with the Qāḏīzādeli movement, a “passionately devout, markedly anti-mystical group of Muslim mosque preachers on the periphery of the Ottoman religious establishment” which consolidated into an influential revivalist movement, with strong ties to the imperial household, around 1650-1/1061 (Simeon Evstatiev, “The Qāḏīzādeli Movement and the Spread of Islamic Revivalism in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth Century Ottoman Empire,” Centre for Advanced Study Sofia Working Paper Series, no. 5 [2013]: 4, and 1–34).

²⁵⁴ Covel, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, 268–72. As an historical source, Covel’s account of this disputation, dated 10 August 1675/18 Jumada 1086, must be approached with care. First, Covel was not actually present, and seems to have synthesized his account from a conversation with Baines and the recollection of one of the dragomans present. Finch himself refers to the conversation, but provides no date (LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 71). However, it is difficult to imagine why Covel – who directly served Finch as the Company’s chaplain in the Levant – would be inclined to exaggerate, or why Baines would misrepresent his experience to his personal chaplain. Second, it is important to foreground a double power

In short, the manuscript record does not support any definitive statement regarding Finch's personal attitudes towards non-Christians. It seems most likely that he and Baines internalized broad cultural stereotypes, but engaged in respectful professional and social relationships with individual Muslims, in the context of the Ottoman social elite. In his political and theological thought, however, Finch is far less opaque: religious toleration should be extended to both Jews and Muslims. His most sophisticated argument for tolerating non-Christians is articulated in his treatise manuscript, and relies upon a conceptual distinction between 'hearers' – those who deliberately reject Christianity – and 'non-hearers.' 'Non-hearers,' who had never been exposed to Christianity, could nevertheless enjoy salvation if they "Livd' with th[a]t measure of light they had originally Implanted in them."²⁵⁵ It is for that reason, he argues, that "Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &

dynamic between Baines and Vānī Efendi. On the one hand, Baines was deeply self-conscious of his status as a religious minority in this context, especially relative to Efendi, who had powerful connections to the imperial court. On the other hand, Baines's quintessentially orientalist line of questioning about Muslim women suggests that, at the outset of the disputation, his intent was to embarrass Efendi. As Nabil Matar has noted, the trajectory of Baines's attitude, from brazen self-confidence to humiliation, humility, and (apparently genuine) growth characterizes the conversation as a fascinating encounter in the broader history of inter-religious dialogue. For more on the disputation as a genre of inter-religious dialogue during the late medieval and early modern periods, and for a discussion of this particular encounter in that broader context, see Nabil Matar, "The Anglo-Muslim Disputation in the Early Modern Period," in *Cultural Encounters between East and West, 1453-1699*, ed. Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars, 2005), 39–40. From Covell's diary:

"Sr. Tho. B. said he had heard many things which he now found not truly reported of them [Muslims], and he had read their Alcoran, which he now sees wrongly translated; both which rather prejudic'd him then furthered him in his belief, and many there are who never heard of it at all; supposed such a one (who never heard) to be a Christian and live well, whether he might be saved? He answer'd not close to the point. Sr. Tho. told what kind of Christian he was, viz., he would rather dye then worship either crosse, Picture, Images, or the like. He adored onely one true God, and lived in his fear onely; he believed a Musselman, living up to the height of his law, may be undoubtedly saved. He thought himselfe obliged (though it was never so absolutely in his power to do it) not to touch a hair of a Musselman's head for his difference in religion, but rather to help, relieve, and cherish them in every good office that he was able to do for them. Here Sr. Th. B. saies he wept, and said he could not believe any Christian came so near true Musselmen, but that they all had been Idolators; and the Standers by (which were many) cryed out *E Adám* – he was a *Good Man*. [...] *Vaní* pressing the perfection of his law, and the necessity of turning to it, Sr. Tho. said he was now about 55 years of age, and his bones were dryed and hardened to their forme; and his understanding was in like manner settled by long practice of his own religion, and it would be a hard task, and of some long time, to unrivet his notions. *Vaní* bad him welcome, desired more frequent converse, assuring him all security and freedome" (Covell, *Early Voyages*, 271).

²⁵⁵ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 452. This strongly recalls John Covell's account of the 1675/1086 conversation between Baines and Vānī Efendi, particularly Baines' reported assertion that "he believed a Musselman, living up to the height of his law, may be undoubtedly saved" (see above, n. 74).

Job [...] were righteo[u]s before the Law & before Christ,” along with virtuous classical philosophers.²⁵⁶

Provocatively, Finch proceeds to compare contemporary “Jews, Turkes, & Pagans” to these righteous ‘non-hearers.’²⁵⁷ On a fundamental level, he argues, education and upbringing inevitably shape the epistemic context of an adult believer. “Now how near to the Condition of Non Hearers approach, those th[a]t are Hearers, but under the Prejudice of Education, or other Prevalent Circumstances repugnant to the Doctrine of Christ, as Jews, Turkes, & Pagans.”²⁵⁸ Rhetorically, Finch distances himself from the full theological implication of this argument. He quickly asserts that “no Name under heaven is given by w[hi]ch Men can be savd’ but that of Jesus Christ,” and frames the argument as an open question.²⁵⁹ Taken to its logical conclusion, however, his suggestion is that ‘Jews, Turkes, & Pagans’ are ontologically equivalent to virtuous ‘non-hearers,’ and are therefore eligible for salvation.

It is possible that Finch was even more theologically sympathetic to Judaism and Islam in private. Among his uncalendared papers is an undated document in his hand, titled ‘How farr Humane Reason is exercisd’ in matters of Religion.’²⁶⁰ The document, which occupies 11 folio sheets, appears to be a preliminary draft of material that was later included in his much longer treatise manuscript.²⁶¹ Remarkably, in a section on the early history of the Church, he claims that “the Great Religions w[hi]ch have now orespread almost all [th]e whole world though repugnant to each other the Jewish, Christian, & Mahumetan Professions, doe not-withstanding all three agree the old Testament is [th]e

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ LRO Finch MS, Box 4987, Packet of loose papers, uncalendared. The box contains approx. 107 pages of papers, in both quarto and folio, all in Finch’s hand; the majority are undated.

²⁶¹ One of the clearest indications is a long section devoted to the early Christian martyrs. In his treatise manuscript, composed sometime between 1675-81, Finch argued that if ‘Liberty of Conscience’ is not permissible, then the Roman emperors must be commended for ‘Murdering of all that Noble Army of Martyrs’ (LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, ff. 454-6). In ‘How farr Humane Reason is exercisd’ in matters of Religion,’ Finch offers a numbered list of arguments for the reasonableness of Christianity. The fourth hinges on the ‘suffering of so many Martyr’s,’ and glosses several primary sources from the Bible and Tertullian (LRO Finch MS, Box 4987, uncalendared). It seems likely that this document functioned as a commonplace notebook, which Finch later drew on whilst drafting his treatise.

Word of God, w[hi]ch nothing but Truth could Extract Out of the mouths of declar'd adversaries in Religion.”²⁶²

Nevertheless, Finch’s proposed toleration for Jews and Muslims is grounded in a pragmatic, ecclesiological calculation, not a principle of mutual regard. Finch is unambiguous that “Jewes, Turkes, & Pagans” should be “Indulgd’ Toleration,” which is not a formula which appears anywhere else in his political writing.²⁶³ In this context, the term ‘indulgence’ is used in a technical sense, referring to a particular legal instrument. Under English law, only an Act of Parliament could fully rescind statutory law; however, it was the monarch’s legal prerogative to personally excuse “individuals from the effects of statutes, or to suspend statutes universally.”²⁶⁴ This unilateral legal instrument was referred to as either a ‘declaration of indulgence’ or the monarch’s ‘dispensing power.’ In the context of religious toleration, this prerogative was the king’s “main means to exempt nonconformists from the obligation of religious uniformity.”²⁶⁵ Paradoxically, this power meant that, in the face of a staunchly Anglican Parliament, late seventeenth-century Puritans, Catholics, and other religious non-conformists often staked their hopes for toleration on the indulgence of the monarch, and advocated strongly for the royal supremacy.²⁶⁶ In 1662 and 1672, Charles II issued Declarations of Indulgence in an attempt to “comfort peaceable Dissenters” from the Church of England, both of which failed in the midst of bitter jurisdictional battles between the crown and Parliament.²⁶⁷

Accordingly, Finch’s proposal to ‘indulge’ toleration for Jews and Muslims has political, legal, and ecclesiastical significance. Politically, it reflects his staunch royalism, and his support for the monarch’s supremacy over the Church of England. Indeed, as the Attorney General from 1670-3, Finch’s brother, Heneage Finch (1621-82)²⁶⁸, was

²⁶² LRO Finch MS, Box 4987, ‘How farr Humane Reason is exercisd’ in matters of Religion,’ f. 3^r.

²⁶³ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 454.

²⁶⁴ Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England*, 2013, 90.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England*, 2013, 5–6, 174–81.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 95. For the Stuart Declarations of Indulgence more generally, see ch. 2 *passim.*, 89-128. The 1689 Bill of Rights did not ban the dispensing power outright, but “left to judicial construction a statutory ban on the use of the dispensing power ‘as it hath been exercised of late’” (*idid.*, 91). However, the crown never attempted to exercise the dispensing power again.

²⁶⁸ Heneage Finch (1621-1682) shared a name with John Finch’s first cousin, also Heneage Finch (1628-1689), mentioned above on p. 48.

responsible for defending Charles II's second attempt to use indulgence to lift penal sanctions from religious dissenters. Although Charles ultimately withdrew the 1672 Declaration, Heneage Finch "argued that Charles's ecclesiastical headship meant that changes to religion and canons needed statutory authority, but insisted kings could dispense particular individuals."²⁶⁹

Legally, it indicates that Finch did not propose toleration *per se* for Jews and Muslims. Rather than repealing the statutory restrictions placed on both groups, his proposed strategy mirrors his brother Heneage's argument for indulgence: that the statutory intolerance of Jews and Muslims would be suspended by the monarch's unilateral declaration. In fact, that was exactly the legal status of the Jewish population in England during the 1670s. Having been forcibly expelled from England in 1290, Jews were first readmitted during the 1650s by Oliver Cromwell, who used "personal prerogative powers to allow private but not public worship."²⁷⁰ This indulgence was extended by his monarchical successors, and by 1677, the Jewish community in England had grown to approximately 500 people.²⁷¹

Ecclesiastically, Finch's defense of indulgence as a legal instrument indicates that his proposed toleration would extend to Jews and Muslims on an individual, not a communitarian basis. This is particularly significant with relation to Muslims. Early modern travel writers repeatedly echoed the idea that Muslims were subject to a transnational religious authority. In *A Voyage into the Levant* (1636), Henry Blount wrote that "All these Sects [of Muslims] are governed by one Head, called the Mufty, whose authority unites, and orders them [...] This Mufty is created by the Emperour, to whom he is held ever subordinate."²⁷² Conceptually, many English writers equated the "mufti in Constantinople" with the Roman Catholic Pope, whose claims to universal jurisdiction were seen as an intolerable attempt to subvert the monarchy.²⁷³ For this reason, it is

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 100.

²⁷⁰ Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 383.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant* (Amsterdam and Norwood: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum and Johnson, 1636 [repr. 1977]), 79.

²⁷³ Vernon, *Locke on Toleration*, 36. John Locke's claim that Muslims are intolerable, if "they admit that they owe blind obedience to the mufti in Constantinople, who in turn is completely submissive to the Ottoman emperor" is typically interpreted as a coded critique of Roman Catholicism. However, the fact that

ecclesiologicaly significant that Finch calls for the indulgence of Muslims on an individual basis: by doing so, he intentionally sidesteps the potential for a conflict between the jurisdictional claims made by ‘the mufti’ and the English state. Certainly, Finch is relying on some nimble legal argumentation – but at least conceptually, ‘indulging’ rather than ‘tolerating’ Muslims allows him to simultaneously defend their right to liberty of conscience, while preserving the state’s unitary sovereignty.

By contrast, Finch’s discussions of non-conforming and dissenting Christian denominations are largely hostile to the possibility of toleration. Whereas Jews and Muslims do in fact merit religious toleration, in the form of the monarch’s indulgence, Finch subjects dissenting Christian sects to aggressive state intervention.

Finch’s attitudes towards Roman Catholics, in particular, are a mixture of personal sympathies and ecclesiological hostility. As noted previously, the Finch family was firmly Tory and High Anglican. Liturgically, Finch was committed to a catholic and sacramental form of worship, and defended the use of vestments during the Eucharist, the sign of the cross in baptism, the use of rings in the marriage liturgy, and the use of “Sett forms of Prayers,” i.e., the Book of Common Prayer.²⁷⁴ At the same time, he and Baines were opposed to the use of religious iconography in worship.²⁷⁵

Having lived in Italy almost uninterrupted for twenty years, from 1651-1671, Finch and Baines were comfortable with Roman Catholics on both a personal and professional level. Both men held university appointments in Italy, and as a member of the Accademia del Cimento, Finch benefited from the personal patronage of Leopoldo de’Medici. And, although the European diplomatic community in Istanbul was a close-knit social world, the two men clearly enjoyed socializing (and sparring) with Catholic diplomats and clerics.²⁷⁶ In his treatise manuscript, Finch records an anecdote from a dinner party with

this contested passage in his *Letter concerning Toleration* so obviously replicates contemporary travel narratives about the Ottoman empire suggests that, at the very least, Locke was familiar with contemporary travel writers, and their accounts of the Ottoman model for religious toleration; see Nabil Matar, “England and Religious Plurality: Henry Stubbe, John Locke, and Islam,” in *Christianity and Religious Plurality*, ed. Charlotte Methuen, Andrew Spicer, and John Wolffe (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015).

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 473.

²⁷⁵ Covell, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, 271.

²⁷⁶ ‘Remarques in Turkey of [th]e Country: And at Audiences with foreign Ministers in these Parts,’ LRO Finch MS, Box 4988.

several members of a Catholic chivalric order, who had sworn a “Vow of perpetuall Enmity with [th]e Turkes.”²⁷⁷ In response, Baines “pleasantly asked them” whether or not they were familiar with the Lord’s Prayer, then gleefully “wondrd’ they could desire God to forgive them their Trespasses, [...] when they have made a solemn vow against forgiving their Enemy’s, Contrary to the Doctrine of Christ.”²⁷⁸ Furthermore, both Finch and Baines largely eschew anti-Catholic rhetoric. Both men thought that sectarian prejudices were grounded in economic and jurisdictional anxiety, not in theological controversy. As Baines wrote in 1676, “the Great Opposition which is made in England against Catholicks, is not made by the greatest part of Men simply upon the Score of Religion, but Upon the Score of Civill Rights.”²⁷⁹

Nevertheless, Finch was unambiguous that the Roman Catholic Church could not be tolerated within England. His reservations are not liturgical or polemical, but strictly ecclesiological: the Catholic popes, he argued, had over-extended their rightful jurisdiction in three crucial ways. The first was temporal. In order to “oblige the Consciences of all Men as well as Princes,” the popes had claimed the right to “not onely of forgiving Sinnes upon Earth, but of making that w[hi]ch was no Sinne to become a Sinne.”²⁸⁰ By doing so, the pope had claimed an authority “beyond that w[hi]ch the Sonne of God Himselfe Exercisd’.”²⁸¹ Ecclesiologically, Finch claimed, this fundamentally threatened the sovereignty of the state, and “dissolvd [...] [th]e most Solemn & Legall obligations th[a]t Ever can happen between Prince & Prince, & Prince & People.”²⁸²

Secondly, according to Finch, the Roman Catholic Church overstepped its legal privileges by claiming universal jurisdiction over all Christians after the fall of the Roman empire. As the head of the imperial Roman church, he argued, the “Patriarch or ArchB[isho]p of Rome” had exercised “as Universall a Dominion in Spiritualls, as the Empire Excersisd’ in Temporalls, Rome being the Seat of both Jurisdictions.”²⁸³

²⁷⁷ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 352.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Both men took evident delight in the cavaliers’ discomfort. Finch records that, in response to Baines, “Ad quod non fuit responsum [to which they did not respond], nothing but a blush” (*Ibid.*).

²⁷⁹ LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, June 20/30, 1676, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 29; 18.

²⁸⁰ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 86.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 79.

However, this universal jurisdiction was not “derivd’ from St Peter,” but was rather a function of “[th]e dignity of Rome w[hi]ch was the Imperiall Seat of So Vast an Empire.”²⁸⁴ Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, then, the universal jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church was likewise devolved to the leaders of the national churches.²⁸⁵

Finch’s final argument is a logical extension of the first two, which delimit the temporal and spatial authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Tolerating the jurisdictional claims of the popes would fundamentally undermine the sovereignty of the government. “For God having made People for Governm[en]t, Every Governm[en]t must be within itselife Supreame as to all Interests & Purposes; Since the Governm[en]t would be Lame & Defective if it depended in anything upon any Person out of its Territory or Jurisdiction either. [...] And This very Consideration is enough to Exclude out of all Christian Commonwealths the Popes Supremacy, or indeed His Concerning Himselfe with what related to any Thing Acted in ye state of another Prince, under the Pretense of being Guardian Generall of Christianity.”²⁸⁶ For Finch, sovereign power in a given jurisdiction must be vested in a single authority. In the context of the Roman empire, the imperial church had been fully integrated into a single, universal polity; in a post-imperial context, however, acceptance of the papal claim to universal jurisdiction amounted to sedition.

In sum, Finch was virtually uninterested in anti-Catholic rhetoric; lived in Catholic Italy for most of his adult life; and was personally inclined to a recognizably catholic form of worship. His unwillingness to tolerate Catholicism is purely a matter of jurisdiction. When we turn to his writing on dissenting Protestant sects, we find that he oscillates between relative openness and almost complete hostility. For Finch, the determining factor hinged on an ecclesiological question: if a given sect threatened the unitary, and unified, authority of the state, then it had no right to liberty of conscience.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 77. “For Rome was the Rule of Civility to its Governm[en]t: being [th]e Seat of the Consuls, and afterwards the Emperours; as London is to England, and Paris is to France, from the Residence of the Reciprocall Monarchs.”

²⁸⁶ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 360.

Finch's attitudes towards Quakers are consistent with this focus on ecclesiology and the authority of the state. He was cautiously sympathetic to Quakers, insofar as he was skeptical that they claimed independent ecclesiological authority. His most substantial engagement with Quakerism was an epistolary exchange with Anne Conway in 1678. Before her death in 1679 – likely sometime between 1677-8 – Anne scandalised her family by converting to Quakerism, after a long process of exploration and dialogue with prominent Quaker thinkers.²⁸⁷ Finch learned about her conversion on November 4, 1678, when he received a letter forwarded from Henry More, and wrote to Anne himself four days later.²⁸⁸ His reaction to the news is difficult to parse: the tone of the letter is both disapproving and deeply affectionate. Nevertheless, he does not directly condemn her decision, and unlike her husband Edward, does not claim to be personally embarrassed.²⁸⁹ He describes the Quakers as “well-meaning though mistaken,” and respects her preferences by addressing her as ‘thee/thou.’²⁹⁰

This mitigated openness towards Anne's conversion, and towards the sect at large, proceeded from Finch's admittedly rudimentary understanding of Quaker ecclesiology.²⁹¹ It is significant that his letter stresses the importance of the royal supremacy: “In Short my Dear Christs Kingdome being a Spirituall and not a Temporall One, For He came not

²⁸⁷ Sarah Hutton, *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 177. For more on women and early modern Quakerism, see Catherine Wilcox, *Handmaids of the Lord: Theology and Women's Ministry in the Seventeenth-Century England*, Studies in Women and Religion 35 (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995); for encounters between early modern Quakers and Islam, see Justin Meggitt, *Early Quakers and Islam: Slavery, Apocalyptic and Christian-Muslim Encounters in the Seventeenth Century* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016).

²⁸⁸ BL Add. MS 23215, f. 94^r-96^v. More, who had become a close confidant of Anne's, was deeply distressed at her conversion (Hutton, *Anne Conway*, 177-9). Unfortunately, both More and Anne Conway's letters have been lost.

²⁸⁹ Hutton, *Anne Conway*, 178.

²⁹⁰ “But since you seem to affect the Words of Thou and Thee, I can easily reassume that Dialect” (BL Add. MS 23215, f. 94^r).

²⁹¹ Here, my interpretation departs significantly from that of Sarah Hutton, who has written on Finch's letter to Anne regarding her conversion in the context of the intellectual history of toleration; see Hutton, “John Finch and Religious Toleration,” 287–304. According to Hutton, although Finch “could not and did not approve” of Anne's conversion, “on his own principles, [Finch] would have had to recognise her right to exercise liberty of conscience, and the justice of her following her inward principles, as she understood them” (297). While Finch did indeed view the liberty of conscience as individual right, as we will discuss below, that right could be abrogated in the interests of the state. In my view, his tentative openness to toleration for Quakers is grounded in his understanding of their ecclesiology, not in his commitment to a universal principle of toleration.

to dethrone Kings, but Personally Obeyd' Them and payd them their duty's."²⁹² Finch articulated this perspective more clearly in the notes for his treatise. Among his uncalendared notes is an untitled document, dated June 10/20, 1678, in which he discusses Quakerism at some length. Although he does not directly call for their toleration, he offers two defenses against their critics. First, he observes, "those Persons w[hi]ch are decipherd' and distinguishd' by that name [Quakerism], doe & and believe many things [...] that the most rigid or orthodox or Conformists [...] So that [th]e Saing a thing to be to the Doctrine of [th]e Quakers or Quakerism does not therefore render it evill."²⁹³ Second, he argues that the Quakers pose little threat to the integrity of the state. In language that recalls his argument against toleration for Catholics, Finch displays far more concern with religious dissenters who assert an independent ecclesiastical authority. "For if Ecclesiastickal Persons have any Power of Governm[en]t [tha]t tis not from the Civill Power; then [th]e Civill Power has no right to invade it or oppose it [...] Now is not this setting up direct Rebellion & Worse then Quakerisme, for those deluded People pretend no thing as I rememb[e]r (who am little Consonant with their Reasons or Doctrine) of Authority Independent of [th]e Governm[en]t."²⁹⁴ Judging from these earlier notes, while not quite prepared to call for their toleration, Finch was reasonably confident that Quakers did not claim ecclesiological independence from the state. While theologically misguided, they posed no immediate threat to the state's unitary sovereignty.

When religious dissenters threaten the unified and unitary sovereignty of the state, however, Finch is clear that the principle of toleration must be abrogated. He was certainly sympathetic to the plight of religious dissenters, noting that "every Man is bound up to the Inward Law of what His Conscience or Perswasion enjoyns Him as Good; yet the Peace of the Governm[en]t is of more Concern to the rest of Mankind, then the Peace of any one Private Mans Conscience."²⁹⁵ Furthermore, the sovereignty and 'Peace of the Governm[en]t' was not solely a matter of statecraft: it was explicitly

²⁹² BL Add. MS 23215, f. 96^r.

²⁹³ LRO Finch MS, Box 4987, Packet of loose papers, uncalendared; June 10/20, 1678.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 424.

ordained by God, and obedience to the state had a sacred dimension. Because God had “Left Men in Government (w[hi]ch is of absolute necessity to Civill Society, and could no subsist if all Mens Assertions and actings upon them were of equall Validity & Authority) to such Declarations and Constitutions, and Publick Sanctions, as to the Governm[en]t seem most consonant to Truth; [...] No Man without Sinne can Depart in any Point He is satisfyd’ of [th]e Truth of.”²⁹⁶ Accordingly, he warns “Dissentors [to] further consider, that Almighty God never designed Religion to destroy Government in regard that Religion being for the good & advantage of Humane Nature, it supports the Preservation of Men, as to their Individualls whose Good it is to be, w[hi]ch cannot be done without Government.”²⁹⁷

Ultimately, Finch arranges Christian denominations along an ecclesiological spectrum, from Roman Catholics, to Quakers, to dissenting Protestant sects. Both Catholics and Protestant dissenters are beyond toleration, because both claim ecclesiastical authority independent of the state. In the case of Roman Catholics, the claim to universal papal authority represents an intolerable usurpation of sovereignty at a supranational level, whereas dissenters pose a subnational threat by claiming independence from the national church. For Finch, Quakers occupy an intermediate category. As he himself admits, he was ‘little Consonant with their Reasons and Doctrine,’ but was under the impression that Quakers did not stake a claim to ‘Authority Independent of [th]e Governm[en]t.’ It is precisely because of that uncertainty that he does not unambiguously call for either their toleration or suppression. In each case, however, the deciding factor is his degree of certainty as to whether a given denomination fails an ecclesiological test.

3.3 Conclusion

From one perspective, Finch’s political thought seems deeply paradoxical, if not openly inconsistent. He viewed religious toleration as a pragmatic tool of statecraft, but also defended it as a ‘Humane Right.’ He argued that Jews and Muslims should be tolerated, in the form of monarchical indulgence, but denied religious freedom to the majority of

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 473.

Christian denominations. He argued passionately for the liberty of conscience, but accorded the monarch extraordinary power over religious practice.

These paradoxes are resolved, however, by slightly refocusing our critical lens. Finch's overwhelming priorities are to precisely define the jurisdiction of the state, and to eliminate any possible challenge to the monarch's sovereignty. While the liberty of conscience is a 'Humane Right,' that right belongs to individuals, not to communities. Hence, any community which challenges the jurisdiction of the state is intolerable. Those challenges, according to Finch, can take either of two forms: a supranational challenge to the state's authority, as in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, or a challenge to the monarch's jurisdiction over the form of worship, as in the case of Protestant dissenters. At the same time, Finch's understanding of church history and the history of Islam had convinced him that religious oppression was a fatal political error.

Accordingly, for Finch, liberty and coercion were equally necessary tools of prudent government. The 'Humane' and inviolable right to liberty of conscience defended individual believers from the sort of authoritarian oppression which could provoke them to civil unrest: at the same time, restricting that right to *individual* beliefs ensured that the monarch could suppress communities and practices which might challenge his sovereignty. As Thomas Baines wrote, "it requires a Great Art to place the Ballast and Burthen [the people] carry so proportionably that the whole might Navigate the better; And this Ballast or Burthen is no other then the Laws' They Live Under."²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, June 20/30 1676, cal. *HMC Finch* vol. II, p. 29, 6.

Conclusion: Orientalism and imperialism in Finch's thought

I thinke If I flatter not myself that I have somewhat out of [th]e ordinary Road, showed the Religion of Mahomet to be calculated out of Prudentiall Principles, for growth & Encrease of its profession, & consequently for Grandeur of Empire.²⁹⁹

John Finch to Edward Conway, Feb. 4/14, 1674/5

In 1968, Henry Horwitz published a short bulletin in *Notes and Queries*, that correctly attributed the authorship of Finch's treatise manuscript for the first time in nearly three hundred years. Based on the paleographic and textual evidence, Horwitz concluded that the document – which had previously been attributed to Finch's nephew, Daniel Finch – was in fact the treatise which Finch had alluded to, but which had been presumed lost. “[I]t is hoped that this brief notice will at last bring Sir John's treatise to the attention of those students of seventeenth-century thought who can undertake the task of assessing it,” Horwitz concluded.³⁰⁰

While Finch has gradually been rediscovered by historians of philosophy, particularly Sarah Hutton, this thesis is the first effort to seriously engage with his political thought. As I have argued, Finch freely synthesized his understanding of Ottoman history and politics, his epistemological skepticism, and a staunchly royalist ecclesiology into a theory of sovereignty and statecraft which balanced liberty with coercion, pragmatism with rights. In this short conclusion, I build upon my reading of Finch to offer three arguments. First, I argue that Finch's political philosophy is both a theory of sovereignty – as we have previously discussed – and a theory of empire. Although Finch did not explicitly call for foreign colonization, his orientation towards empire is betrayed by his involvement with the Council for Plantations (see above, ch. 1), and confirmed by the substance of his political writing. As Jennifer Pitts recently observed, the “problem of managing difference is often seen as the perennial political challenge for empires.”³⁰¹ Finch himself admitted that his keen interest in Ottoman

²⁹⁹ BL Add. MS 23215, 81^v.

³⁰⁰ Horwitz, “The Work of Sir John Finch,” 104.

³⁰¹ Jennifer Pitts, “Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism: An Appendix,” in *Empire and Modern Political Thought*, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 354.

religious toleration was an effort to understand the ‘Prudentiall Principles’ which enabled ‘Grandeur of Empire.’

As a result, Finch offers manuscript evidence that at least some early modern imperial thinkers looked to the Ottoman empire as a model. His political philosophy combined comparative, Orientalist scholarship with an orientation towards empire: his papers are, therefore, a first step in addressing an important gap in the existing scholarly literature.

Finally, I argue that the role played by ecclesiology in Finch’s philosophy offers an important conceptual tool for further inquiry. If Finch illustrates a gap in the existing scholarship, then he also suggests a tool which can be used to ‘read for imperialism’ in early modern Orientalist manuscripts and publications. Finch synthesized his understanding of English and Ottoman politics and history by filtering both through a set of ecclesiological questions regarding the church, the state, religious minorities, and Christian dissenters. Understanding the role that ecclesiological thought played in his scholarship offers a forensic tool: if a given Orientalist author frames his account of the Ottoman empire using ecclesiological thinking, then it is worthwhile to ask whether he, like Finch, is acting out of an orientation to empire.

4.1 A theorist of empire

As I have argued, Finch’s political philosophy is ultimately best characterized as a theory of sovereignty. For Finch, the unitary authority of the monarch was paramount. Although he offered a robust theory of religious toleration, grounded in epistemic skepticism, he did not seek to liberate the individual from religious oppression. Instead, liberty and coercion – toleration and oppression – are equally important tools of statecraft, and both may be wielded by the government in order to uphold its sovereignty.

This is not a theory of empire in the sense that would be prevalent between the mid-eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century. Finch did not “rank all non-European cultures as ‘inferior’ or ‘lower’ from the point of view of the presumed direction of European civilisation.”³⁰² Rather, he explicitly sought to learn from and about the

³⁰² Armitage, “John Locke: Theorist of Empire?,” 85.

Ottoman model for empire, in order to apply it in his own context. He did not attempt to “legitimate European imperialism” or colonialism.³⁰³ Having sat on the Council for Plantations for two years, it is almost certain that Finch was interested in the idea of colonial expansion, but his political theory is almost entirely concerned with domestic policy. Neither is it quite accurate to say that Finch “imposed” his theory of empire “on non-European peoples as their cultural self-understanding.”³⁰⁴

Rather, this is a theory of empire which bridges the gap between the legal concept of *imperium*, which the English had inherited from Roman law, and the articulations of imperialism which would emerge later in the eighteenth century. As discussed previously, the concept of *imperium* was introduced in England by Henry VIII, who sought to combine territorial sovereignty, in defiance of the Catholic Church’s supranational authority, with the Roman emperor’s imperial powers – the administration of cultic objects, control of the civil service, and supremacy over the church.

Based on his understanding of ecclesiastical history and the early history of Islam, Finch was convinced that empires rose and fell according to their ability to unite civil and ecclesiastical power. As he observed in his treatise, “the first Splitting of the Roman Eagle, was not the dividing it into the Spreaded Powers of the Eastern & Western Empires, but that w[hi]ch made it become a true Spread Eagle was this dividing Rule & Governm[en]t into Spirituall & Temporall; as to the Exercise of Punishm[en]t & reward under different names of Power w[hi]ch before were streams arose from ye same fountain [...]”³⁰⁵ His political project, then, was an effort to fuse the two heads of the Roman imperial eagle, by reuniting ‘Spirituall & Temporall’ power under the unitary authority of the English monarch.

Crucially, Finch thought that the Ottoman sultans had already accomplished this feat. For the Ottoman dynasty, which did not claim descent from Muhammad, the conquest of Istanbul in 1453/856 was an important element of imperial rhetoric and ideology. Subsequently, the Ottoman imperial ideology was strongly influenced by their self-

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9, 79.

conception and presentation as the successors to the Roman empire. In 1538/944, for example, Süleyman I claimed sovereignty over the historical Roman empire, boasting that “In Baghdad I am Shah, in Rum Caesar, in Egypt Sultan, who sends his fleets to the seas of Europe, the Maghrib and India.”³⁰⁶

Finch was not only familiar with this claim, but saw the Ottoman empire as an improvement upon the Roman – precisely because of the relationship between Islam and the Ottoman porte. In 1674/5, he wrote that the

Civill Law of the Government is so twisted with the Ecclesiasticall; That the very basis of the Govern[en]t is built upon the reverence to the Law; [...] Mahomet like a wise Prince being the Lawgiver, having Learnd’ from the vexations and troubles the Emperours mett with from the exorbitant assuming of Jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of Constantinople and the Popes in Rome; to fit the Ecclesiasticall part of the Govern[en]t to a perfect dependence upon the Secular in the Person of the Prince.³⁰⁷

The Ottomans, in other words, had successfully reunited the ‘two eagles’ of Roman *imperium*. Finch’s comparative analysis of Ottoman history and politics was far from a dispassionate scholarly project: it was an overt attempt to understand the religious basis of their imperial success, and to translate his analysis into the language of contemporary English politics.

³⁰⁶ Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought from the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 207; for the conquest of Istanbul as part of Ottoman imperial ideology, see also Hakan Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis,” in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Maurus Reinkowski and Hakan Karateke (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 13–52, esp. 24–6. For religious toleration as an element of Ottoman statecraft and imperial ideology, Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). One of the standard works on Ottoman ideology remains Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), first published in 1995; see esp. 151–5. For Islamic theories of statecraft more broadly, see the essays in Mehrezad Boroujerdi, *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2013). For the relationship between Islam and Ottoman ideology, see Karen Barkey, “Political Legitimacy and Islam in the Ottoman Empire: Lessons Learned,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 40, no. 4–5 (May 1, 2014): 469–77.

³⁰⁷ BL Add. MS 23215, ff. 81^v-82^r.

4.2 Early modern imperialism: Overlooking Orientalism

In the introduction to this thesis, I gestured towards a gap in the existing literature on the history of scholarship, and its relationship to empire. As I argued, there is a vibrant and important literature focused on the nineteenth century that investigates the relationship between comparative religious scholarship and European imperialism, and between Orientalist scholarship and imperialism. Conversely, while early modernists have engaged (albeit fitfully) with early modern comparative religious scholars and Orientalists, they have not done so in relation to early modern concepts of empire. This thesis begins to address that gap. Finch was keenly interested in comparing and synthesizing Ottoman and English politics and religious history, precisely in order to learn from the Ottoman imperial model, and to apply it to the English context.

In my view, Finch's interest in learning from the Ottomans illustrates one of the reasons that intellectual historians have overlooked the relationships between early modern Orientalists and empire. Edward Said's critique of orientalism remains an indispensable tool for identifying the imperial project underlying much of European scholarly engagement with Islam. However, in his wake, it has become natural to think that European scholars and writers interested in the Ottoman empire were always already motivated by an urge to exoticize, to 'other,' and to dominate. As we have seen, Finch's thought and sensibilities are far from postmodern and postcolonial. However, his interest in Ottoman politics is not orientalist in the sense that Said articulated – from his vantage point in the 1670s, seeking to subvert or to dominate the Ottoman empire would have appeared ludicrous.³⁰⁸ Indeed, especially considering his role as a diplomat and a source

³⁰⁸ As Gerald MacLean has argued, the dynamic of dominance and 'othering' that characterized later imperial relations between European and Muslim polities did not yet exist in Finch's context; indeed, early modern Europeans were intimidated by and envious of the Muslim kingdoms, on military, political, and aesthetic levels. "[E]arly modern English writers framed an imaginary Anglo-Ottoman relation that complicates our understanding of both Orientalism and the emergent culture of British imperialism. Where Said was concerned with the period during which European powers could be said to be 'in a position of strength,' for the pre-colonial English attitudes towards the Ottoman empire can better be characterized by a dominant discursive formation that I call 'imperial envy.' [...] When Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, the English were a weak and relatively insignificant nation seeking to compete with the Spanish for the wealth of the New World. To the pious among the English, the Ottoman Empire was at once the great enemy and scourge of Christendom, yet to the commercially minded it was also the fabulously wealthy and magnificent court from which the sultan ruled over three continents with his great and powerful army. [...] By the end of the seventeenth century, however, once mastery of the seas made ambitions for an empire of their own seem imminent, British attitudes began to shift and the dominance of imperial envy started to

of intelligence for the English state, his lack of interest in identifying or exploiting any political weaknesses in the Ottoman Empire is striking.³⁰⁹ Instead, by analyzing the religious basis for the “Greatnesse of this Empire,” he sought to chart a course to empire for the English state.³¹⁰

In other words, while Finch sought to develop a body of knowledge about religion and politics in the Ottoman Empire, he did not do so with the intention of dominating or subverting the Ottomans. Rather, as an ambassador to the most successful empire in Eurasia, he sought to learn the mechanics of empire from the Ottomans, in order to adapt and apply them to the English context. Those mechanics, as we have seen, involved placing a heavy burden of government upon English subjects, religious communities, and the established church. Put differently, Finch’s imperialism is domestic, not imperial; his empire regulated the English themselves, not a colonial ‘other.’ To identify Finch as an imperial thinker, we must learn to invert the ideological orientation absorbed from Said: in Finch, we find an example of an early modern Orientalist who was interested in learning *from* the Ottomans, and for whom empire was a domestic project.

As a case study, however, Finch also challenges a second body of historical literature. Within the past two decades, early modernists have begun to investigate the history of European imperial ideology; almost invariably, however, the literature has focused on early modern imperial theorists in the context of the Renaissance and the legacy of Roman law and ideology. According to Anthony Pagden, “the theoretical roots of the modern European overseas empires reached back into the empires of the Ancient World. It was, above all, Rome which provided the ideologues of the colonial systems of

give way to an emergent imperiousness” (Gerald MacLean, *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007], 20–22).

³⁰⁹ In 1676, for instance, Finch wrote to Henry Bennet, the earl of Arlington (then the Lord Chancellor), and rather lamely excused himself for the paucity of intelligence flowing to London. “I must acknowledge indeed, That the Topicks your Great Insight into Affayr’s, has suggested for Hints of Information, are suitable to a Person, who is Concerned’ in Affayrs of Importance: But I must needs aver, That I have not yet bin able to give My selfe that Satisfaction you are pleas’d’ to desire of Me: And I doe not find it easy to arrive to a True Knowledge of Them; For Things passe here Under Great Taciturnity; And the Management of State Affayr’s, passe Under No more Eyes then those of the Gran Vizir; Unlesse it be in Case of Warr, And then the advice of the Great Officers is heard. As to the Generall Idea of this Government, you have it best in Consul Rycauts History; And it will take up much Time, Either to Examine Thoroughly those Animadversions, or to adde any Thing of Certainty to Them” (TNA SP 97/19, f. 226, Finch to Arlington, May 31, 1676).

³¹⁰ BL Add. MS 23215, f. 76^v.

Spain, Britain, and France with the language and political models they required.”³¹¹ David Armitage has argued that an integrated concept of the British Empire, as “Protestant, commercial, maritime and free” was only possible by the 1730s.³¹² One of the most important conceptual challenges to modern imperialism was inherited from Machiavelli’s analysis of the Roman empire. “For the classical - above all, Roman - historical and moral traditions within which the majority of early-modern British theorists had been educated, *libertas* and *imperium* remained seemingly incompatible values. [...] So widespread was knowledge of classical history, among the generally educated as well as the more technically learned, that the problem of how to achieve empire while sustaining liberty became a defining concern of British imperial ideology from the late sixteenth century onwards.”³¹³ English imperial thinkers only resolved the classical tension between empire and liberty by equating empire with commerce, and commerce with freedom.³¹⁴ Thomas Dandeleet has called attention to the centrality of the European Renaissance to the (re)emergence of imperial thought in early modernity. In his view, empire was an intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, political, and ideological project, that drew inspiration from the texts and physical artifacts of ancient Rome.³¹⁵ London, Paris, and Madrid were “numerous new Romes all vying for the imperial mantle and all claiming to be the rightful successor to ancient Roman glory.”³¹⁶ In England, Roman law and rhetoric held incredible attraction. As we discussed earlier, Henrician *imperium* was adapted from the Constantian model, which ascribed ecclesiological sovereignty to the emperor. This legal concept would be even more forcefully re-articulated for his son, Edward VI, by a German theologian named Martin Bucer. Writing in 1551, Bucer turned to “the Byzantine church of Constantine and Justinian [for an] historical precedent that

³¹¹ Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britian, and France, C. 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 11; and *passim*, ch. 1, 'The Legacy of Rome,' 11-28.

³¹² David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 195; 9.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 125.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 141–45.

³¹⁵ The redesign of London following the Great Fire of 1666 provides a striking example of the classical influence on the aesthetic of European empire. “The devastation unexpectedly gave Charles II the chance to fulfill the ambition of his grandfather, who had dreamt of following Augustus, after a fashion, by transforming a city of wood into a city of brick” (Thomas James Dandeleet, *The Renaissance of Empire in Early Modern Europe* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 276). Subsequently, Christopher Wren (1632-1723) rebuilt London in the image of Renaissance Rome.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

allowed for a dominant monarchical role vis-à-vis the Church”; Bucer’s work in turn influenced other, better-known writers, notably John Jewel.³¹⁷

These studies, while ground-breaking, have yet to investigate how or whether early modern European theorists of empire were impacted by either Islamic thought or the Ottoman imperial model.³¹⁸ As a case study, John Finch’s extant papers challenge this silence. He not only analyzed the religious roots of Ottoman imperial success: he adapted that model to the English context, and explicitly called upon his correspondents to implement it.

4.3 Reading for imperialism: Ecclesiology and Orientalism

In short, Finch is evidence that at least some early modern Orientalists were motivated by an orientation to empire: and that at least some early modern theorists of empire sought information about Muslim models of imperialism. His example also suggests a potential hermeneutic for identifying others who did the same.

Recently, early modern historians have begun to re-evaluate the relationship between religion and the Enlightenment; or more precisely, between religious discourse and the languages of early modern political thought. As Justin Champion has noted, in “partnership with John Pocock” and other historians working in the ‘Cambridge school’ of intellectual history, “we now have accounts of the plural languages of political thought in the [early modern] period – jurisprudential, common law, historical – but despite this pluralism of discourse the historiography has almost entirely ignored the religious context.”³¹⁹ To reconstruct and recover the political discourse of the seventeenth century,

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 253, 255.

³¹⁸ See further e.g., David Armitage, ed., *Theories of Empire, 1450-1800* (Aldershot: Aldershot, 1998); William Roger Louis et al., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century Vol. 1 Vol. 1* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). To my knowledge, the only counter-example is Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); see ch. 3, “The Requirement: A Protocol for Conquest,” which traces the impact of the Mālikī public ritual for announcing jihad on the later Spanish legal protocol for enacting conquest, called the *Requerimiento*. Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008) is an excellent resource for efforts by Renaissance humanists to comprehend and respond to the success of the Ottoman empire, but does not address the possibility that early European ideologies were influenced by Islamic models or examples.

³¹⁹ Justin Champion, “Some Forms of Religious Liberty: Political Thinking, Ecclesiology and Religious Freedom in Early Modern England,” in *Religious Tolerance in the Atlantic World: Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Eliane Glaser, 2014, 50; see also Jonathan Sheehan, “Thomas Hobbes,

I would argue that we must add ecclesiological thought to this list. At minimum, we must recognize that, for early modern thinkers, ecclesiological discourse was not ‘confined’ to theological debates: those theological debates were political in and of themselves.³²⁰

By extension, writing in terms of ecclesiology was one discursive tool through which an early modern author could intervene in contemporary political questions, or gain purchase on political debate. In Finch’s case, we find an example of an author who sought to synthesize Ottoman politics and history with the history of the early church, in order to address contemporary political concerns. Crucially, his most pressing concerns involve the relationships between an established church, religious dissenters, and the state – these are fundamentally ecclesiological questions, or to employ a slight anachronism, questions about ‘church and state.’ To extrapolate from Finch’s example, then, when trying to determine whether an Orientalist text or author might be relevant to the emergence of European imperial thought, a useful hermeneutic might be to ask whether or not the text is framed in terms of ecclesiological discourse or questions.³²¹

4.4 Conclusion

As William Bulman has argued, while “the intimate relationship between the Enlightenment and the modern European empires has become an almost hoary truth, it is crucial to understand that in England, at least, this relationship was present from the

DD: Theology, Orthodoxy, and History,” *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 2 (2016): 249–274, which provides a useful summary of recent historiography on the ‘turn’ to religion and theology in early modern intellectual history.

³²⁰ This argument follows recent work by Justin Champion, Ethan Shagan, Mark Goldie, and Jacqueline Rose; see Champion, “Legislators, Imposters, and the Politic Origins of Religion: English Theories of ‘Imposture’ from Stubbe to Toland”; Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*; Goldie, “Toleration and the Godly Prince in Restoration England”; Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England*, 2013; Champion, “Some Forms of Religious Liberty: Political Thinking, Ecclesiology and Religious Freedom in Early Modern England.”

³²¹ Finch was only one of many authors who wrote first-hand accounts of Ottoman politics during the Restoration period. As noted in the introduction, the 1660s and 1670s witnessed a flurry of Orientalist publications, written by chaplains, diplomats, and merchants. See e.g., John Evelyn, *The History of the Three Late, Famous Impostors, Viz. Padre Ottomano, Mahomed Bei and Sabatai Sevi*, EEBO (London: In the Savoy : Printed for Henry Herringman, 1669., 1669); Lancelot Addison, *West Barbary, Or, A Short Narrative of the Revolutions of the Kingdoms of Fez and Morocco with an Account of the Present Customs, Sacred, Civil, and Domestick*, EEBO (Oxford: John Wilmot, 1671., 1671); Thomas Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government of the Turks*, EEBO (London : Printed for Moses Pitt, 1678., 1678); Paul Rycaut Sir, *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, EEBO (London : Printed by T.N. for Joanna Brome, 1682., 1682); Addison, *The First State of Mahumedism*.

beginning.”³²² Although broadly applicable to Finch’s manuscripts, I would suggest that this ‘hoary truth’ must be considered afresh in his case. Finch’s methods and preoccupations were undoubtedly orientalist; by framing his account of the Ottoman empire through an ecclesiological lens, however, he intended to provide his readers with a blueprint for an English empire. Drawing on Ottoman politics, the early history of Islam and the Christian church, and a skeptical epistemology, he synthesized a theory of sovereignty that obliges us to reconsider the relationship between early modern Orientalism and the history of European imperial thought.

Finch never published during his lifetime, and his surviving papers only exist in manuscript form. As a result, besides Thomas Baines, the only known audience for his views on empire are his sister, Anne Conway, and his brother-in-law, Edward Conway, to whom both men wrote at length on statecraft, empire, and Islam. It seems fitting to conclude with Baines’ last known letter, written to Conway in 1681. Earlier that year, Conway had been appointed the Secretary of State for the Northern Department, a post he would only occupy for two years. On May 11/21, Baines wrote to congratulate (and to flatter) him:

And Therefore I will be a Prophett & Say That your Lord[shi]p will not be fixd’
in this place, but will rise Higher in His Ma[jes]ty’s Grace & Favour.

His Ego nee metas rerum nee tempora pono
Imperium sine fine dedi.³²³

Making good use of his classical education, the quotation is from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and is spoken by Jupiter: “For these, I set no limits in space and time; I give them empire without end.”

³²² William Bulman, “Enlightenment and Religious Politics in Restoration England: Enlightenment and Religious Politics,” *History Compass* 10 (2012): 61.

³²³ LRO Finch MS, Baines to Conway, May 11/21, 1681, cal. HMC Finch vol. II, p. 111, f. 2.

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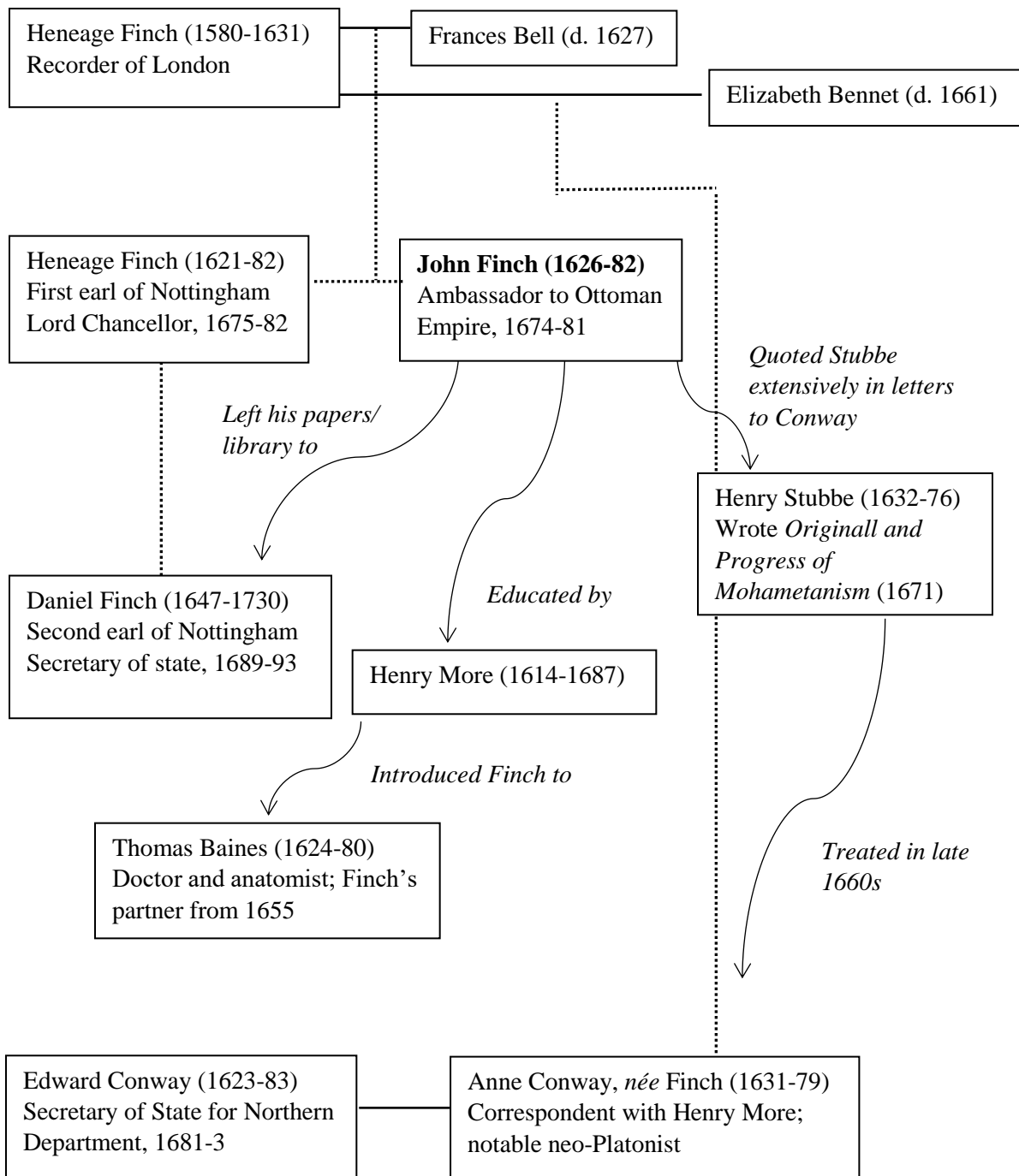
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Appendices

Appendix A: Finch in context

The following schematic outlines Finch’s family relations, and his personal connections to better-known figures – Henry Stubbe, Anne Conway, and Henry More.



Appendix B: Table of Contents for John Finch's treatise

The following chart outlines the contents of John Finch's treatise manuscript. Composed between 1675-81, the manuscript is currently archived in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LRO Finch MS, DG7 lit. 9).

This table of contents follows Finch's highly regimented structure, which subdivides the manuscript into books, chapters, and sections. I have provided a brief description of the contents of each section.

Book	Chapter	Section	pp.	Subject/contents	
1	1	1	1-13	Necessity of focusing on natural world.	
		2	13-17	Necessity of evaluating textual knowledge naturalistically.	
	2	1	17-18	Elaborates epistemology - the nature of the "perceiving faculty."	
		2	18-22	Explanation of the perceiving faculty.	
	3	1	1	23-24	All science is <i>a positore</i> from its effects.
			2	24-25	Knowledge of incorporeal beings is impossible.
			3	26-27	Impossibility of understanding infinite extension.
	4	1	1	27-30	Perfection in knowledge from repeated sense impressions.
			2	31-34	Use of language to distinguish between "one thing from the other."
			3	35-38	Accuracy of the perceiving faculty varies between individuals.
2	1	1	39-41	Undermines the possibility of any innate ideas.	
		2	41-43	Equates the plastic faculty and the perceiving faculty.	
		3	43-47	Illustrates the correspondence of behavior to bodily structure.	
		4	47-53	Body designed for the possibility of receiving sense impressions.	
	2	1	1	53-55	Both external and internal senses (common sense, memory) learned.
			3	55-58	Both the senses and motion are learned.
	3	2	1	58-61	Motion of the body is learned through use and custom.
			3	62-68	Muscles activated by use and custom.
			4	68-74	Plastic and perceiving faculties identical. Philosophy of race.
			5	71-2	Audience with Vani Effendi.
3	1	1	74-92	Temporal vs spiritual authority, religious politics.	
		1	92-99	Impossibility of perceiving incorporeal substances. Challenge to Descartes.	

		2	99-105	If incorporeal spirit is unintelligible, are we compelled to atheism?
		3	105- 119	Critiques the indivisibility/self-unity of spirit.
			112	Critique of self-penetrability.
			113	Critique of self-activity.
	2	1	120-125	Elaborates on a "sort of beings unknowns to us but by their effects."
		2	125-133	More detail on the existence of angels and devils .
4	1	1	133-144	Elaborates on the common sensorium - long discussion of colour theory.
		2	144-148	
	2	1	148-153	Man's dominion over animals related to his possession of reason.
		2	153-165	Fluids, air and water.
		3	165-176	Corrosive substances. Further critique of Descartes.
	3	1	176-184	Epistemology: science analyses human understanding of phenomena. Interesting ideas re: language as representation.
		2	184-195	No objects enter the sensorium except through perception.
	4	1	195-206	More mathematics - number is the differentiation of bodies.
		2	206-212	A numerical theory of music.
		3	212-224	Discusses Galileo's laws of natural motion. Section on vibrations.
		4	224-234	Galileo as support for theory of the common sensorium.
			220	Account of Persian music.
5	1	1	234-245	Astronomy, and movement of celestial bodies.
		2	245-266	Stars fixed; draws upon Copernicus. Fig. 1 - lunar/planetary motion
	2	1	267-	Sceptical about astronomical scientific knowledge as well.
			270	Description of light, optics, and emanation of light.
			276	Further critique of Descartes.
		2	280-300	Offers 7 propositions re: optics, in relation to an elaborate figure.
		3	301-314	More optics - "depends wholly upon Human sensation" (314).
	3	1	314-317	Mechanics, "the second and remaining part of [...] continual quantity."
6	1	1	318-325	Turns to natural philosophy. Continues critique of More and of immaterial substance (323)
		2	325-335	Attacks indiscernibility, truth of being.
	2	1	335-345	A discussion of war, religious accommodation,

			and Ottomans.
	3	1	345-353 Theory of war - must be divinely ordained.
		2	353-357
		3	357-370 Theory of the state - forms of government.
7	1	1	371-375 Physick ought to replace natural philosophy.
		2	375-381 Natural philosophy is "composed deductions from sensible objects"
	2	1	381-386 The usefulness of poetry to a civilizing mission.
		2	386- Brief discussions of oratory (386-7), and a longer one on history. "Reflexions upon history," p. 389 onwards.
			395-7 The Church's efforts to suppress early history.
			404 Account of "imposture" and civil wars.
			407 Strong argument against nobility, using the Ottomans as a model.
			414 Turkish slavery.
			417 Possibility of rule by atheists; reasonableness of religion.
			422-4 Oneness or eternity of truth in God - God and sensory organs.
			425 How divinity differs from morality.
			427 Why Christians hold themselves to their parole, but Turks do not – pseudo-contract theory.
			433 Why governments can deprive private persons of life and property.
			438 Returns to atheism; discussion of Turkish divorce law.
			452 Extends sympathy to "Jews, Turks, and Pagans."
			454 Discussion of religious toleration.
			473 Long section about dissent in religious practice.
			478 Divine rights of the monarch.
			483 Weakness of Christian church enabled emergence of Islam.
			485 Critique of priestcraft.
			486 Lawfulness of breaking with the church's errors.
			492 Discusses religious accommodation and Roman Catholics.
			500-11 The impossibility of knowledge about God.
			529 Long passage on prayer.
			537 Returns to critique of More's philosophy of incorporeal substance.
			541-2 Another critique of incorporeal substance.

Appendix C: John Finch to Edward Conway, 1674/5

<76^r>

Pera of Constantinople Feb 4/14: 1674/5

My ever most honoured & Dear Lord³²⁴

Tis so long since I have given the least interruption to yo[u]r Lo[r]d[shi]ps thoughts, and enjoyments: that I know not how to breake in upon them, w[hi]ch are entertain'd with so many pleasing objects in the advancements of your best friends to the most advantageous stations in England; without begging your Lo[r]d[shi]ps pardon: w[hi]ch though the wonted goodnesse your Lo[r]dshi]p exercisd' towards me gives me some assurance of; yet knowing that the constant conversing with the same though never so delightfull Representations; must at length sate, if not cloy the faculties of the mind; The nature of beings gives me security of. For now I can easily imagine that if nothing else in my writing is agreeable to your Lo[r]dshi]p at least the variety of conversing with so remote a Person, and Different objects, will serve for your divertissement.

My Lord I never understood the humour of those Men, who in their travels thinke themselves obligd' so soon as they are settled in their Lodgings to give an Account of the Country: And this is a fault I cannot dispense withall; in our Modern writers of their voyages, whose Itinerary's are stuffd' up with little more then mine Hosts tale, some Language Master's or Interpreter's Story's, and some Figures of Buildings, than could not remove out of their way; w[hi]ch Superficiall Survey of Country's and Regions, though it be blamable, even when the vicinity of the Place and affinity of Customs can easily afford us better grounded observations, is unpardonable, when the remotenesse of the Country, and repugnant manners, give no Leave to perfect those weake and loose notices that are given us. And I much fear My Lord that in <76^v> the Desscriptions of the Empire your Lo[r]dshi]p is Conversant with, this defect is too obvious; the Pictures making the greatest part of the Discourse; as if the Greatnesse of a Monarchy that is grown bigg out of the Conquest of Christians, was founded in those petite differences of habit w[hi]ch every mans eyes that does not shutt them cannot but animadvert. I shall therefore endeavour to entertain your Lo[r]dshi]p whose is a Person of businesse; with some Account of this Empire in another Manner; Leaving the perfecting of those things which are fitted to the brevity of a letter, to time and observation.

The Greatnesse of this Empire or rather that of Mahumedanisme, was layd in the infancy of it by Mahomet; in opposition to Christianity upon w[hi]ch the Religion being to make its advances; Quite Contrary to Christianity w[hi]ch is a Religion of Peace; The foundation of Mahumedanisme is warr; It being enjoynd' as a Precept to make war upon

³²⁴ The following is my transcription of John Finch's 1674/5 report on the Ottoman empire for Edward Conway, currently archived in the British Library (BL Add. MS 23215, ff. 76^r-82^r). This transcription has been published in accordance with Canadian copyright law; my thanks to Tom Adam, of the D.B. Weldon Library at the University of Western Ontario, for clarifying the relevant regulations. I have indicated folio breaks using angled brackets in bold. In all other respects, my transcription practices are identical to those outlined in the 'Abbreviations and Conventions' section, above.

all Persons that acknowledgd' not the Alcoran or Submitted not to the Government of them that believd' it. This Religion beginning in the time of the Emperour Heraclites had its rise in a time when it was fitted to make a suddain growth (and accordingly its progresse in 30 years time reducing all Arabia Persia & Agypt was beyond the example of all other Religions) For the seat of the Roman Empire being translated to Constantinople, and the Eastern and Western Empire divided; The Interests quickly became not the Same, they [tha]t wore [th]e Imperiall Crowns being not so; and consequently [tha]t overproportiond power was renderd' Lesse formidable being divided: Besides the result of a desire in [th]e Western Emperour to see the Eastern so concernd'ly engagd' at Home, [tha]t He might not be at Leisure, to exercise superiority over the Western Emperour; the Great Divisions in all Religions then under any name of Profession; gave <77'> great advantages to the introducing of a new one. For Christian Religion w[hi]ch was now flown in the beliefe and Generall Exercise of it as farr as the Wings of the Roman Eagle could carry it; insomuch [tha]t it had very weake opposition from Paganism; begun to Exercise greater cruelty upon itselfe, then all the Heathen Persecutions amounted to. For with Constantine the Emperour came the Promulgation of Two points that rent the outward profession of Christianity into incomposible disunion: The first was the Heresy of Arrius w[hi]ch though by [tha]t Emperors diligence was condemnd' in the Councill of Nicea; yet that Generall Councill did rather kindle then extinguish the flame, Whole Regions & Kingdoms as Spayn & all the Goths professing Arrianisme; Nay Italy itselfe under the Popes immediate direction was so overspread with it, That at Rimini Arrianisme was establishd' by a Councill of Bishops; that were more in number by above one hundred, then what were present at the Nicene Councill, and that with so unanimous Suffrages; That there were not 15 who asserted the Doctrine Contrary to Arrius as besides universall History, the Inscription set up by Cardinall Spada attests as Catholica so calld' because that little place Ten miles distant from Rimini, gave a receptacle to those few orthodox who dissented. The point that next divided the Christians was the Introduction of Images and their worship; by the Emperour Himselfe, For Constantine was the First [tha]t ever made the Statue of our Saviour Christ, and Helena his mother that of the Virgin Mary: w[hi]ch though to persons who had never known any other worship then th[a]t of Images; upon their Entrance into Christianity & directing by it their devotions; might to Proselytes in some measure be indulgd'; yet to those who had long bin escaped out of the Heathen darknesse; it looked like a retrograde Passe towards Paganism; and whilst it invited some who were usd' to adore Images, to embrace the new Confession, <77'> it deterrd' others from admitting those into their Society & Communion, who admitted [th]e adoration of Images, the great theme so advantageously to Christian Religion declaimd' against by the Primitive Christians.

As to the Jewish Religion; Since the destruction of Hierusalem by Titus, and the utter desolation of [th]e remaines of it & changing its name into Aelia Hadriana; and banishment of the Jewes from thence by the Emperour Adrian. The poor miserable remnants of [tha]t People became Citizens of the world; and shelterd' themselves under the name of Christians, for in the primitive times these two Religions agreeing in the worship of one God and abhorring of Idols, were not easily distinguished and therefore

distinct from Christians, though were able to make a number, were not now able to make a lead; & much Lesse when the Christian Religion became the Religion of the Roman Empire; and very probably from the great Concourse of Jews to Agypt (for they have ever had a mind to the Garlick & Onions of that place) great was the number of Judaizing Christians in Alexandria and its Patriarchate, w[hi]ch makes us [th]e lesse wonder [tha]t Arrius came from thence with a Doctrine so suitable to Judaism. But to return more closely The Dispersion of the Jews renderd' their religion more considerable for what it had been; then was in [th]e opinion of men when the open Professors of it were not known.

The Pagan Religion had bin by the Mosaicall writings and forms, long batterd', but by the Christian Religion wide Breaches were made in it, till the Emperours becomming Christians the Walls were quite thrown down; and Pagan worship forbid by Publicke Edicts; so [tha]t Paganisme being now discountenancd' by the head the Emperour; was not able to make any Head for its own defense; In this condition was the face of things as to all Religions; and as to Governm[en]t Heraclitus ruled the East in person at Constantinople, & Italy by His Exarchats³²⁵ at Ravenna. <78f> This Governm[en]t of Italy by Hexarchs who resided at Ravenna as the Imperiall Seat; gave advantage to the Longobards to plant a Kingdome in Lombardy w[hi]ch was of long duration inspight of [th]e Roman Empire; & [th]e occasion of it was the non agreem[en]t of these Hexarchs of the Emperour who resided in Constantinople with the Popes; by w[hi]ch means the power of Rome was frequently Depressd'. And The two predecessors of Heraclitis, Mauritius & Phocas had made Italy by their detestation of and ad hoering to [th]e Pope the Scene of Suddain and contrary mutations w[hi]ch render all Governments dangerous. For the First at a Councill held at Constantinople declar'd' the Patriarch of Constantinople to be the Universall Bishop or Oecumenicall Pastor, giving great disquiet to S. Gregory the Great then Pope by His Hexarchs, & Longobar[ds] [tha]t Joynd' with then; and He being murdred by Phocus who Succeeded Him, was as well murdred by him in His Edicts, Declaring upon appeal of Gregory the Great That the Pope was the Vicar of Christ & Oecumenicall Pa[sto]r: By w[hi]ch so immediate and contrary Declarations All the Eastern & Western Christians were torn asunder; and full of [th]e highest animosity's towards each other; Heraclitis followd' [th]e Roman Interest to the great dissatisfaction of [th]e Eastern Church; & being now weary with a Long warr against [th]e Persians gives Himselpe to ease. And in this Conjunction as to all Religions of the World; & the Roman Empire; did Mahomet beginn to promulgate His Doctrine; w[hi]ch beginning to have followers gott an Army to overrun Persia quickly, by the ill Conduct of Heraclitis, For the Sarracens who were allways in the pay of the Empire; being ill payd' & worse usd' by the Emperours officers they in a mutiny Revolted to Mahomet, who had fitted His fundamentals to the Present Conjunction of Affayrs Universally. And therefore sett up a Religion That through neither Jew nor Christians could being so admitt of; yet it should have Principles Suitable to both; and be fitted for Proselyts w[hi]ch could not possibly be

³²⁵ An idiosyncratic variant of "Hexarch," the title given to the governors of the provinces in Italy and Africa recovered by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I.

other then reall by the Shibboleth He <78^v> gave to buy them. These Points of Religion were Principally four [tha]t were fitted to make an Empire great.

Their first and main Principle is That there is but one God; w[hi]ch in all their Prayers (w[hi]ch they say five times a day in Publick) they repeat over and over; And Atheisme or Polytheisme is amongst them Death without mercy; The repetition of the Doctrine of one God in all their Prayers and Discourses, was that w[hi]ch brought over The Arrians to them with ease; who denyd' the Divinity of our Saviour, and they were very numerous in all the Eastern parts at that time; and to Speake the Truth The very Doctrine of [th]e Alcoran seems particularly to be Levelld' against the Doctrine of [th]e Trinity and Divinity of our Saviour; Mahomet repeating the Impossibility of God having Sonnes; and yet calls our Saviour the Spirit of God, The Miraculous Holy one Borne of a Virgin; and in every thing that relates to our Saviour speakes as honorably as Arrius, nay Further enjoyns every Musselman to believe so of Him & Punish as a blasphemer anyone that speak contumeliously of Him: This Doctrine of one God brought in all the Jews too, whom to invite by nearer approaches, They retaind' Circumcision; And frequent outward washings for till they wash their Feet and their Arms they cannot say their Prayers; and the Prohibition of Swines flesh.

Their second Great Principle is the Accounting Wine an Accursed thing; and forbidding the Drinking of it as a horrid Sinne. This was a perfect opposition to Christians; who celebrate the Sacram[en]t of the Lords Supper with Wine, & cannot if it be to be had Celebrate without it, w[hi]ch putt Christians to a Shibolet of being known by; as well as the speaking magnificently of our Saviour was a Shibolet to the Jews; and was [th]e occasion of [th]e mistake in many writers who say that a Jew before He can Turn Turk must first Turn Christian. But the Politick use of this Prohibition is of more use then the Religious; For your Lp[rdshi]p who is so great a souldyer will <79^r> presently conclude That an Army w[hi]ch Drinkes nothing but water is not only with much more ease provided for then one that drinks Wine & Beer; For water will be had with ease; when those other Drinks cannot be gott, for want of w[hi]ch they [tha]t are usd' to it presently Languish. an advantage fitted for conquest. But To this must be added the Constant Sobriety [tha]t attends them; w[hi]ch makes them not only in Military affayrs keep exact discipline, and slip no occasion; w[hi]ch Drunkenesse in Christian Army's makes them wanting in: But in Civil Government makes the People of so calme & Pacific a Temper; That [th]e whole Discourse of the People is Grave, Sedate, and without Heat; their words are slow the People being thoughtful; attributing the haste and Heat of Speaking usd' by most Christians to their being at the best not quite Sober. True it is my Lord that the Greatest Turkes violate this prohibition & once or twice a week drink Wine (And the Court amongst Christians are not the most mortifyd' men neither). But when the Turks drink wine they doe it on purpose to be drunk, for water they will never putt to it And the Quantity is always Great. The Gran Signor himselfe would one day in His Hunt entring a Christian House needs taste wine w[hi]ch He smelt in the Poor Cottage; But His Favourite [tha]t marry's now His daughter durst not till He had acquainted the G. Visir give Him any; And then [th]e Visir orderd' wine to be given Him [tha]t was allmost

vinegar w[hi]ch the G. Signor tasting wonderd at the Gusto of [th]e Christians: The Visir feard' the change of Inclinations in the G. Signor who being a most Mercifull and Sedate Prince, He did not thinke it safe to putt unlimited power into humors never yet experimentd.

The Third Great Principle is Liberty of Conscience to all different Religions that acknowledge But one God; The Professors of it paying to the Gran Signor onely 15 s p[er] Annum. As by the former Praecepts they were fitted for Conquests, so by this they were not onely made easy, by making their yoke so (in that w[hi]ch men are the most uneasy in) But by it, they were assur'd to <79> keep the Conquests they had made; for nothing occasions such desperate Revolts and dangerous attempts as the oppressing [th]e Conscience; w[hi]ch being a Trade so universally practisd' amongst Christians; the Turks find it a most beneficiall one to them; For all sides empty their coffers at this Court to depresse those Christians that are of a different perswasion from them; And in the time of the Christian Emperours The Eastern & Western Churches did never with more bitterness persecute each other; I cannot say Annually what they spend, but the Christians are allotted at least 40 th[ousa]nd Crowns per annum to uphold their Animositys. And at this very time the Greeke Church by mony has gott a sennod [synod?] to out the Latin Church of the possession of [th]e Holy Sepulchre; unlesse it be only from midnight to break of day; w[hi]ch after a little time very likely they may with much expense regayn.

The fourth Great Point that tends to Enlargement of Empire is the Liberty of Every Mans having 4 Wives; and as many Concubines as He Can maintain. Tis true indeed My Lord The Husband is obliged once a weeke to give due benevolence to his Wives or for want of it The woman may goe to the Cadi & be divorced; nor can He without [tha]t benevolence use any of His Concubines: But Desire of Women being the most Prevalent because the most naturall & necessary Passion God has given Man; Tis very inviting to make that a reward of a Beleif w[hi]ch Christians hold inconsistent with their beleif. And upon this very Account most of the Renegado's Turn Turks; especially Fryers & Ecclesiasticall Persons; And Sawyer Himselfe our English Apostate made this liberty of enjoying women without sinning, the Great Argument of his becoming Turk; and to maintain Him when He was so, of cheating His Principalls; This Doctrine of Concubines was exactly fitted to the Jewish Practise, and indeed to the Customs of all the Eastern Great Persons in all ages; and servd for [th]e propagating Mahumadanism; The Concubines being of any Religion for they are Generally Slaves; and their children become all Turkes, and the Mothers if not before, yet after then have children are seldome <80> otherwise. But to speake of things as they are of all Religions The Turkish provides the least for [tha]t of [th]e women: For though the Men are enjoynd' to come five times a day to say their Publick prayers in the Moscheas; yet the women are never permitted to come to doe their devotions there; w[hi]ch I believe to be occasiond upon a Treble Account, Each w[hi]ch depend upon one Generall one, w[hi]ch is the strange Jealousy of all their women; For they never suffer them to speak to any man but their own Husbands or Masters; unlesse Eunuchs [tha]t Guard them, nor to be seen by any

man; For if at any time they come in view w[hi]ch is but seldome for they hardly give them Leave to goe abroad; They are so muffled up that nothing of their face is to be seen more then such a part of their eyes as must not be hid if they would have them see their way; nor any part of their Skin save their hands, whose Extremitie their sleeves (for they never wear gloves) doe not cover & so their nayles and tips of their fingers may be perceivd' to be dyed red for [tha]t they all use. Now My Lord were women enjoynd or permitted to come to church; so I call at present their Moscheas; In the first place they would come abroad five times a day; Secondly their morning prayers being a little before break of day; and their Two last times of prayer, at Sun Sett, & An hour & and a half after sun sett, the Womens dayly comming abroad, would at such hours of Convenience for appointments enrage the Turkish Jealousy; But in [th]e third place if they should come to Publick devotion, since they could not be admitted to prayers unlesse they first washed their Armes and Feet, they must expose to dayly & Publicke view of men; what they would murder their own Brothers for, if they knew they had seen uncoverd', & what so studiously they reserve only to their own view. But the whole Sexe is Left to their home devotions, and conversations one with another; By w[hi]ch inaccessibility, and impossibility of applications to them; it comes to passe that the <80v> Governm[en]t of this Empire is wholly Masculine; w[hi]ch it is in no part of Christendome, where though the women by law are excluded from the entering into Sessions of Parliam[en]ts and offices of state; yet the charming & irresistible beauty of [th]e Soft Sexe above Law; gives rules to the very Lawgivers themselves in a great measure; and by their Smiles and Graces, meet with more reverence and Awe to their commands Then Superiors themselves receive from their frowns. All w[hi]ch despoticall power of the Sexe is perfectly abrogated Here, where Women are neither to be seen, not spoken to.

But My Lord Leaving this Digression concerning [th]e Sexe, w[hi]ch I could not omitt the representing the State of, having occasion to speake something of them as to Religion: I must needs mention some great advantages Mahumedanisme had in making Proselytes out of the Christians, w[hi]ch I omitted when I mentioned their First Great Principle so often repeated by them dayly that there is but one God; For my Lord from hence they Conclude that nothing else is to receive any Demonstrations of worship; all deference of devotion belonging onely to that being w[hi]ch knows whither it be renderd' from the from the Heart or not; & consequently all outward Acts of reverence implying in the object to w[hi]ch it is payd a *καρδιογνώσις*³²⁶ or knowing of the thoughts: Hence they indisputably breake all Images; whose worship being as I sayd before introduc'd' by Constantine, brought irreconcilable differences into the Church and all those Christians who were *Εἰκονομαχίαρι*³²⁷ or for the breaking of Images w[hi]ch some Emperours & Councills were, if their own Consciences could not permitt them to embrace Turcisme; yet it made them willing to admitt the yoke; rather then to be forcd' to an adoration of

³²⁶ *καρδιογνώσις* is a compound of *καρδία*, 'heart,' and *γνώσις*, 'seeking to know, inquiry, investigation.' Here, Finch uses the term to mean 'knowledge/knowing of the heart,' in juxtaposition to "knowing of the thoughts."

³²⁷ Iconoclasts. My thanks to Andrew Rampton for his valuable assistance in transcribing and translating both terms.

that they abhor'. And upon the same Ground the Turkes are against Images & Pictures, They are against Praying to Saints, that in Hypothesi; supposing the Saints to be, omniscient & omnipresent. <81^r> For if they know not all mens thoughts, possibly they may not know His that Prayes to them; & what return then ought He to expect of what did not animadvert His Petition; w[hi]ch makes omnipresence necessary, or else every Individuall Mans Prayer was not certain to be heard much lesse granted, if the Saint should be chance to be out of the way; or if the Prayer was made by one out of the sphere of the Activity or Diocesse of the Saint. And the school distinction th[at] the Saints See all these things in God *tamquam in speculo*, is but an empty sound: For How can a finite thing as a Glasse is, represent an infinite object and such is [th]e Divine knowledge; And if they will have the Glasse to be God Himselfe and so Infinite, Then The Eye that beholds it must be infinite too to Survey It, w[hi]ch to the Saints which have but finite organs and must see part by part is impossible. And the Turkes doe so abhor this Doctrine that instead of praying to Mahomet they constantly pray to God, for Him their Great Prophett; & begg of God to glorify Him every day more & more; This Doctrine of theirs mett with many Christians who readily submitted to it, by becomming Professors, or putting themselves under the Protection of those that held a Doctrine so agreeable to their own sense. But since than Mahomet first broachd' His Doctrine Transubstantiation (for then though 600 years after Christ it was not heard of) upon its Principle it more vehemently impugnd' then all Image worship or Paganism; They Pretending that [tha]t Severall Statues represented so many Gods as Roman Catholicks will have them now to doe Saints; But the Roman Church making the Turkes believe that one part of [th]e flower out of w[hi]ch they made their bread, is converted into the very essence of God Himselfe, the Creation into the Creator; doe more provoke their Anathema's then any thing they most detest; and invites those Christians that abhor the Doctrine to recurr to them for Protection against the Persecution <81^v> of those, who condemn those th[at] will not assent to this Doctrine against their own Consciences; to temporall flames in this world, and to eternall ones (as farr as their vote goes) in the world to come: And thus the Turk gaines still upon Hungary; & is still like to doe so, unlesse persecution for Religion be taken off.

My Lord I have not instanced in any Precepts of Mahometanism w[hi]ch were designd' to bring Pagans to submit to His Governm[en]t Because No Quarter is allowd' to any th[at] either deny there is one God, or assert that there is more than One; And Paganism at the Time of the Publication of the Alcoran was upon its last Leggs; and as to the number & Power of the Profession scarce considerable; as the Suddain conquest of Persia showd'.

But I thinke If I flatter not myself that I have somewhat out of [th]e ordinary Road, showed the Religion of Mahomet to be calculated out of Prudentiall Principles, for growth & Encrease of its profession, & consequently for Grandeur of Empire; Now this Religion was like to remain unchangd' from two Principles. First Because tis not Lawfull to dispute the points of [th]e Alcoran as to praecepts whether they be lawfull or not; for it is enjoynd' by Mahomet as well as it was by Moses That He shall be cutt off that Speakes against the Law. Secondly the Civill Law of the Government is so twisted with the

Ecclesiasticall; That the very basis of the Governm[en]t is built upon the reverence to the Law; in the very Same manner The Precepts of the Alcoran being *Jure Divino* to the Turkes as the Judicial Law of Moses was to the Jewes, upon the Common Principles of Divine Revelation: And therefore the Gran Signor (who must have obedience from His Subjects unlesse He or they renounced the fayth upon this Ground) gives Great Reverence to the Mufti who like the Pope the Scriptures Interprets the Alcoran; and if He is calld' before the Mufti as sometimes He is upon some extravagant putting men to death; or Enormous Vices, The Gran Signor himselfe in honour to [th]e Law sits not down but stands up and <82r> and this Is done in perfect reverence to [th]e Law & not [th]e Mufti; in regard He holds not this charge for life like the Pope, but is removeable whensoever the Gran Signor pleases: Mahomet like a wise Prince being the Lawgiver, having Learnd' from the vexations and troubles the Emperours mett with from the exorbitant assuming of Jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of Constantinople and the Popes in Rome; to fit the Ecclesiasticall part of the Governm[en]t to a perfect dependence upon the Secular in the Person of the Prince; who allwayes names, & as often as He pleases changes the Mufti, and that without the least dispute, that Prerogative being as much *Jure Divino* to [th]e Gran Signor, as any that are annexed to the Person or office of [th]e Mufti; both their rights depending upon the Same noble Law as they call the Alcoran.

My Lord Having I fear tyred your Lo[r]dshi]ps patience with the necessity of Greatnesse That must result to an Empire founded upon the Principles of Mahomet; and in the Conjunction He found & left things; I dare not enter upon a particular Examination at present of the Grounds of their Civill and Military Constitutions; But I dare affirm to your Lo[r]dshi]p they are no Lesse conducible to the Greatnesse of Empire then the Religion is; & I believe would be an Enquiry of much Curiosity to your Lo[r]dshi]p. When I know it a thing desirable; I shall find so much time as to give an account of that, suitable to those great fundamentals of Reason w[hi]ch I perceive to move this Great Machine; For beleive it My Lord No Governm[en]t can wax Great & Permanent but it must be deeply rooted in the Stable Grounds of Reason; and knowing no man a Greater Judge of them then your Lo[r]dshi]p I would most willingly suggest my thoughts to a Person that knows how to correct & pardon their mistakes; I am sure your Lo[r]dshi]p will make none in esteeming me to be My Lord

Your Lo[r]dshi]ps

Most faythfull humble servant &

most entirely affectionate Brother John Finch

S^r Thomas Baines is with unalterable devotion & fidelity yo[u]r Lo[r]dshi]ps most reall & humble Servant.

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