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Малой Скифии к 679-680 году даст известные основания допустить, что грекоязычная форма (Ὠγγλος) или славяноязычная (?) (жгълъ-oglos-hoglos) нашли почву и были использованы в эпоху Первого болгарского царства. Территория Абоба-Плиски в VIII-IX веках выглядела, в результате специальной гидромелиоративной деятельности, как „остров“, опоясанный внутренним и внешним рвами, собиравшими атмосферные осадки и прочие воды, откуда они поступали в близкие реки. Наружный город прорезали многочисленные каналы, проложенные с той же целью.⁵⁵ Эти и другие специальные меры в этом направлении по существу придали болгарской столице облик своеобразного „сторечья“. При этом положении не исключено, что территория „кампоса Плиска“ (Πλίσκοβα), вместе с укреплениями, получила традиционное название или эпитет *ongol*, т. е. „сторечье“, „сторечный“. Эта реконструкция предоставляет серьезные аргументы в пользу высказанного впервые К. Шкорпилем и развитого С. Ваклиновым мнения, что „первая“ столица рассматривалась как „онгол“.⁵⁶ Еще более вероятным является использование и *oglos* или *hoglos* как *nomen appellativum* болгарской столицы или иного крупного государственного центра. Причина этого, как было отмечено выше, в том, что они представляют собой модифицированные понятия тюркоязычного *ulug-olgoi*, т. е. „великий“ – эпитет, часто используемый по отношению к главным центрам тюркских и, в частности, болгарских городов и крепостей.

⁵⁵ П. Георгиев. Селищната система на Абоба-Плиска. – Археология, 2000, № 3-4, 16-30.

⁵⁶ К. Шкорпил. Старобългарски паметници..., с. 228; С. Ваклинов. Указ. соч., 40-41.

Image of Turks in Western Literature: “Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy”

Fatma Acun (Turkey)

Introduction

Great deal of written accounts have been collected over the centuries by the Westerners on various aspects of Turkish history, religion, culture, manners etc. which could be broadly classified into three categories. 1. Reports of diplomats and tradesmen. 2. Books written by specialists. 3. Travel accounts and other popular books. The first group of documents were used strictly for political and commercial purposes and kept in files in state archives as official documents, while the second group of works were read primarily by those who had a special interest and a good deal of knowledge about the Turks and kept on the shelves of rear book rooms. The works included in these two groups, by their very nature, did not lend themselves to wider circulation. The wider reading public, who wanted to gain some insight into Turkish life, history and culture, relied heavily upon travel literature and other popular books. It was this group of works that shaped the image of Turks in the minds of the Western public. *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* by Giovanni P. Marana (1642-1693) is an example of a popularly read books. It certainly met the intellectual needs of educated Westerners and contributed to shaping the public image of the Turks in the West.

The author of the *Turkish Spy*, Marana, was an Italian journalist who resided in Paris for many years. He extensively read about the Islamic religion and Turkish culture. He even claims that he studied the annals of the Ottoman Empire. There is, however, no evidence that he ever visited the Ottoman lands. His knowledge on the Turks is therefore based solely on the information brought home by diplomats, merchants, travellers, pilgrims and private individuals from the East. Through this extensive reading, Marana conceived the idea of a Turk visiting Paris and writing back to his friends and colleagues in Istanbul about what he saw and did. These letters are fictional in the sense that all the characters and the events surrounding them were invented. But, these fictional features are imbedded within the political and historical reportage: The letters contain tremendous scope of subjects in the field of contemporary politics, culture, religion, manners and philosophy which make them invaluable for any study of the 17th century Europe, including this one.¹

¹ Marana is said to have invented the foreign letter technique which became a popular form of

The letter writer, Marana, created a fictional character, a Turkish spy, to avoid the censorship of the time. In this way, while adding a flavour of oriental exoticism to the letters, he enjoyed anonymity and could disavow anything dangerous written in the letters. The fictional features, however, do not make the entire contents of the letters fictional too.

The hero of the *Letters*, Mahmud, was on a mission to spy on the political and military activities of the Christians and to send secret reports to officials and ministers of the Ottoman Empire. The *Letters* are mainly Mahmud's reports on the contemporary events taking place in Europe between 1637 and 1682. However, while reading, one is always aware that the letter writer was a Turk, a Muslim, a foreigner and more-over a spy who was not particularly comfortable in Paris. The author is very consistent and careful in the characterisation of the letter writer and never lets the spy mask slip and speak out in his voice. This makes Mahmud an ideal figure for the study of the European perception of the Turks in the 17th century and makes one hopeful about finding answers to the following questions: What type of image did Europeans have in their minds about Turkish customs, character traits and way of thinking? Were these actually stereotypes that had been formed before the 17th century and continued afterwards? Were the people in Europe aware of the cultural differences between the Turks and the other nations they dominated? In other words, did they portray the Turks within the wider context of a Middle Eastern image, where the religion of Islam was dominant and superseded the cultural differences it embraced? These are the main questions that will be addressed by this study.

The *Turkish Spy* was widely read and immensely popular in the late 17th century and throughout 18th century. However, except for a few references, it has gone unnoticed in the subsequent centuries.² Modern scholarship has only recently drawn attention to its importance in the cultural history of Europe and France. The authorship of the *Turkish Spy* was discussed in detail.³ A selected edition of the *Letters by Turkish Spy* has also been recently made by Arthur J. Weitzman; thus making it available to the wider reader.⁴

literary expression with writers such as Montesquieu, Goldsmith and Voltaire. However, similar kind of works existed previously and Marana was probably aware of them: An Italian nobleman and traveller Pietro Della Valle wrote narrative voyages in letter form and divided into three parts: Turkey, Persia and India. Another Italian Traiano Boccalini, wrote in the form of gazette, rather than letter, satirical in the tone. Kamil Aydın, *Images of Turkey in Western literature*, The Eothen Press, Huntingdon, 1999, p. 58.

² The first volume of *The Turkish Spy* appeared in 1686 in French. The publication resumed in English in 1687-1694, totaling to 600 letters in eight volumes. Several other publications of the *Letters* have been made during the 17th century both in English and in French. On the discussions of the publications of the *Letters*, see, Ahmad Gunny, *Images of Islam in 18th Century Writings*, London, 1996, p. 107.

³ William H. McBruney, "The Authorship of the Turkish Spy", *PMLA*, 72(1957), pp. 915-935; Joseph Tucker, "The Turkish Spy and its French Background", *Revue du Literature Comparee*, 32(1958), pp. 74-91; Paul Jamed Degategno, *The Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy and the Motif oa the Foreign Observer*, Unpub. Dissertation, Pensilvania, State University, 1975.

⁴ Giovanni P. Marana, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, selected and edited by Arthur Weitzman, Great Britain, 1970.

This selected edition has already been translated into Turkish.⁵

This study is based upon this edition of the letters. The edition consists of 77 letters out of 600 in the original, and contains strains of subjects ranging from religious matters to the personal adventures of Mahmud.⁶ The content of the letters was analysed by means of a computer program called Concordance.⁷ In doing this, certain words and phrases that are indicative of research question are selected. These words and phrases were quantified and the relationships between them were analysed to make inferences about the image of Turks portrayed in the text. The search also made for the words indirectly relating to Turks such as Osman and Ottoman. These terms were used as implicit variable of the word Turk. Proximity analysis was made to determine the co-occurrence of certain terms. In this procedure, some words were determined and scanned across the text to check for their co-occurrence.

To put details of the content analysis of the *Letters*, in perspective, we must take a brief glance at the 17th century history of Europe, Ottoman Empire and the nature of the relationship between them.

The seventeenth century is usually remembered for its religious wars in which Protestants fought against Catholics, Puritans against Royalists and Christians against Turks. However, as the century progressed, religious fervour waned and Europeans became appalled by the carnage perpetrated in the name of religion. The issues that divided Catholics and Protestants now seemed less worthy to fight about and the attitudes towards religion foreshadowed the main developments of the 18th century religious liberalism. The 17th century was also an age in which scientific thinking flourished. As the knowledge of new lands and peoples was brought to the attention of Europeans seeking information of other political and religious systems, hostility to non-Christian peoples diminished. "The spirit of the Enlightenment, consensus based on mutual interest rather than religious orthodoxy, desire to find a set of principles every reasonable man could believe in, the subjection of passion to the firm guidance of reason, and the ardent hope for an orderly world where trade and peace would flourish" were the ideals shared, in varying degrees, by the intellectual community of the late 17th century.⁸

As for the Ottomans, the 17th century was also an age of internal disturbances and transformation of classical institutions. Although the Empire continued to extend its

⁵ Mehmet Öz-Fatma Acun, *Bir Türk Casusunun Mektupları*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1999.

⁶ This edition has been based on the first English edition (1691-1694) found in the British Museum. The variety of subjects covered in the selected letters make them representative of the whole and, as the editor, Weitzman, claims, the selection "gives a reader the flavour of the whole without slighting the spirit of the work". Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. xviii. Ideally, any study should include a whole series of documents. In the absence of such study, the work done on the representative documents has still got some value.

⁷ The internet address of the program is as follows: <http://www.rjcw.freemove.co.uk/>

⁸ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. vii.

frontiers, the second and unsuccessful Siege of Vienna (1683) and the loss of land with the Peace of Karlowitz (1699) convinced Europeans that they were finally free of the Turkish menace. As the European fears eased, travel to the Ottoman lands increased and a more observant breed of travellers brought a new life to the stereotyped ideas of the Renaissance in which the Turks were portrayed as the "sworn enemies of all Christians".⁹ However, the authors of drama and imaginative literature lagged behind the travellers in understanding the Turks: Cruelty and military power were still important in popular characterisations.¹⁰

Despite the endemic state of war, economic necessity and insatiable quest for wealth kept the channels of interchange open between the Europeans and the Ottomans. In fact, the commerce that began during the Crusades (between 11th and 13th century) had never diminished and the Ottomans granted trade concessions to the European states particularly to Genoa, Venice and Holland as early as the mid 15th century.¹¹ With the establishment of the Levant Company in 1581 Anglo-Ottoman economic relations started officially. Growing commercial ties and the developments taking place in Europe led to a surge of interest in Turks, their way of life, religion, history, culture, etc. This interest was also demonstrated in various ways in a variety of literary works such as plays, prose fiction and travel accounts. The author of the *Turkish Spy* is likely to have been motivated by this new wave of interest and thrilled and satisfied the educated Europeans by adopting the mask of a Turkish spy.¹²

Formation of the Turkish Image before the 17th century

Image is, basically, a construction of the appearance of one culture by another culture. Images were not formed suddenly or in the course of few years. Certain aspects of images appear and evolve through the preceding centuries and continue to have a great deal of influence over the succeeding ones. In the process, images often manifest themselves as stereotypes and it becomes almost impossible to completely dissociate the prevalent images from these stereotypes. Production of stereotypes is also closely related to tradition and certain type of literature, including travel literature and detective

⁹ The following book is devoted to the study of image of Turks during the Renaissance period during which the Turks were portrayed in a negative light as the official enemy of the faith, as infidels and barbarians. Robert Schowebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of Turks (1453-1517)*, New York, 1967. See particularly chapter VIII, pp. 202-226.

¹⁰ Alexandre N. St. Clair, *The Image of the Turks in Europe*, New York, 1973, pp. 14-15. Eg. contemporary English play writers presented the Turks with some negative connotations of cruelty malice and violence, which appealed to the public and motivated the play writers to introduce more Turkish characters in their writings Aydın, *Turkish Image*, pp. 54-56.

¹¹ St. Clair, *Image of the Turks in Europe*, p. 7-8. Exchanges in trade extended to the exchanges of art and various cultural material such as paper cutting, shadow play, coffee, tulips etc. between the Ottomans and Europe. St. Clair, *Image of the Turks in Europe*, p. 15-18.

¹² Marana's Turkish spy is accepted as the ancestor of a long line of spy works which gained popularity in the 20th century.

fiction, which draw heavily upon them. The author of the *Turkish Spy* is likely to have made use of the cultural stereotypes about the Turks in Europe.¹³

Traditional European attitude towards the Turks began with the Pope's call for the First Crusade to protect the Byzantine Empire. It was also this time that the name of "Turk" became a pejorative term meaning "infidel" and "savage". The fall of Istanbul (1453) was a milestone in the Western concept of Turks, together with the building up of stereotypes associated with cruelty, savagery and sadism.¹⁴ The fact that the Ottomans moved into the very heart of Europe and were at the gates of Vienna as early as 1529, contributed to enforce the earlier stereotyped images of Turks. These early images endured into the following centuries with similar connotations.

As indicated above, the name of Turk had already become a pejorative term meaning "infidel and savage" from as early as the First Crusades.¹⁵ This is largely because the Crusaders confronted, not the Arabs, but the Turks as defenders of Islam. In the centuries ahead, The Turkish peril was often viewed as the last phase in the centuries-old assault of Islam upon Christendom. One consequence of this ongoing historical process was the negative stereotyping of Turks in Western mind.¹⁶ Thus, the word Turk reflected not only image of an enemy against whom all Christians should fight but, became synonymous with infidel.

The use of such terms as "Turk, infidel, slave, dog" and "savage" for Mahmud in various contexts is certainly a reflection of the earlier images of Turks.¹⁷ Among the

¹³ A great part of the early stereotypes were created through travellers accounts and reports of pilgrims who journeyed to the Holy Lands. The knowledge of the Turks carried to Europe by them was neither accurate nor complete and, no doubt, distorted to a great extent. On this and the evaluation of the information given by the pilgrim narratives, see, Schowebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, p. 176-196. However, Westerners relied, for a long time, on the overemphasis of the traveller's accounts, their interests and views in comprehending the social, economic, judicial and administrative history of the Ottoman Empire. On this see, Ezel, Kural Shaw, "The Double Veil: Traveller's View of the Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries", *English and Continental Views of the Ottoman Empire 1500-1800, papers read at a Clark Library Seminar, January 24, 1970*, University of California, Los Angeles, 1972, p. 25. Besides travel literature, the works of the diplomats, theatres and operas contributed to the creation and continuation of Turkish image in Europe. On the works of a diplomat Sir Paul Rycout, see, Colin Heywood, "Sir Paul Rycout, A Seventeenth Century Observer of the Ottoman State: notes for a Study", *English and Continental Views of the Ottoman Empire 1500-1800, papers read at a Clark Library Seminar, January 24, 1970*, University of California, Los Angeles, 1972, p. 33-66. See also the following reference for the construction of Turkish image in England through diplomatic and trade relations: Netice Yıldız, "İngiliz Yaşamında Türk İmgesi ve Etkileri", *Türkler XI*, 921-933.

¹⁴ Tales of cruelty were produced by the Europeans about the Turks this time onwards. One of them is concerned with Mehmed II, the conqueror of Istanbul, who allegedly criticised the painting of Gentile Bellini, the Venetian painter, as failing to show faithfully a beheaded person and ordered one of his slaves to be be-headed in Bellini's presence for the Enlightenment of the artist, Schowebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, p. 207.

¹⁵ On this, see Mary Lee Settle, *Turkish Reflections*, New York, 1991, p. 77.

¹⁶ The Turks were, thus, easily associated with such negative images as "infidel, followers of the profane Mohammed and pernicious force dedicated to the destruction of Christendom". Schowebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, p. 187.

¹⁷ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, pp. 61-137.

other negative connotations, the author uses the word "barbarian" and upbraids the Turks with "ignorance and barbarism". Each of these negative connotations appear in the text only once, except the word barbarian which appears three times.

It is true that, the Western view of Turks evolved over a period of centuries as part of a lengthy historical process. As the Ottomans no longer constituted a threat to the Europeans after the 17th century, the image of Turks degenerated into one of ignorant, debauched and corrupt people.¹⁸ This change of view is clearly seen in Marana, as he describes the Turks as being "ignorant" because printing was not widespread in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹ The invention of printing in Europe (1486) made books and knowledge accessible to common people. As Marana puts, "books are infinitely multiplied, grown cheap and common. The lowest sort of people who can but read have the privilege to become as knowing as their superiors and the slave may vie for learning with his sovereign".²⁰ The Europeans were well aware of the contributions made by printing to their culture and wider society. The oversight of this technology by the Turks was, therefore, associated with "ignorance and barbarism".

Added to the negative stereotypes are the character traits ascribed to the Ottomans: "warlike", "furry" and "tyranny" are the words used to describe the nature and the mood of the Ottomans (here Ottomans and the Turks are used interchangeably).²¹ The portrayal of the Ottoman/Turkish character in a negative light is largely due to the abovementioned negative stereotypes produced in the earlier times.

The above analysis indicates that, negative stereotypes and characterisations were dominant features of the Turkish image in the mind of Europeans, which could be associated with the earlier historical stereotypes traced back to the First Crusade. The very low frequency counts of these negative connotations (usually once and rarely three times), on the other hand, might be taken as gradual change of this image, together with the fading away of the feelings of hostility against Turks in the 17th century.

How Distinct was the Turkish Image?

The terms Turkey and Turks started to be used by Europeans as early as the 12th century, with reference to the lands and the people in Anatolia. At this time, the Turks had occupied only a portion of Anatolia and, as we know, in the ensuing centuries, they extended their domains into further parts of Anatolia, Eastern Europe the Middle East and North Africa. That is to say, the boundaries of the Turkey were continuously

¹⁸ In his study, Aydın focuses on the image of Turks in travel literature and detective fiction of the 20th century where the abovementioned representations of Turks are more evident. End of his study he arrives at the conclusion that "it is almost impossible to discuss the prevalent images completely dissociated from early religious and historical stereotypes of Turks, which can be traced back to the Crusades". Aydın, *Image of Turks*, p. 136.

¹⁹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, pp. 77.

²⁰ Quoted from Marana, *Turkish Spy*, pp. 77.

²¹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, pp. 57, 81, 189.

changing and might not be quite clearly defined in the minds of most Europeans. Similarly, there is also a possibility of confusion of the native people of these lands with the new coming Turks. Of course, such possibility is likely to have existed for the later periods and particularly for the people who had close cultural connections with the Turks.²² The use of words relating to Turks and Arabs by Marana show a high degree of confusion concerning the image of Turks in the minds of the Europeans.

To start with, the total number of words that appear in the text relating to Turks is much lower than that of the words relating to the Arabs, 14 and 42 respectively (see Table 1 and Table 3). The terms "Osman" and "Ottoman", which were cited 4 and 19 times respectively, refer to the Ottoman empire, the sultans and some qualities of the Ottoman dynasty, and therefore, could be used as implicit variable.²³ With the addition of the word, "Osman" and "Ottoman", the number of words relating to Turks rises to 37, which is still lower than that of the Arabs.

The word Turk(s) is cited only 9 times (3 of them appear in the letters addressed to various officials), comparing to the word Arab(s) which cited 23 times. This is despite the fact that the whole text is about the adventures of a Turkish spy living in a European city. A closer examination of the use of words "Turks" and "Arabs" in various contexts further reveals that European perceptions of these two nations were almost the same: At the start of the text, Mahmud is introduced as an Arabian (Mahmud the Arabian). He has taken on another name of Titus the Moldavian to conceal himself.

²⁴ In a conversation, Mahmud is told: "you are an Arabian and serve to some Eastern prince incognito".²⁵ Moreover, Mahmud introduces himself to the lady with whom he is in love, as an Arab. However, his supposed identity as a Turk appears nowhere in the body of the text except the title and one instance where Mahmud is thought to be a Turk because the Quran is found in his room.²⁶ This could be due to his mission as an agent in a Christian country and the need to disguise himself. However, this still does not explain the near to absence of Mahmud's identity as a Turk.

The proximity search of the terms "Mahmud", "I", "you", "we" and "our" with the term "Arabia(n)" shows very close connection between these terms as they appear in the text 9 times with none to four words between them.²⁷ When the same search is

²² Among the Europeans, it was common practice to use the word Turk as a synonym of Muslim and to speak of a convert to Islam as having "turned Turk". On this, see Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilisation of the Ottoman Empire*, Norman Okla, 1962, p. 145.

²³ The terms cited in the text relating to Ottomans are as follows: Osman Emperor, Osman Empire, victorious Osmans, warlike Osmans, Ottoman house, Ottoman tyranny, universal empire of Ottomans, service to Ottomans, Ottoman court, interest of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman forces, annals of the Ottoman Empire, no profit to the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman fury, Ottoman house. See, Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 3, 32, 57, 67, 69, 78, 81, 83, 118, 119, 127, 147, 177, 189, 192, 213, 217 in changing order.

²⁴ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 1.

²⁵ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 158.

²⁶ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 68.

²⁷ The result of proximity search is as follows: Our religious Arabs (1 time); We in ordinary

repeated with the term "Turk", the frequency turns out to be zero which refers to very weak or no connection at all. During the discussions, Mahmud often consults the Arabian proverbs (8 times) to strengthen his arguments concerning various issues.²⁸ He also refers to Arabian doctors and sages in discussing European philosophy, particularly Descartes', and religion.²⁹ The expressions of "our (Arabian) doctors" and "our religious Arabs" appear in the text three times and one time respectively. Moreover, Mahmud often gives examples from the history of Arabs³⁰ and addresses 9 of his letters (out of 77) to various Arabian professors at the Arabian universities, a learned man in Arabia and an official of Arabian origin at the Ottoman Porte. Among these persons, Kerker Hasan Paşa was Mahmud's countryman and son of his father's neighbour.³¹ Mahmud has been dispatching reports about the present state of Europe to Hasan Paşa who is reporting back to divan (the Privy Council). From the accounts of Mahmud, Hasan Paşa seems to have been an official of middle rank about whom no information has yet been found. As with Mahmud, Hasan Paşa might be purley a fictional character.

As Mahmud indicates, his childhood passed in Arabia (and in Istanbul) where he also received his early education.³² Mahmud's tendency towards Arabia is also apparent in the uses of the terms "Arabia" and "Turkey" which counts 7 and 2 respectively. He praises the Arabs as "aboriginal people, established from all antiquity, a stayed race, not canted up and down, hither and thither by every caprice of fortune".³³ Apart from the accusation of robbery, which occurs only once, there found no negative connotation about the Arabians in the whole text.

Mahmud also praises the Arabic language on various occasions by saying that, "it was rather a dialect of Arabic, in which language thou knowest God wrote the Ten Commandments on the two tables."³⁴ He adds that, the Muslims are generally taught

conversation in Arabia (1 time); Mahmud the Arabian (2 times); I was an Arabian (1 time); Our Arab doctors (3 times); You are an Arabian (1 time).

²⁸ The Arabian proverbs Mahmud cites are as follows: The habitation of danger is on the borders of security and that a man never runs greater hazards than when he least fear them; The camel that travels often to Mecca will return lame at last; He that peeps in at his neighbours window may chance to loose his eyes; A wise man's soul reposes at the root of his tongue, but a fool's is ever dancing on the tip; To have veil upon veil; I love you eternally, I will serve you, fight for etc. eternally; This not good to jest with God, death or the devil. For the first neither can nor will be mocked, the second mocks all men one time or another, and the third puts an eternal sarcasm on those that are too familiar with him; That wind bows from an unlucky point of the compass which wafts no good to somebody. See the following pages respectively. Marana, *Turkish Spy*, pp. 62, 66, 71, 73, 74, 88, 150, 187.

²⁹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 51, 54, 78.

³⁰ Examples are about Muhammad, eremite in Arabia (Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 94), Umayyad statesman Hadjdjadj (661-714) (Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 113) and Omar, successor of the prophet Mouhammad (Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 138), Arabian Ifriqui, which is a powerful and clever demon in Muslim mythology (Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 193) and about a tradition (Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 139).

³¹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 162.

³² Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 136.

³³ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 223.

³⁴ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 173.

the Arabic (and Persian) language from their childhood. Many famous histories have been written in Arabic, as well.³⁵ Mahmud knows, speaks and converses with pure Arabic, could read old Arabic manuscripts and taught Arabic to the children of several nobles in Paris.³⁶ He even made some translations from Arabic to Latin and French.³⁷ He always keeps the Kur'an (the holy book of Muslims) in his pocket so that he might not forget his Arabic.³⁸ He also knows Turkish and in his words, he "perused the annals of the Ottoman empire and now and then cast an eye on the Turkish translation of Herodotus and Plutarch".³⁹ The way he speaks about the Turkish makes one to conclude that his Turkish was not as good as his Arabic. This is also apparent in the text that, the word "Turkish" is cited only twice (see Tables 1 and 3) whereas the word "Arabic" is cited 11 times in various context, which strengthens the Mahmud's bias in favour of Arabic.⁴⁰

The author of the *Turkish Spy* seems, apparently, more knowledgeable about the history, culture and manners of the Arabs than that of the Turks. His readings could have been backed by the information collected in Europe about the East/Arabs and the Turks. But why, then, does the portrayal of Mahmud appear to be more of that of an Arab than that of a Turk? Was this because he was an agent and had to disguise his real identity? Or was there a confusion between the two nationalities? Judging from the above discussions, it seems that the author's view of the Turks was confused with that of the Arabs and this is reflected in the *Letters* to the degree to cast serious doubts about the identity of Mahmud as a Turk. The author, as a European, does not seem to be very much aware of the cultural peculiarities of the Turks which differed them from the other nations in the East. Rather, he seems to view the Turks within the entire Eastern context in which, he thought, all nations were intermingled. It was, perhaps, this general image of the East that shaped his perception of the Turks. As a result, the image of Turks he portrayed was heavily coloured with the image of another nation in the East, i.e. the Arabs. Why then, one might ask, the Arabs and not the Persians? The Arabs adhered to Sunnite Islam, just as the Turks, whereas the Persians believed in Shiite Islam. Moreover, Arabic was the most prominent and prestigious language of the contemporary Muslim society, through which Marana gained his knowledge of the East. It was also the language of the religion of Islam and the language of science taught in schools throughout the Muslim world. Additionally, the presence of Arabs in Europe until the 17th century might have inspired Marana to use the Arabians as a more familiar figure for Europeans.

³⁵ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 78.

³⁶ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 57, 120, 127.

³⁷ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 120.

³⁸ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 68.

³⁹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 127.

⁴⁰ For citations of Turkish, see Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 127. For citations of Arabic, see Marana, *Turkish Spy*, pp. 44, 57, 68, 78, 120, 121, 126, 127, 164, 165, 166, 173.

Another significant aspect of the image of Turks in Marana's view was that of Islamic identity which is going to be dealt with next.

Table 1. Frequency of words relating to Turks.

Words	Frequency of occurrence
Turk(s)	9
Turkey	2
Turkish	2
Turquesqe	1
Total	14

Table 2. Frequency of words relating to Ottomans.

Words	Frequency of occurrence
Osman(s)	4
Ottoman(s)	19
Total	23

Table 3. Frequency of words relating to Arabs.

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Arab(s)ian(s)	23
Arabia	7
Arabic	12
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Islamic Identity of Turks as a Part of Turkish Image

The author, is aware that most of the Turks profess Sunnite Islam which is the predominant religion in the Ottoman Empire. The hero of the *Letters* Mahmud is, therefore, a Sunnite Muslim and projects the Sunnite views. However, his Sunnism disappears fast when he discovers Descartes and the sceptical philosophy of antiquity. His ideas concerning religion are subjected to fluctuations. In his handling of Islam, he attempts to reconcile it with Christianity. But, he is not particularly successful in his attempts, as he focuses on uncommon elements between the two religions and therefore, instead of closing, he widens the gap between them. Moreover, he does not seem particularly concerned with projecting a certain image of Islam as he has tendency

in varying degrees towards Christianity, materialism, deism and agnosticism.⁴¹ His knowledge of Islam is not as well informed as that of a specialist.⁴² His view of Turks and Islam were bound to be coloured by the 17th and even earlier views of Islam shared by many Europeans.

Marana attaches too much importance to certain aspects of Islam such as ritual, thus endorsing to the stereotyped views that the Europeans held about Islam. The most common image upheld in the minds of most of the 17th century Europeans about a Muslim was that, he was a person spending much of his time in performing rituals and washing himself. Mahmud fits very well into this image. He fasts, gives alms and spends much time reading the Quran (he even carries the Quran in his pocket which is not a typical Muslim habit). To show the sincerity of his devotion to God, he even prays more frequently than is required by Islamic law. When he sits down to eat or put a glass of water to his lips or when he begins any action of importance he often finds himself pronouncing the sacred Basmala. Similarly, he pronounces Hamdala to praise God, after a meal or when anything happened.⁴³ He attaches particular significance to ablution which is somewhat exaggerated; he believes that the ablution is the way to the purity of the soul and salvation.⁴⁴ He even goes to bathe in the stream outside the city, after which he returns to the city to do his business, as he does not seem to have the same facilities in Paris as in Istanbul.⁴⁵ He also notes that Muslims are thought to wash their bodies before entering a sacred mosque.⁴⁶ The Turks are criticised for this habit that "it is absurd to command Turks to wash their bodies when their souls defiled with filth".⁴⁷

The other familiar images of Islam, that is a religion that relies on force when reason fails and whose adherents are naïve believers in miracles, echoes in the expressions of the author: Marana speaks through a Jesuit who, besides other imprecations made against the Prophet Muhammad, maintains that "one (a Muslim) must be very foolish to adore a blasphemmer (Prophet Muhammad) who has commanded his law should be maintained by the sword, when it could not be supported by reason".⁴⁸ The same view is expressed with regard to the rule that the Holy lawgiver, i.e. God, allowed the Muslims to have four wives and as many other females as they purchase

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either by sword or money.⁴⁹ The references made to sword is significant in that, it is adopted by Muslims as a way of achieving an aim or solution to problems.

The search for the term "miracle" in the text resulted in no citation. Instead, the beliefs of Muslims and the rules of Islam are criticised with various terms; "superstition" is used in the sense that, the prayers that the Muslims perform in the mosques are "ceremonies of superstitious worship".⁵⁰ "Dreams", "blasphemies" "impurities" and "bestialities" are the terms describing contents of Quran. Moreover, Muslims are condemned with "violence" and "robberies" they committed for the precept of the religion of Islam.⁵¹ The presentation of image of Islam is somewhat negative and reflects all the biases that Europeans held about Islam. The Turks, being Muslims, share the same image.

To complement the image of Turk, physical appearance and manners of Mahmud is in order.

Physical Appearance of the Turks and their Manners

Mahmud is of low stature, of an ill-favoured countenance, ill-shaped and by nature not given talkativeness. His hair is grown a little below his ears and his outer costume is a little cassock of black serge.⁵² The way of life he has been leading and the way he fed himself with only bread, water and some other food which is just enough to survive, made his body even weaker. As he got old, hardships and pains invaded his body as well as his soul. He was infected with some acute diseases such as gouts, fevers, cramps, horrid dysenteries, dropsies and asthmas. He feels the reversion of his youthful vanities which gives him nothing but pain and torment.⁵³ This physical image of Mahmud fits very well with that of a spy, as he appears to be an insignificant person not wishing to draw the attention of the people that he is observing. However, this image is in very much in contrasts with the image of Turks threatening Europe. He looks like a beggar rather than a warlike Turk. The author's portrayal of the physical image of a Turkish spy is also very much in contrast with the European spies of the time who have rich and noble clothes in order to practice among the men of quality as well as commoners.⁵⁴

The manners in which Mahmud had been educated in his infancy, still influence his behaviour in Paris. He often uses the expression of prayers before and after finishing an action. As is custom in the East when saluting grandees, he kisses the bottom of their robe with reverence. While doing this, he sometimes cannot forbear from falling

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Besides Turks and Arabs, character traits of some other nations, such as French, Italian, German, Spanish, Dutch, Swiss and Jews are also cited on various occasions in the *Letters*. In some cases, instead of referring to a specific nation, the author refers to Europe or uses names of religion or sects, such as Europeans, Christians, Jews, Catholics, Protestants etc. This kind of references were not taken into consideration within the confines of this study as they are directed to a whole community. Rather, the references directed to a specific nation were taken into consideration to gain a better view of the author concerning portrayal of images in general and the images of the Turks in particular. The letters are full of the customs, life styles and even fashion of the European nations, particularly the French. However, I have taken here only the character traits of these nations, in order to compare them with those of Turks.

Image of other Nations in the Letters

Among the nations mentioned, more information is provided about the Italians and the French. The following passage taken from one of the letters describe the Italian and French character in a comparative manner very well:

"The Italians in general are much like the ancient Romans in their humour: men of grave aspect and carriage and much composed in both than the French, who appear ridiculous through the levity of their discourse and actions. The former abound in sage precepts of morality and politic aphorisms, which serve as a rule whereby to square the course of their lives; the latter only affect some flashy improvements of wit and conversation, studying rather how to please women than men, coveting to be perfect in external accomplishments and the graces of the body, whilst they slight the more valuable endowments of the mind. In a word they are mere apes and mimics. On the contrary the Italians are men of an awful and majestic behaviour, solid judgment and deep reach. If you see them smile you shall seldom or never hear 'em laugh, whereas the motion of a feather will set the French abraying like asses. These will contract a warm friendship with any man at first interview, heighten it with a thousand compliments, make him their confessor and unbosom all their secrets. Yet a second

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encounter shall extinguish this passion and a third shall revive it again, whereas those (Italians) are cautious and slow in the choice of their friends, and when once that knot is dissolved, 'tis never to be fastened there again. They are irreconcilable in their hatred and revenge".⁵⁷

Italians are also portrayed as cruel and inhuman nation. Their physicians try poisons and other fatal tricks on the poor for the pleasure of the rich. An Italian painter who stabbed a poor man to death to draw his picture was esteemed the greatest master of his time and the head of the church absolved this the murder as a venial sin.⁵⁸

The Germans are described as "rude, unpolished people, greedy of novelties, inconstant, rash, perfidious and phlegmatic". They cannot endure labour and the most excessive gluttons and drunkards in the world. Their dinking habits are heavily criticised and they are blamed for spreading the drunkenness to other countries.⁵⁹ Besides Germans, the Swiss are also mentioned as "drunker".⁶⁰

The Spaniards, the Dutchmen and the Jews are named as the "scandals of the human race". Jews are "infamous wretches and slaves of all nations except Turkey".⁶¹

The author of the *Letters*, Marana, was observing both the West and the East; the Turks, Arabs and the Europeans. He had something to say about all these nations. The information he gives about the European nations are, as seen above, about their character traits whereas, the negative connotations he uses about the Turks do not reflect Turkish characteristics, rather, they could be considered as the result of the universal tendency of representing one's enemy.

Conclusion

During the 17th century, the Western reading public believed the Turks to be one of the nations of the Muslim East. The idea was sound, though not always formulated with precision; The Turks were closely associated with the Muslim community of the East, particularly with the Arabs who were the major member of this community. This association, mainly, arises from the fact that Marana consider religious criterion indispensable for determining Turkish identity. The terms and the concepts that he uses to describe Muslims do not necessarily contrast with those of the Turks. Rather, they often used in what might be said to be their old connotations; that is, to designate the stereotypes among the Muslims of the East. Thus, the image of Turks closely associated with the clearly defined notions of Islam not only reflects the Western views of the Turks but also helps to perpetuate such notions about the Turks throughout the history of Europe.

⁵⁷ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 133.

⁵⁸ For the full story, see Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 144-146. This story is very similar to that of told about Mehmed II. See the footnote 15 above.

⁵⁹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 190-191.

⁶⁰ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 27.

⁶¹ Marana, *Turkish Spy*, p. 25.

Another conclusion drawn from the above study is the difficulty of determining a distinct range of images totally peculiar to the 17th century, divorced from the earlier periods and from surrounding environment i.e. the Middle East. In other words, it is almost impossible to discuss the prevalent images completely dissociated from the early historical and religious stereotypes of Turks which can be traced back to the Crusaders. However, this should not imply a range of fossilised, or better, frozen images of Turks persisting through centuries. Of course, 17th century religious liberalism and the spirit of Enlightenment have made the educated Europeans more critical about the older views and stereotypes. As we have already seen above, the number of negative connotations used for Turks is quite low and not all of them were used in the text.

In tune with the general atmosphere of literary and scientific world of the 17th century Europe, the author adopts a comparative and critical view of both the European and the Turkish-Muslim nations, philosophy, culture and way of thinking. For example, he describes the Italians as "cruel" and "inhuman", the French as "ridiculous", Germans as "rude, unpolished and most excessive drunkards in the world, and the Spanish, the Dutchman and the Jews as the "scandals of the human race".

In conclusion, to characterize the understanding of Western writers and their portrayal of the Turks as totally uninformed and fictional would be unfair. The image of Turks portrayed in these works could sometimes be hardly recognisable. However, a fundamental knowledge of and familiarity with Turkish and Islamic way of life and values were displayed in these works. This knowledge, though not consistently positive, nor even totally accurate, contribute to mutual understanding and awareness of the Western and Eastern cultures.