

## FRIENDS, FOES, ALLIES: OTTOMAN- BRITISH RELATIONS IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

*Turks and the British have been friends, foes and allies for a long time. The transformation in the nature of their relationships depended on the ongoing changes in power relationships. The eighteenth century was an era of transition during which England became an empire while The Ottoman empire declined. N.M.Cugler observes that before this period “England was not a powerful institutional force, but a small isolated island when compared to more powerful better-organized world Powers such as the Ottomans” (11). At the height of the Ottoman Empire(16th century), many Christians wanted to convert to Islam and thus become a citizen of a strong empire like the Ottomans. According to Nebil Mattar “conversion into Islam held a strong attraction for the English Christians - especially for the poor and the illiterate” (24).*

*After 1650, the British entered the Mediterranean where they established their dominance. Napoleon had invaded Egypt to open up a route to the East via the Red Sea. The British seized this opportunity to enter the Mediterranean and destroyed the French fleet. After the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the French lost their importance in the eyes of the Ottomans and the British became their closest ally.*

*Soon after, in 1827, the British formed an alliance with France and Russia to destroy the Turkish fleet and supported the Greeks in the war of independence (1830). In the Crimean War, they fought alongside Turkey and France against the Russians (1853-1856). However, in the first World War, the Ottomans sided with Germany, thinking that they would be on the winning side. The war proved to be disastrous for the Ottomans and ended with the break up of the Empire. Three other empires disappeared as a result of this war: the German, Austro- Hungarian and Russian. The British occupied several Southern and Eastern States of Turkey. Drawing on this historical context, this paper aims to examine the changing political relationship between the Ottomans and the British in the long Eighteenth Century.*

**KEYWORDS:** Friends, Foes, Allies, Relationships

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