

Ali Ufkî Bey (Wojciech Bobowski) – Well-Known Musician, Forgotten Political Figure. A Luminary in the 600 Years of Turkish–Polish Diplomatic Relations¹

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In 2014, Turkey and Poland celebrated the 600th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations. The six-century-old relations have been full of negotiations, agreements, peaceful times and conflicts, commercial ties and cultural interplay. Among the cultural interactions, many figures have played important roles for the cultural and political history of both countries. Ali Ufkî Bey (Wojciech Bobowski) (1610?–1675?) is certainly one of those personalities who deserve more scholarly debate. From a historical perspective, his contributions in the fields of culture, diplomacy, music, theology and linguistics illustrate how important the role of an individual as a non-state actor might be in the discipline of International Relations (IR), which constitutes the main focus of this article. Ali Ufkî (Bobowski) is certainly one of those individuals whose contributions need to be analysed in a profound manner, with special emphasis on inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. This article also aims at accentuating the historic importance of the 600 years of diplomatic ties in today's foreign policy making process, which might be the subject of further study in IR.

Keywords: Turkey, Poland, 600 years, Ali Ufkî Bey (Wojciech Bobowski), role of individual in IR, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, cultural diplomacy, area studies.

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¹ 'Luminary' has several meanings: A very famous or successful person; a person of prominence or brilliant achievement; body that gives light, especially one of the celestial bodies (Merriam Webster online dictionary, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/luminary accessed at 7/11/2015). Since 'Ufkî' is derived from 'ufuk' in Turkish (originally Arabic) meaning 'horizon', I believe this attribute can be used to describe Ali Ufkî Bey, both literally and metaphorically.

Introduction²

The 600th anniversary of the establishment of Turkish–Polish diplomatic relations was widely celebrated in Turkey and Poland throughout 2014. The six-century-long history of contacts between Turkey and Poland demonstrates the existence of quite a rare and long-lasting relationship in the political history of Europe. The political and social ties as well as cultural interactions between Turkey and Poland constitute a vast area of study for political scientists, historians, art historians, anthropologists, architects, musicologists, costume designers and craftsmen³ as well as for people in other fields of expertise and disciplines.

Ali Ufkî Bey (Wojciech Bobowski) was one of the most interesting figures who belonged to the common history of the Ottoman Empire and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was remembered in the year 2010, due to the ‘Year of Ali Ufkî’, which was organised by the İstanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency and the ‘Türk Musikisi Vakfı’ (Turkish Music Foundation) on the occasion of the 400th birth anniversary of Ali Ufkî.⁴ The cultural diplomacy activities of both countries paid tribute to the memory of Ali Ufkî and his music reflecting the melodies of East and West by organising, *inter alia*, concerts of well-known music groups such as Ensemble Sarband, Pera Ensemble and Capella Cracoviensis.⁵ With the support of the Central Bank of Turkey, a CD titled ‘Ali Ufkî Bey, A Polish in Enderun’ was produced by another well-known group, Bezmârâ, marking the 600th anniversary celebrations.

Nonetheless, it is interesting that not much attention was paid to his other areas of interest. Ali Ufkî was for sure not only a musician and composer but also an individual who had influence on both the Ottoman and European decision-makers thanks to his multi-lingual skills, official position at the Ottoman Court and other endeavours. This article attempts to present the less-known dimension of his life, which might be interesting from the political and IR perspective, since this individual may serve as

² I am grateful to Doç. Dr. Hacer Topaktaş from İstanbul University and Dr. Hanna Schreiber from University of Warsaw for their helpful and inspiring comments on different drafts of this article.

³ *Savaş ve Barış: 15.-19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı-Polonya İlişkileri*, ed. Selmin Kangal, İstanbul: MAS Matbaacılık A.Ş., 1999 and *Distant Neighbour Close Memories: 600 Years of Turkish-Polish Relations*, ed. Ayşen Anadol, Sabancı University: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2014 are two reference books for such researchers, published on the occasion of two historic exhibitions: ‘War and Peace: Ottoman-Polish Relations in the 15th-19th Centuries’ and ‘Distant Neighbour Close Memories: 600 Years of Turkish-Polish Relations’ held in İstanbul respectively at the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in 1999 and the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in 2014.

⁴ See Fikret Karakaya, *Ali Ufkî Bey/Wojciech Bobowski/Albert Bobowski*, İstanbul 2010 Avrupa Kültür Başkenti, İstanbul: Mas Matbaacılık A.Ş., 2010.

⁵ ‘600th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Turkey and Poland’, <http://varsova.be.mfa.gov.tr/ShowInfoNotes.aspx?ID=202244> (accessed on 3/11/2015); ‘Saz-ü Söz- Sözler ve Müzik’, http://ankara.mfa.gov.pl/tr/haber/saz_u_soz_sozler_ve_muzik (accessed on 13.02.2015).

another example testing the hypotheses on the role of the individual in IR developed by Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack.⁶

Historical background: Poles in Turkish History

Turkish–Polish diplomatic relations were established in 1414, during the eras of Sultan Mehmed I of the Ottoman Empire and Władysław II Jagiełło, Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland. In 1414, Hungarian King Sigismund asked for help from the Polish King against the Ottomans and Polish King Jagiełło offered to mediate between these two powers. Thus, a Polish delegation composed of Jakub Skarbek of Góra and Gregory the Armenian was sent to Sultan Mehmed I, which constituted the first formal diplomatic contact between Ottomans and Poles.⁷

Polish historian Dariusz Kołodziejczyk stresses the importance of the ‘permanent’ peace treaty of 1533, which was to remain in power during the lifetime of the rulers of that era (Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and Sigismund I) and subject to renewal by their successors. The wife of Sultan Süleyman, Hürrem Sultan (Roxelana), who was originally from Ruthenia, then a province in the Kingdom of Poland engaged in correspondence with the Polish King, stressing her special affection and sending presents to the King as his former subject.⁸ Entering the Ottoman Court after being captured by Tatars,⁹ Hürrem Sultan was acknowledged to be one of the strongest women in Turkish history.

In the 15th century and later, Ottomans and Poles had often challenging relations due to wars or conflicts as well as Poland’s participation in the Holy Wars and the Holy League. The Battle of Varna (1444), the Second Battle of Kosovo (1448), the Battle of Khotyn (1621), Campaign of 1672–1676 (in Turkish the Kamanıçe Campaign) and the Second Siege of Vienna (1683) were among the most important military clashes. Due to the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, Poles felt under threat. In addition, the two parties were not sympathising with each other because of their religious differences. In Poland, many anti-Ottoman sentiments were expressed in different publications during the 16th and 17th centuries and the wars led to the creation of a mythical Polish self-image of a Christian state – *antemurale Christianitatis* (Bulwark of Christianity – *przedmurze chrześcijaństwa*¹⁰), whereas Poles in general were regarded as enemy and infidel by the Ottomans.¹¹

⁶ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, ‘Let Us Now Praise Great Men’, *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Spring 2001), pp. 107–146.

⁷ See Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, ‘A Historical Outline of Polish-Ottoman Political and Diplomatic Relations (1414-1795)’, in *Distant Neighbour Close Memories: 600 Years of Turkish-Polish Relations*, ed. Ayşen Anadol, Sabancı University: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2014, pp.17–25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰ On this concept see Norman Davies, ‘Polish National Mythologies’, in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin, London: Hurst&Company, 1997, pp. 141–157.

¹¹ Hacer Topaktaş, ‘Ottoman-Polish Relations From the Turkish Perspective. Written, Unwritten and Remembered’, in *Turkey, Herito Quarterly*, No. 14, Kraków: International Cultural Centrum, 2014, pp. 50–61, pp. 51–52.

Polish Turcologist and historian Piotr Nykiel argues that Turkish and Polish historians perceive relations, in particular the military conflicts which gained more intensity in the 17th century, in two opposite ways. While many Poles acknowledge the fact that the Ottoman Empire was their state's main enemy, threatening its borders and general system of values, for the Turks, Poles were generally accepted not to be real foes, and the 600 years of relations were more or less peaceful with the exception of some local conflicts.¹² The then Polish President, Bronisław Komorowski, emphasised that Turkish-Polish relations were peaceful for 575 years¹³ during his official visit to Turkey on 4–5 March 2014, inaugurating the 600th anniversary celebrations, which constituted an important year of cultural diplomacy for both Turkey and Poland.

Turkish historian Hacer Topaktaş stresses that due to the fact that the Second Siege of Vienna was against the Habsburgs, not against Poles, King Jan III Sobieski's significant role in the defeat of the Ottoman Empire is not highlighted very much in Turkish historiography.¹⁴

According to Turkish historian İlber Ortaylı, the Second Siege of Vienna by the Ottomans, which was impeded by King Jan III Sobieski, did not bring victory to Poles; on the contrary, King Sobieski unintentionally initiated the weakening of the Polish state. The Ottomans did not acknowledge the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century.¹⁵ Polish patriots fighting for independence of Poland found refuge on Turkish soil in the 19th century, which led to the establishment of Adampol (Polonezköy) in 1842, the Polish village in İstanbul. The national poet of Poland, Adam Mickiewicz was among those Poles who went to İstanbul for some projects related to regaining the independence of Poland, yet passed away in İstanbul in 1855 due to cholera. As a matter of fact, Mustafa Celaleddin Paşa (Konstanty Borzęcki), the great grandfather of the Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet was among the high level military officials who played an important role in the modernisation of the Ottoman army during the 19th century, and his book titled *Les Turcs: Anciens et Modernes* (The Old and Modern Turks) pioneered the Turkish nationalism movement.¹⁶ Immigrant Poles were mainly employed in the military, medicine and mining sectors; however, their contributions were not limited only to these fields. In the first quarter of the 20th century, Count Leon Ostroróg became the adviser to the Minister of Justice, while

¹² Piotr K. Nykiel, 'Six Hundred Years of Polish-Turkish Relations', in *Does Poland Lie on the Mediterranean*, ed. Robert Kusek and Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga, Kraków: International Cultural Centrum, 2012, pp. 192–213, pp. 192–194.

¹³ 'Polish and Turkish presidents mark 600 years of bilateral ties', www.prezydent.pl/en/president-komorowski/news/art,575,polish-and-turkish-presidents-mark-600-years-of-bilateral-ties.html (accessed on 01.09.2015).

¹⁴ Topaktaş, pp. 53–54.

¹⁵ İlber Ortaylı, 'Polonya ve Osmanlı İlişkileri: Avrupa'nın Ortasında 600 Yıllık Müttefik', in *İmparatorluğun Son Nefesi, Osmanlı'nın Yaşayan Mirası Cumhuriyet*, İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2014, pp. 57–70, pp. 60–62.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Alfred Bieliński (Ahmed Rüstem Paşa) was appointed the Ambassador of the Ottoman Empire in Washington.¹⁷

Following World War I, the Republic of Poland, which regained independence in 1918, became one of the first countries that recognised the young Turkish state, successor to the Ottoman Empire, as Turkey and Poland signed the ‘Friendship and Cooperation Treaty’ on 23 July 1923,¹⁸ just one day before the Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed. Today, Turkish–Polish relations have been rapidly developing in the political, economic and cultural spheres. Turkey strongly supported Poland’s aspiration to become a NATO member, and Poland, who joined NATO in 1999, has been among the staunch supporters of Turkey’s EU membership process. Bilateral political relations gained important momentum after Turkey and Poland became strategic partners in 2009.¹⁹ According to the figures of the Turkish Ministry of Economy, bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Poland reached USD 5.48 billion in 2014.²⁰ Turkish citizens in the 2013–2014 academic year accounted for over 20 per cent of all students coming to Poland under the Erasmus programme (the largest national group), while Poland was also the first choice for students from Turkey for Erasmus (Germany was the second) according to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland.²¹

Ortaylı highlights his wish that the 600th year would lead to a review of history and guide for making the necessary changes.²² In a similar vein, Polish scholar Adam Balcer draws attention to the unique character of Turkish–Polish relations and the ‘obscurity’ of this exceptional historical heritage, even in Poland and Turkey.²³

Individuals matter²⁴: Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey

The individual is the smallest unit in IR, a non-state actor at micro level. Yet, history is full of examples showing how one single individual was able to change the course of events by his decisions and actions due to his ability to shape the intentions

¹⁷ ‘Poles in the Ottoman Empire’, www.msz.gov.pl/en/p/stambul_tr_k_en/c/MOBILE/polish_community_in_turkey/poland_and_turkey_two_countries_in_one_mirror/poles_in_the_ottoman_empire (accessed on 10.10.2015).

¹⁸ ‘Relations between Turkey and Poland’, www.mfa.gov.tr/reasons-between-turkey-and-poland.en.mfa (accessed on 10.10.2015).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ www.ekonomi.gov.tr (accessed on 11.10.2015).

²¹ ‘Students from Turkey are increasingly willing to take up studies in Poland’, www.go-poland.pl/pl/node/1425 (accessed on 11.10.2015).

²² Ortaylı, p. 57.

²³ Adam Balcer, ‘Lehistan and the Sublime Porte – Overlapping Worlds’, in *Turkey, Herito Quarterly*, No. 14, Kraków: International Cultural Centrum, 2014, pp. 16–33, p. 17.

²⁴ For a philosophical discussion on the importance of individuals see John Lachs, ‘The Insignificance of Individuals’, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 38, No. 1/2, Essays in Honor of Richard S. Robin (Winter-Spring 2002), pp. 79–93, Indiana University Press, www.jstor.org/stable/40320882 (accessed on 08.01.2016).

and behaviours of his state and as a consequence affecting the positions and reactions of other states.²⁵ Hitler, Napoleon, Bismarck and Wilhelm II, Saddam Hussein, Hafiz Al-Asad and Ayatollah Khomeini were referred by Byman and Pollack as ‘easy cases’,²⁶ demonstrating the importance of individuals in IR, where the influence of each individual was self-evident. On the other hand, the main character of this article, Bobowski (Ali Ufkî), might be categorised as a ‘hard case’ since he was neither the leader of a state nor a very well-known figure for the IR discipline. Nevertheless, this humble effort to focus on the role of an individual who was not a state leader follows the recommendation of the said scholars.²⁷

From Lviv to İstanbul...

Wojciech Bobowski, Albertus Bobovius, Alberto Bobovio Leopolitano, Hali Beigh, Ali Ağa, Santuri Ali Bey, Ali Ufkî Bey... These are some of the names of Bobowski, who was born in the 17th century, a period full of conflicts between the Ottomans and Poles.

One should seriously take into consideration where Ali Ufkî originally came from. He was born in 1610 (?) in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (named as such after the Union of Lublin in 1569), which recently experienced its Golden Age (1492–1586), the Renaissance as well as the Reformation on its soil.²⁸

Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey *per se* had a multi-cultural identity. Most probably as a Protestant Pole who was probably born in the then Polish city of Lwów²⁹ (present-day Lviv in Ukraine), he might have entered the Ottoman Court between 1632–1643 according to the calculations of Cem Behar.³⁰ Behar explains that after being captured by the Tatars in the early 1630s, he came to İstanbul and lived at the Court for almost 20 years, where he was employed firstly as a page

²⁵ For a comprehensive analysis of the role of individual in IR, see Byman and Pollack, *ibid.* For an analysis of the importance of the role of individuals in political psychology, see Fred I. Greenstein, ‘Taking Account of Individuals in International Political Psychology: Eisenhower, Kennedy and Indochina’, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Special Issue: Political Psychology and the Work of Alexander L. George (March 1994), pp. 61–74, International Society of Political Psychology, www.jstor.org/stable/3791439 (accessed on 08.01.2016).

²⁶ Byman and Pollack, p. 115.

²⁷ Byman and Pollack, p. 146.

²⁸ For more information on the ‘Golden Age’, the Renaissance and the Reformation in Poland, see Aleksander Gieysztor, *et al.*, *History of Poland*, Warsaw: PWN-Polish Scientific Publishers, 1979, pp. 145–176.

²⁹ Although not as widely as Lviv, *Bobowa* in the southern part of Poland is also considered to be Wojciech Bobowski’s birth place. The City of Bobowa organised a concert and presentation titled ‘Lord of Horizons’ (Ali Ufkî Bey/Wojciech Jaxa Bobowski) at the Bobowa Music School on 23 November 2014, which I had the opportunity to attend.

³⁰ For Ali Ufkî’s biography, see Cem Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008, pp. 17–55. Behar indicates that Bobowski may have been most probably Catholic. See, *ibid.*, p. 19.

(içoğlanı) and musician and later as a translator.³¹ Suraiya Faroqhi refers to Ali Ufkî as an ‘Educated Border Crosser’,³² who already received education before coming to the Ottoman Court.³³

Was Ali Ufkî born a few decades ago, with his multi-talented personality, reflecting his own cultural diversity in his music and written works, he might certainly have been characterised as a ‘Renaissance intellectual’. It is these personal characteristics and idiosyncrasies which laid the ground for his contributions to Turkish cultural heritage as well as to the cultural, intellectual and political life of the then İstanbul.

According to Franz Babinger, Bobowski, who was a member of a noble family, was captured by Tatars and came to İstanbul as a slave in his twenties. He went to Egypt as a servant of a nobleman, yet thanks to his good services was freed afterwards.³⁴ Şükrü Elçin, who wrote the facsimile of ‘Mecmûa-i Sâz ü Söz’ (Ali Ufkî’s collection), argues that following his education at Enderun (Court school) he went to Egypt as a servant along with a high level military official and upon his return entered the Court as a free man. However, Elçin cautiously adds that his life remains mostly unclear from his journey to Egypt until he entered the Court and started working as an official.³⁵ Furthermore, Behar concludes that many biographic details of his life before coming to İstanbul and in the Ottoman capital are unknown. Beside the narrative on his journey to Egypt and emancipation, another narrative claims that he lived for a long time at the Residence of the British Ambassador in İstanbul after leaving the Ottoman Court.³⁶

Similarly to its beginning, how his life ended also remains mysterious. Juxtaposing various information, Behar anticipates that Bobowski probably passed away between 1673 and 1677, and there is no information on the whereabouts of his grave.³⁷

³¹ Cem Behar, ‘The Ottoman Musical Tradition’ in *Turkey, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839* ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, The Cambridge History of Turkey, Vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 393–407, p. 398; Cem Behar, *Ali Ufkî ve Mezmurlar*, İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 1990, p.11.

³² In the context of the ongoing immigration crisis deeply affecting Europe, the term ‘Educated Border Crosser’ is relevant to today’s debate as well, since education is unfortunately an unwritten criteria of some European countries for accepting refugees who need safe haven. See Patrycja Sasnal, ‘Who are They? Two Profiles of Syrian Refugees’, *PISM Policy Paper*, No. 36, 29 October 2015, at www.pism.pl/Publications/PISM-Policy-Paper-no-138.

³³ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011, pp. 92–93.

³⁴ Franz Babinger, ‘Bobowski, Wojciech’, in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Vol. 2, Kraków, 1936, pp. 156–157.

³⁵ Şükrü Elçin, *Ali Ufkî: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Mecmûa-i Sâz ü Söz (Tıpkıbasım)*, Kültür Bakanlığı Türk Musikî Eserleri: 1, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1976, p. 4.

³⁶ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008, p. 18.

³⁷ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, pp. 51–52.

Ali Ufkî: Musician³⁸

He was considered a ‘wizard of sorts’ at the Ottoman Court, thanks to his ability to write music with notation.³⁹ He was among the group of ‘saz’ (a stringed instrument) players at the Court and due to playing ‘santur’ (dulcimer), he became known as ‘Santuri Ali Ufkî Bey’. One must not forget his other artistic talents as well: he was a poet and a composer.

Ali Ufkî’s most famous anthology, ‘Mecmûa-i Sâz ü Söz’, is the first historical document that includes more than 500 Turkish classical and folk music songs and pieces from the 16th and 17th centuries, written according to European notation, and this single manuscript, currently at the British Library, is also a good source of information on the music repertoire of the mid-17th century İstanbul.⁴⁰ He had written from right to left most probably in order to avoid disharmony between the Ottoman script and the Western notation according to Fikret Karakaya.⁴¹

His two other manuscripts, ‘Saklı Mecmua’ (Hidden Collection, as referred by Behar), at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and ‘Mezmurlar’ (Psalter), at the same library, constitute his other known works in the field of music and include his own compositions as well.⁴²

Ali Ufkî was a musician and artist who made it possible to pass old Turkish music on to future generations, after his two manuscripts became known in Turkey during the first half of the 20th century.⁴³ Registering music was a very innovative step for Turkish music, which occurred after Wojciech transferred his European musical know-how to Ali who studied and performed Turkish music at the Ottoman Court. For a conceptual conclusion, it is important to note that artists who represent and reproduce their own national cultures and provide primary means for the maintenance of their national cultures are considered among people who count and make a difference, amplified by the cross-boundary character of art.⁴⁴

³⁸ These subtitles aim at categorising the roles of Ali Ufkî in accordance with the ‘individual roles’ described by Rosenau. Musicians fall under the group ‘Artists’. James N. Rosenau, *People Count! Networked Individuals in Global Politics*, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008, pp. 130–131.

³⁹ Behar, ‘The Ottoman Musical Tradition’, p. 398.

⁴⁰ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, pp. 47, 192.

⁴¹ Karakaya, p. 24.

⁴² See the first detailed analyses on these two masterpieces: Cem Behar, *Saklı Mecmua: Ali Ufki'nin Bibliothèque Nationale de France'taki [Turc 292] Yazması*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008 and Cem Behar, *Ali Ufki ve Mezmurlar*, İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 1990.

⁴³ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 46.

⁴⁴ Rosenau, pp. 130–131.

Ali Ufkî: Translator and Author⁴⁵

Ali Ufkî worked as a ‘palace interpreter’ (dragoman) at the Sublime Porte. Behar postulates that the number of languages spoken by Ali Ufkî could be 13 (Polish, Latin, German, French, English, Italian, ancient Greek, modern Greek, Hebrew, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Aramaic) without excluding the possibility of a quantitative change, yet not 17–18 as argued by some European intellectuals.⁴⁶

He translated and authored a number of books on languages and religions mostly upon the requests of European bishops or Orientalists, that is why his manuscripts can be found today at the British Library, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Oxford Bodleian Library, Glasgow University Library, Leiden University Library, Harvard University Houghton Library.⁴⁷

He translated the Czech educational reformer and religious leader Comenius’ *Janua Linguarum Aurea Reserata* (1631, The Gate of Tongues Unlocked) from Latin into Turkish and prepared a Turkish dictionary along with this book. Among his linguistic contributions, he wrote a Turkish–Latin grammar book (*Grammatica Turcia–Latina*) and the book titled *Dialogues en françois et en turc* (French–Turkish dialogues).⁴⁸

His translation of the Holy Bible into Turkish, with the order and support of the Dutch envoy Lewinus Warner, who aimed at spreading Christianity in the Muslim world in Turkish language,⁴⁹ has been one of his most important works. He also translated the famous book of Grotius, *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* (1627, The Truth of the Christian Religion). Among his theological works, one should also remember his authoring of the Turkish and Latin version of the Church Catechism.⁵⁰

In addition to his works on Christianity, he wrote *De Turcarum Liturgia, Peregrinatione Meccana* (A Treatise Concerning the Liturgy of the Turks), a book on Muslim worship, rituals and principles, per request of Thomas Smith, Bishop of the British Embassy in İstanbul.⁵¹ This book provided Europeans with insight information on Islam, introducing Islam to Europeans, whereas his translation of the Holy Bible and other Christian texts into Turkish⁵² were steps introducing Christianity in the Ottoman Empire.

⁴⁵ Because of their creative nature, I assume ‘translators and authors’ can be considered within Rosenau’s ‘Artists’ category.

⁴⁶ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 25 and Elçin, pp. 2, 5.

⁴⁷ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 44; see pp. 52–55 for a detailed list of manuscripts and works of Ali Ufkî.

⁴⁸ Elçin, pp.12, 14.

⁴⁹ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 33.

⁵⁰ Elçin, pp. 10–12.

⁵¹ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 23.

⁵² Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 46.

Ali Ufkî was an interpreter of Ottoman culture to Europe,⁵³ in Kunt and Yelçe's words: 'He was an "interpreter" of a different kind; his work in the dragoman's bureau was not so important, he interpreted culture itself, in all its aspects, but especially music and religion'.

His book titled 'Saray-ı Enderun' (Life at the Ottoman Court)⁵⁴ depicted the organisational structure and daily life of the Ottoman Court with his insight knowledge and observations, being a first-hand source of information for European decision-makers who followed Ottoman domestic politics. He also wrote his observations on the poisoning attempts of Sultan Mehmed IV by Kösem Sultan in the year 1651.⁵⁵

Ali Ufkî: Hybrid and Cosmopolitan⁵⁶

Comparing Ali Ufkî's vantage point in his works, Behar believes that his pedagogical works on languages had a more academic nature and a unifying character of his two cultures, whereas his translations of the Holy Bible and Psalter into Turkish reflect a more divisive and prejudiced approach. Despite his conviction that Ali Ufkî did not hesitate to serve Warner's purpose by translating the Holy Bible, Behar suggests that this cannot be regarded as 'treason', 'hypocrisy' or 'contradiction'. It was natural that he had his own religion and culture before coming to İstanbul at a certain age, and as a consequence he was able to view İstanbul, the Ottoman Court and Turkish music both as an insider and an outsider, reflecting the influences of his both cultures, religions and *Weltanschauungs* into his works.⁵⁷

Behar points out that maybe after being captured and brought to the Court he converted to Islam and behaved accordingly at the Ottoman Court. He was able to translate Christian texts into Turkish and as a Muslim man he could write religious/sufi poems and compose religious pieces (ilahi).⁵⁸

According to Rosenau, mobility of people is a key factor, creating hybrids and cosmopolitans. These people might be confused by their affiliations and search for an appropriate identity, feeling no meaningful ties to any country they lived in, they might develop cosmopolitan impulses and have an attitude toward their own diversity with a willingness to engage with the other.⁵⁹ As a matter of fact, Ali Ufkî's religious dichotomy created the uniqueness of his contributions. One can never know his real

⁵³ Metin Kunt, Zeynep Nevin Yelçe, 'Two Polish Ottomans' in *Distant Neighbour Close Memories: 600 Years of Turkish-Polish Relations*, ed. Ayşen Anadol, Sabancı University: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2014, pp. 48–59, pp. 48, 58.

⁵⁴ Ali Ufkî Bey, Albertus Bobovius, *Saray-ı Enderun: Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*, translated by Türkis Noyan, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013.

⁵⁵ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ See 'Hybrids and Cosmopolitans' in Rosenau's book, pp. 52–58.

⁵⁷ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe: Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik*, pp. 32–34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

⁵⁹ Rosenau, pp. 52–54.

feelings and preferences about his religion. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge today that his two worlds had enriched his intellectual and spiritual capacity, which was reflected in his works thanks to his own experience of cultural exchange and interpenetration.

For European countries, the journals of European travelers and envoys were important sources of information on the Ottoman Empire. Yet, Ali Ufkî's works transmitted the views of an author – cognizant of his old and new cultures – who wrote from the center of his 'new world' to which he later belonged.⁶⁰ This awareness of both cultures facilitated the flow of information like a channel, from his Western and Eastern perspective.

Ali Ufkî: Teacher⁶¹

In addition to his roles as a musician and a translator, Ali Ufkî was also a teacher. French orientalist Antoine Galland, famous for being the first to translate 'One Thousand and One Nights' into a European language, as well as translating the Kur'an-ı Kerim (Qur'an) took Turkish language courses from Ali Ufkî.⁶²

Born in Lorraine, in today's France, Franciszek Mesgnien Meniński, who later became a diplomat of Poland and Austria, also took Turkish courses in İstanbul from Ali Ufkî and wrote the famous *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae*, which was considered to be a very important dictionary of Turkish language. Meniński, who came to İstanbul along with the delegation of the Polish Ambassador in 1652, later became the chief translator of the Polish Parliament and the Polish Ambassador in İstanbul. In 1661, he started working in the service of the Austrian Emperor Leopold. He worked as the Austrian Chargé d'affaires in İstanbul and the first translator of Oriental languages at the Court of the Austrian Emperor.⁶³

As a teacher he shared his knowledge of Turkish with Meniński and Galland in İstanbul, indirectly contributing to the development of Orientalism.⁶⁴

Illustrating the examples of Meniński and Bobowski, Balcer points out that Poles often played the role of intermediaries between the Muslim and the Christian worlds from the 16th to the 18th century.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Namik Sinan Turan, 'Osmanlı Kültürünün Aktarımında Polonya Asıllı Ali Ufkî Beyin Katkısı', *Evrinsel Kültür Dergisi*, February 2014, No 266, pp. 52-58, p. 55.

⁶¹ Teachers and scholars are also considered as the group of people who matter. See Rosenau, pp. 1-2.

⁶² Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe...*, pp. 25–28.

⁶³ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe...*, pp. 25–26.

⁶⁴ Behar, *Saklı Mecmua: Ali Ufkî'nin Bibliothèque Nationale de France'teki [Turc 292] Yazması*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008, p. 31.

⁶⁵ Balcer, pp. 27–28.

Ali Ufkî: Networker⁶⁶

Thanks to his ability to speak many languages and his highly intellectual personality, Ali Ufkî was a source of attraction for Europeans who were trying to get insight information on the Sublime Porte to be able to guide their headquarters within the foreign policy making process. Thus, Ali Ufkî intentionally or unintentionally contributed to the foreign policy analyses of those European powers, whose envoys were in close contact with him.

He was in direct or indirect contact with many influential Europeans residing in or coming to İstanbul, such as French orientalist and scholar Galland, orientalist and diplomat Meninski, Swedish envoy Claes Ralamb, British diplomat Sir Paul Rycaut, Italian traveler Cornelio Magni, Bishop of the British Embassy John Covel and Thomas Smith, orientalist Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Dutch envoy Warner, military official from Swabia Nicolaus Brenner. These Europeans had the natural tendency to accept Ali Ufkî as an individual ‘among themselves’⁶⁷ as they shared a similar cultural and religious background. Moreover, poly-glot Ali Ufkî’s intellectual personality, position and translations made him an interesting contact person for such Europeans. Being connected to each other by their shared concerns and purposes served as the basis for their interaction.⁶⁸

What may be seen as a good example to illustrate this fact more concretely is Sir Paul Rycaut’s book titled ‘The Present State of the Ottoman Empire’. Sir Rycaut states at the ‘Epistle to the Reader’ that information on the Court and its education of the youth and other matters of custom and rule was transmitted to him by several people trained up with the best education of Turkish learning, particularly, by an understanding Polonian who had spent nineteen years in the Ottoman Court.⁶⁹ This book became a bestseller with its English, French, Dutch, German, Italian and Polish versions in 1678 and remained the key reference book in Europe for a century on the perception of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁰ Thus, from the micro perspective, it may be proposed that as an individual Ali Ufkî was able to affect the course of events to a certain extent due to his communication with Europeans in İstanbul, who were also very much

⁶⁶ See the chapter on ‘Networkers’, Rosenau, pp. 102–107.

⁶⁷ Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe...*, pp. 32, 49.

⁶⁸ Rosenau, p. 103.

⁶⁹ Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, Third Edition, London: John Starkey and Henry Brome, 1670.

⁷⁰ Bülent Arı, ‘Giriş: Paul Ricaut ve “The Present State of the Ottoman Empire”’, in Paul Ricaut, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Halihazırının Tarihi (XVII. Yüzyıl)*, transl. Halil İnalçık and Nihan Özyıldırım, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2012, pp. xiii–xxii, p. xiv. This is the Turkish translation of Sir Rycaut’s book from French, published by the Turkish Historical Society. Behar also emphasizes that Rycaut’s book ‘The Present State of the Ottoman Empire’ was regarded as the most important reference book on the Ottoman Empire in the United Kingdom for many years and its chapters on the Court bear traces of Ali Ufkî’s Saray-ı Enderun. See Behar, *Musikiden Müziğe...*, pp. 19, 50.

interested in his insight information and intellectual works reflecting his knowledge and understanding of the two worlds he belonged to.

Ali Ufkî: Expert of Area Studies⁷¹

Area Studies evolved during and in the aftermath of World War II in the United States for a very practical reason. Area experts were needed to provide specific information to address the practical needs of warfare and in a broader perspective to contribute to the strategic decision-making process of the governmental bodies.⁷² Having said this, the definition proposed by Jean B. Duroselle for Area Studies is as follows: ‘The scientific study of a region presenting a certain politico-social unity with a view to understanding and explaining its place and its role in international society.’⁷³ The father of Realism, Hans J. Morgenthau, argued that Area Studies provided valuable intellectual knowledge by ‘integrating’ different disciplines and achieving ‘cross-fertilisation’ as a result of communicating the results of different fields. According to Morgenthau, it is aimed at conveying the experience of ‘cultural relativity’, which will lead to the just appreciation of foreign cultures.⁷⁴

Analogous to the United States during and after World War II, powerful European states were interested in gathering information from distant geographies, and in this very case with his vast linguistic abilities, cultural and religious knowledge and insider information as well as manuscripts Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey may be regarded as a very early ‘Area Studies’ expert for the field of Ottoman Studies in the 17th century, who integrated the roles of linguist, palace interpreter, anthropologist, theologian, historian and musician.

Conclusion

Although most probably not of his own free will, Ali Ufkî’s migration (capture) from the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Ottoman Empire as an extraordinarily ‘highly-skilled labourer’ and a multi-talented young man, changed his life completely. Thanks to ‘Ottoman multi-culturalism’, which not only allowed but also supported the existence of different religious and ethnic groups within its macro entity, as well as his previous Western education and his highly sophisticated Enderun education at

⁷¹ This subtitle is an exception, ‘area studies expert’ is not among the categories of Rosenau.

⁷² ‘Introduction’ in *Area Studies*, *UNESCO International Social Science Bulletin*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1952, pp. 633–635, p. 634; Jean B. Duroselle, ‘Area Studies: Problems of Method’, *UNESCO International Social Science Bulletin*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1952, pp. 636–646, p. 636; Hans J. Morgenthau, ‘Area Studies and the Study of International Relations’, *UNESCO International Social Science Bulletin*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1952, pp. 647–655, pp. 647–649.

⁷³ Duroselle, p. 636.

⁷⁴ Morgenthau, pp. 650–651.

the Ottoman Court, he had the opportunity to work as a musician and a translator at the Court.

While living in İstanbul, he had the chance to combine his Polish-Christian roots with his later Ottoman-Muslim identity, with his translations and books, sometimes even in a paradoxical way. Ali Ufkî may have been himself a 'cultural attraction' with his European background and new Ottoman culture and identity. This flow of ideas and notions continuously kept on, from one side to the other in his mind and spirit, creating a 'civilisational exchange' within one individual. This makes him unique from the psychological and anthropological points of view as well, experiencing two cultures at the same time with his versatile personality and gifted character, he was beyond the limits of ordinary experience.

This openness is very much needed in today's international politics, where the role of religion is abused every day as a dividing factor among different societies and countries, instead of being a moral and cultural asset bringing peace and harmony. As an individual, Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey had a different life story than many other people, and his different vision enabled him to be a musician, translator and writer nourished by his old and new religion and culture. Even today he continues to contribute to inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue by his unique role being discussed.

In a nutshell, with his personality and contributions, Ali Ufkî was a *sui generis* individual who had influence on Ottoman and European decision-makers, which makes him a micro actor worth considering in IR. More information on his biography and works would most probably strengthen this claim, since the roles of individuals can be analysed much better with more knowledge of their life stories and choices. In this vein, a long-term inter-disciplinary project to be conducted at the archives and libraries of the relevant countries by historians, musicologists, anthropologists and theologians, might bring us the opportunity to see how Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey was historically perceived by these countries. Such detailed research, which may resemble 'area studies', would be instrumental in the final analysis of the role of Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey as an individual in IR. Nevertheless, despite of these limitations, it can still be argued that Wojciech Bobowski/Ali Ufkî Bey has been an important individual in the contemporary cultural diplomacy of Turkey and Poland.