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

Elmas Şahîn
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

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

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 ŞAHİN

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 Harums and Scenery, Andrée Harvey Hope's and Annie Jane Tennant Harvey's 1871 Turkish Harums & 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 ferige 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 "enviable" 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>.

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.
Hope, Andrée Harvey, and Annie Jane Tennant. Turkish Harems & Circassian Homes. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1871.
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 P, 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.


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.


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


Elmas Şahin, "Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey", page 5 of 9

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 15.1 (2013): <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss1/8>

Cochran, William. Pen and Pencil in Asia Minor or Notes from the Levant. London: Sampson Law, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1887.


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: Waggstaff, 1909.


De Bunsen, Victoria Alexandrina. Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Holy Land, Turkey and Greece. London: John Murray, 1892.


Elliott, Charles B. Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey. London: Richard Bentley, 1838. 2 Vols.


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.


Fowler, George. Turkey or a History of the Ottoman Empire. London: Thomas H. Rees, 1854.


Fysh, Frederich. The Time of the End, or the Sultan of Turkey the Wilful King, and Mehemet Ali, the King of the South Pushing at Him. Bath: Binns and Goodwin, 1839.


Galt, John. Voyages and Travels in the Years, 1809, 1810, and 1811, containing Commercial and Miscellaneous Observations on Gibraltar, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, Sirigo and Turkey. London: Cadell and Davies, 1812.


Elmas Şahin, "Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey" page 6 of 9

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 15.1 (2013): <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss1/8>


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


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.


Harriss, John. *The Tragic Life and Death of Muley Abdella Melek the Late King of Barbare with a Proposition or Petition to All Christian Princes*. London: Delph, 1633.


Hobhouse, John C. *A Journey through Albania and other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople during the Years 1809 & 1810*. Philadelphia: M. Carby and Son, 1817.


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


Elmas Şahin, “Introduction to and Selected Bibliography of English-language Books about Turks and Turkey” page 7 of 9
CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 15.1 (2013): <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss1/8-9>

Mackenzie, Georgina Mary Muir, and Paulina Adeline Irby. The Turks, the Greeks, & the Slavons: Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe. London: Bell and Dalby, 1867.
Montagu, Mary Wortley. Letters of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu on the Manners, Customs, and Religion of the Turks. London: Edward Moxon, 1867.
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.
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.

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


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

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

Sterrett, J.R. Sittlington. 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 Scholten, Johannes. 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 R. 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.


