

them only five or six handfuls of barley with double the quantity of chopped straw, the whole put into a bag which hangs from the horse's ears.

It is the policy of the Turks to have their armies twice as numerous as those of the Christians. This superiority of numbers augments courage and allows them to form different corps, and to make their attacks on various parts at the same time. Should they once force an opening, they rush through in incredible crowds, and it is then a miracle if all be not lost . . . The Turkish lances are worth nothing: their archers are the best troops they have, and these do not shoot so strongly nor so far as ours. They have a more numerous cavalry, and their horses, though inferior in strength to ours and incapable of carrying such heavy weights, gallop better and skirmish for a longer time without losing their wind.

I must own that in my various experiences I have always found the Turks frank and loyal, and when it was necessary to show courage, they have never failed . . . Their armies I know commonly consist of 200,000 men, but the greater part are on foot and destitute of wooden shields, helmets, mallets or swords. They have besides amongst them a great number of Christians who are forced to serve—Greeks, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Albanians, Slavonians, Wallachians, Serbians and other subjects of the despots of that country. All these people detest the Turk, because he holds them in a severe subjection; and should they see the Christians, and above all the French, march in force against the Sultan, I have not the slightest doubt but they would turn against him and do him great mischief.

### A Turkish View of the Christians

You know well the unwashed Gyaours<sup>1</sup> and their ways and manners, which certainly are not fine. They are indolent, sleepy, easily shocked, inactive; they like to drink much and to eat much; in misfortunes they are impatient, and in times of good fortune proud and overbearing. They are lovers of repose and do not like to sleep without soft feather-beds; when they have no women with them they are sad and gloomy; and without plenty of good wine they are unable to keep counsel among themselves. They are ignorant of any military stratagems. They keep horses only to ride while hunting with their dogs; if one of them wishes to have a good war-horse, he sends to buy it from us. They are unable to bear hunger or cold, or heat, effort and menial work. They let women follow them in the campaigns, and at their dinners give them the upper places; and they want always to have warm dishes. In short, there is no good in them . . .

And then the Christians fight constantly among themselves, because everyone desires to be a king, or a prince, or the first amongst them. One says to another, "Brother, help thou me today against this Prince, and to-morrow I will help thee against that one." Fear them not, there is no concord amongst them. Everyone takes care of himself only; no one thinks of the common interest. They are quarrelsome, unruly, self-willed and disobedient. Obedience to their superiors and discipline they have none, and yet everything depends on that.

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1. Gyaours: Christians

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TURKS AND THE CHRISTIANS

When they lose a battle they always say, “We were not well-prepared”; or, “This or that traitor has betrayed us”; or, “We were too few in number and the Turks were far more numerous”; or, “The Turks came upon us without previous declaration of war, by misleading representations and treachery. They have occupied our country by turning our internal difficulties to their own advantage.”

Well, that is what they say, being not willing to confess truly and rightly: “God is on the side of the Turks. It is God who helps them and therefore they conquer us.”

**Sources:** For Brocquière—Excerpt from *Early Travels in Palestine*, edited by Thomas Wright (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848). For Sultan Bayezid II—Excerpt from *Constantine, the Last Emperor of the Greeks* by Cedomilj Mijatovic (London: S. Low, Marston, 1892).