

# The image of Europe and Europeans in Ottoman-Turkish travel writing

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Travelogues unfold from humankind's urge to know new places and people, and to learn and pass on different cultures and ways of life. A traveller will surely give his utmost attention to the ever-changing environment; he will turn his gaze upon never before seen buildings, forests, roads, vehicles and people. The voyages discussed here are long journeys to the vast centres, where great civilizations dwell. From this perspective, Marco Polo, Ibn Fadlan, Evliya Çelebi and others were great travellers in every sense of the word. In their works we can find detailed descriptions of every aspect of the places they claim to have seen.

Travel was also a significant means by which Turks learned about Europe. To the Ottoman Empire, Europe was a Mediterranean Europe, the Europe discovered in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, since the first direct contact between the Ottomans and the countries of Europe was established with the city-states on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, which today are cities in Italy such as Naples, Florence and Venice.<sup>1</sup> It would be a mistake to assume that these relations have remained only within the frames of trade and war.<sup>2</sup>

The major rapprochement was of course the fall of Constantinople (1453); since this important historical event, relations between the Turks and Europe have expanded and continue to this day. The Turks, who had already established ties with the Italian city-states on the Mediterranean shores in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, soon came into close contact with Spain and Portugal. The majority of these contacts came about either through naval battles or, in a more peaceful manner, through trade relations. The cultural influence remained limited in this century.

With this introduction to Europe, the Turks envisaged veering towards the Austro-Hungarian territory and, eventually, deep into Europe. Over time, direct diplomatic relations were established with powerful European states such as Brit-

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<sup>1</sup> Mentioning these relations Ülken states: "The West that we [the Turks] came into contact with was the Byzantine Empire and the mercantile cities of the Mediterranean (Venice, Genoa, Ragusa [Dubrovnik])" (Ülken 2005: 24). [All footnotes translated from Turkish by Burcu Yoleri.]

<sup>2</sup> I would like to draw attention to Turhan's thoughts on this matter: "In fact, if the beginning of the westernization movement is accepted as the transfer of singular elements of culture, especially the transfer of technical resources, it is possible to trace its history to the 15<sup>th</sup> century according to the available documents (for example the importation of the printing press to our country by the Jews)" (Turhan 1987: 135).

ain, France, Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, parallel to which cultural interactions became increasingly manifest. The cultural developments, especially during the period between 1718 and 1730, also known as the Tulip Era (*Lâle Devri*), and the periods of reformation that followed, are remarkable: The first printing press was established in 1728 in Istanbul by İbrahim Müteferrika and Sait Efendi, and the first paper factory that resembled its European counterparts was opened in 1744 in Yalova to meet the demands of the press. During the same years new libraries were established, especially in Istanbul, the translation of several Occidental works into Ottoman Turkish began, and Occidental influence on architecture and painting likewise became apparent. During the reign of Selim III (1789–1807), permanent embassies were established in the most important European capitals to more closely monitor developments in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Reciprocally, the interest of European thinkers in Ottoman culture had grown throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Literary figures such as Alphonse de Lamartine and Edmondo De Amicis described their journeys to Istanbul in travelogues, and painters who came to Istanbul, such as Jean-Baptiste van Mour, Heinrich Schlesinger, Ivan Aivazovsky, Fausto Zonaro, Amedeo Preziosi, Leonardo de Mango, Salvatore Valeri, Warnia Zarzecki and many more, contributed to the acknowledgement of modern painting in the Ottoman Empire (cf. Tansuğ 1999, Renda 1977, Renda – Erol 1980, and Turani – Berk 1981).

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Ottoman Empire began to lose its pre-eminence in Europe, an idea to Europeanize especially the army, the educational system, and state institutions gained prominence, and reform efforts became widespread around the end of the century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Parallel to this, the travels of the Ottoman statesmen, ambassadors and travellers began to pick up steam in the 1700s and reached a peak in the 1800s.

### *Travel accounts on Europe*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans' perception of Europe was primarily centred on France, followed by Britain. Even though political relations with Britain were quite important, the Ottomans' opinion regarding Europe in cultural and social terms was centred mainly on France, most likely due to the considerable importance of France in European politics before and especially after the 1789 Revolution. The fact that Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet was sent to France in 1720/21 as part of the first extensive diplomatic mission is very telling in this regard. Additionally, that the majority of Ottoman travel writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was on France conveys the extent of this political and cultural orientation. Shortly be-

<sup>3</sup> On this subject, see: Ülken (2005: 28–31), Mardin (1991: 12–16), Turhan (1987: 135), and Ortaylı (1995: 165–168).

fore and after the Tanzimat, alongside the reports of the official diplomatic delegations (*sefaretnames*), travelogues played an active role in representing Europe directly through first-hand accounts. Memoirs, travel writings and the correspondence of statesmen, as well as of individuals outside the court regarding Europe, allowed European countries such as France, Britain, Austria and Italy to become known in the Ottoman territory.

The interest and orientation towards Europe mostly followed a precise and determined course, whether it ended with triumph or defeat, in war or in diplomacy. Even the journeys that Ottoman officers and intellectuals took for reasons other than war or diplomacy should be taken into account within this perspective. The trips undertaken to European countries for diverse reasons between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are an important source that nurtured the image of Europe and Europeans in the Ottoman imagination. The accounts of these journeys can be interpreted as complementary aspects of a greater resource; a bigger picture is revealed when information from various travels is brought together.

### *Official travel: the sefaretnames*

*Sefaretnames* (diplomatic travel accounts)<sup>4</sup> on Europe emerged in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and became widespread in the 18<sup>th</sup>. They were written by Ottoman ambassadors to European countries such as France, Prussia (later the German Empire), Austria, Italy and Spain, and contained information usually collected from an official but occasionally also from an unofficial perspective. In reports such as the *sefaretnames* of İbrahim Paşa on Vienna, dated 1719, of Hattî Mustafa Efendi on Austria (1748), of Ahmet Resmî Efendi on Vienna (1758) and on Prussia (1764), of Vasîf Efendi on Spain (1787–88) and of Ebubekir Ratib Efendi on Austria (1791–92), the information presented about the respective countries is of a more official nature. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, in line with the political relations between the two states, the Ottoman ambassadors to France produced a continuous stream of *sefaretnames*. These works, composed by Moralı Seyyid Ali Efendi (1797), Amedî Mehmed Said Galib Efendi (1802), Seyyid Abdürrahim Muhib Efendi (1806–11), and Seyyid Mehmed Emin Vahid Efendi (1806) present the France of that period from different perspectives, but mostly within the frame of political liaisons.

### *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's Fransa Sefaretnamesi*

Considering its impact, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's trip to Paris in 1720/21, deemed the first great official expedition in Ottoman history, played a

<sup>4</sup> For a definition of the term *sefaretname*, see Unat (1992: 43–46).

major role in quickening the relations between the Ottomans and Europe. Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi (d. 1732) went on an extensive, colourful, and important 11-month journey as ambassador to Paris and published the outcomes of his trip in his *Fransa Sefaretnamesi* (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi 1288/1872). Even though, as shown above, many other *sefaretnames* were written afterwards, none were as influential as this one. Like all *sefaretnames*, this work was produced in the style of a report on the impressions of an official visit. Nonetheless, this *sefaretname* was more than just an official report: It is inscribed with Mehmet Efendi's curious gaze on almost every page, and is one of the cornerstones in the history of Europeanization of the Ottomans. Referring to the work, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar accentuates its importance by asserting that “no other book holds a more important place in our history of occidentalization than this little *sefaretname*. (...) In truth, a whole program is hidden inside this *sefaretname*” (Tanpınar 1985: 44). What Tanpınar means by “program” is Mehmet Efendi's suggestions regarding the path the Ottoman Empire must follow on its march to westernization. The information presented in *Fransa Sefaretnamesi* is of a striking depth, combining both the information expected in an official *sefaretname* and impressions of his travel. The advice proposed to the palace throughout the work, sometimes in detail and sometimes implicitly, was effective in opening the doors to Ottoman modernization.

Considering Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet's evaluations regarding France in general, the ambassador's feelings of “admiration” for France appear frequently. Especially when describing the artwork in Paris, this admiration is clear in his frequent repetition of expressions such as “innumerable”, “indescribable”, “sight unseen”, “impossible to describe without seeing it”, “inexplicable”, “impossible to put into writing”.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless it would not be realistic to expect different wording from an ambassador who is introducing a new and advanced civilization to a society in which few are closely acquainted with Europe. Furthermore, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's *Fransa Sefaretnamesi* is not only important for proposing a modernization program to the Ottoman Empire, but also because it paved the way for further official and personal trips to France.

Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi, who was sent to France as an ambassador in 1720 by Sultan Ahmet III, relayed a vast amount of information in his *sefaretname* about how the French lived in the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He recounted anything that he could catch sight of in cities including Marseille, Paris, Toulon and Toulouse, from castles to roads and palaces, from streets to opera houses and theatres, from officials in the courts to people on the streets. The information that he provided was received with excitement in the Ottoman palace, and his travel report was read closely as innovations were made.

<sup>5</sup> “kabil-i ta'dâd değildir, tabir olunmaz, ta'dâdı mümkün değildir, naziri görülmemiştir, görülmedikçe tabir ve tavsif ile beyan olunmak muhaldir, vasfı mümkün değildir, kabil-i tahrir değildir, ifade ve beyan mümkün değildir...”

The independence and status of women in France is one of the important matters that grab Mehmet Efendi's attention: "In France women are held in a higher esteem than men. Therefore they do whatever they wish and go wherever they want. They are respected and courted even by the elite and their opinions are valuable".<sup>6</sup> Noting that the streets are always crowded, the ambassador marks this as a consequence of women's presence within everyday life and their comfort walking the streets. According to his description Parisian women never stay in their houses; they are always on the streets, going from house to house, shopping. Since the spheres of men and women are not separated, the streets are constantly crowded. The storekeepers are also generally women. Since they have "never seen a Muslim in their lives" and find Ottoman attire intriguing, Parisians, especially women, observe the ambassador and his company with great interest (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi 1288/1872: 17).

One of the most interesting parts in Mehmet Efendi's *sefaretnâme* is his description of the Opera in Paris, a description that many researchers concentrate on to this day. This should not come as a surprise, for Mehmet Efendi describes with admiration an entertainment and art form that is foreign to Ottomans: the modern opera theatre. He describes going to the opera to watch a play: As every night, the theatre is full of women and men. More than a hundred instruments are ready, several hundred "beeswax" candles are lit, and the hall is entirely illuminated. Mehmet Efendi finds this lighting "indescribable" (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi 1288/1872: 25).

Mehmet Efendi did not forget to emphasize the characteristics of Paris's city structure and to include his observations of its inhabitants. He states that Paris is not as big as Istanbul. However, the fact that the buildings are constructed three, four, or even seven storeys high bears testimony to the city's greatness, even though it does not add to its territorial expansion. Since many of the buildings are made out of stone, they are not only beautiful but also strong. He describes the layout of the city, noting that the Seine, as it passes through the middle of Paris, seems to have cut the city into three islands. Crossing is only possible by bridges. Since they are built within short distances of each other, one can stumble on one of them in every corner of the city. Mehmet Efendi makes a little comparison and appraises Paris as "a city without equal, apart from Istanbul".<sup>7</sup>

According to the *sefaretnâme*, which proposes France as the embodiment of Europe in the Ottoman public opinion and which mostly speaks about "Frânçe" in particular and sometimes generally about "Evropa", free social life, science, and work are at the roots of European civilization. Mehmet Efendi continually

<sup>6</sup> "Frânçe memalîkinde zenânın itibarı, ricâline galib olmağla istediklerini işlerler ve murad ettikleri yerlere giderler. En âlâ beyzade en ednâsına hadden ziyade riayet ve hürmet ederler. Ol vilâyetlerde hükümleri cârîdir" (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi 1288/1872: 9).

<sup>7</sup> "İstanbul'dan kat'ı nazar bi-nazîr bir şehir" (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi 1288/1872: 38).

draws attention to the coexistence of women and men in social life, to the order in working life, and to the innovation and progress in science and technology. As Unat points out, the work provided inspiration to a range of new measures taken by Grand Vizier Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa that were important in shaping the intellectual life of the country, from the introduction of the first official printing press to urban architecture in Istanbul. On the other hand, the success of Mehmet Efendi's mission served to further relations with France, abolishing existing prejudices about Turks and creating sympathy towards the Ottoman Empire (Unat 1992: 56).

"For Yirmisekiz Çelebi was civil, smart and a freethinker in all his actions and dealings. He would frequent workshops of painters to commission portraits, not showing the slightest bit of the fanaticism attributed to Turks" (ibid.).

*From sefaretnames to personal travels: Mustafa Sami Efendi and Sadık Rifat Paşa*

Personal travelogues recounting individual, non-official impressions of travels to Europe started to be published around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, presenting perspectives different from those of the official reports. Two *risales* (treatises, pamphlets) published in the mid-1800s are especially interesting because they include semi-official impressions about France and Europe. These two works, Mustafa Sami Efendi's *Avrupa Risalesi* ('Treatise on Europe') and Sadık Rifat Paşa's *Avrupa ahvâline dair risale* ('Treatise on the state of affairs in Europe'),<sup>8</sup> are the products of their writers' long years of diplomatic duty and experiences in Europe. They can neither be considered as purely official reports nor as purely civil travelogues and thus are representative of a shift from official to personal travel writing, or from *sefaretnames* to *seyahatnames*. The two *risales*, which contain comparisons with Europe from various angles, show the influence of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's *sefaretname*, but they were also themselves taken as examples for subsequent travelogues. Mustafa Sami Efendi and Sadık Rifat Paşa's ideas on matters such as education, economy, social welfare, justice, industrialization, urbanization, and ecology had an impact on subsequent travel writers such as Ahmet Midhat, Ahmet İhsan, Hüseyin Hulki, Halit Ziya, Cenap Şahabettin, Asmai, Fağfurizade Hüseyin Nesimi, Selim Sırrı, and Mehmet Celal. In the *risales* of Mustafa Sami Efendi and Sadık Rifat Paşa there is extensive information regarding France as well as Europe, with the latter being introduced through the former.

After holding various offices related to the palace, Mustafa Sami Efendi (d. 1855) was appointed first secretary of the Ottoman embassy in Paris in 1838, *chargé*

<sup>8</sup> See Mustafa Sami Efendi (1256/1840) and Sadık Rifat Paşa (1290/1874). The latter was written around 1838.

*d'affaires* in Vienna in 1846, and ambassador to Berlin directly thereafter.<sup>9</sup> As for Sadık Rifat Paşa (1807–57), he was a statesman with ample experience in Europe, having served two terms as Ottoman ambassador in Vienna and several terms as minister of foreign affairs. Apart from his *risale*, Sadık Rifat Paşa also wrote a travel account about Italy (*İtalya Seyahatnamesi*, 1838), which he visited on official mission during his time as ambassador in Vienna.

Through their usage of certain wording in the *risales*, it becomes clear that these two statesmen were aware of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's embassy report, and it would not be incorrect to say that they shared certain opinions with him. Considering the three works together, one notices similarities in the way the writers convey their impressions and choose the topics for their considerations on Europe. The clearest examples for these parallels are the descriptions of women's contributions to social life and the reflections on science, art, and educational activities. Mustafa Sami Efendi also directly refers to his predecessor when he remarks on the importance of reading Mehmet Efendi's *sefaretnamesi* for those who wish to truly know Paris (Mustafa Sami Efendi 1256/1840: 23f.).

Mehmet Efendi, Sadık Rifat and Mustafa Sami were certainly conscious of what they were doing as they showcased their firsthand knowledge of European civilization in a period during which the Ottomans were intent on reform, and especially while insistently emphasizing the liberties in Europe, respectively France, in everyday life, the status of women, the progress in science and art, people's willingness to both work and create, the order and discipline in working life, and the importance given to the education of children and adolescents. Holding importance also in terms of being among the last of the *sefaretnamesi* to showcase Europe, *Avrupa Risalesi* and *Avrupa avdâline dair risale* do not differ greatly from Mehmet Efendi's report in terms of the main concerns treated. With this in mind, it seems that the three Ottoman intellectuals' reports complete and support each other, and have contributed more to the Turkish history of reform than is assumed. The two later authors' insistence on the project of Europeanization even increases the significance of their texts as two of the last embassy reports.

### *Non-official travel accounts: the seyahatnames*

#### *Looking at Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century: United Kingdom and France*

In the beginning of the reform movement, the Ottoman travellers' gaze towards Europe primarily focused on France; later travel works, however, tried to present Europe as a whole, a sphere of the new civilization at which the Ottoman Empire was aiming. This does not mean, of course, that the travellers in their de-

<sup>9</sup> For further information on Mustafa Sami Efendi and his *risale*, see Andı (2002) and Erçilasun (1983).



scriptions of the various European countries and societies only concentrated on the similarities; they also felt it necessary to point out the differences. This new outlook and the widening of travel destinations by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century from France to Northern Europe, Great Britain and Germany, testify to the Ottomans' perceived need to learn about Europe's different regions. It was the *seyahatnames* that introduced wider knowledge about the United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Scandinavia and the Mediterranean countries to the Ottoman-Turkish public during the modernization period: Not only did their authors provide in-depth geographical accounts, but they also provided information about the things that could not be seen in their own country. The writers' points of view vary in relation to the lands they visited and to their previous experiences. Some of them admire almost anything they lay their eyes on, while others are more careful with their judgements.

It was particularly the literary figures of the reform period known as the Tanzimat who, for various reasons, regularly went to Europe. The journalist İbrahim Şinasi (1826–71), although sent to Paris for an education in finance in 1849, worked on literature and language instead, and laid the first stone for the westernization of Turkish literature. In his newspaper articles, as well as in the travel notes *Paris'ten Londra'ya ve Hotel Metropole* ('From Paris to London and the Hotel Metropole', published in 1897) by Ebüzziya Tevfik (1849–1913), an acclaimed editor and publisher of the Tanzimat period, there are first hand impressions of Europe. The prominent writer, journalist and government official Namık Kemal (1840–88), who fled to Europe in order to engage in the activities of the oppositional Young Ottomans in 1867 after getting into conflict with the government because of his liberal views, never published a straightforward *seyahatname* but put down some solid observations on European civilization in his articles *Terakki* and *Londra*<sup>10</sup> dated 1872, as well as in some of his letters written while he was in Europe. His article *Terakki* is especially important as it showcases the level that the British and the European civilizations had reached, according to him, in terms of science and technology.

Another writer and poet of the same period is Abdülhak Hâmit (1852–1937), who spent a large part of his life in Europe due to various posts he held in the foreign office. He went to Paris in 1876 as the second secretary to the embassy, to London in 1886, to The Hague in 1895, and once more to London in 1897, where he stayed for several years, before moving to Brussels in 1906. He got to know European high society closely, observing from close proximity the quotidian life of the Europeans, their traditions and customs, and he gave a vivid account of his observations in his letters and memoirs. His impressions were not limited to the everyday life of Europeans and the foreign office entourage; he also elaborated especially on the nightlife of Paris and London. The experiences

<sup>10</sup> 'Progress' and 'London', respectively (Namık Kemal 1872a and 1872b).



he and other writers and poets made in Europe are reflected again and again in their literary works as well as in the political milieu of their homeland. However, for some reason, these literary figures contented themselves with touching shortly upon the time they spent in European countries in memoir passages, letters and various other writings, which is why I will not examine them further here and instead focus on travel writing proper.

The traveller Mehmet Rauf, about whom there is unfortunately not much biographic information, and who is sometimes mistaken for another Mehmet Rauf, the author of the novel *Eylül*, wrote an account of his trip to Europe in 1851. *Seyahatname-i Avrupa* ('Travel account of Europe') is one of the important works that reflect the gaze of an Ottoman towards Europe in the very middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; it is also through this book that the United Kingdom appears at great length for the first time in a travelogue.

The author, who embarked on a ship that brought Ottoman goods to the world's fair opening in London in that year, not only described the exposition but also carefully observed and expressed his opinion regarding the social life of the locals. One important aspect of the work is that it also delivers extensive information about the countries visited along the way, such as Malta, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (the author left the ship halfway and continued his journey by train). London, the centre of the Industrial Era, had a deep impact on this young Ottoman traveller. He writes at length of the city's overcast weather, its orderly streets, numerous and spacious parks, museums, palaces, trade and industrial activities, the harbour as the main artery of commerce. One might postulate that Mehmet Rauf's attention was directed towards the social life and economy because of his desire to glean the secrets of material life in Europe.

During the winter, he writes, the majority of people retreated to the countryside since they could not stand the polluted air of London; thus, balls and soirées were organized during the summer as opposed to other major European cities, which held them in the winter. For entertainment and diversion, people went for a stroll "within the city gardens, called 'parks', each a one- or two-hour width, specially designed with large lakes and pleasant trees and adorned with grass."<sup>11</sup> Some of these parks were lit with thousands of oil and gas lamps for night strolls. While touching upon the French nightlife, Mehmet Rauf states that especially in Paris the public squares and arcades such as the Place Vendôme and the Place de la Concorde, and avenues such as the Champs-Élysées were sites of entertainment in their own right, and the main amusement of the people was to drive or walk around them by day and night. As in London, Paris also had mag-

<sup>11</sup> "şehirin içinde beherinin bir-iki saat vüs'ati olmak üzere *park* tabir ettikleri mahsusen yapılmış pek vâsi' göller ve latif ağaçlar ve çimenler ile müzeyyen [bahçeler]" (Mehmet Rauf 1851: 28).

nificent parks “illuminated in various ways by lighting countless gas lamps”<sup>12</sup> especially for night walks, where those who wished could watch all sorts of dances being performed. There was even a garden roofed with iron and glass for winter entertainment. Mehmet Rauf also writes about the circus near these parks where “there are two extremely large and well-equipped equestrian theatres, where extraordinarily strange spectacles are performed.”<sup>13</sup>

The anonymous *Seyahatname-i Londra* (“Travel account of London”),<sup>14</sup> dated 1852, is interesting in that it almost exclusively deals with the British capital. Its author, another visitor of the 1851 world exposition, describes London both in general and through small details, underscoring the city’s importance for the British Empire by comparing it to the proverbially famous Persian city of Isfahan: “Just as Isfahan is said to be half of the world, we could now coin the proverb ‘London is half of the United Kingdom’ about this city...”<sup>15</sup>

The first thing that draws the traveller’s attention is the abundance of people: Many people from all around the world had come to London for the exhibition, making a large and diverse crowd. Despite the smoggy weather caused by coal burning in the winter, he finds London’s streets, houses, shops and offices perfect and everything in the city neat and orderly. The great docks on the bank of the Thames are described as being among the places that nurture the city economically. Although there were a few wooden buildings in London, he writes, most were made of stone and brick, such that there was little damage during fires. Having visited some of the palaces and churches in the city, he draws attention to the ornamentation in such places. He also found the opportunity to closely observe the everyday life of Britons and recounts in detail how they spent their time in the streets, cafés, pubs and gymnasiums. He hypothesizes that the ever-overcast weather of London caused its citizens to become addicted to entertainment activities.

His observations of the entertainment in music halls (*gazino*), which held an important place in the London nightlife, are quite interesting. The music there, he writes, was of such a high quality that it could make people insane with joy.<sup>16</sup> Since everyone was there for entertainment, the music hall ambiance aroused one’s “passion and desire” (*sevda ve hevesini*, *ibid.*) and washed away all sorrow. The traveller tells how he enjoyed watching the best examples of polka dances and, although he was not familiar with the quadrille, could not resist when he

<sup>12</sup> “türlü resm üzere hesapsız gazlar yakılarak aydınlatılmış” (Mehmet Rauf 1851: 38).

<sup>13</sup> “İki adet gayetle cesim ve muntazam olmak üzere at canbazının tiyatrosu dahi olmağla fevkalade garib oyunlar oynanılır” (*ibid.*).

<sup>14</sup> The name of the author could not be determined.

<sup>15</sup> “Şimdi biz dahi Isfahan nısf-ı cihan denildiği misillü Londra nısf-ı İngiltere meselini şehri mezkûr hakkında îrâd ederken...” (N. N. 1852: 14).

<sup>16</sup> “muzikaların hevâları ve sadâları insanı deli etmek derecesinde neş'e-mend edecek” (N. N. 1852: 28).

was surrounded by several girls and one of them took him by the hand, inviting him to dance.

The author also noticed that contests and sports competitions were a major part of the entertainment life in London, prompting some unique descriptions we don't find in other travelogues, as for example when he relates how everyone, high or low, was enthusiastic about boxing so that a poor man mastering that sport could be supported by noblemen and make a fortune (N. N. 1852: 30). It is interesting how he not only pays attention to the sport and the sportsmen but also to those organizing the boxing games. The most successful boxer, he writes, was like a "national wrestling champion" (*millet baspehlivanı*) and had a special "badge" (*alâmet*). When someone else aspired to win this "badge", the author claims, a bare-knuckled fight "to the death" was held between the two boxers, and the victor then became the possessor of the "badge" (*ibid.*).<sup>17</sup> Apparently the word *alâmet* is used here to refer to what would be called a "championship belt" today.

The author of the *Seyahatname-i Londra* also notes the Britons' strange habits of entertainment and betting practices extending beyond boxing to dog and cock fights, rat coursing with greyhounds, beach entertainments, puppetry, circus, wrestling, horse racing, and soccer. Habits of entertainment and gambling were so common among Britons that even two stampeding cattle on the street were enough for butcher's apprentices to bet on. Since outright gambling was forbidden by law and people could not easily abandon those inclinations, the public satisfied their need with these sorts of races and bets.

The author also mentions the Britons' banquet procedures, remarking that male attendees were obliged to trim their moustaches and wear white neckties, gloves, a vest, black trousers and an open short tailcoat. The seating arrangement in official banquets was planned in advance and everyone sat only in the seat reserved for him or herself. Towards the end of the dinner, he writes, the women left the table all at once, while the men, with additional appetizers brought to the table, continued eating and drinking until they were fairly drunk. According to the traveller's observations, this habit was almost abandoned in London but still prevailed among the nobility in other cities of the United Kingdom. He notes that from high officials to members of the parliament, from factory workers to powerful rich men, everyone organized frequent banquets for those near them and all had a great time. According to him, there were ample private diners for banquets of three to five hundred guests. In these banquets, which at times lasted for hours, topics that had provided occasion for the gathering were discussed and resolutions made while the guests were entertained. Especially when a ball was organized, people met by midnight and enjoyed each other's company until sunrise.

<sup>17</sup> "Greek and Roman fist fighting was revived by the Britons in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Britain's first champion was James Figg (1694–1733); Jack Broughton established the first boxing rules (*London Prize Ring Rules*, 1838). Bare-knuckle fights organized by wealthy supporters or bookmakers were common in Britain and the U.S." (N. N. 1992).

*Gazes to Europe towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were a considerable number of Europe *seyahatnames*. Most prominent, however, are the two *seyahatnames* written by Ahmet Midhat and Ahmet İhsan, because they treat almost each and every topic encountered in the works of other travellers at great length. Among the travellers of this period, who had by now accepted the orientation towards Europe as a state policy, it was Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844–1912) who presented the broadest view of Europe. This popular Tanzimat novelist and journalist is an interesting figure for his proximity to the Palace and for embodying the conservative Ottomanist point of view. After journeying through Europe in 1889 at the request of Sultan Abdülhamit II, he first serialized his travel impressions in the newspaper *Tercüman-ı hakikat* ('Interpreter of truth') and after a few years re-published them as a colossal work of 1044 pages entitled *Avrupa'da bir cevelan* ('A stroll in Europe', Ahmed Midhat 1308/1892). Maintaining a comparative perspective throughout his travel notes, the writer, partly out of adherence to the palace's politics at the time, appreciates Europe's "material progress" (*terakkiyât-ı maddiye*) but nevertheless alleges that the people of Europe, apart from the Northerners, are characterized by a "moral decadence" (*tedenniyyât-ı maneviye*). The author's thoughts on the French likewise carry traces of his conservatism: According to Ahmet Midhat, Parisians do not even have a proper domestic life. Since they always dine in restaurants and always wear ready-made clothes, it is impossible for them to have the order and the warmth of a family in their home. The author's verdict on the disappearance of such an important part of civilization as the family in a city as advanced as Paris is:

"What remains of the humanity of the creature we call human if it has not the relation and attachment to and love of a mother and father, children and siblings? And if this is so, wouldn't it be befitting of humanity for these people, who really need to be attached, to have relations and affinities also with grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, in-laws, nephews and so on? By the looks of the civilization that I saw in Paris, all of these words should be omitted from dictionaries. For they are invalidated."<sup>18</sup>

When examining material elements, the author reasons like a civilizationist (*medeniyetçi*) with progressive ideas; however, when it comes to moral issues, he thinks like a moral purist (*ablakçı*). He advocates that the elements constituting material civilization in Europe must be adopted without hesitation. Nevertheless, in doing so, no harm should be inflicted upon the customs, the ethics, the way of life proper to the Ottomans.

<sup>18</sup> "İnsan denilen mahlukta ana, baba, evlat, karındaş münasebeti merbutiyeti, muhabbeti de bulunmaz ise onun insanlığı neden ibaret kalır? Halbuki doğrudan doğruya mürtebit olmaları lazım gelen bu adamlarda bir de büyük valide, büyük peder, amca, dayı, hala, teyze, enişte, yenge, yeğen falan münasebetleri, muhabbetleri de bulunmak şân-ı insaniyetten değil midir? Paris'te gördüğüm medeniyete bakılır ise kamuslardan bu kelimelerin kâffesini tayyetmelidir. Zira hükümleri kalmamıştır" (Ahmet Midhat 1308/1892: 770).

The real particularity of this colossal work by Ahmet Midhat is that it is overflowing with detailed, almost scientific information on European countries such as France, Italy, Austria, and Germany, as well as the Northern European states. The quotidian lives of Europeans, their manners of working and entertainment, their habits, their considerations regarding Easterners: all are discussed at length and through comparative analysis in Ahmet Midhat's work. Considering that the Ottoman travellers before him did not provide much information on Scandinavian countries, the work is also important in geographical terms. At all the meetings he participated in, and in all the communities into which he was accepted, Ahmet Midhat made a great effort to represent the Ottomans in the best possible way.

The principle reason behind Ahmet Midhat's trip to Europe was to participate in the Stockholm Orientalists' Congress of 1889. Ahmet Midhat gives extensive information on almost every European he became acquainted with either at the congress or during his later travel, and in doing so, he tries to establish a generalization of the European individual. Being the first author to extensively introduce the Northern European regions to the Ottoman public, he thinks highly of their inhabitants. While comparing the Northerners with the other peoples in Europe, he makes a point of touching upon the difference between them in terms of morals, and he asserts that in spite of contributing to the progress of Europe in science and industry, they do not participate in moral indulgences.

Another traveller with a similarly critical approach to the European civilization, and especially to its people, is Asmaî. Asmaî went on his journey to Europe two years after Ahmet Midhat and visited a country that his predecessor did not: the United Kingdom, about which he did not harbour especially positive opinions. In his travel account *Seyahat-i Asmaî* ('Asmaî's journey', Asmaî 1308/1892), the author, who stayed in Britain for quite a while, concentrates mostly on the British family structure, the attitude towards foreigners, and social relationships. Being close to the worldview of Ahmet Midhat and following in the steps of his master who wrote that the French were morally low, Asmaî considers British people conceited and insincere and believes they bear enmity towards Islam. Additionally, when stating his thoughts on London, he proceeds with a feeling of constricted appreciation more than admiration. But this animosity can be explained: Asmaî began his trip to Europe in Egypt, and his journey coincides with a period of British colonial rule there. Against this background, the reason for his extremely negative attitude towards British people becomes more apparent.

Ahmet İhsan (1867–1942), the owner of the journal *Servet-i fünun* ('Wealth of knowledge') and an important actor in the westernization of Turkish literature, went on a trip to Europe in the spring of 1891 to observe the progress in printing technology. He conveyed the impressions of his journey in the voluminous, 600-pages *seyahatname, Avrupa'da ne gördüm* ('What did I see in Europe?', Ahmet İhsan 1307/1891). Ahmet İhsan was one of the period's intellectuals representing the Western conceptualization and advocating westernization both in the field of sci-

ence and technology and in the practices of everyday life. This is probably the most apparent difference between Ahmet Midhat and Ahmet İhsan. When describing “what he saw” in Europe, Ahmet İhsan is mostly impartial towards issues, milieu and people. He is aware that the ethics and way of life of European nations are part of the European civilization; that everything in Europe is part of a whole whose elements are causally related. For this reason he objects to those who claim that the French or other European nations are morally decadent. Objecting to Ahmet Midhat in particular – although he does not name him specifically –, he states that each society must be considered within the scope of its own values. There is not much difference between his views on material progress and technology and on the morals of people; he approaches them as a whole. Observed as such, it is remarkable how Ahmet İhsan’s assessments regarding the French are the complete opposite of Ahmet Midhat’s. Although Ahmet İhsan is in accord with him on many issues, from science and technology to architecture and museology, he is not as puritanical as Ahmet Midhat on issues regarding Parisians’ morals.

In the section entitled *Hâtime, Paris’in hâli* (‘Epilogue, Paris’s condition’, Ahmet İhsan 1307/1891: 141), Ahmet İhsan elaborates on the morals of the Parisian population, and compares the knowledge he acquired from certain sources before his travel with his own travel impressions on this subject. Before the journey, taking into account the novels he read and the claims of Ottoman journalists, he had presumed that the women of Paris were morally corrupt; however, throughout his journey he sees that this is not quite the case. He writes:

“Generally the Parisian morals are quite well preserved. Even signs of high morality are widespread. What has misled the gaze has only ever been the outward looks of things! For example, a man who comes to Paris and goes for a walk at night through the boulevards would confirm the claims of our journalists if his thinking succumbs to the outward appearance; however, if you dig a little bit below the surface and analyze in depth, a truth will emerge before you, which is that the morals have been well preserved.”<sup>19</sup>

These words are not only his views but also a critique of the writers preceding him – especially Ahmet Midhat – who gave false information regarding the Parisians’ ethics. According to Ahmet İhsan, Parisian women do not have low morals, as others believe; instead of giving too much credit to the ‘outward appearance’, people should base their judgments on their own observations. Insisting that Parisians are not morally decadent, the author later often likens the joyful attitude of the people in the countries he visited afterwards to the joy of the Parisians. For example, he states that the people of Rotterdam, in fact all Dutch citizens,

<sup>19</sup> “Umumiyyet itibarıyla Paris ahlâkı pek mazbutçadır. Hem ahlâk-ı ulviye âsârı cümleye yayılmıştır. Nazarları aldatan hâl hep delâil-i hariciye imiş! Meselâ Paris’e girip geceleri bulvarları şöyle dolaşan adamın fikri delâil-i hariciyeye kapılarak gazetecilerimizin iddiasını tasdik eyler; fakat biraz müşkülpeşent olur da derin tedkik ederseniz pişgâhınızda bir hakikat tezahür eder ki o da ahlâkın mazbutiyetidir” (Ahmet İhsan 1307/1891: 141).

“have the joy of Paris and are good-humoured and happy” people (Ahmet İhsan 1307/1891: 287).

In his travel writing, countries such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and notably France are lengthily showcased. Ahmet İhsan does not content himself with describing what he saw; he also tries to get to the core of issues by asking questions and seeking answers, in particular the factors that played a part in the fast development of Europe. One of the main reasons he discovers is the fact that the Europeans take possession of their own past and make good use of what they have in the present. In the important European countries, works are executed within pre-established plans; education, art, culture, communication, and everyday life seem to be in cohesion. It is impossible to separate one from the other, because all of them are embedded in the lives of Europeans in a complementary way. According to Ahmet İhsan, the main characteristics of Europeans are their courtesy, the esteem shown to women, the fact that they know both how to work and how to enjoy themselves, and that they go about their lives without wasting time. Even though he resorts to comparisons from time to time, Ahmet İhsan seems to have mostly grasped that Europeans have their own way of living.

*From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century:*

*The widening concept of Europe and the orientation towards Germany*

There is a shift in the destination of trips to Europe around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that coincides with the Ottoman State's affiliation with Germany, a realignment which caused the latter to be recast as the real centre of Europe. Journalists, scientists, politicians, soldiers etc. went on many trips to Germany and published their travel impressions.

In his three-volume work *Seyahat hatıraları* (“Travel memories”)<sup>20</sup>, Şerefeddin Mağmumi (1869–1927), a Young Turk who was instrumental in paving the way for the Ottoman Empire's Second Constitutional Era and who went to Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, makes extensive comparisons between cities in European countries such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium and Germany on the one hand, and Istanbul and Egypt, which he considers one of the most developed places in the Orient, on the other. With special attention to urban planning, Mağmumi advocates that new planning, such as that present in European cities, be done for Istanbul and Egypt. This is an argument voiced almost since the beginning of the Tanzimat in regard to the problems of urbanization. But despite the familiarity of his argument, Mağmumi's attitude towards Europe is especially interesting to the extent that he focuses on matters such as population, urbaniza-

<sup>20</sup> Only the last two volumes are about Europe: Şerefeddin Mağmumi (1326/1910 and 1330–33/1914–17).



tion, the meaning that buildings bear for nations and citizens, and the stratification in the society, and that he specifically stresses the importance of institutions in these matters. Museums hold an essential place among these institutions, drawing attention to the importance Europeans accord to the “old”. The British Museum has a special place in Mağmumi’s travel notes. Describing this museum in comparison to other great ones in Europe, the author not only introduces it but he also stresses the institution’s importance in Great Britain’s history (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 1326/1910: 118–130).

Having sojourned in Berlin for ten days during his trip to Europe, Şerefeddin Mağmumi first draws attention to the cleanliness, the beauty and the prosperity of Friedrichstraße, one of the city’s biggest avenues. Both sides of the street are lined with tall buildings, grand hotels, nice restaurants and pubs, shiny stores and shops. The avenue’s only problem is that it is narrower compared to other great avenues. Going for a short walk on another major avenue, Unter den Linden, Mağmumi specifically mentions the trees and awnings there. He relays detailed information on the libraries, the Tiergarten park, the museums, the opera, and several churches, palaces and squares, which he visited during his stay in Berlin. All this information comes down to the civilization that Germany has built throughout centuries.

It is in Mağmumi’s work that we see the first traces of the admiration for Germany that will become apparent in travel accounts at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though not entirely different from travellers to Germany of the previous periods, such as the middle and end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is easy to catch glimpses of a Young Turk’s signature in his notes. It should be noted that when the Tanzimat was drawing near, ‘Europe’ meant France and travellers wrote of their opinions regarding Europe in that perspective, whereas in Mehmet Rauf’s *Seyahatname-i Avrupa* and in the second volume of Şerefeddin Mağmumi’s travel work the discourse is centred upon Great Britain. This demonstrates how the axis slowly shifted and diversified. The fact that Mağmumi turns the course of his travel towards Germany in the third volume of his travel memoirs should not be overlooked, considering that he is a Young Turk. The meaning that a traveller attributes to the concept of Europe shows differences according to his approach and his travel map.

After a short period of time, as we have pointed out above, Germany would become the favourite country of Europe and along with Mağmumi, many more would embark on extended journeys to Germany. It seems as if, for Ottoman travellers around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all the positive associations of the word ‘Europe’ now only meant ‘Germany’. Having been introduced through its museums, certain state institutions, and some of its cities in the travelogues of Ahmet Midhat and Ahmet İhsan, and described in detail in Mağmumi’s travel notes, Germany now came to be written about extensively by writers such as: Ce-

lal Nuri (1882–1936),<sup>21</sup> renowned for his westernizing ideas in the 1920s; Halit Ziya (1865–1945),<sup>22</sup> a famous novelist representing the westernizing approach of the literary movement *Servet-i fînun* (named after the journal); Mehmet Akif (1873–1936),<sup>23</sup> who, although supporting Ottomanism-Islamism, did not refrain from voicing his admiration for the German civilization after travelling to Berlin in 1914 (where he was shown – for propaganda purposes, of course – a special prisoner camp for Muslim captives, who enjoyed privileged treatment); the statesman Mehmet Celal (1863–1926),<sup>24</sup> who wrote a propagandistic travel account emphasizing German strength, ability and valour; and Cenap Şahabettin (1871–1934),<sup>25</sup> a *Servet-i fînun* poet who came to know Western life by living in Paris for four years and travelling around Europe towards the end of the 1910s. The reason behind this increased interest is, of course, the political rapprochement: The affiliation between the Ottoman Empire and Germany that led the two countries to become allies in World War I paved the way for travellers to turn their steps toward this particular country.

The travels of the five writers stated above all took place during the 1910s; aside from that of Celal Nuri, all trips coincide with World War I. Among them, Halit Ziya presented Germany most extensively, discussing his observations and experiences in his ‘Letters from Germany’ and his conclusions in ‘German life’, always speaking positively about “our ally”. The fact that he positions Germany at the centre of his travel notes and that he designates Germans as role models cannot be considered apart from the political developments of the period. A *seyahat-name* published during World War I full of praise for opposing countries such as France, the United Kingdom, or Italy would be against the aura of the time. If writers turned their gaze towards Germany from these lands previously praised and deemed the centre of civilization, it was due to the politics of the state and public sensitivity.

Halit Ziya went on his first journey to Europe in 1889 and was deeply impressed and amazed, being still very young. The same admiring gaze is expressed in his 1915 travel letters, though this time directed specifically at Germany. For him, the civilization that Germany built through its people, its administration and institutions, and the progress it showed, embodied all of the innovations built by the European civilization. According to Halit Ziya, who elaborates especially on the importance of educational institutions, European civilization was equivalent to Germany. This bias, which began with Celal Nuri and continued with Halit Ziya, can also be observed in Cenap Şahabettin, who also writes at

<sup>21</sup> *Şimal batıraları* (‘Northern memories’) and *Kutup musababeleri* (‘Polar conversations’), Celal Nuri (1330/1914 and 1331/1915).

<sup>22</sup> *Almanya mektupları* (‘Letters from Germany’) and *Alman hayatı* (‘German life’), Halit Ziya (1915 and 1916).

<sup>23</sup> *Berlin batıraları* (‘Berlin memories’), Mehmet Âkif (1943).

<sup>24</sup> *Almanya’daki iltisâsâtım* (‘My impressions in Germany’), Mehmet Celal (1917).

<sup>25</sup> *Avrupa mektupları* (‘Letters from Europe’), Cenap Şahabettin (1335/1919).

length about the issue of education, attempting an analysis of the German educational system and institutions. Clearly revealing the underlying rationale of speaking about a friendly and allied country, the poet is convinced that Germany was constantly rising higher on the four pillars of education, army, industry, and economy; and while discussing professional life in Germany, he points out the impact military discipline had on the industrial sector. Halit Ziya and Cenap Şahabettin's minds were sharp enough to spot the important role that Germans would play in 20<sup>th</sup>-century history.

### *General evaluation*

The European culture and civilization with which the Ottomans came into contact starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century have been examined in various ways since the first days of this contact. Especially during and after the Tanzimat, works translated from European languages, source books introducing European countries, newspaper articles, etc. constituted an important means of familiarizing Ottoman subjects with the continent. In the period just before the Tanzimat and afterwards, the *sefaretnames* and *seyahatnames* played a role that should not be underestimated in conveying information about Europe in a relatively direct way through firsthand accounts. Moreover, it can be said without doubt that Europe was presented *primarily* by means of the reports and accounts of ambassadors and travellers.

During the Tanzimat period, when bilateral relations between the Ottoman Empire and European countries grew closer off the battlefield as well, ambassadors on both sides directly supported the process of mutual acquaintance through their reports, which at times would reach book-length. A little later, the vast number of travel accounts written by European and Ottoman travellers extended the depth and breadth of this acquaintance, presenting the individual European countries and peoples as well as European culture and civilization as a whole.

As westernization became increasingly prominent on the Ottoman political and intellectual agenda, the travel routes began to change noticeably. To be sure, there were also travellers who journeyed to Africa or Central Asia and recounted for their countrymen what they had seen. But the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman travellers towards Europe amounted to a veritable 'travel caravan'. Of course, even the greatest number of travel accounts cannot capture a whole civilization in all its aspects; however, the impact which the images of Europe and the Europeans that they created had on the Ottoman public opinion should not be underestimated. The fact that travel notes were often immediately published in newspapers or printed as books soon afterwards indicates the extent of their importance. What it was that the Ottoman public apparently wanted to learn about Europe can be seen in the notes of the travellers: Nearly all of them elaborate at length on European day-to-day life, entertainment venues and the experiences therein, educa-

tional and scientific institutions, and the order and discipline observed in working life – all of which was aimed at projecting a complete image of European social life. Whereas certain travellers, such as Ebüzziya Tevfik and Mehmet Rauf, were generally content with recounting their own experiences, others such as Ahmet Midhat, Ahmet İhsan, Cenap Şahabettin, and Halit Ziya felt it necessary to relay additional information on countries and cities from a number of different sources. This was due as much to the desire to base their impressions on solid ground as to their effort to produce a satisfying and objective work for the reader.

Regarding the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, one has to be more cautious in the assessment of the *seyahatnames*' practical benefits. The increase in the number of illustrated newspapers and periodicals, the remarkable development of the media, and the fact that knowledge acquired on Europe could be transmitted quickly through these means lessened the informational value of the *seyahatnames*. Particularly after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have to be viewed rather as a form of individual expression. Thus, just as the ambassadorial reports, which had addressed a specific audience and remained more or less within the official circles, had been followed by the *seyahatnames*, which were addressed to a wider audience, these non-official travelogues themselves gradually handed their functions over to other means of yet broader dissemination.

In several Turkish studies of the history of westernization and modernization in the Ottoman Empire (e.g. by İlber Ortaylı, Mümtaz Turhan, Hilmi Ziya Ülken), special importance is given to a few primary sources, such as Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's *Fransa Sefaretnamesi* and the *risales* written by Mustafa Sami Efendi and Sadık Rifat Paşa. However, if we look closely, almost all of these are introducing a France-centred Europe to the Ottoman public. While it is true that the Ottomans gave priority to France in the beginning of the modernization movement, we should not overlook the fact that subsequent travel writers exposed the rich diversity of the European map. It was by means of travelogues that the Ottoman public learned about the existence of different cultures and lifestyles in the various countries of Europe, which had been previously perceived as a unified body within the conceptualization of 'Christianity'. Thanks to the *seyahatnames*, Turkish readers in the Ottoman modernization period gained an extensive knowledge not only of France but also of the United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries. Even though some countries received particular attention at certain periods, the majority of the travel writers had a more general approach. As mentioned above, this was based mainly on Europe's broadly shared development in the domains of science and technology.

Many of the *seyahatname* writers 'packed' their works with almost anything they deemed interesting and that they thought would arouse the attention of the readers. Their stated aim in doing so was, to a great extent, to 'be beneficial', to ensure that their readers were informed about the modern world. While producing their works with this purpose, some of these travellers analyzed Europe with a critical

mind, such as Ahmet Midhat, while others did it with admiration, like Ebüzziya Tevfik. But even those who hesitated on spiritual and moral issues unconditionally accepted Europe's superiority in areas such as urbanization, education, art and labour. The principal areas in which all authors of *seyahatnames* agreed on the superiority of Europe can be enumerated as: economy, industry, conveniences that technology provided in daily life, the participation of women in social life, the education of children and young adults, healthcare, conservation of historical artefacts, absolute openness to innovations, fine arts, urbanization, transportation, architecture, respect for the human and human rights, governments tolerating a diversity of ideas, etc. The travellers' sympathetic impressions regarding these issues are generally based on their own observations, made in museums, hospitals, schools, harbours, stations, factories, workshops, restaurants, shopping centres, entertainment venues, theatres and so on. Almost all the travellers are in accord with the great leap of Europe in the domain of science and technology, sometimes emphasizing this aspect even to the point of tiresome repetition.

Regarding modern urbanization works in Europe and the new regulations in this field, lengthy descriptions in travelogues are dedicated especially to urban planning and the construction of roads and squares in the prominent 19<sup>th</sup>-century capitals of Paris, London and Vienna. The travellers also show great interest in the presentation of scientific and technological knowledge, such as industrial exhibitions, zoological and botanical gardens, and in its results, such as new means of transportation and communication, large factories and work houses. Likewise, schools and anatomy classrooms as places of applied education, and galleries of fine art are reflected in the travel works. Theatres and opera houses are treated both as institutions where these performing arts were actively followed and as illustrious architectural monuments. In churches, the travellers talk about the architectural characteristics and beautiful artwork rather than religiosity, and in palaces and castles about their history, art and architecture. Museums, monuments and historical buildings are presented as reminders that all elements of culture and civilization are to be protected and meticulously preserved, and that history is revered in Europe.

The idea that steam power, the press and freedom had a great impact on the rapid development of the European civilization is either directly or implicitly expressed by almost all of the travellers. Immediately after this comes the affirmation that civilization depends substantially on human beings, and as such the value and importance attributed to the human being in European countries is among the main issues upon which travellers dwell. Countries develop and civilization progresses by virtue of human determination and industriousness. The idea is commonly accepted among the travellers that Europeans execute each task with perseverance and diligence and that they are and will be successful in every single endeavour. The assiduousness of the European person who "works day and night," and the fact that he or she spares time for entertainment as much as for

work are some of the points that attracted the travellers' attention. Parallel to people's orderliness and their sensibility to comply with the laws of the state and the rules of the society, the travellers maintain that administrators for their part strove to make the lives of people easier and to better serve them. It can be assumed that the aim of mentioning these matters was proposing solutions to problems within the Ottoman state government. In fact, this is a characteristic already seen in the reports of ambassadors.

The fact that the same approach can be found in *sefaretnames* and in the *seyahatnames* that replaced them indicates the travellers' desire for a similar situation to fall into place in their own country. In Europe, justice, education, law, art, politics, technology, in sum *everything*, was supposedly at the service of the people. It was believed that the fact that Europeans had a mindset that did not differentiate between genders greatly contributed to their accomplishment. In education, entertainment, business, court etc., i.e. in every area of life, men and women were together; their rights and duties were equal. The important thing was not man or woman, but the society. Nevertheless, women were accorded privileges in certain special circumstances; men were always courteous to women and assisted them at receptions and in public places.

The travellers insistently underline certain points where they noticed Europe's superiority in order to support the attempts of reform within the Ottoman State and to contribute to quickly meeting the requirements to reach Europe's level. Absolute reformists such as Ahmet İhsan, Ebüzziya Tevfik, and Celâl Nuri aside, even writers such as Ahmet Midhat and Mehmet Âkif, who adhered to a traditional view of life and culture and who felt the necessity of touching upon the drawbacks of westernization, seem to support the Ottoman State in putting into practice the reforms that advanced Europe. Whatever their worldview, all the travellers appear to agree on this matter. The disagreement originates from the approaches to such matters as moral philosophy, family life, entertainment styles, and the relationship between genders.

In the Europe perceived by the *seyahatname* writers, all institutions are like the constituents of a whole, interlocking with and complementing each other. Science and agriculture, industry and trade, entertainment and art, education and technology, urbanization and ecology, economy and justice – even those parts that seem unrelated – are invariably intertwined within a system that runs like clockwork. The concept of institutionalization appears to be the factor that creates coherence in all of the European countries. Some travellers who trace the causes of the countries' prosperity also touch upon the issue of colonialism and make denunciatory statements; but in the end, even they praise Europeans for advancing civilization. They are also aware that, in order to 'protect civilization', prominent European countries such as France, Great Britain and Germany needed to possess powerful regular armies. Endeavours and reforms in this field find their echoes in the travelogues.

Generally speaking, the travellers journeyed through Europe with feelings of marvel and admiration. However, they also knew how to get to the bottom of matters: by resorting to analogies while analyzing European institutions, by making new and constructive suggestions for their country, by comparing the European people with the Ottomans on various levels, and by contrasting countries with each other.

Europe was not just considered a colourful and lively picture; they also evaluated the ways in which this picture came to life. Conscious that they were gazing at a different world, and exploring the reasons for this difference, the travel writers experienced the sadness of being on the outside of a superior civilization instead of being a part of it, and they reacted to this experience. Especially writers such as Mustafa Sami Efendi, Sadık Rifat Paşa, Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Fağfurizade Hüseyin Nesimi, Ahmet İhsan, and Şerefeddin Mağmumi put forward 'program'-like proposals on various matters and included constructive comparisons. For all their biased perspective, even Celal Nuri, Halit Ziya and Cenap Şahabettin reiterate these constructive suggestions. The impressions that all these writers gained on their travels can be combined like pieces of a puzzle to create a big picture of Ottoman images of Europe. There are different colours, different lights and shades that constitute the whole. The travellers either openly or indirectly expressed their wish to see in the Ottoman Empire the same progress and advances that they had witnessed in Europe. They saw Europe as a model for an easier life, a life of liberty and without fear that they wanted to achieve in their own country.

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