Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey

Elmas Şahin
University of Çağ

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb

Part of the Cultural History Commons, Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons

Dedicated to the dissemination of scholarly and professional information, Purdue University Press selects, develops, and distributes quality resources in several key subject areas for which its parent university is famous, including business, technology, health, veterinary medicine, and other selected disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as “comparative cultural studies.” Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <clcweb@purdue.edu>

Recommended Citation
Şahin, Elmas. "Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey.”
CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 15.1 (2013): <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2130>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.
The above text, published by Purdue University Press ©Purdue University, has been downloaded 1067 times as of 11/07/19.

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the CC BY-NC-ND license.
Abstract: In her article "Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey" Elmas Şahin presents a selected bibliography of work by Western travelers, writers, scholars, and journalists. Fictional works — owing to the large corpus of such texts — are excluded. Focus of the Bibliography is on texts published from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century although seminal works published later also included. From earliest times Western writers, travelers, and scholars were interested in the East and their "gaze" resulted in writing about it as exotic and mysterious and often negative in the context of Edward W. Said's concept of Orientalism. In particular, perceptions about Turkish history, culture, customs, and traditions are reflected in negative images in the works of most English-language authors.
Elmas Şahín

Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey

In the following I present a selected bibliography of books in English about Turks and Turkey by Western travelers, writers, scholars, and journalists. In my selection I focus on texts published from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century, although seminal works published later are also included. Not included in the Bibliography, but of note is that there is a significant corpus of scholarship about Turkish foreign workers in Germany — including English-language publications — and the construction of their image in literature and in culture in general (see, e.g., Rankin <http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1318>) and about the similar situation in US-American culture (see, e.g., McCarthy) or in Western culture in general (see, e.g., Aydin) and there has been written much on the image of the Turk in Shakespeare's plays (see, e.g., Bevington; Vitkus). I exclude fictional works owing to the large corpus of such texts. From earliest times Western writers, travelers, and scholars were interested in the East and their "gaze" resulted in writing about it as exotic and mysterious and often negative in the context of Edward W. Said's concept of Orientalism. In particular Turkish history and culture, customs, and traditions are reflected in negative imagery in the works of most English-language authors (on imagology and travel, see, e.g., Andras). Thus, the image of the Turk and Turkey appeared and often appears as a negative Other. One matter of exoticism, the harem, was of particular interest to Westerners in the nineteenth to the twentieth century, for example James E.P. Boulden's 1855 *An American among the Orientals: Including an Audience with the Sultan, and a Visit to the Interior of a Turkish Harem*, Gordon O.L. Treney's 1855 *The City of the Crescent, with Pictures of Harem Life; or, the Turks in 1854*, Caroline Paine's 1859 *Tent and Harem: Notes of an Oriental Trip*, Cristina Belgioioso's 1862 *Oriental Harems and Scenery*, Andree Harvey Hope's and Annie Jane Tennant Harvey's 1871 *Turkish Harems & Circassian Homes*, Demetra Vaka's 1909 *Haremlik: Some Pages from the Life of Turkish Women*, Anne Van Sommer's Samuel M. Zwemer's 1911 *Daylight in the Harem: A New Era for Moslem Women*, Vahan Cardashian's 1914 *Actual Life in the Turkish Harem* are texts in which the harem and Turkish women are narrated in imaginary ways and as late as in Philip Glazebrook's 1984 *Journey to Kars*, we read about the harem as a place of exoticism.

Often, Turkish women are considered to have a lack of "philosophic minds," to have no notion of even the simplest items of knowledge. For example, in Hester Donaldson Jenkins's 1911 *Behind Turkish Lattices* we read that "a Turkish lady's conversation is largely made up of exclamations such as 'Vai, vai, vail' or 'Allah, Allah!' which she will mutter perhaps twenty times in lieu of reasonable discourse" (21). Jenkins also writes that no education was considered necessary for woman and that her greatest work in life was to be a housewife or, if some work, than that of a nurse: "women were considered to be much lower than men in everything. They were supposed to stay at home, deprived of every advantage in life, while their fathers, brothers, and husbands enjoyed themselves in every way; they were excused for ignorance when there were no schools to develop their minds" (Jenkins 24). What Jenkins forgets to mention is that in Western culture women have been blamed for Eve's "original sin" for many centuries and that the female gender has been considered secondary to the male one, "a womb, an ovary" (Beauvoir 33). Penzer observes correctly that "most of [Westerns] still imagine that the Sultan is — or, rather, was — a vicious old reprobate, spending all his time in the harem surrounded by hundreds of semi-naked women, in an atmosphere of heavy perfume, cool fountains, soft music, and over-indulgence in every conceivable kind of vice that the united brains of jealous, sex starved women could invent for the pleasure of their lord" (13).

In particular in the eighteenth century the Turk is imagined as negative. For example, in Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's, Honoré Maria Lauthier's, and John Senex's *A Voyage into the Levant* about their travels to Istanbul, the Aegean islands, the Black Sea, Armenia, Georgia, Anatolia, and Persia the Ottoman life style, customs and manners, traditions, social, political, and religious life are distorted and/or exaggerated: "the Turks hate Dogs, and never fusser them in their Houses; and in a time of Pestilence they kill as many as they find, thinking these unclean Creatures infest the Air" (62). In the nineteenth century we find similar negative imagery. For example, the above referred to Boulden...
describes in 1855 Turkish women as "ghosts": "The ferigee and yashmak impart a very singular and sepulchral appearance to the Turkish women, making them look as though they had just arisen from beneath the marble slabs that adorn their own cypress-shaded cemeteries" (56) or for Edward Frederic Benson in *Crescent and Iron Cross* as late as 1918 Turks are a tumor: "we can make a far truer phrase than Lord Aberdeen's. For Turkey is not a sick man: Turkey is a sickness. He is not sick, nor ever has been, for he is the cancer itself, the devouring tumour that for centuries has fed on having tissue, absorbing it and killing it" (3).

Although in the eighteenth century Mary Wortley Montagu described Turkish culture contemptuously, she also interprets women's position in Ottoman Turkey in some ways "envious" at least implicitly: "this perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery. The most usual method of intrigue is to send an appointment to the lover to meet the lady ... the great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are and it is so difficult to find it out that they can very seldom guess her name they have corresponded with above half a year together. You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lover's indiscretion" (116). Two books of note which do not have a necessarily negative view of women and the harem are Norman Mosley Penzer's 1902 *The Harēm: An Account of the Institution as It Existed in the Palace of the Turkish Sultans, with a History of the Grand Seraglio from Its Foundation to the Present Time* and Alev Lytle Croutier's 1989 *Harem: The World behind the Veil*, the latter a woman author which may explain her less "othering" views.

For a bibliography on Turks and Turkey in English, see Berna Moran, *A Bibliography of English Publications about the Turks from the 15th Century to the 18th Century* (Istanbul: Istanbul UP, 1964) and for a bibliography of works about travel in general, see Carlo Salzani and Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Bibliography for Work in Travel Studies." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture (Library)* (2010): [http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/travelstudiesbibliography](http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/travelstudiesbibliography).

**Works Cited**


Boulden, James E.P. *An American among the Orientals: Including an Audience with the Sultan, and a Visit to the Interior of a Turkish Harem*. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1855.


Trenery, Gordon O.L. *The City of the Crescent, With Pictures of Harem Life; or, the Turks in 1854*. London: Charles J. Skeet, 1855.

Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey


Adams, William T. *Cross and Crescent; or, Young America in Turkey and Greece. A Story of Travel and Adventure*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875.


Alexander, James Edward. *Travels from India to England; Comprehending a Visit to the Burman Empire, and a Journey through Persia, Asia Minor, European Turkey, etc., In the Years 1825-26*. London: Parbury, Allen and Co., 1827.


Baltimore, Frederick Calvert. *A Tour to the East in the years 1763 and 1764 with Remarks on the City of Constantinople and the Turks; Also Select Pieces of Oriental Wit, Poetry and Wisdom*. London: W. Richardson & S. Clark, 1767.


Bennett, Ernest N. *With the Turks in Tripoli Being Some Experiences in the Turco-Italian War of 1911*. London: Methuen, 1902.


Boulton, James E.P. *An American among the Orientals: Including an Audience with the Sultan and a Visit to the Interior of a Turkish Harem*. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1855.


Cameron, Verney Lovett. *Among the Turks*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1890.


Cox, Samuel S. *Diversions of a Diplomat in Turkey*. New York: Charles L. Webster, 1887.


Davidson, John H. *A Visit to a Turkish Lunatic Asylum*. Lewes: Geo. P. Bacon, 1875.

Davis, Clara Bidle, and Seymour Davis. *A Winter Journey to the Western Islands, Madeira, Gibraltar, Italy, Egypt, the Holy Land, Turkey, and Greece*. Philadelphia: Wagstaff, 1909.


Dodd, Andrew Bowman. *In the Palaces of the Sultan*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1903.


Ellis, Grace. *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1856.


Finlay, George. *The History of Greece from its Conquest by the Crusaders to Its Conquest by the Turks and of the Empire of Trebizond 1204-1461*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1851.


Great Britain Foreign Office. Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Turkey. London: Harrison and Sons, 1878.


Hahn-Hahn, Ida. Letters of a German Countess: Written during Her Travels in Turkey, Egypt, the Holy Land, Syria, Nubia... in 1843-44. London: Henry Colburn, 1845.


Hamilin, Cyril. Among the Turks. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1877.

Hammond, R.A. The History of Turkey and the War in Egypt. Toronto: A.H. Hovey, 1883.

Hammond, R.A. A History of the Empire and People of Turkey and the War in the East. Toronto: A.H. Hovey, 1878.


Harrison, John. The Tragic Life and Death of Muley Abdela Melek the Late King of Barbary with a Proposition or Petition to All Christian Princes. London: Delph, 1633.

Hawley, Walter A. Asia Minor. London: John Lane, 1918.


Hornby, Mrs. Edmund. In and around Stamboul. Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, Lindsay & Blakiston, 1858.


John, Bayle St. Turks in Europe: A Sketch of Manners and Politics in the Ottoman Empire. London: Chapman and Hall, 1853.

Kesnin Bey. The Evil of the East; or, Truths about Turkey. London: Vizetelly, 1888.


Knight, William. Oriental Outlines, or, a Rambler's Recollections of a Tour in Turkey, Greece, & Tuscany in 1838. London: Sampson Low, 1839.


Levis, Georgina King. Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Turkey. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905.


Lithgow, William. Total Discourse Rare Adventures & Painful Peregrinations and Painfull Peregrinations of Long nineteenth Years Travayles from Scotland to the Most kingdoms in Europe, Asia and Affrica. London, 1818.


Macgill, Thomas. Travels In Turkey, Italy and Russia, London: John Murray, 1808.


Neale, Adam. *Travels through some Parts of Germany, Poland, Moldavia and Turkey*. By M.D. late Physician to the British Embassy at Constantinople. Physician to the Forces and Member of the Royal College of Physicians of London. Edinburgh: n.p., 1810.


Quin, Michael J. *A Steam Voyage down the Danube with Sketches of Hungary, Wallachia, Servia, and Turkey etc.*, London: Richard Bentley, 1835.


Ramsay, W.M. *Impressions of Turkey during Twelve Years' Wanderings*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897.


Slade, Adolphus. Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. and of a Cruise in the Black Sea, with the Capitan Pasha in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831. London: Saunders and Otley, 1833.


Smyth, Warington Wilkinson. A Year with the Turks; or, Sketches of Travel in the European and Asiatic Dominions of the Sultan. London: J.W. Parker and Son, 1854.

Sonini, Charles Sigisbert. Travels in Greece and Turkey; Undertaken by Order of Louis XVI. And With the Authority of the Ottoman Court by C.S. Sonini. London: T.N. Longman & O. Rees, 1801.


Spencer, Edmund. Turkey, Russia, the Black Sea and Circassia. London: Routledge, 1855.

Stephen, John Lloyd. Incidents of Travel in Greece, Turkey, Russia, and Poland. London: Wiley & Putnam, 1838.

Sterrett, J.R. Sitlington. Leaflets from the Notebook or an Archeological Traveler in Asia Minor. Austin: U of Texas, 1889.


Thompson, Charles. Travels through Turkey in Asia, the Holy Land, Arabia, Egypt, and Other Parts of the World. London: J. Newberry, 1767.


Tully, Miss. Letters Written During a Ten Years' Residence at the Court of Tripoli; an Account of the Domestic Manners of the Moors, Arabs, and Turks. London: H. Colburn, 1819.


Von Soden, Joachim-Francois-Johann von Soden, and John Adams. Travels through Egypt and Syria, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785: Containing the Present Natural and Political State of Those Countries; Their Productions, Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; With Observations on the Manners, Customs, and Government of the Turks and Arabs. London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1798.


Walker, Alice M. Through Turkey Pass to Amherst and Beyond. Amherst: Tercentenary Committee, 1903.

Wallace, Susan E. Along the Bosphorus and Other Sketches. Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1898.


Author’s profile: Elmas Şahîn teaches Turkish literature at the University of Çağ. Her interests in research include comparative literature, aesthetics, women’s literature, literary criticism, and the image of Turks in Western literature. Şahîn’s recent publications include the single-authored books *20. Yüzyıl Amerikan Romancıları* (2005) (Twentieth-century US-American Novels) and *Küresel Köyde Hayat* (2009) (Life in the Global Village) and her recent articles include "English Ballads and Turkish Turks: Comparative Study," *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* (2012), "Leyla Erbil’de Feminist İzlemler" ("Feminist Approaches in Leyla Erbil"), *Istanbul-Women, Women-Istanbul: Project Book* (2012), and "Ahmet Nedim Servet Tör: Türk’ün Destani" ("Ahmet Nedim Servet Tör: The Epic of the Turks"), *International Journal of Turkish Literature* (2013). E-mail: <elmassahin@cag.edu.tr>