

**Replacing the Image of the Ottoman Turk: *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Turquerie* as
Resistance**

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the cultural and diplomatic clashes that happened in the 17th century between the Ottoman Empire and France beginning with an Ottoman envoy's visit to Louis XIV's Court in France in 1669. This visit has generally been given the labels "failed" and "scandalous" by the western scope as a result of consequent conflicts that occurred between these states' representatives. In every moment that these representatives encountered each other, their performances reveal fascination and confusion in trying to make sense of one another.

This study provides a close examination of these performative interactions which reveal that this event was not necessarily a failure, but rather a commencement of spectacular social reactions. Throughout the visit of Ambassador Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa, French officials were skeptical about the envoys' mission and did not know how to treat them, which resulted in novel theatrical interactions such as the French foreign minister impersonating the Ottoman Grand

Vizier. This haphazard attempt to gain the upper hand in diplomacy, I argue, led to the adoption of and permission to use Ottoman identifiers which developed into the practice of *turquerie*. Throughout the century *turquerie* became a tool that was used to declare either political power for its practitioner or resistance to authoritarian power. Thus, the visit, even years after it occurred, has impacted French identity and its “high” culture.

This study analyzes the performativity of these events, their well-known products such as *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *turquerie*, how they shaped these states’ identities and politics, and the ways in which they still affect the scholarly approach to this period. Rather than relying solely on French sources, I re-examine this encounter by including Ottoman sources of diplomatic and cultural customs. This methodological approach reveals the French political agenda behind this interaction and why this encounter, which has historically been referred to as a diplomatic failure, may have been purposely orchestrated. I argue that giving an equal voice to the point of view of the Ottoman Empire changes our conception of this, and similar, diplomatic and artistic performances.

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Abbreviations

BOA: Osmanlı Arşivleri Başkanlığı (Directorate of Ottoman Archives)

İE: İbnü'l Emin Tasnifi

SM: Saray Mesalihi

R: Rumi (Turkish language); Julian Calendar.

H: Hicri (Turkish language); Islamic Calendar.

AAE CP: Archive des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Politique

AAE MD: Archive des Affaires Étrangères, Memoires et Documents

BNF MF: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Manuscrits Françaises

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Introduction

An invaluable manuscript which is preserved in Bibliothèque Nationale de France exhibits the admiration that an Ottoman Turk, Slave Süleyman, has for France. In the middle of this manuscript, the protagonist Süleyman, who formerly was a slave in Paris, had watched the horizon with teary-eyes and sincere melancholy about France in 17th century Egypt. While gazing upon the ruins of Heliopolis, he remembers the ‘Le Roi Soleil’, the French Sun King Louis XIV. “Such a marvelous city which suits the sun king of France perfectly,” he shares with the Ottoman statesmen who gathered around anxiously to hear more about the incredible stories of France and its royal king. “These ruins were home for the sun-worshippers,” Süleyman says, “and the king of France’s seal is the sun since the sun is the brightest star in the sky, just like the French king is the strongest, smartest, and the most grandiose of the entirety of Europe.”¹ This is a brilliant extension of an Ottoman- French cross-cultural transformative relation which emerged after the political tension hit its high in the 1660’s.

This anonymous manuscript which is written in Ottoman Turkish asserts that an Ottoman soldier who fought for the Ottomans against Habsburgs was taken as a war prisoner by a kindhearted French architect. The architect taught Süleyman the core of the French civilization, introduced him to King Louis XIV, and eventually permitted him to return to his hometown, Ottoman land. The manuscript describes Süleyman’s experience and knowledge about France and the French king. According to Süleyman, France is the center of civilization, the king is fair and sublime, and the French military has all the technological advantages and strength with its loyal soldiers.

¹ Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Supplément turc 221.

The fascination of Süleyman with the French government is intriguing for a scholar, all the while over-exaggerated in various aspects. Nevertheless, my research could not find a trace of this Ottoman persona's existence in France during the indicated years. Moreover, the description of France and the French King, the French identity, its civilization, courtesy, and power presented in the manuscript accurately befit the French political strategy in defining its national identity during Louis XIV's reign. Correspondingly, I believe that it was fabricated by a French mind impersonating an Ottoman Turk to complement the 'propagandist agenda' of Louis XIV.

There are three concrete reasons to hypothesize the manuscript was written by a Frenchman. First, there is unrealistic and conflicting information presented in the text.² Secondly, the manuscript comes from a library of a well-known orientalist and Louis XIV admirer Eusèbe Renaudot who was also famous for his extensive oriental manuscript collection. Some of these manuscripts were translated to French and Latin by Renaudot, some of them were written by him, and some of them were utilized by him to serve French government's propagandist politics. And thirdly, this and similar literature pieces quickly became fashionable after mostly passive-aggressive but occasionally belligerent confrontations between the Ottoman Empire and France in the mid-17th century, especially after a visit of an Ottoman envoy to the French king. The most famous of these literature pieces are, without a doubt, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*.³

² The analysis of the manuscript reveals these points with details at the chapter 4, 21-30.

³ Giovanni Paolo Marana, and Arthur J. Weitzman, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1970). An elaborate analysis of this book presented at the chapter 4, 14-19.

An Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa and his envoy who visited France in 1669 stirred numerous uncomfortable encounters and perhaps became a milestone for how both France and Ottoman Empire are characterized today. In fact, the envoy, and its ambassador Süleyman Ağa were utilized brilliantly by the French government to posit France as an equivalent power to the Ottoman Empire. This secured France's position in a Christian Europe and manipulated the socio-political equilibrium in subsequent political and cultural history. But how did a small mission like this become a major incident in Franco-Ottoman political history? Alain Grosrichard examines pre-modern French approach to the Ottoman Empire explicitly in his book *Structure du Sérail: la fiction du despotisme asiatique dans l'Occident Classique*. In his study Grosrichard widens Edward Said's *Orientalism* from focusing on colonized oriental states to the Ottoman Empire and from 18th century to 16th century France and its relations with the Orient. In this way he provides broader analysis opportunities for Ottoman Empire's representation in France. As Grosrichard claims "Ever since the envoy from the Sublime Porte visited Louis XIV in 1669, the gaze of the Oriental has haunted France and Paris."⁴ The visit of Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa and the Ottoman envoy changed not only the French mentality, but also changed the country cosmetically. Throughout the visit French officials were skeptical about the envoys' mission without any credible reason and did not know how to treat them. They questioned the envoy's credibility and its ambassador's title, and in this way, they also questioned Ottoman superiority and everything which it stood for. The visit, even the years after it occurred, has impacted French identity and its "high" culture.

⁴ Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East*, Wo Es War (London; New York: Verso, 1998), 24-25.

Although the story of this envoy started from the Sublime Porte, there is apparently no evidence to support this fact in Ottoman archive yet. The Palace chronicles neither mentioned the ambassador Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa nor this mission. Interestingly, the myriad of archival documents from court reports to memoires, and newspapers to several formal and informal letters have appeared in French archive. However, the original letters from the Ottoman Sultan to the king of France are missing in both archives. How can we make sense of this? From the Ottoman point of view, it seems to have never happened, yet it stands out as a major political feat for France. Can an absentee be the signal of the existing? Nonetheless, the absence of evidence cannot necessarily be the absence of the event and vice versa, the evidence cannot necessarily be the proof of its existence. What does exist is this: the visit was boldly exploited by Louis XIV so that every national French benefit was shaped in the way desired by Louis XIV. As I explain more meticulously, this research examines the tools that were utilized by the French court for this formation, how the Ottoman Empire involuntarily and unintentionally contributed to this emergence, how we can reconstruct the Ottoman participation in this phenomenon, and how all these sequences of events contributed to the modern state.

Historian Albert Vandal is one of the earliest scholars who examined and pointed out the political connection between *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and its performance in 1670, and the Ottoman ambassador Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa's visit to Louis XIV's France the previous year. The interrelation between the two has been accepted at face value by modern historians and has become a very familiar subject for scholars who studied Louis XIV's court or Moliere's works.⁵ There is no research today that studies the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* without

⁵ Albert Vandal, ed., *L'odysee d'un ambassadeur: Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)* (Paris, 1900), 23- 27.

mentioning this visit or vice versa in its analysis. For instance, C. D. Rouillard who worked on Ottoman Empire and France relations on literature and stage performances elaborately claims that "... it was the visit of this mission which, as much as anything, led to the incorporation of the Turkish business in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*."⁶ However, 'the 'Turkish Business' he mentioned had been a part of almost all the court performances and French literature at least since the Ottomans conquered Istanbul in 1453. Rouillard himself underlines the French interest of the Ottoman Turks "Scenes of cruelty and violence in the sultan seraglio were a source of constant fascination for French readers, both in their narrative form in letters, pamphlets, newspaper accounts of histories, and in their literary repercussions, in tale, novel, or drama."⁷ Examples for these products are *La Soltane*⁸ in 1561, *l'Hermite*⁹ 1627, and *Ibrahim, ou l'illustre Bassa*¹⁰ in 1641. However, none of these works were products of any physical political encounter between these two states.¹¹ In fact, the 'Turkish figure' was a very regular motif of any imaginative product of French cultural life. Then what is the real reason to interrelate the Süleyman Ağa's visit with the *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*? Similarly with Rouillard, Mathieu

⁶ C. D. Rouillard, "The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1969): 33-52, 38.

⁷ *Ibid*, 39.

⁸ Gabriel Bounin and Michael J. Heath, *La Soltane*, Textes Littéraires; 27 (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1977).

⁹ Sophie Tonolo and Alain Génétiot, *Cahiers Tristan L'Hermite. 2019, N° XLI - Tristan L'Hermite Et L'Académie Française (1648-1655)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2019).

¹⁰ Delphine Denis and Anne-Elisabeth Spica, *Madeleine De Scudéry: Une Femme De Lettres Au XVIIe Siècle: Actes Du Colloque International De Paris*, Collection "Etudes Littéraires Et Linguistiques." (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2002).

¹¹ I decided to use the term "state" throughout this research instead of "nation" since the latter fails to describe the Ottoman Empire, which was an amalgamation of culturally, ethnically, and historically disparate groups. Although, I am aware that using "state" is also problematic, it represents the single-government organizational structure shared by both France and the Ottoman Empire.

Grenet who studies cross-cultural diplomacy between Ottoman Empire and France and focuses on this specific visit writes "... the reception in Lyon of the Ottoman envoy Müteferrika Suleiman Ağa and his retinue in 1669... inspired a much finer piece of literature, namely Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*."¹² Phil McCluskey is another prominent researcher on the subject. He also asserts that Süleyman Ağa's "supposed hubris was also the object of some of the satire in Moliere's play..."¹³ However a well-known pre-Moliere court performance displayed the Turks almost in the same fashion. In 1626, *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*, danced by Louis XIII, was either omitted or its interconnections was not discussed in these works.¹⁴ Some of the scholars who work on the subject have scrutinized the entire play as a parody of the visit. For instance, Julia Landweber who is pioneer in this subject and whom I often reference in my analyses asserts that "Louis XIV had not specified how Moliere and Lully should ridicule Suleiman Ağa...". She suggested that the play was a mockery of the recent visit of the Ottomans. Others have studied the traits in common between the protagonist and Süleyman Ağa, and some have analyzed the play as a criticism of the French government and their relationship with Ottomans. One of these scholars, Michele Longino indicates in her book *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, that "This comical sketch pokes fun not only at bourgeois pretensions, but just as sharply at the politics of obsequiousness that are part and parcel of the language of diplomacy, and exposes the financial underpinnings of the rhetoric."¹⁵ Although all of these claims are

¹² Mathieu Grenet, "Muslim Missions to Early Modern France, C.1610-c.1780: Notes for a Social History of Cross-Cultural Diplomacy," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19, no. 2-3 (2015): 223-44, 226.

¹³ Phil McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris: Süleyman Ağa's Mission to the Court of Louis XIV, 1669," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları = The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 48 (2016): 337-55, 352.

¹⁴ C. D. Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," 38.

¹⁵ Michele Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 138.

valuable in some respects, contain truth in their evidence, and reveal details otherwise hidden in the courtly curiosities through political and social differences between these two nations, almost all of their sources lean solely on French documentation. Naturally, they, both the scholars and the documents, allow only one side of the account to speak. Hence, only the French side of this history is written repeatedly. In that as the popular saying claims ‘history is written by the victors’ it might be thought that France, or at least the court of Louis XIV, has been winning its cultural materialist war against the Ottomans. Edward Said says orientalism is a “corporate institution for dealing with the orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it.”¹⁶ Thus, possibly, or likely from a fear of the orientalist stamp, scholars have fallen into a substitute version of orientalism in which ignoring it, not acknowledging it, and not dealing with it has superseded their initial fear. Such as Said points out “...so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism.”¹⁷

The Ottomans, in this reconstruction of history and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme’s* connection to the events of Süleyman Ağa’s visit to the French court, remains silent. Thus, in this research my main ambition is to re-produce the consecutive events from the Ottoman Empire point of view, bringing the Ottoman Empire’s courtly attitude, traditions, relations, and empirical power to the view for Western audiences. Therefore, with this reconstruction of the intriguing event of the Ottoman ambassador’s visit to France in 1669, which plays a pivotal role in French-Ottoman diplomacy and their political and cultural relationship after the 17th century, rather than

¹⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 2003), 3.

¹⁷ Ibid.

only the French, I wish to provide a fresh and more balanced view of the history of these events which gives both their individual voice. “Orient has helped to define Europe as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience,”¹⁸ says Said “The orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture.”¹⁹ I examine French identity and its self-recognition throughout, in that their creation of the ‘monstrous Turk’, which they were both fascinated by and fearful of, is an image that is ridiculed through the theatrical events and the comedy-ballet, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, which fills the negative space that surrounds their identity as a mold, to display a facade of what they are not, in order to concretize their inherent characteristic identity beneath, following this encounter.

It is evident that the French court displayed conflicting sentiment towards the Ottoman Empire and its oriental ‘Turk image.’ *Turquerie*, imitation of the oriental figures, which became a popular fashion from 16th century onward, had developed throughout the previous century and a half. Because of the theme of the Grand Turk marching onto European soil, and its accompanying terrifying cruelty that had decorated the Gazette²⁰, these sentiments of European travelers’ fascination with the Turk are expressed by Rouillard, partly stemming from horrifying fear:

Fear of the Turk in western Europe of the seventeenth century was no longer the constant dread of earlier generations which had watched the sweeping Ottoman expansion led by Suleiman the Magnificent. But even under the series of corrupt voluptuaries who succeeded Suleiman, Cyprus had been wrested from the

¹⁸ Ibid, 1-2.

¹⁹ Ibid, 2.

²⁰ Weekly newspaper in Paris.

Venetians and war raged in Hungary at the turn of the century. During Moliere's childhood, as news from Turkey dominated by reports of bloody purges in Stamboul and repression of Janissary revolts and Persian rebellions, it was freely predicted that the Ottoman Empire had sunk so low it could not recover. At mid-century, however, there emerged under a weak sultan a pair of powerful grand viziers, the Kiuprilis, who launched another major offensive against Christian Europe.²¹

Numerous pamphlets were published which displayed the Warrior Turks, and newspapers sold out when they covered the monstrous Turk in special issues throughout Paris, Lyon, and Rouen while the success of Christian army was celebrated with cheerful excitement. This dichotomy created a secret fascination of the Ottoman warrior's power which reveals itself in the tragedies and novels written about the Grand Turk.²² The French travelers' stories about the Orient had become popular entertainment for the court and also aristocratic households. The French ambassador Cesy, who served at the Porte before de La Haye, for instance, who served in the Turkish capital for nearly twenty years, was greatly popular with his *oriental* stories. d'Arvieux, whom I will mention occasionally throughout this dissertation, found himself in a comfortable place in the palace of Louis XIV, as the dauphin's amuser with his imitations of Turks.²³

These stories influenced ballets and popular novels, the Turk causing a horrifying curiosity, such that during Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa's visit the interest towards him violated his privacy so much that Louise XIV felt the necessity to provide multiple guards to protect him

²¹ C. D. Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 37.

Suleiman: Süleyman; Stamboul: Istanbul; Kiuprilis: Köprülü family.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

from the courtiers' and Parisians profound attentiveness. Thus, this intractable relevance had initiated worry among the Court and its statemen, questioning their French-ness and all its meanings tied to their identity, sharing their concerns with the rest of the Christian world. In *History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, Paul Rycaut, a 17th century diplomat and a historian, shares these concerns and speculates that this phenomena is a seducing practice of the Ottomans in order to persuade Christians to convert to Islam, saying “it is no small inducement to the common people, who is most commonly won with outward allurements, to become Turks; that when they are so, by a white Turbant ... we shall not wonder if the ignorant and vain amongst Christians ... should be caught and entrapt with the fancy and enticement of the Turkish Mode ... and thus the Turk makes his habit a bait to draw some to his superstition”.²⁴ We witness one of the early examples of these complex attitudes during the audience between ambassador Süleyman Ağa and the French secretary of State for foreign affairs Hugues de Lionne. Lionne produced a theatrical performance-like audience for Süleyman Ağa and placed himself in the middle of the stage assuming the role of an Ottoman Turk at his estate at Suresnes, outside of Paris, against all the objections of well-known oriental specialist Chevalier Laurent d'Arvieux. D'Arvieux notes in his memoire that “As for the ceremony, I took the liberty to tell him it seemed to me very improper to affect Turkish manners in France, and that it would have been better to receive the Envoy according to French grandeur, as we lower ourselves to take on their customs; as much as we might want to do so in the name of equal treatment, it was not necessary to act as they act; and just as they do not abandon their customs when they are in

²⁴ Paul Rycaut. *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Polity; the Most Material Points of the Mahometan Religion; Their Sects and Heresies; Their Convents and Religious Votaries; Their Military Discipline: With an Exact Computation of Their Forces Both by Sea and Land*. Early English Books Online. London: Printed by J.D., (1686), 147.

France, it seemed to me that it detracted from the grandeur of our monarch, to conform to such manners that are quite foreign to us.”²⁵ Despite d’Arvieux’s objection, Lionne continued his roleplay of a Grand Vizier, dressing like one and accepting Süleyman into his audience in a room decorated with oriental carpets and pillows, as if it were the Ottoman Grand Viziers accepting foreign ambassadors into their presence. All of this to tell Süleyman Ağa that Lionne was in fact not a Grand Vizier:

Having learned that when you requested an audience with me you specified my title as Grand Vizier, and too that you were persuaded that France has three Grand Viziers, I believe myself obliged before all else to disabuse you of such a false opinion, the more so because it is injurious to the glory of the Emperor my Master, no other authority than that of the Emperor himself, for which all the ministers were mere executors of the orders which daily and hourly issued from his mouth regarding all matters of business. he had reserved for himself alone the authority of Master, which he was, not transferring any portion of power to anyone, no matter who, to understand all, see all, decide all, order all, by himself alone, to work without ceasing eight hours each day at these affairs, and to render justice to his subjects. myself, whom you see seated just as the Grand Vizier would be in Constantinople, am but a minor secretary of his Imperial Majesty, who puts me to work night and day writing up his decisions regarding my

²⁵ Laurent D’Arvieux, *Mémoires Du Chevalier D’arvieux: Contenant Ses Voyages À Constantinople, Dans L’asie, La Syrie, La Palestine, L’egypte, & Le Barbarie*, Recüillis De Ses Mémoires Originaux, & Mis En Ordre AVEC Des Réflexions. Par Jean Baptiste Labat, (Paris: C.J.B.Delespine, 1735), 150; As translated in Garritt Van Dyk, "The Embassy Of Soliman Ağa to Louis XIV: Diplomacy, Dress, and Diamonds." EMAJ: Electronic Melbourne Art Journal, (Emaj: Electronic Melbourne Art Journal, 2017): 9-10.

particular area of affairs; and after I have set his thoughts to paper I bring them back to him to learn? whether I have rightly understood his will and his intentions, and he corrects me or not according to whether he finds my interpretation good or bad.²⁶

His long lecture to Süleyman Ağa about the French governmental system and its hierarchy ended with Süleyman Ağa declaring that he is in fact not in France to be lectured about the French court, but to deliver the letter to the king of France as it was required by the Sultan himself:

I did not come here to be instructed in the manner of France's government; it is sufficient to know that the Emperor of France is a great and powerful monarch, for whom I have plenty of respect. My master sent me to deliver a letter to him, and to assure him of his continued friendship.... I will return when I have placed [this letter] in his hands, and when I have received his response: that is my commission, I have no other purpose beside it, and I sincerely beg you to procure me this satisfaction.²⁷

In this strange setting and bewildering ambition, my research begins with a display of French identity and its customs, dressed in the attire of the 'other', the barbarous Turk, among exotic oriental furniture. Why did M. de Lionne feel the necessity to accept the Turkish ambassador in his audience in an oriental setting? What is the significance of discarding French diplomatic ceremonials to accept a foreign ambassador assuming Ottoman customs instead? And finally, if this is an absurd power display strategy, how was this attitude read by the Turkish envoy and

²⁶ As translated in Julia A. Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey: The Impact of Turkey on the Construction of French Identity, 1660–1789* (2001), 38-39. I discuss this letter and the event in more detail in Chapter 2.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 41.

their leader Süleyman Ağa? Rycout suggests that “the novelty of Turkish dress is attractive to ‘common people’ partly because it permits an appropriation of foreign symbols of status.”²⁸ Although M. Lionne’s French title was significantly lower in rank than the equivalent of a Grand Vizier, it would be pointless to examine this cross-cultural attire as an intention of status seeking. I am taking an ethnographical approach in that I am going to create a thick description as much as my evidence permits, as Clifford Geertz utilizes. I am aiming to generate a subjective understanding of M. de Lionne’s behavior in order to build a clear context to comprehend the Turkish envoy’s perception of this masquerade.²⁹ Not an objective observance of the attitudes displayed by these two parties, rather a subjective analysis of these parties’ interpretation and response to these attitudes. I will analyze its sociological and anthropological indicators from a performance studies perspective, juxtaposing the Ottoman court audience ceremonies to that of the French court, and further examining the Ottoman Empire, Turkishness, and their significance in French common life in the 17th century. At the same time, I will search for an answer for how this significant power game produced spiteful and covert interests in each other and outlined each nation’s identity putting forth who they are not, and they will not be as well.

From its financial reasons through the French courts’ approach to Süleyman Ağa there were countless compelling and confusing occurrences during this visit. The language, translation, religion, clothing, courtly manners, civility, gentility, the court entertainment... it is almost impossible to find a mutual point between these two sides. Although they were trying to make sense of each other, their desire to display power sets up this diplomatic failure, which I will

²⁸ Rycout, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 147; As translated in Garret, “the Embassy of Süleyman Ağa,” 9.

²⁹ For more information see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-54.

elaborate on later. The obvious reason for the visit, as usually indicated by historians, was repairing the highly damaged Franco-Ottoman relationship which had existed since Francis I began searching for an alliance against the house of Habsburg, and his mother, Louise de Savoie asked for help from Süleyman the Magnificent after her son's imprisonment by Charles V in 1525. The Sultan answered this call infamously:

I who am the Sultan of Sultans, the sovereign of sovereigns, the dispenser of crowns to the monarchs on the face of the earth, the shadow of the God on Earth, the Sultan and sovereign lord of the Mediterranean Sea and of the Black Sea, of Rumelia and of Anatolia, of Karamania, of the land of Romans, of Dhulkadria, of Diyarbakir, of Kurdistan, of Azerbaijan, of Persia, of Damascus, of Aleppo, of Cairo, of Mecca, of Medina, of Jerusalem, of all Arabia, of Yemen and of many other lands which my noble fore-fathers and my glorious ancestors (may God light up their tombs!) conquered by the force of their arms and which my August Majesty has made subject to my flamboyant sword and my victorious blade, I, Sultan Suleiman Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan, son of Sultan Bayezid Khan: To thee who art Francesco, king of the province of France...³⁰

This letter represents the enormity of Ottomans and their true meaning to the Christian European world. In every step, decision, and warfare between European nations, there lays the ceaseless pressure of the Ottoman Empire on the European rulers' shoulders. Historian Alan Mikhail insists that the role Ottomans played in shaping European thoughts and politics since this time "has been dismissed or ignored by professional historians and lays readers alike." He explains, "Yet, Muslims were integral to what is inevitably a shared history. The ineluctable fact is that the

³⁰ As translated in A. Nuri Yurdusev, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional? Studies in Diplomacy* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 19.

Ottoman Empire made our modern world - which is, admittedly, a bitter pill for many in the West.”³¹ In fact, we see the Ottoman Empire’s influence on how the European diplomacy developed, and how the Ottoman Empire maintained the balance of the power between the European states.³² Although in the 17th century, we see the hope of diminishing the power of the Turks over the European states, and from time to time some tentative recalcitration against it occurred as well, it was beyond any courtly imagination to suppress its power or colonialize it.³³ In order to consolidate the claim above and underline the meaning the letter of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent to the French king, Francis I, we should consult Mikhail again;

For half a century before 1492, and for centuries afterward, the Ottoman Empire stood as the most powerful state on earth: the largest empire in the Mediterranean since ancient Rome, and the most enduring in the history of Islam. In the decades around 1500, the Ottomans controlled more territory and ruled over more people than any other world power. It was the Ottoman monopoly of trade routes with the East, combined with their military prowess on land and on sea, that pushed Spain and Portugal out of the Mediterranean, forcing merchants and sailors from these fifteenth-century kingdoms to become global explorers as they risked treacherous voyages across oceans and around continents- all to avoid the Ottomans.³⁴

³¹ Alan Mikhail, *God's Shadow: Sultan Selim, His Ottoman Empire, and the Making of the Modern World* (New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a Division of W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 3.

³² For further and detailed information see A. Nuri Yurdusev, *Ottoman Diplomacy*.

³³ See Faruk Bilici, *Louis XIV Et Son Projet De Conquete D'Istanbul* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından. XI Seri; Sayı 11. Société D'histoire Turque, 2004).

³⁴ Alan Mikhail, *God's Shadow*, 2.

Notwithstanding, we should naturally consider that the power of the Ottoman Empire had been challenged and in fact they started losing. Furthermore, their internal conflicts distracted them from external affairs which still included projecting their political power over European nations at the beginning of 17th century. However, none of the European states would show an attempt to defeat the Empire for the next 300 years. And yet, I believe for each individual European nation supporting the crusades—which were attempted over and over again against the Islamic East, naturally including the Ottoman Empire—was the requirement of their commitment to Christianity and the papacy without an assumption of victory against the Ottomans, at least until the failure of the siege of Vienna in 1683.

In this environment, during the reign of Louis XIV, France was stuck between the Ottoman alliance and Christian Europe. This conflict is revealed when the French troops that were supporting Venetians in Crete fought against Ottomans, although not under the French banner in order to conceal their collaboration.³⁵ Furthermore, Louis XIV sent a message to the Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha excusing their behavior in the name of protecting their status in the European state. Ottomans of course were aware of this double playing and they were refusing renewal of the capitulations which gave privilege to French merchants over the Dutch and British at the Porte.³⁶ The French ambassador de La Haye had failed his diplomatic negotiations with the Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha, who had personal animosity for the father of La Haye and consequently the son La Haye as well. Even the death of Köprülü Mehmet Pasha did not change anything since his position was succeeded by his son, Köprülü Fazıl Ahmet Pasha. Consequently, Denis de La Haye was recalled by the king after his ineffectualness.

³⁵ Philip McCluskey, "Commerce before Crusade? France, the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary Pirates (1661-1669)." *French History* 23, no. 1 (2009): 1-21, 2-5.

³⁶ Ibid. See C. D. Rouillard also.

However, there was no attempt to send a new ambassador to the Porte and it caused speculation among the Ottoman government.³⁷ The rumor of preparations for a possible new crusade created discomfort in the government and of course triggered questioning of the French alliance with the Ottoman state, which was further exacerbated by France recalling the French ambassador without any further plan of replacing him. Köprülü Fazıl Ahmet Pasha, the Grand Vizier, was leading the war in Crete and de La Haye utilized this opportunity to attempt one last negotiation with Ottomans in his absence, right before the French vessels arrived in Porte to collect him. He convinced Kaymakam³⁸ to send a letter to Paris to ensure the king of the Ottoman's good will and their friendship. All of this effort was to go back to his country not as a failure, but a bureaucrat who established his mission successfully. While everything seemed like regular diplomatic negotiation until this moment, the case becomes complicated and challenging to analyze with the following events. First of all, La Haye offered to cover the envoys expenses. This is extremely confounding because the Ottoman Empire had covered the expenses of foreign ambassadors upon their entry into the empire's land, and the empire had expected the exact same treatment from foreign governments toward its ambassadors. This was counter to the traditions in European nations. It was not their diplomatic custom to cover foreign ambassadors' expenses, however they accepted this treatment towards the Ottoman ambassador for at least several decades prior. Second, de La Haye appoints his dragomen as Süleyman Ağa's interpreter. This is also intriguing since the Ottomans were so particular about the communication and interpretation of the languages, especially during negotiations, to prevent any direct or symbolic insult to the empire. I am skeptical that they trusted the French ambassador's dragomen in this mission.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ A title equivalent to district governor in the Ottoman governmental system.

Hence it needs further investigation. Third, the Ottoman ambassador was sent to the French court without a gift for the French King. This is also antithetical to the Ottoman tradition. Fourth, the ambassador sailed with the French vessels which had been sent to retrieve the French ambassador, instead of an Ottoman vessel. Finally, every single original document belonging to the Ottomans regarding this encounter seems to have vanished from both Ottoman and French archives.

There were only two months between the decision by the Ottoman Empire to send an envoy to the king of France, and the departing of the envoy to Toulon. Thus, there was such a rush behind this visit and very likely there was not enough time for Süleyman Ağa to adequately prepare for a mission of this magnitude. The mission is often described as delivering a letter from Ottoman Sultan to the French king. However, the envoy's mission and ambassador Süleyman Ağa's title caused a series of diplomatic confusions among the French statement regarding the acceptance of Süleyman Ağa as an ambassador or rather a lower rank.³⁹ This has been interpreted by scholars such that Süleyman Ağa is viewed as a falsifier who lied to the French officials about his mission. It is my argument that these remarks come from both a lack of knowledge at worst, and misassumptions at least, about the Ottoman state system and some implicit bias. You will find further information about the ambassadorial system employed by the Ottomans in Chapter One. Many scholars explain Hughes de Lionne's cross-cultural dressing as an effort of taking over the Sultan's letter and attempting to identify Süleyman Ağa's credentials in it before allowing him to have an audience before the king, in order to prevent a potentially embarrassing situation for the king.⁴⁰ In fact during the second meeting with Süleyman Ağa,

³⁹ McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris," 343- 45.

⁴⁰ See related studies from C.D. Rouillard, Julie Landweber, Phil McCluskey, Mary Hossain, Ellen R. Welch. Van Dick Garret, Ellen M. McClure, David William Hammerbeck.

Lionne, who was intriguingly in Grand Vizier attire again, proclaimed “The king summoned me to treat with you, whether you are an ambassador or only an envoy, in the same way the principal ministers of your emperor use with our ambassadors and envoys...”. This might be true for some respects; however, it would be a weak argument considering the entire mission was the French ambassador La Haye’s idea. He was involved with Süleyman Ağa’s appointment for the mission; therefore, it is unlikely that the French court was oblivious to this envoy’s mission and its leader’s rank. In fact, sieur de La Gibertie, who was appointed by the king to receive Süleyman Ağa and his envoy from Toulon, was ensured by the dragoman, La Fontaine, who used to work for the French Embassy in Porte, that Süleyman Ağa was indeed an ambassador. Thus, La Gibertie arranged a formal entrée the way French accepts the foreign ambassadors:

The Consuls [provincial governors], dressed in their ceremonial robes, were presented by the Sieur de la Gibertie and made their compliments to the Ağa at the city gate. Then, flanked by the Sieur de la Gibertie and the First Consul, he marched into the city through a double line of soldiers to the roar of canons, which began firing the moment the Ağa passed under the gate in imitation of the custom of the Turks who salute Ambassadors thus with their canon.⁴¹

If La Gibertie was convinced of Süleyman Ağa’s credentials, then why did M. de Lionne need to question the envoy’s title again? How many times did the French government need to be assured in order to accept Süleyman Ağa as Ottoman ambassador? What was the reason for this constant questioning unless they were searching for the information which might have been written in the letter? What was the real aim of approaching Süleyman Ağa differently than other nations’

⁴¹ Le Dran, “Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669,” AE/MD/ Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fols. 59r/v; As translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 30.

ambassador at the French Court? And why did Süleyman Ağa repeatedly refuse to show the letter to prove his credentials? Can we find a trace that leads us to an unrevealed ambition in the effort to deny Süleyman Ağa's ambassadorial identity distinct from what the general assumptions about the event impose? I provide possible answers for these questions in my research.

Through this research I will bring these questions to the surface studying events both directly and peripherally related to Süleyman Ağa, such as the state of the relationship between these two nations before and after the ambassadorial visit, Ottoman state ceremonial traditions and courtly bureaucracy and hierarchal structure. I also plan to discuss the political background, warfare contacts, and the Ottoman fashion in France called *turquerie*. Lastly, I will analyze a French comedy ballet written shortly after the visit, a fictional diary, *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy*, regarding Süleyman Ağa's temperament and nature while in France, and an anonymous Ottoman manuscript which was found among the French archival materials that contains a variety of documents from Süleyman Ağa's visit to the French court.

Methodology

In fact, there are a lot of difficulties and risks in bringing this kind of completely unfamiliar and strange topic to the performance studies as whole. First, because it is a rare topic, examples of scholarly works of this kind are few, and it requires the adaptation of an appropriate methodology in order to make an unfamiliar object more familiar for the audience. Naturally, it means numerous descriptions and definitions, repetition, and challenging readings both for the scholar and the readers. Thus, I utilize mixed methodologies, borrowing from variety of scholars and their theories through this study. First and foremost, I feel obligated to visit Edward Said and Orientalism since my work defines the Orient exclusively. Although, Said's studies focus on the

post-18th century phenomena, belligerently excluding the Ottomans as they had never been a colonized state, his work still speaks for 17th century Franco-Ottoman interaction at its core. Other theories will be utilized in this work include but are not limited to Cultural materialism, Cultural Studies, and the New Historicism as well.

One of the agonizing realizations that this research revealed is how numerous scholars who have worked on this subject, either contemporary to the event or greatly more modern, consciously or unconsciously construct the events by othering the Ottomans Empire following only French footprints, and assuming politeness as a French quality, perhaps even inherent in French-ness. Naturally, while the uniquely convoluted dichotomy of these entities has intrigued historians accordingly, these studies have predominantly fallen into the trap of Orientalist prejudice and remain centered on France and its centuries long ceaseless othering of the Ottoman Empire. It is seen in individuals' memoirs, in its most popular art forms, and even in the courts' national archives.

Perhaps through the process of working on one of the most captivating events in Ottoman history, the most disappointing part is a lack of available Ottoman primary documents for the historian who then must repeatedly rely on the European accounts of events. This is not because of the lack of the archival material of Ottoman state, but the lack of available archival documents in still effective languages. This insufficiency naturally and awfully constrains the historian to look at this enormous empire, which possessed over 600 years of world history, from the eyes of the others from a vastly western gaze, which lacks objectivity but provides ample amounts of islamophobia and orientalist fantasies. Thus, utilizing only a single account of the confrontations that occurred, opinion and custom drags the historian into the same eternal whirlpool about which Cem Erimtan warns us rephrasing historian Cemal Kafadar, "One cannot but recognize

that certain ideas and notions have been too readily re-circulated without scrutiny in many scholarly narratives dealing with Ottoman History.”⁴² Despite this deficiency Ottoman history provides innumerable enchanting narratives that force modern historians to reconstruct and reimagine its history independent from the consuetudinal way. And new archival works allow more scholars to work on Ottoman subjects.

My ambition through this research might be seen as one of the failing attempts to give voice to the “unvoiced”⁴³ and dismantling the ‘regime of truth’⁴⁴, however it is actually bringing evidence which has been disregarded from consideration previously. My main question is while constructing the historical events and, as I claimed earlier, give an equal voice to the accounts, what additional evidence can we collect? How can a scholar understand what the historical characters were thinking? How can I present an educated guess as to allege what was filling the minds of the participants through these events? Especially while the one side of the accounts provides bountiful evidence, from eyewitnesses to courtly documents, and the rival side keeps its secret hidden, as if they had never existed. By leaving a wide emptiness behind it, no matter what either we ignore the emptiness that the account left behind or, consciously or not, lean over to one side because it provides more abundant evidence. We end up losing our direction; our descriptions then possess missing meanings. Our theses, even if they are not wrong, cannot be true. “The material evocation of the not-there, and the ideology by which the gaps remain not

⁴²Can Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West? The Origins of the Tulip Age and Its Development in Modern Turkey*, Library of Ottoman Studies; v. 14 (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies; Distributed in the USA by Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁴³ Esin Akalin, *Discovering Self and Other: Representations of Ottoman Turks in English Drama (1656–1792)* (2001), 8.

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1. Trans Robert Hurley (New York, Vintage Books, 1980), 131.

there, has been made more present than the broken and reassembled pieces that do remain”⁴⁵ says Odai Johnson, while he traces the wholeness from its missing ends of history. This research, hence, follows the gaps between the French documents, and juxtaposes the missing pieces in their wholeness with their equivalent in extant Ottoman documents. In doing so, this research will bring numerous analyses and descriptions of events well documented by Ottoman sources, both before and after the events that are of primary concern so that we can comprehend in general what is expected of an Ottoman bureaucrat’s behavior pattern. Hereby, as Robert Darnton suggests, I will “...attempt to show not merely what people thought but how they thought - how they construed the world, invested it with meaning, and infused it with emotion.”⁴⁶

Alain Grosrichard starts his fascinating work, *the Sultan’s Court* by examining, describing, and exemplifying Asian despotism, based on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and follows its trace deep into European possession of oriental fantasies.⁴⁷ Throughout Aristotle’s description of despotism and tyranny, and his effort to bring his own justification for situating aristocracy over tyranny, since aristocracy comes with nature and is built upon knowledge and nonetheless tyranny puts eye on wealth and power over its populace, Grosrichard underlines that “He (Aristotle) contrasts the peoples of the north of Europe and those of Asia; in the north they are full of spirit, but lack ingenuity; they are therefore able to preserve their freedom, but unable ever to dominate others”.⁴⁸ However, Asians (and/or Non-Greeks in his case) intellectual and skillful from their souls without any spirit which subsidizes them “more slavish than Greeks”, and their

⁴⁵ Odai Johnson, *Ruins: Classical Theater and Broken Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 1.

⁴⁶ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 1.

⁴⁷ Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, 17.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

kingship comes from this nature. Basically, as Grosrichard concludes according to Aristotelian thought, as I described it earlier, barbarians cannot possess any power above their existence, therefore they should be ruled by Greeks. We easily find the extension of this belief in 17th century France as Paul Rycaut exemplifies, “[O]ne need not be surprised that the Turks are happy in servitude and that they live gladly under tyranny, since for them this is a natural as it is for a body to live and to be nourished on the food to which it has been accustomed since childhood.”⁴⁹ While this belief system is an effort to legitimizing colonizing the inferior this research is interested in how this effort creates national identity over the inferior ‘other’ regardless of its presence or absence, as we observe in the case study of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. French literature scholar Peter France describes that constant structuring principle which:

... has operated mainly in the minds of the ‘civilized’, who define their society, manners and speech by opposition too what they call savage, barbarous, uncouth.... For the European then, the savage and the barbarian are the other - like the madman. They easily become the object of a mythologizing representation, through which the civilized subject of discourse can express in a potent form his or her fears and desires European writing is full of the opposition between the rational civilized self and the wild Other, and not only writing, for some of the strongest images are visual.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ As translated in Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, 22.

⁵⁰ Peter France, "Western European Civilization and Its Mountain Frontiers (1750–1850)." *History of European Ideas* 6, no. 3 (1985): 297-310, 1.

We observe this regularized attitude in the pamphlets and in the news that *Gazette* and *Mercury* covered in their issues and which Grosrichard righteously asserts:

And this vast literary output (which keeps on growing up until the middle of the eighteenth century) is not just the mere result of fashion... Have we inquired deeply enough into the strange and complex relation that is at the root of this literature's success? An entire century took pleasure in making itself seen through what it burned to go and see; in revealing to itself the truth about its princes, its obeisance, its way of making love—in short, all its madness—through the artifice of a gaze which, it tells itself, is foreign. This gaze, which to me is other, knows more about me than I do myself. And when I attempt to go and look behind what I believe to be the point from which, over there in that other world, it looks at me, it is myself and our world that I find in the end.⁵¹

This research follows Grosrichard's invitation to making sense of this gaze throughout Grosrichard's 'fictional Asian despotism' lens and trying to understand it in the widest possible context. Ric Knowles in his book *Reading the Material Theater*, notes that the "[t]raditional way of analyzing drama and theater has tended to focus on what happens on stage or in the script."⁵² This means that this aim produces only a search for the absolute meaning of text or the performance, disregarding how these indicators are perceived by different nations, cultures, and customs. It centralizes only one meaning, accepted as a universal phenomenon by the scholars. However, Knowles acknowledges, "in doing so, such work tends in the interests of what is

⁵¹Grosrichard. *The Sultan's Court*, 24-25.

⁵² Ric Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9.

understood to be universal truth to police the norms and commonsense understandings of dominant cultures, and to effect significant cultural, material differences based on such things as national, political, cultural, and geographical location, together with class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.”⁵³ Thus the traditional reading by historians of this visit, its meaning and its effect remains within the limits of French cultural perception and -later on- the manipulative reaction to the event. This was, as I claim, the main purpose of the event which was particularly set up by the French. Naturally, this French-centric reading of the performativity of this visit and the individual encounters has forced Ottoman accounts to remain silent for centuries. Hence, in this research I aim to reconstruct both accounts’ transgressive and transformative input in this historical phenomenon and analyze what they performed, for whom they performed, and how their performances were read by the other account. For instance, how did Süleyman Ağa perceive the meaning of the audience that Hughes de Lionne meticulously prepared for him, in assuming a Grand Vizier role, dressing in a kaftan and turban which absolutely belongs to the orient that they have otherized, and egregiously decorating it with a huge cross on his neck which symbolizes only the west in the French mind?

As I underlined earlier the lack of the evidential material from the Ottoman Empire account limits the close reading of the indicators and how they were perceived by the Ottoman envoy during and after this encounter. Then how we can examine both accounts objectively and equally? How can a complexly introverted account, in this case study, reveal the significance of this interaction truthfully without any false interpretation? In this specific purpose I will

⁵³ Ibid, 9-10.

juxtapose similar accounts in the Ottoman Empire which have been verbalized and studied in more detail than in the case of Süleyman Ağa and provide sufficient documents.

Review of the Literature

This research is primarily influenced by three historians and their work about and around this subject; C.D Rouillard, Julia Landweber, and Phil McCluskey. In his work *The Turk in French History, Thought and Literature 1520-1660* Rouillard presents an extremely valuable source for scholars and provides excessive study of the Turk in French literature along with their political and social background and importance in French daily life and culture. Although his work concludes with 1660, the foundation of his work illuminates even the following century. His article “The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*,” also has become a valuable guide and a handbook for this study and helped me focus on specific points. Landweber also provides numerous sources to specifically examine the visit and the consequences of the encounter. She mostly focuses on the national identity of France throughout the comedy-ballet *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and studies the interrelation between the protagonist of the comedy ballet, M. Jourdain, and the court interpreter Laurent D’Arvieux. Phil McCluskey examines the period with two articles and provides interesting insights into the visit and the Franco-Ottoman relationship more from a political and financial stance. He brings a great deal of comparative information and knowledge about the subject from both sides of the account.

The language issue during this encounter is recognized by many scholars since the main source for these events is provided by D’Arvieux in his memoirs. As a merchant in the Orient D’Arvieux had learned a few oriental languages from Arabic and Persian to Ottoman Turkish, and after his return to France, consequences placed him in the middle of this affair between the

Turks and the French King. In *The Training of Interpreters in Arabic and Turkish Under Louis XIV*, mostly utilizing the memoir of D'Arvieux, Mary Hossain describes how the visit of Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa caused the French government to recognize the necessity of establishing an institutionalized interpretation system for developing more effective and beneficial communications with foreign nations, especially those in the East. In her earlier article *The Chevalier D'arvieux and 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, on the other hand, she traces D'Arvieux's collaboration and contribution to the play to comprehend his reliability about the actual events. In doing so she examines his memoirs, establishing a close reading of them. Ellen R. Welch, in her article *Dancing the Nation: Performing France in the Seventeenth Century* "Ballets de nations" focuses on the performativity of ballets and 'Ballets de nations' and what these presentations of the other nations' stereotypical representation means for the French identity. In his analyses of music, John S. Powell allows us to study a wider frame of this phenomenon and comprehend the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* with all its technical and diplomatic aspects, include its music throughout his article "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme: Moliere and Music*". Michele Longino analyses orientalism in French Classical Drama and studies the comedy ballet with its political and ideological context and provides a deeper context of the orientalist approach to the stage performances in the 17th century France. Other than these scholars, works from Daren Hodson, Ali Behdad, Esin Akalin, Matthew William Head, Inge Boer, Van Dick Garret, and David William Hammerback are included. These authors showed interest in the subject and produced inestimable works for the field.

During my research I examined numerous documents in their original languages which include French, Turkish, Italian, and Ottoman-Turkish. Although I studied these documents in their original languages, I only made independent translations of several of these documents to

English. The majority of original Ottoman documents were translated to Turkish by Ahmet Gokhan Kaynakci and several of the French documents were translated to English by Irina Dorfman for this project. I also benefited from the works of scholars who have worked previously on this subject by utilizing their translations of the original material. These instances are indicated in the footnotes throughout this dissertation.

The Turkish view of this event is mostly provided by historians such as Ahmet Refik, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Faik Reşit Unat, Gündüz Akıncı, Von Hammer, Faruk Bilici, A. Nuri Yurdusev, M. Alaaddin Yalçınkaya. and many Ottoman language archival materials and manuscripts.

Turquerie become a complicated term more than a simple Ottoman fashion in scholarly analysis. Nebahat Avcioglu is an inspirational scholar with her comprehensive examination of *turquerie*. I follow her approach of making sense of *turquerie* and its context of identity politics in 17th and 18th century France. Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer study how *turquerie* were shaped and influenced French society in their article *Turquerie: Culture In Motion, 1650–1750*. They indicate that “Ottoman culture offered an attractive vocabulary in which new conceptions of leisure, refinement and the body could be articulated. Treating *turqueries* as translations places them at the heart of the process whereby early modern Europeans came to understand Ottoman culture.”⁵⁴ Through the examination of this interaction Bevilacqua and Pfeifer provide an intriguing insight of this cross-cultural fashion. Kendra Van Cleave focuses on *turquerie* in clothing.⁵⁵ Her research interestingly points out how Ottoman clothing offered

⁵⁴Alexander Bevilacqua, and Helen Pfeifer. "Turquerie: Culture In Motion, 1650–1750." *Past & Present* 221, no. 221 (2013): 75-118.

⁵⁵ Kendra Van Cleave, "The Desire to Banish Any Constraint in Clothing," *French Historical Studies* 43, no. 2 (2020): 197-221.

comfort and morality to French society and how this fashion was supported by the enlightenment writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Exoticism as metaphor: Turquerie in eighteenth-century French art* by Perrin Stein is another explicit work on *turquerie* which studies it in plastic arts.⁵⁶ Stein provides the art works with their cultural context and their aesthetic conversation with each other. I study the anonymous manuscript from French National Library as a prolongation of *turquerie* in literature along with Giovanni Paolo Marana's *Letters Writ by Turkish Spy in Paris*. Although their approach is fundamentally different than my analysis, I utilize Gündüz Akıncı and Belkıs Altuniş Gürsoy's brief study on the manuscript.⁵⁷

My research receives many benefits from Aleksandra Porada, Joseph E. Tucker, Beyazıt H. Akman, and Jacob Crane's works on Marana's *Letters Writ by Turkish Spy in Paris* book.⁵⁸ While Porada provides insight about Louis XIV's police force and how this oppression reflects on Marana's book, Tucker examines and traces its authorship and publications. Akman's and Jacob's work on the other hand examine the book and its influence on the other literary works beyond France borders.

My argument is built through the four chapters. In Chapter 1, "Falsity of the 'Friendship'-the background of Franco-Ottoman relationship and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," I focus on the

⁵⁶ Perrin Stein, *Exoticism as Metaphor: Turquerie in Eighteenth-century French Art* (New York: New York University, 1997).

⁵⁷ Gündüz Akıncı. *Türk-Fransız kültür ilişkileri, 1071-1859: Başlangıç Dönemi*, (Ankara, Sevinç Matbaası, 1973); Altuniş Gürsoy, Belkıs. "Siyasetname Hüviyetinde Bir Esaretname." *Erdem*, Ankara 60 (2011): 77.

⁵⁸ Aleksandra Porada, "Giovanni Paolo Marana's Turkish Spy and the Police of Louis XIV: The Fear of Being Secretly Observed by Trained Agents in Early Modern Europe," *Altre Modernità* 11, no. 11 (2014): 96-110; Joseph E. Tucker. "On the Authorship of the "Turkish Spy": An "État Présent," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 52, no. 1 (1958): 34-47; Beyazıt H. Akman, "The Turk's Encounter with Defoe." *Digital Defoe* 1, no. 1 (2009): 76; Jacob Crane, "The Long Transatlantic Career of the Turkish Spy." *Atlantic Studies* (Abingdon, England) 10, no. 2 (2013): 228-46.

governmental differences between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of France. Hence, this chapter must be considered as a guide for western readers to comprehend the Ottoman Empire and France's fundamental customs, their differences, and how these two states perceived each other's differences. In this way the reader might visit this chapter to comprehend some of the cultural clashes occurred during the encounter between France and the Ottoman Empire.

Understanding the Ottoman Governmental system and its diplomatic relations with Foreign nations and the juxtaposition of these customs with the French state system allows us to recognize the fundamental challenges that these two nations were facing during this visit. I also demonstrate the political background of these two alliances in order to provide sufficient information for the reader to comprehend the reasons behind the actions and recognize how the accounts displayed power as well as the circumstances during the encounter between Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa and M. de Lionne, which set the tension of the visit very early on. This chapter mainly aims to make the unfamiliar familiar and the familiar strange again⁵⁹ in that by subverting the French diplomatic narrative and introducing Ottoman customs, I will attempt to objectify the diplomatic interactions. I study these two states' diplomatic and bureaucratic differences with sub-titles: *The Role Model Cardinal Mazarin* introduces the first minister of France during Louis XIII's and the beginning of Louis XIV's reigns and examines his influence on Louis XIV as a strong political figure. *Köprülü Mehmed Pasha* focuses on the Grand Vizier who repaired the political damage that the Ottoman Empire had suffered for the previous three decades. *Before the Visit of Süleyman Ağa* describes the conflicts and political agenda of the Ottoman Empire and France during the first half of the 17th century. *Ottoman Sources* gives some general information

⁵⁹ I used this popular discourse to underline the purpose of this research as bringing the unspoken object 'other' to our attention to discuss a different angle of the encounter.

about the archival documents that a scholar can utilize for studying Ottoman government's custom and traditions and importantly, its approach foreign diplomacy. *Choosing an Ottoman ambassador* and *Ottoman receiving ceremony for foreign ambassadors* examine and juxtapose how the government of the Ottoman Empire approached either their ambassadors or foreign ambassadors in Sublime Porte. *1669 and Süleyman Ağa* focuses on Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa, his identity, and how he prepared for his mission. *The Ambassadorial Cortège and the Mission* gives insight about the expectation from this mission and *Intermingle* guides the reader on how to utilize the given information.

Chapter 2, *Re-examining the Ottoman Ambassador in the French Court, and the Performativity of the Encounter*, consists of three parts. The first part argues how the French literature and stage performances, and the Turk image that they contained, set the expectations for the French population of an Oriental image during the Turkish envoy's visit. The second part analyzes the significance of cross-national dressing, its implications while reconstructing the two events which Hughes de Lionne and Süleyman Ağa confronted, as well as the audience for king Louis XIV. Finally, this chapter exhibits the difficulties of interpretation of cultures along with their languages and how this issue set the malfunction of the mission. I examine French court reports, newspaper articles, and analyze the performative details of these intriguing encounters between Ottoman envoy and French court nobles. These encounters' details also reveal how the representation of Turkish images change throughout the political and diplomatic developments, and how these phenomena effect the French mind. This chapter also builds the fundamental arguments of chapter three which I examine Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and chapter four which I display *turqueire* as a milestone in French public discovery of self and power.

Chapter 3- *Replacing the Turk: Louis XIV versus Süleyman Ağa: Commissioning of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, analyses of commissioning *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, its relationship with the ambassadorial visit and the ambition of the play and includes studies of other French court ballets which were produced before and after the visit. Moreover, it traces the image of Turk throughout these performances to examine *turquerie*. How did *turquerie* consist of French desire of power and title? How was it permitted by the king for public utilization? And how did these performances, the visit of Süleyman Ağa, and *turquerie* force construction of the French identity, cultural imperialism, equated French-ness to politeness, and took ownership of the title ‘civilized nation’? I examine the play and the Turkish imagery in it to bring answers for these challenging questions. This chapter illuminates the strong connection of the Ottoman Empire and France via analysis of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. In this way, this chapter aims to extend the cross-cultural perspectives to broaden the performance studies perspective on the subject.

Chapter 4, *Turquerie as a Statement of Freedom from Courtly Performances to Literature*, examines *turquerie* with its powerful and unique examples in French court and public. In order to map *turquerie*, in this chapter I study its historiographical development, and analyze its significance in the French minds. I also investigate its meaning for the French identity beyond its definition. I exemplify Louis XV’s mistress Madame Pompadour, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and a well known fictional diary *Letters Written by a Turkish Spy, Who Lived Forty Years Undiscovered at Paris*, along with an intriguing manuscript which has not yet been analyzed from the mid- 17th century, which is written in Ottoman Turkish by an anonymous writer who claimed to be an Ottoman Turk at Louis XIV’s court. I claim in this chapter that both texts were likely written by French writers assuming the role of an Ottoman Turk and with this action they went beyond the fashion of *turquerie*. They did not only assume the Turkish costume

and manners, but also attempted to comprehend the mind of the Turk. This chapter studies this ‘rites of passage’ attempt, utilizing mixed discourses borrowing from variable methodologies.

The conclusion of this research brings all the studied pieces throughout this research together to summarize how the visit of Süleyman Ağa caused the French nation to question their identity and how they utilized court performances, theater plays, ballets, and the fashion ‘*turquerie*’ for this purpose while creating the ‘other’ to define what they were not, and hence, what they were.

Chapter I. Falsity of the ‘Friendship’- the Background of Franco-Ottoman Relationship and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*

The Ottoman ambassador Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa’s visit to Louis XIV’s court in 1669 and the consecutive events during and after this encounter provides fascinating veracity about these two nations reciprocal relationship, their national identity and political priorities, each desiring and maintaining imperial power over Europe and the rest of the world.

Furthermore, this encounter manifests as the most violent contact zone in the name of diplomatic courtesy between these two powers.

Concurrently numerous questions arise due to the participants’ mysterious and obscure behaviors towards each other. While this diplomatic encounter exemplifies numerous diplomatic wrongdoings; at the same time, it carries the gravity of a complete clash between these two deeply different cultures and everything that they represent in a strict denial of acceptance of the ‘other’. Opportunities for misunderstanding abound, for example, it might be seen as simply the desire to act superior or as an intentional power display. Thus, the parties had interiorized theatrical tools such as ‘role playing’ and ‘imbodying’ to portray how they want to be seen in order to enact political ploys. We see this attitude especially when the French diplomats were suspicious about Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa’s credentials and his exact title while preparing an appropriate acceptance ceremony. However, as I will explain further, this attitude was impertinent and possessed a secondary meaning. Therefore, this series of events must be studied from a different perspective than the traditional way, in fact, as I claim in this work; everything about this visit was a meticulously planned diplomatic encounter which was set to fail on purpose. The intent was to achieve more complicated benefits than simply displaying power, or than the prevailing interpretation of a naïve good deed.

Therefore, in the subsequent chapters I aim to read these encounters and their allegorical meanings from a performance studies point of view since the performativity of the events may reveal more pertinent information about how these nations' current representations and identities was built by these attitudes. Previous attempts to analyze this diplomatic visit have centered on French-ness, because the vast evidence from this encounter is provided by the French historical archives. As such the traditional approach to reading their meaning is inadequate to fill the gaps between the courts' diplomatic performances. Hence, I display the context of the Franco-Ottoman relationship by including the Ottoman perspective in this chapter.

It is important to briefly review the history of the Franco-Ottoman association to understand the foundation of this research. In fact, in each chapter we must continually reference to these two nations' interactions as far back as the 16th century to gain a complete understanding of events. Considering the foundational ambitions of diplomacy, Historian Nuri Yurdusev frames it starkly, "It is the system and art of communication between sovereign states and its chief function is negotiation. Diplomacy, then, relates to peaceful relations; war is not diplomacy."⁶⁰ Thus, it needs to be supervised carefully to allow the participants to create a unique language, different than their own, at once unifying and comprehensive, and with recognition and protections of reciprocal benefits. The so-called friendship between the Ottoman Empire and France, thus, was built on these benefits with extremely sensitive communicative efforts. It is intriguing to inspect this effort in the 1669 visit of an Ottoman diplomatic envoy to France since it reveals the accounts' strong resistance to what each other was and instead insisting on what they desire that the other was.

⁶⁰ A. Nuri Yurdusev, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional? Studies in Diplomacy* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10.

C. D. Rouillard studies the Ottoman Empire and France interrelations and how Ottoman influence is evident in French literature and theater. In his fascinating and extensive work *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)* he provides invaluable insight to comprehend how French minds were shaped by the Ottoman Empire and its actions.⁶¹ Rouillard posits in his article “The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*” that France was not ready to receive Turks at this time.⁶² Indeed, in my opinion, they were not ready to meet the Turk yet since the Turk they were going to meet would not exemplify their fantasies about the Turks. However, Rouillard’s reasoning is different than mine; he reads the event as a complete diplomatic failure because, according to him, since the beginning of the visit there were numerous confusing, complicated, and undesirable moments that occurred simultaneously.⁶³ In fact, to state a few of these briefly, these diplomatic dilemmas included the size of the Süleyman Ağa’s envoy, his credentials, the act of preparing a proper receiving ceremony for him, how the French government should receive the letter which was sent by the Sultan and there were many more. These are somewhat expected in diplomatic negotiations. However, an interesting aspect in this reading is, although the hesitations of the French bureaucrats indicated ill-considered manners, the general approach of historians has been to find Süleyman Ağa at fault because of his self-sufficient attitude towards the French government and its bureaucrats. For instance, Albert Vandal describes Süleyman Ağa’s behavior as “religious fanaticism, fiery pride... and above all, mistrust of infidels.”⁶⁴ William j. Bernstein

⁶¹ Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)* Etudes De Littérature Étrangère Et Comparée; 13. (Paris: Boivin, 1941).

⁶² Clarence Dana Rouillard, “The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1969), 33-52.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Albert Vandal, *L’odysee d’un ambassadeur: Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)* (Paris, 1900), 23-27; as translated in Phil McCluskey, “An Ottoman Envoy in Paris: Süleyman

writes about Süleyman Ağa "...insolently wearing a simple wool coat and refusing to bow before the bejeweled Louis XIV, he addressed the Sun King as an equal and was instantly banished to Paris. His embassy may have failed, but his coffee succeeded..."⁶⁵ Julia Anne Landweber who is pioneer in this subject, recognizes the host, the French government's- rudeness, however does not hesitate in remarking that the blame is on Süleyman Ağa, "Everything wrong with the 1669 mission stemmed from Suleiman himself, from the conflict between his highly aggrandized self-perception and the less than satisfying treatment he was accorded by his French hosts."⁶⁶ These and many other instances of discourse about Turks, especially those created around this visit, draw interest to what Süleyman Ağa displayed during this visit in order to receive such complex dislike by commentators of the event. I will find answers for this intriguing question later. Before describing the Turkish envoy in Paris, the events following this, and a close reading of their performativity, I will frame a brief history of these two nations, their alignments, and how these shaped and balance of power in Europe, and in so and what benefits were received by the parties. This background will be a guide for comprehending the connections between events and people later in this research.

Before 1669

With the Ottoman Empire's 10th Padişah Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent having ascended to the throne of the empire, the Ottoman gaze firmly shifted to Europe and there began planning for their extension through European lands. However, this ambition was blocked by Europe's

Ağa's Mission to the Court of Louis XIV, 1669." *Osmanlı Araştırmaları = The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 48 (2016), 339.

⁶⁵ William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 247.

⁶⁶ Julia Anne Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey: The Impact of Turkey on the Construction of French Identity, 1660--1789* (Rutgers University, 2001), 27.

strongest dynasty the Habsburgs and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. His powerful navy and military had become the biggest obstacle confronting the Ottomans and it firmly controlled the land and Mediterranean passages to Europe. Moreover, because of the Habsburg's strength, the balance of power in Europe was already turning against the Ottomans' will and against the Ottomans' interests. On the other hand, the king of France, Francis I, was feeling threatened by the Habsburg's expansionist policy and with the pope's help, attacked Charles V to attempt to decelerate his increasing power. However, the Habsburg forces defeated the French and took the French king Francis I as a prisoner of war. Following this, the mother of Francis I, Louise de Savoie, asked for help from the only state that could help balance European power in France's favor, and so sent an envoy with a secret message to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. It was not only a unique opportunity for the Ottoman Empire to ally with a Christian state, but also it would be one less nation supporting crusading troops against the Ottomans. Sultan Süleyman declared a guardianship role in a letter, in which clarifies the scope of the relationship between the Ottomans and France, and the definite hierarchical order along with his inviolable support in 1526:

I who am the Sultan of Sultans, the sovereign of sovereigns, the dispenser of crowns to the monarchs on the face of the earth, the shadow of the God on Earth, the Sultan and sovereign lord of the Mediterranean Sea and of the Black Sea, of Rumelia and of Anatolia, of Karamania, of the land of Romans, of Dhulkadria, of Diyarbakir, of Kurdistan, of Azerbaijan, of Persia, of Damascus, of Aleppo, of Cairo, of Mecca, of Medina, of Jerusalem, of all Arabia, of Yemen and of many other lands which my noble fore-fathers and my glorious ancestors (may God light up their tombs!) conquered by the force of their arms and which my August Majesty has made subject to my flamboyant

sword and my victorious blade, I, Sultan Suleiman Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan, son of Sultan Bayezid Khan: To thee who art Francesco, king of the province of France ... You have sent to my Porte, refuge of sovereigns, a letter by the hand of your faithful servant Frangipani, and you have furthermore entrusted to him miscellaneous verbal communications. You have informed me that the enemy has overrun your country and that you are at present in prison and a captive, and you have asked aid and succors for your deliverance. All this your saying having been set forth at the foot of my throne, which controls the world. Your situation has gained my imperial understanding in every detail, and I have considered all of it. There is nothing astonishing in emperors being defeated and made captive. Take courage then, and be not dismayed. Our glorious predecessors and our illustrious ancestors (may God light up their tombs!) have never ceased to make war to repel the foe and conquer his lands. We ourselves have followed in their footsteps, and have at all times conquered provinces and citadels of great strength and difficult of approach. Night and day our horse is saddled and our saber is girt. May the God on High promote righteousness! May whatsoever He will be accomplished! For the rest, question your ambassador and be informed. Know that it will be as said.⁶⁷

This letter is not only important in displaying a comparison of these two states by their size, but it also gives evidence of their fundamental differences in diplomacy and *raison d'état*. It is obvious then the scope of the land and power of these two states' possession was incomparable, which it is beyond dispute that this was common knowledge. Nuri Yurdusev indicates that "the historical record shows that the Ottoman Empire became an active participant in the emerging

⁶⁷ Roger Bigelow Merriman and Archibald Cary Coolidge. *Suleiman the Magnificent, 1520-1566* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1944), 28-32

European balance system. The Sultans pursued a conscious policy of balance vis-à-vis the European powers so that the rise of the nation-states was to a certain degree facilitated.”⁶⁸ As it is displayed here, while it was only a matter of time before the Ottoman’s possessed the entire world, for the French it was establishing their existence in the balance of European nations. Although the Ottomans had lost power during Louis XIV’s reign, it was still an empire with an enormous amount of land and power, which was more than enough to remain a fearful object in the entire Christian world’s mind. Moreover, under Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha’s robust leadership it was beginning to reclaim power that was lost over the previous few decades. However, Köprülü Mehmet Pasha will be discussed later in this chapter.

Following his promise Sultan Süleyman declared war with Hungary, and three years later surrounded Vienna, forcing Charles V to sign the *Cambrai treaty* with France. Through this Francis I regained Burgundy followed by France’s first residency in Sublime Porte,⁶⁹ the first among the European states. Consequently, this alliance also granted France capitulations, a trading privilege before many other states under a condition that required renewal by each Sultan.⁷⁰ The renewal of the capitulations in 1569 demonstrates the inter-relation between the two nations.⁷¹ From then on, the Franco-Ottoman relationship remained fairly stable until the Sun King, Louis XIV, rose to power in France.

Beginning in the 17th century a series ambassadorial mistakes almost damaged the alliance, and consecutive misunderstandings and boastfulness increased tensions to the point that

⁶⁸ Yurdusev, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 22.

⁶⁹ Sublime Porte is a metonym for the central government of the Ottoman Empire.

⁷⁰ Rouillard, "The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 33-52.

⁷¹ Faruk Bilici, *Louis XIV Et Son Projet De Conquête D'Istanbul*. Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından. XI Seri; Sayı 11 (Ankara: Société D'histoire Turque, 2004), 13-15.

in 1618 Sultan Osman II sent an ambassador to France in order to repair the damage and request a new delegate to Istanbul residency.⁷² Although diplomatic blunders continued until Jean de la Haye's appointment to embassy residency in 1639, with Köprülü Mehmet Pasha's appointment in 1656 diplomatic relationships became worse than ever, and there are several reasons for this. These complex relationships played an important role during Süleyman Ağa's visit to France, and they required special attention since the visit, often referred to as a diplomatic failure resembles the broad history of this greater diplomatic relationship and as such, they are the base of this research. Thus, the following information has been broken into the sections for this purpose; the first subtitle, *The Role Model Cardinal Mazarin* introduces the first minister of France during Louis XIII's and the beginning of Louis XIV's reigns and examines his influence on Louis XIV as a strong political figure. The second subtitle, *Köprülü Mehmed Pasha* focuses on the Grand Vizier who repaired the political damage that the Ottoman Empire had suffered for the previous three decades. The third subtitle, *Before the Visit of Süleyman Ağa* describes the conflicts and political agenda of the Ottoman Empire and France during the first half of the 17th century. The fourth subtitle, *Ottoman Sources* gives some general information about the archival documents that a scholar can utilize for studying Ottoman government's custom and traditions and importantly, its approach foreign diplomacy. The fifth subtitle, *Choosing an Ottoman Ambassador and Ottoman receiving ceremony for foreign ambassadors* examines and juxtaposes how the government of the Ottoman Empire approached either their ambassadors or foreign ambassadors in Sublime Porte. The fifth subtitle, *1669 and Süleyman Ağa* focuses on Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa, his identity, and how he prepared for his mission. The sixth subtitle,

⁷² Ismail Soysal, *Fransız İhtilali ve Türk Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1987), 18.

The Ambassadorial Cortège and the Mission gives insight about the expectation from this mission and the last subtitle, *Intermingle* guides the reader on how to utilize the given information.

The Role Model? Cardinal Mazarin

Despite traditional aims to describe the Franco-Ottoman relationship as ‘friendly’, this friendship was comprised of double-faced politics and a relationship based on self-interest.⁷³ At the beginning of Cardinal Mazarin’s term as first minister of France this relationship was at a low point. Mazarin was an Italian diplomat who served as a papal diplomat and began working for Cardinal Richelieu in France until he succeeded him in 1643, after Richelieu’s death. He was a church clerk of Sicilian descent who harbored personal and political enmity towards the Ottomans as well as support for the crusades. Because of this, the Franco-Ottoman relationship was on a knife’s edge. Following the Pyrenees Treaty in 1659 which ended a prolonged state of warfare with Spain, Mazarin turned his gaze to the East. He initiated serious political negotiations, targeting the Ottomans in order to push them out of Hungary and Crete. However, it was clear that in order to suppress the Habsburg’s, and for financial reasons, it was beneficial for France to continue its diplomatic concord with the Ottoman Empire. Even this simple duplicity describes the inextricable contradiction that France showed towards the Ottomans in their diplomatic alliance.

Mazarin was aware of the unfeasibility of his ambition to fight against the Turks. This uncertain diplomatic pendulum was also well known by the Ottomans, but the Ottoman government’s own instability at the time prevented any major provision against the French

⁷³ Faruk Bilici, “XVII. Yüzyıl İkinci Yarısında Türk Fransız İlişkileri: Gizli Harpten Objektif İttifaka” Ankara, *Yeni Türkiye Yay* (1999): 480-492.

government. In fact, this indetermination caused financial constraints for both sides in the trade market. In this underwhelming environment the British, Dutch, and Genoese increased their privilege on tariffs with the Ottomans to only 3% while French merchants had to pay 5%. Despite the loss of privileges over the other nations it was still beneficial for France to continue its commerce at the Sublime Porte. Notwithstanding, Mazarin could not restrain his personal urge and sent a fleet to Venice to support the war against the Turks in 1646, and in 1660 to Crete to support Christian forces against Ottomans, without receiving any beneficial result.⁷⁴ He even made an offer to Spain to collaborate against the Turks in Crete, however this was turned down by the Spanish. Although with his death in 1661 his great plans against Ottomans were slowed down, even though they were closely followed by Louis XIV after he gained the kingdoms' complete power. This 25-year long support of the Christian world against the Ottomans naturally made the political 'friendship' fundamentally more tense.⁷⁵

Mazarin's influence on Louis XIV is under debate, although considering the king's minor age when coming to the throne, Mazarin was likely a strong role model in political power and management of external affairs. Furthermore, Louis XIV's desire to become the prince and defender of Christianity displays his wish to follow Mazarin's footsteps.⁷⁶ And this also underlies the diplomatic clash involving Süleyman Ağa, as a representative of the 'Barbaric Muslims.'⁷⁷

Köprülü Mehmet Pasha

⁷⁴ Ibid, 480.

⁷⁵ Philip McCluskey, "Commerce Before Crusade? France, the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary pirates (1661–1669)," *French History*, Volume 23, Issue 1 (March 2009): 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ I chose this discourse to display Louis XIV approach to his guest which represents the west opinion about the Turk. However, I am well aware, also insist, that this description of Ottoman Turk is far from representing the veridical of the Ottoman state system.

Before the appointment of Köprülü Mehmet Pasha to the title of Grand Vizier, the Ottoman Empire was passing through a period now called “Sultanate of the Women,” in which two women in the seraglio retained political power over Ottoman governmental affairs following Mehmet IV’s ascent to the throne at age six; his mother, Turhan Sultan, and his grandmother Kösem Sultan.⁷⁸ Although at the beginning of this period the Ottomans were able to maintain their position regarding the Empire’s territorial power, the power struggles between the two women ended in the assassination of Kösem Sultan. Further, for over three years leading up to that, 14 different Grand Viziers came to power and subsequently, mostly violently, lost power. In fact, only one of these lost power because of natural death.⁷⁹ Therefore, no Grand Vizier would have been in a strong position to manage commerce at the Porte. In this environment, and as the current Grand Vizier, Köprülü demanded unconditional authority in governmental decisions. He not only sought sole authority over governmental decisions, but he also demanded to be appraised of and consulted about external conflicts and intended to be the only authority for diplomatic appointments. His ambition was definite. His first act was going to be concluding the war in Crete and the removing obstacles preventing the government from rebuilding its external affairs. However, since he came to power shortly after the rapid disposal of the 14 previous Grand Viziers, it was challenging for him to gain respect by external powers. In fact, as such, Jean La Haye, the French ambassador who had served at the Sublime Porte since 1638, who established a successful relationship between France and the Ottoman Empire, and who accomplished the renewal of the capitulations two times prior, expected Köprülü’s time to be

⁷⁸ Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. Studies in Middle Eastern History (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.), 103-112.

⁷⁹ Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660.)* Etudes De Littérature Étrangère Et Comparée (Paris: Boivin: 1941), 99- 104.

brief. Thus, he postponed his congratulatory visit for Köprülü's ascension until after all of the foreign states' delegates visited him and presented their gifts and customary respect.⁸⁰ However, Köprülü stayed in power until his natural death in 1661, a healthy five years. French traveler and writer Jean Chardin notes the incident "Seeing at last that Köprülü was establishing himself at court through the ruin of several people of importance, and that according to all appearances, he would be Grand Vizier for some time: he went to see him and paid his respects. The visit and the respects were truly a lost cause, for the vizier was indignant at the negligence and lack of consideration that the ambassador demonstrated in this important meeting, and he had formed the idea of taking revenge on him and even on the entire French Nation."⁸¹ Nonetheless, it is impossible to assert that this belated visit caused a direct personal enmity, the duplicitous politics of the French government and its support of the enemy of the Ottoman Empire surely caused Köprülü Mehmet Pasha to ensure close surveillance on the French embassy. In fact, another story that was reported by the Parisian Donneau De Vise, in *le Mercure*, and confirmed by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by Jean Chardin indicates that La Haye belittled the grand vizier Köprülü implying his non-Aristocratic background. According to this story La Haye told his servants in the Levant that they have to be kind everyone, especially towards to apple sellers because they can become the vizier someday, referring to the fact that the grand vizier Köprülü was brought to the Ottoman palace to serve in the kitchen.⁸² Targeting Köprülü and his altitudinarian persona in this way likely caused a personal enmity more than any previous encounter of the ambassador and the grand vizier Köprülü.

⁸⁰ Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 130-131.

⁸¹ Chardin, *Journal du voyage du Chevalier Chardin En Perse & Aux Indes Orientales*, 14. As translated in Michèle. Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 130.

⁸² *ibid*, 132.

In Ottoman bureaucratic infrastructure ‘devsirme’ was an important practice in which Christian children were brought to the palace for simple service work. Köprülü Mehmet Pasha came to the palace via this tradition at an early age and started his career from *matbah-ı âmire* (the palace kitchen). Some western sources record his kitchen background of him as an apple seller. According to the story, because of this well-known background of Köprülü Mehmet Pasha, La Haye evaluated Köprülü’s leadership and his capacity with his own French self-importance, targeting him even in front of his servants. De Vise reports this sarcastic attitude “He- the Grand Vizier- found out that an ambassador, who shall remain nameless, had strongly encouraged all his servants to be polite, and not to be stingy with greetings when passing through the street of Constantinople, and especially not to forget to greet apple-sellers, because they couldn’t be sure that one day they wouldn’t need them, since it might happen that one of them became Grand Vizier.”⁸³ The western sources note this episode to display that the Ottoman attitude towards French ambassadors and merchants, and hesitation to renew the capitulations is based on the personal feud from Köprülü to La Haye. Michèle Longino notes that, consequently, “...because of this ‘chagrin personnel’ brought on by this ‘faux pas’ of the first order, French Ottoman official and trading relations were disastrous for the following twenty years.”⁸⁴ However, these allegations may only conceal the real reason behind it; French double politics. This effort, perhaps to be able to find a scape goat for the poor diplomatic relationship became a burden instead for French government itself. Nevertheless, we will see the same belittling attitude in the French aristocrats’ approach to Süleyman Ağa from the beginning of his trip in Toulon to Paris. In fact, the resistance of Süleyman Ağa’s credentials that we will see towards to

⁸³ Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 132.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 131.

end of this chapter originates from this disdain. This attitude is also followed by the historians that I will explain in the *Süleyman Ağa* section.

If we go back to the real reason for Köprülü Mehmet Pasha's dislike of French ambassador Jean de La Haye, the truth lies again in the double politics of the French government. According to Ottoman sources, a French naval officer brought letters which were handed over to him by a Venetian admiral to deliver to the French Ambassador in Istanbul. The *Kaymakam* sent the letter to the Grand Vizier and the Sultan who were in Edirne at the time.⁸⁵ Thereupon, La Haye was invited to Edirne, although because of his health problems he sent his son Denis La Haye to this meeting.⁸⁶ The Grand Vizier requested that Denis La Haye explain the meaning of these letters but was refused with a disrespectful attitude, according to palace hierarchical order, that ended up in his being taken into custody and his father La Haye was brought to Edirne. The father and son were both jailed where they had to await the return of Köprülü Mehmet Pasha from Hungary. As soon as the news of this imprisonment arrived in France a letter addressed directly to the Sultan was sent to Istanbul by cardinal Mazarin, however the detainees' status did not change. In fact, because of this incident, Louis XIV sent military support to Emperor Leopold. It was certain after this point that La Haye's presence in Istanbul be a such disadvantage for France that the father and son were recalled to Paris while leaving the official representation status to a common merchant, Monsieur Roboly from 1660 to 1665.⁸⁷ Coincidentally, the two mighty political figures of Cardinal Mazarin and Köprülü Mehmet Pasha died in the same year but their legacy lived and influenced the Franco-Ottoman relationship from

⁸⁵ Kaymakam is a title in Ottoman governmental system.

⁸⁶ J Von Hammer, *Osmanlı Devleti Tarihi*. Cilt 11 (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1947), 35-36.

⁸⁷ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* (Ankara: Cilt 3, 2. Kısım, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 209.

that point on; while France continued supporting the war powers against Ottomans, the Ottoman Empire remained cautious about their elusive friend.

Before the Visit of Süleyman Ağa

Following the death of both political figures Cardinal Mazarin and Köprülü Mehmet Pasha, two French officials brought a letter from Louis XIV to Sultan Mehmet IV requesting an apology and informing the Ottoman government about their controversial decision to appoint the son of La Haye, Denis, to the Istanbul embassy.⁸⁸ Considering the antagonistic past of these two parties there was no expectation of any upturn from this appointment. In fact, as soon as Denis de La Haye arrived in Istanbul on a vessel named Kayser, his request to receive a welcome ceremony from the Grand Vizier in a manner equal to that of the Dutch and British Ambassadors was denied and he was welcomed by only ten security officials called '*Divan Cavusu*.'⁸⁹

The Grand Vizier title was now bestowed to Köprülü Fazıl Ahmet Pasha, the son of Mehmet Pasha, and he inherited a staunch cynicism against the La Hayes. Unfortunately, this 'one son to another son' confrontation was not going to result in circumstances more fortuitous than their fathers could manage. With France's support of Hungary against the Ottomans in the Grand Vizier's mind, he accepted Dennis de La Haye in his chamber without standing up as a protest of French double politics. According to 19th century Ottoman historian J. Von Hammer, Denis de La Haye objected to this attitude and sent a messenger to Fazıl Ahmet Pasha to inform him that if he repeats this unfriendly manner, he will retrocede the capitulations and leave the Empire. Nevertheless, during a second audience the behavior had not changed, and this resulted La Haye throwing the capitulation papers at the Grand Vizier's feet. Hereupon the guardian

⁸⁸ Ibid, 156.

⁸⁹ A military representative in Palace service.

Cavus walked towards to La Haye, physically beat him and took him into custody for three days.⁹⁰ During this time the Grand Vizier Fazıl Ahmet Pasha spent his time gathering more information about La Haye and his ambassadorial attitude. However, Hammer adds, the Grand Vizier changed his mind and decided to forget the past and accept La Haye into his audience in a new beginning. Hammer ends his notes stating that the beating was quickly forgotten and that “the French government had never put this incident in their records.”⁹¹

Since the beginning of the 1660's the situation in the Levant⁹² did not seem to be advantageous for France. And Denis La Haye immediately found himself in a tight situation between the French government's demands and the Ottoman government's diplomatic processes as he laments in his letter to Lionne “I ask you most humbly. Monsieur, to consider that I am in Turkey, where it is not easy to do everything that one would like to.”⁹³ His main mission was to renew the capitulations and reduce the tariff to three percent, however, he had difficulties gaining the Ottomans' trust; “in spite of you are repeatedly underlying the friendly manner of France toward Ottomans” the *kaymakam* said allusively, “Alas, I've met your soldiers in every battle field.”⁹⁴ And he reminded La Haye that the Ottoman military had never bared arms against the French government. Furthermore, he cornered La Haye, who clearly underestimated the Ottomans intelligence sources, asking about the presence of French noblemen in Candia in the previous year. Although La Haye tirelessly denied the involvement of his government in Candia his justification attempts were helpless as exemplified by Phil McCluskey in his article

⁹⁰ Hammer, *Osmanli Devleti Tarihi*, 156.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Levant is an historical geographical term which roughly refers to Eastern Mediterranean.

⁹³ AAE CP Turquie 9, f. 168: La Haye to Lionne, 17 April 1669. As translated in Phil McCluskey, “*Commerce Before Crusade*,” 12.

⁹⁴ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 211.

Commerce Before Crusade as La Haye claimed that the noblemen were curious about the siege of Candia, and after they arrived, they wanted to see the tent of the Grand Vizier, though they got caught and beaten so they immediately returned to France. Moreover, he insisted that if this Majesty decided to defend Candia, the result would be much more different.⁹⁵

In this tense environment it became clear to Louis XIV that Denis de La Haye was not capable of establishing any trade advantage for France. However, he noted in his memoir that the Grand Vizier's attitude hindered the accomplishment of his duty.⁹⁶ Furthermore, it was scandalous that their representative in the Porte had not received respect and was losing dignity among the other nations' delegates. Perhaps because of this and to be able to put some pressure on the Ottomans as he later claimed that year, he recalled the ambassador "...from the Porte in order to make them afraid of what his intentions might be."⁹⁷ Louis XIV not only recalled La Haye, but also befittingly following his 'gloire' sent a fleet of warships to retrieve him.⁹⁸

The father and the son La Haye's ambassadorial difficulties and hardship at the Sublime Porte were of course the result of France's problematic political maneuvers however their diplomatic misapprehension also played a crucial role in damaging the relationship. France's loathing of the Ottoman culture and the Ottoman form of state politics, as well as its underestimation of both the intelligence of, and intelligence gathering ability, of the Ottoman government are just a few of

⁹⁵ AAE CP Turquie 9, f. 43: La Haye to Lionne, June 1668; as translated in Phil McCluskey, "Commerce before crusade," 18-9.

⁹⁶ Louis XIV, *Mémoires for the Instruction of the Dauphin*, ed. Paul Sonnino (London, 1970), 183-6.

⁹⁷ 'Mémoire pour servir d'instruction au Sieur Président de Saint-André s'en allant ambassadeur ordinaire à Venise (1668)', in *Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France*, vol. XXVI: Venise, ed. Pierre Duparc (Paris, 1958), 60. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k116649>. Accessed 2-5-2020.

⁹⁸ McCluskey, "Commerce before crusade," 16.

these misjudgments. Furthermore, the disrespectful and conceited attitude of the son La Haye during his audience with the Grand Vizier and in spite of the French government double politics, requesting equal treatment with the Dutch and Genovese ambassadors was the last straw. Despite these difficulties Denis La Haye felt the necessity to accomplish some sort of negotiation with the Ottomans before he went back to France. This was to clear his name of his ineffectualness and claim that he did everything to build a strong relationship with Porte despite the enmity of the Grand Vizier. Thus, the dilemma and difficulties of Süleyman Ağa's convoy begins at this point. On one hand France was going to make him pay for the Ottomans' attitude to their ambassadors and on the other hand they were going to display the glory of France to the Turk.

Before leaving his Embassy in the Porte, La Haye used the opportunity of the Grand Vizier Fazıl Ahmet Pasha's absence in Crete, since he was leading the siege at Candia, and attempted once more to convince the Sultan to renew the capitulations. Kaymakam Kara Mustapha Pasha was the surrogate to the Vizier and although he was more moderate in negotiations with La Haye, he would not yet promise the renewals. Nevertheless, it was obvious that he did not want to demolish the alliance either. "Instead," McCluskey explains the result of this negotiation, "they reached a compromise whereby the sultan would choose *'une personne considérable'* from among his officials to deliver a letter to Louis XIV to assure the king of his friendship and to request the assurance of his."⁹⁹ There are few existing documents that give us information about the rest of this negotiation.¹⁰⁰ McCluskey asserts that the mission to France

⁹⁹ McCluskey, "An Ottoman envoy in Paris," 342; AAE CP Turquie Supplement 7 f.318, La Haye to Lionne, (9 April 1669).

¹⁰⁰ After this point of the negotiation is not noted in any Ottoman archival records (documents). Neither the historians of the court nor the financial records point out how Süleyman Ağa had been chosen for the mission. It is as if this mission, the letters, and the consequences had been deleted or deliberately had not been recorded. Unfortunately, because of the lack of the evidence any kind interpretation of this situation would be speculations. In fact, I will return to this subject

was most likely La Haye's own idea, and according to rumors that circulated between the merchants in the Levant, he personally financed the envoy with 3,000 ecus.¹⁰¹ I believe this information is also evocatory for three main reasons for my research. First, this disclosure shows how hopeless La Haye felt to be able to make this visit happen. Secondly, it indicates that La Haye obviously hid some important information about his negotiation with the kaymakam from the French government. Lastly, he knew Süleyman Ağa's identity and ambassadorial status. These are important because we will see in the following chapter that the French government performed absurdly as if they had no information about Süleyman Ağa's status. This set up the materialistic performativity of the following events.

La Haye was required to remain in his assignment until the end of the Ottoman envoy's mission. According to the negotiation, the vessel that anchored in Istanbul was going to carry the Turkish envoy to Toulon instead of La Haye. It is not clear why the Ottoman Empire decided to send an envoy to Paris, however, we can only assume that it was a signal of its desire to continue this highly beneficial relationship and keep its ally in Europe, reliable or not, since "French merchants and shipping were by this stage crucial to the Ottoman economy and the movement of goods within the Empire. Whereas the sixteenth century alliance between France and the Ottomans had been based on shared geopolitical concerns, the new relationship which developed from the late seventeenth century and which went on to flourish through the eighteenth century was far more commercially and economically-driven."¹⁰²

in the later chapters, however for our purposes I will follow the western records to view the rest of the mission from now on. Rouillard, Landweber and McCluskey's research and the French records will be my main sources.

¹⁰¹ This information is highly contentious and going to be discussed again later throughout the description of general custom of Ottoman Empire envoys.

¹⁰² McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris," 343.

The decision to send an envoy to Paris was made in relative haste. The French vessel was going to leave Istanbul by June and the convoy had to be ready for the voyage within two months. There was little time for proper preparation in accordance with Ottoman customs for this type of mission. The Ottoman officials were also undecided about the person who was going to lead the mission. A well-known diplomat in the Ottoman court, Mehmet Ferenc Bey's name was among the list of the candidates, however the last-minute letter from the Grand Vizier Fazıl Ahmet Pasha ordered a different name with a small and simple delegation. Thus, Süleyman Ağa was chosen for the mission.¹⁰³

Ottoman Sources

Ottoman diplomacy and the details of its historical events are generally found in '*tahdid raporlari*' (restriction reports), conciliation hearings, personal and formal letters, contemporary history research, and ambassadorial reports.¹⁰⁴ Of particular interest are the ambassadorial reports which display unique information about the nation they just visited and the Ottoman Empire cultural life, customs, their expectations, and each nations approach to one another. Furthermore, these manuscripts present the diplomatic practices, rules, and their fundamental requirements not only in the foreign nations but also in the Ottoman government.¹⁰⁵ In recent years Ottoman historians' interest in these reports has increased and numerous important

¹⁰³ Ibid, AAE CP Turquie Supplément 7 f.340, Matharel to Matharel (30 June 1669); Laurent d'Arvieux, Mémoires du chevalier d'Arvieux, envoyé extraordinaire du Roy à la Porte, ed. by Jean-Baptiste Labat, 6 vols (Paris, 1735), IV, 124.

¹⁰⁴ M. Alaeddin Yalçınkaya, "*Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Osmanlı Diplomasi Tarihi Literatürü*. Türkiye Arastirmalari Literatür Dergisi, Cilt 1, Sayı 2, (2003): 423-489

¹⁰⁵ Uğur Kurtaran, "Osmanlı Diplomasi Tarihinin Yazımında Kullanılan Başlıca Kaynaklar İle Bu Kaynakların İncelenmesindeki Metodolojik Ve Diplomatik Yöntemler üzerine Bir Değerlendirme." OTAM Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma Ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi, no. 38 (2015): 107-39.

research endeavors have emerged. These developments are promising since a significant amount of veracity about the Ottomans and their relationship with foreign countries will be uncovered by these manuscripts. However, some of the events remain as a mystery from the Ottoman side. Either the reports may have been delivered verbally to the Grand Vizier or Sultan or they have not yet been found. Unfortunately, if one even exists, Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa's ambassadorial report is one among these conundrums. There is one manuscript in the Archive des Affaires Étrangères written in Ottoman language by an Ottoman Turk named Süleyman around the same era. As such, this is generally considered to be Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa's ambassadorial report by some scholars.¹⁰⁶ However, it is clear that these scholars may not have viewed the manuscript before addressing it as the one because a close reading of it reveals that it is unlikely, if not impossible that it had written by the ambassador Süleyman Ağa. Many of these scholars reference Gündüz Akinci who mentions this manuscript in his research. However, although Akinci clearly indicates his doubt about the origin of the manuscript, his followers ignore this part of Akinci's research.¹⁰⁷ I will analyze this manuscript with elaborate details in chapter four since even if the manuscript does not belong to Süleyman Ağa as I indicated earlier, it is an invaluable document to comprehend how France, its culture, and daily life represented in intercultural relationship from a firsthand source. My main goal is to find a voice for Süleyman Ağa and for the members of his envoy to understand how they perceived the images of France.

¹⁰⁶ See İbrahim Şirin, *Osmanlı Seyahâtnamelerinde Avrupa (1839-1876)*, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, (Ankara, 2004), 78, 79, 83; Namık Sinan Turan, "Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Batı İmgesinin Değişimi ve Elçilerin Etkisi (18. ve 19. Yüzyıllar)" *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, sayı: 6/2, 64, 65; Ayşin Şişman, *Osmanlı-Fransız İlişkileri 1740-1789 (Konsolos Arzlarına Göre)*, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, (Afyon, 2011), 11; Ali Dadan, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Sefirlerinin Avrupa Algısı (Kâfirlerin Cenneti)," *Marife*, sayı: 3, (2006), 271.

¹⁰⁷ Gündüz Akinci, *Türk-Fransız Kultur İlişkileri*, 7-8.

Because of the deficiency of documents there is little known about Mütferrika Süleyman Ağa and there is only a small amount of research conducted around this highly influential visit. It appears as if he did not exist before this mission and quickly vanished thereafter, which makes this research subject extremely interesting and intriguing. The very first research that mentions his name was done by the historian Albert Vandal. In fact, Vandal was the first historian who mentioned the political connection between Süleyman Ağa's envoy and Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* as I am going to study in the next chapter.¹⁰⁸ Following Vandal, a short analysis presented by Ahmet Refik in *Tarihi Similar* in 1913, however, this work mostly focuses on the visit itself and gives very limited information about the identity of Süleyman Ağa.¹⁰⁹ In addition to these works we gather a small amount of information about him from the 17th century contemporary publications, memoires, and personal letters of those who encountered the envoy and Süleyman Ağa. However, these sources also reveal insufficient detail regarding him personally. In an encyclopedia of the Ottoman Turks, Aladdin Yalçinkaya mentions Süleyman Ağa's name only once.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, neither state chronicles nor Ottoman archive credentials mention his name. In his grandiose work *Ottoman History*, 18th century historian Joseph Von Hammer gives more detailed data, but once more, it is insufficient in providing a clear picture of Süleyman Ağa.¹¹¹ Thus, in order to construct a realistic description of Süleyman Ağa, and to juxtapose details from available sources, it is necessary to review how Ottomans chose the ambassadors who were sent to visit foreign countries, their titles, the mutual requested characterization, education, and if there is any, physical requirements.

¹⁰⁸ Vandal, 367-384.

¹⁰⁹ Ahmet Refik, *Tarihi Similar* (İstanbul: Kütüphane-i Askeri, 1915), 7-18.

¹¹⁰ Yalçinkaya, "Süleyman Ağa (Mütferrika)," 560-561.

¹¹¹ Hammer, *Osmanli Tarihi*, 197-199.

Choosing an Ottoman Ambassador

Faik Reşit Unat's work *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* gives elaborate details about the process of choosing and preparing ambassadors for their roles in Ottoman government. In his examination of the Ottoman ambassadors, based on the Mehmet Raşid Efendi's chronic "*Tarih-i Raşid*",¹¹² Unat underlines the importance of knowledge of foreign languages for the chosen ambassador. In fact, in many cases the ambassadorial envoy included members who had diverse ethnicity for this purpose. *Tarih-i Raşid* informs us that ambassadors were at least capable of "*terfîb-i muhâverât ve desâyis-i nasârâyâ ittîlâ ve hâsıl itmîş.*"¹¹³ This is not surprising since '*devşirme*' tradition customs to bring the Christian children as young as 5 years old to the palace service. Hence, I assume that these children maintained at least basic knowledge of their mother languages. For instance, both 1549 and 1562 envoys to Habsburg were led by ambassadors who were ethnically German.¹¹⁴ This information is exceedingly important for this research for two reasons; first, Süleyman Ağa was a *devşirme*, and as such, I claim that he had at least basic language skills. Secondly, general assumption indicates that Ottoman ambassadors' lack of language knowledge put them in a vulnerable position during their encounter with foreign nations and they had to rely on their dragomen's interpreting skills during the negotiations with the foreign governments. This approach naturally affects the performativity of the encounter. In fact, because of the assumption of the Ottoman ambassadors' lack of language skills, the very important researchers of this subject, C. D. Rouillard, Julie Landweber, Mary Hossain, Ellen Welch, Phil McCluskey, and many more have not even considered this detail in their analysis of

¹¹² Mehmet Raşid Efendi: an Ottoman State Chronicler.

¹¹³ Ibid. "Successful on dialogues and capable of understanding the Christian's tricks and humbug."

¹¹⁴ Faik Reşit Unat and Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, *Osmanlı Sefirleri Ve Sefaretnameleri*, VII. Dizi; Sa. 8b. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), 20-30.

the encounter even when they studied the segments of the translation issue. For instance, Mary Hossain, in her valuable research, the *Training of Interpreters in Arabic and Turkish under Louis XIV: the Ottoman Empire*, disregards this fact totally and only refers the biases of Süleyman Ağa's dragoman Georges Fontaine since he was appointed to the envoy by the French ambassador at Sublime Porte, M. de la Haye. In fact, this assumption without any consideration that Ottoman ambassadors may know the language of the country visited displays the Ottoman ambassador as child-like, vulnerable, and oblivious of the situation may cause misinterpreting of the performative materiality of these encounters. Alain Grosrichard explains this unconscious aim, digging the roots of the fantasy as a source of the orient in novels and dramas of the west "The opening up of the seraglio, with its violent or unnatural amours, its mutes and eunuchs, its blind princes and veiled sultanas – a space in which pleasure and death are experienced within a time made up only of disconnected moments without duration, a master who is ever absent and everywhere present, and above all that language of silence, absurd yet supremely effective, consisting of signs which refer only to themselves..."¹¹⁵ In this fantastical view of the west regarding the Ottomans, minds are influenced by the castrated image of Turks or oriental persona who carries the heaviness of their absolute master, the Sultan, however, incapable of existing as a whole in the western gaze. Thus, the image of the Ottoman Turk as the "other"; silent and deaf, lost in the civilized world, has existed for centuries in western minds. Regarding Ottoman ambassadors as silent in the western audiences, within the space to which they are already a strange image, displays an imbalance of power between the two accounts. Since the ambassador represents the Sultan and, naturally, the empire as well, it places the Western king, its culture and

¹¹⁵ Alain Grosrichard, *Structure Du Sérail: La Fiction Du Despotisme Asiatique Dans L'Occident Classique* (Connexions Au Champ Freudien. Paris: Seuil, 1979), 24.

everything it represents in juxtaposition to the ‘other’. Theater theorist David William Hammerbeck notes in his description of Orientalism as “West’s representation of what it constructs as the ‘Orient.’ The West is speaking for an “Orient” that is denied its own voice.”¹¹⁶ This suggests it centralized the western interpretation of the events and continued “othering” the Ottomans. That is the reason the art of France has been accepted as high art, or the attitude of the court has been accepted as polite-ness. I believe this is a trap that historians could not avoid, at least until now, and continue to disregard a balance between the accounts. This work also, therefore, assumes the responsibility to give the ambassador Süleyman Ağa a voice even if it does not explicitly belong to him, at least it is capable of representing him in juxtaposition to the other Turkish accounts, thus adding the Ottoman account more reliably in the reading of the performativity of these encounters.

Faik Reşit Unat also highlights the fact that there was no specific role or rank for the ambassadorial position until the 18th century since the approach of diplomatic relations with the foreign government policy showed several differences between the Ottomans and European states. However, when an ambassadorial mission was planned, the ambassadors were either chosen from a high rank bureaucrat or given a higher rank before the mission started.¹¹⁷ Another important feature for the ambassadors was also their physical appearance, strength, and height. This information matches with the accounts of eyewitness descriptions of Süleyman Ağa that I will explain at the next section. Unat also emphasizes that irrespective of Ottomans financial difficulties at the time of an ambassadorial visit, valuable gifts were bestowed to the king and the

¹¹⁶ David William Hammerbeck, “Orientalism, Islam and the Other in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Theatre.” *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences* 63, no. 10 (2003): 3.

¹¹⁷ Unat and Baykal, *Osmanlı Sefirleri Ve Sefaretnameleri*, 20-40

high ranking officials of the nation they were visiting commensurate with the nation's importance in their eyes.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the ambassadors were given expensive goods since they were representing the splendor of the Ottomans.¹¹⁹ Impressively, we will see in the next chapter that the biggest controversy that French officials created at the beginning of the Süleyman Ağa's visit was his envoys' failure to bring gifts for the king, Louis XIV and Süleyman Ağa's absence of an ambassadorial dagger which was customary for the Ottoman ambassadors to possess.

Before going into the details of the ambassador Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa's journey, I describe the ambassador audience ceremony at the Ottoman Empire for two reasons. First, in this way we can comprehend the treatment that the foreign ambassadors received during these ceremonies. Hence it will reveal the treatment that Denis La Haye was complaining about, and as we will see in the next chapter that French government considering it as a humiliating and degrading. Second, this description allows us to compare these two states governmental performative attitude. Also, it reveals how the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa perceived to be subjected to the audience by the M. Lionne as a duplication of an Ottoman receiving ceremony. Further, it may explain some of the Süleyman Ağa's apparent stubborn behavior during the visit.

Ottoman Receiving Ceremony for the Foreign Ambassadors

Both Christian and Muslim ambassadors were the subject of audience ceremonies with the Grand Vizier and the Sultan. These were meticulously planned and sumptuous events within the Ottoman Imperial Council, particularly the ambassadors' arrival to the council and the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 26-27.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 25.

audience with the Grand Vizier and the Sultan. However, the scope of these ceremonies reflected differences depending on the nation of the ambassador, its relationship with the Ottomans and its political reliability. For instance, after the French ambassador Jean de La Haye was caught spying for the Venetians the credibility of France was degraded in these ceremonies.¹²⁰

The Ottoman government's hospitality towards the foreign ambassador is a confirmed fact by serial historians. Even a historian like Ricault who showed little favor towards Ottomans noted that "...as it is underlined in Quran this mission (ambassadorship) must remain beyond every kind of violence. Turks accept this norm as law... whatever the ambassador's government's attitude towards the Ottomans, the ambassadors always feel safe amongst Turks."¹²¹

As soon as the Ambassador arrived at the Ottoman borders a '*mihmandar*'¹²² welcomed him and all the expenses of the envoy were covered by the Ottoman government throughout the ambassador's travel.¹²³ The very next day the ambassador would have visited the Grand Vizier and be served coffee and sorbet in this way his arrival was legally recognized by the Council. The next day an appointed dragoman would visit the ambassador with dry fruits and nuts, and flowers which were sent by the Grand Vizier and a few janissary guardians were left to provide for the ambassadors' protection.¹²⁴

The ambassadors were distinguished by two ranks, either a high-ranking ambassador or a lower ranking ambassador. This was an especially important fact since the Ottoman government

¹²⁰ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez Ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı*, VIII. Dizi; Sa. 16. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1948), 272.

¹²¹ Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teskilati*, 273.

¹²² Equivalent to a host.

¹²³ Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teskilati*, 291-5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 279.

appointed their ambassadors to the foreign country missions according to what rank of ambassador was sent to the Porte, to receive audience with the Sultan. This phenomenon was so crucial that for instance, in 1791 during the ambassadorial mission to Habsburg when the Ottoman government realized that the Austrian ambassador's rank was lower than the Ottoman ambassador's rank they reduced the ambassador's rank to lower rank, equal to the Austrian ambassador's rank. Furthermore, they recalled the gifts for the Austrian king in the middle of the journey to Vienna. When the ambassadors arrived at the palace, they would meet their translator who had led them to a waiting room to rest for about half an hour, where they were served coffee and sorbet, and then they were led to the door of the council, to wait there until the Grand Vizier came to the room and sat, then the negotiations would start. These elements of the tradition were ones that generated many complaints, especially, by the French ambassadors. Apparently to be made to wait was perceived by some of the foreign ambassadors as arrogance on the part of the Ottoman government. Historians have had the same interpretation. We will see the reaction to this in the next chapter when M. de Lionne accepted the Turkish ambassador to his audience.

Protocol officials ensured compliance with every detail with failure exacting a heavy price. Thus, there are several drawings which describe the exact ceremony; including the place that the ambassador should stand, who should be next to him, the position of the couch, seats, windows, doors, etc.¹²⁵

Ricault describes the 17th century ceremony for the foreign ambassador in his work *Histoire de l'état present de l'empire Ottoman* as "Traditionally the foreign ambassadors accepted to the audience on a Tuesday, which was the salary day for the janissaries. The room

¹²⁵ Ibid, 300.

which ambassadors waited filled up with the money which will be paid to janissaries before the ambassador was hosted by the Grand Vizier. After he rested for about half an hour in a room filled with money, he was led to the room to meet the Grand vizier. After he had taken his place in the room, the grand vizier would be called to the room to sit in his place on the divan and the ambassador would sit after him, close to the Vizier on a red velvet seat before he joins in supper with them (illustrated in Figure 1.1).”¹²⁶ The meal served with a silver ‘sini’¹²⁷ and plates changed after every appetizer and entrees. Historian D’Ohsson indicates that about fifty different kinds of food have been served during such a meal.¹²⁸

After the feast, *cavusbasi* had taken the ambassador and some of his attendants to another room to be gifted and dressed in a special silk caftan with various bird designs. Then the ambassadors were escorted to the Sultan’s room by two *Kapıcıbaşı* who had carried silver staffs in their hands. All the court yards were filled with *Janissaries* who waited in complete silence for the ceremonies to end (Illustrated in Figure 1.2). Ricault describes this ceremony as such a ‘deep quietness’ that you can even hear water drops from faraway places.¹²⁹ All the janissaries had bowed to the ceremony cortege while they were passing by the special war force of Ottomans that had displayed “respect and warrior parade.”¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Ricault. *Histoire de l’etat present de l’empire Ottoman* (Paris. 1671), 210-15

¹²⁷ A round tray. Uzunköprülü asserts that the tray had been kept in the treasury and if an ambassador would be accepted for audience in another city, like Edirne, the tray had sent there for this purpose.

¹²⁸ Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson, *C. Tableau Général De L’empire Othoman: Divisé En Deux Parties, Dont L’une Comprend La Législation Mahométane, L’autre, L’histoire De L’empire Othoman* (Paris: De L’imprimerie De Monsieur [Firmin Didot], 1788), 488- 501.

¹²⁹ Ricault. *Histoire de’etat*, 210-15.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

C. D. Rouillard recounts that since the Sultan Murat was assassinated by a Serbian nobleman with a sword the Ottoman Empire forbade carrying any sharp items by the foreign ambassadors during an audience with the Sultan.¹³¹ Thus, the ambassadors would have handed over their swords before walking slowly to the Sultan's room. Ricault also tells us that there was a golden ball that hung over on the top of the audience room which was decorated with several diamonds and the room was almost covered by numerous oriental pearls. The floor was also covered with the most valuable carpets ornamented by pearls and golden threads.¹³² He also tells that the throne of the Sultan placed higher, on top of four golden pillars which displayed invaluable jewels.

When everything was ready the ambassador would have been brought to the room by two *Kapıcıbaşı* who held the ambassador under their arms and when upon arrival at the Sultan, the ambassador was made to bow in front of the Sultan, and then these two *kapıcıbaşı* would withdraw backward to the room's door. This ceremony would be repeated multiple times for all the ambassadorial envoy's members; however, the accompany of the ambassadors had been bowed lower than the ambassadors themselves (illustrated in Figure 1.3 and 1.4).

This Ottoman's receiving ceremony tradition has specific importance for this research especially when I analyze Süleyman Ağa's audience ceremony with Louise XIV. Throughout this presentation I will posit more meaningful description of Süleyman Ağa's attitude towards the French aristocrats during the French ceremony rather than simply describing him as arrogant or smug despite this having been the general approach to him.

¹³¹ Rouillard, *French Thought and Literature*, 75-99.

¹³² Ricault, *Histoire de 'etat*, 210-15; Uzuncarsili, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teskilati*, 295.

1669 and Süleyman Ağa

We know so little about Süleyman Ağa. His ethnicity, how he had come to the palace, and his precise career path are unknown. However, there are a few letters, memoires, a fictional memoire, a portrait belonging to him, and what we know about general specialties of the Ottoman ambassadors' characteristics as I describe above allow us to draw an approximate description of him. In the following I will piece this information together for the most veridical description of him which plays an important role for the reconstruction of this encounter between the Ottoman Empire and France. First of all, one of his titles *Ağa* belongs to senior officers in the military and in the palace service.¹³³ Secondly, his beard, as it shown in his portrait points out his senior palace position.

The only person in the palace who had the privilege to grow a beard after the Sultan was *Bostancıbaşı*¹³⁴ who had responsibility over the security of the Bosphorus and the Princes islands (Figure 1.5).¹³⁵ He also assumed the role of captain for the Sultans' rowboat and controlled the wheel while the *bostancı*s who worked under his command, were rowing. Furthermore, *Bostancıbaşı* also had the authority to permit waterside mansions for the Bosphorus. *Bostancı* corps members were chosen by the best looking, the strongest and the most trustworthy *devşirme* boys and mainly they worked for the Palace's parks and gardens, however, they served in several different palace services since they were the most loyal corps to the Sultan. Also, since they were in view, they represented the strength and power of the palace.

¹³³ McCluskey, *An ottoman Convoy*, 343; Gustav Bayerle, *Pashas, Beks, and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1997), 2.

¹³⁴ The head of *Bostancı* corps.

¹³⁵ *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Book 6, 1992), 308-309.

All of these pieces of information reveal much about Süleyman Ağa and his importance not only for the Ottoman governmental system but also for the Sultan himself. Moreover, these details about *bostancis* and the importance of their physical strength and handsome appearance conforms with what we know about the Ottomans criteria about the requirements of an ambassador.

We gather most of the information about Süleyman Ağa's personality from a letter that written by comte de Matharel, an officer in the French vessel which carried Süleyman Ağa and his convoy to Toulon, to one of his relatives. He describes Süleyman Ağa as around 50 years old, "strong, wise, and highly esteemed."¹³⁶ This information is also supported by the writer, Giovanni Paolo Marana, of the fictional novel *Letters Writ by a Spy at Paris*.¹³⁷ He reports Süleyman Ağa as "...He makes a very personable figure, being tall, full-bodied, well-shaped, and not of an ugly face, which is enough to be said of a man designed for business and not only for love."¹³⁸ This a further explanation of the fascination of Parisian women with Süleyman Ağa during his visit in Paris and the reason why he received visitors continuously in his hotel room. Turkish historian Ahmet Refik also talks about Süleyman Ağa; "tall, strong facial featured, olive skin, and a nervous person."¹³⁹ However, he borrowed this description from Albert Vandal.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ AAE CP Turquie Supplement 7 f.341, Matharel to Matharel (30 June 1669); as translated in Phil McCluskey, 'An Ottoman Envoy,' 343- 45.

¹³⁷ Giovanni Paolo Marana, 1642-1693. [from old catalog]; Volume 7. 1770. These letters are fictional, however, since the writer of the letters was a historian and he remained faithful to the historical events as we see in several accounts, I approach these writings a sort of documentary novel. I will return to these letters several times to check and juxtapose the reality facts.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 122.

¹³⁹ Ahmet Refik, *Tarihi Simalar* (İstanbul: Kütüphane-i Askeri, 1915), 9.

¹⁴⁰ Vandal, *L'odyssée d'un ambassadeur. Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)*.

Describing Süleyman Ağa by not only his rank and personality but also his physical appearance is of particular significance. My research has evidenced that for so long familiarity with the interaction of East and West is exclusively from the Western point of view and our knowledge about West was reinforced repeatedly and framed clearly, at least in the way West has desired. The East had been, on the other hand, represented with blurry images which were mostly framed by the result of orientalist fantasies that disregard the vast diverse appearance of the East; mostly ‘castrated’ as I described previously; deaf and mute, and abalienated to Western acceptance of what is human. Thus, it is important for the reader of this research to have clear and trustworthy images of the Turk in mind rather than the traditional approach to him which was modified and recreated in the French minds as I explain throughout my later chapters *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and the *turquerie*, and very much so embedded in the modern mind. I believe that if the reader can perceive the features of Süleyman Ağa, they can find a more faithful image of these two states facing each other. Therefore, my effort is to prepare the reader for the encounter of Süleyman Ağa and the French government, and as historian Alan Mikhail suggests, to make the familiar strange.¹⁴¹ In this way, I hope, the reader can construct in their imagination between these two unique states, cultures, and images that belong to the events’ participants rather than a simplified version of a French man and a stereotyped Ottoman Turk.

The French warship officer, Matharel, also confirms in the same letter that Süleyman Ağa was from the *Bostancı corp* and recently received the title of *Müteferrika*.¹⁴² McCluskey

¹⁴¹ Borrowing his discourse here and in my whole analysis of the Franco-Ottoman relationship, I am aiming to have a scholarly conversation with Alan Mikhail’s works and his methodology to reexamine the French Ottoman encounters.

¹⁴² Müteferrika: Under the Ottomans, a corps of mounted guards, or member of the guard, who were especially attached to the person of the sultan. al-Mu‘tazz Bi ‘llāh. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Glossary and Index of Terms, Edited by: P.J. Bearman, Th. Banquis, C.E. Bowworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs Bowworth. Accessed October 7, 2020.

indicates that members of this title accompany the Sultan wherever he goes and "...received orders only from the Sultan who often used them for special missions."¹⁴³ Matharel also points out in his letter that one of the duties of Süleyman Ağa was "passed commands between the Sultan and the Grand Vizier."¹⁴⁴ I have to indicate at this point that all of this information informs us of the importance of Süleyman Ağa and his counterparts for the Ottoman Palace and, especially, the Sultans' trust to this rank in general. In fact, the Sultan, Mehmet IV affirms this assertion in his letter; "We send to you one of our confidants; he is the most capable and the most esteemed among our servants: Süleyman, the exemplar of illustrious and glorious personages [...] May his glory be augmented with our powerful and magnificent letter on the part of our High, Royal and Sublime Porte."¹⁴⁵ Besides the letter of Sultan, Denis La Haye, France's own ambassador observed Süleyman Ağa's chosen for this mission and his receiving the Müteferrika title, thus, it the sincerity of the France government's cynicism about the rank of Süleyman Ağa is extremely doubtful. Hence, the reason for it must be hidden somewhere else.

In contradistinction to the general French Aristocratic approach to Ottoman Turks that they are "brusque, boorish, uncivil and crude- even those who holds high rank at the porte."¹⁴⁶, according to Matharel, the envoy was "Sage, honest, and very civil."¹⁴⁷ Despite this first hand observation, as I quoted earlier, Vandal had chosen to approach Süleyman Ağa's personality as

http://dx.doi.org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei2glos_SIM_gi_03502 First published online: 2012. First print edition: ISBN: 97890041444484, PAGES 137-592, 20090501.

¹⁴³ McCluskey, *An Ottoman Envoy*, 344; Bayerle, *Pashas, Begs, and Efendis*, 45-116.

¹⁴⁴ McCluskey, *An Ottoman Envoy*, 344.

This information also indicates the trust that Ottoman Sultan, Mehmet IV preserves for Süleyman Ağa.

¹⁴⁵ Archive des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Politique Turquie 9, f.327: Mehmed IV to Louis XIV (June 1669); as translated in McCluskey, "An Ottoman Convoy," 337-8.

¹⁴⁶ As translated in McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy," 344.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

“religious fanaticism, fiery pride... and above all mistrust of infidels.”¹⁴⁸ I believe Vandal’s account is secondhand knowledge that comes from the French courts reports’ descriptions of the events following Süleyman Ağa’s visit. It details French accounts and outcomes of the clash between these two cultures during the audiences; first with Hughes de Lionne, and then with the king, Louis XIV, as sourced in French newspapers and memoires. However, as McCluskey underlines “each of these present their own problems. To historians: for example, the official record of ceremonial events was often manipulated for political ends and cannot be relied upon to give a true picture of what occurred.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the memoires which are used widely by the historians are also not reliable since they were published after the owners’ of the diaries death and their editors manipulated the text to make them more enjoyable and entertaining.¹⁵⁰

The Ambassadorial Cortege and the Mission

It was custom to appoint members to ambassadorial cortege who can complete and fill any deficiency of the ambassador who led the Ottoman envoy. Most of them, for instance, included a cook since religious differences required some ingredients restriction. However, this does not mean that the entire envoy was comprised of Muslim Turks. Some evidence suggests that some of the envoys received wine from the visited nations. This indicates that the envoys included non-Muslims. The dragomen of the envoys were usually Greek.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, 339; Vandal, *ed.*, *L’odysee d’un ambassador: Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)* (Paris, 1900), 23-27.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁰ For further information see Mary Hossain, "The Chevalier D'arvieux and 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme'." *Seventeenth-century French Studies* 12, no. 1 (1990): 76-88.

The size of the envoys also held some variations. On some occasions the number of members increased to as much as a thousand people (illustrated in Figure 1.6 and 1.7).¹⁵¹ However, since the Süleyman Ağa's visit was ad hoc, quickly arranged, and the envoy travelled via the French vessel it may have been as small as twenty people, although we do not have enough information about their identities.

From the *Sefaretname(s)*¹⁵² we learn that it was custom for ambassadors to receive the letter for the king they had been sent to visit from the Sultan himself right before their mission begins. They also received verbal instructions about their mission during this audience from the Sultan, the Grand vizier, and the 'Seyhulislam'¹⁵³ as well.¹⁵⁴ According to this custom the ambassadors would have dressed in a special caftan, learned the details of their mission, and after kissing it they would keep the Sultan's letter over their head until they left the Padişah room, and meet their cortege front of the palace before starting their journey. Unfortunately, we have never learned what exactly the Sultan and the ambassador verbally exchanged during this ceremonial mission acceptance. However, the description of this ceremony proves the importance of the Sultan's letter and its sacred meaning for its career. I must indicate that only the Koran and the letter of a Sultan are the sacred enough to be carried overhead.

Intermingle

As it is briefly presented here, the Ottoman Empire-France relationship is so complicated that it is impossible to describe it easily or as simple as 'friendly'. In fact, these tangled personal

¹⁵¹ As reported by the Hungarian sources 1718 Vienne envoy was combined by thousand people. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, 31.

¹⁵² Sefaretname: Ambassadorial report.

¹⁵³ Or shaykh al-islam; one of the leaders of Islamic doctrine.

¹⁵⁴ Unat, *Sefirler ve Sefaretnameleri*, 23-46.

relationships and scandalous encounters play important roles for every moment of political history in the following years, especially during the visit of the Ottoman ambassador Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa and will build the important steps of the arguments in this research. Although I particularly tried to avoid explicit details, the dynamics of the relationships between these two obverse courts allows us to comprehend the performativity of creating national identity and its attitude. The consecutive events and the French ambassadors' interaction with the Ottoman government explains the peculiarity of the French court's attitude towards Süleyman Ağa's envoy in Paris.

These two states' different governmental practices caused several misunderstandings and mistreatment of each other not only by the accounts but also by the historians. The Ottoman state system has not only been 'othered' by French and European thought but also 'othered' by the scholars repeatedly and deliberately for centuries. Hence, it becomes very likely the reader of the performativity of the courts could not have comprehended the unbalanced affairs. These differences are demonstrated to help the reader become familiar with the Ottoman state system. Also, the Ottoman's diverse backgrounds and their system that allows everyone in the palace to rise as far as Grand Vizier status even if they were an apple seller in their early age as we see in the case of Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha is featured. The system which gave equal opportunities to its citizens and we praise in our recent society for some reason belittled again, not only in the western minds but also in the recent scholars' minds that Süleyman Ağa was unfavored and fell into contempt because he was a gardener, moreover, because of this particular reason perceived as an uncivilized fool so much so that scholars think and claim that Moliere created his foolish character in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* based on him. this argument is detailed in the following chapter. I wanted to point out the political background of these states in

order to better understand the reason of the 'failure' of the visit. To the contrary, I comprehend the result of this visit as a power-displaying opportunity and a success story in the long-term outcome for France.



Figure 1.1 Dinner at the Palace in Honour of an Ambassador.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Jean Baptiste Vanmour. 1700-50. Oil on Canvas. Pera Museum. Google Arts and Culture. Accessed May 17, 2021. <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/dinner-at-the-palace-in-honour-of-an-ambassador-jean-baptiste-vanmour/-QFjzb2GyiY8Tw?hl=en>.



Figure 1.2 The Ambassadorial Delegation Passing Through the Second Courtyard of the Topkapı Palace.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Jean Baptiste Vanmour, Oil on Canvas, Pera Museum, Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Collection. Google Arts& Culture. Accessed May 18, 2021. <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/the-ambassadorial-delegation-passing-through-the-second-courtyard-of-the-topkap%C4%B1-palace/sAHhylh9nvRTGw?hl=en>.



Figure 1.3 Audience for the Persian Ambassador.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Şehinşâhnâme, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, FY, nr. 1404, vr. 41b-42a, Ahmet Mumcu, “Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn”, İslam Ansiklopedisi, Cilt 9, (Türk Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul: 1994), 430-432.



Figure 1.4 Sultan Ahmet III Receiving a European Ambassador, 1700-1750.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Jean Baptiste Vanmour, Oil on Canvas, Pera Museum, Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Collection. Google Arts& Culture. Accessed May 18, 2021. <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/sultan-ahmet-iii-receiving-a-european-ambassador/1QE6s7Z1v76EuQ?hl=en>.

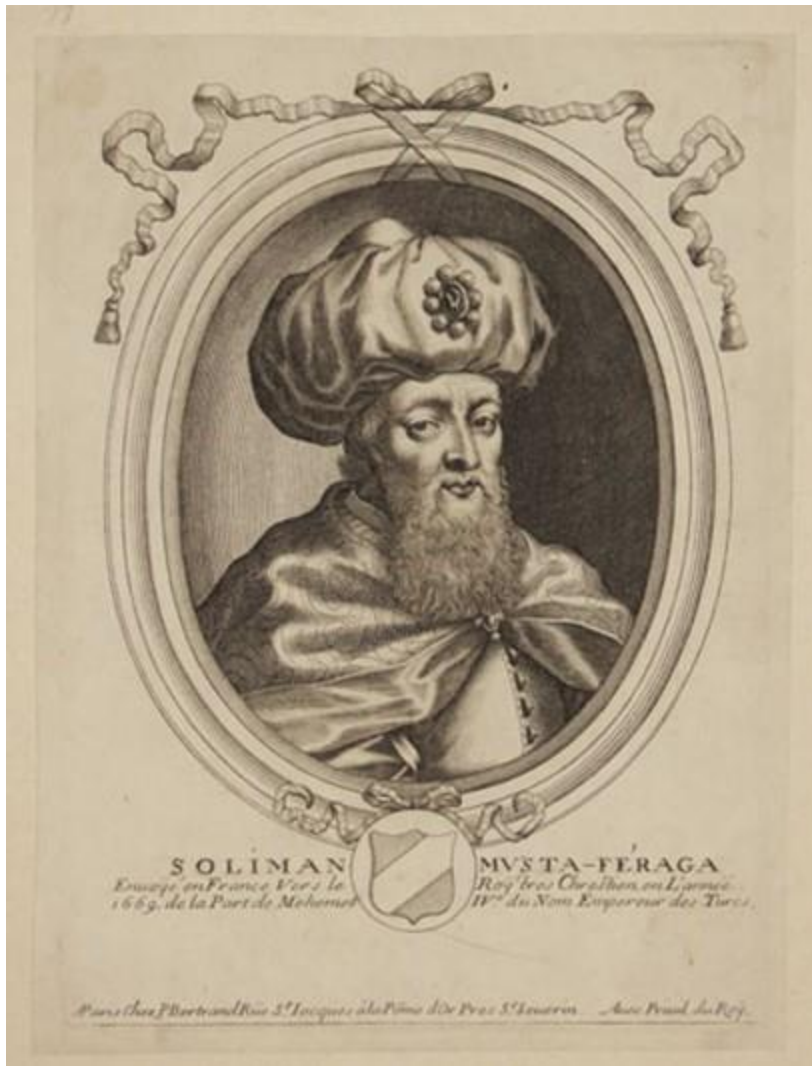


Figure 1.5 Muteferrika Süleyman Ağa in French Sources.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ BnF, Gallica, Nicolas de Larmessin, *Les Augustes Représentations de Tous les Rois de France, Depuis Pharamond Jusqu'à Louis XIV. Avec un Abrégé Historique sous Chacun, Contenant Leurs Naissances, Inclinations et Actions Plus Remarquables Pendant Leurs Règnes*, 1690, vue 161, p.156.



Figure 1.6 The Ambassadors' Procession, 1700-1750.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Jean Baptiste Vanmour, Oil on Canvas, Pera Museum, Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation Collection.



Figure 1.7 Ebubekir Ratip Efendi and Ottoman envoy, Vienne, 1792.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı sefirleri ve sefaretnameleri*, illustrations.

Chapter 2. Re-examining the Ottoman Ambassador in the French Court and the Performativity of the Encounter

The focus of this chapter is reconstructing the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa's visit to France in 1669. This study will examine what happened during the visit, how it had been interpreted by the scholars, and the political agenda of the French government. Then it will explore how the adding of Ottoman accounts to the through line of these events might have shifted these interpretations and the performativity of the encounter. This chapter partly utilizes Clifford Geertz's thick description as a methodology as much as the sources allow and takes an ethnographic approach to the masquerades which were produced by the French officials and courtiers during their encounter with the Ottoman envoy.¹⁶² It is important for this research to study every aspect of the event as much as possible to define the thick description of it to build a clear context and comprehend the Turkish envoy's perception of the subsequent events. The main goal is not to understand what the envoy members' thought, but "how" they thought.¹⁶³ During this encounter many serious issues were produced because of the skepticism of the French officials regarding the official title of the ambassador Süleyman Ağa. While their strategies for figuring his rank out caused a disastrous diplomatic failure, at the same time it produced intriguing court performances. The constant judgement and surveillance pursuant to the monarch's desire for power display, that is presented in this chapter, obviously caused high stress within the envoy, and affected the Turks' attitude during this visit. Ignoring this fact in scholarly research causes an unavoidable miss-analysis and shift in the reconstruction of cause and effect in these two states' interactions. As it has been demonstrated in chapter one, citing the Ottoman

¹⁶² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures*, Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-54.

¹⁶³ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 1.

accounts as responsible for any distaste of this diplomatic encounter is an inevitable result of relying solely on Western sources and failing to attempt an equal approach to both parties.¹⁶⁴ The main reason for this one-sided approach could be the lack of documents produced by the Ottoman principal members during the visit. Therefore, in this chapter, I attempt to bring relevant sources from different Ottoman accounts who were sent to western countries for equivalent missions, and through their records I will elucidate Ottoman thoughts and involvement likely evident in this cross-cultural exchange between the Ottoman Empire and France.

The Sublime Porte to Paris

Sailing to the infidels' land in a French warship in the summer of 1669 must have been an astonishing experience for the Turkish envoy, who had been rushed into this journey with less than two months' preparation. Would they have presumed they were going to make such a mark in France? Were they aware what hardship and resistance to their identity of Ottoman-ness they were about to face? What did they know about France, its aristocrats, the French people, their culture, traditions, politics, literature, art, court entertainments, and how they have perceived the Turk? It is such a desperate moment for a scholar to not to have a firsthand letter or memoire, of any ambassadorial reports from this visit. We can only guess, more or less, the gaze of the French sailors on the Turks and the Turks' gaze on the sailors, and reciprocal feeling of the gaze on themselves in their every step, from their reaching out to the bread they eat, to breathing the fresh air of the Mediterranean, and during their sacred moments of praying. Unfortunately, later on in this journey the parties were going to miss the unique performativity of this firsthand

¹⁶⁴ See Chapter 1, 1-4.

exchange of their selves, and discerning the similarities along with their differences, and the encounter was going to hit the great wall of the ‘other’.

The French vessel’s senior officer comte de Matharel describes the envoy as “sage, honest, and very civil’, with a great fascination since before this journey his entire knowledge about the Turk was contrary to this opinion.¹⁶⁵ The only “bad manners,” according to Matharel, that they exhibited was that they were neither talking while eating nor drinking anything, and doing it “extraordinarily quickly.”¹⁶⁶ The letter Matharel wrote to his relative contains details about the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa’s title in the Ottoman Palace and Matharel’s description of Süleyman Ağa includes his personality such as ‘wise’ and ‘highly esteemed’ and in it he displays the senior officer’s personal interaction with the envoy and the ambassador. It is obvious that these descriptions come from an effort toward understanding each other, and frank conversations rather than simple observations. Furthermore, this close interaction undoubtedly points out a certain respect they showed towards to each other. Perhaps this was the only part of the journey that the envoy experienced in that way.

Despite seemingly enough time to prepare for an ambassadorial visit, especially in the 17th century, two months was a challenge to arrange such mission properly. This was not going to be the first envoy that visited France, although it was the first since 1618, after a letter which announced Sultan Ibrahim’s succession to the Ottoman throne was delivered to the king of France, Louis XIII. However, the 1618 mission was not an ambassadorial visit the way we

¹⁶⁵ AAE CP Turquie Supplement 7 f.341, Matharel to Matharel (30 June 1669); as translated in Phil Mccluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris: Süleyman Ağa’s Mission to the Court of Louis XIV, 1669." *Osmanlı Araştırmaları = The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 48 (2016): 337-55, 343.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

perceive it today by any meaning since the only mission was to deliver the letter and thus was executed by an Ottoman Palace sergeant. Hence, both sides of the accounts in 1669 were unsure about what to expect from each other because of the lack of an example for such an encounter. How could states prepare for such an encounter without a specific guideline written for it? How can they set flexible expectations and make sense of each other while maintaining their cultural dignity, especially at a time when their alliance was going through a rough phase, with displays of power over each other and claims of military or cultural supremacy being stated?

Considering that Süleyman Ağa was appointed to this mission and received the title ‘Müteferrika’¹⁶⁷ during the absence of the Grand Vizier Köprülü Fazıl Ahmet Pasha, and he had less than two months to prepare for it, I believe he had limited resources to study his assignment.¹⁶⁸ How then did he learn about what his mission would require? Where did he find examples of such a mission? How did he study it? There was no imperial system for Ottomans to educate ambassadors for their duty in the 17th century. There was no guideline, handbook, or even ambassadorial report tradition in the Ottoman Empire at the time. All the experience and information gathered during such missions had been reported by the ambassadors directly to the Grand Vizier and the Sultan himself prior to Süleyman Ağa.

The Ottoman Empire used to send ambassadors to foreign governments only in necessities, at least until the end of the 18th century. Historian Faik Reşit Unat lists a few of these necessities such as informing the foreign nation about the Ottoman Sultan’s succession to the

¹⁶⁷ A special official title in the Ottoman Palace system. *Müteferrikas* are responsible for serving the Sultan and the Grand Vizier, however, they are collected from among the distinguished personas who served in different branches in the Palace. Erhan Afyoncu, “Müteferrika,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türk Diyanet Vakfı, 2006), 183-185.

¹⁶⁸ See Chapter 1 for the details of his appointment.

throne, representing the Empire in the foreign kings' coronation ceremonies, treaty exchanges, establishing alliances with foreign nations, negotiating the borders, or expressing condolences.¹⁶⁹ However, the Ottoman Empire's hesitancy in sending a resident ambassador to foreign countries, especially to European states, is interpreted as one of the Ottoman Empire's biggest faults and a reason for their eventual regression, especially by the 20th century historians. Ottoman historian A. Nuri Yurdusev touches on the subject stating that "According to the prevalent view the Ottomans, being faithful to Islamic precepts, distanced themselves from the infidel Europeans and, adopting a negative attitude toward (European) diplomacy, refused to send resident missions to the European capitals until the late eighteenth century."¹⁷⁰ Several fundamental reasons for the Ottomans keeping their distance from European states are discussed by some scholars.¹⁷¹ These have been the Islamic polity of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans sense of superiority towards the infidel nations, and Dar-al-Islam¹⁷² and Dar-al-Harb.¹⁷³ Consequently, the Ottoman Empire's relationship with Christian nations is based on continued conflict and, according to this presumptions, unavoidable constant warfare.¹⁷⁴ "Therefore" says Yurdusev, according to this claim, "...one cannot expect normal peaceful (diplomatic) relations and reciprocal exchange of resident representatives between Muslims and non-Muslims."¹⁷⁵ However, according to these systems then, would the Ottoman Empire not have rejected the residents of the infidels in their

¹⁶⁹ Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 17-19.

¹⁷⁰ A. Nuri Yurdusev, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional? Studies in Diplomacy* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 6.

¹⁷¹ Such as Halil İnalcık, Faruk Bilici, Suraiya Faroqhi, Bernard Lewis, Nebahat Avcıoğlu.

¹⁷² "Where Islamic law obtains, and the Muslims live under the law of Islam." Yurdusev, *The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy*, 7.

¹⁷³ "Where the infidels live outside the law of Islam and with which the Muslims are at war." Yurdusev, *The Ottoman Attitude Toward Diplomacy*, 7.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

territory as well? Would they have sent an envoy to the infidel states for any reason? Why did they award the western-Christian states with capitulations then? For instance, while Bernard Lewis asserts the Ottoman Empire's certain acceptance of themselves as an absolute power over European countries caused them to fall behind the modern democracy, M. S. Anderson claims that because the military power and the wide territorial possession, the Ottomans felt the superiority that prevented them from establishing any regular diplomatic relations with the western countries.¹⁷⁶ However, they did not feel the necessity to answer the questions stated above; Why did the Ottomans have any peaceful exchange with the European countries if this kind of relationship were against their law and governmental policy? Hence, this argument of Ottomans distancing themselves because of their superiority remains a tentative assumption. In my opinion if we want to find an answer for why the Ottoman Empire had not felt the necessity to establish a resident embassy in the west, we must look at the definition of 'diplomacy' again. "Diplomacy is the system and art of communication between sovereign states and its chief function is negotiation."¹⁷⁷ Then, it demands peace. It is established and developed for ending or preventing a warfare, finding a different way of reconciliation. Yurdusev explains how modern diplomacy began in 15th century for Italian city states' exigency for balancing "competitive struggle with one another."¹⁷⁸ In another word, it was financially more sustainable to negotiate peace than feed warfare. However, modern diplomacy was founded, developed, and refined to its modern state in Europe because of the Christians fear of the young Ottoman Empire. Hence, Yurdusev claims that the European state system and the Ottoman Empire formed together. "They

¹⁷⁶ See Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); M.S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450- 1919* (Taylor and Francis, 2014).

¹⁷⁷ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 162-164.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 12.

had never been isolated.”¹⁷⁹ Yurdusev also points out ‘Dar al-sulh’,¹⁸⁰ the idea that is stated in the Koran which requires Muslims to offer peace to the other nation which they were in conflict. This naturally opposes the assumption of Ottoman ambition of constant war with infidels. Yurdusev continues “They (the Ottoman Empire) not only made use of the ‘aman’¹⁸¹ system or the system of ahdname,¹⁸² granting safe conduct and freedom to live by themselves in respect of subject population who were non-Muslims, but also in their external relations.”¹⁸³ Putting it as simple as ‘Ottomans distancing themselves from Europe because of their sense of superiority’ is unsupported and it is a discourse that need to be changed by the scholars.

Although there must be several social-political reasons for the Ottomans’ resistance to sending a resident ambassador to Christian nations, this was undoubtedly not a purposeful neglect, although it was likely a lack of necessity. One of the reasons the European nations sent ambassadors to the Ottomans, other than political negotiation, was to understand and learn about the Ottoman culture, religion, and tradition. It was the only way to develop a special communication method to negotiate with this absolutely strange and complicated ‘other.’ Then what was beneficial for Ottoman Empire to send a permanent resident ambassador to foreign nations? What would they possibly achieve with this kind of move? Considering the vast territory, they possessed and reigned over, and the cultural and religious diversity these regions contained, the Empire already had the knowledge of cultural, traditional, and religious differences of the Foreign nations. In fact, the Ottoman Palace services was built upon this

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 13-15.

¹⁸⁰ Where the Muslims and non-Muslims live in peace. Yurdusev, *The Ottoman attitude Toward Diplomacy*, 15.

¹⁸¹ Safe conduct.

¹⁸² Bill of oath.

¹⁸³ Yurdusev, *The Ottoman attitude Toward Diplomacy*, 15.

diverse representation. The ethnic diversity of the government personas and the *Dar al-Sulh* with the infidels under the Ottoman rule had already allowed this kind of firsthand observation. Furthermore, the government was already hosting the foreign countries' ambassadors for necessary negotiations. I accept that the Ottomans were late to become involved with the ambassadorial exchange with Europe and this hesitation caused several problems, even may have accelerated the collapse, however this was not a question in the middle of the 17th century.

In the Süleyman Ağa's case the real issue was the lack of the institutionalized bureaucratic inter-relation training. His receiving the title of Müteferrika, being appointed to the mission, gathering his envoy, researching his assignment and its requirements, and preparation for his duty had to be completed within two months. To believe that this situation was a custom for an Empire this big and this strong for centuries would be either malevolent or born of ignorance. The Ottoman government previously showed an extremely sensitive approach to ambassadorial missions' preparation and they were meticulous about the details of these assignments.¹⁸⁴ Naturally, the ambassador of the mission was representing the Sultan himself during his journey to the foreign land in the end. The shortest time for these sorts of preparations would be more than ten months under regular circumstances.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, these missions contained many people to aid the ambassador in various topics. However, the number of attendants varied from ambassador to ambassador with the purpose of the assignment. Generally, the number ranged from 300 to as many as 1000 aides on some occasions. Süleyman Ağa not only had a short amount of time to prepare for this mission but also, he was permitted to gather only 20 officials to support him since the envoy was going to travel with the French vessel that

¹⁸⁴ See Chapter 1 for details of envoy preparation, 22-6.

¹⁸⁵ See Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, 23-9.

arrived in Porte to collect the French ambassador, Denis La Haye.¹⁸⁶ This number was extremely small in comparison to regular Ottoman envoys. Naturally, all these deficiencies set this mission up as an extreme challenge from day one.

I claim that to be able to understand the circumstances in this mission, how Süleyman Ağa thought, what his expectations were for this mission, and what his duty was, we have to figure out the way Süleyman Ağa prepared for this assignment and the sources he utilized. As I noted earlier it was not custom for the Ottoman Ambassadors to report the details of their mission in a written document until the 18th century. Instead, they verbally reported their journey to the Grand Vizier and the Sultan. Therefore, there is no direct evidence of these reports in the records for palace officials' use. However, an earlier ambassadorial visit of an Ottoman ambassador to Vienna in 1665, just four years prior to Süleyman Ağa's mission, was recorded by a well-known Ottoman travel writer who was one of the aids to the ambassador in that mission. This document provides a tremendous amount of information about the ambassadorial journey of an Ottoman envoy.¹⁸⁷ I believe Süleyman Ağa exemplified this visit for his own mission to France and we can find many traces of Süleyman Ağa's approach and expectations from his duty in this document. Hence, I believe this report, *Seyahatname*, could be the main source to utilize as a guidebook for comprehending Süleyman Ağa since various of diplomatic traditions established between the Ottoman Empire and the Western states are described meticulously.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ See chapter 1 for more information about the background of this situation. 30-39.

¹⁸⁷ The ambassador of this visit was Kara Mehmed Pasha. He was also coming from *Bostancı* corps like Süleyman Ağa and he was holding the *Müteferrika* title as well. Hence, this information legitimates my decision of juxtaposing these two events, because of their background similarities, and claiming that the Vienna envoy was an exemplifier for Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa for his visit to France. I will refer Kara Mehmet Pasha as Ambassador from now on in order to prevent any confusion because of the names' unfamiliar nature for the Western reader.

¹⁸⁸ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, Cilt 7 (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1928).

Therefore, I will provide the comparison of these two envoys' experiences to make sense of Süleyman Ağa and his behavior during this duty. In the following section I will focus on Kara Mehmed Pasha's Vienna visit and analyze the aspects that, generally, an Ottoman ambassador was to follow. I must note that examining the subsequent document I am not claiming these events are absolute facts. It is not my ambition to discuss whether Evliya Çelebi exaggerated the events' authenticity and manipulated the arguments, or if he conveyed the events truthfully. My goal is to provide a document that contains contents that were most likely circulated, at least verbally, in the palace after the ambassadorial journey and was likely utilized by Süleyman Ağa as a source for his duty. That is to say, the information in this document would likely have been available to Süleyman Ağa. Hence, I focus on presenting only the Ottoman records for the Vienna visit in 1665, examining the expectations of an Ottoman ambassador both from his personal aides and the Ottoman government. Naturally, I excluded the Austrian documents since I am not fact checking this perspective in this part of my research. Following the next section, I will continue describing Süleyman Ağa's journey, comparing it with Kara Mehmed Pasha's journey, in order to study Süleyman Ağa's behavior during his encounters with the French bureaucrats from an Ottoman ambassador's point of view.

Footprints of 1665 Vienna on 1669 Paris

The representative of the Ottoman Empire was an extremely important subject for the Ottoman government. It was accepted in the Ottoman Empire that he was representing the magnificence of the Empire and its ruler.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, they were always selected from among

¹⁸⁹ Dr. Mustafa Can, "Elçi Kara Mehmed Paşa Örneği Üzerinden Osmanlı Diplomasi Teşrifatına Dair Bir Analiz," 'Tarihin İzinde Bir Ömür' Profesör Dr. Nuri Yavuz'a Armağan (2019): 241-64, 243-44.

the most loyal to the Sultan, the best behaved, and the best educated. As I presented in Chapter one, the ambassadors were also required to know the language and the manner of the court that they were going to visit to represent the Sultan of the Empire without being subjected to any insult. So much so that during the Vienna visit the cortege of the envoy showed respect to the Ottoman ambassador, Kara Mehmed Pasha, as if he were the sultan himself. Even his aids referred to him as ‘my Sultan.’ Besides, he personally was ordered by Sultan Mehmet IV to take a good care of his cortege and protect the empire’s honor.¹⁹⁰

According to this approach, the Ottoman ambassadors must have been precise in every sense of performative action during their journey, especially with respect to the foreign countries’ customs of welcoming ceremonials and ambassadorial audience practices. The Turkish envoy’s Vienna visit exemplifies this approach perfectly. For instance, in the negotiation between the Ottoman ambassador and the chief superintendent of Habsburg, the ambassador threatened the Habsburg officer to refuse the King’s invitation for his audience and to further notify the Grand Vizier of the situation.

According to Evliya Çelebi, a Habsburg officer notified the Ambassador that the king was ready to accept the Turkish envoy to his audience, however they requested the envoy send their heavy objects and carriers ahead of them, which caused the Ottoman ambassador to respond with rage. The following conversation is from Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*,¹⁹¹

Ambassador: Nobody has business with our belongings. The Sultan’s gifts to the king are among them.

¹⁹⁰ Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, *Vekayi-name Osmanlı Tarihi (1648-1682), Tahlil ve Metin Tenkidi*, Haz. Fahri C. Derin (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınevi, 2008), 173-175.

¹⁹¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, Cilt 7 (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1928), 239.

Habsburg officer: We considered your comfort with this request. We did not want you to have trouble with them during the entrance ceremony.

Ambassador: Then the camels can go ahead. I will keep my belongings with me.

Habsburg officer: My dear Pasha, the king commanded...

Ambassador: Infidels! I do not want to hear you say again that the magnificent king commands, I will wallop you with my dagger's handle...¹⁹²

Evliya Çelebi adds that after the Ambassadors reaction, the officer froze, not finding any words to express himself. Reading this anecdote makes me wonder, naturally, how the ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha was able to behave in this manner? Why wasn't he repeatedly referred to as the rude, snobbish, self-important one by historians like Süleyman Ağa has been? How and why did the Habsburg government indulge him?

Ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha's visit was arranged following the Peace of Vasvar¹⁹³ which ended the Battle of Saint Gothard¹⁹⁴ between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, promising twenty years of peace between the two. The mission required an exchange between these two powers; an ambassador from Habsburg was sent to the Porte, and an Ottoman ambassador was sent to Vienna. Although the peace treaty was beneficial for Habsburg, in that they were promised 20 years of peace, it was a show of power and strength for the Ottoman government and its military, in that the West feared them enough to acquiesce to demands in exchange for a promise to halt their military campaign. Habsburg would do anything to avoid upsetting this agreement. The situation was much different for Süleyman Ağa's journey to

¹⁹² Ibid. Translation is mine.

¹⁹³ Unat, *Osmanli Sefirleri*, 47.

¹⁹⁴ Ottoman- Habsburg War 1663-1664.

France. There was not a current threat of military intimidation by the Ottomans to force the French into assuming a humble attitude towards the Turks. Moreover, the entire mission was likely the French ambassador, Denis de La Haye's manipulation of both sides for his self-interest. He was the failure in the eyes of both sides since he had not been successful in his attempt to extend the capitulations for France's benefit, and he needed something, anything, to protect his reputation before his duty expired at Porte. Conversely, the mission of Kara Mehmed Pasha in Vienna was deliberate for both the Ottoman Empire and Habsburg. Kara Mehmed Pasha could have threatened the Habsburg government letting the Grand Vizier know how the Austrians threatened him and requested Ottomans to do the same to the Habsburg ambassador in the Porte since it meant terminating the good will between the empires. Any insult to the Habsburg ambassador was going to be an insult to the king of Habsburg, France did not have that fear since, as I described in Chapter one, their ambassador, Denis de La Haye, had already lost favor in the Ottoman court long before the visit of Süleyman Ağa.

Turning our gaze back to the city wall of Vienna, the Habsburg king Leopold I also requested that the Ottomans not open their flags and banners, and to carry their pikes on their shoulders instead of lifting them up. Furthermore, he wanted the Habsburg marching band to lead the envoy to the city instead of the Janissary band. Kara Mehmed Pasha was not going to accept this either, he burst out "Look at these infidels. Is it the result of making me wait at the outside of your city's wall for a week? Are your goals to respect us or insult us?" Officers repeatedly tried to assure the ambassador "never, we have never wanted insult you. This is our foreign ambassador protocols. It is our law." Kara Mehmed Pasha raged again:

Your law is the law of infidels. Not ours. I am the Vizier of the Sultan (here he aligns his title and responsibilities in the Palace of the Ottomans). I am the governor of the

Rumelia... I have official duty to convict criminals. If my envoy passes through a city, I play my music. I order my soldiers to shoot a stranger who attempts to come close to my regiment. I am the representative of the Sultan of Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Egypt, and Damascus. Why should I let the infidels' music to lead my way? I understand your ambition. I will not go to the audience of the king; I will not ruin the Ottoman custom. Do not compare me with the other ambassadors... I am here in the name of the Sultan, and his honor.¹⁹⁵

According to Evliya Çelebi these words stirred a panic among the Habsburg officers. When they asked for patience so that they could consult the king the ambassador become angrier and ridiculed the officers for not having independent thoughts and actions. Furthermore, he indicated that the Hapsburg could never have been equal with the Ottoman Empire if the Habsburg Empire did not have any self-ordained officers.¹⁹⁶ It is evident that at first, it was important for both the ambassador and the Habsburg officials that Kara Mehmed Pasha was holding a high rank in Ottoman hierarchical system. Hence, he did not hesitate to use it to enforce his customs and expectations to the Habsburg delegates. Second, he was adamantly loyal to Ottoman customs, that even a slight difference in his plans was perceived by him as an insult to his envoy. And finally, he underlined his determination to follow Ottoman customs no matter what, saying that he would order his soldiers to shoot anyone that goes beyond the limits set by him. It means that he could have terminated the peace treaty using the power of representing the Ottoman Sultan in this foreign land, and that he would fight for this honor even if it cost his life. In this point it is impossible to not to feel for the Habsburg officials who were stuck between their king and the

¹⁹⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, Cilt 7, 240-241. Translation is mine.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Ottoman ambassador. However, they had to try it again anyway, they asked if it would be appropriate for the Ottoman envoy to tilt the banners a slightly at the gate of the city, but the Pasha said that he would rather die. Finally, the officers accepted all his conditions and allowed the envoy to enter the city the way the ambassador desired. However, this argument was only the first one of many others during this visit which all ended up falling in the Ottoman ambassador's favor.¹⁹⁷

The next morning the Habsburg king Leopold I sent a special eight-horse carriage covered with jewels to the ambassador to travel in it to his audience with the king however ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha rejected this offer as well asserting that the carriages are for women; Ottomans would ride a horse. This was also a statement that represented not only the sultan but also the entire Ottoman Empire and their traditional and military custom since horses had maintained a substantial importance for the ottoman cultural, religious, and civic life. In his research historian Serkan Emir Erkmen describes the special place of horses in Ottoman's life as "Horses not only represented being valor, bravery, courage, valiantness, and being warrior for the faith but also they had carried symbolic, mythologic, and spiritual meanings in Ottoman military and daily life."¹⁹⁸ Hence Ottoman ambassadors had showed a great care which horse to ride and when to dismount from their horses especially during the encounters with the foreign states' delegates. This phenomenon is a well-known power display and dignity strategy between the accounts as we see several examples of this kind of political power game in the ambassadorial visits. The delegates of the nations had waited and found numerous excuses not to dismount their horses before the opposite sides. For instance, a few decades later, during another

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Serkan Emir Erkmen, *Klasik Donem Osmanli Kara Kuvvetleri (Silahlari ve Techizatları)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2019), 556-68.

Vienna visit, an Austrian delegate member pretended to dismount his horse, then he had not at the last moment in order to make the Ottoman ambassador to dismount his horse first. However, one of the older Ottoman cortege members immediately said that because of the mud on ground they had to continue their encounter somewhere else and prevented the Ottoman ambassador from dismounting his horse before the Austrian delegate.¹⁹⁹ This example also shows that for the Ottoman ambassador which horse to ride, how to ride their horse, and when to dismount had numerous symbolic meanings besides displaying power during this power game. Therefore, Ottoman ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha rejected leaving his horse behind and arriving to the audience in a carriage despite its numerous jewels. In fact, I believe that it was part of a strategy in the mind of the ambassador to display the Ottoman power marching throughout to the city, riding their horse and having an opportunity to show the solemnity of the Ottoman Turk.

A week after the Turkish envoy entered the city, the Habsburg officers arrived to let the Ottoman ambassador know that the king was going to accept him to his audience. Nonetheless, the ambassador had certain conditions. When the ambassador entered the palace, the king was to stand up from his throne and come to the doorway. Then the ambassador would kiss the king's shoulder, the king would kiss the ambassador's chest, the ambassador would then deliver the letter of the Sultan, and the king would kiss it, and hold it over his head. The king would listen to the letter's reading standing, and then the gifts of Sultan to the king would be submitted to the court. These requests stirred the officials. The chief officer was insulted by these conditions. "what kind of a dream you are living in?"²⁰⁰ he asked, "None of your nation's ambassadors

¹⁹⁹ See Ali İbrahim Savas, "Osmanlı Diplomasisinde El-Kadimu Yüzarı Kaidesi," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Sayı 15 (1995-1997): 434-54.

²⁰⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, Cilt 7, 287-88.

asked such things from a king.”²⁰¹ However, the ambassador was adamant. The delegates had run between the king and the ambassador for three times until they reached agreement; The king was going to walk toward to the ambassador for seven steps, kiss the letter and put on his forehead, listen the letter standing, but was going to sit down during the ceremony of receiving the gifts.²⁰²

These events in Vienna and the audience between the Habsburg king and the ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha are especially intriguing for this research for examining Süleyman Ağa’s visit to France which was about five years later than the Vienna mission. Hence, they reveal the pattern of the way of thinking and motivation behind the actions of Süleyman Ağa. The adamancy and the determination of the ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha, and his success in attaining his request, and how his demands set the condition of his audience with the Habsburg king had played an important role to set the Süleyman Ağa’s expectations for his visit to France beyond dispute. Needless to repeat that perhaps the sequence of these events and the details of the interactions between the two nations were overstated in many levels by Evliya Çelebi. However, my focus point is not establishing the fact of Kara Mehmed Pasha and Turkish envoy’s Vienna visit, but to comprehend how this visit and the consecutive incidents perceived by Süleyman Ağa before his visit started in order to establish the fact for his France journey.

1669- Süleyman Ağa in France

The Ottoman Empire had had *vakanüvisler*, state chroniclers on the palace service. Every visit, every mission, every movement of Ottoman Government was noted by them. Many subjects had not been studied in Ottoman history not because they did not record the Palace

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

events, but, either the archival works of the subject were not completed, or the documents were damaged from some destruction like a war. Unfortunately, Süleyman Ağa's visit to France is among these unfound manuscripts. Hence, during this research I wondered if he had ever existed. Was the mission just a fraud or even a creation of the French mind? Was it staged deliberately to sculpt out the French identity? Nevertheless, whether he was an ambassador from Porte or not, or maybe never existed, he had been a milestone in French socio-political life. Thus, my aim is to analyze the subsequent events assuming that Süleyman Ağa in fact was an ambassador from Porte. However, I suggest to the reader to follow this study from this lens, knowing that, although there is no evidence to support his existence at the Ottoman archive, he marked his existence in French history. However, I will come back to this subject at my conclusion and bring my arguments deep.

Though the major question as to why the Ottoman government had an agreement with the France ambassador de La Haye and sent the envoy to France remains unanswered and the mission was arranged rather quickly, when the French vessel arrived at Toulon with its Turkish guests on the board on August 4, 1669, it was met by one of Louis XIV's gentilhommes ordinaires, sieur Giberty. His job was to "receive and defray him (Süleyman Ağa) in towns along route according to his dignity."²⁰³ It is an extremely intriguing order since the French ambassador Denis de La Haye had firsthand responsibility for this mission and he was involved with the planning of the journey. Then how did he not notify the French court about Süleyman Ağa's title or his 'dignity'? What did 'dignity' mean? What was the real mission of sieur Giberty? *La Gazette* speculated this order even further "His majesty chose the Sieur de

²⁰³ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Manuscrits Françaises 14118 f. 85, 'Relation de ce qui s'est passé a la reception de Soliman Ağa Mustapharaca envoyé par Sultan Mahomet Han Empereur des Turcs en 1669'; as translated in Phil McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy," 344- 45.

Lagebertie (La Gibertie), Gentleman in ordinary of his house, to go receive him, accommodate him, pay for his expenses on the way (to Paris), and to honor him according to his function.”²⁰⁴ Later we understand that he took his duty so seriously that he questioned Süleyman Ağa and his envoy almost raucously. He even demanded the Sultan Mehmet IV’s letter in order to see if the letter revealed that Süleyman Ağa was a real ambassador or just a delivery officer. Naturally, this demand was unacceptable, even an insulting request in the eyes of an Ottoman statesman, an ambassador or not. As I presented the Ottoman government’s traditions about the ambassadorial visits in chapter one and the case study of Kara Mehmed Pasha’s Vienna visit at the beginning of this chapter, the Sultan’s letter was a sacred fiduciary for the Ottoman ambassador. They were ordered to carry the letter with dignity and protect the honor of the Sultan by the Sultan himself. Not only did they carry the letter above their heads when it is revealed to the others’ gaze but also, they demanded the same respect from the foreign governments towards it. As we witnessed in Kara Mehmed Pasha’s mission, he even requested that the king receive the letter standing out of respect to the Sultan and the Ottoman Empire. Not knowing what the letter symbolized for the envoy, scholars who work on the subject have claimed that Süleyman Ağa was not an ambassador in fact, but he was a title seeker who fooled French officers.²⁰⁵ Even if their claim presents the truth, their evidence is neither strong enough nor makes sense considering Ottoman customs. Landweber for instance claims that Süleyman Ağa’s objection to showing the letter to the French officials “...heightened his hosts’ suspicion that he was in fact only an envoy, and not an ambassador; why else would he not show them the letter?”²⁰⁶ she even calls the incident as

²⁰⁴ *La Gazette*, no 148; as translated in Mathieu Grenet, “*Muslim Mission to Early Modern France*,” 237.

²⁰⁵ Many scholars have mentioned and argued Süleyman Ağa’s title. However, for more information please see Julia Landweber, Phil McCluskey, C. D. Rouillard.

²⁰⁶ Landweber, *French Delight*, 32.

the second error of Süleyman Ağa. Nonetheless, even though dragoman of the French embassy in Istanbul, Georges Fontana, confirmed the ambassador's title it was not enough for the scholars. However, Fontana's testimony satisfied the sieur Giberty to some degree as he approved ceremonial receptions for the envoy on the way to Paris.²⁰⁷

Süleyman Ağa naturally was not going to permit anyone's eyes to see the letter unless it was the King himself. It was the order he was given by the Sultan. Nonetheless, I believe the real reason for asking the letter by the French officials was not for credential checking, but it was the desire of seeing if the Sultan was granted France for the capitulations. Then, the court was going to receive the Ottoman ambassador according to that knowledge; either they were going to praise the Ottomans, or they were going to ridicule them. They basically did both.

Le Dran, a court officer notes that, for about 60 years after the visit, Süleyman Ağa was accepted as an ambassador from the 'Sublime Porte' by French officials that "The Consuls [provincial governors], dressed in their ceremonial robes, were presented by the Sieur de la Gibertie and made their compliments to the Ağa at the city gate. Then, flanked by the Sieur de la Gibertie and the First Consul, he marched into the city through a double line of soldiers to the roar of canons, which began firing the moment the Ağa passed under the gate in imitation of the custom of the Turks who salute Ambassadors thus with their canon."²⁰⁸ Everything seemed settled between the accounts favorably as the court poet Jean de La Fontaine worded enthusiastically upon the envoys arrival:

We expect from the Grand Lord

²⁰⁷ McCluskey, "An Ottoman envoy," 345.

²⁰⁸ Le Dran, "Mémoire sur le cérémonial observe en France en 1669," AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fols. 59r/v; as translated in Julia A. Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 28-29.

Beautiful and good ambassador:
He comes with a large cohort.
Ours is flattered by the Porte.
All this peace promises us,
Between Saint Mark and Mahomet²⁰⁹

According to travel plans the envoy was going to stop over in Marseille, Aix, Lyon, and Fontainebleau.²¹⁰ As a French courtier indicated that “All the Oriental ambassadors, and even envoys received extraordinary honors in the cities they passed by,”²¹¹ The envoy caused excitement throughout the route and French people showed their interest in these exotic Orientals in every city, so much so that performative stories spread all around France about the Ottomans and their envoy which displays how the Turk takes its place with all of its nakedness in the French ‘imaginative’ mind. Many fictional stories derived from this imagination. One of the most famous of those *Le Salamalec Lyonnais* adapted most likely by Jean de La Fontaine a few years after the visit.²¹² According to this story an Ottoman envoy was planning to stop at the city (most likely Lyon), and the local officials planned to honor him appropriately in an Ottoman way. They started searching for someone who knew Ottoman language to welcome to the envoy to their city. A man named Francois Selim introduced himself to the officials as a former Muslim who converted to Christianity and claimed that he knew the Ottoman language and the customs well enough to welcome the ambassador the way the officials desired. However, he had one

²⁰⁹ Jean de La Fontaine, ‘A Son Altesse Sérénissime Madame la Princesse de Bavière’ (July 1669) in *OEuvres complètes de Jean de La Fontaine*, ed. Charles Athanase Walckenaer (Paris, 1835), 537.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Mss. Français 14117-14120, *Memoires de M. de Saintot, introducteur des ambassadeurs* (1645-1791) 11:180; as translated in Mathieu Grenet, “Muslim Missions to Early Modern France, C.1610-c.1780: Notes for a Social History of Cross-Cultural Diplomacy.” *Journal of Early Modern History* 19, no. 2-3 (2015): 223-44, 234-35.

²¹² Although the stories attributed with La Fontaine, Grenet notes his doubt about La Fontaine’s contribution with these stories. Grenet, “Muslim Missions to Early Modern France,” 234-35.

serious condition; the officials were going to imitate his gestures while disregarding how much ridiculous or strange his gestures were. His condition was accepted graciously. When the envoy arrived, Francois Selim surprised them with his excellent language skills, however, it was impossible for the Ottomans to believe that he converted to Christianity leaving the true religion behind him. There was only one outward physical attribute to present his Muslim background, so he revealed his circumcised penis, likewise his entourage complied with his previously mentioned condition, and contributed to this performative display with their parts. The story continues with the fascination by women with this incentive performance of the ceremony that they could hardly wait to celebrate the next Ottoman mission in their land. However, the ceremony ended abruptly after the Muslim envoy ran away from the city “in fear of the worse” to happen to them.²¹³

This cross-cultural performative encounter of the East and West and its erotic display of manhood as a religious identification method in French minds not only underlines, metaphorically or directly, the fundamental and physical -altered- contrast but also an erotic interest and curiosity towards the oriental other. Through this story, the women who enthusiastically participated in witnessing this spectacle were also informed at the same time, about the obvious difference between the French and the other. In these stories the storyteller centered the French (obvious) identity with its wholeness and revealed its patriarchal commodity throughout the French officials and a former Muslim’s burlesque performance. At the same time, it kept the Muslim envoy and its attendants ‘identities’ unrevealed, sort of, as an absent figure while a former Muslim singlehandedly represented them under his new identity of a Frenchman.

²¹³ La Fontaine, *Le Salamalec Lyonnais*. See Mathieu Grenet “Muslim Missions to Early modern France.”

Thus, the French officials symbolize what French men are while the former Muslim French man who possess the knowledge of the meaning of being Ottoman but is no longer Ottoman, symbolizes what the French are not. Even if they had resemblances, big or small, once upon a time, it was no more. The French officials attempted in greeting the Ottoman envoy using the Ottoman language and ‘gesture’ in order to warm the relationship actually caused highlighting the differences even deeper. This kind of encounter is underlined by Foucault “...where their words unceasingly renew the power of their strangeness and the strength of their contestation. Between them there has opened up a field of knowledge in which, because of an essential rupture in the Western world, what has become important is no longer resemblances but identities and differences.”²¹⁴ Furthermore, since these ‘identities and differences’ performed in front of the Ottoman ‘other’ as the spectator and the spectacle at the same time, however, without the permission of representation of themselves since “From the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one thing the orient could not do was to represent itself,”²¹⁵ the West distributed the East “by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it...”²¹⁶ It is interesting that the ambassador Süleyman Ağa and his envoy became an identity mold for the French imaginative mind through their fictional stories; using humor and centering the Ottomans in the through line but representing them in their absence with the French characters who impersonate the Ottoman (mold, in order to display their true identity). Using their French identity which displays their true identity sets the ideological theme for this journey from its beginning with *Le Salamalec lyonnais* through the

²¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge Classics. Taylor and Francis, 2018), 50.

²¹⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 2003), 283.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

end with *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. As I will analyze it elaborately in the next chapter, chapter 3, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* following the footprints of the *Le Salamalec* story, utilizes Süleyman Ağa's visit and represents the Turk with its absence (without a real Turkish character in it), throughout the play, to declare the French identity as well. Then it is important for this research to understand that the French people focused on what Süleyman Ağa and the Ottoman envoy were not rather than what they were. In this way we can comprehend how the French reacted to the envoy and why they reacted the way they had while the envoy was following their Imperial tradition, more or less.

The envoy caused excitement and was received ebulliently by the French public on the way to Paris. However, since *la Gazette* announced the question about the ambassador's credentials and speculated if he was just a delivery officer or a real ambassador, this skepticism overshadowed the French officials' welcoming the envoy to their cities. For instance, in one event officials complained that Süleyman Ağa refused to dismount his horse during a receiving ceremony by the aldermen of the city of Marseille, and they immediately accused him being an arrogant, snob, and undiplomatic, which he has been branded by even our modern-day historians.²¹⁷ It is of course a result of a French effort of claiming what the Ottoman Turk was not instead of what it was. As I detailed at the beginning of this chapter exemplifying the Vienna visit of a Turkish ambassador, dismounting the horse had symbolized many sacred meanings for the Ottoman Turks and especially for an Ottoman ambassador. Süleyman Ağa who utilized the Vienna visit as a guideline for his visit to France, naturally followed the Ottoman protocol in every step of his journey. In fact, I believe, the real reason for this resentment was

²¹⁷ AAE CP Turquie 9, f.188: Monsieur de Meaux to Lionne (1 October 1669); See Julia A. Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*; Phil McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy" for further information.

disappointment by the French people seeing how small the ottoman envoy was. They were expecting a “Beautiful and good ambassador, He comes with a large cohort” as La Fontaine claimed.²¹⁸ Whereas the French public had read the glory of the Ottoman envoy during its visit to Vienna just a few years ago from the *Gazette* and the *Mercure*. Hundreds of men, with hundreds of horses with their silver engraved tents, and the numerous gifts for the king of Habsburg, and their majestic ambassador who was wearing silver and gold buttons as big as a goose egg...²¹⁹ On the other hand, this envoy they had to deal with had contained only 20 men, with limited belongings, without any splendid display of the richness of the Sublime Porte, and no janissary band marching in their streets.

Also, naturally, ignorance of each other’s traditions and protocol played an important role in this kind of displeasure. Süleyman Ağa had been unprepared for the French customs. He, I assume, besides his ambassadorial title’s accuracy, only studied the Vienna visit, Austrian custom, and protocols that we see in the Evliya Çelebi’s *seyahatname* which was fundamentally different than his visit to France. These differences were not only diplomatic differences between the Austrian and French protocols but also the circumstances were different as well. As I indicated earlier that the Austrians relied on the Ottomans’ good deeds towards them and avoided every kind of asperity during the Ottoman envoy’s visit. However, France had not needed Süleyman Ağa’s visit to their court other than desiring that he was carrying the renewal of the capitulations in the letter he brought to the king of France. Furthermore, Süleyman Ağa’s aides who support him in this kind of situations in order to inform him how to act or react

²¹⁸ Jean de La Fontaine, ‘A Son Altesse Sérénissime Madame la Princesse de Bavière’ (July 1669) in *OEuvres complètes de Jean de La Fontaine*, ed. Charles Athanase Walckenaer (Paris, 1835), 537.

²¹⁹ See for details Mustafa Can, “Elçi Kara Mehmed Paşa Örneği Üzerinden Osmanlı Diplomasi Teşrifatına Dair Bir Analiz,” 241–64.

through French protocols were too few. His Dragoman, who worked for the French Embassy for several years before this mission was only knowledgeable about the French ambassadors' customs in Istanbul, not in France. Hence the issue was beyond just language in this miscommunication; it was being oblivious regarding each other's traditions. Thus, this was just a beginning of the collision of cultures as Phil McCluskey also indicates that "What happened in Marseille provided a foretaste of what was to come in the capital. During his visit to the French court in November and December of 1669, inadequacies on both sides became increasingly apparent."²²⁰

These complications surrounding the embassy mission of the Ottoman Empire became a great opportunity for Louis XIV to declare his eminent sovereignty to Europe and to the Ottoman Empire as well. However, in doing this he must have had to take care not to damage the relations with the Ottoman government, since it was still beneficial for France to keep the Empire in their alliance, but he also had to be decisive enough to make sure that other nations received the message clearly along with the Ottomans. In this way he intended to advance France and his monarchy over Habsburg and claim superiority over the Christian coalition.

Using the French code of 'Courtesy' against the Ottoman subject had become the Court strategy during this visit. Orest Ranum states that for France "what was novel after 1630, however, was the systematic use of courtesy as a device to coerce all the king's subjects to enhanced obedience."²²¹ The state was practicing complete absolutism over its subjects by encoding hierarchical order into the coded rites of social interactions in order to further impose

²²⁰ Phil McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy," 345.

²²¹ Orest Ranum. "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660." *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980): 426-51, 430.

the monarch's power. Doing this allowed even the control of the courtiers' *honnetetés*²²² in the absence of the monarch. However, the demand of requiring complete knowledge of this code was not only limited to the monarch's French subjects but also included the foreign nations. Cardinal Richelieu, who was the first minister of France between 1621 and 1642 dedicated himself and his work in the court to "set out to ensure that French kings received proper respect from both foreign princes and their own subjects."²²³ It was within the King's power to assert what was courtesy and *honnetetés*, and this authority "... gave him enormous coercive power upon society in all its constituted elements,"²²⁴ as well as on the state's foreign politics. Expecting these courtesy codes from an Ottoman ambassador naturally would not be a reasonable attitude, at least not at the beginning of the visit. Louis XIV was able to foresee that a direct belittling and insult to Ottomans would have been detected by the envoy immediately and his plan would have been disclosed in the middle of it. Hence, I am claiming that questioning the ambassador Süleyman Ağa's credentials was not a sincere necessity but a part of a diplomatic plan since Louis knew that Süleyman Ağa would not have disclosed the letter before seeing the king. However, he had to be an ambassador to be able to see the king otherwise it would contradict the court code of courtesy, and not receiving the letter would have caused a diplomatic disaster between the two states. Thus, even Louis acted like he would not have an audience for Süleyman Ağa if he was not an ambassador; he knew, since the beginning, that he was going to have an audience with him, however, the conditions had to be set properly early on. Le Dran²²⁵

²²² Complete and confirmed integrity, having strong moral principles including physical reverences.

²²³ Orest Ranum, "Courtesy," 432.

²²⁴ Ibid, 430.

²²⁵ Sieur Nicolas-Louis Le Dran, Guardian of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1720 and 1762.

states that “His Majesty decided that if the Ağa Süleyman were only an envoy, he would treat him exactly as the sultan treated French envoys. He delegated Monsieur de Lionne to receive him in the guise of His Majesty’s Grand Vizier...”²²⁶ However, when the Ottomans treated the French envoys, they follow their protocols, their traditions of audience ceremonies in an Ottoman setting, furniture, decorations, and in Ottoman attires. It is understandable if Hughes de Lionne only assumed the role of the Grand Vizier as an equivalent title of its Ottoman hierarchical rank in Ottoman bureaucracy, nonetheless, he assumed a little more than that in his role-playing.

The First Audience and M. de Lionne, the ‘Grand Vizier of France’

On November 2nd, 1669, early in the morning Süleyman Ağa arrived at Hughes de Lionne, secrétaire d’État des Affaires étrangères, house in Suresnes, and was received by Kiaya-Bey,²²⁷ who was another role-player, one of the relatives of Lionne’s wife. Rouillard claims that after Süleyman Ağa was served coffee, and he waited for eight hours as it was custom in Ottoman government receiving ceremony for the foreign ambassadors, however, it is not true.²²⁸ The foreign ambassadors had waited for about half an hour before the audience with the Grand Vizier and some rest time for the foreign ambassadors was planned before the ceremony.²²⁹ They had been served coffee, sherbet, nuts and dried fruits as a part of Ottoman hospitality. Nevertheless, a day after the audience, Lionne himself indicates that he made the ambassador wait for half an hour on purpose, not eight hours: “Sire, I would not feel right in troubling you

²²⁶ Le Dran, “Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669,” AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4 ,63v-64n; as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 32.

²²⁷ Butler in Ottoman language. It is spelled ‘Kahya’ in Turkish, however, I followed the French spelling to prevent confusion since the French accounts spelled it ‘Kiaya’.

²²⁸ Rouillard, “Turkish Ceremony,” 43.

²²⁹ See chapter 1.

with a communication, were it not that yesterday I acquitted myself perfectly for a quarter of an hour in the role of Grand Vizier which you had assigned me. I had the Turk received in an antechamber by my kiaya, which is to say by my household steward, who invited him to be seated and served him coffee while he waited half an hour for the privilege of speaking to me.”²³⁰ It has been obvious that the French government was displeased by the Ottoman government’s recent treatments towards the French ambassadors in the Sublime Porte. Many disagreements between the ambassadors and the Ottoman government caused the French ambassadors to lose their privilege in the palace and fell behind the Dutch and the British ambassadors.²³¹ In a few cases they were even taken into custody by the Ottomans for certain time. They were constantly complaining about the treatment they received from the Porte to the French court as an insult and a dignity issue. However, France remained ineffective to solve this situation and their demands were not acknowledged by the Ottoman government because of the French government’s double politics and support of Christian forces against the Ottoman military.²³² This phenomenon, naturally, was perceived as a crucial and critical problem by Louis XIV. He was, perhaps unconsciously, building French national identity through establishing courtesy both inside and outside of France. He could not have been able to make the Ottomans receive the French ambassadors with French manners and dignity and prevent his ambassadors from being belittled in the presence of the Ottomans, however, he could have made a point by belittling the Ottoman ambassadors in the presence of French people. Thus, the French king’s desire to receive the Turkish ambassador in an equivalent manner with the Ottoman government

²³⁰ “Lettre de M. de Lionne au Roy Louis XIV, 3 novembre 1669” reproduced in Le Dran, “Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669,” AE/MD/Turquie, voL 10, doc. 4, fol. 64v. as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 34.

²³¹ For details see chapter I. *Before the Visit of Süleyman Ağa*, 14-19.

²³² Ibid.

was only to make his point of this understandable. However, Hughes de Lionne not only received the Ottoman ambassador like a Grand Vizier, but he also role-played as one, wearing Ottoman attire, sitting at an Ottoman style couch, decorating the room with Ottoman characteristics. Garritt Van Dyk describes the audience in his research as "...de Lionne dressed as a Turk in black robes to appear like the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire. He received Soliman²³³ Ağa seated cross-legged on a raised platform, covered with a finely-woven carpet embellished with gold, and strewn with brocade cushions- a re-creation of the sofa of the Grand Vizier."²³⁴ Why did Hughes de Lionne have an audience with the ambassador Süleyman Ağa not following the Ottoman traditions of receiving a foreign ambassador, but rather he also decided to assume the Grand Vizier role truly and dressed like one, and set up the receiving room as an Ottoman palace room? To find an answer for this question we need to pay close attention to the details of this audience. After waiting about a half an hour, Süleyman Ağa entered the audience-chamber, and reverenced touching his brow, lips and chest as its tradition in Ottomans to show respect, and he was seated on a stool which "covered with gold-fringed damask, but it was carefully placed below the step up to the sofa..."²³⁵ Thus, we can interpret Hughes de Lionne efforts of impersonating an Ottoman Grand Vizier as prolongation of Louis XIV's strategic plan to claim France superiority over Ottoman Empire. If the Ottoman ambassador represented the Ottoman Sultan as it was indicated several times in the previous documents in this research, then placing the ambassador below the so-called the Grand Vizier of France not only degraded the

²³³ French sources spell the name Süleyman in a few different ways. 'Soliman' is one of those spellings.

²³⁴ Garritt Van Dyk, "The Embassy of Soliman Ağa to Louis XIV: Diplomacy, Dress, and Diamonds," 4.

²³⁵ Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 43.

Ottoman ambassador but also this performative action degraded the Ottoman Sultan as well, not only before the French King, but also before his ‘Grand Vizier.’

As I explained earlier in chapter I and at the beginning of this chapter, Ottoman diplomacy was extremely particular about the ambassadorial relationship between foreign nations and the Ottoman government. Although they did not send a resident ambassador to the European countries until the 18th century, and this attitude was perceived as an Ottoman sense of superiority towards the foreign nations and their neglect of proper foreign diplomatic relations as their eventual fatal flaw, and since the Ottoman ambassador was representing the Sultan, the foreign nations must have been extremely careful about their acceptance ceremonies for Ottoman ambassadors. France used to have masquerades during the formal ceremonies, and it was a custom to welcome an envoy from an Oriental country with oriental parades, but the audience of Süleyman Ağa in the de Lionne’s house had an agenda beyond those orientalist performances. If Hughes de Lionne had an audience for Süleyman Ağa in French traditional settings Süleyman Ağa, most likely, would immediately protest the French statesman’s attitude towards him, and reject the seating setting as we have seen during the previous ambassadorial mission of Ottomans to Vienna. The Ottoman ambassador Kara Mehmed Pasha was extremely elaborative about the Habsburg’s audience ceremony. He even demanded the Habsburg king be standing up upon the ambassador’s entrance to the audience- chamber. He asked the king to kiss the ambassador’s chest and hold the Sultan’s letter over his head. However, I claim that, in the Süleyman Ağa’s case, the French plan had tied the ambassador’s hands with setting up the room for the audience ceremony in Ottoman decorations. Because, perhaps in Süleyman Ağa’s mind, rejection of sitting on a lowered stool would be rebuffing the Ottoman traditional seating of a foreign ambassador accepting ceremony. Thus, accepting the Ottoman ambassador to his audience as if

he was a Grand Vizier in Ottoman kaftan, and surrounding himself by oriental decorative pieces, sitting on a raised sofa, de Lionne set the conditions properly as Louis XIV planned meticulously for the Ottoman ambassador before having an audience for him whether he was an ambassador or not.

After establishing superiority over the Ottoman representative, Lionne followed immediately his secondary duty of convincing the ambassador to hand over the Sultan's letter to him, pleading that he was ordered by the king to confirm the ambassador's credentials, "The king summoned me to treat you, whether you are an ambassador or only an envoy, in the same way the principal ministers of your emperor use with our ambassadors and envoys" and threatened him saying "I do not know if, while your letters of introduction will bear the word 'Elci', meaning ambassador, my master the emperor (Louis XIV) will receive you as such, unless you bring him presents, as he has sent to your master through his ambassadors."²³⁶ Nevertheless, Lionne knew that the ambassador did not bring gifts to the king since it was part of a deal between the French ambassador La Haye and the Ottoman government. This mission was not going to cost anything to Ottoman government and the expenses were going to be covered by the French ambassador himself.²³⁷ Moreover, since the Ottoman envoy travelled with the French vessel to France for this mission, they were subject to a limit for their belongings as well. Nonetheless, Süleyman Ağa refused to give the letter to Lionne and underlined that the king

²³⁶ *La Gazette*, no 139, November 23, 1669; as translated in Mathieu Grenet, "Muslim Missions to Early Modern France," 233.

²³⁷ See Chapter 1 for details.

could decide how to treat him but he had to deliver the letter to the king himself, no one else, even it was going to cost the ambassador's head.²³⁸

The audience was partly a success for France considering Lionne managed to seat the ambassador lower than him and Süleyman Ağa could not show any resistance to this treatment since France used the Ottoman's audience custom against the Ottomans (illustrated in figure 2.1). On the other hand, it was frustrating for both sides since not only cultural and political differences dominated the meeting, but also communication failed in every sense. There were three interpreters present during the meeting, Francois Petis de la Croix was going to translate Turkish, Pierre Dippy was going to translate Arabic for the French side, and sieur de la Fontaine was on the Ottoman side. However, as I explained in chapter I, since de la Fontaine was the French ambassador Denis de la Haye's aid in the Sublime Porte, and Denis de la Haye long lost the French monarch's trust, a French traveler from the orient who learned the languages fluently, Laurent D'Arvieux was sent to the audience by the king to check "if the Interpreters faithfully report all that we say about on both sides."²³⁹ However during the meeting it became obvious that the French court interpreters were language scholars who can read and write in the oriental languages, but they could not speak. Hence the conversation between the accounts became gibberish and caused a lot of frustration. It was embarrassing for Lionne, but it was even worse for Süleyman Ağa who had already developed a distaste for the French attitude. The French statesman, Lionne, was pressuring him to reveal the letter to his eyes- which was impossible for Süleyman Ağa to do whether he was an ambassador or not-, the French interpreters taking a lot

²³⁸ "Lettre de M. de Lionne au Roy Louis XIV, November 3, 1669," AE/MD/ Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol. 65 v. as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 36.

²³⁹ D'Arvieux, *Memoires*, 131. See Mary Hossain, "The Chavalier D'arvieux and 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme'," *Seventeenth-century French Studies* 12, no. 1 (1990): 76-88, 81.

of time to follow their duty and translate the situation, left Süleyman Ağa unable to make sense of all this bureaucratic mess. D'Arvieux who was fluent in the Ottoman language watched the event sorrowfully alas quietly since he was not appointed as a formal interpreter for the audience and la Croix oversaw the communication between the parties. Eventually la Fontaine assumed the role of interpretation for both sides since Ottoman envoy had not understood anything la Croix had tried to say.²⁴⁰

M. de Lionne, embarrassed by the situation, wanted to finish the meeting shortly and ordered his 'kahya' to serve coffee and sorbet which was the traditional signal for Ottomans for withdrawal. As a last touch for power display Kahya served Lionne first while bending his knee and Süleyman Ağa afterwards standing straight. A second interview with the same parties was set up for November 19th and a house provided for him and his retinue in Issy until his departure to Paris.

Fascination and Boundaries

The massive interest for Süleyman Ağa during his wait until his second audience with de Lionne was impressive. Perhaps this interest was more than the French government wished for an envoy from the Orient. However, it added more pressure on the Süleyman Ağa's shoulders and overwhelmed the envoy. "Süleyman Ağa received many visits from people of both sexes, who arrived there from Paris and the surrounding area with full of curiosity. We followed him for a walk, saw him eating, praying to God, and we must admit that the Parisians are wrong to complain when they are called loafer; in truth I have never seen so much idleness... The crowd of curious people became so large that we had to bring in the Swiss to prevent disorder."²⁴¹ How

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 136-137.

²⁴¹ D'Arvieux, *Memoires*; as translated in "The Background of the Turkish Ceremony," 44.

did the envoy feel under this kind of continues surveillance? The interest, affection, affinity might have been comforting for the Ottoman envoy at the beginning, and perhaps confirming the importance of Ottoman Empire for the Western countries in their eyes. However, it must have been uneasy for them since their culture required many private times for them to perform their religious and social habits. Boundaries between private and public life was the main difference between the French and Ottoman social lives. The clearest difference was eating habits between these two cultures. Ottomans ate rather quickly, without talking, or drinking anything. Many European travelers were strongly surprised by this phenomenon. In fact, the French vessel senior officer comte de Matharel, who became close acquaintance with Süleyman Ağa during their travel to Toulon on the French vessel, pointed out this habit as the Ottomans only savage attitude.²⁴² Mealtime was not a socializing event in the Ottoman culture. The individuals would have preferred eating alone and saw this as privilege. For instance, out of respect, the father of the household would eat alone and with their son's joining them only when they become old enough. Sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek explains the Ottoman peculiarity for privacy during mealtimes as "the only living habit to be shared with and disclosed to people outside the household- and only close friends at all- was eating... Foreigners were not usually invited to Ottoman houses. Among themselves, even the household members did not eat together; the women and men ate separately."²⁴³ French custom was completely different from the Ottomans. Mealtimes were socializing events for the French people. While Ottomans did not have any dining rooms, French people gathered in big dining halls. Women and men used the mealtimes as sort of entertainment filled with conversations, music, and various social interactions. Göçek

²⁴² Phil McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy," 343.

²⁴³ Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York; Oxford, [England]: Oxford University Press, 1987), 37.

underlines that “the nobleman now needed twice as many servants in the kitchen and in the dining room.”²⁴⁴ In 17th century forward while the king was still using his fingers during his daily meals occasionally, however, the court had started using napkins, forks, knives, multiple glasses and plates for different meals and beverages during the court gatherings and feasts.²⁴⁵ Ottomans on the other hand were only using spoons, sat on the floor and their meals served on large trays on low stands, courses were finished quickly and parties cleaned their hands before they rose.²⁴⁶ These socially and culturally different ways of course caused several boundary crossings between the two states during Süleyman Ağa’s visit. While Süleyman Ağa’s facial expressions interpreted as his seeing himself as a superior, I believe they are clear performative indications by Süleyman Ağa for discomfort and being in a quandary. Unfortunately, we do not have any documents that indicates what Süleyman Ağa thought about this continued surveillance. However, we can find some hints regarding his thoughts around the interest of Parisiennes and the other French people to him and his envoy. In 1721 another Ottoman ambassador in Paris noted

They wanted, in particular, to watch us eat. We received messages that the daughter of so-and-so or the wife of so-and-so requested permission to watch us eat. We could not always refuse. Since our eating times coincided with their fast, they would not eat but surround the dining table and watch us. Since we were not accustomed to such behavior, this distressed us very much. We endured with patience out of our consideration for them.

Yet the French were accustomed to watching people eat; for example, it was their custom

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 41.

²⁴⁵ Orest Ranum. "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660." *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980): 426-51, 433-37. Accessed January 8, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1876927>.

²⁴⁶ Göçek, *East Counter West*, 38.

to permit some to watch their king eat. What stranger was the fact that these people would go to watch the King rise and get dressed in the morning. The fact that they made similar request of us made us very uneasy.²⁴⁷

As Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi displays in his ambassadorial report, approximately 50 years after Süleyman Ağa's visit to France, it was unbearable and extremely demeaning for Ottomans to be watched during their mealtimes. However, they tried to find some consolation in the idea that French was accustomed to watch their King's eating and dressing. Hence, they did their best to go along with the French custom, nevertheless, they did not have another option. However, Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi underlines the Ottoman envoy's distress regarding this strange custom. Based on Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi's report, it is natural to comprehend the pressure that Süleyman Ağa and his retinue felt as a reaction to the French interest in themselves. Eating uncomfortably, swallowing every bite may have seemed like a rock in their throats, and perhaps they tried to hide their eyes from the watchers with embarrassment. This must have been trying for the envoy members. They had, in fact, become a spectacle for the Parisians to watch like exotic animals in a cage, stripped from their Ottoman personality. Who would not have protested against being part of this performance and watched, without the protection of boundaries between their private life and the public spaces in their own habitat? Although it was clearly an uncomfortable situation for the Ottomans to be watched during mealtime, the privilege was still afforded to Parisians by special request. Thus, it still can be considered in some respect as boundaries between the private and public gaze. However, the public spaces did not provide any privacy in any means and as d'Arvieux pointed out that the King was obligated to appointed

²⁴⁷ Beynun Akyavaş, *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi'nin Fransa Sefâretnâmesi*. Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları; 129, (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1993), 20; as translated in Fatma Muge Göçek, 41.

security marshals ‘to prevent disorder.’²⁴⁸ Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi, again, helps us to comprehend the massiveness of the Parisians’ curiosity towards to the Ottomans “the crowd who has come to see us so enormous with men and women, waited to come in our house in day and night.”²⁴⁹ and another section of his report he indicates the determination and stubbornness of the Parisians to be able to see an Ottoman persona “when we travelled the streets become so crowded with all the women and men that I thought no one would occupied to another street. They had descended on our gates that even the French soldiers had been incapable of stopping them. They had squeezed in confluence that some of the women who came to our assembly were fainted... even in cold and rainy days they waited until three – four am in the morning, shivering.”²⁵⁰ From this account, even though it was fifty years after Süleyman Ağa’s visit to France, it is easy to comprehend that the interest towards the Turks challenged the envoy’s privacy day and nights and naturally caused constant distress and discomfort among the members. Unfortunately, this aspect of the visit is mostly ignored or unquestioned by the scholars who analyze the visit and its performativity. Naturally, they present the Ottomans and Süleyman Ağa’s characteristic as “religious fanaticism, fiery pride,” “insolent solemnity,” “snobbish attitude,” or “absurdly undiplomatic.”²⁵¹ Naturally this approach causes, even during the attempt of counter-orientalist examinations, the continuity of centralizing France and placing the Ottoman Empire as the ‘other.’ Hence, it produces a stereotypical and narcissistic character, so called ‘the Turk,’ who is aloof towards ‘civilization,’ stripped from any human behavior, and

²⁴⁸ D’Arvieux, *Memoires*; as translated in Rouillard, “The Background of the Turkish Ceremony,” 44.

²⁴⁹ Akyavaş, *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi'nin Fransa Sefâretnâmesi*, 17.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 14.

²⁵¹ Albert Vandal, ed., *L’Odysée d’un ambassadeur: Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)*, (Paris, 1900), 23- 27; Landweber, *Turkish Delight*, 27.

conversely allows Western culture to possess kindness, goodness, politeness, and courtesy against 'Eastern cultures.'

French Women and the Exotic Other

The interest of women perhaps was more shocking than stressful for the Ottomans. "... visits from people of both sexes..." D'Arvieux says when he underlines the fascination of Parisians toward to the Ottomans. Women freely walked towards Süleyman Ağa during the garden visits and greeted him without hesitation. They were visiting the envoy in their hotel, and had been served coffee and sorbet, in many cases, without their husbands' presence.²⁵² Nayan Chanda connects the starting of the fashion of coffee drinking and coffee houses to this visit and claims that "ambassador Suleiman Ağa became the envoy of coffee extraordinaire."²⁵³ Unsurprisingly, some sources found these visits and the coffee drinking of French women with the Turk as erotic interest towards the exotic subjects.

If a Frenchman, in a similar case, to please the ladies, had presented to them his black and bitter liquor, he would be rendered forever ridiculous. But the beverage was served by a Turk- a gallant Turk- and this was sufficient to give it inestimable value. Besides, before the palate could judge, the eyes were seduced by the display of elegance and neatness which accompanied it,- by those brilliant porcelain cups into which it was poured,- by napkins with gold fringes on which it was served to the ladies; add to this the furniture, the dresses, and the foreign customs, the strangeness of addressing the host through an interpreter,- being seated on the ground on tiles, &c., and you will allow that there was

²⁵² See W. A Bernstein, *Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, (2008); Nayan Chanda, *Bound Together* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

²⁵³ Nayan Chanda, *Bound Together*, 87.

more than enough to turn the heads of French women. Leaving the hotel of their acquaintances to speak of the coffee of which they had partaken; and heaven only knows to what a degree they were excited.²⁵⁴

Through this passage Crawford eliminates the natural interest between sexes but suggests that the strangeness of the ‘other’ drew attention of the French women towards ‘the Turk.’ Then according to this idea there is nothing these Ottoman men offer to the French women romantically or physically but a drink that stimulates women’s desire for the other, their strange attires, and their exotic decorative choices. Hence, referring to the erotic gaze between the accounts, he exoticized the relationship between the Ottomans as the ‘other’ and the French women. “Exoticism refers to a Western valorization, idealization and/or fetishization of a foreign culture,” David Hammerbeck states, “and the accompanying denigration of the home culture, a process which can be advanced only by avoiding comprehensive ‘deep’ knowledge of the culture portrayed.”²⁵⁵ Correspondingly, this phenomenon has been seen in many French drama, ballets, and literatures after ‘the oriental’ Süleyman Ağa and his envoy’s departure from France. For instance, the story *Le Salamalec lyonnais* that we examine at the beginning of this chapter, in which a former Ottoman man displays his Islamic background with an erotic performance, and Moliere’s infamous play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* which exoticizes the religious customs of Ottomans. Exoticism is also seen during the envoy’s stay in Paris. One example of these exoticist productions is a letter addressed to the French King that arouses the sexual implications for Süleyman Ağa’s interactions with French women,

²⁵⁴ John Crawford, "History of Coffee." *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 15, no. 1 (1852): 50-58, 52.

²⁵⁵ David William Hammerbeck, "Orientalism, Islam and the Other in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Theatre." 63, no. 10 (2003): 3424, 3.

While eating on a beautiful carpet,
He is seated on his knees.
Of the most remarkable Lords,
The most pleasant ladies,
From the Court or the City,
It is sometimes visited,
Whose soul is very happy.²⁵⁶

Consequently, since the French women's curiosity about the Ottoman envoy in Paris created discomfort, eroticized phantasies about Süleyman Ağa arose and some gossip spread amongst the high society of France about so-and-so French woman's romantic interest in Süleyman Ağa as was expected from occasions like this. However, other gossip alleged that Süleyman Ağa tried to purchase a beautiful young daughter of a French bourgeois for the Sultan's harem and produced a more serious and permanent outcome as a result of a verse newsletter written by Charles Robinet in *Gazette* on December 1669.²⁵⁷ Although C. D. Rouillard suggests that this gossip might reflect some sort of truth, it was highly improbable if not impossible that Süleyman Ağa even attempted to do such thing like this as a regular Ottoman officer.²⁵⁸ This attempt, might even have been cause for his head.²⁵⁹ Robinet, who wanted to be a successful playwright and turned out to be a mediocre verse writer instead, without having any 'deep' knowledge of the

²⁵⁶ http://moliere.humanum.fr/base.php?Mayolas%2C_Lettre_en_verse_et_en_prose_au_Roi_du_17_novembre_1669. Accessed November 15, 2020

²⁵⁷ Rouillard, "The Background of the Turkish Ceremony," 45- 46.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ See Çağatay Uluçtay, *Harem* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1985).

harem or the Ottoman state system, wrote his exoticist verses, and, most likely, influenced Moliere for his play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*;

The Turkish envoy in the turban
Having in his strolls suburban
Noticed midst the maidens' gentle
Ogling an Oriental
One brunette whose amorous glance
Would make a sated Sultan dance,
Began at once investigation
Of her name, address, and station.
Finding her a Bourgeois' daughter,
With speed befitting Turk or Tartar
He sent to bargain with the father,
With no preliminary pother,
To buy her for the Sultan's harem
Where she would soon, he could assure'em,
See him fling in her direction
The mark of amorous selection,
To wit, the handkerchief, whose flight
Says eloquent: "good day... goodnight...
This my imperial wish, my sweet
That you and I collaborate
So that the Public may exult in
A brand new little future Sultan."
The Bourgeois, temper quick as phosphorous,

Replied: “You go jump in the Bosphorus!”²⁶⁰

Besides entertaining his readers with his oriental fantasies through these lines Robinet’s main ambition was obviously to scare French women who were ‘ogling an Orient’. On one hand, the verses were alleging a French woman could have been only a sex object in the eye of Ottoman men, who enslave women in their harems, and romanticism could have only belonged to French men. On the other hand, it was castrating Süleyman Ağa in Parisians’ minds displaying him being incapable of liking any woman for himself but purchasing them for his Sultan. Despite all these propaganda against women’s attraction to the oriental envoy the visits continued even more than before after the envoy moved to the Hotel de Venise, and until their departure.

There is only a handful of evidence that displays the possibilities of how Süleyman Ağa and his envoy perceived the attraction of the French women towards them. According to Rouillard a “doggerel bulletin record” says the women’s attention, their looks and attires pleased the ambassador.²⁶¹ Although it is impossible to make sure that this information had not come from an exoticist source which only assumes that the envoys must be enjoying the beautiful French women’s company, the fact that the envoy had continued giving permission for the daily visits might prove the accuracy of the source. Nevertheless, in order to comprehend the thick description of the way an Ottoman man approach to the Western women, I juxtapose the other Ottoman envoys who visited West and recorded their experiences.

Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, during his visit to France in 1721 notes that since the French men had given a lot of latitude and initiative to French women, the women can act according to their own whim and go wherever they wanted. Therefore, France is a heaven for women where

²⁶⁰ As translated in, “The Background of the Turkish Ceremony,” 46.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 47.

they do not have to deal with any hardship of the world.²⁶² However, he does not show any discomfort about it. In fact, he mentions French women as beautiful fairies in multiple occasions.²⁶³ Contrary, Evliya Çelebi, who visited Vienna in 1665 with the Ottoman ambassador, mostly criticizes the gender politics in Europe. Similar with the Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, he claims that Vienna is a heaven for women, but he asserts that the unpleasant freedom of women to speak freely is a bad habit of European women since the virgin Mary.²⁶⁴ While he is surprised that women sit next to men during the court feast, he mostly reacts to the fact that the husbands of these women do not show any jealousy related to this situation. Also, he claims that European women do not wear underpants, nevertheless they wear crinoline, and their face and cleavage is not covered. Although, his observations about European women seem unfavorable and pretty judgmental, he hints that he finds the European women beautiful with stating that the women are beautiful because they drink the water of Danube river which makes the women also headstrong rebels.²⁶⁵ I expect an approximately similar approach in reaction to European women from Süleyman Ağa and his envoy. While perhaps they were flattered by the opposite sex' interest towards them, they were also surprised by the level of freedom women had in Europe. Although it is seen occasionally in the Ottoman court records that sometimes Ottoman women were involved in some private home gatherings and entertainment, in many cases -not all- these women were 'working' in these occasions, and it was the only time an Ottoman man could have

²⁶² Beynun Akyavaş, *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi'nin Fransa Sefâretnâmesi*, 8.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12- 27.

²⁶⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, Cilt 7, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1928), 227, 231, 318, 319; Nurettin Gemici. *Evliya Çelebi'nin Gözlemleriyle 17. Yüzyılda Kadınlar*, (TYB Akademi, 2011), 66.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

spent time with an unrelated woman.²⁶⁶ Hence, this extraordinary exchange between the Ottoman men and the French women in fact was confusing but also appealing for both sides. French women were basically everything from which an Ottoman man must have had distance, opposite gender, opposite religion, opposite state, and opposite culture. However, it was also the only time that their duty required from them to disregard their distance with the oppositions. Thus, according to a logical assumption, they did.

The Second Audience with the French ‘Grand Vizier’

The second audience between Süleyman Ağa and Hughes de Lionne was two weeks after the first one, on November 19th. Following the translation fiasco during the first audience the French government immediately started the language school “jeunes de langues,” and decided to send six French boys to Sublime Porte to learn Arabic, Ottoman, and the other Oriental languages to appoint as a court translator, and in the meantime replaced the court interpreter Petis de la Croix with d’Arvieux. Also, to prevent any repetition of embarrassment and mistranslation, Hughes de Lionne wrote his speech and provided a translation of it for the Ottoman envoy before the audience.

In spite of the French minister of Foreign affairs wearing the exact same attire that he wore during the first encounter for this second encounter with the Turkish envoy, his ambition was for this time to state that he was indeed not a Grand Vizier. While he was there sitting on an

²⁶⁶ See Fikret Yılmaz, “Boş Vaktiniz Var mı? veya 16. Yüzyılda Anadolu’da Şarap, Eğlence ve Suç,” *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar 1* (Bahar 2005): 11-49. Fikret Yılmaz, “XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı toplumunda mahremiyetin sınırlarına dair,” *Toplum ve Bilim 83* (Kış 1999-2000): 92-110; Ahmet Gökhan Kaynakçı, *18. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Konya* (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2020).

Ottoman style sofa, wearing an Ottoman design caftan, surrounded by Ottoman style decorative pillows, declared that:

Having learned that when you requested an audience with me you specified my title as Grand Vizir, and even you were persuaded that France has three Grand Vizirs, I believe myself obliged before all else to disabuse you of such a false opinion, the more so because it is injurious to the glory of the Emperor my Master. In France, there is no other authority than that of the Emperor himself, for which all the ministers were mere executors of the orders which daily and hourly issued from his mouth regarding all matters of business.²⁶⁷

Four months after his arrival in France, Süleyman Ağa was having an audience with Hughes de Lionne to ask him when he could have an audience with the king to deliver his Sultan's letter. His order was to return to the Porte immediately after delivering it. However, he had been sitting in the minister's chamber and had lectured about the French state system by a French man in a Grand Vizier costume instead. The obvious reason for all this role playing in an Ottoman masquerade was part of a political ploy to display the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV as de Lionne also admitted at the end of his two page speech "[the king] ordered me to deal with you in the same fashion that your Emperor's principal ministers handle [our] ambassadors, that is to seat myself upon a couch, to give you only a stool, to neither advance to receive you nor

²⁶⁷ "Relation de l'audience donnee par le Sieur de Lionne, i Soliman MustafAğa, Envoyd au Roy, par l'Empereur des Turcs, le Mardy 19 Novembre 1669, a Suresne," recopied in Le Dran, "Mémoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669," AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol. 68r/v. as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 38.

accompany you to the door.”²⁶⁸ And following the coffee ceremony he ended with his words exactly as it happened during the first audience. The minister was served with a bended knee, while the ambassador was served a standing position. What Süleyman truly saw in this performance is unknown since there is no court report in Ottoman to mention it. However, he answered firmly “I did not come here to be instructed in the manner of France’s government; it is sufficient to know that the Emperor of France is a great and powerful monarch, for whom I have plenty of respect. My master sent me to deliver a letter to him, and to assure him of his continued friendship. I will return when I have placed [this letter] in his hands, and when I have received his response: that is my commission, I have no other purpose beside it, and I sincerely beg you to procure me this satisfaction.”²⁶⁹ And as noted by Le Dran “Ağa withdrew from the audience thanking for the satisfying meeting,” leaving de Lionne unsatisfied and frustrated indeed.²⁷⁰

I hypothesize that Lionne’s performance of the Grand Vizier was not simply copying a Turk, but, as Gilles Deleuze distinguishes particularly, was a simulacrum of a Turk.²⁷¹ He provided the image of the ‘other’ with his ‘Turk’ and replaced its meaning with his French-ness. Through this performative rite of passage, the Turk-ness become an empty shell to serve to French imaginative mind as the first steps of the French fashion ‘*Turquerie*’, right before Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* exemplified what to do with this image.

²⁶⁸ “Relation de ’audience donnee par le Sieur de Lionne, 4 Soliman Musta-Feraga le 19 Novembre 1669,” AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol. 69n. As translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 39.

²⁶⁹ D’Arvieux, IV: 149; as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 41.

²⁷⁰ Le Dran, “Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669,” AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol. 71lr.

²⁷¹ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia U P, 1990), 257; Ellen R. Welch, “The Specter of the Turk in Early Modern French Court Entertainment,” 87.

Süleyman Ağa and the envoy did not provide what France was expecting from them. There were no splendid gifts, endless envoy, eye-brightening jewelries in display, janissary marching band, or a high-ranking ambassador like Vienna had four years prior. This medium rank Ottoman official who was hesitant to show any impression about France and its customs caused disappointment in the monarch's mind whose expectations were set for the glorified display of power and wealth in baroque style. Louis XIV had already declared that he would not have an audience with Süleyman Ağa if he did not a title of an ambassador. And most likely Süleyman Ağa did not have the desired 'ambassador' title which was equivalent to the French ambassadorial title in the French bureaucratic and diplomatic system. The Ottoman state system and diplomacy were completely different than the French state which was deliberately ignored by the monarch and his officials. Correspondingly, this fact continuously was missed by the scholars as well. Scholars like Landweber, Rouillard, and McCluskey present Süleyman Ağa as a rank searcher who "claim a rank which he was not entitled."²⁷² Nonetheless, it would be a mis-opportunity for the king to display his superiority, wealth, and power over the Orient if he would reject the audience with the 'Oriental man' who was carrying a letter from the Sultan. Showing superiority was not necessarily intended to be over the Ottoman Empire, but definitely, to the Western nations. If the King of Habsburg had obeyed all the conditions that were set by the Ottomans in 1665, then France was going to belittle the Ottoman representative, before the Western eye.

²⁷² Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 44. Also see Rouillard, "The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 33-52; McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları = The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 48 (2016): 337-55.

Intriguingly, one of the few depictions of the audience, a print in Bibliotheque Nationale de France, neglects portraying any of the Ottoman imagery, other than the Ottomans, that the eyewitnesses, *Gazette* and the court records describe. In this print the Ottomans appear on the far left side while the French appear on the far right, as if its engraver, Jean Lepautre wanted to display the contrast between the two cultures (Figure 2.1). The ambassador sits lower than the minister de Lionne who wears only French attire while the portrait of Louis XIV is placed in the middle of the room larger than life, symbolizing what the caption of the print indicates “The King my Master, governs himself, he sees all, he hears all, he commands all”. Garritt Van Dyk explains why the Ottoman imagery is erased in this engraving as “The absence of these elements suggests that they were deliberately omitted to avoid commemorating de Lionne’s diplomatic gaffe in appropriating Turkish dress and protocol.”²⁷³ However, I suggest that the main reason of the role playing was a ploy to prevent the Ottoman ambassador’s objection to the treatment he received in Lionne’s house by being placed lower than the minister. After establishing superiority over the Ottomans through this display, de Lionne was pictured in French attire during the audience as if the ambassador obeyed the French conditions without any hesitation. This was contrary to what occurred during Ottoman envoys visit to Habsburg. Thus, French underlined its authority not only before the Ottomans but also Habsburg and the other European nations.

The Audience, Louis XIV, Süleyman Ağa, and the Sultan’s Letter

“At three o’clock, the Turk arrived on horseback, preceded by twenty Turks, all with green serge dresses and turbans, very dirty and seven or eight others followed on horseback as badly dressed

²⁷³ Garrit Van Dyk, "The Embassy Of Soliman Ağa to Louis XIV: Diplomacy, Dress, and Diamonds." *EMAJ: Electronic Melbourne Art Journal* (2017): 6.

as the others.” said a courtier, Olivier Lefevre d’Ormesson describing the arrival of Süleyman Ağa to Paris, “Nothing seemed so poor or so wretched.”²⁷⁴ Perhaps the Ottoman envoy and Süleyman Ağa were not expecting more than how they encountered de Lionne from the royal audience. It was going to be a small ceremonial gathering with a few French government officials, the king was going to read the letter, and the envoy was going to leave France immediately as they were commissioned. Contrarily, the audience occurred on December 5th in the chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye was arranged to display all the magnificence, wealth and power of France and brilliance of the Sun- King (illustrated in Figure 2.2).

According to the *Gazette* which reported the audience with details, Louis XIV was sitting on a silver throne “at the end of this beautiful hallway was a golden throne ... and the King appeared there in all his Majesty, dressed in golden brocade, but so completely covered in diamonds that he seemed surrounded by light.”²⁷⁵ The diamonds he was wearing were said to cost fourteen livres.²⁷⁶

Süleyman Ağa, despite all this flamboyance, entered the audience chamber with a simple caftan which d’Ormesson referred as “very dirty” and he was not possessing the sabre which was customary for an Ottoman ambassador to carry during an audience with a foreign sovereign.²⁷⁷ These two aspects of the audience were also utilized to point out the ‘false ambassadorship’ of Süleyman Ağa. Contrarily, D’Arvieux and Denis de La Haye’s memoirs indicates that Süleyman Ağa indeed was carrying the sabre which was symbolizing his ambassadorship. Nonetheless, the

²⁷⁴ Olivier Lefevre d’Ormesson, *Journal d’Olivier Lefevre d’Ormesson et extraits des memoires <d’Andre Lefevre d’Ormesson. 2 vols.* (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1861), II: 578; Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 44.

²⁷⁵ *La Gazette*, 1669B.

²⁷⁶ D’Ormesson, *Journal d’Olivier Lefevre*, 577.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 578.

examination of Ottoman custom of audience for foreign ambassadors in Sublime Porte reveals that the lack of these visuals during the audience might be showing Süleyman Ağa's respect towards the French king in spite of how it was interpreted. Firstly, the foreign ambassadors were offered a silk caftan or fur by the Ottoman government before the audience. This Ottoman custom might be what Süleyman Ağa expected from the French government.²⁷⁸ Secondly, foreign ambassadors had never been allowed to carry their swords or armor in the Ottoman audience chamber. Any insistence of keeping the armor would be seen as disrespect to the Sultan by the Ottoman Empire and had caused serious hardship between the states.²⁷⁹ As an Ottoman official who had seen and experienced these customs, and who did not have a chance of proper preparation for this visit, Süleyman Ağa might have thought the audience with the king was also going to follow the Ottoman customs of an ambassador receiving ceremony, as it had happened during his audience with the minister de Lionne.

He bowed three times, holding the letter of Sultan above his nose, and approached to the throne,

He held the letter out like an offertory, and the King gestured to M. de Lionne to take it.

But the Turk explained through his interpreter that his orders were to place it in His Majesty's hands. He was allowed to approach two steps closer, whereupon seeing that His Majesty was not rising to accept it, he registered astonishment and said through his interpreter that he was amazed that His Majesty did not rise to receive his master's letter, since the Grand Seigneur had risen when he had given it to him, to mark his esteem and his friendship for the King.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ See Chapter 1, 24- 29.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Le Dran, "Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669," AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol. 76r/v. as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 45.

Louis did not rise and Süleyman Ağa, holding the letter over his head, waited patiently.²⁸¹ It was a long consideration for both sides. If Süleyman Ağa had given up he was going to lose in this power game, and if Louis had reached out for the letter, he was going to lose his dignified stand as a superior to his guest. By extension, all of the theatricality of this overly elaborated encounter and continuation of claiming the French hegemony over Europe was going to fail right in this moment before the Ottomans' eyes. Louis, indeed, was obliged to take the letter, however, it must have been the least dignifying way. After a long pause, Louis finally took the letter exasperatedly, and quickly handed it off to Lionne.²⁸² McCluskey claims that then Süleyman Ağa "withdrew brusquely, murmuring with clenched teeth, with sign of anger."²⁸³ According to Rouillard the ambassador was so angry that he "was later overheard to remark, apropos of the array of precious stones on Louis' costume, that bigger and better ones and more of them, were worn on parade days by his master's horse."²⁸⁴ However, this remark was only mentioned by one courtier, and most likely was created for the amusement of the court. In fact, quite the opposite of how a person who said something like this could react after the audience ended; Süleyman Ağa heard about all of this gossip and fell ill from sadness.²⁸⁵

After receiving the Sultan's letter and before the audience ceremony ended, Louis had one more chance to perform the superiority of his court before Süleyman Ağa. Thus, he refused to read the letter from the Sultan during the ceremony and declared that he was going to read it some another time to decide what to do with it. He added resentfully that Süleyman Ağa had to

²⁸¹ D'arvieux, IV:161- 163.

²⁸² Le Dran, "Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669," AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol. 78v.

²⁸³ McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy," 349.

²⁸⁴ Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony," 44.

²⁸⁵ Ahmet Refik, *Tarihi Similar* (İstanbul: Kütüphane-i Askeri, 1915), 15.

wait in Paris until then.²⁸⁶ Thereby, as Pietro Bargellini asserted the audience ended while parties “showed a little signs of being pleased with one another.”²⁸⁷ D’Arvieux, who served as an interpreter during this audience, later noted in his memoire that the intention of the monarch’s decision to postpone the envoy’s deploy was to force Süleyman Ağa to travel back to Sublime Porte during the hardness of winter as a last touch of his revenge plan for response to Süleyman Ağa’s presumptuousness during the audience.²⁸⁸ Nonetheless, perhaps the bureaucratic complexity had taken more time than the monarch imagined since, the envoy and Süleyman Ağa finally left France, with a new French ambassador, seven months after the audience, in mid-July.

Commissioning the Play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*

Süleyman Ağa remained under surveillance during his stay. D’Arvieux writes in his memoire that several Turks who dressed like French were prevented from seeing him “for fear of the information they may have provided him with.”²⁸⁹ On his way back to Toulon he did not stop in Marseille to prevent any agitation among the Muslim galley slaves, however, the new French ambassador, the marquis de Nointel, was ordered to show Süleyman Ağa the naval forces in Toulon to reinforce the image of French naval strength.²⁹⁰ And finally a year after their arrival, the Ottomans sailed back to Sublime Porte.

Although the visit caused several diplomatic scandals, bureaucratic dilemmas, and the audience with Süleyman Ağa tarnished Louis XIV’s honor, the Ambassador left a big impact on the Parisians. The display of the Oriental Ottomans at the Saint-Germain and Süleyman Ağa were

²⁸⁶ Landweber, *French Delight*, 46.

²⁸⁷ Pietro Bargellini, quoted in Poumarède, ‘Les envoyés ottomans’, 89; McCluskey, “An Ottoman Envoy,” 349.

²⁸⁸ Arvieux, *Mémoires*, IV, 201.

²⁸⁹ Arvieux, *Mémoires*, IV 154-5; Vandal, *L’Odyssée d’un ambassadeur*, 30; McCluskey, “An Ottoman Envoy,” 349.

²⁹⁰ McCluskey, “An Ottoman Envoy,” 350.

not what the French Aristocrats were expecting. Furthermore, Süleyman Ağa's adamant attitude during the royal audience threatened Louis' performance as the splendid monarch of the West. Despite these failures, perhaps because of these failures, Süleyman Ağa was found charismatic, dignified, and attractive by most Parisians, especially by French women. Thus, this oriental image was neither acceptable nor beneficial for France. It had to be changed, replaced, or had to become something deceptive, laughable, imaginary, playful and cheerful. Furthermore, it had to have been something 'other'; strange, primitive, inferior which French people see what they must be through what they don't want to be. Therefore, Louis XIV commissioned Moliere and Jean-Baptiste Lully to create a play which contains a Turk and Turkish manner to amuse the court; *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.²⁹¹

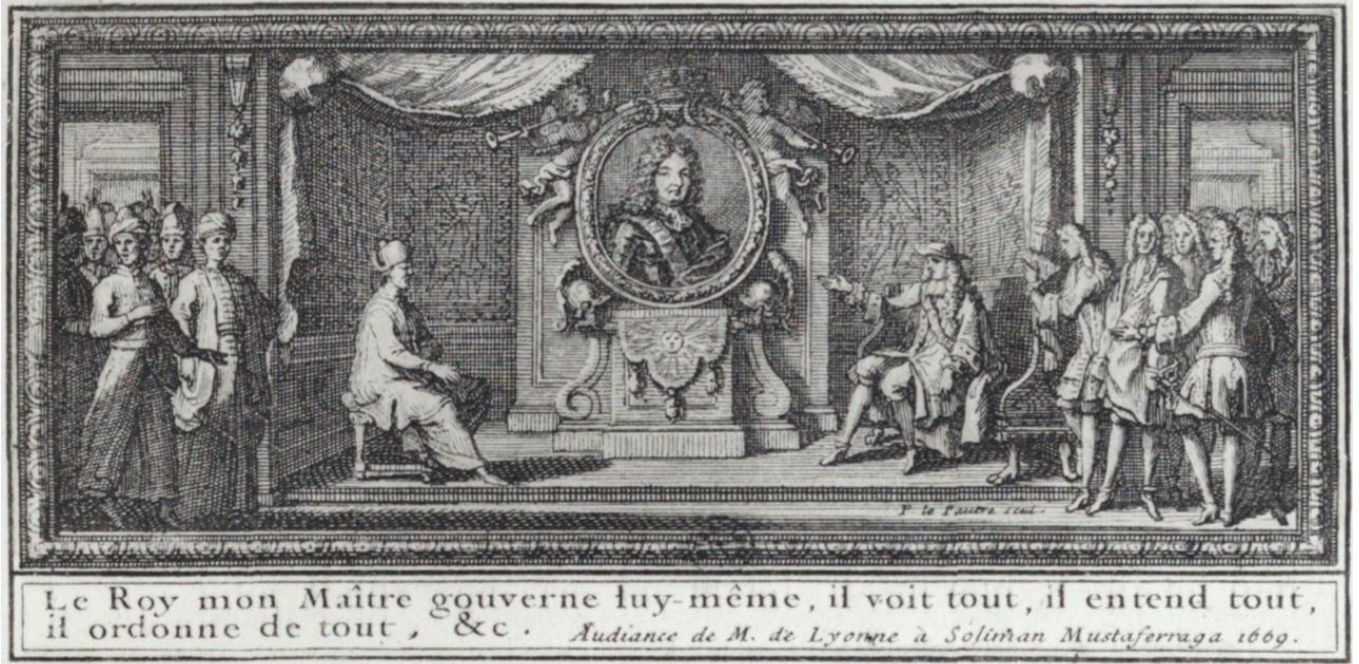
M. Matharel, the senior officer of the vessel which Süleyman Ağa sailed to Toulon indicated several times, in his letter to one of his relatives, that the vessel was delayed in departing because of the instructions which were sent by the Grand Vizier to Süleyman Ağa a few times.²⁹² According to Matharel, Süleyman Ağa entered the vessel as a high rank ambassador but his orders changed before the vessel departure, and his mission simplified by the order from Grand Vizier and the Sultan. Despite the simplicity that the Ottomans desired, this visit become a milestone in the states' relationship and the development of the French identity. The variant theatricality of power display, marginalization of each other, and the clash of the cross-cultural negotiations were exploited by Louis XIV for the benefit of French national empowerment in the way desired by him. France needed an extravagant display of their

²⁹¹ Landweber, *French Delight*, 50.

²⁹² AAACP 1669, supplement 6, 355. Letter from M. Matharel to M. Matharel 30 June 1669; as translated in Garrit Van Dyk, "The Embassy of Soliman Ağa to Louis XIV: Diplomacy, Dress, and Diamonds," *Cosmopolitan Moments: Instances of Exchange in the Long Eighteenth Century* [Special Issue 9.1], 14.

superiority, wealth, and glory that the simplicity was not going to serve them as Ottomans were aiming for. In fact, France was in a turning point during this visit. On one hand it was claiming the champion of Christianity, and on the other hand it was trying to secure its place in global colonialization and commerce. In this encounter Louis had three achievements in mind; first, to indicate France's strong stand and superiority against the Islamic world. Second, assume leadership among the European Princes, and third was to mold the French identity displaying who the French were and were not. With ordering an Ottoman style audience and allowing M. de Lionne to dress like an Ottoman Grand Vizier, Louis utilized the Ottoman receiving ceremonies for foreign ambassadors in order to overpower Ottoman Empire and prevented any rejection of Süleyman Ağa for being seated lower than M. de Lionne. Correspondingly, he deflated the meaning of a Turk in French minds, leaving an empty shell of turbans, caftans, and all the Ottoman decorative indicators.

While commissioning a Turkish ceremony for the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Louis also allowed the French people to possess these concepts as commodity. Hence, in this chapter, I examined the tools that were utilized by the French court for this formation and how the Ottoman Empire involuntarily and unintentionally contributed to this emergence. Subsequently, I will examine *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Turquerie* in next chapter to illustrate how the Ottoman indicators become commodity for the French nation and how this sequence of events contributed to the modern state.



Le Roy mon Maître gouverne luy-même, il voit tout, il entend tout, il ordonne de tout, &c. Audience de M. de Lionne à Soliman Mustaferraga 1669.

Figure 2.1 The Audience Between M. de Lionne and Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa in 1669.²⁹³

²⁹³ BnF, Gallica, Jean Lepautre, Le Roy, Mon Maître Gouverne Luy-Même, il Voit Tout, il Entend Tout, il Ordonne de Tout, etc. Audience de M. de Lionne à Soliman MustaferrAğa 1669.



Figure 2.2 The audience between Louis XIV and Mütferrika Süleyman Ağa.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ BnF, Gallica, Jean Lepautre, La Magnifique Audience Donnée le 5 Décembre 1669 à S. Germain en Laye par le Roy Très Chrestien à Soliman Aga Musta-Feraga, Envoyé du Grand Seigneur.

Chapter 3. Replacing the Turk: Louis XIV Versus Süleyman Ağa, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*

During the infamous Turkish Ceremony portrayed in the fourth act of Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* the protagonist bourgeois M. Jourdain is transformed into an Ottoman Turk. He is dressed in exaggerated Ottoman regalia, including an extra-large turban containing lit candles, carrying an enormous Quran on his back and he undergoes a beating with a stick in order to be transformed into a Muslim as a part of this ceremony. This elaborate ceremony is a ruse to convince him that he is receiving a highly prestigious Ottoman title, that of *Mamamouchi*. He also is led to believe that the ceremony is executed by an Ottoman courier and his envoy. In truth, he has been only fooled by the servant of his daughter's lover. The envoy is all Frenchmen in Turkish attire and the title *Mamamouchi* is apocryphal.

In truth, this ceremony is easily seen as highly stereotypically orientalist and shows the French court's cliché ideas about the Ottomans and Islam. Notwithstanding this display of orientalism coming from neglect of the Orient, it also represents the French court's propensity to usurp and use court performances to advance its political agenda. Intriguingly, court letters, courtiers' memoirs, and the contemporary newspaper accounts from 17th century France assert that *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, a *comédie-ballet* produced by Moliere and Lully was commissioned by Louis XIV to 'ridicule the Turk' following the diplomatically and politically devastating visit of the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa to the French court less than a year prior.²⁹⁵ One such document belonging to an Oriental specialist, a memoir of Laurent

²⁹⁵ Darren Hodson, "A Would-Be Turk: Louis XIV in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 32 (2010), 90–101; Mary Hossain, "The Chevalier d'Arvieux and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (1990): 76-88.

d'Arvieux, asserts that the King was so eager for a realistic representation of the Turk that he appointed d'Arvieux himself to work with the production team as a Turkish expert.²⁹⁶ d'Arvieux also claims that the portrayal of the Turk was so important for the king that he worked meticulously with the costume designer during the creation of the kaftans and turbans for eight straight days to prevent any questions about the significance of the Turkish display.²⁹⁷ It is a mystery what d'Arvieux accomplished in the costume designer shop for those eight days. Since very little of the aspects of the ceremony exhibit truth about the Turks and their ceremonies, there is a question as to the veracity of his assertions. Moreover, the representation of Ottoman Turks on French stages was not a new phenomenon for the French court. In fact, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*'s original Ottoman costume designs bear a strong resemblance to a ballet which was performed by Louis VIII in 1626, *Ballets Du Grand Turc et Peuples d'Asie* (Figure 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). Even specific props like the extravagant turban with a lit candle attached and the enormous Quran are seemingly borrowed directly from this ballet, which was produced almost 45 years prior to the first production of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (Figure 3.5). Given this appropriation, what was the significance of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and its Turkish masquerade that made d'Arvieux place himself in a more prominent position in the production team than he had been? And what were the play's indicators depicting the Turks and their visit to France so that the audience perceived strict ridicule of 'the Turk' (more than the previous court ballets)?

²⁹⁶“on pût faire entrer quelque chose des habillements et des manières des Turc.” Laurent d'Arvieux, *Mémoires*, IV, 252-53; as translated in Ali Behdad, "*The Oriental(ist) Encounter: The Politics of "turquerie" in Molière*," *L'Esprit Créateur* 32, no. 3 (1992): 37-49, 38.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

Despite the short duration for preparation of the production it is clear that the result of the Moliere-Lully collaboration was more than satisfactory for the king and his guests at the Chateau de Chambord because the performance was repeated three times in the same week.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, confoundingly, the five-act *comédie-ballet* which presents a so-called Turkish ceremony in act four, in fact, did not present a single Turk whom it purported to ‘ridicule’ as the king requested. Conversely, the Turkish ceremony was performed by French actors playing French characters on stage that were merely disguised as Turks within the world of the play. Then how did it ridicule ‘the Turk’ as is claimed by scholars like C. D. Rouillard, Julia Landweber, Phil McCluskey, and Esin Akalin?²⁹⁹ This twisted angle of approaching the Turk has captivated many scholars drawing analysis of its significance, questioning if it was merely failure to obey the King’s will on Moliere’s part? Or was it the brilliance of Moliere to display the Turk in layers of allegorical significance to the French court? These questions could be important and helpful scholars in reconstructing just how the play was perceived by the courtiers. However, I believe neither of these questions or their possible answers illuminate the real meaning of Moliere’s deliberate decision of representing Turks in their absence, even within the play’s meta-reality. Therefore, in this chapter I focus on one specific question which I believe answers both the questions stated above as well. The focus of my question is how did this decision by Moliere support the political agenda of Louis XIV in the creation and imposition of ‘the image of a Turk’

²⁹⁸ John S Powell, “*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*: Molière and Music,” *The Cambridge Companion to Molière*. Cambridge University Press, (2006): 121.

²⁹⁹ Esin Akalin, *Staging the Ottoman Turk: British Drama, 1656-1792* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2016); Julia Anne Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey: The Impact of Turkey on the Construction of French Identity, 1660--1789*, (2001); Clarence Dana Rouillard, “The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1969): 33-52; Phil McCluskey, “An Ottoman Envoy in Paris: Süleyman Ağa’s Mission to the Court of Louis XIV, 1669,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları = The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 48 (2016): 337-55.

favorable to French mind and imagination? I argue that *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* was commissioned, and its Turkish ceremony was requested by the King in order to replace ‘the image of the Turk’ that had occupied the public view a year prior, following the visit by the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa, with a more convenient orientalist image for the French imaginative mind and French political identity in Europe. Furthermore, it was tacit permission for the fashion of *turquerie* to start. C. D. Rouillard states it so eloquently “Moliere, like Shakespeare suffers from being worshipped as a sacred cow” meaning perhaps scholars, by nature, aim to elevate Moliere and make inference from his work that exceeds his intent instead of recognizing simple facts that are driven by the simple needs which this chapter examines. Moliere, despite all meaning ascribed to him, was a court entertainer and he needed to do this for the king’s favor. And the thing that entertained Louis XIV the most was seeing his political agenda proceeding. Owing to this, Moliere provided what the king wanted to see on his stage.

This chapter contains seven sections and a conclusion. All of the sections centralize the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and examine its tangible segments with their connection to the “Oriental” in the French mind. The section *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* examines the general aspects and facts about the play and its first production at the chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. The second section *Turks in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* explains the strong tie between the Ottoman envoy’s visit to French court in 1669 and the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and studies the allegorical references to the visit in the play. The third section *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, its source of inspiration, and Süleyman Ağa* analyzes how and why the effects of the prior encounter between Ottoman Turks and French society influenced the playwright and the creative team of the play. The fourth section *Bourgeoisie, Aristocracy, and the Oriental ‘other’* is a closer look at the French hierarchical system and is a close reading of the play to

comprehend how the view of “Other” developed in this system as a mechanism of segregation. The fifth section is *Absolutism, its Courtesy and Les Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. In this part I examine courtesy as a system of oppression both in the play and in the French court. This examination of courtesy as an oppressive phenomenon also displays how the French court usurped it during the encounter with the Ottoman representative to claim their superiority. The sixth section *Title Obsession* articulates differences between Ottoman and French state systems, how bureaucracy worked in these courts, and how these dissimilarities were reflected in the play. *The Turkish Ceremony* is the seventh section, and it analyzes the meaning of oriental(ist) masquerade as a political agenda of Louis XIV.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme was the first performance that broke the tradition of the royals participating in the performances’ *Intermède* (interludes) as dancers; it was performed only by professional actors and dancers. Further, it was the first play that Moliere used the term *comédie-ballet* as the choreography completed the plays comedic discourse and actions.³⁰⁰ *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* is comedy about a wealthy bourgeois named M. Jourdain who is about to expend a fortune to raise his status in the French social hierarchal system and become a nobleman. He hires a music teacher, a dance teacher, a philosophy teacher, a fencing teacher, and a tailor in order to learn how to become and act like a noble. Contrary to his expectations he is exploited by his masters, servants, even by a noble ‘friend’ Dorante and he clearly was unable to see the truth. He rejects his daughter’s wishes to marry the man she loves out of hope to betroth her to an aristocrat. Finally, he is fooled by Covielle, the servant of the daughter’s lover, who

³⁰⁰ Powell, “*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and Music,” 1.

assumed the role of messenger of an imaginary Turkish envoy. Covielle convinces M. Jourdain to accept a marriage between his daughter and the son of the Grand Senior, the Ottoman Sultan. He also promised that his own rank would be elevated to a noble Ottoman title. M. Jourdain accepts the offer and his daughter marries, unknowingly to him, her lover who is disguised as the son of the Ottoman Sultan. The *comédie-ballet* contains five acts with each act followed by an interlude. The first three interludes, dictated by the protagonist's dance master, the tailor, and then the cooks, seemingly represent a rehearsal process for their following acts. The fourth interlude exhibits the Turkish ceremony through which M. Jourdain receives his false Ottoman title "mamamouchi." A Mufti (clergy in Islam), twelve Turkish singers, six dancers, and six Dervishes transform M. Jourdain into a Muslim and then a 'mamamouchi'.³⁰¹ Finally the play ends with *Ballet des Nations* which Ellen Welch describes as a "common type of performance consisting of a series of dances or "entrées" in which performers wore stereotyped national costumes and danced steps associated with the countries or regions they purported to represent."³⁰² In this layout the play seems very much disconnected between the acts and the interludes. However, as this research examines and explains the meaning of this ostensible disconnection, the play displays thoroughness as a part of Louis XIV's political agenda in the creation of the French identity as superior to other European and oriental states.

With its multi-layer socio-political criticism and the over-the-top orientalism, the play indeed leaves a sour and bitter aftertaste when the laughter falls silent. This is the case even today, as is so common in Moliere's plays. This was the case so much so in the premiere that Louis XIV took a few days, leaving the playwright in complete distress, to think about it before

³⁰¹ Ibid, 136.

³⁰² Ellen R Welch, "Dancing the Nation: Performing France in the Seventeenth-Century "Ballets des Nations," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 3-23.

he revealed his opinion. Despite the courtiers' harsh criticism of the play following the King's silence after its performance, Louis verbalized his respect of Moliere's work saying "I did not speak to you of your play at the first performance, because I feared being influenced by the manner in which it had been performed: but in truth, Moliere, you have never written anything that has entertained me more, and your play is excellent."³⁰³ The play was generally hard to digest for its contemporaries in 17th century, as it is for modern scholars as well, because of the richness in meanings, 'allegorical performativity' and its display of French identity.³⁰⁴ *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* touches upon socio-political hierarchy of France; correspondingly, the inevitable financial and social clash between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the use of courtesy as a system of suppression, the diplomatic relationship with the Oriental 'other', as well as the imposition of French identity and its social order in multiple layers throughout its seemingly unembellished plot. Thus, the following considers all four of these aspects of the play and examines it through these four lenses. However, I mainly focus on the diplomatic relationship with the oriental 'other' and analyze the play's strong link to French relations with the Ottoman Empire, Süleyman Ağa, and the visit of Turkish envoy in 1669.

Turks in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*

Other than the Turkish ceremony, the play is connected to the Ottoman Empire and Süleyman Ağa's visit to France with five main allegorical representations throughout its plot.

³⁰³ Quoted in Powell, "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and Music," 125.

³⁰⁴ I use Allegory as the representation of political or social symbols in performances as a parallel to its direct translation from Greek, which is "veiled speech." Allegorical Performativity in my research is the effect of how these symbols are utilized by the state system in staged performances to enforce a specific disposition. And this disposition contains direct and veiled performativity which exists above and beyond what was immediately interpretable from the symbols.

First, the playwright was directly influenced by a poem which was printed in *Gazette* just after Süleyman Ağa's audience with Louis XIV which claims that Süleyman Ağa had tried to convince a bourgeois to let his daughter marry the Ottoman Sultan and become one of several wives in the harem. Although the poem was written to discourage women from flirting with the members of the Ottoman envoy and warning them that it only makes them one of the several concubines of a Turk, the subject matter suits the play's premise very well.³⁰⁵ Second, the play displays fundamental differentiation between Aristocracy and Bourgeoisie due to their bloodline, which is also allegorically represents the differences between the Ottoman Empire and the French Monarchy. Third, the obsession of M. Jourdain with the higher title in the French hierarchal order is a direct reference to the court officials' obsession and confusion with Süleyman Ağa's ambassadorial title. Many court officials and scholars have alleged that although, Süleyman Ağa did not have the ambassador title, he claimed it in order to receive a ceremony more in accordance with a higher status with the French king.³⁰⁶ Fourth, the play implies that the interpretation fiasco that occurred during the audience between Süleyman Ağa and Hugues de Lionne, happened because the court interpreter could write and read the oriental languages, but was unable to speak them. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* refers to this event two times. The first reference of it is when the philosophy master of M. Jourdain teaches to him how to pronounce the French letters and their sounds, which M. Jourdain had been using correctly and more eloquently his entire life. The second reference is M. Jourdain's confrontation with Covielle, thinking he is a messenger for the son of the Ottoman Sultan. Covielle speaks complete

³⁰⁵ This poem is discussed in section *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, its source of inspiration, and Süleyman Ağa*.

³⁰⁶ See Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*"; McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları = The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 48 (2016): 337-55; Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*.

gibberish spreading some familiar Ottoman language sounds throughout his speech, like the court interpreter's devastating attempt to speak the language during the audience between Süleyman Ağa and Hughes de Lionne a year before the production, and the character M. Jourdain is ignorantly fascinated by its sound. The fifth and the last allegory in the play that links it to the Ottomans and the prior visit is M. Jourdain's attire and his dialog with his tailor. This allegory refers to French effort at being the fashion center for all of Europe and how the court fashions changed rapidly, the audience between the king and the Ottoman envoy and how both parties found each other's dress ridiculous, and the French fabric which was the only gift given to the Ottoman envoy on its way back to Porte. Fabric was also the main trade subject for French merchants in the orient and the French government's request for commercial benefits (capitulations) in Ottoman territory was the main reason of the Ottoman envoy's visit to Paris.³⁰⁷

I examine this five-pillar allegorical connection of the play and the visit of the Ottoman envoy to the French court along with diplomatic practices of the French court in negotiating with the East. I focus primarily on the Turkish ceremony and its connection to the Oriental 'other', and verbalizing Louis XIV's vision of French Nation and its identity through examining his requirements, and the reason he commissioned this play with a Turkish ceremony.

***Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, its Source of Inspiration, and Süleyman Ağa**

The Turkish envoy in the turban
Having in his strolls suburban
Noticed midst the maidens' gentle
Ogling an Oriental

³⁰⁷ Phil McCluskey, "Commerce Before Crusade? France, the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary pirates (1661–1669)," *French History*, Volume 23, Issue 1, (March 2009): 1–21.

One brunette whose amorous glance
 Would make a sated Sultan dance,
 Began at once investigation
 Of her name, address, and station.
 Finding her a Bourgeois' daughter,
 With speed befitting Turk or Tartar
 He sent to bargain with the father,
 With no preliminary pother,
 To buy her for the Sultan's harem
 Where she would soon, he could assure'em,
 See him fling in her direction
 The mark of amorous selection,
 To wit, the handkerchief, whose flight
 Says eloquent: "good day... goodnight...
 This my imperial wish, my sweet
 That you and I collaborate
 So that the Public may exult in
 A brand new little future Sultan."
 The Bourgeois, temper quick as phosphorous,
 Replied: "You go jump in the Bosphorus!"³⁰⁸

These very entertaining, although twaddling verses which were written to amuse the reader and mirror how the Turks were represented in French prejudice and imaginative mind. They were printed in the *Gazette* as a response to French women's unexpected and increased interest, both from curiosity and sexual attraction to the oriental other, towards Süleyman Ağa and his

³⁰⁸ Charles Robinet, *La Gazette*. December 1669; as translated in Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 46.

envoy.³⁰⁹ With their strange but interesting clothing, tradition, and manners, the Ottomans in the streets of France were already arousing affection, especially after the envoy was granted its audience with Louise XIV. As the two opposite cultures clashed devastatingly, the curiosity compellingly increased.³¹⁰ Even as a representative of the Ottoman Empire, Süleyman Ağa's resistance to the French court customs and evident challenge to the king of France, was a rare occurrence in court events. Correspondingly, contrary to the desire of the King Louis XIV, the Turk transformed to a charismatic, attractive, and powerful figure. In fact, a doggerel bulletin openly indicated that women very much liked him, especially, his clothing.³¹¹ Inevitably, gossip spread with stories regarding an affair between an unnamed French woman and Süleyman Ağa.³¹² It is apparent that the verses above were a quick remedy to prevent these rapidly rising interests towards the envoy. They reminded the French reader of 'the image of the Turk' that had been imposed on them frequently for the last century or more in literature, court entertainment, ballets, and newspaper articles.³¹³ This imposition was that of a brutal race, as contrast to everything that the French men represent.

The verses ridiculed the Turk, specifying and targeting three main differences between the Ottoman Turks and the French society that were known by the French public, while implying

³⁰⁹ *Gazette* is a French newspaper. For details see Friedrich Diez, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Romance Languages*. (London: Williams), 15.

³¹⁰ Two main unpleasant moments marked this meeting as a failure. First, Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa expected Louis XIV to receive the letter of the Sultan standing as a symbol of his respect to the Ottoman Sultan, and Louis perceived this request as an insult. Second, a courtier claimed that he heard Süleyman Ağa saying that the sultan's horse is better ornamented than the king of France. For further details see Michèle Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*. Cambridge Studies in French; 69. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 109- 146.

³¹¹ Rouillard, "Turkish Ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 47.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)*. Etudes De Littérature Étrangère Et Comparée; 13. (Paris: Boivin, 1941).

rudeness and ignorance by Süleyman Ağa. First, the poem's text highlighted the turban of the Turks in its very first line to alienate and ridicule the Ottomans' attire saying, "The Turkish envoy in the Turban- Having in his strolls suburban." Second, in the lines "Noticed midst the maidens' gentle- Ogling an Oriental- One brunette whose amorous glance- Would make a sated Sultan dance- Began at once investigation- Of her name, address, and station" the poem was claiming that the Turk's were not able to follow simple courtesy rules or customs of France. Süleyman Ağa, according to the poem, ignorantly and rudely misinterpreted the most innocent ogling of a young girl, stalked her, and found her home without her permission. Third, and finally, ominous to all the French women, the poem displays Turks as discourteous men who purchase women as sex slaves with the lines: "...He sent to bargain with the father- With no preliminary pother- To buy her for the Sultan's harem." Nevertheless, claiming that Süleyman Ağa wanted to buy her for the Sultan, the poem reduced the only function of an Ottoman man to serve to their Sultan. Ottoman men would be unable to even think of having an affair for themselves. Thus, the poem also castrates the Ottoman man, exhibiting them as non-sexual. Therefore, dreaming of any romantic exchange with an Ottoman man could have only been beside the point for French women. Through this analysis the poem explicitly reveals parallels between these verses and the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, that it is an obvious source material and provided essential influence on the playwright Moliere. Additionally, it supplemented the five fundamental tenets of the play: bourgeoisie, courtesy, desire, ignorance, and France versus the oriental 'other'.

Bourgeoisie, Aristocracy, and the Oriental 'Other'

As one of the very first examples of its kind and perhaps the most discussed one among them, as well as being considered a masterpiece, the five-act comedy-ballet *Le Bourgeois*

Gentilhomme as I briefly mentioned earlier, focuses on a bourgeois Monsieur Jourdain and his desire to receive a royal title one way or another. Throughout the play it is underlined vigorously that this ambition is a fool's errand since the Aristocratic privilege is granted by different circumstances which a bourgeois could never attain. Hence the play might be examined as a clash between the French aristocracy and bourgeoisie, and everything their titles represent in the French socio-political order, equivalent to the clash that had been seen in the French court almost a year prior to the production of the play, between the West and East; France and the Ottoman Empire, in 1669. It became obvious then, when the Ottoman envoy stood before the King of France, with all of the cultural differences, from clothing to education, traditions to courtesy and manners, Ottomans, as a representative of the East, could never blend with the West in the French mind, similar to the bourgeoisie and aristocracy's separation from each other with all their irrevocable aspects.

In fact, the biggest conflict between the two cultures, the Ottoman Empire and France, happened during the audience between Süleyman Ağa and King Louis XIV on 5 December at the chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. While the king was covered with diamonds and gold, Süleyman Ağa arrived at the meeting in an ordinary caftan, and as an eyewitness courtier mentioned it in his memoir as "Nothing seemed so poor or so wretched."³¹⁴ As a matter of fact both parties expected and forced each other to follow their own traditional diplomatic way of encounter without any flexibility. While Süleyman Ağa had expected an official, bureaucratic encounter with much less participation (perhaps high rank bureaucrats of the French government) than a large aristocratic gathering and feast, Louis XIV had planned to display

³¹⁴ Olivier Lefevre d'Ormesson, *Journal d'Olivier Lefevre d'Ormesson et extraits des memoires <d'Andreed*. M. Chervel, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1861), II: 578; Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 44.

power and wealth of France. He received Süleyman Ağa on a golden throne "...dressed in golden brocade, but so completely covered in diamonds that he seemed surrounded by light."³¹⁵ However, Süleyman Ağa seemed unexpectedly unimpressed by Louis XIV's light. As a representative of the Ottoman Emperor, he waited for the king of France to stand up before him and receive the emperor's letter; "...he (Süleyman Ağa) registered astonishment and said through his interpreter that he was amazed that His Majesty did not rise to receive his master's letter, since the Grand Seigneur had risen when he had given it to him, to mark his esteem and his friendship for the King."³¹⁶

Expecting to be treated as an equivalent to the King was a ridiculous ambition for Süleyman Ağa in the French mind, and this this ridiculousness finds its representation throughout the first three acts of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Because of his 'ridiculous' ambition of being seen as an equivalent to a French aristocrat, M Jourdain, as a bourgeois, is exploited by a music teacher, a dance teacher, a philosophy teacher, and a tailor whose main existence is to serve their knowledge and skills to aristocracy, not to bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, how much money a bourgeois spends to learn the aristocratic taste of music or dance, or even if he uses the best fabrics for his clothes, he could never have the very essence of the natural intellectual conscience which has been asserted by birth to an aristocrat. Even the masters, who teach M. Jourdain these different subjects, only could have been mastered in single discipline as non-royal born. Mastering all the teachings pertains to only the royal beings.

No matter how many times his wife, Madame Jourdain, warns M Jourdain about the non-sense of his behavior, he believes adamantly that even only to be able to imitate the aristocratic

³¹⁵ *La Gazette*, 1669B.

³¹⁶ Le Dran, "*Memoire sur le ceremonial observe en France en 1669*," AE/MD/Turquie, vol. 10, doc. 4, fol.76r/v. as translated in Landweber, *French Delight in Turkey*, 45.

senses allows him to raise his rank in his society. However, he could only see the very surface of the responsibilities of being a royal born, listening to highbrow music, dancing ballet, speaking Latin, and perhaps having a mistress. However, as the poem, which I discussed previously in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Its Source of Inspiration, and Süleyman Ağa*, takes away all the manly attractiveness and masculinity from Süleyman Ağa and castrates him, the play exhibits M.

Jourdain in very much the same manner. The play ridicules M. Jourdain and his ambitions so deeply that there is no attractiveness left about him. The play, as the poem had been, stands as a definite warning for a lower-class French man against desiring equivalent privileges with French aristocrats. It implies that desiring higher rank status causes a man to suffer being treated less than his status already allows him. Thus, this point of the play also connects to Süleyman Ağa since his (according to the French minds) requesting higher rank than what he was promoted to by the Ottoman Empire had made him fall into the king's disfavor.

Absolutism, its Courtesy and *Les Bourgeois Gentilhomme*

M. Jourdain works constantly with his music, dance, fencing, and philosophy instructors to be able to learn and earn the privileges of respect and appreciation, and of course the tax breaks of the French government that had been provided for aristocrats since birth and consistently have been denied to the rest of the French population by the French aristocratic system. However, instead of questioning the oppressive system itself, M Jourdain blames his parents, his wife, and even himself for not being able to climb high on the French social structure. His so-called Friend, noble Dorante, as we see throughout the play, promises some sort of leverage to M Jourdain's societal rank via his own nobility as M. Jourdain's friend. Furthermore, he also promises to bring a mistress, Dorimène, to him along with privileges of higher societal rank. Nevertheless, as every interaction and affection towards M. Jourdain

compounds throughout the play, the friendship of Dorante and his helping hand is nothing but counterfeit. Dorante, as the monarchy does to the French Bourgeoises, exploits M. Jourdain's trust, friendship, and labor in impressing Dorimène. Instead of matchmaking, Dorante takes all the gifts which M. Jourdain buys for Dorimène and presents them to her as his own gifts to convince her to marry himself instead. To be able to prevent M. Jourdain from revealing the truth of the real purchaser of the expensive jewels, he continuously silences M. Jourdain. As a penniless aristocrat, Dorante constantly exploits M. Jourdain and his money for his own desires and necessities. Dorante not only pretends that all the jewels from M Jourdain to Dorimène were his gifts to her, but he also creates groundless courtesy rules for M. Jourdain like claiming if M. Jourdain mentions his gifts to Dorimène it would be vulgar for a gentleman.³¹⁷ In this way he guaranties M. Jourdain's silence and obedience.

Targeting the most vulnerable weakness of M. Jourdain, Dorante, as a representative of the noble French court, puts a stranglehold on the bourgeois and controls the wealth and manipulates freewill. These fabricated courtesy rules become practical tools for maintaining aristocratic precedence in the play and in the real French court as well. This way, the aristocrat Dorante utilizes the codes for establishing his socio-political agenda through manipulating M. Jourdain's possessions. Orest Ranum indicates that the French court's "courtesy codes, sustained by absolutist ideology, provided the state's first line of offence against French society after about 1630."³¹⁸ This court policy became a strict political agenda especially during the reign of Louis XIV. Hence, Dorante only mirrors the court policy in which he is integrated. This metaphoric

³¹⁷ Molière, Nick Dear, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, (Bath, England: Absolute Classics, 1992), 57.

³¹⁸ Orest Ranum, "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660." *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980): 426-51, 426.

approach might be read as allusive and sarcastic criticism of the court, however, doing this indirect exposition, the playwright, Moliere, once again connects his subjects to the visit of Süleyman Ağa.

During Süleyman Ağa's visit two very essential and controversial issues occurred which were linked to each other. The first issue was demanding that Süleyman Ağa neglect the Ottoman traditions during ambassadorial visits to foreign states and the second issue was demanding his obedience to the French court courtesies in which failure was all but guaranteed. Orest Ranum examines and explains the method of utilizing and forcing courtesy rules in his article *Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660*, and righteously asks that if "in forcing the nobility to pay respects to him at Versailles, did not Louis XIV weaken their political influence?"³¹⁹ Yes, indeed he did. In fact, he was an absolute and held the only power to decide whether his subjects had obeyed the code. He was also 'the authority' who can arbitrarily manipulate the code, needless to say, for the benefits of his political agenda.³²⁰

Many books were published to explain and enforce these courtesy rules especially in the first half of the 17th century. For instance, *Grand Ceremonial de France* by Theodore Godefroy rationalizes the courtesy codes and demands respect for social hierarchy in 1619.³²¹ His son Denis II revised and extended his father's work in 1649, restoring the social order to his society to some extent, and helped his court to sooth the civil war.³²² Ranum describes this period as the modes of courtesy's "codification and strict enforcement" which created a system that began

³¹⁹ Ibid, 430.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ "Recueil Sur Le Cérémonial, Formé En Grande Partie Par Les Soins De Théodore Godefroy. (1323-1654.) Originaux Et Copies. III « Mélanges. » (1495-1939)." 1501.

³²² Ranum, "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State," 428.

functioning by itself so that “slowly and perhaps unconsciously royal servants developed courtesies appropriate to enhance the power of the state.”³²³ The king’s control over his subjects was strengthened by these codes such that even in the king’s absence his subject bowed before the royal objects like his portrait, his knife, and his napkin. This way, his presence filled the space.³²⁴ However, the king’s most vigorous enforcement tool against his subjects was disconnecting from a court member and not exchanging words. This indicator was an absolute insult for the court member, and they would do anything for their king to prevent falling into disfavor. Once these rules established the strict order and absolute obedience in his court, the king turned his eyes to his foreign guests and started expecting the same respect and manners from them.

By expecting Süleyman Ağa to follow French courtesy code, Louis XIV knew beyond a doubt that these demands were going to cause resistance, although it would be a great opportunity for him to make the mark of his superiority over the Ottoman Empire.³²⁵ When he aimed to exhibit his superiority, Louis XIV’s targeted audience was European states rather than the Ottoman Empire. The political indicator of this act was to display how France would bring the Ottomans to heel. According to this indicator, the true power was the loyal blood of the Frenchmen as a civilized Christian, and Louis was ready to conquer the uncivilized Muslims as a Christian prince and emperor.³²⁶

³²³ Ibid, 427.

³²⁴ Ibid, 433.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Faruk Bilici, *Louis XIV Et Son Projet De Conquête D'Istanbul*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından. XI Seri; Sayı 11. (Ankara: Société D'histoire Turque, 2004).

There were conflicting demands on Süleyman Ağa to both follow the courtesy rules and the customs of the French court, but at the same time to protest them, seemingly part of Louis XIV's diplomatic strategy. For instance, they complained when Süleyman Ağa refused to dismount his horse during a receiving ceremony by the aldermen of the city of Marseille, however they did not provide a proper occasion for him to do that. In another example, the French officials constantly accused Süleyman Ağa of being arrogant, snobbish, and undiplomatic because he did not allow them to see the letter from Ottoman Sultan to King, ignoring their own snobbish and undiplomatic insult to him, since it was known that displaying the letter to them prior to the king would be considered high treason in Ottoman bureaucratic tradition.³²⁷ In this way, as Louis XIV controlled his subjects using the courtesy code for obedience, he manipulated the image of Süleyman Ağa as well, and the Ottoman representative was labelled as an uncivilized and rude man while the Frenchmen were granted ownership of politeness, a tradition that continues even into the present.³²⁸ Accordingly, Suleman Ağa was not only ignorant of the courtesy codes, but also he was unable to follow them even had he had knowledge about them. They were not fit for his kind, for the 'Oriental other'. The same incompatibility is seen in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. In scene sixteen, the first confrontation of M. Jourdain and Dorimène represents how M. Jourdain was stripped of the ability, of even mimicking the high attitude that belongs to Louis XIV's courtly manners:

³²⁷ Mustafa Can, "Elçi Kara Mehmed Paşa Örneği Üzerinden Osmanlı Diplomasi Teşrifatına Dair Bir Analiz," 'Tarihin Izinde Bir Omur' Profesör Dr. Nuri Yavuz'a ArmAğan, (2019): 241-64, 243-44.

³²⁸ Scholars like Julia A. Landweber, Phil McCluskey, Ellen R. Welch, Faik Reşit Unat, Metin And, C. D. Rouillard, Garritt Van Dyk, Nayan Chanda, W. A Bernstein, and more.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: (After having made two bows, finding himself too near Dorimène) A little farther, Madame.

DORIMÈNE: What?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: One step, if you please.

DORIMÈNE: What is it?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Step back a little for the third.³²⁹

In this comedic scene M. Jourdain prepares to bow three times front of Dorimène as he learned from his dance teacher, however after the first two bows he realizes that he had come too close to Dorimène and he does not have enough room for the third bow in his reverence. Beyond his awkwardness from his ineptitude, he also requests Dorimène to step back for him to complete this performance. Naturally, Dorimène is startled by this request, at the same time realizing M. Jourdain's lacking in noble qualities, instead of questioning the arbitrary necessities of this groundless array of movements. In fact, both Süleyman Ağa and M. Jourdain are exhibited in parallel to each other, as being unable to not be aloof inferiors. In that way, as M. Jourdain has been stuck permanently in the present tense of his destiny, as a subject of ridiculous ambitions, Süleyman Ağa as well is still judged by the same courtesy rules which were created by the court to control its statesmen, bureaucrats, and society, and has made these entities obey the absolute power of their monarch.

Title Obsession

³²⁹ Molière, *The Middle-Class Gentleman*. Project Gutenberg, Accessed 1/25/2021, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2992/2992-h/2992-h.htm>.

With his desire to receive a higher title, M. Jourdain represents the French government and its obsession with individuals' titles as a governmental policy, as they had been insisting on finding out Süleyman Ağa's ambassadorial title. Thus, this obsession is another point that connects the play to the visit of the Ottoman envoy, Süleyman Ağa and the Ottoman state system.

French and Ottoman state systems exhibit obvious differences in official titles, especially in how and who could attain a particular title. While only a few limited opportunities permitted a lower-class born French person to climb to a certain extent in the French court, conversely, other than a few exceptions, almost the entirety of Ottoman court statesmen and bureaucrats rose from the lowest servant status³³⁰. This fact caused, in some instances, the Frenchmen to see the Ottomans as aloof or ineligible during their diplomatic exchange. Moreover, French statesmen and bureaucrats, not directly but suggestively, belittled the Ottoman officials, and claimed superiority over them, as happened during Süleyman Ağa's visit. Michèle Longino indicates this issue as "the French have not in fact always distinguished themselves with polished manners in international affairs, and the term 'gaffe' also has made its way around."³³¹ The most recent instance of this snobbish attitude before Süleyman Ağa's visit to France had happened when the French ambassador Jean de la Haye delayed his visit to pay his respect to the Ottoman Empire's new Grand Vizier, Köprülü Mehmet Pasha in 1650. In his mind Köprülü was going to be in power only a short amount of time, although in the end he was mistaken. French traveler Jean Chardin points out this arrogant gaffe:

³³⁰ For example, after 1656 the status of Grand Vizier was dominated by the members of the Köprülü family. The first Köprülü Mehmet Pasha was *Devsirme*, but his descendants carried the privilege of their names and becoming subsequent Grand Viziers.

³³¹ Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 129-130.

Seeing at last that Köprülü was establishing himself at Court through the ruin of several people of importance, and that according to all appearances, he would be Grand Vizier for some time: he went to see him and paid his respects. The visit and the respects were truly a lost cause, for the Vizier was indignant at the negligence and lack of consideration the [the ambassador] demonstrated in this important meeting, and he had formed the design of taking revenge on him and even on the entire French Nation.³³²

Jean de la Haye's smugness was not limited to this one instance. He continued looking down on the Grand Vizier Köprülü, insinuating his non-aristocratic background:

He [the Vizier] found out that an ambassador, who shall remain nameless, had strongly encouraged all his servants to be polite, and not to be stingy with greetings when passing through the streets of Constantinople, and especially not to forget to greet apple-sellers, because they couldn't be sure that one day they wouldn't need them, since it might happen that one of them became Grand Vizier.³³³

This arrogance naturally put the Ottoman-French relationships in jeopardy and Ottomans became distrustful of the French ambassadors for at least the next twenty years. These stories then bring up the question of why were the French diplomats considered adept at diplomacy? Or how much were the bureaucrats and diplomats deserving of their titles? Longino answers these questions:

It is not here then that the French earned their reputation as gifted diplomats; they behaved badly. These stories, beyond encapsulating diplomatic boorishness, illustrate

³³² Jean Chardin, *journal du voyage du Chevalier Chardin. En Perse & Aux Indes Orientales, Par La Mer Noire & La Colchide*. M. Pitt (Londres 1686), 14; as translated in Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 130.

³³³ Donneau de Visé, *Fuite del'histoire de Mahomet IV depossede* (Paris: Michel Guerot, 1688), 201- 202; as translated in Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 128.

seventeenth century French anxiety with the social mobility of the Ottoman world, a fluidity the French found incomprehensible and disquieting – at once different from their own system and resembling the direction theirs was beginning to take as Colbert’s meritocracy supplanted the tradition of the aristocracy.³³⁴

And yet French officials felt entitled to question Süleyman Ağa’s eligibility for his mission not only because he had just received his ‘Müteferrika’ title right before he started his journey to France, but also it was problematic for the French bureaucrats that he had risen up to his position from being a ‘bostancı’ (gardener) in the Ottoman palace system.³³⁵ Thus, the effort of figuring out his official title was just a cover for the French to figure out how to deal with Süleyman Ağa’s meritocratic background. And yet, it became easy for them, and subsequently the modern scholar, to claim that he was just an opportunity seeker.³³⁶ In fact, it seems that it had been an effort to segregate aristocrats and bourgeois to protect aristocrats’ natal privilege.

Throughout the play M. Jourdain and his family suffer from his ignorance, but nonetheless he shows some sort of awareness of the hardship of social climbing. He acknowledges the closest possibility for him to receive a royal title could be only through the marriage of his daughter to an aristocrat. Thus, he refuses his daughter, Lucile’s, wishes to marry Cléonte, another non-aristocratic bourgeois. There is only one way to convince M. Jourdain to permit the young lovers’ marriage; to fool him into believing that someone else with the title that M. Jourdain desires, wants to marry her. In this case it is the son of the Grand Turk. Covielle,

³³⁴ Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 132.

³³⁵ *Bostancı* corps members were chosen by the best looking, the strongest and the most trustworthy *devşirme* boys and mainly they worked for the Palace’s parks and gardens, however, they served in several different palace services since they were the most loyal corps to the Sultan. Also, since they were in view, they represented the strength and power of the palace.

³³⁶ Such as D’Arvieux, le Dran, Julia Landweber, Phil McCluskey, and C. D. Rouillard.

Cléonte's valet, who organizes the entire plot and who assumes the role of an interpreter between the Turk and M. Jourdain, even throws an ennoblement ceremony for M. Jourdain. This infamous ennoblement ceremony which is known as the “Turkish Ceremony” is almost an abstract representation of all the court ballets, newspaper articles, and court gossips about the Ottoman Turks. With this ceremony, the playwright not only refers to the verses I posited above but also evokes another poem in the audiences’ minds which was ridiculing Süleyman Ağa’s full name and his Ottoman title, Müteferrika Süleyman Mustafa Ağa, from a year prior:

One so big Name

Who’s at least eight feet long,

So in order to write it down

You need one meter as you’re going to see

By naming and rhyming in si:

CARASTAPHAMARABASSI.³³⁷

Hereby, the moment the French character mentioned the Ottoman noble title ‘mamamouchi’ for M. Jourdain to receive, the audience immediately perceived the allegory, remembering ‘carastaphamarabassi’, bursting into laughter.³³⁸ These indicators and the equivalents in scenes preceding the ‘Turkish ceremony’ are full of allegorical and comedic preparation for the audience to observe M. Jourdain becoming an Ottoman Turk. At the same time, they are constructive in changing the Turkish image that Süleyman Ağa constituted as a strong and

³³⁷ Quoted in Rouillard, “Turkish Ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*,” 48; translation: Irina Dorfman.

³³⁸ Ibid.

charismatic figure. Reminding the audience, the farcical moments of the Ağa's visit, the play reduces Süleyman Ağa to a comedic, humiliated, and primitive image. Meta-theatrically making the fearful Ottoman image into a playful and hollow shell, the play also gives metaphorical permission to the audience to impersonate an Ottoman Turk and assume the role. Hereby, it became a starting point for *turquerie* fashion.

As Grosrichard claims "Ever since the envoy from the Sublime Porte visited Louis XIV in 1669, the gaze of the Oriental has haunted France and Paris." It changed France not only mentally but also cosmetically. Since the moment that Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa stepped onto French soil in Toulon with his envoy, French officials were skeptical about the envoys' mission and Süleyman Ağa's title in the Ottoman bureaucratic system, albeit without adequate reason, and thus did not know how to treat them. They not only questioned the envoy's credibility and its ambassador's title, but also as a matter of fact, they questioned the Ottoman Empire's superiority and everything for which it stood. The visit, and even in the years after it occurred, has impacted French identity and its 'high' culture since Süleyman Ağa left France with numerous questions and doubts in French mind.

The Turkish Ceremony

Although the actual ceremony takes place at the end of act four, scene five, the masquerade of the Turkish ceremony in fact starts with scene three. Covielle, the servant of M. Jourdain's daughter's lover, enters the stage disguised as a world traveler who can speak the Ottoman language. He encounters the bourgeois to tell him that the son of the Ottoman sultan asks his permission to marry his daughter. It is unclear if he appears in Ottoman attire completely, or if he carries some accessories from the oriental places through which he claims to have travelled, however he masquerades the language decorating the sounds of it with

oriental(ist) manners. He, allegedly, translates the son of the Sultan's words for M. Jourdain from mostly gibberish to a few Arabic, Turkish, and French phonemes, spreading some familiar words throughout in his sentences, sounds which would be familiar to his audience's ears from the previous year's visit of a real oriental representative. For instance, he says "alla moustaph gidelum amanahem varahini oussere carbulath?"³³⁹ *Alla* sounds like "Allah" and *moustaph* sounds like "Mustafa" which is Süleyman Ağa's second name. Additionally, *gidelum*, *amanahem*, *varahini* approximate Ottoman Turkish words, and *carbulath* reminds the audience "CARASTAPHAMARABASSI" which was a made-up name for Süleyman Ağa from a poem printed in *Gazette* (which was discussed earlier in this chapter in the section *Title Obsession*).³⁴⁰

The display of approximate of Ottoman Turkish instead of the using the real language is accepted as an expected strategy by the scholars since Covielle feigned the world traveler role. However, if the palace orientalist, d'Arvieux, was appointed by Louis XIV to work with the production team to help them to create truthful representation of the Turks in the play as d'Arvieux claimed, then why did they not spread some real Ottoman words in the conversation instead of a gibberish? Even a few words would give more opportunity to the playwright to create more comedic moments. Furthermore, it would arouse more memories about Süleyman Ağa and his envoy from the prior year. Yet, the following scene with the Turkish ceremony contains the real Ottoman Turkish words. Then, why does the playwright not choose to not to use any of them in this scene where the audience was introduced to the idea for the first time? I believe that by choosing full gibberish instead of a few real words that the audience could easily understand, or potentially remember, the playwright's main goal was not only underlining

³³⁹ Molière, Jean De, and Louvat-Molozay, Bénédicte, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Garnier Flammarion (Series); 1537, (Paris: GF Flammarion, 2014), 122.

³⁴⁰Gidelum: gidelim; Amanahem: Aman ha; Varahini: vallahi.

Covielle's pseudo personality, but also suggesting that the Ottoman language was combination of meaningless, vulgar, unintelligent, and impolite sounds. In this way, replacing the reality of the "Turk" with the imagined one, starting first with the replacement of the language. Hence, before the image of the Turk was reduced to simple minded figures, the language of the Turk was replaced with a primitive one.

In the Turkish Ceremony, French performers and Covielle perform four dervishes, six Ottoman-Turkish dancers, six Ottoman-Turkish musicians, and a Mufti. First, six Ottoman Turks entered the stage with three rugs, which clearly represents Muslim prayer rug, lay them out on the ground and sit on them. In the meantime, Mufti and the dervishes cry for help from the prophet Muhammad with grotesque and comedic gestures. Then, the rest of the performers bring M. Jourdain to the stage. While the singers and dancers dress him with a kaftan, and an enormous turban with a lit candle on it is placed on his head. During the ceremony, the dancers dance with their sabers around M. Jourdain to suppress him with their cruelty. He is kneeled and converted to Islam with a huge Quran, which is placed on his back, and the performers swiftly beat M. Jourdain with it. After several consecutive comedic *mise en scenes* M. Jourdain is beaten up with *bastinado* and finally receives his precious title *mamamouchi*. This scene displays two false ceremonies, one for converting M. Jourdain to Islam, and the second one is to appoint him to his new Ottoman title *mamamouchi*. However, besides the falsehood of the ceremonies, it also displays the hollowness of French knowledge about the Ottoman Empire. Primarily, the scene claims that Ottomans forced their subjects to convert to Islam to receive benefits from the

Empire. Although this claim is partly true, the Ottoman Empire mostly allowed diverse religious beliefs to thrive under its reign.³⁴¹

During this scene the prayer rugs, sabers, Quran, and the turban, supported by the macho sounds of the Ottoman Turkish, exhibit almost everything the French knew and wanted to see about the Ottomans in this oriental fantasy. In fact, the performers were French who openly assumed the role of the Ottoman Turk on the stage, however, all the allegorical signifiers were placed on stage to individually represent the primitivity, brutality, and lunacy of Ottomans which the French society had been repeatedly introduced to by the contemporary media. It was a regular practice for newspapers and bulletins to display Ottoman Turks with their sabers in their drawings, thus it was representing the brutality of Ottoman Turks. Additionally, one of the conspiracies about the title of Süleyman Ağa was the absence of his saber during his audience with Louis XIV. Thus, the saber was a strong indicator to exhibit Ottoman Turks on the stage and naturally, reminded the audience of the visit of Süleyman Ağa. Prayer rugs on the other hand were underlying the clash of the two religions. As infidels the Ottoman Turks were primitive, eating on floor and pray bowing down to ground. Lastly, the turban with lit candles represented the Ottomans lunatic nature, referring to another story that was printed in a pamphlet in 1608.³⁴² In this pamphlet Sultan Ahmed was pictured with a huge turban on fire on his head indicating his

³⁴¹ For more details see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı*. 2ci Baskı. ed. Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları. VIII. Dizi; Sa. 15a. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1984).

³⁴² According to the pamphlet, during his birthday banquet Sultan Ahmed declared that his subjects obey his orders without questioning. This caused the foreign ambassadors' protests since their masters have been obeyed loyally as well. Therewith, Sultan Ahmed had stand up with rage and ordered one his pashas to kill himself. The Pasha, in a second killed himself with his scimitar.

The story is excerpted from Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)*. Etudes De Littérature Étrangère Et Comparée; 13. (Paris: Boivin, 1941), 81.

rage. This visual, from that point, became a popular display of Ottoman Sultans and it became an icon for the French court and society in the 17th century and was used in many court ballets before *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. One of the very first visual indicators of this turban with the lit candle in the court ballets is *Ballets Du Grand Turc et Peuples d'Asie* from 1626. The well-preserved colorful drawings of this ballet display the turban on fire clearly, and very likely was the influence for creating the Mufti character of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.³⁴³

Basically, this small comedic scene with all its stereotypical and oriental(ist) motifs was designed in every possible way to serve and feed French fantasies about the orient. It combines the reverie of the French and their limitless imagination, thus creating better than real mirage for their minds. This replaced and recreated image of the Ottoman Turks on the French stage has since instituted what the orient is, who the oriental is, how a westerner can approach it, and how the West can reduce its anxiety about it. Therefore, as Edward Said indicates, "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it,"³⁴⁴ so the oriental becomes docile and manageable in the western mind, while constituting their congenital superiority over it. Hence as Said describes Orientalism "...as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient,"³⁴⁵ this play's displayed image of the Turk unfortunately remains as the dominant image of the Ottomans, even in our modern days, as a part of this restructuring.

³⁴³ Rouillard, "The Background of The Turkish Ceremony in Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," 36.

³⁴⁴ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2014), 3.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

The play's Turkish masquerade received so much attention and interest that it is considered an essential piece of the play. So much so that Moliere and Lully decided to add Turkish visuals in their next play *Psyche*.³⁴⁶ The subject of the Turkish Ceremony in particular, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* in general pleasantly satisfied the audience's desire to gaze upon an oriental other to feed their fantasies, but also similarly to documentary theater, it touched upon their fresh memories of their year's prior experiences with 'the' Oriental other. In addition to this Ali Behdad points out "the Turkish masquerade in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, as a self-conscious theatrical representation of Otherness, responded not only to the Court's desire for a substitute for its unsatisfactory meeting with the 'real' Oriental, but also to the broader cultural desire for the exotic."³⁴⁷ furthermore, I believe, the success of the play's Turkish ceremony also lay under the French passion of reflecting their desire of being superior over the non-French states on oriental subjects, and helped mold their identity with the otherness of Turkish masquerade. Hence, texts like this inform, visually and conceptually, what the French were not, and they mold the figure of what they were (and what they want to be). Larry Norman indicates this focusing on Moliere's work specifically as "Moliere's theater capitalizes here on one of the defining ambitions of French classical literature: the desire to stimulate a sense of self-recognition in the audience."³⁴⁸ In this way, the audience was accustomed to being guided to perfection of their supra-identity. Longino also approaches the exact same point with a slightly different angle. "Moliere's play was not simply a comedy with a few '*turqueries*,' but a compensatory exercise in which the French indulged to console themselves for their inability to

³⁴⁶ Arvieux, L. D. (1735). *Mémoires du chevalier d'Arvieux* (Paris: 1735).

³⁴⁷ Behdad, "The Oriental(ist) Encounter," 40.

³⁴⁸ L. Norman, *The Public Mirror: Moliere and the Social Commerce of Depiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 85.

manage the Ottomans to their advantage and to keep the French nouveaux riches in their place. What they could not control in the world, they would control on the stage.”³⁴⁹ Thus, with the play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, they manipulated and controlled the image of the Ottoman Turk. Consequently, they generated complete obedience to the manufactured French identity.

Intermingle

Louis XIV is well known for his excellent utilization of stage performances, not only as a performer but also as a creator for his strategic performative diplomacy. He rebirthed himself as the ‘sun king’ (Le Roi Soleil) many times, performing characters such as the Rising Sun in *Ballet de la Nuit*, and Neptune and Apollo in *Les Amants Magnifiques*. Before he retired from stage with his last ballet performance in 1670, while the Ottoman envoy and Süleyman Ağa were still in France, Louis declared and marked himself as the source of illumination not only for France but also for the world one last time with his performance of Apollo.³⁵⁰ It is unclear whether Süleyman Ağa was present at the production to witness how the king of France reiterated himself as the ‘Sun King’, however it is not likely that he did not at least hear of this event. As Theater theorist Samuel Chappuzeau indicates “Any one of the spectacles the King gives to the Court... either in the accompanying pomp or in the richness of the space in which they are shown... makes Foreigners see what a King of France can do in his kingdom.”³⁵¹ Hence the performance of *Les Amants Magnifiques* was a great opportunity for Louis to display his ‘light’ for the Orientals’ gaze one more time.

³⁴⁹ Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*, 145-146.

³⁵⁰ See Julia Prest, *Dancing King: Louis XIV's Roles in Molière's Comédies-ballets, from Court to Town*, *The Seventeenth Century* 16, no. 2 (2001): 283-98; Michael Call, *Of Sceptics and Spectators: Les Amants Magnifiques and the Wonders of Disenchantment*, *Early Modern French Studies* 40, no. 2 (2018): 166-78.

³⁵¹ Quoted in Ellen R. Welch, “Dancing the Nation,” 3.

The brief array of consecutive events demonstrates that the moment Süleyman Ağa set his foot on French soil, and until he departed, the audiences and governmental ceremonies, and both Moliere's *Les Amants Magnifiques* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* are connected with each other as an important part of Louis XIV's strategic and performative political agenda. First, Süleyman Ağa's credentials are questioned deliberately and consistently. Second, Süleyman Ağa was hosted by Hugues de Lionne following the Ottoman audience custom in order to make him believe that he was treated with respect deserving of the Ottoman Empire, which also made him believe that he was going to have an audience with Louis XIV following the same custom. He was subjected to lengthy lectures about the French system of government and forced to be defensive on the subject, which also was displayed by the officials and the newspaper as his aloofness and poor manners. Third, he was accepted to the audience of the King, only to have Louis XIV display the wealth of France with his gold and diamond costume, and a courtier mentioned "...dressed in golden brocade, but so completely covered in diamonds that he seemed surrounded by light."^[3] In this way the King built contrast with Süleyman Ağa who dressed in a simple caftan as a representative of the Ottoman Empire, the French king became the 'light' and Süleyman Ağa became the 'rude'. Then the French King transformed from only being 'light' in the Orientals' eyes to the sun king in his performance in *Les Amants Magnifiques* just three months after this audience. Lastly, the image of the Ottomans was fabricated and reintroduced to the audience as a commoner's subject; playful, tamed, impersonate-able, fictional characters in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

This chapter indicates many times that the main ambition of the play was to display power over the oriental for European states' gaze to indicate France's superiority within its ideal balance in its bureaucratic system. The stage performances utilized "Ballet des Nations"

regularly for this purpose. Generally, *Ballet des Nations* performed at the end of the court performances and exhibited the ‘other’ ethnic, and nationalistic characters in their stereotyped cultural dresses and manners. While these stock characters- who naturally were performed by the French actors- represented their ethnic and cultural defaults they also revered to France and being French. At the end of these interludes French characters entered to stage to demonstrate their natural differences from the others and attest to their civilized ascendancy. This last touch, naturally, created nirvanic unity of being French among the audiences. In *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* this interlude comes after the ‘Turkish Ceremony’ and contains Gascon, Swiss, Italian, Spanish, bourgeois, and French stereotype characters. I believe in this way the play segregates the Turkish representation from the European characters’ representation. Thus, while it “others” the non-French Europeans at the same time it offers unification to them. It might be read as a promise the French support against the ‘extreme other’ Ottomans.

Moliere’s main ambition almost always was to entertain his aristocratic audience. When he criticized somebody directly or indirectly, or the court system tacitly he had stood on the sharp edge of being too much or too less. Nevertheless, if his king laughs at his comedic moments on his plays it was obligatory for the others to laugh at them as well. These productions first entertained the court, then the Parisians, and rest of France to circulate what is amusing to Louis, what he wants the public eye to see, and what he wants to construct within and above France. Thus, besides Moliere’s works kept their relevancy to our modern era, the laughs are continuing because we continue to reflect what amuses Louis XIV and what he wanted us to laugh at. Every moment the laughs accrue for the Ottoman Turkish display at *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, it becomes burlesque itself: dragging away from its power, reducing to being an

‘exotic’, funny, toy-like image, and has become an empty shell that French can dress and enjoy all its stereotypical but cultural aspects in the fashion of ‘*turquerie*’.



Figure 3.1 *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*. Entrée de Mahomet. 1626.³⁵²

³⁵² *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*. February 1626. Opera Baroque: creator Jean-Claude Brenac. Accessed February 4, 2020. https://operabaroque.fr/BOESSET_DOUAIRIERE.htm.



Figure 3.2 *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*. Ballet des Piclers ou Lacquais du grand Turc. 1626.³⁵³

³⁵³ Ibid.



Figure 3.3 *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*. Entrée du grand Turc.1626.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ Ibid.



Figure 3.4 *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*. Ballet des Dames du Serrail. 1626.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Ibid.



Figure 3.5 *Ballets du Grand Turc et Peuples D'Asie*. Burning Turban. 1626.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

Chapter 4. *Turquerie* as a Statement of Freedom from Courtly Performances to Literature

The painting *Sultana Taking Coffee* (1754) depicts a beautiful woman in the Ottoman Sultan's harem reaching out for her coffee from the hands of her servant (Figure 4.1).³⁵⁷ The two women display a moment that pauses forever on the wall of Louvre Museum. Their eyes resting on each other warms up the narrative while the servant's pose divulges respect and trust towards her master, which manifests in the Sultana's ratified power. The scene invites the viewer to recognize the confidence of the Sultana, relaxed half-recumbent on a sofa. She is in her Ottoman attire and her layers reveal only a little of her cleavage, however they cannot conceal her sexuality. She is beautiful, strong, and one of the most important people in the Ottoman seraglio and the Sultan's life, as it is declared that she is his favorite confidant. This Sultana, who is championing this *mise en scene* in Carle Van Loo's painting, is instead Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV, and the 'harem' is actually her *chambre a la turque*, in her Chateau de Bellevue. Notwithstanding, this portrait is a manifestation of her seeming importance in the eye of the French king, that of his favorite. At the same time, it displays her political power in the French court, just as a Sultana would maintain in the Ottoman empire. Thus, this portrait, as one of the most important examples of *turquerie* fashion in France, represents the political and social manifestative nature of *turquerie* beyond being 'just a fashion'.³⁵⁸

Moreover, this portrait and others by the same artist elevated Madame de Pompadour's identity from being a powerful mistress of the king to a political authority in the French court by

³⁵⁷ Carle Van Loo, *Sultana Taking a Coffee (Madame de Pompadour as a Sultana)*, c. 1754, oil on canvas, 47" x 50." St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum (GE-7489).

³⁵⁸ *Turquerie* generally define as an artistic form that fashioned after the 17th century which reflects the western conception of the Ottoman State and its cultural and visual assets.

equating her social reputation with that of the Ottoman Sultana, a *Haseki*.³⁵⁹ In another drawing by the same artist, Madame de Pompadour poses in the same setting, although as an embroiderer, while another women's gaze lies upon her (Figure 4.2). Madame de Pompadour is apparently aware of this gaze and yet continues her craftwork as she is the favorite one; she is the owner of the heart of the king. She is familiar with this adoration and admiration and displays her deserved superiority over the other women. Even a quick glance at these two paintings reveals how the theme of them and their theatricality obviously proclaim the social-political agenda of Madame de Pompadour as her beauty, sexuality, and superiority possesses the viewer. The case study of Madame de Pompadour and her usage of *turquerie* as an art form to manifest her political authority in the French court is a great example to display how social climbers, even women in 17th century patriarchal France, found opportunities through *turquerie* for declaration of their political power and influence. It is clear that mystique of *turquerie* has allowed her to enrich and strengthen her power when she masqueraded as a Turk and exhibited herself in this foreign culture. Thus, even though she was not the wife of the king, she was his legitimate confidant.

Supporting this claim, my examination here builds on the scholarship of Julia Landweber, who analyzes *turquerie* as a social phenomenon. She suggests that through *turquerie*, Madame de Pompadour "...continually reinforced a vision of herself as Louis XV's most-favored 'sultana.'"³⁶⁰ Landweber uses masquerade as an umbrella term and asserts that it is an identity statement that displays power. Naturally, commissioning this series of paintings was a significant

³⁵⁹ Although *Haseki* is a title for palace officials who are close to the sultan, the term is mostly known as a title of the Sultan's favorite concubine. For more details of women in a Harem and women in Ottoman political lives see Leslie P Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³⁶⁰ Julia Landweber, "Celebrating Identity: Charting the History of Turkish Masquerade in Early Modern France," *Romance Studies: A Journal of the University of Wales* 23, no. 3 (2005): 175-189, 184.

part of Madame Pompadour's agenda, and as Landweber points out, it was her "propaganda" that established her domination in the French court even after Louis separated his bed from hers.³⁶¹ Similar to Landweber, Perrin Stein explains how Pompadour "saw the arts as a means to clarify and solidify her political position" and she asserts that Madame de Pompadour orchestrated the fashion of *turqueries* in order to convey her political influence.³⁶² Although, these close readings of Madame du Pompadour's approach to masquerading as a Sultana explain how she utilized *turquerie* as a tool for her manifestation, it is still insufficient to demonstrate the significance of *turquerie* in the French mind. I argue that in actuality, *turquerie* created the collective perception and approval for her competency on French socio-political culture. Hence, in this chapter I map out the significance of *turquerie* in 17th century French social and intellectual life. I am analyzing it not as an ephemeral fashion, or as an oriental and foreign pattern décor, but as a penetrating internal, and material concept that bi-directionally defined the figure of French identity.

In order to map *turquerie*, examine its historiographical development, and analyze its significance in the French intellect, this research studies its meaning beyond its definition. I claim and bring evidence to suggest that *turquerie* is not simply masquerading a foreign culture, but further investigating it, impersonating its aspect to discover self and liberate this 'self' within it. In this chapter I will examine practices of *turquerie* such as paintings, diplomatic performances, and publications to analyze the nuances that emerged and departed from *turquerie*. These examples are examined to present the evidence that *turquerie* was internalized to produce identity and claim power by its followers. I survey these cases from nearly seventy years of *turquerie* from arguably the moment of initiation in December 1669 to one of the most

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Perrin Stein, "Madame de Pompadour and the Harem Imagery at Bellevue," *Gazette Des Beaux-arts* 136, no. 123 (1994): 29-44, 29.

important examples of its usage in France; Madame de Pompadour's manipulation of it in the 1750's. In this way, the evolution of *turquerie* as its being from fashion as a consumer power to becoming performer power as an identity statement will be exhibited. I asserted in previous chapters, *turquerie* was permitted by Louis XIV as an image that he could easily control, which praised the French government and its superiority.³⁶³ I will now demonstrate how it metamorphosed in the hands of French intellectuals, who were seeking freedom in their self-representation, so that at the moment Louis XIV offered it to the French public, he lost his authority over it. *Turquerie* was not about aesthetic anymore but was about political power.

'Masquerading' the Turk or *Turquerie*?

I believe that there is a subtle difference between masquerading as a Turk and *turquerie*. I draw this line abruptly between the act of dressing like a Turk as a shallow representation (in the western minds) without any concern of its factuality, as opposed to an effort of sense-making and meaning loading into the Turkish objects and their aspects. *Turquerie* indeed started as a subject of masquerade, however it formed itself defining its meaning for its followers through an evolution into a statement of individuality and power. Naturally, this shapeshifting carried *turquerie* beyond a simple exploitive orientalism to an inspirational phenomenon that influenced western bodies to find their own meanings within it. Nebahat Avcioglu examines the influence of *turquerie* through the lens of identity politics and underlines that identity and cultural subjects are constructed and produced by the 'self' and simultaneously its 'opposite' as well.³⁶⁴

According to Avcioglu the representation of self is related to displays of power and it aims to

³⁶³ See Chapter 3.

³⁶⁴ Nebahat Avcioglu, *Turquerie ve Temsil Politikasi, 1728-1876* (Istanbul, Koc Universitesi Yayinlari, January 1, 2014), 26.

either force or obtain power. She separates representation from a passive role playing and claims that self-representation is an altered manifestation.³⁶⁵ Hence, as an expansion of her statements, my argument is that masquerade dissociates from *turquerie* in this moment of complex representation. While masquerade utilizes the ‘other’ as an attire, *turquerie* approaches it as the opposite of self to mold their identity within it. While court festivities and carousels represented the other as an accessory of self in a masquerade form, *turquerie* became an art form of rebellious manifestation by power seekers. Thus, while masquerade remains as only an inactive image of representation of the other, *turquerie* became an active creation that liberated and formed the ‘French identity’ interlaced within, beyond, and over the ‘other’.

Although *turquerie* differentiates itself from masquerade with its ideological and utopic usage, it contains masquerade’s euphoric effect on the practitioner. In his book *Masquerade and Civilization* Terry Castle studies British court’s fascination with masquerade and he traces its influences in British fiction. He describes this fascination as “...deepest sense a kind of collective meditation on self and other.”³⁶⁶ Masqueraders satisfy themselves “on the experience of doubleness, the alienation of inner from outer, a fantasy of two bodies simultaneously and thrillingly present, self and other together, the two-in-one.”³⁶⁷ I argue that *turquerie* took this satisfaction one step further and made its mark on its practitioners as a permanent brand instead of an ephemeral effect. It allowed its followers to carry this doubleness as an enriched and enhanced aspect of their identity.

³⁶⁵ Avcioğlu, *Turquerie ve Temsil Politikası*, 33.

³⁶⁶ Terry Castle. *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986), 4.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 5.

In the following, I exemplify and further investigate two distinct events that occurred during the same decade to understand the nuances between masquerade and *turquerie*. The first event is *Carrousel du Louvre* that occurred in 1662 to celebrate the birth of the Grand Dauphin. During this equestrian pageant, the aristocratic representatives masqueraded as the peoples from five different regions. King Louis XIV, dressed like a Roman emperor, his brother represented the Persian king, Prince de Condé masqueraded as the Ottoman Sultan, the Duc d'Angevin was the King of Indians, and the Duc de Guise was the king of the Americans.³⁶⁸ I examine this parade as an obvious instance of masquerade since the effect of it was ephemeral. Contrarily, I analyze the audience between French foreign minister Hugues de Lionne and the Ottoman ambassador as an example of *turquerie* since Hugues de Lionne's cross-dressing was an act of demanding a powerful title which only existed in the Ottoman State system.

Masquerading the Turk

After the 16th century many travelers started to visit the orient either as diplomats, merchants, or as scholars.³⁶⁹ Their travel narratives are filled with informative descriptions about the Ottoman Empire and its daily life which aroused interest and fascination towards it. Although terrifying stories and news about the Ottoman Empire was already entrenched in French contemporary popular media, they had been mostly created as an extension of the French government's political agenda. Generating horror stories about the monstrous Turks and displaying them as a threat to the Christian West was naturally going to increase public support

³⁶⁸ Landweber, *Turkish Masquerade*, 180.

³⁶⁹ Such as François Bernier, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Jean Thévenot, Barthélemy Carré and Laurent d'Arvieux.

for war against them.³⁷⁰ However, travel accounts, even though exaggerated in many cases, introduced depth to the reality of the Ottomans. Perhaps, for the first time the French were able to notice more than blood thirsty Ottomans in these travel accounts. Although the French court had represented the Ottomans in stage performances and Turks were masqueraded repeatedly in court festivities, banquets, and carrousels, with these travel narratives the French people's approach to Ottomans began to shift so that more factual details were added to the representation of the Turk, and even the manners of the masqueraders became more authentic. Nevertheless, while the attraction to the representation of the Turks rapidly grew, the depiction of the Turk was still a stereotype that serve the court's allegorical theatricality, an aspect that is clearly seen during the Carrousel du Louvre.

In June 1662 during the Carrousel du Louvre, which was held for *Le Grand Dauphin's* birth celebration, three continents of the world were performed by three quadrilles: Asia, Europe, America³⁷¹. While Louise XIV was masquerading as a Roman emperor leading the first quadrille, Prince de Condé led the third quadrille of the carrousel as the emperor of the Ottomans. He wore red satin that was ornamented with diamonds and silver edgings and his costume, along with his horse, was decorated with crescents.³⁷² His high-flown turban with turquoise feathers and his horse's saddle were clear indicators for viewers that he was masquerading as the Ottoman Emperor. The triumph of his role and his splendid costume might

³⁷⁰ C. D. Rouillard, in his book *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)* provides a wide range of survey of Ottomans in French socio-political life. In his research he not only studies the political events between these two nations but also examines and traces the influences of these events in the French intellectual development. Please check, Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in the French History Thought and Literature (1520-1660)* (Boivin, Paris, 1938).

³⁷¹ Quadrille is a group of horse riders who distinguish themselves from the other quadrilles with their colors and uniforms.

³⁷² Landweber, *Celebrating Identity*, 180.

be considered a dare to the French king considering his connection with several uprisings against the monarch in prior years, however the opulence of the costumes was prepared in detail in order to exhibit the wealth and magnificence of France.³⁷³ In this way he was clearly a part of an allegorical conversation of Louis XIV with the Ottomans. Prince de Conde was not only representing the Ottoman Sultan but also his complicated relationship with Louis XIV, and the French court was representing the complicated relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the French State. Louis XIV, by allowing Prince de Conde to masquerade as the Ottoman Sultan, was exhibiting that he was the leader of all the following quadrilles. As a former agitator of the court Prince de Conde was now a loyal servant of the monarch. Hence, his masquerading as a Turk was Louis XIV's display of power, rather than Prince de Conde's. Indeed, he somewhat enjoyed masquerading as a powerful emperor in the theatrical pleasure of experiencing "...self and other together, the two-in-one,"³⁷⁴ however, his demonstration of the Turk and his interaction with it limits itself to within this carousel. Neither did his masquerade of the Ottoman Sultan performatively mark any addition to his status in the French court nor did he aim to load any meaning into it. Hence, I do not consider his cross-dressing as a part of *turquerie* since it does not display any utopic desire or claim of elevated identity during his spectacle.

In 1669 on the other hand, during the audience between the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa and the French foreign minister Hughes de Lionne, an attempt at impersonation of an Ottoman beyond only masquerade occurred. As I presented in chapter 2 there were many scandalous encounters that happened since the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa stepped onto the land of France. One of the most important reasons for this was the French officials'

³⁷³ Haydn Williams, *Turquerie: An Eighteenth-century European Fantasy* (London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 63-64.

³⁷⁴ Castle, *Masquerade and civilization*, 5.

insistence on requesting the Sultan's letter for the French king in order to confirm the ambassadorial title of Süleyman Ağa. However, this request was unacceptable for Süleyman Ağa since the Sultan ordered him to hand the letter only to the king. Because of this conflict the French foreign minister Hughes de Lionne had an audience with the Ottoman ambassador and attempted one last time to take the letter.

During this visit Hughes de Lionne not only crossed-dressed as an Ottoman Grand Vizier in an Ottoman-style decorated environment, but also, acted like he was the Grand Vizier of France. Furthermore, he hosted Süleyman Ağa following the tradition and complete manner of the Ottoman palace's audience with foreign ambassadors.³⁷⁵ He made Süleyman Ağa wait for one half of an hour as was the custom in the Ottoman Palace, his *Kiaya-Bey* served the ambassador sorbet and coffee and made him sit on a stool that exactly duplicated the Ottoman stool on which the foreign ambassadors sat while in Ottoman territory.³⁷⁶ Furthermore, he "...received Soliman Ağa seated cross-legged on a raised platform, covered with a finely-woven carpet embellished with gold, and strewn with brocade cushions- a re-creation of the sofa of the Grand Vizier."³⁷⁷ In this theatrical space Hughes de Lionne, placed himself higher than Süleyman Ağa, and implicitly requested the Ottoman ambassador to treat him as he would treat a Grand Vizier. In this way, Hughes de Lionne positioned himself a much higher title than his status in the French court. He demanded the power of the Grand Vizier who owns the highest title in the Ottoman court system after the Ottoman Sultan. That is to say that he claimed himself and his power as an equivalent to an Emperor's second in command, which is a rank much

³⁷⁵ For elaborate details of this audience check Chapter 2.

³⁷⁶ Kaiya Bey: Butler.

³⁷⁷ Garritt Van Dyk, "The Embassy of Soliman Ağa to Louis XIV: Diplomacy, Dress, and Diamonds," *Emaj Special Issue Cosmopolitan Moments: Instances of Exchange in the Long Eighteenth Century* (December 2017): 4.

higher than was possible for a French statesman. Therefore, as it is clearly exhibited here, he not only masqueraded as a powerful Turk like Prince de Conte had, but he also demanded the power of that Turk through his title, which had no parallel or analog in the French state system.

Although art historians have mostly not given any specific dates for the beginning, I argue that the moment Hughes de Lionne dressed as a Grand Vizier and assumed the role of a Turk in his audience with ‘the Turk’ Süleyman Ağa, the ‘fashion’ of *turquerie* began. As I exemplified above, there are many instances in which the ‘western’ courts masqueraded as Ottoman Turks in their court ceremonies and their festivities like Prince de Conde did. However, what differentiates M. de Lionne’s Turkish masquerade from the others was not dressing in Turkish attire, but it was the attempt at impersonating the ‘Turk’ in totality. It was a moment where he stood at the liminal place of himself and the other. The audience with the Ottoman ambassador became his rite of passage of a declaration of power. Nevertheless, M. de Lionne’s display of *turquerie* as demanding more power than he had was immediately noticed by Louis XIV and he was obliged to correct himself in front of the ambassador and the French media. The second meeting was immediately arranged, and Hughes de Lionne gave a long speech to the ambassador in which he metaphorically stepped down from his Grand Vizier title. In this speech, which was written and even published in the newspaper beforehand, Hughes de Lionne claimed that he assumed the role of Grand Vizier to indicate the power of France.³⁷⁸ He stated that the king of France was the only power in their state system, and no one could be equivalent to him. With that he gave up his brief ‘Grand Vizier power’ and handed it back to his king, Louis XIV.

³⁷⁸ Chapter 2.

Despite the short life of M. de Lionne's power display through *turquerie*, from that moment on the practice developed as a utopic form that went beyond an ephemeral entertainment of cross-dressing masquerade. Moreover, it became a pastiche form of art which was utilized by a group of people who struggled between their own strong identity and intelligence, and their society that continually diminished them. Many of those users were educated women, overthrown kings, bourgeois who disliked the French class system, and diplomats who lost their favor in the French court.³⁷⁹ And *turquerie* provided for them a liminal area that they could explore and declare their personal favors, status, and desires. Beyond a doubt, the royal mistress Madame de Pompadour was one of the most famous of those. As a well-educated woman, she claimed an identity and power that she could not find in her society and she equaled herself with an Ottoman Sultana, the Ottoman Emperor's *Haseki*.³⁸⁰

Pompadour, as one of the most exceptional political influencers during the reign of Louis XV, had an unusual background besides her remarkable position as a governmental aid and ministerial adviser in the court despite her gender. She was coming from a bourgeois family and her father was unknown. This makes her more unique as the mistress of the king since it was uncommon for the king to choose a woman as his mistress outside of the aristocratic class. However, against all odds she managed to get the king's attention with her beauty, but she wanted more. In his article which examines the public image of Madame de Pompadour, historian Colin Jones claims that "... the modulation in her relationship with the king brought about a marked intensification of her image. Henceforward, image management became her key

³⁷⁹ Nebahat Avcioglu, *Turquerie and Temsil Politikari*, 33.

³⁸⁰ Ottoman Sultan's favorite concubine.

technique for maintaining ascendancy over the affection of her difficult master.”³⁸¹ I believe and argue that the most powerful tool she used during the creation of her image indeed was *turquerie*. Herewith, similar to Hugues Lionne’s attempt to find authority for himself in the foreign system, a century later, Madame de Pompadour found and fabricated herself an Ottoman title which provided her a position that France neither was able to nor wanted to provide for her.

Towards the 18th century, *turquerie* transformed from being a fashion statement to a power statement, and this display of power meant to liberate the body and mind. In its liberated aura its practitioners found a space that they could escape their era’s constricting structure. Scholars Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer examine this effect in the French culture and explain it as “the success of *turquerie* lay in its function as a liberating cultural vocabulary. Through Ottoman decoration and dress, Europeans could explore ways of being that were not so readily available within their own culture.”³⁸² This aspect showed itself in various levels in French life. Adam Geczy focuses fashion and orientalism interconnection among those levels and agrees that masquerade (specifically *turquerie* in my case study) provided a certain freedom to its participants. He claims that “for the subsumption of identity through dressing as someone else- frequently as an ‘other’ that courted fascination or fear- afforded temporary release from social restrictions.”³⁸³ These restrictions mostly showed themselves through religious beliefs, clothing, displays of wealth, and political and social opinions.

³⁸¹ Colin Jones, "The Fabrication of Madame De Pompadour," *History Today* 52, no. 11 (2002): 36- 40.

³⁸²Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer. “*Turquerie: Culture in Motion, 1650–1750*,” *Past & Present*, No. 221, Oxford University Press, (2013): 75-118. 101.

³⁸³ Adam Geczy, *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture From the 17th to the 21st Century* (London: New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 11.

Turquerie was presented through several different forms such as fashion, architecture, painting, culinary arts, and literature. And all these forms were an exploration of opportunities for liberating its practitioners' identities. Especially During the reign of Louis XIV, French society was constructed by court rules that strictly narrowed its social habitats. For instance, the display of luxury and appearances were part of courtly requirements, and the French public had to accept the court's religion unitedly. Contrary to this, towards the 18th century the display of wealth was strongly and swiftly condemned by contemporary intelligentsia. This condemnation directly targeted women, suggesting that the desire of women to dress higher than their class was a threat to their virtue.³⁸⁴ In both cases for the French public, especially women, their bodies and minds were a political subject that was strongly controlled by either their government or society itself. *Turquerie* was an escape for these suppressed people. It allowed them to display and discover a new style of wealth and luxury throughout the expansive oriental materials such as silk kaftans, jewelries, and furniture. Furthermore, it allowed bodies to relax in the loose designs of Ottoman clothes. And it also allowed them to explore themselves away from their structured French identity. Embodiment of a Turk was a way to break out of their constraints.

In this liminal space they belonged to a foreign culture who would be oblivious to French custom, tabus, and rules, hence, they were not obligated to follow its laws. Bevilacqua and Pfeifer³⁸⁵ indicate that while the display of nudity and eroticism rose eyebrows in French society, exhibiting these in Ottoman costume “were rendered much more acceptable by being ‘culturalized’”. And they exemplify this idea with François Boucher’s painting *The Brunette*

³⁸⁴ Kendra van Cleave, “‘The Desire to Banish Any Constraint in Clothing’ *Turquerie* and Enlightenment Thought in the French Fashion Press, 1768–1790”, *French Historical Studies*, vol.43/2, Duke University Press, (2020): 208.

³⁸⁵ Bevilacqua, Pfeifer, “*Turquerie: Culture in Motion, 1650–1750*,” 101,108.

Odalisque which displays a young woman nude from behind in a *turquerie* setting, saying it "... would have been scandalous had she been seen as a French girl, an eighteenth century Olympia, but the nudity of a foreigner could be understood as culture rather than licentiousness."³⁸⁶ Hence, I further claim that *turquerie* not only liberated the bodies with its comfortable attires, but also, it introduced sexual freedom within its aesthetic and ecstatic form as a foreign culture as well. Moreover, the practitioners have several venues through *turquerie* to criticize their government and society and to offer an alternative a utopic France instead of their current system.

Turquerie, Spies, Police, and the Criticism of France

The book *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy* is an excellent example for how *turquerie* was beyond just a fashion of decoration and how it penetrated European minds. It was not only impersonating a foreignness, but it was also an attempt to understand an Ottoman person's thinking pattern. It was almost an ethnographic approach to simulate a foreign environment complete with its culture. Naturally, this attempt fell into the shallowness of inability to comprehend the Orient's unfamiliar structure. Although many travelers brought new knowledge about the orient to the French society, French public understanding of the Orient was limited to their imagination and fantasies. And one of the most intriguing case studies of this effort to comprehend the Ottoman thinking pattern reveals itself in this fascinating fictional book that was published in 1684, fully titled as *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy, Who lived Five and Forty Years Undiscovered in Paris*.³⁸⁷ Its author Giovanni Paolo Marana not only chose an Ottoman Arab as a protagonist for his book but he also examined French society through the lens of his Ottoman

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Giovanni Paolo Marana, Arthur J. Weitzman, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, (New York, Temple University Publications, Colombia University Press, 1970).

spy, Mahmut. His character's foreignness enabled Marana to reveal even the most unthinkable criticism of France through Mahmut's voice. Furthermore, conveying his protagonist journey as full of agony and self-conflicts differentiates it from a first-person narrative, Marana embodies a Turk and also impersonates the mind of a Turk as an extension of *turquerie*.

Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy is an epistolary novel about a lonely, young, and unattractive Ottoman spy who was sent to Paris by the Ottoman government. During his 40-year undercover life in France, Mahmut reflects on socio-political events in his letters to his Ottoman superiors and acquaintances. Throughout his secret life he acts like a student and then a Greek teacher under the name of Tito of Moldavia. The first letter starts in 1637 and Mahmut reports every single significant occurrence of the French court, and the court's reactions to the political events in the world from then until 1682. While Mahmut informs his reader about the factual French court events almost in the manner of a historian, he also displays how he approaches them as an Ottoman Turk. Moreover, he gives an insight into the events' possible effects on the Ottoman government. Herewith, the author of the book, Marana, assumes a historian's identity at the same time strolling inside an Ottoman person's mind. That is to say, he narrates historical events through *turquerie*. He puts himself in a situation of a Turk in an environment which is now strange for both Marana and the Ottoman Turk. He embodies a Turk and discovers his foreignness through a foreign mind while trying to make sense of French politics, diplomacy, society, religion, customs, and taboos. Thus, he can see these things through Mahmut's eyes, and subsequently see himself and his own situation through the lens of the 'other'. Throughout these letters readers directly faced the very real life of the France that they lived in, however from Mahmut's observations and experiences. Through the Turk's eyes the view of economic hardship, social injustice, and their very own oppression was visible.

Obviously, Giovanni Paolo Marana's decision to look at France's close history through the lens of an Ottoman spy was not accidental.³⁸⁸ It was the most secure way for him to look at the history and happenings of the court of Louis XIV. So that if Louis XIV found any unpleasant approach to any event it would be the fault of his Ottoman spy. This was maybe the only way for an author (historian or not) to be politically objective in the court of Louis. Utilizing *turquerie* in this way Marana was granted a chance for freedom to write about history thoroughly. He did not claim power through *turquerie* however he could powerfully criticize France because of it, under its protection. Aleksandra Porada examines *the Turkish Spy* through its relation and relativity with the French court and indicates that Marana wanted a position at the court of Louis as a historian and hoped that this unique way of history telling was going to attract Louis' attention.³⁸⁹ Through Mahmut's loneliness and foreignness Marana was also representing himself in a way since he was a refugee in Paris. He was previously imprisoned in Italy for five years because of his political involvements, and as an ex-prisoner he was trying to survive in France in a similar manner as his protagonist Mahmut. Marana's ex-prisoner background also allowed him to create Mahmut as highly likeable and sincere in a way that readers found believable, and even found a piece of themselves in him.

There are three direct indicators through which the French readers found their hardship and oppression through the life of Mahmut in Paris. First, as a spy from an oriental state, Mahmut is under the impression of constant surveillance. In every moment of his life, he has to

³⁸⁸ Aleksandra Porada, "Giovanni Paolo Marana's Turkish Spy and the Police of Louis XIV: The Fear of Being Secretly Observed by Trained Agents in Early Modern Europe," *Altre Modernita*, No. 11, (2014): 96-110.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 98-99.

show extreme caution and he could never trust anyone for fear of being caught.³⁹⁰ This was similar to the French readers' life during the Louis XIV's reign. Porada points out this as "increasingly unpopular, Louis XIV demanded his police to control not only whatever his subjects were doing, but also what they said in private about him, the government, and the Church."³⁹¹ Especially after the base of modern police force was created in 1667, dozens of Louis' subjects were imprisoned and 36 of them were executed between 1677 and 1682, it was clear that government spies were among the Parisians. French society was now being controlled by the government even during their most private moments and conversations. Even their most innocent complaints about the government became subject to punishment.³⁹² They stopped trusting anybody more than they needed to and filled their polite conversations with courtesy to the king and his government. Hence, as their beloved Mahmut was, they were imprisoned in the fake identities to protect themselves from physical imprisonment or worse, execution.

Secondly, Mahmut had to conceal his true religion since being a Muslim would reveal his true identity and he had to assume a role of a devout Christian in order to survive. This was relevant to religious restrictions which was another subject from which the French society suffered. In the 1670's Louis XIV's approach to French protestants, Huguenots, worsened and became extremely intolerant. The persecution of Huguenots in France dramatically increased, and finally in 1685, Louis XIV announced Protestantism illegal by issuing the *Edict of*

³⁹⁰ Book 1, letter I. Mahmut says "*Eliachim the Jew came to see me, who seems to be sufficiently informed of what passes in the World and will be a useful man to me: yet I will never trust him more than I need.*" Giovanni Paolo Marana, Arthur J. Weitzman, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, 2.

³⁹¹ Porada, "Giovanni Paolo Marana's Turkish Spy," 108.

³⁹² Orest Ranum. "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660." *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980): 426-51.

Fontainebleau.³⁹³ Many protestants were forced to convert to Catholicism and many of them left France. In this environment numerous courtiers and Parisians had to conceal their true religion and acted as devout Catholics in order to protect their families and their fortune in France.

Lastly, in spite of Mahmut's sacrifices for his government he had to deal with financial hardship since his government did not truly cover his expenses. This reflected France's weakened economy and the financial hardship of its subjects especially as unsuccessful wars and wasted money for the sake of the Court's luxury created discomfort among the population. All these aspects of the novel are the reason for the extreme success of its publication. Marana presented a factual image of social life in France to his reader. As Alesandra Porada also indicates, the novel was published timely since the reader was exhausted from reading novels that praised Louis XIV and his genius.³⁹⁴ Thus, this fresh product with its innovative genre was welcomed with enthusiasm by its French readers.

The novel perfectly endorsed *turquerie* as a protective shield and mirrored the readers' French-ness through the eyes of the Ottoman 'other.' While the reader followed the empathetic character Mahmut's story with all its desperate aspects, they also found themselves in this foreign story. And they experienced feelings for the 'other' and of the 'other' via exploring the mind of the 'other.' Thus, the reader found a connection with the Ottomans and their foreign cultures beyond seeing them as people with strange appearance. They gained dual vision towards Ottomans and imagined the Ottoman view towards themselves. This ecstatic experience of doubled self was apparent in the book's sales and made Marana and his book extremely famous. Many editions and copies were printed until its success faded towards the 19th century. Perhaps

³⁹³ Porada, "Giovanni Paolo Marana's Turkish Spy," 108.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 107-8.

Marana did not claim power through *turqueire*, however, he gained power and fame through the utilization of *turquerie*.

An Anonymous Ottoman Manuscript

Marana's success influenced many authors and playwrights, especially during the 17th century. One of the most interesting of these subsequent attempts to use *turquerie* in literature is a handwritten Ottoman manuscript that is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.³⁹⁵ Unfortunately, many scholars refer to this manuscript as the Ottoman ambassador Süleyman Ağa's ambassadorial report, since Professor Dr. Gündüz Akıncı mentions this manuscript in his research and claims that there is a handwritten note indicating that.³⁹⁶ However, as he also notices it, the context of the manuscripts reveals that it is fictional. After a quick analysis of the manuscript, he asserts that seeing this manuscript in the French archive made him think that it might belong to ambassador Süleyman Ağa, however, he realizes that it is very unlikely. Unfortunately, following the first part of Akıncı's suggestion and reading only the short accompanying note, many scholars have claimed that this manuscript is the ambassadorial report of Süleyman Ağa.³⁹⁷ Examples of these scholars are İbrahim Şirin, Namık Sinan Turan, Ayşin Şişman, and Ali Dadan who specifically worked on Ottoman ambassadors and their reports.

³⁹⁵ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221.

³⁹⁶ Gündüz Akıncı, *Türk-Fransız Kültür İlişkileri (1071-1859): Başlangıç Dönemi* (Erzurum, Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1973), 9.

³⁹⁷ İbrahim Şirin, *Osmanlı Seyahâtnamelerinde Avrupa (1839-1876)*, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, (Ankara, 2004), 78, 79, 83; Namık Sinan Turan, "Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Batı İmgesinin Değişimi ve Elçilerin Etkisi (18. ve 19. Yüzyıllar)," *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, sayı: 6/2, 64, 65; Ayşin Şişman, *Osmanlı-Fransız İlişkileri 1740-1789 (Konsolos Arzlarına Göre)*, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, (Afyon, 2011), 11; Ali Dadan, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Sefirlerinin Avrupa Algısı (Kâfirlerin Cenneti)", *Marife*, sayı: 3, (2006), 271.

Nevertheless, Ottoman archival documents shows that Süleyman Ağa retired right after his visit to France.³⁹⁸ However, this script was written nearly 20 years after his visit to the court of Louis XIV. The protagonist of the manuscript is named Süleyman and that may be a reason that current scholars claim that the manuscript might belong to the ambassador Süleyman Ağa. Naturally, these claims misdirect scholars away from the manuscript's direct connection with *turquerie*. Nevertheless, this manuscript is another unique example of *turquerie* in 17th century French literature.

The writer of this document assumes the role of an Ottoman in this fiction, and wanders around an oriental setting in their oriental fantasies, display Ottoman customs, and praising French identity as if the Ottomans are looking at France as a utopic place. Furthermore, the writer explores the Ottoman Turkish language and its alphabet as part of *turquerie* to make their manuscript more convincing and credible.

The manuscript is intriguing for three reasons. First, it is written in Ottoman language, however, it is obvious that its targeted audience is the French reader who was interested in *turquerie* in literature. One of the reasons for believing this is that the manuscript begins by saying “it has been told that there is a tradition in Egypt...”³⁹⁹ It likely means the writer of the manuscript is not from the Orient. Moreover, this story has just been told to the writer and they are the conveyer of the story. Secondly, its protagonist Süleyman claims that he was captured

³⁹⁸ As I indicated in earlier chapters, I could not find any information about how Süleyman Ağa was promoted to his governmental title in the Ottoman archives. Nevertheless, a document mentions the retirement of a person named Müteferrika Mustafa Süleyman Ağa (Figure 4.8). According to this document, Müteferrika Mustafa Süleyman Ağa requested his retirement due to his advanced age. The document indicates that he received his retirement in 1675 which maintains his title, Müteferrika. See the copy of the first four pages of this document at the end of this chapter (Figure 4.3- 4.7).

³⁹⁹ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221, 2.

during the battle of Vienna by the enemy. He was given to an architect who treated him fairly and respectfully. However, Süleyman leaves him after eight years of servitude, goes back to Egypt, and subsequently becomes a slave to a soup maker. Clearly, this is the only solution that the writer of the manuscript came up with to explain how an Ottoman soldier knows about France explicitly and tells his knowledge about it to the Ottoman *pashas* and *Ağas*. Nevertheless, it does not make sense and essentially reveals the manuscript's fiction. French geography and the French military system were explained explicitly, however no specific French person, like the French architect who was the master of Süleyman, are given names. Lastly, the writer of the manuscript utilizes *turquerie* to claim power for France and its government. This approach is different from how *turquerie*'s individual practitioners' demand of a powerful status for themselves, however, it still uses *turquerie* for a power display.

Interestingly, I found many similarities between this manuscript and Thomas More's *Utopia*. First of all, it is written in a dialogue style and it depicts France as so near to *Utopia* that its power and fair government enchants even the Ottoman notables in the manuscript.⁴⁰⁰ Many aspects of *Utopia* are clearly utilized to construct the fundamental theme of the manuscript. In many moments, the manuscript's writer follows *Utopia*'s structure while exploiting *turquerie* to establish their utopic center as France. I will explain these similarities later in this chapter. I believe that the writer of the manuscript was influenced by *Utopia*, a very well-known script at the time by French scholars, to impose France as a utopic place. I want to point out that, although the likeness of these texts is so obvious, my aim is not to analyze More's very complicated work. My only goal is to present a possible socio-political influence between this manuscript and More's *Utopia* and note that it is recognized. I believe as *turquerie* was utilized to praise France

⁴⁰⁰ Thomas More, *Utopia*, (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1949).

as a superior state, More's *Utopia* had the same function as a convenient tool for the writer of the manuscript. Thus, throughout this analysis I will indicate the resemblance to underline only how the writer of the manuscript imposes France as a utopic land, however, I will avoid complex analysis since it would neither be functional nor beneficial for my study of *turquerie*.

The manuscript is an anonymous document that presents neither its produced date nor its writer's identity. The only information given by the archive is "Description of France and of the city of Paris, written without author's name, in the form of a dialogue held in Egypt, between a senior Divan official named Ahmed Agha and a character named Soleïman, who had been a prisoner among the Christians. 1651-1700."⁴⁰¹ Despite what the given information notes, that the manuscript was written between 1651 and 1700, a close examination of the manuscript reveals that it was written shortly after Marana's Turkish spy book, and likely before 1695. I believe the writer of the manuscript was strongly influenced by Marana's use of *turquerie* and his Ottoman Turk protagonist. However, the manuscript's super objective is completely different from Marana's.

The manuscript is studied mainly by two scholars: Gündüz Akıncı and Belkıs Altunış Gürsoy.⁴⁰² Akıncı only focuses on the manuscript to comprehend if it really belonged to the ambassador Süleyman Ağa. His analysis does not provide detailed information. He proves that it cannot be an ambassadorial report but completes his examination at that point. Thus, his analysis is not adequate for this study. On the other hand, Belkıs Altunış Gürsoy, provides deeper

⁴⁰¹ Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Supplément turc 221.

⁴⁰² These studies are mostly written to introduce the manuscript and its content: Belkıs Altunış Gürsoy, "Siyasetname Hüviyetinde Bir Esaretname." Erdem, Ankara (2011): 60- 77; Gündüz Akıncı. *Türk Fransız Kultur İlişkileri*, 8- 10.

analysis, unfortunately, she claims that this manuscript was really written by an Ottoman Turk. She asserts that the writer's main goal is to show Ottoman statesmen how to create a strong state like France. I disagree with Gursoy in this approach as I believe that the manuscript was written by a French writer. There are two reasons for these beliefs. Firstly, I think it is obvious that the protagonist sees and displays France as a utopic place and many of his descriptions of France are overly exaggerated and shows enthusiastic devotion and admiration towards it. On the other hand, he does not recognize or even mention positive comparisons on the Ottoman State's side. Secondly, his listeners who were Ottoman Ağas and Pashas were mesmerized by his stories about France and accept its superiority without any realistic hesitation. These and similar manners of expositions clearly point to French propaganda, which matches the contemporary French court's political agenda. Hence, it is easy for me to conclude that this manuscript is more likely a product of a French mind.

The manuscript came to the the Bibliothèque Nationale de France from French theologian and orientalist Eusèbe Renaudot's library and this information reveals a little more about it. Cornel Zwierlein studies Renaudot and his political ideas in his article *Orient Contra China: Eusèbe Renaudot's Vision of World History* and indicates that Renaudot had mastered seventeen languages including Ottoman and Arabic.⁴⁰³ His grandfather was Théophraste Renaudot, the establisher of the weekly newspaper *La Gazette*, and this strong liaison allowed Eusèbe Renaudot to become an important part of the French court in early age.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ Cornel Zwierlein, "Orient Contra China: Eusèbe Renaudot's Vision of World History (ca. 1700)." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 81, no. 1 (2020): 23-44, 25.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 26.

Eusèbe Renaudot was a member of The Académie Française and he had unlimited access to the court manuscripts collection.⁴⁰⁵ Naturally, he had many opportunities to study the oriental manuscripts, and translated many of them to French and Latin languages. As a devoted Catholic and a prominent Louis XIV defender, his works particularly support his religious and political opinions and his state's benefits. Zwierlein asserts that "an inspection of his copious manuscripts reveals, he produced numerous Latin and French memoires, speeches, and comments, often in different versions, over decades."⁴⁰⁶ According to Zwierlein, Renaudot was also a part of the *Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns* which was not only an aesthetic debate "...but also a controversy that intersected with early global inter-civilizational and technological comparison."⁴⁰⁷ I believe this anonymous manuscript is an expansion of this and the kind of debates in which Renaudot engaged. I think that this manuscript is likely either written by Renaudot or commissioned for him. In either case, it is clear that it was written by a French person with a specific political agenda. Renaudot's political and religious opinions, especially his being one of the most prominent supporters of Louis XIV, as well as his writings are supportive evidence of my assertion. The manuscript displays an explicit comparison between the Orient and France, and the writer clearly displays superiority of France over oriental states, especially the Ottoman Empire.

The manuscript's story starts by indicating that the event occurred in Kasru'l-ayn, Egypt. Ottoman Pashas and Ağas are having a feast and watching javelin and some military games. One of the slave's talent and skills with the rifle and his horse received many compliments. One of the wise participants, Mustafa Ağa tells the others that the slave Süleyman had learned

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 27.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 25.

everything he knows in France during his stay there as a war captive. Mustafa Ağa was also held in France as a war captive for five years which makes him more believable. His claim surprises the others. Another wise elderly Ahmet Ağa exhibits his wonderment in telling that he would not have expected that France could have good horses and skillful riders. Thereupon Mustafa Ağa insists that France has one of the best horses in the world. The elders find this claim exaggerated and decide to listen the slave Süleyman's journey in France for himself. In this way the manuscript establishes three main characters within it. Ahmet Ağa represents an Ottoman authority and asks specific questions to reinforce France's establishment as a utopic state. Slave Süleyman answers these questions with amazement and adoration toward France. And Mustafa Ağa supports Süleyman's claims and makes him credible with his own captivity experiences in France. The rest of the manuscript continues as question-and-answer style dialogue.

The manuscript focuses three main ideals about France: French people's fairness, wealth and lawfulness, the geographical and habitual beauty, and military accomplishment. Süleyman at first hesitates to share his knowledge about France with the Pasha's and Ağa's. He worries that they would not like to hear the wondrousness of France. However, the attendees convince him that they are eager to hear everything about France in all its accurateness, and they will show respect to Süleyman's experiences in this infidel state. After this encouragement, Süleyman starts telling his story about how fair and merciful the French people are.

According to Süleyman, after he was captured, he was gifted to one of the predominant architects from the Louis XIV court (although, his name is never mentioned in the text). His master was so kind and fair to Süleyman that even though there is no slavery in France, and he was free to leave for Ottoman Empire, Süleyman chooses to stay with his master for eight years. His master was extremely respectful to Süleyman's religion and traditions, he had never asked

him to change either his Ottoman attires or his religion.⁴⁰⁸ What I want to touch upon here is that the master of Süleyman's respectful attitude to his slave's religion is another extremely interesting point in this manuscript for two reasons. First, this idea conflicts with the French court's political agenda against non-Catholics in France. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Protestantism was declared unlawful, many of the protestants were prosecuted and many of them ended up fleeing from France towards the end of the century about the same time this manuscript was produced.⁴⁰⁹ One might think that the writer of the manuscript was trying to exemplify how to make France a better state, and they espouse religious freedom. However, the tone of the text indicates that the writer most likely aims to manipulate the French readers instead, and convince them that they, in fact, are living in the most respectful state that they could. The second interesting point is that although the Ottoman Empire is a diverse state and this diversity along with the religious freedom is one of the most important customs in the Ottoman government at that time. Slave Süleyman does not mention this fact in his speech. In fact, throughout his narration he places only France in a superior position to other states and ignores the Ottoman empire's manners about the subject completely unless its unfavorable. In this way, the manuscript shows another similarity with Thomas More's *Utopia*.⁴¹⁰ Although the writers suggest religious freedom as a utopic subject, they do not show any interest to follow its requirements. In fact, despite his writings, More was against the Protestant reformation as part of his devotion to the Catholic Church.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221, 5-6.

⁴⁰⁹ Chapter 4, 17.

⁴¹⁰ More, *Utopia*, 70.

⁴¹¹ Margaret L. King, *Renaissance Humanism: An Anthology of Sources*. (Hackett Publishing, 2014), 157.

As I mentioned earlier, although the manuscript of the slave Süleyman was written more than a century after More's *Utopia*, these two texts and their writers' ambitions show several similarities. These aspects make me believe that the writer of the manuscript imitates More's *Utopia* creating France as a utopic place. *Utopia* has three main characters: More, Giles, and Morton, and they discuss the utopic aspects of a faraway place. While the action is actually happening in Antwerp, the characters' discussion centralized the utopic island, thus, the island become the main stage for the narrative. Although the people of Utopia do not like any warfare, they have a superior military force with superbly well-trained soldiers, who are ready to act when its necessary.⁴¹² They have a protective relationship with their neighboring states, they are kind, fair, wealthy, and respectful of each other's religious beliefs.⁴¹³ All of these aspects are placed in the slave Süleyman manuscript. The manuscript is written in a dialogue style, three characters discuss a utopic place which is in this case France. They are actually having the conversation in Egypt, but they centralize France in their conversation, so that France become 'Utopia.'

After page six of the manuscript Süleyman starts describing the cities and habitual setting of France. He even claims that Paris' population is three times, and the France treasury is four times bigger and wealthier than Egypt.⁴¹⁴ Thereupon the listeners murmur and display their disbelief.⁴¹⁵ This expression of the writer of the manuscript is also another reference to *Utopia*. In More's work, when Morton mentions the wealth of the people of *Utopia*, he notices the others' disbelief and notes that "I would not have believed it myself if anyone had told me about it-not unless I had seen it with my own eyes."⁴¹⁶ Similar to Morton, Süleyman also states that to

⁴¹² More, *Utopia*, 63.

⁴¹³ Ibid, 37, 43, 45, 57.

⁴¹⁴ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221, 7.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ More, *Utopia*, 43.

be able to believe the wealth France has, the pashas and the ağas have to see France as well. He says “what I am telling you is strange because you did not witness it... I am not telling someone else’s experiences; I am telling you mine own.”⁴¹⁷ With these direct references, the writer of the manuscript continues having a conversation with this well-known text, *Utopia*, and claims that France is the utopic place to which even the Ottomans admire.

There are many indicators that the writer of the manuscript’s ambition was to underline that France is superior to any other states. For instance, when Süleyman mentions the enemies of France he first states the military power of France and the French castles strength saying “the French king has two hundred thousand of mounted troops, three hundred thousand of infantry men, and also hundred galleys with fifty thousand soldiers. The king can conquer three or four castles at ones.”⁴¹⁸ He states that he saw more than two hundred French castles and they are the strongest of the region. “the king himself renovates the castles” Süleyman says “the cannons and soldiers of these castles are so strong that no force can break their walls down.”⁴¹⁹ Thereupon when the others ask if the French king is more powerful than the Austrian king, Süleyman answers, “no doubt.” He also admires the loyalty of the French soldiers and nobles to the French king. He claims that the French king can conquer wherever he wants because of the nobles’ support and his soldiers’ strong disciplines, and devotion to their king. “Therefore,” he says, “wherever France has warfare, they shine in the battlefield.” According to Süleyman the French soldiers are so devoted to their state that they have never been seen to flee the battlefield; either they win the battle, or they die for their king. The others support this statement saying, “we heard that the French soldiers never flee the battlefield.” After this point Süleyman continues praising

⁴¹⁷ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221, 7.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 8.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

the French soldiers and the French military system with more details. Here Süleyman, as a former Ottoman soldier who was captured on the battlefield, never mentions anything about himself and in some way demeans himself and the Ottoman warfare. This also shows another weakness of the manuscript and reveals its usage of Ottoman persona to exploit this character for the writer's political agenda; state France's superiority utilizing *tuquerie*.

My goal is not to establish a lengthy script analysis of the manuscript but rather to display how this manuscript is obviously a product of a French mind and how this product utilizes *turquerie*. Therefore, I am not exemplifying every statement that Süleyman makes in this manuscript. However, if of interest, there are many more points in the script that exemplify these examples declaring France as a Utopia that is superior to other states. For instance, Süleyman talks about the strength of the French military for about third of the text and acclaims France's naval power, the strength of the galleys, the king's excellent warrior skills in both army and navy, and the success of the administration of the warfare at great length. Süleyman repeatedly mentions the wealth of the French king and the people of France. He describes the nobles as intellectuals who know the culture and people better than the people of that culture. He claims that they perhaps know Egypt better than who is in the conversation with him at that moment. The people of France dress so beautifully that they dazzle the eyes of those who see them.

At the beginning of the manuscript the writer is extremely chary with his fictional Ottoman character Süleyman and his admiration towards France. He is aware of his Ottoman personality and hesitates to reveal his imaginary Ottoman's amazement of France. However, throughout the text he reveals all his praise about the French king and France. This is especially demonstrated when Süleyman gazes upon Heliopolis and states that this city is the most appropriate for the French king since this city is the sun worshipers' city and the French king is

the Sun king. Concurrently, he demeans Ottomans suggesting that the French king's seal is the sun, and the Ottoman sultan's seal is a crescent, regarding the sun and the moon's obvious difference. He continues saying "as you know that the sun is the brightest star on the sky. Since the French king is the smartest, strongest and the most talented among the Christian kings he is called the Sun king."⁴²⁰ The listeners display their approval of the notion that the French king is superior to the any Christian king and he deserves the name of Sun. Following this moment in the manuscript, I believe there is no doubt remaining about the identity of the writers of the manuscript. The text continues describing the beauty of Versailles and France, brags about the servants' dedication to their king, and the ascendant skills of the king as a leader. Süleyman also indicates that the king of France does not need a vizier because he is the absolute power of his state and the entire Christian world.⁴²¹ I believe that the political agenda of the writer and his strategy to achieve it is clearly addressed and displayed here. The writer not only openly reiterates the France propaganda here, but also using an Ottoman character they try to manipulate the readers' minds about the Ottomans. Displaying the Ottomans' awe about France places France even above the Ottoman empire.

The manuscript is written in the Ottoman Turkish language seemingly to state its authenticity in order to prevent the same problem with Marana's fictional book. Marana's *The Letters Writ by Turkish Spy* received a lot of interest and brought him fame. However, despite Marana's claim that the letters were originally written in the Ottoman Turkish language and were translated to French, readers quickly found out this fiction since he could not provide the original letters. Learning from Marana's experience, modeling his spy book, and utilizing *turquerie*, the

⁴²⁰ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221, 32-33.

⁴²¹ Ibid, 35-46.

writer or the commissioner of the manuscript aims to display this work as original and avoid any suspicion about its authenticity. Perhaps the next step was going to be publishing it with its translation, however, it became one of the unfinished works in Renaudouts' manuscript pile, and eventually forgotten.

This manuscript, whatever its specific ambition was, represents an attempt to take *turquerie* in literature one step further than the Marana's Ottoman spy's letters. It not only wonders in the Ottoman mind and enjoys an exotic Ottoman setting, but it also demands the identity of it. It claims that it utterly belongs to the Ottomans, from its language to customs and the environment. In this way, it uniquely separates itself from its kinds.

The French foreign minister Hugues de Lionne, Moliere's play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*'s character M. Jourdain, Louis XV's mistress Madame de Pompadour and the many others who I could not present here, utilized *turquerie* to find an equivalent status that they wanted to be in the Ottoman empire in one way or another. Utilizing *turquerie*, they claimed power, which was unavailable to them in their society, so that they went to the power which they respected and feared and found a comfort in its meaning for them. Hugues de Lionne embodied the Ottoman Grand Vizier, the right hand of the Sultan in order to declare power over an Ottoman ambassador. But also, with this action he placed himself above all the French statesmen. M. Jourdain, the comedic character of Moliere, finally receives a unique title that he desires endlessly, after his transition to being an Ottoman. In fact, this title, 'mamamouchi' is so unique to him that no one else has it, even in Ottomans because it is a hoax. Nevertheless, whether or not the title really belongs to the Ottomans, the main point is that M. Jourdain thinks that it belongs to the Ottomans. Hence, his title also symbolizes the French fantasies about the Ottomans. Madame de Pompadour covered up her ambiguous lineage and being mistress to the

king by assuming the role of *Haseki*, the Sultan's favorite. Thus, with this unique status she elevated her meaning for the French court in the highest level that a woman could ever have in the 18th century France.

Marana's spy book was an attempt by Marana to find a secure position for himself in the French court. Although he did not receive what he was hoping for with his peerless approach to French history, utilizing *turquerie*, he gained an amazing and unique success with his book in France. The anonymous manuscript on the other hand, claims the identity of a Turk not to find a status in the Ottoman culture or government when there is no equivalent to it in France, but it is an attempt to declare that there is no equivalent state in the earth to France. Here, utilizing *turquerie* borrows an Ottoman gaze to look at France, but it only sees what it wanted to see. Thus, while it manipulates the Ottoman's eyes, it tries to manipulate the eyes of the reader to see the image of France the way the Ottoman characters of the manuscript sees it. It means that the manuscript utilizes *turquerie* to elevate France to a status above all the states. Thus, the usage of *turquerie* completes its requirements, demanding power, elevating one's status, and finding comfort in gaining the desired status within the Ottoman empire.



Figure 4.1 Madame Pompadour as Sultana, an exhibit of *turquerie*.⁴²²

⁴²² *Sultana Taking Coffee*. Carl van Loo. Oil on Canvas. 1753- 54. Hermitage Museum. Accessed May 1, 2021. <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/38118>



Figure 4.2 Madame de Pompadour utilizing *turquerie* to express her identity as the Sultan's wife.⁴²³

⁴²³ *Sultan's Wife Embroidering*. Carle van Loo. Oil on Canvas. 1755. Hermitage Museum. Accessed May 1, 2021. <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/38119>.

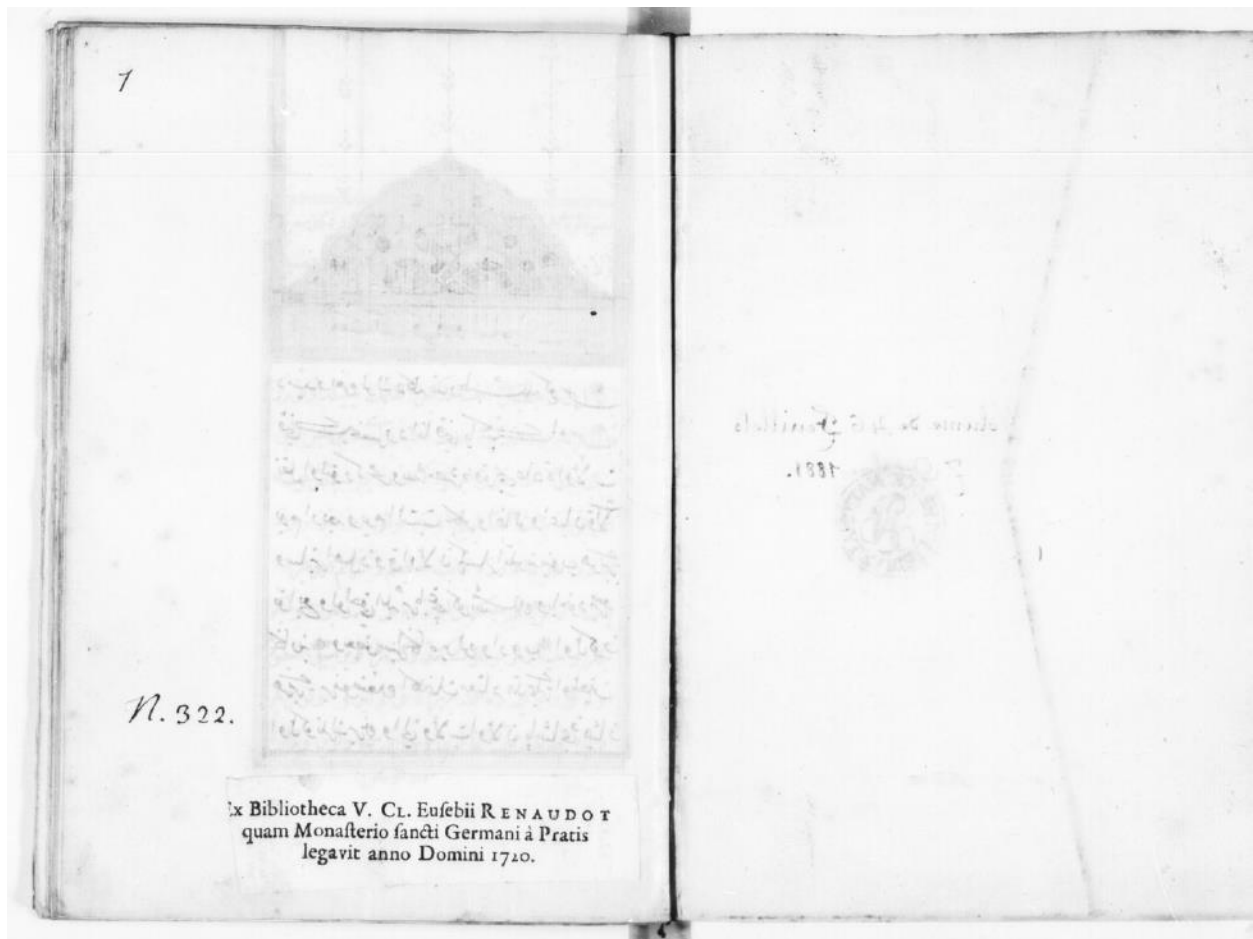


Figure 4.3 Süleyman's Manuscript-1.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁴ BnF, Gallica, Supplément Turc 221. Accessed December 20, 2019.
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100822318.r=BnF%2C%20Gallica%2C%20Suppl%C3%A9ment%20Turc%20221?rk=171674;4>.

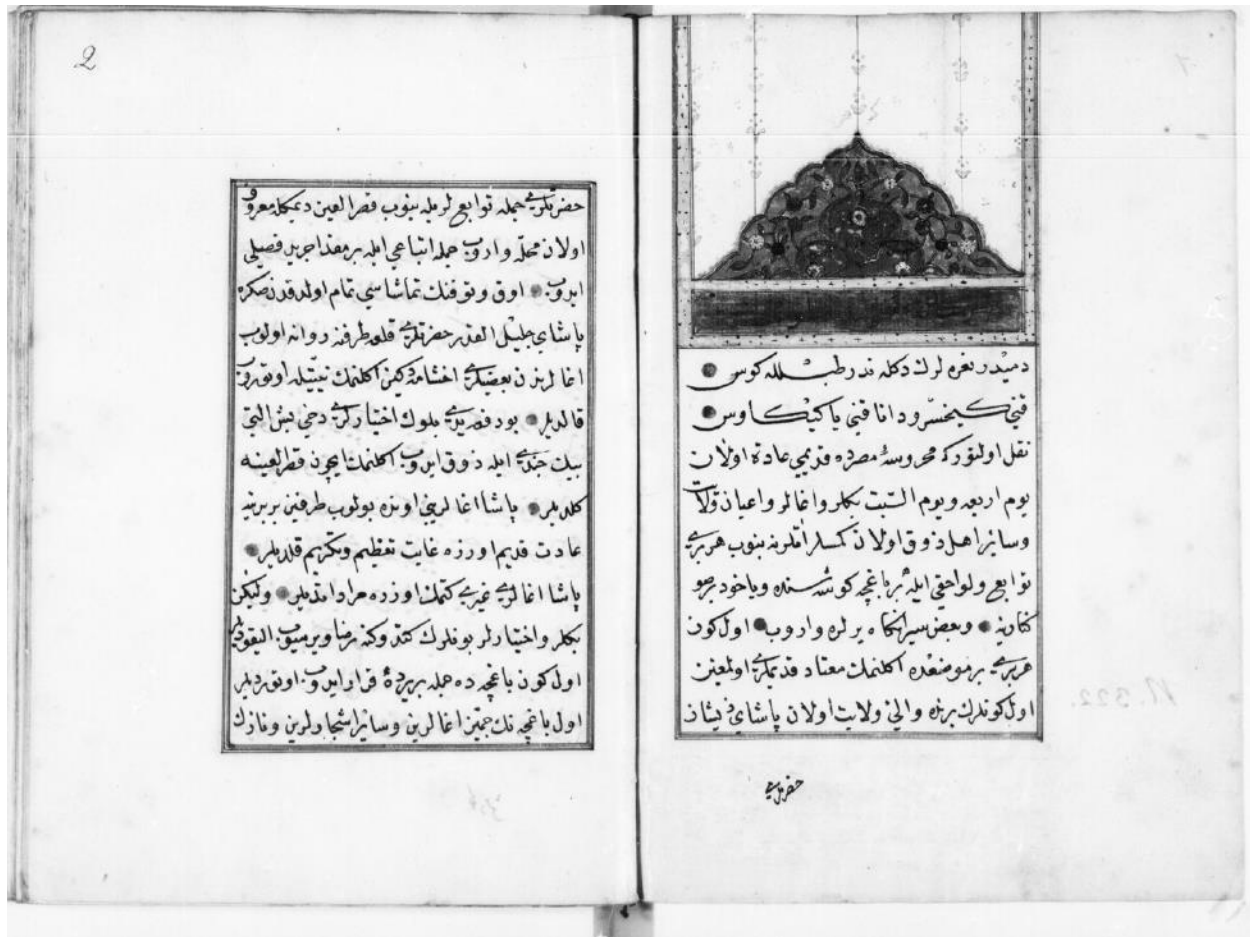


Figure 4.4 Süleyman's Manuscript-2.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

میوه لون • و نیل مبارک از دیاد بولوب کلد و کین
 سیر و تماشا قدبلر • بوندن ما عدا ام العیاسک
 قدیم و مشهور اولان روضه باغجه سنک بشل لکن
 و اهرام طاعن سیر و تماشا این ریکن مرقوم او جاق
 اغا ربیک نعمتک کلدی • سما طرد و شنوب نعمتین
 فهو و شریک ایچدی • بعد اول کون اولان جری
 احوالی و اوق و توفک مصفا ایچدی • بو کون بچو بر
 سلیمان دیکلم معروف بر کولدی طباخجلی توفک ایله
 ات اوزون دیکه دفع جرای او رده و نیچ هنر ایله
 افرین دیوب عظیم مدح ایله بلر • برون بونک حقنه
 مصاحت ایچدی • سوره اغاز ایله بلر • اول جمله پاشا
 اغا لردن مصطفی اغا دیکلم معروف سوز بیور امود
 دین • هر و جمله اطراف معمود عاقل و دانا نیچسراغام

کودمز

Figure 4.5 Süleyman's Manuscript-3.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

بلکه سنج سفر بنه اسپر اولدوغت زمان کافر لایله
 انیت ایدوق و سنک قلبکله تا نیر اتمشدر دیو لطیفه
 ایندیلمر بوکر نصلطی اغا دیریکه لطیفه خورشید اناجره
 توفیق ایله فرن سلیمان کوله اگر ممکن ایسه چغردوب کوزک
 و سوال ایلت نیم سوزم خلافتیه سزه بیان انسون
 دیویم • بوسوزه بکده راجعی اولوب سلیمانیا اولمجه
 کتور دبل اول کوز ایندی و کجه مقابله سنه کند و بیظیم
 ابرق اونورون دیر احمد اغا دیریکه فرا نجه دیارین بریت
 فرار ایلمش سن و نجه شیلره و فوف تحصیل اتمش سن مصطوف
 بزه بعض شیار نقل آیدک • اول احوال کر حکیمه طغریز
 سوبله سنه نجه سنجی اورزه خیرن المقمرا دایر زدی
 سیمان ایندی امر سوزن اطاعت بز دن اینجی سوبله
 بز م عادتمه مخالف سنیلر • سنه لسانه کتور و ب بیان

ایلیک

ایلیک غایت تکله ذیرا ولایتک مدجن ایدر بودی
 هسوز کافر دور دیر سوز دیر احمد اغا ایندی خیر سن اولم
 قیاس اتمه بز اولدوغا دیر ایدر بی حقه راجعی اولم سلیمان
 دکلو زکم غیر بی ملنه معرفت واذغان صاحبی یوقد
 دیلم • دینز اریسه ایسه نکریمز بر در دیو جواب آیدک •
 و فرا نجه یاد شاهک قوت و حشمی زیاد اولدوغن
 بیلورز • ذیرا اسنا بولم کلوب کینلورن استماع
 اولمش • و فرا نجه دیار تو غایت جنگ کدار آدم
 اولر و عی دخی سوز عی اولمش دیر • بود فعه سلیمان
 ایندی • اون بیلورن برو باشمه کلاخی و فرا نجه دیار
 سوز دن و فوف تحصیل ایندی کجه نقل ابریم دیر • نزل
 دیکله معرفت قلعه اوکنه جنگ ایدوب بوز ولد و فر
 اسپر اولدم • نسه کبار ده لرینک اراسنه بر کجه فرا

Figure 4.6 Süleyman's Manuscript-4.⁴²⁷

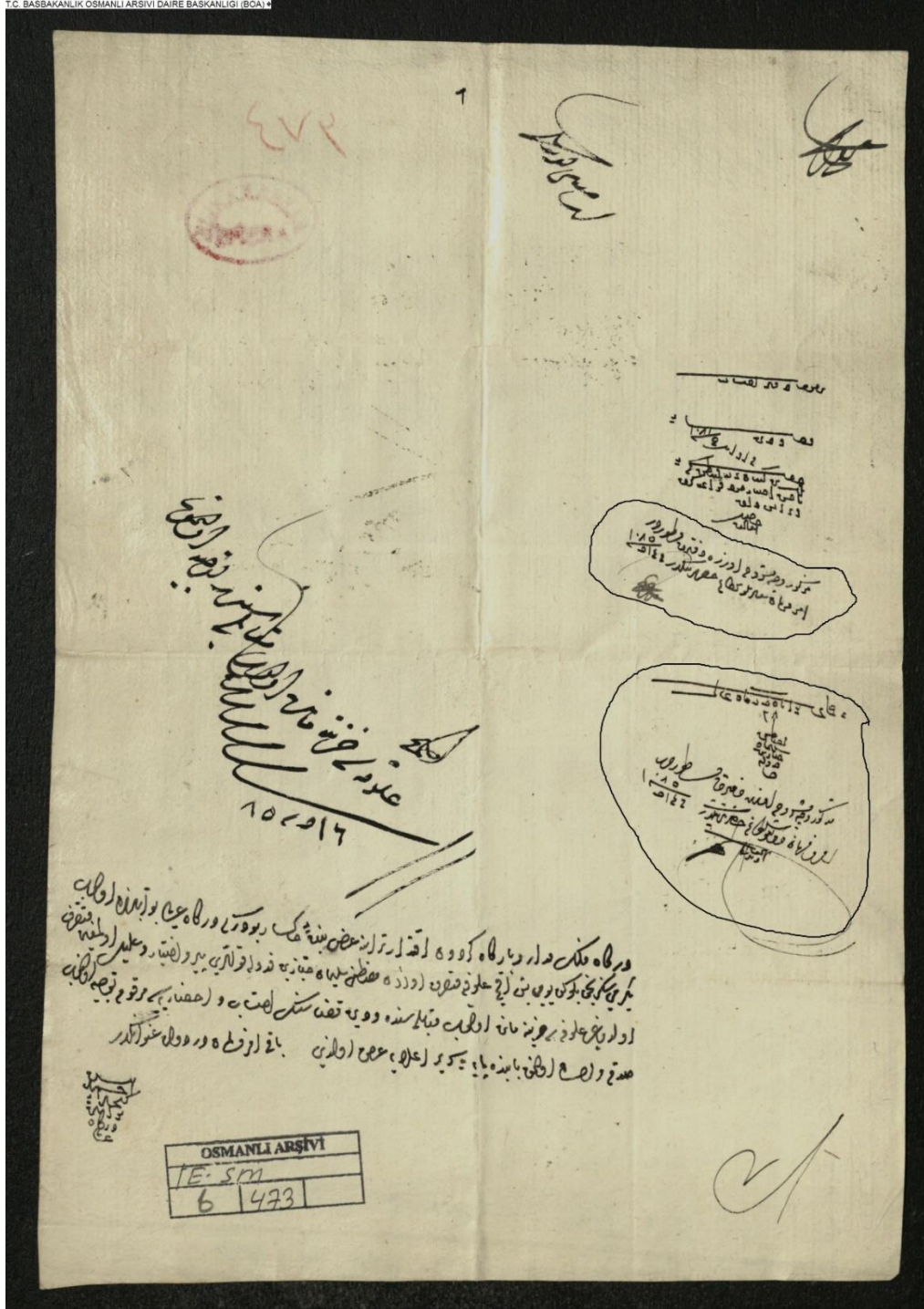
⁴²⁷ Ibid.

چنگی سیراتک سودا سنه زامبار لویا و نلورک ایچده
 بولمقلدی بی اوک و پر دیر • اول بی لوب فراخچه دیار
 کتدی • و اوک سکرسنه قدر خدمت ایتم و بی دیندن
 چور ملک ایچون اصلاح داندی • و باک دنیا قدر عیاست
 ایتم • و بی کسوتم ایله کوردو • غیره کسوت کوردی
 ایتم • و کتدی و کسوتم ایله بولک آدمرا ویزه و سربلر کورد
 حتی پادشا هله بیک سرانیه بیلد واردم • ایچنجکا و نیم
 خصوصندن و ولایتیم احوالندن سوال ایبره ایتم • احمد
 اغا دیکه ایتم • فراخچه بی بو سیکر سوال ایلیق و قورق
 ایتمک طایبیا و لوق کورک دیر • سلیمان دیکه بوند ک اول
 مصطفی اغاه فراخچه دیارنه کوردم • نیم سزه سوپه و کچی
 اندن سوال ایلمک اول ایشان ایبره ایتم • زیرا اول دیز
 فراخچه دیارنه دوون بوش سنه قدر او قورعی • اغا سی بر

قلعه

Figure 4.7 Süleyman's Manuscript-5.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Ibid.



İE.SM.00006.00473.001

Figure 4.8 A document purporting to be that of Mütefferika Süleyman Ağa's retirement.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁹ Osmanlı Arşivleri Başkanlığı IE:SM 6:473

Conclusion

In this research I examine the Ottoman Empire's and France's inter-cultural and inter-political relationship and the performativity exhibited within, starting with the visit of Ottoman Ambassador Mütferrika Süleyman Ağa to the French court in 1669. The main ambition of this work has been to reproduce this fascinating interaction between these two states and reinterpret both parties' political and social agendas equally. Allowing both sides to contribute their accounts equally has changed the narrative and performativity of this encounter dramatically. It also has revealed more opportunities for scholars to examine the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Western states with a more truthful lens than the traditional approach of situating the Ottomans as the 'other.'

Süleyman Ağa's visit to the French court revealed the well-known resistance of the West to the East. This resistance was performed as a demand of the French Court Officials to the Ottoman envoy to follow French customs and courtesy rules without exception. Interestingly, this demand resulted in a completely opposite outcome than the main ambition of the French King and his officials. Instead of the Ottoman envoy adopting French customs and attitudes, the French officials, rather, assumed the role of an Ottoman during these audiences. The theatricality of this intriguing encounter, therefore, became a major source for many artistic aesthetic or cultural productions. Soon after the visit of the Ottomans, Moliere's infamous play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* was produced, and *turquerie*, the western conception of the Ottoman State and its cultural and visual assets, spread around France and then further to other European states between the 17th and 18th centuries. I have analyzed these performances and the performativity of these events with their connection to their recent past and their near future.

Several works which focus on this era and the encounter rely heavily on the Western sources. Phil McCluskey who has produced extensive work in this era, and in this subject, points out this issue stating, “the lack of Ottoman documents means that we have to rely instead on the European, and in this case French sources.”⁴³⁰ This is a complicated and also dangerous statement, and just one example of many other similar assumptions about the Ottoman Empire and its archive. And I believe that this kind of approach among the scholars causes misanalyses of the era, and the Ottoman Empire’s critical position in the development on modern European states and diplomacy. This is a statement that it is not only misdirecting scholars that are interested in this period, but also it will prevent scholars from digging deeper into Ottoman sources believing their research will be inconclusive and ineffective. And then, naturally, they depend on solely Western sources without even a quick search in the Ottoman archives. Perhaps it would be easier and less problematic for the researcher as well. However, it will be an attempt to conceal the real drivers behind the events under scrutiny and it will become a continuous misinterpretation of history. In fact, the Ottoman archives do not present a lack of documents. On the contrary, they maintain an abundance of documents, so much so that there is myriad of yet unanalyzed sources. Perhaps the lack of the studied documents is the reason that scholars seem to perceive history lacking the Ottoman side. Due to these claims my research was almost going to fall into the same misconception about the Ottoman archives. However, my studies within this work have shown that bringing the Ottoman accounts to the analysis of performativity in these events changes our conception of the history dramatically.

⁴³⁰ Phil McCluskey, “An Ottoman Envoy in Paris,” 339.

Ottoman envoy Süleyman Ağa had been seen by many scholars as ‘rude,’⁴³¹ a ‘religious fanatic,’⁴³² and a ‘failed embassy.’⁴³³ This certainly is a result of the examination of only the French and Western records of the event, centering Europe to the core of these encounters and their performances while ignoring the provided documents from the Ottoman side. This is also, as I make evident in this research, the result of France’s strict propaganda and imposition of their courtesy codes which became widely accepted as fundamental rules for civilized societies. By questioning these codes and the previous scholars’ approaches to the Franco-Ottoman relationship I have aimed to make the recurring narrative of the history of these states unfamiliar again. Re-questioning aspects of this event and de-centering both parties’ historical consuetudinary positions will enlighten shadowed details of the performances exhibited during and following this encounter.

This study reveals that it is impossible to make meaning of the history and identity of modern European states without an extensive examination of the Ottoman Empire, its customs, traditions, and its impact on the world throughout its six-century existence. Any attempt of othering the Ottomans and centering West is the amputation of the history of modern humanity, its performances, aesthetic choices, and ambitions. France and the French population in the 17th century, after long, fascinating, and fearfully complicated sentiments towards to the Ottoman Empire and everything it represented in their socio-political lives, encountered the Turk directly

⁴³¹ Julia Landweber, Celebrating Identity: Charting the History of Turkish Masquerade in Early Modern France." *Romance Studies: A Journal of the University of Wales* 23, no. 3 (2005): 175-89, 176.

⁴³² Albert Vandal, ed., *L'Odysee d'un ambassadeur: Les voyages du marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)* (Paris, 1900), 23, 27.

⁴³³ William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World*. First ed. (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 247.

in 1669. This encounter became a milestone for both states, and the way that their identity and reputation emerged in that moment has persisted until the present day.

With the examination of the Ottoman representative's interaction with French officials and courtiers, I utilized alternative research tactics such as bringing equivalent but unassociated events to view.⁴³⁴ In this way I brought a more equal voice to the Ottomans more in line with that of their Western counterparts. This strategy can allow scholars to comprehend the Ottomans' existence in Western courts, especially when documents provide limited information. Studying Ottoman customs, court rules, and traditional diplomacy is another methodology this work utilized to recognize Ottoman representatives' performances.⁴³⁵ In practice, this methodology brought to light a different interpretation to Süleyman Ağa, not as a 'rude' or 'fanatic' envoy, but rather a devoted representative of the Ottoman court who upheld the Ottoman Empire's diplomatic attitude, and this was then exploited by the French court according to their own political agenda.

Adding the Ottoman voice to the narrative of this event unveiled the fact that Süleyman Ağa did not leave distaste behind him, but instead fascination. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and its production was an attempt to replace the image of him with a more convenient one for the French Court's ambition, exploiting the Ottoman image. The production was one of the early examples of *turquerie*, and a permission for French public to practice it. However, the French court lost the control of the Ottoman image the moment it presented it. And *turquerie* became an important fashion, and moreover a statement which gave its practitioners freedom to declare their power and criticize the French government under the protection of the Ottoman image.

⁴³⁴ Chapter 2.

⁴³⁵ Chapter 1.

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